tracted during years of scientific reflection, if he wanted 
fruitfully to approach the problems raised by the poetic 
imagination. To me at least, the first paragraph of the 
introduction to this volume is one of the major modern 
contributions to the philosophy of art, especially to its 
methodology. It opens in it a new era. By carefully dis-
sociating the principles of a correct interpretation of art 
from those that have always rightly presided over that 
knowledge, Gaston Bachelard has done about all that it 
is possible to do in order to establish the specificity of the 
philosophy of art in the general family of the philosophical 
disciplines.

How he did it is something every attentive reader will 
have to discover by himself. Commentaries usually are longer 
than the books and, in the last analysis, much less clear. 
I only wanted to mark the striking originality of a man so 
deeply rooted in the soil of everyday life, and in such inti-
mate relation with the concrete realities of nature, that 
after carefully scrutinizing the methods whereby man 
achieves scientific cognition, he yielded to an irresistible 
urge personally to communicate with the forces that create 
it. The only field where he could hope to observe them at 
play was poetry. Hence the series of writings in which 
Gaston Bachelard has applied the principles of his new 
method, and quite particularly this one, in which he finally 
brought it to perfection.¹

ETIENNE GILSON
August 1963

¹French titles of books mentioned: L'expérience de l'espace dans la 
physique contemporaine, La psychanalyse du feu, L'eau et les rêves, 
L'air et les songes, La terre et les rêveries de la volonté, La terre et 
les rêveries du repos.
Later, when I shall have occasion to mention the relation of a new poetic image to an archetype lying dormant in the depths of the unconscious, I shall have to make it understood that this relation is not, properly speaking, a causal one. The poetic image is not subject to an inner thrust. It is not an echo of the past. On the contrary: through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away. Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own; it is referable to a direct ontology. This ontology is what I plan to study.

Very often, then, it is in the opposite of causality, that is, in reverberation, which has been so subtly analyzed by Minkowski,¹ that I think we find the real measure of the being of a poetic image. In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being. The poet speaks on the threshold of being. Therefore, in order to determine the being of an image, we shall have to experience its reverberation in the manner of Minkowski's phenomenology.

¹ Cf. Eugène Minkowski, Vers une Cosmologie, chapter IX.

(Editor's note: Eugène Minkowski, a prominent phenomenologist whose studies extend both in the fields of psychology and philosophy, followed Bergson in accepting the notion of "élan vital" as the dynamic origin of human life. Without the vital impulse, as conceived by Bergson, the human being is static and therefore moribund. Referring to Anna Teresa Tymieniecka's book Phenomenology and Science, we can say that for Minkowski, the essence of life is not "a feeling of being, of existence," but a feeling of participation in a flowing onward, necessarily expressed in terms of time, and secondarily expressed in terms of space.

In view of this, Minkowski's choice of what he calls an auditive metaphor, resonit, is very apt, for in sound both time and space are epitomized. To understand Bachelard's reference, the following excerpt from Minkowski's Vers une Cosmologie might be helpful: "If, having fixed the original form in our mind's eye, we ask ourselves how that form comes alive and fills with life, we discover a new dynamic and vital category, a new property of the universe: reverberation (resonit). It is as though a well-spring existed in a sealed vase and its waves, repeatedly echoing against the sides of this vase, filled it with their sonority. Or again, it is as though the sound of a hunting horn, reverberating everywhere through its echo, made the tiniest leaf, the tiniest wisp of moss shudder in a common movement and transformed the whole forest, filling it to its limits, into a vibrating, sonorous world . . . What is secondary in these images, or, in other terms, what makes these images only images for us, are the sonorous well-spring, the hunting horn, the sealed vase, the echo, the reflection of sonorous waves against the sides—in a word, all that belongs to the material and palpable world.

"Suppose these elements were missing; would really nothing living subsist? For my part, I believe that this is precisely where we should see the world come alive and, independent of any instrument, of any physical properties, fill up with penetrating deep waves which, although not sonorous in the sensory meaning of the word, are not, for this reason, less harmonious, resonant, melodic and capable of determining the whole tonality of life. And this life itself will reverberate to the most profound depths of its being, through contact with these waves, which are at once sonorous and silent . . . Here to "fill up" and "plenitude" will have a completely different sense. It is not a material object which fills another by espousing the form that the other imposes. No, it is the dynamism of the sonorous life itself which by engulfing and appropriating everything it finds in its path, fills the slice of space, or better, the slice of the world that it assigns itself by its movement, making it reverberate, breathing into it its own life. The word "slice" must not be taken in its geometrical sense. It is not a matter of decomposing the world virtually or actually into sonorous balls, nor of tracing the limits of the sphere determined by the waves emanating from a sonorous source. In fact, our examples, the sealed vase, the forest, because of the very fact that they fill up with sounds, form a sort of self-enclosed whole, a microcosm . . .")
all of the oppressions—that a poet has been subjected to in the course of his life. But the poetic act itself, the sudden image, the flare-up of being in the imagination, are inaccessible to such investigations. In order to clarify the problem of the poetic image philosophically, we shall have to have recourse to a phenomenology of the imagination. By this should be understood a study of the phenomenon of the poetic image when it emerges into the consciousness as a direct product of the heart, soul and being of man, apprehended in his actuality.

II

I shall perhaps be asked why, departing from my former point of view, I now seek a phenomenological determination of images. In my earlier works on the subject of the imagination, I did, in fact, consider it preferable to maintain as objective a position as possible with regard to the images of the four material elements, the four principles of the intuitive cosmogenies, and, faithful to my habits as a philosopher of science, I tried to consider images without attempting personal interpretation. Little by little, this method, which has in its favor scientific prudence, seemed to me to be an insufficient basis on which to found a metaphysics of the imagination. The "prudent" attitude itself is a refusal to obey the immediate dynamics of the image. I have come to realize how difficult it is to break away from this "prudence." To say that one has left certain intellectual habits behind is easy enough, but how is it to be achieved? For a rationalist, this constitutes a minor daily crisis, a sort of split in one's thinking which, even though its object be partial—a mere image—has none the less great psychic repercussions. However, this minor cultural crisis, this crisis on the simple level of a new image, contains the entire paradox of a phenomenology of the imagination, which is: how can an image, at times very unusual, appear to be a concentration of the entire psyche? How—with no preparation—can this singular, short-lived event constituted by the appearance of an unusual poetic image, react on other minds and in other hearts, despite all the barriers of common sense, all the disciplined schools of thought, content in their immobility?

It seemed to me, then, that this transsubjectivity of the image could not be understood, in its essence, through the habits of subjective reference alone. Only phenomenology—that is to say, consideration of the onset of the image in an individual consciousness—can help us to restore the subjectivity of images and to measure their fullness, their strength and their transsubjectivity. These subjectivities and transsubjectivities cannot be determined once and for all, for the poetic image is essentially variational, and not, as in the case of the concept, constitutive. No doubt, it is an arduous task—as well as a monotonous one—to isolate the transforming action of the poetic imagination in the detail of the variations of the images. For a reader of poems, therefore, an appeal to a doctrine that bears the frequently misunderstood name of phenomenology risks falling on deaf ears. And yet, independent of all doctrine, this appeal is clear: the reader of poems is asked to consider an image not as an object and even less as the substitute for an object, but to seize its specific reality. For this, the act of the creative consciousness must be systematically associated with the most fleeting product of that consciousness, the poetic image. At the level of the poetic image, the duality of subject and object is indescribable, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions. In this domain of the creation of the poetic image by the poet, phenomenology, if one dare to say so, is a microscopic phenomenology. As a result, this phenomenology will probably be strictly elementary. In this union, through the image, of a pure but short-lived subjectivity and a reality which will not necessarily reach its final constitution, the phenomenologist finds a field for countless experiments: he profits by observations that can be exact because they are simple, because they "have no consequences" as is the case with scientific thought, which is always related thought. The image, in its simplicity, has no need of scholarship. It is the property of a naïve consciousness; in its expression, it is youthful language. The
poet, in the novelty of his images, is always the origin of language. To specify exactly what a phenomenology of the image can be, to specify that the image comes before thought, we should have to say that poetry, rather than being a phenomenology of the mind, is a phenomenology of the soul. We should then have to collect documentation on the subject of the dreaming consciousness.

The language of contemporary French philosophy—and even more so, psychology—hardly uses the dual meaning of the words soul and mind. As a result, they are both somewhat deaf to certain themes that are very numerous in German philosophy, in which the distinction between mind and soul (der Geist und die Seele) is so clear. But since a philosophy of poetry must be given the entire force of the vocabulary, it should not simplify, not harden anything. For such a philosophy, mind and soul are not synonymous, and by taking them as such, we bar translation of certain invaluable texts, we distort documents brought to light thanks to the archeologists of the image. The word "soul" is an immortal word. In certain poems it cannot be effaced, for it is a word born of our breath. The vital importance of a word should arrest the attention of a phenomenologist of poetry. The word "soul" can, in fact, be poetically spoken with such conviction that it constitutes a commitment for the entire poem. The poetic register that corresponds to the soul must therefore remain open to our phenomenological investigations.

