

## **Verbundkatalog Kalliope**

### **André Gide and the Moral Crisis of Europe.**

**Mann, Klaus**

---

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Bei zahlreichen Dokumenten auf monacensia-digital.de sind die Urheberrechte bereits abgelaufen. Sie sind gemeinfrei und dürfen ohne weitere Rücksprache mit der Monacensia weiterverwendet werden. Bei den Dokumenten, bei denen noch Urheberrechte bestehen, müssen für eine Weiterverwendung stets die Rechteinhaber\*innen angefragt werden sowie eine Publikationsgenehmigung der Monacensia eingeholt werden. Das Zitatrecht bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Zur Erteilung einer Publikationserlaubnis wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus  
Literaturarchiv  
Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München  
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

#### **Terms of use**

The copyrights for numerous documents on monacensia-digital.de have already expired. They are in the public domain and may be reused without further consultation with Monacensia. In the case of documents for which copyrights still exist, the copyright holders must always be contacted for further use and publication permission must be obtained from the Monacensia. The right to quote under copyright law remains unaffected by this. To obtain permission for publication, please contact:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus:  
Literaturarchiv  
Address: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München  
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

ANDRÉ GIDE  
and the Moral Crisis of Europe.

BY  
KLAUS MANN.

CHAPTERS:

- 1.) Portrait
- 2.) The Heir
- 3.) The Prodigal Son
- 4.) The Strait Gate
- 5.) Proteus and Protestant
- 6.) The Fugue
- 7.) Freedom and Discipline
- 8.) The Reality
- 9.) The Debacle
- 10.) The Quest.

( Each chapter approximately 20 pages.)

Ad 1.) PORTRAIT: Introductory chapter presenting André Gide as a man and surveying, in a condensed form, his personal background, the main data of his biography and the peculiarities of his way of life. His autobiography, Si le Grain ne Meurt, yields bountiful material both of a factual and psychological nature. Moreover, there is a profusion of testimonies and anecdotes concerning Gide to be found in the memoirs and essays of his friends or rivals, such as Jean Cocteau, Julien Green, Charles Du Bos, Marcel Proust, etc. As for myself, I met Gide fifteen years ago and never lost contact with him since. I may conclude the chapter with some reminiscences apt to add some new sidelights to the picture of this iridescent character.

Ad 2.) THE HEIR: This chapter is to scrutinize the complex structure of Gide's intellectual organism and to define the forces that molded his way of thinking. The scope of his spiritual experiences is stupendous. No other writer of our time has absorbed and assimilated such vast variety of ideas and visions. The Hellenic philosophy and the revelations of Christianity are the double source of his inspiration. He is not only the heir of the great French tradition from Racine to Stendhal, from Montaigne to Balzac and Baudelaire, but also integrated virtually all patterns and potentialities of the Occidental soul. Among all French writers he seems to be the one most profoundly versed in the mysteries of the Russian psyche (a knowledge to which his extensive studies on Dostojewsky testify in the most eloquent way.) Goethe meant almost as much to <sup>him</sup> ~~his striving youth~~ as did Racine; Nietzsche - more than ~~him~~ Pascal. Among his great mentors and models are Dante and Whitman, Shakespeare (of whom he translated several plays into French), the English novelists (especially Fielding and Dickens), Oscar Wilde (to whom he devoted an illuminating booklet), and the great musicians from Bach to

Chopin (excluding Richard Wagner.) - To outline the topography of Gide's inner landscape ~~is~~ is almost tantamount to surveying the amplitude of the European spirit as such.

ad 3.) THE PRODIGAL SON: The inherited wealth becomes a burden to the Prodigal Son. Tired of the security too easily granted to him in his father's mansion, he rebels; he escapes. To Gide, the seditious heir and inspired fugitive <sup>of the Gospel</sup> becomes a symbol of his own destiny and adventure. In fact, he was to a generation of Europeans what the prodigal son when he comes home, matured and deeply experienced, is to his younger brother. Gide invokes their dialogue in one of the most unforgettable scenes he has ever written - Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue. The admired brother confirms what the child has already divined in his reveries: that there are other kingdoms to discover, outside the familiar hierarchy, and also lands without a king. The traveller - weary but still glowing with the seduction of foreign zones - offers the fruit of adventure and restlessness: not the apple of wisdom which quenches the thirst, but the savage ~~and~~ pomegranate whose bitter-sweet aroma makes for more thirst - and makes you love your longing. ..... This is the period when Gide's books, L'Immoraliste (1902) and Les Nouvelles Nourritures (1897), enthralled the vanguard, not only in France. His pagan message seemed to continue and crown Nietzsche's rhapsodic crusade against the Christian evaluations. The young Frenchman who presented himself as the "Immoralist", was Zarathustra's most ~~candid~~ and spirited disciple.

