

# **This Novel Will Self-Destruct: (Un)Writing the Self in André Gide's *The Counterfeiters***

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The novel, at its very etymological core, is innovative. It creates and renews language, genre, and ideology, narratives and discourse, often breaking with, or expanding on, traditions. Such a revolution of *poiesis* seems yet to have run out of steam, constantly creating and targeting new reading publics, from the scholarly to the masses, as the implicit shift in the French term *roman* demonstrates: a shift from Latin to vulgar.

Beyond the naturally creative impulse underpinning the novel, I wish to also examine its dynamics of destruction through the intermediality of music and literature. In André Gide's auto- and metafictional novel *The Counterfeiters* (*Les Faux-monnayeurs* 1925; also translated as *The Coiners*, 1952), the novel-writing protagonist pronounces his desire to write a novel structured like a musical fugue: "Ce que je voudrais faire, [...] c'est quelque chose qui serait comme L'Art de la Fugue. Et je ne vois pas pourquoi ce qui fut possible en musique

*serait impossible en littérature.*"<sup>1</sup> ("I wish to create [...] something similar to *The Art of Fugue*. And I don't see why that which was possible in music should be impossible in literature"<sup>2</sup>). In considering the possibility of reproducing musical fugue in literary form, we must consider not only its creative interdisciplinary potential, but also the potential damage of applying musical style to text in what could be considered a poetics of erasure, or writing (the self) as annulling (the self). Such *writing* performs the very contradiction in the English-French false cognate of "redaction," where *rédaction* signifies to write or edit, whereas in English, it also carries a connotation of cancellation and censorship, a form of un-writing.

In this article, I demonstrate that the ekphrastic reference to fugue slowly eats away at the novel's core, in an attempt by Gide to musicalize his fiction for subjective and experimental purposes. Although alluding to psychoanalytic theory as a manner of expanding the theoretical frame of a fugal poetics, this analysis mostly considers the *novel as theory*, to echo Eva-Lynn Jagoe's comments in a class on Proust, a novel whose intermediality causes it to implode.

### Gide's First Novel: A Brief Summary<sup>3</sup>

Despite having published at least seven works prior to 1925 classified under the nomenclature "novel" – from the diary-novel *Paludes* (1895) and *The Immoralist* (1902) to *The Pastoral Symphony* (1919) –, Gide considers *The Counterfeiters* to be his first real novel, as he writes in a dedication to Roger Martin du Gard,<sup>4</sup> describing his previous works rather as  *récits*, stories and tales. *The Counterfeiters* certainly ticks many a box on the novel checklist, not least of which being length. It weighs in at 420 pages in the first edition, which clearly separates it from his previous, shorter works. The second break is of stylistic and formal nature: once a self-proclaimed symbolist – with examples such as *Treatise of the Narcissus* (1891) and *Le Voyage d'Urien* (1893) representing this aesthetic –, Gide evidently distances himself in *The Counterfeiters* from the cacophonous *cymbalisme* as Ezra Pound referred to the movement, in favour of a non-linear narrative, considered a precursor of the *nouveau roman*.

It is nearly impossible to *briefly* summarize *The Counterfeiters* not only due to its length, but also given the labyrinthine narratives that subvert a linear reading of a novel in which approximately thirty main characters intertwine. The guiding dynamism in this work, as its title suggests, is a variation on the theme of the real or the authentic: from a gang of coin counterfeiters, lies regarding paternity, to duplicitous characters and repressed homosexuality. The confusion between reality and its illusions permeate all textual levels, from physical objects to character traits.

The most central storyline revolves around the contrapuntal young budding novelist high-school students, best friends Bernard and Olivier, and their travels, as well as literary and arguably sexual adventures with Olivier's uncle Édouard and the Count de Passavant respectively. These parallel narratives follow the topoi of the *Bildungsroman*, where a coming of age story overlaps with one's sexual identity and one's literary aspirations, the latter encapsulating the characteristics of the *Künstlerroman*. I argue that *The Counterfeiters*, in keeping with the theme of authenticity, should be read as an anti-*Bildungs* or *Künstlerroman*, and that musical fugue, via suggestive counterpoint, further embellishes its ironic dimension.