In the domain of painting, in which realization seems to imply decisions that derive from the mind, and rejoin obligations of the world of perception, the phenomenology of the soul can reveal the first commitment of an oeuvre. René Huyghe, in his very fine preface for the exhibition of Georges Rouault's works in Albi, wrote: "If we wanted to find out wherein Rouault explodes definitions . . . we should perhaps have to call upon a word that has become rather outmoded, which is the word, soul." He goes on to show that in order to understand, to see and to love Rouault's work, we must "start from the center, at the very heart of the circle from where the whole thing derives its source and meaning: and here we come back again to that forgotten, outcast word, the soul." Indeed, the soul—as Rouault's painting proves—possesses an inner light, the light that an inner vision knows and expresses in the world of brilliant colors, in the world of sunlight, so that a veritable reversal of psychological perspectives is demanded of those who seek to understand, at the same time that they love Rouault's painting. They must participate in an inner light which is not a reflection of a light from the outside world. No doubt there are many facile claims to the expressions "inner vision" and "inner light." But here it is a painter speaking, a producer of lights. He knows from what heat source the light comes. He experiences the intimate meaning of the passion for red. At the core of such painting, there is a soul in combat—the fauvism, the wildness, is interior. Painting like this is therefore a phenomenon of the soul. The oeuvre must redeem an impassioned soul.

These pages by René Huyghe corroborate my idea that it is reasonable to speak of a phenomenology of the soul. In many circumstances we are obliged to acknowledge that poetry is a commitment of the soul. A consciousness associated with the soul is more relaxed, less intentionalized than a consciousness associated with the phenomena of the mind. Forces are manifested in poems that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge. The dialectics of inspiration and talent become clear if we consider their two poles: the soul and the mind. In my opinion, soul and mind are indispensable for studying the phenomena of the poetic image in their various nuances, above all, for following the evolution of poetic images from the original state of revery to that of execution. In fact, in a future work, I plan to concentrate particularly on poetic revery as a phenomenology of the soul. In itself, revery constitutes a psychic condition that is too frequently confused with dream. But when it is a question of poetic revery, of revery that derives
pleasure not only from itself, but also prepares poetic pleasure for other souls, one realizes that one is no longer drifting into somnolence. The mind is able to relax, but in poetic revery the soul keeps watch, with no tension, calmed and active. To compose a finished, well-constructed poem, the mind is obliged to make projects that prefigure it. But for a simple poetic image, there is no project; a flicker of the soul is all that is needed.

And this is how a poet poses the phenomenological problem of the soul in all clarity. Pierre-Jean Jouve writes:1 “Poetry is a soul inaugurating a form.” The soul inaugurates. Here it is the supreme power. It is human dignity. Even if the “form” was already well-known, previously discovered, carved from “commonplaces,” before the interior poetic light was turned upon it, it was a mere object for the mind. But the soul moves and inaugurates the form, dwells in it, takes pleasure in it. Pierre-Jean Jouve’s statement can therefore be taken as a clear maxim of a phenomenology of the soul.

Since a phenomenological inquiry on poetry aspires to go so far and so deep, because of methodological obligations, it must go beyond the sentimental resonances with which we receive (more or less richly—whether this richness be within ourselves or within the poem) a work of art. This is where the phenomenological doublet of resonances and repercussions must be sensitized. The resonances are dispersed on the different planes of our life in the world, while the repercussions invite us to give greater depth to our own existence. In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own. The reverberations bring about a change of being. It is as though the poet’s being were our being. The multiplicity of resonances then issues from the reverberations’ unity of being. Or, to put it more simply, this is an impression that all impassioned poetry-lovers know well: the poem possesses us entirely.

This grip that poetry acquires on our very being bears a phenomenological mark that is unmistakable. The exuberance and depth of a poem are always phenomena of the resonance-reverberation doublet. It is as though the poem, through its exuberance, awakened new depths in us. In order to ascertain the psychological action of a poem, we should therefore have to follow the two perspectives of phenomenological analysis, towards the outpourings of the mind and towards the profundities of the soul.

Needless to say, the reverberation, in spite of its derivative name, has a simple phenomenological nature in the domain of poetic imagination. For it involves bringing about a veritable awakening of poetic creation, even in the soul of the reader, through the reverberations of a single poetic image. By its novelty, a poetic image sets in motion the entire linguistic mechanism. The poetic image places us at the origin of the speaking being.

Through this reverberation, by going immediately beyond all psychology or psychoanalysis, we feel a poetic power rising naively within us. After the original reverberation, we are able to experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our past. But the image has touched the depths before it sits the surface. And this is also true of a simple experience of reading. The image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it. It becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being.

This last remark defines the level of the ontology towards which I am working. As a general thesis I believe that everything specifically human in man is logos. One would not be able to meditate in a zone that preceded language. But even if this thesis appears to reject an ontological depth, it should be granted, at least as a working hypothesis appropriate to the subject of the poetic imagination.

Thus the poetic image, which stems from the logos, is
personally innovating. We cease to consider it as an "object" but feel that the "objective" critical attitude stifles the "reverberation" and rejects on principle the depth at which the original poetic phenomenon starts. As for the psychologist, being deafened by the resonances, he keeps trying to describe his feelings. And the psychoanalyst, victim of his method, inevitably intellectualizes the image, losing the reverberations in his effort to untangle the skein of his interpretations. He understands the image more deeply than the psychologist. But that's just the point, he "understands" it. For the psychoanalyst, the poetic image always has a context. When he interprets it, however, he translates it into a language that is different from the poetic logos. Never, in fact, was "traditio, traditio" more justifiably applicable.

When I receive a new poetic image, I experience its quality of inter-subjectivity. I know that I am going to repeat it in order to communicate my enthusiasm. When considered in transmission from one soul to another, it becomes evident that a poetic image eludes causality. Doctrines that are timely causal, such as psychology, or strongly causal, such as psychoanalysis, can hardly determine the ontology of what is poetic. For nothing prepares a poetic image, especially not culture, in the literary sense, and especially not perception, in the psychological sense.

I always come down to the same conclusion: the essential newness of the poetic image poses the problem of the speaking being's creativeness. Through this creativeness the imagining consciousness proves to be, very simply but very purely, an origin. In a study of the imagination, a phenomenology of the poetic imagination must concentrate on bringing out this quality of origin in various poetic images.

By thus limiting my inquiry to the poetic image at its origin, proceeding from pure imagination, I leave aside the problem of the composition of the poem as a grouping together of numerous images. Into this composition enter certain psychologically complex elements that associate earlier cultures with actual literary ideals—components which a complete phenomenology would no doubt be obliged to consider. But so extensive a project might be prejudicial to the purity of the phenomenological observations, however elementary, that I should like to present. The real phenomenologist must make it a point to be systematically modest. This being the case, it seems to me that merely to refer to phenomenological reading powers, which make of the reader a poet on a level with the image he has read, shows already a taint of pride. Indeed, it would be a lack of modesty on my part to assume personally a reading power that could match and re-live the power of organized, complete creation implied by a poem in its entirety. But there is even less hope of attaining to a synthetic phenomenology which would dominate an entire ouvres, as certain psychoanalysts believe they can do. It is therefore on the level of detached images that I shall succeed in "reverberating" phenomenologically.

Precisely this touch of pride, this lesser pride, this mere reader's pride that thrives in the solitude of reading, bears the unmistakable mark of phenomenology, if its simplicity is maintained. Here the phenomenologist has nothing in common with the literary critic who, as has frequently been noted, judges a work that he could not create and, if we are to believe certain facile condemnations, would not want to create. A literary critic is a reader who is necessarily severe. By turning inside out like a glove an overworked complex that has become debased to the point of being part of the vocabulary of statesmen, we might say that the literary critic and the professor of rhetoric, who know-all and judge-all, readily go in for a simplex of superiority. As for me, being an addict of felicitous reading, I only read and re-read what I like, with a bit of reader's pride mixed in with much enthusiasm. But whereas pride usually develops into a massive sentiment that weighs upon the entire psyche, the touch of pride that is born of adherence to the felicity of an image, remains secret and unobtrusive. It is within us, mere readers that we are, it is for us, and for us
alone. It is a homely sort of pride. Nobody knows that in reading we are re-living our temptations to be a poet. All readers who have a certain passion for reading, nurture and repress, through reading, the desire to become a writer. When the page we have just read is too near perfection, our modesty suppresses this desire. But it reappears, nevertheless. In any case, every reader who reads a work that he likes, knows that its pages concern him. In Jean-Pierre Richard's excellent collection of essays entitled *Podsie et Profondeur* (Poetry and Depth), there is one devoted to Baudelaire and one to Verlaine. Emphasis is laid on Baudelaire, however, since, as the author says, his work "concerns us." There is a great difference of tone between the two essays. Unlike Baudelaire, Verlaine does not attract complete phenomenological attention. And this is always the case. In certain types of reading with which we are in deep sympathy, in the very expression itself, we are the "beneficiaries." Jean-Paul Richter, in *Titan*, gives the following description of his hero: "He read eulogies of great men with as much pleasure as though he himself had been the object of these panegyrics." In any case, harmony in reading is inseparable from admiration. We can admire more or less, but a sincere impulse, a little impulse toward admiration, is always necessary if we are to receive the phenomenological benefit of a poetic image. The slightest critical consideration arrests this impulse by putting the mind in second position, destroying the primordiety of the imagination. In this admiration, which goes beyond the passivity of contemplative attitudes, the joy of reading appears to be the reflection of the joy of writing, as though the reader were the writer's ghost. At least the reader participates in the joy of creation that, for Bergson, is the sign of creation. Here, creation takes place on the tenuous thread of the sentence, in the fleeting life of an expression. But this poetic expression, although it has no vital necessity, has a bracing effect on our lives, for all that. To speak well is part of liv-


...ing well. The poetic image is an emergence from language, it is always a little above the language of signification. By living the poems we read, we have then the salutary experience of emerging. This, no doubt, is emerging at short range. But these acts of emergence are repeated; poetry puts language in a state of emergence, in which life becomes manifest through its vivacity. These linguistic impulses, which stand out from the ordinary rank of pragmatic language, are miniatures of the vital impulse. A micro-Bergsonism that abandoned the thesis of language-as-instrument in favor of the thesis of language-as-reality would find in poetry numerous documents on the intense life of language.