ad 4.) <sup>STRAIT</sup> THE ~~NARROW~~ GATE: However, there is another vein in Gide's work - already noticeable and of essential importance while the prodigal son ~~and~~ seems still under the lustful spell of the great god Pan and his roguish companion, Eros. The Immoralist is haunted by the problem of Sin,

which means that he is essentially a moralist. He who believes in the Devil (as Gide does, notwithstanding his pagan credo) necessarily believes also in God. God remains the immutable goal of all his roving and seeking. But He is evasive and nebulous - exceedingly difficult to get hold of, if only for one transient moment. The gate to the Paradise is narrow and can be easily missed. While the Immoralist protests against the Puritanism of his Calvinist~~ic~~ ancestors, another Gide keeps striving for a new form of purity. It is to this "second" Gide that we owe the tender and fervent story of La Porte Etroite. (1910.) ... The mood of religious contemplation and ecstasy increases during the first World War. A booklet called "Numquid et Tu...?" (composed in 1915; published in 1926) shows André Gide very close to a Franciscan form of Christian mysticism. The God-seeking pathos, inherent in everything he wrote, predominates for a while and seems to supersede all other tendencies.

Ad 5.) PROTEUS AND PROTESTANT: Gide is a fanatic of truthfulness, who can never say the whole truth: he reveals but aspects of his complex, contradictory being. Proteus-like, he seems to glide from one disguise into another. Now he is conservative and rationalistic; the next moment, anarchic or frivolous. His astounding versatility might remind us of the somersaults of Picasso's kaleidoscopic style; if it were not for the inexorable probity inherent in the most casual <sup>statement of</sup> ~~ones of Gide's statements~~ but lacking even in Picasso's masterpieces. For Picasso is essentially a virtuoso juggling colours and forms; ( although the intensity and mastership of his performance may at times assume truly tragic grandeur); whereas André Gide never distorts or betrays his incorruptible identity; (although his metamorphic skill sometimes suggests a histrionic playfulness.) ... Gide's oeuvre is to be shown as one <sup>meticulous</sup> ~~continuous~~ account of his constant permutations. To dwell on the unique significance of his Journal

as the gist and clue of his literary production.

ad 6.) THE FUGUE: However, there is one moment in the career of every genius when, at the acme of his creative force, he may venture to tie together the various threads interwoven into the many patterns of his previous work. Once in his life he succeeds in integrating the manifold components - thus accomplishing the valid formula of his message. - Gide presented Les Faux-Monnayeurs (1925) as "my first novel", although he was a man in his late fifties at the time of its appearance and had published six other novels before. But none of them disclosed more ~~but~~ <sup>than</sup> certain facets of their author's potentialities. Only The ~~primary~~ <sup>Counterfeiters</sup> - dramatic and involved like a fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach - embrace the total sum of his experiences. .... To analyse the rich and delicate texture of this extraordinary book and to define its singular importance for the development of the modern novel at large.

ad 7.) FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE: With Les Faux-Monnayeurs Gide has reached the climax of his artistic experiment and given the best he has to offer as a narrator and inventor. Subsequently his purely artistic ventures assume the character of relieving escapades. The center of his literary efforts shifts from fiction to the moral and philosophical sphere. (To point out how developments of this sort, in the case of Gide, always mirror or anticipate certain general trends and mysteriously correspond with yet inarticulate requirements of the respective hour.) - Moreover, the very kernel of his moral thinking changes about that time. If he was formerly preoccupied by the antithesis between Purity and Sin (= asceticism/sensuality), he now delves into another antagonism - that between Freedom and Discipline. During the period following the appearance of Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Gide undergoes another crucial transformation: he discovers and develops his social consciousness. An extensive voyage to the interior

of Africa marks the turning point. (Voyage au Congo, 1927.) Moved and horrified by the wretchedness of the natives under an imperialistic regime, ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> launches his initial "J'accuse." The Nouvelles Pages de Journal (1932-1935) mirror the gradual deepening ~~and~~ of his social ideas. According to Gide's own statement, "the great, the all-important change is this: Up to very recently I believed that what primarily matters is to change man, the men, every man; that one ought to start from the individual. That is why I wrote that the moral question is of greater significance than the social question. Today I am convinced that man <sup>himself</sup> cannot change, ~~himself~~ ~~self~~, unless the social conditions invite and enable him to do so: which means that we should occupy ourselves with them, the social conditions, above all and before anything else." .... Thus begins his much-discussed "conversion to communism."

ad 8.) THE REALITY: This chapter has to give the characteristic and somewhat melancholy tale of Gide's escapade into the realm of actual politics: How his horror of Fascist barbarism and his striving for a new form of moral and social order, by degrees <sup>brought</sup> ~~induced~~ him to endorse - if only with reservations! - the Soviet experiment. If the crisis of 1914 had almost driven him into the arms of the Holy Church: the upheavals of the early Thirties gave the decisive blow to his proud individualism. The left-wing vanguard applauded his "leaving the Ivory Tower." The party propagandists did their ~~best~~ utmost to exploit his glory on behalf of their cause. In 1936, Gide goes to Moscow - a fêted guest of the Soviet Government. His disappointment was to be foreseen, indeed, almost inevitable, considering his immoderate expectations and the inexorable integrity of his spirit. He announces and explains his bafflement in a pamphlet, Retour de l'U.R.S.S. - incidentally, the most superficial piece of writing and, therefore, the only "best-seller" he ever produced.

