

THE ROLE OF THE CORRESPONDENCES IN GIDE'S
SEARCH FOR DIALOGUE

Kathleen F. Todd

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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BY

Kathleen F. Todd

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Ph.D. in the University of St. Andrews.

April 1978



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C A N D I D A T E ' S D E C L A R A T I O N

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and is a record of research work undertaken personally during a period of over six years. This thesis has not been submitted for any previous higher degree in the university of St Andrews or elsewhere.

Kathleen Todd, M.A.

S U P E R V I S O R ' S C E R T I F I C A T E

Kathleen F TODD was enrolled as a Research Student under the General Ordinance in October 1971 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in June 1972. I certify that she has pursued her research under my supervision, that she has fulfilled the conditions of the relevant Resolution and Regulations and that she is qualified to submit the accompanying thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Malcolm Scott, B.A., D.Phil.

THE ROLE OF THE CORRESPONDENCES IN GIDE'S SEARCH

FOR DIALOGUE

Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the University of St Andrews in May 1978 by Kathleen F. Todd.

Abstract

The aims of this thesis are to show that dialogue in Gide's correspondences is of primordial importance in helping Gide to establish and develop his artistic position and to provide adequate proof of the fact that artistic discussion in the correspondences bears fruit in Gide's literary work.

Before undertaking this task, certain preliminary steps are taken in my Introduction and in Chapter One. The former contains a definition of dialogue which stresses the fact that, for Gide, it is essentially artistically orientated and most useful when it entails opposition. My choice of Gide's correspondences with Paul Valéry, Francis Jammes, Paul Claudel and Roger Martin du Gard is explained and justified. These correspondences are representative of Gide's development as a "being of dialogue" and cover Gide's literary career chronologically.

In Chapter One, Gide's attitude to correspondence is explored, in order to prove that the correspondences deserve closer study since they held an important and specific place in Gide's life, being intended for publication. The possible reasons for this are investigated and the conclusion is drawn that Gide wanted his public to participate in the moral and artistic dialogue which takes place in the most important of his correspondences. The purpose of such a study was to show that my decision to deal only with dialogue upon art was not an arbitrary one.

Chapters Two, Three and Four concern the course of dialogue in the chosen correspondences. Chapter Two shows how dialogue with Valéry helps Gide to build the foundations of his artistic

position, Chapter Three now dialogue with Jammes and Claudel encourages Gide to establish and strengthen it, while Chapter Four is witness to the fact that dialogue with Martin du Gard is Gide's insurance against artistic complacency.

Chapter Five studies the relationship between Gide's correspondences and certain of his works (Le Traité du Narcisse, Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue and Les Faux-Monnayeurs). Images and artistic preoccupations which appear in the correspondences studied are given parallel expression in Gide's literature. In addition, the nature of Gide's dialogue with his correspondents is also apparent in the manner in which he presents ideas in his literature. Chapter Five is intended as proof of my conclusion not only that dialogue in Gide's correspondences is, as much as his Journal, a bridge to his work but also that, for a fuller understanding of the artistic reflection which is the fundamental basis of Gide's work, his correspondences are essential reading.

LIST OF CONTENTS

| | <u>Page No.</u> |
|--|-----------------|
| <u>CONTENTS</u> | i |
| <u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u> | iv |
| <u>ABBREVIATIONS</u> | v |
| <u>INTRODUCTION</u> | 1 |
| <u>CHAPTER I</u> | |
| <u>Gide's Attitude to Correspondence</u> | 22 |
| 1. Correspondence as an Enemy to Work | 22 |
| 2. Gide's Sense of Inferiority as a Correspondent | 24 |
| 3. Correspondence and Gide's <u>Journal</u> | 30 |
| 4. Correspondence and Conversation | 35 |
| 5. Pleasure in Correspondence | 52 |
| 6. The "True" Letter | 56 |
| 7. Care over Correspondence | 62 |
| 8. Correspondence: A "Filing-System" | 64 |
| 9. Sincerity | 68 |
| 10. Correspondence: An Art-Form? | 69 |
| 11. Correspondence: A Moral Dialogue | 73 |
| 12. Artistic Dialogue | 76 |
| <u>CHAPTER II</u> | |
| <u>Dialogue in Gide's Correspondence with Paul Valéry</u> | 79 |
| 1. The Initial Stages of Dialogue: from an Echo to the Author of the <u>Traité du Narcisse</u> | 79 |
| 2. The Dual Development of Gide to the <u>Voyage d'Urien</u> | 99 |
| 3. The Introduction of Discussion upon Gide's and Valéry's Differences | 107 |
| 4. The Peak of Literary Dialogue | 122 |
| 5. The Last Stages of Dialogue | 138 |
| <u>CHAPTER III</u> | |
| <u>Dialogue in Gide's Correspondences with James and Claudel</u> | 147 |
| 1. The Need for a New Interlocutor and the First Steps to Dialogue | 147 |
| 2. <u>Ménelque</u> and the <u>Nourritures terrestres</u> | 149 |
| 3. The Role and Quality of Art | 156 |

CHAPTER III
(Continued)

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 4. | <u>L'Immoraliste</u> and the Strengthening of Reaction | 162 |
| 5. | Nostalgia and the Need to experience Religious Emotion | 170 |
| 6. | Saintliness "par la route païenne" | 174 |
| 7. | The Purpose of Art: The Way or the End | 187 |
| 8. | The Provocation of Literary and Religious Dialogue during the Writing of the <u>Caves du Vatican</u> | 196 |
| 9. | Discussion upon the <u>Caves</u> and Gide's Declaration of Independence | 206 |
| 10. | The Last Throes of Dialogue | 215 |

CHAPTER IV

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| | <u>Dialogue in Gide's Correspondence with Martin du Gard</u> 1. Introduction | 228 |
| 1. | The Effects of Gide's Journey to the Congo on Dialogue | 258 |
| 2. | <u>L'Ecole des Femmes</u> , <u>Oedipe</u> and the Deepening of Literary Discussion | 267 |
| 4. | A Literary Argument | 285 |
| 4. | Art and Commitment | 306 |
| 5. | The Last Stages of Dialogue | 341 |

CHAPTER V

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| | <u>The Fruits of Dialogue: The Relationship between Gide's Correspondences and his Fictional Work</u> | 363 |
| 1. | Introduction | 363 |
| 2. | The <u>Traité du Narcisse</u> and Gide's Correspondence with Valéry | 370 |
| | i André Walter and the <u>Traité du Narcisse</u> | 370 |
| | ii Gide's <u>Journal</u> and the <u>Traité du Narcisse</u> | 377 |
| | iii Parallel Ideas and Images in the <u>Traité du Narcisse</u> and the <u>Gide-Valéry Correspondence</u> | 381 |
| | iv The <u>Traité du Narcisse</u> , Correspondence and Dialogue | 390 |
| 3. | <u>Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue</u> and Gide's Correspondences with Jammes and Claudel | 396 |
| | i An Artistic Understanding of <u>Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue</u> | 396 |
| | ii The House, the Father and the Elder Son | 400 |
| | iii Individual Effort and Dependence on a System | 405 |
| | iv Inclusion and Limitation | 408 |
| | v Resemblance and "le plus irremplaçable des êtres" | 411 |
| | vi The Moral Role of the Artist | 414 |
| 4. | <u>Les Caves du Vatican</u> and Gide's Correspondences with Jammes and Claudel | 419 |
| | i The Origins and Importance of <u>Les Caves du Vatican</u> | 419 |

| | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|-----|
| <u>CHAPTER V</u> | | | |
| (Continued) | | | |
| | 4. | ii The Artist | 423 |
| | | iii The Source, Role and Character- istics of Art | 438 |
| | 5. | <u>Les Faux-Monnayeurs</u> and Gide's Corr- espondence with Martin du Gard | 444 |
| | | i The <u>Faux-Monnayeurs</u> : An Answer to Martin du Gard's Expectations? | 444 |
| | | ii "(U)ne logique subjective" | 453 |
| | | iii Objectivity and the Novel | 458 |
| | | iv Limitation and Complexity | 466 |
| | | v The Role of the Author's Intellect | 472 |
| | | vi Amusement | 478 |
| | | vii Precipitation | 481 |
| <u>CONCLUSION</u> | | | 487 |
| <u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u> | | | 505 |

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I am pleased to acknowledge my debt to the University of St. Andrews which awarded me a grant for two years (1972-1974).

Finally, I would like to thank my parents both for their financial support during my first year of research and for their help and generosity during the final stages of preparation.

ADDENDUM

The following works ^{were} mistakenly omitted from the Bibliography
and the List of Abbreviations :

André Gide and Albert Mockel, Correspondance (1891 - 1938),
edited by Gustave Vanwelkenhuyzen (Droz : Geneva 1975)

References to this correspondence will be made by the

abbreviation : G./Mo. Corr.

André Gide et Paul Claudel Correspondance (1899 - 1926),
edited by Robert Maillat (Gallimard : 1949)

Abbreviations

The following works and periodicals figuring in the footnotes are referred to by the abbreviated forms below:

- G./B. Corr. André Gide-Arnold Bennett, Correspondance. Vingt ans d'amitié littéraire (1911-1931) (Geneva and Paris: Troz et Minard 1964)
- G./Co. Corr. Jean Cocteau, Lettres à André Gide, avec quelques réponses d'André Gide (Paris: La Table Ronde 1970)
- G./Du Bos Corr. Lettres de Charles Du Bos et Réponses d'André Gide (Correa 1950)
- G./Chéon Corr.1) Henri Chéon - André Gide, Correspondance, vol. I (1897-1903), vol. II (1904-1944) (Gallimard 1976)
- G./Chéon Corr.2)
- G./Gosse Corr. The Correspondence of André Gide and Edmund Gosse (New York: New York University Press 1959)
- G./J. Corr. Francis Jammes and André Gide, Correspondance 1893-1938 (Gallimard 1948)
- G./M. Corr. André Gide - François Mauriac, Correspondance 1912-1950 (Gallimard 1972)
- G./Proust Corr. Marcel Proust, Lettres à André Gide (Neuchâtel and Paris: Ides et Calendes 1946)
- G./M.G. Corr.1) André Gide-Roger Martin du Gard, Correspondance, vol. I (1913-1934), vol. II (1935-1951) (Gallimard 1968)
- G./M.G. Corr.2)
- Index M.G. Susan Stout, Index de la Correspondance André Gide-Roger Martin du Gard (Gallimard 1971)
- G./R. Corr. André Gide - André Rouveyre, Correspondance 1913-1951 (Paris: Mercure de France 1967)
- G./V. Corr. André Gide - Paul Valéry, Correspondance 1890-1942 (Gallimard 1955)
- G./J./F. Corr. Paul Claudel, Francis Jammes, Gabriel Frizeau, Correspondance 1897-1938 (Gallimard 1952)
- O.C. I-XV André Gide, Œuvres complètes, vols. I-XV (Gallimard 1932-1939)
- J.1 André Gide, Journal 1889-1939, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Gallimard 1951)
- Lit. et Mor. Littérature et Morale } these works
 Numquid Numquid et tu...? (1916-1919) } appear in J.1

- J.2 André Gide, Journal 1939-1949, Souvenirs, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Callimard 1954)
- SI Si le Grain ne meurt } these works
 Et nunc Et nunc manet in te } appear in J.2
- Romans André Gide, Romans, Récits et Soties, Oeuvres Lyriques (Callimard 1958)
- TN Le Traité du Narcisse }
 TA La Tentative amoureuse }
 NT Les Nourritures terrestres }
 R.e.p. Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue } These works
 P.e. La Porte étroite } all appear in
 Caves Les Caves du Vatican } Romans
 SP La Symphonie pastorale
 FM Les Faux-Monnayeurs
- CAW André Gide, Les Cahiers d'André Walter, 19th Edition (Callimard 1952)
- Dostoïevski André Gide, Dostoïevski: Articles et Causeries Collection Idées (Callimard 1970)
- J.F.M. André Gide, Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs (Callimard 1972)
- NAG Roger Martin du Gard, Notes sur André Gide, 27th édition (Callimard 1951)
- IP Germaine Brée, André Gide l'insaisissable Protée (Paris: Societe d'Édition "Les Belles-Lettres" 1953)
- Entretiens Centre Culturel International de Cérisy-la-Salle, Entretiens sur André Gide (Paris-La Haye: Mouton et Cie 1967)
- JAG 1)
 JAG 2) Jean Delay, La Jeunesse d'André Gide, vols. I and II (Callimard 1956 and 1957)
- MAG Claude Martin La Maturité d'André Gide: De Paludes à L'Immoraliste (1895-1902) (Paris: Klincksieck 1977)
- M.V.R., Cahiers 4)
 M.V.R., Cahiers 5) Maria Van Rysselberghe, Les Cahiers de la Petite Dame, vol. I (1918-1929), vol. II (1929-1937), vol. III (1937-1945), vol. IV (1945-1951) (Callimard 1973, 1974, 1975, 1977)
 M.V.R., Cahiers 6)
 M.V.R., Cahiers 7)
- B.A.A.G. Bulletin des Amis d'André Gide

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The notion of dialogue is recurrent and, indeed, inevitable in any study of Gide which claims to breadth or depth. Gide's own avowal to being an "être de dialogue" has justified critics in their attempts both to define Gidian dialogue and to explain Gide's life and work in terms of it.

My own understanding of Gidian dialogue is not radically new. This thesis does purport, however, to take an initial step towards filling in a gap in Gidian studies. Gide's correspondences have been written about, but a systematic study of dialogue and its role within them throughout Gide's creative life has not yet been undertaken. It is the intention of this thesis to do so.

The work already done on Gide's correspondences may be divided into three broad categories. Firstly, and most obviously, there are the introductions to the published correspondences; secondly, there are articles on the correspondences; thirdly, there are works such as Jean Delay's La Jeunesse d'André Gide, where the correspondence helps to throw greater light on Gide.

In general, the introductions trace the development of the correspondences and attempt, where possible, to fill in gaps caused by a meeting between Gide and his correspondent. Most of the introductions also point to the personal and artistic differences between Gide and his correspondents, the most lengthy and serious account being by Jean Delay in the Martin du Gard Correspondance.

Most of the preface-writers make some attempt to justify the publication of their particular correspondence. Robert Mallet, for example, sees the Claudel Correspondance as a dialogue of general importance. He also, contrary to Gide, feels that the James Correspondance has equal importance. The publication of the Valéry Correspondance is explained by

Gide's admiration for Valéry's letters. Mallet himself sees their correspondence as a dialogue and an "enquête" as well as a testimony of what Valéry defines as friendship.¹ Jean Delay is exceptional because he makes no attempt to justify the publication of Gide's Correspondance with Martin du Gard. This is surprising only until one has read his introduction and the actual correspondence. The two preclude any need for explanation.

Anxious though the preface-writers may be to warrant the publication of individual correspondences, few take a more general view of Gide as a correspondent. Nor, in spite of many interesting comments on Gide, do the preface-writers make many cross-references to other correspondences in an attempt to place the individual correspondence in a wider context. The most notable exception to this is Robert Mallet's introduction to the Jammes Correspondance. In it, mention is naturally made of Gide's correspondence with Claudel who was not only a common friend but as concerned as Jammes with bringing Gide to the Catholic faith.

Lack of a general approach is also evident in articles and, pardonably, in reviews on Gide's correspondences. G. Picon and Pierre de Boisdeffre are among the few, more modern writers who do comment on Gide's published correspondence as a whole.

In his article, which deals with Gide and Valéry as seen through their correspondence,² Picon writes of Gide's lack of mention of his homosexuality: "Gide a besoin pour s'exprimer, de l'intermédiaire de la création artistique, de ses symboles ou, du moins, de son décalage..." before making a more general conclusion on Gide as a letter-writer:

On ne peut donc attendre de lui, à aucun moment, une expression définitive, et c'est parce qu'il le sait qu'il ne cesse, dans ses lettres, de se préserver et de réserver. Et comme du temps, il a besoin du monde; si égotiste qu'il soit, c'est moins lui-même qu'il épie que son contact avec

1. G./V. Corr., p. 35.

2. "Gide et Valéry (à propos de la correspondance)," L'Usage de la Lecture, Vol. II, Mercure de France, 1961, pp. 115-122.

les choses. Apprentissage et amour des objets de ce monde qui, malgré les banalités et les faiblesses, font de sa correspondance et plus encore de son Journal un témoignage si émouvant et si humain...¹

The view that Gide holds himself back in his letters is shared by Auguste Anglès² and Pierre de Boisdeffre who, nonetheless, makes an exception of the Correspondance with Martin du Gard.³

Despite the undeniable interest of some articles on Gide's correspondences, such as J. Pénard's "Aspects d'une amitié: Roger Martin du Gard et André Gide"⁴ or Pierre Klossowski's "Correspondance de Claudel et de Gide,"⁵ rare are the attempts to generalize, even in passing, as Picon and De Boisdeffre have done.

G.-P. Collet, in an article⁶ on Gide's unpublished letters to Jacques-Emile Blanche, does refer briefly to other correspondences. The title of his article, "André Gide Épistolier," is, however, misleading since it suggests a global approach to Gide as a letter-writer rather than the actual study Collet makes of a few only of Gide's letters to Blanche, which he divides into sometimes dubious "essential themes."

Collet is also guilty of exaggeration when he explains that his decision to write an article on Gide's unpublished letters to Jacques-Emile Blanche was due to the already prolific amount written on Gide's published correspondence. Compared to Gide's fictional and autobiographical works, the published correspondences are still a rich source which existent articles and books have tapped but, by no means, exhausted.

-
1. Picon, op. cit., p. 118.
 2. "Gide-Ghéon: Quarante Ans de Correspondance," La Quinzaine littéraire, no. 241, 1st-15th October 1976, pp. 14-15.
 3. "Gide et son Mentor," Nouvelles littéraires, 11th April 1968, p.3.
 4. Revue des Sciences Humaines, January - March 1959, pp. 77-98.
 5. Un si funeste Désir, Gallimard, 1963.
 6. "André Gide épistolier," The French Review, 1964-1965, pp. 754-765.

Books, such as Catherine Savage's André Gide. L'Evolution de sa Pensée religieuse¹ or Enrico Bertalot's André Gide et l'Attente de Dieu,² make incidental mention of Gide's correspondences with Claudel and James, in particular, since they are essential to any study of Gide's attitude to religion.

Apart from specific references like this in critical works, one may set in a class of its own the use made of the correspondences by Jean Delay and Claude Martin in La Jeunesse d'André Gide³ and La Maturité d'André Gide⁴ respectively. Drawing, for the most part, on the unpublished correspondence between the young Gide and his family, Jean Delay contributes to a knowledge of Gide the man and his development as an artist, which is not to be gained from Gide's autobiographical work. Claude Martin takes up this work where Jean Delay left off in 1895, making extensive reference to Gide's correspondence with family and friends alike as well as to Gide's literary contributions from 1895 to 1902.

Both works are biographical. Hence, the correspondences are primarily an aid to both Jean Delay and Claude Martin in telling what exactly Gide did during a set period of his life. The two men's approach to such knowledge does differ slightly. Claude Martin lays more store, perhaps, on the inferences to be made about Gide, the creator, and Jean Delay on those to be made about Gide's emotional and psychological make-up. Both men's books are, however, essential to a better knowledge of Gide. They also give a far more comprehensive view of Gide's correspondences than, paradoxically, any of the articles written specifically on them.

1. Niset, 1962.

2. *Lettres Modernes*, Minard, Paris, 1967.

3. Volumes I and II, Paris, Gallimard, 1956-1957.

4. Klincksieck, 1977.

In sketching briefly the distinguishing factors of work either written on or making use of Gide's correspondences, my intention has been to show that much remains to be said both on a more general level than is to be found in most articles and in a more systematic way than is possible or desirable in a biography of Gide.

Before turning, in greater detail, to the subject-matter of this thesis, Gidian dialogue and its purpose for Gide must be defined. This is a necessary step towards appreciating the place held by Gide's correspondence in his search for dialogue. In attempting to define the latter, I shall refer to Gide himself and to those critics, notably Germaine Brée and Claude Martin, whose views I found to be the most convincing.

In Si le Grain ne meurt, Gide himself wrote: "Je suis un être de dialogue; tout en moi combat et se contredit",¹ after attempting to explain this fact by the doubtful argument of split geographical and religious heredity.² In fact, the Protestant religion alone and Gide's being an only child, are, in my judgement, more responsible for Gide's discovery that he was a being of "dialogue" than any precocious opposition of Uzès to La Roque-Baignard³ or of his Catholic to his closer Protestant relations. Gide's family circumstances and his religion undoubtedly inclined Gide to introspection which resulted in the far from earth-shattering discovery that he was neither consistent nor like others.

Gide's consciousness that, within him, there existed opposing desires and that, to accommodate them, he had to oscillate between them is seen by some as the state of Gidian dialogue. Such a view is by far too simplistic, although the importance of Gide's sensitivity to this state cannot be denied, as is to be seen in a passage from Si le Grain ne meurt:

1. J. 2, SI, p. 547.

2. Ibid, pp. 358-359.

3. Uzès was the home-town of Gide's father's family and La Roque-Baignard was the property of Gide's mother's family.

Souvent je me suis persuadé que j'avais été contraint à l'oeuvre d'art, parce que je ne pouvais réaliser que par elle l'accord de ces éléments trop divers, qui sinon fussent restés à se combattre, ou tout au moins à dialoguer en moi.¹

This passage also helps to show that what some people believe to be Gidian dialogue is, more precisely, a state of inner dialogue which helps to explain the apparent distance between each of Gide's récits and soties while it also, in Maria Van Rysselberghe's opinion, constitutes the greatness of Gide's Journal.

Gide's "oscillations de son être vers des pôles opposés"² are important because they prompted Gide to become an artist. They are not, however, the sole components of the state of "dialogue". Gide himself, in a passage which proves the influence of religion upon him, indicates that inner dialogue, or the opposition of the contradictory aspects of his nature, is not to be considered as his ultimate aim but as something which is to be put behind him:

Le propre d'une âme chrétienne est d'imaginer en soi des batailles; au bout d'un peu de temps l'on ne comprend plus bien pourquoi...J'ai passé toute ma jeunesse à opposer en moi deux parties de moi...Par amour du combat, j'imaginai des luttes et je divisai ma nature.³

Gide's sensitivity to his own contradictions is rather a starting-point to truly becoming a being of "dialogue" as defined by Germaine Brée who refers to a letter of the 10th May 1894 from Gide to Marcel Drouin:⁴

'L'état de dialogue' ainsi défini n'est pas un dialogue de Gide avec lui-même. C'est un état de disponibilité objective, de curiosité 'non prévenue' devant tout point de vue. Ce n'est pas cette simple oscillation entre deux attitudes contradictoires que présentent des études souvent puériles. 'Des êtres comme vous et moi', aurait dit Gide à Du Bos, 'esprits critiques, auto-critiques surtout...sont des êtres de dialogue et non d'affirmation'. L'état de dialogue s'oppose donc au dogmatisme et porte la pensée vers la polyvalence et non point

1. J. 2, SI, p. 358.

2. M.V.R., Cahiers 6, 9th June 1941, p. 251.

3. J.1, 1893, p. 42.

4. JAG 2, p. 318: "...l'état de dialogue; il vient d'une pénétration, d'une compréhension toujours plus grande et surtout plus profonde des croyances et des morales d'autrui; de la possibilité de s'émouvoir tour à tour autant pour l'une que pour l'autre, et cela sincèrement, passionnément..."

simplement vers le dualisme.¹

Thus, for Germaine Brée, Gidian dialogue consists of unprejudiced curiosity for all aspects of life coupled with an ever-alert critical spirit.

This point of view is shared by Gide, who writes of himself;

Raisnable et raisonneur, que je le veuille ou non, je le suis irrémédiablement; j'ai beau faire, mon esprit n'assimile rien qui n'ait d'abord passé par l'octroi de ma raison. Mais ce que j'y veux faire passer, oh! sans fraude, ce sont matières étrangères et que mon propre pays ne produit pas spontanément.²

Gide's love of opposing ideas, born from his religious upbringing, is no doubt responsible for the prevalence of reason. The openness, which Gide allies to his critical spirit, is also a product of his upbringing, in my point of view. Gide's decision to cultivate the "désintéressement complet de son opinion personnelle",³ is no doubt made easier by the fact that he suffers from "cette maladie secrète que mes parents m'ont inoculée dans mon enfance avec l'éducation chrétienne... une incurable modestie",⁴ which predisposes him to abandoning his own opinions in order to absorb those foreign to him. It is also the case that Gide's feeling that he was an exception drove him to try to understand what lay outwith him, to attain "une banalité qui ne m'était pas naturelle".⁵

Gide's openness to the ideas of others has been questioned. Notably, in his Mémoires intérieurs, François Mauriac wrote of Gide:

...cet esprit qui se voulait 'non prévenu' et qui s'y efforça et crut l'être, ne fut, sur l'essentiel qu'affirmation. Son charme venait de ce contraste:

1. IP, p. 15.

2. J.l, Feuillets, p. 1277.

3. JAG 2, p. 318.

4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 1st February 1931, p. 442.

5. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 12th March 1931, p. 460.

qu'il cédait aisément à vos raisons!...Mais rendu à lui-même, devant la page de son carnet, il réoccupait avec force tous les points sur lesquels il avait paru céder...¹

This contradictory picture of Gide, on the one hand, of integral firmness and, on the other, of multiple "disponibilité" is to be explained by the over-all significance of dialogue for Gide, which will be discussed more fully later in this introduction.

Another aspect of Gidian dialogue is that Gide, like several of his critics, seems to assimilate it with sincerity when he writes of Francis James: "C'est par ses contradictions qu'un être nous intéresse et témoigne de sa sincérité".² Among Gide's critics, Claude Martin, Germaine Brée³ and Henri Peyre⁴ share the view that dialogue constitutes Gide's sincerity, which is artistically orientated as Claude Martin pointed out in a letter to myself:

...la sincérité de Gide se définit artistiquement, et cela tout simplement parce qu'il a vécu sa vie comme une oeuvre...et sa sincérité se définit dialectiquement par la co-existence et la succession de ces écrits et de ces actes, de la totalité indissociable qui forme la 'figure de Gide...'

Dialogue thus ensures Gide's sincerity or authenticity, as a man and an artist. Because Gide accepts the contradictions of his own nature and refuses to equate sincerity to consistency,⁵ he thereby rejects a pre-fabricated notion of his own personality. By avoiding a firmly delineated personality, Gide is able to search outwith himself for those elements originally unrecognised or lacking in him. So Gide adds breadth to his own thought and experience. Gide may truly be said

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1. Flammarion, 1959, p. 185. Quoted by Jean Tipy, G./Ghéon Corr.1, p. 105. The same sentiments are also expressed in Mauriac's article, "La Victoire de Spartacus", La Table ronde, April 1951, pp. 9-13, and are shared by Pierre Herbart, A la Recherche d'André Gide, Gallimard 1952, p.66.
 2. J.1, 29th October 1922, p. 745.
 3. IP, pp. 89-90.
 4. Literature and Sincerity, Yale University Press, 1963, p. 280.
 5. J.1, 1922, p. 745; 1st January 1907, p. 226; 6th September 1924, p. 790.

to have created himself.

Dialogue is also the gauge of Gide's intellectual honesty. Gide's search for "les diverses formes de la Vie"¹ may involve "l'abandon de soi" but not "l'abandon à soi".² The validity of Gide's search lies in the fact that he never sacrifices depth to breadth. While he attempts to broaden his moral and artistic spectrum, one must not forget the early formation of Gide's thought.³ This is a permanent background to Gide's search. Thus, Gide's efforts to embrace not only his own complexity but that of the human world around him are submitted to a very tight, critical control. This explains the peculiar quality of Gide's art where deeply felt, convincing and highly varied ideas and emotions carry within them their "propre réfutation",⁴ as Francis James remarked of the Fourritures terrestres.

No thought, not even Gide's own, which has not undergone careful examination by comparison and contrast, is accepted by Gide. Inevitably, in such a procedure, those thoughts which meet with Gide's approval are strengthened. This explains why Mauriac should have seen in Gide a being of "affirmation" rather than one of strict, intellectual honesty and why Martin du Gard was able to say:

Qui vous parlerait avec cette franchise bourrue, si pas moi?
Vous n'êtes pas assez influençable pour que cela vous soit
nuisible, et de cette franchise vous avez toujours su tirer
l'exact parti qu'il fallait.⁵

Gide's interest in ideas which differ from his own is, thus, both a means to enriching himself, providing that it is not at the expense of his early conviction of his artistic vocation, and a means to proving

1. JAG 2, p. 319.

2. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 1926, p. 285.

3. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 6th June 1927, p. 325: "C'est curieux combien chez moi, comme chez Valéry, la pensée s'est formée tôt".

4. G./J. Corr., 19th June 1897, p. 112.

5. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 12th July 1945, p. 327.

to himself that the ideas he holds are correct for him because they have remained unshaken by exposure to other points of view.

The more Gide's interlocutors differ from him, therefore, the more rigorously he may test his own opinions or be sure that, if he takes new elements unto himself, his choice is an authentic one. Gide himself wrote: "'Comment prendrais-je bien ma position, sans adversaire?'"¹

Inner dialogue, "cette cohabitation en moi des extrêmes", lead Gide to "l'oeuvre d'art et précédait immédiatement la création, aboutissait à l'équilibre, à l'harmonie".² Gide's search for opposition outwith himself lead to the knowledge of his own position whether by its enlargement or its reinforcement. Gide himself admits that his desire to experience diverse forms of life comes from the literary man in him,³ who wishes to link art more closely to life. At the same time, Gide constantly questions his own approach to art through dialogue. Hence, whether the latter's function is one of openness or criticism, Gide intends it to be a fundamental aid to his art.

Under these circumstances, Gide's correspondences, a great number of which were with literary men quite different to him, are of primordial importance in Gide's search for dialogue and our knowledge of it. In the correspondences, one sees Gide going outwith himself, seeking for "matières étrangères" and being helped by an "adversary" to realize what may or may not be incorporated into the world of his art.

Writing of two of Gide's earlier correspondences, Daniel Moutote explains their role in the following way:

Les Lettres à Angèle bénéficient de l'entraînement à la critique littéraire par lettres que Gide pratique depuis 1891 avec Valéry et 1893 avec James: le scepticisme littéraire du premier, les prises de position du second en faveur du catholicisme, l'engagent d'une part à une réflexion esthétique permanente sur les fondements de l'art, d'autre part à une critique polémique de défense personnelle...⁴

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1. Quoted by Catherine Savage, op. cit., p. 109.
 2. J.1, Feuillets, 1923, pp. 777-8.
 3. See: JAG 2, p. 319, and J.1, January 1912, p. 358.
 4. Le Journal de Gide et les problèmes du moi (1889-1925). Paris, P.U.F., 1968, p. 104.

Dialogue, in Gide's correspondences, has thus an essential part to play in giving vigour and authenticity to Gide's artistic ideals.

I have chosen to study the course and underlying issues of dialogue, which also means 'discussion' (as one may tend to forget in the complexities of Gide's definitions), in three chapters of this thesis. These will deal with the correspondences with Valéry, Jammes and Claudel, and Roger Martin du Gard, in that order. I have placed the correspondences with Claudel and Jammes in one chapter, as the source of dialogue is basically the same. Before attempting to justify my choice, I shall give some factual information as to the relationship between Gide and his correspondents and to the contents of each of these correspondences. Firstly, I shall give the dates of each correspondent to show his age relative to that of Gide.

André Gide et Paul Valéry. Correspondance, 1890-1942.

Gide (1869-1951). Valéry (1871-1945). This correspondence includes 462 letters,¹ 228 from Valéry and 234 from Gide. Four are addressed to Madeleine Gide, one to Madame Paul Gide, and one letter is a joint one from Valéry and Eugène Rouart. Ten, hitherto unpublished letters are also to be found in the Bulletin des Amis d'André Gide, January 1976, Vol. IV, no. 29, pp. 3-12.

The two men met in December 1890 through Pierre Louÿs who had become acquainted with Valéry in May 1890. Their friendship lasted until Valéry's death. Gide considered Valéry to be one of the most intelligent people he had ever met.² However, despite his admiration for Valéry and his affection for him, Gide was truly close to Valéry only in his youth and had the growing feeling that dialogue with Valéry was not really possible.³

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1. I use the word "letters" in a general sense. This includes post-cards, telegrams, notes, fragments and rough-copies.
 2. M.V.R. Cahiers 7, 29th January 1949, pp. 120-121.
 3. M.V.R. Cahiers 4, 13th September 1922, p. 156.

The topics of most interest in this correspondence include literary theory and criticism, philosophical and moral arguments, and youthful ideas on love and friendship.

Francis James et André Gide. Correspondance. 1893-1938.

James (1868-1938). This correspondence includes 280 letters, 167 from James and 113 from Gide. Five are addressed to Madeleine Gide and one to Madame Francis James. Certain letters, for reasons of discretion, have not been included in the published correspondence.

Francis James first heard of André Gide through Eugène Rouart and, during the latter's visit to Pau in 1893, asked him to give Gide a copy of Vers. This was the starting-point of their correspondence. Their letters show that both men's admiration for the other's literature was not always unadulterated. Their first meeting was in April 1896 in Algeria, when James unexpectedly accepted Gide's invitation to join him there. The relationship between the two men was not exempt from irritation. Although Gide sent an affectionate telegram to James' wife after his death, their correspondence suffered several long gaps after James' conversion in 1905 to Catholicism. Literary criticism and explanation of the writers' works and religious positions are the pivots of this correspondence.

Paul Claudel et André Gide. Correspondance. 1899-1926.

Claudel (1868-1955). This correspondence includes 179 letters, 125 from Claudel to Gide, 46 from Gide to Claudel, 1 from Claudel to Madeleine Gide, 1 from Madeleine Gide to Claudel, 3 from Claudel to Jacques Rivière, 2 from Francis James to Gide and from Gide to James. There are also excerpts from Gide's Journal and the text of an interview with Claudel.

Gide and Claudel first met during Mallarmé's literary evenings from 1890 to 1894. In the following years, Gide sent his published work to Claudel, who was Vice-Consul in Boston, New York and then

Foochow in 1896. After receiving Le Prométhée mal enchaîné and Philoctète in 1899, Claudel began to correspond with Gide. Back in France in 1900 and 1905, Claudel took the opportunity to meet Gide¹ and to speak of conversion. Both Gide and Claudel felt sincere admiration for each other's work. This was an important factor both in the establishment and the continuance of their correspondence which wavered, now because of the brutality of Claudel's exhortations, now because of Gide's retreats. The publication of Les Caves du Vatican caused a long gap in Gide's correspondence with Claudel and letters thereafter were few and far between. The last letter of the correspondence, from Claudel to Gide, is dated the 25th July 1926. Claudel and Gide did meet after this but without notable enthusiasm.²

The unusual disproportion in the quantity of letters written by the two correspondents is to be explained not only by the fact that Gide was a less assiduous correspondent than Claudel but also by the destruction of many of Gide's letters in an earthquake while Claudel was working at the French Consulate in China. The interest of this correspondence, apart from a greater insistence on religion, has the same basis as that with James.

André Gide - Roger Martin du Gard, Correspondance, 1913-1951.

Martin du Gard (1881-1958). This correspondence includes 897 letters, 449 from Martin du Gard and 448 from Gide. In addition, 2 letters from Martin du Gard are to be found in Susan Stout's Index de la Correspondance André Gide - Roger Martin du Gard.³ Certain letters and passages have not been included in the published Correspondance.

André Gide received the manuscript of Jean Barois in June 1913 from Jean Schlumberger. Immediately, he sent a telegram to Gaston Gallinard telling him to publish this work.

1. J.I, 1st December 1905, pp. 186-187.

2. M.V.R., Cahiers 7, 17th and 22nd October 1947, pp. 73-74.

3. Gallinard, 1971.

Encouraged, Martin du Gard wrote to Gide on the 7th November 1913 to ask if he might meet him. Their first meeting took place after this.¹ Thus began a friendship which was to become of the greatest importance to Gide in his maturity. The two writers kept in constant contact with each other either by meetings or by their correspondence. In spite of differences of opinion, their correspondence never suffers from the acidity or lapses so often to be found in Gide's other correspondences. Martin du Gard was fascinated by Gide as a literary figure and a man and, hence, devoted his attention to all Gide's thoughts and actions. Gide was sensitive not only to this but to the firmness of Martin du Gard's opinions which helped him towards a better knowledge of his own position. This friendship lasted and deepened until Gide's death in 1951.

Statistically, the first thing that strikes one about this correspondence is its sheer quantity; secondly, the lack of discrepancy between the number of letters written by each correspondent. This correspondence, like the others mentioned, is literary. Indeed, Martin du Gard's willingness to discuss Gide's work and his insight in criticism is one of the principal sources of joy to Gide in this correspondence. Discussion, sometimes heated, includes attitudes towards literature and literary theory. Politics, Gide's psychology and the principal factors influencing his life and work also cause much ink to flow between the two writers. In quality as well as in quantity, this is, in my judgement, the richest of the correspondences hitherto published.

My decision to deal with only four of Gide's correspondences was made firstly for practical reasons. The sheer quantity of Gide's published correspondences alone ruled out any attempts to make a comprehensive study of more than a few of them.

The unpublished correspondence represents an equally formidable task for the reader. Moreover, because many of them are being prepared for

1. NAG, pp. 12-17.

publication, there is, naturally, some unwillingness to give access to them.¹

Practical considerations also imposed a limit to my study of dialogue in the correspondences chosen. Dialogue is, by definition, a two-way system of communication. Claude Martin believes that Gide's influence upon others is just as important as that of his friends upon him:

...ne pas le voir, lui, vivre et s'exprimer dans ceux qui constituent autour de lui une sorte de réseau, ce serait se condamner à n'avoir de lui qu'une image mutilée. Sa conférence de 1900 sur l'Influence, il semble bien l'avoir entièrement construite pour prouver ce mot qu'il empruntait de Nietzsche: Un homme grand n'a pas seulement son esprit, mais aussi celui de tous ses amis ... De là, je crois, ce caractère propre à une biographie de Gide, qui doit non seulement traiter ses actes comme des oeuvres et ses oeuvres comme des actes, mais aussi le retrouver dans la vie et dans les oeuvres de ses amis...ils incarnent un moment ou une voix de l'"être de dialogue" qu'il était.²

Within the bounds of a thesis, it would be difficult to give such a complete picture, which is, moreover, dependent upon the similarity of his friends' and Gide's ideals. Although this undoubtedly counts enormously to Gide in his contact with others, it is only one part of "dialogue". As I hope to have shown in my definition of dialogue, the latter is most valuable to Gide when it entails opposition, thereby enabling him to ascertain the ideas and qualities best suited to him. It seems to me, therefore, that, in studying Gide's correspondences, it is more pressing to consider the action of dialogue upon Gide than upon his friends and that this may be done without too greatly "mutilating" his "image".

It was, indeed, to avoid doing this that I chose, on a positive level, Gide's correspondences with Valéry, James, Claudel and Martin du Gard. These correspondences were the major ones available when I

1. The correspondences with Jacques-Émile Blanche and Dorothy Bussy are to be Cahiers d'André Gide, nos. 8 and 9, respectively. Professor Kevin O'Neill is preparing that with Jacques Rivière, Michel Drouin that with Marcel Drouin, Claude Martin with F.-P. Alibert and that with Madame Paul Gide is ready for the press. Claude Sicard is preparing Gide's

correspondence with Jacques Copeau for publication.

2. B.A.A.G., Vol. V, no. 34, April 1977, pp. 27-28.

embarked upon this thesis. They cover a wide range of topics and show different facets of Gide since he is interacting with interlocutors whose only point in common is their interest in literature.

My reading has included all of Gide's major as well as the majority of his minor published correspondences and two of his unpublished correspondences.¹ This has convinced me that my limited choice is, nonetheless, representative of Gide as a letter-writer and of his mental and artistic development.

The Valéry Correspondance shows us the Gide whose primary concern is his contact with the world as an artist and a man. The world is seen as a mirror by Gide who adds: "...je suis étonné quand il me reflète mal!"² Gide obviously hopes that he has found a mirror worthy of him when he expresses his wishes for his correspondence with Paul Valéry:

...j'aimerais qu'elle ait certaine unité, certaine teinte fixe, certaine originalité stable...chacune de ces lettres serait quelque subtil paysage d'âme, pleine de...délicates analogies s'éveillant comme des échos aux vibrations des harmoniques...³

To obtain such a perfect image of oneself from the outer world implies not only immobility but Narcissism. Gide's realization of this fact lead to the criticism, in the Traité du Narcisse, of the desire to obtain one's own image by these means.

Gide changes because of his decision, "Oser être soi",⁴ and because of his growing conviction that he must "Assumer le plus possible d'humanité".⁵ This means that Gide's insertion into the world is to be accomplished neither by forcing the mirror of the world to conform to his own image nor by limiting himself.⁶ Acceptance of his own contradictions

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1. Those with Jacques Copeau and Madame Paul Gide. Gide's letters to Jacques Copeau are now in the possession of Dr. Heitz in Nice. Copeau's letters to Gide are filed in the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet in Paris. The typed and bound copy of Gide's correspondence with his mother, which is awaiting publication, is the property of Claude Martin.
 2. J.l., June 1891, pp. 20.
 3. G./V. Corr., 16th January 1891, pp. 42-43.
 4. J.l., 1891, p. 20.
 5. Ibid, 1894, p. 56.
 6. Gide does consider this possibility, however, See, J.l, 3rd January 1892, pp. 28-29.

and absorption of emotions and ideas other than his own, for the sake of his art,¹ are to be the means to ending Gide's anxiety caused by a world which does not always reflect him faithfully. Now the world is seen as a rich new source of images, all of which may find a reflexion in Gide who, in 1891, wrote to Valéry:

...j'ai peur d'un mot maladroit qui te ferait croire que je n'ai pas compris ton âme, et que je suis 'un autre', alors que je connais en moi assez de modalités différentes pour qu'une enfin pourtant te reflète.
(Par instants, je pense qu'il faudrait être tout reflet, reflet de quelque séraphique aurore).²

The Valéry Correspondance is, thus, exemplary of this sometimes problematic period of reflexion and absorption during which Gide attempts to lay the foundations of his art.

Gide's correspondences with James and Claudel coincide with his growing awareness of the need for moral considerations in his art together with increasing mistrust of his own contradictions and his ability to absorb others' emotions and ideas.³

In Littérature et Morale, Gide proves that he is not unaware of the dangers of "Le sentiment de la complexité",⁴ since it may become "une stupéfaction passionnée", instead of leading to a "synthesis" through "analysis" in, one presumes, the work of art.

By 1905, Gide frankly admits that his artistic sterility is the result of too much openness to contradictions:

Je voudrais prendre en main toutes ces causes de stérilité, que je distingue si bien, et les étrangler toutes. Toutes les négations en moi je les ai savamment cultivées. A présent je me débats contre elles; chacune prise à part est assez facile à réduire; mais riche en parentés; savamment alliée à chaque autre. C'est un réseau dont je ne me dégage pas.⁵

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1. J.l., 1895, pp. 37-38.
 2. G./V. Corr., 14th and 15th July 1891, p. 111.
 3. J.l., 14th July 1893, p. 38.
 4. J.l., p. 90.
 5. J.l., Monday 1905, p. 157.

This passage shows clearly that Gide is in need of positivity to offset the purely negative effects of his own complexity.

Gide is thus ready to submit the "sentiment de la complexité" to the end of finding a "synthesis".¹ For some years, the whole question of Gide's contradictory nature is studied by him in his Journal. The purpose of dialogue is now self-analysis rather than absorption and reflexion.

In this context, the role of Claudel and James is important. By encouraging Gide to assume the more positive, spiritual side of his nature, they help to restore the balance against Gide's doubts which were in danger of overcoming his personality and preventing the very analysis he wishes to and does make in his art of what he has acquired. The Claudel and James correspondences reflect this period of self-analysis.

Having consolidated in depth what he has gained in breadth, Gide is much more confident in his own thought.² He is thus ready to look for artistic fulfilment. Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard must be read in this context. Gide's own position is firmer, but this does not entail personal or artistic complacency. Gide still prefers "ce qui diffère le plus de moi".³ This is now, however, more a means to intellectual honesty than to the broadening of Gide's scope or to fundamental self-knowledge.

When Gide writes: "Qu'ai-je à faire d'une amitié sans clairvoyance? La haine de la complaisance, je la veux porter jusque-là",⁴ he might well be referring to Martin du Gard. Gide wishes to test his acceptance of himself against an "adversary" in order to guarantee not only the

1. J.l., Lit. et Mor., p. 90.

2. Ibid, 2nd March 1917, p. 619, and May 1927, p. 840:
"Une à une je ressaisis chaque pensée de ma jeunesse".

3. Ibid, 22nd March 1922, p. 731.

4. J.l., 22nd July 1928; p. 885.

progressive nature of his sincerity but his originality.¹

The Martin du Gard correspondence shows us the Gide who wrote:
"Ne jamais isoler arbitrairement ou complaisamment rien, ni soi-même".²
This is the case even when Gide considers finding "une fin à la recherche,
à la quête, à l'agitation de l'esprit"³ in Communism. Martin du Gard is
essential to Gide not only because he ensures the latter's intellectual
honesty, but also because he helps to maintain Gide in his decision not
to suppress "en soi le dialogue"⁴ the better to reach artistic and
personal harmony.

This, and not an externally imposed order, is the end to Gide's
"quest". Sadly, Gide's "dialogue intérieur"⁵ is extinguished with the
death of Madame Gide, thereby reducing Gide's existence to artificial
harmony by the suppression rather than the co-existence of "les prop-
ositions les plus antagonistes de ma nature".⁶

After exploiting his differences to Martin du Gard, the finding of
harmony becomes increasingly incumbent on him, since Gide writes:

Je prends d'autant plus de plaisir à causer avec Roger
Martin du Gard que de moins en moins avec d'autres.
Chaque conversation nouvelle avec lui s'ajoute au grand
ensemble d'une conversation commencée depuis longtemps,
interrompue, reprise et, somme toute, toujours la même,
ainsi qu'était toujours le même mon muet dialogue
perpétuel avec Em. Et, de même qu'avec Em., nous sommes
sans cesse, Roger et moi, du même avis. La conversation
ne nous oppose pas; elle nous instruit, nous avertit
et nous éclaire.⁷

Peace in his contact with "les très rares qui ne sont non plus

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1. J.l., 24th November 1928, pp. 897-898.
 2. Ibid, 16th October 1927, p. 853.
 3. Ibid, 8th March 1932, p. 1121.
 4. Ibid, June 1927, p. 842.
 5. M.V.R., Cahiers 6, 19th April 1938, p. 78.
 6. J.l, June 1927, p. 842.
 7. J.l, 25th December 1939, pp. 1328-1329.

suiveurs qu'opposants"¹ and in his acceptance of himself and his own accomplishments ends the cycle of Gide's artistic and mental development. The latter is by no means as simple as might seem from the tripartite division I have made into a search for reflexion and absorption, self-analysis, and the achievement of intellectual honesty and harmony. As the chapters on the correspondences will give a more complete picture of the complexity of Gide's development as an artist, but also as a man, I have discussed only the salient features of it, at this point, with reference to Gide's Journal.

I hope, however, to have made clear that, behind the changes in Gide's attitude to himself and others around him, there is one constant, - Gide's critical search for authenticity as a highly individual being and artist. The correspondences I have chosen are representative not only because they follow Gide's development closely but because they show the truth of Gide's statement that: "...c'est à soi-même surtout qu'il importe de rester fidèle".²

Thus, although I make no claims to having written the ultimate study of even one aspect of Gide's correspondences, I do feel that the future publication of other important sets of correspondence will not invalidate my arguments but may, in fact, corroborate them. At most, I feel they will show, as did the Ghéon Correspondance which was published after this thesis was well under-way, that there is room for a broader approach to the correspondences than I have allowed myself within the limits of a thesis.

I now turn briefly to the contents of this thesis. Chapters Two, Three and Four will contain a study of the four correspondences chosen. They will respect the chronological development of Gide as an "être de dialogue"

1. J.l., Peuillots, pp. 902-903.
2. Ibid, Peuillots, p. 711.

and concentrate on the literary and subsidiary issues which appear in the four correspondences I have chosen. When referring to the procedure of discussion on literary matters, I shall use one of two interchangeable phrases - "discussion on literature" or "literary dialogue". The latter phrase is not simply intended to be a variant but also a reminder of the fact that "discussion", in the respective correspondences dealt with in this thesis, amounts to "dialogue" as defined in this introduction - that is to say, a purposeful search, on Gide's part, through his contact with others for a "literary" position. In Chapter One I shall devote my attention to Gide's attitude to correspondence and the purposes he envisaged for it. I shall also try to determine what distinguishes correspondence from other means of expression open to Gide and shall therefore refer to two of Gide's fictional works, La Porte étroite and Paludes, since they help to throw some light on this question. Such a step seems necessary to me, in order to give a general background to my thesis and to demonstrate that discussion upon literature and approach to art was one of the principal roles of correspondence for Gide.

Chapter Five will deal with the relationship between the correspondences I have chosen and those of Gide's fictional works which are most closely linked to them. My approach, in this chapter, will be thematic rather than chronological. In the previous three chapters, the latter approach was necessary to give a faithful interpretation of Gide's search for a position. A thematic study is more suitable for this final chapter, since it concerns Gide's artistic works which are, as it were, Gide's finds. The purpose of this chapter is to show that, for an understanding of Gide's fictional works, one must take into consideration his correspondences as well as his Journal and other writings. Gide's search for dialogue was primarily artistically orientated and the role of the correspondences, in this search, is of undeniable importance.

CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER I

GIDE'S ATTITUDE TO CORRESPONDENCE.

1. Correspondence as an Enemy to Work.

A man of literary circles as well as being a public figure in later life, André Gide was also the writer of an imposing number of letters. This very fact is, in part, an explanation of Gide's professed dislike of correspondence but also a warning against taking Gide's statements too seriously.¹

Before exploring Gide's attitude to correspondence in greater depth, however, I shall mention briefly some of Gide's more negative comments since, at first sight, they appear to give the clearest indication of Gide's feelings towards letter-writing.

Gide's journals are full of references to the time consumed by correspondence, the principle function of which seems to be to prevent him from working. In 1903 Gide writes: "Ces lettres à écrire m'exténuent, m'excèdent; elles ne me laisseront pas travailler...Il n'y a pas là amitié qui tienne; j'enverrais la meilleure au diable..."² Thus, not only the "menues broussailles"³ of business letters but also those to intimate friends are seen as enemies to work.

In a later entry Gide writes:

L'état de joie dans lequel j'ai vécu depuis plus d'un mois m'a fortifié sans doute et m'a redonné confiance. J'aurais voulu pouvoir me replonger sitôt après dans le travail. Depuis mon retour ne n'ai guère pu qu'écrire des lettres, des lettres, des lettres.⁴

The dull repetition of the word "lettres" sounds the death-knell to Gide's hopes for his work.

1. As does Gustave Vanwelken-huyzen, G./Mo, Corr., note 3, p. 60.
2. J.1, p. 134.
3. Ibid, Tuesday morning, 1906, p. 201.
4. Ibid, 23rd September 1917, p. 632.

It must be remembered, however, that correspondence is not the sole factor which interferes with Gide's work. A man of multiple activities such as piano-playing, translating and travelling, his work also suffers from his own personality. As painted by Maria Van Rysselberghe in her Cahiers de la Petite Dame, Gide is only too open to the chances offered him for change and discontinuity in his life. Gide could never have emulated the solitary and tenacious worker, Martin du Gard. Nonetheless, despite the many external and internal obstacles to his work, Gide resembles his friend to the extent that his art is of immense importance to him.

Hence, in spite of the impression one may have of a Gide vainly struggling in a morass of letters to reach the haven of his work, the latter does regain control more often than it would seem. His correspondence often changes to "lettres arriérées" and one finds the following entry in Gide's Journal: "Remettre à plus tard tout autre lecture, travail de traduction, lettres à écrire - et d'abord réamorcer mon travail".¹

How often, also, does Gide in his correspondence with Martin du Gard explain the brevity or lack of a letter by the fact that he is working?² In a letter to Henri Ghéon, Gide admits: "J'écris mal; j'ai mal à la tête; j'écris surtout Saül",³ and later: "Je suis en admirable disposition pour travailler, c'est-à-dire en fort mauvaise pour t'écrire".⁴ Jacques Copeau, while he enjoyed the position of literary confidant to Gide, often received similar excuses for short letters.⁵

It would seem, therefore, that G. Picon is right in his belief that the shortness of Gide's letters is not to be explained by the quantity of Gide's friends⁶ but rather by his unwillingness to take time off from his work.

1. J. 1, 1916, 545.

2. G.M/G. Corr. 1, Monday 1923, p. 234; 14th October 1927, p. 317; 10th April 1928, p. 342; 11th September 1934, p. 631.

3. G./Ghéon Corr. 1, 1st February 1898, p. 150.

4. Ibid, 12th January, 1902, p. 389.

5. In an unpublished letter of 1908, for example, Gide explains the lack of a long letter by the fact that it would distract him from his work.

6. Picon, op. cit., p. 116.

Similarly, G.-P. Collet, in his article "Gide épistolier", quotes Gide's comments on Jacques-Émile Blanche's letters: "Mes lettres me paraissent bien ternes et vides auprès des vôtres; mais vous, ^{vous} avez tout à raconter..." only to conclude: "Sous-entendu: je vis solitaire, tout entier à mon oeuvre. Je n'ai rien d'autre à dire".¹ Although this view of Gide's studious solitude is exaggerated, there exists strong proof of the superior position granted by Gide to his work in the following remarks to Valéry: "On ne devrait faire que des livres dans la vie; comme tout le reste m'embête!! même de t'écrire!!"² and: "Dans ces périodes d'écriture, les lettres me deviennent insupportables...il fallait la tienne bien charmante pour que j'écrive cette réponse..."³

Letters in general, therefore, seem to come into conflict with Gide's literary production. As will be seen, however, correspondence has a far more positive function for Gide. Moreover, when viewing Gide's comments on correspondence, it is necessary to keep one's sense of proportion: any man who wrote as many letters as André Gide may be excused for complaining from time to time that letter-writing is a burden.

2. Gide's Sense of Inferiority as a Correspondent.

Gide's apparent unwillingness to correspond is matched by his low opinion of himself as a correspondent. In the preface to Gide's Correspondance with Valéry, Robert Mallet quotes Gide as saying:

Valéry était un épistolier remarquable. Peut-être aurais-je pu lui donner convenablement la réplique. Mais le fait est là: j'ai répliqué sans brio. Il faudra pourtant que je me résigne à faire figurer mes lettres. Si je prends la décision de publier notre correspondance, c'est pour lui et non pour moi.⁴

1. The French Review 38, 1964-1966, pp. 754-765.

2. G./V. Corr., 21st March 1892, p. 154.

3. Ibid, September 1892, pp. 172-173.

4. Ibid, pp. 9-10.

Perhaps because Gide is so aware of Valéry's stylistic and intellectual brilliance, one finds constant reminders in this correspondence of his feelings of inferiority as a letter-writer.¹ The same feelings are expressed in Gide's letters to Martin du Gard. As with Valéry, Gide feels that a comparison between their letters can but highlight the richness and interest of Martin du Gard's letters at the expense of his own. Gide is, however, perhaps less conscious with Martin du Gard of such a stylistic gap as he believed to exist between Valéry and himself.

Gide expresses his admiration for Martin du Gard's letters thus: "...vous avez un art épistolaire qui n'appartient qu'à vous et dont ne se douteraient guère ceux qui ne vous connaîtraient que par vos livres..."² In this light, one understands why Gide also writes: "Votre excellente lettre ne ferait plus de plaisir encore, si je ne sentais tout en la lisant combien je vais mal y répondre...Je suis un très mauvais correspondant..."³ Admittedly, this is a letter of comfort to Martin du Gard who is himself suffering from feelings of inferiority. Gide is not, however, simply attempting to raise his friend's morale since he is known to have said of Martin du Gard's correspondence: "'Ce sera la correspondance de Flaubert'".⁴ Despite Pierre de Boisdeffre's view that Gide is the last of the great letter-writers,⁵ therefore, Gide himself feels quite genuinely mediocre in this domain in comparison to a Valéry or a Martin du Gard.

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1. G./V. Corr., 4th March 1918, p. 464, & 25th October 1922, p. 492.
 2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 26th January 1931, p. 435.
 3. Ibid, 12th September 1922, pp. 190-191.
 4. Entretiens, p. 112. Gide's admiration for Flaubert's correspondence is well-known. In En Marge d'André Gide, 1930, p. 152, F.-P. Alibert wrote: "La correspondance de Flaubert a été longtemps le livre de chevet d'André Gide..."
 5. "Gide et son Mentor", Nouvelles Littéraires, 11th April 1968, p. 3.

Convinced as he is of the superiority of certain of his correspondents and severe towards himself for his short-comings, Gide constantly points them out to his correspondents while apologising for them. Thus, although wishing to write only what is "délucieux" to James, Gide nonetheless asks him: "As-tu remarqué que ma lettre est mal écrite?"¹ To Valéry Gide writes: "J'ai l'air d'un vieux jaboteur dans cette lettre, toute de faits divers..."² The contempt with which the contents of this letter are treated must be seen in the light of the young Symbolist whose duty it is to rise above such trivia. So concerned is Gide by his style that he does not send those letters which do not live up to his standards.³

In his apologies to Martin du Gard, Gide asks his friend's indulgence not only for his style and reasoning⁴ but also for the gloominess,⁵ absurdity⁶ and banality⁷ of his letters. It might be thought that, on the part of a literary writer, such declarations are merely a form of false modesty. One must remember, however, Gide's assertions in his journals of the particularly paralysing modesty from which he suffers and how likely it is that he should be prey to it when faced with the undeniable excellence of Martin du Gard's and Valéry's letters in particular.

To alleviate this black picture painted by Gide himself, one must not forget that Gide also believed that both his own and Paul Claudel's letters were of great beauty.⁸ One must also take into account others' opinions on Gide's letters. Unfortunately, neither Martin du Gard nor Valéry, Gide's two most brilliant correspondents, were prone to commentary on Gide's letters for different reasons. Valéry's letters tend to appear

1. G./J. Corr., 18th August 1896, p. 81.

2. G./V. Corr., 29th March 1891, p. 77.

3. G./V. Corr., May 1891, p. 81; 26th April 1892, p. 156.

Also, an unpublished letter to Jacques Copeau of the 6th September 1910 contains the admission that Gide is not sending a long letter he has written because his style is unworthy of his thought.

4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 22nd March 1931, p. 468.

5. Ibid, 12th September 1922, p. 223.

6. Ibid, 19th February 1924, p. 243.

7. Ibid, 28th September, 1933, p. 579.

8. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 19th February 1929, p. 403.

as a monologue and are quite rarely prompted by either the style or the contents of Gide's letters. Martin du Gard's lack of epithets on Gide's letters seems to derive more from his marvellous spontaneity. He seems to have no time for commenting briefly on Gide's style but prefers to enter directly into his part of dialogue.

Valéry's lack of comment does not, however, spring from complete indifference to Gide's letters. When he writes; "O salutaris! ... Malgré que votre lettre semble dédaigner ce qui m'attire en amitié comme en tout - l'absolu - elle est belle et bonne d'une vérité ineffable..."¹ one sees appreciation not only for style but also for content. Indeed, when Gide's sense of inferiority causes him to suspect Valéry's disdain for his letters, Valéry is quick to reply: "Souviens-toi que tu as été presque mon seul confident - tout le temps, - que je n'ai eu souvent que le seul repos de t'écrire et de te lire dans des semaines douloureuses..."²

Martin du Gard declared on several occasions his preference for Gide the man, to Gide the artist.³ Whether Gide's letters as an activity of Gide the man are to be included in this classification is not clear. However, comment such as "La bonne lettre, la bonne lampée de cordial! Merci. Je pense à vous chaque jour...Vous ne saurez jamais bien tout ce que je vous dois",⁴ shows that Gide's letters can be as beneficial as his presence.⁵ Martin du Gard also admits to being amused⁶ by Gide's letters or enlightened by their completeness, pertinacity and lack of bias.⁷

The highest praise for Gide as a correspondent comes from Henri de Régnier: "Vos lettres à vous ont un tour, une mesure, un aspect. Vous

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1. G./V. Corr., 13th July 1891, p. 110.
 2. Ibid, 10th November 1894, p. 217.
 3. M.G. Corr. 1, 22nd July 1920, p. 153, & 30th January 1931, p. 439.
 4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 9th October 1922, p. 194.
 5. Ibid, 9th November 1928, p. 361, where Martin du Gard once again thanks Gide for the comforting effect of his letter of the 5th November.
 6. Ibid, 20th April 1923, p. 217.
 7. Ibid, 26th September 1928, p. 353.

excellez à faire un plaisir littéraire de l'amical petit papier que vous envoyez de poste en poste".¹

Clearly, therefore, Gide's feelings of inferiority are not entirely founded. Indeed, Gide's letters often rank as highly as Valéry's or Martin du Gard's both by their content and their style. As has been seen,² Gide was particularly preoccupied by his style in his earlier letters to Valéry many of which are, to use Henri de Régner's phrase, "un plaisir littéraire". Moreover, the completeness of certain of Gide's letters, which gains him Martin du Gard's praise, detracts from Collet's argument that Gide reserves all of himself for his work.³ Gide's view that he was a poor and unwilling correspondent must not be taken too literally.

It is nonetheless true that many of Gide's letters were undeniably brief compared to those of Martin du Gard and Claudel in particular. It is also the case that Gide often wrote far fewer letters than some of his correspondents.⁴ The infrequency and brevity of many of Gide's epistles is underlined by the feelings of neglect experienced by several of Gide's correspondents.⁵

Often, also, in reply to a letter, Gide touches cursorily on a topic mentioned only to break off on the pretext that he would have too much to say on the matter or that it is a subject more suited to conversation. These arguments are perhaps excusable in the case of Martin du Gard whom he saw quite frequently. Gide did, however, see considerably less of Rouveyre and Claudel for example and one may wonder if Gide is unwilling to pursue his thoughts in written form.⁶

1. Lettres à André Gide 1891-1911, Droz et Minard, 1972, 6th December 1895, p. 94. My own underlining. See: Ibid, pp. 40, 70, 71, 83-84.

2. See: above p. 26.

3. See: above, p. 24.

4. The most notable exceptions to this are Gide's correspondences with Martin du Gard and Henri Ghéon.

5. G./Gosse Corr., 2nd January 1914, pp. 104-105; G./Proust Corr., 21st November 1918, p. 59. Among Gide's other correspondents, both Marcel Jouhandeau and Albert Mockel were not above writing to Gide to ask him for a letter.

6. One must also take into account that the nature of Gide's relations with Claudel and Rouveyre may pre-suppose little desire to correspond at all.

The gaps in Gide's correspondence may be due to the sheer quantity of his correspondents, to his other activities or, more simply, to the place held by the correspondent in Gide's life. However, given Gide's own statements on his lack of enthusiasm for letter-writing and his ineptitude as a correspondent, one cannot, in spite of evidence to the contrary, ignore the possibility that he finds correspondence an unsatisfactory means of expression and communication.

Clearly, as a means of expression, Gide's correspondence cannot vie with his work. Unlike Valéry, who valued correspondence and his private relations more, apparently, than his literature,¹ Gide placed his art above all. It is not the aim of this thesis to challenge this fact.

In order to ascertain the place held by correspondence for Gide, I shall consider Gide's evaluation of correspondence in comparison to two other means of expression at his disposal: his Journal and the spoken word. In both, Gide is speaking in his own name.

Admittedly, one cannot discard the view that Gide's works are a means of direct self-expression. The many parallels to be drawn between Gide's life and his work have caused much ink to flow from critics' pens. Nonetheless, Gide himself warns against identifying him too closely with his fictional characters.² For this reason, critics, such as Henri Massis, who quote "Gide" directly from his literary works are on dangerous ground and were, indeed, condemned by Gide for their failure to recognise the inevitable artistic transposition in any work of art, no matter how representative of its author.

Certainly, Gide's Journal, his correspondences and even his speech are not exempt from some "transposition". In the first of these media,

1. G./V. Corr., 16th November 1891, p. 138, and 8th July 1898, p. 321.
2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 29th December 1925, pp. 280-281.

Gide is, to some extent, preparing his literary figure for posterity; in the second two, Gide's attitude and way of expressing himself change according to his correspondent or his interlocutor. Nonetheless, all are supposedly private media where Gide is expressing himself directly. At this stage, therefore, I shall restrict myself to studying Gide's correspondences in comparison to his Journal and the spoken word which are means of expression representative both of Gide the man and the writer. By comparing them to correspondence, I hope to isolate what is particular to the latter as a means of written communication, thus taking an intermediary step from the more negative aspects studied so far to what is positive in Gide's attitude towards correspondence.

3. Correspondence and Gide's Journal.

The obvious difference between the Journal and Gide's correspondence lies in the fact that in the former Gide's dialogue is with himself and in the latter with his correspondent. Nonetheless, one may justifiably argue that both media are connected.

There is, indeed, evidence that the two are interchangeable. Commenting on Gide's correspondence with Marcel Drouin in 1898, Claude Martin expresses his belief that the length and frequency of Gide's letters is due to the fact that, at this time, Gide was not writing in his Journal.¹ One sees that Gide does, in fact, count upon his correspondence to do duty for his Journal since, after mentioning in the latter that he has met a certain Vollmoeller in Sorrento, he adds: "... (j'ai raconté longuement cette visite dans une lettre à Drouin)".²

Another example which lends support to Claude Martin's point of view is to be found in Gide's correspondence with Henri Chéon of 1900.³

1. MAG, p. 268.

2. J.1, November 1904, 146.

3. At this time Gide was not writing in his Journal.

In two letters which were written little by little from the 15th August to the 21st, both content and style prove that Gide is sending Chéon the equivalent of daily entries in a diary.¹ Another letter to Chéon in which he writes of César Franck and Beethoven, seems to fulfil the same function as his Journal for Gide as he declares: "Ce n'est pas pour toi que j'écris ainsi, c'est pour moi-même et parce que j'ai pris, tu sais, l'habitude de me promener avec toi".²

To Roger Martin du Gard, Gide openly admits that one of his letters replaces his Journal, "où je n'écris plus guère".³ By corollary, in a later letter, Gide does not go into depth on the question of post-war Germany, referring Martin du Gard to certain passages in his Journal which he may read at a later date.⁴ Moreover, in one instance at least, Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard serves almost as a practising-ground for what will become a part of Gide's Journal on Martin du Gard's encouragement.⁵

On a more general level, it is noticeable that, during the two World Wars, when Gide's correspondence was reduced for various reasons,⁶ his Journal is well-filled. It is therefore obvious that Gide slips easily from one source of expression to the other viewing both as equally suitable means of informing his correspondents of his daily life and of his points of view.

Letter-writing is also closely linked to Gide's Journal since the one often prompts expression in the other. Frequently, the letters Gide

1. G./Chéon Corr. 1, pp. 285-288.

2. Ibid, 24th June 1901, p. 336. In 1901 too there are no entries in Gide's Journal.

3. G./M.G. 2, 30th October 1944, p. 284.

4. Ibid, 11th February 1945, p. 312. See: J.2, 18th December 1946, pp. 305-6. This entry is a reply to Martin du Gard's letter of the 7th October 1920, G./M.G. Corr. 1, pp. 156-159.

5. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 23rd September 1942, pp. 268-271, & 30th September 1942, pp. 271-272.

6. During the First World War, Gide had very little time for correspondence due to his voluntary work at the Foyer franco-belge. During the Second World War, letters had not only to be censored but were also often lost or impossible to send from Africa to France.

receives are mentioned or even partially copied¹ in his Journal in order to allow Gide to express his opinion or, sometimes, as a pretext for self-explanation.²

Gide comments on Henri Ghéon's letter of the 9th May 1920³ and on his own letter to Jacques Copeau of the 17th October 1930.⁴ These letters have raised in Gide's mind the question of his attitude to Catholicism and are being used by Gide to give his definitive opinion in his Journal. Insofar as Gide's opinion of Henri Ghéon's letter is concerned, this is probably all the more important to Gide as there is no reply in the published Correspondance.

Martin du Gard's letters are often used by Gide as a point of reflection in his Journal. Thus, after agreeing too swiftly to Martin du Gard's criticism of Oedipe in his correspondence,⁵ Gide modifies and defines his point of view more clearly in his Journal,⁶ expressing, nonetheless, his satisfaction that he did acquiesce immediately. Gide's definitive point of view is no sooner worked out in his Journal than he writes to inform Martin du Gard of it.⁷ Similarly, during the War years, a letter from Martin du Gard on Marshal Pétain⁸ is quoted by an approving Gide in his Journal⁹ after he has expressed his agreement with Martin du Gard in his correspondence.¹⁰ Another letter from his friend which describes occupied France is mentioned by Gide in his Journal.¹¹

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1. J.1, 1905, p. 182; 8th April 1906, p. 207; 2nd May 1906, p. 211; January 1922, p. 727; 18th June 1923, p. 760.
 2. Ibid, 21st January 1902, p. 123; 2nd May 1906, p. 211; 8th November 1931, pp. 1090-1091.
 3. G./Ghéon 2, pp. 971-973. See: J.1, Sunday 1920, p. 682.
 4. Unpublished. The wording of Gide's letter differs from his quote in J.1, November 1930, pp. 1014-1015.
 5. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 30th January 1931, pp. 437-439, & 1st February 1931, pp. 440-443.
 6. J.1, 3rd & 5th February 1931, pp. 1029-1030.
 7. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 6th February 1931, pp. 445-446.
 8. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 6th October 1942, pp. 273-274.
 9. J.2, October 1942, p. 138.
 10. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 11th October 1942, pp. 274-275.
 11. J.2, 17th July 1940, pp. 41-42. Martin du Gard's letter of the 13th July 1940 has not been found. See: G./M.G. Corr. 1, Annex to letter 661, p. 536.

He writes at greater length than in his correspondence¹ of his regret that he has protected himself from this part of history thereby missing a golden opportunity for new experience for his art.

Thus, the letters received by Gide which provoke thought in him are fruitful for his Journal in which he transcribes his considered opinion as he sometimes omits to do in his correspondence. Certain entries, in turn, find their way back into Gide's correspondence showing that the relationship between Gide's Journal and his letters is two-way.

Gide not only takes into account in his Journal the letters he receives but also the letters he writes. In addition to quoting at length from letters of general importance which he actually sent,² Gide also uses his Journal as an epistolary graveyard for unsent letters.

One finds several examples of Gide's inserting letters of reply to articles upon him into his Journal.³ Such letters, had they been sent, would obviously have been published in the respective newspapers and revues thereby giving too much importance to the articles which had provoked them. This probably explains why Gide prefers the more discreet but equally efficient medium of his Journal to rectify "les erreurs [qui] ont la vie dure".⁴

Apart from this use of letters in his Journal, Gide also includes unsent letters which he clearly believes to be of general importance. Thus, one finds a letter to Susanne Allégret in which Gide subtly mingles his views on Christianity and Greek legend with a criticism of Susanne Allégret's narrow understanding of her children.⁵

1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 16th July 1940, p. 211.

2. J.1, 5th February 1916, pp. 536-537, where Gide quotes with some small alterations his letter of 6th February 1916 to Edmond Gosse, G./Gosse Corr. pp. 127-129.

3. J.1, 23rd November 1912, footnote 1, p. 386, & 26th July 1929, p. 928. J.2, December 1947, p. 308.

4. Ibid, p. 308.

5. J.1, 23rd January 1923, pp. 744-745.

Also in Gide's Journal is a letter intended for Ghéon which strongly criticises the latter's work, L'Homme né de la guerre. Témoignage d'un converti. The fundamental issue of this letter is art. The converted Ghéon's easy dismissal of his past, of life, art, beauty, "la part du diable"¹ deeply shocks Gide as well as Ghéon's writing of the "refus de conclure" of the work of art instead of its "'impartialité'", its "honnêteté de l'esprit".²

Gide also, at one point, includes both the letter he has received from a certain Bernard Enginger and his reply³ such is the importance of this exchange on the influence of the Nourritures terrestres. In Enginger's letter one sees the anguish that may be caused by liberating oneself, as advised in Gide's book, from any moral code imposed from outside; in Gide's reply one finds the continued conviction that it is the "incoumis" who have the most important role to play in the survival of our civilisation and who are the "responsables de Dieu".⁴

Another curious example of an unsent letter which appears in Gide's Journal is a critical letter on Judith intended for its author, Giraudoux. The contents are such that one thinks rather of an article within a letter within Gide's Journal.

Although this letter is not extremely important in itself, I mention it as it shows how very thin the line can be which separates the Journal, Gide's letters and even his articles as a way of expressing himself.

The Journal is indeed complementary to Gide's correspondence since not only may one replace the other, but also the technique of Gide's Journal is to be found in his correspondence and epistolary techniques in his Journal. Moreover the correspondence supplies Gide's Journal with

1. J.1, 23rd February 1918, p. 647.

2. Ibid, pp. 647-648.

3. J.2, 24th February 1946, pp. 294-296.

4. Ibid, 296.

subject-matter while the latter sometimes helps Gide to conceive a reply to his correspondents.

This explains why, as Auguste Anglès points out, both the correspondences and the Journal are necessary for a complete knowledge of Gide's life:

...le Journal ne livre qu'une fraction absolument infime de tout ce que Gide pouvait penser et exprimer en un jour. Si on voulait vraiment avoir le vrai journal de bord de Gide, il faudrait truffer l'actuel Journal des correspondances qu'il pouvait écrire chaque jour à cinq ou six personnes, dans un éclairage extrêmement différent .¹

4. Correspondence and Conversation.

As has been seen, the function of Gide's Journal and his correspondence often overlaps. In the case of correspondence and speech, this occurs more rarely. The bond between these two means of expression is not so close for several reasons. I now turn to the first of these which seems to me to lie in Gide's behaviour during the act of speech and its consequences. Both help to explain why the function of correspondence, with which I will deal subsequently, differs from that of speech.

In Gide's Journal, one finds, particularly in his youth, frequent references to his painful social awkwardness. This very awkwardness is caused by the importance Gide attaches to the impression he makes on other people:

La présence des autres me sera bientôt insupportable; je finirai en cours, je crois. Je m'excite et m'irrite devant chacun. L'opinion d'autrui m'importe, je crois, plus que jamais. J'ai bien peu progressé par là .²

Gide's opinion of his conversational abilities is very low as is shown by two typical examples of self-denigration: "...ma conversation

1. Entretiens, pp. 206-207.
2. J.1, 8th October 1891, p. 26.

reste désespérément terne, et l'on ne peut obtenir de moi nul avantage.."¹
and: "J'en arrive à ne plus comprendre même, parfois, d'où peut me venir
l'amitié que certains me portent...tant me déplaisent et m'exaspèrent
les propos que j'entends de moi!"² Even in later life, Gide writes
after a conversation with General de Gaulle in 1943: "Je songeais
tristement à ce qu'aurait pu être cette entrevue, si Valéry eût été à
ma place..."³ proof of his sense of conversational inferiority to Valéry
who shares the butt of Gide's envy with the brilliant Cocteau.⁴

Even when he shines in conversation,⁵ Gide is subject to fits of
unsociability due to his feeling that conversation is a waste of time⁶
in comparison, no doubt, to the more serious occupation of literary
production.

When Gide goes into details on the contents of his conversations,
one sees that the problem lies not so much in what he does not say, the
usual manifestation of ordinary shyness, as in what he does say or even
do.⁷

One finds a significant passage in Gide's Journal of 1916 where
Gide, after quoting the following lines from Maurice de Guérin's Journal,
confesses his desire to have written them himself:

'Pour nourrir le discours, j'y jette mes pensées
favorites, celles que j'aime le plus secrètement
et avec le plus de sollicitude. Ma parole timide
et embarrassée les défigure, les mutilé, les jette
au grand jour, désordonnées, confuses, demi-nues.
Quand je m'en vais, je recueille et je serre mon trésor
répandu, mais je ne remets en moi que des rêves
mourtris comme des fruits tombés de l'arbre sur des
pierres'.⁸

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1. J.1, 12th November 1915, p. 516.
 2. Ibid, 22nd or 23rd April 1916, pp. 554-555.
 3. J.2, 26th June, p. 248.
 4. G./Co. Corr., p. 17.
 5. To judge by Martin du Gard's opinion of Gide as a conversationalist, this happens more often than Gide believes. See: M.A.G., p. 15.
 6. J.1, 26th February 1927, p. 831.
 7. J.1, Friday 1916, p. 561, & October 1916, 563-564, where Gide describes a particularly embarrassing meeting with Edmund Gosse.
 8. J.1, 8th February 1916, p. 538.

Gide thus seems to be subject to the same helpless, semi-inarticulate frankness that one finds in the "hero" of Paludes. In speech, both feel keenly how damaging spontaneous expression is to their thoughts and to the impression they make on others.

One finds several instances of this in Paludes, albeit in ironic vein. At one of Angèle's literary soirées, the hero is asked to recite one of his poems. His exasperation at being asked to read "une toute petite pièce sans..."¹ gives way under the insistence of Angèle's other guests. His poem, PROMENADE, bears a stylistic resemblance to Gide's own Poésies d'André Walter. The reaction to the hero of Paludes's artistic attempts is general silence since; "...évidemment on ne comprenait pas que c'était fini; on attendait. - 'C'est fini', dis-je".² Writing of the same soirée the hero admits: "J'étais en eau et complètement ahuri; je répondis éperdument",³ and: "...comme chez Angèle je suis presque chez moi, m'approchant d'elle et sortant ma montre, je criai très fort: - 'Mais, chère amie, il est horriblement tard!'"⁴

Such over-spontaneity in speech does, in fact, have a contrary effect on one's listeners whose silent disconcertment ends any possibility of communication. Gide himself, on a slightly different plane, recognises that the purity emanating from his youthful being must have had a freezing effect on more ordinary mortals around him.⁵ Thus, the young Gide, at least, experiences difficulty in conversing himself and also imposes the same problem upon his interlocutor thereby killing communication.

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1. Romans, Paludes, p. 117.
 2. Ibid, p. 117.
 3. Ibid, p. 123.
 4. Ibid, pp. 123-124.
 5. J.1, 26th November 1931, p. 1093.

Another pitfall of conversation is its swaying influence. Gide dislikes affirmation¹ and is too ready to understand others' viewpoints to be able to refute them in conversation.² Moreover, the desire to please often falsifies what he does express. A desperate need for "sympathie" is at the root of this problem: "Le plus souvent je ne cherche qu'à flatter pour plaire, tourmenté par le désir d'être aimé".³ This search for approval is viewed severely by Gide himself since he recognises the danger of this form of concession to sincerity.⁴

It must be remembered, however, that Gide's inability to express convictions in conversation, coupled with his need for "sympathie", is also a willed state. Gide's ability to enter into another's thoughts and emotions is explained in psychological terms in Daniel Moutote's Le Journal de Gide et les problèmes du moi.⁵ Of greater interest, perhaps, is Gide's own explanation of this voluntary phenomenon in a most important letter to Marcel Drouin:

J'en suis parvenu...à cet heureux état où l'on n'a plus de foi personnelle; cet état, qui pour le philosophe serait le scepticisme, est pour l'homme de lettres ce qu'on pourrait appeler l'état de dialogue; il vient d'une pénétration toujours plus grande et surtout plus profonde des croyances et des morales d'autrui; de la possibilité de s'émouvoir tour à tour autant pour l'une que pour l'autre, et cela sincèrement, passionnément; enfin, du désintéressement complet de son opinion personnelle.⁶

In the same letter, Gide makes it quite clear that it is for the furtherance of his art that he has brought about this state, which has rendered verbal discussion quite impossible for him because: "Je m'occupai...presque uniquement de 'comprendre' ...rien ne m'importait moins que de me former ensuite une opinion personnelle..."⁷

1. J.2, 1940, p. 31.

2. J.1, 12th May 1892, pp. 31-32.

3. J.2, 29th January 1943, p. 182.

4. J.1, 9th June 1928, p. 881, "Il ne s'agit @ m'isole".

5. Op. cit., note 34, pp. 5-6.

6. Letter of the 10th May 1894 quoted in J.A.C. 2, p. 318.

7. Ibid, p. 319.

Although, for artistic purposes, Gide seems ready to abandon any attempt to express his own opinions, it is noticeable that both Valéry and Claudel whose speech tended towards implacable monologue are but reluctantly admired or envied by an impotently silent Gide.¹

Despite, or perhaps because of, Gide's difficulty in communicating verbally with people from his own social and artistic milieu, one finds that he has a great love of contact with people from other social backgrounds. This is mainly to be seen in his sojourns in Algeria where he frequents districts which would definitely not have met with his mother's approval or again during his visit to Russia where he easily engages in conversations with chance encounters in trains. Thus, Gidian speech may be spontaneous without being disastrous.

Nonetheless, the act of speech is beset with problems. As I have mentioned, Gide is often unwilling to express himself, now for artistic now for psychological reasons. Conversation for Gide is, on the one hand, the spontaneous but self-destroying expression of his opinions and on the other the absorption or flattering repetition of those of his interlocutor.

I now turn to the function of correspondence which, no doubt because of Gide's difficulties in expressing himself verbally, is not that of spontaneous expression at a distance as it was for Madame de Sévigné.

It is already evident from Gide's comments on his own letters that he dislikes any stylistic or contextual lapses on his part, thus making it clear that the letter is not to have the same haphazard quality that one sometimes finds in Gide's speech. The following comment in a letter to Martin du Gard proves that the letter is not Gide's most spontaneous mode of expression: "Ma lettre d'hier m'inquiète un peu. Je l'ai laissée partir trop vite. J'aurais dû la relire; la récrire peut-être.

1. J.1, 19th November 1912, p. 384; 2nd January 1923, p. 751; 8th May 1927, p. 838.

D'y repenser, cette nuit coupe mon sommeil..."¹

The fact that the letter is not regarded as an easy, natural flow of words is shown in heightened proportion in Gide's Correspondence with Claudel, the very correspondent who requires the most difficult, since intimate, explanations. Thus Gide writes to Claudel: "...je ne sais pas vous écrire tout à coup."²

For Gide, correspondence is therefore a more considered, stable form of expression than speech. Because of this basic functional difference, the question now arises: which of these media does Gide prefer and when? In answer to this question, I will deal firstly with the cases where Gide favours correspondence and then with those where conversation is preferred.

In Gide's correspondence with Valéry, there is evidence that Gide finds the written word more acceptable. This is because of the difficulties he experiences in conversation with Valéry which are possibly at the root of his calling Valéry his "meilleur correspondant" without going on to add "friend". Valéry's superiority over Gide in speech³ is not, however, the most important reason for Gide's preference for him as a correspondent.

After a reproachful letter from Valéry who has discovered a copy of the newly-released Cahiers d'André Walter in a friend's house before he himself has received a copy, Gide replies:

J'aime vos mélancoliques querelles: la suavité de vos reproches me console de les mériter - croyez-vous donc que dans quelque mois encore, après ^{encore} une dizaine de languissantes lettres, je pourrai rien avoir de caché pour votre âme? ⁴

This quotation seems to suggest that for Valéry the letter is the best vehicle for gaining knowledge of Gide. This is certainly the case for

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1. G./M.C. Corr. 1, 12th March 1931, p. 459.
 2. G./C. Corr., 9th January 1909, p. 93.
 3. Which causes Gide to express his thankfulness that he may express his disagreement with Valéry over the Dreyfus affair in a letter rather than a conversation. G./V. Corr., 18th January 1898, pp. 310-311.
 4. *Ibid.*, 8th March 1891, p. 83.

Gide insofar as Valéry is concerned, since he writes:

Tu m'as écrit deux lettres extraordinairement douces,
où il me semblait que j'entraiss en toi profondément;
il me semblait goûter un fruit trop mûr, par un
couteau d'acier pelé.¹

Through the sensuality of his imagery Gide evokes the most intimate penetration of the other's mind by a reading of his letters alone.

An explanation of this fact is to be found in the following admission:

Je viendrai à Montpellier dans un mois et demi je pense, -
pour mes parents certainement, mais pour vous aussi beaucoup;
cela vaudra bien des lettres, - encore que les vôtres soient
souvent de plus subtile essence que des propos improvisés.²

One sees here that while Gide grants a meeting more value than letters, he also shows some regret that their "propos improvisés" will involve a loss of the "subtile essence" to be found in Valéry's letters at least. The fact that he does not object to a meeting on his own account shows that there must be some other reason than social paralysis for his reticence.

It is, at this point, useful to remember that both Valéry and Gide were strongly influenced by Mallarmé thought at this time of their lives. The letter may, therefore, be viewed as a superior means of communication as it is closer to Symbolist anti-inspiration and pro-absence than the physical presence and the spoken word. This can be seen clearly in one of Gide's letters to Valéry: "...j'ai presque peur de vous revoir et que nous sentions tous deux que de loin les intellectuelles noces étaient plus facilement mystiques et spirituelles..."³ Gide fears that too close a physical contact will destroy the delicate bonds that have been established on the purely spiritual plane of correspondence. This concept is echoed in the poetry of both Valéry

1. G./V. Corr., 21st March 1892, p. 153.
2. Ibid., 21st March 1891, pp. 69-70.
3. Ibid., May 1891, p. 82.

and Gide. Valéry's "Fragments du Narcisse" ends:

Helàs! corps miserable, il est temps de s'unir...
Penche-toi...Baise-toi. Tremble de tout ton être!
L'insaisissable amour que tu me vins promettre
Passe, et dans un frisson, brise Narcisse, et fuit...¹

and one finds the following passage in Gide's "Nuit de Prière" definitively named "Nuit d'Idumée":

Deja deux fois, vers moi, mes mains se sont tendues -
- Sans toucher que l'horreur des vides étendues -
- Un peu de brume qui s'accroche aux doigts, rosée,
Pan de robe déchiqueté, morte corolle -
S'évapore parmi l'espérance brisée,
Parfum dont le regret exhalé se désole.²

Neither knowledge of oneself nor the other is to be achieved by physical communion.

It is interesting to note that in his description of his wishes for their correspondence Gide should write to Valéry:

...chacune de ces lettres serait quelque subtil
paysage d'âme, plein de frissonnantes demi-teintes
et de déliçates analogies s'éveillant comme des échos
aux vibrations des harmoniques; quelque spécieuse
vision, que suivraient, doucement découlées, les
déductions de nos rêves. Et ces sortes de conf-
idences nous révéleraient bizarrement et délicieusement
l'un à l'autre en apprenant à l'un comment chez l'autre
s'associent ces frêles images...³

The words underlined by myself indicate that even their correspondence, which Gide wishes to be on a spiritual, mystical plane, is of such quivering delicacy that it may also be destroyed by the slightest hint of brutality or over-spontaneity.

An interesting parallel to Gide's attitude towards the physical presence is to be found in La Porte étroite. Both Jérôme and Alissa desire and yet fear each other's physical presence since their conversations prove only too often to be infinitely inferior to their letters as a means of communication.⁴ Alissa, in particular, is far more open and in control of her words in her letters than in Jérôme's presence.

1. Poésies, Gallimard, 1958, p. 73.

2. G./V. Corr., p. 59.

3. Ibid, 16th January 1891, p. 43.

4. Romans, P.e., pp. 524: "-Je ne sais - d'être venu", and p. 558: "Mon ami - auparavant".

Moreover, her feelings are stronger for the absent Jérôme than for the poor substitute of his physical emanation. Whenever their relationship is forced onto a more banal level, Alissa is at a loss and regrets its former spirituality. Her correspondence with Jérôme is such that its evocation spoils their meetings which suffer from the understandable difficulty of maintaining the mysticism and purity which can be upheld in the written word.

As Gide used both his own and Madeleine's letters, sometimes almost word for word, in La Porte étroite, it is not surprising that one finds similar sentiments in Madeleine's letters to her cousin:

Oui, décidément, il faudra toujours savoir nous séparer de temps à autre, pour avoir nos lettres, elles sont irremplaçables, et elles le sont d'autant plus que nous n'osons nous parler...¹ Nous étions fait pour toujours nous écrire...mais non pour être liés...²

Gide's sentimental experience thus goes hand in hand with his youthful literary ideals in giving the letter superiority over the spoken word as a means of communication and knowledge of the other.

There are two other explanations of Gide's preference for the letter. One is well-expressed in Robert Mallet's introduction to Gide's Correspondance with Claudel where he writes: "Pour celui qui ne veut pas répondre, il est évidemment plus facile d'affronter l'interrogation par lettre que celle qu'on vous assène à brûle-pourpoint."³ This remark follows a quotation from Claudel's letter⁴ where he asks Gide when he is going to follow the example of his newly-converted sister-in-law. Six years before, Claudel had asked Gide verbally when he would become a Catholic, not without inducing in Gide a complete "désarroi d'esprit".⁵ To the written question, Gide replies in a letter⁶ where he slips out of

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1. Letter of the 27th August 1895 quoted by Claude Martin, M.A.G., p. 46.
 2. Letter of the 5th September 1895 quoted by Claude Martin, *ibid*, p. 46.
 3. G./C. Corr., p. 21.
 4. *Ibid*, 7th December 1911, pp. 183-184.
 5. J.1, 5th December 1905, p. 190.
 6. G./C. Corr., 10th December 1911, p. 185.

Claudiel's reach by the dubious, if apparently acceptable, argument of the beauty and sacrifice of the dominant, Protestant figures of his youth.

Significantly, in La Porte étroite, Alissa uses her letters to the same end. How often, just when Jérôme believes the barriers between him and Alissa to be at their lowest, does Alissa, fearful of too close a contact, raise them by means of a letter? The first occasion on which this happens is immediately after the death of Jérôme's mother which leads Jérôme to hope that the main obstacle to his engagement with his cousin has been overcome. His hopes are swiftly broken by the first and last words of a letter from Alissa: "- Jérôme, mon ami, mon frère... Adieu, mon pauvre ami."¹ These simple words hide the complexity of Alissa's feminine subtlety. Jérôme is firstly granted the status of friend, a status which is immediately denied him by the additional word "brother". He is then dismissed by the word "Adieu" but at the same time is pitied in his function of "ami" as soon as this role has been deprived of any possibility of concrete action. Not only does Alissa alienate Jérôme on an emotional level but also, again through a letter, attempts to raise a further barrier between them by urging him into the spiritual sphere she has chosen for him.²

Both Gide and Alissa, therefore, use the letter as a safeguard against an external influence which is a danger to their intimate moral being. Although their reasoning in their letters is not, perhaps, strictly honest, this use of the letter as a defence is closely connected to another advantage afforded by correspondence, - namely, that it ensures greater frankness than the spoken word.

When discussing with Maria Van Rysselberghe a letter to Charles Du Bos³ which she has persuaded Gide to moderate, Gide expresses his

1. Romans, P.e. p. 512.

2. Romans, P.e., p. 552.

3. G./Du Bos Corr., 28th September 1928, pp. 147-148.

regret that he has done so and bursts out:

'...je suis sans résistance vis-à-vis d'autrui, sans résistance devant la sympathie. Je sens que les gens de ce parti me coupent mes moyens, m'enlèvent mes arguments, m'empêchent de dire ce que je veux dire. Je n'ai de liberté, de hardiesse que devant le papier blanc; tenez, je ne rends compte que certaines pages que j'ai écrites hier matin, et que je suis heureux d'avoir écrites, ne me viendraient peut-être plus aujourd'hui, après avoir vu Mauriac. Quand je pense à cela, je suis capable de fuir n'importe où...'¹

In a letter published in Le Cri de Paris² Gide also writes:

...ce que j'aime le moins donner, c'est 'mon avis'; dans la discussion, avant d'avoir raison, je m'éteins complètement; j'ai le tort d'écouter les autres... Mais je reprends forme aussitôt seul devant le papier blanc. Voilà pourquoi je préfère l'écriture à la parole, le livre à la revue et au journal, l'oeuvre d'art à l'actualité.³

The letter and the work of art thus compensate for Gide's voluntary and involuntary difficulties in giving voice to his own opinion in conversation, although Gide has obviously been accused by Christian Beck of the opposite phenomenon since he writes: "Peut-être dans une conversation sauriez-vous avoir raison de mes involontaires silences et de mes fuites; dans ce cas je souhaite vivement de vous revoir".⁴ On the whole, however, access to Gide's true thoughts seems to be surer through the written than the spoken word. As has been seen, speech, which is spontaneous, falsifies both the form and the content of Gide's expression. The letter not only gives Gide the possibility to order his thoughts into their most satisfactory form but is also a greater guarantee that they are of truly Gidian source.

The gloomy picture painted so far of Gide as a conversationalist shows us but one side of Gide's attitude and capacities. Although Gide prefers the letter to verbal discussion when he has reason to fear or avoid spontaneous expression, this preference is by no means a constant in his life.

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 4th March 1929, p. 408.

2. "Points par eux-mêmes: André Gide", Saturday, 5th May 1901, quoted by Claude Martin, MAG., pp. 511-512.

3. Ibid., p. 511.

4. Lettres à Christian Beck, Ed. de l'Altitude, Brussels, 1946, 19th May 1906, p. 44.

Indeed, for several reasons, Gide more often chooses the spoken rather than the written word as a means of communication. Firstly, the spoken word or even, simply, the physical presence¹ is granted superiority over the written word when it comes to avoiding hurt or misunderstandings. Robert Mallet, again in his introduction to Gide's Correspondance with Claudel, and immediately after his statement that it is easier to avoid the issue in writing, adds nonetheless:

Mais si la dérobade est aisée, l'effet produit par les mots écrits est plus saisissant parce qu'il leur manque l'intonation et le regard qui... peuvent les édulcorer ou les neutraliser.²

An example of the truth of these words is to be found in Gide's Journal, where he notes that a letter from Louis Rouart has upset him to the point of insomnia.³ Four days later, Gide mentions a meeting with Rouart which has washed away the effects of his letter.

Similarly, after a letter of reproach from Martin du Gard on Si le Grain ne meurt,⁴ Gide writes to his friend:

...mais ce que je retiens surtout de votre lettre, c'est que nous sommes restés trop longtemps sans nous voir et que votre lunette n'est plus bien au point...votre lettre (pour la première fois une lettre de vous) m'apporte un peu de tristesse...⁵

Obviously, Gide feels that Martin du Gard's lack of understanding would never have occurred had a verbal discussion on the subject taken place.

After Claudel's letter to Gide where he asks him brutally whether he is or not a pederast, Gide replies:

Il m'est très pénible qu'il y ait méprise entre nous; mais votre lettre est en train d'en créer une nouvelle... je puis vous affirmer qu'une conversation avec vous je la souhaite ardemment depuis des mois, des années - encore que le ton de votre lettre me fasse désespérer de pouvoir recevoir aujourd'hui de vous quelque conseil...⁶

1. G./Co. Corr., 11th July 1919, pp. 97-98, and Romans, P.e., pp. 522-523 & 525-526 where the contrasting effects of the letter and the physical presence are to be seen clearly.

2. G./C. Corr., p. 21.

3. J.l., 5th April 1908, p. 264.

4. Susan Stout, Index M.G., 9th December 1926, pp. 16-19.

5. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 11th December 1926, pp. 302-303.

6. G./C. Corr., 7th March 1914, pp. 217-218

The letter is here being condemned for its tendency to aggravate any possible misunderstanding.¹

One must not forget either that letter-writing is the written manifestation of friendship which is, nonetheless, more dependent on conversations and meetings for its continued existence. Thus, the occasions on which Gide expresses his desire to meet and discuss with correspondents as different as Martin du Gard, Du Bos or Cocteau are countless. Indeed, one sees in the following excerpt from a letter to Martin du Gard: "Je cause avec votre ombre un peu chaque jour. C'est plus simple et ça prend moins de temps que de vous écrire..."² that even imaginary conversation is more profitable and, significantly, less time-consuming than letter-writing.³

It is noticeable that, for discussion on matters of general importance or for literary topics, Gide seems to prefer the spoken word. On the subject of the worn and the banal which has entered into previous letters, Gide writes to Martin du Gard: "Tout cela est matière à conversation, non à lettre..."⁴ or again, after Martin du Gard's long letter on the "veau à cinq pattes",⁵ : "Ah! que nous aurions donc mieux causé cela, qu'écrit."⁶ After Martin du Gard's immense epistle on the lack of homosexuality in Martinique, Gide who is admittedly extremely tired, reserves his comments for a future conversation.⁷ In a letter to Claudel,⁸ also, while giving only a cursory explanation of his refusal to convert, Gide adds that he will speak to Claudel of his sister-in-law's conversion. Thus, although conversation may be difficult in this instance, Gide prefers it to the letter for discussion on a matter of such importance.

See:

1. G./Du Bos Corr., 5th May 1927, p. 120.
2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 18th March 1934, p. 602.
3. G./C. Corr., 7th November 1906, p. 68, "Croyez - satisfaisant".
4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 2nd October 1928, p. 358.
5. Ibid, 7th March 1931, p. 454.
6. Ibid, 11th March 1931, p. 459.
7. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 28th July 1939, p. 182.
8. G./C. Corr., 10th December 1911, p. 185.

Literary topics are also often relegated to conversation. Thus brief references to Dubois and Montherlant in a letter to Martin du Gard¹ are followed by the promise of conversations on these writers. Again, on the subject of Martin du Gard's own literature, Gide expresses his disagreement with his friend on one point only to add: "...mais je ne vais pas me lancer dans une discussion qui ne peut être que dialoguée..."² In his correspondence with Arnold Bennett, Gide frequently expresses his desire to speak to his correspondent³ because of the beneficial effect of their conversations which deal more often than not with literature.⁴ The same salutary effect cannot be said to be gained from their correspondence which consists, on Gide's part, at any rate, of short and infrequent letters.

The most striking example of the superiority of conversation over the letter as a means of communicating with Bennett is to be found in Gide's letter written after Bennett, his host, has been called away from his home to a funeral:

Quelle triste chose que d'en être réduit à vous écrire!
...Je crois que vous pouvez mal comprendre quel courage
et quelle excitation mon esprit et tout mon être trouvent
dans votre conversation, et même dans votre seule
présence.⁵

In his Correspondance with Rouveyre, following several articles in Le Crapouillot by Rouveyre, Gide replies to his attacks on Valéry and Copeau and to his comments on Hamlet. Although Gide is quite explicit in his letter,⁶ he nonetheless wishes, before his departure for the Congo, to clarify verbally and in depth the discussion begun in his letter. Likewise, Charles Du Bos' article on La Symphonie pastorale

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1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 10th September 1940, p. 218.
 2. Ibid, 22nd September 1941, p. 239.
 3. G./B. Corr., 20th August 1915, pp. 84-85.
 4. Ibid, 26th December 1922, pp. 118-119.
 5. G./B. Corr., 31st August 1920, p. 101.
 6. G./R. Corr., 8th February 1928, p. 106.

arouses comment in a letter from Gide but also the remark that they must discuss this question later.¹

Nonetheless, literature, as the last two references and a reading of Gide's correspondences more than amply show, is also discussed in letter-form as are topics of general interest. One cannot entirely divorce the letter from speech since both are a part of friendship. Indeed one finds that letters and conversation often interrelate much as Gide's Journal and his correspondence.

Letters often arouse in Gide the desire for verbal discussion.

This is to be seen when Gide writes to Rouveyre:

Après cette dernière lettre de vous² j'ai plus envie de vous revoir que jamais, et je sens que, désormais, je pourrai causer avec vous plus à mon aise, plus sérieusement et authentiquement que je n'ai fait jusqu'à présent.³

Again, on reading Rouveyre's article, "Le Contemporain capital: André Gide", in the Nouvelles littéraires, Gide writes: "Combien j'aimerais vous revoir! C'est seulement maintenant que je pourrais bien causer avec vous."⁴

By corollary, Gide's visit to Mauriac's home at Malagar, which was rich in conversation, provokes three letters from Gide⁵ all of which are decidedly more affectionate and relaxed than those preceding the visit.

After meeting Maeterlinck in Belgium, Gide notes in his Journal: "Nous commençons à causer. J'ai le regret des choses que nous aurions pu nous dire. J'aimerais lui écrire."⁶ The letter is seen here as a means of prolonging conversations which were perhaps inhibited by Gide's shyness.

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1. G./Du Bos Corr., 14th January 1921, p. 28.
 2. G./R. Corr., 10th June 1923, pp. 65-68, where Rouveyre explains his use of the word "menteur" referring to Gide in his article on Colberg in the Mercur de France.
 3. Ibid, 11th June 1923, p. 69.
 4. Ibid, 22nd November 1923, p. 89.
 5. G./M. Sorr.1, 22nd July 1939, pp. 93-94; 26th September 1939, p. 96; 9th January 1940, p. 98.
 6. J.l, 23rd July 1891, p. 23.

Gide also uses his correspondence to complete or to deal in greater depth with topics raised in conversation. Thus a letter to Martin du Gard¹ completes a previous conversation on Gide's need to leave his work in order to plunge deeply into life.

The introduction of ideas raised in conversation into Gide's letters is not always just^a written prolongation due to the physical absence of a friend. This is seen very clearly when Gide, in a falsely casual "petit post-scriptum"², expresses his views on Dostoïevsky and Tolstoy. Gide's opinion has been provoked by a remark made by Martin du Gard three months before and to which Gide had obviously not replied verbally.³

This brings us back to the lack of spontaneity of the letter as a means of expression. Gide has allowed his thought to mature for three months before expressing it in definitive, ordered form in a letter. He has also deliberately introduced this topic into his correspondence because he feels it is of general and literary importance. Clearly, therefore, conversation has not the monopoly of such matters although, within the framework of friendship, Gide prefers it to correspondence.

The distinguishing factor of correspondence lies in the fact that, while it may be spontaneous because it is a part of friendship, it also allows Gide to give considered and, hence, a more exact expression to his thought. It has also been seen that correspondence has a heightened value for Gide because of his relationship with his cousin and his attachment to Symbolism.

The letter, as Robert Mallet points out,⁴ has more gravity than conversation. For this reason the letter is more suitable than correspondence for the expression and furtherance of friendship in spite of

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1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 17th July 1920, p. 151.
 2. Ibid, 2nd June 1930, p. 399.
 3. Ibid, 12th June 1930, p. 401.
 4. See: above, p. 46.

Jean Cocteau's view that: "Il me semble que la tendresse de Gide s'exprimait plus par les lettres que par la présence".¹ The spontaneity afforded by the spoken word, when all goes well, in turn helps towards Gide's written expression. Although correspondence and speech complement each other to a certain extent, Gide's very anxiety when he writes too swiftly² proves that he does not wish correspondence and speech to fulfil the same function. Gide, as I hope to have shown, has a use for both spontaneous and considered expression.

The three means of communication I have dealt with are, for this reason, less to be opposed than viewed as parts of a whole. Gide needs all these media if only because: " - Je n'arrive jamais à dire vraiment dans un texte unique ce que je me proposais d'exprimer".³

As has been seen, letters were granted a superior position to speech by the youthful Gide particularly and were often preferred by the unwilling Claudelian "convert". Conversation more often appeared to be the better medium for topics of general or literary interest. One must not forget, however, that correspondence is the written and more considered record of Gide's dialogue on such topics with his contemporaries and this aspect was not negligible to Gide.⁴

The various means of expression chosen by Gide complement each other. When unable to express himself in one, Gide adopted another. Moreover, as has been seen, expression in one medium often leads to expression in another.⁵ Although this point has not been dealt with in this chapter, it is Gide's work which benefits most from his other modes of expression.

1. GIDE VIVANT, Amiot-Dumont, Paris, 1952, pp. 37-38.

2. See: above, p. 40.

3. Claude Mauriac, Conversations avec André Gide. Extraits d'un Journal, Albin Michel, 1951, p. 213. My underlining.

4. This will be seen more clearly later in this chapter.

5. This occurred on a direct level with Gide's conversation and his correspondence. The notes to La Tentative amoureuse, Paris, Librairie de l'Art independant, 1893, pp. 41-43, for example, were inspired by a conversation with Albert Mockel.

Hence, in spite of the weight of evidence that Gide sees his work as the most important means of written expression, one cannot discard any of the other means at his disposal.

It is perhaps not out of place to remark briefly at this point that Daniel Moutote¹ has more than adequately proved the use made of Gide's Journal for his work. In the final chapter of this thesis, I hope, in a more modest way, to show that the correspondences also served this purpose while, at the same time, Gide's work had an effect upon self-expression in his correspondence.

As all modes of Gidian expression are necessary and complementary, one cannot make an entirely arbitrary separation between them. Nonetheless, it is possible to point to a distinguishing factor of correspondence other than its lack of spontaneity and the advantages Gide saw in this.

Gide's work involves transposed expression of his own experiences and possible avenues of thought. It is a means of communication with the public and with himself due to the retroactive effect of Gide's work upon him. The Journal is a means of communicating with oneself by inner dialogue. Correspondence is a means of self-expression and communication with private and varied individuals. Herein lies its value for the Gidian student, at least, since it shows Gide going outwith himself, searching for authentic self-knowledge and self-expression by avoiding the very pitfalls of conversation.

5. Pleasure in Correspondence.

The evidence up to this point has tended to show that Gide finds correspondence a secondary, even tiresome occupation and only partially satisfactory as a means of expression or communication. This is because

1. In Le Journal de Gide et les problèmes du moi (1889-1925).

I have deliberately restricted myself to a study of cognitive and negative aspects of correspondence. I now, wish to devote my attention to the more positive aspects of Gide's attitude to correspondence. Thereafter, I shall explore, in greater depth, the possible parts Gide expected his correspondences to play, in order to isolate what seems to me to be its most important role.

A closer look at Gide's correspondences themselves shows that Gide's complaints against letter-writing are no more numerous than the occasions on which he expresses his pleasure in this activity.

Thus, Gide writes to Rouveyre: "Heureux suis-je que ma lettre vous ait plu; j'avais pris grand plaisir à l'écrire..."¹ in reference to a letter prompted by Rouveyre's article "Le Contemporain capital".² The letter concerned is on the level of literary debate, which probably explains Gide's enjoyment in writing it.

Gide is capable of putting his correspondence before his work.³ When he writes to Martin du Gard⁴ that he has been longing to write to him but has promised himself that he would first finish an article for the Revue de Genève, this self-inflicted moral blackmail is comparable to parental promises of a pleasurable desert in order to persuade children to eat a hated helping of meat and vegetables.⁵

It is interesting to notice that in one letter to Martin du Gard⁶ Gide opposes the word "enmerdements" to the long letter he would like to write to his friend. In so doing, correspondence appears in the same light as Gide's work which is also discouraged by petty irritations such as an accumulation of ordinary correspondence.

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1. G./R. Corr., 5th November 1924, p. 87.
 2. Published in the Nouvelles littéraires, 25th October 1924.
 3. G./Chéon Corr. 1, 30th June 1899, p. 217, "Des piles de papier blanc sont sur ma table; mais avant tout j'ai voulu t'écrire".
 4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 7th October 1922, p. 192.
 5. See: Ibid, 1 and 2, 10th March 1932, p. 514; 16th April 1923, p. 216; 17th September 1946, p. 351.
 6. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 17th September 1946, p. 351.

Gide not only enjoys letter-writing himself but is also keenly aware of the pleasure of receiving letters. As I have already remarked, Gide raises Martin du Gard's letters to the level of "un art épistolaire"¹ which he wishes to preserve for Martin du Gard's future admirers.²

Gide's pleasure in Valéry's letters is mainly artistic. The ideas expressed in Valéry's letters are often desolate and despairing.³ Frequently, in his replies to such letters, Gide's artistic consciousness is so strong as to supercede the natural reactions of sympathetic and comforting friendship:

Sais-tu, mon ami, que tu écris admirablement; je t'écris, moi, pour le plaisir seulement d'une réponse, pour le plaisir de lire un peu de toi. Mais si, à ta lassitude, je sympathise de loin et comme un artiste, je me lasse vite de refléter ta chère âme.⁴

Although Gide's admiration is particularly strong for the correspondence of Valéry and Martin du Gard, they are by no means the only correspondents whose letters receive the epithets of exquisite or excellent.⁵

The most obvious reason for the pleasure Gide finds in correspondence lies in the role of the letter as the written expression of friendship. Gide's comments on the exquisiteness of letters received does not derive from artistic considerations alone.

Writing to Martin du Gard, Gide describes a letter from his friend as a "preuve d'amitié"⁶ which has touched him more than any other. To Edmund Gosse, Gide proclaims his joy at receiving a letter from him, "car quel ami vous faites!"⁷

The letter is not only a simple token of friendship but also a means

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1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 26th January 1931, p. 435.
 2. Ibid, p. 435.
 3. G./V. Corr., 8th May 1891, pp. 82-83; 11th September 1891, p. 127; 10th August 1891, pp. 119-120.
 4. Ibid, September 1891, p. 128. My own underlining.
 5. G./Co. Corr., letter no. 46, pp. 122-123 & 27th August 1949, pp. 201-202; G./M. Corr., 13th November 1949, pp. 111-112; G./B. Corr., End of August 1923, pp. 123-126; G./Du Bos Corr., 2nd July 1926, pp. 105-106.
 6. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 1st February 1931, p. 440. Martin du Gard's long letter on Oedipe of the 30th January 1931, Ibid, pp. 437-439, was written while he was still in a clinic after a very bad car accident.
 7. G./Gosse Corr., 8th January 1914, pp. 106-107.

of furthering the bonds of friendship and giving a better knowledge of one's own and the other's points of view. Thus, from Lamalou, Gide evokes the important correspondence he had with Valéry the previous year which "enfonçait plus avant notre commerce et nous expliquait mieux nos rapports".¹

Apart from its role in the progression of friendship, correspondence, as the expression of the latter, takes on heightened importance at particular moments in Gide's life, when it becomes an instrument of solace.² This concept of the letter as a comforting or soothing agent is echoed in La Porte étroite, where Jérôme, during his military service, writes of Alissa's letters that they were his "seul refuge".³

The need for letters is emphasised at the time of Madame Gide's death. While not ready to see Martin du Gard, one sees fully in two of Gide's letters at this time the comforting influence of his friend's letters when Gide writes: "Cher ami, chaque ligne de votre lettre...me va au coeur...c'est de vous que j'attends le meilleur conseil",⁴ and: "Votre bonne lettre m'a fait un peu de bien en caressant mon amour-propre".⁵

The eclipse of the axis of Gide's life with his wife's death and Gide's exile during the Second World War explain an increased need for letters in the later years of Gide's life.⁶ A letter from Martin du Gard during the War arouses the following comment from Gide: "Votre bonne lettre...me ranime. Ce sont certes les liens de l'amitié qui me rattachent le plus à la vie",⁷

Even after the end of the war, however, Gide continues to feel the

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1. G./V. Corr., 15th October 1900, p. 372.
 2. J.1, 17th January 1916, pp. 527-528 & Ibid, p. 531; Lit Eng., p. 176; J.2, 31st July 1942, p. 128.
 3. Romans, P.e., p. 550.
 4. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 23rd April 1938, p. 135.
 5. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 7th May 1938, p. 138.
 6. A letter to Mauriac of the 3rd July 1940 and Journal entries of the 15th and 19th July 1940 show Gide's natural preoccupation with correspondence at this time.
 7. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 24th May 1942, p. 248.

need for letters. Gide's confession in his letter to Martin du Gard is by no means exaggerated. The final years of Gide's life were filled neither by his wife's presence nor by a weighty literary output nor by the desire to involve himself in current events. Indeed, the most striking aspect of the final letters in all Gide's published correspondences is Gide's detachment from the hustling progress of life. In these circumstances, it is indeed the "bonds of friendship" which count most for him. These bonds are no longer as often before between "de beaux ennemis"¹ but depend on the warmth of mutual and peaceful affection and comprehension.²

6. The "True" Letter.

Despite the joy Gide experiences in friendship, particularly in the latter stages of his life, this is far from being the sole reason for his pleasure in correspondence. Gide's letter to Gosse³ where he emphasises Gosse's qualities as a friend does not entail greater assiduity in Gide as a correspondent.

When his correspondence with Rouveyre is resumed after a gap of two years, Gide also insists on friendship.⁴ In two short letters,⁵ Gide replies to Rouveyre's four letters which re-open the door to cordial relations. Both these letters begin with a similar formula: the pleasure Rouveyre's letters have brought Gide have made him realise how much affection he still has for Rouveyre and how much he would like to see him again. The very fact that Gide should use almost identical

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1. G./C. Corr., 7th January 1911, p. 159.
 2. Gide looks to Martin du Gard in particular for this. See: G./M.G. Corr. 2, 22nd June 1948, p. 412, "C'est - birinque".
 3. See: above, p. 54.
 4. This break in their correspondence was caused by an exchange of letters in the Nouvelle Revue française during August and October 1928, due to Rouveyre's attacks on Paul Valéry, Jacques Rivière and Jacques Copeau.
 5. G./R. Corr., 10th April 1931, p.128 & 4th or 5th September, p.133.

terms when writing to Rouveyre is an indication of what follows. Gide's letters remain short and infrequent. His eagerness to admit to continuing friendship for Rouveyre is not an inducement to renewing the sometimes hurtful depth of exploration of their former letters. Their letters which now depend on friendship alone are disappointing for the reader. Correspondence cannot, therefore, be seen as a simple sign of friendship.

The same is true of Gide's correspondences with Copeau, Du Bos and Ghéon after their conversion. Although Gide continued to see his friends after their joining the Catholic Church and even continued to correspond amicably, his letters become shorter and scarcer.