Thus, along with considerations on the life of words, as it appears in the evolution of language across the centuries, the poetic image, as a mathematician would say, presents us with a sort of differential of this evolution. A great verse can have a great influence on the soul of a language. It awakens images that had been effaced, at the same time that it confirms the unforeseeable nature of speech. And if we render speech unforeseeable, is this not an apprenticeship to freedom? What delight the poetic imagination takes in making game of censors! Time was when the poetic artist codified the licenses to be permitted. Contemporary poetry, however, has introduced freedom in the very body of the language. As a result, poetry appears as a phenomenon of freedom.

Even at the level of an isolated poetic image, if only in the progression of expression constituted by the verse, the phenomenological reverberation can appear; and in its extreme simplicity, it gives us mastery of our tongue. Here we are in the presence of a minuscule phenomenon of the shimmering consciousness. The poetic image is certainly the psychic event that has the least importance. To seek justification of it in terms of perceptible reality, to determine its place and role in the poem's composition, are two tasks that do not need to be undertaken until later. In the first phenom-
enological inquiry of the poetic imagination, the isolated image, the phrase that carries it forward, the verse, or occasionally the stanza in which the poetic image radiates, form language areas that should be studied by means of topo-analysis. J. B. Pontalis, for instance, presents Michel Leiris as a "lonely prospector in the galleries of words," which describes extremely well this fibered space traversed by the simple impetus of words that have been experienced. The atomism of conceptual language demands reasons for fixation, forces of centralization. But the verse always has a movement, the image flows into the line of the verse, carrying the imagination along with it, as though the imagination created a nerve fiber. Pontalis adds the following (p. 93), which deserves to be remembered as a sure index for a phenomenology of expression: "The speaking subject is the entire subject." And it no longer seems paradoxical to say that the speaking subject exists in his entirety in a poetic image, because unless he abandons himself to it without reservations, he does not enter into the poetic space of the image. Very clearly, the poetic image furnishes one of the simplest experiences of language that has been lived. And if, as I propose to do, it is considered as an origin of consciousness, it points to a phenomenology.

Also, if we had to name a "school" of phenomenology, it would no doubt be in connection with the poetic phenomenon that we should find the clearest, the really elementary, lessons. In a recent book, J. H. Van den Berg writes: "Poets and painters are born phenomenologists." And noting that things "speak" to us and that, as a result of this fact, if we give this language its full value, we have a contact with things, Van den Berg adds: "We are continually living a solution of problems that reflection cannot hope to solve." The philosopher whose investigations

are centered on the speaking being will find encouragement in these lines by this learned Dutch phenomenologist.

vi

The phenomenological situation with regard to psychoanalytical investigation will perhaps be more precisely stated if, in connection with poetic images, we are able to isolate a sphere of pure sublimation; of a sublimation which sublates nothing, which is relieved of the burden of passion, and freed from the pressure of desire. Thus by giving to the poetic image at its peak an absolute of sublimation, I place heavy stakes on a simple nuance. It seems to me, however, that poetry gives abundant proof of this absolute sublimation, as will be seen frequently in the course of this work. When psychologists and psychoanalysts are furnished this proof, they cease to see anything in the poetic image but a simple game, a short-lived, totally vain game. Images, in particular, have no significance for them—neither from the standpoint of the passions, nor from that of psychology or psychoanalysis. It does not occur to them that the significance of such images is precisely a poetic significance. But poetry is there with its countless surging images, images through which the creative imagination comes to live in its own domain.

For a phenomenologist, the attempt to attribute antecedents to an image, when we are in the very existence of the image, is a sign of inveterate psychology. On the contrary, let us take the poetic image in its being. For the poetic consciousness is so wholly absorbed by the image that appears on the language, above customary language; the language it speaks with the poetic image is so new that correlations between past and present can no longer be usefully considered. The examples I shall give breaks in significance, sensation and sentiment will oblige the reader to grant me that the poetic image is under the sign of a new being.

This new being is happy man.

Happy in speech, therefore unhappy in reality, will be the psychoanalyst's immediate objection. Sublimation, for him,

cannot say whether or not Pierre-Jean Jouve would agree to consider the causes divulged by psychoanalysis as "contributory." But in the region of "the pure form of language" the psychoanalyst's causes do not allow us to predict the poetic image in its newness. They are, at the very most, opportunities for liberation. And in the poetic age in which we live, it is in this that poetry is specifically "surprising." Its images are therefore unpredictable. Most literary critics are insufficiently aware of this unpredictability, which is precisely what upsets the plans of the usual psychological explanations. But the poet states clearly: "Poetry, especially in its present endeavors, (can) only correspond to attentive thought that is enamored of something unknown, and essentially receptive to becoming." Later, on page 170: "Consequently, a new definition of a poet is in view, which is: he who knows, that is to say, who transcends, and names what he knows." Lastly, (p. 10): "There is no poetry without absolute creation."

Such poetry is rare. The great mass of poetry is more mixed with passion, more psychological. Here, however, rarity and exception do not confirm the rule, but contradict it and set up a new regime. Without the region of absolute sublimation—however restrained and elevated it may be, and even though it may seem to lie beyond the reach of psychologists or psychoanalysts, who, after all, have no reason to examine pure poetry—poetry's exact polarity cannot be revealed.

We may hesitate in determining the exact level of disruption, we may also remain for a long time in the domain of the confusing passions that perturb poetry. Moreover, the height at which we encounter pure sublimation is doubtless not the same for all souls. But at least the necessity of separating a sublimation examined by a psychoanalyst from one examined by a phenomenologist of poetry is a necessity of method. A psychoanalyst can of course study the human character of poets but, as a result of his own sojourn in the region of the passions, he is not prepared to study poetic images in their exciting reality. C.J. Jung said this, in fact,

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very clearly: by persisting in the habits of judgment inherent in psychoanalysis, "interest is diverted from the work of art and loses itself in the inextricable chaos of psychological antecedents; the poet becomes a 'clinical case,' an example, to which is given a certain number in the psychopathia sexualis. Thus the psychoanalysis of a work of art moves away from its object and carries the discussion into a domain of general human interest, which is not in the least peculiar to the artist and, particularly, has no importance for his art." 1

Merely with a view to summarizing this discussion, I should like to make a polemical remark, although indulging in polemics is not one of my habits.

A Roman said to a shoemaker who had directed his gaze too high:

Ne nunc ultra crepidam.

Every time there is a question of pure sublimation, when the very being of poetry must be determined, shouldn't the phenomenologist say to the psychoanalyst:

Ne pschor ultra utern.

VII

In other words, as soon as an art has become autonomous, it makes a fresh start. It is therefore salient to consider this start as a sort of phenomenology. On principle, phenomenology liquidates the past and confronts what is new. Even in an art like painting, which bears witness to a skill, the important successes take place independently of skill. In a study of the painting of Charles Lapicque, by Jean Lescure, we read: "Although his work gives evidence of wide culture and knowledge of all the dynamic expressions of space, they are not applied, they are not made into recipes. . . . Knowing must therefore be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge. This is the price that must be paid for an oeuvre to be, at all times, a sort of pure beginning, which makes its creation an exercise in freedom." 2 These lines are of essential importance for us in that they may be transposed immediately into a phenomenology of the poetic. In poetry, non-knowing is a primal condition; if there exists a skill in the writing of poetry, it is in the minor task of associating images. But the entire life of the image is in its dazzling splendor, in the fact that an image is a transcending of all the premises of sensibility.

It becomes evident, then, that a man's work stands out from life to such an extent that life cannot explain it. Jean Lescure says of the painter (loc. cit., p. 193): "Lapicque demands of the creative act that it should offer him as much surprise as life itself." Art, then, is an increase of life, a sort of competition of surprises that stimulates our consciousness and keeps it from becoming somnolent. In a quotation of Lapicque himself (given by Lescure, p. 193) we read: "If, for instance, I want to paint horses taking the water hurdle at the Auteuil race-course, I expect my painting to give me as much that is unexpected, although of another kind, as the actual race I witnessed gave me. Not for a second can there be any question of reproducing exactly a spectacle that is already in the past. But I have to re-live it entirely, in a manner that is new and, this time, from the standpoint of painting. By doing this, I create for myself the possibility of a fresh impact." And Lescure concludes: "An artist does not create the way he lives, he lives the way he creates."

Thus, contemporary painters no longer consider the image as a simple substitute for a perceptible reality. Proust said already of roses painted by Elstir that they were "a new variety with which this painter, like some clever horticulturist, had enriched the Rose family." 3


2 Jean Lescure, Lapicque, Galalith, Paris, p. 78.

VIII

Academic psychology hardly deals with the subject of the poetic image, which is often mistaken for simple metaphor. Generally, in fact, the word image, in the works of psychologists, is surrounded with confusion: we see images, we reproduce images, we retain images in our memory. The image is everything except a direct product of the imagination. In Bergson's *Matière et Mémoire* (Matter and Memory), in which the image concept is very widely treated, there is only one reference (on p. 198) to the productive imagination. This production remains, therefore, an act of lesser freedom, that has no relation to the great free acts stressed by Bergsonian philosophy. In this short passage, the philosopher refers to the "play of fantasy" and the various images that derive from it as "so many liberties that the mind takes with nature." But these liberties, in the plural, do not commit our being: they do not add to the language nor do they take it out of its utilitarian rôle. They really are so much "play." Indeed, the imagination hardly lends iridescence to our recollections. In this domain of poeticized memory, Bergson is well this side of Proust. The liberties that the mind takes with nature do not really designate the nature of the mind.

I propose, on the contrary, to consider the imagination as a major power of human nature. To be sure, there is nothing to be gained by saying that the imagination is the faculty of producing images. But this tautology has at least the virtue of putting an end to comparisons of images with memories.

