

Bachelors, Bastards, and Nomadic Masculinity

Bachelors, Bastards, and Nomadic Masculinity:
Illegitimacy in Guy de Maupassant and André Gide

By

Robert M. Fagley

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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I dedicate this book to my mother, Vera, the most authentic person I know.

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PREFACE

I would like to thank all of my friends and family for their support during the writing of this book and all the years of wandering leading up to its completion. Firstly, I thank my friends and colleagues, past and present, at the University of Pittsburgh, especially Giuseppina Mecchia, Todd Reeser, Scott Kiesling, Lina Insana, and Monica Losagio. Dr. Mecchia deserves special thanks for all of her time, work and advice. Dr. Reeser remains a strong theoretical influence on my work, and I am grateful to have been able to work with him. I must also acknowledge the role of Eva Tsuquiashi-Daddesio at Slippery Rock University, whose mentorship has been invaluable for many years.

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INTRODUCTION

“L’enfant naturel a en général les mêmes droits et les mêmes devoirs que l’enfant légitime dans ses rapports avec ses pères et mères... Il entre dans la famille de son auteur.” (Code civil, 1972, loi de 3 janvier)

When the law of January 3, 1972 was passed in France, it assured the legal equality of legitimate and illegitimate children alike. This law expresses the juridical end of illegitimacy as a basis for the long-standing privation of inheritance, financial support, and basic needs, suffered by illegitimate children in France. Of present importance is the law’s reference to a child’s “author” (*auteur*). While the illegitimate child’s rights and duties are explained to be equal to that of a legitimate child, specifically in relation to both that child’s male and female relatives (“ses pères et ses mères”), the “family” to which the child belongs is specifically that of the child’s *auteur*, the father. With this consideration of the family as specifically that of the *father*, the importance of a person’s biological sexual identification remains capital for their role within the traditional family, even while the law provides for equality between legitimate and illegitimate children of unspecified gender. Because of the inherent paternal nature of the law’s language, one may consider the privileging of the father-son relation in family law and custom as one that began with Roman law, and continues even today thanks to the law presently discussed¹.

The appellation “bâtard,” despite its generally negative connotation throughout French history in reference to bastard blood and impure lineage, is used throughout this book without moral implications in reference to children born of unwed parents. Another important term used in French for illegitimate children is *enfant naturel*; this expression, which has less of a negative connotation, is often found in both literary and legal texts, whereas “bâtard,” when referring to a child, is less commonly found in legal discourse. The various “bastard” characters to be discussed in the following chapters are all male; there are a few reasons for this choice. Firstly, the system of male-centered primogeniture prevalent throughout most of French history inherently values male children over females, thereby making the question of illegitimacy of more consequence for male bastards than for females. This is not to say that illegitimate daughters did

not have their share of problems due to their legal familial status. Many of the material disadvantages of being an illegitimate child were suffered equally by male and female bastards, particularly the disadvantages related to being raised in poverty by a single mother. But because even legitimate French daughters lacked many of the legal rights also denied to bastard sons, illegitimacy quite simply represented a greater drawback for sons than for daughters.

Secondly, the study of bastardy, with specific attention paid to the illegitimate son, allows me to analyze different ideals of masculinity associated with legitimate sons of different classes, as well as how those ideals are often viewed in literature as unrealized and “bastardized” in the illegitimate son. While there is undoubtedly work to be done in the study of illegitimacy as it pertains to female bastards, I choose to incorporate, not only gender-based methodologies used for feminist criticism, but also critical work specific to the study of masculinity. “Men’s studies,” or more accurately here, the study of masculinities, presently encompasses a wide number of critical methodologies used in anthropology, sociology, criminology, and literary criticism, to name only a few of the most prevalent fields for such study. This book is meant to be, in its own way, a contribution to this branch of gender studies.

Questions of il/legitimacy in France during the period from about 1870-1914 are uniquely important in social debate for a handful of reasons, stemming mostly from social, economic and historical events such as industrialization, and the Franco-Prussian War (1870), and from the socio-legal transformations provoked by improved women’s rights and the re-legalization of divorce (1884). According to Annelise Mauge, it is also during this period that masculinity in France finds itself “in crisis.”² Part of this perceived crisis is the social evolution that accompanied industrialization in Western Europe; the employment of women in industry and the increasingly migratory nature of labor together contribute to a devaluation of traditional family structures, favoring the interests of production. These historical conditions contribute not only to the number of illegitimate children fathered during this time, but also to the creation of a sustained and increasingly developed bachelor culture, in France as in other industrializing Western nations³. This economic current is directly opposed, however, by national social pressure following the Franco-Prussian War to procreate within marriage in order to repopulate the decimated nation following 1870. Because bio-politics is so essential to understanding the spirit of this time period, both bachelors and bastards, in their exclusion from the structure of the legitimate family, are of prime

interest and provide important insights into the fragility of such supposedly legitimate institutions.

The French bachelor during the period, for his part, was considered a transitional figure in society, a man in formation, temporarily free and expected to eventually join the ranks of married French men and fathers; when bachelors put off marrying or refused to do so, however, another problem is posed. Scholar Katherine Snyder describes the gender problematic of the bachelor, a social type with important ties to illegitimacy, with relation to social change in the late nineteenth century:

This explosion of popular bachelor discourse attests to the uneven developments that cultural ideologies and institutions of marriage and domesticity were undergoing during this era of rapid urbanization, industrialization, and modernization. Bachelors were a troubling presence within and beyond the already troubled world of the bourgeois family home.

