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André Malraux and the Concept of Will

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## Forward

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## Introduction.



In Paul Nizan's novel, Le Cheval de Troie, there is found a remarkably rich and strangely evocative picture of social change in France in the 1930s.

He writes:

" La France bougeait.

Le dimanche, sur des places qui avaient connu des siècles de tranquillité, sur des places qui parfois n'avaient même pas vu passer les ombres des révolutions, des guerres, des invasions, dont les habitants n'avaient pas eu un battement de cœur depuis des générations, des bandes s'affrontaient. Les Français avaient longtemps fait partie d'un petit monde incorruptible; l'Europe était en fusion autour d'une France de diamant; les Français regardaient l'Allemagne, l'Italie, l'Espagne, tous leurs voisins, avec des yeux de spectateurs. Nous ne sommes pas si fous, pensaient-ils. Soudain, sur ces places, les pierres volaient, les chevaux galopaient, les matraques sonnaient sur les têtes, les revolvers tiraient. Pas une ville où ne tinssent des conciliabules, où ne montassent des montagnes de haine, de colère. On faisait connaissance avec la faim, avec l'angoisse. Le désespoir avait une puissance d'explosif. C'était une époque qui rappelait la formation des guerres de religion lorsque les granges des protestants flambaient, lorsque les hommes partaient sur la route pour combattre" (1).

Nizan's description refers specifically to the social upheaval which began in France with the Depression of 1929-1930 and which culminated in the riots of February 1934 and the polarisation of French political society between the Bloc National and the Front Populaire in the Legislative Elections of 1936. In this context, Nizan is striving to give historical dimension and historical significance to the hunger-marches of the weary unemployed in the France of the 1930s.

At the same time, however, Nizan's passage possesses a metaphorical significance: it is able to trace an accurate portrait of the intellectual and spiritual life of the country in the same period, that life summed up by H. Stuart Hughes as a desperate search for an "obstructed path" (2). For the social stagnation of France, leading to an acute sense of frustration and

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1. Paul Nizan, Le Cheval de Troie, Paris, Gallimard, 1935, pp. 68-69.
  2. H. Stuart Hughes, The Obstructed Path, French Social Thought in the Years of Desperation 1930 - 1960, New York, Harper Torchbacks, 1969, p.1.

despair, is merely the social counterpart of a general sense of intellectual anxiety experienced in France, and in other countries of Europe, after the First World War. Nizan's reference to the small quiet squares of France may be seen to signify also an intellectual life which has lost all meaning, because it has been by-passed by history. Spengler's Decline of the West, Valéry's La Crise de l'esprit and Malraux's La Tentation de l'Occident all concentrate upon a Europe which has come to the end of a long road, a road which looks out now upon a waste-land of the intellect in which there can be no firm value-system by which to live or think. It is this sense of total intellectual disorientation which is characterised by Marcel Arland as "un nouveau mal du siècle" (1), and whose origins he sees particularly in the War itself, which constitutes the essence of the Absurd, and which is the basis for the work of the French philosophical novelists of the inter-war period.

Yet, if Nizan's rich description is able to evoke the stagnation and anxiety which sets the underlying but pervading tone of the literature of the 1920s and 1930s, it indicates also, in its references to the violence which suddenly erupted in those quiet squares, a possible solution to the problem. For the juxtaposition of the riots and the peaceful towns contains a fruitful opposition of two values: dynamism and immobility. It is in the very fixed, immobile, contemplative nature of French intellectual life that the disillusioned generation of the "nouveau mal du siècle" see the cause of their disarray. Malraux's Chinese visitor to Europe records his contempt for the European attitude towards sexuality, an attitude which is directed towards the knowledge of the personality and emotions of the partner; and, in so doing, he calls into question the entire value of statically-acquired knowledge itself. It is as if European intellectuals had thought themselves into a circle of the

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1. Marcel Arland, "Sur un nouveau mal du siècle", Nouvelle Revue Française, 125, 1924, pp.149-158.

intellect in which a spiral of knowledge leads remorselessly towards an empty centre. And the Absurd, once recognised, cannot be escaped or transcended by rational thought or exploration or analysis: something more is needed.

It is this which constitutes the significance of the arrival of the riots in the town-squares of France. For, if the cultivation of the intellect has led only to a static recognition of the Absurd which cannot, by intellectual means, be transcended, a recognition which carries with it the collapse of a whole value-system, action, on the other hand, because it is knowable, visible, because within its hermetic order it has meaning, is seen to provide a new scale of values. The return of the rioters to the small towns of France, long the backwaters of history, signifies the return of history, the return of a meaningful time-scale in which action and thought may be undertaken.

It is for this reason, amongst others, that the 1920s in France sees the upsurge in the publication of adventure-novels. The travel-novels of Paul Morand, that mixture of travel, exoticism, realism and fantasy in the work of Pierre MacOrlan, the poetic, tough exoticism of Blaise Cendrars, and the seedy, yet heroic lives of Francis Carco's petty criminals imply a reaction against the fluid, valueless world of the "nouveau mal du siècle" in terms of a celebration of a way of life in which value is conferred upon the individual by the measure of his action. In this way, the intellectually self-conscious fiction of Saint-Exupéry, Malraux, Bernanos and Montherlant may be seen to merely render more explicit and to explore more thoroughly the solution to the problems of the Absurd cultivated by the adventure-novelists. As René Pomeau notes:

"La Littérature redécouvre la métaphysique, la mystique, le mystère, en tout cas le tragique de la condition humaine. Ce qui entraîne un regain du roman de guerre, et une résurgence de la guerre dans le roman" (1).

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1. René Pomeau, "Guerre et roman dans l'entre-deux-guerres", Revue des Sciences Humaines, 109, 1963, p.84.

Thus, Malraux's adventurers and political activists, Saint-Exupéry's pilots and his controller, Rivière, and Bernanos' heroic priests, who see themselves consciously as front-line soldiers in the war against evil (1), constitute a resurrection of the value of action as the only possible antidote to the moral and intellectual vacuum of the 1920s. Yet, whereas intellectual contemplation has as its horizons language alone, action depends upon a philosophical and psychological quality which is of a different order: the will. As A. Darbon writes: "L'objet de la volonté n'est pas la parole, mais l'action" (2). It is the will which must be seen as the initial impulse which sends Malraux's adventurers to Asia, Saint-Exupéry's pilots out upon their dangerous missions, and which constitutes at least a part of the grace which falls on Bernanos' priests. Yet the will is not merely the impulse: it serves also as a force to maintain the hero in his course of action. Darbon adds to his definition:

"le caractère essentiel de la volonté est d'imprimer à la conduite une direction ferme et de faire effort pour la maintenir"(3).

The will, therefore, in the inter-war years in France, provides a privileged solution to the problem of the Absurd by enabling the hero to choose a course of action which will emancipate him from a contingent and valueless existence, and thus furnishes the possibility of remaining within the saving state of action.

In this context, Nizan's reference to other European countries, looked at lazily by France in her role as spectator, takes on further significance. The interest in the will expressed in the 1920s draws upon intellectual traditions which are not exclusively French. Although the cult of the dour

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1. A point emphasised clearly by the curé de Torcy, in Journal d'un curé de campagne, Livre de poche, p.130.
  2. A. Darbon, Philosophie de la volonté, Paris, Presses Universitaires Françaises, 1951, p.3.
  3. Ibid, p.109.

hero may be seen to connect, in some measure, with the Cornelian concept of action and honour, the view of the will as an organic force, a view which is essential to an understanding of the impulsion to action, draws upon a German tradition which stems from Schopenhauer and which is crystallised in Nietzsche. Moreover, since the cult of the will-as-solution is inextricably linked in France with the disorientation of the "nouveau mal du siècle" and attempts to find a new solution to the problems of French intellectual life, it is similarly a part of those European avant-garde movements, particularly Italian Futurism, which see in action and excitement a transcendence of the old Western Consciousness.

In addition, the references to Germany, Italy and Spain, with their now apparent political connotations, and the political content of Nizan's passage as a whole, indicate the way in which the will to action, accepted by intellectuals of the 1920s, becomes rapidly, and especially in the 1930s, the will to political action. In other words, not action alone, but action in history becomes the way of conferring importance upon the individual.

Nizan's description of the social troubles in France in the early 1930s, therefore, may be used as a metaphor to express the intellectual anxiety of the inter-war period: the initial sense of sterility, followed by the search for an antidote in the form of action. The action itself is justified by a concept of the will, a concept which can be defined only by reference to the immediate intellectual context - the "nouveau mal du siècle", and the avant-garde movements, and to traditions of the will, of which the Cornelian and Nietzschean traditions may be considered the most influential. Finally, that action cannot exist for long in a social vacuum: it rapidly assumes political significance and bids for the prizes of history itself.

Yet, viewed as a metaphor of this nature, Nizan's description reveals certain disquieting elements. The reference to the "guerres de religion" is

by no means gratuitous, it is part of a general attempt of writers in the inter-war period to view action as possible only in a context removed from civilised urban life in the twentieth century. Thus, Drieu la Rochelle, whilst celebrating Bolsheviks, Fascists and National Socialists as admirable symptoms of a regenerative European will (1), sees their significance as a resurrection of the Medieval ideal of the combination of action and intellect. Similarly, Bernanos, in his anti-bourgeois pamphlets (2), uses the medieval model as an example of an ideal social organisation; and, in Journal d'un curé de campagne, he deliberately sets the novel in a geographical context which is rendered timeless so that the dominant ethos is that of medieval courage exhibited by the Docteur Delbende, the curé de Torcy, and the curé of Ambricourt himself. Similarly, Malraux and Saint-Exupéry represent an important characteristic of the cult of the will in the 1920s and 1930s: that the will to action is incompatible with civilian existence, an existence which must be transcended or escaped, either spatially or temporally, before the will can begin to operate. Malraux's heroes travel to Asia and their myths, like that of Claude Vannec's grandfather, in La Voie Royale, lie in an epic past; Saint-Exupéry's pilots present an even more extreme example: they leave the earth altogether in order to wage an elemental battle in the night sky.

Yet, if there is a rigid incompatibility between the will and civilian + existence, certain moral problems are immediately raised. The "nouveau mal du siècle" is a metaphysical problem and the solution presented by the will to action is, similarly, metaphysical in nature. It is by no means automatic, therefore, that the pursuit of self-definition and self-justification by the exercise of the will possesses positive ethical content, particularly as, as

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1. Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, Paris, Gallimard, 1940.
  2. Georges Bernanos, La Grande peur des bien-pensants, Paris, Plon, 1934; Les Grands cimetières sous la lune, Paris, Plon, 1938.

Nizan's description indicates, that exercise of the will takes the form of violent action. It is this which constitutes the difficulty of any fundamentally existential philosophy, which has as its sole value the defining power of conscious action, and it is a recognition of such a difficulty which prompts Sartre's unconvincing moral justification of French existentialism,

L'Existentialisme est un humanisme. Whilst observers of the literature and thought of the inter-war period have normally agreed with Sartre, and accepted his arguments that the pursuit of self-definition through action can constitute the basis of a new humanism, the ethical, as opposed to the metaphysical properties of such an action remain highly ambiguous and in need of exploration.

Nizan's description has already introduced the role of the will as a solution to grave metaphysical problems in the inter-war years, and has allowed the question to be raised of the precise moral nature of that solution. It introduces further, however, one final important point: to evoke the armies of the unemployed and their battles with the police, he uses the comparison with the "formation des guerres de religion". In other words, a precise concrete political event is generalised and aestheticised by the use of a metaphysical link with an almost mythical past. Yet the heroes of the novels of action of the late 1920s and the 1930s, and, to a large extent, their creators, approach the problem in an exactly inverse manner. That is to say that the man of will, seeking an historically important action, will tend to view a turbulent political context as a metaphor of his own projected action. In such a case, the concrete situation exists both as itself and as an image, ultimately an aesthetic image. Once more, observers of the period have tended to take fictional representations of political involvement at their face value and to ignore the possible décalage between politics as fact and politics as an image of an ideal situation relating only to the man of will, as well as the aesthetic content of such a political involvement.

As a means of exploring the importance of the will in French intellectual life in the twentieth century and the problems which it and its aesthetic formulation raise, a discussion of the work of André Malraux is particularly useful. His novels contain what is arguably the clearest typology of the man of will to be found in the fiction of the inter-war period. The almost pure adventure of Claude Vannec and Perken, in La Voie Royale, as they battle against the elemental forces of the Absurd represented by the decomposing jungle, shows the will and its enemies in a classically stark manner. Yet the evolution of Malraux's fiction, by which the solitary adventurer is necessarily impelled to assume a political role, reflects what appears to be an essential progress of the man of will, as well as the problems and ambiguities which that progression entails. Similarly, the increased socialisation of Malraux's heroes, the way in which the totally self-preoccupied man of will gradually fades out of the novels, to give way to men such as Garcia, in L'Espoir, would appear to testify to a recognition on Malraux's part of the ethically ambiguous nature of the man of will. It is interesting, however, to postulate that this increased socialisation merely serves to render the ethical ambiguities more complex and less apparent. At the same time, the arrival of Malraux's activists in a critical political situation which corresponds to their own personal needs illuminates the way in which, for the man of will, a political situation is of metaphysical as well as concrete importance.

From the point of view of an intellectual-historical analysis of the will in the 1920s and 1930s, Malraux is of more than usual usefulness. Not only does the main body of his fiction indicate his notion of the will and its application to inter-personal and political relationships, but his self-consciously intellectual role, his receptiveness to a wide range of intellectual influences, his non-fictional writing in the form of essays, reviews and works of art-philosophy, and, finally, his own role as a man of action in Indochina, in the Anti-fascist and Front Populaire committees from 1934 to 1936, in the



Spanish Civil War and in the Gaullist movement, permit an exceptionally detailed analysis of a concept of the will to be made.

La Tentation de l'Occident and "D'une Jeunesse européenne" constitute one of the major formulations of the "nouveau mal du siècle" itself, in their analysis of the bankrupt state of European culture and their gloomy recognition of the Absurd. At the same time, the "fantaisiste" short fictional pieces, Lunes en papier, Ecrit pour une idole à trompe and Royaume-farfelu take their place within the avant-garde search for a new solution to the problems of the European mind beyond the bounds of the rational; and, in their parodic use of the myth of the heroic quest they establish one of the primary fictional structures of the will.

In addition, if Malraux can be seen to fit into the context of the intellectual and artistic life of the 1920s, from which the general European interest in the will takes its origins, his work is equally useful in the way in which it illuminates in both his fictional and non-fictional writing the intellectual traditions of the will: the one, running from Nietzsche, through Sorel and Pareto, and which expresses the organic, irrational quest for power which motivates such men as Garine; the other, Cornelian and Cartesian in essence, which emphasises the lucid control necessary to maintain the man of will in his chosen project, and which is emphasised by the constantly-open cigarette-box on the desk of Ferral. Furthermore, that complex mixture, in Malraux's heroes, of will to power and the need for lucidity, illustrates admirably A. Darbon's insistence upon the many-faceted structure of the will.

Finally, Malraux's own involvement in history serves to indicate some of the problems inherent in the relationship between the will and politics. From the editorship of Indochina to his role as de Gaulle's Ministre de la Culture and Conseiller d'Etat, through the speeches and committees of the Front Populaire period, the task of organising the España air-squadron, and the clandestine life of "le colonel Berger", Malraux has participated freely in politics, but always in the forefront, always as a leader, an organiser,

a director. The very constancy of this aspect of his political participation raises the question as to whether the will impels the individual necessarily to a position of command, or whether there is a possible compatibility between the will and the assuming of a mere collective role. For, if such a compatibility is proven to be impossible, then Malraux's conversion from fellow-travellers "dirigeant" to Gaullist "dirigeant" becomes less difficult to understand.

It would be natural to assume that writers on Malraux have already examined this material and have discussed such questions, but gaps in Malraux criticism still remain. Most critics of Malraux are in agreement in attributing great importance to his depiction of the adventurer and his use of action as a solution to a metaphysical problem, that of the Absurd. Some, particularly Denis Boak (1), have emphasised the importance of the will as the basis of the action of Malraux's heroes. But a full exploration of the deep complexity of the will in relation to Malraux's work has not yet been undertaken. Particularly, there is no complete analysis of the way in which the two major components of the will: the organic irrational drive and the lucid ambition to control, combine. On the whole, Darbon's warning: "La volonté n'est pas une faculté simple" (2) has been neither heeded nor investigated in work on Malraux.

The same may be said to apply to the question of the context and tradition of Malraux's concept of the will. Françoise Dorenlot (3) gives an excellent account of Malraux's early thought in relation to the "Nouveau mal du siècle", but uses this to reinforce her arguments concerning the unity of

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1. Denis Boak, André Malraux, London, Oxford University Press, 1968.

2. A. Darbon, Philosophie de la volonté, p.14.

3. Françoise Dorenlot, Malraux ou l'unité de la pensée, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Les Essais", 1970.

Malraux's thought. The scope of her subject does not permit her to analyse Malraux's work in the context of war or adventure-literature, nor in that of the European avant-garde. André Vandegans (1), on the other hand, provides a meticulously-researched and exhaustive study of Malraux's intellectual activities in the 1920s, but does not relate this activity to the broader context of Malraux's significance as an expression of the intellectual currents of the inter-war period as a whole. As regards the tradition of the will, there has been general acceptance of Malraux's debt to Nietzsche. Both Charles D. Blend (2) and Avriel Goldberger (3) define, in general terms, Malraux's concept of tragedy as essentially Nietzschean, and Blossom Douthat (4) is able to indicate the affinities between La Tentation de l'Occident and The Birth of Tragedy. Yet, there has still been no detailed analysis of the precise nature of Nietzsche's influence on Malraux, nor of Malraux's apparently idiosyncratic and partisan interpretation of Nietzsche's work. Even Horst Hina's excellent Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, in spite of its full documentation, remains too detailed and too uncritical to answer fully questions of this nature. (5)

The general lack of detailed and critical analysis of Malraux's notion of the will, in its context as well as in its essence, has tended to lead to certain debatable conclusions with regard to the ethical and political implications of the cult of action. The prevailing critical view, exemplified

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1. André Vandegans, La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux: Essai sur l'inspiration farfelu, Paris, Pauvert, 1965.
  2. Charles D. Blend, André Malraux, Tragic Humanist, Ohio State University Press, 1963.
  3. Avriel Goldberger, Visions of a New Hero: the Heroic Life According to André Malraux and Earlier Advocates of Human Grandeur, Paris, Minard, 1965.
  4. Blossom Douthat, "Nietzschean Motifs in La Tentation de l'Occident", Yale French Studies, 18, 1957.
  5. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, Tübingen, Niemayer, 1970.

by Charles Blend and Joseph Hoffmann (1), tends to claim that the heroic action of a small number of men, striving for self-definition in a situation of fluid values, is sufficient to constitute the basis of a new humanism. And this view subsists in spite of the assertions, by both Ilya Ehrenburg (2) and Robert Brasillach (3), at the time of the publication of La Condition humaine, that the novel's minority, elitist preoccupations could not possibly be considered in an ethical context, and in spite of later criticism of Malraux by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Claude Roy (4) on similar grounds. Analysis of Paul Nizan's description of the 1930s has already shown that violent action, whatever the nobility of the metaphysical cause which it serves, cannot be taken automatically as the basis for an ethical code or a new humanism.

Similar problems are raised in discussions of Malraux's political themes and writing. In the same way that critics have been willing to condemn the disturbing, anarchic adventurers of the early novels, only to hail the inception of a new humanism in the actions of Kyo and Katow, so they accept the ambiguity of Garine's presence in Canton, but assert a gradual movement in Malraux's fiction towards an increased democratisation. This approach is typified by David Wilkinson (5), who argues that Les Noyers de l'Altenburg is the culminating point in Malraux's evolution away from extremism towards liberalism. Whilst such an evolution appears, on the surface, quite plausible,

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1. Joseph Hoffmann, L'Humanisme de Malraux, Paris, Klincksieck, 1963.
  2. Ilya Ehrenburg, "Malraux", in his Duhamel, Gide, Mauriac, Morand, Romain, Unamuno, vus par un écrivain d'URSS, Paris, Gallimard, 1934.
  3. Robert Brasillach, "André Malraux ou le mal de l'héroïsme", in his Portraits, Paris, Plon, 1935.
  4. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le Langage indirect et les Voix du silence", in his Signes, Paris, Gallimard, 1960.  
Claude Roy, "André Malraux", in his Descriptions critiques, Paris, Gallimard, 1949.
  5. David Wilkinson, André Malraux. An Essay in Political Criticism, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967.

there is nevertheless evidence to show that there is an underlying authoritarianism which governs Malraux's attitude to Communism and to Gaullism, an authoritarianism which determines Garine's attitude to Canton and also Garcia's attitude to Spain. It is this possibility of an authoritarian undercurrent, dependent upon the will, which has never been fully explored in studies of Malraux's heroism.

If there are problems which concern the definition of the will itself, the exploration of its contexts and traditions, the ethical and political ambiguities which it presents, which have, thus far, been insufficiently studied, there remains one final major area of complexity. Nizan's metaphor of the wars of religion introduces the question of the role of aesthetics in a metaphysical, ethical or political framework. Once more, in this area assumptions have been made which cannot be immediately substantiated. A large number of those critics who have studied Malraux's art philosophy have viewed it as the triumphant climax of his establishment of the new humanism; yet such an assertion is by no means obvious. Merleau-Ponty has pointed out that Malraux's art-philosophy has relied upon a notion of history which is rigorously non-humanist (1). If this is true, then it raises important questions for the whole of Malraux's work, and sheds important light upon the true significance of aesthetics in the inter-war years. For aestheticism is in many ways central to Malraux's work and his view of the world from the very beginning, and if his view of art is founded upon a false notion of history which is incompatible with the traditions of European humanism, then his whole work, and the role of the will in general must be reviewed carefully.

Nizan's picture of the troubled town-squares of France provides a microcosmic view of the problems of the country in the inter-war period. Seen as a metaphor for the intellectual life of Europe, it emphasises the problem

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1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le Langage indirect et les Voix du silence".

of the return of the will which brings with it the benefits of definition and history itself, but also raises questions of political and ethical importance. These problems are able to be seen clearly through the work of Malraux, who centres his work upon the will and provides one of the clearest definitions of it. Through analysis of him and his concept of the will, the armies of religion who left a forgotten sixteenth century to erupt into the quietness of the squares of France in the 1930s, can be understood more clearly.

## Chapter One

### La Tentation de l'Occident

In his first two novels, La Voie Royale and Les Conquérants (1), Malraux makes use of the same method of introduction. The novels open with a voyage from Europe to Asia by boat, and in both cases the passengers are clearly divided into two distinct groups. Perken and Claude, in La Voie Royale, and the narrator of Les Conquérants are separated from their fellow-passengers by a radical difference in attitude. The other passengers belong firmly and unquestioningly to a certain context, which is cultural, philosophical and economic, whereas Malraux's heroes have deliberately set themselves outside this context. Whereas, for the other passengers, Asia is a colony, an extension of the old European framework which differs only in a certain vicarious exoticism from the European mainland, for Claude, Perken and the nameless narrator of Les Conquérants, Asia is a field of action which offers opportunities which break away from the European tradition and enter into direct conflict with it. The two types of men have become almost different races. As the boat bearing Claude and Perken towards Asia passes through Bab-el-Mandeb, "les Portes de la Mort", Claude reflects upon the effect of Perken's legend upon the rest of the passengers:

"Jamais Claude n'avait vu à ce point le besoin romanesque de ces fonctionnaires qui voulaient en nourrir leurs rêves, besoin contrarié aussitôt par la crainte d'être dupes, d'admettre l'existence d'un monde différent du leur" (2).

For their world is different, and, for Claude, unacceptable. Malraux writes:

"Il avait réfléchi naguère, sans avoir la naïveté d'en être surpris, aux conditions d'une civilisation qui fait à l'esprit une part telle que ceux qui s'en nourrissent, gavés sans doute, sont doucement conduits à manger à prix réduits" (3).

1. Denis Boak, in his study, André Malraux, London, Oxford University Press, 1968, provides convincing evidence that, although published two years later than Les Conquérants, La Voie Royale was substantially written earlier. This view has also been confirmed privately to the author by W.M.Frohock. For the purposes of this study, I have taken the view that analysis of La Voie Royale before Les Conquérants enables discussion of the solitary will before it enters collective political life.
2. La Voie Royale, Livre de poche, p.15.
3. Ibid, p.37.



This contrast between the hero and the other Europeans is indicated further by Malraux's use, in Les Conquérants, of the daily posting of wireless-messages referring to the situation in China. The Europeans see the telegrams, with their news of the Hongkong strike, as blows against their own well-being, against their way of life. The narrator, however, views the messages from the opposing point of understanding, from that viewpoint which is trying to cut itself off from the European way of life and deal it a mortal blow.

The presence of the voyage in the novels is clearly convenient for Malraux's purpose. Insofar as it is able to awaken a deep emotive response, it is of intense mythical value. But in this context it is important not to ignore the fact that, apart from being a metaphysical or moral journey, the voyage in the two novels is geographical as well. It leads the hero away from the old and tired Europe to an Asia beginning in its own way to awaken, with its own values and its own traditions; and that geographical voyage demands necessarily reflexion on the contrast between East and West.

The epistolary essay, La Tentation de l'Occident, deals with a voyage in the same way that the two novels do. Indeed, it deals with two voyages. The young Chinese, Ling, travels about Europe, from Paris to Rome to Greece, and finally returns to Paris; the young Frenchman, A.D., replies to Ling's comments in the course of a voyage from Europe to China. The conclusions reached by the two men form the basis of the reflexions upon Europe indicated by the opening passages of the two novels, and are central to an understanding of Malraux's thought in the 1920's. What concerns Malraux at this time, paradoxically, is not so much China and the East in themselves, although he appears fascinated by them; rather, he is concerned with the reasons for that fascination, namely the state of a Europe which can no longer satisfy him. Of the eighteen letters contained in La Tentation de l'Occident, no more than six are written by the European A.D.. For the most part, Malraux is concerned with

the impressions made upon Ling by European culture, a preoccupation contained already in Montaigne's analysis of the cannibals and in Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes. The importance of the role of A.D. lies in the way in which he reinforces the impressions collected by Ling by developing them and confirming them. Asia is, above all, for Malraux at this time a vantage-point from which to see Europe more clearly and more deeply. In 1926, he writes:

"La vue que nous prenons de l'Europe lorsque nous vivons en Asie est particulièrement propre à toucher les hommes de ma génération parce qu'elle donne à nos problèmes une intensité extrême, et parce qu'elle concourt à détruire l'idée de la nécessité d'un mouvement unique, d'une réalité limitée. Car notre domaine me semble être surtout celui du possible" (1)

Malraux is therefore careful to concentrate his attention upon Europe, upon his own generation, and upon the limitations imposed by European civilisation which, if the notion of man is to survive, must be extended. Asia is, above all, the field of extension.

But as such, it is Malraux's major preoccupation for a large part of the 1920's, particularly in the years 1926 and 1927, during which he published four texts which deal exclusively with this problem. La Tentation de l'Occident was published by Grasset in 1926; on 31st July of that year, Les Nouvelles Littéraires contained an unsigned article, "André Malraux et l'Orient", which is generally attributed to Malraux himself; in 1927, in the collection of essays, Ecrits, published by Grasset in their series, "Les Cahiers Verts", appeared "D'une jeunesse européenne"; and Malraux further elaborated his views on the West in a review of Défense de l'Occident by Henri Massis, published in the Nouvelle Revue Française in June 1927 (2). From these four works, the basis of

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1. André Malraux, "André Malraux et l'Orient", in Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 31st July 1926.
  2. In addition to these four texts, Malraux published excerpts from La Tentation de l'Occident under the title "Lettres d'un Chinois", in the Nouvelle Revue Française, 151, 1926.

Malraux's understanding of the West in the 1920's, with the notions of heroism and the will as the central features of Western civilisation, may be deduced.

At the very end of the long correspondence which constitutes La Tentation de l'Occident, A.D. concludes his final letter with a despondent and resigned summary of the problems of modern Europe:

"Il n'est pas d'idéal auquel nous puissions nous sacrifier, car de tous nous connaissons les mensonges, nous qui ne savons point ce qu'est la vérité. L'ombre terrestre qui s'allonge derrière les dieux de marbre suffit à nous écarter d'eux. De quelle étreinte l'homme s'est lié à lui-même! Patrie, justice, grandeur, vérité, laquelle de ces statues ne porte de telles traces de mains humaines qu'elle ne soulève en nous la même ironie triste que les vieux visages, autrefois aimés? Comprendre ne permet point toutes les démenes. Et, cependant, quels sacrifices, quels héroïsmes injustifiés dorment en nous ....

Certes, il est une foi plus haute: celle que proposent toutes les croix des villages, et ces mêmes croix qui dominent nos morts. Elle est l'amour, et l'apaisement est en elle. Je ne l'accepterai jamais: je ne m'abaisserai pas à lui demander l'apaisement auquel ma faiblesse m'appelle. Europe, grand cimetière où ne dorment que des conquérants morts et dont la tristesse devient plus profonde en se parant de leurs noms illustres, tu ne laisses autour de moi qu'un horizon nu et le miroir qu'apporte le désespoir, vieux maître de la solitude. Peut-être mourra-t-il, lui aussi, de sa propre vie. Au loin, dans le port, une sirène hurle comme un chien sans guide. Voix des lâchetés vaincues .... je contemple mon image. Je ne l'oublierai jamais" (1).

In this passage, characterised by its sober lyricism, Malraux attempts to sum up the state of mind of his generation: images of solitude and disorientation; a past which is out of reach and no longer valid; and, above all, Europe and the civilisation of the West defined by the image of a heroism once vital and now dead. For Malraux, Europe is pre-eminently the land of the conqueror, the man of will, and the tragedy of the West lies in the fact of this definition itself and its present failure. The device of Ling, the traveller in Europe, who moves through the cultural and social manifestations of the civilisation, following in the steps of Montesquieu's Persians, enables Malraux to present

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1. La Tentation de l'Occident, Paris, Grasset, 1926, pp.216-218.

this initial definition and then to explore its effects and its faults.

As Ling arrives in Marseille, he writes to A.D., telling him of his preconceptions of Europe:

"La création sans cesse renouvelée par l'action d'un monde destiné à l'action, voilà ce qui me semblait alors l'âme de l'Europe, dont la soumission à la volonté de l'homme dominait les formes" (1).

And this first letter of Ling to A.D. constitutes an exposition of the way in which the European will manifests itself. It is essentially a will to order: Ling claims:

"Je vois dans l'Europe une barbarie attentivement ordonnée, où l'idée de la civilisation et celle de l'ordre sont chaque jour confondues" (2).

It is this sense of order, that sense which imposes form upon the world and upon life, which governs the European sense of action, an attribute which is continually contrasted with the Oriental sense of assimilation into the universe. The European imposes himself upon his surroundings, be they physical or metaphysical: the Oriental becomes a part of them. Ling writes:

"Que la grandeur soit vôtre, celle de l'homme armé, celle de la douleur, ou nôtre, celle de la perfection, elle vient de l'intensité de l'émotion qu'un sentiment éveille en nous. Chez vous, c'est celui du sacrifice, l'admiration vient d'une action. Pour nous, c'est seulement la conscience d'être selon le mode le plus beau" (3).

Malraux thus makes the contrast between East and West quite explicit: the West is defined in terms of action, the East in terms of being (4). The essential difference is a metaphysical one, concerned with attitudes to time

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1. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.28.

2. Ibid, p.35.

3. Ibid, p.39.

4. In spite of Malraux's main aim, his attempt to illustrate the failings of the West, his picture of the East, by necessity of contrast, is clearly too simple. The view of the constantly static and acquiescent Oriental does not conform to such phenomena as the Mongol invasions, cults of the warrior, such as the Japanese Samurai caste, or, indeed, the presence of war-lords in China at the time of Les Conquérants.

and the threat of death. Ling writes to A.D.:

"Le temps est ce que vous le faites, et nous sommes ce qu'il nous fait" (1).

For the European, life is a will to order, so that time may be conquered and death itself beaten; for the Oriental, time is something to which man submits, and death a further, the ultimate mystical experience.

The passivity of the Oriental and the dynamic quality of the European are finally illustrated by their conflicting views in art. For the European, art is totally a means of creation, and therefore it takes its place in the whole notion of order, action and will. The Oriental, in contrast to this, sees art solely as a means of feeling and experiencing, a view summed up by Ling at the very beginning of the correspondence:

"L'artiste n'est pas celui qui crée: c'est celui qui sent" (2).

There is therefore a total dichotomy between the Eastern and the European view of life. Whilst the Oriental is concerned with passivity, with feeling, with detachment, the Western man is engaged in a battle with life which demands all of his will, and which places him in a constant state of action, in a constant attempt to impose order on chaos and defeat the forces of time and death. Such a battle is not without nobility or grandeur, and if Malraux were to merely indicate a contrast between East and West on these terms, the West would in no way be diminished. But this view of the West is only the opening statement of a position, and underlying it there is an increasing tragedy which leads to the atmosphere of despair and resignation with which the book closes.

For Ling's task is to illustrate the futility of the Western man of action. Even on individual terms, the notion of action directed towards conquest is

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1. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.50.
  2. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.38.

shown to be a failure. Ling comments:

"Toujours vous vous dirigez vers un but vers lequel vous êtes portés tout entiers. Vous voulez vaincre. Que trouvez-vous sous vos pauvres victoires?" (1).

For:

"A peine comprenez-vous que pour être il ne soit pas nécessaire d'agir et que le monde vous transforme beaucoup plus que vous ne la transformez" (2).

But if conquest is an inadequate solution for the individual, collectively it is even more futile. Perhaps the most revealing stage of Ling's travels in Europe is his visit to Rome, the very symbol of collective will and conquest. What he discovers is the fact that apart from the conquest itself, the collective act of will is valueless. He looks at the ruins of Rome, and recalls:

"Je comprends bien, pensais-je encore, ce que disent ces fragments: Celui qui se sacrifie participe à la grandeur de la cause à laquelle il s'est sacrifié. Mais cette cause, je ne lui vois de grandeur que celle qu'elle doit au sacrifice. Elle est sans intelligence. Les hommes qu'elle dirige sont voués à la mort, qu'ils la reçoivent ou la donnent. Pour être puissante, la barbarie est-elle moins barbare?" (3).

The collective act of will contains therefore a circular self-justification which amounts to absurdity. Apart from its own barbarity, it is unable to provide a basis and an aim for its action. It is death-orientated and can only travel towards death.

The real origin of the tragedy of the West, however, lies for Malraux, deeper than this inherent lack of justification of conquest. The act of will of the Western man, even when accomplished in a collective form, is the act of an individual. And it is from this fact that stems the difficulty experienced by Malraux's fictional heroes in integrating themselves into a collective political action. After he has visited Rome, Ling travels to Greece, journeying

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1. Ibid, p.43.
  2. Ibid, p.46.
  3. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.59.

back in time towards the origins of Western man. One piece of sculpture in Athens attracts him particularly:

"une tête de jeune homme aux yeux ouverts s'imposait à moi comme une allégorie du génie grec, avec son insinuation profonde: mesurer toute chose à la durée et à l'intensité d'une vie humaine. Sous ce visage inconnu, que n'avez-vous gravé le nom d'Oedipe? Son histoire est le combat entre le sphinx de toutes vos facultés" (1).

For:

"Les Grecs ont conçu l'homme comme un homme, un être qui naît et meurt" (2),

and:

"L'Occident naît là, avec le dur visage de Minerve, avec ses armes, et aussi les stigmates de sa future démence" (3).

Western man, in spite of the virtues of power and knowledge, is condemned to an eventual downfall, a downfall provoked by a crisis of his own individualism.

Ling returns from Athens to Rome, and on his second visit to the city, he sees not only the embodiment of power and force, but also the capital of Christianity which has played a decisive role in the development of Western individualism. Already, at the very beginning of the correspondence, Ling has noted:

"Le Christianisme me semble être l'école d'où viennent toutes les sensations grâce auxquelles s'est formée la conscience que l'individu prend de lui-même" (4).

On his visit to Rome, he amplifies this opinion:

"L'Oriental irresponsable s'efforce à s'élever au-dessus d'un conflit dont il n'est pas l'enjeu. Le chrétien ne peut point s'en séparer; Dieu et lui sont désormais attachés l'un à l'autre et le monde n'est plus que le vain décor de leur conflit" (5).

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1. Ibid, p.65.
  2. Ibid, p.68.
  3. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.69. The reference to Minerva is interesting. It contains echoes of Hegel's celebrated view of the intelligence in an age of decline: "The Owl of Minerva flies only at dusk", a comment which, in its turn points to the English title of Gustav Regler's memoirs from left-wing politics in the 1930's: The Owl of Minerva.
  4. Ibid, p.35.
  5. Ibid, p.70.

The essence of Western man is contained in the personal, individual relationship between him and his God. The very notion of a personal God presupposes a strong individuality on the part of his followers. Yet within the Europe of the 1920's, and for the generation which came to intellectual maturity at this time, both sides of the relationship became endangered by the near-collapse of both poles. In an often-quoted passage, Ling remarks to A.D.:

"La réalité absolue a été pour vous Dieu, puis l'homme; mais l'homme est mort, après Dieu, et vous cherchez avec angoisse celui à qui vous pourriez confier son étrange héritage" (1).

For the notion of individualism, on which the Western concepts of God and Man were founded, is no longer valid and able to support them. It stands in complete contrast to the ideals of the East. As Ling points out, ironically:

"Je prends un divertissement exquis à votre chasse de l'individu, et à vos efforts pour retenir une capture si précieuse" (2),

for "la suprême beauté d'une civilisation affinée, c'est une attentive inculture du moi" (3). In the West, on the other hand, the ideal has been the cultivation of the self through action, and the imposition of the self on time and on the world. The failure of this self, however, comes from within, from a distance which has come to exist between the act and the emotion which produces it. The development of psychoanalytic theory in the early years of the twentieth century, and the work of Bergson and Proust in France, all of which indicate a growing understanding of the deeper, less knowable nature of human psychology, showed to the generation of the 1920's that the self and the act are not so simple nor so closely connected as was once supposed. By a curious irony, the

1. Ibid, p.174.

2. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.109.

3. Ibid, p.111. A statement which echoes strongly Barrès' Culte du moi. If Barrès, in this work, represents the fatal fascination with the individual, condemned by Malraux, his later discovery of Lorraine marks an escape from the individual to the collective unit, a journey to be followed by Malraux in his transition from the novels of the adventurer to those of political action. See: Pierre de Boisdeffre, Barrès parmi nous, Paris, Plon, 1969.



evolution of European thought, which concentrates more and more upon a glorification of the individual, reaches an impasse because of the failure of that very individual. Towards the end of the correspondence of La Tentation de l'Occident, the Frenchman A.D. writes to Ling, telling him how China has changed his outlook:

"Ce qu'elle a transformé d'abord en moi, c'est l'idée occidentale de l'homme. Je ne puis plus concevoir l'Homme indépendant de son intensité. Il suffit de lire un traité de psychologie pour sentir combien nos idées générales les plus pénétrantes se faussent lorsque nous voulons les employer à comprendre nos actes. Leur valeur disparaît à mesure que notre recherche avance, et, toujours, nous nous heurtons à l'incompréhensible, à l'absurde, c'est-à-dire au point extrême du particulier. La clef de cet absurde n'est-elle pas l'intensité toujours différente qui suit la vie? Elle est touchée par notre vie volontaire, connue, et notre vie plus celée, faite de rêveries et de sensations secrètes s'étendant dans l'absolue liberté" (1).

Thus, Europe having constructed a vast scheme of generalisations based upon a notion of the individual, finds that scheme broken by the unexpected depth and complexity of the individual. A.D. speaks lyrically of the role of the dream in European thought, of the possibility of each man to evoke for himself the atmosphere of Austerlitz, by which the dream becomes the basis for action and the framework of the will. Yet it is at this point, in the dream and the imagination, that the full absurdity of the modern European appears (2). The word "absurde" is used for the first time by Ling in this essay when he is discussing the European attitude to sexuality:

"L'homme qui veut aimer veut s'échapper, et cela est peu; mais l'homme ou la femme qui veulent être aimés, qui veulent perdre à un autre être, en leur faveur, sa soumission à cet accord me paraissent obéir à une nécessité si puissante que j'y trouve cette conviction: au centre de l'homme européen, dominant les grands mouvements de sa vie, est une absurdité essentielle" (3).

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1. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.168.
  2. In the context of the evocation of Austerlitz, it is interesting to note that the dream, in twentieth-century literature, appears frequently as an expression of nostalgia for a golden past, of happiness or heroism or innocence, which is now vanished and forever irretrievable. In this context, the last paragraph of F.Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby is illuminating.
  3. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.76.

The European attitude to sexuality is based not merely upon the notion of sexual conquest, exemplified by Ferral, but upon the need for one partner to conform to the imagination of the other and to be understood, indeed felt, through the powers of the imagination. But two people, especially two sexes, with their own imagination and their own hidden lives, are not to be so easily united. Essentially, conquest by the imagination is as empty and as doomed to failure as conquest by arms.

As Malraux writes his essay, he is sadly conscious that Europe is dying.

A.D. writes to Ling:

"Les Européens sont las d'eux-mêmes, las de leur individualisme qui s'écroule, las de leur exaltation. Ce qui les soutient est moins une pensée qu'une fine structure de négations. Capables d'agir jusqu'au sacrifice, mais pleins de dégoût devant la volonté d'action qui tord aujourd'hui leur race, ils voudraient chercher sous les actes de l'homme une raison d'être plus profonde" (1).

Later, as he writes from Tien-Tsin, he sees behind him the old Europe, with its will to action and conquest now a past virtue, whose very values are suspect and empty, and with a concentration upon the individual which has been accentuated to the point of absurdity. Not only is Western culture unable to satisfy the members of Malraux's generation, but it is now spreading its dangerous influence to those cultures which it touches. Especially, through colonial influence, it is beginning to pervert China. Christianity, the great formative influence upon Western individualism is now a dead force; the religion of man, built upon that same individualism, is equally in jeopardy. The will of Europe has become a valueless concept, existing only in past and empty glories. Externally it has been attacked by time, which has made of Europe a cemetery; internally it has been eaten away by the complexity and intensity of the individual whose force it was.

Nevertheless, the essay is not totally devoid of hope. In his discussion of Western art, Ling pauses in his despondent tour of the paintings in the Louvre and reflects:

1. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.139.

"Victorieuse de tant de chef-d'oeuvres, l'infatigable tristesse de l'Occident passe de salle en salle, tandis que le jeune génie de la Seine fait monter du fleuve un brouillard couleur de peuplier ..."(1)

The West may well have ossified its works of art in museums (2), but the "jeune génie de la Seine" may be seen to symbolise a new art, creative youthful and vigorous, which may point the way to a new regeneration.

More significant is the attitude of A.D. himself, particularly the very fact that he has felt it necessary to journey to China at all. His final letter from Tien-Tsin, whilst it contains a melancholic and final accusation of Western culture, for that very reason opens the way to a new possibility. A.D. rejects the state of Europe as it stands, with its dead conquerors irrevocably lost, and its complacent and futile preoccupation with the individual. But in one respect, that realisation and that rejection are able to form part of a new heroism and a new will. For Malraux, modern Western man is lost, but at least he knows the paths he should not take. He sees Europe with lucidity; he rejects the peace and the comfort offered by the Church; he rejects cowardice and he rejects submission. And in this way, A.D. follows the path that will be taken by Perken and Claude Vannec, and by Garine and the anonymous narrator of Les Conquérants. All of them reject Europe, the Europe of the 1920's, weighed down by the individualist legacy of the nineteenth century. Yet in order to accomplish that very rejection, they make use of one of the essential characteristics of European culture which is the will. Malraux is concerned here with salvaging one of the oldest weapons of the West, and with turning it against the very culture which produced it. The will to conquest becomes the will to rejection.

Criticism has shown a certain difficulty in the classification of La Tentation de l'Occident, uncertain whether to describe it as a novel or as

1. Ibid, p.124.

2. It is important to note that the role of the museum is present as a preoccupation at the very beginning of Malraux's work, though in this essay it is seen in a different light from that in which it appears in Le Musée imaginaire, where it symbolises fruitful unity.

an essay (1). Certainly the work is more than a conventional interchange of intellectual opinions, and joins that interest in abstraction and in personality found in Montesquieu's work. In *Ling*, in the Chinese traditionalist Wang-Loh, and especially in the character A.D., Malraux has been able to go beyond the mere statement of intellectual positions towards a human pathos produced by the situations of the characters. The final letter of A.D. is not merely an intellectual condemnation of Europe; rather, Malraux uses A.D. to express a tragic attitude, fully endowed with human anxiety and personal involvement. The work, therefore, achieves a depth and a melancholy unusual in this type of literary venture, and it is this which distinguishes it from the tone of other works dealing with a similar subject and written at the same time. The book is not a polemic, and thus is in a different category from Emmanuel Berl's Mort de la pensée bourgeoise; it is not a collection of reminiscences, and therefore differs from Daniel-Rops' Les Années tournantes (2)

More consistent with the latter trend of the literature in France in the late 1920's are Malraux's three further works on Europe and Western culture. Malraux does not return to the form of the fictionalised essay: instead, in order to express further his views of the position of his generation in Europe, he preferred the article, the essay and the review - short, incisive works which exhibit the polemical aspect of his writing, undoubtedly formed in some part by his experience with the newspaper Indochine, which he edited in Saigon with Paul Monin in 1925 and early 1926 (3).

The polemical use to which Malraux put the arguments contained obliquely in La Tentation de l'Occident is shown in the short article "André Malraux et l'Orient", which he begins with a short, almost epigrammatic condemnation of

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1. An extreme example of this view is found in Violet Horvath's André Malraux. The Human Adventure, New York, 1970, where she sees the book emphatically as a novel.
  2. Emmanuel Berl, Mort de la pensée bourgeoise, Paris, Grasset, 1929.  
Daniel-Rops, Les Années tournantes, Paris, Editions du Siècle, 1932.
  3. See: Walter G. Langlois, The Indochina Adventure, New York, Praeger, 1966.  
and Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas III, Paris, Grasset, 1969.

the West:

"Le caractère essentiel de notre civilisation, c'est d'être une civilisation fermée. Elle est sans but spirituel; elle nous contraint à l'action" (1).

Yet within this condemnation, there is contained, explicitly, the solution hinted at in La Tentation de l'Occident, the virtue of action. But in this case, the action will be a new one, uncorrupted by the individualism of the nineteenth century. Malraux is careful to underline the importance of action in European culture, and he points the contrast with the East in exactly the same terminology he uses in the essay. In the article, he writes of: "L'Extrême Oriental pour qui l'homme est un lieu bien plus qu'un moyen d'action" (2); in the essay, Ling speaks of the Chinese attitude to death in exactly the same way:

"C'est aussi la conscience de n'être pas limité à soi-même, d'être un lieu plutôt qu'un moyen d'action" (3).

For the European of Malraux's generation, there is no solution but action, and it is for this reason that the East, as a field of action, exerts such a strong attraction. He writes:

"Nous apportons, nous, une suite de besoins différents: chacune de nos victoires, de nos actions, en appelle d'autres et non le repos" (4).

The failure of the West lies, for Malraux in this essay, in the bankruptcy of nineteenth-century individualism. He remarks:

"Chaque génération apporte une image du monde créée par sa souffrance, par le besoin de vaincre sa souffrance: le premier présent de la nôtre, j'en ai la conviction que c'est la proclamation de la faillite de l'individualisme, de toutes les attitudes, de toutes les doctrines qui se justifient par l'exaltation du Moi" (5).

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1. "André Malraux et l'Orient".
  2. Ibid.
  3. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.49.
  4. "André Malraux et l'Orient".
  5. "André Malraux et l'Orient".

He continues, later:

"Toute la passion du XIXe siècle, attaché à l'homme, s'épanouit dans l'affirmation véhémement de l'éminence du Moi. Eh bien! cet homme et ce moi, édifiés sur tant de ruines, et qui nous dominent encore, que nous le voulions ou non, ne nous intéressent pas" (1)

The task of Malraux's generation is to break with the past, with the shaky and false individualism of the nineteenth century, a point which Malraux emphasises:

"Le fait capital de l'Occident à mes yeux, dans l'ordre intellectuel, c'est la nécessité où se trouve presque toute la jeunesse européenne de rompre avec l'effort d'un siècle, bien que sa sensibilité n'en soit pas complètement détachée" (2).

He is careful not to exaggerate the ease of this break with the past, for, in spite of a strong intention to reject the achievements of the nineteenth century in Europe, his generation has been indelibly marked by its influence:

"Échapper au rythme de notre civilisation et la regarder avec une curiosité désintéressée, il semble bien que ce soit la condamner. Elle n'a d'autre but que son développement matériel; elle ne nous propose que des raisons d'être les plus basses. Mais une telle condamnation est impossible: notre civilisation est dirigée par nos besoins, qu'ils soient ou non misérables" (3).

It is rather a question, as in La Tentation de l'Occident, of using one part of European civilisation to combat another, of pitting the values of action and will against the introspective individualism of the previous century, of going beyond the stage of decay and decline to a point where man will once again be in harmony with his surroundings and his aspirations. Malraux concludes his article with a modest exhortation towards a search for a new state of man:

"L'objet de la recherche de la jeunesse occidentale est une notion nouvelle de l'homme. L'Asie peut-elle nous apporter quelque enseignement? Je ne le crois pas. Plutôt une découverte particulière de ce que nous sommes. L'une des lois les plus justes de notre esprit, c'est que les tentations vaincues s'y transforment en connaissance" (4).

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. "André Malraux et l'Orient". In his preoccupation with "une notion nouvelle de l'homme", Malraux is firmly in the context of the avant-garde movements in Europe at the beginning of the century and onwards, for whom the notion of a "New Man", the German Expressionist "Neue Mensch", was central.

The article thus concludes by defining its context as strictly European; the young men of the West, tempted as they may be by the Orient, must seek a solution in the renewal of Western man on fundamentally Western terms. In contrast to La Tentation de l'Occident, "André Malraux et l'Orient" is written in a robust and vigorous style. It is a careful, considered rejection of the values of the West, with a strong and central faith in the values of action. Malraux writes:

"On a dit que nul ne peut agir sans foi. Je crois que l'absence de toute conviction, comme la conviction même, incite certains hommes à la passivité, et d'autres à l'action extrême" (1).

For Malraux, here, the West is to be renewed, initially by a will to negate the dead values of the past, and then by a will to act which, like Sartre's view of life, "commence de l'autre côté du désespoir" (2). Beyond disbelief, the only validity is to be found in the will.

In his preface to the collection of essays Ecrits, in which appeared "D'une jeunesse européenne", Daniel Halévy writes:

"A chaque temps il faut son système. On appelle cela reviser les valeurs. Et on fond des revues pour le dire. Le problème est le suivant: y a-t-il des valeurs humaines?" (3).

In this passage Halévy indicates the crisis of values which marked the years following the War, and which was expressed in the reviews published by the European avant-garde movements. The notion of human values, and the question of the universality of them, are discussed fully in Malraux's earlier essays on Europe, La Tentation de l'Occident and "André Malraux et l'Orient", but he takes up the problem again in his short contribution to this collection of essays, which included work by his friend Marcel Arland, and by Jean Grenier. He returns to the question of value, and particularly of the revision of Western values,

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1. "André Malraux et l'Orient".
  2. J-P Sartre, Les Mouches, in Théâtre, Paris, Gallimard, 1947, p.114.
  3. Daniel Halévy, Preface to Ecrits, Paris, Grasset, coll. "Les Cahiers verts", 1927, p.XIII. He raises here a preoccupation which becomes central to the debate in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg.

right at the beginning of the essay, where he writes:

"Des hommes veulent se délivrer de leur civilisation, comme d'autres veulent se délivrer du divin" (1).

The comparison of a man trying to escape from his civilisation with a man trying to escape his God is in no way gratuitous. In the two previous studies on Europe, Malraux has been at pains to indicate the importance of Christianity as the major formative influence upon Western individualism. In this essay, he develops this theme even more fully. The concept of the divine is at the origins of Western man:

"L'impossibilité de séparer de lui la notion du divin était déjà le caractère essentiel des cultures de la Grèce et de la Chrétienté" (2).

For Malraux, the effects of this Christian influence have been fatal, particularly when that influence became consolidated in the form of Roman Catholicism. He writes:

"Le catholicisme romain a créé une civilisation soumise; la rupture qui donne au monde moderne son aspect de hasard et d'abandon suit sa révolte contre cette soumission" (3).

Not only has the Catholic Church debased man, it has also served to alienate him. Malraux continues:

"Il semble que l'Eglise ait été préoccupé à détacher l'homme de lui-même" (4).

Malraux's notion of the will finds its origins in a rebellion, an act of revolt against the notion of a submissive man and of a disunified and alienated man. At the beginnings of his thought there is a quest for a dignified, autonomous man, for a man unified and in harmony with himself and his surroundings. The problem, however, becomes more complicated. Already Malraux has recognised the impossibility of a total rejection of a civilisation by a man who has, in large part, been formed by that civilisation. The problem is equally acute in the

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1. "D'une jeunesse européenne", p.133.
  2. Ibid, p.135.
  3. Ibid, p.135.
  4. Ibid, p.136.



matter of the revolt against Christianity. Malraux comments:

"Le grand présent chrétien est celui de la réalité occidentale; et notre première faiblesse vient de la nécessité où nous sommes de prendre connaissance du monde grâce à une "grille" chrétienne, nous qui ne sommes plus chrétiens" (1).

The rejection of Christianity by the West, particularly in the course of the nineteenth century, has led to a divinisation of man. Malraux writes:

"Un élan dirige tout le XIXe siècle .... il se manifeste d'abord par un goût extrême, une sorte de passion de l'Homme, qui prend en lui-même la place qu'il donnait à Dieu; et ensuite par l'individualisme"(2).

As Malraux has pointed out earlier, this individualism is destined to failure: above all, it must fail because it is an essentially static concept, requiring no dynamic qualities, no development, merely an ever-growing introspection and an ever-deepening narcissism. Yet man, especially the individual man, is a fatal object for such introspection, for his very complexities and depths and divergencies make it impossible for a universal system to be founded upon him. In other words, a humanism based upon individualism is absurd. And it is this notion of the Absurd which Malraux chooses to emphasise in this context:

"Nous voilà donc contraints à fonder notre notion de l'homme sur la conscience que prend chacun de soi-même. Dès lors, quels liens nous attachent à notre recherche? La première apparition de l'absurde se prépare" (3),

and which he repeats:

"Pousser à l'extrême la recherche de soi-même, en acceptant son propre monde, c'est tendre à l'absurde" (4).

It is essential to note that for Malraux here the Absurd is a concept which comes into being with the discovery of the depths and complexities of human psychology, and man's emphasis upon them. In La Tentation de l'Occident, Ling first discovers the essential absurdity in Western man in that man's sexual relationships, in his need to enter into the feelings of his partner and to make the partner lose his or her autonomy. In this essay the Absurd is

1. "D'une jeunesse européenne", p.137.
2. Ibid, p.138.
3. Ibid, p.139.
4. Ibid, p.144.

seen to appear in the extremes of a static view of the human personality.

It is for this reason that when Malraux seeks a new value with which to combat the decadence of Europe, he seeks it in essentially non-psychological elements, namely the act itself, the act freed from the psychological complexity that produces it. In common with the French Existentialists, Malraux is unable to accept psychoanalysis as a basis for his view of man and for a new solution.

As he points out in his review of Henri Massis' Défense de l'Occident:

"La psychologie ne fonde pas la morale, elle la détruit" (1). His use of the will, therefore, is not psychological, but metaphysical, and for him the act of will achieves its own ontological value. In literary terms, the rejection of psychology entails a reaction against the classic nineteenth-century novel, with its deep analysis of character. As a marginal note to Gaëtan Picon's study, Malraux par lui-même, Malraux writes:

"Le roman moderne est, à mes yeux, un moyen d'expression privilégié du tragique de l'homme, non une élucidation de l'individu" (2).

The nineteenth century in Europe produced, for Malraux, not only the death of God, with the ensuing fatal emphasis upon the individual, but a faith in materialism which was destined to the same failure. Malraux underlines this:

"Notre civilisation, depuis qu'elle a perdu l'espoir de trouver dans les sciences le sens du monde, est privée de tout but spirituel" (3).

Western civilisation has failed, therefore, in its attempts to find a substitute for the Christian God. And as the nineteenth century progresses, Europe has declined to a state of meaninglessness and decadence. Nevertheless, Malraux can see the possibility of regeneration:

"Au centre d'une civilisation dont l'individualisme le plus grossier fit la force, une nouvelle puissance s'éveille" (4).

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1. André Malraux, "Défense de l'Occident", par Henri Massis", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 165, 1927, p.818.
  2. Gaëtan Picon, Malraux par lui-même, Paris, Seuil, Coll. "Ecrivains de toujours", 1961, p.66.
  3. "D'une jeunesse européenne", p.145.
  4. "D'une jeunesse européenne", p.147.

The new power is to be found in the youth of Europe, in the generation, of which Malraux was a part, which was born in the early years of the century and which grew to adolescence during the First World War. This generation is marked above all by a sense of disappointment "semblable à celui qui suit les amours déçus" (1), a disappointment which is translated into a violent rejection of the past European tradition.

Yet, when Malraux writes of this new generation, it is not in terms of unquestioning praise. He comments:

"Cette génération éparse sur toutes les terres d'Europe, unie par une sorte de fraternité inconnue, que voyons-nous en elle? La volonté lucide de monter ses combats à défaut d'une doctrine; et il n'y a là que faiblesse et que crainte. Notre époque, où rodent encore tant d'échos, ne veut pas avouer sa pensée nihiliste, destructrice, foncièrement négative. Et une autre cause, plus voilée, pousse tous ceux qui, en Europe, ont découvert la vie au lendemain de la guerre, à interroger sourdement la pensée des plus grands d'entre eux" (2).

And he concludes his essay with an open question:

"A quel destin est donc vouée cette jeunesse violente, merveilleusement armée contre elle-même et délivrée de la basse vanité de nommer grandeur le dédain d'une vie à laquelle elle ne sait pas se lier?" (3).

That this generation has the will to reject its own culture is beyond doubt, but that very rejection has been accomplished at a price. Its act of negation is fundamentally nihilistic, produced as much by fear as by strength. It contains a disquieting ingredient of pure violence, and a more worrying inability to believe either in itself or in its fellows. This ambiguity is essential to Malraux's thought at this time, to his view of his own generation, and it prevents a total enthusiasm for it. In the recognition of this ambiguity, he differs markedly from the aggressive self-confidence of the avant-garde movements of the same period and earlier. For Malraux, the break with the past

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1. Ibid, p.147.

2. Ibid, p.148.

3. Ibid, p.153.

is by no means as simple as may be thought. His reference to the Christian "grille", through which modern, non-christian man must still see the world, brings into his thought an element of doubt and uncertainty which the avant-gardists lack and which is continued in his consideration of the act of breaking with the past. The generation of which he writes, whether it realises it or not, has failed to substitute a positive value for the values which it has overthrown. The act of rejection has a certain honesty and a certain dignity, but that same act renders this generation too easily incapable of belief, too easily capable of suspicion (1).

Nevertheless, this suspicion and this negation find a positive side in that they are refusals of the permanent, of those things which restrict and bind man. Malraux's generation rediscovers the Gidean virtue of "disponibilité", by which man will not accept his limitations but will constantly, by an effort of the will, attempt to surpass them (2). Of this aspect of his generation, Malraux writes:

"La jeunesse européenne est plus touchée par ce que le monde peut être que par ce qu'il est" (3),

thereby echoing his statement in "André Malraux et l'Orient" that "notre domaine me semble être surtout celui du possible". He continues further in his description of his generation by commenting:

"Elle veut voir en chaque homme l'interprète d'une réalité provisoire"(4),

1. The ambiguity present in Malraux's heroes' rejection of the past is seen particularly clearly in La Voie Royale, where Perken is by no means so consistent a character as he may appear. His will to action, his scorn of biography, his contempt for death, are all subtly undermined. The final pages of the novel particularly achieve their pathos in Perken's "mauvaise foi", his wilful self-deception in his clinging to life. A certain ambiguity would seem to lie at the heart of the will, and it is from this that the tragedy emanates.
2. Regarding the renewal of interest in Gide in the 1920's, Daniel-Rops writes: "Les Nourritures terrestres.... n'ont vraiment trouvé leur climat qu'aux environs de 1920, tandis que ce livre n'avait eu mieux succès lors de sa publication, vingt-cinq ans plus tôt" (Les Années tournantes, p.203).
3. "D'une jeunesse européenne", p.151.
4. Ibid, p.151.

a comment which represents a transposition into French terms of the Nietzschean virtue of "overcoming", by which the man of will, Nietzsche's Superman, cannot and must not accept the present, but must be in constant motion and tension towards an unattainable future. It is a rejection of order, and one of the major passions of the West; and it is, above all, a youthful rejection, for only youth is capable of "disponibilité", as Malraux writes:

"Vieillir, c'est aussi subir un ordre intérieur auquel peu d'hommes échappent" (1).

It is, finally, a new expression of the Romantic aspiration towards the unknown, crystallised in the last lines of Baudelaire's Le Voyage:

"Nous voulons, tant ce feu nous brûle le cerveau,  
Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe?  
Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!" (2).

Whereas the other three texts on Europe by Malraux use the East as a comparison with the decadence of Europe, and as a field of action for the new generation, "D'une jeunesse européenne" ignores the Orient in order to concentrate entirely upon the problems of the West. It constitutes Malraux's most systematic diagnosis of the ills of Europe which begin with Christianity and pass into the notion of individualism and the religion of man. It contains also the most perceptive critique of the generation which rose after the war to challenge those ills, and which was irrevocably marked by them. For this fact alone, the essay is important. It discerns at the very heart of the rebellion against the West a fundamental violence born of an inherent weakness and which may lead to nihilism. The will to negate, so vital to the renewal of Western man, and which plays such a large part in the article "André Malraux et l'Orient", is shown to be at the very least ambiguous,

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1. "D'une jeunesse européenne", p.149. This point throws some light upon Perken's growing preoccupation with the process of ageing. Illness, in Malraux's fictional work, may be said to fulfil the same function, in that, like age, it limits the freedom of man, and constitutes an interiorisation of the human condition.
  2. The fact that the search for the new, in Baudelaire, transcends ethical considerations of good and evil, looks forward to the way in which the will, in Malraux's work, searches for an absolute value which often contradicts a system of ethics.

containing many dangers. The will towards the possible, to the "disponible", is ill-defined, for the very reason that, at the time when Malraux was writing, his generation had had no opportunity to define it in action. It is the task before Malraux to define the search for the possible, and it is this which makes of the essays on Europe a starting-point for his fictional work. The problem is a constant one: Daniel Halévy's question regarding human values always recurs. Malraux's generation, and Malraux himself (1), had succeeded in rejecting the old values of nineteenth-century Europe: such a rejection required strength and will, but it remained to be seen whether, from such a rejection, more positive values could be unambiguously constructed.

Malraux's fourth and final consideration, at least in an exclusive manner, of the problem of his generation in Europe is contained in his review, written for the Nouvelle Revue Française, of Henri Massis' Défense de l'Occident. In contrast to "D'une jeunesse européenne", Malraux returns in this study necessarily to a consideration of the role of the East in its relationship to the West and its role in present European thought. The attitude of Massis is simple: he sees the East as a threat, both political and moral, to the security of Europe, a Europe which he hopes will be regenerated by a return to orthodox Catholicism. In spite of a radical divergence of views, Malraux and Massis agree on one central point: they both recognise that the current state of Europe and Western culture are unencouraging and in need of change. They differ in that, whereas Massis proposes change in the form of reaction, a return to the good, old order, Malraux sees this as impossible and undesirable. When writing of Massis' previous work, he comments:

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1. When Malraux writes of the inability of his generation to believe in itself totally, his own critique of this attitude must be seen as a hyper-conscious example of the same phenomenon.

"il représente et exalte, non point, comme il le dit, la notion de l'homme classique qui n'est qu'à demi en cause, mais bien toute notion fixe de l'homme" (1).

The enemies of Henri Massis are above all the representatives of relativism, particularly Renan and Gide. To these two "servants of Satan", as Malraux expresses it, Massis adds a third: "l'Asie, dernière expression, pour M. Massis, de l'esprit de désagrégation" (2).

The first danger which the East presents to the Europe of Massis is a political one: the rise of nationalism in the European colonies in Asia. Malraux's reply to this charge is significant. He recognises the fact of Asian nationalism, but sees as its cause the destruction, through European influence, of its traditional values - exactly the same problem as that which faces the West. He writes:

"La substitution des valeurs d'énergie persévérante aux valeurs spirituelles est la marque même des temps modernes. En détruisant ces valeurs spirituelles nous avons préparé, chez nous et au loin, le règne de la force et, en particulier, de la plus grande, celle qui dure. Elle se tournera contre nous, dit M. Massis. C'est, en effet, fort probable. Mais il s'agit là, comme chez nous, de la plus tragique fatalité du monde, et les propositions d'intervention armée n'y sauraient rien changer" (3).

But Massis sees beneath the danger of nationalism, the darker, insidious danger of Communism, and, again, Malraux's comment is revealing:

"Le danger ne semble pas très pressant. Que la 3e Internationale désire unir les Asiatiques contre les gouvernements capitalistes d'Europe et d'Amérique, cela est certain, mais nous la voyons partout en recul. Angora lui échappe, l'alliance des cinq est brisée et l'opposition de Chang-Kai-Shek aux communistes est certainement la défaite la plus grave qu'elle ait subie. Car notre civilisation apporte avec sa force son individualisme; elle organise l'Asie, oui, mais en factions opposées les unes aux autres; cela est fort sensible dans les milieux révolutionnaires d'Extrême-Orient" (4).

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1. André Malraux, "Défense de l'Occident, par Henri Massis", p.813.
  2. Ibid, p.814.
  3. "Défense de l'Occident, par Henri Massis", p.815.
  4. Ibid, p.815.

Already, in La Tentation de l'Occident, Malraux has shown, through the character Wang-Loh, the disastrous effects of Western influence upon China. In the East, as in Europe, the process of rebellion against the past (albeit, as in this case, a European colonial past) is frustrated by the legacy of individualism. Yet, as Malraux indicates in the novels on China, that individualism is necessary for a revolution to be accomplished. The continuing problem is that of transforming individualism into a new collectivism.

For Massis, the colonial question is subordinate to the moral danger to Europe represented by the East. And in this respect, Malraux makes an important distinction. For, as he points out, Massis is not dealing with Europe and Asia as sociological or anthropological units - he has supplied no documentation, and he shows no interest in detail. Rather, his Asia is a mythical one, as indeed it must be for any writer. Malraux comments:

"à vouloir parler de l'Asie on ne peut que créer un mythe, même avec beaucoup de notes au bas des pages" (1).

But, whether it possesses factual basis or not, it is the myth itself which is interesting. And it is the myth of Asia which Malraux himself has discussed in La Tentation de l'Occident and "André Malraux et l'Orient". On this point, Malraux and Massis differ only in the value which they accord to the myth of the East: for Massis, it is dangerous, to be rejected and combatted in favour of the only myth of the West; for Malraux, precisely because the myth of the West is no longer capable of inspiring meaningful action, the myth of the Orient is of vital importance.

For Massis, the myth of the West which he defends is still meaningful: it comprises the old values of "Personnalité, unité, stabilité, autorité, continuité" (2), all rooted in the static philosophy of French conservatism, in which immobility and submission are the chief factors. His enemy is a new attitude and a new state of mind, fostered by the myth of the East.

1. "Défense de l'Occident, par Henri Massis", p.816.

2. Ibid, p.816. Malraux is here quoting from Massis.



Malraux comments:

"Cet esprit, M.Massis le combat depuis le premier volume de ses jugements; il est difficile de lui donner un nom; esprit de connaissance (cette connaissance n'étant pas subordonnée), de recherche et de création par cette recherche même; bolshévisme intellectuel ne lui conviendrait pas mal, si nous lui étions assez opposés pour lui donner un qualificatif d'ordre moral. Il implique cette idée que la nature de l'homme est telle que toutes les expériences sont possibles" (1).

He continues:

"L'Asie, c'est un certain nombre de possibilités particulières" (2).

The dichotomy is one that Malraux has posed before, between the actual and the possible. Massis is the representative of the Europe of a static individualism, refusing change because change may transform the individual upon which his whole way of life is built. In opposition to this ideal, Malraux proposes the search for the possible, a heroic search which will in no way harm the personality, for:

"notre cerveau occidental est tel que de semblables tentations, d'elles-mêmes, s'y transforment en connaissance" (3).

What is endangered is not the individual personality, but a certain conception of it, exemplified by Henri Massis: the static, submissive personality constructed by the nineteenth-century in Europe. It is threatened by a danger from the East which Malraux hopefully accepts:

"Cherchons-nous à nous perdre? Non, mais à perdre certaines notions (en particulier celle de la personnalité telle<sup>qu'</sup>la présente M.Massis) qui nous semblent fausses, inacceptables, qui heurtent toutes les démarches de notre pensée" (4),

and he continues:

"La pensée européenne, dans le domaine le l'esprit, s'est toujours exprimée par la création de systèmes, c'est-à-dire d'allégories, de mythes cohérents. Elle travaille aujourd'hui à en construire un nouveau, et les plaidoyers sont sans force contre une recherche de cet ordre, qui dérive d'une nécessité" (5).

This need is produced by the unacceptable state of Europe:

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1. Ibid, pp.816-817.
  2. Ibid, p.817.
  3. "Défense de l'Occident", par Henri Massis", p.817.
  4. Ibid, p.817.
  5. Ibid, pp. 817-818

"Le monde moderne porte en lui-même, comme un cancer, son absence d'âme. Elle ne s'en délivrera pas: elle est impliquée par sa propre loi. Et il en sera ainsi jusqu'à ce qu'un appel collectif de l'âme tord les hommes; ce jour-là vacillera sans doute ce monde dans lequel nous vivons" (1).

The final emphasis upon a collective spiritual regeneration is significant, and looks forward to the preface to Le Temps du mépris. It elucidates further the doubts expressed in "D'une jeunesse européenne" regarding the nihilism of the new generation, and seeks a solution in a state as far removed as possible from the individualism of the nineteenth century. Henri Massis stands for static, individual values, in which man is alone or weighed down into submission by authority. Malraux looks ahead, on the contrary, to a dynamic man with a will to seek out the possible and who may herald a new era of spirituality in which man forms part of a collective way of life without being limited by it. For Malraux at this stage in his thought, the will is not a means towards the glorification of the individual, but towards a collective destiny.

In these four works on Europe, Malraux sees the will as an essential feature of Western culture. Its failure lies not only in the fact that the conquerors are now dead and irretrievable, but also in the way in which the Western concept of will tended too often towards order and fixity. From that fixity there was no exit save towards oblivion. The will which Malraux now proposes is one of "dépassement", of a continual becoming, a constant quest for the possible. Only in this way can the immobile, introspective individualism of the nineteenth century be overcome and a new notion of man be founded. The God of the West was a God of order, demanding submission: he could only die. The man of the nineteenth century was a man of order and fixity resting on a psychological quicksand from which there was no escape. The new man must, literally, become an adventurer, striving constantly for a new experience to be

1. Ibid, p.818.

assimilated into his consciousness and then surpassed (1). And the word adventurer implies chance. It is no coincidence that Perken and Garine use Pascalian gaming imagery to describe their purpose. To cast off the framework of stability and order and to enter the domain of the possible requires a great strength of will: it must not be accomplished through fear or weakness, but with courage, lucidity and firmness.

The reference, in La Tentation de l'Occident, to the new spirit of the Seine which exists in contrast to the order and sterility of the collection of works of art in the Louvre, may be interpreted as a remark in praise of the new artistic movements which grew up in the early years of the twentieth century and in the years following the First World War, and which opposed that same preoccupation with the individual which Malraux himself attacks. All the new avant-garde movements, German Expressionism, Futurism, Cubism, Dada and Surrealism propose, explicitly or implicitly, a new notion of man and a new notion of art. Like Malraux, they are not concerned with the elucidation of the individual psyche, but with a view of the individual as a dynamic, heroic being. It is in this intellectual and artistic context that Malraux's theoretical work on Europe must be examined.

Of the avant-garde movements, the first in chronology and in influence was Italian Futurism: its first manifesto was published by F.-T. Marinetti in Le Figaro, on February 20th 1909. In his Littérature Italienne Contemporaine, Benjamin Crémieux writes, not without a touch of irony:

1. It is interesting to note the constancy of the preoccupation with the assimilation of experience into consciousness. The notion of transformation of experience into consciousness is referred to in "André Malraux et l'Orient", and repeated, in almost identical phraseology in the review of Défense de l'Occident (p.817). The idea reaches its fullest expression in García's prescription for existence: "transformer en conscience une expérience aussi large que possible". The recurrence of the theme would appear to testify to a constant preoccupation, on Malraux's part, with intellectual and, indeed, aesthetic considerations.

"F.-T. Marinetti a, dans une certaine mesure, raison de proclamer - comme il le faisait récemment - que l'orphisme, le cubisme, le dadaïsme, le simultanéisme, la créationnisme, le surréalisme français, le rayonnisme russe, le vorticisme anglais, l'expressionnisme allemand, l'ultraïsme espagnol, le zénithisme yougoslave, l'imagisme anglo-saxon, bref toutes les écoles d'avant-garde dans le domaine littéraire ou plastique doivent depuis 1909 quelque chose au futurisme. Mais on pourrait aussi bien dire que le futurisme a été une des formes prises par un mouvement général ..." (1).

Marinetti's claims are extravagant: there was a general intellectual disorientation in Europe in the first years of the century, which grew into an aesthetic and more wide-spread revolt. Nevertheless, the movements which follow Futurism owe a great deal to it. It is Marinetti who is the most prominent of all the Futurist artists: he was an internationally-known artistic figure, and he was particularly familiar with the French literary milieu of the 1900's. He met Gide on two occasions, with indifferent results; André Salmon, who also knew Malraux, refers to Marinetti as: "le poète milanais, mon ami F.-T. Marinetti" (2); similarly, he knew Apollinaire, and the two discussed aspects of French and Italian Futurism; finally, Marinetti wrote much of his work in French. For these reasons, therefore, he is interesting for a study of Malraux's own reaction against nineteenth-century Europe.

The first Futurist Manifesto, written in 1909, opens with the description of a car journey, at night and at high speed:

"Et nous chassions, tels de jeunes lions, la Mort au pelage noir tacheté de croix pâles, qui filait devant nous" (3).

It is this exaltation of speed which constitutes one of the major characteristics of Futurism. As Professor James Joll points out:

"the main themes of the Futurist movement - violence, destruction, hatred of the past and its values, and, at the same time, intense excitement about the prospects of the new century that was just beginning, an awareness of the beauty of machines ... a realisation of the heightening of experience which new sensations of speed and mechanical power could give" (4).

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1. Benjamin Crémieux, Littérature italienne contemporaine, Paris, Kra, 1928, p.228.
  2. André Salmon, Souvenirs sans fin, II, Paris, Gallimard, 1956, pp.226-227.
  3. F.-T. Marinetti, "Manifeste du Futurisme", Le Figaro, 20th February 1909.
  4. James Joll, Three Intellectuals in Politics, New York, Harper Colophon Books, 1965, p.135.

In this passage, Professor Joll sums up many of the aspects contained in Malraux's own essays: the violent rejection of the past and the frenetic nihilism implicit in that rejection.

The experience of Marinetti's nocturnal car journey impels him to produce the Futurist Manifesto. He writes:

"Nous dictâmes nos premières volontés à tous les hommes vivants de la terre" (1),

and he goes on to indicate the major points of the Futurist program:

1. Nous voulons chanter l'amour du danger, l'habitude de l'énergie et de la témérité.
2. Les éléments essentiels de notre poésie seront le courage, l'audace et la révolte.
3. La littérature ayant jusqu'ici magnifié l'immobilité pensive, l'extase et le sommeil, nous voulons exalter le mouvement agressif, l'insomnie fiévreuse, le pas gymnastique, le saut périlleux, la gifle et le coup de poing.
4. Nous déclarons que la splendeur du monde s'est enrichie d'une beauté nouvelle: la beauté de la vitesse ...  
.....
7. Il n'y a pas de beauté que dans la lutte.
8. Nous sommes sur le promontoire extrême des siècles! .... A quoi bon regarder derrière nous, du moment qu'il nous faut défoncer les vantaux mystérieux de l'impossible? Le Temps et l'Espace sont morts hier.
9. Nous voulons glorifier la guerre - seule hygiène du monde - le militarisme, le patriotisme, le geste destructeur des anarchistes, les belles idées qui tuent, et le mépris de la femme.
10. Nous voulons démolir les musées, les bibliothèques, combattre le moralisme, le féminisme et toutes les lâchetés opportunistes et utilitaires" (2).

The Manifesto is thus a rejection of all values of immobility, particularly the way in which they are embodied in nineteenth-century culture. It is not only the museums which Marinetti scorns, but all that they represent - the past, artistic respectability, a form of intellectual establishment. Instead, Marinetti looks to the future, with the new element of speed which the twentieth century has acquired, a future deprived of the liberal tenets of the nineteenth century, and built upon a glorification of violence and courage (3).

1. F.-T. Marinetti, "Manifeste du Futurisme", p.9.
2. F.-T. Marinetti, "Manifeste du Futurisme", p.9.
3. The appreciation of violence, of the destruction of ethical categories, in aesthetic terms looks forward to the aesthetic nature of Malraux's concept of will, to his creation of "artist-adventurers".

The literary expression of this view is found at its clearest in Marinetti's novel, Mafarka le futuriste, published in Paris in 1909. The original version, like that of the Manifesto, was in French. The novel is set in a fairy-tale Africa, constructed probably from impressions that Marinetti received whilst reporting the Italian-Tunisian War. In an atmosphere and a style of an immensely sensuous, magical quality (1), Marinetti recounts the story of the young prince, Mafarka, who fights many battles and makes many conquests, and who finally strives for immortality by creating a mechanical son, who will embody all the values of courage and youth which Marinetti worships. The novel exalts the notion of speed, for it is speed which allows man to be in a continual state of becoming and overcoming. The values of the novel are ones of dynamism, of war, of a state of tension in which man is continually pitted against himself and his surroundings. It is for this reason that Marinetti's thought is profoundly anti-feminist. Whilst he has no objection to what he calls the "valeur animale" of woman (2), he reacts violently against her sentimental role (3). For he sees the love-relationship as an immobile one, a relationship of depth rather than dynamism: it is in complete contrast to the continual "overcoming" which is Marinetti's ideal.

But the major significance of the novel is to be found in Mafarka's creation of his "son" Gazourmak, and in the "discours futuriste" which he pronounces on his completion. He begins with an exaltation of youth:

"Je veux me surpasser en créant, avec le seul effort de mon coeur, une jeunesse plus radieuse que la mienne, une jeunesse immortelle" (4),

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1. The tone and atmosphere of Mafarka and Malraux's Royaume-Farfelu are similar. In Marinetti's work, scorpions figure as one of the obstacles which the warriors must overcome, and at one stage a battle is fought in which the enemy send against Mafarka's army a hoard of mad dogs.
  2. F.-T. Marinetti, Mafarka le futuriste, Paris, Sansot, 1909, p.VIII.
  3. In the same way, Baudelaire concentrates upon the physical aspects of woman, but distinguishes them from a spiritual quest in which they cannot but hinder him.
  4. F.-T. Marinetti, Mafarka le futuriste, p.208.

and he continues:

"Je vous enseigne à mépriser la mort, à vous nourrir de danger, à jouer votre vie, ainsi que vous le faites, pour une idée, pour un regard, pour un spectacle" (1).

He concludes:

"Vous devez croire en la puissance absolue et définitive de la volonté, qu'il faut cultiver, intensifier, en suivant une discipline cruelle, jusqu'au moment où elle jaillit hors de nos centres nerveux et s'élance par-delà les limites de nos muscles avec une force et une vitesse inconcevables" (2).

Marinetti's definition of the will is important. It is not merely a striving, an effort of perseverance, but rather an interior force, similar to Bergson's "élan vital", or Schopenhauer's understanding of the will. The Futurist ideal is the cultivation of this force, the gift of its freedom, a reaction against all the efforts of the nineteenth century in Europe to imprison it in order and in the past. This force requires a field of action: Marinetti glorifies war and battle. Above all, it implies a continual becoming: Mafarka, having created his son, is killed by him, for he can go no further. His death, and his continuation in the form of Gazourmak, the "New Man", expresses clearly the logical aspirations of the Futurist movement.

The concrete links between Malraux and Marinetti are difficult to establish. They would seem to lie in the fact that a large part of Marinetti's work appeared in French, and in his influence upon later avant-garde movements, particularly the Cubism of Apollinaire, or the painting of Fernand Léger, who provided the illustrations for Lunes en papier. There is a striking resemblance between the views on Europe and the West expressed in Malraux's early essays and those contained in Marinetti's work. This resemblance serves, if nothing else, to place Malraux in an artistic and intellectual context, where rebellion against the traditional beliefs of the West and the search for a solution in terms of a will which is both violent and aesthetic, are the primary characteristics.

Where an Italian influence is more concretely discernible is in the work, and particularly the life, of Gabriele D'Annunzio. But here, some distinction is necessary. In his book on Italian literature, Benjamin Crémieux is at pains

to indicate that there are two D'Annunzios: one an international figure, the other of specific importance for Italy. He writes:

"Le D'Annunzio "international" est une figure relativement simple et cela tient au fait que seuls ses romans et quelques-unes de ses pièces de théâtre sont connus hors d'Italie. D'Annunzio, pour les non-Italiens, est un égotiste de la lignée stendhalienne, qui, comme Barrès auquel on le compare souvent, après une période anarchique et esthétisante, s'est retourné vers sa terre et ses morts. Son action pendant la guerre, et après l'armistice à Fiume, complète sa figure. Une nature ardente et théâtrale servie par un don verbal extraordinaire, non sans quelque mauvais goût, un prince de la jeunesse qu'il faut comme ses pareils lire à dix-huit ans, tel apparaît D'Annunzio aux yeux de l'étranger" (1).

The Italian D'Annunzio is more complex, more rooted in Imperial Italy, and it would appear that, since Malraux does not read Italian, his interest was mainly in the first D'Annunzio, the writer who made an impact on France through his novels and plays translated into French, but, above all, through his life as a man of action.

The Futurists preserved an ambiguous attitude towards D'Annunzio. In one respect, as a disciple of Nietzsche, as a man of action, an enemy of the old European culture, he was admired; at the same time, he was too firmly rooted in that culture, there was too much of the individualist in him, too much sensuous decadence, for him to be accepted completely. He was a Janus-like figure in modern Italian literature, out of place in both those styles to which he pointed.

In his books, his work reflects, in a rich and extravagant style, a basic pessimism. Death is triumphant; in the field of human relationships there can be no real contact between men and women. Essentially, for D'Annunzio, woman is the enemy who must be overcome. Yet, it is in D'Annunzio's life, in his place in history as an artist-hero, in his legend, that the sources of Malraux's interest in him may be found. In a biography of D'Annunzio, Frances Winwar recounts that the writer's childhood heroes were Napoleon and Garibaldi. This taste for heroism is a combination for D'Annunzio of moral, metaphysical and aesthetic qualities. The hero and the man of action are, for him, not merely examples of

1. Benjamin Crémieux, Littérature italienne contemporaine, pp.143-144.



courage, but men of an artistic quality, for whom history is a theatrical setting. There is a strong strain of mythomania in D'Annunzio, exemplified by a hoax that he played on the Italian press, when he was a rising poet, when he claimed to be dead and enjoyed the pleasure of reading his own obituary notices (1).

Like the Futurists, D'Annunzio glorified the new ingredient of speed which the twentieth century had added to life. He made his first aeroplane-flight in September 1909, and was deeply impressed by the experience (2). Again, like the Futurists, he came to glorify war as a salutary exercise, capable of providing the finest context in which man could act, and he joined with them in opposing Italian neutrality during the First World War. As Frances Winwar remarks:

"D'Annunzio fretted at what he thought to be a shameful peace. Europe had grown sick and decrepit, burdened by the ancient wrongs that could not now be set right. From the sanative wounds of war he saw a new Europe arising" (3).

In this war, from which would be born a new Europe, D'Annunzio participated, despite the fact that by 1915 he was middle-aged, and was wounded, losing the sight of one eye. This adventurous man of the will, with the patch over one eye, is similar to Grabot, in La Voie Royale. D'Annunzio's most spectacular exploit during the war was a dangerous flight over Trieste in order to drop leaflets, an experience about which he later enthused in the book Nothurno:

"There is nowhere in the world today a nobler bond than this tacit pact that makes of two lives and two wings a single fleetness, a single prowess, a single death" (4).

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1. In the context of D'Annunzio's mythomania, a trait which links him to Clappique, it is useful to recall a remark by Barrès on D'Annunzio's speeches in favour of Italian intervention in the World War: "He is preparing a magnificent autobiography" (Quoted in Frances Winwar, Wings of Fire, London, Alvin Redman, 1956, p.271). Malraux, in Perken and Garine, shows an interest in the inauthentic aspect of biography.
  2. Enthusiasm for aviation, as a symbol of the new century, was widespread as a theme in avant-garde literature. Apollinaire's lines, in Zone:  
 "C'est le Christ qui monte au ciel mieux que les aviateurs  
 Il détient le record du monde pour la hauteur".  
 reflect this interest.
  3. Frances Winwar, Wings of Fire, p.272.
  4. Frances Winwar, Wings of Fire, p.274. A statement which looks forward to the "fraternité" experienced by Kassner and the pilot, in Le Temps du mépris, and by the aviators of L'Espoir.

But the event for which he received international fame came after the war, in 1919, when D'Annunzio, angered by the failure of the Versailles Conference to restore to Italy the lands in Austrian possession, marched with a band of followers, his "legionnaires", on the port of Fiume and captured it. For 16 months, from September 12th 1919 until December 29th 1921, D'Annunzio governed the city as Regent in a manner of lavishness and ceremony which was to set the pattern for Mussolini and Italian fascism. He left only when it became obvious that the city could hold out no longer.

One aspect of D'Annunzio's life after the Fiume episode is of significance. He lived in retirement, possibly virtual house-arrest, at Cargnacco, and spent much of his time constructing a huge mausoleum, the Vittoriale, to commemorate the Italian war dead, his own followers of Fiume, and in which he himself would be buried. In this way, D'Annunzio's life fused into art and its strivings for immortality.

Malraux's knowledge of D'Annunzio and his interest in him are well-attested. D'Annunzio was, after all, a writer with a large European reputation, enhanced by the Fiume episode, which was reported widely in the French press and literary journals. But Malraux's interest would appear to be deeper. In the first volume of his Mémoire brisée, Nino Frank, who edited the review .900, and later Bifur, to which Malraux gave the "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", writes of one of his first encounters with Malraux:

"Je me souviens, au début de notre commerce, de son avidité de détails à propos de D'Annunzio, poète et capitaine d'aventure, chef d'état même" (1).

This encounter would have occurred in 1926, when Frank and Malraux first met at the house of Ivan Goll. Frank also recounts a conversation, which took place in 1956 or 1957, in which Malraux sees D'Annunzio as a figure of the past. He complains:

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1. Nino Frank, Mémoire brisée, I, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1967, p.292.

"Votre Garibaldi, votre D'Annunzio, pure rigolade aujourd'hui: quand vous aurez réuni deux cents hommes et des armes, on vous arrêtera dès votre arrivée à la gare. L'aventure n'existe plus qu'aux niveaux des gouvernements" (1),

a comment which sheds light upon Malraux's entry into governmental politics after the experience, unrepeatable, of the Résistance. A final indication of an interest in D'Annunzio prior to the writing of the essays on Europe is to be found in a half-humorous remark by Malraux, recounted in the second volume of Clara Malraux's mémoires. She recalls how, during the couple's imprisonment in Indochina, following the attempted theft of statues in late 1923, Malraux attempted to encourage her by saying:

"Il ne faut pas vous désespérer, je finirai bien par être Gabriele D'Annunzio" (2).

An examination of Italy, therefore, indicates a similarity between Malraux's views on Europe and those expressed by the Futurists, which concerns the overthrow of the old Europe by a cult, aesthetic in nature, of violence and the will. It provides, in addition, in the person of D'Annunzio, an example of that aesthetic will: the artist-conqueror.

Malraux's contact with Futurism and D'Annunzio was undoubtedly limited by his inability to speak Italian. The same limitation applies to his relationship with Expressionism, in Germany, but in this case it is largely mitigated by the fact that Clara Malraux spoke fluent German and read extensively in modern German literature, and by Malraux's frequentation of Ivan and Claire Goll, who were similarly conversant with modern trends in Germany. A further factor is Malraux's contact with the group surrounding the review Action, many of whom were German (3). Finally, Expressionism was represented widely in the field of the visual arts, whereas Futurism was less successful in the visual medium, and therefore coincided with Malraux's

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1. Ibid, p.286.
  2. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, II, Nos Vingt ans, Paris, Grasset, 1966, p.191.
  3. For further details of Malraux's contacts with German Expressionism, see André Vandegans, La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux, pp.155-156.

continuing interest in art.

The major theoretician of Expressionism, Wilhelm Worringer, attempts to define a true basis for Northern European art, distinguishing it from Classical or Oriental art. In his two theses: Abstraktion und Einfühlung, and Formproblem des Gothik, written in 1909 and 1912 respectively, he formulated the proposition that, whereas classical art depended upon a harmony between human action and the physical world, Northern art was bound to transform reality. He writes, in Formproblem des Gothik:

"The need for Northern man for activity, which is precluded from being translated into a clear knowledge of actuality and which is intensified for lack of this natural solution, finally disburdens itself in an unhealthy play of fantasy. Actuality, which the Gothic man could not transform into naturalness by clear-sighted knowledge, was overpowered by this intensified play of fantasy and transformed into a spectrally heightened and distorted reality" (1).

Thus, Northern man, European man, is to be defined by his need for activity, and by his inability to accept his surroundings, his will to transform them, albeit into fantasy. As with Marinetti, that essence of European man which he calls will, and which Worringer calls the need for activity, is an interior force, demanding expression and a field of action.

The practical effect of this theory was to provide a justification for a new form of art, which was able to reject the art of the nineteenth century. In painting, this implied a rejection of Impressionism, and an importation into Germany of the style of French Fauvism. The style of Expressionist painting is intensely individual and personal, and for that very reason it tends to turn away from individual elucidation towards abstraction. Expressionism as a movement is concerned with a generalised sense of disorientation, not a personal psychological one.

In literature, Expressionism constitutes a reaction against Naturalism, and hence against the individualism of the nineteenth-century novel.

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1. Wilhelm Worringer, Form in Gothic, translated by Herbert Read, London, 1927. Quoted in Herbert Read, A Concise History of Modern Painting, London, Thames and Hudson, 1959, p.54.

Expressionist literature is not concerned with the individual man, rather with those parts of him which are common to all men and which constitute his fate. It is perhaps for this reason, the movement's tendency towards abstraction, that it was at its happiest in the theatre, whose medium permitted a greater depersonalisation and where realism was able to be set aside in favour of personal expression.

The Expressionists were, above all, concerned with the value of man, particularly man in modern society. There is little sense in their work of the enthusiasm of the Futurists for the technical advances of the twentieth century. Machines appear in their work, as they must, for they make up the world of modern man; but all too often they are there to frustrate and debase man rather than to allow him to strive for the possible.

In addition, unlike the Futurists, the Expressionists were not universally in favour of war. Some did support the First World War, seeing in it values of regeneration; others, like Georg Kaiser, opposed it as the ultimate act of human barbarity, which was to be overcome before the new man could appear. For, overriding both attitudes to the war, there is a search for the renewal of man, be it found in the blood of war or the dignity of peace, the rejection of cowardice or the rejection of barbarity. The phrase: "das neue Mensch" recurs in Expressionist literature: it is their constant hope that the old Western man will die, and that from his ashes a new man will arise (1).

In one sense, the most representative work of Expressionist drama is by a man who can but barely be called an Expressionist, Hugo von Hoffmansthal. Nevertheless, in Hoffmansthal's play, Der Turm, are contained the principal elements of Expressionism. The play takes place in an unidentified past, torn by constant barbaric wars. In a tower in the countryside, the Prince of

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1. It was this ingredient in Expressionism which prompted some of its adherents, notably Brecht, to join the Communist Party in the hope of achieving renewal of man by political means. Malraux's preoccupation with Soviet Communism in the 1930's, particularly his speeches at the writers' congresses of 1934, 1935 and 1936, must be seen, in part, in the same context.

the land is kept a prisoner from his birth, in order that the corruption and violence around him will not touch him. The attempt to keep him pure fails, for violence cannot be forever locked out; and the land prepares again to be torn by war when salvation arrives in the form of a children's army, with a child-king at their head. The "Kinderkönig" has appeared. In this play, with its anxiety and its gloom, its violation even of purity and dreams, the New Man arrives in the person of the "Kinderkönig", who will establish a new order and a new notion of man (1).

Although Expressionism, in its painting, extends beyond the borders of Germany, with the Norwegian Edvard Munch, the Dane Emile Nolde and the Belgian James Ensor, in literature it tended to be restricted to the German language. In 1915 and 1916, however, the Dada movement grew up in Zurich, which, because of its neutrality, attracted a large international population. The movement was sensitive to the avant-garde movements preceding it: it drew upon Cubism and Expressionism, but especially from Futurism, and Marinetti was in close contact with the movement.

Like Expressionism and Futurism, Dada was based upon a rejection of the achievements of the nineteenth century in Europe. Its particular enemy was Naturalism. In his study of the history of modern painting, Herbert Read quotes from a book by Richard Huelsenbeck, one of the founders of the movement, who writes:

"Naturalism was a psychological penetration of the motives of the bourgeois, in whom we saw our mortal enemy, and psychological penetration, despite all efforts at resistance, brings an identification with the various precepts of bourgeois morality" (2).

Such a statement places Dada on a self-consciously political plane; aesthetically,

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1. Hoffmansthal wrote two versions of the play. In the second version, written when the author had grown more pessimistic, there is no "Kinderkönig", and no resultant salvation.
  2. Richard Huelsenbeck, En avant Dada: die Geschichte des Dadaismus, quoted in Herbert Read, A Concise History of Modern Painting, p.117.

however, it came to imply a rejection of all individual psychological analysis in favour of expression and abstraction. Its emphasis on rejection and its anarchic qualities also render it perhaps the most negative and least permanent of the avant-garde movements. Herbert Read comments:

"From the beginning Dada, inheriting the rhetorical propaganda of Marinetti, had claimed to be "activist", and this in effect meant an attempt to shake off the dead-weight of all ancient traditions, social and artistic, rather than a positive attempt to create a new style in art. In the background was wide social unrest, war fever, war itself, and then the Russian Revolution. Anarchists rather than socialists, proto-fascists in some cases, the Dadaists adopted Bakunin's slogan: destruction is also creation!" (1).

It is this negative, almost nihilistic aspect of Dada which prevents Malraux from according it his full support, and which is connected to his distrust of anarchists in his discussion of political questions. The texts on Europe, in which he indicates the unhealthy nature of post-war nihilism in the avant-garde movements, must be seen as a reference, at least in part, to Dada.

Yet Malraux's attitude to Dada would appear to have been ambiguous. In La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux, André Vandegans refers to a reminiscence by André Germain, who saw Malraux at a Dadaist meeting, engaged in writing a collective play, in approximately the year 1920 (2).

Vandegans comments:

"Il aura même trouvé valable la démarche du Dadaïsme dans la mesure où celui-ci entendait en finir avec les persistances d'un passé médiocre",

but is careful to add:

"le Dadaïsme lui parut bientôt trop bruyant, gesticulant et vaticinant. Au reste, rien de commun entre l'individualisme nihiliste des dadaes et le souci dont Malraux, déjà, témoigne de sauver la personne" (3).

It remains essential, for Malraux, that the will to overthrow the past should

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1. Herbert Read, A Concise History of Modern Painting, p.119.
  2. André Germain, La Bourgeoisie qui brûle, Paris, Sun, 1951, "quoted in André Vandegans, La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux, p.45. Malraux's attendance at Dadaist meetings is disputed by Clara Malraux in her mémoires, but it may be assumed that she is not referring to the period before her meeting with Malraux.
  3. André Vandegans, La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux, p.45. Vandegans also draws attention to the fact that, in Clara Malraux's novel, Portrait de Grisélidis, the character inspired by Malraux, Roger Perrouin, expresses a belief in the validity of Dada.

not be confused with a will to anarchy and nihilism, nor with a rejection of all values of art, an aspect which prompts Clara Malraux to comment, of the immediate post-war period:

"Détruire avait rarement semblé aussi nécessaire. A ce jeu, le dadaïsme nous avait précédés, mais qu'il voulut supprimer l'art avec ses moyens même, ôtait quelque peu de son poids à nos yeux" (1).