Gide himself points to duality in the function of correspondence when he makes a distinction between a letter and a "true" letter. Thus Gide writes to Martin du Gard : "Trop fatigué pour vous écrire une vraie lettre".¹ Gide also expresses the desire to receive from Martin du Gard "une lettre de vous, pas un billet, une vraie lettre".²

A letter to Francis Jammes makes it quite clear that true correspondence is more than the expression of friendship since Gide wishes to write "non plus des indications, mais au hasard, les choses de moi les meilleures".³ When one thinks of Gide's best, one thinks of his art. One is also tempted into this comparison by a comment that a true letter for Copeau is swelling within him,⁴ since Gide uses the imagery of pregnancy when in the process of producing a work. It is also to be remembered that, just as Gide believes in the precept of writing "dans la joie", so too he is unable to

1. G./M.G.2, 12th June 1947, p. 370.

2. Ibid, 3rd September 1948, p. 423.

3. G./J. Corr., 23rd October 1895, p. 55.

4. Unpublished letter of the 11th March 1912.

write true letters when there is a lack of joy in his life. In a letter to Copeau, he admits he has been waiting for a day of peace, light and joy before writing to his friend.¹ The use of the word "write" in this letter is obviously not to be taken literally but as an elliptical way of saying "to write a true letter", one which would attain the status of a miniature work.

By this, I do not mean to say that the stylistic content of Gide's "true" correspondence will always be comparable to that of his works. A letter to Jacques Copeau² clarifies the sense in which a "true" letter is to be understood, since Gide not only denigrates the very letter he is writing but praises Copeau's last letter because it intoxicated both his heart and his mind. This letter, therefore, not only underlines that there is a difference between ordinary and "true" letters but also explains what constitutes this difference. An ordinary letter maintains contact between friends or is addressed to the heart; a true letter speaks also to the mind.

One finds that Gide hesitates to send letters which do not live up to this standard. Writing from Italy to Jacques Copeau,³ Gide wonders if he should send his letter and explains that the reason for his not writing before is that he had nothing really interesting to "communicate" to Copeau. Gide's underlining of the word "communicate" gives it added emphasis. One sees the ideal letter here as an active force provoking emotions and reflexion and not merely a news-sheet to be read, albeit with pleasure. Were mediocrity to be agreeable, Gide desires it neither for his life, as the rest of this letter shows, nor for his correspondence. Gide must affect and be affected.

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1. Unpublished letter of the 3rd October 1946.
 2. Unpublished letter of 1904.
 3. Unpublished letter of 1909.

True letters are thus part of an active, two-way system of which dialogue and communication are as much the requisites as stylistic excellence. Because the letter is a less instantaneous means of communication than speech, Gide sometimes shows some impatience with it as when he writes to Rouveyre :

J'aurais voulu, non vous écrire, mais causer avec vous, vous revoir...Quel pis-aller que cette lettre! Je n'aime pas parler tout seul. C'est dialoguer que je voudrais...¹

or to Valéry : "Les réponses d'une lettre devraient vous parvenir au moment que soi l'on achève d'écrire".² On the other hand, when the letter attains the immediacy of spoken dialogue, Gide's joy is untold, principally, one feels, because the letter remains as a record³ : "Ah! par exemple, ça c'est une lettre!...Ça vaut presque une causerie; et ça reste"⁴

The fact that dialogue is necessary for the writing of a true letter is to be seen clearly when Gide writes to Henri Ghéon : "...ceci n'est pas une lettre; j'attends les tiennes pour t'écrire".⁵ When Gide writes to Valéry : "Jamais plus qu'avec toi je n'ai senti la vanité de mes paroles. Il me semble que je jette mes lettres pour toi dans le vide".⁶ one sees to the full Gide's need for dialogue with the other.

A parallel to this is to be found in La Porte étroite.

Despite the basic failure of their attempts at conversation, correspondence between Jérôme and Alissa becomes no less sterile since there is a lack of communication and dialogue. Hence, Alissa tries to break

1. G./R. Corr., 26th June 1937, p. 93.

2. G./V. Corr., 9th July 1891, p. 108. Interestingly, in a letter to her son of the 20th November 1893 Madame Paul Gide expresses the same sentiments because of her fear that she may not echo the tone of her son's letters correctly.

3. This aspect will be dealt with more fully later in this chapter.

4. G./R. Corr., 1st July 1927, p.99.

5. G./Ghéon Corr. 1, 10th April 1899, p. 266.

6. G./V. Corr., March 1893, p. 200.

off their relationship because : "...je sentais trop que notre correspondance n'était qu'un grand mirage, que chacun de nous n'écrivait, hélas! qu'à soi-même et que...nous restions toujours éloignés!"¹

Dialogue is thus essential for the continued existence of correspondence as Gide understands it. Its action upon Gide is, in my opinion, two-fold. Firstly, through dialogue, Gide achieves communion with the other and absorbs , thus making his correspondent's experience his own. This aspect is to be seen clearly in two letters to Henri Ghéon in which Gide writes :

Ecris-moi. Puissent tes poèmes être seulement aussi beaux que tes lettres! En les lisant, je ne sens plus qui je suis, qui nous sommes, et - parce qu'elles me disent mon amour - je ne m'y distingue plus d'avec toi,²

and :

Cher vieux, écris encore; tes lettres sont ma vie, ma joie; j'ai besoin de sentir que tu deviens et de m'associer un peu à ta vie; grâce à toi j'aurai eu deux jeunesse...³

Dialogue, in this case, affects by extension.

Secondly, the letter may act as an agent provocateur.

One often finds that Gide accepts just as cheerfully letters where his correspondent attacks his position as those where there is complete agreement. Of all Gide's correspondents none, perhaps, was as assiduous as Martin du Gard in his criticisms of Gide. Almost without exception,⁴ Gide classifies Martin du Gard's most severe letters as excellent. This is not because he invariably agrees with them but because they have provoked him to thought, the outcome of which is a clearer knowledge of what his views really are and their expression in a "true" letter.

Thus, an epistolary exchange on the question of the Catholic Church's absence at the Ecumenical Council ends with Gide's comment : " Voilà la

1. Romans, p. 559.

2. G./Ghéon Corr. 2, 8th March 1905, pp. 588-589. Gide is referring to his and Ghéon's simultaneous affair with M.

3. Ibid, 22nd January 1915, p. 872.

4. The most notable exception being after Martin du Gard's letter of the 9th December 1926. See : p. 46, note 3.

seule lettre que j'aie pu écrire depuis...trois semaines..."¹

Written dialogue, be it through communion or opposition, is hence a means of action upon one's thoughts or feelings and has the advantage over the spoken word of being preservable. The true letter affects, even alters one's position but never leaves one untouched.

Affection alone is incapable of such action. After describing an evening with a certain young Adolphe to Henri Gheon, Gide writes: "Il me semble après t'avoir dit cela que je n'ai plus rien à t'écrire",² thereby unconsciously foreseeing the future development of their correspondence. Their common homosexual experiences being the true source of dialogue and communion between Gide and Gheon, their termination, with Gheon's conversion, brought an end to true correspondence.

Friendship is valuable to Gide only insofar as it is a source of dialogue and communication. As P. Iseler writes, friendship must be active:

Car l'amitié, pour Gide, est une chose plus mouvante, et plus méritoire que ne le suppose Louys [sic]. Fidélité totale, impérieuse, à nos amis? non...mais fidélité plus impérieuse encore à l'Amitié - c'est-à-dire au principe: l'amitié ne doit jamais devenir un 'sentiment acquis'.³

Gide himself endorsed this view when he said: "Je faisais métier de mon amitié."⁴ In other words, friendship meant hard work for Gide since he expected it to be productive not just of emotions but of ideas.⁵ Hence, dialogue and communication, the active components of the true letter are the principal reasons for the joy Gide found in correspondence.

Gide's very notion of friendship confirms my former argument that the letter is not to be confused with spontaneous expression nor to be

1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 3rd September 1948, p. 424.

2. G./Gheon Corr. 1, 2nd September 1901, p. 354.

3. Les Débuts d'André Gide vus par Pierre Louys, Ed. du Sagittaire, 1937, p. 39.

4. G./V. Corr., p.9.

5. In a letter of the 6th October 1894, Madeleine comments with some perspicacity on the egoism of the artist who cultivates his ego and his work through his friends and who, while loving them, must love himself more. This letter is contained in the, as yet, unpublished correspondence of Gide with his mother.

taken as a sign of ordinary friendship. I will now consider two factors of Gide's attitude to correspondence which will help to underline this fact and to clarify the intentions Gide had for his correspondence.

7. Care over Correspondence.

Gide devotes an enormous amount of time and considerable effort to his correspondence. Often he spends an entire morning or more in composing a letter.¹ While complaining of the time thus wasted, Gide nonetheless adds: "Mais, dès que je répons, ce ne peut être avec indifférence; et dès lors, cela prend un temps..."² To write a worth-while letter, therefore, Gide is ready and, on occasion, willing³ to sacrifice his time.

Gide's Journal shows us that Gide not only spends a great deal of time on his correspondence but also cares enough about it to seek out second opinions⁴ particularly where the letters concerned are not to intimate correspondents or are in reply to an attack. Just as he turns to Martin du Gard for advice on his literary work, so Gide frequently consults him about letters before sending or retaining them. Martin du Gard's advice is sought for a letter to François Porché which is intended for the Nouvelles littéraires⁵. Martin du Gard's disapproval of this letter is enough to cause Gide to withdraw it. Similarly, when Gide plans to write and publish a letter to Fabre-Luce, he asks Martin du Gard for his opinion on it.⁶

Gide takes no less account of Valéry's opinion on stylistic expression as can be seen in an undated entry from Gide's Journal. In it, Gide describes a meeting with Valéry to whom he shows a letter to Poincaré who

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1. J.1, Monday (21st May?) 1906, p. 222; 20th October 1907, pp. 252-253 & 24th October, p. 253; 2nd February 1916, p. 535.
 2. J.1, 30th January 1924, p. 316.
 3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 5th July 1934, p. 624, "J'aspire à un peu de tranquillité pour répondre congrûment..."
 4. J.1, 1st January 1907, p. 226.
 5. And has been provoked by the indignation Gide felt on reading Porché's L'amour qui n'ose pas dire son nom.
 6. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 15th April 1933, p. 562. Martin du Gard's criticisms cause Gide once again to retain his letter.

has congratulated him on his Voyage au Congo. All Valéry's comments on the lack of appropriateness of Gide's mode of expression are carefully taken into account by a relieved but depressed Gide.¹ Although Gide seems to lay particular store on both Valéry's and Martin du Gard's opinion, they are by no means Gide's only advisers.²

Gide's constant need for a second opinion may be due to his innate modesty. However, it seems to me that a more likely reason lies in his desire to test the quality of what he has written through the reactions of his friends. Ever mistrustful of self-complacency, Gide trusts in the rigorous examination of his writing by those of his friends whose critical judgement is not clouded by affection.

This desire for other opinions starts with Gide's literary work. That it should be felt in the field of his correspondence also is proof of the seriousness with which Gide regards his letter-writing. Literary work it may not be; but correspondence, in Gide's case, comes from the pen of a literary man who is subject to certain habits and does himself write: "...je ne puis consentir à écrire moins bien une petite chose qu'une importante..."³ To write well, for Gide, excludes spontaneity.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Gide should be in the habit of making rough-copies of his letters before the definitive version. It is interesting to notice, in the following quotation from a letter to Valéry: "...dès l'adieu à Paris...j'imaginai pour toi quelques phrases, et même j'en notai - fragments, embryons d'Epîtres - que cette informe donc supprime..."⁴ that he is making the mental equivalent of a rough copy. In another letter to Valéry⁵ Gide admits that he has just thrown away the beginning of three letters for him. This shows that Gide is

1. J.1, 1929, p. 930.

2. The Cahiers de la Petite Dame show us that Gide not only labours over his correspondence but often asks Maria Van Rysselberghe's advice on style and subject-matter.

3. J.1, 17th June 1914, p. 421.

4. G./V. Corr., 3rd September 1894, p. 213.

5. Ibid, End of September 1899, p. 352.

not content with sending the first and most spontaneous version of a letter.¹

Sometimes, there is a considerable difference between the rough-copy and polished version either in sentiment or mode of expression. This is the case when Gide drafts a rough-copy of a letter to Jammes.² Gide's rough-copy is later headed by Gide with the comment, "Pas envoyée - hélas!"³ The definitive version of this letter,⁴ written on the same day, avoids the insulting irony of the rough-copy.

One finds that even so short a letter as: "Mon cher Jean. Votre lettre est exquise et vous êtes irresistible. Je vous embrasse sur le plus azuré de mes papiers..."⁵ is a rough-copy and has not, as might be expected of such an apparently spontaneous note, been sent immediately to its destinator. This careful smoothing and polishing of his letters is analogous to Gide's artistic procedure. This must be seen as a sign of the value of the letter in Gide's eyes.

8. Correspondence : A "Filing-System".

The care Gide takes in writing his letters is matched by his treatment of them. One finds, in Gide's Journal, countless references to his habit of keeping double copies of letters written and even received.⁶

Such care is not without a reason. Gide desires to keep records for posterity. He even goes so far as to deliberately write letters for this reason as is pointed out by Madame Van Rysselberghe in her Cahiers: "...et je sens une fois de plus ce désir de laisser des documents, des

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1. Indeed, many of Gide's unpublished letters are classified in the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet as brouillons.
 2. To inform him that the N.R.F. will not go against Jammes' wishes by publishing a letter to Jammes from Charles-Louis Philippe. G./J. Corr., pp. 266-272.
 3. G./J. Corr., 3rd January 1910, p. 272.
 4. Ibid, pp. 271-272.
 5. G./Co. Corr., pp. 123-124.
 6. J.l, 12th February 1907, p. 238; 9th October 1916, p. 570; 2nd May 1906, p. 211; 7th May 1906, pp. 214-215; 4th March 1918, p. 649; 2nd November 1916, p. 582; 1931, p. 1099; 30th October 1929, p. 949.

témoignages de la vérité..."¹ In his Journal, Gide openly admits to this motivation, when writing to Haguénin who is attempting to prepare the German public for the stage-production of Saül. As usual, Gide has kept a double copy of his letter, but this time he goes on to admit; "Je voudrais qu'on la publiât, si jamais..."²

Gide does not only intend isolated letters to reach posterity, however, since he compiled whole dossiers on certain topics.³ Thus, Gide expresses his wish for the future publication of an exchange of letters between himself and the Jesuit Father Victor Poucel following the publication of Poucel's articles in Etudes of October and November. It is clear from Gide's comments in his Journal⁴ that the letters concerned form part of Gide's debate on Catholicism. Another file kept by Gide contained those letters concerning his work.⁵ The Ghéon Correspondance reveals that Gide also kept one on pederasty.⁶ Such a file was part of Gide's struggle to gain "le droit d'être sincère".⁷

As Gide himself admitted to Maria Van Kysselberghe, art, homosexuality and Catholicism were the three subjects upon which he had strongly established views. Definitely Gide feels them to be of general importance. The points at stake in some of the individual letters to which I have referred, however, may seem of little import nowadays. Gide's concern with posterity, it is to be remembered, amounted almost to an obsession⁸ as is shown by his pathetic cry: "...conservez cette lettre. On ne sait ce qui peut arriver. Si ma mémoire est, plus tard, par trop salie, j'aurai bien n'est-ce pas quelques amis pour la défendre?"⁹

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1. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 13th February 1931, p. 130. Gide does not, in fact, write this letter to Martin du Gard which would have explained that Marcel Drouin was mistaken in his belief that he was the model for Créon in Oedipe.
 2. J.1, 15th January 1908, p. 258.
 3. J.1, 2nd November 1916, p. 582, "Projet d'une lettre à Copeau. (Copiée et versée au dossier.)"
 4. J.1, 13th December 1927, p. 864.
 5. MAG, p. 67 & MVR, Cahiers 4, 10th November 1920, p. 55.
 6. G./Ghéon Corr. 1, 23rd July 1902, p. 450.
 7. Ibid, 15th July 1902, p. 449.
 8. Pierre Herbart, op. cit. pp. 12-13.
 9. G./M.C. Corr. 1, 26th November 1930, pp. 425-426.

Gide even goes so far as to destroy a letter from Martin du Gard¹ because he feels it would falsify his image. Gide explains his action to Maria Van Rysselberghe: "'Je viens de déchirer cette lettre de Martin ...je ne puis pas l'entourer de commentaires et telle qu'elle est on pourrait l'interpréter de travers'".² The fact that Gide destroys this document may seem to be the antithesis of a concern for truthful records especially as his own reply is the only record kept of the incident.³ However, the wording of Gide's explanation shows that, such as it is, Martin du Gard's letter will, no doubt, be wrongly interpreted by posterity while there can be no attempt to redress the balance.

Indeed, it seems to me that Gide's dislike of public explanation is the cause of the suitability of the letter as a record for posterity. This is to be seen in an exchange of letters between Gide and Albert Mockel. A letter from Mockel on Les Caves du Vatican provokes the following comment from Gide: "...conservez cette lettre; on la publiera quelque jour en post-face aux Caves, avec votre lettre, si vous le permettez".⁴ When Mockel suggests that these two letters be published immediately, however, Gide refuses.⁵ This seems to me to prove Gide's concern that his correspondence, by being a record for posterity, will gain in credibility because a letter seems more natural than an article or a preface which may be interpreted as self-defence rather than self-explanation.

Gide's desire to avoid the appearance of self-justification explains not only the use he wishes to be made of his correspondence but also the fact that certain unsent letters should be confined to his Journal.

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1. Received on the 11th October 1932.
 2. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, October 1932, p. 253.
 3. Apart from the annex to letter 410, G./M.G. Corr. 1, pp. 721-722.
 4. G./Mo. Corr., 5th July 1914, p. 259.
 5. Ibid, 12th July 1914, p. 262.

In filing his correspondence, Gide is thus consciously supplying future readers with facts great and small which will go to forming the true picture of André Gide. Self-justification is not, however, the only use Gide had for his correspondence. Maria Van Rysselberghe points to an even more important aspect when she writes of Gide: "Il ne laisse jamais rien perdre de sa pensée."¹

Gide's anxiety to preserve his correspondence for both these reasons is, as we have seen, caused by his desire to present a truthful and acceptable picture of himself to posterity. Hence, publication is Gide's aim but is by no means a latter-day preoccupation.

As early as 1893, Gide writes to Valéry :

Il m'est venu quelque inquiétude : que n'ai-je avant de partir repris toutes tes lettres que je t'avais hélas prêtées. Si je n'avais en toi une confiance si rare, je craindrais de ne jamais revoir cette Correspondance.²

The fact that the word "Correspondance" is spelt with a capital letter underlines not only its importance to Gide but makes it assume the form of the title of a published work. It is therefore hardly surprising that Gide should go to the pains of having these letters typed. Gide's desire that Valéry's letters and not his own be preserved for posterity³ is therefore an early one. Admiration for his correspondent explains the fact that Gide has the same intentions for Roger Martin du Gard's letters.⁴

Gide's concern with leaving a faithful record is a more probable reason for his envisaging the publication of Pierre Louÿs' letters in 1928,⁵ since his opinion of both his own and his friend's letters is poor.

In later life, Gide was more than ever desirous to publish his

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1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 17th September 1920, p.47.
 2. G./V. Corr., March 1893, pp. 180-181.
 3. Ibid, pp. 9-10
 4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 26th January 1931, pp. 434-435.
 5. J.1, 12th June 1928, p.882.

correspondence,¹ no doubt because the heyday of his Journal and his literary works was finished.² Throughout his life, therefore, Gide intended his correspondence to be published. I have pointed out that Gide was obsessed with leaving as many records as possible for posterity and that the letter was viewed as a particularly suitable form for this. This is a perfectly acceptable but by far too general an interpretation of the role of correspondence. It is necessary, at this stage, to deal with the more precise reasons which may have been behind Gide's will to publish.

9. Sincerity.

In publishing his correspondence, Gide was undoubtedly moved by the desire to be sincere by uncovering hitherto unknown aspects of himself. In my introduction, I have already expressed my reserves as to the interpretation of Gidian sincerity as frankness. Nonetheless, Gide himself believed that the latter was an important aspect of his sincerity, as a passage from Si Le Grain ne meurt shows :

Je ne suis pas de ces tempéraments qui d'abord s'insurgent; au contraire il m'a toujours plu d'obéir, de me plier aux règles, de céder, et, de plus j'avais une particulière horreur pour ce que l'on fait en cachette; s'il m'est arrivé par la suite et trop souvent, hélas! de devoir dissimuler, je n'ai jamais accepté cette feinte que comme une protection provisoire comportant le constant espoir et même la résolution d'amener bientôt tout au grand jour...3

Gide, it is true, is referring to his homosexuality upon which the Chéon Correspondance has thrown some light.⁴ Nonetheless, I believe that this passage may be taken on a more general level.

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1. During Gide's life-time, his correspondences with Claudel, James, Proust and Du Bos were published.
 2. Although Gide also considered publishing his latest writings in 1951, and, in considering the publication of his correspondence with Marcel Drouin, was motivated by curiosity and impatience. M.V.R., Cahiers 7, 6th February 1951, p.235.
 3. J.2, SI, p.487.
 4. It is to be remembered that Gide and Chéon compiled a dossier on homosexuality in order to claim the "right to be sincere". See: above p. 65.

Gide himself condemns "des lettrés délicats, aux pudeurs faciles"¹ who are against pointing to the feet of clay of great men by the publication of their private writings. Unlike them, Gide sees in the publication of an artist's correspondence no indiscretion nor any unhealthy curiosity. Although an artist's creative work is obviously more important than his private life, for Gide : "...l'admirable, ce qui reste pour moi d'un enseignement inépuisable, c'est qu'il l'ait écrite malgré cela ."² Thus, although one must approach Gidian frankness with some prudence, the publication of Gide's private correspondence is to be seen as a means to a more complete understanding of the man and the artist.

10. Correspondence : An Art-Form?

In any consideration of Gide's reasons for desiring publication, one cannot disregard the possibility that he saw it as an art-form. I have already mentioned in this chapter the high degree of stylistic consciousness Gide showed in his letter-writing. How many times does he destroy a letter or refuse to send it when its style is judged unworthy of himself and his correspondent? How often also, does he apologise for stylistic lacks in the letters he does send?

Despite the extreme care taken by Gide over his letters, however, his judgement of the end result is severe. His opinion of himself as a correspondent seems to prove that he does not consider his own letters as an artistic achievement. Moreover, when Valéry writes to Gide extolling correspondence as "une oeuvre d'art ornemental charmante, un délice consenti à deux",³ Gide makes no attempt to echo Valéry's

1. Dostoievski, 1970, p. 35

2. Ibid, p. 35

3. G./V. Corr., 16th November 1891, p. 138.

point of view as he was prone to do in the earlier stages of their correspondence.

Nonetheless, the letters written by Gide, particularly in his youth, are often imbued with literary style. Gide's earlier letters to Valéry reflect to a large extent the spirit and language of André Walter.¹ Likewise, certain letters to Copeau written in 1912 from Italy have the lyricism of Gide's Nourritures terrestres, an aspect of Gide which does not appear in his letters to Valéry from North Africa .

One must now ask if Gide, by indulging in the style of his literary works, does so because he intends his letters to attain the level of art . It seems to me that this is not the case. It is to be remembered that, while being a friend, Valéry is also a young Symbolist poet. In his first letters, Gide lies somewhat in awe of Valéry and is obviously only too desirous of pleasing him not merely as a person but also as a literary colleague. It is, therefore, natural that he should choose to write in his own particular literary style of the moment, albeit self-consciously.

Just as Gide adopts Symbolist style with Valéry, so he adopts religious topics and a sometime Biblical, even confessional style with the Catholics Claudel and James. This shows that the stylistic content of his letters does depend on the desire to please his correspondent by echoing.²

This is not the only reason for Gide's adopting any one literary style. The work of art has a reaction upon its writer as Gide writes of his Tentative amoureuse.³ By writing of an impossible dream of happiness, Gide achieves through the ideal, artistic form the very

1. G. Corr., 31st July 1891, pp. 113-114 & beginning of August 1891, pp. 117-119.

2. This phenomenon is well described by Gustave Vanwelkenhuyzen in the G./Mo. Corr., p.22, "A lire - dialogue."

3. J.1., 1893, pp. 40-41.

happiness that Luc and Rachel cannot achieve by their more concrete attempts. This form of reaction, still tinged by Symbolism, appears to be the fore-runner of the more conscious "purging" of an undesired state that is to be found in L'Immoraliste or Saul.

Gide the author, also experiences "dépersonnalisation poétique" during the writing of a work.¹ In other words, he becomes the character he is writing of and feels his emotions almost more strongly than he could his own.

In the adoption of a fictional character, Gide's own actions or frame of mind are of the same mould as those of his creation.² Hence his written style, alike, is transformed and closely resembles the style chosen as most suitable for the portrayal of a moral problem through a particular character in a literary work. Daniel Moutote points out that in the journals one sees a conscious attempt to portray the frame of mind necessary to the work Gide is writing. To a lesser extent, this phenomenon appears in the correspondences.

I have already mentioned that Gide's earlier letters to Valéry show the influence of his first work of art both in style and concepts. Similarly, two letters to Copeau³ show respectively conceptual and stylistic links with L'Immoraliste. Although these letters are posterior to the publication of the work, it is to be noted that Gide's next work, Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, does not appear until 1907. Again, two letters of 1906⁴ present the state of Gide's literary creativity as one of joy, piety and abnegation - all highly suitable qualities for one writing La Porte étroite. Two more letters to Copeau

1. J.1, 29th May 1923, p. 759.

2. See: George Painter op.cit., pp. 68-69, for the similarities between Gide's and Michel's behaviour.

3. Unpublished letters of 1903 and the 6th October 1905.

4. One undated and one of the 16th September.

remind one by their contents of the Caves du Vatican.¹ Another letter forms a belated stylistic echo to the joyous lyricism of the Nourritures terrestres.²

The fact that Gide should use the style of a work long since finished seems to suggest that, just as he carefully files his letters, so he does his stylistic procedures.³ The artist in Gide seems consciously or unconsciously to have rendered him incapable of depicting certain emotions or scenes in any style other than literary. Gide explains this himself in a letter to Albert Demarest,⁴ where he admits that he is affected by paralysing shyness when writing to either Demarest or Madeleine Rondeaux. He feels that his every word is judged and fears that he must appear insincere, "littérateur et froid". This very fear, Gide writes, freezes any spontaneity he may originally have had. In addition, the importance of both Demarest's and Madeleine's opinion of him, the desire to please and his fears of incapacity are the cause of "la part de comédie" which does, in fact, irritate his cousins.

Gide lays the blame on literature itself :

Ce n'est pas ma faute après tout si un homme tout rongé de littérature n'aime pas à la façon des charbonniers; cette littérature est comme les maladies constitutionnelles - cela pénètre tout, mais ça n'empêche pas d'aimer bien fort quand même...⁵

This quotation shows that much as Gide desires to achieve a more spontaneous and apparently more sincere style, literature will not always be excluded from his private life and correspondence.⁶

It seems to me, therefore, that Gide does not envisage the

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1. Unpublished letters of the 21st January & the 12th March 1912. Copeau was, in fact, Gide's most constant confidant during the writing of this work.
 2. Unpublished letter of the 24th September 1912 which includes a description of a grotto.
 3. See : G./J. Corr., November 1901, p.179 & May 1902, p.189. Gide still writes in terms of "demons" long after the need to "be" Saul is finished.
 4. J.A.G. 2, p. 146.
 5. Ibid, p.146.
 6. Jean Tipy feels that Gide's correspondence with Chéon is an exception to this rule. G./Chéon Corr. 1, p.10.

publication of his own letters because they are deliberate artistic pendants, despite his admiration for others' correspondence. The fact that many of his letters are undeniably literary in style depends on the three reasons I have given : firstly, the desire to please a particular correspondent by adopting the style best suited to him; secondly, Gide's immersion in an artistic work which causes him in real life to "become" the character he has created; thirdly, the professional incapacity of the writer to express himself mundanely or to forget his artistic work completely.

Of all Gide's correspondence, probably one only was consciously intended as an artistic work, - namely, that with his wife. Everyone who has read Et nunc manet in te knows the story of Madeleine Gide's burning her husband's letters. This action evoked Gide's cry : "C'est le meilleur de moi qui disparaît; et qui ne contre-balancera plus le pire." ¹

At Louxor, Gide wrote :

'Peut-être n'y eut-il jamais plus belle correspondance.'
Disons plus simplement que je n'avais jamais écrit et que depuis je n'écrivis pareillement à personne...je souffrais de savoir réduit à néant par elle ce qui de moi me paraissait mériter le plus la survie. ²

It is quite obvious from Gide's comments that both artistically and morally these letters were to be offered to posterity as the best part of himself. Indeed, Gide himself told François Mauriac that Madame Gide probably destroyed his letters because she sensed they were addressed more to posterity than to herself. ³

11. Correspondence : A Moral Dialogue

Having discussed the possibility of artistic motivation, I now turn to an important reason for Gide's wishing to publish his correspondence. It is noticeable that, of the four volumes of correspondence published before Gide's death ⁴ three should be with Catholic correspondents. ⁵

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1. J.2, Journal intime, 21st November 1918, p.1145.
 2. Ibid, Et nunc manet in te, Note 1, p.1147. The 1st and the 3rd underlinings are my own .
 3. G./M. Corr., p.47.
 4. Those with James, Claudel, Du Bos and Proust published in 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1949 respectively.
 5. The fourth, with Proust, contains only three short missives from Gide.

As regards Gide's intentions in publishing these correspondences, recourse may be made to a letter to Martin du Gard where Gide wrote: "...ma pensée va vers vous tout particulièrement, sur le seuil de cette 81e année de mon 'emploi' sur cette terre..."¹ In the margin of this letter, the following note has been made by Martin du Gard:

L'expression 'emploi' sur cette terre n'est pas venue par hasard sous la plume de Gide: elle exprime ce sentiment qui lui a fait publier Corydon et Si le Grain et la correspondance avec Claudel, - à savoir qu'il a un rôle, une mission à remplir; et que son talent, l'autorité qu'il s'est acquise, doivent, avant tout, servir à lutter contre les préjugés de la morale conformiste, pour soustraire les homosexuels à l'inique condamnation qui pèse sur eux.²

This is a most plausible reason for Gide's primary choice of his three Catholic correspondences for publication and for his compiling a dossier of letters on homosexuality. ^{All three} correspondences are related to Gide's personal struggle with the Catholic religion which he sees as being of general import since it involves such questions as moral "comfort" and blind intolerance and prejudice.

In a letter to Martin du Gard,³ Gide defends his publication⁴ of the exchange of letters of 1914 between Claudel and himself, not only on the grounds that he has thought carefully about this decision and been encouraged by several friends but also because he feels the consequences of his act have been entirely satisfactory. In other words, as Gide tells Martin du Gard, the majority of readers are for Gide and against Claudel and what he represents. The phrase, "Claudel (et ce qu'il représente)", shows that Gide does not intend the correspondence to be taken on an individual level but as one example of a debate that concerns everyone. The correspondence is playing, in this instance, the important role of showing the narrow prejudice of established morality and of opening

1. S./M.G. Corr. 2, 21st November 1949, p. 468.
2. Ibid, p. 469.
3. Ibid, 10th November 1949, pp. 466-467.
4. In the Figaro littéraire.

people's minds to greater comprehension and acceptance.

It is noticeable that even before any decision to publish, Gide wrote to Claudel asking him not to use his letter of confession as to his homosexuality against him.¹ One sees that Gide is not only judging Claudel after his own lack of respect for the privacy of letters but also that this letter is already envisaged as a weapon which may be used in an eventually public battle.

In light of Gide's comments on Jammes and Du Bos in his Journal and of his careful filing and copying of letters both received and written, he is undoubtedly animated by the same consciousness of the role he has to play when he allows the publication of their correspondences.

Similarly, when Gide expresses his admiration for Martin du Gard's "art épistolaire" or hints in letters to him² that the thought of publication is in his mind, he is no doubt ruled by the consideration that Martin du Gard's letters are not only well-written but also that they contain subject-matter that will provoke reflection. This is borne out by the fact that when Gide urges Martin du Gard to publish his letter of the 1st November 1933,³ the contents are of moral and historical import. The fact that Gide wishes his published correspondence to provoke thought on matters of general importance is also made clear by his refusal to permit the publication of his correspondence with Rouveyre because: "Elle ne présente qu'un intérêt trop personnel et ce serait paraître chercher à occuper à l'excès l'attention".⁴

The very correspondences published during Gide's life-time were those, therefore, which offered more than personal interest, more than material

1. G./C. Corr., 8th March 1914, p. 219.

2. G./M.G. Corr.1, 26th January 1931, p. 435 & 11th March 1931, p. 547.

3. Ibid, pp. 586-587.

4. G./R. Corr., 26th May 1950, p. 191.

for a biography of André Gide. These correspondences were offered by Gide to the public whose role it is to form the conclusion of a debate in which ideas count more than style.

The dialogue form of correspondence is, therefore, important to Gide not only because it helps him to broaden or assess his own position but also because it is a means of presentation which provokes thought in his readers.

12. Artistic Dialogue.

Gide's concern with the publication of his correspondences with Catholic friends and with the preservation of his file of letters on homosexuality seem to prove that the role of correspondence lies in its laying the foundations for moral reflection in Gide's readers. While one cannot deny that Gide was a moralist, one must not dismiss his claims to being an artist above all nor disregard the fact that Gide also kept a file of letters concerning his work. These two points lead us to the last and, to my mind, the most important role of correspondence.

As the following chapters deal in depth with this question, I shall merely lay the grounds of my choice at this point. Evidence of the role Gide expected published correspondence to play is to be found in an imaginary interview in Attendu que. Speaking of Stendhal, the interviewee admits that, if he had to choose amongst Stendhal's works, he would discard his novels for his Souvenirs d'Egotisme, Henry Brulard and his Correspondance, since: "Ce qu'il raconte dans La Chartreuse ou dans Le Rouge et le Noir m'intéresse moins que sa façon de la raconter, que lui-même. Plus il se livre, plus il me plaît".¹ Questioned by the interviewer as to whether he would show similar preference for Racine's letters to Boileau, the interviewee, although he qualifies his remark immediately after, replies that he would, "si ses lettres étaient plus

1. Attendu que, Charlot, 1943, p. 81. My underlinings.

nombreuses, moins réservées; s'il y parlait, à la manière de Flaubert, de son oeuvre et des soucis de son métier..."¹

These two quotations show that, for Gide, correspondence is a source of information not only about the artist's techniques and his intentions in writing his work but also about the progress and the processes of his thought which lie behind the end-result of his work. It is in this spirit that Gide explains his decision to publish several letters of Charles-Louis Philippe²:

Il y aura...une dizaine de lettres de lui que nous voudrions choisir entre toutes et présentant un caractère non point confidentiel, mais capable.. d'éclairer le caractère de l'oeuvre de Philippe.³

Correspondence, because, at its best, it entails dialogue, shows the artist and the movement of his thought-processes behind his work and thus gives far more knowledge as to the how and why of his art than would a simple declaration to the public on the part of the author. Of all Gide's reasons for corresponding this seems to me to be the most important, and to explain the number of literary men among his correspondents, who were often less friends than colleagues.⁴ When the two combine, however, as was the case with Martin du Gard notably, correspondence as a means of literary dialogue reaches its zenith and constitutes "une réflexion artistique permanente", "une critique polémique de défense personnelle".⁵

As has been seen, Gide's attitude to correspondence was ambiguous but far from being entirely negative. Correspondence as a means of communication is to be set apart because it is the written record of external dialogue which enables Gide not only the better to know his own thought but also to give it more authentic expression than in speech.

1. Attendu que, 1943, p. 82. My underlining.

2. In La Nouvelle Revue Française of the 15th February 1910. This was a special commemorative edition following his death.

3. G./Ghéon Corr. 2, January 1910, p. 739.

4. G./Mo. Corr., 25th April 1897, p. 185, where Mockel writes to Gide: "Je puis vous l'affirmer, cher Gide: d'avoir voulu pendant quelque temps n'être que votre confrère comme vous m'aviez paru le souhaiter, j'ai éprouvé, à une secrète rancune, que j'étais votre ami".

5. Moutote, op. cit., p. 104. This seems to me a more correct view of Gide's correspondences than that of Jean Tipy who seems to confuse them with literature as such. G./Ghéon Corr. 1, pp. 9-10, "Avec - littérature".

It is probably true to say that hardly a line of Gide's correspondence was written without the thought of posterity although Gide has not one, but several, reasons for desiring the publication of his correspondence. Thus, he is moved by artistic admiration for Valéry and Martin du Gard in his wish to preserve their correspondences with him for posterity. Artistic considerations also, as well as the need for a total picture of himself for posterity, plunge Gide into the depths of despair when the portrait of the "best" of himself is destroyed by his wife. Certain letters contain records for posterity of the true aspects of affairs which have concerned Gide deeply but which may seem to readers nowadays of purely personal interest. The publication of Gide's Catholic correspondences hands down to posterity a dialogue which has provoked reflection in Gide and is, in turn, destined to awaken thought in his readers. Finally, Gide wishes to add to the public's and his own knowledge of himself as an artist through literary dialogue in his correspondences.

In exploring Gide's attitude to correspondences in this chapter, I have gone into sometimes tedious detail for several reasons. Firstly, while taking into account the more negative aspects of Gide's attitude to correspondence, I wished to counter-balance certain critics' acceptance at face-value of Gide's derogatory comments on letter-writing. Secondly, I felt it was essential to demonstrate not only what differentiates correspondence from other means of expression but also to show wherein lies its principal value for Gide. Finally, a study of the complexity of Gide's attitude to correspondence seemed to me necessary in order to show that my decision to study the correspondences from one angle - that of literary dialogue - was no arbitrary one but taken after consideration of the various uses to which Gide put letter-writing.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER II

DIALOGUE IN GIDE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH PAUL VALÉRY.

1. The Initial Stages of Dialogue : from an Echo to the Author of the *Traité du Narcisse*.

Gide became acquainted with Valéry in 1890 through Pierre Louÿs, their mutual friend and literary colleague. Louÿs' letters to Gide of that time¹ mention Valéry in both these respects. This is no hazard, since friendship and literature go hand in hand for these youthful writers. Louÿs' respect for Valéry's literary opinions is as important as his avowed friendship for Valéry in arousing Gide's interest in the "petit Montpelliérain"².

Claude Martin, writing of the Gide of 1895, stresses the place held by Valéry for Gide within the double context of friendship and literature:

'Faire l'amitié'...Que l'amitié fut 'un mot et un sentiment à la mode dans les milieux où Gide s'est formé et a manifesté son jeune génie, entre la fin du symbolisme et la première guerre mondiale',³ c'est possible...C'est en tout cas, indéniablement, avec Paul Valéry que Gide, depuis 1891, s'adonne à ce 'métier',⁴ avec le plus de plaisir et de profit; c'est le correspondant préféré, l'ami qu'il ne manque pas une occasion de retrouver.⁵

In his first, long letter to Valéry, Gide himself states his wishes for the course of their future correspondence, which he would like to be a source of mutual advice and criticism on their own writings. One must not be misled by the fact that Gide denies their writings the status of literature, nor by his keeping this wish for their correspondence till the end of his list. Gide desires a literary correspondence and the most important literature that may come under discussion is his own and that

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1. Henri Mondor, Les Premiers Temps d'une amitié: André Gide et Paul Valéry, Ed. du Rocher, Monaco, 1947. Quoted by Robert Mallet in the G./V. Corr., p. 11.
 2. G./V. Corr., p. 11.
 3. Robert Kanters, "Amitié, terre interdite", La Table Ronde, no. 98, February 1956, p. 42.
 4. G./V. Corr., p.9.
 5. MAG, p. 53.

of Valéry.

Side by side with this wish for discussion on literature, there appears an immediate obstacle to spontaneity. Gide is already conscious that his feelings may not be analagous to Valéry's. Rather than displease Valéry, therefore, Gide asks him to set the pace of their correspondence. When Gide writes: "J'attendrai que vous me donniez courage, que vous me disiez un peu ci ou ça qui m'encourage à vous écrire",¹ he is referring, albeit unknowingly, to quite a general and not merely an initial aspect of their correspondence.

Nonetheless, despite Gide's reiterated fears of displeasing Valéry, his next letter² shows that the desire to talk about literature is stronger. With spontaneous enthusiasm, Gide informs Valéry of his adhesion to Symbolism. This conversion to what Gide calls Valéry's "school" has been brought about by Mallarmé and the reading of an article on Symbolist theory.³ The realisation that this theory is an apologie for his own book⁴ fills Gide with joy at the thought that he may represent Symbolism in the domain of the novel. Not content with his new-found realisation of his artistic position, Gide, very much the young Symbolist, admits that he is writing poetry on which he will require Valéry's opinion. Valéry's reply shows that he is only too pleased that Gide has turned to Symbolism and is keenly awaiting his poems.

The fact that Gide should spontaneously express himself on literature is not surprising. In this instance, he feels sure of pleasing and interesting Valéry. Encouraged, no doubt, by Valéry's approval and by a

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1. G./V. Corr., 16th January 1891, p. 42. All further references to quotes from this correspondence will be included, in parenthesis, in the text, thus: (16th January 1891, 42), or by page-number only if the same letter is referred to several times on a page.
 2. Ibid, 26th January 1891, pp. 46-47.
 3. La Plume, 1st January 1891.
 4. Les Cahiers d'André Walter.

letter where he writes of his own and Gide's poetry,¹ Gide again indulges in a literary letter. Full of delight at Mallarmé's praise of his Cahiers d'André Walter, Gide explains that his boastfulness is merely a form of persuasion to Valéry to appreciate the work and its author.

Perhaps more confident now that his literature will not be subject to Valéry's displeasure, Gide, without prompting, endeavours to widen the scope of discussion by introducing the subject of love and, less directly, friendship. If he desires to please Valéry, Gide writes, it is because he wants to know him as intimately as Valéry must know Gide after a reading of Les Cahiers. The subject of love is to be the pretext of this "initiation sentimentale" (February 1891, 53).

In his reply,² Valéry ignores this subject of debate, this being the first instance of a lack of response from him. Nonetheless, he is anxious for a continuation of literary discussion and asks for Gide's views on his Narcisse.³

Although Valéry does not respond to Gide's preoccupations, the same cannot be said of Gide who seizes eagerly on the chance to write of Valéry's literature.⁴ Even at this stage, however, Gide's desire to please does not affect sincerity in literary judgement. Valéry's Narcisse appears fragmentary to Gide. Having written of Valéry, Gide writes of himself to say that the internal and self-composed world of Gide/Walter is already trembling before the tempting solicitations of the outside world.

This openness on Gide's part is not total and is quite calculated as it is intended to spur Valéry into writing even more intimately, thereby giving Gide a lead to do likewise. The very lead Gide wants is given by

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1. G./V. Corr., February 1891, pp. 50-51.
 2. Ibid, 15th February 1891, pp. 54-55.
 3. Valéry's poem is to appear in La Conque.
 4. G./V. Corr., 1st March 1891, pp. 55-59.

Valéry when he next writes to reproach Gide for having offered to others the Cahiers d'André Walter which he has not yet received. Valéry states how offended he feels as, in his opinion, it is a book which has been written especially for him. He also confesses to sadness because he has failed to inspire enough confidence in Gide to make him offer his work spontaneously.¹

This appreciation of his work, and the appeal for more confidence, causes Gide to write immediately: "...- croyez-vous donc que dans quelques mois encore, après encore une dizaine de languissantes lettres, je pourrai rien avoir de caché pour votre âme?" (8th March 1891, 63). Valéry has thus, by praise and reproach, prompted Gide. Not only is Valéry to receive the book which contains Gide's soul but he will also benefit from greater openness in Gide's letters.

Indeed, Gide goes into greater detail about the now impotent temptations of the outside world.² Disillusioned by the vanity of literary circles and the hopelessness of attempting to influence youth, which task Gide had wrongly thought also belonged to "cette renaissance symbolique" (8th March 1891, 65), Gide writes: "...je me réfugie de nouveau dans la solitude studieuse, mais toute illuminée cette fois au reflet des intimités chères - et de la vôtre plus que jamais, doux Ambroise³..." (65).

Because the world does not correspond to Gide's dream, Gide has reverted to his original position which is that: "...il faut le rêver tel qu'on le veut" (8th March 1891, 64).

Both disillusionment and the desire to please Valéry are the causes

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1. Despite the encouragement of Mallarmé's opinion, Gide expressed his fear of Valéry's disliking his work and, thereafter, its author in his letter of the 1st-2nd March 1891, G./V. Corr., p. 58.
 2. Ibid, p. 58.
 3. This is Gide's name for Paul Valéry.

of Gide's return to studious, artistic solitude, to the Schopenhauerian and Symbolist notion of a personal, idealized world and to exclusive friendship.

Nonetheless, this letter is of interest since it shows us a glimpse of the Gide-to-be of the Traité du Narcisse, where the artist "manifests" for a public, no matter how inattentive. Moreover, the fact that Gide falls back on his own representation of the world, simply because of lack of success in coordinating reality to his own aspirations, indicates that this is a temporary position. Indeed, in the Traité, the artist's role is to find the truth which hides behind all aspects of the world rather than to retreat into his own dream.

Perhaps because Gide is already considering his Traité, he mentions the Cahiers d'André Walter only briefly in this letter:

Vous comprendrez aussi, après que vous aurez lu mon livre, que j'ai connu des intimités, si secrètes, que toujours on en porte le deuil après que l'on les a perdues" (65-66).

However, this apparently discreet comment points to the highly personal knowledge of Gide to be gained from his work. Gide goes on to reiterate his fears that Valéry may not like his work and begs for a long reply.

These fears of displeasing Valéry on a literary and, thence, a personal plane are quite genuine, although Gide admits that there is a degree of "coquetterie" (1st March 1891, 58) in his refusal to offer Valéry his book spontaneously. Indeed, it seems to me that this "coquetterie" is more deliberate than Gide likes to admit. Valéry's opinion of Gide's novel counts enormously for Gide. Therefore, perhaps stronger than Gide's fear of displeasing Valéry is his fear of obtaining as little reaction to his work as to his enquiries about Valéry's views on love.¹ By depriving

1. G./V. Corr., February 1891, pp. 52-54.

Valéry of the first right to criticism, Gide has provoked his interest. Valéry's reaction is, in turn, used by Gide as a pretext to dialogue.

In fact, Valéry's promptness in giving his opinion of the Cahiers d'André Walter shows that his interest needed no artificial stimulation. The Symbolist beauty of his letter is made to please Gide. Not only is Valéry trying to echo the mood and style of Gide's work but also he writes : "Jamais je n'ai mieux senti ma propre existence intime et la jeunesse douloureuse d'un intellectuel - comme dans votre André Walter" (11th March 1891, 67). Since Gide, in a later letter, expresses his conviction that one should be reflexion and nothing else, Valéry's close identification with his work is the highest compliment.

Reassured as to Valéry's interest in his literature, Gide again tries to widen the scope of discussion.¹ This time, he does not openly question Valéry about his views on love and friendship² but, by twisting certain of Valéry's comments to his own ends, makes it appear as if Valéry is setting the pace and he, Gide, is merely replying to Valéry's attempts at dialogue. Having been unwittingly rebuffed once in an open search for discussion, Gide discards the role of initiator for the apparent one of respondent.

In writing of the effect of Les Cahiers on him, Valéry used Biblical imagery. The temptation of Jesus by the Devil became, for him, the Lord's gift of knowledge and religion, philosophy and pure love in return for the love of Him. Valéry accepted this wager. Of Gide's book he wrote : "Nuit d'étoiles blanches - tout s'épure. C'est l'universelle compréhension, la divinité consciente qui descend des astres sur la tête humaine prédestinée

1. G./V. Corr., 21st March 1891, pp. 69-70.

2. Ibid, February 1891, pp. 52-54.

qu'elle couronne. Voilà vos paysages" (21st March 1891, 68).

Fascinated by Valéry's unconditional acceptance of love, Gide immediately plies him with questions about this absolute which frightens him. At the same time, he twists Valéry's thought by placing the debate on a temporal basis. Gide is using Valéry's reference to divine love in order to bring in his own preoccupation with friendship and love. Linguistically, the two cannot be separated at this point in Gide's life. Until the discovery of his homosexuality, Gide's emotions in friendship are expressed in the language of love whether earthly or transcendental. Gide's friendship with Valéry is not one of passion but rather "une communion suprasensible et comme mystique" (69).

Gide might here be describing his relationship with his cousin, Madeleine Rondeaux. Indeed, authorised by the religious tones of Valéry's letter on the Cahiers, the continuation of Gide's reply only reinforces this comparison :

Alors faut-il que l'idée d'élection morale s'imisce, pour qu'un même culte en des rites sacrés fassent les gestes parallèles? et qu'une même lueur nous convie sur des routes pareilles? Il faut aussi cette douceur de savoir jusqu'au fond son âme. Le voulez-vous? (69).

Gide is inviting Valéry to the same mingling of souls which he has with his cousin through religious and literary fervour.

Unfortunately, Gide's communion with Valéry is far from being as advanced as that with Madeleine. Gide still feels that he knows little of Valéry, whereas Valéry knows his soul intimately, "au moins en l'une de ses phases" (69). This remark is to be taken quite seriously if one is to believe Gide when he writes that Les Cahiers portray his own soul. Although Valéry's soul is known by Gide to be "précieuse et religieuse" (21st March 1891, 69). Gide feels there has not yet been total abandonment of Valéry's innermost thoughts. Gide explains that it upsets him when a friend hides anything from him, since he is unable to conceal anything

himself. In fact, another more plausible reason for Gide's wishing Valéry to express himself fully lies hidden in Gide's own comment : ...elle a ses phases, mon âme, comme la belle lune, et comme elle, elle gravite incessamment autour de quelque mystérieux pôle" (69). Gide can only show his multiple phases if he knows around which pole he is gravitating . Thus, Valéry must be open himself to allow Gide to choose which of his phases he may next show Valéry.

This letter is important as regards friendship but also, indirectly, for literary discussion. Gide knows that the cristallisation of one of the phases of his soul in his Cahiers is accepted by Valéry who, judging by his letter on Gide's book, is ready for literary discussion. Indeed, Henri Mondor mentions that Pierre Louÿs and Albert Démarest were abandoned for Valéry as a literary correspondent at this stage.¹

Gide is not, however, sure of Valéry's willingness for more personal discussion on his André Walter phase nor of his acceptance of any other phase of his "moon"-soul: hence Gide's insistence on the one-sidedness of their relations at the very moment of a real opening from Valéry to literary dialogue. The need for an indication from Valéry to his pre-occupations is all the greater since Gide's personality and, therefore, future literature is no longer to be identified with the accepted Andre Walter.² Once again, Valéry must voice his opinions to create a dialogue with their echo.

In his next letter,³ Valéry totally ignores Gide's second attempt to raise the question of friendship. This poses Gide a severe problem, since, unlike Valéry, he cannot "parler tout seul".⁴ It is notable that

1. Mondor, op. cit., p.41.

2. G./V. Corr., 21st March 1891, p.70 : "...je me sens - l'écrivez."

3. Ibid, 24th March 1891, pp.71-72.

4. G./R. Corr., 26th June 1927, p.93.

Valéry's letters can be read much more often on their own. He writes of what he wants to write and picks up points in Gide's letters relatively rarely. The individuality of Valéry's letters leads to the impression of writing for writing's sake and not for dialogue. Thus it is that Gide is obliged to twist Valéry's remarks, in order to introduce his own points of view with some semblance of dialogue and not merely parallel monologue.

This is just what Gide does after receiving a letter from Valéry glorifying the Mass for Palm Sunday. The "Crucificatur!" of the Bible evokes Valéry's comment: "...Cependant il faut bien VIVRE! - Je n'en vois pas la nécessité" (27th March 1891, 73). Gide uses a visit to the Père-Lachaise cemetery as a response to Valéry's Mass. He agrees with Valéry that to live is not strictly necessary and it is precisely "l'atmosphère des paix éternelles" (29th March 1891, 74) which pleased him at the cemetery. Having established an echoing point of contact with Valéry, Gide proceeds to introduce an important preoccupation for him - namely, posthumous and lasting fame. Even this problem, however, is broached only after Valéry has raised it inadvertently by writing that his admiration for Lohengrin is so great that he can but view his unacclaimed literary creation, Narcisse, with such disgust that he may stop writing altogether.

Gide evokes the great literary men buried in Père-Lachaise but also in their work and he adds that: "...dans l'oeuvre à soi il se faut ensevelir peu à peu, tous les jours, pour se sauver de cette 'fausse mort' qui pourrait bien sinon vous envôûter indélébilement" (29th March 1891, 75). Valéry, he insists, must not be discouraged by the imperfection of his Narcisse but must work to render the bier of his work imperishably beautiful. Gide adds encouragement to this advice by his praise for another of Valéry's poems. One senses, in this letter, Gide's pleasure at being able to place his own views in the context of a comforting reply to Valéry's poor view of his Narcisse, thus ensuring an

exchange of ideas.

Valéry's ideas on literary posterity differ from Gide's. Far from wishing to weave an immortal "manteau de gemmes et d'amiante" (75) by the publication of "n'importe quelle 'élégante plaquette'" (15th April 1891, 79), Valéry believes that: "...le livre est saint. On en fait UN, qui est le bon et le seul de son être et l'on disparaît" (79-80). While Gide desires a coat of literary gems to display to posterity, it may be said that Valéry wishes to achieve a single, perfect diamond for himself.

Despite their different viewpoints, Valéry has created discussion by replying to Gide's preoccupation with posterity. Indeed, because of their differing position, there is an opportunity for dialogue through opposition. Just, however, as Valéry often ignores opportunities for responding to Gide's preoccupations, so Gide makes no attempt to pursue a discussion which would involve disagreement. Gide is not yet ready to test their relationship by confronting Valéry with a discordant image.

At the next opportunity, Gide returns to his usual tactics of seizing on any of Valéry's preoccupations which allow the introduction of his own in the apparent form of an echo. In a letter inspired by events at Fourmies,¹ Valéry gives vent to his hatred of the crowds which is matched only by the despairing realisation that his solitary literary aspirations and, hence, life are worthless. Unable to join the common man and depressed by the futility of his literature, Valéry writes that he is dreaming of a bloody war in which he and his respect for literature will be destroyed.² Valéry appeals to Gide to come and awaken "les antiques roses et les lis penchés" (8th May 1891, 83). These flowers obviously represent the satisfaction to be found in art which does not

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1. G./V. Corr., 8th May 1891, Note 1, p. 82. After strikes in the textile industry, a May Day demonstration had ended in the death of ten demonstrators who were shot by the soldiers called in to keep order.
 2. Valéry's dreams are in keeping with the social climate which reigned between 1880 and 1890, when strikes and anarchist movements contributed to political tension.

manifest itself in "un spasme rapide" (82) but achieves permanency through the capturing of an essence.

So strong is Gide's admiration for Valéry's letter that he replies with a direct echo, when he writes of literature:

Nous ne l'avons pas aimée, n'est-ce pas, d'un amour nécessaire, - parce que c'était Elle, et parce que c'était Moi, - mais bien parce que nous ne trouvions rien de mieux pour nous repaître" (12th May 1891, 83).

Gide is not long, nonetheless, in introducing his own preoccupations. After remarking that he is becoming religious and philosophical, Gide uses the disaster at Fourmies as a pretext for writing in this vein.

He blames Christianity for the division of the multitude into individuals who are, somewhat Calvinistically, "tous au premier plan" with the result that: "...notre âme ne se résigne plus à l'humble rôle de comparse" (12th May 1891, 84). Thus isolated from the multitude, one is constantly on stage, Gide complains, forced into a posture by the watchful eyes of oneself, God and the rest of the world. So, Gide cries: "ce sont vos regards qui nous ont soufflé l'orgueil de paraître... Que c'est lassant d'être toujours le centre du monde" (84).

Gide has thus seen in Valéry's letter a pretext to make the rather astonishing leap from social events to the main literary and personal preoccupations of his youth. These problems are frequently evoked in Gide's Journal which is, in fact, the written record of the discoveries of Gide spying upon himself, whether alone, with God or in the world.

Quite clearly, also, Gide is introducing the ideas of the author of the Traité du Narcisse, when he goes on to explain the role of literature. It is in order to forget oneself through adoration that he and Valéry have chosen the god of literature.

Rest comes from self-forgetfulness and, Gide adds, this is why, in literary priesthood, both have loved literature and must always come back to it because: "Elle est 'dans le sang'" (84).

In his excitement Gide has forgotten to be consistent but is, at least honest. Love of literature is a necessary condition for him, despite his previous comments on it.¹ Nonetheless, he understands Valéry's desire to renounce his literary faith in some purely physical enthusiasm which would immerse them in the multitude, but doubts their ability to do this without realising the bitterness of their sacrifice. Gide finishes on a religious note: "Seigneur, délivrez-nous du fardeau de nos pesantes âmes...Délivrez-nous, Seigneur, de toute cette littérature" (12th May 1891, 85).

Gide is concerned here with "being" which, because of his high degree of literary consciousness, may become "appearing" only. As A. Girard remarks:

...si tout sentiment ou toute pensée se transforment en expression, ils n'existent plus à la limite que dans la transcription même, et il devient en quelque sorte impossible de discerner la réalité.²

Nonetheless, through the inconsistency of Gide's letter to Valéry, there appears one clear indication. No matter how difficult the path, Gide will always come back to literature despite the temptation to "aller pleurer dans une église" (85) or to join the masses.

In this, he differs from Valéry to a certain extent. As always, Gide's "echo" is never exact but always modified or refracted by his own views. According to Valéry's letter, which Gide takes at face value, the only alternative to despair in literature lies in nihilism and not in the adoration of other gods. Unlike Valéry, Gide experiences the periodic temptation to abandon literature for life or to put it to the service of external controls but rarely expresses his belief that it is futile or

1. See: above, p. 89.

2. A. Girard, "Le Journal dans l'Oeuvre de Gide", Entretiens, p. 192.

hopeless.¹

Gide's letter thus points to the differences between his own and Valéry's literary positions. There is, at this stage, no attempt made to discuss these differences. This is probably because the two writers are not yet fully aware of their existence rather than because of any conscious unwillingness to pursue the matter.

In spite of his pleas to the Divinity to deliver him from the burden of literature, Gide, in his next letters, returns to this preoccupying subject. This time, it is to write of his own production. Twice Gide mentions a poem² he is writing for Pierre Louÿs' review, La Conque. Although he feels sure that Valéry will not like his poem, Gide confesses that he would like to have shown it to him. One wonders if Gide is not trying to provoke Valéry to curiosity by not going into more detail. If Gide does hope to open a discussion on his work, he is to be sadly disappointed.

In his reply to Gide's second letter³ Valéry mentions that he is writing for La Conque too, without expressing any interest in Gide's poem nor any desire for Gide's opinion on his own. Valéry does reply, though, to Gide's queries about an article on modern metrics,⁴ by giving his own mathematical opinion on the subject.

Discouraged in his attempts to discuss their own literature, Gide tries to continue discussion along the lines accepted by Valéry. He is delighted by Valéry's comment on scansion, "'Le rythme est une question

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1. An exception to this is to be found in Feuillets d'Automne, J.2, p. 311: "Quel fatras - démoralisateurs!"
 2. "La Promenade". G./V. Corr., 2nd June and 11th June 1891, pp. 88-89 and 91-93.
 3. Ibid, 15th June 1891, pp. 93-95.
 4. Ibid, 11th June 1891, p. 92.

de sous-multiples'" (17th June 1891, 96) and chooses the mute "e" as the next topic for talking shop. Gide and De Régnier¹ both believe the mute "e" is absolutely essential to the musicality of French verse and should never be suppressed. Valéry, on the other hand, believes that the most important thing to be considered is the place of the mute "e".

Gide returns to literary considerations which interest him more when he mentions the writing of Le Traité du Narcisse, the evolution of which has been influenced by Valéry.² He also criticises Valéry's La Fileuse which, apart from the rhythm of certain lines, pleases him. In his next letter,³ Gide states his own and what he believes to be Valéry's viewpoint on poetry. Gide remains in the Symbolists' camp by his refusal of inspiration in poetry:

Il faut que les choses aient résisté à nous lorsque nous les voulions 'faire' pour ensuite pouvoir résister au temps quand il les voudra défaire; il faut qu'elles soient éprouvées (29th June 1891, 105).

More personal is his equation between posthumous success and effort in creation.

Valéry replies to none of these points, but, quite unsolicited, gives Gide the opportunity for discussion on love and friendship that he has sought before to no avail. Quite overcome by the sight of an unknown woman, Valéry writes a short, beautiful letter to Gide, "le meilleur", on the dispossession of his soul by "la robe" (4th July 1891, 107).

The most important part of this letter to Gide is Valéry's epithet of "le meilleur". This is the status Gide desires and struggles to achieve. This, Gide writes, is what accounts for his jealousy and the apparent prostitution of his soul in his efforts to please. Moreover, the purer side of his nature condemns "tous ces soupirs de vieille amoureuxse" (9th July 1891, 108).

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1. Henri de Régnier, poet and novelist, five years older than Gide, was also a frequenter of Mallarmé's literary evenings.
 2. G./V. Corr., 23rd June 1891, p. 100.
 3. G./V. Corr., 29th June 1891, pp. 104-107.

By thus explaining his attitude to friendship to Valéry, Gide proves he is conscious of its ambiguity. There is none of this ambiguity when Gide writes simply of his cousin Madeleine: "Pour moi je n'ai connu jamais qu'Emmanuèle; mais mon coeur, mon esprit et mon ame, elle les a pour jamais parfumés" (108). In fact, outside friendship, Gide cannot truly understand "ces pâmoisons du coeur" (9th July 1891, 108) which are now affecting Valéry. This is shown clearly when Gide writes:

Alors voilà que votre coeur aussi a chanté de nouvelles tendresses! Ne croyez pas que je vous en blâme: laissez-vous aimer, abandonnez-vous, de peur après de ne plus savoir être sincère. Puis ces joies sont encore très belles parfois... Il ne faut rien dédaigner que le mensonge, dans ce monde; et ne pas dire: telle chose est de l'art, et telle n'en est point. Toutes choses, universellement sont dans l'Art - ou plutôt l'Art est en nous, que nous projetons sur toutes choses et même sur le banal et ravissant amour (108).

This passage is interesting not only because it shows Gide's basic incomprehension for Valéry's new experience, but also because Gide, irresistibly one feels, introduces another aspect of his artistic position as exposed in his Traité du Narcisse.¹ Gide is merely making the more banal substitute of love for "les plus funestes choses" which he feels called upon to "manifest" in his art.

By expressing his artistic principles, Gide is also minimising the importance of his differences to Valéry by binding all experience together in art. Valéry's reply to Gide's views on friendship and on art gives Gide the opportunity to continue discussion: "Malgré que votre lettre semble dédaigner ce qui m'attire en amitié comme en tout - l'absolu-elle est belle et bonne d'une vérité ineffable" (13th July 1891, 110). Valéry has swiftly seen the implications of Gide's rather shame-faced explanation of his attitude to friendship coupled with his

1. Romans, TN, note, pp. 8-9.

prim reaction to Valéry's passion which differs so from Gide's own relations with his cousin. Indeed, Gide cannot find the "absolute" in any one relationship.

However, as Gide previously avoided opposition by binding Valéry to him by means of his own artistic concepts, so, in his next letter, he denies Valéry's interpretation of their differences, which, had they been exploited might have lead to open opposition of their views. Instead, Gide states more clearly than ever before his need to echo Valéry:

...j'ai peur d'un mot maladroit qui te ferait croire que je n'ai pas compris ton âme, et que je suis 'un autre', alors que je connais en moi assez de modalités différentes pour qu'une enfin pourtant te reflète. (Par instants, je pense qu'il faudrait être tout reflet, reflet de quelque séraphique aurore)
(14th and 15th July, 1891, 111).

This explains why Gide denies that he is not searching for the absolute and now approves Valéry's new love whole-heartedly¹ if, one feels, with some misapprehension. Gide may have many "modalités" but he is lacking in the very one which would enable him to understand that Valéry's feelings are probably very far from the mystical fervour to which Gide likens them.

Having reassured Valéry that their views are but one, Gide anxiously questions him about his attitude to love, in order to avoid stating any of his opinions which might not be shared by Valéry.

Valéry's attitude is not the search for self-forgetfulness that Gide has already suggested as a reason for their love of literature. On the contrary, Valéry, is looking for himself in love and for "une manifestation du mystère extérieur, une correspondance occulte, une harmonie de volontés" (July 1891, 113).

Curiously enough, after all his insistence on this subject, Gide refuses to reply to Valéry on the pretext that he would write badly of love that day.²

It is possible that the two friends had a subsequent conversation

1. G./V. Corr., 14th and 15th July 1891, p. 111: "Oui, j'aime - floraisons".
2. Ibid, 31st July 1891, p. 115.

on this matter. However, one would expect Gide to write more fully about it since he now knows Valéry's views, which might well describe Gide's relations with his cousin. Gide's lack of response is difficult to explain, but may be due either to the unusual discretion he showed when writing of Madeleine or to the fact that he is less rich in "modalités" at that moment than he would like to admit. It is not to be forgotten that Gide is writing his Traité and that his own concept of his contact with others is changing.

After a letter from Valéry on his readings,¹ Gide reverts to the subject of literature.² He echoes Valéry's letter by mentioning the books he is reading but is obviously more interested in his own literary position. He is working with great joy and, "n'était que certains jours mon corps me gêne, rien ne me distrairait vraiment de très hautes pensées" (Beginning of August 1891, 117). As for his artistic position, Gide claims he is a deserter of any school of literary thought and will always be a "pseudo quelque chose" (118). Thus Gide timidly indicates his development as a writer.

This letter is followed by one from Valéry in which he attacks art as a plaything: books are simply a repetition of what their authors are and, as such, useless. As for life, the insomniac Valéry writes: "Tout est faux! ...Tout est la désolation de l'ennui" (10th August 1891, 119-120). Immediately, Gide changes from the carefree creator of his previous letter to a doubting echo of Valéry, the denigrator of art. He tells Valéry that he is writing poetry regularly but joylessly while trying to persuade himself that his verse belongs to some new metrical school since free verse is just as ridiculous as the alexandrine.

1. G./V. Corr., Beginning of August 1891, pp. 115-117.

2. Ibid., Beginning of August, pp. 117-119.

This mournful picture is to be contrasted with Gide's happy assertion that he is a member of no literary school. Gide continues by echoing Valéry's conviction that their books must always be repetitive:

"Certaines heures, je trouve risible ces efforts pour tâcher de redonner du mystère à des choses qui n'en ont plus. Nous sommes comme des refaiseurs de virginités mortes (28th August 1891, 121).

Although Gide may be questioning his own literary vocation, it seems more likely to me that he is intent on reflecting Valéry's opinion in order to understand it better. Valéry himself makes no attempt to prompt Gide into expressing any other views. He does not, however, accept Gide's statement that he likes farce,¹ and provokes him into self-reproach:

Tu dis vrai; je n'aime pas la blague...Que de mensonges avatars n'a-t-elle pas pris, ma petite âme prostituée, par désir d'amour, seulement; de sorte que je ne la connais plus bien, tant elle n'est souvent qu'un reflet amoureux d'autres âmes (9th September 1891, 124).

Thus, on subjects of little importance and, when provoked, Gide is willing to discard his role of echo and even question it.

It is noticeable, so far, that for more weighty matters Valéry does not really encourage Gide to voice his own opinions more openly. If, however, his view of love as "une harmonie de volontés" holds good for friendship, then he, like Gide, must desire mutually reflecting points of view. For the moment, Valéry seems to be unaware that Gide is almost constantly the mirror and Gide himself is far from resenting this role.

Gide is not, forasmuch, completely dependent on Valéry for self-expression. He does, indeed, provoke Valéry's reaction by doubting the faithfulness of Valéry's friendship.² Valéry defends himself by pointing out that he does not share himself between friends, as does

1. G./V. Corr., August 1891, p. 122.

2. G./V. Corr., 9th September 1891, pp. 123-124.

Gide, but:

...chacun des vrais miens m'a tout ENTIER! Tu es pourtant le seul à qui j'ai [sic] dit certaines choses...Amitié, ta blanche parole est encore la seule chose qui filtre au fond de moi. Ami, tes manifestations vers moi sont la plus pure apparition d'une Vérité, s'il y en a une" (September 1891, 125-127).

Where science and literature have failed, by his own admission, to bring Valéry anything more than initiations, friendship is lauded as a possible truth.

To this and another shorter letter,¹ Gide replies: "...si, à ta lassitude, je sympathise de loin et comme en artiste, je me laisse vite de refléter ta chère âme" (September 1891, 128). The explanation of his sudden independence is to be explained, I feel, by Valéry's comment on his own writing:

Je ne dis jamais mon âme en vers ni en toute autre littérature (hors celle-ci qui n'en est pas), car écrire! ce n'est pas se faire rougir, ni affronter l'indifférence - mais bien l'ambition d'abord de saisir un lecteur idéal et de le traîner sans s'émouvoir - ou encore de l'éblouir, l'étourdir, le réduire par la Vérité supérieure et la force magique, oui, merveilleuse! de créer tout ce qu'on veut avec de petits signes comme ceux-ci! (September 1891, 126).

Such a concept of literature is quite different to that of Gide. Not only has Gide already admitted to the highly personal inspiration behind the Cahiers d'André Walter² but also to his preoccupation with posterity and his desire, precisely, to "affronter l'indifférence".³ Moreover, the "manifeste"⁴ and the "'Il faut que le scandale arrive'"⁵ of the Traité du Narcisse are quite clearly opposed to the discreet, linguistically-based writing advocated by Valéry.

Valéry's views on his ideal reading public are also far more exclusive than those of Gide who, while he perhaps desired to be followed

1. G./V. Corr., 11th September 1891, p. 127.

2. Ibid, February 1891, pl 54 and 8th March 1891, pp. 65-66.

3. See: above, pp. 37-38.

4. Romans, TN, p. 8.

5. Ibid, p. 9.

by an élite, became very upset when the numbers of this élite were too reduced.

As Gide's art develops, too, the effect desired by him upon his readers is not the apparently crushing conviction that Valéry writes of; rather he wishes to provoke thought in his reader.

Valéry's views on literature directly question Gide's own. When the very foundations of his art are concerned, Gide cannot echo blindly. For the first time, therefore, he disclaims the need to reflect and, indeed, asserts himself.

Full of joy, Gide writes that he is working in superb and solitary fervour: "Je m'amuse puerilement aux choses, et j'ai des regards vierges pour tous les éblouissements" (September 1891, 128). Gone is the Gide who is incapable of reaching any depth without the presence of another "Esthète" (28th August 1891, 120). Gone is the "refaiseur de virginités mortes" (121). Everything is new for Gide. True creation exists and depends on his very solitude. Also, when Gide writes:

Les choses sont laides, je sais, mais elles s'efforcent
vers des choses superbes, qu'elles ne seront jamais,
mais que nous voyons, poètes, au travers d'elles. Il
faut voir le monde tel qu'il devrait être (128).

weary negativity that Valéry shows in his letters to he is deliberately opposing the ¹ the significance of his artistic work which, to add insult to injury, is not going to please Valéry.

Although Gide's view that one must see the world as it ought to be is not new,² his optimism about the role and impact of his vision is. Protected by his very optimism in his work, Gide can safely bombard Valéry with his own views.

Self-assertion in the domain of literature is swiftly followed by self-assertion in their personal relations. From Paris, Valéry writes a harshly accusatory letter to Gide. The latter has written to

1. Le Traité du Narcisse.

2. See: above, p. 82.

Camille Mauclair a letter so intimate that the knowledge of it has made Valéry extremely sad and jealous. He uses Gide's own terms, when he taxes Gide with the prostitution of his soul to all comers.

Gide is quite impenitent:

De quoi m'en veux-tu...? De ce que je me suis prostitué à quelque autre? Mais tu sais bien que mon âme est en chaleur sans cesse; il faut qu'elle se rassasie. Ne lui en veuille pas trop de ce qu'elle va mendier partout des tendresses. N'est-ce pas toi tantôt qui lui conseillais de 'brûler'? (7th October 1891, 131).

Maliciously, Gide has turned Valéry's own words against him.¹ For the first time, one feels, Gide has the upper hand in his relations with Valéry, since in this letter, he neither echoes Valéry nor apologises for not doing so. Simply, Gide tells Valéry to accept him as he is in this "modalité" of his soul which has no bearing on the greater exclusivity of Valéry's character.

The Traité du Narcisse has thus helped Gide to declare his differences to Valéry openly. While Robert Mallet is possibly right when he says: "Gide s'aperçoit très vite de tout ce qui le rend différent de Valéry",² his conclusion, "Au lieu d'en être déçu, il se sent stimulé",³ is premature and sweeping. Gide's terror when he thinks that his opinion differs from Valéry's has given way only with literary certainty:

Gide's letter,⁴ inspired by the Traité, shows the beginnings of the new moral and artistic avenues which will result in his journey to Africa and the Nourritures terrestres. Gide is even now conscious of the artistic differences which will declare themselves more and more between him and Valéry. Ramon Fernandez sums up Valéry's and Gide's positions of this time well, when he writes that there are:

1. G./V. Corr., 7th October 1891, p. 131: "Brûler au creux de tous les temples..."

2. Ibid, p. 26.

3. Ibid, p. 26.

4. Ibid, September 1891, pp. 127-128.

...deux attitudes possibles: ou bien l'artiste découvre un malentendu entre lui et le monde humain; les actions et les sentiments sont à ses yeux matière brute qui ne peut que vicier l'oeuvre, laquelle sera d'autant plus belle qu'elle sera plus 'pure'; ou bien il tient au contraire pour la plus belle victoire de la poésie qu'elle puisse survivre à l'absorption de la réalité dans sa 'prismatique diversité'. La première attitude est celle de Paul Valéry, qui ne se résoudra jamais à écrire que 'la marquise sortit à cinq heures'. La seconde sera celle de Gide, mais ne l'était pas encore en 1890. C'est pourquoi l'on peut dire qu'il se fourvoyait sur les moyens tout en percevant clairement le but. Gide n'avait pas les moyens de Paul Valéry, pas plus que Valéry n'a les moyens de Gide. La dédicace du Narcisse à Paul Valéry, dans la perspective du passé, fait figure de restitution.¹

2. The Dual Development of Gide to the Voyage d'Urien.

A meeting with Valéry puts an end to Gide's newfound and almost insolent independence. One wonders if Valéry's greater assurance in the spoken word has not caused this reversal. Indeed, it is probable that, without the written word, Gide would not have been able to make this bid for expression of his own character,² since he was always rather in awe of Valéry's verbal capacities.³

In his first letter subsequent to their meeting, Gide carefully echoes Valéry's relief at leaving Paris.⁴ He also agrees now with Valéry that intimacy is desirable only with a few. His mistake, Gide admits, has been to try to "make friendship" as one would make love. With unconscious honesty, Gide adds that this is because he has no desire to make love. In his contempt for his former self, Gide goes too far

1. André Gide, Corrèa, Paris, 1931, p. 62. The only reserve I would make about Fernandez' judgement is that Valéry's rejection of life was not so absolute as might seem from this passage.

2. See: above, Chapter One, p. 40.

3. J.2, 26th June 1943, p. 248 and M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 13th September 1922, p. 155.

4. G./V. Corr., 27th October 1891 and 3rd November, pp. 132-135. Gide echoes stylistically too. See: Valéry's "Voici - peu", p. 132 and Gide's "Des bois - sonores", p. 133.

in the other direction. Only the transcendental emotions of pure spirits are not worthless to him now. Even "Sympathie" comes under the Gidian axe and is dismissed as the weakness of those who are not self-sufficient. Henceforth, Gide declares, he will suffice unto himself, with God.

Even Gide's confidence in his Traité becomes hesitant in this letter. The work is finished but Gide is not completely satisfied with it and he now wonders anxiously if it will please Valéry. This is very far from his casual pronouncement that Valéry will not like this work. Nonetheless, Gide's Traité and Valéry's judgement of it are important enough for Gide to explain to Valéry:

Toujours l'effort pour l'écrire n'est-il pas perdu, car il m'a débrouillé toute mon esthétique, ma morale et ma philosophie. Et l'on ne m'empêchera pas de croire qu'il faut que tout auteur ait une philosophie, une morale, une esthétique particulières. On ne crée rien sans cela. L'oeuvre n'est qu'une manifestation de cela (3rd November 1891, 134).

In his next letter, Valéry, typically by now, makes no response to Gide's statement of his moral-cum-artistic position, nor does he wish to know more about Gide's work. However, he does pick up Gide's remark on "Sympathie". Rightly, he guesses that Gide's severity is not sincerely felt but is a mere attempt to please him, and he adds: "...je t'assure que je déteste cordialement tout ce qui pourrait sonner faux car j'ai cette oreille-là d'une justice non pareille" (7th November 1891, 135).

Although Valéry's ear is not always as acute as he believes it to be, this is, at least, an encouraging step forward. Valéry is urging Gide to echo only if he can do so with honesty. Gide's "honesty" is made complex by his desire for "Dépersonnalisation"¹ but this does not mean that he is entirely without a personal opinion, as his reply shows:

"Tu as raison: peut-être disais-je hier du mal de la Sympathie, par excès de sympathie même, 'pour te faire plaisir'. Pourtant je le pensais hier, et vrai! je me croyais sincère" (15th November 1891, 137).

1. Gide calls "Dépersonnalisation" his ability to experience as his own others' feelings and ideas. J.l, January 1912, p. 358.

Once again, Valéry's insistence has forced Gide into stating his fundamental opinion.

In the same breath, Gide announces his intention of dedicating his Traité to Valéry. Although Pierre Louys approves completely of his work, Gide expresses his fear that Valéry may find it a little brutal. Gide's anxiety is perhaps not without justification if one remembers Valéry's comment that literature should not provoke scandal.¹

Although Valéry recognises the importance of Gide's dedication, he himself, looks upon correspondence as the supreme dedication of "une oeuvre d'art ornemental charmante" (16th November 1891, 138) to one person only. Yet again, Valéry shows his desire for exclusivity and his lack of concern with a public. Gide, on the contrary, cares about his public, especially in his newfound role of the artist who "manifests".²

Not surprisingly, therefore, he makes no reply to Valéry's view of correspondence. The superior position granted by Valéry to the latter over literature is in keeping. Valéry is always more ready to respond on the issue of private friendship which seems to be more important to him than that of literature. Gide, on the other hand, lays more importance on his literature which is obviously destined to become public property. This difference between the two men is not as yet prominent. The young Gide feels a very deep need for friendship; but as the literary man grows, so too grows his discontent at Valéry's apparent lack of interest in his literary production.

The fact that Gide does not continue to discuss the question of dedication is also due to his being caught up in a new set of circumstances. Gide has become "quelqu'un d'abruti, qui ne lit plus, qui n'écrit plus, qui ne dort plus, ni ne mange, ni ne pense" (28th November 1891, 139), but who frequents cafes and salons with the admirable "esthète Oscar

1. G./V. Corr., September 1891, p.126.

2. I believe that Gide uses this word in his Traité not just in the sense of "portraying clearly" but also with its more active connotations, as does Maurice Nadeau, Romans, p.XVI.

Wilde" (139).

Although this is not the first time Gide has succumbed to the temptation of the outside world, it is the first time that Valéry expresses disapproval of his friend's fascination with what he sees as shallow, literary circles. One is left in no doubt that it is Wilde who has incurred Valéry's displeasure : "Courir parmi les Oscar Wilde rêvés, dont les apparences auront fait espérer à tes doigts le secret de la beauté nouvelle...c'est d'un insensé" (3rd December 1891, 140).

For Valéry, who is seeking the permanent, the absolute, "les apparences fugitives" are one of the greatest dangers to his friend. Perhaps to counter-balance this, he evokes the progression of his own friendship with Gide and bids him to come and see him.

The influence of Wilde upon Gide is only possible because Gide himself has already taken the first steps away from Symbolism and the priority of the soul through his writing the Traité. His reaction to Huysman's Là-Bas also points to this development since, despite his interest in the book, he finds it rather annoying with its "élans vers l'au-delà, ses bonds vers le supra-sensible, ses prurits d'âme" (15th December 1891, 141).

Although the new Gide is originally self-composed, Gide is as conscious as Valéry of the danger Wilde constitutes for him. He promises to come to see Valéry in Montpellier but says that : "...ce ne sera jamais qu'enfin. Je m'englué parmi des apparences; en l'attente du soir où près des cygnes noirs du bassin, nous causerons de choses, réelles" (28th November 1891, 139).

Despite Gide's obvious longing for the black swans, which represent not only his previous meeting with Valéry but all the purity of his youth and his attraction to Symbolism, it is clear that he is so far under Wilde's influence that it is only a last desperate effort which will enable him to escape from Wilde's "pious" attempts to kill "ce qui me restait d'âme" (December 1891, 141). This last phrase shows that Gide

has already, on his own, severed all but a few links with the world of the soul. Nonetheless, the fact that Gide writes : "...je n'ai plus dans le coeur un silence" (141), indicates, by his use of a word dear to the Symbolists, that he regrets the "real" world of purity.

Gide, the artist, is now dreaming of "un drame symétrique, où les fantoches évolueraient réciproquement, où tout se tiendrait dans une nécessaire dépendance. Où l'artifice, où l'art seraient de subordination" (141). Aesthetics are thus to be subjugated to ideas.

Valéry is quick to spot the danger of such an approach to art. Just as Valéry disapproves of Wilde, this "symbolique bouche à la Redon" (5th December 1891, 142), so he cannot accept Gide's artistic plans. Valéry is convinced that determinism and logic are the negation of beauty and must be the enemies of any true artist.¹ Besides, Valéry feels that the only perfect drama is that provided by the Mass.²

This confrontation between two artistic standpoints is not destined to be continued in correspondence, although much later on Gide himself raises this question in his correspondence with Martin du Gard. Gide who "depuis Wilde... n'existe plus que très peu" (Christmas Eve, 1891, 144), can no longer resist his friend's call.

Gide has high hopes for the explanatory conversation he will have with Valéry. When he writes : "...je me souhaite auprès de ton âme silencieuse une oasis tranquille" (144), he is obviously expecting Valéry's presence to rescue him from the rather frightening gulf to which his moral, social and artistic development has lead him. Gide is still wavering on the threshold of his Traité^{In fact} their conversation proves

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1. Pierre Louÿs also reproaches Gide with attaching too much importance to ideas and not enough to plastic beauty. Paul Iseler, op.cit.pp.91-93.
 2. G./V. Corr., 5th December 1891, pp.142-143.

to be disappointing.¹ There is, however, no attempt to make up for this by a posterior letter, perhaps because Gide, in one of his sudden changes of mood, is already far from the terrors of Wilde's attacks on his soul.²

With Gide's Poésies d'André Walter, the two friends resume their pre-Wilde dialogue. Valéry is enchanted with Gide's free verse.³ He regrets that he has no work worthy of being dedicated to Gide but writes that his best work is his friendship with him and one or two others. Encouraged by Valéry's interest in his art and preference for him Gide replies both as an artist and a friend. The artist speaks with somewhat unflattering sincerity :

J'ai tout une portée de livres dans ma tête, que
je m'enrage de n'avoir pas le temps d'écrire. On ne
devrait faire que des livres dans sa vie; comme tout
le reste m'embête!! même de t'écrire!! (21st March 1891, 153-4).

This is much more the joyous creator of old and Gide softens the effect of his words by writing :

Fidèle, c'est : qui pense dans l'absolu. Je t'aime
parcequ'il n'y a qu'à toi qu'on ose écrire ces vérités,
qu'à toi...et encore c'est parce que tu m'en écris de
plus folles encore (154).

This evocation of the absolute pleases Valéry as it is intended to do. Indeed, on reading Gide's letter, Valéry feels as if they were :
"...deux miroirs jumeaux de métal différent, et qu'un geste eût lieu dans l'un - puis, après un temps exquis - se baignât dans l'autre, le même et cependant ailleurs" (4th April 1891, 155). Valéry's pleasure in Gide's letter comes, therefore, from the ability to identify with the other through reflected impressions. Thus, Valéry, like Gide, does not yet seem to believe that anything is to be gained from opposition.

In fact, Gide is experiencing growing difficulty in reflecting and Valéry's own mirror is not always prompt to reflect in literary matters. This is shown to be the case, considerations of modesty apart, when Gide

1. G./V. Corr., 15th February and 2nd March 1891, pp. 147-149.

2. Ibid, 2nd March 1891. Gide is happily composing his "library" for his journey to Munich.

3. Ibid, 6th March 1891, p. 151.

writes of the Voyage au Spitzberg¹: "Je m'exaspère sur une besogne très ardue et que je crains absurde d'avance; de plus, qui ne te plaira pas et ca me désole" (25th July 1892, 167). At the same time, he points out to Valéry that he has not given his views on Les Poésies d'André Walter. Thus prompted, Valéry gives his opinion on Gide's poems². Delighted, Gide replies: "Les lettres de toi sont une des joies de l'existence!!" (August 1892, 169), and, no longer so afraid of Valéry's indifference, he writes spontaneously of his book. He is now working in a state of joyous excitement but would very much like to talk to Valéry because: "Tu comprends, toi, comme c'est difficile d'écrire, tant que notre esthétique n'est pas parfaitement clarifiée" (August 1892, 170). This factor is true throughout Gide's life, although the work of art, in turn, can help to determine Gide's approach to art. As will be seen, in the following chapters of this thesis, the initial reason for Gide's engaging in epistolary discussion is, often, this very need to establish an artistic position.

Valéry is not long in giving his opinion on the Voyage d'Urien. He divides the book mathematically into its hot and cold, descriptive and ethical parts. He criticises, among other things, the successive and discontinuous quality of the work, the frequent monotony of the style and "le travail un peu visible" (January 1893, 179). He also warns Gide against the danger of stagnating in "les jeux assez tristes du 'paysage d'âme'" (179). Finally, Valéry expresses his belief that: "...tu t'efforces ...trop vers ton livre - pas assez vers Toi. Tout ce qui t'a paru beau, tu voulais l'en parer - mais gare à la Littérature" (180). Unfortunately, more detailed discussion on Gide's work takes place in conversation.

This is, so far, the longest criticism Valéry has made of any of Gide's

1. To become the Voyage d'Urien.
2. G./V. Corr., 30th July 1892, p. 168.

works. Although Valéry's comments are quite pertinent to Gide's work, his warnings against the "'paysage d'âme'" show that he has not grasped the irony of the Voyage d'Urien.¹ Valéry's accusations that Gide has done too much for his work and not enough for himself need some qualifying. Gide has put a lot of himself into ~~this~~ work. If his work, nonetheless, has pride of place, this is quite in keeping with the artistic credo of the Traité du Narcisse which is that the artist must both forget and subordinate himself to his work.

Nonetheless, Valéry is not entirely wrong in his suggestion that Gide's god in the Voyage d'Urien is the impersonal one of literature. To this extent, Gide has failed that other artistic belief : "...il faut que tout auteur ait une philosophie, une morale, une esthétique particulières" (3rd November 1891, 134). In the Voyage d'Urien, there is still some of the stylistic complacency Gide later criticised in his Preface² to the Cahiers d'André Walter. Gide, the artist, and his style are by no means always subordinated to the ideas in this work or, in other words, to the characters who express them. In Paludes, which criticises stagnation and the "'paysage d'âme'", Gide comes far closer to this. It would, nonetheless, be going too far to assume that Valéry's advice is directly responsible.

This second stage in literary discussion, culminating in Valéry's letter on the Voyage d'Urien, has shown that Gide is in an intermediary stage, hesitating between his past and the logical step forward to be made after the Traité du Narcisse. Valéry and Wilde obviously epitomize two possible paths Gide might follow. Under these circumstances, Valéry is a safeguard against too abrupt a change in Gide and the Voyage d'Urien brings together past and future in a less "brutal" way than Gide's Traité.

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1. Valéry also fails to recognise the critical aspect of Paludes and L'Immoraliste.
 2. Preface of 1930. Les Cahiers et les Poésies d'André Walter, Gallimard, 1952, pp. 9-12.

3. The Introduction of Discussion upon
Gide's and Valéry's Differences.

It is fitting that Valéry's letter on the Voyage d'Urien should be the longest on Gide's work to date, since it is the last work for which Valéry will have real sympathy. Gide the man and the artist are changing and the correspondence reflects this.

After a letter from Valéry lamenting his inability to obtain the absolute, Gide dares to question the necessity of this search. Not only does Gide confess to understanding those who prefer an illusion to the absolute but states his belief that one must consent to this illusion because : "...chaque limite, sans cet a peu près qui l'effrite, serait coupante" (24th August 1893, 185). Thus the sacred Absolute is reduced by Gide to a mere limitation, an obstacle to progress. As only too often, Valéry does not prolong the discussion.

Their philosophical differences are followed by artistic and moral ones. A reading of the Tentative amoureuse has left Valéry perplexed. In order to understand this work, he writes, Gide would have to explain it to him word by word. Gide's reply¹ shows that he realises to the full all that separates him from Valéry on an artistic plane. This letter seems to suggest that Valéry's lack of comprehension for his work is seen by Gide as proof that Valéry was only able to follow him while he was in or near the confines of Symbolism, when an aesthetic, linguistic appreciation of his work could suffice.

Gide questions his ability, henceforth, to dedicate any of his works to his friend and adds : "Au moins peut-on s'écrire et se lire à travers les autres" (December 1893, 194). In this light, correspondence is obviously being suggested by Gide as a form of dedication. Thus, Gide echoes Valéry's own concept of their letters² but, whereas Valéry believes that correspondence is the supreme dedication, for Gide it is very much second-best to his works.

1. G./V. Corr., December 1893, p.194

2. Ibid., 16th November 1891, p. 138.

This blow to discussion on his literature leaves Gide saddened. Nor is there the possibility of dialogue through opposition of their viewpoints, since Valéry's incomprehension certainly appears greater to Gide than his desire to discuss.

Meanwhile, Gide's moral development is drawing him away from Valéry. From Biskra he writes :

Je ne te dirai rien de mon voyage parce que je crois que tu ne l'approuves pas, mais je crois que voyager aussi est un art et que ça peut devenir amusant. J'ai goûté des détresses pour moi jusqu'alors inconnues; je me suis amusé à ne vivre qu'avec des officiers et j'ai maintenant le souvenir de fêtes vraiment brutales (27th November 1893, 192).

Indeed, of his stay in Biskra, Gide tells Valéry nothing when compared to the lyricism of the letters he wrote to his mother of this time. Conscious that Valéry would have had as much difficulty in understanding his moral as his artistic evolution, Gide resorts to silence rather than to the test of opposition.

Gide is however, resentful of this state of affairs since he also writes from North Africa :

Jamais plus qu'avec toi je n'ai senti la vanité de mes paroles. Il me semble toujours que je jette mes lettres pour toi dans le vide; cela n'aurait rien de bien curieux, si précisément notre amitié ne m'apparaissait comme une chose très réelle et dont, sans que mon être en sentit au début le besoin, je ne saurais à présent me passer; elle restera pourtant une chose pour moi toujours mystérieuse, un rapport entre deux incommensurables (March 1894, 200-201).

This accusation is founded. The lack of dialogue behind their undeniably deep friendship comes more from Valéry's apparent indifference than from Gide's fear of being "another" by introducing his own preoccupations. Indeed, Claude Martin believes that Valéry's indifference to Gide's works was very real and that their friendship was "intellectuellement et littérairement, à sens unique".¹

1. MAG, p. 54.

Valéry's reply unconsciously shows the truth of this when he picks up Gide's reference to "deux incommensurables" and takes it only for himself. Valéry also starts his letter : "Tu vois, chère ami, j'y suis et ta chère lettre aura de suite ma réponse - mais pas la sienne" (19th March 1894, 201), which suggests that Gide is right in his assumption that his letters fall on stony ground with Valéry.

Instead of referring to Gide, Valéry, in a later letter writes of Pierre Louÿs : "...Je ne lui ai jamais fait plaisir et... je ne félicite jamais et...j'approuve peu. J'ai cela de difficile que je demande implicitement à mes amis d'agir contre leur nature" (14th July 1894, 209). It is possible that Valéry is making a belated reply to Gide's reproaches since his comments on his relations with Louÿs are to be compared to those he later made on Gide :

Je vois Gide à peu près comme je me vois - c'est-à-dire qu'il me paraît digne de...justice. Ce mot abject n'a de sens qu'en égotisme. Saisissez s.v.p. Quand j'aime quelqu'un, je le traite comme moi-même, c'est-à-dire, très mal, très soigneusement, très intimement, durement. 1

Although, in his letters, Valéry does not seem to have treated Gide "très soigneusement" up till now, one sees that his lack of encouragement to Gide implies no lack of respect.

Gide himself is impressed by the fact that Valéry's comments on Louÿs also explain his own relations with Valéry and adds : "Ma nature, il me semble, a changé : je suis moins accroupi. Méritai-je que tu m'en félicites, ou dois-je- aux étoiles d'être si tellement (sic) heureux?" (16th July 1894, 211). Gide is guilty of some self-deception here if he imagines that Valéry is responsible for his own development. If Valéry has made Gide act contrary to his nature, it has been more by his unconscious prevention of the open expression of Gide's true views.

1. Lettres à Quelques-Uns, Gallimard 1952, letter of May 1905, p.67.

This momentary smoothing-over of their differences does not last long. Gide is provoked into open complaint by a letter where Valéry dismisses the findings of certain great literary men from the past, before treating his contemporaries in like manner. Valéry writes : "Le monde est plein d'intelligentes molleses. Et qui a du courage doit perdre les meilleures années à se refaire entièrement le cerveau. Tout remettre en question. Et on n'y arrive pas" (7th September 1894, 215). Thus, all work, even Valéry's own, ends in a blind alley.

Unfortunately, Gide's letter of protest against Valéry's pessimistic view of himself and others is lost. However, its contents can be guessed at from Valéry's reply. Perhaps the most important part of this letter is Valéry's introductory comment : "Mon seul étonnement est que tu aies tant tardé...à le dire" (10th November 1894, 216). This shows clearly the complete unconsciousness of Valéry's lack of encouragement to Gide to speak his mind. He wishes for the very freedom of speech that Gide can only give under supreme provocation or on the crest of a literary wave.

Gide's accusations against Valéry as an "avorteur ou emménagogue de livres et de lettres, ou antimatéistique" (216) meet with Valéry's reply :

...j'ai toujours supplié mes interlocuteurs de ne tenir aucun compte de mes sentimens [sic] - ce qui est très facile - ensuite, de ne rien accepter de mes théories sans les éprouver logiquement; du reste, j'ai toujours répété que je ne pouvais concevoir une théorie générale : une théorie non personnelle est non fonction du théoricien (10th November 1894, 216-7).

Although Valéry is advocating complete freedom of expression for both himself and his interlocutor, one still has the impression that dialogue is impossible since, in spite of Valéry's refusal of the notion of general theory, he seems equally to reject the feasibility of any mutual acceptance or common bond between two entities with differing, personal theories.

This, in more exaggerated form, has obviously been one of Gide's complaints since Valéry writes : "Mais en quoi suis-je désolant et pour toi, mon ami, qui sembles dire que tes lettres sont méprisées, que je ne te comprends pas et que les motifs premiers de mes actes t'échappent?" (217). Still in terms of himself, Valéry sets about reassuring Gide who, he admits here, has been practically his only confidant all the time.

Valéry tells Gide how much he has suffered from what appears to be his voluntary isolation and that the only balm has been his correspondence with Gide to whom he has poured out his sufferings. The very real place Gide holds for Valéry is shown in a letter to Paul Léautaud :

Gide, - nous sentons bien différemment les choses de l'esprit. Nous nous comprenons et nous nous savons admirablement. Par malheur, il croit que je le déprime, et je suis sûr qu'il m'excite...Je me rends insupportable - mais le sujet ne sais pas combien je parle, et je pense avec lui, avec quelle franchise! Cette franchise a été mon 'idéal' le plus cher. J'ai raconté cela à Gide il y a treize ou quatorze ans. 1

In his letter to Gide, Valéry also explains his own position. He feels he is very different to others. This, he explains, is why he discards an opinion as soon as it is held by another and because : "Je veux être maître chez moi" (10th November 1894, 217). He is, too, struck by the fact that nobody goes "jusqu'au bout" (218) as he would like to do. In these two respects, he differs from Gide. However, when Valéry writes : "J'ai agi toujours pour me rendre un individu potentiel. C'est-à-dire que j'ai préféré une vie stratégique à une tactique. Avoir à ma disposition sans disposer" (217-218), he is using words which might almost be Gide's.

After listing his achievements in life, Valéry sums up his relationship with Gide accurately: "Je vois, je sens que nous nous aimons, mais nous nous montrons tous les deux ce qui réciproquement nous effraye le plus, toi une sorte de Paradis - et moi une certitude d'Enfer" (218).

1. Lettres à Quelques-uns, 1952, p. 67.

Gide is delighted with this letter, which he now admits to having deliberately provoked:

J'ai voulu la plus dangereuse des choses, qui ne pouvait se faire qu'entre bien peu et dont d'autres que toi n'eussent voulu...Eprouver une amitié; désir de la sentir résister, donc puissante. J'ai choisi entre toutes mes lettres à toi encore non écrites, la lettre pénible, au plus! pour savoir ce que tu dirais à te sentir accuser par moi d'accusations sinon fausses, au moins réversibles
(11th November 1894, 219).

Thus, Gide now proves himself ready to oppose Valéry and thereby to test the bonds of their friendship. He has replaced his usual echo or discreet silence by an open attack on Valéry with a view to creating dialogue as it has not existed before.

Gide's attack has been totally successful since it has not only caused Valéry to explain himself, but has also proved to Gide that his correspondence with Valéry may benefit from less echoing of his correspondent. After sometimes unsatisfactory attempts to create dialogue through reflexion, the road is now open to opposition.

In his reply, Gide immediately points to his differences from Valéry. His whole "'technique de vie'" is the opposite of Valéry's. Gide confesses that he is not made for the solitary struggle "jusqu'au bout" and that, instinctively, or perhaps a little lazily, he prefers vicious circles. The passage which follows this admission is highly important since it shows the basis of Gide's moral and artistic position and, to my mind, helps to explain his own form of sincerity:

Je crois que l'important pour chacun est de savoir s'il a bien mis toutes ses peaux l'une après l'autre et pas trop les habits des autres; s'il n'a pas eu trop froid d'être nud, [sic] et si vêtu pourtant à quelque mascarade, il a su s'y bien tenir et retourner après profondément ses poches pour en faire tomber lorgnettes et pralines...."Un état peut être volontaire sans être libre", dit, entre autres, Leibnitz et c'est assez banal, mais ce qui ne l'est pas c'est de, contraint ou non, travailler à faire tous ses états volontaires. (Ce n'est pas là de l'acceptation - au contraire - c'est du choix après l'essai, la vente des peaux d'ours une fois seulement mis à terre). Ma sagesse est là, je dis sagesse, puisqu'ainsi l'on nomme une recette de bonheur
(219-220).

In the first part of this passage, one sees that Gide is wary of the nakedness that Valéry desires. He prefers to adopt one of various roles. Gide is thus stating that relativity and not the absolute is his goal. These roles, however, should come, insofar as possible, from the resources of his own character and, in this desire for individuality, Gide is akin to Valéry or seems to be. Gide may be playing down the notion of "Dépersonnalisation", of the adoption of others' "skins" to prove that he has not entirely left Valéry behind. The most important thing for Gide is to play his part well and to make a clean sweep when it is finished.

The second part of this passage is closely connected to the first since it, too, is concerned with the playing of a role. Gide's qualification, "contraint ou non", requires exploration. The idea of constraint behind the voluntary acceptance of and participation in one's condition makes one think immediately of the yoke of religion or perhaps of Gide's present inability to marry his cousin.

It is probable that the religiousness of Gide's youth has influenced the choice of the word "contraint" but all that follows shows that it is the "ou non" which really interests him. Thus Gide insists that he is not simply accepting meekly all that comes to him but has the free will of a buyer trying on "bear-skins" voluntarily before making a deliberate choice.¹

Gide, therefore, refuses to adopt one position alone. He wishes to test a variety of positions before deciding if any one is more valid than the others. Meanwhile, his art benefits from these varied standpoints. Gide's sincerity or authenticity, both moral and artistic, lies not just in his desire to test, by living out, a variety of roles but also in his determination to act them as well as possible. In

1. Although Gide's image is obviously connected to the French proverb, "Il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué", a more literal understanding does not seem to me to be out of place in this instance.

In artistic terms, this means for Gide that: "La question morale pour l'artiste, n'est pas que l'idée qu'il manifeste soit plus ou moins morale et utile au grand nombre; la question est qu'il la manifeste bien." ¹

The importance of these two letters ² as statements of opposing standpoints is marred by the lack of sequel. Neither Gide nor Valéry attempts to exploit these differences. However, Gide does write more freely of Paludes. ³ Valéry comments on this work but very much in terms of himself. He seems to be more interested in what he would like to add to Paludes than in the book itself. He also criticises "certaines reprises et ravaudages" (11th December 1894, 227), thereby showing some lack of comprehension which provokes Gide to indirect self-defence. This he does by mentioning to Valéry that he has reached a point where he could write a good caricature of himself which would be "une sorte de Paludes où la réitération et le tâtonnement viendraient à cause de l'émotion, non de l'idée, et jusqu'à douter qu'elle soit, tant sa preuve l'avalerait" (28th December 1894, 228). So Gide explains that the repetition in his work is fundamentally necessary to it.

Gide's Ménalque ⁴ is the next cause for comment from Valéry. This time, his reaction is favourable. Reading Ménalque has evoked for him the beauty of their friendship with its "différences si bien définies" (11th January 1896, 255), which Valéry proceeds to describe:

Tu sais que je ne connais pas ton Dieu, et que je ne puis m'en chercher. Hélas! je ne suis pas l'homme de Dieu ni de la campagne. L'extase et l'herbe ne me sur-excitent que pour une demi-journée (255).

1. Romans, TN, pp. 8-9.

2. G./V. Corr., 10th and 11th November 1894, pp. 216-220.

3. Ibid, 21st November 1894, pp. 221-222 and 2nd December 1894, pp. 223-224.

4. Reproduced in the Nourritures terrestres, this fragment was first published in L'Ermitage.

In his reply¹ Gide denigrates the importance of Ménalque. This is in surprising contrast with Gide's attitude in his correspondence with Jammes. The latter's appreciation of Ménalque allows Gide to engage in literary and moral dialogue which indicates that this fragment is far from being unimportant to its author, and that he is willing to exploit his literary differences to Jammes in a way that he cannot do with Valéry.

Perhaps because of this, he insists more with Valéry on his plans for the complete Nourritures terrestres. Even then, however, Gide does not totally yield to enthusiasm; "J'espère après pouvoir me permettre un livre un peu sérieusement triste, car la Mélancolia, dans celui-ci, ne trouvera guère son compte" (24th January 1896, 258). Just as Gide did not write to Valéry of his experiences in North Africa, so, here, he seems unwilling to admit that, with the Nourritures, he will make a definitive break with his ties to Symbolism.

Gide's avoidance of this topic is followed by a new orientation in their correspondence. A letter from Valéry² where he extols the freedom from constraint of his relationship with Gide, meets with the following reply:

Ta lettre est exquise, cher vieux. Notre affection est vraiment au-dessus des petites questions de boutique. Je le sens toujours mieux, et que nous pouvons nous parler sans que la Littérature s'en mêle" (19th May 1896, 267).

Thus, Gide accepts the possibility of a relationship based purely on friendship and not on mutual artistic profit. Gide probably suggests this not only in response to Valéry's basic wishes for their correspondence but also because of the seeming impossibility of the further advancement of literary discussion with Valéry at this stage.

Nonetheless, Valéry is to remain the initiator, since Gide writes:

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1. G./V. Corr., 24th January 1894, pp. 257-258.
 2. *Ibid*, 18th May 1896, pp. 263-264.

"Si je savais un peu ce qui, de moi, peut t'intéresser, je t'écrirais mieux, mais avec toi, je me sens par trop dépouillé d'artifices, et ne me reste plus qu'une chétive nudité" (July 1896, 271). After six years of friendship and several opportunities to break this vicious circle, as Gide seemed willing to do,¹ Gide is still unable to abandon his role of echo completely.

Valéry gives Gide a lead in a letter² where he states his regret at the lack of comprehension of his friends for his research which has no concrete, published result. Gide shows great insight in his words of comfort to Valéry.³ He is disgusted at the accusations of aimlessness with which Valéry has been taxed. Admittedly, he writes, Valéry has never accepted the necessity of a transitory goal through publication, but all his research has been united "'dans le même sens'" (4th August 1896, 273). Gide congratulates Valéry on choosing truth and not happiness as his ultimate if intangible aim.

Having discussed Valéry's position, Gide allows himself to state his own:

J'ai quelque honte, près de toi, à m'avouer que j'ai souvent pris des vessies pour des lanternes, mais le monde m'en paraît d'autant plus illuminé! Les idoles facilitent le bonheur... Mon pauvre vieux! Dieu me garde de te demander d'adorer les faux dieux! Pour moi j'ai toujours dans mon armoire quelque petite idole devant qui je me console de la perte des autres (274).

I quote at length, since this passage forms an interesting contrast to Gide's hurt accusations against Valéry as "Enemy (sic) du genre humain" or "antimaïeutique" (10th November 1894, 216). Not only has Gide accepted their different moral and artistic outlooks but also his "Mon pauvre vieux" suggests a newfound confidence in the psychological rectitude of his position as opposed to the logical rectitude of that of

1. See: above, pp. 110-114.

2. G./V. Corr., 4th August 1896, pp. 272-273.

3. Ibid, 29th August 1896, pp. 273-274.

Valéry. Valéry's pessimism has drawn out Gide's fundamental optimism in his artistic prism.

Perhaps for this reason, Gide fails, thereafter, in his attempts to maintain friendship as the axis of their correspondence. Valéry's Monsieur Teste is the cause of this initial lapse. Gide's admiration is surpassed only by his astonishment at the interest and literary quality of this totally intellectual work. Among his comments, in this letter, Gide wonders if Valéry might not have shown Monsieur Teste speaking to an ordinary being. In his reply, Valéry explains that this would have been to break "la sphère d'intellectualité complète où se meut lui-même le récitant" (5th October 1896, 281). This small point reflects clearly the differences between the two men to which Gide has pointed.¹ In Gide's request for a human contrast to the intellectuality of Monsieur Teste lies his need for "quelque petite idole" but also for more than a single optic through which to present his characters. In Valéry's refusal to compromise lies his single-minded will to greater intellectual truth. Because of his willingness to compromise, Gide is more of a literary man,² and, because of his intransigence, Valéry a chercheur. Gide's realisation of this, which is comparable to his headiness while writing his Traité, is probably responsible for the more relaxed, confident tone of his last letters.

This literary axis is maintained, surprisingly, by Valéry in a criticism of El Hadj. He writes:

...les personnages et le sujet sont fondus dans la prose lyrique au point d'être difficilement distingués. Ils sont comme noyés dans quelque enflure...Méfie-toi de ce qui ne peut exister que par l'enthousiasme ...
Style, tout de même, un peu étranger à ce qu'il dit
(1st January 1897, 283-284).

Valéry's warning against enthusiasm may refer to the moral background

1. See: above, p. 116.

2. This is not to be taken as a comparative judgement of the two men's literature but of their attitude to literature.

of the story and, if this is so, he has hit the nail on the head. Nonetheless, in the light of Valéry's other comments, it is more probable that Valéry is referring to Gide's style. If this is so, Valéry once again proves that, although he is capable of depicting Gide's style as he did with the Voyage d'Urien and Paludes, he is quite impervious to its purpose.

In his Journal, Gide writes: "Je veux n'avoir pas de manière que celle qu'exige mon sujet,"¹ and, again, on the work of art: "...tout ce qui ne sert pas, nuit".² When Gide obeys these two maxims, he achieves his best.

Valéry has raised the question of the aptness of Gide's style to his subject. At the same time, Gide is given a perfect opportunity to defend himself when Valéry writes of El Hadj's dilemma on the Prince's death that it is not in the least worrying since "on sent trop que la seule fluence des phrases dénouera sans effort la situation - en quelque sorte automatiquement" (1st January 1897, 283). Style and subject are inseparable here and this is what Gide wants. Valéry, on the contrary, refuses this almost automatic stylistic solution because "elle démolit toute littérature" (283). By this, it is possible that Valéry is again attacking the subordination of style to ideas or, as Gide prefers, the fusion of the two. Unfortunately, this opening to discussion comes to nothing, unless the two writers discussed it when they met on the 5th January.

A few months later comes Gide's excited cry: "As-tu mon livre? A-t-on mon livre? Que ne peut-on faire les articles soi-même!" (21st May 1897, 296). Valéry's opinion of Gide's Nourritures terrestres does not

1. J.1, 7th May 1912, p. 378.

2. J.1, Feuillets, p. 664.

p.119, 1. The Naturalistes published a manifesto on the 10th January 1897. Their leader was Edmond de Bouhéliier-Lepellatier and their aims were to leave behind the mists and dreams of Symbolism and to write of light and nature.

appear in the correspondence until another few months have elapsed:

"Ce qui fait l'amusement de ton petit Baedeker, c'est qu'il y a un peu de tout. Il y a un d'Annunzio, des soukhs, des Donatelli, et des fruits qui sont à la mode. (Cur?)" (21st September 1897, 300). Valéry's comment is quite possibly a tongue-in-cheek reference to the Naturistes who were, as it happens, active at that time.¹ However, this comparison of his work to a tourist guide must have been as chilling to Gide as to any Gidian enthusiast. The casual "Why?" puts an end to any hopes Gide may have had as to Valéry's comprehension of his work. Gide's reticence about his journey to North Africa has already indicated his uncertainty that Valéry would appreciate the "fruits of the earth". So important is this work to him, however, that he has been unable to suppress totally what is now proved to have been wishful thinking.

Valéry resumes his criticisms of Gide's style:

L'ensemble est peut-être^{trop} écrit; et les impressions pas assez inédites...on sent très souvent le morceau qui commence. Aussi souvent, tu l'arrêtes, et il n'en reste qu'une phrase, mais la sensation demeure. Tu réponds illico: 'Ce n'est pas un bouquin', et puis zut...
(21st September 1897, 300).

Yet again, Valéry is too intelligent not to see what Gide has done but quite unable to see why. Moreover while opening the door to literary discussion, Valéry immediately negates his invitation by foreseeing Gide's reaction. Valéry ends thus: "Maintenant que je me suis incliné en silence et que je n'ai plus rien à dire, je poursuis sur d'autres sujets" (300). No doubt to this unintentionally hurtful homage, Gide would have preferred less "silence" and more interest. This may be the reason for the subsequent gap in their correspondence² and why Gide explains his work to Albert Mockel who also believes that it is "haché".³

2. It is also possible that both men were in Paris.

3. G./Mo. Corr., 3rd September 1897, p. 203. Although this reproach is similar to Valéry's, Mockel, less paradoxically, does not consider that Gide's work is "trop écrit". On the contrary, he believes that Gide has gathered together pages written during his journey to Africa. This provokes Gide's protest: " - Mais ce n'est point le désir de réunir des 'feuilles de route' écrites au hasard qui m'a fait postérieurement les réunir...Non vraiment - dès en écrivant Paludes et avant, j'avais l'idée de ce livre et... le voyage n'a fait qu'approvisionner des pages vides, comme des exemples d'une technique de vie..." Ibid, 12th October 1897, p. 214.

In view of this gap, I take the opportunity to review in a more detached way the course of Gide's attempts to introduce dialogue, by echoing or by opposing, into his correspondence with Valéry.

For Gide, the primary requisite for dialogue lies in mutual knowledge of his and Valéry's characters. Initially, Gide feels that Valéry does not give this knowledge of himself. Only through learning Valéry's character and interests can Gide achieve some form of dialogue. That he sincerely desires this can be seen in his complaints about the difficulty of establishing dialogue with Valéry.

Both Gide and Valéry value reflexion for different reasons: Valéry because he is looking for himself and Gide because he wishes to gain in artistic breadth by experiencing feelings other than his own. An involuntary complication to this state lies in Gide's desperate desire to please. Thus, their strange form of dialogue is conducted by means of "echoing" propositions. Practically always, in the initial stages of the correspondence, Valéry proposes and Gide disposes by interpreting Valéry's preoccupations in such a way as to allow the introduction of his own. Sometimes, however, Gide does not even attempt to give a modified echo but gives a direct and dishonest reflexion of Valéry's views, in order to please him.

As for Valéry, acceptance of dialogue by responding to Gide's preoccupations is relatively rare. When he does accept discussion of these preoccupations, there is little sequel since Gide does not want to or dares not take the next step which would bring their differences completely to the surface.

This does not exclude bouts of self-assertion. Occasionally, Gide, the artist, drops his role of echo to question the validity of Valéry's search for the absolute and its implications for literary production. Moreover, in his exchange of letters with Valéry in 1894, one sees that

Gide is ready to make use of his differences from Valéry which help to strengthen rather than weaken his artistic resolve.

Gide's deliberate attempts to provoke Valéry into dialogue upon their differences does lead to more prolonged discussion on Gide's literature, on Valéry's part, than before in the correspondence.

The net result is, however, disillusionment for Gide. His intention, after Valéry's letter on Ménalque¹ of making friendship the basis of their correspondence is premonitory of the destruction of his high hopes for discussion on his literature, following on more general statements about the two writers' approaches to art.

While the Nourritures terrestres was still in Gide's mind, he could mingle hopes with fears; in Valéry's hands, Gide's book becomes the written proof that his artistic work is the least of the bonds between him and Valéry.

From Gide's somewhat unsatisfactory attempts to establish dialogue by reflexion and opposition, there appears, nonetheless, with great clarity, the range of the two men's differences. Valéry is searching for one truth applicable to himself, while Gide not only accepts but functions by compromise and alternatives. In friendship, Valéry is a believer in exclusivity while Gide is ready to confide, partially at least, in many people. Artistically, Valéry wants to write the perfect work of art to satisfy himself while Gide needs multiple works of art to express himself and to cause a reaction in his public.

