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THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE
NOVELS OF ANDRE MALRAUX

BY

MARGARET FLOWERS SOBEL

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INTRODUCTION

In Malraux's 1926 essay La Tentation de l'Occident the Chinese Ling tells his European correspondant A.D.:

La réalité absolue a été pour vous [European man] 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

This important statement establishes the direction of Malraux's entire career. Influenced by Nietzsche, Malraux was convinced that God was dead; he feared also that God's heir, man, was dead too. For Malraux, his age then "searches with anguish" in a desperate attempt to endow man with a new significance.

In his book The Tower and the Abyss, an Inquiry into the Transformation of the Individual, Erich Kahler says that from the beginning of this century we have been living the "existential experience" (much broader and more profound than any "existential philosophy"). Epitomized in Antoine Roquentin's "nausée" this existential experience is the decomposition of all rational explanation of our lives, decomposition of general terms and concepts, of time, of memory, of history and even of human perception:

the accumulation, the concentration, indeed the quasi-physical climax of all the intellectual and moral crises of the past generations, and most especially of the crisis of the individual. 2
This sort of decomposition of the ordered universe of Christendom has been called the appearance of the absurd. In the early 1920's Malraux was already acutely aware of what would later be termed the "absurd." His novels are the artistic transpositions of his awareness of this European problem. From the beginning he knew that the crisis of the individual and his own search for literary expression were bound together. As he was to say in the preface to Le Temps du mépris written in 1935:

l'histoire de la sensibilité artistique en France depuis cinquante ans pourrait être appelée l'agonie de la fraternité virile. Son ennemi réel est un individualisme informulé, épar de travers le XIXe siècle, et né bien moins de la volonté de créer l'homme complet que du fanatisme de la différence. Individualisme d'artistes, préoccupé surtout de sauvegarder le "monde intérieur" et fondé seulement lorsqu'il s'applique au domaine du sentiment ou du rêve. 3

Taking as a starting point the notion of individualism developed during the 19th century - a notion whose value was finally proved worthless by the end of the First World War - I intend to examine Andre Malraux's novels to determine how he attempts to transform this outmoded manner of viewing the individual into a significance for man which is suited to the conditions of the 20th century, the era of the existential experience.

Rather than explore indefinitely the "interior world" of individuals obsessed with their "difference" as
the 19th century had done, Malraux would orient his search in the opposite direction. His description of the world of his novel Le Temps du mépris applies to all his works:

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. 4

What did the individual feel in this world of tragedy? Before turning to the novels themselves to see how Malraux's fictional characters will deal with their individuality, a brief description is necessary of the individual's situation in his world.

In La Tentation de l'Occident Malraux characterizes contemporary Western man as being obsessed with his separation from any transcendental force, from the world and from his fellow man. The individual must inevitably feel an intense sensation of solitude and isolation. Aware of his isolation he will attempt either to escape his solitude by trying to erase his distinct, individual existence; or he will attempt to exploit and impose this very individuality. However, the situation of the individual, the nature of both his own being as well as that of the surrounding world always stands ready to thwart his escape from obsessive isolation.

This isolation and profound sense of solitude which all of Malraux's characters feel is brought about
by two menaces: the interior menace which comes from within the self and the exterior menace which results from the individual's position in a hostile world. These menaces both make up what Malraux calls "le Destin" which forces upon the individual "la conscience ...de ce qui lui est étranger et de ce qui l'entraîne; du cosmos dans ce qu'il a d'indifférent et dans ce qu'il a de mortel; l'univers et le temps, la terre et la mort."

To begin with, the individual is threatened from within himself by his "demons," the dark and uncontrollable forces which torture him from deep in his subconscious. This is what Malraux meant when he said in D'une jeunesse européenne (1927) that in inaugurating the exploration of the self, psychoanalysis had opened a Pandora's box of forces which deprived Western man of his best arms: his assurance of being a rational integral person. Always ready to break through the wall of conscious lucidity, these "demons" haunt the individual and prevent him from ever grasping himself.

At the same time that they preclude any complete knowledge of the self, these subterranean forces never permit the individual to escape awareness of the fact that there will always remain a deep well of terror which makes escape beyond the self impossible. The presence of the "épouvante," one's own personal portion of "le
Destin," is constantly able to pull the individual back down into his private morass. If we are bound into ourselves, without any definite awareness of what we are, we soon learn that we therefore can never leave ourselves in order to know others. In Les Voix du silence Malraux tells of writing a novel in which one of the principal characters is deeply shocked to realize that he hears his own voice with his throat while others hear his voice with their ears. Because this was the case, Malraux says, he called his novel La Condition humaine. This impossibility of communication between individuals throws individual man back into sterile solitude. In a significant marginal note to Gaeton Picon's Malraux par lui-même, Malraux himself states:

Le mot "connaître" appliqué aux êtres, m'a toujours fait rêver. Je crois que nous ne connaissons personne. Ce mot recouvre l'idée de communion, celle de familiarité, celle d'élucidation - et quelques autres. "Connaître les hommes pour agir sur eux." dit Stendhal; et pour chacun cette connaissance serait claire. Mais le romancier nous en apporte une bien différente, extérieure lorsqu'il s'agit des personnages, épisodiques et qui n'est pas réellement intérieure lorsqu'il s'agit des héros. Elle ne résout pas l'énigme de l'individu, elle la supprime.

Commenting on the world of Malraux's novels as being a world of separation, Pierre de Boisdeffre judges that the endless dialogues in these novels are, in fact, only successive monologues - each individual
speaking to himself, for himself, without thinking of his interlocutor who, for his part moreover, is never swayed. As Boisdeffre puts it, "ses héros ne peuvent pas se reconcilier sans se nier."

This rebuff from others, who cannot permit us to enter their individual selves, leads us from the interior menace to the exterior menace which is the world at large.

One of the principal manifestations of this exterior aspect of the "destin qui pèse sur l'homme" is the hostility of nature. It ranges from the immediate threat of the jungle, the "clenched fist" which threatens to literally engulf man in its general process of suffocation and decomposition, to the indifference of the cosmos which provides the impassive decor for the ridiculously futile attempt of the individual to impose his will and his accomplishments.

This last phase of the portrayal of menacing nature is apparent in many descriptive passages from *L'Espoir* dealing with the Spanish Civil War. For example:

> Le soir sans soleil couchant et sans autre vie que celle du feu, comme si Madrid eût été portée par une planète morte, faisait de cette fin de journée un retour aux éléments. Tout ce qui était humain disparaissait dans la brume de novembre crevée d'obus et roussie de flammes. 9

The activity of the aviators in *L'Espoir* is the most striking symbol of the vanity of human pursuits:

> L'avion qui tournait, comme une minuscule
planète, perdu dans l'indifférente gravitation des mondes, attendait que passât sous lui Tolède, son Alcazar rebelle et ses assiégants, entraînés dans le rythme absurde des choses terrestres. 10

This range of nature from the tangible physical threat of tropical vegetation in *La Voie royale* (1928) to the detached and impersonal antipathy of a vast cosmos which *L'Espoir* (1937) reveals, is an expanding view of nature which increases in scope as the novels themselves gain complexity.

From its earliest introduction in the novels of Malraux nature also implies time. In an article of art criticism "Portrayal in the West and Far East," Malraux points to one of the consequences of the disappearance of reassuring Christendom, an occurrence first commented on in *La Tentation de l'Occident*:

Nature came into its own and with it, the passing hour, as Christianity lost its hold on man. As long as man expected to outlive the world's extinction, seasons were merely decorative settings, in literature as in painting. Once men suspected that the earth would outlast their race, the seasons acquired a new significance. From Charles d'Orleans to Victor Hugo, from the "Seasons" in the cathedrals to Van Gogh, the trend of Western art follows the declension of eternity. 11

History, as the record of the passage of time, inevitably suggests that individuals have no lasting influence, for they will be ground down by the determinism of historical events. The fatality of determinism of time which denies the individual will is perhaps the central
reason why many individuals in Malraux's novels will question Communism. Indeed, their dilemma signifies the endless antagonism between the individual and the collectivity which in its impersonal way can outlast any single man.

Just as nature, in its broadest interpretation, includes time, it also implies death, which after all is a natural process to which all individuals submit. Death also expresses time in the form of the fatality of eternity as this passage from D'une jeunesse européenne makes clear: "Vieillir, c'est aussi subir un ordre intérieur auquel peu d'hommes échappent. Contre cet ordre éternel, quelles révoltes sont possibles?" Death is the "supreme solitude" declares Mounier a fatality, which like the fatality of birth, is the irrefutable proof of the absurdity of life. Confronting death, Perken, an early hero of Malraux, displays a tragic egotism as he cries: "Il n'y a pas...de mort...Il y a seulement...moi...moi qui vais mourir." Perken seeks as he is dying to impose his will even on his death. He tries to "faire sa mort." Instead, all that is left is the inevitable fact that he is alone, his metaphysical solitude is endless.
In the face of these menaces, in the face of the "human condition" which incessantly threatens to erase the individual, Malraux would propose that the writer who chooses to deal with this challenge explore the individual's possibilities rather than his essence. In other words, an ontological approach teaches us practically nothering of value in the struggle to realize the individual. The only course therefore is a phenomenological one which will abandon the "monde interieur" of self-conscious individualism and explore the positive avenues which the individual can open for himself.

This entire quest of the self is in fact a desperate attempt to leave oneself, to leave one's inner self full of chaotic demonic confusion and to arrive at a lucidity on the outside. In other words to thrust oneself outward, make oneself in effect be lost, submerged in an exterior adventure or endeavor.

Malraux showed in La Tentation de l'Occident that Western civilization is unable to escape the fundamental attitude that the individual is distinct from the universe. All of his novels will depict the struggle of the individual either to negate this distinctiveness or to validate it through creative, lucid assertion. This will be the effort to "transformer en conscience une expérience aussi large que pòssible." Through such creation the self must
be fixed outside the self beyond one's demons. The form will be adventure, revolution and later art. In every case this compulsion of the individual is revealed as a "volonte de deité." Gisors in La Condition humaine analyzes many of Malraux's heroes when he declares to Ferral:

l'homme n'a pas envie de gouverner: il a envie de contraindre...d'être plus qu'homme dans un monde d'hommes. Échapper à la condition humaine... non pas puissant: tout puissant. La maladie chimérique, dont la volonté de puissance n'est que la justification intellectuelle, c'est la volonté de deité: tout homme rêve d'être dieu. 15

Instead of the "fanatisme de la différence" which Malraux sees as the failing of the 19th century individualism which followed the practice of "gratter sans cesse l'individu," he is convinced that the ethical individualist strives to transmute his inner anguish into a "scar on the earth," a creative assertion, by means of a "lyrisme transfigurateur."

When the role of the individual is studied in Malraux's novels, it will be clear, however, that just as the human condition consists of the two-fold threat from within the individual and from the universe without, so the behavior of the individual is always somewhere in a subtle balance of negation and validation. A passage from Charles Moeller's study of Malraux touches on this point:
L'aventure affirme la royauté de l'homme sur le monde, mais, avant d'être élevé au-dessus des contraintes de l'existence, il faut aussi être le roi de soi-même. Je ne demande si la plupart des personnages de Malraux ne sont pas secrètement marqués d'une sorte de découragement initial, accepté dans l'adolescence: Ils ont renoncé à vaincre en eux-mêmes le déferlement des rêves inhumains, peut-être aussi la pesée d'une tentative morale. Ils ont alors, devant le chaos de leur être intérieur, reporté avec une violence accrue de leur secrète capitulation leurs énergies spirituelles sur le monde extérieur; autrement dit, désespérés de jamais "évangiliser" par une persuasion lente et attentive les terres inconnues de leur conscience intime, ils ont brûlé les étapes: au lieu d'humaniser, d'apprivoiser avec patience cette terre vierge, hantée de monstres inhumains, grottillante aussi de menaces d'ordre moral, ils ont préféré la couper, l'amputer.

I feel that this analysis is correct but I do not think it is quite so safe to assume that Malraux's individuals were convinced they should "évangiliser" their inner selves. Nevertheless, I think that Moeller has very forcefully pointed out this negation/validation theme.

This study of the individual comes down unavoidably however, to the paradox facing the individual who has chosen to "validate" himself. The inevitable question occurs: is the individual self in danger of being negated just as surely in adventure, in a validating thrust of the self beyond itself as in any directly negative activity? In a word, don't these individuals resemble the child who thought it could life itself up by its own hair, to use Denis Boak's analogy?
How can one be one's own transcendence? How can any attempt at positive autonomy keep from returning to negative solitude? Malraux has been called a humanist. Can his "humanism" mean anything positive to the individual? Isn't there a danger of simply terming humanism any system of thought which rejects supra-human solutions to man's condition? In other words, does humanism merely mean absence of a belief in a divine dispenser of meaning to mankind or must it include the presence of a positive force which generates hope and strength on the human level, a positive force which could therefore be utilized by all individuals?

A study of the role of the individual in the novels of Andre Malraux will show that whether an individual's compulsion is predominately a validation or a negation it cannot help but fail for in both cases the individual in Malraux's fictional works is striving to attain an absolute state which will surmount all the elements within his field of knowledge. However, the curse of the "non-existent" individual whose absence is just as destructive as his presence will prevent Western man either from realizing himself or from finding a larger system of salvation which can then bring meaning back to the individual. It is impossible to master all the interior menaces of one's own being and it is therefore even more futile to
expect to blot out the exterior menaces which threaten to engulf the individual. The elements of the human condition will prevent any positive individuality for they will always make man aware of his subordinate position. On the other hand, the same elements of the human condition will maintain the negative individuality of solitude and of isolation from one's fellow man.
CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGINS OF THE STRUGGLE
BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS DESTINY

A.

According to Malraux, the view of the individual which is found in Western civilization beginning with Greece is seen in retrospect to be a distinct departure from the Oriental thought which preceded it. Essentially this Oriental idea of man is based on the separation of Appearance and Reality. By this view, everything which undergoes the rule of time is only Appearance, including human life. Reality is actually a fatality, an inflexible order which is beyond man but which establishes the significance of all events in man's life. All man's being therefore is governed by impersonal forces, dominated by Fate. The self is not distinct but rather is an indistinguishable part of the whole, dissolved in the cosmos.

In light of this one can understand how revolutionary the Greek view of man was. There, for the first time, man began to be conceived of as being distinct from the world: an entity. The self, as such, exists and acquires an "identity" which can
be defined as the feeling of personal wholeness on the conscious level. The human being is no longer inex- tricable from the forces of the universe. In Malraux's terms, that mysterious Oriental fatality lost its voice on the Acropolis. The intensity of human life is its own measure and although the Greeks never dismissed the "divine," that mysterious aspect of the universe which surpassed reason, humanism had come into being. Aware of his powers and therefore of his freedom, man becomes aware also of his value as an original and unique being. Until well into the 19th century, human individuality, whether it was called soul, spirit or ego, was believed to exist not relatively, but absolutely in time and space.

Christianity did not directly challenge the view of man as it had been established by the Greeks. It too believed in the value of the distinct individual, teaching that each human being is created in the image of God. In addition, by stating that each person has an immortal soul directed by a benevolent and all-encompassing Providence, Christianity extended the destiny of the individual beyond the limits of his mortal condition. This Christian belief that God has a particular concern for each individual can be traced to the Judaic background as well as to the Greek influence. The Hebrew prophets considered themselves to be in a distinct
relationship both to their God and to the Nation. In addition, the God of Israel had always been seen as a Person. This manner of considering God contributed to the emphasis on individuality that is one of the dominant characteristics of Judaism - the covenant of God with the nation Israel reflected by the covenant of God with each individual.

In short, the Christian doctrine definitely stresses the value, dignity and responsibility of the individual. Malraux suggests, however, that the affirmation of "human-ness" found in Christianity is more western, i.e. derivative of Greece, than Christian since the Byzantine or Eastern church put more emphasis on the "otherworldly" aspect of Christ and tended to minimize his human attributes. In any case, the importance of the doctrine of Incarnation joined with that of Redemption assured Christians that their God spoke to them and that they would be saved in their identity as specific, concrete individuals.

Man becomes reconciled with the world since this world was created by God for the use of man. Thus this geocentric view of the universe contributes to the formation of Christendom which differs from Christianity in that it is not only a religion but an entire ethical structure of society. The doctrine of the Christian
Church leads all men who live within her sphere to adopt her "weltanschauung." The best illustration of this meticulously ordered "world-view" is the feudal system itself whereby the political, economic and cultural aspects of a man's life were carefully patterned after man's relationship with God.

In the thirteenth century Christianity took a turn which was to be of immense significance for the future of the individual. To the humanization of religion was added the notion of personalization of faith. The relationship between man and God becomes much more individualized. For example, the cult of the Virgin became prominent at this time, worshippers preferring to appeal to the human mother of Christ rather than directly approach the Son of God. The community life element of faith became less accentuated. The importance of this development for the individual was that as long as Christianity was conceived of as a collective adoration, individual guilt was never a dominant preoccupation. Now, however, the focus was on personal sin and consequently individual anxiety takes root. As Malraux said: "Christianity's 'coup d'etat' was to have established fatality in man and to have founded it upon our very nature." The implication of this personalization of Christian faith is great, for with this phase the Western world lost its collective dimension and would
never recover it. From this point on each man is alone responsible for his salvation.

Joseph Hoffmann concludes that the ruin of the "world-view" that was Christendom (though not to become apparent until the 20th century) began here where thought became oriented around the individual. As faith became personalized so also the world became more secular. The Renaissance therefore could be considered not so much as an anti-Christian phenomenon but as an extension of this "liberation" which was begun in the 13th century.

The decline of Christendom passes through another important phase in the 18th century. At that time accumulation of ideas, of knowledge of the surrounding world replaces the pursuit of a relationship with God as a goal for the individual. In other words, the unifying value that Christianity had provided to Christendom is replaced by a multiplicity of values - there is no longer an absolute in Western society. The security of an absolute had already begun to vanish during the struggle of the Reformation. At that time the individuality of each Christian was no longer thought to be simply his distinctness as a passive object of God's grace but was viewed as an obligation to actively judge oneself by means of the conscience. Furthermore,
the means used by this individual conscience to establish one's moral attitude is primarily reason, a factor which ultimately threatens the unity of an authoritarian Christendom. Luther attacked the "unreasonableness," moral and theological, of the sale of indulgences, for example. The 18th century will extend the judgement of individual reason to ethical and political questions. Proceeding from reason, therefore, the 18th century erects in the place of unifying Christianity the multiplicity of values such as liberty, progress, democracy, science, etc. Instead of the world being offered by man to God it is now cultivated by man for man. Although the facade of Christendom remained intact, it had ceased to be infused with a vital "raison d'être." In essence, this state of affairs marks the beginning of modern times if the modern era can be defined as that period in which man no longer is universally assured what his purpose on earth is.

We are able to see this now but the men of the 18th century and even the 19th century were not yet fully aware of their participation in a radically different situation. Progress, reason, liberty and science were fervently pursued as man strove to fill the void left by the death of Christendom with this range of values created by man for the glory of man.
The work of the Encyclopedists, who perhaps unconsciously took on the task of writing a new sacred text, was fully expanded by the 19th century. As the Ancien Régime disappeared, intellectual, humanitarian and scientific advancement would receive the same hommage previously given to God's minister on earth, the King.

The 19th century shows the full impact of the disintegration of Christendom which had at last become apparent in the "Siècle de Lumières." The individual now bore the full burden of manufacturing his own intrinsic significance. In order to be able to clearly understand later the moral and intellectual climate in which Malraux begins his career, it will be helpful to look at the developments of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th:

This segment of history is particularly complex and contains a great number of intellectual currents which made themselves felt at an accelerating rate. Roughly, however, the period could be said to be characterized by two broad forces. These are, on the one hand, those influences and circumstances which undermine the coherent framework of the unified world Christendom had known; and, on the other hand, the varied, often contradictory efforts to recoup the losses sustained by this diminishing world view. Or, as Malraux will
extend Nietzsche's phrase, after the death of God man himself was in mortal danger. The intellectuals of the 19th century and early 20th century were divided into those who contributed to man's destruction and those who attempted to revive him. At the center of this activity, of course, was the fate of the individual. At the outset of Malraux's career more than a half century of turmoil will not have succeeded in settling the question.

The years following the Revolution of 1789, which had hoped to permanently establish the Rights of Man, eventually showed that man was perhaps not equal to the task of giving himself his own significance. Already the disappointments of 1848 suggested that the progress of the sciences and of education would not develop the generosity and reason which was thought to be latent in every man. The desired end of a fraternal humanity simply did not materialize. Then, after the "débâcle" of 1871, a general feeling of disillusionment and uneasiness indicated that the era of great expectations in the secular humanitarianism introduced with the Revolution was definitely over. Hence, there was a tendency to retreat to traditional values and to counteract the dangers of liberal individualism with wise and beneficent Authority.

However the course of political events which succeeded in compromising humanitarian progress was overshadowed by a larger phenomenon of even more profound consequences
- the Industrial Revolution.

The "traditional values" to which so many would point as being the only salvation for French society, were in fact already being irrevocably weakened. The Industrial Revolution, among other things, caused vast shifts in population and thus radically hastened the disappearance of the small natural groups in French life such as the patriarchal family, the parish, provincial cohesion—all groups made to man's measure, to which he could "relate" and which gave the individual support and meaning.

Erich Kahler, who points out that there has never really been such a thing as a totally integral individual, divides the groups to which men belong into two categories, the Community and the Collective. According to Kahler, the Community grows out of natural origins and can be seen in such units as the family, the tribe, or the organically evolved nation. These divisions he calls "pre-" or "sub-" individual.

The other basic category of groups which Kahler distinguishes, the Collective, is, on the other hand, "supra-" or "post-" individual for it is formed not from origins but toward ends.
Political parties, unions and professional societies are among the various types of collectives. Whereas the basic ethnic or religious forces once determined the formation of groups, since the Industrial Revolution essentially, collectives have begun to form autonomously, artificially so to speak, on purely economic or technical grounds. The pernicious effect that this process can have on the individual and his personality is not hard to imagine. A gradual disruption of the human self occurs as collectivization splits the self into a collective, functional part and a human, actually individual part which grows more and more atrophied. Every individual is in danger of alienation from his surrounding world and ultimately from himself.\textsuperscript{12}

Returning from the broader context of Western society in general to 19th century France we can see that this analysis holds true. The "Community" which was incessantly cited by the traditionalists as being the bulwark from which France must defend herself, was, in fact, already threatened with disintegration. Its moral certitudes, its complex network of laws, customs and traditions which had for centuries formed the country's moral casing ("armature morale") were being eroded by the large, anonymous, centralized modern state brought into being by the Industrial Revolution. The individual simply could not consider this new structure as an object of veneration, for the Collective did not possess the organic, natural relevance to the individual
which the Community had provided. Therefore the 19th century saw France caught up in an accelerating evolution which intensified both the forces which vitiated the traditional structure of society and those forces which desperately tried to buttress it.

The discoveries of science and the spread of the scientific method of reasoning to all phases of intellectual inquiry - Darwin's *Origin of the Species* and Renan's *Life of Jesus*, for example - openly called into question the explanation of the world presented by the Catholic hierarchy. This attitude, coupled with the ever present clamor for political liberalization, seriously challenged the "powers that were."

The two principal systems of counterattack which took shape to meet this challenge were Catholic traditionalism as expounded by Joseph de Maistre and scientific humanitarianism of the sort presented by Auguste Comte. Both doctrines were marked by a deep distrust of individual aspirations and soon revealed their intrasigent aspects. Catholic traditionalism, obviously, rejected the rationalism of the 18th century and the whole ethos of the Revolution. In asserting that the end of political institutions was the accomplishment of divine will, this movement became a theocratic absolutism. Scientific humanitarianism on the other hand posed a more subtle threat to the
individual for it used some of the very developments of the 19th century which under other interpretations loosened traditional strictures. By giving philosophy the goal of transforming the human mind into a mirror of the exterior order of things, scientific humanitarianism in effect instituted a social determinism which denied the individual any autonomous psychological unity. It therefore resulted in a collectivist absolutism. Even such figures as Taine who pointed out the dangers of both the positivist-collectivist and the theocratic forms of absolutism continued to espouse traditionalism, albeit enlightened.

As could be predicted, an upsurge of individualism appeared in frustrated rebuttal to the call for a return to what were now empty values. Tison-Braun points up two branches of this individualism - nihilistic and retributive. Both forms reveal a current of perverted, egotistic and anarchistic idealism which begins here in the pre-Symbolist period (c. 1875) and continues well into the 20th century. The "beylisme" of earlier years together with a vulgarization of the Nietzschean superman theory deliberately puts a protective mask between the individual and the exterior world. This individualism has a strong taste for power, hardness and energy in a game of life which is all the more exhilarating for its
The retributive individualism ("individualisme justicier") will include anarchists and terrorists such as Bakounine and Kropotkine and is placed, ideologically speaking, at the extreme end of humanitarianism. At once fraternal and violent, idealistic and destructive, this anarchy considers the individual not only as enemy of society but as its judge as well. Alfred Jarry's play Ubu Roi which was finally understood in its 1896 presentation, crystallizes "le mélange de peur et de mépris que la société moderne inspirait à l'individu."

Digressing from a strictly historical setting for a moment it would be interesting to see how Malraux viewed the place of the individual in French society as the literature of the past century presented it. He has said: "In France there is a psychological and an ethical individualism, almost always confused, The first concept attaches its value to the "difference," to the unique character of each person; the second attaches its values to an absolute right to act claimed by each individual." He goes on to name Jean Jacques Rousseau and Gide as examples of psychological individualists and Nietzsche and Balzac as illustrations of ethical individualism.

As we know Romantic literature firmly established
this psychological individualism. Its heroes intensified the notion of distinctness already vaguely perceived by the western man to a point where they appear not only alone as far as the world goes, but irreconcilable with their immediate social surroundings as well. The entire idea of the dandy, so well observed by Baudelaire, was based on this conviction that it was essential to set oneself apart. In the preface to Albert Ollivier's study of Saint Just (whom Malraux would term an ethical individualist) he points out the dissimilarities between someone like Saint Just and the psychological individualist:

Pour expliquer Saint Just, le XIXe siècle a tenté de mêler la Raison à l'individualisme; mais son individualisme est possessif, chez Napoléon comme chez les héros de Balzac et il est le sentiment-type par lequel le petit bourgeois se transforme en aristocrate de fiction. Les Rastignacs envient le pouvoir de Saint Just, mais ils tiennent moins celui-ci pour un modèle que pour un extravagant, terme que déjà lui appliquait Danton. Professeur d'énergie? quelles leçons un politicien, un historien, ambitieux du Second Empire ou de la Troisième République, un Rubempré, un Julien Sorel même, tireraient-ils de lui? Qu'y-a-t-il de commun entre l'habilité au conduite d'une action légendaire; entre la complaisance qu'ils mettent à leur portrait et la fureur qu'il met à sa statue?... Il semble s'être fort peu intéressé à sa personne... Oregueilleux, certes; d'un orgueil sacerdotal, bien différent de la vanité. Il voulait n'être que ses actes et que ses actes fussent exemplaires. Or, si l'acte théâtral pare l'individu, l'acte exemplaire le dépossède.

What Malraux has called ethical individualism resembles what Mme Tison-Braun terms retributive individualism. Although Malraux draws a sharp line
between psychological and ethical individualism, it does not seem that this differentiation is always so simple to make. Even though differences exist between a Rastignac and a Saint Just, they are perhaps more differences of degree than of type. Especially toward the end of the 19th century, the individualism of the psychological variety which Malraux sets apart seems rather to correspond to the nihilistic individualism which Tison-Braun discusses. Moreover, this schism between the individual and society which the Romantic dandy typifies is found in the diffused nihilism of Decadent literature. The sophisticated suffering of esthetes such as Huysman's des Esseintes was essentially "une 18 coquerterie avec le Néant," an ethical posture.

In the face of all these iconoclastic individualisms the defenders of traditionalism feverishly worked to re-erect the fallen idols of French life. About 1890 a general refurbishing of values was begun.

Among the French intellectuals who turned to the question of the relation of the individual to society, one of the more formidable was Maurice Barrès. It is to his credit that he approached the issue by a study of the personality. However, there is reason to agree with Tison-Braun's opinion that when Barrès seemed to move from the extreme individualism of his "Culte du Moi" period to the conformism of his later traditionalist
phase, he was in reality only oscillating from an 
19 egotistic nihilism to a nationalistic nihilism.
In his rigorous examination of his "Moi" Barrès was 
unable to find in this sensibility any universal 
element so there is nothing in his thought which 
resembles the love of Man found among followers of 
Rousseau or liberals of the 1848 type. It simply comes 
20 down to a "particularisme ombrageux" since this "Moi" 
sets out in the world as an impassive conqueror intent 
on "feeling as much as possible by analyzing as much as 
possible." This intense pursuit of the self however 
can only bring an anxiety of unfulfillment for 
in rejecting and eliminating everything in himself which 
is "barbare" (not of himself but brought in from 
outside) he practically ceases to exist. As David 
Wilkinson said of Barrès' program: "The self soon dries 
up under its own microscope." As Barrès' thought 
developed, this painful, unstable egotism found a haven 
in the concept of race; the individual consciousness was 
saved from evaporation by being considered as only a 
21 moment in the consciousness of the race. In other 
words, Barrès' nationalism appears as a sort of collective 
egotism for it affords the means of no longer 
being alone while at the same time remaining unique. 
The central theme of Les Déracinés is Barrès' attempt 
to reintegrate the individual into society and to help
him find his reason for living by making him aware of his deep connection with national reality.

This mystique of nationalism was fixed into dogma by Charles Maurras who set out to destroy the evil democratic institutions through the machinery of the Action Française. For both Barrès and Maurras the individual was thought to be only a temporary incarnation of the race; hence, individualism could only be an aberration of the uprooted ("déraciné") thinker.

Tison-Braun seems to have uncovered the irony of this traditionalist position when she states that patriotism for these men was welded to a negative tendancy of the personality - the tendancy to justify by patriotism the restrictive system necessary to their psychological equilibrium. As she says:

marqués au plus profond de leur personnalité par le nihilisme de la fin du siècle, incapables de foi spontanée mais tourmentés par le besoin d'absolu ils se créent, par la volonté et la réflexion, un absolu situé dans le monde des phénomènes, autrement dit, une idole – la nation.

As for the effectiveness of their system: "Leur cité n'est qu'une arche close sur l'océan des phénomènes."

In addition to the secular conservatism exemplified by Barrès which attempted to revivify the nation, there was a neo-christian movement which sought to breathe new life into the Church. In its most humanitarian aspects this movement sincerely attempted to renovate
the conception of the individual's role in society by encouraging Christianity to participate in social progress. Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* was a gesture in this direction. The so-called Catholic Renaissance throughout Europe at this time did offer a faith to intellectuals weary of scepticism. However, Catholicism adapts poorly to liberalism; there is definitely a good deal of truth to the statement that this "nostalgie avouée de la foi recouvrait et dissimulait une nostalgie secrète de la foi." 

In France Paul Claudel was one of the leading figures of this Catholic Renaissance. Beneath the force and beauty of his poetry, a basic conservatism can be felt. Claudel, as did Barrès, considered the evil modern society suffered from to be a "déracinement." However, instead of designating democracy as the cause, Claudel asserted that man's original sin was at the root of the malaise. If modern society's problems are seen from this religious vantage point, the conclusion would inevitably be that modern man suffers due to the transgression of trying to alter the mysterious order of the world which God had provided for man for all eternity. Here the call for Christian humility strongly resembles the call for traditionalistic obedience. Inevitably, egotism is condemned and with it even the most disinterested forms of individualism, for
individualism, according to this line of reasoning, can only be a divinization of reason or a vulgar unleashing of instincts. Proponents of individualism would, of course, retort that Claudel, like de Maistre, looked to Heaven for the metaphysical justification of an authoritarian and repressive order which their psychology called for.

In the period from the fall of Bismarck (1890) until the Tangier incident (1905) there had seemed to be a revival, in literature at least, of humanitarian hope. Its unity was illusory though, since all that such men as Émile Zola and André Gide could be said to have in common was their aversion for the oppressive or decadent society of their time. Zola sought to validate the individual by initiating him to the naturalist joy of life which would harness the instincts of vital forces and so enrich humanity. The individual should adopt solidarity as his principle rather than the competition of the existing society. Gide, on the other hand, espoused the pursuit of "ferveur" which would allow the individual to realize himself through "becoming" ("devenir"), an idea which definitely set individual liberty (with tinges of Nietzschean negativism) against the collective forces. Furthermore, Gide was torn within himself by the simultaneous pulls toward "abandon de soi" in Christian sacrifice and toward "abandon à soi"
in this sort of Nietzschean or dionysian fervor.  