In the same way that Malraux distrusts political anarchism, he refuses to accept a total aesthetic anarchism, by which all artistic values will be overthrown in the name of a rejection of a past culture. There is a constant sentiment in Malraux that the will cannot act in isolation from its cultural context, that the best that it can do is to approach its culture selectively, using its valid elements against those which are false.

The Surrealist movement in France has its origins in Dada, incorporating some of the earlier movement's members, and attempts to create a positive philosophy from the negativity of Dada. Like Dada, it continues the process of the rejection of the claustrophobic rationalist atmosphere of European culture at the end of the nineteenth century. Such an ambition should have conformed to Malraux's own aspirations, and yet, whereas in the cases of Expressionism and Dada he felt interest and a certain sympathy, Surrealism seems to have provoked in him at best a lively irritation. As Clara Malraux comments, of the Surrealists:

"même leur univers géographique ne recouvrait pas le nôtre, mon compagnon ni moi n'appréciant les séjours dans les cafés" (2).

Of all the avant-garde movements, it is Surrealism to which Malraux appears the most opposed.

And yet, superficially, there is a great similarity between the views expressed by the Surrealists and the views of Malraux himself. In André Breton et les données fondamentales du surréalisme, M. Carrouges writes: "Le

1. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, II, Nos Vingt ans, p.63.
2. Ibid, p.226.



Surréalisme est avant tout une immense force de rupture" (1), and in the "Manifeste" of 1924, Breton claims:

"Le procès de l'attitude réaliste demande à être instruit, après le procès de l'attitude matérialiste" (2).

This rejection of preceding attitudes follows the same course as in the case of Malraux, an attraction towards the East. It was this attraction which was attacked by Drieu la Rochelle in an article in the Nouvelle Revue Française in August 1925, where he replied to a "Lettre ouverte à M. Paul Claudel", signed by Aragon, Breton, Artaud, and other Surrealists. In his article, Drieu quotes from this letter:

"Nous souhaitons de toutes nos forces que les révolutions, les guerres et les insurrections coloniales viennent anéantir cette civilisation occidentale dont vous défendez jusqu'en Orient la vermine où nous appelons cette destruction comme l'état de choses le moins inacceptable pour l'esprit" (3),

an argument which differs little from that used in Malraux's review of Henri Massis' Défense de l'Occident. What irritates Drieu is their facile acceptance of the East as a ready-made solution for the problems of Europe, a position dismissed by Malraux, in "André Malraux et l'Orient", in his assertion that the East can, at the most, serve as a vantage-point from which to see Europe. Despite this acceptance of the East as a panacea (4), however, the Surrealists' aims coincide fully with the aspirations of the new European generation, as Drieu la Rochelle himself admits:

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1. M. Carrouges, André Breton et les données fondamentales du Surréalisme, Paris, Gallimard, 1950, p.8.
  2. André Breton, "Manifeste du Surréalisme", in Manifestes, Paris, J-J Pauvert, 1962, p.18.
  3. "Lettre ouverte à M. Paul Claudel", quoted in Drieu la Rochelle, "La véritable erreur des Surréalistes", Nouvelle Revue Française, 143, 1925, p.166.
  4. The role of the East as a solution to the ills of the West is a recurrent one; recent manifestations include the American "Beat" generation, exemplified by the work of Jack Kerouac, and the later "Hippies".

"vous qui, les premiers en Europe, avez voulu rompre une des chaînes les plus rouillées, celle de la littérature, ce résidu durci des plus nobles exercices humains!" (1).

The Surrealists, in common with Malraux and Drieu la Rochelle, work at a rejection of the past and the creation of freedom, in life as in literature.

It is not in their aims that the Surrealists differ from Malraux, rather it is in the method by which they proposed to break with the past. Their introduction of a positive element into the anarchic nihilism of Dada is accomplished, not on the basis of dynamic values, but through a penetration and expression of the unconscious. As Breton writes in the "Manifeste": "L'imagination est peut-être sur le point de prendre ses droits" (2). He goes on to ask:

"Le rêve ne peut-il être appliqué, lui aussi, à la résolution des questions fondamentales de la vie?" (3).

But Breton's understanding of the "rêve" is very different from that of Malraux. In La Tentation de l'Occident, Malraux sees the dream, in the form of the legend of Austerlitz, as the very impetus to action, the domain of a possibility to be conquered. And it is the possible which is the field of action for the will. Yet, for Breton, the possible is to be avoided. He writes:

"L'esprit de l'homme qui rêve se satisfait pleinement de ce qui arrive. L'angoissante question de la possibilité ne se pose plus" (4).

For Breton, therefore, the dream is in no way a call to action in itself; it cannot be a context for the will. Rather, it is the element of man which contains his very essence. Surrealism thus tends towards a static penetration of what exists in man already: it is essential rather than existential. And in its notion of the penetration of the static essence of man, it owes much to

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1. Drieu la Rochelle, "La véritable erreur des Surréalistes", p.170.
  2. André Breton, "Manifeste du Surréalisme", p.23.
  3. Ibid, p.25.
  4. Ibid, p.26.

the development of psychoanalytic theory, a theory which, for Malraux, as the culmination of individualism, is the entrance to the Absurd. Malraux's rejection of psychoanalysis is contained implicitly in the essays on Europe, and expressed explicitly in his interview with Trotsky, in 1934, where he describes Freud as "un philosophe désastreux" (1). Breton, on the other hand, freely admits the debt which Surrealism owes to Freud (2), and makes ample use of the concepts and tools of psychoanalysis, such as the relaxation of the conscious mind in a passive state, and jokes and word-associations to reveal the unconscious. Thus, Breton can arrive at his definition of Surrealism:

"SURREALISME, n.m. Automatisme psychique pur par lequel on se propose d'exprimer, soit verbalement, soit par écrit, soit de toute autre manière, le fonctionnement réel de la pensée. Dictée de la pensée, en l'absence de tout contrôle exercé par la raison, en dehors de toute préoccupation esthétique ou morale ..." (3).

His major precept for automatic writing is:

"Placez-vous dans l'état le plus passif, ou réceptif, que vous pouvez"(4),

and he describes Surrealism in terms of drugs:

"Tout porte à croire qu'il agit sur l'esprit à la manière des stupéfiants" (5),

quoting Baudelaire: "Car la volonté n'a plus de force et ne gomme plus les facultés" (6).

The very theory of Surrealism, therefore, is such that it runs contrary to any philosophy based upon the will, a point summed up by M.Carrouges:

1. André Malraux, "Trotsky", in *Marianne*, 25th April 1934.
2. André Breton, "Manifeste du Surréalisme", pp.36-37.
3. André Breton, "Manifeste du Surréalisme", p.40. It is interesting that the avant-garde movements, in attacking the philosophy of the nineteenth century, reject its ethical system as well. It remains to be seen to what extent a metaphysical and aesthetic revolt against the past can create a new system of ethics or, indeed, possess ethical value at all.
4. Ibid, p.44.
5. Ibid, p.51.
6. Ibid, p.51.

"Dès 1919, Breton avait été frappé par les paroles qu'on entend parfois venir de l'intérieur de soi-même, et sans que la volonté y soit pour rien, surtout aux lisières du sommeil" (1).

The real field of Surrealism is the interior of the personality, that part of man which can only be reached in the most unguarded moments, when lucidity and will are relaxed. It is a process which implies an acceptance of what already exists and an understanding of it (2). In this way, despite a misleading similarity of style in works such as Breton's Poisson soluble and Malraux's Lunes en papier, the motivation and the aesthetic procedure which created the works are widely different. In spite of their pretensions to a rejection of the European past, the Surrealists are destined to become a part of that careful cultivation of the personality which is a distinguishing feature of that past.

Malraux writes at the end of La Tentation de l'Occident:

"Il n'est pas d'idéal auquel nous puissions nous sacrifier, car de tous nous connaissons les mensonges, nous qui ne savons point ce qu'est la vérité" (3).

If his rejection of the old Europe falls within the context of the early twentieth-century avant-garde movements, his pessimism with regard to the philosophical state of the West is part of a context as well. The feeling of a general spiritual and intellectual disorientation in Europe in the years following the First World War is confirmed by many writers of the time. In an article for the Nouvelle Revue Française, in September 1923, entitled "Le Bilan d'une enquête", Benjamin Crémieux discussed an enquiry by Henri Rambaud and Pierre Verillon: "L'Enquête sur les maîtres de la jeune littérature", and

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1. M. Carrouges, André Breton et les données fondamentales du Surréalisme, p.15. The reference to the border-lines of sleep echoes the first pages of Proust's A la Recherche du temps perdu, and there too, the hero suffers from a strangely paralysed will.
  2. Thus, Surrealist works such as Breton's Nadja and Aragon's Le Paysan de Paris are based upon a renewed and heightened understanding of the present, rather than an attempt to change it.
  3. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.216.

concluded:

"Un nouveau "mal du siècle" menace notre littérature de demain, se met à la traverse de toutes les grandes entreprises qui en 1922 se faisaient jour" (1).

His term, "nouveau mal du siècle" was taken up by Marcel Arland in an essay for the Nouvelle Revue Française in the following year, in which he carried out an extensive analysis of the phenomenon, an analysis which he developed in an article entitled "Essai", published in 1925 (2). This disorientation is reflected similarly by Daniel-Rops who, writing in 1932 and looking back on the years immediately after the War, calls the period "Les Années tournantes", thus signifying that in some way a change in direction of the thought and spiritual life of the new generation was achieved. At the same time, the notion of a widespread cultural and intellectual crisis is expressed by Paul Valéry, in the letters and speeches of 1922 which go to make up "La Crise de l'esprit" (3), which begins with the words:

"Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles" (4),

and continues, gloomily:

"Elam, Ninive, Babylone étaient de beaux noms vagues, et la ruine totale de ces mondes avait aussi peu de signification pour nous que leur existence même. Mais France, Angleterre, Russie ... ce seraient aussi de beaux noms" (5).

These writers are united in seeing in the failure of the legacy of the nineteenth century one of the major causes for this depression and disorientation. For them, the nineteenth century meant materialism and individualism, both of which, as concepts, had lost their validity. Daniel-Rops writes:

1. Benjamin Crémieux, "Le Bilan d'une enquête", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 120, 1923, p.293.
2. Marcel Arland, "Sur un nouveau mal du siècle", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 21, 1924; "Essai", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 147, 1925.
3. Paul Valéry, "La crise de l'esprit", in Variété I, Paris, Gallimard, 1924.
4. Ibid, p.11.
5. Ibid, p.12.

"L'individualisme, fondement du monde matériel, semble glorifier l'homme, alors qu'en fait il le mutile, le rabaisse, le ramène à un schéma mécanique dont le moteur est la sensation" (1).

And, in his Notes pour comprendre le siècle, Drieu la Rochelle, like Daniel-Rops looking back at the 1920's, prophesies: "Le XXe siècle enterrera la vaine doctrine du Progrès" (2), for

"La raison des rationalistes, c'est une brusque réduction des possibilités humaines" (3).

To the more general causes of this spiritual and intellectual crises of the 1920's, which lie in the failure of the intellectual constructs of the nineteenth century, may be added the multiple effects of the First World War upon the generation born at the beginning of the twentieth century and which grew to consciousness in a war-time environment. The war, in itself, came to symbolise the end of an era, the culmination of a process of decay in Western civilisation (4). In addition, those Europeans who reached adolescence during the war were brought up on war-time values; their education was based on the assumption that they too would soon be going to the front to fight, an assumption which became redundant with the Armistice. Marcel Arland writes:

"Je suis devenu un adolescent pendant la guerre, je grandissais au milieu de la douleur d'un monde; et la mort, je ne me la figurais pas sous un appareil mythologique, mais je la sentais gonfler chaque jour un peu plus la terre sur laquelle je marchais. Je me préparais moi-même à la souffrance, et je fis alors des réserves d'amertume pour ma vie entière. La paix vint, on ne mourrait plus, on ne souffrait plus; je me trouvai désorienté" (5).

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1. Daniel-Rops, Les Années tournantes, Paris, Ed. du Siècle, 1932, p.24.
  2. Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, Paris, Gallimard, 1941, p.28.
  3. Ibid, p.60.
  4. The feeling of the end of an era is illustrated by the case of Spengler's Decline of the West which, written before the war, found its climate in the years following it, when the notion of the decline of the civilisation was no longer merely theoretical.
  5. Marcel Arland, "Essai", p.663.

Yet, even before the end of the war, with its abrupt change of values, the war had provided its own deep disappointment which lay in the contrast between youthful dreams of heroism and the banal facts of the trenches.

Daniel-Rops insists:

"nous passions de l'enthousiasme qui, souvent, nous soulevait, à la penser d'y aller à notre tour, d'être homme à l'âge où d'autres ne sont que des enfants, comme dit le vieux Jules Verne, à un désespoir mal défini. Nous voyions les soldats qui revenaient en permission, nous avions tous lu, en cachette, Le Feu de Barbusse: alors, ce qui nous attendait était donc si décevant?" (1).

The war-experience was therefore crucial to the formation of the new European generation, both in the disappointment which lay at its very heart, and in the fact that it was a war which had been missed, a war which had left a whole generation morally and philosophically equipped for it, but with nowhere to fight. The analogy between the disorientation of this generation and that of the first French Romantics, particularly Vigny, is very strong, and underlined by Arland's very use of the term "mal du siècle". In both cases, a profound crisis of values occurs, with no object of spiritual satisfaction strong enough to succeed.

The reaction of Marcel Arland, Crémieux, Daniel-Rops and Drieu la Rochelle is to break with the immediate past. Their writings express a generalised feeling that values can no longer be found in the tradition of Europe in the nineteenth century, and that they must be sought elsewhere. This feeling is accompanied, in the case of Crémieux and Drieu la Rochelle, by a nostalgia for the vigorous unity of the Middle Ages. Crémieux searches for

"un art robuste et clair, accessible à tous, barbare peut-être à la façon des cathédrales du moyen âge, mais grandiose, imposant, irrésistible" (2).

Drieu la Rochelle aspires towards a society which, like that of the Middle Ages which he sees exemplified in the "Chansons de geste", can accept heroism and strength as positive values and not as threats.

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1. Daniel-Rops, Les Années tournantes, p.189.
  2. Benjamin Crémieux, "Le Bilan d'une enquête", p.189.

The new notion of man which is sought by these writers is above all a spiritual, non-materialist one; they look for a philosophy which will recognise the eternal and universal aspects of man, and will allow him a free passage towards the creation of his own personality. They refuse limitation, and it is for this reason that the nineteenth-century doctrines of rationalism and determinism are so strongly rejected. In this context, psychoanalysis, which Malraux attacks as a journey towards the unknowable, and hence absurd, is seen as one of the legacies of determinist philosophy, a view expressed particularly by Marcel Arland, who writes:

"Je me refuse à me laisser duper par la comédie d'un inconscient: seul et intangible dieu ... Le contrôle de l'intelligence ne peut en rien gêner les manifestations de notre activité intérieure, même si elles appartiennent aux régions les plus profondes de l'être" (1).

Arland does not deny the existence of the unconscious, rather its relevance to the metaphysical problems which face man. He prefers to deal with that part of man which those problems confront, the consciousness and the will.

It is in this part of man that Arland places his trust. Man can be saved by the will and the act. Arland writes:

"Il faut vouloir fortement sa destinée" (2),

and continues:

"L'important est de se vaincre, c'est-à-dire de se détruire au profit d'une vie plus belle. Car comme un arbre que l'on élague, sa tige devient plus vigoureuse et ses fruits plus abondants, la destruction que nous opérons en nous est le signal d'une nouvelle force" (3).

In this consideration, the Nietzschean concept of overcoming is affirmed again. And overcoming finds its highest expression in the act, thus benefiting from a tradition of thought which existed prior to the war, and which was reinforced,

1. Marcel Arland, "Essai", p.669.
2. Marcel Arland, "Essai", p.667.
3. Ibid, p.676.



and not weakened by it. As Daniel-Rops writes:

"La génération qui avait précédé la guerre s'était demandé, à la suite du Barrès des Bastions, du Psichari de l'Appel des Armes, si ce n'était dans l'acte qu'elle trouverait à se réaliser. Celle de la guerre n'avait pas eu à se le demander" (1).

And it is wholly in this tradition that Daniel-Rops sets Malraux, seeing him as a man seeking justification and value in the act, and writing:

"Chez lui, l'acte est envisagé vraiment à l'état pur, et en particulier dans le personnage de Garine des Conquérants, on voit l'action assumer toute la responsabilité spirituelle de l'individu. Elle n'a pas même à être justifiée par son but: ni religion, ni politique, le dessein poursuivi est essentiellement d'une pragmatique de l'action. Agir se suffit à lui-même, suffit à la fois à fixer l'homme en sa destinée et à lui permettre de s'exprimer" (2).

Similarly, Drieu la Rochelle is at pains to situate Malraux in an eternal tradition of the will, a point which he emphasises in his article, "Malraux, l'homme nouveau", in which he writes:

"Malraux, l'homme nouveau, pose l'homme nouveau, l'homme éternel, dans une de ses époques" (3).

Drieu's argument, in Notes pour comprendre le siècle, is that, since the Middle Ages, with its unity and purpose of action, Western man has declined. The work of the nineteenth century consisted in disassociating man as a thinking being from his physical activity: the mind becomes alienated from the body, and the body becomes despised. Henceforth, man's interests are devoted to a sterile exploration of the individual personality, with a resultant decadence at the end of the nineteenth century. Writing at the end of the 1930's, however, Drieu is able to see a renaissance in those movements which accord a value to physical

1. Daniel-Rops, Les Années Tournantes, p.43.
2. Ibid, p.61. This perceptive critique of Malraux's understanding of the act is of great relevance to the moral and political implications of the will. It should be recalled, however, that of all the writers on twentieth-century "inquiétude", discussed here, it is Daniel-Rops who places the most faith in psychoanalysis, and who sees psychological data as being able to undermine any philosophy based wholly upon the act.
3. Drieu la Rochelle, "Malraux, l'homme nouveau", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 207, 1930, p.273. Drieu underlines the fact that the New Man is not to be seen in terms of individual psychology, but in terms of his eternity.

action as well as to the intellect. He writes in praise of athletics, of the youth organisations which combine the cult of youth with the cult of the body. He admires the Italian Futurists, with their vigour and their dynamism. Inevitably, perhaps, he is led to glorify the political sequels of Futurism, Italian Fascism and German Nazism. For Drieu, the salvation of Western man cannot come through thought alone: it must come through action as well. But that action must not be solitary; it must be linked to a collective purpose, it must approach as closely as possible the ethos of the Middle Ages. Drieu sums up:

"Un nouvel homme était né, en réaction contre la ville, restituant dans l'âme et dans le corps les valeurs de force, de courage, avide d'embrasser l'expérience et l'épreuve" (1).

Those essayists who considered the problem of civilisation: Valéry, Crémieux, Arland, Daniel-Rops and Drieu la Rochelle, are symptomatic of a trend in French thought and writing in the 1920's. Essentially, their ideas do not differ radically from those expressed by the avant-garde movements. Indeed, in the case of Drieu la Rochelle, those movements are sympathetically viewed. Yet, whilst the essayists and the avant-gardists reach the same conclusions, the tone and register are different. In the writings of the essayists, there is an atmosphere of care and sobriety absent in the avant-garde. In them, there is no desire to shock, no eccentricity, no frivolity, rather a concerned, earnest appraisal of a disorientation which affects a whole generation and a search for a possible solution. In this aspect, they are far nearer to the tone of Malraux's essays on Europe. And, in addition, they are nearer to Malraux personally: he would have come into contact with Crémieux and Daniel-Rops through the Nouvelle Revue Française; Marcel Arland and Drieu la Rochelle were both close friends with whom he had a constant interchange of ideas. In this respect, the presence in the writings of these essayists of the recognition of the need for a new philosophy based upon action and the will is more

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1. Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, p.149.

significant than the similarities between the conclusions reached by the avant-gardists and Malraux.

In his "Essai", Marcel Arland is sceptical with regard to the new artistic movements. He writes:

"Je veux marquer encore de quelle médiocre qualité me paraissent ces gestes de ténor, ces batailles devant un miroir, ou même ces airs d'initié, qui sont le propre de certains boutiques littéraires" (1).

More important than their mediocrity, however, is the tendency of the new artistic movements to react against the intellect. Such a reaction, in the light of the rationalist tradition of the nineteenth century, is understandable, perhaps inevitable; but Marcel Arland considers it fatal for the future of art.

He insists:

"L'intelligence est une des conditions nécessaires à l'oeuvre d'art; tout art qui l'a dédaignée a péri; j'en prends à témoin le symbolisme et les branches extrêmes du romantisme" (2).

In this statement, Arland's major targets would appear to be Dada, with its conscious effort towards the illogical, and Surrealism, which rejects the intellect in favour of the unconscious. In this context, Malraux's early fictional works, such as Lunes en papier, Ecrit pour une Idole à Trompe and Royaume-Farfelu, and which critics have readily characterised as Surrealist, would appear to present some problems. The inspiration, however, is totally different, and the works rely to a great extent upon an assertion of the intelligence and the will far removed from the passivity of the Surrealist prescription for automatic writing. Thus, these works, whilst presenting some superficial similarities with some examples of Surrealist writing, need to be situated in a different category which will take account of the intelligence which directs them.

In his Souvenirs sans fin, André Salmon refers to the "école fantaisiste" (3),

1. Marcel Arland, "Essai", p.672.

2. Ibid, p.669.

3. André Salmon, Souvenirs sans fin, II, Paris, Gallimard, 1956, p.221.

which includes writers such as Max Jacob, Francis Carco and Jean Pellerin. It is this school, with its emphasis upon a highly intellectual, highly-stylised creation of fantasy, which provides a more suitable context for discussion of Malraux's "farfelu" works. The "école fantaisiste" is an example of Worringer's assertion that the will of the Northern artist is able to transform actuality into fantasy. Its most dominant figure was Max Jacob, and, for a time, Malraux appears to have been close to Jacob, even the older writer's protégé (1). Jacob's first reference to Malraux in his correspondence occurs in a letter to Raymond Radiguet of 23rd October 1920, and a later letter, to Henry Kahnweiler, indicates that by then Malraux was an accepted member of the Jacob group: he writes:

"Dis aussi bonjour aux amis! Au brave Satie, au savant Malraux, au jeune Radiguet ..." (2).

The relationship does not appear to have lasted for longer than two years. By 1st November 1922, Jacob writes again to Kahnweiler about Malraux, complaining:

"On peut avoir des déceptions sur un protégé, sans cesser pour cela d'avoir été sincère en le protégeant" (3).

In spite of the brevity of the relationship, it appears to have been important for Malraux's career as a writer. Max Jacob stressed the importance of the intelligence and the will in literature, a craft which demanded an almost religious devotion. His theories of art and literature are summed up in his Art Poétique, which appeared in 1922 and was reviewed somewhat harshly by

1. Malraux was by no means the only protégé of Jacob's to leave the "fantaisiste" school for the creation of a literature more rooted in the real problems of the contemporary world. Louis Guilloux, later to be a colleague of Malraux's on the anti-fascist committees of the 1930's, recalls the attraction exerted by Jacob on himself and on Jean Grenier (see: Louis Guilloux, Absent de Paris, Paris, Gallimard, 1952, pp.145-187).
2. Max Jacob, Correspondence, II: 1921-1924, Paris, Ed. de Paris, 1955, p.17.
3. Ibid, p.132.

Malraux in the Nouvelle Revue Française (1). For Jacob, a work of art depends upon the intellect. He writes:

"Une bonne oeuvre littéraire ne peut être que l'intelligence complète d'une idée par l'auteur. Une oeuvre ne peut être que l'intelligence de quelque chose" (2).

Thus, Jacob emphasises the conquering intelligence which is for Malraux one of the characteristics of the West: the impulse to impose order through knowledge and understanding. Closely connected to Jacob's celebration of the role of intelligence in literature, is his emphasis upon the will. He claims: "La volonté est l'essence de l'art, les moyens sont la force" (3). Hence, equipped with this intelligence and will, and creating with an almost religious intensity, the writer is now ready to turn towards a new literature. Jacob continues:

"Ce qu'on apprécie le moins maintenant, c'est la création de types vivants, fortement marqués, généraux, nouveaux, fouillés et simples. Il semble pourtant que ce soit un but digne d'intérêt. Voilà la vraie psychologie et non ces petites querelles d'amants qui font l'occupation des écrivains psychologues" (4).

Jacob's insistence upon a break with the past and the creation of a new literature, which will propound a non-psychological notion of man, foreshadows both Malraux's rejection of the West, in the essays on Europe, and his distrust of psychology in the elaboration of a new type of man. Both Jacob and the early Malraux use this conclusion as the basis for a literature of fantasy, a "farfelu" literature; but Jacob's emphasis of the "vraie psychologie" sheds light upon Malraux's later novels, where the characters are defined, not in terms of individual psychology, but by their heroic actions. As Lucien Goldmann observes, Malraux's "farfelu" works and his later novels are not so divorced as

1. André Malraux, "Art poétique, par Max Jacob", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 107, 1922.
2. Max Jacob, Art Poétique, Paris, Emile-Paul Frères, 1922, p.7.
3. Ibid, p.46.
4. Ibid, pp.73-74.

critics have been tempted to assert (1).

Finally, for Max Jacob, modern art must be essentially epic in nature: it must move beyond the restricted sphere of psychological analysis.

It would appear, therefore, that, from his contact with the "fantaisiste" writers, Malraux gained a notion of art and literature which opposed the psychological cult of the individual, and gave primacy to the values of the intelligence and the will so that an epic scope could be obtained.

Marcel Arland, whilst noting that the effect of the First World War was to create an atmosphere of disorientation, of dissatisfaction with the values of the past, concludes nevertheless that it results in a need to find an expression for this feeling of anxiety. This expression is to be found in the anarchy of the Dadaists, in the penetration into the unconscious practised by the Surrealists, and in the "farfelu" world of the "école fantaisiste".

An expression of this disorientation, however, existed at the same time, which was more closely linked to the experience of the war itself. Dada, Surrealism, and the "école fantaisiste" represent a search for meaning and expression outside the wartime experience. The strain of literature, however, called "aventurisme", is more intimately connected with the action and problems of the war itself. In an article, "La Folie-Almayer et les aventuriers dans la littérature", (2), Pierre MacOrlan discusses Conrad's novel and goes on to examine at some length the phenomenon of adventure literature. And in his analysis, he emphasises the importance of the war as a cause of the existence and popularity of such literature. He writes:

"La guerre et des influences inexplicables ont donné à une génération qui est la nôtre le sens de la misère, de la souffrance, de la fatalité, ce qui serait insuffisant pour la distinguer de la précédente si le cadre ne venait apporter un élément nouveau, en offrant aux personnages un champ d'action illimité" (3).

1. See: Lucien Goldmann, Pour une Sociologie du roman, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Idées", 1964, pp.62-77.
2. Pierre MacOrland, "La Folie-Almayer et les aventuriers dans la littérature", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 81, 1920. Malraux was familiar with MacOrland's work, as his review of Malice, in Nouvelle Revue Française, 114, 1923, indicates.
3. Pierre MacOrlan, "La Folie-Almayer et les aventuriers dans la littérature" pp.932-933.

The adventure-novel is the literary medium of the possible, where man may be shown to act with none of the restrictions that are imposed by the traditions of nineteenth-century Europe.

In addition to his role as a practitioner of adventure literature, in such novels as La Bandera, A bord de l'"Etoile Matutine" and Le Chant de l'Equipage, MacOrlan is able to develop an interest in the "farfelu". His Chronique de jours désespérés, a collection of short-stories dealing with man in time of war and social upheaval, are written in a careful style which aims at the creation of a mythical, fairy-tale atmosphere. Yet even in these stories, the main elements are violence, sexuality; and always the figure of the adventurer is dominant. And it is the adventurer whom MacOrlan analyses in some depth in a small, half-satirical book, Le Petit manuel du parfait aventurier. Here, MacOrlan argues that there are two types of adventurer, the "aventurier actif" and the "aventurier passif". It is the "aventurier actif" who actually accomplishes the deeds of adventure, who surmounts the obstacles and runs the risks. The "aventurier passif" is the writer, the man who feeds upon the active adventurer and who, through the process of his imagination, is able to transform the adventurer's acts into art. For, according to MacOrlan, the "aventurier actif" is devoid of imagination. He characterises him:

"Les traits essentiels sont: l'absence totale d'imagination et de sensibilité" (1).

and this is a deficiency which is compensated by the writer. In general, claims MacOrlan, writers are rarely adventurers, though there are exceptions to this rule. In this category are Jack London, Joseph Conrad, Stevenson, Bernard Combette and Anzias-Turenne, and it is to this group of active and passive adventurers, that Malraux must be linked, and in this context that Garcia's precept: "Transformer en conscience une expérience aussi large que possible" must be seen.

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1. Pierre MacOrlan, Le Petit manuel du parfait aventurier, Paris, Ed. de la Sirène, 1920, p.21.

For MacOrlan, the importance of the writer-adventurer lies in his ability to maintain that state of anxiety and tension which characterises the post-war intellectual world and which is able to be a positive element. He writes:

"L'aventurier, qui est l'écrivain, se doit d'expliquer ce mystère (adventure), d'en retenir les éléments décoratifs et l'inquiétude, car l'inquiétude à elle seule est la clef du roman d'aventures" (1).

And in this context, certain practitioners of the adventure-novel, writers who develop this sense of anxiety, such as Blaise Cendrars, Roland Dorgelès and Paul Morand, shed light upon Malraux's reflections on Europe and his subsequent use of the form of the adventure-novel, particularly in La Voie Royale and Les Conquérants.

Of all the French writers of this period, it is perhaps Blaise Cendrars who most resembles Ernest Hemingway. Throughout his work, particularly in his autobiography, L'Homme foudroyé, he exhibits a marked pleasure in his role as a man amongst real men. He takes pride in the fact that he, and often he alone, can be accepted in circles where courage, toughness and simplicity are the true virtues, be they groups of revolutionaries, explorers or Mediterranean fishermen (2). His early work, whilst being closely linked to the Cubist poetic movement, expresses nevertheless a clear interest in adventure. Thus, the poem, Prose du Transsibérien et la petite Jeanne de France, written in 1913, recounts a journey by train across a Russia torn by the Russo-Japanese War, in the company of a young and pathetic French prostitute. Of greater interest, in the context of "aventurisme", is his novel, Moravagine, published by Grasset in 1926. Cendrars recounts the story of a young psychiatric doctor who becomes fascinated by one of his patients, Moravagine, a deposed member of the Hungarian royal

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1. Pierre MacOrlan, "La Folie-Almayer et les aventuriers dans la littérature", p.931.
  2. In his entry into a fishing community, recounted in L'Homme foudroyé, Cendrars enters clearly the world of Hemingway, whose use of fishing and fishing communities to signify courage and an heroic, archaic way of life is exemplified by The Old Man and the Sea, and, perhaps more strikingly by Islands in the Stream.



family. He effects the escape of his patient, and together the two men begin a series of adventures which takes them through the 1905 Revolution in Russia, to the United States, to Indians in the forest of Brazil, and, finally, to France, during the First World War. The atmosphere of the novel is one of contrast, that between the old world and the new. When the two men return from Brazil to the decadence of France just before the First World War, the narrator exclaims:

"Mais où était donc l'or de la France, la nouveauté, les Hommes nouveaux?"(1)

In this way, Cendrars constructs an ideal upon any value which contradicts the bourgeois claustrophobia of the end of the century: Moravagine himself is a wild, mad, anarchic force, and the values which he represents are the values of action and, above all, those of destruction. And it is destruction which is the hero's motivation in his involvement in the 1905 Revolution. Cendrars writes, of Moravagine's ambitions in the Revolution:

"Et si nous réussissions? Si notre oeuvre est couronnée de succès?... Alors, nous allons tout démolir; démolir ... ha, ha, ha... démolir jusqu'à la gauche" (2).

The hero, therefore, appears above all as a man unable to accept a static situation and striving constantly to overcome the present. It is for this reason that, in common with other novels of adventure, including Malraux's own work, Moravagine uses woman as a symbol of static qualities and exhibits strongly misogynist qualities.

In Cendrars' novel, the war appears predominantly as a symbol of action and regeneration: it finally permits the birth of the "Hommes nouveaux". For Roland Dorgelès, it fulfils more the role of a Tabula rasa, in that it

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1. Blaise Cendrars, Moravagine, Paris, Denoël, 1960, p.385.
  2. Ibid, p.323. The statement emphasises the inability of the man of will to accept fully the aspirations of a revolutionary movement, and thus foreshadows the difficulties experienced by Malraux's heroes in their contacts with left-wing collective politics.

crystallises that feeling of disorientation to which the only response can be action and travel, in the form of adventure. Les Croix de bois, published in 1919, is a major account of the experience of the trenches; Partir, which appeared seven years later, is in many ways a logical sequel to the war-novel, in that it deals with the familiar reaction to the disorientation of post-war Europe, escape to the East. The novel recounts simply a journey on a French colonial boat from Marseille to Indochina, the same journey recounted by Malraux in La Voie Royale and Les Conquérants, and which he himself made twice. And there is a certain, perhaps inevitable similarity between Malraux's description of the voyage and that of Dorgelès, exemplified by the use made by both writers of wireless as an ingredient of their work. Dorgelès writes:

"Ce qui m'empêche d'être isolé du monde, c'est cette TSF qui le soir, crépite sur le pont supérieur, en courtes étincelles" (1),

an observation which is amplified and used to greater effect by Malraux in Les Conquérants, in his description of the daily posting of wireless messages. In both novels, the hero has voluntarily cut himself off from the civilised world.

Similarly, the hero of Partir, Jacques Largy, is used by Dorgelès to represent the disorientation of the post-war period. He writes:

"Après la guerre, que pouvait-il faire? Vingt-quatre ans, pas de métier, pas assez de fortune, l'habitude de tout risquer sans rien tenter, de s'exténuer sans produire. Il était comme ces milliers de jeunes gens à qui l'on avait ravi leurs plus heureuses années, le meilleur de leur force, et qu'on rejetait, cinq ans plus tard, dans une société qu'ils ne connaissaient pas, sans songer seulement à les guider et s'étonnant presque que le petit aviateur adulé de la veille ne redevenait pas sagement l'apprenti mécano qu'il était autrefois" (2).

From the society in which he can no longer find a place and is unable to accept

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1. Roland Dorgelès, Partir, Paris, 1926, p.56.
  2. Ibid, p.104. Dorgelès, having already been through the experience of the war, and having written about it, is writing from a slightly different point of view than that of Malraux. His generation, and the generation of his hero, was not the one which was denied a war, but rather the one which was called upon to fight and was unable to adapt to peace-time existence. Largy is therefore less the generation of Marcel Arland, or Malraux or Claude Vannec than that of Vercel's Capitaine Conan, the German Freikorps in Silesia or D'Annunzio's 'légionnaires' at Fiume.

fixity, the hero must seek escape to a field of action which mirrors as closely as possible the action of the war. It is for this very reason that Jacques Largy is sailing to Indochina. At the same time, Dorgelès introduces a subtle argument which has implications for the role of Claude and Perken. He indicates that the traditional role of the adventurer is no longer possible in classic terms. Whilst on the boat, Largy meets a colonial banker from Pekin, called Garrot, who bears more than a certain resemblance to Ferral (1). At one point in the novel, Garrot proclaims the end of the old order of the adventurer:

"On ne colonise plus avec une carabine, Monsieur Largy ..... Les temps héroïques sont finis. L'arme aujourd'hui, c'est l'argent ..." (2),

an analysis which goes towards explaining the failure of Perken and the necessity of Garine's participation in a modern political enterprise. The danger which confronts the adventurer is acute: he runs the risk of becoming as much an anachronism in Asia as he is in Europe.

Although the adventure-novels of Cendrars and Dorgelès shed light upon the world of action in which Malraux's heroes attempt to find an identity, it is the work of Paul Morand which defines that world most completely. The paths of Morand and Malraux converged physically in Asia. In an article, "Malraux et les Conquérants", written in 1929, Morand recounts how, whilst he was in Hongkong during the strike of 1925, he met Malraux on his way from Saigon to Canton (3). Later he saw Malraux in a Saigon hospital, "pale, amaigri, traqué, infiniment plus malade que les patients" (4). More important than these brief

1. The resemblance is more than superficial. Garrot's view of money as power is very similar to that of Ferral, as his delight in the sexual insult. At one point he says of a woman on the boat who annoys him:  
"Qu'elle me fiche la paix, ... ou bien des premières à un nègre de l'entrepont et je l'installe d'autorité à sa table" (Partir, p.246).
2. Roland Dorgelès, Partir, p.120. The anachronistic nature of the adventurer is indicated in La Voie Royale by references to previous adventures, Mayrena and Oden'hal, who are in a different time-category from that of Perken.
3. According to Clara Malraux, Malraux went no further than Macão (see: Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, III, p.218). She also disputes the account of Malraux's illness (see: Ibid, p.62).
4. Paul Morand, Papiers d'identité, Paris, Grasset, 1931, pp.168-172.

encounters, however, is the similarity of preoccupation between the two writers. The collections of short-stories, Ouvert la nuit (1924), and Fermé la nuit (1923), are set in exotic situations, with a strong emphasis upon violence and eroticism. Thus, "La Nuit catalane", included in Ouvert la nuit, recounts the narrator's love for Donna Remedios, the mistress of the dead Spanish revolutionary, Puig (1), and her subsequent arrest after a bomb attempt. The stories of L'Europe galante (1925) contain the same mixture of violence and eroticism, and in one part draw upon contemporary violence in the Russian Revolution. Of equal interest is the short novel, Lewis et Irène, which not only poses, in the person of the two characters, the incompatibility of East and West, but analyses in Lewis the spirit of will inherent in modern capitalism, that "curieux romantisme d'affaires" (2) which was prevalent in the 1920's. Lewis, like Dorgelès' Garrot, and Malraux's Ferral, is a conqueror-figure in modern business, a man who extends the notion of conquest, like Ferral and Garrot, to sexuality as well as finance (3).

The novel which is the most important, however, for an illumination of Malraux's work in the 1920's, is the novel Bouddha vivant, the second part of Morand's Chronique du Vingtième Siècle, of which L'Europe galante was the first. The book was published in 1927, and reviewed by Malraux in the Nouvelle Revue Française in August of that year. In its preoccupations, it bears great similarity to La Tentation de l'Occident: an Eastern prince, Jâli, influenced by a young European, Renaud d'Ecouen, is led to leave his traditional kingdom to travel in the West. The novel is the narration of his growing disillusionment and disorientation as he travels through Europe and America, and it concludes

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1. The name Puig recurs as that of an anarchist in L'Espoir.
  2. Paul Morand, Lewis et Irène, Paris, Flammarion, 1927, p.13.
  3. Curiously, like Ferral, Lewis has a secretary called Martial.

with his acceptance of his own country's way of life. Through the device of the two protagonists, the one European, the other Eastern, Morand is able to show the almost insurmountable divide between the two.

The character Renaud d'Ecouen bears a marked similarity to the young Malraux; indeed, to create his character, Morand would appear to have drawn upon Malraux's experience. The novel is set in the years following the war, and Morand compares the intellectual position of Renaud to that of the first generation of Romantics. He writes:

"Placé en face de 1914, comme un Musset, un Vigny vis-à-vis des batailles de l'Empire, il a leur pessimisme, mais sans rien de leur admiration pour ce qui les précédait" (1).

Morand explains that Renaud's early poems show the influence of Spengler and Keyserling, and that Renaud, like many of his generation, has come to reject the West and seek meaning for existence in Asia. As in the case of Malraux, this decision leads him to take part in a national liberation movement, though in Bouddha vivant it is in China, not in Indochina. Morand writes, of his hero:

"Renaud passa par Moscou, gagna Shanghai où, dans l'été de 1925, il fonda un journal Jeune-Chine" (2).

Similarly, Renaud's view of the West coincides with that expressed by Malraux in his essays on Europe. He claims:

"D'ailleurs, fussions-nous comblés que nous ne serions pas satisfaits, tant l'Occident ne peut plus exister sans avoir besoin. Nous ne vivons que pour désirer" (3).

The West, for Morand, is defined by the element of continual quest, and it is this which distinguishes it from Asia. And this point of view is expressed by the other hero of the novel, the Oriental prince, Jâli, when, at the end of the novel, he decides to return home. He reflects:

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1. Paul Morand, Bouddha vivant, Paris, Grasset, 1927, p.13.
  2. Paul Morand, Bouddha vivant, p.18.
  3. Ibid, p.37.

"Vouloir faire son choix dans l'ordre, ou même le désordre universel, c'était peut-être la grandeur de l'Occident, mais céder, consentir à son sort, c'était certainement celle de l'Orient" (1).

Once more the view is proposed that it is in the will to choose, in the imposition of the self upon the world, that the essence of the West lies, an attitude which conflicts sharply with the passivity of the East. The closeness of this outlook to that of Malraux is indicated by the favourable nature of his review of the novel, in which he concludes:

"Les critiques futurs, obligés à chercher l'aspect sous lequel l'Occident apparaissait aux voyageurs français en 1927, ne pouvaient trouver une mine plus riche que Bouddha vivant" (2).

Thus, the adventure-novel in France in the 1920's, the novels of MacOrlan, Cendrars, Dorgelès and Paul Morand, may be seen as an expression of the "inquiétude" following the war. As such, it relies upon that "nostalgie d'héroïsme" (3) discerned by Micheline Tison-Braun in the early 1920's in France. And the elements of anxiety and nostalgia combine in the fact of France's colonial empire in the Far East, which provides both a field for action and a point from which the state of Europe may be analysed.

Both MacOrlan and Dorgelès insist upon the crucial role of the First World War in the creation of the "inquiétude" of the 1920's. In their diagnosis, they confirm the hypothesis of Marcel Arland in his discussion of the generation which was unable to fight. The effect of the war, therefore, for the 1920's, lies in the fact that it is a powerful image of heroism and action, but one which is now denied both those who fought in the war and those who missed it. It is natural, therefore, that the post-war period sees not only a rise in the adventure-novel, as an expression of disorientation and heroic nostalgia, but

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1. Ibid, p.239.

2. André Malraux, "Bouddha vivant", de Paul Morand", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 167, 1927, p.254.

3. Micheline Tison-Braun, La Crise de l'humanisme, II, Paris, Nizet, 1958, p.310.

also an upsurge of novels dealing with the war itself. In his article, "Guerre et roman dans l'entre-deux guerres", René Pomeau analyses precisely this phenomenon. Thus, the war as a theme assumes its full importance only when the war was over. Only one major war-novel appeared in France before the Armistice, Le Feu, by Henri Barbusse, published in 1917. Other novels, Les Croix de bois, by Dorgeles, Le Songe, by Montherlant, Bob Bataillonnaire, by MacOrlan, Joseph Kessel's L'Equipage, and Jules Romains' Verdun, were all written after the war, and tend to relate to the needs of the post-war era rather than to wartime France. The war-novel comes to serve the same purpose as the adventure-novel, in that it deals with an extraordinary experience which gives free rein to the will. The statement by Montherlant's hero, Alban:

"Mon cerveau s'est épuisé tandis que mon corps refleurissait. Il m'arrête de penser! Je rejette la couronne d'épines! Il est nécessaire que je me repose dans l'action" (1),

with its implicit rejection of an exaggerated cultivation of the intellect in favour of a renewed appreciation of the body, expresses one of the most prominent themes of the war-novel, as it was written in France in the 1920's.

Yet the very nature of the war acted against these aspirations. The young man seeking individual acts of courage found himself assimilated into the anonymity and mechanism of modern trench warfare. The opportunities for individual acts of heroism were drastically minimised. In this situation, Alban is led to ask, vainly:

"N'avez-vous pas une Section Franche, où la règle du chef est à peu près: 'Je t'envoie le premier au péril. En échange, sur tout le reste je ferme les yeux'?" (2).

The heightened experience of the Free Corps, however, was reserved for a small number of men; more typical was that of Garine, forced to exchange his hero's sword for one which resembles a kitchen-knife. Far from exalting the will, the war comes more and more to demand a surrender of the will. Thus, Dorgeles described his hero, after some months' experience of the war:

1. Henry de Montherlant, Le Songe, Paris, Ed. de la Pléiade, 1959, p.9.
2. Henry de Montherlant, Le Songe, p.48. The role of the Free Corps as a privileged experience is indicated clearly in Roger Vercel's Capitaine Conan, and in the career of Joseph Darnand.

"Sa fatigue même avait disparu: il était une chose exténuée, sans volonté, qu'on pousse" (1).

Because of this diminution of the role of the will, the war-novel tends to concentrate upon more modest values: it depicts, not the great acts of the Superman, rather, the courage of the simple soldier who endures. Nevertheless, the experience of war is still seen as a heightened one, in comparison with which the normality of civilian existence seems inadequate. Dorgeles concludes Les Croix de bois with the statement:

"C'était le bon temps ... Oui, malgré tout, c'était le bon temps, puisqu'il nous voyait vivants ... On a bien ri, au repos, entre deux marches accablantes, on a bien ri pour un peu de paille trouvée ..." (2).

The importance of the war-novel for an understanding of the 1920's, therefore lies in the way in which it charts the frustration of the heroic aspiration, an aspiration which therefore emerges from the war even stronger, and in its glorification of the heightened experience of warfare.

Nevertheless, if the war in the trenches represented a denial of the will, there remained one form of warfare which allowed it full scope. (3). Throughout the war, the aviator was an almost mythical figure, with the minimum of restrictions placed upon him. The war in the air took the form of a duel, in the which the values of personal courage, skill and chivalry were allowed to define the combattants. It had the further advantage that it constituted not only a battle of man against man, but also a struggle of man against the elements. In this way, as a literary theme, it was built upon the enthusiasm of the avant-gardists for the aeroplane as a symbol of modernity and will. And interest in the

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1. Roland Dorgeles, Les Croix de bois, Paris, Albin Michel, 1919, pp.45-46.
  2. Ibid, p.376. The dangers inherent in the creation of a way of life based upon the restricted comradeship of the trenches are indicated in MacOrlan's Bob bataillonnaire, one of a series written on the characters Bob and Babette by different authors at this time, and in Saint-Exupéry's Terre des hommes. They have strong implications for Malraux's concept of "fraternité virile".
  3. There was one other form of warfare which allowed similar scope for the will, the war in the desert, exemplified by the myth of T.E. Lawrence which is discussed by Malraux in "N'était-ce donc que cela?" and, more obliquely, in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg.



air war informs the novels of the 1920's. Thus, Francis Carco, one of the "fantaisistes", served in the airforce during the war. And in Cendrars' novel, Moravagine, whereas the narrator and Cendrars are conscripted into the army, it is the Superman, Moravagine, who becomes a pilot. But it is in Joseph Kessel's novel, L'Equipage, which appeared in 1924, that is seen the clearest example of the cult of the airman. The novel describes the experience of a French air squadron during the war, with its combats and its deaths. The essence of the attraction of the war in the air, however, is contained in the person of the squadron's commander, Gabriel Thélis, who combines the qualities of youth, sobriety, will and courage (1). The values of the book are crystallised in a scene when Thélis examines a new recruit, Herbillon:

"Dès le premier instant, Herbillon lui avait plu... par la franchise de ses traits, la volonté du front dur, la simplicité des yeux clairs et par tout l'élan qui animait son corps" (2).

Kessel's emphasis upon simplicity, will and, above all, spirit, is characteristic, not merely of aviation literature, but of adventure-literature in general. The interest in aviation during the war, its role as the only form of combat allowing personal courage and generosity, made of it a symbol for post-war literature. Thus, it looks forward to the experience and work of Saint-Exupéry, and foreshadows Malraux himself, with his flight over the lost city of the Queen of Sheba, transformed in Le Temps du mépris into the flight to Prague, and his experience as commander of the España Squadron in the Spanish Civil War which forms the basis for much of L'Espoir.

The origins of Malraux's concept of will, therefore, lie in a generalised Spenglerian notion of the decline of the West (3), a belief prevalent throughout

1. The characterisation of Thélis would appear to owe much to the career of Guynemer, the legendary hero of French aviation during the war.
2. Joseph Kessel, L'Equipage, Paris, Livre de poche, p.32.
3. Malraux cannot have read Spengler at the time of writing the texts on Europe. He does not read German, and the French edition of The Decline of the West did not appear until the early 1930's. He would have been familiar with Spengler's views, however, through the vast amount of publicity they received in France in the 1920's, but especially through Clara Malraux, who recalls that she purchased a copy in Germany in 1921 (See: Le Bruit de nos pas II Nos vingt ans, p.53), and through Keyserling.

Europe since the beginning of the twentieth century that the values of individualism and materialism, upon which Western civilisation was based, were bankrupt and could no longer sustain valid action. In his belief in the necessity for the rejection of Western values, Malraux rejoins the theories of the avant-garde: Italian Futurism, German Expressionism, Dada, and Surrealism. Nevertheless, his reflections on Europe lack the robust, aggressive quality of the avant-gardists; writing after the First World War, he expresses in his work a grim recognition of an almost inescapable problem, that of the "nouveau mal du siècle". Thus, his essays on Europe must be seen in the same context as Crémieux's "Le Bilan d'une enquête", Marcel Arland's two essays, Valéry's "La Crise de l'esprit", and Daniel-Rops' Les Années tournantes.

The "inquiétude" following the war, however, is built upon a recognition that images of strength, once aspired to, are impossible and unattainable in the post-war world. Yet, at this very point, a positive element is able to enter Malraux's thought. In the same way that the adventure-novel of Cendrars and MacOrlan and the war-novel of Dorgelès, Montherlant and Kessel look back, from the "inquiétude" of the 1920's, to a period when action as a defining force for man was still possible, Malraux sees in the great cemetery of Europe the graves of the dead conquerors. And his response is to refute the decadence of the present by the heroism of the past, to regenerate Europe with a resurgence of one of its most powerful myths, the myth of the man of will, that wonderful anachronism who, alone, can establish a valid system of meaning. Malraux writes, nostalgically, in La Tentation de l'Occident: "Nous avons tous senti la fraîcheur et la brume du matin d'Austerlitz" (1). Within the very heart of that nostalgia, a new myth may arise, and a New Man, who, armed only with his will, may establish order and meaning in a world which lacks both.

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1. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.95.

## Chapter Two

### The Metaphysics of Will

#### 1) The Adventurer

The review which Malraux wrote for the Nouvelle Revue Française in 1929 of Keyserling's Journal de voyage d'un philosophe takes up many of the problems expressed in the earlier essays on Europe. Keyserling, who had been living in almost monastic seclusion in Raykull, had found Europe no longer sufficient to his role as thinker. He writes:

"So trete ich denn eine Weltreise an. Europa fördert mich nicht mehr" (1).

In his dissatisfaction with Europe, therefore, Keyserling shared the same anxieties and frustrations felt by Malraux's own generation, and which centred on the problem of limitation. As Malraux writes: "La limitation ne constitue pas un idéal" (2).

Keyserling further resembles Malraux and other writers of his generation in his attempt to find a solution to his problems in travel, which, alone, will enable him to develop his personality. He begins his work by stating:

"Was mich hinaustreibt in die weite Welt, ist eben das, was so viele ins Kloster getrieben hat: die Sehnsucht nach Selbstverwirklichung" (3).

His journey thus became a quest, one for "la plus vaste expérience humaine" (4), and, in his review, Malraux is careful to indicate that, rather than a mere exploration of the picturesque, Keyserling's aim was concerned with the discovery of the sense of life of both the foreigner and the explorer himself, a confrontation of mythic significance. Malraux comments:

"Pourtant, ne séjournant que quelques mois en Chine, que pourra-t-il demander aux Chinois? La signification de leur vie à tous deux. Comment la pensée de la Chine, celle de l'Inde, celle de l'Amérique, peuvent-elles animer la vie d'un homme? Malgré un désir extrême de connaissance des individus, une telle question donne aussitôt naissance au mythe" (5).

1. Hermann von Keyserling, Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen, Darmstadt, 1920, p.7. "For this reason, I started out on a journey round the world. Europe no longer satisfied me".
2. André Malraux, "Journal de voyage d'un philosophe, par Hermann Keyserling", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 189, 1929, p.884.
3. Hermann von Keyserling, Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen, p.5. "What brought me out into the wide world was the very thing which has attracted people into monasteries: a nostalgia for a development of the self".
4. André Malraux, "Journal de voyage d'un philosophe, par Hermann Keyserling", p.885.
5. Ibid, p.885. This remark emphasises Malraux's distrust of individual psychology when compared with the fruitful possibilities of myth.

The importance of this myth for Malraux lies in the fact that, whilst it constitutes a general expression of human experience, it is also, more significantly, a personal encounter. He writes:

"La conception dramatique de la philosophie, plus puissante d'année en année dans tout l'Occident, et qui aboutira peut-être à une transformation profonde de la fiction, se défend beaucoup mieux lorsqu'elle pose le philosophe. Il importe peu, nous dit-on, que Nietzsche soit devenu fou. Il importe beaucoup, au contraire, et il faut savoir prendre le tragique où il est" (1).

It is this interest in myth, the desire to discover and impose a universally applicable structure of human action, which constitutes the difference between this review of Keyserling and Malraux's earlier reflections on the problems of European civilisation. Malraux's reference to the possibilities of a transformation of fiction points to a consideration of existence from the point of view of the creative writer rather than the essayist. In addition, Malraux's interest in myth is concerned with the fact that it is not only a universal structure of human action, but a continuing structure, and therefore a call to action. Malraux therefore evolves from the static despair of the essays on Europe to a search for dynamic values, in which the will is of prime importance, and in his fictional treatment of this search, his heroes follow a well-defined structural path which is present not only in the novels, but also in the "fantaisiste" works, Lunes en papier, Ecrit pour une idole à trompe, and Royaume-Farfelu (2).

Apart from the penetrating and exhaustive study by André Vandegans (3), these "fantaisiste" works have received little attention from critics, who have tended to feel, with some justification, that the essential Malraux lies elsewhere.

1. André Malraux, "Journal de voyage d'un philosophe, par Hermann Keyserling," p.886.
2. Although the final version of Royaume-Farfelu appeared in 1928, the year of the publication of Les Conquérants, its genesis and its earlier versions are much earlier.
3. See: André Vandegans, La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux, also "Le Premier Malraux autour de la publication des Lunes en papier", in Publications de L'université de l'état à Elisabethville, vol V, April, 1963.

As Lucien Goldmann sums up the problem, writing of Royaume-Farfelu:

"Un critique qui n'aurait entre les mains que ce seul texte y verrait sans doute le désenchantement superficiel et peut-être purement verbal d'un adolescent à la fois très doué et trop préoccupé de sa propre personne" (1).

At the same time, the early works are by no means lacking in importance.

Royaume-Farfelu itself, in spite of the general impression of slightness indicated by Lucien Goldmann, a slightness which characterises to a greater extent the other "fantaisiste" works - Lunes en papier and Ecrit pour une idole à trompe - achieves at moments a lyrical sonority which is far from negligible. More important is the fact that, underneath the fantasy, these works represent a creative counterpart to the essays on Europe, in that the world considered by the author is essentially the same in both. Towards the beginning of his study of Malraux, Goldmann writes, of his works in general:

"Dans cette oeuvre dominée par la crise des valeurs qui caractérisait l'Europe occidentale à l'époque où elle a été élaborée, la création purement romanesque correspond à la période dans laquelle l'écrivain a pu pouvoir, envers et contre tout, sauvegarder l'existence de certaines valeurs universelles authentiques" (2).

In addition, it may be said that the major fictional works of Malraux begin where, in his own words, "la philosophie ... pose le philosophe", where there is an undeniable presence of the author's concern in the work, a presence missing, or at least diminished, in the works of fantasy. Nevertheless, these early works are born of and express the same crisis of values as that which glowers over the later novels. Moreover, by their very structure, the "fantaisiste" works indicate the way which Malraux's heroes must take in order to find and affirm those universal values to which Goldmann refers. In this sense, the fact that Royaume-Farfelu and Les Conquérants were published in the same year, is by no means totally coincidental.

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1. Lucien Goldmann, Pour une Sociologie du roman, Paris, Gallimard, Coll. "Idées", 1964. p.70.
  2. Ibid, p.63.

Malraux's "fantaisiste" writing begins with a short piece, entitled "Mobilités", published in Action in July 1920. The work is of little interest, apart from the atmosphere which Malraux evokes in it. The scene is an enchanted forest, full of "végétation ouatée semblable à une fourrure de chat noir" (1). Thus, at the very beginning of Malraux's work is the image of the menacing, dark forest, which is to attain its full significance in La Voie Royale, and which constitutes part of the world in which the hero is to act. There is one further evocative image:

"D'énormes aiguilles de cristal disposées en rayons glissent, seuls, à plat, argonautes morts" (2).

The reference to "argonautes" is significant: it introduces the notion of the heroic journey, the quest, which recurs, in varying degrees, in all of Malraux's subsequent novels, and which constitutes one of the characteristics of his heroes.

Mobilités was never incorporated into other works by Malraux, but, in October 1920, he published in Action a piece called Prologue, which, with minor alterations, was to become the preface of Lunes en papier, published in 1921. The prologue itself is built up of the same brilliant and brittle imagery that constitutes Mobilités. It is largely a simple exercise in fantasy, except for a bare narrative, by which there is an attack by the balloons, which fails, and which is followed by their death at the hands of the "génie du lac", which takes the shape of Malraux's most obsessive animal, a cat (3). By dealing with an attack followed by failure, the story points forward to the main body of Malraux's work, which follows a similar pattern.

Lunes en papier itself is susceptible of more than one interpretation, although its inherent frivolity is obvious, reinforced by Malraux's own warning:

1. André Malraux, Mobilités, in Action, July, 1920. Many early and now unobtainable texts of Malraux are to be found in a collection edited by Enea Balmas, Le Opere giovanili di André Malraux, Milan, Editrice Viscontea, 1969.
2. Ibid.
3. Malraux's fascination with cats as a symbol of the "farfelu" is similar to that of Baudelaire who, in Le Chat, sees the cat, like his mistress, as the repository of values which are subtle, dangerous and unattainable.

"Il n'y a aucun symbole dans ce livre" (1). On one level, as Lucien Goldmann suggests, the expedition of the souls of the dead balloons, transformed into the seven deadly sins, to destroy Death, now ageing and bored, and clad in a dinner-jacket, is a satirical representation of the efforts of the avant-garde writers, particularly the Dadaists, to break free from the claustrophobic sterility of a dying Europe. The attack on the travellers in the inn, first by the snakes, who are described as "bigotophones" and who threaten them with

"un nombre de couplets ridicules et de chansons stupides, tel que l'imagination ne peut se représenter sans effroi" (2),

and then by "des tubes de Geissler", is that of a society whose major attributes are a frivolous and empty popular culture, and a scientific materialism. This empty materialism is reinforced by the character of Death with his aluminium skeleton, a fact which he explains:

"Puis, je dois marcher avec le progrès. Tout devenait mécanique, métallique, brillant; le caractère de ma beauté restait gothique: je n'étais plus à la mode" (3).

In other words, the society presented in Lunes en papier is the same as that condemned in the essays on Europe and which motivated Claude Vannec's journey to Indochina. It is

"une civilisation qui fait à l'esprit une part telle que ceux qui s'en nourrissent, gavés sans doute, sont doucement conduits à manger à prix réduits" (4)

In the light of such considerations, it is difficult to treat the story simply as a satire. As a narrative it is slight and frivolous (5), but it contains preoccupations which are common to Malraux's overtly serious work. The dissatisfaction with European civilisation is one such preoccupation; more striking

1. André Malraux, Lunes en papier, Geneva, Skira, 1945, p.158.

2. Lunes en papier, p.174.

3. Ibid, p.182.

4. La Voie Royale, pp. 36-37

5. A similar tone, superficially frivolous but with an undercurrent of pessimism and bitterness, is to be found in the writings of Jacques Rigaut, such as Agence Générale du Suicide. See: Jacques Rigaut, Ecrits, Paris, Gallimard, 1970.



is the obsession with death and with God. At the beginning of the quest,

l'Orgueil remarks of God:

"Il n'est plus vulgaire... A force de vieillir il est devenu tout à fait inconscient. Il a déjà changé de nom et de costume bien des fois sans y attacher d'importance; or, cette fois, Satan, qui n'est pas sot, a fait en sorte de prendre sa place, et ni Dieu ni personne ne s'en est aperçu" (1).

In these very terms, the metaphysical basis of Malraux's universe could be summed up: the effacement of an ageing and senile God, and the replacement of his world by a Manichean one, ruled by Satan and Death, "le meilleur auxiliaire de Satan" (2). Moreover, the descriptions of Death in the "Ville-Farfelu" are characterised by a black humour which renders them intensely disquieting. Malraux's comment:

"La Ville-Farfelu était en fête; sa reine, la Mort, souffrait d'une maladie de langueur" (3),

is above all humorous for its contrived paradox by which Death, personified, is dying in its turn (4). Yet, on another level, the evocation of a world which has reached such a point of decay, that even death is touched by it, has a horrifying quality. Thus, Malraux is able to write of Death: "la Majesté apparaissait comme un gros insecte" (5), using one of his most constant images of menace and inhumanity. And a further link between Death and the Manichean universe is suggested by Death's comment:

"On m'appelle la mort, mais vous savez bien que je suis seulement l'Accident" (6).

Finally, the manner of Death's own destruction is highly significant; by dissolving slowly in an acid-bath, she is the symbol of the gradual wearing-away of man which remains the hardest problem for Malraux's heroes, especially Perken, to surmount. As Death remarks:

"La destruction lente même n'est qu'un de mes déguisements" (7).

1. Lunes en papier, p.168.

2. Lunes en papier, p.168.

3. Ibid, p.179.

4. The same paradox appears in the final line of Donne's 10th Divine Meditation: "And death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die".

5. Ibid, p.180.

6. Ibid, p.185.

7. Ibid, p.185.

Against this world of modernity, evil and death, bathed in an atmosphere of decay and immobility, the response of the seven heroes takes the form of an heroic quest to kill Death. Once more, the irony of the text operates fully, by evoking the absurdity of an attempt to kill a Death who is dying already. But it is an absurdity which Malraux makes explicit at the end of the narrative, when, by killing death, the balloons kill meaning as well. At the same time, the quest, with its obstacles, the attack on the inn and its final triumph, followed by an absurd emptiness, follows a pattern which is repeated successively in the later novels. To the immobility and decay of death, the seven adventurers oppose what may be seen as heroic values of dynamism and mobility.

The fragmentary work, known either as Ecrit pour une idole à trompe, or Journal d'un pompier du jeu de massacre, comprises three articles. The first, "Les Hérissons apprivoisés - Journal d'un pompier du jeu de massacre - publié après la mort de l'auteur avec des notes, par le sieur des Etourneaux", appeared in the review, Signaux de France et de Belgique, directed by Franz Hellens (1), in August 1921. It recounts briefly how, one night, the Pompier and his friends stay at an inn. They are visited by a strange figure, called "le Charlatan", who has seen "la Vertu", now old and ugly. As night falls, the guests in the inn are subjected to strange attacks: a battle ensues, and the Pompier is the only person to escape alive.

Like lunes en papier, this story, underneath its fantastic aspects, presents a familiar structure. The decline of "la Vertu" into ugliness is part of the generalised decomposition of European values. The attack on the inn takes place at night, a traditionally menacing time in literature, but one which, in Malraux's work, is constantly used to symbolise a metaphysical darkness (2).

1. There is a strong similarity between the atmosphere of Malraux's "fantaisiste" works and the poetry of Franz Hellens, and a novel, such as Bass Bassina-Boulou, Paris, 1922.
2. See: G.O.Rees, "Types of recurring similes in Malraux's novels", in Modern Language Notes, LXVIII, 1953, pp.373-377.

Finally, the elements of siege and imprisonment inherent in the description of the attack on the inn, conform to the typology of the later novels.

The second fragment takes place also at night. Its full title, "Journal d'un pompier du jeu de massacre. Où vont les chats qu'on voit la nuit? Fragment", relates it closely to the previous work and, by its reference to cats and the joke: "La nuit tous les chats sont gris", connects it to the "farfelu" strain in Malraux's imagination. The fragment was first published in Action, in August 1921, and, later, under the title "Divertissement", in numbers 3 and 4 of the year 1921 of Marcel Arland's review, Accords. The Pompier, in this story, is in the grounds of a château, and he witnesses a nocturnal dance of skeletons on a mysterious lake, a scene which allows Malraux to display fully his gifts of intense visual description. The climax of this fragmentary episode is the appearance of the Devil, a genial figure, but nevertheless closely allied to the Satan alluded to in Lunes en papier. In the ensuing conversation between the Pompier and the Devil, the themes of this work and of "Les Hérissons apprivoisés" are reinforced. The Devil refers to the decline of moral values: "Tout s'en va parce qu'il n'y a plus de morale" (1), and strengthens further the impression gained from the earlier texts that the world is governed by the forces of evil. He states:

"Il est permis aux personnes intelligentes de croire que j'ai créé le mal: pourtant, il est possible que le mal m'ait créé" (2).

When this extract was published in Accords, under the title "Divertissement", it was followed by a further fragment, called "Triomphe", which later appeared as a larger episode, called "Ecrit pour un ours en peluche", published in the review

1. André Malraux, "Journal d'un pompier du jeu de massacre", in Action, August 1921, and Accords, nos 3 and 4, 1924.
2. André Malraux, "Journal d'un pompier du jeu de massacre".

.900 in 1927 (1). Here, the hero is a musician in a strange town ravaged by a monstrous serpent. As in Lunes en papier, the snake is used by Malraux as an image of menace and horror (2). The townsfolk hold a competition to choose the most able musician to go out and lead the monster into captivity. The hero of the story wins the competition and sets out, only to discover that the serpent, like Death in Lunes en papier, is a woman. His triumph is achieved, not through art or heroism, but through the power of sexuality. Here, Malraux would appear to be using a parody of the Orpheus-myth; but his parody indicates a certain belief in the myth being parodied. The artist-hero, who has journeyed a long way to a beleaguered town and who goes out to confront the forces which threaten man, is a constant figure in Malraux's work, who reaches maximum prominence in the figure of Scali in L'Espoir. And the musician's reflection, as he muses on his future conquest, that if he succeeds, "je deviendrais légendaire" (3), evokes an aim which the later heroes of Malraux are forced to deal with, and which in some ways remains the motivation and justification of their action.

The theme of the heroic quest as a force able to counteract the evil of the universe and the erosion of stable values is a powerful element in this work. That such a theme is, to a certain extent, parodied is not coincidental: the references in La Tentation de l'Occident to the "conquérants morts" indicate Malraux's inability at this time to believe fully in conquest and action as a definitive solution to the problems of the West. Yet it is a solution which gradually imposes itself upon him: its seeds are in these early "fantaisiste" works, and this gradual imposition is indicated particularly clearly by the evolution of the work, Royaume-Farfelu.

1. Further bibliographical detail on Malraux's early texts is contained in André Vandegans, La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux.
2. The use of the snake as an image of threat is discussed fully in Gaston Bachelard's La Terre et les rêveries du repos, Paris, Jose Corti, 1948. Whilst acknowledging C.G.Jung's view of the snake as a predominantly sexual archetype, Bachelard sees its fascination both in its coldness (pp.265-6), and above all, its role as an image of "la dynamique imaginaire" (p.263). In Malraux's story, therefore, the snake may be seen as an image of will.
3. André Malraux, "Ecrit pour un ours en peluche", in .900, no.4, 1927. Re-printed in Balmas, Le Opere giovanili di André Malraux, p.31.

A note to the Skira edition of Malraux's collected works states that the story dates from 1920. It was published in its final form in 1928, and before that, two earlier versions were published, in 1925 and 1927. Royaume-Farfelu, therefore, more clearly than other works, indicates the evolution of Malraux's work and viewpoint during this early period.

The first part of the work, presumably the one which dates from 1920, is the most overtly "fantaisiste", and is comparable to Lunes en papier and Ecrit pour une idole à trompe. Yet, even here there is a difference: the tone is less fantastic, more subordinated to serious themes. It constitutes a poeticisation of reality rather than a whimsical and self-indulgent transformation. The second part is no longer fantastic: it is a poetic, almost lyrical description of a quest, and in its preoccupations and its dénouement, it approaches the seriousness of La Voie Royale. What is lacking is the presence and power of characters.

This impression is strengthened by the first version of the story to be published, which appeared in Indochine on August 6th 1925, under the title "L'Expédition d'Ispahan" (1). In this version, there is no fantasy, merely a poetic treatment of the situation. Unlike the final version of Royaume-Farfelu, this story takes place in the present, and not in a fairy-tale past: the army which besieges Ispahan is not yet that of the Petit-Mogol, but a Cossack army in the service of the Bolsheviks of the Russian Revolution. The narrator is not the landless wanderer of Royaume-Farfelu, but a lecturer at the University of Ektaterinberg. The atmosphere created is not unlike that of Isaac Babel's collection of short-stories, Red Cavalry. At the same time, the action of the story is much the same as that of Royaume-Farfelu: here, as in the later version,

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1. This work appeared under the name of Maurice Sainte-Rose, a half-caste friend of Malraux's, who appears in Clara Malraux's novel, Portrait de Grisélidis.

"la ville se défendait" (1), and an air of frustration and anxiety is evoked. The narrator writes of the desert: "C'est la terre de l'inquiétude" (2). Towards the end of the narrative, however, this early version differs yet again. Unlike the army of Royaume-Farfelu, the Cossack brigade finds its way into the deserted centre of Ispahan, only to lose its sense of time. The men leave a vital historical context for a place where history and time do not exist - that "nuit qui ne connaît pas l'histoire" (3) of which Malraux writes in Les Chênes qu'on abat and which is synonymous with death. Here, as in the later version, the death-blow is administered in the form of scorpions, Malraux once again using insects as an image of death and inhumanity.

Early in his work, therefore, Malraux is able to use a contemporary, albeit exotic, situation to intense mythic effect. The Cossacks dying in the Kafkaesque city which they have conquered look forward to Garine's failure-in-triumph in Canton and to the rout of the Chinese Communists in Shanghai.

It is, however, in Royaume-Farfelu itself that Malraux's fullest use of the "fantaisiste" world is to be found. An early version of the story was published under the title "Voyage aux îles Fortunées" in Commerce, in its Summer edition of 1927, and the work appeared with little alteration in book form in 1928. The very fact of the existence of three versions of the story testifies to a constant effort on Malraux's part at this time to seek a mythic context for man's action, a continuing interest in the non-realist forms of narration, and an artist's preoccupation with perfection, a preoccupation which shows itself in the revisions of Les Conquérants and La Condition humaine (4) and in Malraux's work of literary

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1. André Malraux, "L'Expédition d'Ispahan", in Indochine, 6th August 1925. Quoted in Balmas, Le Opere giovanili di André Malraux, p.31.
  2. Ibid, p.30.
  3. André Malraux, Les Chênes qu'on abat, Paris, Gallimard, 1971, p.236.
  4. For a detailed study of these revisions, see Denis Boak, "Malraux: A Note on Editions", in AUMLA, No.21, May 1964, pp.79-83.

criticism where his interest in the technique of fiction is paramount (1).

The atmosphere, the basis of Royaume-Farfelu, therefore, is substantially that of the earlier "fantaisiste" texts; but in this work the fantastic atmosphere finds its most intense creative representation to date. The description of the market in the port of the Petit-Mogol resembles that of the city of "Ecrit pour un ours en peluche", but at the same time it is not too far removed from the description of the coastline which opens La Voie Royale or from that of the Chinese market through which Kyo Gisors walks whilst waiting for the transporter-bridge to take him to Hankow (2).

Thematically, the opening of the story is similar to the themes of the earlier works. The Petit-Mogol himself sums up the atmosphere of a world of frustrated longing which has lapsed into somnolent decay. His letter to the Chinese princess is followed by his question to the narrator:

"- Parle-moi, dit-il, se tournant vers moi, de la Princesse de la Chine.  
Je ne l'avais jamais vue.

Ah! lassitude, soupira le Prince, lassitude...Moi non plus, pauvre être..."(3)

a dialogue symptomatic of a civilisation no longer able to be equal to the power of imagination of its citizens (4).

The title Royaume-Farfelu comes, of course, from Lunes en papier, where it is used as a synonym for "L'Empire de la Mort" (5), and death is continually present

1. Even in his long essay on T.E.Lawrence, "N'était-ce donc que cela?", Liberté de l'Esprit, April, May, June, 1949, Malraux appears more concerned with an evaluation of the way in which Lawrence recounts his adventure than with a critique of his subject-matter.
2. This similarity would appear to substantiate Professor Frohock's assertion that, rather than an eye-witness recorder, Malraux is above all a strongly imaginative writer. See: André Malraux and the Tragic Imagination, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1952, pp.vii-xiv.
3. André Malraux, Royaume-Farfelu, Geneva, Skira, 1945, p.138.
4. A phenomenon which forms the basis for F.Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, where, with the discovery of America, for the last time does man achieve "something commensurate to his capacity for wonder".
5. Lunes en papier, p.170.

in this work, as is the force of evil (1). There are demons present here: it is they who tear the sails from the narrator's boat and thus bring him to the court of the Petit-Mogol (2); they have been fought and defeated by the Magi, amongst whom was Idekel, the narrator's colleague on the march to Ispahan - yet the victory was not definitive, as Idekel relates:

"Je ne sais pas comment ils nous vainquirent enfin. Pendant plusieurs semaines, je ne pus sortir un seul matin sans trouver des mages illustres pendus, l'un à la suite de l'autre, aux branches des arbres de la promenade des rois d'Irkenise..." (3).

For Idekel a special punishment is reserved: he loses his will. He recounts to the narrator:

"Pour moi, je me défendis longtemps contre les sortilèges; mais en vain. J'oubliai à peu ma conscience; apprendre, enseigner, tout me devint indifférent" (4).

It is these demons who finally attack both Idekel and the narrator, in the form of anxious doubts, under the walls of Ispahan. The "Royaume-Farfelu", therefore, is an evil world, where the evil attacks the will of man, leaving only langour and boredom and inability to continue the struggle. It is a world where the gods are immeasurably diminished. In Lunes en papier, God was a senile old man; here, the gods, once great fetiches, are now mere toys. As Idekel recounts the earlier sacking of Ispahan he tells of the great cry which rose from the flames of the dying city: "Les dieux! les dieux! LES DIEUX!" (5), a cry followed anticlimatically by this description:

"Pour sortir de la mêlée, chaque soldat élevait le trophée qu'il apportait; et, au-dessus des silhouettes les unes aux autres collées, les automates, les animaux mécaniques et les poupées avançaient lentement, noirs, et ne retenant de la lumière de l'incendie qui montait que les lueurs rouges accrochées à leurs bijoux faux" (6).

1. The "Royaume-Farfelu", founded on the two qualities of illogicality and death, is equally the kingdom of the Absurd.
2. Royaume-Farfelu, p.131.
3. Ibid, p.140.
4. Royaume-Farfelu, p.140.
5. Ibid, p.141.
6. Ibid, p.142, The phenomenon of the great fire obviously fascinates Malraux. It recurs most strikingly in his description, in the Antimémoires, of his entry into Nuremburg, where similarly the gods of the dead regime are now useless. See: Antimémoires, Paris, Gallimard, 1967, pp.56-57.



Not only are the gods mere toys (1), but even their jewels are false, a note which symbolises their entire inauthenticity.

To this world of declining values and static torpor, there is now posed the now familiar, dynamic pattern of the quest - the march on Ispahan. This dynamic value is present already in the person of the narrator. In the Petit-Mogol's prison he reflects on the beauties of his home, but concludes:

"Mers d'Asie... j'attends la pâle lumière des méduses qui flotte sur vos vagues tièdes, sur les galères infidèles coulées en proie aux coraux noirs et aux poissons immobiles au-dessus des squelettes enchaînés des rameurs... Barques et vaisseaux d'Orient, votre odeur, en mon coeur, repose" (2).

and even after the catastrophe of Ispahan, he is still unable to remain immobile.

He muses:

"peut-être prendrai-je passage sur l'un des bateaux qui font voile pour les îles Fortunées. J'ai soixante ans à peine..." (3).

The narrator is a representative of that phenomenon which Herman Melville, in Moby Dick, in the person of the sailor Bulkington, describes as "landlessness": the inability to remain in comfort and security, the impulsion to seek out the "îles Fortunées" which ever recede over the horizon. In this, he represents one of the essential qualities of the man of will.

His role in the story is significant. A traveller from afar, he joins an expedition whose purpose is conquest, a conquest which stands in direct opposition to the state of dissatisfaction and loss of values which precedes it and from which it is born. It is a pattern which is already present in Lunes en papier and Ecrit pour une idole à trompe, and, like these works, Royaume-farfelu follows to some extent the typology established by Medieval phenomena such as the Grail-quest, with its search for an absolute in a magic world against many obstacles, or the Crusades which, in their search for salvation, journey towards battle and conquest in the East.

Yet, far from presenting a solution to the problems from which the expedition

1. A description which constitutes a neat inversion of the traditional typology, by which men are the playthings of the gods, and which signifies a total collapse of the traditional value-system.
2. Royaume-Farfelu, p.134.
3. Ibid, p.152.

has escaped, it serves merely to bring those problems nearer and to make them more dangerous and more acute. The walled city fails to divulge its secret, and the army is beset by an "ennui" more terrible than that of the Petit Mogol. And the attacks of the scorpions, one of the most threatening images in Malraux's hierarchy of the dead, bring the presence of disaster even closer. Paradoxically, the expedition has succeeded only in illuminating the horror of the "condition d'homme" (1), which finds its most graphic expression in the attacks of the scorpions and the "mercenaires du Gange" burning the bodies of their dead comrades. Once more, Malraux uses the pattern of an heroic expedition which fails, and which, by so doing, brings about an even deeper awareness of the problems of the human condition which it sought to solve.

In addition, Royaume-Farfelu contains two further elements which are of interest. Like the musicians of "Ecrit pour un ours en peluche", the narrator and Idekel are both artists. The narrator himself makes the expedition to Ispahan in the role of "historiographe du Prince" (2), the role of a man who is both involved in the action yet necessarily detached from it, in order that he may give it artistic form (3). Idekel defines his past role as that of a magus, and the speech of his demon outside the city of Ispahan ends with the threatening words: "Songe à ta mort, artiste..." (4).

Furthermore, Malraux is careful to set his story in a context which has created its own framework of myths. Before the expedition leaves, a Prince recounts to the Petit Mogol how he delivered his daughter to the "Tsar mangeur de poissons", and recalls:

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1. Ibid, p.149.
  2. Royaume-Farfelu, p.139.
  3. His function prefigures exactly that of Kassner, in Le Temps du mépris, who is seen by his fellow-communists as both "le compagnon... et le chroniqueur futur de leurs jours accablés" (p.22).
  4. Royaume-Farfelu, p.148.

"J'ai entendu le chant de guerre d'un chef sauvage prisonnier plongé dans la cuve aux serpents et qui mourrait, brandissant en chantant ses mains pleines de vipères comme des noeuds rompus" (1).

This is a vivid image of heroism in imprisonment and death, reminiscent of Malraux's later description, in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, of the song of the mad Nietzsche in the railway-tunnel as he was brought home from Turin. As the expedition moves towards Ispahan, Idekel relates to the narrator two events which serve further to set the story in a mythical context. He recounts:

"L'empereur Basile II... que nous autres, historiens, appelons le Bulgaroctane, fit aveugler les innombrables combattants bulgares qu'il avait faits prisonniers. Il les rangea par files de dix, qui se tinrent par la main, et leur donna pour guide un onzième prisonnier auquel il ne fit arracher qu'un seul oeil. L'armée qui avait fait voeu de prendre Byzance s'en revint ainsi en Bulgarie, par un grand froid, à travers les monts sauvages et les compagnes stériles. Pendant des siècles on reconnut sa route à la ligne infinie des tombeaux des soldats aveugles, hautes pierres que surmontaient, comme des cibles, des yeux ouverts. Le prince Vlad de Transylvanie, lors de sa grand retraite, fit jucher dans les arbres les cadavres des Turcs. Les troupes du Sultan, bien des années après, lorsqu'elles purent avancer à nouveau sur le chemin des invasions, durent marcher entre d'interminables rangées d'arbres garnis de squelettes dans lesquels les vautours et les cigognes avaient fait leur nid, avec des branches mortes plus grosses que les os des côtes. Des armes rouillées pendaient..." (2).

These two episodes take their place beside the versions of the Viking-like death of the grandfather of Dunkirk, the death of Perken's uncle and Clappique's narration of the death of Attila. They serve to raise the events of the narrative to a higher, epic plane, and to emphasise the general, eternal nature of the situations encountered. Here, Malraux presents examples of cruelty, but in special circumstances: the blind army and the columns of skeletons signal the approaching failure of the expedition; they stand as a warning of the eternal nature of the human condition and the constant dangers that accompany conquest. Malraux's creation, in his fiction, of his own internal myths, serves to evoke an

1. Ibid, p.136. The episode marks an accentuation of the snake-imagery contained in Lunes en papier and "Ecrit pour un ours en peluche" to the extent that it becomes a fate-image similar to Racine's evocation of the Erinnyes in Andromaque, where Oreste cries:

"He bien! filles d'enfer, vos mains sont-elles prêtes?

Pour qui sont ces serpents qui sifflent sur vos têtes?" (lines 1637-8).

2. Royaume-Farfelu, p.143. The reference to the dual lines of corpses lining a road evokes the Spartacus legend, which has attracted the attention of Camus, in L'Homme révolté, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Idées", p.137, and of Arthur Koestler, who bases a novel, The Gladiators, on the subject. In both cases, the political dimensions of the legend are dealt with in depth.

atmosphere of tragic inevitability (1).

The early fictional works of Malraux, therefore, provide an interesting corollary to the essays on Europe. The world they depict is substantially the same, one from which the old Gods have departed, where there are no established values, where evil, "ennui" and frustration are rampant. It is in their response to this world, however, that the "fantaisiste" works of interest. Malraux's grim concluding chapter of La Tentation de l'Occident, with its "conquérants morts", reflects the plight of a whole generation; the "fantaisiste" works examine that plight by posing the problems of conquest, a conquest analysed often in parody and which rarely succeeds. The "conquérants morts" of the Tentation de l'Occident find their echo in the opening of Royaume-Farfelu, where

"à la frontière des deux Indes, sous des arbres aux feuilles serrées comme des bêtes, un conquérant abandonné s'endort sous son armure noire, entouré de singes inquiets" (2).

At the same time, Royaume-Farfelu is the story of a conquest, a conquest which continues beyond the confines of the book. "J'ai soixante ans à peine..." - the narrator's voyage will go on until he becomes Perken and Garine and Ferral and the mercenaries of L'Espoir and Vincent Berger, until he becomes the New Man, until the "îles Fortunées" are his. Yet the early works of Malraux pose the question as to whether, now that the old conquerors of European civilisation are dead, they and their values may be resurrected, and whether the New Man can be built upon those values. Lunes en papier, "Ecrit pour une idole à trompe" and Royaume-Farfelu show clearly enough the dangers of such an enterprise, but even more they show its necessity. In these works, Malraux discovers the pattern of a response to the problems of Europe, a pattern which leads the hero, no less than Dürer's knight, of whom Nietzsche writes in The Birth of Tragedy, to walk between death and the Devil, and which demands the exercise of the will.

1. The blinding of the Bulgarian army by Basile II looks forward to the fate of Grabot, in La Voie Royale, a conqueror finally punished by fate.
2. Royaume-Farfelu, p.131.

It is this pattern which forms the basis of the novels themselves, transformed by a greater intensity of feeling, by a more immediate contact between the author and the situation, a more immediate relationship between the author and his characters. Yet it would be false to see a sharp break between the novels and the "fantaisiste" works. The adventurers who are Malraux's heroes are in a real, recognisable world, but that world is none the less subjected to a certain stylisation by which its essential aspects can be emphasised. As Malraux himself writes:

"L'aventure commence par le dépaysement, au travers duquel l'aventurier finira fou, roi, ou solitaire; elle est le réalisme de la féerie" (1).

The phrase "réalisme de la féerie" emphasises the continuity which exists between the novels and the "fantaisiste" stories: both are "féerique", but the novels depict a world whose characteristics are rigorously analysed and portrayed, and whose metaphysical base rests, initially, on the person of the adventurer.

The dissatisfaction with Europe, with its static and decaying values and its search for the New Man, is translated easily into an interest in the adventurer. For, in his person are united many of the solutions to the problems of the West: he is dynamic, an enemy of static qualities; to be an adventurer he must reject the civilisation from which he comes; he is, above all, the representative of that one value of the West which may be salvaged and which may, in turn, save the West: the will. Thus, the adventurer expresses the will to reject, the will to landlessness, and, particularly, the will to assume, in his own person, the elemental struggle against those forces which restrict and bind

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1. André Malraux, Marginal note in Gaëtan Picon, Malraux par lui-même, Paris, Seuil, Coll. "Ecrivains de toujours", 1961, p.80. Malraux's reference to "dépaysement" coincides with Chestov, Sur les confins de la vie (L'Apothéose du dépaysement), Paris, 1927. The notion of adventure-literature as "le réalisme de la féerie" is similar to the ideas of MacOrlan, expressed in Le Petit manuel du parfait aventurier.

man. He is the prophet of the possible (1).

It is in the adventurer of Malraux's novels that may be seen at its clearest the metaphysical nature of the will. By necessity, in order to carry out his role of adventurer, he must seek out and inhabit a world reduced to elemental problems, a world of extreme situations, unrestricted by the complexities of daily existence. When Gaëtan Picon refers to Man in Malraux's novels as:

"un homme réduit à ses sommets, à sa part de volonté et de conscience  
un homme abstrait de tout ce qui n'est pas le meilleur" (2),

his words are particularly applicable to the adventurer, to the man like Perken, who is outside any collective human experience, to men like Ferral and Garine who are above that experience. It is in Perken, Claude and Grabot, in Garine and in Ferral that the essential metaphysical nature of Malraux's understanding of the will is to be sought. It is true that the will exists as a motivating force in most of Malraux's heroes: it exists in Kyo and Katow, in Kassner and Magnin, in Scali and Garcia. But in these cases, it is a mixed motivation, where the will is at the service of another ideal, with which, indeed, it often tends to conflict. In the person of the adventurer, however, the will is in a pure state, heeding only itself and concerned only with its own elemental battles.

As such, it tends to make use of that interior mythic structure visible in the "fantaisiste" works. La Voie Royale presents a two-fold quest: a quest for treasure and the quest for a kingdom. The passage of Perken and Claude Vannec through "les Portes de la Mort" is an entry into a highly stylised world, that of the jungle. The novel depends also upon references back to past heroic figures whose heroism and will set the context for the action and movement of Claude and

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1. The specific nature of the adventurer as a figure of the 1920's in literature must be emphasised. Whilst he may embrace some of the qualities of the Romantic hero, there is a non-introspective toughness about him which characterises him, and which is exhibited in the three men analysed in Roger Stéphane's Portrait de l'aventurier, Ernst von Salomon, T.E. Lawrence, and Malraux.
  2. Gaëtan Picon, Malraux par lui-même, p.61.

Perken. Malraux writes of Claude:

"Perken était de la famille des seuls hommes auxquels son grand-père - qui l'avait élevé - se sentit lié" (1),

and he proceeds to devote five pages of the novel to the recounting of the uncompromising and grim life of this old man who finally died a "mort de vieux Viking" (2). In the same way, at the end of the novel, as Perken lies dying, the memory of his uncle is evoked:

"Il se souvint d'un de ses oncles, hobereau danois qui après mille folies s'était fait ensevelir sur son cheval mort soutenu par des pieux, en roi hun, attentif durant son agonie à chasser par la volonté de ne pas crier une seule fois, malgré l'appel de tous ses nerfs, l'effroyable épouvante qui secouait ses épaules comme une danse de Saint-Guy..." (3).

Malraux's purpose here is not merely to raise the narrative to an epic level, but also to express in a mythic, and hence universal way, the nature of the conflicts in the novel itself. The heroic, archaic death of Claude's grandfather is an essential point of reference for Claude in his action; far more so is the fate of the Danish uncle which is not only, in its turn, finding its own referential point in the pattern of the Hun kings, but which also affirms the will of man against death and against the weakness of the body. As such, it contributes in large measure to the ironical ingredient in Perken's death.

The novel portrays the experiences of three adventurers, Claude, Perken and Grabot; and each adventurer represents a different aspect of the same role. It is not enough to see the relationship between Claude and Perken solely on the basis of that between master and neophyte. Certainly Claude is initiated by Perken into the combat with the jungle and the presence of sickness and death, but in other ways he follows an autonomous destiny. He is, initially, the conscious mouthpiece in the novel for Malraux's criticisms of European civilisation. The beginning of the novel expresses ideas which follow directly from the essays on Europe, and which constitute Claude's motivation for the voyage to the East. His rejection of post-war Europe and his contempt for his European

1. La Voie Royale, p.16.
2. Ibid, p.21.
3. Ibid, p.174.

fellow-passengers situate him clearly in that generation of dissatisfied youth which Malraux describes in "D'une jeunesse européenne". He is initially an example of that will to reject which is the necessary precondition for Malraux's search for a new value-system.

Yet his expedition to Indochina has a motivation which goes beyond the considerations of the essays on Europe. Even before the voyage, Claude has analysed and, finally, judged Europe and its culture: in this context, a journey to Indochina can teach him nothing further about the civilisation he despises. The voyage is already part of Malraux's antidote to the sterility of the West: Claude's expedition to the Khmer temples is part of a search for an extreme experience, and, ultimately, for money which will mean independence and power. In this aspect, he foreshadows Ferral.

In a crucial scene in the early part of the novel, Claude returns to his cabin after a deep conversation with Perken. He reflects on the state of Europe, on its inability to satisfy him and his aspirations. For him, the crime of his fellow-Europeans lies in the fact that they have accepted the unacceptable state of their culture in return for petty consideration. He reflects:

"La soumission à l'ordre de l'homme sans enfants et sans dieu est la plus grande des soumissions à la mort" (1).

For Claude, it is this very absence of God which necessitates a refusal to submit. He continues:

"L'absence de finalité donnée à la vie était devenue une condition de l'action" (2).

For submission is death:

"accepter vivant la vanité de son existence, comme un cancer, vivre avec cette tiédeur de mort dans la main..." (3).

And his mind leaps joyfully to the solution:

1. La Voie Royale, p.37.

2. Ibid, p.37.

3. Ibid, pp.37-38. The presence of death, with its resultant feeling of absurdity, indicates the continuing atmosphere of Royaume-Farfelu.



"Posséder plus que lui-même, échapper à la vie de poussière des hommes qu'il voyait chaque jour..." (1).

It is for this reason that he comes to Asia. When Perken asks him: "Au fait, que veut dire arriver pour vous?", he replies promptly: "Agir au lieu de rêver"(2). The desire for action, for a field of action, is already within him, independent of any influence which Perken exercises upon him. If Claude seeks out Perken on the boat, it is because of an affinity between the two men, based on qualities present already in both. If Perken is the bearer of a will tempered by maturity and subject to the problems which this entails, Claude Vannec is no less the bearer of a will, but in its youthful and pure state. Significantly, after the experience of the jungle and the flight from the Moïs with the dying Perken, it is his will alone which remains the constant value. Having chosen to remain with Perken on his journey back to his kingdom, rather than returning to Bangkok, he realises finally that "il ne connaîtrait jamais, de lui-même, que sa volonté"(3).

It is also Claude, rather than Perken, who is allowed to exhibit his will in the strongest and most unambiguous way. This concerns the battle and confrontation with the statue in the ruined temple, a confrontation which leaves Perken oddly diminished. Malraux writes:

"Claude ne quittait pas la pierre du regard... Nette, solide, lourde, sur ce fond tremblant de feuilles et de ronds de soleil; chargée d'hostilité. Il ne distinguait pas les raies, ni la poussière du grès; les dernières fourmis étaient parties, sans oublier un seul de leurs oeufs mous. Cette pierre était là, opiniâtre, être vivant, passif et capable de refus. En Claude montait une sourde et stupide colère: il s'arc-bouta et poussa le bloc de toute sa force. Son exaspération croissait, cherchant un objet. Perken, le marteau en l'air, le suivait du regard la bouche à demi ouverte. Cet homme qui connaissait si bien la forêt ignorait tout des pierres. Ah! avoir été maçon six mois! Faire tirer les hommes, tous à la fois, sur une corde?... Autant gratter avec les ongles. Et comment passer une corde? Cependant, c'était sa vie

1. La Voie Royale, p.38.

2. Ibid, p.27.

3. Ibid, p.155. The sense of decline which Perken experiences as a disappearance of his strength is reminiscent of the statement by Hernani, in the course of the speech in which he evokes his dead comrades: "Je suis une force qui va!" (Hernani, Act III, Scene 4, line 992).

menacée qui était là... Sa vie. Tout l'entêtement, la volonté tendue, toute la fureur dominée qui l'avait guidé à travers cette forêt, tendaient à découvrir cette barrière, cette pierre immobile dressée entre la Siam et lui" (1).

This description represents a key moment in the novel, for it unites in one situation so many of the preoccupations of the author. The stone, like Perken and Claude themselves, has been subject to the ravages of the forest, its decomposition and its insects with their soft eggs. Against these forces of dissolution, it has remained solid and firm, immortal as a work of art. Yet if it has remained untouched, it is not to help Claude and Perken in their quest, but rather to stand as the ultimate resistance of the forces of the earth, the ultimate and ironic barrier to the adventurer's goal. In this way, it isolates Claude in his struggle: Perken, with his lack of experience, is useless here; even the strength of the men with them is derisory. The battle between Claude and the stone is an elemental single combat, between the human will and the resistance of man's environment raised to the level of absurdity. As Gaston Bachelard writes, in La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté:

"Le monde résistant promeut le sujet dans le règne de l'existence dynamique, dans l'existence par le devenir actif, d'où un existentialisme de la force" (2).

In this dynamic existence, in this elemental battle, it is Claude who is finally victorious; it is his will which is able to triumph over resistance and gain the art-treasure. In Claude Vannec, therefore, Malraux shows the will incompatible with a decaying European civilisation and which must reject it, as an aspiration to power, over the subject, and finally as a force which, in an elemental struggle with a stone representing an absurd barrier to man, is able to achieve at least a temporary victory.

1. La Voie Royale, pp.80-81.

2. Gaston Bachelard, La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté, Paris, Joseph Corti, 1948, p.39. The sexual quality of the struggle with the stone, which Malraux emphasises, serves further to invert the relationship between Claude and Perken. In the opening pages of the novel, it is Perken who is the sexual expert and Claude the initiate. In the battle with the stone the roles are reversed, a fact which already announces Perken's decline.

Yet, if Claude Vannec is the purest, most direct example of the will in action, the case of Perken is more complex. Like Claude, he has his mythic antecedent - the Danish nobleman with his heroic death. This serves to place him in an heroic context, a mythic context which Malraux sees as essential to the adventurer. As the captain of the ship remarks of Perken: "tout aventurier est né d'un mythomane" (1). But Malraux's discussion of the role of mythomania in the person of the adventurer is ambiguous. Perken is mythomaniac to the extent that he needs a continuing concept of action, his own action included, as a basis for his adventure. He accepts the myth of the hero and inserts himself into that myth. Where he breaks with mythomania, however, is in his refusal to aspire to become myth itself. Already on the ship he has, like the adventurer Mayrena, become a legend, but a legend which serves only as titillation and vicarious excitement for those Europeans who have abdicated all use of their will. Above all, his legend does not interest Perken. In this context, his statement on Mayrena is revealing:

"Je pense que c'était un homme avide de jouer sa biographie, comme un acteur joue un rôle. Vous, Français, vous aimez ces hommes qui attachent plus d'importance à... voyons, oui... à bien jouer le rôle qu'à vaincre"(2).

For Perken, to play a role, to seek to become a legend, is to distance oneself from one's own actions: it becomes, in a sense, an escape from a situation rather than its domination, and hence inauthentic (3). Yet it is the domination of situations and authenticity of action which constitute the values by which Perken seeks to master his destiny. At the very beginning of the novel, he is introduced as "la seule personne du bateau qui prononcât le mot: énergie, avec simplicité" (4),

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1. La Voie Royale, p.16.

2. Ibid, p.12.

3. Malraux's analysis of inauthenticity here coincides with that of Sartre, who, as an example of "mauvaise foi", cites the new and nervous waiter, and writes: "il joue à être garçon de café" (Jean-Paul Sartre, L'Etre et le néant, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p.99).

4. La Voie Royale, p.11.

a comment which emphasises the intimate and authentic links between Perken and his will.

