IMPRESSIONISTIC IMAGERY OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS IN ANDRE GIDE'S EARLY WORKS

Dissertation for the Degree of Ph. D.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
HARLAN R. PATTON

1976

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

IMPRESSIONISTIC IMAGERY OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS
IN ANDRE GIDE'S EARLY WORKS

presented by

Harlan R. Patton

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph. D. degree in French

M. E. Kronegger
Major professor

Date June 15, 1976

ABSTRACT

IMPRESSIONISTIC IMAGERY OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS
IN ANDRE GIDE'S EARLY WORKS

By

Harlan R. Patton

Since literary impressionism reached its highest peaks and existed in its purest form in the last decade of the nineteenth century, this study discusses Gide's use of light in those works written during the fin-de-siècle period and most deeply marked by impressionism, excluding Gide's "symbolist" writings of the same period. André Walter and Ménalque are the first truly antithetical pair of Gidian protagonists, and André Gide in creating them was careful to surround them with very different intensities of light. They are complementary beings, with much in common. This study will attempt to situate divergent apprehensions of light as the factor which causes them to develop differently. Apprehension of light either as reflective of an objective reality, or as existing in itself and independent of any concrete

reality, causes the individual subsequently to form a world-view which must be based on reality's existence or non-existence, and light's influence thus precedes any moral or intellectual development. But light also serves as a construction en abyme, a reflective device incorporated within the major work of art which presents a parallel to the protagonist's moral and intellectual development. The first chapters analyze two divergent ways of viewing reality, as caused by and reflected in the two radically different environments of light set forth in Les Cahiers d'André Walter and in Les Nourritures terrestres.

André Walter and Ménalque are but two possibilities of a single personality, and their common traits demonstrate that apprehension of light could in itself account for the disparate development of these two protagonists. An analysis of L'Immoraliste serves to demonstrate further that light is both a determining factor and a construction en abyme. Michel, whose beginnings are nearly those of André Walter, becomes similar to Ménalque by adapting to the light-surroundings which Ménalque seeks out; a change in Michel's surrounding of light thus leads to a transformation in morality.

Although this study centers upon Gide's early writings, light serves a similar purpose in many of his later works. A final chapter discusses light and darkness in La Porte étroite and in Les Caves du Vatican, choosing these from

among the later books for their suitability to this type of analysis, and for their representation of the same image in two very different genres.

IMPRESSIONISTIC IMAGERY OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS IN ANDRE GIDE'S EARLY WORKS

By

Harlan R. Patton

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Romance and Classical Languages

1976

For Chantal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Marlies Kronegger for her guidance and encouragement throughout the writing of this dissertation, as well as for her many valuable comments and suggestions concerning virtually every aspect of this study. To Professors Laurence M. Porter and Eugene F. Gray, whose suggestions have enabled me to clarify and to improve many sections of this study, and who have indicated further possibilities to expand it, my thanks for their close readings and critical questions. Finally, my thanks to my wife, Chantal, and to my friend, Mark Andrews, for their patient proofreadings and suggestions regarding style and form.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

André Gide may be considered as the modern writer whose individual works most require appreciation as parts of an organic whole. It is impossible to describe him except in terms of an evolution; one can be certain only that he never ceased becoming. Many critics have commented upon Gide's changing nature: certain mythological allusions serve to qualify short periods of his life—Narcissus, Dionysus, Icarus, Prometheus[1]—but only Proteus, who participates in all and has no single form, can serve as an adequate symbol of Gide's metamorphoses. The "dynamic equilibrium" of his work rests upon recurrence, but on recurrence of antinomies,[2] and it is opposition of antithetical elements which gives oneness to Gide's complex life work. Because he frequently modeled his characters after some characteristic quality of himself, he found it necessary to become his protagonists,[3] and manifested ever greater complexity as the number of his creations increased. Always <u>disponible</u>, yet unable in real life to pursue each of the diverse possibilities offered to him because of their mutual exclusivity, he used his writing to illustrate for his own edification and for that of his readers "des

possibles qui n'ont jamais été."[4] These unrealized options are to be found in oppositions of one character to another, and for the emergence of a new aspect of Gide's personality, destruction of the preceding character was frequently necessary. His "creative destruction"[5] leads him to a constant abdication of the present and past in favor of an uncertain future (itself only momentary) and abandoned as quickly as the preceding pose.[6] Constantly renewable crisis is essential to Gide's creation, especially to his preferred genre, the journal,[7] and Gide's abdication of the present is a recurring form of crisis in which both he and his characters evolve toward a new and different form of the self. Thus it does not suffice to study individual Gidian works apart from their counterparts: each thesis has its antithesis in another work (if not contained within the same one) and the reader must recognize both polarities in order to achieve synthetic overview. To isolate one moment or one book and to analyze it apart from its developmental importance would be as misleading as the isolation of a single frame from a motion picture.

In the early works as elsewhere, the major problem is that of characterizing a transformation: "La question qui se pose est de savoir comment se fait le passage de l'oeuvre romantique, puritaine et éthérée que sont les Cahiers (d'André Walter) aux rayonnantes Nourritures

terrestres."[8] These early works constitute a period of literary experimentation by the author, and one of the most striking developments in Gide's style and world-view occurs between the Cahiers d'André Walter and the Nourritures terrestres. In only seven years, Gide's work passed from having little relationship with the real world, to hedonism and overt preoccupation with sensual experience.

If a single influence could account for Gide's own moral change in the period and for the consequent modification of his work, that influence would be the African sun. Gide wrote the Tentative amoureuse, the last of his purely symbolist writings, in the summer of 1893, just prior to his departure for Africa in October of the same year; the brevity of autumn and winter in this story of the four seasons of love is perhaps due to anticipation of his trip. The writer voices his boredom with sterile parables at the end of the Tentative, and hopes to involve himself actively in life. Africa clearly facilitated Gide's break with ethereal symbolism: by the spring of 1894, he had begun to write lyrical praises of sensation, and had completed the "Ronde de la grenade" which would be included in the Nourritures terrestres. Throughout the years between Gide's first voyage to Morocco and the publication of the Nourritures, Africa dominated his life

and his writings; Gide made several more trips to North Africa, and gradually completed the Nourritures during these four years. While the writer had thus long been influenced by Africa in 1897, the sun bursts upon Gide's work for the first time in Les Nourritures terrestres, and remains to dominate a period of writing including Saul and L'Immoraliste. It is as if light became for him an obsession, as it has for the greatest exponents of civilization.[9] André Walter's avoidance of light prior to Gide's African experience, and Ménalque's constant submersion in nearly-liquid light after it, differ as greatly as do their idealistic and sensual moralities. References to light in the texts of these, the first diametrically opposed pair of Gide's prose works, would suffice in themselves to demonstrate the evolution in both style and moral outlook from Walter to Ménalque. Differing responses to light by the protagonists reflect divergent modes of apprehending reality, and thus serve to determine the way in which each views and reacts to his surroundings. In this way, apprehension of light, and its effect upon the way in which reality is seen, may well be the basis for distinctions between Walter and Ménalque, since the seed of each exists within the other. They are but two of Gide's possibilities, and only two moments in his continued evolution.

Critics have generally failed to comment upon the apprehension of light which causes this distinct change in the protagonist's view of reality, perhaps because Gide's early works usually receive comparatively little of their attention. Until very recently, critical anthologies on the early works were rare,[10] and most of the criticism done on his early writings forced them into a convenient but clearly delimited frame. There are several reasons for this absence of criticism on the early Gide. One is Gide's own rather severe judgment of the Cahiers d'André Walter; Gide himself sold the first edition (except for a few dozen copies) as pulp,[11] and in the 1930's was mortified to look back upon his first book.[12] But this surely attests to Gide's personal development in the intervening years, rather than to the literary aridity of the Cahiers. Modern critics have seemingly accepted the writer's view of the Cahiers. Even a critic who judges them "much underrated" condemns them for their "immature, commonplace" manner and for their "portentous and lachrymose style."[13] When their value has been grasped, it is frequently as precursors to the later works.[14] Gide's early writings have also suffered from their youthful appeal when compared to more serious undertakings: "Je me demande si les problèmes de Gide, qui sont humains et importants, ne le sont pas tout spécialement pour la

jeunesse, et si, plus tard, sans les dédaigner, il n'est pas inévitable d'en avoir d'autres plus pressants."[15] The early works are neglected because their attraction is different from, not lesser than, that of Gide's later works.

Another reason for the critical neglect of Gide's early writings is that André Gide is classed primarily as a modern writer whose major works were produced in the early and middle twentieth century; yet he was initially a nineteenth-century writer, moulded by the romanticism and symbolism which directly influenced many of his contemporaries. His son-in-law described this anachronistic aspect of Gide in a memoire shortly after Gide's death: "Ce que je viens d'appeler le côté XIX^{e} siècle m'a souvent frappé chez lui—mais il avait passé au XIX^{e} siècle ses trente premières années, et tout ce qui devait former sa morale personnelle prenait appui—fût-ce pour les nier—sur des conceptions qui avaient nourri sa jeunesse et dont il ne se libérait pas si aisément."[16] Originally a nineteenth-century writer, appreciation of his youthful writing has been hindered by the artificial division forcing authors into a single literary period. Other critics have noted the anachronistic nature of some of his works,[17] the fact that several of Gide's books will not conform to established paradigms

in contemporary literature. The dismissal of several early works results from the fact that Gide wrote as a symbolist in the period between Les Cahiers d'André Walter and Les Nourritures terrestres. While an important innovator in the area of twentieth-century prose, Gide was at best a minor symbolist poet and prose writer, and such symbolist works as Le Traité du Narcisse, Les Poésies d'André Walter, Le Voyage d'Urien, and La Tentative amoureuse are examples of the effect of this school upon a budding writer; they are period-pieces with Gide's genuine input limited to expression of ideas accepted from the major symbolist theoreticians.

The critical neglect caused by the inherent difficulties in classifying Gide as nineteenth- or twentieth-century writer is also favored by the still thornier problem of classifying him as poet or novelist, as romantic or symbolist, as idealist or impressionist. Gide has been described as, and actually was, a romantic in the German tradition, a symbolist under Mallarmé's influence, and an impressionist prose-writer, all this before he was the author of the récits, soties, and romans which brought him recognition. A prose work such as Les Nourritures terrestres is certainly not a novel in the usual narrative sense, and it even seems to violate the rules for hybrids such as the poème en prose by its length,[18] and for the lyrical novel by its narrative undercurrent.[19]

This study will trace a single development in Gide's complex modification, a change in light imagery in the early works, a movement toward an extreme impressionism in the early Gide which culminates in Les Nourritures terrestres, and will have reference to several other of the early writings. It is not the intention of this study to biographically detail influences upon Gide and to set limits to, say, the romantic period, or to situate exactly the beginning of the symbolist period. But it will be necessary to limit the discussion to those books which most clearly demonstrate the stages of this evolution. In so doing, this study too will omit those writings generally grouped under the heading of "symbolism," though not because they pertain solely to the nineteenth century.

There are, to be sure, sufficient references to light and darkness in Les Poésies d'André Walter, Le Traité du Narcisse, Le Voyage d'Urien, and La Tentative amoureuse to justify their inclusion as part of this discussion. But these works are imbued with symbolism, and the importance of light in each of these four texts is entirely different from its importance in Les Cahiers d'André Walter and in Les Nourritures terrestres. As later chapters will demonstrate, André Walter and Ménalque's disciple respond to light; it in some measure determines their activities, even their world-views. Light in these

early symbolist works has meaning, and it is precisely this meaning which distinguishes it from the earlier and later works. Light and darkness here are not physical surroundings imposed upon the consciousness from without and pertinent because of their effect upon the protagonist; they are, rather, projections from the consciousness, purely interior landscape features which serve to express an emotion preceding the light-effect, causing the light rather than resulting from it. A brief demonstration of examples from each of these symbolist efforts, and a definition of expressionism and impressionism, will serve to clarify this distinction.

Les Poésies d'André Walter already are the creation of a Walter very different from the adolescent diarist of the Cahiers. Written rapidly at La Roque, they are rather poor attempts at symbolist poetry. Gide seems at this time to have been unable to impose strict form upon his poetry, understanding it as an opening to the "balbutiements de l'âme," and prose as a more reasoned and aesthetic elaboration.[20] His symbolist poems use prefabricated imagery, bringing to mind the satirical volume Déliquescences which first caused symbolism to be popularly discussed.[21] A rapid glance at the poems shows that their imagery is largely unorignal, and is used solely to express. Lamplight in the second of these poems[22] is not a surrounding

of light, but a symbol of the frustrating and futile struggle to bring clarity to confusion; the night returns inevitably, the lamp goes out, and the "nuits étroites des tombeaux" close in. The lamp of light and learning, the night of death: these are but conventional and expressionistic symbols, independent of reality. In the tenth poem,[23] "un rayon de soleil oblique" serves to express the soul's joy, again an inherited image. An eleventh poem[24] links dawn to rebirth and beginning with the beloved, a sudden passing from darkness into light. Throughout this collection, light is not impressed upon the consciousness, but expressed by it as the embodiment of an inner state.

Gide's Traité du Narcisse is an elaboration of symbolist doctrine, showing the influence of Ghil, Merrill, and especially Mallarmé rather than any truly original idea of Gide's. An exception could perhaps be made of a note in the Traité which shows Gide already leaving the symbolist doctrine in some ways, even in the very idea of attempting to define a symbol.[25] Paradise, the Platonic pre-existence, is here portrayed as a crystaline and transparent garden. All is immobile, Day reigns supreme, and the sky is azure (p. 210). Only beneath the branches of Ygdrasil does Night exist, and with it Mystery. When Man breaks the harmony of pre-existence, the perfection

of these Ideals flees "vers l'inconnu d'un ciel nocturne" (p. 212), and mankind is sent forth into "cette terre de crépuscule et de prières" (p. 212). The elaboration of Paradise can be only symbolic; light again has no relationship to exterior reality, and serves only to express a mood, to symbolize man's fall from contentment in pre-existence filled with light to earthly toil in darkness.

The imaginary voyage in Le Voyage d'Urien[26] is a conscious attempt at a symbolist novel, where all reference to light and darkness in transparently symbolist, though the voyage presents some psychologically interesting developments.[27] In Urien, the landscapes serve to reflect the author's moods, and have no basis in objective reality.[28] Even in the prelude, Gide uses light to express the state of the soul: "Quand l'amère nuit de pensée, d'étude et de théologique extase fut finie, mon âme qui depuis le soir brûlait solitaire et fidèle, sentant enfin venir l'aurore, s'éveilla distraite et lassée" (p. 281). The inactivity of the soul is expressed by the night, its reawakening by the dawn. Throughout this symbolic journey light continues as a symbol for intellectual and emotional state. The torpor expressed in the "Mer des Sargasses" is translated into a grey, cheerless light (p. 325), and the final realization of futility takes place in the polar region where the travellers cannot be certain if dawn will ever return (p. 354).

Gide's Tentative amoureuse,[29] written shortly before the trip to Africa, is again openly symbolic in nature: "Much of the symbolism of the Tentative amoureuse is indeed so transparent that, less delicately handled, it might appear almost puerile."[30] It begins predictably at dawn, the symbolic time of beginning, as Luc meets Rachel coming from the shadows of the forest into his light. Their love begins in spring, matures in summer, fails in autumn, and dies with the onset of winter. There is at the end an opening toward life, a decision to leave the sterile allegory behind and to engage in genuine life (p. 241), but the allegory itself can be only symbolic, and light within it wholly independent of the sun's light.

Even from these few brief remarks on Gide's symbolist writings, the expressionistic nature of textual occurrences of light becomes evident. This study will omit these works precisely because they are expressionistic rather than impressionistic, even according to the most general definitions accorded these two terms. Expressionism can be defined generally as "what the world receives from the artist," impressionism as "what the artist receives from the world."[31] The symbolic nature of light in these symbolist efforts situates them clearly under the heading of expressionistic images. In this study, the primary concern will be rather Gide's impressionistic uses of light, the

effect light has upon the protagonist, rather than the protagonist's effect upon light. Although impressionism and expressionism generally co-exist,[32] distinctions can be made even in highly similar passages. When Luc meets Rachel in La Tentative amoureuse (pp. 225-226), there is an awakening of light, a dawn which symbolizes their new awareness of one another and a new beginning. But they do not react to the light; the light conforms to their state, and serves to express newness, hope, and future. This dawn is clearly expressionistic. There is also an awakening of light in the Nourritures terrestres,[33] but here the protagonist reacts to and records the effect of light upon his own consciousness, becoming other than he was precisely because of the light which surrounds him. The contrast here is dramatic; in the Tentative, light is purely projection from the mind, while in the Nourritures it is purely sensation recorded upon passive consciousness.

Since literary impressionism will constitute a major point of reference to this study, it requires more detailed definition. As a term transposed from the visual arts into the literary arts, it has not been universally accepted, though its first incidence was in 1879.[34] It is still possible for critics to split about evenly over whether or not the term should be used, and, when it is

used, about whether it should be applied to a general movement in literature or to a small, minor group of Parisian writers.[35] In fact, Maria Elizabeth Kronegger has shown in a recent study that impressionism in literature extends beyond any specific period, and beyond any national boundary, even beyond the limits of the West.[36] It is the definition of impressionism given in her study which this analysis will use. Impressionism is, first of all, "a manner of suggesting reality" (p. 13). It is a certain way of understanding man in his world, and of comprehending his interaction with and experience of that which is outside of himself, and yet which penetrates man and forms the fabric of his existence:

> Impressionism is born from the fundamental insight that our consciousness is sensitive and passive. Man's consciousness faces this world as pure passivity, a mirror in which the world inscribes itself. As a detached spectator, the individual considers the world without having a standpoint in it. Reality is a synthesis of sense-impressions. (. . .) What we actually see is a vibration of light on matter in dissolution. (. . .) This means that, for the impressionists, there is no idealistic mental nature: the sense-impressions we have are nature itself. They are not appearances of some underlying realities we can neither see, smell, nor touch, as the symbolists would have it: on the contrary, sense impressions are experiences of the quality of things.[37]

Impressionistic literature proposes no goals beyond itself; a lyrical recounting of life as sense-impression, it requires no values beyond its own, and it subjectivity may be completely non-narrative (though even the Nourritures

terrestres contain certain didactic, narrative elements together with their lyrical effusion).[38] The sense-impression itself becomes independent, something resulting from the interaction of subject and object who exist only in their interdependence: color, for example, becomes not a quality of any object, but a product of light's play upon its surface.[39] In this, light becomes supreme, triumphant, capable of creating and dissolving what was previously seen as a material, independent reality. There are various stylistic devices associated with literary impressionism, to which it shall be necessary to refer in discussing Les Nourritures terrestres, but several good discussions of these devices in other studies render a detailing of them unnecessary here.[40]

Man exists for the impressionist only "phenomenologically," in this continued process of perception, only in his relationship to the world. Several critics have noted the importance of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology to the interpretation and understanding of impressionism,[41] and some have confused the terms "impressionistic" and "phenomenological."[42] While there is in both the reestablishment of primordial contact with an exterior reality, and while each treats the act of perception at the precise moment of this contact, sufficient differences remain to distinguish the two terms, at least for the relatively

pure impressionism of the Nourritures terrestres. As Beverly Jean Gibbs has remarked, there is in impressionism a (perhaps naive) belief in "subjective objectivity:" the exact representation of the sensation as perceived, without interference or interpretation, which relates it directly to realism and to naturalism.[43] Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology comprehends the inherent subjectivity of the act of perception, the distortion involved in perception because of the residue of anterior perceptions, and would deny the possibility of a perfect tabula rasa. The writer of the Nourritures believes that he has succeeded in divesting himself of any preconception,[44] thus locating his experience in the objectivity of the early impressionist painters: the exact and impartial representation of the sense-impression. It is perhaps for this reason that Merleau-Ponty chooses to relate his remarks not to the early Cézanne, but to the later Cézanne of the post-impressionist period.[45]

Since literary impressionism reached its highest peaks and existed in its purest form in the last decade of the nineteenth century, this study will discuss Gide's impressionistic use of light in those works written during this period and most deeply marked by impressionism. In Gide's early symbolist writings, light and all other physical and sensory details serve an expressionistic purpose, and for this reason they will be omitted from this study. Les Poésies

d'André Walter, Le Traité du Narcisse, Le Voyage d'Urien, and La Tentative amoureuse make use of the established "pathetic fallacy," according exterior reality to interior states. In these writings, Gide left behind the phenomenological existence of seemingly genuine protagonists, and sought to construct symbolic, explicative fictions, based not on subjective existences, but on Man's place in the scheme of things. Each of them is too closely tied to symbolic doctrine, to reflect the author's or protagonist's view, or to reflect reality as influenced by apprehension of light. Paludes, following this period, is an important transitional work, satirizing the cloistered life of Parisian salons and bidding farewell to symbolism, but it too is somewhat outside the scope of this discussion. Paludes creates an atmosphere of sterility, aridity, and futility which all its references to physical reality serve to support. As there are closed windows, ventilators which fail to work, and enclosures on every side, so there is also a grey, cheerless light. But light here again serves to support a thesis; it does not exist independently or determine a view of reality. Rather, it reflects an intellectual atmosphere.

The Cahiers d'André Walter, written prior to Gide's involvement with the symbolist school, show at least the possibility of an impressionistic consciousness, and

infrequent passages show a style and a world-view very close to those of Ménalque. The Nourritures terrestres are Gide's first writings after his declaration of independence in Paludes, and are the supreme point of Gide's literary impressionism, perhaps even of all literary impressionism.[46] André Walter and Ménalque are thus the first diametrically opposed pair of Gidian protagonists. Many critics, in seeking the antithesis to Les Nourritures terrestres, have failed to understand that this book is in itself a response. Most have looked forward in time rather than back to Gide's first book. Justin O'Brien finds a response to the Nourritures terrestres in El Hadj,[47] while Gabriel Teuler finds in Saul their antidote,[48] and Diana Bronte seeks it in Paludes.[49] But since Gide's Cahiers d'André Walter were "une sorte de Somme, une oeuvre unique, le testament d'une vie,"[50] Les Nourritures terrestres must be their response. In these two books alone of all the early works of André Gide, there is an elaboration of a personal view of reality. The intervening symbolist writings offer only Gide's interpretation of a pre-existing world-view. Paludes is satirical, and could serve only to destroy a way of seeing reality; it could not build another. Satire is, by nature, destructive. Across the span of seven years, André Walter and Ménalque respond to one another as the first clear

dichotomy of characters native to Gide, establishing two variant ways of experiencing reality. Both of these contrastive currents then reappear within a single personality, that of Michel in L'Immoraliste, joining thesis and antithesis for the first time.

This dissertation adds to existing criticism by situating André Walter and Ménalque as the first clearly antithetical pair of Gidian protagonists from among the early fictional personalities. However, André Walter and Ménalque (just as the early Michel and the later Michel) are but two variations upon a single personality; they contain the same possibilities, developed in entirely different ways. They are complementary beings, with much in common. This study will attempt to situate divergent apprehensions of light as the factor which causes them to develop differently. Apprehension of light either as reflective of an objective reality, or as existing in itself and independent of any concrete reality, causes the individual subsequently to form a world-view which must be based upon reality's existence or non-existence, and light's influence thus precedes any moral or intellectual development. Ménalque's planometric view of the universe is due to the reduction of reality to light-effects, enabling him to discount objective reality, and thus to deny any existence apart from the basic phenomenological life of sensations.

Surprisingly little criticism has discussed the importance of light in the works of André Gide, since most choose to concentrate on Gide's aural sensitivities. Gide was a musician, keenly aware of sound in language as well as in music. Due to the sharpness of his ear for music, others of his sensitivities have been ignored. Even when Gide's visual awareness forms the topic for an essay, it is viewed as secondary to his aural response.[51] But Gide was throughout his life very aware of the interplay of light and darkness, and even physically effected by them. Si le Grain ne meurt recounts the convalescence in Biskra in 1894 as a pursuit of light alone: "Je m'abandonne. Fais que tout en moi soit lumière: oui! lumière et légèreté."[52] Gide extended the analogy of light and darkness as a reflection of his moods very early in the journals: "J'en arrive à présent à considérer les jours d'inquiétude, de scrupules et de désirs abnégatifs, comme des jours trop nuageux, où le soleil ne peut paraître, où le passé vit plus que soi dans l'heure présente; comme des journées de faiblesse, répréhensibles à cause de leur langueur."[53] Roger Martin du Gard knew Gide only much later, but he recounts an analogy of style and light made by Gide himself, comparing his own varied style to Rembrandt's use of light, darkness, and shadow.[54] The image of light and darkness is thus very much a part of

Gide's descriptive repertoire. Several critics too have seized upon chiaroscuro as an image to illustrate sudden development in Gide's work: "Pour la forme, les Nourritures terrestres (. . .) ne constituent pas, dans l'oeuvre, un éclatement; elles seraient même le point le plus extrême, le plus décanté, de cette volonté initiale de prose poétique. Mais, au lieu de la développer, frileusement, dans la demi-ombre, elles la jettent dans le soleil."[55] Given such frequent allusions to light and darkness as physical surroundings, moral analogies, and allusions to style, the importance of light and darkness, both to Gide himself and to his work, cannot be doubted. The alternation of thesis and antithesis so clear in Gide's writings, the constant recurrence of antinomies with intervening shades of variation, invites the analogy with solar time and changing light, where opposites constitute the essential elements of perpetual change. To date no such extended study of this essential image and theme has been undertaken.

