IMAGES OF WOMEN IN ANDRÉ GIDE'S

LES FAUX-MONNAYEURS: MISOGYNY OR FEMINISM?

by

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ABSTRACT

This study consists of an analysis of the major female characters in André Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. The theme of insubordination, as exemplified in the personal growth of the novel's hero, Bernard, provides an important contrast to the author's portrayal of women. Bernard's refusal of subordination drives him toward disponibilité and authenticité. In Gidian terminology, to be disponible is to be receptive to the plenitude of life, to dare all. It is only after experimenting with life's excesses that Bernard arrives at a personal règle de vie that respects both his natural impulses and conventional moral standards.

The discussion of the female characters focuses on the female's status in the social milieu portrayed in the novel. Society's traditions appear to encourage and maintain women's subordination and suppress the female's natural impulse for freedom; female disponibilité and authenticité seem unattainable.

In analysing individual, female characters in light of their subordination and denial of authenticity, they will be classified into three categories: myths, stereotypes and archetypes. Bronja and Lilian, who are diametrically opposed personifications of good and evil, assume the roles of mythical figures. Sophroniska, Sarah and Rachel, who are
typified depictions of the female "intellectual", the "feminist" and the "religious devotee" respectively, constitute stereotypes. The category of archetypes is comprised of Pauline, Marguerite, Mme Vedel, Mme de La Pérouse and Laura, who are all similar in their roles as wives and mothers. They adhere to the conventional role of woman in their society. Consequently, archetypes illustrate most poignantly the problematic existence of women in the novel.

After examining how the female characters are representative of their particular groups, we will attempt to ascertain why the author's portrayal of them is not only limited, but also pejorative. Conclusions will be drawn in light of the male characters' attitudes toward women. The male point of view is dominant and tends to overshadow and efface the female presence in the text. Furthermore, females are denigrated and disparaged from two distinctly different male perspectives: that of the homosexual and that of the heterosexual. The homosexual male vilifies and refuses women in their capacity as objects of male sexual desire. The heterosexual male advocates and adheres to traditional values that tend to privilege men; his deprecation of women is rooted in traditional, male chauvinism. It is from this second perspective that the feminist statement emerges. The author's deference toward the male is entwined with his sympathy for women and the plight of their existence.
That the female characters are forbidden personal freedom and authenticity is never overtly stated; yet this conclusion emerges clearly from a critical analysis of the images of women in the novel and of male responses to the female characters. Exploration of the subtext produces many indications that support the notion that the author sees a potential for women's emancipation and for a resolution of the problems of female existence. The author's sympathy serves as an invitation to the reader to reconstruct the feminist statement and propose a personal solution.
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Qui se dirige vers l'inconnu, doit consentir à s'aventurer seul. Créuse, Eurydice, Ariane, toujours une femme s'attarde, s'inquiète, craint de lâcher prise et de voir se rompre le fil qui la rattache à son passé. Elle tire en arrière Thésée, et fait se retourner Orphée. Elle a peur.

André Gide (Journal, le 12 mai, 1927)
INTRODUCTION

One of the major themes of Les Faux-Monnayeurs is what Gide refers to as "l'insubordination de l'enfant."¹ The traditions of French, bourgeois society are thought to suppress one's uniqueness, or "authenticity" and confine the individual to a situation fausse. The adolescent's natural response to this situation is "insubordination" or revolt. The novel's hero, Bernard, exemplifies this theme. His development follows a familiar, Gidian pattern that can be summarized in four stages. The first stage consists of Bernard's radical departure from his family and socio-cultural milieu. This initial action is what Gide calls the dépassement or the passer outre.² Distant from the influence of family, church and state, Bernard enters stage two; he is free and eager to plunge recklessly into life; to dare all, to experience the "plénitude de vie."³ Like Ménalque of Les Nourritures Terrestres, who implores ". . .

que chaque attente . . . soit . . . simplement une disposition à l'accueil(.)" Bernard is ready for adventure, he is disponible.⁴ Stage three is marked by careful introspection. At this point Bernard's conscience -- his dialogue intérieur, his voix intérieures -- begins its struggle to achieve a balance between passive submission and radical freedom.⁵ He searches for a direction in life, a
but, a règle morale. (v. J d FM pp. 58-9) In a discussion with Édouard, he states:

C'est alors que je me suis demandé comment établir une règle, puisque je n'acceptais pas de vivre sans règle, et que cette règle je ne l'acceptais pas d'autrui.  

The answer, as Édouard points out, is to "trouver cette règle en soi-même; d'avoir pour but le développement de soi." (LFM, pp. 494-5) Bernard accepts Édouard's dictum to learn how to live by living and the formula: "Il est bon de suivre sa pente, pourvu que ce soit en montant." (LFM, p. 495). Having constructed his own règle morale, Bernard reaches the fourth and final stage: l'authenticité. His personality is unique, original, self-defined rather than a "counterfeit", or hypocritical response to the dictates of the social order.

In comparing the female characters of Les Faux-Monnayeurs to Bernard, and certain of the other male characters, there arises a striking disparity. Most of the women never move beyond the situation fausse to stage one — the dépassement, the passer outre. For the few who do — Sarah, Lilian, Laura, Marguerite — their progression toward authenticity is truncated by one of two consequences. They either become fixed in a state of dépassement that propels them toward hedonism and debauchery or they are driven by weakness and fear back to social conformity — the counterfeit personality, the situation fausse.

Sarah and Lilian's dépassement consists of a mandate to
defy all conventions and assume the attitude of "la toison d'or ... à la recherche d'un conquéreur." (LFM, p. 101) They are opportunistic and predatory in their pursuit of licentiousness misconstrued as freedom. As such, they become corruptors of society and are eventually exiled or annihilated. Laura and Marguerite, whose respective dépassements comprise an adulterous affair resulting in illegitimate pregnancy, regress back to the situation fausse. They are reinstated to the ranks of traditional womanhood where they are prescribed lives of resignation and self-sacrifice. Within the social context of Les Faux-Monnayeurs this dreary existence appears to be the status quo of the female condition.

One of several techniques Gide uses to expose the female condition consists of presenting various tableaux of the way women live. The women who populate these tableaux can be recognized as stock images of women that range from myth to woman in society. Those characters classified as women in society will be further divided into stereotypes and archetypes. Although myths, stereotypes and archetypes differ, as we shall discover in subsequent chapters dealing specifically with each category, there is one element that all of the female characters share: a certain artificiality, a lack of development that makes them static, strangely two-dimensional figures.

The reified depiction of women in Les Faux-Monnayeurs conforms to Gide's literary esthetics which include an
adherence to the principles of classicism. Édouard's admiration of the dialogues in Racinian theatre lends insight into Gide's portrayal of women. He states:

(J)e n'admire en littérature rien tant que, par exemple, dans Racine, la discussion entre Mithridate et ses fils; où l'on sait parfaitement bien que jamais un père et des fils n'ont pu parler de la sorte, et où néanmoins (et je devrais dire: d'autant plus) tous les pères et tous les fils peuvent se reconnaître .... Il n'y a de vérité psychologique que particulière, il est vrai; mais il n'y a d'art que général. (LFM, p. 270)

The austere, mask-like representations of women in Les Faux Monnayeurs reflect the elegant simplicity and artificiality of the characters in classical theatre. Their realism resides in their universality. They are contrived, abstract images in which all women are expected to recognize themselves, even though no individual woman would ever speak or act in such a way.

Through his particular manner of exposing the female condition Gide synthesizes two seemingly disparate motifs. The stark, gloomy portrayals of the traditional woman, her analogues and her counterparts, enable the author to suppress the development and influence of the female characters and thus bring into relief the inherent homosexual statement of the novel. From the perspective of the female reader, however, the very nature of the portrayals also signifies the author's empathy for women whose individuality, or authenticity is curtailed by stifling and debilitating marriages. This sympathetic viewpoint engenders an urgent, yet subtle feminist statement.
Gide refrains from proposing any solutions to the female predicament by making emancipation, freedom, exploration and expression of the "authentic" self ideals that never fully materialize. In this respect, he avoids didacticism and elicits the reader's collaboration in constructing and elaborating the intrinsic feminist message. The reader is compelled to move beyond the text, to reflect, judge and, like Bernard, perhaps achieve a balance in her own life between docile submission and radical freedom, a balance that fosters the acquisition of her authenticité.
NOTES


4 See Gide, Les Nourritures, pp. 113-15.


7 See LFM, p. 291; Bernard states, "Je voudrais, tout le long de ma vie, au moindre choc, rendre un son pur, probe, authentique."

8 The terms myth, stereotype and archetype are used conventionally, and distinctions will be defined. They are not meant to reflect their usage in Jungian terminology.
CHAPTER I

MYTHS

The two female characters that comprise the category of mythical personae represent two poles: the ideal of innocence and purity (Bronja), and the symbol of ultimate evil and corruption (Lady Griffith). Bronja's youth and religious devotion suggest chastity, goodness and piety. She is so highly idealized that she transcends reality and enters the realm of the supernatural. She is pure spirit -- a saint and an angel. As such, she assumes the role of Boris' confidante, protector and guiding light. Lilian's worldliness and cynicism, on the other hand, are indicative of her wickedness and villainy. She is an evil spirit, a demon. As Vincent's confidante and mentor, she plays the role of seducer and corrupter. She guides him toward hedonism, licentiousness and depravity.

Bronja's name carries a manifold symbolism. In Russian, her name signifies "armour" or "reserved place". This meaning is congruent with her piety and spiritual devotion. In the context of Christian virtue and fidelity, the armour is impenetrable; it connotes firmness, resistance, resoluteness and shields the soul from temptation and evil. In the Épitre aux Ephésiens, Saint Paul warns: "Revêtez
l'armure de Dieu pour pouvoir résister aux manoeuvres du Diable."²

The name Bronja also evokes the word bronze (fr.) and its synonym airain. In Greek mythology, bronze was revered for its physical properties of strength, power, impenetrability and invulnerability. The third race of man, the "race de bronze" was commissioned by Minos to be guards and protectors of Crete. If strangers attempted to penetrate Crete, or if inhabitants tried to leave, Talos, the last survivor of the "race de bronze", would heat his bronze body to burning red and hunt down, disembowel and burn the invaders or the traitors, known as "les coupables."³

In religious tradition, bronze, or airain, is considered a sacred metal. It is hard, strong, impenetrable symbolizing inflexible justice, incorruptibility and immortality. The "voûte du ciel" is gilded in bronze. The "serpent d'airain" is a symbol of divine protection.⁴

The imagery of the armour and the suit of bronze is complementary to Bronja's angelic symbolism; in religious mythology, angels are believed to form the army of God. As God's "ministres", "messagers", "gardiens" and "protecteurs des élus", they are intermediary beings between God and man. It is thought that: "Chaque fidèle est assisté d'un ange . . . ; cet ange guide sa vie, il est à la fois son pédagogue et son protecteur."⁵

Bronja's angelicism is alluded to at various points throughout the text. Édouard describes Bronja in the following manner:
La petite Bronja est exquise; elle doit avoir quinze ans. Elle porte en nattes d'épais cheveux blonds qui descendent jusqu'à sa taille; son regard et le son de sa voix semblent plutôt angeliques qu'humains. (LFM, pp. 253-4)

Boris expresses his awe and curiosity for Bronja's communion with the angels:

Moi, je t'ai bien crue l'autre jour, quand tu m'as parlé des anges. Dis, Bronja: tu crois que si je piais très fort, moi aussi je les verrais? (LFM, pp. 254-5)

That Boris seeks Bronja's guidance in acquiring the ability to see the angels is significant of the proverbial role of "guardian angel" that Bronja assumes. She becomes Boris' guide, preceptor and protector. Thomas Cordle asserts: "Under the angelic influence of Bronja, Boris overcomes his compulsion (onanism) . . . . . . ." Boris relinquishes his talisman to Sophroniska, thereby renouncing his "mauvaises habitudes". This act allows him to proceed not only toward recovery from mental illness, but also toward piety and spirituality (i.e. his masturbation is considered sinful).

Séraphine's rapport with Gontran de Passavant parallels Bronja's relationship with Boris. The name Séraphine carries an obvious angelic symbolism. It is the feminized version of the word séraphin, which signifies le brûlant. Séraphin is the burning angel of God who purifies by fire (cf. the burning, purifying properties of "bronze" in Greek and biblical mythology). Seraphim angels incite spiritual evolution; their fire cleanses and purifies the soul. They project their own light, which is indestructible, and illuminate the
way for others. Seraphims synthesize all the powers of fire: "ardeur, purification, identité à soi-même, lumière et illumination, dissipation des ténèbres." Self-identity and the ability to project one's own light emerge as prerequisites to the attainment of authenticity. Séraphine's symbolic possession of these traits, along with her capacity to light the way for others, makes her suitable as Gontran's protector, tutor and guardian angel.

Bronja's sudden death at the inception of adolescence has a multiple significance. In the context of her angelic symbolism, her physical death denotes her exaltation to the status of a purely spiritual entity. Since Boris is now "cured", he no longer needs Bronja's guidance and protection. Her earthly mission has been fulfilled. Bronja's abandonment of Boris, however, proves to be premature with respect to Boris' ability to take care of himself, or "project his own light". He recognizes this after receiving the letter in which Bronja announces her grave illness and the improbability that they will ever see each other again:

-- O Bronja, toi qui vois les anges, toi qui devais m'ouvrir les yeux, tu me quittes! Sans toi, Bronja, que deviendrai-je? Qu'est-ce que je vais devenir?

(LFM, p. 490)

Boris' despair and foreboding betoken the now palpable presence of the devil who waits patiently for Boris' "guardian angel" to depart.

After Sophroniska informs the Pension Vedel-Azais of Bronja's death, Boris experiences the following reaction:
Le monde entier lui paraissait désert . .
. . Les anges qu'il souhaitait de voir,
désormais, sans elle, comment y croire? Même
son ciel à présent se vidait.
Boris rentra dans l'étude comme on
plongerait en enfer.

(LFM, pp. 530-1)

This marks the commencement of Boris' spiritual decline. The
devil and his helpmates, personified by Strouvilhou and his
cousin, Ghéridanisol, accelerate Boris' descent to hell
through the manipulation of his talisman (the emblem of his
shameful secret, the darkness of his soul). The talisman is
passed from Sophroniska, who believes Boris to be cured, to
Strouvilhou and on to Ghéridanisol, who embellishes it with a
"large bordure rouge et noire, laquelle était ornée de petits
diablotins obscènes . . ." (LFM, p. 532) before leaving it
to be discovered by an unsuspecting Boris.

The entire passage following Boris' discovery of the
talisman is imbued with diabolical imagery and innuendo. The
narrator relates that the piece of paper has an "aspect
fantastique, 'infernal'". To the bewildered and horrified
Boris, it seems as though the long forgotten paper has "tombé
du ciel, ou plutôt surgi de l'enfer." The prank is referred
to as a "diablerie(s) d'écolier". (LFM, p. 533)

The act of putting the talisman away in his pocket
signals that Boris has reclaimed his "evil" habit. Memories
of his "magie" begin to obsess him. Later in his room, after
a long struggle, Boris succumbs to the "sollicitation
ténébreuse", he "sinks" (v. "il sombra", p. 533). The
narrator discloses Boris' sentiments regarding his surrender:
Il lui semblait qu'il se perdait, qu'il s'enfonçait très loin du ciel; mais il prenait plaisir à se perdre et faisait, de cette perdition même, sa volupté.

(LFM, p. 533)

The recurrence of the word perdition (there are three grammatical variations) and the image of Boris sinking and retreating further and further from the sky connote spiritual damnation. Cordle states that "Bronja's death leaves Boris without an ideal to exert a counterpull against his demonic compulsion(.)" and speaks of Boris' "decline and fall following her death." Without Bronja's spiritual support, her guiding light and protection, Boris is left vulnerable and without hope. He plunges into complicity with the Confrérie des Hommes forts, assisting them in the design of his own murder. His decline and fall terminate in death.

Bronja's death is also meaningful from the perspective of her mythological symbolism. Reverting back to the significance of the "race de bronze" (renowned, interestingly, for its "démesure"), it is important to note that Talos, the last survivor, was impervious to destruction except at the lower half of his leg. By using magic charms, Médée succeeds in penetrating Talos' vulnerability -- "l'indice d'une faiblesse psychique et morale" -- and bringing about his demise. The destruction of Talos by a sorcerer's charms is analogous to Bronja and Boris' destruction by the devil's stealth and beguilement.

On a more prosaic level, Bronja's sudden death at the onset of puberty allegorizes a girl's entry into womanhood.
The very qualities that make her so innocent (her guilelessness) and pure (her integrity) are obliterated at puberty, where she begins a new stage of life marked by conformity and self-denial. In becoming an adult, she is obliged to counterfeit her personality in order to gain social acceptance. The *situation fausse* that the girl's new role as woman demands can be likened to death in that her potential for authenticity has been arrested. From this perspective, Bronja's role as an innocent youth who meets an untimely death serves as an indictment of social hypocrisy.

Bronja's role as both an angelic and allegorical figure supports the proposition that she projects a mythical, thus unattainable ideal. Rather than a realistic role model, Bronja is a paragon of womanhood that the everyday woman would find difficult to emulate. Her superficiality as a symbol makes her enigmatic and unfathomable as a human being. Her presence is spiritual and ephemeral -- she emerges then recedes from view, having served her metaphorical purpose.

If Bronja personifies "goodness" and godliness then Lady Griffith, her symbolic counterpart, embodies "badness" or evil. The brevity and inefficacy of Bronja's influence on Boris and the course of events he undergoes are consistent with the author's wish to stress the pervasiveness and omnipotence of the devil. In the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, Gide states:

> J'en voudrais un (le diable) qui circulerait incognito à travers tout le livre et dont la réalité s'affirmerait d'autant plus qu'on croirait moins en lui. (p. 21)
The balance between good and evil is not harmonious. Evil takes precedence over goodness and piety. Lilian Griffith, the female emissary of the devil, thus assumes immense proportions as a symbolic figure. Bronja's ostensible invincibility as a divine protector of virtue dissipates and she emerges as a pale shadow alongside Lady Griffith, whose influence is relatively persistent and formidable.

Lady Griffith's catalytic experience as a young girl approaching adulthood stands in contrast to Bronja's adolescent death; in Lady Griffith's case, we have the birth of a new persona that is triggered by her involvement as a teenager in the shipwreck of the Bourgogne. She makes the following realization after witnessing the hands of her fellow victims being chopped off in their desperate attempts to climb into the overcrowded lifeboats:

Et quand, à bord du X. qui nous a recueillis, je suis revenue à moi, j'ai compris que je n'étais plus, que je ne pourrais plus jamais être la même, la sentimentale jeune fille d'auparavant; j'ai compris que j'avais laissé une partie de moi sombrer avec la Bourgogne, qu'à un tas de sentiments délicats, désormais, je couperais les doigts et les poignets pour les empêcher de monter et de faire sombrer mon coeur.

(LFM, p. 101)

From this point in her life onward, Lady Griffith is devoid of a moral conscience and loses her humanity. Gide states in the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs:
Le caractère de Lady Griffith est et doit rester comme hors du livre. Elle n'a pas d'existence morale, ni même à vrai dire de personnalité....

(JdFM, p. 52)

The author's confirmation of Lady Griffith's lack of both "existence morale" and "personnalité" shows us to what extent he intended her to be symbolic: her role in the novel is that of the female paragon of inauthenticity (total denial of self), amorality and evil.

In her essay, "Le roman du roman", Lois Linder corroborates the notion of Lady Griffith's mythical nature with an illuminating analysis of the folkloric significance of the name Lilian:

Lady Griffith, elle, n'a pas de "roman". Elle est déjà un être sans dialogue. Le naufrage de la Bourgogne a étouffé, il y a longtemps, toutes ses voix intérieures. Dès cet incident, elle a conclu que la vie est aux "féroces", à ceux qui savent profiter de la chance et elle sera de ces gens-là. Le rôle qu'elle tient désormais, ainsi que son nom (Lilian Griffith), continue une longue tradition littéraire. Dans la mythologie sémitique, Lilith (Lilit, Lilu) est un démon, une espèce de "she-devil", hostile surtout aux femmes enceintes et aux petits enfants (on se souvient de l'attitude de Lady Griffith envers la situation de Laura). Dans le folklore juif, Lilith était la première femme d'Adam. Elle apparaît dans la Bible et dans la littérature juive sous divers noms: "screech owl", "night hag", monstre de la nuit. Dans ce sens, Lady Griffith vit un mythe. 10

In light of Linder's interpretation, Lilian Griffith plays the role of diabolical temptress and seductress. Linder
postulates that, by her name alone, Lilian represents a "she-devil", a "screech owl", a "night hag". Lilian's surname, Griffith, has similar connotations. The "ith" suffix of her last name can be seen as a carry-over from the Hebrew suffix of the root of Lilian, Lilit or Lilith. The name Griffith itself suggests griffe, the French noun for "claw", and griffer, the verb to claw or scratch, both of which are significant of the tenacious and devastating hold Lilian has on Vincent's mind and soul. The name also bears an unmistakable resemblance to the words griffin and griffon, the former being a Greek mythological creature with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion, which later came to symbolize cruel force and the devil. The latter is the Old World appellation for a large, scavenger vulture noted for its ruthless, predatory nature. The Lilian-Vincent affair, furthermore, mirrors the proverbial Adam and Eve relationship ("Lilith était la première femme d'Adam") in that Griffith is the impetus behind Vincent's moral degeneration, and is thus akin to Eve, the devil's first helpmate in the corruption of man.