As Claude's reflections on Perken lead him to imagine the death of the adventurer Odend'hal, attacked by hostile natives, he considers: "on a rarement la chance de combattre" (1). For Perken, as for Claude, the value of combat is immense, and, substantially, the adversary of both of them is the same. Behind the mutual rejection of Europe and the search for the possession of something more than themselves - for Claude, the quest for the bas-reliefs which will give him money and power, for Perken, the kingdom - there lies the presence of death, a fact which Claude suddenly realises during a conversation with Perken, of which Malraux writes:

"Et tout à coup, Claude découvrit ce qui le liait à cet homme qui l'avait accepté sans qu'il comprît bien pourquoi: l'obsession de la mort" (2).

Yet, at this very point, the difference between the two men becomes apparent. Both may be obsessed with death, but for Claude it is still an exterior force, whereas for Perken it is already a part of him. For Malraux, at this time, the significance of death lies in the way in which it is a final limitation of human energy and freedom, a limitation which renders those qualities absurd. The tragedy for Perken is that this limitation is already beginning within himself, whereas for Claude, with his youth, it remains exterior. It is highly significant that, whereas Claude's will is expressed in his battle with the stone, an attempt to master an external object, Perken's will must find a more complex expression in a battle with his own body, which is gradually invaded by old age and the poison of the "pointe de guerre". The reference to his uncle is for this reason in no way gratuitous: like the Danish nobleman, Perken must direct his will against "l'appel de tous ses nerfs", as the onset of death becomes immediate. It is a question of maintaining his presence within the heroic mythical context.

1. La Voie Royale, p.11. For the way in which Perken is to some extent modelled upon Odend'hal, see the article by André Vandegans, "Un personnage de Malraux: Perken", in Revue des Langues Vivantes, XXXI, 1965-6.
2. *Ibid*, p.36.

Perken is highly conscious of the implications of his own aging. He remarks to Claude:

"Vieillir, c'est tellement plus grave! - Accepter son destin, la niche à chien élevée sur sa vie unique... On ne sait pas ce qu'est la mort quand on est jeune..." (1),

and he sees clearly that it is Claude's youth which is his most vital force:

"Je vous souhaite de mourir jeune, Claude, comme j'ai souhaité peu de choses au monde... Vous ne soupçonnez pas ce que c'est que d'être prisonnier de sa propre vie" (2).

The process of aging subjects the will to destiny, it is only youth which allows the will its full freedom. At this point Malraux joins that literature which glorifies the value of youth, "la littérature juvéniste", and which is symptomatic of the immediate post-war years. As Micheline Tison-Braun points out:

"L'action est, avec la Vie, l'un des mots clefs de la littérature juvéniste" (3).

But Perken adds a warning which renders the literature of youth more pathetic:

"La jeunesse est une religion dont il faut toujours finir par se convertir" (4).

Micheline Tison-Braun's statement is interesting, for if the literature of youth sees as its values life and action, once life begins to fade, it can be resuscitated only by action. In this way, action becomes necessarily a force turned against death and limitation. In La Voie Royale, Malraux is concerned with discovering to what extent the will can be successfully employed against the process of age, to what extent it can maintain the values of life and youth. As Perken remarks to Claude:

"Ce qui pèse sur moi, c'est - comment dire? ma condition d'homme: que je vieillisse... le temps, voilà" (5).

And he concludes:

"Ces termites vivent dans leur termitière, soumis à leur termitière, je ne veux pas être soumis" (6).

1. Ibid, p.36. This remark exemplifies the importance for Malraux of the youth cult, a cult criticised in a cynical remark by Céline, in Voyage au bout la nuit, "ce n'est peut-être que cela sa jeunesse, de l'entraîner à vieillir", coll. Livre de poche, p.286.
2. La Voie Royale, p.58.
3. Micheline Tison-Braun, La Crise de l'humanisme, II, Paris, Nizet, 1958, p.129.
4. La Voie Royale, p.59.
5. Ibid, p.107.
6. Ibid. p.107.

In spite of their common obsession with death, their common embodiment of the values of will and action, their common desire to possess more than themselves, Perken's attempt against submission takes a different form from that of Claude, who seeks money as a means to power over his own destiny. Perken seeks immortality, but not that of the mythomaniac. His immortality is that of the father in his son, but immeasurably stronger. It is in this context that Perken's familiar affirmation "je veux laisser une cicatrice sur la carte" (1), must be seen. He describes his kingdom to Claude:

"J'ai tenté sérieusement ce que Mayrena a voulu tenter en se croyant sur la scène de vos théâtres. Être roi est idiot; ce qui compte, c'est de faire un royaume" (2),

and continues:

"Exister dans un grand nombre d'hommes, et peut-être pour longtemps. Je veux laisser une cicatrice sur la carte. Puisque je dois jouer contre ma mort, j'aime mieux jouer contre vingt tribus qu'avec un enfant... Je voulais cela comme mon père voulait la propriété de son voisin, comme je veux des femmes" (3).

Thus is Perken's aim defined: immortality, not as a diversion for a weak civilisation, but as a real part of the lives of a great number of men, immortality as a myth. His will-against-death is a will to power, a power which will continue after his death and which will thereby defeat it. In order to accomplish this aim, however, Perken must maintain his kingdom, a task which demands a constant exercise of the will. Like Claude, he needs money, not for itself, but in order to buy the machine-guns which will guarantee his kingdom's survival and his own immortality. He must therefore journey once more into the hostile forest where the will is assailed by the most dangerous forces.

His enterprise comes ironically close to success. Claude's struggle with the stone ends in victory; Perken's march across the clearing towards the menacing natives is at the same time the moment of his greatest success and of his defeat.

1. La Voie Royale, p.60.

2. Ibid, p.60. This expression of faith in the concrete action of the will to power and contempt for the dandyism of the adventurer-king is not constant in Malraux's work. In the episode of the Antimémoires which deals with Mayrena, his comment "Je suis roi" is treated seriously.

3. Ibid, p.60.

He subdues the natives, but, by falling on the "pointe de guerre", he brings the poison into his body which, in turn, will subdue him. At this point, all the hostile forces around him, against which he has fought so successfully, rise up and combat him in his own body. The forest is decomposition: the poison decomposes Perken; the natives, likened to insects, are symbols of inhumanity: Perken, too, will lose his humanity; the natives and the forest are barriers which separate Perken from his kingdom: it is his sickness which will prove to be the final and most absolute barrier to his aims (1). The poison in him completes the work of time, and accentuates it; already its presence has been felt in Perken's earlier moments of impotence. The effect of the gangrene is to alienate him from events, even from his own body. He is forced to watch, helpless, as the punitive column, the return in strength of those values of civilisation so despised by Claude and Perken, marches on to the inevitable destruction of his kingdom and his immortality.

The tragedy of Perken, however, does not lie merely in the fact of his failure. There is another ingredient which is more sinister, and of great implication for Malraux's understanding of the will. Throughout his life, Perken's values are subordinated to one value, that of the will. It is this which leads him to a life of action in the jungle, and then to a life of domination. What he discovers, retreating sick and inglorious from the natives and the column, is that the will cannot stand up intact to the ravages of the body and the frustration of ambition. Malraux's heroes are often characterised by a speech-mannerism. The speech of Perken, in his conversations with Claude, is marked by a certain care, a hesitancy, even, in expression - the hesitancy of man striving for honesty with himself. Yet, during the retreat back to his kingdom, his speech is marked by a refusal to accept his imminent death which amounts to "mauvaise foi".

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1. For a more complete analysis of the rich image-patterns in this novel, see the unpublished Harvard Ph.D. thesis, by Ralph Tarika: Imagery in the Novels of André Malraux, and the same author's "Ironical figures in Malraux's Novels", in Image and Theme: Studies in Modern French Fiction, ed. W.M. Frohock, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1969.

Whilst ordering the chieftain, Savan, to attack the column before it is too late, he breaks off, and says, in French, to Claude: "Mais d'ici-là... je serai peut-être mort", and Malraux adds: "Saisissant accent: de nouveau, il croyait à sa vie" (1). And later, whilst giving instructions to Claude concerning the way in which the column must be fought, he breaks off:

"Pourvu que j'arrive! Saloperie de fièvre... Quant j'en sors, je voudrais au moins..." (2).

It is true that he regains control of his lucidity and says:

"Il faudrait que ma mort au moins les oblige à être libres" (3),

but Perken exhibits a definite hesitancy in the way in which he faces his death. The "hobereau danois" needed all his strength of will to restrain the revulsion of his body at approaching death. Perken discovers not only how strong that revulsion can be, but also that the will itself may abandon its dedication to truth in exchange for comforting hope.

It is in this experience above all that Perken's relationship to Claude must be seen as that of the initiator. He serves as a brutal example of the dangers which threaten the will, and as such is an inevitable prefiguration of the fate which awaits Claude. Yet, if Perken foreshadows the destiny of Claude, his own tragedy is prefigured by the fate of the third adventurer, Grabot, who illuminates a further important aspect of Malraux's understanding of the will.

Grabot is not a man who communicates in words or ideas. Unlike Perken or Claude, he is no intellectual. The three words he pronounces in the novel are cries from the bottom of his soul, brutal intuitive reactions to his fate. When first discovered at his wheel in the Moï hut, his one halting word "Rien" expresses his total state. As Malraux writes of him: "c'était un homme qui disait sa vérité" (4). Again, when the three men have barricaded themselves in the hut,

1. La Voie Royale, p.171.

2. La Voie Royale, p.177.

3. Ibid, p.177.

4. Ibid, p.119.



his cry "ouai?" (1) is the expression of the most profound hatred, and his rejection of Perken's suggestions for escape with the interjection "Con!" (2) is an affirmation of the total futility of human effort. Grabot's presence, for Claude, fulfils the same purpose as the notion of time for Perken: it is "cette preuve de sa condition d'homme" (3). Yet his earlier manifestations of the will have been of the same order as these profound cries. They are linked to Perken's use of the will against the process of ageing, but they lack the articulacy of Perken. They are, rather, immediate responses to a particular aspect of the human condition.

This aspect shows itself first of all in indications of human weakness. Perken recounts to Claude Grabot's experience with a black scorpion:

"Pour avoir éprouvé une violente répulsion en voyant un, il est allé se faire piquer exprès" (4).

Royaume-Farfelu indicates amply Malraux's use of scorpions to represent some of the more dangerous forces which are set against man; in La Voie Royale, he continues this practice, by using insects, particularly ants, to show inhumanity and degradation. In this context, Grabot's initial fear and revulsion at the sight of a scorpion is an expression of weakness, of surrender to those aspects of life which denigrate man. Yet Grabot's subsequent reaction constitutes a reassertion of the will by assuming the fate he had previously feared, and hence triumphing over his condition (5).

His reaction to weakness is illuminated by further information given by Perken. Earlier in the novel, during a discussion on eroticism, Perken describes a fetishist whose practise it was to be bound and then beaten by women. He later

1. Ibid, p.125.
2. Ibid, p.126.
3. Ibid, p.126.
4. La Voie Royale, p.97.
5. The alternation between humiliation and action would appear to contain a strongly masochistic element found not only in Grabot, but also in the experience of T.E.Lawrence, particularly in the narration of his capture and beating by the Turks in Deraa, in Seven Pillars of Wisdom.

reveals that this person was Grabot, and concludes:

"Mais lui en est atrocement humilié...

- De ce qu'on le sache?

- On ne le sait pas. De le faire. Alors, il compense. C'est sans doute pour cela qu'il est venu ici... le courage compense..." (1).

For Grabot, therefore, the will is initially a reaction against weakness, and subsequently against the humiliation which the recognition of that weakness entails. It is this will which leads him to blind himself in one eye, this same will which brings him to the jungle and to a fate which prefigures that of Perken.

There is a curious irony in Grabot's fate, however; it was out of emotional rage at his treatment by a doctor that he blinded himself in one eye: as a prisoner of the Moïs, he is totally blinded. He breaks away, in an act of will whose main purpose is compensation, from the humiliation of the brothel, only to be discovered in a situation in the Moï village which is an atrocious parody of it. Moreover, there is a pattern of imagery in the novel which suggests a connection between Grabot's uncontrollable sexual urge and his blindness. Grabot's fate is one of universal implications: as a humiliated prisoner, he is the very image of the human condition, a modern Oedipus (2). Yet the suggestion remains that there is a strangely circular aspect to Grabot's fate, which might indicate that, when the will becomes merely a violent emotional reaction arising from deep inadequacies, it can lead only to failure (3).

La Voie Royale, like the "fantaisiste" works preceding it, is of an epic structure, involving the journey of heroes towards a difficult goal. Its landscape, like that of Royaume-Farfelu, is more symbolic than realistic: the jungle is not merely the factual jungle of Indochina, but the embodiment of the human condition in all its worst aspects. That the entrance to this land is through the "Portes de la Mort", serves to indicate that the novel takes place in

1. La Voie Royale, p.106.

2. The fate of Grabot echoes the fate of the "chef sauvage", in Royaume-Farfelu, who is cast into "la cuve aux serpents".

3. For this reason, the failure of Grabot looks forward to those of Hong and Tchen.

a world dominated by the central problem of man's fate, the fact of death itself. As Perken remarks:

"Vous savez aussi bien que moi que la vie n'a aucun sens: à vivre seul - on n'échappe guère à la préoccupation de son propre destin... La mort est là, comprenez-vous, comme... comme l'irréfutable preuve de l'absurdité de la vie" (1).

Against death and absurdity, Malraux shows the will as a strong force, but one which, alone, cannot be definitively victorious. In its struggle with the external forces of the environment, it may win, as Claude finally masters the stone (2), but when the forces become interiorised, as weakness and humiliation in Grabot, and the process of age and illness in Perken, then its battle becomes harder and leads eventually to solitary defeat.

An interesting comment on the novel is contained in the Antimémoires. As Malraux narrates his departure from Singapore for Hongkong and his flight over the landscape of his novel, he reflects:

"en 1965, au-dessus du Pacifique, je pense au jeune homme de 1928 qui se rendait à Batoum, et arpentait le pont d'un cargo dans le détroit de Messine, l'un des plus beaux paysages du monde, en inventant dans un rayonnant matin italien ce paysage, ou plutôt cet holocauste" (3).

The character is Perken, and the holocaust his battle with his destiny.

Malraux writes:

"Le livre et le personnage sont nés d'une méditation sur ce que l'homme peut contre la mort. D'où ce type de héros sans cause, prêt à risquer la torture pour la seule idée qu'il a de lui-même, et peut-être pour une sorte de saisie fulgurante de son destin - parce que le risque de la torture lui paraît seul vainqueur de la mort" (4).

He goes on to compare Perken to Dostoevsky's Kirilov (5), but for Kirilov, as for Perken, death does not come so easily, nor so unambiguously, as he imagines.

1. La Voie Royale, p.106.
2. Malraux's remark, in his London speech of 1936, "Sur l'Héritage culturel", that "l'adversaire de l'homme n'est pas l'homme, c'est la terre", is not merely a statement of political generosity, but a recognition that, only in its dealings with the inanimate, is the will an unambiguous force. See Commune, September 1936, p.7.
3. Antimémoires, p.473.
4. Ibid, p.473.
5. Camus, in Le Mythe de Sisyphe, similarly chooses Kirilov as an example of a response to the absurd.

The will, in its crucial battle with death, encounters forces the very complexity of which it is unable totally to imagine.

This reflection on La Voie Royale is preceded by Clappique's long and fascinating scenario for a film, Le Règne du malin, based on the adventurer Marie-David de Mayrena, "un type auquel vous vous êtes intéressé au temps de La Voie Royale" (1), and the scenario sheds further light upon Malraux's view of the role of the adventurer (2).

The problem which this scenario illuminates is that of the difference between Perken and Mayrena and the antipathy which the former feels for the latter. Perken insists that what makes Mayrena's action inauthentic is his desire to play a part. In the Antimémoires, Clappique is at pains to emphasise this very aspect of the adventurer, the danger of mythomania.

This danger begins with a certain idea that Mayrena has of himself, and which concerns a factual and moral aristocracy. In his conversation with the bishop at Qui Nhon, he guarantees his good faith in the following, characteristic way:

"et la République peut changer de foi avec chaque ministère, mais un gentilhomme n'en change pas!" (3).

This aristocratic ethic is a vital force in him: he recites the Mayrena family motto, speaks of the family château, and marches into the Indochinese jungle under his own banner.

Mayrena is, therefore, in a certain epic context, similar to that conferred upon Claude by his grandfather, or upon Perken by his uncle. Whereas, for Claude

1. Antimémoires, p.376. Nino Frank, in Mémoire brisée, I.p.284, maintains that Clappique is modelled on the journalist, René Guetta.
2. The scenario raises the problem of the extent to which the narration of the Mayrena legend can be attributed to Malraux. It is perhaps sufficient to assume that, since the episode appears in the Antimémoires at all, it corresponds to Malraux's preoccupations, and that Clappique, irrespective of his being modelled upon René Guetta, remains a character of Malraux. Indeed, it is possible to see the historical figures who appear in the Antimémoires, Nehru and Mao, or the de Gaulle of Les Chênes qu'on abat, as figures brought from reality into Malraux's intellectual world. In a private conversation with the author, Malraux confirmed this assumption with regard to Les Chênes qu'on abat.
3. Antimémoires, p.396.

and Perken, however, it is merely a question of a context, of a starting-point for action, for Mayrena the aristocratic ethos is part of his being which, to be maintained, must subordinate even reality. When the Resident at Qui Nhon points out:

"A notre âge, nous avons bien des rêves derrière nous. Enfin, vous, vous en avez un devant... C'est la chance..." (1),

he emphasises a fact of which he is not aware, that the dream in front of Mayrena has necessitated the construction of a world conforming to that dream. As Clappique points out: "Il est évident que tout le long du film, Mayrena ment" (2). His claims to friendship with the President, Félix Faure, and the publisher, Charpentier, are unfounded; his own tale of the burial of his wife in operatic splendour under the towers of the city of My-Son is ironically contradicted by the fact of her burial in the jungle under a simple wooden cross, an irony accentuated in the scenario by Clappique's intention to constantly cut back and forth from the dream-funeral to the real one.

It is no coincidence that Mayrena is a journalist before becoming an adventurer: above all, he is a story-teller. On his return to Paris, in his triumphal gatherings at the Moulin-Rouge with bohemians and dancers, he becomes what Perken refuses to be - a means of vicarious excitement, a conjurer of dreams, a comfortable legend. For Perken, death is to be fought by creating a myth; for Mayrena, action is a process of becoming a myth by which the story is all-important and where a distance gradually appears between the action and the story, thus rendering the action itself inauthentic. It is a process which leads to the irrelevance of the individual, as in the case of Rensky, and, ultimately, to his total destruction, as in the case of the Clappique of La Condition humaine. The difference between Perken and Mayrena is made finally clear by the manner of their deaths. In spite of the ambiguity implicit in his attitude to his approaching death, Perken remains closely attached to his destiny. Mayrena poisons himself. As Perken says:

1. Ibid, p.403.  
2. Ibid, p.449.

"En somme, il est mort bien mal, comme presque tous les hommes... Celui qui se tue court après une image qu'il s'est formée de lui-même: on ne se tue jamais que pour exister. Je n'aime pas qu'on soit dupe de Dieu" (1).

Nevertheless, as Clappique concedes, Mayrena's legend is a tantalising mixture of truth and falsehood. It is true that he attributes this falsehood to a psychological cause:

"Je me demande si un p'tetit médecin chafouin ne verrait pas dans beaucoup de choses qui m'intriguent, l'évolution d'une paranoïa..."(2).

Yet Mayrena himself points out: "un destin comme le mien crée nécessairement sa légende" (3), and as a legend it possesses its authentic mythic value. The scenes which depict the march through the jungle, the recital of the savage "chanson de Roland", the burial of his wife, which, in its tragic austerity, is more heroic and more moving than any of the pomp of which he dreamed at My-Son, the work of the priest, le père Georges, who, with his simple militancy, is an heroic trace of the Middle Ages (4) - all of these elements form a story which is truly heroic and which communicates an authentic atmosphere of grandeur. Mayrena loses interest in the gold which he has come to mine: his finest aspects are shown in his single combat with the Sadète du feu, and in the scene which Clappique himself prefers:

"Quelque part du côté du Rat Mort, du Moulin-Rouge, ou d'un autre truc de nuit, une moche marchande de fleurs lui tend un bouquet. Il le prend, paye, et dit: "Merci, Madame - Madame? Vous êtes un prince ou un artiste... - Je suis roi..." (5).

1. La Voie Royale, p.13.
2. Antimémoires, p.450. Clappique goes on to refer to Mayrena's use of illusionism, found also in the scene of La Voie Royale, where Perken fires at the skull of a buffalo and makes it bleed, to which Malraux adds: "Je les ai trouvés dans les Mémoires de Robert Houdin, chargé de s'en servir contre les marabouts pendant la conquête de l'Algérie", a reference which confirms Malraux's early interest in the literature of conquest. His interest in Cortès is equally manifest in the early novels.
3. Antimémoires, p.469.
4. In his evocation of le père Georges, Malraux enters the universe of Bernanos, who, similarly, particularly in the curé de Torcy of Journal d'un curé de campagne, sees the medieval christian ethic as an heroic ideal. Le père Georges also evokes Thierry D'Argenlieu, the monk who became a power in Indochina, an admiral in the Free French Navy and who, like Malraux, gravitated to Gaullism. See: Robert Aron, Histoire de la Libération.
5. Antimémoires, p.448.

In this scene there is a curious ambiguity. Perken has already categorically rejected the state of kingship as irrelevant, with the words: "Être roi est idiot... ce qui importe, c'est de faire un royaume". Yet in the manner of narration of Mayrena's reply to the flower-seller, a sense of dignity is evoked, the serious dignity of a man who has conquered what he desired only with great difficulty (1). Beside the mythomania there is an aspect of Mayrena's quest which strikes an authentic note. Clappique describes the natives' "chanson de geste":

"La chanson de geste doit suggérer leur domaine profond - qui doit accompagner toute l'aventure de Mayrena" (2),

and he continues:

"En somme, j'ai à représenter une épopée absurde, pas un mot! une épopée tout de même" (3).

Mayrena, like Perken, is engaged upon an epic enterprise, one similarly endowed with a deep significance.

Like Perken, he fails, and, like Perken, he is destroyed by the same forces, those of civilisation itself. As in the case of Claude Vannec, there is already a marked difference between Mayrena and the representatives of the colonial government in Indochina, a difference which culminates in the change of government which necessitates his withdrawal. Far worse is the situation when he returns to France to seek official support for his plan for an extension of the French empire into Northern Indochina, a plan for which there is a pronounced lack of official sympathy. The gap between Mayrena and the politicians, the representatives and leaders of European civilisation, is crystallised in a scene which closely resembles that in which Ferral vainly tries to present his case to the finance committee. Mayrena has entered the Chamber and has taken a seat in the diplomatic gallery:

1. This incident may indicate the ability, in Malraux, of narrative effectiveness to transcend philosophical consistency.
2. Antimémoires, pp.442-443.
3. Ibid, pp.442-443.

"Pendant que Clemenceau démolit Jules Ferry, ou réciproquement, un huissier à chaîne s'approche, suivi de deux inspecteurs de police et dit à voix basse: "Monsieur, le président vous prie de quitter cette tribune pour celle du public". Mayrena sourit avec mépris, et quitte la Chambre" (1).

Like Ferral, he is a man of will, with a vision which demands a will not possessed by a decaying civilisation.

The man of will has no place in Europe. Mayrena dies, an obscure "chasseur d'oiseaux de paradis" (2), in Malaya, a figure who bears a strange resemblance to Claudel's Rodrigue, a lonely and mocked painter of religious pictures on the sea outside Cadiz. Like the adventurers before him, like Raousset-Boulbon, and Aurélie Ier, roi d'Araucanie, like Dupleix and Balboa, like Brazza (3), Mayrena is the proof that the man of will and civilisation are incompatible, and that when he becomes the servant of that civilisation it cannot be long before he is rejected.

Thus, on one level, if Perken is able to criticise Mayrena, it is because there is a certain affinity between them. Both are men of will; both use that will as a means to power; both finally fail because the forces of the civilisation they left behind emerge stronger and more hostile than ever. Similarly, both men operate within a certain mythic context - yet it is at this point that the difference between them becomes clear. Malraux indicates in the stories of Perken and Mayrena that, when the will becomes subordinated to the myth rather than dominating it, it surrenders itself to the "farfelu", it detaches itself from the action which it accomplishes, it enters the realm of inauthenticity and failure.

The notion of the authenticity of action is discussed in Les Conquérants, in the confrontation between Garine and Tcheng-daï. Because of its political subject-matter, the novel inevitably presents a more complex picture of the

1. Antimémoires, p.448.

2. Ibid, p.381.

3. Ibid, p.463.



adventurer than La Voie Royale where, in spite of all its ambiguity, the hero's central problem is the conflict with death and the Absurd in their pure form. In Les Conquérants, these qualities are conveyed through the intermediary of other men, a fact which automatically places the adventurer in an ethical and political, as well as metaphysical context.

At the same time, the figure of the adventurer is clearly discernible in the novel, and his expedition follows the same pattern as that present in the "fantaisiste" stories and La Voie Royale, whilst similarly emphasising a preoccupation with the will. Les Conquérants depicts a quest: Garine is offering his help to a distant city menaced by diverse forces in exactly the same way that the musician aids the town in "Ecrit pour un ours en peluche". Furthermore, Malraux is at pains still to situate his novel on a general mythical level; and to this end he makes use once more of the interior legendary event, one already recounted in Royaume-Farfelu. Towards the end of the novel, Garine states:

"Je pense à l'empereur qui faisait crever les yeux de ses prisonniers, tu sais, et qui les renvoyait dans leur pays, conduits par des borgnes: les conducteurs borgnes, eux aussi, de fatigue, devenaient aveugles peu à peu. Belle image d'Epinal pour exprimer ce que nous foutons ici..." (1),

a remark which, in spite of its bitter irony, based on the proverb: "Aux pays des aveugles, les borgnes sont rois", tends to lift the story into a more universalised context. It is the same eternal setting as that of La Voie Royale, a setting in which there is a play of universal forces, for good and for evil, which demands a response in terms of values which take their origins in the very beginnings of European civilisation. It is not coincidental, therefore, that there is "entre Garine et les siens une sorte de lien féodal" (2): whilst Garine's

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1. André Malraux, Les Conquérants, Paris, Livre de Poche, p.194.

2. Les Conquérants, p.207.

action is, in part, specifically historical, it rests equally upon certain archaic and non-specific values.

In addition, Les Conquérants depicts an elemental struggle insofar as it contains a conflict of wills between Garine, with Canton behind him, and England. The theme of this conflict is sustained throughout the novel. At the very beginning, the narrator speaks of the Canton government, with its "volonté inattendue et qui semble tenace comme la volonté anglaise" (1). He goes on to underline the significance of the English presence in the novel. The English are:

"le peuple qui représente, plus qu'aucun autre, la volonté, la ténacité, la force" (2),

and Klein confirms this by summing up the English qualities: "il y a du boxeur, du dogue et du boucher" (3).

The use of England as a symbol of the will is a common feature of the literature of the post-war period. In Drieu la Rochelle's survey of the twentieth century, England appears as one of the rare healthy phenomena in a decaying culture:

"L'exemple anglais avait été médité pendant toute la seconde partie du XIXe siècle comme un exemple de force et de ruse savamment combiné, essentiellement nietzschéen" (4).

Garine's struggle, therefore, is raised beyond the political sphere: it is against an enemy who, as an incarnation of the will, resembles him closely. This has the effect of not merely placing the conflict on a level in which will confronts will, as Claude Vannec battles with the stone, but also introduces an ambiguity by which Garine is opposing England whilst at the same time feeling an intense affinity with it. It is this factor which explains Garine's reply to the narrator at the end of the novel. When the narrator asks: "où diable

1. Ibid, p.11.

2. Ibid, p.13.

3. Ibid. p.49.

4. Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, p.147.

voudrais-tu-donc aller?", he answers:

"En Angleterre. Maintenant je sais ce qu'est l'Empire. Une tenace, une constante violence. Diriger, déterminer, contraindre. La vie est là..."(1).

In this troubled relationship with England, Malraux depicts a will in its pure state unable to resist the attraction and fascination of another such will, in spite of the moral and political barriers which separate them - a factor which indicates that the will exists primarily as a metaphysical force, independent of ethical or political considerations.

Garine's presence in China coincides with two historical phenomena, the first of which is inflicted upon him, the second inflicted in part by him upon the Chinese population. Garine is one of the victims of the First World War, in the way in which it failed to provide an adequate field of action for the will. Disabused by the abortion-trial, he joins the Foreign Legion because "assister à la guerre en spectateur lui parut impossible" (2). Yet, in spite of the Legion's image as the repository of heroism, disillusionment quickly follows. Malraux writes:

"Jusque-là, les légionnaires, à l'occasion, avaient reçu de courts poignards, qui semblaient être encore des armes de guerre; ils reçurent, ce jour-là, des couteaux neufs, à manche de bois marron, à large lame, semblables, d'une façon ignoble et terrible, à des couteaux de cuisine..."(3).

Garine, therefore, experiences the same disorientation as that felt by Vercel's Conan or Montherlant's Alban, when the war fails to be equal to the expectations of action and heroism. Unable to find an object for his will in Europe, even in the situation of war, Garine is forced to turn away from Europe, to China.

He arrives in China to discover that process so deplored by Wang-Loh, in La Tentation de l'Occident: the discovery by the East of Western values, and particularly the most pernicious value of all, Western individualism. As

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1. Les Conquérants, p.226.
  2. Ibid, p.63.
  3. Ibid, p.63.

Garine explains to the narrator:

"Toute l'Asie moderne est dans le sentiment de la vie individuelle, dans la découverte de la mort" (1).

It is due only to this process that the will of the Chinese can be made to exist, yet it is cruelly paradoxical. It is through this newly-discovered will that the Chinese can fight the colonial powers and gain their independence; at the same time, that will is bought at a high price, the recognition of death. The will, for Malraux, is above all a will against death: from the "fantaisiste" stories onwards, it is conceived of as little else. And the forces of indignity and injustice must, if they are to be fought, be seen as the symptoms of that metaphysical quantity which is death.

It is the struggle against death, with the implication which this struggle has for a view of life, which is the basis for Les Conquérants, and, as in the case of la Voie Royale and the early stories, this struggle follows a familiar pattern. It begins with a recognition of the power of the Absurd, and proceeds to a battle and what appears to be a victory over the Absurd. Yet, the victory is only illusory, and the enemy asserts its claims even more strongly than before.

Garine is almost born into the Absurd. Traumatic as it is, the abortion-trial plays the part of an acute crystallisation of the consciousness of the Absurd in Garine: it is not the birth of that consciousness, however, rather, its social corollary. In this way the trial plays the same role in Les Conquérants as a similar trial plays in Camus' L'Etranger: both instances provide social meaning for a pre-existent sense of the Absurd. Before the trial itself, Garine has already entered into a state of total psychological indifference, relieved only by his insistence on the value of force and his admiration for Napoleon. He remarks to the narrator:

"Surtout, c'est la conquête qui maintient l'âme du chef. Napoléon, à Sainte-Hélène, va jusqu'à dire: "Tout de même, quel roman que ma vie!" (2).

1. Les Conquérants, p.112.

2. Ibid, p.58. This reference to Napoleon indicates clearly the aesthetic qualities of the hero, the man of will.

Already, Garine has felt the Absurd, and has glimpsed a solution to it, a force which may be opposed to it. The trial has the effect of inflicting a humiliation upon him, to which, like Grabot, he reacts with the use of his will; but, in addition, it brings the Absurd into the sphere of social action, thus demanding a response on a social plane. In this novel, the Absurd is shown not in terms of a jungle in a state of decomposition, but rather as a sense of estrangement and, above all, a recognition of universal vanity, a vanity occasioned by death. Nevertheless, it is this vanity which constitutes a necessary prelude to the action of the will. As Garine remarks near the end of the novel:

"Je pensais encore à la phrase de mon père: "Il ne faut jamais lâcher la terre". Vivre dans un monde absurde, ou vivre dans un autre... Pas de force, même pas de vraie vie sans la certitude, sans la hantise de la vanité du monde" (1).

In the light of this relationship between man and his existence, Garine's response takes the form of a will to power. The narrator writes of him, even before the experience of the trial:

"De la puissance, il ne souhaitait ni argent, ni considération, ni respect; rien qu'elle-même" (2).

The trial makes him painfully aware of his own powerlessness: his subsequent action, therefore, is an action towards power in his manipulation of the situation in Canton. It is by no means insignificant that there should be an evolution in the novel from Gérard's characterisation of Garine as an "aventurier" (3), to Nicolaïeff's remark that he is a revolutionary "du type conquérant" (4). The adventurer, as Malraux states in the Antimémoires, is a man who confronts death at the voluntary risk of torture; the conqueror accepts the same risks, but his will is directed more particularly towards power.

1. Les Conquérants, p.213.

2. Ibid, p.58.

3. Ibid, p.21.

4. Ibid, p.211.

Yet, the will to power is accomplished through a will to action. When Garine states: "Ma vie, vois-tu, c'est une affirmation très forte" (1), it is this fact which he is indicating, that, for him, affirmation of the self is to be achieved only in terms of action, an action strongly guided and directed by the will. Gérard, in his conversation with the narrator, underlines this very clearly by characterising Garine not simply, like Borodine, as "un homme d'action", but rather as "un homme capable d'action" (2), a man who will use action in certain circumstances towards a particular aim. He is not, like Borodine, submitted to the depersonalising power of constant disciplined action; rather, he is able to control it and use it for his own needs.

Garine's attitude towards action is brought out clearly in the characters in the novel to whom he is sympathetic and antipathetic: in Hong and Tcheng-dai. Hong's action is motivated by a hatred of the self- respect of others, a hatred which Garine commends, remarking:

"Seule, l'action au service de la haine n'est ni mensonge, ni lâcheté, ni faiblesse" (3).

Hong's dangerous nature lies in the fact that, like Tchen, action becomes all-demanding, an autonomous addiction subject to no control and, hence, inauthentic. It begins as action dominated by the will, only to throw off the restraints of the will and subject Hong to the single domination of emotion. Yet, when Garine says of him: "Il est peu d'ennemis que je comprenne mieux"(4), he indicates a certain aspect of his own will, that after the abortion-trial, his will became the product of an intense humiliation and hatred, similar to that of Grabot. Nevertheless, the transition from La Voie Royale to Les Conquérants shows an evolution from Grabot to Hong, and not from Grabot to Garine. For, even at the moment of highest humiliation, the moment of the verdict, Garine is able to transform his emotion into a general intellectual grasp of the situation:

1. Ibid, p.199.
2. Les Conquérants, p.21.
3. Ibid, p.145.
4. Ibid, p.145.

"Je ne tiens pas la société pour mauvaise, pour susceptible d'être améliorée; je la tiens pour absurde" (1).

It is this ability to intellectualise which enables him to retain constant control over his will and which saves him from becoming subject to it. Malraux appears to see little advantage in the will as a blind emotional reaction: to be effective, to last, it requires the constraining and directing influence of the intellect.

The gap between Garine and Tcheng-dai is wider. Garine represents the values of action and dynamism, existential values with the responsibility which must accompany them. Tcheng-dai represents none of these. Not only is he totally opposed to action, as a man of contemplation, of static values, but he is also characterised by a certain bad faith. He is prepared for others to act on his behalf, with the result that he is able to reap the benefits of the action, but none of the guilt. Garine says of him:

"il remplacerait notre action par de beaux "appels aux peuples du monde" comme celui qu'il vient de lancer et auquel Gandhi et Russell ont répondu. C'est beau, l'âge de papier!" (2).

and he remarks later:

"tous ceux que l'action gêne ou inquiète... forment une masse à qui sa vie, à lui Tcheng, donne une sorte d'ordre..." (3).

Tcheng-dai, therefore, is typical of that political actor whom Sartre, in Réflexions sur la question juive, characterises as the "démocrate", and whose inauthenticity lies in the avoidance of concrete, specific situations, in favour of rhetorical generalisations (4).

Les Conquérants, therefore, presents a clear conflict between two groups: the men of will, on one side, behind Garine, and the men whom action frightens,

1. Ibid, p.62.

2. Les Conquérants, p.87. It is interesting to compare this derogatory view of Gandhi with Malraux's favourable comments on him, in the discussions with Nehru in the Antimémoires, pp.327-371. By the time of these discussions, however, Gandhi was endowed with the weight of history and myth.

3. Les Conquérants, p.131.

4. Jean-Paul Sartre, Réflexions sur la question juive, Paris, Gallimard, coll: "Idées", 1954, pp.65-69.

on the other, with Tcheng-dai as their figure-head. The first group is committed to existential values of power and dynamism; the second, to static, essential moral values, and to the order of the status quo. Garine sums up Tcheng-dai with the words:

"Il est beaucoup plus attaché à sa protestation que décidé à vaincre" (1), and goes on to suggest that this attitude is born, not of strength, but of an inherent weakness.

It is this refusal of action which implies necessarily a lack of responsibility. In spite of the events around him, many committed in his own name, Tcheng-dai remains aloof. As Garine points out:

"Il ne veut pas savoir. Il ne veut pas engager sa responsabilité morale" (2).

There is a further reason for his inaction, one which links him strongly with Mayrena. Garine describes him as a "noble figure de victime qui soigne sa biographie" (3). His role is invalidated by the same characteristics which invalidate that of Mayrena: the fact that both men are playing a role, that there is a gap between the action and its image in the mind of the man which renders it inauthentic.

Garine's experience is different. Conscious of the Absurd, both as a sense of alienation and as a violent humiliation, he reacts with a will to power which embodies necessarily a will to action. Strictly controlled by the intellect, this will is acutely aware of its responsibility, for only by accepting responsibility can it present a valid opposition to the forces of the Absurd.

Garine, like Perken, comes close to victory. The novel closes with the triumphant and mysterious sound of the Red Army as it moves to the front and to victory. And this victory is directly attributable to Garine's will: the way in which he defends the city, organises the strike, and finally persuades the

1. Les Conquérants, p.91.
2. Ibid, p.95.
3. Les Conquérants, p.92.



Committee to issue the decree. Yet Garine's will is attacked by the same forces of the Absurd as those which attack Perken; and they return all the more invincible because, unlike the war-lords or the British, they are not exterior, but within Garine's own body. The theme of old age is not so pronounced in this novel as it is in La Voie Royale, where it has a constant absurd meaning for Perken and for Sarah. Nevertheless, the narrator is moved to ask of Garine: "Il est né en 1894... se vieillit-il?" (1), and Garine himself is highly conscious of the value of youth. When unable to go to Russia to join the Revolution, he cries: "Je considère ma jeunesse comme la carte sur laquelle je joue" (2).

The interior forces of the Absurd, for Garine, tend to operate not so much through old age as through illness. The British Intelligence dossier concludes its report on Garine by stating: "Cet homme est gravement malade" (3). As the novel progresses, Garine's illness gradually asserts its rights, culminating in the episode of his attack, where he directly compares his illness to the work of the Absurd:

"C'est bizarre: après mon procès, j'éprouvais - mais très fortement - le sentiment de la vanité de toute vie, d'une humanité menacée par des forces absurdes. Maintenant, ça revient... C'est idiot, la maladie... Et pourtant, il me semble que je lutte contre l'absurde humain en faisant ce que je fais ici... L'absurde retrouve ses droits" (4).

Garine is fully aware of the nature of his battle with the absurd, but equally conscious of the fragility of any victory over it. The effects of his illness merely confirm that suspicion. As Ling's interrogation-report is returned to him,

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1. Ibid, p.57.
  2. Ibid, p.65.
  3. Ibid, p.74.
  4. Les Conquérants, p.158.

Garine remarks:

"Ah! il n'y a pas beaucoup d'hommes qui résistent à la souffrance..." (1).

The effect of this suffering on Garine is recorded faithfully by the narrator, who notes:

"Depuis le soir où je l'ai vu à l'hôpital, il semble se séparer de son action, la laisser s'écarter de lui avec la santé, la certitude de vivre" (2).

Garine has already reacted strongly against the way in which Tcheng-dai's conscious attempt to become a myth has the effect of separating him from his action, of rendering that action inauthentic. Yet here, by the force of illness, that same separation has been accomplished in Garine. Once more, Malraux indicates that, when the will is directed against external forms of the absurd, it is successful, but that when the absurd works within man, in the form of age or illness, it is immeasurably more difficult to overcome. As Garine comments:

"La souffrance renforce l'absurdité de la vie, elle ne l'attaque pas; elle la rend dérisoire" (3).

The final effect of illness upon Garine is similar to that of the poison upon Perken: as the illness grows more serious, a certain "mauvaise foi" is suggested in Garine's attitude to his approaching death. Although Nicolaïeff has already informed the narrator that the doctor, Myroff, has given up hope for Garine, Malraux's hero, at times, dismisses this verdict. When he leaves Canton, he takes with him only two suitcases. The narrator asks: "C'est tout ce que tu emportes?", to which Garine replies: "Pour quelques mois, c'est bien suffisant" (4). Garine's will, therefore, like that of Perken, is a sure force against the absurdity of the world as an external barrier. But when that absurdity becomes interiorised, through sickness or old age, it is the will and the lucidity upon

1. Ibid, p.185.

2. Ibid, p.203.

3. Ibid, p.214. The absurd appears, for Malraux, therefore, as what Trotsky calls "un décalage d'usure", by which the mind remains lucid whilst the body decays. See: André Malraux, "Trotsky", in Marianne, 25th April 1934.

4. Les Conquérants, p.223.

which it depends which suffer the most.

Malraux writes of Les Conquérants, in his "Réponse à Trotsky": "ce livre est d'abord une accusation de la condition humaine" (1), thus indicating that the preoccupations of this novel and of La Condition humaine are substantially the same. Nevertheless, the later novel indicates an evolution, both in Malraux's thought and in his literary technique. For the first time, in La Condition humaine, Malraux is able to manipulate a large cast of characters, with a corresponding number of interests. In addition, the novel shows that, at this time, Malraux's interest in the will in its pure state is waning, developing into an exploration of the way in which the will coexists with the demands of collective action. This new interest, taking up a line of thought proposed in the essays on Europe, is shown clearly in characters such as Kyo and Katow, whose will is there, but at the service of a higher ideal. For this reason, they do not exhibit strongly the problematic nature of the will. Comparing Kyo to Tchen, Malraux writes:

"Mais chez Kyo, tout était plus simple... Sa vie avait un sens, et il la connaissait: donner à chacun de ces hommes, que la famine, en ce moment - même, faisait mourir comme une peste lente, la possession de leur propre dignité" (2).

Kyo's value lies no longer, as it does for Garine or Perken, within himself and the extent to which he can impose himself, but in an external concept. Certainly, the will is still necessary for him, but its role has shifted from one of total definition to that of an agent assuring the success of the concept. It is no longer a question of will to power, but of a will to implement a preconceived plan based upon ethical considerations.

At the same time, the structure of the novel is in no way different from that of the preceding ones. La Condition humaine still depends upon the arrival of heroic figures in a distant town, needing to accomplish acts which will serve

1. André Malraux, "Réponse à Trotsky", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 211, 1931, p.502,
2. André Malraux, La Condition humaine, Coll. Livre de poche, p.55.

both to the good of the town and to themselves.

In this context, the representative of the pure will in the novel is not, significantly, among the revolutionaries, but one of the main forces who oppose them - the Director of the French Consortium, Ferral. Of all the characters in the novel, it is he who continues the tradition of the adventurer (1). He is in Shanghai to find money and influence, and, through them, power. The form which his adventure takes is the most characteristic of the early twentieth century, that of the financier, the robber-baron of the type sketched in Paul Morand's Lewis et Irène.

Malraux's description of Ferral, when he first appears in the novel, is illuminating. He writes:

"les moustaches tombantes, presque grises, qui semblaient prolonger la ligne tombante de la bouche, donnait au profil une expression de fine brutalité; la force était dans l'accord du nez busqué et du menton presque en galoche..." (2).

Thus, Malraux is at pains to emphasise Ferral's essential qualities, his brutality and his strength; but the reference to the greying moustaches introduces the notion of age and indicates that, as in the case of Perken, at the heart of the man of will there is a weakness which he cannot control.

"Ferral's dedication to action is introduced, significantly, by reference to its negative counterpart, passivity. His visit to the police-chief, Martial, necessitates his hearing a report, which brings Malraux's comment:

"Ferral ne pouvait qu'écouter et attendre, ce qu'il détestait le plus au monde" (3).

Ferral can only exist as a man of action. Malraux records, "Ferral savait agir"(4), and it is in action alone that Ferral can see a possible meaning for existence. In this respect, his conversation with Gisors, a conversation with the representative of lucid passivity in the novel, is important, for he makes use

1. Even his name, with its allusion to iron, becomes an expressive image of the will.
2. La Condition humaine, p.66.
3. Ibid, p.67.
4. Ibid, p.72. A comment which echoes the description of Garine as "un homme capable d'action".

of it in order to sum up his philosophy of action:

"l'acte, l'acte seul justifie la vie et satisfait l'homme blanc...  
Un homme est la somme de ses actes, de ce qu'il a fait, de ce qu'il  
peut faire. Rien d'autre" (1).

Ferral's action however, is of a special kind, for it requires detachment - not the detachment of the mythomaniac from his action, by which the act slowly slips away from his control, but a detachment, a distance which allows the man of will to dominate his act. Malraux writes of Ferral:

"Il ne voulait pas être seulement le président du Consortium, il voulait être distinct de son action - moyen de se croire supérieur à elle" (2).

It is this distance which allows the will to govern and direct the action, and which prevents the action dominating the individual and destroying his will, as it does in the cases of Hong and Tchen.

Significantly, it is precisely in terms of domination that Ferral sees the will. Initially, as for Perken and the Danish uncle, the will must dominate the body and the self: the most characteristic description of Ferral is that which shows him in his office, with the open cigarette-box on the desk:

"cette boîte, depuis qu'il avait décidé de ne plus fumer, était toujours ouverte sur son bureau, comme pour affirmer la force de son caractère"(3).

Beyond the domination of the self is the domination of others. Ferral, as a man of will, sees the will as a will to power, the success of which will enable him to be no longer subject to his environment. For this reason, his relationships with other people tend towards the despotic, particularly in the cases of Martial and Valérie. Yet this striving towards despotism is based upon a vision of two clearly-defined categories of people in the world: the weak, those whom he

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1. Ibid, p.185. Malraux is using Ferral to maintain his insistence upon action as a characteristic of Western man, and is therefore continuing the themes of the essays on Europe. At the same time, Ferral's speech encapsulates the existentialist view of action as a defining force, expressed by Saint-Exupéry's Rivière, and, of course, the philosophy of Sartre.
  2. La Condition humaine, p.182.
  3. Ibid, p.91.

despises and therefore tries to dominate, and those who, like himself, are seeking action, power and domination also. It is for this reason that his feelings towards the revolutionaries are ambiguous. Malraux writes:

"Qui, pour la première fois, il y avait une organisation de l'autre côté. Les hommes qui la dirigeaient, il eût aimé à les connaître. A les fusiller aussi" (1).

For Ferral, the struggle is an heroic one, against men whom he respects and who are of a strength equal to his own.

Ferral's will to power is, in extent of ambition, greater than that of Perken: he aims, not at an empire in Indochina, but at the government of France. Malraux's summary of his past is interesting:

"né dans la République comme dans une réunion de famille, la mémoire chargée des visages bienveillants de vieux monsieurs qui étaient Renan, Berthelot, Victor Hugo, fils d'un jurisconsulte illustre, agrégé d'histoire à vingt-sept ans, directeur à vingt-neuf ans de la première histoire collective de la France, député très jeune (servi par l'époque qui avait fait Poincaré, Barthou, ministres avant quarante ans), président du Consortium franco-asiatique..." (2).

It emphasises two points about Ferral: his success and his intelligence, an intelligence which has, moreover, been placed at the service of his will to power. As he confides to Gisors, the intellect is, for him: "La possession des moyens de contraindre les choses ou les hommes" (3). In addition, Malraux underlines Ferral's youth, with the fact that, at this point in history, youth is a quality which can lead to power.

Yet, Ferral's ambitions are more glorious than his past. His aim, to amass so much money in China that he will be able to buy the Agence Havas, become a minister, and then use the power of his ministry and the weight of public opinion

1. Ibid, p.94. The subordination of political differences in the light of a metaphysical similarity, a subordination which renders the man of will an ambiguous figure in politics, is found both in Garine's admiration for the enemy, England, and in Ferral's respect for the revolutionaries.
2. La Condition humaine, pp.69-70. It is curious that this factual account of Ferral's past coincides closely with the imaginary past of the mythomaniac, Mayrena, who, in Clappique's scenario, emphasises his birth and upbringing in the elite circles of the Third Republic.
3. Ibid, p.183. Ferral thus forms part of that group of acting intellectuals in Malraux's work who aspire to a vast intellectual synthesis, amongst whom are the ethnologist, Garcia, and, the most extreme example, Möllberg.

to defeat parliament (1), is the most extreme example in Malraux's work of the will to power.

As in the case of Garine, it is impossible to define exhaustively the origins of the will. Ferral appears to have been motivated by it from birth: his entry into the Chamber and his subsequent political career follow logically from this will and his birth into a political context. In this apparently effortless rise to power, however, there are two checks which come to assume a large importance. The first concerns his realisation that his political career does not constitute a rise to personal power, but merely a rise to a higher form of service. He reflects that, even as President of Parliamentary Commissions and director of financial schemes, "toujours il avait travaillé pour eux" (2). It is this which drives him to China, through Indochina, in a search for eventual power over those whom he has served.

The second occurrence is more significant because it accentuates the effect of the first, and also because it is comparable in importance to the trial in Garine's development as an adventurer. It concerns Ferral's fall from political power, an event which places him in an isolated and weak position, and which demands that he act with a ruthless strength in order to efface the humiliation and attain a position from which he cannot be removed and where he will no longer be vulnerable. In this way, he joins those in Shanghai who are seeking some solution to their own, personal problems. In her novel, Bombes sur Shanghai, Vicki Baum puts the following comment into the mouth of one of her characters:

"Shanghai n'est pas une ville... Shanghai est un poison. Les hommes qui y vivent sont des ogres que régit la loi des cannibales. Cette ville est peuplée du rebut de l'humanité. Celui qui vient ici, Chinois ou Blanc, a reçu une tape et Shanghai fait le reste" (3).

1. See: Ibid, p.73.
2. La Condition humaine, p.72. This realisation on the part of Ferral echoes exactly Garine's rueful comment: "Ici, qui a servi plus que moi, et mieux?..." Les Conquérants, p.194.
3. Vicki Baum, Bombes sur Shanghai, Paris, Stock, 1947, p.348.

To a certain extent, Ferral falls into this category: at the heart of his will to power, as it appears in China, is, as in the case of Garine or Grabot, an acute emotional experience of humiliation, an experience which forms the true motivation for the battle against the Absurd and precedes its intellectual formulation.

Ferral's failure is inevitable, for, reacting against the isolation occasioned by political defeat, he uses that very isolation as a means to victory, an isolation which is essentially fragility. Yet, Ferral's defeat does not follow exactly the same pattern as that of Perken or Garine. These men are conscious of the nature of their enemy: it is death and a life rendered absurd. They fail only when death and the Absurd enter their bodies and poison the will. Yet Ferral's will is of a more basic, less conscious nature, and his battle, waged implicitly, against a background of death and absurdity, is not found in conscious terms and remains solely a drive to personal power. Hence, he is not destroyed by illness or old-age, though he does confide, in a significant moment during a conversation with Gisors:

"Dormir, c'est la seule chose que j'aie toujours souhaitée au fond, depuis tant d'années" (1),

a statement similar to the mood of tired resignation expressed in Vigny's Moïse, where the prophet begs of God:

"Laissez-moi m'endormir du sommeil de la terre" (2).

The case of Ferral is not identical to that of Perken or Garine, where the will is attacked by the forces of illness and age. He presents here a different phenomenon, that of the strong will which, with constant action, becomes tired and longs for rest, that nostalgia for complete inaction which Schopenhauer expresses in his admiration for the Buddhist nirvana.

Significant as this is for an understanding of the will, however, this is

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1. La Condition humaine, p.187.

2. Alfred de Vigny, Moïse, line 50.



a momentary expression by Ferral and one of minimal importance for the novel. Ferral fails because he is still dependent on the forces of a civilisation which he despises. And in the government finance-committee, those forces return even more strongly than in the punitive-column which follows Perken towards his kingdom. The confrontation between Ferral and the caramel-chewing dignitaries on whom his destiny depends is that between the man of will and the dying civilisation which he must reject in order to exist. It is in this paradox that the failure of Ferral occurs: he cuts himself off from the West far less than Garine or Perken, and thus allows the West to triumph.

In addition to his dependence upon Europe, Ferral is doomed to failure by the changing nature of Western capitalism. No longer is it the great adventure of the nineteenth century or the early twentieth century: it is no longer the field of action for the merchant adventurer of the novels of Paul Morand. Dorgelès' financier, Garrot, recognises that "l'arme aujourd'hui, c'est l'argent"(1), but even he fails to realise that, having rendered redundant the adventure, modern capitalism invalidates even its primitive practitioners. As Gisors points out to Ferral:

"Le capitalisme moderne... est beaucoup plus volonté d'organisation que de puissance" (2).

The will to organisation depends necessarily on the diminution of the will of its members. It is for this reason that Ferral is such a troubling, strange figure to the men in the council-room of the university. Ironically, Ferral is in exactly the same relationship to his organisation, capitalism, as are Kyo, Tchen and Katow to theirs. Modern Communism, like modern capitalism, has become governed by the technicians and the organisers, and there is no place in either camp for the man of will. It is this which is the force of the recurrent images of past acts of heroism in Malraux's work: the man of will is an anachronism, incompatible with the organisational values of modern civilisation.

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1. Roland Dorgelès, Partir, p.120.
  2. La Condition humaine, p.54.

As in the case of Garine, who is illuminated by comparison with Hong and Tcheng-dai, a definition of the will is amplified by analysing those characters in La Condition humaine who differ significantly from Ferral: Tchen, Gisors, and Clappique.

Tchen's initial attraction to action exemplifies the way in which the will acts in rebellion against a life which has lost its values and which requires values to be imposed upon it. In this, Tchen follows the same path as Georges Duhamel's hero, Salavin, who, after a lifetime of failure and frustration, finds meaning for a brief moment by helping to combat a plague in Tunis (1). He is also, initially, an echo of Garine's motivation for action. His education by Gisors is summed up as:

"une initiation au sens héroïque: que faire d'une âme s'il n'y a ni Dieu, ni Christ?" (2).

This inculcation of heroic values leads Tchen on the familiar path to combat and political action. Significantly, however, his first action concerns a death, and through this death a sense of ambiguity enters Tchen's relationship to action which contributes to his own destruction. The murder of the arms-salesman in the hotel room in Shanghai is an act of will in that it necessitates Tchen's domination of his own rebellious feelings; at the same time, however, it crystallises his attraction to death and his fascination with terrorism which lead to a surrender of that will. His reply to Gisors' question: "Tu n'as pas eu horreur du sang?", "Si, mais pas seulement horreur" (3), illustrates his dual attitude to death. Death is the final enemy, the force to be overcome, but also, because it is final, because it is a force, it exerts an irresistible attraction.

1. Georges Duhamel, Tel qu'en lui-même, Paris, Mercure de France, 1932, pp.104-105. Salavin's experience of the plague looks forward to Camus' treatment of it in La Peste.
2. La Condition humaine, p.54.
3. *Ibid*, p.50. This reaction to an act of murder is similar to that of T.E. Lawrence, who records, in Seven Pillars of Wisdom, how he had to settle a dispute by shooting one of his followers, a scene which recalls Garine's shooting of the well-poisoner, and experienced an ambiguous emotion, a point made even more strongly in Robert Bolt's screenplay for David Lean's film.

For Tchen, death, a self-willed death, is, paradoxically, a means of overcoming death, and, but incidentally, of serving the cause of social change. His justification of terrorism is exactly this:

"Donner un sens immédiat à l'individu sans espoir et multiplier les attentats, non par une organisation, mais par une idée: faire renaître les martyrs" (1).

And, when Souen asks the question: "Tu veux faire du terrorisme une espèce de religion?", he replies:

"Pas une religion. Le sens de la vie. La... la possession complète de soi-même" (2).

Within Malraux's notion of the will, therefore, complete self-possession is essential. Yet Tchen's aspiration towards this state is incomplete and dangerous, because it must pass through death. "Celui qui se tue court après une image de lui-même", reflects Perken, and Gisors emphasises the same point with regard to Tchen:

"il se demandait s'il n'y avait pas en Tchen une part de comédie - au moins de complaisance. Il était loin d'ignorer ce que de telles comédies peuvent porter de mortel" (3).

Tchen's reaction against the human condition, therefore, takes, in part, the form of playing a role, of distancing himself from his action, a form which, as in the case of Mayrena, renders that action less than authentic.

Yet the inauthenticity of the role constitutes only a part of Tchen's problem. For, whilst the role serves to distance him from his action, he is, in other ways, too close to his act - so close, that he is dominated and consumed by it. In this sense, he comes to resemble Grabot rather than Mayrena. The act of murdering the arms-salesman remains with Tchen as an inescapable truth: it is an act which soon ceases to be controlled, and becomes a control and a domination in its own right. As Kyo and Tchen leave Vologuine, Kyo reflects, with reference to Tchen: "Soif d'absolu, soif d'immortalité, donc peur de mourir"(4).

1. La Condition humaine, p.189.

2. Ibid, p.150.

3. Ibid, p.50.

4. Ibid, p.123.

What he fails to realise is that, for Tchen, the only absolute value is death and that immortality can only be achieved through a sustained contact with death. Tchen's relationship to action becomes so intimate, his confrontation with death becomes such a part of himself, that his action becomes inauthentic, and is, finally, a submission rather than a conquest. His death, which should, on the basis of his view of life, be a triumph of the will, is instead a symbolic surrender of the will, a product of the reflex actions of the body which the man of will, like Perken's uncle, is constantly called upon to overcome.

Gisors, as a character, is less complex, an example of that great danger for the will which is present in Garine and Ferral, and which is tiredness (1). For Gisors has once been a man of will: at his first appearance, Malraux writes of him:

"Bien que ce vieux professeur de sociologie de l'université de Pékin, choisi par Tchang-Tso-Lui à cause de son enseignement, eût formé le meilleur des cadres révolutionnaires de la Chine du Nord, il ne participait pas à l'action. Dès que Kyo entraît là, sa volonté se transformait donc en intelligence, ce qu'il n'aimait guère: et il s'intéressait aux êtres au lieu de s'intéresser aux forces" (2).

In the course of the exercise of his will, in the training of revolutionary groups, Gisors has been attacked by two dangerous forces. For Malraux, the authentic exercise of the will depends upon a balanced inter-reaction between the will and the intellect; yet Gisors has come to value the intellect more than the will, thus following an evolution in exact contrast to that of Tchen, who accords all power to the will and no regulatory power to the intellect. The second danger concerns the fact that the object of Gisors' interest is no longer what, in Malraux's view, is central to man, the forces which comprise his

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1. It is therefore by no means coincidental that, when Ferral is disillusioned, he, in common with the other characters in the novel, gravitates naturally to Gisors.
  2. La Condition humaine, p.35.

character, but the individual, with all its static, absurd qualities attacked in the essays on Europe (1).

The evolution of Gisors is explained to a great extent by his ageing: a process against which the man of will is singularly vulnerable, and by a vision of the absurdity of a long existence stopped brutally by death, a death against which he is powerless. As he remarks to May at the end of the novel:

"il ne faut pas neuf mois, il faut soixante ans pour faire un homme, soixante ans de sacrifices, de volonté, de tant de choses! Et quand cet homme est fait... il n'est plus bon qu'à mourir" (2).

Yet Gisors is wrong: his is the speech of an old man, a man unable to deal with his old age and the approach of death and the death of loved ones, a man unable to see that the youthful lives of Kyo and Katow are as valid as his own, a man who has surrendered all dynamic values and who remains a static, fixed, escapist and lonely figure. The will would appear not to stand up easily to old age: it is above all a value of youth, and the ageing process can all too easily lead it to a static state where it will attempt to deny and escape reality rather than conquer it. In this context, lucid detachment, raised to an extreme level, can be interpreted only as a form of evasion (3).

It is for this reason that Gisors understands Clappique so well. Yet Clappique is a more complex and ambiguous figure, because he is so intimately connected to some of Malraux's own preoccupations. Thus, Cecil Jenkins is able to suggest that he is used merely as a satire on the "farfelu" strain in Malraux's character (4). Yet, it would appear more useful to see him, less as a

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1. A further comment upon Gisors' dangerous evolution towards an interest in the individual is provided by Malraux's remarks on the nature of characterisation in the novel. See, particularly: Gaëtan Picon, Malraux par lui-même, p.66.
  2. La Condition humaine, pp.274-275. Gisors' despair and indifference in the face of approaching death look forward to Camus' description of Don Juan, "un homme que son corps trahit.... agenouillé devant le vide et les bras tendus vers un ciel sans éloquence qu'il sait aussi sans profondeur" (Le Mythe de Sisyphe, p.105.)
  3. The destructive effects of old-age upon the will are charted remorselessly by Roger Martin du Gard in Jean Barois, a novel which, though it depicts the decline of the hero, nevertheless preserves, in the figure of Luce, the possibility of will and courage continuing in old-age.
  4. Cecil Jenkins, Preface to La Condition humaine, London, London University Press, 1968, p.44.

satire, than as the reflection of a constant aspect of Malraux's work and thought, which runs from the early "fantaisiste" stories, through the character of Rensky, in the first version of Les Conquérants, to a definitive discussion of the values of fantasy in La Condition humaine.

It is significant that, of all the characters in the novel, it should be Clappique who is descended from the archaic hero-figure. In the subject of his grandfather, he recounts:

"On l'a enterré sous la chapelle, dans un immense caveau, debout sur son cheval tué, comme Attila...  
... Quand Attila est mort, on l'a dressé sur son cheval cabré, au-dessus du Danube; le soleil couchant a fait une telle ombre à travers la plaine, que les cavaliers ont foutu le camp comme de la poussière, épouvantés"(1).

With this statement, Clappique situates himself in the same context as Claude Vannec, with his grandfather, Perken, with his Danish uncle, and the characters of Les Conquérants, with "le roi bulgare". At the same time, such a context contains two aspects: it comprises a mythical, fantastic, unreal element, but, in addition, the means of transforming that myth into a call to action, the path adopted by Claude, Perken and Garine.

Clappique, however, never reaches the second stage. His way of life entails acceptance of the myth and a struggle to remain within its confines, to the extent that everything becomes myth and reality ceases. As Gisors says of him: "Sa mythomanie est un moyen de nier la vie, n'est-ce pas, et non pas de l'oublier" (2). Undeniably, in such an enterprise there is a certain heroism, and a good proportion of will; neither is the enterprise so far removed from Malraux's own attempts to resolve the problems of European civilisation. The one unacceptable part of that civilisation is its fixity, its refusal of the domain of the possible, and it is precisely in order to exploit the possible that the adventurer leaves Europe. Yet, at the same time, the possible is the essential ingredient of

1. La Condition humaine, p.27. The same trait is recounted in La Légende du Cid, in the scene in which the hero's body, tied to his horse, is used to terrify the enemy army.

2. *Ibid*, p.36.

fantasy, a fact emphasised by Malraux in his review of Pierre Véry's novel, Pont-Egaré, in which he writes:

"Le talent d'un écrivain fantastique consiste presque toujours à affirmer sans s'en apercevoir que le monde accepté communément n'est que mensonge, non parce qu'il n'est pas vrai, mais parce qu'il est fixe. Le fantastique - on ne saurait trop songer aux quelques contes d'Hoffmann admirables perdus dans un fatras de petit romantique - naît presque toujours d'une foi profonde, d'une adhésion rigoureuse au possible" (1).

He concludes, again referring to fantasy-literature:

"De quoi s'agit-il sinon de refuser aux choses leur pouvoir de contrainte, de créer un monde à notre image lorsque nous ne voulons pas être à l'image du monde?" (2).

The fantastic, therefore, for Malraux, is one of the means of going beyond the barriers of Western civilisation, of entering the world of the possible where the will may act. In this context, Clappique may be adjudged an heroic figure.

There is, in Don Quixote, a curious passage at the end of the hero's first expedition, in which Quixote, a man himself who is following an heroic age and living in a mythical context, returns to his village beaten and ridiculous. He is met by one of the villagers, who urges him to cease his dream-play and to remember that he is only Señor Quixana, an entreaty to which Cervantes adds:

"I know who I am, said Don Quixote, and I know, too, that I am capable of being not only the characters I have named, but all of the Twelve Peers of France, and all the Nine Worthies as well, for my exploits are far greater than all the deeds they have done, all together and each by himself" (3).

What is significant in this outburst is that Quixote is conscious of his mythomania, able to direct it where he pleases, able to escape the constraint of his unheroic, real world for the rarified world of the possible. In this characteristic, he is the archetype for Clappique, who is, similarly, attempting a conscious raid on reality, employing the will against life.

1. André Malraux, "Pont-Egaré, par Pierre Véry, in Nouvelle Revue Française, 195, 1929, p.838.
2. André Malraux, "Pont-Egaré, par Pierre Véry", p.839.
3. Miguel Cervantes, Don Quixote, trans.J.M.Cohen, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1950, p.54. The importance attributed by Malraux to Don Quixote is reflected in his speech to the Association Internationale des Ecrivains pour la Défense de la Culture on June 21st 1936, in Commune, September 1936, and in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, where he recounts the same story showing that only three books, The Idiot, Don Quixote and Robinson Crusoe, have any meaning in the prison experience.

That Malraux was tempted by such a process is confirmed by the early "fantaisiste" works, the constant admiration for Hoffmann, and the reviews which he wrote for the Nouvelle Revue Française on "fantaisiste" authors such as MacOrlan, Véry, Charles Sorel, Franz Hellens and Alexandre Viallette (1), but the temptation never threatened to dominate Malraux completely. The "Fantaisiste" strain exists in his work, side by side with the attempt towards an heroic domination of existence (2).

At the same time, if the solution of fantasy may be seen as a quasi-heroic attempt to deny the fixity of reality, it presents some difficulties. Already, in the dealings of the narrator of Les Conquérants with Rensky, there is a marked impatience with the irrelevance of the mythomaniac. As he sits with Rensky in the Raffles Hotel in Singapore, the narrator asks questions regarding the revolution in China and the personality of Garine, to which Rensky replies archly:

"Sait-on jamais?

- Parfois, Rensky, on peut savoir. On peut savoir, par exemple, que le geste par lequel le Gouvernement Cantonnais ose attaquer l'Angleterre n'est pas du domaine...
- De la fantaisie?
- Charmant, d'ailleurs, dans lequel vous venez de vous promener" (3).

Malraux uses a sharpness of tone in this dialogue, a trace of irony, which relegate the domain of fantasy to a level below that of collective action; and this trend is continued in La Condition humaine, where Clappique is very much outside the main flow of the action and, indeed, by his fascination with the roulette-wheel, brings about the capture of the revolutionaries.

However, Malraux's rejection of mythomania as a means of dealing with the human condition is based not solely upon its inferiority to action. There is

1. "Malice, par Pierre MacOrlan", 116, 1923; "Histoire comique de Francion, par Ch. Sorel", 170, 1927; "L'enfant et l'écuyère, par Franz Hellens", 179, 1928; "Battling le ténébreux, par Alexandre Viallette", 183, 1928.
2. Malraux has subsequently commented on this by stating that he sees himself as a man able to be drawn to two different views of life at the same time, to the tragic and to the "fantaisiste" (Private conversation with the author).
3. Les Conquérants, Paris, Grasset, 1928, p.19.



something within Clappique's mythomania itself which renders it unacceptable. Logically, it is to be a systematic and sustained denial of reality, and as such, it is a product of the will. Yet it is this, which, in the person of Clappique, it is not. The search for the attainment of the possible through mythomania becomes uncontrolled, loses the direction of the will, because it disperses the individual into all forms of the possible. Thus, Clappique, at the roulette-wheel, is able to identify both with himself as gambler and with the ball, and is thus powerless to fulfil his obligations to Kyo, obligations which the coherent personality would keep. Furthermore, for Malraux, mythomania implies not only loss of will power, but loss of self. It implies the fragmentation of the self to such an extent that only a superficial image is left. It is this which makes Malraux's consideration more serious and more sinister than that of James Thurber, in The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, where the capacity to enter a life of dreams is shown as a positive side of the human character (1). For Malraux, however, meaning depends upon the efforts of man to define himself, a process which Clappique rejects. He is referred to in terms of disguise, caricature, and shadow. As Gisors says of him:

"il n'a pas du tout de profondeur, et c'est peut-être ce qui le peint le mieux, car c'est rare" (2).

Nor is this superficiality the work of the conscious will. Once more, significantly, it is Gisors who sees Clappique's true essence; Malraux comments:

"Gisors s'apercevait qu'au fond de Clappique n'était ni la douleur, ni la solitude, comme chez les autres hommes, mais la sensation" (3).

Clappique, therefore, presents the same ambiguity as Tchen: ostensibly working according to a pre-arranged plan, he comes to a state where he is moved solely by sensation, with no consideration of the intellect. He lives as Tchen dies, deprived of the will.

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1. A penetrating study of the role of mythomania in politics is contained in Erik H. Erikson's "The Legend of Hitler's Childhood", in Childhood and Society, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, pp.317-349.
  2. La Condition humaine, p.37.
  3. Ibid, p.214.

Malraux appears to discern in mythomania, therefore, not only a positive search for the possible, an escape from restriction, but a dangerous undercurrent, comprised of elements which accompany mythomania but which have nothing to do with the control of the will. Yet, even if this were not so, Malraux discovers in the attempt to deny life by fantasy a crucial imperfection: it cannot deny life sufficiently. Clappique's relationship to life is like that of Ferral to Europe: neither can escape so completely that they achieve independence. It is this fact which Clappique discovers on the dock-side at Shanghai, where Malraux writes:

"Il était parvenu à échapper à presque tout sur quoi les hommes fondent leur vie: amour, famille, travail: non à la peur" (1),

and, with fear all the reality returns: above all the sense of the loneliness of the individual destiny. Malraux comments, of Clappique:

"Il était stupéfait d'éprouver combien sa destinée était indifférente aux êtres, combien elle n'existait que pour lui" (2).

Finally, with a recognition of the conscious nature of his mythomania, returns a nostalgia for happiness and a vision of its impossibility. He says to himself:

"Toi qui t'imagines si bien tant de choses, qu'attends-tu pour t'imaginer que tu es heureux?" (3).

Clappique has reached the limits of mythomania: it can attempt to deny the world and its reality, but once an elemental situation has been attained, with its fears and its needs, then mythomania is powerless. Instead of the old men of Europe sucking caramels, Clappique is confronted by all the needs and emotions which he has fought so long to deny, and he discovers that, not only are they more powerful than his denial of them, but that, in some paradoxical way, they proceed from that very denial.

In his essay on T.E. Lawrence, "N'était-ce-donc que cela?", Malraux gives one of his clearest definitions of the Absurd:

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1. Ibid, p.209.
  2. Ibid, p.238.
  3. La Condition humaine, p.211.

"L'homme est absurde parce qu'il n'est maître ni du temps, ni de l'angoisse, ni du Mal; le monde est absurde parce qu'il implique le Mal et que le Mal est le péché du monde" (1).

The Absurd, for Malraux, therefore, consists of powerlessness in the confrontation with time and with the Manichean world; and it is this powerlessness which he seeks to remedy by the use of the will, the will directed towards power. The marxist critic, Georges Mounin, sums up this view of the Absurd as "le cancer pascalien", and sees Malraux's acceptance of the values of action as "un anesthésique au cancer pascalien" (2). Gaëtan Picon, whilst accepting the Pascalian nature of Malraux's preoccupations, emphasises the importance of the will in the battle with the Absurd:

"Chez Malraux, comme chez Pascal, le drame vient de la conscience de notre désadaptation à l'univers: conflit du besoin d'infini et de la finitude (Pascal), conflit de la volonté de puissance et de la servitude (Malraux)" (3).

The struggle, therefore, is against anything that subordinates man, that leaves him vulnerable, and that struggle is to be carried out through action. In his book, André Malraux, Gaëtan Picon quotes from a letter received from Malraux in 1933, which emphasises particularly the value of action:

"Le drame essentiel est dans le conflit de deux systèmes de pensée: l'un mettant l'homme et l'univers en question - l'autre supprimant toute question par une série d'activités" (4).

Malraux rejects the constant questioning of man and the universe from a static intellectual position, which is closely allied to the analysis of the individual which, in its turn, leads to the "nouveau mal du siècle", and attempts instead to base his world upon that one aspect of European culture which once succeeded, and which may be brought to life again: he seeks to resurrect the "conquérants morts" who, for A.D., in La Tentation de l'Occident, fill the graveyard that is

1. André Malraux, "N'était-ce donc que cela?", in Liberté de l'Esprit, May, 1949, p.86. The emphasis on "le Mal" underlines the constant nature of Malraux's view of a Manichean world, which exists from the "fantaisiste" works onward.
2. Quoted in Aloys Moray, A la Rencontre d'André Malraux, Paris, 1947, p.12.
3. Gaëtan Picon, André Malraux, Paris, Gallimard, 1946, p.71.
4. Gaëtan Picon, André Malraux, Paris, Gallimard, 1946, p.81.

Europe.

It is for this reason that Malraux emphasises in his novels the anachronistic hero-figures. If he is to succeed in his attempt to regenerate European values, it is the notion of heroism which must be made relevant to the modern world. In this way, Malraux's fiction, from the "fantaisiste" stories onwards, conforms to the typology of the Northern epic established by V.P.Ker, who writes of:

"the Northern principle of resistance to all odds and the defiance of ruin" (1),

and concludes:

"In the North the individual spirit asserts itself more absolutely against the bodily enemies than in Greece" (2).

Malraux's heroes, in their battle against the interiorisation of the absurd, in the form of illness or old-age, act in an heroic context which echoes that of the Niebelungen, the Icelandic sagas or the Chansons de geste. Thus, Malraux uses this echo to refute the present state of decay. There is an additional ingredient, however: for the hero's role is not merely to refute, but to supply values. As Avriel Goldberger indicates, Malraux's heroes are also Promethean, insofar as they deal with decline of their age by assuming the role normally occupied by God, that of the giver of values (3). And this they do by action.

It is the function of the will to impel man towards action and to maintain him within a chosen course of action. Thus, it comprises two different elements. Initially, it may be seen as an instinctual emotional response to the vulnerability of man in an absurd universe. When Pierre-Henri Simon writes:

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1. V.P.Ker, Epic and Romance, New York, Dover Publications, 1957, p.12.

2. Ibid, p.12.

3. Avriel Goldberger, Visions of a New Hero: the Heroic Life according to André Malraux and Earlier Advocates of Human Grandeur, Paris, Minard, 1965, pp.190-191.

"L'action périlleuse n'est pas seulement le moyen privilégié pour surmonter la mort en l'assumant; elle est l'expression même de la vie, et la forme la plus valable de l'être, parce qu'elle implique l'usage de la liberté et de ce pouvoir créateur par lequel l'homme élargit l'étreinte du fatal" (1),

he emphasises the non-conscious, unintellectual, irrational (2) nature of the will, by which it is not merely a reasoned opposition to the world, but is rooted deeply in the emotional life of the hero. It is not merely a conscious project, designed to impose form on existence, it is also a passion. For this reason, Nicola Chiaramonte distinguishes between "the logic of action" and "the obscure, overpowering force (really, a demon) to which men like Garine and Kyo have yielded the moment they choose their place in history" (3). In this light, the will must be understood in the way in which Adler uses it, as a basic psychological motive force, as deep and as obscure as the Freudian sexual urge which it replaces. For this reason, Malraux chooses to emphasise in his work the crucial experience of humiliation: the humiliation of poverty, which sends Hong and Tchen on the road to terrorism; the humiliation of social failure, which sends Garine to Canton, and Ferral to Shanghai; the sexual humiliation which brings Grabot to the treadmill in the Stienq village; the humiliation of pain, which impels König to inflict pain; the humiliation of race, which forms a part of the motivation of Kyo. The response of the will to humiliation in these characters is rationalised by Malraux, but only because he is able to show that humiliation is an integral part of the human condition. Yet the initial reaction of these characters is not rational: it is an immediate, impassioned response to a situation of personal powerlessness, a response which finds its expression in the will to power.

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1. Pierre-Henri Simon, L'Homme en procès, Neuchâtel and Paris, La Baconnière, 1950, p.35.
  2. The irrational quality of the will raises most problems when it is placed in a political situation, such as Soviet Communism, which takes its meaning from a rationalist tradition.
  3. Nicola Chiaramonte, "Malraux and the Demons of Action", in Partisan Review, July 1948, p.786.

All of Malraux's adventurers have a pre-history which is never fully explained in the novels, for the reason that the will as a drive cannot be elucidated in terms of an intellectual decision. Instead, Malraux chooses to show his characters in situations where the results and implications of that original drive can be discussed intellectually and rationally. But the reasons for Perken's and Claude's presence in Indochina, for that of Garine in Canton, that of Ferral in Shanghai, that of Mayrena in Siam, must be sought in the notion of the will as a force, unconsciously implying that man is not to be subordinated, that he has a kingdom which is his right and to which, over all obstacles, he must strive.

Yet, if the will is initially that irrational power which impels man to a course of action, it at once assumes a second and equally important role, that of maintaining the hero on that course of action, of combatting the weakness of his own body. It is a question of the will exerting self-control, of giving form to itself, as it attempts to give form to the chaos of existence. It is this function which is expressed mythically in the story of the death of Perken's Danish uncle, and which is symbolised by Ferral's cigarette-box, always open so that he can constantly affirm the power of his will over his body. Thus, whilst the will as a drive is an irrational force, the will as a control is able to make use of all the powers of the intellect and reason.

Nevertheless, a problem of the will lies in the fact that it cannot be seen solely in either one of these aspects. In his Philosophie de la volonté,

A. Darbon writes:

"Là où la volonté est plus authentiquement elle-même, elle prend toujours appui sur un fond de passion, sans lequel elle serait impuissante. Les hommes qui ont la plus grande force d'âme fléchissent quand ce ressort vient à leur manquer: le volant de direction ne peut suppléer au moteur" (1).

For its effectiveness, the will depends both on its irrational, emotional source, and on its intellectual control; and it is in the balance of these two

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1. A. Darbon, La Philosophie de la Volonté, Paris, Presses Universitaires Françaises, 1951, p.13.

aspects of the will that success or failure is to be determined. The necessity of this balance is seen at its clearest in the way in which the will confronts the forces against it. In his speech to the Association Internationale des Ecrivains pour la Défense de la Culture, Malraux stated:

"l'adversaire de l'homme n'est pas l'homme, c'est la terre. C'est dans le combat contre la terre, dans l'exaltation de la conquête des choses que s'établit, de Robinson Crusoe au film soviétique, une des plus fortes traditions de l'Occident" (1).

It is in the battle against the external world that Malraux sees the essential value of the will - a battle which presents no ambiguity because it raises no ethical problems and because it relies upon a unified action of the will. In the attempt to overcome external forces, as in the confrontation of Claude Vannec with the stone, the will-drive and the will-control combine together to form an effective and authentic will to power.

It is when the destiny confronting man becomes interiorised that this unified will begins to fragment, and the two components begin to work against each other. It is this which constitutes the significance of old-age in Malraux's work. As Rima Drell Reck writes:

"The myth of the old man is intimately bound up with Malraux's notion of destin... Age is both a loss and a gain in Malraux's universe" (2).

Ageing is a gain because those that survive have an increased intellectual experience with which to dominate the world. Yet this gain is bought with the bitter knowledge of the work of destiny within the hero himself, where it is impossible to fight; from this knowledge comes the obsessive fear of mortality which dominates Perken, and which begins with his first moment of sexual impotence.

The connection between sexual impotence and the broader impotence of man in the face of his destiny is important: indeed, Camus takes as one of the symbols of the Absurd the ridicule to which the ageing Don Juan is subjected (3).

1. André Malraux, "Sur l'héritage culturel", in Commune, September 1936, p.7.
2. Rima Drell Reck, "The Heroes in the Novels of Malraux", in The University of Kansas City Review, Vol XXVIII, No. 2, December 1961, pp.152-153.
3. Albert Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe, pp.103-105.

The theme of sexual impotence indicates precisely that not only is man vulnerable to the external forces which attack him, but that there is also an inherent interior weakness which he must combat as well. The tragedy lies in the fact that, not only can this interior weakness not be fought by the will-as-intelligence, the will-as-control, but that it also poisons the will-as-drive, negating it, and, as in the case of the mauvaise foi of Perken or Garine at their approaching deaths, turns it against the directing will itself and renders it inauthentic.

The problem is accentuated by the solitude of Malraux's adventurers. Malraux indicates clearly that the solitary will is unable to achieve a definitive victory against destiny because it is too weak and because it contains within itself these unresolved contradictions which are insurmountable. As Gaëtan Picon remarks:

"L'échec des premiers héros n'est pas la solitude du coeur. C'est la fragilité d'une action purement individuelle, qui vit et meurt avec l'individu: la petitesse de l'homme seul devant les figures écrasantes du destin" (1).

Yet it would be incomplete to see in the solitude of the adventurer merely a fragile opposition to destiny: the problem is also interior. There is, precisely, a "solitude du coeur" in Malraux's heroes which renders a solitary victory unsatisfactory and which leads them, necessarily, and for irrational reasons, to seek collective action. This aspect of the adventurer is isolated carefully by Roger Stéphane, who writes:

"L'entreprise des aventuriers, dès leur départ, est marquée du signe de cette solitude. Faisant tout pour l'éviter, ils réduiront, jusqu'à les rendre dérisoires, les autres mobiles de leur action" (2).

The revulsion at solitude, the nostalgia for a collective enterprise, are the ultimate dangers for the solitary will in that, beside them, even the successes of the will appear insignificant. The victory of Claude Vannec over the stone recedes before his need for fraternity with the dying Perken.

1. Gaëtan Picon, Malraux par lui-même, p.82.

2. Roger Stéphane, Portrait de l'aventurier, Paris, Grasset, 1965, p.73.



In the light of these interior forces which attack the will and which turn it against itself, the greatest danger concerns the distance between the man of will and his act. The adventurer who is concerned primarily with the image of his act has necessarily placed himself at a certain distance from it: he has become a player of roles and his act is rendered inauthentic. The ultimate extension of this distance between the man and his act is to be found in mythomania, where the mythic context necessary to all action is used as an escape from reality, rather than its transcendence. Yet this departure into mythomania or fantasy can never be definitive: reality has rights over man which are not easily eluded; and when reality re-asserts itself, the mythomaniac is acutely vulnerable. In "Les deux univers romanesques d'André Malraux", Brian Fitch writes:

"En fait les moments de rêverie constituent une "vie involontaire" qui fait autant partie de notre moi que notre vie volontaire et qui "dominerait l'autre sans un effort constant"(1).

Malraux recognises the value of the dream-world for man, but he recognises also that the world of dreams is unequal to the task of confronting the problems of man's existence, a task which can only be accomplished by the use of the will.

It is the tragedy of Tchen that his will to power becomes gradually part of a "vie involontaire", an obsession over which he can exert increasingly less control. In the terms of A. Darbon's analogy, his is the case of the motor becoming all-powerful, to the extent that the steering-wheel is rendered redundant. The same is true of Hong or of Grabot, or, to some extent, of König. In each case, there is no distance between the men and their will: their acts are so close to them, so much a part of them, that they begin to dominate them.

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1. Brian T. Fitch, "Splendeurs et misères du "Monstre incomparable". Les deux univers romanesques d'André Malraux", in Le Sentiment de l'étrangeté chez Malraux, Sartre, Camus et Simone de Beauvoir, Paris, Les Lettres Modernes, 1964, p.20. The quotations are from "D'une Jeunesse européenne", p.142. The "vie involontaire" is not merely that libidinous force which undermines the will-as-control; it is part of that static individual psychology, exemplified by Proust, which constitutes the home-ground of the Absurd.

To maintain a distance between the man and his acts, to retain man in the voluntary world, and not wholly that of myth, Malraux sees the intellect as an essential component of his concept of the will. In a general statement on the Western intellectual tradition, Brian Fitch writes:

"Désormais, l'esprit occidental sera le décor d'une lutte incessante entre le domaine des réflexes conditionnés qui nous rapproche des animaux, et celui de la lucidité qui constitue l'essence de l'humain" (1).

The man of will who, like Grabot or Hong or Tchen, ignores the need for lucidity, must end in disaster.

The will begins with an imperfect world, in which a context of action is already present: that of the heroic myth. It begins necessarily as a passion, but if it is to endure and succeed, it must become a subtle blend of passion and intelligence, a controlled, directed force which will, alone, affirm man and his importance in a world where he is weak and threatened. Malraux's New Man, therefore, is constructed upon an understanding of the will, and is proposed as a regenerative force for Europe. The problem, however, is that, whilst the will is proposed as a positive force, it contains many ambiguities and weaknesses, which can only be fully illuminated by analysis of the tradition of the will in which Malraux is writing.

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1. Ibid, pp.21-22. As a general statement, Brian T. Fitch is merely echoing a truth which has been common currency since Montaigne and Descartes. In the context of Malraux and the will, however, it has a more precise meaning.

### Chapter Three

#### The Metaphysics of Will

##### 11) The Tradition

Malraux's early "fantaisiste" stories and the novels themselves may be seen to follow a narrative pattern which corresponds in large part to that isolated by V.P.Ker in his analysis of the Northern Epic tradition. In this way, the use of the figure of the adventurer represents an attempt to resurrect the values of the epic hero as an antidote to the problems of twentieth-century life, and in this search for a return to an archaic system of values, Malraux is symptomatic of a certain trend in French literature in the inter-war years. In his novel, Le Feu follet, Drieu la Rochelle writes:

"La volonté individuelle est le mythe d'un autre âge; une race usée par la civilisation ne peut croire dans la volonté" (1).

Depressed by the eroding effects of Western civilisation, Drieu la Rochelle, in his Notes pour comprendre le siècle, looks back with nostalgia to the period of the Middle Ages, with what he discerns as its emphasis upon youth and energy, its sense of corporate will and its ability to permit the values of the mind to coexist easily with the demands and exaltations of the body (2).

Thus, Malraux and his contemporaries attempt to solve the problems of a spiritless modern society by imposing upon it an archaic aesthetic framework, a solution already attempted by writers of the preceding generation. As Peter Hebblethwaite, in his study of Bernanos remarks:

"The artist hero in Proust, his ironical brother in Thomas Mann, and the political heroes of André Malraux are attempts to restore to the hero his fading glory" (3).

For the generation of the inter-war years, it is only through the restoration of glory to the hero that Western life may be renewed and saved. The adventurer in the novels

1. Drieu la Rochelle, Le Feu follet, Paris, Gallimard, 1931, p.57.
2. The importance of such a view of the Middle Ages lies in the fact that it deals with a myth rather than an objective historical view.
3. Peter Hebblethwaite S.J., Bernanos, an Introduction, London, Bowes and Bowes, 1965, p.13. It is the nostalgia for a past value-system, a dissatisfaction with the present, which is a major cause of the problems encountered by the man of will in the spheres of ethics and politics. Further, the aesthetic quality of such a nostalgia is highly significant.

of Malraux and Paul Morand, the priest in Bernanos, the ascetic in Montherlant, the peasant in Giono, the navigator in Roger Vercel and the criminals in the novels of MacOrlan and Francis Carco all constitute attempts to transcend the stifling influence of a decadent civilisation by recourse to a more vigorous value-system. Necessarily, such attempts demand displacement from the twentieth century, either temporally or spatially - either back to the ethos of an heroic age or away to a context where action is still possible. Drieu la Rochelle, in Notes pour comprendre le siècle, sees Malraux's significance precisely in terms of such an escape from the present. He writes:

"Malraux, depuis toujours, s'est échappé de France et a essayé de poser pour le monde entier un type d'homme: qui participe du bolchévik, du fasciste et du chrétien. Haute entreprise qui laisse la France dans son bas-fond" (1).

In this observation, Drieu la Rochelle clearly implies that the atmosphere of twentieth-century France is in no way conducive to the creation of the New Man, that he can exist only by leaving France and by acting out his life in elemental situations far from Europe, where he draws his inspiration from the events of a time long past (2).

The will which motivates Malraux's heroes, however, is an ambiguous force. In Perken and Claude, in Garine and Ferral, the will exists under two aspects: as energy and as intentionality, as a brute driving-force, with its origin deep in the unconscious, and as a strong control-mechanism, regulated by the power of the intellect. Garine's action in China depends, to a large extent, upon his ability for self-control; but the will-to-power which impels him towards China, accentuated by the humiliation of the trial, appears as a characteristic which is with him from the very beginning. Similarly, whilst Ferral, in resisting the open cigarette-box on his desk, exhibits

1. Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, p.179. The way in which Drieu characterises Malraux's heroes as both Bolshevik and Fascist testifies to the ambiguous political role of the man of will.
2. The search for an heroic mode of life outside Europe is comprehensible in view of the unheroic character of European political life in the 1920s. Drieu's reference to Bolshevism and Fascism, however, points to the growth on the European mainland of epic political movements. By the 1930s these movements had grown in stature to such an extent that, with the conflict between the Popular Front organisations and Italian and German Fascism, culminating in the Spanish Civil War and the Resistance, heroic action was possible once more in Europe. In the light of this evolution, Malraux was again able to see in Europe a suitable context for his heroes' action.

clearly the properties of the will-as-control, he incarnates also a constant drive to power which has led him from academic success to a parliamentary career and which is responsible for his presence as head of the Consortium in Shanghai.

In the creation of his adventurer-heroes, therefore, Malraux draws upon two notions of the will, those which A. Darbon describes figuratively as the "volant" and the "moteur", which correspond, in their turn, to two traditional ways of understanding the will, which may be categorised as the Cornelian and Nietzschean concepts of the will. In the former, the will is understood as a control, dependent upon the exercise of the intellect and a rigid distinction between the intellect and the emotions of the body. It is this will which maintains Malraux's adventurers in their chosen course of action, against all the enemies which beset them, and which is symbolised by the Danish nobleman struggling against the resistance of his body and by Ferral's use of his open cigarette-box as a constant affirmation of his own autonomy. In the second tradition of the will it is seen as an unconscious force which urges the individual on to domination. It is expressed almost uniformly in terms of dynamic imagery, and operates both as a pre-existent "grace" which determines the strong man and as a compensation for weakness, particularly humiliation. In this sense, it explains not merely the urge which sets Malraux's adventurers on their path to action, but also the way in which Grabot reacts to the humiliation of the brothel and Garine to that of the trial. The dynamic tradition of the will, therefore, relies upon Nietzsche's denotation of the "strong will" as the basis for the privileged being he calls the "Superman" and upon the theory of domination as the result of compensation for inferiority exemplified by the work of Alfred Adler. As Ruth L. Munroe writes:

"For Adler, the only biological fact of importance in itself is the helplessness of the human infant. This is the root of universal feelings on inferiority, which supply the motive power for compensatory striving towards superiority" (1).

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1. Ruth L. Munroe, Schools of Psychoanalytic Thought, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1955, p.342.

Thus, since Malraux's own concept of the will appears to be founded upon an amalgamation, often uneasy, of the two traditions of the will, it is necessary to examine them in some detail, both for the way in which they illuminate the behaviour of his adventurers and for the manner in which they crystalise the problems which the adventurer encounters.

In an interview with the Swiss weekly periodical, Labyrinthe, Malraux acknowledged his position in the Cornelian tradition. He stated:

"Les quatre grands écrivains français, dont l'oeuvre est en entier postérieure à 1916 et qui ont à l'étranger l'audience la plus étendue, Giono, Bernanos, Montherlant et moi-même, sont liés tous quatre à ce qu'on peut appeler la tradition héroïque de la France, sa tradition Cornélienne..." (1),

this emphasising the relevance of Corneille to the generation of writers beginning to work during or after the First World War, his relevance as a solution to the "nouveau mal du siècle".

The very centre of this tradition lies in the Cornelian view of the love-relationship. When Chimène, towards the end of Le Cid, speaks the couplet:

"Tu t'es, en m'offensant, montré digne de moi;  
je me dois, par ta mort, montrer digne de toi" (2),

she expresses, by the very balance of the terms, the paradox and contradiction of Corneille's view of the love-relationship. It is a contradiction which is totally internalised: it depends, not upon a lucid confrontation between the values of love and honour, but upon an internal complexity in which essential and existential qualities are intermingled and set against each other. As Octave Nadal writes:

"l'amour chez Corneille ne trouve sa contradiction essentielle qu'en lui-même" (3).

1. "Entretien avec André Malraux", in Labyrinthe, 15th February 1945. Malraux's interest in Corneille also coincides with his admiration for Napoleon. Las Cases recalls, of the Emperor: "Il avait dit un jour: "Si Corneille vivait, je le ferais prince"" (Le Comte de las Cases, Exil et Captivité de Napoléon. Extraits du Memorial de Sainte-Hélène, Paris, Renault, 1857, p.68).
2. Pierre Corneille, Le Cid, Act III, Scene 5, lines 931-932.
3. Octave Nadal, Le Sentiment de l'amour dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Idées", 1948, p.112.

The contradiction, however, whilst it ostensibly concerns the relationship between two individuals, depends upon the fact that, by their development and constitution, those two individuals are not isolated beings, but possess a public role which pervades their whole being. It is impossible, therefore, and meaningless to dissociate the man Rodrigue from the warrior, or the woman Chimène from the noblewoman. The psychological analysis operated in Corneille's theatre, therefore, is of a different order from that endless delving into an unknowable static personality which Malraux, in the essays on Europe, condemns as a major foundation of nineteenth century individualism. Rather it is an attempt to seize the psychological complexity of the relationship between people whose personalities are constituted by their actions and their status (1).

The problem for Corneille, therefore, is initially a social one, in which the status of members of a political elite is of prime importance. And, in his study, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, Serge Doubrovsky makes an illuminating comparison between Corneille's analysis of the problems of a political elite and that conducted by Hegel, in the Phenomenology of the Mind. Doubrovsky begins by summarising the basis of Hegel's argument:

"Selon la Phénoménologie de l'esprit, l'homme ne prend conscience de lui-même que lorsqu'il est capable de dire "moi" (2).

Yet, for Hegel, the ability to affirm the self is dependent upon co-existence with other people, and upon the role assumed by the individual in this collective existence. Thus:

1. The emphasis upon the will, in Corneille, as a means to maintaining action and social status is obviously in large measure attributable to the social and political context in which he was writing: the creation of a strong state out of political chaos, with its cultural correlates - the attempt, by Malherbe and his disciples to curb literary and linguistic excess; the efforts of the Précieux to formalise relations between the sexes; the concern to give primacy to the will and control in the religious experience, exemplified by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola.
2. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Idées", 1963, p.93.



"à son état naissant, l'homme n'est jamais homme tout court. Il est toujours, nécessairement et essentiellement, soit Maître, soit Esclave" (1),

and Hegel sees the process of history as a continuing dialectical opposition between the Master and the Slave.

In the context of Corneille, however, Doubrovsky finds particularly valuable, not so much the Master-Slave dialectic in itself, but rather the internal complexities of the category of Master or Hero. For, by using Hegel's category-distinction, Doubrovsky is able to discover a further dialectical process, which operates within the master-caste itself, and which is the true impetus to action of its members. He writes:

"il existe une complexe dialectique interne du projet de Maîtrise - du Maître par rapport à lui-même, et des Maîtres entre eux. A cet égard, et dans sa portée philosophique et politique, le théâtre de Corneille n'est rien d'autre que cette double dialectique du Maître, ou, si l'on préfère, du Héros" (2).

For Doubrovsky, therefore, it is not sufficient to be merely a hero amongst heroes: even amongst his fellows, the Hero must be apart, since his very existence as a Hero depends upon their recognition, and that recognition may not be obtained without the Hero's constant will towards further attainment. A static enjoyment of status is thus impossible: the Hero must enter a complex spiral of action in which he must call upon himself to rise higher and higher towards an unobtainable aim of absolute power, absolute fame and absolute permanence.

In an aristocratic society such as that peopled by Corneille's heroes, and Malraux's adventurers, the guiding principle must be that of honour, the outward and visible sign of the Hero's presence within the spiral of action. In an introduction to a collection of essays on Mediterranean societies, J.G.Peristiany writes:

1. Ibid, p.94. The view of history as a battle between the Master and the Slave is taken up by Nietzsche, in his creation of an aristocratic ethic, and is found in Malraux's work in his distinction between the adventurer and the "homme soumis", exemplified by Ferral's domination of Martial.
2. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, p.95.

"Honour and shame are the constant preoccupations of individuals in small-scale societies, where face to face personal, as opposed to anonymous, relations are of permanent importance" (1),

and he goes on to reinforce Doubrovsky's theory of the dialectic of the Hero:

"In this insecure, individualist world, where nothing is accepted on credit, the individual is constantly forced to prove and assert himself" (2).