Bachelor trouble was, fundamentally, gender trouble. While they were often seen as violating gendered norms, bachelors were sometimes contradictorily thought to incarnate the desires and identifications of hegemonic bourgeois manhood.⁴

This seeming contradiction is not as paradoxical as it might seem, and considering the bachelor figure as an incarnation of hegemonic bourgeois masculinity is, in fact, misleading; the desires and identifications embodied in the bachelor must be specified, and are not exclusively those of the bourgeoisie, nor of any single social class. According to Snyder, the bachelor in French society was troublesome to the institution of marriage as well as to gender norms, while at the same time exemplifying in some way, “hegemonic bourgeois manhood,” although I would argue that the identifications of the bachelor cannot be strictly limited to bourgeois variants of masculinity; other classes must be taken into consideration, but in literature, we are often limited in our options by the narratives available. The hegemonic masculinity in question would have much more to do with the bachelor’s violation of socially established gender norms than with his desire and freedom to act upon that desire. Bourgeois gender norms limiting male promiscuity via the dictates of the institution of marriage are often at odds with seemingly “natural” sexual desire. Desire, being irreducible to an expression of hegemonic (masculine) gender identity, must rather be considered as a wider, if not universal, impulse. Socially accepted outlets for such desire, however, are another matter.

Any discussion of “bachelors” and what this word designates among different social groups is problematized by various factors beyond

etymology, namely law and social norms pertaining to gender and sexuality. Most mentions of “bachelors” as such in historical and sociological texts depart from an image of the bachelor as a young man who has not yet been committed to a heterosexual marriage, destined to fathering as many legitimate children as possible. This is why the heteronormative definition of marriage and the resulting definition of the bachelor are problematic to the term’s use as a categorizer for all unmarried men. Nevertheless, I persist in using the term “bachelor” for any unmarried man, while remaining conscious of the social realities that force homosexual men to remain life-long bachelors, in a legal sense, except for those who marry a woman, whatever the motivation. The identifications of the bachelor must be defined in contrast to what he is not: the married man; the bachelor is relatively unbound, independent from familial and conjugal restraints, and is more or less free to express his desire as he wishes, provided that no class barriers are crossed. Social reality allowed this, if expectations did not, and the relative sexual liberty of young unmarried men is often the source of nostalgia in married men of any class for this life stage. The bachelor, quite simply, embodies the behaviors other men might prefer for themselves, yet are prevented from displaying.

Since bachelors and bastards are both defined by their place within or without the institution of marriage, one might say that they are “fictions,” artificially created and maintained by a patriarchal social order; bachelors can still be genuine fathers, if not legitimate, after all, and bastards are still sons. The compelling nature of these two fictionalized figures assures them crucial roles in modern French literature. Questions of paternity, legitimacy, and authenticity infiltrate numerous literary and social discourses of the late nineteenth century, as we will see in detail. If one retains the equivocation made in the earlier-mentioned law which equates the “father” with the “author,” one may extend the comparison to equate the “son” with the “text”; this overlying metaphor will serve as a thematic key for much of this book. The “illegitimate” son in literature, then, may be considered as representative of wider discourses concerning “textual paternity.”

While the law of January 3 purports to dissolve the stigma of the bastard child, the legislation’s rather late arrival attests to the fact that conceptions of “illegitimacy” in French families carry with them centuries of social custom and prejudice that would not be completely discarded in the relatively short number of years since the law. The question of illegitimacy before 1972 is tied to a number of other subjects of social and legal debate, perhaps most closely to divorce and women’s rights,

manifesting itself in fiction, theater, legal texts or social commentary. Laws concerning the rights of illegitimate children saw various shifts, as did divorce laws, particularly during the revolutionary era and the reign of Bonaparte. Discourses of il/legitimacy provide a unique lens with which to analyze literary, cultural, sexual, political, and gender discourses as well. In the following book, I consider a wide variety of illegitimacies, counterfeits and bastards, primarily in works of fiction by authors André Gide and Guy de Maupassant, roughly from the period spanning from 1880 to 1925.

Maupassant and Gide: Unlikely Bed-Fellows

In this book, I limit my primary textual sources to what I refer to as the “bastard narratives” of Maupassant and Gide for a number of reasons; the two writers, contemporaries yet representatives of very different literary styles and periods, depict bastards in drastically different ways and in different social milieus, each author with his respective focus and artistic investment.

Before detailing the foundations, structure, and content of the chapters to follow, I am compelled to explain in more detail the reasons and motivation for including these two writers in particular in what may seem at first to be a comparative research study. Firstly, although the comparisons that will be drawn between by Maupassant and Gide are not intended to be merely biographical or stylistic, the two men do have in common complicated personal experiences with regard to illegitimacy, paternity and to the family in general. Gide, for example, lost his father at age eleven. His mother, in turn, heaped her every attention on the boy; her love, as George D. Painter comments, “closed round him with a domination and apprehension she had neither needed nor dare show towards her husband.”⁵ Gide’s paternal grandfather, Tancrède Gide, who helped to raise young André after his father’s death, provided an austere and pious Huguenot model of masculinity for his grandson: a model that was no longer compatible with nor desirable for André, especially after his (homo)sexual awakening during his time in Algeria, his first trip there occurring in 1893.