(Nietzsche was known in France through articles from about 1890 on and his works were being translated from 1890 to 1906. Although he had few avowed disciples in France, thought all through these Decadent years was penetrated by a sort of diffused vitalism adapted from Nietzsche. The anti-historicism aspect of his work, the lack of belief in progress and evolution added fuel to the already existent discontent with rationalism and civilization as a whole. 25 As has already been shown the exultation of force and energy was adapted to the purposes of nihilistic individualists.)

Another intellectual force which deeply influenced the conception of the individual at the turn of the century was the philosophy of Henri Bergson. In over-simplified terms, his system criticized materialism and insisted on the rights of the free "esprit." Bergson pictured life as an "élan vital" out of the material toward the unknown and the undetermined. The implication for the individual in Bergson's thinking was that if intuition could be granted the right to go beyond the rational faculty of the mind, then individual inspiration was given new support. This position was a culmination in the field of esthetics of the typical 19th century belief in creative evolution. Furthermore,
when irrationalism entered philosophy, ultimate reality
was no longer seen as a stable absolute but rather
as a sort of "dynamisme immanent." In any case, it
was not long before the import of this theory, deformed
or otherwise, reached the general public, which took
from Bergson's system a "lesson of irrationalism." 26
The notion of the "moi" which seemed to emerge from
Bergsonism was often adopted without the accompanying
reason needed to assure the force and the cohesion of
the personality. Whereas Bergson himself had thought
to expand the personality, the pseudo-bergsonians
tended toward its dissolution, confusing subjectivity
with spiritualism and pre-logic thinking with intuition.
Jules Romains (who sought to revitalize the individual
by bringing him to participate in unanimism) called
this distortion of Bergson's thought a taste for a
"nirvana du boudoir" which he considered nothing more
than an anemic Romanticism. 27

Throughout all this period of intellectual and
moral turmoil the nation as a whole seemed to retain
its cohesion. The French intelligentsia sensed the
depth of the ethical crisis but the "belle époque"
proceeded gaily on. At the end of the century though,
an event occurred which violently exposed the conflict
between the individual and society which had first appeared,
however slightly, in the 18th century and which was
brought to an acute state under the Third Republic. The Dreyfus Case irrevocably unmasked the rift in French life between those who believed in the freedom of man, in his conscience and in his reason; and those who sought refuge in irrational forces to counter their deep distrust of human possibilities. The very right of the individual to exist was questioned. Ideologically, the upshot of the Dreyfus conflict was a hardening of the positions of the opposing sides. The Army and the entire apparatus of chauvinism was strengthened and would propel the country through four years of butchery fifteen years later. The idealists of individualism, for their part, were exhilarated beyond the pragmatic strength needed to effectively reason with these traditionalists.

In looking back over the "fin de siècle" years in France, it becomes plain that the Death of God made all things possible for man but that man failed to find within himself the power to accomplish them:

la nature vaincue par la science, la tradition bousculée par le rythme des événements, la foi religieuse affaiblie, l'esprit humain est allé jusqu'au bout de toutes les idées. Il n'a plus de devoir, plus de foi, plus de frein, plus de racines qui soient incontestables. Il est pris de vertige devant cette liberté qu'il n'a pas conquise, qu'il n'a pas choisie, et qui lui est jetée comme une marque d'indifférence et d'abandon. 28
In the desperate search for guidance French thought oscillated between the extremes of anarchism and authoritarianism without finding satisfaction at any point in between. Neither the apologists of total individualism nor the defenders of reactionary traditionalism presented a viable solution to the crisis of the personality.

This deep unrest is really a "mal de trois siècles" which grows more and more strident as the individual faces the loss of his established inner as well as outer status. He is disoriented, forsaken and finally alienated. Throughout the last half of the 19th century while the ethical struggles just discussed were occurring, literature was reflecting this conflict by its constant obsession with the void of modern western values. Man is free but it is an "effrayante" freedom which no duty guides. As the material power grows the spiritual horizon narrows until the modern individual is like Baudelaire's:

"...roi d'un pays pluvieux
Riche mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très vieux."

The catastrophe of the First World War shattered the confident notion of European man as well as devastating the physical resources of manpower and territory. It spread to the whole country the malaise which had until then been felt only by the intellectual elite. The violence of the war was echoed in the years
following the armistice by a widespread questioning of heretofore sacrocanct values. As Valéry said, civilization was shown to have the same fragility as a life and the abyss of history was indeed large enough for everyone. Europe was crossed by an "extraordinary shiver" as she felt that she no longer resembled herself:

les faits...sont clairs et impitoyables...Il y a illusion perdue d'une culture européenne et la démonstration de l'impuissance de la connaissance à sauver quoi que ce soit; il y a la science, atteinte mortellement dans ses ambitions morales, et comme déshonorée par la cruauté de ses applications; il y a l'idéalisme, difficilement vainqueur, profondément meurtri responsable de ses rêves; le réalisme déçu, battu, accablé de crimes et de fautes; là convoitése et le renoncement également bafoués; les croyances confondues dans les camps, croix contre croix, croissant contre croissant; il y a les sceptiques eux mêmes désarçonnés par des événements si soudains, si violents, si émouvants, et qui jouent avec nos pensées comme le chat avec le souris, - les sceptiques perdent leurs doutes, les retrouvent, les repérident, et ne savent plus se servir des mouvements de leur esprit. L'oscillation du navire a été si forte que les lampes les mieux suspendues se sont à fin renversées. 33

The future of the individual was uncertain to say the least, as the various intellectual movements which grew up in post-war Europe demonstrated.

Even before the war, classical man was threatened by the appearance of the Proustian universe. In the place of the existence of a firm fixed personality surviving unchanged the various temporary "états d'âme,"
with Proust one saw the decomposition of the personality in a universe of incoherence and conflict. Carried to an extreme, the Proustian psychology ends in total subjectivism. In short, the individual is "l'etre qui ne peut sortir de soi, qui ne connait les autres qu'en soi et, en disant le contraire, ment." Through Proust, the full crisis of the personality becomes evident, a crisis which since the beginning of the century was smouldering under the crisis of institutions and values.

The most serious probing of the personality of the individual was conducted by Sigmund Freud. The forces of the subconscious were uncovered, and as the human psyche was more and more deeply explored its unity and coherence "dissolved into various levels, into a complexity of complexes, dreams...and memories." The discovery of the unfathomable depths of the self obviously refuted once and for all the belief that the individual could be rationally perceived.

On another front Communism attempted to eliminate the evils of czarist traditionalism by denying the individual's right to indulge in excessive self-expression. The Russian experiment intended to prove, in essence, that the whole was more valuable than the parts, and that individuals could be profitably amalgamated into a State. Joseph Hoffmann observes that
Communism should be thought of as the most rigorous example of the 19th century theory of the perfectibility of mankind rather than a 20th century innovation. Malraux said about the same thing when he stated that the Russian Revolution militarily was the first revolution of the 20th century but ideologically the last revolution of the 19th century.

In a 1929 discussion of his novel *Les Conquérants*, which deals with the August 1925 Canton-Hong-Kong strike led by the Communists Malraux said:

> La mesure dans laquelle le bolchevisme nous intéresse sur le plan de l'esprit est la mesure dans laquelle il s'oppose à l'apologie de l'individu qui a été la caractéristique du XIXe siècle, dans la mesure où il propose une méthode de vie opposée à celle de la bourgeoisie considérée...Le communisme est d'abord l'anti-thèse - au sens hégélien - de la bourgeoisie. 36

The Communists called this 19th century bourgeois individualism "consideration," a sort of fatuous self-esteem. Nicola Chiaromonte describes this middle class attitude as one in which the "individual is a prisoner of a loathsome kind of narcissism [and] can never see in the other person anything but the reflection of his own self [and who] is condemned either to use the other individual as an instrument or to yield to masochistic sentimentality in their presence." For the Communists this bourgeois individualism would become the focal point of the attack on bourgeois society which they considered
precisely to be a civilization of solitude. In the eyes of the Communists this solitude was the cause for the basic dissatisfaction they judged most bourgeois to be secretly prey to. In his preface to Roger Stéphane's *Portrait de l'aventurier*, Sartre says of the young bourgeois who are unable to free themselves from their backgrounds: "Ce n'est pas leur Moi qu'ils haissent mais leur solitude et ils ne comprennent pas que pour détruire l'une il faudrait détruire l'autre."

The Communist venture claimed as its goal the establishment of the positive values of a society free from individualism. Other groups were not so sure that anything should be established. In France a definite "après-guerre" nihilisme can be discerned. In fact, Dada very stridently celebrated its non-sensical futility. The movement had begun even before the War. As Marcel Arland said in 1924: "Ce ne fut pas un commencement; depuis longtemps tout était détruit, en morale comme en littérature; mais il importait qu'on dansât la bacchanale parmi les coupes brisées."

Surrealism was an outgrowth of Dada. Whereas Dada by its very nature of violent shock was intended as a short and gratuitous expression of anger, Surrealism sought to discredit the hackneyed values of society so as to restore these values with their original integrity. In its artistic and literary manifestations Surrealism
is marked by a strong receptiveness of everything
mysteriousness with the hope of thereby gaining access
to the true reality of the "surréal." As André Breton
said in one of his Manifestes, they sought "la
récupération totale de notre force psychique par un
moyen qui n'est autre que la descente vertigineuse en
nous." (We will hear more of this "descente vertigineuse"
when we see how Malraux reacted to the Surrealist movement.)

The undeniable political overtones of Surrealism
are manifest in its hatred of "toutes choses sociales."
As Louis Aragon taunted the bourgeois in a speech
which later appeared in the review Révolution surréaliste:

Nous aurons raison de tout. Et d'abord, nous
ruinerons cette civilisation qui vous est chère,
où vous êtes moulés comme des fossiles dans le
schiste. Monde occidental, tu es condamné à
mort. Nous sommes les défaitistes de l'Europe...
Nous reveillerons partout les germes de la
confusion et du mal. 42

Up to this point there seems to be scant reason
to think that the individual will find constructive
meaning in post-war Europe. Yet there persisted a
belief in personality, in individuality. As Malraux
will say in D'une jeunesse européenne, madmen may
give themselves many different identities but at least
they are successive. John Dewey points out in his
study Individualism New and Old that individualism is
definitely not static with a uniform content. In fact
it is in its very nature to be a flexible condition
adapting to each development of society as a whole. Even though the recognition of personality has always existed in the West it had never before had to bridge such a gap as then appeared between the material culture and the moral culture of Europe. For while the material culture was definitely corporate and technical, the moral culture still viewed individualism in terms which can be traced to medieval theology. This is perhaps another way of re-stating the analysis which Erich Kahler made of modern society as being increasingly dominated by the Collective as opposed to the Community. The question of whether the individual can indeed succeed in adapting to this atmosphere which had steadily destroyed his roots was still very much an open question when André Malraux began his career.

B.

As a member of the generation which came of age at the end of the Great War, André Malraux was among that group of French intellectuals which reached maturity just at the moment when the worth of intellectual pursuits as Europe had known them was dangerously compromised, Malraux's first wife, Clara Goldschmidt, whose family had emigrated from Germany,
describes in her memoirs of these years, *Nos Vingt Ans*, the mood of this generation during this period:

"Bouleversés par l'effondrement de l'univers catholique, nous n'aspirions plus à une totalité." 43 The intensity of youthful inquiry still existed however, even though the direction it would take was unclear:

Bien qu'éblouis de nouveautés, nous étions désespérés. Jamais nous n'avions eu autant besoin de Dieu qu'après cette guerre dont aucune Valhalla n'avait accueilli les héros. 44

Malraux's intellectual life was off to an ambitious start well before he was twenty. Although he did not follow any official course of study, he actively pursued his keen interests in literature, art and cinema. As a reticent but elegant and cultivated youth of 19, Malraux became associated with the book dealer and editor Doyon whom he supplied with rare editions discovered in "bouquinistes" stalls. Malraux soon knew the book dealer Kra for whom he supervised the edition of "de luxe" literary volumes. At this time Malraux began contributing to the reviews *Connaissance* and *Action* and soon to the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Introduced by his future wife, Clara, to the important art dealer Kahnweiler, Malraux was soon familiar with the best literary and artistic milieux. Among his acquaintances were the poets Max Jacob, Pierre Reverdy and Blaise Cendrars; the authors Pascal Pia and Marcel
Arland; the artists Picasso, Juan Gris, Georges Braque, Derain, Demetrios Galanis and Fernand Léger (who illustrated Malraux's *Lunes en papier* published by Kahnweiler in 1921.)

In a position of familiarity with the full range of current intellectual activity, Malraux nevertheless maintained an attitude of rather detached lucidity:

> alors répandue parmi la jeunesse intellectuelle à la fois décue par le maintien au pouvoir d'une oligarchie prisonnière des routines d'avant-guerre, et défiant à l'égard des partis novateurs, mais soumis à des doctrines rigides. 45

Unavoidably affected by the aftermath of the war, Malraux shares with others of his age an acute awareness of the absurd, in fact a fundamental pessimism. His first two works, *Le Royaume farfelu*, written between 1920 and 1927 and *Lunes en papier* written in 1921, reflect many characteristics of Dada and Surrealism but they also indicate Malraux's peculiarly personal response to the post-war situation. As Vandegans expresses it:

> Il sent que tout doit être changé, mais qu'avant de construire, il faut sauver; et d'abord l'homme en péril de succomber à l'absurde: c'est-à-dire à la fascination de ses profondeurs. 46

Malraux refused to approve this "recherche destructrice de soi où se complaît son temps" which he have seen to be typical of the "après-guerre nihiliste." He
sensed that in order to "se connaître sans se dissoudre,"
the individual must be reconstituted, turned away from
a negative exploration of the self and thrust toward a
conviction - which, of course, remained to be discovered
or founded. Accordingly the literary work as Malraux's
conception of it evolves, would not reflect the shifting,
variegated "moi" but would be a total manifestation,
through the medium of an imagination nourished by reality,
of a freedom which sets up its own universe beside that
of the world.

Dada soon seemed too clamorous for Malraux. He
had little in common with its rejection of culture since
he was unwilling to repudiate his respect for the cultural
heritage. Although he knew many Surrealist writers
and artists, Malraux did not wish to be considered as
one of them, Clara Malraux discloses. Even though he
shared many of their tastes and considered such figures
as Sade, Nerval and Jarry to be his literary ancestors
also, Malraux shrank from the irresponsibility often
displayed by Surrealists. He hesitated to worship an
unconscious totally unrestrained by traditional bounds.
Vandegans suggests that the influence of literary
cubism (the poetry of Max Jacob, for example) may have
contributed to Malraux's distaste for the direct
expression of the "moi" and to his interest in artistic
autonomy and objectivity. Beginning with his first
writings, therefore, Malraux feels the compulsion to rectify artistically rather than to destroy the universe. His first means of attack on fate is the imaginary, the "farfelu."

Although many of Malraux's later preoccupations can be found in the striking images of Le Royaume farfelu and Lunes en papier, it was not until after his return in 1924 from the first of two trips to the Orient that Malraux's talent would be expressed in works which reflect his particular contribution and which introduce the dominant themes of his career.

Malraux's interest in the Orient began well before his first Asian voyage. He had thoroughly familiarized himself with Oriental art through his wide reading. As a result of careful study of various scholarly reviews devoted to Asian culture, Malraux noticed an article in the Bulletin of the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient which aroused his curiosity. This article told of an uncharted Khmer temple at Banteay Srei on the ancient Royal Way of Cambodia. When the young couple suffered a serious loss on the Paris Bourse Malraux soon formulated the project of locating this temple and "recovering" any valuable sculpture which might decorate it. After obtaining a vaguely worded official sanction, Malraux and his young wife Clara sailed for Indochina in 1923.
The colonial authorities were apparently suspicious from the outset, for after the temple friezes were removed and the party was preparing to leave the country, Malraux was arrested, accused of stealing art treasures and was eventually made to stand trial at Pnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Meanwhile Clara Malraux, emaciated as a result of a hunger strike, was allowed to return to Paris where she rallied the intellectual community in Malraux's behalf and succeeded in having leading artists and writers sign a petition attesting to Malraux's literary worth. As the affair turned out, a three year sentence was decreed but never imposed and the following year Malraux returned to Paris.

In writing about this Indochina experience Clara Malraux has clearly indicated the central issue of individualism which crystallized Malraux's thinking as a result of this Asian encounter. She relates his statement: "L'essentiel, n'est-ce pas, c'est de savoir comment l'Oriental s'accomodera de la nécessité de devenir un individu." She also tells us of some of the literary influences which determined Malraux's metaphysical stance at this time:

A l'époque mon compagnon croit en une hiérarchie, non pas sociale mais établie en fonction de valeurs pour l'essential nietzschéennes. Avant de se révolter contre la condition humaine, avant de songer à l'aménager, il accepte un ordre qui permet et stabilise des forts. La dignité de certains l'intéresse
Davantage que le bonheur d'un grand nombre.
Le commun des mortels, à peu de choses près,
se compose pour lui de marionettes qui se
meuvent sans justification, sinon sans pittoresque.

(During the months of enforced residence at Pnom Penh
before the trial André had read continuously and
Nietzsche's works were among the few books available.)

In 1925 Malraux went to the Orient again, this
time for about two years. All of his activities are
not as precisely known as those of his first trip.
For the greater part of the time he and a lawyer
named Monin (who had defended him at his Pnom Penh
trial) edited a newspaper called Indochine which
energetically attacked the corrupt colonial regime.
Reprisals from the authorities finally forced Malraux
and Monin to abandon the project. It is on this trip
that Malraux is believed to have been connected with
the Jeune Annam, the Communist movement to free
Indochina from French control. He may have travelled
to China to participate in Kuomintang activities.
However, the precise nature of his involvement is not
as important as the overall impact which his Asian
sojourn had on Malraux's manner of considering his
times and his way of interpreting them in his literary
expressions.

The current term "cultural shock" could definitely
be applied to the encounter with the Orient, for Malraux
saw his own European civilization practically for the first time as a result of the dramatic juxtaposition provided by the East. This experience crystallized the vague malaise which Malraux shared with other young post-war intellectuals and furnished him with firm direction toward combatting it.

A passage from a 1926 article called "André Malraux et l'Orient" (written by Malraux) summarizes the reason he himself considered this encounter with the Orient to be so consequential:

Ce que la confrontation de deux civilisations en lutte fait naître en nous, c'est une sorte de dépouillement dû à la découverte de leur double arbitraire......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......concourt à détruire l'idée de la nécessité d'un monde unique, d'une réalité limitée.

He goes on to say why he feels the Occident is at a point in time when it could profit from exposure to another culture:

Car notre domaine me semble être surtout celui du possible. 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'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... [d'où la nécessité de la jeunesse européenne] de rompre avec l'effort d'un siècle bien que sa sensibilité n'en soit pas encore complètement détachée. Toute la passion du XIXe siècle, attachée à l'homme, s'épanouit dans l'affirmation
Two of Malraux's non-fiction works, *La Tentation de l'Occident* written from 1921 to 1925 and published in 1926, and *D'une jeunesse européenne*, published in 1927, not only produce the first expressions of his particular talent and announce virtually all the major themes of his career, but they give us among the very best appraisals of European civilization in the aftermath of the Great War. Their primary subject is the bankrupt state of western values, the sterility of Western thought. This condition was starkly revealed by the contrast between the distinct existence of the individual in European thought and the absorption of the self into the cosmos as seen in Eastern civilizations. An examination of these two works serves, therefore, both as a general introduction to Malraux's literary career and as an essential background to a study of his treatment of the individual.

The form of *La Tentation de l'Occident* is a series of letters exchanged between a young Chinese, Ling, traveling in Europe and a young European, A. D., traveling in the Orient. However, the book does not give two parallel soundings. The familiar literary technique of providing foreign travelers to observe and to evaluate a society serves here primarily to allow Malraux the
opportunity of assessing his own Western civilization against the background of a contrasting culture.

(Although the emphasis is on European civilization, the impact Western culture was having on Chinese life is briefly discussed.)

The "temptation of the West" is that experienced by a drifting civilization intrigued with the Oriental way of viewing man and his role in the world. The underlying situation of the West, which serves as a constant frame of reference throughout La Tentation de l'Occident and D'une jeunesse européenne as well, is expressed by Ling:

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. 53

As to the basic differences between the West and the East, Ling says that the Westerner:

veut se soumettre le monde......son univers est un mythe cohérent. L'esprit oriental, au contraire, n'accorde aucune valeur à l'homme en lui-même, il s'ingénie à trouver dans les mouvements du monde les pensées qui lui permettront de rompre les attaches humaines. L'un veut apporter le monde à l'homme, l'autre propose l'homme en offrande au monde. 54

The description Ling gives of the individual Oriental's conception of his place in the world tells us, by contrast, how the Westerner would approach the same issue:
Nous voulons ne pas prendre conscience de nous mêmes en tant qu'individus. L'action de notre esprit est d'éprouver lucidement notre qualité fragmentaire et de tirer de cette sensation celle de l'univers, non comme vos savants reconstituent les animaux fossiles avec quelques ossements, mais plutôt comme nous voyons l'élever à la lecture d'un nom sur une carte, des paysages inconnus rayés de lianes géantes; car la suprême beauté d'une civilisation affinée c'est une attentive inculture du moi. 55

For the Oriental, the search for wisdom consists of trying to learn the rhythms of the universe so as to bring his own individual rhythm in accord with it. In other words, an individual should not align himself with the ephemeral manifestations of temporal pursuits (Appearance) but rather should strive through assiduous contemplation and detachment to bring his particular existence in line with the Reality which is the movement of the cosmos. Ling considers that the Westerner, who is so presumptuous as to believe that the permanent is found in man, is like the serious scholar who carefully notes all the movements of fish without discovering that fish live in water. Due to this lack of perception where its metaphysical position is concerned, Ling concludes that Europe is dominated by this "impossibility of seizing any reality whatsoever." The "absolute reality" which God once provided the European had vanished but it left European man with an awareness of himself as an individual — a legacy that now impedes his search for new identity.
As he visits Athens and Rome, Ling ponders the nature of these two influences on Christianity and beyond that on Western thought in general. The point of departure for this appraisal is, as will often be the case in Malraux's writings, an art object, in this case the sculpted head of a young man in the Acropolis museum. For Ling, this head was an allegory of the Greek genius which was to measure everything by the duration and the intensity of one human life. For Ling, an Oriental, the entire Greek genius is contained in this idea and in the feeling which depends on it. The Greek believed man distinct from the world as the Christian believed man tied to God, as Orientals believe man tied to the world. Ling goes on to point out further divergences between these beliefs and his own:

nous concevions le monde dans son ensemble, et étions sensibles aux forces qui le composent autant qu'aux movements humains; l'idée du genre humain dominait déjà dans notre esprit celle de l'homme. 58

As he continues to reflect on how Western thought growing out of the Greek view of man differs from his Oriental heritage, Ling uncovers what he thinks to be the source of present Western malaise:

A la conscience, je dirai presque la sensation d'être un fragment du monde, qui précède inéluctablement la notion toute abstraite de l'homme, ils substituèrent la conscience d'être un être vivant, total, distinct, sur une terre
propice où les seules images passionnées étaient celles des hommes et de la mer...

l'Occident naît là, avec le dur visage de Minerve avec ses armes, et aussi les stigmates de sa future déméance... Il est sage de laisser reposer en paix, insinuent les magiciens de mon pays, les dragons qui dorment sous la terre!... Après la mort du Sphinx, Oedipe s'attaque à lui-même. 59

In an earlier letter Ling offered a possible explanation of a conflict inherent to Christianity - a duality of purpose which Ling attributed to the influence of two predecessors of Christianity, Greek and Roman thought. According to Ling, Rome represents force without a soul, the base and vulgar worship of power. The whole race was degraded by this servile tendancy to acceptance. Greece however, had given man the quality of reserving oneself from domination. Ling concludes that these two different positions set up a conflicting dialogue which continues through Western thought. Specifically he detects two Christian voices, one which sings the glory of God (Roman) and another voice which secretly questions him (Greek).

In any case, what is especially important to understand is why Malraux felt that the collapse of Christendom should bring in its wake the anxiety which characterizes the 20th century individual. What troublesome mould of thought was left behind by Christianity? What is the "strange heritage" with which post-Christian Europeans still must contend?
To begin with, Malraux maintains that our first stumbling block is the fact that we are obliged to examine the world by means of a Christian "grid" or key, we who are no longer Christians. Furthermore, this Christian "grid" sets up a conflict which is at the root of European man's dissatisfaction with himself:

Avec les vestiges de l'âme, elle [our Christian "scar"] nous impose l'idée de l'unité de l'homme, de sa permanence, de sa responsabilité; avec le péché, se défendant par ce qui faisait sa faiblesse, elle fonde sa force sur la conscience aigüe de notre désaccord.

This acute awareness of our disaccord stems from the way Christianity led man to view his condition. The position was one of grandeur because man was created in the image of God but also one of misery due to man's fall after sin. In other words, Christian man seeks salvation (that is, his unity with God) above all else but is prevented from attaining this salvation readily because of the fatality of his nature - original sin. This opposition within man which Malraux describes recalls Pascal's expression of the disproportion of man. The essential difference now, though, is that while still being "infinitely small" man has lost his link with any spiritual order higher than himself. There is, therefore, no assurance of being "infinitely grand" as well. Because man's condition now lacks this equilibrium, the remaining "disaccord" creates anxiety; man is divided against himself.
But post-Christian man cannot retrace his steps to the time when a supernatural force provided the invincibility he seeks. It is important to remember this, that for Malraux the real problem for man begins after the death of God. Accustomed for centuries to look for salvation, man is at a loss once the "aquarium" of Christendom no longer sustains him. This explains Tchen's anguished question once his faith in God had evaporated: "What can one do with a soul if there is neither God nor Christ?" This same yearning for individual invincibility is present in the question asked by Tarrou in La Peste. He earnestly wants to know how one can be a saint without God.

For Malraux, the tragedy of contemporary man is that he finds himself compelled to draw from himself - in effect from a void - that with which to transcend his condition. In D'une jeunesse européenne Malraux summarized the chain of events this way:

Un élan dirige tout le XIXe siècle, qui ne peut être comparé, pour la puissance et l'importance, qu'à une religion. Il se manifeste d'abord par ...une sorte de passion de l'Homme, qui prend en lui-même la place qu'il donnait Dieu; et ensuite, par l'individualisme...

'L'Homme est le seul objet digne de notre passion.'

'Je suis le seul objet digne de me passionner.'

Nous voilà donc contraints à fonder notre notion de l'Homme sur la conscience que prend chacun de soi-même. 63

"We are thus forced to base our notion of man on the awareness that each one has of himself." What happened
in the years following the Great War to help the individual gain this knowledge of himself?

As we said before, Freudian psychology presented itself as a revolutionary new path by which to gain knowledge of man. How successful will this method be in furnishing the perception of the self necessary to establish a new idea of man? As it might be supposed, Malraux feels that far from being a salvation, psycho-analysis will destroy what little shred of individual significance European man retains, and may discourage him to the point of feeling any exercise of his "liberty" useless. Examinition will show, Malraux maintains, that our awareness of ourselves is fundamentally "woven of vain desires, hopes and dreams." 64 Any attempt to grasp the self by scientific means or otherwise will fail:

Avec quelque force que je veuille prendre conscience de moi-même, je me sens soumis à une série désordonnée de sensations sur lesquelles je n'ai point prise, et qui ne dépendent que de mon imagination et des réactions qu'elle appelle. 65

In another passage Malraux asserts that to want to give precision to the self is merely to force it to disperse in probabilities. 66

No attempt to chart the self will succeed because of the sham-like nature of this unknown area. We are "miserable actors who do not want to relinquish
glorious roles, for ourselves we are beings in which
sleep intertwined, the ingenuous cortege of the
possibilities of our acts and of our dreams." Or
more brutally: "a madness which contemplates itself."
The cruel outcome of man's quest for himself is like the
experience of knights whose victories have enabled
them to enter palaces where they expected to find the
object of their dreams — they find only deep
perspectives of shadows.

The individual therefore is "walled up in his own
ego" and so cannot break through to "establish
satisfactory relationships with other individuals."
He feels the need to do so but fails because he undergoes
two kinds of sensations in this attempt to communicate
with others — those sensations which he himself feels
and those he ascribes to the other. But since he cannot
know himself how will he fathom another individual? How
can he still believe himself capable of accurate perception
of himself of of anything in his world?

The Westerner's distorted comprehension of his
relation to the world especially perplexes Ling when
he sees the European's view of passion and love. In
the first place he thinks that the Westerners attach
far too much importance to the reality of this love.
The European has a tendency to endow passion with the
ability to form his life but ordonnance ("disposition")
is a factor of the intellect and therefore not a force which acts on values. To love is to lose oneself, a typically Western inclination since belief in oneself must precede loss of oneself. Passionate man, believing in the force of these passions to immerse him, to give meaning to his existence, deludes himself for he is making the error of thinking he can thus surmount the arbitrary nature of things. That the passionate person would think his partner, another person, should solicit the same disaccord with the world only points up the essential absurdity at the core of European man.

If there is no basis for believing that any coherent exchange of knowledge can exist between the individual and his surroundings, these surroundings and the individual together are only a part of an absurd universe. In *D'une jeunesse européenne* Malraux asserts that to "Pousser à l'extrême la recherche de soi-même en acceptant son propre monde, c'est tendre à l'absurde." This was the inevitable discovery to be made once the human being was without the reassuring protection of exterior values. World War I had already demonstrated that nationalism, patriotism, scientific "progress," etc. had led man not to fulfillment but to suffering. When, in addition to this crumbling of the external modes of aligning one's life, the self was not exposed as an impenetrable labyrinth, the absurd is no longer
camouflaged. The individual had now realized that he was estranged both from the world which had failed to furnish him any worthwhile ethos and from himself. Thus, the "royaumes métalliques de l'absurdité" were now our habitat, Malraux believed.

He had described Christendom as the aquarium in which all Western man had lived. A vacuum resulted when this aquarium disappeared. After a relatively brief interval during which man still entertained the delusion that at least the remaining member (man) of the metaphysical relationship that had included God could be given a separate viability, this vacuum was filled by the absurd. European man remains at the center of his world but this position, without the spiritual frame of reference provided by God, is meaningless. The individual is not so much unique and capable of separate original contribution as he is isolated. Furthermore, in light of scientific discoveries which greatly expand the limits of the universe the impression that man is superfluous imposes itself.

The deception which follows the discovery that the universe is in all probability possessed by the absurd drives man to view his individual existence, and hence his society, in negative terms to say the least. For this reason, Malraux saw post-war Europe as a wasteland literally and figuratively.
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. 74

One form which the negation takes is a feverish attempt to disguise this hollowness by seeking to make action and movement the substitute for essential value. This drive was what Ling saw in the Westerner as an infatuation with action. In this way the individual tries to eliminate his inner anguish by exteriorising it into agitation. In speaking of the European individual in general Ling says to A. D.:

Vous avez fait à la puissance l'offrande de votre vie. Vous vous confondez avec vos actions. Votre pensée même... À peine comprenez-vous encore que pour être il ne soit pas nécessaire d'agir, et que le monde vous transforme bien plus que vous ne le transformez. 75

These acts are "gestes vains qui luissent parfois, comme des éclats d'armures en marche, à travers ces ténèbres ou l'Occident s'épuise à se délivrer d'un excessif amour..." 76

Europe is empty like the "empty soul of a conqueror" and is only inhabited by a race "dedicated to force." In short, the madness of Nietzsche only can produce a blind conquering hero. 78

The man who devotes himself to action makes the
is further intensified when man begins to see that there is now even a gap between what man thinks and what he actually does, between the intensity of his sensibility and his possibility. In the eighth letter, which deals with the bankrupt state of the European "moi," A. D. asserts that the European is possessed by a voice which alternatively cries in exaltation and in despair, proclaiming faith in the necessity of the limits of man as being his "raison d'être." Hence the confused struggle which seems to anticipate the tragic paradox of Camus' Sisyphe. Malraux expresses this idea in a phrase typical of his early style:

"Marque...d'une race soumise à la preuve du geste, et promise par là au plus sanglant destin."