The "gloire" of the Cornelian hero, therefore, if viewed in this context, is not a permanent quality, but one which must be affirmed anew with each act. And, in order that the Hero may do this, he must enter a world of continual striving.

As Doubrovsky writes, of Horace:

"Ce qu'Horace découvre et tente de faire comprendre à Curiace, c'est qu'un Maître véritable ne saurait se contenter d'être "unus inter paras", mais qu'il lui faut, sous peine de trahir sa vocation, être "primus inter pares" (3).

Thus, Rodrigue, Horace and Polyeucte must go to the end of their journey without faltering: to do so would be to betray their mission, to shake their very existence. In the same way, for Claude and Perken to give up in their battle against the stone and the jungle, for Garine to leave Canton or Ferral Shanghai, would constitute a surrender to the Absurd.

For the dialectic of the Hero is a metaphysical quality. Although the dynamic heroism of Corneille's characters may be seen to take its origin in a political context, it becomes so all-pervading that it attains to metaphysical significance, the only possible response to a universe devoid of salvation. The world of Corneille is not a bright one. It is a world where reality is not equal to human aspiration - that essential "décalage" described by Camus in the Mythe de Sisyphe and which is the Absurd. The bitter pronouncement of Don Diègue:

1. J.G.Peristiany, ed., Honour and Shame, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965, p.11. Peristiany's emphasis upon the small scale of the society or group within which honour and shame are real values suggests yet further the incompatibility of the heroic way of life with a large-scale, civilised society. It is particularly in the context of such a small-scale group that the relationship, founded upon a mixture of antipathy and respect, between Perken and Grabot must be seen.
2. Honour and Shame, p.11.
3. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, p.146.

"Jamais nous ne goûtons de parfaite allégresse:  
Nos plus heureux succès sont mêlées de tristesse" (1),

is of the same order as Caligula's statement: "Les hommes meurent et ils ne sont pas heureux" (2): the threat to human happiness threatens meaning itself.

It is world menaced by time. For Corneille, time is a barrier, which separates the father from the son, the father from the daughter, a barrier which renders both parties solitary and frustrated. As Sabine cries, in Horace:

"Dieux! verrons-nous toujours des malheurs de la sorte?  
Nous faudra-t-il toujours en craindre de plus grands,  
Et toujours redouter la main de nos parents?" (3).

The repetition of "toujours" conveys the eternal nature of the isolation and the conflict. Yet, above all, for Corneille, time is the force of erosion, the power which saps away the honour, destroys greatness, brings strong men to a state of powerless old age. It is a time which leads "le vieil Horace" to contemplate only as a spectator the battle in which his sons accomplish the great acts that he once accomplished, and which reduces Don Diègue to a state of powerlessness at the insults of his rival. As he comments:

"Et qu'un long âge apprête aux hommes généreux  
Au bout de leur carrière, un destin malheureux" (4).

The world in which Rodrigue, Horace and Polyeucte live and act, therefore, possesses many of the qualities of the world of Perken and Claude, Garine and Ferral. Both are violent worlds, removed from the barriers of civilisation, threatened by death and coloured by meaninglessness. In both worlds also the hero carries within him his own downfall, the interiorisation of the Absurd which is time. The aging Don Diègue looks forward to the failing powers of Perken and

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1. Pierre Corneille, Le Cid, Act III, Scene 5, L1001-1002.
  2. Albert Camus, Caligula, Act I, Scene 4, Paris, Ed. de la Pléiade, 1962, p.16.
  3. Pierre Corneille, Horace, Act III, Scene 6, L1052-1053.
  4. Pierre Corneille, Le Cid, Act II, Scene 8, L.699-700. Don Diègue's preceding statement: "..... Qu'on est digne d'envie  
Lorsqu'en perdant la force on perd aussi la vie"  
(Act II, Scene 8, L.697-698), similarly testifies to the problem of the man of will attacked by the interior forces of the Absurd.

Ferral.

Similarly, the response of Malraux's adventurers to the world in which they live follows the same pattern as that of the Cornelian Hero. Corneille's Heroes are threatened both by meaninglessness and erosion: their response to both is contained in a vibrant self-affirmation, in which they are able to combat meaninglessness by a scale of values which they impose upon themselves, and erosion by achieving fame and honour, which, though not permanent, are at least temporary refuges from time.

Yet, the implementation of a scale of values and the concepts of fame and honour cannot exist as static qualities. They impel the Hero to be a man of action, for it is in the act alone that the hero may affirm himself and be recognised by his fellows. Hence, because Corneille's universe is an empty one, and because its sole values exist within the spiral of action, the Hero is obliged to act, not once, but continually; for with each great act accomplished, his social essence changes and he moves nearer to the ever-receding absolute goal. The Hero, by each act, redefines himself, and assumes a new essence.

In this way, the Heroes of Corneille are governed by an existential rather than essential, code. The very concept of honour depends, not upon static, universally held qualities, but upon a continuing process by which the individual is evaluated with each action accomplished. In the light of this aspect of Cornelian psychology, it becomes clear why Sartre should express "a strong preference for Corneille over Racine" (1). Yet Corneille's emphasis on the act is marked by the fact that one single act does not serve as a final definition. In the aristocratic context of the heroic dialectic, the individual is in a world in flux, in which "l'autre" moves and acts at the same time as the hero. For him to retain his position in the ranks of the elect, therefore, he is obliged to constantly accelerate his action.

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1. Philip Thody, Sartre, A Biographical Introduction, London, Studio Vista, 1971, p.39.

Within such a system of values, the Cornelian hero is destined to inevitable failure. If he is to exist as a hero at all, he must act, and his acts must be brighter and bring more honour than those of his contemporaries. If the hero lives, he must, eventually, fail. By the process of time, old age will come which will dull his acts, his honour will fade, and he will become Don Diègue. The spiral of the Master's dialectic has no final point: it merely goes on until those who follow its course are finally overtaken and forgotten. There is an absolute to be sought, but none to be attained (1).

Nevertheless, in order to enter the caste of Master, the Cornelian hero must begin with a vision of himself, which it is his duty to maintain. Octave Nadal writes:

"Ainsi est-il juste de dire que le héros s'invente et se fixe d'après les images et la vision qu'il a de lui-même" (2).

and such a vision will necessarily be conditioned by his recognition of the qualities of human existence and by the expectations of his fellow-heroes. It is the crucial role of the will to achieve the hero's vision of himself, and thus to control and govern his existence and to maintain him on his chosen path, preventing betrayal of that vision. It is thus a dual role that the will occupies: it maintains the hero in a course of action, and it is instrumental in impelling him forward to further acts which will bring him fame and honour. In both cases however, the will must be seen in the context of a clear, intellectualised view of existence: the hero's predicament is to be grasped with the utmost lucidity. The enemy of this Cornelian will, therefore, is connected with a loss of lucidity: it is the attempt of the body to usurp, through

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1. The true end of the spiral is death, a fact exemplified by Polyeucte, in which the hero, in spite of the fact that his death serves the utilitarian purpose of giving meaning to the lives of Pauline and Félix, is led to continue the movement of the spiral even through the barrier of life. In this sense, the dialectic of the hero may be said to be imbued with a death-orientation of the type diagnosed by Denis de Rougement, in L'Amour et l'Occident, and criticised by Saul Bellow, in a passage of Herzog, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965, p.297.
  2. Octave Nadal, Le Sentiment de l'amour dans l'oeuvre de Pierre Corneille, p.140.

weakness, the rights of the life which the intellect has prescribed.

Eventually, the will must lose, worn down by the reassertion of the body in the form of old-age; but, until then, it must maintain the values of dynamism in opposition to static values, such as the nostalgia for love and peace, which threaten to weaken it (1).

It is this understanding of the will which accounts for Malraux's acceptance of his position in the Cornelian tradition: the role of the adventurer in his work represents, to a certain extent, a recourse to the Cornelian value-system as an antidote to the sterility of European thought in the twentieth century. His heroes therefore make use of the strong ingredient of lucidity in Corneille's view of the will: the successful action of Perken and Claude, Garine and Ferral is characterised by the way in which it is highly intellectualised; the failure of the adventurer is indicated by the way in which the interiorisation of the Absurd, in terms of old-age or illness, impairs his lucid understanding of his predicament. Thus, Grabot's decline is signified by a structure of blindness-imagery.

Similarly, in the same way that Corneille's heroes use the will to maintain them on their chosen path of action, Malraux's adventurers accept, not only the necessity for action as a dynamic response to the world, but also the importance of not deviating from that action - an acceptance symbolised in its most elemental state by the "Voie Royale" down which Perken and Claude pursue their destiny, bordered by the jungle of decomposition and dissolution. At the same time, the adventurer's attitude towards action is explained to some large part by Doubrovsky's application of the "dialectique du héros" to the theatre of Corneille in that such a theory accounts for the restless, striving quality of

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1. In Malraux's work, the rejection of such a nostalgia is expressed at its clearest in the closing letter of La Tentation de l'Occident, where A.D. writes, of the solution offered by Christianity:  
 "Elle est l'amour, et l'apaisement est en elle. Je ne l'accepterai jamais", La Tentation de l'Occident, p.217.

a life dedicated to action. In order to be an adventurer, it is not sufficient merely to have acted: the definition depends upon a constant dynamic assertion of the self against the surrounding world, by which the adventurer must excel himself with each succeeding action (1). Thus, Ferral must follow a logical ascension of ambition from the agrégation to a bid for absolute power in France.

Yet the theory of the heroic dialectic, whilst shedding light upon the frenetic nature of the adventurer's action, does not account for its direction towards power or its origin in compensation for weakness. The notion of honour, of small-scale societies, and the attempt to rise from unus inter pares to primus inter pares, illuminate the rivalry which exists between Perken and Grabot, the personal nature of the conflict between Garine and the British Empire, and the desire for consideration which is part of Ferral's motivation. Malraux's adventurers, however, are more strongly motivated by more concrete aims: it is this which is the significance of Perken's distrust of Mayrena, who, with his preoccupation with the world of legend, remains on the level of honour, whilst Perken sees the authenticity of action as lying beyond mere consideration. Perken's grasp upon his kingdom and his notion of the "cicatrice" cannot be explained by a desire for respect from his group, but rather as a desperate raid

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1. In view of this, it is difficult to accept Sartre's implicit criticism of Malraux, in La Nausée, to the effect that what constitutes an adventure is its narration. Roquentin writes, after his discussion with the Autodidacte: "Pour que l'événement le plus banal devienne une aventure, il faut et il suffit qu'on se mette à le raconter". Such a view, which discerns the inauthenticity of the adventure in the fact that it constitutes a formalisation of a past contingent series of events, does not deal with the notion of adventure as a spiraling series of acts in the present. Nevertheless, the view of adventure as an aesthetic experience is highly significant. see J-P Sartre, La Nausée, Paris, Livre de Poche, p.60. For a full discussion of La Nausée as a satirical critique of Malraux, see Jonathan Dale, "Sartre and Malraux: La Nausée and La Voie Royale", in Forum for Modern Language Studies, 4, 1968, pp.335-346.

upon his destiny (1).

The Cornelian tradition of the will is distinguished from the Nietzschean tradition by the importance which it accords to the split between the mind and the body, by which the mind is called upon to constantly exert itself against the potential weakness of the body. This theory, central to Corneille's portrayal of his heroes, is expressed philosophically in the work of Descartes. Thus, for Descartes, the essence of man is his intellect:

"la raison... elle est la seule chose qui nous rend hommes et nous distingue des bêtes" (2),

a statement which is universally true, for:

"la puissance de bien juger et distinguer le vrai d'avec le faux, qui est proprement ce qu'on nomme le bon sens ou la raison, est naturellement égale en tous les hommes" (3).

It is, indeed, only as a thinking man that Descartes is able to intuit his own existence by seizing the principle of the "cogito" (4).

Yet this very understanding of man as an essentially intellectual being leads Descartes to conclude that man is necessarily imperfect. The Platonic proof of the existence of God depends upon the concept of a God who is ideal and therefore pure reason and upon a view of man who is imperfect precisely because he is not pure reason but a composition of the physical and the intellectual. Thus, Descartes concludes:

"toute composition témoigne de la dépendance, et... la dépendance est nécessairement une faute" (5),

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1. The final ousting of honour, in Malraux's work, as an inadequate response to the world in comparison with action and power, occurs with the death of Hernandez. His transmission of the letter of the Commander of the Alcazar has no meaning in a war concerned with political reality and power.
  2. René Descartes, Discours de la méthode, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1941, p.4.
  3. Ibid, p.3.
  4. Sartre, in L'Etre et le néant, proceeds to construct his view of existentialism by departing in the same way from a cogito, the "cogito préreflexive".
  5. René Descartes, Discours de la méthode, p.34.



whereas:

"je jugeais... que ce ne pourrait être une perfection en Dieu d'être composé de ces deux natures, et que par conséquent il ne l'était pas" (1).

For Descartes, therefore, the fall of man lies in the fact that his mind is enclosed in a body which prevents him from being pure essence and which acts upon the mind in such a way as to lessen its achievements, for "nos sens nous trompent quelquefois" (2).

In the context of the imperfection of man, due to fact that the intellect is imprisoned in the unworthy body, Descartes places particular importance on the will. In a definition of "générosité" as the supreme virtue of man, he writes:

"la vraie générosité... consiste seulement, partie en ce qu'il connait qu'il n'y a rien qui véritablement lui appartienne, que cette libre disposition de ses volontez, ny pourquoi il doive estre loué ou blâmé, sinon qu'il en use bien ou mal; et partie en ce qu'il sent en soi même une ferme et constante résolution d'en bien user, c'est à dire de ne manquer jamais de volonté, pour entreprendre et exécuter toutes les choses qu'il jugera estre les meilleurs" (3).

In this definition, Descartes uses the word "volonté" to signify both force and intentionality. The "libre disposition de ses volontez" refers more to the passions and coincides with the meaning of the term in the Nietzschean tradition of the will. Yet the primary role of the will, for Descartes, is as a regulating and controlling element. Thus, as a further definition of "générosité", he writes:

"Je ne remarque en nous qu'une seule chose, qui nous puisse donner juste raison de nous estimer, à sçavoir l'usage de notre libre arbitre, et l'empire que nous avons sur nos volontez" (4).

The will appears here as an extension of the intellect, carrying out its projects and attempting to make actions conform to its plan.

Within this notion of the will, however, Descartes sees two functions:

1. Ibid, p.34.

2. Ibid, p.31.

3. Rene Descartes, Les Passions de l'âme, Paris, J.Vrin, 1964, p.177.

4. Ibid, p.177.

"les unes sont les actions de l'âme qui se terminent en l'âme mesme, comme lors que nous voulons aymer Dieu, ou généralement appliquer notre pensée à quelque objet qui n'est point matériel. Les autres sont des actions qui se terminent en nostre corps, comme lors que de cela seul nous avons la volonté de nous promener, il suit que nos jambes se remuent et que nous marchons" (1).

In both cases the will appears as a directive force, maintaining the body and the mind in a chosen path ordained by the mind. The way in which Malraux uses his adventurers conforms to this view of the mind. They are placed in the situation of a quest, predetermined by their vision of the world, in which they must be maintained by the will and in which they use the will in order to persevere in spite of all human weakness. Their role is prefigured by Malraux's interior mythology in the form of the Danish nobleman, Perken's uncle, who fulfils his sombre plan against all the resistance of his body. In addition, the importance of the will as a function of the intellect in Malraux's work is underlined by the overtly intellectual or artistic nature of his heroes.

Malraux's continuation of Descartes' use of the mind-body split, however, has one further implication. In the Concept of Mind, Gilbert Ryle criticises this split, which he terms as the theory of "the ghost in the machine", as a fundamental category-mistake. For him, one of the consequences of such a mistake is that the individual is necessarily condemned to solitude. For, if the essence of the individual lies in the mind, and if the body is an imperfection which threatens the essence of the individual, then, whilst it may be possible to know the outward, physical attributes of the individual, his mind, his essence, because it is separated from the body, remains a lost world (2). This is a conclusion reached by Ling, in La Tentation de l'Occident, in his analysis of the futility of the Western pretention to love, which is thwarted by the essence of the loved one continually receding into the depths of the mind. The extraordinary

1. Ibid, p.80.

2. Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind, London, Hutchinsons University Library, 1949, p.15. He concludes: "Absolute solitude is on this showing the ineluctable destiny of the soul".

solitude of Malraux's adventurers, often paradoxically crystallised in the sexual act itself, would appear to owe much to the concept of mind upon which they are based. In this context, the celebration of communal action, in which the entire personality of the actors is both engaged and mystically fused in the concept of "fraternité virile", may be seen as an antidote to the solitude occasioned inevitably by the Cartesian mind-body split. At the same time, the primacy which Malraux gives to the intellect and the way in which he sees the Absurd operating through the physical part of man, would appear to render the success of such a fusion at best very transitory.

Malraux's use of the will as intentionality in the creation of his adventurer-heroes may therefore be explained in terms of his acceptance of his position within the Cornelian tradition of the will. It is this which may be said to account for the primacy of the intellect in the action of the adventurer, his distrust of the eroding force of the body, and his belief in the power of action to define his existence in opposition to the world which surrounds him. The will, in such a tradition, appears as a means of maintaining the hero in his chosen course of action, an action which is constant and self-perpetuating.

In addition, adherence to the Cornelian tradition of the will may be said to account for a part of that ethical ambiguity which Malraux's heroes present. The Cornelian Master is, by definition, a member of an elite who depends for his position upon distinction from the Slave caste upon whom he acts (1). Similarly, the relationship between the Masters themselves, that internal dialectic of the Master-caste discerned by Serge Doubrovsky, is based upon the measurement of the hero against an absolute, metaphysical scale of values, in which dynamism takes precedence over static, essential value-judgements.

Yet, if the Cornelian tradition of the will goes far towards explaining the

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1. In the work of Nietzsche, the distinction between Master and Slave marks the wholesale rejection of traditional humanist ethics in favour of an aristocratic code.

adventurer's faith in action, his elitism and his desperate struggle to remain within the project which he has created for himself, it cannot elucidate totally the more organic drive for power which equally motivates him. It is in this context that the Nietzschean tradition of the will becomes a helpful tool for the analysis of the adventurer, for it elucidates that restless, unformulated urge for action which, embodied by characters such as Hong or Tchen, is contradicted by the Cartesian will to control exemplified by Garine or the authentic Shanghai revolutionaries. Moreover, whilst the adventurer-heroes themselves rely to a large extent on the will as intentionality, they, too, are motivated by a more libidinous search for power which renders their concept of the will highly complex.

This organic understanding of the will may be said to begin with the work of Schopenhauer, so admired by Nietzsche before he found the concept of "pity" untenable, who builds upon Descartes' notion of "les volontez" as passions.

At the end of the chapter on Schopenhauer in his History of Western Philosophy, Bertrand Russell writes:

"In one form or another, the doctrine that will is paramount has been held by many modern philosophers, notably Nietzsche, Bergson, James and Dewey. It has, moreover, acquired a vogue outside the circles of professional philosophers. And in proportion as will has gone up in the scale, knowledge has gone down. This is, I think, the most notable change that has come over the temper of philosophy in our age. It was prepared by Rousseau and Kant, but it was first proclaimed in its purity by Schopenhauer. For this reason, in spite of inconsistency and a certain shallowness, his philosophy has considerable importance as a stage in historical development" (1).

For Russell, therefore, Schopenhauer is one of the prime influences on that "trahison des clercs" castigated by Julien Benda with reference to the intellectuals of the twentieth century, the abandonment of the mission of accumulating knowledge for the cultivation of the values of the irrational, action and the will.

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1. Bertrand Russell, History of Western Philosophy, London, Allen and Unwin, 1961, p.727.

Whilst in the case of Schopenhauer, unlike that of Nietzsche, there is no direct evidence of a specific influence on the work of Malraux, his philosophy merits some brief analysis, for reason of the further definition which he provides of the will and of the more general effect which he exerted upon French intellectual life from the 1870s onwards. As Nietzsche remarks, in Beyond Good and Evil:

"In this France of intellect, which is also a France of pessimism, Schopenhauer has perhaps become more at home and more indigenous than he has ever been in Germany" (1).

Thus, whilst The World as Will and Idea, published in Germany in 1818, did not appear in a French edition until 1886, from that date onwards his work enjoyed a high reputation. Le Fondement de la morale, which appeared originally in French in 1879, was published in subsequent editions in 1885, 1888, 1891, 1894 and 1900 and by 1925 had run to eleven editions. Similarly, a selection, Pensées, Maximes et Fragments. Traduit, annoté et précédé d'une vie de Schopenhauer, par J. Bourdeau, which appeared in 1880, had, by 1900, reached its sixteenth edition. Finally, Bourdeau's translation of The World as Will and Idea,

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1. Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p.214. All quotations from Nietzsche are taken from the Collected Works, ed. Dr. Oscar Levy, Edinburgh and London, J.N.Foulis, 1909-1913.

originally published in 1888 and 1890, ran to seven editions by 1924 (1). Thus, growth of interest in France in the work of Schopenhauer beginning in the 1870s and flowering in the 1880s, would appear to form part of that anti-rationalist reaction of the 1880s and 1890s, of which the revival of interest in Stendhal is one of the symptoms.

Within the Cartesian tradition of the will, man's essence is contained uniquely within his intellect: his body and the external physical world are merely objects for the action of the intelligence, through the power of the will. Schopenhauer's view, however, depends upon a rejection of this mind-body split. The World as Will and Idea begins by <sup>a</sup>development <sup>of</sup> Berkeley's notion that the world is known to man only through his sense-perceptions. Thus, for Schopenhauer, the failure of preceding philosophers lies in the fact that they have concentrated

1. French translations of Schopenhauer's works appeared as follows:

- a) Essai sur le libre arbitre, Paris, 1877.
- b) Le Fondement de la morale, Paris, 1879.
- c) Parerga et paralipomena: Aphorismes sur la sagesse dans la vie, Paris, 1880.
- d) Pensées, maximes et fragments. Traduit, annoté et précédé d'une vie de Schopenhauer, par J. Bourdeau, Paris, 1880.
- e) De la Quadruple racine du principe de la raison suffisante, dissertation philosophique, suivie d'une histoire de la doctrine de l'idéal et du réel, Paris, 1882.
- f) Le Monde comme volonté et comme représentation, Leipzig, 1886; Paris, 1880-1890.
- g) Critique de la philosophie kantienne, Bucharest, 1889.
- h) Schopenhauer: la Volonté, Paris, 1891.
- j) Pensées et fragments, Paris, 1891.
- k) La Vie, l'amour et la mort (vers inédits), Paris, 1897.
- l) Parerga et paralipomena: Sur la religion, Paris, 1906.  
Philosophie et philosophes, Paris, 1907.  
Métaphysique et esthétique, Paris, 1909.  
Ethique, droit et politique, Paris, 1909.  
Philosophie et science de la nature, Paris, 1911.  
Fragments sur l'histoire de la philosophie, Paris, 1912.
- m) Schopenhauer: Mémoires sur les sciences occultes, Paris, 1912.
- n) Schopenhauer et ses disciples, d'après ses conversations et sa correspondance, Paris, 1920.
- o) Paradoxes sur les femmes et l'amour, London, 1921.

on a dichotomy between the subject, which is the mind, and the object, the physical universe, and have chosen to examine independently one or the other. His solution lies in an examination of the relationship between both, a relationship which is necessarily dynamic. He writes:

"cause and effect thus constitute the whole nature of matter; its true being is its action" (1).

And, within this relationship, Schopenhauer discovers a force which gives to existence its unity, a force which he calls the will. He states:

"The objective world, the world as idea, is not the only side of the world, but merely its outward side; and it has an entirely different side - the side of its inward nature - its kernel - the thing-in-itself. This we shall consider in the second book, calling it after the most immediate of its objective manifestations - will " (2).

In the context of this dynamic inter-relationship between will and idea, emphasis upon the mind-body split is invalid. For this reason, Schopenhauer is unable to admire the heroes of the intellect alone, the Stoic and the Philosopher, of whom he writes:

"When compared with him, how entirely different appear the overcomers of the world, and voluntary hermits that Indian philosophy presents to us, and has actually produced" (3),

a phrase which illuminates the contrast in Malraux's work between the static intellectual, removed from action, such as Tcheng-dai or Gisors, and the man of will. For Schopenhauer, the essence of man lies, not in his intellect, but in the dynamism of his whole being, the mind and the body, which he calls will and which distinguishes between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself. He writes:

"Phenomenal existence is idea and nothing more. All idea, of whatever kind it may be, all object, is phenomenal existence, but the will alone is a thing-in-itself" (4).

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1. Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, trans. R.B.Haldane and J. Kemp, London, Trubner, 1883, Vol.I, p.10.
  2. Ibid, p.39.
  3. Ibid, p.120. Respect for the "overcomer" becomes accentuated in Nietzsche's work, where the figure fully appears as the man of will.
  4. The World as Will and Idea, Vol.I, p.142.

The will is therefore the mystical life-force in Schopenhauer's universe.

Because of its essential dynamism, the will must necessarily translate itself into acts, and in his emphasis upon action, Schopenhauer briefly rejoins the intentional aspect of the Cornelian tradition of the will. He states:

"Resolutions of the will which relate to the future are merely deliberations of the reason about what we shall will at a particular time, not real acts of will. Only the carrying out of the resolve stamps it as will..." (1),

and continues:

"Every true, genuine, immediate act of will is also, at once and immediately, a visible act of the body" (2),

and he concludes:

"I know my will, not as a whole, not as a unity, not completely according to its nature, but I know it only in its particular acts and therefore in time..." (3).

Thus, by his insistence on the translation of the will, the essence of man, into action, in time, Schopenhauer's philosophy looks forward to the emphasis on action in existentialism, and to the importance which it gives to action "en situation".

Yet, whilst existential philosophy, and Malraux's analysis of the man of will, regard the translation of the intention into action as a positive quantity, it is the origin, in Schopenhauer's work, of an extreme pessimism. The entry into time is not the triumphal assumption of the individual's authentic role in an historic situation, rather a phenomenon which indicates the nature of the acting individual as symptomatic of something larger than himself and over which he has no control. In other words, for Schopenhauer, the will is not the property of the individual; rather, the individual is the property of an all-embracing will. For:

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1. Ibid, p.130.
  2. Ibid, p.130.
  3. Ibid, p.132.



"The fact is... overlooked that the individual, the person, is not will as a thing-in-itself, but is a phenomenon of the will, is already determined as such..." (1).

Thus, whilst there are many phenomena, there is but "one indivisible will" (2) in the world.

Because of the necessarily dynamic nature of the will, however, the world is in a state of continual movement, a notion which allows Schopenhauer to adopt a Heraclitan vision:

"Eternal becoming, endless flux, characterise the revelation of the inner nature of the will" (3),

and in this context, flux is to be equated with conflict. He writes:

"everywhere in nature we see strife, conflict and alternation of victory, and in it we shall come to recognise more distinctly that variance with itself which is essential to the will" (4).

Thus, to use Patrick Gardiner's analogy, Schopenhauer's world comes to resemble nothing so much as a canvas of Van Gogh, torn by anguished movement (5). Even the domination of the natural world, viewed by Descartes as the true aim of philosophy and by Malraux, in his London speech of 1936, as the highest and least ambiguous aim of the will, becomes, for Schopenhauer, a symptom of the universal conflict:

"the will to live everywhere preys upon itself, and in different forms is its own nourishment, till finally the human race, because it subdues all the others, regards nature as a manufactory for its age"(6).

The individual, therefore, by acting, becomes a phenomenon of the will in conflict with other phenomena. Schopenhauer's conception of existence is a tragic one: life entails willing which, in its turn, implies tension and suffering. Schopenhauer's research, therefore, is directed towards the discovery

1. The World as Will and Idea, Vol. I, p.147.

2. Ibid, p.154.

3. Ibid, p.214.

4. Ibid, p.191.

5. Patrick Gardiner, Schopenhauer, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1963, p.183.

6. The World as Will and Idea, Vol.I, p.192. This view of the essentially parasitic nature of the will goes some way towards explaining the ethical ambiguity of Malraux's adventures, who tend to regard "l'autre" as a means to the fulfillment of their own project.

of a means of escaping the eternal flux of the will, a means which he seeks first in art, which, because it is fixed, is beyond the movement of the will (1), and subsequently in the Bouddhist concept of Nirvana.

Escape from this situation of constant movement is difficult because even the disappearance of the individual phenomenon has no effect on the eternal nature of the will. As Schopenhauer states: "every particular act of will has its end; the whole will has none" (2). Nor is death an easy solution. It constitutes a vast conflict because it is something which the individual must logically resist with great force. Schopenhauer comments:

"What we fear in death is the end of the individual, which it openly expresses itself to be, and since the individual is a particular objectification of the will to live itself, its whole nature struggles against death" (3).

Since death constitutes such a barrier, therefore, suicide is an illogical solution to the tension of the will, for:

"Far from being a denial of the will, suicide is a phenomenon of strong assertion of the will" (4).

For Schopenhauer, therefore, salvation is not to be found in a deal with death, in which the will is inevitably invoked, but in a renunciation of the will in a search for will-lessness. The "Principium Individuationis" must be penetrated, and then:

"Man...attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true indifference, and perfect will-lessness" (5).

This is the state of Nirvana, a concept to which Schopenhauer arrives through a process of comparative cultural anthropology, to be continued by Nietzsche

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1. Schopenhauer's theory of the special value of art, due to its place outside the flux of the will, has some importance for an understanding of the role of aesthetics in Malraux's work and his use of artist-heroes.
  2. The World as Will and Idea, Vol.I, p.215.
  3. Ibid, p.365.
  4. Ibid, p.514.
  5. Ibid, p.490.

and by Malraux himself in the essays on Europe. As Bertrand Russell indicates, Schopenhauer's concept of Nirvana is in reality a concept of extinction (1).

In addition to this deliberate quest for the surrender of the will in the state of Nirvana, Schopenhauer offers a second example of the way to willlessness, a way which is perhaps more privileged and which explains part of the working of the will in the adventurer. He writes:

"it has often happened that men who have led a very restless life in the full strain of the passions, kings, heroes and adventurers, suddenly change, betake themselves to resignation and penance, become hermits or monks" (2).

Not only does this statement illuminate Gisors' renunciation of his revolutionary role for the life of the sage, or Vincent Berger's abrupt return from the Middle East to the cloister-like Altenburg, but it also corresponds to a phenomenon present in the Cornelian tradition of the will: the way in which continual presence within the spiral of action finally causes an unassailable fatigue and loss of will.

The importance of Schopenhauer, therefore, for a study of the concept of will in relation to Malraux, lies primarily in the fact that he undertakes to demonstrate the organic properties of the will and in his emphasis upon action as a necessary result of the will. With his research, a part of the adventurer's motivation is uncovered, as are the results of subjection to the constant tension of the will.

The Heraclitan view of the universe which Schopenhauer adopts does not completely coincide with Malraux's depiction of the world, but the notion of a world in flux and tension and conflict is echoed in the situations which Malraux portrays in his fictional work, where the heroes are attacked constantly

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1. Bertrand Russell, History of Western Philosophy, p.724.
  2. The World as Will and Idea, Vol.I, p.510.

from all sides: from the invasion of the "bigotophones", in Lunes en papier, to the battles of Les Noyers de l'Altenburg. The constant nature of the menace is in both authors, shown to be eventually too great for the individual will, though the resultant breakdown is for Schopenhauer a salvation and for Malraux a tragic failure. It is rather in the work of Schopenhauer's disciple, Friedrich Nietzsche, who accepts the dynamic notion of the will in man, but minimises the emphasis on the action of that same will in the universe, that Malraux, with others of his generation, finds a more useful predecessor.

The effect of Nietzsche's work on France occurred rapidly, and flowers particularly in the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century. (1). Although one book, Richard Wagner in Bayreuth, had been translated into French as early as 1877, it must be considered more as an act of personal homage on the part of the translator, Marie Baumgartner, than as an expression of genuine interest on the part of the French intellectual public (2). Authentic enthusiasm for Nietzsche's work must be seen as beginning with two translations which appeared in 1893: A travers l'oeuvre de Friedrich Nietzsche, extraits de tous ses ouvrages, by P. Lauterbach and A. Wagnon, and a translation by Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, Le Cas Wagner: un problème musical. This interest expanded at the turn of the century. In 1898, Henri Albert published the first of his series of Nietzsche translations, Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra, un livre pour tout le monde et personne. This translation reappeared in 1901, under the modified title: Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra, un livre pour tous et personne, which ran to a second edition in the same year and appeared again in 1919, issued

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1. In one sense, Nietzschean influence on France represents an influence, at one remove, of certain French writers. Nietzsche's work testifies to an admiration for French writers, particularly moralistes like Montaigne, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Fontenelle and Chamfort, and psychological writers such as Paul Bourget, Pierre Loti, Gyp, Meilhac, Anatole France, Jules Lemaître and Maupassant. In the context of Nietzsche's emphasis on the will, his enthusiasm for Napoleon and Stendhal is significant.
  2. Richard Wagner à Bayreuth, par Frédéric Nietzsche, trans. Marie Baumgartner, Schloss-Chemnitz, 1877.

by a different publisher. At the same time, Henri Albert's selection, Frédéric Nietzsche. Pages choisies, ran to three editions in the year in which it was published, 1899. From this time onwards, the number of editions of French translations of Nietzsche's works testifies to a lively interest in his philosophy amongst French intellectuals. Thus, Albert's translation, La Généalogie de la morale ran to three editions in 1900; his Le Gai Savoir reached three editions in 1901; his Le Voyageur et son ombre reached two editions in 1902; and his translation, Par-delà le bien et le mal, published in 1903, ran to thirteen editions by 1920. This upsurge of interest in his work, therefore, coincides with that in Schopenhauer and Stendhal, and forms a further part of the reaction against rationalism and nineteenth-century humanism.(1).

1. Translations of Nietzsche's work into French appeared in the following order:
  - a) Richard Wagner à Bayreuth, par Frédéric Nietzsche, trans. Marie Baumgartner, Schloss-Chemnitz, 1877.
  - b) A travers l'oeuvre de Frédéric Nietzsche, extraits de tous ses ouvrages, trans. P. Lauterbach and A. Wagnon, Paris, 1893.
  - c) Le Cas Wagner, un problème musical, trans. Daniel Halévy and Robert Dreyfus, Paris, 1893.
  - d) Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra, un livre pour tout le monde et personne, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1898.
  - e) Par-delà le bien et le mal, trans. L. Weiskopf and G. Art, Paris, 1898.
  - f) Aphorismes et fragments choisis, par Henri Lichtenberger, Paris, 1899.
  - g) Humain, trop humain, I, trans. A-M Desrousseaux, Paris, 1899.
  - h) Frédéric Nietzsche. Pages choisies, par Henri Albert, Paris, 1899.
  - j) La Généalogie de la morale, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1900.
  - k) Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra, un livre pour tous et personne, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1901.
  - l) Aurore, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1901.
  - m) Le Gai Savoir, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1901.
  - n) L'Origine de la tragédie, trans. Jean Marnold and Jacques Morland, Paris, 1901.
  - o) Humain, trop humain, II, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1902.
  - p) Par-delà le bien et le mal, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1903.
  - q) La Volonté de puissance, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1903.
  - r) Considérations inactuelles: David Strauss, etc., trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1907.
  - s) Ecce Homo, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1909.
  - t) Le Cas Wagner, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1914.
  - u) Considérations inactuelles, II, trans. H. Albert, Paris, 1922.
  - v) Lettres choisies 1868-1888, Paris, 1932.
  - w) Georges Walz, La Vie de Frédéric Nietzsche, d'après sa correspondance, Paris, 1932.

The existence of such a growth of interest in Nietzsche at this time is confirmed by the results of the study by Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France (1), in which she defines as the authentic Nietzschean influence on France that which reached writers already creating by the turn of the century, such as Remy de Gourmont, Maurras, Gide, Péguy and Barrès. Madame Bianquis sees the influence of Nietzsche on French intellectuals as operating particularly in the spheres of "antichristianisme", "immoralisme", "impérialisme", and the philosophy of art, spheres of influence which correspond to areas of interest in Malraux's work. The "antichristianisme" is strongly present in La Tentation de L'Occident and, particularly, in the essay "D'une Jeunesse européenne"; the "immoralisme", which includes the influence of Gide, is found in the attempt of Malraux's heroes to discover a solution to their metaphysical problems with ambiguous regard for ethical considerations; the "impérialisme" in Malraux's work continues the influence of Nietzsche on writers such as Psichari, Sorel and Barrès, and is exemplified in the person of the conqueror. Finally, the Nietzschean preoccupation with aesthetics is echoed by a similar dominating concern on Malraux's part.

Malraux admits readily the influence of Nietzsche on his work. He describes Nietzsche as a great man, one of a select number which includes Goethe and Kierkegaard (2). He displays a detailed and comprehensive knowledge of Nietzsche's work, able to distinguish between the main body of his writings and later works, such as The Antichrist and The Will to Power, the one written when the author was mad, the other an invalid compilation of the author's notes, established in a biased fashion by his sister, Frau Foerster-Nietzsche (3).

As a result of this knowledge, references to Nietzsche occur in the body of Malraux's work. Nietzsche appears as a character in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg,

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1. Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France, Paris, Stock, 1926.
  2. In an interview with the author in April 1971.
  3. In an interview with the author in April 1971.

in the scene in which Walter brings the mad philosopher back to Basle from Turin, a role fulfilled historically by Nietzsche's friend, Franz Overbeck, and where, in the St. Gothard Tunnel, he sings his eerily haunting Venice poem. In connection with Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, it is interesting to recall a passage from Nietzsche's biography, Ecce Homo, in which he writes of his father:

"Previous to taking over the parish of Rocken, not far from Lützen, he lived for some years at the castle of Altenburg, where he had charge of the four princesses" (1).

Pastor Nietzsche was tutor to the four daughters of the Duke of Altenburg, and if this is not merely coincidental, it would indicate an extreme interest on Malraux's part in Nietzsche's life. Finally, on the subject of the same novel, it is useful to recall that the colloquium which forms its central part is based upon Paul Desjardins' "Décades" at Pontigny in the late 1920s, two of which Malraux attended and which united a number of noted Nietzsche enthusiasts (2).

Nietzsche's influence also leaves a direct mark upon several of Malraux's early works. Blossom Douthat has indicated the influence of The Birth of Tragedy on La Tentation de l'Occident and the way in which the two works are thematically similar (3). In addition, Horst Hina, in his study, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, notes the resemblance of the advice given by Garine's father, in Les Conquérants: "il ne faut jamais lâcher la terre", to Nietzsche's dictum: "Bleibt der Erde treu" (4). Surprisingly, Horst Hina does not indicate what appears to be a more obvious direct reference to Nietzsche's work. The "fantaisiste" story, Royaume-Farfelu, ends with the narrator's reflection:

"Mais le prince croit que les sirènes existent, car il désire en posséder. Avec l'argent qu'il me donnera, peut-être prendrai-je passage sur l'un des bateaux qui font voile pour les îles Fortunées. J'ai soixante ans à peine..." (5).

1. Ecce Homo, p.15.
2. See: Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, Tübingen, 1970, p.13.
3. Blossom Douthat, "Nietzschean Motifs in Temptation of the Occident," in Yale French Studies, no.18, 1957, pp.77-86.
4. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, Chapter 5, part 1.
5. André Malraux, Royaume-Farfelu, p.152. It is important to recall that an earlier version of the story was entitled "Voyage aux îles Fortunées".

and the reference to the "îles Fortunées" would appear to be drawn from the "Happy Isles" visited by Zarathustra, who declaims:

"Like a cry and an huzza will I traverse wide seas, till I find the Happy Isles where my friends sojourn" (1).

Indeed, in his relentless "landlessness", the ageing narrator of Royaume-Farfelu resembles closely Nietzsche's hero.

Whilst the fact of some Nietzschean influence on Malraux appears well-attested, the way in which that influence reached him is more difficult to assess. It is important to emphasise that Malraux's reading-knowledge of German is exceedingly limited, and that for a detailed knowledge of German works he has had to rely upon French translations or German-speaking acquaintances. In the matter of French translations, they were complete by 1909, thus allowing Malraux free access to Nietzsche's work. It appears, however, that Malraux's interest in Nietzsche does not begin until his relationship with the German-speaking Clara Goldschmidt. Horst Hina writes, of Malraux in the early 1920s:

"Clara Malraux besass zu jener Zeit Ausgaben von Nietzsche's Zarathustra, von Jenseits von Gut und Böse sowie einen Auswahl-Band seiner Aphorismen; Malraux, der alle diese Bücher gut kannte, schätzte Jenseits von Gut und Böse am höchsten an" (Dem Verfasser mitgeteilt von Clara Malraux)" (2).

From this basic knowledge of Nietzsche's key works, Malraux progressed, making particular use of his period of captivity in Indochina to deepen his reading of Nietzsche. Clara Malraux records, of this period:

"Mon compagnon m'approvisionne en livres pris à la bibliothèque. Tout Nietzsche défile sur mes draps..." (3).

1. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.97.
2. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, p.9. "At this time, Clara Malraux possessed copies of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil, in addition to a selection of his Aphorisms. Malraux, who knew all these books well, admired Beyond Good and Evil greatly. (Told to the author by Clara Malraux)". Malraux's preference for Beyond Good and Evil, where Nietzsche develops to its most extreme the theory of the aristocratic hero, is significant in view of the ethical ambiguities of the adventurer.
3. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, II, Nos Vingt ans, Paris, Grasset, 1966, p.176.



and she continues:

"A l'époque mon compagnon croit en une hiérarchie, non pas sociale, mais établie en fonction de valeurs pour l'essentiel nietzschéennes. Avant de se révolter contre la condition humaine, avant de songer à l'aménager, il accepte un ordre qui permet et stabilise le triomphe des forts. La dignité de certains l'intéresse davantage que le bonheur d'un grand nombre" (1).

At the same time as Malraux deepened and extended his reading of Nietzsche, his knowledge and understanding of the philosopher was no doubt increased by contacts with other enthusiasts. Not only did Malraux frequent the Nietzschean intellectuals who participated in Paul Desjardins' "Décades" at Pontigny, but also he, in company with a group of younger writers, including Emmanuel Berl, Marcel Arland and Drieu la Rochelle, would meet in a salon in the late 1920s, in which, every Saturday, Daniel Halévy, one of the translators of the 1893 edition of Le Cas Wagner, and the editor of Grasset's "Cahiers verts" series in which appeared "D'une Jeunesse européenne", would participate (2). The presence of Drieu la Rochelle at these meetings is significant in view of his closeness to Malraux and his overt admiration for Nietzsche. In Notes pour comprendre le siècle, that grim condemnation of the stunted growth of Western civilisation, he sees Nietzsche, after Darwin, as the crucial figure in the return in Europe to an heroic mode of life. He writes:

"Il remet le corps - et ses passions et ses résistances, et ses exigences, ses disciplines et ses rigueurs propres, son ascétisme indispensable - à sa place au milieu de la vie de l'esprit. Il démasque et déblaie toutes les tendances du XIXe siècle et apporte ainsi au XXe siècle des directions toutes prêtes pour l'action" (3).

For Drieu, therefore, the importance of Nietzsche lies in the fact that he is a powerful antidote to a decaying Cornelian tradition, in which emphasis upon the intellect has led only to sterile introspection. Thus, Drieu enthuses:

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1. Ibid, p.179.
  2. See: Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, pp.12-13.
  3. Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, p.144.

"Nietzsche est le saint qui annonce le héros" (1).

and he concludes: "c'est un saint, un voyant, un prophète" (2). Finally, to these young intellectuals, who were important in sharing a common interest in Nietzsche with Malraux, may be added the importance of Malraux's contact with Bernard Groethuysen, the author of the Introduction à la pensée philosophique allemande depuis Nietzsche.

Malraux's travels in the 1920s also played an important part in his understanding of Nietzsche's thought. For Horst Hina, Malraux's journey to Italy in 1921, to Greece in 1922 and to Germany in 1922 and 1923 gave him increased awareness of the world of the German philosopher (3), who loved Italy and was a classical scholar. In addition, Malraux's visit to Berlin in 1922 brought him into contact with the work of the Nietzschean philosophers Spengler and Keyserling, whose cultural anthropological theories are echoed in Malraux's essays on Europe and return with renewed power in the colloquium of Les Noyers de l'Altenburg. The importance of Keyserling for French intellectuals of the post-war era is accentuated by his presence in Paris in 1926.

The predominant personal and literary influence on Malraux which contains Nietzschean elements, however, is that of André Gide. For Geneviève Bianquis, Gide is fortunate in belonging to the generation which benefited most fully and most authentically from the influence of Nietzsche. For her, the Nietzschean influence on Gide lies in the notion of "immoralisme", by which man is able to debate with his destiny without consideration for established moral norms. Nevertheless, such a concept has wider implications. Horst Hina quotes from the Journal of Charles du bos, in which he reflects:

"Oui, Gide a eu raison de dire que le grand problème nietzschéen est toujours: jusqu'où l'homme peut-il aller? Que peut l'homme?" (4).

1. Ibid, p.144.

2. Ibid, p.145.

3. See: Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, p.10.

4. Quoted in Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, p.14.

In this sense, Gide's immoralism enters the same context as Henri Massis' notion of man in Défense de l'Occident. As Malraux points out in his review, Massis stands for a fixed concept of man, whereas, for Malraux, the essence of the new generation is a belief in the possibilities of man. It is this, above all, which Malraux borrows from Gide, particularly from the Nourritures terrestres. In his article entitled "Ménalque", published in Franz Hellens' review Le Disque vert in 1923, Malraux writes:

"Votre méthode, qui diffère de celle de vos devanciers en ce qu'elle fixe, non un point d'arrivée, mais un point de départ, n'avait de valeur que si vous suggériez le désir de partir" (1),

and he concludes:

"Vous leur avez dit que vous les conduirez vers le bonheur; mais, s'ils vous ont suivi, c'est qu'ils ne vous croyaient pas. Et ne vous semble-t-il pas, Ménalque, que quelque masochisme intellectuel caractérise la plus intéressante partie de la jeunesse de notre énergique peuple de vainqueurs?" (2).

It is through Malraux's personal contact with Gide and his knowledge of all Gide's work (3) that, above all, the Nietzschean doctrine of the necessity of man being surpassed comes to Malraux.

Malraux, therefore, himself admits to an admiration for Nietzsche and exhibits a good knowledge of his work. Equipped in the early 1920s with a reading of Thus spake Zarathustra and Beyond Good and Evil, he extended his knowledge through further reading, particularly during his stay in Indochina, through his travels to Italy, Greece and Germany in the years 1921-1923, through contact with other admirers of Nietzsche and men indebted to him, particularly during the last years of the decade of the 1920s, and, finally, through his

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1. André Malraux, "Ménalque", Le Disque Vert, fév-mars-avril, 1923, p.21.

2. Ibid, p.21.

3. See: Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, p.9.

reading, in which the figure of Gide is pre-eminent (1).

Nevertheless, in spite of the weight of this Nietzschean interest and influence, Malraux's thought, on certain important issues, departs considerably from the philosophy of Nietzsche, and in a way which is not attributable to an uneasy blending of the Nietzschean and Cornelian traditions of the will. In view of this departure, it is necessary to trace in some detail the main lines of Nietzsche's philosophy of the will, in order that the full extent of Malraux's deviation, and its exact nature, can be determined.

Nietzsche writes, of Human, all-too human:

"It is called a book for free spirits: almost every sentence in it is the expression of a triumph - by means of it I purged myself of everything in me which was foreign to my nature" (2).

It is a comment which could apply equally well to his work as a whole. For Nietzsche is concerned with two things: he must propose the Free Spirit, the Superman, the Man of Will, but, in order to do this, he must demand that Western man be freed. Thus, Nietzsche's work is obliged to begin with a critique of everything in Western civilisation which prevents man from being free and attaining the estate of Superman.

He begins in a way employed already by Montaigne and Montesquieu and used after him to great effect by Spengler, in The Decline of the West, and by Malraux, in the essays on Europe, particularly La Tentation de l'Occident, the method of comparative cultural anthropology. He writes, in The Joyful Wisdom:

"In order for once to get a glimpse of our European morality from a distance, in order to compare it with other earlier or future moralities, one must do as the traveller who wants to know the height of the towers of a city: for that purpose he leaves the city" (3).

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1. Horst Hina argues that it was through the work of Charles Maurras that Nietzsche's thought, particularly his antiromanticism, came to Malraux. Since he bases this assertion on Malraux's preface to the Stock edition of Mademoiselle Monk, of 1922, a piece of work which was undertaken at the behest of Florent Fels and not through any ideological commitment, and on Clara Malraux's reference to their reading, in 1921, of Anthinéa, which in fact produced a less than enthusiastic reaction (see: Nos Vingt ans, p.16), the argument lacks conclusiveness. It appears more probable that, for Malraux, Maurras was above all a representative of the theory of the fixed nature of man in a strong West.
  2. Ecce Homo, p.82.
  3. The Joyful Wisdom, p.347.

Thus, Nietzsche prescribes that voluntary alienation from civilisation which alone permits understanding of that civilisation which is accomplished by Malraux's adventurers in their journey away from Europe. As a classical scholar, Nietzsche was well-suited to such an approach: already he had a fund of knowledge about a different civilisation with which to compare his own. Thus, in his work, the importance of Greek civilisation, with its close relationship between Apollo and Dionysus and its gradual decline under the influence of Socratic thought, is that it constitutes a condemnation of the sterility of modern Western existence and provides a reason for such a state. Nietzsche refuses to forgive Western culture for the fact that, since Socrates, the Dionysian element has been ignored in favour of the rational and the mechanistic. It is the aim of his philosophy to restore to the West its Dionysian past.

In addition to his professional interest in Greece, Nietzsche explored freely the values of other cultures. The fullest expression of this exploration is to be found in Thus spake Zarathustra, both in the figure of Zarathustra himself and in the doctrine of eternal recurrence. In this context, Charles Andler judges that Nietzsche made use, not only of Greek and Persian but also of Hindu and Bouddhist sources (1). Indeed, the Bouddha himself appears in the work, under the guise of the "voluntary beggar".

At the same time that Nietzsche explores other cultures, using them as vantage-points from which better to judge his own, he makes use of the theory, which will become central to Spengler's Decline of the West, of the cyclical nature of human history, by which one cycle is inevitably superceded by another. He writes, in the first part of Human, all-too human:

"It may be figuratively said that the ages of culture correspond to the zones of the various climates, only that they lie behind another, and not beside each other like the geographical zones" (2).

This theory, in itself, constitutes a condemnation of the West, for it implies that European culture, following the cyclical law of history, will in its turn

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1. Charles Andler, Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée, II, La Maturité de Nietzsche, Chapter 2.
  2. Human, all-too human, I, p.219.

be superceded. Such an argument, therefore, sharply contradicts the notion of a fixed and eternal West expounded by Henri Massis and attacked by Malraux in his review of Défense de l'Occident. Yet, a certain heroism is necessary. Nietzsche concludes:

"Moreover, we cannot go back to the old, we have burnt our boats; there remains nothing but to brave whatever happens - March ahead, only get forward!" (1).

Although Western civilisation will pass as others have passed, the free man must see in its passing the source of freedom and must accept it joyfully.

This civilisation of the West, which Nietzsche finds so abhorrent, and which he exhorts his followers to leave, is composed of three elements which are particularly dangerous. The first is Christianity; the second, the system of morality dependent upon that religion; and the third is the society produced by the combined effects of that religion and that morality. For Nietzsche, it is Christianity which is the enemy of the philosophy of Dionysus. He ends his autobiography, tellingly, with the question: "Have you understood me? Dionysus versus Christ" (2), and, indeed, it was in an hallucinatory attempt to fuse the two poles that Nietzsche found the struggle too great, and became mad (3).

His almost obsessive antagonism to Christianity comes from a recognition of its cumulative effect upon the civilisation of the West. For Christianity has rendered man a fearful and oppressed being, the very opposite of the ideal of the free spirit. Nietzsche writes, in The Wanderer and his Shadow:

"Christianity first painted the devil on the wall of the world. Christianity first brought the idea of sin into the world. The belief in the remedies, which is offered as an antidote, has gradually been shaken to its very foundations. But the belief in the disease, which Christianity has taught and propagated, still exists" (4),

1. Ibid, p.230.

2. Ecce homo, p.28.

3. For a full account of this, see: Charles Andler, Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée, II, Chapter 3, "L'Apogée et l'effondrement". The madness occurred between December 28th, 1888, and January 3rd, 1889.

4. Human, all-too human, II, p.237.

and, in The Genealogy of Morals, he sums up the guilt inculcated by Christianity in a scene in which a priest says to a sick man, of his sufferings: "it is the fault of thyself alone against thyself" (1). It is this which, for Nietzsche, constitutes the crime of Christianity: by its notion of sin and guilt, it has destroyed love of life and made of the earth a dark place. As Zarathustra asks perceptively:

"Or was it a sermon of death that called holy what contradicted and dissuaded from life?" (2).

Thus, Nietzsche summarises the task of Christianity as:

"to invert all love of the earthly and of supremacy over the earth into hatred of the earth and earthly things" (3).

For this reason, he is fascinated by Pascal, whose faith "resembles in a terrible manner a continuous suicide of reason" (4).

Christianity is the denigration of joy, of love of life, of reason - it is because of this that Nietzsche hails the death of God with such enthusiasm. Zarathustra could believe only "in a God that would know how to dance" (5), but the Christian God, for Nietzsche, held dance, the exaltation of life, in anathema. Thus, when Nietzsche announces the death of God, he writes:

"In fact, we philosophers and "free spirits" feel ourselves irradiated as by a new dawn by the report that "the old God is dead" (6).

And the death of God was due to his pity for man, that expression of weakness and will-lessness which Nietzsche despises so in the work of Schopenhauer (7).

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1. The Genealogy of Morals, p.165.
  2. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.246.
  3. Beyond Good and Evil, p.83.
  4. Ibid, p.64.
  5. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.45.
  6. The Joyful Wisdom, p.276.
  7. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.105 and pp.117ff.

Nevertheless, if Nietzsche is able to hail with joy the removal of God, the battle is not over: indeed, its worst phase is just beginning. He writes, in The Joyful Wisdom:

"God is dead: but as the human race is constituted, there will perhaps be caves for milleniums yet, in which people will show his shadow. - And we - we have still to overcome his shadow!" (1).

In dealing with this phase of the battle against Christianity, a certain ambiguity enters Nietzsche's argument. For it is not only the weak and the foolish who continue to harbour the shadow of the old God: the influence of Christianity has been so strong that it cannot be rejected in a moment, not even by Nietzsche's free spirits. Furthermore, Nietzsche admits that the Christian influence has not been entirely negative. He remarks, of Christianity, in Beyond Good and Evil:

"all this violence, arbitrariness, severity, dreadfulness, and unreasonableness, has proved itself the disciplining means whereby the European spirit has attained its strength, its remorseless curiosity and subtle mobility" (2).

The problem for Nietzsche, is that, whilst Christianity is to be condemned, its by-product of will-power is to be the foundation of his philosophy, and this will exists not only in the severity of the religion itself, but also in the struggle against it. For:

"the struggle against the ecclesiastical oppression of milleniums of Christianity ... produced in Europe a magnificent tension of soul" (3).

Yet, so imbued with Christianity is European culture, that even the exercise of the will is not exempt. As Nietzsche concludes:

"we good Europeans, and free, very free spirits - we have it still, all the distress of the spirit and all the tension of its bow" (4).

Thus, if the influence of Christianity has been so profound that it has coloured

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1. The Joyful Wisdom, p.151.
  2. Beyond Good and Evil, p.108. A similar conclusion forms the basis for works such as Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism and R.H.Tawney's Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.
  3. Beyond Good and Evil, p.3.
  4. Ibid, p.3.



even the dynamism of the West, Nietzsche's free spirits are in a paradoxical position, for even the generation emancipated from Christian dogma exists in an intellectual context which is still influenced by Christianity, and must experience the distress which is the product of disbelief in that context. As Nietzsche concludes, in the first part of Human, all-too human:

"The tragedy consists in the fact that we cannot believe those dogmas of religion and metaphysics, if we have strict methods of truth in heart and brain" (1).

It is exactly this tragic situation that Malraux analyses, with respect to his generation, in "D'une Jeunesse européenne". He concludes that his generation must reject the power of Christianity to poison a love of life and the world, but that it is condemned to a tragic paradox because, by its intellectual formation, it is obliged to perceive the world through a Christian "grille" which it cannot believe in.

Nietzsche's critique of Christianity and its influence has implications for his attack on nineteenth-century morality and political organisation. Of the Christian effect on morality he writes, in Beyond Good and Evil:

"Christianity gave Eros poison to drink; he did not die of it, certainly, but degenerated to vice" (2).

For Nietzsche, Christianity has ruined human relationships, and, above all, it has established a system of morality in which the absolute values of Good and Evil are universal laws, a system designed to protect the mediocre and the weak, and to punish the strong and the exceptional. For Nietzsche,

"Christianity was devised for another class of ancient slaves, for those who had a weak will and weak reason - that is to say, for the majority of slaves" (3).

Christianity is a slave-religion, which propagates its slave-morality and its slave-politics. As Nietzsche remarks, with contempt: "the democratic movement is the inheritance of the Christian movement" (4).

In contrast to this system of morality and society, Nietzsche proposes a new

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1. Human, all-too human, I, p.112.
  2. Beyond Good and Evil, p.99.
  3. The Dawn of Day, p.377.
  4. Beyond Good and Evil, p.127.

system, one which favour the free spirit, the man of strong will, who is able to act in a moral context "beyond good and evil" and who can feel comfortable only in an aristocratic society. Nietzsche's ideal is the free spirit, and his aim is to liberate himself and his followers from the narrow confines of nineteenth-century civilisation. Such a process of liberation begins, as in the work of Malraux, with a will to rejection - rejection of the influence of Christianity, as far as is possible, and of its manifestations in the spheres of ethics and politics. It is this liberation which is the prerequisite of the man of will. Nietzsche writes, in The Wanderer and his Shadow:

"Only when the disease of chains is overcome is the first great goal reached - the separation of man from the brute" (1),

and Bernard Groethuysen adds, as a definition of the adventurer:

"Ce sera un aventurier qui ne saurait vivre que dans un univers aux horizons illimités" (2),

a comment which applies not merely to Nietzsche's Superman, but also to his descendants, Gide's "immoralistes" and Malraux's men of will.

What Nietzsche discerns in nineteenth-century Europe is a decaying culture which is unable to produce a positive response to existence. He writes, in Beyond Good and Evil: "a man of late culture and broken lights will, on average, be a weak man" (3), and, in the same book, he concludes that the only possible antidote to the decadence of Europe is a cultivation of the will. Thus, he sums up his aim as to "teach man the future of his humanity as his will, as depending upon human will " (4). The will, therefore, for Nietzsche, is not merely the result of the rejection of Christianity, it is also the only means by which the civilisation tainted by Christian influence may be redeemed.

The free spirit appears first in Nietzsche's system as a wanderer, an expression in spatial terms of his freedom, and it is as such that Nietzsche

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1. Human, all-too human, II, p.363.

2. Bernard Groethuysen, Introduction à la pensée allemande depuis Nietzsche, Paris, Stock, 1926, p.29.

3. Beyond Good and Evil, p.122.

4. Ibid, p.129.

defines him in Human, all-too human:

"He who has attained intellectual emancipation to any extent, cannot, for a long time, regard himself otherwise than as a wanderer on the face of the earth - and not even as a traveller towards a final goal, for there is no such thing" (1),

a definition which coincides with Serge Doubrovsky's notion of an unending dialectical spiral in the relationship between Corneille's Masters. In addition, this definition is reinforced by the way in which Nietzsche entitles part of the Second Part of Human, all-too human: "The Wanderer and his Shadow". The free spirit, therefore, is to be seen not even as a wanderer towards a goal, but as a figure whose essence is aimless journeying. For Nietzsche, a life of detachment is vital as a condition for the coming of the Superman. As Zarathustra prophesies:

"Ye lonesome ones of today, ye seceding ones, ye shall one day be a people: out of you who have chosen yourselves, shall a people arise:- and out of it the Superman" (2).

In this way, the necessary "landlessness" of the free spirit explains the incompatibility of the family-structure with Gide's view of the free individual, and the particularly detached quality of Malraux's heroes.

To secede from the mass of humanity requires strength and courage - Nietzsche refers to it as a "refined heroism" (3) - and yet, already, the act of surpassing outdated ideas confers a sense of power. Of this sensation, Nietzsche remarks:

"in the course of knowledge we surpass older ideas and their representatives, and become, or believe ourselves to be conquerors" (4).

Yet the real power, the power of the Superman to which Nietzsche aspires, cannot be reached solely by the individual's liberation from the context in which he lives. That he should be a wanderer is the first condition; but, to be a true free spirit he must go, not only beyond his contemporaries, but beyond himself. He must live always in the realm of the possible, a realm of constant tension, of constant striving towards the beyond. It is on this point that Zarathustra

1. Human, all-too human, I, p.405.
2. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.89.
3. Human, all-too human, I, p.263.
4. Ibid, p.233.

begins his first sermon, with the words:

"I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have you done to surpass man?" (1).

It is for this reason that the goal of Nietzsche's free spirit must never be attained, for, once the aim is achieved, the free spirit's existence becomes static and a prey to the introspective absurdity of nineteenth-century individualism. As Zarathustra indicates:

"The most careful ask today: "How is man to be maintained?" Zarathustra, however, asketh, as the first and only one: "How is man to be surpassed?" (2).

Thus, if Nietzsche's comparative cultural anthropology teaches him the vanity of absolute truths and the supremacy of cultural relativism, his striving towards the free spirit and the Superman demands a rejection of static, essential statements about man in favour of emphasis upon the dynamic act of the superior man creating his own self.

In this sense, Nietzsche is a contributor to the growth of existential philosophy as much as is Corneille. In the second part of Human, all-too human, he rejects contemplation in favour of the defining power of the acting will:

"Active, successful natures act, not according to the maxim: "Know thyself", but as if always confronted with the command: "Will a self, so you will become a self"" (3).

And Zarathustra cries:

"Ah! my friends! That your very self be in your action, as the mother is in the child: let that be your formula of virtue!" (4),

summing up his task:

"The past of man to redeem, and every "It was" to transform, until the will saith: "But so did I will it! So shall I will it -" (5).

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1. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.6.
  2. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.351.
  3. Human, all-too human, II, p.168.
  4. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.112.
  5. Ibid, p.242.

Nietzsche, therefore, proposes a dynamic, restless philosophy, by which, if an act is to be a man's own, it must be a product of his will. Indeed, the will as a force can only manifest itself in striving, restlessness and action which have a defining function for the individual personality. It is this notion of the will which is at the origin of Ferral's statement to Gisors:

"l'acte, l'acte seul justifie la vie et satisfait l'homme blanc...  
Un homme est la somme de ses actes, de ce qu'il a fait, de ce qu'il peut faire" (1).

Since Nietzsche's philosophy constitutes a celebration of wandering, restlessness, surpassing of the self and dynamism, he is led to employ frequently the metaphor of warfare as an ideal situation for the free spirit, and as a desirable contrast to the static decadence of nineteenth-century Europe (2). In this context, his boundless admiration for Napoleon, which coincides with a similar enthusiasm on the part of Malraux, assumes its full relevance. He notes, in The Genealogy of Morals:

"Napoleon, the most unique and violent anachronism that ever existed, and in him, the incarnate problem of the aristocratic ideal in itself"(3),

and writes, in The Joyful Wisdom:

"To him, consequently, one will one day be able to attribute the fact that man in Europe has again got the upper hand of the merchant and the Philistine; perhaps even of "woman" also..." (4).

1. La Condition humaine, p.135.
2. Nietzsche's personal experience of war was limited to a brief spell of service as an ambulance-man in the Franco-Prussian War. His reactions, however, appear to have been somewhat ambiguous, ranging from admiration for the glories of a cavalry-charge, to, at the same time, nausea at the suffering which he encountered. See: Charles Andler, Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée, I, p.344.
3. The Genealogy of Morals, p.56. The anachronistic quality of the man of will is, of course, common to Malraux's heroes as well.
4. The Joyful Wisdom, p.320. This remains one of the clearest statements of Nietzsche's belief in a dichotomy between the race of Masters and the mass of weak humanity.

For Nietzsche, war, in its figurative and literal sense, is the only means by which humanity can remain healthy and aspire to the age of the Superman.

He states, in the preface to The Twilight of the Idols:

"War has always been the great policy of all spirits who have penetrated too far into themselves or who have grown too deep; a wound stimulates the recuperative powers" (1).

In this way, therefore, war, the highest point of action, is a corrective to that same absurd introspection of the nineteenth century which Malraux condemns in the essays on Europe, and which is exemplified by works such as Barrès' "culte du moi". It is thus to the regenerative powers of war that Nietzsche appeals. He enthuses: "We rejoice in all men, who like ourselves love danger, war and adventure..." (2), and he looks forward with joy to the prospect of that love being satisfied in the near future, claiming:

"I greet all the signs indicating that a more manly and warlike age is commencing, which will, above all, bring heroism again into honour. For it has to prepare the way for a yet higher age, and gather the force which the latter will one day require, - the age which will carry heroism into knowledge, and wage war for the sake of ideas and their consequences" (3).

Nietzsche therefore embraces the values of war - discipline, tension, and a necessary harshness towards fellow-men - as a means of permitting the will to develop and flower. It is interesting that, in the first part of Human, all-too human, he should discuss, with reference to the British, specifically, various acceptable substitutes for war:

"dangerous exploring expeditions, sea voyages and mountaineering, nominally undertaken for scientific purposes, but in reality to bring home surplus strength from adventures and dangers of all kinds" (4),

a comment which looks forward to Drieu la Rochelle's view of Britain as one of the last repositories of will in the twentieth century and illuminates the

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1. Preface to The Twilight of the Idols, p.XVIII
  2. The Joyful Wisdom, p.343.
  3. The Joyful Wisdom, pp.218-219. This passage is interesting for the way in which Nietzsche combines a figurative and literal notion of war.
  4. Human, all-too human, I, p.350.

personal nature of Garine's battle with the British Empire.

War, or its substitute, is therefore, for Nietzsche, of prime importance as a context and breeding-ground of the will. It is in the acceptance of the values of war, with the ethical ambiguity that such an acceptance implies, in the exercise of the will, that, for Nietzsche, man truly enters his own estate. One phrase, repeated on three separate occasions in Thus spake Zarathustra, emphasises this. Nietzsche begins:

"Willing emancipateth: that is the true doctrine of will and emancipation" (1),

continues: "Will - so is the emancipator and joy-bringer called..." (2),

and concludes: "Willing emancipateth: for willing is creating" (3). The exercise of the will, as an act of creation (4), leads man to a state of freedom and superiority.

Having proposed that the will is the very essence of the higher man, as will-lessness is the essence of the slave, Nietzsche goes on to define the exact nature of the will. He begins by distinguishing violently between the will of the Superman, the dynamic, defining force, and that creation of a static psychology and slave-society, the doctrine of "free will". He refers, therefore, to the "hundred-times-refuted theory of the "free will" (5), and explains, in The Dawn of Day:

"Need I add that the wise Oedipus was right, that we are not really responsible for our dreams, any more than for our waking hours, and that the doctrine of the free will has as its parents man's pride and sense of power!" (6).

In The Wanderer and his Shadow, he storms:

"the teachers of free will draw the inevitable conclusion from their doctrine of "free will" and boldly decree: "No action has a past"" (7).

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1. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.101.
  2. Ibid, p.168.
  3. Ibid, p.252.
  4. It is important to note the frequency with which Nietzsche implies that the will is connected with an aesthetic function.
  5. Beyond Good and Evil, p.25.
  6. The Dawn of Day, p.132.
  7. Human, all-too Human, II, p.209.

Such an objection is based upon Nietzsche's deep psychological knowledge which taught him that actions do indeed have a past. His antipathy to the theory of "free will", however, appears to proceed less from a commitment to a form of psychological determinism, than from a rejection of the whole value-structure in which the doctrine is contained. The notion of "free will" presupposes an insistence upon responsibility and upon a scale of absolute morality. Nietzsche, however, prefers to ignore a system of qualitative value-judgements, and concentrates instead upon the construction of a system of quantitative values. Thus, he concludes, in Beyond Good and Evil:

"The "non-free will" is mythology; in real life it is only a question of strong and weak wills" (1).

Having removed the debate to its proper plane, Nietzsche is then able to employ the erroneous terminology, but in his own sense. He writes:

"one could imagine a delight, and a power of self-determining, and a freedom of will, whereby a spirit could bid farewell to every belief, to every wish for certainty, accustomed as it would be to support itself on slender cords and possibilities, and to dance even on the verge of abysses. Such a spirit would be the free spirit par excellence"(2).

In Nietzsche's terms, therefore, the "free will" is a freed will, the strong will which has broken away from the constrictions of a dying culture.

Nietzsche's rejection of the doctrine of "free will" is accompanied by his more personal rejection of the philosophy of Schopenhauer. As a student and young writer, Nietzsche was strongly influenced by Schopenhauer's work: it was this which deflected him from his purely scholarly work at Leipzig, under Ritschl, and resulted in the rejection of his doctoral thesis; more positively, Schopenhauer's influence produced the essay, Schopenhauer als Erzieher, and led Nietzsche to the admiration for Wagner which culminated in The Birth of Tragedy. By the time he was writing the main body of his work, however, Nietzsche had come to distrust Schopenhauer's philosophy. He blames him first for that

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1. Beyond Good and Evil, p.31.
  2. The Joyful Wisdom, p.287.



"general ill-will to all philosophy" (1) which he discerns in Germany, the cause of which he attributes to Schopenhauer's rejection of Hegel, and the sense of history. Yet it is particularly Schopenhauer's notion of the will which Nietzsche finds difficult to accept. In The Joyful Wisdom, he refers to Schopenhauer's "undemonstrable doctrine of one will" (2), a criticism which he makes more specific in the latter part of Human, all-too Human:

"According to the description given of this All-one-will, this is much as if one should positively try to have the stupid Devil for one's God" (3).

Finally, in The Twilight of the Idols, he inveighs against Schopenhauer:

"He interpreted art, heroism, genius, beauty, great sympathy, knowledge, the will to truth, and tragedy, one after the other, as the results of the denial, or the need of the denial, of the "will" - the greatest forgery, Christianity always excepted, which history has to show" (4).

In one crucial passage in The Joyful Wisdom, however, Nietzsche ceases his purely negative attacks on Schopenhauer and deals constructively with the latter's theory of the will. He concludes:

"I set the following propositions against those of Schopenhauer:- Firstly, in order that will may arise, an idea of pain and pleasure is necessary. Secondly, that a vigorous excitation may be felt as pleasure or pain, is the affair of the interpreting intellect, which, to be sure, operates thereby for the most part unconsciously to us, and one and the same excitation may be interpreted as pleasure or pain. Thirdly, it is only in an intellectual being that there is pleasure, displeasure and Will; the immense majority of organisms have nothing of the kind" (5).

The Schopenhauerian theory of the universal will, present in all phenomena and continually in conflict with itself, is thus disputed by Nietzsche, and the will becomes the sole property of man. Nietzsche's criticism, however, does not

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1. Beyond Good and Evil, p.135.
  2. The Joyful Wisdom, p.133.
  3. Human, all-too Human, II, p.15.
  4. The Twilight of the Idols, p.77.
  5. The Joyful Wisdom, p.171.

constitute a total rejection: he retains the concept of the will as a dynamic, organic essence, but, unlike Schopenhauer, gives it a firmer psychological basis in the unconscious and the realm of pain and pleasure stimuli, a theory which contributes to Freud's elucidation of the "pleasure principle".

It is for this reason that Nietzsche constantly refers to the will as a deep-seated, irrational force, the product of something other than the intellect. Thus, Zarathustra cries:

"Yea, something invulnerable, unburiable is with me, something that would rend rocks assunder: it is called my Will" (1),

and later, in the same book, the King develops this dynamic notion of the will in a more dynamic way, to which Les Noyers de l'Altenburg provides a certain echo:

"There is nothing, O Zarathustra, that groweth more pleasingly on earth than a lofty, strong, will: it is the finest growth. An entire landscape refreshes itself at one such tree. To the pine do I compare him..." (2).

At the same time, however, Nietzsche appears unwilling to conceive of this dynamic, libidinous will as existing without an object; and, for him, this object is power. Already, in The Dawn of Day, he writes: "Neither necessity nor desire, but the love of power, is the demon of mankind" (3), and Zarathustra proclaims:

"Voluptuousness, passion for power and selfishness: these three things have hitherto been best cursed, and have been in worst and falsest repute - these three things will I weight humanly well" (4).

From his discovery of the search for power by mankind, a search condemned by systems of absolute morality, Nietzsche goes on to see in it the unique expression of the will. In Beyond Good and Evil, he writes:

"A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength - life itself is Will to Power" (5),

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1. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.133.
  2. Ibid, p.343.
  3. The Dawn of Day, p.248.
  4. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.229.
  5. Beyond Good and Evil, p.20.

and he refers, some pages later, to: "the right to define all active force unequivocally as Will to Power" (1). Again and again, the dynamic organic image of the will as energy appears, now with its object as power - a conclusion to be reached later by Adlerian psychology. Nietzsche, however, does not define clearly the nature of the power towards which mankind aspires, except that it is implicit already in his postulation of the free spirit, for, in order to be free, the will must demand the autonomy of the willing individual and the surpassing of others.

Nietzsche, therefore, leads his free spirit away from all the chains of European civilisation to a state in which his will may flourish and where he will continually surpass himself. The free spirit becomes the Superman, Zarathustra, and the Dionysus. Nietzsche emphasises his allegiance to the Greek God: twice he refers to himself as "the disciple of the philosopher Dionysus" (2). For Dionysus is the expression of a will which has gone "beyond Good and Evil", a will which has achieved hardness and difficulty. Nietzsche writes, in Ecce Homo:

"The command "Harden yourselves! and the deep conviction that all creators are hard, is the really distinctive sign of a Dionysian nature" (3),

and, in Beyond Good and Evil, he recounts a conversation with Dionysus, in which the "tempter-god" (4) describes the way to man's salvation, with the words:

"I like man, and I often think how I can make him stronger, more evil, and more profound. - "Stronger, more evil, and more profound?" I asked in horror. "Yes", he said again, "stronger, more evil and more profound; also more beautiful""(5).

In this passage, Nietzsche sketches the path to freedom in terms of strength and grimness, in terms of departure from ethical norms, but also, highly significantly, in terms of aesthetic beauty.

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1. Ibid, p.52.
  2. See: The Twilight of the Idols, p.120, and Ecce Homo, p.2.
  3. Ecce Homo p.114.
  4. Beyond Good and Evil, p.261.
  5. Beyond Good and Evil, p.263.

It is passages like this which indicate that, for Nietzsche, the will is not concerned solely with a celebration of the dour warrior-hero, but with an additional ingredient which is of a different order. In The Twilight of the Idols, he describes his free spirit in terms of Goethe and Napoleon, but continues:

"Such a spirit becomes free, appears in the middle of the universe with a feeling of cheerful and confident fatalism; he believes that only individual things are bad, and that as a whole the universe justifies and affirms itself - He no longer desires - but such a faith is the highest of all faiths: I christened it with the name of Dionysus" (1).

Clearly, such a definition of the man of will departs radically from the typology offered by Corneille's heroes or Malraux's adventurers. Yet, it is essential to Nietzsche's thought, and is constructed upon a series of discoveries which accompany the gradual affirmation of the Superman.

In the first place, there is a persistent current running through Nietzsche's work which expresses some doubt in the value of action by itself. As he writes, in Beyond Good and Evil, "actions are always ambiguous, always inscrutable" (2): for him, success lies in the belief rather than in the action. Furthermore, Nietzsche sees the real ambiguity of action as lying in the fact that devotion to the concept requires a single-mindedness which characterises both the hero and the fanatic. The free spirit, however, really can belong to neither camp, a fact which is summed up by a revealing passage in Human, all-too Human:

"Compared with him who has tradition on his side, and requires no reason for his actions, the free spirit is always weak, especially in action; for he is acquainted with too many motives and points of view" (3).

It is for this reason that Nietzsche can have no sympathy for the cult of the hero, exemplified by Carlyle, on whom he pours some of his most bitter abuse.

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1. The Twilight of the Idols, p.110.
  2. Beyond Good and Evil, p.256.
  3. Human, all-too Human, I, p.214.

At the same time, Nietzsche's doubts regarding the value of action bring him to question its authenticity, and, in order to do so, he employs the same arguments and imagery as that used by Perken to show the inauthenticity of the adventurer, Mayrena. Thus, he writes, in The Joyful Wisdom: "the problem of the actor has disquieted me the longest" (1), a theme which he pursues in Beyond Good and Evil, where he notes: "What? A great man? I always see merely the play actor of his own ideal" (2). Similarly, he notes approvingly, in The Joyful Wisdom, of Tiberius: "He was genuine and not a stage player" (3). Nietzsche discerns in action, therefore, the dangers, both of fanatical single-mindedness, which constitutes a loss of freedom, and a certain inauthenticity, connected with the playing of a role. These doubts, however, are merely symptomatic of a more important objection; for Nietzsche moves towards the position where he claims that the path of action in itself leads ultimately in the wrong direction.

The man of action, by definition, asserts his individuality against his surroundings. Yet, from The Joyful Wisdom onwards, Nietzsche begins to conclude that the secret of man's salvation lies, not in resistance, but in the highest notion of acceptance. Hence he arrives at the doctrine of "amor fati", and the theory, expressed at its most complete in Thus spake Zarathustra, of eternal recurrence. The first counsels the submergence of the individual into the race; the second, the assimilation of man as a whole into the pattern of eternity.

It is this current of Nietzsche's thought which allows him to minimise the obsession with death in favour of a celebration of life and joy. He writes dismissively of death: "Among human beings there is no greater banality than death" (4), and concludes:

"It makes me happy to see that men do not want to think at all of the idea of death!" (5).

1. The Joyful Wisdom, p.318.
2. Beyond Good and Evil, p.90.
3. The Joyful Wisdom, p.75.
4. Human, all-too Human, II, p.227.
5. The Joyful Wisdom, pp.215-216.

In place of the obsession with death, Nietzsche proposes a devotion to the life force. Yet, for the man who is a critic of his civilisation, the task is by no means easy. Nietzsche writes of the problems presented by Thus spake Zarathustra:

"The psychological problem presented by the type of Zarathustra is, how can he, who in an unprecedented manner says no, and acts no, in regard to all that has been affirmed hitherto, remain nevertheless a yea-saying spirit?" (1).

Nevertheless, that "yea-saying" must have its place, and with it laughter and the dance. It is Zarathustra himself who exults:

"This day is a victory: he already yieldeth, he fleeth, the spirit of gravity, mine old arch-enemy!" (2),

and he proclaims: "Laughing have I consecrated; ye higher men, learn, I pray you - to laugh" (3). Nietzsche's ideal is summed up as that of Pyrrho:

"silence and laughter" (4), and he concludes:

"I know not what the spirit of a philosopher would like better than to be a good dancer. For the dance is his ideal, and also his art, in the end likewise his sole piety, his "divine service"" (5).

It is, in the end, the dance which characterises Nietzsche's philosophy, in its emphasis upon freedom, the upsurge of the will, in its laughter and joy contained in aesthetic form.

As an art-form, however, the dance requires control, and in Nietzsche's work the will exists as intentionality at the same time as it exists as a psychological drive: Dionysus is balanced and controlled by Apollo. In his early work, The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche sees Greek tragedy as a unique art-form: the life force of Dionysus embodied in the dithyramb, is fixed and eternalised through the effect of Apollonian plasticity. As he describes it:

"we must understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus, which always disburdens itself anew in an Apollonian world of pictures" (6).

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1. Ecce Homo, p.109.
  2. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.380.
  3. Ibid, p.363.
  4. Human, all-too Human, II, p.301.
  5. The Joyful Wisdom, p.351.
  6. The Birth of Tragedy, p.68.

If the Dionysian upsurge is contained and given eternal form under the influence of Apollo, so the will of the free spirit must be similarly controlled and directed. The free spirit requires a force of intentionality to keep him on the path of the eternal wanderer, to force him to leave home and love and comfort, and to face the cold and joyful world of the possible.

At the end of The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche makes use of a startling image in order to describe the problems of a sterile and decadent European civilisation. He writes:

"We look in vain for one vigorously-branching root, for a speck of fertile and healthy soil: there is dust, sand, torpidness and languishing everywhere! Under such circumstances a cheerless solitary wanderer could choose for himself no better symbol than the Knight with Death and the Devil, as Dürer has sketched him for us, the mail-clad knight, grim and stern of visage, who is able, unperturbed by his gruesome companions and yet hopelessly, to pursue his terrible path with horse and hound alone"(1).

Yet, if Nietzsche began his journey with Death on one side and the Devil on the other, he learned soon that the journey could only be accomplished by ignoring both his companions, by transforming fear of death into "amor fati", by going beyond the Devil, "beyond Good and Evil", to where the Devil becomes the tempter-god Dionysus. The journey done, he found at the end of the path a terrible joy; and the grim, lonely knight learns to dance, in the person of Zarathustra.

This lengthy analysis of Nietzsche's thought indicates at once an important aspect of Malraux's debt to him: that he is able to follow Nietzsche only to a certain extent. With the negative aspect of Nietzschean philosophy, Malraux is in full agreement. Like Nietzsche, he goes beyond his own society and examines other cultures in order to view better the insufficiencies of Western culture. He shares with Nietzsche an interest in Eastern civilisations, an interest indicated by his early enthusiasm for Oriental art, his journeys to Indochina and the presence of his adventurer-heroes in the East. Thus, in their concern to find an external point from which to assess Western civilisation, the essays on Europe echo the cultural anthropological content of Nietzsche's work. Malraux similarly

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1. Ibid, p.156.

follows Nietzsche in his view of Christianity as a detrimental influence upon Western culture, an influence which he attacks, particularly in "D'une Jeunesse européenne", but the tragic effect of which he is forced to recognise: in common with Nietzsche, he experiences the distress of the Anti-Christian who must necessarily work within a Christian intellectual tradition.

Malraux's search for the New Man leads him to accept Nietzsche's concept of the free spirit and the wanderer, who must go outside of their civilisation, cast off all attachments, and lead a life built upon isolation and restlessness. The will to reject is the initial necessity of both Nietzsche and Malraux.

Yet, in their view of the constitution of the free spirit/adventurer, a certain discrepancy emerges between Malraux's writing and that of Nietzsche. Malraux finds useful Nietzsche's proposition that a state of war, with war-time values, is essential if the free spirit is to transcend the introspective individualism of the nineteenth century and base the creation of his essence upon the firmer foundation of the exercise of the will. At the same time, he shares some of Nietzsche's misgivings about the man of action. La Tentation de l'Occident, through the Oriental, Ling, raises the question of the ambiguity of the act; more important, Nietzsche's fascination with the inauthenticity of the actor as a symbol of the man of action is reflected strongly in a strain of role-or actor-imagery in Malraux's work, exemplified by the critique of Mayrena.

This coincidence of views, however, is deceptive. For, whilst Malraux's heroes reject the actor's role for the concrete aim, they do so in a different sense from Nietzsche's free spirit. Malraux's adventurers are endowed with a strong will to power, but in a more specific sense than that which motivates the free spirit: Perken moves towards his kingdom, Claude towards wealth, Ferral towards political power. The Nietzschean theory that the man of will must be a wanderer, devoid of aims save that of continually surpassing himself, is not mirrored exactly in Malraux's characters. Indeed, the only truly Nietzschean "wanderer" is the ageing and anonymous narrator of Royaume-Farfelu, still intent,



after all that he has suffered, upon his journey to the "îles Fortunées".

If Malraux departs from Nietzsche's precepts on the question of the nature of the hero, he diverges equally with regard to the notion of individualism. Like Nietzsche, Malraux attacks the introspection of the nineteenth century, with its static and absurd introspection. Similarly, both writers concern themselves with a new notion of psychology which removes the man of will from the field of static analysis and explanation. Nietzsche's substitution of the concept of "strong will" for "free will" is both a recognition of the deep determining qualities of the unconscious and a dismissal of its relevance to metaphysical argument, and this view is continued in Malraux's rejection of the "élucidation de l'individu" for the "moyen d'expression privilégié du tragique de l'homme" (1). Furthermore, Nietzsche's assertion that the individual must be subsumed into the race is mirrored, not merely by the evolution of Barrès from Le Culte du moi to Les Déracinés, but equally in Malraux's efforts, particularly in the Preface to Le Temps du mépris, to integrate the individual into collective action. Similarly, Zarathustra's comment that the individual should live on in his children finds a faint echo in Perken's search for immortality through the continuing life of the inhabitants of his kingdom (2). However, when Nietzsche suggests that the individual should resign himself to a place in the cycle of eternal recurrence, that he should cultivate "amor fati", he expresses a notion not found in Malraux's work, until it emerges in his most Nietzschean book, Les Noyers de l'Altenburg. The will which motivates Malraux's adventurers and which defines them is the force which causes them to struggle against the environment in which they find themselves. In the context of the jungle of La Voie Royale, the siege of Canton or the revolution of La Condition humaine, "amor fati" can be seen only as a gratuitous surrender to the forces of the

1. Gaëtan Picon, Malraux par lui-même, p.66.

2. At the same time, however, Perken's construction of his kingdom, which has almost metaphysical significance, is far more a manifestation of the struggling individual will.

Absurd. In this sense, however, Nietzsche, with his integration of the free spirit into the cycle of eternal recurrence, resolves a problem which persists in Malraux's work, that of the individual. Whilst Malraux is able to transform the notion of individual psychology by concentrating upon acts rather than the unconscious, he retains such problematic individual traits as solitude and individual weakness.

Notwithstanding such divergences from Nietzschean philosophy, however, Malraux's concept of the will owes much to Nietzsche. Above all, Nietzsche's understanding of the will assists in explaining one aspect of the adventurer which is unilluminated by the Cornelian notion of will as intentionality. Whilst Nietzsche himself makes use of the intentional will, in order to maintain the free spirit firmly on the path to freedom, and in his theory of aesthetics, his major importance for Malraux lies in his continuation, albeit modified, of Schopenhauer's theory of the will as a force in order to create a psychological explanation for the existence of the pre-intentional will. What can only be explained when referring to Corneille's heroes and their initial motivation as a "grâce de la volonté", becomes, in Nietzschean terms a product of psychological stimuli on the basis of pain and pleasure. Whilst all men are subject to these stimuli, some experience them more acutely, and these are the men of strong will. What distinguishes Claude and Perken, Garine and Ferral from their fellow-men is that they experience pain and pleasure more sharply and are therefore endowed with a strong will which leads them to devote their lives to the will to power and the career of the adventurer (1). In this case, Nietzsche's incidental references to the will as intentionality and, indeed, the entire Cornelian tradition, indicate that the role of the intentional will is to maintain the man of strong will on his chosen course of action: it is this will which separates

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1. In terms of Adlerian psychology, which is of particular relevance for Malraux's adventurers, the pain may be seen particularly in terms of the experience of inferiority, of which the most extreme manifestation is humiliation, and the pleasure as a sense of superiority which comes from a feeling of invulnerability. The adventurer, therefore, reacts more strongly than the average person to the experience of the alternation of inferiority and superiority.

Perken from Grabot, Garine from Hong, and Ferral and the revolutionaries from Tchen. It is also now possible to distinguish between the adventurer and those of Malraux's characters, such as Klein or Kyo and Katow, who use the will at the service of an abstract ideal which is not the will. In these characters, the will as force is subordinated, though not extinguished by, an ideal such as "dignité" or "fraternité" which is to be attained by the will as intentionality. In the case of an adventurer such as Garine, however, the ideal which he nominally serves is never wholly a unit in its own right but rather a screen for the real value, which is the will to power itself.

If Malraux's concept of will is elucidated by his adherence to Nietzschean precepts, however, it is explained no less so by one particular point on which he diverges sharply from Nietzsche's view of the Superman. Although Malraux is consistent in his claims to Nietzschean influence, claims which are confirmed by certain aspects of his work, it remains true that he ignores that central concept of Nietzsche's philosophy, that which concerns Dionysus, the God of laughter and dance. For Nietzsche's laughter results from the acceptance of "amor fati", but it is an acceptance which Malraux is unable to reflect. Similarly, whilst Nietzsche begins with Dürer's grim knight, only to progress to Zarathustra and Dionysus, Malraux remains steadfastly fascinated by that first sombre image of the will. It is not merely, however, a case of fascination, since Malraux sees the whole of Nietzsche's work as bathed in the same grimness. Indeed, when questioned about the role of Dionysus in Nietzschean philosophy, he dismisses its importance, relegating it to the level of "pure compensation"(1). Yet such an evaluation does not appear to be born out by a careful analysis of Nietzsche's work: the most valid interpretation of the Superman would appear to be of the order of that expressed by Serge Doubrovsky in his study of the Cornelian hero, where he writes:

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1. In an interview with the author in April 1971.

"là où le "héros" veut parvenir à la maîtrise par l'extirpation de la nature, le "surhomme" prétend y arriver par son exaltation" (1).

It would seem possible to assume, therefore, that Malraux has either read Nietzsche's work inadequately or that he has misread it, and such an assumption would find support in Geneviève Bianquis' bitter attack on the lack of comprehension amongst the Nietzsche enthusiasts of Malraux's generation. She writes:

"La génération née entre 1895 et 1905 est déjà bien moins nietzschéenne, bien qu'elle vive sur quelques théories grossièrement dérivées de Nietzsche ou hâtivement bâties à l'aide de quelques-unes de ses boutades les plus aventurées: impérialisme, immoralisme, bellicisme, nationalisme; dans l'ensemble elle ne garde de Nietzsche qu'un résidu assez pauvre limité aux conséquences pratiques les plus arbitrairement déduites" (2).

Nevertheless, whilst these remarks might be seen to apply to some of the less thoughtful members of the Action française Right, they seem inaccurate as a description of the more thoughtful and deeply pessimistic group to which Malraux belonged, along with Marcel Arland, Emmanuel Berl and Drieu la Rochelle, who, incidentally, gives more importance to Nietzsche's emphasis on the body than does Malraux.

At the same time, Malraux's understanding of Nietzsche uniquely in terms of pessimism appears incorrect. He writes, in Les Chênes qu'on abat:

"Nietzsche écrivait que depuis 1860, le nihilisme (c'était pour lui ce que j'ai appelé l'absurde) atteignait peu à peu tous les artistes"(3).

Yet, when Nietzsche writes about nihilism, he does so with anger, seeing it as a solution which is invalid. Thus, in The Joyful Wisdom, he refers to:

"Nihilism in the St.Petersburg style (that is to say, in the belief in unbelief)" (4).

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1. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, p.500. The reference to "l'extirpation de la nature" inherent in the Cornelian tradition of the will clearly announces the ethical difficulties met by the hero on his path towards "maîtrise".
  2. Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France, p.112.
  3. André Malraux, Les Chênes qu'on abat, Paris, Gallimard, 1971, p.172.
  4. The Joyful Wisdom, p.286.

Similarly, in The Genealogy of Morals, he looks forward to:

"this man of the future, who in this wise will redeem us from the old ideal's necessary corollary of great nausea, will to nothingness, and Nihilism" (1).

For Nietzsche, therefore, nihilism is merely a false response to life, to be rejected and by-passed. The Absurd for Malraux, on the other hand, is a pervading quality of existence: he may use it as a point of departure, a quality to be opposed, but it remains a dark and eternal truth. Clearly, therefore, the two terms are of a different order. Yet Malraux will not accept that Nietzsche's references to nihilism are of a consistently derogatory nature (2).

This emphasis on Nietzsche as a prophet of nihilism instead of its critic is central to Malraux's use of Nietzsche in his own work. Clearly Gide, in Les Nourritures terrestres, conveys a more authentically Nietzschean message than does Malraux in his depiction of the adventurer, who is characterised by a tension, a grimness, a lack of joy an obsession with death and the absurd quite alien to Zarathustra. Yet Malraux cannot easily be criticised as a superficial reader of Nietzsche's work: he has little in common with those of his generation attacked by Geneviève Bianquis. Rather, his particularised interpretation of Nietzsche would appear to be due to his own tragic vision, imposed over the philosopher's work like a distorting lens.

This lens is provided, in part, by the "nouveau mal du siècle", but, in the specific case of Nietzschean influence, it is provided also by a disciple and commentator who had great influence amongst Malraux's generation in France in the 1920s. In this connection, Nietzsche's remark about "Nihilism in the St. Petersburg style" attains an unexpected relevance. Léon Chestov (3), the Russian philosopher and critic, was writing in France in the years after the

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1. The Genealogy of Morals, p.117.
  2. In an interview with the author in April 1971.
  3. The French spelling of Chestov is used throughout.

October Revolution, and achieved a great following there (1). His work was published in French throughout the 1920s. In 1923, appeared Les Révélation de la mort, on Dostoievsky and Tolstoy, with an introduction by Boris de Schoezer, to whom Horst Hina attributes the beginning of Malraux's interest in Chestov (2). Also in 1923, in Grasset's "Cahiers verts" series, edited by the Nietzschean Daniel Halévy and in which Malraux's "D'une jeunesse européenne" appeared four years later, was published La Nuit de Gethsémini, a study of Pascal. In 1926 appeared La Philosophie de la tragédie, on Dostoievsky and Nietzsche. In 1927, Sur les Confins de la vie (L'Apothéose du dépaysement) appeared, and, in 1935, Kierkegaard et la philosophie existentielle. Thus, in Chestov's critical world, Nietzsche appears in the same category as Dostoievsky, Pascal, Kierkegaard and the later Tolstoy - all writers who expressed a deep-seated sense of existential anguish - and, in view of Malraux's acknowledgement of Chestov's influence upon him, it may be assumed that Chestov's particular view of Nietzsche, in addition to his own philosophy, has coloured significantly that of Malraux.

For Chestov, there are two worlds. There is the world of rationalism, symbolised by the principle " $2 \times 2 = 4$ ", the exponents of which range from Descartes to Claude Bernard. Chestov views this trend of thought with distrust, seeing in it a superficial reaction to existence which leads to comfort and self-satisfaction. Yet, at the same time, there is another world, summed up in Dostoievsky's prison-experience and which he describes in Notes from the Underground. The "underground" experience is that which teaches man that life is best expressed in a prison-image. Chestov writes, with reference to Dostoievsky:

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1. Talking of the 1920s, Malraux has stated: "Tout le monde lisait Chestov, Spengler aussi, mais surtout Chestov". (In an interview with the author, April 1971). He also deplores the decline in interest in Chestov.
  2. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, pp.9-10.

"Les idéals qui élèvent l'âme n'existent pas, il n'y a que des chaînes, invisibles, il est vrai, mais qui maintiennent l'homme encore plus solidement que des fers. Et nul acte d'héroïsme, nul "bonne oeuvre" ne peut ouvrir devant l'homme les portes de ce "lieu de détention perpétuelle" (1).

As Chestov points out, this is an insight which Dostoievsky does not possess in his early humanitarian and sentimental writings, and which does not appear even immediately after the prison-experience. Nevertheless, the full significance of that experience is grasped by Dostoievsky in the Notes from the Underground and, for Chestov, this discovery results in a division of his subsequent characters into two groups, by which Raskolnikov, Stavrogin and Ivan Karamazov are portrayed as "underground men" whom even the "saints", Mishkin and Aliosha Karamazov cannot reach. Thus, one result of Chestov's understanding of the "underground" experience is that it can be described only in existential, non-ethical terms. The humanitarian value-system is unable to communicate with this experience which is, genuinely, beyond good and evil. This constitutes therefore a further ingredient which marks a departure of the adventurer from the norms of a conventional ethical system.

In the case of Tolstoy, Chestov sees the last years as crucial in the attainment of the "underground" experience, in which a vital factor is the realisation of the true importance of death. As Chestov writes of the dying hero of The Death of Ivan Ilitch: "Le moribond est aussi un rêveur que, contre son gré, on arrache à l'univers commun" (2). He continues:

"la mort coupe tous les fils sensibles qui nous relient à nos proches, et la condition première de la régénération de l'âme humaine, c'est la solitude..." (3).

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1. Léon Chestov, Les Révélations de la mort, Paris, Plon, 1923, p.15. Clearly such a view of existence owes something to Platonic philosophy, where man is continually exiled from the world of the ideal. In the case of Chestov, however, whilst there is a recognition of this exile, the experience is accentuated by more concrete elements of suffering.
  2. Léon Chestov, Les Révélations de la mort, p.198.
  3. Ibid, pp.208-209.

Chestov sums up his argument by discussing the end of The Master and the Servant, in which a rich man, fully preoccupied with the affairs of the world, is trapped in a snowstorm and, near to death, achieves a final lucidity.

Chestov concludes:

"Telle est, en effet, la révélation de la mort: là-bas, sur la terre, tout cela était important; ici, il faut autre chose" (1).