From the very incipit, Gide sets the contrapuntal tone and syncopated rhythm of unexpected revelations that expose the inauthentic: for example, Bernard, upon uncovering a hidden letter, discovers that Albert Profitendieu is not his biological father, which triggers a literal fugue from home. The pinnacle of Gide's portrayal of the illusion of reality centres on the figure of Édouard, an already established writer, and his counterfeited novel: he is attempting to write a novel entitled *The Counterfeiters*, but is barely capable of writing a word. It seems fitting to draw parallels here between Gide and Édouard, as most critics initially did, critics unable to go beyond the specularity however of the two novelists. Gide, reaffirming the survival of the author and in an attempt to distance himself from his creation, decided to publish his notes entitled *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* in 1927, thus revealing his strategies, ideas and concerns in preparation for the novel. Herein he claims to draw parallels between his own aesthetic desires and those of Édouard, whilst ironically distancing himself from the character destined

for failure, represented by his empty novel, a conception not wholly unlike James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Beyond the journal specific to *The Counterfeiters*, Gide also kept a personal *Journal*, both of which are in parallel with a journal kept by Édouard in the novel, not to mention other diegetic journals and letters kept by several characters as well.

At the heart of *The Counterfeiters*, Édouard unveils the objectives behind his project:

*“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 [...]. À vrai dire, ce sera là le sujet: la lutte entre les faits proposés par la réalité, et la réalité idéale”*<sup>5</sup> (“The protagonist I am creating is a novelist, whom I place as a central figure in the work; and the specific subject of the book, if you will, is the struggle between what reality offers him and what he purports to do with it [...]. *In fact, that is the subject: the struggle between the facts that reality offers, and an ideal reality”*<sup>6</sup>).

In her book, *Gide's Art of the Fugue: A Thematic Study of Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Karin Ciholas situates this aesthetic problematics of the novel within literary history as an example of Gide's disgust for realism's “slice of life” attitude to literature. *“Ce que je veux, c'est présenter d'une part la réalité, présenter d'autre part cet effort pour la styliser”*<sup>7</sup> (“*What I wish to present is reality on the one hand, and on the other, an attempt to stylize it”*<sup>8</sup>). Regardless of his aspirations, Édouard's potential is thwarted at every turn, as Gide explains his predestined failure in the *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* in the following terms: *“Chaque fois qu'Édouard est appelé à exposer le plan de son roman, il en parle d'une manière différente. Somme toute, il bluffe; il craint, au fond, de ne pouvoir jamais en sortir”*<sup>9</sup> (*Every time Édouard is asked to offer an outline of his novel, he describes it differently. All in all, he is bluffing; deep down, he is worried he will never succeed”*<sup>10</sup>).

His concerns are valid given that this character in flux whose utopian goal is to stylize an ideal reality remains, in a sense, imprisoned (*“jamais en sortir”*) within the blank page of his failure, in a novel constructed as a *mise-en-abîme*, a term first coined by André Gide in reference to

painting.<sup>11</sup> Such a vertical construction, I will demonstrate, has significant contrapuntal resonances in Gide's fugal project.

### The Melopoetics of Fugue: the What and the How

Albeit theoretically infinite, and defined as a musical *style* rather than *structure* dependent on historical context—due to its protean form over time—, there are some common elements to all fugue, which Nadya Zimmerman summarizes in what I deem the most succinct definition of fugue's fundamental polyphonic element: counterpoint. She writes:

Like the canon, fugue incorporates the method of imitation. In a fugue, the first voice enters playing the main theme, which [...] is called the subject. The second voice enters, perhaps a few measures afterwards, and takes that same subject, but modifies it by starting on a different note. The modification in the second voice [...] is called the answer. [...] the answer retains the same intervallic shape and melodic structure as the subject, yet it is said to be in a different key. When the second voice enters with the answer, the notes occurring simultaneously in the first voice are no longer considered part of the subject: they are referred to as the countersubject.<sup>12</sup>

This general definition, albeit sufficient for examining the transposition of several musical elements onto literature, does not mention the potentially pertinent sub-categories of counterpoint, such as mirror counterpoint and inverted counterpoint, which would merit further scholarly attention.<sup>13</sup>