By the swiftness of its actions, the imagination separates us from the past as well as from reality; it faces the future. To the function of reality, wise in experience of the past, as it is defined by traditional psychology, should be added a function of unreality, which is equally positive, as I tried to show in certain of my earlier works. Any weakness in the function of unreality, will hamper the productive psyche. If we cannot imagine, we cannot foresee.

But to touch more simply upon the problems of the poetic imagination, it is impossible to receive the psychic benefit of poetry unless these two functions of the human psyche—the function of the real and the function of the unreal—are made to co-operate. We are offered a veritable cure of rhythm and analysis through the poem, which interweaves real and unreal, and gives dynamism to language by means of the dual activity of symbolization and poetry. And in poetry, the commitment of the imagining being is such that it is no longer merely the subject of the verb "to adapt oneself." Actual conditions are no longer determinant. With poetry, the imagination takes its place on the margin, exactly where the function of unreality comes to charm or to disturb—always to awaken—the sleeping being lost in its automatism. The most insidious of these automatisms, the automatism of language, ceases to function when we enter into the domain of pure sublimation. Seen from this height of pure sublimation, reproductive imagination ceases to be of much importance. To quote Jean-Paul Richter:1 "Reproductive imagination is the prose of productive imagination."

IX

In this philosophical introduction—doubtless too long—I have summarized certain general themes that I should like to put to the test in the work that follows, as also in a few others which I hope to write. In the present volume, my field of examination has the advantage of being well circumscribed. Indeed, the images I want to examine are the quite simple images of felicitous space. In this orientation, these investigations would deserve to be called topophilia. They seek to determine the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love. For diverse reasons, and with the differences entailed by poetic shadings, this is eulogized space. Attached to its protective value, which

can be a positive one, are also imagined values, which soon become dominant. Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination. Particularly, it nearly always exercises an attraction. For it concentrates being within limits that protect. In the realm of images, the play between the exterior and intimacy is not a balanced one. On the other hand, hostile space is hardly mentioned in these pages. The space of hatred and combat can only be studied in the context of impassioned subject matter and apocalyptic images. For the present, we shall consider the images that attract. And with regard to images, it soon becomes clear that to attract and to repulse do not give contrary experiences. The terms are contrary. When we study electricity or magnetism, we can speak symmetrically of repulsion and attraction. All that is needed is a change of algebraic signs. But images do not adapt themselves very well to quiet ideas, or above all, to definitive ideas. The imagination is ceaselessly imagining and enriching itself with new images. It is this wealth of imagined being that I should like to explore.

Here, then, is a rapid account of the chapters that compose this book.

First of all, as is proper in a study of images of intimacy, we shall pose the problem of the poetics of the house. The questions abound: how can secret rooms, rooms that have disappeared, become abodes for an unforgettable past? Where and how does repose find especially conducive situations? How is it that, at times, a provisional refuge or an occasional shelter is endowed in our intimate day-dreaming with virtues that have no objective foundation? With the house image we are in possession of a veritable principle of psychological integration. Descriptive psychology, depth psychology, psychoanalysis and phenomenology could constitute, with the house, the corpus of doctrines that I have designated by the name of topo-analysis. On whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being.

In order to give an idea of how complex is the task of the psychologist who studies the depths of the human soul, C. G. Jung asks his readers to consider the following comparison: "We have to describe and to explain a building the upper story of which was erected in the nineteenth century; the ground floor dates from the sixteenth century, and a careful examination of the masonry discloses the fact that it was reconstructed from a dwelling-tower of the eleventh century. In the cellar we discover Roman foundation walls, and under the cellar a filled-in cave, in the floor of which stone tools are found and remnants of glacial fauna in the layers below. That would be a sort of picture of our mental structure." Naturally, Jung was well aware of the limitations of this comparison (cf. p. 180). But from the very fact that it may be so easily developed, there is ground for taking the house as a tool for analysis of the human soul. With the help of this tool, can we not find within ourselves, while dreaming in our own modest homes, the consolations of the cave? Are the towers of our souls razed for all time? Are we to remain, to quote Gérard de Nerval's famous line, beings whose "towers have been destroyed"? Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are "housed." Our soul is an abode. And by remembering "houses" and "rooms," we learn to "abide" within ourselves. Now everything becomes clear, the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them, and the play is so varied that two long chapters are needed to outline the implications of house images.

After these two chapters on the houses of man, I studied a series of images which may be considered the houses of things: drawers, chests and wardrobes. What psychology lies behind their locks and keys? They bear within themselves a kind of esthetics of hidden things. To pave the way now for a phenomenology of what is hidden, one preliminary remark will suffice: an empty drawer is unimaginable. It can only be thought of. And for us, who must describe

what we imagine before what we know, what we dream before what we verify, all wardrobes are full.

At times when we believe we are studying something, we are only being receptive to a kind of day-dreaming. The two chapters that I devoted to nests and shells—the two refuges of vertebrates and invertebrates—beauties witness to an activity of the imagination which is hardly curbed by the reality of objects. During my lengthy meditation upon the imagination of the four elements, I re-lived countless aerial or aquatic day-dreams, according to whether I followed the poets into the nest in the tree, or into the sort of animal cave that is constituted by a shell. Sometimes, even when I touch things, I still dream of an element.

After having followed the day-dreams of inhabiting these uninhabitable places, I returned to images that, in order for us to live them, require us to become very small, as in nests and shells. Indeed, in our houses we have nooks and corners in which we like to curl up comfortably. To curl up belongs to the phenomenology of the verb to inhabit, and only those who have learned to do so can inhabit with intensity. In this respect, we have within ourselves an entire assortment of images and recollections that we would not readily disclose. No doubt, a psychoanalyst, who desired to systematize these images of comforting retreat, could furnish numerous documents. All I had at my disposal were literary ones. I thus wrote a short chapter on "nooks and corners," and was surprised myself to see that important writers gave literary dignity to these psychological documents.

After all these chapters devoted to intimate space, I wanted to see what the dialectics of large and small offered for a poetics of space, how, in exterior space, the imagination benefited from the relativity of size, without the help of ideas and, as it were, quite naturally. I have put the dialectics of small and large under the signs of miniature and immensity, but these two chapters are not as antithetical as might be supposed. In both cases, small and large are not to be seized in their objectivity, since, in this present work, I only deal with them as the two poles of a projection of images. In other of my books, particularly with regard to immensity, I have tried to delineate the poet’s meditations before the more imposing spectacles of nature. Here, it is a matter of participating more intimately in the movement of the image. For instance, I shall have to prove in following certain poems that the impression of immensity is in us, and not necessarily related to an object.

At this point in my book, I had already collected a sufficient number of images to pose, in my own way, by giving the images their ontological value, the dialectics of within and without, which leads to a dialectics of open and closed.

Directly following this chapter on the dialectics of within and without is a chapter titled "The Phenomenology of Roundness." The difficulty that had to be overcome in writing this chapter was to avoid all geometrical evidence. In other words, I had to start with a sort of intimacy of roundness. I discovered images of this direct roundness among thinkers and poets, images—and this, for me, was essential—that were not mere metaphors. This furnished me with a further opportunity to expose the intellectualism of metaphor and, consequently, to show once more the activity that is characteristic of pure imagination.

It was my idea that these two last chapters, which are full of metaphysical implications, would tie into another book that I should still like to write. This book would be a condensation of the many public lectures that I gave at the Sorbonne during the three last years of my teaching career. But shall I have the strength to write this book? For there is a great distance between the words we speak uninhibitedly to a friendly audience and the discipline needed to write a book. When we are lecturing, we become animated by the joy of teaching and, at times, our words think for us. But to write a book requires really serious reflection.

C. B.

1 Cf. La terre et les rêveries de la volonté, Corti, Paris, p. 378 and the following pages.
the poetics of space
The house, quite obviously, is a privileged entity for a phenomenological study of the intimate values of inside space, provided, of course, that we take it in both its unity and its complexity, and endeavor to integrate all the special values in one fundamental value. For the house furnishes us dispersed images and a body of images at the same time. In both cases, I shall prove that imagination augments the values of reality. A sort of attraction for images concentrates them about the house. Transcending our memories of all the houses in which we have found shelter, above and beyond all the houses we have dreamed we lived in, can we isolate an intimate, concrete essence that would be a justification of the uncommon value of all of our images of protected intimacy? This, then, is the main problem.

In order to solve it, it is not enough to consider the house as an "object" on which we can make our judgments and daydreams react. For a phenomenologist, a psychoanalyst, or a psychologist (these three points of view being named...
in the order of decreasing efficacy), it is not a question of
describing houses, or enumerating their picturesque features
and analyzing for which reasons they are comfortable. On
the contrary, we must go beyond the problems of description
—whether this description be objective or subjective, that is,
whether it give facts or impressions—in order to attain to
the primary virtues, those that reveal an attachment that is
native in some way to the primary function of inhabiting.
A geographer or an ethnographer can give us descriptions
of very varied types of dwellings. In each variety, the phe-
nomenologist makes the effort needed to seize upon the
germ of the essential, sure, immediate well-being it encloses.
In every dwelling, even the richest, the first task of the
phenomenologist is to find the original shell.

But the related problems are many if we want to deter-
mine the profound reality of all the subtle shadings of our
attachment for a chosen spot. For a phenomenologist, these
shadings must be taken as the first rough outlines of a psy-
chological phenomenon. The shading is not an additional,
superficial coloring. We should therefore have to say how
we inhabit our vital space, in accord with all the dialectics
of life, how we take root, day after day, in a "corner of the
world."