There is a twofold importance of light in these writings. Each character first responds to an environment of light: André Walter is most comfortable in shade, and actually seeks out shade, attempting to fix it as a permanent condition which best suits his requirements. Ménalque is most properly Ménalque when surrounded by brilliant

sunlight, Walter is most Walter when shaded from the sun and in the presence of moderate, attenuated light. Outside of this favorable environment, the protagonist changes profoundly: Walter in sunlight becomes nearly sensual, responding to summer and ceasing to write; Ménalque's disciple remains for many years in Paris away from the sun, occupying himself in intellectual pursuits, and his sensual education is interrupted until he again goes forth into the light. Michel is first the one, then the other, successful in adapting from Walter to Ménalque, and capable of being both of them genuinely in different surroundings of light. Environments of light thus have a profound determinative effect upon these protagonists.

But light and darkness have another importance, more properly termed "imagery." The protagonist's surrounding of light serves as each moment as a <u>construction en abyme</u>, reflecting fully his moral and intellectual position. Gide was the writer who coined the term "mise en abyme" in his <u>Journal</u> in 1893: "ce procédé du blason qui consiste, dans le premier, à en mettre un second 'en abyme.' "[56] He refers here to a device by which a smaller coat-of-arms is placed in one quarter of another, itself containing a third, which contains a fourth, a process which could go on to infinity. It was this placement of a reflective device within a work of art which Gide admired in <u>Hamlet</u>

and in many other masterpieces, both literary and visual, and which he consciously attempted in many early works as well as in the "Journal d'Edouard" in Les Faux-Monnayeurs.[57] Claude-Edmonde Magny sees in this process a determining factor to later developments in prose, with an influence upon the new novel.[58] This is not to say that the light situation becomes symbolic, but that it serves as a parallel: "La 'mise en abyme' a une signification analogue: elle nous rappelle à chaque instant l'impossibilité où se trouve tout existant de s'affranchir assez de sa situation métaphysique, de sa condition d'homme, de ses particularités individuelles, etc."[59] Light serves in these early writings as a construction en abyme. It does this first by presenting a microcosm of the protagonist's moral and intellectual position in the text: a reference to light summarizes the protagonist's position frequently, while the book does so but once. The reflection of moral position in light-surroundings also serves to universalize the decidedly subjective human position of the character.

This study will analyze light and darkness both as determining influences and as construction en abyme in Les Cahiers d'André Walter and in Les Nourritures terrestres in order to elucidate and to analyze two divergent ways of viewing reality, as reflected in two radically different environments of light. Since André Walter and Ménalque

seem to be but two possibilities of a single personality, their common elements are discussed in order to demonstrate that apprehension of light could in itself account for their differences. This will be borne out be a similar analysis of L'Immoraliste where both of these possibilities exist in a single personality, and where a Michel similar to André Walter becomes by his receptivity to light very similar to Ménalque; a change in light environment thus results in a parallel change in morality. By confining discussion to the early works, this study does not deny that this stylistic device and theme are present in the later works. Indeed, much the same analysis could be done of Gide's later works as well, and a single chapter will discuss briefly two of these, La Porte étroite and Les Caves du Vatican.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Justin O'Brien, Portrait of André Gide (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), uses these and other mythological allusions as chapter divisions in his critical biography.

[2]O'Brien, p. 10.

[3]Daniel Moutote has studied this problem at length in his Journal d'André Gide et les problèmes du moi: 1889-1925 (Paris: Université de Paris, Faculté des Lettres, 1968).

[4]Gabriel Teuler, Après Gide (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Debresse, ca. 1959), p. 61.

[5]Albert J. Guérard, André Gide (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 51.

[6]Teuler, p. 21.

[7]Denis de Rougemont, "Au sujet du Journal d'André Gide," Nouvelle Revue Française, 1[ier] janvier 1940, quoted by Teuler, p. 22.

[8]Claude Lebrun, "La Naissance des thèmes dans les premières oeuvres d'André Gide," Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), p. 205.

[9]Lord Kenneth Clark, Civilisation, a personal view (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 212.

[10]Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), is the first issue of a literary journal to be devoted entirely to the early works.

[11]O'Brien, p. 61.

[12]Journal, 1939-1949 (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), p. 522.

[13]G. W. Ireland, André Gide: a Study of his Creative Writings (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 8, 26, 5-6, 51.

[14]"L'insuccès apparent des Cahiers d'André Walter n'avait d'égal que le précoce talent qui s'y montrait," which would later produce better books. Henri Mondor, Les Premiers temps d'une amitié: André Gide et Paul Valéry (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 1947), p. 56.

[15]Teuler, pp. 8-9.

[16]Jean Lambert, Gide familier (Paris: René Julliard, 1958), p. 28.

[17]Wladimir Krysinski, in "Les Faux-Monnayeurs et le paradigme du roman européen autour de 1925," a lecture delivered at the University of Toronto on October 25, 1975, found it necessary to put Gide's books into a separate classification, since they will not fit the paradigm he establishes.

[18]Suzanne Bernard, Le Poème en prose de Baudelaire à nos jours (Paris: Nizet, 1959), p. 15 states that brevity is essential to any poème en prose, but includes Les Nourritures terrestres under this heading (p. 412).

[19]Ralph Freedman, The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Hermann Hesse, André Gide, and Virginia Woolf (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 143.

[20]Allain Goulet, "Les premiers vers d'André Gide," Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), p. 126.

[21]Several of these poems are reprinted in facsimile by Michael Packenham, ed., Les Premières armes du Symbolisme (Exeter: Exeter University Printing Unit, 1973).

[22]Les Poésies d'André Walter, in Gide, Oeuvres complètes, Louis Martin-Chauffier, ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1932-1938), Vol. I, pp. 180-181. These Oeuvres complètes remain the best collection of the early works, though incomplete for the later ones. References to this edition will herein be abbreviated O.C.

[23]*O.C.*, I, pp. 188-189.

[24]*O.C.*, I, p. 189.

[25]*Le Traité du Narcisse*, *O.C.*, I, pp. 215-216. Other page references will appear in the text.

[26]*Le Voyage d'Urien*, *O.C.*, I, pp. 279-365. Page references will appear in the text.

[27]Guérard, pp. 53-54.

[28]O'Brien, p. 77.

[29]*La Tentative amoureuse*, *O.C.*, I, pp. 221-243. Page references will appear in the text.

[30]Ireland, p. 71.

[31]Beverly Jean Gibbs, "Impressionism as a Literary Movement," *Modern Language Journal*, XXVI (1952), pp. 176-177.

[32]Gibbs, p. 177.

[33]*Les Nourritures terrestres*, *O.C.*, II, pp. 69-70.

[34]Ferdinand Brunetière, in "L'Impressionisme dans le roman," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 novembre 1879, defines impressionism as a conscious transposition of a painting technique into the literary arts, in discussing a novel by Daudet.

[35]In a "Symposium on Literary Impressionism," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 17 (1968), pp. 40-68, at least two of the five participants oppose the use of this term in the literary arts.

[36]*Literary Impressionism* (New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, 1973).

[37]Kronegger, p. 14.

[38]Freedman, p. 143.

[39]Maria Elizabeth Kronegger, "Authors and Impressionist Reality," French Literature Studies, I (March, 1973), p. 159.

[40]See Kronegger, Literary Impressionism, pp. 69-85; Gibbs, pp. 178-180; Calvin S. Brown in "Symposium on Literary Impressionism, p. 54. There is general agreement concerning the major techniques of literary impressionism.

[41]Kronegger, Literary Impressionism, p. 14

[42]"A cette vision romanesque, on aurait donné en 1890 la qualification d' 'impressionniste' ou de 'subjectiviste.' On dit de nos jours 'phénoménologique.' " R.-M. Albérès, Métamorphoses du roman (Paris: Albin Michel, 1966), p. 78.

[43]Gibbs, p. 176.

[44]O.C., II, p. 61: "Cette désinstruction fut lente."

[45]Maurice Merleau-Ponty, L'Oeil et l'esprit (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

[46]Kronegger, Literary Impressionism, p. 17.

[47]O'Brien, p. 141.

[48]Teuler, p. 17.

[49]Diana Bronte, "Le Symbolisme dans l'oeuvre d'André Gide," Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), p. 236.

[50]Mondor, pp. 29-30.

[51]Jean Mouton, "Le Regard d'André Gide," in Entretiens sur André Gide, Marcel Arland et Jean Mouton, eds. (Paris: Mouton et Cie, 1967), p. 13.

[52]Si le Grain ne meurt, in Journal 1939-1949; Souvenirs (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), p. 570.

[53]Quoted by Ireland, p. 93.

[54]Roger Martin du Gard, Notes sur André Gide (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 37.

[55]Marc Beigbeder, André Gide (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1954), p. 50.

[56]Journal, O.C., I, pp. 511-512.

[57]Ibid., loc. cit.

[58]Claude-Edmonde Magny, Histoire du roman français depuis 1918 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1950), "La 'mise en abyme' ou le chiffre de la transcendance," pp. 269-278.

[59]Magny, p. 274.

CHAPTER I

BETWEEN DARKNESS AND LIGHT: LES CAHIERS D'ANDRE WALTER

From late in 1889 until late in 1893, the young André Gide maintained a "cahier de lectures," which testifies to Gide's remarkable intellectual curiosity. Only recently published by Jacques Cotnam,[1] this document permits one to witness Gide's struggle to settle upon a personal style in a decade which saw both naturalism's highest point in the Rougon-Macquart novels, and symbolism's greatest achievements in poetry. Having read Taineon L'Idéalisme anglais, Gide desired to be a "héros-poète" or a "representative man," but equally desired to conquer the public of his own time.[2] The best of writers excited his emulation, the worst of writers his hatred; but all readings are understood and commented upon in terms of their effect upon Gide's own future work, not as gratuitous pastimes. Momentarily impressed with romanticism or with realism, no individual writer or school long maintained supreme interest for him. In July of 1891, the Subjectif (Gide's own title for this notebook) contains titles from Barrès,

Shakespeare, Heine, and Verlaine;[3] in December of 1889, Rabelais, Gautier, and the Goncourt brothers appear together.[4]

Surrounded by polar oppositions in the arts, Gide was forced to leave the romantic tradition to conquer the public of his own day, and yet hesitant to choose one or several literary models. His first published book was perhaps compelled to be extremely personal as much by the variety of possible options as by the narcissistic personality of the young writer. This book evolved gradually within Gide, originally his own intimate diary,[5] and only later did it occur to him to attribute these personal remarks and observations first to a fictional Allain, then to André Walter. Gide planned such a journal for several years: he and Pierre Louis spoke of it in 1887,[6] long before he retired to Switzerland to prepare it in 1890. Other details point to the intimate, personal nature of Les Cahiers d'André Walter, including his hurry to finish them before his twentieth birthday. He expected the novel to influence his future in addition to reflecting his past, serving as a marriage proposal which Madeleine would be unable to resist. Less self-conscious at this age than later in life, Gide showed more of his true self in this early work than he would again until much later in his career.

A highly personal work, the Cahiers were nonetheless influenced by other considerations, as one might expect from a reading of the Subjectif. It has been said that Gide wrote the Cahiers in part as Goethe wrote his Werther, to liberate himself from his own sterile romanticism.[7] But he had long been immersed in German romanticism as well, and Renée Lang has shown how well this prepared him for symbolist salons.[8] Gide was introduced to Mallarmé and to Hérédia in the winter of 1889-1890,[9] and he may have been influenced by symbolist thought well before the final draft for Les Cahiers d'André Walter. Some date Gide's conversion to symbolism in January, 1891,[10] when he first plunged into Mallarmé's poetry, but it is possible to see a symbolist influence at an earlier date, and prior to the writing of the Cahiers; Valéry welcomed Gide to the symbolist fold early in February, 1891, before reading André Walter,[11] but upon reading it wrote to Gide in praise of the Cahiers as a symbolist work.[12] Gide was thus in the process of becoming a symbolist when he wrote his first book, and seems to have vacillated about what form it would take. He travelled in Britanny in 1889 with the purpose of describing its overcast sky, mists, and landscapes as a real frame for his hero,[13] something one might expect from a realist or a naturalist. The eventual setting for André Walter includes little reference to

natural surroundings and could be situated nearly anywhere; this wavering demonstrates that the young Gide was not yet a wholeheartedly symbolist novelist, as he at least considered situating his first book in a genuine landscape before turning to an imaginary one.

It is at times difficult to distinguish the various influences of German romanticism, earlier French romanticism, and French symbolism upon Gide. It is equally difficult to situate Les Cahiers d'André Walter as either a symbolist or romantic work, since it contains elements of both and evades definition as one or the other. Furthering this difficulty is the implicit contradiction in the label of "symbolist novel;" Gide certainly saw himself as the symbolist novelist shortly after this,[14] but to most of Mallarmé's disciples, "in open revolt against the excesses of the Naturalists, (. . .) the novel appeared vulgar and formless."[15]

If Gide was not yet fully a symbolist, it seems he had at least eliminated one literary option by turning away from naturalism. His first prose contains nothing of the naturalistic techniques or interests so prevalent in this era. Heredity is mentioned only briefly, and that to thwart the determination of a single race for Walter, to set him apart from the common herd. No mention of cause and effect in the social world is made: Walter's fortune,

his circumstances, even his geographic location are left largely unmentioned. What leads him to his dilemma is not any physical event or reality, but a purely emotional and intellectual problem. No attempt is made to study his madness from a physiological viewpoint, or his reactions from a social one. The Bildungsroman of the period tended to confuse adolescence with puberty, and Gide's was one of the first of this age to recognize that "the intellectual and spiritual puberty is often as tormenting as the physical."[16] Walter's physical conflicts, while very real, are subordinate to his emotional distress. Since Gide was turning away from naturalism, Walter's conflicts are not directly related to any objectively-described real world: his conflicts are stated in terms of absolutes, independent of any specific or objective reality. Those landscapes necessary to maintaining the fiction are sketched only in the most non-specific of terms: all phenomena without meaning to André Walter's interiorized and intellectualized conflicts are eliminated from the novel.

Since light and darkness are phenomena of the real world, they should be eliminated from the personal notebooks of a wholly interior life where "il n'en a rien paru" (p. 31).[17] The fact that they figure frequently in the text means that they must assume a role, not as

objective phenomena, but in relationship to Walter's inner conflicts. Walter's preoccupation with shaded atmospheres, away from intense light and total darkness, parallels his intellectual and moral conflict. Full light and total darkness are extremes, and André Walter regards them as he regards moral and intellectual extremes, as dangerous to his existence. Morning and evening are his preferred environments, times of moderate, changing light. Reflected and moderated light—the moon and the lamp—he finds agreeable and even profitable to his creative life. But not once in the Cahiers does Walter mention the full light of day, and unbroken darkness inspires only despair. Light falls within the same system of filters, barriers, and reflecting obstacles which Walter uses to attenuate all things. He seeks reflected, filtered light and avoids the full, blinding light of day just as he attempts to attenuate and block other interior and exterior forces, to keep from being overwhelmed by them. Walter's inability to synthesize light and darkness into a suitable degree of half-light directly corresponds to his impossible situation when faced with the necessity of reconciling real and ideal. In seeking an ideal surrounding, Walter must avoid intensities of light and darkness; in facing his moral and intellectual dilemma, he must avoid intensities of analysis and discovery. The shade Walter desires

exists on two levels in the text. There is first of all an actual physical surrounding of shade which Walter finds comforting, and secondly a continuing metaphor of shade which Walter uses to describe the peace and security he finds in his protectors and intercessors: Emmanuèle, God, and prayer. This metaphorical shade is an extension of physical surroundings of attenuated light, but it is an ideated comparison. This comparison will be further extended to show that Walter's only comfortable moral position is an exact parallel to his only suitable light-environment. The degree of light preferred by this first of Gide's protagonists provides an understanding of his intellectual position.

Shade is important to André Walter first as a physical surrounding. From the beginning lines of the Cahiers d'André Walter, "l'ombre est pacifiant" (p. 28). Only later does he extend this metaphorically to include his intercessors. Half-light, moderate light, exists first as a real situation and its importance is established by Walter's near-obsession with a perfect, controlled light. His ideal situation, pictured in his mind as an unattainable goal, includes specific reference to light: "Je voudrais une cellule nue: coucher sur une planche, un oreiller de crin sous la tête; auprès, une prie-Dieu, simple, énorme; sur le support, la Bible toujours ouverte;

au-dessus, une lampe toujours allumée" (p. 49). Any thought of contemplative monastic life, to which Walter thinks himself perfectly suited, contains as a necessary condition the presence of moderate light bringing peace and repose (see for example pp. 43, 143). Other real surroundings of shade which Walter finds pleasant abound in the Cahiers. Memories of evenings by lamp, fire, and candle are frequently recalled: "Lire à haute voix, les soirs d'automne; eux rassemblés entre le foyer et la lampe" (p. 55: see also pp. 56, 58, 86, 173). The lamp itself comforts Walter in these evenings. It is not the traditional lamp of knowledge, but a source of moderate, controlled light which favors creative pursuits such as writing (pp. 69, 106, 118, 119, 123, etc.), music (p. 47), and reading (p. 56).

This moderate, artificial, and controlled light is essential to Walter, and does not simple accompany the isolated situations of which he dreams. Contemplative atmospheres depend partially on light for their effect: "Souvent me prend le désir d'une atmosphère ambiante toute de noir et de silence, de calme muet; une lampe auprès de moi qui ne ferait pas d'ombres sur les murs" (p. 105). Calm is based in Walter's mind upon immutability: to excape from solar light is in a sense to escape from solar time. He tries even to create this absolute moment in

his room when he considers finishing Allain, and succeeds only in parodying it:

> Dans ma chambre j'ai fermé les rideaux des fenêtres: la lampe allumé quoique ce soit le jour, mais pour l'illusion du travail nocturne où tout, autour de soir, dort—tous les bruits, toutes les images.
> L'atmosphère tranquille et comme conseillière, et pour plus encore: la pendule et la montre arrêtées—c'est l'heure indifférente; c'est le travail dans l'absolu sans plus de temps ni d'espace. —Ce qu'il faut pour manger, pour dormir— n'importe quand, puisque l'heure est passée;—et de l'huile encore pour la lampe, de peur qu'elle ne s'éteigne au milieu d'une nuit (p. 124).

The surrounding of moderate, controlled light is the very basis of his attempt to construct the ideal creative atmosphere. It is, of course, a failure from the first line: "quoique ce soit le jour" shows the futility of his attempt. Several points about this recurring dependence upon attenuated light deserve mention. Light in this passage is as important to Walter's life as sleeping and eating: lamp oil is listed here as one of three requisites. It is, if anything, more important than the other two, the only essential item commented upon and justified. And there is both pursuit and avoidance involved in seeking the middle course between light and darkness. Walter must first of all attenuate the natural extremes, by imposing obstacles between solar light and his vision, in this case his curtain. Secondly, he must attempt to alter even what succeeds in piercing the disruptive filter, by substituting

artificial light which he can control for solar light which escapes personal control. Avoidance of extremes is the first requisite, and substitution of a controllable environment is the second.

Walter thus normally seeks physical surroundings of half-light, shaded from extremes of light and darkness. Time and light are intimately connected in his mind, as the preceding attempt to suspend time indicates, and the pursuit and avoidance of different light-environments result in the limitation of times of day. He avoids bright noon and afternoon, times of intense light, spoken of only twice in the Cahiers. "Pour éviter les après-midi mornes, se coucher au milieu du jour, quand la chaleur accable" (p. 144), Walter writes to himself at one point. Afternoon here is bleak, gloomy, a time to be gotten through by whatever means possible. His only other reference to daytime comes shortly after the first: "Tout le jour, je les avais fait rire, follement rire. Puis le soir est venu; je suis remonté tout seul dans ma chambre. Je me suis assis, l'esprit inerte" (p. 157). Daytime is set off, apart from evening in this, the only description of how a full day was spent. It is disruptive and exhausting, detrimental to the inner life.

But night with its total darkness is not more pleasant than day with its disruptive light. For one who avoids

afternoon and its demands that one pay attention to the exterior world, night should be the best of times, and Walter sees this principle: "Comme tu me plairais, ô nuit! sans tes étoiles" (p. 64). The reality of night is different from the foreseen possibility of being alone in one's self, even very early in the Cahiers: "Que la nuit est silencieuse. J'ai presque peur à m'endormir. On est seul" (p. 28). Sleep brings dreams, again escaping control of the consciousness, and Walter fears night for its hallucinations (as we shall see), not for what might happen to him physically. Allain too later reflects this same fear of hallucination, of his own evoked visions in the night (p. 147). Darkness constantly threatens rather than reassures, and threats are metaphorically described in terms of darkness. Walter's sacrifice of Emmanuèle to his mother's dying wish brings on a fear of the unknown, a vague sense of despair, "le sentiment de me jeter dans une nuit obscure" (p. 30). Starless night seems at times to kill the entire world ("oh! le crêpe du crépuscule" /p. 158/), and its depressing influence is inescapable. The protagonist feels first ill-at-ease in darkness, expressing a vague and non-specific fear, and gradually comes to dread night, crying like a child in the darkness (p. 162).

Walter's avoidance of bright day and dark night is the correlate of his attempt to establish a controlled and moderate surrounding of light. Shade is to him an essential sustainer of life. Shade protects, comforts, and appeases, while light and darkness disrupt and exhaust. It is not surprising then that André Walter should extend this condition to a continuing metaphor. All that which filters, reflects, and attenuates reality, protecting Walter from intellectual and moral extremes, he identifies metaphorically with the shade which protects him from extremes of light.

Emmanuèle protects Walter from many things and serves to attenuate reality throughout the Cahiers. Her very existence is reflective and indirect, her glance dark and shaded. She exists not on the same level as others, not as barbare, but as Walter's only kindred being. Only in hallucination does Walter ever picture her physically: she lives in his own domain, at the grey area between light and darkness. Emmanuèle's presence is unreal: she exists by and through others. A dead sister is reflected in Emmanuèle: "Le soir, je retrouvais son profil disparu dans l'ombre de ta tête penchée" (pp. 40-41). She represents more than she exists: a sister, she is also an extension of Walter's mother. It is by his mother's wish that Walter leaves Emmanuèle, and what Jean Delay

calls "angélisme," the beatification of the beloved thus making her even more unattainable, certainly shows in Walter's disembodied image of Emmanuèle; thus a dead sister's profile is found in her shadow, placing Emmanuèle at two removes from physical reality. Emmanuèle and Walter can communicate by glance alone: "Tu étais assise dans l'ombre; pourtant j'ai senti ton regard lorsque je lus" (p. 56). Her eyes here look out from the dark; they are frequently sources of darkness in light, as well: "ton âme chante dans tes yeux sombres," "dans l'ombre humide de tes yeux" (p. 71). She is a phantom presence, dwelling with Walter at his own level, but physically almost non-existent: she reflects a dead sister and mother, and attenuates all things.

Her name, Emmanuèle ("God with us"), reflects Emmanuèle's role of reflector and attenuator. She is Walter's intercessor before the God of whom he feels unworthy, much closer to God than Walter himself: "elle prie à haute voix... moi, reculé dans l'ombre, je me sentais si humble!" (p. 52). Moderating both the supernatural and the natural, she projects a comforting shade during the day, and serves also to moderate darkness. Light in darkness brings to mind a recurring memory of the ideal "baiser immatériel," looking with her at the same star: Emmanuèle even merges with the moon and the star in Walter's mind (p. 145).

Eventually, she becomes one of the "invisibles clartés" in the surrounding darkness (p. 13[illegible]). Emmanuèle is thus identified with shade in physical surroundings during the day and with light serving to disrupt the surrounding darkness at night. Comforting Walter and interceding for him, she too belongs to moderate light environments, but participates causally in their creation.

André Walter's other major consolation from the tension of extremes in prayer. It too is subsumed by the metaphor of shade and moderate light. Walter clearly requires moderate light for the monastic, contemplative life of prayer. Emmanuèle and Walter frequently pray in surroundings of twilight (p. 52), and the Gospels are read in a similar environment (p. 37). The image of religion as shade extends even to the next life: "En toi, Seigneur, mon âme se confie. Je cherche un refuge à l'ombre de tes ailes" (p. 120).

Religious thought, prayer, God, and Emmanuèle, all major comforts to Walter, are thus included in a continuing metaphor of controlled light, shade, and twilight. André Walter consciously recognizes that brilliant light and profound darkness are disruptive, exhausting, and terrifying. Before discussing the parallel to his intellectual dilemma which this presents, it is necessary to specify the basic fears underlying his aversion to extremes of light

and darkness, in order to analyze these fears as they relate to intellectual extremes. At times an amorphous and barely-described fear, occasional passages in the Cahiers point to more exact bases for this dread of extreme light and darkness.

Walter's fear of light stems first of all from his conviction that the real life is inner: "Pas un évènement: la vie toujours intime—et pourtant la vie si violente. Tout s'est joué dans l'âme; il n'en a rien paru" (p. 31). Real, inner life must be private, the life of the mind and the emotions which passes within the individual, incapable of being expressed. Life among his fellow men does not appeal to Walter except momentarily when old dreams of influence and success are rekindled by a letter from Pierre (pp. 68-69). He remedies this by hiding it from his consciousness, sending all his letters to a fictional address. Of normal everyday occupations surrounding life at a country estate, not a word is spoken: the world outside his mind is foreign to this account. With the real world disappears the afternoon, the time for real-life occupations, spoken of only twice in the entire book (see above, p. 39). Daylight leaves him with "l'esprit inerte" (pp. 107, 157), incapable of pursuing the inner life, and thus reducing him to a life of physical impressions alone, an animal life unworthy of him. Daylight tends to impress

him too heavily, to involve him at least through the senses with the outside world which has no place in "la vie intime," and must thus be shunted aside to favor the inner life. What Walter fears in daylight is reduction: limitation of his inner life at the least, imposition of a mere animal life when extreme.