The "method of imitation" to which Zimmerman alludes highlights a mimetic necessity in literature, particularly in the novel, which is at the very heart of Édouard's goals. However, more precisely, how can literature reproduce the musical style of fugue that Édouard dreams of, and which many symbolist and modernist writers experimented with: from De Quincey and Mallarmé to Joyce, Pound, and Saba? The short answer is: it simply cannot. As a linear literary medium in which we read one word after the other, an equivalent in literature of vertical simultaneity seems impossible. Literature can, however, *suggest* or *evoke* counterpoint – *suggest* and *evoke* being inherently symbolist terms, which is significant given fugal poetics is born in symbolist poetry – in

ways only text can, and the end results vary significantly from one author's work to another. These linguistic and literary examples include the paradigmatic axis, the use of free indirect speech – perhaps the clearest example of the narrative voice overlapping with the character's speech –, and the dynamics of theme/motif. In the following section, I unpack two of these examples, excluding free indirect speech, in order to demonstrate that the novel already contains within itself the potential for its own expansion, by absorbing other art forms, albeit through the use of literature's only tool – language. The novel suggests musical fugue, a form a priori incompatible with literature, in order to exceed itself, and arguably, in an attempt to fill a lack or void, the novel's *abîme*.

### Literary Polyphony: the Paradigmatic Axis and Chiming Motifs

Pound, in *How to Read*, defines “melopoeia” as “wherein the words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning.”<sup>14</sup> Also interested in reproducing fugue in poetry for his project *The Cantos*, Pound warns nonetheless of the pitfalls of melopoeia and of fugue more specifically: we should not treat counterpoint, Pound reminds us via Kay Davis, “as a strict one-to-one analogy,”<sup>15</sup> but rather as “something chiming from something we remember from earlier.”<sup>16</sup> To counter this, many critics from David Keypour to Frédérique Arroyas,<sup>17</sup> have demonstrated the ways in which motifs unite under a common theme, amassing meaning throughout the text as the narrative advances with every new example. It suffices to evoke once more the examples cited earlier: the authenticity of coins and the truth behind Bernard's biological father are motifs that unite under the same theme of inauthenticity.<sup>18</sup> Roland Barthes, in *An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative*, evokes a fugal structure that transcends the perceived spatio-temporal boundaries of narrative, which he seems convinced is representative of all novels, which I would caution against. Some novels are certainly more fugal than others.

*Le lecteur, lui, perçoit une suite linéaire de termes. Mais ce qu'il faut noter, c'est que les termes de plusieurs séquences peuvent très bien s'imbriquer les uns dans les autres: une séquence n'est pas finie, que, déjà, s'intercalant, le terme initial d'une nouvelle séquence*

*peut surgir: les séquences se déplacent en contrepoint; fonctionnellement, la structure du récit est fuguée: c'est ainsi que le récit, fois, "tient" et "aspire."<sup>19</sup>*

(The reader, by contrast, perceives a linear succession of terms. But what calls for special attention is that some terms belonging to several sequences can easily dovetail into each other. Before a sequence is completed, the initial term of a fresh sequence can be introduced: sequences proceed according to a contrapuntal pattern. Functionally the structure of narrative is that of the fugue: narrative "pulls in" new material even as it "holds on" to previous material.)<sup>20</sup>

Despite the lack of music, in the following passage, Gide puts into practice precisely what Barthes highlights, and he does so by creating a sense of counterpoint between three distinct scenes, conflating dusk and dawn in parallaxic viewpoints.