For our house is our corner of the world. As has often
been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every
sense of the word. If we look at it intimately, the humblest
dwelling has beauty. Authors of books on "the humble
home" often mention this feature of the poetics of space.
But this mention is much too succinct. Finding little to
describe in the humble home, they spend little time there;
so they describe it as it actually is, without really experi-
ceing its primitiveness, a primitiveness which belongs to
all, rich and poor alike, if they are willing to dream.

But our adult life is so dispossessed of the essential ben-
efits, its anthropocosmic ties have become so slack, that we
do not feel their first attachment in the universe of the
house. There is no dearth of abstract, "world-conscious"
philosophers who discover a universe by means of the dia-

lectical game of the I and the non-I. In fact, they know the
universe before they know the house, the far horizon be-
fore the resting-place; whereas the real beginnings of
images, if we study them phenomenologically, will give con-
crete evidence of the values of inhabited space, of the non-I
that protects the I.

Indeed, here we touch upon a converse whose images we
shall have to explore: all really inhabited space bears the
essence of the notion of home. In the course of this work,
we shall see that the imagination functions in this direc-
tion whenever the human being has found the slightest
shelter: we shall see the imagination build "walls" of im-
palpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of pro-
tection—or, just the contrary, tremble behind thick walls,
mistrust the staunchest ramparts. In short, in the most
interminable of dialectics, the sheltered being gives per-
ceivable limits to his shelter. He experiences the house in
its reality and in its virtuality, by means of thought and
dreams. It is no longer in its positive aspects that the house
is really "lived," nor is it only in the pasting hour that we
recognize its benefits. An entire past comes to dwell in a
new house. The old saying: "We bring our lares with us"
has many variations. And the daydream deepens to the
point where an immemorial domain opens up for the
dreamer of a home beyond man's earliest memory. The
house, like fire and water, will permit me, later in this work,
to recall flashes of daydreams that illuminate the synthesis
of immemorial and recollected. In this remote region, mem-
ory and imagination remain associated, each one working
for their mutual deepening. In the order of values, they
both constitute a community of memory and image. Thus
the house is not experienced from day to day only, on the
thread of a narrative, or in the telling of our own story.

Through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives
come alive and retain the treasures of former days. And
after we are in the new house, when memories of other
places we have lived in come back to us, we travel to the
land of Motionless Childhood, motionless the way all Im-
memorial things are. We live fixations, fixations of happiness.¹ We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost.

Thus, by approaching the house images with care not to break up the solidarity of memory and imagination, we may hope to make others feel all the psychological elasticity of an image that moves us at an unimaginable depth. Through poems, perhaps more than through recollections, we touch the ultimate poetic depth of the space of the house.

This being the case, if I were asked to name the chief benefit of the house, I should say: the house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace. Thought and experience are not the only things that sanction human values. The values that belong to daydreaming mark humanity in its depths. Daydreaming even has a privilege of autovalorization. It derives direct pleasure from its own being. Therefore, the places in which we have experienced daydreaming reconstitute themselves in a new daydream, and it is because our memories of former dwelling-places are relived as daydreams that these dwelling-places of the past remain in us for all time.

Now my aim is clear: I must show that the house is one of the greatest powers of integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind. The binding principle in this integration is the daydream. Past, present and future give the house different dynamisms, which often interfere, at times opposing, at others, stimulating one another.

¹ We should grant “fixation” its virtues, independently of psychoanalytical literature which, because of its therapeutic function, is obliged to record, principally, processes of de fixation.

the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing. Without it, man would be a dispersed being. It maintains him through the storms of the heavens and through those of life. It is body and soul. It is the human being’s first world. Being, he is “cast into the world,” as claimed by certain hasty metaphysics, man is laid in the cradle of the house. And always, in our daydreams, the house is a large cradle. A concrete metaphysics cannot neglect this fact, this simple fact, all the more, since this fact is a value, an important value, to which we return in our daydreaming. Being is already a value. Life begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house.

From my viewpoint, from the phenomenologist’s viewpoint, the conscious metaphysics that starts from the moment when the being is “cast into the world” is a secondary metaphysics. It passes over the preliminaries, when being is being-well, when the human being is deposited in a being-well, in the well-being originally associated with being. To illustrate the metaphysics of consciousness we should have to wait for the experiences during which being is cast out, that is to say, thrown out, outside the being of the house, a circumstance in which the hostility of men and of the universe accumulates. But a complete metaphysics, englobing both the conscious and the unconscious, would leave the privilege of its values within. Within the being, in the being of within, an enveloping warmth welcomes being. Being reigns in a sort of earthly paradise of matter, dissolved in the comforts of an adequate matter.

It is as though in this material paradise, the human being were bathed in nourishment, as though he were gratified with all the essential benefits.

When we dream of the house we were born in, in the utmost depths of revery, we participate in this original warmth, in this well-tempered matter of the material paradise. This is the environment in which the protective beings live. We shall come back to the maternal features of the house. For the moment, I should like to point out...
the original fullness of the house’s being. Our daydreams carry us back to it. And the poet well knows that the house holds childhood motionless “in its arms”:

Maison, pan de prairie, ô lumière du soir
Soudain vous acquérez presque une face humaine
Vous de près de nous, embrassons, embrasés.

(House, patch of meadow, oh evening light
Suddenly you acquire an almost human face
You are very near us, embracing and embraced.)

II

Of course, thanks to the house, a great many of our memories are housed, and if the house is a bit elaborate, if it has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges that are all the more clearly delineated. All our lives we come back to them in our daydreams. A psychoanalyst should, therefore, turn his attention to this simple localization of our memories. I should like to give the name of topoaanalysis to this auxiliary of psychoanalysis. Topoaanalysis, then, would be the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives. In the theater of the past that is constituted by memory, the stage setting maintains the characters in their dominant rôles. At times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being’s stability—a being who does not want to melt away, and who, even in the past, when he sets out in search of things past, wants time to “suspend” its flight. In its countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That is what space is for.

And if we want to go beyond history, or even, while remaining in history, detach from our own history the always too contingent history of the persons who have encumbered it, we realize that the calendars of our lives can only be

established in its imagery. In order to analyze our being in the hierarchy of an ontology, or to psychoanalyze our unconscious entrenched in primitive abodes, it would be necessary, on the margin of normal psychoanalysis, to desocialize our important memories, and attain to the plane of the daydreams that we used to have in the places identified with our solitude. For investigations of this kind, daydreams are more useful than dreams. They show moreover that daydreams can be very different from dreams.3

And so, faced with these periods of solitude, the topoaanalyst starts to ask questions: Was the room a large one? Was the garret cluttered up? Was the nook warm? How was it lighted? How, too, in these fragments of space, did the human being achieve silence? How did he relish the very special silence of the various retreats of solitary daydreaming?

Here space is everything, for time ceases to quicken memory. Memory—what a strange thing it is!—does not record concrete duration, in the Bergsonian sense of the word. We are unable to relive duration that has been destroyed. We can only think of it, in the line of an abstract time that is deprived of all thickness. The finest specimens of fossilized duration concretized as a result of long sojourn, are to be found in and through space. The unconscious abides. Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are. To localize a memory in time is merely a matter for the biographer and only corresponds to a sort of external history, for external use, to be communicated to others. But hermeneutics, which is more profound than biography, must determine the centers of fate by riddling history of its conjunctive temporal tissue, which has no action on our fates. For a knowledge of intimacy, localization in the spaces of our intimacy is more urgent than determination of dates.

Psychoanalysis too often situates the passions “in the century.” In reality, however, the passions simmer and simmer in solitude: the passionate being prepares his explosions and his exploits in this solitude.

3 I plan to study these differences in a future work.
And all the spaces of our past moments of solitude, the spaces in which we have suffered from solitude, enjoyed, desired and compromised solitude, remain indelible within us, and precisely because the human being wants them to remain so. He knows instinctively that this space identified with his solitude is creative; that even when it is forever expunged from the present, when, henceforth, it is alien to all the promises of the future, even when we no longer have a garret, when the attic room is lost and gone, there remains the fact that we once lived in a garret, once lived in an attic. We return to them in our night dreams. These retreats have the value of a shell. And when we reach the very end of the labyrinths of sleep, when we attain to the regions of deep slumber, we may perhaps experience a type of repose that is pre-human; pre-human, in this case, approaching the immemorial. But in the daydream itself, the recollection of moments of confined, simple, shut-in space are experiences of heartwarming space, of a space that does not seek to become extended, but would like above all still to be possessed. In the past, the attic may have seemed too small, it may have seemed cold in winter and hot in summer. Now, however, in memory recaptured through daydreams, it is hard to say through what syncretism the attic is at once small and large, warm and cool, always comforting.

III

When I relive dynamically the road that "climbed" the hill, I am quite sure that the road itself had muscles, or rather, counter-muscles. In my room in Paris, it is a good exercise for me to think of the road in this way. As I write this page, I feel freed of my duty to take a walk: I am sure of having gone out of my house. And indeed we should find countless intermediaries between reality and symbols if we gave things all the movements they suggest. George Sand, dreaming beside a path of yellow sand, saw life flowing by. "What is more beautiful than a road?" she wrote. "It is the symbol and the image of an active varied life." (Consuelo, vol. II, p. 116). Each one of us, then, should speak of his roads, his crossroads, his roadside benches; each one of us should make a surveyor’s map of his lost fields and meadows. Thoreau said that he had the map of his fields engraved in his soul. And Jean Wahl once wrote:

Le moutonnement des haies
C'est en moi que je l'ai.
The poetry of space

(The frothing of the hedges
I keep deep inside me.)

