**Gide Seminar Two**

Before the seminar:

‘that basic conflict which was so constant a preoccupation in Gide’s work – between l’être and le paraître, between the real self and the mask, between true motives, which often lie hidden in the self-conscious, and apparent ones, which we deceive ourselves into regarding as real and which make unconscious hypocrites of us all’ (J.C. Davies, Gide: *L’Immoraliste* and *La Porte étroite*, p. 28).

Bearing Davies’s description of ‘l’être and le paraître’ in mind, how might we piece together a portrait of Michel and his narrative? To what extent is he at points self-delusional, narcissistic, lucid, egotistical, self-justificatory? You could look at the following extracts. Think about both the content and form of what he’s saying – you could consider vocabulary, use of tense, punctuation…

p. 47-p.48 (end of Part I, ch. III), ‘J’avais oublié que j’étais seul’ to ‘l’esprit engourdi de bonheur’

p. 105-106 (part II, ch. II) ‘Pourtant je n’aurais pas su dire ni ce que j’entendais par *vivre’*…to ‘ je disais la Culture, née de la vie, tuant la vie’.

pp. 155-56 (part III, ch I) ‘Teifenkasten, le Julier, Samaden… je me souviens de tout’ to ‘Enfin nous arrivons’.

pp. 162-63 (part III, ch I) ‘Bien qu’elle se reposât sur moi […]’ to ‘qui dira combien de passions et combien de pensées enemies peuvent cohabiter en l’homme…’?

**Further questions for discussion:**

What is the function of the scenes at La Morinière, which bookend Part II? (chapters 1 and 3)

Comment on the character of Marceline, and on the nature of the relationship between Michel and his wife.

Comment on the closing paragraphs of L’Immoraliste, from p. 179, ‘Michel resta longtemps silencieux’ to p. 182, ‘Peut-être a-t-elle un peu raison’. How do they compare and contrast with the framing devices at the beginning of the narrative that we looked at last week?