From the very beginning of his career Malraux was deeply interested in art and its reflection of the values of succeeding cultures. In 1927 he believed he saw in the art of the period an illustration of what European man was hoping to achieve, namely a harmony between man and his thought without making man conform to thought posed "a priori." He felt this need explained the current value of the possible (or as he said elsewhere the "provisional reality"). Malraux saw possibility like a "bizarre royalty" reigning alone over the plastic arts of Western Europe. A. D. had wanted to reject all such myths as being unproved, but Malraux seemed to see
myths as necessary and therefore was willing to allow
man to explore possible replacements for the myths which
post-war Europe had had to discard. These new tentative
myths were seen in an art which tried out the present
and its possibility. He continued:

Les manifestations artistiques qui lui [le possible]
sont vouées se démodent vite, nous dit-on...
peut-être. Mais les œuvres ont peu d'importance
en l'occurrence... le mouvement qui nous attache
à elles est constant. 81

The situation of the European individual at
the start of the Absurd Era is summarized by two
passages, one from the end of D'une jeunesse européenne
and the other from the last paragraph of La Tentation
de l'Occident. The first passage describes the dilemma
of European youth and asks how it will be solved:

Il semble que notre civilisation tende à se créer
une métaphysique d'où tout point fixe soit exclu,
du même ordre que sa conception de la matière.
L'Homme et le Moi l'un après l'autre détruits, que
peut une telle métaphysique contre les besoins
de l'âme? Tenter de les faire disparaître,
d'élever un domaine de l'esprit et de la
sensibilité tout en mouvements, en changements,
en rapports nouveaux et naissances nouvelles,
auprès d'une vie à quoi tout ce qui ne peut se
traduire en actes ou en chiffres est devenu
étranger... Faiblesses images, en face des vieilles
nécessités humaines. À quel destin donc est
vouée cette jeunesse violente merveilleusement
armée contre elle-même, et délivrée de la basse
grandeur de nommer grandeur le dédain d'une
vie à laquelle elle ne sait pas se lier? 82

The next passage expresses the same anguish though
here in a more lyrical, almost florid style:
Image mouvante de moi-même, je suis pour toi sans amour. Comme une large blessure mal fermée, tu es ma gloire morte et ma souffrance vivante. Je t'ai tout donné; et, pourtant, je sais que je ne t'aime jamais. Sans m'incliner, je t'apporterai chaque jour la paix en offrande. Lucidité avide, je brûle encore devant toi, flamme solitaire et droite, dans cette lourde nuit où le vent jaune crie, comme dans toutes ces nuits étrangères où le vent du large répétait autour de moi l'orgueilleuse clameur de la mer stérile. 83

In an article published in 1926 shortly after La Tentation de l'Océdent appeared, Malraux reviewed the meaning of his Asian experience for a society which must now reconstruct its conception of man's value, beginning with the individual. To escape the rhythm of our civilization and to contemplate it with disinterested curiosity certainly seems to condemn it. It has no other goal except its material development and it only proposes the basest "raison d'être" to us. But Malraux continued by saying that such a condemnation was impossible since our civilization is modeled by our needs whether they are ignoble or not.

Western youth searches for a new notion of man, Malraux said in the same article. The civilization of the Orient supplies no specific lesson which can be adapted to this purpose - Asia itself was in a period of turmoil and transition. Rather, the encounter with the East should ultimately be a creative and strengthening antagonism which leads the Westerner to find his own course. This is what is meant by his statement that
our civilization is modeled by our needs whether they are ignoble or not. The shock of a temptation to submerge the self into the ubiquitous cosmos must somehow be transformed into a knowledge of how best to validate the self. In the end Europe must create its own solution to the aridity brought on by disintegration of conventional values. Any new humanism, any new notion of man would have to contend with the European's troubling awareness of his individual existence.
CHAPTER TWO

THE FICTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Before looking at specific characters in Malraux's novels, I would like to outline the different means of validation and negation which they will use. Where validation, the more significant undertaking is concerned, we see an evolution of methods, an evolution corresponding to the chronological development of Malraux's novels. The first form which validation takes is action - raw adventure such as Malraux described in the last pages of *La Tentation de l'Occident*. In essence, the individual who engages in action aims for the coincidence of the drive of the self with that of a cause or an adventure. He seeks to cheat his isolation. R. Bespaloff writes that for the adventurer, "l'aventure est le lieu où son être se ramasse devant l'imprévisible, où ses sentiments maîtrisés se transforment en pouvoir. Il y transporte une solitude que le combat preserve de moissure."

However, as Ling warned A. D., the obsession of Westerners with intensity of action threatens to distort and destroy what would be a judicious balance between the individual and the universe around him. Moeller summarizes this danger extremely well: "la vérité est remplacée par l'intensité; le monde sur lequel l'homme règne lui devient de plus en plus étranger, la seule 'clarté' est
la fulgurance d'une volonté qui rend plus opaque ensuite la ténèbre environnante. 2

The two main characters of La Voie royale, Claude Ven nec and Perken, are adventurers of this first type, as is T. E. Lawrence. The hero of Les Conquérants, Garine, is basically an adventurer as the title of the novel implies but he also shows the transition from pure action for its own sake to action which is closely connected with political revolution.

The adventurer or "conquérant," the individual who throws himself into the violence and sensation of action will never be absent from Malraux's novels. The characters who embody this form of validation continue even after other forms are introduced but gradually, beginning with Les Conquérants, Malraux will increasingly emphasize the role played by political activity in the 20th century individual's search for validity. However there are two major tendencies on the part of those engaged in political activity. Present in Les Conquérants and La Condition humaine, this division will be fully explored in L'Espoir. In that novel revolution and politics in general are at the center of this long and complex treatment of the Spanish Civil War. The division is shown between those individuals who enter political activity in order to "be" and those who enter in order to "do." This theme of "être" and "faire" is the core of this novel culminating Malraux's ten year literary
examination of politics.

Under the heading "Être" can be grouped all those individuals who see politics as a means for conquest of their selves. They are driven by the "soif de l'absolu" exclusively and belong to the "race de ceux qui sont capables de lutter et de vaincre mais non pas de vivre dans leur victoire, de vivre leur victoire." 3 Death in the course of the struggle is their only salvation. These men are the terrorists and anarchists -- Hong in Les Conquérants, Tchen in La Condition humaine, and Puig and Le Négus in L'Espoir, all variants on Claude and Perken in La Voie royale. Also to be included in this general category are those who seek in politics the resolution of personal, ethical or a-political problems. Captain Hernandez in L'Espoir is the most striking example of this sort of man.

The second principal tendency of individuals involved in political activities is to identify themselves more completely with the goals of that activity rather than simply to feed on the intensity of the pursuit of these goals. Already various elements of Garine's quest show this enlarged concern.

In its most developed phase "faire" means "fraternité," the effort of revolutionaries to serve a cause and thereby to validate all individuals by creating a fusion of selves into a larger, enhanced whole. These political adventurers see "fraternité" as the manifestation of this drive. One
of the characters of *L'Espoir* defines "fraternité" as dignity which really comes down to the simultaneous validation of individuals among themselves, individuals who pursue a political end in order to assure respect for every other individual. Throughout the three "political" novels of Malraux the dignity of fraternity is an effort to combat the humiliation inflicted on their fellow men by those who seek instead to deny validity of the individual.

The effectiveness of politics as an instrument of validation of the individual is increasingly questioned by Malraux. The developments in *L'Espoir* face the suggestions of the previous novels, for there it is demonstrated that the ethical, metaphysical quest of the individual, which after all remains the essential one for Malraux, is fulfilled less and less as the degree of political engagement grows. Malraux gives this description of the setting of a conversation between two major characters in *L'Espoir*, Ximénès and Manuel who, as they stroll above a village, discuss the role played by revolution in the endless effort of men to validate their lives:

> De cette hauteur, tout des hommes de la plaine était dérisoire, sauf les lents rideaux de feu qui montaient sur le ciel où les nuages informes avançaient lentement; il semblait qu'au regard des dieux les hommes ne fussent que la matière des incendies.  4

In another description, similar to many others in *L'Espoir*, Malraux observes: "le soir tembant donnait une vanité
infinie à l'éternel effort des hommes qu'enveloppaient peu à peu l'ombre et l'indifférence de la terre." 5 "Destin" in the form of the exterior menace of the universe has not been exorcized by revolution. After L'Espoir Malraux will confront the implications of this failure.

Throughout Malraux's novels there are examples of individuals who deny their distinctness from the universe, who seek what seems to be the opposite of validation by attempting to erase, to negate themselves. Malraux treats the characters who illustrate this tendency less systematically than he does the individuals striving for creative validation but they are no less important to his overall examination of the individual's confrontation with "Destin."

Essentially this is the individual who, when faced with the terrifying depths within himself as well as with the utter solitude which his isolation from the world implies, chooses to completely escape this self rather than to dominate it through a creative conquest by his will -- he negates himself.

In many respects this disavowal of the self foreshadows the phenomenon of "mauvaise foi" which Sartre will study a few years later. As will be the case with "mauvaise foi" one form the negation of the self takes in Malraux's novels is the escape into "comédie." By this means the individual tries to elude his most vital existence by inventing a personality or more probably a variety of personalities which
serve as a mask, hiding the reality of his anxieties and torments from himself and also from others. Such a character is the baron Clappique, one of the most significant figures of *La Condition humaine*. More often the individual will try to establish a fixed role which then becomes a sheltering identity. This is the case with the men who, as Sartre would say, insist on bourgeois "consideration," a reassuring "en soi" with which to encase themselves. Hence, Tcheng-Dai, the "Chinese Gandhi" of *Les Conquérants*, is described by another of the novel's characters as "un homme qui soigne sa biographie."

In addition to comedy, another means of escaping the self isolated and anguished by the absurd universe is through contemplation. Gisors of *La Condition humaine* is an example of the effort of the self to dissolve itself, to blend with the surrounding universe by force of meditation but more effectively through the hallucinations of opium. This evasion through opium does represent a widespread Oriental practice which is not so simple for Europeans to assume. Nevertheless the meditation involved in this process could perhaps suggest the escape into sterile intellectual pursuits, an escape by no means foreign to the West. Furthermore at one point Malraux compares Gisor's use of opium to other means of escape such as violence thereby indicating that Gisor's form of negation is not just an Oriental custom with no relevance to the European
individual's dilemma. Indeed Gisors is the most complex of all the characters in *La Condition humaine*, an extremely rich and baffling personality.

At times the division between validation and negation is especially hard to distinguish. This occurs when an individual's principal activity is the negating of the individuality of another person. An example of this has already been mentioned in connection with the spirit of fraternity generated in political activity by the fusion of many selves seeking to endow one another with dignity. They are fighting to combat humiliation -- the negation of one individual by another. This negation or humiliation is invariably felt when one person is made to be dependent on another person. Nicolaieff in *Les Conquérants* and Konig in *La Condition humaine* are sustained by such a drive. These two men, police officers charged with the function of torturers, represent torture as a standard element of 20th century politics, a theme which Malraux is concerned with in each novel, especially in *Le Temps du mépris* which recounts the experience of prison from within the mind of a prisoner.

As in the case of humiliation, eroticism is negation of the individuality of another. Instead of a creative exchange which the relationship between a man and a woman is thought to have in its best form, eroticism denies the other. Where the dividing line between negation and validation
becomes blurred however is when one realizes that eroticism is the conquest of a surrogate-self; the partner. The suspicion that negation and validation of the self are closely connected is confirmed by the fact that both Perken and Ferral, two characters strongly committed to an aggressive validation of their own individuality think of their sexual dealing with women strictly erotic terms.

A.

Examples of individuals seeking to validate themselves in the first manner mentioned, adventure, are to be found in La Voie royale. Even though La Voie Royale, published in 1930, appeared two years after Les Conquérants there is evidence that Malraux was planning and perhaps even writing them simultaneously. In one transaction Malraux received from Grasset an advance on three books as yet unwritten and which would become La Tentation de l'Occident, Les Conquérants and La Voie royale. The characters of La Voie royale present the first type of hero in the evolution of Malraux's novels. Other factors which lead one to believe that the book was conceived if not written before Les Conquérants are first, the fact that the plot parallels the experience of Malraux on his first trip to Indochina in 1923 and second, the strong influence of Nietzsche in Malraux's portrayal of Perken and Claude. As we saw Clara Malraux says that Malraux had already been interested in Nietzsche before
their voyage and had spent a great deal of time reading further in his works while the two of them were detained by the colonial authorities.

In any case, the two main characters of La Voie royale are definitely both examples of individuals engaged in action or adventure in its purest form. In fact they are so much alike it could really be said that they represent the same character at two moments in his life, Claude Vannec being the youthful adventurer and Perken the same man some years older. Because the content of the novel is entirely composed of the joint venture of these two men and because Malraux himself makes a definite point of establishing the deep similarities between Claude and Perken, I will treat their common adventure as if it were the attempt of one complex individual to validate his identity.

The novel opens on board ship to the Orient. The two men meet almost immediately and are soon planning their adventure. The "dédoublement" is apparent from the beginning:

Lointaine parenté: même hostilité à l'égard des valeurs établies, même goût des actions des hommes lié à la conscience de leur vanité; mêmes refus, surtout. Les images que Claude entrevooyait de son avenir étaient partagées entre ses souvenirs et cette présence qui le requéraient comme une double menace, comme les deux affirmations parallèles d'une prophétie. 6

Claude and Perken are marked by their "volonté de solitude." 7 As their relationship develops they come to
realize that this sense of isolation which haunts them both is an obsession with death and that it is this obsession which has caused them to share their adventure. As Perken remarks to Claude: "Vous savez aussi bien que moi que la vie n'a aucun sens...La mort est là, comprenez-vous, comme ...comme l'irréfutable preuve de l'absurdité de la vie." 8

Immediately however they resist:

La soumission à l'ordre de l'homme sans enfants et sans dieu est la plus profonde des soumissions à la mort; donc, chercher ses armes ou ne les cherchent pas les autres; ce que doit exiger d'abord de lui-même celui qui se sait séparé, c'est le courage. 9

The validation which Claude and Perken seek through adventure is meant as a frontal attack on the apparently relentless logic of "Destin." For them the very "absence of finality in life has become a condition for action." 10

Adventure is not a flight but a pursuit; victory is less important than the combat, as Perken implies: "La vie est une matière, il s'agit de savoir ce qu'on en fait -- bien qu'on n'en fasse jamais rien mais il y a plusieurs manières de n'en rien faire." 11 Or as he says elsewhere: "Etre roi est idiot; ce qui compte, c'est de faire un royaume." 12

Action is the game in which one plays one's life. As they disembark Claude was saying to himself: "Le jeu commençait: tant mieux. Il chassait l'inquiétude." 13 The passive ship had imprisoned him within himself in "cette vie livrée à l'espoir et aux songes." 14
In brief, the underlying element in the character of both these individuals is an implacable preoccupation with death. They therefore feel acutely the absurdity of life and the vanity of their own existences. This realization, rather than paralyzing them however makes them find in despair the justification for action. Adventure becomes the means to counter the sentence of "Destin" by allowing them to thrust their selves into an adventure which can let them see the scar, however small, that they make on a hostile world.

In *La Voie royale* the most dominant threat against which the adventurer must fight to establish his validated individuality is nature. The dense forest through which Claude and Perken must literally hack their way can definitely be seen as a symbol of the exterior menace of the world. Furthermore the jungle is not only threatening vegetation but is also all forms of nature from the most primitive animal life ("les mouvements de mollusque de la brousse" 15) to the natives whom Malraux describes in terms of sinister insects, (the Moïs "se coulaient dans le sentier avec leurs gestes précis de guêpes, avec leurs armes de mantes." 16) We are meant to understand that the individual is in danger of disintegration; that the "étouffante gangrène de la forêt" 17 is ready at every moment to destroy the distinctness, the integrity which European man is doomed to try to maintain.
Claude reacts most acutely to the forest and Malraux makes it clear that the sharpness of Claude's response betrays the fundamental correspondence between the exterior menace of the forest and the interior menace of personal demons and memories. On shipboard while he was inactive Claude was tormented by "une angoisse d'intoxiqué privé de sa drogue." 18 Once in the forest this same anxiety reappears from another direction: "l'obsession de la brousse et des temples revenait, recouvrait tout, reprenait sur Claude sa domination anxieuse." 19 Malraux calls our attention elsewhere to the interaction between the forces of the jungle and the hidden areas of Claude's mind. He describes the atmosphere of the first days of the journey as "décéomposition de l'esprit dans cette lumière d'aquarium; d'une épaisseur d'eau." 20 Later in the novel as the two adventurers encounter savage Mois, Claude's response to the scene is a synthesis of all his fears:

Claude était fixé à ce spectacle par les yeux, par les mains, par les feuilles qu'il sentait malgré ses vêtements; par le sentiment panique qui tombait sur lui, enfant, devant les serpents et les crustacés vivants. 21

As they travel deeper into the forest the oppression becomes more and more overwhelming:

La forêt et la chaleur étaient pourtant plus fortes que l'inquiétude: Claude sombrait comme dans une maladie dans cette fermentation où les formes se gonflaient, s'allongeaient, pourissaient hors du monde dans lequel l'homme compte, qui le séparait de lui-même avec la force de l'obscurité. Et partout, les insectes. 22
All through La Voie royale, and for that matter throughout Malraux's work, insects stand for all that is inhuman and menacing. The first abandoned temple that the pair discover is in ruins, completely overrun by vegetation. In order to locate the friezes, if any, Claude crawls through a passageway and is covered by ants as large as wasps. The experience causes a raw, panicked revulsion. His terror is so deep that his body seem to react independently -- when he calls out "ça va" in answer to Perken's inquiry, "sa voix le surprit, criarde et désaccordée; elle n'avait pas encore oublié les fourmis." As he forces himself toward the end of the tunnel, Claude "ne voyait que la tache de lumière qui l'absorbait, mais ses nerfs ne voyaient que les insectes écrasés, n'obéissaient qu'à leur contact." 23 Claude nearly succumbs to the forest:

...la fatigue, la lassitude, un dégoût de créature exténuée le pénétraient. Se coucher...Après tant d'efforts, la forêt reprenait sa puissance de prison. Dépendance, abandon de la volonté, de la chair même...Il s'imaginait là... recroquevillé, perdant toute conscience, obéissant avec le sentiment d'une libération aux sollicitations de la brousse et de la chaleur. 24

Then suddenly he makes an intense effort to defend himself; the vegetation and the stone friezes which resist his effort to detach them represent everything that he is engaged in adventure to combat:

Cependant c'était sa vie menacée qui était là...sa vie. Tour l'entêtement, la volonté tendue, toute la fureur dominée qui l'avaient
The "will to vanquish" is for a moment so powerful that Claude succeeds in establishing a brief equilibrium between the forest, the temple and himself. This balance is precarious; its eventual collapse is subtly foreshadowed as Malraux shows us Claude listening to the blows of the hammers on the wedges as the men struggle to detach the sculpted friezes from the walls -- the blows are "humains et vains dans l'im immense silence de la brousse, dans la chaleur." 26

Whereas Claude's struggle for validation takes place against the background of the forest, Perken's assertion is at its peak when he confronts the savage Mois tribesmen who encircle them. Perken walks alone across an expanse strewn with poisoned shafts in an attempt to buy their freedom. He even derives a deep sensual satisfaction from his defiance:

La lutte contre la déchéance se déchainait en lui ainsi qu'une fureur sexuelle......Il éprouvait si furieusement l'exaltation de jouer plus que sa mort, elle devenait à tel point, sa revanche contre l'univers, sa libération de l'état humain qu'il se sentit lutter contre une folie fascinante, une sorte d'illumination. 27

Then the "exaltation tragique" 28 which compelled him disappeared suddenly as he remembered that the Mois castrated as well as blinded their prisoners. At that moment Perken
is defeated by a terrorizing, natural revulsion just as Claude was by the contact of the giant ants: "Une fois de plus il se trouva planté dans le sol, vaincu par la chair, par les viscères, par tout ce qui peut se trouver contre l'homme." 29

This dread never entirely abates, for even as Perken continues in his "marche vers les Mois" Malraux tells us that "l'épouvante et le résolution s'accrochaient à sa peau." In fact, as we noticed in the case of Claude, the resolution is impossible without terror. Instead of disintegrating in fear Perken, in a Nietzschean manner, gathers himself up to thrust himself beyond. He must try to validate himself, to recover his identity intact:

soudain son regard rencontrant la cime des arbres où s'étendait longuement la dernière rougeur du soleil, tandis qu'au ras de terre l'immobile agitation continuait, la passion de cette liberté qui allait l'abandonner l'envahit jusqu'au délire. Au bord de l'atroce métamorphose qui l'obsédait, il se raccrochait à lui-même, les mains crispées s'enfonçant dans la chair des cuisses...Jeté sexuellement sur cette liberté à l'agonie, soulevé par une volonté forcenée se possédant elle-même devant cette imminente destruction il s'enfonçait dans la mort même. 30

Within his assertion however there are unmistakable signs of defeat.

In the passages discussed where Claude confronts the forest and where Perken defies the forest's creatures, the Mois, Malraux shows us two of the powerful focuses of this drive to validate one's simultaneous isolation and dependence. The fatalism of these challenges to "Destin" is
undeniable, though, when we see in the last passage a phrase such as: "soulevé par une volonté forcenée se possédant elle-même" which certainly suggests that if Perken resists the danger of disintegration into visceral fear which the Mois represent he does not avoid being swept along by a will that is its own driving force to the point where he seems to wallow in the very death he fears so much.

With this in mind the final developments of the novel should be studied to determine how successful the validation attempt of Claude/Perken will be. As the novel progresses all attention centers on Perken. Claude serves primarily to throw the fate of the older man into relief, but the aura of defeat shows through Claude's attitudes though to a lesser degree. For example when the two of them were encircled by the Mois: "L'épouvante de l'être écrasé de solitude saisit Claude au creux de l'estomac, au défaut des hanches, l'épouvante de l'homme abandonné parmi les fous qui vont bouger." 31 We know that Malraux considers Western man fated to consider himself an isolated creature in a hostile universe. Words such as "épouvante," "écrasé," "solitude," and "abandonné" used to describe Claude's reaction do not give us any reason to think this condition has changed.

The dominant defeat of La Voie royale is however Perken's defeat. As he had said to Claude early in the expedition:
Je vous souhaite de mourir jeune, Claude, comme j'ai souhaité peu de choses au monde... Vous ne soupçonnez pas ce que le destin limité, irréfutable, qui tombe sur vous comme un règlement sur un prisonnier: la certitude que vous serez cela et pas autre chose, que ce que vous n'avez pas eu vous ne l'aurez jamais. Et derrière soi, tous ses espoirs, ses espoirs qu'on a dans la peau comme on n'aura jamais aucun être vivant... il faut régler le compte de ses espoirs. C'est comme si nous devions tuer un être pour qui nous avons vécu. 32

Perken had fallen on a poisoned shaft while he was advancing toward the Mois and his knee has been gashed. This wound (which he received ironically enough during his most willful assertion) became infected and would kill him. The threatening approach of death brings with it all the isolation, the "déchéance" Perken had fought to surmount. As a doomed man, he no longer had control over the natives who were once within his power:

Il releva la tête vers Savan [one of the native leaders] leurs regards se rencontrèrent et il vit......qu'il était pour lui un condamné...il rencontrait sa mort dans le regard d'un homme; il éprouva fureusement le désir de tirer sur lui, comme si le meurtre seul eût pu lui permettre d'affirmer son existence, de lutter contre sa propre fin. Il allait retrouver ce regard dans les yeux de tous ses hommes... Son pire adversaire, la déchéance, il allait le combattre dans l'âme de chacun de ses hommes. 33

In spite of the strength of his will, he remains imprisoned by his body which at the same time seems to exist separately and triumphantly from him:

Seule luttait contre l'affirmation de la plaie l'affirmation des hommes: sur ce médecin siamois, il semblait qu'il dût conquérir sa vie... Perken se sentit brutalement séparé de son corps, de
ce corps irresponsible qui voulait l'entraîner
vers la mort. 34

This power of his wounded body makes him experience the
simultaneous but contradictory impulsions to flee a life
which only makes him aware of his suffering and to plunge
into himself in a last effort to possess himself:

Un son de chair le surprit: c'était ses doigts
fascinés par la brûlure des insectes qui tam-
bourinaient convulsivement sur la charrette,
sans qu'il s'en fut aperçu. Tout ce qu'il avait
pensé de la vie se décomposait sous la fièvre
comme un corps dans la terre; un cahot plus
brutal le ramenait à la surface de la vie...
cet intolérable réveil le rejetait à la fois
dans une vie qu'il voulait fuir et en lui-même
qu'il voulait retrouver. 35

Perken seems to escape into his defeat when he says that
there is something satisfying to be found in the grinding
down ("écrasement") that our life consists of.

During his last few hours as Claude transports him
through the jungle in a rough cart, Perken's inescapable
death seems to take the form of his hand which he stares
at:

une conscience atroce demeurait: cette main
était là, blanche, fascinante avec ses doigts
plus hauts que la paume lourde, ses ongles
accrochés aux fils de la culotte comme les
araignées suspendues à leurs toiles par le
bout de leurs pattes sur les feuilles chaudes;
devant lui dans le monde informe où il se
de battait, ainsi que les autres dans les
profondeurs gluantes. Non pas énorme: simple,
naturelle mais vivante comme un oeil. La mort
c'était elle. 37

The fate of Western man imprisoned by his feeling of
individuality but haunted by the need to leave himself is
amazingly presented in the following passage:

A la fois enchaîné à sa chair et séparé d'elle, comme ces hommes que l'on noyait après les avoir liés à des cadavres. Il était si étranger à cette mort aux aguets en lui qu'il se sentait de nouveau en face d'un combat: mais le regard de Claude le rejeta dans son corps....Perken, bien qu'il s'attachait à Claude plus qu'il ne s'était attaché à aucun être, sentait sa mort comme si elle fut venue de lui. 38

What becomes unmistakable also is the association of Claude and Perken as two facets of the same self. The disparate, discordant elements within Perken are echoed by the gap between Perken and Claude who listens to the agonized words of his dying friend:

Cette voix seule entre le ciel éblouissant et la mort et les ténèbres, venait d'un homme, mais avec quelque chose de si inhumain que Claude se sentait séparé d'elle comme par une folie commençante. 39

The final minutes of Perken's life telescope all his defeats:

All the sensations of the forest:

se confondaient avec....la puissance de la forêt, avec la mort même, dans un emprisonnement surhumain, sans espoir...Prisonnier, encore enfermé dans le monde des hommes comme dans un souterrain, avec ces menaces, ces feux, cette absurdité semblables aux animaux des caves. À côté de lui, Claude qui allait vivre, qui croyait à la vie comme d'autres croient que les bourreaux qui vous torturent sont des hommes: haissable. Seul, Seul avec la fièvre qui le parcourait de la tête au genou et cette chose fidèle posée sur sa cuisse: sa main...libre, séparée de lui...elle le regardait, elle l'accompagnait dans cette région de solitude. 40

Death is isolation and metaphysical separation. As he lies in the cart, Perken feels that no man had ever died...
only he was going to die, only he was going to be torn away. 41 Claude desperately grasps his friend's shoulders but as the book ends "Perken regardait ce témoin, étranger comme un être d'un autre monde." 42

T. E. Lawrence, especially the Lawrence revealed by Malraux's study of him, must also be included when the fictional adventurers of Malraux's novels are discussed. Lawrence is a unique figure in the category of those seeking to validate themselves through action for he is not only an historical figure but he combines the pursuit of adventure with a literary career, thus attempting through art to extend and perfect his fundamental quest for identity. The Lawrence portrayed by Malraux gives us therefore a fascinating synthesis of all the essential elements of this search for the self and at the same time clearly reveals the reasons why this search is doomed. Appearing in 1949, six years after Malraux's last novel and three years before the first of his esthetic works, the long article on Lawrence "N'était-ce donc que cela?" 43 serves as a resumé of all that Malraux has written about the validation through action.

The Seven Pillars of Wisdom is treated by Malraux as being the last stage of a quest which began with the Arabian adventure. As such it must fulfill the central aim of validation:

Le livre de Lawrence était, au sens le plus haut du mot, une épreuve. Et le démon de
l'absurde reparaissait sous sa plus cruelle figure: si Lawrence n'avait pas exprimé l'homme qu'il croyait être n'était-ce pas simplement qu'il ne l'était pas? Et s'il n'était pas cet homme-là, il n'était rien. 44

Malraux understood perfectly what drove Lawrence, what made this book a "trial," a "combat décisif avec l'ange" 45 in which Lawrence would try to kill his demon "à coups de conquêtes et de lucidité." 46 Lawrence:

ne rêvait pas d'un prestige, mais de la possession de sa plénitude. Ce qu'il avait désiré le plus ardemment au monde, et ce qui lui était le plus étranger. Il avait toujours été profondément désaccordé. [and Malraux quotes Lawrence]: 'Je connais bien en moi-même le faisceau de puissances et d'entités, c'est le personnage central qui demeure caché. 47

The race to catch the essence of himself now takes place in the book. The demon of the absurd had not been killed in Arabia and Lawrence now had to try to recoup his own action, and his own destiny. Malraux asserts that as Lawrence wrote he wanted to transform once more into lucidity the confusion which had been his fate up until then. 48

This "confusion" was everything that prevented him from reaching the "central character." To validate himself Lawrence must still achieve an "identité profonde et complète de l'être avec lui-même." 49 Even literary creation threatens to fail him for he saw that he had not reached "la transfiguration qui eût arraché jusqu'à ses souvenirs pour les fonder en signification, leur faire effleurer l'éternel." 50

Lawrence will not achieve this any more than will any
other individual who longs to purify his self through the sensation of action. When Malraux says of Lawrence "il s'est brûlé avec ce qu'il voulait brûler en lui," 51 we think of Kyo's premonition that Tchen, like all men perhaps, are fire flies who secrete the flame with which they will be consumed. Malraux picks out from The Seven Pillars of Wisdom a passage which could be a confession of Tchen:

Une des choses les plus tristes de la vie est d'en arriver à découvrir sa propre insuffisance. Je me moque des à peu près, je ne me compare pas aux gens de mon espèce. Il y a quelque part un Absolu, il n'y a que cela qui compte: et je n'arrive pas à le trouver. De la cette impression d'existence sans but. 52

Malraux judges that this existence seemed without purpose because little by little all the combats finally ended in a belated cheerless victory and especially because art, almost imperceptibly, supplanted action in his deepest struggle; even the Arabian epic itself had in his mind become the means of a grandiose expression of human nothingness ("néant"). Therefore:

J'ai écrit ceci pour montrer ce qu'un homme peut faire' se substituait avec le son amer des deux mots Un triomphe qu'il avait ajouté en sous-titre: 'J'ai écrit ceci pour montrer ce que peuvent faire de nous les dieux. 53

The fatality suggested by this bitter tribute to the gods is inevitable for the "identité profonde et complète de l'être avec lui-même" which Lawrence and Tchen sought can only be achieved in the individual can validate himself through a religious transcendance. Lawrence was like
a saint or prophet — without God. Therefore when Malraux assesses Lawrence's Arabian adventure he had to conclude:

Ce qui l'avait en vérité séparé de la Révolte, ce qu'il avait voulu exprimer pour que son livre fut grand, c'était que toute action humaine était souillée par sa nature même. Le portrait qu'il avait voulu faire, c'était l'écorché d'un homme qui regarde tout ce qui fut sien ou pourrait l'être, avec la lucidité empoisonnée de l'athée de la vie.  

If this is the case the individual who obsessively must leave "une cicatrice sur la terre," who drives himself to "arracher ses propres images au monde stagnant qui les possède" is trying, through what he feels is validation, to negate his own self, his individual existence that can only be solitude and isolation from anything which could provide transcendance.