The "ici" refers to an extreme situation, fully in the presence of death, where the rational solutions of daily existence are irrelevant, and where a tragic philosophy is needed.

It is as a philosopher who has become aware of this extreme situation, the "underground" situation, that Chestov sees Nietzsche, placing him in the same category as Dostoievsky, Tolstoy, Kierkegaard and Pascal. Indeed, Chestov sees a similarity between Pascal and Nietzsche in the way in which both men achieve their experience of the "underground" through blinding headaches. Chestov views Nietzsche's early adherence to Schopenhauer and Wagner, the idealist school of the "Ding an sich", in the same light as Dostoievsky's early humanitarian writing. In his maturity, however, Nietzsche rejects both Schopenhauer and Wagner, and becomes truly an "underground man". Chestov writes of him: "Il n'était, lui, qu'un homme souterrain" (2), and thereby explains Nietzsche's insistence upon the continual surpassing of man, the endless wandering - for only in this way can man remain in the state of the extreme situation and avoid the sterile world of " $2 \times 2 = 4$ ". It is for this reason that Chestov writes Sur les Confins de la vie, with its highly significant sub-title, in which he discusses the future literary hero:

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1. Ibid, p.230. The similarity between Chestov's view of death and that of Malraux, exemplified by the death of Perken which constitutes a gradual isolation, even from Claude Vannec, is striking.
  2. Léon Chestov, La Philosophie de la tragédie, Paris, Schiffrin, 1926, p.178.



"Le héros a un passé - ses souvenirs, mais pas de présent: ni femme, ni fiancée, ni ami, ni travail quelconque. Il est seul, et ne cause qu'avec lui-même ou bien avec des interlocuteurs imaginaires. Il vit loin des hommes" (1),

thus arriving at a definition which applies closely to the adventurers of Malraux's novels.

For Chestov, therefore, there is but one valid philosophy: "la vraie philosophie est alors la philosophie du bagne" (2), and in such a philosophy, Chestov includes the work of Nietzsche, together with that of his other "underground men". He concludes his Philosophie de la tragédie:

"La philosophie est la philosophie de la tragédie. Les romans de Dostoyevsky, les livres de Nietzsche ne nous parlent que des "hommes les plus laids" et de leurs problèmes. Nietzsche et Dostoyevsky, de même que Gogol, étaient eux aussi de la race du "plus laid des hommes", privés des espoirs ordinaires. Ils s'efforçaient de trouver ce dont ils avaient besoin, là où personne n'avait jamais cherché, là où, selon la conviction générale, il ne peut rien y avoir que les ténèbres et le chaos..." (3).

Chestov's conclusion is moving, but not totally accurate. Designating Nietzsche as one of the "ugliest men" has undoubted poetic effect, but ignores the fact that, in Thus spake Zarathustra, it is the "ugliest man" who kills God, through pity, and horrifies the true hero and example of the book, Zarathustra himself. Nevertheless, there is little difference between Chestov's Nietzsche of chaos and darkness and the Nietzsche from whom Malraux takes a certain notion of the will. This view of Nietzsche by Chestov and Malraux is a particular view

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1. Léon Chestov, Sur les Confins de la vie, Paris, J.Schiffrin, 1927, p.88. It is interesting to recall that, whilst this passage provides an almost exact description of Saul Bellow's hero, Moses Herzog, Bellow's aim, in the novel, is to find a way back from the stark, isolated world of the extreme situation to an appreciation of life itself. As such, his work may be read as an implicit criticism of the position adopted by Malraux.
  2. Léon Chestov, La Philosophie de la tragédie, p.84.
  3. Ibid, p.186.

for it accentuates the tragedy and eliminates the joy, and the world of Malraux's novels is the darker for it.

The ideal of the heroic way of life, as exemplified in the myth of the Middle Ages, and seen by the generation of Europeans writing in the 1920s and 1930s, as a means of salvation, would appear to reach Malraux through the current of two traditions. From Corneille and Descartes comes a notion of the will as a struggle to remain on a pre-selected path of action, a struggle on which the definition of the individual in terms of his metaphysical value depends. In addition, a prominent feature of this tradition of the will is its constant tension, by which the hero must battle, not only against his inferiors, the Slaves, but against his equals in the Master-caste. The action which he undertakes, therefore, takes the form of an unending spiral from which the hero, if he wishes to remain a hero, and recognised as such, can never escape.

Such a tradition implies, by its differentiation between Masters and Slaves, a departure from an orthodox ethical system, a departure accentuated by the fact that the only values are concerned with actions which produce reactions of approval and admiration from other members of the elite group to which the hero belongs. In addition, the Cartesian theory of the split between mind and body, essential to this tradition of the will, cannot be seen as providing an ethical basis for the man of will. The emphasis upon the intellect, to the detriment of the demands of the body, implies not only the inevitable solitude of the adventurer, but lays the basis for a system by which lucid strength of purpose alone is tolerated and weakness and frailty are despised.

The Cornelian tradition of the will, therefore, explains the existential emphasis upon action of Malraux's adventurers, and their grim and lucid use of the will to maintain them in that course of action against the resistance of their bodies. The Nietzschean tradition, however, goes on to explain the origin of this will as intentionality and the presence of the adventurer in the spiral

of action. Schopenhauer propounds the theory of the will as an organic psychological force and, since such a force may, after great effort, weaken, he illuminates the way in which Malraux's heroes are constantly menaced by the interiorisation of the Absurd in the form of illness, old age and tiredness. Nietzsche provides a more acceptable psychological explanation for the phenomenon of the will, discerning its origins in acute reactions to stimuli of pain or pleasure, which, in Adlerian terms, may be translated as experiences of inferiority and superiority, or humiliation and invulnerability.

At the same time, Malraux's reading of Nietzsche leads him to accept the necessity of breaking with the European culture of the nineteenth century and to propose as an antidote the New Man, living constantly in the realm of the possible. Such an acceptance of Nietzschean precepts entails a rejection of the major characteristics of European culture, Christianity, and the slave-morality and slave-politics which follow from it, in favour of a strong, elite individual. Thus, whilst, in an adherence to the Cornelian tradition of the will, divergence from orthodox ethics is only strongly implied, the Nietzschean philosophy explicitly demands a system of action beyond ethical judgements.

Malraux's view of Nietzsche is, fundamentally, that of Chestov: it envisages a man of will who strives towards supremacy against a background of darkness and chaos and is fully conscious only of the tragedy of existence. Malraux's Nietzsche lacks the laughter which Zarathustra insists on teaching to his disciples. By accepting this view of Nietzsche, Malraux adds to his concept of the will a grimness which it need not necessarily possess, and eliminates a Nietzschean exaltation of the body in favour of a more steadfast Cartesian concern with the intellect.

The two traditions of the will do not blend perfectly in Malraux's work. The intentional will is not always able to control and direct the dynamic will, and, in such cases, where Hong or Tchen is concerned, the predominance of the

dynamic will leads to dissolution and disaster. Nevertheless, assimilation of both systems is facilitated by Malraux's avoidance of Nietzsche's epicurianism and his peculiarly tragic understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy.

Similarly, both systems of thought - the Cornelian and the Chestov - Nietzschean - coincide in possessing a common metaphysical base in Pascal. Serge Doubrovsky writes of Corneille's understanding of heroism: "Au fond, Corneille témoigne ici de la même haine... du monde que Pascal" (1), an assertion which is supported by de Rougemont's discovery of a death-orientation in the Western heroic quest. At the same time, Malraux's statement:

"Les quatre grands écrivains dont l'oeuvre est en entier postérieure à 1916 et qui ont à l'étranger l'audience la plus étendue, Giono, Bernanos, Montherlant et moi-même, sont liés tous quatre à ce qu'on peut appeler la tradition héroïque de la France, sa tradition cornélienne...",

quoted earlier, ends: "... (dont Pascal est à mes yeux un chaînon capital)..."(2), thus appearing to endorse Doubrovsky's discovery of a Pascalian basis to the Cornelian tradition of the will. Likewise, Chestov's Nietzsche is an "underground man", one of whose closest companions is Pascal. For Chestov, both Nietzsche and Pascal have suffered and, through suffering, have entered the experience of tragedy, an experience of which they have become prophets.

Having denied the element of joy and exaltation present in Nietzsche's work, and assimilated the free spirit to the Cornelian hero, Malraux's novels become clear examples of "la philosophie du bagne". Pascal's prison-image is central to Malraux's work: it recurs in the besieged Canton, the school-yard in which Kyo and Katow are imprisoned, in Kassner's prison and the encircled Madrid, and finally is explicitly referred to at the end of Les Noyers de l'Altenburg (3). Against such a metaphysical background, the will operates both as intentionality and as dynamism, but the search for such a background so that the will may operate and the primacy of the will, whilst possessing metaphysical coherence and validity, lead to a problematic ethical and political life.

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1. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, p.513.
  2. "Entretien avec André Malraux", Labyrinthe, 15th February 1945.
  3. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, p.289.

## Chapter Four

### The Ethics of the Will: the Will and "L'Autre"

In one important episode in Les Conquérants, Garine refers to a recurrent memory from his experience of the First World War which crystallises for him the notion of the Absurd. He tells the narrator:

"C'est, pendant la guerre, à l'arrière. Une cinquantaine de bataillons enfermés dans une grande salle, où le jour pénètre par une petite fenêtre grillée. La pluie est dans l'air. Ils viennent d'allumer des cierges volés à l'église voisine. L'un, vêtu en prêtre, officie devant un autel de caisses recouvertes de chemises. Devant lui, un cortège sinistre: un homme en frac, une grosse fleur de papier à la boutonnière, une mariée tenue par deux femmes de jeu de massacre et d'autres personnages grotesques dans l'ombre. Cinq heures: la lumière des cierges est faible. J'entends: "tenez-la bien qu'elle s'évanouisse pas, c'te chérie!" La mariée est un jeune soldat arrivé hier Dieu sait d'où, qui s'est vanté de passer sa baïonnette au travers du corps du premier qui prétendrait le violer. Les deux femmes de carnaval le tiennent solidement; il est incapable de faire un geste, les paupières presque fermées, à demi assommé sans doute. Le maire remplace le curé, les cierges éteints, je ne distingue plus que des dos qui sortent de l'ombre accumulée près du sol. Le type hurle. Ils le violent, naturellement, jusqu'à satiété. Et ils sont nombreux. Oui, je suis obsédé par ça, depuis quelque temps..... Pas à cause de la fin de l'action, bien sûr: à cause de son début absurde, parodique...." (1).

It is an episode which recalls strikingly a scene from Roland Dorgelès' Les Croix de bois, in which he describes a group of soldiers occupying a stable in the grounds of an abandoned house behind the lines. The most adventurous of the soldiers, Sulphart, leads a comrade, Lemoine, in an exploration of the house, and Dorgelès continues:

"Il conduisit Lemoine au premier, dans une grande chambre à teintures claires.  
- V'là ce qu'il nous faut, dit-il en ouvrant l'armoire. Et, jetant, en vrac, du linge et des robes sur le tapis, fouillant les tiroirs, vidant les rayons, il fit son choix.  
- J'vas m'habiller en poule et toi en homme, tu piges, face d'âne. Le temps de déchirer quelques corsages dans des essayages malheureux, et ils purent s'admirer dans la glace, transformés en mariés de mardi gras. Quant ils parurent dans la cour, bras dessus, bras dessous, ce fut une courte stupefaction, puis une clameur les salua.  
- Vive la noce! hurla le premier Fouillard" (2).

In both scenes, the setting is identical: in a period of relaxation behind the lines during the war a group of soldiers enact a mock wedding-ceremony.

1. Les Conquérants, pp.199-200.

2. Roland Dorgelès, Les Croix de bois, pp.17-18.

Yet the tone of the scenes and the role they play in the two novels are completely different. For Dorgelès, it is a device to show the good nature and boisterousness of the common soldiers who are his characters; the atmosphere is one of brightness, emphasised by the "teintures claires", and which contrasts with the darkness and squalor of the trench warfare. Garine's story, on the other hand, is rich with the familiar image-patterns of Malraux's novels. The scene is infused with darkness; the shadows rise from the floor, and stifle even the guttering candles as the action reaches its climax. The large room, with its barred window, becomes an image of prison. And instead of the carnival atmosphere of the Dorgelès scene, with its reference to "mardi gras", Malraux accentuates the sinister quality of the "femmes de jeu de massacre". Above all, whereas Dorgelès is careful to emphasise the lack of violence, in contrast to the brutality of the trenches, Malraux's scene relies for its whole meaning upon an acute evocation of sadistic violence.

Indeed, the levels on which the two passages operate are completely different. For Dorgelès, the scene of the soldiers boisterously and joyfully at play, conveys the notion of a humanity able to reassert itself, even in the midst of that most dark of accidents, the First World War, and remains upon a human level. The Malraux passage, however, not only depicts a situation in which the dignity and humanity of man are ruthlessly denied, but uses that situation as an image to express a metaphysical problem - that of the Absurd. Thus, whereas Dorgelès may be seen to fit easily into a tradition of humanism, where the value of man is freely admitted, Malraux, in his treatment of a similar subject exhibits more disquieting characteristics: the use of human activity as an image of a metaphysical state, the violent and sadistic nature of that activity itself, and, finally, the fact that the rape image is the product of the obsession of one of Malraux's men of will. A comparison of the two passages, therefore, would appear to indicate a departure on the part of Malraux's hero from a conventional humanist approach, and a movement towards a more problematic attitude towards his fellow-men.

In this apparent departure from the tenets of established humanism, Malraux is not alone. It is a phenomenon charted admirably by Micheline Tison-Braun, in La Crise de l'humanisme. Of the culminating point of Western humanism, she writes:

"Les valeurs de l'humanisme sont désormais fixées: liberté, raison, sympathie. Il s'agit de les étendre à tous les hommes et de les défendre contre les survivances barbares" (1).

The reference to the "survivances Barbares", however, indicates the fundamental fragility of humanism, that it is established by means of a constant battle against barbarity which may at any moment reassert itself. Indeed, it is no longer possible to abolish this barbarity:

"Désarmer le guerrier, il n'en est pas question; du moins peut-on épurer ses motifs et faire de lui le redresseur des torts. L'instinct de conquête subsistera, mais subordonné à l'idéal de fraternité" (2).

And the resurgence of the conqueror and the warrior, in conflict with the ideals of humanism, occurs still in the twentieth century:

"Au XXe siècle encore, une génération, étrangère pourtant à toute foi religieuse, mais qui fait de la révolte une vertu et de l'angoisse un signe d'élection, grimace de mépris à la seule idée de bonheur comme si ce mot évoquait l'homme vautre" (3).

That this comment is valid not merely for the generation of Psichari which was to face the First World War, but also for the generation which followed the war, the generation of Malraux, is confirmed by Julien Benda's attack on his fellow-intellectuals, La Trahison des clercs. Writing in 1927, he remarks:

"Il est banal de signaler combien, en France par exemple, chez la grande majorité de la jeunesse dite pensante, la dureté est aujourd'hui objet de respect, cependant que l'amour humain, sous toutes ses formes, passe pour une chose assez risible" (4).

And, shortly after, he refers to the irrational nature of intellectual activity in the period following the war:

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1. Micheline Tison-Braun, La Crise de l'humanisme II, p.8.

2. Ibid, p.8.

3. Ibid, p.9.

4. Julien Benda, La Trahison des clercs, Paris, Grasset, 1927, p.176.



"cet enseignement de la métaphysique moderne exhortant l'homme à tenir en assez faible estime la région proprement pensante de son être et à honorer de tout son culte la partie agissante et voulante" (1).

For Benda, therefore, the intellectual life of Europe, and of France in particular, in the 1920s, encounters a crisis in which its very nature is threatened. Its humanistic tradition rests upon a faith in the intellect, and subsequently on a belief in the values of love and sympathy which will lead to happiness. Yet he grimly observes that these values are being rejected for an irrational enthusiasm for the will and action, that the old forces of barbarism are returning to the fore. The New Man, hailed by the avant-garde movements as an antidote to the decadence of the old Europe, appears more frequently under the guise of the conqueror than in the form of the isolated thinker.

The substance of the charge levelled against the post-war intellectuals by Benda and Tison-Braun, therefore, is that they wilfully turned their backs upon the whole tradition of European humanism, with its faith in the intellect and the respect of man, for an irrational exaltation of the forces of action. In many ways, however, this argument is modified by the significance of Malraux's essays on Europe. La Tentation de l'Occident and D'une Jeunesse européenne, like the Futurist or Surrealist manifestoes, reject the tradition of nineteenth-century humanism, but they do so for different reasons. Whereas the Futurists and Surrealists joyfully proclaim the demise of the old civilisation, and immediately reject the intellect for a cult of action, Malraux's approach is less exuberant and more thoughtful. His essays represent a gloomy recognition that, for the member of his generation, nineteenth-century humanism, with its static belief in the individual, has simply proved untenable, shattered by internal contradictions. It is this view which he expresses at its clearest in

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1. Ibid, p.184.

his Sorbonne lecture of 1946, L'Homme et la culture artistique, in which he concluded:

"Tout d'abord, le dix-neuvième siècle avait eu un espoir immense en la science, en la paix, en la recherche de la dignité.  
En ce qui concerne la paix, je crois qu'il est vraiment inutile d'insister.  
En ce qui concerne les sciences, Bikini répond.  
En ce qui concerne le dignité...." (1).

For Malraux, the intellectual crisis of the twentieth century is not the result of a deliberate rejection of a past tradition, but of the failure of that tradition to fulfil its promises. In such a context the thinking man must act on whatever firm precepts he can find; and if those precepts are not drawn from the tradition of humanism, it is because that humanism is no longer satisfactory.

Nevertheless, although Malraux may be able to answer charges of wilful rejection of humanist values, he cannot totally escape the problems raised by Benda's attack, particularly when Benda refers to the central doctrine of the new "clerics":

"l'éloge de la vie guerrière et des sentiments qui l'accompagnent et le mépris de la vie civile et de la morale qu'elle implique" (2).

In other words, the static values of the cultivation of the intellect, of sympathy and happiness, have been rejected in favour of action and the will, and it is this which is one of the meanings of the difference between Malraux's and Dorgelès' depiction of the charade-wedding. For Dorgelès, the happiness of the soldiers behind the lines is everything; it is even the justification of their suffering at the front; in the scene of Les Conquérants, however, that happiness is lacking, transformed in the obsession of a representative of "la vie guerrière". And the question remains as to whether that rejection of the static values of the old humanism can produce in itself new ethical values, a question reinforced by Benda's insertion of a quotation from Psichari's Terres de soleil et de sommeil:

1. André Malraux, 'L'Homme et la culture artistique', in Les Conférences de l'UNESCO, Paris, 1946, p.75.
2. Julien Benda, La Trahison des clercs, p.157.

"En vérité, nous faisons la guerre pour faire la guerre, sans nulle autre idée" (1),

which sums up the concept of action as a hermetically self-justifying belief.

The analysis of Micheline Tison-Braun and Julien Benda of a crisis of Western humanism in the twentieth century raises certain questions in respect of the ethical implications of Malraux's men of will, questions inherent already in the difference between Malraux's and Dorgeles' treatment of the charade-wedding scene. There is a departure from the traditional values of humanism towards an interest predominately metaphysical in character, in which the will and action are the only firm bases of existence and where they use human relationships as a means to attaining their end.

In this context, the assumption by critics such as Joseph Hoffmann or Charles D. Blend (2) that Malraux's work constitutes necessarily the construction of a new humanism cannot be accepted unquestioningly. Whilst Malraux can state:

"Mon problème est celui d'une nouvelle prise de conscience de l'homme" (3), it is by no means clear that this new vision of man is humanist in nature, or that Malraux's "homme nouveau" can fit comfortably into an ethical system. For, if ethics implies a willingness on the part of the individual to limit his personal project when confronted by the requirements of others, then the very nature of the will, which must follow its own course on its own level, raises very severe problems, which have not escaped some commentators. In his discussion of the treason of the French intellectuals, Julien Benda is able to recognise clearly one of the major sources of that betrayal. He writes:

"se vouloir fort est le signe d'une âme élevée, se vouloir juste la marque d'une âme basse. C'est l'enseignement de Nietzsche, de Sorel, applaudis par toute une Europe dite pensante; c'est l'enthousiasme de cette Europe, dans le mesure où le socialisme l'attire, pour la doctrine de Marx, son mépris pour celle de Proudhon" (4).

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1. Ibid, pp.162-163.
  2. Joseph Hoffmann, L'Humanisme de Malraux, Paris, Klincksieck, 1963; Charles D. Blend, André Malraux, Tragic Humanist, Ohio State University Press, 1963.
  3. André Malraux, Interview in Carrefour, mars, 1952.
  4. Julien Benda, La Trahison des clercs, p.142.

Thus, for Benda, it is the tradition of the will which constitutes the threat to the tradition of humanism; and, specifically, he sees the will in its metaphysical significance as stemming from the work of Nietzsche. And with regard to the ethical implications for Malraux of Nietzsche's work, it is useful to recall a reminiscence by André Salmon of a lunch-time conversation with Malraux in which he observes:

"Dès l'adolescence il trouva ses règles dans la Volonté de puissance et cela par la pratique d'une culture intellectuelle proche de la culture physique. Bien que tout cela soit sérieux, j'oserai pourtant écrire que Malraux, par ailleurs un peu Chinois dès avant le voyage en Chine, eut toujours pour la force une certaine faiblesse" (1).

Although the statement is inaccurate in attributing to Malraux an admiration for the Will to Power which he denies (2), it serves to indicate the way in which Malraux's interest in Nietzsche and his use of the Nietzschean will leads him, in the sphere of ethics, to a relationship built upon force and which appears to depart from the tenets of traditional humanism. In addition, the different stages of Nietzsche's discussion of ethics may be used as a typology of the ethical situation of the man of will.

It was one of the major preoccupations of Nietzsche's work to trace the origin of ethical systems, to write "a history of the origin of these feelings and estimates of value" (3), and, by so doing, vigorously to combat morality. He writes in Ecce homo, about the Dawn of Day: "With this book I open my campaign against morality" (4). And as the bastion of this morality which must be overthrown, Nietzsche discerns the notion of pity. He writes, in the Genealogy of Morals:

"I realised that the morality of pity which spread wider and wider, and whose grip infected even philosophers with its disease, was the most sinister symptom of our modern European civilisation" (5).

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1. André Salmon, Souvenirs sans fin, III, Paris, Gallimard, 1961, p.24.
  2. Interview with the author.
  3. The Joyful Wisdom, p.281.
  4. Ecce homo, p.91.
  5. The Genealogy of Morals, p.8.

For in the notion of pity, which Nietzsche associates closely with the Schopenhauerian ethics which he rejected, he sees exemplified all the emotions which bind man to his community and subject his freedom to the laws of a morality. For Nietzsche, man was not always subject to the emotion of pity: there were, at one time, groups of strong men who had no need of such an emotion. Yet eventually, such groups of warriors encountered other, weaker groups, and in that meeting is born for Nietzsche a system of morality. He concludes:

"The pathos of nobility and distance, as I have said, the chronic and despotic esprit de corps and fundamental instinct of a higher dominant race coming into association with a meaner race, an "under race", this is the origin of the antithesis of good and bad"(1).

This conjunction is, in itself, only a stage of transition. The aristocrat is able to accept an antithesis between good and bad without undue connotations of morality; yet, under the influence of the weaker race, the non-ethical, situational antithesis of good and bad becomes the absolute ethical contrast between good and evil. As Nietzsche describes the two:

"The 'Bad' of aristocratic origin and that 'evil' out of the cauldron of unsatisfied hatred - the former an imitation, an 'extra', an additional nuance; the latter, on the other hand, the original, the beginning, the essential act in the conception of a slave-morality"(2).

As to the purpose behind the attempt of the slave-morality to control the aristocratic warrior caste by a substitution of the value of 'evil' for that of 'bad', Nietzsche had already discovered it in the early work, the Wanderer and his Shadow, where he reminds the reader that:

"Morality is primarily a means of preserving the community and saving it from destruction" (3),

an aim which has sinister implications for the man of will. As Nietzsche writes, in the Genealogy of Morals:

"the very essence of all civilisations is to train out of man, the beast of prey, a tame and civilised animal" (4).

1. The Genealogy of Morals, p.20.
2. Ibid, p.39.
3. Human, all-too Human, II, p.221.
4. The Genealogy of Morals, p.42.

Here Nietzsche indicates that struggle between humanism and the conqueror analysed by Micheline Tison-Braun, and he draws the same conclusions: that if civilisation is to survive, the strong man must be brought to heel. It is also an observation which explains the antipathy felt by Perken and Claude Vannec for the civilisation which tries to emasculate them, to force them to "manger à prix réduits". And, for Nietzsche, as later for Malraux, the effect of civilisation has been considerably to wound the notion of man. Not only was the world brighter and purer in the pre-moral age (1), but it lacked the inhibiting power of the bad conscience, the product of the will, destined to act outwardly, turned in upon itself. For man

"invented the bad conscience so as to hurt himself, after the natural outlet of his will to hurt became blocked" (2).

Thus, for Nietzsche, the era of the unfettered will, when civilisation had not yet tried to suffocate the hero by morality, is equated with health, and the rise of morality, the domination of the "under race", are linked with psychological sickness. And since these states are not merely personal, but may be used to characterise the evolution of a civilisation, it follows, for Nietzsche, that the only way to escape the decadence of the present is to reject the morality of the present and return to the golden age of the pre-moral past. The act of will, therefore, insofar as it embodies the aspirations to this return, is in itself in opposition to a system of ethics and a tradition of humanism. As Nietzsche writes:

"The free man is immoral because it is his will to depend upon himself and not upon tradition" (3).

Nietzsche's first line of attack upon humanism, therefore, is concerned with the way in which an ethical system stifles the man of will, and replaces his natural vigour with a deep psychological sickness, transferred to the whole

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1. See: The Genealogy of Morals, p.75.

2. Ibid, p.112. It is here that Nietzsche begins to merit his self-assumed title of "psychologist": the similarities with the Freudian theory of repression are clear.

3. The Dawn of Day, p.14.

society. His second criticism, however, goes deeper, to the very roots of any ethical system. Writing in Beyond Good and Evil about Kant, he concludes:

'it is high time to replace the Kantian question, "How are synthetic judgements necessary?" '(1).

Any a priori judgement must rest upon a universal, essential view of man, that view which stifles the man of will, and in questioning the validity and the usefulness of such a view, Nietzsche moves towards the postulation of a self-defining, existential notion of man, in which free use of the will plays a predominant part.

In order to distinguish between the two views, Nietzsche makes use of two frequent sets of metaphors, metaphors which contain also a literal importance: the distinction between the master and the slave, and that between man and woman. The slave and the woman represent subservience to a universal and essential view of man; the master and the man stand for transcendence of this view by exercise of the will. It is clear, however, to what extent this represents a departure from the beliefs of humanism, whose very importance lies in the way in which it presupposes a unified, universal view of man. Here, Nietzsche feels compelled to shatter that unity, to prescribe salvation to the strong and damnation to the weak, and, indeed, to turn the strong against the weak, so that the salvation of the former may rely upon the damnation of the latter.

Nietzsche is initially attracted to the master-caste by their freedom from the restrictions of remorse. He writes:

"They are ignorant of the meaning of guilt, responsibility, consideration, are these born organisers; in them predominates that terrible artist-egoism, that gleams like brass, and that knows itself justified to all eternity..." (2).

If the master is free from guilt, it is because he refuses belief in essential values and creates his own being. As Zarathustra proclaims:

1. Beyond Good and Evil, p.18.
2. The Genealogy of Morals, p.103.

"He, however, hath discovered himself who saith: This is my good and evil: therewith hath he silenced the mole and the dwarf, who say: "Good for all, evil for all"." (1).

And the master's rejection of universal values leads almost automatically to a situation in which he ensures his own salvation by the exercise of his will irrespective of the needs of others. If humanism exhorts man to love his neighbour, Zarathustra answers immediately:

"be not considerate of thy neighbour! Man is something that must be surpassed" (2).

And, despite some ambiguity in his attitude towards pain, in which he reflects:

"There are enough of sublime things without its being necessary to seek sublimity where it is linked with cruelty" (3),

Nietzsche's prevailing view of the relationship between the will and cruelty is best summarised in the statement:

"Who can attain to anything great if he does not feel in himself the force and will to inflict great pain?" (4).

Whilst this must be seen on a different level from the charade-wedding scene in Les Conquérants, in that it lacks the note of obsession, this exhortation places other men in a subordinate position to the master, to the extent that they are mere instruments of his own action.

In view of his insistence upon the will and action of the master, and the inevitability of the infliction of pain, it is logical that one of Nietzsche's recurrent images of the ideal life should take the form of an idealisation of warfare. Zarathustra cries:

"War and courage have done more great things than charity. Not your sympathy, but your bravery hath hitherto saved the victims" (5).

At this point again, Nietzsche returns to the antithesis noted by Benda - the rejection of "civilian" morality for the moral code of the warrior, the rejection

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1. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.237.
  2. Ibid, p.243.
  3. The Joyful Wisdom, p.245.
  4. Ibid, p.250.
  5. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.52.



of the search for happiness for the exaltation of action. Yet the use of the image of warfare serves to do more than express the context conducive to action on the part of the man of will. The war is non-civilisation, a return to the bright days of the conqueror; here, the man of will is permitted to fulfil his destiny, irrespective of the effect of that destiny on others; here, he is allowed to command, to separate himself from the slaves on whom he exercises his will, the followers of the herd-morality. Finally, it permits him to enter the only collective relationship which Nietzsche can tolerate - the privileged state of comradeship with his fellow conquerors.

Yet in this relationship Nietzsche encounters a problem to be encountered in his turn by Malraux. At the beginning of the comparatively early work, The Joyful Wisdom, Nietzsche includes a poem, Heraclitism, in which he writes:

"Brethren, war's the origin  
Of happiness on earth:  
Powder-smoke and battle-din  
Witness friendship's birth!  
Friendship means three things, you know, -  
Kinship in luckless plight,  
Equality before the foe,  
Freedom - in death's sight!" (1).

In this poem, Nietzsche's concept of friendship comes to resemble strikingly Malraux's notion of "fraternité virile" (2), in that they both express the positive aspects of a relationship between men of action, in the very thick of that action and under the imminent threat of death. Yet Nietzsche comes to discover that even this high association of great men ultimately constitutes a barrier between the man of will and his goal. The whole epic of Zarathustra constitutes a gradual isolation from mankind. The temptation of the city is the first to be overcome, as Zarathustra turns back and reflects:

"O human hubbub, thou wonderful thing! Thou noise in dark streets!  
Now art thou again behind me:- my greatest danger lieth behind me!" (3).

1. The Joyful Wisdom, p.23.
2. A concept which he shares with Montherlant.
3. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.226.

This rejection of the human masses, of the civilian life, is a necessary precondition for the action of the man of will, be it Zarathustra's retreat to the mountains, or the journey of Perken and Claude to Indochina. But, before Zarathustra can achieve final salvation, he must overcome the final temptation - that of "fraternité virile". Nietzsche writes, of this episode:

"Suddenly he sprang up -

"Fellow-suffering! Fellow suffering with the higher men!" he cried out, and his countenance changed into brass. "Well! That - hath had its time!" (1).

The discovery by Zarathustra that even the privileged relationship between men of will is an impediment looks forward to the ambiguous solution offered to the adventurer by Malraux's "fraternité virile".

In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche sums up his opposition to the values of humanism:

"At the risk of displeasing innocent ears, I submit that egoism belongs to the essence of a noble soul" (2).

The statement contains two poles of argument. It expresses an exclusive interest in the "noble soul" - that figure whom Nietzsche refers to as the master, as opposed to the slave, as man, as opposed to woman. In this view, humanity is no longer a universal concept; mankind is divided into two castes: the man of will, that higher form, and the rest of humanity, who may either be ignored or acted upon with impunity in order that the hero's destiny may be fulfilled. This is a division of humanity similar to that operated by Sartre between authentic men and the "salaud", except that it is accentuated by the possibility of using the lower caste to the glorification of the higher.

The emphasis upon egoism, by completing the definition of the "noble soul", serves to separate firmly the will from a humanist tradition where the rule of altruism must be the norm. For Nietzsche, there can be no limitation, on the part of the man of will, of his personal project before the needs of others, for it is

1. Ibid, p.401.

2. Beyond Good and Evil, p.240.

only within that project that he can exist and march towards salvation.

Similarly, the other cannot exist in terms of its own individuality, but only with reference to the man of will. For him, it has no needs, serving merely as an instrument.

Benda's recognition, therefore, of Nietzsche as a major threat to the tradition of European humanism would appear to be well-founded. His legacy to the French writers of the 1920s, including Malraux, comprises a division of humanity into two castes, the exaltation of the dominant caste, that of the conquerors, and of the "fraternité virile" which they enjoy, and a total rejection of the moral work of civilisation in favour of a return to the archaic days of barbarism.

Malraux's early novels present many features similar to Nietzsche's ethical viewpoint. His heroes constitute a small elite band of men of action, consciously different from the mass of humanity; their journey to distant, and violent, situations represents a flight from the constraints of civilisation to the pre-moral world of the barbarian; their view of existence is governed, not by universal, a priori moral assumptions, but by a belief in the defining power of action and the will. Above all, in their search for a salvation which is metaphysical in character, they ignore the notion of happiness, and their relationship with their fellow-men is, at best, ambiguous.

In one respect, Malraux's ethical problems are more complex than those presented by Nietzsche. When the latter attacks moralists, he attacks those "actuated by a desire to avenge themselves on life" (1); in other words, his assault on morality is an impassioned defence of life itself. In this way, his bitterness at the psychological harm wrought by the imposition of a traditional morality resembles Freud's attitude on the same subject (2). However, in the work of Malraux, who dismisses Nietzsche's love of the dance as "pure compensation",

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1. Ecce homo, p.141.

2. See particularly: Sigmund Freud, Civilisation and its Discontents, Chapter 2.

that defence of life cannot be so easily assumed. In a world symbolised by a gruesome and sinister mock-wedding, the significance of happiness recedes almost to vanishing-point, and the moral import of the work becomes even more difficult to assess.

At the same time, however, the central ethical problem presented by both Malraux and Nietzsche is substantially the same. Nietzsche, in his raid upon all the sacred tenets of Western humanism, does not deny the general concept of man. "Man is something that must be surpassed", states Zarathustra, and the old, universal man will be swept away. But the "higher man" exists, and it is in him that Nietzsche vests his hopes for the survival and future of the West. Similarly, Malraux, following the broad lines of Nietzsche's critique of traditional humanism, takes on the role of "l'homme nouveau", the seeker of "une nouvelle prise de conscience de l'homme". In both cases, the question is raised as to whether a philosophy dominated by the will can constitute a new humanism, or, indeed, whether it possesses any valid ethical quantity at all.

It is a question which is found particularly in the division operated between two types of humanity. Nietzsche's metaphorical distinction between Master and Slave, Man and Woman, is not exclusively metaphorical: it has literal connotations as well. He uses the master-slave dichotomy to express his antipathy to democracy and mass-politics, that between man and woman to indicate his underlying mysogyny - a quality present in the work of Malraux and in that of the novels of Montherlant. Together, the two provide useful categories for observing the ethical implications of Malraux's man of will - the way in which the adventurer reacts to his fellow-men in general, and in sexual relationships in particular.

The dichotomy in Nietzsche's thought between the master and the slave allows him to express the belief that, whilst for the slave an ethical system is proper - he is too weak to exist in anything other than a "slave morality" - for the higher man there should be no such restrictions (1). In this context

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1. A similar reflection is found in Etienne de La Boétie's Discours de la servitude volontaire, in which he attributes acceptance of tyranny to custom, diversion and a powerful nucleus of commanders around the tyrant.

Nietzsche rejects a submissive system based upon the essential, universal notions of good and evil, and replaces it by an exaltation in egoism, by which the higher man will act only in accordance with what is of value to him personally in one particular situation (1). The submissive code of good and evil is replaced by the aristocratic system of good and bad. Nor does Nietzsche propose a situation by which two such codes of conduct simply coexist: because of his strong will and increased consciousness, the higher man has every right to seek his fulfilment by the suppression of the slave. As Alfred Adler defines this concept, in rather simplified terms:

"The great thinker, Nietzsche, advocated rule by the best, and subjugation of everyone else" (2).

In the same way, in his analysis of the adventurer, Malraux necessarily makes use of a distinction between the men who are "soumis" and those who are not.

This distinction is already implicit in the essays on Europe, where Malraux contrasts the acceptance of the values of a dying civilisation with that rejection of such values without which there can be no New Man. Malraux proceeds to make this distinction explicit in Ia Voie Royale, during the boat journey to Indochina, in which there is a barrier between the adventurers, Claude and Perken, and the other Europeans, who are unquestioningly immersed in their civilisation. The contempt which the former feel for the latter is expressed in a reflection by Claude Vannec as the boat passes through Bab-el-Mandeb:

"La légende de Perken, maintenant, rôdait dans le bateau, passait de chaise longue à chaise longue comme l'angoisse ou l'attente de l'arrivée, comme l'ennui malveillant des traversées. Toujours informe. Plus de mystère imbécile que de faits, plus de gens empressés à confier, entendus,

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1. This rejection of universal morality looks forward to the final situation of Sartre's hero, Goetz von Berlichingen, in Le Diable et le bon Dieu, where it is given an expressly political pragmatic significance.
  2. Alfred Adler, Understanding Human Nature, London, Allen & Unwin, 1928. p.259.

derrière le cornet de leur main: "Un type étonnant, vous savez, et'honnant!" (1).

And Malraux continues:

"Jamais Claude n'avait vu à ce point le besoin de romanesque de ces fonctionnaires qui voulaient en nourrir leurs rêves, besoin contrarié aussitôt par la crainte d'être dupes, d'admettre l'existence d'un monde différent du leur" (2),

a comment which prefigures Saint-Exupéry's evocation of the bureaucrat, in

Terre des hommes:

"Vieux bureaucrate, mon camarade ici présent, nul jamais t'a fait évader et tu n'en es point responsable.... Tu t'es roulé en boule dans ta sécurité bourgeoise, tes routines, les rites étouffants de ta vie provinciale, tu as élevé cet humble rempart contre les vents et les marées et les étoiles. Tu ne veux point t'inquiéter des grands problèmes, tu as eu bien assez de mal à oublier ta condition d'homme" (3).

There are thus two races of men: those who accept their fate and do not revolt, and the adventurers, who are to the former merely a source of worried dreams. But Claude, and Malraux, do not doubt that these two forms of existence are not merely different, but that the latter is vastly superior to the former. When the man of will comes into contact with the "fonctionnaire", he unhesitatingly expresses his contempt and, if necessary, is prepared to use the other race as a means to his own advancement. This contempt is visible in the feelings of Claude for his fellow-passengers, and in his interview with the Directeur of the Institut Français, Albert Ramèges (4). The same contempt is felt by the young narrator of Les Conquérants, as the frightened Europeans cluster round the menacing news bulletins from Hongkong. And the final revenge upon these bureaucrats is taken by Ferral, who governs them despotically in the Consortium of Shanghai, and whom he wishes to dominate completely upon his triumphant return

1. La Voie Royale, p.15.

2. Ibid, p.15.

3. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Terre des hommes, Paris, Livre de Poche, p.23. In spite of the similarity of meaning, Saint-Exupéry's statement is imbued with a human sympathy for the bureaucrat absent from Malraux's work.

4. At one point in their interview, Malraux writes:

"à quel titre ce fonctionnaire s'arrogeait-il des droits sur des objets que lui, Claude, pourrait découvrir?" (La Voie Royale, p.45. ).

to France. That it should be Ferral who is finally humiliated by these same bureaucrats is totally in keeping with the recurrent imagery of Malraux's early novels, in which the man of will is constantly in conflict with the slave - "fonctionnaire".

If the attitude of the man of will towards the non-hero manifests itself initially in contempt, a feeling of apartness, it rapidly becomes a refusal of the slave's whole being. Thus, Perken moves from contempt for his fellow-travellers on the boat to active use of lesser men to his own ends. And the fact that those men are tribesmen, and consistently described in non-human, insect terms, emphasises the fact that they are instruments of Perken's purpose. His view of the subjects of his kingdom is typical in this respect. His desire to "exister dans un grand nombre d'hommes" is directed solely towards his own metaphysical self-preservation, and the inhabitants of his kingdom are merely a means towards his own immortality. And it is this goal of immortality which is the overriding concern of Perken and the preoccupation which colours all his dealings with his fellows. The Moï tribesmen are typified as insects, not because of an inherent inhumanity, but because in the eyes of Perken they represent an obstacle to his goal. Similarly, when the tribesman Savan is unwilling to help Perken, when fleeing towards his kingdom pursued by the twin enemies, the punitive column and the Stiengs, Perken unhesitatingly, and not unmelodramatically, shoots two of Savan's subjects (1). La Voie Royale, therefore, indicates two ways in which the man of will deals with his fellow-men: for those of his own civilisation who lack the will to reject it and live a life of action, dehumanised, and therefore are able to be used as a means to an end or, indeed, discarded if they constitute an obstacle to that end. And since that end is metaphysical, ethical considerations become subordinate to it: the man of will is defined by the way in which he overcomes obstacles and not, essentially, by their nature.

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1. La Voie Royale, pp.172-173.

Perken's shooting of the natives who oppose his will is paralleled in Les Conquérants by Garine's execution of the well-poisoner (1). However, as regards the ethical significance of his action, Garine is more problematic because he is not, at least nominally, working solely for himself. In addition, the context has changed. The decomposing jungle, with its termites and insect-like tribesmen, of La Voie Royale is an extended image of the human condition in its purest form. The port of Canton, however, although it still constitutes an image of a metaphysical state, is a concrete reality as well, and the heroes of Les Conquérants live in a world populated by people who are not totally reducible to the role of images.

The novel presents an interesting relationship between the fundamentally non-ethical motivation of his hero and the effects of his action, which is directed towards the improvement of the life of the people of Canton. In addition, there is, in the case of Garine, that limitation of personal projects without which there can be no ethical basis for action. But it is a curious limitation, for, in itself, it is a rejection of ethics. This is crystallised by Garine's statement:

"Ma force vient de ce que j'ai mis une absence de scrupules complète au service d'autre chose que mon intérêt immédiat" (2).

Similarly, there is a reluctance to inflict death where it is not necessary for the cause for which he is working. Garine refuses to execute the first workers to break the strike, with the words: "La mort ne se manie pas comme un balai!" (3).

Nevertheless, beyond this limitation and the ethical results of Garine's action, he follows more closely the pattern of the man of will in his relationship with others. The will is, for him, a will to power. Malraux writes of him: "il sentait en lui, tenace, le besoin de la puissance" (4), and continues:

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1. Les Conquérants, pp.219-220.
  2. Les Conquérants, p.73.
  3. Ibid, p.80.
  4. Ibid, p.58.



"Il finissait par considérer l'exercice de la puissance comme un soulagement, comme une délivrance" (1).

The deliverance may be seen as a salvation in metaphysical terms, from the anguish of a vulnerable man in an absurd world. It is this fascination with power which explains his attraction to his enemies, the British:

"Diriger. Déterminer. Contraindre. La vie est là...." (2).

In conjunction with this need for power, there exists in Garine a corresponding dislike of life itself. The narrator asks Nicolaïeff:

"Et tu crois que la vie ne compte pas pour lui?"

and receives the reply: "Pas beaucoup, pas beaucoup..." (3).

And with this dislike of life, there exists a dislike of people, a dislike which Garine readily admits. He tells the narrator:

"Et j'aurais fait un mauvais missionnaire pour une autre raison: je n'aime pas les hommes. Je n'aime pas même les pauvres gens, le peuple, ceux en somme pour qui je vais combattre..." (4).

In this sense, Tcheng-daï is perfectly correct when he reproaches Garine with a dislike of the people: "Je pense que vous êtes extrêmement dangereux: car vous ne l'aimez pas" (5).

The representatives of traditional morality are unanimous in their condemnation of Garine. The dossier of the British Intelligence Service refers to him as an "individu énergique, mais sans moralité" (6), and this is further emphasised in the conflict with Tcheng-daï, the Chinese Gandhi. In spite of Garine's attempt to discredit Tcheng-daï, there remains in the contrast between the two men important indications of the ethical nature of Garine's actions.

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1. Ibid, p.58.

2. Ibid, p.226.

3. Ibid, p.164.

4. Ibid, p.68.

5. Ibid, p.136.

6. Les Conquérants, p.70.

Garine informs the narrator that Tchend-daf's authority is above all in terms of a moral force (1), and he continues: "Il est beaucoup plus attaché à sa protestation que décidé à vaincre" (2). According to Garine, this moral stance is a means to superiority and is inauthentic because Tcheng-daf will not accept the responsibility of that moral stance (3). Yet, in many ways, Tcheng-daf's position is perfectly consistent with a certain humanist viewpoint. Garine says of him:

"Sa vie entière est une protestation morale, et son espoir de vaincre par la justice n'exprime point autre chose que la plus grande force dont puisse se parer la faiblesse profonde, irrémédiable, si répandue dans sa race" (4).

His most characteristic action has been the creation of hospitals:

"Les membres du parti voyant se fermer devant eux les portes des hôpitaux, il parvint à en créer un nouveau" (5).

Tcheng-daf's action is rooted in the present, it is a response to people as they are, as they are not. It is this, in large part, which accounts for his ineffectualness and inauthenticity when he is placed in the political sphere which is necessarily a projection into the future. He refuses to move out of an ethical sphere of action.

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1. Ibid, p.90.
  2. Ibid, p.91. A criticism which looks forward uncannily to the criticism levelled by Garcia and Vargas against the Spanish anarchists.
  3. Ibid, p.95.
  4. Ibid, p.91. In his assertion that a moral code is the rationalisation of weakness, Garine is following closely a Nietzschean attack on ethics.
  5. Ibid, p.88. This raises an important point. In French twentieth-century literature, the doctor has been a frequent symbol of a humane and practical response to the injustice of human existence. Bernanos' *Docteur Delbende*, in *Journal d'un curé de campagne*, Camus' *Bernard Rieux*, in *La Peste*, and, to a lesser extent, Martin du Gard's *Antoine Thibault* represent a strong link between a metaphysical and ethical response to the world. Indeed, it is the strength of this myth of the doctor which permits such parodic deviations such as Romain's *Knock* or, more profoundly, the doctor-figure in the work of Céline. In Malraux's work, however, apart from *May*, the doctor hardly exists as an ethical quantity. More important, when he does appear, in the case of the sadistic British doctor who treats Perken, he is in a resolutely non-ethical role. This general absence, and the lack, especially, of a doctor-hero, would appear to confirm that Malraux's interests are not in an ethical system based upon man as he is, but in a continuing dynamic surpassing of man. In this light, it is not coincidental that Katow abandons his medical studies for the Revolution.

Garine, on the other hand, who consciously rejects the ethical sphere, nevertheless produces by his action results of ethical standing. At the beginning of the novel, Malraux states that his propaganda is more effective than that of Borodine, because it gives to the coolies "la possibilité de croire à leur propre dignité" (1). Later, Garine reflects:

"Pourtant, pourtant.... En cet instant même, combien d'hommes sont en train de rêver à des victoires dont, il y a deux ans, ils ne soupçonnaient même pas la possibilité! J'ai créé leur espoir. Leur espoir. Je ne tiens pas à faire des phrases, mais enfin, l'espoir des hommes, c'est leur raison de vivre et de mourir" (2).

Yet the difference between Garine and Tcheng-dai remains, and it lies in the fact that whereas the latter never leaves the sphere of ethical pronouncement, the former acts constantly on a metaphysical plane, albeit a plane where actions may have an ethical value. This is emphasised in Garine's reflection on pity, where he states:

"Je ne suis pas un homme doux, mais il m'est arrivé d'avoir profondément pitié, de cette pitié qui serre la gorge. Et bien, quand je me suis retrouvé seul avec moi-même, cette pitié a toujours fini par se désagréger. La souffrance renforce l'absurdité de la vie, elle ne l'attaque pas; elle la rend dérisoire" (3).

For it is the absurd which is Garine's true enemy. He confides:

"il me semble que je lutte contre l'absurde humain, en faisant ce que je fais ici" (4),

and it is this which is the true sense of the claim: "Ma vie, vois-tu, c'est une affirmation très forte" (5). Pity, ultimately, is not enough. The simple relationship, man to man, is for Garine inadequate; the battle is with something beyond man, in the recesses of Garine's dark obsession.

In spite of the ethical properties of Garine's action in Canton, his work exemplifies that non-humanist character prefigured in Nietzsche. Garine has rejected his civilisation, he has returned to the pre-civilised world of action,

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1. Les Conquérants, p.20.
  2. Ibid, p.158.
  3. Ibid, p.214.
  4. Ibid, p.158.
  5. Ibid. p.199.

in which he is surrounded by his assistants in a feudal relationship. What has impelled him to enter this world is a metaphysical, rather than an ethical reason: the vision of the absurd and the need to combat it by power.

Ferral is a simpler character than Garine, for the reason that he does not limit the personal project at all and his actions have no ethical advantages. He is the embodiment of the will to power seen in Garine, but with none of the contradictions. Garine's ambition: "Diriger, Déterminer, Contraindre" is mirrored by Ferral's understanding on the intellect: "La possession des moyens de contraindre les choses ou les hommes" (1), which Gisors sees as "le portrait de son désir, ou... l'image qu'il se faisait de lui-même" (2). This ambition for control over objects and people, in which people become objects, is the quality of Ferral which Malraux emphasises: it explains his view of sexuality as eroticism; it is at the origin of his past political career, his work for the consortium, and his ambitions for absolute power upon his return to France. His attitude to those about him is summed up by his treatment of Martial, of which Malraux writes:

"Il était dominé par Ferral et ses rapports avec lui avaient été établis par des ordres auxquels il ne pouvait que se soumettre; l'autorité antérieure de Ferral était beaucoup plus intense que la sienne; mais il ne pouvait supporter cette insolente indifférence, cette façon de le réduire à l'état de machine, de le tuer dès qu'il voulait parler en tant qu'individu et non transmettre des renseignements" (3).

He adds:

"Les parlementaires en mission lui avaient parlé de l'action de Ferral, avec sa chute, aux Comités de la Chambre. Des qualités qui donnaient à ses discours leur netteté et leur force, il faisait en séance un tel emploi que ses collègues le détestaient chaque année davantage: il avait un talent unique pour leur refuser l'existence" (4).

Whereas the will leads Garine into a situation where he is forced to take account, however minimally, of the existence of others, in the case of Ferral it leads him to a process by which "l'autre" is systematically dehumanised and becomes an instrument to his advancement. As such Ferral is the most striking

1. La Condition humaine, p.183.

2. Ibid, p.183.

3. Ibid, p.68.

4. La Condition humaine, p.68.

example in Malraux's work of Nietzsche's egoism: the world through a system of personal values which relate to Ferral alone.

Malraux's adventurers, therefore, conform to the definition of the Master constructed in the work of Nietzsche: to ensure their own metaphysical well-being they follow their own code of conduct, dictated by the situation, irrespective of general moral laws. By so doing, they break away from the confines of civilisation entirely; it is unable even to direct them in a course of action which is ethically valuable. At the same time, their action entails a division of humanity into two camps, a fragmentation of the universal moral law - and this fragmentation is accentuated by the fact that the presence of the will in the hero cannot be totally explained without the notion of chance, without a concept of a "grace of the will" (1). In such a case, men are not predestined to be equal, with equal moral rights, they are predestined to be either masters or slaves. And the latter have no rights at all.

In addition, the very nature of the will militates in favour of a non-humanist view of man. For the will, if it is to exist at all, must be embodied in action, and action implies an object. It may well be that Malraux, at the time of his London speech of 1936, could accept that "l'adversaire de l'homme n'est pas l'homme, c'est la terre" (2), but in this situation it is possible to see the conqueror harnessed to an enterprise beneficial to humanity. Certainly, his adventurers do not make the same distinction. Claude and Perken may well battle against the stone, but that very struggle is a theft from the guardians of a dying civilisation: significantly, they treat the "fonctionnaires" and the tribesmen in a similar way, as obstacles to a metaphysical goal. For Garine or Ferral, there is no inanimate adversary: they work in a situation composed entirely of fellow human-beings, on whose behalf they may work or whom they may

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1. See Chapter 2.

2. André Malraux, "Sur l'héritage culturel", Commune, September 1936.

dominate according to the course their will dictates. As Serge Doubrovsky writes of Hegel:

"à son état naissant, l'homme n'est jamais homme tout court. Il est toujours, nécessairement et essentiellement, soit Maître, soit Esclave" (1).

It is this which comprises a major component of the Hegelian dialectic: to continue to feel himself a Master, in order to be a man of will, the hero must continually suppress the slave, who exists merely as a means to the self-consciousness of the Master.

It is at this point that Malraux's aspiration towards "une nouvelle prise de conscience de l'homme", and the collective political enterprise in which Garine is engaged, are undermined by an internal contradiction. If the new vision of man is a general one, not restricted to the hero, then it will lead to the assumption by all men of hero-status. Similarly, political action of the type in which Garine is engaged is aimed at a change in consciousness of all the participants. Yet, the man of will who assists this change of consciousness is working towards his own destruction; his participation will lead to the removal of one of the poles of the dialectic necessary to his self-consciousness as hero. The man of will needs men of submission about him merely to allow him to exist, and the implementation of a new system of ethics applicable to all men will no longer satisfy that necessity. It would appear that not only is the will incompatible with the ethical system of Western humanism, but that it is incompatible with any ethical system which is universal.

Nevertheless, if the relationship between the Master and the Slave is devoid of ethical value, there remains that relationship between the "higher men" which Nietzsche terms "friendship" and Malraux "fraternité virile". It must be stated, however, that should this relationship be shown to possess positive ethical qualities, in that the participants limit their personal projects, the

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1. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, p.94.

substance of the arguments of Julien Benda and Micheline Tison-Braun concerning a departure from the tenets of humanism is not altered. For "friendship" and "fraternité virile" will apply to a restricted group only and will operate only within certain situations. They are built upon what Doubrovsky calls:

"une complexe dialectique interne du projet de Maîtrise, - du Maître par rapport à lui-même, et des Maîtres entre eux" (1).

It is this dialectic between the Masters themselves which forces the hero into a spiral of action in order to constantly reassert his role as a Master, which can be done only by gaining constant recognition. Yet this dialectic, constantly impelling the hero to ever greater action, causes necessarily a state of tension and distrust within the master-caste. It is this which is at the root of Perken's ambiguous attitude to Grabot. When he accepts Claude's offer, he does so in these terms:

"je vais chercher - rechercher - un homme pour qui j'avais une grande sympathie et une grande méfiance.... Je crois...

- Donc, vous acceptez?

- Oui... qu'il est parti dans la région dont je me suis occupé. S'il est mort, je saurai à quoi m'en tenir. Sinon...

- Sinon?

- Je ne tiens pas à sa présence... Il gâchera tout..." (2).

Because Perken and Grabot are of the same type, Perken feels an instinctive distrust of his fellow man of will if both are to be engaged in the same project. The same dialectic may, in part, lie at the base of the distrust between Garine and Borodine, in Les Conquérants.

However, if the relationship between men of will is built initially upon conflict, upon the tense compulsion to be recognised constantly as a hero by their fellows, it contains also a more positive element. The exercise of the will is necessarily a solitary occupation, and the hero, having broken away from his civilisation, is even more vulnerable and prone to consciousness of his solitude: hence, there is a constant nostalgia on the part of the man of will for

1. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, p.95.

2. La Voie Royale, p.35.

assimilation, a nostalgia which will manifest itself politically in the hero's desire to enter collective action. But if the relationship of the man of will with his fellow-men is one of domination, then that very domination excludes the possibility of assimilation. Only with men of his own kind, and in certain situations, does it appear possible for the man of will to transcend his solitude.

This is expressed at its clearest in La Voie Royale, at the moment when Perken states:

"Si j'accepte un homme, je l'accepte totalement, je l'accepte comme moi-même. De quel acte, commis par cet homme qui est des miens, puis-je affirmer que je ne l'aurais pas commis?" (1),

thus basing the concept of "fraternité virile" on an understanding of action and not the acceptance of a personality. And, when Claude Vannec raises the question of the dangers that such a concept may entail, Perken retorts:

"Craindrai-je l'amour à cause de la vérole? Je ne dis pas: peu m'importe, je dis: je l'accepte" (2).

The notion of "fraternité virile", therefore, begins with the highest possible expectations: it is likened to physical love, and it is a conjunction of acts which avoids the pitfalls of psychological incomprehension. It is important to note that the relationship of "fraternité virile" between Perken and Claude begins at the moment of highest danger in the novel, when, with Grabot, they are trapped by the natives in the hut (3). At this moment, Perken begins to "tutoyer" Claude. The presence of death serves only to make the need for "fraternité" stronger: indeed, that presence may be seen as an indispensable ingredient. The wounded Perken states later: "Maintenant j'ai besoin des hommes"(4) and it is a feeling of fraternity which compels Claude to remain with his dying comrade as he flees towards his kingdom.

In the same way, in the critical situation of Canton, Garine is able to

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1. La Voie Royale, p.58.
  2. Ibid, p.58.
  3. This scene represents an inversion of the situation in the final act of Claudel's Partage de midi, in which Amalric and Mesa, whilst superficially in accord in the safety of the boat-journey, are driven apart by the critical presence of death.
  4. La Voie Royale, p.154.



reflect upon the mutilated body of Klein and remark: "J'avais pour lui une amitié d'homme" (1). And, at the end of the novel, as the narrator looks into the face of the sick Garine, he writes:

"Je cherche dans ses yeux la joie que j'ai crue voir; mais il n'y a rien de semblable, rien qu'une dure et pourtant fraternelle gravité" (2).

In its initial appearance, in La Voie Royale and Les Conquérants, "fraternité virile" appears as a means of exercising solitary death.

It is significant that in the measure that Malraux diminishes the importance of the individual man of will in his novels and places him increasingly at the service of an ethical or political ideal, thereby returning to Micheline Tison-Braun's minimum requirement for humanism, he diversifies the concept of "fraternité virile" so that it applies to all the participants of an action and not merely the leaders. Katow may well be the apostle of the concept, but all of the revolutionaries of La Condition humaine participate. Similarly, whilst Kassner is the only real character in Le Temps du mépris, the "fraternité" which saves him from madness in prison links him with all those engaged in the struggle against fascism. This evolution reaches its climax in L'Espoir, where "fraternité" becomes the prime virtue, superceding even the value of "dignité" of La Condition humaine. When König asks Kyo: "Qu'appellez-vous la dignité?", Kyo replies: "Le contraire de l'humiliation" (3). Yet, in L'Espoir, Barca can proclaim:

"le contraire de ça, l'humiliation, comme il dit, c'est pas l'égalité... le contraire d'être vexé, c'est la fraternité" (4).

And this fraternity is no longer the prerogative of the combatants, it is able to encompass also the peasants who greet the cortège from the mountainside with silently raised fists (5).

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1. Les Conquérants, p.193.

2. Ibid, p.223.

3. La Condition humaine, p.234.

4. L'Espoir, p.93.

5. In an interview with the author Malraux has stated that he believes this extension of "fraternité" to be even more marked in the film Espoir.

Yet the conditions for this fraternity remain the same, in the Spanish Civil War or in the Cambodian jungle. Malraux's concept of "fraternité virile" constitutes a fellow-feeling between men in an extreme situation, one of violence, and under the imminent threat of death. And under these conditions, it is still not certain that such a concept constitutes a truly ethical view (1). For it is plain that "fraternité virile" cannot exist outside of a wartime situation, that it has no meaning for civilian existence. In other words, it appears impossible to benefit from the positive force of "fraternité virile" without first accepting a whole scale of wartime values. As Saint-Exupéry writes, in Terre des hommes:

"Dans un monde devenu désert, nous avons soif de retrouver des camarades: le goût du pain rompu entre camarades nous a fait accepter les valeurs de guerre" (2).

The effect of the First World War extends further than the inculcation of a desire for action in succeeding generations: it allows a view of a privileged relationship between warriors, of the type depicted by Roger Vercel in his analysis of the feudal bonds which bind Capitaine Conan to his "corps franc". Even a commentator as humane as Roland Dorgelès ends his account of the war with the recognition that the comradeship of the trenches was a positive force: "C'était le bon temps" (3). Thus, even at its most positive, the concept of "fraternité virile" forms a part of the military ethic, and is distinct from the civilian morality which for Julien Benda and Micheline Tison-Braun is the basis of humanism. It is significant that even though Malraux, in L'Espoir, extends the concept of "fraternité" to cover the whole Republican war-effort, he chooses to show Hernandez, the representative of the humanist value of

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1. It is significant that Malraux, in the extreme situation of capture by German forces in 1944, abandons the identity of Colonel Berger, conferred upon him by his collective role, and invokes his individual identity as a writer (Antimémoires, p.220.)
  2. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Terre des hommes, Paris, Coll. Livre de Poche, p.232.
  3. Roland Dorgelès, Les Croix de bois, Chapter XVII.

"générosité", as a tragic anachronism (1).

A further problem concerns the ultimate effectiveness of "fraternité virile" as a device against solitude. Although it appears in a critical situation, in the presence of death, it proves inadequate to alleviating the uniqueness of the death-experience. To describe the dying Perken looking at Claude Vannec, Malraux writes: "Perken regardait ce témoin, étranger comme un être d'un autre monde" (2). Perken's total acceptance of Claude cannot extend to infinite lengths, simply because death is an "autre monde" where the norms of behaviour are different and incomprehensible.

Yet this other world of experience is not confined to the approach of death: it extends back into life, forming a parallel existence with which communication has all but broken down. It is exemplified by the private solitude of Hemmelrich; and in the inability of Katow to communicate totally with him, Brian T. Fitch sees the failure of the concept of "fraternité virile" (3). And, in spite of the more optimistic view of R-M Albères, that Malraux is able to bridge the abyss between men (4), the position adopted by Claude-Edmonde Magny, that the hero's solitude, in spite of appearances, is irreducible, would seem more defensible, and is, indeed, borne out by the ultimate loneliness of Vercel's "chef", Capitaine Conan (5).

For there is a further problem encountered particularly in L'Espoir, where the problem of the will would appear to be diminished, and that concerns the problem of command. Serge Doubrovsky attempts to distinguish between two sorts of command: that exercised by Magnin, and that of Saint-Exupéry's Rivière.

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1. L'Espoir, pp.255-256.
  2. La Voie Royale, p.182.
  3. Brian T. Fitch, Les Deux univers romanesques d'André Malraux, Paris, Minard, "Archives des Lettres Modernes", 1964, p.78.
  4. R-M Albères, "André Malraux and the Abridged Abyss", Yale French Studies, 18 1957, pp.45-54.
  5. Claude-Edmonde Magny, "Malraux le fascinateur", Esprit, 10, 1943, pp.513-534.

He concludes:

"Etre à la tête" peut alors vouloir dire être à l'unisson des hommes et, tel Magnin, dans L'Espoir de Malraux, gravir à pas lourds la montagne hostile avec ses compagnons de marche, tout en sentant s'exalter en lui "l'idée fraternelle qu'il se faisait du chef"; être à la tête peut aussi signifier l'isolement superbe et douloureux du Rivière de Saint-Exupéry, dans Vol de nuit (1).

But whilst Magnin achieves a kind of comradeship of leadership, he is nevertheless forced to send Steiner away from the squadron; and the novel also contains, indeed it is its other pole, the long "Bildungsroman" of Manuel, depicting his painful initiation into the solitude which characterises Rivière. And in this "Bildungsroman", Malraux's own experience of command provides a further commentary. Joseph Hoffmann quotes two letters from Malraux to P.B. on this subject. He writes first:

"Vous savez combien ce genre de commandement implique, non de solitude (j'y ai rencontré une presque constante fraternité) mais d'isolement partiel, d'autant plus marqué qu'il est toujours au bord de l'amitié des armes" (2),

a comment interesting for the way in which it illuminates the fact that although "fraternité" may be present, it is not able to stifle a feeling of "isolement".

In a further letter, he adds, more pessimistically:

"J'ai senti plusieurs fois, avec les soldats, comme avec mes compagnons les plus proches, passer la fraternité que je cherchais" (3).

"Fraternité virile", therefore, for the commander, is neither all-embracing, nor permanent.

Finally, it must be stressed that the notion of fraternity is itself part of that egoism lauded by Nietzsche. It exists only in relation to those who feel it: Katow, Kassner, Magnin (4). As such, it is sought and experienced as

1. Serge Doubrovsky, Corneille et la dialectique du héros, p.122.
2. Letter from Malraux to P.B., dated 25th February 1947. Quoted in Joseph Hoffmann, L'Humanisme de Malraux, p.229, n.31.
3. Letter from Malraux to P.B., dated 10th October 1943, quoted Ibid, p.229, n.31.
4. The way in which Malraux's heroes tend to conform to the myth of the traveller from afar and act in a context which they have made their own increases the egoistical quality of their involvement.

a further means to overcoming a part of existence, as a means towards a metaphysical end. When Barca talks of "fraternité" as the opposite of "être vexé", he is referring to it as an antidote to a metaphysical ill - all those aspects of existence which weigh upon man and frustrate his ambitions. The warmth which comes from Magnin's feeling of contact with his comrades and with the Spanish peasants, is the result of a recognition that he is not alone in the struggle. Ultimately, "fraternité virile" in Malraux's novels appears less as the foundation of a new ethical system than as a means of self-recognition: it is not, and cannot be a sense of gradual understanding, of acceptance of "l'autre".

In Malraux's fiction, therefore, the man of will as a Master conforms to the typology established by Nietzsche. His will impels him to dominate the will-less, to use them as a means to his own salvation. It is a process which necessarily isolates the hero, a process in which the only positive effect can be the "friendship" denoted by Nietzsche in his Heraclitism poem, and which must pass, because of the nature of the will and because that friendship is, itself, transitory, the product of a fragile coincidence of circumstances. The ethical properties of the man of will do not conform in any way to the tradition of Western Humanism, as defined by Micheline Tison-Braun: such as they are, they form part of the willed return to barbarism, the upsurge of the conqueror.

At the same time, Malraux's understanding of Nietzsche's "friendship" as a "fraternité virile" introduces the masculine nature of the hero, and coincides with Nietzsche's second metaphore of human interaction, that of the dichotomy man-woman.

In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche writes: "How much of the "slave" is still left in woman..." (1), and he concludes that the man of will

"can only think of woman as the Orientals do: he must conceive of her as a possession, as confinable property" (2).

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1. Beyond Good and Evil, p.234.
  2. Ibid, p.187.

The reason for such a judgement lies in Nietzsche's belief that it is man alone who is the repository of a truly dynamic quality, whereas woman is the representative of all static, essential virtues. This view is expressed at its clearest in The Joyful Wisdom, in a conversation with a wise man who states that "Man's attribute is will, woman's attribute is willingness" (1), a notion expanded in Zarathustra's wish: "Thus would I have man and woman: fit for war, the one; fit for maternity, the other" (2), and which looks forward strikingly to Malraux's assertion during an interview that, in the event of a war against fascism: "c'est aux hommes de partir se battre et aux femmes de soigner les blessés" (3).

The Nietzschean view of relations between the sexes, therefore, embodies two distinct but interconnected aspects. He uses the relationship primarily as a means of distinguishing between existential and essential values; at the same time, because woman is the repository of static values, the epitome of will-lessness, she exists to be acted upon by the man of will, to become an object of possession.

In Malraux's portrayal of the adventurer, the sexual relationship is seen in its most reduced form in the person of Garine. Apart from the sexually obsessive element present in his narration of the homosexual rape, a scene which, in itself, expresses the idea of violent sexual domination, the theme occurs at only one point in the novel. The narrator enters Garine's room suddenly and surprises him with two Chinese women. Garine's comment on the incident is significant:

"Lorsqu'on est ici depuis un certain temps, ... les Chinoises énervent beaucoup, tu verras. Alors, pour s'occuper en paix de choses sérieuses, le mieux est de coucher avec elles et de n'y plus penser" (4).

1. The Joyful Wisdom, p.102.
2. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.257.
3. André Malraux, Les Questions que posent les Antimémoires, Paris, Coll: "Français de notre temps", 1967. Mussolini's dictum: "La guerre est à l'homme ce que la maternité est à la femme" provides a further, ironic, example of Nietzsche's influence.
4. Les Conquerants, p.138.

By making a distinction between the sexual relationship and the "choses sérieuses" - the grand political action which engages Garine's whole being - Garine reduces the sexual act to a simple release of nervous energy which constitutes a total depersonalisation of the partner. And it is this depersonalisation which is the most frequent characteristic of the man of will in his sexual encounters. Indeed, such an attitude would appear profoundly necessary for the hero: to admit the personality of the sexual partner is not merely to risk diminution of domination but, more important to exchange a non-problematic universe for a problematic one. In La Condition humaine, Kyo's relationship with May and Ferral's affair with Valérie are problematic situations whose very complexity inhibits the exercise of the will; the role of the prostitute in the novel - the courtisane whom Ferral visits, the prostitute with whom Clappique exorcises his momentary guilt, and those who constitute Tchen's rudimentary sexual education - is to provide a non-problematic area of sexual encounter.

It is in La Voie Royale that Malraux chooses to analyse the relationship between the man of will and sexuality more fully. The theme is introduced at the very beginning of the novel, in the conversation between Claude and Perken on the boat taking them to Indochina. Perken states:

"Les hommes jeunes comprennent mal... comment dites-vous?... l'érotisme. Jusqu'à la quarantaine, on se trompe, on ne sait pas se délivrer de l'amour: un homme qui pense, non à une femme comme au complément d'un sexe, mais au sexe comme au complément d'une femme, est mûr pour l'amour: tant pis pour lui. Mais il y a pis; l'époque où la hantise du sexe, la hantise de l'adolescent, revient, plus forte. Nourrie de toutes sortes de souvenirs..." (1).

The speech goes far towards explaining an important aspect of Malraux's treatment of the hero in his novels: he is interested, primarily, not in the hero as a young man, but, like Jean Lartéguy, in his depiction of the doctor, Martin-Janet, in Les Mercenaires, (2), in the man of will when he has reached that age when the forces of destiny are beginning to work within him, when the absurd has become

1. La Voie Royale, p.7.

2. See: Jean Lartéguy, Les Mercenaires, Paris, Presses de la Cité, 1960, pp.15-21.

interiorised. Neither Claude nor the young narrator of Les Conquérants is shown involved in a sexual relationship: it is a theme used in conjunction with the portrayal of the older hero. By this means, Malraux adds to his treatment of sexuality a further dimension, that of time. For Perken, the sexual act is not simply a battle for domination, nor even simply for assimilation: it is mocked constantly by the past, a past which accentuates the fragility of the present.

It is in the light of this fragility, in addition to the more general context of the response of the will to the decadence of the West, that Malraux's analysis of Perken must be seen. And this is the crucial importance of Perken's momentary bouts of impotence: they foreshadow his death. Again, in the character of Perken, the sexual joins the metaphysical: potency and power are intimately connected.

It is under the guise of power and domination that sexuality appears most frequently in Malraux's novels. When Perken tells of his desire to establish a kingdom, and hence achieve a kind of immortality, he sums up the desire in an image which expresses notions of sexual power:

"Je voulais cela comme mon père voulait la propriété de son voisin, comme je veux des femmes" (1).

Similarly, the struggle to wrest the bas-relief from the stone which holds it, is described in sexual terms:

"Des coups répétés, de la perte de sa lucidité, un plaisir érotique montait, comme de tout combat lent" (2).

Thus, in the image, not only is sexuality linked with the notion of a battle, but it is connected also with a loss of lucidity, a connection which Malraux makes explicit in the case of Grabot.

It follows, therefore, that if sexuality is, for Perken, to be seen in terms

1. La Voie Royale, p.60.
2. La Voie Royale, p.85.



of struggle and domination, the result is the dehumanisation of the partner, a result emphasised in the opening conversation of the novel, and crystallised by the statement:

"L'essentiel est de ne pas connaître la partenaire. Qu'elle soit: l'autre sexe" (1).

In La Tentation de l'Occident, Ling has already poured scorn on the pretensions of Western man to know his sexual partner. Here, Perken accepts a rejection of that pretension as a necessary belief of the New Man and uses it as a justification for his definition of eroticism. Above all, for Perken, sexuality is to be seen not within the confines of love, but within those of eroticism, not merely because of a desire to dominate but because of an emphasis upon distance, in which the imagination of the actor may have full play. He sums up his ideal:

"En soi-même, étrangère à soi-même... L'Imagination.... Elle compense toujours..." (2),

and concludes:

"Il n'y a qu'une seule "perversion sexuelle" comme disent les imbéciles, c'est le développement de l'imagination, l'inaptitude à l'assouvissement"(3).

The will, therefore, which, if it loses its lucidity, will lose also its significance, retains its independence through the imagination in the sexual act itself.

From this necessary ambition on the part of the will, however, there arises a cruel irony, which Perken discovers only in the presence of death. In his final sexual encounter, he finds the establishment of distance and the exertion of domination inadequate. Yet by now he is within a spiral from which he cannot escape: he needs to combat the woman in order to affirm his own existence: yet at the same time, to alleviate his solitude, he needs to know her. And the dual ambition is impossible: the woman with the symbolically blue eyelids remains utterly alien to him at the moment when he most desires to know her:

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1. Ibid, p.10.
  2. Ibid, p.8.
  3. Ibid. p.10.

"Malgré la contraction des commissures des lèvres, ce corps affolé de soi-même s'éloignait de lui sans espoir; jamais jamais, il ne connaîtrait les sensations de cette femme, jamais il ne trouverait dans cette frénésie qui le secouait autre chose que la pire des séparations. On ne possède que ce qu'on aime" (1).

On one level, this very desire to know the partner, a desire rejected previously by Perken, is a measure of his decline, comparable to the certain "mauvaise foi" with which he accepts his approaching death. Even more, however, it underlines the deep contradictions in the relationship between the man of will and "l'autre". The man of will, destined to solitary domination, feels the need nevertheless for assimilation. Further, the aim of the hero is possession; but if possession may only be reached by love, that static surrender of the self, then he will never achieve complete possession. Within the context of sexuality, therefore, the man of will, striving for a possession he can never attain, is in as absurd a position as the Western man criticised by Ling for attempting in love to know the unknowable. In this context, it is no coincidence that the sexual experience is relegated by Malraux in his novels to a relatively subordinate position. Garine's concentration upon "les choses sérieuses" is a logical avoidance of a dangerously paradoxical situation.

With regard to the notion of sexuality as domination, however, Malraux has chosen to add to La Voie Royale an interesting commentary in the person of Grabot, who inverts the relationship. Whereas the man of will should strive for domination, paradoxical as this may be, Grabot, making full use of the power of the imagination, strives for submission. Perken, continuing his remarks on that "perversion sexuelle" which constitutes imagination, refers early on to a man:

"qui se faisait attacher, nu, par une femme, dans une chambre obscure, pendant une heure...." (2),

and to Claude's question: "Eh bien?", he replies:

"C'est tout; c'était suffisant. Celui-là était un 'perversi' parfaitement pur..." (3).

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1. La Voie Royale, pp.157-158.
  2. Ibid. p.10.
  3. La Voie Royale, p.10.

Perken later (1), reveals that this person was Grabot, and that this adventurer's courage constitutes a compensation for the subsequent humiliation which he feels.

This past history of Grabot, which Malraux is careful to indicate, is linked firmly to the events which follow. The scene in the brothel in Bangkok is a parody and a prefiguration of the fate which finally befalls Grabot as a bound prisoner in the Moï village. In addition, the obsessive element in Grabot's sexual "perversion" is connected by the imagery to his subsequent blindness, a connection reinforced by the loss of lucidity experienced by Perken in his battle against the stone.

The implication of Grabot's destiny for the man of will in his attitude to sexuality are strong. A sexual obsession will divert him from his intentional path and attack the lucidity necessary to maintain him there. Again, Garine's view of the disruptive effect of sexuality is confirmed. Furthermore, if the hero's view of sexuality and his view of the world are inextricably linked, then Grabot becomes even more instructive. Claude Mauriac writes of Malraux: "la femme devient alors l'indispensable instrument de la possession du monde" (2). But if the sexual obsession leads, even in parody, to a situation in which the hero is the possession of the woman, then he is similarly the possession of the world, and subjected to it. There is a tight logic in the fact that Grabot, the charade-slave of the Bangkok prostitute, should lose his domination over the people of the jungle, and end his life as a real, blind slave.

It is in Ferral, however, that Malraux presents his clearest depiction of the man of will in his relationship to sexuality. He shows Ferral's reactions to women as conforming completely to his treatment of people in general. As Joseph Hoffmann writes:

1. See Ibid, p.106.

2. Claude Mauriac, Malraux ou le mal du héros, Paris, Grasset, 1946, p.111.

"ce rôle d'instrument auquel Ferral réduit autrui apparaît plus clairement encore lorsque l'on considère les rapports qu'il entretient avec les femmes" (1).

That aim which leads Ferral to deny the existence of his colleagues in the Chambre des députés and to humiliate Martial, impels him to attempt to dominate Valérie and to treat the courtisane unmercifully. In a conversation with Gisors, just after his own humiliation at the hands of Valérie, Ferral formulates a Nietzschean definition of man's attitude towards woman. He remarks:

"Beaucoup moins de femmes se coucheraient... si elles pouvaient obtenir dans la position verticale les phrases d'admiration dont elles ont besoin et qui exigent le lit.

- Et combien d'hommes?

- Mais l'homme peut et doit nier la femme" (2).

In this way Ferral, like Perken, conceives of sexuality in terms of eroticism, but of an eroticism of such an extreme sort (3) that it begins to resemble sadism. As Claude Mauriac remarks, in his study of Malraux:

"Ainsi que l'a indiqué Jean-Paul Sartre, le sadisme est le refus par celui qui y recourt de ce que l'amour physique comporte de compromission. Son but est d'asservir le partenaire en une exclusive et unilatérale appropriation qui se veut froidement conçue et réalisée" (4).

1. Joseph Hoffmann, L'Humanisme de Malraux, p.170.
2. La Condition humaine, p.185.
3. It is the extreme nature of this attitude towards women which has prompted Clara Malraux's accusations of misogyny at Malraux, and which is criticised implicitly by Simone de Beauvoir, in her Chapter on Montherlant in Le Deuxième Sexe. Discussing the myth of sexuality against which Montherlant reacts with so much disgust, she writes: "Montherlant s'inscrit dans la longue tradition des mâles qui ont repris à leur compte manichéisme orgueilleux de Pythagore. Il estime après Nietzsche que seules les époques de faiblesse ont exalté l'Eternel Féminin et que le héros doit s'insurger contre la Magna Mater. Spécialiste de l'héroïsme, il entreprend de la détrôner. La femme, c'est la nuit, le désordre, l'immanence" (Le Deuxième sexe, I, Paris, Gallimard, 1949, p.311). From this basic premise stems the contempt felt by the hero for woman, in her role as mother or as mistress. In addition, Simone de Beauvoir discerns in Montherlant the same link between sexuality and a world view as is found in Malraux: she writes, of Montherlant's hero: "C'est par le mal qu'il fait à son prochain qu'il s'estime supérieur à lui" (ibid, p.330). In other words, a myth of sexuality which sees woman as an inferior object of contempt, will be connected to a non-ethical, authoritarian philosophy of domination.
4. Claude Mauriac, Malraux ou le mal du héros, pp.69-70. This view is expanded by Mauriac in his novel, Toutes les femmes sont fatales.

It is Valérie's error that she is unable, initially, to recognise this trait in Ferral. Malraux writes:

"Elle ignorait, elle, que la nature de Ferral, et son combat présent, l'enfermaient dans l'érotisme, non dans l'amour" (1),

and emphasises:

"un corps conquis avait d'avance pour lui plus de goût qu'un corps livré - plus de goût que tout autre corps" (2).

Ferral's sexual activity can be reduced to the term of cold conquest. He exhibits the same dehumanisation of the partner operated by Perken: he reflects, of Valérie: "elle n'était rien que l'autre pôle de son propre plaisir" (3).

Whilst Ferral represents in the most extreme manner the role of domination in the sexual activity of the man of will, he differs in one important aspect from Perken, in that he remains completely true to the will. Perken's final attempt at sexuality is marked by an unsatisfied desire to know the partner, a desire for assimilation, which contradicts his earlier pronouncements on eroticism. For Ferral, however, assimilation remains unimportant. He thinks, of Valérie:

"Elle n'entraînait pas dans son sommeil des souvenirs et des espoirs qu'il ne posséderait jamais" (4).

For what interests him is only that aspect of a relationship which has significance for him. The sexual relationship, for Ferral, is a totally isolated one; but there is no pain in this isolation, as there is for Perken. It is a mark of Ferral's strength of will that he can reject so easily the nostalgia for assimilation. Ultimately, sexuality for Ferral never moves beyond the narcissistic. As he watches the courtesan, he thinks:

"n'eût-il de sa vie possédé une seule femme, il avait possédé, il posséderait à travers cette Chinoise qui l'attendait, la seule chose dont il fut avide: lui-même (5).

1. La Condition humaine, p.95.

2. Ibid, p.174.

3. Ibid, p.99.

4. Ibid. p.99.

5. Ibid, p.188.

Nevertheless, if Ferral is free from the paradox of a will to power yearning for its own destruction in assimilation, he raises one ambiguity, which concerns his choice of Valérie as a partner. If his aim is pure domination, then the choice of Valérie, who is as independent and wilful as he, presents some risks, confirmed by her early revolt. The choice by Ferral of a strong sexual partner, however, is consistent with a theory developed by Alfred Adler, who writes:

"The imperious, superiority-crazed individual will never choose a weak individual as his love partner, but will seek one who must be conquered and reconquered, so that each conquest appears as a new victory" (1).

The love relationship of the man of will, therefore, possesses its own internal dialectic, one which resembles that of the relationship between the Master and his peers. If continued being as a Master depends upon constant action against one's peers, in order to wrest recognition from them, then continued being as a "man" depends upon recurrent conquest of a strong woman. In this situation, the man of will has two choices. Either, like Camus' portrayal of Don Juan, he can affirm his existence by an infinite succession of conquests, or, as in the case of Ferral and Valérie, he can choose one strong partner in whom each conquest will embody a recognition of the conqueror's will. The constant attempt to denigrate "l'autre" in order to affirm the self as hero, observed by Simone de Beauvoir in her discussion of Montherlant, remains a unifying link in the attitude of the man of will towards his peers and his women.

Significantly, however, Ferral's recognition and choice of Valérie as a strong personality does not endow her in his eyes with any more humanity. She still remains an object, albeit a more interesting one. As she writes to Ferral:

"Vous savez beaucoup de choses, cher, mais peut-être mourrez-vous sans vous être aperçu qu'une femme est aussi un être humain" (2).

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1. Alfred Adler, Understanding Human Nature, p.247.
  2. La Condition humaine, p.176.

And in her rebuke to Ferral, during their previous conversation, she is able to undermine one of the essential bases of his view of the values of sexuality. When he states, almost too glibly, with almost too much self-conscious intellectuality:

"Se donner, pour une femme, posséder, pour un homme, sont les deux seuls moyens que les êtres aient de comprendre quoi que ce soit"(1),

she counters rapidly:

"Ne croyez-vous pas, cher, que les femmes ne se donnent jamais (ou presque) et que les hommes ne possèdent rien? C'est un jeu: "Je crois que je la possède, donc elle croit qu'elle est possédée..." Oui? Vraiment? Ce que je vais dire est très mal, mais croyez-vous que ce n'est pas l'histoire du bouchon qui se croyait tellement plus important que la bouteille?" (2).

In spite of the fact that Ferral has, to a fine degree, all the characteristics of the man of will in his relationship with women: that cold domination which allows a self-recognition as a hero, and that constant refusal of the humanity, even the autonomous existence, of the partner, the validity of his position is called severely into question. To Ferral, whose raison d'être depends upon a notion of possession, Valérie raises the argument, developed already by Proust, who writes of "l'acte de possession physique - où d'ailleurs l'on ne possède rien..." (3), of the mythical nature of this possession. Malraux therefore is able to add to his critique of the attitude of the man of will towards sexuality as domination, looking forward to arguments to be used by Simone de Beauvoir, in her demolition of the myths of sexuality in Le Deuxième sexe. He has shown, through Perken, that the man of will cannot achieve sexual possession unless he has love, unless he abandons his vocation as man of will. Now, through Ferral, he casts further doubt by questioning the validity of the goal of possession itself.

Malraux's analysis of his hero-figures, Perken, Garine and Ferral, indicates that in their relationships with women, they conform to the Nietzschean

1. La Condition humaine, p.98.

2. Ibid, p.98.

3. Marcel Proust, Du côté de chez Swann, II, Paris, Gallimard, 1954, p.27.

prescription, by which the woman must necessarily be dominated by the man of will (1). Within the field of sexuality, it is to eroticism, and not to love that they are drawn, a point emphasised by Malraux in a discussion on sexuality published in Arcane, where he states:

"Je parle naturellement de l'amour qui prend tout le pouvoir, qui s'accorde toute la durée de la vie, qui ne consent bien sûr a reconnaître son objet que dans un seul être. A cet égard l'expérience, fût-elle adverse, ne m'a rien appris" (2).

It is to eroticism, rather than to love, that Malraux is intellectually drawn, a fact confirmed by a reference by Julien Green to his brilliant discussion of the subject (3). And Malraux's non-fictional remarks on eroticism, contained mainly in his writings on Laclos and D.H. Lawrence, serve to illuminate further the sexual aspect of the man of will.

His discussion of Les Liaisons dangereuses begins with a reference to the nature of the characters of the novel:

"La marquise, Valmont, Julien Sorel, Vautrin, Rastignac, Raskolnikov, Ivan Karamazov ont ceci de particulier qu'ils accomplissent des actes prémédités, en fonction d'une conception générale de la vie" (4).

In other words, these characters possess a firm notion of the will as intentionality, in common with Malraux's own adventurers, a notion which he goes

1. It is interesting to note that, in Malraux's fiction, it is Valérie alone who deviates from the prevalent pattern by which the hero, through the exercise of his will, arrives at a domination of the woman. Yet even Valérie's importance in the novel is closely bound to this pattern, in that her significance lies in the way in which she conflicts with it. Constantly the emphasis is on the man. Nowhere does Malraux undertake an analysis of the wilful woman in her own right, as do Prevost, in Manon Lescaut, Montherlant, in the character of Andrée Hacquebaut, Victor Margueritte, in his La Femme en chemin trilogy, or Emmanuelle Arsan, in Emmanuelle. In other words, Malraux is preoccupied, not by the will as an abstract concept, but by the will as a specifically masculine attribute. In this, his concept of the hero comes closest to that of Hemingway.
2. André Malraux, Interview in Arcane, 17, pp.40-41. Quoted in Claude Mauriac, Malraux ou le mal du héros, p.150.
3. Julien Green, Journal 1928-1958, Paris, Plon, 1961, p.38.
4. André Malraux, Préface to Les Liaisons dangereuses, Paris, Livre de poche, 1952, p.8.



on to describe precisely. Discussing the "personnage significatif", he writes:

"Il y a dans tout personnage significatif au moins trois éléments: d'abord la conception d'un but décisif de l'homme, puis la volonté de l'atteindre, puis la mise en système de cette volonté" (1).

It is clear that within this system of the intentional will, as it directs its bearer remorselessly towards his goal, there can be no room for the static relationship of love; love can only, as in the cases of Katow and Hemmelrich, in La Condition humaine, divert the will from its high purpose. What interests Malraux is a form of sexuality which will allow the exercise of the will, a form of eroticism. He writes of Merteuil and Valmont:

"Par leurs deux personnages significatifs Les Liaisons sont une mythologie de la volonté, et leur mélange permanent de volonté et sexualité est leur plus puissant moyen d'action" (2).

It is important to emphasise at this stage, however, that by eroticism Malraux does not mean merely "l'application d'une volonté à des fins sexuelles" (3).

He insists:

"Volonté et sexualité se mêlent, se multiplient, forment un seul domaine, précisément parce que, Laclos ressentant et exprimant la sexualité avec d'autant plus de violence qu'elle est liée à une contrainte, la volonté ne se sépare pas de la sexualité, devient, au contraire, un composant du domaine érotique du livre" (4).

In his discussion of Laclos, therefore, Malraux reinforces his depiction of the adventurer by which it is impossible to separate the exercise of the will in its sexual aspects from its activities in other areas of experience. Indeed, his statement on Laclos acts as an important footnote to that mixture of action and sexuality which characterises the battle between Claude and Perken and the stone. Similarly, Perken and Ferral, in their confrontation with women, merely continue their life of the will. It is this quality which may be summed up as an indivisible masculinity in reactions to the world. As Adler writes:

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1. André Malraux, Préface to Les Liaisons dangereuses, p.8.

2. Ibid, p.15.

3. Ibid, p.16.

4. Ibid, p.16.

"As a boy grows older his masculinity becomes a significant duty, his desire for power and superiority is indisputably connected and identified with the duty to be masculine" (1),

a comment which sheds more light upon the concept of "fraternité virile".

Similarly, Denis de Rougemont's attempt to explain the nature of Western love in terms of warfare coincides with Malraux's own picture. De Rougemont writes:

"nous avons indiqué qu'un tel amour n'est pas sans lien profond avec notre goût de la guerre" (2).

Thus, even in his sexual activity, the man of will is in a state of constant rejection of the civilian code of ethics.

If Malraux, in common with other members of his generation, sees action as the means of creating the New Man, he sees eroticism in similar terms.

Writing on D.H. Lawrence, he states:

"Il y a en France un individualisme psychologique et un individualisme éthique, presque toujours confondus. Le premier attache ses valeurs à la "différence", au caractère unique de chacun; le second, à un droit absolu d'agir réclamé par l'individu. Lawrence ignorait le premier; et quant au second, l'importance n'était pas pour lui de défendre sa liberté, mais de savoir ce qu'on en pouvait faire" (3).

Lawrence's view of eroticism, as seen by Malraux, presents a patent means of destroying that old individualism of the West. He goes on:

"Lawrence ne veut être ni heureux, ni grand: il veut être. Et il croit plus important pour lui d'être homme que d'être individu. Le goût de la différence est alors remplacé par celui d'une intensité déterminée: il s'agit d'être homme - le plus possible. C'est-à-dire de faire de notre conscience érotique, dans ce qu'elle a de plus viril, le système de références de notre vie" (4).

At the same time, however, Malraux remains conscious of the fact that Lawrence cannot, in Lady Chatterly's Lover, overcome one major problem, the same problem which confronts Malraux's own men of will: solitude. He comments:

1. Alfred Adler, Understanding Human Nature, p.127.

2. Denis de Rougemont, L'Amour et l'Occident, Paris, Plon, 1939, p.47.

3. André Malraux, "D.H. Lawrence et l'érotisme", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 220, 1932, p.137.

4. Ibid, p.137.

"Si l'homme doit trouver sa raison d'être par l'intégration de l'érotisme dans sa vie, je me méfie de garanties qu'il faut aller chercher au plus profond de la chair et du sang. Je crains alors et leur nature et leur durée. Car une grande saveur de solitude accompagne ces personnages de Lawrence: pour ce prédicateur du couple, l'"autre" ne compte guère. Le conflit ou l'accord s'établit entre l'être et la sensation" (1).

The same judgement could apply to Perken or to Ferral.

Yet Malraux is unwilling to abandon his vision of the potentialities for Western man of eroticism. The problem lies, he writes, in our notion of love, by which the partner must be a particular loved being. Instead, he proposes a partner "qui n'est plus l'amant, qui ne vaut que par la conscience qu'il a d'un état particulier qu'il peut atteindre et donner" (2). He continues:

"Or, notre amour-passion repose sur ce caractère unique de l'amant, de la maîtresse. Il s'agit de détruire notre mythe de l'amour, et de créer un nouveau mythe de la sensualité: de faire de l'érotisme une valeur" (3).

The answer, he believes, may well lie in a rejection of the Western view of love for that "érotisation de l'univers que nous prêtent les Asiatiques" (4). Yet, here too, there is a problem: in La Tentation de l'Occident, Ling is firm in his rejection of the Western view of sexuality, the pretension to know the partner in which he discerns the first faint glimmer of the Absurd. But, he is no less firm in his rejection of that other, closely allied Western tradition, that of the hero. It may well be that, in embracing the Asian "érotisation de l'univers", the tradition of the will, with all its contradictions, may crumble.

Whatever Malraux's theoretical enthusiasm for eroticism, however, for his adventurer-heroes, it is not enough. For Perken it leads to an overwhelming recognition of solitude; for Grabot it leads to enslavement; for Ferral it leads to humiliation. Indeed, their failure, ultimately, as men of will, may lie in their failure to accept whole-heartedly the wilful, yet solitary, essence of eroticism.

1. Ibid, p.139.

2. André Malraux, "D.H.Lawrence et l'érotisme", p.139.

3. Ibid, p.139.

4. Ibid, p.139.

Malraux's analysis of the relationship between the man of will and sexuality shows no positive ethical qualities. The hero uses his will upon the woman for a metaphysical purpose which concerns him alone and which encloses him in his own isolation. In the process, the woman is inevitably dehumanised to the extent that she comes to represent an extension of the hero's sensations. The woman exists as an object, an object to be conquered - a part of that general struggle which constitutes existence for the man of will, but a part which, as Garine proves, is not essential.

Even the relationship between Kyo and May, the most fully-developed sexual relationship in Malraux's fiction, does not escape totally this conclusion. It is attenuated because Kyo has a different concept of the will from Ferral: he is able to place, to some extent, the will at the service of an ethical concept, that of "dignité", whereas, for Ferral, the exercise of the will is blatantly an end in itself. Yet, whilst Kyo's belief in that ethical concept will lead him to the conscious recognition of his wife's independence and freedom, he is emotionally unable to accept the results of that recognition, her infidelity. In other words, the unspoken desire for masculine possession is still the governing principle of Kyo's marriage. In addition, the way in which Kyo's morale is undermined by his wife's infidelity, at a crucial stage of the events in Shanghai, continues the implication in Malraux's work that, unless the woman is reduced to the role of object, the sexual relationship can impede the real mission of the hero. In this context, it is highly significant that the only possible reconciliation between Kyo and May should be in the threat of death, in a present with no future.

Malraux's analysis of sexuality in his fiction continues by indicating how the sexual relationship is founded upon dangerous ambiguities: whether the will can achieve possession without surrendering itself; whether, indeed, possession can exist at all. Similarly, the final problem raised by the sexuality of Malraux's heroes concerns the fact that, by departing from the realm of civilian morality, they enter an area where war and sexuality mingle, and which is

susceptible of the interpretation that both are directed towards death. This death-impulse in sexuality and action has been fully explored by Freud and by Herbert Marcuse (1), and is neatly summed up by Denis de Rougemont, who writes:

"comme la passion, le goût de la guerre procède d'une conception de la vie ardente qui est un masque du désir de la mort" (2).

Similarly, Cecil Jenkins, in a preface to La Condition humaine, indicates strongly the importance of death in the novel, and objects to this orientation:

"It is not death which governs our finitude: we should be finite, if only because we can only be one person in one place and at one time, even if we were immortal" (3).

Yet it is this very finitude which haunts Malraux's men of will and against which they rebel. And beyond their enemies and their women, and through them, they are fighting a grim battle with death itself.

It is this preoccupation with death and finitude, metaphysical qualities, which accounts for the difference to be found between the two charade-wedding scenes: that of Dorgelès, in Les Croix de bois, and that of Malraux, in Les Conquérants. Dorgelès' depiction of the scene concentrates upon a return to the

1. Freud first enunciated the theory of the death-instinct in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), a theory developed most interestingly by Marcuse in Chapter 11 of Eros and Civilisation (New York, 1955): "Eros and Thanatos". It is worth noting, however, that Freudian explanations of sexuality have been strongly criticised on the grounds of their masculine bias. This point of view has been adopted particularly by Simone de Beauvoir, who notes: "Les deux reproches essentiels que l'on peut adresser à cette description (of the castration-complex in women) viennent du fait que Freud l'a calquée sur un modèle masculin" (Le Deuxième sexe, I, p.81).
2. Denis de Rougemont, L'Amour et l'Occident, p.319. De Rougemont himself links this trait to the Tristan myth. It is also essential to Romeo and Juliet.
3. Cecil Jenkins, "Introduction" to La Condition humaine, London, London University Press, 1968, p.38.

values of civilian existence; that of Malraux depends upon a refusal to make that return and upon an extension of the military context to cover all areas of human experience. Malraux's adventurers exemplify that resurgence of the conqueror feared by Micheline Tison-Braun as a threat to European humanism. In his relationships with other men, the man of will is in a constant state of conflict: he follows the Nietzschean pattern of power, and appears incapable of action upon a recognisably ethical basis. His relationships are built upon domination, tension, distrust and solitude: he denies the existence of those men who are weaker than he; with those who are his peers, he enters into the spiral of competition to gain recognition. Ferral refuses the very being of Martial; Perken quietly distrusts Grabot and is anxious at his presence in the Indochinese jungle.