Two predominant features of Lady Griffith's demonic persona are her cultural heritage and her exotic nature. In his essay "Les Faux-Monnayeurs ou le mouvement perpétuel", Pierre Masson attributes the following significance to Lady Griffith's American origins and ties with Anglo-Saxon culture.
[Les pays anglo-saxons semblent marquer leurs ressortissants d'un certain aspect maléfique; de la très lointaine Amérique, vers laquelle Gide n'a jamais été attiré, vient Lady Griffith, la seule figure de femme vraiment inquiétante de son oeuvre; une figure qui, en fait, plus que de l'Amérique, revient du fond des mers comme une diabolique Vénus anadyomène qui a fait dans le naufrage l'apprentissage du crime, pour entraîner à son tour Vincent au fond de ces abîmes auxquels il rêve si bien.13

The world of Les Faux-Monnayeurs is, for the most part, limited to the narrow confines of one area of Paris; apart from Édouard, Bernard and Laura's brief sojourn in Switzerland -- at the fictitious Saas-Fée - all of the action immediate to the novel takes place in the environs of the Luxembourg Gardens. In reference to the novel's setting, Germaine Brée states:

Gide rejette délibérément à la périphérie de son roman ces "explorateurs", les personnages qui... s'embarquent pour de ténébreuses Afriques; ils disparaissent dans les régions obscures qui s'étendent aux confins du monde inconnu; ce n'est pas à ces exilés que Gide s'intéresse.14

Lady Griffith's foreignness thus stands in stark opposition to the overstated, bourgeois Frenchness of her acquaintances and surroundings: she has lived in San Francisco, where we assume she was born and raised, has presumably spent some time in England with a certain Lord Griffith, and has travelled in Europe enough to form a close acquaintance with the Prince of Monaco. Griffith's cultural displacement gives
her an affinity with the devil in that she arrives from a remote and unspecified region, and artfully insinuates herself into the adopted milieu where she is in a strategic position to alienate and destroy her victim (Vincent).

Lady Griffith's exoticism is instrumental in her seduction of Vincent. In reference to Vincent's reaction to Lilian, the narrator comments:

On appelle "exotisme", je crois, tout repli diapré de la Maya, devant quoi notre âme se sent étrangère; qui la prive de points d'appui. Parfois telle vertu résisterait, que le diable avant d'attaquer, dépaysé....

Près de Lilian, également, il se sentait dépaysé.

(\textit{LFM}, p. 211)

Griffith's perfume and liqueurs, the sumptuous and colourful nature of her surroundings and apparel evoke an air of exoticism that has a dizzying, disorienting effect on her victim: "le large lit où près de Lilian il repose" (\textit{LFM}, p. 95); "Lilian étendue sur le divan bas" (\textit{LFM} p. 211); "elle avait revêtu un pyjama pourpre lamé d'argent" (\textit{LFM}, p. 98).

The scenes which follow Vincent's triumphant return from Pédro's demonstrate the manner in which Lilian deprives Vincent of his customary "points d'appui", and renders him bewildered, vulnerable, thus receptive to her manipulation:

--Bravo! Bravo! Bravo! cria-t-elle. Puis elle sauta au cou de Vincent, qui sentit tout le long de son corps la souplesse de ce corps brûlant à l'étrange parfum de santal, et Lilian l'embrassa sur le front, sur les joues, sur les lèvres. Vincent, en chancelant, se dégagea. Il sortit de sa poche une liasse de billets de banque.

(\textit{LFM}, p. 84)
Lilian's "étrange parfum de santal" appears to have a hypnotic effect on Vincent. Her exotic scent envelops and transfixes him, as does her "corps brûlant" that he feels "toujours long de son corps". His powerlessness is reflected in his passivity as she kisses his forehead, cheeks and lips. Upon disengaging himself from her embrace, he totters, or wavers ("en chancelant") as though struggling to release himself from the trancelike state her perfume and physical closeness have induced. In this instance, Vincent manages to free himself and reaffirm his independence and self-control. Further on, however, Griffith reinstates her power over him when she offers drinks to toast his success at the gambling house:

Lilian s'approcha de lui et posa sa main sur son front qu'il releva; ses yeux étaient secs et ardents.

— En attendant, nous allons trinquer tous les trois, dit-elle, et elle remplit de tokay les trois verres.

Après qu'ils eurent bu:

— Maintenant, quittez-moi. Il est tard, et je n'en puis plus. Elle les accompagne vers l'antichambre, puis, comme Robert passait devant, glissa dans la main de Vincent un petit objet de métal et chuchota:

— Sors avec lui, tu reviendras dans un quart d'heure. ...

L'auto partit. Vincent fit quelques pas sur le quai, traversa la Seine, gagna cette partie de Tuileries qui se trouve en dehors des grilles, s'approcha d'un petit bassin et trempa dans l'eau son mouchoir qu'il appliqua sur son front et ses tempes. Puis, lentement, il revint vers la demeure de Lilian. Laissons-le, tandis que le diable amusé le regarde glisser sans bruit la petite clef dans la serrure...

(LFM, pp. 85-7)
The exotic liqueur Lilian gives to Vincent is similar in effect to the "étrange parfum de santal". It behaves as a mysterious drug, or potion, that dulls his senses and causes him to wander aimlessly onto the "quai", over the Seine, past the Tuileries. The act of dampening his "mouchoir" and passing it over his forehead suggests that Vincent is attempting to regain his clarity of perception.

Vincent's dutiful return to Lilian's apartment after the designated lapse of time marks the first step in his unconscious surrender to her authority; she has made him her pawn, as well as an object of the devil's amusement. From this point onward, her total control of his will manifests itself in all aspects of her attitude towards him. Her manipulation begins with Vincent's physical appearance:

Elle se penchait avec un instinct d'amante et de mère au-dessus de ce grand enfant qu'elle prenait à tâche de former. Elle en faisait son œuvre, sa statue. Elle lui apprenait à soigner ses ongles, à séparer sur le côté ses cheveux qu'il rejetait d'abord en arrière, et son front, à demi caché par eux, paraissait plus pâle et plus haut. Enfin, elle avait remplacé par des cravates seyantes, les modestes petits noeuds tout faits qu'il portait. Décidément Lady Griffith aimait Vincent; mais elle ne le supportait pas taciturne, ou "maussade" comme elle disait.

(LFM, pp. 95-6)

In the above passage, Lilian not only dictates Vincent's manner of personal grooming, but also prescribe his emotional behavior by refusing to tolerate his natural reticence, or what she prefers to consider his sullenness, or glumness.
Vincent's submission to Lady Griffith's tyranny is exaggerated as their time spent together increases. His blind obedience to her most outlandish commands is taken to the extreme in the following episode:

--- Ecoute: tu vas passer dans la salle de bain et tâcher de laisser tes regrets sous la douche....
--- Ne te rhabille pas tout de suite. Dans l'armoire, à droite du chaufb-e-bain, tu trouveras des burnous, des haiks, des pyjamas ... enfin tu choisisiras.

Vincent reparait vingt minutes plus tard, couvert d'une djellabah de soie vert pistache.
--- Oh! attends! attends que je t'arrange, s'écria Lilian ravie. Elle sortit d'un coffre oriental deux larges écharpes aubergine, ceintura Vincent de la plus sombre, l'enturbanna de l'autre.

The impression Lady Griffith gives in her treatment of Vincent is that of a domineering and critical mother. Vincent's reappearance in the burlesque "djellabah de vert pistache", furthermore, not only confirms his meek compliance, but also symbolizes an early stage in his progressive estrangement from the French cultural and moral milieu: the oriental costume foreshadows Vincent's travels with Lilian to remote Africa, and the exotic banks of the Casamence.

The extremity of Vincent's moral and emotional deterioration culminates in his murder of Lilian and an outburst of insanity. Armand's estranged brother, Alexandre, reports in his letter:

Je vis depuis une quinzaine de jours en compagnie d'un singulier individu que j'ai recueilli dans ma case. Le soleil de ce pays a dû lui taper sur le crâne. J'ai d'abord pris pour
du délire ce qui est bel et bien de la folie. Cet étrange garçon...se croit possédé par le diable; ou plutôt il se croit le diable lui-même.... Il a dû lui arriver quelque aventure, car, en rêve ou dans l'état de demi-sommeil où il lui arrive souvent de tomber...il parle sans cesse de mains coupées....

Un hideux nègre qui l'accompagnait, remontant avec lui la Casamance, et avec qui j'ai un peu causé, parle d'une femme qui l'accompagnait et qui, si j'ai bien compris, a dû se noyer dans le fleuve, certain jour que leur embarcation a chaviré. Je ne serais pas étonné que mon compagnon ait favorisé la noyade. Dans ce pays, quand on veut se débarrasser de quelqu'un, on a grand choix de moyens, et personne jamais n'en a cure.

(LFM, pp. 527-8)

Vincent's mental derangement denotes the annihilation of his original self, and consequent inability to act in accordance with his own conscience and free will. This being the case, it would appear that the devil's victory over Vincent is complete: "il se croit le diable lui-même". Furthermore, because Lady Griffith has accomplished the task of figuratively delivering Vincent into the devil's hands, she is no longer necessary, and is, therefore, disposed of without ceremony, becoming the drowned reject, herself, and replaced as survivor by Vincent, who succumbs to guilt.15

In relation to Bronja, Lilian's murder has further significance in that they are the only female characters in the novel who die. Pierre Masson makes the following observation concerning their death:

[L]l'autre [Lilian], suivant sa pente, s'enfonce de plus en plus vers ces terres sauvages où triomphent les instincts. Un tel éloignement est synonyme de mort, morale pour Vincent, physique pour Lilian et pour Bronja, qui, comme par hasard, tombe malade à son retour: persister dans une voie pour laquelle on n'est peut-être pas vraiment fait
Masson's analysis maintains that Lilian and Bronja represent women who persistently motivate a single aspect of their personality toward a dangerous extreme, and, in so doing, suppress all the other angles of their character that are necessary to the creation of a harmonious and well-balanced whole. Lilian's mortal flaw resides in her utter lack of attachment to the past; she has no history, no family, no cultural ties. Being excessively absorbed in the pursuit of novelty and adventure makes Lilian one-dimensional, and unrealistic. Bronja is equally flat, or one-sided, in that she is fanatically obsessed with religion. Her rigorous devotion makes her incapable of existing in a society that is dependent upon interaction with other human beings. In reference to Vincent, E.D. Cancalon states:

\[ \text{Au fer et à mesure que Vincent se rendra compte que son désir de gloire le détruit, il décidera d'en anéantir toute manifestation...} \]
\[ \text{Cet effort pour détruire totalement une partie de lui-même ne peut aboutir qu'à la folie. Les sujets victorieux maîtrisent un côté du conflit mais pour maintenir leur équilibre mental admettent l'existence en eux de désirs contradictoires.} \]

Cancalon claims that it is impossible for Vincent to achieve a mental equilibrium without allowing contradictory aspects of his character to co-exist. The personality must be multi-faceted to be healthy, or sane: this condition is also necessary in order for it to be human. Lady Griffith and
Bronja's absolute single-mindedness thus makes them improbable models of real women, and their death connotes the impossibility of their existence in the real world.
NOTES


3 "Bronze," Dictionnaire des Symboles.


5 "Ange," Dictionnaire des Symboles.


7 "Séraphin," Dictionnaire des Symboles.

8 Cordle, p. 130.

9 "Bronze," Dictionnaire des Symboles.

10 Linder, p. 87

11 "Griffon," Dictionnaire des Symboles; see also the traditional, Christian symbolism discussed in this entry: "Il (le griffon) représente ... la force cruelle ... [Il]l est l'image du démon, à tel point que pour les écrivains sacrés, l'expression hestisequi est synonyme de Satan."


15 Linder, p. 87.


18 Linder, p. 86.
CHAPTER II

STEREOTYPES

Our second category of female images is that of stereotypes. Both stereotypes and archetypes are similar in that, unlike the mythical women, they are functions of typical female roles; although they seem realistic, they are, nevertheless, elemental models which exhibit a certain flatness and lack of development. As such, they are only slightly more realistic than their mythical counterparts.

In her introduction to *Images of Women in Literature*, Mary Anne Ferguson defines literary stereotypes in the following manner:

The term **stereotype** used in its sociological sense is merely descriptive of a mental image arrived at by making characteristics of some individuals into a pattern which is then assumed to apply to other individuals exhibiting several of the characteristics. Stereotypical thinking is necessary in the socialization process of finding role models. But when stereotypes become so rigid that individual variations are ignored or denigrated, they act as barriers to recognizing the complexity of human beings. For this reason the word **stereotype** is commonly used in literary criticism pejoratively to apply to underdeveloped or "flat" characters or caricatures recognizable in outline.¹

The stereotypes in our discussion will comprise the women in the novel whose characters are stock types or "caricatures"
such as the intellectual (Sophroniska), the feminist (Sarah), and the spinster (Rachel).

In defining the stereotypical female intellectual, Ferguson states:

"Whether married or single, young or old, a learned woman has usually been suspect and the butt of ridicule in literature.... Even now the stereotype of a highly educated woman is of an unattractive female in sturdy oxfords and tailored suit...."

Although Sophroniska is not exactly ridiculed for her beliefs and practices as a psychiatrist, nor for her intelligence in general, it becomes evident through her discussions with Edouard on the topics of both literature and psychology that she is dogmatic and her convictions are objectionable. Pierre Masson relates Sophroniska's intellectual rigour to her Polish heritage:

"Certains êtres vont tenter d'apporter dans ce roman un peu d'air pur: ce sont Boris et Bronja, accompagnés de la doctoresse Sophroniska, venus du froid, d'une Pologne qui semble être ici le pays du spiritualisme, de l'austérité, mais aussi de la raideur d'esprit et du dogmatisme; si Boris et Bronja, grâce à leur candeur enfantine, n'incarnent que le côté positif de cette origine, Sophroniska est sans conteste la représentante de l'aspect négatif, qui ne laisse pas d'irriter Edouard, et Gide à travers lui."

As we shall soon discover, Sophroniska's "fixité de pensée" and "fanatisme d'intellectuelle que rien ne pourra modifier" not only undermine her credibility as an intellectual and scholar, but also prove harmful, even fatal, in the case of her medical treatment of Boris' psychological illness.
Our first impression of Sophroniska comes to us through Édouard's eyes. He notes in his journal:

Mme Sophroniska s'est approchée de moi.... Je fus surpris de voir qu'elle tenait mon dernier livre à la main; elle m'a demandé, en souriant de la manière la plus affable, si c'était bien à l'auteur qu'elle avait le plaisir de parler; puis aussitôt s'est lancée dans une longue appréciation de mon livre. Son jugement, louanges et critiques, m'a paru plus intelligent que ceux que j'ai coutume d'entendre, encore que son point de vue ne soit rien moins que littéraire. Elle m'a dit s'intéresser presque exclusivement aux questions de psychologie et à ce qui peut éclairer d'un jour nouveau l'âme humaine.

( LF M, p. 256)

We can judge from the above that Sophroniska's appreciation of Édouard's novel has been curtailed by her exclusive interest in the psychological realism of the characters. At a later point, she reproaches not only Édouard, but novelists in general for their failure to delve more deeply into the psyche of their characters:

— Comme vous entrez donc peu avant dans l'âme humaine, s'écria-t-elle; puis elle ajouta brusquement en riant: — Oh! je ne parle pas de vous spécialement; quand je dis: vous, j'entends: les romanciers. La plupart de vos personnages semblent bâtis sur pilotis; ils n'ont ni fondation, ni sous-sol.

( LF M, p. 261)

Sophroniska subscribes to the notion that psychological realism is paramount to the creation of fictional characters. Her criticisms in the above passage imply that she is opposed to the "psychologie toute faite" that is typical of most novelesque heroes. In addition to this, she states that "tout ce qui n'est créé que par la seule intelligence est
faux" (LFM, pp. 261-2), thereby intimating that literary artifice is dishonest. Édouard, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of stylisation:

> Je comprends de reste ce que Sophroniska reproche au roman de ne point lui offrir; mais ici certaines raisons d'art, certaines raisons supérieures, lui échappent, qui me font penser que ce n'est pas d'un bon naturaliste qu'on peut faire un romancier.

(LFM, pp. 261-2)

The debate that issues from Sophroniska and Édouard's opposing points of view on the modern novel establishes Sophroniska as Édouard's adversary. Her attitude adopts a patronizing tone, followed by skepticism and mockery. When Édouard introduces the notion of not having a "subject" for his novel, that he wants to "tout y faire entrer ... il ne m'arrive rien que je n'y verse" (LFM, p. 270), her reaction is:

> — Et tout cela stylisé? dit Sophroniska, feignant l'attention la plus vive, mais sans doute avec un peu d'ironie.

(LFM, pp. 270-71)

The ironic and incredulous tone that characterizes Sophroniska's question, and her affected interest in Édouard's response recur throughout their discussion:

> -- Si, si; j'entrevois, dit poliment Sophroniska, que le rire de Laura était bien près de gagner....

(LFM, pp. 271-2)

> -- Et le plan de ce livre est fait? demanda Sophroniska, en tâchant de reprendre son sérieux.
> -- Naturellement pas.
> -- Comment! naturellement pas?

(LFM, p. 272)
In addition to disbelief and mockery, Sophroniska challenges Édouard's propositions with her own arguments. She cautions him on his intention to distance himself from "reality" in his fiction:

--- Ne craignez-vous pas, en quittant la réalité, de vous égarer dans des régions mortellement abstraites et de faire un roman, non d'êtres vivants, mais d'idées? demanda Sophroniska craintivement.
--- Et quand cela serait! cria Édouard avec un redoublement de vigueur. A cause des maladroits qui s'y sont fourvoyés, devons-nous condamner le roman d'idées?

(LFM, p. 274)

Furthermore, when Édouard reveals his desire to apply the principles of the "Art de la Fugue" to his novel, he provokes the following reaction from his opponent:

A quoi Sophroniska ripostait que la musique est un art mathématique, et qu'au surplus, à n'en considérer exceptionnellement plus que le chiffre, à en bannir le pathos et l'humanité, Bach avait réussi le chef-d'œuvre abstrait de l'ennui, une sorte de temple astronomique, où ne pouvaient pénétrer que de rares initiés. Édouard protestait aussitôt, qu'il trouvait ce temple admirable, qu'il y voyait l'aboutissement et le sommet de toute la carrière de Bach.

(LFM, pp. 275-6)

In both of the above passages, Sophroniska expresses contempt for artifice, accusing it of rendering art abstract, tedious and esoteric, while Édouard finds it admirable; their views remaining diametrically opposed, their argument does not
reach a resolution. The narrator intervenes at this point to state that: "La discussion se perdait en arguties" (LFM, p. 276).

Sophroniska and Édouard's contradictory points of view on art and literature echo the polarity in Gide's own set of standards that govern the writing of a novel. As we discover in his Journal, and in various other writings, his literary esthetics are dominated by the principles of classicism which, for Gide, advocate a harmonious balance of reality and stylisation:

Ne jamais peindre d'après nature; faire d'après nature ses préparations; mais ne pas faire part au lecteur de ses préparations.  

Il n'y a pas, à proprement parler, un seul centre à ce livre, autour de quoi viennent converger mes efforts; c'est autour de deux foyers, à la manière des ellipses, que ces efforts se polarisent. D'une part, l'événement, le fait, la donnée extérieure; d'autre part, l'effort même du romancier pour faire un livre avec cela.

(JdFM, p. 31)

Édouard's literary esthetics resemble Gide's in some respects. After expressing his admiration of Racine's dialogue between Mithridate and his sons he formulates the following objectives for his own novel:

Tout le problème est là, précisément; exprimer le général par le particulier; faire exprimer par le particulier le général.... J'voudrais un roman qui serait à la fois aussi vrai, et aussi éloigné de la réalité, aussi particulier et aussi général à la fois, aussi humain et aussi fictif qu'Athalie, que Tartuffe ou que Cinna.... Ce que je veux, c'est présenter d'une part la réalité, présenter d'autre
part cet effort pour la styliser, dont je vous parlais tout à l'heure.... Pour obtenir cet effet, suivez-moi, j'invente un personnage de romancier, que je pose en figure centrale; et le sujet du livre, si vous voulez, c'est précisément la lutte entre ce que lui offre la réalité et ce que, lui, prétend en faire.

(LEF, pp. 270-71)

In comparing the above passage to the previous excerpts from Gide's Journal and the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, it would seem that Édouard's goals as a novelist are mirror images of Gide's own. During the episode in which Édouard offers Georges Molinier a passage of his novel to read, however, it becomes obvious that Édouard falls short of his ideals. Édouard's writing proves to be stilted, unnatural, over-stylized, thereby validating Sophroniska's suspicions and establishing a sharp distinction between Gide and Édouard as novelists (LEF, pp. 508-10). Sophroniska's role here is to act as counterpoint to Gide's literary esthetics, as envisioned and expounded by Édouard. Sophroniska and Édouard can thus be seen to play the parts of two contradictory ideas in Gide's own mind, and their debate can be likened to a dialogue Gide might have within himself in an effort to crystallize his own ambitions as the author of Les Faux-Monnayeurs.

Sophroniska's raideur d'esprit manifests itself to a much greater degree in her diagnosis and treatment of Boris' mental illness. Her unshakeable confidence in her theories proves to have disastrous repercussions on her patient's
health and safety. During a conversation with Édouard, she enumerates the causes of Boris' psychological condition, claiming he is "très délicat" and that:

La société de sa mère ne lui vaut rien.... Sa mère l'aime beaucoup; mais à vrai dire, il serait souhaitable qu'il ne vécût plus avec elle.  

(LEFM, p. 257)

This passage not only reflects her dogmatism, but also arouses suspicion as to the validity of a treatment which aims to alienate the child from his mother. Furthermore, it appears that Sophroniska has never discussed with Boris his own preferences and desires. Her self-declared omniscience has narrowed her viewpoint to such a degree that there is no leeway for speculation as to what might be beneficial or detrimental to Boris' mental health.

Having confirmed the surrounding circumstances of Boris' illness, Sophroniska informs Édouard of the procedures involved in her treatment. Her main goal is to have Boris completely abandon his innermost thoughts to her, thereby enabling her to discover the shameful secret he harbours deep within his consciousness. She explains:

L'important est de gagner sa confiance. Déjà je sais beaucoup de choses. J'en pressens beaucoup d'autres. Mais le petit se défend encore, il a honte; si j'insistais trop vite et trop fort, si je voulais brusquer sa confiance, j'irais à la rencontre de ce que je souhaite obtenir: un complet abandon.  

(LEFM, pp. 258-9)
Inherent to Sophroniska's method of delving into the inner psyche is the conviction that once the origin of Boris' "quantité de petits troubles, de tics, de manies" has been disclosed, he will be on the road to recovery:

Je crois qu'on peut toujours trouver leur origine dans un premier ébranlement de l'être dû à quelque événement qu'il importe de découvrir.... Mais cette cause le plus souvent échappe à son souvenir; on dirait qu'elle se dissimule dans l'ombre de la maladie; c'est derrière cet abri que je la cherche, pour la ramener en plein jour, je veux dire dans le champ de la vision.