*C'est l'heure où, dans une triste chambre d'hôtel, Laura, sa maîtresse d'hier, après avoir longtemps pleuré, longtemps gémi, va s'endormir. Sur le pont du navire qui le ramène en France, Edouard, à la première clarté de l'aube, relit la lettre qu'il a reçue d'elle, lettre plaintive et où elle appelle aux secours. Déjà, la douce rive de son pays natal est en vue, mais, à travers la brume, il faut un œil exercé pour la voir. Pas un nuage au ciel où le regard de Dieu va sourire. La paupière de l'horizon rougissant déjà se soulève. Comme il va faire chaud dans Paris ! Il est temps de retrouver Bernard. Voici que dans le lit d'Olivier il s'éveille.<sup>21</sup>*

(It is at this same hour that Laura, his yesterday's mistress, is at last dropping off to sleep in her gloomy little hotel room, after having long wept, long bemoaned herself. On the deck of the ship which is bringing him back to France, Edouard, in the first light of the dawn, is re-reading her letter—the plaintive letter in which she appeals for help. The gentle shores of his native land are already in sight, though scarcely visible through the morning mist to any but a practised eye. Not a cloud is in the heavens, where the glance of God will soon be smiling. The horizon is already lifting a rosy eyelid. How hot it is going to be in Paris! It is time to return to Bernard. Here he is, just awaking in Olivier's bed.)<sup>22</sup>

The contrasting adverbs “*longtemps*” and “*déjà*” push and pull the temporal and spatial contexts that the reader imagines through the metonymic and metaphorical omnipresence of sight: Laura’s falling asleep is contrasted with Édouard’s travelling while reading at dawn, which is in turn followed by a depersonification of sight – echoes of the dissociative (fugue) – beginning with the passive “*son pays natal en vue*,” the impersonal “*il faut un œil exercé*,” an example of synesthetic blending of sight and smile from the master-signifier (“*où le regard de Dieu va sourire*”); culminating in sight as metaphor in the landscape, a sort of pathetic fallacy foreshadowing Olivier’s waking moments, and suggestive of a rather sleepless night.

The linear (syntagmatic) trope of metonymy combines with the verticality (paradigmatic) of metaphor in order to evoke the spatio-temporally dovetailing polyphony of music that Barthes defines in narrative. It is a music of both the eye and ear. What the textually fugal elements of this passage further explore are the interconnectedness of characters, fugaciously blending into each other and their environments, uniting under a sense of ideal totality (*plenum*) in Gide’s literary ontological landscape. Furthermore, a fugal poetics may also serve as a driving force for the *unheimlich*, shunting pleasure and displeasure to and fro, as well as concealed, unnamed, homosexuality in a new mimetic language of the unconscious.

Following the undercurrents of theme/motif, the paradigmatic axis is a second example that represents the absent presence of counterpoint in a fugal dynamics. Northrop Frye, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, explains that modal counterpoint emanates from the effect of reading two diametrically opposed fictional modes, such as the high and low mimetic, or the mythical and the abject, as is the case with James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, according to the Gilbert-Linati schema left by the author, in order to better grasp the episode’s ties to Homer’s *Odyssey*. It is therefore impossible to read Leopold Bloom or Stephen Dedalus’ actions without considering their mythical counterparts, and this incredible distance evokes counterpoint and verticality. To echo a Derridean neologism, the paradigmatic hauntologically looms over the current narrative that seems to be writing itself under the watchful eye of the



reader, further exposing ironic tones in a text that otherwise takes itself quite seriously.

The paradigmatic axis, or axis of “selection” according to Roman Jakobson,<sup>23</sup> is fundamental to metafiction and autofiction, and especially so in a novel that already purposely subverts a linear reading. The jumbling of plot lines and confusion of time and space hinders the reader’s preconceived expectations regarding the syntagmatic axis, the axis of combination, in which phonemes, morphemes, and words morph into significant sentences, all woven together into a narrative. In Gide’s novel, the paradigmatic unites both novelists and their respective *The Counterfeiters*, as suggested earlier: Édouard’s and Gide’s. Whereas Édouard’s actions, or lack thereof, are centripetal – with a novel literally being written into the abyss/*abîme* – Gide’s novel is centrifugal, expanding on a centre, a narrative and theme that always seems to exceed itself in a novel that unveils the genetics of literary practice. Various other palimpsests include Gide’s personal journal, his published *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* and Édouard’s journal, not to mention the numerous biographical references to other characters in the novel that some critics have read as Gide’s alter-egos.<sup>24</sup> Beyond simply considering the parallels between Gide and Édouard, it would be worth exploring how Édouard, Bernard, and Olivier triangulate as a fugal subject, answer, and countersubject as well. However, in lieu of further textual analysis, it is essential now to focus on the function of fugue in Gide’s novel.