Valéry is constancy, Gide inconsistency. Valéry's constancy cannot comprehend the very necessary motivation of Gide's inconsistency and his desire to achieve harmony by mingling morals and aesthetics. These differences are not mollified by Valéry's understanding or interest and this is why discussion on literature fails temporarily.

1. G./V. Corr., 11th January 1896, pp. 255-257.

4. The Peak of Literary Dialogue

Discussion is resumed over Gide's play Saül. The letters concerning Gide's work are extremely important since they also raise the whole question of success or failure of dialogue between Gide and Valéry.

Gide writes to Valéry:

Un prochain Saint-Graal est à l'impression où se dresse paraît-il ma statue. C'est très gentil à d'autres de me la faire, moi qui y travaille depuis longtemps, je me fais bien peu ressemblant encore; Saül et Prométhée vont ajouter, j'espère, quelques traits (12th January 1898, 307).

Saül is also mentioned briefly in two later letters¹ where Gide remarks that it is not a play to be read but to be seen and that Valéry must help him with the conception of a stage-production. Valéry makes no response.

A further letter from Gide² shows that he has been hurt by this imagined indifference but that a short conversation with Valéry has dissipated his hurt pride and that he is sending a copy of Saül to Valéry. In this letter, Gide also admits that, despite his fear of Valéry's criticisms, "tu es un de ceux dont le jugement m'importe le plus et à qui, tu le penses bien, je désirais le plus montrer ma grande machine" (July 1898, 319).

This is no mere flattery on Gide's part as is shown by his former disappointment at Valéry's not writing an article on Les Cahiers d'André Walter.³ Gide knows what separates him from Valéry now but so great is his respect for the literary man that he prefers to have an unfavourable judgement rather than the hurtful void of indifferent incomprehension.

In his next letter, Valéry writes a long explanation of his attitude to literary dialogue. Firstly, he admits that he has been a little annoyed by the fact that Gide prefers other "réactifs" (8th July 1898, 321)

1. G./V. Corr., 15th March and May 1898, pp. 315 & 317.

2. Ibid, July 1898, p. 319.

3. Ibid, 29th March 1891, p. 76.

to himself for talking of his literature. Also, Valéry writes that he is interested only in the end result and not in affecting the development of a work. Valéry states his belief that personal relations are far above anything literary. Literature, he feels, is something to be carried out apart by two very different people. Finally, Valéry warns Gide against seeking the opinions of those who think like him since it is wiser to seek the opinions of one's opposites.

Gide remains unimpressed by the argument that personal relations are superior to literature. For him, the contrary seems to be true since he writes: "...Rouart...m'a consolé en me disant que tu m'aimais bien...Mais tout ça c'est du sentiment et n'a rien à faire..." (10th July 1898, 322-323). Gide adds, quite justifiably, that it is precisely an opposite point of view that he wants and looked for in Valéry only to get no reaction. However, Gide concludes, pride must not come between them and, so, Valéry is to speak about Saul.

This Valéry does in his next letter.¹ His most important comments on the play stem, this time, from quite understandable incomprehension: the character of Saul appears quite logical to him within the bounds of the play but, when taken in relation to Gide and Valéry, allows for no possible identification. This is a perfectly just statement from anyone who does not know that Gide is homosexual. The fact that Valéry has no knowledge of this explains why he is also unable to understand Saul's behaviour towards the demons. For Valéry, Saul is suffering from "folie dramatique" (July 1898, 324), and this is the only reason for his inability to rid himself of them by vigorous, corporal chastisement.

Gide replies in a short, unsatisfactory note² to say that without the demons, the play cannot exist. Admittedly, Gide is hoping to meet

1. G./V. Corr., July 1898, pp. 323-324.

2. Ibid., 26th July 1898, p. 325.

Valéry shortly, but this refusal to reply fully to Valéry's comments stems also from the embarrassing problem of how to answer them. Gide is certainly begging for time in order to resolve this problem by more mature thought.

Luckily, Valéry comes back to the subject of Saül, probably because he now realises how much Gide desires his opinion. Also, for the first time, Valéry is truly intrigued by Gide's art. Valéry again raises the question of the demons and how their presence is to be interpreted. He finds Gide's treatment of the subject of pederasty troubling in the light of previous conversations with Gide.

Gide does not reply in his next letter¹ to Valéry's queries on the subject of Saül's homosexuality. He confines himself to an explanation of the demons whose peculiarity lies in their not being exterior to Saül; they are there to explain his silent monologues.

After these incomplete replies from Gide, the subject of his play is set aside for a while due to the death of Mallarmé. It is Valéry who raises the question again.² Valéry tells Gide that his admiration for Saül can not lessen his inability to identify with any of the characters. Moreover, the fact that Saül is mad detracts from the force of his character, in Valéry's opinion. For Valéry, the main interest to be found in the Biblical story being the problem of the confrontation of personal and established authority, Gide should have dealt with this in greater detail.

The most striking factor of this exchange on Saül is that, for once, it is Valéry who shows persistent literary curiosity and Gide definite reticence in accepting this provocation to speak his mind. This change is all the more noticeable for the fact that it follows Valéry's

1. G.M.L., 27th July 1898, p. 327.

2. *Ibid.*, 22nd October 1898, pp. 337-338.

quite unquestioning incomprehension of Gide's Nourritures terrestres. Gide's reproaches to Valéry seem to have borne fruit, somewhat to Gide's embarrassment.

The gap caused by Mallarmé's death has allowed Gide the time to construct a satisfying explanation to the most problematic of Valéry's queries. Nonetheless, in spite of this opportunity for careful thought and the greater ease with which certain subjects may be approached in writing than in speech, Gide can only explain the pederasty of Saül evasively:

...j'estime le sujet très général...L'on m'a assez reproché mon subjectivisme des Cahiers, des Nourritures, de Paludes, etc. pour que je puisse me payer enfin la fierté de paraître avoir créé un type où rien de moi ne se retrouve" (22nd October 1898, 339).

One must read this passage in conjunction with Gide's comment that he has chosen to interpret the story of Saül in his own way less for its anecdotal interest, as Valéry suspects, than because it reduces to the essential a very general subject, "le drame intime qu'est tout vice: accueillir, aimer ce qui vous nuit" (339).

Subtly, Gide is explaining one of the general principles of his art, which is that the link between subjectivity and objectivity must not be severed. Because Valéry has attached too much importance to the individuality of Saül's case, Gide has been forced, for artistic reasons as much as for reasons of personal discretion, to underline the more general implications of his play, while at the same time hinting to Valéry, by his use of the word "paraître" that the basis of his play is subjective.

Valéry's accusation that Saül is mad also provokes Gide into an explanation of another important aspect of his art. Gide insists that Saül is not mad since everything that causes his downfall comes logically from within his character. Indeed, this, Gide says, is how he envisages the ideal drama which is to be dependent only on characters and not on

external contingents. While this illustrates Gide's admiration for Racine, it also shows that he is ready for his récits with their intense concentration on inner motivation and their subjectivity which, nonetheless, allows for general interpretation.

Gide also points to the critical turn his work will take by telling Valéry that his play is "la suite et la négation des Nourritures" (22nd October 1898, 339), which is something which will be understood only by those who really know how to read his works. One wonders if this is not a veiled reproach to Valéry. Gide ends his letter by remarking that the best result of Valéry's comments on Saül is that he now wishes to talk to Valéry of another play which will interest him more.¹

This long exchange of letters on Saül is a milestone in Gide's correspondence with Valéry, since the latter now desires an explanation of what he does not understand. This is the first time that Valéry fully realises his own incomprehension and attaches some importance to what lies outwith his own preoccupations and understanding. Because of this new interest in what is foreign to him, Valéry makes his first, most consistent and deliberate effort to provoke Gide into comment, which has resulted in Gide's statement of his artistic position.

In spite of the importance of this exchange of letters on Saül which has prompted Gide to clarify his approach to art, it is perhaps unfortunate that the subject under debate should be this very work. Gide is unwilling to be too explicit about the personal basis of this play. Had he been so, discussion might have centred around the two writers' differences, both moral and artistic, and, thus have been even more profitable to Gide.

Another letter from Valéry forms a pendant to those on Saül since

1. Gide is referring to Candaule. G./V. Corr., 11th July 1899 pp. 348-349.

it shows that Valéry has taken Gide's reproaches to heart and has gone so far as to re-read Gide's most recent publications¹ before commenting admiringly on them.²

After a few more letters, Valéry is again the initiator of an extremely important exchange of letters which have a more general bearing than the ones on Saül. In the first, Valéry writes at length of himself. He condemns the irregularity in his life, while accepting that it has helped him to achieve certain things. At the same time, he expresses his belief that nothing of value is born of irregularity.

Valéry then defends his position against the criticisms of his contemporaries: "Vous n'avez pas vu que je ne demandais que la contradiction. Vous ne pouvez me refuser que j'ai toujours donné des raisons et qu'elles n'étaient point toujours mauvaises" (16th October 1899, 354-355). Aggressive sincerity in "des intimités terribles" (355) is what Valéry wants from his relationships but has realised is impossible. By intimacy, Valéry explains that he means the ability with a few people to have "une conversation entre pensées actives, sans monologues de mémoire, échos, etc." (355).

Valéry believes his disdain for his contemporaries is justified because of their "volonté de ne pas voir ce qui est, comme conservation du talent littéraire qu'on suppose qu'on a" (355). Moreover, Valéry is convinced that his critics are incompetent to judge him because they can only understand what, to Valéry, is their own facile concept of genius. Valéry's own work, although largely unpublished, is viewed by him as of much greater solidity and importance than any mere spasm of genius.

The principle behind his work is "l'extension, la généralisation perpétuelle" (355). Valéry is against "quoi que ce soit de singulier" (356).

1. Narcisse, El Hadj, Prométhée, Philoctète.
2. G./V. Corr., 6th July 1899, pp. 346-348.

To perpetrate these ideals and to avoid seeing things as others do, Valéry's method is the following:

J'en prends d'abord une impression aussi instantanée que possible, puis j'y reviens en tâchant de les retrouver par une suite de conditions indépendantes entre elles et par conséquent plus générales que mon objet (356).

In this system, Valéry explains, literature becomes a problem, not an aim nor something fundamental.

In this letter, it is obviously Valéry's desire for an end to monologue and echo which is most important for his correspondence with Gide. In fact, the main impression that emanates from their correspondence up to the Nourritures terrestres is precisely one of Valérian monologue and Gidian echo. Since then, to all appearances, Valéry is attempting, admittedly after provocation, to establish dialogue and Gide is hence no longer forced into providing an echo to Valéry's preoccupations.

Valéry's wish for a "conversation entre pensées actives" is about to be fulfilled, since his comment on literature shows that there is no similarity between his and Gide's attitudes to it. The problem of the "why" and "how" of literature is being raised here and opens the way to literary dialogue more fully than ever before.

Gide's reaction to this provocation is extremely favourable. He immediately attacks Valéry's statement on his literary contemporaries since he feels that it is aimed against him, in which case Valéry is a bad judge. Gide answers Valéry's accusation in pre-existential terms. Obviously, Gide says, "être" and "le 'pas mensonge'" (19th October 1899, 358) are preferable to their opposites. Nonetheless, Gide admits, not for the first time, that he can understand perfectly those who choose the easier solution and, thereby avoid the madness of Nietzsche.¹

Gide accuses Valéry of not listening to others and, because of this,

1. See: G./V. Corr., 24th August 1893, p. 184: "...et c'est - dupe", and 11th November 1894, p. 220: "Ma - folie".

he does not realize that he is not alone in thinking as he does. Gide also attacks the solitary nature of Valéry's research: if others make mistakes, he writes, it is not by the little that Valéry publishes that they will be convinced of them. Here, Gide is displaying his disagreement with what he feels to be Valéry's indifference to dialogue and also to a public. Interest in others' points of view is an indispensable part of Gide's artistic procedure and his artistic work is very definitely intended to provoke thought in a public, no matter how small. Gide is obviously attempting to show Valéry that his position is perhaps mistaken and to encourage him into greater production and a more artistic role similar to his own.¹ Gide's reaction shows that Valéry's letter has been felt by him as an attack on his artistic raison d'être.

Gide keeps to the last his reply to Valéry's view that literature should be a mere problem rather than something which depends on genius.

He writes;

Si certains ne poussent pas plus loin l'étude chimique qui leur permettrait de faire sûrement des fleurs, c'est aussi par l'effroi du nombre illimité qu'on en pourrait dès lors produire. Chez certains, le compromis est plus conscient, volontaire et délibéré que tu ne le crois... J'ajoute, à propos des recettes, etc., procédés, que je crois qu'on ne les acquiert qu'aux dépens d'une sorte de finesse artistique, finesse sensuelle; la musique de Wagner m'apparaît d'un art terriblement grossier. A vouloir préjuger la volupté, ses sens s'étaient dés-affinés. Il y a toujours en art quelque chose d'imprécisable que ne pourra saisir l'instrument, etc. Art des fausses fleurs (19th October 1899, 358).

Gide's case is an argument for himself as an artist, for his own multiplicity which he believes to be the best means of achieving the "particulier". In more literary terms, this means that Gide is against the complete suppression of lyricism as is shown in a passage of the *Faux-Monnayeurs*,² which was surely inspired by these letters or by subsequent conversations on the question of "fausses fleurs". Valéry's case for extension and generality is that of the seeker of definitive truth through individual

1. See: above, p. 90.

2. *Romans*, FM, pp. 1184-1185.

effort, who, should he find this truth, will never, thereafter, have to waver from his personal and artistic archetype. Perhaps because of Valéry's single-mindedness he has difficulty in understanding Gide,¹ whereas Gide gives a perfectly adequate explanation of Valéry's position in his correspondence with André Rouveyre.²

Valéry is delighted that Gide has taken his previous letter personally. Whereas ^{an} earlier climax in their correspondence³ was caused by Gide, here it is Valéry who has deliberately provoked Gide into reaction upon their literary positions. For Valéry, the question of one's differences to others is one of the most fascinating problems of one's existence. To describe his relationship with others, Valéry uses the image of scales:

La sensibilité de cette balance est singulière. Elle dépend de la qualité de ce qu'on met dans l'autre plateau. Quand c'est toi qui t'y trouves, la mienne devient bien plus sensible que jamais (25th October 1899, 359).

Their differences, in Valéry's opinion, are hairbreadth. Hence, to discover them, Valéry writes, he and Gide can approach each other very closely. Because they have done this, he adds, they have seen that all that the other does is exactly what one must not do oneself. Therefore, Valéry believes that an understanding of what the other does is a means to self-knowledge.

Valéry gives, as an example of this, Gide's successive, intimate relationships which have intrigued him and he adds that this is but one of many points in this mutual process of enlightenment by reaction, which

1. G./V. Corr., 27th November 1893, p. 191 and 7th November 1899, p. 364.

2. G./R. Corr., 11th April 1928, p. 109. I use the words "artist" and "chercheur" with much the same implications as Gide's "poète" and "artiste" in his letter to Rouveyre. The "poet" is he who is close to the star of Pollux whom Gide believes has been influenced by his twin "Clytemnestra-passion"; the "artist" is he who is close to the star of Castor, twin of "Helen - beauty". Gide's true admiration goes to the "poet-artist", such as Goethe, who is equidistant from both stars. Nonetheless, he understands those like "l'admirable Paul Valéry" who are more artist than poet and who refuse the other star "sans trop comprendre ou s'avouer qu'ils perdraient d'un coup toute valeur s'ils n'en étaient plus du tout éclairés".

3. See above, p. 110.

has taken place "à demi à notre insu" (359). Valéry believes that their mistake has been to try to suppress this process. Valéry blames himself more than Gide, since this dates from a time when Valéry, armed only with general analysis, was trying to grasp and, no doubt, affect Gide's points of view. Now, Valéry realises that it is only one's own thoughts which one can discount as invalid, as the thoughts of another are inaccessible to one. Where Gide has been at fault, Valéry points out, is in his lack of protest against Valéry's apparent, verbal massacre of his ideas.

Although it is true that one can now see clearly the differences between the two writers, Valéry is equally correct when he writes that their revelation has been made almost unconsciously. In the correspondence, it is sometimes only by carefully reading between the lines of monologue and "echo" that one realises the strong differences between the two and the subsequent obtaining of self-knowledge.

Valéry's use of the term "verbal massacre" in his letter is telling. Conversation with Valéry is a much more difficult medium for Gide, since, in it, Valéry's tendency towards monologue is more crushing than in the letter. Nonetheless, as regards their correspondence, Valéry's analysis is also pertinent as is the blame he places both on himself and on Gide for the lack of consciousness and systematization that has hitherto been manifest in their approach to dialogue in correspondence.

Valéry might, however, have made more of Gide's anxiety to echo which has been a stumbling-block to the emergence of their differences. Moreover, the accusations Valéry levels against himself seem to me less revealing of his own part in lack of dialogue than of his strengthened conviction that others' thoughts are impermeable.

Valéry's former fault, in Gide's eyes, was that he did not even look to understand Gide. Now that he has attempted to do so, Valéry himself

seems to discard his, or anyone's ability, to enter into another's mind. Albeit unconsciously, Valéry has pointed to another difference between himself and Gide. For Valéry, the other, with all his differences, obviously represents a problem which may well be insoluble. This explains Valéry's difficulty in echoing Gide who, on the contrary, is both able and willing to experience the other's emotions and thoughts as his own.

Gide may thus echo Valéry in his correspondence but, if he does so, it is in order to commune with a kindred response. Because Valéry is unable to supply this, letters, where both men raise the problem of their differences, are a far more satisfying means of dialogue and do lead to self-knowledge if not, as Valéry suggests, to true feeling for Gide's point of view.

Valéry continues his letter by refusing to condone his contemporaries. He claims that Gide is about the only exception to the majority of those who can only improve on the same thing and who are moved uniquely by fear of change or lack of success. Such people, Valéry is convinced, have no desire to make the necessary effort to surpass themselves or to discover. For most literary men, the same is true in Valéry's opinion.

Like Gide, Valéry recognises what is most important to this exchange of letters, by leaving to the last the question of "false flowers" and Wagner. Gide's point of view has made no impression on Valéry who is still on the side of skill and "calcul" as opposed to random beauty. While Valéry realises the boredom that a system of "false flowers" may bring, he is for any system which loses no time.

With real flowers, "On en vient ^{vite} à comparer la valeur du brochet pris à celle du temps consumé à l'attendre (25th October 1899, 361).

This mixed metaphor means that Valéry has no time to waste over an individually beautiful contingent, like the artist Gide, but ideally must

progress unilinearly and quickly towards perfect truth. Thus, he will always prefer to move "entre des manières de penser, plus qu'entre des pensées" (361), since the latter will only prevent him from achieving generality. This is quite contrary to Gide whose interest is in one's very thoughts and what is special to each person. The "particulier" is Gide's stepping-stone to generality.

Gide's reply opens with the exclamation, "Exploitions le filon!" (28th October 1899, 362). This letter is intended as a preliminary clearing of the ground, in order to gain better access to the "vein" to be worked upon. Thus, Gide tackles the more personal questions raised by Valéry's letter. He expresses his acquiescence with Valéry's criticisms of literary men now that he realises that he is an exception in Valéry's eyes. Gide, confesses that he, too, has cause to complain of the incomprehension of others because of his own lack of literary consistency which has entailed equal lack of success. This is but a prelude to Gide's attacking Valéry whose misunderstanding of Gide is much more serious since it is not due to stupidity. If others criticise, Gide feels that Valéry should praise him. Instead, Valéry has associated Gide with other success-mongers by saying: "'Ah oui! il y a aussi le groupe de ceux qui attendent le succès de quarante^{-cinq} ans'" (362).

Gide admits that he is less irritated than he appears to be since Valéry's letter has greatly encouraged him, not least of all, one feels, to speak his mind. Never before has Gide been so open about his feeling that Valéry ought to be interested in his work, and, by implication, of more help towards its conception.

Valéry's next letter¹ is of extreme importance, since it is his first real explanation of himself with regard to Gide and, in it, he shows high

1. G./V. Corr., 7th November 1899, pp. 363-366.

understanding of their relations, in spite of his own scepticism as to his ability to grasp Gide's thought. Firstly, he answers Gide's argument that, in light of the majority's lack of understanding, it is Valéry's duty to appreciate his work. He points out, justly, that Gide has his partisans as well as his critics and that Gide's works are never the same. What then, Valéry queries maliciously, does Gide think of people who like all his books? For Gide's own sake, Valéry insists yet again,¹ he would do better to heed the opinions of his detractors or opposites than of those who praise him.

Having reprimanded Gide, Valéry returns to literary discussion. He gives what, for him, are the three aims of literature: firstly, money; secondly, the number of people to know one's name and the consequences thereof and, thirdly, for personal instruction from the general problems to which the technique and practice of art lead. Valéry's reason for writing is the last one which, he explains, entails either leaving the domain of art completely or remaining in it in a highly specific, episodic way. In Valéry's opinion, to do otherwise teaches one nothing and merely produces a sickening little pool of genius. In other words, Valéry continues, one's way of thinking is unaffected by literary creation.

After this explanation of his own attitude to literature, Valéry devotes his attention to Gide's. He admits once again to not understanding Gide. This is clearly because he cannot make up his mind whether Gide's aims in writing come under his third or his second category. On the one hand, Gide seems to have too much thought for his public since: "Tu sens certainement par minutes...le besoin brusque de rattraper une sorte de moyenne que tu oubliais heureusement" (7th November 1899, 364). On the other hand, Gide is not the typical, success-seeking literary man

1. G/V. Corr., 8th July 1898, p. 321.

because:

...tu ne fais pas cela comme on fait du sucre...ou de l'enseignement (même avec enthousiasme). La preuve en est que tu t'agites pour ne pas imiter (entendons-nous! ...je donne ici à ce mot une grande extension) et pour ne pas t'imiter - et que tu préfères toujours, sans doute, intéresser moins et t'intéresser plus (365).

As Valéry points out, this position could easily slide into his own, but, in fact, Gide's motives remain far from those of Valéry and are ever incomprehensible to him.

Valéry's powers of descriptive analysis are no nearer helping him to understand why Gide is as he is. Quite rightly he has seen that Gide's reasons for writing are both inward- and outward-looking. What he does not understand, however, is that one can look to a public for reasons other than confirmation of one's success and with results other than self-abasement. Valéry's understanding that Gide's art is also a personal quest, which prevents mental stagnation, is only partial too, since he cannot conceive that art may be a perfectly acceptable end in itself. For Valéry art is a means to an end. For Gide, his art is a means to art. In other words, the "instruction personnelle" (364) which may be gained from his work is self-perpetuating for Gide's literature and is not siphoned off. Gide's art necessarily includes the personal and general problems which Valéry sees as incidental discoveries to be made from the process of creation as from any other mental activity.

Valéry has little more understanding of Gide's way of work which he contrasts to his own which is based on the fact that: "Tout ce que j'ai fait ou pensé est relié à mon existence - IMMEDIATEMENT. C'est force et faiblesse" (365). Because of this, Valéry wishes to bind these moments of his existence by "des propriétés additives" (365), as diverse as possible, in order to achieve "l'état parfait ou théorique de mon être" (365). Because Valéry's own method is one of progressive juxtaposition,

he realises that he would have nothing to gain from "des oeuvres contrariées" (365) which are, indeed, so alien to his own methods that he believes the purpose of such works is to delight or confound a public. Because Valéry cannot understand that this is Gide's way of presenting his problems, he again mistakenly associates Gide with his second category of writers.¹ Valéry concludes by explaining that:

De tous les sentiments possibles, le plus fort en moi est celui de sécurité - ou, si tu veux, de défiance infinie. Je ne puis avoir aucune confiance dans ce qui va et vient. Je ne m'y fie pas, c'est pourquoi j'ai cherché des choses plus constantes (365).

More than unfortunately, this exchange of letters is interrupted by a meeting. With their letters on Saül, this is the most prolonged discussion to date between Gide and Valéry. As with his comments on Saül, Valéry shows unprecedented persistence in coming back to the subject of literature as a means of provoking reaction in Gide.

In these letters, appears clearly the full range of differences between Valéry's and Gide's artistic methods and aims. If one may use the image of a ladder to describe the two men's ways of working, Valéry climbs up each rung as he builds and tests it. His aim is to reach the finite end of the top of his ladder from which point he may count its rungs and view them as a whole. Gide, on the contrary, may be said to have dismantled his ladder and separated its rungs into sub-groups. Gide then tests his rungs by moving from one to another. His aim is not to reach the top of his ladder but to reconstruct it himself after examination.

The purpose and the end-result of both men's art is also different. Literature, for Valéry is but one of the tools he uses in constructing his ladder, which will lead him to his ideal self. For Gide, literature is his ladder, the rungs of which are formed by the many, simultaneous

1. See: above, p. 134.

possibilities of his nature. The end-result of art for Valéry is, if one is to take him entirely seriously, the mass-production of ladders. For Gide, if I may shift my metaphor slightly, the end-result may be compared to the Mathematical Bridge in Cambridge which was perhaps not reconstructed as it was originally formed but which has, nonetheless, gained in individual interest because of the experiments allegedly tried out upon it.

The importance of the exchange of letters which lead to such knowledge of Valéry and Gide is underlined by Gide's evocation of them, the following year, as consolation for lack of meetings:

...je me souviens...que dans ce même Lamalou où je suis pour moisir un mois,¹ l'an passé je t'envoyais et recevais de toi les plus importantes des lettres, de sorte que cette correspondance reprise enfonçait plus avant notre commerce et nous expliquait mieux nos rapports (15th October 1900, 372).

Valéry assures Gide that their relations are too abstract to suffer from the infrequency of their meetings and adds:

Toutes aventures, jusqu'à cette espèce d'amitié ennemie qui a été un instant, à ton précédent Lamalou, la nôtre, et fort étroite, n'ont tourné qu'à mêler énormément quelque chose et à démêler très heureusement tout le reste. J'espère que très souvent nous nous servons mutuellement de types bien définis d'un autre esprit que la nôtre, et aussi sympathique et aussi différent que possible! L'idéal serait: aussi possible que possible! (17th October 1900, 373).

It is to be noticed that not only was Valéry largely responsible for the creation of discussion on their differences but also that Valéry, to a greater degree apparently than Gide, realises that this is as important a means to self-knowledge as to knowledge of the other.

The letters exchanged by Valéry and Gide after the Nourritures terrestres and up to this point form the kernel of their correspondence.

1. Gide is undergoing a cure.

Both men have been responsible for provoking each other to intensify dialogue on their literary dissimilarities.

Valéry has more than caught up on Gide's tentative efforts to bring discussion to a head. These letters prove that Robert Mallet is doubly wrong when he compares Valéry to Gide in the following terms: "Valéry, lui, moins enclin à affronter son contraire, est pourtant très intéressé par une expérience qui peut enrichir la sienne."¹ Not only does Valéry's interest in Gide seem exceptional in light of their early correspondence but also Gide helps Valéry to self-knowledge not by enrichment but by proving to Valéry that he should never follow in Gide's steps. Moreover, as the post-Nourritures terrestres letters show, Valéry is more than willing to confront Gide and is stimulated by their differences perhaps even more so than Gide. Indeed, in homage to André Gide, Valéry wrote:

Voici quelque trente-cinq ans que je le connais familièrement, cependant que nos différences se développent à merveille. Nos sentiments sur presque toute chose sont généralement opposés, mais d'une opposition si naturelle qu'elle équivaut à une harmonie et qu'elle crée entre nous une liberté vraiment rare des échanges de pensées.²

5. The Last Stages of Dialogue.

Henceforth, letters and discussion on literature become much rarer. It is to be remembered that both writers had the opportunity for meetings in Paris and that Gide was, to a high degree, involved in the Nouvelle Revue française. Literature is next mentioned, therefore, when Gide writes of L'Immoraliste. It is a work, he says, which he should have written two years ago because:

...à présent, le goût n'y est plus; je n'aime plus que le 'genre sec',³ mais on écrit toujours en retard; l'embêtant, c'est que ça arrête le développement; il y a toujours en soi ou à côté quelque chose qui n'est pas au pair et qui tire (5th July 1901, 385).

1. G./V. Corr., p. 26.

2. André Gide, Ed. du Capitole, Paris, 1928. Quoted by Gustave Vanwelkenhuyzen in the G./Mo. Corr., p. 281.

3. One wonders if Gide is not thinking of the Caves du Vatican.

Gide's tendency towards simultaneous conception of his works is the cause of this.

In his reply, Valéry shows no interest in L'Immoraliste but writes of the conversion of his employer and his own work Agathe. In a later letter, Gide again mentions his work in much the same terms¹ and inquires about Agathe. Perhaps he hopes that, by showing interest in Valéry's work, he will prompt him into similar interest in L'Immoraliste. After this letter, there is a gap in their published correspondence.

Nonetheless, as a letter published in the Bulletin des Amis d'André Gide proves, Valéry must have given his opinion on L'Immoraliste either verbally or by letter. As this letter will be discussed in the next chapter, I deal only briefly with it here. Gide's comments show that, once again, Valéry has failed to comprehend his work. Contrary to his reaction to Saul, Valéry believes that L'Immoraliste is almost entirely an autobiography.

Gide's letter, where he underlines the fact that L'Immoraliste is a critical work, is significant when compared to Gide's comparative lack of explanation upon this point after Valéry's letters on Paludes and Le Voyage d'Urien. No doubt because of Valéry's attempts to discuss literature from their opposing standpoints, Gide feels freer to explain his work and surer of Valéry's interest.

As this letter shows, the gap in Gide's correspondence may be due to loss of letters. More mundanely, both Gide and Valéry are married and lead extremely busy lives. Indeed, when Gide sends La Porte étroite to Valéry,² he urges him not to read it nor to thank him for it since Madame Valéry is ill. External circumstances have certainly helped to prevent correspondence.

1. G./V. Corr., 23rd September 1901, p. 389.

2. Ib:d, 4th July 1909, pp. 419-420.

A letter from Valéry on Gide's Dostoïevski only goes to show this. Valéry admits that he would have found this work exciting, if so many worries had not prevented him from concentrating, especially on literature. Despite Valéry's present difficulties, however, one suspects that Valéry's lack of enthusiasm is not just momentary but also due to his general inability to penetrate deeply into Gide's work. This, no doubt explains why Gide does not reply to Valéry but comments on a letter on Dostoïevski from Claudel whose interest in Gide's book was far greater.¹

Gide's next work to provoke comment from Valéry is Les Caves du Vatican. Valéry has no one opinion of the book but: "J'en ai des tas et tantôt je blâme le pourquoi, j'apprôve^u le comment; tantôt je sens le contraire" (2nd July 1914, 433-434). Valéry is sure that the Caves will astonish Gide's public in itself and not just by its contrast with his previous work.

From a musical point of view, Valéry writes, Gide has written the Caves "finalement à travers toutes les tonalités" (434). Valéry tends towards praise rather than criticism because he feels the Caves has been an excellent exercise for its author. In this Valéry is correct, since this work is a prelude to Gide's novel. However, the "pourquoi" is just as important as the "comment" and cannot, as the single-minded Valéry would like to do, be separated from it.

Although Valéry comes back to the subject of the Caves in another letter² little is added to these rather casual comments on Gide's work which leave one with the habitual feeling that Valéry's approach to Gide's works is much the same as he might have to a cross-word. After all, one neither re-reads nor explores the global meaning of the latter.

1. G./C. Corr., 29th July 1923, pp. 239-240 and Gide's comments in his Journal, 9th October and 21st December 1923 quoted in G./C. Corr.,
2. G./V. Corr., July 1914, p. 436. /pp. 239-300.

This rather disappointingly short comment on the Caves is compensated for by Valéry's letter on the beginnings of Si le Grain ne meurt which Gide has read to him. It is the kind of work of which first impressions are probably the most exact, Valéry writes, because "le genre même est d'exprimer ces choses qui, soit par leur espèce délicate, soit par leur relation à la mémoire, sunt ut sunt aut non sunt" (27th July 1917, 452).

The portrait of the author is a close resemblance, Valéry feels, and his first impressions guarantee this. By resemblance, Valéry explains that he does not mean that between Gide himself and the Gide of Si le Grain ne meurt, but between Gide and Man. Artistic procedure is, in Valéry's opinion, a secondary consideration.

Hence, Valéry advises keeping the more artistically polished parts for an expurgated version while cutting them down for a complete version. This is because the readers of autobiographies always think that the author is hiding something from them and:

C'est pourquoi les morceaux virtuoses ne sont pas ici sans danger. Faire des mots à son confesseur est grave: il y a de quoi lui faire oublier de vous absoudre. Il suppose à son pénitent un sang-froid incompatible avec la sincérité (45A).

Valéry admits to difficulty in writing of this book which is so intimate a part of Gide but realises that the book itself raises the question: "Où commence, où s'arrête la littérature?" (45A). In Valéry's opinion, Si le Grain ne meurt will be the key to all Gide's work for posterity, since: "En un certain sens, tu fais là tout ce que tu as fait déjà et tout ce que tu pourras jamais faire. C'est un livre qui aura écrit tes autres livres" (45A).

Valéry's judgement is not only perspicacious but also bound to please Gide by its likening of Gide to Man. The young Gide's realisation of the contradictions in his own nature, from which he concluded that he was unlike others, and the older Gide's attempts to solve this problem

through political or religious involvement are of less importance than Gide's supreme fusion with humanity and himself, through his art.

Valéry has also pin-pointed an essential factor of this and all Gide's work, by raising the question of the bounds of literature. Valéry previously touched upon this subject when he accused Gide's El Hadj of demolishing all literature. As I pointed out,¹ Valéry could have been referring to the subjugation of style to ideas. It is also possible that he meant that the role of literature would be fundamentally changed, should one, as Gide tends to do with his écrits, view literature as a solution, no matter how provisional, to the possible problems one may encounter in life.

With Si le Grain ne meurt, Valéry becomes even more conscious that Gide's literature poses the very problem of the role of literature. Gide, as Claude Martin remarked² and as Valéry has grasped, has brought new horizons to literature, since life and literature mingle and emulate one another. Gide's work, and his autobiography, represent a new tide attacking the breakwater which protects both pure and privileged art and realism. Henceforth, the division between a literary view of the world and the world itself must be increasingly difficult to trace. In realising this, Valéry has understood a fundamentally important aspect of Gide's art.

Valéry's judgement of Gide's autobiography places Gide in the history of French literature and helps to make up for his frequent lack of comprehension for Gide's individual works. Unfortunately, there is no reply from Gide.

After this letter, the two writers do little more than inform each other summarily of their own works and those they are reading. It is

1. See: above, p. 118.

2. See: above, Introduction, p. 8.

fitting, therefore, that Valéry's last long letter on Gide's work should be so comprehending a statement on his autobiography.

More and more, the basis of the correspondence becomes friendship. After having his appendix removed, Gide writes to Valéry: "Ta lettre est venue sourire à mon réveil, et ressaisir pour l'amitié un coeur à peine sorti de l'horrible...J'ai pu voir à l'épreuve quelle place tu tiens dans mon ciel" (28th December 1924, 499-500). Valéry writes back:

Quand le simple hasard qui fait que deux hommes se rencontrent, se tâtent, se mesurent, etc., se change insensiblement en une sorte de nécessité, d'événement qui n'aurait pas pu ne pas être, cette justification (au sens évangélique) d'un cas fortuit est: amitié
(1st January 1925, 500).

This beautiful definition shows what a place friendship holds in Valéry's life. For Gide too, friendship is enormously important and particularly with Valéry, since he continues to correspond with him relatively regularly after the possibility of literary dialogue has ceased.¹

It is also true that the elderly Gide experiences less need for "réactifs" and more need for agreement in friendship. His correspondence with Valéry is no exception to this. In a letter from Grasse during the Second World War, Gide writes that he has to agree with Valéry's views on history and current events but adds: "C'est aussi que je n'aime pas te quitter" (10th September 1941, 525). This statement no longer comes from a Gide who is anxious to echo for artistic reasons or through fear of displeasing but from a mature, if lonely, man who is united to life by friendship now more than by literature.

Having traced the sometimes uneven course of artistic and philosophical discussion, there now remains the task of assessing the degree of failure or success of this correspondence. One may safely say that dialogue is by no means an unmitigated success, if one remembers that it is a two-way, moving system of communication.

1. This is to be contrasted to Gide's behaviour with Jammes, Claudel and Charles Du Bos with whom he virtually ceased to correspond.

At first, Gide is concerned with establishing complete harmony with Valéry. This leads him to introduce his own preoccupations only when Valéry's letters allow him to do so. Gide is as intent on dialogue as on harmony. Because Valéry is so different from him, he is forced, in order to keep some semblance of dialogue, into twisting the contents of Valéry's letters to allow for self-expression as a response to Valéry. Valéry's initial insensitivity to Gide's need for dialogue coupled with his own ease in expressing himself, leave one with the impression that Gide is constantly trying to catch up on Valéry's monologues in order to form part of them without, forasmuch, leaving behind any of his own attributes.

Only when provoked by Valéry or when he is by far too saddened at what he feels to be his friend's indifference, does Gide eventually assume his responsibility for dialogue which is more than an echo or the defiant joy of the literary creator.

Gide's persistence in trying to establish literary discussion is due to Valéry's being his first important friend in a literary world dominated by Mallarmé. Furthermore, of all his Mallarméen co-disciples, Valéry is the one for whose work and intelligence Gide had the strongest admiration.

Understandably, therefore, Gide would have liked more intimate and even practical discussion on his works than either Valéry's interest or wishes lead him to give. Valéry's preference went to more theoretical exchanges on literature and it is noticeable that these are the highpoints of his correspondence with Gide. Nonetheless, even when Valéry does broach the more general topic of his and Gide's approaches to art, he often does so in such an irrefutable way that one still feels that the correspondence has not entirely escaped the trap of parallel monologue.

It is also the case that, when Valéry realised and responded to Gide's need for discussion on literature, Gide did not always take full

advantage of the opportunities given him by Valéry. Indeed, it is the latter who openly expresses his satisfaction that they have dwelt upon their differences which, by reaction, have shown him the paths he must follow. From his correspondence with Valéry, Gide does gain similar knowledge, as I hope to show in my fifth chapter. This fact, however, is sometimes only to be understood tacitly from a reading of their correspondence. Nonetheless, the clarity with which the differences between the two men appear in certain passages constitutes the true importance of this literary correspondence, in spite of the fact that such clarity is somewhat at odds with the mingling of ideas inherent in dialogue.

When considering that dialogue is only partially successful, one must remember that, apart from his stormy correspondence with Pierre Louÿs, this is Gide's first attempt to establish a literary correspondence with a colleague. This, as well as Valéry's and Gide's own characters, may explain why the course of literary discussion rarely comes to dizzy heights.

Valéry sums up his relations with Gide thus:

...il y a entre Gide et moi quelque chose qui n'est ni littérature, ni goûts communs ou complémentaires, ni rien qui s'exprime par un calcul régulier mais quelque chose de l'ordre de la vitabilité, de la faculté de se suivre, de s'adapter instantanément, de se deviner avec bonheur...¹

Although Valéry was capable, in his correspondence, of adapting himself to Gide's needs and, on occasion,

of piercing Gide's desire to please, Gide remained, throughout his life, more sensitive to the fact that, in Valéry, he found "nul reflet de ma pensée".² In Gide's opinion, both in speech and in his letters, "Valéry monologue".³

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1. Lettres à Quelques-uns, 1952, p. 67.
 2. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 27th April 1919, p. 20.
 3. Ibid, 12th November 1928, p. 381.

Although this judgement is a little unfair, it is viable for a large part of Gide's correspondence with Valéry. Moreover, as a first step to literary correspondence, Gide would have preferred to find in their letters those very ingredients, - literature and common or complimentary tastes - , which Valéry dismisses as of little importance in their relationship.

These factors no doubt explain why, even as dialogue through opposition becomes truly authentic, Gide should not make a deliberate effort to prolong it. Gide, as Valéry suggests, has moved on to more profitable, literary "réactifs" who are willing and able to write at length of literature with, as their starting-point, Gide's own works.

CHAPTER III.

CHAPTER III

Dialogue in Gide's Correspondences with
James and Claudel.

1. The Need for a New Interlocutor and
The First Steps to Dialogue.

Gide's failure to establish dialogue with Valéry to his complete satisfaction was partially due to his feeling that Valéry could only disapprove of his changing approach to art but also to the latter's frequently reticent attitude towards literary discussion. When Valéry accused Gide of preferring other literary "réactifs" to himself, he was not mistaken.

The final product of Gide's break with his youthful ties to Symbolism may be said to be the Nourritures terrestres. In spite of Valéry's later undeniable interest in Saül, the casualness with which he greets the all-important Nourritures show that Gide had correctly foreseen that he could not depend upon Valéry for dialogue on his future work.

Gide began to correspond with Francis James in 1893 after Eugène Rouart, a mutual friend, passed on a copy of James' Vers to Gide. The attraction of James, as an artist, for Gide lies in his spontaneity, his primitive simplicity and his love of nature. When attempting to seek common ground between James and Gide, Robert Mallet exaggerates both Gide's spontaneity¹ and the similarities between his and James' portrayals of nature in their poetry.²

1. G/J. Corr., p. 10.

2. Ibid, pp. 12-13, where Mallet makes a most doubtful attempt to liken what is still a Walterian "'paysage d'âme'" to the sunny sensuality of James' portrayal of love in natural surroundings.

Certainly, Gide is trying to rid his work of the "'paysage d'âme'" criticised by Valéry, but his sensual understanding of the world is far less akin to that of Jammes than Robert Mallet believes. Nonetheless, Gide himself tends to over-emphasise the similarity of his and Jammes' love of nature, perhaps because he envies the other's spontaneity which was not one of his inherent artistic qualities even in the Nourritures.¹

Robert Mallet, despite over-willingness to accept similarities between Jammes and Gide, does point briefly to the conceptual gap between Gide's and Jammes' representations of nature: the former's being philosophical² whereas Jammes' are more visionary and imaginative.³

If one is seeking likenesses between Jammes and Gide, therefore, there lies a much more plausible one in Gide's consciousness that morality has a part to play in his art. The question of "what" to portray is just as important as portraying "well".⁴ The Nourritures will be a work with a mission, over-reaching the limits of pure art. It is in this light that one must view Gide's attraction to the author of Vers, in order to understand the development of their relations.

Gide's and Jammes' first letters indicate clearly the basis of their interest in each other, while pointing immediately to both similarities and differences.

Gide expresses his appreciation both of the spontaneity to be found in Jammes' poems and of their sincerity which he assimilates to the refusal of a priori sensations.⁵ In his introduction,⁶ Mallet recognises the importance of the two writers' individuality but fails to notice that

1. Claude Martin, MAG, pp. 210-211.
2. Germaine Brée, in her criticism of Gide's Nourritures terrestres, goes further than Mallet since she suggests that Gide's description of natural surroundings have been drawn more from his intellect and literary memory than from any actual experience. IP, pp. 80-82.
3. G./J. Corr., p. 13.
4. Romans, TN, p. 9.
5. G./J. Corr., May 1893, p. 33.
6. Ibid, p. 10.

their new and personal visions of the world are destined for a public which must be educated "à nous sentir".¹ Gide has thus discarded any hint of the Symbolist's lack of concern for a public.

Jammes' reply shows that his own artistic aims are not unlike those of Gide. In his opinion, happiness is not to be found for either of them in youthful memories or in Symbolist works but in God.² In his very next letter,³ Jammes opens the door to discussion on the differences between their approaches to art. He admits that he is highly sensitive to the poetry of Le Voyage d'Urien and La Tentative amoureuse but would prefer these works, were their beauty more healthy in its exoticism.⁴

Gide makes no attempt to reply to this accusation. Rather, he emphasises what brings him closer to Jammes, for whom his admiration is not "seulement littéraire" (End of 1894, 37), and whose works do not even surprise him, "tant je vous comprends naturel" (37). Gide is thus re-invoking his affinities to Jammes, thereby avoiding the opportunity Jammes has given him to discuss his works. As with Valéry, it seems that Gide's concern with friendship prevents him from accepting too direct an initial confrontation.

2. Ménalque and the Nourritures terrestres.

The fact that Gide is more interested in exploiting his similarities to Jammes is shown the very first time he writes of his own literature. While Gide realises that Jammes may dislike the theory of Ménalque,⁵ he prefers to believe that "nos pensées se fondront dans un commun amour de la nature" (19th January 1896, 63). Jammes, however, in his Réponse à Ménalque,⁶ proves that he has correctly realised that Ménalque's

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1. G./J. Corr., May 1893, p. 33. From now on, in this chapter all references to quotes from this Correspondance will be included in parenthesis in the text as for the preceding chapter.
 2. Ibid, June 1893, p. 34.
 3. Ibid, 9th January 1894.
 4. See: Jammes' letter of the middle of October 1894, Ibid, p. 37.
 5. L'Ermitage, January 1896, pp. 1-7, and Les Nourritures terrestres, Chapter I, Book IV.
 6. L'Ermitage, April 1896 and G./J. Corr., pp. 295-298.

philosophy is of far more importance than his love of nature which is a product of this philosophy.¹ Nature, as any other object of Ménéalque's desire, is incidental to the fervour it arouses:

'Toutes formes de Dieu sont chérissables, et tout est la forme de Dieu... Mon bonheur est fait de ferveur. A travers indistinctement toute chose, j'ai éperdument adoré.'²

From the beginning, unlike Gide himself, Jamnes is attracted towards discussion upon Gide's differences from him.. Jamnes' article is, in its own way, an intelligent comment on Ménéalque contrasted to himself. Firstly, he comments on the difference between Ménéalque's strangely sumptuous but intellectual love of nature and his own which is all brightness and simplicity. Ménéalque's view of nature depends on his "scolastique amère et puérile" (295); Jamnes' on his humble satisfaction with his own limited and yet, Jamnes implicitly suggests, boundless experience. Moreover, Jamnes makes it clear that the tales he may tell of well-known countries are a source of comfort to simple people, whereas Ménéalque, one gathers, may have the rich knowledge of "freedom" but is without compassion or humility. To some extent, Jamnes' reproach is justified. Ménéalque's realisation that "la coupe que j'ai vidée reste vide pour toi, mon frère"³ is not followed by a solution to this problem and he does admit to experiencing "la violente joie de l'orgueil".⁴

Jamnes' own claims to humility are to be taken with a pinch of salt. Of greater importance is his insistence on the limited boundaries of his experience and on the fact that this brings him closer to suffering humanity.

Gide's acknowledgement of Jamnes' article is short,⁵ merely

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1. See: above, Chapter II, Note 2, p. 119.
 2. Romans, NT, pp. 190-191.
 3. Ibid, p. 184.
 4. Ibid, p. 186.
 5. G./J. Corr., 21st February 1896, pp. 65-66.

expressing his pleasure at being upbraided by his correspondent. It is only when his Nourritures is published that Gide participates in discussion.

Nonetheless, a part of Jammes' criticisms of Ménéalque is not alien to Gide's own feelings since, after finishing the Nourritures, he writes to André Ruyters: "Ménéalque est loin - je suis un être plein d'inquiétude, de tendresse souffrante, et tourmenté d'autrui..."¹ Commenting on this letter, Claude Martin says that Gide, in his own life, is following the precept of his Nourritures: "AUTRUI - importance de sa vie; lui parler..."²

It is difficult to say whether Jammes' comments on Ménéalque's egoism have influenced Gide or not, especially as Gide himself does not give his opinion on them. However, one wonders if the increased preoccupation with communication, which appears in the Nourritures, is not a belated reply to Jammes' article on Ménéalque.

Certainly, the completed Nourritures changes Jammes' outlook initially, since he now realises that, under the magnificence and sensuality of Gide's book, there lie "des torrents de chasteté, d'ascétisme et de frugalité morale" (19th June 1897, 112). Jammes has also sensed, unlike Valéry, that Gide's work contains its own criticism:

Chacune de tes pensées portait en elle, DIRECTEMENT, sa propre réfutation et il me semblait qu'un plainchant et qu'un parfum de nef et qu'une évangélique sérénité s'élevassent comme des brumes divines vers un inaccessible sommet (112).

When Gide replies to Jammes: "Ta lettre sur mes Nourritures n'est le plus grand gain de ce livre" (4th July 1897, 113), he is scarcely exaggerating. Valéry's ironic appreciation of his work as a tourist guide and the incomprehension of those who see it as an invitation to

1. Letter of the 14th or 15th May 1897 quoted by Claude Martin, MAG, p. 191.
2. Romans, NT, p. 246. Quoted by Claude Martin, MAG, p. 192.

debauchery are more than made up for by James' understanding that Gide's work is not just affirmative but critical and that it is essentially a book of purity and abnegation.

In his next letter,¹ James comes back to Gide's work, writing affectionately of their differences in a way which shows that he identifies Ménéalque with Gide. With his Lettre à Ménéalque,² he forces Gide into discussion. Although, James still accepts the underlying religiosity of the Nourritures, he criticises the "apostle" and his faith in terms reminiscent of his Réponse à Ménéalque. After contrasting the mediocrity and the sadness of his own life to the insolent joy of the egoist, Ménéalque, James adds that the latter's life and philosophy would have true value only if:

...ô Ménéalque, tu avais pris et pétri ces misères;
si, de la Beauté et de la Bonté qui furent déposées en
ton âme tu les avais revêtues, si tu t'étais levé pour
servir...Alors chantant de pauvres choses, Ménéalque,
peut-être nous eusses-tu enchantés (299).

James is thus, once again, raising the question of "AUTRUI". The pain James' letter caused Gide is clearly due not only to the fact that the former has failed to see that Gide is concerned with others, in his book, but also to James' implication that the philosophical basis of the Nourritures has led to artistic failure because it cannot move the ordinary reader.

Gide's Réponse à la Lettre du Faune³ subtly justifies his own position at the expense of James'. While he states that both he and Ménéalque pity humanity, he claims no less strongly the right to proclaim his own experience, even if its joy and beauty do not reflect James' "'pauvresses immobiles'" (300) and may, therefore, upset them. Indeed, the very fact that Gide does expose his differences from more common mortals, at the risk of not writing a best seller, appears to be an act of artistic courage

1. G./J. Corr., Beginning of July 1897, pp. 114-115.

2. Le Spectateur Catholique, July 1897 and G./J. Corr., pp. 298-299.

3. Le Spectateur catholique, September 1897 and *Ibid*, pp. 301-302.

when compared to the safety of James' literary ventures: "Donc seule la douleur, selon toi, s'osera répandre, sûre qu'elle sera de trouver toujours un écho" (300). Gide has realised that the freshness of James' poetry does not depend upon the novelty of his ideas and that James is, thus, far from being the educator Gide had, at first, thought him to be.¹

Gide then sets about showing that Ménalque's way of life is not applicable to an élite only, as his exaltation is not dependent upon objects in themselves but also comes from within the beholder.

In his Nourritures, therefore, Gide is concerned with prompting people to exaltation not only of their experience of the world but also of their own possible attributes. He wishes to raise people up to a joy and individuality as great as his own. James, on the other hand, wishes to erase his peculiarities, to bring himself down to the level of the greater mass of humanity. Basically, James' attitude is extremely condescending and Gide, who realises this, teases him gently: "Adieu, Faune; je t'aime énormément. Ne sois pas trop orgueilleux de ta gêne" (301).

In his Réplique à André Gide, James reiterates with even greater firmness his belief that silence must be maintained wherever knowledge could be hurtful. Hence James bids Gide to leave his earthly prophat, Ménalque, and to sample the "nourritures divines" (302) which are the food of the humble. To join and comfort the latter, religious sentiment is, therefore, a logical necessity, in James' eyes.

Unfortunately, Gide does not reply to James' article directly. However, according to him, L'Immoraliste is to be considered as a reply to James' criticisms,² no doubt because Michel does harm by his way of life and ends in isolation.

An interesting contrast is to be made between Gide's exchange of letters with James in Le Spectateur catholique and certain points from

1. G./J. Corr., May 1893, p. 33: "J'aime surtout cette sincérité qui vous fait sentir, comme existantes et réelles, des sensations quoique non encore exprimées... nous devons éduquer les autres, leur apprendre...
2. G./J. Corr., July 1897, p. 117 and the notes to this letter, p. 330.

a prior letter to André Ruyters. The letter, who had become friendly with Gide in 1895, was to write an article on the Nourritures terrestres.¹ When the article appeared, it was influenced to a large extent by Gide's long, explanatory letter.

Whereas James' interest in the Nourritures is mainly moral and religious, Ruyters' comment that Gide seems to have killed all sentimentality in him for this work² gives Gide the opportunity to write about his book from an artistic point of view. Indeed, Gide insists that this work was born with a "préoccupation non tant morale que littéraire" (31st May 1897, 27). The nature of this "préoccupation" is explained in an earlier letter to Ruyters: "Il nous faut précipiter la littérature dans un abîme de sensualisme d'où elle ne puisse sortir que complètement régénérée" (10th September 1896, 25). Although Gide depicts sensuality as a means to literary renaissance, the very force with which he proclaims its necessity contrasts with his joyful acceptance of James' view that the Nourritures is a work of purity.

Gide also expresses freely to Ruyters not only his desire that the Nourritures create a highly individual form of lyricism but also explains how he has created his own fervour, and what its role is to be. To achieve fervour, Gide has, as suggested by Ruyters, suppressed the notion of sentimentality because, paradoxically,:

La sentimentalité est compliquée, détériorée par trop de choses, et puis elle s'adresse d'individu à individu et méconnaît l'éternité divine des choses, pour ne s'attacher qu'à ce qu'elles ont de périssable...enfin, c'est un sentiment égoïste et l'on dira tout ce que l'on voudra, je prétends que les Nourritures sont anti-égoïstes au plus haut point, un livre de complet dévouement - et je prétends que qui prétend le contraire n'y a rien compris...il faudrait appeler le dévouement: l'obéissance à sa vocation (de là cet orgueil que tu sens dans les Nourritures) (31st May 1897, 27).

1. L'Art Moderne, 18th June 1897.

2. Letter of the 31st May 1897 in the Bulletin des Amis d'André Gide, no. 30, April 1976, p. 26. The Bulletin mentioned is the source of all further references to letters between Gide and Ruyters. Therefore, only letter-dates and page-numbers will be given henceforth in the text.

This explanation to Ruyters might well have been given to Jammes since it shows the deeply artistic motivation behind the Nourritures and that Gide, in his query to Jammes, : "Quelle fut mon erreur, après tout, que d'avoir aimé Dieu plus que les hommes" (300), might have replaced the word "God" by that of "Art".

Gide discusses the artistic implications of his work with Ruyters and the moral ones with Jammes because, respectively, they are what his two correspondents are interested in. The commentator of Gide's letters to Ruyters remarks that it is not by chance that Gide explains his work in greatest depth to his newest and youngest friend.¹ Perhaps Ruyters embodies the very youth Gide is writing for; concentration on the more positive aspects of the Nourritures is, therefore, in keeping. Jammes, on the other hand, may be said to represent the more weighty aspect of human responsibility. Gide is not as insusceptible to the latter as might seem from the joking tone he adopts to confess to Ruyters that he could, with great enjoyment, have ended his Nourritures with the discomfiture of Ménélaque.

What Gide's letters to both correspondents have in common is Gide's suggestion that his work does not contain an individual message, no matter how individual his lyricism, but one of general moral impact.²

Gide wishes to prompt others to devotion to their vocation, which must be found by a conscious effort and even the pain brought by knowledge. Gide's contact with humanity is, thus, one of ideas whereas Jammes' is one of commiseration, of helping people to accept their lot. In this context, Jammes' love of nature is used to underline his likeness to the common man, to show that his is shared experience. Gide's portrayal of natural and man-made surroundings, is, by his own admission, merely an

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1. Ruyters is barely twenty-one and has known Gide for less than six months.
 2. See: Lettres à Christian Beck, Brussels, 1946, letter of the 13th June, p. 31: "Il n'y a pas de particularité qui ne manifeste quelque loi générale".

illustration of a way of life.¹ Discussion on Ménalque and the Nourritures terrestres has not only cleared away any doubts as to whether Gide's and Jammes' outlooks may mingle in a "common love of nature" but has also brought their differing concepts of the role of art into sharp relief.

3. The Role and the Quality of Art.

The exchange of letters on Ménalque and the Nourritures brings to light what is to be the basic source of dialogue throughout the Correspondance. On the one hand, Gide clings to the authenticity of individual morality and artistic aims, even while he is able to recognise their appearance of pride; on the other, Jammes finds strength in the humble certitude afforded by limited experience and simple pleasures.

Gide has little to gain, as yet, from turning to Jammes' artistic sources as Jammes would like him to do. In reply to Jammes' call to purify his art, he writes: "M'aimes-tu donc assez pour vouloir me 'sauver', cher ami? Je suis, tu sais, de rédemption difficile, et contrecarre les desseins des Sauveurs!" (July 1897, 117).

Gide is by no means ready to write of the "nourritures divines" (302) suggested by Jammes. Nonetheless, as Gide shows that he is only too sensitive to the charm of Jammes' moral and artistic position,² Jammes follows up his advantage. His criticisms of the Nourritures concerned only the unimportant aspects of Gide's work which, Jammes is convinced, will be discarded when Gide writes another Nourritures in which "tu te lèveras de toute ta taille d'apôtre" (End of August 1897, 121).³ When Jammes writes, in the same letter, : "...le jour où j'entendrai suinter

1. See: G./Mo. Corr., 12th October 1897, p. 214: "...vraiment le voyage n'a fait qu'approvisionner des pages vides, comme des exemples d'une technique de vie..."

2. G./J. Corr., August 1897, p. 120.

3. Interestingly, Albert Mockel, after writing that he had mistakenly believed that the Nourritures terrestres was an extremely selfish book, advises Gide to write not one, but three books to clear up any possible misinterpretation. G./Mo. Corr., 3rd September 1897, p. 201.

les citernes de tes pleurs, alors, ô je saurai que tu es André Gide" (End of August 1897, 121), he is but reiterating his belief that André Gide, prophet, is not to be found in the insolent joy of Ménalque but in the gravity of an André Walter made aware of the misery of man.

After reading La Danse des Morts,¹ Jammes renews his exhortations to Gide to produce "une oeuvre suprême" (End of October 1897, 124). Jammes' former certainty that Gide's art will change has been shaken, however. This is because the overall message of the four poems of La Danse des Morts is that one should enjoy the pleasures of the earth here and now rather than waiting for an illusory after-life. This follow-up to the Nourritures has shown Jammes that there is more to the surface of Gide's work than he had thought.

This realisation causes Jammes to insist more vigorously than before on Gide's role as a painter and leader of men. By entangling himself in "des raisonnements de géométrie religieuse" (124) instead of bringing consolation, Gide is responsible, lectures Jammes, not just for his own mistakes but also for those committed by others who have been influenced by the false teachings of the Nourritures.²

Hence, Jammes urges Gide: "Après ces crises nécessaires, sois égal" (124). Jammes is unconsciously asking Gide to abandon the necessary principle of his art. It is interesting to recall at this stage that Valéry uses the word "ressemblance" in relation to Gide when writing to him of Si le Grain ne meurt. Jammes' use of the word "égal" may, I feel, be interpreted somewhat freely as an elliptical way of saying "equal to your true self", to "le pâtre des berges".³ Valéry, on the other hand, is far too intelligent to make this falsely limiting equation but realises that the true importance of the portrait in Si le Grain ne meurt is its

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1. A collection of four poems published in L'Ermitage, July and October 1897.
 2. Jammes' concern here is to be contrasted to his former statement that only immature schoolboys will not understand the purity of the Nourritures. G./J. Corr., 19th June 1897, p. 112.
 3. This is Jammes' name for Gide/André Walter, the grave and good Puritan.

resemblance to Man. Gide is on the side of Prometheus and his art must be questing and complex.

Although Jammes rightly believes that the Nourritures is not a definitive indication of Gide's future art, he has tended to simplify the nature of the critical spirit which Gide brings to his art. Gide's Nourritures are, indeed, a part of a whole which is to be completed by Saül and L'Immoraliste. However, Gide will not criticise the Nourritures by another work of fervour, be it piously sad, but will use his thought to show the canker that lies in one's desires.

Insofar as the aspiration towards God is a part of human and his own personal experience, Gide does, nonetheless, desire to write this work which Jammes sees as a summum. While Jammes describes such a work as "suprême", though, Gide contents himself with the adjective "admirable" (October 1897, 125). Thus Gide envisages this work as only a part of his creation, however important it may be.

Indeed, Gide does not hesitate to inform Jammes of the other components of his nature which will go towards his art in Saül, when he writes:

Tous les démons de la Judée m'habitent, se nourrissent de moi, me tourmentent; si je ne les chérissais pas un peu, je serais beaucoup plus malheureux; mais je ne serais pas si malade. Je suis hanté. Toi, le plus doux des poètes et le plus pur de mes amis, qui veux bien croire en moi autant que j'y crois moi-même et qui persistes à me croire hanté seulement par le ciel, adieu...(October, 1897, 125).

Gide is admitting to Jammes that the sources of pleasure in the Nourritures terrestres are not simply pretexts to inner fervour but are a very real and personal risk to Gide's equilibrium, should he prize them for themselves.

As well as showing Jammes that his moral and, hence, artistic development will be one of exorcism rather than a simple oscillation to the paths of virtue, Gide also seems concerned with showing Jammes the other side of the coin in order, one feels, to belie Jammes' belief that there is only one, "true" Gide.

Thus, only a few months later, Gide finds a pretext for informing Jammes that the role of his art is not just to be self-preservation. A miserable letter from Jammes¹ causes Gide to deny the Christian faith regretfully since, through it, a believer may bring comfort to those who are suffering. In fact, Gide is not truly sorry, since this denial of Jammes' and Occidental society's God is but a prelude to his confirming the existence of his own god:

Mon seul rôle dans cette société qui se referme autour de moi, - n'y trouvant heureusement plus de place, m'étant éloigné d'elle à mesure que je m'approchais de Dieu - mon seul rôle est de m'élever contre elle. Quelle force me faudra-t-il! Je demande trois ans d'exil (trois, c'est peu) où me nourrir comme Jean de sauterelles et de leur aigre clameur sur les sables. Je veux ne revenir qu'étranger, c'est-à-dire déjà presque ennemi. (1st December 1897, 130).

Gide's Saül-like confessions to Jammes do not mean, therefore, that he has abandoned the more positive message of the Nourritures.

This cult of savage rebellion against society can only go to remind Jammes that Gide does not, as he, accept the state of man compassionately but passively. Gide's god here is virtue,² the high point of personal, human endeavour. Gide himself explains this to the Catholic, René Schwob, : "...vous acceptez un Dieu tout fait, tandis que je crois que Dieu se fait en nous, par nous, et qu'il s'agit pour nous de l'obtenir..."³

Obviously, such an outlook will produce works of art quite unsolicited by Jammes. Indeed, this passage from Gide's letter to Jammes is more an artistic than a moral declaration. Gide is stating clearly, for the first time, that his artistic role is an attack on society's moral fibre by its incitation to discover one's own way in life.

Unfortunately, there is no reply from Jammes in the Correspondance, but the importance Gide lays on his declaration of the dual function of his art is to be seen when he writes: "...c'est à cause de notre ^{divergence que notre} _^

1. G./J. Corr., November 1897, pp. 128-129.

2. J.2, Feuillets d'Automne, p. 310.

3. Pierre Angel, Lettres inédites sur l'Inquiétude Moderne, Les Editions Universelles, 1951, 19th February 1945, p. 119.

amitié tant m'importe...Et j'aime à me mettre en demeure d'être morigéné par toi" (17th April 1897, 137). Jammes' constant provocation has forced Gide into reflection upon his artistic position and into swift acceptance of the fact that opposition constitutes the true value of their correspondence.

Having explained the moral content and the role of his art, Gide, curiously leaps to the defense of its quality, before Jammes has even read his next work, Saül. One wonders whether Jammes' final comment in his Réponse à Ménéalque is not still rankling.¹

Eugène Rouart's book, La Villa sans Maître, is the pretext for Gide's justifying his artistic position. Jammes has judged Rouart's book from a limited, moralistic point of view, which Gide condemns. He takes care to point out that Rouart is not to be identified with his here and adds: "Crois-tu donc que Rouart l'approuve et que ce soit un livre qu'il ait écrit sans se déchirer?" (17th April 1898, 138). Gide is clearly arguing the case for his own works, urging Jammes to recognise the depth of personal involvement in them but warning him not to enclose Gide in any one of them.

Gide also attacks Jammes' judgement on the grounds that one's opinion of a work of art should have nothing whatsoever to do with one's moral judgement and, indeed, "les plus abominables trahisons de Charlotte ou de Marguerite servent à écrire calmement les plus admirables Faust ou Werther" (17th April 1898, 138). The quality of one's moral sentiments, Gide is saying, does not necessarily enhance one's art² and most definitely harms one's critical judgement. It is probably because Jammes has shown that his literary objectivity is suspect that Gide avoids mentioning Saül to Jammes and turns, rather, to Valéry for discussion on his work. In fact, somewhat disconcertingly, Saül meets with Jammes' entire approval.

1. See: above, p. 152.

2. Iostojevski, 1970, p. 203: "'C'est avec les beaux sentiments que l'on fait la mauvaise littérature'".

There is a small, but interesting, pendant to the question of morality in the work of art. Replying to a letter from Gide, which does not appear in the Correspondance, Jammes attempts to calm Gide's fears that he, Jammes, may doubt in his affection. At the same time, Jammes takes the opportunity to attack Gide for what he wrongly believes to be philosophical "inquiétude" (April 1901, 173-174). This, Jammes feels, is what prevents Gide from letting himself go and accepting the simplicity of belief.

Once again, the Christian faith is being advocated by Jammes, in spite of Gide's clear indication that art must contain the "Devil".¹ The next letter from Gide, since it is dated several months later, is probably not the direct reply to Jammes'. However, it seems to me that, in it, Gide is subtly pointing out that art has nothing to gain from submission to Christian morality.

Gide mentions two of Jammes' works, Clara d'Ellébeuse and Almaïde d'Étrement. In Clara, the heroine's character is responsible for her death, Gide writes. He might have added that Clara's youth and her upbringing were hardly conducive to sufficient knowledge of the facts of life to realise that she could not be pregnant. In Almaïde, the heroine, having begun an affair with a goatherd, is deprived of her lover when the latter falls into a crevasse. The logic and inner necessity of Clara are thus, in Gide's opinion, replaced by moral considerations which necessitate the deus ex machina in Almaïde. Gide adds: "Mais je commence à t'irriter et tu vas faire semblant de ne plus pouvoir me comprendre" (July 1901, 175). One sees that he is pulling Jammes' leg on the, nonetheless, very important question of art based on external, moral precepts or on the individual qualities of one's characters.

The period from the publication of the Nourritures to that of Saül appears in Gide's Correspondance with Jammes as one of growing certainty,

1. Dostoïevski, p. 203: "'Il n'y a pas d'oeuvre d'art sans collaboration du démon'".

on Gide's part, as to the role and the quality of his art. His initial declarations¹ have an undeniably Biblical ring to them. However, as Jammes makes it clearer not only that Gide's "oeuvre suprême" (End of October 1897, 124) but also his own literary judgement is dependent upon the Christian faith, Gide avoids any stylistic ambiguity.

Even at this stage, Gide knows that, if he submits to religious belief, he will not be able to express the complexity of his character nor retain the quality of his art. Jammes has proved to him that one's critical faculties are also adversely affected if given second place to a a priori morality. The hardening of Gide's attitude is to be seen in the fact that he comes to combat Jammes' standpoint with artistic rather than seemingly moral arguments which, inevitably, strengthen his own position while weakening that of Jammes.

4. L'Immoraliste and the Strengthening of Reaction.

These differences in no way affect Gide's desire for a favourable opinion from Jammes on L'Immoraliste since he writes: "Qu'est-ce que tu vas penser de mon livre? Sera-t-il, selon toi, dans ma vraie courbe?" (May 1902, 189). Despite the knowledge that he will never definitively adopt Jammes' position, Gide's concern is quite genuine, as he sees L'Immoraliste as another step in the debate which began with the Nourritures.² Gide's reaction against Jammes has neither detracted from his admiration for him as a writer³ nor caused him to discard fully Jammes' interpretation of his work. Jammes is not, obviously, the only "réactif" to Gide's complexity but he has recognised that the need for purity and simplicity exists within Gide. Jammes is useful to Gide both because

1. See: above pp. 158-159.

2. G./J. Corr., November 1901, p. 179: "Puisse - plaire!"

3. Ibid, November 1901, p. 178.

the latter does not wish to sever all links with this part of himself and because, by reaction, he helps to convince Gide of the need for complexity and individuality.

The epistolary discussion between the two writers on L'Immoraliste is unfortunately conditioned by Gide's opinion of James' Existences. James tends to agree with those of his critics who see in Existences "la preuve la plus éclatante de mon génie et de ma sagesse" (April 1902, 186), although he modestly disclaims any comparison between himself and God as exaggerated.¹

Gide, on the other hand, forms the hasty and rather sweeping judgement that Existences is almost admirably appalling.² Gide insists that his judgement is due to his comprehension of the inherent qualities of James' work. The reasons for Gide's admiring and detesting Existences lie not just in the duality of the work, as he believes, but also in his own and man's duality.³ Existences, in his opinion, is suffused with the spirit of God and God provokes both love and resistance.

Gide explains his reactions to Existences by stage imagery. In the work, there exists a "côté cour" but also a "côté jardin". The "côté cour" represents, for Gide, the stifling prison of his own philosophy which remains without effect on others and, therefore, brings only anguish to him. Gide clearly feels that the Nourritures terrestres has not had its desired impact. This, and the very criticism of Ménélaque's philosophy in L'Immoraliste, are probably responsible for Gide's emphasising the ill-effects of his own thought. The "côté jardin" must represent James who is "quelque chose de frais où pouvoir reposer ma tête" and "l'étanchement" (May 1902, 189) to Gide's fever. Nonetheless, while Gide professes

1. G./J. Corr., April 1902, p. 187.

2. Ibid, 7th May 1902, pp. 187-188.

3. Ibid, May 1902, pp. 188-189.

to hating his ideas, he stresses that they can only be denied by his thinking processes, as he has tried to prove in Paludes. The use of his reason, and not its abandonment, is ever Gide's means to achieving equilibrium.

Jammes remains deaf to Gide's plea for understanding. He is sensitive only to the fact that his work has been criticised.¹ He therefore ignores the opening Gide has given him to discuss both sides of his nature and merely states categorically that Christianity, because of its stabilizing qualities, is the only possible philosophy² and has, indeed, produced Saul, the proof that Gide will one day be "l'admirable et rutilant poète biblique" (End of May 1902, 191) that Jammes sees in him.

This letter is the most unequivocal statement so far from Jammes that Gide has but one moral and literary path to follow which, he short-sightedly believes, is that of Saul.

In Jammes' next letter, one sees to the full that literary pique is the reason for his demanding Gide's philosophical and artistic surrender. Jammes rejects Gide's "terrifiantes Terres promises" (10th June 1902, 192) not, one feels, for themselves but because Gide's love for them and his intellectual "pride" prevent Gide from appreciating "une admirable moisson de nielles, de coquelicots et d'épis" (192). The latter obviously represent the simple beauty, not only of Jammes' God, "Celui qui échappe à vos logiques" (192), but also of Jammes' literature which it is Gide's duty to appreciate.

So hard does Jammes find it to understand Gide's refusal to do so, that he can only see in Gide's attitude either gratuitous obstinacy or "l'adoption des plus misérables préjugés de littérature" (193).

1. G./J. Corr., May 1902, pp. 189-190; End of May 1902, pp. 190-191; 10th June 1902, pp. 192-194.

2. Ibid, End of May 1902, p. 191.

which cause him to approve of mediocre writers rather than belong to "cette courbe d'êtres d'élite" (193) who admire Jammes unconditionally.

The basic issue of Jammes' letter is the premise of one's literary judgement. Jammes' continued approval of Gide's art will depend, as he has informed Gide,¹ on its faithfulness to those works which do not offend his moral ideas. In his attempts to reduce Gide to a moral and artistic imitation of himself, not the least of Jammes' considerations is that Gide will, thereafter, be unable to criticise his, Jammes', work. As Jammes' judgement of La Villa sans Maître has already shown,² his moral opinions are automatically aped by his literary ones. Gide's letters to Jammes have proved that Gide is much more prone than Jammes to purely literary "prejudices".³

Nonetheless, as Gide has freely admitted to Jammes, his own moral position is largely responsible for his attitude to Existences.⁴ The distinguishing line between moral and artistic considerations, is, thus, thin for Gide too. Gide differs from Jammes in that he does not unthinkingly assimilate bad or good sentiments to bad or good literature respectively.

Gide's reply⁵ shows that he recognises that literary judgement is both the most important issue of Jammes' letter and the greatest stumbling-block to the continuance of dialogue.

Gide picks straightaway on the pettiest and most illogical of Jammes' assertions, - namely, that Gide's love of mediocrity, and not his "combat singulier et merveilleux" (193) with his thoughts, is responsible for his mixed feelings on Existences.⁶ After refuting this artificial division of his artistic and thinking being, Gide goes on to attack this very unity

1. G./J. Corr., End of May 1902, p. 192.

2. See: above, p. 160

3. See: above, pp. 160-162.

4. G./J. Corr., May 1902, pp. 188-189, and pp. 18-19 of this chapter.

5. Ibid, 12th June 1902, pp. 194-195.

6. Ibid, 10th June 1902, p. 193.

in Jammes:

Tu te fais un Bon Dieu commode pour tes vers, puis tu t'écries avec Frizot (sic) : 'C'est le seul qui me satisfasse,' Parbleu! Ne te suffit-il pas que du fond de l'autel tu le fasses te murmurer: 'Francis Jammes est le seul poète qui me satisfasse' pour qu'aussitôt tu croies en lui? (12th June 1902, 194).

Gide is pointing out that the inseparability of Jammes' religious beliefs and his art is very much in his interests. By his accusation against Jammes, Gide is simultaneously defending himself against Jammes' belief that his opinion of Existences is caused by gratuitous pride. And subtly declaring the independence and honesty of his literary judgements.

Gide's attitude to Existences has caused Jammes to demand the simplification of his moral and critical outlook. With L'Immoraliste, Jammes renews his arguments for the simplification of Gide's art. As before, Jammes surrounds Gide with the hypothetical frame of his work as a whole:

Mon idée, c'est que ce livre n'est qu'une graine de tes greniers magnifiques et, par cela même, jamais insignifiante, mais ne valant que parce qu'il indique de possibilité ténébreuse dans tes drames futurs...C'est pour cela que, lorsque je songe à ton génie si certain, c'est de préférence encore ton Candaule ou ton Saül qui se présentent. Là tout vit...Là, fume ton génie religieux que je ne puis écouter sans frissonner" (June 1902, 196).

The thoughts exposed by Gide in L'Immoraliste are thus not entirely dismissed by Jammes since he believes they may be put to use in religiously-inspired art. This passage goes to underline, however, that, while Jammes may accept a limited use of the darker possibilities of L'Immoraliste, he cannot accept the defiant joy of Gide's "terrifiantes Terres promises" (10th June 1902, 192). "Safety and sadness" seems to be Jammes' motto.

Thus, Jammes compares the artistic results of the philosophy of L'Immoraliste to a tree which grows strange, variegated leaves and dark flowers like poisonous trumpets which, Jammes admits, are, nonetheless, superbly beautiful. Such a tree is contrasted by Jammes to the traditional ones native to France, which obviously represent his wishes

for Gide's art - that is to say, its simplification and purification by religious sentiment.

This letter is followed by another¹ in which James forcefully resumes his arguments by insulting Gide's philosophy, as he sees it, and by pointing out the erroneousness of the theories which torment him since Gide was born to be simple and good.

The unpleasantness of James' letters, with their wearing insistence on Gide's duty to limit himself, his art and his views on literature, not unsurprisingly infuriate Gide. They do, however, provoke him into both an explanation and a statement of his artistic position.

To explain his inability to exist simply, Gide evokes his well-known but doubtful argument of split heredity. Because he himself is full of contradictions, he will be unable to write "une oeuvre d'art simple" (6th August 1902, 199) without having rid himself, cathartically, of his "multiples raisons d'être" (199) in his art.

Gide goes on to describe his approach to his works:

...je ne viens pas dire que j'écris celles-ci pour pouvoir écrire celles-là; ni celles-là pour les premières; mais, contraint dans chacune de me contraindre, chacune de mes oeuvres est en réaction directe contre la précédente. Je ne me satisfais complètement dans aucune, et je ne danse jamais à la fois que sur un pied,...mais à chaque livre je change de pied, l'un étant fatigué d'avoir dansé; l'autre de s'être reposé tout ce temps (199-200).

This statement is a warning against presuming from Gide's former comments that the exploration of his contradictions is simply a means to the definitive end of writing "une oeuvre d'art simple". Such a work will merely be in reaction to its predecessor. Gide has obviously no intention of cutting off one leg to please James. His reference to a "simple" work of art, therefore, seems to me to be more a means of forestalling further onslaught from James than an artistic solution.

Indeed, Gide warns James against trying to confine his genius to emulations of Saül : "...plus tu loues Saül, et plus tu me persuades qu'il

1. G./J. Corr., 3rd August 1902, pp. 197-199.

est réusai, et plus tu me convaincs qu'il n'est plus à refaire" (200). If Gide is looking for an end to artistic development, it will be in work which will satisfactorily express all his "raisons d'être".

The letters provoked by Existences and L'Immoraliste have brought out clearly both Gide's and Jammes' positions. Religious beliefs allow Jammes' faults to flower. This is a reproach which Gide later levels against the majority of Catholic converts, when writing to René Schwob: "...vous êtes le seul chez qui la conversion n'ait pas encouragé les pires défauts d'esprit".¹ When one is certain of one's faith, it is an easy step, for one such as Jammes, to certainty in oneself and one's art, to voluntary blindness to one's faults. Jammes' reactions to Gide's criticisms of Existences have amply proved this to Gide.

It is, moreover, the strengthening of Jammes' religious leanings which cause him to intensify his efforts to reduce Gide to his own limitations. While Jammes restricted himself to Gide's art and his morality, Gide listened to him, even although he did not agree entirely with him. Jammes' letters on Existences and L'Immoraliste show that he also wishes Gide's critical spirit to become as conditioned as his own.

In other words, to gain Jammes' full approval, Gide must abandon his intellectual honesty. This is one thing which Gide can never do and explains his statement to Jammes that he is a two-legged creature even if a one-legged dancer. Gide may temporarily deprive himself of the use of a leg to write a pure work as Jammes wishes but he will never accept the amputation of his powers of reason.

Before continuing, it seems to me worth-while to compare and contrast Gide's explanatory letter on L'Immoraliste to Valéry and that to Jammes which has just been discussed. Both Jammes and Valéry are mistaken in their limited interpretation of Gide's work: the former because he

1. Pierre Angel, Lettres inédites sur L'Inquiétude Moderne, 1951, Letter of the 30th December, p. 103.

believes that this work is not at all representative of the "true" Gide and the latter because he believes too unquestioningly that it is. Jammes has refused to recognise what may be personally viable in the moral basis to the work and dismisses L'Immoraliste because, in it, Gide has spoken like a puppet, his true voice being that of a prophet. Valéry, on the other hand, has accepted only too completely the personal implications of the work.¹ Thus, in an entirely different way, he too, tends to limit the scope of Gide's art.

Thus, Gide has to explain to Valéry that he is not Michel and that Valéry has been too sensitive to "le plaidoyer"² in the book and not sufficiently conscious of its irony. In this letter to Valéry, Gide explains that he is defending himself and not his book. Nonetheless, this explanation of himself is to be gleaned from what Gide writes about his work. In his letter to Jammes, he proceeds in the opposite way, the import of L'Immoraliste being indicated by self-explanation. This difference in approach makes the similarities in vocabulary all the more interesting. When writing of himself to Jammes, Gide emphasises the influence upon him of divided, geographical heredity. In his letter to Valéry, Gide writes:

J'ai voulu avant tout dessiner un caractère, avec son nord, son sud, son chaud, son froid...il paraît que j'ai réussi puisqu'on n'a pas cru que ce pût être un autre que moi.³
Autobiographie? Cela paraît surtout à cause de Biskra et de la Roque...Il n'y a pas plus d'autobiographie là que dans Paludes ou dans Candaule (1st July (1902), 8).

To Jammes, Gide is explaining the inner, if only partial, motivation behind his work; to Valéry, he must show the critical faculties which, applied to personal elements, make a work of art and not just a "plaidoyer".

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1. Jacques-Emile Blanche also made the same mistake. G./Ghëon Corr. 1, 27th September 1901, pp. 362-363.
 2. Letter of the 1st July and presumably of 1902, published in the Bulletin des Amis d'André Gide, no. 29, January 1976, pp. 8-9. Any further references to this letter appear in the text by date and page-number only.
 3. This is to be contrasted with Gide's comment on his book to Jammes in his letter of May 1902, G./J. Corr., p. 189: "Je l'ai vécu pour quatre ans, et je l'écris pour passer outre..."

Valéry's tendency has been to infuse the breath of life into Michel, thereby restricting the work to a mere defence of personal philosophy. Jammes has made the far less pardonable error of denying Michel any life-like qualities at all. After the exchange of letters on Existences and L'Immoraliste, there is a gap in the two men's correspondence which is healed by Gide's visiting Jammes at Orthez. Nonetheless, for a period of about two years, their letters remain infrequent and friendly rather than literary.¹ Gide is not ready to risk further attacks from Jammes upon his personal and artistic integrity.

5. Nostalgia and the Need to experience Religious Emotion.

After completing L'Immoraliste, which was itself a retrospective work, Gide finds no immediate inspiration for a new work of art.² Jammes is not entirely wrong in his supposition that Gide has been following a certain cycle which has now reached its end in the "bitter ashes" of Michel's story.³ His mistake has been to insist on religious art as the only, acceptable, new orientation for Gide. Gide is always prepared to limit himself but only temporarily for any one work.

The time has now come for a change in his art and, hence, for the voluntary concentration on the aspect of his character which most interests Jammes.

Gide thus re-opens the door to dialogue in a letter which amounts to the confession necessary in the Catholic Church before making a fresh start. Nonetheless, this is a literary and not a religious confession. Gide regrets the lost Paradise of his youth or, to my mind, of his first literary ventures. The "God" of fervour and joy whom Gide followed in

1. Unless, of course, letters have been omitted from the Correspondance.

2. J.1, November 1904, p. 144: "Depuis - retrait".

3. G./J. Corr., 7th July, 1902, p. 197.

the Nourritures and portrayed in L'Immoraliste is no longer Gide's aim, since this very joy is now seen as inferior to "la tristesse de mon enfance" (10th March 1904, 210). The final drying-up of Gide's philosophy is summed up in one short sentence: "J'étais poète et je suis soucieux" (210).

Thus, Gide succumbs to nostalgic memories of La Roque and his infantile love for his cousin, which prevented the growth of his pride. It is James' poetry,¹ Gide writes, which is responsible for his longings for this lost Paradise where:

...la simplicité m'apparaît, pour bien changer, la chose indispensable; où je voudrais dans l'averse d'avril, me laver...je te désire alors, vieux faune, près de moi, parce que tu représentes bien plus qu'un humble deuil de primevères...(210).

So Gide expresses his need for a new artistic and, hence, moral orientation which will bring him closer to James' position.

All the possibilities of such art are shown to Gide by James' work, Pomme d'Anis, since: "Faire une oeuvre pure n'est rien; mais la faire à la fois brûlante!" (Middle of March 1904, 211). The spontaneous freshness and youthfulness of James' work attract Gide, perhaps because of his own unfulfilled wish, on the completion of L'Immoraliste, to write, for the first time, "un livre subit" (12th April 1902, 185). It is also possible that the theme of James' work, where Pomme d'Anis sacrifices the man she loves for the happiness of a friend, has impressed Gide. La Porte étroite is the next work upon which Gide will work and had already been thought of in 1894.² Thus, Gide's changed attitude and the attraction of James' work are probably with a mind to his own book.

At this time, Gide is deeply affected by a letter from Claudel to James to hasten the latter's conversion.³ Indeed, this takes place a

1. Notably Elégies and Prières.

2. J.1, p. 55.

3. G./J. Corr., End of April 1905, pp. 226-227. In fact, James is already a believer and his "conversion" will be a formality rather than a true conversion. The latter word was, however, fashionable at the time, since many literary men turned to Catholicism.

few months later after a romantic disappointment which was rather more severe than usual.¹ Gide's letter of sympathy² suggests that he is ready to take the first steps towards joining Claudel in the religious consolation that the latter may bring Jammes.³ Gide's sadness at his friend's pain is only increased by a re-reading of Jammes' poems which has moved him almost to tears.⁴ One has the most extraordinary impression that Gide is actually experiencing all Jammes' emotions. In fact, this phenomenon is only extraordinary if one does not take into account Gide's self-professed ability, as an artist, to assume personalities and feelings other than his own. Moreover, while Gide is genuinely sorry for his friend, this mood of sadness also suits his new artistic purposes which, one imagines, are to produce, as Jammes has done, a work which is pure and "brûlant". In this context, there is no exaggeration when Gide writes to Jammes: "L'Ode de Claudel m'a remué 'comme un poteau' jusqu'à ma base. Que te dire? Que te dire! J'attends. Tout le reste m'ennuie, me profane" (Beginning of October 1905, 229).

Gide implicates himself even more when replying to Jammes' request that he read aloud his Eglise habillée de feuilles. He is only too delighted that Jammes has understood how much his poetry means to him and adds: "Ce soir j'étais déjà tout catholique...Si Claudel vient par là-dessus! T'avouerais-je que je n'ai pas encore osé le voir?" (29th November 1905, 231).

For the first time, therefore, Gide has used the word "Catholic". He has moved from the expression of artistic needs to that of religious ones and now he states precisely the possible solution to these needs.

One must never forget, however, that the most fundamental of Gide's needs are artistic and the solutions to his problems are more dependent

1. G./J. Corr., July 1905, p. 228.

2. Ibid, 27th July 1905, p. 228.

3. Ibid, p. 228: "Je trouve - à rouvrir".

4. Ibid, Beginning of October 1905, p. 229.

on art than on any other factor. Hence, Gide's admission must be taken with some wariness and very much in conjunction with his admiration for Jammes' poems and his desire to draw closer to Jammes at this point. One cannot separate Gide's religious emotion from his artistic admiration, as can be seen in the following passage from his autobiography:

J'entrais dans le texte de l'ancienne alliance avec une vénération pensive, mais l'émotion que j'y puisais n'était sans doute point d'ordre uniquement religieux, non plus que n'était d'ordre purement littéraire celle que me versait L'Illiade ou L'Orchestre. Ou plus exactement, l'art et la religion en moi dévotieusement s'épousaient et je goûtais ma plus parfaite extase au plus fondu de leur accord.¹

Gide's interest in Claudel is also due to his need for a further "réactif" in light of the voluntary, but partial change in his attitude to his art. Daniel Moutote explains Claudel's attraction for Gide thus:

Claudel présente à Gide l'excellent exemple dont il est actuellement en peine, celui d'une personnalité forte qui, sans se laisser embarrasser par les difficultés théoriques qui opposent les exigences contradictoires d'une vie religieuse et d'une vocation artistique dans une riche nature individuelle, de leurs conflits tire ses raisons d'être, résout ses problèmes en affirmant son existence par son action, son génie par ses œuvres, et s'impose comme une manifestation inspirée de vie exubérante et dense.²

The course of dialogue in his correspondence with Jammes, so far, is probably not alien either to Gide's interest in Claudel. Jammes has shown faults as a literary correspondent. Too easily piqued, he becomes incapable of emitting or receiving objective literary criticism. The hardening of Jammes' attitude towards Gide's art, brought about by religious beliefs, ended in a swift reaction on Gide's part.

As La Porte étroite is already taking form, while Gide is involved with M.³ A total reaction against purity and religion is, therefore, the very last requisite for the continuance of his literary production.

1. J.2, SI, p. 499.

2. Moutote, op. cit., p. 165.

3. See: J.1, 16th May 1905, p. 155.

After reading Gide's work, Gabriel Frizeau wrote to Claudel:

Il m'a paru...que Gide voulait, aussi bien que ses souvenirs d'enfant pieux..., nous montrer comment il n'avait pu demeurer religieux...Gide ne propose donc aucun sentiment religieux; il fait l'histoire du sien après l'avoir dépouillé. Vous et Jammes lui avez donné ce regain de mémoire sentimentale et le désir de le raconter.¹

Frizeau's analysis would have been more correct, in my opinion, had he inverted cause and effect. Rather than being given, Gide actively sought for the frame of mind necessary for La Porte étroite in his correspondence with Jammes and in the latter's art.

Because Gide wishes to maintain this frame of mind but at the same time his way of life, and because he realises the risks and limitations of dialogue with Jammes, he engages in correspondence with Claudel who has a more objective literary outlook and who apparently admits contradictions in a way which Jammes does not.

6. Saintliness "par la route païenne".

Gide now turns to Claudel rather than to Jammes. Nonetheless, his wishes for dialogue remain unchanged. Gide is ready to discuss religion and morality providing they do not take precedence over literature. Gide himself introduces this double preoccupation early in his correspondence with Claudel.

With Jammes, Gide had refused to adopt the role of "pâtre des berges" and Biblical poet. Now, however, he has doubts about his own "God" whom he has created in preference to "je ne sais quel compromis tiède entre l'art et la religion".² He is tormented by "la difficulté, l'impossibilité

1. C./J. /F. Corr., 1st June 1909, p. 157.

2. G./C. Corr., 7th December 1905, p. 58. Letter wrongly dated by Robert Mallet as being of the 8th December. See: J. Nokerman, "Paul Claudel et André Gide : A propos de la Correspondance", Les Lettres Romanes, February 1952, pp. 57-62. Henceforth, references to the Claudel Correspondance will appear in parentheses in the text thus - (C, 7th December 1905, 58) or by page-number only if a letter has already been referred to on the same or the previous page.

peut-être d'arriver à la sainteté par la route païenne" (C, 7th December 1905, 58-59). By this, I believe Gide is referring to his endeavour to fulfil his highest personal aspirations, both artistic and moral, and that the difficulty he experiences is not only one of self-control but of judgement.

Gide has already submitted the possible position of "pagan saintliness" to Claudel's scrutiny and his previous comment is in response to Claudel's tirade against the acceptability of anything pagan.¹ The only possibility of saintliness for Claudel lies in doing one's honest best throughout one's life. For the artist, this consists in the animation of his work by "cette puissante source de jeunesse que donne seul le sentiment du divin naturel" (C, 7th November 1905, 52).²

This comment has made Gide realize that Catholicism might have caused less opposition within him between "non point tant deux croyances que deux éthiques" and he adds:

Pour la première fois avant-hier (mais déjà je l'entrevois dans vos oeuvres) j'ai pu voir, éclairé par vous, non pas une solution - absurde à souhaiter - mais une nouvelle, une acceptable position de combat (C, 58).

Although Gide is obviously attracted by Claudel's position, his preference for the word "éthiques" as opposed to "beliefs" is a warning to Claudel. Gide portrays, as a thing of the past, his fears "de ne chercher à m'approcher de Dieu que pour m'approcher de vous, tout au moins que pour vous mieux entendre" (C, 58). Nonetheless, his interest is more in Claudel's moral and, hence, artistic position than in Claudel's God.

By the conciliatory terms of his letter, Gide is apparently quite close to acceptance of Claudel's position for himself. In fact, Claudel

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1. C./C. Corr., 7th December 1905, pp. 52-54. Letter wrongly dated by Robert Mallet as being of the 7th November.
 2. See: C./J.F. Corr., 1st May 1908, p. 131: "Quant à l'art, quel art peut-il y avoir s'il est privé de la jeunesse? je veux dire de la confiance naïve en un Dieu père de toute joie".

believes that not only Gide but also his wife are ready to convert at this point.¹ The restriction imposed by Gide's choice of tense in this letter² excludes acceptance of Catholicism as a solution.

Gide is giving hope to Claudel but, at the same time, allowing his true preoccupation to pierce through. He is curious about Claudel's thought and art which allow for contradictions. Thus, Gide wishes to establish dialogue with Claudel not with a view to conversion but with a view to deeper understanding of a possible artistic position.

The precedence given by Gide to literature is seen clearly in a letter in which, while barely touching on the subject of religion, he writes of Claudel's Partage de Midi :

J'éprouve à certaines pages de votre drame ce tremblement de Moïse devant le buisson ardent; cet enthousiasme secret, que notre littérature semble tâcher à nous désapprendre et qui doit être notre état normal. Voici qui vous mérite notre reconnaissance" (C, 7th November 1906, 67-68).

Daniel Moutote points out, and I would agree with him, that Gide's thoughts of Claudel, after reading this play, are not of Claudel, the Catholic convert, but of "Claudel créateur"³ who mingles sensuality and spirituality in a common fervour.

Thus, while Gide gives Claudel little opportunity to renew the rather brutal, if fervent, exhortations of their conversations, he allows himself to admire this very fervour when it is put to artistic ends.

Earlier, Claudel's Ode aux Muses had also aroused in Gide "un ébranlement de tout mon être, et comme l'avertissement que depuis un mois bientôt, j'attendais..."⁴

• One part, at least, of Claudel's Ode which undoubtedly affected

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1. C./J./F. Corr., letter of the end of 1905, p. 78.
 2. G./C. Corr., 7th December 1905, p. 58: "Peut-être le catholicisme eût-il opposé moins fortement en moi, non point tant deux croyances, que deux éthiques..." My own underlining
 3. Moutote, op. cit., p. 184.
 4. J.l, Wednesday 1905, p. 156. It is to be remembered that Gide's and Henri Ghéon's affair with M. ended in July of the same year.

Gide is that where Claudel states that a poem is not just a bundle of words but the imitation of human action with its complexity. Both classicism and national characteristics must be included. This may no doubt also be taken as meaning that individual characteristics or, on a poetic level, lyricism are admissible but need to be controlled. The purpose of these resources is made clear to the poet in the following lines:

Tous les deux te sont nécessaires, tu sauras les engager
tous les deux; tu sauras employer tout le chœur.
Le chœur autour de l'autel
Accomplit son évolution : il s'arrête...¹

Thus, one's contradictions, one's entire self may apparently be given and brought to God in whom lies the end to one's search for self-integration.

Although Gide's "God" is a personal creation, such a possibility must be a fascinating one for him both personally and artistically. Claudel's message, in his poem, is one of individuality tempered by controlled effort. As such, it resembles Gide's notion of "sainteté... païenne" (C, 7th December 1905, 58-59).² Gide, I feel, is attracted, in Claudel's poem, to what fits in with his own moral and artistic preoccupations. Claudel, however, is obviously thinking of the unequivocal religious message behind his work when he writes: "Non, Gide, ce n'est pas le triste galimatias de ce pauvre Claudel que vous aimez, c'est ce que vous lisez tant bien que mal au travers" (C, Christmas 1906, 69).

By turning to Gide's correspondences with James³ and Henri Ghéon⁴ of this period, one sees that Gide is, in fact, far from any religiously-inspired admiration for Claudel. Moreover, the need for artistic dialogue is shown to be much less pressing than would appear superficially from

1. Paul Claudel, Oeuvre Poétique, Editions de la Pléiade, 1957, p. 228.
2. See: above, p. 175.
3. G./J. Corr., 2nd May 1906, pp. 235-236.
4. G./Ghéon Corr. 2, 9th December 1905, p. 622: "Claudel souffle sur moi une espèce de typhon religieux qui me secoue du faite à la base, mais me fatigue plus qu'il ne me convainc".

Gide's letters to Claudel. It almost seems as if Claudel's departure for China has afforded Gide a breathing-space in which to recant and to consolidate his former position.

A letter in which Gide expresses doubts and anxiety, as regards Claudel, elicits a prompt diagnosis from Jammes:

Tu me parais inquiet comme un bouchon dans l'eau... Mon article sur toi t'expliquera, d'une autre façon, les mêmes choses. Tu es dans l'état singulier d'un homme dont l'âme aurait les branchies (Claudel) nécessaires à l'aspiration vers Dieu et qui, depuis des années, absorberait avec elles de la teinture de caméléon
(30th April 1906, 235).

With Jammes, Gide shows none of the ambiguity caused by his respect for Claudel. Rather than allow Jammes to write an erroneous, if much appreciated article, on certain aspects of his nature, Gide prefers to explain clearly what his present position is: although he does not know exactly who he is, he does know that he is not a prey to the "inquiétude" which Jammes attributes to him "poétiquement".

Jammes is, in fact, not the only Catholic who attributes "inquiétude" to Gide. In a letter to René Schwob of 1927, Gide was forced into an explanation which would have met with François Mauriac's final approval¹:

...je crois, hélas! cher ami, que vous vous exagérez mon inquiétude; je crois même que c'est là ce qu'il y a de plus désespérant dans mon cas: c'est que je n'en souffre pas.²

Not only does Gide not suffer from his state but, as he admits to Jammes, he is perhaps on the threshold of Paradise:

...mais pas à la porte que tu crois. Il faut un cœur meurtri pour entrer par où tu es entré toi-même; et je fais profession de bonheur. Ne vois pas là d'orgueil: je confonds bonheur et vertu. Si ma sérénité s'est quelque peu troublé ces derniers temps, après la publication d'Amyntas, c'est défaillance de vertu (2nd May 1906, 236).

The publication of Amyntas took place shortly before Claudel's departure

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1. Homage à André Gide, Gallimard 1951, "Les Catholiques autour d'André Gide", p. 107: "Gide ne fut jamais un 'pauvre pécheur'; il fut une créature redressée et triomphante, un être de défi."
 2. Lettres inédites sur l'Inquiétude Moderne, 1951, Letter of the 14th March 1927, p. 102.

for China. Thus, together with Gide's "doutes et...tristesses à l'égard de Claudel" (26th April 1906, 234), there is room for confusion as to the true nature of Gide's "inquiétude" or "défaillance de vertu" as he himself defines it.

A letter from Claudel just before his departure shows that he has, in conversation, given Gide ample food for thought. Gide himself has obviously been far more reticent during their talk since Claudel has been left with the impression that many topics have not been touched upon. In his letter, Claudel makes it abundantly clear that he cares little whether his words have pleased or not. He calls upon Gide, nonetheless, to accept the unique truth that resides in them and bids him: "...faites place dans votre intelligence à d'immenses espaces déserts" (C. 14th March 1906, 66).

Gide's admiration for this letter¹ is not merely due to an author's pride in Claudel's comments on Amyntas. Rather, he is impressed by Claudel's brutal frankness. Moreover, Claudel could have chosen no better means of rallying Gide than this call to intellectual disponibilité. Undoubtedly, this letter and previous conversations have made Gide think deeply. Nonetheless, Gide's anxiety is not, to my mind, religiously inspired.

His explanation to James that his recent lack of serenity is due to "défaillance de vertu" must be read in conjunction with the Journal of this time. From January to May of 1906, Gide's Journal contains constant references to his reading and to meeting friends. Only occasionally does Gide mention his artistic work.² The difficulty he is experiencing in writing La Voie étroite is to be seen when Gide writes:

1. J.1, Tuesday morning, March 1906, p. 210: "Ce matin très belle lettre de Claudel".

2. J.1, the 1st, 6th and 29th March and the 18th April 1906, pp. 199-200, 204, 209.

"Je me cramponne au travail; mais souffre d'être distrait, et, malgré moi, cherche encore à me distraire".¹

Thus, while trying to write this book, Gide is unable to cast aside totally the "Immoralist's" attraction to the outside world. When Gide writes to Jammes of "bonheur" and "vertu", the implication is that happiness resides in work and virtue, in the subordination of his life and character to his work. Because Gide has been unable to achieve this in the past two months, he has been suffering anguish which comes from artistic difficulties rather than from religious want.²

Gide's explanation to Jammes in a further letter³ of his relations with Claudel only goes to underline how far he is from succumbing to Catholicism. Despite the reticence Gide sometimes shows in his letters to Claudel, he has talked to him about his present position.⁴ Now he writes to Jammes that it was not Catholicism which attracted him but Claudel himself. Thus Gide has felt "le désir de l'accompagner plus longtemps, certaine curiosité de sa pensée, et l'impossibilité de comprendre sans éprouver moi-même" (Tuesday, 16th May 1906, 238). The need to experience others' thoughts for himself is artistically orientated for Gide.

A letter to Marcel Drouin explains⁵ this very fact. Gide deliberately cultivates his understanding of others' views to broaden or deepen his art. Hence, his search outwith himself cannot be laid down, as Jammes attempts to do, to psychological or metaphysical "inquiétude".

Having clarified his position to Jammes, Gide's main fear is that Jammes will withdraw his friendship, since he is willing to accept him and Claudel only as men and artists and not as emissaries of God.⁶

1. J.1, 27th March 1906, p. 209.

2. J.1, 10th May 1906, p. 215.

3. G./J. Corr., 16th May 1906, pp. 237-238.

4. Gide did also write to Claudel about this. G./M.G. Corr. 2, August 1942, p. 259.

5. JAG 2, letter of the 10th May 1894, pp. 318-320.

6. G./J. Corr., 16th May 1906, p. 238.

In fact, this does not happen yet. James does, however, decide not to write his projected article on Gide because the latter's explanatory letter¹ has shown him that he was completely mistaken as to Gide's present state. James now seems to believe that Gide's work is against religion.² Clearly "inquiétude" is Gide's saving grace, joy outwith Christianity being synonymous, almost, with evil.

James is also annoyed at what he feels to be a personal attack against Claudel. Gide is extremely hurt by James' consequently harsh little note defending Claudel,³ but more so, one feels, because of James' abandonment of his article, even though this is due to his own honesty.

In his reply to Gide's letter, James soothes his pain but also, no doubt encouraged by Gide's upset, expresses his belief that Gide's position is neither definitive nor completely honest. Indeed, James is convinced that: "...tu souffres de ne plus pouvoir étendre ton coeur au delà de ce qu'une philosophie, néfaste à mon sens, te circonscrit" (21st August 1906, 240). Because Gide feels ill-at-ease and stifled by his adhesion to "cette doctrine étriquée" (241), James is sure that, after Amyntas, Gide is going to abandon his "Nietzschian" cycle. James believes that his article is only provisionally delayed because of a temporary moral crisis on Gide's part. Once this is over, James optimistically predicts, Gide will continue by writing new masterpieces and he by his article.

Gide thanks James for having rightly guessed that he has been going through a terrible crisis. He believes that James is capable of seeing into his heart with greater perspicacity than he himself. Thus, Gide has been tortured by the idea that the only person competent to write "des

2. G./J. Conf., 6th May 1906, pp. 236-237.

3. Ibid, Letters of the 17th May and the 19th August 1906, pp. 238-240.

1. Of the 2nd May 1906. See: above, p. 178.

choses secrètes" (End of August 1906, 242) on his work has chosen voluntary silence.

Indeed, as Gide's Journal shows, the Spring and Summer of 1906 have been a period of crisis. Insomnia has laid him open to doubt and anguish and has prevented him from working. Jammes' remarks upon the limitations of being an "immoralist" have come at the right time since Gide is unable to come to terms with this aspect of himself¹ which is also holding up the progress of La Porte étroite.

Thus, although physical and moral, Gide's crisis is primarily artistic. Indeed, Gide's letter to Jammes seems to show that Gide's position is much the same as that of the time of Existences.² Gide's unhappiness is also due to the fact that his work, up to this point, lends itself too easily to misinterpretation and, hence, the importance of an article by Jammes who realises that Andre Walter is still lurking in André Gide.

Gide would have been only too glad to have seen this article published had it studied the multiple elements contained in his work. Jammes, however, has been too ready to see a single orientation in Gide's work and, because of this, the latter has been forced into self-explanation which only underlines his refusal of religion and the fundamentally artistic nature of his crisis.

Despite this explanation, Jammes has not been discouraged in his belief that Gide is finally ready to become the "pâtre des berges". He therefore advises Gide, in more general terms, to change his approach to art.

For Jammes, Gide's crisis is religious and not artistic. He urges Gide not to let his feelings of the moment interfere with his work and adds: "Ce fut toujours ta grande erreur que d'expliquer dans presque

1. J.1, Tuesday 1906, pp. 219-220.

2. G./J. Corr., May 1902, pp. 188-189, and see: above, pp. 163-164.

chacune de tes oeuvres à quel mobile tu obéissais" (October 1906, 243). That Gide does use his own life for his works is true but it is equally true that Gide forces his life to suit the mood of his works which were often conceived years before they were written, as, indeed, is the case of La Porte étroite. George Painter points out, for example, that Gide became Michel, almost, before L'Immoraliste¹ and Gide himself gave the following advice to Henri Ghéon:

Travaille ferme, vieux, pour pouvoir venir. C'est Le Vagabond que tu pourras le mieux écrire en voyage ce n'est donc pas à cela qu'il faut songer présentement.²

In fact, Jammes is attempting to prevent Gide from writing another ambiguous, critical and highly personal work. Jammes has no more patience with any last "Nietzschian" throes. The time has come, he insists, for Gide to write a mature, religious work from which personal philosophy is to be excluded.³

Jammes is, hence advising both personal and artistic peace, an end to Gide's problems by their amputation. Religion, and not religious problems, is to be the source of Gide's art, if he is to please Jammes.

It is not until after a broken engagement that Jammes writes again at length to Gide.⁴ Following upon his artistic advice, he now makes it equally clear that failure to heed his strictures will entail an end to true dialogue with Gide. Their friendship may continue but religious, philosophical and literary discussion should be avoided, Jammes says, as they only lead to conflict.

Gide makes no attempt to reply to either Jammes' advice or his suggestion for an amicable solution to their differences. However, he formulates his announcement of his Retour de l'Enfant prodigue in such a

1. Painter, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

2. G./Ghéon Corr. 1, 14th October 1900, p. 304.

3. G./J. Corr., October 1906, p. 244.

4. Ibid, 26th March 1907, pp. 246-247.

way as to lead James to hope that his advice has at last been taken:

J'ai achevé un Enfant prodigue que 'je crois très - beau'...puisses-tu y sentir que, si je ne crains pas de te déplaire en écrivant un Immoraliste ou un Prométhée, a fortiori ne puis-je craindre de déplaire à ceux vers qui tu m'as soupçonné de m'incliner (End of March 1907, 247).

Indeed, James does infer from this that the moment has perhaps come to resume his article on Gide.¹

His hopes are dashed once he has read the Enfant prodigue. His letter to Gide on this work is extremely harsh and proves that he has lost all patience with Gide, the philosopher, since he writes: "Il m'importe peu de savoir quelles dernières convulsions t'agitent avant que tu poses plus nettement le pied sur les plages éternelles" (June 1907, 248).

James has not been fooled by Gide into thinking that the Enfant prodigue is "tout de ferveur" (248). His anger and lack of spiritual generosity make the subsequent gap in his correspondence with Gide understandable from the latter's point of view. James is closed to any other position than his own and it is he, rather than Gide, who is unwilling for further discussion.

James' accusations against the lack of Biblical foundation in Gide's work and the lack of love in the Prodigal Son cause Gide to hesitate before sending his work to Claudel. In fact, Claudel's letter to Gide² proves to be far more comprehending than that of James. The better to convince Gide, Claudel hides the fact that the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue has saddened him and concentrates on the task of enticing "une curiosité qui se défie".³

In order to emphasise his sympathy for the Prodigal Son, Claudel makes the mistake of taking far too literally his family background which he likens to that of Gide. Within the framework of a repressive family,⁴

1. G./J. Corr., 7th April 1907, p. 247.

2. G./C. Corr., 3rd March 1908, pp. 83-85.

3. C./J./F. Corr., 1st May (1908) p. 131.

4. Claudel is mistaken, I feel, not only in his belief that the Prodigal Son's family is repressive but also in his belief that Gide's family was too. Gide's correspondence with his mother shows that she is less repressive than she is often depicted as being. She is not so much repressive by her personality as by her acceptance of the morality of her time.

Claudél is almost ready to condone the need to rebel. Within the framework of religion, Claudél cannot accept the Prodigal Son's flight. The wisest course of action in life, for Claudél, is not to flee but to remain and conquer.

Moreover, the Church, Claudél insists, is the house which one need not leave. It is exclusive only because it is catholic. Because the House of God includes everything,¹ it is far less oppressive than the dungeons of pride which house those outwith the Church.

Claudél goes on to chide Gide that those who have chosen to enter God's House have not done so through laziness. The Catholic's life is not restful but a never-ending struggle to maintain his faith, "un scandale et une contradiction continuelles (sic)" (C, 3rd March 1908, 84).

Although Claudél is arguing the case for religion, his words are equally applicable to art. Indeed, Claudél uses a literary example to illustrate the need for choice and restriction to achieve one's best. For every sentence Gide writes, Claudél is sure that he suppresses twenty others which are probably not always of poor quality. Claudél concludes from this that Gide, the artist, cannot write what he wants, nor can he think or do exactly what he wants.

This letter shows to the full how conscientious Claudél is in finding the arguments most suited to his interlocutor. Claudél has insisted on the idea of struggle engendered by contradictions, of unity through diversity and, finally, to sweeten the pill of limitation, coats it with artistic demands.

Unfortunately, there is no reply from Gide, either because it has been destroyed or because it was never written. There is no mention either of this letter in Gide's Journal. If Gide deliberately omitted to reply to Claudél's letter, it is probably because of the difficulty

1. The theme of the inseparability of all God's creation is to be found in "L'Esprit et l'Eau", the second of Claudél's Odes. Claudél, Oeuvre Poétique, Editions de la Pléiade, 1957, p. 241.

of his task. Claudel's arguments have such a Gidian bent that a reply of submission to Catholicism seems Gide's only possible course other than an outright refusal for which he is not ready.

The initial stages of dialogue with Claudel and Gide's continued dialogue with Jammes, have shown a shift in Gide's attitude. From nostalgia for his youth and the desire to immerse himself in religious feelings propitious to La Porte étroite, Gide has moved to reflection upon his art in relation to religion.

Gide is, in fact, looking for "la sainteté par la route païenne" as he has suggested to Claudel. The very difficulties he experiences in achieving this are to be seen in his Journal of 1906 and his correspondence with Jammes of that year.

Because Gide believes his task may be impossible, he considers Claudel's position which, although Catholic, represents the artistic state he would like to achieve without the help of religion. Catholic art, as represented by Claudel's, in Gide's eyes, is a source of youth, renewal, confident acceptance of one's contradictions and steady work. Herein lies the fascination of Catholicism for Gide: it is both a joyous inspiration and a discipline.

Claudel is a temptation to Gide because his position so closely resembles Gide's own ideal of "pagan saintliness". From the beginning of his correspondence with Claudel to the publication of the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, Gide struggles to become a "saint" and toys with Catholic "saintliness" in his moments of discouragement, when the difficulties of high but individually inspired effort seem overwhelming.

Gide makes his choice against Catholicism and Catholic art in the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue into which he pours the basic issues of dialogue in his correspondences with Claudel and Jammes of the previous years. Jammes fails to understand fully the implications of the Prodigal

Son's return which are closely connected to Gide's former rebellious statement against society.¹ His religious beliefs, notwithstanding, are so offended that discussion with Gide ends temporarily. Claudel, although motivated by his desire to persuade Gide to convert, still allows the artist in him to speak. Gide's work is not just a religious disappointment to him but an artistic pleasure.² Claudel is thus a more objective critic than James and, hence, a more adroit religious correspondent.

7. The Purpose of Art : The Way or the End.

Claudel continues to show greater tolerance than James when he writes to Gide of his Dostoievski. Gide has accused Catholics of being unable to understand Dostoievsky's sufferings or, as Claudel puts it, "les effusions religieuses de ce grand coeur" (C, 30th July 1908, 85). This provocation on Gide's part shows that, in spite of reaction against Catholicism, he is not at all ready to abandon dialogue with Claudel. Gide's "curiosité de sa pensée" (16th May 1906, 238) is by no means dead.

Both Claudel and James dispute Gide's point of view, although they both believe in Dostoievsky's fundamental error in attacking the Church. James uses this letter on Dostoievsky to reiterate his conviction that Gide is not completely lost to the Catholic Church.³ Claudel shows not only more compassion for Dostoievsky but also avoids any references to Gide's own religious position. He confines himself to pointing out that Dostoievsky is wrong to attribute national characteristics to Christ who is Catholic and resides "dans une église qui n'est exclusive que parce qu'elle est universelle et dans une vérité qui n'est intransigeante

1. G./J. Corr., 1st December 1897, and p. 14 of this chapter.

2. G./C. Corr., 3rd March 1908, p. 83.

3. G./J. Corr., 26th June 1908, p. 253.

que parce qu'elle est totale" (C, 30th July 1908, 85).

There is no reply from Gide to either James' or Claudel's letters. It is significant that James does not resist the temptation to use his comments on the Russian writer in order to infer that Gide will eventually turn to Catholicism. Claudel, on the other hand, shows greater intelligence when he employs here, as before on the Enfant prodigue, more general arguments. No doubt he realises that a recurrence of his formerly more personal advice¹ would provoke retreat. The trap of objective discussion is always more easy to fall into.

Thus, despite the unfortunate lack of reply from Gide, Claudel still proves to be more adept than James in provoking Gide's desire for dialogue. He is more willing for purely literary correspondence and, even where literature is but a thin veil over his preoccupation with religion, he does not allow the latter to falsify his judgement completely. While there is a gap in Gide's correspondence with James, Claudel's attitude seems to have encouraged Gide, since he eagerly announces his intention of sending Claudel La Porte étroite for which, Gide admits, "votre jugement m'importait entre tous" (C, 18th June 1909, 104).

In fact, Jacques Copeau read this work, while it was still unpublished. This does not, however, reduce the importance of Claudel's opinion which counts for Gide because of the predominantly religious subject of this book.