Thus we cover the universe with drawings we have lived. These drawings need not be exact. They need only to be tonalized on the mode of our inner space. But what a book would have to be written to decide all these problems! Space calls for action, and before action, the imagination is at work. It mows and ploughs. We should have to speak of the benefits of all these imaginary actions. Psychoanalysis has made numerous observations on the subject of projective behavior, on the willingness of extroverted persons to exteriorize their intimate impressions. An exteriorist topology analysis would perhaps give added precision to this projective behavior by defining our daydreams of objects. However, in this present work, I shall not be able to undertake, as should be done, the two-fold imaginary geometrical and physical problem of extroversion and introversion. Moreover, I do not believe that these two branches of physics have the same psychic weight. My research is devoted to the domain of intimacy, to the domain in which psychic weight is dominant.

I shall therefore put my trust in the power of attraction of all the domains of intimacy. There does not exist a real intimacy that is repellent. All the spaces of intimacy are designated by an attraction. Their being is well-being. In these conditions, topoanalysis bears the stamp of a toposphilics, and shelters and rooms will be studied in the sense of this valorization.

IV

These virtues of shelter are so simple, so deeply rooted in our unconscious that they may be recaptured through mere mention, rather than through minute description. Here the nuance bespeaks the color. A poet's word, because it strikes true, moves the very depths of our being.

Over-picturesqueness in a house can conceal its intimacy.

The house, from cellar to garret, the significance of the hut

This is also true in life. But it is truer still in daydreams. For the real houses of memory, the houses to which we return in dreams, the houses that are rich in unalterable onerism, do not readily lend themselves to description. To describe them would be like showing them to visitors. We can perhaps tell everything about the present, but about the past! The first, the oneirically definitive house, must retain its shadows. For it belongs to the literature of depth, that is, to poetry, and not to the fluent type of literature that, in order to analyze intimacy, needs other people's stories. All I ought to say about my childhood home is just barely enough to place me, myself, in an oneristic situation, to set me on the threshold of a day-dream in which I shall find repose in the past. Then I may hope that my page will possess a sonority that will ring true—a voice so remote within me, that it will be the voice we all hear when we listen as far back as memory reaches, on the very limits of memory, beyond memory perhaps, in the field of the immemorial. All we communicate to others is an orientation towards what is secret without ever being able to tell the secret objectively. What is secret never has total objectivity. In this respect, we orient onerism but we do not accomplish it.

What would be the use, for instance, in giving the plan of the room that was really my room, in describing the little room at the end of the garret, in saying that from the window, across the indentations of the roof, one could see the hill. I alone, in my memories of another century, can open the deep cupboard that still retains for me alone that unique odor, the odor of raisins drying on a wicker tray. The odor of raisins! It is an odor that is beyond description, one that it takes a lot of imagination to smell. But I've already said too much. If I said more, the reader,

1 After giving a description of the Cannan estate (Poétique, p. 90), Sainte-Beuve adds: "It is not so much for you, my friend, who never saw this place, and had you visited it, could not now feel the impressions and colors I feel, that I have gone over it in such detail, for which I must excuse myself. Nor should you try to see it as a result of what I have said; let the image float inside you; pass lightly; the slightest idea of it will suffice for you."
back in his own room, would not open that unique wardrobe, with its unique smell, which is the signature of intimacy. Paradoxically, in order to suggest the values of intimacy, we have to induce in the reader a state of suspended reading. For it is not until his eyes have left the page that recollections of my room can become a threshold of onerism for him. And when it is a poet speaking, the reader's soul reverberates; it experiences the kind of reverberation that, as Minkowski has shown, gives the energy of an origin to being.

It therefore makes sense from our standpoint of a philosophy of literature and poetry to say that we "write a room," "read a room," or "read a house." Thus, very quickly, at the very first word, at the first poetic overture, the reader who is "reading a room" leaves off reading and starts to think of some place in his own past. You would like to tell everything about your room. You would like to interest the reader in yourself, whereas you have unlocked a door to daydreaming. The values of intimacy are so absorbing that the reader has ceased to read your room: he sees his own again. He is already far off, listening to the recollections of a father or a grandmother, of a mother or a servant, of "the old faithful servant," in short, of the human being who dominates the corner of his most cherished memories.

And the house of memories becomes psychologically complex. Associated with the nooks and corners of solitude are the bedroom and the living room in which the leading characters held sway. The house we were born in is an inhabited house. In it the values of intimacy are scattered, they are not easily stabilized, they are subjected to dialectics. In how many tales of childhood—if tales of childhood were sincere—we should be told of a child that, lacking a room, went and sulked in his corner!

But over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits. After twenty years, in spite of all the other anonymous stairways, we would recapture the reflexes of the "first stairway," we would not stumble on that rather high step. The house's entire being would open up, faithful to our own being. We would push the door that creaks with the same gesture, we would find our way in the dark to the distant attic. The feel of the tiniest latch has remained in our hands.

The successive houses in which we have lived have no doubt made our gestures commonplace. But we are very surprised, when we return to the old house, after an odyssey of many years, to find that the most delicate gestures, the earliest gestures suddenly come alive, are still faultless. In short, the house we were born in is an engraving within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting. We are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house, and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme. The word habit is too worn a word to express this passionate liaison of our bodies, which do not forget, with an unforgettable house.

But this area of detailed recollections that are easily retained because of the names of things and people we knew in the first house, can be studied by means of general psychology. Memories of dreams, however, which only poetic meditation can help us to recapture, are more confused, less clearly drawn. The great function of poetry is to give us back the situations of our dreams. The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams. Each one of its nooks and corners was a resting-place for daydreaming. And often the resting-place particularized the daydream. Our habits of a particular daydream were acquired there. The house, the bedroom, the garret in which we were alone, furnished the framework for an inextricable dream, one that poetry alone, through the creation of a poetic work, could succeed in achieving completely. If we give their function of shelter for dreams to all of these places of retreat, we may say, as I pointed out in an earlier work, that there exists for each one of us an oneicric house, a house of dream-memory, that is lost in the shadow of a beyond of the real past. I called this oneicric house the crypt of the house that we were born in.

1 La terre et les reves du repos, p. 98, Corti, Paris.
in. Here we find ourselves at a pivotal point around which reciprocal interpretations of dreams through thought and thought through dreams, keep turning. But the word interpretation hardens this about-face unduly. In point of fact, we are in the unity of image and memory, in the functional composite of imagination and memory. The positivity of psychological history and geography cannot serve as a touchstone for determining the real being of our childhood, for childhood is certainly greater than reality. In order to sense, across the years, our attachment for the house we were born in, dream is more powerful than thought. It is our unconscious force that crystallizes our remotest memories. If a compact center of daydreams of repose had not existed in this first house, the very different circumstances that surround actual life would have clouded our memories. Except for a few medallions stamped with the likeness of our ancestors, our child-memory contains only worn coins. It is on the plane of the daydream and not on that of facts that childhood remains alive and poetically useful within us. Through this permanent childhood, we maintain the poetry of the past. To inhabit oneirically the house we were born in means more than to inhabit it in memory; it means living in this house that is gone, the way we used to dream in it.

What special depth there is in a child's daydream! And how happy the child who really possesses his moments of solitude! It is a good thing, it is even salutary, for a child to have periods of boredom, for him to learn to know the dialectics of exaggerated play and causeless, pure boredom. Alexander Dumas tells in his Mémoires that, as a child, he was bored, bored to tears. When his mother found him like that, weeping from sheer boredom, she said: "And what is Dumas crying about?" "Dumas is crying because Dumas has tears," replied the six-year-old child. This is the kind of anecdote people tell in their memoirs. But how well it exemplifies absolute boredom, the boredom that is not the equivalent of the absence of playmates. There are children who will leave a game to go and be bored in a corner of the garret. How often have I wished for the attic of my boredom when the complications of life made me lose the very germ of all freedom!

And so, beyond all the positive values of protection, the house we were born in becomes imbued with dream values which remain after the house is gone. Centers of boredom, centers of solitude, centers of daydream group together to constitute the oneiric house which is more lasting than the scattered memories of our birthplace. Long phenomenological research would be needed to determine all these dream values, to plumb the depth of this dream ground in which our memories are rooted.

And we should not forget that these dream values communicate poetically from soul to soul. To read poetry is essentially to daydream.

v

A house constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability. We are constantly re-imagining its reality: to distinguish all these images would be to describe the soul of the house; it would mean developing a veritable psychology of the house.

To bring order into these images, I believe that we should consider two principal connecting themes: 1) A house is imagined as a vertical being. It rises upward. It differentiates itself in terms of its verticality. It is one of the appeals to our consciousness of verticality. 2) A house is imagined as a concentrated being. It appeals to our consciousness of centrality.¹

¹ These themes are no doubt very abstractly stated. But with examples, it is not hard to recognize their psychologically concrete nature.

Verticity is ensured by the polarity of cellar and attic, the marks of which are so deep that, in a way, they open up two very different perspectives for a phenomenology of the imagination. Indeed, it is possible, almost without com-

³ For this second part, see page 89.
mentary, to oppose the rationality of the roof to the irrationality of the cellar. A roof tells its raison d'être right away: it gives mankind shelter from the rain and sun he fears. Geographers are constantly reminding us that, in every country, the slope of the roofs is one of the surest indications of the climate. We "understand" the slant of a roof. Even a dreamer dreams rationally; for him, a pointed roof averts rain clouds. Up near the roof all our thoughts are clear. In the attic it is a pleasure to see the bare rafters of the strong framework. Here we participate in the carpenter's solid geometry.

As for the cellar, we shall no doubt find uses for it. It will be rationalized and its conveniences enumerated. But it is first and foremost the dark entity of the house, the one that partakes of subterranean forces. When we dream there, we are in harmony with the irrationality of the depths.