ad 9.) THE DEBACLE: His high-minded and naive attempt to join <sup>the ranks</sup> of a militant organization has utterly failed. But, while his friends of yesterday - the agents of the Kremlin - heap venomous slander upon him, he avoids the dangerous fallacy of almost all *désillusionnés* "fellow-travellers": not for one moment does he indulge in any sort of "Red-baiting", nor does he allow any semi-Fascist or anarchistic group to exploit his frustration. He remains implacably anti-Fascist, actively humanitarian, devoted to the great postulates of progress, peace and liberty. But he is alone, once again: in fact, more isolated than ever; for in 1938 he loses his wife - that meek, almost angelic figure, invisible to the world (she stayed in the country and hardly ever visited the city), but much more essential to Gide's inner life and development than usually believed. - The complete edition of his Journal, 1869/1939 (published on occasion of his seventieth birthday) - a standard-work of French letters - ends with these terrifying words: "Me voici libre, comme je ne l'ai jamais été; libre effroyablement..." During the War he sojourns in a village, near Nice, mostly engaged in helping the anti-Fascist refugees harassed by the French authorities. He remains in the South when the Republic falls and the sordid conspiracy between Vichy and Berlin eliminates the freedoms gained by the Great Revolution. Undaunted, incorruptible as ever, Gide refuses to "collaborate." He also refuses exile. The old wanderer settles in the Midi. He severs from his old publishing house, the Nouvelle Revue Française, as that august firm begins to acquiesce in Nazi philosophy. He defies the warning of a Fascist organization not to ~~attend~~ appear in public and placidly faces a riot when attending a literary meeting in Nice. In the midst of betrayal and disintegration, he remains faithful to himself, to France, to Europe, to humanity.

ad 10.) THE QUEST: In this concluding chapter I shall try to summarize the intrinsic meaning of Gide's message and attitude. He is to be shown as

the purest embodiment of the European spirit - representing both its erratic restlessness and imperishable grandeur. The diversity as well as the unity of the Occidental genius are inherent in his work and being. As a truly universal spirit he is akin to Goethe, although he does not command the vast potency of that titanic creator. <sup>they</sup> What ~~has~~ have in common <sup>m</sup> is the insatiable curiosity which embraces antiques, rituals and contemporary music, the realm of literature and botany, the secrets of submarine life and the secrets of the human soul. Like Goethe's Faust, Gide conceives life not as a static being but as a perpetual becoming, an unending movement towards aims unknown. Both his religious and social pathos spring from this basic belief. Alissa, the pious heroine of La Porte étroite, formulates his own credo when she writes: "Je me figure la joie céleste non comme une confusion en Dieu, mais comme un rapprochement infini, continu... et si je ne craignais de jouer sur un mot, je dirais que je ferais fi d'une joie que ne serait pas progressive." The last word of this remarkable confession - the word "progressiv", somewhat surprisingly chosen in this particular context, is apt to elucidate the relation between Gide's metaphysical feeling, on the one hand, and his social attitude, on the other. His word, "Le Paradis est toujours à refaire," ~~has~~ connotes a political program - the concept and postulate of the perpetual evolution.

My purpose in writing this book is not only to re-examine and evaluate the individual drama of André Gide in the light of the recent events; but also to clarify these developments by analysing them in connection with his at once singular and symptomatic story. By doing so I may succeed in tracing the current social and political crisis back to its moral sources and, furthermore, in rationalizing my faith that the crisis may be eventually overcome.

ANDRÉ GIDE  
and the Moral Crisis of Europe.

BY  
KLAUS MANN.

CHAPTERS:

- 1.) Portrait
- 2.) The Heir
- 3.) The Prodigal Son
- 4.) The Strait Gate
- 5.) Proteus and Protestant
- 6.) The Fugue
- 7.) Freedom and Discipline
- 8.) The Reality
- 9.) The Debacle
- 10.) The Quest.

( Each chapter approximately 20 pages.)

Ad 1.) PORTRAIT: Introductory chapter presenting André Gide as a man and surveying, in a condensed form, his personal background, the main data of his biography and the peculiarities of his way of life. His autobiography, Si le Grain ne Meurt, yields bountiful material both of factual and psychological nature. Moreover, there is a profusion of testimonies and anecdotes concerning Gide to be found in the memoirs and essays of his friends or rivals, such as Jean Cocteau, Julien Green, Charles Du Bos, Marcel Proust, etc. As for myself, I met Gide fifteen years ago and never lost contact with him since. I may conclude the chapter with some reminiscences apt to add some new sidelights to the picture of this iridescent character.