### **The Melopoetics of Fugue: Unravelling a Sense of Self**

Several authors from the symbolists to the (post)modernists have experimented with musical fugue in literature in several languages and in relatively close historical proximity, and they have done so to multiple ends: from representations of the oneiric (De Quincey) and experiments in style (Joyce) to the destruction of language (Mallarmé and Amprimoz) as well as a means of representing censorship (Elio Vittorini). One quintessential element in fugue that arguably connects all of these authors is the relation between fugue and the conception of selfhood. Zimmerman explains: “[i]n the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, fugal forms served as musical analogues to the notion of the centered Self: fugue narrated a quality of “subjective becoming” in which

heterogeneous elements of self come together as an autonomous whole.”<sup>25</sup> A concern with totality, an impossible *plenum*, is at the very heart of fugue alongside its portrayal of “subjective becoming,” and although this is true for the ornate, elaborate, and ostentatious baroque in music, one needs to wait until Baudelaire’s definition of modernity and De Quincey’s *The English Mail-Coach* for it to appear in literature and alongside technological advancement. Baudelaire, in the *Painter of Modern Life* defines the dialectics of modernity as “transitory,” “fugitive”—note the etymological link to *fuga*—as well as the “immutable” and “eternal.”<sup>26</sup> The melopoetics of fugue is therefore particularly concerned with a modern representation of fragmented selfhood, encapsulating the many polysemic references to “subject”: from music and literature to psychology.

In his masterpiece, *The Art of Fugue*, Bach wrote fourteen fugues and two canons as “an exploration in depth of the contrapuntal possibilities inherent in a single musical subject,”<sup>27</sup> where “subject,” for Bach, already flirted with the notions of “topic” and “selfhood.” Bach’s fifth son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, famously noted that Bach had transcribed himself as one of the subjects within his oeuvre, codifying his own name into the score via musical annotation, the following letters – now referred to as the Bach motif – appearing in counterpoint: B, A, C and B $\sharp$  (which corresponds to “H” in the German notation).<sup>28</sup> In literature, writing the self and one’s name into one’s work is fairly common practice, albeit less so in intermedial examples. I have argued elsewhere that Paul Verlaine in *Romances sans paroles* wrote the phonemes of his name into his poetry,<sup>29</sup> an example in line with what Italian Franco-Canadian poet, Alexandre Amprimoz, states in his work, *In Rome*, in which he transforms Ezra Pound’s contrapuntal birds in *The Cantos* into a “Sonata of the Birds”: “I am sure that the wish of every poet was to be remembered as a musical note.”<sup>30</sup> In Gide’s work, many characters demonstrate a conscious understanding of their disjointed sense of self and their complex relationship to others, such as Olivier who demonstrates how the subject – and especially the creative subject – is in constant flux, not to say constantly counterfeiting himself:

*Que cette question de la sincérité est irritante ! Sincérité ! Quand j'en parle, je ne songe qu'à sa sincérité à elle [Laura]. Si je me retourne*

*vers moi, je cesse de comprendre ce que ce mot veut dire. Je ne suis jamais que ce que je crois que je suis – et cela varie sans cesse, de sorte que souvent, si je n'étais là pour les accointer, mon être du matin ne reconnaîtrait pas celui du soir. Rien ne saurait être plus différent de moi, que moi-même.*<sup>31</sup>

How vexing this question of sincerity is! Sincerity! When I say the word I think only of her [Laura]. If it is myself that I consider, I cease to understand its meaning. I am never anything but what I think myself – and this varies so incessantly, that often, if I were not there to make them acquainted, my morning's self would not recognize my evening's. Nothing could be more different from me than myself.<sup>32</sup>

Olivier is under the illusion that he knows Laura, who is synonymous with sincerity and honesty, better than he knows himself, he who is questioning his sexuality and aesthetic abilities. And this is but one of many examples that demonstrate the fragmentation of the self, and particularly the figure of the novelist.