(LFM, pp. 257-8)

It is in reaction to this method of relentless probing that Édouard assumes the role of devil's advocate. He continually challenges her theories with questions that boarder on being offensive. He asks, for example: "Serait-ce à dire que vous attendez de ce petit quelques révélations impudiques?" (LFM, p. 259). Sophroniska trivializes Édouard's skepticism by retorting that her practices are no more immodest or unethical than checking a patient's pulse. She claims resolutely that she must "tout savoir", especially that which Boris wants most to hide. This strikes Édouard as being particularly suspect. He responds:

-- Vous soupçonnez donc qu'il a des aveux à vous faire? Etes-vous bien certaine, excusez-moi, de ne pas lui suggérer ce que vous voudriez qu'il avoue?

(LFM, p. 259)
The more Édouard is skeptical of Sophroniska's theories, the more obstinately she defends them. Her justification in response to Édouard's question above is revealing in respect to her characterization by the author:

Cette préoccupation ne doit pas me quitter et c'est elle qui m'enseigne tant de lenteur.... Mon rôle est de laisser venir et surtout de ne rien suggérer.

(LFM, p. 259)

This last sentence echoes in some ways Édouard's affirmations about the writing of his novel. As Édouard waits for reality to supply events for his novel, so does Sophroniska wait for Boris' "secret" to reveal itself and provide the basis for his cure. They both believe themselves to be honest, impartial observers who work with what the facts offer them. In both of their cases, however, their actual achievements fall short of their ideals because both have convinced themselves that they are acting in Boris' best interest when, in reality, they are motivated by self-interest, or a desire to serve their professional principles as novelist and psychiatrist. This professional mauvaise foi, or self-deception, becomes instrumental in Boris' suicide.

Édouard's attempt to shape what reality offers him leads him to the fatal decision of having Boris sent to the Vedel-Azaïs pension. The narrator's contempt for Édouard's cruel self-interest is evident in the following passage:

Il connaît la pension Azaïs; il sait l'air empesté qu'on y respire, sous l'étouffant couvert de la morale et de la religion. Il connaît Boris,
sa tendresse, sa fragilité. Il devrait prévoir à quels froissements il l'expose.... Pourquoi cherche-t-il à se persuader, à présent, qu'il conspire au bien de Boris? Mentir aux autres, passe encore; mais à soi-même! Le torrent qui noie un enfant prétend-il lui porter à boire...

(LFM, p. 319)

In his effort to "pour" everything into his novel, Édouard is driven by opportunity and anticipation; he hopes that any event, instigated or not by himself, will furnish an interesting episode for his novel. This insatiable curiosity for consequences is what tricks Édouard into believing that he is acting out of benevolence with regard to Boris, when actually, his act is a betrayal.

Sophroniska's mauvaise foi is similar to Édouard's in that she deceives herself by failing to recognize what is detrimental to Boris' well-being. Her eager desire to confirm her psychological theories has convinced her that, having discovered her patient's "secret honteux", he is cured. Her absolute confidence has blinded her to the truth, which Édouard perceptively points out in his journal:

<<Sophroniska va répétant que le petit Boris est guéri; cette cure doit corroborer sa méthode; mais je crains qu'elle n'anticipe un peu. Naturellement je ne veux pas la contredire; et je reconnais que les tics, les gestes-repentirs, les réticences du langage, ont à peu près disparu; mais il me semble que la maladie s'est simplement réfugiée dans une région plus profonde de l'âtre, comme pour échapper au regard inquisiteur du médecin; et que c'est à présent l'âme même qui est atteinte.

(LFM, pp. 303-4)

We see here that, like Édouard, Sophroniska anticipates what
she wants the results to be. Germaine Brée states:

Comme Profitendieu suit les traces du crime, de même Sophroniska dépiste patiemment les traces du mal dont souffre Boris pour l'éliminer du repli intérieur où il s'est logé.... [L]e mal, sous la forme qu'il a prise, disparaît momentanément, mais c'est pour se terrer plus profondément dans une région inaccessible de l'organisme.... Sophroniska, sur le plan moral, leur a préparé une victime.6

Sophroniska's conviction that her treatment has succeeded, and Édouard's belief that the pension will have salutory effects on Boris are both forms of self-deception which constitute a potent combination in preparing Boris as a victim of the sinister suicide plot devised by Ghéridanisol and Strouvilhou.

Sophroniska's betrayal of Boris' confidence is symbolically encapsulated in the events relating to Boris' talisman -- "un bout de parchemin ... sur lequel étaient écrit cinq mots...: GAZ. TELEPHONE. CENT MILLE ROUBLES" (LFM, p. 299). Sophroniska confides to Édouard that the actual role of the talisman, with its enigmatic words, is to serve as a "formule incantatoire, le 'Sésame ouvre-toi' du paradis honteux...." (LFM, p. 299) She believes, furthermore, that it was a last refuge for his illness, or shameful secret. The fact that she has convinced him to relinquish it to her signifies the final step in his "abandon complet". What is not only ironic, but also verifies her betrayal of his confidence is that once in possession of Boris's talisman -- which has come to represent his soul -- she casually gives it
Boris' death is the logical conclusion to the above sequence of events relating to the talisman. It also corroborates Sophroniska's incompetence and failure as a psychiatrist. Boris's death destroys both her theories and her credibility. The only thing left intact is, perhaps, her confidence. Pierre Masson claims that "Sophroniska venue de sa Pologne, y retourne simplement, montrant ainsi sa fixité de pensée, son fanaticisme d'intellectuel que rien ne pourra modifier...." 

Sophroniska and Édouard have many similarities in their roles as intellectuals. They not only serve as foils to each other regarding their professional doctrines, but also share the role of the incompetent, or the raté in their respective domains: they each fall short of their own ideals by allowing their actions to be dictated by self-interest and by failing to recognize their errors.

Édouard and Sophroniska differ, however, in that Sophroniska is a "typical" intellectual, in the most pejorative sense of the word; she is one-sided, narrow-minded and arrogant, whereas Édouard's opinions fluctuate.
Edouard is what we might call the classic, Gidian être de dialogue; he demonstrates that he is able to admit that he is wrong, and to modify his principles. He realizes the weaknesses of his novel, for example, and decides he must abandon what he has written and begin again. Sophroniska, on the other hand, seems devoid of a dialogue intérieur. We see her strictly as a scholar and psychiatrist; even her reaction to her daughter Bronja's death is somewhat clinical, lacking in emotion. Her concern is more focused on how her patient, Boris, accepts and deals with the trauma. This one-sided portrayal indicates the absence of a realistic, multi-faceted personality and establishes her as a stereotype.

Sarah Vedel is another prominent figure in the category of stereotype in that she embodies everything typical to the radical feminist libertine. Her beliefs are based on extremes that sever her from the tempering influences of family and tradition. According to Gide, the past plays a prime role in shaping our existing conventions and code of ethics; the past is also an important factor in the process of becoming an être authentique. Radical extremism constitutes a complete denial of the past, and engenders a situation fausse wherein we are constantly at odds with attitudes, codes of morality and conduct, that have been instilled in us since childhood, and upon which our personalities have been constructed. Sarah's rupture with her family and the traditions it imposes on her makes her
dépaysée, robs her of a moral conscience and leaves her vulnerable to the devil.

We are first introduced to Sarah's personal feminist philosophy in her contemplation while waiting for Édouard and Bernard to escort her to the Banquet des Argonautes:

Par une sorte de protestation préventive, elle cultivait en elle un facile mépris pour toutes les vertus domestiques. La contrainte familiale avait tendu son énergie, exaspéré ses instincts de révolte. Durant son séjour en Angleterre, elle avait su chauffer à blanc son courage.... Elle était résolue à conquérir sa liberté, à s'accorder toute licence, à tout oser.... Dans ses avances auprès d'Olivier, elle avait triomphé déjà de sa modestie naturelle et de bien des pudeurs innées. L'exemple de ses deux soeurs l'avait instruite; elle considérerait la pieuse résignation de Rachel comme une duperie; ne consentait à voir dans le mariage de Laura qu'un lugubre marché, aboutissant à l'esclavage. L'instruction qu'elle avait reçue, celle qu'elle s'était donnée, qu'elle avait prise, la disposait fort mal, estimait-elle, à ce qu'elle appelait: la dévotion conjugale.

(LFM, pp. 414-15)

Here we discover the main reason for her rebellion: the family environment. The suffocating, puritanical constraints of the pension, along with the examples of her two sisters, prompt an awareness of what she does not want to become. This "self-education" shapes and edifies her new tout oser philosophy, and promises to liberate her from her oppression.

Sarah's friendship with Miss Aberdeen, the Anglaise, is another motivating force in the realization of her ambitions. As was the case with Vincent, her connection with a foreigner signifies that Sarah is in a state of dépaysement, or désencadrement: she is detached from her past, homeland,
family, and traditional set of values. The influence of the étranger, especially England, signals weakness and vulnerability for Sarah, as it did for Vincent: she eventually defers to the devil's authority, and to inevitable moral corruption and perdition.

Sarah's chute is actualized in her relationship with Bernard. Throughout all of the episodes relating to their association, Sarah's brother, the diseased and debased Armand, plays the important role of devil's helpmate. He utilizes a blend of intimidation and enticement to gain control:

Sarah craignait de rencontrer son frère, dont elle redoutait les moqueries. Armand favorisait, il est vrai, ses entreprises les plus hardies; on eût dit qu'il y prenait plaisir, mais seulement par une sorte d'indulgence provisoire, car c'était pour les juger ensuite et d'autant plus sévèrement; de sorte que Sarah n'aurait pas su dire si ses complaisances mêmes ne faisaient pas enfin le jeu du censeur.  

(LFM, p. 414)

This notion of Armand leading Sarah into temptation is demonstrated from Sarah's first encounter with Bernard, to the abrupt termination of their relationship. It is Armand who arranges for Sarah to attend the Banquet des Argonautes as Bernard's partner. Sarah accepts the invitation "joyeusement" indicating her eagerness to enter the devil's game.

All scenes leading up to and including Sarah's triumph in the seduction of Bernard comprise a constant play of symbolism, with a particular emphasis on the clair-obscur.
It is through a "porte condamnée", and subsequently through Armand's dark, empty room that Sarah must pass in order to meet Bernard at the "escalier de service" (LFM, p. 413). When they meet, they do not "know" each other: "Bernard et Sarah ne se connaissaient pas encore. Le couloir était sans lumière. Dans l'ombre, ils ne se distinguaient qu'à peine" (LFM, p. 413). The image of the dark, narrow hallway with its dark shadows imbues this scene with an ominous, sinister mood, foreshadowing evil.

Once Sarah and Bernard arrive at the banquet, the scene changes to one of light and animation. For the first time, Bernard can actually see Sarah:

Ses yeux amusés brillaient d'un éclat extraordinaire. Bernard, qui dans l'obscurité n'avait pu la voir, était frappé de sa ressemblance avec Laura. C'était le même front, les mêmes lèvres.... Ses traits, il est vrai, respiraient une grâce moins angélique, et ses regards remuvaient il ne savait quoi de trouble en son cœur. (LFM, p. 421)

Sarah's extraordinarily brilliant eyes give her a supernatural aura that seems to fascinate, then captivate Bernard. He is also struck by her resemblance to Laura, a resemblance which is paradoxical in that the forehead, lips and physical features of the two sisters are the same, yet provoke diametrically opposed reactions in Bernard. With Sarah, his attention focuses on her lips, emphasizing her carnal appeal, whereas Laura's appearance elicits Bernard's reverence for her purity and chastity. Sarah's bold sensuality becomes
the source of Bernard's "trouble en son coeur" in both an obvious, sexual way as well as spiritually; her "less angelic" grace is somehow disturbing to his moral conscience.

With the mock shooting of Bercail by Jarry, the scene is once again obscured. This allows Sarah to pursue her amorous intentions:

--- Eteignez donc! Eteignez! cria des Brousses.
Sarah s'était levée, suivant l'injonction de Passavant; et sitôt que l'on fut dans l'obscurité, elle se pressa contre Bernard pour l'entraîner sous la table avec elle.

(LFM, p. 427)

It is fittingly under the table, and in the darkness, that Bernard experiences: "les lèvres brûlantes de Sarah s'écraser voluptueusement sur les siennes" (LFM, p. 428). This kiss foreshadows the events that follow later that night in Sarah's bedroom.

When Sarah and Bernard return to the pension, all is dark once again: "... toutes les lumières étaient éteintes ... ils gagnèrent à tâtons l'escalier de service...." (LFM, pp. 431-2). It is ironically Armand who provides the light when they climb the steps to his room, the symbolic ante-chamber and gateway to Sarah's room of darkness and sin: "... il sortit sur le palier, une lampe à la main. -- Prends la lampe, dit-il à Bernard.... Eclaire Sarah; il n'y a pas de bougie dans sa chambre..." (LFM, pp. 431-2).
Once they have crossed the threshold into Sarah's room, we witness Armand's reaction: "Armand, penché derrière eux, d'un grand souffle éteignit la lampe ... il referma sur eux la porte et tira le verrou" (LFM, pp. 431-2). This action confirms Armand's role as Sarah's corruptor, and the devil's helpmate. His room is aptly situated between the outer world of temptation and desire and the inner world of carnal pleasure and moral depravity. It is to this inner world of darkness that he banishes them, symbolically extinguishing the light and locking the door.

In the previous scenes, light seems to connote temptation, which is passive for the victim, whereas darkness entails sin, which requires active involvement. Light also represents realization and awareness, while darkness implies their absence. This is evident in the "morning after" scene which follows Sarah and Bernard's first night together. Before awakening Bernard to caution him to return to his own room, Armand contemplates the sleeping couple:

L'aube naissante blanchit la vitre.... Qu'ils sont beaux! Armand longuement les contemple. Il voudrait être leur sommeil, leur baiser. Il sourit d'abord, puis, au pied du lit, parmi les couvertures rejetées, soudain s'agenouille. Quel dieu peut-il prier ainsi, les mains jointes? Une indicible émotion l'étreint. Ses lèvres tremblent.... Il aperçoit sous l'oreiller un mouchoir taché de sang; il se lève, s'en empare, l'emporte et, sur la petite tache ambrée, pose ses lèvres en sanglotant. (LFM, pp. 433-4)

The image of light flowing into the room denotes Armand's
recognition of the wicked role he has played in delivering Sarah into the hands of the devil. His tears betoken his mourning of the death of Sarah's soul, which is symbolized in the blood-stained handkerchief. Furthermore, it is significant that Bernard is awakened, while Sarah is left to sleep: she is left in the darkness, she does not "see".

Bernard's flash of awareness is dramatically symbolized by his struggle with the angel, and becomes the motivator of his rejection of Sarah. He is brought to realize that there are two paths to choose between in life: the conservative path, conceived and built by his forefathers, and upon which the contemporary social, moral and political standards are based; or the path which leads to the nurturing of the authentic self, and by which one's own ethical standards emerge as a result of careful introspection. Bernard finally chooses the latter path, thus renouncing his radical, "tout oser" philosophy, and, along with it, Sarah:

Bernard ne dîna pas ce soir-là; et quand il rentra à la pension, il ne chercha pas à rejoindre Sarah ainsi qu'il avait fait les autres soirs, mais monta tout droit à cette chambre qu'il occupait avec Boris.

(LFM, p. 489)

It is appropriate at this point that Bernard returns to the room he shares with the pure and innocent Boris. That same night he has the battle with the angel, a symbolic enactment of his moral dilemma. Bernard wins the battle, thereby allowing good to triumph over evil, and overcoming Sarah's
influence.

Bernard's encounter with Rachel the next day constitutes the final step in his rejection and renunciation of Sarah:

Lorsque, plus tard, Bernard sortit à son tour de la chambre, il croisa Rachel dans le couloir.
-- J'ai à vous parler, lui dit-elle. Sa voix était si triste que Bernard comprit aussitôt tout ce qu'elle avait à lui dire. Il ne répondit rien, courba la tête et, par grande pitié pour Rachel, soudain prit Sarah en haine et le plaisir qu'il goûtait avec elle en horreur.

(LFM, p. 490)

It seems here that Bernard has vindicated himself by confessing, facing judgement and despising Sarah, his temptress and the former object of his "sinful" desires. When he definitively leaves the pension that night, the narrator tells us that Bernard "n'avait pas cherché à revoir Sarah" (LFM, p. 491).

By way of contrast, Bernard's absolution and triumph over evil serve to magnify Sarah's complete submission to moral degeneration. When she discovers Bernard's departure, she bitterly accuses Rachel, and proclaims her contempt of virtue, and spiritual salvation:

Que les remontrances de Rachel aient été cause du brusque départ de Bernard, c'est ce que Sarah comprenait soudain; et elle s'indignait contre sa soeur qui, disait-elle, empêchait autour d'elle toute joie. Elle n'avait pas le droit d'imposer aux autres une vertu que son exemple suffisait à rendre odieuse.
Rachel...protestait...:
-- Je ne puis pas te laisser perdre.
Mais Sarah sanglotait et criait:
-- Je ne peux pas croire à ton ciel. Je ne veux pas être sauvée.

(LFM, pp. 496-7)
This dispute between the two sisters indicates that Sarah refutes the mercy of God, and repudiates Rachel's piety. By refusing to acknowledge the sinfulness of her actions, and by rejecting redemption and virtue, she is relinquished to l'étranger:

Elle décida tout aussitôt de repartir pour l'Angleterre, où la recevrait son amie. Car, "après tout", elle était libre et prétendait vivre comme bon lui semblait. Cette triste querelle laissa Rachel brisée.

(LFM, pp. 496-7)

Sarah's radical ideas distance her from the norms of her own Christian, bourgeois society; this independence from family and society culminates in her flight to England and reunion with Miss Aberdeen.

As adolescents about to embark on adult life, Sarah and Bernard are confronted by three options; basing their actions on what is righteous by society's standards; forming their own ethical standards, taking into account both the limiting effects of the social milieu and the expression of the authentic self; finally, rejecting traditional mores entirely for the pursuit of licentiousness, misconstrued as freedom. Sarah and Bernard both reject the first option. Bernard chooses the second; like the deep-sea fish Vincent speaks of, in the darkness, Bernard can project his own light. Sarah chooses the third option; her freedom finds expression in a complete rupture with virtue, and the espousal of a stereotypical "feminist" doctrine of libertinage. She acts
without moral dilemma, or crisis of conscience: she has no **dialogue intérieur**. Her brand of freedom is so extreme that, paradoxically, she becomes enslaved by it.

In Sarah and Bernard, we witness the results of experimenting with one's **disponibilité**, or receptiveness to the multitude of experiences life offers. This receptiveness gives rise to behavioural extremes. Each extreme constitutes one side in the balancing process inherent to the construction of the "self". Throughout the novel, Bernard is an **être en formation** who, like a pendulum, constantly sways back and forth between varying extremes, eventually achieving an equilibrium which enables him to live in accordance with both the established moral and ethical limitations of society, and his acquired, personal values. The "self" that Bernard constructs is "authentic". His ability to recognize his errors, and recoil from extremes redeems him on a moral level, and gives him depth and humanity.

Although Sarah is **disponible**, she does not experiment with a variety of extremes. She follows only one path, and is thus fixed in the same conditions that bound Bernard, prior to his "awakening" and return to the "light". She remains in "darkness". Her capacity for **dialogue intérieur** is abandoned for the exclusive pursuit of freedom and her eagerness to defy the traditional role of woman. In turn, she forfeits her authentic self and forges a counterfeit personality. Like Sophoniska, her attitudes and ambitions never sway, and her rigid extremism makes her superficial,
one-sided: she becomes a caricature of the libertine posing as a feminist.

If Sarah Vedel is to represent the feminist libertine, then Rachel, her older sister, is the exact counterpart: the chaste, self-sacrificing spinster. Any single aspect of Rachel's personality can be attributed to one of three fundamental character traits: virtue, modesty and martyrdom.

The corner-stone upon which Rachel's character is founded is her virtue. Virtue applies to Rachel in both senses of the term: she has both chastity and moral integrity. It is Rachel's strong moral sense that makes her approach Bernard regarding his liaison with Sarah. She announces to Sarah: "Je ne peux pas te laisser perdre" (LFM, p. 497).

Rachel's virtue is often alluded to by Édouard and Armand. In both cases, she appears to be greatly appreciated and admired for her chastity and moral rectitude. After his first meeting with her at the pension, Édouard records in his journal:

— Je savais que je pouvais compter sur vous, m'a-t-elle dit en me tendant la main, avec une expression de tristesse tendre, résignée, et malgré tout souriante, plus touchante que la beauté. [R]ien n'est plus discret, plus modeste que sa vertu.

(LFM, pp. 339-40)

Édouard's frequent use of the superlative at first suggests that he considers Rachel to be almost saintly; however, upon closer examination, it seems that his reverence is too
exaggerated to be genuine. We can detect a certain glibness, and a distinctly ironic tone that imparts an air of mockery to his excessive admiration. In regard to Édouard's attitude, Ferguson's statement about the image of the single woman in literature is pertinent to Rachel:

Unlike the other stereotypes, the image of the single woman has not been at all ambivalent; with very few exceptions the old maid - a single woman beyond the marriageable age of, say, 30 - has been either pitied or ridiculed in literature. The exception is the nun, admired for giving herself to a supernatural cause as bride of the church. But a single woman who remains in society is seen as queer, frequently thin and emaciated to symbolize withdrawal from life, prim, highly conventional...

From Édouard's description alone, it is evident that many of the qualities enumerated in the above passage are applicable to Rachel. She has an affinity with the nun in that she is the Protestant equivalent: she is admired for her resignation, abnegation and "tender sadness", or suffering. These same characteristics also imply a withdrawal from material life, and an adherence to religious convention.