Ad 2.) THE HEIR: This chapter is to scrutinize the complex structure of Gide's intellectual organism and to define the forces that molded his way of thinking. The scope of his spiritual experiences is stupendous. No other writer of our time has absorbed and assimilated such vast variety of ideas and visions. The Hellenic philosophy and the revelations of Christianity are the double source of his inspiration. He is not only the heir of the great French tradition from Racine to Stendhal, from Montaigne to Balzac and Baudelaire, but also integrated virtually all patterns and potentialities of the Occidental soul. Among all French writers he seems to be the one most profoundly versed in the mysteries of the Russian psyche (a knowledge to which his extensive studies on Dostojewsky testify in the most eloquent way.) Goethe meant almost as much to <sup>him</sup> ~~the striving youth~~ as did Racine; Nietzsche - more than ~~him~~ Pascal. Among his great mentors and models are Dante and Whitman, Shakespeare (of whom he translated several plays into French), the English novelists (especially Fielding and Dickens), Oscar Wilde (to whom he devoted an illuminating booklet), and the great musicians from Bach to

Chopin (excluding Richard Wagner.) - To outline the topography of Gide's inner landscape ~~and~~ is almost tantamount to surveying the amplitude of the European spirit as such.

ad 3.) THE PRODIGAL SON: The inherited wealth becomes a burden to the Prodigal Son. Tired of the security too easily granted to him in his father's mansion, he rebels; he escapes. To Gide, the seditious heir and inspired fugitive <sup>of the Gospel</sup> becomes a symbol of his own destiny and adventure. In fact, he was to a generation of Europeans what the prodigal son when he comes home, matured and deeply experienced, is to his younger brother. Gide invokes their dialogue in one of the most unforgettable scenes he has ever written - Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue. The admired brother confirms what the child has already divined in his reveries: that there are other kingdoms to discover, outside the familiar hierarchy, and also lands without a king. The traveller - weary but still glowing with the seduction of foreign zones - offers the fruit of adventure and restlessness: not the apple of wisdom which quenches the thirst, but the savage ~~and~~ pomegranate whose bitter-sweet aroma makes for more thirst - and makes you love your longing. ..... This is the period when Gide's books, L'Immoraliste (1902) and Les Nouvelles Nourritures (1897), enthralled the vanguard, not only in France. His pagan message seemed to continue and crown Nietzsche's rhapsodic crusade against the Christian evaluations. The young Frenchman who presented himself as the "Immoralist", was Zarathustra's most ~~candid~~ ~~and~~ spirited disciple.

ad 4.) THE <sup>STRAIT</sup> ~~WATER~~ GATE: However, there is another vein in Gide's work - already noticeable and of essential importance while the prodigal son ~~and~~ seems still under the lustful spell of the great god Pan and his roguish companion, Eros. The Immoralist is haunted by the problem of Sin,

which means that he is essentially a moralist. He who believes in the Devil (as Gide does, notwithstanding his pagan credo) necessarily believes also in God. God remains the immutable goal of all his roving and seeking. But He is evasive and nebulous - exceedingly difficult to get hold of, if only for one transient moment. The gate to the Paradise is narrow and can be easily missed. While the Immoralist protests against the Puritanism of his Calvinist~~ic~~ ancestors, another Gide keeps striving for a new form of purity. It is to this "second" Gide that we owe the tender and fervent story of La Porte Etroite. (1910.) ... The mood of religious contemplation and ecstasy increases during the first World War. A booklet called "Numquid et Tu...?" (composed in 1915; published in 1926) shows André Gide very close to a Franciscan form of Christian mysticism. The God-seeking pathos, inherent in everything he wrote, predominates for a while and seems to supersede all other tendencies.

Ad 5.) PROTEUS AND PROTESTANT: Gide is a fanatic of truthfulness, who can never say the whole truth: he reveals but aspects of his complex, contradictory being. Proteus-like, he seems to glide from one disguise into another. Now he is conservative and rationalistic; the next moment, anarchic or frivolous. His astounding versatility might remind us of the somersaults of Picasso's kaleidoscopic style; if it were not for the inexorable probity inherent in the most casual <sup>statement</sup> ~~ones~~ of Gide's ~~statements~~ but lacking even in Picasso's masterpieces. For Picasso is essentially a virtuoso juggling colours and forms; ( although the intensity and mastership of his performance may at times assume truly tragic grandeur); whereas André Gide never distorts or betrays his incorruptible identity; (although his metamorphic skill sometimes suggests a histrionic playfulness.) ... Gide's oeuvre is to be shown as one <sup>meticulous</sup> ~~continuous~~ account of his constant permutations. To dwell on the unique significance of his Journal

as the gist and clue of his literary production.