Claude and Perken were pure adventurers. T. E. Lawrence represented for Malraux the sort of adventurer whose personal quest was simultaneous with a cause. We see Malraux explore this type further in Les Conquérants whose major character Garine introduces what will become a crucial theme both in La Condition humaine and in L'Espoir. This issue is the true nature of the relationship between an individual seeking validation through action and this action when it happens to be revolutionary political activity which by definition involves the fate of a collectivity. The events of Les Conquérants center around the 1925 general
of Canton led by the Kuomintang. The immediate object is to force the British to evacuate a ruined Hong Kong and eventually to bring about the withdrawal of all European commercial exploitation in China. Garine is among the small group of Western Communists who serve the Kuomintang as advisors.

In the course of a 1929 symposium on *Les Conquérants* Malraux plainly states that the issue of Garine as an individual adventurer and his connection with a collectivist cause is at the root of the novel:

Les critiques ont vu en lui un personnage d'un individualisme extrêmement violent; je ne le conçois pas ainsi. La question est très particulière car Garine met ce qu'il possède d'individualisme au service d'un anti-individualisme. Il est certain qu'il se prête une très grande importance dans la mesure où il agit. Mais nous touchons ici aux points les plus complexes de la 'psychologie de l'élu.' Dans quelle mesure l'homme qui se considère comme chez (ailleurs comme un prophète) peut-il se considérer comme individualiste au moment où il met en jeu sa vie pour une cause à laquelle il adhère plus ou moins parfaitement? 58

We will see that Garine is a transitional figure in the progression from adventurer to fully committed revolutionary. As such he represents a critical phase in the evolution of the various methods of individual validation and the remarks of Malraux during that debate on "La Question des Conquérants" confirm this:

La question fondamentale pour Garine est bien moins de savoir comment on peut participer à une révolution que de savoir comment on peut échapper à ce qu'il appelle l'absurde. L'ensemble des
Conquérants est une revendication perpétuelle, et j'ai d'ailleurs insisté sur cette phrase: échapper à cette idée de l'absurde en fuyant dans l'humain. 59

(The word "humain" appears frequently in Malraux's writings. Its meaning is never precisely apparent and in addition it varies from one context to another. In this passage it seems to mean the opposite of the inhuman, hostile absurdity of our human condition more specifically the "human" vitality which a liberal revolution is most concerned with.)

In La Voie royale the individual's struggle against the absurd took the form of a defiance of death. In Les Conquérants Garine undertakes a struggle in the company of others but without feeling deep attachment to his fellow revolutionaries. Both these aspects of the hero will be explored in La Condition humaine.

We know then that the fundamental interest of Les Conquérants is found in Garine's peculiar use of the revolution. However it is significant to see what Garine thinks this revolution will mean to the Chinese. As Garine explains to his friend Pierre the narrator of the story:

Toute l'Asie moderne est dans le sentiment de la vie individuelle, dans la découverte de la mort. Les pauvres ont compris que leur détresse est sans espoir, qu'ils n'ont rien à attendre d'une vie nouvelle. 60

To Garine this new awareness of individual life limited by death with nothing to be expected from a future life resembles the attitude which accounts for the force of Christianity -- the feeling of possessing a life separate and
distinct in the eyes of God. This sharp difference between European and Oriental ways of viewing human life was one of the most provocative and troubling aspects of A.D.'s (i.e. Malraux's) discovery of Eastern culture which _La Tentation de l'Occident_ recounts.

Garine adds that he sees evidence every day that there is practically no distance at all between this Christian idea of individual existence and the hate, even fanatical hate, which one notices emerging among the Chinese revolutionaries. Dignity, that evidence of validation of the individual, is what the Chinese involved in the revolution are striving for:

> En même temps que la terreur d'une mort sans signification, d'une mort qui ne rachète ni ne récompense, naît l'idée de la possibilité, pour chaque homme, de vaincre la vie collective des malheureux, de parvenir à cette vie particulière, individuelle, qu'ils tiennent confusionnément pour le bien le plus précieux des riches. 61

In short, "ce qu'il faut, c'est que chaque homme sente que sa vie est liée à la Révolution, qu'elle perdra sa valeur si nous sommes battus, qu'elle redeviendra une loque..." 62

Garine considers that the awakening to an individual existence due to a sudden realization that there will be no better life beyond death will assure the total participation of the Chinese masses in a revolution with collectivist aims. The common effort is therefore an essential element in the revolutionary scheme.

As far as Garine's own relationship to the revolution
goes we already expect a great deal more complexity. Early in the narrative Gerard, a Kuomintang agent in Saigon, in describing the various types of Europeans who have come to China, places Garine among those who:

sont venus......pour courir leur chance ou jouer leur vie, et qu'il faut bien appeler des aventuriers...pour eux la Chine est un spectacle auquel ils sont plus ou moins liés. Ce sont des gens en qui les sentiments révolutionnaires tiennent la place que le goût de l'armée tient chez les légionnaires. 63

Later in the book the narrator reflects that Garine is the sort who is unable to link himself to the full political process which revolution sets in motion. Instead Garine is separated from all but the urgent immediacy at the outset: "il était de ceux pour qui l'esprit révolutionnaire ne peut naître que de la révolution qui commence, de ceux pour qui la révolution est, avant tout, un état de choses."64

It is therefore no surprise to hear Garine tell the narrator that humanity in general has no appeal for him and that he has no belief in a lasting spirit of revolution:

...je n'aime pas les hommes. Je n'aime pas même les pauvres gens, le peuple, ceux en somme pour qui je vais combattre...Je les préfère, mais uniquement parce qu'ils sont les vaincus...Ce qui est bien certain, c'est que je n'ai qu'un dégoût haineux pour la bourgeoisie dont je sort. Mais quant aux autres, je sais si bien qu'ils deviendraient abjects, dès que nous aurions triomphé ensemble......Nous avons en commun notre lutte, et c'est bien plus clair. 65

His fellow Communists are justifiably skeptical of Garine's orthodoxy. Nicolaieff, a Russian who heads the Kuomintang
secret police tells the narrator: "Il n'est pas communiste, voilà... il n'y a pas de place dans le communisme pour celui qui veut d'abord... être lui-même, enfin, exister séparé des autres." When the narrator asks Nicolaieff if he means that Communism is opposed to the individual conscience, he is told that Communism demands more than that, that individualism is a bourgeois sickness and individual conscience a sickness of leaders. Although this judgment is accurate for the most part, it fails to grasp the reason behind Garine's participation in this Communist led movement.

Garine's life as such does not interest him. He is concerned rather with a certain form of power that he must seek and the instrument of power is immaterial to him. As Malraux has explained Garine's activity should be understood as an attempt to escape the absurd or as we have said an attempt to validate his individual self. The absurdity of the human condition was startlingly uncovered to Garine during the course of a trial which he underwent for having given money to finance abortions among women Communists in Switzerland. At that time Garine came to the conclusion that society was neither bad, unreasonable, or susceptible to improvement but merely absurd. For this reason he explains that he will never be able to adhere to any social form, that he is a-social just in the same way that he is an atheist. He will always exist alongside of social order rather than in it for he says "on peut vivre en acceptant
l'absurde, on ne peut vivre dans l'absurde." 67 This acceptance of the absurd becomes for Garine "une passion parfaitement désespérée," deeper than all other passions. The objects of conquest lose their specific meaning, the passion alone counts and is "un des plus puissants soutiens de la force." 68

Accordingly for Garine the way to sustain this force is to "se lier à une grande action quelconque et ne pas la lâcher, en être hanté, en être intoxiqué." 69 When he asserts that "on ne se défend qu'en créant" 70 we know that validation consists of thrusting oneself beyond one's inherent absurdity into any great action. At the age of twenty, Garine spoke with disdainful irony therefore of those men (for example, socialists) who think that they are working for the good of humanity. His refutation of them was: "Ces crétins-là veulent avoir raison. En l'occurrence, il n'y a qu'une raison qui ne soit pas une parodie: l'emploi le plus efficace de sa force." 71 (the narrator who is recalling this to himself adds that at the time Garine's imagination was full of Saint Just...)

For Garine the "most effective use of one's force" is an assuagement, a deliverance. This being the case, the end to which this force is applied has practically no importance. Garine plays his life, he does not aim it:

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. Comme
tous les joueurs, je ne pense qu'À mon jeu, avec entètement et avec force......il y dans ma vie un certain rythme, une fatalité personnelle si tu veux, à quoi je n'échappe pas. Je n'attache à tout ce qui lui donne de la force... 72

The adventure of Garine is certainly more social, more politically involved than the domaine Perken had carved for himself among the natives or the jungle expedition of Claude and Perken. Nevertheless we saw that Garine was driven by the same desire to validate an identity acutely threatened by the absurd. The failure of Perken's effort is more definitive than that of Garine and in Les Conquérants Malraux presents us with a defeat that seems to retain some elements of victory. At the end of the novel Garine is seriously ill with a tropical fever and must leave the Orient to preserve what little chance he had for survival. As the general strike is coming to an apparently successful conclusion, Garine resolves finally to leave. But at this point Pierre remarks:

Depuis le soir où je l'ai vu à l'hôpital il me semble se séparer de son action, la laisser s'écart er de lui avec la santé avec la certitude de vivre. Une phrase qu'il vient de dire est encore en moi: 'Le souvenir d'un certain degré de misère met à leur place les choses humaines, comme l'idée de la mort...' La mort lui sert souvent de comparaison, maintenant. 73

The night before his departure he surveys his contribution to the Kuomintang effort and even speaks of continuing his struggle this time in England now that he knows what the Empire is, "une tenace, une constante violence."
Diriger. Déterminer. Contraindre. La vie est là...” 74

But the narrator then says to himself:

Et je comprends soudain pourquoi ses paroles me déconcertent: ce n'est pas moi qu'il veut convaincre. Il ne croit pas ce qu'il dit et il s'efforce, de tous ses nerfs irrités, de se persuader... Sait-il qu'il est perdu, craint-il de l'être, ne sait-il rien? Devant la mort certaine, une exaspération désolée naît en moi de ses affirmations, de ses espoirs. J'ai envie de lui dire: 'Assez, assez! Tu vas mourir.' 74

The spectre of his own death in the eyes of Claude was sufficient to convince Perken he was isolated forever. Garine is spared such a brutal confirmation for the narrator does not speak out but as the novel ends Garine embraces his friend and Pierre sees no joy in Garine's eyes, "rien qu'une dure et pourtant fraternelle gravité." 75 Garine remains essentially isolated from the narrator and certainly from the revolution he is leaving behind. Even so, Garine's adventure does end less conclusively than Claude/Perken's. Malraux is perhaps introducing the possibility that fraternal communion in the context of revolutionary activity can validate the individual to a greater extent than could pure action. Although Malraux already gives us many indications to the contrary in his next two novels La Condition humaine and L'Espoir he will explore this possibility thoroughly.

When we move from Les Conquérants to La Condition humaine therefore we enter squarely into Malraux's most "political" novel so far. The problem of the individual's
role in society is certainly not new and its solution is never more than a temporary compromise between individualism and discipline. In discussing this issue, Micheline Tison-Braun quotes Henri Bergson as saying that society can survive only if it subjugates the individual but will progress only if the individual is not hindered. In any case, the compromise between individualism and discipline appears almost impossible to achieve in modern times.

Revolutionary activity in the 20th century is concerned with just this issue. It is clear therefore why Malraux chose this subject as he explores the role of the individual in modern Western society. In a study on Malraux Rachel Bespaloff affirms that Malraux's novels offer us a new image of solitary man recovering the mythical and religious meaning of "participation à l'humain" by means of a common rebellion. She considers that these novels go far below social constraints to reveal to us the primeval need for communication which links the separated life to the collective life. At least this is what revolution tries to do. Whether or not it will succeed is another matter. In any case Malraux was aware of the problematic aspect of revolution as a metaphysical solace when he said in his preface to *Le Temps du mépris*: "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."
Revolution in our century has been almost exclusively Communist revolution. In this same preface Malraux touches on what the contribution of Communism to the validation of the individual is thought to mean:

Aux yeux de Kassner [the novel's one character], comme de nombre d'intellectuels communistes, le communisme restitue à l'individu sa fertilité. Romain de l'Empire, Chrétien, soldat de l'armée du Rhin, ouvrier soviétique, l'homme est lié à la collectivité qui l'entoure; Alexandrin, écrivain du XVIIIe siècle, il en est séparé. S'il l'est sans être lié à celle qui la suivra, son expression essentielle ne peut être héroïque. Il est d'autres attitudes humaines. Il est difficile d'être un homme. Mais pas plus de le devenir en approfondissant sa communion qu'en cultivant sa différence, -- et la première nourrit avec autant de force qu'une que la seconde ce par quoi l'homme est homme, ce par quoi il se dépasse, crée, invente ou se conçoit. 79

The idea of fertility is perhaps very close to the notion of validation. In a good definition, Nicola Chiaromonte says that the "viril fraternity" which many Malraux heroes feel they experience "gives back to the individual made sterile by bourgeois egocentrism his fertility, the absolutely fundamental sense of belonging to a definite time, a definite place and a specific milieu, without which authentic norms of conduct and even a true understanding of the self cannot be born..." The communion between revolutionaries is therefore: "a type of human relationship cleansed of both sentimentality and suspicion, in which the individual will feel both 'left alone' and trusted, hence essentially encouraged: 'fertile!'" 80
Keeping in mind the various aspects of "Destin" which the individual must always contend with, those interior and exterior menaces of absurdity that challenge the separate existence of each person, we should now look at the principal characters in Malraux's novels of revolution to determine to what extent revolutionary activity succeeds in validating the individual.

Kyo, the principal revolutionary of La Condition humaine, is portrayed as being a man who has decided on this activity after deliberation and who has proceeded to dedicate himself to it fully. Malraux tells us that Kyo: "choisit l'action, d'une facon grave et préméditée, comme d'autres choisissent les armes et la mer." 81 His commitment to the revolution seems complete. On the eve of the Shanghai uprising Kyo lies down to rest for a short time:

Couché pour tenter d'affaiblir sa fatigue, Kyo attendant...Cern'était pas lui qui songeait à l'insurrection, vivante dans tant de cerveaux comme le sommeil dans tant d'autres, qui pesait sur lui au point qu'il n'était plus qu'inquiétude et attente. 82

Kyo appears calm, resolute and efficient as he goes about the duties of a responsible revolutionary leader; organizing and encouraging the numerous cells. His loyalty is above question but we will see that he has reservations about the marxist policy in China.

This becomes apparent after the Shanghai insurrection has succeeded and the Kuomintang under the leadership of
Chang-Kai-Chek plans to force all Communists out of the revolutionary movement. The majority of the Communists want to resist this attempt but the official policy from Moscow is compliance with Chang's order to surrender arms. Kyo travels to Han Keou, a Communist held city in the interior, to try to persuade Borodine and Voloquine, the Kremlin representatives, to reverse the decision and to agree instead to authorize the Communists to seize control of the whole movement. They show nothing but unrelenting practical opportunism. Frustrated, Kyo finally remarks: "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." 83 Once he has left the Communist headquarters Kyo and Tchen walk through Han Keou feeling penetrated by a dependence, the anxiety of being no more than a man, no more than himself. 84 Walking there with Tchen the terrorist Kyo reflects: "Peut-être Tchen est-il un éphémère qui secrète sa propre lumière, celle à laquelle il va se détruire." We will later see why this is definitely true of Tchen but what is interesting here is that Kyo goes on to wonder:

Peut-être l'homme même?...Ne voit-on jamais que la fatalité des autres? N'était-ce pas comme un éphémère que lui-même voulait maintenant repartir pour Chang-hai qu'un plus tot maintenir les sections à tout prix? 85

At one point Gisors had said that individual questions only arose for Kyo in his private life. 86 This is only
partially true, as we already can guess. Furthermore when an individual is seeking validation the distinction between public and private can no longer be made. The problems which arise in Kyo's "private" life are of the same compelling nature as those which drive men into "public" action. This will become obvious to us when we see that Kyo's private question is one of separation and isolation such as any individual aware of the human condition must feel.

Kyo's wife May, a German-born doctor, who also serves the revolutionary cause, has just told Kyo that she had made love to a fellow doctor at the hospital. Because of their understanding that both of them were free, May had thought this news of an incident to which she attached no importance would have little effect on Kyo. He in turn knew that in theory he should not be deeply disturbed by May's revelation, but in fact he was shattered:

L'essentiel, ce qui le troublait jusqu'à l'angoisse, c'est qu'il était tout à coup séparé d'elle, non par la haine -- non par la jalousie......par un sentiment sans nom, aussi destructeur que le temps ou la mort: il ne la retrouvait pas. 87

This feeling "just as destructive as time or death" is isolation, the separation which individuals experience and against which they struggle in validation attempts. Earlier in a gathering of activists Kyo had heard his own voice on a propaganda record and had failed to recognize himself. This was not unusual, someone explained, for we hear our
own voice with our throat while we hear the voice of others with our ears. At the time, this incident caused a complex uneasiness in Kyo. Now after the scene with May Kyo walks through the streets, recalls his experience with the record and is overcome with doubt:

Il s'enfonçait en lui-même comme dans cette ruelle de plus en plus noire, où même les isolateurs du télégraphe ne luisaient plus sur le ciel. Il y retrouvait l'angoisse et se souvint des disques...Sa vie aussi, on l'entend avec la gorge, et celle des autres?...Il y avait d'abord la solitude, la solitude immuable derrière la multitude mortelle comme la grande nuit primitive derrière cette nuit dense et basse sous quoi guettait la ville déserte, pleine d'espoir et de haine. 'Mais moi, pour moi, pour la gorge, que suis-je? Une espèce d'affirmation absolue, d'affirmation de fou: une intensité plus grande que celle de tout le reste. Pour les autres, je suis ce que j'ai fait.' ......
L'étreinte par laquelle l'amour maintient les êtres collés l'un à l'autre contre la solitude, ce n'était pas à l'homme qu'elle apportait son aide; c'était au fou, au monstre incomparable, préférable à tout, que tout être est pour soi-même et qu'il chôie dans son coeur. 88

Rather than abandon himself to solitude and despair, Kyo tries to struggle out of his isolation by remembering what should be redeemed in his relationship with May. He reminds himself that only for May was he not what he had done, for him alone was she completely different from her biography. They were a deep complicity, "consented, conquered and chosen":

'Avec elle seule j'ai en commun cet amour déchiré ou non, comme d'autres ont, ensemble, des enfants malades et qui peuvent mourir...' Ce n'était certes pas le bonheur, c'était quelque chose de primitif qui s'accordait qux ténèbres et faisait
monter en lui une chaleur qui finissait dans une étroite immobile, comme d'une joue contre une joue -- la seule chose en lui qui fut aussi forte que la mort. 89

This "primitive something," strong enough for the time being to defy death, fortifies Kyo, giving him something with which to combat his condition. Instead of allowing his hurt to exclude May, Kyo finally lets her accompany him to the party meeting the last night of his life. They both thought that to permit someone to die with you was the highest mark of love. Does Malraux present conflicts within Kyo only to resolve them in ways which do not completely convince us? I think there is this possibility.

After Kyo has been captured by Chang-Kai-Chek's police and imprisoned to await death we have the opportunity to see whether Kyo's sense of isolation will return in the face of death. Once in the prison, which is incredibly sordid and filthy, Kyo is confronted with all the primitive brutality and degradation that torturers and prisoners evoke. When he sees a guard whip a defenseless lunatic Kyo "ressentait jusqu'à l'envie de vomir l'humiliation que ressent tout homme devant un homme dont il dépend: impuissant contre cette immonde ombre à fouet -- dépouillé de lui-même." 90

He sees the "foul fatality" ("immonde fatalité") of the obscure creatures swarming behind the bars -- disquieting creatures like the crustaceans and giant insects of his
childhood dreams. Total humiliation and solitude is what they represent for they are not even men. The "inhuman" aspect of this "ignominie humaine" recalls Claude's reaction as he faced the decaying devouring force of the jungle. In such situations, the integrity of the individual is surely denied for it is impossible to escape the inexplicable, demonic forces which we try to dominate both within us and without in the absurd setting of our human condition. Any validation which an individual may feel he has achieved is harshly compromised in such moments.

A few pages later in the office of Konig, the head of Chang's police, Kyo nearly collapses under the strain of his effort to avoid madness himself. In a remarkable understatement Malraux comments "il venait de découvrir combien être contraint à se réfugier tout entier en soi-même est épuisant." 92

As Kyo is lying on his back in the vast hall gathering the necessary courage to kill himself by swallowing his cyanide capsule he thinks of May and knows how far he is from her and from all others who will continue to live:

Depuis plus d'un an, May l'avait délivré de toute solitude, sinon de toute amertume. La lancinante fuite dans la tendresse des corps noués pour la première fois jaillissait, hélas! dès qu'il pensait à elle, déjà séparé des vivants. 93

But when the scene of Kyo's suicide is considered as a whole one definitely get the impression that for him, the revolution and its "amour viril" provide a transcendant
force which is sufficient to redeem his death. There is a series of religious terms used to describe this revolution which leave no doubt as to the spiritual value the movement offers. Kyo is certain the revolution will be "resurrected" elsewhere in spite of its temporary defeat; these condemned men resemble those to whom believers "pray"; these "frères dans l'ordre mendiant de la Révolution" are united by "sacrificed" suffering; the murmurings of the wounded sound like a "chant funèbre" and they will undergo a "mort saturée de ce chevrotement fraternel, assemblée de vaincus ou des multitudes reconnaîtraient leurs martyrs, légende sanglante dont se font les légendes dorées!" Kyo is convinced that he will die his death, a death which resembles his life, and be its supreme expression. To him "it is easy to die when one does not die alone," and this death chosen in fraternity is not the passivity of merely dying but is instead an act. As Kyo crushes the poison between his teeth:

\[
\text{il entendit encore Katow l'interroger avec angoisse et le toucher, et au moment où il voulait se raccrocher à lui, suffoquant, il sentit toutes ses forces le dépasser, écartelées au-delà de lui-même contre une toute puissante convulsion.}
\]

Murray Krieger has suggested that Kyo's private self dies alone even if his public self dies fraternally.

We have seen that we cannot separate the two lives of Kyo in that way. It would be more accurate to say that Kyo's
death contains hints of defeat in spite of his courageous and even "saintly" behavior. Krieger's statement does point up the fact that here and there in the passage describing Kyo's death are indications that this sacrifice was a defeat and not a victory, a negation rather than a validation. However, I feel that at the time he wrote La Condition humaine Malraux meant us to consider Kyo's death as Kyo did and to dismiss "la sauvage indifférence avec quoi la vie nous démasque à nous-mêmes, l'instant où la mort écraserait sa pensée de toute sa pesée sans retour." ⁹⁸

The death of Katow, another revolutionary, is an even more remarkable example of devotion to the revolution, of the revolution's ability to be an object of sacrifice. Katow had been captured separately from Kyo but had found himself beside his friend in the hall filled with condemned Communists. However now Kyo lay dead at Katow's side and Katow "depuis la mort de Kyo......se sentait rejeté à une solitude d'autant plus forte et douloureuse qu'il était entoure des siens." ⁹⁹

Then Malraux tells us that in spite of the obsession of horror in the hall Katow found in this total abandonment the sensation of repose, as if for years he had waited only for this, a repose met and found again at the worst moments of his life. Katow asks himself where he had read "'Ce n'étaient pas les découvertes, mais les souffrances des
explorateurs que j'enviais, qui m'attiraient..." As if to answer Katow's thought Malraux adds that the faraway whistle (of the locomotive in whose furnace Chang's soldiers are burning their Communist prisoners) reached as far as the hall where Katow lay. 100 That Katow envies the suffering of explorers rather than their discoveries, that he finds a "sensation du repos" in the total abandonment before death strongly suggests that the existence which Katow had chosen for himself never really would have had any other outcome but self destruction. As Serge Doubrovsky would put it the inevitable "dialectique de l'héroïsme" is that "il n'est de possession absolue que dans l'instant, il n'est d'instant absolu que dans la mort." 101

On the other side of Katow there are two very young Chinese who are paralyzed with fear at the thought of being thrown alive into the locomotive. Katow tries to comfort them but nothing anyone can say would erase their terror. Katow lies there amidst the sounds of the wounded and "malgré la rumeur, malgré tous ces hommes qui avaient combattu comme lui, Katow était seul, seul entre le corps de son ami mort et des deux compagnons épouvantés, seul contre ce mur et ce sifflet perdu dans la nuit."

Then however Malraux writes: "Mais un homme pouvait être plus fort que cette solitude et même, peut-être, que ce sifflet atroce: la peur luttait en lui contre la plus terrible tentation de sa vie." 102 Katow divides his cyanide
capsule between the two young Chinese, acceding to the "most terrible temptation of his life" which has now become "ce don de plus que sa vie." 103

But soon after the two are dead "Katow se sentit abandonné. Il se retourna sur le ventre et attendit. Le tremblement de ses épaules ne cessait pas." 104 However when Chang's officers come and discover the young Chinese dead beside Katow he explains that it is he who has given them his cyanide and replies when they ask him what he will do for himself: "Il n'y en avait que pour deux." He gave this answer with a "joie profonde" and then marched off to his fate. 105

As was the case with Kyo's death, I feel we should conclude that in 1933 Malraux intended for Katow's death to be interpreted as a creative sacrifice in the fraternity of revolution. We can wonder, though, if there is not a fundamental similarity between the "profound joy" Katow feels as he walks to the locomotive and the "repose" he feels in the presence of death.

Although in La Condition humaine there were indications here and there that revolutionary activity was not the solution to the individual's validation problem, in 1933 this novel certainly seemed to say that the Communists involved in the Chinese uprising were definitely engaged in an activity which could offer them the chance to "leave a scar on the earth."
L'Espoir, Malraux's novel of revolution which appeared five years later in 1937 presented a different view of this activity. In the first place the setting was Europe not Asia. Instead of a handful of Westerners participating in a fairly limited action, L'Espoir showed a country's entire population cruelly involved in total warfare. Moreover this "civil war" in Spain represented the fascist/communist conflict which would soon affect the whole continent as it had already done in Germany and in Italy. The structure of the novel reflects this complexity -- there are many more characters and Malraux depicts these characters in a long, intricate succession of scenes. Malraux's increases experience accounts for this increase in stylistic complexity. In the five years since La Condition humaine was published Malraux witnessed the rise of Nazi oppression in Europe (German refugees, relatives of his wife Clara Goldschmidt, brought first hand accounts of persecution). This growth of fascism prompted Malraux to participate in many Communist led protest drives. On the other hand, Malraux (who has never been a member of the Communist party) was, like many other leftist intellectuals of the period, unable to avoid noticing the "betrayal" of the fervent idealism of the revolutionary years in Russia. This deterioration culminated in the Stalinist purges of the late 1930's. Inevitably Malraux acquired a more developed view of 20th century revolution and this increased knowledge
caused his portrayal of the Spanish Civil War to be a mature, comprehensive panorama of European political forces in this prelude to the Second World War.

On the ideological level, the entire novel could be considered an investigation of the statement made in the title -- hope. Before we reach the last of four hundred and thirty two pages we will have seen Malraux explore fully the possibility that the hope within revolution can offer the European individual the validation he seeks.

In the opening sections of the novel, all the revolutionaries, the Spanish republicans, are immersed in an "aura of fraternity." To them the revolution is a "kermesse de liberté." This word "kermesse," a fair, suggests that the revolution will be exuberant but short-lived, a feeling born out by Malraux's title for the entire first section of the novel: "L'illusion lyrique." Malraux does show us however the conviction on the part of almost every character that this revolution they are involved in will bring a validation of the individual by means of the acquisition of dignity and liberty.

Magnin, an important republican officer who commands the air squadron, when asked why he has come from France to combat fascism, replies:

*Le rêve de liberté totale, le pouvoir au plus noble et ainsi de suite, tout ça fait partie à mes yeux de ce pour quoi je suis ici. Je veux, pour tout un chacun, une vie qui ne se qualifie pas par ce qu'il exige des autres.*

107
The exaltation of revolutionary activity bridges the gap between two persons and thus helps to diminish the isolation which is one of the constants of the human condition. Manuel, the cinema sound engineer who is gradually emerging as a revolutionary chief, is returning from a walk with a fascist, Alba, who has come over to the republicans. Alba's sincerity has not yet been fully established but Manuel decided in the course of their walk to hand Alba his gun, knowing the risk he was taking but wanting to risk his life in such a trust. As they come back to the village, even though "ses muscles fussent aux aguets, Manuel sentait une sourde confiance entre cet homme et lui, comme il sentait parfois des bouffées de sensualité entre sa maîtresse et lui." 108

This confidence, this recognition of the integrity of the other, is the dignity which the left defends against the fascist tendency toward humiliation. For the Italian Scali, in civilian life a professor of art history, this is why he has become a republican pilot:

L'idée, si commune parmi les fascistes, que leur ennemi est par définition une race inférieure et digne de mépris, l'aptitude au dédain de tant d'imbéciles n'était pas une des moindres raisons pour lesquelles il avait quitté son pays. 109

And as Scali later maintains to a sceptic who questions the value of the fraternal revolutionary spirit:

les hommes unis à la fois par l'espoir et par l'action accèdent, comme les hommes unis par l'amour, à des domaines auxquels ils n'accèderaient
pas seuls. L'ensemble de cette escadrille est plus noble que presque tous ceux qui la comprosent. 110

There are many passages in L'Espoir particularly in the first half, which show this spirit of "fraternité virile" felt by the republicans which translates a military conflict into an ethical crusade. But to continue with a study of the role of the individual in these revolutionary novels it is necessary to show when and where the revolution fails to provide validation.

The "vieux Alvear," the father of one of the republicans, refuses to leave his Madrid apartment during the fascist bombardments, preferring to die amid his books and paintings. He has no confidence in either republican or fascist claims and as he explains to Scali who had come to take him to safety outside the capitol "L'homme n'engage dans une action qu'une part limitée de lui-même; et plus l'action se prétend totale, plus la part engagée est petite." 111 For Alvear the action in revolution cannot validate enough of a man for it to be worth anything. Reason and "l'age du fondamental" have yet to be founded again or as Ling of La Tentation de l'Occident would say Western man has still to continue looking for someone or something who will assume the heritage of man, dead shortly after God.

As L'Espoir progresses the exigencies of efficient military campaigns and the demands of individual validation are shown to be in opposition. Early on, Magnin had remarked
with a touch of bitterness that action was action and not justice. 112 The deep irony of revolution was that to be successful the revolution must sacrifice those very qualities in it which cause individuals seeking validation to join the revolution. Thus we can see why the most articulate and sensitive observer of the war, the propaganda officer Garcia, states that all action is manichean and that every true revolutionary is a born manichean as is every politician. 113

The passage describing Kyo's death contained many phrases which underlined the parallel between religious faith and devotion to the revolutionary cause. Alvear confirmed the fact that for many the revolution represents a transcendance which can validate the lives of individuals marooned in an absurd world when he says that the revolution plays, among other roles, the role which was formerly held by eternal life. 114 Men seek in the action of revolution the all-consuming sensation, the total coincidence of their effort to establish themselves with the common fraternal effort -- in short, an Apocalypse. But as Garcia points out:

L'Apocalypse veut tout, tout de suite; la révolution obtient peu -- lentement et durement. Le danger est que tout homme porte en soi-même le désir d'une Apocalypse. Et que, dans la lutte, ce désir, passe un temps assez court, est une défaite certaine, pour une raison très simple: par sa nature même, l'Apocalypse n'a pas de future. 115
Not only can the revolution not provide a sustained source of transcendance, but as soon as men become involved in revolution they are exposed to the corrupting aspects inherent in any war. Scali sadly realized that the revolution was menaced by the present as well as by the future.\footnote{116} When Garcia discovers that during the aerial siege of Madrid fifth column fascist sympathizers within the city are destroying strategic bridges he realizes he must not disclose that it is not a result of Franco's bombers because he fears that the citizens of Madrid would become enraged and react to this treachery with brutal violence -- "Il savait qu'il ne faut pas tenter la bête en l'homme." The bestial aspect, the demon hidden within each individual is not eradicated but nourished by the war. Not only does the revolution menace the general populace but also those revolutionaries who have chosen this action. Even though he manages to overcome it the question briefly arises in Garcia's mind that "de quelque facon que finisse la guerre, à ce point de haine, quelle paix sera possible ici? Et qu'est-ce que cette guerre fera de moi?"