Armand's description of Rachel is similar to Édouard's:

Rachel est, je crois bien, la seule personne de ce monde que j'aime et que je respecte. Je la respecte parce qu'elle est vertueuse. Et j'agis toujours de manière à offenser sa vertu. Pour ce qui est de Bernard et de Sarah, elle ne se doutait de rien. C'est moi qui lui ai tout raconté.... Et l'oculiste qui lui recommande de ne pas pleurer! (LFM, p. 524)

Within Armand's admiration resides bitter irony and contempt.
He loves and respects Rachel because she is virtuous, yet he tells Olivier that he despises virtue itself, and that he makes every effort to offend Rachel's moral sensitivity. It appears, therefore, that his love and respect are prompted by the sheer fortitude she exhibits in meeting virtue's demands more than by the simple fact that she is virtuous. Armand is scornful of the debilitating effects of virtue on those who rigidly conform to its dictates. This bitter contempt is implicit in his speech concerning Rachel's retinal weakness:

Rachel, ma soeur aînée, devient aveugle.... Depuis deux ans elle ne peut plus lire sans lunettes. J'ai cru d'abord qu'elle n'avait qu'à changer de verres. Ça ne suffisait pas. Sur ma prière, elle a été consulter un spécialiste. Il paraît que c'est la sensibilité rétinienne qui faiblit. Tu comprends qu'il y a là deux choses très différentes: d'une part une défectueuse accommodaion du cristallin, à quoi les vers remèdent. Mais même après qu'ils ont écarté ou rapproché l'image visuelle, celle-ci peut impressionner insuffisamment la rétine et cette image n'être plus transmise que confusément au cerveau.

(LFM, pp. 407-8)

Armand's discourse contains an allegory of the mental blindness that is acquired as a result of excessive virtue and religious devotion. Gide explains this concept in the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs:

A mesure que G. s'enfonce dans la dévotion, il perd le sens de la vérité. Etat de mensonge dans lequel peut vivre une âme pieuse; un certain éblouissement mystique détourne ses regards de la réalité; il ne cherche plus à voir ce qui est; il ne peut plus le voir.

(JFM, p. 32)
The condition from which "G." suffers is analogous to Rachel's. Her excessive devotion blocks out the factual truth: she does not want to see, and eventually no longer can see what is happening around her. This explains why she had never suspected Bernard and Sarah's illicit affair, and why Armand had to inform her of it. Rachel's "sensibilité rétinienne qui faiblit" can, therefore, be construed as the symbol of her blindness to objective reality, and to the situation fausse which has developed around her.

Rachel's virtue gives rise to both her modesty and her martyrdom. Her modesty is manifested in her manner of speaking, clothing, physical appearance, and gestures. As a prelude to soliciting Édouard's financial assistance for the bankrupt pension, she sends him a letter in which she asks in a reserved, unassuming manner: "J'ai de graves choses à vous dire. Pouvez-vous, sans trop vous déranger, passer à la pension demain après-midi? Vous me rendriez grand service" (LFM, p. 337). As for Rachel's clothing and general physical appearance, Édouard relates in his journal that when he first sees her, she greets him "en tablier de servante, un torchon à la main" (LFM, p. 339). Later on, when he returns from his visit with Mme Vedel, he finds Rachel helping with the cleaning. He records: "Elle avait relevé les manches de son corsage pour aider au rangement de la salle d'études; mais les rabaissa précipitamment en me voyant approcher" (LFM, p. 348). The gesture of lowering her sleeves when Édouard approaches emphasizes her chaste, modest nature. All of the
above images, however, contain such gross overstatements of humility and modesty that they seem derisive, like Édouard's admiration of Rachel's virtue.

Rachel's self-denial is so pronounced that it becomes a source of martyrdom. She constantly denies herself all forms of enjoyment, sacrificing her own self-fulfillment for the happiness and comfort of others. In his journal, Édouard makes the following generalization:

Par une sorte de pudeur, elle ne dit jamais: je travaille. Rachel s'est effacée toute sa vie, et rien n'est plus discret, plus modeste que sa vertu. L'abnégation lui est si naturelle qu'aucun des siens ne lui sait gré de son perpétuel sacrifice. C'est la plus belle âme de femme que je connaisse. (LFM, p. 340)

Rachel's self-sacrifice is exemplified in the episode following Édouard's consent to lend her the necessary amount of money. Édouard tries to console her by requesting that she not be troubled by having to ask him for the money, since he is eager to oblige. She responds:

— Ce qui m'est pénible, c'est de devoir vous prier de n'en parler ni à grand-père, ni à maman. Depuis qu'ils m'ont confié les comptes de la pension, je leur laisse croire que ... enfin ils ne savent pas. Ne leur dites rien, je vous en supplie. Grand-père est vieux, et maman se donne tant de mal.
— Rachel, ce n'est pas elle qui se donne tout ce mal ... C'est vous.
— Elle s'est donné beaucoup de mal. À présent elle est fatiguée. C'est mon tour. Je n'ai rien d'autre à faire. (LFM, p. 349)

Above, we witness an incongruity in the makeup of Rachel's
character. Her martyrdom forces her to deceive her parents. The act of having them believe "otherwise", although noble in motive, reveals a flaw in her moral integrity. This flaw shows itself again when she inadvertently admits that the administrative difficulties she has assumed at the pension are a burden. The statement that her mother has gone to such great pains -- the expression "se donner du mal" is reiterated three times -- and that it is now her turn to do so reveals that she considers this aspect of her life unpleasant, thus somewhat oppressive. Furthermore, her conclusion, "Je n'ai rien d'autre à faire" suggests that she feels unfulfilled, and perhaps resentful. These feelings, however mild or subtle, are incompatible with traditional Christian piety, and, as such, put in question the depth of Rachel's virtue and religious devotion. Are Rachel's virtue, modesty and self-sacrifice connected to a deep spiritual commitment, or are they simply responses conditioned by an upper middle-class, Christian sense of moral duty?

The suspect nature of Rachel's spiritual commitment can also be detected in her emotional and physical reaction prior to, and after asking Édouard for the money. The anxiety she feels in having to initiate this discussion is evident in this scene:

<<Elle était très pâle, et, comme elle disait ces derniers mots, son menton et ses lèvres furent agités d'un tremblement convulsif qui l'empêcha quelques instants de parler.... Elle s'appuya contre la porte qu'elle avait renfermée. Je voulus lui prendre la main, mais elle l'arracha d'entre les miennes. Elle reprit enfin, la voix contractée par un immense effort."

(LEFM, p. 348)
When Édouard offers Rachel what money he has at the time as a partial payment, she responds in the following manner:

Elle baissa la tête et fit un "oui" si faible que je l'entendis à peine, puis gagna en chancelant un banc d'écolier sur lequel elle se laissa tomber et, les deux coudes appuyés sur le pupitre devant elle, resta quelques instants le visage dans les mains.

(LFM, pp. 349-50)

In the first passage, Rachel manifests the physical symptoms of moral anguish. Asking Édouard for money is contrary to her natural reserve, or modesty, and requires an "immense effort". In the second passage we witness the result of this intrusion on her modesty when she responds in a meek, barely audible way to Édouard's question. Her reply carries an indication of shame which, in turn, implies she has an inherent pride, a quality that contradicts her humility and is recognized as sinful from a Christian perspective. Pride, like dissatisfaction and resentment, is further evidence of the weakening of Rachel's spiritual integrity. Weakness is echoed in the actual words — tremblement, s'appuya, faible, à peine, chancelant, tomber — and in Rachel's lack of physical stamina. Her staggering and falling symbolize her faltering virtue, and, perhaps, an eventual fall from grace. This image could also indicate, however, a fall from her own humanity that is the result of excessive devotion. Rachel's virtue blinds her and, paradoxically, turns her into a hypocrite, a counterfeiter.
As a stereotype, Rachel differs from Sophroniska and Sarah in several ways. Sophroniska is portrayed through observations and remarks in Édouard's journal, narratorial comments and, especially, lengthy dialogue between her and Édouard. Sarah's character is established primarily through narratorial reporting, and interior monologue. She appears very little in Édouard's journal in comparison to Sophroniska. Rachel, however, is presented almost entirely from the opinionated perspectives of Édouard and Armand: we never know "first hand" what she is thinking. Rachel's art of self-effacement is refined to such a degree that she effaces herself right out of the novel. What remains of her are the biased views of Édouard and Armand, who either ridicule or pity her, and profess to despise the virtue upon which her character is founded. Because of the narrowness of Édouard and Armand's perspectives, Rachel appears as a static, two-dimensional tableau vivant of the "pious spinster". This lifeless quality makes her seem symbolic, almost mythical, like Lady Griffith or Bronja; however, her bourgeois virtue, deceitfulness, sense of shame and role as administrator of the pension make her too worldly for this category. She is too inextricably linked with family, society and quotidian existence to be mythical.

As stereotypes, Sophroniska, Sarah and Rachel also have many traits in common, the most prominent of these being the excess displayed by each in the pursuit of her goal or ideal.
Their personalities reside solely within the confines of the respective extremes of "intellectualism", "feminism" and "virtue". These narrow views distort their perception of reality to the extent that each sees only that which conforms to her limited vision of the world. All three are devoid of the Gidian dialogue intérieur that would shape them into multilateral, more lifelike characters. Instead, Sophroniska, Sarah and Rachel move relentlessly toward their extremes, eventually becoming exaggerations, or caricatures.
NOTES


2 Ferguson, p. 9.


6 Brée, p. 306.


8 Ferguson, pp. 8-9.
CHAPTER III

ARCHETYPES

The female archetypes in this study are similar to the stereotypes in that they are capsulized representations belonging to a particular group of women. They are different, however, in that the stereotypes consist of women who deviate from the usual role prescribed by society, while the archetypes conform to social standards, or the status quo: they are caricatures of the "everyday" woman, which, in the social context of Les Faux-Monnayeurs, signifies wife and mother. They are the products of fixed roles established by generations of tradition. Ferguson formulates the following definition of archetype:

[C]ertain stereotypes are particularly strong because they are formed not by a single society but by the entire experience of mankind....

[A]rchetypes, grounded in emotion, are strong; they represent man's desires and fears about his nature and the structure of the world.... Archetypes strongly resist modification by facts and logic and are often fortified by religion, which inevitably involves a large measure of myth. 1

The archetypal women of Les Faux-Monnayeurs reflect Ferguson's definition. Their role as wife and mother is indeed resistant to change, and imposed on them by a Christian bourgeois code of conduct.
The wives and mothers can be classified by age into three groups: young, middle-aged and old. The middle-aged women, Pauline and Marguerite, will be examined first, followed by the old women, Mme Vedel and Mme de La Pérouse. We will then return to Laura, whose case is of central importance: being young, recently married and pregnant situates her at the threshold of traditional womanhood. She is en formation, in the process of becoming what her predecessors already are. One characteristic that all of these women share is resignation; they have accepted the unsuitability, or mediocrity, of their husbands in order to participate in the "honorable" tradition of marriage and family life. This compromise puts them in a situation fausse that eventually engenders acute resentment, bitter discontent and, in the extreme cases of Mme Vedel and Mme de La Pérouse, complete mental inertia or insanity, the ultimate sign of the loss of "self".

Although Pauline and Marguerite have both resigned themselves to distressing situations, the factors that motivate their passivity differ greatly. Pauline's resignation is the result of her desperate attempt to maintain the appearance of marital and familial harmony, whereas Marguerite's stems from feelings of guilt and a fear of self-assertion and liberty.

Pauline has devoted her life to concealing the insufficiencies and errors of her husband and creating the
semblance of the bonne famille. Édouard explains:

Pauline apporte tous ses soins à pallier les insuffisances et les défaillances d'Oscar, à les cacher aux yeux de tous; et surtout aux yeux des enfants. Elle s'ingénie à permettre à ceux-ci d'estimer leur père; et, vraiment, elle a fort à faire;... Elle parle de son mari sans mépris, mais avec une sorte d'indulgence qui en dit long. (LFM, p.394)

The word "cacher" appears here, and recurs in numerous passages relevant to Pauline's life with Oscar. The above passage also reveals that Pauline's chief motive for hiding Oscar's mediocrity is to protect the happiness of her children. She has built her own life around falsehood so that they can respect and value their father. Pauline thus establishes herself as the familiar, self-sacrificing mother. Oscar, at one point, makes the cynical observation: "Elle est comme toutes les mères" (LFM, p. 327).

The two situations around which Pauline's efforts to conceal the truth revolve are Oscar's long-standing adulterous affair, and the thievery and deceitfulness of her son, Georges. In reference to Oscar's affair, Pauline confides to Édouard:

Depuis longtemps je suis au courant des relations qu'il entretient ... je sais même avec qui. Il croit que je les ignore et prend d'énormes précautions pour me les cacher; mais ces précautions sont si apparentes que plus il se cache, plus il se livre. Chaque fois que, sur le point de sortir, il affecte un air affairé, contrarié, soucieux, je sais qu'il court à son plaisir.... J'en rirais, si j'y avais le coeur. Ma seule crainte, c'est que les enfants ne s'aperçoivent de quelque chose; ... je me vois forcée de l'aider.... Je finis par m'en amuser.
presque...; j'invente pour lui des excuses; je remets dans la poche de son pardessus des lettres qu'il laisse traîner.

(LPM, pp. 399-400)

Pauline stresses the importance of hiding Oscar's infidelity from the children; however, certain clues here and elsewhere indicate that Pauline's anxiety originates at a more personal level. She hastens to mention, for example, that she knows the identity of Oscar's mistress, inadvertently disclosing her curiosity and jealousy. Furthermore, her assertion that she finds her own connivance laughable and sometimes entertaining seems bitterly ironic and implies a hidden sorrow. Her depth of feeling for Oscar is eventually verified in the following dialogue with Édouard:

[T]ôt ou tard, on perd prise, et... le plus tendre amour n'y peut rien.... J'en arrive à cacher même cet amour.

<<— A présent vous parlez de vos fils.
<<— Pourquoi dites-vous cela? Prétendez-vous que je ne sache plus aimer Oscar? Parfois je me le dis; mais je me dis aussi que c'est par crainte de trop souffrir que je ne l'aime pas davantage.

(LPM, pp. 395-6)

The above confession supports the notion that Pauline's artifice is actually motivated by a desire to conceal the truth from herself: recognition of the truth is not only painful, but could also instigate confrontation and result in the loss of Oscar and the dissolution of family unity. Pauline prefers to remain passive. She tells Édouard: "Ce
que je vois que je ne puis pas empêcher, je préfère l'accorder de bonne grâce" (LFM, p. 394).

Pauline's reluctance to confront family members regarding their reprehensible behavior is further demonstrated by the way in which she deals with Georges. She maintains that she strongly suspects him of stealing money from her closet, but invents a profusion of excuses to vindicate him and attenuate her own suspicions. The excuses vary in nature, but all point to her fear of the consequences, and her incompetence as a parent. Although she admits the likelihood of Georges' culpability, she cannot confront him for fear of seeing him add lies to misconduct. She is also unsure about her ability to deal severely enough with him, should her accusation be validated. Her incompetence lies in her passivity. She naively believes that Georges' self-reproach will suffice as a punishment. Her greatest deterrent, however, seems to be the desire to believe he did not steal the money. She almost succeeds in convincing herself of Georges' innocence with the comforting proposition that it is a passerby in the building who is responsible for the missing money. Pauline's excessive justification for her lack of action becomes satirical. Édouard reflects: "J'admirais avec quelle ingéniosité elle mettait en avant tout ce qui pouvait disculper son enfant" (LFM, p. 399).

Pauline's aversion to reprimanding Georges for his behavior is the result of her fear of alienating his
affections. This echoes the fear she has of losing Oscar, should he discover that she knows about his mistress. Pauline's passivity in relation to her decaying marriage, and her inability to properly discipline her children are what resign her to being a "counterfeiter". When Édouard aptly points out to her that in pretending not to "see" Oscar and her son's errors, she in turn is deceiving them, she retorts:

-- Mais comment voulez-vous que je fasse?
C'est beaucoup, de ne pas me plaindre; je ne puis pourtant pas approuver!

(LFM, p. 395)

For Pauline the choices are either acceptance or approval: disapproval is not an option. Her instincts to hold fast to Oscar, and to the respectability of marriage and family unity drive her to build her life on the dupery of others and self-deception.

Pauline's predicament is made particularly poignant by several factors, the first being awareness of the compromise she has made of her life, and of her "self". She confides to Édouard:

<<-- Vous rendez-vous compte de ce que devient ma vie? J'ai restreint mon bonheur; d'année en année, j'ai dû en rabattre; une à une, j'ai raccourci mes espérances. J'ai cédé; j'ai toléré; j'ai feint de ne pas comprendre, de ne pas voir....

(LFM, p. 450)

Pauline's awareness has been heightened by the sudden realization of the futility of her efforts. Years of feigning ignorance and tolerating mediocrity, infidelity
and deceitfulness are made vain by the actualization of one of her greatest fears: the loss of Georges' affection and respect. Pauline verbalizes her indignation in this passage:

Mais enfin, on se raccroche à quelque chose; et quand encore ce peu vous échappe...! Le soir, il vient travailler près de moi, sous la lampe; quand parfois il lève la tête de dessus son livre, ce n'est pas de l'affection que je rencontre dans son regard; c'est du défi. J'ai si peu mérité cela.... Il me semble parfois brusquement que tout mon amour pour lui tourne en haine; et je voudrais n'avoir jamais eu d'enfants.

(LEF, pp. 450-51)

This last sentence shows the depth to which Pauline's bitterness has plummeted, as Georges, the last object of her obsessive maternal drive, eludes her.

Georges' defiance, however, seems insignificant in comparison to the cruel irony of the episode which follows. Georges discovers the hidden love letters from his father's mistress and uses them as an initiation offering for admittance to the Confrérie des Hommes forts. This one act serves as the culminating point of Pauline's most unnerving fears: Georges is made aware of his father's licentiousness, and Oscar thinks his infidelity has been discovered by Pauline. There is a parodic, but at the same time pathetic, quality about the convoluted consequences of Pauline's dupery and connivance.

The dénouement of Pauline's predicament is significant in that it corresponds with Édouard's earlier expectations.
Upon contemplating the growth of what he terms the "branche mystique" Edouard remarks:

Les romanciers nous abusent lorsqu'ils développent l'individu sans tenir compte des compressions d'alentour. La forêt façonne l'arbre. A chacun, si peu de place est laissée! Que de bourgeois atrophiés! Chacun lance où il peut sa ramure. La branche mystique, le plus souvent, c'est à de l'étouffement qu'on la doit. On ne peut échapper qu'en hauteur. Je ne comprends pas comment Pauline fait pour ne pas pousser de branche mystique, ni quelles compressions de plus elle attend.... Je ne soupçonnais pas...tout ce que, sous les apparences du bonheur, elle cache de déboires et de résignation.  

(LFM, p. 393)

Although Pauline's pathetic situation provokes Edouard's cynicism, it does not elicit his contempt. He seems sympathetic with regard to the suffocating effects of Pauline's life. The image of the atrophied bud is appropriate since Pauline has never allowed herself to reach her potential. Emotional attachment, self-sacrifice and social constraints have confined her to an unsuccessful, thus unrewarding career as wife and mother.

It is Boris' suicide which, surprisingly, furnishes Pauline's escape "en hauteur". In the aftermath, Georges' admiration for Ghéridanisol transforms into horror. This motivates an emotional reunion with his mother:

Lorsqu'il revint ce soir chez ses parents, il se jeta dans les bras de sa mère; et Pauline eut un élan de reconnaissance vers Dieu, qui, par ce drame affreux, ramenait à elle son fils.  

(LFM, p. 546)
The recovery of Georges' affection has a momentous impact on Pauline. Her surge of gratitude toward God implies that her "branche mystique" has taken root.

Marguerite Profitendieu's role as wife and mother can be viewed as the reverse mirror image of that of Pauline. They both project an overall image of passivity and resentment, and adultery is a primary issue in their failing marriages. The reversal of roles comes into play in the rapport each has with her husband. In Pauline's case, Oscar's guilty conscience makes him somewhat obsequious toward her. In the Profitendieu union, however, it is Marguerite, the wife, who plays the part of the guilt-ridden adulterer; her perpetual repentance enslaves her to the self-righteous authority of her husband.

Marguerite's subordination is the indirect result of having confessed her act of adultery. It is this confession that has empowered her husband with the role of judge and redeemer -- his career as a magistrate is appropriate. Profitendieu considers himself to be the indulgent judge, and victim, who has benevolently pardoned his offender: "Il ne pouvait...pas...lavrer aux enfants le secret de l'égarement passager de leur mère. Ah! tout était si bien pardonné, oublé, réparé" (LFM, p. 41). Bernard's discovery of his illegitimacy, and subsequent departure, are proof, in Profitendieu's estimation, that Marguerite had never fully repented for her adultery. He feels that this crisis serves as a recompense for her sinful past: "Il sait bien qu'elle ne s'est jamais
que très imparfaitement repentie...que cette tristesse, cette épreuve pourra servir à son rachat..." (LFM, p. 45).

Profitendieu's manner of speaking to Marguerite has a distinctly paternal quality appropriate to his stance as the merciful judge. When he announces to the family that Bernard will no longer be living with them, he makes the following aside to Marguerite:

-- Tâche de te tenir, lui dit-il à voix basse, mais sur un ton impérial; et ne dis pas un mot, tu m'entends. Nous causerons ensuite tous les deux. Et tandis qu'il parle, il garde une de ses mains à elle dans les siennes. (LFM, p. 43)

Profitendieu's imperious manner is consistently displayed by his actions. Each description of his physical bearing with respect to Marguerite invariably renders the image of the husband either towering over or stooping down to his wife:

Il s'est levé, par instinctif besoin de dominer; il se tient à présent tout dressé...et pose gravement, tendrement, autoritairement la main sur l'épaule de Marguerite.... Il se penche vers elle. [P]uis elle se plie comme prête à s'agenouiller devant lui, qui se courbe vers elle et la maintient.... Il se penche jusqu'à ses lèvres. (LFM, pp. 45-6)

Condescension remains the foundation of Profitendieu's treatment of Marguerite up to the last scene in which they appear together: he accompanies her to her room and gives her a fatherly kiss on the forehead before returning to his study.
Marguerite's customary reaction to Profitendieu's overbearing demeanor is characterized by resistance:

L'épaule de Marguerite résiste à la douce pression de sa main. Marguerite sait si bien que toujours, insupportablement, quelque enseignement moral doit sortir, accouché par lui, des moindres événements de la vie; il interprète tout selon son dogme.

(LFM, p. 45)

This physical resistance is analogous to Marguerite's mental and emotional resistance to Profitendieu's dogmatic nature. She does not submit willingly to his spiteful tyranny. Her resentment is detailed in this passage:

Comment lui eût-elle dit qu'elle se sentait emprisonnée dans cette vertu qu'il exigeait d'elle; qu'elle étouffait; que ce n'était pas tant sa faute qu'elle regrettait à présent, que de s'en être repentie.