ad 6.) THE FUGUE: However, there is one moment in the career of every genius when, at the acme of his creative force, he may venture to tie together the various threads interwoven into the many patterns of his previous work<sup>s</sup>. Once in his life he succeeds in integrating the manifold components - thus accomplishing the valid formula of his message. - Gide presented Les Faux-Monnayeurs (1925) as "my first novel", although he was a man in his late fifties at the time of its appearance and had published six other novels before. But none of them disclosed more ~~but~~ <sup>than</sup> certain facets of their author's potentialities. Only The ~~Monnays~~ Counterfeiters - dramatic and involved like a fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach - embrace the total sum of his experiences. .... To analyse the rich and delicate texture of this extraordinary book and to define its singular importance for the development of the modern novel at large.

ad 7.) FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE: With Les Faux-Monnayeurs Gide has reached the climax of his artistic experiment and given the best he has to offer as a narrator and inventor. Subsequently his purely artistic ventures assume the character of relieving escapades. The center of his literary efforts shifts from fiction to the moral and philosophical sphere. (To point out how developments of this sort, in the case of Gide, always mirror or anticipate certain general trends and mysteriously correspond with yet inarticulate requirements of the respective hour.) - Moreover, the very kernel of his moral thinking changes about that time. If he was formerly preoccupied by the antithesis between Purity and Sin (= asceticism/sensuality), he now delves into another antagonism - that between Freedom and Discipline. During the period following the appearance of Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Gide undergoes another crucial transformation: he discovers and develops his social consciousness. An extensive voyage to the interior

of Africa marks the turning point. (Voyage au Congo, 1927.) Moved and horrified by the wretchedness of the natives under an imperialistic regime, ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> launches his initial "J'accuse." The Nouvelles Pages de Journal (1932-1935) mirror the gradual deepening ~~and~~ of his social ideas. According to Gide's own statement, "the great, the all-important change is this: Up to very recently I believed that what primarily matters is to change man, the men, every man; that one ought to start from the individual. That is why I wrote that the moral question is of greater significance than the social question. Today I am convinced that man <sup>himself</sup> cannot change, ~~that~~ ~~self~~, unless the social conditions invite and enable him to do so: which means that we should occupy ourselves with them, the social conditions, above all and before anything else." .... Thus begins his much-discussed "conversion to communism."

ad 8.) THE REALITY: This chapter has to give the characteristic and somewhat melancholy tale of Gide's escapade into the realm of actual politics: How his horror of Fascist barbarism and his striving for a new form of moral and social order, by degrees <sup>brought</sup> ~~induced~~ him to endorse - if only with reservations! - the Soviet experiment. If the crisis of 1914 had almost driven him into the arms of the Holy Church: the upheavals of the early Thirties gave the decisive blow to his proud individualism. The left-wing vanguard applauded his "leaving the Ivory Tower." The party propagandists did their ~~best~~ utmost to exploit his glory on behalf of their cause. In 1936, Gide goes to Moscow - a fêted guest of the Soviet Government. His disappointment was to be foreseen, indeed, almost inevitable, considering his immoderate expectations and the inexorable integrity of his spirit. He announces and explains his bafflement in a pamphlet, Retour de l'U.R.S.S. - incidentally, the most superficial piece of writing and, therefore, the only "best-seller" he ever produced.

ad 9.) THE DEBACLE: His high-minded and naive attempt to join <sup>the ranks</sup> of a militant organization has utterly failed. But, while his friends of yesterday - the agents of the Kremlin - heap venomous slander upon him, he avoids the dangerous fallacy of almost all disillusioned "fellow-travellers": not for one moment does he indulge in any sort of "Red-baiting", nor does he allow any semi-Fascist or anarchistic group to exploit his frustration. He remains implacably anti-Fascist, actively humanitarian, devoted to the great postulates of progress, peace and liberty. But he is alone, once again: in fact, more isolated than ever; for in 1938 he loses his wife - that meek, almost angelic figure, invisible to the world (she stayed in the country and hardly ever visited the city), but much more essential to Gide's inner life and development than usually believed. - The complete edition of his Journal, 1869/1939 (published on occasion of his seventieth birthday) - a standard-work of French letters - ends with these terrifying words: "Me voici libre, comme je ne l'ai jamais été; libre effroyablement..." During the War he sojourns in a village, near Nice, mostly engaged in helping the anti-Fascist refugees harassed by the French authorities. He remains in the South when the Republic falls and the sordid conspiracy between Vichy and Berlin eliminates the freedoms gained by the Great Revolution. Undaunted, incorruptible as ever, Gide refuses to "collaborate." He also refuses exile. The old wanderer settles in the Midi. He severs from his old publishing house, the Nouvelle Revue Française, as that august firm begins to acquiesce in Nazi philosophy. He defies the warning of a Fascist organization not to ~~attend~~ appear in public and placidly faces a riot when attending a literary meeting in Nice. In the midst of betrayal and disintegration, he remains faithful to himself, to France, to Europe, to humanity.