Darkness should favor this inner life: "Oh! que pour contempler, les nuits sont plus tranquilles,—les belles nuits, que les jours d'autrefois" (p. 116). But night brings terror instead of the expected contemplative atmosphere. Light imposes external reality too heavily, but darkness inspires dread by imposing inner reality too intensely. What Walter fears is not the normal primate fear of losing vision in the darkness, but hallucination, a new form of sight inspired by darkness. Dreams he fears from the beginning of the Cahiers because of their intensity: "La pensée se projette comme sur un fond noir; le temps à venir apparaît sur le sombre comme une bande d'espace. Rien ne distrait de la vision commencée" (p. 28). Hallucination impresses itself upon the consciousness just as does exterior reality, with the same reductive effect: "on n'est plus qu'elle." Walter's major underlying fear is a dread of being only what he perceives. Reduction, either to reflective consciousness or to hallucination, is thus onefear in vision, whether vision of reality from without of hallucination stemming from within.

Accompanying this fear of being reduced to passivity is the fear of losing control. It is largely a question of intensity which decides whether vision is agreeable or dangerous to Walter. Just as exterior reality can at times be pleasant, when not too intense, hallucination can be pleasant when desired and controlled: "se la figurer présente—oublier les choses—rêver" (p. 100). But in this as in all things, Walter fears losing control in hallucination brought on by darkness. The eye can even cause the mind to lose control:

> Que l'esprit domine sans cesse; qu'il ne perde pas pied un instant; tant qu'il est fervent, la chair est soumise—mais veille bien qu'il ne faiblisse—Veillez et priez de peur de succomber. Dans la nuit, quand le regard s'hallucine, ô Luther jetant son écritoire contre le démon maraudeur (p. 132).

Again, it is not night-blindness which Walter fears; it is rather night-vision, hallucination, another form of perception equally dangerous to those who prefer the inner life. Even more dangerous is the moment when external and internal are indistinguishable, when all points of reference in external reality are lost, and when the internal needs them in order to function:

> La nuit, devant la glace, j'ai contemplé mon image. Comme surgie de l'ombre, la fragile apparition se modèle et s'immobilise; autour de moi, dans l'ombre éclairée, des profondeurs de ténèbres s'enfoncent. Je plonge mes yeux dans ces yeux: et mon âme flotte incertaine entre cette double apparence, doutant enfin, comme étourdie, lequel est le reflect 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... (p. 141).

Here the value of both external and internal reality is questioned, and all that remains at the fine line between the two is sufficient reason to wonder which is real and which unreal, or more appropriately which exists as object in reality. All control is lost, and this inspires fear.

Reduction to vision (whether normal or hallucinatory, brought on by light or by darkness) leads to loss of control, and when Walter loses control, he fears to discover more than he is willing to discover. At the point where Allain and Walter become one, both faces of this single being fear unmasking the emptiness of Emmanuèle by means of hallucination:

> Allain a jeté sur l'image un grand drap étendu, —dessous elle est emprisonnée,— je ne la vois plus— mais je la sens vivante encore sous le drap, derrière le voile et je la sens, quand je me tourne, qui me regarde; c'est un souffle entre les épaules.
>
> Exaspéré, il la crèverait,— mais la peur le retient de trouer aussi le fantôme et que le néant n'apparaisse derrière l'apparence brisée. (. . .)
>
> Voilée de noir, au crépuscule, je t'ai vue accoudée au chevet de mon lit, telle qu'une ombre, silencieuse. Contre ta main, ta tête était appuyée, comme lasse—elle était couverte d'un crêpe.
>
> J'eus peur, et la vision s'évanouit (pp. 141-142).

Walter tries to explain this hallucination scientifically, using Taine's thoughts upon the subject (p. 142), but the

fear of hallucination continues. Frightening as they are, these hallucinations are the only links with the past: by evoking Emmanuèle's image before him, Walter can retain some belief in her continued existence. This necessary vision is all that peoples the night, and a final hallucination about hallucination itself disappearing brings consciousness of what death must be, a night without dreams:

> La nuit, j'ai vu les visions échapées, les visions du passé s'évanouir. Les souvenirs s'en vont; je les ai vus fuir. Les souvenirs du passé, les visions, les formes chères,—quand toutes s'en seront allées, la nuit sera noire. Dans la nue étoilée les images s'envolent; quand toutes seront envolés, ah! je pourrai dormir (pp. 166-167).

Fear of hallucination is counterbalanced by fear of there being no hallucination to interrupt the darkness which causes it.

In situations of extreme light and especially of total darkness, Walter thus fears three things: reduction, leading to a loss of control, which can bring on unwelcome discovery. In order to avoid these results, he seeks to exist totally at the grey area between light and dark, recognizing dawn and dusk as his most comfortable environments in the outside world, and attempting to fix a controlled level of light. Walter's aversion to bright light and to total darkness is motivated not by fear of them as objective phenomena, but by their effect upon his inner,

contemplative life. Indeed, their occurrence in these notebooks of a life where nothing was manifested to others must be as extensions of Walter's interior life. It is not only as forces acting upon his intellectual and moral existence that light and darkness appear in the Cahiers d'André Walter, but also as a construction en abyme, paralleling Walter's intellectual position and conduct. The same reasons and fears which cause him to seek out atmospheres of shade and moderate light cause him to dwell at the grey area between moral and intellectual extremes, where he attempts to fix a midpoint and thus to find comfort away from the tensions of oppositions. His search and his self-analysis are like light; they must not be allowed to attain full intensity, for the same risks (reduction, loss of control, and unwelcome discovery) await him at moral and intellectual polarities, as await him in deep darkness and bright light. Classical unity prevails in this first Gidian protagonist: he seeks a light-surrounding which parallels his moral situation.

All that which is most real to André Walter cannot stand the full light of day: "Par rapport à l'homme;—il faut la pénombre où l'on sente vaguement transparaître le mystère" (p. 137). His self, which disappears under the press of impressions during the day, becomes overly clear when vision is no longer impression but expression,

hallucination stemming from himself. Darkness causes him to recognize not only the beauty and uniqueness of the self, but the existence of the enemy within, and finally to recognize the ephemeral situation of the self. He comes very close to recognizing the illusory nature of his ideals under these circumstances, but since the illusions are necessary to his continued existence, he prefers to keep them in half-light and half-darkness, where their mystery is unimpaired. Everything he believes eventually comes very close to exposure as fraud or illusion, as an analysis of Walter's ideals will reveal. The protagonist who prefers shaded and filtered light also prefers shaded, filtered contemplation of his condition. When the illusory nature of his ideals and beliefs becomes nearly apparent, contemplation is turned aside to another object: the full light of his own consciousness is never applied, and certain areas are left enough in mysterious shade to allow them to continue. It is this which leads to the continuing cycle of stages in Les Cahiers d'Andre Walter. Some ideals and beliefs are very nearly exposed more than once, but the glance is diverted in time to allow them to continue.

André Walter realizes that the ideal cannot rationally exist with the real. From early on in the Cahiers, the realization that Cartesian separation of body and soul cannot be completely realized, that body and soul are

inseparable and interdependent, comes clearly to him:

> Et tu me dis, ami qu'il ne faut pas se soucier du corps, mais bien le laisser paître aux lieux qu'il convoîte;—mais la chair corrompt l'âme, une fois corrompue! on ne peut mettre du vin pur en des vaisseaux qui se pourissent! La chair fait l'âme à soi, si l'âme ne la domine d'abord;—et il faut qu'elle l'asservisse (p. 45).

He clearly realizes that the inner ideal very much depends on the real: fear of reduction to the nearly-animal level appears here, and the fear of losing control if the body is not subjugated. He refuses to admit this interdependence into his credo, and finishes the entry by consciously disregarding it: "Alors romantique parce que mon sang bouillonne... Tant pis! l'illusion de l'idéal est bonne et je la veux garder" (p. 45). Whether or not the soul depends on the body, Walter has refused to decide; he sees that it must, but averts his glance in time to keep the illusion of an independent ideal alive. In doing so, he manifests the third fear of extreme situations, the fear of making unwanted discoveries. This begins a cycle where the same problems return, since he refuses to end them by decision. He sees subsequently that the soul depends on the body at least for expression:

> La triste chose et dont j'ai bien souffert, que l'âme n'ait, pour révéler ses tendresses, d'autres signes que les caresses des désirs impudiques aussi; elle s'y méprend, elle s'y leurre... (p. 66).

But at the same time, by avoiding any extreme choice, he can separate the two when he finds it tempting to do so:

"Non, le corps n'est pas un indispensable interprète; il est des communions plus subtiles, des baisers qu'il ignore, et les plus suaves caresses s'échangent au-delà des espaces, —quand il repose" (p. 99). By remaining at the area between moral extremes, by refusing to decide whether the ideal can or cannot exist together with the real, Walter succeeds in maintaining a precarious balance without resolution. It is not the lack of possible decisions, but the aversion to discard any possibility, even a tired illusion, which prolongs André Walter's debate with himself. Just as when seeking favorable light, Walter gravitates toward the midpoint between extremes. His indecision, his refusal to choose, prolongs the dilemma and reinforces the creative tension, permitting discussion to recur cyclically.

Other ideals supportive to the existence of an independent Ideal are very nearly exposed as incapable of existing in the real world, but prolonged in Walter's belief by this same means of refusing to recognize the illusion as such. Belief in the ideal requires a central Truth, and Walter realizes that no single Truth can exist:

> 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 que la raison surtout approuve: les sentiments mènent l'homme et non pas les idées. On reconnaît l'arbre à ses fruits; doctrine à ce qu'elle suggère. La meilleure sera celle qui dira les mots d'amour pour que l'homme avec joie se dévoue...: Seigneur! à qui irions-nous? Tu as les paroles de la vie éternelle (p. 54; Gide's stress).

He realizes the relativity of truth, the non-existence of any monolithic Truth, but ends the passage by calling to God for a single belief. The fears here are the same: reduction of all values to a single lower level, the fear of losing control (in this case control of salvation by ignorance of what system he must follow), and fear of discovering the relativity of the absolute, contrary to his expectations. No final decision is attained. Only by diverting his contemplation from the relativity of truth, by retreating from an extreme moral stand, does Walter retain a possible Truth.

Chastity is Walter's most constant pursuit, the goal which he finds most elusive and most necessary to his integrity and salvation. It too comes very near to being exposed as fraudulent:

> Oui, vanité, la chasteté! Vanité—C'est un orgueil qui se déguise; pouvoir se croire supérieur, très noble au-dessus des autres;—il ne faudrait pas s'en douter, que cette chasteté s'ignore.... Si encore l'on triomphait: mais on ne supprime rien;—mais le Malin sitôt traqué se transfigure; ainsi que l'antique Protée, on ne vainc jamais qu'une à une toutes ses multiples formes,—aussitôt il se mute prestigieusement en une délectation plus spécieuse et plus subtile, et découvre les perspectives tentatrices de sensualités plus savantes.—La continence dépravée! comme perversité, c'est assez délicat!—O Seigneur! écartez de moi le blasphème (p. 171).

Walter's fear of reduction shows in the possible equation of good with evil. Chastity may be only a subtle form of perversion, reducing the entire moral hierarchy of his

credo to a single level. His dread of losing control comes out in the reference to Proteus: how is one to deal with Satan when he is impossible to identify? And his final fear of making an unwanted discovery shows clearly in the last words of this passage, when he calls to God to spare him such thoughts. Again, the final lines turn away from discovery and thus avoid disillusionment. The ideal is impossible to realize, the real too dreadful to admit, and André Walter continues at the level between extreme choices.

Often, his glance is diverted from these near-revelations to rest upon something seemingly admirable—philosophy, music, creative writing, reason—but the nature of vision is such that each one of these false idols is nearly overturned. The defense is the same in each case, to discontinue the analysis while the illusion yet remains. Reading, metaphysics, virtue, reason: almost everything Walter finds admirable, absolute, or ideal dissolves under close scrutiny, and scrutiny must thus be avoided. Each of these is taken up in turn, nearly discredited, but set aside in the shade where it can continue as illusion before its value is entirely destroyed. Walter's three basic fears, demonstrated in his light surroundings, are at the base of each of these refusals to choose.

Reading and reason—pleasureable evening occupations in earlier days— are rejected together in favor of the soul:

> La connaissance intuitive est la seule nécessaire. Par delà les phénomènes aux pluralités contingentes, contempler les vérités ineffables.—La raison devient inutile; il faut la répudier pour qu'elle ne vienne pas, fallacieuse, devant nos yeux hallucinés, lever ses arguments troubles. Les sciences sont dangereuses, car elles exaltent la raison: après, elle parle haut et se veut autoritaire; les lectures l'enorgueillissent ... et de quoi? Quand l'esprit lit, le coeur sommeille, —et sa ferveur tiédit sous les poussières érudites.
>
> Donc, ne plus lire, sinon beaucoup la Bible,—et relire doucement quelque sage classique (p. 110).

All that which troubles intuitive knowledge, all which threatens the ideal, must be avoided if the illusion is to remain. Since reason cannot attain the ideal, it compromises it and must be disregarded. All that favors reason is equally dangerous. But the search for the ideal fares no better than reason: "Spéculations abstraites: poursuite de vent, course après la chimère—ô le mirage, pendant la vie, des choses d'au-delà de la vie..." (p. 150). Again, the reaction is not to discard the frustrating pursuit, or to regard it as impossible, or even to study it more deeply and thus to decide. This entry is followed by praise of <u>ferveur</u> (p. 151), and then by a return to work on <u>Allain</u> (p. 151). The cycle is permitted to continue because the direct and penetrating glance is averted before the illusion can be destroyed, and debate is pushed into the shadows away from the full light of reason.

This pattern of near-discovery of illusion followed by resumption of work is frequent. Despair is never far from full realization of life's emptiness:

> Que fais-je ici? enfoui dans cette solitude, absorbé dans la contemplation de mon rêve,—je me consume moi-même; il n'en surgira rien.
>
> Stériles, les grands espoirs! stériles, les pensées, les recherches et les travaux qui font que le front se relève;—stériles mes tendresses aussi: mes larmes coulent sur moi-même, elles n'auront consolé personne.
>
> Stérile aussi ma chair, stérile volontairement, péniblement, dans la poursuite d'une chasteté vaine.
>
> Inutile—tout entier; n'avoir rien fait—ne rien faire... ô les ambitions d'autrefois!—toujours le rêve des choses sublimes et la réalisation d'aucune.
>
> Et maintenant des désespoirs; c'est ça—des regrets lâches!
>
> Réveille-toi! toi qui dors et te relève d'entre les morts!
>
> Allain est là. Travaille et regimbe—et ne regarde plus en arrière...(p. 123).

From a point very near the abyss of despair, from contemplation of le néant, Walter's attention shifts to Allain and he continues to work. More and more, as other illusions near destruction due to a penetrating look, Allain is the only admirable object, the only worthwhile pursuit to ease the mind from despair at its condition, and the mid-point to which Walter retreats after near-disillusionment.

Viture itself, the single ideal pursuit, nearly dissolves into relativity in an early entry:

> Je cherche où est la vertu?
>
> La vertu serait le bien sans qu'elle le sache... Oui, sans qu'après, auprès d'elle, je revendique des droits à une estime plus grande... (. . .)
>
> —Me laisser calomnier, fût-ce par elle, et vaincre la révolte de l'orgueil; accepter l'accusation injuste, sans chercher à s'en défendre, de sorte qu'elle me croie pire que je ne suis. Cela serait superbe! (pp. 82-83).

Virtue is self-denying: if it knows itself, it is not virtue. It must seek non-recognition, non-existence, a nirvana-state of existence without consciousness of existence. Further, it is based here on its opposite, on injustice and misrecognition by others. Virtue is thus relative, based not even on its self-denying existence in itself, but on the injustice of Emmanuèle. The ideal again proves relative. But the illusion remains of virtue as a worthwhile ideal pursuit, and Walter continues to view it as "superbe."

In each of these cases, Walter approaches the abyss of despair, but always pulls back at the exact moment when prolonged concentration would lead the thin illusion to disappear and to be replaced by le néant. He fears the discovery of emptiness and avoids the last step which would lead him to the abyss, just as he fears extremes of light and darkness. He fears that the surface will be stripped away to leave nothing behind it, even in his relationship with Emmanuèle. He believes that she loves him, and believes that he can penetrate and understand her soul: "Loin de moi, de nouveau ton esprit dominait ton âme" (p. 60); "Nous ne pensions plus, nous regardions penser l'autre, et c'était même chose" (p. 64); "ton esprit me dérobait ton âme" (p. 77); "le regard, transparent, mais pour nous seuls" (p. 99). In this as in all things, he

has no absolute indication, only subjective phenomena which prove nothing except by his interpretation: "J'ai relu tes lettres. (. . .) Elles te feraient bien mal connaître; si elles étaient le seul souvenir que j'ai gardé de toi.... (. . .) Ton esprit en chassait ton âme" (p. 59). In this last passage there appears the possibility that his love for Emmanuèle is entirely one-sided: only his knowledge of her soul keeps these letters from showing him that she sought to escape from him rather than to commune with him. Since he knows that souls cannot be transparent and must rely on the body to manifest themselves ("et les plus semblables encore demeureront PARALLELES" [p. 68; Gide's stress], he evades the fact that he cannot perfectly know her soul, and that his own interpretation is again subjective, far from the absolute. He also has the intimate proof of her glance, the soul's own form of communication, but this is felt, not proven: "et tu me regardais; —je sentais ton regard sans le voir" (p. 85). Emmanuèle's reciprocal love might well be another of the illusions surrounding Walter, but this most essential of illusions must never come close to scrutiny. It remains in the shadows, and it is only by the uncontrollable vision of hallucination that he comes near uncovering this most necessary illusion, when she appears to him veiled and covered (pp. 142, 169), and he declines to lift the veil,

fearing to find only emptiness where he thought to find ideal love. Here Emmanuèle too is very nearly exposed as illusory, and only turning away before making the final discovery permits Walter to retain his desired beliefs.

André Walter's light-situation is thus in close parallel to his moral and intellectual position. He seeks actual surroundings of shade and controlled light, finding comfort in them as he finds comfort in other phenomena which block, attenuate, and filter forces too intense for him. Vision brought on by environments of bright light and total darkness inspires him with dread of reduction, loss of control, and unwanted discovery. What is true of vision is true also of his own self-analysis: it escapes the defined limits of moderation, and threatens to destroy. In both light and self-analysis, Walter must pursue the middle ground, somewhere between intensity and absence. He seeks to control light as he seeks to control discovery, so that he will not be forced to an extreme, and due to the same fears. If the epitaph for Allain, "CI-GIT ALLAIN QUI DEVINT FOU PARCE QU'IL CRUT AVOIR UNE AME" (p. 163) is meant to reflect upon Walter's own situation, it is a mistaken epitaph. Walter does not cease to exist because he follows the illusory ideal to the detriment of the real: he ceases to be because he will not resolve tensions: he fears the consequences of all decisions and acts, and most

especially the inevitable consequences of analytical discoveries which would destroy his illusions. Neither his vision nor his mind must rest too long on any object. The risk is that sustained analysis will discover le néant behind the apparent and illusory surface. And in this, the protagonist's light-situation exactly parallels his situation in the world. His fear of extremes extends to all things, to acts (even psychological acts) for which he might be responsible, and to his environment as well. His light-situation points up his dominant fear as well. His protestant upbringing makes him the master of his own fate, and he cannot allow himself to lose control of his physical situation any more than he could permit the loss of his moral self-control. In the end, of course, his fear is borne out. The madness which overcomes him is a total loss of control over all mental faculties of distinction between real and imaginary, and he thus falls into the situation he has dreaded more than any other.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Jacques Cotnam, "Le Subjectif de Gide ou les lectures d'André Walter (1889-1893)," Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), pp. 15-113.

[2]Ibid., p. 20.

[3]Ibid., p. 40.

[4]Ibid., p. 34.

[5]Jean Delay, "En écrivant André Walter," Table Ronde, 98 (février, 1956), p. 12.

[6]O'Brien, p. 43.

[7]O'Brien, p. 52.

[8]Renée Lang, André Gide et la pensée allemande (Paris: Plon, 1949).

[9]O'Brien, p. 45.

[10]As does Alain Goulet, p. 136.

[11]Mondor, p. 26.

[12]In a letter dated 12 mars, 1891. Quoted by Mondor, pp. 70-71.

[13]Delay, p. 14.

[14]Ireland, p. 49.

[15]O'Brien, pp. 69-70.

[16]O'Brien, p. 55.

[17]All references to Les Cahiers d'André Walter will be to the edition in O.C., I, pp. 27-175. Page references will appear in the text.

CHAPTER II

THE TRIUMPH OF LIGHT: LES NOURRITURES TERRESTRES

A fundamental reorientation takes place in the space of only six years between Les Cahiers d'André Walter and Les Nourritures terrestres. It is not surprising that such a sudden transformation would occur in the Protean Gide, when many artists among his contemporaries, notably Cézanne and Gauguin, found their perception of color and light (and consequently of reality as perceived) changed by their experience of a more intense southern light. By the time of the publication of Les Nourritures terrestres in 1897, Gide had on more than one occasion travelled to the South,[1] and his perception was altered by the African sun to that of an impressionist viewing external light-play. Gide had of course travelled before to other regions, spending time in the South of France with his family, and once travelling to Spain,[2] but the trip in 1893 with Paul Laurens to Africa was his first escape from both familiar landscapes and family influences. Iceland, Gide later stated, could as easily have been his chosen destination,[3]

but the warmer southern regions had clearly attracted him from his childhood, when his favorite readings were from the Thousand and One Nights.[4] And he left with specific ideas on what he would find in travelling: he and Laurens had fixed certain goals for the trip, and Gide left as a symbolist "with the deliberate intention of discovering the imagined harmony."[5] What he actually found was a wild variety of sensations which caused him to re-evaluate his concept of reality, to turn from André Walter's concentration of the self inspired by Schopenhauer, toward an open self without limits or boundaries.[6] Gide had been a symbolist acolyte for several years, introduced to Mallarmé by Pierre Louis, and although some critics feel that he was at most a "half-hearted symbolist,"[7] the experience of new sensations caused him to break at least with orthodox symbolism by writing Paludes in 1895.[8] Paludes was a satiric attack upon the dry life of literary salons, an ironic masterpiece with more destructive than constructive elements, facilitating a clean break with such salons, but barely hinting at another alternative for living. It is not a substitute for or an answer to previous ways of seeing reality, but a parody of them.

Les Nourritures terrestres constitute the first genuine elaboration of a world-view after Les Cahiers d'André Walter, and replace the symbolist's transcendental

perspective with the impressionist's atomization of reality. Symbolism and Mallarmé's school influence both Gide's earlier and later work, but for Les Nourritures terrestres he totally discarded the attempt to transcend reality. Here he retreats from transcendence and the intrasubjective to reality's subjective manifestation as sensation. This is in fact a regression rather than the usual development, the point of view moving from within the mind to the retina of the eye; painting at about this time was moving from subjective impression further into the consciousness, the last Cézanne capturing potential geometric shapes, representations of a universe within the mind and independent of objective phenomena.[9] André Walter's light-situation is the expression of his moral and philosophical vacillation between ideated absolutes. Ménalque's light environment, however, is impressionistic and closer to the two-dimensional creations of the early Cézanne which present only the subjective sensation as experienced.

Many aspects of André Walter's world-view cannot persist in the planometric impressionistic universe, where all is equal, and exterior reality only a flat surface for light to play upon.[10] Darkness loses its significance since its identity depends solely upon its correlative of light. André Walter's chiaroscuro, representing the warring of polar opposites at all levels of being, becomes

in Les Nourritures terrestres a changing pattern of light which it suffices to experience and to appreciate. The levelling extends to moral judgment. André Walter conceptualizes good and evil as moral extremes: Ménalque's disciple knows only diverse aspects of a single universal harmony, where morality is but a pedantic travesty for those incapable of life. From André Walter's quest for the au-delà of reality, Ménalque's disciple retreats to the en-deça of reality, where the individual exists at the subjective level and is important by his uniqueness.

The first few pages of Les Nourritures terrestres strive to set forth these new and strikingly different tenets, serving to pull down the symbolic universe of André Walter and to erect a new point of view, equally comprehensive and systematic, but with a totally different perspective. Having established this different angle of vision in the first book, the writer proceeds to employ it in the following six books. In studying light and darkness in Les Nourritures, one must follow first a qualitative change in angle of vision, then a related change in degree. Gide first shifts point of view from symbolist to impressionist perspective: the first book postulates this new vision of reality. Subsequent to this transformation and dependent upon it is a gradual progression toward the finite limits of impressionism,

proceeding by increasing levels which it is possible to follow throughout Les Nourritures terrestres.

The very first lines of this book postulate a position which seems at first not far from the symbolist principle of underlying significance: "Ne souhaite pas, Nathanael, trouver Dieu ailleurs que partout. Chaque créature indique Dieu, aucune ne le révèle. Dès que notre regard s'arrête à elle, chaque créature nous détourne de Dieu" (p. 61).[11] This seems reminiscent of André Walter: value is beyond the particular, in the au-delà. While everything indicates God, nothing serves as perfect indicator. But that which seems to be a transposition of neo-Platonic symbolist tenets (God here identifying with le Beau) dissolves almost immediately into pantheism: "Nous ne savons hélas, en attendant de Le trouver, où nous devons adresser nos prières. Puis on se dit enfin qu'il est partout, n'importe où, l'Introuvable, et on s'agenouille au hasard" (p. 63). Here is a major step back from the search for transcendence to a more certain pursuit, a more tangible quarry than the chimera, a retreat by the protagonist to a southern world filled with colors, sounds, textures, odors, and tastes. Pantheistic universality is accessible simply because all which one perceives participates in the harmonious unity: while a higher order unifies all individual perceptions, it is in a sense on the

same level. The sum of accessible sensation is God, and any higher level ceases to exist except in quantity. With the situation of a single level of existence in which merge the physical concept of nature and the metaphysical concept of God, all that which created moral conflict in André Walter dissolves into a single phenomenon, and the groundwork for an impressionistic attitude toward reality is laid. In a very few sentences, all is reduced to a single level, all phenomena are aspects of a single unity, and worship joins pleasure and pain at a single level, fervor being the proper attitude toward all experience.