(LFM, p. 46)

In an effort to curtail Marguerite's resistance, Profitendieu capitalizes on what he perceives to be her guilty conscience. Whenever he senses that his authority is diminishing, he re-establishes it by directing her thoughts toward piety, virtue and atonement:

Profitendieu sent confusément leurs pensées à tous deux prendre une direction divergente. Et tandis qu'elle se plaint, qu'elle accuse, qu'elle revendique, il essaye d'incliner cet esprit rétif vers des sentiments plus pieux:
Voilà l'expiation, dit-il.

(LFM, p. 44)

Because Profitendieu wants complete submission, he is
frustrated by Marguerite's obstinance and defiance. In response to her wish that he had never pardoned her and her statement, "Ah! je n'aurais pas dû revenir!", he abandons his efforts. He announces in a condescending manner: "—Ma pauvre amie...je crains que tu ne sois un peu butée ce soir. Il est tard. Nous ferions mieux d'aller nous coucher" (LFM, p. 46). The mounting tension engendered by Marguerite's recalcitrance and Profitendieu's despotism portends a confrontation and definitive resolution.

Marguerite's resistance is prompted not only by her husband's overbearing demeanor, but also by a natural retaliation against the enslaving demands of the virtue imposed on her by family and society. Her final appearance in the novel consists of the following scene:

Elle ne pleure pas: elle ne pense à rien. Elle voudrait, elle aussi, s'enfuir; mais elle ne le fera pas. Quand elle était avec son amant, le père de Bernard, que nous n'avons pas à connaître, elle se disait: Va, tu auras beau faire; tu ne seras jamais qu'une honnête femme. Elle avait peur de la liberté, du crime, de l'aisance; ce qui fit qu'au bout de dix jours elle rentrait repentante au foyer. Ses parents autrefois avaient bien raison de lui dire: Tu ne sais jamais ce que tu veux. (LFM, pp. 47-8)

"Honnête" is synonymous with virtuous, and has a distinctly derogatory connotation in the above passage. It is not, however, Marguerite's virtue that makes her fear freedom, but inversely, her fear of freedom that makes her an "honest" woman. As was the case with Pauline, Marguerite's fear constitutes the crux of her dilemma and has sent her back as well as kept her "repentante au foyer".
In contrast to Pauline's "branche mystique," Marguerite's eventual escape is not en hauteur, but en largeur. At the end of the novel, we learn that Marguerite leaves Profitendieu. The problem posed by her fear of freedom is not, however, completely resolved. No details are furnished as to where she goes nor what she does to maintain herself. The fact that she is virtually banished from the novel -- as though effaced or, more appropriately, excommunicated -- leaves doubt as to the success of her "escape." We are tempted to ask questions, such as: How will she survive? What preparation has she for being free, independent? Will the incongruity of freedom and society's expectations of women force her to follow the paths of Sarah and Lilian toward moral degeneration and licentiousness? How long will it be before she is obliged to return to the foyer, once more repentant?

As the respective dilemmas of Pauline and Marguerite can be viewed as reverse mirror images of each other, the cases of the aged Mme Vedel and Mme de La Pérouse can be seen as projections into the future of what life as a wife and mother has to hold for the middle-aged Pauline and Marguerite. Mme Vedel is a suitable counterpart to Pauline; the latter's "élan de reconnaissance vers Dieu" has the potential to evolve into the same extreme religious fanaticism as that of the old Mme Vedel. Édouard tells us that Mme Vedel is "niaise", that she is "enfoncée dans une rêverie poétïco-religieuse où elle perd tout sens du réel..." (LFM,
Further on, he tells us in mock admiration that:

Sa conversation n'est pas sans charme. Il lui arrive assez souvent de ne pas achever ses phrases, ce qui donne à sa pensée une sorte de flou poétique. Elle fait de l'infini avec l'imprécis et l'inachevé. Elle attend de la vie future tout ce qui lui manque ici-bas; ceci lui permet d'élargir indéfiniment ses espoirs. Elle prend élan sur le rétrécissement de son sol. (LFM, p. 343)

The image of the physical world of Mme Vedel shrinking or closing in on her is indicative of the constrained life she leads, of the idea expressed by Pauline of life offering less and less and one expecting less and less at the same time. Abnegation has suffocated her to the point of emotional and mental atrophy: apart from mere physical existence, she now functions only on a spiritual level. Mme Vedel has experienced a spiritual élan. As a result, all of her hopes and dreams are deferred to the "afterlife". In terms of her present existence in the material world, this is the ultimate state of resignation. She passively submits to the notion that life has nothing to offer in the here and now, that its course has been irrevocably fixed.

Mme Vedel's resignation has induced a mental and physical inertia that prevents her from accomplishing anything. The impression of listless monotony is emphasized by the way in which she rambles on, never completing her sentences. Her actual life, if transposed into written form, would be punctuated by ellipsis points at every turn, as is her speech in this passage:
Si vous saviez tout ce qu'il se laisse mettre sur les bras, depuis que... Comme on sait qu'il ne se refuse jamais, tout le monde lui... Quand il rentre le soir, il est si fatigué parfois que je n'ose presque pas lui parler de peur de le...

(LE, p. 344)

This incoherent babbling, which Édouard mockingly refers to as a "flou poétique", implies mental derangement. Mme Vedel's intellectual powers have atrophied due to the mental inactivity which accompanies her withdrawal from life. In her delirium she also exhibits a preoccupation with the minimization of her husband's inadequacies. This preoccupation, along with her well-established "branche mystique," reinforces the notion that Mme Vedel's existence is a projection of what life will be like for Pauline.

Marguerite and Mme de La Pérouse's situations are similar in that they share a sense of resistance and rebellion and a considerable amount of bitterness toward their respective husbands; however, there are a number of differences in the ways in which their resentment has evolved. While Marguerite's marriage was undermined from the start by her adultery and the birth of an illegitimate son, the de La Pérouse union appears to have been the epitome of conjugal bliss. M. de La Pérouse reminisces:

Les premiers temps de notre ménage avaient été charmants.... Je l'aimais avec innocence... oui... et je ne consentais à lui reconnaître aucun défaut. (LE, p. 180)
It is not an act of infidelity, or any other crisis situation that has brought about the dissolution of their marriage. Their "désunion" is due, rather, to a slow process of deterioration. A lifetime of petty differences and annoyances has accumulated to produce complex feelings in each of resentment, intolerance and even hatred. This process is referred to by both Gide and Édouard as the décristallisation of love. In the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, Gide states:

Si la "cristallisation" dont parle Stendhal est subite, c'est le lent travail contraire de décristallisation, le pathétique; à étudier.... [L]e temps, l'âge, dérobent à l'amour, un à un, tous ses points d'appui...

(JdFM, p.20)

Édouard's definition is much the same:

On parle sans cesse de la brusque cristallisation de l'amour. La lente décristallisation, dont je n'entends jamais parler, est un phénomène psychologique qui m'intéresse bien davantage. [O]n le peut observer, au bout d'un temps plus ou moins long, dans tous les mariages d'amour.

(LFM, p. 111)

The deterioration of love is a theme of major importance in the novel. It is explored to varying degrees in most of the relationships portrayed: Pauline and Oscar; Marguerite and Profitendieu; Lady Griffith and Vincent; Olivier and Passavant; Laura and Édouard; Laura and Vincent. The relationships of all of these couples "decrystallize" as the novel unfolds. None, however, exemplify the final
results of this deterioration more aptly than that of M. and Mme de La Pérouse.

Although it becomes evident that both M. and Mme de La Pérouse are guilty of making each other suffer, M. de La Pérouse places the blame entirely on his wife, thus prompting her to be constantly on the defensive. He relates to Édouard that the starting point of the deterioration of their marriage was Mme de La Pérouse's opposition to him concerning the education of their son:

[C]'est seulement avec l'éducation de mon fils que cela a commencé à se gâter.
[N]os idées n'étaient pas les mêmes sur l'éducation des enfants. Chaque fois que je voulais morigéner mon fils, madame de La Pérouse prenait son parti contre moi; à l'entendre, il aurait fallu tout lui passer. Ils se concertaient contre moi. Elle lui apprenait à mentir....

(LFM, pp. 179-80)

This single point of contention becomes the stimulus for the petty jealousies, intolerance and suspicions that transpire. M. de La Pérouse accuses his wife of jealousy regarding the time he spends reading his deceased brother's letters. He states: "Tout ce qui s'attachait à moi, elle a toujours voulu me l'enlever..." (LFM, p. 182). He is repulsed by the way in which she eats: "De la voir à table, en face de moi, se jeter sur les plats, m'enlève tout appétit" (LFM, p. 237). His mistrust of his wife's actions and motives borders upon paranoia. He claims that she spies on him, and that everything she says and does is intended to contradict and thwart him: "La grande affaire pour elle, c'est de me
contrarier. ... Tout ce qu'elle fait de travers dans la vie, c'est à moi qu'elle en fait grief" (LFM, p. 236). These recriminations indicate that M. de La Pérouse attributes his suffering and discontent to what he perceives to be willful persecution on the part of his wife. His animosity culminates in a desire to rid himself of her by placing her in a retirement home.

Mme de La Pérouse's complaints are neither as prolonged nor as vehement as those of her husband. While his reproachfulness is on a personal level, aimed at her habits and demeanor, hers is a reflection of the distress she feels at her husband's contempt and mistrust of her every motive and action. She is indignant, for example, about his lack of appreciation for her care and concern for his health. During her brief conversation with Édouard, Mme de La Pérouse enumerates these concerns, claiming that she has to plead with her husband to take care of himself. Édouard reports:

"Et elle entra là-dessus dans des récriminations infinies: Le vieux refuse de se soigner par seul besoin de la tourmenter. Il fait tout ce qu'il ne devrait pas faire, et ne fait rien de ce qu'il faudrait. Il sort par tous les temps, sans jamais consentir à mettre un foulard. Il refuse de manger aux repas: "Monsieur n'a pas faim", et elle ne sait quoi inventer pour stimuler son appétit; mais la nuit, il se relève et met sens dessus dessous la cuisine pour se fricoter on ne sait quoi.

(LFM, p. 233)

It is her husband's unwillingness to accept her ministrations and his indifference toward her that provoke her displeasure.
Her indignation is especially evident when she discloses her feelings about his desire to send her away:

<<Puis elle se plaignait que le vieux voulût la faire entrer dans une maison de retraite; ce qui lui serait d'autant plus pénible, ajoutait-elle, c'est qu'il était parfaitement incapable de vivre seul et de se passer de ses soins.  

(LFM, pp. 234-5)

Mme de La Pérouse sees herself as being indispensable to her husband and his welfare. His disregard for this self-sacrifice becomes another source of her hostility.

In retaliation, she exhibits an unreasonable, childish attitude. When her husband insists that she leave the room so that Édouard and he can be alone, she protests that "le fauteuil sur lequel elle restait assise était à elle, et qu'elle ne le quitterait pas" (LFM, p. 235). Further on, M. de La Pérouse exclaims:

<<--- Imaginerez-vous que, dans chacune de ces pièces, il y a des meubles qui sont à elle et d'autres qui sont à moi? Vous l'avez vue tout à l'heure avec son fauteuil. Elle dit à la femme de journée, lorsque celle-ci fait le ménage: <<Non; ceci est à Monsieur; n'y touchez pas.>>  

(LFM, p. 237)

This territorial behavior arises from Mme de La Pérouse's desire to defend and assert herself; she does not meekly submit to her husband's attempts to efface her by placing her in a retirement home.

The decrystallization of the de La Pérouse union is presented mainly from the perspectives of M. de La Pérouse,
who speaks through Édouard's journal, and Édouard. We must, therefore, be doubly cautious about forming an opinion of Mme de La Pérouse's character. Other than in a few directly quoted sentences from her conversation with Édouard (LFM, pp. 232-5), we learn nothing about her character "first hand" or from an objective point of view. When Mme de La Pérouse is not being maliciously depicted by her husband, her "récriminations infinies" and complaints -- "elle se plaignait" -- are scrutinized and presented from the biased viewpoint of Édouard. In fact, Édouard openly admits his prejudice: "...mais (est-ce parce que je suis prévenu contre elle), ses traits m'ont paru plus durs, son regard plus aigre, son sourire plus faux que jamais" (LFM, p. 232).

Édouard's will to vilify Mme de La Pérouse and place her husband in a favourable light becomes obvious when he affirms his wish to refrain from judging the old couple, then promptly contradicts himself in the following physical description of Mme de La Pérouse:

<<Sous sa perruque à bandeaux noirs qui durcit les traits de son visage blafard, avec ses longues mitaines noires d'où sortent des petits doigts comme des griffes, madame de La Pérouse prenait un aspect de harpie. (LFM, p. 234)

The fact that Édouard compares her to a harpie, which in Greek mythology is an evil, predatory creature, creates the impression that Mme de La Pérouse is a sinister shrew who preys upon her innocent husband. This would conform to
her husband's assertion that everything she says and does is intended to contradict and torment him. In reality, however, it is Mme de La Pérouse who is victimized by her husband when he finally succeeds in having her admitted to the retirement home.

Although Edouard's reference to Mme de La Pérouse as a "harpie" is ironic and unfair and it is obvious that he is partial to his old music teacher, we are compelled to agree with the ideas he expresses in the following commentary:

Il reste que voici deux êtres, attachés l'un à l'autre pour la vie, et qui se font abominablement souffrir. J'ai souvent remarqué, chez des conjoints, quelle intolerable irritation entretient chez l'un la plus petite protubérance du caractère de l'autre, parce que la "vie commune" fait frotter celle-ci toujours au même endroit. Et si le frottement est réciproque, la vie conjugale n'est plus qu'un enfer.

(LFM, p. 234)

The mutual life that the de La Pérouses have established does indeed resemble "hell" in that it is underscored by distress, mental anguish and despair. This "hellish" existence is the end result of the decrystallization of their love and marital harmony, the final stage that brings with it mental deterioration. Mme de La Pérouse ends up in a retirement home, suffering from the hysterical delusion that she has been incarcerated in an "asile d'aliénés", and that her husband visits only to spy on her (LFM, p. 359). Similarly, M. de La Pérouse lives out the final days of his existence at the pension, where he is kept awake at night by an incessant,
unidentifiable noise from within the wall. (LFM, pp. 502-3). The pathos of their situation is consummated in M. de La Pérouse's last bitter lament concerning love and marriage:

<<-- Eh bien! accordez-moi que c'est une triste chose, lorsque l'amour, au lieu de faire la félicité de la vie, en devient la calamité...

(LFM, p. 360)

A lifetime of distress and resignation culminates in bitter disappointment for Mme de La Pérouse and in mystical escapism for Mme Vedel. Both women have spent their lives confined to a situation fausse, or a situation that impedes the expression and development of the self. Mme Vedel's abnegation and Mme de La Pérouse's self-sacrifice have ultimately brought them to the point of exhibiting signs of mental derangement. Furthermore, there are many parallels in the lives of Marguerite and Pauline, the most obvious of which is the evolution of this same, restrictive situation fausse. Their circumstances are so similar to those in the lives of their older counterparts that, should they continue along their present voie, it is probable that they will meet the same fate.

Laura holds a special status in our discussion of archetypes because the stage at which she has arrived in life puts her in the position of becoming what either Pauline, Marguerite, Mme Vedel or Mme de La Pérouse already are. It is easy to recognize that the basic traits of all the
archetypal women have been incorporated into Laura's character. Laura's "défaillance passagère" in Pau, the resulting illegitimate pregnancy, and her repentant return to her husband are a repetition of the same course of events experienced by Marguerite. At the same time, the clearly stated fact that Laura has married an inferior, recognizes his mediocrity and attempts to palliate his deficiencies in both her own eyes and the eyes of others echoes almost precisely the same scenario we witnessed in the case of Pauline. Laura's return to Douviers near the end of the novel not only indicates resignation to the same sort of situation fausse endured by Pauline and Marguerite, but also suggests that she is destined for the same fate as Mme Vedel and Mme de La Pérouse: atrophy and eventual annihilation of the authentic self.

At the beginning of the novel, we learn that Laura has recently married and just discovered that she is pregnant. This commonplace situation is complicated by circumstances which come to constitute a major crisis and turning point in her life: the child is the result of her illicit affair with Vincent. Her predicament places her at the crossroads of the classic, Gidian dilemma of choosing between authenticity and fausse monnaie, freedom and social conformity. The manner in which she views her options and chooses her path in life becomes an important voyage of self-discovery, symbolized by her actual voyage from Paris, to Pau, to Saas-Fée, back to Paris and on to her final
destination: upon returning to England, she is reunited with her husband and committed to the marriage and motherhood for which her religious, upper middle-class education has prepared her.

It is the bourgeois ideology of feminine virtue that is the focal point of Laura's character, and the crux of her distressful predicament; the rigid virtue women are forced to assume leaves them helpless, defenseless when confronted with a dilemma that is at odds with society's rules and values. Laura's case, then, ties in well with the concept of désencadrement, or dépaysement, a state in which the person is rendered weak and defenseless when outside of the secure and familiar framework of his or her social milieu.

The notion of désencadrement is allegorized in Vincent's explanation of the two types of ocean fish -- the sténohalins and the euryhalins -- and their ability, or inability, to survive in water of varying degrees of salinity (LFM, pp. 221-2). Lillian explains to Passavant:

Vincent dit qu'il y a des espèces de poissons qui crèvent quand l'eau devient plus salée, ou moins, et qu'il y en a d'autres au contraire qui supportent des degrés de salaison variée, et qui se tiennent au bord des courants, là où l'eau devient moins salée, pour manger les premiers quand ils faiblissent.

(LFM, p. 79)

This allegory extends to Laura's case, depicting her stay at the sanitorium in Pau, where she went to recover from tuberculosis. In Pau, she is disconnected from her family and her past; she is outside of her secure environment, in a
new element that is disorienting, where she is easy prey to both her own instincts (her inner drive to abandon herself to freedom, to be *disponible*) and to the will of others. The anonymity resulting from Laura's displacement, coupled with the belief that she will soon die of tuberculosis, make illicit sex with Vincent seem like an *acte gratuit*, an act whereby she can compromise virtue and exercise freedom without fear of reproach or penalty. Laura fails to acknowledge, however, the possibility of both survival and pregnancy. Thus she finds herself back in Paris, pregnant with an illegitimate child, abandoned by Vincent, alone and in a state of despair.

When Vincent, her "last hope", abandons her, the situation degenerates rather than improves. Having ventured into an element to which she cannot adapt, Laura finds herself struggling to survive "socially". She eventually tires, gives up struggling and anxiously waits for fate to choose her outcome. It is in such a state that we find her in her hotel room, waiting and wondering if and when Édouard will arrive to assist her:

[Elle attendait confusément quelque chose ou quelqu'un qui vint la tirer de l'impasse. Elle avait fait fausse route, à n'en pas douter; elle se sentait fourvoyée. Elle avait la triste habitude de compter sur l'événement plus que sur elle-même. Elle n'était pas sans vertu, mais se sentait sans force aucune, abandonnée.](LFM, p. 189)

Although clearly connected to what has transpired
between Vincent and herself, Laura's weakness and sense of abandonment lie more in the fact that she cannot seek solace from her family and the comfortable familiarity of home. The nature of her predicament forbids her to lean on those whose support she would benefit from the most: "Ceux sur qui je voudrais pouvoir m'appuyer, c'est à eux surtout que je dois cacher ma détresse. Mon ami, je suis dans une grande détresse" (LFM, p. 105). She feels she cannot return to Douviers because she is unworthy of his kindness and mercy: "Je n'ose retourner près de lui. Je ne peux pas. Je ne veux pas. Il est bon. Il me pardonnerait sans doute et je ne mérite pas, je ne veux pas qu'il me pardonne" (LFM, p. 105). As for her morally irreproachable family, confessing her transgressions to them is even more formidable than doing so to Douviers: "Mon père...serait capable de me maudire. Il me repousserait. Comment affronterais-je sa vertu, son horreur du mal, du mensonge, de tout ce qui est impur? J'ai peur aussi de désoler ma mère et ma soeur" (LFM, p. 105).

The narrator confirms that Laura's weakness and helplessness are the symptoms of being disengaged from husband, family and social milieu when he alludes to the phenomenon of désencadrement and explains its effect on Laura: "...elle avait besoin, pour prendre appui, des convenances, et se sentait sans force depuis qu'elle était désencadrée" (LFM, pp. 263).

Laura's emotional weakness and dependency are conveyed through her physical reactions in the scene in which Bernard
first finds her in her hotel room. He boldly enters and announces himself as Olivier Molinier's friend, qualifying Olivier as "frère de Vincent, votre amant, qui lâchement vous abandonne..." (LFM, p. 190). Laura's physical response reveals the emotional impact of this brusque invasion of her privacy:

Laura chancelait. Ses deux mains rejetées en arrière cherchaient anxieusement un appui. Mais ce qui boulversa par-dessus tout Bernard, ce fut le gémissement qu'elle poussa; une sorte de plainte à peine humaine, semblable plutôt à celle d'un gibier blessé (et soudain le chasseur prend honte en se sentant bourreau), cri si bizarre, si différent de tout ce que Bernard pouvait attendre, qu'il frissona....

Mais Laura, haletante, se sent défaillir. Elle cherche des yeux où s'asseoir. Bernard...a compris son regard. Il bondit vers un petit fauteuil....

(LFM, pp. 190-1)

In the vulnerable position of not knowing who Bernard is — helpmate or adversary? — nor how he has discovered the intimate details of her situation with respect to Vincent, Laura becomes physically weak. She sways and staggers, looking for an "appui". The verb "défaillir" conveys the sense of physically fainting, or feeling faint, as well as weakening and faltering as a result of losing one's moral strength and courage. This physical imagery used to depict Laura's mental and emotional state is consistent with the allegory of the fish in varying degrees of salt water. Her weakness and helplessness place her: "sur les confins des grands courants, où la densité des eaux change, là où
viennent agoniser les sténohalins" (LFM, p. 222). It is, furthermore, significant that Bernard "leaps" to Laura's rescue as she is about to faint. His status as "friend" is hereby established: he is not one of the euryhalins "qui se tiennent au bord des courants" to prey on the sténohalins "quand ils faiblissent" (LFM, pp. 78-9).

Although Bernard confirms himself as Laura's helpmate, it is Édouard who actually "saves" her by pulling her out of the "impasse". When Édouard and she finally have the opportunity to speak with each other alone, Laura's relief manifests itself in this emotional release:

J'ai vécu seulement pour vous attendre. Par moments, je n'en pouvais plus....
   Et elle redoublait de sanglots en criant presque, mais d'une voix tout étranglée.
   (LFM, p. 197)

Édouard responds to the above plea by becoming Laura's emotional and spiritual chaperone on her voyage of self-discovery, a voyage paralleled and symbolized by their actual voyage to Saas-Fée.