It could be fruitful to further address the correlation between notions of the self and fugue from a psychoanalytic perspective – particularly interesting given Gide was in analysis in 1921 –, with a particular focus on Jacques Lacan's Borromean Knot. The latter, which unites the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real – which parallels the tripartite definition of fugal counterpoint as subject, answer, countersubject – is a topology through which to think the subject, the Other, and their *jouissance*. Furthermore, Lacan's categories elaborate on the linguistic terms I related to polyphony, in which the paradigmatic is tied to the Symbolic realm and the syntagmatic to Lacan's classification of the Imaginary, leaving the impossible to the Real. Édouard's attempt to represent both the real and a stylized version of it seems to echo the dynamism of the Borromean Knot, not to mention the (nearly) blank page which embodies the idea of *plenum*. Joyce, whose "Sirens" episode in *Ulysses* was written as a literary fugue, is at the basis of Lacan's conception of the *sinthome* – fugaciously beyond meaning – which links the three rings in the Borromean Knot of his subjectivity. It seems only appropriate, in future scholarly investigations, to further explore this topology alongside fugue, and more specifically, the

limitations of language and intermediality's endeavor to represent it, since Gide and Joyce both revert to a musical form in order to supplement what is lacking in the novel.

### **(Un)writing the Self: Fugue and Destruction**

Although intermediality is commonly understood to be a creative intermingling of various arts, media, and techniques, it can also be destructive, breaking the boundaries between arts where one intrudes upon the other's sovereignty, breaking what Jean-Nicolas Illouz refers to as the hymen of the arts.<sup>33</sup> The choice to refer to voiceless music, for example, indicates the application of an *amimetic* art form onto a mimetic work, unraveling the semiotic strands of language no longer able to represent literary, poetic, philosophical, or social ideals. In order to break down language in an attempt to recreate it, and in turn, destroy the novel so it too may be reborn, Gide, not to mention Joyce and Mallarmé, evoke musical fugue. And Gide does so through the intrusion of what I call parasitic ekphrasis: one character evokes Bach's fugues and the possibility of recreating them in literature, and this plants the seed of destruction. From ekphrasis, here a description or comment related to a work of art in a novel, the allusion sprawlingly takes hold of the text, damaging a *normal* reading, and pushes readers in the direction of motifs and themes, as well as polyphony, in a work whose author nearly chose the professional path of piano playing over writing. Fugal poetics can therefore both supplement and destroy a literary work, and particularly so for Gide who felt a certain apathy while writing *The Counterfeiters*, feeling the need to renew his style and travel. In fact, he begins his famous voyage/fugue to the Congo upon completing *The Counterfeiters*.

Since language cannot ever actually become music, the actual process of suggesting novelistic and linguistic destruction needs to occur, paradoxically, through language itself, language that may echo or suggest musicality, as I have argued thus far. Roland Barthes, in "The Rustling of Language," describes language as a continuous machine incessantly stammering and rustling, much like speech, condemned to forever increase and expand, and something that can never be cancelled or omitted. Barthes explains that, in speech, it is impossible to literally

take something back, to cancel or annul what we have said; in an effort to do so, we are, on the contrary, condemned to speak more: to say we take something back only adds more layers to what has been said.<sup>34</sup> In literature, the author is at liberty to cross out, erase, and tear up what has been written; nonetheless, we must examine this from a diegetic perspective: Gide is performing language and writing in a *Künstlerroman*, a novel which narrates the self-development of an artist. To write the self, and the many selves, fragmented and unraveling as a theoretically infinite musical fugue, paradoxically becomes the destruction of writing through writing (musically), similar to the speaker's attempt to annul what has been said by only saying more.

To complicate this idea further, let us reconsider the paradigmatic axis that unites Gide and Édouard in modal counterpoint. If we focus on Gide's novel as a *mise-en-abîme*, then this vertical, descending narrative is destined to the abyss that is Édouard's *The Counterfeiters*, an un-novel, in which very little is written, but which he theorizes at length. In other words, the convoluted and non-linear narrative of *The Counterfeiters* eventually culminates in an unwritten novel, with the redaction and erasure of *The Counterfeiters*. These novelists and their works function as two sides of the same (counterfeited) coin, and they join in a tortuous way, as though both authors are caught in a Möbius strip, and *The Counterfeiters* is turned inside out. Such a spiral, not wholly unlike a tress, blurs notions of space and time, of a single plane becoming multidimensional, and an impossible distinction between inside and outside, between beginning and end. Such an image is most suitably represented in music by Bach's famous crab canon – the canon being the origin of fugue –, a musical sequence to be played front to back and back to front (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUHQ2ybTejU>).