Similarly, when "l'autre" is a woman, ethical considerations are absent. The man of will refuses her existence as an independent being: she becomes an extension of his own sensibility, permitting a privileged contact with his own essence and reinforcing his position as a man of domination. The civilian quality of love is replaced by the voluntarist concept of eroticism. Even when, as in the case of Ferral and Valérie, the man of will chooses a love-partner who is not self-effacing, it is in order that she may act all the more efficiently as a mirror of his own abilities.

In his relationships with his fellow-men, and in his sexual relationships, the man of will, by his very nature, is incapable of a limitation of his own personal project, of giving full value to the person with whom he has dealings: to do so would be to enter a static relationship, with no possibility of "overcoming": a relationship where the man of will would, effectively, cease to exist. Yet this very inability throws him back irremediably upon himself: his relationship with others, even at its highest, in the warmth of "fraternité virile", is governed totally by his own needs.

The problem lies in the fact that the will cannot be considered as an ethical quality. If it achieves ethical significance at all, it is when, as in the case

of Kyo or Katow, it is placed at the service of a known ethical quality: dignity or fraternity. By itself, because it allows its project to be limited only by its own demands, and because it denies the project of others, it is not merely devoid of ethical value, it exists in contradiction to such a value.

For Malraux, the will is on a different plane: it exists within a metaphysical context in which man is struggling against his condition, and it constitutes the finest weapon which man can wield in that struggle. And it is this which is Malraux's dominant preoccupation. In an essay on Sartre, Pierre-Henri Simon writes:

"L'autre est toujours obstacle à ma liberté, donc menace à mon intégrité de personne, offense à mon être. Combien plus j'aurai à me méfier si l'autre est l'Autre, c'est-à-dire Dieu!" (1).

Malraux's heroes amply demonstrate their distrust of others, that feeling of threat discerned in Sartre; but in them it is accentuated, in that for Malraux "l'autre" is, deeply, always "l'Autre", a quantity in the real battle, which is against an absent God and an unjust fate.

In his study, André Malraux. Tragic Humanist, Charles D. Blend writes:

"Philosophically, it can be debated that in Malraux's humanism the individual is being used towards an end: the greatest possible grandeur for the human race as a whole" (2),

an argument which he disputes. Yet, as far as the adventurer-heroes are concerned, this is exactly what is happening. If the New Man does carry in his wake a new humanism, it is a humanism embodied in a few privileged men of will who assume on themselves the greatness of man, and who work towards their aim by the denial of lesser individuals. Yet these privileged men, who need to dominate the rest of their fellows, cannot escape the nostalgia for assimilation; and the two poles of this paradox determine the action of the man of will in his confrontation with "l'autre" in the form of a collective action - in his confrontation with politics.

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1. Pierre-Henri Simon, Théâtre et destin, Paris, Armand Colin, 1959, pp.178-179.
  2. Charles D. Blend, André Malraux. Tragic Humanist, p.77.

## Chapter Five

### The Will and Politics:

#### 1) The Will and Authoritarianism



Malraux's use of the will, in characters such as Perken and Claude, Garine and Ferral, is such that it must reject any preconceived notion of ethical values and must seek only its own metaphysical attainment. But, if the man of will, in his relationship with his fellows on an ethical basis, gives rise to serious doubts as to his ethical value, his relations with a collective body of men in the sphere of politics would seem likely to accentuate those doubts yet further. The hero cannot exercise his will in isolation: he needs men around him to affirm his existence as a hero by being objects to his will. In one respect, the journey from ethics to politics consists merely in the extension of the area in which the will may operate. Ferral's domination of his assistant, Martial, and of his mistress, Valérie, finds its political counterpart in his role in the Chinese situation and in his aspirations to total power in France. Nevertheless, political action contains a quality absent from the ethical sphere. Whatever the ethical action of the man of will, be it domination or an attempt at assimilation, it remains an extension of the hero: it will live and die with him. The importance of Ferral's power over Martial and Valérie exists only in terms of Ferral's individual will; and that power, by a strange irony, comes to reinforce a feeling of solitude and vulnerability. The importance of political action, on the other hand, is that it seems to represent a movement which exists outside of the man of will and independent of him. It presents him with a field of action and the possibility of domination, but also with the means to destroy his isolation, to enter into a value which exists before him and will continue after his death. It appears to contain the seeds both of assimilation and immortality. As Joseph Hoffmann writes:

"ce qui attache Malraux à la Révolution, c'est qu'elle est une volonté: la forme privilégiée de l'effort collectif des hommes pour devenir les maîtres de cette part prométhéenne qu'ils portent en eux" (1).

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1. Joseph Hoffmann, L'Humanisme de Malraux, p.258.

Political action is a will in its own right: a process by which the hero may employ his own will, with all the metaphysical value that such an action implies, but evade the fragility of individual action by linking it to an autonomous, collective, continuing action.

The very inevitability of the hero's entry into politics however, indicates the problems that such a situation raises. The main force which destroys the ethical value of the personal relationships of the man of will is that metaphysical preoccupation which has driven him to seek those relationships in the first place. Yet it is that same force which drives him to politics, and which will prompt him, at any given moment, to act according to metaphysical rather than political guidelines. Similarly, whilst the overriding attraction of political involvement is contained in its autonomous nature, it is that very autonomy which the man of will finds unacceptable when it conflicts with his metaphysical aspirations.

There is a further problem. In the same way that for a man of will a static personal relationship, such as marriage, is impossible because it prevents free exercise of the will - so its political counterpart - liberal parliamentary democracy - is inadequate to his needs. Domination is Ferral's ambition, in politics as in sexuality.

It is a correlation found with particular emphasis in Nietzsche's analysis of the will, and which is continued in the thinking of disciples, such as Sorel. The distinction he makes between the Master and the Slave, interpreted figuratively, enables him to propose a system by which the Superman, the man of will, is restrained by no a priori ethical considerations. Yet the use is not entirely figurative: in a concrete sense, the Master/Slave dichotomy justifies a political system which is essentially undemocratic, since it divides humanity into two classes - the rulers and the ruled. Nietzsche writes, in Human, all-too human:

"A higher culture can only originate where there are two distinct castes of society: that of the working-class and that of the leisured class who are capable of true leisure" (1),

and he continues, in Beyond Good and Evil:

"I have already revealed my serious topic, the rearing of a new ruling caste for Europe" (2).

In similar vein, Zarathustra proclaims:

"Therefore, O my brethren, a new nobility is needed, which shall be the adversary of a populace and potentate rule..." (3).

For Nietzsche, it is not simply a question of accepting the coexistence of two categories of men, but of advocating an interaction between the two, by which the stronger represses the weaker. As he points out, concerning both individuals and nations:

"the sharpest spur which urges them onwards is their need for the feeling of power" (4).

Nietzsche's system is constructed upon a rejection of the notion of equality, and upon a vigorous suppression of the weak by the strong. It is a system motivated not merely by a metaphysical ideal, but also by the fear that the ideal may be destroyed forever. For Nietzsche, the constant enemy is mediocrity, and democracy is its servant and propagator. He writes of himself and those who share his views as:

"we, who regard the democratic movement, not only as a degenerate form of political organisation, but as equivalent to a degenerating, a waning type of man, as involving his mediocrity and depreciation" (5).

For this reason, he is opposed to the democrats and socialists who, by their demands, are effectively attempting to maintain and accentuate a situation of will-lessness, with its resultant philosophical despair. These democrats, active as they may be, cannot properly belong to Nietzsche's band of free spirits, for:

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1. Human, all-too human I, p.319.
  2. Beyond Good and Evil, p.210.
  3. Thus spake Zarathustra, p.247.
  4. The Dawn of Day, p.186.
  5. Beyond Good and Evil, p.128.

"they belong to the levellers, these wrongly-named "free spirits" - as glib-tongued and scribe-fingered slaves of the democratic state"(1).

Indeed, the situation aspired to by the socialists and democrats results in the extinction of the free spirit. Nietzsche writes:

"The Socialists demand a comfortable life for the greatest possible number. If the lasting house of this life of comfort, the perfect State, had really been attained, then this life of comfort would have destroyed the ground out of which grew the great intellect and the mighty individual generally, I mean powerful energy" (2).

He goes further: it is not merely a question of combatting democratic trends, but of advocating the only system conducive to the exercise of the will. For:

"Every elevation of the type "man", has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society" (3),

a statement, which, if used by Malraux, will contradict the assertion by Charles Blend, quoted in the preceding chapter, that Malraux does not buy the glorification of man at the expense of a large number of individuals.

For Nietzsche, therefore, the man of will requires an aristocratic society in which to operate and avoid descent into mediocrity. Yet his analysis of the political aspect of the will is important in one other respect: it correlates with the analysis of ethics in its emphasis on the primacy of metaphysical considerations. The individual necessities of the practical situation are subordinated to the metaphysical aim of the hero. Yet those practical requirements form a large part of the essence of politics, and they are not subordinated with ease. The autonomous course of history may yet revenge itself upon the hero.

Such a view of the will as an anti-democratic quality is not confined to Nietzsche. It finds confirmation in Carlyle's view of history expressed in Heroes and Hero-worship, and in Weber's concept of charisma. Equally, it recurs under the influence of Nietzsche, in the intellectual climate of the decade

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1. Ibid, p.58.

2. Human, all-too human, I, p.218.

3. Beyond Good and Evil, p.223.

preceding the First World War. The novels and short stories of Psichari, the findings of the Agathon report, Ce que pensent les jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui, and the way in which they are mirrored in the latter part of Martin du Gard's Jean Barois, testify to a resurgence of a cult of irrationalism and energy, accompanied by a deep distrust of liberal democratic politics. It is a trend which continues after the war: Julien Benda's La Trahison des clercs is not merely a criticism of the way in which the intellectuals abandoned devotion to rationality, but equally of the way in which this rejection led them from allegiance to liberal politics to political extremism.

In a study of Malraux's use of the will, therefore, it is of crucial importance to establish whether his heroes conform to the political typology established by Nietzsche and his disciples: that the will must, of necessity, be anti-democratic, elitist and extremist. To do this, it is helpful to follow at some length the categories established by Lucien Goldmann in his consideration of Malraux's work. Goldmann analyses first the early works, the essays on Europe and the "fantaisiste" stories, "qui affirment la mort des Dieux et la décomposition universelle des valeurs" (1). After this negative, tabula rasa stage in his development, Goldmann sees Malraux's fictional work as falling into two distinct categories. There are first of all the novels of "l'individu problématique" (2), La Voie Royale and, more important, Les Conquérants, which presents the confrontation of the problematical hero with the Revolution. There then follow the novels of the "community" (3), La Condition humaine, which analyses the "communauté problématique" (4), Le Temps du Mépris, "le récit de la relation non problématique de l'individu Kassner avec la communauté non problématique des combattants révolutionnaires" (5), and, finally, L'Espoir, whose subject is "la relation non-problématique du peuple espagnol et du

1. Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman, p.62.
2. Ibid, p.195.
3. Ibid, p.195.
4. Ibid, p.195.
5. Ibid, p.196.

prolétariat international avec le parti communiste" (1). This progression, from the novel of the individual to that of the community, entails a diminution of the importance of the individual will, which concludes, as a major theme, with the character of Ferral. Yet the problem of the will and politics does not end at this point. For, in contrast to the ethical situation, politics as history constitutes a will in its own right, which exerts a fascination on the characters and to which they must react.

An analysis of this progression in Malraux's work will show to what extent his use of the will follows the conclusions of Nietzsche and his disciples: whether the will must necessarily be non-democratic, and, if so, whether it embraces an extreme of the Right or the Left. Furthermore, Goldmann, in his analysis, is careful to correlate the different stages of Malraux's political development with the successive literary forms used by him. He writes: "il y a non seulement une différence de contenu mais aussi une différence de forme"(2). It will be necessary to continue this structural analysis and to investigate not only the relationship between the form used and the political theme, but the relationship between those two elements and Malraux's own experience at the time of writing his works (3).

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1. Ibid, p.196. That Goldmann should categorise the relation between the Spanish people and the Communist Party as "non-problématique" seems curious. The relationship presents far more similarities with that between the characters of La Condition humaine and their Russian advisers than with that between Kassner and his comrades. Indeed, its problematic nature is essential to an understanding of the will (see Chapter 6).
  2. Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman, p.62.
  3. It is, as Malraux himself recognises, a feature of communism, and especially communist societies, to concentrate, not upon the struggle of man against man, but on that of man against the physical environment. Whilst this is an area outside the ethical considerations thus far examined, it is important to note the way in which Malraux will tend to transform into a metaphysical quality either a physical obstacle, such as the environment of La Voie Royale, or, more important, another person.

Malraux's early view of a world whose values are in a state of decomposition is expressed in two sorts of literary production: the "fantaisiste" stories - Lunes en papier, Ecrit pour une idole à trompe and Royaume-farfelu - and, more solidly, the essays on Europe.

Of the former, little may be said. Their setting is comprised of banality, death and dehumanisation, against which the sketchy characters work to establish some value. Goldmann, in his analysis of the Prologue to Lunes en papier, writes:

"Le contexte nous indique que ces ballons sont des écrivains, alors que les enfants de la lune, le château et le génie du lac sont des symboles de la société toute entière" (1),

and:

"l'écrit raconte en effet la lutte des écrivains non conformistes contre le Royaume Farfelu, l'Empire de la Mort, la société bourgeoise de l'époque" (2).

Implicitly, therefore, the stories have a political theme, a critique of the existing social structure, with its frivolous civilian, non-militarist values. Similarly, the pattern which the stories then follow, the way in which the heroes react against this society, has implications for Malraux's political development. The pattern of the quest, of the critical situation relieved by the arrival of heroes from afar, is not merely a mythical pattern, but relates closely to elements in Weber's definition of charisma. In connection with this, it is important to note that the emphasis of the stories is upon atmosphere, relating to a metaphysical state, and action as a response to that state. The ethical component is non-existent, replaced by a fascination with violence.

Nor is the political implication of the "fantaisiste" works totally by extension. The early version of Royaume-farfelu, l'Expédition d'Ispahan, published in L'Indochine in August 1925, transfers the setting of the story from a fantastic timelessness to a period of contemporary history, the Civil War in Russia after the Revolution (3). Yet whilst in some respects the treatment of

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1. Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman, p.72.
  2. Ibid, p.72.
  3. See Chapter 2.

the situation bears comparison with Babel's Red Cavalry stories, the "conte" remains rooted firmly in the fantastic: the moral and political ambiguity which so enriches Babel's accounts of his Cossacks is absent here. The sole importance of the Cossacks in Malraux's story is that of an imaginative force and nothing further. The Bolshevik army fulfils the same function as that of the army of the Petit-Mogol in the final version, or that fulfilled by the scorpions and the dying horses: they are images of a tortured world, but images evoked in a cold and calculated manner. Malraux is not ready here to deal with the Soviet epic.

Indeed, it is this coldness, this distance, which characterises Malraux's treatment of his material in these stories, and which accounts possibly for the lack of critical interest in them. They may present images of anguish and discontent, but finely controlled by the intellect, so as to make of them products of a highly intellectual game, but a game more or less subtly removed from the contact of human experience. It is exactly this contact which gives the later novels their value, and in comparison with them the "fantaisiste" stories seem strangely dehumanised, a point to which Malraux himself draws attention, in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, where Vincent Berger remarks:

"L'art plastique de l'Islam summite est abstrait....., et sa littérature, fantastique (ce qui est aussi une façon d'être abstrait, de refuser l'homme)" (1).

Thus, when Goldmann writes of a change in form from the early works to the later novels, he may be seen to be indicating a passage away from the refusal of man to his acceptance. The dehumanised Cossack cavalry of L'Expédition d'Ispahan will return, with human stature, in the workers for the 3rd International of Les Conquerants and La Condition humaine, and in the European anti-fascists of Le Temps du mépris and L'Espoir.

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1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.125. This comment upon abstract art may help to explain the relative absence of such works of art in Malraux's "musée imaginaire", though his later work on Picasso, in La Tête d'obsidienne (Paris, Gallimard, 1974) may well testify to an evolution in this respect.



The essays on Europe constitute an intellectual, categorised counterpart to the imaginary world of the stories. But the metaphysical world is the same:

"une civilisation qui fait à l'esprit une part telle que ceux qui s'en nourrissent, gavés sans doute, sont doucement conduits à manger à prix réduits" (1).

Malraux's attack on this world amounts to a realisation of its total bankruptcy, its inability to provide any value by which its members may live authentically - a criticism which, like that implicit in the stories, has political connotations. For this decaying state of European civilisation explored remorselessly by Malraux, has a political expression - that of parliamentary democracy. Above all, the rejection of Europe, implicit in the departure of A.D. for China, is based upon a distrust of static values, where the origins of the absurd lie, and a search for values of action. Yet the search for the static, in the political sphere, is expressed at its clearest in parliamentary democracy, particularly as operated by the French Third Republic in the 1920s and 1930s (2). And the search for the values of action points to a solution outside the liberal democratic framework.

A further problem of the dying civilisation concerns the way in which it attempts to impose itself upon other civilisations. The section of La Tentation de l'Occident dealing with the Confucian Wang-Loh represents a gloomy recognition of the way in which Europe has exported its most pernicious values, those of individualism and death. Wang-Loh concludes, with reference to European influence upon the youth of China:

"sans les séduire, elle les pénètre, et ne parvient qu'à leur rendre sensible - comme sa force - le néant de toute pensée" (3).

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1. La Voie Royale, pp.36-37.
  2. An aspect of the Republic which led to that opposition to its decay, particularly by ex-servicemen, in the name of strong values, and which culminated in the events of the 6th February 1934. (See particularly: Henry Charbonneau, Les Mémoires de Porthos, Paris, Editions du Clan, 1967, pp.85-118.)
  3. La Tentation de l'Occident, pp.185-186.

Yet this meditation on the destruction of one culture by another, decaying one, remains on the intellectual, philosophical level. It is left to Ling to bring the theme of intellectual colonialism to the more practical plane of political colonialism. For Wang-Loh, as for A.D., the tragedy lies in the breakdown of the old Confucian harmony between man and his world. Ling goes further, adding a note which will yield positive results in the later novels. He writes:

"Les provinces du Centre et du Sud attendent tout de cet étrange gouvernement de Canton qui tient en échec l'Angleterre, et vénère les Sages en organisant sa propagande par le cinématographe" (1).

Thus, the theme of intellectual colonialism is followed up by that of political colonialism and reaction against it. Yet in that reaction, there is an inconsistency: Wang-Loh and A.D. mourn the passing of the sense of harmony with the universe occasioned by the onslaught of individualism. But it is precisely that individualism which must be inculcated as a necessary prerequisite for political action; and the sense of harmony stands as a barrier to progress, as the finest bastion of the status quo. It is Garine who claims:

"En cet instant même, combien d'hommes sont en train de rêver à des victoires dont, il y a deux ans, ils ne soupçonnaient même pas la possibilité!" (2),

but the creation of that hope must be understood in relation to his earlier remark:

"Toute l'Asie moderne est dans le sentiment de la vie individuelle, dans la découverte de la mort" (3).

The revolutionary aspirations of the Chinese people depend, therefore, upon that very breakdown of Confucian harmony mourned by A.D. and Wang-Loh. In the same way that, for Marx, a Communist revolution is only possible after a transition from a feudal to an industrial society, so, intellectually, Malraux indicates that the Chinese revolution must follow a transition from harmony to

1. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.194.
2. Les Conquérants, p.158.
3. Ibid, p.112.

individualism (1).

Nevertheless, it is in Malraux's critique of nineteenth-century individualism that he comes closer to a concept with strong political implications. His analysis of the fundamental absurdity inherent in individualism, which lies at the core of the bankruptcy of the whole civilisation, corresponds to the analysis of the same society by Marx with respect to alienation, on the material level. Marx sees the growth of European industrialism as having the effect of separating man both from the natural world and from his fellows. From this state of isolation, comparable to Durkheim's concept of "anomie", Marx looks forward to the day when mankind will come home to itself, fused and content in the great community. And the importance of the similarity between Marx's analysis and Malraux's rejection of humanism lies in the fact that Malraux's conclusions must necessarily correspond to those of Marx in respect of communal action. The destruction of the value of individualism carried out in the essay on Europe leads logically to the statement in the "P<sup>r</sup>éface" to

Le Temps du mépris:

"Il est difficile d'être un homme. Mais pas plus de le devenir en approfondissant sa communion qu'en cultivant sa différence" (2).

Yet, if there is a logical progression from the recognition of the dangers of individualism to the desire for assimilation in the collective act, a progression which conforms to Marx's conclusions, there is a different evolution in Malraux's work, that of the will, which coexists with the desire for assimilation and serves to complicate it. For the conclusion drawn by Malraux from his view of Europe as a "grand cimetière où ne dorment que des conquérants

1. This fact is allied to the fact that Malraux's revolutionary heroes are, for the most part, Europeans, and hence are one stage ahead of the people they are trying to help. This in itself raises the problem of whether the transition of a whole people from harmony to individualism is necessary only or predominantly, to provide a solution for the anguished individualism of the Western hero.
2. André Malraux, "Préface" to Le Temps du mépris, pp.12-13. The relationship between Malraux and Marxism will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

morts" (1), and which is expressed in La Voie Royale and Les Conquérants, is precisely that salvation lies in the resurrection of the dead conquerors. And, as Micheline Tison-Braun has indicated, such a conclusion falls into the pattern of the rise of the new barbarism, in conflict with the humanist tradition. Politically, the resurgent conqueror will exhibit the anti-democratic Nietzschean traits, but will remain an ambiguous figure, by his consistent desire to assimilate himself into collective action whilst maintaining his autonomy. The absurd situation of the hero in the sphere of sexuality, is mirrored exactly by his political experience.

There is one further complication. As A.D. writes his final letter from Tien-Tsin, he concludes:

"Certes, il est une foi plus haute: celle que proposent toutes les croix des villages, et ces mêmes croix qui dominent nos morts. Elle est l'amour, et l'apaisement est en elle. Je ne l'accepterai jamais; je ne m'abaisserai pas à lui demander l'apaisement auquel ma faiblesse m'appelle" (2)

The distinction between a weak aspiration towards peace and a refusal of that aspiration, precisely because it indicates weakness, is, in large part, the distinction between the nostalgia for assimilation and a refusal of it.

Similarly, whilst on one level Malraux's statement conforms to his consistent rejection of Christianity, it contains within it a rejection of any higher authority, particularly one which, by being obeyed, will bring that peace which contradicts the will. Thus, it looks forward to the difficulty that Malraux's heroes find in their relationship with political groups (3).

The works produced by Malraux in what Lucien Goldmann calls the period of "décomposition des valeurs" present, therefore, certain common political implications. In their description of a civilisation of bankrupt values, they represent a dissatisfaction with post-war European society, and, by implication, with its system of government. From this description, two patterns of reaction emerge: on the one hand, a refusal of individualism and a nostalgia for

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1. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.217.
  2. La Tentation de l'Occident, p.217.
  3. This aspect of Malraux's work is reinforced by his practise of comparing Communist Party officials, such as Borodine and Vologuine, with ecclesiastics.

assimilation; on the other, a return to one primal pattern of Western action, that of the hero and the quest. The former will lead Malraux to a close experience of Marxist politics, the latter to a position which is in many ways strongly and dangerously anti-democratic. Yet the two patterns rarely totally diverge: in the journey of A.D. from Paris to the lonely port of Tien-Tsin, there is the pattern of the epic quest, but also the nostalgia for peace in assimilation, no less weak because it is denied.

The form employed by Malraux in both his stories and his essays has one common feature, that of distance - a distance achieved by an intellectual use of fantasy, on the one hand, and by abstraction on the other (1). And it is useful to discover how this period of literary distance relates to Malraux's own political experience of the time. There are two aspects which are important: the apparently total lack of interest in politics prior to Malraux's journey to Indochina, and the reactions to his conflict with colonialism in the years 1924 and 1925.

Of the former, little may be said. There is no record of any political awareness on Malraux's part before his departure for Indochina. On the contrary, his interest goes to metaphysics and aesthetics. Of this period, Clara Malraux writes: "Seuls comptaient pour nous les héros, les artistes et les saints" (2), and, with reference to Malraux, she continues:

"mon compagnon fut plus irrité contre la bêtise du militarisme, que son père et Ubu incarnaient à ses yeux, que contre la guerre elle-même" (3),

a statement which reveals both an aesthetic view of the world, by the reference to Jarry, and an intellectualisation of the concrete fact of the war. Finally,

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1. In spite of the moving nature of the final letter of La Tentation de l'Occident, it is impossible to accept the interpretation of Violet M. Horvath of the book as a novel (see: Violet M. Horvath, André Malraux: the Human Adventure, New York and London, 1969, pp.10-11). Malraux's concern is not to create a fictional experience for the reader, but to evoke an intellectual atmosphere in which abstract problems will appear with their fullest clarity.
  2. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas II, Nos Vingt ans, p.64.
  3. Ibid, p.46.

Malraux's political inaction of the time is revealed in a significant statement by Clara Malraux:

"Je parlai, non sans confusion, de l'inégalité sociale, d'une future révolution en Europe occidentale. La réponse que j'obtins m'étonna, m'étonne encore: "Vous êtes de celles qui veulent tuer tout le monde pour le bien de quelques-uns"" (1).

Whilst Malraux's first journey to Indochina, culminating in his arrest and imprisonment, had the effect of transforming his political unconsciousness into awareness, the results were less violent than might have been expected. It is interesting, in the light of the Wang-Loh section of La Tentation de l'Occident, and Malraux's subsequent discussion of colonialism in La Voie Royale and, particularly, in Les Conquerants and La Condition humaine, to examine briefly his attitude towards French colonialism in Indo-china, expressed whilst co-editor with Paul Monin of the newspaper Indochine.

In spite of the humiliating experience of the trial (2), Malraux's attitude towards colonialism appears to have been liberal and reformist rather than revolutionary (3); he demanded neither total independence for Annam nor the abolition of the capitalist economic system. In his book on Malraux's experience in Indochina, Walter Langlois discusses Malraux's editorials in Indochine. In the first one, "there was nothing shameful in the profit motive, Malraux wrote, as long as Frenchmen earned their profit legitimately, by their labours" (4). And Langlois remarks, of two subsequent editorials:

"These two brief editorials revealed something of the tenor of Malraux's thinking on economics and politics during this time. In both cases, he was essentially conservative, apparently convinced of the virtues of capitalism, private enterprise and competition..... He did not share the Marxian view of capitalist society as being the background for a struggle to the death between different economic classes" (5).

1. Ibid, p.46.
2. Which Malraux now attributes to a belief by the French secret service that he was a political agent. See: "La Mort qui n'est pas loin", Nouvelle Revue Française, 220, Avril, 1971, p.16.
3. See: Walter G. Langlois, André Malraux. The Indochina Adventure, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1966, p.57.
4. Ibid, p.122.
5. Ibid, p.125.

Similarly, with regard to French colonisation of Annam, Malraux's position was not one of total opposition: instead, he demanded reform of the existing system, so that whilst still under the tutelage of France, the Annamite could coexist peacefully and co-operate freely with the colonisers (1).

This picture of Malraux as an exponent of laissez-faire capitalism and profoundly non-revolutionary thought is confirmed by an episode to be incorporated into the first volume of the Antimémoires, and published initially in the Nouvelle Revue Française in April 1971, under the title "La Mort qui n'est pas loin". It is intended to follow the Singapore section of the book, coming immediately after Clappique's description of his scenario on Mayrena. As he concludes his description, another man joins them, Méry, once a great colonial administrator in Indochina, "le seul haut fonctionnaire français qui, les congais aidant, parlât bien l'annamite et le cambodgienne" (2), and now approaching death in Singapore. In the course of their subsequent conversation, Malraux discusses his role as newspaper editor in Indochina and as supporter of the Jeune-Annam movement, and recalls:

"Au début, dis-je, notre action n'était pas exactement politique. Ni le Jeune-Annam, ni le parti communiste indochinois n'avaient de structure. Ngugen Ai Quoc écrivait: La France est un grand pays libéral qui n'exporte pas son libéralisme. Et que voulions-nous alors, les uns et les autres, sinon obtenir pour les Indochinois les droits des Français?" (3).

And to Méry's (4) question: "En fait, qu'étiez-vous politiquement?", he replies, revealingly:

"Rien. Disons: libéral. Le marxisme, à mes yeux, appartenait à la philosophie; et, malgré Lénine, à un domaine un peu utopique" (5).

1. See: Ibid, p.181. This is a view which Malraux rejoins in his espousal of the Gaullist notion of the "communauté".
2. André Malraux, "La Mort qui n'est pas loin", p.1.
3. André Malraux, "La Mort qui n'est pas loin", p.8.
4. The Méry in question is Jacques Méry, the author of a novel, Cavernes, Paris, 1931, published by Gallimard thanks to Malraux, and which describes life amongst the colonists of Hanoi.
5. André Malraux, "La Mort qui n'est pas loin", p.16.

As he goes on, he continues to emphasise the practical, personal elements of his political involvement, almost rejecting at this stage the usefulness of ideology. He remarks:

"C'est le lien des Annamites avec moi qui a créé mon lien avec eux.  
Je suis entré dans l'action révolutionnaire par la reconnaissance" (1).

In these two statements, referring to liberalism and gratitude, Malraux appears to have been following in his own experience a pattern which is a curious inversion of that followed by the heroes of his novels. A character such as Garine begins his action from an idea, and uses his will to maintain that action in conformity with the idea. Yet, for Malraux at this point, there is a diminution of the value of ideology and an entry into action on the basis of personal experience and human contact. It is important that this refusal of ideology in favour of practical considerations conforms to a certain idea of liberalism, whilst the disquieting quality of Malraux's heroes lies in the fact that, in politics as in sexuality, they subordinate practical, personal considerations to metaphysical aims (2).

Finally, there are still two further aspects of Malraux's experience in Indochina which require elucidation: his alleged membership of the Kuomintang, and the extent of his involvement in the Canton revolution. The evidence for

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1. Ibid, p.16.

2. Malraux's admission of personal, rather than ideological political motivation raises an important problem. Whilst in the novels, the characters are not merely fully conscious of the philosophical implications of the political role which they fulfil, but are also able to discuss that role with extreme lucidity, Malraux himself appears to have reacted differently. In spite of an undeniable unity between his actions and his view of the world, he has shown an ability to immerse himself in the practical details of any political situation, be it Indochina, Spain during the Civil War, the Resistance or Gaullist politics. Ilya Ehrenburg refers to an episode in Spain, when he attempted a conversation with Malraux on literature only to find that his sole preoccupation was machine-guns (See: Ilya Ehrenburg, Eve of War, London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1963, p.166). Similarly, the extent of Malraux's commitment to Gaullism cannot be explained solely in theoretical terms: it expresses a personal response to de Gaulle himself. It would appear, however, that in the novels the necessity of a politically and philosophically self-conscious hero accentuates the problem of political assimilation.



his membership of the Kuomintang is strong. Walter Langlois asserts that when Indochine was immobilised by the government's seizure of the type, Malraux was forced to buy new type, and that there he came into contact with agents of the Kuomin tang (1). He points out further that when Malraux left Indochina after the failure of the newspaper, he did not return direct to Europe, but first attended a convention of Kuomintang leaders in Hongkong in January 1926 (2). His assertions are supported by those of Clara Malraux, in the third volume of Le Bruit de nos pas, who refers to Malraux's early collaboration with members of the Kuomintang (3), and who describes the entry of Malraux and herself into the organisation (4). Her description of the banquet celebrating their entry is revealing:

"Après le banquet du Kuo-min-Tang, André prit conscience de ce qu'un ensemble d'hommes n'était pas la somme des individus qui la composaient, mais un élément nouveau qui les dépasse" (5).

This statement, which has close affinities with Jules Romains' philosophy of unanimité, set out at its clearest in La Vie unanime, published in 1908, is important. Not only does it confirm Malraux's remarks to Méry regarding the personal aspect of his involvement, but it also represents the origins of the concept of "fraternité virile". This concept, however, depends precisely upon the type of faith in the human group exemplified by Romains: a faith to which Malraux aspires but which he arguably never attains.

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1. Walter G. Langlois, André Malraux. The Indochina Adventure, p.157.
  2. Ibid, p.251.
  3. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas III, p.109.
  4. Ibid, p.119.
  5. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, III, p.158. It should be emphasised that Malraux's adherence to the Kuomintang appears to have been of ceremonial rather than active significance. Clara Malraux writes, of the journey to Hongkong: "On ne nous a chargés d'aucune mission" (ibid, p.212).

Professor Langlois' assertion regarding Malraux's contact with the Canton revolution is less sure, however. He suggests that, whilst in Hongkong, Malraux sailed to Canton and met Borodin and the other organisers of the revolution (1). This is not confirmed by Clara Malraux's account. She refers to the visit to Hongkong, but mentions then only a visit to Macao (2). Her references to the situation in Canton have the tone of hearsay:

"Nous savions que pendant ce temps à Canton, à Peking, à Han-Kéou, des manifestations avaient lieu pour qu'on supprimât des traités écrasants" (3).

In addition she writes, of the organisers of the revolution:

"Borodine, que nous ne vîmes jamais, auquel néanmoins André prêta un visage plus vrai que la réalité, Blücher, dont le nom m'amusaît et que nous ne vîmes pas davantage, organisaient une armée moderne" (4).

Thus, whilst Malraux had strong links with the basically liberal, reformist Indochinese Kuomintang, the revolution in China remained for him at the time a product of hearsay. The liberal, non-revolutionary, non-marxist pattern of his political thought at this time is unchanged.

It is further significant that the failure of that liberal policy, crystallised by the disappearance of Indochine, produced, not a political reaction, but a literary one. Clara Malraux, after writing: "En Indochine, nous avons connu l'échec à deux reprises" (5), remarks that Malraux spent the journey back to France writing La Tentation de l'Occident (6), and continues:

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1. Walter G. Langlois, André Malraux. The Indochina Adventure, p.157.
  2. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, III, p.218.
  3. Ibid, p.220.
  4. Ibid, p.110. Blücher also went under the name of Gallen.
  5. Ibid, p.221.
  6. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, III, pp.240-241. The essay was therefore written between January and March 1926.

"L'homme auquel je m'étais remise tentait enfin, avec ses armes propres, de dominer le monde qui jusque-là lui avait résisté et auquel il allait, par l'écriture, imposer sa vision - ce à quoi n'avaient pu parvenir ses gestes maladroits d'aventurier de rêve" (1).

The period of "décomposition des valeurs" of Malraux's work presents the beginnings of two fruitful lines of development - that of the will and that of the search for assimilation. The form of these works is characterised by a certain distance and is accompanied by a period in Malraux's life of political inaction (2) or liberalism, strongly subordinated to aesthetic interests (3). It remains to be seen how these differing lines of political thought coexist when Malraux, having failed to dominate the world by action, attempts to do so by literature.

The first of Malraux's novels written in the stage of the "héros problématique" which follows the stage of the "décomposition des valeurs", and is an attempt at its solution, is La Voie Royale, a novel which contains aspects of the preceding stage, in that it constitutes a critique of Western civilisation, which serves as a basis for its action, and follows the pattern established by the "fantaisiste" stories, that of the heroic quest, the exercise of the will. Furthermore, whilst it is, of all Malraux's novels, the most elemental, symbolising the battle of man against his destiny by the physical battle of Claude and Perken against the jungle, it contains important political ingredients.

The civilisation from which Claude is escaping is the same as that of the essays on Europe, "la vie de poussière des hommes qu'il voyait chaque jour" (4),

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1. Ibid, p.242. The author's own italics.
  2. A point reinforced by Max Jacob's surprise that Malraux at this time made no mention of "prisons, revolutions, ransoms, famines" (Quoted in Walter G. Langlois, "André Malraux. The Indochina Adventure, p.53).
  3. It is therefore significant that whilst engaged in anti-colonial action in Indochina, Malraux brings aesthetic interest into the heart of his action by publishing in Indochine "L'Expédition d'Ispahan".
  4. La Voie Royale, pp.37-38.

a civilisation which finds its microcosm in the boat itself as it goes from France to Asia. In Claude's admiration for Perken, there is seen the already established antidote to that civilisation - the exercise of the will. Perken is "la seule personne du bateau qui prononçât le mot: énergie, avec simplicité"(1).

It is when that energy or will becomes will-to-power, however, that it becomes immediately susceptible of political analysis. And, in the case of Perken, the transition has been made. On the boat, the Armenian says of him: "Il a toujours voulu faire le chef" (2). And for Perken the term is not merely figurative: it is this, after all, which distinguishes him from Mayrena. Unlike the French adventurer, he sees power not in terms of status or effect, but in concrete terms of domination. He remarks: "Etre roi est idiot; ce qui compte, c'est de faire un royaume..." (3). The will, therefore, in the case of Perken, passes quickly from being a purely metaphysical concept to being one which is concretely political, with strong metaphysical justifications. In the real world, the only possibility for autonomy lies in the sole domination of a state. That absolute political power implies absolute freedom for the man of will is indicated by Perken's reference to Grabot: "le pouvoir doit se définir pour lui par la possibilité d'en abuser" (4).

In political terms, the despotic exercise of power situates the man of will on the extreme right of the spectrum: the man of will, to continue to exist as such, must necessarily seek absolute political domination of a group who serve merely to guarantee his position in a personal metaphysical scale of values. In this way, it is possible to see Perken as an individual colonising power, exploiting a people for metaphysical returns in the same way that a colonial nation uses a people for economic or strategic purposes. This sheds some light upon the rivalry between Perken and Grabot, which, on a personal scale, mirrors

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1. La Voie Royale, p.11.
  2. Ibid, p.23.
  3. Ibid, p.60.
  4. Ibid, p.96.

the rivalry of the colonial powers. Perken appears as a dominating, Right-wing force in the government of his kingdom, he fulfils a protective function in defending his people against the effects of Western civilisation which will result if the colonial powers defeat him. Malraux's criticism of Western colonialism as a force propagating the dangerous values of a dying civilisation is made from the very beginning of the novel: the passengers on the boat are, for the most part, colonial civil-servants, representatives of a civilisation and disquieted and titillated by the presence of a man who infringes the rules of that civilisation. The contrast between Claude and Perken, on the one hand, and these colonial administrators on the other, is accentuated by the interview between Claude and Ramèges, in which the man of will confronts a further representative of the civilisation he rejects. For the encroachment of civilisation upon Perken's domain is equated with the approach of death. Of the soldiers in the punitive column marching towards the kingdom, Malraux writes:

"la volonté des hommes reprenait ici sa place de commandement, au service de la mort" (1).

This equation of colonialism with death requires further elucidation.

Colonialism, like the capitalism to which it is linked, has, historically, its period of dynamism, a period in which the man of will could still find a field of action. Yet this period of dynamism was past, for French colonialism, by the time of the events recounted in the novel. In his essay, "L'Indochine de la conquête à la colonisation", Daniel Hémery places the conclusion of the period of the French conquest of Indochina at 1898 (2). The distinction between the

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1. La Voie Royale, p.163.

2. Daniel Hémery, "L'Indochine de la conquête à la colonisation" in L'Expansion coloniale de la France, ed. Jean Gainage, Paris, Payot, 1968, pp.354-396. See also: Donald Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indochina, London, Oxford University Press, 1961, pp.38-56.

terms "conquête" and "colonisation" is important: the period of colonial conquest presents opportunities for the man of will; colonialism is civilisation, to be fought or escaped. Thus, Perken can never be at the service of France; his official colonial action prior to the events of the novel is an ambiguous position at the service of the Siamese government (1), a power significantly non-European and with a recent tradition of colonial rivalry with France, and hence still able to offer Perken a valid field of action (2). For French colonialism is impossible for the man of will. It has already entered the dreamy calm of the colonial era, the period of "les Français en toile blanche et les Françaises en mousseline imprimée" (3). And eventually even Siam becomes an agent of civilisation: Perken remains alone, defending his people in their savagery.

Because of this protective role of Perken with regard to his people, his action becomes politically ambiguous. He is not merely the feudal leader of his subjects, he is also their defender, the defender, indeed, of their liberty. As he is dying, he speaks of his people, and proclaims: "Il faudrait que ma mort au moins les oblige à être libres" (4). Thus, there is the same ambiguity in Perken's action as there is in the action of Garine: in both cases Malraux depicts men using a political situation as a means to their own metaphysical salvation - a situation with strongly Right-wing connotations - yet at the same time professing an underlying altruistic motive.

La Voie Royale indicates that the recognition of the bankruptcy of European values, combined with a belief in the will, may lead to a situation of political repression. Yet, underlying this pattern and mitigating it, there is a recurrence in Perken of the nostalgia for assimilation and the hint of the possibility for the man of will of altruistic political action. This mitigating

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1. La Voie Royale, p.16.

2. See: Donald Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indochina, p.43.

3. André Malraux, "La Mort qui n'est pas loin", p.3. Méry is speaking.

4. La Voie Royale, p.177.

aspect is strengthened by the fact that Perken's creed: "Exister dans un grand nombre d'hommes", looking forward to Garine's aspiration to "se lier à une grande action quelconque...", represents a primitive grasp of collective history, of which Malraux's heroes will endeavour to make more effective use as they continue.

Les Conquérants continues Malraux's picture of Western colonialism both in its cultural and economic form. To underline the effect of European thought on China, Malraux makes Garine use a phrase which looks back to Wang-Loh's criticism in La Tentation de l'Occident. Thus, Garine states: "Toute l'Asie moderne est dans le sentiment de la vie individuelle" (1). Yet, already, far from mourning such a development, Malraux shows it in a positive light as the necessary prelude to revolution. Further, the colonial context in which Garine finds himself is different from that of La Voie Royale. Instead of a static colonial organisation, concerned with the smooth running of an already established administrative machine, British colonialism in Hongkong, with its continuing attempt to dominate mainland China, is still in the dynamic phase of its development and thus presents a valid opponent to the man of will. Hence, whereas Perken is simply concerned with the protection of his kingdom from the erosion by values practised by colonial France, Garine is fascinated by Britain as a symbol of will. The battle with England assumes an almost metaphysical quality, that of a confrontation between two heroes, and facilitates the entry of Garine into political action. Yet, because the battle is with England and has this metaphysical quality, it masks the very real ambiguity of Garine's political involvement. As Nicolaïeff remarks:

"Tout ira tant qu'il sera en face d'un ennemi commun à tous:  
l'Angleterre. (Ce n'est pas pour rien qu'il est à la propagande  
du Kuomintang)." (2).

Nevertheless, the fact that the battle with England provides a field of action for the man of will causes him to enter a specifically political sphere. Whereas La Voie Royale presents an elemental, symbolical situation, susceptible

1. Les Conquérants, p.112.
2. Les Conquérants, p.212.

of political interpretation, Les Conquérants deals explicitly with the problems which arise when the man of will enters a collective action.

Malraux's attention is naturally focused most clearly upon Garine. But to understand Garine's position fully, it is perhaps easier to examine first those representatives of political doctrines against whom Garine reacts or from whom he may be distinguished: Tcheng-daf and liberalism; Hong, Rebecchi and anarchism, Klein and humanistic socialism.

In a comment on Tcheng-daf, Garine points out:

"Sun Yat-Sen a dit avant de mourir: "la parole de Borodine est ma parole". Mais la parole de Tcheng-daf aussi est sa parole et il n'a pas été nécessaire qu'il le dit" (1).

He thus sums up the two aspects of the Chinese revolution: the liberal, reformist, traditional aspect, and the practical, revolutionary, marxist strain. It is the conflict between these two aspects which accounts for the tension within the Kuomintang, a tension which leads inevitably to the final confrontation in Shanghai in April 1927. It is significant, however, that Garine should see one aspect of the revolution, the violent one, as a suitable field for action, but dismisses the possibility of a liberal solution to his problems. For Tcheng-daf is the representative of an absolute value, just as much as Garine; but whereas Garine's absolute lies in the metaphysical sphere, Tcheng-daf is directed towards a moral absolute, that of justice. As Garine points out: "son autorité est, avant tout, morale" (2), and the narrator refers to him as "le Gandhi chinois" (3). Similarly Tcheng-daf himself states:

"j'ai la conviction que le mouvement du parti ne sera digne de ce que nous attendons de lui qu'à la condition de rester fondé sur la justice" (4).

1. Ibid, p.88.

2. Les Conquérants, p.90.

3. Ibid, p.26.

4. Ibid, p.107. The conflict between Tcheng-daf and Garine, that between the essentialist and the existentialist, bears great similarity, to the extent of similar vocabulary, to the conflict between Camus and Sartre in 1952.



Yet for Garine, quite apart from Tcheng-dai's inauthenticity, his action is politically unacceptable. He states to the narrator:

"il remplacerait notre action par de beaux "appels aux peuples du monde" comme celui qu'il vient de lancer et auquel Gandhi et Russell ont répondu"(1).

For Garine, the necessary components of politics are "action" and "vaincre" - Tcheng-dai says: "la guerre ne vous déplairait pas" (2) - but action, conquest and war are politically ambiguous, linked more firmly to a personal metaphysical need than to an absolute goal dealing with the affairs of all men. Between the man with a thirst for action, therefore, and the liberal politician - Gandhi or Russell - there appears a barrier which cannot easily be crossed.

If Garine's political action implies a rejection of liberalism, it implies also, but more ambiguously, a rejection of anarchism. As if to add weight to this ambiguity, Malraux presents pictures of two anarchists in his novel: the Italian anarchist Rebecchi, and his disciple Hong. Of Rebecchi, Malraux emphasises that his present has been unable to equal his past. He is described as an "anarchiste militant" (3) of the 1895 period; yet, "il n'aimait pas parler de cette partie de sa vie" (4), due to his awareness of the contrast between his early career and his present task as purveyor of dreams and trinkets to the children of Saigon. He has become dominated by an "érotisme de colonial" (5), a description which places him in a certain category in Malraux's work, that occupied by Grabot, the British doctor who treats Perken, and which embraces Nicolaïeff and König. Further, his transition from anarchism to fantasy implies a comment on Malraux's part on the reality and efficacy of anarchist principles. This is reinforced by his refusal to diverge from a moral absolute to save the destiny of the revolution. Malraux writes:

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1. Ibid, p.87.
  2. Ibid, p.108.
  3. Les Conquérants, p.31.
  4. Ibid, p.31.
  5. Ibid, p.32.

"On lui avait proposé la direction d'un service de police de Sun Yat-Sen: ses sentiments d'anarchiste étaient trop forts encore, et il se savait incapable de faire dénoncer ou surveiller un homme" (1).

Finally,

"il avait accepté un poste au Service des renseignements généraux, après avoir spécifié qu'il était bien entendu qu'il n'aurait à moucharder personne" : " (2).

Malraux's analysis of anarchism with respect to Rebecchi, therefore, points to dissatisfaction with such a political creed for two reasons: its unreality, and its retention of absolute moral values, which subject it to the same charges levelled at liberalism. It fails, because it is ineffective (3).

The critique of anarchism embodied in the person of Hong, and later Tchen, is more damning, especially since it represents a temptation for the man of will. Garine's statement about Hong: "Il est peu d'ennemis que je comprenne mieux" (4), must be constantly recalled. For the experience leading to Hong's political involvement is similar to that of Garine. Like Garine, the essential nature of that experience for Hong is humiliation; in his case, the humiliation of poverty. Like Garine, he needs, in order to exorcise that humiliation, a continuing series of violent events so that he may be in a state of perpetual action, of constant self-vindication. Garine remarks:

"Il haït les idéalistes parce qu'ils prétendent "arranger les choses". Il ne veut point que les choses soient arrangées" (5).

Yet there is a profound difference between the two men. Hong believes in action, "l'action au service de la haine" (6), but in nothing beyond that action. Indeed, his speech in favour of a wild form of nationalism (7), amounts to an irrational

1. Ibid, p.34.

2. Ibid, p.35.

3. It must be stressed that, at this time, Malraux's view of anarchism seems somewhat vague, and dominated by a metaphysical concern for order and direction. He does not appear to have met the notion of anarchism as syndicalism, an effective, directive force, until his experience of the Spanish Civil War. At the same time, his distrust of the disordered nature of anarchism is present in his depiction of the anarchists in L'Espoir (See Chapter 6).

4. Les Conquérants, p.145

5. Ibid, pp.144-145.

6. Ibid, p.45.

7. See: Ibid, p.153.

plea for a situation permitting continuation of action and hatred. The emotion which motivates his entry into political life is a dominating emotion, demanding only its survival and depersonalising its instrument, Hong himself. For Garine, however, important as action is, it must be controlled and contain within it a progression towards conquest, a conquest which will, when achieved, ironically render him superfluous and impel him to seek a new action. Thus, the significance of Hong is that he introduces a further objection from the man of will to anarchism, which concerns its very formlessness, its quality of being subjected rather than dominating. Logically, it is a personal, non-political, creed which sets its limits by the individual and not the political situation. As Hong admits: "La politique ne m'intéresse pas" (1).

Yet if Garine and, to a certain extent, Borodine, choose a particularly idiosyncratic form of political action (2) which situates itself on the left, it is useful to recall finally that Malraux has chosen to depict a man who is authentically, without personal aim, a man of the Left: the revolutionary, Klein. Sparing as Malraux is in his description of Klein, the reader is left in little doubt as to his admirable qualities, reflected in Garine's reaction to his death. For Klein is the humanitarian socialist, and he justifies his entry into political action in a characteristically altruistic way:

"Oui, faire savoir à ces gens-là qu'une chose, qui s'appelle la vie humaine, existe! C'est rare, ein Mensch - un homme, quoi! (3).

His justification for the revolution is in simple terms: "c'est d'abord parce qu'il y a trop de misère" (4). He remains the honest practitioner of revolutionary

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1. Ibid, p.147.

2. So idiosyncratic, indeed, is their action, that it conforms dangerously to the typology of that of the colonial adventurer. Whilst Garine has come to Asia for philosophical, rather than financial reasons, he would fit easily into the mould of colonial literature of the type produced by Farrère, Merand and Dorgelès. Similarly, he echoes the aspirations of Perken, whilst looking forward to those of Ferral.

3. Les Conquérants, p.53.

4. Ibid, p.54.

politics, and a yard-stick by which Garine's action may be assessed.

Between liberals, anarchists and humanitarian socialists, Garine steers his curious path. He is unable to accept liberalism as a political creed, not only because it places emphasis upon the value of each individual and therefore denies to the man of will the possibility of domination, but mainly because liberalism is a static political philosophy which tends to substitute rhetoric for action. As regards anarchism, although it maintains a faith in action, it is still dominated by absolute ethical beliefs, and lacks that element of control, of direction, which is essential if the will is to fulfil its purpose. It is will without intentionality. Finally, humanitarian socialism, although it permits an exercise of the will as intentionality, places the will at the service of a universal ethical aim; it does not permit the metaphysical purpose of the will and looks forward to the abolition of the hero's aspiration to domination.

The contradictions present in Garine's relationship to these three political codes are not eradicated, but rather accentuated by his position in the movement which he embraces, that of Communism, as practised by the Third International. And in his action within the Communist context, it becomes clear that he is action on a different plane from the purely political. Although he is drawn to Bolshevism by its voluntarist characteristics (1), he ignores the fact that, in Bolshevism, the will is still subordinated to the political aim. If ethics implies a limitation of the personal project in accordance with the projects of others, politics demands that limitation in favour of a collective aim. Yet it is this limitation which Garine is reluctant to practise: what attracts him to revolutionary action is the possibility of leadership, the exercise of control. As the narrator writes of him:

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1. The reasons for Garine's action within the context of Bolshevism will be fully developed in Chapter 6, "The Will and the State". What is necessary here is to emphasise the authoritarian use which Garine makes of his role in Communist action.

"Garine ne croit qu'à l'énergie. Il n'est pas anti-marxiste, mais le marxisme n'est nullement pour lui un "socialisme scientifique": c'est une méthode d'organisation des passions ouvrières, un moyen de recruter chez les ouvriers des troupes de choc" (1).

a comment confirmed by Garine's own statement:

"En l'occurrence, il n'y a qu'une raison qui ne soit pas une parodie: l'emploi le plus efficace de sa force" (2).

Efficient exercise of the will, an activity absent from anarchist theory, is found at its most productive in the organisation and leadership of a collective political enterprise. Yet the narrator's use of the term "troupes de choc" is illuminating. It looks back to the elite corps of the first world war, that group which found the most difficulty in adapting to peace-time existence, and which produced the German "Freikorps", Vercel's Capitaine Conan, and the leader of the Vichy "Milice", Joseph Darnand. In addition to this non-democratic connotation, the reference is ambiguous. It testifies to Garine's ambition to form a feudal army to reinforce his role as leader, but also to the fact that these men will be used as shock-troops, not just in a political battle, but in the wider metaphysical battle which Garine wages with his own destiny.

This ambiguity is continued in a curious paragraph in which Garine sums up his whole ambition:

"Vaincre une ville. Abattre une ville, la ville est ce qu'il y a de plus social au monde, l'emblème même de la société" (3).

On one level, this statement refers simply to the battle against British power in Hongkong; yet it clearly goes beyond this specific interpretation. It expresses an opposition to any social aim, an opposition crystallised in his earlier statement: "Je suis a-social comme je suis athée" (4). Garine here

1. Les Conquérants, p.207.

2. Ibid, p.57. Parody, for Garine, is the very expression of the Absurd; it is this aspect which obsesses him in the charade-wedding scene (See Chapter 4).

3. Ibid, p.225.

4. Ibid, p.62.

dissociates himself from the traditional utopian socialist aspiration towards the "cité future", the "cité de soleil" evoked in Koestler's Spartacus, or Sartre's Le Diable et le bon Dieu. Insofar as the city represents the possibility of a social solution to the human condition, Garine must reject it. Rather, the city for him has another meaning, similar to that of the jungle or the stone for Perken and Claude Vannec: it is a metaphysical force which the man of will must confront, as Kafka's Joseph K. lays siege to his castle.

At the same time, however, in spite of the urge to domination and the relegation of social concerns to symbolical metaphysical values, Garine expresses that desire for assimilation found in previous reactions of the man of will to political action. He does, after all, express some pride in the political affects of his action, asking: "Ce qu j'ai fait ici, qui l'aurait fait?" (1), and he recognises:

"Ma force vient de ce que j'ai mis une absence de scrupules complète au service d'autre chose que mon intérêt immédiate.." (2).

Yet in both these statements there is a concentration upon Garine, upon the way in which his action and its effects reinforce his own strength. The same egocentric quality is found in his remark:

"Il y a au fond de moi de vieilles rancunes, qui ne m'ont pas peu porté à me lier à la Révolution.... le besoin d'une victoire commune"(3).

The communal nature of the victory is needed, not to assure the political well-being of the group, but exorcise the "vieilles rancunes", to lend validity to Garine's exercise of the will. And it is this egoism of the hero which finally excludes <sup>from</sup> him the collective triumph. At the end of the novel, there is heard a curious sound in the night, a sound which rises to dominate the whole

1. Les Conquérants, p.196. The question resembles strikingly Aragon's poem: "Et si c'était à refaire..", but whereas Aragon's hero, Gabriel Péri, takes his points of reference from a collective purpose, those of Garine are related to a personal destiny.
2. Ibid, p.73.
3. Ibid, p.114.

scene, and which is finally explained as: "l'arrière-garde de l'armée rouge qui monte en ligne.." (1). Yet the feeling of fraternity which the scene creates is one from which Garine is curiously distant, enclosed in his own action. As it looks forward to the fraternity of the school-yard, in La Condition humaine, to that of the prison-cell, in Le Temps du mépris, to that of the descent from the mountain, in L'Espoir, it stands as a constant temptation for the man of will in his solitude.

In view of the necessary egoism of the man of will, it is not surprising that Borodine, as the representative of orthodox revolutionary politics, should distrust Garine. As the narrator writes, of his friend:

"Et il découvre (c'est bien tard...) que le communisme, comme toutes les doctrines puissantes, est une franc-maçonnerie. Qu'au nom de sa discipline, Borodine n'hésitera pas à le remplacer..." (2),

an eventuality which Nicolaïeff finds perfectly logical:

"Il n'est pas communiste, voilà. Moi, je m'en fous, mais, tout de même, Borodine est logique: il n'y a pas de place dans le communisme pour celui qui veut d'abord... être lui-même, enfin, exister séparé des autres..." (3).

And Garine himself provides confirmation of this judgement:

"Si je me suis lié si facilement à la Révolution, c'est que ses résultats sont lointains et toujours en changement. Au fond, je suis un joueur" (4).

The use of the Pascalian gaming-image serves to place Garine's action firmly on a metaphysical level, in which the political possibilities of leadership and domination are means to a personal end.

The novels of the problematic hero, therefore, follow a common pattern with regard to the hero's political connotations. The man of will is driven to seek out "un temps de troubles" (5), in which he may act. The very nature of

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1. Ibid, p.227.
  2. Les Conquérants, p.208.
  3. Ibid, p.210.
  4. Ibid, p.201.
  5. Ibid, p.57.

the will, however, demands that the action take the form of control and domination: the hero cannot be a mere participant, he must be a leader. And in this respect, the urge to domination reaches its climax in the person of Ferral, who aspires to complete sway over France (1). Always, however, the ultimate concern of the problematic hero is the nature of that problem itself: his relationship to a metaphysical scale of values. Clearly, the nature of the involvement of the man of will in collective political action is ambiguous, and potentially dangerous. As Nicolaïeff remarks, of Garine: "il n'a pas d'axe" (2). This is not precisely true: Garine has an axis, but it is not a political one. However, Nicolaïeff continues:

"La révolution n'est un axe qu'aussi longtemps qu'elle n'est pas faite. Sinon, elle n'est pas la révolution, elle est un simple coup d'état, un pronunciamiento. Il y a des moments où je me demande s'il ne finirait pas comme un mussoliniste..." (3).

In his reference to the possible fascist nature of Garine's action, Nicolaïeff is expressing a point of view taken up by liberal critics of Malraux's work, a point of view exemplified by Albert Béguin's assertion that Malraux is "le seul fasciste authentique français" (4), and developed by orthodox Communists, such as Roger Garaudy, in the late 1940s (5). The question is a serious one, and merits more profound treatment than the somewhat airy dismissal of the charge by Professor David Wilkinson (6), or the too facile attribution of importance to Malraux's preface to Mademoiselle Monk by Charles Maurras (7). The problem can

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1. In his desire to manipulate a parliamentary democracy by means of the press and financial power, Ferral resembles not so much European as American authoritarianism, exemplified by Huey P. Long's control of the state of Louisiana. See: T. Harry Williams, Huey Long, New York, 1969; Robert Penn Warren, All the Kings Men, London, Eyre and Spottiswood, 1948.
  2. Les Conquérants, p.211. Nicolaïeff is quoting Borodine.
  3. Ibid, p.211.
  4. Albert Béguin, "Points de vue", Esprit, 10, 1948, pp.449-452.
  5. See: Roger Garaudy, Literature of the Graveyard, New York, 1948.
  6. See: David Wilkinson, Malraux - An Essay in Political Criticism, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967, pp.1-2.
  7. As André Vandegans points out, in La Jeunesse littéraire d'André Malraux, this was a mere literary exercise, undertaken at the behest of Florent Fels, and devoid of political significance.



best be resolved by an analysis of the pattern of action of Malraux's men of will and a comparison between that pattern and that of certain forms of political belief.

The pattern of Malraux's early novels is contained already in the "fantaisiste" stories: it begins with the rejection of civilisation, with its static and decaying society, and embraces the heroic qualities of the quest. La Voie Royale and, particularly, Les Conquérants, however, introduce an additional ingredient. Perken and Garine do not merely reject European civilisation: they travel far from it, and come to another situation, Perken's kingdom or Garine's Canton, which they proceed to dominate. And this pattern coincides in large measure with Max Weber's analysis of the concept of charisma and its relationship to bureaucracy.

Weber begins by discussing the means by which a developing society seeks to rationalise its every-day functions: a process which he calls bureaucracy. He writes:

"As a permanent structure with a system of rational rules, bureaucracy is fashioned to meet calculable and recurrent needs by means of a normal routine" (1).

But this bureaucratic structure cannot meet all the needs of a society: there remains an area beyond the rational, where it is powerless. Weber continues:

"The provisioning of all demands that go beyond those of everyday routine has had, in principle, an entirely heterogeneous, namely a charismatic foundation.... The natural leaders in distress have been holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit, and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody" (2).

And, as Reinhard Bendix points out, the circumstances which give power to the charismatic leader tend to be "times of trouble" (3).

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1. Max Weber, From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology, translated and edited by H.H.Gerth and C. Wright Mills, New York, 1958, p.245.
  2. Ibid, p.245.
  3. Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber, An Intellectual Portrait, Anchor Books, 1962, p.299.

The important characteristics of charisma, therefore, are that it requires a crisis-situation in which to operate, and that it is strongly opposed to routine and tradition, on the one hand, and to rationality, on the other. And routine includes the area of the personal life of the leader himself. H.H.Gerth and C. Wright Mills write:

"Bureaucracy and other institutions, especially those of the household, are seen as routines of workaday life; charisma is opposed to all institutional routines..." (1),

and Bendix adds:

"This rejection of orderly economic life is related to the rejection of worldly entanglements generally" (2).

In the same way in which he rejects routine institutions, the charismatic leader will oppose any formal structure, save that imposed by himself. Weber writes: "Charisma knows only inner determination and inner restraint" (3). Charisma follows an egocentric pattern, by which the situation is subordinated to the view and requirements of the leader. Thus, charisma is, by itself, a non-ethical quantity: indeed, Reinhard Bendix takes pains to emphasise that Weber places questions of good and evil on a different plane from that of charismatic leadership (4). The result of this process is, that as charisma becomes institutionalised in the phenomenon of charismatic kingship, society becomes divided into two categories: the initiates, the comrades and disciples of the leader - those who act, and the vast mass of the population, those who are acted upon. Bendix comments: "The people in turn become tax - or dues - paying "subjects"" (5).

Yet the charismatic leader is a fragile figure. His position and power depend upon a continued recognition by his people of his extraordinary gifts. Like the heroes of Corneille, to continue as a hero, he must continue to act, and

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1. H.H.Gerth and C. Wright Mills, "The Man and his Work", in From Max Weber, p.52.
  2. Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber. An Intellectual Portrait, p.302.
  3. Max Weber, From Max Weber, p.246.
  4. Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber. An Intellectual Portrait, p.300.
  5. Ibid, p.304.

those acts must conform to the image in the minds of the people. Thus, there is the ever-present danger of that phenomenon which is the loss of charisma.

As Weber writes, of the leader:

"His charismatic claim breaks down if his mission is not recognised by those to whom he feels he has been sent" (1).

The charismatic leader is therefore in an existential position of some tension, always in danger of losing his charisma, as the Chinese emperors were in danger of losing their deity.

A more potent threat to the charismatic leader, however, is the simple process of history, by which charisma becomes institutionalised, patriarchal, and, finally, bureaucratic. Weber sees history as following a cycle, running from bureaucracy to charisma, and back to bureaucracy again. But in analysing the decline of charisma into bureaucracy, Weber emphasises yet again the way in which charisma correlates with a celebration of the great individual. He writes:

"The waning of charisma generally indicates the diminishing importance of individual action..." (2).

In their introduction to Weber's essays, Gerth and Mills place him in a certain intellectual tradition. They write:

"In spite of the careful nominalism of his method, Weber's conception of the charismatic leader is the continuation of a "philosophy of history" which, after Carlyle's Heroes and Hero Worship, influenced a great deal of historical writing. In such an emphasis, the monumentalised individual becomes the sovereign of history" (3).

Yet Reinhard Bendix would appear to be more correct in disagreeing with this view on the grounds that, whilst Weber acknowledges the historical importance of the great individual, he recognises the dialectical process of history, by which that individual must finally decline so that the process may begin again (4).

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1. Max Weber, From Max Weber, p.246.

2. Ibid, p.253.

3. H.H.Gerth and C. Wright Mills, "The Man and his Work", p.53.

4. Reinhard Bendix, Max Weber. An Intellectual Portrait, p.328. It is significant that Nietzsche, in spite of his evocation of the Superman, is opposed to Carlyle's "great man" theory.

Weber's analysis is useful for a study of Malraux's man of will. The progression from bureaucracy to charisma is mirrored by the departure of Perken and Garine from Europe. The contrast between Perken and his fellow-passengers on the boat may similarly be seen in terms of the distinction between the charismatic leader and the representatives of a bureaucratic society. Again, the mythic significance of Perken and Garine as "travellers from afar", coming to a situation which they then dominate, correlates with the idea of the charismatic leader as a man endowed with extraordinary gifts. This aspect is reinforced by the scene in which Perken, by causing blood to flow from a totem-skull, accomplishes a magic act.

The results of establishing Perken and Garine as charismatic figures are significant. Weber's category of routine action, comprising both bureaucracy and ordinary family relationships, allows a connection to be made between the rejection by the man of will of European bureaucracy, as manifested in the France of the 1920s and French colonialism, and that of ordinary human relationships, with their "civilian" morality. It helps to explain the hero's view of sexuality as domination, and the way in which Hemmelrich and Katow find family relationships inhibiting to a life of action.

Furthermore, the way in which both Perken and Garine use a social situation as a means to achieving their own aims is characteristic of the charismatic leader, who rejects any norms except those imposed by himself. Yet the tension and fragility of the charismatic leader, constantly striving to define himself as a leader, but doomed, by time, to fail, are equally attributes, finally tragic, of Malraux's men of will.

Finally, Weber's emphasis that the charismatic leader will arise only in times of crisis, but can only be a transitory figure, before the inevitable degeneration of charisma into institutionalism, is of particular importance in the case of Garine. To be a leader, Garine requires a "temps de troubles". What he realises insufficiently is that such a crisis cannot be permanent, that, indeed, the whole direction of the revolution is towards a final eradication of

that crisis. His growing hostility towards Borodine is provoked by a growing resurgence of the bureaucracy which he has fled, and which is now, inevitably taking control and rendering the man of will an anachronism.

Above all, Weber's distinction between the routine and the charismatic is, always by implication, and often explicitly, a distinction between democratic and extremist politics: the charismatic hero thrives upon emotions which endanger the democratic frame work. Yet, if the man of will is proven to have, as charismatic leader, anti-democratic political qualities, Weber's analysis does not provide for any additional means by which he may be more specifically categorised. Additional categories, however, are suggested in the field of social psychology, and developed particularly in the study by T.W.Adorno and others: The Authoritarian Personality and in later work on the same subject, particularly by H.J.Eysenck.

The Authoritarian Personality is the result of exhaustive research into the social attitudes of Californian citizens in the period following the Second World War, and constitutes an attempt to produce a typology of authoritarianism and, particularly, potentiality for fascism. The most important part of the study, therefore, is that concentrated on the questionnaire designed to discover traits of fascism: Form 78, from which the researchers' "F Scale" may be adduced (1).

It must be pointed out that the study has been the subject of much criticism, particularly concerning the method used of presenting and collating the questionnaires. Nevertheless, Roger Brown, in his Social Psychology, concludes, after examining the criticism:

"it seems to me that there is a substantial residual probability that the chief conclusion of the questionnaire is correct: attitudes of anti-semitism, ethnocentrism, and authoritarianism do generally go together"(2).

1. T.W. Adorno et al, The Authoritarian Personality, New York, The American Jewish Committee, 1950. Quotations from the New York, Norton, 1969 edition. p.226.
2. Roger Brown, Social Psychology, New York and London, Collier-Macmillan, 1970, p.523.

The most interesting chapter of the book for a study of the political nature of Malraux's use of the will is that entitled: "The Measurement of Implicit Antidemocratic Trends", in which Adorno and his collaborators indicate certain aspects of character and attitude which coordinate with an authoritarian and anti-democratic view. The most important of these is what the authors call the "power-complex". They write:

"there is a disposition to view all relations among people in terms of such categories as strong-weak, dominant-submissive, leader-follower, "hammer-anvil"" (1),

and add: "We should expect that both leaders and followers will score high on this variable" (2). Such a category gives political significance to Nietzsche's distinction between the Master and the Slave and also to its continuation in Malraux's work: the distinction between the men of will and those upon whom they act. In addition, it confirms the supposition that the will to power, as expressed by Nietzsche, and continued by Perken, Garine and Ferral, is an anti-democratic force.

In addition to the concept of the "power-complex", the Stanford group indicate two other aspects of the authoritarian personality which have connections with Malraux's early heroes. The first is a "belief in mystical or fantastic external determinants of the individual's fate" (3), an aspect which correlates with the hero's belief in "destin" and his continual battle, beyond man, with a metaphysical quantity. (4). The second aspect concerns the ingredient of anti-intropection in the authoritarian personality, and which manifests itself in the active opposition of German Nazism to psychoanalysis. The authors write:

1. T.W.Adorno et al, The Authoritarian Personality, p.237.
2. Ibid, p.237.
3. Ibid, p.236.
4. It is interesting in this context to recall Malraux's emphasis on the role of coincidence in his life, expressed in the Antimémoires, pp.18-19, with reference to Alsace-Lorraine.

"An important feature of the Nazi program, it will be recalled, was the defamation of everything which tended to make the individual aware of himself and his problems; not only was "Jewish" psychoanalysis quickly eliminated, but every kind of psychology except aptitude testing came under attack" (1).

Such an attitude is not totally distinct from the rejection by Malraux and other members of his generation of the study of the psychological state of man in favour of analysis of his action: the realisation that psychology is static, an absurd study, whilst action is dynamic. The more general distrust of existentialism of psychology, especially psychoanalysis, falls into the same pattern. Furthermore, the authors add:

"This general attitude easily leads to a devaluation of the human and an over-evaluation of the physical object; when it is most extreme, human beings are looked upon as if they were physical objects to be coldly manipulated..." (2),

thus discussing an attitude already seen in the reaction of the man of will to ethical or political situations.

Working from results of scores on the F-Scale, Adorno himself attempted to categorise certain types of authoritarianism. From these categories, two types are relevant to a study of Malraux's heroes. Adorno's fourth category is that of "The Rebel and the Psychopath", a group characterised by a respect for strength, and typified by the role played in Nazi Germany by Captain Roehm. Typical of this type is the "Condottieri", a type which, as the report from the Institute of Social Research pointed out in 1939, may be drawn from one or two reservoirs. The first is the mass of the unemployed; it is the second which is significant for Malraux's heroes. The report notes:

"The other reservoir, at the opposite pole of society, is the group belonging to the dangerous professions, colonial adventurers, racing motorists, airplane aces, They are the born leaders of the former group" (3).

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1. T.W. Adorno et al, The Authoritarian Personality, p.235.
  2. Ibid, p.235.
  3. Quoted in Ibid, p.763.

The report adds that the ideal of this group is an heroic one. Thus, it may be concluded that the heroic quest for danger of Malraux's heroes, in addition to their role as colonial adventurers, possesses some authoritarian characteristics.

This conclusion is reinforced by Adorno's sixth, and final, category of authoritarian types: "The "Manipulative" Type", a type characterised by his refusal of emotional ties and his tendency to treat his fellow-humans as objects, to be manipulated by himself. The ethical bankruptcy of the view of sexuality of Perken, Garine and Ferral, and the way in which they view "l'autre" as a means or an obstacle to their own destiny, thus takes on a further, political, implication. A comparison of the pattern of behaviour with the types constructed from Adorno's research, therefore, indicates that these heroes may be seen to possess strongly authoritarian traits, thereby confirming the way in which the pattern of their action correlates with Weber's analysis of the charismatic leader.

To assume, however, from this correlation that Malraux's men of will possess specifically fascist tendencies, is not so easy. Adorno and his colleagues, whilst defining authoritarianism, are, in their own minds, at the same time defining fascism: indeed, at some points, the terms are used indistinguishably. Yet it was soon observed that the F-Scale was not an infallible means of describing fascists alone, that high scores could be obtained by Communists as well. In an experiment in London in 1953, Thelma Coulter administered the F-Scale questionnaire to fifty-three English fascists, forty-three communists and eighty-three national servicemen who belonged to neither political extreme. The results showed that, whilst the fascists achieved a score which raised them far above the other two groups, the Communists







(Figure 2.) (1)

However, as Eysenck points out:

"Much might be said in favour of both these hypotheses, but clearly they cannot both be true as long as we restrict ourselves to a one-dimensional system" (2).

What Eysenck proposes is to keep the one-dimensional scale, running from Right to Left, transforming it into a scale of Radicalism-Conservatism, but adding a further scale able to record certain authoritarian traits. To do this, he borrows two new categories from William James: the concepts of the "tender-minded" and the "tough-minded", and tabulates their qualities:

<u>The tender-Minded</u>	<u>The tough-Minded</u>
Rationalistic (going by "principles")	Empiricist (going by "facts")
Intellectualistic	Sensationalistic
Idealistic	Materialistic
Optimistic	Pessimistic
Religious	Irreligious
Free-willist	Fatalistic
Monistic	Pluralistic
Dogmatical	Sceptical

(3).

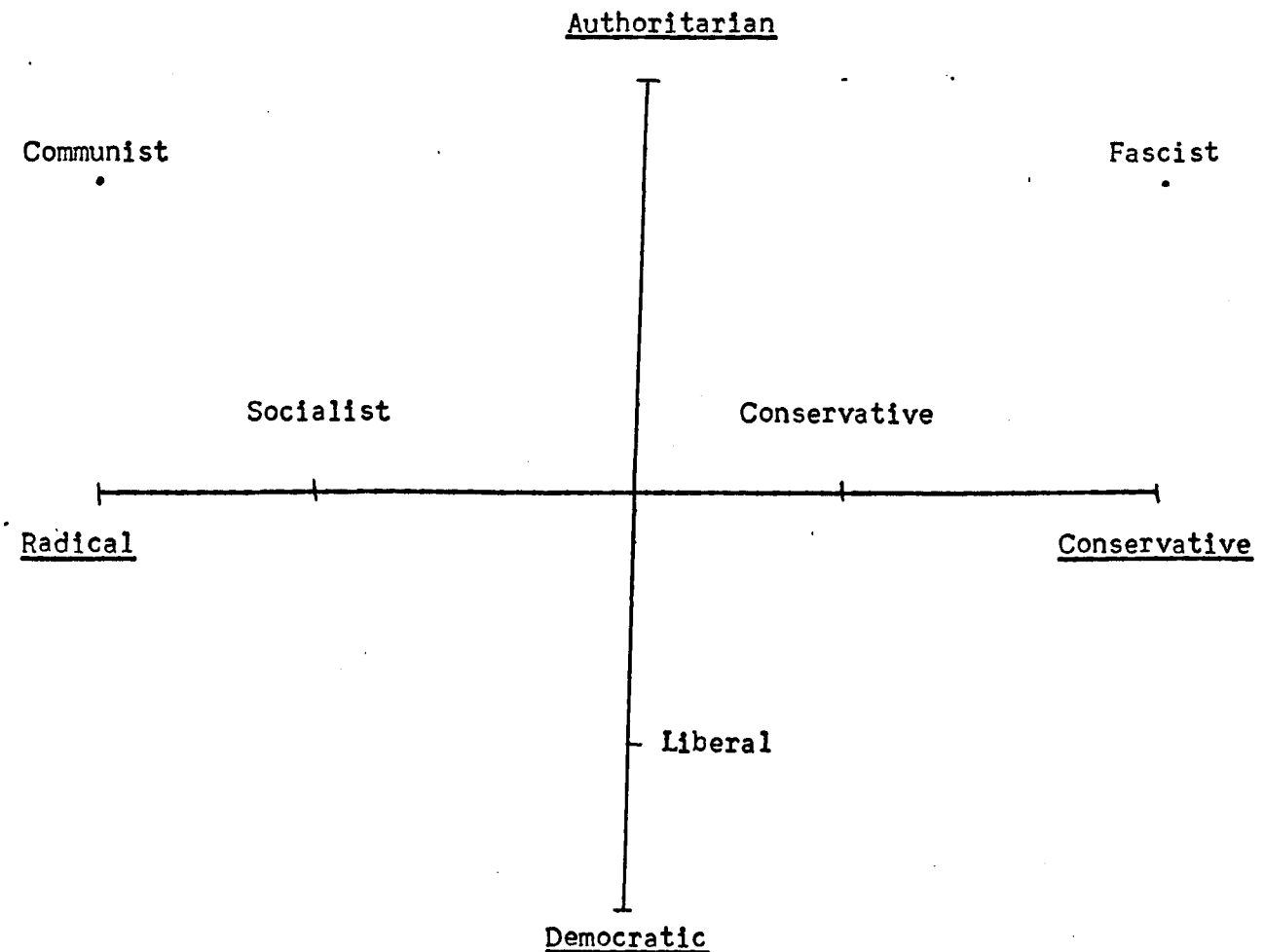
Eysenck notes that this distinction between the "tender-minded" and the "tough-minded" is exactly that expressed by Koestler in The Yogi and the Commissar (4), and it is clear that, despite some differences, Malraux's men

1. Ibid, p.111.
2. Ibid, p.110.
3. H.J.Eysenck, The Psychology of Politics, p.131.
4. Ibid, p.132.

of will fit more comfortably into the category of the commissar than into that of the yogi (1). Finally, Eysenck, looking at the results of the Coulter experiment, is able to conclude:

"It will be seen that with very few exceptions both Fascists and Communists have more "tough-minded" scores than the average of the soldier group" (2).

With this new data, Eysenck is able to construct a two-dimensional scale:



(Figure 3.) (3).

1. It is the commissar who contains that realistic, organisational view of political action found in Garine and Garcia (See: Arthur Koestler, The Yogi and the Commissar, London, Jonathan Cape, 1945, Part I, Chapter I). It is also helpful to recall, with reference to the presence of a belief in free-will in the "tender-minded" category, that Nietzsche is constantly careful to distinguish between "free-will", which he rejects as an essentialist prejudice, the prerogative of the weak, and the will itself, the non-ethical force.
2. H.J.Eysenck, The Psychology of Politics, p.142.
3. H.J.Eysenck, The Psychology of Politics, p.111.

In this scale, the vertical axis: Authoritarian-Democratic, is also the axis: Tough-minded-Tender-minded.

Eysenck goes on to list further attributes of the tough-minded person which tend to confirm the presence of Malraux's early heroes in that category. First amongst these is aggression, either actual or sublimated. And he refers to a revealing observation by William James:

"James has suggested that a "moral equivalent for war" might be found in sublimating aggressive urges through physical exercise, the conquest of nature etc." (1).

Secondly, authoritarianism is linked to the urge for domination. Eysenck finds that both Fascists and Communists are more dominant than neutrals (2). And he quotes Else Frenkel-Brunswik, a member of Adorno's team, who distinguishes:

"the "power-orientation" of the authoritarians as opposed to the "love-orientation" of the non-authoritarians" (3).

Further, Eysenck notes a certain tendency to rigidity amongst authoritarians, and he quotes Coulter: "Communists and Fascists are more intolerant of ambiguity" (4). This is a point present in Weber's description of Charisma: the charismatic leader is contemptuous of existing order, but is urged to impose his own order upon a situation of his own making. In the same way, Perken imposes order upon his kingdom, and Garine directs both the minds and the actions of the people of Canton. In addition, the refusal of ambiguity may be discerned in the love of Garine and Garcia for constructing definitions.

Finally, Eysenck concludes that authoritarianism correlates with under-socialisation. He writes:

"If we put together the two propositions, namely, that conditioning lies at the basis of socialisation, and that extroverts condition only with difficulty while introverts are subjected to the same degree of

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1. Ibid, p.199.
  2. H.J.Eysenck, The Psychology of Politics, p.204.
  3. Ibid, p.234.
  4. Ibid, p.224.

socialisation pressure by society then introverts should become "over-socialised" and extroverts "under-socialised""(1).

It is this which gives added significance to the fact that Weber's charismatic hero and Malraux's men of will find great difficulty in adapting to society. The rejection of routine, proposed by Weber as a precondition for the charismatic leader, and accomplished by Claude and Perken, Garine and Ferral, is here given political significance: the flight from civilisation is, in itself, an indication of authoritarianism.

Eysenck's two-dimensional scale, despite criticism of the data used in its construction, is a useful device for the assessment of the political properties of the man of will. It indicates that Albert Béguin is imprecise in categorising Malraux as a fascist; it is sufficient that they can be established to be authoritarians, as figures who, in a collective political action, will enter it only as leaders and will subordinate it to their own ends. In this way, they stand in a tradition running from Nietzsche, through Sorel and Pereto, and such authoritarian manifestations after the First World War as the German Freikorps and D'Annunzio's Fiume adventure, to figures of the 1930s such as Drieu la Rochelle, with his admiration for the exercise of the will in left-wing and right-wing politics.

A word must be added on Sorel, for he is one of the clearest examples of an application of Nietzschean philosophy to politics. He begins with an evocation of pessimism, "cette doctrine sans laquelle rien de très haut ne s'est fait dans le monde" (2), linking this to the "volonté de délivrance" (3) of the true pessimist. To accomplish this, he embraces specifically aggressive values. He writes: "un nombre énorme de nos idées politiques proviennent de la guerre" (4). And, in order to implement those values, Sorel appreciates the crucial value of

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1. Ibid, p.262. Eysenck has previously established a connection between extrovert tendencies and authoritarianism.
  2. Georges Sorel, Réflexions sur la violence, Paris, 1907. Introduction, p.13.
  3. Ibid, p.24.
  4. Ibid, p.76.

the myth: "il faut juger des mythes comme des moyens d'agir sur le présent"(1), a theory which places Garine's activity as a propagandist in the context of the politics of will. Finally, for Sorel, such a philosophy, based upon metaphysical points of reference, runs contrary to an ethical system. He writes, in a mood which looks forward to the "nouveau mal du siècle":

"Des gens qui ont voué leur vie à une cause qu'ils identifient à la rénovation du monde, ne pouvaient hésiter à user de toutes les armes pour développer d'autant plus l'esprit de lutte de classe que l'on faisait plus d'efforts pour le faire disparaître" (2).

From this curious mixture of marxism and Nietzschean philosophy evolves a contribution to political theory which is characteristic of the politics of the will, in that it cannot be situated on the Right of the Left, but can be best characterised as authoritarian. As H. Stuart Hughes writes:

"Sometime in the early 1930s, in parallel and almost simultaneous démarches, the Russian and Italian ambassadors to France proposed to erect a monument above the grave of Georges Sorel, which, they understood, had fallen into a state of disrepair during the decade that had elapsed since his death" (3).

Although Professor Hughes admits that the anecdote may be apocryphal, it nevertheless crystallises the nature of the will in politics: authoritarian, but difficult to classify in terms of Right or Left.

A similar difficulty is experienced when dealing with that other engineer, Pareto, who moves from a sympathetic critique of Marx, in Les Systèmes socialistes, to the sociological justification of an elite in the Trattato di sociologia generale, a justification which, as Professor Hughes indicates, is a legacy from Machiavelli's "Lions" and "Foxes" dichotomy (4), and which cuts across any Left-Right cleavage. It is this which is the significance of the remark by Nicolaïeff, in Les Conquérants, immediately after indicating that Garine could

1. Ibid, p.180.

2. Ibid, p.281.

3. H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society, New York, 1958. Quotes from Vintage Books edition, p.161.

4. Ibid, p.268.

be a Mussolinist: "Tu connais Pareto?... Lui (Garine) doit le connaître" (1).

Finally, it is useful to recall the writing of Malraux's friend of the 1930s (2), Drieu la Rochelle, who, in his enthusiasm for the will, makes Little distinction between its different political manifestations. He remains consistently Nietzschean, connecting different political creeds to the master's philosophy. Thus, referring to such disparate figures as Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler, he writes, of Nietzsche:

"Certes, il ne les aurait pas reconnu comme ses fils; pourtant, selon le siècle, selon le premier degré de l'esprit, ce sont ses fils"(3).

He continues this amalgamation of the aggressive forms of twentieth-century politics, writing:

"On vit Mussolini se débarasser en peu d'années de l'anarchisme et du marxisme, Lénine accorder les thèmes talmudiques de Marx aux besoins sommaires d'un conquérant tartare, Hitler ne pas même entrer dans le marxisme..." (4).

Similarly, Drieu la Rochelle builds up a composite picture of the ideal regenerating figure of Europe:

"le fasciste, l'hitlérien. Ce type assimile certains traits du bolchevik de la guerre civile russe et du gangster américain" (5),

and asks:

"Cette image d'une magnificence imaginaire peut-elle être insérée, incarnée dans le réel façonné par les premiers bolcheviks, les fascistes, les hitlériens, les Français d'Afrique?" (6).

1. Les Conquérants, p.211.
2. See: Frédéric Grover, "Malraux et Drieu la Rochelle", Revue des Lettres Modernes, 304-309, 1972, pp.61-93.
3. Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, pp.145-6.
4. Ibid, p.152.
5. Drieu la Rochelle, Notes pour comprendre le siècle, p.157. The connection between the myth of the gangster and the success of fascism is, of course, made explicit in Brecht's play: The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, in which the rise of Hitler is portrayed in Chicago-gangster terms.
6. Ibid, p.180. The emphasis on the early Bolsheviks as representatives of the will, as opposed to bureaucratic Bolshevism, is important in the context of Garine's action.

continuing the idea of an heroic ideal transcending categories of Right and Left. Finally, he concludes with a long analysis of this composite figure, embodied in the Hitlerian type:

"L'hitlérien s'est formé de la convergence de tous ces éléments; le combattant de la grande guerre formé dans les Sturmtruppen ou l'aviation, devenu l'acharné des corps francs, le terroriste-assassin de Rathenau; le boy-scout, le Wandervogel errant de maison de jeunesse en maison de jeunesse jusqu'à l'autre bout de l'Europe, vers le salut inconnu; l'homme de main communiste; l'homme des villes neurasthénique excité par l'exemple des fascistes italiens aussi bien que par celui des gangsters américains, des mercenaires des guerres de Chine, les soldats de la Légion étrangère.

C'est un type d'homme qui rejette sa culture, qui se raidit au milieu de la dépravation sexuelle et alcoolique et qui rêve de donner au monde une discipline physique aux effets radicaux. C'est un homme qui ne croit que dans les actes et qui enchaîne ses actes selon un mythe très sommaire" (1).

Drieu is at pains in his essay to classify Malraux as an example of the "homme nouveau", thereby situating him in the same category as other figures of regeneration, all of whom correspond to an authoritarian type. His emphasis on the rejection of the frivolous and decadent Europe of the 1920s and the aspiration towards an individually-imposed discipline, with an accompanying distrust of doctrine, imposes a comparison with Malraux's early heroes, as does the non-ethical aspect of the New Man.

The pattern which Malraux presents in La Voie Royale and in Les Conquérants is a simple one, a continuation of that found in the "fantaisiste" stories. At the very beginning there is, in both cases, the problem of a bankrupt civilisation, against which the man of will reacts with energy, obliged to leave Europe and exercise the will in a context more conducive to action. Malraux's early heroes are thus heroes on a quest, a quest for value. As such, they enter a situation which they use to further a metaphysical aim, irrespective of the ethical or concrete political demands of the context. It is a pattern which relates to Max Weber's characterisation of charisma and which correlates with later definitions

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1. Ibid, p.159. It is significant that in his book, Portrait de l'aventurier, Roger Stéphane, in addition to discussing Malraux and T.E.Lawrence, devotes a section to Ernst von Salomon, the assassin of Rathenau. Similarly, Drieu's references to gangsters is interesting in the context of the Bonne of Les Noyers.



of authoritarianism, without being specifically fascist in nature.

It is interesting that this rise of the authoritarian hero should coincide with a period of political inaction on the part of the author. The extreme authoritarian manifestations of the heroes, Perken and Garine, may be seen to some extent, therefore, as the result of that attempt to dominate the world by writing indicated by Clara Malraux (1), an attempt which begins with the abstract preoccupations on the nature of European civilisation to which the will is a solution. In this case, a shift in the emphasis on the role of the will in politics, at least on a superficial level, would be expected in those novels written by Malraux during involvement in collective political action.

One conclusion, however, may be drawn already. It seems clear, not merely from an analysis of Perken and Garine, but from an examination of Sorel, Pareto and Drieu la Rochelle, that the acceptance of the Nietzschean will has certain political implications, implications accentuated in the post-war years, after the experience of war-values and the ensuing disorientation. The man of will, the New Man, is a man of energy who gravitates towards authoritarian politics, the product of metaphysical preoccupations and the refusal of a universal ethical system. In such a situation, categories of Right and Left become redundant. Yet whilst the New Man may exist on the Right or the Left, searching only "un temps de troubles", his fear of discipline and orthodoxy will certainly lead him to feel uncomfortable in a post-revolutionary situation, which is one of construction rather than tension.

There is a further problem. The man of will refuses discipline and orthodoxy because, to exercise his will, he must be a leader, he must preserve his autonomy and the objects of his action. Yet, with that autonomy goes the

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1. Such an aspiration raises the question as to whether, in Malraux's work, writing and political action become intimately connected, both directed towards the domination of the world.

sense of individualism he is trying to escape; and, embodied in the necessarily transitory nature of his involvement, is the fragility of human action. In the face of such a dilemma, the hero is drawn inevitably to the nostalgia for assimilation, the tantalising salvation of the collective enterprise. In the dark night of the individual soul echoes still the captivating music of the Red Army, marching to the lines.

## Chapter Six

### The Will and Politics:

#### ii) The Will and the State

In Malraux's early novels, the will appears as a force which sets the heroic individual apart from collective action in order that he may dominate it. Perken is thus an adventurer and chieftain, Garine a leader, pursuing his destiny on the very margins of involvement. Politically, such a use of the will is essentially authoritarian and fraught with the same ambiguities as all individual action: it is fragile and isolated. Yet, within this same sphere of politics, there is another notion of the will. In his Philosophy of History, Hegel distinguishes between the individual and collective wills. He speaks first of the subjective will, which he defines as "passion", and which, in certain great historical actions, becomes a "great world-historical passion" (1). Yet Hegel recognises that this subjective will is restricted by its own limitations, much in the same way that Malraux's early heroes are limited by their own finitude. At the same time, however, solution is at hand, for:

"the subjective will has also a substantial life - a reality - in which it moves in the region of essential being, and has the essential itself as the object of its existence" (2).

This suggestion is crucial for Malraux's heroes, imprisoned as they are in an existential world and fundamentally unable to make the transition into the world of essential values. And Hegel is quite clear as to where those essential values lie:

"This essential being is the union of the subjective with the rational Will: it is the moral Whole, the State, which is that form of reality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom"(3).

The solution, therefore, would appear to lie within that collective political action into which Malraux's heroes find so much difficulty in inserting

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1. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. J.Sibree, New York, Dover Publications, 1956, p.38.
  2. Ibid, p.38.
  3. Ibid, p.38.

themselves. And the rewards are great: the will as "passion", in the case of Perken or Garine, is without an ethical component. The union of the individual and the collective wills in the State can provide for a moral basis for action.

As Hegel writes:

"Subjective volition - Passion - is that which sets men in activity, that which effects "practical" realisation. The Idea is the inner spring of action; the State is the actually existing, realised moral life. For it is the Unity of the universal, essential Will, with that of the individual; and this is 'Morality'. The individual living in this unity has a moral life; possesses a value that consists in this substantiality alone" (1).

The political experience for the man of will, therefore, is of more than usual value: it cannot be considered solely as a field of action (and it is perhaps in this consideration that reasons for the failure of Perken and Garine may be sought), nor is it simply an aspect of existence which illuminates vividly the contradictions of the will. Using Hegel's categories, it may be said that political, collective action is the very destiny of the will, the point at which it becomes positive and humanistic, the point at which it escapes fragility and isolation. And since the "essential" will is "universal", it may transcend time as well.

It is to this that the nostalgia of Malraux's early heroes for collective action is tending. And it is here that the true importance of history and historical action becomes apparent. Yet Hegel poses a condition: within the State, within collective action, the individual man of will finds his moral base and his universality, "but on the condition of recognising, believing in, and willing that which is common to the Whole" (2). For the man of will to enjoy the benefits of history, an act of subordination is necessary. The question

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1. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, p.38.
  2. Ibid, p.38. Author's italics.

remains as to what extent Malraux is willing, in his later novels, to subordinate those vestiges of the will which remain to a collective purpose: to what extent he is willing to exchange the individual qualities of heroism, with their residue of nineteenth-century individualism, for those ethical values afforded by a collective enterprise.

That Malraux attempted such a synthesis in his later work is indicated already by Goldmann's analysis of a progression from the novels of the "individu problématique", with their antagonism between the individual and collective projects, through the novel of "la communauté problématique" - La Condition humaine - to the "non-problematical" novels - Le Temps du mépris and L'Espoir (1). In Goldmann's terms, the transition from the individual to the collective will has the value of eliminating the problematic aspect of the hero's existence, and it is in this that the attraction of collective action is to be found. The question still remains, however, to what extent Malraux is prepared to diminish the individual will in order to achieve the non-problematic view of existence, and, indeed, to what extent the problematic view of existence itself is essential to Malraux's view of humanity.

The transition from the subjective will to the essential, universal will, is seen clearly in La Condition humaine, and analysis of this transition necessitates a return to the figure of Ferral. Certainly, he is easily recognisable as one of Malraux's hero-figures. As Professor Frohock writes:

"Critics who look everywhere in Malraux's novels for portraits of the Adventurer should give Ferral more attention. Much more clearly than either Kyo or Tchen, he is cut to the adventurer pattern.... In Ferral we once more have Malraux's version of the *Übermensch*..." (2).

Nevertheless, whilst Ferral exhibits all the characteristics of the man of will, in his metaphysical and ethical aspects, whilst he is near in type to Perken or Garine, he is now clearly on the wrong side, superceded. His underwriting

1. Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman, pp.195-196.
2. W.M.Frohock, André Malraux and the Tragic Imagination, p.76.

of Chiang-Kai-Chek's coup isolates him from the positive, dynamic force of the Revolution and reduces him to a supporter of the old order by which he is eventually destroyed. As Professor Frohock adds, he is "an *Übermensch* in a sack suit who frequents the best hotels" (1), and the situation is no longer propitious for such a man. In spite of a certain sympathy present in Malraux's depiction of Ferral's ultimate failure, the predominant tone in that scene is that of irony, indicating that his humiliation is the product of a certain wrong turning on the part of the will, the natural conclusion to a career of solitary power. The ambiguities in *Garin* are absent here: Ferral is a clear case of an existential will devoid of any ethical component, and shown to be dangerous. Because of these very qualities, he is denied the salvation of history.

For the originality of the novel lies in the fact that, for the first time in Malraux's work, the essential, ethical point of view is put with as much force as that of the existential hero. Kyo's devotion to the ideal of "*dignité*", and Katow's acceptance of the value of "*fraternité*" are not to be placed in the same category as Tcheng-dai's inauthentic liberalism. For the first time essential values are considered seriously, as a logical solution to the approaching vision of the bankruptcy of the solitary will. Like Ferral, Kyo and Katow are men of action, but they place their will and direct their action at the service of an essential, universal concept in a political context. They represent that direction of the anarchic will of the conqueror hailed by Micheline Tison-Braun. The will as "passion" becomes substantial, and the man of will enters collective life. Ferral, as the final exponent of solitary action, cannot truly be classed as a political figure: his actions have political effect, but they exist for him alone, and they lose the value conferred by history.

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1. Ibid, p.76.

Yet the transition is not so smooth as it may appear. It is too easy to claim that the concept of "volonté" becomes subsumed into Katow's worship of "fraternité" or Kyo's allegiance to "dignité". To begin with, these concepts become, in the mouths of their protagonists, absolute values, able to define a personality (1). And, since these values have the power of definition, great strength is required to maintain them. Kyo, confronted by König, cannot deny the concept of dignity - to do so would be to shatter, in a certain, but very real sense, his whole essence. No more can Katow reject the mystical quality of revolutionary fraternity - the giving of the cyanide becomes a sacramental act, a totally fitting climax to his life. In these two characters, it is not so much a question of the will being replaced by another value, but of the will being placed at the service of a value, the only guarantee that this value may continue to exist. It is, to be sure, no longer a strictly Nietzschean notion of the will: the Superman receded with Ferral. Rather, the use Malraux makes of the will here, with respect to characters, is Cornelian in essence: it is a force enabling man to maintain himself in a chosen action, in a chosen vision of himself, as Rodrigue maintains himself in an image of heroism.

And it is precisely at this point that the will, which seemed to be about to transform itself into a substantial essential quality, reappears as a problem. It is not totally a question of the individual abandoning himself to a universal value; rather, the value is assumed by the individual, safeguarded by his will - and the problem of the individual and collective action re-emerges. Micheline Tison-Braun assumes too easily that by placing his will at the service of an absolute aim, the conqueror is neutralised. The problem

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1. Thus Katow, who rejects the notion of sainthood, thus seeming to depart from the absolute scale of values searched for by Duhamel's Salavin, a search which looks forward to that undertaken by Camus' Tarrou, embraces a concept which is nevertheless itself an absolute, as the religious imagery which is used to describe it indicates.



in La Condition humaine is centred upon the conflict between the revolutionaries of Shanghai and the Communist bureaucracy in Hangkow, and the decision of the revolutionaries to refuse to lay down their arms and to continue to fight on in vain. It is a problem which explains in part Kyo's celebrated comment on Marx:

"il y a dans le marxisme le sens d'une fatalité, et l'exaltation d'une volonté. Chaque fois que la fatalité passe avant la volonté, je me méfie" (1).

