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The Ubermensch and the Virtue of Redemption

The Ubermensch (translated ‘Over man’) is a concept discussed by Friedrich Nietzsche in his work *Thus Spake Zarathustra.* According to Nietzsche, the Ubermensch was meant to be the ideal person who would be the next evolutionary course of man; one who breaks social norms and conventional ethics. The Ubermensch is one who needs no redemption and what matters to him is his own experience. This philosophical idea can be explored in the novels *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky and *The Stranger* by Albert Camus. *Crime and Punishment* gives an example of a character who exemplifies the personality of the Ubermensch, committing himself to rise above the norms of society, finding that his actions carry serious consequences. Albert Camus’ *The Stranger* gives us a character similar to Dostoyevsky’s of one who gets the death penalty not for his crime of killing an Arab, but for acting in contrast to society’s standards. By the end of the novel, the reader comes to the conclusion that this man experiences nothing that would relate to redemption; only to his own experience. It is important to note that out of the two characters mentioned, only Dostoyevsky’s character experiences an objective form of redemption through the virtues of hope, faith, and charity. What these two novels express in relation to Nietzsche’s ideal man is that they demonstrate how the Ubermensch ideology runs counter to what is the human condition.

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