This first book of Les Nourritures terrestres contains the essentials of flattening all of nature to a single level, a two-dimensional surface, abundantly available to the impressionistic consciousness. Once the universe is reduced to a single but multi-faceted phenomenon holding no Platonic or symbolic significance, the au-delà has disappeared, and significance must be situated somewhere within the remaining dimensions. In the first book of the Nourritures, significance is re-situated within the consciousness itself: from a universe of "self-nature-ideal," reduction to pantheistic unity has left only self and nature. But both of these necessarily exist in a symbiotic relationship, neither complete without the other:

> Mais plutôt les sources seront où les feront couler nos désirs; car le pays n'existe qu'à mesure que le forme notre approche, et le paysage à l'entour, peu à peu, devant notre marche se dispose; et nous ne voyons pas au bout de l'horizon; et même près de nous ce n'est qu'une successive et modifiable apparence (p. 62).

Here the consciousness actively creates. Only by being witnessed subjectively does reality come into being. This is not the first time that the creative role of subjective reflection emerges in Gide's writings: as early as the summer of 1891, his first published work contains a similar concept of the central role of consciousness, upon which the landscape depends for its being.[12] But in this arrangement where the final "ne...que" reduces nature to sensation, consciousness is stressed almost to the exclusion of objective reality, which is not wholly accurate in the continuing relationship between the two. Consciousness and reality interact, and each both limits and surpasses the other: each is infinitely available and supremacy of the one is only momentary in a continued interaction. This superiority of consciousness is a stage in development of appreciation, a stage where distance still exists. The witnessing individual's integrity is still complete, and his importance guaranteed by his distance from the object: "Que <u>l'importance</u> soit dans ton regard, non dans la chose regardée" (p. 63; Gide's stress). Complete subjectivity, the removal of importance from

outside to the retina of the eye, clearly appears in this capital sentence; but equally visible is a consciousness unwilling to lose its integrity by merging with exterior reality in the act of perception. A line separates "ton oeil" from "la chose regardée," and importance is assigned to the eye alone.

This is just the beginning of fervor, the first step toward becoming Vision. Impartiality removes the individual further from previous prejudices, but continues to assure his primary role in perception. This is not yet fervent worship of sensation. The next stage diminishes distance, and effaces the line between thing and eye:

> Nathanael, le malheur de chacun vient de ce que c'est toujours chacun qui regarde et qu'il subordonne à lui ce qu'il voit. Ce n'est pas pour nous, c'est pour elle que chaque chose est importante. Que ton oeil soit la chose regardée (p. 89).

A new relationship is established here. Even a comparison of the two sentences, "Que l'importance soit dans ton regard, non dans la chose regardée," and "Que ton oeil soit la chose regardée" shows significant development. A doubt created by separating regard and chose in the former is removed in the latter. Importance disappears, and with it judgment, which would be rationalization of the object. Le regard becomes l'oeil, an equal participant with la chose regardée in a single act of perception, a relationship where neither exists without the other.

Any suggestion of separation or individual integrity apart from perception is gone in the second sentence, in what seems nearly a mathematical formula of identity. Self and other appeared to be separate, and are now shown to be constituent parts of a single act. This removes the final pretention to hierarchy, and with its removal comes a totally planometric universe.

The universe reduced to a single level, and the equality of participants in the act of perception once situated, a number of resultant changes must occur from André Walter's universe, that of le vieil homme weighed down by the accumulation of culture, and Ménalque's world, that of le nouvel homme who prides himself in liberation. One necessary modification is the view of time. André Walter is a being weighed down by the press of linear time. He is in search of a lost past, involved in an attempt to re-create memory intensely, to the point of making it absolutely present. In this attempt, he recognizes cyclical recurrence (of despair in the dark, of religious fervor in the right conditions, etc.) but he also recognizes on-going progress (his progress toward madness, the gradual completion of Allain, etc.). A moment's overwhelming presence is to him a matter of dread, too intense to be withstood. Nathanael's interlocutor, on the other hand, recognizes only the moment:

"Nathanael, ne cherche pas, and l'avenir, à retrouver jamais le passé. Saisi de chaque instant la nouveauté irressemblable et ne prépare pas tes joies, ou sache qu'en son lieu préparé te surprendra une joie autre" (p. 84). Each instant is now but a framework for new spontaneous experiences, and "these instants are radically discontinuous."[13] The relationship of one moment to all time is a parallel with the relationship of one object to all of nature, of one sensation to the sum total: since the underlying unity is incomprehensible by its size and by its very nature, it can be appreciated only to the extent to which the available and comprehensible atom participates in the organic whole. In this, only the particular moment, just as the particular object, is available to the consciousness. To attempt transcendence, to try to go beyond the particular, would thus be foolish as well as futile, since all of nature and time are appreciable only in their atomization. Reality is thus no longer static or consistent, and reflects no au-delà: reality is now composed of unique atoms without significance apart from new experiences they may offer.

In Les Nourritures terrestres, all ground rules for a new and intensely different view of reality are thus laid down from the first chapters. In order to convert Nathanael, a world-view is first postulated, and then

illustrated throughout the remaining books, a surprisingly traditional and logical proceeding for what the writer would give as a spontaneous lyrical song to fervor and the union of consciousness with reality which exists only through sensation. But Gide saw himself as always capable of allying such divergent states as passion and lucidity, lyricism and cold reasoning in his writing,[14] and there is a conscious intent beneath the lyrical prose. Gabriel Teuler remarks that "Nathanael ne pouvait que feindre de résister. Il fut créé pour suivre."[15] This feigned resistance must be overcome as would any real objection, and Nathanael, at least, must be convinced to follow Ménalque. Much of what Ménalque teaches depends upon the destruction of received prejudice, and accompanying elaboration of a new world-view there is a negative counterpart, destruction of other preconceptions. Ménalque's disciple finds it necessary to rase before rebuilding, and the end of the first book leaves the disciple with a tabula rasa. But this tabula rasa has been cleared for a purpose, and Nathanael is freed in order that he might follow a specific interpretation of life, a sort of impressionistic Odyssey guided by Ménalque's disciple.

In the course of the impressionistic voyage, light will be all-important: vision experiences only light itself, since sensation is the only point of contact with

reality. Reality and consciousness interact in the only valid act, perception, and neither can exist without its counterpart. But to come to the realization that the self is an equal partner rather than the controlling force in perception requires an abdication of the self, a levelling which is beyond the beginner's power. At this point, consciousness retains an element of choice, at least as the more voluntary of the participants in perception: "Et tu seras pareil, Nathanael, à qui suivrait pour se guider une lumière que lui-même tiendrait en sa main" (p. 63). Nathanael must learn to see from his own perspective the uniqueness of his sensations. Ménalque's disciple doubts that Nathanael can at this point understand what it has taken others a lifetime to grasp: "Peux-tu comprendre cela: toute sensation est d'une présence infinie" (p. 66). Nathanael must be led through successive stages to gradually evolve within himself a realization which cannot be imposed from without. There is qualitative change, a modification of angle of vision from Les Cahiers d'André Walter to the end of the first book of Les Nourritures terrestres. Largely destructive of previous concepts, the first book leads virtually back to zero. Within the remaining books of the Nourritures, there is quantitative change, a gradual progression toward the ultimate sensation of light with the consciousness abdicating more and more to impression as it travels farther south.

As the pantheistic statement made at the beginning of Les Nourritures terrestres is misleadingly similar to a symbolist statement, so the quality of light from the beginning is misleadingly similar to the attenuated, reflected light which André Walter finds necessary. Ménalque's disciple has consciously disowned Walter's form of life:

> Obscures opérations de l'être; travail latent, genèses d'inconnu, parturitions laborieuses; somnolences, attentes; comme les chrysalides et les nymphes, je dormais; je laissais se former en moi le nouvel être que je serais, qui ne me ressemblait déjà plus. Toute lumière me parvenait comme au travers de couches d'eaux verdies, à travers feuilles et ramures; perceptions confuses, indolentes, analogues à celles des ivresses et des grandes étourdissements (p. 69).

He makes a conscious association in this passage between a form of life and a particular intensity of light. Even the birth of le nouvel être is qualified first as a change in appreciation of light rather than in its intensity. Le vieil homme sequesters, vegetates, waiting for le nouvel être, and finally the change comes upon him unbidden:

> Puis je me réveillais de très loin, en sueur, le coeur battant, la tête somnolente. La lumière qui s'inflitrait d'en bas, entre les fentes des volets clos, et renvoyait au plafond blanc les reflets de la pelouse, cette clarté du soir m'était la seule chose délicieuse, pareille à la clarté qui paraît douce et charmante, venue entre les feuilles et les eaux, et qui tremble, au seuil des grottes, après qu'on a longtemps senti vous envelopper leurs ténèbres (p. 70).

Here is no great change in intensity: leaves and water filter the light, and the shutters are still closed in the second passage. But there is progression already toward ferveur, toward the appreciation of sensation, even in the reductive phrasing of "la seule chose délicieuse." Importance has now been readjusted, resituated away from the priorities of le vieil homme, and this is a first step toward Vision.

From this level, light intensifies to a stronger level with the removal from indoors to outdoors. Gone are the closed shutters, but the intensity of full light is yet too strong for the apprentice:

> Sous le soleil tout se pâmait. Nous allions chaque après-midi nous reposer sous la terrasse, abrités unpeu de l'extraordinaire éclat du jour. C'était le temps où les arbres à cônes, chargés de pollen, agitent aisément leurs branches pour répandre au loin leur fécondation. (. . .) ...le pollen des conifères sortit comme une fumée d'or des branches (p. 72).

The sun's full light is still too strong at this point, causing everything to pale and forcing the central consciousness to seek shelter. But progress is made here from the indirect light of the previous passage. From something which can parvenir, s'infiltrer, light has come to almost full force. It has already begun to take on body, filling the air as the golden pollen reflects it. One might also note a transposition of impressionistic painting techniques in this: "brume," "poussière," filling

space, reflecting and distorting light in a manner reminiscent of the Impression: soleil levant from which the movement draws its name.[16] In such an atmosphere, light begins to take on an importance beyond any concrete object which merely serves to reflect it. But for the moment its existence is still tenuous, gaseous, able to be disrupted by the slightest breeze.

Still another stage in progression toward the absolute sensation, the ultimate sense-impression, occurs in Rome:

> Ce qui fit ma joie ce jour-là, c'est quelque chose comme l'amour—et ce n'est pas l'amour—ou du moins pas celui dont parlent et que cherchent les hommes. —Et ce n'est pas non plus le sentiment de la beauté. Il ne venait pas d'une femme; il ne venait pas non plus de ma pensée. Ecrirai-je, et me comprendras-tu si je te dis que ce n'était là que la simple exaltation de la LUMIERE?
>
> J'étais assis dans ce jardin; je ne voyais pas le soleil; mais l'air brillait de lumière diffuse comme si l'azur du ciel devenait liquide et pleuvait. Oui, vraiment, il y avait des ondes, des remous de lumière; sur la mousse des étincelles comme des gouttes; oui vraiment, dans cette grande allée on eût dit qu'il coulait de la lumière, et des écumes dorées restaient au bout des branches parmi ce ruissellement de rayons (p. 97).

Light continues to solidify in a further stage yet farther south. Now it has become liquid, filling space, even creating the space around the central consciousnes. In a transposition reflective of its modification, it has become a tactile phenomenon, not merely a visual experience. It is a liquid capable of intoxicating. Capable also of assuming material presence, it retains an almost magical

protean quality: it can be mousse, goutte, onde, remous, heavy or weightless, airy or smothering. From this point begins a genuine adoration of light, a worship of visual perception.

The progression here becomes obvious in a matter of a few pages: Florence is a "ville d'études graves" (p. 96), in Rome the sudden realization about light's liquidity occurs, Naples is awash in light and brings to mind a "petite boutique (de) coiffeur devant la mer et le soleil" (p. 97). Naples exists in the area between light and sea, and is remembered only for the sensations collected there. References of value begin to multiply within the text: light confers value to objects, makes them what they are. Light makes precious metals and jewels of all things that reflect it: "la mer lointaine et que la lune argentait" (p. 103; my stress); "les tiges de fenouil (l'éclat de leur floraison d'or verdi, sous la lumière d'or)" (p. 105; my stress). From this point forward, each object is judged on its light reception and reflection: this remains as the only value judgment, adding to the dislike of property and fixity which would bring Gide into a polemic with Barrès.

At this moment, when the sensation is strong and its value established as the only real criterion, a need occurs to intensify the sensation, either by increasing its

intensity or by sharpening subjective receptivity:

> Le pain que j'emportais avec moi, je le gardais parfois jusqu'à la demi-défaillance; alors il me semblait sentir moins étrangement la nature et qu'elle me pénétrait mieux; c'était un afflux du dehors; par tous mes sens ouverts j'acceuillais sa présence; tout, en moi, s'y trouvait convié (p. 117).

Almost as an intoxicating drug, the sensation becomes a more demanding habit, requiring not only maintenance of the existing level, but intensification and supplemental doses. Occasional momentary retreats occur, the writer returning to his Paris apartment of former times, to darkness and the lamp (p. 118), but these serve only to intensify sensation by providing sharper contrast: thus even a step back serves the development toward stronger sensation. This level does indeed last longer than most: twenty-five years are spent in Paris (or fifteen, perhaps)[17] in the pursuit of culture, self-improvement, and friendship. But in the text only a paragraph summarizes these years (p. 120), a length equal only to the momentary stopover in Paris which preceded them (p. 118). Since time is subjective, moments separated, and continuity only accidental, the measurement of days spent doing anything could only be artificial, and both the one day and the twenty-five years are foreign to the development of sensation. Ménalque's disciple changes no more in the twenty-five years than he does in one day, since this discontinuous

self "could not preserve into another instant the identity which the first conferred on it."[18] This is, perhaps, a nod toward the necessity of assuring one's fortune in order to assure freedom from fixity.

Even after the brief interruption of a quarter of a century, descriptive technique and fascination with sensation remain unchanged:

> Le ciel était de la couleur de l'or: des ramures légères, parties de la terrasse où j'étais, pendaient vers le couchant splendide, ou s'élançaient, presque sans feuilles, vers la nuit. De la ville montait ce qui semblait une fumée; c'était de la poussière illuminée qui flottait, s'élevait à peine au-dessus des places où plus de lumière brillait. Et parfois... une fusée...dont les étincelles d'or pâle tombent (p. 125; my stress).

Light is still embodied, nearly concrete because it and the dust are but a single phenomenon, and still confers the value of precious objects to all that which it strikes. Fascination with light seems especially strong in the changeability of light, in the dynamic surprise of sunset and rockets in the evening sky. It is as if light is airy, weightless, in the morning's mist ("brume," p. 127) or in the evening's dust, and assumes more concrete physical form under the midday sun, becoming liquid and foam.

Light's value is increasingly the only value, light's conferred reality the only reality. Even before the diarist consciously formulates this as a tenet of impressionistic existence, the fact that light alone confers

reality shows in the subjective identification of certain phenomena: "Et nous entrâmes vers le soir dans une ville sillonnée de canaux, une ville couleur de l'or ou de la cendre et qu'on nommait Amsterdam ou Venise, suivant qu'elle était brune ou dorée" (p. 136). Of all things one might say of a city, only its capacity for light reflection gives it true identity. It is merely a collection of buildings and canals, capable of reflecting light to a greater or lesser degree, and Amsterdam becomes Venice, when illuminated by the proper light. Their value is equal if their light-reception is equal, and the two are interchangeable.

Although full sunlight at this point is still too intense for complete comfort, it is now bearable. In Italy, "le jour trop lumineux" (p. 136) can be escaped or attenuated near "des sources qu'un bosquet de chênes abritait" (p. 137). Leaves play an essential role, sheltering from full light, even from moonlight in a progressive sequence from moonrise to moonset (pp. 141-142). Gradual progress from shelter to full light develops in the cinquième livre with the coming of autumn and the dying of leaves. References to dead leaves multiply—"feuilles rouies" (p. 150), "m'asseoir...parmi les feuilles mortes" (p. 153), "ses feuilles roussies tombaient" (p. 154). Outside light when autumn comes cannot

be filtered by leaves, and the writer is left with a choice between shelter inside or full light outside. He chooses first the inside, singing the praises of eight farm buildings: each one is pleasant, but presents only a limited diversity to the senses, and none long occupies the impressionistic consciousness. "La dernière porte ouvrait sur la plaine" (p. 161), and to resumption of the search for newer and greater intensity of light, in a nature now without sheltering leaves.

As light progresses in importance and intensity, its opposite becomes more forbidding. In a single reference to total darkness, Nathanael's tutor finds absence of light repulsive: "La lumière des torches vacille, est oppressée; puis il y a un encroit tellement sombre qu'on se dit: Non jamais je ne pourrai remonter plus avant" (p. 167). To be in blackness is to be deprived of the single sensation which is most overpowering: it closely approximates non-existence. Self-preservation of the impressionistic consciousness must dictate a continuous bath in sensation, and darkness here is inadmissable. Darkness succeeds even in imparting a "goût d'ombre" (p. 170) to those waters which light never touches.

Just as the "exaltation de la lumière" came suddenly upon the writer in Rome as a sudden revelation of light's physical and nearly-concrete existence, so light's ability

to confer value and reality suddenly formulates clearly in his passive consciousness, marking another step toward the ultimate impression.

> Ils ne sont pas si brillants que les perles; ils ne sont pas si luisants que l'eau; les cailloux du sentier pourtant brillent. Réceptions douces de la lumière dans les sentiers couverts où je marchais.
>
> Mais de la phosphorescence, Nathanael, ah! que dirai-je? La matière est infiniment poreuse à l'esprit, acceptante de toutes lois, obéissante! transparente de part en part. Tu n'as pas vu les murs de cette cité musulmane rougir le soir, s'éclairer faiblement la nuit. Murs profonds où la lumière, durant le jour, s'est déversée; murs blancs comme le métal, à midi la lumière s'y thésaurise; dans la nuit vous sembliez la redire, la raconter très faiblement.—Cités, vous m'avez semblé transparentes! vues de la colline, de là-bas, dans la grande ombre de la nuit enveloppante, vous luisiez, pareilles à ces creuses lampes d'albâtre, images d'un coeur religieux—pour la clarté qui les emplit, comme poreuses, et dont la lueur suppure autour, comme du lait.
>
> Cailloux blancs des routes dans l'ombre; réceptacles de clarté. Bruyères blanches dans les crépuscules des landes; dalles de marbre des mosquées; fleurs des grottes de mers, actinies.... Toute blancheur est de la clarté réservée (pp. 171-172).[19]

From this realization comes the first act of judgment in the Nourritures terrestres since the désinstruction of the first book:"J'appris à juger tous les êtres à leur capacité de réception lumineuse; certains que le jour sûrent accueillir le soleil, m'apparûrent ensuite, la nuit, comme des cellules de clarté" (p. 172). This does indeed mark a further stage in impressionistic development: from the equality of all forms and varieties stated in the first book, the writer has passed to an infatuation with light,

then to intoxication, then to the point of seeing nothing else. In judging all by its capacity to reflect light, the writer has established a single criterion, and formed from the pursuit of sensation a personal code of sorts. The code is of course entirely different from that which he originally destroyed within himself, but a choice of any criterion is binding, even when the subjective consciousness alone judges without outside interference. From this moment on, the writer is bound to a course which leads to the desert, no longer totally free, and certainly less disponible.

His choice of sensation alone is reflected in a stylistic change. Like the "petites touches" of impressionist paintings, short phrases are juxtaposed in a disjointed manner, evoking sensations but making no attempts at narrative unity or development:

> Deux heures.—Enfants couchés. Silence étouffant. Possibilité de musique, mais n'en pas faire. Odeur des rideaux de cretonne. Jacinthes et tulipes. Lingerie.
>
> Cinq heures.—Réveils en sueur; coeur battant; frissons; tête légère; disponibilité de la chair; chair poreuse et que semble envahier trop délicieusement chaque chose. Soleil bas; pelouses jaunes; yeux éclos dans la fin du jour. O liqueur de la pensée vespérale! Déroulement des fleurs du soir. Se laver le front d'eau tiède; sortir... Espaliers; jardins enclos de murs au soleil. Route; animaux revenant des pâtis; coucher de soleil inutile à voir— admiration déjà suffisante.
>
> Rentrer. Reprendre le travail près de la lampe (p. 174).

All senses are involved here, and the central consciousness, bombarded by a variety of sensations, has only to record the impressions received. An absence of finite verbs stresses both the separation of this moment from all others, and the passive state of the consciousness, which has become only a reflector and recorder of sensations. The sun serves to increase fervor when it ebbs, but with a proper level already established it proves "inutile." This is not to say it is unpleasant or unimportant, only that the sharpened consciousness is already at its most receptive, and fervor cannot be increased for the moment.

When fervor diminishes, the writer again finds it necessary to seek novelty and intensification: mere repetition never suffices:

> Je ne peux t'expliquer, Nathanael, ce désir exaspéré de nouveauté; il ne me semblait point effleurer, déflorer aucune chose; mais ma subite sensation était du premier coup si intense qu'elle ne s'augmentait ensuite par aucune répétition; de sorte que, s'il m'arriva souvent de retourner aux mêmes villes, aux mêmes lieux, c'était pour y sentir un changement de jour ou de saison, plus sensible en des lignes connues (pp. 176-177).

Realization comes after the fact: although he has long sought novelty in sensation, he formulates this fact clearly for the first time in this sixth book. Repeated sensation, like a coin passed too often from hand to hand, becomes less distinct. Even the nomadic life could become reductive, lose its advantage, if the consciousness is

not on guard to seek the new and the different even in familiar landscapes. Change in a given landscape, although a subtler form of sensation requiring a more practiced eye, is not as striking as a new and different landscape. It is for this reason, and to avoid forming any habit which might damage disponibilité, that new lands and landscapes, under new light, must be found.

The writer, gradually progressing toward more extreme forms of impressionism, comes to realize more about himself and about his world-view in this sixth book than in any of the others. He even attempts to define life as he experiences it, as a symphony of sensations:

> —J'y suis; j'occupe ce trou, où s'enfoncent:
> dans mon oreille: ce bruit continu de l'eau; grossi, puis apaisé, de ce vent dans ces pins; intermittent, des sauterelles, etc.
> dans mes yeux: l'éclat de ce soleil dans le ruisseau; le mouvement de ces pins... (tiens, un écureuil)... de mon pied, qui fait un trou dans cette mousse, etc.
> dans ma chair: (la sensation) de cette humidité; de cette mollesse de mousse (ah! quelle branche me pique?...); de mon front dans ma main; de ma main sur mon front, etc.
> dans mes narines: ...(chut! l'écureuil s'approche), etc.
>
> Et tout cela ensemble, etc., en un petit paquet;—c'est la vie;—est-ce tout?—Non! Il y a toujours d'autres choses encore (p. 182).

His consciousness is no longer an equal participant with nature in a single act of perception. Not only has matter

been reduced to a receptacle of light, but consciousness has been reduced to a receptacle of impressions, "ce trou, où s'enfoncent" a variety of sensations. It is, at most, a coordinator, capable of receiving many messages at the same moment, forming them into a "petit paquet," synchronizing them in a separate instant which is different from all other "petits paquets" of other moments consisting of other impressions. He would deny that he has been reduced to a mere reflective phenomenon: "crois-tu donc que je ne suis qu'un rendez-vous de sensations? Ma vie c'est toujours: CELA, plus moi-même" (p. 182). But what distinguishes this self from others is wholly a matter of <u>disponibilité</u>, and the physical impossibility of two selves filling the same hold in space at the same time. In what Guérard calls "the dialogue between the impulse to unify or concentrate the self, and the impulse to destroy and dissolve it,"[20] it is the latter which wins out, though the self seems reluctant to recognize its dissolution. The diarist promises to speak of himself at another time, but states that, "dans ce livre, je ne veux pas faire de personnalités" (p. 183). To distinguish no personalities is to reduce all to one. Any elitist prejudices are thus dismissed, any reductionist fears subordinated to an attempt to create a perfectly <u>disponible</u> consciousness, the lowest common denominator. "Et même moi, je n'y suis

que Vision" (p. 183). The individual personality is inactive and distinguished from others only by its receptive ability and its wider experience.

Having stated an extreme form of impressionism and defined his life as such, the writer is even more narrowly imprisoned in a single possible course of action. He has already stated goals, progressed to the limits of the possible, and at least partially exhausted nature's almost-limitless variety of sensations. To pursue the new and stronger sensation now requires more effort than before, and travel beyond the limits of previous experience. This is what he does in the course of the seventh book, making of it the pinnacle of the impressionist Odyssey, and perhaps the highest point possible in pure impressionism, both in style and in sensation.

Impressionistic style dominates the beginning of this book:

> Départ de Marseille. Vent violent; air splendide. Tiédeur précoce; balancement des mats.
> Mer glorieuse, empanachée. Vaisseau conspué par les flots. Impression dominante de gloire. Souvenir de tous les départs passés (p. 187).