The assimilation of the individual into the collective act may well achieve that limitation of the personal project refused by the Adventurer, and without which no ethical system can exist, but, in Malraux's treatment of political action, it does not achieve its extinction. And a political system, by its very nature, depends upon subordination as much as does an ethical system. Moreover, a political system works often within a sphere of relative, practical values, sometimes far removed from absolutes. Yet, for Katow and for Kyo, the values of fraternity and dignity are absolutes, with strong metaphysical significance, and at their heart is the protective power of the will. How, then, can Katow and Kyo surrender these absolute commitments to the temporary manoeuvrings of the Comintern? To do so would be to deny their whole being. And so, at the very moment of closest assimilation, when the collective, for its own justification, demands the surrender of even its members' will to absolute values, the will reasserts itself against those who attempt to stifle it, and Kyo and Katow march resolutely towards death, but a death which is profoundly their own.

At the very moment, therefore, when Malraux begins his evolution towards total acceptance of the value of a collective historical enterprise, there is an ambiguity. The Adventurer, the Superman, is rejected, and fades away with the failure of Ferral, but the will itself remains as the obsessive defender of an absolute moral value in a situation which must deal necessarily with temporary political facts.

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1. La Condition humaine, p.114.

Indeed, the very means by which Malraux describes the confrontation between Kyo and Vologuine contain an implied value-judgement, or rather, the idea that the values represented by the two protagonists are in completely different categories. Between Vologuine's "mains ecclésiastiques" (1), and Katow's "frères dans l'ordre mendiant de la révolution" (2), there is a gap which is not merely that of a political function. Vologuine is the representative of a political organisation which treats a situation on purely political terms; the revolutionaries of Shanghai, on the other hand, risk the interpretation that, like Garine before them, they are dealing with a political situation on the basis of considerations which are personal, and not exclusively political. It is a point made by two critics of Malraux's novel who occupy opposing positions in the political spectrum: Robert Brasillach and Ilya Ehrenburg.

Brasillach's analysis of the novel is hostile and concentrates upon an unhealthy taste for heroism, which the author discerns in Malraux. He points out:

"Il ne cherche pas dans la révolution une doctrine économique et sociale: il y cherche une action et une nouvelle image de l'homme"(3).

And, for Brasillach, such a search can lead only to a selfish involvement on the part of the heroes. He writes:

"Croit-on que ces hommes désirent vraiment sauver un peuple de l'oppression, un peuple ou une classe? Ils s'en moquent, à vrai dire, et la charité, même déformée, leur a toujours été étrangère. Ils travaillent pour eux seuls, non pas gratuitement, comme on l'a pu croire, mais la révolution ne leur est qu'un moyen d'affermir leur âme, de l'aiguiser, de l'éprouver" (4),

and he concludes, revealingly: "Ils sont des artistes" (5).

Curiously, Ehrenburg makes almost exactly the same points. His doubts about the novel concern the way in which the historical, political action is

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1. La Condition humaine, p.116.

2. Ibid, p.244.

3. Robert Brasillach, Portraits, Paris, Plon, 1935, p.219.

4. Robert Brasillach, Portraits, p.220.

5. Ibid, p.220.

relegated to the role of a backcloth for the tormented heroes, in whom Ehrenburg has little confidence:

"Isolés du monde dans lequel ils vivent, ces héros nous apparaissent comme des romantiques exaltés" (1).

The historical action, therefore, becomes devalued. He writes:

"La Révolution qu'a vécu un grand pays devient l'histoire d'un groupe de conspirateurs" (2).

And, finally, Ehrenburg reaches the same conclusion as Brasillach:

"Des milliers d'hommes se sont battus pour arracher leur droit élémentaire à la condition humaine. Cette lutte a inspiré Malraux, mais il a écrit un livre, non sur la lutte elle-même, mais sur l'état de sa propre inspiration" (3).

Similarly, his analysis sees the same aesthetic preoccupations as seen by Brasillach: for him Malraux is torn between commitment to the people, represented by the Revolution, or to art, as represented by Gisors. Whilst recognising the danger which faces Malraux, Ehrenburg recalls his presence at anti-colonial meetings, and can predict: "André Malraux ne fera pas route avec les Gisors" (4).

These criticisms indicate an important tension in Malraux's novel. The references by both writers to aesthetic concerns reflects an obsession with the absolute on Malraux's part which does not accompany easily treatment of a political subject. Certainly, he can claim, as he did in a newsreel interview after the award of the Prix Goncourt, that he wrote La Condition humaine for the massacred revolutionaries of China, but equally he has written the novel for himself, as an expression, through his characters, of a vision of life which is not essentially political. To emphasise the latter aspect to the detriment of the former, as do Ehrenburg and Brasillach, is inadequate and unjust: the novel expresses two visions of the world, the metaphysical and the

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1. Ilya Ehrenburg, "La Condition humaine vu par un écrivain d'URSS", Duhamel, Gide, Malraux, Mauriac, Morand, Romains, Unamuno, vus par un écrivain d'URSS, Paris, Gallimard, 1934, p.194.
  2. Ibid, p.194.
  3. Ibid, p.197.
  4. Ibid, p.202.

political. But, in the end, these two aspects are not complementary. The subjective will has not yet become substantial and universal: it has not yet entered the State.

That Malraux was aware of this dichotomy is confirmed by the Preface to Le Temps du mépris. The conclusion to this preface is a series of carefully constructed juxtapositions between the individual, on the one hand, and the collective unit on the other: juxtapositions which maintain the value of both quantities. Thus, he writes:

"L'individu s'oppose à la collectivité, mais il s'en nourrit. Et l'important est bien moins de savoir à quoi il s'oppose que ce dont il se nourrit" (1),

and:

"Il est difficile d'être un homme. Mais pas plus de le devenir en approfondissant sa communion qu'en cultivant sa différence..." (2).

These statements, and others, are a conclusion arising from a re-statement of the inadequacy of the "individualisme informulé" (3) of the nineteenth century. Yet they indicate, not a desire to abolish the individual, so much as an attempt to reduce his primacy, to see him in terms of equality with the collective unit. However, by refusing the individual's disappearance, Malraux maintains a tension in his work which defies resolution on political terms. The recognition of the individual's opposition to the collective unit is followed, not by a condemnation, but by a change of emphasis in research. The Preface, therefore, seems to justify that continuing tension between the individual and collective action exemplified by Kyo and Katow.

Nor does the novel itself progress greatly towards full integration into political action. Indeed, for a novel generally held to represent Malraux's highest, least ambiguous commitment to Communism, it contains remarkably little politics. In spite of Kassner's position in the German Communist hierarchy, his revolutionary past and his imprisonment by the Nazis, the novel as a whole represents a return to the elemental world of La Voie Royale, and in this context

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1. Le Temps du mépris, Geneva, Skira, 1945, p.12.

2. Ibid, p.13.

3. Ibid, p.12.

the inherent prison imagery of Malraux's novels becomes explicit. It is, therefore, not quite accurate to describe the novel, as does Goldmann, as one which is "non-problématique". By transposing a concrete political situation into an elemental world, Malraux creates a simple universe where the forces against man are clear and where his necessary response is equally so. Yet that very act of transposition is in itself problematical, and would lay the novel open to charges similar to those levelled at La Condition humaine by Ehrenburg.

That this problem exists is to some extent confirmed by Malraux in his preface. He is at pains to emphasise the eternal nature of the tragedy being evoked:

"Le monde d'une oeuvre comme celle-ci, le monde de la tragédie, est toujours le monde antique; l'homme la foule, les éléments, la femme, le destin. Il se réduit à deux personnages, le héros, et son sens de la vie" (1).

Thus, the tragedy tends explicitly to emphasise the concept of "Man's Fate" to the submergence of the concrete political situation. In such a tragedy, it is no surprise that Malraux should use once again to characterise the fate of man the symbol of the prison. And here again, in the preface, Malraux's comments are revealing. He begins with a discussion of the German concentration-camps, and adds:

"Je ne définis pas le parti national-socialiste allemand par les camps; ce que nous savons des bagnes français n'est pas très encourageant" (2).

Yet, he concludes: "mais c'est des camps de concentration qu'il s'agit ici" (3).

In other words, in terms of the novel, it is precisely and exclusively by the prison-experience that German National Socialism is defined, which, in the treatment accorded it by Malraux, leads to a specific political phenomenon

1. Le Temps du mépris, p.11.

2. Ibid, p.11.

3. Ibid, p.11.

being described in general metaphysical terms (1).

Similarly, the German Communist Party is described in the novel, not in political terms, but in moral and metaphysical ones. Of its social policy, little or no mention is made. Its value is contained in two roles: its resistance to fascism, and its source of comfort to Kassner as a group symbolising the concept of "fraternité virile". Of the complexity within the German Party, attested to by Koestler in his contribution to The God that failed, there is no discussion at all. Here, the epic and tragic considerations of Malraux the novelist dominate the concerns of the political commentator.

The fundamentally non-political essence of the novel becomes clear with an examination of Kassner himself. In the preface, Malraux writes:

"Si j'avais dû donner à des nazis l'importance que je donne à Kassner, je l'aurais fait évidemment en fonction de leur passion réelle, le nationalisme" (2).

Yet, if the dominating passion of the Nazis is nationalism, the passion which justifies Kassner is not a political opposite, Communism; rather, it is constructed from the metaphysical value of the will and the ethical value of "fraternité virile". This is made clear in the initial description of Kassner and the narration of his past career. Malraux refers to his "long visage de cheval aux mâchoires serrées" (3), thus using an emphasis on the jaws to denote will-power (4). In addition, with his "tête de pur-sang ravagé, vaguement romantique" (5), he is characterised as an almost Byronic figure.

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1. It is perhaps this factor, above all others, which has prompted critics such as Cecil Jenkins ("André Malraux", in The Novelist as Philosopher, p.67) to complain at the ineffectual nature of Malraux's evocation of the prison-experience. Certainly, as compared with Fucik's Notes from the Gallows, mentioned by Jenkins, Victor Serge's Men in Prison, Koestler's Darkness at Noon, or the work of Solzhenitsyn, the novel is a poor evocation of prison life.
  2. Le Temps du mépris, p.11.
  3. Ibid. p.19.
  4. The same emphasis is used by Martin du Gard in his evocation of one of the main characteristics of the Thibault family.
  5. Le Temps du mépris, p.19.

Furthermore, Kassner assumes a larger-than-life, epic quality, by the way in which Malraux records his legendary nature: when the S.A. guards lift their heads at the mention of his name, Malraux writes:

"C'était la première fois que Kassner recontrait sa légende sur des visages d'ennemis" (1).

The career which has given rise to the legend is recounted succinctly:

"Fils de mineur; boursier de l'université, organisateur de l'un des théâtres prolétariens; prisonnier des Russes, passé aux partisans puis à l'armée rouge; délégué en Chine et en Mongolie; écrivain, rentré en Allemagne en 1932 pour préparer les grèves de la Ruhr contre le décret Papen, organisateur du service illégal d'information, ancien vice-président du Secours Rouge..." (2).

This short description of Kassner's past is constructed from several quite separate aspects. The reference to his father's profession as a miner serves not only to emphasise Kassner's proletarian origins, but constitutes another allusion to the will. Bachelard, in La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté, indicates the symbolic value of the struggle against the earth itself:

"Le monde résistant promeut le sujet dans le règne de l'existence dynamique, dans l'existence par le désir actif, d'où un existentialisme de la force" (3).

In addition, Kassner's artistic and intellectual career is heavily emphasised: his scholarship at the university, his work in the theatre, and, finally, his importance as a writer, an importance made clear by Malraux's later comment:

"tous ceux de la défaite aimaient en lui, à la fois, le compagnon (sa fonction était importante, mais non capitale), et le chroniqueur futur de leurs jours accablés" (4).

He is truly, in H. Stuart Hughes' terms, an "artist adventurer" (5), a participant in the revolution, but present also to give it form through art.

1. Ibid, p.20.

2. Le Temps du mépris, p.21.

3. Gaston Bachelard, La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté, p.39.

4. Le Temps du mépris, p.22.

5. H. Stuart Hughes, The Obstructed Path, New York, Harper and Rowe, Harper Torchback, 1969, p.37.

For Kassner has been an adventurer: his experience with the Russian partisans and the Red Army, and his work in China and Mongolia, place him in much the same category as Garine and, more clearly, Borodine. That his revolutionary action has been, until the fascist threat of 1932, outside his own country, fits him into the well-established pattern of Malraux's heroes who work out their destiny in a far-off country. It is significant that his role in the Party hierarchy dates only from his return to Germany in 1932: his short-lived period as an organiser is shattered by a return to the elemental, in terms of the prison. It is thus as a man of will, an artist and an adventurer, that Kassner is initially defined. The truly political nature of his career is shown to be of recent existence and to be temporary.

And it is as such that Kassner confronts the experience of solitary confinement and torture. He confronts it with his will; when that fails, with that collective will to dignity which constitutes "fraternité virile"; and with his past.

The description of the prison experience enables Malraux to use once again his familiar typology of destiny (1). The very darkness of the cell signifies its evil; its silence is opposed to the measured tapping on the wall; the dehumanisation of the prisoners brings with it a recurrence in the use of insect-imagery:

"Il (Kassner) était collé au mur. "Comme un mille-pattes", pensa-t-il" (2).

In this elemental world of darkness, silence and dehumanisation, Kassner is obliged to struggle for his own humanity. To do so, he uses initially, and almost automatically, the will which has served him in Russia and China. His

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1. In Malraux's use of the prison as an image to express the Pascalian constriction of the human condition, he looks forward to a recurrent image in the work of Camus, a similarity analysed by Geoffrey Hartmann, in "Camus and Malraux: the Common Ground" Yale French Studies, 25, 1964, pp. 104-110, and by Roy J. Nelson, in "Malraux and Camus: The Myth of the Beleaguered City", Kentucky Foreign Language Quarterly, 13, 1966, pp.86-94.
  2. Le Temps du mépris, p.36.



reflection before being tortured:

"S'ils me torturaient pour me faire donner des renseignements que je ne possède pas, je n'y pourrais rien. Supposons donc que je ne les possède pas" (1),

recalls Katow's reflection before execution: "Allons! Supposons que je sois mort dans une incendie" (2). Yet, from the moment of torture onwards, Kassner becomes aware that the struggle is not as simple as he had envisaged. Malraux writes: "La faiblesse de la douleur l'étonna..." (3), and it becomes clear that Kassner's situation does not entail the rigorous confrontation with a tangible object, but something which the will, unaided and solitary, can hardly encompass. The enemies of Kassner are not the insects and the rotting vegetation of La Voie Royale, but the disintegration of the consciousness upon which the will depends. As Malraux writes of Kassner:

"Son courage, comme tout courage, était beaucoup plus efficace contre le danger que contre l'angoisse" (4),

and that anguish entails an approach of madness. Thus, the work of the will is not to struggle with the situation, but to maintain its own consciousness, its own order:

"Une chasse vertigineuse lançait son esprit vers les images qui maintenaient sa vie. Il fallait organiser cette chasse, la transformer en volonté" (5).

Yet that will alone is not enough to overcome the disintegrating effect of the solitary darkness. Malraux writes, of Kassner:

"Sa force, devenue parasite, le rongait opiniâtement. Il était un animal d'action, et les ténèbres le désintoxiquaient de la volonté" (6).

Kassner's salvation comes from his latent faith in "fraternité virile", reinforced by the slogans on the wall of his cell, and the tapped message of a fellow-prisoner, and finally by the lyrical evocation of the fraternity of combattants against fascism.

1. Ibid, p.24.
2. La Condition humaine, p.252.
3. Le Temps du mépris, p.27.
4. Ibid, p.32.
5. Le Temps du mépris, p.39.
6. Ibid, p.29.

If Le Temps du mépris is interesting because it provides a clear postscript to the previous accounts of the solitary will, it nevertheless presents a solution which is ethical, rather than political in essence. The novel is about a man trying to rise above his prison experience. This he does by his realisation, reaffirmed, that his struggle is not a solitary one, and also by extensions from his specific state. For a prison-novel, it is remarkable to what extent Le Temps du mépris deals with events outside the prison, either in the form of evocations of the life of Kassner's wife, Anna, or, more frequently, of events from Kassner's past. At points, the novel is a series of flash-backs: to the death of the Orthodox popes, during the Russian Civil War, to the prayers of the

"chameliers tartares prosternés dans la poussière du Gobi parmi l'odeur des jasmins desséchés, leurs hymnes soudain coupés par la psalmodie nocturne;.... et si cette nuit est une nuit du destin - Bénédiction sur elle jusqu'à l'apparition de l'aurore..." (1).

And the culminating point of the novel, the escape by aeroplane to Prague, expresses in concrete terms the final ability of Kassner to rise above his imprisonment. The lack of political content in the work is symbolised by the fact that the flight scene is a transposition of Malraux's terrifying return from the city of the Queen of Sheba - a situation which, for all its elemental qualities and its crystallisation of the notion of the "retour sur terre", was completely outside of a political context. (2).

Le Temps du mépris represents the highest commitment, in Malraux's work, to Communism. Yet this commitment is only possible when Malraux suspends his

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1. Ibid, pp.34-35. Such descriptions recapture the atmosphere of the "fantaisiste" stories, particularly that of the Voyage aux îles fortunées. In the same way that these early works represent an aesthetically inauthentic response to the problems of the human condition, so the stylised set-pieces in Le Temps du mépris constitute an escape from the complexities of a concrete political situation, and indicate the primacy of an aesthetic concern.
  2. See: André Malraux, Antimémoires, p.98.

discussion of Marxism and Soviet Communism, begun in Les Conquérants, and continued in La Condition humaine, and to be dealt with most fully in L'Espoir, and substitutes for it the barest, most elemental situation in which, in the battle between good and evil, the Communists and anti-fascists everywhere become synonymous with the good (1). The will in this novel makes a formidable resurgence, but does not conflict with political complexity only because that complexity is removed.

It is in L'Espoir that Malraux expresses his greatest attempt towards the integration of the man of will into a common cause. In Le Temps du mépris, the concept of "fraternité", for all its force, remains curiously abstract: the objects of this concept are rarely glimpsed. They exist like the unnamed and unknowable prisoner tapping messages of solidarity on the wall of Kassner's cell, like the heroes of anti-fascism evoked in the speeches of the great public meeting in Prague. In L'Espoir, "fraternité" becomes concrete and democratised. Instead of being shadow-figures, and all the more impressive for that, the men in whom "fraternité" is consecrated are tangible characters: "le père Barka"; the countrymen who line up their ramshackle vans to serve as markers for Magnin's aircraft; the peasant who guides Magnin to the enemy airfield; the villagers with their silently raised clenched fists who watch the procession of the cortège down the mountainside.

Accompanying the concretisation and democratisation of the concept of fraternity, and inextricably linked to it, is the fact that in L'Espoir the situation, as situation, counts for more than in Malraux's previous novels. This is not to deny that the novel is susceptible of symbolic interpretation, and intended as such, but it is less open to charges of the sort brought by Brasillach and Ehrenburg against La Condition humaine. As Malraux pointed out in an early essay, "André Malraux et l'orient", the importance of the East for

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1. It is, of course, significant, that the only role of the Communist Party seen in Le Temps du mépris is its anti-fascist role.

Western man lay in the fact that it illuminated aspects of that man's condition. The essay, indeed, contains a strongly-implied refusal to see any non-European situation in anything other than European terms. Thus, Les Conquerants and La Condition humaine, for all their evocation of the drama of the Chinese revolution, are, finally, meditations upon certain Western philosophical problems. Yet, with the shift of the revolutionary sphere of action from the East to the West, the contradiction becomes already less marked; and, with the overriding need to combat the rise of fascism in Europe, the issues become more concrete. Instead of using a situation to illuminate certain Western philosophical problems, Malraux finds a situation in Europe which is ready-made and inescapable. The fact that Malraux himself fought in Spain, whereas he had no first-hand experience of German concentration camps, serves to explain the difference between the highly abstract Le Temps du mépris and the more concrete L'Espoir. Kassner is a revolutionary, but he is also, perhaps predominantly, an adventurer, an artist, the bearer of a mythical past. It is difficult to decide whether he comes to Communism because of his thirst for fraternity or vice versa. Yet Magnin comes to Spain with a concrete aim: to combat Franco, and Manuel becomes a lonely commander because that is what the situation demands and the situation is worthy on its own merits. To deny the abstract quality of the novel would be foolish and unrewarding, but it is important to emphasise the fact that here the abstract no longer has primacy over the particular situation, but, rather, rises from it.

The field of action itself, therefore, the Spanish Civil War, and Malraux's personal involvement in it, would seem to facilitate the integration of the will into a collective enterprise. But, for reasons concerning both the political situation itself, and a continuing view of the novel by Malraux, that integration proves more difficult than it appears.

The difficulty arises in one of the major threads of the work, the long

"Bildungsroman" of Manuel, his evolution from the frivolity of the young cinema technician with the weekend car to the seriousness of the battle-tested commander. It is an experience of initiation. As Manuel himself admits: "Je crois qu'une autre vie a commencé pour moi avec le combat" (1). Yet that initiation is not merely, or even mainly, concerned with the practise of realistic politics: that role in the novel is left to Garcia, Pradas and Vargas. Rather it is an initiation into the problems of command, the position of the "chef", of, precisely, the man of will. It is for this reason that the initiator is Ximinès, the professional soldier and, essentially, a non-political character (2).

The nature of Manuel's role is indicated in the remark by the colonel:

"Il y a plus de noblesse à être un chef qu'à être un individu, reprit le colonel: c'est plus difficile" (3).

It underlines the division between the individual and the leader, a dichotomy similar to Hegel's or Nietzsche's Master-Slave distinction, and a division which shows that the leader can attain the heights of nobility forbidden to the individual. And that nobility comes from the very difficulty of the task. With Manuel, Malraux returns to the mainstream of the will, by which distinction and value are to be gained only by a constant and repeated overcoming of obstacles.

Yet that return to the mainstream of the will serves to isolate Manuel from the democratic fraternity which is one of the book's major innovations. Already in Manuel there is a certain distrust of the static individual, with his static humane values. As he claims to the fascist deserter, Alba: "Je ne m'intéresse pas à ce que sont les gens, je m'intéresse à ce qu'ils font" (4). His fraternity is a fraternity of action: when a delegation of workers come to see him, Malraux comments:

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1. L'Espoir, p.487.
  2. This relationship provides a further example of Professor Frohock's indication of the "master-neophyte" theme in Malraux's novels.
  3. L'Espoir, p.173.
  4. Ibid, p.166.

"Pour la première fois, il était en face d'une fraternité qui prenait la forme de l'action" (1).

But Manuel's pursuit of nobility, which comes only through a constantly confronted difficulty, leads, as it has led Malraux's heroes in the past, to an inevitable isolation, crystallised in the episode of the execution of the deserters, where Malraux writes of Manuel:

"Jamais il n'avait ressenti à ce point qu'il fallait choisir entre la victoire et la pitié" (2),

and where Ximinès comments: "Vous voulez agir et ne rien perdre de la fraternité" (3). Once more, the action of the man of will, which is almost necessarily one of command, conflicts with the desire for assimilation (4).

In spite of the broader vision of Malraux's novel, its increased democratisation, it is nevertheless a book about an extreme situation, a situation which demands action and which places its participants in close proximity to death. The necessary response to that situation concerns the will, and tends to return the hero to a state of isolation. Thus Manuel, whilst fighting for collective values, becomes, paradoxically, a solitary figure. The desire for integration is defeated by the concrete measures necessary to defend that desire. However, although Manuel's role as leader cuts him off from his fellows and isolates him from the ethical life, it does not constitute a political contradiction. Manuel is well aware of the extent of his sacrifice and in what cause that sacrifice has been made. In the conversation with Ximinès on the execution of the deserters, Manuel exhibits a high degree of lucidity with regard to his actions. He reasons:

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1. Ibid, p.270.

2. L'Espoir, p.382.

3. Ibid, p.402.

4. A conflict present in Malraux's own experience of command (See Chapter 4).

"On ne peut commander que pour servir, sinon... Je prends sur moi ces exécutions: elles ont été faites pour sauver les autres, les nôtres. Seulement, écoutez; il n'est pas un des échelons que j'ai gravis dans le sens d'une efficacité plus grande, d'un commandement meilleur, qui ne m'écarte davantage des hommes" (1).

And this remark about command as a service must be read in conjunction with Manuel's celebrated statement:

"Un homme actif et pessimiste à la fois, c'est ou ce sera un fasciste, sauf s'il y a une fidélité derrière lui" (2).

Manuel's action will not lead him to fascism: the faith is there. But he illustrates a vital aspect of the participation of the man of will in politics: the will to command, even at the service of an ideal, or, more accurately, the will not to be commanded.

If Manuel rises to this lonely nobility by means of command, there is another group of men in L'Espoir who escape domination by acting autonomously - Magnin's air squadron. In spite of the incursions made into the squadron's authority by the Communist bureaucracy (3), it remains the most authentic expression of the heroic mode of life in the novel, contrasting with the purely political aspects.

There are certain obvious reasons for this. The air war is described by Malraux as "la guerre la plus romanesque" (4): it inherits the glamour of the aviators of the First World War (5). In addition, the pilot, alone in his machine, is a ready symbol of man in an heroic, purely metaphysical situation: a symbol used already by Malraux in Le Temps du mépris and which plays an important role in the evocation of the pilot by Saint-Exupéry. When the air

1. L'Espoir, p.402.

2. Ibid, p.167.

3. It is significant that the novel ends before the incorporation of the "España" squadron into the Communist-dominated Republican Airforce.

4. L'Espoir, p.473.

5. An aspect of the First World War described admirably by Joseph Kessel, in L'Equipage, Paris, Gallimard, 1924.

squadron in L'Espoir begin night-flights, Malraux writes: "Le destin avait pris la place du combat" (1), and he describes one particular flight, with Leclerc as pilot:

"Leclerc, la cape grise sur la tête, se sentait libre d'une liberté divine au-dessus du sommeil et de la guerre, au-dessus des douleurs et des passions" (2).

A further aspect of this squadron concerns the fact that, more than any other unit in L'Espoir, it conforms to a well-established heroic typology: the arrival of warriors from afar, come to save a place in danger. It is this which helps to give the squadron an almost archaic quality, reinforced by Malraux's description of Magnin:

"ses moustaches tombantes, d'un blond gris, lui donnaient sous le serre-tête un aspect de Viking étonné..." (3),

a description which places him in the heroic lineage of the grandfather of Claude Vannec.

Indeed, Magnin may be seen to illustrate the dual nature of the squadron. His mask of an archaic warrior is imposed upon a man with a strong political commitment as a Revolutionary Socialist. The squadron, similarly, is divided between the purely political volunteers, such as Scali, Jaime Alvear and Attignies, and the mercenaries, such as Leclerc, Sibirsky and Karlitch (4). The distinction between the two groups lies in the fact that whereas the political volunteers have come to remedy a specific situation, the mercenaries are pursuing a continuing style of life, in which flying and combat are linked, Leclerc, as he flies through the night, thinks back to his experience in the

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1. L'Espoir, p.215.

2. Ibid, p.215.

3. Ibid, p.58.

4. The distinction should not be too rigid. Leclerc terms himself as "un mercenaire de gauche" (p.287).



Great War and in China (1); Karlitch has been the commander of a Free Corps and has fought with Wrangel's White Russians (2). The distinction is summed up by Malraux as that between "les politiques" and les guerriers": the mercenaries "parlaient des volontaires en disant "les politiques", et d'eux en disant "les guerriers"" (3). The term "guerrier" is used here to convey the idea of an archetypal heroic figure, a man who lives by the will, different from those who fight for specific reasons or simply as employment. The same opposition is used in Roger Vercel's novel, Capitaine Conan, in a scene in which the hero suddenly produces an outburst at the career-officer, de Sève, who argues:

"Ecoute, mon vieux, c'est inutile de discuter. Nous ne pouvons pas nous entendre, et je vais t'expliquer d'un mot pourquoi: je suis militaire, et toi..."

- Moi, interrompit Conan subitement redressé, je suis peut-être ce qu'on appelle un guerrier!..." (4).

This "guerrier" has the characteristics of the man of will. Leclerc adds, after his claim to be a left-wing mercenary: "si je suis ici, c'est parce que je suis un dur" (5). The "guerrier" operates in a metaphysical sphere, without ethical considerations except those of the group, a sphere which defies political categories, but which is authoritarian in nature. Thus, when Scali is sent to interrogate the captured fascist aviator, he reflects:

"Il ne ressemblait pas à House, mais il était de la même famille" (6).

Similarly, Karlitch, whose previous experience has been exclusively on the Right, finds himself fighting for the Republican Left. It is for this reason that there is a strong antipathy amongst the political volunteers towards the "guerriers".

Malraux writes of Scali:

"Scali aimait les combattants, se méfiait des militaires et détestait les guerriers. Karlitch, c'était trop simple, mais les autres?... Et, chez Franco, il y en avait aussi des milliers comme ça" (7).

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1. L'Espoir, p.215, It is interesting to note the recurrence of China in the past of the man of will.
  2. Ibid, p.420.
  3. Ibid, p.284.
  4. Roger Vercel, Capitaine Conan, Paris, Livre de poche, pp.186-187.
  5. L'Espoir, p.287.
  6. L'Espoir, p.139.
  7. Ibid, p.422.

Thus, in L'Espoir, the will continues to live, in the character of Manuel, in the strange, mixed nobility of the air-squadron. As Scali states to Alvear: "L'ensemble de cette escadrille est plus noble que presque tous ceux qui la composent" (1). Yet even for the best of its members, the most committed of its political volunteers, the squadron has an archaic quality of heroism - the heroism of an order of chivalry. Leclerc, for all his bitterness, is accurate when he tells Jaime Alvear: "t'es un chevalier de l'Internationale" (2).

And this archaism is necessary and intended - the man of will fights not only in a specific situation but also in a metaphysical dimension removed from time and which challenges the present. Thus it is that in L'Espoir there is constant reference to the eternal nature of the field of combat and the combat itself. As the victorious Republican army pushes forward after Guadalajara, the former guide of the Palais de Guadalajara looks on and remarks to Manuel:

"Des pierres... Des vieilles pierres... C'est tout. Encore, si vous allez plus bas, vous aurez des choses qui valent la peine, des choses du temps des Romains! Plus de trente ans avant Jesus-Christ! Je dis: avant. Ça, c'est quelque chose. Sagunte, c'est grand. Ou parlez-moi des quartiers neufs de Barcelone. Mais les monuments? Comme la guerre: des pierres..." (3).

This reflection recalls the remark of Scali who, as he interrogates the fascist pilot, looks at the pile of clocks in the room:

"Ces pendules - remontées pour combien de temps? - donnaient à Scali une telle impression d'indifférence et d'éternité" (4).

And this idea is pursued in a scene when Manuel watches his soldiers at dusk:

"Le soir tombant donnait une vanité infinie à l'éternel effort des hommes qu'enveloppaient peu à peu l'ombre et l'indifférence de la terre" (5).

In this atmosphere of eternity and an indifferent earth, the struggle is

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1. Ibid, p.319.
  2. Ibid, p.292.
  3. Ibid, p.490.
  4. L'Espoir, p.143.
  5. Ibid, p.172.

profoundly elemental. As the strange guide to the Palace of Guadalajara says:

"Le principal ennemi de l'homme, messieurs, c'est la forêt...  
Si l'homme cessait de lutter, en moins de soixante ans la  
forêt recouvrirait l'Europe" (1).

And within the elemental context of the novel, there is no coincidence in the fact that a recurrent battle in the novel is that against fire: from the heroic capture of the flame-thrower by Le Négus (2), to the destruction of the besieged Madrid by fire-bombs (3), to the heroic battle against the flames by Mercery (4).

And the final victory against the eternal lies in the eternal itself, in the stone of the mountain which Magnin climbs to rescue his wounded comrades, in the works of art which continue their existence on into the future, in the very fundamental nature of man. Alvear says to Scali:

"Eh! Vous êtes tous fascinés par ce qu'il y a de fondamental  
en l'homme...  
L'âge du fondamental recommence, monsieur Scali..." (5).

In L'Espoir, as in Le Temps du mépris, underneath the surface integration of the hero into collective action, there exists a strong residue of the will, and its eternal metaphysical context, which does not completely accord with political activity.

The Spanish Civil War, and Malraux's use of it as material for L'Espoir, is worthy of further analysis insofar as it represents, on Malraux's part, the highest degree of commitment to concrete political activity, and for the light it sheds on the difficulty of the integration of the man of will into collective political action. For, within the study of the concept of will, L'Espoir is significant, not merely for the intellectual positions and conflicts which Malraux chooses to depict, but for those aspects of the war which find little or no presentation and analysis in the novel. L'Espoir represents an attempt on the part of Malraux to create an epic work, an attempt which necessitates

1. Ibid, p.494.

2. Ibid, p.132. Malraux writes of this scene: "La guerre n'avait rien à voir dans ce combat des hommes contre un élément".

3. See Ibid, p.345.

4. Ibid, p.463.

5. Ibid, p.319. A statement which, as Professor Frohock indicates, looks forward to Les Noyers de l'Altenburg.

inevitably a reduction of the complexity of the situation to certain well-defined limits. The novel therefore is structured upon two interlinking plots: the "Bildungsroman" of Manuel, and the heroic struggle of Magnin's air-squadron. Both threads, however, and the numerous ancillary situations which go to build up the vast canvas of Spain at war, are unified and dominated by the simple struggle of the united Spanish people against the fascist insurgents and their allies. In other words, the novel is a war-novel and its major intellectual preoccupations are concerned with the problem of efficiency in waging war.

As Noam Chomsky points out, this view of the war, which has obtained almost universal acceptance, is already partisan. In an illuminating essay in American Power and the New Mandarins (1), he analyses one of the most respected representatives of this commonly-held theory, Gabriel Jackson's The Spanish Republic and the Civil War: 1931-1939 (2). Whilst praising the work as an outstanding contribution to liberal scholarship on the subject, Chomsky is careful to point out that the study, which at first seems entirely objective, is in fact constructed so as to minimise the importance of one crucial factor in the Civil War - the vast popular revolution which occurred behind the Republican lines in the years 1936 and 1937. He writes:

"During the months following the Franco insurrection in July 1936 a social revolution of unprecedented scope took place throughout much of Spain. It had no "revolutionary vanguard" and appears to have been largely spontaneous, involving masses of rural and urban labourers in a radical transformation of social and economic conditions that persisted, with remarkable success, until it was crushed by force" (3).

For Jackson, this popular revolution, operated by non-Stalinist marxists or by anarchists, is either a side-show, of minimal significance compared to the opposition to Franco, or, more important, a dangerous force, threatening to

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1. Noam Chomsky, American Power and the New Mandarins, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1969.
  2. Gabriel Jackson, The Spanish Republic and the Civil War: 1931-1939, Princeton, New Jersey, 1965.
  3. Noam Chomsky, American Power and the New Mandarins, p.65.

undermine the Republic's war-effort. For Chomsky, on the other hand, and for his sources (1), this revolution, far from being a dangerous diversion, is the very motive force of the Republic's struggle, and the final defeat of the Republic finds its cause not in the inefficiency of the Spanish workers, but in the failure of the government and the dominant Spanish Communist Party (PSUC) to give the revolutionary potential of the rural and urban masses full rein.

It is in this context that must be seen the central political debate of war-time republican Spain, that between the partisans of a strongly-centralised government and military command, and between those who saw in spontaneous action the only means of winning the war. The former, including the Spanish Government and the Spanish Communist Party, argues that only a strongly controlled, disciplined force could resist Franco's professional army. Their efforts were directed therefore towards limiting the revolution by suppression of land collectivisation and by the reintroduction of a professional technical army in place of the revolutionary militia. If the notion of revolution was accepted at all, it was in a subordinate position to the war. Thus, Largo Caballero could proclaim to the reporter of the Daily Express: "D'abord, gagner la guerre, et après nous pourrons parler de révolution" (2), a sentiment echoed by the Spanish Communist, José Díaz:

"Nous ne pourrons faire la révolution si nous ne gagnons pas la guerre.... Ce qu'il faut, c'est d'abord gagner la guerre" (3).

The aim, therefore, is victory over Franco, and the revolution is seen as incompatible with that aim.

The non-Stalinist left, however, and the anarchists refuse to accept that incompatibility. For them, far from being diversionary or divisive, the

1. He uses particularly Pierre Broué and Emile Thémime, La Révolution et la guerre d'Espagne, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1961.
2. Quoted by Broué et Thémime, La Révolution et la guerre d'Espagne, p.188.
3. Ibid, p.210.

revolution is central to the Republic's power to wage war. Thus, Broué and Thémime sum up the position of the POUM and the JCI:

"La guerre et la révolution sont deux aspects qu'on ne peut séparer. En aucun cas, nous ne pourrions tolérer que la révolution soit ajournée à la fin du conflit militaire" (1),

and they quote the Italian marxist Berneri:

"Le seul dilemme est celui-ci: ou la victoire sur Franco grâce à la guerre révolutionnaire, ou la défaite" (2).

Finally, the conflict between the PSUC and the POUM is admirably summed up by George Orwell. Of the "PSUC line", he writes:

"At present nothing matters except winning the war; without victory in the war all else is meaningless. Therefore this is not the moment to talk of pressing forward with the revolution" (3),

and of the "POUM line":

"It is nonsense to talk of opposing Fascism by bourgeois "democracy"... The only real alternative to Fascism is workers' control. If you set up any less goal than this, you will either hand the victory to Franco, or, at best, let in Fascism by the back door... The war and the revolution are inseparable" (4).

The conflict is therefore between two diametrically opposed policies. The "centralisers" can conceive of opposition to Franco only on Franco's terms, those of a highly-organised, highly-trained technical army. They see the élan of the masses as inadequate to the task and as a danger to the enterprise. The aim of the government, therefore, becomes that of disciplining, forming and directing that élan. The Left-wing opposition and the anarchists, however, continue to maintain that it is in that very undisciplined nature of the masses' fervour that the strength of the Republic lies, and that attempts to restrain it will be disastrous for the republican cause.

There is without doubt evidence to show that this was, in part, the case. So great was the fear of the government of the notion of revolution, that it

1. Ibid, p.253.

2. Ibid, p.254.

3. George Orwell, Hommage to Catalonia, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1962, pp.58-59.

4. Ibid, p.60.

conducted a battle on two fronts: against Franco and against the left-wing opposition. As Orwell remarked, after his experience of Barcelona:

"A government which sends boys of fifteen to the front with rifles forty years old and keeps its biggest men and its newest weapons in the rear is manifestly more afraid of the revolution than of the fascists" (1).

Similarly, the absorption of the irregular militias into a regular army, with uniforms, pay and military discipline, seems to have produced, not the hoped-for increase in efficiency, but a general disillusionment, exemplified by the Italian, Bertoni:

"La guerre d'Espagne, dépouillée de toute foi nouvelle, de toute idée de transformation sociale, de toute grandeur révolutionnaire... reste une terrible question de vie ou de mort, mais n'est plus une guerre d'affirmation d'un nouveau régime et d'une nouvelle humanité" (2).

In spite of the fact, however, that this vast revolution - its rise and its decline into despondency - is a well-attested fact, it is apparent that, in L'Espoir, Malraux has chosen not to depict that revolution in any great depth. The role of the POUM is not mentioned, not even in those sections dealing with Barcelona, where the party was a powerful force. The popular revolution is seen as the prerogative of the anarchists, and is treated in the highly critical way mentioned by Chomsky. The novel becomes the story of Garcia, Vargas, Manuel and others to curb the excesses of the anarchists and weld the Spanish people into an efficient fighting-unit. The positive potential of the revolution, the arguments of Berneri and the POUM that only with a simultaneous revolution could the republic defeat Franco, are ignored.

Yet, even though the ideological conflict is reduced to that between Communists and anarchists, the latter are hardly analysed more than superficially. Malraux's interest in them seems restricted to an admiration for them as picturesque fighters. His description of Puig, and, particularly, of Le Négus, is similar in tone to Brasillach's evocation of the death of Durutti in November 1936.

1. George Orwell, Controversy, August 1937. Quoted by Chomsky, p.85.  
2. Quoted in Broué et Thémime, p.216.

"cette brute superbe couchée sur de la soie blanche, la tête enturbannée de blanc" (1).

Nevertheless, however impressive the image of the anarchist warriors, they constitute an undisciplined and unreliable element in the republican ranks which proves inadequate to the technological nature of modern warfare. Thus, the growing disillusionment of Le Négus is shown by Malraux to be, more than the product of the destruction of the revolution, the result of a failure to grasp what Jackson terms: "the unsuspected complexity of modern society" (2).

The manner in which the novel dismisses the notion of a popular revolution in favour of a highly-controlled, technological war, is indicated revealingly in the conversation between Garcia, Vargas and Magnin in the Ministry of War. It is this debate which leads up to the sad conclusion by Garcia: "Notre modeste fonction, Monsieur Magnin, c'est d'organiser l'Apocalypse" (3), and the whole debate centres upon the conflict between the emotional demands of the apocalyptic movement and the need for organisation, a conflict introduced at the very beginning of the debate, with the republican songs entering the War Ministry. For the song, "toute la rumeur d'espoir" (4), symbolises that emotionally-satisfying, lyrical force in the republican movement which will finally be sacrificed to the demands of efficiency.

It is to Magnin - significantly a Revolutionary Socialist, hence nearer to the POUM - that the role of defender of this lyricism is given, whilst Garcia and Vargas emphasise the need for control over it. The importance of this debate, however, lies in the fact that, in Malraux's construction of it, the

1. Robert Brasillach, Histoire de la guerre d'Espagne, Paris, Plon, 1969, p.216.

2. Gabriel Jackson, The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, pp.313-314. For Chomsky's comments on this statement, see American Power and the New Mandarins, p.74.

It is significant in this context that Malraux chooses to describe those characters who have difficulty in accepting the realistic policies of the Communists in anachronistic terms.

3. L'Espoir, p.120.

4. L'Espoir, p.115.



result is inevitable. Garcia and Vargas have the reluctant role of explaining and analysing an unpleasant but, on Malraux's terms, incontrovertable fact, summed up by the statement:

"une action populaire, comme celle-ci, - ou une révolution - ou même une insurrection - ne maintient sa victoire que par une technique opposée aux moyens qui la lui ont donnée" (1).

Thus, it is to Garcia and Vargas that the bulk of the dialogue is given; Magnin is, for the most part, reduced to short, often unfinished interventions attempting to defend the popular, emotional element in the revolution - interventions which serve merely to allow Garcia to indicate the untenable nature of Magnin's position.

This crucial scene, therefore, is so structured as to show the invalidity of the theory of popular revolution in the Spanish Civil War, and to argue in favour of the "centralising" approach. This is supported by historical arguments used by Garcia and Vargas in the course of the debate. To emphasise the need for the forming of an army and the abolition of the militias, Vargas states:

"Les Wrangel ont été battus par l'armée rouge, et pas par les partisans..." (2).

Similarly, Garcia denigrates the notion of the "Peuple", as used in the context of the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution, pointing out that as a concept it is inadequate to dealing with a twentieth-century situation (3). Finally, although Garcia analyses the Spanish situation in terms of two successive coups d'état: the original pronunciamiento of Franco, which failed, and then the aid of the fascist powers, no mention is made whatsoever of the revolution on the republican side (4).

It seems clear, therefore, that Malraux has chosen to depict the Spanish Civil War as a struggle against Franco and the fascist powers, a struggle which

1. Ibid, p.119.
2. Ibid, p.117.
3. See Ibid, p.116.
4. See Ibid, p.118.

necessitated the suppression of the popular revolutionary forces in Spain and their replacement by a technical, disciplined army. That Garcia, the main proponent of the theory in the novel, should only accept the conclusion with some regret adds pathos and dignity to his situation, but does not alter the point of view which he expresses.

For if political integration for Malraux's heroes is impossible, it is possible only in an egalitarian, popular movement, a movement of the sort that the POUM and the anarchists were building in Spain. The refusal to describe that movement, and the careful rejection of its premises would seem to be attributable to what Chomsky terms an "elitist bias" (1), and which is the continuing characteristic of the man of will. It is not, therefore, merely the epic structure of L'Espoir, its archaic heroic allusions, which reinforce the image of the man of will experiencing difficulty in integration into the historical process; the rejection of the popular revolution in favour of control and direction and order confirms the man of will in an isolated position of power. The function of Garcia is, after all, not so different from that of Garine.

Malraux's attitude to the popular elements in the Spanish Civil War raises problems as regards the integration of the man of will into any collective historical process, and, in order to complete an analysis of those problems, it is helpful to proceed from the Spanish Civil War to three areas of Malraux's involvement and interest: the Popular Front Movements of the 1930s; the main actors of the Bolshevik Revolution; and, finally, Marxist theory itself.

On the surface at least, Malraux's relations with the international Communist movement in the years 1933-1939 seem to offer few problems. He seems totally at one with the aims of the movement: a member of committees, the emissary to foreign heads of state, the welcome guest of Soviet Russia. Yet, in the same way that L'Espoir conceals a certain ambiguity in the relationship

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1. Noam Chomsky, American Power and the New Mandarins, p.82.

between the heroes and collective action, so Malraux's own involvement in the anti-fascist committees of the 1930's presents many of the same problems. His situation is summed up by David Caute:

"He cared greatly for human justice and dignity, he abhorred exploitation, but his socialism was skin deep" (1).

Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the anti-fascist organisations, set up as "Communist front organisations" by men such as Willi Münzenberger, were designed to appeal to as broad a group of democrats as possible. Hence, firm allegiance to the principles of orthodox Soviet Communism was considered unnecessary, and, in certain circumstances, dangerous. If the aim of the organisations was the unity of all democratic anti-fascist forces, then the very suspicion of Communist direction or influence was to be avoided. Indeed, Gustav Regler recalls that when, in his speech at the 1935 International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture, he roused his audience to sing the "Internationale", he was branded by the German Party as a "saboteur" for "breaking cover" (2). The result is that, whereas in different times certain incompatibilities between Malraux's outlook and orthodox Communism would have led to a split, in the 1930's they were able to be overlooked when set against the enormous propaganda-value of Malraux's adherence to the movement. As David Caute writes:

"Membership of the Party was not always considered necessary or desirable. Intellectuals like Rolland or Malraux were equally useful outside the Party..." (3).

And official Comintern policy, exemplified by Dimitrov's report to the Communist International's Seventh World Congress, in 1935, emphasises a willingness to bury differences in the light of the international struggle against fascism (4).

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1. David Caute, The Fellow Travellers, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973, p.180.
  2. Gustav Regler, The Owl of Minerva, London, 1959, pp.232-233.
  3. David Caute, Communism and the French Intellectuals: 1914-1960, London, André Deutsch, 1964, p.29.
  4. G. Dimitrov, The Working Class against Fascism, London, Martin Lawrence, 1935.

Nevertheless, beneath the surface harmony between Malraux and the Communists, there exist very real problems. Malraux, in his view of the world, differs radically from the orthodox Communist intellectual. As David Cate writes:

"He never really cared about plans, about social security benefits, about production statistics and easy-to-come-by abortions. The heirs of the Enlightenment did" (1),

and

"The proletarian cause was a giant whetstone on which his heroes (Gariné, Kyo, Katow, Garcia - himself) could sharpen their swords, and also the gravestone over which their bloody corpses would finally be thrown" (2).

And Gustav Regler recalls Malraux's ironic attitude to Gorki's orthodox speech at the Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 (3). It is plain therefore, that Malraux comes to the Popular Front era with a personal philosophy which contradicts in many aspects the aims of the movement: he has no faith in rationalism and materialism; still the concrete situation is at the service of a personal vision structured around the notion of heroism and the will.

Nor can Malraux's role in the anti-fascist and Popular Front committees lead convincingly to integration. For this "most glittering jewel in the tiara" (4), was in the main reserved for the elite tasks, from which maximum propaganda-value could be extracted. Thus, Münzenberger sent him with Gide to petition Goebbels for the release of Thaelmann in 1934 (5); he was made "Président du comité Thaelmann"; and always he was used as a figure-head and an orator. This role applies both in the international anti-fascist committees and in the French Popular Front movement. Jean Grandmougin records Malraux's presence at meetings and demonstrations in late 1935 and early 1936 (6), and

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1. David Cate, The Fellow Travellers, p.178.
  2. Ibid, p.178.
  3. Gustav Regler, The Owl of Minerva, pp.205-207.
  4. David Cate, The Fellow Travellers, p.179.
  5. See Ibid, p.135.
  6. Jean Grandmougin, Histoire vivante du Front Populaire 1934-1939, Paris, Albin Michel, 1966, p.108, p.112.

reports his appearance on the rostrum of the Eighth Congress of the French Communist Party, held at Villeurbanne in January 1936. He continues:

"Debout entre Thorez et Cachin, il lève le poing et chante "d'une voix ferme", rapporte le Figaro, l'Internationale" (1).

And Lucien Rebatet, recalling bitterly the Popular Front demonstrations, writes:

"N'y manquait jamais, avec sa figure de maniaque sexuel dévorée de tics, le sieur André Malraux, espèce de sous-Barrès bolcheviste, rigoureusement illisible, et qui soulevait pourtant l'admiration à Saint-Germain-des-Près, même chez les jeunes gogos de droite, grâce à un certain éréthisme du vocabulaire et une façon hermétique de raconter des faits-divers chinois effilochés dans un bouillon d'adjectifs" (2).

It would appear, therefore, that the role which Malraux was given in these left-wing organisations demanded his name and adherence, but not necessarily subservience, discipline, or routine work, a point which aroused the irritation of Martin du Gard. Contrasting Malraux and other "intellectuals" with real Communists, subjected to hard everyday work and party discipline, such as his friend Marcel Lallemand, he writes:

"Un Romain Rolland, un Malraux (je cite à bon escient), sans aucun doute, seraient de la seconde charette. Tous les comités, les manifestes, leur puent au nez. Ils laissent faire et semblent approuver" (3).

A similar problem is present in the speeches themselves in that they consistently take as their frame of reference a set of non-political, metaphysical coordinates, which express themselves in a consideration of art. In one sense, of course, there is nothing unusual in this. Malraux spoke at the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture, at their meeting in 1936, and at the Congress of Soviet Writers held two years previously. This is in line with the Comintern directive that anti-fascist elements should form organisations which would unite other members of their profession. And

1. Ibid, p.138.

2. Lucien Rebatet, Les Décombres, Paris, Denoël, 1942, p.39. The comment is interesting for the way in which it shows a partial appeal of Malraux amongst the Right.

3. Correspondance André Gide-Roger Martin du Gard, Paris, Gallimard, p.641. Letter from Martin du Gard dated 31st December 1934.

Dimitrov, in his report, refers specifically to intellectuals:

"We must turn the spearpoint in the opposite direction and show the toiling peasants, artisans and toiling intellectuals whence the real danger threatens" (1).

Nevertheless, Malraux's almost exclusive interest in the problems of the artist during his speeches, his view of fascism as a threat in cultural terms, seems excessive, particularly when his speech in the Salle Wagram in December 1935 in support of Thaelmann consists almost entirely of an eulogy of the German writer, Ludwig Renn.

Again and again in the speeches there is a return to the non-political, abstract concepts so familiar in the novels. Thus, the speech to the Russian Writers' Congress, whilst extolling the success of the Soviet Union in cutting through the intellectual barriers present in post-war capitalist society, concludes with the mythic figures of Prometheus and Zarathustra. The abolition of the importance of money has led to an "héros positif":

"L'absence d'argent interposé rend au fait héroïque toute sa force primitive, celle qu'il aurait dans la guerre si le marchand de canons n'existait pas et si la guerre ne profitait à personne - celle de Prométhée" (2).

Similarly, the final value of the Soviet experiment lies in its creation of a new humanism:

"de même que Nietzsche reprit ce qu'on appelait alors l'attitude de la brute et l'éleva jusqu'à Zarathustra, nous reprendrons, bien au delà de toute sentimentalité dérisoire, les valeurs par lesquelles les hommes s'unissent, et redonnerons son sens à la fraternité virile" (3).

Intermingled with the appreciation of Soviet society, the images of the will return: Prometheus and Zarathustra, the field of war and the ensuing fraternity (4).

In the same way, the speech dealing with Ludwig Renn elevates the political struggle to a metaphysical level. Once more, the task is the recreation of a

1. G. Dimitrov, The Working Class against Fascism, p.35.
2. André Malraux, "L'Attitude de l'artiste", in Commune, November 1934, pp.172-173.
3. Ibid, p.174.
4. It is not without significance or irony that this pure warrior society should attempt to avoid war, even at the expense of a pact with Hitler. This may well be connected with Malraux's rejection of Soviet Communism at the time of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and his remark to Louis Fischer: "We are back to zero" (Louis Fischer, Men and Politics, London, Jonathan Cape, 1941, p.573).

new humanism. Renn's aim is described as: "redonner son sens au mot vilipendé de dignité" (1), and Malraux, by quoting from the German writer, emphasises still further the humanistic bias:

"le soir où l'on me ferait dire autre chose que ce que je dis maintenant, c'est que j'aurai cessé d'être homme" (2).

And, finally, Malraux describes Renn as having joined the Communists "Parce qu'il voulait la fraternité virile" (3). Renn, therefore, appears in this political speech almost as a character of Malraux (4), but a character concerned with the same fundamentally extra-political considerations. He appears as a certain type of the man of will: the man, who, like Katow, seeks to define his personality by adherence to an ethical belief, and who uses the will to maintain adherence to that belief. In both cases, it is the concern for self-definition which is important.

The speech, Sur l'héritage culturel, delivered in London to the "Association Internationale des Ecrivains pour la Défense de la Culture", is more complex and longer. Yet, it presents the same aspects as the two previous speeches, in that Malraux is not concerned to situate his theory of art in the context of the anti-fascist struggle, but rather to situate fascism and the struggle against it in the context of the destiny of the artist. Thus, he begins the speech with the narration of the episode which is to have such importance in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg:

"J'ai reçu un jour la visite d'un homme qui venait de passer plusieurs années en prison. Il avait donné asile à des anarchistes poursuivis. C'était un intellectuel et il me parla de ses lectures. "Voilà, me dit-il, il n'y a que trois livres qui supportent d'être lus en prison: L'Idiot, Don Quichotte et Robinson" (5).

Similarly, he proclaims later:

1. Mero - Giaggeri, André Gide, André Malraux, Pasteur Nick, Pour Thaelmann, Paris, Editions Universelles, 1935, p.17. (The meeting took place on December 23rd 1935, in the Salle Wagram).
2. Ibid, p.17.
3. Ibid, p.17.
4. Kassner obviously owes much to him.
5. André Malraux, "Sur l'héritage culturel", in Commune, September 1936, p.1.

"Tout le destin de l'art, tout le destin de ce que les hommes ont mis sous le mot de culture, tient en une seule idée: transformer le destin en conscience..." (1),

a statement which situates the speech in the world of L'Espoir and which mirrors Garcia's celebrated prescription: "transformer en conscience une expérience aussi large que possible" (2).

In addition, the speech expresses some of the main tenets of Malraux's art-philosophy. For,

"L'art vit de sa fonction qui est de permettre aux hommes d'échapper à leur condition d'hommes, non par une évasion, mais par une possession" (3).

And Malraux proceeds to analyse the fruitful nature of mass-culture for the artist, and to conclude that, for man, beauty is "ce qui leur permet de s'exprimer davantage, de se dépasser eux-mêmes" (4), and that

"le monde séculaire ne peut prendre son sens que dans la volonté présente des hommes" (5).

The speech is therefore firmly rooted in the world of art, destiny, the Nietzschean concept of surpassing oneself, and in the concept of will.

The consideration of fascism is relegated to an unfavourable contrast with the unifying power of mass-culture, fascism being, by definition, divisive, and to the reflection that:

"la civilisation fasciste, à son point extrême, aboutit à la militarisation totale de la nation" (6).

An analysis of Malraux's role in the anti-fascist and Popular Front movement in Europe in the 1930s confirms the pattern visible in his portrayal of the Spanish Civil War. The elitist nature of the role is still apparent, and, despite what must be presumed to be a most sincere antipathy to fascism, the considerations are removed from a purely political plane to a metaphysical

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1. Ibid, p.9.

2. L'Espoir, p.389.

3. André Malraux, "Sur l'héritage culturel", pp.1-2.

4. Ibid, p.8.

5. Ibid, p.9.

6. Ibid, p.7.



world in which the will still plays an important part.

If Malraux's understanding of the will in left-wing politics leads him to a fundamentally elitist position - whether as a privileged representative of the Popular Front or as a supporter of controlled, as opposed to spontaneous, political action - it coincides with a lengthy and serious consideration in his work of the concrete embodiment of such a position: Bolshevism.

Certainly, the organisation and rationale of Bolshevism, as defined in particular by Lenin, in his essay What is to be done?, is mirrored by the political structures which Malraux's heroes embrace and in which they act. For Lenin, revolution is a serious business: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" (1) - the success of the movement depends upon the rigorousness of its theoretical position, but, equally, upon the firmness and cohesion of its organisation. It is for this reason that Lenin continually distinguishes between the masses, the labour movement as a whole, and those who have as their task to weld this movement into an efficient fighting-unit - the "vanguard fighter" (2), or "professional revolutionaries" (3). And, as a definition of this group, Lenin asserts:

"(1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organisation of leaders maintaining continuity; (2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously into the struggle, which forms the basis of the movement and participates in it, the more urgent the need for such an organisation, and the more solid this organisation must be...; (3) that such an organisation must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity..." (4).

Essential to Bolshevism, therefore, is a distinction between elitist control, based upon theoretical premises, and the spontaneity of the masses, upon which that control must be exercised. At the same time, Lenin dissociates himself from political manifestations of "spontaneity" - particularly opportunism and

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1. V.I.Lenin, What is to be done?, New York, International Publishers, 1969, p.25.
  2. Ibid, p.26.
  3. Ibid, p.121.
  4. Ibid, p.121.

anarchism. He concludes his assertions regarding the professional revolutionary with the comment:

"I invite our Economists, terrorists, and "Economists-terrorists" to confute these propositions" (1).

Finally, Lenin's theory represents a striking example of the exercise of the will in the political context. At the very beginning of What is to be done?, he expresses this use of the will in a remarkable image:

"We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have combined, by a freely adopted decision, for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not of retreating into the neighbouring marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation"(2).

In this image, the Bolshevik experience has all the characteristics of the epic: the determined march of a small band of men through a narrow defile against huge odds. And the very depiction of the narrow path through the surrounding marsh has connotations of the will's struggle for form and being under the constant menace of formlessness and nothingness (3).

In at least one respect, therefore, the political action of Malraux's heroes coincides with Bolshevism. Garine, Kassner, Garcia and Magnin - even Kyo and Katow - may be properly described as "vanguard fighters", even as "professional revolutionaries" (4). Their task is to lead the masses in their revolutionary action, and to control, organise and direct their efforts.

1. Ibid, p.121. The "Economists" is a reference to the Marxist revisionists, led by Edouard Bernstein.
2. V.I.Lenin, What is to be done?, p.11.
3. It is certainly tempting to see the image in Sartrean terms, with the path representing choice, action and being, and the marsh, with its viscous quality, representing the danger of "le néant". It also provides a convenient transition, in Malraux's work, from the elemental world of La Voie Royale, with its path threatened by decomposition, to the political content of the other novels.
4. The professional aspect of Malraux's heroes combines with his use of myth to explain the fact that, in most cases, they come from afar to the critical political situation.

Indeed, the problems of the hero can only be the problems of the leader. In this regard, the criticisms levelled by Ehrenburg and Brasillach at La Condition humaine are generally applicable. Rather than showing the workings of revolution in a popular context, Malraux concentrates upon the motivation and problems of what Ehrenburg calls "the band of conspirators". Hence, Nicolaïeff's comment on Borodine: "la conscience individuelle, vois-tu, c'est la maladie des chefs" (1), looks forward to the solitude of Manuel. The heroes are "chefs", and their work consists either in organising or representing the masses. Katow and Kyo, although leaders of sections in the Shanghai uprising, are seen less in their organisational role than in their role as representatives. Thus, Kyo goes to Hankow as the delegate of the Shanghai revolutionaries, and as the representative of one concept of political action opposed to the pragmatism of Moscow. Similarly, in the dialogue with Koenig, he represents the concept of dignity which he sees as the motive force of the Communist cause:

"Je pense que le communisme rendra la dignité possible pour ceux avec qui je combats" (2).

In his defence of the madman, and in his death, he must exemplify allegiance to that dignity. In the same way, Katow, although self-avowedly only one of the "frères dans l'ordre mendiant de la révolution", is at the same time one of the leaders of the revolution, and, of necessity, no less than perfect in his exemplification of the ideal of fraternity. In the case of the death of both Kyo and Katow, there is a strong sacrificial sacramental element: by their manner of dying, they assume the burden and the purity of the revolution.

At the same time, Malraux is able to vouch for the revolutionary credentials of his two heroes. Kyo rejects the static philosophy of his father for a life of practical political action:

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1. Les Conquérants, p.212.
  2. La Condition humaine, p.235.

"il avait quitté son père, vécu à Canton, à Tientsin, de la vie des manoeuvres et des coolies-pousse, pour organiser les syndicats" (1).

Similarly, Malraux traces Katow's career from his medical studies to student protest, to the voluntary departure to the lead mines out of sheer solidarity (2). Thus, even though Kyo and Katow do not exhibit the domination-component of the will, they are nevertheless within the Bolshevik tradition insofar as they are depicted as professional revolutionaries with an elite role to play.

La Condition humaine differs from Les Conquérants and L'Espoir in that, rather than the story of a revolution, it is the account of a desperate defence. In the latter two novels, however, the central problem is that of waging war, and in this case the problem of organisation is posed more clearly. In La Condition humaine, the ambiguities and solitude of command are experienced, not by the revolutionaries, but by the adventurer of the Right, Ferral. In Les Conquérants and L'Espoir, they are the problems of the revolutionary leaders, Garine and Garcia. And in the way in which the problems are confronted, Malraux's use of a Leninist view of organisation becomes clearly visible.

For Garine, the very attraction of the Canton situation lies in the fact that it gives him full opportunity to organise and direct a large number of people in an historical action. The masses of the Canton uprising are never brought into relief; they remain a shadowy object of the will of Garine and others in the revolutionary hierarchy. The essence of the novel is its nature as a chronicle of a leadership-crisis, in which the support of the masses must be wrung from Tcheng-dai and the moderate wing of the Kuomintang. In the same way, much of L'Espoir is devoted to the attempt of the leadership, personified by Garcia, to establish itself as the dominant directing force of the republican war-effort - an attempt which leads to the "elitist" bias in the treatment of events, similar to that noted by Chomsky in his study of Jackson.

In their attempts to pursue a work of political organisation, Garine and Garcia exhibit two important common characteristics which coincide with a

1. Ibid, p.54.

2. Ibid, p.32.

Bolshevik attitude to political events. Both figures, in common with Lenin, deeply distrust spontaneous political action. For this reason, both men distinguish between the emotion which gives rise to political activity, and the necessity for the control and direction of that emotion. Thus, Garine, in the "fragment inédit" of Les Conquérants, states:

"Je ne prétends pas que la haine n'existe pas. Je dis que notre force n'est pas dans la haine, mais dans l'organisation de la haine..."(1),

a comment which prefigures exactly Garcia's view of the role of the Republic's leaders: "organiser l'Apocalypse" (2). And this comment, in its turn, sheds light on a remark by Garine about Borodine:

"Je lui dis périodiquement qu'il vit dans une apocalypse..."

- Que veux-tu dire?

- Je pense aux premiers chrétiens qui voyaient dans l'Empire ce qui devait disparaître, mais non ce qui devait reparaître dans l'Eglise. Bien sûr, c'était leur rôle, et les apocalypses peuvent être fort efficaces: mais encore faut-il les prendre pour telles" (3).

In this comment, on the place of hatred in Borodine's motivation, Garine exhibits the same scepticism in relation to the Apocalypse and the same concern for realism as Garcia.

In addition, both characters have the same, Leninist, attitude towards the concrete manifestation of spontaneity in politics: Anarchism - an attitude visible also in the depiction of Tchen in La Condition humaine. In spite of the similarities in character between Hong and Garine, crystallised in the latter's statement: "Il est peu d'ennemis que je comprenne mieux" (4), and in which the common experience of humiliation plays a crucial part, Hong offends Garine's sense of organisation, jeopardises the enterprise, and therefore must be liquidated. And Malraux, in his reply to Trotsky's criticism of the novel, includes a specific and heated attack on Hong as a representative of Anarchism:

1. André Malraux, "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", Bifur, December, 1929, p.15.
2. L'Espoir, p.120. A further similarity between Garine and Garcia concerns their love of definitions. Thus, Garine: "Voilà une belle définition, ma foi" (Fragment inédit, p.11); Garcia: "Garcia avait le goût des définitions" (L'Espoir, p.117). The definition is a means of imposing form upon the world.
3. André Malraux, "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", p.12.
4. Les Conquérants, p.146.

"il représente, non le prolétariat, mais l'anarchie; il n'a jamais travaillé; agissant d'abord en liaison avec les bolcheviks, il les attaque et n'accepte de directives que les siennes propres.... Il se fiche de l'avenir du prolétariat..." (1),

and he concludes:

"Je sais ce qu'il y a de prenant dans cette figure, dans sa résolution, dans sa pureté sauvage; mais je ne puis oublier que lorsque Lenine et Trotsky ont rencontré des Hong, ils ont chargé la Tchéka de leurs rapports avec eux" (2),

a remark which highlights Nicolaïeff's nostalgic conclusion: "Ce qui manque le plus, ici, c'est une vraie Tchéka..." (3). Thus, Malraux's depiction of Hong as an ultimate danger to the revolutionary organisation, and his subsequent narration of Tchen's divergence from the main body of the Shanghai movement, prefigures the pronounced distrust evinced by Garcia and the other Republican leaders with regard to the Spanish Anarchists, epitomised by the romantic, but disillusioned figure of Le Négus.

The political action, therefore, into which Malraux's heroes insert themselves in the three major political novels is Bolshevik in character; and it may be concluded that, by reason of its elitist, organisational and anti-anarchist nature, Bolshevism represents the left-wing political manifestation of the will (4), a point indicated by Drieu la Rochelle's enthusiasm for Soviet Bolshevism, along with Italian Fascism and German National Socialism, as a sign of the regeneration of Europe, and Georges Sorel's eulogy of Lenin, written

1. André Malraux, "Réponse à Trotsky", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 211, Avril, 1931, p.505.
2. Ibid, p.505.
3. Les Conquérants, p.212.
4. This is reinforced by the non-ethical nature of both the will and the practise of Bolshevism. Garine's use of the death of Tcheng-dai for propaganda purposes and his shooting of the well-poisoner for the security of Canton, both of which confirm his role as man of will, may be seen in the same context as Lenin's tacit condoning of bank-robberies to swell party funds and his manipulation of Social Democrat Committee meetings (See Bertram D. Wolfe, Three who made a Revolution, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966, Chapter 22).

when the author still had some admiration for the values of Action française (1).

Nevertheless, from the experience of Garine, of Kyo (2), and, in more muted form, of Garcia, it becomes clear that even within this most extreme manifestation of the political will, the hero finds total assimilation difficult (3). And this failure may be attributed, almost entirely, to the final refusal of the man of will to accept Hegel's major condition for integration: that of willing what is common to the whole. In other words, at a certain point in the Bolshevik experience, the hero departs from the common aspirations of the movement.

Nor are the reasons for this departure difficult to ascertain. The Bolshevik organisations may well be a manifestation of the will, but its raison d'être is not the exercise of the will, but the creation of a social revolution and its ultimate accomplishment. To this end, therefore, an end which is, by definition, finite, the Bolsheviks will demand the self-effacement of their members and subordination of the self to the political aims and activities of the movement (4).

In the context of these aspirations, Garine is a dubious travelling-companion. Motivated by an intense philosophical pessimism, he lacks the political activist's belief in social action as a means of conferring meaning upon an individual existence. In search of a mere field of action, he lacks the belief in the final solution, both social and philosophical brought about by the successful conclusion of revolutionary action. His politics, and those of

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1. Georges Sorel, Pour Lénine, Paris, 1919. See also: Pierre Andreu, Notre Maître, Monsieur Sorel, Paris, 1953.
  2. Although Kyo represents an impure type of the man of will, by placing the will at the service of "dignité", his confrontation with Vologuine must be seen in terms of the autonomous will struggling against bureaucracy.
  3. A point realised immediately by Lenin, whose reactions to Sorel's theories consisted of a sharp rebuttal. (See H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society, p.164).
  4. An aspect of Bolshevism which enabled Suklianov, in 1917, to refer to Lenin and his fellows as the "teacher" and the "pupils" (Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station, London, Fontana Library, 1960, p.394), and which accounts for the successive splits within the movement and the numerous expulsions (See: Wilson, To the Finland Station; Wolfe, Three who made a Revolution).

his fellows, are the politics of social destruction and continuing social crisis, but not the politics of reconstruction.

Malraux writes of Les Conquérants: "ce livre est d'abord une accusation de la condition humaine" (1). Garine's battle against the human condition can only be waged in the context of a permanent struggle in which social measures are mere aids to victory. And the assertion of his individual will, upon which the possibility of that victory rests, must deny the self-effacement demanded by revolutionary action. Hence the bitterness with which Garine reflects:

"Servir, c'est une chose que j'ai toujours eue en haine... Ici, qui a servi plus que moi, et mieux?..." (2).

Thus, on the questions of the plane of interest, philosophical or political, the questions of social optimism and self-effacement, there is a break between Garine and the revolutionary discipline he has espoused - a break reflected in Kyo's philosophical considerations and his refusal to accept blindly the policy of the Comintern, and in Garcia's eternal ethnological interests and in the reluctance of his acceptance of Communist Party discipline. It is also, significantly, but curiously, present in Borodine's view of Communism:

"C'est pour pouvoir continuer son action qu'il joue sa vie, non pour un résultat futur" (3).

The orthodox revolutionary experience is an experience in time, to be thrown into the past upon its own completion; yet only by existing in a continuous present can the hero retain a total faith in the defining power of his own will.

The paradox of the relationship between the man of will and Bolshevism is crystallised by the comment by the narrator of Les Conquérants on Garine's relations with the Bolsheviks in Switzerland:

"Il ne vit jamais Lénine. Si la technique et le goût de l'insurrection, chez les bolcheviks, le séduisaient, le vocabulaire doctrinal et surtout le dogmatisme qui les chargeaient l'exaspéraient" (4).

1. André Malraux, "Réponse à Trotsky", p.502.
2. Les Conquérants, p.194.
3. André Malraux, "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", p.8.
4. Les Conquérants, p.64.



Thus, Garine is attracted by the possibility offered by the Bolsheviks of revolution and of highly-organised action: his antipathy is towards their doctrinaire nature and restrictiveness. Here, already, he departs from one of Lenin's major precepts: the necessity of a firm theoretical basis for revolutionary action. (1). But it is in the limitations of Bolshevism that is found Malraux's recurrent objection to the movement. It is an objection brought out particularly in the "fragment inédit des Conquérants", consisting as it does of a long character-sketch of Borodine. Garine begins by comparing Borodine to an "officier passionné par son métier" (2), a comparison based upon "ce besoin d'organisation" (3), which he discerns in his colleague. This organisational need is fulfilled admirably by membership of the Third International, which satisfies in addition a technical mentality: "il s'agit d'une belle machine" (4). All of which leads to a destruction of the individual personality and the imagination: Garine states: "Il n'a pas d'existence individuelle" (5), and concludes, with a significant reference to Napoleon: "Il ne pourrait pas penser que sa vie est un beau roman" (6).

In this portrait of Borodine is contained the germ of Malraux's criticism of the Bolshevik mentality: the Bolshevik may well exhibit a sense of the will, but the will is submerged by the organisation-man, the technocrat, the man who

1. Yet here, Malraux offers an important qualification of Marxist and Leninist theory. Garine's objection does concern the overriding importance of theory, but also the way in which technical implementation of the theory can transform it. He remarks to the narrator: "la technique, d'abord subordonnée à la doctrine, finit par la transformer" ("Fragment inédit", p.6), a comment which mirrors Trotsky's warning to Lenin: "The organisation of the Party takes the place of the Party itself; the Central Committee takes the place of the organisation; and finally the dictator takes the place of the Central Committee" (Quoted in Wolfe, Three who made a Revolution, p.289).
2. André Malraux, "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", p.5. A comment which parallels Vercel's distinction between the "militaire" and the "guerrier".
3. Ibid, p.5.
4. Ibid, p.6.
5. Ibid, p.7.
6. Ibid, p.7.

abdicates individual destiny and that imagination which will enable him, like Napoleon, to enter history (1). And it is this typology which is continued in the other novels, through Vologuine, in La Condition humaine, to the bureaucratic Communists in L'Espoir (2), and reinforced by the religious analogy. Garine states of Borodine:

"Dans tous les "vieux bolcheviks" il y a quelque chose des fondateurs d'ordres religieux" (3),

a description which looks forward to the "mains ecclésiastiques" of Vologuine (4).

At one point, Garine makes explicit his distance from Borodine and the bureaucracy of the Third International:

"Je sais qu'un jour il dit de moi: "Ce qu'il y a d'embêtant avec Garine, c'est qu'on ne sait jamais en se réveillant s'il ne s'est pas suicidé dans la nuit". Il se trompe lourdement; mais on voit ce qu'il veut dire..." (5).

Garine can no more commit suicide than Perken, but its mention indicates clearly how Garine and Borodine exist on two different levels - Garine on the metaphysical (6), Borodine on that of practical organisational politics. And only by existing on that level can the will be given full rein and achieve that aestheticisation of existence which is its purpose and which is indicated by the reference to Napoleon's cry: "Quel roman que ma vie!"

In his use of Borodine and Vologuine, Malraux expresses the conflict which must arise between the man of will and Bolshevism. Although initially attractive to the will, by reason of its insurrectionist and organisational characteristics, Bolshevism, for Malraux, inevitably turns against the will, contradicting it and demanding the effacement of its bearer. The road from the

1. It must be reiterated that Borodine is not himself a typical Bolshevik in all respects: underneath the typical superstructure lie his humiliation at being a Russian Jew, his hatred of the bourgeoisie, and that commitment to the continuation of his own action which makes him depart from orthodox Communism and which prompts Nicolaïeff's remark: "Il finira bien comme ton ami, Borodine..." (Les Conquérants, p.212).
2. Connected with this is the fact that in Le Temps du mépris, apart from Kassner, there are depicted no other Communist figures.
3. André Malraux, "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", p.6.
4. La Condition humaine, p.116.
5. André Malraux, "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", p.12.
6. The opening sentence of Camus' Le Mythe de Sisyphe: "Il n'y a qu'un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux: c'est le suicide" (Paris, Gallimard, coll: "Idées", p.15), serves to indicate the philosophical nature of the anecdote.

October Revolution to the bureaucracy of the Comintern is one which entails a progressive dehumanisation of the participant and a destruction of the heroic. As Céline claimed, on his return from the Soviet Union in 1936: "Tous les Ford se ressemblent, soviétiques ou non..." (1). Yet, if Malraux's depiction of the final incompatibility between the man of will and Bolshevism represents a condemnation of the latter, there are two figures in the movement, the two brightest stars of the constellation, towards whom he has a less ambiguous attitude, Lenin and Trotsky. And in his reaction to these two leaders of the 1917 Revolution, he further defines his attitude to the role of the will in politics.

Horst Hina records that Malraux's interest in Lenin began in the 1920s (2). The reason for his interest is clear: not only is Lenin the architect of Bolshevism, the embodiment of the will in left-wing politics, but in his own person he exhibits strongly the properties of the will. As Trotsky writes, in his notes for a biography of Lenin:

"Gorky is right when he says that Lenin is the extraordinary and perfect embodiment of a tense will striving towards the goal" (3).-

In addition, his application of the will in politics is of a fundamentally non-ethical nature - what Hina calls "Lenins immoralistische Aktion" (4) - in its emphasis on power rather than justice (5): an application which coincides with that of Garine and other exponents of the will to power.

Nevertheless, this interest in Lenin is more in the man as a symbol of the will, in the manner of Sorel or Drieu la Rochelle, than in his theory.

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1. L-F Céline, Mea Culpa, Paris, Denoël et Steele, 1937, pp.14-15. Céline's reaction is in line with that of Gide, expressed in Retour d'URSS, Paris, Gallimard, 1936.
  2. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, p.96.
  3. Leon Trotsky, On Lenin, Notes toward a Biography, London, Harrap. 1971, p.158.
  4. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux.
  5. Ibid, pp.99-100.

Hina states that the only theoretical work which Malraux knew well was Left Radicalism: the Infantile Malady of Communism (1). On the other hand, Malraux is far more knowledgeable of the history of the Russian Revolution and events in Lenin's life. Images of the Civil War abound in his work - from the Voyage aux îles fortunées, to Koenig in La Condition humaine and Karlitch in L'Espoir. Similarly, during the interview between Kyo and Vologuine, much detailed reference is made to the October Revolution. Thus, Kyo states:

"Ça allait encore plus mal à Leningrad... quand Youdenitch était devant la ville, et on s'est tiré tout de même..." (2),

and Vologuine defends the Comintern's pragmatism by referring to Lenin's decision to share the land (3). At the same time, when Lenin does appear in the novels, it is less as a theorist than as an historical personality. The evocation in Les Conquérants of the dying Lenin unable to enforce the publishing of his message denouncing Stalin is used to symbolise the fragility of the will and foreshadows Garine's own sickness; the narration, in L'Espoir, of the scene in which Lenin delightedly jumps up and down in the snow of Moscow to celebrate the fact that the Russian Revolution has lasted one day longer than the Paris Commune serves to set the tone of revolutionary optimism.

Yet the predominant interest in Lenin as an historical figure, as a "great man", in Carlyle's sense, betrays a certain anxiety on Malraux's part with regard to the very nature of the Russian leader. Accounts of the Iskra board meetings (4) abound in theoretical discussions and show Lenin as a man totally subordinated to the aims and policies of the political movement. And Malraux's anxiety at this subordination of the self is clearly expressed by Garine:

"Remarque que les grands bolchéviks ont tous ce caractère d'anonymat. Ils semblent ne pas vivre hors du parti. Lénine, Staline, individuellement n'ont aucun relief" (5),

1. Ibid, pp.96-97.
2. La Condition humaine, p.116.
3. Ibid, p.119.
4. See: Wolfe, Three who made a Revolution; Wilson, To the Finland Station; Trotsky, On Lenin.
5. André Malraux, "Fragment inédit des Conquérants", p.11.

an insight confirmed by Lunacharsky in his Revolutionary Silhouettes of 1923, where he writes of Lenin:

"I believe that Lenin never looks at himself, never glances into the mirror of history, never even thinks of what posterity will say of him - simply does his work. He does his work imperiously, not because power is sweet to him but because he is sure that he is right and cannot endure to have anybody spoil his work. His love of power grows out of his tremendous sureness and the correctness of his principles, and out of the inability, if you please - an inability very useful in a political leader - to see from the point of view of his opponent..."(1).

Within this perceptive comment are contained the reasons for Malraux's attraction to Lenin: his "love of power", his "imperiousness", his single-mindedness, but even more so the reasons for a final inability to accept Lenin wholeheartedly. For Lenin's love of power exists only in the context of a specific finite aim: it does not possess any properties which will confer value upon the individual, for the simple reason that the individual has ceased to exist. The vital aesthetic nature of the solitary will is denied; thus, Lenin is a "grand homme", certainly, but without the additional qualities of the "chaman" (2).

There is a story told of Lenin, how, listening to a piece of piano music one day, he sighed, rose and said: "Music is very beautiful; but we, we have so much work to do". It may be said that it is at this very point that Malraux parts company with Lenin, in his refusal to deny the aesthetic dimension of the will.

But if Lenin, in spite of his greatness, does not have the peculiar qualities of the "chaman", that other figure of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky, does - a distinction once more confirmed by Lunarcharsky, who concludes his character-sketch of Lenin with the words:

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1. S. Lunarcharsky, Revolutionary Silhouettes, Moscow, 1923, quoted in Wolfe, Three who made a Revolution, p.552.
  2. André Malraux, Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.49. In spite of Professor Frohock's detailed analysis of chamanism with reference to Malraux's novels (André Malraux and the Traagic Imagination, pp.138-139), it is possible to see Malraux's use of the term simply as a means of giving to the will its full, aesthetic dimension.

"Unlike him (Lenin), Trotsky looks at himself often. Trotsky treasures his historic role and would undoubtedly be ready to make any personal sacrifice, not even excluding that of his life, in order to remain in the memory of mankind with the halo of a genuine revolutionary leader.."(1).

And the use of the mirror-image is interesting in this case, for it serves as more than an image of vanity. It has echoes of Baudelaire's use of the mirror as the defining point of the Dandy:

"Le Dandy doit aspirer à être sublime sans interruption; il doit vivre et dormir devant un miroir" (2),

a point taken up by Camus, in the section of L'Homme révolté entitled:

"La Révolte des dandys", a section situated significantly in the chapter:

"La Révolte métaphysique" (3). Thus, Trotsky, as an object of the imagination, is on a different plane from Lenin, who remains resolutely within a political context.

The fascination of Trotsky for Malraux, on a level beyond politics, is made abundantly clear in Malraux's account of an interview with the exiled leader in 1934. He is at pains immediately to situate Trotsky on this non-political level. Trotsky is "l'un des derniers grands destins du monde"(4), and Malraux continues:

"la présence de Trotsky posait à la pensée l'une des fortes questions: le rapport du caractère et du destin" (5).

And, as a figure of destiny, Trotsky is led inevitably to action: "chez lui, le désir de connaissance menait à l'acte" (6).

Significantly enough, the conversation between the two men turns on intellectual matters rather than political ones. On the subject of art, whilst Trotsky agrees with Malraux's assertion:

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1. S. Lunacharsky, Revolutionary Silhouettes, quoted in Wolfe, Three who made a Revolution, p.552.
  2. Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, p.1273.
  3. Albert Camus, L'Homme révolté, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Idées", pp.67-74.
  4. André Malraux, "Trotsky", in Marianne, 25th April 1934, p.3.
  5. Ibid, p.3.
  6. Ibid, p.3.

"L'art est d'abord pour moi... l'expression la plus haute ou la plus intense d'une expérience humaine valable" (1),

he questions the theory by which art forms supercede each other, and proposes: "l'humanité n'abandonne pas ce qu'elle a conquis une fois" (2), a statement which looks forward to Malraux's "musée imaginaire". The discussion moves from art to the philosophical problem of individualism, which both agree will be transformed by the Communist experiment - a point supported by Trotsky's answer to a question about Lenin: "Attendait-il du communisme un nouveau type humain...?":

"Un homme nouveau.... certainement. Pour lui, les perspectives du communisme étaient infinies" (3).

As Malraux indicates in his speeches of the 1930s, Communism becomes for him one of the strongest means of replacing the individualism of the nineteenth century by "l'homme nouveau" (4).

Finally, Trotsky becomes, as in the case of the de Gaulle of Les Chênes qu'on abat, synonymous with a Malraux character. His reflection on death, that it is a "décalage d'usure" (5), by which the mind remains sharp whilst the body weakens, points to the absurdity of illness or old age experienced by Perken and Garine.

Malraux's attitude to Trotsky, therefore, is one of frank admiration, exemplified by his final words in the article:

"Je sais, Trotsky, que votre pensée n'attend que de la destinée implacable du monde son propre triomphe" (6),

and by the incident recorded by Clara Malraux, when the writer, a guest of the Soviet government, caused dismay by proposing a toast to the exiled leader (7).

1. André Malraux, "Trotsky", p.3. A full analysis of Malraux's interest in Trotsky is contained in André Lorient, Orientations étrangères chez André Malraux: Dostoïevsky et Trotsky, Paris, Archives des Lettres Modernes, 1971.
2. Ibid, p.3.
3. Ibid, p.3.
4. It is interesting in this context to see how Malraux and Trotsky differ in their opinions of Freud. Trotsky, because of Communism's connotations of clarity and lucidity, is willing to accept Freud. Malraux continues to see Freud as the origin of a "philosophie désastreuse" (Ibid, p.3.).
5. Ibid, p.3.
6. Ibid, p.3.
7. Clara Malraux, Le Bruit de nos pas, III, pp.124-125.

Nevertheless, whilst Malraux admires the metaphysical aspect of Trotsky: his importance as an intellectual and a man of will, he distrusts that side of him which remains true to Bolshevism. Thus, during the interview, as the conversation turns to the Red Army and the Soviet Government, Malraux reflects:

"Je me méfie de ce Kremlin, de cette armée rouge qui venaient d'envahir la pièce ouverte sur les pins parasols et les arbres brûlés..." (1).

Paradoxically, Trotsky's criticism of Les Conquérants expresses exactly the same sentiments. Whilst admitting that Garine, in contrast to Borodine, is "plus près du type du révolutionnaire" (2), he regrets that Garine lacks the indispensable tool of the revolutionary, on Lenin's terms, a firm theoretical foundation:

"Le révolutionnaire qui "méprise" la doctrine révolutionnaire ne vaut pas mieux que le guérisseur méprisant la doctrine médicale qu'il ignore..." (3).

And this lack of a theoretical basis has led Garine, and Malraux, to view the Canton revolution incorrectly. In his article, Trotsky accuses Malraux of that same elitist bias criticised by Brasillach and Ehrenburg in La Condition humaine, and uses almost identical arguments to those used by Chomsky in his view of the Spanish Civil War. The problem of the depiction of the Canton general strike, in Les Conquérants, is that "elle est aperçue en haut" (4): thus the novel becomes the narration of the efforts of a bureaucratic elite to direct the action of the proletariat:

"Borodine, Garine, le "général" Gallen, le Français Gérard, l'Allemand Klein constituent une originale bureaucratie de la révolution, s'élevant au-dessus du peuple insurgé et menant sa propre "politique révolutionnaire" au lieu de mener la politique de la révolution" (5).

1. André Malraux, "Trotsky", p.3. Malraux's use of "scene-setting" in narration of interviews is consistent: the pines here, the Indian night which accompanies the conversation with Nehru in the Antimémoires, and the motif of the falling snow in Les Chênes qu'on abat, serve to add a universal dimension to the encounters.
2. Léon Trotsky, "La Révolution étranglée", in Nouvelle Revue Française, 211, Avril 1931, p.492.
3. Ibid, p.493.
4. Ibid, p.489.
5. Ibid, p.490.



For Trotsky, this attempt to organise and direct the revolution from above leads to a betrayal of the revolution: Garine and his colleagues, instead of giving full rein to the revolutionary impulse of the masses, check it, and form alliances with the bourgeoisie - the Kuomintang and Tcheng-dai. Thus:

"Elle (la bureaucratie) a inculqué aux masses la notion de la nécessité de se soumettre à la bourgeoisie et elle a déclaré que les ennemis de la bourgeoisie étaient les siens" (1).

The closest historical parallel, therefore, with the Canton revolutionaries is found, not in the October Revolution in Russia, but in the March one, "le système de Kerensky et de sa bande" (2).

Trotsky discerns, therefore, in Malraux that fear of spontaneity (3), that need for control and domination which constitute the author's attraction to Bolshevism. His warning to Malraux:

"une révolution ne peut se commander. On peut seulement donner une expression politique à ses forces intérieures" (4),

foreshadows exactly the attitude of the PCUM in the Spanish Civil War, an attitude which Malraux chooses to ignore in L'Espoir (5).

Thus, in spite of the fact that La Condition humaine may be said to constitute a vindication of Trotsky's thesis, in its condemnation of Stalinist foreign policy in China, Malraux is temperamentally unable to accept that uncontrolled revolutionary spontaneity which is the essence of Trotsky's doctrine, and it is an inability to which he returns in his treatment of the Spanish Civil War. As a reason for this dislike of spontaneity, Trotsky indicates an element of Malraux's work which is of increasing importance for an understanding of his concept of the will: the element of the aesthetic. At the very beginning of the article, he remarks that the way in which the political material of Les Conquérants contradicts Malraux's position itself "fait honneur à

1. Léon Trotsky, "La Révolution étranglée", p.497.
2. Ibid, p.496.
3. Though Trotsky's view of Hong as a representative of the masses is a misreading of the text.
4. Trotsky, "La Révolution étranglée", pp.490-491.
5. The parallel between the alliance with the bourgeoisie in Les Conquérants and the Communist support of the Azaña Republic in Spain, and particularly its alliance with the Negrín ministry, is clear.

l'observateur et à l'artiste, mais non au révolutionnaire" (1), and he continues by indicating that Malraux's revolutionary sympathies are corrupted by "les outrances de l'individualisme et du caprice esthétique".

Malraux's attitude to Bolshevism is ambiguous but, in its very ambiguity, illuminating. His use of the will, his emphasis upon its controlling, directing nature - its refusal of spontaneity - leads him naturally to a support of Leninist rather than Trotskyite views of revolution. At the same time, his demand that the will should be unfettered, that the individual should not be effaced by the exigencies of the situation, leads him to reject Lenin and to accept the personal significance of Trotsky, if not his political theory. At this point, it becomes clear that Malraux's interest goes beyond the political plane - towards a view of man defined by the will itself. It is this which may account for the basic distrust felt by the Soviet hierarchy towards Malraux: Gustav Regler records an incident in which Karl Radek refers contemptuously to Malraux as a "bourgeois" (2). At any rate, if Lenin is able to write of himself and his comrades marching through a marsh along a narrow path, it is apparent that Malraux is taking a different path altogether - a path which may cross that of Lenin, but one which is, finally, leading to a different goal.

It is this ultimate difference in direction, in preoccupation, which accounts for a similarly ambiguous attitude on Malraux's part towards Marxist theory. In Kyo's statement to Vologuine:

"il y a dans le marxisme le sens d'une fatalité, et l'exaltation d'une volonté" (3),

1. Trotsky, "La Révolution étranglée", p.488.
2. Gustav Regler, The Owl of Minerva, p.213. Malraux expresses his anxiety clearly in his review of Ehrenburg's Sans reprendre haleine, where he compares and contrasts the Soviet writers and Balzac. For Balzac, "l'homme vaut par sa volonté", whilst "aucun écrivain soviétique n'a encore trouvé l'accord entre le monde qu'il veut posséder et le sentiment qui serait le moyen de sa possession, entre la Comédie humaine et son Rastignac" ("Sans reprendre haleine, par Ilya Ehrenburg", Nouvelle Revue Française, 266, 1935, p.771). In other words, in Soviet society, the will and society are not yet reconciled.
3. La Condition humaine, p.114.

Malraux expresses the fundamental difficulty in the relationship of the man of will to Marxism: the fact that Marxism both provides for full exercise of the will, in that it leads towards insurrection, and stifles that will by subordinating it to an inexorable theoretical view of history, a view used by the Stalinist bureaucracy to oppress individual action.

The way in which Malraux moves gradually towards an interest in Marx's theory is significant. Horst Hina relates that this interest would appear to stem originally from Malraux's experience of his trial for theft of statues in Indochina, an experience which introduced him brutally to a social situation (1). Hina also records an early interest in Lenin (2), and the fact that Malraux, whilst in Indochina, read Halévy's edition of Sorel's Réflexions sur la violence (3). In addition, Hina notes that in 1926 Malraux read Plekhanov's Anarchism and Socialism, which was in Clara Malraux's library at that time (4).

It is Hina's thesis that Malraux's interest in Marxism only really developed in 1926, with his meeting in 1926 with the future Front Populaire "Ministre des Loisirs", Léo Lagrange (5). It is interesting, however, that Malraux's early experience of Marxism should be non-theoretical, and concerned with areas of personal experience, to the extent of personal humiliation, admiration for Lenin as a great man of action, and an interest in anarchism (6). Sorel's work, proposing a general strike to bring down the government, unleashed and effective because of its profoundly mythical qualities, looks forward to Les Conquérants, with its general strike and its crucial role of propaganda. These early approaches to Marxism, as defined by Hina, would appear to indicate that extra-political nature of Malraux's political involvement seen in his treatment in the novels of concrete political action.

From the crucial meeting with Léo Lagrange onwards, Malraux deepens his

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1. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, p.79. It must be repeated that Malraux's attitude to colonialism at this time was one of liberal opposition (See Chapter 5.).
  2. Ibid, p.81.
  3. Ibid, p.81.
  4. Ibid, p.81.
  5. Ibid, p.82.
  6. As Hina notes, the Plekhanov study contains an analysis of Jean Grave.

knowledge of Marxist theory, particularly through personal acquaintances. Hina refers to his meeting with Raymond Aron, at the 1932 Pontigny "décade", and at subsequent colloquia, and his contact with other participants, such as Paul Nizan, Jean Guéhenne, Lucien Herr and Charles Andler (1). To this list may be added Malraux's friends Emmanuel Berl, Bernard Gréthuysen and Drieu la Rochelle.

This increased grasp of Marxist theory is immediately visible in Malraux's speeches and articles of the 1930s. Horst Hina indicates that a comparison of La Tentation de l'Occident and the article "Jeune-Chine", written six years later, shows a shift in Malraux's preoccupations from German culture-theory to social investigation (2), an investigation which enables him to refer, in the anti-fascist speeches, to Marxist concepts of consciousness and its transformation (3).

Those elements of Marxism which attract Malraux and coincide with his concept of the will concern Marx's emphasis on change. Malraux's notion is initially of a will to deny: it can exist only in opposition to that static and individualistic philosophy of nineteenth-century humanism. In this denial, it finds one of its most powerful allies in the work of Marx, whose thought, like that of Nietzsche, represents a most damning indictment of nineteenth-century individualism. Louis Althusser indicates clearly the way in which Marx attacks the two poles of this humanism: the notion of a universal human essence, and the fact that this essence is the product of the analysis of the human individual. With the discovery of the theory of history, however, these two concepts become redundant, and a new philosophy is possible. Althusser writes:

1. Ibid, pp.82-83.
2. Horst Hina, Nietzsche und Marx bei Malraux, p.107.
3. A good example of this familiarity with the theory of consciousness is the comment, in the speech "L'Attitude de l'artiste": "Je crois enfin que la conséquence fondamentale de la société soviétique est la possibilité de recréer un humanisme" (Commune, November 1934, p.173).

"Ainsi, quand Marx remplace dans la théorie de l'histoire le vieux couple indidus-essence humaine par de nouveaux concepts (forces de production, rapport de production, etc.), il propose, en fait, en même temps, une nouvelle conception de la "philosophie""(1).

Within, and by his theory of history, therefore, Marx accomplishes the journey to be taken later by Malraux, who attempts to replace the absurd theory of individualism by one of action, and thus open up a new way of looking at man (2).

If there is a coincidence between Marx's critique of Western society and the views expressed in Malraux's essays on Europe, it is continued in the voluntarist aspects of both men. In his study of Western Socialism, Edmund Wilson discusses the poetry written by Marx during his days as a student, and comments on the presence of the Prometheus-motif. He adds: "Prometheus is to be Marx's favourite myth"(3), and he traces its use, in Marx's prefix to his doctoral thesis, where he quoted from Aeschylus' Prometheus, and in a cartoon of the time, showing him "chained to his press with the Prussian eagle preying on his vitals" (4). Again, Marx's enthusiasm for the Prometheus-myth coincides with Malraux's frequent references to the hero in his anti-fascist speeches.

This voluntarist strain in Marx is central to his rejection of the old Western philosophy and his attempt to replace it by a practical force. Edmund Wilson writes of Marx's dissatisfaction with the "Will" of German philosophy, hitherto a "purely ideological postulate":

"Marx's problem was to convert this abstraction into a force in the practical world" (5),

a problem expressed triumphantly in the last of the Theses on Feuerbach:

"The philosophers hitherto have only interpreted the world in various ways: the thing is, however, to change it" (6),

1. Louis Althusser, Pour Marx, Paris, Maspero, 1965, p.235.
2. Edmund Wilson (p.131) compares the antics of the Neo-Hegelians of Marx's youth, against whom he reacted, with the activities of the Dadaists, a comparison which is fruitful in the light of Malraux's dislike of them.
3. Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station, p.118.
4. Ibid, p.118.
5. Ibid, p.129.
6. Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach.

and echoed exactly by Malraux in "Jeune-Chine":

"La fonction de la pensée européenne est la transformation du monde par l'homme" (1).

It is this strain in Marx which accounts for the view of revolution as an act of will, exemplified in the strident, forceful tone of the Manifesto and the attention which Marx devoted to France as a model of recurrent political action.