ad 10.) THE QUEST: In this concluding chapter I shall try to summarize the intrinsic meaning of Gide's message and attitude. He is to be shown as

the purest embodiment of the European spirit - representing both its erratic restlessness and imperishable grandeur. The diversity as well as the unity of the Occidental genius are inherent in his work and being. As a truly universal spirit he is akin to Goethe, although he does not command the vast potency of that titanic creator. <sup>m</sup> What both have in common is the insatiable curiosity which embraces antique rituals and contemporary music, the realm of literature and botany, the secrets of submarine life and the secrets of the human soul. Like Goethe's Faust, Gide conceives life not as a static being but as a perpetual becoming, an unending movement towards aims unknown. Both his religious and social pathos spring from this basic belief. Alissa, the pious heroine of La Porte étroite, formulates his own credo when she writes: "Je me figure la joie céleste non comme une confusion en Dieu, mais comme un rapprochement infini, continu... et si je ne craignais de jouer sur un mot, je dirais que je ferais fi d'une joie que ne serait pas progressive." The last word of this remarkable confession - the word "progressiv", somewhat surprisingly chosen in this particular context, is apt to elucidate the relation between Gide's metaphysical feeling, on the one hand, and his social attitude, on the other. His word, "Le Paradis est toujours à refaire," ~~also~~ connotes a political program - the concept and postulate of the perpetual evolution.

My purpose in writing this book is not only to re-examine and evaluate the individual drama of André Gide in the light of the recent events; but also to clarify these developments by analysing them in connection with his at once singular and symptomatic story. By doing so I may succeed in tracing the current social and political crisis back to its moral sources and, furthermore, in rationalizing my faith that the crisis may be eventually overcome.

ANDRÉ GIDE  
and the Moral Crisis of Europe.

BY  
KLAUS MANN.

CHAPTERS:

- 1.) Portrait
- 2.) The Heir
- 3.) The Prodigal Son
- 4.) The Strait Gate
- 5.) Proteus and Protestant
- 6.) The Fugue
- 7.) Freedom and Discipline
- 8.) The Reality
- 9.) The Debacle
- 10.) The Quest.

( Each chapter approximately 20 pages.)



Chopin (excluding Richard Wagner.) - To outline the topography of Gide's inner landscape ~~and~~ is almost tantamount to surveying the amplitude of the European spirit as such.

*Bergson "Intuition."*

*Planning "Joseph" pendant.*

ad 3.) THE PRODIGAL SON: The inherited wealth becomes a burden to the Prodigal Son. Tired of the security too easily granted to him in his father's mansion, he rebels; he escapes. To Gide, the seditious heir and inspired fugitive <sup>of the Gospel</sup> becomes a symbol of his own destiny and adventure. In fact, he was to a generation of Europeans what the prodigal son when he comes home, matured and deeply experienced, is to his younger brother. Gide invokes their dialogue in one of the most unforgettable scenes he has ever written - Le Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue. The admired brother confirms what the child has already divined in his reveries: that there are other kingdoms to discover, outside the familiar hierarchy, and also lands without a king. The traveller - weary but still glowing with the seduction of foreign zones - offers the fruit of adventure and restlessness: not the apple of wisdom which quenches the thirst, but the savage ~~and~~ pomegranate whose bitter-sweet aroma makes for more thirst - and makes you love your longing. ..... This is the period when Gide's books, L'Immoraliste (1902) and Les Nouvelles Nourritures (1897), enthralled the vanguard, not only in France. His pagan message seemed to continue and crown Nietzsche's rhapsodic crusade against the Christian evaluations. The young Frenchman who presented himself as the "Immoralist", was Zarathustra's most ~~candid~~ ~~and~~ spirited disciple.

*L'Amour d'un Nègre. Gorla. "Paludes." (Parody)*

STRAIT

ad 4.) THE ~~STRAIT~~ GATE: However, there is another vein in Gide's work - already noticeable and of essential importance while the prodigal son ~~and~~ seems still under the lustful spell of the great god Pan and his roguish companion, Eros. The Immoralist is haunted by the problem of Sin,

Oscar Wilde

which means that he is essentially a moralist. He who believes in the Devil (as Gide does, notwithstanding his pagan credo) necessarily believes also in God. God remains the immutable goal of all his roving and seeking. But He is evasive and nebulous - exceedingly difficult to get hold of, if only for one transient moment. The gate to the Paradise is narrow and can be easily missed. While the Immoralist protests against the Puritanism of his Calvinist~~ic~~ ancestors, another Gide keeps striving for a new form of purity. It is to this "second" Gide that we owe the tender and fervent story of La Porte Etroite. (1910.) ... The mood of religious contemplation and ecstasy increases during the first World War. A booklet called "Numquid et Tu...?" (composed in 1915; published in 1926) shows André Gide very close to a Franciscan form of Christian mysticism. The God-seeking pathos, inherent in everything he wrote, predominates for a while and seems to supersede all other tendencies. ~~La Symphonie Pastorale.~~