Indeed, no sooner has he finished La Porte étroite than he writes to it to him. Gide begins by telling Claudel that this book which has haunted him for so long deals not just with a literary subject and goes on to add: "...si vraiment il en est de tels!" (C, 17th October 1908, 90).

1. G./C. Corr., pp. 56-57, and 14th March 1906, p. 66.

It is perhaps over-scrupulous to balk at such a statement as this. However, there is a certain ambiguity, allowing for religious interpretation, which is no doubt caused by Gide's desire to please. This morsel of hope is, nonetheless, retractable, as the following passage shows:

...Peut-être y saurez-vous deviner la part secrète de confiance qui vous éclairera sur cette enfance que vous avez pu croire opprimée mais qui ne l'a été que par la religion et la morale - disons, comme vous préférez: par le protestantisme, - car vous ne manquerez pas de sentir que ce livre est furieusement, déplorablement protestant. Enfin, j'ose espérer que le protestantisme de ce livre ne vous irritera pas trop contre l'auteur, car vous sentirez bien que l'idée même du livre porte en soi sa critique...et après tout, peut-être le trouverez-vous plus janséniste que protestant...(C, 90).

It is clear that, while Gide apparently blames the Protestant as opposed to the Catholic religion for the repression of his youth, this distinction is one borrowed from Claudel rather than coming directly from Gide himself. Gide is referring to religion in general, I feel.

Certainly, after concentrating upon his own work, Gide skims over the question of his religious development¹ in terms that might have been inspired by a previous letter.² Anxiety as to Claudel's opinion of La Porte étroite rather than any deeply-felt interest in religion seems to be at the root of Gide's rather ambiguous references to his present state of mind.

These hints that his attitude towards religion is not static delight Claudel who responds to Gide's comments on La Porte étroite. Claudel is pleased to hear that Gide's work is Protestant since, to his mind, Protestantism is a "réactif" rather than a religion, a means rather than an end to Gide's understanding "le mystère de la liberté dans la grâce, qui est toute la thèse à la fois de l'art et de la théologie" (C, 8th November 1908, 91). Claudel is resuming the arguments evoked by

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1. G./C. Corr., 17th October 1908, p. 90: "Cher ami je pense à vous souvent et chaque fois avec une intensité singulière. Si je ne suis pas meilleur correspondant, c'est à cause ^{du manque de vos lettres et de l'affaire importante que ce serait pour moi que d'y répondre} de vos lettres et de l'affaire importante que ce serait pour moi que d'y répondre".
 2. Ibid, 17th December 1905, p. 60: "Chaque jour je veux vous écrire, et recule devant l'énormité de tout ce que je pourrais vous dire..."

Gide's Retour de l'enfant prodigue.¹ Both in art and religion, true freedom is attained by constraint. Protestantism is obviously viewed by Claudel as constraint and restraint and, because of this, Claudel is sure that Gide must leave it behind for Catholicism.

Claudel reinforces those arguments by writing of his own artistic aims which are undoubtedly, an indication of the end to which Gide should come, after he has completely reacted against Protestantism. There is a remarkable similarity between certain of his principles and those of Valéry. Claudel loves the form of the circle because it is inexhaustible, while closed, finite, yet infinite; at the same time, perfection fascinates Claudel more than the finite; unlike Pascal, he finds a source of joy in "le silence éternel des espaces infinis" (C, 8th November 1908, 91); he admires the purity of the sky and has "une très forte notion de la fixité" (C, 92) which finds satisfaction in the rules of astronomy. Quite the opposite is Gide who, to the circle prefers the vicious circle; who admits rather sweepingly to Valéry that he distrusts all silences² in a letter in which he explains himself in terms quite the contrary to the completeness which has Claudel's approval. When Claudel writes with good-natured disbelief of people who have "le sentiment continuel de la fuite et du passage" (C, 92), it is more than likely that Gide is his primary target.

Gide's character has lead him to an artistic game of hop, skip and jump and the unity in his work is not to be represented by the immovable circle Claudel evokes, but rather by the constant motion of a wheel with its cog-wheel.

By contrasting his attitude to that of Gide, Claudel is setting down an example which Gide should follow. Claudel could have resumed his

1. See: above pp. 184-185.

2. G./V. Corr., 11th November 1894, pp. 218-220.

advice to Gide in one line of "Les Muses"¹; "Ne cherche point le chemin, cherche le centre!"²

Gide does not reply directly to the points raised in Claudel's letter, perhaps because the Nouvelle Revue française is occupying his thoughts at this time.³ Nonetheless, after giving Claudel the now customary sop to religion, Gide broaches the topics raised by Claudel, indirectly.

A meeting with André Suarès⁴ has left Gide horrified by the solitary, gloomy atmosphere in which the former lives. This leads Gide to the following conclusion:

Il faut parvenir à la joie; à travers la douleur, mais pourtant à la joie. Le pathétique est en deçà de la vérité...c'est proprement le sujet de mon livre, pour qui saura le lire bien (C, 9th January 1909, 95).

This explanation of La Porte étroite seems to me to be a response to Claudel's ironic comments on those who think only of flight and transitory experience. Gide and his art are heading somewhere but not towards Catholicism. Joy, as Gide informed Francis James,⁵ is the very last state of mind to bring one to conversion. Gide is perhaps more attracted to the "centre" now than to the "way", but the "centre", for him, is personal and artistic equilibrium and not the Catholic faith.

At last, Claudel has read the final installment of Gide's book.⁶ As often before in his criticisms, Claudel comments on Gide's style. One has the impression that Claudel's admiration for the latter, "qui s'insinue en vous comme une liqueur enivrante et chaleureuse" (C, 10th May 1909, 101), almost manages to take precedence over any religious considerations. Indeed, when writing on Gide's work, Claudel, after the comment quoted

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1. The first of Claudel's Cinq grandes Odes.
 2. Claudel, Oeuvre Poétique, 1957, p. 227.
 3. The first edition of the Nouvelle Revue française appeared on the 15th November 1908 but it was not until the 1st February 1909 that it began to appear regularly. G./C. Corr., notes to letter 39, p. 285.
 4. The author of Voici l'Homme whose published Correspondance with Gide dates from 1908 to 1920.
 5. See: above, p.178.
 6. La Porte étroite has appeared in three installments in La Nouvelle Revue française.

above, asks if he may approach La Porte étroite firstly from a literary and then from a religious point of view. It is, indeed, Claudel's ability to make this separation which causes his criticisms to be of more value to Gide than those of James.

From a literary point of view, Claudel feels, Gide's work is completely logical as the drama depends on no mere conflict with external duty but entirely on Alissa's character, which fact will make La Porte étroite irritating to some.

Claudel resumes the subject of the work as being "Le sentiment du 'refus'" which is "profondément caché au coeur de la femme"¹ (C, 10th May 1909, 101-102). In fact, this judgement narrows the scope of the idea of refusal inherent in La Porte étroite. Certainly, Alissa and Madeleine, for a part of Gide's life, were responsible for a refusal of tangible happiness for themselves and, hence for Jérôme and Gide. Nonetheless, Gide himself is a prey to the contradiction between transitory joy in living experience and permanent joy in his work or, perhaps, religion: In fact, without the one, the other does not exist. Therefore, sanity lies, for Gide at least, in refusing to reject one thing for another. Alissa, by her refusal of Jérôme, has limited herself to one cause. Even worse, she has been mistaken in the course she has taken.² The problem of refusal in La Porte étroite is not just one of feminine neurosis, nor of self-preservation for the more far-reaching gift of one's person, but of self-destruction by voluntarily limiting oneself to one aim.

Claudel's understanding of the religious implications of Gide's book goes much deeper. It has helped him to realise that the Protestant, because his God is worryingly imprecise, must feel alone and under constant

1. See: Claudel's own play, L'Annonce faite à Marie, Livre de Poche, 1968, pp. 94-95, where this notion is portrayed.

2. J.l, 1894, p. 55: "Possibilité de détresse: l'âme qui croit avoir mal adoré".

pressure. In this light, Claudel now understands why self-betterment should be a Protestant preoccupation which Claudel contrasts to the Catholic's self-humiliation.

Claudel is unable to continue this objective analysis and breaks out into a personal attack against what he rightly believes to be as much a mistake of Gide as of Alissa - namely, that piety and love must be disinterested. To Claudel, this is simply, "le vieux blasphème quietiste" (C, 10th May 1909, 102). Nonetheless, while Alissa's blasphemy annoys Claudel the Catholic, the man is almost unbearably touched by the despair of a pious woman caused by the fact that the Protestant's God offers no reward.

It is interesting that this notion of reward or utility is reiterated by Claudel in an artistic context, when he writes of Alissa's God: "Nous n'avons plus rien à demander:.. nous n'avons qu'à l'admirer froidement comme un objet d'art, et encore d'un objet d'art nous tirons profit et instruction" (C, 103). Thus, adoration of the Christian God or of Art must have a purpose for Claudel. For Gide, the notion of reward is repulsive and his works are never written to instruct others as Claudel interprets instruction.

Nonetheless, the perspicacity of Claudel's judgement on La Porte étroite causes Gide immense pleasure especially since Claudel has recognised that the drama of the work depends on its very unorthodoxy. Claudel's understanding for La Porte étroite has the effect of making Gide provoke Claudel into further discussion on his work.

This he does by stating that La Porte étroite could not have existed in a Catholic framework since Catholicism is "un quietif, non un motif de drame" (C, 18th June 1909, 103). Although Gide does believe this, he may also be playing devil's advocate in order to prolong discussion: Gide knows perfectly well that, for Claudel, Catholicism involves "de

terribles combats et une énergie toujours tendue pour revenir à la foi et pour s'y maintenir" (C, 3rd March 1908, 84).

The drama of Protestantism, Gide believes, lies in the fact that its lack of fixity and reassurance pushes men along the path taken by Alissa or into "free thought".

Gide explains that, in La Porte étroite, he is criticising "cette sorte d'infatuation supérieure...de cornélianisme gratuit" (C, 18th June 1909, 104) which Alissa represents. Thus, although he wishes people to pity Alissa, Gide is pointing out that his criticism of Alissa is, in fact, quite close to Claudel's own. Gide is not to be associated with his heroine.¹

Hence, Gide may be trying to pull Claudel's leg by the implied suggestion that he must have taken the paths of "free thought". This is, in fact, quite probable. Commenting on the period from La Porte étroite to the Caves du Vatican, Enrico Bertalet writes:

...les thèmes qui vont occuper son esprit sont étrangers à la religion, comme Isabelle, ou orientés vers l'apologie de l'uranisme, comme De Profundis ou Corydon, ou bien encore ouvertement ironiques et critiques, comme le commentaire à la Catherine de Médicis de Balzac, ou Les Caves du Vatican. S'il y a polémique, elle est tournée contre la religion plutôt que pour sa défense. C'est donc une période où prédominent les problèmes d'ordre pratique, d'où semblent absentes la recherche et l'attente de Dieu.

Gide's letter is thus a subtle declaration of his position in relation to religion and of the future development of his art and its role. The Catholic writer, for Gide, cannot provoke thought in his reader, whereas the "Protestant" writer, Gide, can. Indeed, to provoke this form of reaction in his readers is precisely what Gide wishes to do. This is why "free thought" appears a more attractive prospect to

1. See: Divers, Gallimard, 1931, "Un Esprit non prévenu", p. 57.
2. André Gide et l'Attente de Dieu, Lettres Modernes, Minard, Paris, 1967, p. 112.

Gide than either Alissa's gratuitous heroism or the constant purposefulness of the Catholic writer.

With La Porte étroite and Gide's Dostoïevski, Claudel has raised the same questions as appeared in his letter on the Retour de l'enfant prodigue¹ : the Catholic Church is all-inclusive and one must therefore seek it as an end and not linger perpetually on the wayside.

Claudel has also raised a question which would have been just as meaningful in discussion on the Enfant prodigue : that of disinterestedness which, for Claudel, is an artistic and religious sin. God is not contingent to one's efforts but their very reward.

Gide does not inform Claudel that he finds the notion of reward repugnant.² By accusing Catholicism of being a "quiétif, et non un motif de drame", Gide does show, nonetheless, that his interest is as much, if not more, in the search than in any end-result. This search, as Gide's comments on Suarez showed,³ lies in the testing of oneself through experience, no matter how painful, and the end in personal and not Catholic joy.

The role of Gide's art as "un motif de drame" is also quite opposed to the idea of a finite end. Gide's literature is not intended to call people to rest in God but to arouse thought in them. Hence, his art opens up as many new ways as Gide has readers.

The letters on the Retour de l'enfant prodigue and La Porte étroite are landmarks in Gide's correspondence with Claudel since they show, not just that Catholicism is not for Gide but that both the manner and the purpose of his art will become increasingly divergent from those wished for by Claudel.

1. See: above, pp. 184-185.
2. J.l., Feuillets 1918, pp. 675-676.
3. See: above, p. 191.

8. The Provocation of Literary and Religious Dialogue
during the Writing of the Caves du Vatican.

As Gide's next main work¹ is to be Les Caves du Vatican, Gide's willingness, in connection with La Porte étroite, to explore the artistic possibilities afforded by Catholicism and Protestantism, or its more dangerous brother, "free thought", is not totally alien to his new work, as I hope to show.

Gide's comment on Catholicism as a "quietif" provokes prompt but predictable reaction from Claudel. He portrays Catholicism as a marriage between the perfect and the imperfect. This idea is attractive to Gide in itself and explains his initial interest in Claudel's thought. Now, Gide probably already realizes that Claudel's argument is lacking in credibility insofar as acceptance of his own imperfections is concerned.

To back up his idea that Catholicism is not a "tranquillizer", Claudel writes that there is no more exciting drama than the development of dogma which, throughout history, has involved and affected millions of men. For once, Claudel has not formed his arguments in relation to Gide. He is giving his own opinion without any of the meanders necessary to touch the subtlety of Gide's mind.

Gide might have bitten the bait of the contradictions inherent in Catholicism since he also sees this as an artistic problem. The excitements of dogma, however, are the very last way to convince Gide to become a Catholic or to continue discussion. Indeed, in the Correspondance, there is no reply to this question.

Surprisingly, therefore, on the occasion of Charles-Louis Philippe's death, Gide offers Claudel the possibility to renew religious discussion.² He sends Claudel a letter written by Philippe on Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, exhorting Gide to choose Catholicism, the inevitable end.

1. With the exception of Isabelle.

2. G./C. Corr., Beginning of January 1910, pp. 114-115.

Such a letter obviously gives Claudel the perfect chance for a new religious onslaught. Oddly, he takes no advantage of this situation and for some time there is little or no mention of religion in the correspondence.

Gide's giving Claudel this opportunity may be due to continued friendship for him or to the need to discuss the question of conversion for the purposes of the Caves du Vatican. Certainly, as Gide's lecture on Philippe¹ and his commentary on Catherine de Medicis show, the temptation of the Catholic Claudel's joy is a thing of the past and, indeed, Catholicism itself is a dangerous personal and artistic enemy.²

Gide's correspondence with James also shows that he is far from Catholicism since he writes: "Comme vous devenez nombreux, toi et Claudel! et que nos destinées sont différentes!" (19th June 1911, 277). The calmness with which Gide dissociates himself from the two Catholic pères de famille proves that this is no sudden reaction but an established state. This admission is made, however, to James and not Claudel, perhaps because James seems, for the moment, to have come to terms with their differences and sees them as being far less important than the admiration aroused in him by Gide's work.³

Claudel also allows literary questions to take a greater place than they had, much to Gide's delight. To Claudel's comment on his play,

L'Otage:

...j'ai réussi à tenir en bride le lyrisme qui est mon grand ennemi; pour la première fois, j'ai réussi à créer des personnages objectifs et extérieurs
(C, 22nd December 1910, 157).

Gide replies:

Si admirables que soient vos grandes Odes, elles pouvaient me faire craindre que désormais vous viviez sur votre erre, et vous contentiez de vol plané. C'est pourquoi le personnage de Turelure, c'est pourquoi votre phrase aujourd'hui: le lyrisme, qui est mon grand ennemi, fait bondir d'espoir neuf

1. G./C. Corr., p. 320.

2. Nouveaux Prétextes, Mercure de France, 1951, pp. 165-166, quoted by Enrico Bertalot, op. cit., p. 113.

3. G./J. Corr., 15th June 1911, p. 276.

mon coeur d'ami. Il est bon d'avoir de beaux ennemis
(C, 7th January 1911, 159).

Claudiel, unlike James, refuses to be complacent about his art because he is Catholic. Although Claudiel holds the truth through Catholicism, he proves here that he is not prone to the belief that he possesses artistic truth. Claudiel has denied that Catholicism entails intellectual complacency, preferring to see it as an immense struggle.¹ Now, he shows that these are no vain words because, on a literary plane, they are equally true for him! Claudiel is as much involved in an artistic struggle as Gide. Gide's joy is caused by the fact that Claudiel, like himself, needs to search for the betterment of his art and does not, like James, "humbly" accept his own God-given genius.

Gide is about to work on Les Caves du Vatican. The development of this work is mentioned more frequently in Gide's letters to Copeau than in his Journal. From Gide's comments, one can see that Gide's characters have not progressed to the apparent autonomy of those of Les Faux-Monnayeurs. However, Gide's obvious amusement in the plot shows that he himself has an objective view of his characters who are products of his intellect rather than of his emotions. Also, in Gide's attitude to Lafcadio, one sees him moving towards the creation of autonomy, Gide's role being confined to that of a scribe² somewhat intimidated by the insolence of his character³ who seems to have escaped his control.

The objectivity of the Caves does not, however, bring Gide unmitigated pleasure. In April of 1912, he reaches the depths of depression and decides to go to Tunis.⁴ In a letter to Copeau, he says that he does not know if he will work on the Caves as he is tired of everything that is not poetic.

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1. G./C. Corr., 3rd March 1908, pp. 83-84.
 2. Unpublished letter of the 21st March (1911).
 3. Unpublished letter of the 24th September 1911.
 4. In fact, Gide goes to Florence.

Gide's original attraction to James lay in the assimilation of to purity and poetry. It is obvious that spontaneity lyricism and spontaneity implies a certain lack of control and, in extreme cases, of consciousness. Both on an artistic and a religious plane, Gide experiences the desire to follow this inclination which is easy and even natural to him. However, as he admits to Jacques Copeau, when referring to his own religious emotivity,¹ Gide mistrusts any blind surrender to one's own nature. Religion obviously represents the temptation of facility to Gide² who prefers the more difficult alternative of a willed position. Gide's mistrust of literary spontaneity as well as its attraction for him are to be seen when he writes to James: "...combien je me sentirais fort contre toi si je n'étais si sensible aux mensonges de ta poésie!" (C, End of March 1914, 231).

Thus, Claudel and Gide both seem to be torn between a natural propensity for lyricism and the desire to achieve a certain degree of objectivity. Paradoxically, a search for objectivity by Gide in the Caves du Vatican can only draw him apart from Claudel.

Therefore, while Claudel and Gide may share a common enemy, this fact will not bring about a united front and one wonders if Claudel and not just lyricism is one of Gide's "beaux ennemis". On the surface, a common preoccupation appears to give fresh opportunities for discussion on literature. Underlying this, however, is the knowledge, on Gide's part, that the irony and criticism which go hand in hand with the objectivity of the Caves, can but emphasise his differences from Claudel.

Nonetheless, Gide is not yet ready to affront Claudel, partly, I feel, because religious discussion may go towards the Caves du Vatican but also because he still feels nostalgia for what is poetic. This

1. Unpublished letter from Copeau to Gide of the 21st August 1927.
2. J.1, January 1912, p. 358.

explains why Gide also replies to the religious contents of Claudel's letter where he advocates the joys of communion.¹ He does not say outright, as he did to James, that this is far from being his destiny, but uses the excuse of memories of the Protestant piety of his youth which prevent his fully understanding Claudel's position.²

Although Gide is more open with James, he is quite easily lead to offer him a small dose of hope similar to that received by Claudel. After Gide's letter in which he casually contrasts his way of life to James', the latter replies with undeniable affection. While Claudel and himself are producing real babies, James writes, Gide's offspring is purely spiritual. Because of Gide's power as a writer, James regrets that Gide does not nourish his children, or readers, with the only food that gives true happiness and, James adds: "J'ai peur pour ta sincérité que tu ne fasses pas au Christ l'acte de foi qu'il te demande et que tu sais lui être dû" (June 1911, 278). For James, Gide's sincerity does not lie in the refusal to choose, therefore, and he urges him to make the only possible choice.

Gide is deeply affected by James' letter no doubt because of its references to sincerity and Christ whom Gide was never ready to abandon entirely, insofar as he was the Son of Man. Sensitive as he is to James' letters, however, Gide cannot acquiesce to conversion.

He does attempt to make up for this by a literary substitute. Gide is not only eager to send James Isabelle, a work which refers to their common past, but he also tells James that he feels he has finished his "oeuvres de jeunesse" and is at last facing "de grands projets" (June 1911, 279).³

This is, in fact, true but Gide has no intention of changing into

1. G./C. Corr ., 22nd December 1910, p. 157.

2. Ibid , 7th January 1911, p. 159.

3. See: J.l. 24th April 1910, p. 297, and 15th October 1911, p. 337. Gide is thinking of Les Caves du Vatican.

the religiously-inspired writer hinted at in this letter. At present, he is the author of the Caves.¹ However, this letter proves that because James has tinged his religious considerations with literary ones in an affectionate letter, Gide is only too willing to respond, be it at the expense of total frankness.

Indeed, it is in large part due to Gide's drawing closer to Claudel and James through literature that he spontaneously introduces the subject of religion into his correspondence. Both Claudel and James have tempered their religious exhortations to Gide thus allowing the former's literary preoccupations and the latter's admiration for Gide to shine through.

Gide may wish to return the compliment or may simply be unable to let sleeping dogs lie. However, it seems to me more likely that Gide's interest is in gathering possible material for the Caves when he announces the conversion of his sister-in-law to Claudel and James. James is not tempted into discussion² since his hopes for a religious change in Gide's art have been dashed by his reading of Dostoïevski d'après sa Correspondance.³ Claudel, on the contrary, eagerly seizes upon this choice morsel and asks Gide outright when he is going to become a convert himself since outwith the Church one is constrained and mutilated.⁴ Claudel's description of the non-Catholic is such that one is irresistibly reminded of the physically maimed Anthime of the Caves du Vatican.

Having provoked Claudel's onslaught, Gide is now in the embarrassing situation of having to check Claudel's advances while attempting to retain his friendship. This he does by making a barrier to Catholicism in the beauty of the Protestant figures of his youth and by implying that his sister-in-law's conversion is due to his having praised the effects of

1. And of Corydon.

2. G./J. Corr., 2nd December 1911, p. 280.

3. Ibid, 5th October 1911, pp. 279-280.

4. G./C. Corr., 7th December 1911, p. 184.

Catholicism on James and Claudel himself.

Claudel rightly does not exaggerate the importance of Gide's letter. He realises that Gide is not being truly open and expresses his premonitory hopes that, one day, they will have such a confidential conversation as those of Dostoevsky's characters at the risk of hating each other afterwards.

He swiftly puts paid to Gide's Protestant ghosts while admitting that they may, indeed, seem more admirable than many Catholics who have come to Catholicism because it is a need rather than a virtue.

This last point is important since opposed to Gide's preoccupation with virtue which is to be associated primarily with his literature.¹ In this light, Gide's reply to Claudel is much less ambiguous than it seems at first sight. He admits to Claudel that he is, in fact, in need:

En dehors du catholicisme je ne comprends que l'isolement. Je suis un isolé, cher ami. Je ne mets point d'orgueil à l'être, car j'ai besoin d'amitié comme de pain-et de servitude (C, 7th January 1912, 189).²

Gide spoils the effect of this apparently unequivocal statement by going on to say that he cannot join the ranks of the Catholics because of those among them who:

...se servent du crucifix comme d'un casse-tête, et, dès qu'on touche à leurs écrits ou à leur personne, s'abritent derrière le Saint-Sacrement. Me rapprocher du Christ, c'est m'éloigner d'eux. (C, 189).

This is the clearest indication so far that Catholicism is viewed by Gide very much as a literary possibility. Gide is thus pointing out that, in spite of his feelings of isolation, he will not join the Catholic Church since to do so is more than weakness: it is abject, literary self-interest in his eyes.

Gide's statement thus puts Claudel in his place. At the same time, his admission to feeling alone probably has a more immediate significance

1. G./J. Corr., 2nd May 1906, pp. 235-236, and see: above, pp. 178-180
2. See: J.1, 1912, p. 358: "Ai-je - Il est temps de rentrer", and Saturday 1912, p. 367: "Le catholicisme - chrétien", where one sees on an artistic and religious plane respectively the difficulties caused Gide by his voluntary inability to choose.

and may well be due to press politics. One sees in the same letter that he is very afraid of losing Claudel's contribution to the Nouvelle Revue française since he may be influenced against the revue by the attacks against it coming from other Catholics.¹

With irresistible Catholic logic, Claudel destroys Gide's arguments against conversion.² He then moves on to an apparently general but no doubt personal attack which may have been prompted by Gide's accusations against certain Catholic writers.

The grave error of many revues and literary men, he thunders, is their belief that Art can be separated from "ce qu'on appelle si bêtement la Morale, et que j'appelle la Vie, la Voie et la Vérité" (C, 15th January 1912, 192). Every writer, Claudel insists, must adopt a position on this primordial question and he asks Gide what is to be that of the Nouvelle Revue française in the fight against "cette littérature de libertinage, de scepticisme et de désespoir" (C, 192) which is sucking the life-blood from France.

Thus, both Gide and Claudel have once again broached the subject of the aim of literature in a more aggressive way than before. Gide is very much against the use of religion to justify one's own literature and Claudel sees as totally unjustifiable any literature which does not, as Gide puts it, use the Cross as a particularly persuasive truncheon.

Never before has Claudel been so categorical, making full use of the opportunity Gide himself gave for this attack. Claudel is no longer using subtly persuasive arguments but is attacking the weak points in the foundations of Gide's position directly. For the first time, too, Claudel seems to realise, as James has long since done, that Gide's

1. Gide's correspondence with Copeau of this time shows how deeply affected he is by the campaign against the Nouvelle Revue française.
2. G./C. Corr., 15th January 1912, pp. 191-192. 5

literary efforts may be actively harmful. Hence, Claudel has thrown caution to the winds.

As the writer of the Caves and Corydon, Gide must have become increasingly conscious of all that separates him from Claudel. Nonetheless, in order to prolong dialogue, he has concentrated, in his correspondence, on those artistic and religious details which seem to show that he is not too far from Claudel. Now that Claudel has annexed literature to religion and raised the question of irreversible literary and religious conversion, dialogue on the same level as before is no longer possible without the complete falsification of Gide's views.

Conscious of this pass in his relations with Claudel, Gide confides in his Journal:

Je voudrais n'avoir jamais connu Claudel. Son amitié pèse sur ma pensée, et l'oblige, et la gêne...Je n'obtiens pas encore de moi de le peiner, mais ma pensée s'affirme en offense à la sienne. Comment m'en expliquer avec lui? Volontiers je lui laisserais toute la place, j'abandonnerais tout...mais je ne puis pas dire autre chose que ce que j'ai à dire, ce qui ne peut être dit par personne d'autre.¹

Enrico Bertalot remarks that, although the years between La Porte étroite and Les Caves du Vatican were not ones of religious longing in Gide, the correspondence with Claudel has a character apart.² To my mind, this is partly because Gide wishes to retain Claudel's friendship but mainly because he wishes, with a view to his own art, to broaden his comprehension of the effects of religion upon the writer.

Unfortunately for Gide, Claudel has got out of hand and, in his anxiety to see Gide convert, has shown that his standpoint is much the same as James' and entails the same preceptoriness. Gide must limit the inspiration of his art to religion. Failure to do so is no longer seen by Claudel as personal weakness but as an attack upon the Church and

1. J.1, January 1912, p. 359.

2. Bertalot, op. cit., p. 112.

French society.¹

Gide is unable to tell Claudel of his artistic inability to limit himself but confides in his Journal:

Mais quel directeur de conscience comprendrait assez subtilement, cette indécision passionnée de tout mon être, cette égale aptitude aux contraires?
Dépersonnalisation si volontairement, si difficilement obtenue, que seule expliquerait, excuserait, la production des œuvres qu'elle autorise et en vue desquelles j'ai travaillé à supprimer mes préférences.²

This statement is similar to that given to James in 1902.³ It differs only in that the personal nature of the seed from which "Dépersonnalisation" grows, is not so clearly indicated here, perhaps because, with Isabelle and the Caves du Vatican, Gide is branching out into more objective creation.

Despite his fears of hurting Claudel and losing his friendship, Gide does, however, attempt to raise the topic of the moral basis of his art.⁴ Gide undoubtedly sees this as a more pressing problem than that of the limitation desired by Claudel and James because the years 1910 and 1911 saw the publication of De Profundis and Corydon⁵ and 1914 was to see that of Les Caves du Vatican.

Claudel's attacks against "cette littérature de libertinage, de scepticisme" (C, 15th January 1912, 192) must have made Gide realise that his own homosexuality, one of the pillars of the moral orientation to his work, may well be condemned by Claudel in similar terms.

Because Claudel has shown that he is ready for a religious and artistic kill, Gide must either inform Claudel of his homosexuality or reduce dialogue to a mockery. Thus Gide makes a timid attempt to explain what motivates his moral and artistic position in order to

1. See: above, p. 203.

2. J.1, January 1912, p. 358.

3. See: above, p. 167.

4. In a letter which does not appear in the Correspondance but the contents of which may be guessed from Claudel's reply.

5. Only a limited number of copies were printed anonymously in 1911 under the title of C.R.D.N.

obtain Claudel's acceptance at least.

Claudel replies to Gide's "enigmatic letter" by telling him that, no matter what Gide may say, do or write, he will never scandalise or discourage Claudel.¹

In his next letter,² Claudel assures Gide again that, in spite of the anxiety caused by Gide's last letters and the rumours he has heard about the work Gide is preparing, Gide will always have his help and friendship. It is obvious what has been preoccupying Gide in his letter when Claudel adds:

S'incorporer le Christ, c'est s'incorporer au Christ,
communier avec le Christ, c'est communier avec tous
les chrétiens. Or vous sentez vous-même que l'on ne
peut faire partie d'un corps et cependant garder toute
sa liberté, croire et faire ce que l'on veut
(C, 19th March 1912, 196).

Thus, despite Claudel's claims to personal tolerance and to the fact that the Catholic Church, being universal, contains all the struggling aspects of life, Gide realises that his homosexuality and, thereafter, his art are unlikely to be received with any sympathy in the rather stricter confines Claudel now depicts. Claudel is more sympathetic than James to Gide's "dernières convulsions" (June 1907, 248) but Gide must make a choice between his way and the Way.³

Literary rapprochement has caused Gide to provoke discussion upon conversion which has ended in his being suberged by the tidal wave of Claudel's literary wrath. It is to Gide's credit that, when he comes to the surface, it is in order to renew dialogue by placing it on its fundamental basis. Only then will he know if his hopes for Claudel's comprehension are founded or not.

9. Discussion upon the Caves and Gide's Declaration of Independence.

After attempting to introduce the topic of his homosexuality, one of

1. G./C. Corr., 29th February 1912, p. 194.

2. Ibid, 19th March 1912, pp. 195-196.

3. Gide qualifies this part of their correspondence as "important". J.l., 19th June 1912, pp. 199-200.

the most important foundations of his life and art, Gide returns to the rather spurious kind of argument he is used to giving¹ to excuse his refusal to convert. Thus he complains to Claudel that conversion seems to be a current fashion.² Nonetheless, Gide also gives a much more satisfactory reason for the fact that he has not, forasmuch, entirely turned his back on Catholicism. Claudel refutes Gide's argument in the following terms: "Vous vous abusez en pensant que votre amitié pour moi soit pour quelque chose dans vos réflexions actuelles" (C, 10th June 1912p 200). How wrong Claudel is in his assumptions is shown by Gide's subsequent confession to Martin du Gard that "sympathie" was responsible for a large degree of lip-service to Claudel.³

In a later letter, Claudel again asks Gide about the book he is writing and mentions his anxiety about it.⁴ Gide systematically ignores Claudel's queries and what Claudel already knows of the book is due to rumour. How little Claudel knows on the subject is shown by his wishful thinking in a letter where he asks Gide if his lack of letters is due to his having gone into retreat "comme un simple papiste" (C, 5th September 1912, 203). The next letter from Claudel⁵ shows that Gide is far from indulging in quiet, religious meditation but is hard at work on the Caves, in spite of Claudel's growing impatience to see him take the final steps in his religious marathon.

The fact that Gide is working on such a book proves that he is nowhere near reaching the stage desired by Claudel. Gide's tentative efforts to inform Claudel of his homosexuality and his artistic development are not followed up in the Correspondance. Gide's reaction against Claudel is confided rather to his Journal⁶ where Gide mentions a

1. See: above, pp. 199-202.

2. In a letter which is not included in the Correspondance but the contents of which are mentioned in Claudel's answering letter.

3. C./M.G. Corr. 2, August 1942, p. 259.

4. C./C. Corr., 3rd August 1912, p. 202.

5. Ibid, 28th September 1912, pp. 204-205.

6. J.1, 19th November 1912, p. 384.

conversation with his Catholic friend in which the latter's natural propensity for talking of religion is equalled by the "outrance et ^àbetise" of his remarks on art.

The artistic objectivity, which Gide prized in Claudel, seems no longer to exist, perhaps because Gide is now viewing Claudel through the eyes of the author of the Caves du Vatican. Having come closer to Claudel, in order to further his understanding of certain aspects of Catholicism, reaction has now set in, probably because of the very criticism of these aspects contained in Gide's work. It is also likely that Gide's lack of willingness to discuss the Caves, in his correspondence with Claudel, is due to his wish to avoid being disturbed or influenced in the writing of his work.

It is only natural that Claudel, who is not informed of the true state of Gide's mind, should continue in his efforts to persuade Gide to convert, until his reading of Gide's book, which gives him more light on the development of Gide's moral and artistic position than, as Claudel himself says in a letter to Jacques Rivière,¹ seven years of correspondence.

It is only then that Claudel writes to Gide the letter described as "comminatoire" in his Journal.² In this letter, where Claudel demands Gide to tell him whether or not he shares the customs of those so often painted in his books, he advises Gide: "...guérissez-vous et n'étaiez pas ces abominations" (C, 2nd March 1914, 217).

Not until this forthright question does Gide manage to discuss his homosexuality openly with Claudel. Gide answers with undoubted sincerity but also with some reserve caused by the brutality of Claudel's questions and his feeling that Claudel may well want to break off their relations.

The first paragraph of Gide's letter contains a veiled warning:

1. G./C. Corr., 20th April 1914, p. 223.

2. J.1, 28th March 1914, p. 399.

"De quel droit cette sommation? Au nom de quoi ces questions? Si c'est au nom de l'amitié, pouvez-vous supposer un instant que je m'y dérobe?" (C, 7th March 1914, 217). Gide is thus unwilling to accept Claudel's right to an explanation unless it is in the name of friendship. The fact that Gide's "Au nom de quoi..." echoes Claudel's "Au nom du ciel..." (C, 2nd March 1914, 217) is an ironic refusal to recognise the rights of religion in this matter. Any future discussion is to be justified by friendship alone.

Having explained his morals, Gide goes on to discuss his art. He does not believe, as does Claudel, that his works have a bad influence, since he knows the number of people whom "le mensonge des moeurs étouffe comme moi" (C, 7th March 1914, 218). This does not mean, Gide adds, that he approves of simply any set of moral standards or of any form of desire, but merely that he hates hypocrisy, and he does not think that religion will not admit those like him. At this point in his letter, Gide perhaps shows a lack of good faith when he writes: "Par quelle lâcheté, puisque Dieu m'appelle à parler, escamoterais-je cette question dans mes livres?" (C, 218), thus attributing to religious calling his treatment of the subject of homosexuality in his books. The "God" Gide serves is not that of Claudel.

Gide rejects the God who caused Christ to die on the Cross, assimilating Him to Zeus, to the natural causes of the world, thereby depriving Him of "toute signification personnelle et morale".¹ Gide's "God" is:

...le faisceau de tous les efforts humains vers le bien, vers le beau...c'est le côté Prométhée; et c'est le côté Christ aussi bien; c'est l'épanouissement de l'homme, et toutes les vertus y concourent. Mais ce Dieu n'habite nullement la nature; il n'existe que dans l'homme et par l'homme; il est créé par l'homme, ou, si vous préférez, c'est à travers l'homme qu'il se crée; et tout effort reste vain, pour l'extérioriser par la prière.²

1. Attendu Que, 1943, p. 232.

2. Ibid, p. 232.

Thus Gide underlines the inner nature of his "God" and this explains why he goes on to admit that he may force himself to be chaste but cannot alter or choose the object of his desire. Gide's homosexuality is but one of the individual "virtues" which must all go towards man's fulfilment.

Gide's confession to Claudel, although due, saddens him as he feels that Claudel's reaction must be one of anger.¹ Gide's attitude to Claudel is still ambiguous. After this letter in which he affirms his position as a writer and a moralist, Gide writes another the following day, in an attempt to gain Claudel's approval by comparing him to a priest chosen by God.

Nonetheless, Gide adds, in terms reminiscent of an earlier Journal entry²:

Par instants j'en viens à souhaiter que vous me trahissiez, car alors je me sentirais délivré de cette estime pour vous et pour tout ce que vous représentez à mes yeux, qui si souvent m'arrête et me gêne (C, 8th March 1914, 219).

Gide's respect for Claudel is obvious here as is also the truth of his previous warning that the driving force behind his interest in Claudel is his admiration for the man and the writer. What Claudel represents for Gide is not just a confessor but an intellectual and artistic possibility and the dangers of remaining entangled with it.

Claudel's long letter in reply to the above two, helps to strengthen Gide's opposition to him. Claudel's advice to cut out the pederastic passage of the Caves³ "pour des raisons de moralité" et pour des raisons d'intérêt personnel" and because: "Vous vous déclassez, vous vous mettez en marge, hors de l'humanité" (C, 9th March 1914, 221) meet with the following reply from Gide:

Je vous remercie du sentiment qui vous fait me demander, ainsi que le ferait également la prudence, de supprimer une phrase de mon livre; mais je ne puis y consentir.

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1. G./C. Corr., 7th March 1914, p. 218.
 2. J.1, Wednesday, January 1912, p. 359
 3. Romans, Caves, p. 824.

Vous avoueraï-je même que votre phrase rassurante : 'peu à peu on oubliera', me semble honteuse. Non; ne me demandez ni maquillages ni compromis; ou c'est moi qui vous estimerais moins (C, 16th March 1914, 224).

Gide's use of the word "prudence" is a deliberate and contemptuous, secular analogy to Claudel's argument of "moralité". For the first time, Gide shows very clearly that his resolve to maintain not only his literary but also his personal integrity will involve opposition with Claudel and that he holds a poor view of Claudel's position:

This increase in open resistance on the part of Gide, due to his diminished respect for Claudel, appears again in a reply to the more polite of Claudel's two letters¹ asking for the suppression of the controversial passage in the Caves du Vatican and of a quotation from L'Annonce faite à Marie. Gide promises to suppress the quotation. As regards Claudel's other request, Gide tells Claudel that he has seriously thought of stopping the publication of the ordinary edition of his work and adds rather maliciously:

Mais votre lettre d'aujourd'hui - je parle de la furieuse - me laisse trop sentir que vous ne m'en jugeriez pas mieux pour cela; que vous mettriez ce sacrifice à l'actif de mon orgueil; et que demain tout serait à recommencer. (C, 19th March 1914, 226)

After these last few letters of open opposition, it is in his Journal that Gide writes of his hardened position and gives his criticisms of Claudel². With the Caves, the question of the basis and the role of one's art has come to a head. Gide has declared firmly that he is on the side of personal endeavour, man-made virtues and inclusiveness; Claudel has finally proved to be on the side of self-interest and limitation. While Gide seemed to be suffering from "inquiétude", Claudel could accept his hesitation and veil his religious exhortations with literary preoccupations. Claudel has been slower than James to realise the full import of Gide's literature. Now, however, that Gide has explained clearly to him that

1. G./C. Corr., Letters of the 17th March 1914, pp. 224-225.

2. J.1, 14th July 1914, p. 438; Tuesday (March) 1916, p. 549; Feuillets, pp. 675-676; 29th November 1921, p. 702; 10th September 1922, p. 742.

his role is to raise man's head against the harshness of Claudel's God, Claudel is bound to condemn Gide.

The break in Gide's correspondence with Claudel, after the publication of the Caves, is caused by the logical impossibility of opposing, with one's own truth, someone who possesses "The Truth" and who must impose it or withdraw entirely.

Gide's book is also the source of an exchange of letters with James who, like Claudel, writes to ask the meaning of the passage from the Caves which appears on page 478 of the Nouvelle Revue française.⁵ James' letter is much less violent than Claudel's, principally because he is much less willing to believe that Gide is a pederast. It is also true that James feels little religious responsibility for Gide now, since he mistakenly believes that Claudel, with his ability to follow the complexity of Gide's thought, is much more likely than himself to influence Gide.

Despite Gide's attacks on the Church, James feels no indignation, but merely regrets that, since Les Cahiers d'André Walter: "Tu t'es énervé... Tu as voulu célébrer la joie, et ton oeuvre n'a été depuis les Nourritures qu'un long frisson maladif" (C, 24th March 1914, 227).

Like Claudel, however, James sees in this, Gide's darkest hour, true hope for conversion.¹ He also uses the same worldly arguments as Claudel to persuade Gide to abandon his sinful ways: so far, Gide has merely been imprudent; a change in his way of life and in his literary orientation will save him from scandal. James has obviously forgotten that he is addressing the author of the Traité du Narcisse.²

Gide's letter where he confessed his homosexuality was burnt by James. The latter's reply shows that Gide must have written to him in

1. G./C. Corr., 9th and 10th March 1914, pp. 220-223.

2. See: Romans, TN, p. 9: "'Malheur à celui par qui le scandale arrive', mais 'Il faut que le scandale arrive'. -L'artiste et l'homme vraiment homme, qui vit pour quelque chose, doit avoir d'avance fait le sacrifice de soi-même".

much the same terms as to Claudel since, with both men, he discounts the possibility that a representative of the Church may change him when Madeleine has failed.

James sees this declaration as a blasphemy against the power of Grace and chides Gide for acting against it, by his persistence in proclaiming publicly and "sans aucune raison" (C, 27th March 1914, 229) ideas which cover in mud all that Gide represents most. James believes that Gide's refusal to change is due to pride. He is destroying himself by placing his trust in himself alone. To avoid madness, James writes, Gide must convert.

James seems to be confusing Gide with his fictional character, Saül, not only does he foresee madness but, when he bids Gide to flee "ces êtres malsains dont tu es devenu le disciple après avoir été leur maître" (C, 24th March 1914, 228), one is strongly reminded of Saül's relationship with the devils in Gide's play.

There exist two rough-copies of replies from Gide.¹ In the first of these, Gide counters James' accusation of pride. He points to the fact that while James can be completely natural with Gide, Gide himself only appears natural when he is insincere with James. Moreover, Gide writes:

Je suis prodigieusement pauvre de tout ce qui fait ta richesse; je n'ai que peu d'images dans la tête; et le peu que j'en avais, je les ai congédiées pour ce qu'elles gênaient ma pensée, qui n'a peut-être pas d'importance, mais qui demeure ma réalité²...Ma sincérité t'apparaît comme une simagrée; et quand, à toi que Dieu fit oiseau, je me permets de dire: 'A moi, c'est des jambes qu'il m'a données', tu prends cela pour de l'orgueil (C, End of March 1914, 231).

Gide has thus come to terms with his thought. He no longer fights it but sees it as his reality and the basis of his work. He has conquered the temptation of the lies of James' poetry, albeit with great difficulty,

1. G./C. Corr., pp. 230-231.

2. See: M.V.R., Cahiers 6, June 1940, p. 176: "Gide ...a entièrement éclairé sa pensée dans ses écrits..."

and has chosen to follow the paths of intellectual sincerity, which, for James, are mere pretence.

This passage is also a reply to James' accusation that Gide's literature is quite gratuitous. For James, there can be no reason behind the choice of Gide's subject-matter. For Gide, there is a very strong one, - namely, the need to write of his inner reality, whatever the cost. In addition, Gide is more and more conscious of the role he has to play in the fight against blindly repressive morality. When Gide writes that God has made James a bird, he evokes the idea of easy flight above the dark problems of this world. On the other hand, with the legs which God has given him, Gide may never reach the lyrical heights of a James, but he cannot avoid reality nor escape, in soaring flight, the condition "God" has chosen for him,¹ nor, indeed, become mad.

Gide is, in fact, pointing out that his so-called pride comes from being a man among men but also a seeker of truth. James' "bon sens" (C, 27th March 1914, 229) is being shown up by Gide as self-interest, a solution of moral and artistic facility.

Gide has shown in his letters to Claudel and James² that both his intellectual and artistic positions are highly motivated, but not by the interests of Gide, the man, as both Claudel and James would prefer.

This point, with its religious and artistic implications is well-illustrated in Gide's Feuillets, when he writes:

L'idée d'un marchandage n'est jamais entrée dans la religion qu'j'ai connue; non, même pas l'idée d'une simple récompense. Et je ne souviens que c'est précisément là ce dont Claudel me faisait grief après lecture de la Porte étroite. C'est en quoi consistait, selon lui, l'erreur protestante; il ne consentait à voir, dans ce désintéressement même, que de l'orgueil.³

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1. G./C. Corr., 8th March 1914, p. 219: "...je ne vois pas comment résoudre ce problème que Dieu a inscrit dans ma chair".
 2. Ibid, 7th March 1914, pp. 217-218; 16th March 1914, pp. 223-224; End of March 1914, pp. 230-231.
 3. J.l, p. 678.

The Caves du Vatican has caused Claudel and James to provoke Gide into a clear declaration of his position which is one of reaction against his Catholic friends. He shows contempt for their consideration of artistic and personal interests. Hence, he declares to James that he is on the side of reality, no matter how dark, and to Claudel that he intends to tear the veil of society's hypocrisy, even if it hurts him personally. Gide intends his courage to show both James and Claudel in an unfavourable light.

Indeed, Gide's reaction against Claudel is stronger than Claudel's against him. Writing to James after his exchange of letters on the Caves, Claudel still shows some compassion for Gide:

Ne pensez pas trop sévèrement à ce malheureux garçon.
Sa destinée est douloureuse, et je ne sais qu'augurer
de l'avenir... ue Dieu ait pitié de lui, car il n'y a
guère d'être plus à plaindre.

Speaking of Claudel at a later date, but in words which would be equally applicable at this point, Gide said:

'Si je consentais à être franc avec moi-même ... je
crois bien que je dirais que je déteste Claudel...
J'ai dû arrêter la correspondance; il devenait
vraiment trop pressant, il me donnait rendez-vous
au pied des autels! Je n'en pouvais plus'.²

10. The Last Throes of Dialogue.

Claudel does not, as yet, pour anathema upon Gide. This is no doubt because Gide stated his position in a moral way, while allowing Claudel to see that he is not a stranger to anguish. In fact, the latter is caused by his love for his wife, but Claudel probably cares little for its source. His continued interest in Gide is due to the fact that Gide is still preoccupied with morality, has still, apparently, not found peace of mind and is thus still good material for conversion.

1. C./J./F. Corr., 27th March 1914, p. 266.
2. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 15th September 1914, p. 39.

James barely renews his attempts to draw Gide to Catholicism probably because Gide's explanation to him was more down-to-earth and showed clearly that his personal needs, abilities and thought would always be the fundamental basis of his art.

Indeed, with his Elie de Nacre or l'Antigyde, James attacks Gide's position publicly, although the ending of his book proves that he has not lost all hope of Gide's converting. James sensibly takes the precaution, however, of making Elie de Nacre die before he may recant.

The apparent goodwill with which Gide receives James' announcement of this work,¹ as well as a letter from Gide after its appearance,² cause a faint, but somewhat mystifying resurgence of hope in James³: Gide's letter, published in La Quinzaine littéraire, is a masterly piece of cattiness. James' hopes are later totally dashed by the definitive proof brought by Les Nouvelles Nourritures that Gide no longer believes in religion or the after-life.

Claudé resumes religious and literary discussion on the occasion of his receiving Dostoïevski. The only reproach Claudé has to make against Gide's work is the definitive aspect it gives to Dostoïevsky's search which, for Claudé, is but a crisis:

...il ne faut pas ^{nous} dire qu'un état de paroxysme soit un état de repos. - D'ailleurs, une des grandes raisons d'être de l'art est la purge de l'âme et cela explique l'élément mauvais qui y est souvent (mais pas toujours) mêlé, comme vous l'avez parfaitement remarqué⁴
(C, 29th July 1923, 239).

In speaking of art as a "purge", Claudé is echoing Gide's former concept of his own literature.⁵ What Claudé cannot accept, however, is the apparently ceaseless nature of a Dostoïevsky's or a Gide's search for their extremes and the fact that this constitutes their "état de repos".

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1. G./J. Corr., 24th December 1931, pp. 287-288.
 2. La Quinzaine littéraire, 1st -15th April 1968, Justin O'Brien, "Gide et l'Antigyde", p. 11.
 3. G./J. Corr., letter to Madeleine Gide of the 16th June 1938, pp. 288-289.
 4. See: Dostoïevski, 1970, pp. 186-187, and 202-205.
 5. G./J. Corr., 6th August 1902, p. 199.

Claudel simply cannot understand the attraction of the "way" as opposed to the "centre".¹ Louis Martin-Chauffier, on the other hand, sees this as the necessary condition of Gide's art:

Avec l'inquiétude, le doute, la recherche anxieuse (et craignant de trouver), l'horloge s'arrêta, privée de balancier. Gide connut alors ce qu'il appela la sérénité... Il continua d'écrire, car rien ne le pouvait retenir. Mais la pièce était achevée bien avant que se baissât le rideau.²

For the sake of his art, Gide never loses sight of the way for any end.³ Nonetheless, Claudel's reference to "repos" has an answering chord in Gide which one may call serenity, joy,⁴ or harmony. One may or may not agree with Martin-Chauffier that the finding of this state, after Madeleine Gide's death, was to the detriment of Gide's art. I believe that Gide had achieved this state before then, in his art itself. The harmony of the Faux-Monnayeurs depends on the co-existence of the contradictory attributes of mankind. Even Gide's artistic summum, therefore, must appear as a state of "paroxysm" to Claudel for whom contradictions are but a prelude to rest, which means reduction to the essential, - and not inclusion as Gide had mistakenly believed when his relationship with Claudel began: "...toute l'économie de l'Eglise est là: nous permettre seulement de communier et nous débarrasser de tout le reste" (C, 10th June 1912, 200).

Gide expresses his admiration for Claudel's letter twice in his Journal,⁵ no doubt because it raises questions dear to him. Indeed, one wonders whether it is Gide's reaction to this letter or simply the continuation of his friendship for Claudel which causes him to send the latter a copy of Numquid et tu? Whatever Gide's reasons, Claudel sees in this work the opportunity he has been awaiting to resume his religious dialogue

1. See: above, p. 191.

2. Figaro littéraire, 18th - 24th August 1969, "Un génie de la Contradiction", p. 6.

3. See: Iostolevski, 1970, p. 46: "...il ne faut gâcher sa vie pour aucun but".

4. See: above, pp. 191 and 195.

5. J.1, 9th October and 21st December 1923, pp. 770 and 772.

with Gide.

Claudiel, who is always more practical than James in his faith, entirely agrees with Gide that the Kingdom of God is with us now and is not just the promised reward to be gained in life after death. However, he adds, it is not a finite object but a grain which may grow or die within us. For Claudiel, the Christian is the man who, by total abandonment, by total submission, allows this seed to subsist on the diminution of his own personality. Gide's fault lies in his only partial abandonment. However, he is:

...en proie à la Grâce, dont le meilleur signe est cette préoccupation^{chré} de la Foi qui ne vous lâche pas depuis tant d'années et qui a déjà accompli en vous tant de transformations" (C, 12th January 1924, 241).

In fact, Claudiel's analysis is not totally divorced from reality. Gide's art has shown many different aspects of him and certainly bears the mark of his preoccupation with submission to a faith. However, if Gide has one faith, it is true to say that it is his own art. The Traité du Narcisse - and the very title of Gide's autobiography is to be taken in the same sense - shows that the complete sacrifice of Gide's personality will always be made by the artist in him and not by the potential Catholic or Communist convert.

What, then, must one think of Gide's reply to Claudiel's letter, when he expresses his desire to talk to Claudiel and adds: "...j'ai peur de vous, Claudiel... Notre conversation ne peut être que grave et votre parole me secoue terriblement" (C, May 1925, 242)? The conversation which takes place between the two men does involve a confession from Gide but it is that: "Le côté goethien... l'a emporté sur le côté chrétien" (C, 242). In conversation, Gide has finally been totally frank with Claudiel by telling him that his happiness lies in work and "sympathie". In his letter, Gide's ambiguity leads one to suppose that he is, in fact, drawing closer to Claudiel. What is more, he makes no mention of the fact that

Numquid et tu? was written during the First World War and reflects a state of mind long since past.

Even at the time when Gide wrote this work, one must take into account the fact that both the War and the Russian Revolution had affected Gide. George Brachfeld comments on this:

The war had intensified his profound compassion for the downtrodden and his reliance on Christ's gospel of love. Profoundly disturbed, he felt a compelling desire for identification, be it with Catholics or even with rabid chauvinists.¹

Gide's admission that he fears a meeting with Claudel is not, however, exaggerated. Claudel, by the very force of his personality and because of Gide's "sympathie" for him, may yet hinder Gide and crush his resolution to oppose his Catholic friend and his precepts once and for all. At the same time, Gide's sensitivity to the faithfulness of Claudel's friendship² possibly makes him more ambiguous, less forceful in his letter, which is not a last resort.

In Gide's last published letter to Claudel,³ it is this aspect which appears most strongly when Gide writes:

A songer à la constance de votre amitié, je trouve quelque réconfort. Parfois je me dis avec un peu de tristesse qu'il ne faut y voir qu'un persistant espoir de me convertir; et je mesure mon affection pour vous au chagrin que j'ai de vous décevoir (C, 15th June 1926, 244).

To his verbal confession to Claudel, Gide thus adds a written reference to all that separates him from the Catholic writer, whom he nonetheless admires.

Even now, however, Gide cannot be completely open with Claudel, but has to offer an out-dated and rather weak explanation of his attitude: "Je ne puis adorer qu'un Dieu de vérité. Je sais qu'Il est le vôtre. Mais que penser d'un arbre qui porte aussi de tels fruits?" (C, 245). It is therefore not surprising that Gide's correspondence with Claudel should

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1. André Gide and the Communist Temptation, Droz et Minard, 1959, p. 86. By "rabid chauvinists", Brachfeld is referring to Gide's adhesion to Action Française in November 1916.
 2. This does exist, in spite of Gide's rather unpleasant comments in his Journal of the 15th May 1925, J.1, p. 805.
 3. In reply to Claudel's letter to Madame Gide. G./C. Corr., 20th August, 1925, p. 243.

end, not with their letters on the Caves but years later with Claudel's optimistic belief that Gide's course is not yet run and that the gates of Heaven will one day close behind him.¹

Gide's correspondences thus continue intermittently with Claudel and James long after he has made a moral and artistic choice against their wishes. His last few letters to both writers are due to his continued friendship for them but cannot truly be said to form a part of religious and artistic dialogue, which has ceased to serve Gide's purposes. Eventually, as Gide rightly guesses, even the bonds of friendship are cut as the two Catholic writers are forced into logical condemnation of Gide.

The peace of a Goethe is a far more dangerous enemy than the searchings of a Nietzsche or a Dostoevsky. Much of James' subsequent venom against Gide seems to be due to the fact that the Nouvelle Revue française and, hence, Gide do not have the lack of success he feels that they, and not he, merit. Claudel's disgust is less petty but infinitely more overpowering. Gide's thought is reduced by Claudel to "Le Protestantisme... une perversion monstrueuse",² and of Oedipe he writes that it is "aussi salement écrit que bassement pensé. Cet homme distingué est devenu vulgaire et grossier".³

Although Gide takes an almost gleeful delight in finding fault with Le Boulquier de Satin,⁴ his attitude is far less single-minded than that of Claudel. He admits in 1930 to being on the side of Abelard's rationalism as opposed to Saint Bernard's mysticism, but "c'est avec déchirement".⁵ Gide, unlike Claudel, does not completely silence his understanding for

1. G./C. Corr., 25th July 1926, p. 245.

2. Lettres inédites sur l'Inquietude Moderne, 1951, letter of the 25th January 1931, pp. 153-154.

3. Ibid, letter of 25th January 1931, p. 155.

4. J.l., 30th October 1929, p. 950.

5. Lettres inédites sur l'Inquietude Moderne, letter of the 26th December 1930, p. 105.

Claudiel's faith nor, even, his admiration for Claudel since:

...Claudel. Je l'aime et le veux ainsi, faisant la leçon aux catholiques transigeants, tièdes et qui cherchent à pactiser. Nous pouvons l'admettre, l'admirer, il se doit de nous vomir. Quant à moi, je préfère être vomi que vomir.¹

In this chapter, it may seem that I have neglected the question of religious discussion which might normally be thought of as the basis of Gide's correspondences with Claudel and Jammes.

Catherine Savage points out that:

...des besoins d'hygiène spirituelle et psychologique poussaient Gide à vouloir dialoguer sur le catholicisme avec Claudel et à faire semblant par moments de se rendre aux raisons du poète.²

On the whole, Gide regarded his attraction to Catholicism as weakness on his part engendered by his frequent periods of moral crisis. Literary sterility is also an important factor in the temptation of Catholicism for Gide³ and, hence, his desire for dialogue with Claudel who represented a source of strength against Gide's own failings.

It seems to me, therefore, that Gide's need for "hygiène" is just as much literary as psychological or spiritual. After the publication of L'Immoraliste, for example, Gide's already existing doubts about morality and art flooded the literary void facing him and caused an intensified search for a new approach to art.

Under these circumstances, Catherine Savage believes that Claudel was the perfect interlocutor since his art is "un jaillissement continu, puissant, débordant, une marée de mots"⁴ whereas Gide's art is all simplicity and severity. I feel that Gide had no intention of emulating Claudel's style and that Catherine Savage might also have mentioned the attraction of the simplicity and freshness of Jammes' art, in the years preceding La Porte étroite. Nonetheless, she is right in her assumption that Gide is interested in Claudel as a writer and that, while their

1. J.l, December 1931, p. 1096.

2. Savage, op. cit., p. 109.

3. Ibid, p. 98.

4. Ibid, p. 105.

art-forms may differ, both Claudel and Gide share a common devotion to art, which is the most likely ground for understanding between them.¹

Despite the fact that Catherine Savage points to the artistic basis of Claudel's attraction for Gide, she does not resolve the question of Gide's "bad faith" by reference to his artistic needs.² To my mind, this question is puzzling only if one considers the unifying factor of Gide's correspondence with Claudel to be religion itself and not religion in relation to art. Gide's courting-dance with Claudel³ is explicable only if one considers, on the one hand, his attraction to the strength Claudel draws from the "déchirement sublime"⁴ of Catholicism and, on the other hand, his condemnation of the complacency Catholicism brings to its writers. In other words, Catholicism has its uses both as a means of broadening Gide's understanding and, by reaction, of convincing him that his own approach to art is the right one for him. It is also the case that discussion with his Catholic correspondents was a means to Gide's subordinating his character and his thought to his artistic work.⁵

If Gide had been interested in Catholicism as an end in itself, his behaviour would have appeared to be an exaggerated and rather grotesque caricature of his own hesitancy. This is why I have tried to show, in this chapter, that, even in the height of "religious" discussion with Claudel, Gide's concern is with literature.⁶ Hence, Gide's "bad faith" is simply with a view to avoiding the discontinuation of discussion on literature, which is intended to enrich his art but also to enable Gide

1. Savage, op. cit., p. 105.

2. Ibid, pp. 110-112.

3. Which is the source of a very interesting study by Pierre Klossowski in *Un si funeste Désir*, Gallimard, 1963.

4. Léon Pierre-Quint, *André Gide*, Nouvelle ed. Paris: Stock, Delamain et Boutelleau, 1952, p. 451. Quoted by Catherine Savage, op. cit., p. 106.

5. See: above, pp. 171, 174, 199-200, 201.

6. Except in the final stages of his correspondence with Claudel, where Gide is more concerned with safeguarding friendship.

to "prendre conscience de sa propre pensée".¹

Despite the fact that Gide originally believed James' and Claudel's aims were similar to his own, therefore, opposition between approaches to art is the fundamental issue of dialogue in his correspondences with the two men. This appears almost from the beginning in Gide's correspondence with James because the latter intuitively grasps the essential difference between himself and Gide, which lies in the place and role of morality in their work. As soon as James realizes this, he engages in discussion. Because James is too sensitive to considerations of "littérature froissée",² Gide's respect for him diminishes. He sees that little is to be gained from James as a literary correspondent and, hence, is rapidly convinced that he must continue on his own way.

Claudel is endowed with greater logic and objectivity than James and mingles religious and artistic precepts in a way which is attractive to Gide and which shows that Henri Davignon's following claim is a little exaggerated: "Claudel fait tout juste assez de concession à l'artiste pour éviter la rupture redoutée par lui".³

Claudel's differences from Gide are less fierily obvious than those of James. Discussion upon artistic ideals is, therefore, longer-lived. This is also due to Gide's respect for Claudel as a man and an artist, which causes him to be more tolerant of discussion on religion with Claudel than with James. In turn, Gide finds greater difficulty in stating that his reaction against Claudel is as strong as that he reaches against James.

Nonetheless, open discussion on both similarities and differences proves to be more satisfactory in Gide's correspondences with his Catholic friends than in that with Valéry. On the whole, this seems to be due to

1. Savage, op. cit., p. 110.

2. J.1, February 1911, p. 329.

3. De la 'Princesse de Clèves' à 'Thérèse Desqueyroux', Palais des Académies, Brussels, 1963, pp. 60-61.

the nature of Gide's correspondents who are ever-ready to provoke or be provoked into discussion on the very moral and literary questions which preoccupy Gide most.

Initially, Gide's dialogue with James and Claudel is, to some extent, one with himself. James helps Gide to ensure the survival of André Walter and Claudel, in 1905, not only helps Gide to maintain his links with the more spiritual side of his nature but provides him with an example of what Gide would like to become.¹ M. Delmat-Marsalet correctly remarks that:

L'amitié de Claudel semble jouer sur Gide à la manière d'un réactif...Il aime dans cet homme le contradictoire, l'ennemi salutaire, celui qui, s'opposant à une part de lui-même, rétablit un moment l'équilibre intérieur rompu.²

Once Gide's equilibrium was re-established, however, the impetus to dialogue with Claudel became intellectual and in reaction to Claudel, rather than profoundly motivated by Gide's needs. The toning-down of both Claudel's and Gide's ideas comes to an end and dialogue with it. The open expression of the two men's thought clarified once and for all that, for Claudel, discussion lead to Catholicism, for Gide, to his art.

Total submission to Catholicism meant, for Gide, the sacrifice of his art. Gide preferred to sacrifice his friendship because:

'...quand j'essaye de dépister mes raisons les plus secrètes,...il me semble qu'elles sont d'un ordre plutôt esthétique. Je sens que c'est plus beau comme ça, que ça offre plus de ressources; ça permet d'aller plus loin, c'est d'un meilleur rendement, c'est...ça qui me retient ou me pousse...'³

The importance of Gide's correspondences with James and Claudel lies in the fact that they have swiftly helped him to realise this, to see that his raison d'être, his very equilibrium are to be found in literature.

Gide's turning against Claudel and James was indeed, primarily for

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1. See: above, p.173[^]
 2. André Gide l'enchaîné, Bordeaux, Picquet, 1955, p. 94. Quoted by Catherine Savage, op. cit., p. 110. My own underlining.
 3. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 30th November 1928, p. 386.

literary reasons in André Malraux's opinion: "A Claudel, à Jammes, à Péguy, il reprochait moins le Vatican, que ce qu'il appelait leur romantisme. Ils n'admiraient pas assez Poussin".¹ This point of view is entirely borne out by Gide's "Notes pour une Etude sur Francis Jammes"² in which he writes that Jammes is a poet and nothing else, being completely closed to all artistic values. In more general terms, this means that Gide was opposed to his Catholic friends because he believed in the personal rather than the mystical motivation and control of his art. Moreover, the role of Gide's art is to help men reach their highest achievement through lucidity and with no thoughts to their interests. Claudel's only concern was that his art might draw men to the common end of Catholicism or, in Gide's eyes, to the abandonment of their reason, to the unthinking but comfortable certainty of their rectitude.

Having discussed briefly the course and import of Gide's dialogue with Jammes and Claudel, it would be a mistake not to recapitulate the development in Gide's artistic outlook as it appears in his correspondences with the two men. This is primordial to an understanding of how Gide, from his starting-point as André Walter, will become the author of the Faux-Monnayeurs.

Gide's first letters to Jammes show him to be keenly aware of not only the need for greater spontaneity in his works but also to give them a more moral orientation than before. The Nourritures terrestres is the outcome of these wishes. In L'Immoraliste, Saül and La Porte étroite, Gide explores more critically the risks of losing sight of all else by too intense a search for moral, physical and religious fervour. In all these works, Gide is obeying an inner necessity, studying various possibilities within himself. To this extent, Gide may be said to be

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, Préface, p. XXI.
2. J.1, Feuillets, pp. 720-725.

indulging in a thorough, mental spring-cleaning.

It is within this context that James suggests that Gide should devote his energies to a pure work or, if I may continue my housewifely metaphor, to polishing the silver and not to sweeping under the carpets. In fact, as Gide himself tells James, this is not possible until he has purged himself, one by one, of the darker sides of his nature.

The dearth in Gide's literature after L'Immoraliste may have suggested that this state of affairs has been achieved, and that Gide is ready, as James wishes, to adopt his role of "père des berges". Certainly, it is during this period that Gide turns to James and Claudel. Nonetheless, the nature of Gide's attraction to the latter is indicative of his true preoccupation. Claudel represents the successful mingling of one's contradictions both in life and in art. While Gide is ready, as James desires, to limit himself, it is for the purposes of La Porte étroite, the last remaining work of his "youth" to be written. Underlying this, however, Gide's artistic intent is to be "pushed" ahead rather than "retained".

This is to be kept in mind when one considers Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue which is, on the surface, the nearest thing to "l'oeuvre pure" which James has been advocating. This work is, in fact, another critical one based on Gide's doubts and, for James, a pure work implies the exclusion of Gide's inner preoccupations of the moment.

The significance of the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue also lies in the fact that Gide, helped by his dialogue with Claudel and James, is beginning to "dance" on both feet and, hence, that the time of literary purging is coming to an end. The criticism in this work is no longer an implicit one of a Gidian possibility but, because of the dialogue-form, it is, in the end, a highly explicit one of what Claudel and James represent for him.

Gide is thus on the threshold of dealing with intellectual or

external preoccupations. He does not, forasmuch, write the work that James expects from him. One is aware of the direction Gide will take when he agrees with Claudel that lyricism is a marvellous enemy. Gide is ready for greater objectivity as regards both moral and artistic presentation, as is to be seen in Corydon, Isabelle, and the Caves du Vatican. This change in Gide's outlook is primarily due to the need to renew his art, after finishing his "'oeuvres de jeunesse'" (June 1911, 279); but it is also due to the knowledge, to which Claudel and James have contributed, that his works must, by appealing to reason and no longer to emotions, strike a blow for "ceux que le mensonge des moeurs étouffe comme moi" (C, 7th March 1914, 218). It is the consciousness of this very role which gives the publication of his correspondences with James and Claudel such importance in Gide's eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTER IV

Dialogue in Gide's Correspondence with

Martin du Gard

1. Introduction

Although Gide's correspondences with Claudel and Jammes continued after the publication of the Caves, firm reaction against Catholicism dates from this period. The pain caused later by Henri Ghéon's conversion and Gide's disapproving fears of a similar fate for Jacques Copeau¹ are personal but by no means negligible factors in his condemnation of Catholicism as an enemy to truth.

In June 1913, Gide has just finished the Caves du Vatican. He has not yet written to Claudel to confess his pederasty and his intention of fighting moral hypocrisy. He is, however, aware of what must always separate him from Claudel and Catholicism and, at the same time, of the need for further change in his approach to art: "Il me semble parfois que je n'ai rien écrit de sérieux jusqu'ici, que je n'ai présenté qu'ironiquement ma pensée".²

It is under these circumstances that Gide receives the manuscript of Martin du Gard's Jean Barois which provokes his immediate comment: "Je reste là devant sans critique, et j'approuve sans restriction. Celui qui a écrit cela peut n'être pas un artiste; mais c'est un gaillard".³ This appraisal, had it come from the pen of a younger Gide influenced by Symbolism and concerned perhaps more with literary form than content, might have appeared uncharacteristic.

At present, however, Gide's interest in Martin du Gard is easily explained. Gide wishes to make a break with irony in order to write a serious and more objective work.

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 15th August 1921, p. 94.

2. J.1, 26th June 1913, p. 388.

3. G./M.G. Corr.1, p. 9. From now on, in this chapter, all references to this correspondence will appear in the text, as in the preceding chapters. Letter dates and page numbers will be preceded by "M.G.1" or "M.G.2", the latter numbers referring to the volumes.

Such a change was also keenly desired by Gide's Catholic correspondents. Gide has, nonetheless, made it quite clear to Jammes, at least, that his future work will not be religiously-inspired. Faith is now regarded by Gide as an artistic limitation and this helps to explain Gide's admiration for Jean Barois. Not only does Martin du Gard's work have as its principal subject the conflict between faith and humanism but also many of the ideas expressed in it correspond to Gide's preoccupations. The questions of married life, liberty, individuality, the self-interested conservatism of the Catholic Church, the role of art and life, the future of mankind are all raised in Jean Barois.

Gide was probably also sensitive to Barois' plea for the positive effects of doubt and to the fact that Martin du Gard himself, by the dialogue-form of his work, was addressing the critical faculties of his readers.

From a purely artistic point of view, Gide's admiration for Martin du Gard causes Maurice Rieuneau some perplexity since Gide cared little for historically accurate portrayals such as Martin du Gard made of the trial in Jean Barois. Rieuneau, nonetheless, believes that Gide possibly saw behind Jean Barois "un romancier, ...quelqu'un qui pourrait faire une grosse machine romanesque".¹

This is undoubtedly true but it might be more precise to say that Martin du Gard's work showed Gide that he could profitably bring together, in one work, the multiple aspects of his thought. Because Gide has hitherto been an artist, a "précieux", a "quintessencié"² like many of his time, he is the first to admire the "gaillard" Martin du Gard because:

...ceux-là seuls m'intéressent profondément, qui luttent contre leur époque et nagent à contre-courant. Je ne viens pas prétendre que Roger Martin du Gard soit le seul de nos jours à n'être point précieux; mais il me paraît que, parmi les non-précieux, lui seul compte. On s'apercevra de cela dans vingt ans.³

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1. Entretiens, "Gide et Martin du Gard - Discussion", p. 113.
 2. Divers, Gallimard, 1931, p. 200.
 3. Ibid, p. 201.

Gide's curiosity has been aroused by a literary effort alien to his own manner of writing but concordant with his own preoccupations and, hence, potentially enriching for the future development of his art.

Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard does not become regular until 1919.¹ In his Journal, Martin du Gard describes one of their meetings during the war years² noting how they both share the same pre-occupation with morality, the same desire for a complete social renaissance and a new and worthy way of life. When the two men discussed their literature, the same accord is to be found. Gide would like to write a work belonging to the same "family" as Martin du Gard's projected work, Le Bien et le Mal, and to make a break with irony. Martin du Gard writes of Gide: "Il projette un roman énorme, en mosaïque; il pense à La Chartreuse et à Guerre et Paix,³ il voit trois parties, avec la Guerre au milieu, faisant une scission absolue entre avant et après" (M.G.1, 653).

The most interesting aspect of these literary plans is Gide's obvious desire for experimentation with an art form which is not originally his own but is far more natural to Martin du Gard. Gide's astonishing similarity to Martin du Gard at this stage⁴ seems to form part of the same pattern which attracted him towards Claudel and James. Gide is once again trying to broaden his sphere of literary possibilities. Not only does he depend upon his faculty for "dépersonnalisation poétique" for this but also conscious investigation of artistic principles other than those

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1. This is due partly to meetings but mainly to a general decrease in Gide's correspondence during the War because of his activities in the Foyer Franco-belge.
 2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, Annex to letter 13, extract from Martin du Gard's Journal of the 17th May 1915, p. 653.
 3. See: M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 21st October 1922, p. 158: "'Je relis en ce moment La Guerre et la Paix, et je me rends compte que c'est décidément le réalisme que je n'aime pas, quel qu'il soit. Je ne puis me passer d'un peu de fantastique. Chez Tolstoï, c'est toujours le même éclairage plat, un peu de cinéma. Eh bien! quand je fais le tour de toute la littérature, si je réussis mon roman, c'est malgré tout à ça que je voudrais qu'il ressemble, par le côté touffu, sautes brusques d'un milieu dans un autre, sans transitions ni explications'".
 4. Martin du Gard also stresses their similarity in his letter of the 6th January 1914, G./M.G. Corr. 1, p. 129.

he already possesses.

The modern reader may smile on learning Gide's wish to emulate War and Peace in his Faux-Monnayeurs. However, in spite of the many differences between Gide and Martin du Gard or Tolstoy, which are so ably discussed by Jean Delay,¹ this intention shows that Gide initially believed similarity to Martin du Gard to be more advantageous than opposition. Martin du Gard and his work have shown an artistically dissatisfied Gide the possibility of new literary paths to be followed.

Martin du Gard's literary aims are perhaps best expressed in his own words on Jean Barois:

Je voudrais tant revêtir mes créations d'une vie intense! d'une telle vie, que, devant elles, le lecteur soit exactement (ou presque...) comme il est devant une réalité. Je voudrais que mon Barois soit assez vivant pour qu'on l'accepte tel qu'il est, comme un fait, comme une évidence, - et sans en discuter la fabrication, comme s'il s'agissait d'une marionnette!
(M.G.1, 6th January 1914, 130).

Thus, Martin du Gard raises one of the fundamental sources of dialogue between himself and Gide, albeit unknowingly.²

Encouraged by a conversation with Gide, Martin du Gard consciously broaches the same problem in his first important letter to Gide after the War. Both he and Gide, he writes, are obsessed with objectivity which, for Martin du Gard, is "le don magique supreme, l'enfantement total, la création toute pure...le but" (M.G.1, 28th May 1919, p. 141). Martin du Gard congratulates Gide on the first part of La Symphonie pastorale³ which is, in his opinion, the nearest Gide has come to attaining this goal since Martin du Gard feels the characters are no longer attached to the narrator but are entities with a rich and complex life of their own.

This praise for Gide's recit explains Martin du Gard's concept of literary objectivity. A work must not be controlled and limited by the

1. In his Introduction to the Correspondance.

2. This will be seen later in this chapter.

3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, pp.141--142.

author's personality, prejudices or artistic precepts but by the desire to paint life itself. On this, both Gide and Martin du Gard agree to a certain extent. However, Gide's own words, "un artiste", "un gaillard", may be used to show how their techniques differ. So strong is Martin du Gard's refusal of "parti pris" that he is attracted to the dialogue form and to subject-matter which allows the portrayal of life apparently quite unrelated to his own. Gide, on the other hand, more artist than "gaillard", is more intent on stylistic objectivity¹ than on painting a world to which his existence is unnecessary.

Thus, Gide, more easily than his friend, may be tempted to leave objectivity aside, as Martin du Gard accuses him of having done in the second part of La Symphonie pastorale. Gide has obeyed "une logique subjective, une logique de composition" and no longer "cette complexité contradictoire de la vie" (M.G.1, 28th May 1919, 142).

Martin du Gard's point of view is, to my mind, justified. Gertrude's development is traced so sketchily that nothing pre-supposes one to believe that, taken out of her element by having her sight restored, she must perish. Her death does not depend upon her character which, in any case, we know only through the pastor's eyes, nor is it necessary to bring the Pastor face to face with himself. Had Gertrude lived and married Jacques, Gide could still have finished his book as he did.² Gide has bowed to artistic effects and not to psychological veracity.

Gide himself is delighted with Martin du Gard's criticisms: "... combien je vous sais gré de me parler ainsi, cher ami. Vous allez tellement dans le sens de mes plus intimes pensées" (M.G.1, 30th May 1919, 143). Although brief, Gide's reply shows that his time as a writer of

1. J.1, 7th May 1912, p. 387: "Je veux n'avoir pas de manière que celle qu'exige mon sujet".

2. Romans, SP, p. 930: "J'aurais voulu prier, mais je sentais mon coeur plus aride que le désert".

écrits and soit is over.¹ Martin du Gard's opinion gives confirmation of the need to show life in all its complexity which, for Gide, may only be done in the novel, as Ramon Fernandez points out:

La conquête du roman suppose pour Gide une double réussite: réussite psychologique, réussite artistique; peu à peu, elle lui apparaît comme l'achèvement de sa destinée d'artiste, et aussi comme son installation complète dans la vie.²

A letter from Gide³ gives Martin du Gard the opportunity to explain his point of view more fully and with his already customary "franchise" (M.G.1, 3rd July 1919, 145). Gide confesses that sometimes he regrets having involved himself so fully in life to the detriment of literary production. Nonetheless, he believes that, had he written more, the quality of his work would have suffered not simply from prolixity but also through the loss of "le sens aigu de la vie" (M.G.1, 17th July 1920, 152). Gide explains that he hates confusion and thinks that long intervals between works destroy the superfluous considerations which ruin and date so much literature.

In spite of Gide's encouragement to squash "bien des scrupules et des timidités" (152), Martin du Gard feels some hesitation in offering advice to the elder man but is, much to Gide's content, incapable of not speaking his mind. He protests that he has never, as Gide seems to think, condemned lack of production. The artist's involvement in life is, on the contrary, of supreme importance since:

...un livre, comme nous l'entendons, doit exprimer toute une période de la vie de son auteur; il doit avoir la couleur de cette période; et ce n'est qu'après avoir évolué et changé de couleur, que l'on sent à nouveau le besoin de dire ces choses nouvelles (M.G.1, 22nd July 1920, 153).

What Martin du Gard wishes from Gide is his abandonment of the limitations of his former successive, fragmentary and voluntarily restricted

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1. On the 9th July 1919, Gide informs Maria Van Rysselberghe that he has begun the Faux-Monnayeurs. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, p. 28.
 2. André Gide, Corrèa, Paris, 1931, p. 126.
 3. This letter has been prompted by a conversation in which he fears he has not been sufficiently clear.

works. In these, he writes, Gide has described with consummate art and unsurpassable depth "un petit coin de vie" (153). But, Martin du Gard complains, none of these works has come to grips with life itself in all its richness, magnificence and complexity. In fine, these works, although perfect, are but studies, in Martin du Gard's opinion.

Moreover, despite the variety and excellence of Gide's books, Martin du Gard says that he has come to realise more and more that Gide's character and life are infinitely richer than his work. Gide is approaching maturity but has not yet written "l'oeuvre large et panoramique" (M.G.1, 22nd July 1920, 153) that Martin du Gard expects from him. Here, the latter seems to be suggesting that Gide has achieved all the fullness and complexity necessary for such a work.

Martin du Gard believes that Gide has perhaps been unable, hitherto, to pour all his resources into one work because of a mistaken attitude towards his own methodology: the weakness of the endings of Gide's works has perhaps persuaded him that a longer work would be impossible for him. Gide's impatience with his works and his desire to resume life are, in Martin du Gard's opinion, symptomatic of the fact that each was "un fragment de la grande envie qui vous sollicite" (M.G.1, 154). Were Gide to include all his preoccupations in one book, Martin du Gard suggests, he would no longer feel limited and frustrated; on the contrary, he would experience "une impression de rebondissement successif, et un entrain sans cesse renouvelé" (154). Martin du Gard gives Dostoevsky's Idiot as an example to Gide. Out of this novel he is sure that Gide would have made several. Dostoevsky's strength lies in "l'enchevêtrement hardi de tous ses sujets divers" (M.G.1, 155).

Martin du Gard's advice is all the more interesting when compared to Gide's own choice of Tolstoy as an example. Martin du Gard's own preferences go to Tolstoy and Gide's to Dostoevsky. Possibly belated

proof of the help Martin du Gard has given Gide¹ is to be found in Gide's Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs:

Je reprocherais à Martin du Gard l'allure discursive de son récit; se promenant ainsi tout le long des années, sa lanterne de romancier éclaire toujours de face les événements qu'il considère, chacun de ceux-ci vient à son tour au premier plan; jamais leurs lignes ne se mêlent et, pas plus qu'il n'y a d'ombre, il n'y a de perspective. C'est déjà ce qui me gêne dans Tolstoï.²

In Contrast to Tolstoy, Gide adds a footnote:

Dickens et Dostoïewski sont de grands maîtres en cela. La lumière qui éclaire leurs personnages n'est presque jamais diffuse. Dans Tolstoï, les scènes les mieux venues paraissent grises parce qu'elles sont également éclairées de partout. Intérêt successif.³

Thus Gide transcribes his realisation that Tolstoy's and Martin du Gard's literary techniques are not for him without, forasmuch, indicating his original interest in them. This is but one of Gide's eventual reserves as to Martin du Gard's advice. Nonetheless, the importance of the latter's opinion is to be seen when Gide writes to him:

Je suis un très mauvais correspondant, mais je sens que c'est un peu à vous que je m'adresse, en écrivant mon livre et que c'est ma vraie façon de vous écrire...Je voudrais obtenir de moi de ne concéder rien à la mode, à l'usage, ni surtout à la virtuosité (M.G.1, 12th September 1922, 191).

Here, Gide shows his desire to remain true to the concept of objectivity which enabled Martin du Gard to criticise the second part of Gide's Symphonie pastorale with its author's full approval. Life itself and not simply artistic considerations are to govern Gide. Thus, despite the fact that Gide's techniques will differ from those of Martin du Gard's, he shares his friend's fundamental expectations for Les Faux-Monnayeurs.

The publication of Corydon⁴ turns Martin du Gard's attention momentarily away from Gide's novel. For the first time, Martin du Gard makes

1. G./M.G. Corr.1, 10th August 1920, p. 156: "Vous ne pouvez savoir de quel secours m'a été votre lettre..."

2. J.F.M. pp. 29-30.

3. J.F.M. p. 30. It is also interesting to note that Gide mentions re-reading The Idiot in his entry of the 28th November 1921, p. 55.

4. A limited number of copies were published in Bruges in 1920.

no attempt to apologise for his freeness of speech which he now looks upon as being accepted with entire good grace by Gide. The two interlocutors of Corydon irritate Martin du Gard intensely. In his opinion, the subject of Corydon is one close to Gide's heart but, paradoxically, Gide uses the most impersonal tone to write of it. Indeed, he feels Gide almost seems to reprove what he is seeking to defend.

Martin du Gard believes that Corydon should have depicted "la passion avec une telle sincérité, un tel accent de vérité, une si exacte chaleur, qu'elle s'impose comme une réalité" (M.G.1, 7th October 1920, 157). In Martin du Gard's eyes, defence and explanation make homosexuality seem a personal, ephemeral problem. He believes that only through the beauty and truth of a moving work of art may pederasty be shown to be a part of reality with its own complexity and contradictions. Gide's attempt to legitimise homosexual desire has failed because of "Trop d'intentions" (M.G.1, 157). Gide has been wrong, he insists, to bow to false, lifeless objectivity where "la chaleur et l'abandon total à votre sincérité" (M.G.1, 157) should have been the means of achieving "un miracle de vie" (M.G.1, 157).

Gide makes no direct reply to Martin du Gard, reserving the right to self-defence for a conversation.¹ It is not unlikely, however, that he explained himself in terms similar to those of his Feuillets, where he states his belief that the impersonal tone of Corydon is necessary to underline the generality of the problem raised. Corydon is no personal vindication.² As such, Gide himself shares Martin du Gard's doubts about the boldness of his work.³ One wonders if Martin du Gard's comments were not responsible for Gide's using aesthetic persuasion to greater

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, October 1920, p. 159.

2. The influence of Gide's own liaison with Marc Allegret was, however, an important factor in his need to write such a work.

3. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 29th October - 4th November 1918, and 21st April 1919, pp. 7-8 and 17, where Gide's comments on this work.

effect, in Si le Grain ne meurt¹ to demonstrate the beauty of homosexual desire as opposed to the mundanity of its heterosexual counterpart.

It is interesting that, while Martin du Gard, in his own work, is not averse to dialogue between opposing parties, he should advise Gide against this. One is reminded of the Martin du Gard who advocates Dostoievsky as a guide to Gide, the novelist, thus proving that the advice he gives is always shaped by his knowledge of Gide and not simply by his own convictions.

This is again shown to be the case when Martin du Gard continues by criticising Si le Grain ne meurt. In spite of his own dislike of self-expression in his works, Martin du Gard reproaches Gide with having shown the reader only what he might have guessed anyway. While this, in Martin du Gard's opinion, is one of the best and most beautiful things Gide has written, beauty alone is not enough since: "Vous êtes là au coeur même du Sujet; le seul, l'unique: vous. Il faut que le génie s'y épuise en totalité" (M.G.1, 7th October 1920, 158). Gide has succumbed to the charm of his own memories which has produced "cette belle coulée de miel" rather than "une image d'une inoubliable vérité" (158).

Martin du Gard would like Gide to change his work and open "la porte secrète...et...nous y conduire avec vous, dans un flot de lumière" (158).² Martin du Gard's view of Gide's "lighting" techniques is thus similar to that of Henri Rimbaud who believes that Gide is "un maître du clair-obscur" because:

...le plein jour de l'aveu peut ne pas être une moins "spécieuse ceinture" que la clarté du style. Un homme qui dit tant, on se persuade presque inévitablement qu'il dit tout. Comme il n'y a rien de tel que de s'avancer un masque à la main pour donner à croire qu'on se présente le visage nu; cependant, réfléchissez, la conséquence n'est pas nécessaire; car on peut avoir

1. J.2, SI, pp. 561 and 578.

2. Such advice is to be contrasted to Valéry's warning of the risks of self-confession. See: above, Chapter II, p. 141.

deux masques, et, davantage, et, il se pourrait que celui qu'on exhibe si candidement ait tout juste pour fonction d'empêcher qu'on se demande si notre visage n'en porterait pas un second.¹

To some extent this opinion is justified since Gide's openness hid much that he did not tell.

Nonetheless, I feel one must view the problem of the "clair-obscur" less as a personal safeguard than as a literary technique. The "clair-obscur" does not just concern what Gide said but the way in which he presented his literary material.

Gide's later reproaches against both Tolstoy and Martin du Gard in his Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs² are to be remembered here. Without shadow there can be no perspective. The amount of light is not all-important to Gide. Rather, one must study the point from which the light flows; all shadows depend upon this and all figures upon their shadow. This implies that whatever reality Gide shows will be highly personalised and quite dependent upon his characters and their ideas; hence the importance of knowing from what angle the scene depicted is being studied; and hence the importance of contrast to form a complete picture. Gide's light is deliberately not impartial, so that the reader is not forced into passivity by the very clarity of the "flot de lumière" Martin du Gard projects onto his literary creation. Unfortunately, Gide does not take full advantage of this opportunity for discussion but he does promise to add certain things to his work, which he will write with "une impudeur dont vous porterez la responsabilité" (M.C.1, October 1920, 159). Gide's use of the word "impudeur" shows that he has accepted Martin du Gard's advice only insofar as it finds an echo in his own thought. The full implications of Martin du Gard's recommendations do not elicit a response from Gide. Simply he has extracted what may encourage him to follow an

1. Entretiens, "André Gide et l'Art du clair-obscur", p. 273.

2. J.F.M., pp. 29-30.

inclination which is his own and to which he has not given full play in Corydon.

Martin du Gard comes back to the subject of the Faux-Monnayeurs only after a complete re-reading of Gide's works. For him, the Nourritures is a work apart as "C'est là que votre odeur reste la plus pénétrante" (M.G.1, 17th July 1921, 167). Gide's récits, on the other hand, while often excellent and always instructive, are noticeable, Martin du Gard feels, more for the prodigious skill of their "fabrication". Like Baudelaire, Martin du Gard comments, Gide understands art as artifice.

This fact has aroused Martin du Gard's anxiety for the progression of the Faux-Monnayeurs. He bids Gide not to hide behind the example of Dostoïevsky's literary procedure since, with the Russian writer,:

Les prodigieuses habiletés...semblent toujours spontanées: c'est à son insu, semble-t-il, que son génie combine ses savants détours, ces déroutants renversements. Sa volonté semble hors du jeu.

(M.G.1, 167).

Gide, Martin du Gard feels, is all too conscious of his own skill and derives immense satisfaction and amusement from his "fabrication". As Martin du Gard points out, the truly great author gives his reader no opportunity to see just how he has pulled the strings. In fact, Gide himself would be the first to agree with this and considered that both Martin du Gard, himself, and Simenon fulfilled this condition.¹

For Martin du Gard, Gide's best pages are those where his sensitivity takes control over his intelligence and where his aim is no longer to astonish his reader by his virtuosity. A few pages are not, however, enough for Martin du Gard who explodes:

1. Divers, Gallimard, 1931, p. 199, where Gide comments on Martin du Gard's writing: "Il n'y a là ni raffinements psychologiques, ni recherches de style...et la grand force de l'auteur lui permet de se passer de tout cela. Je ne connais pas d'écriture plus neutre, et qui se laisse plus complètement oublier". Francis Lacassin and Gilbert Sigaux, Simenon, Plon, 1973, letter of the 6th January 1939 from Gide to Simenon, p. 394: "A vrai dire je ne comprends pas bien comment vous concevez, composez, écrivez vos livres. Il y a là, pour moi, un mystère qui m'intéresse particulièrement".

N'écrivez-vous donc jamais ce livre-là?... Quel démon critique vous retient toujours, à califourchon sur les vanes de l'écluse, et qui s'amuse à doser avec une science espiègle les échappements de l'eau? Laissez ce jeu à ceux qui n'ont qu'un filet d'eau à diriger, et qui doivent, à force d'artifice, donner à leur ruissellet l'apparence, l'intérêt, d'une rivière. Mais vous! (M.G.I, 17th July 1921, 168).

Martin du Gard's anger is perhaps excessive but, nonetheless, pertinent.

Writing of the Caves du Vatican, François-Paul Alibert reached the more general conclusion:

Toute oeuvre d'art bien entendue n'est, ou ne devrait être qu'un jeu. C'est bon pour les fanatiques de la délectation morose comme Flaubert, de croire le contraire et de s'y exténuer, au nom de je ne sais quel sérieux dont ils meurent. Tout, même le tragique n'est qu'un jeu...²

The notion of "play" is a part and parcel of Gide's life and, hence, cannot be excluded from his art. This, admittedly, may disconcert the reader but, as Christopher Bettinson points out in his book on the Caves du Vatican,³ this is quite deliberate and profoundly motivated by the very theme of Gide's work, - that of relativity. Obviously, however, in any game, one may get carried away by the fun of the moment and forget the true aim. This is artistic temptation and Martin du Gard is right to warn Gide against it.⁴

A comparison may be drawn between Martin du Gard's reproaches and those of Gide's Catholic correspondents. While Jammes criticises the basis of Gide's thought, however, Martin du Gard attacks its influence on the form of his work. Both Jammes and the atheist Martin du Gard share a common desire to see Gide write a culminating work; but the former wishes for fixity and limitation in works which would serve a cause and the latter for all-inclusiveness in works of which the only aim would be

1. En Marge d'André Gide, Les Oeuvres Représentatives, Paris 1930, p. 71.

2. (Studies in French Literature 20, Gide: Les Caves du Vatican), Edward Arnold 1972, pp. 25-28.

3. See: G./Chéon Corr. 1, 27th September 1901, p. 363: "J'ai de plus en plus peur de donner dans le roman satirique, dans le 'castigat ridendo'. Le comique, le ridicule, l'illogique de l'existence des autres et de la mienne m'excitent chaque fois d'une manière plus déman-gante...L'empirisme est pourtant bien contraire à nos belles théories!"

4. G./J. Corr., 10th June 1902, p. 192.

to resemble life and humanity as closely as possible.

Gide is delighted at being thus spurred on by Martin du Gard. With unacceptable modesty, he claims that Martin du Gard is mistaken in over-emphasising his "habileté". However, he agrees that: "...une ingéniosité est presque toujours une petitesse (le camouflage d')" (M.G.1, 19th July 1921, 169). In theory, Gide wishes his "habileté" to exist only when justified by the very subject of his work.¹ Martin du Gard is to help him make this voluntary restriction. Gide ends his letter almost impatiently: "Mais si! Mais si! c'est ce livre-là que je veux écrire" (M.G.1.).

Martin du Gard resumes his attacks after hearing the first forty pages of the Faux-Monnayeurs.² He is struck by the superior quality of the dialogue and reiterates his idea that: "...un roman en scènes...un film dialogué" (M.G.1, 16th December 1921, 177) might be the best form for this work. Interestingly, while Martin du Gard condemns dialogue in Corydon, he now advocates it for the Faux-Monnayeurs, perhaps because the latter is a living work and has none of the artificiality of an apologia for homosexuality. With his Faux-Monnayeurs Gide's work has taken an extraordinary new turning in Martin du Gard's opinion. Therefore, dialogue form might help to keep Gide "en pleine création directe" (M.G.1, 16th December 1921, 177) and prevent him from falling back on "les subtilités littéraires" which, Martin du Gard adds ironically and rather unfairly, "tout un glorieux passe vous pousse à introduire dans votre nouveau livre" (M.G.1, 177).

Martin du Gard is right in his assumption that Gide's former creations have not directly captured life's richness. Gide himself was quite conscious of this. However, Martin du Gard does not take

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1. Gide's desire to avoid gratuitous ingeniousness is parallel to his concern with stylistic motivation. See: M.V.R, Cahiers 4, 16th April 1921, p. 75, where Gide condemns Gautier thus: "Chez lui, le mot toujours remplace la vie".
 2. In Paris. G/M.G. Corr., 10th and 16th December 1921, pp. 176-177, and Annex, p. 660.

into account here the fact that all Gide's literary skill was used in his récits towards infusing intensely living qualities into the human problems represented by his characters. Gide's "literary subtleties" are not as gratuitous nor as opposed to life as Martin du Gard thinks.

Nonetheless, it is noticeable that, while Gide uses dialogue form in Corydon and his Interviews imaginaires, he never entirely abandons narrative in his fictional works even as dialogue increases in importance. To this extent, Gide controls his subject-matter more obviously than Martin du Gard and this is why the latter fears that Gide's "creation" in the Faux-Monnayeurs will not be "direct".

Gide is also warned by his friend against including in this promising work any superfluous subjects of personal scandal.¹ Gide's attributing obvious homosexual desires to Edouard causes Martin du Gard to wonder if : "...ce n'est pas un moyen, dont l'emploi est plein de danger, de réintroduire le 'subjectif' dans une oeuvre qui s'en passerait fort bien " (M.G.1, 16th December 1921, 178). Martin du Gard would prefer greater ambiguity which would produce the same astonishing "clairs-obscur" (M.G.1, 16th December 1921, 178) as are to be found in Dostoïevsky's literature. Martin du Gard concludes by deploring the fact that, although Gide possesses all the elements to make a masterpiece:

...une certaine disposition tortue de son cerveau l'incite sans cesse à couper net le mouvement, pour l'introduction parasite de suppléments 'curieux', auxquels on ne pourra prendre qu'un plaisir passager et cérébral! (M.G.1, 178).

This is precisely what will date Gide's work but, Martin du Gard adds, he doubts whether Gide is capable of abandoning these stylistic and contextual peculiarities.

Once again Martin du Gard has come back to the subject of objectivity.

1. This is, of course, a reference to the parallel that may be drawn between Gide's relations with Marc Allégret and those of Edouard with Olivier.

His advice to Gide to mix rather than separate the elements in his possession complements his belief that life is richly complex and that its literary representation must be so too. Gide is in danger, Martin du Gard writes, of falling into the trap of exploring the individual case, of projecting too much light on what is "'subjectif'" with the result that his work may not flow longitudinally.

Unfortunately, Gide makes no written reply to this letter. By turning to his Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, however, one gains some idea of his views on this topic. He has no wish to make a "panorama"¹ of his work but a picture. His ideas upon the distribution of light in his work seem exactly those of Martin du Gard, who has understood Gide well enough to realise that his gifts are not those of a Tolstoy. Gide is for both clarity and obscurity. However, Martin du Gard is advocating, as ever, the mingling of the two. His very transcription, "clairs-obscur", shows this. Such a presentation is analagous to the conflicting evidence life itself often presents. Gide, on his own admission, is more interested in the starting-point of light and the shadows produced than by the actual light projected.² This means that Gide's "clairs" are not an off-set to his "obscur" but have a spot-light effect. Gide's reader is a participant because Gide presents not evidence but a problem: given that light comes from point X and shines upon point Y, what is contained in the obscurity which surrounds Y?

The fact that Gide attaches importance to the source of light suggests that he is more partisan, more subjective than Martin du Gard whose fears as to Gide's "inutile témérité" (M.G.1, 16th December 1921, 177) are not unjustified. The fact that Gide is more than ready to brave

1. J.F.M. p. 30.

2. J.F.M. p. 30, "Etudier - ombre".

scandal is shown by his disappointment at the calmness with which the stage-production of Saül is received.¹ There has been no hostility, no indignation, merely a refusal to recognise that King Saul's desire is homosexual and, to Gide, this is failure.

Thus, Gide seems to be unable, as Martin du Gard suspects, to banish highly individual subjects from his work. Nonetheless, he shares his friend's wish that his be no ephemeral success.² Gide's anxiety to write a work which will last by achieving more than hollow perfection or passing significance is echoed by earlier fears that he is destined to be a theorist. When asked on the same occasion which novelist he would like to be, Gide replied without hesitation "Dostoïevski".³ Although, in his correspondence with Martin du Gard, Gide does not mention such an aspiration⁴ in connexion with the Faux-Monnayeurs, it is obvious that, like his friend, he desires his novel to emulate life and not just "un coin de vie" with all the restrictions this entails.

Although the two writers become immersed in their work to the detriment of epistolary discussion,⁵ the Faux-Monnayeurs is never far from their minds.⁶

A stay made by Martin du Gard at Cuverville leaves him with the admiring sensation that, the in the Faux-Monnayeurs, Gide has at last managed to join his extremes, since in Edouard there is a little of Paludes and in Bernard one sees Lafcadio.⁷ In spite of such justified

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 21st June 1922, pp. 182-184.

2. Ibid, 12th September 1922, p. 191, "Je - virtuosité..."

3. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 7th June-20th July 1919,

4. See: G./M.G. Corr. 1, 7th October 1922, p. 193, where Gide even admits that, despite his waning enthusiasm for War and Peace, it is this work, if any, which he would like as a model for his novel.

5. Meetings also account for this.

6. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 18th July 1922, p. 187; 22nd July 1922, p. 187; 12th September 1922, p. 191; 7th October 1922, p. 193; 14th December 1922, p. 201; 26th December 1922, p. 204.

7. The original Bernard in the Faux-Monnayeurs was, in fact, Lafcadio.

praise, Gide continues to experience great difficulty in working.¹

It is in Annecy that Gide reverts to the conception of his novel. George Eliot's Middlemarch seems to have chased away Gide's lack of fervour² by raising the question of "le rôle du choeur, id est: les réflexions de l'auteur" (M.G.1, 25th February 1923, 211). Gide feels this is missing not only from his own work but also from Martin du Gard's Thibault.

Martin du Gard remains sceptical as to the results to be obtained for his own work since, outwith scenes and direct dialogue, he feels incompetent. Nor, he adds, has Gide anything to gain from such a procedure since the best parts of the Caves were those where the author's presence was not felt.

Whether one agrees with this judgement or not, the passages in the Caves, where Gide intervenes directly, appear less natural than those in the Faux-Monnayeurs. This seems to me to be due to what Christopher Bettinson calls Gide's "paradoxical attitude towards his characters - libertarian and totalitarian at the same time".³ Bettinson lays this down to the fact that Gide, "Having abandoned a central plot and a unilinear concept of time, ...must demonstrate his ability to control but not stifle the contradictory movements of reality. The balance of these forces is possible only in the work of art".⁴ As Bettinson points out, this balance is destroyed in the theatrical version of the Caves. Without the author's intervention, the Caves becomes a farce. Martin du Gard is thus not entirely correct when he tells Gide that his desire to intervene is a purely artistic preoccupation.⁵ Nonetheless, one cannot blame him completely for fearing that Gide's plans for his Faux-Monnayeurs may mean a return to "virtuosité" at the expense of more

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 1st February 1923, p. 207.

2. See: M.V.R. Cahiers 4, 21st October 1922, p. 158, where Madame Van Rysselberghe writes of the role of Gide's reading: "A travers tout ce que dit Gide, quel que soit l'auteur dont il parle, on sent qu'il pense à son roman, pour le comparer, pour l'opposer".

3. Gide: Les Caves du Vatican, Studies in French Literature 20, Edward Arnold 1972, p. 30.

4. Ibid, pp. 30-31.

5. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 1st March 1923, p. 213.

objective writing.

Martin du Gard's advice on the intervention of the author and his fears for a precipitous ending to Gide's work¹ cause Gide momentary hesitation. He admits that he may resume work on the Faux-Monnayeurs only after a conversation with Martin du Gard. Whatever the contents of this conversation were, Gide finally ignores Martin du Gard's advice on both counts and one is reminded of Gide's comment: "Les vraies influences sur moi, s'exercent par réaction" (M.G.1, 22nd March 1931, 467). One's only regret is that, as so often, Gide confines merely his final decision to writing² and not the discussion prior to his reaching it.

Gide's Dostoïevski replaces the Faux-Monnayeurs in an important letter from Martin du Gard. While reproaching Gide with having left his work in the incoherent state of his lecture on Dostoïevsky,³ Martin du Gard adds: "Mais c'est un voyage de cimes et on en revient étourdi et vivifié" (M.G.1, 22nd July 1923, p. 223). In his opinion, the reader will wrongly seek an explanation of all Gide's work in this book, whereas it explains only a part of Gide's work as always. Martin du Gard continues:

Permettez-moi de vous dire, sans grossièreté, que vous êtes comme la lune... De quelque façon qu'on s'y prenne, on n'en voit jamais qu'un morceau, et le plus que l'on puisse embrasser d'un même coup d'oeil n'est jamais que la moitié de Gide, dont les deux pôles ne se trouvent jamais éclairés en même temps (M.G.1, 22nd July 1923, 224).

One senses in the homogeneous Martin du Gard's perplexity the very reason for his attraction towards Gide. Unlike Claudel, Martin du Gard admits the influence of Gide; unlike Valéry, he does not conceive within the pure vacuum of monologue. Therefore, as much as Gide, Martin du Gard is attracted to what differs from him. His efforts to influence Gide depend on both his own personality and his knowledge of Gide's own

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 20th April 1923, p. 217.

2. J.F.M., 8th March 1925, pp. 83-84.

3. These lectures were given at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier in 1922 and appeared in the Révue hebdomadaire. Gide himself explains that he has deliberately left his lectures unchanged. Dostoïevski, p. 75.

character and artistic needs; hence, dialogue with Martin du Gard is truly valuable to Gide.

This is to be seen when Gide writes to his friend:

Et puis je ne suis pas toujours sûr que ce que j'écris vous plaise, et je m'aperçois que je tiens énormément à vous. Je me souviens de ce que vous me disiez au sujet de l'illusion créée et des reproches que vous me faisiez d'y nuire en laissant parfois paraître l'auteur... Je m'expliquerai là-dessus dans la préface que l'on m'a demandée pour Tom Jones, et que je veux considérable (M.G.1, End of July 1923, 227). -228

While Gide may not be expansive in his letters, Martin du Gard's remarks are an incitement to dialogue through his work. In fact, the projected translation of Tom Jones does not come about and Gide is left only with the feeling already aroused by Middlemarch, that his work is seriously lacking.¹ Martin du Gard is not of the same opinion: Gide possesses all the necessary elements to write his work, except patience and the ability to sit down and work hard.²

In spite of Gide's total agreement with this scolding,³ it is not until the following year that Martin du Gard has the opportunity of pronouncing his opinion on "mes Faux-Monnayeurs". (M.G.1, 8th March 1925, 258). Not surprisingly, his views are "excessifs et contradictoires" (M.G.1, 258). Contrary to Gide's Dostoïevski, the printed text of the Faux-Monnayeurs has left him with an entirely different impression to that produced by Gide's readings. In its written form, the work takes on "une autorité, une sûreté d'intentions, une richesse de nuances" (M.G.1, 258). Martin du Gard now admits that Gide was right to intervene in his novel. Gide's comments have "un caractère fantastique - Massis dirait diabolique - très impressionnant et d'une inégalable saveur" (M.G.1, 258).

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1. G./M.G. Corr.1, February 1924, p. 239. For Gide's "Notes pour une préface au Tom Jones de Fielding", See: O.C., vol. 13, Gallimard, 1937, pp. 412-416. Gide does not mention the question of the author's intervention in these notes.
 2. Ibid, 17th February 1924, p. 241.
 3. Ibid, 19th February 1924, p. 243.

It is also the case that the author's comments in the Faux-Monnayeurs have a less irritating quality than those in the Caves. The latter tended to emphasize the author's control whereas the former give greater reality and autonomy to Gide's characters. To this extent, life has precedence over artistic considerations in his novel, thus showing that Gide has reflected upon his friend's advice.¹

Gide has accomplished a great work which is nonetheless opposed to all that Martin du Gard believes in. Martin du Gard's wonderment at this feat is, in inverse form, comparable to that of Gide when he says of Bennett, whom he likens to Martin du Gard,²:

...il est pour moi l'exemple curieux d'un auteur qui a fait ce que je suis bien près d'appeler un chef-d'oeuvre, Old Wives' Tale, sans génie, à force de patience, d'observation et d'humanité.³

Gide is greatly encouraged by Martin du Gard's comments, his only fear being that the next chapters of his work will not meet with his friend's approval, which, he confesses, is so necessary to give him a true idea of the worth of his work.⁴ Gide's fears are not unjustified since he is determined to finish his work before leaving for the Congo.⁵ This arouses Martin du Gard's vigilant anxiety in case Gide should consent to concessions in order to achieve this aim.⁶

More important to Martin du Gard at this stage, however is the question of luminosity, which has already been raised between the two friends. He therefore tells Gide that his scenes are almost all unilateral since, in each, only one person, "le monologueur" (M.G.1, 7th June 1925, 266), is important, the other characters being obscured. Even if Gide has done this on purpose, Martin du Gard warns him that it is a

1. See: above, pp. 245-246.

2. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 19th August 1921, p. 98: "C'est la même passion aiguë de la vie, la même patience, la même absence d'art".

3. Ibid, 10th - 19th June 1921, p. 85.

4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, March 1925, p. 258.

5. Ibid, 3rd June 1925, p. 263.

6. Ibid, 7th June 1925, p. 266.

mistake.

Martin du Gard's comment on Gide's procedure is applicable to the first stages of Gide's novel, when the reader becomes acquainted with each of the characters at a critical moment in their life. Undoubtedly, this is on purpose, since the mingling of Gide's characters is brought about by life itself or by their entry into life. Only then do the separate threads entwine in a movement which is seen to be logical at the end of Gide's novel. For the author of Les Thibault, this can but be a mistake. Even when he concentrates on Jacques, it is never to the detriment of Jacques' political comrades or of Jenny or of Antoine. Martin du Gard allows himself to isolate his characters only when they are face to face with death.

The fact that Gide has done so from the beginning and a "manque d'aisance" (M.G.1, 7th June 1925, 266) in some scenes is due simply to lack of work, Martin du Gard feels. In a well-written scene, he insists, no one character should capture all the author's attention but:

...il faut alors tourner son projecteur sur un second personnage, et refaire le même travail; puis sur un troisième; et puis fondre le tout en polissant et en repolissant pour qu'on ne voie pas l'ajustage; quand le premier jet est bien venu, qu'il a son mouvement, ce mouvement subsiste sous toutes ces retouches (M.G.1, 267).

Never more clearly has Martin du Gard advocated the "lumière...diffuse"¹ which Gide has long since rejected.

In spite of his understanding that Dostoïevsky and not Tolstoy should be a model for Gide, Martin du Gard is here arguing the case for what Gide himself condemns in Tolstoy. Nonetheless, Martin du Gard's regret that Gide's scenes are unilateral rather than comparable to "l'Hydre de Lerne" (M.G.1, 267) is quite in keeping with his former championing of Dostoïevsky. In the latter's works, Martin du Gard sees the living

1. J.F.M., Note 2, p. 30.

complexity necessary to artistic objectivity; Gide, however, has now chosen to admire the Russian writer's concentration on the individual case. In other words, both Gide and Martin du Gard tend to attribute to Dostoevsky a part of their own preoccupations. Gide's desire to emulate Tolstoy, on the other hand, comes from his consciousness of the difficulty of such a task for him. Indeed, Martin du Gard's criticisms seem to show that, on the whole, Gide has failed to abstract from either writer qualities other than those he possessed already.

Sure that his work has reached completion, Gide does not discuss this point in his next letter but does promise to review his work. He has come to the end of the Faux-Monnayeurs quite naturally. The laconic dismissal, in the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, of Martin du Gard's advice to prolong his novel indefinitely, is now replaced by the firm conviction that Boris' suicide is the culminating point of his work. Determined, at first, as Martin du Gard had advised, to note down a conclusion which would be finished after his return from Africa, Gide has been surprised by the ease with which he has written. Words have come from his pen, he writes, "comme un fruit mûr depuis longtemps, prêt à être cueilli" (M.G.1, 9th June 1925, 269).

Thus, although Gide admits to taking into account all Martin du Gard's remarks,¹ he has been unable or unwilling to follow Martin du Gard's recommendations for major changes in his artistic procedure. Hence, Martin du Gard may well feel "une âpre et rancunière fureur" (M.G.1, 10th October 1925, 274) but, at the same time, because of Gide's own genius, "un grand et joyeux orgueil" (M.G.1, 274).

For once, Gide's conclusion meets with Martin du Gard's judicious

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 8th July 1925, p. 271. With the exception of the scene with the Angel, in Chapter 13, Les Faux-Monnayeurs.

approval because, as he writes to Gide, he realises the voluntary nature of this abrupt ending which is, indeed, in Martin du Gard's opinion, suitable to the Faux-Monnayeurs and not, as so often, due to insufficient planning or enthusiasm. The third, and to Martin du Gard's mind, the best part of Gide's work has left him "dans un état d'admiration reconnaissante, tout fondu de satisfaction!" (M.G.I, 10th October 1925, 274). While making no mention of either Tolstoy or Dostoievsky, Martin du Gard likens Gide's Faux-Monnayeurs to "un de ces livres compacts et pleins comme les romans étrangers" (M.G.I, 274-275).

Perhaps of the most importance to Martin du Gard, however, is the query raised in his mind by the Faux-Monnayeurs: Has Gide achieved the objective work intended? Martin du Gard points out that, to the reader, the best parts of the Faux-Monnayeurs will be those contained in Edouard's diary, this being the very part of Gide's work which is most distant from objectivity.¹ Martin du Gard believes that while Gide, at the outset, wished to write an objective novel, his role in the Faux-Monnayeurs has become increasingly great with the result that:

...un élément subjectif, un élément 'Gide d'autrefois' est venu, insensiblement, s'ajouter au livre commencé; il y a pris de plus en plus de place; on vous y sent infiniment plus à l'aise qu'ailleurs, et infiniment plus irremplaçable; ce qui permet de dire que l'extraordinaire réussite des chapitres objectifs, et notamment de toute la troisième partie, qui est vraiment excellente, c'est un peu un tour de force, c'est un admirable renouvellement volontaire, un très beau geste ... parfaitement légitime et probant (M.G.I, 276).

Thus, Martin du Gard doubts whether the Faux-Monnayeurs provide a new artistic orientation for Gide's genius and whether he should continue in his efforts to attain objectivity.

Martin du Gard's query is pertinent. I feel, however, that he

1. This is also the point of view of Charles Du Bos who writes of Gide in his Dialogue avec André Gide, Au Sans Pareil, Paris, 1929, pp. 174-175: "Tout le ramène à Edouard... En un roman Gide donne sa vie dans l'acception la plus littérale et aussi la plus pathétique du terme, mais il ne peut donner qu'elle: il ne peut pas donner la vie".

attaches too much importance to Edouard's diary as "un élément subjectif" and not enough to the development of the novel itself. The ideas inherent to Gide's work appear firstly through his characters, through their attitudes to life. These, as much as life itself, are responsible for bringing the characters together. Had Bernard, for example, not decided to assume his role of bastard, he would never have become Edouard's secretary.

Initially, life and its events appear in the wings revealing themselves fully only in the third, objectively-narrated part of Gide's novel. At this point one sees that events, and not just ideas, have been responsible for drawing the characters into a composite framework. One must not, however, forget that life is also responsible for the separation of the characters, for projecting them outwith the bonds of the novel, be it to darkest Africa, as was Vincent's case, or back to his adoptive family, as was the case of Bernard. The artistic message of the Faux-Monnayeurs seems, therefore, to be that one must make a compromise, in any literary creation, since life escapes the limits of art and art, or one's own vision of life, cannot, with impunity, ignore life itself. Thus, Martin du Gard has rightly, but for the wrong reason, deduced that Gide is not made to be a completely objective writer.¹

By taking Martin du Gard's remarks on Edouard in perhaps too literal a way, Gide seems to misinterpret their implications for his attempt as an objective novelist. With hasty ambiguity, Gide denies the subjectivity of Edouard's or Alissa's journals, only to go on:

Mais ces pages intimes je ne les peux écrire en mon nom propre...Et tout ce que j'y écris traduit exactement ma pensée. (Je vous ai dit parfois que je n'ai plus de pensée personnelle) (M.G.I, 29th December 1925, 280).