We become aware of this dual vertical polarity of a house if we are sufficiently aware of the function of inhabiting to consider it as an imaginary response to the function of constructing. The dreamer constructs and reconstructs the upper stories and the attic until they are well constructed. And, as I said before, when we dream of the heights we are in the rational zone of intellectualized projects. But for the cellar, the impassioned inhabitant digs and re-digs, making its very depth active. The fact is not enough, the dream is at work. When it comes to excavated ground, dreams have no limit. I shall give later some deep cellar reveries. But first let us remain in the space that is polarized by the cellar and the attic, to see how this polarized space can serve to illustrate very fine psychological nuances.

Here is how the psychoanalyst, C. G. Jung, has used the dual image of cellar and attic to analyze the fears that inhabit a house. In Jung's Modern Man in Search of a Soul, we find a comparison which is used to make us understand the conscious being's hope of "destroying the autonomy of complexes by debaptising them." The image is the fol-

lowing: "Here the conscious acts like a man who, hearing a suspicious noise in the cellar, hurries to the attic and, finding no burglars there decides, consequently, that the noise was pure imagination. In reality, this prudent man did not dare venture into the cellar."

To the extent that the explanatory image used by Jung convinces us, we readers relive phenomenologically both fears: fear in the attic and fear in the cellar. Instead of facing the cellar (the unconscious), Jung's "prudent man" seeks alibis for his courage in the attic. In the attic rats and mice can make considerable noise. But let the master of the house arrive unexpectedly and they return to the silence of their holes. The creatures moving about in the cellar are slower, less scampering, more mysterious.

In the attic, fears are easily "rationalized." Whereas in the cellar, even for a more courageous man than the one Jung mentions, "rationalization" is less rapid and less clear; also it is never definitive. In the attic, the day's experiences can always efface the fears of night. In the cellar, darkness prevails both day and night, and even when we are carrying a lighted candle, we see shadows dancing on the dark walls.

If we follow the inspiration of Jung's explanatory example to a complete grasp of psychological reality, we encounter a co-operation between psychoanalysis and phenomenology which must be stressed if we are to dominate the human phenomenon. As a matter of fact, the image has to be understood phenomenologically in order to give it psychoanalytical efficacy. The phenomenologist, in this case, will accept the psychoanalyst's image in a spirit of shared trepidation. He will revive the primity and the specificity of the fears. In our civilization, which has the same light everywhere, and puts electricity in its cellars, we no longer go to the cellar carrying a candle. But the unconscious cannot be civilized. It takes a candle when it goes to the cellar. The psychoanalyst cannot cling to the superficiality of metaphors or comparisons, and the phenomenologist has to pursue every image to the very end. Here, so far from reducing and explaining, so far from
comparing, the phenomenologist will exaggerate his exaggeration. Then, when they read Poe’s Tales together, both the phenomenologist and the psychoanalyst will understand the value of this achievement. For these tales are the realization of childhood fears. The reader who is a “devotee” of reading will hear the accursed cat, which is a symbol of unredeemed guilt, meowing behind the wall. The cellar dreamer knows that the walls of the cellar are buried walls, that they are walls with a single casing, walls that have the entire earth behind them. And so the situation grows more dramatic, and fear becomes exaggerated. But where is the fear that does not become exaggerated?

In this spirit of shared trepidation, the phenomenologist listens intently, as the poet Thoby Marcellin puts it, “in a flush with madness.” The cellar then becomes buried madness, walled-in tragedy. Stories of criminal cellars leave indelible marks on our memory, marks that we prefer not to deepen; who would like to re-read Poe’s “The Cask of Amontillado”? In this instance, the dramatic element is too facile, but it exploits natural fears, which are inherent to the dual nature of both man and house.

Although I have no intention of starting a file on the subject of human drama, I shall study a few ultra-cellars which prove that the cellar dream irrefutably increases reality.

If the dreamer’s house is in a city it is not unusual that the dream is one of dominating in depth the surrounding cellars. His abode wants the undergrounds of legendary fortified castles, where mysterious passages that run under the enclosing walls, the ramparts and the moat put the heart of the castle into communication with the distant forest. The château planted on the hilltop had a cluster of cellars for roots. And what power it gave a simple house to be built on this underground clump!

In the novels of Henri Bosco, who is a great dreamer of houses, we come across ultra-cellars of this kind. Under the house in L’Antiquaire (The Antique Dealer, p. 60), there is a “vaulted rotunda into which open four doors.” Four 1 Edgar Allan Poe: “The Black Cat.”

1

corridors lead from the four doors, dominating, as it were, the four cardinal points of an underground horizon. The door to the East opens and “we advance subterraneously far under the houses in this neighborhood…” There are traces of labyrinthine dreams in these pages. But associated with the labyrinths of the corridor, in which the air is “heavy,” are rotundas and chapels that are the sanctuaries of the secret. Thus, the cellar in L’Antiquaire is oncetically complex. The reader must explore it through dreams, certain of which refer to the suffering in the corridors, and others to the marvelous nature of underground palaces. He may become quite lost (actually as well as figuratively). At first he does not see very clearly the necessity for such a complicated geometry. Just here, a phenomenological analysis will prove to be effective. But what does the phenomenological attitude advise? It asks us to produce within ourselves a reading pride that will give us the illusion of participating in the work of the author of the book. Such an attitude could hardly be achieved on first reading, which remains too passive. For here the reader is still something of a child, a child who is entertained by reading. But every good book should be re-read as soon as it is finished. After the sketchiness of the first reading comes the creative work of reading. We must then know the problem that confronted the author. The second, then the third reading... give us, little by little, the solution of this problem. Imperceptibly, we give ourselves the illusion that both the problem and the solution are ours. The psychological nuance: “I should have written that,” establishes us as phenomenologists of reading. But so long as we have not acknowledged this nuance, we remain psychologists, or psychoanalysts.

What, then, was Henri Bosco’s literary problem in his description of the ultra-cellar? It was to present in one central concrete image a novel which, in its broad lines, is the novel of underground maneuvers. This worn-out metaphor is illustrated, in this instance, by countless cellars, a network of passages, and a group of individual cells with frequently padlocked doors. There, secrets are pondered,
projects are prepared. And, underneath the earth, action gets under way. We are really in the intimate space of underground maneuvers. It is in a basement such as this that the antique dealers, who carry the novel forward, claim to link people's fates. Henri Bosco's cellar, with its four subdivisions, is a loom on which fates are woven. The hero relating his adventures has himself a ring of fate, a ring carved with signs that date from some remote time. However, the strictly underground, strictly diabolical, activities of the Antiquaires fail. For at the very moment when two great destinies of love are about to be joined, one of the loveliest sylphs dies in the vault of the accursed house—a creature of the garden and the tower, the one who was supposed to confer happiness. The reader who is alive to the accompaniment of cosmic poetry that is always active beneath the psychological story in Bosco's novels, will find evidence, in many pages of this book, of the dramatic tension between the aerial and the terrestrial. But to live such drama as this, we must re-read the book, we must be able to displace the interest or carry out our reading in the dual interest of man and things, at the same time that we neglect nothing of the anthropo-cosmic tissue of a human life.

In another dwelling into which this novelist takes us, the ultra-cellar is no longer under the sign of the sinister projects of diabolical men, but is perfectly natural, inherent to the nature of an underground world. By following Henri Bosco, we shall experience a house with cosmic roots. This house with cosmic roots will appear to us as a stone plant growing out of the rock up to the blue sky of a tower. The hero of L'Antiquaire having been caught on a compromising visit, has been obliged to take to the cellar. Right away, however, interest in the actual story is transferred to the cosmic story. Realities serve here to reveal dreams. At first we are in the labyrinth of corridors carved in the rock. Then, suddenly, we come upon a body of murky water. At this point, description of events in the

novel is left in abeyance and we only find compensation for our perseverance if we participate by means of our own night dreams. Indeed, a long dream that has an elemental sincerity is inserted in the story. Here is this poem of the cosmic cellar:

"Just in front of me, water appeared from out of the darkness.

"Water! ... An immense body of water! ... And what water! ... Black, stagnant, so perfectly smooth that not a ripple, not a bubble, marred its surface. No spring, no source. It had been there for thousands of years and remained there, caught unawares by the rock, spread out in a single, impasive sheet. In its stone matrix, it had itself become this black, still rock, a captive of the mineral world. It had been subjected to the crushing mass, the enormous upheavals, of this oppressive world. Under this heavy weight, its very nature appeared to have been changed as it seeped through the thicknesses of the lime slabs that held its secret fast. Thus it had become the densest fluid element of the underground mountain. Its opacity and unwonted consistency made an unknown substance of it, a substance charged with phosphorescences that only appeared on the surface in occasional flashes. These electric tints, which were signs of the dark powers lying on the bottom, manifested the latent life and formidable power of this still dormant element. They made me shiver."

But this shiver we sense, is no longer human fear; this is cosmic fear, an anthropo-cosmic fear that echoes the great legend of man cast back into primitive situations. From the cavern carved in the rock to the underground, from the underground to stagnant water, we have moved from a constructed to a dreamed world; we have left fiction for poetry. But reality and dream now form a whole. The house, the cellar, the deep earth, achieve totality through depth. The house has become a natural being whose fate

1 Henri Bosco, L'Antiquaire, p. 154.
2 In my study of the material imagination: L'eau et les rêves, there was mention of thick, consistent water, heavy water. This was imagined by a great poet, by Edgar Allan Poe, cf. chapter II.
is bound to that of mountains and of the waters that plough the land. The enormous stone plant it has become would not flourish if it did not have subterranean water at its base. And so our dreams attain boundless proportions.