Maupassant’s often-absent father, on the other hand, is widely considered responsible in great part for his son’s particular views of cuckoldry and adultery. Critic A.H. Wallace reiterates the importance of Maupassant’s father (or at least of his absence), in the young writer’s opinions of paternity:

A strong paternal influence in [Maupassant's] life would certainly have affected his attitude toward husbands and fathers. As it turned out, it is fortunate for us and for the son that the father did not excel in the paternal role. Maupassant's quest for a father was an important aspect of his career.⁶

Whether or not Maupassant's father's failings were "fortunate" for the son is perhaps up for debate, but it is certain that issues of paternity, (failed) fathers and (cuckolded) husbands provide the material for many of the writer's greatest works.

Despite certain similarities, the two writers differ drastically in other ways; Maupassant (1850-1893), while only nineteen years older than Gide (1869-1951), recalls a much different literary tradition than the latter. Maupassant received his formation as a writer among the Médan group, and was of course mentored by his stand-in "father figure," Gustave Flaubert, himself a representative of the end of French romanticism and the rise of French realism.⁷ Maupassant never professed his allegiance to any school of literature, nor to any ready-made ideology, although he is now widely considered a naturalist, a label he would have most likely rejected; many of Maupassant's bastard narratives, however, reflect a clearly naturalist sensibility. His friend Émile Zola's brand of *experimental* naturalism never effectively attracted Maupassant, the latter preferring to detail his own literary philosophy without ever feeling the need to give it a novel label.⁸ It is in the preface of Maupassant's novel, *Pierre et Jean*, that the author expresses his views on literary production, in a short essay criticizing the seemingly mandatory classification of contemporary works of fiction, as well as certain aspects of literary realism: "Le réaliste, s'il est artiste, cherchera, non pas à nous montrer la photographie banale de la vie, mais à nous en donner la vision plus complète, plus saisissante, plus probante que la réalité même."⁹ This view of realism, favoring truth over detailed verisimilitude, also describes Gide's vision of the writer's tendency to forgo strict realistic description in favor of a more essentialized narrative style. The bachelor-hero Tytyre of Gide's *Paludes* embodies the essentializing and occasionally symbolist narrative vision of his writer/creator at the time. The writer-narrator of *Paludes* explains that his Tytyre is a *célibataire* "*pour plus de simplicité*"; he reveals later, however that the character is based on his friend Richard, a husband and father¹⁰. The narrator explains that he has no need to include Richard's family in his book, since they all suffer from the same monotony and boring lifestyle. The essential nature of Tytyre, Richard, and the narrator himself, is one of fixity, of immobility; the story of *Paludes* is "spécialement l'histoire de qui ne peut pas voyager"¹¹. These three

versions of the “man in the tower,” regardless of marital status, are all representative of the same *ennui*, a boredom shared by these men who are all limited, or territorialized, to a confined field, whether literally or symbolically, by a sense of duty; that duty may be towards a family, a parcel of land or territory, or to a literary vocation or project. It is for this reason, Tytyre’s symbolic yet arbitrary bachelorhood, that *Paludes* is not considered here as one of Gide’s primary bachelor figures.

Both Gide and Maupassant express identifiable traits of historic literary schools through their bastard narratives; Maupassant’s treatment of illegitimacy reflects his particular idea of realism, and Gide’s bastards and bachelors embody the modernist nature reflective of his later work. In Gide’s *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, for example, Édouard, a writer, implies that the novel as a genre exists outside of rules and legality, describing it in the following manner:

Est-ce parce que, de tous les genres littéraires, discourait Édouard, le roman reste le plus libre, le plus *lawless*..., est-ce peut-être pour cela, par peur de cette liberté même (...) que le roman, toujours, s’est si craintivement cramonné à la réalité ?¹²

Édouard’s question is an accusation of the realist novel, suggesting that the realist author is frightened by the novel’s propensity for “lawlessness.” In claiming that the novel is the most free and lawless literary genre, he implies that the modernist novel represents such lawlessness better than does the realist novel, which in contrast implies a fearfully strict adhesion to the representation of reality. To interpret this passage in relation to bastardy, I suggest that modernism within the genre of the French novel, as it is represented by Gide, holds a position similar to that of bastards within the social hierarchy; both challenge hegemonic conventions and may be considered “outlaws” in various senses. While this comparison can only be taken so far, modernist literature represents a clear yet complex example of “bastard language,” language that exists beyond the rules of realism and with which modernist writers, Gide for example, employ to dethrone literary realism as the dominant style. As the modernist novel gains in legitimacy, it is reterritorialized onto a space of literary acceptance, of institutionalized legitimacy. We will see Gide’s bastard Bernard for example, who has access to a similar sort of freedom as that of the novelist in that he is allowed to reterritorialize and remain tied to a social collective, making a new space within a canon of traditional norms. One of the central suppositions of my book is that the literary bastard’s transformation and eventual valorization, particularly in Gide, mirrors a shift from pre-modernist to modernist French literature.