1. Gide himself later criticises his novel for being "dur à mastiquer.. trop constamment intelligent...factice", but he does not entirely regret this. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 10th September 1936, p. 557.

Gide then explains that he needs his characters to speak for him, but only because they may go further than he himself and because, unhampered as he is by contradictory ideas, they have an eloquence which is far greater than his own. This is why, Gide continues, his friends and even Martin du Gard may make mistakes about "la valeur confidentielle de mes livres" (M.G.1, 29th December 1925, 281).

One has only to turn to Martin du Gard's letters on La Symphonie pastorale¹ Dostoïevski² and to that encouraging Gide to write his Faux-Monnayeurs³ to realise that Martin du Gard has never exaggerated the confidential aspect of Gide's work but is closer to Gide's opinion than the latter realises. Indeed, Martin du Gard's reproaches are not simplistically levelled against too direct a use of the author's life in his novel but rather against the fact that the umbilical cord joining the fictional character to his author has not been severed as in the first part of La Symphonie pastorale. Gide's reply tends to prove rather than dispute this fact and seems to justify Martin du Gard in his belief that there has been a constant "redressement" (M.G.1, 10th October 1925, 276) in the Faux-Monnayeurs leading from objectivity to subjectivity.

Unconsciously, perhaps, Gide goes on to reply to Martin du Gard's earlier reproaches against the unilateral aspect of his scenes caused by too great a concentration on one character. Edouard is never Gide because of the slight "biais" (M.G.1, 281) in everything he thinks and, Gide continues:

...je dirai même que l'indice de réfraction m'importe plus que la chose réfractée. Et je ne puis imaginer un individu sans biais; mais ce qui me gêne (et me sert) c'est que tour à tour, ou simultanément, je les ai tous (M.G.1, 281).

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1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 28th May 1919, pp. 141-142.
 2. Ibid, 22nd July 1923, pp. 223-225.
 3. Ibid, 22nd July 1920, pp. 153-155.

Therefore, Gide's interest must always be in what is most personal, most individual to his characters and their experiences, even when he raises, through them, general moral problems. This, and his need to separate and explore in depth all the "biais" of which he is composed, explains why Gide prefers a spot-light to Martin du Gard's lantern; why he prefers a work of shadow and perspective to the diffused light of a Tolstoy "panorama"; and why, in spite of, or perhaps because of, Martin du Gard's recommendations, the Faux-Monnayeurs is not completely objective because its strength depends to a large extent on the "biais" of its characters.

After more than a decade of friendship, the two men's correspondence has reflected faithfully the change in their relations. The respect of Martin du Gard for Gide, the older man and established artist, has been swiftly replaced by the frankness of one whose wonderment has in no way diminished but whose "intempérante amitié" (M.G.1, 7th October 1920, 159). and "exigeante admiration" are no longer stifled by reverence. Martin du Gard is aware of Gide's need for him as of his own for Gide. On the other hand, while Gide's initial admiration for Martin du Gard's work remains, his genuine attempts to benefit from qualities so different to his own have ended in reaction. As an objective novel, the Faux-Monnayeurs is only partially a success, since both in its subject-matter and in its literary techniques, it is strongly influenced by the "'Gide d'autrefois'" (M.G.1, 10th October 1925, 276). Gide's letters to Martin du Gard have shown progressively more the need to draw from his "glorieux passé" (M.G.1, 16th December 1921, 177) rather than remain true to his early resolutions for the Faux-Monnayeurs.

Not only does Gide often adopt a position opposed to that of Martin du Gard but also he shows some reticence in confining to paper the reasons

leading to his decision. One may wonder if Gide is truly willing to engage in dialogue.¹ It may perhaps seem that the progress of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard resembles that of the Claudel correspondence as seen by Robert Mallet:

Mais si la seule conscience d'être l'objet d'un assaut lui dicte de se replier sur lui-même, il commence courtoisement par discuter la valeur des moyens mis en oeuvre par l'assaillant, ne pouvant, sous peine de se méestimer lui-même, prendre d'instinct la décision d'un refus que n'aurait pas justifié le raisonnement

(C., Introduction, 33).

Although Gide was, in fact, more open to Claudel's position than Mallet suggests, it is true that Claudel made the first, insistent steps towards Gide, whereas Gide himself first took an interest in Martin du Gard. Therefore, while Martin du Gard never spares Gide, he merits less than Claudel the name of aggressor. The motivating factors of both men's frankness are also different: Claudel attempted to call Gide to Catholicism and Martin du Gard is urging Gide to higher literary aspiration. There can be no doubt that Gide was more attentive to and conscious of his literary needs. Hence, Martin du Gard's unfailing and pertinent interest in Gide's art places him in a favoured position.

Gide's frequent refusal, nonetheless, to follow Martin du Gard's advice is less to be seen as an instinctive movement than to be taken in context with his changing view of dialogue. I have already mentioned in my Introduction² that, as Gide matures, he realises that the discovery of his own position through opposition is far more valuable than the adoption of a great number of points of view. When Gide asks: "Comment prendrais-je bien ma position sans adversaire?"³, he means that without mental

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1. See: J. Pénard, "Aspects d'une amitié: Roger Martin du Gard et André Gide", Revue des Sciences Humaines, January - March 1959, p. 82: "Gide avoue n'avoir écouté les conseils de Martin du Gard que lorsqu'il les sentait aller dans son propre sens". Louis Martin-Chauffier also contests the validity of Gide's search for dialogue in his article, "André Gide, l'Immoraliste exemplaire" in the Figaro littéraire, 18th - 24th August 1969, p. 4.
 2. See: above, pp. 18-19.
 3. Catherine Savage, op. cit., p. 110.

struggle, an opinion is worthless to him. Gide's own thoughts are controlled and tested by opposition just as rigorously as he himself inspects, often by experiencing them, the attitudes and opinions of others. By this process, which was already apparent in the Correspondance with Claudel, Gide achieves not just artistic but intellectual honesty.

Gide's apparent unwillingness to take Martin du Gard's point of view into account may also be explained both by their frequent meetings and by Gide's own admission that the Faux-Monnayeurs is his true way of writing to his friend. The effects of initial dialogue with Martin du Gard are to serve Gide's work rather than his correspondence.¹ One must also remember that Gide's thought-process may be likened to the privacy sought by a dog when worrying over a bone. Martin du Gard's easy expression of his opinions is not always matched by Gide who tends to interiorize dialogue before exteriorizing it now in his work now in his correspondence.

The problem of objectivity and subjectivity as raised in this first stage of the correspondence contains diverse elements which appear contradictory but are, in fact, unified.

Firstly, objectivity is assimilated by Martin du Gard, with Gide's agreement, to life itself which, unlike art/artifice, is richly complex. Because, in Martin du Gard's opinion, Gide himself is richer by far than any of his works prior to the Faux-Monnayeurs, Martin du Gard seems to condone the use of Gide's experience in his artistic works, thereby upsetting a more conventional concept of what constitutes objective art.

Martin du Gard's comments on Corydon, Si le Grain ne meurt and the Symphonie pastorale add further elements to discussion on objectivity. In Corydon, moral considerations have produced artificial objectivity by the presentation of Gide's own ideas in the form of a general debate.

1. This will be seen in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

In La Symphonie pastorale and Si le Grain ne meurt artistic considerations have weighed too strongly.¹ Truth, therefore, has not been attained; in the first case because of Gide's desire to prove and in the second because of his desire for formal, aesthetic perfection. In other words, these three works are no longer directly linked to life.

Be it stylistically, conceptually or in his sometimes active role as narrator, the presence of Gide, the artist, is always felt more strongly in his works than that of the disapproving "gaillard", Martin du Gard. The reason for this lies in Gide's inability or unwillingness to abandon "biais" even in the Faux-Monnayeurs and simply to paint the richness of life itself. This, one feels, is why Martin du Gard moves away from his original belief that Gide's own life may be a source of artistic renewal.

The possibility of change in Gide seems highly limited, therefore, even at this point in their correspondence. Gide's attitude towards his Nourritures terrestres of 1896 has remained basically unchanged:

...la question d'Ethique m'intéresse, me passionne peut-être trop. Je crois très stérilisante la théorie de Flaubert, et déplorable en tant que théorie, ce souci de ne montrer de soi que l'oeuvre et d'artificiellement s'en retirer.²

Gide's attitude towards his artistic production does not, however, justify José Cabanis' view that: "Gide fut un essayiste égaré dans le roman par les encouragements de Martin du Gard".³ Even without Martin du Gard's encouragement Gide would have attempted to write a novel. Moreover, Gide cannot be denied the status of a novelist simply because his Faux-Monnayeurs does not coincide with Martin du Gard's more traditional concept of the novel.

Martin du Gard is the first to realise this. Thus, the clear knowledge of his and Gide's differences has not the same result as in

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1. Martin du Gard feared that this would mar the Faux-Monnayeurs. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 16th December 1921, p. 177.
 2. Letter to Meclislas Golberg published in La Revue sentimentale. No. 11-12, February - March 1896, pp. 108-110. Quoted by Claude Martin, MAG, p. 167.
 3. Revue de Paris, "Une Collaboration littéraire: GIDE - MARTIN DU GARD", June-July 1968, p. 108.

Gide's Correspondences with Claudel and Jammes. Art, the basis of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard is unclouded by religious obligations. Hence, Gide's search for intellectual honesty, through dialogue, will continue. In Martin du Gard, Gide has found the perfect response to new literary curiosity. From a purely literary concept of life, Gide moved to the exploration of the possibilities of his own life. Now, through dialogue with Martin du Gard, Gide has made a laudible attempt to come to closer grips with life itself and objective truth.

The fact that the Faux-Monnayeurs is seen by Martin du Gard as proof that Gide's genius is not made to follow such paths does not bring an end to dialogue. The problem of objectivity and subjectivity, with all its off-shoots is due to flower into a central part of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard. Indeed, the letters exchanged between the two men more than make up for Gide's discouragement because:

Tout ce que j'écrirais pour m'expliquer, me disculper, me défendre, je dois me refuser tout cela. J'imagine souvent telles préfaces...où exposer ce que j'entends par l'objectivité romanesque, où établir deux sortes, ou du moins deux façons de regarder et de peindre la vie qui, dans certains romans...se rejoignent. L'une extérieure et que l'on nomme communément objective, qui voit d'abord le geste d'autrui, l'événement et qui l'interprète. L'autre qui s'attache d'abord aux émotions, aux pensées, et risque de rester impuissante par l'auteur. La richesse de celui-ci, sa complexité, l'antagonisme de ses possibilités trop diverses, permettront la plus grande diversité de ses créations. Mais c'est de lui que tout émane. Il est le seul garant de la vérité qu'il révèle, le seul juge.¹

The principal interest of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard both up to and following the Faux-Monnayeurs lies in the fact that Gide does not just "expose" his ideas on objectivity and subjectivity but is forced, by dialogue, into profound reflexion upon these two artistic possibilities.

2. The Effects of Gide's Journey to the Congo on Dialogue.

On Gide's return from Africa, a change is to be noted in his

1. J.l., 8th February 1927, p. 829.

relations with Martin du Gard. Gide himself feels that his journey has altered him. He confides to Maria Van Nysselberghe:

'C'est curieux, depuis ce voyage, je me sens plus intelligent; il faut vraiment qu'il n'y ait que nous deux pour que je dise cela; intelligent n'est pas le mot, j'attends que vous me le fournissiez.' Je propose: lucide, délibéré. 'Oui, il y a de tout ça et puis, surtout, je remplis mieux mon personnage. Ce n'est pas en vain que pendant un an on représente, on 'joue gouverneur'! Ça ne m'était encore jamais arrivé!' 1

Gide the man seems to have come to terms with his external representation and no longer to be engaged in a feverish, if critical search for a suitable "bear-skin" or attitude. Perhaps because of this, Gide's attitude to his art has undergone change. During Gide's first visit to Pontigny² after his return from Africa, the question of choice and voluntary limitation is raised by Paul Desjardins. With Gide's approval, Ramon Fernandez defines the position of the artist as the necessary acceptance of the co-existence of extremes to enrich literary creation. Outside the realm of art, however, Fernandez condemns this as a way of life. Later Gide comments:

'Fernandez a très justement fait remarquer que cela était favorable au jaillissement artistique; c'est ce que j'exprimais autrefois en écrivant: Moi ça m'est égal, parce que j'écris Paludes. Cette libération égoïste est tout de même intolérable pour une âme bien née et l'on voudrait trouver une consolation pour autrui...L'intérêt en dehors de soi peut vous venir tout naturellement, comme il m'est par exemple venu en Afrique'.³

Gide also admits that his former belief that considerations of good and evil were of no importance has led him to the realisation that: "... Cela peut mener tout droit à la complaisance envers soi-même, et l'abandon de soi n'est pas l'abandon à soi"⁴.

Gide has come far since the Traité du Narcisse. Moral considerations are now no longer just permissible but seem to have taken precedence over

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1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 8th August 1926, p. 258. Neither the Voyage au Congo nor the Retour du Tchad indicate such a change in Gide.
 2. Here took place ten-day discussion periods organised by Paul Desjardins.
 3. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, pp. 284-285.
 4. *Ibid*, p. 285.

purely artistic ones. Gide's own experience has been more successful in persuading Gide of the need for committed art than any of Claudel's or Jammes' exhortations. Humanity and not religion is Gide's choice.

As George Brachfeld points out in his book, Andre Gide and the Communist Temptation,¹ Gide's interest in social and, hence, political events is by no means entirely new:

Before 1894 Gide listed as a means of encouragement to work: "Ne pas faire de politique..." Yet shortly afterwards, in a "Chronique de l'Ermitage" he wrote of Menalque: "Et comme je m'étonnais de l'entendre parler de politique, il ajouta: 'le temps vient où honte à celui qui ne parlera pas de cela'."²

Just as Gide conceived of many of his literary works at an early age but waited for the most suitable moment in which to write them, so he has deferred taking an active interest in social affairs until after the artistic fulfilment of his novel.

Gide's decision to open his eyes to the world is not just a personal whim but is also due to the impact of events upon him. It is to be remembered that, during the international turmoil caused by the First World War, Gide instinctively sought for commitment, both religious and political.³ Now, in the twenties, Gide's growing sympathy for the Left is a symptom of the times.⁴

The rise of the Left and the Right alike in France, in the years between the World Wars, was in large part due to the Russian Revolution. The Left drew encouragement from the new Soviet Republic, while the determination of the Right grew in face of this new menace. Amid France's

1. Droz et Minard, 1959.

2. Brachfeld, op. cit., p. 56.

3. Gide became a member of Action française in 1916.

4. In 1920, the Red Army defeated the White Army, thereby establishing Bolshevik power in Russia. In April 1921, Gide wrote: "Quand j'abandonne à leur penchant naturel mes pensées, elles vont vers la gauche extrême, et je ne les ramène à droite que par l'effort de ma raison... Et je ne parviens pas à me persuader que la direction naturelle de la pensée ne soit pas la direction la meilleure". "Billets à Angèle", O.C., Vol. XI, p. 51 Quoted by George Brachfeld, op. cit., p. 90.

financial difficulties following the War,¹ Communist Cells, Trade-Union movements and Rightist leagues sprang up. Only after a period of strikes ranging from 1915 to 1920, was relative calm and financial stability reached with Poincaré's government from 1926.

During such times, it is not at all surprising that André Gide, "after creating Bernard...allowed his long-restrained interest in the social question to assume its full force"² with his journey to the Congo.

In 1926 at Pontigny, Gide reads the notes that he took during his journey. Despite his belief that the Congo has given him an unselfish concern for the fate of others, Gide's reading provokes instant displeasure in the "Petite Dame"³ because of the constant emphasis placed on "Je tant dans les choses puériles que dans les choses importantes".⁴ Not only the contents of Gide's notes but his manner of reading them, which is subjugated to the desire to impress while avoiding approval, arouse Madame Van Rysselberghe's indignation.⁵ Gide's attempts at personal and artistic renewal bring this pertinent comment from her pen: "Il n'a pas encore trouvé l'esthétique de la pleine lumière qui devrait être la sérénité. Le mystère lui allait mieux".⁶ In other words, Gide has not succeeded in transposing his new ideals into a fitting artistic form.

Madame Van Rysselberghe's disapproval is echoed by that of Martin du Gard. Thus, despite initial unawareness of any change in Gide,⁷ events at Pontigny have opened his eyes. It is with no surprise, therefore, that

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1. These afforded a trump-card to the Right since they could be blamed on the fact that Soviet Russia was defaulting on its repayments to France. As the petite bourgeoisie had participated in the war-effort by handing in their louis d'or to the government, feelings sometimes ran high against the Soviet Republic.
 2. Brechfeld, op. cit., p. 63.
 3. Madame Maria Van Rysselberghe.
 4. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 30th August 1926, p. 273.
 5. Ibid, pp. 273-274. Gide agrees entirely that the effect produced by his way of reading was bad.
 6. Ibid, p. 273.
 7. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 18th June 1926, p. 292.

one reads his "filandreux sermon"¹ in reply to Gide's request that he be allowed to submit the text of the Voyage au Congo to his friends's critical appreciation.

The change in Gide finds an answering change in Martin du Gard who has never been so harsh before. Both the Voyage au Congo and Gide's publication of Si le Grain ne meurt are seen by Martin du Gard as indications of a growing tendency in Gide to publicise his every word and deed and perhaps not without the thought of financial gain.

In Martin du Gard's opinion, the inevitable result of continuing to use his day-to-day life as direct material for his works will be Gide's inability to write "un mot vraiment sincère dans votre carnet de poche".² Moreover, Martin du Gard points to the fact that not only would Gide's sincerity be compromised, but that the quality of his work has already been affected by his mania for publication. Martin du Gard blames Gide, the man, for the failings of the artist. He berates Gide for accepting his own qualities, too easily and insists: "Il faut aussi s'orienter, vouloir sa vie".³

Conscious, perhaps, of the advantage the post-Congo Gide may take from this statement, Martin du Gard hastily adds: "Je ne vous prêche pas sottement de vous contrefaire, de vous composer une figure, de faire d'avance votre statue".⁴ Obviously, Gide is thinking of his "figure", since the notion of political involvement was a pre-conceived one.⁵ Nonetheless, its emergence, as I have already pointed out, was also due to current events.

Martin du Gard, like Maria Van Rysselberghe, wishes for more serenity in Gide to combat his short-comings. However, Martin du Gard is more

1. Index M.G., 9th December 1926, p. 19.

2. Ibid, p. 17.

4. Ibid, p. 17, where Susan Stout quotes Martin du Gard's comment from Notes sur André Gide: "...jamais aucun auteur de 'confessions' n'aura mis plus d'astucieuse sincérité à modeler d'avance sa statue...".

3. Ibid, p. 17.

5. See: above, p. 260.

concerned with the means of attaining serenity which, for him, involves strict quantitative limitation in order to eliminate "toute une flore de mauvaises herbes inutiles"¹ which have been stifling the growth of Gide's true work. Were Gide to die now, Martin du Gard would be in despair at the artistic image left behind due to Gide's inability to organise his life and his too ready reply: "'Prenez-moi comme je suis'".²

The true importance of Martin du Gard is made very clear in this letter. The Gide who wishes to avoid self-satisfaction meets with total encouragement from his friend. Moreover, Martin du Gard realises now to the full that Gide's work cannot be divorced from Gide the man. He has, therefore, none of the indulgence of Madame Van Rysselberghe towards the failings of Gide as a man nor as a literary figure. Indeed, his ideal is always higher than Gide's own so that, by attempting the arduous task of living up to Martin du Gard's expectations, Gide may well feel that he is avoiding the danger of "complaisance envers soi-même".³

This is not the first time that Martin du Gard has questioned Gide's temporal orientation. When Gide was tempted to become a member of the Académie française, Martin du Gard was instrumental in dissuading him, using the following terms:

Jusqu'ici votre vie reste pure dans sa ligne. Le chemin suivi est droit...vous n'avez vraiment rien sacrifié d'important à l'éphémère, vous tendez sans déviation vers l'avenir; on peut vous admirer, vous prendre pour exemple; on peut vous défendre...le jour où vous aurez accepté les compromissions d'une candidature à l'Académie,...Gide tombe pour la première fois.

(M.G.1, 22nd January 1922, 179-180)

Now, for the second time, Gide is risking his entire artistic future for ephemeral considerations and, as before, Martin du Gard does not hesitate to warn his friend, albeit brutally.

To a certain extent, Martin du Gard's letter is unfair, and must have

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1. Susan Stout, Index M.G., p. 18.
2. Ibid, p. 17.
3. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, p. 258.

been hurtful to Gide who is convinced that he is heading in a very definite direction which may revolutionize his art. As regards the detailed criticisms of Martin du Gard's letter, Gide easily brushes aside the former's accusation as to the materialistic motivation for the publication of Si le Grain ne meurt.

Moreover, Gide's Journal shows that he has not slipped back into Parisian circles as easily as Martin du Gard thinks. Nor is he totally ignorant himself of the need for serenity in his life. Thus, Gide writes: "Ennui sans nom; tout le monde est laid...Perte de temps formidable à un âge où..."¹ or: "Paris de nouveau. Tumulte. Je me sens devenir insociable. Plus aucun désir de causer".² Gide is thinking, therefore, of time wasted, time which ought to be spent on mature works.

However, Martin du Gard's reproach that Gide has become hyper-sensitive³ seems to be borne out by Gide's complaint of the lack of understanding for his Faux-Monnayeurs⁴ to be found in the same entry and a possible attempt in a later entry,⁵ to justify such a misunderstanding. For the first time, perhaps, Gide shows his desire for immediate success unmitigated by the realisation that his true aim is to affect readers of the future.

Gide begins his reply to Martin du Gard by insisting that his natural tendency is to consider and accept criticism, especially when his critic is Martin du Gard himself.⁶ Nonetheless, so scarce have been their recent meetings that Gide believes his friend's reproaches are the result of lack of contact.

Gide therefore feels justified in defending himself. Against Martin du Gard's accusations that he pays too much attention to "l'actualité" (M.G.1, 11th December 1926, 302), he uses the argument that his conversation

1. J.1, 15th September 1926, p. 826.

2. Ibid, 16th October 1926, p. 827.

3. Index M.G., pp. 17-18.

4. See: M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 13th April 1927, pp. 316-317.

5. J.1, 8th February 1927, p. 829.

6. Both Martin du Gard and Maria Van Rysselberghe recognise with admiration the unflinching good grace with which Gide greets criticism.

may have misled Martin du Gard by its anecdotal quality. Gide admits that he is increasingly sceptical as to the possibility of true communication on a level of eternal truths or even questions of general interest. By confining himself to verbal experience, Gide side-steps the fundamental issue of Martin du Gard's letter which is the unselective use made of Gide's life in his written work and the very direction Gide's life is taking at the moment.

Even if Gide intends his defence to be applied to his works, there is still a remnant of dishonesty. Firstly, the short but revealing entry in his Journal of the 15th September 1926 shows that the condition of his art is not as voluntary as he would have Martin du Gard believe. Moreover, although Si le Grain ne meurt and the Voyage au Congo relate Gide's life and contain a certain number of anecdotes, both are seen by Gide as works of considerable importance, as artistic blows against injustice.

When compared to the length and substance of Martin du Gard's reproaches, Gide's defence may seem weak. One must remember, on Gide's own admission, that he is unused to protesting against criticism. Gide is also only too conscious of the number of his enemies and the failure of the public to hail his Faux-Monnayeurs. Gide's feelings of isolation have been countered by the certainty that Martin du Gard, the most important of his friends, will remain faithful to him. The harshness of Martin du Gard's letter has made Gide far less sure of Martin du Gard's affection and his distress just as much as the wish to avoid "de l'attitude et du camouflage" (M.G.1, 11th December 1926, 303) inhibit him.

The basis of Martin du Gard's attacks and Gide's hurt is artistic. Convinced, after his journey to the Congo, that he has discovered a new, less egoistic orientation to his art, Martin du Gard's letter, following events at Pontigny, must have been unexpectedly chilling for Gide's new aspirations especially as Gide himself is uncertain as to how to put

them into practice.

Martin du Gard's reproaches form a sequel to the debate on Gide's Faux-Monnayeurs. While Martin du Gard could not accept fully what, to him, was subjectivity by "biais" in the Faux-Monnayeurs, he was ready to admit that therein lay the foundation stone of Gide's genius. Now, however, Gide has stepped into a pitfall. His works are completely subjective because they deal only too directly with Gide's life and are no longer the literary transposition of these "biais"; hence, Martin du Gard's disgust and unfairness. Far from following his friend's ideal for him, Gide is moving further away from it and becoming a lesser man and artist in Martin du Gard's opinion.

The warmth and affection of Martin du Gard's letter of reassurance to Gide can leave the latter in no doubt as to the intentions behind his "démésure et maladresse" (M.G.1, 13th December 1926, 305). Martin du Gard immediately recognises that if, for once, Gide protests, then it is he, Martin du Gard, who is mistaken. Gide's fears for their friendship, he writes, are totally absurd. In order to allay them, he explains in an extremely important passage the role he ascribes to himself;

Je me sens...de plus en plus, ^{fortement} attaché à vous. Comment n'avez-vous pas vu, au reste, dans cet irritant désir que vous soyez de plus en plus grand, une preuve même de cet attachement? Et qui d'autre vous en donne de semblable? Vous devriez être ravi qu'une amitié si chaude veille jalousement sur vous-même, sur le meilleur de vous-même; et lorsque vous avez le sentiment profond que cette amitié se trompe dans ses partis pris, vous devriez en sourire et n'attacher d'importance qu'à la chaleur qu'elle y met!

(M.G.1, [redacted] 304)

Unfortunately, there is no reply from Gide, probably because the meeting so ardently desired by both writers takes place. A possible

1. M.V.R, Cahiers 4, 9th February 1927, p. 305.

concrete result of Martin du Gard's scolding may be Gide's decision to share a flat in the Rue Vaneau with Maria Van Rysselberghe, this arrangement being seen by Gide as beneficial to the orderly progress of his work.¹ Martin du Gard is entirely of Gide's opinion, warning him, however, to avoid using his new dwelling as a pretext for "de trop fantaisistes expériences" (M.G.1, 20th March 1928, 336) and to think only of its usefulness to his work.

The harmony of Gide's relationship with Martin du Gard, which is now re-established, was broken because of the former's belief that Gide was moving more and more towards a downward trend in subjectivity, exemplified by the Voyage au Congo.

Hence, Martin du Gard attacked the source of the problem at its root which, for him, was Gide the man. Gide is no longer viewed as a source of infinite but untapped richness. He is responsible too for a refusal to choose and organise his best elements for the enhancement of his art.

Martin du Gard's scolding no doubt helps to galvanise Gide into a more suitable mode of life for literary production since dialogue continues around Gide's works, Oedipe and L'Ecole des Femmes. However, as will be seen, Gide comes no closer to gaining Martin du Gard's approval. Gide's growing awareness of the need to choose contextually and, hence, stylistically, in his literature will simply draw him into further pitfalls from Martin du Gard's point of view.

3. L'Ecole des Femmes, Oedipe and the Deepening of Literary Discussion.

Martin du Gard's vigilance does not relax even when he learns with joy that Gide is far from Paris writing "une fringale d'Ecole des Femmes" (M.G.1, 7th November 1927, 318). Although, he shows less vehemence,

1. M.V.H., Cahiers 4, 9th February 1927, p. 305.

Martin du Gard still adheres to "ce rôle passif de papier tournesol" (M.G.1, 9th January 1928, 321)¹ which is capable of turning dark red at the slightest failing in Gide, the literary figure.

Martin du Gard is not totally satisfied with L'École des Femmes which, for him, is again a work of restricted if undeniable interest and is a hindrance to the development of other "'plans'" soliciting Gide.² Indeed, Martin du Gard goes so far as to relegate both L'École des Femmes and the Voyage au Congo to the ranks of minor works. Once again, he blames Gide's mode of life for his inability to write a serious work. Gide's travels and "ces longs intervalles de jachère, où loin du travail, je me laisse emporter par la vie" (M.G.1, 17th July 1920, 151) were formerly accepted by Martin du Gard as a fertile source for Gide's work. Now, they are condemned by him. In his opinion, Gide's journey to the Congo has proved that travel is no longer of any use to Gide's works but is merely a form of laziness, a flight from literary responsibilities which last should be, on the contrary, the only preoccupations of his old age.

Martin du Gard is, in my opinion, a little too harsh on Gide. Admittedly, after the Faux-Monnayeurs, Gide probably felt that his artistic destiny was largely accomplished. Nonetheless, his plunge into life away from literature was a voluntary decision to join forces with humanity and Gide felt, unlike Martin du Gard, that this part of his experience might be of benefit to his art.

There is no reply from Gide to these accusations and, indeed, for some time after, the correspondence deals directly with artistic questions leaving those of the artist's life aside. Nonetheless, Gide does not ignore Martin du Gard's advice totally.

1. Needless to say, Martin du Gard's role is far from passive.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 20th March 1928, p. 336.

In a letter of criticism¹ on the published version of L'Ecole des Femmes Martin du Gard says that his admiration is clouded only by the fact that he is most conscious of the author's skill and presence in this work, in spite of Gide's obsession with giving life to his characters and the care he has taken to cut the umbilical cord between them and himself. This is an old reproach from Martin du Gard² and evokes this response from Gide:

Tout ce que vous me dites de L'Ecole des Femmes, me paraît parfaitement exact. Est exact. Songez-y pour Les Thibault. Je me suis absenté de ce livre (plus encore que d'Isabelle). Et je ne puis estimer que j'aie eu tort, pour ce livre. Mais dans mon Oedipe, par contre ...Ah! quelle revanche je vais prendre! ...Votre lettre... me galvanise, me revigore (M.G.1, 25th June 1929, 374).

It is noticeable that Gide has thus adjusted Martin du Gard's advice to his own wishes which are to return to a work which depends on inner necessity and may merit the name of art rather than artifice. As Martin du Gard has already shown, this is not precisely the artistic ideal he most believes in but is well in keeping with Gide's genius.

Martin du Gard's belief in his own artistic concepts is not, in fact, so strong as to relieve him from anguished doubts caused by a letter from Jacques Copeau.³ When asking for Gide's sincere advice, Martin du Gard insists that, for the betterment of his work, he is capable of "de vraies révolutions" and when he adds:

Je ne suis pas un type qui 'brûle sa vie', non, pas du tout; et j'ai, grâce à cette économie de sédentaire, des réserves d'énergie disponibles pour les coups de reins les plus inespérés: le tout est de me convaincre que le sursaut est nécessaire et possible (M.G.1, 15th September 1928, 351).

one understands to the full his fears that the moveable Gide may, by squandering his energy, be less and less able to renew or revolutionize his art.

Gide's reply reassures Martin du Gard and, by explaining the role of the latter's art, throws light upon his own literary principles. The

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 25th June 1929, pp. 372-373.

2. Ibid, 17th July 1921, pp. 167-168.

3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, Annex to letter 230, pp. 687-688.

homogeneous Martin du Gard, Gide feels, cannot be expected to create any other characters than those which correspond to his words to Gide on his own personality:

Faites attention: vous allez être déçu: vous allez faire le tour de moi tout de suite: je n'ai rien à vous laisser découvrir: pas de doubles fonds, pas de mystères, etc. (M.G.1, 22nd September 1928, 352).

Martin du Gard has suppressed Heaven and Hell in himself, Gide writes, and it is natural that he cannot provide his characters with them. The corollary of this lies, obviously, in the exaltation and doubt induced by the work of Gide who, while he is ready to deny Heaven, cannot so easily dismiss the influence of Evil.

Gide continues by discussing the formal aspect of Martin du Gard's work, which Copeau believes is lacking in "débordement" (M.G.1, 687). His remarks are those already made against Tolstoy and Martin du Gard in his Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs.¹ Gide insists, however, that Martin du Gard has no need to change because: "Ingres n'a pas à souhaiter les qualités d'un Rembrandt" (M.G.1, 22nd September 1928, 352). The sole reproach that Gide might make against his friend's art is that:

Comme vous montrez tout, chacun y voit la même chose, et la voit toute du premier coup. Vos personnages ne prêtent pas aux interprétations ou opinions diverses ...comme fait la réalité (M.G.1, 352-353).

Gide thus uses Martin du Gard's own weapons to argue the case for his own ambiguity which, more than Martin du Gard's clarity, he implies, is representative of life. Moreover, by his suggestion that Martin du Gard cannot break away from his own basic qualities in his art, Gide is also hinting that Martin du Gard is not so objective a writer as he thinks.

One must not assume from this passage that Gide himself is a realist. This is shown by his comment after reading L'Ecole des Femmes to

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 22nd September 1928, p. 352: "Cette façon - deviner".

Martin du Gard:

Je ne suis pas certain que ses conseils soient bons, ils sont trop dans son sens. Il veut que je fasse mes caractères aussi bons que mauvais, que personne n'ait tort dans le conflit; ça, c'est excellent pour un réaliste, c'est selon la vie, c'est entendu. Mais moi, je n'ai jamais été un réaliste.¹

Gide is quite prepared to bend reality to artistic or moral needs. His rather malicious Parthian shot to Martin du Gard must be taken as provocation. Gide is playing the part of Devil's advocate. Conscious that his work has a larger dimension than that of his friend, because Heaven and Hell encompass Man's ambiguity, Gide is nonetheless aware that, by his impartiality and his refusal of any unearthly basis to his characters, Martin du Gard is far closer than himself to materialistic realism.²

However, Gide is the first to recognise that: "...certaines qualités que nous aurions voulu lui voir ne sont pas dans son sens, et...il doit persévérer dans son chemin".³

Indeed, convinced by Gide⁴ that not change but full exploitation of his own gifts is necessary to survive the test of posterity, Martin du Gard confesses:

...vous m'aidez. J'ai si peur de céder à la tentation de 'l'étonnant', du 'très curieux' ...que je m'interdis parfois des embardées qui eussent pu être fructueuses
(M.G.1, 26th September 1928, 353).

The temptation of the "'très curieux'" obviously represents for Martin du Gard the subjugation of content and form to purely subjective and artistic considerations and the rout of realism by too deliberate a choice which may be made in art but not in life.

Despite this, the determined "gaillard" realises that some concession to the artist in him would be beneficial to his work. It may seem ironic that Martin du Gard, who criticises Gide so consistently for succumbing only too willingly to this temptation, should now turn to him for advice

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 15th April 1927, p. 321.

2. Indeed, Martin du Gard's materialism causes Gide some anxiety as to the consequences for his work. See: M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 21st March 1927, p. 306.

3. Ibid, 1st April 1927, p. 310.

4. G./M.G. Corr., 28th September 1928, pp. 354-355.

on the legitimate introduction of "l'étonnant" into his own work. One must not forget that this appeal is being made to the man whom Martin du Gard thanks in the following words: "Comme vous avez vite et bien répondu! Et toujours sans tirer dans votre sens!" (M.G.1, 26th September 1928, 353). Martin du Gard will later have call to modify his opinion, just as before Gide ignored Martin du Gard's comments on L'Ecole des Femmes because they were too much "dans son sens". On the whole, though, both writers genuinely consider the other when offering advice and where this is not the case, the knowledge of "sa pente naturelle" and of "la valeur de l'autre dans son altérité" (M.G.1, Intro., 103) helped towards the final decision of rejection or acceptance.

These two letters are important as a declaration of what forms the value of Martin du Gard in Gide's eyes. By implication, they delineate the necessary differences between the two writers' approaches to art and point to the fact that the existence of the one in no way invalidates the other. Gide has made a constat à l'amiable. At the same time, however, the tables seem to have turned, since Martin du Gard appears in the role of suppliant rather than head-strong critic and Gide has thrown his first provocative dart.

Indeed, this polite acceptance of their differences is followed by their increasing opposition. This culminates in a full-blown literary querelle, the origin of which is to be found in Martin du Gard's letter of the 26th September 1928.

Martin du Gard's doubts about his own literature do not bring about greater diffidence when he writes of Gide's. While he accepts to the full what differentiates his art from Gide's, he is far more restrictive than the latter when it comes to defining the bounds of his friend's art.

Once again, therefore, he attacks Gide's complacency in "ce jeu banal de l'objectivité" (M.G.1, 6th February 1930, 389). In Martin du Gard's

opinion, the care with which Gide constructs scaffolding and foundations to support what is simply a source of literary and psychological amusement is unworthy of him. Martin du Gard admits that this painstaking construction is important for himself since he is "un simple romancier" (M.G.1, 6th February 1930, 389), but for Gide: "La libre et succulente fantaisie de votre Oedipe [est] un monde digne d'être créé par vous, et où vos créatures se meuvent comme dans leur élément naturel" (M.G.1, 389). Because Gide has constructed and not created Robert, to use Martin du Gard's terms, "Ses racines ne plongent pas dans la vie, mais dans votre cerveau" (M.G.1, 389).¹

The concept of objectivity has thus been raised again. The Faux-Monnayeurs proved to Martin du Gard that Gide's true genius lay in subjectivity, in those parts of his work from which Gide was not entirely absent. These conditions are fulfilled in Gide's récits into which Gide poured much of his thought and experience.

Since the time of the Symphonie pastorale, Martin du Gard's attitude has undergone change. Before Gide's novel, he wished his friend to achieve objectivity by leaving aside purely artistic considerations, to paint life's complexity. For Gide to do this, Martin du Gard felt that a change in his literary technique was necessary. Thus, instead of the spotlight presentation of the récits, Martin du Gard advocated a "lumière ...diffuse". As Elaine D. Cancalon's work on Gide's récits shows, this is alien to Gide's methods of achieving objectivity:

Sans traiter ces sujets 'objectivement, du dehors, selon les procédés du roman courant' Gide trouve toutefois... des moyens qui ajoutent des perspectives supplémentaires à celle du protagoniste...²

In his récits, therefore, Gide gave a finally objective portrayal of his heroes by multiplying perspectives all of which throw a different

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1. This is to be compared to Madame Van Rysselberghe's comment on Gide's work, M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 14th October 1928, p. 374: "Si ce livre réussit, ce sera à force de jugement et de tact. Il se rend très bien compte de cela".
 2. Techniques et Personnages dans les Récits d'André Gide, Archives des Lettres Modernes 2, Minard, 1970, p. 81.

light on the principal character and contributed to a complete knowledge of him or her. The Faux-Monnayeurs was a warning to Martin du Gard that Gide could do little to change this state of affairs. His comments on L'Ecole des Femmes, which he believes to be falsely objective because Gide has used his intellect, show, therefore, that he no longer expects Gide to make fundamental changes in his artistic methods but rather to exploit to the full his own resources.

Gide has not done this in L'Ecole des Femmes. Hence, the word "objectivity" is now used by Martin du Gard in criticism. The objective person is normally considered as emotionally uninvolved and therefore able to see both sides of events. From this commonly-accepted view, Martin du Gard seems to have developed his artistic view of objectivity which implies the portrayal of life which is made necessarily by an observer whose vision is non-unilateral and unclouded by personal, moral considerations.

In his own way, Gide achieved this in miniature form in his récite. In Robert, however, Gide has reduced not only the number of perspectives¹ but also the impact of his trilogy is lessened by the very brilliancy of his character portrayal.

Martin du Gard is not wrong to chide Gide for using methods more suitable to the author of the Thibault. Gide has rejected his own concept of objectivity² without, forasmuch, attaining that of his friend since, in L'Ecole des Femmes, Gide's artistic techniques are subordinated to the condemnation of "le malheureux Robert" (M.G.L, 6th February 1930, 389), which he wishes to arouse in his readers.

Despite the psychological detail which goes towards convincing the reader, Martin du Gard is sure that it is not by such means that Gide will obtain true objectivity. Nor has Gide achieved, with his Faux-monnayeurs,

1. This is also due to Robert's being part of a trilogy.

2. See: above, p. 270.

"l'enchevêtrement hardi de tous ses sujets" (M.G.1, 22nd July 1920, 155). The nearest Gide may come to Martin du Gard's ideal of objectivity is in "La libre et succulente fantaisie..." (M.G.1, 6th February 1930, 389). Nowhere does Martin du Gard indicate so clearly that the most suitable recipient for Gide's genius is not "l'oeuvre large et panoramique" which he had formerly desired. The word "fantaisie" used to praise Oedipe strikes a note of freedom and airiness which contrast strongly with Martin du Gard's own down-to-earth approach to art, but also to the control Gide imposed upon Robert who was neither an autonomous character nor internally motivated.

Martin du Gard is thus advising Gide, much as the latter advised him, not to look for qualities other than his own. What Martin du Gard accepts as a recognisable procedure for himself is censurable when used by Gide in Robert. Martin du Gard, as I have already pointed out, has moved from his original belief that the scope of Gide's art may be widened by transcending his own limits to the realisation that Gide's artistic optimum is to be achieved from his inner needs and not by intellectual control over his works.

By Gide's own admission, Oedipe is a work from which he will not be absent.¹ This explains Martin du Gard's high hopes for this drama. The very fact that Oedipe is a play is probably a not insignificant factor in Martin du Gard's elation since dramatic art must involve dialogue and hence counter Gide's tendency to study but one "biais" and, in so doing, to respect artistic logic, but not the fullness of life.

Gide's reply shows that Martin du Gard is not alone in having undergone change. Gide neither accepts his friend's criticisms unconditionally, as so often before, nor is his protest that of a deeply wounded man. His

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 25th June 1929, p. 374.

disagreement with Martin du Gard shows calm, unprecedented assurance.¹ In his letter, Gide even goes so far as to question Martin du Gard's authority as a literary critic.

While Gide agrees with certain of Martin du Gard's criticisms and admits that Robert is not "une oeuvre longuement élaborée et patiemment écrite" (M.G.1, 9th February 1930, 391), he seems to refute the view that the value of a book lies in hard work and not spontaneity. Also, although hastily written, Gide explains that Robert contains "le résultat de longues et patientes méditations" (M.G.1, 391).

Gide defends himself against Martin du Gard's criticism that: "...vous vous êtes royalement amusé en empruntant...le domino et le masque de l'adversaire, et en lui prêtant votre voix" (M.G.1, 6th February 1930, 390). Likening his use of the "style gidien" in Robert to that in his récits, Gide is close to believing that this "double ressemblance" of style to creator and creation is necessary for such works. Gide cites Shakespeare, Racine and Molière as examples of the success of such a procedure and is doubtful that Martin du Gard has been right in certain parts of La Sorcellina² to adopt a style totally alien to him. When Gide adds: "Ce tour de force d'objectivation reste un peu factice et sent le 'devoir'" (M.G.1, 391), he ironically turns against Martin du Gard the latter's very comment on the Faux-Monnayeurs.³ The implications of Gide's remarks for Robert are quite clear. This work is not simply a "jeu banal de l'objectivité" but is imbued with the author's stylistic presence, at least.

When replying to Martin du Gard's comments on "le détail" (M.G.1, 6th February 1930, 389) Gide, interestingly, avoids generalities to seize on Martin du Gard's doubts as to the credibility of a Catholic priest's

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1. Gide is perhaps surer of himself because of the approval of Maria Van Rysselberghe and Jean Schlumberger for Robert. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 15th October 1929, p. 50. Moreover, Gide is staying with the passionately pro-Gidian Dorothy Bussey.
 - 2: Les Thibault, Vol. II, Gallimard, 1972, pp. 9-103. La Sorcellina is the title of Jacques' short story.
 3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 10th October 1925, p. 276: "...ce qui permet - probant".

giving the last rites to an unbeliever. Gide's Catholic friends have provided him with information which amply justifies this scene. Gide's choice of the exceptional, proved by quasi-scientific research to have some basis in the general, is important because it is premonitory of his position in his argument with Martin du Gard about the "veau à 5 pattes".¹ Also, Gide's defence shows how sensitive he is to accusations of falsifying reality, this last point adding a new dimension to discussion on objectivity.

A meeting with Martin du Gard sparks off a long letter from Gide in which, by defending Dostoïevsky, Gide seems almost to be defending his own integrity as a writer in his letter on Robert.

Martin du Gard's rather unfortunate sally: "'Dostoïevski ne peut nous enseigner que des trucs'" (M.G.1, 2nd June 1930, 399) meets with Gide's equally unjust conclusion that Martin du Gard has no understanding whatsoever of Dostoïevsky.²

Gide agrees with Barrès in his judgement that: "'Il y a un certain art de romancier, de conteur qui n'est que du trompe-l'oeil : Tolstoï, Maupassant'" (M.G.1, 400). It is in Tolstoy's work that Gide is conscious of "le truc" and never in Dostoïevsky's because, with the latter:

...la chose à dire est toujours neuve et importante; ou, du moins, ce qui importe, chez lui, ce n'est jamais la peinture elle-même et l'acte extérieur de ses personnages, mais il confie à chacun d'eux quelque mystérieuse angoisse qu'il lui importe de faire partager au lecteur. Et je comprends, de reste, que l'art puisse se passer d'angoisse, et qu'une peinture parfaite n'a nul besoin d'être révélatrice d'un tourment. Mais s'achopper à la peinture, et ne point distinguer le tourment qui nécessite l'habileté du coup de pinceau, c'est, lorsqu'il s'agit de Dostoïevski, lui manquer gravement; car, c'est ce qui me plaît précisément en lui, c'est que, précisément, il ne se laisse jamais emporter par son habileté de conteur, mais que chacune de ses habiletés reste profondément motivée, exigée, par son démon intérieur. C'est là, précisément, ce que je ne sens pas dans Tolstoï; et c'est pour cela qu'il m'ennuie
(M.G.1, 400).

1. See: below, pp.285-289.

2. Gide himself recognises his own injustice. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 2nd June 1930, p. 399.

This impassioned plea is as much for Gide as for Dostoïevsky. Gide is trying to destroy the myth of conscious amusement to which Martin du Gard has always attributed Gide's own "habileté". Thus he is arguing that "l'habileté du coup de pinceau" is necessitated not only by the subject matter of the work itself but also by the inner "démon" of the author. At once, Gide's concept of stylistic "double ressemblance"¹ - a style which reflects both the attitude of Gide's fictional characters to life and the author's intimate being - is clarified, as it is the only means of rendering this split motivation.

Martin du Gard's reply shows less desire for discussion than justifiable irritation at the fact that Gide must be "bizarrement rancunier pour venir me chercher querelle, au bout de trois mois, à propos d'une phrase sommaire sur Dostoïevski" (M.G.1, 12th June 1930, 401). In fact, Gide does not bear Martin du Gard any grudge since he knows as well as the reader of his correspondence that the latter does recognise that Dostoïevsky's skill as a writer has no superficial basis.²

Martin du Gard's irritation at Gide's letter is perhaps responsible for his modifying his opinion on the Russian writer. He now points out that Dostoïevsky is not totally exempt from "truquages" (M.G.1, 401). Not only does Martin du Gard thus contradict Gide in his belief that Dostoïevsky is never carried away by his skill as a storyteller but also points to the dangerous ease with which Dostoïevsky's procedures may be imitated by writers who do not possess his genius.

On the other hand, Martin du Gard is convinced that Tolstoy is impossible to imitate in this way because he teaches one "à voir et non à peindre" (M.G.1, 402). As for those who imitate, Martin du Gard dismisses their art as "un coup de ponce...psychologiquement" and he wonders: "Quel grand romancier échappe d'ailleurs, à ce petit travers

1. See: above, p.276.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 17th July 1921, p. 167.

professionnel, d'employer parfois en 'truc' ce qui est l'élément propre de son génie?" (M.G.1, 402). Gide himself does not escape this trap in Martin du Gard's opinion.

These retorts do not constitute the true importance of Martin du Gard's letter. Far more important to him is the issue revealed by Gide's letter, which is that of objective portrayal. Gide's letter is a small but significant part of a general and "méchante tendance...à présenter...de la façon, du biais, où la riposte est pour vous plus aisée et péremptoire!" (M.G.1, 402). In other words, Martin du Gard blames Gide for transcribing only the "propos-tremplins" (M.G.1, 402) of his friends' thoughts because his only consideration is the opportunity thus given him to express his own views.¹

This fact, Martin du Gard adds, is not "sans intérêt général, si l'on se met à songer aux parties polémiques de votre oeuvre" (M.G.1, 402).

Thus, discussion on Dostoïevsky is closely connected to Gide's and Martin du Gard's differing views on Robert. The same question of the honesty or the objectivity of one's methods of presentation is raised. This time, however, Gide's defence is more eloquent, perhaps because he is no longer writing in his own name.

Gide is delighted that he has provoked Martin du Gard into discussion on these points.² Before replying to his friend's accusations that he presents him as "une figure assez sotte" (M.G.1, 403), Gide wishes to argue the case before his "tribunal intérieur" (M.G.1, 15th June 1930, 404) thus showing again his reflex to interiorize his thought prior to

1. Madame Van Rysselberghe gives her opinion on this phenomenon. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 15th June 1930, p. 93: "C'est vrai que Gide ne relève dans ses notes que les arguments tremplins, mais cela me semble très logique, il y poursuit sa pensée, ce n'est pas le lieu, le moment de tracer un portrait - et puis, citer autrui c'est le prendre en considération, ça prouve que son avis vous arrête".

2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 15th June 1930, p. 404.

discussion. Despite this promise, Gide's conviction that Martin du Gard's reproaches are unmerited¹ is not destined to be shaken even when this problem is approached again in amplified form.

Gide's Oedipe is the source of further discussion on Gide's approach to art. Martin du Gard admits that his judgement on Oedipe can only be highly personal because he had been hoping so much that this play would be Gide's Faust.² Oddly, Martin du Gard's reproaches form a direct counter-part to his former praise of the "libre et succulente fantaisie" (M.G.1, 6th February 1930, 389) that was to be found in Oedipe. "Fantasy" obviously does not mean laisser-aller to Martin du Gard.

His reproaches may be resumed thus: there is no orderly progression in Gide's play which leaves one with the patchwork impression of having read a selection of papers found in the drawer of a dead writer; once again Gide has been unable to conclude satisfactorily; finally, the uneven quality of Oedipe suggests that its author is a gifted adolescent whose self-confidence produces "de nobles hardiesses" (M.G.1, 30th January 1931, 439) but also causes him to yield to "cette tentation d'étonner, qui aura été, dans un certain sens, le mauvais virus de votre vie et de votre oeuvre" (M.G.1, 439).

Martin du Gard's severity is to some extent justified since there are sudden jumps both in tone and in the ideas expressed in Oedipe. Moreover, an interesting parallel is to be made between his comment about Gide's desire to "astonish" and Oedipe's reaction to the knowledge of his incestuous marriage: "Je voudrais inventer je ne sais quelle nouvelle douleur. Inventer quelque geste fou, qui vous étonne tous, qui m'étonne moi-même, et les dieux".³

Martin du Gard softens his reproaches by writing that he infinitely prefers Gide, the man, to his works. Gide is very touched by his

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 15th June 1930, p. 93.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 30th January 1931, pp. 437-438.

3. André Gide. Théâtre, Gallimard, 1951, 34th Edition, p. 297.

letter.¹ He explains that Oedipe is not his Faust because of the very limitations of its subject-matter and the form of classical drama he has chosen for it. Nonetheless, Gide continues, included in Oedipe is all that he intended to say and more besides.

Martin du Gard's inability to perceive any "direction" (M.S.L, 1st February 1931, 441) in Oedipe provokes Gide into explaining the unifying factor of his play which may be said to be the struggle to achieve a superior, uncomplacent form of individualism to which is allied the notion of human progress and all the other ideas in the work. It is thus not surprising that Gide should admit to preferring the dialogue between Oedipe and Tirésias to Oedipe's introductory soliloquy, since, quite literally, it is the central point of Gide's play, appearing in the second of its three acts.

The conversation between Oedipe and Tirésias, the priest, is also essential to the development of the play. In Act One, Oedipe presents himself through a monologue as being conscious only of the present and satisfied to be lead by the gods, who have been good to him. In Act Two, Oedipe's dialogue with Tirésias opens his eyes and this leads to the confrontation of past and present in what amounts to an inner dialogue. Oedipe then destroys his sight as expiation for the past but also as a true revolt against the puppet he was. Thereby, Oedipe is ready to "see" the plight of others and turn to the future. Gide's play is, in fact, tightly bound together by temporal aspects which correspond to Oedipe's moral development. To obtain authenticity, one must first live for the present, but never blind oneself to the past; without full consciousness of all the elements of one's character, one cannot truly progress to one's real being.

Gide entirely agrees with Martin du Gard's suggestion that, to avoid

1. This letter was written by Martin du Gard while in the Clinique Delaginière after a very bad car accident.

hasty endings, he should write his conclusions at the moment of peak enthusiasm for a work.¹ However, he believes, along with Martin du Gard, that the question of how to end a work is "aesthetic" and, hence, is the implication, the ending of Oedipe is as it should be. Thus Gide explains:

J'en tiens pour le 'presto' des finales de sonates ou de symphonies, et prends exemple sur les sonnets, qui commencent en quatrains et s'achèvent sur des tercets. Enfin il me plaît de ne pas accompagner trop avant le lecteur, mais de le laisser faire seul le chemin, sur indications suffisantes. J'aime qu'il 'me quitte'
(M.G.l, 1st February 1931, 442).²

In a typical movement of contradiction, Gide himself destroys his claims to aesthetic motivation by reducing his artistic procedure to the outcome of a fault in his character, "une incurable modestie" (M.G.l, 1st February 1931, 442). The blame for this may be laid on his religious upbringing, Gide explains. When he writes:

Quand je me trouve amené à prendre une place de vedette, c'est sans conviction, craintivement, ou en crânant, plastronnant; je joue un rôle, que j'eusse souhaité n'assumer qu'après ma mort (M.G.l, 442),

there is a definite connection with his Protestant youth which Gide himself does not express. The external aggrandizement of one's own qualities being strictly frowned upon, knowledge of one's worth becomes the product of internal pride; hence Gide's feeling of embarrassment when his gifts are to be exposed and judged in an external context and hence, his wish, all the same, for general but intangible recognition after his death.

Gide is obviously searching for a suitable viewpoint on the endings of his works. Oddly, he does not at this point³ stress his belief in the future and in his readers which leads him to open endings in his works. This is a far more convincing argument than those of "aesthetic" needs or, of a failing in his character.

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 30th January 1931, p. 458.

2. The same sentiments are expressed in the Journal des Faux-monnayeurs, p.86.

3. See: below, p.284.

It is difficult to say why Gide should insist on the latter as he does by pointing to the connection between his character and the posthumous quality Martin du Gard has rightly discovered in his last works.¹ Should L'Ecole des Femmes remain unfinished, Oedipe, in spite of its imperfections, will probably be his last work according to Gide, who hastily adds that this in no way detracts from the importance of his present writings but: "...ce ne sont plus, à proprement parler, des oeuvres; simplement des pages, où le souci de l'affirmation remplace celui de la dépendance et de la subordination" (M.G.1, 443). Even in his letters, Gide seems to obey his literary principle that the reader participate in solving a problem of which Gide has given only the "indications suffisantes".

The basic elements given here by Gide are "dépendance" and "subordination". It seems to me that Gide's former "dépendance" was on different "biais" experienced through "Dépersonnalisation poétique" and that he "subordinated" himself to the artistic and critical representation of these "biais". Now, Gide's aim is affirmation which seems paradoxical following what he has already said about his "incurable modestie".

To explain this apparent contradiction, one has only to turn to Gide's short but revealing comment: "...je me fais l'effet à moi-même... d'être déjà outre-tombe" (M.G.1, 442). In other words, Gide feels he has already gathered, in his former works, all the necessary material to justify his posthumous "place de vedette" (M.G.1, 442). Therefore, the need for a critical approach in truly artistic works has become less pressing. Gide, like Oedipe, is ready to serve Man. His conception of literature seems, therefore, to have caught up with his growing consciousness of the role he has to play in society

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 1st February 1931, p. 442.

subsequent to his journey to the Congo.

Whether this changed attitude to art is as voluntary as Gide would have Martin du Gard believe, leaves room for doubt. On the one hand, Gide's Journal does show growing firmness in reaction to received truth, definite identification with the cause of progress and even the belief that humanitarian preoccupations may be profitably included in the work of art;¹ on the other hand, however, the difficulties Gide is experiencing in writing Geneviève, which is not a work of "profonde exigence" but motivated by "la sympathie",² go hand in hand with his fears that laziness is the cause of his deferring "le vrai travail".³

It is interesting that both Martin du Gard's tendency to insist only upon his "refus" and his "réserves" (M.G.1, 30th January 1931, 439) and Gide's over-willing acceptance of them undergo some modification. Martin du Gard simply apologises for his "méchante lettre" (M.G.1, 3rd February 1931, 444). Gide shows more complexity since his Journal⁴ and not his correspondence shows the reasons for his change of heart. The author's will and no longer his "modesty" has been decisive in the lack of "développement et d'ampleur" (M.G.1, 1st February 1931, 441) in his play. Gide claims that he has deliberately excluded the non-essential and that a more ample ending would have destroyed the balance of his play. By such deliberate structural and stylistic severity, Gide has suppressed "toutes les résonances amplificatrices, qu'il me suffit d'éveiller dans l'esprit du lecteur",⁵

Gide's conclusion must be taken all the more seriously because of his very genuine consideration of criticism which comes from his "grande crainte de complaisance envers moi-même"⁶. It is this which

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1. J.1, 30th January 1931, pp. 1026-1028.
 2. Ibid, 31st March 1930, pp. 977-978.
 3. Ibid, 21st March 1930, p. 975.
 4. Ibid, 3rd and 5th February 1931, pp. 1029-1030.
 5. Ibid, 5th February 1931, p. 1030.
 6. Ibid, p. 1030.

has caused his initial acceptance of Martin du Gard's criticisms and the fact that:

...je sens bien que c'est à votre amitié même que je dois votre sévérité. Dès lors, comment ne point m'y plaire? (Mais je crois que vous aussi vous vous y plaisez; et peut-être un peu trop, en effet)
(M.G.1, 6th February 1931, 446).

This comment is, to some extent, justified. The impression gained up to this point by the reader of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard is somewhat one-sided. Martin du Gard himself seems to recognise his tendency to amplify his "outrécidants reproches" (M.G.1, 30th January 1931, 439) to such an extent as to smother profound admiration for Gide's work. Gide is also responsible since, although he is often provoked into self-explanation, he rarely refutes Martin du Gard's point of view directly. A person whose knowledge of Gide was limited to his correspondence with Martin du Gard so far could be excused for accepting the strength of Martin du Gard's arguments at face-value. This would mean, however, dangerously ignoring the increasing "redressement" (M.G.1, 10th October 1925, 276) Gide has brought about, principally in his letters on Robert¹ and Dostoïevsky.² Gide is, indeed, asserting himself and has been doing so ever since the publication of the Faux-Monnayeurs which marked the end of a truly profound attempt to benefit from his friend's approach to art.

4. A Literary Argument.

The culminating point of Gide's assertion on a literary plane is his argument with Martin du Gard about "le veau à cinq pattes" (M.G.1, 7th March 1931, 454), which was sparked off by Martin du Gard's Confidence africaine. In this novel, the child, Michel³, born of an incestuous relationship, suffers from poor health and dies at an early age.

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 9th February 1930, pp. 391-392.
2. Ibid, 2nd June 1930, pp. 399-400.

Jean Delay sees the basis of the two writers' quarrel as being, on Gide's part, : "Ce sentiment tragique de la destinée de l'artiste, qui devrait sacrifier sa réputation humaine à l'accomplissement total de ses fins" (M.G.1, Intro., 67) which is expressed by Gide in the explanatory note to the Traité du Narcisse. He hence evokes the ethical considerations involved in the publication of Corydon and Si le Grain ne meurt as precursors of this quarrel which is essentially moral in his opinion. Jean Delay also believes that, for Martin du Gard, the basis of his difference with Gide is "la limite de ce qui est permis à l'homme et de ce qui lui est interdit" (M.G.1, Intro., 63), and that, in this context, Martin du Gard has caught Gide "en flagrant délit d'immoralisme a priori" (M.G.1, 63). Undoubtedly, the moral question of acceptance of scandal in the grave, Biblical sense of the word, is important. However, it seems to me that this "querelle" is not merely limited to a specific moral context but encompasses general artistic principles. In discussing the implications of the "querelle du veau à cinq pattes", I hope to show, therefore, that the unifying factor is the ever present problem of objectivity/subjectivity and that only the "biais" has changed.

As with their discussion on Dostoïevsky, Gide is responsible for initial provocation by agreeing with Dorothy Bussy that : "Ce 'fruit du péché' devait être sain, beau, hardi, glorieux" (M.G.1, 5th March 1931, 452) if only, one gathers, to annoy Mauriac. Martin du Gard's explosion that Gide's "intention dominante eût été...de prouver la légitimité de l'inceste" and "non pas de faire vrai, de conter" (M.G.1, 7th March 1931, 453) immediately identifies the subject of the debate as objectivity.

On the one side, there is Gide, obsessed by "ce...besoin d'étonner" (M.G.1, 454) and who is not "un artiste désintéressé, mais un avocat que camouflent un grand art et une suprême habileté; l'avocat d'une cause, et d'une cause autant que possible 'scandaleuse'" (M.G.1, 453-454); on the other, there is Martin du Gard whose aim all through life has been to

attain "cet équilibre entre mes indignations, mes révoltes, - et l'équité, la vue juste de ce qu'il y a dans le camp adverse" (M.G.1, 7th March 1931, 454) and who may claim that: "...dans la vie, je suis capable d'être assez sectaire, - dès que je suis devant mon papier, le doute est maître, et le souci de rester mesuré, d'être juste, freine mes impulsions" (M.G.1, 456). Martin du Gard's reproaches against the determined nature of Gide's manner of portraying are more clearly expressed than ever before. Moreover, they form a complement to all his previous comments on artistic procedure.

Gide is delighted at the effect of his provocation, but is himself galvanised into self-defence since, as Jean Delay points out, Martin du Gard has touched his "point vulnérable" (M.G.1, Intro., 63). Thus, Gide writes:

...comprenez-vous bien le discrédit que votre lettre peut jeter sur mon oeuvre entière? Vous protestez que toujours vous a dominé un souci de vérité, d'équité, de justice; et nul n'en a jamais douté; mais vous le faites de manière qu'il semble que pareil souci me soit demeuré toujours étranger; ce qui, tout de même, ne me paraît pas très équitable. Je crois avoir mérité plus souvent le reproche d'excessive souplesse et de...flottement, que fait figure de partisan
(M.G.1, 11th March 1931, 457)

Commenting on this passage, Jean Delay tends rightly to agree with Gide, since in his work:

Gide avait essayé dans ses livres les attitudes morales les plus opposées, oscillant...sans jamais s'inféoder à une doctrine. A l'exception de sa protestation homosexuelle que R.M.G. savait sincèrement motivée, la protestation immoraliste de Gide n'avait rien de systématique tout en restant fidèle à une ligne générale de revendication de l'individu contre les conformismes (M.G.1, Intro., 65).

Gide is no less concerned than Martin du Gard with the equitable portrayal of the advantages and disadvantages of varying attitudes towards life. The question raised here is that of the aptness of his way of presenting them.

Gide now admits freely to what he has already briefly indicated to Martin du Gard: "Le temps est loin où je me croyais simplement un artiste" (M.G.1, 11th March 1931, 457). Gide is not denying his status as an artist here but adding another dimension to it and, perhaps to justify himself, he points to an undesired dimension to Martin du Gard's work, when he writes pertinently: "...ce qui fait votre valeur, c'est que vous n'êtes pas simplement un conteur" (M.G.1, 457). Gide goes on to clarify his concept of the author's role:

Je crois que le vrai naturaliste est celui qui sait retrouver, à travers l'exception apparente, la loi, la règle, et, artiste, peindre la créature à l'apparence la plus banale, comme il ferait une exception (M.G.1, 457-458).¹

Although, Gide separates the "naturalist" from the "author" here, it is probable that he is thinking of the Naturalist writer such as Zola or Maupassant, who said that in life one found exceptions which it was the novelist's duty to avoid choosing as his subject-matter. Gide's procedure is quite the opposite, making his artistic sphere broader than that of Maupassant. The role of Gide's art, in this case, is to change the very premises of humanity by raising the "banal" to the level of the "exception" which, in a new world, would become the norm.² Gide is a creator and not a painter since he claims that, in art, one may make a very deliberate choice of subject-matter intended to establish a law or rule but, presumably, "sans tricherie" (M.G.1, 1st February 1931, 441).

Martin du Gard's implication that Gide's attitude does involve trickery, in order to escape the bounds of reality, has undoubtedly affected Gide as much as the suggestion that "le scandale pour lui-même" (M.G.1, 7th March 1931, 456) constitutes his moral and artistic aim. This is no doubt why Gide turns Martin du Gard's weapons against him in

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1. This statement may be compared to that made by Gide in his Journal, 10th February 1929, p. 913: "Je crois, avec Wilde, que les plus importants artistes ne copient point tant la nature qu'ils ne la précédent".
 2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 28th September 1929, pp. 354-355, "Vous savez-d'atteindre".

order to counter-attack Martin du Gard in his most sensitive spot, - namely, his belief that his "'esthétique'", if he has one, is "un certain flair, un certain sens de la réalité, un goût de la vie et des êtres, qui m'empêchent de fabriquer des fantoches" (M.G.1, 456). This Gide does by reminding Martin du Gard that his scientific knowledge is inferior to his, Gide's, and that, by the laws of nature, it is not at all certain that Michel must be weakly and die.

Gide's letter is followed by another which shows his anxiety at the possible consequences of the fury of the explosion he himself has provoked from Martin du Gard. Both for their work and their friendship, Gide believes that: "...il y a plus grand profit...à confronter nos 'esthétiques' (puisque, d'éthique, vous ne consentez point d'en avoir) qu'à les heurter" (M.G.1, 12th March 1931, 460). For the first time with Martin du Gard, Gide obviously fears the consequences of dialogue. Also, the word "confronter" suggests comparative and self-perpetuating evaluation rather than a full-scale battle involving a winner or a loser. This explanation of the ideal functioning of their relations underlines, too, their essential role for Gide's work by allowing him to test and strengthen his approach to art.

To Gide, Martin du Gard is more guilty than he of "étroitesse et déni" (M.G.1, 460). His preoccupation with painting what is most normal in life is the cause, in Gide's opinion, of his refusal to admit a growing number of values. The danger of this is, Gide writes ^{that}: "...vous en ôtez musique, poésie et tout l'exceptionnel, dont l'ordinaire et le banal peut ne me paraître parfois que la permission et le support" (M.G.1, 460). Not only does Martin du Gard shut out such values but also he looks for "tout ce qui peut vous encourager dans ce sens" (M.G.1, 460). This double evidence of Martin du Gard's narrowness is contrasted by Gide to his own openness:

J'ai, tout au contraire, et fort imprudemment parfois, cherché toujours ce qui différait le plus de moi, jusqu'à me nuire. Exception moi-même, mais désireux d'admettre et de comprendre le plus possible, j'ai tendu vers une banalité qui ne m'était pas naturelle (M.G.I, 460).

The foundation of such a claim is unshakeable. Thus used by Gide, it not only refutes Martin du Gard's accusations against his partisanship but also shows that, by experience, Gide may be said to have gained a form of literary objectivity superior to that of Martin du Gard. Whereas Martin du Gard's objectivity is an effort of will, involving extremely hard work, fairness and rigorous method, Gide has found his by experiencing rather than observing elements exterior to his personality.

Having, in his previous letter, confessed to a certain orientation in his work,¹ Gide hastens to protect himself from Martin du Gard's further wrath by going into greater depth on the question of "scandale". Gide takes the example of his experience in the Congo because he feels that his argument will have greater strength in an extra-literary context. One may be forgiven for thinking that Gide avoids the example of Si le Grain ne meurt and Corydon because he would be on the dangerous ground already evoked by him in his previous letter, - namely, that he is a committed artist.

The example Gide chooses is perhaps intended to show that his preoccupation with bringing to light what is concealed is no longer just a personal, moral one as Martin du Gard clearly thinks. Gide imagines a conversation between himself and Bénilan² where Bénilan deplores the fact that Gide has chosen to concentrate his literary talents on the exceptions to the generally admirable administration in the colonies. Gide draws his conclusion:

1. See: above, p. 288.

2. Spelt "Bénilon" in Gide's Journal. The latter, a colonial official, had written an article attacking Gide in the Revue de Paris.

Que cette exception vous gêne, il se peut; et de là votre besoin d'invalider mon témoignage par ce discreditant reproche de m'occuper beaucoup plus...du mouton à cinq pattes que de tout le reste du troupeau. Mais ce qu'il m'importe surtout de montrer, c'est ce qui se cache, ce que l'on cache, ce que l'on n'aurait pu voir, ou laissé voir, sans moi (M.G.1, 460).

Thus, Gide destroys Martin du Gard's argument that he is not "un artiste désintéressé". Far from basing his works in an "immoralisme a priori", Gide finds in life itself evidence of the existence of the "mouton à cinq pattes" and uses this basic material to establish his unique value and as one of the means of avoiding "tout ce qu'un autre aurait aussi bien que moi pu écrire".¹ This explains his conviction of the necessity to limit subject-matter. From this very limitation spring richness and complexity which Martin du Gard believes are the initial components needed for the objective painting of life.

Martin du Gard's less microscopic study of the world is another means of obtaining objectivity but entails just as many pitfalls as that of Gide. Gide himself warns Martin du Gard of the principal danger:

Et si vous inventez, faites bien attention de ne point aller dans le sens de cette vision conventionnelle... mais bien de la réalité. Je veux, me penchant sur votre oeuvre, que vous me mettiez à même d'y trouver, comme dans la nature elle-même, et de quoi motiver cette vision conventionnelle, et de quoi m'assurer contre ce qu'elle a de conventionnel et faux (M.G.1, 461).

The connexion between moral and more general artistic considerations has now been made clear. Both Martin du Gard and Gide desire to paint reality. They differ in that the former chooses to depict commonly-known facets of reality and the latter what is hidden and feels must be brought to the surface. The main enemy to the objective portrayal of reality is the acceptance of a priori moral concepts. While both writers share this belief, Gide again differs from Martin du Gard. Gide sees the world through the eyes of a moralist, but one who has created his own set of moral values; Martin du Gard, the writer, is guided, theoretically, by

1. J.1, 1931, p. 1068.

no moral principles but, because of his own personality, must beware of infusing his works with "cette vision conventionnelle" (M.G.I, 12th March 1931, 461).

Martin du Gard's reply,¹ where he apologises for the tone of his last letter, deals firstly with the scientific likelihood of good health in a child born through incest. Using the image of the "veau à 5 pattes" Martin du Gard admits that, to a certain extent, he is wrong to exclude it almost systematically from his field of study. He recognises in Gide's achievements all the "utiles éléments de révision sur bien des points" (M.G.I, 17th March 1931, 462) that such a study may bring but seems unwilling to credit the lasting validity of a system built upon the revolutionary knowledge gained from the exception to the norm. From the zoological example used by Martin du Gard appears a sociological and historical view of mankind in which the exceptional is an interesting and useful but non-essential part.

Martin du Gard then turns his attention to the effects on artistic durability of studying the exception. He himself, in Confidence africaine has avoided making Michèle a healthy child because:

...je ne me sens pas le droit de choisir cette exceptionnelle hypothèse, justement parce que ce choix impliquerait, ou semblerait impliquer, une intention de plaider, une arrière-pensée de thèse

(M.G.I, _____ 462),

and the Gide who is no longer simply an artist is warned:

C'est, malgré tout, ça qui vous sauve, et vous sauvera!
Je veux dire que, en général, ce qui vieillit une oeuvre, ce qui la démonétise, ce que la postérité laisse tomber, c'est justement ce à quoi l'auteur attachait le plus de prix: ses intentions révolutionnaires, ses innovations, ses partis pris, ses marottes (M.G.I, 463).

In reply to Gide's complaint that his former letter seemed to deny Gide any concern with truth, Martin du Gard protests that this was never

1. G./M.G. Corr., 17th March 1931, pp. 461-466.

his intention. He explains that, while one of Gide's primordial preoccupations is truth, :

...c'est votre vérité que, depuis ces dernières années, vous défendez. C'est en ce sens qu'on peut dire, à la fois et véritablement, que vous êtes obsédé par la préoccupation de la vérité, et possédé par un certain esprit partisan (M.G.1, 465).

To illustrate this, Martin du Gard mentions the ending of Oedipe which, he correctly believes, has been made to fit Gide's philosophy - the optimistic belief in individual and social progress - rather than to obey the inner logic of the play.

This more measured letter has as much effect upon Gide as Martin du Gard's infuriated one, since Gide again indulges in a double reply. In his first letter, Gide brushes aside Martin du Gard's apologies and adds: "...c'est du jour où vous croiriez devoir prendre des précautions pour m'écrire, que mon amitié protesterait" (M.G.1, 22nd March 1931, 466), thus showing how meaningful to him is discussion of his differences from Martin du Gard. Indeed, Gide goes on to explain why he depends so much on his friend when he writes of the question of the durability of art: "...je vous sais gré de m'amener à le redébattre encore, avec moi-même" (M.G.1, 466). Roger Martin du Gard, more than any other of Gide's correspondents, is useful to Gide in the maintenance of intellectual honesty, not only because of the solidity of his resistance but also because the "position" (M.G.1, [redacted] 466) he helps Gide towards is that of what his artistic policy should be. One understands why, in this same letter, Gide should write: "Les vraies influences sur moi, s'exercent par réaction" (M.G.1, [redacted] 467).

This letter shows how far Gide's artistic position has changed in the past few months. Prior to that, Martin du Gard's comments would have met with almost unrestricted acquiescence, Gide writes and, indeed, even now he is tempted to agree with Martin du Gard. However, Gide admits that he has allowed his "'esthétique'" to take another bent and

he uses the surprisingly conventional argument that this is because he is older, and one suspects "wiser", than Martin du Gard who will, according to Gide, surely undergo the same change when he is a little older.

Progress is Gide's new watchword and Gide writes: "Et le progrès, on ne peut commencer d'y croire, sans désirer aussitôt y aider"¹ (M.G.1, 466). The idea of progress appears as an incipient faith commanding engagement. Temptation now seems to be Gide's former and Martin du Gard's own concept of art as a pure object unsullied by any "intentions" (M.G.1, 7th March 1931, 453). This new position is a far cry from the Gide who wrote of his autobiography: "...tout, pour moi, cède à la raison d'art"² or professed his whole-hearted identification with the title of Nietzsche's work, Considérations inactuelles.³

Gide himself explains in full his changed attitude towards art:

...l'impartialité parfaite de l'artiste, la pure objectivité de son oeuvre, m'apparaît de plus en plus chimérique. L'artiste, nécessairement prend position; et le mieux encore est qu'il en ait nette conscience. Il écrit pour prouver, quoi qu'il en ait; et vous ni plus ni moins que les autres. Si objectif qu'il soit, et impartial, il ne peut peindre le monde que selon 'son indice de réfraction'. C'est déjà fort beau qu'il ne fasse rien et n'écrive pas une oeuvre tendancieuse, ou de parti. J'aime que, comme Ibsen, il sache éclairer tour à tour les deux côtés d'une question; et rien ne m'a plus gêné, dans Tolstoï, lorsque récemment j'ai repris Guerre et Paix, que la trop apparente intervention de ses théories. Mais Montaigne lui-même, avec son air d'indifférence, n'a-t-il pas plus et mieux travaillé pour la libre pensée que n'eût pu faire un polémiste acharné?

466 -
(M.G.1, 22nd March 1931, 467).

The "manifesting" of the young Gide has progressed, not illogically, to "prouver" and to the belief that objectivity in art is an illusion. Thus, even the author who, like Martin du Gard, wishes simply to portray life, forgetting none of its richness and complexity, cannot avoid refraction or subjectivity. Once again, one is fatally reminded of the inevitable

1. My own underlinings.

2. J.1, 1st February 1917, p. 617.

3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 25th July 1930, 414.

importance for Gide of "le point d'où doit affluer la lumière".¹ Only the cause of this importance has changed from the inner needs of the individual to the member of society's consciousness of his role. Despite Gide's very genuine attempts to achieve the objectivity extolled by Martin du Gard, the end result is merely a shift in his "indice de réfraction".

Forasmuch, Gide makes clear, in this letter, that no change in methodology is necessary or even advisable. Gide's comment on Tolstoy shows that he believes neither art nor the author's cause has anything to gain from too obvious an ideological intervention on the author's part. Indeed, Charles Du Bos comments on Gide:

L'originalité radicale de la position de Gide en tant qu'artiste réside en ceci que la matière de son oeuvre n'est pas, elle, esthétique; que toujours, en son essence, elle est morale... Ici non seulement la morale est subordonnée à l'art mais captée par l'art.²

As before, Gide's second letter is prompted by the desire to fend off attacks against the weak spots of his first. Gide obviously realises that his plea for progress is not destined to fall on sympathetic ears since he writes: "Ne me blaguez pas sur ce que je vous dis du progrès. Je vous avoue que je suis très chatouilleux sur ce point" (M.C.1, 468) and insists that: "...la peinture de la vie réelle n'est qu'un département de la littérature" (M.G.1, 468). In this strictly literary sphere, Gide goes on by indicating Martin du Gard's and his own incompatibility.

Only then does Gide allow himself to broach the topic of progress, but here the connection with literary value is stressed as it was not before, since Gide writes: "...il n'y a pas un grand auteur dont l'oeuvre n'ait d'abord été quelque peu bousculatoire" (M.G.1, 468). Gide entirely agrees with Martin du Gard that a work lasts because of its "qualités de sagacité, de vérité, de beauté" (M.G.1, 468), but implies that, without

¹: Le Dialogue ³⁰ avec André Gide, Corrèa, 1946. Quoted by Lucien Adjadji, André Gide. Journal, Didier, 1971, p. 36.

his concern for moral liberation, the author might never have written his work as: "...c'est là ce qui la lui faisait écrire" (M.G.k, 468).

Thus, Gide and Martin du Gard share the belief that the ephemeral and highly individual preoccupations of the author can have no effect on the lasting quality of his work. The attribution of artistic value to such preoccupations is the point of contention; Gide believes they are a necessary but by no means sufficient condition to being a great artist and Martin du Gard is unwilling to accept their validity at all in an artistic context. Indeed, he believes they are contrary to the artist's sincerity. As has already been seen,¹ Gide is not insensitive to this reproach. Now, in this letter, he swiftly and successfully counters Martin du Gard's insinuation that his Oedipe is only semi-sincere because it has been written to prove Gide's own theory. "Indice de réfraction" there may be, Gide seems to say, but never "tricherie".

In reply² to Gide's two letters, Martin du Gard, for once, adopts the Gidian reaction of "'oui et amen'" (M.G.l, 1st February 1931, 440). On the contrary, it is Gide who wishes to prolong the debate or, perhaps, merely, to put the final touches to his position. Not the least interesting point in this exchange of letters has been the marked contrast between the two friends' ways of expressing themselves. Martin du Gard has required only one letter in which to eject all his ideas, his second letter involving mainly an alteration in tone rather than in content. Gide, on the other hand, has allowed his ideas gradual expression in order to exploit fully the repercussions of Martin du Gard's point of view on him.

Thus, Gide's initial letters³ were provoked by Martin du Gard's one,

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 11th March 1931, p. 457.

2. Ibid, 26th March 1931, pp. 469-471.

3. Of the 11th and 12th March 1931. Ibid, pp. 457-461.

and his second letters¹ by inner dialogue where the protagonists remained nonetheless Gide and Martin du Gard. Gide seems to have transferred to his correspondence his own literary technique which he likens to "ce procédé du blason qui consiste, dans le premier, à en mettre un second 'en abyme'. Cette rétroaction du sujet sur lui-même m'a toujours tenté".² Not only are both letters of each set connected but there is an inter-relationship between all the individual letters, since Gide may touch briefly on a topic in one letter only to develop it more fully in another.

Thus, Gide's next letter³ deals in greater depth with the question of the qualities which bring lasting recognition to a work. Gide firmly refutes Martin du Gard's opinion that his changed approach to art is the effect of his seeking immediate success.⁴ The firmness with which Gide lays down his principles in this letter proves that their discussion has indeed helped him to "prendre conscience plus nette de mes positions (M.G.1, 27th March 1931, 471). Gide refuses to believe, as does Martin du Gard, that only human emotions can save a work from ageing. To support this argument Gide uses the example of the inhuman beauty of the friezes of the Palace of Suse and follows up his advantage by writing: "Du reste nulle émotion qui ne doive à la beauté de son expression sa survie" (M.G.1, 471).⁵ Here one sees that Gide's involvement with human progress has caused no denial of his supreme role as an artist. Indeed, Gide even expresses his belief that social questions are of ephemeral interest only and have little effect on the mainstream of life. Gide is, however, sure that:

1. Of the 22nd March 1931.

2. J.1, 1893, p. 41.

3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 27th March 1931, pp. 471-472.

4. This opinion originated after Gide's return from the Congo. However, Martin du Gard now seems to believe in cause rather than effect (G./M.G. Corr. 1, 17th March 1931, pp. 463-464) and one wonders if Gide is not being a little unfair here.

5. This is to be compared to Albert Mockel's later comment to Gide, the Communist sympathizer. G./Mo. Corr., 3rd February 1935, p. 314. "En mon âme d'artiste, je m'afflige d'une rigueur qui me semble inhumaine en son excès. Certes oui, que la pitié nous porte! mais la moindre parcelle de beauté est le plus riche présent que l'homme puisse faire à l'homme".

Dès qu'elle cesse d'être abstraite et s'humanise, la revendication de Prométhée contre les dieux, entre dans le domaine de l'art...les questions morales restent...pressantes

(M.G.1, 471).

Unconsciously, Gide has explained the moral basis of his future involvement with Communism¹ and, at the same time, his literary silence which was caused by the fact that social evolution obviously took precedence over the moral evolution hoped for by Gide.

Having explained his position, Gide does not resist the temptation to defend himself firmly but subtly against Martin du Gard's accusations that his choice of subject-matter is far too subjectively restricted and that he is, therefore, in danger of alienating future readers:

Que romancier, je me sois emparé d'une étoffe si riche et l'aie faite mienne, c'est ce qui peut surprendre; mais j'en fais un titre de gloire; et ce qui me surprend, moi, c'est que les romanciers, pour la plupart, n'aient pas compris qu'on pouvait tailler là-dedans autre chose que des drapeaux (M.G.1, 471).

Martin du Gard and not himself, Gide is suggesting, is the writer who may be accused of narrowing the scope of his work by his refusal to see the wide range afforded by the richness of moral questions. Gide's claim to richness evokes Martin du Gard's own definition of objectivity as being the painting of life in all its fullness and complexity, while his belief that moral questions are of undying interest evokes a similar fate for his work. One feels that Gide once again² wishes to show that Martin du Gard's realism is a trap which prevents him from attaining superior objectivity and that Gide's final "'presto'" (M.G.1, 1st February 1931, 442) has indeed left Gide with "le beau rôle" (M.G.1, 17th March 1931, 464).

As predicted by Martin du Gard,³ his play, Un Taciturne, is the pretext for a pendant to their debate.⁴ However, Martin du Gard swiftly

1. See: G./M.G. Corr. 1, Annex to letter 382, p. 716.

2. See: aLove, pp. 289-291.

3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 17th March 1931, p. 463.

4. Ibid, letters of the 31st July - 6th August 1931, pp. 480-484.

realises that Gide's criticisms are prompted by literary considerations and not because he is "l'avocat d'une cause...autant que possible 'scandaleuse'" (M.G.1, 7th March 1931, 454).

The importance of this long exchange of letters for the development of the correspondence is two-fold. The complexity of the two friends' argument forms an apotheosis to the original discussion opened by Martin du Gard and which he chose to qualify as one on literary objectivity. None of the arguments used here are entirely new to either protagonist. Thus gathered together around Gide's decision to limit portrayal to "le mouton à cinq pattes", the questions of stylistic, structural and contextual objectivity gain in cohesion and gravity. Moreover, these letters show the full extent of the two writers' differences and the very real value of confrontation for Gide who now knows what his position is.

In fact, a review of dialogue in the correspondence, after Gide's return from the Congo, shows that both Martin du Gard's and Gide's attitudes have undergone a circular movement.

The Faux-Monnayeurs persuaded both writers that Gide would be better advised to desist in his attempts to write objectively. However, Gide's tendency with his Voyage au Congo to make too direct a use of his own life in literature caused Martin du Gard to warn him very harshly against this dangerous pitfall for the subjective writer. To continue along this path would seriously compromise Gide's sincerity in Martin du Gard's opinion and would lead him away from life itself.

Much as Martin du Gard deplored Gide's tendency to draw too discerningly on the personal details of his life, his tolerance for fictional detail and false objectivity in Robert was minimal. The trap of subjectivity does not excuse the equally grave one of objectivity in Martin du Gard's eyes and he is therefore forced into full acceptance of those of Gide's qualities which helped to make the Faux-Monnayeurs a great work.

Martin du Gard is not, forasmuch, ready to accept any failings in these qualities and, hence, his anger when he believes Gide is guilty of subjecting his art to a moral outlook which, far from encompassing life's complexity, is highly single-minded and personal. Once again, therefore, Gide is being accused of subjectivity and clearly on an ideological level.

Martin du Gard was excusably mistaken in considering that the basic material of the Voyage au Congo was the anecdotal, day-to-day life of Gide, the man. Now he can be in no doubt as to the moral basis Gide intends to bring to work in his art, this intention having flowered with his experience in the Congo. Obviously Martin du Gard's wrath is occasioned by his feeling that Gide has moved from indiscriminate to channelled subjectivity. In fact, Gide's journey to the Congo and his growing political involvement are indicative of the desire to step into a moral context propitious to the sharing of his preoccupations and, probably, to the widened scope of his art. Martin du Gard's letters to Gide on the "veau à 5 pattes" show why his disapproval of Gide is not as paradoxical as it may seem in light of the latter's intentions.

While Martin du Gard would have been only too happy to have seen Gide's art draw on life's complexity, he cannot accept art ruled by moral considerations. The latter, because it does not paint life, is seen as a limitation by Martin du Gard and, as such, harmful to Gide's literary output.

Gide, at this stage has perhaps not fully realised that moral, social and political problems do not always mix. This is why he believes that he can infuse into his art his conviction that the lot of humanity may be improved. Immediately after his return from the Congo, he seemed momentarily unsure as to whether this would be possible. Dialogue with Martin du Gard has but strengthened his belief that even political experience may serve "Le seul but de sa vie: l'enrichissement de l'oeuvre".¹

1. NAG, p. 82.

Gide's letters have thus shown an unprecedented desire to assert himself. The apparent passivity of his former letters, which was dependent on internal dialogue, is replaced here by active provocation to external dialogue because of the necessity to work out his own position, which, once known, allows Gide to appear with a new strength which was formerly the prerogative of Martin du Gard.

After a conversation with Madame Van Rysselberghe, Gide comes back to the topic of Martin du Gard's Un Taciturne only to attack its author with his own weapons. The physical violence of the heroine, Isabelle, makes an exception of her in Gide's opinion. He believes that Martin du Gard's play will date because he has made his characters obey too simplistic a theory of heredity and Gide adds, tongue-in-cheek: "C'est au spectacle de la vie que vous devez vous instruire, non dans les livres" (M.G.1, 7th September 1931, 487). Just as Gide's reproaches are reminiscent of those made against him by Martin du Gard, so does Martin du Gard's reply make us think of certain of Gide's letters with its immediate but partial agreement¹ and the cry: "Pour une fois, doux ami, je m'insurge un peu!" (M.G.1, 10th September 1931, 488).

Later, when Martin du Gard is once again deep in Les Thibault, Gide hastens to advise him in exactly the same spirit as Martin du Gard had been used to advise him. Martin du Gard has decided to write about the war rather than the corrupting effect of inherited money on Jacques and Antoine. Gide writes anxiously:

Je voudrais être sûr que vous ne cédez pas au plus facile...la question héritage, vous êtes uniquement qualifié pour en dénoncer les méfaits, en ayant tout de même aussi connu les avantages. Oui, je vois bien ce qui vous gêne: c'est qu'ici vous êtes contraint de

1. See: G./M.G. Corr. 1, 11th December 1926, p. 302, "Vous - porter".

'penser'... tandis que pour la guerre... vous n'avez qu'à peindre; et que vous y excellez (M.G.l, 24th February 1933, 548-549).

Gide is trying to persuade his friend to surpass his own limits and to reach higher pinnacles. Just as Martin du Gard formerly advised his friend to draw from the totality of life, now Gide is advocating greater use of Martin du Gard's personal experience. In the one case, Gide's art was to gain in breadth and, in the other, Martin du Gard's art may still gain by added depth.

Martin du Gard's reply proves that he accepts criticism with the same good will as Gide. Criticism is also a means of helping him to know his own mind since he writes: "Merci de me dire tout cela, au sujet de mes Thibault. Je le sais bien, mais il est bon que je me l'entende dire" (M.G.l, 25th February 1933, 549). Indeed, Martin du Gard uses this letter to explain why he cannot evade the subject of the War without being unfaithful to one of his artistic principles which is obviously felt by him to be less a limitation than a source of richness: "Je tiens aux dénouements traités avec ampleur et sans lassitude" (M.G.l, 25th February 1933, 550).

Martin du Gard's refusal of Gide's advice appears to authorize Maurice Rieuneau in his belief that Martin du Gard:

...s'est employé à ne pas se mettre dans son roman. Il l'a refait quinze fois pour qu'il n'y ait plus rien de lui. Oui, j'ai l'impression que ce que Gide n'aimait pas dans les Thibault c'était une esthétique retardataire à ses yeux. Martin du Gard a voulu porter à la perfection une manière romanesque qu'il n'avait pas inventée. Je crois que, dans certains cas, il y est arrivé. Seulement, quand on veut écrire les Faux-Monnayeurs on n'aime pas cette façon de raconter un peu trop simplement les choses.¹

Such a view of both Gide's opinion and of Martin du Gard's book seems to me to be somewhat short-sighted. Gide may not have liked certain

1. Entretiens, "Gide et Martin du Gard", p. 113.

parts of the Thibault but this did not impinge upon his admiration for the work. Moreover, in spite of the fact that Martin du Gard did his artistic duty by portraying the War, both Jacques, the pacifist, and Antoine, full of anguish over his death and the future of mankind, reflect Martin du Gard's preoccupations, and may be the result of Gide's advice.¹

The two letters on Martin du Gard's book prove that the tables have turned. Gide's role is now active and provokes Martin du Gard into explanation. Gide shows greater assurance not only on a literary plane but also on a political plane.

With the rise of Hitler in Germany, Gide is only one of many intellectuals who, along with anti-Fascist movements,² joined in the fight "pour la défense d'une culture et d'une civilisation qu'ils voyaient mises en péril",³ and who had understood that: "Defendre la culture revenait à combattre sur le terrain politique".⁴ The political scene in France, in reaction to events in Germany was marked by the growing popularity of the Communist Party which "henceforth attracted an increasing number of adherents deluded by its cloak of liberalism".⁵ This was Gide's case but not Martin du Gard's.

In 1933, the latter is far behind Gide in his growing involvement with current events. Thus, Gide, in spite of Martin du Gard's continued advice, seems very much the controlling figure in an exchange of letters on the opportuneness of signing the Surrealists' petition against Aragon's indictment for Anarchist propoganda.⁶ Similarly, when Félicien Challaye organises a petition to condemn war, it is Gide who not only firmly advises Martin du Gard to sign but who also does not rest until Martin du Gard's letter to Challaye meets with his entire satisfaction.⁷ Moreover,

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 25th February 1932, p.513 and 8th October 1933, p.581.
2. Such as the "Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires", the "Association Internationale des Ecrivains pour la Defense de la Culture".
3. Jacques Brigaud, Gide entre Benda et Sartre, Archives André Gide no.3, Archives des Lettres Modernes no. 134, Minard, 1972, p. 48.
4. Ibid, p. 49.
5. George Brachfsld, op. cit., p. 120.
6. G./M.G. Corr. 1, letters of the 2nd February 1932 - 5th February 1932, pp. 494-497.
7. Ibid, letters of the 7th July 1932 - 18th July 1932, pp. 528-534.

Martin du Gard, although he wishes to avoid commitment, approves so far of Gide's involvement as to write: "Vous y apparaissez dominant les événements, décidé à ne pas vous laisser manœuvrer" (M.G.1, 11th March 1932, 515).

The same may not be said of poor Martin du Gard who is caught up in a struggle between the desire to remain within his limits which he defines modestly as "la création douée de vie, de personnages fictifs" and the fact that: "...la force propulsive des événements autour de nous, ma curiosité, mon angoisse devant l'avenir, vos influences m'ont amené à vivre moins solitaire et unilatéral" (M.G.1, 23rd February 1932, 512).

While Martin du Gard realises that: "...il sera anachronique et vaguement criminel de faire le mandarin" (M.G.1, 512), he believes that this must be his lot and himself condemns the temptation of involvement. Although he is writing of the present political context, the implications are for Martin du Gard's art. Were he to yield completely to the current of events, Martin du Gard could no longer continue to be an objective painter of humanity and would thus deprive himself of what he believes is his one gift. At the same time, he expresses his doubts as to the validity of his own limits, likening them to "un lit de Procuste" (M.G.1, 23rd February 1932, 512).

Gide's reply shows immediate understanding of the literary basis to Martin du Gard's anguish. Gide admits that he has been greatly moved by his friend's letter because it expresses his own confusion. However, Gide says, it has helped him to realise more clearly what he is against and what his aspirations are. Once again, therefore, dialogue is the means of establishing Gide's own position, which is now confidently indicated as a solution for Martin du Gard too.

In his letter, Gide reproves lack of involvement in the course of current events, adding: "Dussions-nous en être beaucoup dérangés" (M.G.1,

25th February 1932, 513). Here, one senses all Gide's disapproval of mental "comfort", Gide seems to have found a way of adapting political involvement to his art, without forasmuch falling into the trap of propagandist portrayal of social problems, since he writes:

Mais cette angoisse, c'est dans votre oeuvre même et indirectement qu'elle peut se donner cours.
'Mandarin'? Non, certes; mais francs-tireurs.
Votre action n'en sera que plus efficace, votre voix que mieux entendue pour ne point se fondre en un choeur (M.G.1, 513).

Such advice is connected to that given by Gide on Les Thibault where he tries to point out to Martin du Gard that "'penser'" (M.G.1, 24th February 1933, 548) will provide greater scope to Martin du Gard's art than "peindre" (M.G.1, 549). Gide is, in my opinion, suggesting that Martin du Gard experiment with a critical form of subjectivity just as, earlier, Martin du Gard tried to advocate the idea of impartial objectivity.

Although Gide appears to be strong in the knowledge of the role of art in the light of current events, he is, in fact, face to face with a more critical problem than that of Martin du Gard whose doubts are not entirely new.¹ Gide knows what his thoughts are - namely, "'une foi ingénue dans la vocation messianique du prolétariat'"², a belief that mankind may progress ever higher - is excited at the possible use to be made of them in his art but is really quite unable to answer his own question: "quelle forme leur donner à ces pensées?"³ (M.G.1, 25th February 1932, 513). This is one of the reasons why, during his period of involvement with politics, Gide experienced enormous difficulty in writing. For once, the external experience sought by Gide the man is so alien that Gide, the artist, cannot conquer the hiatus between style and structure, on the one hand, and thought and subject-matter, on the other.

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 15th September 1928, p. 351.

2. René Gillouin, André Gide et notre temps, Paris, "Union pour la vérité", Bulletin, no. 7-8, April-May 1935, p. 68. Quoted by George Brachfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

3. See: M.V.R. Cahiers 4, 6th February 1929, p. 402: "...chaque fois que je sens se former en moi une idée neuve, qui vaille, c'est étonnant le mal qu'elle a à trouver sa forme". Gide is nowhere nearer solving his problems in 1935. Littérature engagée, Gallimard 1950, p. 64.

There is, therefore, a breach in Gide's new-found confidence. Also the reversal of Martin du Gard's and Gide's roles is not as complete as it might, at first, have seemed. As regards both Gide's literature and his political involvement, Martin du Gard is still capable of fulfilling his part as "papier-tournesol". Thus, when Gide begins to wonder if he will be able to use his doubts about the validity of his past literature as the subject-matter of Genève,¹ Martin du Gard cried: "Cave!" (M.G.1, 27th May 1932, 524). Martin du Gard realises all the dangers of choosing as subject-matter one's preoccupations of the moment² to the detriment of the lasting quality of the artistic ideal Gide seems tempted to abandon. This very moderate literary warning is the first indication of Martin du Gard's return to his former vehemence which grows with Gide's commitment to the Communist cause.

5. Art and Commitment.

A division in the chapter at this point may seem somewhat artificial since Gide is obviously well along the road to political involvement. The qualitative difference which discussion between Martin du Gard and Gide undergoes seems to me to justify such a division. The outcome of the "querelle du veau à 5 pattes" was, in a sense, a literary victory for Gide. The latter's position was immensely fortified by this argument which produced, for some time, an unusually meek Martin du Gard. The repercussions of the quarrel on the latter are undeniable and, just as much as current events, have caused Martin du Gard's doubts about his own position. A certain lack of confidence in his own literary aims as well as the quite unjustified feeling that he is "incompetent" in political matters³ explain why he so much appreciates his conversations with Gide

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 25th May 1932, 522.

2. Francis James also warns Gide against this. G./J. Corr., October 1903, p. 243. One remembers too that this was Martin du Gard's reproach against Gide on the latter's return from the Congo. Index M.G., A

3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, Annex to letter 382, Roger Martin du Gard's Journal of the 5th April 1932, p. 717.

pp. 16-19

where: "...chacun de nous se livre sans réticence et s'étale comme un livre ouvert, avec le souci de voir plus clair" (M.G.1, Annex to letter 382, 718).

These conversations are no doubt largely responsible for Martin du Gard's growing firmness in reaction to Gide's strong hopes for Russia. The balance, which had been in Gide's favour, becomes equal again. Martin du Gard attacks his friend's position which is all the more vulnerable because Gide's belief that political involvement may benefit his art is destined to be short-lived.

Martin du Gard's first admonitory letter is prompted by his agreement with Albert Fabre-Luce's article in Pamphlet¹ which prompts the following remark:

...il est pénible de voir s'achever sur 'un acte de foi' une existence dont le meilleur a été consacré à lutter, avec les armes du sens critique, contre les dogmes du conformisme religieux et moral (M.G.1, 3rd April 1933, 555).

Martin du Gard insists on the speciousness of the argument of courage in any sacrifice of one's reason. He realises that Gide's "sympathie pour certaines révolutions des moeurs opérées brutalement par le communisme russe" (M.G.1, 3rd April 1933, 556) has come to him quite naturally but deplores the fact that Gide is no longer his own master because: "Vous avez dû abandonner votre naturelle démarche, qui, quarante ans de suite, a été de zigzaguer entre les extrêmes" (M.G.1, 556).² Not only is Gide being led, but also Martin du Gard believes that his ideas, although genuinely felt, are pitifully lacking in novelty.

Martin du Gard himself has been saved from becoming more than a

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1. "Contre la Manifestation Gide", Le Pamphlet, Friday the 31st March 1933, pp. 9-10. In his article, Fabre-Luce points out how illogical Gide's adhesion to Communism is in light of his past writings. Fabre-Luce also believes that Gide's and others' anti-Fascism is dangerously close to nationalism and a little ridiculous since, in his opinion, Russia will soon be at peace with Germany.
 2. Martin du Gard's reproaches are comparable to those made by Albert Mockel. G./Mo. Corr., 3rd February 1935, p. 313 and p. 315: "Votre adhésion au bolchévisme me déconcerte; elle trouble en moi votre image...parce qu'elle me semble contradictoire à toute votre attitude mentale...Je m'attriste...d'une erreur qui pourrait nous priver des oeuvres de beauté que vous portez encore en vous".

sympathizer by his hatred of blind faith. Gide's role in helping him out of his former tortured indecision is shown when Martin du Gard writes: "En ce moment, à cause de vous, par réaction naturelle, l'évidence du 'contre' domine un peu" (M.G.1, 557).

Martin du Gard is no bourgeois reactionary but his innate caution has been aroused by the fact that Gide's enthusiasm is symptomatic of the times, when: "On put croire qu'à la mode de la conversion au catholicisme, qui, pendant quelque temps, avait paru sévir chez les littérateurs, allait succéder celle de la conversion au communisme".¹

Martin du Gard's own hopes of bringing about a reaction against this new faith in Gide are not high since he realises: "...ces protestations trop véhémentes ne vous toucheront guère, et...pour vous faire réfléchir 'en retour', il faudrait autre chose" (M.G.1, 3rd April 1933, 557). The fate of dialogue, however, is not to be compromised as Martin du Gard promises to be more persuasive another time.

His concern for Gide's literature as well as for the man explains his desire to convince Gide, as he rightly considers that one of the reasons for Gide's political involvement is the latter's feeling that he had nothing more to say in his works. Gide is delighted to hear "ces vérités" (M.G.1, 5th April 1933, 558), but not in a spirit of complete acquiescence. Because Gide sees an outlet for these questions in his Feuillets, however, the Correspondance is deprived of an interesting reply.²

One must look to a later letter from Gide³ to find even the slightest response to that of Martin du Gard. It is significant that Gide should consider the problem from the angle of literature. He agrees with

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1. François Coguel, La Politique des Partis sous la III^e République, Eds. du Seuil, 1946, p. 480. Quoted by George Brachfeld, op. cit., p. 121.
 2. Gide does mention Fabre-Luce in his Journal, expressing his agreement with him. J.1, 10th April 1933, p. 1163: "Donner vent, par trop tôt, aux revendications d'extrême-gauche, si légitimes qu'elles puissent être, c'est inciter Hitler à venir les écraser chez nous, comme il vient de faire en Allemagne". Neither Gide's Journal nor his Oeuvres complètes contain the promised Feuillets.
 3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 15th April 1933, p. 562.

Martin du Gard that he has allowed himself to be manoeuvred but insists that he is quite conscious of this fact. For once, Gide seems quite unworried by the risk of no return which is causing Martin du Gard such anxiety.¹

Thus, Gide explains:

...j'ai dix ans de plus que vous et n'ai déjà plus les mêmes raisons que vous de protéger une oeuvre qui n'est déjà plus à écrire...Je vous l'ai dit: tout cela est, somme toute, l'indirect et lointain résultat d'une défaillance, d'une carence, de la vis poetica (M.G.1, 15th April 1933, 562).

There is a noticeable contradiction in this explanation. The first part seems to suggest that Gide has accomplished all that he had wished to and that his decision to commit himself to politics is voluntary; the words "défaillance" and "carence" used in the second part seem to refute the voluntary nature of Gide's abandonment of a literary axis.

In a later letter prompted by one from Martin du Gard on an article by Jean-Richard Bloch,² Gide explains the "défaillance" of his literature on a non-personal basis. Martin du Gard has been profoundly affected by the Jewish Bloch's destruction of the French artistic ideals of "ordonnance", "mesure", "sobriété", "équilibre" and "équité" (M.G.1, 30th April 1933, 564-565) which are Martin du Gard's own.

While Gide agrees with Bloch that these ideals have been discredited in the eyes of the world by Lacretelle's last works, he places Martin du Gard's Thibault and his Faux-Monnayeurs outside any such criticism.

...nous entrons dans une ère ténébreuse, où les valeurs artistiques, morales, etc., que nous avons en portefeuille, n'auront plus cours...La littérature, les 'beaux arts' pour un long temps, ne seront pas différents de ce qu'ils étaient; tout simplement ils ne seront plus; ils n'auront plus, ne trouveront plus, raison d'être (M.G.1, 2nd May 1933, 566).

This passage shows clearly that, if Martin du Gard's and Gide's principles have no current value, then literature itself is doomed to extinction.

1. G./M.G. Corr., 14th April 1933, p.561.

2. This article appeared in Europe, April 1933.

This is so because the possibility of artistic renewal through the disorder championed by Bloch is discarded totally by Gide who writes: "Car se lancer dans les Sybilla,¹ c'est bien, à mon avis, la plus absurde chose que vous ou moi pourrions faire" (M.G.1, 566). One suspects that, had Gide's opinion of Bloch's work been higher, he might well have attempted, as he has already done, to glean from the other's artistic position those elements helpful to a Gidian renaissance. For once, Gide sees no alternative outwith his own proven values which, however, are no longer accepted by him,² because he feels they are out-dated. When Gide resumes work on Geneviève, therefore, his inability to establish a firm artistic basis to his life is transposed, on a more concrete level, into the inability to write satisfactorily and with ease.³

In considering the factors both personal and external, voluntary and involuntary, which prevented Gide from writing, I think it would be wrong to say that only one is responsible. We must accept that all go towards Gide's lack of production as well as his own admission that: "...pour le bon travail, dès que la vie réelle prend le pas sur l'imaginaire, je ne vau^s plus rien".⁴ Gide is using his letters to Martin du Gard as a source of dialogue almost with himself, as a testing-ground to discover his own views.

The most important factor, however, in Gide's involvement with life and politics is his belief that his main work is behind him, be this a willèd phenomenon or not. Gide himself explains, elliptically, to Martin du Gard why he feels this, when he assimilates the post-humous aspect of his recent writing to his "souci de l'affirmation" (M.G.1, 1st February 1931, 443). A comment made by Louis Martin-Chauffier helps to clarify Gide's own impression: "Gide se laisse aller...dans ses

1. Sybilla is the first tome of Bloch's trilogy, L'Aigle et Ganymède.
2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 25th May 1932, p. 522.
3. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 6th June 1928, p. 362.
3. Ibid, 8th October 1933, p. 581.

oeuvres les plus concertées et dans son journal quotidien, à entasser tout ce qui nourrit son inquiétude, qui est le levain de son génie (et il le sait)".¹ Thus, an end to genuine "inquiétude"² must deprive Gide of the most essential ingredients of his genius.³ The intelligence of the man and the craftsmanship attained by him allow him to continue writing but not without immense difficulty because Gide's "esprit critique" cannot produce the same results as "la nécessité intérieure d'écrire".⁴

In spite of Gide's declaration that the predominance of real life over the imaginary is always to the detriment of his work, he is not above trying to make use of his present preoccupations in his Geneviève.⁵ Moreover, he encourages Martin du Gard to do the same thing with his Thibault.⁶ Thus, when Martin du Gard doubts the general veracity of making Jacques a conscientious objector in the 1914 War, Gide brushes aside such mundane considerations as historical exactitude. With Jacques as a conscientious objector, the Thibault will have "un retentissement considérable" (M.G.1, 8th October 1933, 581) in Gide's opinion and he adds:

L'important c'est que vous y puissiez dire ce qui vous tient à coeur, fut-ce de la manière la plus objective et indirecte. Et voici qui fera plus réfléchir et portera plus de fruit que toutes mes "déclarations"
(M.G.1, 581).

One suspects Gide here of wishing on Martin du Gard a task which he himself has been unable to fulfil. Gide's own artistic problems constitute one of the reasons for his constant interest in Martin du Gard's work

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1. Figaro littéraire, 18th - 24th August 1969, p. 6.
 2. To the concept of "inquiétude", I prefer that of "disponibilité" or a search for Gide's own possibilities.
 3. The more politically conscious Gide of 1935 adds "ignorance et... incuriosité (des questions sociales)" as other essentials to work, Littérature engagée, 1950, p. 72.
 4. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 14th October 1928, p. 374.
 5. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 25th May 1932, p. 522.
 6. Ibid, 2nd May 1933, p. 581.

and the encouragement he derives from it at this time. While Gide's own pen has been indolent, his artistic life has continued vicariously through Martin du Gard and, when Gide resumes work on Genevieve, he admits that Martin du Gard's example has stimulated him.¹ Gide's advice to his friend has thus had a retroactive effect upon him, since he tells Martin du Gard that, for the moment, he has abandoned political activism and is totally immersed in his work. Perhaps Gide hopes to emulate his own wishes for Martin du Gard's work by achieving more with Genevieve than through his political declarations.

Almost six months later, however, Gide is no nearer solving his original difficulties in writing Genevieve. An attempt to incorporate the mysticism of Charles Du Bos into the character of Genevieve and to use his notes on his period at the Foyer franco-belge² meet with Maria Van Rysselberghe's frank disapproval and Gide is forced into admitting that:

Tout au fond est très médiocre...je me sers très mal de la réalité, des documents, et suis beaucoup meilleur quand j'invente. J'écris tout cela contre ma pente naturelle...à mon âge, on ne se refait pas une esthétique, j'ai passé ma vie à essayer de quitter la réalité pour recréer la vie. J'ai tort, tout à fait, de vouloir entrer dans des formes connues. Si je ne puis plus en trouver une à moi, mieux vaut ne plus écrire. Quoi? pour essayer de sauver quelques bons passages, donner un énorme labeur pour n'aboutir qu'à une chose 'pas mal'?...Non, j'abandonne Genevieve; si elle doit vivre, elle reviendra autrement. Mieux vaut penser à autre chose; peut-être que, le printemps aidant, quelque chose fleurira, il faut parfois si peu pour me faire partir...une réplique...une nuance entrevue...³

One wonders if the stage-production of Perséphone has not provided Gide with the necessary "nuance" since, not many weeks after his telling Madame Van Rysselberghe that he will abandon his work, he puts to Martin du Gard, his other main "réactif", the suggestion that Genevieve might benefit from dramatic form.⁴ Gide's letter to Martin du Gard shows that

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 8th October 1933, p. 581.

2. Where Gide worked during World War One helping refugees.

3. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 8th April 1934, pp. 371-372.

4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 12th May 1934, p. 613.

he has now reacted against his own view that it would be wrong to expend his energy in order to save the few good passages of this work which, he believes, are to be found in the dialogue. Gide sees a serious drawback in resorting to dramatic art, however, in the lack of "intrigue" (M.G.1, 12th May 1934, 613) which, to his mind, is essential to a play.

Gide may have hoped for a more encouraging attitude from Martin du Gard than that of Maria Van Rysselberghe to his new plans. If so, he is to be disappointed. Although Martin du Gard favours dialogue form, he is swift to realise that this is no solution to a very basic problem which is not one of "intrigue" but of "sujet" (M.G.1, 19th May 1934, 614). He expresses his belief that Gide has many valuable ideas but has been looking in vain for more than two years for the necessary subject-matter to give these ideas substance, and, whether Gide writes a play or a novel, he needs a subject. This is why Martin du Gard advises Gide to give up his hopeless search and to confine himself to a work like Prétextes which has not the same requirements as an artistic work.

Such lengthy discussion on artistic matters may seem out of place at this time in Gide's life. However, they form an essential backcloth to Gide's commitment to Communism. Gide always remains strongly attached to his art and, even in the heat of political involvement, there are interludes where he deliberately disengages himself in order to resume a purely literary role when writing to Martin du Gard.

The difficult development of Genevieve is exemplary of Gide's dilemma, which consists in his desire to reconcile his art with his present preoccupations coupled with his inability to accept the necessary aesthetic change this would involve. Correspondence with Martin du Gard is important to Gide at this time not only because his friend is sympathetic to the anguish caused by these problems but also because he remains primarily concerned with the fate of Gide's work and does not fail to resist Gide when he feels that the latter is obeying external, inartistic

impulses in his writing.

Martin du Gard sees only too clearly how irreconcilable are Gide's present life and the continued quality of his art. Therefore, he encourages his friend to refuse artistic compromise for the sake of politics just as, hitherto, Gide himself had refused to make a similar sacrifice for the sake of Catholicism. Although Gide makes no reply in his correspondence to Martin du Gard's comments on Geneviève, his later declarations at a meeting of the Union pour la Verité¹ show that he has come to terms with his own inability to give artistic expression to political ideas.

On a political level, the same problem is discussed by the two friends,² the pretext being Gide's reply to Fabre-Luce's article in Pamphlet, which he submits to Martin du Gard's scrutiny. The latter writes back:

Le fond de l'histoire, c'est que vous sentez confusement qu'il faut concilier le communisme et l'individualisme pour que la vie humaine soit possible sous ce nouveau régime; mais vous n'avez pas encore trouvé comment
(M.G.1, 17th April 1933, 563).

Thus, both politically and artistically, Gide is struggling with the "how" of providing a unifying factor between his intellectual beliefs and his inner needs. For Martin du Gard, there can be no identification of Communism with individualism and, in a letter to Dorothy Bussy, he writes that his frequent warnings to Gide are motivated by Gide's blinding himself to all that opposes him to Communism,³ as represented by Stalinist Russia.

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1. On André Gide et notre Temps, the meeting took place in the Rue Visconti on the 26th January 1935. Littérature engagée, 1950 p. 64: "Que l'entente de l'art et de la doctrine communiste soit possible, je veux le croire, Mais il me faut avouer que le point d'accord et de fusion, je n'ai su jusqu'à présent l'obtenir - en raison aussi de longues habitudes prises. C'est pourquoi je n'ai plus rien produit depuis quatre ans. Qu'il y ait sacrifice, cela n'est pas douteux".
 2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 3rd April 1933, pp. 555-558.
 3. Ibid, Annex to letter 457, p. 729.

Thus, Martin du Gard's main criticism of Gide's letter to Fabre-Luce is that Gide claims to have found the common point between these opposite concepts without, forasmuch, enlightening his reader as to the elusive "comment" (M.G.1, 563). Martin du Gard points out that it would be more truthful to say:

..."ce sont deux opposés: je ne veux pas renoncer à l'un (individualisme) et je suis très attiré par l'autre (communisme); en fait j'arrive tant bien que mal (et assez confusement) à laisser cohabiter en moi cette contradiction. J'ai depuis longtemps l'habitude de ces cohabitations inconfortables. Et je sais, par expérience, qu'à force de vouloir ne renoncer ni à l'eau, ni au feu, on finit par trouver un accommodement" (M.G.1, 728).