Malraux considers the essence of the human condition to be absurdity -- a gap forever separating the transcendence which the individual longs to attach himself from his inability to bridge this chasm between his solitude and the universe. This conception of absurdity fits one meaning of tragedy when tragedy is understood to imply a "décalage"
between man's aspirations and his attainments. To validate oneself, to create a source of transcendant authentication from within an existence which is inescapably individual and separate is therefore a tragic endeavor:

Pour un homme qui pense, la révolution est tragique. Mais pour un tel homme la vie aussi est tragique. Et si c'est pour supprimer sa tragédie qu'il compte sur la révolution, il pense de travers, c'est tout. 118

The "volonte de déité" is a contradiction in terms.

The character who perhaps best illustrates the impossibility of eliminating the tragedy of one's existence by participation in the revolution is "le capitain Hernandez." In a series of conversations between Hernandez and Garcia, Malraux exposes the reasons why Hernandez must fail.

Hernandez asks what purpose the revolution serves if it is not to make men better and why the revolution will not be made by "les hommes les plus humains?" In reply to the first question Garcia retorts that the revolution, of necessity, is made by the proletariat and not by stoics. His answer to the second query is "parce que les hommes les plus humains ne font pas la révolution, mon bon ami: ils font les bibliothèques ou les cimetières. Malheureusement." 119 Later Garcia continues their dialogue when he asserts that Hernandez is possibly in the process of meeting his destiny because:

la partie que vous jouez est perdu d'avance, parce que vous vivez politiquement - dans une action politique - dans un commandement militaire
A casual acquaintance of Hernandez, "un anarchiste ou se disant tel," was accused of stealing from a cash box. He was innocent and because he called on Hernandez to attest to this, Hernandez defended him. The man had conducted a forced collectivization in the village for which he was responsible and his men began to extend the collectivization to the neighboring villages. Hernandez conceded that such measures were bad, that a peasant who has to show ten papers to get a sickle would become enraged. He agrees that in contrast the program of the Communists on this score is good. Garcia replies that the Communists and those who are trying to "organize the Apocalypse" think that the pure heart of Hernandez' friend does not prevent him from abetting Franco's cause if the collectivization were to result in peasant revolts. Hernandez' answer to that is:

Je suis en mauvais termes avec [les communistes] depuis que j'ai témoigné...Tant pis, que voulez-vous, je ne laisserai pas traiter de voleur un homme qui fait appel à mon témoignage quand je le sais innocent. 121

Hernandez continues to reject any compromise between his personal ethical standards and the political demands of the context in which he finds himself. During the siege of Toledo, Moscardo the fascist commander of the Alcazar
asks Hernandez the republican officer in charge to allow a letter to his sick wife in Madrid pass through the lines. 122 Hernandez permits this, even though he is accused by less "généreux" republicans of gratuitous "espagnolisme," not to mention a gesture of mercy toward the fascists who should deserve none. What will the outcome of this persistent conflict be? Garcia is quite explicit:

Le capitaine [Hernandez] est un homme très honnête pour qui la révolution est un mode de réalisation de ses désirs éthiques. Pour lui, le drame que nous vivons est une Apocalypse personnelle. Ce qu'il y a de plus dangereux dans ces demi-chrétiens c'est le goût de leur sacrifice: ils sont prêts aux pires erreurs, pourvu'qu'ils les paient de leur vie. 123

(This explanation will be even more significant when we come to Tchen who also seeks nothing short of a personal Apocalypse in the engulfing sensation of terrorism.) Garcia had previously told Hernandez that the only bridge between his individual quest for moral perfection and the revolution was the idea of his sacrifice. In the end Hernandez does pay for the error of misunderstanding what he should and should not expect from the revolution by sacrifice.

At Visagra Hernandez is in the Roman arena with the last few republican troops left before the advancing Moors. Rather than evacuate the town with the others, Hernandez remains behind in a gesture of futile resistance. In the last minutes before he is of course captured, Hernandez
"ne pensait à rien, serrait sa mitrailleuse contre son épaule, et était heureux avec plénitude." 124

Hernandez rejects another opportunity to save himself this time as he is being marched from the fascist prison to the execution grounds. The man he is bound to cuts the ropes with a razor. Instead of escaping also Hernandez stays in line. Then, as he stands waiting his turn before the firing squad he ecstatically welcomes death: "Hernandez regarde la glaise avec passion. O bonne terre inerte! Il n'y a de dégoût de d'angoisse que chez les vivants." 125

Moreno, a friend of Hernandez, had once explained to him what he had felt under sentence of death while imprisoned by the fascists:

Ecoute, mon vieux: il n'y a pas de héros sans auditoire. Dès qu'on est vraiment seul, on comprend ça. On dit qu'être aveugle est un univers; être seul, c'en est un aussi, tu peux me croire. Là-dedans, on s'aperçoit que ce qu'on pense de soi est une idée de l'autre monde. Du monde qu'on a quitté. Du quai des ballots. Tu peux penser quelque chose de toi dans cet univers-là, mais tu as simplement l'impression d'être fou...... Les deux mondes ne se communiquent pas. Il y a le monde où les hommes meurent ensemble, en chantant, en serrant les dents où comme ils voudront - et puis, derrière, mon vieux, il y a ce [prison] avec.....(les sous qu'on jette). 126

The prisoners would pass the time (!) until the guards knocked on their cell doors to lead them to the execution ground by tossing coins - heads or tails. Their whole existence came down to this senseless game — an absurdity:
"Chaque homme est menacé de sa vérité, souviens-toi. Sa vérité, hein, ça n'est pas même la mort, pas même la souffrance, c'est un sou, mon vieux, c'est un sou." 127

Another character in L'Espoir had sadly remarked elsewhere that one always has to meet the world in oneself, like it or not. The interior menace of one's own individual truth and the exterior menace of the world turn out to be the same -- the human condition's absurdity, even more than death. So Hernandez consummates his sacrifice in death but his denai

The eternal isolation of the individual which the revolution does not succeed in alleviating becomes more and more apparent to the revolutionaries. Manuel, who in the first scene of the novel only lent his car to the republican cause, is gradually emerging as a born leader of soldiers. But his mentor, the colonel Ximénès tells him:

un officier doit être aimé dans la nature de son commandement - plus juste, plus efficace, meilleur - et non plans les particularités de sa personne. Mon enfant, me comprenez-vous si je vous dit qu'un officier ne doit jamais séduire?.....Il y a plus de noblesse à être un chef qu'à être un individu...c'est plus difficile. 128

In another scene two deserters condemned to death throw themselves on their knees at Manuel's feet and clutch his legs, begging for mercy. It is raining hard and Manuel "does not see their faces." The one who cries out to Manuel, "ne criaait pas le visage levé, mais vers
la boue, et ses cris étaient enveloppés dans le grand
chuchotement de la pluie." Manuel says nothing!

"Que dirais-je?" pensait Manuel. La défense
de ces hommes était dans ce que nul ne saurait
jamais dire, dans ce visage ruisselant, bouche
ouverte, qui avait fait comprendre à Manuel
qu'il était en face de l'éternel visage de celui
qui paie. Jamais, il n'avait ressenti à ce
point qu'il fallait choisir entre la victoire
et la pitié. 129

All of a sudden the man drops his arms and looks at Manuel
from top to bottom:

Il était au-delà de la résignation; comme s'il
eut tout compris - non seulement pour cette fois
mais pour les siècles des siècles. Et, avec
l'amertume indifférente de ceux qui parlent déjà
de l'autre côté de la vie: 'Alors, t'as plus de
voix pour nous, maintenant?' Manuel s'aperçut
qu'il n'avait pas encore dit un mot. 130

After his troops have engaged in their first major
battle Manuel realizes that he and they are bound by an
"alliance de sang." As he is reviewing the troops Manuel
looks at their faces, "tragiquement fraternels" and Mal-
raux tells us that "jamais Manuel ne s'était senti aussi
seul." 131 He is deeply troubled by this and when he next
sees Ximénès he confides to him: "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. Je suis chaque jour un peu moins
humain." 132

Garine had sought to escape the absurd "en fuyant dans
l'humain" but he never really wanted a communion with those
men who, like him, participated in the revolution. Manuel, on the other hand, had longed to find in the human fraternity of revolution the validated individuality he needed. In the end both men are isolated. Kyo managed to find a measure of fraternity during his revolutionary activities but Manuel, a Communist also, finds only isolation in his role of leader.

For Magnin, the solitude of command is only part of the greater solitude of war. Furthermore, Magnin feels himself more and more detached from the events of the war. In one scene Gardet, a delegate from the Surete had told Magnin that three of his aviators were suspected of being fascist spies and should be forbidden to remain at the airfield. Later Enrique, a Communist, tries to persuade Magnin to keep the three on since they are members of the Communist party. Magnin refuses to acquiesce to this line of reasoning. Weary and disheartened by the whole issue, it is at this point that Magnin says to himself "l'action est l'action, et non la justice," for he knew that Enrique had organized the best Spanish troops and that he, Magnin, had already agreed to the dismissal of one of the fliers. He looks out beyond the hangar, over the field and suddenly feels "comme tout cela était dérisoire en regard des foules paysannes fuyant avec leurs ânes devant les villages en feu." 133
The fact that it is Magnin, the commander of the republican air force who makes this observation is significant. Throughout L'Espoir in every scene involving aviators there is a reference to the "dérision" efforts of men in warfare when these petty struggles are compared to the vastness of the indifferent eternal universe. The planes are at a distance high above the earth and this "recol" seems to stand for the detached understanding one must reach when the revolution no longer represents to the individual the most glorious means of validation.

The most extreme path toward self validation is that taken by the terrorists. These individuals are engaged in action on the same level as that sought by a pure adventurer, but they are also involved in a political venture if only in a marginal way. However the drive for self possession is too extreme to be able to be put to the service of anything beyond their own acute needs. This type of individual, first seen as Hong in Les Conquérants, will be portrayed in a much more expanded way in the character of Tchen in La Condition humaine. These are the only two terrorists, strictly speaking, which Malraux depicts. In L'Espoir the anarchist Puig and Le Négus are also characters who represent the quest for validation through the sensation of violence but they are more fully integrated into a political context.
It is significant that both Hong and Tchen are Asians. They represent the conflict discussed by Malraux in *La Tentation de l'Occident*, a conflict which occurred when the traditional stability and unity of China was being undermined by the impact of Western ideas. The exposure to Western views caused many young Chinese to question the value of the static culture which had existed in China for centuries but many aspects of European civilization were equally impossible for them to accept blindly.

Hong, an orphan, had been taken under the wing of Rebecci an old Genovese who had in his youth been a militant anarchist but who for many years had led a curious existence first in Shameen and then in Canton itself where he now sold mechanical toys. Although Hong, unlike Tchen, is still oriental enough not to attach to death a great importance, Malraux tells us that as a result of Hong's contact with Rebecci and other Europeans it was impossible for him to be free of the concept of the unique character of life:

Une seule vie, une seule vie...Il n'en avait point conçu la crainte de la mort (......meme aujourd'hui mourir n'est pas pour lui mourir, souffrir à l'extrême d'une blessure tres grave), mais la crainte profonde et constante de gâcher cette vie qui était la sienne et dont il ne pourrait jamais rien effacer. 135

Hong learned by heart this poem he had once heard:

"Je combats seul et gagne ou perd,
Je n'ai besoin de personne pour me rendre libre.
Je ne veux pas que nul Jesus-Christ pense
Qu'il put jamais mourir pour moi." 136
In Hong's eyes there are only two races: "les misérables et les autres." He assassinates one after the other the heads of British services in Hong Kong because these men represent "the others," all the European exploiters which the general strike hopes to drive out of China.

But the economic exploitation is only part of the suffering of the impoverished Chinese masses. We see why terrorism is the means by which Hong seeks self validation for himself and indirectly for others when Malraux explains Hong's attitude:

'Un pauvre ne peut pas s'estimer! Cela, il l'accepterait s'il pensait avec ses ancêtres que son existence n'est pas limitée au cours de sa vie particulière. Mais,...il n'accepte plus, ne cherche plus, ne discute plus; il hait. Il voit dans la misère une sorte de démon doucereux, sans cesse occupe à prouver à l'homme sa bassesse, sa lâcheté, sa faiblesses, son aptitude à s'avilir. Sans nul doute, il hait l'homme qui se respecte, qui est sûr de lui-même.

Not only does Hong reject the traditional Chinese belief that one's existence is not limited by one's particular life but he also rejects the Communist belief in expediency which often sacrifices the present for the sake of the future. Specifically Hong refuses to obey Garine and Borodine, the leaders of the uprising, when they order him not to murder the rich Chinese who, although bourgeois, could be made to contribute money to the cause. Pierre, the narrator, comments that Hong:
ne veut point que les choses soient arrangées. Il ne veut point abandonner, au bénéfice d'un avenir incertain, sa haine présente. Il parle avec rage de ceux qui oublient que la vie est unique. 138

In fact, Hong has absolutely no use for any political order. When Garine warns Hong not to persist with the assassinations of rich Chinese all Hong replies is "tout Etat social est une saloperie. Sa vie unique. Ne pas la perdre. Voilà." 139

Trotsky wrote an article entitled "La Révolution étranglée" in which he said that Les Conquérants was not a chronicle of the Chinese revolution in novel form because the main accent was on the relation between individuals and collective action, not on the collective action alone. In his "Réponse à Trotsky," a propos of Hong, Malraux asserted:

Il s'agit de le convaincre? Hong n'est pas susceptible d'être convaincu. Il se fiche de l'avenir du prolétariat; le prolétariat ne l'intéresse qu'héroïque...Son but est éthique, non politique -- et sans espoir. 140

From an orthodox Communist point of view Trotsky was absolutely correct but as Malraux explained when discussing Garine in "La Question des Conquérants," the relation between an individualist and the collective action he engages in was the paramount issue as far as he was concerned.

Hong eventually divorces himself entirely from the practical considerations which governed the organization of the strike and began to kill for the sheer sensation his
individual quest required. Finally he is executed by the revolutionaries themselves for in spite of warnings he continued his assassinations and had even murdered Tcheng-Dai, the "Chinese Gandhi" spiritual leader of the revolution.

Tchen illustrates perfectly the fate of those young Chinese touched by Western culture as Malraux described them in *La Tentation de l'Occident*:

[L'individu naît en eux, et avec lui cet étrange goût de la destruction et de l'anarchie....Ah, que ne pouvez-vous voir venir vers nous, avec une âme asiatique, le long cortège de l'Europe, porteurs blancs et vaisses chargés de toute la cour de la Mort! Mages de la Bible, ambassadeurs auprès des empereurs mongols, quelle pauvreté dans vos caravanes! 'Je*t*apporte o reine, toute ce que tu peux désirer pour mourir.' 141

Tchen will become his own fatality, for the discovery of individuality, essential to the awareness of death, makes peace and happiness impossible havens for him and set Tchen off on a doomed quest for himself.

Tchen's uncle had sent him to a Lutheran school only to learn English and French and withdrew him when he noticed the boy was also being taught such preposterous and dangerous notions as Hell. Therefore Tchen would not spend his life as a Christian but his brief exposure to Christianity was sufficient to alter the rest of his life:

Détačé par la foi [de la Chine], habitué par elle à se séparer du monde au lieu de se soumettre à lui, il avait compris que tout s'était passé comme si cette période de sa vie [au college luthérian] n'eût été qu'une
The tragedy of Tchen, as well as the tragedy of all European men according to Malraux, is found in the question Tarrou in Camus' La Peste asks when he wonders how one can be a saint without God. "What to do with a soul if there is neither God nor Christ?" means what to do with an existence which feels an individual spiritual need for validation but which sees no transcendant force to validate it? The individual has to set out on a religious quest but cannot hope to find a religion. A friend, astonished by Tchen's intensity, asks him if he wants to make a sort of religion out of terrorism. Tchen replies: "pas une religion. Le sens de la vie...La possession complète de soi-même." There remains no one to sacrifice to except oneself.

Terrorist action becomes the means by which Tchen struggles to exorcise his inner tormenting demons, demons which no God banishes. From this underlying state of solitude Tchen is driven in a pseudo-Nietzschean like manner to perpetually seek escape from the spectacle of these demons which his isolation forces upon him. At the same time, however, by virtue of this inherent solitude he is simply unequipped to attain any force or object beyond himself. Tchen seeks therefore both to transform this solitude from within, to repudiate the terrifying aspects of this solitude and also to validate this very solitude just as
Perken, dying, sought to escape his existence and at the same time "validate" it by making his death. It is this basic paradox, this impasse, which accounts for the eventual failure of all these characters marked inexorably by their individualism.

We can understand then why both the following statements describe Tchen's fundamental thrust: "l'action politique donnait un sens à sa solitude," 144 and "la violence lui donnait la sensation d'une action solitaire." 145 The best way to know more clearly what this violence of solitary action means to Tchen's life is to follow Malraux's magnificent description of Tchen's first murder, the only murder described in the novel.

In this opening scene of the novel, Tchen stands in a hotel room poised above a sleeping man who must be murdered in order to obtain documents which the revolutionaries need to appropriate a shipload of machine guns. Malraux tells us that Tchen is alone, there beyond time and beyond the world of men in an atmosphere of madness:

Tchen découvrait en lui, jusqu'à la nausée, non le combattant qu'il attendait, mais un sacrificateur. Et pas seulement aux dieux qu'il avait choisis: sous son sacrifice à la révolution grouillait un monde de profondeurs auprès de quoi cette nuit écrasée d'angoisse n'était que clarté. 146

As if subconsciously to remind himself of the deep connection between the assuagement he needs from inside himself and the murder he will commit when he plunges the dagger
into the sleeping man, Tchen drives the blade into his left arm. He strikes at last and the man is dead. Immediately afterward Malraux describes Tchen's reaction as his entire arm is shaken, jerked:

Ce n'était pas la peur, c'était une épouvante à la fois atroce et solennelle qu'il ne connaissait plus depuis son enfance: il était seul avec la mort, seul dans un lieu sans hommes, mollement écrasé à la fois par l'horreur et par le goût de sang. 147

Moving about in the room Tchen crosses in front of the balcony and suddenly finds himself looking out over Shanghai. At first the night "boils" like enormous black smoke full of sparkles, the night itself is shaken by Tchen's anguish. Little by little, the night, in accord with Tchen's breath which is less and less panting, becomes immobile and the stars establish themselves in their eternal movement. The whole view is one of "poignant serenity." Far below, the lights of the city palpitated with the life of men who do not kill, millions of lives all now rejecting his. But their miserable condemnation was small compared to death which was withdrawing itself from him and which seemed to flow out of his body like the blood of "l'autre." That whole shadow, scintillating or immobile, was life. 148 Breathing finally to the depth of his chest it seemed to Tchen that he rejoined that life with an endless gratitude. He stands there contemplating the movement of cars and pedestrians as a cured blind man looks or as a famished man eats. "Insatiable de vie," he would have
wanted to touch all those bodies. 149

As Tchen is leaving, a drunken man near the bar on the first floor of the hotel tells him in English that "the dancing girl in red is stunning." Tchen wants both to slap the man to make him be quiet and to embrace him because he is living. The relationship between Tchen and the surrounding world is complex, and ambivalent, reflecting perhaps the confusing intensity of his mind in general. Tchen's first reaction to the panorama of Shanghai was that it was turbulent, "boiling" like his own anxiety. Then, as death leaves him, he enters the active world of life, welcoming the presence of other human beings who he had previously felt rejected him as he had stood encased still in his isolated atmosphere of murder. Just before leaving the hotel, Tchen returns to the hotel room because he has forgotten the papers he came for. The room had stayed the same -- murder changed nothing, then. On the way out of the hotel he sees himself in a mirror -- murder had not left a trace on his face. 150 He hails a taxi and leaves the European section to enter Chinese Shanghai. All is "abandon et silence," nothing remains of the world except a night with which Tchen is in accord as with an old friendship. An eternal world from which men have disappeared: "Il y avait un monde du meurtre, et il y restait comme dans la chaleur." 151
Tchen has just committed murder. If he is to validate himself, to stabilize himself beyond his demons by murder, the presence of murder must not vanish as it seems to have done. In order to sustain him the sensation experienced in murder, the most crucial act of Tchen's life so far, must not evaporate.

But then Tchen has to return among men; he comes to the phonograph shop of Lou-You-Shuen and Hemmelrich where a small group of comrades waits in the back room for the documents. Even among fellow revolutionaries Tchen knew that he would not be able to express what the experience of murder has meant to him: "Il pouvait renseigner ces hommes, mais il ne pourrait jamais s'expliquer." 152

In a later scene Tchen is hurrying along a street carrying in his briefcase a bomb with which he intends to assassinate Chang-Kai-Chek. By chance he meets Pastor Smithson, his first teacher. When Smithson learns that Tchen has not yet found peace but does not want either peace or happiness, the pastor asks Tchen if he does not realize that every truly religious life is a conversion every day. This remark betrays the pastor's own obsession and Malraux says that for Tchen "cette confidence à ton de secret donnait au pasteur une profondeur soudaine et pathétique. Si près du meurtre, il s'accordait à toute angoisse." The pastor says he will pray for Tchen and thinks he has established a link with him, that he has
"found his face" which he could not see before. But Tchen was in communion with the pastor's suffering, not with his words. He rejects the offer of prayer, tells Smithson that he will kill in two hours, and asks if the pastor still thinks he sees his face: "Non. Il était seul. Encore seul." 153

To return to the scene in the phonograph, one notices that Malraux writes that the presence of comrades "arrachait Tchen à sa terrible solitude, doucement, comme une plante que l'on tire de la terre où ses racines les plus fines la retiennent encore." 154 But Tchen would not be able to accept real communion with these men because "les paroles n'étaient bonnes qu'à troubler la familiarité avec la mort qui s'était établie dans son coeur." 155 The group learns that the insurrection is scheduled for the following day. Tchen's reaction is: "Tant mieux...Commes toutes les sensations intenses celle du danger en se retirant, le laissait vide; il aspirait à la retrouver." 156

Later as the insurrection proceeds, the Communists become aware of Chang's desire to eliminate them from the movement now that they have helped to make it successful. Tchen is convinced that Chang's death would remove all obstacles to a Communist takeover of the entire revolution. For this reason he goes to Han Keou independently of Kyo and seeks official Komintern approval of his plan, which he of course fails to get. He returns to Shanghai intent
on carrying out his scheme anyway. Like Hong (and to a
certain extent like Garine) Tchen cannot identify with the
ultimate ends of the Marxist revolution nor with its
cautious efficient agents Vologuine and Borodine. But
more acutely, Tchen sees that he has no fundamental link
with those directly engaged in the same activity as he.
Looking at the two young Chinese who have offered to
help him in the assassination attempt, Tchen thinks to
himself:

Pour eux, tout était simple: ils allaient à la
conquête de leur pain et de leur dignité. Pour
lui...sauf de leur douleur et de leur combat
commun, ils ne savait pas même leur parler.
Du moins savait-il que le plus fort des liens
est le combat. Et le combat était là. 157

Even the link of combat will not suffice to pull Tchen from
his private inner morass. Just before he leaves Han Keou,
Tchen walks along the streets with Kyo and confesses the
depth of his obsessions.:

Je rêve presque chaque nuit. Il y a aussi la
distractive [sic], la rêverie. L'ombre d'un
chat, par terre...Dans le meurtre, le difficile
n'est pas de tuer. C'est de ne pas déchoir.
D'être plus fort que...ce qui se passe en soi
à ce moment-là...Les rêves, c'est pire. Des
bêtes...Des bêtes...Des pieuvres, surtout. Et
je me souviens toujours...La seule chose dont
j'aie peur - peur - c'est de m'endormir. Et
je m'endors tous les jours...Ou de devenir fou.
Ces pieuvres, la nuit, et le jour, toute une
vie...Et on ne se tue jamais quand on est fou,
parait-il, jamais. 158

Kyo realizes that he was seeing in his friend the fas-
cination with death. He knows this is true when he asks
Tchen if he thinks of the planned assassination with
uneasiness. Tchen answers: "Nong [sic]. Avec...Je cherche un mot plus fort que joie. Il n'y a pas de mot, même en chinois. Un apaisement total...Plus près de ce que vous appelez...extase. Oui. Mais épais. Profong [sic]. Pas léger. Une extase vers...vers le bas." Kyo then asks: "Et c'est une idée qui te donne ça?" to which Tchen replies: "Oui; ma propre mort." 159 Kyo then knows Tchen will kill himself and remembers how Gisors had said that:

Celui qui cherche aussi âprement l'absolu ne le trouve que dans la sensation. Soif de l'absolu, soif d'immortalité, donc peur de mourir. Tchen eût dû être lâche; mais il sentait, comme tout mystique, que son absolu ne pouvait être saisi que dans l'instant. D'où sans doute, son dédain de tout ce qui ne tendait pas à l'instant qui le lierait à lui-même dans une possession vertigineuse. De cette forme humaine que Kyo ne voyait même pas, émanait une force aveugle et qui la dominait, l'informe matière dont se fait la fatalité. Ce camarade maintenant silencieux râvassant à ses familières visions d'épouvante avait quelque chose de fou, mais aussi quelque chose de sacré - ce qu'a toujours de sacré la présence de l'inhumain. Peut-être ne tuerait-il Chang que pour se tuer lui-même. Cherchant à revoir dans l'obscurité ce visage aigu aux bonnes lèvres, Kyo sentait tressaillir en lui-même l'angoisse primordiale, celle qui jetait à la fois Tchen aux pieuvres du sommeil et à la mort. 160

The awareness of one's own fatality, the basis of man, will never be successfully obliterated by any form of sensation except the sensation of death. Gisors had earlier concluded about Tchen that:

Capable de vaincre, mais non de vivre dans sa victoire, que peut-il appeler, sinon la mort? Sans doute veut-il lui donner le sens que d'autres donnent à la vie. Mourir le plus haut possible. Ame d'ambitieux: assez lucide, assez séparé des
hommes ou assez malade pour mépriser tous les objets de son ambition, et son ambition même?" 161

As he parts company with Tchen Kyo himself is finally forced to wonder: "Peut-être Tchen est-il un éphémère qui secrète sa propre lumière, celle à laquelle il va de détruire..." 162

Instead of possessing himself, Tchen is possessed by his desperate attempt at validation. Again, Gisors had foreseen this when he said that Tchen "entrait dans la vie terroriste comme dans une prison...Ses idées l'avaient fait vivre, maintenant, elles allaient le tuer." 163

The deepest irony of this attempt at validation through the sensation of action is that those who pursue total self possession are convinced that they will create themselves entirely, that they follow no pre-ordained pattern, no one else's formula. Perken had said that "celui qui se tue court après une image qu'il a s'est formée de lui-même: on ne se tue jamais que pour exister. Je n'aime pas qu'on soit dupe de Dieu." 164 Tchen must kill himself to realize himself, for only beyond death will he find the unending sensation he sought.

Malraux conveys this sense of fatalism as he describes the setting of Tchen's death. The street where Tchen waits for Chang's car to pass is slowly being engulfed by fog. The pedestrians walk quickly but in silence - they seem to have no goal. Their shadows flow to the river in a "con-
stant, inexplicable movement." It seemed to Tchen that it was fate itself ("Destin") which pushed them toward the bottom of the avenue where the illuminated arc of signs, barely visible before the shadows of the river, seemed to be the very gates of death. 165 The enormous characters of these signs "enfoncés en perspectives troubles......se perdaient dans ce monde tragique et flou comme dans les siècles." Tchen welcomes the approach of Chang's car -- "serra la bombe sous son bras avec reconnaissance." 166

He runs toward the car "avec une joie d'extatique" 167 and throws himself underneath. Regaining consciousness several seconds later, Tchen is aware only of a depthless pain. The officers approach; he wanted to ask if Chang was dead but he had wanted that in another world. In his present world, that death was unimportant to him. Reaching for the gun in the pocket of his trousers, Tchen discovers only ragged flesh -- his leg is gone. By "the most terrible effort of his life," he takes a gun from inside his shirt and puts the barrel into his mouth. As the policeman furiously kicks him, Tchen fires the pistol "sans s'en apercevoir." 168

Puig and Le Négus in L'Espoir are evolved versions of the terrorist character first seen in Hong and then most fully in Tchen. Less extreme and more politically oriented than their predecessors, Puig and Le Négus are not terrorists but rather anarchists. Their aims remain
essentially ethical and not political but they have participated in political activities to a far greater extent than have the Orientals of the earlier novels.

Puig appears very briefly at the beginning of *L'Espoir* in the section entitled "l'illusion lyrique" appropriately enough. Like Hong and Tchen Puig refuses to relinquish to God any responsibility for his individual existence. In a conversation with Ximenes, who believes deeply in God while deploiring the repression practiced by the Spanish church, Puig says that he does not want to be pardoned, especially not for what he had done best. Puig feels that his best is his devotion to anarchism. Still, he does not expect from anarchism anything beyond gratification of his individual needs: "Face à un monde sans espoir, il n'attendait de l'anarchie que des révoltes exemplaires; tout problème politique se résolvait donc pour lui par l'audace et le caractère." 169

We are not surprised when Puig dies alone at the wheel of a car he had rammed through the gates of a building in Barcelona held by the fascists. Like Tchen Puig seems to be serving the revolution by risking his life in such a way. But this is not the case: their deaths accomplish nothing for the cause. Both men may have told themselves the needs of the revolution were at the base of their sacrifices but the fundamental impulsion of Puig as well as of Tchen was the need to escape their individual solitude
through sensation.

Like almost all the combatants in *L'Espoir* Le Négus too wants to immerse himself in fraternity and for Le Négus too fraternity fulfills an ethical need:

> Si nous sommes écrasés ici et à Madrid, les hommes auront un jour vécu avec leur coeur... Malgré la haine. Ils sont libres. Ils l'avaient jamais été. Je ne parle pas de la liberté politique, hein, je parle d'autre chose!" 170

The "other thing" is dignity, the validation which individual men attain through their mutual fraternal effort.

Like Hernandez, Le Negus rejects the opportunism of the Communists, whom he calls "cures." Like Hernandez Le Négus feels that instead of doing ("faire") one should be ("être"): "Les partis sont faits pour les hommes, pas les hommes pour les partis. Nous ne voulons faire ni un État, ni une Église, ni une armée. Des hommes." 171

But the revolution will not provide validation. As Garcia said to him: "Mon vieux Négus... quand on veut que la révolution soit une façon de vivre pour elle-même, elle devient presque toujours une façon de mourir." 172

Hong never had the least use for the revolution. Tchen believed he would give an example to other "misérables" like himself. Just before his death Tchen speaks of giving an example so as to "faire renaître des martyrs." 173 This thought reminds us of the golden legend of martyrs of the revolutionary movement which Kyo
thought on to console himself before death. Hong and Tchen believed then that their life and certainly their deaths could benefit others, but this hope was essentially a secondary consideration on their parts, coming after their own thirst for sensation through violence.

As for Le Négus, he does make his aims coincide with the aims of the revolution for quite a while. He does lose faith in the revolution eventually but does not withdraw from it or work at cross purposes to it as Hong did. Instead, flamethrowing in underground passages becomes Le Négus' chosen area of service. Even if he serves the revolution still, he serves himself first more than ever:

Le Négus s'est réfugié dans ce combat souterrain qu'il aime, où presque tout combattant est condamné, où il sait qu'il mourra, et qui garde quelque chose d'individuel et de romantique. Quand Le Négus ne se tire pas de ses problèmes, il se réfugie toujours dans la violence ou dans le sacrifice; les deux à la fois, c'est mieux encore.

His individual validation can now only be sought through violence and sacrifice.
B.

The individual obsessed with his separateness, his isolation, will strive to somehow authenticate his very condition or he will attempt to escape it. We have already seen that at many points the individual's drive toward validation through action, action/politics and terrorism is sometimes tinged with negation. While it is true therefore that the division between validation and negation is not absolute, nevertheless, throughout Malraux's fiction we can see some characters who never even attempt validation, for example, Clappique assuming roles in his private "comédie" or Gisors escaping into opium induced contemplation. Then there are others for whom the quest for validation must depend on the negation of others, for example those individuals who inflict humiliation in the form of torture or eroticism. After looking closely at these various forms and degrees of negation of the individual, we will then be in a position to assess what the role of the individual in Malraux's novels has turned out to be. The first type of negation which I will examine is that of comedy.