Critic Jean-Joseph Goux discusses the metaphor of the counterfeit coin in Gide, and of realist language as “gold language”: “the basis for realist and expressive mechanisms of classical representation has been succeeded by the present age of ‘token-language’ with its vanishing frames of reference and floating signifiers.”¹³ Goux posits modernist language in the position of “token language,” having no intrinsic value, representing nothing. In Gide’s case, the questioning of the legitimacy of “gold coins” such as pre-modernist language (as difficult to define as that may be), law, patriarchy and religion, helps to define the modernist novelist and the bastard hero, and will eventually lead to their acceptance as “good money.” Gide’s bastards represent both social outsiders as well as a new brand of modern individual, relatively free from rigid social norms when compared to legitimate sons.

Themes in Theory

The variety of themes treated in the three parts of this book requires equally varied theoretical treatments from a handful of disciplines and methodologies. The theme of each principle section alludes to the respective methodology employed to treat it. In Part I, “Bachelors, Bastards and Seduction,” the focus on the bachelor figure, and his implications in instances of illegitimacy, is most importantly inspired by Charles Stivale’s work on Maupassant and the “bachelor machine,” as well as by the theoretical works of Deleuze and Guattari that influenced it. Part II owes its title to André Gide’s novel, *The Counterfeiters* (*Les Faux-monnayeurs*, 1925), but its initial theoretical approach to Jean-Joseph Goux’s book on the same novel, *The Coiners of Language* (1994). In this present study, the “coining” metaphor is translated to treat an array of types of illegitimacy. Part III of my book focuses on the bastard’s freedom from the imperatives of the hegemonic social order, particularly the bastard’s tendency toward a “nomadic” existence outside of the institutions of the State which favor “legitimate” families and regulate morality and sexuality. Deleuze and Guattari provide a theoretical frame for this particular discussion with their chapter on “nomadology” in *A Thousand Plateaus*.¹⁴ Ben Knights and Wolfram Schmidgen provide the concepts of “male narratives” and the bastard’s “liminality” respectively, contributing to my argument concerning the bastard’s freedom and the possibility of a practice of “nomadic” masculinity.¹⁵

Difficult to narrowly categorize, this research project is of course foregrounded by existing work in gender studies from numerous sources and sub-disciplines. My treatment of illegitimacy is, overall, greatly

informed as well by socio-historical work by individuals such as Rachel Fuchs, by socio-cultural analyses like Robert Nye's book on male honor in France, and Howard P. Chudacoff's work on bachelorhood in America, and also by research in sexual ethnology by Edward Shorter and others. Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, a recurring influence in my research, provides an essential socio-sexual and biopolitical framework for the whole of my research.

Important to this project are a handful of terms which are given very specific meanings and connotations by the theorists and writers who frame this discussion. Here I present some of the most central terms and their theoretical context. Firstly, my use of Michel Foucault's work in this study is based primarily on *The History of Sexuality*; the term "degenerescence" and the concept of "the deployment of sexuality" are used here with the same meaning as he employs. Eventual references to the "war machine" or "bachelor machine" are made in the context of *A Thousand Plateaus*, but also with regard to Charles Stivale's book, *The Art of Rupture*, a skillful treatment of Maupassant and his work, thematically based on Maupassant's *chronique*, "L'art de rompre."¹⁶ The "art of rupture" is the prospective theory, anticipated and called for by Maupassant, according to which men may remain safe and free from the traps of marriage and of commitment to clingy, demanding lovers, the most dangerous of which are represented by Maupassant as the real-life women, married or not, who raised a roar in Parisian society in the 1880s by throwing vitriol (sulfuric acid) in the face of unfaithful lovers and their consorts. Stivale develops this "art of rupture" into a methodological device for examining a variety of narratives by Maupassant: "Maupassant's discourse of rupture thus presents the male-female relationship as a constant struggle, one in which male pleasure, comfort, and, above all, freedom are of utmost importance."¹⁷

References made here to "homosociality," or "homosocial" rapports or activities, are understood as they are used in Eve Sedgwick's classic work, *Between Men*.¹⁸ Sedgwick discusses "homosociality" as the way that same-sex social bonds lead to one man or woman helping or promoting the interest of a member of the same sex. The mutual desire to help another of the same sex is, according to Sedgwick, related to feminism for women, and to patriarchy for men. References to "triangulation" and "triangles of illegitimacy" are made to and adapted from recent research by Todd Reeser from his book, *Masculinities in Theory*.¹⁹ Reeser, drawing inspiration from Sedgwick, considers same-sex social relationships, or "homosocial" relationships, as they contribute to the dynamics of "love triangles." I relate Reeser's reading of triangulation to "triangles" of illegitimacy in which two male elements, one representing a State

apparatus and one an agent of a bachelor machine, are put into relation with each other through their shared link with a woman, the mother of a natural child. I will focus on the development of this conception of triangulation, and how it is put into dialogue with certain aspects of male honor, specifically how honor codes dictate perceptions and performances of bourgeois masculinity in the domain of sexuality. In the preface to his book, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*, Robert Nye defines honor as a “masculine concept”:

[Honor] has traditionally regulated relations among men, summed up the prevailing ideals of manliness, and marked the boundaries of masculine comportment. Its codes sprang from the social and political arrangements of male-dominated warrior societies in which the possession of honor, together with its wealth and perquisites, was essential for elite status.²⁰

The bourgeois class of the nineteenth century, in its quest for “elite status” as Nye puts it, adopted codes of honor similar to those of the dissipating noble class. The poorer classes no doubt had their own honor systems, but the bourgeois had its own code appropriate to its particular reproductive and social strategies. The wealth accumulated by the newly dominant middle class had to be coupled with some manifestation of traditional honorability in order to legitimate, sustain and augment its social and economic superiority. Since commerce replaced war as the primary vocation of the prevailing social class, it was more commonly in this public realm that bourgeois men asserted their masculinity, rather than on the battlefield. A man’s sexuality, however, remains a vehicle for masculine performance and duty in private life well into and beyond the nineteenth century. Moreover, sexuality was and remains essential to masculine identity regardless of social rank.