Martin du Gard is thus questioning Gide's sincerity in allowing his reader to suppose that he has found a generally acceptable theory of reconciliation whereas, in fact, he is in the highly personal and momentarily uncomfortable situation of one who has not found an "accommodement" between two opposites.

So convincing is Martin du Gard's argument that Gide agrees entirely with him¹ and decides not to send his reply to Fabre-Luce. It is not until Gide receives from Martin du Gard a letter by Ermiloff² that he shows excited confidence in the correctness of his position, now confirmed by Ermiloff and Ehrenbourg, the Russian writer, which is that: "...l'individualisme bien compris et le communisme bien compris ne doivent pas se dresser l'un contre l'autre" (M.G.1, 30th May 1934, 615). Gide believes this to be the accepted standpoint among literary men in Russia.

Martin du Gard, on the other hand, is more ready to attach importance to the contrary point of view expressed in a manifesto³ sent him by Gide and which, he feels, portrays the true face of Russia.⁴ Gide's

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1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 26th April 1933, p. 564. Nonetheless, Gide later finds an image to bring these two opposites together, J.l, Feuillets, p. 1293: "'Individualisme et communisme...comment pouvez-vous prétendre réconcilier ces deux adversaires, fût-ce en vous-même? me disait en riant mon ami Martin du Gard. C'est l'eau et le feu.' De leurs fiancailles naît la vapeur".
 2. A Russian critic who was editor (or director) of the Moscow Literary Gazette.
 3. Of the Association of writers in the Russian tongue.
 4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 2nd June 1934, p. 617.

hopes for a return to individual values in art are obviously suspected by Martin du Gard of being an illusion. Indeed, he is not far from wondering if the right-wing movement, Ordre nouveau, is not right in its assumption that intolerance in Russia is not just a primary step in establishing the revolution but something which has come to stay. If this is so, used as Gide is to experiencing simultaneously opposite points of view, an "accommodement" between his art and his political principles can not only be to the detriment of the former but also to his personal integrity.

Indeed, Martin du Gard's next scolding is due to Gide's growing tendency to bring everything back to Communism which, Martin du Gard seems to believe, is not a natural instinct in Gide but is caused by the influence of his comrades in political arms.¹ The pretext for this scolding is the political motivation behind Gide's projected visit to Dahomey² and Gide's unilateral decision that a letter written by Martin du Gard³ should be improved upon and published in Lu. To this, Martin du Gard replies:

Savez-vous, cher vieux compère, ce que je vous dirais si j'étais un peu méchant? Que je ne suis pas comme certains, enrages à tirer écrit public de la moindre page qui leur échappe, du moindre paragraphe de journal intime, de la moindre réponse à une lettre...Et que je me défends obstinément contre cette tentation, parce que j'en arriverais bientôt à ne plus pouvoir griffonner un mot vraiment naturel ou gratuit, à ne plus pouvoir prendre mon stylo sans penser que je m'adresse au monde attentif et à la postérité aux aguets!

(M.G.1, 5th November 1933, 588).

This reply shows that Martin du Gard believes Gide is no longer an artist since his life is now totally submitted to his current preoccupations. For Martin du Gard, implicit danger of this position both for Gide the man and the artist is the loss of his essential virtues.⁴ It

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 5th November 1933, p. 589.

2. Where Marcel de Coppet, a mutual friend of Gide and Martin du Gard, is Governor.

3. That of the 5th November 1933.

4. Martin du Gard believes these reside in Gide's tendency to "zig-zag" between extremes as the guarantee of his critical spirit.

It is noticeable that Martin du Gard's reproaches are similar to those of Francis James,¹ but have an entirely different motivation. James wanted Gide to write of the permanent beauty of Christianity; Martin du Gard wants Gide to write of the complex beauty of his life which can only be done by artistic transposition.²

Plainly, even during Gide's Communist phase, the basic source of dialogue has remained unchanged for Martin du Gard who does not indulge in straight political discussion but concentrates rather on the consequences of political involvement for Gide's art. This explains the strength of his arguments against Gide who is still struggling to resolve this problem. When the subject of politics is broached more directly, however, Gide gains in strength, adopting a tentatively persuasive role.

This is to be seen when Gide replies to a long letter of self-explanation from Martin du Gard.³ The latter is experiencing difficulty in writing his Thibault because of the disturbing effect of his own form of political involvement. All Martin du Gard's sympathy goes to those engaged in the fight to destroy Capitalist society but who wish for revolutionary methods and a new form of society which have no basis in the structure of Russian Communism. Ideally, Martin du Gard feels, the West should make its own "véritable réforme révolutionnaire" (M.G.1, 13th March 1934, 600).

Gide writes back to this and another letter asking for advice on Les Thibault.⁴ Since he is planning to visit Martin du Gard, the letter

1. G./J. Corr., October 1906, p. 243: "Ce fut toujours ta grande erreur que d'expliquer dans presque chacune de tes oeuvres à quel mobile tu obéissais".

2. See: above, p.233.

3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 13th March 1934, pp. 599-600.

4. Ibid, 14th March 1934. Martin du Gard is thinking of ending his Thibault in the form of Jean Barois. In fact, Martin du Gard notes: "Sans refaire Barois, j'ai quitté le ton récit", Note 2, p. 600.

is short but at the same time ambiguous in its comment on Martin du Gard's position: "Tout ce que vous me dites au sujet du communisme me paraît d'une grande sagesse; mais qu'il est difficile, aujourd'hui, pressé de toutes parts et par tant d'événements, de nuancer" (M.G.1, 16th March 1934, 602).

One feels that, although Gide understands only too well Martin du Gard's "sagesse", he is not totally convinced that it is opportune. It is to be remembered that this is the time of the Stavisky affair,¹ and bloody right-wing riots of the 6th February 1934 against the government. Daladier's government was forced to resign. In face of this threat from the Right, the Leftist organisations demonstrated their anger in turn, three days later, and, on the 12th February, there was a general strike. After these events, "Le raidissement du pays en deux blocs antagonistes s'accentua".² Gide's attitude must be viewed in conjunction with the internal politics of France at that time.

Nonetheless, commitment is not an easy bed to lie upon. This is borne out by Gide's next, longer letter.³ He himself, when faced with the accumulation of books, manifestos, and pamphlets sent him by the various political parties, experiences the desire to leave Paris where it is impossible, Gide writes, to work, think, or breathe. This picture of total suffocation of the critical qualities necessary to the artist is counter-balanced. The political man in Gide attempts to persuade Martin du Gard to sign a petition organised by Walter, the ^{of the} secretary.

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1. Stavisky was an adventurer of Russian origin who had taken French nationality. After coming out of prison in 1928, he took hold of the Credit municipal de Bayonne, emitted bonds, which were bought by insurance companies, and refused to pay them back. The scandal broke in 1933 when it was discovered that Stavisky had connived with several politicians. Stavisky himself was found dead near Chamonix.
 2. ^{Claude} Fohlen, La France de l'Entre-Deux-Guerres, 1917-1939, Castermann, 1966, p. 111.
 3. G./M.G. Corr., 18th - 20th March 1934, pp. 602-603.

Comité de vigilance anti-fasciste.¹ The arguments Gide uses to sway Martin du Gard are obviously the response to Martin du Gard's declaration that he is against Communism. Martin du Gard should sign "non précisément pour le communisme, mais contre l'effroyable et systématique entreprise de camouflage de la vérité déclenchée par la tragique nuit du 6 février" (M.G.1, 20th March 1934, 603), and Gide adds somewhat Biblically: "Ne pas se mettre avec ceux-ci, c'est faire le jeu des autres" (M.G., 603).

Martin du Gard is unmoved by Gide's attempts at persuasion which he has reinforced by sending Martin du Gard a letter written by Ramon Fernandez. Martin du Gard's letter shows that he is no longer so unsure of his attitude towards current events as before. His quite unjustified feelings of incompetence and inferiority in this domain have decreased since, unlike Gide, his artistic position is strong. Martin du Gard insists that he, the novelist, has nothing in common with Fernandez the essayist, moralist, critic and teacher who, having chosen the role of "conseiller" (M.G.1, 22nd March 1934, 605), is perfectly justified in informing the public of his views.

Martin du Gard points out that his position is quite the contrary. He sums up the basis of his life and work as a refusal of bias, a refusal to portray in his works only his own sentiments and, wherever he has allowed himself this luxury, it has never been "sans les mettre en dialogue et sans donner largement la parole à l'adversaire, avec des armes égales (et sans conclure)" (M.G.1, 605).

Martin du Gard regrets the fact that they live in an age which no longer believes in either "libéralisme" or "arbitres" (M.G.1, 605).

1. This movement was founded at the beginning of March 1934 by three teachers, Langevin, Paul Rivet and Alain, belonging to the Communist, Socialist and Radical parties respectively.

Nonetheless, he has already taken a stand to the extent that:

Four l'instant, je ne suis encore qu'un 'anti': anti-capitaliste, anti-étatiste, anti-militariste...Ce n'est pas un mol oreiller, je vous assure, que ces velleités purement négatives. C'est très inconfortable de savoir seulement ce qu'on ne veut pas!" (M.G.l, 22nd March 1934, 607).

Among the things Martin du Gard does not want is the unusually pacifying Walter of the anti-Fascist manifesto and he ends with a customary scolding:

Moi aussi, je cause avec Gide, je me dispute même avec lui, bien souvent. Et ce qu'il me fait perdre du temps, le grand bougre!...Il risque tout, et le meilleur de lui-même, à rester dans la mêlée, avec ses armes insuffisantes et son coeur prompt à s'emouvoir! Mais le mot "risque" est une de ces formules magiques qui suffisent à lui tourner la tête...(M.G.l, 607).

It is certainly true that, as Martin du Gard suggests, Gide's love of risk is partially responsible for his entry into politics. Gide was not unaware that his adhesion to Communist precepts was an anti-Establishment and hence anti-Catholic attitude; as George Brachfeld remarks:

One may wonder to what extent the rejection by the Catholics and the encouragement from the Communists prompted Gide on a course of action that would most certainly infuriate the former while providing a blatant proof, in their eyes, of their adversary's perversity.¹

Martin du Gard's strength lies in caution, the aim of which is to preserve his artistic ideals. Gide's weakness, in Martin du Gard's opinion, is his love of risk, the end result of which will be the destruction of the best part of him - his critical spirit which has produced his best work.

The weakness of Gide's position is, in my opinion, to be seen in his reply to Martin du Gard. It becomes obvious that his political involvement is perhaps less a personal need than an externally influenced necessity, since Gide blithely admits to having been taken over by political

1. Op. cit., p. 123.

forces rather than having chosen his position completely voluntarily as one would expect from a man of Gide's age and critical spirit. To justify himself, Gide quotes a comment made by Fernandez which is reminiscent of sentiments expressed by Moliere's Don Juan:

'Il est des moments où l'on se voit forcé de prendre position afin de sauver son honneur d'homme, même si cette position entraîne des acceptations auxquelles l'esprit s'astreint difficilement' (M.G.1, 25th March 1934, 608).

Martin du Gard, Gide writes, will not escape the necessity to adopt a stand.¹ The former's previous letter² has shown that he himself realises this. However, it is clear that he intends to protect his art for as long as possible and that when he does succumb to the world of politics, it will only be after a long and critical struggle with himself and, one feels, after he has completed his artistic work.

Gide is right, to a certain extent, when he likens Martin du Gard's position to his own but wrong when he adds: "Je ne vois guère, dans votre lettre, qu'une différence d'âge pour nous séparer. Si je suis plus avancé que vous, c'est dans la vie" (M.G.1, 607). Nonetheless, Gide's fallacious argument brings him to a correct conclusion.. Literally, Gide has allowed himself to enter life's whirlwind whereas Martin du Gard has deliberately locked the door to temptation.

Gide's lack of caution in accepting essentially external pressure to commitment³ is shown when he admits that his inner self is unchanged. Moreover, Gide has come to realise that he must sacrifice his art since "accommodement" with sources external to himself is impossible.⁴ This is why, whenever Gide wishes to write, he has to detach himself literally

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1. In his reply to Gide's letter, Martin du Gard rather pathetically agrees. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 27th March 1934, p. 609.
 2. Ibid, 22nd March 1934, p. 605.
 3. Namely, the events of the 6th February in France, which helped to bring the Left together, and the rise of Fascist Germany, which had withdrawn from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations in October 1933.
 4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 25th March 1934, "Si - écrire", p. 608.

from his present mode of life and, in this letter, he writes: "Il me tarde de quitter Paris...pour me remettre au travail - au...dialogue" (M.G.1, 25th March 1934, 608). Work-dialogue is thus an escape from the tiring and necessary unilinearity of political involvement. The recognition that politics do not correspond to an inner need causes the desire for involvement to flee and explains Gide's need for correspondence with Martin du Gard at this time because the latter, too, represents the repose of dialogue¹ for one who is not as convinced as might seem.

For some time after this, Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard reflects this retreat into art² and his only difference with Martin du Gard is about his Journal. An entry of the 3rd October 1920 on Martin du Gard's Souvenirs d'enfance allows the reader to infer that Martin du Gard had had homosexual tendencies.³ Since this interpretation is entirely false, Martin du Gard asks Gide to suppress the passage in question.⁴ Gide is extremely hurt by Martin du Gard's accusations that he frequently falsifies the thoughts of his friends in his Journal,⁵ adding: "quel discrédit total elles jettent sur mon Journal dans l'esprit d'un futur lecteur de votre correspondance!" (M.G.1, 10th July 1934, 625). Gide does not deny that all his writing is subject to an "indice de réfraction" (M.G.1, 626).⁶ To avoid even unintentionally distorting the truth, Gide has submitted his Journal to Maria Van Rysselberghe and has suppressed passages on her advice. Gide writes courteously that Martin du Gard's advice is no less important to him but adds significantly that he knows Martin du Gard is "quelque peu opposé, par principe, à ce genre de publication" (M.G.1, 626).

1. See: NAG, pp. 107-108.

2. During which Gide works on Geneviève and Robert ou l'Intérêt général.

3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 5th July 1934, pp. 624-625.

4. Ibid, Annex 2 to letter 485, p. 732. The passage does not appear in the Journal.

5. This is not a new reproach. See: Ibid, 12th June 1930, p. 402.

6. See: NAG, February 1920, "Il s'applique - je suis ainsi", p. 20.

When Martin du Gard made similar reproaches before, Gide had promised to appear before his "tribunal intérieur" (M.G.1, 15th June 1930, 404). In fact, both then and now, Gide's "tribunal" was perhaps not so much his conscience as Maria Van Rysselberghe¹ who was more willing to accept the elliptical presentation of "propos-trempins" (M.G.1, 12th June 1930, 402). Thus Gide refuses to believe that Martin du Gard is right. This does not detract from the sincerity of a statement from the same letter: "Pour chacun de nous deux notre amitié ne serait pas de si grand profit, si nous abondions dans le même sens" (M.G.1, 626). As I have already pointed out, Martin du Gard, so different from Gide, forces the latter into considering an opposite point of view to his own, thus ensuring the intellectual honesty of a final decision.²

Like Gide, however, Martin du Gard refuses to alter his opinion which is that Gide often gives his readers "une idée foncièrement inexacte et cela, en n'écrivant que des choses strictement exactes" (M.G.1, 12th July 1934, 627). The most curious part of Martin du Gard's reply is that he seems to believe that Gide is excusable because he is writing his Journal entirely for himself and with no thought of publication. How does one explain this when part of Gide's Journal is soon to be published in his Oeuvres complètes and when Gide himself, in his previous letter, makes it quite clear that his correspondence with Martin du Gard will not escape a similar fate. It is possible that Martin du Gard credits Gide with the power to abstract himself from any such considerations while he is actually writing in his Journal. In my opinion, this is, however, very unlikely. In his correspondence^{nce} with Gide, Martin du Gard has already upbraided him for his inability to forget posterity.³ Moreover, Martin du Gard's Notes sur André Gide leaves us in no doubt as

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 15th June 1930, p. 99, and 9th July 1934, p. 598. Gide says of Maria Van Rysselberghe: "...vous, c'est moi, mais un moi resté plus difficile", M.V.R., Cahiers 6, 19th October 1941, p. 278.

2. See: NAG, p. 70.

3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 5th November 1933, p. 588.

to Martin du Gard's understanding that Gide's smallest note is written with, behind it, "la hantise du jugement qui, 'à l'avenir', sera porté sur lui".¹

A more plausible explanation of Martin du Gard's apparent naivety seems to me to be his very desire to make Gide think. Both he and Gide are convinced they are right. Martin du Gard himself knows that too vehement a letter will never make Gide think "'en retour'" (M.G.1, 3rd April 1933, 557). It is possible that he hopes to achieve more by his apparently innocent statement.

This, however, is not the outcome. Gide's prior unwillingness to write fully on this subject now becomes complete and irritable refusal of epistolary discussion. While he agrees to talk to Martin du Gard about the question, it is on the condition that: "Nous... tâcherons de la ramener, profitablement pour chacun de nous, à une question d'esthétiques différentes" (M.G.1, 22nd August 1934, 629).²

Gide's refusal to discuss in writing reminds one of his own comment on a visit to the Catholic convert Jacques Copeau:

'Je n'ai que trop longtemps cherché la conciliation et à plier à autrui ma pensée. Je prends conscience de ce qu'elle est, en sentant à quoi elle s'oppose'... On peut interminablement discuter. Cela ne sert à rien. Je m'y refuse. Je ne tiens pas à prouver que j'ai raison, ni qu'ils ont tort.³

His comment on verbal discussion helps to explain the role of dialogue for him. Discussion is useless to Gide once he has firmly made up his mind about a question and when further discussion would have destructive results only. Where it involves exploration and discovery of a position, however, one finds that Gide is ready for it. Gide, in this case, has

1. NAG, p. 128.

2. See: M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 2nd September 1934, p. 399: "Tout cela vient d'une différence foncière: Martin s'intéresse à l'homme général, moi au particulier, ce sont des esthétiques différentes, des tempéraments opposés. Ce qu'on écrit dans un journal, c'est un trait qui frappe, ce n'est pas un portrait".

3. J.1, 2nd November 1930, p. 1014.

made up his mind but seems not to have found a suitably strong position to support his decision. Irritation has prevented Martin du Gard's letter from arousing immediate thought in Gide who thus prefers to delay and change the nature of discussion.

So sensitive is Gide to Martin du Gard's criticism of his Journal that, to a certain extent, he may be accused of bad faith in his desire to place the debate on an artistic level. Gide's argument of an "indice de réfraction" is valid for his fictional works but not entirely so, I feel, for those parts of his Journal where he mentions his friends and which he intends to publish. It is all very well to expect one's readers to participate in fictional works by the mental effort of decoding but has Gide the right to expect the same from the readers of his Journal at the same time as he lays claims to "la vérité historique"?

Martin du Gard has raised a question of primordial importance which, in my opinion, forms a part of their debate on objectivity. In ^{the} first place, objectivity was assimilated by Martin du Gard to the unbiased portrayal of life's richness. The Faux-Monnayeurs proved to him that this was not Gide's domain but that he excelled in those parts of his work which were prompted by inner needs. Once Martin du Gard accepted this factor, he directed his criticisms against Gide's attempts to give his works objectivity by using his intellect when a true source of richness lay within him. Martin du Gard thus realises that Gide's inner life rather than life itself is the inspiration best suited to Gide's work. Although Martin du Gard accepts the "élément subjectif" (M.G.1, 10th October 1925, 276) in Gide's work, he never fully comes to terms with their lack of amplitude and the fact that the same two phenomena recur in Gide's Journal is quite inadmissible to him. Subjectivity may be acceptable in fiction but not in a document aspiring to "la vérité

historique". Gide's very sincerity is being questioned here¹ and his inability to reply satisfactorily explains part of his irritation.

After this skirmish, the correspondence becomes more peaceful as both writers are hard at work.² Martin du Gard's role in helping Gide to write is considerable. Not only his criticisms of Gide's involvement with politics but also his example and encouragement are instrumental in Gide's return to "dialogue" (M.G.1, 25th March 1934, 608). Martin du Gard's admiration for Gide's Pages de Journal and his Oeuvres complètes³ prompts Gide into setting up his friend's photo before him because: "Il me plaît ^à de travailler sous votre regard" (M.G.1, 20th September 1933, 633). The effects of Gide's diligence are to be seen in his correspondence. Gide's letters become shorter and, to his shame, less well-written.⁴ Gide rightly contrasts his letters of this time to the marvelous ones he receives from Martin du Gard who does not, like Gide, see correspondence as an interference when he is working, but writes at length of his work.

Indeed, Gide confesses: "...à moins de parler politique, je ne vois RIEN d'autre à vous dire" (M.G.1, 19th November 1934, 636). Martin du Gard, however, begs Gide not to disturb the peace he has found in his art and in the belief that: "...prendre parti est une nécessité de l'action, non de la pensée, ni de l'art" (M.G.1, 28th November 1934, 637).

In his next letter, Gide writes only of literary matters⁵ and it is Martin du Gard himself who reintroduces the topic of politics in a letter full of irritation against any form of faith be it religious or political.⁶ He berates Gide, therefore for his speech on the 23rd October⁷ in the

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1. IP, "La publication de l'Envers du Journal de Gide n'a fait que souligner brutalement la part de mythe dont s'accorde la sincérité gidienne, comme tout autre sincérité". p. 12.
 2. G./M.G. Corr., 11th September 1934, p. 631.
 3. Ibid, 15th September 1934, p. 633.
 4. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 19th November 1934, p. 636.
 5. Gide has almost finished Robert ou l'Intérêt général and writes: "J'ai rarement travaillé avec autant de joie", G./M.G. Corr.1, 3rd December 1934, p. 639.
 6. Ibid, 31st December 1934, pp. 640-644.
 7. "Littérature et Révolution", Littérature engagée, 1950, pp. 56-63.

following forthright terms:

...vous ne serez pas surpris que j'aie eu grand mal à encaisser...la phrase sur 'la vérité'¹...Si je vous avais tenu, à ce moment-là, je vous aurais copieusement injurié!...L'argument suprême de tous les croyants, l'excuse de tous les Inquisiteurs: parce que c'est la vérité; tandis que les autres, c'est l'erreur
(M.G.1, 31st December 1934, 641).

Thus, Martin du Gard is as much against pre-conceived truth as he is against what he feels to be Gide's all too personal form of truth. More and more clearly one sees that for Martin du Gard ideology and morality are enemies of truth which is never one-sided but as complex as life itself.

Gide's ability to assimilate truth to the greater part of an ideological system is to be explained perhaps by his tendency to explore in depth rather than in breadth. Gide can accommodate himself to Communism by yet another "indice de réfraction" and thus believe that his is following the path of truth. The highly personal nature of Gide's involvement with Communism is shown when Gide explains in his next letter² that he will remain faithful to Communism only as long as Communism remains faithful to the truth which, Gide agrees with Martin du Gard, is totally compromised by faith and mysticism and depends on the necessary safeguard of one's critical spirit.

Martin du Gard also warns Gide that the bourgeois artist has no long-term place in the Revolution and, indeed, insists that the intellectual is "l'ennemi-né" (M.G.1, 31st December 1934, 641) of Communism. Gide's reply, when he mentions the progress of his work, is the corollary of this point of view:

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1. Lit. eng. , p. 58: "Mais comme la cause de la vérité se confond dans mon esprit, dans notre esprit, avec celle de la Révolution...".
 2. Ibid; 14 th January 1935, pp. 9-11.

Les préoccupations qui m'habitent sont on ne peut plus préjudiciables à l'oeuvre d'art...et c'est parce que j'ai laissé celles-ci envahir ma pièce que cette pièce est ratée...Même chose pour mon roman. Chassé du ciel, en service chez Admète, Apollon se dépouille de ses rayons (M.G.2, 14th January 1935,9).¹

Gide's art in the service of Communism is worthless in his eyes and neither his play Robert nor Geneviève will be published until they have been adapted to Gide's satisfaction.

Gide is less hesitant about publishing Le XIIIe Arbre in spite of Martin du Gard's reproach that he is unable to resist the temptation of making use of his slightest word. For Martin du Gard, Le XIIIe Arbre will add nothing to Gide's work. In fact, this little play does bring a new, although unimportant element to Gide's work, since it shows that he is capable of writing a farce, albeit an intellectual one. Of all Gide's plays, this is the one which most clearly belongs to theatrical tradition, where Gide is most conscious of stage-effects.

While Gide recognises that his play is not excellent, he states his belief that he is no literary pontiff and, therefore, has a perfect right to amuse himself by publishing this unimportant but not dishonourable little play which is devoid of any of his present preoccupations.² The publication of Le XIIIe Arbre appears to be contradictory to Gide's desire with Robert and Geneviève, to publish only what is fitting to his standards. It is to be remembered, however, that Gide is caught between the desire to produce artistic works and his political beliefs and that he has not found the means to reconcile these contradictions. Thus, it is only by leaving aside his deepest preoccupations which are the usual, if rarely immediate, source of his art, that Gide can produce and this

1. It is amusing to contrast this last sentence with Gide's speech, "Littérature et Révolution", where Gide claims that "Apollon employé chez Admète" is a Fascist prerogative and is unworthy of the U.S.S.R., Littérature engagée, 1950, p. 58. Gide expresses the same sentiments to Albert Mockel as to Martin du Gard, G./Mo. Corr., 6th February 1935, p. 317.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 14th January 1935, pp. 9-10.

explains the publication of Le XIIIe Arbre during his period of involvement with Communism. In fact, this play is not entirely divorced from Gide's preoccupations of the moment but these appear clearly in an incidental way only, as when the Countess asks: "Est-ce qu'il ne vaut pas mieux ignorer les misères que nous ne pouvons pas secourir?"¹

Martin du Gard comes back to the attack in a later letter² where he also expresses some disappointment with Acqua Santa. After insisting that Gide has made a serious error in publishing this work, Martin du Gard goes on to tell him that he has no right to amuse himself since:

Noblesse oblige. Aujourd'hui plus que jamais. Vous, si attentif à soigner votre figure, si peu indifférent aux gages qu'on peut prendre sur vous, vous devez faire attention en ce moment (M.G.2, 30th April 1935, pp. 26-27).

As with Martin du Gard's previous letter of criticism,³ Gide greets this warning with the same sincere pleasure, since he realises that these reproaches are motivated by Martin du Gard's very friendship for him. Gide is in entire agreement with Martin du Gard's comments on Acqua Santa but continues to disagree with him about the XIIIe Arbre. He explains that he regrets Martin du Gard's insistence because his own refusal to change his mind may be interpreted as obstinacy which is far from being the case. Gide is supported by Madame Van Rysselberghe and others who are unused to flattery and, he tells Martin du Gard, his play helps to show that he is not hypnotised by social problems to the point of being unable to joke.

To indicate the foundation of his dismissal of Martin du Gard's views, Gide also evokes their letters on the passage in Gide's Journal relating to Martin du Gard⁴ where Gide yielded to his friend's arguments without forasmuch being convinced by them.⁵ Martin du Gard and not himself is

1. André Gide. Théâtre, 1951, p. 337.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 30th April 1935, pp. 25 - 26.

3. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 31st December 1934, pp. 640 - 644.

4. See: Ibid., letters of the 10th and 12th July and the 22nd August 1934, pp. 624-629.

5. It is interesting to note that this question has still not been solved since Gide writes: "...nous en reparlerons un jour", G./M.G. Corr. 2, 5th May 1935, p. 28.

guilty of obstinate conviction in Gide's eyes. Although Gide does not agree with Martin du Gard's advice and reminds him that it is wise to leave everyone "le soin de sa vie" (M.G.2, 5th May 1935, 28), he insists that Martin du Gard continue to take his interests thus to heart.

Indeed, Martin du Gard's constant vigilance as regards the figure of Gide the man and the artist is one of the reasons why Gide most appreciates his friendship. Faced with the high standards expected of him by his friend, Gide is in no risk of becoming complacent. Here, however, Gide protests against what is obviously felt to be interference on Martin du Gard's part and one is reminded of Gide's agreement with Ibsen that one's friends are dangerous not because of what they make you do but because of what they prevent you from doing.¹

Martin du Gard's reply² is rather curious. He sees in Gide's reaction a hyper-sensitivity which I, for one, find hard to discern in Gide's letter.³ Martin du Gard has considered abandoning his "querelles" of the XIIIe Arbre and the indiscretion and deformation of Gide's Journal but believes that, were he to do so, their friendship would suffer:

...dans son expression; dans son rayonnement, qui ne va pas sans un libre jeu de franchise et même un certain manque d'égards. Si je devais ne plus pouvoir penser tout haut, si je devais peser et soupeser l'expression de mes réactions, vous connaissez assez mon temperament pour comprendre que ce serait quitter le plan de l'amitié véritable pour passer sur le plan de la relation amicale

(M.G.2, 7th May 1935, 30).

Martin du Gard obviously thinks that Gide is ready to refuse the continuation of dialogue. Rather than see this happen, Martin du Gard promises to soften his written attacks while Gide must try to be less sensitive to them.

Gide replies to assure his friend that he is not in the least offended but that he refuses to go into lengthy discussion since:

1. J.1, 16th December 1917, p. 642.
2. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 7th May 1935, pp. 29-30.
3. Ibid, 5th May 1935, pp. 27-29.

"...vous n'êtes pas type à vous laisser convaincre" (M.G.2, 18th May 1935, 31). However, Gide adds:

...n'allez pas, pour cela, croire devoir moucheter vos fleurets de discussion ou feutrer vos gants de boxe affectueuse! au grand détriment de nos francs rapports. Tout est fichu si nous n'osons plus être, l'un vis-à-vis de l'autre, naturels, et si notre amitié doit exiger des soins de plante rare. Croyez que je la sens en moi des plus robustes; et que, de plus elle m'est devenue indispensable (M.G.2, 31),

thus showing that he desires the very frankness which Martin du Gard feels he is unable to stand. Indeed, insofar as Martin du Gard's views on literary matters are concerned, Gide would feel lost without them. Gide needs dialogue but not discussion when both parties know their own minds and have no intention of changing them.

Reassured, Martin du Gard shows his customary frankness in his disapproval of the tone of Gide's letter addressed to Potemkin¹ on behalf of Victor Serge.² Perhaps, also, Martin du Gard feels on safer ground when discussing politics, since the contradictions which exist between Gide's personality and his political figure make him desirous of dialogue.

Thus, Martin du Gard allows full expression to his dislike of faith and he describes Gide's tone in his letter to Potemkin as "celui d'un néophyte...d'un homme qui a 'fait sa soumission'" (M.G.2, 6th July 1935, 38). Despite the undeniable humility and abnegation of Gide's position, Martin du Gard believes that these are not the virtues best suited to the influential André Gide with his "passé de pensée critique libre et insurgée" (M.G.2, 38), and that, indeed, they are not natural to him but a form of intoxication.

1. The Russian Ambassador in Paris.

2. Victor Serge was a writer of mixed Russian and Polish origin. After spending his late boyhood and adolescence in Belgium and Paris where he was in contact with Socialist and Anarchist circles, he went to Russia after the October Revolution. He became an open oppositionist later and, like many Trotskyists was put out of the Party. He was deported to the back of beyond in Russia, and was let out of the country by Stalin principally because of the campaign for his release in France, in which L'École émancipée, a liberal paper of the thirties, played an important part.

Gide explains to Martin du Gard that the submissive tone of this letter was partly due to his own character and partly due to opportunism.¹ Thus, Gide is not a victim of faith. However, he makes no attempt to reply to Martin du Gard's wishes for other qualities more in keeping with his character and his public figure.

Martin du Gard, however, seems to see a reply in Gide's Nouvelles Nourritures. He is full of joy to learn that Gide is back at work since: "C'est vraiment votre seule raison d'être" (M.G.2, 16th August 1935, 41). Martin du Gard thinks that Gide's involvement with Communism is the result of his inability to write rather than its cause, as Gide seems more prone to believe. After expressing the great hopes he has for Gide's work, he bids Gide to rise above present preoccupations and to think of nobody but "le jeune homme de l'an 2000" (M.G.2, 42) when writing this work.

Gide's reply to this "bon coup d'éperon pour mon propre travail" (M.G.2, 18th August 1935, 42) follows a similar pattern to that when he is trying to work on Robert and Geneviève. Once again Martin du Gard's photo is placed in front of him and the briefness of his letter is explained by his refusal to be disturbed from his work which he wishes to finish before his journey to Russia.² Gide's comments on Robert in this letter show that Martin du Gard has perhaps helped him to the full realisation that his true artistic as well as his personal virtues suffer from his involvement with Communism.³ "Realism" is not Gide's element.⁴

Gide's return to literature and his certainty that a compromise is not to be made between his own art and his political beliefs is perhaps responsible for the greater amenity with which he greets Martin du Gard's next few, long letters. Having re-assumed his role of literary man, he allows himself to become politically closer to Martin du Gard.

1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 10th July 1935, p. 39.

2. This was originally planned for October 1935, *Ibid*, 18th August 1935, p. 43.

3. *Ibid*, 18th August 1935, p. 42; "A relire - hybride".

4. See: above, p. 271.

The latter, despite his determined involvement with the final volumes of the Thibault, is aroused into a tirade by the rise of Fascism, the prevailing atmosphere of faith and that of undoubting, Leftist fanaticism surrounding the young Catherine Gide, which prompts him to write:

La pensée ne commence qu'avec le doute...La seule éducation rationnelle, celle qui, seule, peut préparer un être à se former, plus tard, selon ses dons propres, au contact de la vie et par des expériences personnelles, - est sceptique (M.G.2, 10th September 1935, 45).

Gide replies:

...combien j'applaudis à ce que vous me dites du fanatisme et de la foi...quelle qu'elle puisse être. Rien ne fausse plus un esprit que d'être invité à admettre quoi que ce soit de non "contre rôle" (M.G.2, 12th September 1935, 47).

In spite of the fact that Gide has always insisted that he has retained his critical spirit along with his involvement with Communism, nowhere does he express so clearly and naturally just how far he has remained faithful to the former Gide. The discreetness of his previous declarations was caused, perhaps, by the realisation that, once admit to the absence of faith, the very foundation of his political involvement is rendered unsteady; and Gide knows that Martin du Gard will not miss the opportunity to widen any crack in his present position. For the moment, however, Gide is closer to literary than political preoccupations and this explains the complete lack of reticence in his agreement with Martin du Gard.

From politics, Martin du Gard turns to literature in his long letter on Gide's Nouvelles Nourritures. His criticisms of the first part of Gide's work are important. They show that the evolution in Martin du Gard's aspirations for Gide's works has definitely ended since certain of his comments are closely connected to those made on Gide's Robert.¹

1. Of L'Ecole des Femmes. See: above, pp.273-274.

Although Gide's lyricism was necessary to establish the link with the Nourritures terrestres and although the accent obtained is "du pur Gide" (M.G.2, 6th November 1935, 53), Martin du Gard discerns "une virtuosité, qui s'enivre de ses exercices" (M.G.2, 53) and no longer the "besoin intérieur" (M.G.2, 53) of the Nourritures terrestres. He prefers the pages where Gide's lyricism is "tout intérieur, tout subjectif" (M.G.2, 54). Thus, Martin du Gard expresses more clearly than before his recognition of subjectivity as the most essential of Gide's literary virtues.¹ Despite his mastery of literary technique, Gide is not at his best when he attempts to achieve objectivity, as Martin du Gard understands it, or to simulate emotions which are no longer deeply felt. On a political plane too, it is the irreconcilability of Gide's "besoin intérieur" and external "truth" which is felt by Martin du Gard and makes him attack his friend's position.

Paradoxically, Martin du Gard's ideas on progress which are limited and those of Gide in the Nouvelles Nourritures which have far wider scope are not contrary to the former's objectivity and the latter's subjectivity. Martin du Gard thinks that Man is perfectible but only within certain limits and that, no matter how social systems may change, the basic nature of Man will remain fundamentally unchanged; Gide, on the other hand, thinks Man is "indéfiniment perfectible" (M.G.2, 6th November 1935, 55). One is reminded of the two writers' "querelle du veau à 5 pattes". Gide's study of the "particulier" lends itself to a belief in complete and workable revolution of commonly-accepted values, whereas Martin du Gard's conviction that general phenomena are those most worthy of studies implies that Man's qualities are circumscribed and lasting and that profound change must be very gradual.

Martin du Gard's conservatism when discussing Gide's ideas of progress

1. Although he does not compromise on the question of objectivity/"vérité historique".

becomes complete pessimism when he turns to the idea expressed in the Nouvelles Nourritures that: "La mort est atroce à qui n'a pas rempli sa vie" (M.G.3, 6th November 1935, 55). Martin du Gard considers that no lucid human being can die without despair because he must necessarily view his life as unfulfilled.

Unfortunately, a meeting deprives the correspondence of a reply from Gide to this important letter. However, it is well-known that Gide regarded death with complete serenity. It is not improbable to suppose that the artistic and moral differences between the two writers explain the difference in their attitude towards not only progress but death. Martin du Gard as an artist and, to some extent as a man, has been an impartial observer: Gide, on the other hand, has become more and more conscious of the role he has to play. Inevitably, action, be it one's own, or the action one causes in others, gives a sense of purpose which is not to be attained by one who confines himself to observation and description.

There is no reply either to a long letter in which Martin du Gard once again raises the question of Russian Communism.¹ This letter contains the most measured yet most damning criticisms of the development of Communism in Russia and explains why Martin du Gard's doubts have overcome the hopes he had for the new regime. Capitalism, for the pacifist Martin du Gard, means war in all sectors of society; Russia may claim to have overthrown Capitalism but it has not destroyed society based on war.

This question may have been discussed viva voce since the two men met.² Martin du Gard's comment on this meeting suggests that, despite differences of opinion, the closeness found through their literature stretches to other matters: "Ces quelques rencontres ont été bonnes, quand même. Elles nous montrent qu'après des mois de séparation, nous

1. G./M.G.2, 22nd November 1935, pp. 57-61.

2. There is no mention of this meeting in Notes sur André Gide.

nous retrouvons sans avoir de distance à franchir" (M.G.2, 5th December 1935, 61).

Martin du Gard's New Year wishes for Gide contain the warning: "...continuez à éviter les hideux pièges de la politique, qui sont le sectarisme et l'opportunisme; deux pièges où l'U.R.S.S. ne s'est que trop laissé prendre" (M.G.2, 30th December 1935, 63) Gide's reply where he expresses the desire for the "tranquillité laborieuse" (M.G.2, 30th December 1935, 63) of Cuverville, shows that he is still trying to rise above the temptation of involvement. This is probably not only because he agrees with Martin du Gard as to the necessity of doing so for his work, but also because he will soon be submerged directly in life when he undertakes his journeys to Dakar and, later, Russia. Moreover, the news which has reached Gide from Russia has perhaps already warned him that the Revolution is no longer following the path of truth.

Gide has received information about the frightful conditions in which the Yugoslavian political prisoners were kept.¹ Also, before Gide's departure for Russia, Victor Serge sent him a letter which said:

'Nous faisons front contre le fascisme. Comment lui barrer la route avec tant de camps de concentration derrière nous?...Laissez-moi vous dire que l'on ne peut servir la classe ouvrière et l'U.R.S.S. qu'en toute lucidité. Laissez-moi vous demander, au nom de ceux qui, là-bas, ont tous les courages, d'avoir le courage de cette lucidité'.²

Such warnings brought about waning enthusiasm in Gide for his journey to Russia³ where, he rightly guessed, he would not be able to say all that he wished to, particularly on the subject of homosexuality.

Gide's fears were more than amply justified by the events which took place in Russia while he was there. On the 14th August 1936, the trial

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 8th December 1935, p. 496.

2. Victor Serge, Mémoires d'un Révolutionnaire 1901-1941, Editions du Seuil, 1951, p. 365.

3. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 5th May 1936, p. 539.

of sixteen members of the old revolutionary generation was announced. By the 25th August, the sixteen men accused had been executed after admitting that they were guilty of the most astounding accusations against them.¹ Thus began the systematic extermination of the first revolutionaries.

Due to his visit to Africa, Gide's letters become relatively rare and after Gide's departure for Russia² Martin du Gard receives only one, short letter from Tiflis.³

Gide's impressions of Russia were divulged in his Retour de l'U.R.S.S.. On his return to Paris, Gide writes to Martin du Gard:

...il semble que le monde entier s'enfonce dans un tunnel d'angoisse, dont on ne voit pas la sortie. Je n'éprouve quelque réconfort qu'en me cramponnant à de rares amitiés, dont, au tout premier plan, la vôtre...Je pense pouvoir regagner Cuverville dans deux jours. J'ai hâte de me mettre à la rédaction de notes sur la Russie, que tout à la fois il me tarde, et que je redoute, d'écrire (M.G.2, 7th September 1936, 78).

This short passage is all that allows Martin du Gard to guess at the emotional and intellectual upheaval caused by Gide's first-hand experience of the situation in Russia. A letter from Martin du Gard to Madame Van Rysselberghe⁴ proves that even the opportunity for a conversation has not persuaded Gide to confide in Martin du Gard as he did after his trip to the Congo. Gide's behaviour here makes one think of the publication, after Madeleine Gide's death, of Et nunc manet in te coupled with a perhaps understandable reticence in his correspondence of that time.

Gide himself explains the reason for his silence. When Maria Van Rysselberghe wonders if it is indiscreet to ask him whether his work on

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1. In Mémoires d'un Révolutionnaire, 1951, p. 362, Victor Serge analyses this phenomenon: "Connaissant les hommes et la Russie, je dois répéter que les vieux-bolchéviki étaient pénétrés d'un tel fanatisme de parti, d'un tel patriotisme soviétique qu'ils en devenaient capables d'accepter les pires supplices, incapables pour cela même d'une trahison. Leurs aveux mêmes prouvent ainsi leur innocence".
 2. In July 1936.
 3. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 22nd July 1936, pp. 75-76.
 4. *Ibid.*, Annex to letter 553, p. 516.

Russia will simply describe his travels or reveal his thought., Gide replies: "Non, ce n'est pas indiscret, mais je préfère n'en pas encore parler, même à vous, pour me sentir tout à fait libre".¹

Another anxious enquiry from Martin du Gard about Gide's book on Russia elicits no response from Gide. Indeed, it is not until December that he breaks his silence on the Retour de l'U.R.S.S. by writing:

Vous aurez sans doute compris...à quel point le temps me manquait; compris aussi, j'espère, combien me rapprochait de vous, de votre point de vue, de votre 'éthique', les remous soulevés par mon livre...je crois que ce livre va servir à ma libération

(M.G.2, 3rd December 1936, 83).

A more complete explanation of Gide's position comes only in a letter² after Martin du Gard has been at a reading of his book and has provoked Gide into clarifying his thought.³ From Gide's reply and from Martin du Gard's letter to Madame Van Rysselberghe,⁴ one can assume that the main reproach formulated by Martin du Gard is a lack of documentation and the fact that Gide adds nothing by his book to what is already known about conditions in Russia.

Gide defends himself against this accusation by explaining that, if he has not documented his book more thoroughly, it is because he did not wish to compromise those who gave him his information and also because he wished to write only of what he himself had seen and experienced. He realises that this may detract from his book and expose it to criticism but reminds Martin du Gard of the similar circumstances surrounding his Voyage au Congo.

In fact, Gide is not mistaken in his supposition. His approach to history is very different from that of his friend. Martin du Gard documents his fictional work with astonishing accuracy and portrays political analyses extremely well. Gide, even in non-fictional works, cannot

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 5, 10th September 1936, pp. 557-558.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 10th December 1936, pp. 86-87.

3. In a letter which has been lost.

4. G./M.G. Corr. 2, Annex to letter 562, 9th October 1936. p. 518.

go past his personal view to make a more general analysis; hence, the importance of full documentation. Gide's incapacity for general analysis in the domain of politics explains why he made the mistake of adhering to Communism in the first place, confusing the harsh reality of politics with an Evangelical renaissance,¹ "his ultimate goal" being "the greatest 'efflorescence' of art and humanism."² Soviet Russia's repression against intellectuals, dissidents and homosexuals was a necessary blow to convince Gide of his misapprehension.

Gide is on stronger ground when he defends his book against Martin du Gard's reproach of inopportuneness, which seems to him to be much more serious, since:

...je ne me suis décidé (à la publication) qu'après avoir soigneusement tâté le terrain (politique),³ acquis la conviction que ce livre ne pouvait, en fin de compte, que servir une cause qui, tout de même, me reste chère; mais qui n'est peut-être pas celle du communisme précisément. Le communisme, à présent fait fausse route; il ne peut se sauver qu'en cessant de se mettre à la remorque de Moscou. La foi dans l'U.R.S.S. est ébranlée; il y eut, à la suite du procès des 16, quantité d'exclusions du parti. Vous pensez bien que je suis cela de près. Mon grand regret est de n'en pouvoir parler avec vous. Non...ne doutez pas de ma...prudence; et moins encore de ma profonde amitié (M.G.2, 10th December 1936, 86-87).

This passage is significant, as Gide admits for the first time to Martin du Gard, albeit reluctantly, that the cause he was following was not Communism but a personal vision which Gide believed to have found concrete form in the Russian political system. No such explanation of Gide's work appears in Gide's Journal of the time nor in his letters to Pierre Alessandri and Jean Guéhenno⁴ after the publication of his book, and one thus sees the importance of Martin du Gard's criticisms of Gide's works as a means of provoking Gide into self-explanation. It is also clear,

1. J.1, 1933, p. 1176, "Mais - soustraire."

2. George Brachfeld, *op. cit.* p. 141.

3. The political scene is in fact, far from favourable to the publication of Gide's book. Because of the Civil War in Spain, Gide was bitterly attacked by the Communists and even accused of being in the service of the Gestapo, Littérature engagée, 1950, pp. 179-180 and 185.

4. Littérature engagée, 1950, pp. 176-187, and 207-208.

from this letter, that Gide, now rejected by the world of Communism, which has so deeply disappointed him, is all the more dependent on Martin du Gard's friendship and desirous of fundamental similarity in their views.

Throughout the entire period of Gide's involvement with politics, Martin du Gard's main preoccupation remained Gide's work and public figure as a literary man. For this reason, the basis of dialogue is fundamentally unchanged and the decision which arises from discussion with Martin du Gard is one concerning Gide's literature.

Martin du Gard has definitively accepted that, for his literature, Gide's genius depends upon inner need and subjectivity. Gide's attempts to change his approach to art by forcing artistic considerations to bow to external beliefs calls into doubt his artistic sincerity. Martin du Gard's condemnation of such a move is merely a logical continuation of his criticism against Gide that intellect was the motivating factor behind Robert.¹ Inner necessity should be Gide's sole consideration when writing.

Through dialogue with Martin du Gard, Gide is prompted into making no compromise with his art but rather the temporary sacrifice of it. Indeed, Martin du Gard is also to some extent responsible for Gide's realisation that his essential attributes, critical and intellectual, are those least acceptable to Russian Communism.

Without Martin du Gard's constant vigilance, Gide risked falling into the trap of "la vérité" (M.G.1, 31st December 1934, 641) thereby bringing an end to his "zig-zagging" approach to life and art which was the guarantee of his intellectual honesty and artistic sincerity. Gide himself undoubtedly realised this and clung to dialogue with Martin du Gard as a safeguard of his true value and as a bridge back to the most important

1. Of L'École des Femmes.

"dialogue" of all - his work.¹

5. The Last Stages of Dialogue.

The Communist temptation over, dialogue between the two writers continues with equal frankness but the desire for resemblance rather than for "reaction" motivates Gide's letters. As Gide himself writes to Martin du Gard after his return to France from Russia, little separates them now. Politics are no longer a source of opposition.

Moreover, Gide is no longer seeking to explore new artistic avenues, nor is Martin du Gard intent on changing his friend's genius. Therefore, on a literary plane, little more is to be gained from dialogue between opposites. Gide is now content with friendship as the most important factor in his correspondence with Martin du Gard. Thus, growing attention is paid by Gide to what he has in common with Martin du Gard.

This is to be seen when Gide mentions the difficulties he is encountering in the writing of his Rapport on his journey to Dakar and his hesitation in publishing it. Such an action, Gide feels, would be bound to involve him in polemics and with political parties. Gide does not want this since:

Je me persuade de plus en plus que notre pensée n'a de valeur que si elle n'est pas mise en fagot avec celle des autres; et je me sens de plus en plus incapable de 'donner mon adhésion' entière à n'importe quelle manifestation collective. A quoi bon vous dire tout cela, que vous pensez aussi? Mais j'ai besoin de savoir et de sentir que vous le pensez aussi et votre dernière lettre me rassure et me reconforte (M.C.2, 6th April 1938, 131).

The death of Madame Gide on the 17th April 1938 reinforces Gide's need for Martin du Gard's friendship² while at the same time causing a temporary pause in their epistolary discussions. It is not until August of that year that one sees a glimmer of light in the greyness of Gide's

1. G./M.C. Corr. 1, 25th March 1934, p. 608.

2. J.1, 25th December 1938, pp. 1328-1329.

existence.¹

In February of 1939, Gide is in Louxor. A letter to Martin du Gard² shows that he is back at work. Thésée is almost finished and during his stay in Egypt, he has kept a daily diary. Without Martin du Gard's opinion, however, Gide admits he is unsure of the worth of what he has written.³

Despite Gide's "grande joie au travail" and "légereté de pensée et de plume" (M.G.2, 24th February 1939, 163), he does not hide from Martin du Gard the fact that he cannot achieve "une pleine ferveur" (M.G.2, 163) in his work and that his attitude towards life in Paris, at least, is one of detachment. Indeed, in the time between Madame Gide's death and his own, he frequently reiterates this feeling of apartness from life in his letters to Martin du Gard.⁴

In his reply, Martin du Gard encourages Gide by pointing to the positive aspect of detachment since: "N'avoir plus à faire que 'ce qui vaut la peine'. C'est ça qu'il est nécessaire de se réserver, à nos âges, coûte que coûte. On se comprend" (M.G.2, 28th February 1939, 164). Away from the temptations of life, Martin du Gard believes that Gide, the artist, will flourish.

Gide, however, is more conscious of the loneliness of his situation. Thus a long letter from Martin du Gard⁵ on the total lack of homosexuality in Martinique due to common moral consent and the liberty allowed to heterosexual relations by family and Church alike, fails to elicit a lengthy reply from Gide. Martin du Gard's presence is indispensable to him since: "Il est certains gestes de pensée que je ne puis oser qu'avec vous" (M.G.2, 28th July 1939, 181) and correspondence in the period after Madame Gide's death is obviously no compensation.

1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 24th August 1938, p. 149.

2. Ibid, 24th February 1939, pp. 162-163.

3. In Egypt, Gide wrote Carnets d'Egypte and part of Et nunc manet in te.

4. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 7th May 1940, pp. 204-205; 23rd July 1940, p. 213; 24th May 1942, p. 248; 17th October 1944, p. 281 See: J.2, 31st December 1942, p. 159; 15th December 1946, p. 304; 3rd September 1948, pp. 331-332.

5. Ibid, 10th June 1939, pp. 170-180..

Thus, Gide merely comments:

Mais ce peuple, celui parmi lequel vous vivez et que j'espérais naturel, me paraît, d'après ce que vous en dites, effroyablement malaxé par quelle mesquine et ravalante religion!...Ne me le donnez pas pour exemple
(M.G.2, 28th July 1939, 182).

Although slight in volume this passage seems to me to be heavy in significance. One senses the weariness of a man who has crusaded for the overthrow of inhibiting, artificially formulated morality only to discover that it has insinuated its roots where they have least right to be. At the same time, this letter shows the firmly anchored prejudice of Gide in favour of his cause, since in the case of the priesthood mentioned by Martin du Gard, their attitude to sexual morality seems to be less "mesquine" than sensibly expedient.¹ Gide's protest, "Ne me le donnez pas pour exemple", seems to suggest that he would rather believe Martin du Gard to be on his side than engage with his former willingness in one of their frank but dissident debates.

Martin du Gard's optimism again counters Gide's feelings of detachment in a letter which suggests that Gide's art should fill the empty space left in Gide's life. To crown his "glorieuse maturité" (M.G.2, 6th August 1939, 183), Gide still has to write "Une vie du Christ, de votre Christ" and "Une mythologie grecque" (M.G.2, 183). As ever, Martin du Gard has higher hopes for Gide than Gide himself.

Gide's inability to involve himself in life may explain a simultaneous lack of decision. The need for self-affirmation in the years preceding and including his involvement with Communism seems to have disappeared with disillusionment.

Thus, Gide's decision to participate in the first edition of the Nouvelle Revue française to be published in occupied France leaves him in an unhappy state of uncertainty, which is resolved for him by Martin du Gard.²

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1. Indeed, it seems to me that Robert Amar, in his article "L'Homosexualité dans la Correspondance Gide - Martin du Gard", Arcadie, September 1969, pp. 397-401, is quite wrong to suggest that Martin du Gard's attitude to homosexuality in his letter is narrow-minded and repressive.
 2. G./M.G. Corr.2, Dialogue avec Gide, 20th January 1941, pp. 228-231.

Martin du Gard's firmness meets with Gide's admiration¹ because of the salutary effect it has upon him. In his reply² to the text in which Martin du Gard explains his view of Gide's position, the latter shows his gratitude for his friend's perspicacity and frankness. Martin du Gard, he writes, has helped him to understand himself more clearly and this, in turn, provokes Gide into giving a more complete explanation of his decision to publish his Feuillets in the Nouvelle Revue française. Gide agrees with his friend that, when he is unsure, "la sympathie... décide" (M.G.2, 24th January 1941, 231) and he explains his own decision in familiar terms: the novelist's desire to understand others entails enormous difficulties in establishing one's own point of view. Torn between conflicting ideas, Gide admits he has allayed his suffering by writing about it but complete appeasement has come only from Martin du Gard. By provocation, Martin du Gard has once again induced Gide to examine his motives more closely and to account for them more fully.

This seems to be a return to the Gide of "flottement" (M.G. 2, 24th January 1941, 231) who uses his inability to adopt one position to nourish his writing even at this level. Even now, faced with life's decisions, Gide has not achieved the peace of Ainsi soit-il. Because his literature no longer requires "inquiétude", however, Gide tends more and more towards a state of serenity for which his friendship with Martin du Gard is of great importance.

Gide's next few letters show that he has turned to literary work, as Martin du Gard wishes. Nonetheless, work is only a partial solace since, in writing his Interviews imaginaires, Gide has the impression that:

...ce n'est qu'un bluff et...je n'aurai pas la force, la constance, ni surtout la foi qu'il faudrait pour le mener bien loin...mon oeuvre est derrière moi,...je dois prendre mon parti qu'elle ne soit pas meilleure et plus importante, et...ce n'est pas une oeuvre nouvelle qui pourrait y ajouter beaucoup (M.G.2, 22nd September 1941, 238).

1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 18th January 1941, p. 226.
2. Ibid, 24th January 1941, pp. 231-232.

A letter of the following month¹ shows that Gide is less discouraged about the progress of his work and another² that he is just as strongly interested in Martin du Gard's work as before.

Nonetheless, Gide's exile from France made "les liens de l'amitié" (M.G.2, 24th May 1942, 248) his strongest bond with life although he admits that work is his best way of fighting despair. His own work, however, consists of a few pages in his Journal and some chronicles for the Figaro and none of the "projets téméraires" (M.G.2, 15th June 1942, 251) he had hoped to complete. Under these conditions, a desperate cry comes from Gide: "L'été passé, où aller? Que devenir? Vous me manquez terriblement" (M.G.2, 251).

In his reply³ Martin du Gard writes at length of his own work,⁴ which is the best way of consoling Gide for his own lack of production. Indeed, Martin du Gard's letter is probably in large part the cause of Gide's equanimity over the difficult progression of his Interviews imaginaires.⁵

Gide's temporary depression gives way to discussion, however, when Martin du Gard sends him an article on Father Doncoeur.⁶ This article prompts Gide into making an entry in his Journal⁷ which he sends to Martin du Gard.

1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 14th October 1941, pp. 239-240.

2. Ibid, 9th February 1942, p. 243.

3. Ibid, 20th June 1942, pp. 252-253.

4. The preparation for his Journal de Maumort.

5. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 30th June 1942, p. 256.

6. "Restauration le sens du sacré, réincarner les valeurs spirituelles", by Jean de Fabrègues; Demain, 7th June 1942. Demain was a weekly religious newspaper, which, as Jean de Fabrègues' article clearly shows, backed Pétain and the strictest of authorities whole-heartedly, caring little whether the source of authority was French or German. Father Doncoeur was a Jesuit priest whom Gide admired for his tolerance. In 1936, Gide and he worked together to form a delegation, representative of different political and religious standpoints, to intervene in Spain against atrocities on both sides during the Civil War.

7. J.2, 1st July 1942, p. 125.

In his Journal, Gide deplores the idea of fighting Hitlerism by its equivalent - the blind submission to authority required by the very Church which Father X, short-sightedly as history has shown, sees as the only effective weapon against Hitler and his methods. Gide refuses to see support to either side as anything other than the abdication of one's reason and, indeed, considers the idea of submitting to an external force as infinitely less dangerous than the submission of one's mind to the dogma of the Church.

Martin du Gard's enthusiasm for the sentiments expressed in the passage from Gide's Journal is complete.¹ However, he warns Gide against his veneration for the intransigent Jesuit, Father Doncoeur, whom Martin du Gard considers to be a dangerous enemy whose aggressiveness is now appearing after being hidden under an appearance of tolerance. Martin du Gard continues by expressing his respect and indulgence for the Dominicans of the review Sept,² who represented the more progressive and liberal elements of the Church, but his hatred for the more traditional Jesuits and their weekly Demain.

Martin du Gard's reaction provokes Gide into further comment.³ He reveals himself to be more radical or, perhaps, merely more logical than Martin du Gard. He agrees with his friend's remarks on the Dominicans and the Jesuits but warns him against too much indulgence for the former. In Gide's opinion, Martin du Gard is falling into the trap of collaboration. Because the Dominicans' aims are similar to his own, he does not see that logically, they are either hypocrites or worthy of the Index, which, in a political context, was the fate of Sept.

However, on the subject of Father Doncoeur, he agrees entirely with

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1. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 26th July 1942, p. 257.
 2. Sept which became Le Temps présent had as its sub-title, En dehors et au-dessus des partis, but nonetheless took a firm stand against nazism, attacked Hitler's regime consistently as an enemy of Catholicism and was a strong supporter of social progress to tide the rise of Communism. After the Armistice in 1940, it was no longer published and re-appeared only in 1944.
 3. G./M.G. Corr. 2, August 1942, pp. 259-260.

Martin du Gard as to the dangers of the priest, pointing out that:

La libre pensée seule peut être désintéressée, dans le sens le plus plein, le plus parfait du mot. Rien de gratuit chez eux. Ils font la quête. Ce qui leur importe, dans chaque âme, c'est par où la prendre, 'la sauver' diront-ils; l'acquérir à Dieu (M.G.2, August 1942, 259-260).

Despite his hardened attitude against what Father Doncoeur represents, Gide explains his attitude towards the man by the ease with which he is influenced by "sympathie" and goes on to quote one of his letters to Claudel:

'Méfiez-vous...je suis en caoutchouc; la sympathie me déforme: j'acquiesce et, pour vous suivre, vais jusqu'au bord de l'insincérité; mais sitôt de retour et seul, je reprends ma forme' (M.G.2, 259).

As ever, Gide is more ambiguous than Martin du Gard. He is far more partisan than his friend who always weighs the other side's point of view against his own. Nonetheless, because Gide is so easily influenced by "sympathie", he is, in fact, more prone to "collaborating" than Martin du Gard, despite his warnings to the latter.

Perhaps the most interesting point about this exchange of letters resides in the fact that this correspondence has shown little propensity for discussion on religion in spite of conversations on Gide's view of Christ and the Church, at least.¹ Now, in the latter stages of the correspondence, the two friends argue more than once about the question of religion.²

One of the possible reasons for the lack of religious discussion is that this correspondence originated in a period of reaction against Claudel and James. Despite conversations on religion, therefore, Gide may have felt that his correspondence with Martin du Gard, as a record

1. NAG, pp. 134-136.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 1st April 1948, pp. 405-406; 7th April 1948, pp. 407-408; Annex to letter 807, pp. 558-560; 14th August 1948, p. 418; 18th August 1948, pp. 419-423; 3rd September 1948, pp. 423-424; 11th September 1948, pp. 425-426; 19th September 1949, p. 461; Beginning of October 1949, pp. 461-462.

for posterity, should represent the side of his nature opposed to received religion. It is also the case, as Gustave Vanwelkenhuyzen suggests, that Gide tends to avoid subjects which would break "l'harmonie du dialogue"¹ with his various correspondents.

This is perhaps why the correspondence does not reflect Gide's own comment after a meeting with Roger Martin du Gard: "Je ne puis me satisfaire du nihilisme de Roger Martin du Gard" (M.G.1, Intro., 19). Nor does the correspondence show what Jean Delay believes to have been the reassuring role of the atheist Martin du Gard during Gide's period of doubt, notably during the writing of Numquid et tu? and his Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs.²

Indeed, none of the ambiguity of Gide's attitude towards religion finds its way into his correspondence with Martin du Gard. When he expresses himself on religion, it is in a spirit of complete opposition to Catholicism which suggests that his position is far more hardened than that of Martin du Gard, and the temptation of Claudel is mentioned only years after its danger is past and, then, in the most restrictive of terms.

It seems to me that Gide's harshness is due not only to his desire to offer a contradictory picture to his correspondences with Claudel and James but also to the "convert"'s realisation of the risk he had run. Martin du Gard can afford to be tolerant towards certain Catholics because his own atheism dates from an early age. Moreover, his very objectivity prevents him from discarding totally the strong points of the other's position.³ Gide for all his claims to "flottement" and over-comprehension, is enabled, by his subjectivity to condemn utterly and, with characteristic

1. G./Mo. Corr., Intro., p. 22.

2. G./M.G. Corr.1, Intro., p. 19.

3. Although no more than Gide is Martin du Gard for the Dominicans. G./M.G. Corr.2, 3rd September 1942, p. 264.

ellipticity, he expresses his final conclusion without allowing the reader of his correspondence with Martin du Gard to guess that his condemnation of Catholicism came only after he had satisfied his curiosity about it.

During Gide's stay in North Africa in the War years, Martin du Gard continues to encourage him to maintain his literary output. Conscious, perhaps, that Gide may never write of Greek mythology nor of Christ's life, Martin du Gard advises Gide to follow his inclination to write in his Journal,¹ broadening its sphere by including his "souvenirs" and not simply his "réactions du moment" (M.G.2, 14th September 1942, 267). Gide is, however, more interested in the latter, at the moment, and, by including them in a letter to Martin du Gard,² he once again uses his friend as a "papier-tournesol". Martin du Gard's enthusiasm is complete³ and his encouragement⁴ is partially responsible, as Martin du Gard admits for the portrait of Victor which appears in Gide's Journal.⁵

As the War advances, letters become rarer and Gide's next mention of his Journal shows that it is no replacement for Martin du Gard's presence since:

Il n'est pas de jours où je ne converse avec vous en pensée, comme je ne peux faire avec nul autre. C'est à vous que j'adresse mes réflexions les plus inavouables, sachant bien qu'elles trouveront en vous quelque écho
(M.G.2, 30th October 1944, 284).⁶

Thus cut off from his friend, internal dialogue does not compensate for that externalised, with Martin du Gard whose reaction to Gide's letter is

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1. G./M.G. Corr.2, 3rd September 1942, p. 265. Martin du Gard repeats his advice in a letter of the 24th January 1948, p. 394.
 2. Ibid, 23rd September 1942, pp. 268-271.
 3. Ibid, 30th September 1942, p. 271.
 4. Ibid, 6th October 1942, pp. 273-274; 1st November 1942, p. 277.
 5. J.2, pp. 157-220.
 6. Unfortunately these "réflexions" have been cut by Martin du Gard.

one of total accord.¹

Despite the enforced distance caused by the war, therefore, the place Martin du Gard holds as interlocutor and friend is in no way lessened and, indeed, Gide writes more often to Martin du Gard than to his other correspondents while he is in North Africa. The unaccustomed gentleness of Martin du Gard's encouragement to an older and lonelier Gide does not prevent him from continuing to be the outspoken literary critic so much prized by Gide.

Writing of Gide's article, "D'une France nouvelle",² Martin du Gard deplores the fact that Gide should publish the very banalities which cover the pages of the majority of newspapers at that time.³ The fact that Gide manages to express these common-place ideas in his own inimitable style only serves, according to Martin du Gard to underline the lack of necessity of this article. Martin du Gard finishes with the friendly, if exacting, warning:

Méfiez-vous de l'actualité!...Vous êtes visé, on vous guette. Vous n'aurez pas de meilleur moyen de déjouer les attaques, que d'écrire peu et de ne donner que du très bon. Vous avez la chance que ce moyen soit à votre portée, profitez-en; soyez plus exigeant pour vous et plus circonspect que jamais! (M.G.2, 11th January 1945, 300).

Gide is delighted with Martin du Gard's letter as, indeed, he usually is when his friend's vigilance aims at maintaining the high standard of his writing. As for Martin du Gard's actual criticisms, Gide brushes aside the problem with a typical: "...vous avez sûrement raison" (M.G.2, 29th January 1945, 301). Gide is thus more willing to agree with Martin du Gard than to renew what is an old subject of discussion concerning Gide's work - namely, that the superiority of Gide's style is no excuse

1. G./M.G. Corr.2, 16th November 1944, p. 284.

2. Article which appeared in Combat, De La Résistance à la Révolution. 23rd December. See: G./M.G. Corr. 2, 11th January 1945, p. 300.

3. Gide has published, with Martin du Gard's consent, an extract from one of his letters where he condemns the Jesuits. Martin du Gard's point of view is founded. Gide's views are a predictable echo of the international and internal political climate of the time and may be resumed thus: Germany should be made to feel conquered and be allowed a say in European affairs only once the Germans have been completely re-educated; America, England, Russia and France should work together to help other countries, especially those hardest-hit by their war-effort; France should not look to the past, even at its most revolutionary, to find a political settlement to her problems.

excuse for a lack of "ampleur" in subject-matter.¹

The next occasion for criticism from Martin du Gard is Gide's indiscretion in publishing certain disobliging comments on his daughter Catherine in his Journal.² As is frequently the case when his diary is discussed, Gide refuses to be convinced by Martin du Gard.³

The latter again attacks Gide's Journal for its involuntary deformation of the truth.⁴ This is an old subject of debate which has never been solved satisfactorily. All Martin du Gard's rancour against Gide's methods of portrayal explodes in the following passage:

Je vous envoie au Diable, cher ami, vous et votre sacré Journal! Cette phrase de moi, qui vous sert de tremplin pour des méditations pertinentes, est affreusement courte de vues...sous cette forme écourtée et brutale, elle ne rime vraiment à rien...Il aurait fallu développer, préciser, nuancer, - ou ne rien dire

(M.G.2, 19th February 1946, 340).

Unless read with extremely critical eyes, Martin du Gard says, this passage, in Gide's Journal, shows him as an "imbécile sectaire" and will, moreover, cause deep hurt to certain people.

Before considering Gide's reply, it is important to turn to a letter written by Martin du Gard after reading the published volume of Gide's Journal.⁵ The impressiveness of this volume which is "la méditation de toute une vie exceptionnelle, livrée sans fard, communiquant à ceux qui y participent une merveilleuse passion de vérité, de compréhension universelle" (M.G.2, 6th August 1939, 183), almost causes Martin du Gard to accept the total indiscretion Gide shows in his Journal.

The problem of Gide's "indice de réfraction" is considered from Gide's point of view alone. In Martin du Gard's opinion, Gide sometimes

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 1st February 1931, p. 441.

2. J.2, 1st and 2nd January 1942, pp. 104-105.

3. See: above, pp. 322-324.

4. Gide has published, with Martin du Gard's consent, an extract from one of his letters where he condemns the Jesuits.

5. Published in 1939.

traces the outlines of the man he would like to be and not of the man he is. However, Martin du Gard dismisses this as being inevitable and explains the phenomenon thus:

Celui qu'on veut être, qu'on s'efforce d'être, s'applique, comme un calque un peu différent, sur le portrait qu'on trace sincèrement de soi-même...exactitude par anticipation! (M.G.2, 183).

Martin du Gard's anger is, therefore, directed only partially against Gide's indiscretion and not at all against Gide's subjective portrayal of himself. There remains the question of deformation of "la vérité historique" which Martin du Gard cannot accept. Martin du Gard's attitude towards Gide's Journal is far more equitable than would seem at first sight.

One has difficulty in not regarding severely Gide's constant refusal to discuss this question with his friend, preferring always to side-step the fundamental issue by giving Martin du Gard satisfaction on a more superficial level.¹ Perhaps the final word in this debate, however, is to be found when Gide, after criticising the Russian writer Tourgueniev,² writes:

Il 'tient le coup' et n'a, somme toute, que très peu vieilli...je devais cette réparation à Tourgueniev; car trop souvent, dans mon Journal, je laisse sans contrepartie tel jugement, sur des personnes ou sur des oeuvres, profondément modifié par la suite, sans qu'aucune retouche le laisse entendre (M.G.2, 16th September 1947, 382).

One wonders if Gide is not belatedly offering a final admission of the justice of some of Martin du Gard's criticisms of his Journal.

While in North Africa, Gide worked not only on his Journal but also on Thésée. After his return to France, he submitted a copy to Martin du Gard.³ The latter was anxious for Thésée to be a complete success since Gide himself saw it as his culminating work. In spite of much that is admirable in Gide's work, therefore, Martin du Gard regrets the lack of "nécessité intérieure" and Gide's concession in many passages as if an

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1. By offering to exclude or alter passages. In this instance, Gide merely replies: "Nous réexaminerons cela à neuf et rien ne sera fait qui puisse vous déplaire et vous engager fâcheusement", G./M.G. Corr.2, 28th March 1946, p. 343.
 2. Ibid, 18th August 1947, p. 378.
 3. A type-written copy but not the definitive version.

accumulation of detail could hide "l'inintérêt du fond" (M.G.2, 12th July 1945, 326). Moreover, Martin du Gard thinks, Gide's style often lacks simplicity and because of this and "les trucs, les partis pris, la complaisance" (M.G.2, 326), Gide is falling back into former ways which Martin du Gard believed he had forsworn.

To some extent, Martin du Gard's reproaches are rather unjust. It would have been more correct to say that Thésée lacks novelty than interest. This work adds nothing to Gide's thought but does gather it together and, as a peaceful testament, as an anticipation of Gide's own death, it is a necessary work and one where a certain amount of "parti pris" is understandable.

Because Thésée is Gide's last fictional work and a syⁿthesis of his thought, however, Martin du Gard is right to insist on the need for subjectivity but also for classical rigour to unite form and fond. Thésée suffers more from the same stylistic inconsistency that is to be found in Oedipe. The former is Gide's legacy and, hence, as much attention should have been paid to style as to subject-matter.

Commenting on Martin du Gard's letter, Maria Van Rysselberghe expresses her agreement with it, adding that Gide is ready to change the final monologue. She nonetheless concludes that Gide:

...accepte les critiques, essaie de les comprendre, mais ne croit pas qu'elles puissent l'aider à rendre son oeuvre meilleure, et je pense qu'il a raison: supprimer ses jeux, ses pointes, rendrait son texte plus plat sans en augmenter la puissance. La profondeur de Gide doit se découvrir, se chercher à travers son jeu, disons même ses puérilités. Elle n'est jamais à découvert.¹

Gide has thus definitively reached a point where dialogue is a form of self-respect and respect for the other and no longer a means to altering his art. He has, nonetheless, no desire to see any change in Martin

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 6, 17th July 1945, p. 367.

du Gard who is still as vigilant as ever in his attempts to make Gide attain the high point of his own essential virtues. Indeed, in his letter, Martin du Gard sums up his own part and Gide's in dialogue:

Evidemment, l'adulation ne saurait m'être reprochée aujourd'hui...Mais n'est-ce pas mieux? N'est-ce pas ainsi que nos rapports rentrent dans leur 'lit'? Qui vous parlerait avec cette franchise bourrue, si pas moi? Vous n'êtes pas assez influençable pour que cela vous soit nuisible, et de cette franchise vous avez toujours su tirer l'exact parti qu'il fallait
(M.G.2, 12th July 1945, 327).

Unfortunately, in this case, there is no reply to prove the exactitude of Martin du Gard's pertinent analysis of his relations with Gide. This is due to a meeting between the two men during which Gide listened with simplicity and pleasure to all Martin du Gard's reserves as to Thésée.¹

In general, the desire for agreement with Martin du Gard becomes more and more obvious in the latter years of their correspondence. The fact that the two writers should so often share similar views is not due to Gide's self-professed ability as a novelist to adopt another's point of view. Gide himself expresses the reason, in his eyes, for their profound understanding in a letter to Martin du Gard after he, Gide, has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Despite the fact that this letter has the added solemnity of a public statement, all Gide's sincere affection appears, when he writes:

Si c'est à vous que j'écris tout cela, c'est que vous m'appeliez plaisamment, dans votre lettre de félicitations: 'cher collègue', et que ce qui nous a fait élire l'un après l'autre par l'Académie de Stockholm, c'est aussi bien ne croyez-vous pas: ce commun amour de la Vérité, raison secrète de 'notre exceptionnelle entente, d'une affection qui n'a fait que croître depuis trente ans' (M.G.2, 27th November 1947, 389-390).

Perhaps because this is a published letter, Gide simplifies this aspect of his relations with Martin du Gard and emphasises their resemblance

1. G/M.G. Corr. 2, Annex to letter 736, pp. 547-548.

too much. Firstly, Martin du Gard's and Gide's discussion on truth, centred around Gide's Journal, has shown that they do not always see eye to eye on the subject. Moreover, while such a statement may explain why both writers were awarded the Nobel Prize, it falsifies, to my mind, the importance of Gide's friendship with Martin du Gard which lies, precisely, in their differing ways of approaching truth, which provokes Gide into constant reflexion on his actions and his art.

Thus, even in the last years of Gide's life, Martin du Gard does not hesitate to express his disapproval of Gide's publication in the Figaro of the "lettres scabreuses" (M.G.2, 7th November 1949, 464) of his correspondence with Claudel of March 1914. In his letter, Martin du Gard writes of his uneasiness at seeing such letters in the columns of a newspaper "où, fatalement, l'importance de cette discussion et la qualité de vos lettres s'effacent devant l'impression que vous avez intentionnellement cherché le scandale" (M.G.2, 464).

Martin du Gard is sure that the choice of these particular letters will prejudice even serious-minded readers against the future volume of the entire correspondence. He regrets this all the more as, in his opinion, Gide's position was excellent and, by his action, he has seriously compromised it. He continues:

Si je vous parle ainsi, ce n'est pas par sottise pruderie, ...mais par souci de la 'tame', de votre dignité, et parce que je comptais beaucoup sur la publication de ces lettres pour ennoblir votre figure et obliger vos détracteurs à réviser leur jugement. Maintenant, l'affaire est aussi mal engagée que possible, et j'en suis inconsolable! (M.G.2, 7th November 1949, 464).

Martin du Gard apologises for his frankness, adding with perfect truth: "...mais qui pourrait vous dire cela, si pas moi?" (M.G.2, 464).

A comparison between this letter and an extract from Martin du Gard's Journal shows that Martin du Gard has either changed his mind or that he realises correctly that, on this occasion at least, complete frankness will

not be appreciated by his correspondent.¹ In his journal, Martin du Gard criticises the very quality of both Gide's and Claudel's letters, as well as those of Jammes,² and expresses the rather short-sighted belief that future readers will give all their support to Claudel in spite of the poor quality of his letters.

It is interesting to note that no considerations of discretion have motivated Martin du Gard's attitude, as was the case with Si le Grain ne meurt and Corydon. Martin du Gard has realised that of greater importance now is the fact that Gide's position as a literary figure will be quite unenhanced by this publication and that one more battle will be lost against Catholicism. Just as Martin du Gard was disappointed by Gide's final literary work, so he is depressed by these letters which detract from the ideal André Gide conceived by him and held up as a constant example to the real and fallible André Gide who remains wisely impenitent, in this case, as to his projected action.³

As much as Martin du Gard disapproves of this blow to Gide's public figure, as much he disapproves of the development in Gide's personality noticeable after his return from North Africa. The adulation which Gide received in Tunis and Algiers has given him, in Martin du Gard's opinion an "assurance"⁴ which was missing in him before. In his journal, Martin du Gard regrets that Gide does not brook interruption and takes it for granted that people should be at his disposal.

In their correspondence, however, it is not until much later that Martin du Gard takes Gide to task for this change. In a letter, "toute farcie de reproches" (M.G.2, 21st April 1950, 479), he expresses his

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1. G./M.G. Corr.2, 10th November 1949, pp. 466-467 where Gide writes: "Mais je n'ai pas la force, ni la patience, de chercher à vous en convaincre. De plus rien ne me déplaît davantage que de chercher à prouver qu'on a eu raison de faire ce que l'on a fait...si forte que soit ma tendance à ne point abonder dans mon sens, j'estime qu'il n'y a nullement lieu de rien regretter ici".
 2. Ibid, Annex to letter 807, p.559.
 3. Ibid, 10th November 1949, pp. 466-467. A cut has been imposed by Martin du Gard in this letter.
 4. Ibid, Annex to letter 736, p. 547.

dismay at Gide's behaviour during his stay with Madame Gould¹ at Juan-les-Pins. Gide's apparent satisfaction at all the flattering attentions surrounding him has caused Martin du Gard "les deux seules heures atroces que notre amitié m'ait infligées en trente ans!" (M.G.2, 479). He begs^{Gide} not to abandon himself to this atmosphere and, while apologising for further reproaches,² says: "Pourtant, vous m'avez tellement habitué à vous parler sans réticence" (M.G.2, 479).

Gide's reply³ shows that, even if there have been changes in his conduct due to age and success, there is still no change in the pleasure he takes in Martin du Gard's frankness with him in such a case as this. He agrees with Martin du Gard on the torture of his stay at Madame Gould's where "je n'en pouvais plus certains jours, d'ennui, de dégoût et de fureur" (M.G.2, 25th April 1950, 481).

As for Martin du Gard's other reproach about his having acted with "une inquiétante légèreté" (M.G.2, 480) over the deed concerning his works, Gide disagrees, but only, however, after having carefully reviewed its terms. This is perhaps the last of many occasions on which Martin du Gard provoked deeper thought resulting in a definitive position on Gide's part. Gide himself admits this role played by Martin du Gard when he writes: "Vous apportez à mes pensées une sorte de pondération salutaire, de contrôle" (M.G.2, 7th July 1950, 492).

It is precisely this factor which gives Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard such importance. Even in the last stages of their correspondence, Martin du Gard does not loosen this vigilant control which leaves not a corner of Gide untouched. All Gide's artistic and moral

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1. Madame Gould was an extremely rich American, who lived near Gide in Paris. She held a literary salon and gave financial help to many writers and artists.
 2. Regarding Gide's signing a deed of proxy, now in the possession of Jean Amrouche. Martin du Gard considers that Gide has acted unwisely since the terms of the deed, which theoretically concern only the arrangements for his Oeuvres complètes, may be interpreted on a much wider scale.
 3. G./M.G. Corr.2, 25th April 1950, pp. 481-482.

attitudes and the man himself seem to be judged by Martin du Gard now spontaneously now because Gide himself uses Martin du Gard, the "papier-tournesol" in order to test his position.

Although Gide began to correspond with Martin du Gard partly through reaction against Claudel and partly because his own artistic needs would gain from a fuller understanding of Martin du Gard's principles, opposition rather than resemblance was swiftly established as the ground-stone of this correspondence. Gide himself has developed in that he will not prolong resemblance unduly either through a desire for "Dépersonnalisation poétique" or through "sympathie" for his interlocutor. Nor is Gide opposing a part of himself to another part of his nature as might be said, to some extent, of his dialogue with Claudel and James. Dialogue with Martin du Gard is truly one with attributes external to Gide.

The following comment is made by Gide on Guillaume Guizot's book on Montaigne: "Sur rien je ne pense comme lui, ça me donne d'excellentes réactions".¹ Although it would be going too far to say that Martin du Gard was the complete opposite of Gide, it is true that he often had this beneficial effect upon the older man. Nor, when Gide reacts against Martin du Gard, does he feel the need to break off his epistolary relations with him as happened so often with Gide's Catholic correspondents.

Quite apart from Gide's recognition of the value of opposition, it seems to me that there is another reason which excludes such a necessity. Martin du Gard is truly a literary correspondent as Valéry, Claudel and James were only partially. Claudel's robust admonitions and James' more querulous demands were motivated by their desire to see Gide serve the Catholic faith by means of his literature. Martin du Gard's equally firm demands, however, called Gide to obey but one law, Gide's chosen one - that of his art.

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 14th October 1928, p. 374.

Indeed, Jean Delay seems to believe that the two men's love of art is the only reason why these two "adversaires-nés" have remained "deux compagnons de route, cheminant, chacun dans sa voie, parallèlement" (M.G.1, Intro., 103) and that their attempts at mutual concessions were destined to end always in a return to "sa pente naturelle" (M.G.1, 103).

Although the bond of literature and the part of reaction is undeniable, I feel that Jean Delay is wrong to describe the two men as born enemies, since both in the early and the latter stages of the correspondence, first Martin du Gard and then Gide tend to emphasise their fundamental similarity. The young Martin du Gard insists in his first letters on the quality of sincerity¹ and the older Gide explains their exceptional understanding through their common love of truth.² I have already expressed my reserves as to the exactitude of Gide's comparison.³ However, both Martin du Gard, through observation, and Gide, through experience, refuse a unilinear, a priori view of the world and, in admittedly very different ways, their art reflects their highly critical spirits.

I also feel that Jean Delay dismisses too categorically the ability of both writers to make concessions. Indeed, to my mind, another reason for Gide's continuing to correspond with Martin du Gard lies in the latter's willingness to adapt, which is based on a very real understanding of Gide. The best example of this is the change which Martin du Gard's advice to Gide undergoes after the publication of the Faux-Monnayeurs. Martin du Gard realises that he has been asking Gide to venture along paths unsuited to him. Thereafter, rather than see Gide broaden his genius, Martin du Gard encourages him to develop it no longer "en largeur" but "en profondeur".⁴

1. G./M.G. Corr.1, New Year 1913, p. 126; 6th January 1914 p. 130.

2. Ibid, 27th November 1947, pp. 389-390.

3. See: above, p.355.

4. Romans, FM, p. 1081.

Even when Martin du Gard adapts himself to Gide's needs, however, he maintains a very high ideal for his friend's art. Indeed, his desire for Gide to give only the best of himself is responsible for the fact that he so often seems to disapprove of Gide the man and, more so, the artist.¹ Martin du Gard admits himself in his letter on Oedipe: "Comme toujours entre nous - entre moi et vous - je n'ai su insister que sur mes refus, mes réserves, mes outreucidants reproches" (M.G.1, 30th January 1931, 439). To counter-balance this tendency, Martin du Gard often reminds Gide to ignore what is excessive in his explosions.² Moreover, for Martin du Gard, Gide is "la grande affection, la grande obsession" (M.G.1, 1st March 1923, 213) and, side by side with his reproaches, the correspondence reflects his love and admiration for Gide more straightforwardly.

Like Martin du Gard, I have concentrated more on this apparently negative aspect of his relations with Gide. I believe, as did Gide and Martin du Gard, that it is through opposition that the two writers were most useful the one to the other³ by establishing the most effective form of intellectual control, which is to the mature Gide⁴ as much a part of "dialogue" as the absorption of "matières étrangères" was to the younger Gide.

The latter stages of Gide's correspondence differ from the earlier stages. Gide desires physical and mental closeness to Martin du Gard rather than fruitful opposition. Jean Delay considers this last phase as the best in Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard.⁵ For peaceful

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1. G./M.G. Corr.1, 13th December 1926, p. 304; 6th February 1930, p. 390, "En somme - davantage".
 2. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 7th May 1935, p. 30.
 3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 3rd October 1928, p. 359, and G./M.G. Corr.2, 18th May 1935, p. 31.
 4. See: M.V.R. Cahiers 5, 10th August 1929, pp. 38-39. Gide is reassuring Martin du Gard as to posterity's understanding of their friendship: "...on comprendra que tant qu'à différer de moi, il me fallait bien Martin du Gard. Je suis très fier de notre amitié, elle nous augmente, elle ne peut que nous apporter de la considération, à moi aussi bien qu'à vous, et d'autant plus qu'on ne pourra pas dire: oui, amitié d'enfance, dont ils n'ont pu se débarrasser, non, nous nous sommes choisis volontairement, à l'âge mûr, sans nulle obligation".
 5. G./M.G. Corr.1, Intro., p. 105.

friendship, this is certainly true. Without Martin du Gard's friendship and continued artistic production, without Martin du Gard's belief that Gide's artistic race was not completely run, Gide's life would have been much emptier. To a certain extent, Gide lived through Martin du Gard in his latter years just as, during his Communist phase his own lack of production was compensated for by Les Thibault.

In its last stages, the correspondence ceases to play its former role and makes less interesting reading. Because of this, I tend to disagree with Jean Delay's judgement and prefer, on a more general level than is intended, Louis Martin-Chauffier's analysis of Gide's later life:

Le temps vint où, pour lui, Dieu s'éteignit comme un astre mort, où le Christ se tut, où, Madeleine disparue, le drame, faute de victime, sombra dans l'indifférence. Avec l'inquiétude, le doute, la recherche anxieuse (et craignant de trouver), l'horloge s'arrêta, privée de balancier. Gide connut alors ce qu'il appela la sérénité, cette forme prématurée du trépas, le silence du dernier hiver et l'arrêt des saisons. Il continua d'écrire, car rien ne le pouvait retenir. Mais la pièce était achevée bien avant que se baissât le rideau. Et la salle était vide, de l'orchestre au paradis, comme la scène, comme l'auteur.¹

Without a search for a position through dialogue, the role of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard becomes primarily one of personal friendship. This is not a negligible aspect but, if one thinks of Gide's wish to publish his correspondence for its general interest, one realises that the warmth of friendship is not enough to give this correspondence its place among Gide's published works.

All Gide's published correspondences which continued to his death end on a note of harmonious friendship. One of the most moving and exceptional characteristics of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard is the latter's unwillingness to abandon opposition and his stern but encouraging insistence on Gide's literary role. Of all Gide's correspondents, Martin du Gard, in my opinion, best understood Gide's need for a

1. Figaro littéraire, 18th - 24th August 1969, p.6.

firm literary "réactif" and realised that, if Gide no longer felt this need, then he would no longer have a role to play.

Martin du Gard's importance as a correspondent and a friend comes from his attachment to the ideal, literary figure of André Gide. In the initial stages of correspondence with Gide, he tried to broaden his friend's art, thereafter to deepen its quality and finally to prolong its existence; but through these changes, there remains the constant obsession of Gide's art.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER V.

THE FRUITS OF DIALOGUE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
GIDE'S CORRESPONDENCE AND HIS FICTIONAL WORK.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of some of Gide's most important correspondences in the three previous chapters was intended to prove that, for Gide, discussion on literature was the ultimate aim of his correspondence. The very differences which distinguish Gide's correspondents the one from the other and Gide's own concept of art as the representation of diverse ideas is responsible for the broad scope of literary dialogue. The very close connexion between Gide's art and all his thought, whether artistic, moral or political, cannot be denied.

Literary dialogue in the four correspondences I chose as most representative was not equally successful. The most lasting and the most fruitful in itself was obviously that with Roger Martin du Gard. I feel, nonetheless, that all the correspondences dealt with in this thesis have been turned to artistic account by Gide. In other words, in Gide's literary works, one finds traces not only of the principal preoccupations of these correspondences but also of the nature of dialogue in them. In his correspondence with Valéry, Gide was at first concerned with the modest establishment of dialogue through reflexion which, met with failure because Valéry was essentially a creature of monologue and because Gide's own character and art developed in such a way as to draw him away from his friend. Dialogue through opposition, which was somewhat tentative in Gide's later correspondence with Valéry, became more flourishing in his correspondences with James and Claudel where the main source of dialogue was the role and the contents of literary art. The prolongation of dialogue by Gide with the two Catholic writers and the lack of a clear-cut end to

his relations with them is to be explained, I feel, not just by Gide's affection for both men but by the primordial importance and interest of his dialogue with them. In the context of Gide's time, it is not to be forgotten that Gide came between Mallarmé and Sartre. Gide is central to a whole period of reflection upon the role of art.

Gide's correspondence with Roger Martin du Gard presents us with the most authentic and profitable dialogue through opposition. The axis of discussion is approach to art. Because both writers accept this, Gide's correspondence with Roger Martin du Gard may be said to be more purely literary than those with Valéry, Claudel or James.

This chapter will attempt to show the interrelations between Gide's correspondences with Valéry, James, Claudel and Martin du Gard and certain of his fictional works. Before this, however, it is essential to justify my exclusion of Gide's non-fictional works and my belief that there exist links between Gide's correspondences and his works.

Not the least important reason for such a choice is the practical impossibility of covering all of Gide's written work.¹

Prior to giving a more positive justification of my choice I quote from Morceaux Choisis²:

- Il n'y a d'incolores que les pensées qui ne se portent pas bien. J'aime à sentir les miennes assez fortement colorées. Mais...j'en ai de toutes les couleurs.

- Cela doit bien vous gêner.

- Devant autrui, pour discuter, oui certes; et c'est pourquoi je n'aime pas trop discuter; au premier détour des propos, c'est moi-même que j'abandonne; si rouge ou blanc que soit autrui, je lui sers sa couleur aussitôt.

- Mais de nouveau seul, cher monsieur, c'est avec soi que l'on discute; le dialogue, en dépit de soi, tout naturellement s'établit. Et, tout naturellement aussi, il se forme en roman, en drame...N'est-ce pas là ce qu'il faut?

1. The same considerations brought about limitation in my choice of correspondences.

2. Gallimard 1921, "Visites de l'Interviewer (Fragments)" from "L'Hermitage" of January 1905, pp. 29-30.

The necessary progression presented here is from external to internal dialogue to fictional work which, for Gide, was more important than his other work.¹ Articles often met with his exasperation if only because of the difficulty Gide experienced in writing in his own name.² Gide's Journal was often seen by him as a means of keeping his pen rust-free during periods where fictional writing was impossible for him.³

Claims that Gide's fictional works surpass his other works in importance seem to be founded. More tenuous, however, may appear the argument that the connexion between Gide's correspondence and his fiction is more worthy of study than that to be found between his correspondence and his Journal, say.

There is a functional connexion between Gide's Journal and his correspondences. As I have already mentioned in Chapter One, unsent letters appear in Gide's Journal, while ideas expressed in Gide's Journal appear in his correspondence or those of his correspondence in his Journal. Although this indicates that internal and external dialogue nourish each other, it seems to me that a study of such instances risks becoming a catalogue.

The same case may be argued against a comparative study of Gide's articles and his correspondence. In the latter two media and in his Journal Gide is giving direct expression to his own thought. An alternative to listing similarities in Gide's thought as it appears in these three forms of written expression, lies in a stylistic study which it is not my intention to undertake.

A study of the relationship between Gide's correspondences and his fictional works appears to me to be more profitable for the following reason: Gide's correspondences are primarily concerned with discussion

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1. With the exception of Corydon and Si le Grain ne meurt.
 2. G./M.G. Corr.1, letters of the 7th October 1922, pp. 192-194 and of the 29th December 1925, pp. 279-281.
 3. J.1, 8th January 1932, p. 1100: "A présent que, loin de Paris, je suis plus libre, je veux reprendre l'habitude, pour un temps, d'y [in his Journal] converser chaque jour. Ne serait-ce que pour ne point laisser trop s'alourdir ma plume", & J.2., Carnets d'Égypte, 31st January 1939 p. 1049. "J'écris ceci pour dérouiller ma plume et m'entraîner..."

on approach to art and on the role of the artist; because of this, any links that may be established between them and his work will help to give full impact to Gide's own statement that: "C'est du point de vue de l'art qu'il sied de juger ce que j'écris...C'est du reste le seul point de vue qui ne soit exclusif d'aucun des autres."¹ In addition the other problems raised in Gide's work may be taken on an artistic level. To explain the "en abyme" technique, Gide writes: "Ainsi, dans tels tableaux de Memling ou de Quentin Metys, un petit miroir convexe et sombre reflète, à son tour, l'intérieur de la pièce ou se joue la scène peinte."² This mirror may be taken as art itself and the infinite number of reflections within it as all the echoing existential and moral implications which Gide intended to spring from the literary problems which form the basis of his work. A study of the relationship between Gide's correspondences and his literature gives a deeper understanding of this fact. It involves a search beneath the surface of Gide's fictional works. This, to my mind, gives rise to far richer possibilities than those afforded by a comparative study of Gide's letters and his Journal or his articles.

In this chapter, I will respect the order established by the three preceding chapters. Firstly, I will discuss the relationship between the Valéry Correspondance and the Traité du Narcisse; secondly, that between the Claudel and James correspondences and Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue and the Caves du Vatican; thirdly, that between Gide's correspondence with Roger Martin du Gard and Les Faux-Monnayeurs.

My reasons for limiting myself to these particular works are, firstly, practical. Having already rejected the possibility of a study of all Gide's correspondences within the limits of this thesis, a contrary decision as regards Gide's fictional works would be both puzzling and unwise. My choice was based on the fact that these works correspond, chronologically,

1. J.1, 13th October 1918, p. 658. See: J11, 25th April 1918, p. 652.

2. Ibid, 1893, p. 41.

to the central periods of the four correspondences dealt with in previous chapters. As will be seen, there is clear evidence, except in the case of the Caves du Vatican, that Gide took into consideration the points of view of his respective correspondents when writing these works.

Although limited, therefore, my choice has not been made entirely arbitrarily and, although I do not expect to deal exhaustively with the interaction of Gide's letters and his literature, I believe that this chapter may be viewed as a pilot study to prove that the correspondences do throw special light on the fictional works.

The necessity of such a study is unquestionable. Several critics recognise that Gide's dealings with his four correspondents have influenced the four works I have picked out. George Brachfeld believes that the Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue was inspired by the "Abrégé de toute la doctrine chrétienne" that Claudel sent Gide on the 9th March 1906, while Enrico Bertalot has the broader view that, in Gide's work, one finds "les arguments mêmes de la correspondance entre Gide et Claudel, de l'opposition entre le dogme et le libre examen."¹ Similarly, Christopher Bettinson sees in the themes of the Caves du Vatican "an intimate connection" with "the central issues discussed in the Gide-Claudel debate on conversion to Catholicism."² Such comments are not to be discarded but they do ignore the more profound artistic questions which link Gide's works to his correspondences.

Ramon Fernandez and Daniel Moutote, both commenting on the Traité du Narcisse,³ have grasped the fact that discussion on art between Valéry and Gide is not alien to the ideas expressed in the Traité du Narcisse. They do not, however, make a detailed study of this phenomenon. The same

1. Bertalot, op. cit., p. 97.

2. Studies in French Literature 20, Gide: Les Caves du Vatican, Edward Arnold, 1972, p.8.

3. Fernandez, op. cit., p. 62 and Moutote, op. cit., p. 16.

may be said of Geneviève Idt's comments on the Faux-Monnayeurs which are representative of those of the majority of critics. She recognises that the conversations between X and Edouard may be the prolongation of those between Gide and Martin du Gard and writes:

Le rôle de Martin du Gard, pendant la rédaction semble moins positif; il agit surtout comme un frein...Cependant, même si Gide n'a pas toujours tenu compte des conseils de son ami, leurs discussions ont permis à chacun de préciser sa technique en l'opposant à celle de l'autre...Ce roman est bien le fruit d'une collaboration entre deux grands écrivains...¹

This analysis is acceptable, although a little restrictive, but does not attempt to show how Martin du Gard's relations have affected the artistic questions raised in the Faux-Monnayeurs. The purpose of this chapter is, in a modest way, to make a far more detailed study of the connection between artistic discussion in the correspondences and Gide's fictional works.

Before tackling this task, a brief explanation is necessary of the nature of the relationship between the above correspondences and works. There is no one, simple, clear-cut connection between them. The possible instances of the direct influence of a correspondent are rare. More often close parallels are to be drawn between the contents of the course of dialogue in the correspondences and the ideas expressed in these works. It is also the case that sometimes Gide's correspondence may affect his work and sometimes his work may produce retroactive consequences in his correspondence.

As a preliminary measure to discussion on the relationship between the Traité and the Gide's correspondence with Valéry, I shall attempt to

1. André Gide, Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Hatier, 1970, p. 14.

establish the relationship between this work and Gide, the artist. Firstly, I shall make a comparative study of this work and the Cahiers d'André Walter and, secondly, I shall turn to Gide's Journal in order to ascertain Gide's frame of mind while writing this work.

In the first part of this chapter, this seems to me to be a necessary step. The Traité du Narcisse is only Gide's second work, written at a time of relative immaturity, when Gide was anxious to become a part of literary circles and to "make" literary "friendship".¹ The literary circle which attracted Gide was that which rotated around Mallarmé, who, every Tuesday, held meetings at his house. These meetings undoubtedly affected Gide, as Claude Martin believes:

...après avoir donné avec son Traité du Narcisse, suivant la très fine suggestion d'Henri Mondor, peut-être le plus fidèle reflet de ce que pouvaient entendre les habitués des 'Mardis', il s'est tourné vers la vie...²

As well as the influence of current Symbolist thought, two other claims to influence must be considered.

The first is made by Gustave Verwelkenhuyzen who believes that the Traité was influenced by Gide's conversations with Albert Mockel who, in a letter, thanks Gide for the latter's dedication to him of the appendix to the Traité du Narcisse.³ As Verwelkenhuyzen remarks, Mockel is apparently making a mistake since, in fact, it is the notes to La Tentative amoureuse⁴ which are dedicated to him.

Nonetheless, Verwelkenhuyzen wonders if Gide did not originally intend these notes for his Traité on the grounds that they are more suitable to this work than to the Tentative amoureuse. In this, I beg to differ from Gustave Verwelkenhuyzen since these notes are closely connected to the final pages of the Tentative where the author addresses "Madame".⁵

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1. G./V. Corr., 3rd November 1891, p. 134.
 2. MAG, p. 177.
 3. G./Mo. Corr., 20th September 1893, p. 99.
 4. Published by the Librairie de l'Art independant in 1893.
 5. Romans, TA, pp. 82-85.

A claim to influence which must be taken more seriously is that made by Gide himself when referring to Valéry, his most important literary friend and colleague of that time:

...j'élabore doucement Le Traité du Narcisse, dont je vous ai vaguement parlé et que sans vos paroles des soirs, je n'eusse peut-être pas écrit - ou pas vu tel tout au moins...¹

Certainly, Gide's approach to literature was influenced not only by Romantic and Symbolist thought and by his young friends and colleagues. Gide himself admits that it was only after writing the Traité that his own highly individual artistic position became quite clear to him.² Given this, it seems essential to me to pick out what is peculiar to Gide at this point in his life and dependent neither on his contact with Valéry nor on that with Symbolist circles. It is with this view in mind that I intend to study the Cahiers d'André Walter and Gide's Journal.

2. The Traité du Narcisse and Gide's Correspondance with Valéry.

i. André Walter and the Traité du Narcisse.

Daniel Moutote points out that the Traité du Narcisse was conceived at the same time as the Cahiers.³ It is not surprising, therefore, that the same preoccupations should appear in both works in spite of differences in style and presentation.

Jean Delay regards the Traité as "une manifestation symbolique de l'auteur, l'emblème de sa propre entéléchie",⁴ rather than a symbolist manifesto, and Justin O'Brien as "one stage in a prolonged meditation on the sincerity of the artist".⁵ In the Cahiers d'André Walter, Gide

1. G./V. Corr., 23rd June 1891, p. 100.

2. Ibid., 3rd November 1891, p. 134, and Moutote, op. cit., p. 17, where Daniel Moutote expresses his belief that Gide finds the answer to his artistic problems in Schopenhauer's point of view that: "...l'Idée de l'humanité...se peint le plus nettement dans les caractères les plus individuelles."

3. Op. cit., pp. 10-11.

4. JAC 2, p. 117.

5. Op. cit., p. 76.

is already concerned with the role of the artist:

Les chimères plutôt que les réalités; les imaginations des poètes font mieux saillir la vérité idéale, cachée derrière l'apparence des choses...Tous ont raison. Les choses DEVIENNENT vraies; il suffit qu'on les pense. - C'est en nous qu'est la réalité; notre esprit crée ses Vérités. Et la meilleure ne sera pas celle qui dira les mots d'amour pour que l'homme avec joie se dévoue...¹

The following lines from the Traité show that Gide's concept of the role of the artist has undergone little change:

Les apparences sont imparfaites: elles balbutient les vérités qu'elles recèlent; le Poète, à demi-mot, doit comprendre, - puis redire ces vérités...La question morale pour l'artiste, n'est pas que l'Idée qu'il manifeste soit plus ou moins morale et utile au grand nombre; la question est qu'il la manifeste bien.²

Both works proclaim that the artist should not limit his choice of ideas to those accepted by current moral standards but, in seeking to obtain an ideal artistic truth, be ready to brave scandal.³ Gide's concept of the artist's role is not startlingly new, having obvious affinities with Romantic and Symbolist tradition.

The difference between the Cahiers and the Traité lies in the highly personal note struck in the former which gives way in the latter to the more objective tone of an artistic credo. From "ses vérités" Gide has moved to "Les Vérités"⁴ and the "mots d'amour" of the Cahiers are replaced by the stricter but more general precept for the artist: "Son seul devoir est qu'il...manifeste. Son seul péché: qu'il se préfère...à l'Idée qu'il manifeste."⁵ Gide's contact with Symbolist circles seems to have affected him to the extent that he no longer puts forward his ideas in a subjective way. Gide is now aware that he is not alone in thinking as he does.

Another similarity between the Cahiers and the Traité is to be found in the mathematical terms used by Gide to represent harmonious perfection.

1. CAW, pp. 35 & 48.

2. Romans, TN, pp. 8 & 9.

3. Gide foresees this necessity but timidly in the Cahiers, "Enfant - suppriment," CAW, pp. 135-136.

4. Romans, TN, p. 8.

5. Romans, TN, p. 8. André Walter himself is not exempt from this literary sin since he allows language to take precedence over ideas instead of being subordinated to them, CAW, p. 163: "J'y suis - périodiques"

The somewhat Germanic André Walter views both the communion of souls¹ and music² in such terms. In the Traité, mathematical vocabulary is used to describe the literary symbol of the Garden of Eden:

Tout était parfait comme un nombre et se scandait
normalement; un accord émanait du rapport des lignes;
sur le jardin planait une constante symphonie.
Au centre de l'Eden, Ygdrasil, l'arbre logarithmique...³

The link between mathematics and art is, therefore, not due to the influence of Valéry who believes that: "Le rythme est une question de sous-multiples..."

A further preoccupation common to the two works is that of reflexion. André Walter, not unlike the young Gide, is convinced that knowledge of his own thought is to be obtained through reflexion in a mirror:

Je plonge mes yeux dans ces yeux: et mon âme flotte
incertaine entre cette double apparence, doutant enfin,
comme étourdie, lequel est le reflet de l'autre et si
je ne suis pas l'image, un fantôme irréel; -doutant lequel
des deux regarde, sentant un regard identique répondre à
l'autre regard. Les yeux l'un dans l'autre se plongent,
- et, dans ses prunelles profondes, je cherche ma pensée...⁵

Emmanuele serves the same purpose as André Walter's own image, since he claims: "Nous ne pensions plus, nous regardions penser l'autre, et c'était même chose."⁶ Although Emmanuele, his cousin, is obviously external to André Walter, there exists between them a communion of souls and it is therefore true to say that André Walter's search to seize his own thought is essentially self-centred.

The same is more obviously the case for Narcisse at the beginning of the Traité where Gide writes:

Il veut connaître enfin quelle forme a son âme; elle
doit être, il sent, excessivement adorable, s'il en
juge par ses longs frémissements; mais son visage! son
image! Ah! ne pas savoir si l'on s'aime...ne pas
connaître sa beauté! Je me confonds dans ce paysage sans
lignes, qui ne contrarie pas ses plans. Ah! ne pas pouvoir
se voir! Un miroir! 7

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1. CAW, p. 143.
 2. Ibid, p. 159.
 3. Romans, TN, p. 5.
 4. G./V. Corr., 17th June
 5. CAW, pp. 147-148.
 6. Ibid, p. 59.
 7. Romans, TN, p.3.

At this point, the outside world is a source of self-knowledge neither for Narcisse nor André Walter nor for André Gide.¹

The world's phenomena are meaningful as the subject of the author's contemplation. Thus, André Walter expresses his belief that:

Ce qui connaît tout et n'est connu de personne,
c'est le Sujet. Il est donc le support du monde...
Quelles exaltations. Crier à pleine voix cette
phrase et se plonger dans cette pensée orgueilleuse.²

Opposed to the desire for self-knowledge through one's own image is the intoxicating position of the artist who, by contemplation, gains unlimited knowledge and truth. This is, indeed, the final position of Narcisse.³ The difference between André Walter and Narcisse lies in the latter's humility and conscious sacrifice of himself to art.

The original part of Adam in the Traité is none other than that of the artist as explained in the previous paragraph. In the perfection of the Garden of Eden, man too exists as "une forme première...paradisiale et cristalline".⁴ Thus, Adam, the essence of mankind, contemplates with the reverence of the artist.⁵

In both the Cahiers and the Traité, therefore, appear the apparently contradictory notions of knowledge of self through one's own image and knowledge unlimited through contemplation and, in the Traité, through the sacrifice of one's image.

The fall of Adam represents, in my opinion, another way towards achieving self-knowledge and, once again, the ideas expressed in the Traité find an echo in the Cahiers.

Conscious that he is powerful because he creates, Adam nonetheless

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1. J.1, June 1891, p. 20: "Je ne parviens jamais à me persuader tout à fait de l'existence réelle de certaines choses...Le monde m'est un miroir, et je suis étonné quand il me reflète mal."
 2. CAW, p. 101.
 3. Romans, TN, pp. 10-11: "Mais Narcisse - passent."
 4. Ibid, p. 4.
 5. Ibid, p. 5: "Adam, religieux, écoutait. Unique, encore insexué, il demeurait assis à l'ombre du grand arbre. L'homme! Hypostase de l'Elohim, Suppôt de la Divinité! Pour lui, par lui, les formes apparaissent. Immobile et central parmi toute cette féerie, il la regarde qui se déroule."

tires of being an inactive spectator and becomes a prey to unrest since: "...lui-même il ne se voit pas...que sait-il de sa puissance, tant qu'elle reste inaffirmée? A force de les contempler, il ne se distingue plus de ces choses: ne pas savoir où l'on s'arrête - ne pas savoir jusqu'où l'on va! Car c'est un esclavage enfin, si l'on n'ose risquer un geste, sans crever toute l'harmonie."¹

André Walter, while obsessed with the notion of harmony,² is not exempt from the irritation which causes Adam to destroy the perfection of Eden. Thus, André Walter bids his soul to leave aside melancholy dreams and adds: "...qu'elle se réveille enfin et recommence à vivre"³ for his art he writes of his intentions: "Je romprai les harmonies, fussent-elles fortuites";⁴ finally, André Walter's moral purity is shaken by "Une inquiétude de toute la chair..."⁵ and by the suspicion that sanity lies in possession rather than in "l'immatérielle étreinte."⁶

André Walter's temptation to cast aside the purity but intangibility of the soul is the precursor of Adam's gesture of revolt which ends his subordination to harmony. Adam rejects pure contemplation in Gide's Traité du Narcisse. Consequently, he enters actively into the world and his participation in the course of humanity is represented by the birth of woman. Adam has decided to invest himself with a sense of his own reality by mingling with life, by acting and being acted upon.

Germaine Brée interprets Adam's gesture on an artistic plane:

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1. Romans, TN, p. 6.
 2. CAW, p. 43: "...mes amours tout entières iront vers l'harmonie."
 3. Ibid., p. 18.
 4. Ibid., pp. 18-19. Commenting on Rimbaud's "Mémoire," Henri Peyre attributes the same artistic preoccupation to the poet: "Les strophes, les vers y sont davantage brisés et plus riches en surprises. Toute éloquence trop facilement entraînant est évitée". La Littérature symboliste, P.U.F., 1976, p. 33.
 5. Ibid., p. 102.
 6. Ibid., p. 70.

Contemplant un peu l'Adam insexue dans son Paradis; n'est-il point, lui, le créateur du monde, de la vie, par son geste scandaleux d'affirmation?... Ne peut-on discerner dans ce Traité le mouvement de révolte, qui, à travers toute la terminologie mallarméenne, se dessine? Contempler, rêver, retrouver l'Idée, la Forme, au-delà des apparences, premier mouvement; mais second mouvement, l'acte libre de la volonté qui brise la Forme dans un bruit de scandale et de mondes qui tombent, sans doute pour reconstruire une autre forme à volonté: voilà ce que Gide semble réserver au poète. 1

In the long run this is true. Adam is, however, an ambiguous character. Before accepting him as the incarnation of the artist Gide is to become, one must view his act on an existential plane.

Adam's fate is painted by Gide as one of constant regret and ceaseless wandering in search of the lost Paradise, the only traces of which he will find in the mouths of poets. Such a pessimistic view of man hides the implications of Adam's destiny, when one thinks of Gide's own evolution.

Adam's gesture of revolt which leads to his exile from Paradise, everlasting wandering and an endless quest for harmony is representative both of the man and the poet. The dispersion of Adam and his race is not only an integral part of Gide's obsession with travelling but is premonitory of the "dépersonnalisation poétique" so necessary to Gide's art and of his cry: "Assumer le plus possible d'humanité."²

Adam/Gide's experience will shortly become the indispensable stairway to Narcisse/Gide's creation of truth and harmony.

Thus, I feel that Jean Delay's clear-cut evaluation of what separates Narcisse from Adam restricts "cette part d'inconscient"³ which, if one is to believe Gide, it is the reader's prerogative to find in his works.

Of the Traité, Delay writes:

Ainsi, devant le grand dilemme... être un artiste, être un homme, Narcisse choisit d'être un artiste. La loi morale est faite pour Adam, mais Narcisse ne connaît que la Loi de sa vérité. Le bien manifester sera sa seule éthique. 4

2. J.1, 1894, p.56.

3. Romans, Paludes, p.89.

4. JAG 2, p.124.

1. I.P., p.44

It is true that "sur cette terre de crépuscule et de prières"¹ Adam will meet human morality but he is not to be discarded for this nor because he has preferred self-knowledge to the idealised, privileged role of poet. It is not to be forgotten that temptation for Adam is not his own image in a mirror but the desire to act which entails endless travel and an endless mental search. Therein, Adam closely resembles Gide, the man, who abandons his mirror by implicating himself in life, by considering others' points of view and constantly questioning his own, thus guaranteeing the authenticity of his art. Adam's function is complementary to that of Narcisse, the artist. Germaine Brée points to the almost symbiotic relationship between life and art which "s'authentifient mutuellement, mais...restent nettement distinctes".² As Justin O'Brien remarks, the Traité marks the beginning of Gide's search for sincerity as an artist, which means that: "...jamais le mot ne précède l'idée...Et pour la vie entière de l'artiste, il faut que sa vocation soit irrésistible; qu'il ne puisse pas ne pas écrire."³ This explains the need for inner motivation behind Gide's works. Justin O'Brien fails to take into account, however, the means of achieving this highly individual position, which, although decided upon well after the Traité, seems to be the logical consequence both of Adam's act and of Narcisse's final decision to contemplate. Adam must therefore live to nourish Narcisse's contemplation which will produce the archetypal truth which lies behind Adam's experiences. The moral dilemma posed by "l'ange" et "la bête" in the Cahiers,⁴ has been transposed in the Traité to an apparent contradiction between man and the artist which nonetheless allows one to foresee how the two will complement each other in Gide's case. While the Cahiers and the Traité share many points in common, therefore, Gide is right in his judgement of the

1. TN, opus cit., 7.

2. IP., p. 15.

3. J.1, 31st December 1891, p. 28. Quoted by Justin O'Brien, op. cit., p.76.

4. The first representing the soul and the second the body, CAW, p. 94.

latter work: "...il m'a débrouillé toute mon esthétique, ma morale et ma philosophie."¹ Many points in the Traité look back to the Cahiers but have been organised and allotted their just place in an artistic schema which is forward-looking because it is based on Gide's decision to break with moral taboos and to obey artistic laws only.

ii. Gide's Journal and the Traité du Narcisse.

Although little direct mention is made of Gide's work in the Journal, those pages which cover the period of the writing of the Traité are indicative of the underlying importance attached to this work by Gide, which, as I have just mentioned, points to Gide's entire artistic future.