Among the characters in Les Conquérants is an elderly Chinese named Tcheng-Dai. He is the spiritual mentor of the revolutionary cause, a sort of "Chinese Gandhi" who abhors the violent, direct methods of the
Communists and who prefers to rely on moderate though often ineffectual ways toward reform. Over the years Tcheng-Dai had spent his entire fortune on the revolution and perhaps did this without deep regret, proud to think that few men would have done so. But Malraux analyzes this particular participation in the revolution and comes to definite conclusions:

Chez lui comme chez les chrétiens, l'action s'accorde avec la charité; mais la charité, qui est, chez les chrétiens compassion, est chez lui, le sentiment de la solidarité... La grandeur de sa vie vient d'un dédain du temporel qui donne à ses actes publics un caractère admirable; mais ce dédain, pour être sincère, n'en laisse pas moins la place au sens de son utilisation, et Tcheng-Dai, désintéressé, entend ne point laisser ignoré un désintéressement fort rare en Chine. Ce désintéressement, qui semble avoir été d'abord simplement humain, est devenu, par une subtile comédie, sa raison d'être: il y cherche la preuve de sa supériorité sur les autres hommes. Son abnégation est l'expression d'un orgueil lucide et sans violence, de l'orgueil compatible avec la douceur de son caractère et sa culture de lettré. 174

His "subtle comedy" is described in another way when someone says that Tcheng-Dai presents a "noble figure of a victim who looks after his biography."

Communists have traditionally attacked what they consider the "mauvaise foi" (to use a phrase later coined by Sartre) of the self-important bourgeois who care more for their individualistic images of "consideration" than for any vital active participation in the adventure of existence. When Garine says that Tcheng-Dai refuses to
engage his moral responsibility in the necessities of revolution we can see that this is a form of negation. Tcheng-Dai flees from the torment of confrontation with the actual human condition of the oppressed the revolution seeks to free, seeking refuge instead within the image of his abnegation. The irony of Tcheng-Dai's behavior is that the cloak of righteousness—self-denial will not protect him from his fundamental isolation. Garine muses: "Lui qui fut riche, mourra presque pauvre, et la grandeur de cette mort ira s'éparpiller sur des millions d'hommes. Dernière solitude."

The most elaborate example of negation by comedy is seen in the figure of Clappique, one of the best characterizations in all Malraux's novels. This personnage (a unique type among Malraux's characters) is a sort of bouffon, "un Polichinelle maigre, et sans bosse," whose whole existence consists of a series of roles he adroitly assumes. He never considers himself responsible for himself. The role he plays both in the company of others and alone, are all designed to cancel out the reality of his condition, the solitude and absurd isolation which Malraux tells us is the condition of all men. Clappique's "livre de chevet" is the Tales of Hoffmann, a detail which reflects the horror—beneath—the-comedy aspect of his character as a whole.)
Clappique's first scene takes place in the Black Cat night club. We observe him through Kyo's eyes as Kyo waits in the background to ask a service of this man known to all levels of Shanghai society. Tonight Clappique wears a dinner jacket but in any case, it seems that "de quelque facon qu'il fut habillé...le baron de Clappique avait l'air déguisé." Seated at a table with a Russian and a Philippine prostitute, he recounts one tale after another out of his past, of his ancestors, of the revolution - all a fantastic assemblage of truth and fiction.

After a long and embellished "performance" which is one of Malraux's best stylistic achievements, Clappique pays the waiter with a hundred dollar bill and takes ten dollars from the change for himself. Giving the rest to one of the women, without accompanying her further, Clappique leaves with Kyo. After Kyo has spoken to him about the small service he needs done, Clappique must ask Kyo for fifty dollars. Later, as Kyo tells his father of this inexplicable behavior Gisors explains:

Sa mythomanie est un moyen de nier la vie, n'est-ce pas, de nier et non pas d'oublier...
Tout se passe comme s'il avait voulu se démontrer que bien qu'il ait vécu pendant deux heures comme un homme riche, la richesse n'existe pas. Parce qu'alors, la pauvreté n'existe pas. non plus. Ce qui est l'essentiel. Rien n'existe; tout est rêve... 177

Clappique himself will say in a tone which is all the
more revelatory for its jest: "Le baron de Clappique n'existe pas."

The high mark of Malraux's portrayal of Clappique happens also to be a crucial point in the novel as a whole. The insurrection has succeeded and Chang-Kai-Chek is about to repress all the Communist workers and leaders within the revolutionary movement. Through one of his numerous contacts Clappique has learned that Kyo will be arrested by Chang's police if he attends a midnight section meeting of the party. Planning to warn Kyo when they see one another at an 11:30 rendez-vous, Clappique must find a way to pass the hours until then. He enters a gambling house for the first time and undergoes the most unsettling experience of his life. Clappique is seized by the game, exulting in the fantastic absurd chance of it all. The adventurers seeking to validate themselves through action sought to coincide with the cause they undertook - Clappique seems to coincide with the roulette ball:

Cette boule dont le mouvement allait faiblir était un destin, et d'abord son destin. Il ne luttait pas contre une créature, mais contre une espèce de dieu; et ce dieu, en même temps, était lui-même.

The game continues; Clappique loses more often than he wins. But this loss, this "hasard" is what he discovers to be "le sens même du jeu, la frénésie de perdre."

He knows that this game is the only means he has ever found to possess himself: "Grâce à [la boule] il
assouvissait ensemble, pour le première fois, les deux Clappique qui le formaient, celui qui voulait vivre et celui qui voulait être détruit."

The two Clappiques, the one who wanted to live and the one who wanted to be destroyed reach a precarious balance, at a level of intensity which is an acceleration of the mythomania underlying Clappique's entire existence. Gisors had said that this mythomania was a means to deny life; to deny it and not to forget it. Likewise, the fever pitch of this "frénésie de perdre" which grips Clappique as he sees himself subordinated to the absurdity of chance as the roulette is, is neither life nor destruction of life but denial - a negation. Clappique's experience is ambivalent. This negation which seems to try to validate by its very intensity shows the contradictory nature of all his energies. He searches for a shattering 182 that will be passive ("bouleversement passif") and he is at last drained by an intoxicating shame ("honte 183 vertigineuse").

Clappique cannot bear the sight of his watch which accuses him of staying long past the hour of his rendezvous with Kyo. He turns it around, throwing Kyo back into a world of dreams. It seems to Clappique that he is nourishing this roulette ball not with chips, but with his own life. This recalls Tchen who had nothing to sacrifice to except himself, who was the "Éphémère"
secreted into the light with which he would extinguish himself. Or perhaps Moreno's assertion that the truth of a man's life was the tossing of "sous." Clappique knows that his delay will cause Kyo to be taken prisoner but cannot resist the terrible exultation he feels:

C'était Kyo qui était enchaîné à cette boule, à cette table et c'était lui, Clappique qui était cette boule maîtresse de tous et de lui-même - de lui qui cependant la regardait, vivant comme il n'avait jamais vécu, hors de lui, épuisé par une honte vertigineuse. 184

But there can be no doubt that if as Clappique looks at the ball he is "living as he had never lived," this new existence only comes from the intense sensation of negation:

Il découvrait que le jeu est un suicide sans mort: il lui suffisait de poser là son argent, de regarder cette boule et d'attendre, comme s'il eût attendu après avoir avalé un poison, poison sans cesse renouvelé, avec l'orgueil de le prendre. 185

Clappique finally leaves the gambling house at one o'clock. Pushing Kyo out of his mind he starts to walk. The night which Clappique enters is described magnificently by Malraux who had created many remarkable nocturnal scenes. At first everything is serene as the sudden appearance of the moon gives the whole city an extra-terrestrial life. Death, even his own death, doesn't seem very real in this atmosphere with so little human about it into which Clappique feels he has intruded. But there are several phrases through the passage which suggest
that the pain and uneasiness of human life will reassert
themselves. Finally Malraux writes:

La vie future frémissait derrière tout ce silence. 
Humanité enragée que rien ne pouvait délivrer 
d'elle-même! L'odeur des cadavres de la ville 
chinoise passa, avec le vent qui se levait à 
nouveau. Clappique dut faire un effort pour 
respirer; l'angoisse revenait. [L'odeur de la 
mort] prenait peu à peu possession de ce décor 
qui cachait la folie du monde sous un apaisement 
d'éternité, et......la lune atteignit la grève 
opposée et tout retomba dans les ténèbres. 
'Comme un rêve...' Mais la terrible odeur le 
rejetait à la vie, à la nuit anxieuse..... 186

Tchen felt empty as the danger of terrorism subsided;
Clappique feels himself haunted by the thought of Kyo now 
that the "bouleversement" of gambling has drained him. He 
seeks escape, not in further intensity, but in his more 
familiar form of negation, comedy. Entering a bordello, 
Clappique tells a prostitute that he plans to commit 
suicide:

Quand il disait qu'il se tuerait, il ne se croyait 
pas, mais puisqu'elle le croyait, il entrait dans 
un monde où la vérité n'existait plus. Ce n'était 
ni vrai, ni faux, mais vécu...rien n'existait. Le 
monde avait cessé de peser sur lui. Délivré, il 
ne vivrait plus que dans l'univers romanesque qu'il 
venait de créer, fort du lien qu'établir tout 
pitié humaine devant la mort. 187

But this time the comedy is not quite sufficient; he 
leaves with neither his spirit nor his sensuality 
188
assuaged. He returns to his room, "la peur...... 
surgissait en lui, comme une conscience aigue de sa 
solitude." Ordinarily he would chase this solitude 
by rushing to the closest Black Cat. This is impossible
tonight for he is "excede, repu de mensonge et de fraternite provisoires." Mocking and consoling himself at the same time he looks at his image in the mirror, enumerating all the professions and roles he could assume to "furnish the solitude" in his future. He makes faces at himself and then:

comme si l'angoisse que les paroles ne suffisaient pas a traduire se fut exprimee directement dans toute sa puissance, il commenca a grimacer, se transformant en singe, en idiot, en epouvante, en type a fluxion, en tous les grotesques que peut exprimer un visage humain. Ca ne suffisait plus: il se servit de ses doigts, tirant sur les coins de ses yeux, agrandissant sa bouche pour la gueule de crapaud de l'homme-qui-rit, tirant ses oreilles. Cette debauche de grotesque dans la chambre solitaire, avec la brume de la nuit massee a la fenetre, prenait le comique atroce de la folie. 190

Suddenly there is a knock at the door and Clappique "degringola dans le reel." Gisors has come to entreat him to intercede with Konig, Chang's chief of police, for Kyo's release from prison. Although barely coherent, Clappique allows himself to be led outside and "pour cacher le trouble dont il ne pouvait encore se delivrer il fit le fou, comme d'habitude." The interview with Konig is a disaster and Clappique hurriedly leaves, having been warned that because of his slight involvement with the revolutionaries, he himself must leave Shanghai in three days.

Assuming a final disguise, Clappique buys a broom, dresses as a deckhand and stows away on a ship bound for Europe. No one questions his role, and reassured,
Clappique can again feel he does not exist:

l'acceptation générale de son nouvel état civil
l'envahissait lui-même...Non, les hommes
n'existiaient pas, puisqu'il suffit d'un costume
pour échapper à soi-même, pour trouver une autre
vie dans les yeux des autres. 193

As he had looked at this personnage in whom he had
placed the hope of saving Kyo's life, Gisors thought to
himself that if the world had no reality, men and especially
those men who opposed the world had a very strong
reality. But he realized then that Clappique was one of
those rare beings who had not the slightest reality
whatsoever. Clappique could cease to exist, disappear
into a vice or into a monomania but he could not become
a man. As for his future "Clappique ne pouvait vieillir:
l'âge ne le menait pas à l'expérience humaine mais à
l'intoxication - érotisme ou drogue - où se conjugerait
enfin tous ses moyens d'ignorer la vie."

As the gangplank of the ship goes up, Clappique,
recounting a long imaginary inventory of his sea voyages
to a new found friend, says, "allons nous saouler..."
a suggestion which is one more in an endless series of
evasions into negation.

Gisors, the father of Kyo, occupies a unique
position in the structure of La Condition humaine. He is
a sort of "central intelligence" in the 19th century novel
sense, aware of the essential nature of almost every other major character. It is through his eyes that Malraux analyzes Tchen's terrorism, Clappique's mythomania, Ferral's eroticism and Katow's devotion to the revolution. Gisors lucidly gauges the fundamental situation of all these figures as well as of men in general: "Tous souffrent...et chacun souffre parce qu'il pense. Tout au fond, l'esprit ne pense l'homme que dans l'éternel, et la conscience de la vie ne peut être qu'angoisse."

Formerly a professor at the University of Peking, Gisors was dismissed because of his radical views. He had taught and inspired many of the leaders of the revolutionary cadres throughout China but has never chosen to participate directly in the action himself.

Near the end of the first part of the novel Tchen pays a visit to Gisors to tell him of his first murder. After Tchen leaves, Gisors reflects on the meaning of this life of terrorism and the influence Christianity has had on it. He feels he has been unable to lessen Tchen's solitude, to blunt the edge of his isolated suffering. Thinking this, Gisors wonders is perhaps his own son whom he had thought he knew is not just as isolated as Tchen. In fact, later in the book, after an important conversation with Ferral, Gisors will think to himself: "...la connaissance d'un être est un sentiment négatif:
le sentiment positif, la réalité, c'est l'angoisse d'être toujours étranger à ce qu'on aime."

This remains Gisors' conviction. He has thoroughly understood one of the basic factors of the human condition as Malraux sees it - the realization that one is fated to endure the anguish of this condition alone.

When Tchen has gone Gisors is left to his own thoughts. His mood for quite some time had been deep discouragement: "il avait soixante ans et ses souvenirs étaient pleins de tombes." His pure sense of Chinese art, of all the civilization of suggestion in China surrounding him was no longer anything but a thin cover under which anguish and obsession with death were waking, like anxious dogs who twitch at the end of sleep.

Just as his son Kyo was deeply troubled by the phonograph records of his own voice, Gisors too senses that he will never know himself:

Il se sentait pénétrer, avec sa conscience intruse dans un domaine qui lui appartenait plus que tout autre, posséder avec angoisse une solitude interdite où nul ne le rejoindrait jamais...

Even the love he had for Kyo would not free Gisors from this total solitude but even if Gisors does not know how to escape himself into another person, he knew how to free himself: through opium.

Opium will be the means by which Gisors nullifies his obsession with solitude and death, a nullification of the
of the obsession rather than an actual negation of himself for he creates nothing with which to try to "furnish his solitude." In the first description of the contemplative serenity which Gisors finds as he smokes opium, Malraux tells us that the contours of shadows and the objects in the room fade. They are no longer distinct from Gisors but rather join him deep in a familiar world where a benevolent indifference fuses all things. From this point Gisors recalls a peaceful landscape he saw one September afternoon—a lake filled with vast fields of water lilies. Peasants in a skiff pass silently, gathering the seeds of the lilies. Two long folds of water form from the rudder and lose themselves:

avec nonchalance dans l'eau grise. Ils se perdaient maintenant en lui-même, ramassant dans leur éventail tout l'accablement du monde, un accablement sans amertume, amené par l'opium à une pureté suprême. Les yeux fermés, porté par de grandes ailes immobiles, Gisors contemplait sa solitude: une désolation qui rejoignait le divin en même temps que s'élargissait jusqu'à l'infini ce sillage de sérénités qui recouvrait doucement les profondeurs de la mort. 201

Solitude and desolation vanish in the wake ("sillage") of serenity which softly covers the depths of death. This is the process by which Gisors negates himself, escaping the obsession with death which is at the core of his being.

Gisors' conversation with Ferral, mentioned earlier, is a very important exposition of Malraux's metaphysical views. It was at this point for example where Gisors
stated that those individuals driven by a "volonté de puissance" are in reality following their "volonté de déité." He also said: "Il faut toujours s'intoxiquer: ce pays a l'opium, l'Islam le haschich, l'Occident la femme......Tchen et le meurtre, Clappique et sa folie, Katow et la révolution, May et l'amour, lui-même et l'opium..." Such a statement supports the view that the dividing line between "validation" through action, action/politics or terrorism and the "negation" of mythomania and eroticism is very thin.

The death of his son Kyo is a shattering experience for Gisors. Standing there before the body which May has brought back from the prison, in his intense grief, Gisors wonders if sorrow ("douleur") is an offering to love or to fear. He does not dare to touch the opium and soon opens the door to throw it into the night:

Cette nuit, sa vie allait changer: la force de la pensée n'est pas grande contre la métamorphose à quoi la mort peut contraindre un homme. Il était désormais rejeté à lui-même. Le monde n'avait plus de sens, n'existait plus: l'immobilité sans retour, là, à côté de ce corps qui l'avait relié à l'univers était comme un suicide de Dieu.

Gisors realizes that he was thrown out of time by Kyo's death because "l'enfant était la soumission au temps."

Out of time and therefore out of hope because Gisors' hope and his "angoisse" existed simultaneously. But this hope was really a hope of nothing, just a wait, and his love for Kyo had to be crushed before Gisors could
discover this. However Malraux goes on to say that everything which destroyed Gisors' hope found an avid welcome in him and that he thought to himself:

Il y a quelque chose de beau à être mort...
Il sentait trembler en lui la souffrance fondamentale, non celle qui vient des êtres ou des choses mais celle qui sourd de l'homme même et à quoi s'efforce de nous arracher la vie, il pouvait lui échapper, mais seulement en cessant de penser à elle; et il y plongeait de plus en plus, comme si cette contemplation épouvantée eût été la seule voix que put entendre la mort, comme si cette souffrance d'être homme, dont il s'imprégnait jusqu'au fond du coeur eût été la seule oraison que put entendre le corps de son fils tué." 207

Fortunately Gisors cannot sustain this "terrified contemplation" indefinitely. We see him once more, at the end of the novel. May visits Gisors at Kobe where, returning to his first calling, he is now professor of history of Western art. She tries to persuade him to go to Moscow with her but he refuses, explaining that the death of Kyo has metamorphosed him. Marxism dies in Gisors. He no longer feels any connection with the revolution and tells May that for Kyo Marxism was a will ("une volonté") but that in his eyes it is a fatality. Gisors identified with the revolution only because its fatality matched his own obsession with death. Since the death of Kyo, however, there is almost no conscious anguish left in Gisors because he is indifferent to the thought of death. He says that he is "délivré (délivré!) de la mort et de la vie." This deliverance
is facilitated by opium but is not caused by it, that is to say that Gisors uses opium as a means to reach the "worlds of contemplation" he has always wanted to reach: "Il faudrait que les hommes pussent savoir qu'il n'y a pas de réel, qu'il est des mondes de contemplation - avec ou sans opium - où tout est vain..." When May asks Gisors what one contemplates there he answers: "Peut-être pas autre chose que cette vanité... C'est beaucoup."

Hearing that, May recalls Kyo having said to her that opium played a large role in his father's life but that he (Kyo) often wondered "s'il la détermine ou s'il justifie certaines forces qui l'inquiétent lui-même..." Seeing Gisors at this point we can perhaps understand what Kyo suggested, that opium, per se, was not so crucial as Gisors' drive to negate himself, to coincide with the vanity of existence at large. Giving himself over totally to opium, Gisors feels for the first time that the approach of death does not separate him from the world but instead binds him to the world, a statement which reminds us of the Oriental's harmonious relation to the world surrounding him as Ling described it in *La Tentation de l'Occident*. In a magnificent passage Malraux describes Gisors' view of a Kyoto crowd in movement at the end of the day:
le corps de l'univers, qui semblait s'effondrer sous la pression de ses propres dimensions. Les nuages qui le cerclaient étaient transparents, comme des gants de soie, et le laissait sans protection contre la froideur de l'espace. Les étoiles brillaient de mille feux, mais elles étaient isolées, sans attaches ni liens, et il semblait que dans ce monde sans fin, il n'y avait pas d'endroit sûr. Cela le terrifiait, mais il savait que c'était nécessaire. Il ne pouvait pas rester ici, sans se battre contre ses peurs.

In an earlier passage Gisors had said that every man is mad but that human destiny was a lifetime of attempts to unite this madman and the universe. As the opium takes effect Gisors' attention turns from the clammering noise of these men who seem mad, separated from the universe and thrown into solitude and shifts to the lofty, light clouds which are slowly reabsorbed into the sky just as Gisors' dead friends are closer to him now that he waits for death without fear. Gisors had always always been as acutely aware of the suffering of mankind in general as he had been of his own bitter solitude. Now however even the pain and death of this humanity fades into the light just as the music fades into the silent night. Gisors' escape from the madness of the human condition, from the absurdity of an isolated
existence denied any meaning from the surrounding world
is thus a magnificent and sublime negation for the suffering
is not really banished, it merely slowly folds its
inhuman arms and waits to reappear. Ironically, Gisors
is just as isolated as ever in his own world of
contemplation.

After "comédie" and contemplation another means of
negation is humiliation. As Malraux uses it, this term
describes one of the constant threatening elements of
the human condition. It generally implies a state of
dependence, the feeling an individual has when he is at
the mercy of something or someone preventing validation.
This state of dependency can arise because of one's own
shame and abjection such as we see in Hemmelrich's
squalid misery or, as is more specifically the case in
Malraux's fiction, because of direct and deliberate
dominance by another individual.

Men who are humiliated have no dignity; that is,
you have no sense of self-worth, no authentic fertility,
to use the same word Malraux used in his preface to
Le Temps du mépris. An individual who is humiliated
will feel his isolation in the world more sharply than
ever before. As one of the characters in Les Noyers de
l'Altenburg says "il y a partout un moyen décisif d'être
retranché de la communauté des hommes, c'est l'humiliation,
la honte." Even Clappique could recognize this. As Konig is bitterly refusing to acknowledge that Kyo could have become a revolutionary in order to achieve dignity, Clappique tells himself: "La négation du monde qu'appelle l'humiliation intense, seuls le sang opinionâtrement versé, la drogue et la névrose nourrissent de telles solitudes."

The humiliation of enslavement, of torture and of eroticism are three methods used in Malraux's novels to convey the attempt of an individual to humiliate another person, thereby negating him. It is an intricate process by which the master, the torturer or the erotomane actually seeks to transfer his own dependence or humiliation onto his victim.

Intense humiliation makes one want to negate the world in order to erase everything which throws into relief one's futile isolation. In reality every individual in Malraux's novels who consciously or unconsciously negates himself is reacting to some form of humiliation. This is clear from Clappique's observation that the shedding of blood, drugs or neurotic detachment from reality "nourish" or assuage the solitude felt as a result of humiliation. In that case Clappique's remark describes the doomed validation attempts of the adventurers and terrorists as well as the more obvious negations practiced by Clappique or Gisors.
We can understand how in Malraux's novels humiliation is at the root of every individual's conscious reaction to his isolated and helpless condition when we read in *La Voie royale* how Claude, apparently free but in truth constantly threatened by the destructive forces of nature and death, is terrified when he sees Grabot, a European enslaved by the Mois savages, blinded, probably castrated and tied to the shaft of a mill stone. Claude's potential humiliation by death, the central obsession of *La Voie royale*, is just as real as Grabot's actual humiliation in slavery.

Horrified, Claude stares at Grabot whose existence, bound by the circular path he trods around the mill has been reduced to the state of an animal:

Claude, atterré, le regardait: cette peau décolorée d'homme de cave......Une puissante ruine. Et il avait été plus que courageux. Celui-là aussi pourrissait sous l'Asie, comme les temples...L'épouvante rôdait auprès de lui, en cette seconde, autant qu'après des Mois. 215

So great is Claude's horror at this "épouvante" which is the word Malraux always uses when describing the raw state of the human condition, that he nearly shoots Grabot "pour supprimer ce visage, cette haine, cette présence - pour chasser cette preuve de sa condition d'homme, comme l'assassin qui coupe son doigt révélateur."

"Cette preuve de sa condition d'homme" can be interpreted as referring to either Grabot or to Claude for their condition is the same. Both are menaced with
"déchéance" - Grabot by humiliation through slavery and Claude by destructive nature and by the prospect of a death as solitary as Perken's.

Hemmelrich, of *La Condition humaine*, is a miserable character whose whole life had consisted of one failure after another. His Chinese wife, whom he bought for twelve dollars, "s'était accrochée a lui d'un amour de chien aveugle et martyrise, soupçonnant qu'il était un autre chien aveugle et martyrise." Barely able to feed their child who is ill with a severe, painful mastoiditis, Hemmelrich is so poor that even his death would bring no profit to his family: "Comme si l'univers ne l'eut pas traité, tout le long de sa vie, à coups de pieds dans le ventre, il le spoliait de la seule dignité qu'il possedat, qu'il put posseder - sa mort."

When Tchen and his two young companions seek refuge with Hemmelrich after the abortive first attempt on Chang's life, Hemmelrich refuses, fearing possible reprisals against his family if he participates directly in the revolution. After they have gone off, Hemmelrich is deeply humiliated at his sterile isolation within his own misery. He does not even have the satisfaction of violent action to "nourish" the solitude of his humiliating life. For the time being Hemmelrich will find no escape from this
situation except perhaps a masochistic submersion in it, a sort of "horreur satisfaite."

The only person who makes any attempt to relieve Hemmelrich's pain is Katow who once experienced the same sort of debilitating self-condemnation and who knew that "la pire souffrance est dans la solitude qui l'accompagne."

Later, however, Hemmelrich will not be so powerless to leave himself. During the repression of the Communists by Chang's troops, his shop was "'nettoyée à la grenade" and he returns home to find the mangled bodies of his wife and child. As he shuts the door in horror he suddenly realizes that behind it he was closing off as much suffering as Blood: "cette fois, la destinée avait mal jouée: en lui arrachant tout ce qu'il possédait encore, elle le libérait." With "horreur et satisfaction" Hemmelrich recognizes this "joie atroce, pesante, profonde de la libération."

He is freed (or rather impelled forward) by the very intensity of this final humiliation at the hands of an absurd world. When we recall Clappique's thoughts in the presence of Chang's chief "bourreau," Konig, "la négation du monde qu'appelle l'humiliation intense seuls le sang opinionâtrement versé, la drogue et la névrose nourrissent de telles solitudes" and when we read Malraux's account of Hemmelrich's reaction to the murder of his family, we will
see significant similarity between Hemmelrich's impulsion toward revengeful participation in the last struggle of the Communists, Konig's "total intoxication" with torture and even Tchen's thirst for the sensation of murder.

Malraux says of Hemmelrich:

Maintenant il pouvait tuer, lui aussi, Il lui était tout à coup révélé que la vie n'était pas le seul mode de contact entre les êtres, qu'elle n'était même pas le meilleur; qu'il les connaissait, les aimait, les possédait plus dans la vengeance que dans la vie...une exaltation intense bouleversait son esprit, la plus puissante qu'il eût jamais connue; il s'abandonnait à cette effroyable ivresse avec un consentement entier. 'On peut tuer avec amour. Avec amour, nom de Dieu! ' repeta-t-il frappant le comptoir du poing - contre l'univers peut-être... 222

The "intense exaltation" of violent participation in revolutionary conflict, especially the bloodshed involved, is now the first means Hemmelrich has ever found to "nourish" the humiliating dependence of his own existence. This existence of defeat culminated in the murder of his family by the very violence Hemmelrich had himself shunned out of hope to spare his family to which he now feels closer than ever, but forever isolated from them none the less.

In general, the state of humiliation makes the individual aware of his "condition d'homme," his solitude and his impotence in the face of this situation. The agent of humiliation can be life in general, as was the case of
Hemmelrich, or it can be a specific incident such as Grabot's enslavement. Intense humiliation, in turn, will cause those so subjugated to inflict humiliation on others in an effort to "negate the [humiliating] world" as Clappique said. We have already seen how Konig strove through his role as torturer to humiliate his prisoners in an unending attempt to transfer his memories of his own bitter shame while a prisoner during the Russian Revolution. When Konig learns that Kyo fights through a desire for dignity, the very force sought in order to validate the individual by eliminating the humiliation in his life, he is absolutely certain that Kyo must never escape his power.

The theme of torture, signifying the brutality of humiliation, is found throughout Malraux's novels. As Perken is dying, his death makes him aware only of the absurdity of life: "A cote de lui, Claude qui allait vivre, qui croyait a la vie comme d'autres croient que les bourreaux qui vous torturent sont des hommes: 223 haissable."

The first torturer in Malraux's novels is Nicolaieff, in Les Conquerants, who finds a voluptuous, almost erotic satisfaction in his trade. As he recounts to Pierre his private sessions with a prisoner Nicolaieff says:
'Quand le type entre, il fait souvent claquer ses talons...mais quand il sort, il ne fait jamais claquer ses talons. S'il y avait là des gens...les accusés tiendraient tête...Tu ne peux pas comprendre cela: tout seuls...' Et avec un sourire mou, un sourire de gros vieillard excité regardant une petite fille nue, il ajoute, plissant les paupières: 'Si tu savais comme ils deviennent lâches...'

Elsewhere in Les Conquérants we see the link between validation through political terrorism and the negation through humiliation when Hong says: "La torture – moi je pense – est...une chose juste. Parce que la vie d'un homme de la misère est une torture longue."

We have already seen the cases of Konig and Hemmelrich in La Condition humaine. The theme of torture is extensively treated in Le Temps du mépris which takes place almost entirely in a Nazi prison. In this short novel which is actually a long short story, the one character, Kassner, struggles to retain his sense of identity in the face of torture which threatens to rob him of all control over himself. In L'Espoir the theme of torture is found within the larger theme of humiliation (the fascist aim) as opposed to dignity (the Communist/Republican aim). Here the men engaged in revolutionary activity do so in order to acquire dignity, humiliation's opposite, for themselves and for others. Without individual dignity fraternity could not be attained.
Throughout Malraux's fiction the theme of humiliation is almost identical to the theme of eroticism. In both cases we see an individual who attempts to deny his own "condition d'homme," to negate the solitude and dependence within himself by conquering a surrogate-self. By subjugating one's partner, the erotomane or torturer transports his "angoisse" outside himself, for instead of suffering from it himself, he sees it in the face of his victim. As Malraux said in an article of criticism "Il y a érotisme dans un livre dès qu'aux amours physiques qu'il met en scène, se mêle l'idée d'une contrainte."  

In addition to the four novels where the theme of eroticism is present there are two shorter works by Malraux on this same topic. His preface to a French edition of D. H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover and his essay on Les Liaisons dangereuses of Choderlos de Laclos both study the eroticism of these two novels. Malraux does offer interesting and pertinent observations on the central significance of each work although his approach does not let us forget Malraux's own particular metaphysical views on this subject.

A few quotations from the preface to Lady Chatterley's Lover will serve as a brief background to an examination of the eroticism of Perken in La Voie royale and of Ferral in La Condition humaine. First of all, Malraux
is convinced that for Lawrence, "la conscience exaltée de la sensualité peut seule combattre la solitude humaine." Malraux believes that the need to "combat human solitude," to validate oneself is a need felt by any individual aware of the isolation brought on by the human condition, a fact illustrated by his analysis of Lawrence's heroine:

De quoi a-t-elle besoin? De se révéler à elle-même à l'aide de sa propre sexualité. Peu importe le moyen de cet éveil. Que Mellors se réduise d'abord à un sexe adroit et anonyme: qu'il ne soit à aucun titre le séducteur; le vrai dialogue est entre Lady Chatterley et elle-même. Jamais Mellors ne n'opposera profondément à elle: il est nuancé, individualisé, mais non pas autonome.

It is important to notice that Malraux considers Mellors the "victim" so to speak for Connie cannot allow him to be autonomous. When Malraux says that the real dialogue is between Lady Chatterley and herself he means that Mellors becomes a dependent instrument. For that reason Malraux asserts that "une grande saveur de solitude accompagne ces personnages de Lawrence: pour ce prédicateur du couple, 'l'autre' ne compte guère. Le conflit où l'accord s'établit entre l'être et sa sensation."

We might ask how much this sort of pre-sartrian view can apply to a novel from another country but in any case we definitely begin to see what Malraux's attitude on eroticism is and how this view is related to the general theme of validation and negation of the individual that we are now examining.
The eroticism of both Perken and Ferral, as Malraux represents it, is a variant on a fundamental theme. This basic determinant is the need in all individuālīstīo combat the human condition by "leaving a scar on the earth," the need to affirm oneself through some sort of creative imposition of human will. In the case of eroticism, the validation of the individual depends on the "negation" or humiliation of a partner. We will see however, that this negation is basically directed not so much toward the partner as toward oneself.