Michel Foucault discusses what he calls “a *deployment of alliance*: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions,” which existed universally prior to the eighteenth century (Foucault’s emphasis).²¹ Foucault then details what he calls the “deployment of sexuality” beginning to supplant the former system in the eighteenth century in Western societies. Rather than simply maintaining and reproducing social and power relations, as did the system of alliance, the deployment of sexuality “engenders a continual extension of areas and forms of control.”²² This expansion was accomplished, in his view, by a special focus on the body and sensation, the family being its primary agent. Foucault argues against the idea of a repression of lower-class sexuality by the bourgeoisie, implying that the deployment of sexuality was implemented by the bourgeois family on itself as a means of

creating “a ‘class’ body with its health, hygiene, descent, and race: the autosexualization of its body, the incarnation of sex in its body, the endogamy of sex and the body.”²³

With this “deployment” came a fixation on heredity: not merely the importance of marriage alliances, economics and inheritance, but the hereditary dangers posed by defects in the family line, both real (disease) and presumed (bad morals). Sexuality, then, had to conform to this project by maintaining and reproducing heirs who were reliable, healthy, and legitimate. Robert Nye points out that “[b]ecause their fortunes were dependent not simply on inheritance, but on viable and talented *inheritors*, there was much more at stake in marriage and reproduction for bourgeois families than there had been for Old Regime nobles.”²⁴ So the capacity for not only reproduction, but the reproduction of capable offspring, was paramount for the prosperity, reputation and honor of a family.

Sexuality for the bourgeoisie, in its many manifestations, also has the potential to undermine popular morality, provoking behavior which can damage the bourgeois social structure, and thereby male honor. The class endogamy described by Foucault makes marriage between social classes unthinkable, but leaves little reason to believe that inter-class sexual relations might stop. In fact, bourgeois reproductive strategies, while preventing inter-class marriage, promote illegitimacy within the lower classes with the help of French law, specifically divorce law, and the abolition of the law allowing paternity suits, or *recherche en paternité*.²⁵ Yvonne Knibiehler points out how the Civil Code guarantees that all children born into a legal marriage are considered legitimate, thus liberating men (and their reputations) from the potential consequences of a wife’s adultery: “En affirmant tranquillement que l’enfant né dans le mariage a pour père le mari, le Code civil confirme, consolide, l’émancipation de l’homme par rapport au dire féminin, émancipation que le mariage chrétien avait déjà instituée.”²⁶ Paradoxically, this law also legitimated bastards, unless a husband wished to contest his own paternity, a practice which was facilitated for men if not for women.

In these bourgeois reproductive strategies, combined with the double standard of a contradictory toleration of male promiscuity, one uncovers the oppositional yet cooperative rapport between State-sanctioned male sexuality (moderate, within marriage, and focusing on reproduction) and the rebellious sexuality characteristic of the bachelor (immoderate, outside of marriage, and centered on male freedom). Two stories by Maupassant are examined that treat two extremes of male sexuality which are central to understanding bourgeois masculinity: sterility and promiscuity, both of which are problematized by Maupassant particularly. While one extreme is

medical and the other is behavioral, both represent aspects of sexuality which can bring dishonor to a family, and each has varying effects from one social class to another.

Three Thematic Views of Illegitimacy

Part I of my book extends the discussion of illegitimacy to include the study of bachelorhood and the role of bachelors in seduction, chiefly in “bastard narratives.” This study is particularly framed within a socio-economic context that simultaneously encourages marriage and values the bachelor as a mobile worker. Bachelor sexuality is double in that the refusal to marry and procreate, at least within that marriage, makes the bachelor a threat to social reproduction and to the legitimate family, but his sexual liberty and tolerated promiscuity reflect another masculine ideal: that of the virile “lady-killer.” The bachelor’s performance of an aggressively heterosexual masculinity is often central in Maupassant’s fiction, whereas Gide’s bachelors often embody a somewhat anachronistic pederastic ideal, demonstrating Gide’s views of homosexuality. For Maupassant in particular, notions of masculinity and its performance, particularly through sexuality, contribute at times to a strengthened family structure, and at other times to the noncommittal male behavior involved in Stivale’s understanding of Maupassant’s “art of rupture.” Seduction is an essential factor in both of these possible opposed outcomes for the French male during the time period studied in this present work. While the act of seduction may have a member of either sex as its object, the majority and most problematic cases in Maupassant’s *œuvre* are instances of a man seducing a victimized female. In Gide, however, the privileged form of seduction is much different, as will become clear. Motives of seduction include pure desire, the pursuit of a marriage partner, social advancement, revenge, as well as many others and combinations of several. What remains undeniable is that seduction is central to the “art of rupture,” greasing the wheels of the “bachelor machine.” Stivale’s important book on the “art of rupture” and aspects of it as “functions of a *war machine*” generously inform my study of illegitimacy and masculinity. In his work, he incorporates previous exploration of the “bachelor machine” via the work of Jean Borie, Michel Carrouges and Deleuze and Guattari.²⁷ Stivale discusses the “bachelor machine” particularly in its reference to a new social class of men:

This concept allows us to envisage the diversity of artistic and literary relations within the staging of “class as entertainment” in a manner that

may enrich our understanding of the multiplicity of subject-positions located in this socioeconomic and sociosexual field of representation.²⁸

Every person is a cog in the bachelor machine then, playing a role in the “staging of ‘class as entertainment.’” The social diversity of Maupassant’s narratives therefore provides an ideal staging ground for Stivale’s illustration of the “bachelor machine.”