Laura's decision to entrust Édouard with the responsibility of solving her predicament becomes a fatal error with respect to the survival of her authentic self. This inner death is symbolically foreshadowed by Bernard's first image of Laura: "Laura était vêtue très simplement, tout de noir; on l'eût dit en deuil" (LFM, p. 189). The error resides in Laura's failure to recognize that Édouard is
a faux ami who has betrayed and abandoned her in the past. This same pattern of betrayal and abandonment recurs in his treatment of her during their stay in Saas-Fee, and precipitates her return to Douviers and subsequent loss of her authentic self.

Édouard first betrayed Laura by awakening in her a love that he becomes reluctant, and eventually refuses, to reciprocate. It would appear in his journal entry of October 18 that, at one time, Édouard considered Laura to be his soul mate, the love of his life. His reverence for her and the nature of her profound influence on him are expressed in the following passage:

Laura ne semble pas se douter de sa puissance; pour moi qui pénètre dans le secret de mon cœur, je sais bien que jusqu'à ce jour, je n'ai pas écrit une ligne qu'elle n'ait indirectement inspirée ... toute l'habileté de mon discours, je ne la dois qu'à mon désir constant de l'instruire, de la convaincre, de la séduire.

(DFM, p.108)

Édouard ends this eulogy to Laura by confiding that his personality became involuntarily altered by an overwhelming tendency to shape, or fashion himself after her:

Par quelle illusion ai-je pu croire jusqu'à ce jour que je la façonnais à ma ressemblance? Tandis qu'au contraire c'est moi qui me pliais à la sienne . . .

(DFM, p. 108)

He concludes: "Quiconque aime vraiment renonce à la sincérité." (DFM, p. 108)

In the next paragraph, however, Édouard denounces Laura for precisely the same lapse of sincerity that he so ardently romanticized when examining his own personality. He writes:
<<C'est ainsi qu'elle m'a donné le change... je ne savais pas que ce n'était que par amour pour moi qu'elle s'intéressait si passionnément à tout ce dont elle me voyait m'éprendre... <<Je ne m'ornais et ne me parais que pour toi>>, dira-t-elle. Précisément, j'aurais voulu que ce ne fût que pour elle et qu'elle cédât, ce faisant, à quelque intime besoin personnel. Mais de tout cela, qu'elle ajoutait à elle pour moi, rien ne restera, pas même un regret, pas même le sentiment d'un manque. Un jour vient où l'être vrai reparait, que le temps lentement déshabille de tous ses vêtements d'emprunt; et, si c'est de ces ornements que l'autre est épris, il ne presse plus contre son cœur qu'une parure déshabillée, qu'un souvenir... que du deuil et du désespoir.
<<Ah! de combien de vertus, de combien de perfections l'ai-je ornée! 

(LFM, pp. 108-9)

Apart from the cruelty of this abrupt reversal of Édouard's feelings, what is important to note are his self-deception and double standard; in condemning Laura's "hypocrisy" he does not even see his own reflection in the picture he has just painted of her. Édouard's self-deception becomes more pronounced when he attempts to justify and aggrandize his disillusionment with Laura by imbuing it with philosophical and psychological import through a detailed analysis of the slow decrystallization versus the rapid crystallization of love.2 (LFM, pp. 110-12)

Édouard further betrays Laura by counselling her to marry Douviers. In writing about the slow decrystallization of love, Édouard states:

Il n'y aura pas à craindre cela pour Laura, certes (et c'est tant mieux), si elle épouse Félix Douviers, ainsi que le lui conseillent la raison, sa famille et moi-même. Douviers est un très honnête professeur, plein de mérites, et très capable dans sa partie (il me revient qu'il est très apprécié par ses élèves) -- en qui Laura va découvrir, à l'usage, d'autant plus de vertus qu'elle s'illusionnera moins par avance; quand elle parle de lui, je trouve même que, dans la
louange, elle reste plutôt en deçà. Douviers vaut mieux que ce qu'elle croit.  
(LFM, p. 111)

The qualities that Édouard attributes to Douviers in the above passage and his implied determination to convince Laura of his worthiness are in bad faith. We learn later that Édouard in fact holds Douviers in contempt. In his journal entry of November 2, for example, he openly admits Douviers' "insufficiency": "Je sens je ne sais quoi d'insuffisant chez Douviers, d'abstrait et de jobard." (LFM, p. 143) In relating the conversation they shared, he makes a point of conveying Douviers' obsequiousness and the banality of his sentiments. Édouard's tone is condescending, particularly when he states: "... il m'agaçait. J'ai néanmoins serré le plus chaleureusement que j'ai pu la main qu'il me tendait." (LFM, p. 144) Toward the end of this report, Édouard has the arrogance and the gall to pronounce: "Mais si je ne puis devenir son ami, du moins je crois qu'il fera un excellent mari pour Laura; car, somme toute, ce sont ici surtout ses qualités que je lui reproche." (LFM, p. 145) Édouard's true opinion of Douviers not only puts to question his loyalty and sincerity as a friend, but also bears the stamp of a self-serving ulterior motive.

We soon discover that Édouard's sudden change of feeling was indeed motivated by self-interest rather than by a sudden flash of realization and noble desire to do what is best for Laura. Exactly fifteen days after the above entries, Édouard writes on November 1:

Il y a quinze jours ... -- j'ai eu tort de ne pas noter cela aussitôt. Ce n'est pas que le
temps m'ait manqué, mais j'avais le coeur encore plein de Laura -- ou plus exactement je voulais ne point distraire d'elle ma pensée; ... mais je sens bien, et j'ai beau m'en défendre, que la figure d'Olivier aimante aujourd'hui mes pensées, qu'elle incline leur cours et que, sans tenir compte de lui, je ne pourrais ni tout à fait bien m'expliquer, ni tout à fait bien me comprendre. (LFM, pp. 129-30)

In light of the above disclosure, it becomes obvious that Édouard's brusque rejection of Laura, his elaborate justification and the deceitful manner in which he persuades her to marry Douviers constitute no more than a convenient means of disentangling himself from a complicated relationship that he, rather than Laura, is responsible for initiating; the resulting state of affairs leaves Édouard free to pursue his romantic interests in Olivier.

The manner in which Édouard transfers his love and reverence from Laura to Olivier is reflected in this passage from Édouard's journal, November 1:

Dès que je le vis, ce premier jour, dès qu'il se fut assis à la table de famille, dès mon premier regard, ou plus exactement dès son premier regard, j'ai senti que ce regard s'emparait de moi et que je ne disposais plus de ma vie. (LFM, p. 139)

The persistent recurrence of the word "dès" emphasizes the rapidity and completeness of Édouard's act of substitution. More importantly, the above statement is followed, on November 2, by this bitter lamentation:

<<Admirable propension au dévouement, chez la femme. L'homme qu'elle aime n'est, le plus souvent, pour elle, qu'une sorte de père à quoi suspendre son amour. Avec quelle sincère facilité Laura opère la substitution! Je comprends qu'elle épouse Douviers; j'ai été un des premiers à le lui conseiller. Mais j'étais en droit d'espérer un peu
de chagrin. Le mariage a lieu dans trois jours.

(LFM, p. 145)

In relation to the previous passage, this one brings Édouard's self-deception and egoism sharply into focus. His self-indulgence, his plea for pity are ironic, unfair and appalling when we stop to consider that it is, conversely, Laura who has been abruptly dispossessed of love and devotion and hastily replaced by Olivier. The injustice on Édouard's part is further heightened by the fact that he emerges triumphant: he has found an object worthy of his love. Nowhere, on the other hand, do we witness a similar expression of adoration for Douviers on the part of Laura -- at most, we sense acceptance, resignation and perhaps a certain level of esteem.

Although this first sequence of betrayal and abandonment drives Laura toward making the great mistake of her life -- marrying Douviers -- it also provokes inadvertently both the despair and sense of rebellion necessary to compromise her virtue and commit the liberating act of passion (her excès, her passer outre) in Pau. The narrator comments:

... lorsqu'elle se remémorait le passé, il lui paraissait qu'Édouard l'avait trompée en éveillant en elle un amour qu'elle sentait encore vivace, puis en se dérobant à cet amour et en la laissant sans emploi. N'était-ce pas là le secret motif de ses erreurs, de son mariage avec Douviers, auquel elle s'était resignée, auquel Édouard l'avait conduite; puis de son laisser aller, sitôt ensuite, aux sollicitations du printemps? Car, elle devait bien se l'avouer, dans les bras de Vincent, c'était Édouard encore qu'elle cherchait.

(LFM, p. 264)
The emancipating force of this act, however, becomes truncated by the magnitude of the consequences; illegitimate pregnancy cannot easily be accommodated at the precarious stages of her first steps toward freedom and self-discovery. To revert back to the water analogies, the variation in salinity has become too severe and can no longer be endured. Laura gasps for help; she needs a saviour to pull her up into the lifeboat. This is where Édouard intervenes to execute his second act of betrayal -- to guide her back toward virtue, piety, Douviers and the family hearth, her proper place in society.

That Édouard concedes to "lead" Laura to the resolution of her crisis is perhaps the great irony and tragedy of her life. Édouard proposes that she accompany him on the voyage to Saas-Fée. His intentions are to allow her an interval of time to regain her composure so that she can make the "right" decisions. For Laura, Saas-Fée literally becomes the place where ça se fait. Her sense of virtue repossesses her. She feels uneasy being in the hotel with Édouard and Bernard under what might appear to be morally questionable circumstances. This malaise and fear keep her in a state of weakness and vulnerability. Laura finally succumbs to the inevitable: She writes to Douviers, confesses all, begs forgiveness and promises to repent. This letter constitutes Laura's relinquishment of liberty and authenticity.

Douviers' response, to forgive Laura and accept her back unconditionally, is for Édouard a victory. His approval and
self-satisfaction are exemplified in this dialogue with Bernard:

--Je ne pouvais douter que Douviers ne prît la chose comme il faut, dit Édouard en se mettant au lit. C'est quelqu'un de très bien. Un peu faible peut-être; mais tout de même très bien. Il va adorer cet enfant, j'en suis sûr. Et le petit sera sûrement plus robuste qu'il n'aurait su le faire lui-même . . . je suis heureux de voir se terminer pour le mieux cette histoire, qui paraissait sans autre issue que le désespoir. Ça arrive à n'importe qui de faire un faux départ. L'important, c'est de ne pas s'entêter . . .

( 

Édouard's attitude toward Laura and the reprehensible way in which he has treated her throughout the novel are finally censured. In reaction to the above commentary, Bernard is shocked and appalled: "Bernard aimait Laura beaucoup trop pour ne pas être choqué par la désinvolture d'Édouard; il n'en laissa néanmoins rien apparaître." (LFM, p. 313) To eliminate any further ambiguity, the narrator intervenes with the following pronouncement:

Édouard m'a plus d'une fois irrité (lorsqu'il parle de Douviers, par exemple), indigné même; j'espère ne l'avoir pas trop laissé voir; mais je puis bien le dire à présent. Sa façon de se comporter avec Laura, si généreuse parfois, m'a paru parfois révoltante.

( LFM, p. 318)

This serves to corroborate the insidious and nefarious role Édouard has played in propelling Laura toward a situation fausse and the demise of her authenticity.

Laura's loss of self is symbolically encapsulated in the counterfeit coin she asks Bernard to give to her after
confessing her intention to return to Douviers. Upon her first attempt to ask Bernard for the coin, she falters: "les larmes montaient à ses yeux, et, dans l'effort qu'elle fit pour les retenir, Bernard vit ses lèvres trembler." (LFM, p. 292) She finally succeeds in verbalizing her request: "en souvenir de vous, lorsque je partirai -- elle se raidit et cette fois put achever sa phrase -- voudriez-vous me la donner?" The act of accepting the coin signifies that Laura has sold her soul for fausse monnaie (i.e. hypocrisy, inauthenticity). It is significant that Bernard -- who embodies courage, strength, freedom, authenticity -- gives the coin to her; since she cannot incorporate him into her life, both literally and figuratively, she must espouse his antithesis: Douviers, who personifies weakness, impotency, fear and submission to the ordre établi. Her emotional outburst reflects the despair she feels in admitting the defeat of her integrity and the mourning of her authentic self as she succumbs to a life of hypocrisy with Douviers.

Shortly after taking possession of the false coin, Laura begins her journey back to Paris where she is promptly reintegrated into family and society. At the end of her journey, what she has discovered is that she is unable to survive outside of the Christian-bourgeois milieu. In his book André Gide: voyage et écriture, Pierre Masson states the following about Laura's psychological voyage:

L'itinéraire de Laura, parti de l'Angleterre, y ramène, prouvent s'il en était besoin sa soumission à l'ordre établi, effaçant l'embardée de Pau dont elle n'a pas su faire une en volée. ...
Like her predecessor, Marguerite, Laura returns "repentante au foyer".

If, while being an archetype, Laura's character appears more developed, more textured or "realistic", it is because we observe her during a period of crisis when she is contemplating her life's options. The tragedy resides in that her only viable option is the one she is most reluctant to choose. Not yet acquiescing, she is agonizing over the intangibility of her alternatives (i.e. all those roads which lead to freedom and authenticity). The reason she seems more complex and dynamic than her counterparts is that we see her gradual progression toward the fixed, one-dimensional role common to the other archetypes. It is fitting that after her return to England, she disappears from the novel. This could signify that she is an outcast on a literary level: the development of her character has been arrested both psychologically and esthetically.

As was the case with Marguerite, whose past so remarkably mirrors Laura's own, it must be recognized that Laura's acceptance of her subalternate and self-annihilating role is not necessarily definitive (i.e. she is not necessarily destined to become a Pauline, Mme Vedel or Mme de La Pérouse); la fuite is conceivable. In "La Structure de l'épreuve," E.D. Cancalon gives credence to the possibility
that Laura's surrender to the moral order is **not** irrevocable:

S'étant séparée d'un amoureux et d'un amant Laura revient vers un mari, ramenant avec elle le signe de son émancipation (symboliquement l'enfant qu'elle attend - peut-on parler ici de l'annonce de Geneviève?). La femme de Douviers n'est plus la vertueuse Vedel mais se situe à mi-chemin entre ses soeurs Sarah et Rachel.

Cancalon intimates that emancipation for Laura, who is now disencumbered of her oppressive "virtue" (but is she really?), will perhaps materialize at some point in the future.

Whether Laura follows the same path as Marguerite, or that of her equally plausible prototype, Pauline, is impossible to ascertain and, moreover, of little consequence in relation to the state of women's existence in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. For theirs is a society in which the "typical," pathetic existence women lead is seemingly without issue. Pierre Masson states that:

... les <<valeurs>> traditionnelles, le mariage, la famille, la religion, et par-dessus tout une résignation qui les conduit à faire de leur vie une perpétuelle hypocrisie ... are what lead these women to accept compromise and mediocrity. He also maintains that the only form of revolt is "la fuite." If we weigh Masson's proposed solution of "flight" against the despair and eventual senility that results from a life of "perpetual hypocrisy", we arrive at the conclusion that the archetypal women are in an insoluble situation: they cannot triumph until they have solved the predicament of where to "flee" and what to do once they have
"fled." Pauline appears to recognize the futility of rebellion when shefatalistically remarks to Édouard:

<<- Mais, mon ami, vous savez bien qu'il n'y a rien de tel pour s'éterniser, que les situations fausses. ... Dans la vie, rien ne se résout; tout continue. On demeure dans l'incertitude; et on restera jusqu'à la fin sans savoir à quoi s'en tenir; en attendant, la vie continue, tout comme si de rien n'était. Et de cela aussi on prend son parti; comme de tout le reste ... comme de tout. (LFM, p. 452).

The situation fausse that the archetypal mother and wife endures in the novel is, at the very least, formidable. Furthermore, the novel offers no apparent solution regarding how to successfully extricate oneself from this situation, although Pauline implores the "novelists" to supply her with one: "C'est affaire à vous, romanciers, de chercher à les [situations fausses] résoudre." (LFM, p. 452)

The mythical characters of Part One — Bronja and Lilian — represent diametrically opposed, allegorical figures of good and evil; the stereotypes of Part Two — feminist, scholar and chaste, self-sacrificing spinster — are caricatures of "typical" individuals who have deviated from the norm. The archetypes, on the other hand, are the only characters to comprise a group of individuals who all behave in a similar, "typical" way. When examined separately, each archetype represents the profile of essentially any woman at that particular stage in life and belonging to the same social milieu as that of the characters of Les Faux-Monnayeurs. If we arrange each profile side by side and in chronological order, we could say that they
comprise the historical flowchart of one woman from marriage through motherhood (or vice versa) and on to old age. This interrelatedness generates a *jeu des miroirs* whereby each character receives as well as projects something of the others in her category. In Laura's case, we have a magnified image in which the multiple aspects of her particular stage are set forth in detail. The basic images that they all receive from or project onto each other are virtue, resignation, anguish and loss of identity. The pathos underlying each stage is what makes their similarity and "normality" suspect and objectionable.

Archetypes are exceptional not only in that they constitute the only "group" of women, but also because they are more numerous (myths - 2, stereotypes - 3, archetypes - 5) and widespread throughout the novel. Their predominance parallels the prevalence of this type of woman in the society the author is portraying and affirms the strength and influence of the archetypal role in both society and the novel. Unlike myths and stereotypes, which play relatively marginal roles and fade into the background once their task is complete, archetypes are omnipresent, persistently in the foreground, and exert an effect on the events and the structure of the novel from beginning to end. It is important to recognize that all of the archetypes are closely related to either Bernard, Édouard or Olivier, whereas the myths and stereotypes are either unrelated to them entirely, or come into contact with them for only a brief time. In
associating the archetypes with Bernard, Édouard and Olivier, it is also important to recognize that their images, which seem complex in comparison to those of the myths and stereotypes, are nevertheless one-dimensional and marginal when contrasted with the complexity and variability intrinsic to the personalities of the three major male characters.
NOTES

1 Ferguson, p. 4.

2 Édouard's analysis is self-deceptive since it appears that the decrystallization of his love for Laura occurs rapidly.

3 Édouard's scorn for Dauviers' "insufficiencies" is reiterated at the end of the novel when he states without reserve: "Les joies de la paternité, qui sait si, sans le séducteur, il aurait pu jamais les connaître (.)," LFM, p. 473.


5 Cancalon, p. 44.

CHAPTER IV

MISOGYNY, HOMOSEXUALITY AND FEMINISM

At this point it is necessary to pose some crucial questions regarding the depiction of the female characters in Les Faux-Monnayeurs. The first that arises is: Why are the women portrayed from such a limited and often pejorative perspective? The obvious response would be that Gide is simply offering a vision of the feminine sector of a particular level of society; after all, Albérique Profitendieu, Oscar Molinier, M. Vedel, M. de La Pérouse, Vincent and Passavant are no less limited and caricatured than the females. This being the case, Gide's critique of women becomes incidental, merely a subsection of his social commentary on the whole.

There are, however, several flagrant inequities in the general depiction of men and women which confirm that the deprecation of women goes far beyond a general commentary on society. Bernard, Olivier and Édouard, for example, have many opportunities to express their dialogue intérieur, experience the "plenitude of existence" and progress toward authenticity. Why, then, are none of the female characters granted these same privileges, particularly Sarah, Laura and Marguerite who demonstrate the will to resist or refuse the
traditional *situation fausse*? That they cannot project their own light nor adapt to varying degrees of salinity suggests that these allegories are meant to instruct the men exclusively.

A further inequity is that there is excessive exaggeration in the female caricatures. This is manifested on two levels: first, there is the prominent motif of the glorification versus the vilification and mockery of women, particularly in the categories of myth and stereotype; second, there is a relentless insistence on the pathos of female existence, as is exemplified by the archetypes whose fear, weakness, helplessness and resignation are poignant, rather than contemptible.¹

There are various possible reasons that the female characters -- myths, stereotypes and archetypes alike -- are confined to rigid, marginal roles in which they tend to be either vilified, ridiculed or pitied. The postulation and development of these answers will serve as a major focus in the conclusion of this study. As well, one final question will be addressed, alluding to Pauline's request of novelists to resolve the problematic *situations fausses*: Why is there no explicit solution developed within the text?

It is relevant to examine the issue of female depiction in light of the diametrically opposed attitudes of antipathy and sympathy evident in the portrayal of women in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*. Enmity toward women is a consequence of the author's express intention to assert the value of homosexuality. Empathy for women is an embodiment of the
author's sensitivity to their subordination in society and the self-denial and discontent which that entails. What transpires from this dualistic perspective is that homosexuality emerges as the dominant, overt theme while feminism -- sympathy for the female condition -- becomes an understated, covert theme to be discovered by an attentive and perceptive reader. The polarity of the homosexual and feminist statements is concomitant to Gide's ethical and esthetic tenets. He writes in his Journal: "Je vois toujours presque à la fois les deux faces de chaque idée et l'émotion toujours chez moi se polarise." Gide's portrayal of women is a product of his intent to balance two contradictory issues against each other and thereby achieve an ideological and thematic harmony.

The preeminence of the homosexual theme is expressed through the rapid and frequent crystallization of homosexual love affairs and by their juxtaposition with the invariable pattern of failure and vilification inherent in all of the heterosexual unions. Homosexuality is further asserted through a systematic denigration of women who, in marriage or extra-marital relationships, become debased objects of male sexual desire. A misogynic tone permeates both male attitudes and the actual portrayal of women throughout the novel. Finally, the notion of heterosexual love is refuted in that the only form of affection for female characters is either filial and fraternal love, or a fixation on feminine attributes such as piety, chastity and virtue. Male love for
the female is thereby elevated to devotion and reverence and precludes any association with physical desire.

In his *Journal*, Gide confirms his desire to sanction the homosexual union in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* when he pronounces that the novel was written for his homosexual lover, Marc Allégret. On June 9, 1928, Gide wrote:

*C'est pour lui (Marc), pour conquérir son attention, son estime, que j'écrivis *les Faux-Monnayeurs*, de même que, tous mes livres précédents, c'était sous l'influence de Em. ou dans le vain espoir de la convaincre.*

The author's ambition to write a novel that endorses homosexuality is recognized by Michael Tilby who writes: "There is no doubt . . . that Gide wanted to make male homosexual love seem a perfectly normal and acceptable fact of life." Tilby proceeds to explain that in order to imbue homosexual love with a sense of commonplace, Gide went so far as to contrast the "good" homosexual (Édouard) with the "bad" homosexual (Passavant), thereby affirming that "conventional morality" is relevant in the homosexual as well as the heterosexual world.