For Perken in La Voie royale eroticism is a direct result of his obsession with death: "L'austère domination... celle de la mort, se répercutfait en lui avec le battement de sang à ses tempes aussi impérieuse que le besoin 228 sexuel." The domination of death is expressed forcefully in the "déchéance" Perken always dreads. This "déchéance" is the passage of time, preventing him from indefinitely sustaining his defiance of "le Destin." When he tells Claude why he began to draw away from his pursuit of power among the natives he says:

Je crois que ce qui m'en a séparé...ce sont les femmes que j'ai manquées. Ce n'est pas l'impuissance, comprenez bien. Une menace...Comme la première fois que j'ai vue que Sarah [la femme avec qui il avait vécu pendant des années] vieillissait. La fin de quelque chose, surtout...je me sens vidé de mon espoir avec une force qui monte en moi, contre moi, - comme la faim...229
Another aspect of eroticism becomes clear as Perken describes to Claude the behavior of a certain group of men in a Parisian "bordel": "L'essentiel est de ne pas connaître la pertenaire. Qu'elle soit: l'autre sexe."

Claude then asks: "Qu'elle ne soit pas un être qui possède une vie particulière?" and Perken replies: "Dans le masochisme plus encore. Ils [les hommes] ne se battent jamais que contre eux-mêmes."

Later Perken tells Claude that he can now understand the sense of the Oriental erotic cults:

'cette assimilation de l'homme qui arrive à se confondre jusqu'aux sensations, avec la femme qu'il prend, à s'imaginer elle sans cesser d'être lui-même. Rien ne compte à côté de la volupté d'un être qui commence à ne plus pouvoir la supporter. Non, ce ne sont pas des corps, ces femmes: ce sont des...des possibilities, oui. Et je veux...' Il fit un geste que Claude devina seulement dans la nuit, comme d'une main qui écrase. 'Comme j'ai voulu vaincre des hommes...'

When he hears this, Claude thinks to himself: "Ce qu'il veut...c'est s'aneantir."

After the encounter with the Mois Perken and Claude escape back into the region under direct control of the colonial administration. In the first village they come to Perken, whose knee wound has become deeply infected, hears the opinion of first a European doctor and then of a Cambodian medical officer. Both tell Perken that he is doomed - only an amputation would save him but he is too far from a medical center equipped for this task. In that scene Malraux concentrates on what will be Perken's last
attempt to achieve an "érotisation de la volonté" (the phrase Malraux will use to describe Valmont's ethic):

À dix centimètres du visage aux paupières bleuâtres, il le regardait comme un masque, presque séparé de la sensation sauvage qui le collait à ce corps qu'il possédait comme il l'eût frappé... 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. Pris par son mouvement, pas même libre de la ramener à sa présence en s'arrachant à elle, il ferma lui aussi les yeux, se rejeta sur lui-même comme sur un poison, ivre d'anéantir, à force de violence, ce visage anonyme qui le chassait vers la mort. 232

The anonymous face of the Cambodian woman (like the faces around Perken which only reflect the presence of his death, the solitude of his "déchéance") instead of being a means of self-possession for Perken, only drives him deeper into his isolation, into his solitary wait for death.

In addition to his preface to the French translation of Lady Chatterley's Lover, Malraux wrote another short study which perhaps explains even better his treatment of eroticism as the expression of an individual's need to possess himself by imposing his will on a negated and humiliated partner. This study is an article on Les Liaisons dangereuses of Choderlos de Laclos which appeared in 1939 in the Tableau de la littérature française
de Corneille à Chénier. Of particular interest are the parallels between Malraux's remarks about Valmont and Mme de Merteuil and those about Ferral in *La Condition humaine*.

Ferral illustrates the same sort of Nietzschean devotion to will that we saw in the early characters Claude and Perken. When Gisors asked Ferral how he would define intelligence Ferral answered by saying that it was the possession of the means to coerce things and men. It is important to remember this when we read Malraux's thoughts on Valmont and Mme de Merteuil:

> *Par leurs deux personnages significatifs les Liaisons sont une mythologie de la volonté; et leur mélange permanent de volonté et de sexualité est leur plus puissant moyen d'action. Le personnage le plus érotique du livre, la marquise, est aussi le plus volontaire.*

In short, the whole novel is an "érotisation de la volonté," a phrase which shows the connection between eroticism and humiliation.

Malraux says of Valmont and la Marquise that they conceive themselves ("se conçoivent"). They constantly project before themselves the representation they have created of themselves and this mythical image determines the living image of their conduct. This procedure is in fact identical with the quest for self possession which the individuals of Malraux's own novels pursue. However, when the area of endeavor is eroticism, another individual
must inevitably be negated in order to allow the erotomane to try to possess himself through the possession of others. Furthermore the drive toward self possession, no matter what form it takes, can only end in self negation. This point will be apparent when we look further into Malraux's characterization of Ferral.

Ferral, the haughty Frenchman who runs the entire European financial consortium in China, is the only capitalist among the characters Malraux portrays. As such Ferral would seem to differ fundamentally from the terrorists, adventurers and political activists who fill the pages devoted to revolution. This is not the case, for Ferral is impelled by a "volonté de puissance," a force which simply choses capitalist economics rather than jungle danger or revolution as an instrument of validation. Ferral seeks the power which absolute control over European economic concessions in China can bring - power to dominate men and events rather than the satisfaction of wealth. In the action of La Condition humaine specifically, Ferral seeks to force the wealthy Chinese into recognizing and supporting Chang-Kai-Chek as a "democrat" so as to enable Chang to resist the Communists within his movement. Democrats make better clients.

Ferral's overt need to humiliate is brought out not only in his dealings with women but in his relations with
his subordinates as well. Malraux tells us that Martial, Ferral's assistant, is constantly put down by Ferral and that Martial:

ne pouvait supporter cette insolente indifférence, cette façon de le réduire à l'état de machine, de le nier dès qu'il voulait parler en tant qu'individu et non transmettre des renseignements.

In other words, Ferral would "deny" his subordinates, he had a "talent unique pour leur refuser l'existence."

Likewise in his dealings with women Ferral had the recurring need to humiliate, to force the women to submit to the shame of domination of the mind even more than of the body:

La liberté des moeurs, chez une femme, alléchait Ferral, mais la liberté de l'esprit l'irritait. Il se sentit avide de faire naître le sentiment qui lui donnait, croyait-il, prise sur une femme: la honte chrétienne, la reconnaissances pour la honte subie.

The basic process is the same as that already described in Perken's case. Malraux defines eroticism as a sexual encounter where there is constraint. The constraint consists of negating the partner so as to allow oneself to project into the being of the other person. When Ferral thinks of Valérie, the European woman who has recently become his mistress, he realizes that "c'était son besoin de s'imaginer à sa place des qu'il commençait à toucher son corps qu'il tirait sa sensation aigue de possession."
This Valérie is of course more carefully portrayed and individualized than Perken's native woman. She is really Ferral's equal where matters of will are concerned. Malraux devotes several scenes to their meetings including the famous scene of the "interrupteur" in which Ferral was determined to see her face clearly:

Les caresses donnaient à Valérie une expression fermée qu'il voulut voir se transformer. Il appelait l'autre expression avec trop de passion pour ne pas espérer que la volupté la fixerait sur le visage de Valérie, croyant qu'il détruisait un masque, et que ce qu'elle avait de plus profond, de plus secret, était nécessairement ce qu'il préférait en elle. 237

But as Valérie would later say in her letter to Ferral "Je ne suis pas une femme qu'on a." When she realizes that Ferral is determined not so much to possess her physically as to intellectually savor her submission, that he "attendait le plus clair de son plaisir de la transformation sensuelle de ses traits," she resolves then not to pardon him.

As revenge she causes Ferral to undergo an extremely humiliating incident in the lobby of the Astor Hotel where the whole of Shanghai can witness her mockery of him. She is not present but has instructed that a letter be handed to him in which she explains the full reason for her resentment - she refuses to be an instrument. Ferral is paralyzed by anger because:
Elle l'avait atteint à son point le plus sensible, comme si elle lui eût crevè les yeux pendant son sommeil: elle le niait......Il s'affirmait qu'il avait construit des routes, transformé un pays, arraché aux paillotes des champs des milliers de paysans nichés dans des huttes de tole ondulée autour de ses usines, - comme les féodaux, comme les délégués d'empire;...La force de Ferral, sa lucidité, l'audace qui avait transformé l'Indochine...aboutissaient à cet oiseau ridicule comme l'univers entier, et qui se foutait incontestablement de lui. 'Tant d'importance accordée à une femme.' Ce n'était pas de la femme qu'il s'agissait. Elle n'était qu'un bandeau arraché: il s'était jeté de toute sa force contre les limites de sa volonté. 240

After leaving the hotel, Ferral goes next to the bar of the Cercle français where he has his conversation with Gisors. Then, as Ferral goes up the steps to his house he thinks to himself:

'Allons dormir'...Le sommeil, c'était la paix. Il avait vécu, combattu, crée; sous toutes ces apparences, tout au fond, il retrouvait cette seule réalité, cette joie de s'abandonner soi-même, de laisser sur la grève comme le corps d'un compagnon noyé, cet être, lui-même, dont il fallait chaque jour réinventer la vie. 'Dormir, c'est la seule chose que j'ai toujours souhaitée, au fond, depuis tant d'années....' 241

Ferral had said that man was the sum of his acts, that he was what he does and nothing else, but this burden of "reinventing his life each day" was almost more than he could bear. The quest of himself has exhausted him. Ferral seems to be composed of two beings, like Clappique was - a Ferral who sometimes wants to escape into peace by sleeping for example, and a Ferral who must validate himself through humiliating constraint of others. This
second Ferral is dominant, but his "volonté de puissance"
is just as much a negation as the desire for sleep in the
first Ferral.

After the incident of Valerie's letter Ferral's pride
dictates that he recoup his losses by imposing his will
somehow. He brings a woman home with him, choosing a
Chinese courtisan rather than a prostitute for the
courtisan traditionally sings, plays the cithar or
prepares a ceremonial pipe. By refusing to let her go
through this preliminary ritual, Ferral is able to humiliate
her. His thoughts as he approaches the woman make
unmistakable the essential nature of his eroticism and of h
his whole struggle toward validation:

L'érotisme, pensa-t-il, c'est l'humiliation en
soi ou chez l'autre, peut-être chez tous les
deux...Son plaisir jaillissait de ce qu'il se mit
tà la place de l'autre, c'était clair; de l'autre
contrainte, contrainte par lui. En somme il ne
couchait jamais qu'avec lui-même...oui, sa volonté
de puissance le revouler; mais, 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. Il
lui fallait les yeux des autres pour se voir, les
sens d'une autre pour se sentir. Il regarda la
peinture tibétaine: sur un monde décoloré ou
erraient des voyageurs, deux squelettes exactment
semblables s'étaient en transe. 242

The two skeletons convey a sense of the endless
futility and defeat which can be the only result of
Ferral's search for self possession. This meaning of the
scene between Ferral and the Chinese courtisan is further
reinforced by the scene immediately following this one - the death of Tchen. This juxtaposition emphasizes the similarity between Ferral's doomed attempt to possess himself by possessing others and Tchen's thirst for absolute possession of himself in the sensation of bloodshed. Both scenes together carry out the underlying obsession with death which is seen in all of Malraux's writings.

C.

By the end of L'Espoir we saw how Malraux draws attention more and more insistently to the failure of political action to provide ethical and even metaphysical validation for the individual. Speaking of L'Espoir's celebrated scenes of "fraternité," the critic Emmanuel Mounier said:

Plus d'une fois déjà, la solitude des premiers personnages de Malraux s'est ouverte sur une bouffée d'extase cosmique; mais, par derrière un émerveillement des sens et une vague effusion de l'âme, celle-ci n'apportait à leur solitude forclose que la fraternité - fuyante et onirique - de la solitude des mondes. 243

But in addition to this negative aspect of political action there is also present here and there in L'Espoir the suggestion that rather than feverishly pursuing the individual and immediate quest for validation, rather than seeing himself as a separate being at a particular point in time (China in 1927, Spain in 1937 etc.), man should give himself over to the eternal, comforting flow
of life.

Throughout *L'Espoir* there are numerous images and phrases which make analogies between a present, particular character and historical characters. This stylistic device of placing characters and scenes in a historical or even an eternal context definitely seems to dilute the individuality of the character described and implies that the individual is not distinct at all but rather a facet of something greater - humanity at large.

When Manuel visits his friend Barca in the hospital the patients whose limbs are in plaster casts have the profile of "Éclopés des Grandes Compagnies" of the Middle Ages. The whole setting gives Manuel the impression that he is entering "un royaume éternel de la blessure, établi là, hors du temps et du monde." The cries of all these wounded resemble "l'universel aboiement de la souffrance."

Another example among many comes when Malraux says that captain Hernandez "ressemblait aux rois d'Espagne des portraits célèbres, qui ressemblent tous à Charles-Quint jeune."

Near the end of the book in the famous scene of the "descente de la montagne" the survivors of an air strike are guided down the mountain on which their plane has crashed. As Magnin walks along the narrow path to the village on the hillside Malraux tells us that "Désormais
il entrait dans une Espagne éternelle." The faces of the peasants never change. Farther up the mountain Magnin comes to an apple tree beside the path:

un pommier, en silhouette japonaise sur le ciel au milieu d'un champ miniscule. Ses pommes n'avaient pas été cueillies: tombées, elles formaient autour de lui un anneau épais, qui peu à peu retournait à l'herbe. Ce pommier seul était vivant dans la pierre, vivant de la vie indéfiniment renouvelée des plantes, dans l'indifférence géologique. 248

There is the unmistakable implication that "life indefinitely renewed" can give mankind consoling examples which the individual was unable to see. When Magnin returns down the mountain path leading his wounded aviators he sees the apple tree again:

Magnin... regardait le pommier debout au centre de ses pommes mortes... Dans le silence empli tout a coup de ce bruissement d'eau vivante, cet anneau pourrissant et plein de germes semblait être, au-delà de la vie et de la mort des hommes, le rythme de la vie et de la mort de la terre. 249

In the last pages of L'Espoir Manuel is away from the scene of fighting for a short time. Finding a phonograph in one of the rooms of his brigade's headquarters, he plays several records of Beethoven's symphonies. As he listens to the music, "il sentait la vie autour de lui, foisonnante de présages." In the last paragraph of the novel Malraux says that for Manuel:

Ces mouvements musicaux qui se succédaient roules dans son passe, parlaient comme eut pu parler cette ville qui jadis avait arrête les Maures, et ce
ciel et ces champs éternels; Manuel entendait pour la première fois la voix de ce qui est plus grave que le sang des hommes, plus inquiétant que leur présence sur la terre: la possibilité infinie de leur destin - et il sentait en lui cette présence mêlée au bruit des ruisseaux et au pas des prisonniers, permanente et profonde comme le battement de son coeur. 250

When someone had asked Garcia what a man could do best in his life, Garcia answered "transformer en conscience une expérience aussi large que possible."

These scenes with Magnin and Manuel seem to start toward a development of that statement. Even though Malraux never gives an explicit explanation of this goal, there are these elements in L'Espoir and again more fully in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg which point toward an abandonment of the individual's quest for validation in favor of his absorption into an eternal species - mankind.

Les Noyers de l'Altenburg which appeared in 1943 is the last fictional work of Andre Malraux. He wrote in a prefatory note that the larger work La Lutte avec l'Ange of which Les Noyers was only to be a part, had been destroyed by the Gestapo. Therefore, the published edition of Les Noyers was only a preliminary version of what would have appeared later, according to Malraux. He then makes the remark "La presente edition ne s'adresse donc qu'a la curiosite des bibliophiles et a ceux qu'interesse 'ce qui aurait put etre.'" Malraux also states without explanation that the interpretation which
critics have given to a major incident in the book, the "appel au bonheur" which overtakes Vincent Berger when he realizes he is gassed, if false. In spite of the impression of uncertainty about the meaning of the book, Les Noyers de l'Altenburg should be studied to see how the last fictional expression of Malraux treats the question of the role of the individual.

The structure and mood of Les Noyers are quite different from the four "adventure" novels which precede it. In the first place we know now that the novel is a slightly transposed version of actual autobiographical material. Instead of the customary direct narrative form the book has three main divisions which make a structure which has been described as a triptych. In 1940 as Les Noyers opens the narrator, a Frenchman, is held prisoner in Chartres cathedral, along with thousands of other captured French soldiers, by the invading Germans. The events of the second and longest division take place from approximately 1906 to 1915 and deal with Vincent Berger, the narrator's father. We see Berger, an Alsatian German, as a young man in Turkey in the role of "eminence grise" of the Pan-Islamic movement. Next he is back in Alsace, which at the time was part of Germany. One week after his arrival his father commits suicide. Shortly thereafter Vincent attends one
of the celebrated colloquia organized by his uncle Walter Berger and held at the former abbey of Altenburg. A year or so later in 1915 Vincent Berger is serving in the German army on the eastern front and witnesses a gas attack on Russian troops. He is himself poisoned during the attack. The third and last division deals again with Vincent Berger's son. In this section the narrator, a French tank commander in 1940, takes part in the short-lived Flanders campaign. The tank is trapped in a ditch but Berger and his crew are able, miraculously, to free it and so escape almost certain death from German mortar shelling.

These experiences of adventure and war are not presented in the same manner as similar experiences have been treated in Malraux's four earlier novels even though certain scenes of action have the immediacy of Malraux's familiar narrative style. The whole tone is much more reflective and at times the book seems more an essay than a novel. The subject of the colloquium organized by the professor of history Walter Berger could be considered to be the theme of *Les Noyers* as a whole.

That topic was stated in the form of a question:

La notion d'homme a-t-elle un sens? Autrement dit: sous les croyances, les mythes, et surtout sous la multiplicité des structures mentales, peut-on isoler une donnée permanente, valable à travers les lieux, valable à travers l'histoire, sur quoi puisse se fonder la notion d'homme? 251
As he sits on straw thrown onto the floor of Chartres cathedral, the narrator asked himself: "Ecrivain, par quoi suis-je obsédé depuis dix ans sinon par l'homme?"

This obsession brings the narrator to examine his father's memoirs which Vincent Berger had called "rencontres avec l'homme" (from which the events of the central division of Les Noyers are taken) and to confront them with his own "meetings with man," "tandis que la vie continue jusqu'à ce qu'au fond fraternel de la mort se mêlent ses questions et les siennes."

It is apparent from the subject of the Altenburg colloquium that the focus has now shifted from the individual's attempt at validation or negation to an inquiry into the significance of mankind in general. Vincent Berger could be said to be the last "action hero" of Malraux's fiction. As he describes his father's reasons for going to Constantinople as a young man; for having given a series of lectures at the University there on Nietzsche which he entitled "Philosophie de l'action"; for undertaking an assignment as clandestine liaison between the German ambassador and the Turkish Pan-Islamic movement and for eventually participating exclusively and openly in this political action in the role of Enver Pacha's chief advisor, the narrator says of Vincent Berger:

Sa passion, mon père n'en avait guère mis en question l'origine. En elle se mêlaient son besoin de s'écarter de l'Europe, l'appel de
l'histoire, le désir fanatique de laisser sur la terre une cicatrice, la fascination d'un dessein qu'il n'avait pas peu contribué à préciser, la camaraderie de combat, l'amitié... 255

For some time Vincent Berger seems to coincide with this action but he is suddenly "disillusioned" and sees that the Pan-Islamic movement does not actually exist. Troubled and ill, he returns to Alsace. Vincent sees also that to his family and to the members of the Altenburg colloquium he is not the defeated adventurer he considers himself to be but rather a dashing hero:

Il rencontrait devant lui sa légende - décor romanesque, action secrète, indifférence au profit et peut-être au pouvoir - comme s'il eût couru derrière elle, de sa démarche précipitée que la maladie n'avait pas ralenti:...Il se sentait, non sans malaise, semblable à un homme ruiné entouré de tâpeurs. 256

But if Vincent Berger is no longer certain that action can give sufficient meaning to the individual existence the intellectuals of the colloquium are nonetheless sure that "la notion d'homme" is an eternal, immutable truth. The proposed topic had been "the eternal elements of art" but it was felt necessary to consider instead "permanence et métamorphose de l'homme." The man who discloses this change to Vincent comments: "L'éternité va mal."

Keeping in mind Malraux's basic view of man as an isolated, solitary being beset from within and without by the absurdity of the human condition, it will be most important to confine our look into the Altenburg
colloquium to those developments which show particularly how the participants proposed to "know man," to attempt somehow to diminish the isolation through knowledge.

Quite soon in the discussion one of the members discounts the effectiveness of culture as a means to establish "une notion d'homme":

La culture ne nous enseigne pas l'homme, elle nous enseigne tout modestement l'homme cultivé, dans la mesure où il est cultivé; comme l'introspection ne nous enseigne pas l'homme mais tout modestement l'homme qui a l'habitude de se regarder.

The same man dismisses psychology also: "Quant à la psychologie, elle enseigne la vie, ma foi, comme les tableaux de bataille à devenir général ou les marines à naviguer..."

In spite of the fact that some of the intellectuals believe in an eternal, constant man because of their faith in the eternity of man's artistic masterpieces the strongest and most provocative voice of the colloquium belongs to the historian-ethnologist Mollberg. After years of studying the peoples of Africa Mollberg took the manuscript representing his life's work, a book which would have been entitled "La civilisation comme conquête et comme destin" and has hung its pages "aux basses branches d'arbres d'espèces diverses, entre le Sahara et Zanzibar." He says ironically, "Parfait. Selon l'usage le vainqueur porte les dépouilles du vaincu."
In a passage which Malraux reproduces in *Antimémoires*, Mollberg tells the group at Altenburg of an ancient kingdom in which the power of the king depended totally on the phases of the mood, in other words on the cosmos:

Sa puissance montait avec la lune:...le croissant [lui] conférait les menues dignités...Enfin la pleine lune faisait de lui le vrai Roi, l'e vrai Roi, le maître de la vie et de la mort...La lune commençait à diminuer; il se cloîtrait dans le palais. Quand enfin venait l'époque des nuits sans lunes, nul n'avait plus le droit de lui parler. Son nom, par tout le royaume, était interdit. Supprimé. Le jour lui était refusé...Caché dans l'obscurité,...il perdait les prérogatives royales. Ne donnait plus d'ordres...Dans le peuple entier, récolte, mariage, naissance étaient liés à ces événements. Les enfants nés pendant les jours sans lune étaient tués à leur naissance...les rapports sexuels du Roi et de ses...femmes étaient liés au mouvement des astres. Comme la vie du Roi était liée à la lune, celle de la Première Reine l'était à Venus - la planète, bien sûr...un représentant du Roi était solennellement étranglé sur la grand'place de Babylone pour la naissance de l'année; pendant ce temps-là le vrai Roi, le Tout-Puissant, était déshabillé, humilié, battu dans un coin obscur du palais...

Mollberg intends for his listeners to realize that this kingdom was part of the cosmic domain: "Il n'est pas question que ce Roi soit assimilable à un dieu, ni à un héros. Il était le Roi comme la reine des termites est la reine. Cette civilisation vit dans une fatalité absolue." 

In the "ennui préhistorique" of the African plains Mollberg became convinced that "pour l'essentiel, le monde est fait d'oubli." The narrator (Malraux) tells us that Vincent Berger:
Mollberg had said there was no better way to understand mankind's significance than to contemplate an anthill, meaning that man's situation was identical to that of the lowest insect. He refuses, then, to acknowledge that there could be a permanent idea on which one could found a notion of man:

Moins les hommes participent a leur civilisation et plus ils se ressemblent, d'accord! mais moins ils en participent et plus ils s'évanouissent... on peut concevoir une permanence de l'homme, mais c'est une permanence dans le néant.

To this, however, Vincent Berger asks: "Ou dans le fondamental?" Mollberg retorts that fundamental man is a myth. Again, when another member of the colloquium maintains that "quelque chose d'éternel demeure en l'homme - en l'homme qui pense...quelque chose que j'appellerai sa part divine: c'est son aptitude a mettre le monde en question..." Mollberg's answer is that Sisyphus also is eternal.

It appears that the arguments (such as Mollberg's) against the permanence of fundamental man seem irrefutable on an intellectual level. However Malraux's response to this position is found in an emotional and intuitive affirmation of life. The individual who through four
novels had struggled desperately to validate his own particular existence has been replaced by man in general, out of time, who seeks comfort from his metaphysical solitude by immersing himself in the mysterious flow of life. Walter Berger had insisted that "Pour l'essentiel, l'homme est ce qu'il cache...un misérable petit tas de secrets." 267 Vincent Berger rejected this "psychologie-au-secret" maintaining that man was what he did. However he says "Ce n'est pas l'action qui m'a fait comprendre que pour l'essentiel...l'homme est au-dela de ses secrets." 268 This conviction of his cannot be precisely demonstrated but rather must be intuitively reached through the "discoveries of life," to use Manuel's phrase in L'Espoir, those discoveries which lie at the root of the "rencontres avec l'homme."

It is extremely important to keep in mind this mysterious aspect of life. The "dessin obscur" of life is more a presence than an explanation. When Vincent Berger walks through the crowded streets of Marseille on his return to Europe after a seven years' absence, and again when he stands looking out into the city from the room in which his father has just died, he is overcome by the same feeling, a "sentiment inconnu," an awareness of "angoissante liberté." From his father's window he watches the people in the street below and from
their presence alone:

sourd un secret qui ne venait pas seulement de la mort encore embusquée dans son dos, un secret qui était bien moins celui de la mort que celui de la vie — un secret qui n'eût pas été moins poignant si l'homme eut été immortel. 270

The individual was unable to sustain validation through action. Mankind will find intermittent solace in the presence of life, but life will always remain a secret, essentially. Berger's reaction to the spectacle of Marseille and to the city outside his father's window is a "vision...a curious mixture of delighted astonishment and obscure questioning."

Les Noyers de l'Altenburg contains four major "rencontres avec l'homme" in which Malraux shows the mysterious and sacred presence of life. Two are experienced by Vincent Berger. His first encounter takes place immediately after the session of the colloquium. He wanders out into the fields beyond the abbey and sees in the ancient walnut trees a symbol of the eternal living force in nature. The assertive continuity of natural forces is paralleled by the timeless effort of mankind in general — the shadows of the walnut trees seem to blend into the spires of Strasbourg cathedral, barely visible in the distance. This scene of the walnut trees resembles in tone and in meaning Malraux's depiction of the apple tree symbolizing the regenerative
forces of the earth in the scene of the "descente de la montagne" at the end of L'Espoir.

Vincent Berger's second "rencontre" occurs shortly thereafter while he is serving in the German army along the Russian front. The German soldiers, huddled apprehensively in the dark trenches waiting for the order to advance against the Russian lines after a gas attack, represent to Berger common humanity - "le peuple allemand ...le peuple tout court." Common humanity with all of its weaknesses and endurance. The correspondingly eternal menace of "l'inhumain" here in the form of the poison gas destructive of all living forms causes Berger (also gassed) to exclaim that the meaning of life was happiness and that he had pursued everything except happiness.

The first of the narrator's "rencontres avec l'homme" occurs as the book opens. Vincent Berger's son is in the nave of Chartres cathedral in 1940 where the advancing Germans have put thousands of French prisoners. The bearded faces of the men near him seem "visages gothiques." These common men who surround him on the straw of the cathedral floor are of the sort who "vivent au jour le jour depuis des millénaires." These men who wait quietly in the shadows have an "ancient familiarity with misfortune" but also a "foi clandestine dans une patience gorgée de désastres." From this experience the narrator
writes:

Et de jour perdu en jour perdu, m'obsède davantage le mystère qui n'oppose pas, comme l'affirmait Walter, mais relie par un chemin effacé la part informe de mes compagnons aux chants qui tiennent devant l'éternité du ciel nocturne, à la noblesse que les hommes ignorent en eux, - à la part victorieuse du seul animal qui sache qu'il doit mourir. 274

The final encounter with man is an episode which Malraux also includes in Antimémoires. The narrator commands a tank in the French army during the brief Flanders campaign of 1940. The three men who serve under him are of "le peuple" again. The tank falls into a mortar trap but the four men finally free it. The next morning they enter a village. This last encounter is literally a "retour à la vie" such as Kassner in Le Temps du mépris experienced after his airplane had weathered a severe storm.

In each of these four successive "rencontres avec l'homme" Malraux returns to a basic mood - the mysterious presence of life. Each exploration is extremely rich and conveys varying facets of the same essential experience. In a thematic study of Malraux's treatment of the individual these scenes cannot be examined as fully as they deserve. I would like however, to present passages from Vincent Berger's walk among the walnut trees and from Malraux's escape from the tank to give a better idea of this final fictional answer to the questions raised in
La Tentation de l'Occident.

After the colloquium session is over for the day Vincent Berger strolls out into the fields beyond the abbey of Altenburg. He feels vaguely dissatisfied with the pessimistic view of man which the intellectuals have voiced and yet does not know the source of his belief that man's life has a fundamental meaning. But as he walks along:

le soleil se couchait, allumant les pommes rouges des pommiers. Vaine pensée, vergers aux inépuisables renaissances, que toujours la même angoisse éclaire comme un même soleil. Pensée de jadis, pensée d'Asie, pensée de ce jour d'été pluvieux et insoleillé, si accidentelle, si insolite, - comme la race des hommes derrière la fenêtre de la chambre mortuaire, le bouleversant et banal mystère de la vie dans le jour inquiét de l'aube. 275

Then he sees the two ancient walnut trees:

La plénitude des arbres séculaires émanait de leur masse, mais l'effort par quoi sortaient de leurs énormes troncs les branches tordues, l'épanouissement en feuilles sombres de ce bois, si vieux et si lourd qu'il semblait s'enfoncer dans la terre et non s'en arracher, imposaient à la fois l'idée d'une volonté et d'une métamorphose sans fin. Entre eux les collines dévalaient jusqu'au Rhin; ils encadraient la cathédrale de Strasbourg très loin dans le crépuscule heureux, comme tant d'autres troncs encadraient d'autres cathédrales dans les champs d'Occident. Et cette tour dressée dans son oraison d'amputé, toute la patience et le travail humains développés en vagues de vignes jusqu'au fleuve n'étaient qu'un décor du soir autour de la séculaire poussée du bois vivant des deux jets drus et noueux qui arrachaient les forces de la terre pour les déployer en rameuses. 276
The trees creatively transform the "forces of the earth" just as mankind has creatively expressed itself through cathedrals. When Vincent Berger witnessed the effect of the deadly gas in 1915, it was significant to notice that man and nature both were destroyed by "l'inhumain." In addition to the Russian soldiers who are "moisis" by the poison gas, horses, birds and trees are suddenly made lifeless as well. In this "noyers" scene, too, nature is no longer exclusively a threat to the individual (as it was in La Voie royale for example) but rather a continuing counterpart to mankind's general, anonymous assertion of its form of life. Berger realizes that "le bois convulsé de ces noyers, au lieu de supporter le fardeau du monde, s'épanouissait dans une vie éternelle en leurs feuilles vernies sur le ciel..."

During the colloquium Vincent had noticed Walter's two walnut statues of Atlantis and of Saint Mark of which his uncle was very proud as examples of human achievement. In the course of that afternoon Vincent had heard through the open windows of the library the sound of walnut logs being chopped. Now the entire cycle is apparent to him and he sees that:

Entre les statues et les bûches, il y avait les arbres, et leur dessin obscur comme celui de la vie. Et l'Atalante, et la face de Saint-Marc ravagée de ferveur gothique s'y perdaient comme la culture, comme l'esprit, comme tout ce que mon père venait d'entendre - ensevelis dans l'ombre de cette statue indulgente que se sculptaient à elles-même les forces de la terre, et que le soleil au ras
des collines étendait sur l'angoisse des hommes jusqu'à l'horizon. 278

The last episode of Les Noyers tells of the narrator's mobilization into the French army during the summer of 1940. In the barracks, Malraux observes the ordinary soldiers who represent to him mankind at large much as the German infantrymen did for the narrator's father in 1915. The same photographs of wives, the same fears, the same banal conversation characterize all these men and serve to emphasize the continuity of common humanity.