No sentence is formed here. The first words serve to situate the description, and are alone in contributing to the narrative progression. Each of the other disjointed phrases serves a purely impressionistic purpose, evoking sense-impressions and proceeding from the exterior to the

interior. Verbs are completely absent from this passage, thus situating the impression as nearly independent of the consciousness which registers it. The sensation registers itself, but the "I" is absent from the account.

In the next entry, sentences nearly emerge, but the separation between sensations continues, forming a transition between the style above and a subsequent return to traditional sentences:

> Que de fois ai-je attendu l'aube...
> ... sur une mer découragée...
> et j'ai vu venir l'aube, sans que la mer en soir calmée.
> Sueurs aux tempes. Faiblesses. Abandons (p. 187).

This is a momentary regression in the progress toward stronger sensation. Ménalque's disciple seems to violate his own caution against seeking the past in the present or future. Time has been atomized in most of the Nourritures terrestres, and suddenly becomes linear in a moment of depression. Regret is linked directly to linear time, without which there can be no comparison or judgment. And it is an expression of regret which brings forth the first full sentence in the seventh book, the writer ruing circumstances which keep him from new and unique sensations:

> Mer acharnée. Ruissellements sur le pont.
> Trépignements de l'hélice.
> O! Sueur d'angoisse.
> Un oreiller sous ma tête brisée.
> Ce soir la lune sur le pont était pleine et splendide —et je n'étais pas là pour la voir (p. 188).

This last is not a statement of impression. It comes in upon the impressionistic consciousness and turns it aside from the impression of the moment. Further reflections follow this full sentence: the writer makes associations and finds himself to be "un bouchon—un pauvre bouchon sur les flots" (p. 188). This is of course the perfect situation, to be a cork floating on the waves, perfectly disponible and passive. Depressed with sea-sickness and meditation, he is nearly brought to denounce his chosen form of life. In order to remain pure Vision, the writer must go beyond former sensations, as shown in the phrase "Mon oeil lassé de voir" (p. 188). Boredom threatens him, and renewal can come only from a new set of perceptions. Even the helpless writer of Paludes sees that "La perception commence au changement de sensation,"[21] that it is insufficient to re-experience past sensations.

Repetition at a single level is now totally insufficient, the worn impression far too indistinct. Nathanael's tutor has at this moment become blasé, and consciously realizes it, regretting the time when all things were new and beautiful to him:

> N'est-ce pas que je vais retrouver dans l'aurore
> Lorsqu'elle paraîtra
> La saveur qu'elle avait quand j'y voyais encore
> Avec étonnement les clartés et les choses?
> Quand j'y viendrai laver mes paupières brûlées (p.191).

But a new level is available in Africa, and the stated hope

of renaissance is immediately answered, as if the writer knew exactly what he required and where to find it: "Tu n'imagines pas, Nathanael, ce que peut devenir enfin cet abreuvement de lumière; et la sensuelle extase que donne cette persistante chaleur..." (p. 191). With the coming of a constant, nearly unbearable light, a new level never before felt, fervor is reborn in Ménalque's disciple. The change is of course quantitative: light is not new to him, but the constant abreuvement of light suffices to renew all sensation. Its heat and constant liquidity are strikingly new:

> Je courus hier au haut des collines qui dominent Blidah, pour voir un peu plus longtemps le soleil: pour voir se coucher le soleil et les nuages ardents colorer les terrasses blanches. Je surprends l'ombre et le silence sous les arbres; je rôde dans la clarté de la lune; j'ai la sensation souvent de nager, tant l'air lumineux et chaud m'enveloppe et mollement me soulève (p. 192).

Light here is appreciated and experienced for itself more than at any previous point in the Nourritures. Yet even this liquid bath of light is capable of solidification. Light and honey are linked in a passage: "Eté! couleur d'or; profusion; splendeur de la lumière accrue; immense débordement de l'amour! Qui veut goûter du miel? Les cellules de cire ont fondu" (p. 197). Light is nearly solid, capable of building up, of accumulating, and there is for the first time a reference to its destructive properties as well as to its abundance. If the writer found it

necessary to seek actively nearly any sensation before his voyage, he discovers that under the African sun no search is required. New and unique sensations are available everywhere, and can be collected like honey from the rocks.

From this level of light, there is only one further step possible. Nathanael's tutor first praises the oasis, last outpost of life, then goes on to where only light itself exists: "Le lendemain, je n'aimai plus que le désert" (p. 198). Progression in degree again appears, from the green oasis to the desert villages (p. 199), where life is possible only at evening and dawn: full light at midday is destructive, unbearable, but some remnant of life remains. From this to the caravan (p. 201), the last remaining nomadic remnant of life before the desert, there is a thinning-out of life and of objects to reflect light. Ultimately, beyond oases and villages,

> la vie ne triomphait plus du désert—comme penché vers cette source de lumière, déjà trop éclatante et insoutenable aux regards, ai-je tendu vers toi mes désirs, vaste plaine de lumière tout inondée—de torride chaleur... quelle extase assez exaltée, quel assez violent amour, assez ardent pour vaincre l'ardeur du désert (p. 202).

Light alone can exist in the desert: but even here the writer follows a gradual evolution, passing from one level to the next, from grass to broken rock where life has been, then to clay desert where simple forms of life are

barely possible, and finally to the sand desert, where all life is totally impossible, where even the caravan is stopped (pp. 203-204). Light here is burning, destructive, in its own element and at full intensity:

> Désert de sable—vie exclue; il n'y a plus là que la palpitation du vent, de la chaleur. Le sable se veloute délicatement dans l'ombre; s'embrase au soir et paraît du cendre le matin (p. 204).

This pure sensation indicates nothing but itself. All mitigating objects, things which light might touch, are excluded, and light reaches the consciousness directly. The reflecting self becomes almost negligeable; it and the dust are the only things existing between sun and sand, and like the dust it has become completely atomized and passive. From this point on, no further progression is possible: this is the ultimage point in linear progress from discovery of light, to infatuation with it, to its gradual (and finally complete) domination of the consciousness. Light has overpowered the consciousness in this progression. At the first realization of perception as the only authentic act, both consciousness and light participated equally, each dependent upon the other. But the progression here favors the exterior phenomenon, since the impressionistic consciousness must seek stronger levels of sensation. The writer is gradually tempted to stronger and stronger levels of light, coming ultimately to the desert where light is fatally intense, where life is

excluded, and where the presence of any consciousness is completely gratuitous and accidental. Any pretense of equilibrium between consciousness and the light which causes sensation is destroyed under the full light of the desert sun, where light exists in its own domain and at its full intensity, regardless of whether or not it is perceived.

This is, of course, destructive of the consciousness except as reflector of sensation; light, sound, and other sensation-producing forces have completely dominated it, and it can no longer exist except to reflect. "Je ne comprends plus le mot: solitude: être seul en moi, c'est n'être plus personne; je suis peuplé" (pp. 209-210). This is not only a description of the self, it is a definition: to be is to be peopled, to experience sensations. The inverse is also true: not to experience is not to be, non-experience is death. Since time is discontinuous, "life is radically discontinuous against a background of death on which these instants (of life) appear as interruptions."[22] In order to live, the interruption must be continued. But having once attained the ultimate, nearly-pure sensation of light in its own element, no intensification is possible. All that is left is regret of those times when all was new and when the diarist knew sensations "si fortes qu'un peu plus et je n'aurais plus pu les

goûter" (p. 210). Bitterness and regret of time passed occupy the writer: "Attentes. Attentes; fièvres; heures de jeunesse en allées... Une ardente soif pour tout ce que vous appelez péché" (p. 212). Sensation has been habit-forming, destructive by its ever-increasing demands, to the point where nature's infinite variety has totally exhausted the resources of the reflecting consciousness to appreciate: "Mes sens s'étaient usés jusqu'à la transparence, et quand je descendis au matin vers la ville, l'azur du ciel entra en moi" (p. 214). He is now defenseless against nature's invasions, having retained nothing of himself apart from his function as mirror of sensations, and he is equally powerless to intensify sensations or to seek new ones. Having lived "as though an intense enjoyment of all senses and of every moment might fill at last certain vacant places of body and spirit,"[23] he finds himself irremediably vacant. Ménalque's disciple is, finally, a martyr to the quest for sensation, a hole which can no longer be filled.

He is one of the phosphorescent falling stars of the "Hymne en guise de conclusion," having only a limited capacity to glow, burning far more brilliantly than most, but burning out the sooner for that. Roger Martin du Gard finds that even the book itself could be judged by this final analogy, placing it among those books which are

"Utiles, mais qui n'ont qu'un temps parce que les générations qui en profitent, les usent."[24] If Gide never returns to this high point of impressionism, it is because, like Ménalque's disciple, he finds no further possibility for dépassement. Having gone to the desert in search of the pure sensation, no stronger possibility offers itself, and one more possibility for living has been pursued to its ultimate on paper. This is the first perfect opposition of two characters in Gide's writings: Ménalque's disciple is the opposite of André Walter, but his seed was within Walter. Choosing each momentarily, Gide chooses neither permanently, and elements of both survive in his later works.

FOOTNOTES

[1]O'Brien lists three trips to Africa prior to publication of the Nourritures, as do most critics. Jacqueline M. Chadourne in André Gide et l'Afrique (Paris: Nizet, 1968), p. 88, refers also to a fourth trip in 1897.

[2]Chadourne, p. 33.

[3]Si le Grain ne meurt, in Journal 1939-1949;Souvenirs (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), pp. 550-551.

[4]Chadourne, p. 17.

[5]Guérard, p. 8.

[6]G. W. Ireland, Gide (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), p. 17.

[7]Guérard, p. 14.

[8]Ireland, Gide, p. 13.

[9]Ortega Y Gasset, "On Point of View in the Arts," in The Dehumanization of Art and Other Writings on Art and Culture (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), pp. 97-120, considers this to be the major movement in modern art.

[10]That this levelling extends to all art forms and to all elements of literature has been brought out by William Barrett, "The Testimony of Modern Art," in Irrational Man: a Study in Existential Philosphy (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962), pp. 42-65.

[11]All references to Les Nourritures terrestres will be to the edition in O.C., II, pp. 55-223. Page numbers will appear in the text.

[12]Gide, "Reflets d'ailleurs," in La Wallonnie, juin-juillet-août, 1891, quoted by Allain Goulet, pp. 129-130: "Il me semblait que le paysage n'était plus qu'une émanation de moi-même projetée, qu'une partie de moi toute vibrante—ou plutôt, comme je ne me sentais qu'en lui, je m'en croyais le centre: il dormait avant ma venue, inerte et virtuel, et je le créais pas à pas en percevant ses harmonies; j'en étais la conscience même."

[13]Ireland, Gide, p. 20.

[14]Martin du Gard, p. 111.

[15]Teuler, p. 18.

[16]Such atmospheres are frequent in the Nourritures: see for examples pp. 68, 113, 121, 127, and 167.

[17]There is some doubt as to which is the actual duration. The passage is introduced by the sentence: "Pourtant à vingt-cinq ans, non lassé de voyages, mais tourmenté par l'excessif orgueil que cette vie nomade avait fait croître, je compris ou me persuadai que j'étais mûr enfin pour une forme nouvelle" (p. 120; my stress). This is followed by "Durant quinze ans, je thésaurisai comme un avare" (p. 120; my stress), somewhat later in the same passage. A later paragraph, just following these, begins: "A cinquante ans, l'heure étant venue..." (p. 120; my stress). This is perhaps an intentional confusion to further stress the subjectivity of time and the futility of attempting to measure it by standard means.

[18]Ireland, Gide, p. 22.

[19]Gide described very similarly his arrival in Tunis in 1896 in his Feuilles de Route: "C'était encore, bien que déjà très abîmée par les grands boulevards qui la traversent, une ville classique et belle, uniforme harmonieusement, dont les maisons blanchies semblaient s'illuminer au soir intimement comme des lampes d'albâtre. (. . .) ...au matin le blanc devenait rose sur un ciel légèrement violet. Mais après les pluies de l'hiver, les murs végètent; des mousses vertes les couvrent et le bord des terrasses semble celui d'une corbeille de fleurs." O.C., II, pp. 25-26.

[20]Guérard, p. 34.

[21]Paludes, O.C., I, p. 404.

[22]Ireland, Gide, p. 19.

[23]Guérard, p. 23.

[24]Martin du Gard, p. 90.

CHAPTER III

FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT: L'IMMORALISTE

It is generally accepted that Gide's fictional characters were not wholly imaginary, but the expression of some aspect of his own personality. Usually their characteristics were extended to an extreme which was impractical in real life, or which theoretically led to an impasse to which death provided the only solution. Ménalque and Walter are but two antithetical possibilities, and each ends in failure. These two fictional characters are in one sense exclusive; André Walter would find Ménalque's world-view inadequate and exclusive of all that which he finds most real in his contemplative life, while Ménalque would pity Walter's interior existence, and would find it equally inadequate to his needs. Neither could be imagined in the moral or intellectual position of his counterpart, just as neither would seek out the light-surroundings preferred by his antithetical being. This establishment of opposition between two early Gidian characters suggests a linear progression from monastic, contemplative life to pronounced hedonism, while in fact each of

these is but momentary, and the hedonistic pose no more permanent that the other. There is the grain of Ménalque within Walter, and the seed of Walter is in Ménalque as well, forming thus thesis and antithesis. It is only the chronological necessity of destroying a pre-existing Walter-like personality which suggests an advance, rather than a regression, in the direction of sensual experience: the Nourritures after all were written after the Cahiers. Ménalque's disciple is well aware of a Walter within himself, and consciously sets about destroying him. Walter, as Gide's initial fictional persona, could be evoked without first destroying another literary personality. Both the Cahiers d'André Walter and the Nourritures terrestres provide sufficient textual documentation to substantiate the complementarity of these two seemingly exclusive personalities, and to suggest that light's effect upon the protagonist is at the foundation of their differences.

In Walter's case, the Ménalque aspect is less evident because it is repressed. An austere protestant upbringing could do no less than to turn Walter from the dangers of worldly and sensual experience. But there are occasional glimpses of Ménalque-like reactions in entries where the diarist suddenly becomes nearly lyrical, and even occasional foreshadowings of Ménalque's world-view. Shade provides comfort to Walter, and it is shade which he seeks

primarily. The escape to shade results in part from what seems an uncomfortably intense reaction to attractive aspects of light's play upon exterior reality. There is, at least in his childhood, a naive response to natural beauty which would do justice to Ménalque and to his followers: "à l'éveil des sens j'errais dans les bois, cherchant les solitudes, plein d'inquiétudes inconnues; lorsqu'un chant de vent dans les pins balancés me semblait chanter les langueurs au gré des strophes récitées; que je pleurais aux feuilles tombantes, aux soleils couchants, à l'eau fuyante des ruisseaux, et qu'au bruit de la mer je restais songeur tout le jour" (p. 35). In this passage, Walter acknowledges at least an awakening of the senses, although his spontaneity is in part already conditioned by romantic sentiment. The finality of certain moments—leaves falling or the sun setting—gives an awareness of time's flight and its irreplaceability, though not yet Ménalque's full appreciation of the moment's uniqueness. Certainly Walter responds, though less frequently and less intensely than Ménalque, to natural beauty.

Walter's flight from exterior reality is due to its incompatibility with the creative life, as well. The reaction evoked by light playing on nature can be detrimental to Allain or to any project. It occupies the mind as well as the body, and serves to draw the intellect

from more serious matters: "Quelque soir, revenant en arrière, je redirai les mots de deuil...—mais aujourd'hui le ciel luit trop gaiement, trop d'oiseaux chantent. J'ai du printemps plein la tête" (p. 89). Writing is not the occupation of one whose vocation is to admire nature's infinite variety. Ménalque, after all, writes nothing: only a disciple, by an inexplicable literary tendency, takes time to write in the hope of converting Nathanael. Walter recognizes the attraction of leaving literature behind (albeit momentarily) when impressed too deeply with nature's beauty. He is capable of appreciating the light-show offered by nature, when he chooses to leave temporarily his contemplative existence: "Plus tôt levés que les autres, nous courions vite aux bois, quand le temps était clair. Il frissonnait sous la rosée fraîche. L'herbe étincelait aux rayons obliques; dans la vallée que des brumes encore faisaient plus profonde et comme irréelle, c'était un ravissement. Tout s'éveillait, chantait aux heures nouvelles: l'âme adorait confusément" (p. 42). His evocation of glimmering light and dispersing mist shows an appreciation of what might easily be an impressionist landscape. Changeability, light's dynamic nature, is what fascinates Walter: he and Emmanuèle admire this spectacle only as long as the light changes, and when "les teintes s'étaient faits lumières " (p. 42), they

return to sleep. It is the appeal of light's play, and not of the landscape as object, which attracts Walter, and the view becomes uninteresting when evenly illuminated.

Walter's sensitivity to light in nature is a unique response, and he once makes reference to the individuality of the subjective viewpoint. In doing so, Walter clearly enunciates another of Ménalque's beliefs, that uniqueness alone justifies the attempt to express artistically the subjective experience:

> Tous, ainsi, nous vivons dans notre rêve des choses; une atmosphère émanée de nous enveloppe notre âme et colore inconsciemment notre vision des choses. Et, comme elle est impénétrable, elle nous entoure de solitude.—Et, comme elle est diversement colorée, chaque vision des choses est individuelle;—l'on ne voit jamais que <u>son</u> monde et l'on est seul à le voir; c'est une fantasmagorie, un mirage, et le prisme est en nous, qui fait la lumière diaprée (p. 103).

Like Ménalque, Walter places the importance of the act of perception in the eye, and accords less significance to the perceived exterior reality. The uniqueness of the individual's perception makes it valuable, but also makes it inexpressible. Reality is illusion and only the subjective consciousness serves to supply it with interesting variegation, as it does for Ménalque.

André Walter feels the same attraction to purely sensual experience that Ménalque both feels and lives. His understanding of the uniqueness of subjective perception differs from Ménalque's largely in that Walter ordinarily

awaits emotional response from sensation while Ménalque attempts to seize the sense-impression at its source and in its purest form before subsequent emotional response is possible. Several basic formulae, almost mathematical in their brevity, would need only change "emotion" to "sensation" in order to fit the framework of the Nourritures: "Pas le paysage lui-même: l'émotion par lui causée" (p. 39); "Multiplier les émotions" (p. 42). When Walter drops his guard, even his style becomes nearly that of Ménalque. Infrequent passages in the Cahiers show a clearly impressionistic style filled with "petites touches" just sufficient to evoke sensory response. Travelling with Emmanuèle in a carriage, Walter describes a vision of passing objects upon awakening:

> Pendant notre sommeil, on avait allumé les lanternes. Nous regardions, amusés, la masse obscure des buissons dépassés surgir de l'ombre: nous cherchions des formes connues qui nous dissent si la route était longue. —Puis des bruits de pas: un passant attardé, brusquement éclairé dans une saccade de lumière;—et dans les raies de la lumière projetée, fuyantes en avant de nous sur la route, l'ombre des papillons de nuit qui s'en venaient heurter aux vitres des lanternes. (. . .) Puis enfin l'arrivée, les rires de nouveau, le foyer, la lampe et le thé qui réchauffe (p. 39).

Walter's style in this passage, setting off short fragments of sentences with commas and semicolons to describe momentary sense impressions, achieves an effect similar to the other fictional writer's style late in the Nourritures. The visual sensations take precedence, but other

sense-impressions are briefly mentioned, to constitute a passage which nearly approximates the symphonic presentation of simultaneous impressions in the Nourritures. Even the destructive capabilities of bright light, fully realized only in the desert, are hinted at by the reference to moths both here and later in the Cahiers (p. 168).

Ménalque is also not alone in feeling the temptations of sensual experience. It is to escape from the stain of worldly attractions that Walter isolates himself. But just as nearly-impressionistic vision comes to him when he has just awakened during a trip with Emmanuèle, Ménalque's life-style comes to him in his dreams:

> Cette nuit, presque sans dormir, car la pensée était trop forte, je rêvais des courses énormes, des fatigues épuisantes; et, dans un songe plein de visions, se déroulaient des champs dorés, des pentes de vallons que fraîchit le cours, ombragé de saules, d'une rivière fuyante. Et dans la rivière je revoyais les enfants aperçus de ***, qui s'y baignent et plongent leur torse frêle, leurs membres brunis de soleil dans cette fraîcheur enveloppante.—Des rages me prenaient de n'être pas des leurs, un de ces vauriens des grandes routes, qui tout le jour maraudent au soleil, la nuit s'allongent dans un fossé sans souci du froid ou des pluies; et, quand ils ont la fièvre, se plongent, nus tout entiers, dans la fraîcheur des rivières... Et qui ne pensent plus (p. 156).

Much of Ménalque's way of life is summed up in this repressed bision. A varied and beautiful countryside, and the praises of water bring to mind several parts of the Nourritures. The joys of life beneath the sun and the

rain, blind acceptance of all natural experience without protection or interference, and the nomadic life are major parts of Ménalque's creed. Finally, thought itself being banished by sensual impression in this life of dénuement closely approximates Ménalque's complete disponibilité, free from preconceptions.

There is thus much in André Walter's subconscious which parallels Ménalque's conscious elaboration of a life-style, although most of these similarities are repressed. Walter's appreciation of beauty in reality is limited, but he is susceptible to light, which can keep him from writing. His admiration of changing patterns of light, while infrequent, is fervent. He grasps the individuality of the subjective view, although his own vision is largely contemplative. With these qualities and an attraction to sensual pleasure, Walter possesses all of Ménalque's faculties, and would seemingly need only develop his own ferveur in order to become as Ménalque. There are passages which seem even to foreshadow Ménalque, including an early fascination with the desert (p. 34). There is within Walter a subconscious or repressed Ménalque who most clearly comes to the surface when conscious defenses are let down, in moments spent dreaming or when barely awake. Walter's reaction to this aspect of his personality is decidedly negative, but his efforts to destroy it are

half-hearted, perhaps as semi-conscious as the very existence of a Ménalque striving to get out.

Ménalque's disciple too contains his own antithesis, a Walter repressed within his being. But in the Nourritures, because of its chronological position after the Cahiers, full consciousness of this antithetical aspect leads the diarist to struggle actively against it, destroying or dissipating it sufficiently to feel that he has been successful. A previous chapter has discussed the destruction involved in the first entries of the Nourritures terrestres. Ménalque refers to an early period of his life in which he closely resembled Walter: "j'eus fini mes premières études, l'esprit las de travail, le coeur inoccupé, languissant de l'être, le corps exaspéré par la contrainte" (p. 113). This is the position in which Walter might find himself without Emmanuèle, an attitude of frustration and emptiness. But while Walter chooses to busy himself with reading and writing to fill the vacuum, Ménalque and his disciple set about systematically eradicating any literary tendencies from their lives: "Tandis que d'autres publient ou travaillent, j'ai passé trois années de voyage à oublier au contraire tout ce que j'avais appris par la tête" (p. 61). Walter's bookishness would offend Ménalque and his disciples, who set themselves free of second-hand experience by symbolically

burning all books. The lengthy "Ronde pour adorer ce que j'ai brûlé" (pp. 74-76) devotes itself to a cataloguing of the books which the writer has burned, at least in himself. A longing "Nathanael, quand aurons-nous brûlé tous les livres!" (p. 76) stresses that the ultimate goal is to eliminate all unlived, artificially learned knowledge from one's being. To Walter, who fills his book with references to Schopenhauer, Hugo, Taine, Goethe, and the Bible, reading forms the major part of experience. Ménalque's disciple does not succeed in this as well as does Ménalque himself, since this book condemning bookishness comes from his pen. He also retains Walter's predilection for occasionally beginning an entry by clearly stating that he cannot write today, but continuing that entry long enough to explain why (p. 65). It is not easy to destroy this side of the personality—"Cette désinstruction fut lente et difficile" (p. 61)—but carried out systematically, it effectively rids the intellect of the ideas and systems which fascinated Walter, and frees it for first-hand experience. This bookishness is but a single side of Walter's indecision. His sources are impressively numerous because he hesitates to choose a single author among many, a single philosophy from a myriad of such systems. Ménalque too has experienced this painful and sterile indecision in his early life. Describing the passion

which consumed his youth, he says:

> La nécessité de l'option me fut toujours intolérable; choisir m'apparaissait non tant élire, que repousser ce que je n'élisais pas. (. . .) Je ne faisais jamais que ceci ou que cela. Si je faisais ceci, cela m'en devenait aussitôt regrettable, et je restais souvent sans plus oser rien faire, éperdument et comme les bras ouverts, de peur, si je les refermais pour la prise, de n'avoir saisi qu'une chose. (. . .) Choisir, c'était renoncer pour toujours, pour jamais, à tout le reste et la quantité nombreuse de ce reste demeurait préférable à n'importe quelle unité (pp. 111-112).

It is for these reasons that much of youth is wasted. Incapacity to choose, one of Walter's major characteristics, is repressed within Ménalque's fanatic choice of new sensations at each moment. Walter's fear of reduction provides a basis for Ménalque's life of dénuement, as well: "De là me vint d'ailleurs un peu de cette aversion pour n'importe quelle possession sur la terre; la peur de n'aussitôt posséder que cela" (p. 112). Choice of possession assumes loss of the complete liberty required for nomadic pursuit of sensation, and the basis of the nomadic life is in Walter's fear of reduction.