In 1890, Gide is principally concerned with subordinating himself to his work and to the ideas expressed in it. Thus, he writes: "Au temps de la production...Il faut lorsqu'on travaille, que l'idée où l'on s'achoppe vous soit unique. Il faut croire que c'est dans l'absolu que l'on travaille",² and: "Ne jamais perdre de vue le but. Ne jamais préférer le moyen...se considérer soi-même comme un moyen; donc ne jamais se préférer au but choisi, à l'oeuvre."³

The ideas expressed here echo those of the explanatory note in the Traité du Narcisse.⁴ The Journal also echoes the query of the Traité: "Et maintenant que manifester?"⁵

For the moment, Gide lacks a subject.⁶ Not only does Gide not know what subject to choose but also he queries the possibility of free choice of his subject. Thus, Gide already senses that his work must spring from an inner need. Gide's problem may be due to lack of content within himself but it is noticeable that several months later he claims to be prey

1. G./V. Corr., 3rd November 1891, p. 134.

2. J.l, 8th May 1890, p. 17.

3. Ibid, End of November 1890, p. 18.

4. Romans, TN, p. 8-9. This note was written in 1890.

5. Ibid, p. 9. See: J.l, End of November 1890, p.18: "(Ici lacune - choisir?)"

6. This state is seen by some as a permanent factor in Gide's work, G./Ghéon Corr.1, Intro.,14, & Sur les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no.5, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, nos. 439-444, Minard 1975, "L'Oeuvre sans Objet" by Anne-Marie Moulènes and Jacques Paty, pp.93-101.

to "cette complexité inextricable des émotions, et ces systèmes de vibrations, que je notais déjà en janvier 1890"¹ and he concludes that this is the state which precedes literary production.

It is interesting to note that the writing of the Traité which deals with Gide's approach to art and his role as an artist is thus having a retroactive effect upon its author. Parallel to tackling this theoretical problem in his artistic work, Gide is also thinking of the more practical problem of what to write about. Through his Journal, Gide decides what form his choice will take and, by this dialogue between himself and the written page, ensures the inner necessity of his choice.

Reading plays an important part in Gide's development. After reading Carlyle, Gide writes: "J'en tire le désir et déjà presque l'habitude d'une certaine braverie morale, un peu hargneuse, mais belle en somme, et la seule certainement capable de grandes choses."²

In conjunction with this entry in his Journal, one may read an extract from a letter from Gide to his mother where he expresses his exasperation after finishing the Cahiers d'André Walter:

...j'ai senti qu'il me fallait me sortir tout à fait de cette atmosphère de larmes, de mélancolies religieuses et de ressassements solitaires où j'avais vécu vingt ans. Je me suis longtemps plongé dans une vie volontairement toute différente avec le but d'oublier mon ancienne personnalité.³

On this letter Jean Delay remarks: "...plus l'écoeure la sentimentalité de Walter, plus l'exalte le solitaire destin de Narcisse."⁴ Although Gide is certainly thinking of the solitary destiny of the Symbolist artist, Narcisse, his reactions to his personal reading prove that he is,

1. J.1, 4th June 1891, p. 19.

2. Ibid, 10th June 1891, p. 19.

3. JAG 2, letter to Gide's mother of the 27th May 1892, p.34.

4. Ibid, p. 114.

in fact, more concerned with his own moral development which is to be the source of his art, the answer to the question of "what to manifest". Shortly after this, Gide writes in his Journal: "Oser être soi",¹ thereby underlining his determination to break the limits of the received morality of his youth.

In this new turning Gide wishes to avoid any compromise be it moral or artistic and, because of this, he expresses his fear of company around him since he may be influenced by his desire to please others.²

Gide's mother and probably also Madeleine are obviously seen by Gide as a stumbling-block to his plans for a new moral and artistic position since he notes in his Journal:

Brunetière parle de ceux du XVII^e siècle (plusieurs d'entre eux, du moins; pas Pascal) qui n'avaient pas ces pensées profondes sur la vie (d'un Shakespeare, par ex.) ou qui n'avaient pas osé les dire, parce qu'ils étaient habitués, dans la société, à mettre leur pensée à la portée des femmes.³

Immediately after mentioning these difficulties, however, Gide writes of the intoxicating influence of the history of the Renaissance in Taine's Littérature Anglaise: "Peut-être était-ce là la vraie beauté; toute physique...Ma pensée devient voluptueusement impie et païenne. Il faut exagérer cela."⁴ Gide goes on to list the authors he must read in order to harden himself and develop this aspect of his character with a view to his art.⁵

In light of these resolutions to make a break with his moral and artistic past, Gide's hopes of absorbing himself in "une émotion sensuelle"⁶ during his stay in Ostend are quite in keeping. However, the journey to

1. J.1, June 1891,

2. Gide's fears seem to be justified, J.1, 23rd June 1891, p.22.

3. Ibid, June 1891, p.21.

4. Ibid, June 1891, p.21. It is to be remembered that, for Gide, exaggeration is equivalent to the work of art, J.1, November 1893, p.33.

5. Ibid, June 1891, p.21: "...voilà ceux qu'il me faut lire...Et ne pas se préoccuper du reste. J'ai assez de larmoiements dans mon âme pour irriguer trente livres."

6. Ibid, 22nd July 1891, p. 23.

Belgium is reminiscent of the day-trip of Paludes. Travel, the symbol of rupture with one's background, fails Gide miserably and indeed: "Le 'paysage', au lieu de me distraire de moi-même, prend toujours désespérément la forme de mon âme lamentable."¹ The nose-bleeding and feverish Gide of this journey has been unable to make the so ardently dreamt of break with his past since he is accompanied not only by his mother but by obsessive memories of Madeleine.

Gide does not, however, allow himself to forget his dream. When he writes: "Le désir de la solitude laborieuse me saisit de nouveau. Maeterlinck est d'une force admirable".² Gide's desire to emulate the Belgian poet is the indirect expression of his will to find strength in the solitary, amoral role of artist unhindered by the wish to please or by an excess of "larmoiements dans [son] âme",³ This is to be seen more clearly when Gide writes of Flinck's paintings:

Peinture méchante. Quand on dit: 'il a du caractère,' il y a toujours un peu de méchanceté; parce que, pour s'affirmer, on est obligé de briser des choses. Flinck a du caractère. Plus tard, il a travaillé pour plaire et a eu peur de lui-même.⁴

The picture painted by the Journal of this time is one of a Gide who is determined to break moral bonds, to leave aside the world of the soul and to affirm himself in sensuality. Far more than a retarded adolescent revolt, this moral position is also an artistic one.⁵

Evidence of this is to be found in Gide's Journal⁶ if one accepts that the problem of "être" and "paraître" may be interpreted not just as one of being and appearing but as one of reality and the imaginary or of life and art. Gide's query as to whether "être" should come before

1. J.1, 22nd July 1891, p.22.

2. Ibid, 23rd July 1891, p.23.

3. Ibid, June 1891, p. 21.

4. Ibid, Brussels, 1891, p.24. My own underlinings.

5. Ibid, June 1891, p. 21: "Aucun compromis (moral ou artistique)..."

6. Ibid, 7th August 1891, p. 25.

"paraître" or after may be interpreted as the artistic problem of whether life should precede and, hence, form art or whether art should model life. The role of the Poet in the Traité seems to be the latter.¹ However, it is not to be forgotten that Gide claims in the Traité that the rules of morality and aesthetics are but one and that just as "toute oeuvre qui ne manifeste pas est inutile et par cela même, mauvaise",² so the same may be said of man.

Gide's Journal points to the interlocking destiny of Adam and Narcisse and to the forward-looking impetus the author of the Traité has received from his work. The retroactive effect upon Gide of the Cahiers d'André Walter was to disgust him with "the solitary, melancholy and religious atmosphere of his youth".³ That of the Traité is more complex. Gide's work commences negatively. As Daniel Moutote points out, the artist is uneasy because his book is not strictly necessary, a repetition of old truths.⁴ Moreover, Adam and Narcisse have apparently opposing roles and yet, ordinarily, man must be considered as the most important of the "Formes-Symboles"⁵ in this world. Through exploring certain negative aspects, Gide reaches a positive position where not only the role of the man and the artist are reconciled but also where Gide foresees the possibility of new and necessary truths to be told to a chosen public thirsting after Paradise lost.⁶

iii Parallel Ideas and Images in the Traité du Narcisse and the Gide-Valéry Correspondence.

The Cahiers d'André Walter and Gide's Journal prove not only that the main seeds of the Traité du Narcisse were already existent within

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1. Romans, TN, p.9: "Les apparences - normalement."
 2. Ibid, p.8.
 3. JAG 2, letter to his mother of the 27th May 1892, p.34.
 4. Moutote, op.cit., p.16.
 5. Romans, TN, p.8.
 6. Ibid, "Triste race - connaître," p.7.

Gide regardless of his relationship with Valéry and of his contact with other Symbolists but also that the artistic and moral solution found by Gide in the Traité is Gide's alone. Nonetheless, Gide admits:

"... j'élabore doucement Le Traité du Narcisse, dont je vous ai vaguement parlé et que sans vos paroles des soirs, je n'eusse peut-être pas écrit - ou pas vu tel tout au moins..."¹ As Robert Mallet points out,² there is no record of Gide's first conversations with Valéry. Nonetheless, one may assume that this conversation was not entirely divorced from the preoccupations of the correspondence. In his correspondence with Martin du Gard, for example, Gide often states his wish to continue verbally a discussion begun in his correspondence.

There is some evidence that either this was the case in this instance or that the correspondence independently influenced Gide since certain ideas expressed by Valéry in his letters before his conversation with Gide have been indirectly echoed in the Traité.

In his correspondence with Gide, Valéry expressed his conviction that: "...le livre est saint. On en fait UN, qui est le bon et le seul de son être et l'on disparaît..."³ this sentiment being in marked contrast to Gide's belief that several works are necessary in order to achieve immortality by the creation of a "manteau de gemmes et d'amiante".⁴

Both concepts of the art of literature are to be found in the Traité. In Paradise lies "le livre du Mystère - où se lisait la vérité qu'il faut connaître".⁵ This book has the same religious status given by Valéry to the perfect work he dreams of accomplishing. The one and only truth is to be grasped through such a work which thereby ends the artist's search and renders other works unnecessary.⁶ Thus, Valéry foresees an

1. G./V. Corr., 23rd June 1891, p. 100

2. Ibid, Intro., p. 12.

3. G./V. Corr., 15th April 1891, pp. 79-80.

4. Ibid, 29th March 1891, p. 75; See: above, Chapter 2, p. 88.

5. Romans, TN, p.5.

6. Valéry's search, as Claude Martin remarks, consists of "l'analyse de son moi intellectuel et du mode de fonctionnement de celui-ci". This explains Valéry's decision after the storm in Genoa to give up "l'édification d'une oeuvre littéraire, qui lui est soudain apparue comme une vaine idolâtrie", MAG, p.54.

end to literary production. Gide, on the other hand, is ready to make a compromise. He does recognise that books are not strictly necessary since: "...quelques mythes d'abord suffisaient; une religion y tenait tout entière..."¹ In this, Gide echoes Valéry who views religion as a superb artistic gesture.² However, rather than reduce himself to silence because perfection is already manifest in religion, Gide prefers to repeat ancient truths.

It is also true, however, that the Traité opens up fresh avenues for artistic exploration,³ and Gide pleads the artist's right to multiplicity when he writes of the poet/artist's duty: "Tout phénomène est le Symbole d'une Vérité. Son seul devoir est qu'il la manifeste."⁴ Gide already believes that: "...le Paradis est partout..."⁵ Nonetheless, by writing in the Traité: "Le Poète, lui, qui sait qu'il crée, devine à travers chaque chose - et une seule lui suffit, symbole, pour révéler son archétype..."⁶ Gide shows his acceptance of Valéry's position as described by Robert Mallet:

Valéry...construira sa pensée et sa vie à grand renfort de refus et de soustractions...La densité de ce que contiendront finalement les deux mains réunies de Valéry est une cristallisation par la défiance.⁷

These quantitative considerations are closely connected to qualitative ones concerning the artist's choice of subject-matter. The perfection Valéry is seeking in his mind or in his art should have no necessary connexion with his personal life, "car écrire! ce n'est pas se faire rougir...mais bien...saisir un lecteur idéal et...le réduire par la Vérité supérieure...de petits signes".⁸

1. Romans, TN, p.3.

2. G./V. Corr., Intro., p.14: "Paul - gothique", & letter of the 27th March 1891, pp.72-74.

3. Romans, TN, p.9: "...tout doit être manifesté, même les plus funestes choses..."

4. Romans, TN, p.8.

5. Ibid, p.9.

6. Ibid, p.9. My own underlinings.

7. G./V. Corr., Intro., p.13.

8. Ibid, , September 1891, p.126.

Valéry's one "Truth" is to be contrasted to Gide's "Vérités",¹ his refusal to blush to Gide's decision that: "...tout doit être manifesté, même les plus funestes choses: 'Malheur à celui par qui le scandale arrive!'"² Not only is Gide suggesting multiplicity but also consciously daring, new and personal subject-matter.

While Gide's Journal reflects his desire to extend his artistic and moral frontiers, the Traité proposes not only this as the role of the artist but also the search for perfection "en soustrayant"³ the end result of which is "le livre...saint"⁴ of Valéry. Gide's respect for his friend is undoubtedly responsible for the fact that he not only expresses his own ideas but takes those of Valéry into account too, in his book. One may also discern Valéry's influence in Gide's choice of images when, in the Traité, he writes of the artist and the work of art in relation to the public. Both Valéry's letter about the Passion of St. Mathew sung on Palm Sunday⁵ and that concerning events at Fourmies on the first of May⁶ strike a similar note to part of the Traité which was no doubt written after these letters.⁷

In his first letters, Valéry is overcome by the artistic beauty of the music and of the words of the Passion, in particular the powerful chorus: "Crucifigatur! [sic]"⁸ This very cry is used to voice Valéry's complaints about how hard he is working for his law exams:

Crucificatur! -
Cependant il faut bien VIVRE!
- Je n'en vois pas la nécessité.⁹

In the Traité Gide evokes the Crucifixion. With none of Valéry's irony

1. Romans, TN, p.8.

2. Ibid, p.9.

3. G./V. Corr., Intro., p.13.

4. Ibid, 15th April 1891, pp.79-80.

5. Ibid, 27th March 1891, pp. 72-74.

6. Ibid, 6th May 1891, pp. 82-83.

7. It is only on the 23rd June 1891 that Gide writes: "...j'élabore doucement Le Traité du Narcisse...", Ibid, p. 100.

8. Ibid, 27th March 1891, p. 73.

9. Ibid, 27th March 1891, p. 73.

he opposes the perfect necessity of Christ's sacrifice of himself on the Cross to the noisy contingent of life¹;

'Il se fit dans le ciel un silence'; prélude des apocalypses. - Oui tragiques, tragiques époques, où commencent des ères nouvelles, où le ciel et la terre se recueillent, où le livre aux sept sceaux va s'ouvrir, où tout va se fixer dans une posture éternelle...lorsque l'extase immobilise les saintes femmes, et que le voile qui se déchire va livrer les secrets du temple; quand toute la création contemple le Christ enfin qui se fige en la croix suprême, disant les dernières paroles: 'Tout est consommé...'2

Perfection is thus achieved through subordination of oneself to a sublime motivation be it the discovery of truth through art or the saving of mankind or, more mundanely, passing one's law exams. "Si nous savions être attentifs et regarder..."³ Gide writes, then, instead of endless masses, one only would suffice. One concludes that, if this were the case, paradise would be refound, imperfection would have reached perfection because, at last, humanity would have learnt to contemplate pure beauty with the attention of a Valéry.

A comparison may also be made between Valéry's letter on Fourmies and certain aspects of the Traité. Gide's reaction to Valéry's letter is significant when one considers the resemblance between it and a passage to be found in the Traité. Gide writes to Valéry:

Comme je l'aime, votre lettre! (le commencement, du moins, - car j'aime à vous entendre crier, et je préfère à votre murmure, votre phrase, lorsqu'elle s'écartèle) - et comme je vous aime! Je veux vous parler: c'est en moi un besoin rageur et qui se tourmente et s'irrite à ne pouvoir aussitôt se satisfaire.⁴

One may be forgiven for assuming that this letter was discussed in Gide's conversation with Valéry which influenced the Traité du Narcisse.

As I have already mentioned,⁵ the parallel to be drawn between Valéry's

1. It is to be remembered too that, in his correspondence, Gide agrees with Valéry that "VIVRE" is not really necessary and expresses his belief that: "...l'atmosphère des paix éternelles...", evoked by the Père Lachaise cemetery is infinitely preferable, G./V. Corr., 29th March 1891, p.74.

2. Romans, TN, p.8.

3. Ibid, p.9.

4. G./V. Corr., 12th May 1891, p.83.

5. See: above, p.384.

letter and Gide's work is one of images and not one of ideas. Both men mention soldiers whose role is inevitably destructive and both men denigrate the people. Here, however, the resemblance stops.

The soldiers who shot and killed some of the demonstrators at Fourmies are envied by Valéry whose hatred of the people is motivated, by the feeling that his research and literature have achieved no more than their unconsciousness. Hence, Valéry would like to kill his respect for literature and other ideals in "des visions réelles, trépiglements funèbres de sabots clapotants et déchirements de fusillades, et n'en revenir".¹ Paradoxically, therefore, involvement in reality and life leads to annihilation and to common experience with the very people Valéry despises.

Although Gide understands Valéry's desire to die with the people and disapproves of them,² it is because they have come to see themselves as individuals and not because they are in any way equal to the artist. Indeed, the soldier of the Traité du Narcisse is the enemy of the contemplative artist, creator of perfection. Thus, the Crucifixion, where all should have been "finished," becomes but a "form", a "symbol" destined to be endlessly repeated, "parce qu'un soldat voulait gagner une tunique, parce que quelqu'un ne regardait pas".³

Gide blames Christianity for man's viewing the world in function of himself, and complains that one lives to appear before others. Instead of this tiring form of self-affirmation, Gide suggests that one should subordinate oneself to an object of adoration which, in Gide's own case, is literature. Gide will not succumb to the temptation of destruction of the artist in him by joining the common people.

1. G./V. Corr., 8th May 1891, p.83.
2. Ibid, 12th May 1891, pp. 83-85.
3. Romans, TN, p.8.

Gide's view of the people is a pessimistic, negative one since, he writes: "La comédie sans nous n'en sera pas moins jouée, et ce n'est pas nous, tristes mimes, qui vous ferons mieux comprendre..."¹ Nonetheless, from this statement, one gathers that the role of the artist is to try to convert the people against all odds and that he must not commit an absurd gesture through disgust or despair.

The views expressed by Gide in reply to Valéry's letter are also to be discerned in the Traité. The artist must subordinate himself to contemplation and avoid the temptation of self-affirmation through premature knowledge of himself. Adam, Man, is in the same unenviable position as Gide² being the centre of the world but chooses to know himself rather than to forget himself in adoration. The only remedy to the disorder and anguish brought him by his gesture of revolt is in the memory of Paradise to be found in the words of literary "priests".³

In his correspondence, Gide insisted on the fact that for the true artist, such as Valéry or himself, there could be no escape from the goddess, literature.⁴ Gide's Traité also teaches this lesson, by underlining the fact that contemplation is the artist's role and that any venture into life should never be in the aim of self-destruction but a way towards enrichening one's art. The latter is a way which Gide may follow with impunity because he can never forget literature. For Valéry, life is of the greatest danger to his art. Gide's Traité as much as his correspondence is both warning Valéry of this and encouraging him to continue his solitary search for "le livre...saint",⁵ since the latter

1. G./V. Corr., 12th May 1891, p. 84.

2. Ibid, , 12th May 1891, p. 84: "Que c'est lassant d'être toujours le centre du monde et de supporter autour de soi toujours cette gravitation", Romans, TN, pp. 5-6.: "Immobile - se lasse."

3. Ibid, , 12th May 1891: p.84: "...o'est - littérature!"

4. Ibid, , 12th May 1891, pp. 83-85.

5. Ibid, 15th April 1891, pp. 79-80.

may reach an ideal public which will join in communion with the writer at a time when "une messe suffirait. Si nous savions être attentifs et regarder".¹

An interesting parallel is to be made between Adam's desire to destroy the surrounding harmony and Valéry's desire to kill his respect for literature through meaningless action. Both men thus refuse contemplation, the cardinal virtue of the artist. Also, just as Adam, after the Fall, will depend on the poet/prophet to evoke his former privileged existence in Paradise, so Valéry, the iconoclast calls to Gide:

Venez donc réveiller les antiques roses et les lis
penchés, comme un âge de jadis, un âge terrible et
frêle de jadis dont un souffle aurait de corolles
suscité l'éveil rose dans des jardins et qui des
gestes de ses mains aurait fait obéissants les
parfums pâles et les feuilles confuses, dans l'Eden?²

It is difficult and even unwise to state categorically that Gide's correspondence influenced his work since, as was shown in my chapter on the Correspondance, Gide tended to twist Valéry's preoccupations in order to introduce his own with some semblance of dialogue.

However, both the letters from Gide³ to which I have referred are not just vehicles for the expression of Gide's ideas but also very much responses to Valéry's letters.⁴ Also, these letters preceded Gide's conversation with Valéry which, Gide admitted, influenced the course of the Traité and certain parallels between the Traité and the ideas provoked by Valéry's letters are quite noticeable.

It is, nonetheless, impossible to conclude firmly that Valéry's letters had a direct influence on Gide's thought as expressed in his Traité. Obviously Gide thought of his work before writing it. The connexion between Gide's work and his correspondence cannot be reduced to a simple,

1. Romans, TM, p.9.

2. G./V. Corr., 8th May 1891, p. 83.

3. Ibid, 29th March 1891, pp. 74-77, & 12th May 1891, pp. 83-85.

4. Ibid, 27th March 1891, pp. 72-74, & 8th May 1891, pp. 82-83.

one-way system but resembles the possibility afforded by a dual carriage-way to pass from one lane to another.

Therefore, in addition to those ideas in the Traité which seem to be prompted by Valéry's letters, Gide spontaneously gives expression in his correspondence to thoughts which are also to be found in his book. Before admitting to Valéry that he is writing the Traité du Narcisse, Gide, in his correspondence, questions the necessity of books:

Le hiéroglyphe suffit à murmurer les secrets de toute une science. Tout le reste est concession. Il ne faut pas concessionner. O rester pur!
Mais on se prostitue pourtant parce qu'on a trop aimé les autres, faibles, et que paramour pour eux on explique.¹

In the Traité this concentrated perfection lies in "le livre du Mystère - où se lisait la vérité...Et le vent, soufflant dans les feuilles de l'arbre, en épelait, le long du jour, les hiéroglyphes nécessaires".² In fact, the condensing of human knowledge into one work is more akin to Valéry than to Gide and this explains Gide's rather embarrassed explanation of his own tendency to be among those who are ^{des} "refaiseurs de virginités mortes".³

Gide's uneasiness as to the validity of a literary vocation is solved by the writing of the Traité. As I have already explained, Gide allows pride of place to the "livre du Mystère"⁴ which is equivalent to Valéry's "livre...saint",⁵ but also discovers a more lofty role for the artist, who aspires to genius through multiplicity, than the shame-faced one of his correspondence. The artist portrayed in the Traité is a solitary being untroubled by human weakness or morality. His object is to discern

1. G./V. Corr., 17th June 1891, p.99.

2. Romans, TN, p.5.

3. G./V. Corr., 28th August 1891, p. 121.

4. See: above, p. 382-384.

5. G./V. Corr., 15th April 1891, pp. 79-80.

what lies behind every phenomenon, to re-create the world with his writings which will contain personal but multiple truths.

Having established this justification of his vocation through the Traité, Gide does not hesitate to introduce this point of view into his correspondence in order to counter Valéry's continued and his own former pessimism in regard to literature. Thus Gide writes:

Les choses sont laides, je sais, mais elles s'efforcent vers des choses superbes, qu'elles ne seront jamais, mais que nous voyons, poètes, au travers d'elles. Il faut voir le monde tel qu'il devrait être.¹

Valéry's depression² is due to his inability to construct perfect truth in reality. Gide proposes imaginary perfection which will draw reality to it.³

iv. The Traité du Narcisse, Correspondence and Dialogue.

The relationship between Gide's correspondence with Valéry and the Traité du Narcisse is thus two-way. By his letters, Valéry provokes Gide to thought and self-expression which bears fruit for the Traité. The Traité helps Gide to seize his own thought and, as soon as Valéry offers an opening, it is given expression in his correspondence. Both his and Valéry's ideas about literature and their ways of expressing them are allowed parallel existence by Gide both in his correspondence and in the Traité. Thus, Echo apparently controls the relation between the two. However, as Gide becomes more conscious of the moral and artistic position he has discovered both through his correspondence and in the Traité, he must necessarily adopt the artist's role he has created. Thus, Echo's voice becomes weaker and more distorted and, in the end,

1. G./V. Corr., September 1891, p. 128.

2. Ibid, September 1891, p.125-127.

3. See: Sur les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no. 5, La Revue des Lettres modernes, nos. 439-444, Minard 1975, "L'Oeuvre sans Objet", p.95 & note 3, p. 102.

Gide's artistic optimism seems an elusive mockery of Valéry's pessimism.

When Gide writes: "...je me lasse vite de refléter ta chère âme... Je travaille mais ce que je fais va te déplaire",¹ one understands that he is ready to affirm his opposition to Valéry's literary position as viewed by himself. The breadth of scope afforded Gide by the fact that he has "des regards vierges pour tous les éblouissements"² is in strong contrast to the apparently limited literary inspiration conceived of by Valéry: "Les livres! ...sont ce qu'on est. On les refait - donc, pas besoin."³

Through his Traité, Gide has found a way to refute this. The writer may multiply his possibilities and recreate himself for each new work through contact with life. From this point, Gide goes on to question the necessity of the very absolute Valéry is seeking. Perfection is just as easy to reproduce, if not more so, than imperfection as Gide points out to Valéry in 1899. Gide's decision not to achieve such perfection has been consciously made by the artist in him who wishes all his works to have a profound personal motivation so that he will never again have to write: "Les livres ne sont peut-être pas une chose bien nécessaire."⁴ Each of Gide's works must contain "une sorte de finesse artistique, finesse sensuelle,...quelque chose d'imprécisable que ne pourra saisir l'instrument".⁵

Because Gide realises, after writing his Traité, that this constitutes the essential difference between Valéry and himself, he believes that Valéry's reaction will, inevitably, be one of disapproval.

Although Gide is not entirely right in his assumption,⁶ it is, nonetheless, an understandable one. When Gide announced his adhesion to

1. G./V. Corr., September 1891, p. 128.

2. Ibid, p. 128.

3. Ibid, 10th August 1891, p. 119.

4. Romans, TN, p.3.

5. G./V. Corr., 19th October 1899, p.358

6. Valéry never disapproves of Gide's work. Simply, he fails to understand its meaning, MAG, p.54:"...de la part de Valéry, aussi peu d'intérêt aux oeuvres de son ami qu'à toutes celles de 'ses compagnons du début [qui] s'évertuaient à des productions qu'il jugeait de mince importance..."

the Symbolist movement,¹ Valéry's approval of "cette conversion miraculeuse et divinement fatale"² was whole-hearted. The Traité du Narcisse has helped Gide to realise that : "...il faut que tout auteur ait une philosophie, une morale, une esthétique particulières."³ Thus, Gide is once again a "frondeur acharné de ce que je puis dire 'votre école' et...apôtre de vérités neuves".⁴ Although Gide misjudges Valéry's respect for what differs from him, one cannot entirely blame him for his apprehension that Valéry may find the Traité rather brutal.⁵

The calling in question of dialogue through reflexion in the correspondence with Valéry is foreseeable in the Traité. Gide's determination in echoing Valéry is due not only to his admiration for the latter and his subsequent desire to please him but also, perhaps, because Gide wishes to create a play of mirrors which will give him a more exact image of himself than the world around him.⁶

Now, in the Traité, the usefulness of the mirror, so dear to André Walter and to André Gide, is denied. Narcisse, the artist, refuses self-knowledge through the possession of his own image and settles down to contemplate "l'apparence du Monde".⁷ Adam, the man, who wants to realise his own strength and not his own beauty, does not go in search

1. G./V. Corr., 26th January 1891, pp. 46-47.

2. Ibid, 1st February 1891, p. 48.

3. Ibid, 3rd November 1891, p. 134.

4. Ibid, 26th January 1891, p. 46.

5. Ibid, letter of the 15th November 1891. p. 137.

6. J.1, June 1891, p. 20: "Le monde m'est un miroir et je suis étonné quand il ne reflète mal."

7. Romans, TN, p. 11. In this Gide's Narcisse is quite foreign to Valéry's, since, in Fragments du Narcisse, Valéry writes: "Mais moi, Narcisse aimé, je ne suis curieux // Que de ma seule essence; // Tout autre n'a pour moi qu'un coeur mystérieux, // Tout autre n'est qu'absence". The Narcisse of Valéry's poem wants to seize "[s] a divinité" by mingling body and soul which results in the inevitable shattering of his image as he possesses it. The rupture of harmony here is no deliberate gesture but the necessary paradox caused by Narcisse's reaching the "terme pur de [s] a course." Poésies, Gallimard, 1966, pp. 70, 73 and 62 respectively.

of a mirror, as does Narcisse. Tired of being a part of the perfect harmony of Eden, he decides, through destruction, by "une dissonance... un peu d'imprévu"¹ to know the fullness of his possibilities. Thus, Adam leaves a world of harmony and enters into one of dialogue where he may gain knowledge of himself by discovering what differs from him.

At this level, therefore, the Traité is representative of the change in Gide's attitude towards dialogue with Valéry. Gide's original view that their correspondence should present "certaine unité, certaine teinte fixe, certaine originalité stable...et de délicates analogies s'éveillant comme des échos aux vibrations des harmoniques"² no longer holds good. Gide's work of art which considered ideas dear both to himself and Valéry has brought him to the realisation³ of the need for individuality³ both morally and artistically.

This last is not to be found in a mirror which gives either the illusion that one has gained easy but, in fact, limited access to knowledge of oneself or the doubt that assailed André Walter as to his own reality.⁴ Indeed, one wonders if the same doubts did not trouble Gide in his echoing dialogue with Valéry before the Traité convinced him of the need, on an existential plane, to break harmony in order to reach individuality.

The mirror having fallen out of grace with Gide, he has to construct his individuality and this he will do by means of multiplicity, by the exploration of the world's phenomena and his own latent resources.

In his correspondence, the effects of this decision are to be felt when Gide, while recognising the rectitude of Valéry's search for the absolute, refuses for himself the negative limitation of such a search.⁵ Nonetheless, Gide's refusal is also intended as a form of persuasion

1. Romans, TN, p.6.

2. G./V. Corr., 16th January 1891, pp. 42-43.

3. Moutote, op. cit., p. 17.

4. CAW, pp. 147-148: "Je plonge - regard."

5. G./V. Corr., 24th August 1893, pp. 184-185.

to Valéry. Although Gide realises that: "...il y en a dont l'orgueil répugne à consentir à être la dupe. Ce sont les plus altiers...",¹

he interprets Valéry's bitterness over the failure of his search² thus:

... ce qui te manquait - me trompai-je? -
c'était l'appel vers l'autre; ce qui manquait
à l'autre, c'était de se sentir appelé. Il faut
attendre affreusement longtemps les réponses; et
c'est pourquoi je comprends bien ceux qui préfèrent
appeler fort qu'appeler juste,³

and insists: "On ne sort de sa solitude qu'à l'aide d'une illusion; mais il faut consentir..."⁴

Gide's literary optimism⁵ is not, therefore, the means of reinforcing his self-confidence by an easy if unaccustomed victory over Valéry but is used by him to encourage his friend. Of Gide's attitude towards Valéry, Claude Martin writes: "...attention constante à tout ce qu'écrit Valéry, une seule crainte, celle de voir ses qualités mêmes le réduire au silence, à la stérilité..."⁶ In this light, Gide's dedication of the Traité du Narcisse to Valéry has more significance, perhaps, than a mere show of affection. I have already mentioned the parallel between Adam's post-paradisiac plight and the, for Gide, inadvisable nihilism sought for by Valéry who is completely disillusioned about literature.⁷ It is possible that Adam is a warning to Valéry, the artist, at the same time as being the incarnation of what Gide, the man, may do with impunity before adopting the ideal role of Narcisse.

The Traité du Narcisse, therefore, has not only helped Gide to

1. G./V. Corr., 24th August 1893, p. 184.

2. Ibid, letter of the 24th July 1893, p. 183.

3. Ibid, p. 184.

4. Ibid, p. 184.

5. Interestingly, a clue is given to the concrete form it will take in Gide's letter of the 24th August, G./V. Corr., p. 185: "Pardonne-moi: je ne t'ai dit que des sottises; j'aurais dû te parler de Saint-Malo au clair de lune et des polders gris, verts et bruns. Mais j'aurai bien le temps, je pense, l'an prochain de raconter des paysages."

6. MAC, p. 54.

7. See: above, p.p. 387-388.

understand his own position but has brought him to acceptance of his differences with Valéry and the readiness to discuss them on occasion.¹ A long tradition of echoing cannot be expected to disappear completely, however. This explains why Gide, for whom the absolute is no longer an aim either morally or artistically, should turn to other literary "réactifs"² than Valéry in his correspondence.³

Valéry's influence on the Traité is discernable but relatively limited. The artistic concepts imputable to Valéry and Gide in the latter's work appear in juxtaposition. There is little of the mingling or opposition of true dialogue.

Gide's final conclusion in the Traité, may not be regarded as one drawn from dialogue with Valéry. This, and the mere parallel existence of two artistic standpoints in the Traité du Narcisse, reflects the way of Gide's correspondence with Valéry up to that point. More important perhaps than Valéry's influence on Gide's work is the influence of the work itself on Gide's attitude to dialogue. The breaking of harmony by Adam in the Traité is followed by an end to Gide's systematic echoing of Valéry in the correspondence,⁴ and the attempt, with limited success, to create a truer and, on the instigation of Gide,⁵ a more literary form of dialogue.

1. See: above, pp. 110-114 and pp. 127-137.

2. G./V. Corr., 8th July 1898, p. 321.

3. Notably Francis James.

4. Letters of the 24th August 1893, pp. 184-185, & September 1891, pp. 127-128.

5. See: above, p. 122.

3. Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue and Gide's Correspondence
with Jammes and Claudel

i. An Artistic Understanding of Le Retour l'Enfant Prodigue.

Little of great depth has been written about the specific relationship between the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue and Gide's correspondences with Claudel and Jammes. Most critics go no further than recognising that Gide's Catholic friends' attempts to convert him did influence this work,¹ particularly, as Daniel Moutote believes, in the person of the elder brother:

...le Fils prodigue est en lutte contre un milieu qui le ressaisit et auquel il finit par s'abandonner: le Frère aîné symbolise largement les amis dont le prosélytisme inquiète Gide à cette date...²

Germaine Brée also concedes that the problem of conversion posed by Claudel and Jammes has found its way into Gide's work. She refuses, however, a narrow interpretation of the House in the Enfant prodigue, adding:

La Maison représente toutes les Eglises, tous les systèmes, tout l'ensemble des édifices intellectuelles religieux que l'homme construit aux confins du désert, au bord de l'inconnu où il est situé.³

The fact that Claudel's and Jammes' influence is recognised by critics, even so wary as Germaine Brée of limiting the scope of Gide's works by considering them from any point of view other than an artistic one, is no doubt due to Gide's much quoted letter to Christian Beck.⁴ Gide

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1. See: George Brachfeld, *op. cit.* p. 112, and Enrico Bertalot,^{op. cit.} p. 97.
 2. *Op cit.*, p. 190. The mother of the Prodigal Son represents "les voix de Cuverville" in Moutote's opinion.
 3. *IF*, p. 191. To justify the breadth of her interpretation, Germaine Brée quotes part of Gide's preface, underlining the fact that God is not written with a capital letter: "'Je ne cherche...à prouver la victoire sur moi d'aucun dieu'"
 4. Lettres à Christian Beck, Ed. de l'Altitude, Brussels, 1946, 2nd July 1907, pp. 59-62.

intimates to Beck that his work has been motivated by his contact with Claudel and James and may be taken as a negative response to their efforts to convert him.¹

Opinions on Gide's degree of personal involvement in this work are less concordant. Germaine Brée believes that Gide's work is objective and not a "confession"² since not only is Gide's Journal of 1907 exempt from anguish³ in her opinion but also Gide writes of the Enfant prodigue:

J'avais peur, si je le couvais plus longtemps, de voir le sujet foisonner, se déformer; enfin, j'étais las de ne plus écrire et tous les autres sujets que je porte présentaient trop de difficultés pour être traités aussitôt.⁴

It seems to me that this entry has little to do with the question of objectivity. Rather it suggests that Gide is not ready for the complexity, for the foisonnement of such works as the Caves or the Faux-Monnayeurs, because he has not yet settled the question of how to write them.

To support her argument, Germaine Brée could have found more convincing proof in Gide's letter to Christian Beck where he writes:

Cher ami, vous prenez, je le crains, trop à la lettre la première personne de cette opérette. L'important pour moi, c'est que, oeuvre d'art, elle soit réussie. Je crois y avoir montré assez éloquemment les diverses faces de la question, et non d'une manière abstraite, mais avec tout le pathétique qu'elle comporte. Enlever ici l'aiguillon, c'est enlever l'intérêt.⁵

Here Gide is refusing to be identified totally with his work, as Beck has obviously been tempted to do. At this point, it is useful to recall Gide's letters to Valéry and James on L'Immoraliste.⁶ In his letter to

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1. Lettres à Christian Beck, Ed. de l'Altitude, Brussels, 1946, 2nd July 1907, p.62.
 2. IP, p. 189.
 3. Germaine Brée forgets Gide's entry of the 3rd January 1907, J.1, p. 227, where one sees his regrets for his former self and methods of work. See: Lettres à Christian Beck, 2nd July 1907, p. 62.: "Mon inquiétude, mes dépressions, sont le résultat d'insomnies et de la fatigue qui les suit. Aussitôt je remets tout en question. Depuis deux ans à peu près je suis malade de cette fatigue."
 4. J.1, 16th March 1907, p. 240. Quoted by Germaine Brée, II, p. 189.
 5. Lettres à Christian Beck, 2nd July 1907, pp. 59-60.
 6. See: above, Chapter 3, pp. 168-170.

the former, Gide defended himself against the same reaction as Beck has had to his Enfant prodigue, - namely, that it is a "confession." To Jammes, on the other hand, Gide had to explain that he was personally involved in his work. Interestingly, in his letter to Beck, Gide goes on to explain the ambiguous quality of his work because, in it, : "...j'ai mis tout mon coeur mais aussi toute ma raison."¹

Gide's letter to Beck and his two letters to Jammes and Valéry are, therefore, warnings against considering his works from only one standpoint. One must accept that Gide's works up to the Enfant prodigue depend both on inner necessity and on his critical spirit. In this light, Daniel Moutote's judgement of the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue appears to me a more balanced one than that of Germaine Brée. Moutote feels that, in Gide's work, there is, on the author's part, "un engagement dans l'oeuvre, non que celle-ci présente les opinions de son auteur, mais parce que sa sincérité fait d'elle l'expression intégrale de la personnalité de Gide".²

The overall significance of Gide's work is, on the whole, regarded by critics as religious.³ Germaine Brée, as I have already mentioned, is an exception to this rule since she does not equate Gide's work to a simple refusal of Catholicism. Daniel Moutote, too, does not exaggerate the role of religion in the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, viewing this work rather from an artistic point of view:

Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue...est une affirmation artistique et humaine de personnalité... Elle marque...le caractère nouveau de la manifestation gidiennne, désormais affermie par la synthèse, dans les oeuvres, des forces contradictoires de la personnalité ...C'est cette réconciliation de toutes les vertus du moi qui redonne à la personnalité littéraire de Gide et autorise à considérer Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue comme la préface des oeuvres à venir.⁴

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1. Lettres à Christian Beck, p. 62.
 2. Moutote, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
 3. This is Catherine Savage's interpretation, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
 4. Moutote, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-192.

Surprisingly, Germaine Brée's understanding of the artistic implications of the Enfant prodigue is much more restricted since she merely remarks that it ends an artistic cycle, being the last of Gide's works of Biblical inspiration.¹ This is to be contrasted to previous comments such as: "Gide a accompli sans défaillance sa tâche d'écrivain. Le reste lui importe peu. Le moraliste chez Gide est issu de l'artiste",² or:

Le dilemme essentiel de la vie de Gide, incapable d'opter entre les exigences de ses désirs et le besoin de 'revenir dans l'ordre', n'aura jamais de solution qu'esthétique.³

In considering the links between Gide's correspondences with Claudel and Jammes and his Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, I intend to throw more light on the questions this work has frequently raised, - namely, the nature of the relationship between Gide's work and his correspondences, the fundamental meaning of his work, and, indirectly, the degree of his involvement in it.

I hope to show that Gide's claim that this work contains both his "heart" and his "reason" is not to be neglected and that essentially, the Enfant prodigue presents an artistic problem and its solution without excluding moral, social or religious problems.⁴ Gide's work presents the same qualities as his correspondences with Claudel and Jammes. Under the seal of religion, lies profound reflection on art through dialogue and, both in the correspondences and in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, one finds the same opposition between individual art and art submitted to and drawing its value from a system.

1. *IB*, p. 189.

2. *Ibid*, p. 25.

3. *Ibid*, pp. 88-89.

4. Gide's comment to future critics is to be remembered: "C'est au point de vue de l'art qu'il sied de juger de ce que j'écris... C'est du reste le seul point de vue qui ne soit exclusif d'aucun des autres", *J.I.*, 13th October 1918, p. 658.

11. The House, the Father and the Elder Son.

Before discussing this, I shall clarify briefly my own interpretation of what is represented by the House, the Father, and the Elder Brother. All three are fundamental symbols, forming the background to the Prodigal Son's experience. For this reason, I feel it is necessary to explain exactly what I understand by them prior to dealing with the links between Gide's work as a whole and his correspondences. Before his return, the Prodigal Son dreams of his Father's house in the following terms: "... cette chambre point étroite...ce jardin abreuvé d'eau courante, mais clos et d'où toujours il voulait s'évader...."¹ Gide himself evokes "les toits bleus de la maison"² which he too has left but which has as much attraction for him as for the Prodigal Son.

The blue of the roof may symbolise Heaven but I feel that it is more likely that this colour reflects the notions of rest and peace which are also conjured up by the running water in the garden. Irresistibly, one thinks of Gide's letter to Jammes on Existences³ where he contrasts the "côté cour" of a stage to the "côté jardin."⁴ The former is the stifling but self-appointed prison of Gide's thought which tortures him certainly, from which he wishes to escape but which is also, to my mind, the gage of a personal struggle. The "côté jardin" of Jammes' work is the "Côté Jammes" or "La 'part de Dieu'".⁵ Gide's attitude towards it is ambivalent, but the attraction of Jammes and his "Bon Dieu"⁶ for Gide is exactly that of his Father's house for the Prodigal Son; "Je cherche quelque chose de frais où pouvoir reposer ma tête. J'ai soif de toi comme on a soif des

1. F.e.p., Romans, p. 476.

2. Ibid, p. 478.

3. See: above, pp. 163-168.

4. G./J. Corr., May 1902, pp. 188-189. The "côté cour" is equivalent in the Retour to the desert.

5. Ibid, p. 188.

6. Ibid, p. 188.

sources. Tu es l'étanchement; je suis la fièvre."¹

Gide's thought and the Prodigal Son's venture into the desert are equal to personal effort on a human and artistic plane. The difficulties of remaining true to an authentic position give strength to the tempting picture of repose and abdication of personal responsibility to be found near James or in the confines of the Father's house. Equilibrium gives not only the illusion of having found oneself but is also a condition of artistic production. The House is, at once, a source of strength for the weak and an artistic strait-jacket for those who remain in it.

The Father in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue is a rather vague but all-important character both to the Prodigal Son and the author who cries: "Ah! malgré que le fils aîné vous souffle, Père, puissé-je entendre votre voix, parfois, à travers ses paroles!"² The obvious interpretation of the Father is that he is the Christian God whose voice is stifled by the Catholic priest, his earthly representative. Gide's Journal helps to clarify his notion of God:

Comme le musulman convaincu crie 'Dieu est Dieu',
je voudrais crier 'L'Art est l'Art'. La réalité
reste là, non pour le dominer mais pour le servir,
au contraire.
O valeur! lentement entamée.³

Gide's "God" is an artistic and moral ideal. The Father of the Enfant prodigue may represent a god but he is not a pre-defined one attached to a system be it religious or artistic. Rather, the Father is a supreme artistic and personal aspiration.⁴ Unlike Francis James and Raymond Bonheur, Gide does not see God as "le grand dispensateur de la grâce"⁵ who thus enables genius to dispense with hard work and mental effort.

1. G./J. Corr., May 1902, p. 189.

2. Romans, P.e.p., p. 478.

3. J.1, June 1905, p. 164.

4. In a letter to the Director of L'Art et la Vie, where he mentions his plans for a work to be entitled Le Christianisme contre le Christ, Gide writes: "Ma conclusion eût dit que l'on ne pouvait atteindre l'état supérieur que le Christ appelle 'Roy-aume de Dieu', qu'après avoir traversé tous les autres et qu'il était préférable de chercher à l'atteindre en soi, que de chercher à l'imposer aux autres", L'Art et la Vie, no. 53, September 1896, pp. 595-596, MAG, p. 148.

5. MAG, pp. 392-393.

Gide's "God" is an aim, an end to individual effort and depends on "une conception classique de l'art comme activité lucide et volontaire",¹

The elder brother of the Enfant prodigue undoubtedly reflects the attempts of Gide's Catholic friends to convert him as an artist and a man. Certain of the arguments used by the elder brother in his discussion with the Prodigal Son remind one of Claudel. Nonetheless, the elder brother's character seems to me to owe more to Gide's correspondence with Francis Jammes.² Gide writes of the brother: "...l'enfant prodigue...songe...à l'économe frère aîné qu'il n'a jamais aimé, mais qui détient encore dans l'attente cette part de biens que, prodigue, il n'a pu dilapider",³ and: "Il préfère à l'amour le bon ordre."⁴

The material image of the elder brother's careful saving may be taken on an artistic level. Between the Prodigal Son and his brother there exists the same contrast that is to be found between Gide and Jammes. On the one hand, Gide spares no literary expense in the exploration of his possible beings, both by "purging" himself⁵ and by over-teaching his limits. On the other hand, Jammes deliberately restricts himself to known and received experience. Thus, in his Réponse à Menalque, he writes:

Je n'aurai pas été nomade, je n'aurai pas été charmé par des musiques instrumentales - je n'entends que celle des vers...Il y avait un sourire en moi quand tu m'exposais tes richesses, car si j'avais dû voyager, c'eût été vers des contrées connues, ainsi que d'autres voyagèrent, naïvement, en botaniste, par exemple, ⁶ citoyen fidèle, professeur au Jardin des Plantes...

Jammes and the elder brother will never squander their patrimony, and yet, because of this, they will always have something concrete to offer to the poor, be it comfort or money, as opposed to the sole gift of ideas

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1. Letter of the 9th August 1901 from Raymond Bonheur, MAG, p. 393. René Lalou also defines Gide's "God" in the following terms: "Gide espère, réclame, affirme l'existence d'un Dieu qui concilie tout...Dieu sera dans son univers ce classicisme qui s'édifie sur un romantisme dompté", André Gide, Eds. Joseph Heissler, Strasbourg, 1928, pp. 79-80.
 2. This is quite natural as Gide's correspondence with Jammes started far earlier than that with Claudel. Regular correspondence with Claudel seems to have commenced in 1905 only.
 3. Homans, R.e.p., p. 476.
 4. Ibid, p. 477.
 5. G./J. Corr., 6th August 1902, p.199.
 6. Ibid, pp. 295-296.

of the Prodigal Son or Gide/Ménalque.¹ In an astonishing letter to René Schwob, Paul Claudel counters the viability of "dénouement", a notion which was so dear to Gide:

Sur la question des riches dans l'Évangile, il y aurait beaucoup à dire...comment donner, si c'est sur rien que le Seigneur a jugé bon de nous confier ce pouvoir d'intendance?²

It is thus quite against Claudel's, Jammes' and the elder brother's principles to rid themselves of their gifts inherited from God or the Father. This explains Jammes' insistence on the fact that Gide must throw aside his vain philosophy in order to re-assume his basic purity.

On an artistic level, therefore, the "part de biens"³ which the elder brother has kept for the Prodigal Son is a parallel, in my opinion, to the pure work of religious inspiration which Gide has not yet produced and which Jammes is ever encouraging him to write. Both Jammes and Claudel are considered as instruments of God, as priests almost by Gide.⁴ Through them, Gide, if he wishes, may reach a lasting artistic position. Claudel and Jammes hold in their hands a part of Gide's entity which he has never explored artistically.

The severity of the orderly but ungenerous elder brother is to some extent reminiscent of both Gide's Catholic friends. Jammes is totally unsympathetic to the suffering involved in both Gide's and Dostoevsky's mental struggles with religion, despite his protests.⁵ Claudel too, strong in his own faith, is not exempt from a strange indifference to

1. See: above, Chapter 3, p. 150.

2. Lettres inédites sur l'Inquiétude Moderne, Les Éditions Universelles, 1951, 27th January 1933, p. 162.

3. Romans, R.e.p., p. 476.

4. G./J. Corr., May 1902, p. 188: "Je ne dis pas que tu sois le Bon Dieu, mais tu représentes pour moi plus qu'un homme..." and G./C. Corr., 8th March 1914, p. 219: "...j'ai pris l'habitude de vous considérer un peu comme un prêtre, et parfois je me laissais persuader que Dieu vous employait à me parler."

5. G./J. Corr., letters of the end of October 1897, pp. 123-125, & of the 26th June 1908, pp. 252-253. My own underlinings, Jammes' fundamental lack of true kindness is commented on by Gide in his Journal, 8th April, 1906, p. 207.

others' distress.¹ The desire to console others by bringing them to God does not necessarily entail human understanding and love.

The elder brother's preference of order to love may also be seen as distrust of the fervour which prompted the Prodigal Son to leave home. In this case, there is a striking resemblance to the position of Francis James which is well summed up in the following passage from "En faveur de la Simplicité Chrétienne":

Je viens d'allumer ma pipe. Je ne te dépeindrai pas longuement son fourneau de terre brune, son tuyau de mérissier. Elle est une pauvre soeur noire de ces pipes que l'on achète à bon marché dans les bureaux de tabac des villages. Elle est ce qu'il faut qu'elle soit: l'image du sort médiocre qui est le mien.²

The parallel to be drawn between James' and the elder brother's dislike of injudicious spending is quite clear. Although James' claims to mediocrity are not to be taken too seriously, he and the elder brother both believe fundamentally that one should confine oneself to one's natural or, rather, inherited limits and avoid any ruinous attempts to establish one's individuality by exploring new geographical, moral and artistic fields.

The House, the Father and the elder Son, to my mind, evoke certain attitudes and concepts which were already apparent in Gide's correspondence with James. In Chapter Three of this thesis, I attempted to show that the underlying source of dialogue was literature. The explanation I have given here of what the main symbolic values of the Retour de l'Enfant prodigue mean to me is again basically artistic as I feel that the essential purpose of this work for Gide was to interiorise his literary dialogue with his Catholic correspondents in order to find a solution in his art.

Having discussed some of the fundamental values in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, I now turn to the sources of dialogue between the characters.

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1. J.l, 5th December 1905, p. 191. This indifference is, in a mitigated form, also apparent in L'Annonce faite à Marie when Violaine speaks of her God-given joy to the suffering Pierre de Craon and asks: "Et lequel vaut mieux, Pierre? Que je vous partage ma joie, ou que je partage votre douleur?", Livre de Poche, Gallimard, 1968, p. 28.
 2. "Lettre à Ménélaque sur les Nourritures terrestres", Le Spectateur catholique of July 1897, G./J. Corr., p. 298. My own underlining.

iii. Individual Effort and Dependence on a System.

When the Father speaks to the Prodigal Son, the question of individual and a priori values is raised. The Father reminds his Son that the House, the fruit of many generations' work, was built for the Prodigal Son and, prompted by the elder brother, the Father adds: "'Hors la maison, point de salut pour toi.'"¹ The House is, therefore, an unchosen gift but also the only possible means of salvation. The Prodigal Son's revolt is prompted by feelings of imprisonment but also by his conviction that his Father is to be found everywhere and is the Creator of far more than the House.² Thus, the Prodigal Son suggests that one may achieve one's aspirations outside the House. The nature of the Prodigal Son's search is both personal and artistic. To his Mother he explains: "Je cherchais... qui j'étais",³ and to his Father: " - J'ai changé votre or en plaisirs, vos préceptes en fantaisie, ma chasteté en poésie, et mon austerité en désirs."⁴ The relationship to Gide's own development is close. Gide's letters to his Mother show that he made sometimes too free a use of his allowance in order to travel but also to indulge in what were viewed as spendthrift whims by her.⁵ Gide's clashes with parental authority were, however, of less importance than his deliberate efforts, much like those of the Prodigal Son, to break with his personality as formed by his background in order to enrich his art.

The Prodigal Son's questioning of a unique, a priori way to self-fulfilment is reminiscent of Gide's suggestion to Claudel that there might

1. Romans, R.e.p., p. 480.

2. Ibid, p. 478: "Vous, vous avez construit toute la terre, et la Maison et ce qui n'est pas la Maison,".

3. Ibid, p. 484.

4. Ibid, p. 479.

5. On an artistic level, Madame Gide feared that her son was also spending too much time living out his fantasies rather than writing them down, unpublished letter of the 18th March 1895. On a more mundane level, Madame Gide did not always agree with her son's obsession with hiring a piano during his travels.

be such a thing as "une sainteté païenne".¹ To Claudel, this notion is nothing but "un exécration orgueil".² Any attempt to seek a personal, artistic ideal is condemned as pride both by Claudel, James and the elder brother: "...moi je suis dans l'ordre; tout ce qui s'en distingue est fruit ou semence d'orgueil."³

Commenting on these reproaches, Henri Rambaud expresses his belief that Gide is acknowledging that he himself is a victim of pride but is attempting to hide this fact by putting such accusations in the mouths of people who are unconvincing and unattractive to the reader.⁴ Such tortuous reasoning is perhaps worthy of Gide but has little foundation. Even though Gide does not consistently deny that he is subject to pride, his moments of repentance⁵ may be numbered. Gide is aware that certain forms of pride are preferable to certain forms of humility and this, I believe, is what he is trying to show in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue.

Thus, to counter accusations that he is a creature of pride, Gide, through the Prodigal Son, attacks, by implication, the comfortable position of those who remain in the House.⁶ The Prodigal Son admits to his Father that thoughts of the physical comforts of his House are responsible for the fact that: "J'ai fléchi; pour lutter plus longtemps, je ne me sentais plus assez courageux, assez fort, et cependant..."⁷

The home-coming of the Prodigal Son, is, therefore, in his interest but nonetheless considered by him as a proof of cowardice when he speaks to his Father. The Father's reply is also an answer from Gide to Claudel's and James' efforts to subjugate himself and his art to the Catholic faith.

1. G./C. Corr., 7th November 1905, p. 53.

2. Ibid, p. 53.

3. Romans, R.e.p., p. 480. See: G./J. Corr., 10th June 1902, p. 192.

4. Entretiens, "André Gide et l'Art du clair-obscur," p. 287.

5. See: J.l, Numquid, p. 588.

6. In his Journal Gide goes further; "(Le plus grand avantage de la foi religieuse, pour l'artiste, c'est qu'elle lui permet un orgueil incommensurable.)" J.l, 1905, p. 191.

7. Romans, R.e.p., p. 480.

The Father understands both the Prodigal Son's revolt and the weakness which made him return but adds that if his Son had called him from outside the House, he would have come.

The superiority of individual philosophies and artistic approaches is indicated here by Gide but only for the strong. That he himself belongs to this category and is in no risk of abandoning his personal aspirations is to be seen in a letter to Francis Jammes where Gide subtly points out that his idea of Paradise is literary and not religious.¹

Although Gide intends to continue his search for an individual position, he understands only too well the temptation of the Prodigal Son who says to his mother that he has come back because: "Rien n'est plus fatigant que de réaliser sa dissemblance. Ce voyage à la fin m'a lassé."² Artistically, the Prodigal Son's decision to return is, in this case, the temptation to find rest in consistency. Gide himself seems to reject this solution when he claims that one thing is impossible for him and that is "être simplement".³ Moreover, the diversity of his works, although not an end in itself,⁴ does not seem to cause Gide undue mental upset and exhaustion. His primary concern, he says, is to write well.⁵

Nonetheless, Gide, on a moral, philosophical and artistic level, is as prone as his Prodigal Son to anguish.⁶ While the Mother in the Enfant prodigue may well represent the feminine figures surrounding Gide, Gide may also have thought of Jammes when writing her part. Thus, the Prodigal Son confesses: "...je reviens à vous très humble. Voyez comme

1. G./J. Corr., 2nd May 1906, p. 236. See: above, pp. 178-180.

2. Romans, R.e.p., p. 484.

3. G./J. Corr., 6th August 1902, p. 199.

4. Gide's works up to L'Immoraliste are, however, on his own admission, necessary if he is to write "une oeuvre d'art simple" as Jammes wishes. See: Ibid, p. 199.

5. Ibid, p. 200.

6. Ibid, letter of May 1902, pp. 188-189.

je mets mon front plus bas que votre coeur! Il n'est plus une de mes pensées d'hier qui ne devienne vaine aujourd'hui."¹ The Prodigal Son has abandoned his reason to submit to simple emotion and, in so doing, seems to be more attentive than Gide to Jammes' words:

Chez vous l'idée du néant et de caprice, sous le prétexte de libération, devient une conception pire que celle qui mit du pétrole en enfer. Votre logique n'est qu'un entêtement. Elle part de ce qui s'affirme de soi-même absolu, sans autre contrôle que l'orgueil de votre pensée. Elle rejette comme inutile ou idiote toute une admirable moisson de nielles, coquelicots, et d'épis.²

The Prodigal Son succumbs to the temptation of simplicity and mental ease which Gide himself avoids.³

iv. Inclusion and Limitation

The struggle between a personal search to gain knowledge of oneself and the accepted vision of the world is closely connected to the problem of inclusion and limitation which is raised both in the correspondences and in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue.

The elder brother's first piece of advice to the Prodigal Son after his return is the following: "N'appelle qualité que ce qui te ramène à l'ordre, et tout le reste, réduis-le."⁴ To the Prodigal Son, this amounts to the mutilation of his personality, to the suppression of a part of himself which also comes from the Father.⁵ The Prodigal Son's reply thus anticipates Gide's two letters of explanation to Claudel of 1914,⁶

1. Romans, R.e.p., p. 483.

2. G./J. Corr., 10th June 1902, p. 192.

3. The idea that laziness is responsible for the Prodigal Son's return causes Claudel to protest: "Il faut de terribles combats et une énergie toujours tendue pour revenir à la foi et pour s'y maintenir. La vie du catholique est un scandale et une contradiction continues", G./C. Corr., 3rd March 1908, p. 84.

4. Romans, R.e.p., p. 480.

5. Ibid., p. 480, where the Father says: "Mais écoute: c'est moi qui t'ai formé; ce qui est en toi, je le sais. Je sais ce qui te poussait sur les routes; je t'attendais au bout."

6. G./C. Corr., letters of the 7th and 8th March 1914, pp. 217-219.

where he makes it quite clear that his homosexuality comes from "God ". The meaning attributed to "God ", in this case, is similar to the Prodigal Son's view of his Father who is the creator of all human experience and may just as well be reached by individual aspiration as by submission to a system. Thus, although Gide waits for seven years after writing Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue to give a direct reply to Claudel's exhortations, his final position has been worked out in this little book which has undoubtedly been inspired by his dialogue with Claudel and Jammes.

The elder brother's response to the perhaps wilful interpretation of his words by the Prodigal Son is reminiscent of Claudel's view of Christianity.¹ Unlike Jammes, both Claudel and the elder brother discount the necessity to suppress one's impurity completely. Both allow for contradictions, for the simultaneous existence of good and bad. For Claudel, the latter two concepts are replaced by those of religion and art.² Despite the exalting struggle born from these contradictions, however, the end sought both by Claudel and by the elder brother is humility and complete submission to a system. Not only is the choice of a system limited to one by the elder brother and Claudel but also the means of exaltation prior to submission. Both the Prodigal Son's attempts to achieve fervour in the desert and Gide's suggestion to Claudel that there is "une sainteté païenne"³ are considered as perverse pride by their respective mentors. Despite the fact, therefore, that inclusion of all aspects of one's personality is possible within their system, they are, in fact, closer to Jammes, who straightaway advocates limitation, than would at first seem.

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1. J.l, 5th December 1905, "Pendant - vaincu," p. 190; Romans, R.e.p., "...ce n'est pas - a...", p. 481; G./C. Corr., 3rd March 1908, p. 84.
 2. J.l, 5th December 1905, p. 190.
 3. G./C. Corr., 7th November 1905, p. 53.

The problem of limitation or inclusion of all one's facets is an artistic one. This is to be seen when the elder brother speaks of the tattered but still visible shreds of the Prodigal Son's virtues: "Il te les faut exagérer."¹ This is clearly a parallel to Gide's artistic procedure: "En ne montrant dans une oeuvre qu'une vérité, il l'exagère. Simplifier, c'est exagérer ce qui reste. L'oeuvre d'art est une exagération."² The Prodigal Son and Gide have chosen to exaggerate the very qualities of which the elder brother and James disapprove. Both, however, have kept in reserve other qualities thereby avoiding the suppression of their personality. The exaggeration of his virtues which the elder brother would like to impose upon the Prodigal Son is, in fact, a limitation, since, little by little, the other components of the Prodigal Son's personality would be forced out. Speaking of the Father, the elder brother makes this quite clear: "Il n'y a pas plusieurs façons de l'aimer; afin que nous soyons unis dans son amour."³ To Gide, who compares his literary production to a dance now on one foot now on the other,⁴ this would mean the loss of a leg.

Implicitly, in Le Retour de l'enfant prodigue, Gide is criticising the limitation brought about by the simplification of one's personality and, hence, one's art. His immediate targets are the elder brother, and, through him, Claudel and James. However, it seems to me that Gide is also criticising his own and the Prodigal Son's position. The Prodigal Son admits to having reduced his virtues, presumably in order to increase his desire to break away from the House and to explore new roads. Now, he feels that: "...je ne peux plus refermer ma main sur mon bien."⁵ This is comparable to Gide's admission to James in the years following

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1. Romans, R.e.p., p. 481.
 2. J.l, November 1893, p. 33.
 3. Romans, R.e.p., p. 481.
 4. G./J. Corr., 6th August 1902, pp. 199-200.
 5. Romans, R.e.p., p. 482.

L'Immoraliste that:

...je voudrais dire à cette sorte de fatalité qui me mène (et que j'appellerais: Dieu, plus volontiers si elle ne m'éloignait pas de ton Dieu): 'Pourquoi m'emmenes-tu? J'étais bien là! La joie que tu proposes à présent ne vaut pas (vaudra-t-elle jamais?) la tristesse de mon enfance. J'étais poète et je suis... soucieux.'¹

In all its forms, limitation by the exaggeration of only one aspect of one's personality is being questioned by Gide because it may become an artistic prison.

With the Enfant prodigue Gide foresees artistic works which will belie his former statement to James: "...je ne danse jamais à la fois que sur un pied..."² The result of a two-footed literary dance will not be the simple work of art so ardently desired by James but rather a work where all Gide's complexity and simplicity will intertwine and please a Martin du Gard rather than Gide's Catholic correspondents. With the Enfant prodigue Gide clarifies his future approach to art.

v. Resemblance and "le plus irremplaçable des êtres".³

The notion of simplicity mentioned in the previous section is, of course, closely bound to that of consistency both artistic and personal. The Prodigal Son's decision to leave his Father's House might well have been prompted by Gide's words to Nathanaël after insisting that he create his own philosophy.⁴ The need not only to create one's own personality, philosophy and art but also to ensure its complete individuality is to be seen in the Prodigal Son's words: "J'imaginai...des routes non tracées; j'imaginai en moi l'être neuf que je sentais s'y élancer.

1. G./J. Corr., 10th March 1904, p. 210.

2. Ibid, 6th August 1902, pp. 199-200.

3. Romans, NT, p. 248.

4. "Ce qu'un autre aurait aussi bien fait que toi, ne le fais pas. Ce qu'un autre aurait aussi bien dit que toi, ne le dis pas, aussi bien écrit que toi, ne l'écris pas. - Ne t'attache en toi qu'à ce que tu sens nulle part ailleurs qu'en toi-même, et crée de toi, impatientement ou patiemment, ah! le plus irremplaçables des êtres." Romans, NT, p. 248.

Je m'évadais."¹

To achieve such an end, the difficulties and contradictions of personal endeavour must take the place of the artificial unity and order afforded by an existing system. The Prodigal Son lacks strength and the utter defeat of his venture is summed up in his resigned decision to differ in no way from the other members of his family.² Once again, the Prodigal Son acts as Gide might have done had he listened to Francis James who bade him: "Après ces crises nécessaires, sois égal",³ or to Claudel's injunction in Les Muses: "Ne cherche point le chemin, cherche le centre!"⁴

James' intention in persuading Gide to adopt his ready-made character of "'pâtre des berges"⁵ is artistically orientated. Once Gide accepts the identity offered to him by James, the latter feels that Gide will produce "une oeuvre suprême" which will be "l'imitation de l'homme".⁶ Quite obviously, James means Gide to paint man in accepted colours and to mix no new, disturbing tints on his palette. As will be seen later in this chapter, the Prodigal Son's return and submission to the a priori values of the family also results in an artistic gesture, which explains Gide's refusal to obey James' injunctions.

In reply to the Prodigal Son's attempts to explain his departure from the House, the elder brother uses arguments which seem to be influenced by James' point of view. Thus, like James in his letters to Gide, he advises the Prodigal Son to accept not only a fixed notion of humanity but also of himself,⁷ adding: "'Afin que personne ne prenne ta couronne."⁸

1. Romans, R.e.p., p. 481.

2. Ibid, p. 484.

3. G./J. Corr., End of October 1897, p. 124.

4. See: above, Chapter 3, p. 191.

5. G./J. Corr., 18th August 1896, p. 81.

6. Ibid, p. 124.

7. Romans, R.e.p., p. 482.

8. Ibid, p. 482, (Apoc., III,).

This concern is comparable to Jammes' anxiety that Gide will lose his literary "crown" by remaining faithful to personal philosophy and by failing to write the supreme work which, Jammes is sure, lies within him.

For once, Gide is more attentive to advice than the Prodigal Son,¹ whose reaction is no doubt indicative of Gide's final standpoint. In spite of his return, the Prodigal Son expresses horror at the thought of the immobility imposed by such a view of humanity.

Moreover, the Prodigal Son does not share the elder brother's view of what constitutes his crown. He is not at all interested in the riches preserved for him by his brother since they consist in "cette part de biens qui nous est commune à nous tous: les biens fonciers".² The share of personal gifts which he may yet receive from his Father is the only thing which the Prodigal Son wishes to possess.³ As the elder son points out, the riches belonging to the Prodigal Son alone were the first thing to be squandered by him and, therefore, it is not at all sure that the Father will bestow further gifts upon him.

A parallel is to be established, I feel, between this dialogue and two letters of advice from Francis Jammes to Gide, the literary man. The Prodigal Son ends by accepting the land kept for him by his brother since he is too tired to venture forth on another personal search. Jammes is quite convinced that Gide has reached a similar state of artistic exhaustion with his Amyntas which brings to an end what he calls Gide's Nietzschean cycle.⁴

The only possible means of artistic renewal for Gide is, in Jammes' eyes, to abandon a form of art based only on Gide's personal experience

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1. G./J. Corr., October 1897, pp. 125-126.
 2. Romans, R.e.p., p. 482.
 3. Ibid, p. 483.
 4. G./J. Corr., 21st August 1906, p. 241.

and philosophical preoccupations,¹ and to submit "[s]a vie strictement intérieure"² to God's Grace. In other words, Gide, like the Prodigal Son, should be concerned only with inherited qualities and not with a search for personal artistic qualities which set him apart by their unhealthy splendour.³ The elder brother warns the Prodigal Son against the uncertainty of personal gifts while James attempts to persuade Gide that, should he change the foundation of his art, he would run little risk of losing his existent disciples.⁴

In spite of the Prodigal Son's acceptance of common values, Gide's answer to James' advice may be read in the objections made to the elder brother. Resemblance to an accepted, arbitrary view of man, abandonment of the aspiration towards being "le plus irremplaçable des êtres"⁵ means stagnation on a personal plane. Artistically, the author is deprived of any justification for his vocation. Without inner necessity, without an individual search for literary values, one would come back and agree with the author's comment in the Traité du Narcisse: "Les livres ne sont peut-être pas une chose bien nécessaire..."⁶

vi. The Moral Role of the Artist.

As well as exploring the writer's approach to his art, Gide, in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, considers the artist's role in relation to his public by opposing what is basically his own standpoint to that of Claudel and James.

1. G./J. Corr., October 1906, p. 243.

2. Ibid, p. 244.

3. Ibid, letters of the 9th January 1894, pp. 34-35, & of June 1902, p. 196.

4. Ibid, October 1906, p. 244: "Puisse-tu - entendement."

5. Romans, NT, p. 248.

6. Ibid, TN, P. 3.

Not the least important of the advantages of the Father's House is the fact that it provides a ready-made occupation¹ for the somewhat ungrateful Prodigal Son. The Father chides his Son for abandoning this inheritance and choosing to sleep outside in the rain. When the Prodigal Son argues that poorer people than he have done this, his Father replies: " - Ce sont les pauvres. Pauvre, tu ne l'es pas. Nul ne peut abdiquer sa richesse. Je t'avais fait riche entre tous."² The choice of a rainy bed means the deliberate refusal of one's appointed riches, gifts and duties. The artist who is "riche entre tous" has even less right than other men to reject his privileged position.

The Father's words of advice to his son, no doubt prompted by the elder brother, express exactly the same ideas as those to be found in one of Claudel's letters.³ One's role in life which consists principally, in Claudel's terminology, of "les devoirs de justice",⁴ is pre-destined. The artist's gifts come from God; hence, just as the Prodigal Son was wrong to leave his post within the House, so the artist, in Claudel's opinion, has no right to be a mere dilettante but:

Nous sommes délégués par tout le reste de l'univers à la connaissance et à la vérité, et il n'y a pas d'autre vérité que le Christ, qui est la Voie et la Vie, et le devoir de le connaître et de le servir s'impose à nous plus qu'aux autres avec un caractère d'urgence terrible.⁵

Any negligence in the use of one's artistic genius to lead others to God is equivalent to the Prodigal Son's squandering of his Father's gifts.

Jammes, too, shares the belief that the artist, and Gide in particular,

1. Romans, R.e.p., p. 478.

2. Ibid, p. 478.

3. G./C. Corr., 7th November 1905, pp. 52-54.

4. Ibid, p. 53.

5. Ibid, p. 54.

is a privileged being, the holder of a truth necessary to lesser, pitiful mortals. Thus, he bids Gide: "Ton troupeau désolé bêle sur la colline et tu t'es perdu au désert. Et maintenant reviens vers ton troupeau."¹

In fact, in a letter to Jammes where he explains his role as an artist, Gide shows that he is by no means lost and, at the same time, clarifies the true meaning of the Prodigal Son's return:

Mon seul rôle dans cette société qui se referme autour de moi, - n'y trouvant heureusement plus de place, m'étant éloigné d'elle à mesure que je m'approchais de Dieu - mon seul rôle est de m'élever contre elle. Quelle force me faudra-t-il? Je demande trois ans d'exil (trois ans, c'est peu) ou me nourrir comme Jean de sauterelles et de leur aigre clameur. Je veux ne revenir qu'étranger, c'est-à-dire déjà presque ennemi.²

Jammes, short-sightedly, sees little more in this profession of faith in a personal, liberating form of art than the effects of literary pique on an author discouraged by lack of success.³ Similarly, Claudel refuses to understand the true implications behind the Prodigal Son's encouragement to his younger brother to leave the House.⁴ Thus, neither of Gide's Catholic correspondents realises that Gide's or the Prodigal Son's revolt and actions subsequent to their return are gestures of artistic responsibility towards a youthful public of the future.

One of the factors motivating the Prodigal Son's return was, significantly, the idea that, in the House, he could "servir pour servir!"⁵ This desire is fulfilled when the Prodigal Son's mother asks him to use his influence upon his younger brother who is by far too interested in unsavoury reading and in what goes on outside the House.

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1. G./J. Corr., End of October 1897, p. 124. Madame Gide was no less preoccupied with the moral role her son had to play as an artist. In an unpublished letter of the 8th April 1895, she warns Gide not to write of his experiences adding, with some insight, that, should weak people try to emulate Gide, they would perish in the attempt.
 2. G./J. Corr., 1st December 1897, p. 130.
 3. Ibid, December 1897, p. 132. Even more short-sightedly, Jammes advises Gide to be content with his approval and that of a few others.
 4. G./C. Corr., 3rd March 1908, pp. 84-85.
 5. Romans, R.e.p., p. 484.

In his new role as adviser, the Prodigal Son, like his Father, repeats the concepts of the elder brother in order to impress upon his younger brother that his mistaken departure was due to pride alone. Soon, however, the Prodigal Son's carefully chosen words are replaced by admiration for the rebellious determination of his brother, who will leave the House free from the restraints of paternal gifts, and, he hopes, of his own example.

The Prodigal Son's advice differs but little from that of the author of Les Nourritures terrestres who tells Nathanael to throw away his book.¹ The role of the artist, incarnated by the Prodigal Son, is well expressed by Daniel Moutote who believes that in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue there is a :

...thème pédagogique introduit dans la dernière partie, où le Prodigue aide comme il peut au départ du Frère puîné: telle est l'attitude de l'artiste, tel est le sens de l'oeuvre qui, sous le calme apparent de sa forme, est génératrice de révolte. En ce sens l'artiste est l'homme qui revient afin que d'autres puissent partir.²

Gide's sense of responsibility towards his public is just as strong as that of either Claudel or James. His intentions, however, are quite opposed to those of his two Catholic correspondents whose aim is to entrance or subjugate their readers in the service of the Church. Gide, on the other hand, obeys artistic laws only.³ By creating his own values

1. Romans, NF, p. 248.

2. Moutote, op. cit., p. 191.

3. A fact which meets with Henri Gheon's disapproval, G./Gheon Corr. II, 9th May 1920, p. 972: "Tu n'es pas guéri du 'je' comme le souhaitait ce pauvre Wilde - et c'est ce jour-là seulement que tu verras le monde comme il est, l'oeuvre d'art comme elle doit être, extérieure à l'homme, informée, animée, par quelque chose de plus fort qu'elle et que lui; de plus fort que le 'je': je veux dire une loi. La loi esthétique ne peut suffire, même à une oeuvre d'art. Ta pensée est sans loi et s'épuise à en chercher une. La pire vaudrait mieux qu'aucune."

and approach to art through critical works, he hopes to inspire his readers to rebel against an accepted view of mankind without intervening, forasmuch, with advice as to the road to take. Each man must form his own destiny. The dialogue form of Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue has enabled Gide to gather together various aspects of his innate thought and those achieved by "Dépersonnalisation." Through his work, Gide not only reinforces his conviction that his art must be individually-inspired and controlled, but that it should include all his attributes. In this way, Gide affirms his role as an artist and as a man.

4. Les Caves du Vatican and Gide's
Correspondences with Jammes and Claudel.

i. The Origins and the Importance of Les Caves du Vatican.

In Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue Gide rejects politely but firmly an artistic option and, with it, the moral, religious and social position which such a choice would entail. The conclusions drawn by Gide from his work help him to formulate the most significant of his arguments against Claudel when the question of his pederasty at last appears in their correspondence in 1914.¹ Gide makes it quite clear that his artistic role as a liberator and his mistrust of any action which is in his own interests are as unshakeable at this time as they were in 1914. Gide has no need, in the Caves, to seek an artistic solution long since found. Hence, artistic reflection, in the Caves, is on an entirely different level to that of Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue.

Before discussing Gide's work itself, some mention of its origins is necessary in order to show to what extent a comparative study of the Caves and Gide's correspondences is justified.

The first known reference of this work is to be found in De me ipse² of the summer of 1899. Thereafter, Gide writes of the Caves in his Journal in 1905 only.³ Although Gide had already thought of the Caves six years before, it is probably not entirely by chance that he once again considered this work during a period where Catholicism was viewed by him as the most effective means of strengthening himself by imposed discipline.⁴

Enrico Bertalot for one believes that: "Les Caves du Vatican présentent

1. G./C. Corr., 7th March 1914, p. 218: "Pour le mal - imitation ", and 16th March 1914, p. 244: "Je vous remercie - moins."

2. An unpublished dossier. See: MAG, pp. 384 & 388.

3. J.l, 3rd September 1905, p. 176: "Je repense aux Caves...et vais un peu mieux depuis hier."

4. Although, in the same breath, Gide shows that submission to such a discipline would amount to dishonesty on his part. J.l, 1st September 1905, p. 176.

une fresque du côté catholique de la société française, du moins de cette partie qui était familière à l'auteur."¹

When next Gide writes of the Caves, one sees, through his portrayal of Lafcadio, that there is no system inherent to the individual but that any one of one's acts may be the starting-point of an avalanche of consistency to the good or to the bad.² In fact, the story of Lafcadio in the final version of the Caves is more refined and ambiguous. Amédée, rather than Lafcadio, is dragged on headlong by his first decisive act which, leads him into the external system of false values controlled by Protos.

If one admits that thoughts of the Caves were not completely divorced from Gide's religious leanings of 1905, new dimensions are added to his conception of Lafcadio in 1909. The inexorable systematization of one's life image which may be set up by a single act is a more dangerous but headier possibility than the acceptance of an external system which is but a safety measure in Gide's eyes and, hence, as is seen in the Caves, is easily substituted by another system.

One of the essential themes of the Caves is that of the disorder of life and man's attempts to reduce chaos by various systems.³ Gide pokes fun at scientific or religious attempts to reduce life to an orderly, manageable concept which allows for the existence of absolute truth. At the same time, Gide criticises the notion of a personal, freely adopted stance towards life by means of Lafcadio's "acte gratuit." Freedom and truth are both relative. However, in the Caves, contrary to his picture of Lafcadio's life of 1909 and to the tragic end of La Porte étroite, Gide shows that one may avoid imprisonment in the mesh of one's personality

1. Bertalot, op. cit., p. 126.

2. J.1, 3rd December 1909, p. 277.

3. Germaine Brée believes that one is projected, in the Caves, "au sein d'un univers dont le seul ordre est celui, relatif, fallacieux et mobile, que l'homme y projette", and that: "Protos semble figurer l'ambiguïté de la vie....Protos c'est le démenti constant apporté à toute intégrité de pensée ou de comportement", IP, pp. 236 & 230.

and one's acts.

George Painter believes the main target of Gide's critical irony is Catholicism. Indeed, for Painter, Claudel's religious assault of 1905 supplied Gide with the energy he needed to create his work since: "After 1905 he saw the Church as an enemy to both pans of the 'Gidian balance'; as a menace to his spiritual freedom and a temptation to his love of restraint."¹ Although Gide's reaction against Catholicism is basically artistic, this analysis is, on a more general level, quite acceptable. The credibility of Painter's judgement is, however, tarnished by his attempts to prove the strength of this temptation for Gide through "the beauty and sincerity of Anthime's conversion only to add in a contradictory footnote that the Virgin had appeared to the Catholic writer Emile Baumann "much to Gide's amusement".³

Nonetheless, Gide's contact over the years, and not just in 1905, with his Catholic correspondents undoubtedly played its part in the maturation of this work although, like Germaine Brée and Enrico Bertalot,⁴ I believe Gide is not attacking the Catholic Church as such. Germaine Brée considers that no one institution is being attacked by Gide but rather "une certaine 'bonne conscience' - pour ne pas dire bêtise - humaine".⁵ Such a view needs to be qualified. Underneath the self-satisfaction afforded by the certainty that they have chosen the right system, there lies a strong streak of self-interest in both Julius and Anthime. As Christopher Bettinson points out, this, "in a half-concealed

1. Painter, op. cit., p. 104.

2. Ibid, p. 104.

3. Ibid, Note 2, p. 104. See also: J.1, 7th June 1912, p. 380. For other instances of miraculous conversions which may have influenced Gide in writing the Caves, see: Bettinson, Studies in French Literature 20. Gide : Les Caves du Vatican, Edward Arnold, 1972, p. 9.

4. Bertalot, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

5. IP, p. 228.

anti-clerical context",¹ is one of the central themes of the Caves.

Although, puppet-like, the two men may appear laughable to more generously motivated people, they are by no means stupid in the naive, whole-hearted way of Amedée.

Gide's choice was made in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue. The Caves is a logical sequence to this work.² Gide's own refusal of the "biens fonciers",³ which the Prodigal Son accepts, has led him in the Caves to criticise the rather pompous acceptance of a system which brings material, spiritual and artistic advantages.

In this study of the Caves, I will concentrate on Gide's criticism of a certain type of artist and, thereafter, man and then on the consequent source, role and characteristics of a certain type of art. This is not intended as a complete interpretation of the Caves which raises more general philosophical problems,⁴ but as an attempt to deal with those questions in the Caves which, to a large extent, received their impetus from Gide's reflection upon religion in relation to art in his correspondences with Claudel and James.⁵ Nonetheless, the advantage of a study of the artistic implications to be found in the Caves lies in the fact that it does not exclude other preoccupations such as order, truth, freedom and commitment.

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1. Bettinson, op. cit., p. 17.
 2. Indeed, there is a clear parallel between the Father, the elder brother, the Prodigal Son and Juste-Agenor de Baraglioul, Julius and Lafcadio. Julius' interpretation of his father's life in his book, L'Air des Cimes, is intended to play the same part as the words the elder brother puts into his Father's mouth. Both Julius and the elder brother falsify reality. Unfortunately for Julius, since the Caves is a critical work, his father is distinctly less easy to manage than the Father of the Enfant Prodigue. Not only does Juste-Agenor criticise Julius' work but sends him packing in order to have a direct discussion with the vagabond Lafcadio, his bastard, in preference to the pallid report of him that Julius would no doubt have supplied, Romans, Caves, pp. 728-729.
 3. Romans, R.e.p., p. 482.
 4. See: above, Chapter 5, p. 420. For a more detailed study of the Caves du Vatican, see: Christopher Bettinson, Studies in French Literature. Gide: Les Caves du Vatican, Edward Arnold, 1972.
 5. For this reason, I shall not study Protos as "a character complementary to the author figure" (Bettinson, op. cit., p.29), as I do not believe that Gide's correspondences with his Catholic friends have fundamentally influenced his portrayal of Protos.

ii. The Artist.

In this section, I will discuss Julius and Anthime since both, in a sense are artists. Rather than use reality to create a more or less competent representation, however, they both force reality into a form dependent on their own, pre-defined vision of the world. Julius' father and his all too seemly romantic experiences are the source of rather bad, psychological novels and Anthime's rats are tortured and bullied into the sets of figures necessary to his articles. Gide's introductory quote to Chapter One of the first part of the Caves justifies the view that Anthime is to be considered as a writer, - albeit in his most castrated form,¹ but does not forasmuch justify Henri Freyburger in his ill-advised attempts to identify Gide with Anthime.²

I believe that Julius and Anthime represent satirically what Gide might have become had he, on the one hand, heeded Claudel and James and, on the other hand, reacted too strongly against their position. This explains the fact that they do remain ambiguous and psychologically realistic characters, as Christopher Bettinson points out.³ At the same time, through Julius, Gide pokes fun at his Catholic correspondents while Anthime plays red cape to a Catholic bull. In the Caves there is none of the reverence of Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue.

The young Julius, already attracted by the Académie française, is described in terms which would not be amiss for certain youthful photographs of Gide himself.⁴ Moreover, Julius has not been a stranger to the sensuality which caused Gide to experiment with Meriem during his

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1. Romans, Caves, p. 680: "Pour ma part, mon choix est fait. J'ai opté pour l'athéisme social. Cet athéisme, je l'ai exprimé depuis une quinzaine d'années, dans une série d'ouvrages..." Atheism may be as much a source of stagnation as Catholicism, one is tempted to conclude.
 2. L'Evolution de la Disponibilité gidienne, Ed. A.G. Nizet, Paris, 1970, p. 133.
 3. Op. cit., pp. 32-33.
 4. Romans, Caves, p. 690: "...sa belle allure, la grave onction de son regard et la pâleur pensive de son front".

early trip to North Africa. There, however, the resemblance ends. Julius has sensibly restricted his amorous attentions to feminine members of high society, thus ensuring his literary success in the same sphere.

Both the influence of Julius' character upon his works and their retroactive influence upon him have kept him within safe bounds:

La distinction foncière de sa nature et cette sorte d'élégance morale qui respirait dans ses moindres écrits avaient toujours empêché ses désirs sur la pente où sa curiosité de romancier leur eût sans doute lâché bride.¹

The word "foncière" used here by Gide is translatable as "fundamental." However, one should remember that the landed goods ("les biens fonciers") of Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue were considered as valueless since they were common to everyone. This same criticism is being made of Julius' fundamental quality. In other words, Julius has accepted the character produced by his upbringing. As a man, he is totally lacking in the spirit of psychological and moral adventure and the curiosity Gide grants him as a novelist is, in fact, meaningless, since it must necessarily be controlled by the temperament of the man. Julius is what Gide might have become had he not fought against the barriers of conditioned personality, became interested in little boys and consequently unacceptable to established morality if not to established literary circles.

The restricted nature of Julius' personality is one cause of his voluntary blindness to others' formal interpretations of the world's phenomena. Thus, he prefers to remain ignorant of his brother-in-law, Anthime's experiments. One cannot help thinking, here, of James' attitude towards the Nourritures terrestres after reading Gide's

1. Romans, Caves, p. 689.

"La Danse des Morts."¹ The atmosphere of this short collection of poems is one of disbelief in the idea of life after death. Hence, they advocate one to take immediate advantage of the pleasures of this world. Conscious that his original statement on Les Nourritures terrestres² is no longer valid, Jammes now admits that he has not the courage to open Gide's book again. Thus, both Julius and Jammes prefer to ignore the more disturbing aspects uncovered by Gide's and Anthime's work.

Not only does Julius deliberately close his eyes to representations of life which might upset him but also he is quite unable to come to terms with life itself. Used as he is to his own restricted social class, Julius, when he has to descend into the Impasse Claude Bernard to find Lafcadio, is at a loss³ in spite of "certaines curiosité professionnelle et la flatteuse illusion que rien d'humain ne lui devait demeurer étranger..." Julius has never realised that his knowledge of the world is, in fact, sadly lacking because he has never had the opportunity to test the veracity of his curiosity about mankind. So might Gide have remained apart from life had he not deliberately created opportunities to immerse himself in it.

If Julius had chosen to question his competence as an observer of mankind, he might have noticed that, even in his own social sphere, he is quite incapable of unearthing the secret and surprising resources hidden within any man. Indeed, when his father allows him to see that he does not resemble the conventional picture drawn of him in Julius' book, Julius proves not just to be innocent of life's surprises but quite unwilling to take them into account.⁵

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1. Four poems, "Les Pretendants," "Petites Gens," "Le Naturiste," "La Fausse Amante," published in L'Hermitage of July and October 1897. See: MAG, pp. 200-201.
 2. "En somme, la confession catholique est toujours la...", G./J. Corr., 19th June 1897, p. 112.
 3. Indeed, nature seems to take wilful pleasure in disconcerting Julius: "Une averse surprit Julius tandis qu'il traversait le Luxembourg", Romans, Caves, p. 712.
 4. Ibid, p. 712.
 5. "Ce n'est pas maintenant qu'il venait d'achever d'écrire la vie de son père, qu'il allait se permettre des questions a son sujet", Ibid, p. 712.

Julius' attitude is a less clear-sighted version of that of Francis James who wished to "imprison" Gide in an article.¹ Having been warned by Gide that he is not at all on the right track, James admits: "Tu as raison: je me substituais à toi dans cette étude, j'essayais de t'emprisonner dans ma propre personnalité."² James' immediate reaction is to forbid Gide ever to mention this article again. James' initial acceptance of the mistake he has made is swiftly followed, however, by the feeling that sooner or later Gide will conform to James' idea of him and that he may then continue his article.³ His long-term refusal of Gide's nature is, therefore, comparable to Julius' more summary refusal to accept his father's true personality.

Julius' attitude to life is also similar to that of James. Both refuse to understand or explore life when it cannot be reduced to a simplified order. Gide's criticism, in the Caves, of the author who is completely divorced from life, is echoed, subsequently, in his Correspondance with James: "Ma sincérité t'apparaît comme une simagrée; et quand, à toi que Dieu fit oiseau, je me permets de dire: 'À moi, c'est des jambes qu'il m'a données', tu prends cela pour de l'orgueil..."⁴ Gide does not make the same mistake as James or Julius by pushing aside anything which does not fit in with their pre-conceived vision of the world; nor does Gide reject influences as do James and Julius.

The fact that Julius' curiosity has never taken a preponderant place either in his life or in his art seems, so far, to be due to his personality. Gide completes his criticism of Julius, who has never attempted to enlarge his possibilities, when he writes:

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1. G./J. Corr., 6th May 1906, pp. 236-237
 2. Ibid, p. 236.
 3. Ibid, 21st August 1906, pp. 240-241.
 4. G./C. Corr., End of March 1914, p. 231

"Il n'exigeait, tout compte fait, que du confort, dont ses succès d'homme de lettres faisaient partie."¹ In spite of all Claudel's attempts to prove to him that Catholicism is not a source of rest and self-satisfaction,² Gide still criticises the justification found by the Catholic writer in his religion and the subsequent interest he has in remaining faithful. Obviously, Francis James with his "Bon Dieu commode pour [s]es vers" has strongly impressed Gide who queries ironically: "Ne te suffit-il pas que du fond de l'autel tu le fasses te murmurer: 'Francis James est le seul poète qui me satisfasse' pour qu'aussitôt tu croies en lui?"³ The answer to this question, in the case of Julius, is an affirmative one.

The fact that Julius begins to doubt in the authenticity of his life and his art is an ironic parallel to Gide's own constant questioning of his approach to art as well as a piece of fun at the expense of the Catholic writer. Julius' father, the critics and the Académie française all become uncertain values to Julius since they are no longer to be considered as instrumental to his success. They have become unpredictable and may no longer be controlled by Julius.⁴ One wonders if Gide is not poking fun at Francis James by suggesting that his malleable and approving God might one day change into the independently critical God of Don Camillo.

Gide made a constant personal, artistic search because, as he wrote in the preface to the Caves: "La seule question de métier m'importe et je n'aspire qu'à être bon artisan."⁴ As a Catholic writer, like Julius, Gide might have undergone similar change but motivated by self-interest.

1. Romans, Caves, pp. 731-732.

2. G./C. Corr., letters of the 3rd March 1908, pp. 83-85, & of the 8th July 1909, pp. 106-107.

3. G./J. Corr., 12th June 1902, p. 194. Ironically, James' belief in God's approval of his poetry does not entail equal certainty as to Man's approval, G./J./F. Corr., letter from Claudel to James of the 16th July 1932, p. 334: "Enfin, comme vous dites, le succès en ce monde n'est pas pour les chrétiens."

4. Romans, Caves, p. 679.

Julius' total lack of concern as to whether the Pope is the real one or not proves that this is the reason for his new artistic outlook. The establishment has let Julius down and must therefore be rejected as any factor, true or false, disturbing to Julius' interests.

Thus, Julius obeys his own interests¹ while Gide obeys the interests of his art. Moreover, the change undergone by Julius is merely a shift from one moral system to another whereas Gide moves from one necessary artistic avenue to another.

Julius, by reading Lafcadio's notebook, comes into indirect contact with life outwith his own restricted social milieu. His blunted curiosity, however, causes him to misunderstand entirely the fact that Lafcadio's points system is a personal, moral one. The only point of interest to Julius is a quotation from Boccaccio²: "Devant l'expression d'idées morales l'intérêt de Julius s'éveillait brusquement; c'était gibier pour lui."³ Julius is open only to recognisable moral values and, indeed, these are what control the psychology of his own mediocre works.

Even when Julius changes and becomes interested in the inconsequence of human nature, one sees that this is a moral preoccupation for him since he says to Lafcadio: "Vous ne sauriez croire, vous qui n'êtes pas du métier, combien une éthique erronée empêche le libre développement de la faculté créatrice."⁴ Julius' claims to the free développement of his creative faculties are, in fact, meaningless not only because he is motivated by self-interest but also because he wishes to submit his art to a moral theory which is not basically his own. In this, he differs

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1. This explains his irritation at the converted Anthias's lack of worldliness. Romans, Caves, pp. 771-772.
 2. Which, in crude translation, gives: "Here begins the book of new demands and supreme virtue. One cuts as much." This last sentence is a reference to Lafcadio's cutting his thigh every time he fails his moral code which is explained by Gide in his Journal of the 3rd April 1906, p.205: "Par trois fois aujourd'hui...j'ai cédé à des impulsions de vanité, à ces mouvements de parade - pour le moindre desquels Lafcadio se serait enfoncé la lame de son canif dans la cuisse", and resumed thus by Germaine Bree, IP, p.226: "...rester intact.. Julius makes no attempt to understand what this sentence could mean.
 3. Romans, Caves, p. 717.
 4. Ibid, p. 836.

from Gide. The moral content of Gide's works is born from inner necessity and is always secondary to artistic considerations.¹ To this extent, Julius is much closer to Claudel and James whose art was subjugated to religion and who were filled with horror for art for art's sake.²

How little Julius has really broken away from his former self is shown by his refusal to take into account the possibility that the Pope might be false.³ With difficulty, Julius has set up another moral scaffold on which to build his art. This new morality is just as rigid as the old one since Julius rejects any facts liable to disturb or to disprove it. Moreover, he refuses to take any risks by committing himself, as a man, to his new values.⁴

As I have already pointed out,⁵ Julius' moral standards are always ones which will serve his own interests. By changing, Julius expects to write better books than before. He impresses upon Lafcadio that he has left far behind his former "impures considerations de carrière, de public, et de juges ingrats dont le poète espère en vain récompense."⁶ Now, Julius insists: "...j'attends tout de moi; j'attends tout de l'homme sincère; et j'exige n'importe quoi."⁷ The parts of Julius' statement which I have underlined go to show that Julius still wants public recognition and expects more from his new public than from the old one. Julius is suffering from literary pique.⁸

A comparison is to be made between Julius' reactions and those of Francis James during his exchange of letters with Gide on Existences.

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1. IF, p. 25: "Le moraliste chez Gide est issu de l'artiste."
 2. G./C. Corr., letters of the 7th November 1905, pp. 52-54, of Christmas 1906, pp. 69-70, & of the 6th February 1906, pp. 81-82; G./J. Corr., letters of the 10th June 1902, pp. 192-194, & of June 1902, pp. 195-196.
 3. Romans, Caves, p. 815.
 4. "...je pressens à présent les plus étranges possibilités en moi-même. Puisque ce n'est que sur papier, j'ose leur donner cours. Nous verrons bien!", Romans, Caves, p. 837. Gide may, of course, be poking fun at himself here.
 5. See: above, p. 428.
 6. Romans, Caves, p. 836. My own underlining.
 7. Ibid, p. 837. My own underlining.
 8. Ibid, "'Et - pas'", p. 837.

Julius is entirely taken by surprise by the fact that his literary success and entrance to the Académie Française are no longer sure. This is because his own former view of literary success could be described in the words of Francis Jammes: "Je la veux et l'exige seulement comme une chose qui m'est due, je l'exige avec un autoritarisme profond, comme j'exigerais des réparations morales, je la réclame, y ayant droit...".¹ Jammes compares his attitude to that of Gide which is rather a flight from success. Thus, both Julius and Jammes "demand" recognition. One may be forgiven for interpreting Jammes' expression, "des réparations morales", somewhat freely. Jammes is writing of the results of his literature but may one not also think of the basis of his literature which is more moral than literary. In this case, Gide may be poking fun at Jammes by making Julius demand "n'im o te quoi" as the reward of his literary efforts.

Because Jammes has never questioned his right to recognition, he does not indulge in Gide's anxious speculation as to whether his friend will appreciate his works.² Hence, his surprise and pique at Gide's criticisms of Existences are as strong as those of Julius when hounded by the critics and abandoned by the Académie.

Just as, bound by his new morality, Julius turns to "l'homme sincère", so Jammes falls back on Bonheur, Frizeau and "cette courbe d'êtres d'élite"³ who do not have the unfortunate habit of allowing "[l]es plus misérables préjugés de littérature"⁴ to influence their judgement.

Gide's reply to Jammes foresees Julius' return to his former self. Of the disciples whom Jammes accuses him of heeding too closely, Gide writes: "Si je pouvais, je te les passerais; à la première louange, tu

1. G./J. Corr., End of October 1901, p. 177. My own underlining.

2. Ibid, November 1901, p. 179.

3. Ibid, 10th June 1902, p. 193.

4. Ibid, p. 193.

ne les trouverais plus si bêtes..."¹

To do Julius justice, the news that the Church and the Académie are once again to be the means of his literary success reaches him after he has been severely shaken by Amédée's death. Nonetheless, the fact that Julius cannot accept this death as a gratuitous act shows not only that theories alone are the source of his works but also that, as an artist, he is a coward, since reality, at all costs, must be kept out of his art.

Julius' attitude again reminds one fatally of James who says that he is coming closer and closer to God in order to achieve what one supposes is a literary dream. James' God is not a personal one as is Gide's and, indeed, James admits: "Je ne veux plus de vos terrifiantes Terres promises car elles sont terrifiantes."² James, like Julius, is weak. Julius has been badly frightened by the fact that life itself may be stronger than his pre-conceived ideas and may control them in the most atrocious way. James refuses even to play with fire as Julius has done.

Referring to peasants come to celebrate Corpus Christi Day, he writes:

Il fallait bien qu'ils s'adressassent à quelqu'un
puisqu'ils chantaient. Pourquoi la Vie se tromperait-elle
elle-même? Pourquoi chercher des religions si complexes
alors que celle-ci est si simple?]

Life, in other words, has no right, in both James' and Julius' opinion, to disconcert or to produce phenomena which escape from the simplest of systems: "Le plus simple, quand on est simple, c'est de s'en tenir à ce qu'on sait...La connaissance ne fortifie jamais que les forts..."⁴

Satisfied that he has remained consistent throughout, Julius, correctly but unconsciously, lays the blame for change on the Pope⁵ and congratulates

1. G./J. Corr., 12th June 1902, p. 194.

2. G./J. Corr., 10th June 1902, p. 192.

3. Ibid, 192. My own underlining.

4. Romans, Caves, p. 861.

5. IP, p. 231: "Julius, le romancier, vit à l'intérieur d'un ordre social dont les romans flattent les croyances. Il a, littérairement son pape: l'analyse psychologique, et moralement son 'tropisme': l'opportunisme. Au contact de Lafcadio, il entrevoit un autre pape, l'acte gratuit, hypothèse intellectuelle, bonne pour la littérature, mais qu'il écarte, effrayé devant la double aventure de Fleurissoire et de Lafcadio."

himself for his logic and the constancy of his thought. Julius has indeed stayed faithful to his desire for success which he realises may best be attained by him through the expression of moral ideas and the reduction of life to a system. Therein he resembles Jammes and not Gide of whom Germaine Brée writes:

La sincérité gidienne n'est point à confondre...avec l'unification d'une vie soumise à un principe éthique simple: toute l'oeuvre de Gide affirme l'incompatibilité de la vie et d'une morale systématique. Cette sincérité consiste d'abord à ne point éluder les faits, et surtout ce qui en eux, échappe à la raison, à ne point refuser de 'pénétrer dans les coulisses'. 1

In discussing Anthime, I will not dwell upon certain basic similarities between him and Julius. It is enough to say that his standpoint is also dependent upon self-interest.² and that, as with Julius, his refusal to accept events which would shake these beliefs is altered only by self-interest.³

Anthime, the atheist, is convinced that he is freer than Julius. Thus, when his brother-in-law presumes that his book, L'Air des Cimes, could not possibly please him, Anthime's reaction is one of irritation:

...cette allusion à ses opinions le chatouille; il proteste que celles-ci n'inclinent en rien les jugements qu'il porte aux oeuvres d'art en général, et sur les livres de son beau-frère en particulier. 4

Not content with this protest, he attempts to show that Julius and not he is a slave to his beliefs.⁵

One is reminded of Gide's irritation with Jammes when the latter suspects that his opinion of Existences has been influenced not, as with Anthime, by his beliefs but by the mediocre friends surrounding him.⁶ Like Anthime, Gide claims that his judgement is entirely free of outside influence.

1. IP, p. 236.

2. Romans, Caves, p. 686: "Qui - Dieu ", and p. 694: "Mais ce que - les siens".

3. Ibid, p. 696: "Ma charmante - n'existe pas", which is to be contrasted to Anthime's total acceptance of the miracle which heals him.

4. Ibid, p. 695. 5. Ibid, p. 695: "...Anthime, tout échauffé - guérit."

6. G./J. Corr., 12th June 1902, p. 194.

Another point of comparison with the Caves is the subsequent accusation which Gide throws at Jamnes:

'Tu penses (dis-tu) que je sais mauvais critique'...
Mon cher ami : je pense que tu n'es pas critique
du tout, et que précisément pour cela ton intuition
vierge est souvent ou fut resté juste et précieuse;
je suis donc très dispos à te croire, mais par
moments je ne comprends plus qu'une chose, c'est
que tu ne me comprends plus du tout'. 1

Jamnes, in other words, may never have relied upon intelligence in order to form a correct opinion but intuition served him almost as well. Now, even intuition has disappeared, killed by religious precepts. Any opinion Jamnes may have is thus falsified in Gide's eyes just as Julius' points of view are regarded as invalid by Anthime.²

Gide differs from Anthime in that his claim to unbiased judgement is justified. None more than Gide kept a careful watch upon his thoughts, especially those concerning literature, to safeguard their authenticity. Anthime's opinions, on the other hand, are connected to his beliefs, since, when his "free" thought is replaced by Catholicism, his view of Julius' book undergoes complete change.³

Originally, Anthime is even more pitted against external influence than the more unconscious Julius. This is understandable since the action of Grace, which Anthime opposes to the natural order of cause and effect, is far more mysterious and uncontrollable than the notion of man's inconsistency which attracts Julius. In his resistance to the inexplicable nature of Divine phenomena, Anthime represents, to an extreme degree, what Gide might have become had he completely rejected both the "'part de Dieu'"⁴ and the "'part du diable'"⁵ - a materialistic writer of dry articles.

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1. G./J. Corr., 6th August 1902, p. 199.
 2. Indeed, both Gide and Anthime go so far as to judge their respective interlocutors as quite incompetent reasoners. See: G./J. Corr., 10th June 1902, p. 193: "Je sais bien que tu trouveras ce que je te dis là parfaitement idiot, comme tu me l'affirmais un jour", and Romans, Caves, p. 690: "Anthime...appréciait chez Julius...une grande maladresse dans la discussion, qui souvent laissait à la libre pensée l'avantage".
 3. Romans, Caves, p.773. This is much to the irritation of the new Julius.
 4. G./J. Corr., May 1902, p. 188. 5. IP., p. 236.

The change brought about in Anthime by the miracle does not raise him to the ranks of artist, however, since, more so than Julius, he steps from one system to another. Anthime as an atheist, accepts his physical disability as the guarantee of the ideas upon which his articles are founded and, hence, his comfortable economic situation; as a Christian, Anthime accepts poverty which is the guarantee of his spiritual safety. Before, the tortured rats represented Anthime's work; now, fat and happy, the rats are still a principal preoccupation.¹ Work has been replaced by good works. Therefore, although Anthime's thoughts have changed, his basic ordering of the world is the same. Henri Freyburger is quite wrong in his belief that Gide's only reproach against Anthime, "cet homme intelligent",² is his sudden adhesion to Catholicism. Gide criticises Anthime both as a scientist and as a Christian.

Unlike Gide, Anthime has come back to his "troupeau désolé".³ His ideas have produced the very worst of results in the mutilation of his rats. Now, touched by Grace, he has realised to the full the terrible responsibility which is his. Anthime has adopted the exemplary role of comforter which Claudel and James both wished Gide to do, as a man and as an artist.⁴ Ironically, the result of Anthime's change of heart is not a supreme and successful work of art to the glory of God, but a bevy of sleek rats and a few poorly paid homilies.

Anthime's disinterestedness also provides Gide with a means of ridiculing the attitude of his Catholic correspondents and Claudel in particular. Julius cannot accept Anthime's resignation at the loss of his worldly goods and chides him for it:

1. Romans, Caves, p. 772.

3. G./J. Corr., End of October 1897, p. 124.

4. Ibid, p. 124 & G./C. Corr., 7th November 1905, p. 54.

2. Freyburger, op. cit., p. 132.

...je reconnaissais la moins de sainteté que d'orgueil et que l'excès de cette résignation, la dernière fois que je vous vis à Milan, m'avait paru beaucoup plus près de la révolte que de la véritable piété, et m'avait grandement incommodé dans ma foi. Dieu ne vous en demande pas tant, que diable! 1

Julius himself has always insisted that one can be a perfectly good Christian without, forasmuch, disdaining the advantages which may come from the position chosen for one by God. Moreover, Julius protests that Anthime's attitude seems superior to his own. When Anthime invokes God as his witness that this has never been his intention, Julius replies with as much truth as irritation: "Dieu n'a que faire ici."²

Julius, like Claudel³ believes that one's position in life is chosen by God. Also, his complaints against Anthime echo those made by Claudel against La Porte étroite. The Protestant Alissa, intent on bettering herself, is viewed by Claudel as a creature of pride. The nearer the true Saint is to God, the humbler he should feel. Claudel adds:

Si l'amour de Dieu devait ôter de lui les sentiments de componction et d'humilité d'un coeur pénitent, il vaudrait presque mieux qu'il restât dans le péché... Nos titres ne sont pas dans nos vertus, mais dans nos infirmités. 4

Thus, for Claudel, as for Julius, Anthime, as a physically disabled atheist, must seem far more worthy of interest, a far more attractive prospect than the annoyingly pure Christian he proves to be. God, Claudel argues, is "le bien suprême"⁵ and the profit and gifts we gain from God are inseparable from Him.

Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue showed one of the risks of a converted Gide: the Caves shows another. Through the Prodigal Son we see that Gide would not have been a true Catholic because of his tendency to arouse

1. Romans, Caves, p. 862.

2. Ibid, p. 862.

3. G./C. Corr., 7th November 1905, p. 53.

4. Ibid, p. 102, 10th May 1909.

5. Ibid, p. 102.

thought in others; through Anthime we see a different obstacle in the refusal of material advantages.

Gide is also criticising Claudel's beliefs in the Caves by indicating how easily they may become mere self-interest¹ and entirely divorced from any thoughts of God.² Moreover, Gide makes fun of his Catholic correspondents in Julius' feeling that Anthime's position appears in a better light than his own.

Although Anthime's decision to abandon the Christian faith is caused by inverted self-interest³, he remains throughout a more honest character than Julius. The news that the Pope is not the real one affects Julius but little. Anthime, considerations of his bad leg, apart, needs to feel that what he believes is true, even if advantageous to him. More clearly than Julius, he realises where his interests lie but accepts the fact that this must entail a conscious choice.

As an atheist, Anthime sacrifices his bodily well-being; as a Christian, he sacrifices his work. In neither case, however, does he sacrifice his personality which is always hidebound in its consistency, as Germaine Brée points out: "...avec la simplicité des 'tropismes' qu'il discernait dans ses rats, sa démarche intellectuelle est sans nuance; l'hypothèse du désordre protéen ne l'effleure même pas."⁴

Julius, on the other hand, uses his beliefs to avoid making any sacrifice, either of his personality or of his work. Anthime's exasperated judgement of Julius is correct: "...vous à qui, vrai ou faux, tout profite..."⁵

While Anthime makes a partial sacrifice and Julius none at all, Amédée gives himself completely. The concepts of choice and sacrifice

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1. As in the case of Francis James, in Gide's eyes, G./J. Corr., 12th June 1902, p. 194.
 2. It is to be remembered that the notion of God, for Gide, represents a supreme personal aspiration. See: above, p. 401-402.
 3. Anthime has begun to limp again, Romans, Caves, p. 864.
 4. IP, p. 231.
 5. Romans, Caves, p. 864.

raised by these three characters are basically artistic. Julius, from the very start, has held in his hands the solution which Claudel took two years to find, - namely, that one may be an artist and a Catholic. No sacrifice of one's art is necessary.¹ This point of view is no doubt strengthened in Claudel's mind by the fact that, as a Catholic, he believes that the Church includes all.²

Although Claudel, as a result of his decision, leads a more uneasy mental existence than Julius, the vernacular fact remains that, as a Catholic writer, he can have his cake and eat it.

Anthime, by his partial sacrifice, seems closer to the Gide who admitted to Jammes his habit of dancing now one literary leg now on the other.³ However, any complete identification of Anthime to Gide would be a most serious mistake. As I have already mentioned, Anthime not only acts according to his interests but also never commits his personality to change. Hence, he is neither an artist nor a man as defined by Gide in the Traité du Narcisse: "L'artiste et l'homme vraiment homme, qui vit pour quelque chose, doit avoir d'avance fait le sacrifice de soi-même."⁴

Gide, it is true, subjugates his very self to his art. Thus, he differs from both Anthime and Julius but also from Amédée. Gide does not suffer Amédée's fate because he did not explore one aspect of his character only nor did he accept the literary option suggested by Valéry: "...le livre est saint. On en fait UN, qui est le bon et le seul de son être et l'on disparaît..."⁵

If Gide's approach to art is to be found at all in the Caves, it is in Lafcadio.⁶ Germaine Brée comes to a satisfactory conclusion as to

1. J.1, 5th December 1905, & G./C. Corr., pp.56-57.

2. G./C. Corr., 3rd March 1908, p.84.

3. G./J. Corr., 6th August 1902, pp. 199-200.

4. Romans, TN, p. 9. 5. G./V. Corr., 15th April 1891, pp79-80.

6. Gide himself is not, forasmuch, to be identified in any way with Lafcadio, J.F.M., p. 68: "Il m'est certainement plus aisé de faire parler un personnage, que de m'exprimer en mon nom propre; et ceci, d'autant plus que le personnage créé diffère de moi davantage. Je n'ai rien écrit de meilleur que les monologues de Lafcadio ou que le journal d'Alissa. Ce faisant, j'oublie qui je suis, si tant est que je l'aie jamais su".

the "moral" of this story, but, because of her justifiable mistrust of over-limited interpretations of Gidian art, she places her own interpretation of the Caves on a general moral and philosophical level as she did with Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue.¹ If one takes into account that Lafcadio may represent, in his final stage, not just an attitude to life but an artistic approach, then one may accept her judgement that:

Parlant de cette sottise, Gide se servit du mot 'fable'. Et c'est bien une fable avec une morale particulière: celle qu'apprend Lafcadio; et une autre éthique qui s'épanouira dans les Faux-Monnayeurs, comme la structure schématisée des Caves du Vatican y sera subtilement utilisée. Formulée, l'éthique gidienne perd de sa pertinence et peut même paraître banale. C'est une éthique d'engagement limité, ou, après chaque acte, l'être humain redresse sa direction au contact de la vie, mais reprend sa liberté par rapport à elle. Lafcadio a commis un crime, il regarde Protos face à face, mais refuse d'être entraîné par son action vers d'autres activités illicites. 2

Gide commits his personality whole-heartedly but temporarily to each of his artistic creations. He neither refuses to depart from a consistent, ordered vision of himself and the world, nor does he become entangled and perish in too complete an involvement in any one of his works. Partial but personal commitment is felt by Gide to be the best means of serving his art and avoiding the mistaken literary paths of Claudel and James,³ or even Valéry.

iii. The Source, Role and Characteristics of Art.

The source of Julius' art and its success is a pre-conceived moral and, hence, psychological order. In this, he may be compared both to Claudel and James in that the latter tends to view Catholicism not only

1. See: above: pp. 397-400.

2. IP, p. 233.

3. J.1, October 1929, pp. 946-947.

as the source of his genius but of his art as such. When Claudel asks Gide: "Qu'est-ce que Saint Jean condamne, sous le nom des trois Concupiscences, sinon la préférence des choses en elles-mêmes, leur considération en tant que telles..."¹, he is expressing disapproval of art which investigates life for and in itself.

In Claudel's eyes, this form of art is deprived of "toute réalité substantielle"². Presumably, therefore, reality is to be found in art which is "une espèce de mimique de la Parole créatrice, 'poétique', de répétition du Fiat".³

Julius shares this view of art which discards life ⁱⁿ itself as unimportant compared to the superior reality of his art; "Je n'écris pas pour m'amuser...Les joies que je goûte en écrivant sont supérieures à celles que je pourrais trouver à vivre."⁴

Julius does add on the subject of art and life: "Du reste l'un n'empêche pas l'autre..."⁵ Julius transposes his life, as well as his beliefs, into his writing.⁶ Both Julius' experience in life and his moral outlook are subjugated, however, to an order which is always advantageous to his artistic success. Gide's condemnation of this attitude is seen when he writes of Corydon: "Toute ma volonté n'est pas de trop, qui m'acharne à ce travail où je ne cherche plus avantage. (Tout de même pour la Porte étroite. Seul ce qui a cessé de servir est apte à devenir matière d'art)."⁷

Gide is therefore no more advocating a form of art which is a faithful imitation of life than art which depends on a moral system.

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1. G./C. Corr., 7th November 1905, p.52.
 2. Ibid, p. 52.
 3. Ibid, p. 52.
 4. Romans, Caves, p. 735.
 5. Ibid, p. 735.
 6. Ibid, pp. 689-690.
 7. J.1, Feuillets, p.670.