The entire sequence leading to the tank's escape from the ditch is one of Malraux's best portrayals of man's confrontation with the presence of death. Then, as the four men at last are safe, Malraux writes: "la nuit qui n'est plus le sépulcre de la fosse, la nuit vivante m'apparaît comme un don prodigieux, comme une immense germination." 279

They enter a hastily evacuated village. Everything remains just as the inhabitants had left it and everything also looks as if it had been there forever. Malraux feels that they are walking into "le temps où les bêtes parlaient, la louche poésie des plus vieux contes [qu'on] rapporte avec soi de l'autre côté de la vie." 280 This image recalls the humor of the "fabliaux" and of Brueghel that the narrator saw in the faces of his fellow prisoners at Chartres. Like the scene in the cathedral nave, too, Malraux has the impression that he is
seeing eternity in these "granges des temps gothiques": the tanks clustered at one end of the village are not tanks but rather "monstres agenouillés devant les puits de la Bible." The whole impact makes Malraux aware of "la vieille race des hommes" and of life, "si vieille!... et si opiniâtre." The recollection of the intimate presence of death in his trapped tank causes Malraux to remember Pascal's words and then to add his own impressions of his immediate situation:

Qu'on s'imagine un grand nombre d'hommes dans les chaines, et tous condamnés à mort, dont les uns étant chaque jour égorgés à la vue des autres ceux qui restent voient leur propre condition dans celle de leurs semblables... C'est l'image de la condition des hommes. Combien une telle méditation peut crisper les hommes sur leur pauvre part de bonheur. Je me souviens de mon père... Peut-être l'angoisse est-elle toujours la plus forte; peut-être est-elle empoisonnée dès l'origine, la joie qui fut donnée au seul animal qui sache qu'elle n'est pas éternelle. Mais ce matin, je ne suis que naissance. 

Man's joy is perhaps poisoned from the start but there will occasionally be mornings life this, an idea which recalls Manuel's thought on the last page of L'Espoir: "On ne découvre qu'une fois la guerre mais on découvre plusieurs fois la vie."

As Malraux looks around the village he marvels:
"Comme toutes ces formes uniques sont accordées à la terre."
Life seems harmonious and eternal to him because the surroundings make him feel that "l'univers est plein et mystérieux comme un jeune corps."
The men come upon the only villagers left, an old peasant couple sitting in the sun. The woman slowly explains:

"Qu'est-ce qu'on pourrait donc faire? Vous, vous êtes jeunes; quand on est vieux, on a plus que l'usure."

"L'usure" the same timeless patience the narrator saw in the face of the anonymous soldier at Chartres who was waiting "jusqu'à ce que ça s'use."

This peasant woman, like the walnut trees, represents a form of life which does not struggle against the world around it as the individuals bent on validation had done:

Accotée au cosmos comme une pierre...Elle sourit pourtant, d'un lent sourire retardataire, reflechi; par dela un terrain de footballaux buts solitaires, par dela les tourelles des chars brillants de rosee comme les buissons qui les camoufluent elle semble regarder au loin la mort avec l'indulgence, et meme - a clignement mysterieux, ombre aigue du coin des paupieres - avec ironie...

This "irony" brings the narrator to realize once more the mysterious nature of l'âme and Les Noyers ends with the passage:

Portes entr'ouvertes, linge, granges, marques des hommes, aube biblique ou se bousculent les siecles, comme tout l'ebrouissant mystere du matin s'approfondit en celui qui affleure sur ces levres usees! Qu'avec un sourire obscur reparaisme le mystere de l'homme et la resurrection de la terre n'est plus que decor fremissant...Je sais maintenant ce que signifient les mythes antiques des etres arraches aux morts. A peine si je me souviens de la terreur; ce que je porte en moi, c'est la decouverte d'un secret simple et sacre...Ainsi, peut-etre, Dieu regarda le premier homme...
So we see that as the individual becomes mankind there is formed a sort of fraternity among members of the same species just as fraternity in political action meant a cohesion of like-minded men. Here, however, the fraternity is more amorphous, more nebulous — the individuality is no longer accented. The characteristics of the group are much less clearly defined. Instead of living men, we have men who have lived at any historical moment or who may just happen be be alive today. The edges of individuality are blunted so as to ease the anguish of sterile solitude. The price of this relief is erosion of the significance any individual may acquire.
CONCLUSION

After Malraux finishes L'Espoir his fiction abandonns the forward search for possibility or existence and turns instead to the backward search for fundamental man or essence. The focus of this inquiry was very briefly the generalized humanity as seen in Les Noyers de l'Altenburg but soon shifted to the world of art. Individual adventurers and particular civilizations represent specific and isolated assertions of an explicit historical moment but the significance of fundamental man, which Malraux finally turns to art to find, is a generalized unchanging humanity. The immediacy of the individual conquest of Malraux's fictional works becomes the conquering endurance of artists of past ages. In art, the final "lutte avec l'ange," the validation process is abstracted out of time and space. What remains to be seen, however, is whether or not this compendium of artistic creation which mankind has produced over the ages can provide a positive response to Malraux's continuing interrogation of man.

I would like to present a brief resumé of some of the most important aspects of Malraux's ideas or the meaning of art for man and then to discuss the reasons why I feel that he has still not succeeded in endowing the individual with a sufficient value to survive in a destructive and absurd world.

It is often assumed that Malraux has at last found through his study of art the answer to the question which he had posed from the beginning of his career,
from the days of *La Tentation de l'Occident*, when he first became aware of the bankrupt state of the European individual.¹ This would appear to be the case when we read that Malraux considers art to be the ultimate "anti-destin." For him culture in general is made up of all the forms of art, love and thought which through thousands of years have allowed man to be less of a slave.² As an "anti-destin" art represents the responses men have made to the question of their significance, the attempts men have made to impart some meaning to their lives. For this reason Malraux has said that in studying art we should not try to discover the methods which produce a chef-d'oeuvre but rather should try to learn what there is in genius that will be a means for knowing man.

Because it is an "anti-destin," we will see that art resembles the other attempts at validation of the individual throughout Malraux's novels. In his article "De la représentation en Orient et en Occident" Malraux establishes this connection, writing that when man's defiance of "Destin" is directed toward persons or things it becomes activity but that when it is directed toward the modification of forms, toward a questioning of the relation of man to these forms, man's defiance takes the shape of art. We have seen for example, that for Garine the Chinese masses were the raw material with which he exercised his "volonté de puissance." Likewise the Revolution (in fact all political action undertaken
by those who seek a metaphysical and individual validation) derives its meaning and fruitfulness from the creative powers, the "fertile dignity" which was thought to be the by-product of Revolution. Malraux writes in *Les Voix du silence*: "L'art naît ... de la volonté d'arracher les formes au monde que l'homme subit pour les faire entrer dans celui qu'il gouverne ... [la vocation de l'artiste] est liée ... au sentiment violent d'une aventure."  

It is apparent by now that Perken's concern to leave a "scar on the earth" and Claude's obsession to "tear one's own images from the stagnant world which possesses them" are continued in (the) artistic creation as Malraux conceives of it. In other words, the artist, like the individual seeking validation through action, revolution or terror, uses the real world of nature as a raw material with which to create himself. For Malraux, art reveals the power of man to recreate the world because the creative artist sets his own world of forms up against the confusion of the cosmos. This is the reason, according to Malraux, that the artist makes an unmistakable metaphysical gesture through his works.

Malraux also believes that now, thanks to photographic reproduction, all art of all times can be assembled in an "Imaginary Museum." This idea is an extension of his view that it is through museums that crucial and creative confrontations of potential artists with the artistic works of the past takes place. Claude
Vannec already expressed this thought in *La Voie royale* when he told the director of the French Institute at Saigon:

Les musées sont pour moi des lieux où les œuvres du passé, devenus mythes dorment, - vivent d'une vie historique - en attendant que les artistes les rappellent à une existence réelle. Et si elles me touchent directement, c'est parce que l'artiste a ce pouvoir de résurrection...En profondeur, toute civilisation est impénétrable pour une autre. Mais les objets restent et nous sommes aveugles devant eux jusqu'à ce que nos mythes s'accordent à eux. 4

For Claude (and for Malraux) time does not exist in art. What is more significant is the decomposition, the transformation art undergoes. It is this process which makes myth out of art and thereby enables it to speak to successive generations of men across the barriers of historical time. This idea of metamorphosis is central to Malraux's art theory and can mean either the different effects which the same work of art can have on different viewers, the development of forms and styles within a culture, or the diffusion of forms and styles between cultures. Any way that an artistic creation is achieved, its presence in the Imaginary Museum teaches us that fate ("le Destin") is momentarily defeated every time man's world (man's creation) imposes itself on the world at large, the same world which menaced the individual struggling to validate himself.
Malraux points out, however, that to represent a fatality, to express the forms of the world through artistic means does not amount to a liberation from this fatality. This fatality ("le Destin") will not vanish but will appear again in the artist's next work. However, Malraux contends that by representing the fatality along with other elements, by incorporating it into a creation which reaches beyond the artist, this artistic expression enters the relative universe of things which are dominated, even if this universe is small. Malraux claims that artistic creation thus causes the feeling of humiliating dependence to disappear as the artist through his work reduces the disaccord between himself and the world. In addition, Malraux in places even says that the artist can "dévaloriser" the reality of the menacing world by means of his faith and hope that man, not the chaos of an absurd universe, carries within himself the source of his own eternity.

Although he qualifies this idea elsewhere, in a number of other passages Malraux goes so far as to say that art becomes an absolute, succeeding the other ordering values (such as religion) which the world has known and that modern art has become its own fundamental value. Through the process of metamorphosis therefore the "invincible interior voice" of vanished civilizations survives for us in the great arts of the past. This survival is not immortality (a distinction which Malraux leaves obscure) but this voice nevertheless raises its
"sacred chant" against "l'intarissable orchestre de la mort." 6

The ensemble of past art which our present civilization has at its disposal in the Imaginary Museum now constitutes the first universal humanism Malraux maintains, for our civilization is, through the means of the internationalization of culture, able to view for the first time this entire body of human creation, the successive challenges to fate that ominous "destin" of the human condition: Notre culture artistique ne tente pas d'extraitre du passé des affirmations semblables à la sienne, elle le transforme tout entier en un cortège de réponses éphémères à une invincible question." 7

But in spite of whatever qualities of style and learning which Malraux's brilliant works on art can offer us, I do not feel that they successfully prove that these "réponses éphémères" provide the individual with the validation he has been seeking since Malraux first began his career. Malraux himself admits that "L'art ne délivre pas l'homme de n'être qu'un accident de l'univers." 8

Roger Stéphane in his book Fin d'une jeunesse tells of having a conversation with Malraux in which he (Stéphane) quoted Gide as saying that there was no problem of which a work of art was not a sufficient solution. Stephane goes on to relate that Malraux's answer to that was "L'art ne résout rien, il transcende seulement." 9
Malraux has never fully explained some of his terms and
transcendence is one of the more elusive ones. We can
get an understanding of this idea however by remembering
what Malraux says on the subject of the Western individual
in *La Tentation de l'Occident* and *D'une jeunesse européenne.*
According to Malraux, the Christian view of man's relation
to God created the conception of the individual distinct
from the world and involved personally and separately
in the process of salvation. Once the ordering framework
of Christianity collapsed and European man's existence
had no ultimate spiritual definition he was cut adrift
from a value-imparting force, but he was left with his
awareness of his individuality. Without the religious
significance which the Christian's individual relationship
to God implied, European man's individuality was now
nothing more than solitude and isolation in an absurd
world which offered no significance to the individual.
This being the case, the individual sets out to endow
*himself* with spiritual value, he tries to justify, to
authenticate, to validate himself. Since transcendence
implies the existence of a power beyond man and since man
is reduced to his own resources he simply cannot manu-
facture the means to project himself beyond his own
existence. The solitude of the individual remains, with
or without art. In other words, after having seen all
the various forms of validation which individual man has
attempted in the course of Malraux's novels and after
having noticed how much this validation resembles negation,
we are in a position to question whether any further human effort, even the sublime artistic effort, could truly transcend the state of being human. Furthermore, when Malraux says that art resolves nothing, it only transcends, there is the unmistakable suggestion that transcendence is only an escape from the human condition, not a solution to it. If this is so then we understand why any validation attempt is in reality a negation of individuality rather than an authentication of it.

In looking at those aspects of Malraux's works on art which make us think the individual is indeed still without his validation, a general criticism would have first to be made of the style and rhetoric of these books which, because of their "questionable schematizations," "perilous comparisons," and "hasty generalizations," (to use Denis Boak's terms) undermine our acceptance of many of the ideas which Malraux's studies contain.

More specifically, one could say that if works of the past are significant to us primarily for what present artists and contemporary interpreters find in them (as Malraux's ideas on metamorphosis would seem to mean) and if the civilizations of the past are largely closed to us, how then can Malraux expect that his own interpretation of the meaning of art - a defiant, individualistic challenge to fate with minimal historical or cultural overtones - should be accepted either? In other words, if successive civilizations are indeed unable to communicate
one with another, as Claude Vannec, Mollberg and Malraux have said, and since almost all of these previous civilizations were marked by a religious faith of one sort or another, how can we expect our agnostic civilization to be able to understand much less appropriate that which is most significant in works of the past? That our civilization happens to be the most universal and the last in line does not seem sufficient reason. How can we avoid the suspicion that modern art is no more than a refinement of the old idea of art for art's sake, only this time art creates itself in a vacuum alongside an equally unanchored, "absurd" universe? When the exploration of the possibility and present existence of the individual is set aside in favor of the examination of the past fundamental, essential aspect of man, one would at least expect this fundamental to have more substance than the elusive creative conquest which Malraux calls artistic expression.

Another reason why the individual is no longer at the center of this quest for validity is that this quest has been relinquished to the individual man's proxy - the artist. Where is the individual in all this? He is left by the wayside as Malraux fixes his attention on the illustrative but remote group of artists through the ages. Moreover, Malraux does not make it clear how the individual man in this first universal humanism will directly benefit from what his proxy has accomplished. How will the individual spectator be properly trained so
as to be certain he derives the desired "anti-destin" solace from a work of art? Furthermore, there is the danger that when the spectator, seeking to see in all art an expression of "anti-destin" will in fact only be projecting his own views and will not make the necessary effort to actually perceive through disciplined understanding what the artist of another period did in reality intend to convey. So Malraux's approach to art carries in it the ironic danger of betraying the individual who created the work of art, for in the endless change of the metamorphosis process the original meaning may be completely ignored or overlooked, as works are taken from their setting and placed in museums and again as they are transformed and distorted through the means of photography, to mention only the most obvious aspects of metamorphosis.

Another objection to the use of art as the ultimate "anti-destin" for the individual is the fact that works of art are, after all, objects which can be destroyed by the menacing world of time and nature. The precariousness of artistic survival is a theme which Malraux does mention briefly in his art works but one which becomes even more marked in passages of the Antimémoires where Malraux acknowledges that art is no more immune to the ravages of "Destin" than individual man.

Malraux said that in front of a work of art we should ask what there is in genius that gives us knowledge of man. However, aside from reiterating his
views of man's creative assertion of his "own world" as opposed to the world of the cosmos, I do not feel that he has sufficiently shown why art, any more than any of the other means used by his fictional characters, should be considered a successful path to validation. At least the characters in the novels tried to wrest their own validation and even if they failed their failure was their own.

There is a final objection to the belief that in his works on art Malraux found the reply to his interrogation of man. This objection comes from Malraux's "romanticism" for want of a better term. E. H. Gombrich points out that the inordinate emphasis on style and individual inspiration common to Romantic views of art (and to Malraux's theory of art as well) leads to the position that art history expresses some sort of "world-view." Because of this development the history of art came to be identified with some sort of metaphorical history of "seeing," of interpreting man's civilization and significance. In other words, the confusion between the role of the artist and the role of the prophet can lead to distorted vision. Art was made the new absolute. European esthetics ever since this Romantic development have been marked by the resultant split between "art" and "life." The artist's progressive separation from society eventually ends in what Erich Kahler called the Collectivization process. This phenomenon occurred when the artist (just as did any
other individual) lost his "integral" qualities and became "fractionalized." His identity was shattered and sent in many different directions as a result of the disintegration of traditional community oriented values. If both the individual artist and the individual spectator are deeply affected by this fractionalization can we hope that the process could be reversed and that somehow an individual can recover his lost integrity to a point where he can forge a valid significance? Also, it seems undeniable that when all is said and done, the artist in Malraux's eyes is seeking an unknown and unknowable value, a Romantic quest if ever there was one and one which could be highly negative. In the end, this search for individual validation is defeated by the very solitude and isolation which it attempted to surmount. For Malraux's view that art is personal transcendence seems ultimately to be just as futilely egotistic as Perken's vain defiance of "déchéance" and death.

The dazzling and poetic pages that we read in Malraux's works on art seem at times like a hysterical incantation in the face of the almost overwhelming certainty that the human condition is indeed to hear with one's throat what others hear with the ears. Isolation and solitude is still the fate of the individual in a world which has yet to find a new transcendence.
More recently, in his *Anti-mémoires*, Malraux again indicates that we still need a new transcendance and that the efforts of modern men, individually or collectively, have still not produced this transcendance from the means at their disposal: "Depuis combien de siècles une grande religion n'a-t-elle secoué le monde? Voici la première civilisation capable de conquérir toute la terre, mais non d'inventer ses propres temples, ni ses tombeaux." 12

The *Anti-mémoires* reproduces segments from several of Malraux's earlier works. In them are slight changes here and there, however, which may reveal an evolution in Malraux's thinking since these works were written. For example, in the passage from *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg* dealing with the colloquium Mollberg is not portrayed with the tinges of satire that were present in the first version. Also, when Mollberg says that the permanence of man is forgetfulness ("oubli") Vincent Berger's retort "ou dans le fondamental?" has been left out.

Throughout the *Anti-mémoires* we are constantly aware of Malraux's increasing preoccupation with the haunting presence of death. In many places in the book, especially in the long and developed passages having to do with the Orient, the oppressive weight of the cosmos reasserts itself and there is the suggestion that man will never free himself from its influence. In short, the individual is farther than ever from being validated by his own efforts.
That Malraux thinks the modern world is still without a transcendental value reinforces the conclusion reached at the end of the study of the novels—the attempts at validation through individual struggle such as Malraux's fictional characters undertook are undistinguishable from negation. The isolation of man in an absurd universe allows no other outcome. I think that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that far from developing a humanism in his novels, Malraux is indeed a remarkable and brilliant poet... of violent defeat.13

In an article entitled "Malraux: esthétique ou religion de l'art?" Pierre Meren said:

"Derrière ce pathos mystique autour de l'homme et de l'art se cache une caricature dangereuse du véritable humanisme; car, à la base, se trouve une peur et une dépréciation du réel, une négation de son objectivité et de sa rationalité, d'où découle un pessimisme exacerbé à l'égard... de tous les moyens dont dispose l'homme pour pénétrer les lois du réel et dominer effectivement le monde au profit de l'homme. Caricature au profit de l'art seul défigure et mystifie, séparé de toutes les autres activités humaines, arraché à l'histoire, procurant des victoires illusoires, des triomphes magiques qui ne changent rien aux rapports réels." 14

Meren is a Marxist and we are not obliged to share his opinion that Malraux would do better to turn his attention to the "reality" of science, technology and political. Nor must we assume that he, Meren, has the key to the "veritable humanism." However, his remarks point up an
element of Malraux's thought which is extremely important. This element (Malraux's conviction that if there is to be found a new meaning for man, it will come from a transcendental, essence-imparting force well beyond the reach of any individual's particular "project") is especially crucial when we know that this element is not only apparent at the end of Malraux's career, but that it can also be shown to be present from the beginning, thus inescapably determining the outcome of his exploration of the individual in the novels.

In *D'une jeunesse européenne* Malraux remarks that the characteristic of the arts of that period was their orientation toward the possible, in other words toward improvisation, the exploration of the moment. He adds that European youth is more touched by what the world can do than by what it is and that this youth is less responsive to the loss than to the affirmation of any reality achieved through art. In Malraux's eyes, this European youth wanted to see in each man the interpreter of a provisional reality and if the works of art of this period were ephemeral the movement which attached his generation to them was constant. (This is the same idea Malraux was to restate in another way twenty-four years later in *Les Voix du silence* when he said that art is a "cortège de réponses éphémères.") In his 1927 essay he goes on to say:
Le créateur est ici à l'extrême de l'individualisme: dédaignant même son expression du monde il nous propose des visions, ne leur demandant que des qualités poétiques ou plastiques. Mais l'art est le moyen qui pousse le spectateur (obligé d'accepter cette vision pour la goûter) à la plus subtile désagrégation..."

Mentioning the provisional reality which the art of his times seeks, Malraux then asks: "Que devient un monde qui est ma représentation si je n'ai que peu d'intérêt pour moi-même, et si je tiens pour essentiellement mensongère la volonté d'édifier cette représentation?"

I believe that the answer he proceeds to give shows why the validation attempt of the individual throughout the novels could only have ended in negation and why when all is said and done, Malraux allowed his fictional characters to valiantly struggle toward an existence while he secretly feared all the time that what they really wanted was an obliterating but secure essence:

Quelle vanité celle d'une allégorie du monde que je dois à de patientes constructions. Due à l'illusion de ma permanence, la voici, cette illusion évanouie, qui se dispense ainsi qu'un dieu nocturne, et je ne puis plus concevoir que comme l'infini des possibles…Et le monde se réduit à un immense jeu de rapports, que nulle intelligence ne s'applique plus à fixer, puisqu'il est dans leur nature même de changer, de se renouveler sans cesse. Il semble que notre civilisation tende à se créer une métaphysique d'où tout point fixe soit exclu, du même ordre que sa conception de la matière. L'Homme et le Moi l'un après l'autre détruits, que peut une telle métaphysique contre les besoins de l'âme? Tenter de les faire disparaître, d'élever un domaine de l'esprit et de la sensi-
bilité tout en mouvements, en changements, en rapports nouveaux et naissances nouvelles auprès d'une vie à quoi tout ce qui ne peut se traduire en actes ou en chiffres est devenu étranger...
Faibles images, en face des vieilles nécessités humaines." 15

The last lines of this passage and of *D'une jeunesse Européenne* as a whole ask what fate awaits this violent youth, "marvelously armed against itself and freed from the base vanity of calling "grandeur" their disdain for a life to which they do not know how to bind themselves. In *Les Conquérants, La Voie royale, La Condition humaine, L'Espoir* and to some extent in *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg* Malraux will have his characters seek an answer to this question. The individuals in Malraux's novels will attempt to validate themselves and thus try to make the "provisional reality" of their particular existences into a significance. Any conclusion they might reach could only be the same as the one Malraux himself had forseen in his early twenties. The metaphysic of infinitely varying, individual "possibilities" is a "vain allegory" which will never satisfy the soul.
FOOTNOTES - INTRODUCTION

1. André Malraux, La Tentation de l'Occident (Paris, 1926), pp. 174-175

hereafter the following abbreviations will be used for works by Malraux:

   A  Antimémoires (Paris, 1967)
   C  Les Conquérants (Paris, 1928)
   CH La Condition humaine (Paris, 1933)
   E  L'Espoir (Paris, 1937)
   JE D'une jeunesse européenne (Paris, 1927)
   MD La Métamorphose des dieux (Paris, 1957)
   NA Les Noyers de l'Altenburg (Paris, 1948)
   TM Le Temps du mépris (Paris, 1935)
   TO La Tentation de l'Occident (Paris, 1926)
   VR La Voie royale (Paris, 1930)
   VS Les Voix du silence (Paris, 1951)


3. TM 11

4. TM 8

5. André Malraux, "De la représentation en Orient et en Occident," Verve, No. 3 (été 1938), p. 69 quotation from original article in French found in Joseph Hoffmann, L'Humanisme de Malraux (Paris, 1963), p. 74


8. VR 70

9. E 330

10. E 130

12. JE 149


14. VR 178

15. CH 272

16. André Malraux, "N'était-ce donc que cela?", Liberté de l'esprit, No. 3 (avril 1949), 49-51 hereafter abbreviated as NDQC

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER ONE

A.

1. MD 16

2. Erich Kahler, The Tower and the Abyss, an Inquiry into the transformation of the individual (New York, 1957), p. 25

3. MD 81-82


7. NA 125

8. Hoffmann, p. 49

9. VS 466


11. Tison-Braun, I. p. 42

12. Kahler, p. 13

13. Tison-Braun, I, p. 50

14. ibid., pp. 75-77

15. ibid., p. 86


18. Tison-Braun, I, p. 14

19. ibid., p. 136
20. ibid, p. 142
21. ibid, p. 181
22. ibid, p. 269
23. ibid, p. 279
24. ibid, p. 130
25. Kahler, p. 146
26. Tison-Braun, I, p. 390
27. ibid, pp. 395-396
28. ibid, p. 509
29. Kahler, p. 145
   "Spleen III", p. 70
    1957), p. 988
32. ibid, p. 989
33. ibid, pp. 990-991
34. Tison-Braun, II, p. 113
35. Kahler, p. 164
36. André Malraux, "La Question des Conquérants,"
    Variétés (15 octobre 1929), 431-432
    Partisan Review, XV, vii (July 1948)
38. Roger Stéphane, Portrait de l'aventurier (Paris, 
    1950), p. 15
    XXII (1924), p. 152
40. Tison-Braun, II, p. 141
41. ibid, p. 136
42. ibid, p. 137
B.


44. ibid, p. 63


46. ibid, p. 421

47. ibid, p. 65

48. ibid, p. 425

49. Clara Malraux, p. 274

50. ibid, p. 191

51. ibid, pp. 179-180


53. TO 174-175

54. TO 154-155

55. TO 111-112

56. TO 158

57. TO 121

58. TO 67-68

59. TO 67-69

60. TO 53-59

61. JE 137

62. JE 135

63. JE 138-139

64. JE 142

65. TO 102

66. JE 143
67. TO 101
68. TO 98
69. JE 146-147
70. Wilbur Merrill Frohock, André Malraux and the Tragic Imagination (Stanford, 1952), p. 31
71. ibid, p. 32
72. JE 144
73. TO 122
74. TO 139
75. TO 145-146
76. JE 148
77. TO 114
78. JE 146
79. JE 122
80. TO 104
81. JE 150-151
82. JE 153
83. TO 218
84. "André Malraux et l'Orient," p. 2
FOOTNOTES — CHAPTER TWO

1. Rachel Bespaloff, Cheminements et carrefours: Julien Green, André Malraux, Kierkegaard, Chestov devant Nietzsche (Paris, 1938), pp. 22-23


3. CH 63

4. E 348

5. E 152

6. VR 25

7. VR 24

8. VR 157

9. VR 54

10. ibid.

11. VR 159

12. VR 86

13. VR 81

14. VR 38

15. VR 99

16. VR 179

17. VR 129

18. VR 17

19. VR 22

20. VR 97

21. VR 108-109

22. VR 98
23. VR 103-104
24. VR 124
25. VR 120
26. VR 122
27. VR 192-193
28. VR 195
29. VR 194
30. VR 197
31. VR 191
32. VR 84-85
33. VR 256
34. VR 225
35. VR 259
36. VR 161
37. VR 263
38. VR 226
39. VR 160
40. VR 262
41. VR 265
42. VR 269

43. André Malraux, "N'était-ce donc que cela?", Liberte de l'esprit, no. 3 (avril 1949), 49-51; no. 4 (mai 1949), 86-87; no. 5 (juin 1949), 117-118
These three installments will be abbreviated as follows:
    NDQC,1, (page)    NDQC,2, (page)    NDQC,3, (page)

44. NDQC,3,117
45. NDQC,2,86
46. NDQC, 2, 86
47. NDQC, 3, 117
48. NDQC, 1, 49
49. NDQC, 3, 118
50. NDQC, 2, 86
51. NDQC, 3, 118
52. NDQC, 3, 118
53. NDQC, 2, 86
54. NDQC, 3, 118
55. NDQC, 2, 86
56. VR 87
57. VR 53-54
59. ibid.
60. C 112
61. ibid.
62. C 113
63. C 19
64. C 63
65. C 67
66. C 210
67. C 214
68. C 61
69. C 67
70. C 214
71. C 56
72. C 201
73. C 203
74. C 225
75. C 227
76. Tison-Braun, Vol. II. p. 13
77. Bepaloff, p. 54
78. TM 11
79. TM 12-13
81. CH 79
82. CH 56
83. CH 166
84. CH 177
85. CH 189
86. CH 80
87. CH 63-64
88. CH 67
89. CH 67-68
90. CH 334
91. CH 337
92. CH 342
93. CH 361
94. CH 358-360
95. CH 360
96. CH 363
98. CH 362
99. CH 363
100. CH 364
102. CH 365
103. CH 366
104. CH 36
105. CH 368
106. E 47
107. E 105
108. E 148
109. E 126
110. E 279
111. E 278
112. E 140
113. E 335
114. E 278
115. E 107
116. E 277–278
117. E 264
118. E 339
119. E 185
120. E 186–187
121. E 186
122. E 171
123. E 182
124. E 215
125. E 224
126. E 198
127. *ibid.*
128. E 153
129. E 332
130. E 333
131. E 346
132. E 347
133. E 140
134. TO 201
135. C 33
136. C 145
137. C 144
138. *ibid.*
139. C 147

140. *André Malraux,* "Réponse à Trotsky," *Nouvelle Revue Française* no. 211 (avril 1931)

141. TO 201
142. CH 79
143. CH 221
144. CH 79
145. CH 122
146. CH 122
147. CH 15
148. CH 16
149. CH 17
150. CH 18
151. CH 20
152. CH 21
153. CH 201
154. CH 22
155. ibid.
156. CH 23
157. CH 109
158. CH 178-179
159. CH 179-180
160. CH 180
161. CH 74-75
162. CH 189
163. CH 75-76
164. VR 20
165. CH 278
166. ibid.
167. CH 279
168. CH 280
169. E 31
170. E 175-176
171. E 178
172. E 176
173. CH 277
174. C 92-93
B.
175. ibid
176. CH 92
177. CH 35
178. CH 234
179. CH 288
180. CH 289
181. CH 288
182. ibid
183. CH 190
184. ibid
185. CH 290
186. CH 292
187. CH 295
188. CH 296
189. CH 307
190. CH 308-309
191. CH 309
192. CH 312
193. CH 351
194. CH 313
195. ibid
196. CH 352
197. CH 400-401
198. CH 268
199. CH 82
200. CH 83
201. CH 84
202. CH 271
203. CH 372
204. CH 373
205. ibid
206. ibid
207. CH 373-374
208. CH 398
209. ibid
210. CH 399
211. ibid
212. CH 401-402
213. NA 120
214. CH 319-320
215. VR 185
216. VR 186
217. CH 216
218. CH 217
219. ibid
220. CH 250
221. CH 303
222. ibid
223. CH 262
224. C 133
225. C 140

228. VR 55

229. VR 89

230. VR 15

231. VR 90-91

232. VR 232

233. "Laclos," p. 387

234. CH 100

235. CH 143

236. CH 255

237. CH 144

238. CH 258

239. CH 144

240. CH 259

241. CH 274

242. CH 275-276
C.


244. E 89

245. E 84-85

246. E 109

247. E 401

248. E 402

249. E 409-410

250. E 432

251. NA 130

252. NA 29

253. NA 30

254. The influence of Nietzsche on Malraux has been treated by David Wilkinson in his *Malraux - An Essay on Political Criticism* (Cambridge, Mass. 1967). Among other remarks, Wilkinson states on page 168 that Nietzsche was "deliberately apolitical in his philosophy."

255. NA 64

256. NA 102

257. NA 106

258. NA 116

259. NA 113

260. NA 110

261. NA 131-133

262. NA 149

263. NA 142

264. NA 133
265. NA 145
266. NA 147
267. NA 89–90
268. NA 90
269. NA 152
270. NA 92–93
272. NA 28
273. NA 26
274. NA 250
275. NA 151
276. NA 151–152
277. NA 152
278. NA 152–153
279. NA 284
280. NA 287
281. NA 288
282. NA 289
283. E 432
284. NA 290
285. NA 291
286. ibid
287. NA 291–292
1. Critics such as Wilbur Frohock (André Malraux and the tragic imagination), Joseph Hoffmann (L'Humanisme de Malraux) or Charles Blend (André Malraux, Tragic Humanist) maintain that while the essential tragedy of the human condition remains apparent to Malraux, nevertheless he succeeds in finding in art a convincing proof that mankind can confront "le Destin." Even if this were able to be proved to be true for mankind as a whole, such a view would do nothing to resolve the problem of the individual as we will see.


3. VS 318

4. VR 61


6. VS 628

7. VS 629

8. VS 635


12. A 11


15. JE 150-153
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