It is essential to frame Part I of this book with a clear idea of what is inferred by the word “seduction,” and how the forms of seduction will vary from instance to instance. The etymological Latin root of the word, *seducere*, is defined as to “lead away” or to “lead astray.” In most modern uses, seduction carries an overwhelmingly sexual connotation. More classical instances of seduction, or rape in the older sense of “carrying away” (Latin *rapere*), such as the famous historical abduction of the Sabine women, may not have directly sexual implications, but often imply a later if not immediate sexual aspect. The instances of seduction discussed in Part I will fall into several possible categories: its modern connotation of incitement to sexual intercourse, and its less current meanings of “leading away,” and “corrupting.” While seduction in Maupassant is overwhelmingly sexual, Gide’s bachelors perform types of seduction that are much more tied to the meaning of “carrying away,” in a less obviously and not necessarily sexual manner.

What Stivale’s examination of bachelors lacks is any consideration of the homosexual, who is admittedly absent in Maupassant’s fiction. Stivale defines the bachelor machine as one that “serves to link an array of duplicitous male celibatory practices that provide further insight into the deployment of the art of rupture in Maupassant’s fiction.”²⁹ “Male celibatory practices” involve essentially male/female relations, generally with at least some degree of sexual activity. Stivale’s conception of the bachelor machine as an illustration of Maupassant’s art of rupture also does little to treat the different types of bachelors, namely the bachelor as a life stage and the bachelor as a character type. For Gide, it is often a question of the “confirmed bachelor,” a common if now dated euphemism for a gay male bachelor. Such nuances, relatively unimportant and unnecessary for Stivale’s treatment of Maupassant, will prove crucial to my treatment of André Gide’s work.

The first part of my book will also invoke and apply a new concept for the study of bastardy and paternity: triangulations of illegitimacy. My main objectives are: to elaborate the different manifestations and roles of the narrative (and narrating) bachelor in Maupassant and Gide’s fiction, to demonstrate how the embodied bachelor, as agent of a bachelor machine, may produce (and even embody) illegitimacy, and how the seductive

behaviors associated with it hinder “normalized” paternity in these works. Finally, I will reveal how the bachelor figure may in fact abstain completely from the production of illegitimacy while taking up a father or mentor role, remaining unaffiliated with the “bachelor machine” as laid out by Stivale.

The second part explores the metaphor of the bastard as “counterfeit,” and the wider application of comparisons between counterfeiting and other sorts of forgeries, between passing false coins as genuine, and passing bastard children as legitimate. Gide’s novel *Les Faux-monnayeurs* sets the stage for my treatment of coining. Jean-Joseph Goux’ book, *The Coiners of Language*, considers the “coining” metaphor used in Gide’s 1925 novel and its wider implications in discourses of both monetary exchange and modernist versus realist literature. The opposition of the concepts “legitimacy” and “authenticity” are key to my argument considering the advantage, even superiority of the “willfully authentic” bastard over legitimate sons. The terms “willful authenticity” and “willfully authentic” are my own conceptualizations that oppose the passive nature of both legitimacy and factual authenticity. To illustrate, a legitimate son is legally authentic by no action of his own; he is born legitimate. The authentic or biological son is authentic by his blood, shared with his mother and father, again by no choice of his own. The willfully authentic son, regardless of biology or law, chooses to be what he considers a son is meant to be. Willful authenticity is not meant to refer merely to father-son relationships, however. It provides a third possible concept of authenticity which, as we will see, is similar to the authenticity discussed throughout André Gide’s fiction. This opposition between willful authenticity, legitimacy and factual authenticity leads to my treatment of the “legitimizing” quality of clothing, a discussion framed by Michael Rowland’s treatment of “clothing” in *Les Caves du Vatican* as well as by Thomas Carlyle’s farcical *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), the latter of which influenced Gide considerably, and which appears explicitly in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*.

When it becomes clear how Gide’s characters transgress the laws of “legitimate” authority, the practice of questioning legitimacy will then be applied to works by Maupassant, whose bastards are on the whole less willfully authentic, and more passively subject to circumstance. While this author’s work often exposes the hypocrisy and falseness of people in general and Parisian *société* specifically, the questioning of legitimacy will serve as a starting point in the analysis of a selection of Maupassant’s bastard narratives. Although the coining metaphor is not specifically presented in his work, the *passing off* of a bastard as legitimate is central

to certain of his bastard narratives. One novel, *Pierre et Jean*, and several of his short works will provide the examples needed, although he and Gide bring to light different sorts and uses of counterfeits and dissimulation.