The renaissance of Ménalque's disciple has already been characterized as an awakening to light, an escape from the shadows. His remembrance of youth puts him in the same light-environment as André Walter, prior to this rebirth. Ménalque's disciple visits the Paris apartment where he spent his studious childhood without opening the shutters or the curtains, with lamp in hand: "Dans la bibliothèque,

la plus sombre et la plus silencieuse des pièces, les livres sur les rayons et sur les tables gardaient l'ordre où je les avais placés; parfois j'en ouvrais un, et, devant la lampe allumée bien que ce fût le jour, j'étais heureux d'oublier l'heure; parfois aussi, rouvrant le grand piano, je cherchais dans ma mémoire le rythme d'anciens airs" (p. 118; my stress). The underlined portion of this passage quotes nearly word-for-word from a previously cited passage in which Walter sought to suspend time by imposing strict control over the light in his room. His attempt to remember piano melodies also points in the direction of a youth spent as André Walter. As an old man, the fictional writer regrets his wasted years, and again characterizes them as dark: "Certes oui! ténébreuse fut ma jeunesse: je m'en repens" (p. 211). It is a previous personality more suited to the shadows than to sunlight which Ménalque and his disciple have left behind in their pursuit of sensation, and much indicates that the adolescent personality left behind is that of André Walter. Bookishness and hesitation, two determining factors in Walter's personality, must be overcome by Ménalque and by his disciple before the nouvel être can be constructed in his place. Even the life of dénuement and the absolute devotion to a single option seem to spring from André Walter's underlying fears.

These similarities between André Walter and Ménalque point up the mutual dependence of two seemingly antithetical and exclusive personalities. Ménalque is but an adaptation of André Walter to a stronger environment of light, a personality who rather than maintaining rigidity and identification in a single environment seeks new surroundings in order fully to explore changes within himself, thereby destroying any specific identity except in terms of a constant evolution. To destroy within himself all traditional learning is to simplify for Ménalque, to seek the level of the child or the animal consciousness where all is new and response not automatic. He becomes by this process a less complex entity than André Walter, a being whose reactions are as unconditioned as is humanly possible. But the lowest common denominator which Ménalque uncovers after shedding superfluous knowledge and rationality still contains elements of André Walter, laid bare and caricatured by the importance they assume in a simplified personality. Ménalque's change, his simplification, is based on light, on a regression from emotive response to sensual reaction. To see nothing but light itself is to deny the reality of objective reality, and hence to belittle all of social life; roles, possessions, even identity, lose their rational importance when rationality fades. Unreasoned response, characterized by a search for

more intense sensations (brighter light in the environment), supplants Walter's emotional and mediated response to physical sensation. Adaptation, rather than complete replacement, characterizes the interrelationship of Walter and Ménalque. In a single controlled environment, Walter assumes rigidity and could be defined in positive terms, finding no need to evolve. By changing environments frequently, Ménalque and his disciple become subjects of evolution and adaptation, defineable only by what they no longer are. The necessity of adapting to new surroundings in Ménalque's constant wandering, or the necessity of wandering to supply new surroundings, simplifies Ménalque. Ménalque is a simplified personality, reduced to nearly-animal consciousness, but with traits similar to those of André Walter. Walter is more complex, as he adds to Ménalque's traits the complicating factors of reason and knowledge. But reaction to environment, in which light is a major factor, contributes greatly to what distinguishes the one from the other.

Until now, in this study, it has been necessary to separate the contemplative personality of André Walter from the hedonistic character of Ménalque. André Gide himself separated them by publishing the Cahiers and the Nourritures seven years apart, and they seem on several levels to be mutually exclusive. André Walter's belief

in the ideal would be wholly unsuited to the hedonistic life, and Ménalque's impressionistic world-view would be superfluous to Walter's personality. But, as in all of Gide's creative writing, fictional characters serve to actualize potential developments of his own personality, becoming "des possibles qui n'ont jamais été." André Walter and Ménalque stem from the same creative imagination, and are thus complementary as well as exclusive. Gide incorporated both of these tendencies into a single fictional personality for the first time in L'Immoraliste. Michel undergoes in this novel a development which takes him from a character very similar to André Walter, to one very near Ménalque, thus further establishing them as variations on a single individual.

L'Immoraliste can be interpreted as an illustration of the importance of light-surroundings (one element of total environment) to the moral and intellectual development of the protagonist. In this novel, the entire plot can be seen in relationship to Michel's adaptation to a new environment of stronger light, a gradual evolution of his sensitivity to light, and a consequent modification of his apprehension of reality. His new view of reality causes him to assume a new morality, and gives to this book its title. Michel's consciousness of light and darkness, his fascination with and progressive dependence

upon light impressions, can leave no doubt that this is an essential element in understanding his development. By adapting first to the African sun and then to the darkness of Normandy, Michel explores the relativity of two moral extremes, and grasps the principle of a purely subjective moral system. Africa's light brings him to destroy within himself the northern intellectual, and leads him to posit Culture as injurious to Life.

Michel's background prior to his marriage is left largely untreated, as superfluous to the development of a second self following rebirth. What he was is less important than what he has since become. But there are sufficient references to his early life, especially within the first pages of the narrative, to establish parallels with the early André Walter, to whom rebirth of this sort was denied. Michel, in situating the essential role of his marriage, mentions several major influences in his early life. One of these is the Huguenot upbringing which establishes a primary morality within him, against which he must later struggle: "Je ne soupçonnais pas encore combien cette première morale d'enfant nous maîtrise, ni quels plis elle laisse à l'esprit" (p. 373).[1] The rigid moral system instilled within him as a child is reinforced in part by the equal austerity of his father's life (pp. 373-374), though this simple life is a matter of convenience rather

than of religious scruple. Michel's childhood, like that of André Walter, is austere, and his morality Huguenot, though he too is sufficiently wealthy to be spared the drudgery of earning his livelihood. Michel is, further, of a bookish mentality, having spent his youth and adolescence in the dry pursuit of ancient languages (p. 373) and among the ruins of fallen civilizations (pp. 374-375). These ruins constitute virtually his only knowledge of the real world, and he openly admits having reached the age of twenty-five "ne connaissant rien de la vie" (p. 374). Michel's future domestic life is preordained at the deathbed of his single remaining parent (p. 372), though in an entirely different manner from Walter's; Michel receives a wife from his father's hands. He is of delicate health, but unaware of his susceptibility: "La vie trop calme que je menais m'affaiblissait et me préservait à la fois" (p. 374). It is significant that no reference to light is made in these pages outlining his early life and moral tendencies, apart from the image of years spent in secluded study away from the real world, recalling André Walter's isolation. Unaware of natural forces of all types, ignorant of the world, he is unaware of the interplay of light and darkness, and his interest in this external spectacle is rekindled only by manifest contrast on his wedding trip.

France and his early life are identified with gloom and shadow. Michel and Marceline pass the evening after their wedding in Paris, and daylight does not enter the text until after France is left behind. Michel suddenly remembers a dormant image of Spain, visited with his father on one of several brief study trips: "divers souvenirs de Grenade et de Séville me revinrent, de ciel plus pur, d'ombres plus franches, de fêtes, de rires et de chants" (p. 375). His memories of southern climates link these climates to a chiaroscuro of bright skies and deep shadows, differing from a presumably more uniform illumination in France. An atmosphere of differing morality, of laughter and celebration, furthers the contrast with northern austerity and gloom. With the southern light, Michel begins to find a fascination with detail and exterior reality previously left unvoiced in the text: "Marceline était très jolie. (. . .) Je me reprochai de ne m'en être pas d'abord aperçu" (p. 375). His wife seems beautiful to him for the first time under a more tropical light, although he was previously unaware of her appearance. His modification is evident both in this sudden revelation and in the mention of her clothing, the first physical detail to intrude into the text. Their marriage really begins under the "ciel splendide" (p. 376), and they embark in Tunis somewhat modified from the state in which they left Marseille.

Michel has become more conscious of physical beauty, a fact directly attributable to the stronger southern sun.

But if Michel is modified by this new climate, he at first attempts to remain in Africa the austere intellectual he was in France. What he later considers sottise (p. 376) leads him to pursue his old interests in a new country, planning to visit only places of archeological interest. He, like Ménalque's disciple early in the Nourritures terrestres, feels the beginnings of a nouvel être, but his stirrings are too vague to fully explain: "Au toucher de nouvelles sensations s'émouvaient telles parties de moi, des facultés endormies qui, n'ayant pas encore servi, avaient gardé toute leur mystérieuse jeunesse" (p. 376). He has not been fully transformed to an impressionistic consciousness, but has begun to feel its attractions. It is not the nouvel être, but the pre-existing Michel as archeologist ill-suited to this climate, which leads him to physical crisis at Sousse. The light-surroundings in this scene reflect his incongruous position as a contemplative intellectual in a landscape of sensation. Having misunderstood his surroundings, he finds himself weary, but assumes that the heat in an area still further south will remedy this (pp. 376-377). His expectations are ruined upon finding a cold, forbidding place for which he is unprepared: "Par quelle puérile confiance en la douceur

d'air du Midi, légèrement vêtus tous deux, n'avions-nous emporté qu'un châle?" (p. 377). Weather and light violate his expectations just as he violates by his rigid self-concept the necessity of adaptation. Michel is as out of place in this surrounding as is the cold and wearisome night, and the "jour lugubre" (p. 377) which follows it. His health is broken by the cold, windy night, and his first attack comes with the onset of yet another cold night. It is from Michel himself and from his new surroundings that the attack springs, from his misadaptation to these surroundings; a combination of these antithetical forces results in physical crisis. With dawn comes the end of his first attack, and perhaps his first realization that light in this environment is his ally against evil darkness. In many primitive societies illness is explained as disharmony with the surrounding universe; Michel's illness clearly seems to express just such a disharmony.

Michel's unsuitability to the African climate thus finds a physical expression in his tuberculous condition. His convalescence, on the other hand, is a gradual but complete adaptation to his light-environment, a reduction to purely animal and sensory life more closely suited to the African sun. Michel's recovery occurs as a sensitivity to the powerful light surrounding him, and an accompanying rejection of darkness. Diagnosed as a terminal patient

(p. 379), he nonetheless slowly regains his health. The first mention of his impending recovery makes two references to light: "Un jour enfin, comme un marin perdu qui aperçoit la terre, je sentis qu'une lueur de vie se réveillait (. . .) le jour devînt pour moi d'une lumière inespérée" (pp. 380-381). Day rather than night is the time for this realization, and Michel first glimpses the possibility of life as a "lueur" against the background of darkness which preceded it. His rebirth occurs in a bright, sunlit room where nothing but the walls themselves reflect the intense sunlight: "murs blanchis à la chaux, rien aux murs" (p. 38). As Michel convalesces in this room, the sun itself provides his only diversion: "Là coulèrent des jours sans heures. (. . .) Je regarde. Je vois le soleil; je vois l'ombre; je vois la ligne de l'ombre se déplacer; j'ai si peu à penser, que je l'observe" (p. 381). He begins in this passage to recover, but to recover as a new man with a new morality and with a new surrounding of light. Having opted for animal sensory life, Michel leaves the light-environment of André Walter and enters that of Ménalque. Light comes to him as the only reality, the sensory life is now the only valuable life, and he chooses to pursue light in its novel forms. His will fortified in this resolution by deciding upon specific steps to physically strengthen himself, he has yet to make the necessary

rejection of darkness which accompanies his decision. Michel does this by waking an entire night, struggling against darkness: "Enfin, je vis la nuit pâlir; le jour parut. Ç'avait été ma veillée d'armes" (p. 385). His decision becomes heroic by his reference to vigil; Michel decides to struggle actively against death and darkness, and to accord himself fully to light.

In recovering, he comes to appreciate fully the novelty of chiaroscuro, and to accept it solely as impression, without going beyond sensation to interpretation. He is, as Ménalque's disciple was in the beginning, a novice and not yet sufficiently strong to stand the full light of the desert. Michel's first opening to unfiltered sensation is a symbolic opening of windows to moonlight (p. 387). Soon strong enough for short recreational walks, he strolls in the public gardens, but chooses a garden shaded by large mimosas, and with benches and walkways beneath these trees (p. 387). He grasps at least in a physical sense the adaptation of the Arabs to their surroundings in seeing that "dès qu'ils ont quitté le soleil, leur manteau blanc prend la couleur de l'ombre" (p. 387). Shade, while protective, is also mysterious to Michel after his recovery in light, and he shudders when entering the "ombre étrange" (p. 387) beneath the trees, but he also gradually learns to accord himself

to various contrastive environments, finally spending a good night uninterrupted by his illness (p. 390). As he grows stronger, his appreciation of light grows more pronounced. Again in the public garden, he begins to see the gaseous, nearly-fluid qualities of light: "J'entrai avec ravissement dans son ombre. L'air était lumineux. (. . .) L'ombre était mobile et légère; elle ne tombait pas sur le sol, et semblait à peine y poser. O lumière!" (p. 390). His progression to a sensory, impressionistic form of life requires a surrounding where exterior reality is non-concrete, where light and darkness alone reach his consciousness without being reflected by specific objects in reality. His moral position and his light-surroundings progress hand-in-hand; survival of consciousness alone is his goal, and consciousness alone apprehends sensation directly as images of light and darkness. As his health improves, and as he adapts to this new morality, Michel tolerates stronger impressions and goes with Marceline to another shaded area, but this time closer to the edge of the desert, where palm trees instead of mimosas serve to disrupt the desert sun (p. 392).

The new way of life at an animal and sensory level, which Michel has chosen, results both from Ménalque's doctrine of dénuement, here the simplification of all things by repressing cognitive processes, and from his

newfound ferveur. Thought itself is abandoned in Michel's recovery: "je sentais le soleil ardent doucement tamisé par les palmes; je ne pensais à rien; qu'importait la pensée? Je sentais extraordinairement" (p. 392). His rhetorical question is subsequent to the actual moment here, for throughout this period Michel is bereft of any rational reflection upon his new condition, neither thinking nor examining, and guided only by a "fatalité heureuse" (p. 399). But there is at least one dogmatic tenet within his new morality, perhaps an instinctual reaction rather than a reasoned response: the injurious properties of darkness. Michel's health first faded in a setting of gloom and cold, and his newfound health is but an adaptation to the tropical sun. With the onset of cloudy and rainy weather, he must again struggle against his tuberculosis (p. 394), and his health suffers from the least disturbance of light: "ma santé, tantôt meilleure et tantôt pire, chancelait encore au vent froid, s'inquiétait de l'ombre d'un nuage" (p. 397). His health is a direct result of light, his illness a creature of darkness; to accord himself to light is to regain his health. Michel surrounds himself with light, and chooses companions suitable to his new sensory morality, preferring the impulsive Moktir to any of the other Arab boys.

There ensues in the text an alternation of light and darkness and their accompanying reactions of well-being and fear. Michel remembers with dread the "fixité terrifiante des ombres nocturnes" (p. 397), and more actively pursues sunlight by deciding to tan his body under the full force of the sun's rays (pp. 399-400, 401). Shade attracts him in a grove of lemon trees, but he knows of its danger to his health: "L'ombre était si dense sous eux, que je n'osais m'y arrêter après la marche qui me faisait encore transpirer" (p. 400). Away from the sun, his body suffers (p. 401), in contrast to the peasants whose bodies become penetrated with light (p. 401). Michel's gradual adaptation to light reaches completion in his total exposure to the sun at Ravello. Indicating a physical change to accompany his moral transformation, he invites the sun to penetrate and color his body. A further symbolic gesture, the shaving of his beard, puts an end to his past self, and removes the last physical obstruction which would keep sunlight away from his skin.

Michel's adaptation to light and the moral development which accompanies the light change are fully evolved at this point. Having become a physical, animalistic consciousness, his former moral self is completely uprooted. The ego established as central consciousness begins to manifest its presumed physical superiority.

A drunken coachman endangers Marceline, and Michel's first demonstration of physical superiority is to attack him. Michel's completely subjective morality is evident in a single sentence, "l'étrangler paraissait légitime" (p. 405). To protect Marceline is to manifest his physical superiority to her, seconded by the expression of the sentence, "Ce fut cette nuit-là que je possédai Marceline" (p. 405). The use of "posséder" here implies superiority, an act done by Michel to Marceline in which she is less participant than object. He has now surpassed her in physical strength and health, and the light which has made him "harmonieux, sensuel, presque beau" (p. 402) now shows Marceline to be "triste et pâle" (p. 406).

With a return toward the north comes a rebirth in some measure of the old Michel, and with him an interest in archeology more suited to this northern climate. But Michel's interest is not unmodified by his new being, and he seeks and finds a kindred spirit in antiquity in the young king Athalaric, who reverted to barbarism and debauchery after his classical education (p. 407). A hope for tranquillity in order to pursue these archeological studies brings to mind La Morinière, to which Michel has not returned in many years. An entirely different light-environment surrounds the Michel who decides to spend the summer at the country estate left

by his mother. While Biskra and much of Africa are inundated by light, "La Morinière (. . .) est située entre Lisieux et Pont-l'Évêque, dans le pays le plus ombreux, le plus mouillé que je connaisse. (. . .) Nul horizon; des bois-taillis pleins de mystère; ... où des pommiers nombreux, quand le soleil est bas, joignent leur ombre" (p. 409). Since the reborn Michel was the product of the African sunlight, he ceases to exist when surrounded by the obscurity of Normandy. The northern darkness is stressed when Michel and Marceline arrive at La Morinière with the last rays of daylight, and with the evening fog obscuring the river below (p. 409). Michel does not resist this new environment, the nouvel être disappearing much more suddenly than he evolved: "tout le passé soudain se souleva, comme s'il m'attendait et, me reconnaissant, voulait se refermer sur mon approche" (p. 410). La Morinière's atmosphere reawakens the past and causes day and night to be indistinguishable (p. 410). The major events recorded at the beginning of this stay in Normandy occur at twilight: Bocage announces his son's arrival in the evening (p. 411), Charles arrives toward the end of the day (p. 412). Normandy's clouds seem to invade even the waters of Michel's estate, making them murky and opaque (p. 412). Michel lives peacefully in this atmosphere, tamed as quickly as the horse which

Charles undertakes to break, and assuming his burden as docilely. The studies which he resumes are as perfectly suited to twilight as is the northern Michel, who now reserves the end of the day and the evening for his intellectual pursuits.

A return to Paris for the winter leaves Michel in a similar light-environment and in the same intellectual and contemplative position. Unable to progress further in the sensual life, Michel meditates on his past in this interior surrounding, and arrives at the conclusion that culture and life are mutually exclusive, though culture is born of life. Their mutually-dependent exclusivity is a parallel to light and darkness, each excluding the other, but depending upon the other for identity. Michel becomes acquisitive in his shaded situation in Paris, luxuriously furnishing a new apartment in Passy (p. 421). In Paris even Ménalque exists in a shaded, dimly-lit environment: "Deux lampes éclairaient la pièce, moins que ne le faisait le foyer" (p. 435). Again the light-surrounding is appropriate to Michel's development; however much Ménalque's counsel might bear upon his future sensual life, Michel's discoveries in Paris are wholly intellectual, suited to the shade and to the lamp.

Marceline too has become a shade-figure since the departure from Biskra. Expected to join Michel when a

fish-pond is being emptied, she fails to appear in the sun at La Morinière (pp. 412-413). She becomes less interested in life: "Elle prenait autant de joie, semblait-il, à me sentir vivre, qu'à vivre" (p. 418). Becoming physically weaker as Michel strengthens, she must lean upon him as he first leaned upon her (p. 420). As Marceline retreats from life, she is surrounded by deepening obscurity, receiving guests in a "petit salon moins éclairé " (p. 430) than the room Michel frequents in Paris, and reflecting the absence of light in her color. Marceline's miscarriage during Michel's absence also occurs in a room "peu éclairée" (p. 437), where Michel, upon returning, is unsure of what he sees. Michel's illness originally resulted from the absence of sunlight where he had expected to find it, and he escaped it by gradually according himself to light and to life. Illness and darkness go hand-in-hand in this novel, and Marceline's illness makes of her a creature of darkness and night (p. 438). Michel even conceptualizes Marceline's ill-health as a dark spot upon her, making of her "une chose abîmée" (p. 439).

All concrete things become for Michel "choses abîmées" when their novelty and perfection are marred by use (pp. 429-430), and this is true for sensation as well. Returning to La Morinière, he finds his former diversions

inadequate to his current state of evolution, his tastes having modified in the intervening period (p. 443). But Michel's sensitivity to the surrounding environment has not been diminished, and he finds Normandy remarkably refreshing by contrast to Paris: "Il me sembla que, depuis l'an passé, je n'avais plus respiré, ou respiré que des poussières, tant pénétrait mielleusement en moi l'atmosphère" (p. 440). His sympathetic identification intensified by his attentions to Marceline, he finds an attraction to all of nature: "Il me semblait, ainsi, que ma vue ne fût plus seule à m'enseigner le paysage, mais que je le sentisse encore par une sorte d'attouchement qu'illimitait cette bizarre sympathie" (p. 441). Michel is no longer a mere simple observer, but a participant with nature in the act of perception, where his consciousness actively contributes to the process of awareness. In Africa, he found it necessary to accord himself perfectly to light, the strongest influence in his environment. But Normandy's atmosphere is one of darkness and obscurity, and he adapts equally well to this surrounding, seeking out the deepest shadows as he sought the brightest light in Africa. And as he sought out companions most deeply imbued with sunlight in Biskra, he seeks in Normandy companions well-suited to the darkness.

Seeking suitable companions, he turned in Africa to Moktir, least reputable and most instinctual of the Arab boys; in Normandy, he is drawn first to Pierre, an itinerant given to drink and "uniquement mené par l'instinct" (p. 442). The Heurtevent family, dark and of Spanish blood, then receives his attention, especially the younger son,who sings like an African (p. 445). But Heurtevent is far too secretive to admit Michel into his confidence, and it is through Alcide that Michel becomes a poacher on his own land. Michel again feels the pull of life, reversing his academic conclusions and allowing life to kill culture within him as darkness kills light: "Dès lors je ne sortis plus si volontiers le jour, où les bois vidés m'offraient moins d'attraits. Je tâchai même de travailler; triste travail sans but (. . .) travail ingrat, et dont me distrayait soudain le moindre chant, le moindre bruit dans la campagne; tout cri me devenait appel" (pp. 448-449). A sudden reversal has taken place in the relative positions of light and darkness with this modification. If life was closer to those who existed in the sunlight in Africa, it is closer to those who prefer the night in Normandy. The description of Africa as a sunlit, desert place and of Normandy as a rainy, shaded environment reverses the method of pursuing life, which is now carried on in darkness. Michel quickly learns

the appeal of night: "c'était notre heure, dont je ne soupçonnais pas jusqu'alors la beauté; et je sortais comme entrent les voleurs. Je m'étais fait des yeux d'oiseau de nuit. (. . .) La nuit creusait tout, éloignait, faisait le sol distant et toute surface profonde. Le plus uni sentier paraissait dangereux. On sentait s'éveiller partout ce qui vivait d'une existence ténébreuse" (p. 449). It is certain from Michel's reaction that the roots of life are closer to darkness in Normandy as they were closer to the sun in Africa. Even its effect upon him is similar; he learns to enjoy the external light-show, the illusory deepening of all surfaces, and loses as he did in Africa his cognitive faculties, returning from these forays "ivre de nuit" (p. 449). There is an appealing and myterious secrecy about night which gives it the feeling of danger, and the authenticity of real life.

Total darkness leads to the same result as bright light; both kill culture because both are more intense forms of life. The lamplit environment is essential to Michel's intellectual endeavors, and the seeking of life's roots in Normandy's darkness disrupts these projects as completely as did their pursuit in Africa's light. Michel's subjective morality is unchanged, but the differing atmosphere of Normandy requires him to seek life in a changed light-environment. It is a light-environment of

nearly-total darkness which permits him to take a second role directly in opposition to his primary role as master, and Michel leads two different lives contingent upon separate surroundings of light. When Charles confronts Michel, the impossibility of reconciling his two roles causes him to sell La Morinière; but the separation maintained by opposing light-environments allowed him to exist for some time as master in light and as poacher in darkness.

Michel's pursuit of life in darkness is dependent upon Normandy, and when he leaves La Morinière, he returns to the interior, shaded environment where Marceline has remained since the beginning of her illness. The scenes of their winter in Switzerland are filled with references to evening and to night now spent indoors with Marceline. At Coire, noise keeps them from sleeping at night. They leave "dès avant l'aube" (p. 455), and a single reference to light during the trip describes nightfall after their unpleasant journey: "Je revois la tombée du jour, la rapide ascension de l'ombre contre les pentes des forêts" (p. 455). When the coach stops, "on plonge jusqu'au coeur dans la nuit.... On repart dans la nuit" (p. 455). Michel is no longer suited to Marceline's element, and barely recognizes her in the pervasive darkness. In this surrounding, Michel continues his studies of antiquity, but now solely as a means of psychological investigation.

He qualifies his studies as a "recherche ténébreuse" (p. 457), and the surrounding gloom and simplicity of Switzerland allow him to deepen studies from which he was drawn by the light of Africa and the darkness of Normandy. Michel is not alone in feeling the effect of surroundings upon his development: "Honnête peuple suisse! Se porter bien ne lui vaut rien. (. . .) Sans crimes, sans histoire, sans littérature, sans arts, ... un robuste rosier, sans épines ni fleurs" (pp. 457-458). Michel's luxuries in Switzerland are a poor substitute for the nearly-animal life of Biskra and La Morinière, and his surroundings offer him little possibility of variety in sensation. Fog and snow cause the disappearance of the exterior world (p. 458) and bring Michel back to a life of exclusively interior satisfactions, reflecting the moderation of light and morality among the Swiss.