Art and life, art and religion are distinct concepts for Gide. What Gide is criticising through Julius is the Catholic writer's mistrust and hatred, almost, of life inasmuch as it may challenge the absolute truth upon which he founds his work. As early as 1905, Gide warns Henri Gheon against this danger:

Mais cette phrase m'attriste: 'Détestons la vie', dis-tu. Non! non, pas de rancunes. Pour lui preferer l'art, faut-il ne pas aimer la vie. Propos de passionné mal guéri. Un pas de plus et tu fais un 'écrivain catholique'. 1

Denial of life by belief in absolute truth rather than "cette vérité partielle (la seule que nous puissions pourtant saisir)" may lead, Gide suggests in the Caves, to the poorest form of art or even to sterility. Thus, Julius' book on his father which was supposed to be a monument to his glory² is, in fact, monumental only in its failure. Moreover, when Julius invites Anthime to write articles for Le Correspondant as La Dépêche de Toulouse has refused to accept any more articles from a convert, Anthime replies gently: " - Mais, cher ami, que voulez-vous que j'y écrive?... rien de ce qui m'occupait hier ne m'intéresse plus aujourd'hui".³ Catholicism is obviously no substitute for Anthime's experiments as a source of production be it merely in the form of articles.

Clearly, in the Caves, Gide has not forgotten his words to Claudel:

Je cherche en vain quel pourrait [^]être le drame catholique. Il me semble qu'il n'y en a pas; qu'il ne peut pas, qu'il ne doit pas y en avoir - (ou bien l'on peut dire qu'il se concentre dans la messe)."⁴

Catholicism can never be a source of art in Gide's terms. Without dialogue, Cidian art has no impetus,⁵ and imitation, whether of the Mass, other writers or oneself precludes any justification of one's role as an artist for Gide.

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1. G./Gheon Corr. 2, 14th July 1905, p.603. Gheon's and Gide's affair with M. has just come to an end. Gheon was much more affected by this than Gide.
 2. ^{See} G./C. Corr., 7th November 1905, where Claudel expresses his view on art: "Qu'est-ce que l'art sinon une exclamation et une acclamation, une énumération et une action de grâces...", p.52.
 3. Romans, Caves, p.705. 4. G./C. Corr., 18th June 1909, p.103.
 5. J.l, Feuillets, 1923, p.775 & Feuillets, p.664: "Le souhait - bonne."

Through Lafcadio's view of Julius' book, Gide criticises art which excludes the dialectic nature of life and is a "ragout de logique." L'Air des Cimes is a work of artificial unity, entirely lacking in mystery and hermetically closed to any such upsetting details as Juste-Agenor's amorous exploits. One may ignore such details in life but not entirely with impunity; to do so in art is disastrous. This self-same message is to be found in a letter from Gide to Gheon where he attempts to raise the latter's spirits after the end of their affair with M. Gheon's mistake in life, Gide writes, and the cause of his complete depression is the fact that he has not been clear-sighted enough to realize that one cannot stereotype that most fluid of sentiments, friendship. Gheon has been plunged into total chaos by its developing into love. Gide's suggested solution is, in my opinion, one of artistic analysis, where Gheon would have to open his eyes to "la part du diable, la part du feu, et celle de l'autosuggestion."¹

Art, the solution to one's problems, must be nourished by analysis of every detail of life and this Julius is incapable of doing because he is weak.² The only questions Julius asks of life are those which will give answers acceptable to his ordered view of the world. It is for this reason that Lafcadio refuses to allow Julius to ask him about himself:

Je pressens que vous me questionnerez très mal. Tenez! laissez-moi vous raconter ma vie tout simplement. Vous apprendrez beaucoup plus que vous n'auriez su demander, et peut-être même souhaité d'apprendre...³

Julius makes his art present a systematized vision of a world of "bienheureuse ignorance"⁴ where logic nonetheless precedes life.⁵

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1. G./Gheon Corr. 2, 14th July 1905, p.602.
 2. See: Ibid, p.602: "L'analyse n'a jamais nui qu'aux impuissants."
 3. Romans, Caves, pp.737-738.
 4. G./C. Corr., 7th August 1903, p.48.
 5. In this, he resembles the author of Almaïde. See: Gide's criticism of this work in his letter of July 1901, G./J. Corr., p.175.

Because Julius is weak, he discovers, on a personal level, that he had better not deviate from the safety of his pre-conceived ideas.

From an artistic standpoint, Gide considers, in Le Retour de L'Enfant prodigue, the problem of individualistic art and art controlled by a moral system. While he recognises, in this work, the advisability of an external order to support the weak, he refuses, for himself at least, the artistic role of Good Shepherd. In the Caves, Gide goes on to criticise this very weakness the roots of which so often lie in self-interest and, at the same time, condemns the artist who, by drawing strength from established morality, serves himself first and art and mankind last.

The conclusion reached by Gide in the Caves has repercussions upon his correspondences with Jammes and Claudel. Firstly, Gide openly criticises Jammes for the lies contained in his poetry.¹ Reality is to be found, in Gide's case in his thought and by contact with life in all its forms. Thus Gide dismisses the superior, absolute truth which Jammes believes may be seized by images and intuition alone. Secondly, Gide's criticism of self-interest in the Caves moves to contempt² when Claudel demands him to suppress the passage pertaining to Lafcadio's homosexual experiences.³

The Caves has provoked in Gide's correspondences the very reactions foreseen and criticised by Gide in his work. Moreover, both Claudel and Jammes have proved themselves incapable of a judgement other than a moral one. Gone is the Claudel who could separate his literary from his religious comments.⁴ Had Jammes and Claudel not been blinded to the other aspects of the Caves by their somewhat retarded attention to pederastic detail, they would have realised that the Caves was a serious indictment

1. G./J. Corr., End of March 1914, pp230-231.

2. G./C. Corr., 16th March 1914, p.224 & 19th March 1914, p. 226.

3. Romans, Caves, p. 824.

4. G./C. Corr., 10th May 1909, pp. 101-103.

of their own literary position. A little more insight on their part might have changed the temporary gap in Gide's correspondences with Claudel and James in 1914 into a complete break.

5. Les Faux-Monnayeurs and Gide's Correspondence
with Martin du Gard

1. Les Faux-Monnayeurs: An Answer to Martin du Gard's Expectations?

It may seem that the question raised in the sub-title above is one that should be answered at the end and not at the beginning of a study of Gide's work in relationship to his correspondence with Martin du Gard. Gide's changing attitude to dialogue and the strengthened knowledge of his approach to art gained from his contact with Valéry, Claudel and Jammes, make it essential to deal with this question immediately, in order to leave the road clear to study the true nature of the existing links between Gide's novel and his correspondence.

Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard was undoubtedly richer than those with Valéry, Jammes or Claudel. Paradoxically, consideration of Martin du Gard's approach to art seems less apparent in the Faux-Monnayeurs than that, say, of Catholic artistic principles as viewed by Gide in the Enfant prodigue or the Caves. By tracing briefly the use made of literary dialogue by Gide and the development^{of} his own literary position, an explanation of this fact is to be found.

In the Traité du Narcisse, Gide took into account not only Symbolist theories but also Valéry's attitude towards art. The literary abyss represented by Valéry merits Gide's respect and, although necessarily discarded by Gide for himself, the purity and sincerity of Valéry's position is painted with reverence by Gide.¹

With Claudel and Jammes, Gide continues to study an approach to art other than his own. In Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue, however, dialogue

1. Reaction to Valéry's position comes only at a later date when Gide sees it as a threat to himself, G./V. Corr., letters of the 16th October 1899, 19th October 1899, 25th October 1899, 28th October 1899 & 7th November 1899, pp. 354-366.

replaces the juxtaposition of literary outlooks to be found in the Traité. This means of literary exploration lead, as we have seen, to refusal and criticism in Les Caves du Vatican.

Gide's position as an artist was considerably strengthened by his literary reaction against his Catholic correspondents. Moreover, Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue and the Caves are preparatory works to the complexity of the novel.

The problem with which Gide, as a novelist, must come to grips is that of objectivity, "cette complexité contradictoire de la vie".¹ Martin du Gard is quite right when he writes that both he and Gide are obsessed with objectivity.²

As early as 1900, Gide raises the question of life and literature in a criticism of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's Histoires souveraines:

Le mot factice ici devient éloge, mais c'est lui qu'il faut qu'on emploie... Est-ce son subjectivisme quasi religieux qui impose à Villiers sa méconnaissance, quasi religieux aussi, de la vie? ou au contraire cette méconnaissance précède-t-elle...?... La même question peut d'ailleurs se poser, et vainement, pour tous les 'écrivains catholiques'... c'est là leur trait commun: méconnaissance de la vie, et même haine de la vie - mépris, honte, peur, dédain, il y a toutes les nuances, - une sorte de religieuse rancune contre la vie. ³

The criticism made here is to be found in Les Caves du Vatican. However, Gide's attitude is ambiguous. Praise and criticism are clearly mingled when Gide comments on "Vera", one of Villiers' stories:

Magnificence de l'artiste! L'art suprême supplante l'inexistante réalité... Mais on peut estimer que le monde extérieur existe et que Vera ne meurt que parce que c'est Villiers qui la tue: son art n'apparaît plus alors qu'une admirable et éblouissante imposture. ⁴

Villiers, therefore, is a counterfeiter since he imposes his own, ideal, subjective view over and above reality. Yet, as Claude Martin

1. G./M.G. Corr.1, 28th May 1919, p. 141.

2. Ibid, 28th May 1919, p.141.

3. La Revue Blanche, 1st February 1900. Quoted by Claude Martin, MAG, p. 436.

4. Ibid, p. 436.

points out, certain of Villiers' statements quoted by Gide in his article could well receive Gide's approval too.¹

The accomplishment of Gide's recits lies in their essential unlikability. Everything is subordinated to the development of the principal character who represents one only of many possible reactions towards life. Although this approach apparently indicates the same limitations as Gide saw in Villiers' work, the invariable criticism of his heroes' attitudes, which Gide incorporates into his works, makes them ambiguous. Moreover, the moral rather than physical painting of the principal characters of Gide's recits gives them a broader reality to the reader whose imagination is brought into play.² The reader's subjective experience thus goes hand in hand with the subjective presentation³ of the hero, linking it to life and giving reality to the hero's experience.

As Elaine Cancalon points out, Gide's narrative techniques become increasingly complex in his recits. Dialogue, descriptive passages and secondary characters begin to take over from the hero's monologue which ruled Les Cahiers d'André Walter or L'Immoraliste. Thereby, Gide introduces a multiplicity of points of view. The illusion created by these means is objective in that, "le lecteur voit et juge les personnages de l'extérieur".⁴ At the same time, however, involvement on the reader's part with ^{the} almost puppet-like characters of the Caves is reduced according to Elaine Cancalon.⁵

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1. "Nul ne peut posséder d'une chose que ce qu'il en éprouve", and, "Le seul contrôle que nous ayons de la réalité, c'est l'idée". Essentially, therefore, Gide is reproaching Villiers for his refusal to realise the relativity of his own views.
 2. See: Cancalon, op. cit., pp.72-73.
 3. By "subjective", I do not mean that the hero is Gide or even that one sees one face only of the particular problem with which the hero is at grips. "Subjective" is to be taken here in the sense of self-centred. All the facts presented, all Gide's literary techniques are with a view to giving complete knowledge of the hero's attitude towards his problem.
 4. Cancalon, op. cit., p.73.
 5. In my opinion, involvement does not disappear entirely. This is probably due to the fact that Gide began to feel, when writing the Caves, that: "Mes personnages...s'emplissent peu à peu de sang réel et je ne m'aquitte plus envers eux aussi facilement que j'espérais", J.L, 7th May 1912, 377. This almost accidental development becomes a deliberate device in the writing of the Faux-Monnayeurs.

Both in his recits and his soties, Gide proves himself to be an accomplished artist who has not, forasmuch, found the means of making a literary transposition of all life's complexity. The missing link appears with Martin du Gard who is perhaps less of an artist than Gide but surely a "gaillard".¹

Gide's attraction to Martin du Gard has the same foundations as that which drew him towards Claudel. Martin du Gard has a quality which Gide himself does not possess and which, attracts him profoundly. However, Gide's initial openness to Martin du Gard's literary achievements is to be placed in the more general context of his own strengthened artistic position as an outcome of reflection in several works on the contact between life itself and a subjective, idealised notion of life.² The criticisms which Martin du Gard makes of Gide's work prior to Les Faux-Monnayeurs are, as Gide says himself, "dans le sens de ^{mes} plus intimes pensées".³

Martin du Gard's role, therefore, differs from that of Claudel and James. He is not so much an instigator of critical reaction in Gide as a vigil. Martin du Gard himself best sums up the part he played for Gide:

Je ne le convaincs pas à tous coups; néanmoins ma sincérité ne lui est jamais inutile: quand elle ne le persuade pas, elle sert du moins à l'enfoncer plus délibérément dans son sens. 4

Gide's rejection of Martin du Gard's advice is always in function of himself and his art and not in function of his interlocutor. Thus, Martin du Gard's comments are truly and artistically fruitful for the mature Gide.

Gide has no need nor desire to attack or escape from the dangers

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, Intro., 9.

2. Isabelle, Les Caves du Vatican & La Symphonie pastorale.

3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 30th May 1919, p. 143.

4. NAG, p.69.

of the literary possibility Martin du Gard represents. Indeed, in his own way, he wishes with Les Faux-Monnayeurs to write a novel which will live up to Martin du Gard's demanding expectations.

As Martin du Gard is not a threat to Gide's literary entity, the dialogue form used in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue to produce a literary solution and the critical irony of the Caves are no longer appropriate forms of consideration of the other's approach to art. In the Faux-Monnayeurs, Martin du Gard's thought is exposed rather as was Valéry's in the Traité du Narcisse - by juxtaposition. The artistic outlooks portrayed in the Traité, however, seemed strangely separate. All the elements of the Faux-Monnayeurs together form an integral whole. So consideration of Martin du Gard's in relation to Gide's own ideas may be compared to two squares of the patchwork cover of the Faux-Monnayeurs which are juxtaposed but bound together.

It is indeed the vastness and the complexity of the Faux-Monnayeurs which causes the place held by Martin du Gard in Gide's book to appear at first so small. This fact is paradoxically in keeping with Martin du Gard's wish that Gide should pour all his resources into his novel. Because Gide has done this on an artistic level, consideration of Martin du Gard's advice and point of view is not as immediately discernable as were the artistic standpoints studied in Le Traité du Narcisse, Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue or Les Caves du Vatican. As I hope to show, however, Martin du Gard's and Gide's reflections on the novel form a central part of the Faux-Monnayeurs but are not to be taken as an affirmative or negative answer to Martin du Gard's hopes for Gide as a novelist. Rather they form part of Gide's entire consideration of artistic problems and techniques in his work.¹ The only real answer made by Gide to Martin du Gard is his novel itself.

1. For a more complete study of Les Faux-Monnayeurs, see: Geneviève Idt, André Gide, Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Hatier 1970.

The Faux-Monnayeurs is an answer to Martin du Gard's statement:

Je suis, de rencontre en rencontre, plus frappé
chaque fois de ce que vous êtes plus riche que votre oeuvre...
aucun (de vos livres) n'exprime la vie; je ne dis pas
sottement dans sa totalité (je sais bien!) mais la
vie dans sa richesse, dans sa magnificence, dans sa
complexité. 1

For the Faux-Monnayeurs Gide draws on his entire ideological, personal
and artistic experience.

Gide's main concern is with future possibilities not the least of
which is the liberating effect of his work upon its readers who, Gide
hopes, will create their own, personal line of conduct in life and reject
received experience.² His characters, who represent "diverse orienta-
tions...profondément gidiennes" are "issus de lui-même"³ but become
autonomous. Thus the novelist is he who gives and whose characters live
at his expense.⁴ Gide's novel is "le 'roman' de la vie"⁵ not only for
this reason but also because it deals with the adolescent's venture into
life where his own intelligence is his only arm against the falseness of
prefabricated appearances and the means to discovering his own truth and
purity⁶ through contact with life itself. The dangers of this contact
mean that common sense as much as sincerity and sacrifice is a watchword
of the Faux-Monnayeurs.

Gide used as much of his own experience as possible in the Faux-
Monnayeurs. The figures of La Perouse and Armand Vedel, for example are
among those drawn from real life. There is an obvious parallel to be

1. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 22nd July 1920, p. 153.

2. See: Jean Hytier, André Gide, Paris, Charlot, 1946, pp.282 & 284;
Painter, op. cit., p. 143; IP, p.311.

3. IP, p. 308.

4. David Steel, "Lettres et Argent: L'Economie des Faux-Monnayeurs",
Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no.5, La Revue des
Lettres modernes, nos. 439-444, Minard, Paris, 1975, p.74,
J.F.M., pp. 24-25 & 68: "Pousser l'abnégation jusqu'à l'oubli de
soi total...Ceci est la clef de mon caractère et de mon oeuvre",
and Alibert, op. cit., p. 89.

5. IP, p. 309.

6. IP, pp. 307, 309 & 311.

made between Boris and the young Gide, between Olivier's relations with Edouard and those of Gide with Marc Allégret and Gide himself admits that:

'Les réalités auxquelles je songe (rapports de parents à l'enfant chez mon oncle Charles Gide et chez Allégret), pour ce début, sont si riches que j'ai bien peur de rester très au-dessous.' 1

Artistically, the Faux-Monnayeurs is linked to Gide's literary past and joins together the elements at his disposition. Elaine Cancalon shows how Gide's literary techniques and consequently the portrayal of his characters becomes more complex in his recits and his soties and she concludes:

L'harmonie de l'idée et de la forme naît donc avec la création d'une oeuvre relativement simple, le récit psychologique. Grâce à une recherche esthétique consciente elle évoluera lentement pour s'épanouir enfin dans le roman-somme. 2

Moreover, as Germaine Brée remarks, Edouard's definition of the subject of his novel as the rivalry between the real world and one's concept of it is, in fact, the common theme of Gide's recits and soties.³

Insofar as concerns Gide himself, Anne-Marie Moulènes and Jacques Paty believe that his genius and his personality are best expressed in his manipulation of the real and the imaginary:

L'oeuvre gidienne n'atteint pas au chef-d'oeuvre parce qu'elle porte à leur point de perfection un certain nombre de techniques romanesques. Elle atteint les sommets de l'art parce qu'elle est l'expression absolument nécessaire d'un esprit à la 'démarche si naturellement insolite' que réel et imaginaire ne sauraient rester pour lui distincts. 4

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1. M.V.R. Cahiers 4, 30th August 1921, p. 106. Laura's affair with Vincent is also drawn from Gide's MAC, p. 565. It is also possible that the source of Passavant's advances to Sarah at the literary banquet in the Faux-Monnayeurs is to be found in those made by Robert de Bonnières to a certain Mlle Fanny at a banquet organised by the literary review, Le Centaure, Romans, F.M., p. 1172, and G./Mo. Corr., 6th March 1896 p. 175. Gide became acquainted with Robert de Bonnières at Heredia's literary "Saturdays". De Bonnières was an author and a journalist and is described by Gustave Verwelkenhuyzen as a "Type du salonnard accompli".
 2. Cancalon, op. cit., p. 94.
 3. IP, p. 260.
 4. "L'Oeuvre sans Objet", Sur les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no. 5, nos. 439-444, p. 97.

Gide's investment in the Faux-Monnayeurs is primarily artistic.¹ Not only does Gide use his literary experience as the subject of his novel and as an aid to its construction but also he considers various forms of and approaches to art² through the reflections of his characters. Indeed, abler critics than myself have already shown that Gide's characters themselves represent various aspects of the novelist.³ The Faux-Monnayeurs is, therefore, the integral expression of Gide's life as an artist.

Les Faux-Monnayeurs is also a reassuring answer to Martin du Gard's anxiety that Gide might indulge in unnecessary or purely artistic "habiletés". Gide's narrative techniques in his novel are inseparable from his desire to give it the richness and the complexity of life itself. The mixing of past, present and future leaves one with the impression that time may only be apprehended in the present continuous.⁵ In this light, the author's intervention is no mere artifice but adds to the present quality of the novel and to the reality of the characters.⁶

Not only time but the destinies of Gide's characters are unified⁷ to form a complex whole. The reader must pick his way through a series of "jeux de perspectives"⁸ in order to find, as Lois Linder comments, that all the characters, ideas and events of the Faux-Monnayeurs only receive their full significance in relation to the other elements of Gide's book. Gide's success in binding these elements and in giving them life is due to the excellence of his artistic qualities. As

1. J.F.M., 9th July 1921, p. 38.

2. See: Romans, F.M., pp. 935, 937, 1043, 1189, 1198.

3. Alain Coulet, "Lire Les Faux-Monnayeurs", Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no.5, La Revue des Lettres modernes, nos. pp. 439-444, p. 23; Gerald Prince, "Personnages - Romanciers dans Les Faux-Monnayeurs", French Studies, vol. XXV, January 1971, no. 1, pp. 47-52; Lois Linder, "Le Roman du Roman", Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives, André Gide no. 5., La Revue des Lettres modernes, nos. 439-444, pp. 81-91.

4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 17th July 1921, p. 167.

5. IP, p. 304; Linder, op. cit., p.91.

6. Linder, op. cit., p.91; A.-M. Moulènes and J. Paty, "L'Oeuvre sans Objet", Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives, André Gide no.5, p.96.

7. Elaine Cancalon, "La Structure de l'Épreuve dans Les Faux-Monnayeurs", Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no.5. La Revue des Lettres modernes, nos. 439-444, pp. 29-30.

8. Alain Coulet, op. cit., p.14.

Germaine Bree points out,¹ the value of Gide's book does not come from its ideological or moral contents. It is the organisation of Gide's work by artistic means which is the cause of Martin du Gard's admiring comment that the Faux-Monnayeurs resembles "un de ces livres compacts et pleins comme les romans étrangers".²

Alain Goulet is no doubt right when he comments that "la fabrication et la mise en forme esthétique"³ are more important to Gide than the presentation of reality in his work.⁴ Gide is a realist only insofar as his novel corresponds to Elaine Cancelon's interpretation that; "('Dans la vie, rien ne se résout; tout continue', dit Pauline). Le roman vraiment 'réaliste' loin de créer un système clos doit capter cette relative pour l'exprimer."⁵ This no doubt explains why Jean Hytier⁶ and Martin du Gard⁷ feel Gide is less at ease in the objective presentation of events since one of the most telling ways in which Gide portrays the relativity of life lies in the perspective afforded by indirect presentation.

The Faux-Monnayeurs, therefore, does not live up to Martin du Gard's expectations because Gide achieved the objectivity of Les Thibault. Gide's novel is rich and complex as life because Gide mobilised all his artistic and personal resources and, by giving them unreservedly to his characters, made of his work "une réalité humaine permanente" and "une réussite littéraire compacte et unique."⁸

1. IP, p. 310.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 10th October 1925, pp. 274-275.

3. Goulet, "Lire Les Faux-Monnayeurs", Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no.5, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, nos. 439-444, p.23.

4. See: J.F.M., pp23-24.

5. Cancelon, "La Structure de l'épreuve dans Les Faux-Monnayeurs", Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no.5, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, nos. 439-444, p.25.

6. Hytier, op. cit., p.273.

7. G./M.G. Corr.1, 10th October 1925, p.276.

8. IP, p.312.

Having dealt briefly with the manner in which Gide responded to Martin du Gard's wishes for his novel, I now turn to the relationship between Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard and the Faux-Monnayeurs with which I will deal thematically.

ii. "[U]ne logique subjective."

One of the central themes of Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard was that of literary objectivity and subjectivity. This, with all its offshoots, is also one of the main preoccupations of the Faux-Monnayeurs, although these terms are replaced in Gide's novel by those of reality and man's representation of reality.

Martin du Gard's praise and criticism of La Symphonie pastorale, which met with Gide's approval, shows a necessary step towards literary objectivity; the characters of a novel should have a life of their own and not be slaves to "une logique subjective, une logique de composition".² Gide's ready acceptance of his friend's criticism is unsurprising in view of his constant desire to subjugate himself, his style and his literary techniques to the subject in hand rather than impose upon his subject.

In the Faux-Monnayeurs, this problem is raised through several of the characters. In his first conversation with Olivier, Edouard points out that the poem which Olivier has written is a failure because he has allowed an idea to control his words instead of being guided by the words themselves. Later, Edouard confesses to the feeling that it is Olivier himself who is now teaching him the truth of his own advice. This is so not just because of Edouard's devotion to Olivier but because Olivier, with his curiosity and dissatisfaction with the past, is a guide to the

1. G./M.G. Corr.1, 28th May 1919, p.142.

Edouard who asks, "Quels problèmes inquiéteront demain ceux qui viennent? C'est pour eux que je veux écrire."¹ Edouard, however, transgresses against his own rule, "le vent de l'esprit"² invades his work filling it with ideas to which the characters are made to conform,, helpless in the hands of their creator.³ Edouard ends by imposing his ideas and his choice of words upon his characters. He also makes the even more serious mistake of claiming that the ideas which are the products of his own imagination may usurp reality itself. Thus, both Edouard and his fictional character, X, will kill Laura's and Z's love for them by imagining that they, and not the loved ones, are no longer involved sentimentally.

Lady Griffith, Azais and Passavant are also guilty of imposing their own ideas or desires upon their "subjects". Lady Griffith makes of Vincent "son oeuvre, sa statue",⁴ changes his very appearance and encourages him to kill his conscience.⁵ Azais is:

... le portrait du mauvais romancier dont parle Gide dans son Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, celui qui 'construit ses personnages; il les dirige et les fait parler'. C'est Azais, omniscient et autoritaire, qui domine le roman qu'il écrit. Il en connaît d'avance la fin, celle qu'il a choisi et la seule possible selon sa façon de voir. Ce qui en résulte est une grande comédie, la fiction pure, 6

1. Romans, P.M., p.1007.

2. Ibid, p.1085.

3. Ibid, p.1085; "Mais l'attribution - personnages." Albert Nockel's reply to Gide's explanation of his Nourritures terrestres is to be remembered here. See: G./Mo. Corr., 14th October 1897, p. 216: "Il faut bien...qu'un livre soit composé comme ceci ou comme cela, et que les idées morales viennent de quelque part ou de quelque chose. Les vôtres vous sont venues...et c'est d'après elles que vous avez écrit Les Nourritures... La conclusion c'est que les idées déjà accomplies dominent chez vous les sensations. J'aurais cru qu'elles s'accomplissaient en elles."

4. Ibid, p.978.

5. Ibid, p.981: "'Alors - prendre'."

6. Linder, "Le Roman du Roman," Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, archives Andre Gide no.5, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, nos. 439-444, p.85.

or, one might add, fictional purity. Passavant is also responsible for forcing an unnatural development in Olivier who, as Lois Linder remarks, is not at all ready to leave his family background.¹

La Pérouse, as a victim rather than an instigator, commits the same fault as Edouard by allowing imagination to oust reality. Thoughts of suicide and of meeting Boris kill his ability to act and to feel.² The same is true, in less tragic vein, for Olivier whose imaginary joy at the thought of meeting Edouard, back from England, comes to disappointment in reality and causes his separation from Edouard.³

All these are instances of the subjugation of reality to a pre-conceived, subjective order controlled either by an external creator or by one's own imagination. This is being criticised by Gide since, in every one of these cases, life takes its revenge. Edouard, whose ideas control his work, never writes his novel and his attempts to kill Laura's feelings for him produce an unexpected reaction. In "true life" Laura's attachment to Edouard continues⁴ but her admiration for Edouard's work diminishes⁵ a fact which Edouard refuses to equate with his own concept of his novel.⁶ Lady Griffith's statue, Vincent, takes on a life of his own and kills his creator. Evil itself slips into Azais' boarding-school,

1. Linder, "Le Roman du Roman," Sur Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Archives André Gide no.5, La Revue des Lettres Modernes, nos. 439-444, pp. 84-85.

2. Romans, F.M., p.1132.

3. Alain Girard offers another interpretation of Olivier's meeting with Edouard equating it to "cette crainte de Gide...de ne pas pouvoir exprimer à l'autre ce qu'il a à lui dire...si la rencontre d'Edouard et d'Olivier avait été plus spontanée,...rien ne se serait produit. Tout arrive à chaque instant dans la vie, par suite de cette impossibilité d'exprimer ni par des paroles, ni par autre chose que des paroles, le plus profond de soi-même", "Le Journal dans l'Oeuvre de Gide", Entretiens, p.201.

4. Romans, F.M., p.1094

5. Ibid, pp. 1082-1085.

6. Ibid, p.1097: "Mais - livre?" Edouard prefers to hide behind the word "mysticism".

the bastion of "good" and literally dissolves it. Olivier escapes from Passavant to follow a more natural development and La Pérouse kills not only reality but, indirectly, Boris. Reality thus destroys any attempt to control it through "une logique subjective."

A more specific criticism of such attempts on the author's part is to be found in the following passage from Edouard's Journal:

Je n'ai jamais rien pu inventer. Mais je suis devant la réalité comme le peintre avec son modèle, qui lui dit: donnez-moi tel geste, prenez telle expression qui me convient. Les modèles que la société me fournit, si je connais bien leurs ressorts, je peux les faire agir à mon gré; ou du moins je peux proposer à leur indécision tels problèmes qu'ils résoudront à leur manière, de sorte que leur réaction m'instruira. C'est en romancier que me tourmente le besoin d'intervenir, d'opérer sur leur destinée. Si j'avais plus d'imagination, j'affabulerais des intrigues; je les provoque, observe les acteurs, puis travaille sous leur dictée. 1

If Edouard is unable to invent anything, the best solution for him would be to paint life simply or to choose a form of writing other than the novel.² Edouard himself uses the image of a painter to describe the author's role. However, the reality facing Edouard is already to a large extent subjective. The model here is seen as a malleable object ready to receive the creator's imprint and to exist merely by his pre-conceived ideas.

Edouard's position is, nonetheless, ambiguous since he continues,

1. Romans, F.M., p.1022.

2. The importance of the inventive capacities of the author is proved by the fact that Gide wished to differentiate himself from Edouard in this respect. See: J.1, 29th October 1929, p.949. Indeed, Gide believes the living qualities of art to be superior to those offered by a faithful rendering of reality. This is to be seen in the following passages on Georges Simenon's Pedigree: "J'ai donc lu ces pages avec une attention soutenue, mais avec étonnement, un étonnement dont toute ma sympathie préalable ne parvenait à triompher; comment expliquer, me demandais-je en avançant, que le romancier le plus romancier-né d'aujourd'hui, le plus habile à nous donner de la vie d'autrui une vision saisissante, hallucinante, à nous intéresser (et je prends ce mot dans le sens le plus fort, comme lorsque l'on dit qu'un banquier est intéressé à la réussite d'une affaire), à créer des personnages vivants, halotants, pantelants, réels - ne nous présente ici, alors qu'il s'agit d'êtres réels, que des ombres? C'est, me dis-je (et précisément parce qu'il sait que ces personnages ont existé, qu'ils ont vécu), qu'il n'a pas cru devoir, pas pris la peine de les recréer; qu'il a cru que le souvenir suffisait." B.A.A.G. no.34, Vol. V, April 1977, p.42.

in terms which would not come amiss from Gide, by claiming that his models would, in fact, have a large degree of autonomy. Moreover, just as Gide does so often in his Journal, Edouard rectifies his own point of view when he writes the next day that it would be more correct to say that:

...la réalité m'intéresse comme une matière plastique; et j'ai plus de regard pour ce qui pourrait être, infiniment plus que pour ce qui a été. Je me penche vertigineusement sur les possibilités de chaque être et pleure tout ce que le couvercle des mœurs atrophie. 1

In fact, Edouard succumbs to his original idea of the role of the novelist since he refuses to portray any element which escapes from his control or surprises him.² Edouard cannot accept autonomy in his characters. Moreover, any study of the future possibilities of one's characters implies a close study of their present state and this Edouard is unable to do, even to a large extent, with Olivier whom he loves. Thus, Edouard cannot see that both Laura and Bernard are crying out to be of use to him³ and that Boris could well have dispensed with his help.⁴

It is Gide who realises this, informs the reader and, in so doing, gives the characters of his novel an entity of their own outwith the novelist's limited interpretation. It is Gide who uses life as a starting-block for the exploration of possibilities and who considers not only present and future but past.

Thus, through Edouard, Gide not only criticises an approach to art which is unacceptable to both Martin du Gard and himself but points to the means he will employ to avoid making the same mistake. This mingling of criticism and justification will recur.

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1. Romans, F.M., p.1023.
 2. Edouard does not include Boris' death of the story of counterfeit money in his novel. He is shocked by M. Vedel's Journal and he rejects Bernard, Romans, F.M., pp. 1246, 1086, 1021 & 1096.
 3. Ibid, p.1078.
 4. Ibid, pp. 1108-1109.

iii. Objectivity and the Novel.

The problem of the literary transposition of reality is raised in Edouard's Journal when he writes of the incident through which he unwittingly met his nephew, Georges Molinier.¹

In his Journal, Edouard, as is fitting for an outside observer, begins to write in objective style.² However, his description of Georges' physical appearance gives way to a retrospective, personal flight of imagination where Edouard endows Georges with his own experience. In other words, Edouard cannot allow his model to exist independently. Moreover, Edouard's attempt to write objectively is not natural to him: "Je note tout cela par discipline, et précisément parce que cela m'ennuie de le noter."³ Edouard's reaction is interpreted by Geneviève Idt as being that of Gide who wishes to show that "toute notation dite réaliste est au contraire arbitraire".⁴ To some extent this is true. I believe, however, that Gide also wishes to indicate the dangers of Edouard's lack of observation. It is probably not by chance that the latter's remark follows his description of the yellow decoration that Georges wears in his button-hole.⁵ In this clue to future possibilities, Edouard sees at first a mere physical detail.

When Edouard approaches Georges, objective description gives way logically to dialogue. However, Edouard is not completely at ease in this medium either since, he says, it does not bring out Georges' accent. In fact, the second part of Edouard's dialogue with Georges shows that there is a more serious problem attached to this form of presentation. Edouard tries to control the conversation by his questions. Because he quickly goes too far, Georges, his model, rebels and cuts the conversation

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1. Edouard observes a young boy who, after stealing a book, realizes that he has been watched and replaces the book. During the subsequent conversation he has with the boy, Edouard discovers that he is his nephew. Apart from the latter twist of fate, this incident is drawn from Gide's own experience, J.F.M., 36.
 2. Romans, F.M., p.998.
 3. Ibid, pp998-999.
 4. Idt, op.cit., p.64.
 5. The mark that Georges belongs to a group of school-boys whose activities lead to Boris' death.

short. Edouard fails both in observation and in dialogue because his own presence takes precedence.

Edouard's difficulties with objective portrayal and direct speech provoke a short passage of reflection on the best way to transcribe his experience with Georges in his novel.

Edouard recognises that the incident has, in fact, been falsified by being seen through his own eyes and wonders if it would not be better to sketch a few essential features thereby leaving the reader's imagination free or to tell the story from Georges' point of view. The latter idea was also considered by Gide in his Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs.¹ The fact that Edouard, and hence Gide, does not proceed in this manner may be seen as proof that the difficulties to which Edouard is prey here are also those experienced by Gide. Such a conclusion, however, does not take into account that Edouard, as a novelist, is being criticised by Gide. Not only does Edouard, in the long run, eliminate a factual description of the incident with Georges but also he offers a parody of direct speech since Audibert's point of view dominates his "conversation" with Hildebrandt to the point of becoming a monologue.²

Thus, Edouard, in spite of his initial consciousness of the necessity to achieve objectivity, falls into the trap of unpleasantly pompous subjectivity. He has allowed "Trop d'intentions"³ to enter into this passage from his novel, has destroyed dialogue as a means of "pleine création directe",⁴ has definitely not created "un miracle de vie"⁵ but has merited Martin du Gard's full disapproval.

The knowledge that Edouard has transgressed as a novelist, however,

1. J.F.M., p.36.

2. Romans, F.M., pp. 1222-1224.

3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 7th October 1920, p. 157.

4. Ibid, 16th December 1921, p.177.

5. Ibid, 7th October 1920, p.157.

comes after his explanation of what he would like his novel to be. Chronologically, therefore, Edouard exposes his problems and expresses his positive intentions before his final failure.

Edouard's ideas on his novel are, to a large extent, those given by Gide in his Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs.¹ Neither Edouard nor Gide wish to write a realist novel.² Both are concerned, on the contrary, with ridding the novel of any extraneous elements.³ Both admire seventeenth-century drama for its perfection and purity which causes rather than detracts from its profound humaneness.⁴ Both are tormented by the notions of objectivity and complexity, which they want to attain through subjectivity.⁵ Both are against the linear progression of their respective novels which, like life, would contain not one but many subjects.⁶

Both consider writing a novel which would be a criticism of itself and the novel in general;⁷ neither rejects entirely the possibility that

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1. It is to be remembered that, prior to giving his views on the novel, Gide wrote: "Je ne dois noter ici que les remarques d'ordre général sur l'établissement, la composition et la raison d'être du roman. Il faut que ce carnet devienne en quelque sorte 'le cahier d'Edouard'." J.F.M., pp.31-32. This is counter-balanced by a later passage: "Je crois qu'il faut mettre tout cela dans la bouche d'Edouard - ce qui me permettrait d'ajouter que je ne lui accorde pas tous ces points, si judicieuses que soient ses remarques." J.F.M., p.59. The part that Gide himself may play in Edouard's theories on the novel is, therefore, considerable but is subjugated to Edouard's personality.
 2. Romans, F.M., 1080: "'Est-ce - plus du naturel'." J.F.M., p.54: "Seul le ton de l'épopée me convient et peut me satisfaire; peut sortir le roman de son ornière réaliste." M.V.R. Cahiers 4, 21st October 1920, p.158: "...je me rends compte que c'est décidément le réalisme que je n'aime pas, quel qu'il soit."
 3. Romans, F.M., p.1080: "Il n'a jamais - siècle français." J.F.M., p.57: "Purger le roman - le mélange."
 4. Romans, F.M., pp.1080-1081: J.F.M., pp.57-58. J.1, Feuillets, p.345; 1928, 891; 1933, 1187.
 5. Romans, F.M., p.1081: "Il n'y a - le général." M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 5th July 1922, p.135: "'Dans mon prochain roman, je ne chercherai pas l'objectivité. Au fond je n'y crois pas. Je voudrais l'atteindre par une série de subjectivités.'"
 6. Romans, F.M., p.1081: "Mon roman - la mienne." J.F.M., 1st November 1924, p.80: "La vie - Edouard."
 7. Romans, F.M., p.1083: "...au lieu de me contenter - général." M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 12th September 1919, p.38: "'Ce roman peut devenir aussi la critique du roman, du roman en général'." Gide's intentions are quite in keeping with literary currents of thought in the twenties, when the realist novel was questioned by Breton, Valéry and others, *op. cit.*, p.15.

their novels may be ruled by ideas.¹ Both refuse to work according to a plan but not for the same reasons: Edouard because he is waiting for reality to dictate his plan and Gide to free his inventive capacities and the possible development of his characters.²

In this first difference, one sees that Gide is closer than his fictional character to writing the Faux-Monnayeurs. Edouard not only expects real life to provide him with a plan but is incapable of deviating from reality.³ Edouard is no inventor. However, the fact that Edouard sees a struggle between "les faits proposés par la réalité, et la réalité idéale"⁴ is an indication of his inability to accept reality which causes his own ideas to take an even greater place in his novel.⁵

In his choice of a double axis to his work, Edouard resembles Gide who writes in his Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs:

Peut-être l'extrême difficulté que j'éprouve à faire progresser mon livre n'est-elle que l'effet naturel d'un vice initial... Il n'y a pas, à proprement parler, un seul centre à ce livre, autour de quoi viennent converger mes efforts; c'est autour de deux foyers, à la manière des ellipses, que ces efforts se polarisent. D'une part, l'événement, le fait, la donnée extérieure; d'autre part, l'effort même du romancier pour faire un livre avec cela. Et c'est là le sujet principal, le centre nouveau qui désaxe le récit et l'entraîne vers l'imaginatif. 6.

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1. Romans, F.M., pp.1083-1084. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 30th August 1921, p.106: "Quand je songe à mon roman, ce mythique roman, j'ai parfois la peur de tomber dans le roman à idées, le pire des genres! Puis je me dis: pourquoi penser ainsi? Il n'y a pas de mauvais genres; pourquoi pas, après tout, un roman à idées, carrément, en le montrant, en faisant nettement sentir à certains moments que les idées sont plus importantes que les personnages...?"
 2. Romans, F.M., p.1082: "J'attends que la réalité me le dicte." J.F.M., 1st January 1921, pp.28-29: "...je ne suis pas - imiter."
 3. Romans, F.M., pp.1001 & 1022. Gide has the same desire to change absolutely none of the details provided by reality but in the case of his autobiography: "Je ne veux modifier aucun détail. Je ne changerai ni un nom propre, ni la couleur d'une chevelure. Ma confession n'aura de valeur...que si elle est strictement véridique. Pour mériter créance, il faut que je puisse dire: Vous voyez, je ne vous trompe en rien, tous les détails concrets sont exacts. Eh bien, le reste l'est également." N.A.G., p.20. As far as the novel is concerned, Gide condemns such a procedure, J.F.M., 3rd November 1923, p.67, B.A.A.G., no.34, April 1977, pp42, and see: above, note 2. p.456.
 4. Romans, F.M., p.1082.
 5. Romans, F.M., p.1085.
 6. J.F.M., p.45.

Gide is far more conscious than Edouard of the difficulties and dangers of such a subject. Not only must he fight against the desire to simplify but also against any flight into the purely imaginary where the novelist's subjective truth would drown reality.

Paradoxically, Gide avoids the latter danger by his decision that, "Je dois respecter soigneusement en Edouard tout ce qui fait qu'il ne peut écrire son livre."¹ One is reminded of Edouard's own comment:

"Laissons aux romanciers réalistes l'histoire des laissés-aller."² Edouard's very failure brings us back to reality while the criticism of his subjectivity allows objective appraisal on the reader's part.

In fact, Gide is not so much criticising Edouard's or his other characters' subjective interpretation of life as their attempts to impose their vision as life itself. Gide does not forget the relativity or the complexity of human experience; as Germaine Bree says:

...pour Gide, le 'roman' de la vie n'est plus dans le duel entre une idée que l'on se fait de la réalité et la réalité même. La réalité n'est en aucun point extérieure aux personnages des Faux-Monnayeurs. Ils sont la seule réalité dont l'ensemble complexe forme le 'roman', et les 'idées' qu'ils se font de la vie ne sont qu'une partie de cette réalité. 3.

Gide intends to accomplish what Edouard is incapable of doing. Thus, Gide controls Edouard more carefully, perhaps, than any of the other characters in the Faux-Monnayeurs. His aim is not, however, to impose his own views and personality in his novel but rather, by differentiating Edouard from himself, to give substance and reality to his work.

In themselves, many of Edouard's ideas on the novel form part of Gide's argument pro domo sua and are contrary to Martin du Gard's procedures. In particular, Gide's and Edouard's belief that generality may

1. J.F.M., p.59.

2. Romans, F.M., p.1125.

3. IP, p.308.

best be attained through subjective elements does not meet with Martin du Gard's approval precisely because such an approach is harmful to the longitudinal flow of the novel.¹ Edouard's intentions and the means used by Gide are opposed to those of Martin du Gard but the desired result, "'Une tranche de vie'",² is the same. Through Edouard, Gide gives his point of view on the novel pride of place but does not, foras-much, insist that this view is the only, true one.³ Gide is arguing for himself and not against Martin du Gard.

This is to be seen clearly when Gide, after considering the problems of objective writing and intimating his means of achieving objectivity, goes on to criticise in Edouard what Martin du Gard himself regards with a wary eye.

In his Journal,⁴ Edouard admits to the feeling that life is an imposition. Basically, Edouard would like to equate his life, his interpretation of facts to life itself:

...nous tentons d'imposer au monde extérieur notre interprétation particulière...La résistance des faits nous invite à transporter notre construction idéale dans le rêve, l'espérance, la vie future... 5

or, as Edouard might well have added, into the novel. Apparently, Edouard realises that this can be no more than wishful thinking. In fact, as the next part of his Journal shows, Edouard has decided to take the first step towards imposing his own point of view as reality: "Les réalistes partent des faits, accommodent aux faits leurs idées. Bernard est un réaliste. Je crains de ne pouvoir m'entendre avec lui."⁶

Thus Gide gives the reader a clue to the fact that Edouard will invade his novel to such an extent that the facts offered by reality,

1. G./M.G. Corr.1, 16th December 1921, p.178.

2. Romans, F.M., p.1081.

3. Not only is Edouard criticised by his own development but also his views on the novel are given to a critical audience.

4. Romans, F.M., p.1096.

5. Ibid, p.1096, My underlining. 6. Ibid, p.1096, My underlining.

which do not fit in with his subjective view of the world, will disappear. Edouard, the author, will be the source and subject of his work and will deserve Martin du Gard's criticism because his intervention will have reduced his characters to being mere puppets and will have killed objectivity which is "l'enfantement total, la création toute pure".¹

Not only does Edouard go against Martin du Gard's wishes but also against Gide's since the latter does not intend to ignore reality but to foresee the future possibilities of life.² Moreover, although Gide makes no claims to being a realist, he does not rid himself of Martin du Gard as Edouard rids himself of Bernard. Gide knows that he can but gain from Martin du Gard's constant attempts to stop him from making Edouard's mistakes.

This, perhaps, explains why Martin du Gard's views conquer when Gide acquaints the reader with a few pages written by Edouard and intended for his novel. Edouard, who has been asked by his sister, Pauline, to speak to Georges, has decided to show Georges the written text which is the result of his reflection upon his nephew. The source of this text is Georges' attempt to steal and not the more serious problem of his involvement in the circulation of counterfeit money. Instead of dealing directly with the more important fact, therefore, Edouard not only concentrates on what is of secondary importance but also presents it in a subjective, indirect light.³

The aim of Edouard's art here is to provoke a reaction in his reader. At the same time, Edouard is hoping for a reaction from Georges which will enable him to continue his story by reforming Georges. Unfortunately, for Edouard, Georges is merely flattered at having aroused the novelist's

1. G./M.G. Corr., (6th January 1914, p.130; 28th May 1919, p.141; 20th April 1923, p.217; 10th October 1925, p.276.

2. J.P.M., pp.28-29.

3. Romans, P.M., pp. 1222-12224. Such a procedure is not alien to Gide See: J.I, 15th July 1905, p.168.

interest. One is reminded of Strouvilhou's condemnation of literature: "Je n'y vois que complaisances et flatteries."¹ The reaction produced in Georges is of the most shallow. The subjectivity, the self-centred "biais"² of Edouard's presentation has failed to cause any self-questioning in Georges because the only point of contact between him and Edouard's story is his attempted theft itself. On the other hand, Edouard's direct verbal warning to Georges of the dangers of circulating counterfeit money provokes an immediate reaction and change in Georges' conduct.³

The failure of Edouard's "subtilités littéraires"⁴ shows that Gide accepts Martin du Gard's point of view that the introduction of subjective elements^{unnecessary} to the development of his novel will give his readers "un plaisir passager et cérébral"⁵ and detract from its lasting quality. Edouard falls victim to Gide's temptation while Gide, with Martin du Gard's help,⁶ never unnecessarily complicates his presentation be it direct or indirect. Gide gives direct presentation the upper hand here but the most important question remains for him the necessity of his procedures and not, as such, the form they take.

The attitudes of both Martin du Gard and Gide are present in the consideration of subjectivity and objectivity in the Faux-Monnayeurs. However, Gide does not simply oppose one standpoint to the other. This, as I have already explained,⁷ is not his aim. The very nature of the Faux-Monnayeurs lends itself to the co-existence of two and more approaches to the problem of artistic production. Martin du Gard's and Gide's opinions now overlap and now separate. In the latter case, however, Gide's is less intent on criticising Martin du Gard than on laying the foundations

1. Romans, F.M., p.1198.

2. Ibid, p.1221.

3. Romans, F.M., p.1225. In fact, the final cause of Georges' reform is the darkness of reality itself. Boris' death gives Georges a glimpse of the Devil and brings him back to the safety of his family.

4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 16th December 1921, p.177.

5. Ibid, 16th December 1921, p.178.

6. Ibid, 19th July 1921, p.169.

7. See: above, p.448.

of his own methods.

iv. Limitation and Complexity.

Gide's treatment of the connection of limitation and complexity to the work of art is similar.

Edouard, after writing the first thirty pages of his Faux-Monnayeurs, realises what was lacking in his former works which he criticises in terms partially reminiscent of Martin du Gard's comments on Gide's work.¹

Edouard compares his previous writings to "ces bassins des jardins publics, d'un contour précis, parfait peut-être, mais où l'eau est captive et sans vie".² Now, Edouard wants the course of his novel to run "selon sa pente, tantôt rapide et tantôt lente, en des lacis que je me refuse à prévoir".³

Edouard's image of "lacis" is less brutal than the "enchevêtrement hardi de tous ses sujets divers"⁴ which Martin du Gard wishes to see in Gide's novel and proves that he is more stylistically preoccupied than Martin du Gard. It is obvious nonetheless that temporally, spatially and contextually Edouard wishes his novel to be far more complex than any of his other works. From the still perfection of an artificial pond, which reflects only what is projected on it, Edouard intends to follow the ceaseless but gracious movements of streams of water which gather life's reflection wherever they pass.

Edouard's sudden realisation of what his novel should be, however, cannot be considered in isolation. Like Gide, Edouard has "tout un glorieux passé"⁵ which renders his attitude towards complexity in the novel ambiguous to say the least.

Among Edouard's first reflections on the novel⁶ one sees that he wishes

1. See: Chapter 4, pp.233-234. 2. Romans, F.M., p.1200.
3. Ibid, p.1200 4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 22nd July 1920, p.155.
5. Ibid, 16th December 1921, p.177, and See: above, Chapter 4, p.241.
6. Romans, F.M., p.990.

to write what he calls a pure novel which would contain only those elements specific to the novel. Thus, dialogues and any unexpected, externally caused events are to be rejected since they are prerogatives of the gramophone and the cinema respectively. Nor does Edouard feel that there is any place for description in his novel and he adds; "Le romancier, d'ordinaire, ne fait point suffisamment crédit à l'imagination du lecteur."¹ Gide himself only takes into account the last of Edouard's intentions and for the same reason. Gide's reader must be autonomous. Edouard differs from Gide at this point because he has not yet realised that his novel must be so too. Neither life nor chance, neither his characters nor their ideas are to be allowed direct expression in his novel. Such limitation is extremely dangerous in the light of Martin du Gard's views on the novel. Unless Edouard achieves a miracle of suggestiveness which will give his work reality in the reader's mind, his novel may well fall into the trap of being a purely subjective "coin de vie"² or of having no life at all.³ In either case, the impact of his work would be considerably reduced.

Later, when writing of the psychology of the novelist's characters, Edouard seems to realise that his belief in purity of presentation is not applicable to peoples' personalities. Indeed, he criticises those authors who develop individual characters without taking into account "les compressions d'alentour" or the fact that, "La forêt [^] façonne l'arbre"⁴. This criticism is similar to that made by Gide against Martin du Gard's presentation of events:

...se promenant...tout le long des années, sa lanterne de romancier éclaire toujours de face les événements qu'il considère, chacun de ceux-ci vient à son tour au premier plan; jamais leurs lignes ne

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1. Romans, F.M., p.990
 2. G./M.G.Corr.1, 22nd July 1920, p.153.
 3. See: Edouard's own criticism of his former works. Romans, F.M., p.1200. See: above, p.466.
 4. Romans, F.M., p.1153.

se mélangent et, pas plus qu'il n'y a d'ombre, il n'y a de perspective. 1

Perhaps more important for Edouard and Gide than inclusion of life's richness in the novel is the relationship between the various elements they have at hand. Gide criticises Martin du Gard for the lack of complexity of his presentation² while Martin du Gard criticised Gide for that of his subject-matter.³ Both Edouard and Gide differ from Martin du Gard in that purely artistic considerations are of more importance to them than to Martin du Gard. On a psychological level, Edouard's concern to establish the multiple causes of the development of a personality is equivalent to the need felt by Gide to establish "une relation continue entre les éléments épars"⁴ which he achieves by "une science subtile des éclairages"⁵.

To this extent, therefore, Gide seems to be criticising Martin du Gard. However, there is also an implicit criticism of Edouard who, while he takes into account the effects of personal, family and social influences, refuses to see the significance of life's events for the development of one's character. The novelist may measure the limits of a personality through the former, but the novelist's characters may best see their limits through their reactions to the latter. Adventures and chance project one out of a sphere of influence and into an area where one comes face to face with oneself. Gide does not forget this and therefore keeps a better balance between art and life than either Edouard or Martin du Gard.

Edouard himself seems at one point to have come to terms with the problem of limitation or inclusion. During a conversation with La Pérouse, Edouard is amused at the old man's vehement indignation against art which paints man's passions and "tout notre univers...en proie à la discordance".⁶

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1. J.F.M., pp29-30. My underlining.
 2. N.A.C., pp.36-37.
 3. G./M.G. Corr.1, 22nd July 1920, pp.153-155.
 4. J.F.M., p.18.
 5. N.A.C., p.37.
 6. Romans, F.M., p.1064.

For La Ferouse art should be "un accord parfait continu".¹ To counter the limitations of such a perfect picture, Edouard suggests that, "tout doit enfin se rendre et se réduire à l'harmonie".² Harmony is seen by La Ferouse, however, as being just as dangerous as disorder since one's sensitivity to evil is blunted and one ends by accepting everything until one's purity is tarnished.³

By viewing harmony as the ultimate aim, Edouard seems to champion an idea dear to Gide who, like Blake, is tormented by "Un besoin constant de conciliation",⁴ by the need to marry Heaven and Hell in order to create new possibilities. Edouard differs from Gide in that he does not see co-existence as the means of achieving harmony.⁵ Rather Edouard wishes to suppress parts of life just as La Ferouse would like to do.

This comes out when Edouard's originally favourable impression of Monsieur Molinier is modified during a conversation with him where Edouard discovers that Molinier has a mistress. Edouard has had no difficulty in accepting Molinier as an honest, middle-class father and husband. Faced with the complementary aspect of Molinier as a lover, Edouard expresses his surprise and embarrassment in the following terms: "...les sentiments qu'il m'exprimait, ni son visage ni sa voix ne me paraissaient faits pour les rendre; on eût dit une contrebasse s'essayant à des effets d'alto..."⁶ Edouard has a similar reaction when Sarah shows him her father's personal notebook. Sarah believes that the constant references in it to her father's struggle against smoking refer, in fact, to a more serious failing. Edouard, who believes that the prevailing atmosphere in the Vedels' school is the imposition of hypocrisy in others, is forced

1. Romans, F.M., p.1064.

2. Ibid, p.1064.

3. Ibid, p.1064.

4. J.1, Feuillets, p.1293.

5. J.1, Feuillets, p.664: "Le souhait du romancier n'est pas de voir le lion manger de l'herbe. Il reconnaît qu'un même Dieu a créé le loup et l'agneau, puis a souri 'voyant que son oeuvre était bonne'."

6. Romans, F.M., p.1117.

into considering the possibility that Sarah's father is a hypocrite himself. This idea shocks Edouard deeply.¹

Thus, for Edouard, all elements must go together to fit with his own pre-conceived ideas. This explains why Edouard controls not only the characters of his novel² but also the events in it³ at the expense of complexity. In so doing, Edouard will deprive his novel of the "clairs-obscur"⁴ of Dostoïevsky, of his own and life's ambiguity. Martin du Gard warned Gide against the separation of the components of his novel and against concentration on subjective elements. In fact, the literary techniques used by Gide as well as the two events incorporated into the novel⁵ ensure its cohesion. Edouard, however, goes entirely against Martin du Gard's advice since not only does he wish to separate the different aspects of people's personalities but also he goes as far as to reject any of life's occurrences disturbing to his own vision of the world.

A strong contrast to Edouard's attitude is to be found in that of Bernard, the realist. Of all the characters of the Faux-monnayeurs, Bernard is the furthest from having a pre-conceived notion of life. His reactions are provoked by contact with life itself and the only certainty Bernard has is that his doubt exists.⁶ In an attempt to capture life's complexity, Bernard keeps a notebook in which he writes only those opinions to which he has found a contrary point of view.

On an artistic level, Bernard would like to write a book about a person who, after listening to everyone and realising that no-one agrees, would listen only to himself and thus become immensely strong. At first sight, this might seem to be a Gidian procedure. However, such an

1. Romans, F.M., p. 1021: "'Etait-ce - comprendre...'"

2. Ibid, p.1085.

3. Ibid, p. 1246.

4. G./M.C. Corr.1, 16th December 1921, p.178.

5. Boris' death and the activities of the group of counterfeiters.

6. Romans, F.M., p.1088.

analysis is by far too simplistic. Bernard proceeds by aural observation, Gide by experiencing, by adopting temporarily for his own, others' points of view. Also, even in the last years of his life, Gide was reproached with being too conciliating rather than too strong.¹ Gide himself admits that this is the case except for artistic, religious and sexual questions. Nonetheless, it is certainly true that the firmness of Gide's attitude towards art and religion, at least, has been brought about by openness to and comparison with minds which do not resemble his own.

It seems to me that the parallels to be drawn between Bernard and Gide are of lesser importance than those to be drawn between Bernard and Martin du Gard. Although Martin du Gard has certain strong convictions,² as an artist he resembles Bernard in that, "devant le papier, le doute est le maître".³ Thus, even when, as in Jean Barois, Martin du Gard allows himself to express his own ideas, "un puissant désir de rester juste...n'a cessé de ...faire belle part à l'adversaire".⁴

Although Martin du Gard's concern is, in this way, to achieve objectivity, a short comment in the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs shows that Gide is against such a procedure: "Il n'est pas bon d'opposer un personnage à un autre, ou de faire des pendants..."⁵ Gide, it is true attributes these methods to the Romantics but the first, at least, seems equally applicable to Martin du Gard.

Gide's criticism of Edouard who, despite his rather hazy realisation of life's contradictions, falls into the trap of limitation, shows that he himself wishes to live up to Martin du Gard's wishes for a novel which would reflect "cette complexité contradictoire de la vie".⁶ Nonetheless, Gide does not accept the methods peculiar to Bernard or Martin du Gard.

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 7, 29th September 1946, pp.40-41.

2. Against religion, G./M.G. Corr.1, 28th January 1926, p.284.

3. Ibid, 7th March 1931, p.456. 4. Ibid, p.456.

5. J.F.M., p.13.

6. G./M.G. Corr.,1, 28th May 1919, p.142.

The basis of Gide's refusal lies in the problem of "éclairages."¹ Gide achieves the objective presentation of his characters by perspective rather than by opposition.

Geneviève Idt believes that Gide falls into the trap of opposing one character to another, since "aucun type n'apparaît sans un double ou un triple qui s'oppose à lui au moins sur un détail...à l'intérieur de chaque groupe on joue sur les ressemblances et les différences."²

Although this is certainly the case, Gide is showing negative or additional clichés of one representative character, such as the author in *Edouard* and *Passavant*, thereby creating multiple perspectives rather than simply opposing one point of view to another or making a clear distinction between "good" and "bad". Basically, therefore, the contradictions, which allow Gide's reader to form an objective opinion of his fictional characters, are inherent to the characters themselves. Gide does not need nor want to oppose one person to another since his literary lamp passes from past to present to future³ in order to light up now one now another aspect of each character and each event.

v. The Role of the Author's Intellect.

The place occupied by the author's intellect in his works of art was the source of much of Martin du Gard's irritation against Gide in their correspondence.⁴ In the *Faux-Monnayeurs*, Gide considers the problems raised by one's intelligence both on an artistic and existential plane.

A conversation between *Edouard* and *Sophoniska* brings up this question.

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1. N.A.G., p.37.
 2. Idt, op. cit., p.52.
 3. Gide does not always respect this order. For this reason, the temporal presentation of the *Faux-Monnayeurs* is one of the most important factors in joining the various elements of the work to produce "l'enchevêtrement hardi" extolled by Martin du Gard.
 4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 7th October 1920, p.157; 17th July 1921, p.168.

Sophoniska, the psychologist, reproaches the majority of novelists for the psychological shallowness of their characters, adding that, "tout ce qui n'est créé que par la seule intelligence est faux".¹ For this reason, Sophroniska believes that poets come closer to the truth. This point of view is to be taken in connection with her comments on the unconscious mind.² These seem to suggest that Sophroniska thinks that a state of inspiration, of dream-like abandonment of one's reason is the best means of grasping profound truths.

Oddly, Edouard does not immediately give his point of view on this, since he interprets Sophroniska's remarks as referring to the Naturalists. However, both here and later, when Edouard discusses lyricism,³ one sees that Edouard considers that the controlling factor in one's approach to truth should be "certaines raisons d'art, certaines raisons supérieures".⁴ Thus, Edouard is a conscious artist who submits reality and feeling to artistic demands.

In itself, this is an acceptable position but is not free from certain risks. Gide points briefly but significantly to one of them when he writes of Gheridanisol's decision to allow Boris to join the Confrérie des Hommes forts;

...comme il advient souvent dans une entreprise, Gheridanisol songea beaucoup moins à la chose même qu'aux moyens de la faire réussir; ceci n'a l'air de rien, mais peut expliquer bien des crimes. 5

Gheridanisol is equivalent to the artist who allows "artifice" to conquer "art",⁶ who has forgotten that the modus operandi is but one link in an indissoluble chain of events and that artistic, intellectual and moral preoccupations must all be bound together to form a whole. Gheridanisol uses his intellect at the expense of all feeling to make Boris commit

1. Romans, F.M., p.1075.

2. Ibid, p.1075.

3. Ibid, p.1185: "Je consens - d'abord."

4. Romans, F.M., p.1076.

5. Ibid, p.1238.

6. N.A.C., p.37.

a tragic act. Gide thus raises the question of the author's responsibility. The author, according to Bernard, is he who cannot act because he writes whereas, according to Olivier, "Les oeuvres d'art sont des actes qui durent."¹ Works of art last because of the reactions they produce in their readers. Gide recognises the author's responsibility for the consequences of his influence,² but is always careful to show the reader the dangers of certain attitudes towards life. As François Mauriac remarks on Lafcadio;

...tout poison guérit ou tue selon la dose,
et selon le tempérament qui le recoit...
La mission de Gide est de jeter des torches
dans nos abîmes, de collaborer à notre examen
de conscience. 3

Horis, it is true, is ready for death, but Gheridanisol, unlike Gide offers no warning, deprives his influence of any humanity and gives strength to Gide's words on Dostoevsky behind which there is an artistic message.

L'enfer, d'après Dostoïevski, c'est...la région intellectuelle...L'intelligence, pour lui, c'est précisément ce qui s'individualise, ce qui s'oppose au royaume de Dieu, à la vie éternelle, à cette béatitude en dehors du temps, qui ne s'obtient que par le renoncement de l'individu, pour plonger dans le sentiment d'une solidarité indistincte. 4

Edouard, the novelist, is conscious of the ill effects of too intellectual an approach to his art. He has been made aware of this by his friend, X, who may be compared to Martin du Gard since Edouard writes of him, "Son conseil m'est toujours salutaire; car il se place à un point de vue différent du mien."⁵ X has confided his fears to Edouard that the latter is replacing the true subject of his work by "l'ombre de ce sujet

1. Romans, F.M., p.1150.

2. Prétextes, 1963, pp. 20-21. Quoted by Claude Martin, M.A.G., p.445.

3. "Episodes des Caves du Vatican choisis par l'auteur", Stock 1924. Quoted in Romans, p.1575.

4. My underlining. See: J.l., 1893, p.42: "Originalité - supérieurement"; J.l, Feuillets, p.49: "Je sais - perdra!"; J.l, Lit. et Mor, p.94: "L'oeuvre d'art est un équilibre hors du temps..."

5. Romans, F.M., p.1003.

dans [s]on cerveau",¹ thereby allowing "le factice" to predominate.² Edouard is convinced that the cause of this is that the basis of his work is no longer his own personal and emotional experience as in the past. He blames the growing abstractness and artificiality of his work upon the fact that, "entre ce que je pense et ce que je sens, le lien est rompu".³

Edouard is in a situation comparable to that of Gide as seen through Martin du Gard's eyes and his reaction to the problem is closely connected to Martin du Gard's advice to Gide. A complete re-reading of Gide's works has convinced Martin du Gard that Gide is at his best in the Nourritures terrestres or when, as Martin du Gard writes:

^
Votre sensibilité s'exprime sans contrôle sévère,
votre émotion ne se laisse pas endiguer, elle
rayonne alors et soulève tous les coeurs autour
d'elle. 4

He criticises Gide, therefore, for the consciousness with which he controls the movement of his work, for the artificiality of such a procedure and reminds Gide that the technique of a great author should remain invisible.⁵ Gide, in other words, is watching himself write, in Martin du Gard's opinion.

In fact, as is shown in an article written by Gide on Maurice Léon's Le Livre du Petit Gendelette,⁶ Martin du Gard is questioning Gide's sincerity as a writer. The fundamental question raised by Gide in his article is that of "l'impossible co-existence de l'intelligence et de la sincérité"⁷, since: "Être intelligent, être conscient, c'est ne pas coïncider avec soi-même."⁸

1. Romans, F.M., p.1003.

3. Romans, F.M., p.1003.

2. Gide came to believe that he had been guilty of this in Les Faux-Monnayeurs. See: above, Chapter 4 p.252, Note 1.

4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 17th July 1921, p.168.

5. Ibid, pp.167-168.

6. La Revue Blanche, 15th February 1900. Quoted by Claude Martin, MAG, 452. Maurice Léon at the age of just over twenty committed suicide. Gide deals with the motivation of this act in his article.

7. MAG, p.452.

8. Ibid, p.452.

Edouard is prey to this very dilemma but fails to find the solution which it is in his power to find according to his own judgement of himself:

Mon coeur ne bat que par sympathie; je ne vis que par autrui; par procuration, pourrais-je dire, par épousaille, et ne me sens jamais vivre plus intensément que quand je m'échappe à moi-même pour devenir n'importe qui. 1

The alternative solution for Edouard would be to observe life closely and absent himself from his work as an objective novelist. Edouard, however, shuts his eyes to reality just as Gide, on his own admission, did until the age of forty.² Moreover, his claims to being able to inhabit identities other than his own is unfounded. Thus, Edouard is incapable of penetrating the true reasons for Laura's apparent reserve.³ Also, in spite of his insistence that:

La singulière faculté de dépersonnalisation qui me permet d'éprouver comme mienne l'émotion d'autrui, me forçait presque d'épouser les sensations d'Olivier...4

Edouard does not grasp the Catholic Olivier's true reactions to the austerity of a Protestant Church.

Both Edouard and Gide use their experience as the basis of their novels. Edouard, however, retires more and more into the recesses of his own mind and his "habiletés"⁵ become an end in themselves.⁶ Gide, not without some difficulty, manages to give his characters autonomy after entering into their feelings thereby guaranteeing the strict necessity of the ideas they express: "Cet effort de projeter au-dehors une création intérieure, d'objectiver le sujet (avant d'avoir assujettir l'objet) est proprement exténuant."⁷

1. Romans, F.M., p.987.

2. N.A.G., p.29.

3. Romans, F.M., p.1078.

4. Ibid, p.1009.

6. See: above, p. 465-466.

7. J.F.M., pp.24-25.

5. G./M.G. Corr.1, 17th July, p.167.

This passage from the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs shows that Gide intends to submit everything to the true subject of his work, - namely, the characters and that, as he protests to Martin du Gard, "je ne voudrais pas en avoir d'autre ('habileté') que celle qui est exigée par le sujet [^]meme".¹

Edouard's mistake evokes comment from Bernard who is against Edouard's methods because, "Un bon roman s'écrit plus naïvement que cela. Et d'abord, il faut croire à ce que l'on raconte,...et raconter tout simplement."² Through Bernard's words, one glimpses Martin du Gard's advice to Gide³ not only to simplify his way of writing but also to give free rein to his sensitivity and to curb his intellectual enjoyment.

Bernard is quite right in his supposition that Edouard, on his own, will never write his book. However, his view that Edouard's ability to write Les Faux-Monnayeurs depends upon collaboration with himself is erroneous. By offering Edouard facts on which to write, Bernard would admittedly keep closer to life but would, at the same time, deprive Edouard of any inner necessity and reduce him to a completely objective writer at best. On the other hand, Edouard is wrong to reject Bernard since he, himself, is quite unable to accept the facts which come directly to his knowledge. Bernard has a mistaken conception of the role he may play for Edouard while Edouard refuses to see that Bernard may help him at all. This misunderstanding is, to a large part, due to the needs of Gide's work itself: Olivier and not Bernard should be with Edouard. Thus, Bernard must never become too intimate with Edouard. Nonetheless, a useful contrast is to be made between Edouard's relations with Bernard and Martin du Gard's with Gide. The latter are successful for two

1. G./M.G. Corr.1, 19th July 1921, p.169.
2. Romans, F.M., p.1095.
3. See: above, p.475-476.

reasons. Firstly, Martin du Gard's advice is for rather than to Gide and his essential concern is Gide's approach to art although, like Bernard, in relation to Edouard, he would prefer to see less subjectivity in the contents of Gide's work. Secondly, Gide himself is ever open to criticism, to what differs from him most in fact as well as in theory,¹ and consequently never tries to reduce the importance of Martin du Gard's position or help to him.

vi. Amusement.

Martin du Gard's criticism of the preponderant place of Gide's intellect in his works opens the way to the closely connected reproach that Gide thinks too much of amusing himself when writing.² This question is brought up briefly in the Faux-Monnayeurs.

Bernard, having shaken off family bonds and read Edouard's Journal, confronts life with a freshness and amusement which is literary at heart and which closely resembles Gide's attitude towards his initial work on the Faux-Monnayeurs:

Pour m'introduire dans une intrigue aussi corcée,
je suis décidément un peu jeune. Mais parbleu!
c'est ce qui m'aidera...Le gênant, c'est que cette
histoire va devoir servir également Edouard; la même
et ne me couper point. Bah! nous trouverons bien.
Comptons sur l'inspiration du moment...³

So Gide, according to Martin du Gard, refuses to foresee the consequences of what he writes, preferring to work "d'impulsion, selon le caprice de l'heure"⁴. Another point of similarity between Bernard and Gide lies in the fact that Gide too, in order to create his story must follow the lines taken by Edouard while taking care to differentiate himself and his work

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1. Edouard, on the other hand, accepts X's advice but not Bernard's example.
 2. This judgement is shared by Jacques Copeau, N.A.G., p.30: "'André manque d'un don essentiel aux vrais romanciers: il est incapable de s'ennuyer'."
 3. Romans, F.M., p.1033.
 4. N.A.G., p.68.

from Edouard's personality and artistic ventures.

Both Bernard and Gide are forced to reconsider their situation. As Bernard's words show, his decision to go to see Laura is motivated by literary curiosity. Bernard sees life through the eyes of a book-lover but, faced with Laura's undeniable pain when he reminds her of her situation, Bernard "comprendait soudain qu'il s'agissait ici de vie réelle... et tout ce qu'il avait éprouvé jusqu'alors ne lui parut plus que parade et que jeu" ¹ This realisation at once separates Bernard from Edouard while, on a superficial level, he imitates Edouard's subsequent actions. Both Edouard and Bernard decide to help Laura, but it is the latter who truly helps her since he commits himself entirely, if temporarily, to her. By this decision, Bernard chooses to devote himself to life and resolves the problem of intelligence and sincerity by action and devotion.²

Gide, who is only too ready to drift, as was Bernard, is brought up short by Martin du Gard's comments on his attempts to defend his literary tactics: "En fait, (sa façon...de composer) le ravit parce qu'elle l'amuse. Mais j'ai beau jeu: le résultat laisse à désirer. Il ne s'en était pas avisé, et doit en convenir."³ Moreover, Martin du Gard considers that the best part of Gide's work is what he has written of Edouard's Journal.⁴ In light of Martin du Gard's later comments on Edouard's Journal,⁵ Gide is thus wavering between subjectivity and a purely intellectual approach which is endangering the quality of his work. Through contact with Martin du Gard, Gide is constantly lead to question not only the quality but also the necessity of what he writes. Gide commits himself, not to life as does Bernard, but to the infusion of life into his characters and to the establishment of the necessary connection between them. Martin du Gard

1. Romans, F.M., p.1034.

2. See: above, p.475; Romans, F.M., p.1150: "Il n'y a pas - plus que moi."

3. N.A.G., p.69.

4. Ibid, p.68.

5. G./M.G. Corr.1, 10th October 1925, p.276.

helps Gide to think incessantly of the justification of his work just as Laura shows Bernard the way to justifying his life. Neither Gide nor Bernard accept Olivier's superficial interpretation of La Fontaine's verse¹ as "le portrait de l'artiste, de celui qui consent à ne prendre du monde que l'extérieur, que la surface, que la fleur."² Gide's and Bernard's admiration goes to those who have "un esprit d'examen, de logique, d'amour et de pénétration patiente."³

Edouard also experiences the temptation to succumb to the amusement he takes in unexpected events to the point of forgetting the true aim in sight.⁴ In this, he is similar to Gide who expressed his anxiety to Martin du Gard that his involvement in life might have been harmful to his work.⁵

The end sought by Edouard is artistic as the following passage on Bernard shows:

Ma valise est retrouvée; ou du moins celui qui me l'a prise. Qu'il soit l'ami le plus intime d'Olivier, voilà qui tisse entre nous un réseau, dont il me faut qu'a moi de resserrer les mailles.⁶

The author's experience of life is, as Martin du Gard remarks,⁷ extremely important as the source of his art, but only after it has evolved enough in the author's mind to become artistic material. Although Edouard's words may be taken literally, I feel that they also refer to the author's task which consists in joining life's elements into the composite whole of the novel. Should Edouard derive too much pleasure from incidents in themselves or from his control of them in life, then he will have failed in his mission as a novelist.

Gide himself, to Martin du Gard's mind, was in danger of committing

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1. Romans, P.M., p.1142: "Papillon du Parnasse, et semblable aux abeilles// A qui le bon Platon compare nos merveilles,//Je suis chose légère et vole à tout sujet,//Je vais de fleur en fleur et d'objet en objet."
 2. Ibid, p.1142.
 3. Ibid, p.1144, My underlining.
 4. Ibid, p.1058.
 5. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 17th July 1920, pp. 151-152, and see: above, p. 233.
 6. Romans, P.M., p.1058. My underlining.
 7. G./M.G. Corr., 1, 22nd July 1920, p.153, and see: above, p. 233.

the first of these literary sins, due to his sudden invention of new characters for quite insufficient reasons, "pour corser la scène, parfois simplement pour placer une réplique savoureuse"¹.

Through Bernard's and Edouard's reactions towards their own enjoyment of the surprises life reserves for them, one sees Gide's anxiety to avoid this literary pitfall and to justify his novel in his own and Martin du Gard's eyes.

vii. Precipitation.

Martin du Gard's criticisms were also levelled against Gide's tendency to end his works abruptly. Martin du Gard laid this down to the fact that the subject of each of Gide's works prior to the Paux-Monnayeurs represented only a part of what Gide had to say with the consequence that Gide's enthusiasm inevitably waned.²

This aspect of Gide's writing is considered briefly and ironically in the Paux-Monnayeurs. Passavant, conscious that Olivier has not enjoyed his book, La Barre fixe,³ hastens to denigrate it by explaining that he wrote it too quickly as he was thinking all the time of his next book. Passavant exclaims: "Ah! celui-là, par exemple, j'y tiens. J'y tiens beaucoup. Vous verrez..."⁴ One is reminded of Gide's irritation with La Porte étroite⁵ caused by the fact that his state of mind while writing it was more in tune with the Caves du Vatican or again of Gide's promises to Martin du Gard that his disappointment in L'École des Femmes will be amply compensated for by Oedipe.

On a different but equally disastrous level, Edouard is prone to too much haste. Thus, his return from Saas-Fé to Paris a week early

1. N.A.G., p.68.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 1, 22nd July 1920, p.154.

3. This very title seems to mock Passavant's claim that his next book will be entirely different.

4. Romans, F.M., p.1044.

5. G./Gheon Corr.2, 28th July 1905, p.605; September 1908, p.700; 20th April 1909, pp. 717-718.

avokes his own comment: "Ma précipitation toujours me fera devancer l'appel. Curiosité plutôt que zèle; désir d'anticipation. Je n'ai jamais su composer avec ma soif."¹ Edouard's impatience is therefore due to his desire to provoke action. The events which are precipitated by Edouard's return to Paris bring about the tragic, "conventional" ending of Gide's novel. However, Edouard's desire to hurry on events shows that unlike Gide, he has no sense of duty towards his characters.² Nor does he accept his part in Boris' death since he refuses to write of it in his novel. Edouard fails to heed his own point of view that; "...je considère que la vie ne nous propose jamais rien qui, tout autant qu'un aboutissement, ne puisse être considéré comme un nouveau point de départ."³

Edouard's words are contrasted to those of his friend, X, who believes, as does Martin du Gard,⁴ that the novelist should know how his work is going to end and even before beginning it. The ending of Gide's novel corresponds to Edouard's designs. Gide refuses Martin du Gard's advice to prolong his novel indefinitely but chooses an abrupt ending since his novel must give an impression of "l'inépuisable...par son élargissement et par une sorte d'évasion de son contour. Il ne doit pas se boucler, mais s'éparpiller, se défaire..."⁵

Nonetheless, Martin du Gard's point of view preoccupies Gide who, in his own way, is just as concerned as his friend that the ending of his book should not bring about the simultaneous ending of its living possibilities. Twice, after Gide refuses Martin du Gard's advice, he comes back to the subject of the end of his novel. Firstly, Gide justifies

1. Romans, F.M., p.1112.

2. Ibid., p.1111.

3. Ibid., pp. 1200-1201. My underlining.

4. G./M.G. Corr.1, 30th January 1931, p.458.

5. J.F.M., 8th March 1925, p.83. It is interesting to note that, while Gide wishes the elements of his work to scatter, Martin du Gard, by means of Antoine Thibault's Journal, causes his work, Les Thibault, to "become undone" by reducing its elements to nothingness at the moment of Antoine's death. At the same time, the ending of Martin du Gard's work is also "un nouveau point de départ" since Antoine's Journal was written for his nephew, with the aim of influencing a new life.

the fact that he does not prepare us for Boris' death since, "On verse dans le morne, par excès de préparation,"¹ This seems to condone Martin du Gard and Jacques Copeau in their belief that, when Gide becomes bored with his creation, he is incapable of substituting hard work for enthusiasm.² Thereafter, Gide dismisses his anxiety over the lack of proportion of the two parts of his novel³ by claiming that hasty endings please him. He compares his books to the art of the sonnet where quatrains give way to triplets. Moreover, Gide argues, it is an insult to the reader to indulge in lengthy explanations when, "L'imagination jaillit d'autant plus haut que l'extrémité du conduit se fait plus étroite, etc..."⁴ Gide's "etc..." is not misplaced since this very argument is later brought up and developed in his correspondence with Martin du Gard.⁵

On a more general level, the "etc." of the artistic problems with which I have dealt in the Faux-Monnayeurs resides in Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard which is both a preface and an appendix to Gide's book.

Prompted by his contact with Martin du Gard's thought, Gide considers both his own and Martin du Gard's approaches to art as an integral part of the artistic weave of his novel. Although Gide's refusal of certain aspects of Martin du Gard's advice appears clearly, far more importance is attached to Martin du Gard's wishes insofar as they coincide with those of Gide himself.⁶ As Martin du Gard himself realises,⁷ this does not mean that he has a purely nominal part to play for Gide. The solidity of Martin du Gard's ideas which have but one aim in mind - the betterment of Gide's art - forces Gide into constant reflection on his art and into

1. J.F.M. p.85, My underlinings.

2. See: N.A.G., p.30.

3. Gide adopts the solution of three parts foreseen in the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, p.86. However, his conclusions on the ending of his novel hold good in spite of this change.

4. Ibid, p.86.

5. See: above, Chapter 4, p.288.

6. J. Penard, "Aspects d'une amitié: Roger Martin du Gard et André Gide", Revue des Sciences Humaines, January-March 1959, p.82: "Gide avoue n'avoir écouté les conseils de Martin du Gard que lorsqu'il les sentait aller dans son propre sens."

7. N.A.G., p.69.

a more conscious knowledge of what he himself expects from the Faux-Monnayeurs.

As I hope to have shown, Edouard's portrayal is not nearly as subjective as Martin du Gard thought.¹ Gide puts on Edouard's shoulders the mistakes which Martin du Gard and he himself wish to be avoided in the Faux-Monnayeurs. In this way, Gide's own novel gains in power to such an extent that Martin du Gard's admiration even goes to procedures which seemed most suspect to him in Gide's art.² Martin du Gard has thus served Gide in the way he wished to; by his control, Gide's individual qualities have been strengthened for the better. Alone, Gide's qualities might have become faults or impediments to his novel. Gide himself recognises this fact when he writes of Martin du Gard:

...il fut le seul que je consultai, et dont j'appelai les conseils: je ne notai que ceux contre lesquels je regimbai, mais c'est que je suivis les autres - à commencer par celui de réunir en un seul faisceau les diverses intrigues des Faux-Monnayeurs qui, sans lui, eussent peut-être forme autant de 'recits' séparés. Et c'est pourquoi je lui dédiai le volume. ³

The Faux-Monnayeurs helps both Gide and Martin du Gard towards a better grasp of what constitutes Gide's artistic genius and is responsible not only for Martin du Gard's modifying his views but also for the intensification of literary dialogue in the correspondence. Henceforth, Martin du Gard will spur Gide on to achieve objectivity by his own means, "une série de subjectivités",⁴ but will maintain his insistence on the need to motivate his artistic "habiletés".⁵ Moreover, certain questions considered or foreseen in the Faux-Monnayeurs by Gide appear in the correspondence where Gide expresses himself with some firmness.

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1. G./M.G. Corr.1, 16th December 1921, p.178; 10th October 1925, p.276.
 2. The abrupt ending and the author's intermention, G./M.G. Corr. 1, 1st March 1923; G./M.G. Corr. 1, 8th March 1925, p.258; G./M.G. Corr.1, 7th June 1925, p.267; G./M.G. Corr.1, 16th October 1925, p.274.
 3. J.l, 17th April 1928, p.879. Quoted in G./M.G. Corr.1, p.686.
 4. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, p.135.
 5. G./M.G. Corr.1, 17th July 1921, p.167.

Gide's dismissal of himself as a realist novelist while writing the Faux-Monnayeurs¹ has repercussions on the exchange of letters in 1928 concerning Martin du Gard's art.² Gide's decision to work by a series of subjective elements is motivated by the fact that:

Procéder autrement, ce serait partir, muni de deux ou trois idées simples et grosses, pour une sorte de rapide excursion. Ce serait passer, dans la plupart des cas, à côté du particulier, de l'individuel, de l'irrégulier - c'est-à-dire, somme toute, du plus intéressant.³

The question of the "particulier" which held such an important place in Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard is thus clearly formulated in the Faux-Monnayeurs.

The link between Gide's work and his correspondence with Martin du Gard is indissoluble. Gide's habit of working before Martin du Gard's photograph is symbolic of his constant attention to Martin du Gard's high ideal for his art. Martin du Gard is present in Gide's mind as he writes and, once Gide has finished a work, he depends to a large extent on the fullness and perspicacity of Martin du Gard's comments in order to form his own judgement of his work.

because Martin du Gard is capable of recognising that part of himself which influences his advice to Gide⁴ and because, in consequence, he is ready to adjust his opinions the better to suit Gide's artistic needs, his dialogue with Gide never falters and is of constant benefit to both men. Gide's need for Martin du Gard is permanent and not temporary as was the case with Claudel and James who wished to impose upon Gide or

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, 21st October 1922, p. 158.

2. See: above, Chapter 4, pp. 269-271.

3. Introductory quote to Chapter 1, Part three of the Faux-Monnayeurs taken from Lucien Febvre's La Terre et l'Evolution humaine, Romans, F.M., p. 1112. My underlinings. Gide's interest in the "particulier" is also shown by the fact that Edouard, who fails as a novelist, prefers to ignore any details which surprise him. See: above, pp. 469-470.

4. See: Intro., G./M.G. Corr. 1, p. 36, where Martin du Gard comments on his letter of the 22nd July 1920: "'Amusant...cet effort ingénu pour convaincre Gide d'écrire Les Thibault'."

Valéry who so rarely wrote in terms of Gide. Of the four men, Martin du Gard alone accorded all his interest to all aspects of Gide's character and, hence, to the totality of Gide's work and to his complete figure as an artist.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION.

Although this thesis is far from being an exhaustive study, it is to be hoped that it has achieved its purpose: to have given adequate proof of the fact that dialogue in the correspondences is an integral part of Gide's personal and artistic development, which contributes to a deeper understanding of Gide's works.

It has been seen that the links uniting Gide's correspondences to his literature are twofold. Firstly, Gide's changing attitude to dialogue, which I traced in my Introduction, is to be discerned in his correspondences and, thereafter, in his works. Secondly, dialogue in the correspondences is of primordial importance in helping Gide to clarify and develop his concept of art, which is the very foundation of all his literary writing.

Since these are the two unifying factors of this thesis, it is not out of place, at this point, to summarize what has been learnt both of the progress and the sources of dialogue in the correspondences. These two points will be considered separately. Such a division is, to some extent, artificial, since form and content are necessarily interdependent. I have, nonetheless separated the two primarily to achieve greater clarity but also to make for a more objective appraisal of the knowledge of Gide the man and the artist, which is to be gained from his correspondences.

In reviewing the repercussions of the changing nature of Gide's attitude to dialogue upon the presentation of ideas in his works, I shall respect the order established by the previous chapters of this thesis: Gide's correspondences with Valéry, Jammes and Claudel will be followed by that with Martin du Gard.

Gide's decision to adopt a literary career was due to his conviction that only in art could he resolve the problem of his contradictions and bring an end to his feelings of isolation in a world which did not always "reflect" him faithfully.¹

The first pages of Gide's published Journal consecrate his decision to become an artist dedicated to the discovery of his true self.² Such an intent is clearly the outcome of Gide's youthful, religious examination of his conscience. Nonetheless, as Daniel Moutote remarks, between a religious and an artistic vision of oneself, there exists a profound difference:

Le mysticisme religieux peut s'accomplir dans la solitude: une vocation littéraire ne le peut pas, elle implique la communion avec les hommes et tout un matériel de communication à découvrir. 3

Gide's correspondence with Valéry constitutes one of Gide's first steps towards making contact with others in order to establish his "literary vocation." Prompted both by the need to find himself and by his desire to "make" literary friendship, Gide seeks communion with his friend. Unwilling to accept that the true value of his relationship with Valéry lies in "le problème de la différence".⁴ Gide determinedly but distortedly echoes his correspondent, while becoming more and more aware that his and Valéry's ways must remain parallel.

The positive knowledge that Gide gains of himself and of his contact with others, through correspondence with Valéry, is transposed into the Traité du Narcisse. Because of the threat Valéry presents to Gide's artistic vocation, Gide realises that there can be no communion between them and that the assumption of his literary role must cause him, in the end, to react against Valéry.

1. See: above, Introduction, p.16.

2. See: Moutote, op. cit., pp.6-7.

3. Ibid, p.6.

4. G./V. Corr., 25th October 1899, p. 359.

For this reason, Valéry's and Gide's own concepts and images are juxtaposed in the Traité. Gide has not abandoned all hope of contact with others but has seen the danger such contact may present to his art. Provisionally, Gide has, as it were, placed himself beside the other, contemplating and taking into consideration a position which can never become part of his own experience. This too, is the role adopted by Narcisse who overcomes the temptation to seize his own image, preferring to observe and portray the essence of the world's phenomena.

I have already expressed my belief that Adam's role in the Traité is much more indicative than that of Narcisse of Gide's future development.¹ Narcisse is a passive observer. Adam, by his revolt, points to Gide's active absorption of others' emotions and thoughts in order to portray them authentically but also as a means to consolidating his bonds with the outside world.

Initially, therefore, Gide's correspondence with James is to be viewed in the same context as that with Henri Ghéon. Gide, the future author of Ménalque and the Nourritures terrestres, wishes to absorb sensations and feelings but also to share them. Others are seen as links with Gide² who would like to join forces with the outside world.

Having affirmed this in the Nourritures terrestres, Gide, "être de dialogue", must explore, in a critical way, what he has accomplished personally and artistically. Gide's dialogue with James and later with Claudel becomes one with himself in the world, as an artist. Uncritical acceptance of oneself and absorption of "matières étrangères" are called into question by Gide through dialogue with his Catholic correspondents, who also provoke him into thought upon the role he has to play on earth.

1. See: above, Chapter 5, pp. 375-376.

2. G./J. Corr., May 1893, p.33: "...sentir est une éducation et nous devons éduquer les autres, leur apprendre et patiemment à nous sentir", and end of 1894, p.37: "...tout mon être vous accompagne, vous ne me surprenez même plus, tant je vous comprends naturel."

The nature of Gide's dialogue with Jammes and Claudel - who represent the voice of dissent in Gide's dialogue with himself - affects the presentation of ideas in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue and Les Caves du Vatican. In the first of these works, Gide uses dialogue form, each character expressing himself in a different way. This means that Gide is no longer, as in the Traité, beside the other but both inside and outside him. Gide has, in other terms, benefited from his ability to absorb others' feelings but also from his criticism of this very capacity, which has allowed him to portray more objectively.

In the Caves, dialogue is also a Gidian device for the presentation of ideas but the behaviour of his characters is equally important in informing his readers of their attitudes. Gide is now outwith the other, intent, certainly, on portraying his ideas authentically but without sympathy.

Through his contact with Jammes and Claudel, Gide primarily attains self-knowledge: Gide has learnt that he must accept himself but only with all his contradictions. Just as important, however, is the knowledge Gide gains of his relations with others. Gide no longer fears "le problème de la différence", but now looks to the other as "une indication sur lui-même" which is often "de sens contraire".¹ Only in this way, may Gide attain self-acceptance without falling into complacency.

When Gide begins to correspond with Martin du Gard, he is ready to assume his entire personality, to achieve "like Rousseau, 'une harmonie qui n'exclue pas sa dissonance'".² Dialogue with Martin du Gard is Gide's insurance against creating harmony by suppressing "dissonance" but is also representative of the final consolidation of Gide's bonds with the outside world.

1. J./V. Corr., 25th October 1899, p.359.

2. André Gide, Dostoïevski, O.C., XI, p.294. Quoted by George Brachfeld, op. cit., p.54.

Gide is ready to accept his differences from others, confident that one's very individuality is the sign of one's authenticity, but, at the same time, expects his closest friends to belong to the same "spiritual family" as himself. This, as Paul Iseler points out, does not imply a lack of "oppositions de pensée",¹ but rather fundamental similarity in the "réactions de l'esprit en face des problèmes que lui posent l'art et la vie, c'est-à-dire la manière dont l'esprit accueille les données, et la manière dont il aborde la solution."² Martin du Gard and Gide, despite their many and fruitful differences, belong to the same "spiritual family" by the honesty with which they unflinchingly investigate their own and others' experience in a constant effort to guarantee their personal and artistic integrity.

Because of this, Martin du Gard is the perfect correspondent for the final stage of Gide's development. He brings "une sorte de pondération salutaire, un contrôle"³ to the self-assurance Gide has gained both individually and as regards his relations with others. Dialogue with Martin du Gard ends only with Gide's death because Martin du Gard is intent on seeing Gide reach self-fulfilment without stagnating. Valéry, James and Claudel were suitable correspondents for a part only of Gide's development. Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard coincides with his maturity.

The presentation of ideas in Les Faux-Monnayeurs is related to Gide's dialogue with Martin du Gard. The variety of points of view expressed in Gide's work, together with their inherent criticism, form a patchwork.⁴ Gide has thus mingled his own and others' opinions in an orderly, critical way. He and Martin du Gard are united in the artistic weave of Les Faux-Monnayeurs. By his work, by his dialogue with Martin du Gard, Gide has found a solution not only to the problem of his own contradictions

1. Paul Iseler, op. cit., p.80.

2. Ibid, p. 80.

3. G./M.G. Corr.2,7th July 1950, p.492.

4. See: above, Chapter 5, p.448 .

but also to that of the dichotomy between his own experience and life at large.¹

The progress Gide has made may well be summed up by considering two pages from Gide's correspondence with Georges Simenon. In a letter written on about the 15th January 1939, Simenon writes to Gide:

Et voilà qu'il faut que je vous avoue tout de suite le plus difficile, le plus dangereux. Je suis conscient! Horriblement conscient! Conscient au point que, depuis mon plus jeune âge, j'ai annoncé, avec les dates, les étapes de ma carrière... Et depuis l'âge de dix-huit ans, je sais que je veux être un jour un romancier complet et je sais que l'oeuvre d'un romancier ne commence pas avant quarante ans au bas mot. Je dis d'un romancier et non d'un poète. 2

In a later letter, Gide expresses the following sentiments:

J'attends encore que vous m'apportiez dans un roman à nombreux personnages la perfection et la maîtrise dont vous avez maintes fois fait preuve dans la construction d'un personnage unique. 3

Simenon's letter might almost have been penned by the young Gide,⁴ who on many occasions came close to foundering because his over-critical watchfulness over himself and the world's phenomena hindered him in his search to encompass and express his own richness and that of life itself. Knowledge, if it is not a stepping-stone to fulfilment is a danger. Gide's advice to Simenon shows that he wishes the latter to progress from self-knowledge to self-fulfilment as he himself has done, - namely, by bringing together all his most "particular qualities" in order to attain, in his art, the living complexity so ardently desired by

1. Ramon Fernandez, op. cit., p.126.

2. Francis Lacassin and Gilbert Sigaux, Simenon, 1973, p. 397.

3. Ibid, letter of the 2nd May 1948, p. 440.

4. Another passage of self-description is also worthy of comparison to Gide: "Timide ou impudent. Et c'est justement pourquoi j'en profite pour écrire cette lettre - de vive voix, ce serait faux. Automatiquement, en face d'un partenaire, je jouerai un rôle et je deviendrai un personnage de roman, je verrai mon partenaire comme tel et sincèrement je mentirais. La plume à la main il est plus facile d'être froid et simple."

Martin du Gard.¹

Of the role of dialogue in Gide's itinerary, Daniel Moutote writes:

La pensée progresse par un dialogue du moi actuel avec le moi passé. L'invention de soi est critique. Le sentiment précis de sa relativité pousse le moi à se vérifier perpétuellement par référence à soi. Toute idée est une révélation et s'agrège au système après vérification, devenue vérité, nécessairement provisoire... Les oeuvres, comme des actes supérieurs, jalonnent ce passage que la réflexion change en itinéraire. 2

While correct as a judgement on the Journal, this passage does not take into account the fact that Gide's frame of reference lay as much in other people as in himself. Dialogue with others is equally important to Gide as a means of self-questioning, the aim of which is to find his authentic being, widened and strengthened. In the correspondences, one sees how Gide develops to this point, "ondoyant...pour que, partout, vous puissiez authentiquement apparaître!"³

Because this is Gide's aim, dialogue in his correspondences lasts only as long as it contributes to his progress, the steps of which are, as Daniel Moutote suggests, marked by Gide's literary creation. Whenever dialogue becomes a threat to the furtherance of Gide's search, he is ruthless in cutting the chords of true communication since, as Paul Iseler writes of Gide's friendship with Louÿs:

...c'est une vérité bien banale, que la création de l'artiste requiert, elle, l'intolérance; qu'elle n'est possible que par un acte de foi décisif, par une adhésion patiente et exclusive de l'esprit à l'Idée - bref, qu'elle absorbe en elle toute force, toute vie... L'amitié de Louÿs et de Gide pouvait subsister aussi longtemps qu'elle n'entravait pas l'expression sincère de l'un d'eux. Du jour où Gide prit conscience d'un écart entre leurs idéals...il fallait qu'il se dégageât. Tant il est vrai qu'un créateur a pour aveugle mission de se dévouer à sa création...4

The creation of his personality by Gide, through inner dialogue and his contact with others, is subjugated to "l'Idée", to literary creation.

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1. G./M.C. Corr. 1, 22nd July 1920, pp. 153-155.
 2. Op. cit., p.85.
 3. G./Mo. Corr., 18th July 1903, p.241.
 4. Iseler, op. cit., p.81.

The correspondences, therefore, in addition to helping Gide towards self-discovery through dialogue, also fulfil the parallel function of helping him to find artistic fulfilment. The progression of Gide's artistic aspirations is, to a large extent dependent upon discussion with his literary correspondents. I hope to make this point clear in the summary I shall now make of the light thrown by the correspondences on Gide's changing attitude towards art.

Gide's correspondence with Paul Valéry was instrumental in the discovery of the foundations of Gide's art. In the period preceding the Traité du Narcisse, while Gide was still uncertain about the form his artistic vocation should take, Valéry raised two questions of great importance. Firstly, he queried the need to write more than one book.¹ Secondly, he mentioned his distaste for literature in which the author expresses himself.² These two questions are considered by Gide in his Traité which leads him to the realisation that the work of art must be the "manifestation" of the personal "philosophy", "morality" and "aesthetics" of its creator.³ Consideration of Valéry's exclusive, impersonal outlook on art has convinced Gide that the basis of his own art must be quite the opposite.

Some years after the publication of the Traité du Narcisse, Valéry adds to the questions he has already raised, by explaining that his only interest lies in "le mot: Fin".⁴ In reply to this categorical statement, Gide makes it quite clear that he has no desire to reach any definitive aim, so attached is he to the notion of relativity, to the exploration of all the possibilities within him.⁵

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1. G./V. Corr., 15th April 1891, pp. 79-80.
 2. Ibid, September 1891, pp. 125-126.
 3. Ibid, 3rd November 1891, p. 134.
 4. Ibid, 10th November 1894, p. 217.
 5. Ibid, 11th November 1894, p. 219.

The same question is later raised with more specific reference to art. Valéry, because he rejects "quoi que ce soit de singulier",¹ wishes literature to become "un problème, une application"² in scientific method. Gide instantly attacks Valéry's viewpoint, horrified at the thought of the lack of originality and sensitivity in the end-products to which such an artistic system would give rise.

Comparison and dialogue with Valéry has helped Gide to know both why and how he will fulfil his artistic calling. Gide now realises that he needs literature in order to express his relativity or, as he puts it, in order to adopt "toutes ses peaux".³

While Valéry is intent on reducing art to a system, which would exclude all individual characteristics, Gide would like to be the post-artist he sees in Goethe.⁴ In other words, Gide does not wish to separate personal inspiration from artistic control.

Gide's route, in contrast to Valéry's "End", will always be essentially artistic but also, profoundly personal and undulating. Valéry's absolutism has helped Gide to realise that this route will entail some compromise, because he wishes to mingle his attributes.

In Gide's correspondences with Jammes and Claudel, one sees Gide attempting, not without some difficulty, to achieve this on a practical level. Before and during the writing of the Nourritures terrestres, the poet in Gide gains the upper hand. He is attracted to Jammes' "sincerity" in painting "sensations"⁵ in verses in which "le naturel étourdit comme un air trop raréfié".⁶ Nonetheless, as Gide's explanatory letter to Albert Mockel shows,⁷ Gide has not lost all sight of the artist

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1. G./V. Corr., 16th October 1899, p. 356.
 2. Ibid, p. 356.
 3. Ibid, p. 219.
 4. G./E. Corr., 11th April 1928, p. 109.
 5. G./J. Corr., May 1893, p. 33.
 6. Ibid, Autumn 1894, p. 214.
 7. G./Mo. Corr., 12th October 1897, p. 214.

in him since the Nourritures is based on a controlling idea as Jammes perfectly well understood.¹

In Gide's evolution up to the Nourritures, one must see less "Une vive critique de l'Idée, germe de fièvre, cause de mort",² than an attempt to fuse his living experience to his philosophy, his poetic lyricism to classical control. In Les Nourritures terrestres, Gide achieves this.

The need to explore the philosophy of his work critically draws Gide gradually away from poetry to follow the artist's principle that: "L'oeuvre d'art, c'est une idée qu'on exagère...La phrase est une excroissance de l'idée."³ Two letters to Jammes prove that he intends the artist in him to take precedence over the poet,⁴ as occurs in L'Immoraliste.

The period of artistic sterility following this work seems to me to be partly due to the fact that Gide has become caught in the vicious circle of his own thought, as he writes to Jammes,⁵ and partly because he can find no source of renewal in deeply felt experience. Between gardening and the peace of married life, Gide is far from conceiving his next work.

No doubt because of the void caused by his artistic problems, Gide considers writing "un livre subit".⁶ Daniel Moutote rightly believes that Gide wishes to go on to more objective expression,⁷ but is dragged back, after L'Immoraliste, "comme malgré lui, à l'expression de ses émotions".⁸ Gide, according to Moutote, is torn between the "will" to write objectively and his innate "sensitivity". This conflict turns Gide's Journal of 1902 into a constant meditation on "sa vertu créatrice",⁹ in Moutote's opinion.

1. G./J. Corr., 19th June 1897, pp. 111-113.

2. Moutote, op. cit., p. 67.

3. J.l, Lit. et Mor., p. 94.

4. G./J. Corr., August 1897, pp. 120-121: "Je nuis - d'amour", and 1st December 1897, pp. 129-130: "Tes lettres - avoir."

5. Ibid, May 1902, pp. 188-189.

6. Ibid, 12th April 1902, p. 185.

7. See: G./Ghson Corr. 1 & 2, May 1903, p. 518, and 7th February 1905, p. 583

8. Moutote, op. cit., p. 138.

9. Ibid, p. 123.

Gide's creative "virtue" consists in conforming his mode of life to the work which he is writing¹ or, in other words, of bringing artistic control to his own experience. As Daniel Moutote points out, all Gide's attempts in his Journal to produce the frame of mind necessary to writing an objective work come to nothing.

Gide is not yet ready for such a venture. His attempts to revive his creative "virtue" by seeking a source of inspiration in his own past also seem, at first sight, destined to fail. Gide's Journal of 1904 and his correspondence with Gheon of 1905 tend to show that Gide is nowhere near achieving the qualities required to write La Porte étroite. Having "danced" on one "foot" in L'Immoraliste, Gide still seems incapable of finding his other "foot" in order to "purge" himself of the last vestige of his youth.

It is through his correspondence with Jammes and later Claudel that Gide manages to return to the paths of artistic "virtue". To Jammes, Gide writes of his nostalgia for his role as poet, painter of La Roque-Baignard and "cet unique amour qui parfuma ma vie".² In Claudel, Gide finds an example of his own belief that "le problème du créateur consiste à faire collaborer les puissances plastiques du génie artistique dans l'accueil d'une expérience profondément sentie".³ This example is, however, as Daniel Moutote points out:

...ambigu, à la fois à suivre et à fuir, des droits de ce qu'il nomme lui-même 'le poète', c'est-à-dire l'être inspiré. Avertissement par rapport au marasme dont il souffre, et qui l'encourage à accorder une part accrue dans l'oeuvre aux données de l'existence. Avertissement par rapport au lyrisme, et qui lui permet, conformément à son propre génie, de réserver un rôle plus important à la discipline qu'impose l' 'artiste' conscient. Mais en tout cas 'ébranlement' de l'être et provocation au travail. 4

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1. G./Gheon Corr. 1, 14th September 1903, p. 544: "J'ai la tête lourde de projets; je me fatigue à les porter et cherche quelle forme de vie cet hiver pourra me mettre en mesure et en demeure de les extraire de moi-même."
 2. G./J. Corr., 10th March 1904, p. 210.
 3. Moutote, op. cit., p. 145.
 4. Ibid, p. 145.

Jammes and Claudel have therefore encouraged Gide to find the equilibrium necessary to artistic production. They have, by their positive example, helped Gide revive the poet in him. By reaction, because, as André Malraux wrote, "Ils n'admiraient pas assez Poussin",¹ Gide is convinced of the need to control his art, leaving nothing to chance or to divine inspiration.

Gide's correspondence with Valéry brought Gide to the realization that, in his art, he wanted a compromise. The parallel existence of Adam and Narcisse in the Traité testifies to this fact. Gide's correspondences with Jammes and Claudel throw light on Gide's struggle to allow expression both to the artist and to the poet, unable for several years to combine the two. Gide's reaction against Jammes and Claudel enables him to do so in Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue which is a critical response to the limitations of the two Catholic writers' artistic positions, a criticism which allows Gide to find a solution to his own artistic problems, by writing with both his "heart" and his "reason."

I tend to disagree with Daniel Moutote who believes that La Porte étroite is Gide's answer to his Catholic correspondents.² The links between Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue and Gide's correspondences with Jammes and Claudel are quite specific. Moreover, this work is clearly a solution to the problems Gide experienced after L'Immoraliste both in giving voice to his own experience and in achieving more objectivity in his art.

By its criticism of art as the exaggeration of an idea³ but also as lyricism which leads to the abandonment of personal effort, Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue does too point to the fact that Gide is now truly

1. M.V.R., Cahiers 4, p. XXI.
2. Moutote, *op. cit.*, p. 167.
3. J.l, Lit. et Mor., p. 94.

ready to mingle art and poetry. Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue also consolidates the role of the artist, of which Gide had earlier dreamt,¹ as an inciter to revolt.

Having firmly established his artistic position, working to achieve it through dialogue, and having paid his debt to the past with La Porte étroite, Gide is free to go on to the objectivity of Les Caves du Vatican, in which he can let the "conscious artist" work without qualms of completely losing sight of the poet in him or of being overcome by his own "sensitivity".

After writing the Caves, Gide, encouraged by Martin du Gard, turns to the artistic problem of expressing the mingling of his attributes and experience. Since Gide intends to write his first novel, the terms in which he writes to his friend are no longer psychological, as with Valéry, nor moral and religious, as with James and Claudel, but literary and existential. Gide's correspondence with Martin du Gard revolves around the questions of objectivity and subjectivity, life and art.

Gide is ready to integrate in one work the painting of his entire personality but also of experience outside his own, while at the same time drawing together all his artistic resources in an attempt to give life to his novel.

By his encouragement but also by reaction, Martin du Gard helps Gide towards solving the problem of including all his personal and artistic characteristics in the Faux-Monnayeurs. Gide's novel strengthens his conviction that he may only reach objectivity through subjectivity, generality through the "particulier." Yet again, Gide's contact with others has convinced him that no quality, artistic or personal, should

1. G./J. Corr., 1st December 1897, p. 130.

be divorced from its contrary.

Although the Faux-Monnayeurs is Gide's artistic summum, Gide does not rest upon the strength of his position, since one more avenue remains open to him. On a moral, artistic level, Gide has proved that one may mingle one's "extremes." Gide now attempts, in social and political action, to do the same, in order to renew his art with an implicit message. Behind all Gide's experience, lies the thought of his art and the years covering Gide's period of commitment to politics are no exception, although Daniel Moutote seems to believe the contrary.¹

Gide, as his correspondence with Martin du Gard shows, was originally optimistic about his ability to mingle individualism and Communism, art and commitment. Only the overwhelming difficulties that he encountered in binding these opposing concepts in an artistic weave, convinced him that, for once, he could not "reconcile the irreconcilable" on a practical level.

Gide's dialogue with Martin du Gard was of primordial importance in helping him to reach this decision but also kept the return road to Gide's art open, at a time when external pressures were drawing Gide farther and farther away from the paths of literature.

Encouraged by Martin du Gard, Gide accomplished the Nouvelles Nourritures and Thésées. These works do have a social resonance but fall back upon Gide's artistic past rather than contributing to artistic progress. They are not so great as Gide's former works, as Martin du Gard points out,² but do show that, in the final stage of his literary development, Gide has not abjured his early wish to be a poet and an artist, classically controlling what he has most deeply experienced.

1. Op. cit., note 3, p. 95.

2. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 6th November 1935, p. 53, and 12th July 1945, p. 326.

Throughout his life, both personally and artistically, Gide worked to achieve "une harmonie qui n'exclue pas sa dissonance" by effort and control. Dialogue in Gide's correspondences must be considered as one of the primary factors in Gide's successfully attaining his goal.

The conclusions that I have reached from studying Gide's correspondences are by no means revolutionary. Nonetheless, I believe that certain elements have been added to our knowledge of Gide. Even in its restricted form, this thesis has undertaken a hitherto neglected aspect of Gide, - namely, that the course and contents of dialogue in Gide's correspondences cannot be divorced from his literary work. The findings of this thesis give further proof of the fact that Gide:

...vivait en art comme on vit en religion et c'est là sa marque authentique, sa vérité première et dernière. La vie ne lui paraît donnée que pour alimenter son oeuvre. Les expériences de sa vie nourrissent son oeuvre. Toute construction esthétique est toujours plus ou moins autobiographique. Mais, chez Gide, l'oeuvre se confond avec la vie ou la vie avec l'oeuvre, et ne peuvent en aucune manière être séparées...Toute démarche est acceptée en vue de sa transposition esthétique...1

In Le Journal de Gide et les problèmes du moi, Daniel Moutote has brilliantly proved the role played by the Journal in the conception of Gide's work, encouraging him fully to assume the frame of mind necessary to his works of art. I have already mentioned² that the correspondences also helped towards this.

On a general level, this is true. However, the correspondences provide a new angle to this question. Quite apart from the incidental facts to be found in the correspondences which either prove that Daniel Moutote's judgement is not entirely correct or show that the Journal gives but one side of Gide's complexity, the roles of the Journal and the

1. A. Girard, "Le Journal dans l'oeuvre de Gide", Entretiens, p. 191.
2. See: above, Chapter One, p. 52.

correspondences are functionally dissimilar.

Daniel Moutote indicates a variety of uses to which Gide put his Journal: now to make his life conform to his literary creation,¹ now to avoid stagnating on a literary level,² now to experiment structurally³ or stylistically⁴ with a view to his next work, now to maintain his creative fervour.⁵

In general, therefore, the Journal, both psychologically and stylistically, incites Gide towards literary creation. The Journal may be likened to a training-circuit which guarantees the authenticity of Gide's works.

The correspondences differ from the Journal in that they show much more clearly the conscious working-out of the theoretical, ideological basis upon which Gide's work reposes. Although the correspondences may replace the Journal, by producing both the frame of mind and the style suited to a work,⁶ they do generally have a less practical role to play.

By dialogue in his correspondences, Gide gains fuller knowledge of the foundation of his art and of his role as an artist. This knowledge is the seed from which his literary work grows, while the Journal helps Gide to find the form his work will take.

In "Le Journal dans l'oeuvre de Gide", Alain Girard comments:

L'oeuvre entière de Gide offre un commentaire psychologique et moral sur la création artistique et pivote autour du Journal. Sans son journal et sans le procédé littéraire du journal, son oeuvre et le développement même de sa pensée seraient inconcevables.⁷

It is my contention that consideration of Gide's work is also "unthinkable" without having taken into account the existing artistic reflection in Gide's correspondences. The latter, moreover, go to show that Gide's

1. Moutote, op. cit., p. 91.

2. Ibid, p. 127.

3. Ibid, p. 190.

4. Ibid, p. 149.

5. Ibid, p. 196.

6. See : above, pp. 496-497.

7. Entretiens, p. 185.

work is less a "commentary" than a dialogue which is the guarantee that the consolidation of Gide's artistic position in his literature is truly authentic.

More so, perhaps, than the inner dialogue of the Journal, Gide's dialogue with others in his correspondences ensures that the position he adopts will be one of inner necessity. Scrutiny of one's own conflicting desires, as Gide himself came to realise, is a less reliable way of achieving self-knowledge and, hence, equilibrium than dialogue with an "adversary."

It is also the case that, because Gide is involved, in his correspondences, in an exchange of points of view, his artistic principles become a living part of his experience and are in no way arbitrary nor divorced from life. The correspondences are therefore as important as the Journal, if not more so, in enabling Gide, both personally and artistically, to achieve authenticity and harmony through dialogue.

In my Introduction,¹ I mentioned that the primary aim of this thesis was to explore the impact upon Gide of literary discussion in the correspondences. For this reason, I have excluded any reference to Gide's influence on others but feel that it would be wrong, in my conclusion, not to make even a brief reference to this aspect of Gidian dialogue which was as important to Gide as it is undoubtedly becoming to Gidian scholars.

The correspondences, to a greater extent than the Journal, show that Gide is an active force upon others and is thus closely bound to the real, if literary, world. Moreover, because of the variety of Gide's literary correspondents and of the literary arguments raised in their letters, the correspondences, as much as his works, establish Gide's place in French literature, proving that, even on such a general level as this,

1. See: above, Introduction, p. 15.

Gide is a being of "dialogue." Not only is Gide linked to the past by his attachment to Symbolist values,¹ to his time by his constant questioning of his moral and artistic values,² but also to the future by his affinities with Surrealism, committed literature or the nouveau roman.³

Gide is truly "un carrefour - un rendez-vous de [s] problèmes"⁴ to be encountered in art and life. Because of this, his search for dialogue, orientated towards his works, continues through them as they touch not only "le jeune homme de l'an 2000"⁵ but the artist intent on exploring the problems of his trade.

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1. See: Henri Clouard, Histoire de la Littérature française du Symbolisme à nos Jours, De 1885 à 1914, Albin Michel, 1947, p. 146: "Le Symbolisme garde pourtant un caractère commun au principe de toutes ses divergences: l'individualisme intégral."
 2. See: Jacques Brigaud, Gide entre Benda et Sartre, Archives Andre Gide no.3, Archives des Lettres Modernes no. 134, 1972, p.3: "Durant la première moitié de ce siècle, les écrivains français se sont beaucoup interrogés sur leur métier, sur la valeur et les destinées de l'art en général, sur leur propre fonction dans un monde qui devait être bouleversé par deux guerres mondiales... Rarement dans l'histoire littéraire les écrivains ont été saisis d'une telle fièvre de justification."
 3. See: R.M. Alberès, Metamorphoses du Roman, Albin Michel, 1972, pp. 27-48.
 4. J.l, 17th June 1923, p.760.
 5. G./M.G. Corr. 2, 16th August 1935, p.42.

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