### Having Your Novel and Loving it Too

Gide's *The Counterfeiters* ends with yet another annulment: the forced suicide of young Boris, the illegitimate grandson of La Pérouse, the piano teacher in the novel who narrates the ekphrases related to Bach's fugues on several occasions. Boris, who was mentally unstable, begins a new class, but in a forced initiation ritual, he shoots himself. Scott Branson underlines that Édouard in his *The Counterfeiters* does not

include the suicide in his version:

Without exactly pretending to explain anything, I should not like to put forward any fact which was not accounted for by a sufficiency of motive. And for that reason I shall not make use of little Boris's suicide for my Counterfeiters; I have too much difficulty in understanding it. And then, I dislike "*faits divers*." There is something peremptory, irrefutable, brutal, outrageously real about them... I accept reality coming as a proof in support of my thought, but not as preceding it.<sup>35</sup>

Édouard's refusal to write Boris' death into his work is first of all an impossibility to understand the event and the motives behind those responsible. Secondly, he is not only incapable of representing the event in its own right, but his attempt to stylize it – as is his novelistic goal with the real – is entirely out of the picture. Branson explains that Gide wants to have his cake and eat it too: [B]y placing this "outrageously real" event in his own novel, Gide tries to have it both ways: he simultaneously represents and refuses to represent reality in the form of Boris's death."<sup>36</sup> Once again, these two aesthetic and arguably psychoanalytic goals seem irreconcilable, almost cancelling each other out in a warped (a)mimetic novel that performs subjective becoming, and which arguably gestures towards the real, a stylization of the real, and the Lacanian Real in the (un)writing of the self thanks to the musico-literariness of fugue.

As the fugue is theoretically endless, to conclude seems inappropriate. In order to spiral into yet another direction, I end by echoing the title of Cindy Zeiher and Todd McGowan's collection, *Can Philosophy Love?: Reflections and Encounters* (2017), by asking: beyond desire, what is the relation between the novel and love, hidden love, love for self and for the Other? Is love a symptom of the novel? To return to the BACH motif – the immortalizing inscription of the composer's name into his work – I note the cryptogram of LOVE present in the very nomenclature NOVEL, without forgetting this is Gide's first novel. Rearranging the letters in "novel" offers us "love," and the same goes for its French counterpart: *roman* also hides *amor* – the French spelling for *amour* up to the Renaissance. In both cases, all that remains is the "n" of negation. It seems that, in French and in English at least, the novel

already contains the seeds of its own destruction and creation.

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<sup>1</sup> Gide, André. *Les Faux-monnayeurs*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997: 243.

<sup>2</sup> My translation.

<sup>3</sup> This article stems from an initial study I conducted on the textually fugal elements in *The Counterfeiters*. For an expanded breakdown of definitions and examples, see: "Fuir la complétude ou Le métarécit intermédiaire des *Faux-monnayeurs*," *Voix plurielles*, Vol. 12.2, 2014: 53-63.

<sup>4</sup> Baty-Delalande, Hélène, Ed., *André Gide, Les Faux-monnayeurs Relectures*, Paris: publie, 2013: 20. Accessed Dec. 10, 2018, <https://www.publie.net/wp-content/uploads/extraits/baty-gide-extrait.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Gide, 233-234. Italics are from the original.

<sup>6</sup> My translation.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 88.

<sup>8</sup> My translation.

<sup>9</sup> Gide, *Journal des Faux-monnayeurs*, 55.

<sup>10</sup> My translation.

<sup>11</sup> In his 1893 *Journal*, Gide employs the term for the first time in relation to painting: "une 'mise en abîme' ou mise en place au centre d'une oeuvre d'une autre version du sujet 'à l'échelle des personnages'" (Morrisette, Bruce. *Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet*, Préface de Roland Barthes, Nouvelle édition augmentée. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1963: 117.