Leaving Switzerland and going south toward the tropical sun, Michel again experiences an intoxication with light: "La descente en Italie eut pour moi tous les vertiges d'une chute. Il faisait beau. (. . .) Depuis trop longtemps nous n'avions plus ri qu'à des ombres. (. . .) Une énorme réserve d'amour me gonflait; parfois elle affluait du fond de ma chair vers ma tête et dévergondait mes pensées" (p. 458). This foretaste of southern sunlight is sufficient to rekindle Michel's ferveur, and when

Italy's warmth proves unseasonal, they flee darkness by travelling still further south: "Alors, pour fuir le froid, nous descendîmes plus au sud: nous quittâmes Milan pour Florence, Florence pour Rome, Rome pour Naples qui, sous la pluie d'hiver, est bien la plus lugubre ville que je connaisse" (p. 459). Michel's constant search for a warmer, sunnier climate becomes a matter of obsession: he feels driven by a demon (p. 459). No longer content to live in northern shadows, he feverishly seeks a brighter location, a place where sensation is more varied and available. Michel even attempts now to accord his surroundings to himself, rather than adapting to his surroundings, by filling the apartment with almond blossoms (p. 460). Marceline's tears at the sight of these blossoms bring Michel to understand that his environment and hers are now irremediably separated, that her <u>bonheur</u> and his cannot be the same (p. 461). Michel's needs have changed, and he requires more forceful stimulation; a formerly beautiful hotel garden he now finds depressing rather than charming (p. 461). His guilt at leaving Marceline alone in the daytime does not prevent him from stealthily creeping out at night, and he finds the night more brightly lit than day: "Le ciel, obscur le jour, s'était délivré des nuages; la lune presque pleine luisait" (p. 461). Michel progressively seeks a stronger light-environment, embarking

on an impressionistic voyage reminiscent of Ménalque's disciple's in the Nourritures, where thought is suspended and where he is driven by a desire for increasingly intense light. His thought has ceased evolving, having become a doctrine (pp. 459-460), and he now pursues only his sensual life. Marceline's needs are for the calm, quiet, and relative gloom of Switzerland, and her health grows worse as they near the African continent. Michel formerly grew healthy under the African sun, and he persuades himself that Marceline will do the same: "Par quelle aberration, quel aveuglement obstiné, quelle volontaire folie, me persuadai-je, et surtout tâchai-je de lui persuader qu'il lui fallait plus de lumière encore et de chaleur, invoquai-je le souvenir de ma convalescence à Biskra?" (p. 462). His own desire for desert light overrides Marceline's needs, and the progress toward the south continues. With it comes a return to instinctual, passionate life; Michel prefers the worst of people in Syracuse (p. 463), and would prefer to live as they live. But even this environment is inadequate to him, obsessed as he is by the memory of the South (p. 464). Places become for him only surroundings of light; Naples lost its grace and charm when it ceased to reflect light, and Tunis seems to him less a city than an atmosphere: "Tunis. Lumière plus abondante que forte. L'ombre en est encore emplie.

L'air lui-même semble un fluide lumineux où tout baigne, où l'on plonge, où l'on nage" (p. 464). Just as it does late in the Nourritures, light takes on a fluid quality, becoming nearly solid, and all of external reality disappears beneath its force.

While Michel is diverted by the plunge into nearly-unbearable light, Marceline remains in the shade. Michel recovered by adapting to light, by choosing a purely animal existence; but his wife is incapable of formulating a plan for the necessary adaptation, incapable of imposing a purely egotistical decision upon Michel. As they journey further south, their distance from one another increases. Marceline cannot find a suitable environment in which to recover, but exists instead alongside Michel in his most comfortable surrounding. Her survival becomes doubtful because she requires a quiet, shaded location in which to recover, and Michel pursues with her the environment most suitable to him: "à mesure que nous avancions vers le sud, l'état de Marceline empirait" (p. 462). Marceline becomes weaker from the heat (p. 465), finds it impossible to sleep (p. 465), and her illness grows worse (pp. 466-467). Unsuited even to Italy, she finds herself progressively deprived of the necessary surroundings in Africa. Michel alone decides on the fatal trip to Touggourt, and manages somehow to tell Marceline

of his decision (p. 467). The trip to Touggourt is a journey into the desert, where light is at its strongest and where little exists to reflect it. Moktir accompanies them, "heureux comme un roi" (p. 467). Michel too is perfectly content with the rock and sand under the desert sun: "A l'oasis je préfère à présent le désert—ce pays de mortelle gloire et d'intolérable splendeur" (pp. 467-468). He has found the ultimate sensation of light, intolerable and even fatal to life. Marceline alone suffers from this environment: "la surabondante lumière fatigue son regard; ce paysage hostile le meurtrit" (p. 468). Forced by Michel from Switzerland to Italy and then to Africa, she has found herself increasingly unsuited to the stronger light-environments imposed by Michel's wanderings, and dies following the journey. Even in death she remains a shade-figure, buried by Michel "dans l'ombre d'un jardin privé qu'elle aimait" p. 470). His only concession to her needs comes subsequent to her death.

Michel has at this point reached the end of possible evolution toward visual sensation, as did Ménalque's disciple in the Nourritures. His three friends find him living in the desert, and seemingly incapable of speech in the light: they exchange few words until nightfall. Even assembled on the terrace, Michel and his friends

admire the landscape, and it is only when darkness is complete that Michel begins his account (p. 371), which ends with the coming of dawn (p. 370). At the end of his story, Michel himself attaches his moral and intellectual development to the climate: "J'avais, quand vous m'avez connu d'abord, une grande fixité de pensée, et je sais que c'est là ce qui fait les vrais hommes;—je ne l'ai plus. Mais ce climat, je crois, en est cause. Rien ne décourage autant la pensée que cette persistance de l'azur. Ici toute recherche est impossible, tant la volupté suit de près le désir" (p. 471). His pursuit of life leads him to the southern sun, and the sun leads him to pursue life to the detriment of intellectual efforts. Throughout his evolution, extremes of light and darkness were tied to life at its fullest, while the lamp and shaded environments permitted him to develop and to expand his theories. At the end of his development even the thirst for stronger light abandons him, as it would be impossible to transcend the desert light. He becomes as Ménalque's disciple, an empty, burned-out body, attempting to gather what coolness he can by holding pebbles in his hand (p. 471). Michel's dependence upon sensation leads him along a linear development which cannot continue beyond a certain point, and from which he cannot retreat without retracing his steps.

L'Immoraliste thus provides a clear example of dependence upon light and darkness. Light is important to Michel, determining whether he will be contemplative or hedonistic, and determining also the state of his health. His illness, originally brought on by his incongruity to a new environment, is overcome by gradually according himself to Africa's sunlight, by exposing himself more and more completely to it. Adaptation to the light requires of Michel a new and totally subjective morality, which progresses as light increases, and which is suspended when light diminishes. Contemplative existence thus resumes when Michel leaves Africa and returns to Normandy, but he finds that the roots of life are closer to darkness in Normandy, and adapts even more easily to a new light-situation. In each of these extreme situations of light, life succeeds in supplanting culture within Michel; culture becomes for him the product of an intolerable moderation in environment. His journey to the south can be complete only when he once again finds the full desert light of Morocco, where his new moral system, rigidly fixed as a doctrine, can exist in the proper surroundings. Marceline does not adapt as did Michel in the desert sun, and the incongruity of a creature of shade existing in this light leads to her death. In this novel at least, agreement between light-surroundings

and moral position seems inviolable; Michel survives only by according his entire being to his new surroundings, and Marceline dies because of her presence in an element to which she is permanently unsuited.

FOOTNOTES

[1]References to *L'Immoraliste* are to the edition contained in *Romans, récits, et soties: oeuvres lyriques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958). Page numbers will appear in the text.

CHAPTER IV

LIGHT AND DARKNESS IN SEVERAL LATER WORKS

This study centers upon the early works of André Gide, not because its findings are inapplicable to the later writings, but because this image essential to Gide's entire literary creation has its beginnings in André Walter and in Ménalque, and because predominant light and predominant darkness are brought together for the first time in Michel. Since much of Gide's creative writing is characterized by recurrence, and since the same themes and problems return frequently throughout his literary career, even the early works as a group must be considered in their developmental importance, and not separately as an independent unit. Gide's use of light and darkness as a determining factor to the protagonist and as a parallel to moral and intellectual position continues in his later work, and could be traced throughout his literary career. To do so is beyond the scope of this limited study, but discussion of several later works is essential here in order to establish the existence of this image and theme later in Gide's career. Two later books, La Porte étroite and Les Caves du Vatican have been chosen to illustrate

this, both because of their suitability to analysis of light and darkness and because of their very different natures. La Porte étroite is a récit, Les Caves du Vatican a sotie, and yet both permit the establishment of light as a construction en abyme, a parallel to moral and intellectual position, demonstrating that Gide relied on this device in very different genres.

1. Light and darkness in La Porte étroite

The parallel of light-situation to metaphysical posture is consistent throughout La Porte étroite, although the major characters in this novel are descended from André Walter rather than from Ménalque, and shade dominates most scenes. There is, however, a continued dichotomy between shade-figures and light-figures; they do not exist within a single personality as they do in L'Immoraliste. Alissa's descendence from two very different bloodlines fixes her course in life, and her position between light and darkness is assured by her descendence from a father who retires from bright light and a mother who seems uncomfortable in the northern gloom.

Jérôme's family sends him to Fougueusemare because he is pale and needs the country sunlight (p. 495).[1] But the Bucolin's country estate is a shaded environment, well

protected from the sun's rays. Its garden is sheltered on all sides from the elements, and constitutes nearly an indoor surrounding, with finite limits, walls, and a ceiling of branches. The grass is shaded and bounded by a low wall which allows a view of the farmyard, itself surrounded by beech trees (p. 496).

> Derrière la maison, au couchant, le jardin se développe plus à l'aise. Une allée, riante de fleurs, devant les espaliers au midi, est abritée contre les vents de mer par un épais rideau de lauriers du Portugal et par quelques arbres. Une autre allée, le long du mur du nord, disparaît sous les branches. Mes cousines l'appelaient "l'allée noire" et, passé le crépuscule du soir, ne s'y aventuraient pas volontiers (p. 496).

Walled, secluded, and covered over by trees, Fougueuse-mare's garden is a shaded place well away from the sun and the wind. The tiny door which leads from the garden and from which the novel draws its name, gives the only exit from the well-maintained and well-protected grounds. Although this garden seems to protect from natural forces more than to offer contact with them, the adults prefer to stroll there only in the evening, when the shade is still deeper: Jérôme's mother, his uncle, and Miss Ashburton accompany the children there only in the evening (p. 496).

In this atmosphere of attenuated light, a contrast is constructed between Lucile Bucolin and the others. She alone among the book's characters is actively involved

in seeking novelty in life, and she alone exists largely in daylight. She is out of place at Fougueusemare, a Creole born in Martinique (p. 498) upon whom the sun has left its mark. While the others prefer to walk in the garden at dusk, Lucile remains alone in the salon (p. 499). She is set off from the family: "Lucile Bucolin ne prenait que peu de part à notre vie; elle ne descendait de sa chambre que passé le repas de midi; elle s'allongeait aussitôt sur un sofa ou dans un hamac, demeurait étendue jusqu'au soir et ne se relevait que languissante" (p. 499). Stifled and bored by life at Fougueusemare, she remains apart from the others, having little part in the lives of the children or the adults. In a short background paragraph (pp. 498-499), little effort is made to reinforce the verisimilitude of Jérôme's uncle having chosen to marry a woman so far from his religious and social tradition, although his youth and dépaysement at the time may account for it. The union of these two very different personalities produces Alissa, Juliette, and Robert, who are thus descended both from a tropical race and from a northern one. Alissa is closer to the dark, Protestant side of her father: she is his favorite (p. 507), and he relies on her progressively more and more as the novel goes on.

The division between Alissa and her mother is widened by an extreme contrast in their light-surroundings, in

the scene where Jérôme begins to understand Alissa's dilemma. In his uncle's absence, Jérôme visits the Bucolin home and glimpses Lucile with two of her children and a lieutenant unknown to him:

> La porte est ouverte, devant laquelle il faut passer; un rai de lumière sort de la chambre et coupe le palier de l'escalier; ...au milieu de la chambre aux rideaux close, mais où les bougies de deux candélabres répandent une clarté joyeuse, ma tante est couchée sur une chaise longue; à ses pieds, Robert et Juliette; derrière elle, un inconnu jeune homme en uniforme de lieutenant. La présence de ces deux enfants m'apparaît aujourd'hui monstrueuse; dans mon innocence d'alors, elle me rassura plutôt (p. 503).

While the presence of the two children might be either monstrous or reassuring, its use in the text is to set Alissa off from her mother. The other two children are closer to Lucile than is Alissa, and Alissa's solitary suffering is reinforced by this division. Lucile's environment is consistent with her pursuit of novelty in life, a surrounding of brilliant light contrasting strongly with the dark Bucolin family, constantly in mourning and austerely Protestant. Her light cuts across the shadows of the corridor, in sharp contrast to the remainder of the house.

To this <u>clarté joyeuse</u>, Alissa's darkened room serves as counterpoint. Continuing to the higher floor, Jérôme pushes the door and surprises Alissa in a dark, mournful light: "La chambre est déjà si sombre que je ne distingue

pas aussitôt Alissa; elle est au chevet de son lit, à genoux, tournant le dos à la croisée d'où tombe un jour mourtant" (p. 503). This atmosphere of shadow is Jérôme's first impression of the room, even before he finds Alissa in the darkness. Her light-situation in this scene stresses her decision to pursue a wholly interior life from this moment on, turning away from the variety of social reality. Alissa avoids even the "jour mourant" which filters into the room, turning her back to this small evidence of natural, exterior reality. From this scene on, Alissa's light is wholly interior: Jérôme finds her love an "illumination intérieure" (p. 506), and his two other friendships exist only "éclairées par (son amour)" (p. 507). "Eclairé par son regard" (p. 525), everything seems simple, and her smile illuminates (p. 526). As Emmanuèle becomes a source of light for André Walter, Alissa, by her choice of contemplative life, becomes a source of muted, interior light. Her exterior surroundings continue to be shaded and mysterious: Jérôme walking with Juliette in the garden describes encountering Alissa at twilight: "nous allions revenir sur nos pas, quand, sortant de l'ombre, Alissa se montra tout à coup. Elle était si pâle que Juliette se récria" (pp. 519-520). Just as André Walter, she begins to avoid intensities of all types, even the corporal presence of Jérôme. Each must

become for the other a reflected presence, since Alissa finds more safety in correspondence than in conversation. A parallel in light-environment foreshadows the impending disembodiment by making of both Jérôme and Alissa reflections in a mirror. Entering her room, Jérôme finds Alissa attaching a necklace: "elle mettait un collier de corail et pour l'attacher levait les bras et se penchait, tournant le dos à la porte et regardant par-dessus son épaule, dans un miroir entre deux flambeaux allumés. C'est dans le miroir qu'elle me vit d'abord et qu'elle continua de me regarder quelques instants, sans se retourner" (p. 520). A sensual impression reminiscent of her mother surrounds this sight of Alissa attaching a coral necklace by candlelight, but it is attenuated by the mirror, which serves as a filter and increases the distance between Alissa and Jérôme. Only on several occasions of extreme self-indulgence, when she allows herself to see Jérôme again, does Alissa reappear in morning or afternoon sunlight.

While Alissa chooses to remain within the dark, Protestant tradition of her father, Juliette tends more toward her mother. It is with Alissa, and not with Juliette, that Jérôme's uncle seeks support, and the contrastive scene where Alissa cries while her mother laughs includes Juliette in her mother's company. Juliette seems incapable of Alissa's austerity, though equally

capable of noble sacrifice. The younger sister is consistently surrounded by light: "L'été, cette année, fut splendide. Tout semblait pénétré d'azur. Notre ferveur triomphait du mal, de la mort; l'ombre reculait devant nous. Chaque matin j'étais éveillé par ma joie; je me levais dès l'aurore, à la rencontre du jour m'élançais.... Quand je rêve à ce temps, je le revois plein de rosée. Juliette, plus matinale que sa soeur qui prolongeait très tard ses veillées, descendait avec moi dans le jardin" (p. 516). Bright morning is more suited to Juliette than to Alissa, who prefers to lengthen the evening. Evening, in this novel, is similar to what it is in Les Cahiers d'André Walter, a time for reading (p. 508), prayer (p. 509), and death (pp. 511-512), a time for contemplative and spiritual activity, but excluding the joy and beauty of morning. Juliette accompanies Jérôme on his morning and afternoon walks in the garden while Alissa, like the adults of the first few pages, prefers to walk out only in the evening. Certainly, light and darkness suggest a contrast between childhood and maturity in this novel. The seriousness of adult life contrasts strongly with the sunlit world of children, and Juliette remains childlike in certain ways while Alissa seems old even as a child. Better suited to life than is Alissa, Juliette is more receptive to full light, and eventually finds contentment in a southern region,

enabling Alissa to write, "Je songe à ce radieux pays dont me parle Juliette" (p. 547). Juliette is capable of a simple physical life, and she alone in this novel can carve out a moderately happy existence, lacking in grandeur but sufficiently contented. Her surrounding of light reflects this suitability to life in the real, social world.

Jérôme by his preference of Alissa to Juliette tends toward the dark Protestant tradition, but not as decidedly as does Alissa. Lucile Bucolin repels him; even as a small child he feels "un obscur instinct" (p. 499) which warns him against her. To serve as narrator to this story, he must be astride two different levels, capable of conversing with Alissa and of amusing Juliette. In chronological age, in preferences, and in moral and intellectual position he is between Alissa and Juliette. Incapable in the end of seconding Alissa's sacrifice in order to seek the narrow path, he is equally incapable of accepting willingly the purely animal life to which Juliette gradually becomes accustomed. Involved in the real world by his military service and by his need to earn a living, he is but half-heartedly active. The light-environment changes as he shifts back and forth between intellectual life and physical life, as it does when he accompanies Juliette or Alissa.

Jérôme alone among these characters seems consciously and literarily to recognize the parallel of the light which surrounds him to his moral and intellectual dilemma. He seems at times to respond instantly and vibrantly to all extremes and to all situations of light, as when he finds joy in the summer following his mother's death (pp. 515-516). Equally responsive is his reaction when Juliette, at nightfall, accepts the suitor she does not love: "La nuit se fermait dans mon coeur" (p. 539). He again consciously voices the parallel when absent from Alissa: "L'épais brouillard d'hiver m'enveloppait; ma lampe d'étude, et toute la ferveur de mon amour et de ma foi écartaient mal, hélas! la nuit et le froid de mon coeur" (p. 542). In each of these varied reactions, Jérôme responds to the situations around him, which parallel his own emotional conflict. In this latter quotation, he approaches the pathetic fallacy, and at one point in the novel the light-situation becomes an emanation of his emotion: J'avançais lentement; le ciel était comme ma joie, chaud, brillant, délicatement pur" (p. 561). Jérôme thus shows certain romantic tendencies, but whether correspondence between his actual moral position and surrounding light are due to the pathetic fallacy or to a pronounced sensitivity to natural phenomena is a moot point. The light which surrounds him changes as his position changes,

going from the bright light of childhood and hope to the obscure night of despair. He is fully cognizant of the existing parallel, takes pains to note it in his own case, and is equally careful to supply the other fictional characters with a light-surrounding indicative of their differing positions.

If Jérôme himself can leave the intellectual life for the physical and then return, his love for Alissa cannot. It is required by her tenacious dedication to the narrow path of salvation to remain platonic and unexpressed. And it too is paralleled by a suitable light-environment. The first scene in which Jérôme feels love and pity for Alissa (pp. 503-504) has already been characterized as dark and shaded. Each scene in their love after this is surrounded by shadow and evening. Even out of doors at midday Alissa is shaded from the sun: "Le soleil ne tiédissait plus qu'à peine les espaliers, mais le ciel était orientalement pur. (Alissa) avait le visage encadré, caché presque au fond d'une grande coiffe zélandaise qu'Abel lui avait rapporté de voyage..." (p. 525). It is "vers la fin du jour" (p. 534), and when "le soir tombait et le brouillard de mer cachait la ville" (p. 536), that Juliette decides to marry her suitor and thus leave Jérôme to Alissa. Further details on the obscure lighting abound in the text: the Christmas tree is "dépouillé, presque

éteint" (p. 538), "Le vestibule... n'était plus éclairé" (pp. 538-539). But Juliette's sacrifice does not permit Jérôme's love for Alissa to move into reality; Alissa requires that it remain repressed, and it continues between light and darkness.

Only once in the novel do Jérôme and Alissa meet in full unattenuated daylight, and that surrounding is totally unsuited to their love. An aunt is responsible for this unwilling meeting: "Il faisait chaud pour la saison. La partie de la côte où nous marchions était exposée au soleil et sans charme; les arbres dépouillés ne nous étaient d'aucun abri" (p. 556). Both find this direct exposure to the sun particularly unpleasant: the full light of day offends the vision ("Alissa était déplaisamment colorée [p. 557]), and touch too becomes disagreeable under the sun's light: "la gêne de sentir accrochées l'une à l'autre nos mains moites nous les fit laisser" (p. 557). This is perhaps Jérôme's first discovery of the irrealizeable nature of their love, and it is fitting that it come in full sunlight. Their love is by its nature something to be kept in shadow, only potential and not to be brought forth into the real world. Jérôme and Alissa feel ridiculous playing the roles of fiancés, and would feel equally ridiculous playing the roles of spouses. Their negative reactions to this

meeting require that all future meetings be arranged in mysterious darkness.

The first scene of Jérôme's next visit to Fougueuse-mare again takes place in the evening (p. 567). Alissa becomes even more closely identified with darkness, "penchée vers l'ombre" (p. 567) while she works, and her eyes lost their lueur (p. 568). Her room, which Jérôme enters for the first time in many years, is dark: "L'ombre bleue des rideaux aus fenêtres et autour du lit, les meubles de luisant acajou, l'ordre, la netteté, le silence, tout racontaint à mon coeur sa pureté et sa pensive grâce" (p. 568). Even the obscurity of the room calls to mind Alissa, identifying her specifically with the twilight surroundings. A final meeting between the two, three years later, is filled with progressive references to evening and shadow: "le soleil déclinant" (p. 567), "le soir tombait" (p. 578), and finally Jérôme "sanglotant dans la nuit" (p. 579). The love which Jérôme and Alissa have for one another is dependent upon the atmosphere of evening and shadow, and is suspended by the sun's light on the one occasion when they unwillingly parade it before others. Personal and incapable of realization, it takes shape and continues as a wholly interior phenomenon, a part of Alissa's life which must exist as she does, at the area between light and darkness.

Alissa's progress, of which this novel is the account, can be followed in its entirety as an evolution from light to darkness, as she gradually leaves more and more of the concrete world behind. Her struggle is to repress a certain side of her nature, that part inherited from her mother. Her father reminds Alissa that she resembles her mother (p. 585), and there are, in her, sensitivities to impression and realizations of the beauty of natural phenomena which could lead her to Ménalque's school of thought. She mentally accompanies Jérôme to Italy, but finds cause for ferveur much nearer Fougueusemare: "J'ai fait avant-hier, seule, à pied, une énorme promenade à travers champs, au hasard; je suis rentrée plus exaltée que lasse, tout ivre de soleil et de joie. Que les meules, sous l'ardent soleil, étaient belles!" (p. 549). She comes very near Ménalque's profession of value in the uniqueness of natural phenomena, seeing a "hymne confus" in nature, and comes to "ne comprendre plus que l'adoration comme seule forme de la prière" (p. 549). In this there is a distant echo of Ménalque, a pantheistic adoration of nature where one might adore anything. But Alissa does not often permit this side of her nature to dominate, and continually retreats by stages into deeped darkness to escape this ivresse de soleil. Her first entries in the journal which she leaves to Jérôme speak of the natural

beauty of Fougueusemare and of spending the early morning alone in the garden. At this point she considers shadow mysterious, even pagan; "nos arbres ... abritent, presque à l'extrémité du parc, une clairière étroite, mystérieuse et se penchant au-dessus d'un gazon doux aux pieds, invitant le choeur des nymphes" (pp. 581-582). Natural beauty has for her a pagan appeal, and darkness is mysterious. Jérôme too remarks that his female cousins fear the "allée noire" (p. 496), and refuse to venture there after dark. But it is a dark and narrow path that Alissa chooses in her hope of salvation, and light gradually fades from her surroundings as she turns further to contemplation.

The second notebook begins at a level of shade much different from the initial light of the first notebook: "Sortant chaque soir, vers la tombée du jour, par la petite porte du potager, je descends l'avenue déjà sombre..." (p. 591). Further references to the darkened garden at dusk occur frequently (pp. 591-593), in virtually every entry, after Jérôme's final visit. Increasingly, the shadows grow deeper; even the dawn, "grise, mouillée de pleurs" (p. 593), provides no relief. Her final cry to God is a metaphorical cry from the darkness: "Je suis dans la nuit; j'attends l'aube" (p. 595). In this darkness of despair, the sudden revelation of her solitude appears to Alissa as a sudden <u>éclaircissement</u> accompanied

by a shudder of terror. The final appeal of life is here indicated textually as a light in the darkness of her freely-chosen contemplative life. There is thus a deepening of shade in Alissa's environment as she gradually progresses away from active pursuit of life toward contemplative perfection of the soul. The degree of darkness in her physical surroundings parallels her moral progress toward the dark and narrow path of salvation.