While the passing off of bastards as legitimate sons is a common theme in the fictional works I treat, the bastard figure provides unique opportunities to represent non-traditional gender roles as well. Masculinity is one of several aspects of the bastard that is manifested as a “nomadic” practice. Part III of my book shows how bastards and fatherless sons, due to their status as such and thereby lacking immediate masculine models and ties to normalized bourgeois (and working-class) identity, are not only freed from rigid traditional social and moral imperatives, but also have access to unique and diverse forms of social and gender identity, allowing the bastard to create and perform new “hybrid” masculinities by transgressing social custom and even law. While in Gide these instances of transgression, when not excessive, are found to be generally positive challenges to a monolithic social order, one finds in Maupassant that the bastard often transgresses law and custom, not to challenge the social order, but to avenge himself against those he blames for his exclusion from it, generally his legitimate family. For both writers, these acts of “free will,” whether self-creating or self-destructive, may come in the form of performances of “nomadic” masculinity, which are translated through different types of counter-cultural, subversive, and occasionally sociopathic behavior.

While my views of nomadic masculinity are greatly influenced by Deleuze and Guattari’s work on “nomadism,” I also draw inspiration from Ben Knight’s views of masculinity as formed and conveyed through “male narratives.”³⁰ In *Writing Masculinities*, Knight develops the concept that masculinity is not passively received in a single, predetermined form, but rather it is “achieved”: “My working assumption is that masculinities are not given but achieved through a constant struggle with countervailing tendencies.”³¹ His view of an active masculinity which is “achieved” suggests quite clearly that gender in all forms, and masculinity in particular, is not “natural” in the sense of being innate and effortless. I deviate from Knight’s presumption that masculinity is “achieved,” preferring to consider gender formation as never entirely achieved or finished; I explore the ways in which gender, through performance, remains mutable and in constant flux.

Wolfram Schmidgen’s conception of a “liminal” bastard figure also corresponds well with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of a nomad war machine.³² Schmidgen points out the overwhelmingly negative portrayals previously made of the bastard in the British novel, which began to

change, however, already in the eighteenth century. There emerged what he calls the “bastard as hero” character, an appellation borrowed from Michael McKeon.³³ The bastard in that literary tradition has multiple functions as a symbol and social type, but Schmidgen remarks that “one central function of the bastard figure was to threaten the patrilineal transmission of status, wealth, and power by challenging the rules that govern such descent and by exposing the notion of legitimacy.”³⁴ This view of the bastard as a challenger to patriarchy is a remarkable way of describing him as a positive figure in discussions of gender. Challenging the rules of legitimate inheritance is by and large considered as positive only during times of national crisis, particularly when disapproval of the established order is widely felt; this was evidently the case in eighteenth-century Britain. The threat to patrilineal transmission represented in the bastard is a clear link between illegitimacy and feminist concerns. This positive view of the bastard “hero” in literature is very much problematized in both Maupassant and Gide, however. Their fictional bastards, while “liminal” or “threshold” figures in their own ways, are also mobile, oscillating among mainstream and fringe groups of society; they are transformational. Both writers offer bastard narratives in which the illegitimate are generally not “heroic” in the least, although it will become quite clear that both pose a challenge to received ideas about “patrilineal transmission of status, wealth, and power” in their respective works.

The bastard in nineteenth-century French literature may indeed represent the same challenge to the hegemonic social structure, but this challenge was interpreted much differently in a society defined by the 1804 Civil Code, by which women were again regarded as perpetual minors, first in the house of the father and later in that of the husband. The *puissance paternelle* regained much of the force it had lost during the Revolution. Emperor Bonaparte’s legislative reinforcement of the family structure made of illegitimacy a symptom of a transgression of the law, and punished it accordingly. Even after the fall of Bonaparte, much of the Civil Code remained, only slowly changing throughout the following century and a half. Historical events and circumstance, such as war and the rule of patriarchal regimes, often served to maintain the respect for the existing familial structures and other social institutions. The eventual changes in social mores and in family and divorce law, particularly the Naquet law of 1884, influence and are illustrated in much of the literature of the time.³⁵

While these historical and juridical sources all provide useful tools for analyzing social structures and literary texts, my method will take a slightly different angle in the following section, synthesizing various

elements of previous work. Ben Knights focuses on “male narratives” of the twentieth century, his example being “the construction of the male reader and of the male as subject and as actor through the discourse of texts.”³⁶ While the male narratives I consider are by and large bastard narratives, I will consider expressions of masculinity in these works as an essential part of the literary exchange that occurs through the reading of the text. As Knights states: “[a] narrative, even when it is written – or, for that matter, read – in isolation, is a form of social exchange.”³⁷ This social exchange in the bastard narrative, may present a pitiful view of an illegitimate child, as in Maupassant’s “Un fils,” or the exchange may offer a new and essentially hopeful (if admonishing) view of the bastard as free subject, as in the case of Gide’s character, Lafcadio. Knights’ work not only informs my methodology in reading male (bastard) narratives, but is also the basis for my analysis of Maupassant’s “L’orphelin,” in which the main character’s reading material may well be his only source of masculine models and influence. The greatest step away from Knights’ vision of “masculine narrative” will be my focus on certain such texts both as “bastard narratives” and as sources for gender modeling by fictional characters in the texts under study. Illegitimacy in “male narratives” provides another aspect of gender representation. I show how bastard characters are not only influenced by literary models of masculinity read by those characters, but also how they perform original masculinities themselves through the fictional text.