Preference for male homosexuals is evident in that the three major characters -- Bernard, Olivier and Édouard -- are homosexual. Not surprisingly, the homosexual personality is infinitely more complex and dynamic than that of the heterosexual characters, particularly those who are female. The narrator shows overt favoritism for Bernard and Olivier while reflecting on the state of affairs at the end of Part II:
Laura, Douviers, La Pérouse, Azais . . . que faire avec tous ces gens-la? Je ne les cherchais point; c'est en suivant Bernard et Olivier que je les ai trouvés sur ma route.

(LFM, p. 321)

Partiality for the male homosexual is taken to such a degree that the satanic Passavant, whose corruptive force is instrumental in Vincent and Olivier's downfall, is exempt from absolute disapproval. In the following passage, Édouard professes his admiration:

Ce n'est pas qu'il déteste Passavant. Il l'a rencontré parfois et l'a trouvé charmant. Passavant s'est du reste toujours montré pour lui des plus aimables.

(LFM p. 104)

Édouard's esteem for Passavant is partisan, when compared to the implacable criticism and denigration of female characters such as Sarah and Lilian, who are no more devious nor harmful to society than Passavant.

A privileged perspective is accorded to male homosexual liaisons in much the same manner. This is demonstrated through the swiftness and frequency of the crystallization of homosexual affairs, as well as their relative success. Olivier and Bernard's receptiveness to homosexual intimacy is evident. The scene in which Bernard spends the night with Olivier after departing from his family is characterized by Bernard and Olivier's innocence, frankness and tenderness. Édouard and Olivier's interest in each other wells up abruptly and intensifies throughout the novel, culminating on the evening of the Banquet des Argonautes; after the humiliating brawl with Bercail, a remorseful Olivier dramatically
throws himself into Édouard's arms and their love is consummated later that night. (LFM, pp. 429-30; 454)

The motif of jealousy abounds within the male homosexual relationships. It engenders their constant flourishing and fluctuation. Olivier is jealous upon discovering that Bernard and Édouard share a room in Saas-Fée; this precipitates his affair with Passavant. Édouard becomes jealous of Passavant who has usurped his role as Olivier's confidante and lover. Édouard is reunited with Olivier in the end, which provokes Passavant's jealousy and retaliation. All of this activity instills a sense of freshness and dynamism to the homosexual love affairs that is severely lacking in the heterosexual involvements.

The extent to which Gide strove to legitimize and ennoble homosexual love is epitomized by Pauline's approval of Édouard and Olivier's relationship. After visiting her recuperating son at Édouard's apartment, she says to Édouard: "Mon pauvre ami, n'attendez pas de moi des reproches. Je vous en ferais si vous ne l'aimiez pas . . ." (LFM, p. 448) Further on, when she senses Édouard's discomfort, she rephrases her sentiments with greater clarity:

<< -- En ne me scandalisant pas tout à l'heure, je crains de vous avoir scandalisé. Il est certaines libertés de pensée dont les hommes voudraient garder le monopole. Je ne puis pourtant pas feindre avec vous plus de réprobation que je n'en éprouve. (LFM, p. 449)

The implausibility of Pauline condoning a homosexual relationship between her half-brother and her own son is more than apparent. The reader's credulity is strained even
further when, for fear of disturbing Olivier's sleep, Pauline asks Édouard to kiss him on her behalf. (LFM, p. 448) One critic refers to this scenario as "one of the most obviously wish-fulfilling scenes in all of Gide's fiction."  

Favoritism for homosexuals and the frequent crystallization and success of their unions is brought into sharper focus by the deprecation of heterosexual characters, both female and male, as well as the utter disharmony or failure which marks each and every heterosexual relationship in the novel. After examining the roles of myths, stereotypes and archetypes in the first three chapters of this study, it is easy to recognize the degree to which virtually all female characters are impugned. Lilian and Sarah are corrupt and licentious. Rachel is rendered ridiculous and pathetic by her virtue and piety. Laura is weak, helpless and defenseless. Pauline and Marguerite are denounced and subordinated in their roles as wives and mothers. Mme. Vedel is "niaise" and deranged, while Mme. de La Pérouse is decrepit and insane.

The depiction of male heterosexual characters is also defamatory. In virtually every male heterosexual there resides some form of decrepitude. The younger men -- Vincent and Armand -- possess flaws that lead to both physical and moral decline. Vincent's vulnerability makes him an easy target for Lilian's manipulation and villainy. He ends up mentally deranged, roaming a deserted island. Armand becomes increasingly amoral and develops an abscess
inside his mouth. Significantly, this occurs after Armand has kissed the blood-stained cloth, the symbol of Bernard and Sarah's carnal sin that Armand was instrumental in effectuating.

The married men are equally marred, which is perhaps their recompense for a lifetime of heterosexual activity. Both Profitendieu and Molinier are in a fragile state of health: Profitendieu is plagued by liver problems, while Molinier runs short of breath with the mere physical exertion of walking down the street. The old, married men -- Vedel and de La Pérouse -- are afflicted with a certain degree of senility. The former drifts about with a faltering memory and complete lack of awareness. The latter suffers delusions of persecution and is frustrated by a series of unsuccessful attempts to commit suicide. Douviers is portrayed as being vacuous and impotent -- Edouard is dubious of his virility, asserting that Douviers would likely be incapable of experiencing the "joys of paternity" were it not for the illegitimacy of Laura's child. (LFM, p. 473)

Heterosexual relationships themselves are debased in a variety of ways. As was established in the previous discussion of archetypes, marriage is invariably destined for bitter discontent and hellish misery. All heterosexual liaisons apart from marriage are also ill-fated. Unlike the painfully slow process of decrystallization endemic to marriage, the disintegration of heterosexual love affairs is unceremoniously brusque. In contrast to the fresh,
passionate and adventurous nature of the homosexual love affairs, the heterosexual ones are vulgar and unprincipled, driven by pure libido or a utilitarian motive. Laura and Vincent's romance results in destitution and humiliation for Laura, who begs on hands and knees for Vincent not to abandon her. Vincent's cruel indifference is pointed out by the narrator, who glibly pronounces that Vincent "ne ressentissait pas pour elle un grand amour." (LFM, p. 65)

Licentiousness and depravity underscore the male-female relationships involving Lilian and Sarah. In her affair with Vincent, Lilian is portrayed as a femme fatale who artfully entices and captures her innocent prey, drawing him into a web of libidinous adventures completely devoid of emotional attachment. She admits in her letter to Passavant that since their physical attraction has begun to fade, they have adopted a new pastime -- the cultivation of a "sourde animosité" which eventually becomes "féroce." (LFM, p. 460)

Sarah and Bernard's relationship is similar in that it is reduced to a series of clandestine sexual encounters in her bedroom at night. Again, no mention is made of emotional attachment or tenderness. Their interest in each other is purely carnal. The narrator derides the physical nature of Bernard and Sarah's affair when he describes Bernard's behaviour the morning after their first night together:

Bernard n'a pas beaucoup dormi. Mais il a goûté, cette nuit, d'un oubli plus reposant que le sommeil; exaltation et anéantissement à la fois, de son être. Il glisse dans une nouvelle journée, étrange à lui-même, épars, léger, nouveau, calme et frémissant comme un dieu. Il a laissé Sarah dormant encore; s'est dégagé furtivement d'entre
Bernard's attitude epitomizes the hedonistic quest for pleasure presumed to be at the core of all extra-marital liaisons between men and women. The grandiose quality of the description of Bernard's physical and mental state makes a mockery of Sarah and Bernard's night together. The fact that he furtively disengages himself and sneaks away while she is still sleeping underlines the gratuitousness of the physical aspects of "love". The degradation of this scene is further emphasized by the narrator's mock horror. He marvels at Bernard's swift departure and his failure to give a last kiss, a last look, and to experience a "suprême étreinte amoureuse". Bernard's emotional indifference is encapsulated in the fact that he considers this seemingly momentous event to be a mere appendix to his life -- an episode of little consequence to his evolvement toward authenticity.

Involvement between man and woman is degraded to the point of becoming a bargaining device, particularly in the context of the male homosexual's "romantic" interests in women. Passavant, for example, attempts to capitalize on heterosexuality when he asks Lilian to marry him. The opportunistic aspects of his proposal are all too apparent.
Lilian recognizes this as she responds: "Est-ce pour couvrir votre vie que vous imaginez de me proposer cela?" (LFM, p. 83) Passavant employs the same tactic with Sarah at the Banquet des Argonautes. The narrator recounts:

Passavant, penché vers Sarah, avait passé son bras autour de sa taille et se montrait de plus en plus pressant. Averti des bruits désobligeants qui couraient sur ses rapports avec Olivier, il cherchait à donner le change. Et pour s'afficher plus encore, il s'était permis d'amener Sarah à s'asseoir sur ses genoux. (LFM, p. 425)

The notion of heterosexuality being used as a form of currency is evoked by the expression "donner le change". This is perhaps what constituted Édouard's line of reasoning when he fostered the semblance of heterosexuality in his relationship with Laura.

The recurrent theme of prostitution further debases heterosexuality -- physical love between man and woman is confirmed as a term of negotiation and a corruptive force in society. Prostitution plays an important role in the sordid enterprises of the Confrérie des Hommes forts. That the brothel is patronized by a group of lycéens is significant; purchasable sex (i.e. heterosexual sex in its most abject form) is seen as an insidious menace to society when its victims are schoolboys.

Homosexuality is further ennobled by its juxtaposition with prostitution. This is demonstrated in a scene that Olivier relates in his letter to Bernard. While Olivier and Passavant are strolling outside of the Olympia theatre during the intermission, Passavant consents to two prostitutes'
request to offer them a glass of beer. In doing so, he proceeds to order costly champagne for himself and Olivier. (LFM, p. 310) The image of the disconcerted prostitutes with their "aspect plutôt minable" alongside Olivier and Passavant who, elegantly attired, smugly drink champagne, creates a sharp contrast: the homosexual couple emerges as not merely acceptable but dignified and superior.

The focus on the depiction of the female characters reveals another prominent motif which evolves as the author asserts the value of homosexuality: the outright hatred and hostile refusal of women as objects of male sexual desire. Hatred of women takes many forms and goes far beyond the misogyny inherent in the debasement of heterosexual unions. The caricatured portrayals of women are in their own right expressions of misogynic sentiment; they aim to suppress and efface the female persona in the text. Apart from the images of female subservience and the theme of female self-effacement and self-sacrifice discussed in earlier chapters, the suppression and effacement of women are further achieved through the use of such devices as cameo appearances and the exclusive male perspective. The erasure of feminine existence escalates to the point of banishment and, in extreme cases, death. Hatred of women is further conveyed through the sexist comments and misogynistic attitudes voiced by the male characters themselves. In contrast to the outright expression of misogyny, contempt for women is communicated by males on a subliminal level in that the
dissolution of male-female relationships is invariably instigated and carried through by the male. In the final analysis, virtually every female character becomes the object of male disapproval, contempt or refusal, except, significantly, the saintly, unsexed women such as Bronja and Rachel.

In reference to Katherine Rogers' book, *The Troublesome Helpmate*, an exploration of the long-standing tradition of literary misogyny, Cheri Register points out that female stereotypes are "fictional embodiments of misogynistic sentiment." We have seen that the stark, bleak images of women in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* serve to dehumanize and thus suppress the female persona — they constitute a subliminal expression of misogyny. Gide's caricatures, however, are not incidental: he is not merely speaking "in terms of male experience", nor inadvertently following an "established literary convention" of unconscious misogyny. His "dehumanized" portraits appear to be consciously contrived to serve the purpose of his homosexual statement.

Fleeting appearances made by secondary and marginal characters such as Cécile Profitendieu, and Sarah's friend, Miss Aberdeen, are dispersed throughout the text. Several anonymous women emerge such as M. de La Pérouse and Édouard's femmes de ménage and "Dhurmer's girl", who provides Olivier with his first, and, as he emphatically states, his last heterosexual encounter. There is also the affected Madame des Brousses who upsets the Banquet des Argonautes with her
"voix stridente" and melodramatic "crise de nerfs". (LPN, pp. 416; 428) The frequent materialization of these ephemeral female presences leaves the impression that these women are "rôdeuses" who circulate about the periphery of the central events of the novel. Their lack of integration can be seen as indicative of the suppression of the female entity in the novel. This becomes more apparent when we contrast them with minor male characters such as Dhurmer, Bercail, Caloub, Gontran, Adamanti and Ghéridanisol; despite the brevity of their appearances, they are seen as substantial and integral elements of the plot.

The women are presented chiefly through Édouard's journal, Bernard and Olivier's letters, conversations between male characters (e.g. Bernard-Olivier, Édouard-Molinier, Olivier-Armand, Bernard-Édouard) and narratorial report and commentary. If the female voice is heard at all, it is in dialogues with men. The male involved initiates and manipulates the conversation and the female's contribution is a response rather than a spontaneous expression of her opinions: Profitendieu always manages to direct Marguerite's thoughts toward piety and virtue; Laura and Sophroniska talk with Édouard about literature in the context of his novel; when conversing with Pauline, Édouard sways the focus toward Georges or Olivier; Bernard uses Laura as a sounding board in preparation for his oral exams.

The erasure of women finds its ultimate expression in the form of banishment and murder. Several major female
characters are cast out of the inner circle into foreign or hostile environments. Sophroniska returns to Poland. Sarah and Laura are exiled to England (see Masson's discussion of the malefic aspects of anglo-saxon culture, p.8). Marguerite simply leaves Profitendieu -- her location is not indicated, she is relegated to the unknown. Mme. de La Pérouse is coerced into the inhospitable milieu of the rest home. The author's apparent desire to purge the novel of feminine existence becomes undeniable after a close examination of this cryptic passage:

Boris se souvint d'un roman qu'il avait lu naguère, où des bandits, sur le point de tuer une femme, l'invitaient à faire ses prières, afin de la convaincre qu'elle devait s'apprêter à mourir. (LFM, p. 542)

This violent scenario resembles the fate of Lady Griffith who is dispatched first to the open sea, then to the African wildlands where she encounters danger and death at the hands of Vincent.

As opposed to the subtle expression of misogyny intrinsic in women's effacement, banishment and death, contempt for women also becomes explicit. At some point, virtually every male character verbalizes distaste or scorn for either one woman or the entire female gender.

Édouard, Bernard and Olivier practise their misogyny from the perspective of the male homosexual; their contempt is rooted in their aversion for women as objects of sexual desire. When speaking of Miss Aberdeen (who exemplifies
feminine sensuality, flirtatiousness, promiscuity) Edouard refers to her diminutively as "l'Anglaise" and "la petite Anglaise". (LFM, pp. 162; 164) His thoughts about Sophroniska invoke this generalization: "Comme toutes les femmes, elle est pleine de contradictions." (LFM, pp. 304-5) In the same vein, he states: ". . . on rencontre, et particulièrement parmi les femmes, bien des inconsciences affectées . . . " (LFM, pp. 473-4)

Bernard's hatred is more focused: it is aimed solely at Sarah and is connected to the shame and remorse he feels regarding their past sexual relations. After being confronted by Rachel, he experiences this reaction:

Il ne répondit rien, courba la tête et, par grande pitié pour Rachel, soudain prit Sarah en haine et le plaisir qu'il goûtais avec elle en horreur. (LFM, p. 490)

It is significant that Rachel, who is virtue personified, is the catalyst of Bernard's feeling of hatred for Sarah. Her chastity and reserve emphasize Sarah's sensuality and abandon, making her appear base and degenerate; this is used to justify Bernard's repudiation.

Of the three major characters, Olivier's aversion for women is the most bitter and complete. His disgust with women as objects of sexual desire is made clear at the onset of the novel and remains consistent throughout. While recounting his first sexual experience with a woman, he pronounces to Bernard:
— Eh bien! mon vieux, c'est dégoûtant. C'est horrible . . . Après, j'avais envie de cracher, de vomir, de m'arracher la peau, de me tuer . . . .
— Ou de la tuer, elle . . .
[C'est] une gonzesse que Dhurmer connaît bien . . . C'est surtout sa conversation qui m'écoeurait. Elle n'arrêtait pas de parler. Et ce qu'elle est bête! . . . J'aurais voulu la bâillonner, l'étrangler . . .
. . . Si c'est ça l'amour, j'en ai soupué pour longtemps.

(LFM, pp. 52-53)

The above passage epitomizes radical misogyny from a homosexual perspective. Olivier's tirade synthesizes and confers onto one woman (who is not even named) the various forms of contempt we have examined: aversion, disgust, horror and a will to inflict physical violence, even death.

From the perspective of the male heterosexual, misogyny is less vehement. It takes the form of disparaging apppellations, sexist comments and chauvinistic attitudes. At one point, Armand refers to Sarah as "une putaine"; further on, he refers to Laura as "la garce" - this he reiterates three times. (LFM, pp. 165; 351)

Molinier's sexism and chauvinistic attitude are so exaggerated that they become parodic. His comments about Pauline are critical and demeaning. He disapproves of her performance as a mother, contending that she interferes in their children's lives. He tells Édouard that "Pauline voudrait rester penchée sur eux." He then generalizes -- "Elle est comme toutes les mères." (LFM, p. 327) His dissatisfaction with Pauline as a wife is also apparent. He confides to Édouard:
Une femme vertueuse, mon cher, prend avantage de tout. Que l'homme courbe un instant le dos, elle lui saute sur les épaules. Ah! mon ami, les pauvres maris sont parfois bien à plaindre. Quand nous sommes jeunes, nous souhaitons de chastes épouses, sans savoir tout ce que nous coûtera leur vertu.

(MFM, pp. 328-9)

Molinier's antipathy is deep-rooted: it stems from his own feelings of culpability. His imagery of the wife who jumps on her husband's back whenever he turns away signifies that he perceives his own wife as predatory in her search to find fault and punish. In light of his promiscuity, Pauline's impeccable virtue makes Molinier resentful and retaliatory. His sense of persecution and plea for pity are chauvinistic and ironically make him an object of the reader's scorn.

The dissolution and abasement of heterosexual liaisons become an expression of misogynistic sentiment in that denial and rupture are always initiated and carried out by the male. All the women are abandoned by their partners either physically or emotionally. Sarah is briefly romanced in a physical sense, then acrimoniously rejected by Bernard. Pauline is abandoned by her husband, who takes a mistress. Marguerite is also abandoned emotionally by Profitendieu in retribution for her transgressions. Mme. Vedel faces male rejection in the form of her husband's indifference to her presence. Mme. de La Pérouse is rejected, reviled and incarcerated.

Laura epitomizes the plight of the rejected and abandoned woman. This is illustrated in the four different
experiences that constitute her romantic involvements with men. Bernard perceptively points out:

Je crois que le secret de votre tristesse (car vous êtes triste, Laura) c'est que la vie vous a divisée; l'amour n'a voulu de vous qu'incomplète; vous répartissez sur plusieurs ce que vous auriez voulu donner à un seul.

(LFM, p. 293)

Édouard's love was never fully conferred upon Laura, except on a spiritual level, and she is eventually jilted and replaced by Olivier. She is rejected physically by Bernard, who idolizes her to the point of being appalled by the notion of a physical union with her. Vincent abandons her to a life of abject poverty. Being refused true love -- emotionally and physically -- by each of the three men with whom she was intellectually compatible and most likely to have been content, she is relegated to a relationship with the insipid and uninspiring Douviers. Here again she is denied a full love relationship when it is suggested that Douviers is impotent and incapable of paternity.

There are only two forms of love accorded to women in Les Faux-Monnayeurs. The first is love for mother and for female siblings. The second relates to the reverence and devotion that several male characters profess for what one critic refers to as the "sainte femme vertueuse".9

Bernard, Olivier, Édouard and Armand emerge as the male proponents of this non-sexual acceptance of women. Bernard's
deference to his mother is evident when he completely exonerates her from having any culpability in his illegitimacy. Ironically, all of his anger and rancor are aimed at his step-father. In his spiteful letter he states: "Je préfère partir sans revoir ma mère, parce que je crairais, en lui faisant mes adieux définitifs, de m'attendrir ..." (LFM, p. 37) Olivier, whose misogyny is so radical in other instances, experiences similar feelings of tenderness toward his mother. During a discussion with Passavant, who disparagingly makes reference to Olivier's need to obtain permission from his mother for their trip, Olivier reacts: "Il aimait tendrement sa mère et le ton persifleur que Robert avait pris en parlant d'elle lui avait déplu." (LFM, p. 204) Examples of this sort of reverential, non-sexual love are echoed in the brotherly affection that Édouard and Armand profess for Pauline and Rachel respectively.

The notion of love for women without erotic obligation is shown again in the relationship that Édouard and Laura experienced prior to the immediate action of the novel. In his journal, Édouard records:

Je repensai soudain à mon éveil religieux et à mes premières ferveurs; à Laura et à cette école du dimanche où nous nous retrouvions, moniteurs tous deux, pleins de zèle et discernant mal, dans cette ardeur qui consumait en nous tout l'impur, ce qui appartenait à l'autre et ce qui revenait à Dieu.

(LFM, p. 149)

Their rapport was one in which ardor found expression in a common religious fervor. This conveniently suppressed, for
Edouard, any necessity for erotic passion and permitted him to carry on the semblance of a romance. However, as soon as she arrived at a marriageable age and began to expect more than their intense, but platonic relationship, Edouard's affection for her began to dissipate; he eventually terminates the affair, advising her to marry Douviers.

Thomas Cordle examines the issue of Laura and Edouard's unusual love affair by comparing it to Gide's own rapport with his mother, and later on with his wife. From a Freudian perspective, he claims:

Edouard is the major symbol of the Gidian Eros. We see him, as an adult male, engaged in both heterosexual and homosexual relations. His love affair with Laura illustrates with exemplary clarity Gide's ambivalent ties with womanhood. In the first, or idyllic, phase of their love Laura is an adolescent girl, twelve years younger than Edouard. She is a "Béatrice," a guiding influence in Edouard's life and work ... This image of pure love between a man and a girl child is a classic expression of the Oedipus complex. Laura is the ideal image of what Gide's mother had been for him and of what he had at first recaptured in his marriage to Madeleine Rondeaux.