In La Porte étroite, light-surroundings are an accurate indication of the degree of commitment to social or contemplative life. This novel contains a much wider variety of degrees of dedication to one option or the other, and provides a finer degree of shading than can be found in any of the previously discussed works. Lucile Bucolin, a Creole fond of bright colors and bright light, is the most devoted to sensation and novelty in life, the closest to Ménalque. Her daughter Juliette, while raised in the Protestant tradition, inherits at least her mother's ability to experience life on a nearly-animal level, and she too appears in surroundings of light. Jérôme, while approaching Alissa's austerity, retains several common interests with Juliette, including a desire to travel and thus to expand sensory experience (p. 519); he is both chronologically and morally mid-way between Juliette and Alissa, and suited neither to domestic life

nor to religious contemplative existence. Alissa, at the farthest reach of the spectrum, is closest to André Walter, avoiding intensity of any sort, turning her back on life in society, and dwelling as Walter does, mid-way between light and darkness, unable to attain the ideal in this life, but equally unable to accept Jérôme and thus to formalize and to destroy a love which seems genuine only in its potentiality and incapable or existing in the full light of day.

2. Light and darkness in Les Caves du Vatican

Les Nourritures terrestres and Les Cahiers d'André Walter provide insight into the use of light and darkness as a parallel to moral and intellectual position in the early Gide. But each supplies only one part of what must become a continuing interaction. Walter and Ménalque respond as complementary beings, each choosing and illustrating a single alternative. Later, as Gide's works grew more complex, he could incorporate both thesis and antithesis into a single framework while yet constructing this same parallel, as he does in L'Immoraliste and in La Porte étroite. Because of its ironic nature, Les Caves du Vatican offers a variety of disparate and contrastive personae, and hence permits the study of

this same technique on a yet more intricate level. There is of course a certain amount of ambiguity inherent in any part of the Caves du Vatican, and the use of light and visual perception is no exception: at the midpoint of this novel Anthime Armand-Dubois, himself halfway between his first conversion and his second, voices this ambiguity when he exclaims to his brother-in-law, "Aveuglé, dites-vous! Est-ce vous qui parlez ainsi? Illuminé, mon frère, illuminé" (p. 772).[2] Just what constitutes vision and blindness is an open question in a novel where any truth is elusive, where Protos can seem to be a priest and Amédée Fleurissoire a hero.

Anthime Armand-Dubois, whose name supplies a title to the first book of the Caves du Vatican, presents an ironic but consistent example of transformation both in intellectual attitude and in light-environment. The light which surrounds him from the beginning of this first book is transparently linked to "enlightenment;" his experimentation on rats is performed in an orangerie (p. 681), and it is in this hothouse that he attempts to reduce the animal reaction to vegetal response, thereby striving to upset the medieval hierarchy of souls: "Anthime Armand-Dubois prétendait simplement réduire en 'tropismes' toute l'activite des animaux qu'il observait. Tropismes! (. . .) Evidemment l'organisme cédait aux

mêmes incitations que l'héliotrope lorsque la plante involontaire tourne sa fleur face au soleil" (p. 683). Anthime conceptualizes his reductive experimentation in terms of an involuntary response to light, seeing this as the essential and most irresistible of vegetal responses. As a philosophe, his purpose is to train the light of reason upon shaded areas of human ignorance; the eighteenth-century image of idea as sudden light in darkness recurs consistently to him—"Tropismes! Quelle lumière soudaine émanait de ces syllabes!" (p. 683), "Une lueur traverse son cerveau" (p. 687). Of course, priests differ with him on which is light and which darkness, but use the same analogy: "Combien d'âmes les fausses lueurs de votre vaine science n'ont-elles pas détournées de la lumière!" (p. 704). A physical environment of light accompanies this role of scientist, as Anthime takes notes on his rats each day at noon (p. 684).

Ambiguity and shade begin to surround Anthime with the arrival of the Baraglioul family, but he remains consistent; it is he who trains a lantern on Marguerite's eye, and thus succeeds in removing the object from her eye which Julius and others have tried to take away without success (pp. 691-692). As sceptic, he attempts to ridicule Julie's childish faith, but succeeds only in embarassing himself (pp. 692-694). Lamplight and obscurity are the

surroundings for scenes of religious devotion, and Anthime is touched by the scene of Julie with her mother and her aunt praying in a surrounding of shadows with the lamp evenly illuminating this sentimental tableau. Julie's naive faith has cast doubt and shame on Anthime's position, and has been accompanied by the encroachment of shade into his surroundings.

The statue of the Virgin which miraculously converts the sceptic is even more dimly lit, and the text makes many references to its situation. Véronique, in hoping to convert her husband, "chaque soir, et sans en manquer un, brûle, au nom d'Anthime, deux cierges, aux côtés de la Madone triviale" (p. 697). Twice more in this same paragraph mention is made of the candlelight surrounding the statue. Without this minimal light, Anthime might ignore the statue, but Véronique and the Church have made sure that it is constantly illuminated: "Eclairant la face exsangue, les rayonnantes mains, le manteau bleu, une lanterne, en face de la statue, mais assez loin en avant d'elle, pend à un toit de zinc qui déborde la niche et abrite à la fois les ex-voto accrochés aux cotés des murs. (. . .) En plus, deux cierges brûlent jour et nuit devant la statue" (p. 699). It is beneath the dignity of such a freemason to become angry at a mere plaster statue, but Anthime responds negatively to the light of

the candles: "Anthime n'en veut point précisément à la Vierge; c'est spécialement aux cierges de Véronique qu'il en a" (p. 699). Beppo is offered money not to tip the statue from its alcove, but to extinguish the candles, which he refuses to do. Anthime's mutilation of the statue is accidental: his crutch is thrown to put out the candles, and his initial reaction is not surprise at having broken a hand from the icon, but frustration that the candles are still burning: "Par l'enfer! les deux cierges brûlent toujours. Mais qu'est-ce à dire? La statue, à la place de la main droite, ne présente plus qu'une tige de métal noir" (p. 700). His violence is due to frustration at the candles' flames, a tropisme this time against light. At the same time when he entered this twilit area before the statue, Anthime left his rational role behind. In seeking out the statue which he habitually avoided, and in irrationally and violently trying to vent his rage on an inanimate object, he has in a sense recognized the symbolic importance of the Madonna. His role and his light-environment are altered together.

From midday's full light to lantern light to candlelight, Anthime's philosophical and moral position has been increasingly compromised. It is only in night's nearly-total darkness that Anthime's world-view is completely reversed by miraculous intervention. Light's importance to this

scene is shown by the way in which it is carefully established in the text. Awakening to a knock on an unused door, "Une demi-clarté lui permettait de distinguer les menus objets dans sa chambre, une douce et douteuse clarté pareille à celle qu'eût répandue une veilleuse; pourtant aucune flamme ne veillait. Comme il cherchait à s'expliquer d'où provenait cette lumière, on heurta une seconde fois" (p. 701). A mysterious, unspecified, unreal light bathes the room,coming from no natural lamp. As the apparition enters the room he sees first only an "obscure embrasure, mais où, comme dans une niche, voici que la Sainte Vierge apparut" (p. 701). He comes to see that the light proceeds from the statue itself, but his full conversion, like that of Saul, occurs only in the blackness of unconsciousness: "Il lui semblait à présent que cette étrange clarté émanait d'Elle. Mais, quand la tige de métal entra tout à coup dans son flanc, une atroce douleur le perça et il s'éveilla dans le noir" (p. 702). Awakening and standing to find himself healed, Anthime goes to the adjoining room where Véronique finds him in the atmosphere which previously surrounded the statue itself: "Son Anthime était là, en face d'elle; il n'était assis, ni debout; le sommet de sa tête, à hauteur de la table, recevait en plein la lumière de la bougie qu'il avait posée sur le bord.... Anthime était agenouillé" (p. 703). He has ceased to be freemason, sceptic, and

philosophe, and becomes as the statue itself, a relic of divine mercy. Assuming this role, he also assumes the accompanying mysterious surrounding of candlelight.

It is in this position of half-light, of mysterious and indirect light, that he continues to exist as long as his conversion continues in force. Julius, visiting in Rome, is surprised to find Véronique and Anthime living in squalor, having given up their material wealth, without resistance but also without specific intention on Anthime's part. Although Julius visits them during the day, the obscurity of their surroundings is among the first details given on their apartment: "On l'introduisit dans un misérable appartement de trois pièces—si l'on peut compter pour une pièce l'obscure soupente où Véronique faisait elle-même cuire quelques légumes, ordinaire de leurs repas. Un hideux réflecteur de métal renvoyait blafard le jour étroit d'une courette" (p. 770). Only with the end of his temporary conversion to near-sainthood does Anthime re-emerge into daylight. The last time Julius (or anyone) sees a Christian and sainted Anthime is at Amédée's funeral. It is not a large funeral, and the weather is not conducive to large numbers of followers: "Trois voitures suivaient le corbillard. Il pleuvait" (p. 861). In this rainy, dimly-lit surrounding, further attenuated by the fact that the scene takes place inside

a carriage, Anthime appears in this attitude and in this atmosphere for the last time, taking God as his witness that he freely accepted his sufferings (p. 862). Gradually, Julius succeeds in convincing Anthime that the Pope is false, and that his sufferings are in vain. In the course of this scene, Anthime gradually opens again to the outside, first opening the carriage window (p. 862). Finally convinced that Julius is telling him the truth, Anthime resumes his original position at exactly the same moment when the light returns: "Il avait cessé de pleuvoir; un rayon écartait la nue. La voiture avec de lents cahots rentrait dans Rome.—Dans ce cas, je sais ce qui me reste à faire, reprit Anthime, de sa voix la mieux décidée: Je vends la mèche" (p. 864). Almost immediately, he leans out of the carriage to touch the driver with his cane, then gets out into the light, resuming all at once his environment of light, his ideas, and his newspaper articles.

It is obvious that the meaning of light-surroundings differs here from the Nourritures terrestres. Anthime's dedication to a single option in life puts him in daylight at the beginning and at the end, but his choice is not to live hedonistically. Anthime dedicates himself to freemasonry, to science, and to rationality. This moral and intellectual choice casts him in a social role, a real-life role characterized by midday's light. He does

not seek novel atmospheres or strong light as does Ménalque, and light in his case seems transparently tied to enlightenment.

There are other parallels of light-environment to moral and intellectual position in Les Caves du Vatican. Almost every character in this sotie finds himself in light which directly parallels his interior state. Lafcadio, deciding to answer a few questions put to him by Julius, first goes to the window and raises the curtain, allowing illumination of the dark room and of his personal life (usually kept secret) at the same moment (p. 736). Light surrounding Lafcadio becomes changeable and ambiguous just before he kills Amédée; Lafcadio reacts negatively to Amédée's efforts to dim the lights (p. 828), and even decides to kill Amédée only if he sees a light gleaming in the dark countryside (p. 829). Amédée Fleurissoire is an unlikely activist in the fraudulent campaign to free the Pope; Amédée is unused to travel and lives contentedly in his still-unconsummated marriage. Like André Walter in the Cahiers who also retires from physical activity, Amédée finds both light and darkness uncomfortable, but because the one brings mosquitos and the other attracts bedbugs (pp. 775-780). The strong light of Rome makes him dizzy (pp. 809-810) and uncomfortable (p. 816), as does the loss of his bearings in an unstable

physical world filled with sinister vagaries and constant flux. Julius de Baraglioul, a writer who retires from real life in order to develop fictional accounts, keeps his back to the sun in Rome (p. 816), and usually appears in a surrounding of lamplight (pp. 700, 707, 708, 843). Protos alone violates this rule as he violates the others, and is equally comfortable in all surroundings; but he alone has no single moral or intellectual position which an environment of light might reflect.

Les Caves du Vatican is among Gide's most ironic works, and contains numerous satires of himself. Protos, Julius, Amédée, and Lafcadio each parody some part of Gide's own personality. The heavy-handed, ironic use of light in this book seems to be another form of satire, a satire of the artist at work. Stylistic parodies and irruptions of the author into the text lend humor to the style by their sudden violation of vraisemblance, and serve to remind the reader of the satiric nature of the Caves du Vatican. In much the same way, light is used here not to create a favorable atmosphere, but to point actively at the novel's mask, indicating that this too is merely another technique. Nothing could be less subtle than the sudden reappearance of the sun when Anthime decides to "vendre la mèche," and nothing could be more predictable than Amédée's discomfort in the light of day. But Gide's ironic use

of light in this ironic text underlines the importance of light-environments to his previous work. Satire here is a matter of caricature, stressing to the point of incredibility a single aspect of one personality, and the author's use of light too is caricatured by its obvious incidence throughout the text.

FOOTNOTES

[1]References to *La Porte étroite* are to the edition contained in *Romans, récits, et soties: oeuvres lyriques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958). Page numbers will appear in the text.

[2]References to *Les Caves du Vatican* are to the edition contained in *Romans, récits, et soties: oeuvres lyriques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958). Page numbers will appear in the text.

CONCLUSION

The light which surrounds the central consciousness in Les Cahiers d'André Walter and in Les Nourritures terrestres is intended to reveal the metaphysical state of this consciousness. Gide was careful to provide for André Walter a surrounding of moderate, filtered light parallel to Walter's tense position between moral and intellectual extremes, drawn by both extremes in every situation but fearful of any intensity. André Walter consciously recognizes the suitability of physical shade to his character, and constructs an imagery of shade to express the comfort he finds in intercessors between himself and all forces. Further, he makes of moderate light an ideal dream, imagining a surrounding of perpetual light which does not cast shadows. Attempting to control his intellectual state, he begins with moderate light in an interior setting, but finds it impossible to maintain this surrounding indefinitely. Full light and total darkness await him without this self-controlled level of light; the intensity of physical response brought on by the one and of intellectual anguish brought on by the other are equally intolerable. Walter's attempt to

reconcile light and darkness results in failure, a parallel to the impossibility of uniting the real with the ideal, the physical with the spiritual. The struggle between light and darkness which he finds attractive at dawn and at twilight can be only a momentary balance; one must eventually surrender to the other. Such is also the case in his continued struggle to maintain a balance between his interior antithetical forces; the equilibrium between real and ideal which he seeks to maintain can be only momentarily imposed, and its failure results in his madness and death. Ménalque's disciple, too, exists in a light-surrounding suitable to his metaphysical position. However, he makes no effort to petrify his surroundings, and seeks actively to change them. From the beginning of the Nourritures, when he awakens from his previous condition, the diarist's search is to intensify constantly the level of light around him. His attachment to a single possibility in life grows more ardent as the level of light surrounding him grows stronger. The state of animal consciousness and the rigidity of his philosophy both reach their pinnacles in the desert; beyond this point no evolution can occur. Shadows and doubts re-enter the fictional diarist's environment at the same time. Regret of his former growth comes to him in a surrounding of twilight.

That Ménalque and Walter are complementary protagonists is clear from their common traits and fears, which underlie their very different ways of life. Their complementarity is further supported by Michel's development from a youth similar to André Walter, living in the relative gloom of France, to a character resembling Ménalque, once he has accorded himself to the desert sun. At least partially as a result of changed light in his surroundings, Michel explores two divergent moralities, and comprehends the subjectivity of any specific moral system.

From the very beginnings of his literary career, André Gide was careful to surround his characters with an environment of light suitable to their moral and intellectual positions, and it is thus inevitable that André Walter and the young Michel of L'Immoraliste should exist in the shade, while Ménalque's disciple and the later Michel prefer the intolerable light of the desert. This correspondence continues in the later Gide as well, as is shown by its occurrence in La Porte étroite and Les Caves du Vatican. Gide's use of physical surroundings to reflect metaphysical condition might be interpreted as a pathetic fallacy, but the consciousness seems to respond to its surroundings rather than to project them. This device might also be interpreted as rigid adherence to classical unity, maintaining inviolable the integrity of the individual to the point of placing him in suitable lighting conditions.

But there are also echos of Gide's early interest in botany and the physical sciences throughout Gide's work, from the names and characteristics of marsh plants in Paludes to Anthime Armand-Dubois's search for vegetal tropisms in animal response in Les Caves du Vatican. Perhaps what the suitability of light-environment to character traits and development demonstrates is essentially an adherence to nineteenth-century scientific and sociological beliefs. Ménalque's differences from André Walter are matters of adaptation: the same fears underlie both divergent attitudes, the one ethereal and the other nearly animal. It is only by leaving his roots and altering his environment that Ménalque and his disciples are able to maintain incessant evolution: confined to a single surrounding, they too would become rigid and incapable of constantly sharpening their ferveur, as does Michel in these circumstances. Adaptation is the sole alternative to death in a changed surrounding. André Walter, too, might be forced to evolve if circumstances required it, and in a sense it is his failure to adapt to the absence of Emmanuèle which causes him to perish. One can find here traces of Hippolyte Taine's determination of character due to race, surroundings, and time. Of these three elements, only surroundings vary dramatically from André Walter to Ménalque, and that only because of

Ménalque's active efforts to alter them. There is in this a suggestion of Lysenko's theories of adaptation, rejecting natural selection and genetics on the supposition that strong individuals could within a single generation adapt to altered environments while those which failed to adapt would perish. Indeed, the entire evolution of the fictional writer of the Nourritures could be placed in analogy with botanical development. Awakening from a dormant phase, in which the diarist contains only the germ of the nouvel être which he is to become, he first seeks light as the only thing beautiful to him. Too young to stand the full light of day, he begins in the shadows, as a seedling, and only gradually succeeds in attaining higher levels of light by his personal development. Light becomes more and more essential to Ménalque's disciple as his growth progresses: he climbs hills in the evening in order to exist for several more moments in sunlight before darkness. Straining toward light, he enters the desert, where light is overpowering, and finds himself drained and consumed, incapable of continuing to live at this level of light, and incapable of transcending it. His final act, the writing of this book, is again that of a plant, a seminal effort, and he gives to this book a title recalling the earth's productivity.

If the determinative force of light in the environment brings to mind nineteenth-century developments, the light imagery in Gide's writings bears directly upon the subsequent development of modern prose. Light and darkness serve as a *construction en abyme*, presenting in a recurring image an analogy to the moral and intellectual position of the protagonist, and this technique of placing reflective devices within a work of art has been of great significance to the modern novel. Gide's impressionistic use of light to dissolve reality into a surface upon which light plays also places these works directly in the mainstream of modern fiction. Exterior reality has lost its solidity, its claim as the only authentic form, to the subjective sensation which serves as sole indicator of that which exists outside the subjective consciousness, and this in itself is a major step away from the Balzacian novel and an advance toward the *nouveau roman*. The passive consciousness, incapable of controlling its destiny, and willing to simply reflect spontaneously whatever registers upon it, and the gradual dissolution of the protagonist's identity (especially in the *Nourritures*), at least suggest the modern fictional protagonist, no "hero" in the traditional sense, but a character whose interest lies precisely in his subjective perception and in the lyrical recounting of that perception. Each of these movements, observable

in the early Gide, would be explored only much later by the nouveau roman. Light and darkness have an impact upon each of these movements, and they bear directly upon protagonists throughout Gide's literary career. Comprehension of the importance of light and darkness in Gide's early works can thus provide insight both into Gide's creative techniques, and into the moral and intellectual positions of Gidian protagonists.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works Consulted

Albérès, René M. Métamorphoses du roman. Paris: Albin Michel, 1966.

Arland, Marcel, and Mouton, Jean. Entretiens sur André Gide. Paris: Mouton et Cie, 1967.

Barrett, William. Irrational Man: a Study in Existential Philosophy. Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962.

Beigbeder, Marc. André Gide. Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1954.

Brée, Germaine. Gide. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963.

Bronte, Diana. "Le Symbolisme dans l'oeuvre d'André Gide." Cahiers André Gide, I (1964), pp. 225-240.

Brosman, Catherine Savage. "André Gide et Roger Martin du Gard: For and Against Commitment." Rice University Studies, LIX,3 (Summer, 1973), pp. 1-8.

Brunetière, Ferdinand. "L'Impressionisme dans le roman." Revue des Deux Mondes, 15 novembre 1879, pp. 446-459.

Chadourne, Jacqueline M. André Gide et l'Afrique. Paris: Nizet, 1968.

Cotnam, Jacques. "Le Subjectif de Gide ou les lectures d'André Walter (1889-1893)." Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), pp. 15-113.

Cresson, André. Bergson, sa vie et son oeuvre. Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1964.

Décaudin, Michel. "Poésie impressioniste et poésie symboliste." Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises, XII (1960), pp. 132-142.

Delay, Jean. "En écrivant André Walter." Table Ronde, 98 (février, 1956), pp. 9-41.

_____. La Jeunesse d'André Gide. 2 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1956.

Francastel, Pierre. Peinture et société. Paris: Gallimard, 1965

Freedman, Ralph. The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Hermann Hesse, Virginia Woolf, and André Gide. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Frohock, Wilbur Merrill, ed. Image and Theme: Studies in Modern French Fiction. Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, distributed by Harvard University Press, ca. 1969.

Gasset, Ortega y. The Dehumanization of Art, and Other Writings on Art and Literature. Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956.

Gibbs, Beverly Jean. "Impressionism as a Literary Movement." Modern Language Journal, 36 (1952), pp. 175-183.

Gide, André. Oeuvres complètes. Ed. Louis Martin-Chauffier. 16 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1932-1938.

_____. Romans, récits, et soties: oeuvres lyriques. Paris: Gallimard, 1958.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. The Sufferings of Young Werther. Trans. Harry Steinhauer. New York: W.W. Norton, 1970.

Goulet, Allain. "Les premiers vers d'André Gide." Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), pp. 123-149.

Guérard, Albert J. André Gide. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Heath, Stephen. The Nouveau Roman: a Study in the Practice of Writing. London: Elek Books, 1972.

Herbart, Pierre. A la recherche d'André Gide. Paris: Gallimard, 1952.

Hoy, Peter C. "A propos d'un fragment ignoré des Nourritures terrestres." Revue des Sciences Humaines, 116 (1964), pp. 497-506.

Huyghé, René. Art and the Spirit of Man. New York: Harry N. Abrams, ca. 1962.

Hytier, Jean. André Gide. Paris: Editions Edmond Charlot, 1945.

Ireland, G.W. André Gide, a Study of his Creative Writings. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

_____. Gide. London: Oliver and Boyd, 1967.

Kaelin, Eugene E. An Existential Aesthetic. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

Kronegger, Maria Elizabeth. "Authors and Impressionist Reality." French Literature Studies, I (March, 1973), pp. 153-166.

_____. Literary Impressionism. New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, 1973.

_____. "The Multiplication of Self from Flaubert to Sartre." L'Esprit Créateur, XIII,4 (Winter, 1973), pp. 310-319.

Lambert, Jean. Gide familier. Paris: René Julliard, 1958.

Lang, Renée. André Gide et la pensée allemande. Paris: Plon, 1949.

Lebrun, Claude. "La Naissance des thèmes dans les premières oeuvres d'André Gide." Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), pp. 203-233.

Littlejohn, David, ed. Gide: a Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970.

Magny, Claude-Edmonde. Histoire du roman français depuis 1918. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1950.

Martin, Claude. "Etat présent des études gidiennes (1951-1963)." In Osburn, Charles B., ed. The Present State of French Studies. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1971.

_____. "Etudes gidiennes réunies et présentées par Claude Martin." Revue des Lettres Modernes, I (1970), pp. 223-227.

Martin du Gard, Roger. Notes sur André Gide. Paris: Gallimard, 1951.

Massis, Henri. André Gide. Lyon: Lardanchet, 1958.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. "Le Doute de Cézanne," in Sens et Non-Sens. Paris: Editions Nagel, 1948.

_____. L'Œil et l'esprit. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.

Mondor, Henri. Les Premiers temps d'une amitié: André Gide et Paul Valéry. Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 1947.

Morrissette, Bruce. "Un Héritage d'André Gide: la duplication intérieure." Comparative Literature Studies, 8,ii (June, 1971), pp. 125-142.

Mouret, François J.-L. "A la recherche d'Oscar Wilde dans la vie et l'oeuvre d'André Gide." Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), pp. 165-184.

Mouton, Jean. Les Intermittences du regard chez l'écrivain. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1973.

Moutote, Daniel. Le Journal d'André Gide et les problèmes du moi. Paris: Université de Paris, Faculté des Lettres, 1968.

Niess, Robert J. Zola, Cézanne, and Manet: a Study of l'Oeuvre. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1968.

O'Brien, Justin. "Les Nourritures terrestres et les Bucoliques de Virgile." French Review, XLIII (April, 1952), pp. 117-125.

_____. Portrait of André Gide. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953.

_____. "Supplément à la bibliographie de Gide." Romanic Review, XLII (February, 1952), pp. 34-53.

Packenham, Michael, ed. Les Premières armes du Symbolisme. Exeter: Exeter University Printing Unit, 1973.

Pollard, Patrick J. "Le Contenu du Narcisse." Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), pp. 151-164.

Porter, Laurence M. "The Generativity Crisis of Gide's Immoraliste." French Forum, II,1 (January, 1977).

Sonnenfeld, Albert. "André Gide." Contemporary Literature, 10 (Winter, 1969), pp. 117-123.

Sturrock, John. The French New Novel: Claude Simon, Michel Butor, Alain Robbe-Grillet. London: Oxford University Press, ca. 1969.

"Symposium in Literary Impressionism." Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, 17 (1968), pp. 40-68.

Teuler, Gabriel. Après Gide. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Debresse, ca. 1959.

Tolton, Cameron D.E. "Image-Conveying Abstractions in the Work of André Gide." In Frohock, Wilbur M., ed. Image and Theme: Studies in Modern French Fiction. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Vergilius Marius, Publius. The Work of Vergil Rendered into English Prose. James Lonsdale and Samuel Lee, trans. London: Macmillan and Co., 1929.

Watson, Graeme. "Le Voyage de Tityre." Cahiers André Gide, I (1969), pp. 185-240.

Zola, Emile. Salons. F.W.J. Hemmings and Robert Niess, eds. Geneva: Droz, 1959.