For Schmidgen’s part, considering the bastard as a “threshold figure” allows one to appreciate the role of the bastard as social observer. He is then free to move throughout different ranks of society with an ease unknown to the “legitimate” bourgeois male. To better illustrate the liminality of the bastard, Schmidgen explains:

Because he or she is both inside and outside society, the bastard is excluded from participating in the established ways of social and cultural reproduction, but able to disclose these established ways *as such*—that is, as conventions by which society maintains itself. By virtue of this rigorously awkward position within and without the social, the bastard figure is able to collect, reflect, and even embody that which constitutes the social.³⁸

While Schmidgen treats mostly eighteenth-century English literature in his work on the bastard, the cultural and literary models employed reveal a methodology which may be extended to French literature of the nineteenth century, when France was undergoing similar challenges related to both industrialization and major shifts in the social and political orders. The

conception of the “liminal” bastard will be most significant when I return to my treatment of works by Gide; in *Les Faux-monnayeurs*, Bernard’s grasp on the reality of things and his position as spectator, nearly made voyeuristic through his invasive reading of Édouard’s journal, reflect a similarity to Schmidgen’s descriptions of the bastard as social observer. Schmidgen details the bastard’s ability to “collect, reflect and even embody” the social, an image that will support my argument for hybrid bastard identities, stitched together by the natural son from diverse sources: male relatives, the mother’s lover(s), and literary models of archetypal masculinity, to name only a few.

Deleuze and Guattari frame their discussion of the State and the war machine with previous work by Georges Dumézil on Indo-European mythology, and by Pierre Clastres in political anthropology, among others. Their work in *A Thousand Plateaus* facilitates my analysis of the bachelor’s role in illegitimate pregnancy, particularly in Maupassant’s tale “Un million.” Using certain ideas of Dumézil, Deleuze and Guattari develop and illustrate a model for conceiving of a State apparatus in opposition to a war machine, which precedes and is exterior to it. The State apparatus and war machine are built into a metaphor with the games of Chess and Go respectively. Deleuze and Guattari associate Chess, “a game of State,” with “striated” space, and the game “Go” with “smooth” space, for example.³⁹ The State apparatus and the war machine are not easily defined or explained concretely, but these concepts are widely applicable in more abstract terms. In order to understand such abstractions, a few examples are in order. The formation of a State apparatus requires a certain “degree of economic development,” and “level of political differentiation.”⁴⁰ The State is “defined by the perpetuation of or conservation of organs of power. The concern of the State is to conserve.”⁴¹ The State controls and regulates power, making “the distinction between governors and governed possible.”⁴² It establishes an inside, outside of which the war machine necessarily exists:

The State-form, as a form of interiority, has a tendency to reproduce itself, remaining identical to itself across its variations and easily recognizable within the limits of its poles, always seeking public recognition (there is no masked State). But the war machine’s form of exteriority is such that it exists only in its own metamorphoses; it exists in an industrial innovation as well as in a technological invention, in a commercial circuit as well as in a religious creation, in all flows and currents that only secondarily allow themselves to be appropriated by the State. It is not in terms of independence, but of coexistence and competition in a *perpetual field of interaction*, that we must conceive of exteriority and interiority, war

machines of metamorphosis and State apparatuses of identity, bands and kingdoms, megamachines and empires.⁴³

War bands, commercial organizations, and religions can all develop as war machines, according to Deleuze and Guattari. This does not exclude the possibility of a war machine being irrevocably appropriated by a State, however. While war bands such as that of Genghis Khan are represented as war machines for Deleuze and Guattari, modern mercenary outfits are often appropriated by states or corporate entities and kept on payrolls indefinitely. Commercial organizations, in a similar way, have evolved from being the target of anti-trust movements, in early twentieth-century United States for example, to becoming appropriated by States, with businessmen becoming politicians and vice versa. As for religion being conceptualized as war machine, one need only consider early Christianity, when followers of Jesus of Nazareth roamed as landless nomads, preaching against the Roman Empire and avoiding persecution. The later appropriation of Christianity by the Roman Empire, and the eventual incorporation of the Catholic faith into the French monarchy witness the changing nature of this particular religion, begun as a potential war machine and becoming assimilated into the (French) State.

The bastard is shown to be an ideal foundation for Gide's argument in favor of authenticity, as opposed to a patriarchal system of heredity and legitimacy, and for Maupassant's condemnation of marriage as an institution. Paternity is then posited as a central theme in bastard narratives. The role of women and mothers, however, particularly single mothers, is both important and complicated in the works to be analyzed, and the "natural" children involved in these bastard narratives are often ignored until they reach adulthood, when they are expected to "territorialize" and attain a place in society. Women and small children are for the most part both "absentee" or evacuated from bastard narratives. Small children are either "lost" or reintegrated only within a tightly regimented pre-existing order. Women, although essential to the creation and the functioning of the "bastard" economy, are most often suppressed and even dismissed from the narratives.

There are exceptions to this generalization in Maupassant's fiction, but rarely any in Gide. Maupassant often proposes a sympathetic view of adulterous wives and single mothers, and the small children he depicts are, for the majority, passive victims of prejudice and circumstance, occasionally allowed to overcome the obstacles posed by illegitimacy. In the vast majority of Gide's fiction, however, women remain underdeveloped characters, and his most memorable female characters may be classified as either villainous schemers or idealized maternal types. Gide tends toward

the representation of a very male universe; the constitution of an all-male (homo)society is a clearly legible telos.