Transformation = Sacrifice

Ad 5.) PROTEUS AND PROTESTANT: Gide is a fanatic of truthfulness, who can never say the whole truth: he reveals but aspects of his complex, contradictory being. Proteus-like, he seems to glide from one disguise into another. <sup>His work can be designated in "phases"</sup> (Now he is conservative and rationalistic; the next moment, anarchic or frivolous.) His astounding versatility might remind us of the somersaults of Picasso's kaleidoscopic style; if it were not for the <sup>statement</sup> ~~casual~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~statements~~ <sup>of Gide</sup> ~~statements~~ but lacking even in Picasso's masterpieces. For Picasso is essentially a virtuoso juggling colours and forms; (although the intensity and mastership of his performance may at times assume truly tragic grandeur); whereas André Gide never <sup>denies</sup> distorts or betrays his incorruptible identity; (although his metamorphic skill sometimes suggests a histrionic playfulness.) <sup>an honest</sup> ~~meticulous~~ <sup>meticulous</sup> ... Gide's oeuvre is to be shown as one ~~continuous~~ account of his constant permutations. To dwell on the unique significance of his Journal

"Caves", "Symphony", "Sic ille Grain",  
("Lark") (recy) "Corydon"

as the gist and clue of his literary production.

ad 6.) THE FUGUE: However, there is one moment in the career of every genius when, at the acme of his creative force, he may venture to tie together the various threads interwoven into the many patterns of his previous work. Once in his life he succeeds in integrating the manifold components - thus accomplishing the valid formula of his message. - Gide presented Les Faux-Monnayeurs (1925) as "my first novel", although he was a man in his late fifties at the time of its appearance and had published six other novels before. But none of them disclosed more certain facets of their author's potentialities. Only The Counterfeiters - dramatic and involved like a fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach - embrace the total sum of his experiences. .... To analyse the rich and delicate texture of this extraordinary book and to define its singular importance for the development of the modern novel at large.

ad 7.) FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE: With Les Faux-Monnayeurs Gide has reached the climax of his artistic experiment and given the best he has to offer as a narrator and inventor. Subsequently his purely artistic ventures assume the character of relieving escapades. The center of his literary efforts shifts from fiction to the moral and philosophical sphere. (To point out how developments of this sort, in the case of Gide, always mirror or anticipate certain general trends and mysteriously correspond with yet inarticulate requirements of the respective hour.) - Moreover, the very kernel of his moral thinking changes about that time. If he was formerly preoccupied by the antithesis between Purity and Sin (= asceticism/sensuality), he now delves into another antagonism - that between Freedom and Discipline. During the period following the appearance of Les Faux-Monnayeurs, Gide undergoes another crucial transformation: he discovers and develops his social consciousness. An extensive voyage to the interior

\* Discipline problem, in Preface to "Vol. 4."

Gide's "Sensibility" in "Vol. 4."

Ad Crisis:

anti-adistocratic

.... No "great men" in Dostojevski's work...

.... Not even "tha admirable Father Zossima";  
not in the eyes of the world... He is a saint, not  
a hero. .... In D.'s books, as in in the Gospel,  
the Kingdom of God is reserved to the "poor ~~ones~~  
in spirit" .....

D.'s political articles - "Journal of a Writer" :  
social ideas - nebulous, awkwardly expressed; mistaken  
in all his predictions concerning the future of  
Europe etc. Political questions seem less important  
to him than social questions: social questions, less  
important - much less important! - than ~~indi~~ the  
questions of individual morale.

(Approvingly! in 1922!)

(Later: his advice to Green, to remain  
"unpolitical")

Ad 4.

The ethos of self-discipline in  
self-narrativization becomes  
increasingly predominant in 6.5.5  
thought and work, a the L.N.T. is  
And yet we must not forget  
that this ~~theoretical~~ <sup>practical</sup> doctrine  
remains the expression of an  
an absolutely individualistic  
attitude; its ~~persuasion~~ <sup>persuasion</sup> and  
roots are religious. ~~Walter~~ <sup>Walter</sup>  
That roots of their action  
be ~~found~~ <sup>sought</sup> in the religious  
sphere, rather than in its original  
from religious motives, rather  
than from social conscience  
The example of Lafcadio Hearn  
it only do what that  
of A's futile generosity  
proves the transcendental  
senses of this disinterested  
mystery of the example of  
Lot. ~~it is only~~ <sup>its attitude</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup>

of Africa marks the turning point. (Voyage au Congo, 1927.) Moved and horrified by the wretchedness of the natives under an imperialistic regime, ~~he~~ launches his initial "J'accuse." The Nouvelles Pages de Journal (1932-1935) mirror the gradual deepening ~~and~~ of his social ideas. According to Gide's own statement, "the great, the all-important change is this: Up to very recently I believed that <sup>the</sup> ~~what~~ <sup>primarily</sup> ~~matters~~ <sup>is</sup> to change man, the men, every man; that one ought to start from the individual. That is why I wrote that the moral question is of greater significance than the social question. Today I am convinced that ~~man~~ <sup>himself</sup> cannot change, ~~unless~~ unless the social conditions invite and enable him to do so: which ~~means~~ <sup>for</sup> that we should occupy ourselves with them, the social conditions, above all and before anything else." .... Thus begins his much-discussed "conversion to communism."