Cordle goes on to explain that Laura's eventual consent to marry Douviers constitutes for Edouard the "first degradation of the ideal". After returning from Pau, pregnant and cast aside by Vincent, she becomes to Edouard "sullied and abject". Now that her pious and once chaste character has been blemished, Edouard can resume a platonic relationship with her without the threat of any sexual obligation. This is what allows him to express compassion for her predicament and faithfully assist her throughout the remainder of the novel.
Bernard's infatuation with Laura is similar to that of Édouard prior to Laura's degeneration. While Édouard's sexual obligations are relieved by Laura's youth, chastity and their mutual religious fervor, Bernard's are circumvented by the societal norm expected of them as a young man (i.e. adolescent) and an "older woman". Laura is pregnant, married and required to adopt the veneer of respectability. When she concedes to accept from Bernard only his "dévotion" and states that his other "exigences" will have to be satisfied elsewhere, he is appalled and responds: "Serait-il vrai? Vous allez me dégoûter par avance et de moi-même et de la vie." (LFM, p. 293) Further on, in a discussion with Olivier, he makes explicit the nature of his love for Laura. He claims that, since knowing her, "je n'ai plus de désirs du tout" and explains:

Mais c'est de la vénération que j'ai pour elle, et, près d'elle, toute pensée charnelle me semble impie. Je crois que je me méprenais sur moi-même et que ma nature est très chaste. Grâce à Laura, mes instincts se sont sublimés. (LFM, p. 388)

Bernard's disgust with the notion of a physical involvement with Laura points indisputably to the conclusion that he rejects women in their capacity as objects of sexual desire. As was the case with Édouard, this rejection of sexual involvement allows his platonic affections to flourish. In considering Bernard's subsequent pledge to chastity, it is beneficial to acknowledge Strauss' observation that "[L]e
lecteur de Corydon sait que pour Gide la chasteté vaut mieux que la pédérastie . . . " 13 This perhaps explains why Bernard, the hero and most distinguished homosexual character in the novel, renounces carnal thoughts altogether; upon repudiating the purely physical aspects of love with Sarah, he does not pursue a homosexual liaison, but opts for celibacy.

Bronja represents the prototype of the female worthy of male approval and veneration. Bernard sees her as "la plus jolie créature que j'aie vue de ma vie." (LFM, p. 249) Édouard states that "[L]a petite Bronja est exquise" and admires her physical beauty. (LFM, pp. 253-4) In her character, we see the synthesis of the three basic requirements for male acceptance: she is sisterly, motherly and inviolable. She is Boris' unadulterated idol and is elevated to the position of feminine ideal. Her death secures her chastity (cf. the Russian meaning of her name — "armour", "reserved place"). The male reverence and adoration that is conferred upon her (and upon Laura, in a lesser way) constitute a paradox in the context of the male homosexual's denial of women. He can love her, but deplore womankind, because she does not threaten or inhibit the expression of male homosexuality. She is therefore spared ridicule, repudiation and rejection.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, there is much evidence to support the notion that the female portrayals in Les Faux-Monnayeurs embody the author's acceptance of women
in the context of his concern for the individual in society. Gide states in the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*: "C'est la pensée, l'émotion d'autrui qui m'habite; mon coeur ne bat que par sympathie." (p. 49) This sentiment resonates in Édouard's declaration: "Mon coeur ne bat que par sympathie; je ne vis que par autrui." (LFM, p. 110) At this point, it is necessary to recall one of the principal elements of Gide's criticism of society: the exploration of the constraints imposed by family and society on the individual's freedom and self-expression (i.e. the "authentic" self). These constraints are shown to be particularly binding for the female characters who appear completely incapable of reconciling their innate drive to be *disponible* and achieve *authenticité* and the powerful subordination and subservience inflicted on them by family and society. In this light, the author's easily recognized models of womanhood address the issue of feminism in that they confront and challenge what appears to be the female predicament.

Proof of the author's sensitivity toward feminist issues abounds in his *Journal* and the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*. To perceive this sensitivity in the novel itself, it is necessary to closely examine the sub-text. The sexism and misogyny inherent in the narrator's comments and in the male characters' attitudes serve to mask the author's voice, a voice that implicitly censures the subordination inflicted on women by the traditions of family and society. The motifs of female rebellion, and voyage are subliminal indications that
the female gender is "en formation" -- that it is overcoming its disharmony and progressing toward emancipation. By examining the author's literary agenda, we gain insight into why the feminist message is so obscured, so deeply imbedded in the text: Gide's aversion to didacticism and his desire to involve the reader prohibit explicit analysis and overt statement. The somber portrayals of women that emerge on the surface are meant to draw the reader into the text, then propel him beyond it where he can interpret, judge and react in accordance with his own needs. This is what Gide did himself in writing L' École des Femmes (1929), which stands as a response to the feminist questions raised in Les Faux-Monnayeurs (1925) and one of many possible solutions to the problems posed by traditional female existence.

In his Journal, Gide expresses alarm, bitterness and sympathy for the predominance of female resignation and servitude in the everyday world. The following entry regarding his "logeuse" is insightful and pertinent:

Ma logeuse -- femme de 36 ans environ -- travaille de 8 heures du matin à minuit . . . .
On n'imagine pas créature plus douce, plus obligeante, plus patiente, plus sereinement résignée. <<Il le faut bien.>> C'est tout ce qu'elle trouve à dire quand elle parle de sa servitude.14

Rachel is easily recognized in this description. As well, this recollection is perhaps the origin of the recurrent image of the femme de ménage that is visible in the novel.

Liberation from subordination and servitude for women is explored in the Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs. The scenario
for a "roman des deux soeurs" constitutes the first motif that Gide discusses in preparation for writing Les Faux-Monnaveurs. One of his tentative plans was to write a novel about two sisters that would involve a wife's discovery of her husband's mediocrity and her own delusions of marital harmony. In the end she would gather the courage to leave him, facing harsh judgment and rejection from her family and acquaintances. (JdFM, p. 6) Although this outline is not incorporated verbatim into the novel, it confirms that the author was concerned with the stifling and debilitating effects of the traditional marriage and preoccupied by the notion of women's emancipation prior to the writing of the novel.

Sarah's thoughts about her role as a woman and her contempt for the institution of marriage furnish the only visible example of a feminist statement in the text. The narrator explains:

Elle ne voyait point en quoi celui qu'elle pourrait épouser lui serait supérieur. N'avait-elle point passé des examens, tout comme un homme? N'avait-elle point, et sur n'importe quel sujet, ses opinions à elle, ses idées? Sur l'égalité des sexes, en particulier; et même, il lui semblait que, dans la conduite de la vie et, partant, des affaires, de la politique même au besoin, la femme fait souvent preuve de plus de bon sens que bien des hommes . . . (author's suspension points)

(LFM, p. 415)

Although there is a distinct tone of scorn and irony on the part of the narrator and Sarah's excessiveness is depicted as objectionable, the inherent feminist message is both
deliberate and unrefuted. In reference to the female characters in general, Strauss states: "Il est évident que Gide leur accorde sa sympathie, qu'il comprend leur besoin de liberté."¹⁵

The use of hidden themes and motifs was important to Gide. In a letter to André Rouveyre, he once wrote:

C'est (aussi) que j'ai plus grand souci de cacher ma pensée que de la dire, et qu'il me paraît plus séant de la laisser découvrir par qui la cherche vraiment, que de l'exposer.¹⁶

This esthetic tenet holds true in Les Faux-Monnayeurs with respect to the theme of women's subordination and their compulsion to be equal and free (i.e. disponible). Although Sarah's interior monologue makes direct reference to this theme, it is much more abundantly explored and developed implicitly, or sub-textually. By piecing together the different motifs the reader is able to reconstruct the feminist message in its breadth and complexity.

One technique that the author employs to disguise the feminist message is the use of irony in the narratorial intrusions. A prominent example of this can be found in the narration of Sarah's thoughts in the penultimate passage quoted above. Use of the interrogative serves to trivialize Sarah's philosophy. The narrator derides her naïveté. The suspension points at the end of the passage, however, are signals of a double entendre. They indicate that the issues raised are worthy of some serious consideration. In refusing to clarify this stand, the author compels the reader to make judgment.
The narrator's smug affirmation that Marguerite will never leave Profitendieu provides another example of how irony is used to disclose the feminist issues of female subordination and dependency. That Marguerite eventually overcomes her fear and actually does leave Profitendieu contradicts the narrator's claim. This disparity between the narration and the actual turn of events indicates that the narrator's omniscience and apparent objectivity are to be mistrusted. His assertions are biased and often false. One critic refers to this form of irony as the effect of the "deluded narrator" and explains that the narrator's deceptive statements call upon the reader's alertness and attentiveness. It is the reader's role to detect the narratorial irony and decipher the message that it conceals.

The criticism of women's status in society is inherent in the author's illustration of how the social order inflicts subordination on women. Cordle argues that the father/husband in Gidian fiction is generally associated with the social order. In Les Faux-Monnayeurs father and husbands often hold the titles of magistrates and clergymen (e.g. Molinier, Profitendieu, and Vedel). They are upholders of law and tradition. Their sexist attitudes make the ambiguous feminist message more distinct. The manner in which they view and treat their wives reflects the oppressive, chauvinistic methods employed by the male to elicit female servitude and submission.
Although neither a husband nor a father, Édouard also serves as an example of the role men play in the subjugation of women. The attitudes he expresses attest to the notion that men condone and often encourage women's adherence to their traditional, oppressed role in society. It is important to recall Édouard's relief upon seeing Laura resign herself to an unfulfilling marriage with Douviers and his admiration of Rachel's virtue and subservience. When Pauline laments that a woman is considered to be the most "raisonnable" and "honnête" when she is the most resigned, Édouard agrees, pondering that "Cette réflexion m'irrita en raison de sa justesse même." (LFM, p.451) The male characters' feelings of indifference and superiority suggest that men present a hostile environment for female growth, freedom and authenticity. It becomes evident that the author disapproves of the prevalent male attitudes and sees that the male gender, particularly fathers and husbands, constitutes a formidable obstacle to women's emancipation.

There are several suggestions of female rebellion against a social order that privileges the male. Sarah's sentiments and actions incorporate the position of feminine revolt. Lilian's feminist stand offers an understated parallel to that of Sarah. Many of her statements support the notion that she is one of the few female advocates of women's emancipation. This is perhaps her one redeeming quality.

In her dialogue with Vincent, Lilian challenges the common male conception that women are intellectually
inferior. She states: "On croit toujours que les femmes ne savent pas réfléchir, mais tu verras que cela dépend desquelles..." (LFM, p.96) Her reproval of the feminine condition is incisive in her discussion of the sinking of the Bourgogne. Lilian asserts that when people are in the midst of peril, the only thing that disgusts her more than those who think only of themselves are "les femmes qui poussent des cris." (LFM, p.99) She concludes by relating the incident of how she saved a child whose mother was rendered helpless and unable to save even herself. Lilian states: "Elle était d'abord avec sa mère; mais celle-ce ne savait pas bien nager; et puis elle était gênée, comme toujours dans ces cas-là, par sa jupe." (LFM, p.99) Clothing represents one's exterior, the image one projects and is, to a certain degree, governed by society's dictates. That the woman in question is hampered by her skirt suggests that the outward appearance she is obliged to assume is limiting and debilitating. It hinders her ability to help herself in the face of difficulty. Lilian's comments convey her impatience with women and their ineffectual cries of despair. In addition, they perhaps denote her reproval of their apathy, or their reluctance to help themselves by confronting their subordination and apparent impotence.

Although Lilian personifies evil and temptation on a symbolic level, she also embodies feminine independence, ability and strength. Her adherence to the principles of freedom, even if they do propel her toward debauchery,
demonstrates that she challenges female subjection in an active way. In light of this, her death perhaps betokens her martyrdom in that it is a recompense for her refusal to resign herself to a conventional role.

Each female character suffers her plight alone. This lack of unity becomes ironic in light of the prominent theme of sisterhood in the novel -- e.g. the author's plans for a "roman des deux soeurs", the three Vedel sisters: Sarah, Rachel and Laura. There is in fact an utter lack of sisterly attitudes among the three sisters. As for the female characters in general, woman to woman discourse is almost non-existent and there are virtually no instances of positive, female friendships. When woman to women dialogue does arise, it is hostile. Rachel and Sarah's altercation regarding the latter's affair with Bernard is the sole example of communication between two women in the entire novel; even this case is limited as an example since their exchange consists of only two lines. (LFM, pp. 496-7) The only female friendship alluded to is that which is shared by Sarah and Miss Aberdeen. Rather than being nurturing and edifying, however, their friendship becomes sordid and destructive. In reference to Miss Aberdeen's accommodation at the pension, Armand declares: "... elle partage la chambre avec Sarah. On leur a mis deux lits pour la forme; mais c'était assez inutile..." (LFM, p.157) Furthermore, Miss Aberdeen is a catalyst in Sarah's rebellion and subsequent descent into licentiousness. As friends they become cohorts in depravity.
The disunity among the female characters creates an impression of disharmony and chaos with respect to the idea of evolvement toward equality and freedom. This may be a sign that the female sex is, like Bernard, "en formation". In reflecting on the difficulties posed by charaterization in his novel, Édouard postulates: "Rien n'est plus difficile à observer que les êtres en formation. Il faudrait pouvoir ne les regarder que de biais, de profil." (LFM, pp. 133-4). The notion that it is difficult to observe a being who is "en formation" could also be applied to the way in which women appear as a collective group in the novel.

The theme of voyage presents a potential for evolvement toward emancipation for women in general and toward freedom and authenticity for the individual. The progression toward authenticity for Bernard is accompanied by his actual voyages and excursions. His trip to Saas-Fée, away from family and French society, his day trips and hikes in the mountains, give him a new perspective and allow him to arrive at conclusions about his own life. After a radical departure, he returns "authentic" and prepared to incorporate his own values into those of conventional society.

Laura, Sarah and Marguerite are also actual voyagers in the novel. The fact that Sarah and Laura go off to England, a country that has come to symbolize libertinage, is suggestive of freedom and potential. It is conceivable that Laura, removed from the influence of her family and the society by which she has been conditioned, could make further
discoveries about herself and progress toward authenticity, as did Bernard on his voyage to Saas-Fée. Similarly, it is possible that Sarah will temper her impassioned rebelliousness after spending an interval of time away from the stifling familial and social milieu she so despises. Her fervent revolt, after all, resembles closely that of Bernard at the beginning of the novel. Marguerite's departure also connotes travel, although her destination is unknown from the reader's perspective. Voyage and displacement, regardless of the apparent consequences, are essentially liberating acts. Furthermore, the narrator's avowed indifference to the affairs of characters who no longer cross paths with Bernard and Olivier is a clear signal that their situations are not inalterable.

To account for the covert nature of the feminist message, it is imperative to examine the author's esthetic principles. Two basic tenets are operant in the camouflage of the theme of women's emancipation and many other motifs that emerge in the novel. The first is Gide's wish to avoid writing a *roman à thèse*, the second his determination to solicit the participation of the reader.

The author's wish to avoid didacticism is evident not only in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* but also in several of his other works. Georges' reading of the excerpt from Édouard's novel illustrates Gide's distaste for the thesis novel and his sense of its inefficacy as a method of instruction. Rather than finding the passage edifying, Georges makes a mockery of
it -- he points out that the characters' names are ridiculous and challenges Édouard to explain how its content is applicable to him. After reading the passage, Georges proceeds to embroil himself even further in the illicit activities of the *Confrérie des Hommes forts* by playing an instrumental role in the planning and execution of Boris' "suicide" (i.e. murder). Furthermore, Édouard concedes in his journal that the passage is a literary failure and must be rewritten. (LFM, pp. 508-13)

In his *Journal*, Gide states: "J'ai soigneusement écarté de mes *Faux-Monnayeurs* tout ce qu'un autre aurait aussi bien que moi pu écrire, me contentant d'indications qui permissent d'imaginer tout ce que je n'étalais pas." In *Caractères*, the essence of this statement is reiterated:

> Ce n'est pas tant ce qu'on y dit qui fait la valeur d'un livre, que tout ce que l'on n'y peut pas dire; tout ce que l'on voudrait y dire, qui l'alimente sourdement.20

The above passages help to clarify why the feminist theme in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, like the homosexual one, is never expressly stated or analyzed. Like Mme. Vedel, who obliges the listener to speculate on the full meaning of her rambling, incoherent discourse -- e.g. "Elle fait de l'infini avec l'imprécis et l'inachevé." (LFM, pp. 343-4) -- the author leaves the message open to multiple interpretations by the reader.

If the author perceives that his function as an artist is to "stimulate creative thought, to pose problems and not to present ready-made solutions," then the reader's colla-
In the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*, Gide elucidates his position on the reader's role in his novel:

> Ce n'est point tant en apportant la solution de certains problèmes, que je puis rendre un réel service au lecteur; mais bien en le forçant à réfléchir lui-même sur ces problèmes dont je n'admets guère qu'il puisse y avoir d'autre solution que particulière et personnelle.

*(JdFM, p. 15)*

The above statement confirms the importance Gide placed on the attentive reader and his confidence in that reader to infer meaning and draw his own conclusions. Tilby sees the "active role which must be sustained by an alert and critical reader" as a basic element of Gide's uniqueness and modernism. He compares Gide's demands on the reader to those of the *nouveaux romanciers*, claiming that *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* constitutes "a more positive encouragement to submit the implications of a fictional text to our own critical scrutiny than almost any French novelist before Alain Robbe-Grillet and the other *nouveaux romanciers* of the post-war period."
NOTES

1 This does not mean that the women are not looked upon with contempt by certain male characters or the narrator.


5 Tilby, p. 71.

6 Cordle, p. 129.


8 Register, p. 4.


10 It is interesting to compare the inherent similarities in Jérôme and Aissa's relationship in La Porte Étroite.

11 Cordle, p. 127; cf. Strauss, p. 18; he follows a somewhat contradictory line of reasoning, adopting the premise that Laura is a "développement idéalisé de ce que Madeleine ... avait de meilleur."

12 Cordle, pp. 127-8.

13 Strauss, p. 15.


15 Strauss, p. 15.

16 Martin, A.G. par lui-même, p. 156.

18 Davies, pp. 31-2.

19 Cordle, p. 130.


CONCLUSION

Gide's demands on the female reader require her to move beyond the words and images that appear on the printed page. As the reader goes beyond the apparent misogyny of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* to construct the feminist message embedded in the portrayals of women, so does the author. The feminist theme implicit in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* becomes, at a much later date, explicit in *L'Ecole des Femmes*. It is in the latter fictional work that the author offers a possible solution to the female predicament in bourgeois society. The female's impulse to resist subordination escalates to effective rebellion and progress toward emancipation and the attainment of authenticity.

Multiple parallels exist between *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* and *L'Ecole des Femmes* in the context of women's emancipation and individual freedom. Cordle confirms that the basic idea for *L'Ecole des Femmes* dates back to Gide's planning of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*.¹ As discussed previously, the scenario for the *roman des deux soeurs*, in which one sister discovers her husband's mediocrity and leaves him, is the first theme the author contemplates in the *Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs*. Although the idea of the two sisters is abandoned, this same scenario sets the foundation for *L'Ecole des Femmes*. The two
works share the motifs of the dissolution of marriage and the youth's insubordination to family, church and society. Many of the characters in the latter work are, unmistakably, more fully developed replicas of characters which appear in *Les-Faux-Monnayeurs*.

In Éveline, narrator of the first part of the novel, we see reflections of Marguerite, Pauline and Laura. All four women are married to mediocre men and suffer silently and alone in their oppression, and self-sacrifice. To a lesser degree, they share in their frustrated attempts to rebel. Éveline takes her *fuite* one step further than Marguerite, however, not only by extricating herself from a stifling and debilitating marriage, but also by directing the energy of her freedom toward an endeavor which is beneficial to society; she nurses the wounded at a war camp hospital.

Robert, Éveline's husband, incorporates elements of both Profitendieu and Molinier. He is domineering like the former and bitterly chauvinistic like the latter. Cordle describes Robert as a "petty tyrant" driven by obedience to church and state and frustrated and angered by his wife's insubordination and failure to conform to her role as woman.  

Geneviève, their daughter and the central character of the last part, represents the potential that resides in Lilian and Sarah. She is a female Bernard in that her quest for freedom is successful; it leads her toward a positive, self-defining individualism that is compatible with society's values and standards.
In his journal entries regarding *L'École des Femmes*, Gide states explicitly his interest in feminist issues. He announces that in this work, "j'aborderais de front toute la question du féminisme." This aim to openly confront the question of feminism in *L'École des Femmes* contrasts sharply with his exploration of the theme in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*; in this earlier work he addresses the issue of feminism "de biais", as though it were still "en formation".

In reference to Geneviève, Gide speaks of "la sympathie qui me pousse à l'écrire." At a later date, he confesses that although he has difficulty speaking in the feminine voice, his determination to "prêter la parole à la génération nouvelle" impels him to surmount this obstacle. Upon completing the work, he succeeds in exhausting and purging himself of a "quantité de ratiocinations qui m'ont élu pour domicile et que je me suis trouvé comme contraint d'assumer." This last pronouncement confirms that Gide felt not merely an inclination but an urgent need to address and explore the issue of feminism in his fiction.

As readers of *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*, we witness the problems posed by traditional female existence. We observe that the static, limited roles of the female characters reflect the constraints imposed on them by their social milieu. For these females, the avenues leading to a full existence and expression of the authentic self seem closed. Despite their obvious subjection, however, emancipation remains only an implied potential within the novel. The
female characters remain either weak, passive and resigned or incapable of liberating themselves in a positive, constructive manner. The effect of these caricatures is to disturb and antagonize the female reader who is sensitive to their plight. They evoke reflection, sympathy, criticism and, perhaps, an urgent need to find an individual solution.

Gide's exposure of the problematic situations faced by women in *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* foreshadows his later espousal of the feminist cause. His negative, misogynistic depiction of women, although ambivalently entwined with a defense of male homosexuality, emerges as a feminist statement. The connection between homosexuality and feminism suggests that authenticity for any subordinated social group is dependent on the emancipation of others who are also confined to lives based on counterfeit values.
NOTES

1 Tilby, p. 96.

2 Cordle, p. 139.

3 Cordle, p. 145.


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