<sup>12</sup> Zimmerman, Nadya. "Musical Form as Narrator: The Fugue of the Sirens in James Joyce's *Ulysses*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 26.1 (2002): 110.

<sup>13</sup> For further reading on this topic, see André Gédalge's *Traité de la fugue: 1re partie: De la fugue d'école*. Paris: Enoch & cie., 1901.

<sup>14</sup> Pound, Ezra. *How to Read*, London: Harmsworth, 1931: 53.

<sup>15</sup> Davis, Kay. *Fugue and Fresco: Structures in Pound's Cantos*. Orono: National Poetry Foundation, University of Maine at Orono, 1984: 76.

<sup>16</sup> Bucknell, Brad. *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce and Stein*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2001: 60.

<sup>17</sup> Arroyas, Frédérique. *La lecture musico-littéraire: À l'écoute de Passacaille de Robert Pinget et de Fugue de Roger Laporte*. Montréal: Presses universitaires de Montréal, 2001.

<sup>18</sup> For more information on theme and motif constructions, beyond Wagnerian leitmotif, see: Falk, Eugene H. *Types of Thematic Structure: The Nature and Function of Motifs in Gide, Camus, and Sartre*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1967.

<sup>19</sup> Barthes, Roland. *Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits*. Paris: Seuil, 1981: 15.

<sup>20</sup> Barthes, Roland and Lionel Duisit. "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative," *New Literary History*, Vol. 6, No. 2, On Narrative and Narratives (Winter, 1975): 255.

<sup>21</sup> Gide, *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, 129.

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- <sup>22</sup> Gide, André. *The Coiners*. Trans., Dorothy Bussy, New York: Random House, 1952: 66.
- <sup>23</sup> Jakobson, Roman. *Essais de linguistique générale*. Paris : Minuit, 1963: 220.
- <sup>24</sup> In Elizabeth Roudinesco, Jacques Lacan & Co., *A History of Psychoanalysis in France 1925-1985*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, University of Chicago, 1990: pp. 91-92, the authors link the character of Madame Soproniska to Eugénie Sokolnicka, Gide's psychoanalyst in 1921. Other characters were believed to represent Jean Cocteau (Count de Passavant), Marc Allégret (Olivier), and Gide's wife Madeleine (Laura).
- <sup>25</sup> Zimmerman, 109.
- <sup>26</sup> Baudelaire, Charles. "Le peintre de la vie modern," 1885. Accessed 10 December 2018, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Le\\_Peintre\\_de\\_la\\_vie\\_moderne/IV](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_Peintre_de_la_vie_moderne/IV). My translation.
- <sup>27</sup> Wolff, Christoph. *Johann Sebastian Bach, the Learned Musician*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2000: 433.
- <sup>28</sup> Zimmerman, 109.
- <sup>29</sup> Viselli, Antonio. « Paul Verlaine et le langage fuyant des oiseaux », *TRANS-revue de littérature générale et comparée* (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris-3), n° 24, 2015. Accessed Dec. 10, 2018, <http://trans.revues.org/1028#bodyftn10>
- <sup>30</sup> Amprimoz, Alexandre. *In Rome*. Toronto: Three Tree Press, 1980: 23.
- <sup>31</sup> Gide, 89.
- <sup>32</sup> Gide, Trans., Bussy, 83.
- <sup>33</sup> Ilouz, Jean-Nicolas. "L'Après-midi d'un faune et l'interprétation des arts: Mallarmé, Manet, Debussy, Gauguin, Nijinski." 2012/4. 168: 3-20. Accessed Nov. 25, 2018. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-litterature-2012-4-page-3.htm>. Ilouz underlines the impenetrability of the arts: music which suggests music never actually becomes music. I argue that an intermedial form of writing can indeed be destructive, especially when an amimetic form is applied to literature.
- <sup>34</sup> Barthes, Roland. *Le Bruissement de la langue, Essais critique IV*, Paris: Seuil, 77.
- <sup>35</sup> Branson, Scott. "Gide, Wilde, and the Death of the Novel," *MLN*, Volume 127, Number 5, December 2012 (Comparative Literature Issue): 1226. This is his modified translation.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 1227.