Shadow ↑ Preparation: V. Com d'Assis.  
Congo - Soviet.  
ad 8.) THE REALITY: This chapter has to give the characteristic and somewhat melancholy tale of Gide's escapade into the realm of actual politics: How his horror of Fascist barbarism and his striving for a new form of moral and social order, by degrees ~~induced~~ <sup>brought</sup> him to endorse - if only with reservations! - the Soviet experiment. If the crisis of 1914 had almost driven him into the arms of the Holy Church: the upheavals of the early Thirties gave the decisive blow to his proud individualism. The left-wing vanguard applauded his "leaving the Ivory Tower." The party propagandists did their ~~best~~ utmost to exploit his glory on behalf of their cause. In 1936, Gide goes to Moscow - a fêted guest of the Soviet Government. His disappointment was to be foreseen, indeed, almost inevitable, considering his immoderate expectations and the inexorable integrity of his spirit. He announces and explains his bafflement in a pamphlet, Retour de l'U.R.S.S. - incidentally, the most superficial piece of writing and, therefore, the only "best-seller" he ever produced.

No more his consciousness

T.S. Eliot 104

2

ad 9.) THE DEBACLE: His high-minded and naive attempt to join <sup>the name is</sup> of a militant organization has utterly failed. But, while his friends of yesterday - the agents of the Kremlin - heap venomous slander upon him, he avoids the dangerous fallacy of almost all disillusioned "fellow-travellers": not for one moment does he indulge in any sort of "Red-baiting", nor does he allow any semi-Fascist or anarchistic group to exploit his frustration. He remains implacably anti-Fascist, actively humanitarian, devoted to the great postulates of progress, peace and liberty. But he is alone, once again: in fact, more isolated than ever; for in 1938 he loses his wife - that meek, almost angelic figure, invisible to the world (she stayed in the country and hardly ever visited the city), but much more essential to Gide's inner life and development than usually believed. - The complete edition of his Journal, 1869/1939 (published on <sup>the</sup> occasion of his seventieth birthday) - a standard-work of French letters - ends with these terrifying words: "Me voici libre, comme je ne l'ai jamais été; libre effroyablement..." During the War he sojourns in a village, near Nice, mostly engaged in helping the anti-Fascist refugees harassed by the French authorities. He remains in the South when the Republic falls and the sordid conspiracy between Vichy and Berlin eliminates the freedoms gained by the Great Revolution. Undaunted, incorruptible as ever, Gide refuses to "collaborate." He also refuses exile. The old wanderer settles in the Midi. He severs from his old publishing house, the Nouvelle Revue Française, as that august firm begins to acquiesce in Nazi philosophy. He defies the warning of a Fascist organization not to ~~attend~~ appear in public and placidly faces a riot when attending a literary meeting in Nice. In the midst of betrayal and disintegration, he remains faithful to himself, to France, to Europe, to humanity.

✓ *Amorale towards Germany  
Now, during last war*

ad 10.) THE QUEST: In this concluding chapter I shall try to summarize the intrinsic meaning of Gide's message and attitude. He is to be shown as

✓ *"Nouvelles  
Nouvelles"*

the purest embodiment of the European spirit - representing both its erratic restlessness and imperishable grandeur. The diversity as well as the unity of the Occidental genius are inherent in his work and being. As a truly universal spirit he is akin to Goethe, although he does not command the vast potency of that titanic creator. <sup>they</sup> What ~~both~~ have in common is the insatiable curiosity which embraces antiques rituals and contemporary music, the realm of literature and botany, the secrets of submarine life and the secrets of the human soul. Like Goethe's Faust, Gide conceives life not as a static being but as a perpetual becoming, an unending movement towards aims unknown. Both his religious and <sup>social</sup> social pathos spring from this basic belief. Alissa, the pious heroine of La Porte étroite, formulates his own credo when she writes: "Je me figure la joie céleste non comme une confusion en Dieu, mais comme un rapprochement infini, continu... et si je ne craignais de jouer sur un mot, je dirais que je ferais fi d'une joie que ne serait pas progressive." The last word of this remarkable confession - the word "progressiv", somewhat surprisingly chosen in this particular context, is apt to elucidate the relation between Gide's metaphysical feeling, on the one hand, and his social attitude, on the other. His word, "Le Paradis est toujours à refaire," ~~has~~ connotes a political program - the concept and postulate of the perpetual evolution.

My purpose in writing this book is not only to re-examine and evaluate the individual drama of André Gide in the light of the recent events; but also to clarify these developments by analysing them in connection with his at once singular and symptomatic story. By doing so I may succeed in tracing the current social and political crisis back to its moral sources and, furthermore, in rationalizing my faith that the crisis may be eventually overcome.