However, if Malraux is correct in discerning in Marx the voluntarist aspects, he is no less so in indicating the fatalism inherent in his thought, embodied in the whole notion of the historical inevitability of the collapse of capitalism and the coming to power of the proletariat. Already in 1850, after the defeat of the hopes of 1848, Marx and Engels begin to attack August Willich, the German leader who was a proponent of immediate action:

"Willich's faction," says Marx, "treats pure will as the motive power of revolution instead of actual conditions" (2).

And this subordination of the individual initiative to the dictates of circumstance becomes increased with Marx's emphasis upon the workings of the dialectic of history, a concept which Edmund Wilson compares to an escalator:

"All too naturally, by identifying himself with the antithesis of the Dialectic, that is, by professing a religious faith, the Marxist puts himself into the state of mind of a man going upstairs on an escalator. The Marxist Will, which once resolved to change the world, has been transformed into the invisible power which supplies the motive force to run the escalator; and if you simply take your stand on the bottom step, the escalator will get you to the top, that is, to the blessed condition of the synthesis" (3).

In its extreme form, this historical determinism takes on the biological imagery of the later work of Engels, in which the development of human society is described in Darwinian terms. And it is interesting in this context, to recall the violent antipathy felt by Nietzsche for Darwin and the theory of social-Darwinism (4).

1. André Malraux, "Jeune-Chine", Nouvelle Revue Française, 220, 1932, p.5.

2. Quoted in Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station, p.206.

3. Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station, p.198.

4. See: George Lichtheim, Marxism, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, pp.218-258; Nietzsche's hatred for Darwin runs throughout his work, but is accentuated in the later works.

Malraux's distinction between the voluntaristic and deterministic elements in Marx's thought, therefore, follows the pattern established in all his attitudes to the Left. In so far as a left-wing theory embodies a use of the will, he is prepared to accept it; but when the theory and the action, as essentially they must, subordinate the individual will to the final aim of the enterprise, and to the theory and collective discipline necessary to achieve that aim, Malraux begins to register uncertainty (1).

Malraux's use of the will renders impossible, therefore, any permanent involvement in popular politics. The Hegelian condition of willing what is common to the whole is never fulfilled, because of the necessarily elitist action of the will in politics, and because of the constant action of the will in a dimension which is no longer solely political.

To emphasise this, it is sufficient to compare Malraux's work with that of a Socialist novelist whom Malraux admired, and who served with him on anti-fascist committees: Louis Guilloux. In spite of Guilloux's undoubted philosophical preoccupations, shown at their clearest in Le Sang noir, the novel prefaced admiringly by Malraux in the Livre de poche edition, (2), his treatment of social and political themes shows none of that use of politics to a philosophical end present in Malraux's work. La Maison du peuple (3) is the simple and moving account, recorded through the eyes of a child, of early attempts to organise the working-class in a provincial French town. The failure of that attempt to construct "la Maison du peuple", occasioned by the declaration of the First World War, is tragic in political and human terms, but it does not

1. In the context of Malraux's division of Marxian theory into voluntarist and determinist elements, it is helpful to recall the continuing debate regarding the place of the "Young Marx" in the Marxist canon. In his study of the debate, "Sur le jeune Marx", Althusser indicates that, at its origins, in the 1931 work by Landshut and Mayer, the use of the young voluntarist Marx is a social-democratic procedure to water down the scientific content of the work as a whole. The discovery of the voluntarist Marx has the effect of constituting an attack on the more threatening aspects of Marxism (See: Pour Marx, pp.47-48).
2. André Malraux, "réf.ace" to Louis Guilloux, Le Sang noir, Paris, coll. "Livre de Poche", pp.9-13.
3. Louis Guilloux, La Maison du peuple, Paris, Ditis, 1960.

constitute the victory of the Absurd. For the aim of the heroes of the novel is social justice, and not the definition of the self by the exercise of the will. This dimension of political involvement characterises Guilloux's own activity during the 1930s. As Ilya Ehrenburg recalls:

"He was a teacher in the Breton town of St. Brieuc and was quite unlike the usual run of literary men: he was simple, unassuming, and had no urge to philosophize..." (1).

As Secretary of the "Secours Rouge", he was quite willing to abandon his literary work for the routine and unglamorous tasks of committees. Quite simply, the nature of Guilloux's assimilation into left-wing political action is possible because he does not admit the primacy of the will.

This difference between the man of will and the man able to assimilate himself into political action of the Left is illuminated in Sartre's remarkable preface to Roger Stéphane's Portrait de l'aventurier. His discussion of the "aventurier", "(j'aurais préféré: de l'homme d'action)" (2), is conducted by contrasting him with his opposite, the "militant". For Sartre the "militant", who comes to political action uniquely for impersonal, concrete reasons, such as hunger, is characterised by his total lack of individual personality:

"il n'est pas vrai que l'on vous demande d'abdiquer votre Moi: ce serait encore trop d'avoir un Moi à abdiquer" (3).

Free of individuality, the militant escapes the problem of solitude and the problem of meaning: his justification and his solidarity are furnished by the Party.

Attractive as this vision of total assimilation may be, however, there is a problem:

"N'est pas militant qui veut. Si le Moi vient d'abord, on est séparé pour toujours" (4).

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1. Ilya Ehrenburg, Eve of War 1933-1941, p.12.
  2. J-P Sartre, "Préface" to Portrait de l'aventurier, by Roger Stéphane, p.11. A redefinition which places him more strongly in the context of the will.
  3. Ibid, p.13.
  4. Ibid, p.14.



For the young bourgeois, solitude is a precondition of existence. And if it is impossible to destroy that solitude by becoming a "militant", the bourgeois attempts to do so by action:

"comme l'action est un lien entre les hommes, ils vont tenter d'échapper par l'action à leur isolement" (1).

From this point onwards, the life of the "militant" and that of the "aventurier" are on different levels: the former lives firmly and unproblematically within his system of values, the system of the Party; the latter lives in opposition to a pre-existent solitude, a solitude of metaphysical significance. Hence, for the "militant" action by itself has no meaning: it is merely a stage, a means towards a political end. For the "aventurier", however, "c'est l'action qui est la fin" (2), for:

"toute fin est bonne en principe: il suffit qu'elle justifie l'action qui le justifiera" (3).

Thus, the "aventurier" directs himself towards the attainment of gloire, towards the state of "héros", whilst for the "militant" the terms are without meaning: they refer to the battles of a lonely individualism which he has never known.

For this reason, any partnership between the two is bound to end in failure, for "les héros,... sont les parasites des militants" (4), and finally

"la société que les militants veulent édifier exclut rigoureusement les desperadoes et leurs libéralités magnifiques" (5).

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1. Ibid, p.17.

2. Ibid, pp.18-19.

3. Ibid, p.19.

4. J-P Sartre, "Préface" to Roger Stéphane, Portrait de l'aventurier, p.22.

5. Ibid, p.23.

In this way, the full significance of Goldmann's analysis of Malraux's novels becomes clear: the progression he discerns from the problematic universe to the non-problematic represents an effort to dissolve the pain of solitude in the warmth of "fraternité". Yet Malraux's man is pursued by an original sin, that solitude and fragility he has known from birth and whose only antidote is the will and action. But the will, because of its very origins, can only direct action on a plane different from that of the movement into which it aspires to assimilate. The only "fraternité" it can experience is the feudal, heroic "fraternité virile", and the only relationship it can have with the popular movement to which it aspires is one of domination and, essentially, one of parasitism: the use of a political movement for a personal aim (1). On one level, the problems concerned with the relationship between Malraux's man of will and politics coincide with the ambiguities of Nietzsche's political arguments, in which hatred for the formlessness of democracy, refusal to accept the rise of slave morality and admiration of caesarism, may be considered less as serious political theory than as images of the metaphysical world in which the Superman has his being.

The will, therefore, in its political extension is authoritarian in nature, and remains firmly on its own plane of metaphysics. It needs to dominate and control, to refuse spontaneity and formlessness, not, in the end, for a political purpose, but because, by so doing, it may continue its battle against death and absurdity. The political superstructure is, finally, of less importance than the underlying metaphysical needs.

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1. This transformation of politics into imagery recalls Simone de Beauvoir's objections to Camus' La Peste, in which the concrete political fact of the Occupation is expressed by the metaphysical image of the town gripped by the plague (See Simone de Beauvoir, La Force des Choses, Paris, Gallimard, 1963, p.144).

For this reason, Malraux's transition from Communism to Gaullism is less dramatic than it may appear. When he declares to Louis Fischer: "We are back to zero", it is less the expression of a radical reappraisal of a political position than the recognition that the Communist epic has lost its motive force (1). It is fortunate that, at that very time, a new epic was beginning, that of the Resistance, which would give to Malraux the heroic role of Colonel Berger (2), that of the 18th June, which would make him a minister in de Gaulle's government. Again, the metaphysical bases of the will remain constant. As Jeanine Mossuz writes:

"Le gaullisme s'inscrit dans une vaste tentative dont le raison n'est pas uniquement politique mais métaphysique et qui est dirigée contre un adversaire, la mort, et contre le cortège de contraintes qui l'accompagnent: le mal, l'oppression, la servitude, les chaînes de toutes sortes.

Le culte de l'énergie, la volonté d'action, la liberté de l'esprit s'expriment tout au long de cet incessant combat" (3).

It would therefore seem somewhat premature to see, as does Professor David Wilkinson, Malraux's post-war action as a shift from the Bolshevik to the liberal mode of action (4), unless the term "liberal" be understood in the narrow terminology of American cold-war politics, exemplified by James Burnham (5). Malraux's reaction to politics would appear to deny, in so far as the will is concerned, that ethical component of political action demanded by liberalism.

And the adherence to de Gaulle poses the whole question of the view of history. It becomes clear that, for Malraux, history is not that vast groundswell of time, the march of all men - however humble - towards the perfect

1. It is this which distinguished Malraux from the ex-Communists who compiled The God that Failed, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1950.
2. On Malraux's activities as a Resistance leader, particularly his attack on the Das Reich regiment, see Robert Aron, Histoire de la Libération de la France, Paris, Fayard, 1959, pp.233-235; and Bergeret and Hermann Grégoire, Messages Personels, Bordeaux, Editions Brière, 1945, prefaced by Malraux.
3. Jeanine Mossuz, André Malraux et le Gaullisme, Paris, Armand Colin, 1970, p.19.
4. David Wilkinson, Malraux - An Essay in Political Criticism. See Chapter 6, "Esthetics and Politics", Part 1, "The Liberal Hero".
5. See, "André Malraux and James Burnham, "The Double Crisis: A Dialogue", Partisan Review, 15, March-April 1948, pp.407-438.

future. As it was for Carlyle and for Nietzsche and for Max Weber, history is the history of great men, locked in fruitful struggle with their obsession. As he writes of Saint-Just:

"l'étoile fixe qu'il appelle République, Napoléon l'appellera la sienne; Lénine, le prolétariat; Gandhi, l'Inde; le général de Gaulle, la France" (1).

In this pantheon of history, where the criterion is not a political point of view, but the relation between a will and an obsession, the realm of the State is left far behind. Politics is incapable of explaining fully these figures: indeed, perhaps the most fitting expression is the terminology of art.

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1. André Malraux, "Préface" to Albert Ollivier, Saint-Just et la force des choses, Paris, Gallimard, 1954, p.21.

## Chapter Seven

### The Will as Rectification

An analysis of the role of the will in Malraux's writing, from the "fantaisiste" stories to L'Espoir, indicates its constant importance. Intellectually, it appears in the essays on Europe, La Tentation de l'Occident and "D'une jeunesse européenne", as a will to reject, as a refutation of the static values of individualism and materialism which constitute the basis of nineteenth-century Western culture. The rejection of these values in the essays of 1926 and 1927 is prefigured, however, by a use of the will which serves as an antidote to the sterility of the West and which constitutes one of the main features of Malraux's thought. The "fantaisiste" stories, Lunes en papier, Ecrit pour une idole à trompe and Royaume-farfelu, introduce the structure of the heroic quest which is essential to the succeeding novels. Within this structure, Claude Vannec, Perken, Garine and Ferral use the will as a means of self-affirmation in a world of fluid and disappearing values, and invoke it in a struggle which is essentially metaphysical and in which the true enemy is destiny itself. In this way, the adventurer, in his lack of any true ethical quality, represents a resurgence of the barbaric conqueror as diagnosed by Micheline Tison-Braun and Julien Benda as a major threat to European humanism. Similarly, preoccupied almost exclusively with his individual metaphysical battle, the adventurer experiences great difficulty in the attempt to assimilate himself into the collective action which the fragility of his individual purpose necessitates. The will, therefore, appears not only as a fundamentally non-ethical quantity, but constitutes a barrier between the individual and his ambition of loss of individuality in collective life. The action of the will in a political context, therefore, is authoritarian in nature.

Whilst these aspects of Malraux's concept of the will are most pronounced in the novels which depict the adventurer-hero: La Voie Royale, Les Conquérants, and, in part, La Condition humaine, they nevertheless continue to inform the later novels, and have the effect of subverting their ostensibly democratic purpose. Thus, whilst the importance of the individual man of will is diminished in La Condition humaine, Le Temps du mépris and L'Espoir, Malraux is careful

to transform a specific political situation into a universal metaphysical context in which the will still has importance. At the same time, whilst the overt authoritarianism of Garine or Ferral has no place in the later novels, it is transformed into a refusal of spontaneity and a devotion to the imposition of order which testify to the continuing presence of the will.

It is this pattern, by which the presence of the will impedes progress towards assimilation into a collective political experience, with its consequent acceptance of a valid ethical system, which is broken by Les Noyers de l'Altenburg (1). In this work, the supremacy of the will is overthrown and replaced by an intuitive grasp of the essential, non-existential sense of life. It is rejection operated in one generation by Vincent Berger, and, in the following generation, it is mirrored, less in the reflections of the narrator, the son of Vincent Berger, than in the transformation of the petty criminal, Benneau.

On one level, the conversion of Vincent Berger from a career of service to Enver Pasha to a rejection of that service may be interpreted as a commentary by Malraux on his own involvement with Soviet Communism and the Comintern, culminating in final disillusionment at the time of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Such an interpretation is expressed at its clearest by Lucien Goldmann, who comments:

1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, Paris, Gallimard, 1948. The consistency of the pattern of the authoritarian will in Malraux's work appears to be, in some part, connected to the narrative form which he adopts, that of the Northern European epic, with its quest undertaken by heroes from afar. In this context, it is significant that, as Geoffrey T. Harris points out, the form of Les Noyers de l'Altenburg differs, by the quantity of authorial intervention, from the other novels, until it most resembles the essays on Europe, particularly La Tentation de l'Occident. See: Geoffrey T. Harris, André Malraux, l'Éthique comme fonction de l'esthétique, Paris, Minard, coll: "Situation" no. 27, 1972, p.119. The same conclusion is reached by Lucien Goldmann, in his study of the novel. See: Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman, p.240. In this sense, some of the descriptive scenes in the novel may be seen to fulfil less a novelistic function than that of the elevated reportage which constitutes one of the major features of the Antimémoires. The tone and function of the description of the horse which charges into the waves of gas on the Eastern front (Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.204), resembles strikingly those of the scene in which Curzio Malaparte, in Kaputt, depicts the horses frozen in motion in the lake in Finland. See: Curzio Malaparte, Kaputt, Paris, Livre de poche, pp.66-67.

"la transposition de la situation contemporaine est évidente: il faut, bien-entendu, lire Russie pour Turquie, gouvernement tsarist pour Abdul-Hamid, panslavisme pour panislamisme, révolution de février appuyée par les puissances occidentales pour première révolution turque appuyée par l'Allemagne, communisme pour touranisme, et enfin probablement Staline pour Enver-Pacha" (1).

Whilst the career of Vincent Berger undoubtedly presents some parallels with Malraux's own political experience, however, its importance within the context of his work as a whole cannot be restricted to that of a commentary upon one particular political regime. Its significance lies in the fact that it resumes the major features of the man of will, as he appears in Malraux's novels, and constitutes finally what appears to be a definitive indictment of his validity.

In his description of Vincent Berger's brief involvement in political action in Turkey, Malraux must be seen to be attempting more than a further portrait of the adventurer, achieved this time by a transposition of the legend of T.E. Lawrence (2). For, whilst Vincent Berger presents many of the general characteristics of the man of will, his action is built upon events which echo aspects of Malraux's earlier heroes. In this way, Vincent Berger's rejection of the life of action is able to signify a condemnation of the attempts to transcendence through the will of Claude Vannec, Perken and Garine.

Like Malraux's adventurer-heroes, Vincent Berger is an intellectual. He is able to fulfil Garcia's prescription: "transformer en conscience une expérience aussi vaste que possible", and, with Ferral, to view the intellect as a means of direction, order and power. More specifically, the information that "il eut obtenu son diplôme de langues orientales" (3) refers the reader back to Claude Vannec, who states to Perken: "Je ne tombe pas du ciel, mais des Langues Orientales" (4), and to the legend of Malraux himself (5). In addition,

1. Lucien Goldmann, Pour une sociologie du roman, pp.255-256.
2. Malraux's knowledge of Lawrence would have been deepened by the publication, in 1937, of Charles Mauron's translation of Seven Pillars of Wisdom, of which, in a sense, the essay "N'était-ce donc que cela?" constitutes a long review.
3. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.47.
4. La Voie Royale, p.30.
5. A legend convincingly exploded by the article by André Vandegans: "Malraux a-t-il fréquenté les Grandes Ecoles?", Revue des Langues Vivantes, XXVI, 5.



the reference directs the reader to the field of action of the novels of the adventurer.

For Vincent Berger, the intellect is conceived of in terms of action. Malraux writes that:

"son premier cycle de cours, en 1908, s'appelait Philosophie de l'action" (1),

and, as with the earlier heroes, this concept of intellect as action finds its basis in the work of Nietzsche (2). Indeed, his view of Nietzsche as solely a philosopher of action, a view which contrasts with the authentic Nietzschean vision contained in Walter's narration of the incident of the St. Gothard tunnel (3), may be seen as constituting a retrospective critique of the inauthentic, or partial Nietzscheanism of the adventurers. At the same time, Vincent Berger is able to bring to his action that absence of inauthentic role-playing which distinguishes Perken from Mayrena. As the narrator reflects, on the notion of Shamanism:

"Mais chaman qui m'avait dit: 'Sache bien que l'arme la plus efficace d'un homme, c'est d'avoir réduit au minimum sa part de comédie'" (4).

If Vincent Berger resembles Perken in the authenticity of his action, his experience of political involvement is similar to that of Garine. Like Garine, he is initially concerned with that most powerful, most aesthetic form of political action which is propaganda. As Malraux writes:

"De la propagande, simple décor, il était résolu à faire un moyen d'action politique" (5).

In the same way, he experiences, with Garine, the problem of the integration of the man of will into a collective enterprise. The autonomous nature of his project rapidly succeeds in isolating him from the bureaucracy of the German Embassy in Constantinople (6). More important, like Garine he is engaged in a

1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.47.

2. Ibid, p.47.

3. Ibid, pp.95-97.

4. Ibid, pp.49-50.

5. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.51.

6. An isolation which exemplifies Max Weber's distinction between charisma and bureaucracy.

political action where his ambitions are essentially non-political in nature. The narrator emphasises this quality: "Le problème social ne s'était pas posé pour lui" (1), a quality which contributes to the growing unease in the relationship between him and the Young Turk leadership, and which is a reflection of the tension between Garine and Borodine.

The action of Vincent Berger, therefore, corresponds closely to the typology of the action of the man of will, established by the early novels. And the final rejection by Vincent Berger of the life of action represents a criticism of the attempt to transcend the human condition by means of the will and action, an attempt to be replaced by an intuitive appreciation of the continuity of human life. This refutation of the earlier solution of the man of action is crystallised in the event which determines Vincent Berger to abandon a life of will: his humiliation at the hands of a madman in Afghanistan (2). The importance of this event does not lie so much in the fact that it is a transposition of the humiliation of Lawrence at the hands of the Turks in Deraa (3), but rather in its meaning within the context of Malraux's work itself. In the careers of Garine and Ferral, it is the civilian life in the West which occasions an experience of humiliation: Garine's trial and Ferral's fall from power, a humiliation which, in its turn, is the impetus towards a life of action which attempts to efface it. In Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, however, the pattern is inverted: it is action itself which brings humiliation. Far from being an antidote to the human condition, the will is now shown as a force which can lead man to subjection to it.

At the same time, however, the import of Vincent Berger's defection from the ranks of the adventurers is marginally qualified because, in relation to the earlier novels, his authenticity is not total. Whilst he appears to share Perken's antipathy to "comedy" in action, he is, unlike his predecessor, not

1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.55.

2. Ibid, p.70.

3. T.E.Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, London, Jonathan Cape, 1935, Ch.LXXX.

immune from the flattery of legend, Malraux comments: "Sa légende le flattait. Davantage: il l'aimait" (1). Similarly, whilst Perken views suicide as both "comedy" and self-delusion, Vincent Berger's reactions to the death of his father are more moderate. The narrator comments:

"- Il m'est arrivé d'entendre bien des bêtises au sujet du suicide, disait mon père; mais devant un homme qui s'est tué fermement, je n'ai jamais vu un autre sentiment que le respect. Savoir si le suicide est un acte de courage ou non ne se pose que devant ceux qui ne se sont pas tués" (2).

Nevertheless, the evolution of Vincent Berger and the inversion of the role of humiliation are strong indicators of a concern on Malraux's part to diminish the importance of the will and to explore a solution to the problems of the human condition in terms of essential values rather than existential action.

The denigration of the role of the will expressed in the evolution of Vincent Berger is reinforced by a repetition of a similar evolution in the time-scale of the narrator of the novel. Although the narrator's own emotion on emerging from the tank-trap mirrors exactly that of his father when the latter comes out of the gas-attack, he does not undergo a similar evolution. The novel begins with his reflections on the eternal nature of man, indicated forcibly by the way in which the French prisoners, in the Cathedral of Chartres, grow to resemble medieval men. The growth of a beard suffices to break the barrier of time. Instead, the evolution from the myth of the will to an acceptance of essential values is operated through the character of Bonneau, an evolution which reflects, often ironically and humourously, that of Vincent Berger.

Bonneau is constructed - indeed, has constructed himself - on the myth of the criminal as man of will. Malraux's initial description of him:

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1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.66.

2. Ibid, p.36.

"Bonneau arrivait en uniforme de souteneur, habitué à inspirer le mépris ou la peur, à vouloir d'autant plus inspirer la peur qu'il rencontrait davantage le mépris" (1),

situates him in the world of the Montmartre "truand", as depicted by Francis Carco, Pierre MacOrlan and the Populists. And, in addition to French sources, Malraux draws upon American crime novelists, notably Dashiell Hammett (2), to construct his myth of the criminal. As such, Bonneau, who is both proponent and victim of his myth, exists as a figure attempting to impose his own image upon the world, with no regard for ethical values, and motivated by humiliation. He thus, in an ironic manner, corresponds to the typology of Malraux's man of will.

In addition, however, by the use of a careful phonetic similarity, Malraux is able to suggest a political correlate to the criminal man of will: Bonneau becomes Bonnot; the criminal becomes the mythical anarchist. Whilst Bonneau, as a symbol of the will, may be treated humourously by Malraux, and may be easily devalued, he is nevertheless linked intimately with a more serious exponent of the will - the leader of the "bande à Bonnet". Yet, the evolution of the insignificant, often pathetic Bonneau to a state of assimilation serves at the same time to undermine the more serious image (3). By this connection between Bonneau and Bonnot, Malraux is also able to provide an additional element of continuity between the two time-scales of the novel. When Vincent Berger returns to Marseille, Malraux notes:

"Les journaux français étaient pleins des procès des anarchistes qu'on appelait alors "les bandits en auto"" (4),

1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.253.
2. André Gide remarks, of Hammett's The Glass Key: "livre si fort recommandé par Malraux". See: André Gide, Journal 1939-1949, Paris, Eds. de la Pléiade, 1954, p.124. Note for 12th June 1942. The peculiarly amoral treatment of politics in Hammett's novel is not without some affinities with Malraux's own work.
3. In his denigration of anarchism, Malraux is, of course, consistent: Bonnot receives the same critical treatment as Hong, Tchen and the Spanish anarchists.
4. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.78. The statement of one of these anarchists: "L'individu tué n'a aucune importance! Mais après, il arrive une chose inattendue: tout est changé, les choses les plus simples, les rues, par exemple, les chiens..." (p.78), is a condensation of the experience of Tchen, and thus permits a further connection: Bonneau-Bonnot-Tchen.

a clear allusion to the "bande à Bonnet" which assumes full significance in the latter section of the novel, when Malraux defines the myths which activate Bonneau's existence:

"la victime de la société que l'ivresse ou l'érotisme en a chassé; l'irréductible des batailles disciplinaires; le hors-la-loi qui lutte seul contre toute la police dans quelque Fort Chabrol; le Bonnet (dont le nôtre n'oubliait certes pas qu'il portait presque le nom) qui tire sur le Préfet à travers son bras..." (1).

Significantly, however, having enumerated the constituent parts of Bonneau's myth, or "folklore" of the criminal as man of will, Malraux proceeds to undermine the whole edifice by adding:

"Car l'enfer de Bonneau, que ses damnés soient épiques ou misérables, n'a qu'un cercle, et c'est un cercle de victimes" (2).

The heroic myth which leads Vincent Berger to humiliation pursues its course in the career of Bonneau.

Whilst Bonneau, in a parodic manner, conforms to the typology of the man of will, he possesses equally that essential faculty on which the will is based, the imagination. It is this which distinguishes him from the more mundane Pradé. Malraux writes, of Bonneau's exasperation at Pradé's indifference to the dream-world:

"Bonneau bafouille, et se sent en face de l'autre race, - celle qui ne rêve jamais" (3).

Yet, whilst for the adventurer the imagination, a projection into the future which the will must then realise, is a positive force, and one which elevates him from the mass of his fellow-men, in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg Malraux is more sceptical about its value. Commenting upon the soldiers' interest in film-stars, he writes:

"Pour tous le rêve existe, Marlène Dietrich, ou Mistinguett, ou la duchesse de Windsor; mais il restera le rêve..." (4),

a statement which does not achieve even the guarded optimism which he expresses

1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.255.

2. Ibid, p.255.

3. Ibid, p.261.

4. Ibid, p.259.

in the Esquisse pour une psychologie du cinéma on the same subject. Reflecting on the star-system, he writes:

"Marlène Dietrich n'est pas une actrice comme Sarah Bernhardt, c'est un mythe comme Phryné" (1).

Yet, unlike his denigration of the dream-world in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, his conclusion admits of a more positive aspect: the dream world becomes myth:

"Le mythe commence à Fantômas, mais il finit au Christ. Les foules sont loin de préférer toujours ce qu'il y a de meilleur en elles; pourtant elles le reconnaissent souvent" (2).

Thus Malraux, in the person of Bonneau, criticises not merely the will to action, but also the imaginative force which is a precondition for it.

In addition, in the same way that Vincent Berger has traces of inauthenticity in his love of his own legend, Bonneau is shown to be a mythomaniac. Malraux writes:

"Il affirmait avoir tué un homme dans une rixe, ce qui était sans doute faux, car il eût été affecté aux bataillons disciplinaires" (3).

Finally, in the same way that Vincent Berger, after the beating at the hands of the madman, abandons his allegiance to the will, so Bonneau, after achieving some assimilation into his group, is rendered "innocent" as the tank tumbles into the "fosse"! Indeed, he is equated with Pradé, of whom the narrator writes:

"comme la tête de Bonneau, sa tête de vieux, malgré le casque, est devenue innocente" (4).

In this way, Bonneau is neutralised and enters the world of the race which does not dream.

Malraux's treatment of Vincent Berger, and of his parodic counterpart, Bonneau, constitutes a radical devaluation of the man of action and the imagination which motivates him, in favour of a substitution of essential values. The man of will recedes in importance, and, with him, the barrier which separates him from

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1. André Malraux, Esquisse pour une psychologie du cinéma, Paris, Gallimard, 1946, Not paginated.
  2. André Malraux, Esquisse pour une psychologie du cinéma.
  3. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.253.
  4. Ibid, p.278.

the will-less mass of humanity, and from the ethical systems which regulate their acts. For the first time, in Malraux's fiction, the elite ranks of the heroes are dispersed. As the German soldiers on the Eastern Front conclude:

"Y a pas de grandes personnes. Y a jamais de grandes personnes...  
Jamais!" (1),

a phrase which Malraux, in the Antimémoires, attributes to the "aumônier du Vercors":

"Il leva ses bras de bûcheron dans la nuit pleine d'étoiles: "Et puis, le fond de tout, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de grandes personnes..."  
Il est mort aux Glières" (2).

The ideal of transcendence of the human condition through domination, conquest and order is therefore replaced by that of an intuitive grasp of the essential values of life, an intuition which, for the conqueror, is possible through that recurrent experience in Malraux's work which is the "retour sur la terre". It is this which constitutes the significance of Kassner's reappraisal of the positive values of existence after his storm-tossed flight from Berlin to Prague - an episode constructed on Malraux's own experience of his return from the flight over the city of the Queen of Sheba, and upon which he comments in Antimémoires:

"C'est là que j'ai rencontré pour la première fois l'expérience du "retour sur la terre", qui a joué dans ma vie un grand rôle, et que j'ai plusieurs fois tenté de transmettre. Je l'ai transposé directement dans Le Temps du mépris. C'est aussi celle de tout homme qui retrouve sa civilisation après avoir été lié à un autre monde, celle de l'héros de l'Altenburg à son retour d'Afghanistan, celle de T.E.Lawrence..."(3).

In this context, it is significant that the final scene of Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, the escape from the tank-trap to the edenic world of the timeless village, should be reproduced, both in the Antimémoires (4), and in Lazare, in which Malraux meditates upon his return to life after a period of critical exhaustion in 1967 (5).

1. Ibid, p.192.
2. Antimémoires, pp.9-10.
3. Ibid, pp.98-99.
4. Ibid, pp.294-321.
5. André Malraux, Lazare, Paris, Gallimard, 1974.

It is precisely on the subject of the "retour sur la terre", however, that a certain ambiguity enters the argument of Les Noyers de l'Altenburg. Although the novel appears most strongly as a reappraisal of the primacy of the will as a means to transcendence of the human condition, the intuition of the essential, continuous values of life does not come to the characters except by means of the "retour sur la terre". At no point in the novel is there introduced a character who possesses this intuition without having previously undergone an extreme experience: in this sense, the intuition must be the result of what W.M.Frohock identifies as a Shamanistic experience (1). In this situation, the will cannot be relegated quite so far as the novel has hitherto appeared to suggest. Rather, the novel denotes a shift of emphasis: the world is no longer to be understood by the action of the will, but by the "décalage" between the experience of the exercise of the will and the way of life to which the acting man returns. In this sense, a certain primacy of the will is still maintained, but at one remove: a return implies a departure. As Malraux states in an interview on the subject of Antimémoires: "Il faut bien partir pour quelque part" (2).

Malraux himself does not appear to have escaped the feeling that Les Noyers de l'Altenburg perhaps inadequately expresses this necessary "décalage" between existential and essential values, and thus constitutes a too categorical rejection of the life of the will. His comment on Vincent Berger's reflection:

"le sens de la vie était le bonheur, et il s'était occupé, crétin! d'autre chose que d'être heureux!" (3),

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1. See: W.M.Frohock, André Malraux and the Tragic Imagination, pp.138-139.
  2. André Malraux, "Les Questions que posent les Antimémoires".
  3. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.245.



"l'appel au bonheur est ici une simple réaction psychologique" (1), serves to redress the balance between action and initiation. Within the careful diptyche structure of the novel, however, by which Vincent Berger's return from the gas-attack prefigures exactly the reaction of his son on his escape from the tank-trap, Malraux's comment must be seen to apply to the lyrical conclusion of the novel as well.

By its very ambiguities, Les Noyers de l'Altenburg expresses the difficulties of Malraux's task, which is less to reject out of hand the exercise of the will than to attempt to reconcile it with a sense of the fundamental nature of man contained, no longer in isolated heroes, but in all men. For this reason, the portraits of the members of the tank-crew: Bonneau, Pradé and Léonard, constitute the most extensive characterisation of non-heroic models to be found in Malraux's fiction. Yet the reconciliation of the man of will with the fundamental can, at this stage, be achieved only by his ceasing to be a man of will, by his exchange of the will for intuition. The full reconciliation of the will and the fundamental is achieved, not in the narrative of action in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, but rather in that section which most resembles the tone of the essays and which looks forward to the art philosophy: the colloque at the Altenburg itself.

If the action of the novel expresses a shift of emphasis from the will to intuition, the colloque constitutes an intellectual counterpart to this shift, and centres on the figure of Möllberg. For the German ethnologist represents more than a major challenge to the universal notion of man: he is, like Vincent Berger and Bonneau, a further example of the inadequacy of the will to dominate existence.

In his article, "Malraux, Möllberg and Frobenius" (2), Armand Hoog minimises Möllberg's debt to Spengler's cultural pessimism and explains him in terms of the

1. Ibid, Préface.

2. Armand Hoog, "Malraux, Möllberg and Frobenius", Yale French Studies, 18, 1957, pp.87-96.

work of Leo Frobenius. In this, he is assisted by a confirmatory note from Malraux, who writes: "Physically, Möllberg is Léopold Chaveau; ideologically, Frobenius..." (1). The reference to Frobenius, however, introduces an interpretation of the role of Möllberg which is necessarily more complex than that provided by Armand Hoog.

Hoog's argument depends upon a correlation between Möllberg's pessimism and arguments evinced by Frobenius in his work, The Childhood of Man. To Möllberg's conclusion:

"Nous venons de considérer des sociétés qui ignorent: la première, notre sentiment du destin; la deuxième, notre sentiment de la naissance; la troisième, notre sentiment de l'échange; la dernière, notre sentiment de la mort. Ça suffit" (2),

Hoog compares Frobenius' discovery that certain African cultures ignore the Western concepts of death, eternity and the human species, and he quotes the German's conclusion:

"Under such circumstances, what is there to study in mankind? What have we to learn from other men?" (3),

Whilst there is an undoubted debt to Frobenius in the characterisation of Möllberg, such a comparison is not totally just. In the first place, The Childhood of Man is an early work, and, never became a standard French edition of Frobenius' work, which was not translated into French until the 1930s. It is therefore difficult to attribute to Malraux, as does Hoog, detailed familiarity with Frobenius' writing from 1920 onwards (4). Indeed, in his review of the Histoire de la civilisation africaine, René Daumal affirms that Frobenius

1. Ibid, p.92. Léopold Chaveau, who attended the "décades" at Pontigny, ressemble Möllberg particularly in his predilection for bizarre carved animals. See: Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.104; Monique Saint-Clair, Galerie privée, Paris, Gallimard, 1947.
2. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.138.
3. Armand Hoog, "Malraux, Möllberg and Frobenius", pp.93-94; Leo Frobenius, The Childhood of Man, London, Seeley & Co., 1909, pp.133-134.
4. Armand Hoog, "Malraux, Möllberg and Frobenius", pp.92-93.

was first known in France through an exhibition of African rupestre paintings at the Musée d'Ethnographie in 1934 (1). It would seem probable, therefore, that, apart from the possibility of second-hand information obtained on Frobenius in Germany in 1921 and 1922, Malraux's knowledge of his work would have been based on an essay: "L'Art africain", which appeared in 1931, and, particularly, on the 1936 translation of Histoire de la civilisation africaine (2).

The latter study indicates precisely the nature of Frobenius' thought. In the avant-propos, he sketches the grandiose nature of his synthetic scheme:

"C'est avec des proportions gigantesques et sans cesse croissantes qu'apparaît à l'homme vivant aujourd'hui, délivré des verres rapetissants qui ne lui laissent voir que des fins définies, et sollicité par une conception nouvelle, - l'unité de la civilisation humaine..." (3).

a scheme as vast as that of Möllberg, who

"semblait devoir fonder, sur la saisissante documentation qu'il avait découverte, une synthèse d'une ampleur hégélienne" (4).

Yet, whilst the very abundance of Möllberg's documentation leads him to the final grim conclusion:

"l'homme est un hasard, et, pour l'essentiel, le monde est fait d'oubli" (5),

Frobenius retains his faith in the possibility of a synthesis. He is not, however, unaware of the dangers, and it is here that isolated quotations, whilst permitting a comparison with Möllberg, can falsify his thought. Like a man constructing a tall house of cards, Frobenius is obsessed by the fear that his edifice of human unity may crumble at the slightest breath. He confesses:

"Comment l'observateur ne craindrait-il pas que le spectacle qui s'offre à ses yeux ne finisse par se dissiper comme une fumée? Moi-même je ne suis pas libre de cette crainte" (6).

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1. René Daumal, "Histoire de la civilisation africaine, par Léo Frobenius", Nouvelle Revue Française, 276, September 1936, p.553.
  2. Léo Frobenius, "L'Art africain", in Léo Frobenius et Henri Breuill, L'Afrique, Paris, Cahiers d'Art, 1931; Léo Frobenius, Histoire de la civilisation africain, Paris, Gallimard, 1936.
  3. Léo Frobenius, Histoire de la civilisation africaine, p.7.
  4. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.109.
  5. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.142.
  6. Léo Frobenius, Histoire de la civilisation africaine, p.8.

and he is highly conscious of the difficulty of his task:

"Rien n'est plus difficile à comprendre que ce qu'enveloppent les voiles d'une contrée "étrange" (1).

Yet, whilst Frobenius recognises the immensity of the problems which beset the synthetic ethnologist and tempt him towards the conclusions reached by Möllberg, and, indeed, devotes the first twenty pages of Histoire de la civilisation africaine to these problems, it is in the knowledge that, with care, a solution exists. He writes:

"l'humanité observatrice peut comprendre l'essence de la civilisation, si elle saisit les changements de sa propre conception, nourrie du sentiment de sa propre vie, et la remplace par une conception basée sur le sentiment de la vie des êtres observés" (2),

and concludes:

"Je ne puis "comprendre" une civilisation, un art, que dans la révélation affective de la substance qui lui imprima sa signification, sa direction, et provoqua son jaillissement même" (3).

And nowhere is this essence of the alien civilisation to be grasped better than in its art-forms:

"L'art lui-même est l'aspect sublime de la civilisation dans sa pureté virginale et immaculée" (4).

In this way, ethnology, the study of man, must logically become the study of art on a broad scale. Frobenius notes:

"Nous comprenons qu'une histoire de l'art devrait être immensément vaste, qu'elle le sera un jour, quand nous aurons dépassé ce premier stade des tâtonnements aveugles" (5),

a prophecy which looks forward startlingly to the publication of La Psychologie de l'art. Finally, it is in art that is contained a reality which transcends time and which is contained in the notion of style:

"Toute réalité est surtemporelle. Grâce à la signification que l'homme peut saisir, tout est durable. Le style lui-aussi survit à la faculté imaginative" (6).

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1. Léo Frobenius, "L'Art africain", p.40.
  2. Léo Frobenius, Histoire de la civilisation africaine, p.29.
  3. Ibid, p.31.
  4. Léo Frobenius, Histoire de la civilisation africaine, p.29.
  5. Ibid, p.35.
  6. Ibid, p.40. In italics in the text.

Such statements are a very long way from Möllberg's final position, but in their evocation of an eternal nature of art, the need for a vast art-history and the importance and supremacy of style, they are very close indeed to Malraux's own art philosophy. Far from being the model for Möllberg whom Malraux rejects, as Armand Hoog suggests, it would appear that Frobenius lies at the origin of certain concepts in La Psychologie de l'art.

The connection between Möllberg and Frobenius, however, sheds light upon the significance played by the former in the novel. Insofar as Möllberg reflects the grand design, the ambition to system-building of Léo Frobenius, he appears as the representative of a nineteenth-century manifestation of the will: the positivist scientist. In this way, the collection of a vast mass of documentation, and the aim of employing it towards the creation of a synthetic theory of humanity, are symptoms of the will to impose order upon chaos, to dominate the world by means of scientific knowledge. It is not by chance that, in L'Espoir, the ethnologist Garcia is at the head of an organisation which depends upon control and direction and order; similarly, it is not accidental that the character in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg whom the ethnologist Möllberg most resembles should be the positivist professor, for whom the gas-attack is merely a fascinating experiment, and whom Malraux describes as a "chaman inquiétant" (1).

However, if Möllberg, in his optimistic ambition, represents the will under the guise of nineteenth-century materialism, his failure and subsequent disillusionment reflect the decline of that philosophy, proclaimed at its clearest in Malraux's UNESCO speech of 1946. In his belief in the contingent nature of man and human works, Möllberg joins and expresses the philosophy of Spengler, in The Decline of the West. What Malraux appears to have done in the creation of Möllberg, therefore, is more than a simple character-sketch based upon either Frobenius or Spengler. In his faith and his disillusionment,

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1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.172.

Möllerberg expresses the evolution of European intellectual history from the age of positivism to the "nouveau mal du siècle". In other words, he embodies that fall of Western man from rational grace, from a firm secure world, which is the essential starting-point for Malraux's work, and which constitutes the subject-matter of La Tentation de l'Occident and "D'une Jeunesse européenne". In this context, the presence of the First World War in the novel is necessary in that, historically, it represents the final blow to materialist optimism. It is significant that the publication of Decline of the West coincided with the end of the war, in 1918. As Spengler noted, laconically, in his preface to the First Edition: "Events have justified much and refuted nothing" (1), and, looking back, in 1919, on the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, he diagnoses that sense of disorientation which informs the writers of the "nouveau mal du siècle":

"The nineteenth century was the century of natural science; the twentieth belongs to psychology. We no longer believe in the power of reason over life. We feel that life governs reason... from optimists we have become sceptics..." (2).

Thus, at the same time that Malraux, through Vincent Berger and Bonneau, shows the necessity of the transition from the will to innocence, so, in his portrayal of Möllerberg, he both presents a condensed picture of the failure of nineteenth-century materialist thought and, more important, postulates a transformation of knowledge as will, domination, order, into knowledge by intuition. The secret of existence is not to be seized by the ordered researches of Möllerberg/Frobenius, any more than it is to be grasped by the adventure of Vincent Berger/T.E. Lawrence: it lies, waiting to be discovered, in the continuity of the walnut-trees.

To the extent that the grim, tense hero-figure recedes in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, the novel comes to express, as Denis Boak indicates (3), more than the other works, an authentic Nietzschean tone. The "retour sur la terre",

1. Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, trans. Charles Francis Atkinson, Vol. 1, Form and Actuality, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1926, p.XV.
2. Oswald Spengler, "Preussentum und Sozialismus", in Politische Schriften, p.84. Quoted in: H.Stuart Hughes, Oswald Spengler. A Critical Estimate, New York, Charles Scribners Sons, 1952, p.12.
3. Denis Boak, André Malraux, Ch. 7

when the narrator and his companions return from the night with death in the tank-trap, is the first example, in Malraux's fiction, of a truly Nietzschean sense of joy. This authenticity of the Nietzschean tone is crystallised in the episode in the St. Gothard tunnel, the narration of which, incidentally, confirms Malraux's accurate knowledge of Nietzsche's biography (1), and is made even clearer if it is compared with a scene in L'Espoir.

During Manuel's first battle in the Sierra, an armoured train, commanded by Ramos, is used to provide artillery support for the Republican forces. When the enemy fire upon it, it takes cover in a nearby railway tunnel (2). As such, the "train blindé" of L'Espoir, like that of La Condition humaine (3), is a symbol of the will: it emerges from the darkness of the tunnel to continue a grim struggle against the forces of oppression, and thus conforms to the typography of Malraux's use of the will. The incident in the St. Gothard Tunnel, however, denotes a radical transition. The darkness, as a symbol of the human condition itself, is transcended, not by the will and its struggles, but by the "sublime" singing of the Venice poem, in which even the individual's own characteristics are surpassed. It is as, far from expressing himself, and nothing more, Nietzsche, in the darkness of the tunnel, becomes the vehicle of a sublime essence which seems to exist apart from him, and which is almost Schopenhauerian in nature.

In Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, therefore, Malraux, in order to achieve an authentically Nietzschean expression, prescribes a transition from existential to essential values, a prescription which is reinforced throughout the novel: Vincent Berger abandons Touranism, perceives the continuity of life in the

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1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, pp.93-97. See Chapter 3.
  2. L'Espoir, pp.62-70.
  3. La Condition humaine, pp.106-107.

walnut-trees of the Altenburg, and grasps its significance in the aftermath of the gas-attack; Bonneau relinquishes his imagination, and his own myth of the criminal-anarchist, to rediscover a timeless innocence in the danger of the tank-trap; Möllberg experiences the futility of the intellectual attempt to dominate, the will to synthesis, and the answers which he seeks are given to the intuition of Vincent Berger; finally, the Nietzsche who appears in the novel is not the grim man of will, the Dürer knight, but the Zarathustra of dance and song. The novel, in all its interlinking patterns, expresses a rejection of domination in favour of a sense of human continuity - a sense which permits adherence to an ethical system and which, in La Psychologie de l'art, assumes a particularly aesthetic significance.

Yet, paradoxically, it is on the very subject of art that the will returns with full force. It is announced in Walter's famous declaration:

"Le plus grand mystère n'est pas que nous soyons jetés au hasard entre la profusion de la matière et celle des astres; c'est que, dans cette prison, nous tirons de nous-mêmes des images assez puissantes pour nier notre néant" (1),

a statement which returns the novel to the metaphysical context of the prison, and which announces art in terms of dynamic, vertical resistance. And, during the Colloque itself, Walter's pronouncement is reinforced and rendered more specific by the intervention of Stieglitz, who concludes that only three books can retain their validity throughout the prison-experience: Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote and The Idiot (2). The speech is more complex and ambiguous than that of Walter, in that it combines the ethical with the metaphysical. What the novels have in common is that they depict solitude: their heroes are

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1. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, pp.98-99.

2. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, pp.119-120. A statement which takes up a point made by Malraux in his speech: "Sur l'héritage culturel".



"Les trois solitaires du roman mondial!" (1). For Stieglitz, the novels depict the path back from solitude to human communion:

"Et que sont les trois récits? La confrontation de chacun de ces trois solitaires avec la vie, le récit de sa lutte pour détruire sa solitude, retrouver les hommes. Le premier par le travail, le second par le rêve, le troisième par la sainteté" (2).

Yet, whilst within the novels there is a passage towards ethical values, their significance as objects is defined in fundamentally metaphysical, dynamic terms. The books' value lies in the fact that they constitute "ce qui résistait à l'atmosphère de la prison" (3), and Stieglitz sums up the narrative devices used by Defoe and Dostoevsky: "Ce sont des moyens d'action!" (4). It would appear therefore that the content of the novel may be distinguished from its metaphysical significance: the former is described in essential, ethical terms, the latter in the dynamic terminology of the will.

By a curious irony, it is left to Vincent Berger, the adventurer who abandons the will, to define the essential importance of the will in art. He begins by discussing fiction:

"Notre fiction... - drame, roman, - implique une analyse de l'homme. Mais il est clair que cette analyse, seule, ne serait pas un art. Pour qu'elle le devienne, il faut qu'elle entre en lutte avec la conscience que nous avons de notre destin" (5),

and redefines "destin" as the consciousness of "l'indépendance du monde à son égard" (6). Yet, this independence, which constitutes the Absurd, can be fought - by art and by style. Vincent Berger continues:

"Qu'est-ce que l'acanthé grecque? Un artichaut stylisé. Stylisé, c'est-à-dire humanisé: tel que l'homme l'eût fait s'il eût été Dieu. L'homme sait que le monde n'est pas à l'échelle humaine; et il voudrait qu'il le fût. Et lorsqu'il le reconstruit, c'est à cette échelle qu'il le reconstruit" (7).

1. Ibid, p.120.
2. Ibid, p.120.
3. Ibid, p.119.
4. Ibid, p.121.
5. Ibid, p.127.
6. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.127.
7. Ibid, p.128.

And, from this concept of the artist as a rival of God in an absurd world, it is but a short step to the conclusion:

"Notre art me paraît une rectification du monde, un moyen d'échapper à la condition humaine" (1).

with its affirmed correlate: "Dans ce qu'il a d'essentiel, notre art est une humanisation du monde" (2).

With the reflections on art in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, the sphere of interest of the novel shifts back from the essential world represented by the walnut-trees and the peasants in the morning to the familiar universe of "la condition humaine", in which a dynamic metaphysical response is required of man. The only difference is that this dynamic response is no longer to take the form of action, political or anarchic, but in terms of art. Vincent Berger abandons the cause of Touranism, but only to exchange weapons in the same battle.

Essentially, Malraux's art philosophy merely continues the lines of thought established in the Colloque in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg. As William Righter notes, of Vincent Berger's affirmation of the power of art to rectify the world:

"Here, in a rather fragmentary miniature, the argument of Les Voix du silence is compressed..." (3).

Yet, Les Noyers de l'Altenburg does not merely prefigure the emphasis of the art philosophy upon the role of the will in artistic creation; its intuitive rejection of Spenglerian visions of isolated cultures is contained and expanded in Les Voix du silence. Thus, both the importance of the will, and its universal, timeless context are maintained. To the pessimistic notion that cultures are irremediably isolated, Malraux replies:

1. Ibid, p.128.

2. Ibid, p.128.

3. William Righter, The Rhetorical Hero, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964, p.19.

"L'idée que les grands styles sont l'expression de visions irréductibles les unes aux autres, l'idée qu'un Chinois voit chinois comme il parle chinois, devient singulière depuis que les peintres chinois ou japonais... devenus épigones de nos grands artistes, oublient la perspective chinoise pour la nôtre..." (1).

Art, therefore, becomes the guarantee that civilisations will not remain contingent, and constitutes the strongest possible attack upon Spenglerian philosophy, an attack which Malraux makes specific towards the end of Les Voix du silence. He begins:

"Nous aurions, des civilisations disparues, une idée bien différente si nous ne connaissions pas leurs arts" (2),

continuing:

"Pourquoi la théorie allemande des "cultures" (au sens des civilisations tenues pour des organismes autonomes et mortels), surtout vidée de la précision que ses théoriciens tentent de lui donner, a-t-elle rencontré une si grande fortune? Parce qu'en subordonnant les religions à une vie organique des cultures dont elles naîtraient, cette théorie établit avec les civilisations religieuses un dialogue qui subordonne la religion sans se limiter aux formes; mais souvent le Déclin de l'Occident semble l'approfondissement d'une méditation qui eût porté d'abord sur le destin des formes artistiques. A supposer que les civilisations disparues soient mortes, leur art ne l'est pas: même si l'Egyptien de l'Ancien Empire doit nous demeurer à jamais inconnu, ses statues sont dans nos musées, où elles ne sont pas muettes" (3).

In other words, Malraux discerns within the Spenglerian system an embryonic methodology which refutes its highest ambitions.

By his emphasis upon the way in which works of art afford a constant relationship between cultures, both spatially and temporally, Malraux is able to establish a synthetic view of the context in which man acts and creates. The imaginary museum, which transcends time and space, represents a logical continuation of Elie Faure's vast Histoire de l'art (4), in which he analyses artistic developments throughout the world in any one period: Malraux merely adds to the synthetic possibilities which such a system presents. In addition,

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1. André Malraux, Les Voix du silence, Paris, Gallimard, coll. "Galerie de la Pléiade", 1951, p.272.
  2. Ibid, p.617.
  3. Ibid, p.617.
  4. Elie Faure, Histoire de l'art, 5 vols., Paris, 1921-1927.

in the resemblance which his system bears to that of Elie Faure, Malraux moves closer to the lines of orthodox Nietzschean thought: Geneviève Bianquis singles out Elie Faure as the perpetuator of Nietzschean artistic theory (1). At the same time, if Malraux's view of continuity through art connects him with the aesthetic import of Nietzsche's philosophy of the will, his use of terms which resemble those of Frobenius, link him with that nineteenth-century tradition of the dynamic, ordering intellect. His definition of art as "continuité profonde par la parenté secrète de ses oeuvres" (2), echoes Frobenius as he narrates the long journey along the thread of style to the unity of mankind (3).

The task of refuting the theory of contingent cultures, expressed by Spengler and represented by Möllberg, is vital in the context of Malraux's work. Should Möllberg prove to be correct, then man's vision of the world is fragmented to such an extent that death and destiny can no longer be taken as common denominators for humanity. In other words, the very concept of a "condition humaine" is exploded. Yet the will, as Malraux uses it, by its very consciousness, strives for universal significance. The invalidity of the notion of the human condition leaves the will alone and without a context for its action. Thus, the return to the concept of a unified coherent world permits once more the action of the will: indeed, Malraux's "condition humaine" appears as the first term of a dialectical process of which the will is a vital second term.

With the re-establishment of the universal context, the two recurrent poles of Malraux's thought, "destin" and "volonté", are able to be maintained. The importance of the latter as an aesthetic function is emphasised particularly in the section of Les Voix du silence called "La Création artistique". What,

1. Geneviève Bianquis, Nietzsche en France. For a full discussion of the similarities between Malraux and Faure, see: Bernard Lamblin, "Elie Faure et André Malraux", Les Cahiers du Sud, février-mars 1965, pp.16-23.
2. Les Voix du silence, p.625.
3. For further antecedents of Malraux's art-philosophy, see: William Richter, The Rhetorical Hero, pp.21-26.

for Malraux, distinguishes the child-artist from the adult is that "son talent le possède, et lui ne le possède pas" (1), and "A la maîtrise, il substitue le miracle" (2). Thus, for the adult artist, the artist-hero, the notion of "maîtrise", an essential ingredient of the Cornelian tradition of the will, is vital. Malraux resumes:

"chacun sent que passer d'une réunion de dessins d'enfants à une exposition, à un musée, c'est quitter l'abandon du monde pour une tentative de possession du monde" (3).

The artist begins to be described in identical terms to those which Malraux uses to depict the adventurer.

As "La Création artistique" progresses, the specific importance of the will is emphasised. Following on from the juxtaposition: "abandon-possession", Malraux insists upon the necessity of the will in the act of creation:

"L'art naît précisément de la fascination de l'insaisissable, du refus de copier des spectacles; de la volonté d'arracher les formes au monde que l'homme subit pour les faire entrer dans celui qu'il gouverne" (4).

In this way, art, as a will to form, becomes the means to possession and domination of the world. Malraux continues, on the subject of the artist and the world: "Sa volonté de le transformer est inséparable de sa nature d'artiste" (5). Yet, such a transformation of the world is operated precisely through the will to form of the artist: the artichoke becomes the acantha; transformation implies formation.

The artist, for Malraux, therefore, is the highest example of the man of will. He is able, through his art, to escape submission to the world and to achieve that mastery over it which is the dream of the adventurer and which constitutes salvation. The true will to power is effected through the will to form which affirms man's sovereignty. In this sense, the artist attains the

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1. Les Voix du silence, p.283.
  2. Ibid, p.283.
  3. Ibid, p.284.
  4. Ibid, p.318.
  5. Ibid, p.322.

level of hero, a heroism which Malraux discerns, both in the domination of the human condition and, in rare cases, such as that of Michaelangelo, in its assumption. He writes, of Michaelangelo:

"Il est héros, non dans la mesure où il domine sa condition, mais dans celle où il en assume l'angoissante grandeur" (1).

From his emphasis on the will-full character of the artist in "La Création artistique", Malraux moves on, in "La Monnaie de l'absolu", to an analysis of his role in relation to the human condition, a concept which may be assimilated into that of "destin" which forms the central preoccupation of Western man.

He writes:

"Mourante ou non, à coup sûr menacée, l'Europe, toute chargée de résurrections qu'elle embrasse encore, semble se penser moins en mots de liberté qu'en termes de destin" (2).

It is in this context that the values of "maîtrise" and transformation assume their full importance, for they permit the creation by man of an autonomous world. Malraux notes:

"Il existe une valeur fondamentale de l'art moderne, beaucoup plus profonde que la recherche du plaisir de l'oeil, et dont l'annexion du monde ne fut que le premier symptôme: c'est la très vieille volonté de création d'un monde autonome, pour la première fois réduite à elle seule" (3).

And the significance of the creation of a pure, autonomous world lies in the fact that it not only rivals the real world of chaos and darkness, but transforms it to the extent that destiny is able to be combatted. Malraux concludes:

"Chacun des chefs-d'oeuvre est une purification du monde, mais leur leçon commune est celle de leur existence, et la victoire de chaque artiste sur sa servitude rejoint, dans un immense déploiement, celle de l'art sur le destin de l'humanité.  
L'art est un anti-destin" (4).

1. Les Voix du silence, p.327.
2. Ibid, p.540.
3. Ibid, p.614.
4. Les Voix du silence, p.637.

For Malraux, therefore, the artist, acting within the context of a universal human condition, whose existence is confirmed by the continuity of style, invokes the will to impose form upon existence, thereby creating an autonomous world which constitutes the only valid response to destiny. In this way, the artist is a truly authentic hero-figure, and his art leads him to a world of exploration in which the will must be constantly invoked. Malraux comments further on modern art:

"Aidé par le Musée imaginaire que par ailleurs il suscitait, l'art moderne imposait l'autonomie de la peinture. A une tradition, c'est-à-dire à une culture qui, dans tous les domaines, entendait se concevoir, il contribuait à substituer une culture qui ne se conçoit pas. Qui oppose un domaine de recherches à un système d'affirmations. Dans laquelle l'artiste - et peut-être l'homme - ne sait d'où il part, quelles sont ses méthodes, sa volonté et sa direction. Un art de Grands Navigateurs... Mais une culture de Grands Navigateurs peut-elle se concevoir?" (1),

thus taking up an idea expressed in "L'Homme et la culture artistique":

"La force occidentale, c'est l'acceptation de l'inconnu... Colomb savait mieux d'où il partait qu'où il irait. Et nous ne pouvons fonder une attitude humaine que sur le tragique parce que l'homme ne sait pas où il va, et sur l'humanisme parce qu'il sait d'où il part et où est sa volonté.

L'art de l'Europe n'est pas un héritage, c'est un système de volonté... (2).

Even such a brief analysis of the main lines of Malraux's art philosophy from the specific point of view of the will suggests immediately a closer relationship between the world of the art philosophy and the world of the novels that is indicated by a purely chronological approach to the work. Malraux's artist, in his struggle against destiny, presents all the characteristics of the man of will of the novels. In this way, it appears inaccurate to consider the works of art philosophy, as does E.H.Gombrich, by the same criteria as works of professional art-history (3). Whilst Professor Gombrich appears to be correct in setting the origins of Malraux's art philosophy in Expressionism (4),

1. Ibid, p.602.

2. André Malraux, "L'Homme et la culture artistique", p.87.

3. E.H.Gombrich, "André Malraux and the Crisis of Expressionism"; Burlington Magazine, December 1954, pp.374-378.

4. For a similar interpretation, see F.D.Klingender, "Goya: Drawings in the Prado. Arranged by Pierre Gassier. Introduction by André Malraux", Burlington Magazine, February 1948, p.53.

his separation of the philosophy from the fictional world can only serve to falsify it.

In fact, Malraux's portrait of the artist conforms in every respect to that of the man of will as represented by the adventurer and the political activist. He, like the adventurer, acts in a world whose essential values are of metaphysical significance; he lives under the shadows of destiny. Within a common world, the notion of action is of similar importance for artist and non-artist alike. Malraux writes:

"La vision du non-artiste, distraite lorsqu'elle est celle d'une totalité (une vision pas encadrée...), intense et confuse lorsqu'elle est celle d'un spectacle saisissant, ne se précise que lorsqu'elle est liée à une action; celle du peintre se précise de la même façon - à ceci près que, pour lui, cette action est de peindre" (1).

This comparison is important, for it indicates that, within Malraux's world, action of any conscious nature is of almost aesthetic significance in that it, like painting, places a frame or form upon existence.

In the same way, the action of the artist and the adventurer is directed towards the same goal, that of possession and conquest. In this respect, it is illuminating to note the almost obsessive repetition of forms of the verb "conquérir" in Les Voix du silence. Thus, of the Renaissance, Malraux writes: "Il ne s'agit plus de conquérir mais de parer" (2); he refers to the "style"... opiniâtement conquis" (3) of Henri Rousseau; Van Meegeren's forgeries are distinguished from the authentic works of art on the grounds that they are "conquis sur rien" (4); he further defines art: "tout art est l'expression, lentement conquise, du sentiment fondamental qu'éprouve l'artiste devant l'univers" (5);

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1. Les Voix du silence, p.277.

2. Les Voix du silence, p.85.

3. Ibid, p.291.

4. Ibid, p.372.

5. Ibid, p.412.



finally, Malraux concludes: "la cohérence du chef-d'oeuvre est celle de sa conquête, non de son écriture" (1). The artist is therefore, together with Garine and Klein, a "conquérant".

If the artist, like the adventurer, proceeds from a recognition of the human condition to action and conquest, there is an indication, in Malraux's work, that his path towards conquest begins, like that of the adventurer, in an intuition of destiny in the experience of humiliation. In this way, for both figures, conquest becomes a revenge. On two separate occasions, Malraux, obsessed by the suicide of Van Gogh, refers to the way in which Gorki's national funeral constitutes a final revenge for the lonely death of Villon. At the re-opening of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, he concludes his speech:

"En regardant se déployer les funérailles nationales de Maxime Gorki, il me sembla voir dans l'immense cortège qui suivait l'ancien vagabond la revanche de ce que fut l'agonie inconnue et misérable du vagabond Villon. Hier, en parcourant pour la première fois les salles qui vont s'ouvrir demain, je pensais au jour de grand soleil où dans la plaine d'Auvers la main tâtonnante du pauvre Van Gogh cherchait du revolver le coeur dans lequel elle allait tirer..." (2),

and, in the preface to a work on Van Gogh, he singles out Dr. Gachet for praise by using the same comparison:

"Dans les immenses funérailles du vagabond Gorki, j'ai cru voir naguère la revanche de l'agonie inconnue et misérable du vagabond Villon; ici, la foi d'un seul homme, maintenue malgré la folie, maintenue malgré la menace de mort, s'égale à la ferveur de la multitude" (3).

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1. Ibid, p.453.

2. André Malraux, Du Musée, Paris, Editions Estienne, 1955. Not Paginated.

3. André Malraux, "Fidélité", Preface to G. Bazin, Van Gogh et les peintres d'Auvers chez le docteur Gachet, Paris, L'Amour de l'art, 1952, p.6.

It is interesting to note that, in his obsession with Van Gogh, Malraux rejoins Drieu la Rochelle, whose last novel, Les Mémoires de Dirk Raspe, uses the suicide of Van Gogh as the key to the work.

Malraux therefore assimilates the artistic experience into that of the man of will, who moves from humiliation to action in an attempt to rectify that original humiliation. In the same way that Garine progresses from the experience of the trial to direction of the propaganda of the Canton Revolution, so the artist participates in a broader, but similar process, which runs from humiliation to vindication. The humiliation of Van Gogh is not redeemed by his actions within his own lifetime, but his will to create ensures a final vindication within the continuing artistic fraternity.

Malraux's typology of the artist, therefore, conforms closely to that of the hero: he is a "Grand Navigateur" in the same fashion that Claude Vannec and Perken and Garine set sail on vessels to the East which will place them in uncharted situations with only their will to defend them. Such a conformity of typology suggests, indeed, that, more than the artist merely continuing the role of the adventurer, there is, throughout Malraux's work, an intimate connection between the two.

Such a hypothesis is supported by a critical work such as Geoffrey T. Harris' André Malraux: l'éthique comme fonction de l'esthétique, in which he criticises the traditional method of approach to Malraux's work, which consists of the maintenance of a division between the fiction and the art philosophy. He writes:

"Nous avons cherché ici à éliminer cette division, pour le moins arbitraire, et qui, à nos yeux, provient d'une interprétation erronée de l'oeuvre romanesque, erronée parce qu'elle est fondée le plus souvent sur une analyse qui porte uniquement sur le contenu thématique" (1).

Such a division fails to take account of the parallel development, in Malraux's work, of his fictional creation and his meditation upon art, springing from his intellectual origins both as the writer of "fantaisiste" stories and as an editor for the art-book publisher, Kra. Similarly, throughout the late 1920s

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1. Geoffrey T. Harris, André Malraux: l'éthique comme fonction de l'esthétique, p.9.

and the 1930s, at the same time as Malraux writes and publishes his novels, he continues to produce works of art criticism and art philosophy. Thus, in 1930, appears the Oeuvres gothico-bouddhiques du Pamir (1), a short work for an exhibition at the Galerie de la Nouvelle Revue Française, in which, by indicating a link between Greek and Indian civilisations, he already implicitly provides ammunition for his later arguments in refutation of Spengler. In 1932, he writes an account of the work of the Persian artist, Semirani, an account which contains an embryonic expression of his later theory of art as imitation. He writes:

"Tout peintre commence par imiter, et se conquiert peu à peu sur l'imitation" (2).

In 1933, he reviews the painting of Fautrier (3), and, in 1937, begins a series of three articles, published in Verve, which form the basis of the argument of the art philosophy published after the war (4). Thus, throughout the creative period of the 1930s, Malraux continues his meditations on the meaning of art, and lays the foundations, as early as 1937, for La Psychologie de l'art.

Whilst the invalidity of the division between Malraux's fiction and his art-philosophy is suggested by the parallel development of both lines of creation from the 1920s onwards, it is reinforced by the way in which Malraux's fictional world may be shown to constitute an autonomous artistic unity, rather than a reflection of the real world. Such a line of argument exists already in W.M.Frohock's André Malraux and the Tragic Imagination, but is made more explicit in studies which emphasise Malraux's use, in his fiction, of techniques which belong to the visual arts. Thus, critics, beginning with Frohock, and continuing

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1. André Malraux, Oeuvres gothico-bouddhiques du Pamir, Paris, Gallimard, 1930.
  2. André Malraux, "Exposition d'oeuvres de Semirani", Nouvelle Revue Française, 223, April 1932, p.773.
  3. André Malraux, "Exposition Fautrier", Nouvelle Revue Française, 233, February 1933, p.346.
  4. André Malraux, "La psychologie de l'art", Verve, December 1937, pp.41-48; "Psychologie des Renaissances", Verve, March-June 1938, pp.21-25; "De la Représentation en Occident et en Extrême-Orient", Verve, September 1938, pp.69-72.

with Geoffrey T. Harris and Jean Carduner (1), have noted particularly Malraux's use of cinematographic techniques in his narrative. Hence, his use of light and shadow, his alternation of close-ups and long shots, and his use of cutting techniques enable him to create an artistic world, in which action and characterisation obey laws of an aesthetic rather than a documentary nature. As Geoffrey T. Harris concludes:

"Les romans de Malraux proposent non pas une transcription de la réalité, mais une anti-réalité" (2).

The anti-réalité, Malraux's autonomous fictional world which rivals and rectifies the real world, is constructed, not merely by the use of cinematographic stylistic devices, but also by sustaining an autonomous image-system (3), and by borrowing styles from painting. Of this procedure, the most striking example is the scene of the descent from the mountain, in L'Espoir, which, as Serge Galupeau notes, is based upon the typology of the Piéta (4). Finally, Malraux's predilection for aphorism may be seen to reinforce the autonomous anti-réalité of the novels. As Nietzsche notes, in The Twilight of the Idols:

"The aphorism, the sentence, in both of which I, as the first among Germans, am a master, are the forms of "eternity"" (5).

In other words, aphorism is the language of a fictional world which is concerned with its own transcendence of time.

Of equal significance is the présence in the novels of an interior aesthetic referential scale, by which art, or works of art, appear as important

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1. Jean Carduner, La Création romanesque chez Malraux, Paris, Nizet, 1968.
  2. Geoffrey T. Harris, André Malraux: l'éthique comme fonction de l'esthétique, p.115. At the same time, however, as Lucien Goldmann insists, this anti-réalité of the novels is connected by its very structure to the structure of a value-system in the real world to which Malraux aspires.
  3. Thomas Jefferson Kline, in his André Malraux and the Metamorphosis of Death, New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1973, is able to conduct an analysis of Malraux's evolution by concentrating solely on the image-patterns.
  4. Serge Galupeau, André Malraux et la mort, Paris, Minard, Coll: "Archives des Lettres Modernes", no.97, 1969.
  5. Twilight of the Idols, p.111.

elements within the narrative itself. In this category may be included the Khmer statues which are the object of Claude's quest to Indochina and which assume their full significance in the battle which Claude and Perken wage against the walls of the temple. In this battle, in the way in which they have transcended time and the eroding power of the jungle and are able to resist Claude, they appear as powerful images of the will. This aesthetic referential system is continued in La Condition humaine, and centres upon the person of Gisors. His links with other characters are, to some extent, aesthetic in nature: Tchen has presented him with a cactus, which assumes the significance of a work of art; Gisors serves, by the intermediary of Clappique, as a purveyor of works of art to Ferral; finally, it is in the house of Gisors that the illuminating interview takes place between Clappique and Kama, an interview which expresses the power of art to last and to transcend.

It is in L'Espoir, however, that this system of aesthetic references reaches its height. The novel is characterised by a deliberate and accentuated aestheticisation of the geographical context, an aestheticisation which extends to cover description and role of characters. Malraux's Spain is an age-old land, linked with the past: as the guide describes it to Garcia and Magnin:

"Des pierres... De vieilles pierres... des choses du temps des Romains" (1).

It is also dotted with churches, buildings which possess less a religious than an artistic significance. Malraux describes Manuel, as he looks at a gutted church, and adds:

"Manuel admirait, et se sentait de nouveau artiste" (2).

More specifically, Malraux's description of Toledo, in the episode of the siege of the Alcazar, continues to express an aesthetic preoccupation, both in the

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1. L'Espoir, p.490.

2. Ibid, p.174.

town's connotations of El Greco and in the fact that, as a command headquarters, a museum is used. Finally, the aesthetic nature of the context is reinforced by the use of music: the radio playing the Ride of the Valkyries in the Republican headquarters in Toledo (1), Manuel's playing of Beethoven at the time of the Republican victory (2), and, above all, the blind accordianist playing L'Internationale, who serves as a leitmotif to the dialogue between Scali and Alvear, and of whom Alvear remarks:

"Si les Maures entrent tout à l'heure, la dernière chose que j'aurai entendue sera ce chant d'espoir chanté par un aveugle..." (3).

The creation of an artistic context for the action of the novel is reinforced by descriptions of characters in terms of comparisons with literary figures or the artistic representation of historical ones. Thus, Vargas is likened to Don Quixote (4), a comparison which links him with Alvear, who, at the time of Scali's entry, is attempting, unsuccessfully, to read Cervantes' novel (5). And, of Hernandez, Malraux writes:

"il ressemblait aux rois d'Espagne des portraits célèbres, qui ressemblent tous à Charles-Quint jeune" (6).

In this way, both Vargas and Hernandez are seen at one remove, through the artistic filter of the verb "ressemblait", a device which, in its allowance of distance and form, coincides with Garcia's preoccupations concerning the conduct of the war itself.

The importance of the aesthetic element as an essential part of the subject-matter of the novel is indicated most strikingly by the variety of aesthetic occupations exercised by the characters. Unamuno's sudden reversal

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1. Ibid, p.122.
  2. Ibid, p.497.
  3. L'Espoir, p.320.
  4. Ibid, p.115.
  5. Ibid, p.314.
  6. Ibid, p.122.

of attitude and his attack on the rebel generals, followed by disillusionment, plays an important part in Garcia's reluctant indictment of the liberal intellectual (1), and forms a further part of the aesthetic background of the novel. More precisely, Malraux notes that Manuel is a cinema-technician (2), that Scali and Alvear are art-historians (3), that Lopez is a painter (4) and fulfils in the war the task of protecting works of art from destruction (5), that Guernico is a Catholic writer (6). The aesthetic realm of the novel may be further extended to include Garcia who, as an ethnologist, looks forward to Möllberg, and expresses the ambition to synthesis, and Shade who, as a journalist, is another representation of the writer, and whom Malraux characterises by his "hostilité à l'Eglise catholique et son amour de l'art (7). Finally, even the peasants of the Republican army become assimilated into the general aesthetic purpose. The peasant who narrates, in the cold mountainside, the nativity of the Christ in an unjust Spain (8) is a popular artist of a high level.

Malraux's artistic meditations and his fictional creation, therefore, have their origins in the same post-war disorientation and follow parallel and intimately-connected lines of development. At the same time, the aesthetic meditation informs the fictional work in the way in which the fiction constitutes a carefully-constructed autonomous world, in which the preoccupations of its heroes are similarly aesthetic in nature.

1. Ibid, pp.371-375.
2. Ibid, p.18.
3. In this context, it is significant that during Scali's interrogation of the Fascist pilot, he discovers him to be carrying "un détail d'une fresque de Pierra della Francesca" (p.140).
4. L'Espoir, p.49.
5. Ibid, p.364.
6. Ibid. p.305.
7. L'Espoir, p.182. Whilst Shade's experience in the war presents features in common with those of Hemingway and Louis Fischer, he also has certain characteristics which link him with the Canadian doctor, Norman Bethune. See: Sydney Gordon and Ted Allen, The Scalpel, the Sword, The Story of Dr.Norman Bethune, London, Robert Hale, 1954, pp.91-129.
8. L'Espoir, pp.178-180.

Such a parallel development of artistic and fictional interests appears to suggest, however, more than a separate, albeit close, evolution of interests. The aesthetic interests of Malraux's heroes, especially those of L'Espoir, tend to indicate, not that they are susceptible of analysis in aesthetic terms, but that the aesthetic mode informs their action, that the man of will is, for Malraux, an artistic being and that the will itself is essentially an aesthetic force.

This hypothesis may be based upon the fact that the typology of the man of will is identical to that of Malraux's artist. The hero - Claude, Perken, Garine and Ferral - is characterised by his intellectuality and his consciousness of the universal metaphysical context in which he exists - an intellectuality and a consciousness which, in the case of Kassner, the artist and chronicler of the anti-fascist struggle, assumes a truly aesthetic significance. In the same way, the essential ambitions of the man of will are those of the artist, as he is depicted in the art-philosophy. The desire for the propagation of the self through transcendence of time characterises Perken's relationship to his kingdom, as it does Michaelangelo's position in the fraternity of art. Furthermore, the transcendence of time is attempted in similar ways by the adventurer and the artist, and centres upon the struggle for form, a struggle which is that of the early hero, the revolutionary, such as Garcia, and the artist. Indeed, Malraux is able to provide a broad definition of all three within an aesthetic framework: he notes, in Les Voix du silence: "J'appelle artiste celui qui crée des formes" (1). It is this ambition to form in the activity of adventure which is satirised by Sartre in La Nausée, when he makes Roquentin reflect:

"pour que l'événement le plus banal devienne une aventure, il faut et il suffit qu'on se mette à le raconter" (2),

a statement which emphasises adventure's aesthetic component. Yet, it is possible to go further than Sartre's analysis, to the point where the notion of

1. Les Voix du silence, p.308.

2. Jean-Paul Sartre, La Nausée, Paris, Livre de poche, p.60.



the future narration of experience becomes an integral part of the experience itself, so that, at its very origins, a concept of form and structure is introduced into the initial adventure. Thus, the journey of Claude Vannec and Perken through the decomposing jungle, because of its connotations of later form, has an aesthetic significance as the action takes place. The desire for form of the will is given greater gratification when the adventurer enters politics and participates in an action which depends upon the moulding of chaotic and spontaneous forces into an effective organisation whose object is to maintain its form rather than suffer the dissolution occasioned by victory in peace. In the context, the contrast between the authentic revolutionary man of will: Garine, Kyo, Katow, Garcia, and the anarchist: Hong, Tchen, Le Négus, assumes its full significance.

The will to form in Malraux's fiction reaches its logical conclusion in the attempt to create an autonomous world. Essentially, Malraux's work represents an interaction between three worlds. His statement, reported by Pierre de Boisdeffre: "Le monde s'est mis un jour à ressembler à mes livres" (1), indicates the existence of two worlds, the real and the fictional, of which the latter constitutes an autonomous counterpart to the former. Yet, within the autonomous world of the fiction itself, constructed by image-patterns, cinematographic narrative techniques and internal aesthetic references, the heroes strive for a further autonomy, in which they will be freed from the threat constituted by the obsessional second world. This relationship between the second and third worlds indicates the importance, in Malraux's work, of his most recurrent myth of the hero: that of the adventurer who comes from afar to a beleaguered city and who, by saving it, makes it his kingdom. This structure is already present in Lunes en papier and Royaume-farfelu, but is more fully developed in La Voie royale, where Perken's kingdom represents ultimate salvation against the forms of decomposition of the jungle and the

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1. Pierre de Boisdeffre, Malraux, Paris, Editions Universitaires, coll: "Classiques de XXe siècle", 1960, p.34.

forces of civilisation represented by the punitive column. In the political novels, the role played by the myth of the kingdom is more complex. The second world of the novels is that metaphysical world characterised by violence, injustice and death. Within that world, the autonomous world of the heroes, centred upon the besieged cities of Canton, Shanghai and Madrid, and constructed upon their attempts to direct and order the revolutionary action, represents their ambition to transcendence of the human condition, a fact which illuminates further their inability to be fully assimilated into collective political action.

If the world in which Malraux's men of will act is symbolised by the decay and decomposition of the jungle in La Voie Royale (1) and by the arbitrary injustice and infliction of pain and death of the political novels, the heroes' will to form and their attempts to construct an autonomous world, free from the ravages of the human condition, represent a version of that rectification of the world indicated by Vincent Berger as the major purpose of art. In this context, Robert Brasillach's comment on the heroes of La Condition humaine: "Ils sont des artistes" (2), becomes literally correct, as does Peter Hebblethwaite's inclusion of Malraux's heroes in the same category as those of Proust and Thomas Mann (3). Thus, the true precursor and symbol of the man of will in Malraux's novels is the hero of the story, "Ecrit pour un ours en peluche", who, as a musician, defeats the serpent who menaces the city and achieves legendary grandeur. As Serge Galupeau remarks, of the comment at the end of Les Noyers de l'Altenburg: "Je sais maintenant ce que signifient les mythes antiques des êtres arrachés aux morts" (4), this is the expression of an Orphic vision (5), and the myth may be extended to cover the whole action

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1. Not only is the "décomposition" of the jungle combatted by the action and will of Perken and Claude, but it may be seen to be ultimately conquered by the "composition" of the novel itself. In this sense, the novels are in their own right, mirrors of the striving towards autonomy of the heroes.
  2. Robert Brasillach, Portraits, p.220.
  3. Peter Hebblethwaite, S.J., Bernanos: an Introduction, p.13.
  4. Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, p.292.
  5. Serge Galupeau, André Malraux et la mort, p.39.

of the man of will, who confronts death, in its guise of decomposition, time and injustice, and achieves salvation through form. It is this that Nietzsche means when he writes: "we... want to be the poets of our lives" (1), and when he defines his ideal as "that Provençal notion of "Gaya Scienza", of that union of singer, knight and free spirit..." (2), a notion echoed by Malraux's assertion that:

"Chacun de nous éprouve que le saint, le sage, le héros, sont des conquêtes sur la condition humaine" (3).

The artist and the hero become one.

1. The Joyful Wisdom, p.233, a statement which echoes that of Vautrin, in Le Père Goriot: "Je suis un grand poète. Mes poésies, je ne les écris pas: elles consistent en actions et en sentiments" (Balzac, Le Père Goriot, Paris, Nelson, 1961, p.147). It is worth noting that the relationship between Vautrin and Rastignac has features in common with that between Perken and Claude, Vautrin's comment: "il n'existe qu'un sentiment réel, une amitié d'homme à homme" (p.217), foreshadows not merely the concept of "fraternité virile", but more precisely Perken's statement: "Si j'accepte un homme, je l'accepte comme moi-même" (La Voie Royale, p.58), and Garine's comment on the dead Klein: "J'ai eu pour lui une amitié d'homme" (Les Conquérants, p.193). Similarly the relationship in Balzac's novel introduces the "master-acolyte" relationship which defines the initiation of Malraux's younger heroes into the realm of the will.
2. Ecce Homo, p.96.
3. Les Voix du silence, p.631.

## Conclusion

The conjuncture of the hero and the artist is a subject which criticism of Malraux's work has tended to deal with inadequately. Most critics have opted for the view that, whilst the adventurer is morally dangerous and the revolutionary politically paradoxical, the apparent evolution to the works of art-philosophy constitutes a final vindication of both. Thus is born, in David Wilkinson's terms, the "liberal hero". Alternatively, critics such as Geoffrey T. Harris, whilst recognising the constant preoccupation with art and the presence of aesthetic concerns as an essential factor in all the works, conclude that this is the strongest possible argument in favour of the ethical value of the whole oeuvre. From the statement that:

"La création artistique possède cette force capable de transcender tous les âges pour venir témoigner de la présence de l'Homme" (1),

Harris is able to conclude:

"Le roman malrucien est au service d'une esthétique. Mais cette esthétique, loin d'être gratuite, est au service d'une éthique" (2).

Although the latter perspective affords greater subtlety of analysis, both views subscribe inevitably and uncritically to a notion of art as an unequivocally good ethical concept, a view expressed at its clearest by George Santayana, who writes:

"That art is prima facie and in itself a good cannot be doubted"(3),

a statement based upon the precept that:

"Aesthetic values everywhere precede and accompany rational activity, and life is, in one aspect, always a fine art..." (4).

A similar view of the unity of morally good and aesthetic judgements is found in Mary McCarthy's novel, Birds of America, in which the young hero, in a

1. Geoffrey T. Harris, André Malraux: l'Éthique comme fonction de l'esthétique, p.141.
2. Ibid, p.145.
3. George Santayana, "Justification of Art", in Eliseo Vivas and Murray Krieger, eds., The Problems of Aesthetics, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963, p.515. Reprinted from: George Santayana, The Life of Reason, IV, Reason in Art, New York, Scribners, 1933, pp.166-190; 222-230.
4. George Santayana, "Justification of Art", p.525.

letter to his mother, comments on Kant's categorical imperative:

"When Kant asks what would the world be like if everyone stole, that may be at bottom an aesthetic question. What would the world look like?" (1).

In both cases, although an intimate relationship between the aesthetic and the ethical is recognised, no conflict of interest is foreseen: art and goodness remain one.

If such a theory is applied to L'Espoir, however, a certain embarrassment is immediately introduced. The novel is traditionally seen as democratic in nature, as marking a welcome evolution away from the wilful and dangerous individualism of Perken, Garine and Ferral. As an indication of this evolution, the accentuation of the internal aesthetic references is understood in terms of a return to the traditional bases of humanist thought. As such, this view of the novel may be seen to constitute a critical unity, in which the two terms, the democratic and the humanist, are essential, and without one of which the unity will fail. Yet, close analysis of the novel indicates that, far from representing a diminution of the will in favour of democratic action by all the participants, L'Espoir, by its emphasis on control and its rejection of spontaneity, constitutes a reinforcement of the importance of the will and its extension over a wider field of action than any previously covered by Malraux. In addition, far from this re-establishment of the primacy of the will entering into conflict with the multitude of aesthetic references in the novel, it is, in its turn, intimately reinforced by them. In other words, the presence of the aesthetic element in L'Espoir does not herald a return to liberalism, but an entrenchment in the essentially authoritarian nature of the will. Garcia, in spite of his profession as an ethnologist and his knowledge of art, continues the function of Garine.

The inadequacy of the aesthetic/democratic unity as a means to explaining

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1. Mary McCarthy, Birds of America, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972, p.129.

L'Espoir introduces a further hypothesis: that an authoritarian, non-ethical concept of art is possible, and that Malraux is best explained in terms of such a concept (1). The hypothesis is lent weight, in the case of Malraux, by the inescapably elitist nature of the will: his heroes form part of that Nietzschean striving towards a "higher culture" (2), which, as a field for aesthetic action, depends for its existence on a division between the Master and the Slave. Thus, whilst the adventurer and even the democratic revolutionary, such as Garcia, are fundamentally authoritarian and elitist, the same description may be applied also to Malraux's view of the artist. It is this which is the basis of William Righter's criticism:

"an appropriate variation on Malraux's query concerning the "death of man" would involve asking what kind of life is preserved in a kingdom of styles that has no frame of reference beyond itself. Such an art has become exclusive and mandarin, accepting its isolation for the sake of its freedom" (3).

By his reference to the "kingdom", William Righter stresses the attempt, in all of Malraux's work, to create an autonomous, isolated world; yet, such a world cannot be assumed to connect automatically with the ethical world of day-to-day existence. This point is reinforced by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's meticulous and perceptive analysis of Malraux's art philosophy, in which he suggests that the concept of history which pervades Les Voix du silence is essentially false.

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1. The possibility of such a concept is suggested by a paper by C.A.Mace, "Psychology and Aesthetics", in which he emphasises the importance of satisfaction in aesthetic emotion, and remarks that such satisfaction need not be ethical. Thus, he quotes Sir Lawrence Jones, who, in his Victorian Boyhood, writes: "For sheer exhilaration, joined with the height of aesthetic satisfaction, I have known nothing to compare with deerstalking", and comments: "Hadley Cantril in his analysis of the enjoyment of life stresses sociality. Sir Lawrence Jones focuses on killing" (C.A.Mace, "Psychology and Aesthetics", in Harold Osborne, ed., Aesthetics in the Modern World, London, Thames and Hudson, 1968, pp.295-296).
  2. Human, all-too human, I, p.319.
  3. William Righter, The Rhetorical Hero, p.86.

He concludes:

"Il y a donc deux historicités, l'une ironique ou même dérisoire, et faite de contresens, parce que chaque temps lutte contre les autres comme contre des étrangers en leur imposant ses soucis, ses perspectives. Elle est oubli plutôt que mémoire, elle est morcellement, ignorance, extériorité. Mais l'autre, sans laquelle la première serait impossible, est constituée et reconstituée de proche en proche par l'intérêt qui nous porte vers ce qui n'est pas nous..." (1).

The former view of history is essentially Spenglerian, and it is against this view that Malraux struggles, subordinating to it the second, more human view. Yet the view of history as an oppressive, alien force can only be thought of in terms of struggle, escape and, finally, transcendence - a transcendence which, however, cannot be attained in the realm of life, namely, that of history, but in the silent, fixed world of death. It is for this reason that Merleau-Ponty sums up Malraux's solution as that of a "fraternité des peintres dans la mort" (2), a solution which, by its distrust of time, is led away from the present and away from a view of history which permits a valid and authentic ethical point of view. To Malraux's view of history as an enemy (3), Merleau-Ponty counters:

"L'histoire vraie vit donc toute entière de nous. C'est dans notre présent qu'elle prend la force de remettre au présent tout le reste. L'autre que je respecte vit de moi comme moi de lui" (4).

1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le Langage indirect et les Voix du silence", in Signes, Paris, Gallimard, 1960, p.75.
2. Ibid, p.77.
3. The criticism of Malraux's concept of history by Merleau-Ponty is similar to that of Camus' view by Sartre and Francis Jeanson. To Camus' assertion: "Nous sommes entrés dans l'Histoire" (Lettres à un ami allemand, Paris, Gallimard, 1948, p.75), which expresses a fear of history as an external, threatening force, Sartre comments: "si je pensais que l'Histoire fût une piscine pleine de boue et de sang, je ferais comme vous..." ("Réponse à Albert Camus", in Situations IV, Paris, Gallimard, 1964, p.123).
4. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le Langage indirect et les Voix du silence", p.93.



For Merleau-Ponty, Malraux, by denying works of art an effective life in the present, neutralises them and permits their reign only in death. Thus:

"Le Musée tue la véhémence de la peinture comme la bibliothèque, disait Sartre, transforme en "mensonges" des écrits qui ont été d'abord les gestes d'un homme. Il est l'historicité de la mort" (1).

The works of art which people Malraux's museum are, by their destiny in death and by their view of history as an enemy who must be combatted, cut off from that ethical world where "l'autre" is a feature to be respected and where the individual project is limited in compliance with that of others. In this way, the artist-hero departs once more from that "civilian" morality prescribed by Micheline Tison-Braun and Julien Benda and embraces, for the "fraternité dans la mort", the "valeurs de guerre" indicated by Saint-Exupéry. This departure is emphasised by the constant use in the art philosophy of military imagery, particularly the verb "conquérir". If the "conquérant" Garine infringes ethical norms, then so do Van Eyk and Henri Rousseau, with their "style... opiniâtement conquis" (2). In both cases, the signification of "conquérir" is not primarily that of physical conquest, a concept more generally understood as unethical, but of the establishment of an autonomous world in which metaphysical, rather than ethical values have primacy. Thus, paradoxically, Malraux's art-philosophy, no less than his early novels, constitutes a return to that menacing barbarism from which Micheline Tison-Braun strives to protect European humanism.

In this respect, Malraux's work may be seen in the context of other writers who have expressed an ambiguous relationship between art and ethics. The hero of J-K Huysmans' Là-bas, whilst bemoaning the sterility and collapse of values in late nineteenth-century society, becomes fascinated by the figure of Gilles de Rais, who combines practises of the utmost cruelty with a high

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1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le Langage indirect et les Voix du silence", pp.78-79.  
 2. Les Voix du silence, p.291.

devotion to the aesthetic. Huysmans describes him as: "le plus artiste et le plus exquis, le plus cruel et le plus scélérat des hommes" (1), and these terms must not be understood as paradoxical or irreconcilable opposites, but rather as expressions of the same ambition: to transcend time, to transcend, above all, the world of the ethical present. Thus, Gilles de Rais as the soldier-companion of Joan of Arc (2), is inseparable from his artistic and satanic counterparts. In the same way, the hero Alex of Anthony Burgess's A Clockwork Orange, is not merely a delinquent with a bizarre taste for Beethoven: the delinquency and the aesthetic sense are so intimately linked that, when one component, the violent one, is exorcised, the other must vanish: to the extent that the delinquency and cruelty may be seen as terms of the aesthetic, and vice versa.

The hypothesis that art may conflict with ethical values is continued and amplified by the work of Thomas Mann who, in Buddenbrooks and Tonio Kröger, indicates the incompatibility of the artistic mode of life with that of the "civilian", the bourgeois. The reason for this incompatibility lies in the fact that, to create a work of genius, the artist must pass through an extreme experience intimately linked with death. Mann writes, in Der Zauberberg:

"There are two ways to life: one is the regular, direct and good way; the other is bad, it leads through death, and that is the way of genius" (3).

Thus, Mann sees the practise of art is a dangerous activity, in which dark demonic forces must be encountered. Yet Mann is careful to indicate the dangerous political correlate of the aesthetic experience: he explores the relationship between the two in the novelle Mario und der Zauberer, and in the

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1. J-K Huysmans, La-bas, Livre de poche, p.22.
  2. In his use of Joan of Arc, Huysmans foreshadows the way in which, in the Inter-War years, the heroic Middle Ages were invoked as a non-ethical antidote to the sterility of the present.
  3. Thomas Mann, The Magic Mountain, trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter, London, Secker and Warburg, 1961. Author's postface, p.727.

novel, Doktor Faustus. In the former, set in Italy in the early 1920s, the liberal narrator takes his small son to a sea-side show, whose major attraction is its magician, who is, more precisely, a hypnotist. Throughout the recounting of the performance, Mann emphasises, before the catastrophic dénouement, the way in which the sinister magician must be seen as both a representation of the artist and of the fascist leadership: as both, he works by paralysing the will of his subjects and of the audience. This indication of the aesthetic quality present in fascism, of the way in which artistic emotion is connected with the sentiments which give rise to authoritarianism, is made precise in Doktor Faustus. Once more, the narrator, the liberal professor Zeitblom, is used to point the contrast between the artist and the non-artist and the powerlessness of the latter in the hands of the former. The narrator describes the evolution of the musician, Leverkühn, towards his pact with the Devil, yet the reader is constantly reminded of the ethical and political implications of the artistic pact by the fact that Zeitblom narrates the story of his friend as the allied armies destroy Germany in 1945. Mann's constant preoccupation, therefore, is to establish that a distance exists between the ethical world of the liberal bourgeoisie and the world of the artist in which concerns are metaphysical, in which there is no place for a just appreciation of "l'autre" in the present, and whose political correlate is fascism.

Mann's argument is reinforced by the peculiarly aesthetic origins of Italian fascism, in the work of Marinetti and the Futurists and in D'Annunzio's theatrical capture and occupation of Fiume in 1920, and by the dramatic preoccupations of the German National Socialist leaders who accompanied the traditional apparatus of the police state with a deep concern for stage-management. The torchlight processions, the Party rallies at Nürnberg, the way in which Hitler's plane descended, at the opening of the 1936 Olympic Games, from the red ball of the setting sun, testify to a coherent attempt to win

over and control the populace by aesthetic means. It is in this context that must be understood Walter Benjamin's celebrated statement:

"Der Faschismus läuft folgereicht auf eine Ästhetisierung des politischen Lebens hinaus" (1).

Yet, if the aesthetic ambition is a component of right-wing authoritarianism, it none the less fosters authoritarianism of the left. Günter Grass, in his play, The Plebians rehearse the Uprising, concentrates upon Brecht at the moment when, in 1953, he is beginning to direct rehearsals of his version of Coriolanus. In the midst of the rehearsals, the revolt of East Berlin of 1953 breaks out, and the workers invade his theatre. To this act of revolutionary spontaneity, the director/Brecht's reaction is one of hostility, yet of a more complex nature than that of a man whose rehearsals have simply been interrupted. The revolution appears to offend his aesthetic sense itself, an offence which can only be eradicated by the workers assuming roles within the play. Grass's play ends ironically with the failure of the revolution, the maintenance of the status quo and the solitary reaffirmation by the director of his aesthetic autonomy. Thus, in the same way that Garcia, in L'Espoir, imposes order upon the distasteful spontaneity of certain elements in the Spanish Civil War, so the director/Brecht orders the Berlin workers of 1953 - an order emphasised by their enforced entry into his play. In both cases, art appears as a preoccupation which transcends the specific political demands of the present, which imposes order and direction, and which is thereby susceptible of an authoritarian interpretation.

These examples indicate that the aesthetic cannot automatically be correlated with moral good. Instead, under certain circumstances, it correlates instead with cruelty, power and authoritarianism of the right and left. This correlation appears to be particularly noticable in periods when the prevalent

1. Walter Benjamin, Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1963, p.48. "The logical result of fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life".

value-system is in decline, and when the artist's preoccupation is with the search for an alternative system. Thus, Huysmans writes in the light of the decline of rationalism, Burgess in the Britain of the 1960s; Thomas Mann continues Nietzsche's meditation on the sterility of nineteenth-century Europe, and writes at the same time that sterility was countered by the imposition of an alternative value-system by the National-Socialists. Günter Grass, whilst implicitly attacking, from a Social Democrat point of view, the inconsistencies of the Communist author, is writing under the materialist atmosphere of the Wirtschaftswunder.

Malraux's own work may be seen in the light of this pattern. It has its origins in the "nouveau mal du siècle", the moral disorientation of the early 1920s, and it constitutes an attempt to seek out a new and valid value-system to fill the vacuum. Thus the original problem which faces Malraux is metaphysical in nature, and the solutions which he proposes: action, revolution, art, are similarly to be seen in a metaphysical context. In this respect, E.H.Gombrich's assertion that Malraux's art-philosophy is essentially "Expressionist" appears correct in the most complete meaning of the term, thereby identifying Malraux's work with the movement, Expressionism, which is precisely an avant-garde attempt to substitute for an outworn system of values a new and dynamic one.

The will in Malraux's work fulfils an aesthetic function. As such, it is non-ethical and authoritarian, finding its main preoccupations in the field of metaphysics. Its presence in Malraux's work, therefore, raises the question of his claim to humanism. As Claude-Edmonde Magny indicates so clearly (1), Malraux has the gift of fascination, by which, through his use of rhetoric, he can convey the impression of the presence of a value which is in reality absent. In this context, his assertion that Giotto conveys the "honneur d'être homme" (2) must be viewed with some circumspection, for Malraux's

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1. Claude-Edmonde Magny, "Malraux le fascinateur", Esprit, 10, October 1948.
  2. Les Voix du silence, p.266.

own understanding of historicity, his concentration upon great men, makes him vulnerable to the charge levelled by Merleau-Ponty, on the subject of Malraux, Koestler, James Burnham and Thierry Maulnier, that:

"ils n'ont pas tenté de tracer malgré tout un chemin pour l'humanisme de tous les hommes" (1).

The concept of history as the menacing embodiment of time establishes a perpetual war-time value-system: the ethical life of the present is banished, and mankind as a whole must invest its hopes for salvation in the select ranks of the men of will. That the exercise of the will confers upon Claude Vannec and Perken, Kyo and Ferral, Kassner and Magnin and Garcia, Giotto and Cézanne, a certain grandeur is beyond discussion. It is more questionable whether those who cannot follow them find their honour protected and affirmed by the heroes' actions, that the achievement of dignity by one "Grand Navigateur" implies automatically dignity for all men. The will struggles against a silent Heaven and finally achieves victory by creating its own world, which constitutes a rectification of the real world. Its success, however, like that begun in the light morning mist of Austerlitz, is metaphysical, but not ethical, in nature.

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1. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Propos: La Politique paranoïaque", in Signes, p.327.

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NOTE:

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