The cosmic daydream in this passage of Bosco's book gives the reader a sense of restfulness, in that it invites him to participate in the repose to be derived from all deep oneric experience. Here the story remains in a suspended time that is favorable to more profound psychological treatment. Now the account of real events may be resumed; it has received its provision of "cosmicity" and daydream. And so, beyond the underground water, Bosco's cellar recovers its stairways. After this poetic pause, description can begin again to unveil its itinerary. "A very narrow, steep stairway, which spiraled as it went higher, had been carved in the rock. I started up it" (p. 155). By means of this galler, the dreamer succeeds in getting out of the depths of the earth and begins his adventures in the heights. In fact, at the very end of countless tortuous, narrow passages, the reader emerges into a tower. This is the ideal tower that haunts all dreamers of old houses: it is "perfectly round" and there is "brief light" from "a narrow window." It also has a vaulted ceiling, which is a great principle of the dream of intimacy. For it constantly reflects intimacy at its center. No one will be surprised to learn that the tower room is the abode of a gentle young girl and that she is haunted by memories of an ardent ancestress. The round, vaulted room stands high and alone, keeping watch over the past in the same way that it dominates space.

On this young girl's misadventures, handed down from her distant ancestress, may be read the following motto:

_The flower is always in the almond._

With this excellent motto, both the house and the bedchamber bear the mark of an unforgettable intimacy. For there exists no more compact image of intimacy, none that is more sure of its center, than a flower's dream of the future while it is still enclosed, tightly folded, inside its seed. How we should love to see not happiness, but pre-happiness remain enclosed in the round chamber!

Finally, the house Bosco describes stretches from earth to sky. It possesses the verticality of the tower rising from the most earthly, watery depths, to the abode of a soul that believes in heaven. Such a house, constructed by a writer, illustrates the verticality of the human being. It is also onerically complete, in that it dramatizes the two poles of house dreams. It makes a gift of a tower to those who have perhaps never even seen a dove-cote. A tower is the creation of another century. Without a past it is nothing. Indeed, a new tower would be ridiculous. But we still have books, and they give our day-dreams countless dwelling-places. Is there one among us who has not spent romantic moments in the tower of a book he has read? These moments come back to us. Daydreaming needs them. For on the keyboard of the vast literature devoted to the function of inhabiting, the tower sounds a note of immense dreams. How many times, since reading _L'Antiquaire_, have I gone to live in Henri Bosco's tower!

This tower and its underground cellars extend the house we have just been studying in both directions. For us, this house represents an increase in the verticality of the more modest houses that, in order to satisfy our daydreams, have to be differentiated in height. If I were the architect of an oneric house, I should hesitate between a three-story house and one with four. A three-story house, which is the simplest as regards essential height, has a cellar, a ground floor and an attic while a four-story house puts a floor between the ground floor and the attic. One floor more, and our dreams become blurred. In the oneric house, toponalysis only knows how to count to three or four.

Then there are the stairways: one to three or four of them, all different. We always go down the one that leads to the cellar, and it is this going down that we remember, that characterizes its onerism. But we go both up and
down the stairway that leads to the bed-chamber. It is more common used; we are familiar with it. Twelve-year olds even go up it in ascending scales, in thirds and fourths, trying to do fifths, and liking, above all, to take it in strides of four steps at a time. What joy for the legs to go up four steps at a time!

Lastly, we always go up the attic stairs, which are steeper and more primitive. For they bear the mark of ascension to a more tranquil solitude. When I return to dream in the attics of yester-year, I never go down again.

Dreams of stairs have often been encountered in psychoanalysis. But since it requires an all-inclusive symbolism to determine its interpretations, psychoanalysis has paid little attention to the complexity of mixed reveries and memory. That is why, on this point, as well as on others, psychoanalysis is better suited to the study of dreams than of daydreams. The phenomenology of the daydream can untangle the complex of memory and imagination; it becomes necessarily sensitive to the differentiations of the symbol. And the poetic daydream, which creates symbols, confers upon our intimate moments an activity that is polysymbolic. Our recollections grow sharper, the onerioric house becomes highly sensitized. At times, a few steps have engraved in our memories a slight difference of level that existed in our childhood home. A certain room was not only a door, but a door plus three steps. When we recall the old house in its longitudinal detail, everything that ascends and descends comes to life again dynamically. We can no longer remain, to quote Joë Bousquet, men with only one story: "He was a man with only one story: he had his cellar in his attic."

By way of antithesis, I shall make a few remarks on dwellings that are onerically incomplete.

In Paris there are no houses, and the inhabitants of the big city live in superimposed boxes. "One's Paris room, inside its four walls," wrote Paul Claudel, "is a sort of geometrical site, a conventional hole, which we furnish with pictures, objects and wardrobes within a wardrobe." The number of the street and the floor give the location of our "conventional hole," but our abode has neither space around it nor verticity inside it. "The houses are fastened to the ground with asphalt, in order not to sink into the earth." They have no roots and, what is quite unthinkable for a dreamer of houses, skyscrapers have no cellars. From the street to the roof, the rooms pile up one on top of the other, while the tent of a horizonless sky encloses the entire city. But the height of city buildings is a purely exterior one. Elevators do away with the heroism of stair climbing so that there is no longer any virtue in living up near the sky. Home has become mere horizontality. The different rooms that compose living quarters jammed into one floor all lack one of the fundamental principles for distinguishing and classifying the values of intimacy.

But in addition to the intimate value of verticality, a house in a big city lacks cosmicity. For here, where houses are no longer set in natural surroundings, the relationship between house and space becomes an artificial one. Everything about it is mechanical and, on every side, intimate living flees. "The streets are like pipes into which men are sucked up." (Max Picard, loc. cit., p. 119).

Moreover, our houses are no longer aware of the storms of the outside universe. Occasionally the wind blows a tile from a roof and kills a passer-by in the street. But this roof crime is only aimed at the belated passer-by. Or lightning may for an instant set fire to the window-panes. The house does not tremble, however, when thunder rolls. It trembles neither with nor through us. In our houses set close one up against the other, we are less afraid. A hurricane in Paris has not the same personal offensiveness towards the dreamer that it has towards the hermit's house. We shall understand this better, in fact, when we have studied, further on, the house's situation in the world, which gives us, quite

1 Paul Claudel, Oiseau noir dans le soleil levant, p. 144.
2 Max Picard, La fuite devant Dieu, trans. p. 111.
concretely, a variation of the metaphysically summarized situation of man in the world.

Just here the philosopher who believes in the salutary nature of vast daydreams is faced with a problem: how can one help confer greater cosmicity upon the city space that is exterior to one’s room? As an example, here is one dreamer’s solution to the problem of noise in Paris:

When insomnia, which is the philosopher’s ailment, is increased through irritation caused by city noises; or when, late at night, the hum of automobiles and trucks rumbling through the Place Maubert causes me to curse my city-dweller’s fate, I can recover my calm by living the metaphors of the ocean. We all know that the big city is a clamorous sea, and it has been said countless times that, in the heart of night in Paris, one hears the ceaseless murmur of flood and tide. So I make a sincere image out of these hackneyed ones, an image that is as much my own as though I myself had invented it, in line with my gentle mania for always believing that I am the subject of what I am thinking. If the hum of cars becomes more painful, I do my best to discover in it the roll of thunder, of a thunder that speaks to me and scolds me. And I feel sorry for myself. So there you are, unhappy philosoper, caught up again by the storm, by the storms of life! I dream an abstract-concrete daydream. My bed is a small boat lost at sea; that sudden whistling is the wind in the sails. On every side the air is filled with the sound of furious klaxonning. I talk to myself to give myself cheer: there now, your skill is holding its own, you are safe in your stone boat. Sleep, in spite of the storm. Sleep in the storm. Sleep in your own courage, happy to be a man who is assailed by wind and wave.

And I fall asleep, lulled by the noise of Paris.1

In fact, everything corroborates my view that the image of the city’s ocean roar is in the very “nature of things,” and that it is a true image. It is also a salutary thing to naturalize sound in order to make it less hostile. Just in passing, I have noted the following delicate nuance of the beneficent image in the work of a young contemporary poet, Yvonne Carouch,² for whom dawn in the city is the “murmur of an empty sea shell.” Being myself an early riser, this image helps me to wake up gently and naturally. However, any image is a good one, provided we know how to use it.

We could find many other images on the theme of the city-ocean. Here is one that occurred to a painter. The art-critic and historian, Pierre Courthion,² tells that when Gustave Courbet was confined in the Sainte Pélagie prison, he wanted to paint: a view of Paris, as seen from the top floor of the prison. In a letter to a friend, Courbet wrote that he was planning to paint it “the way I do my marines: with an immensely deep sky, and all its movement, all its houses and domes, imitating the tumultuous waves of the ocean.”

Pursuant to my method, I have retained the coalescence of images that refuse an absolute anatomy. I had to mention incidentally the house’s “cosmicity.” But we shall return later to this characteristic. Now, after having examined the verticality of the oneric house, we are going to study the centers of condensation of intimacy, in which daydream accumulates.

VI

We must first look for centers of simplicity in houses with many rooms. For as Baudelaire said, in a palace, “there is no place for intimacy.”

But simplicity, which at times is too rationally vaunted, is not a source of high-powered oneirism. We must therefore experience the primitiveness of refuge and, beyond

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1 Yvonne Carouch, Feleurs endormis, éd. Debreze, p. 90.

2 Pierre Courthion, Courbet raconté par lui-même et par ses amis. Published by Callier, 1948, vol. I, p. 278. General Valentine did not allow Courbet to paint his city-ocean on the grounds that he “was not in prison for the purpose of amusing himself.”
situations that have been experienced, discover situations that have been dreamed; beyond positive recollections that are the material for a positive psychology, return to the field of the primitive images that had perhaps been centers of fixation for recollections left in our memories.

A demonstration of imaginary primitive elements may be based upon the entity that is most firmly fixed in our memories: the childhood home. For instance, in the house itself, in the family sitting-room, a dreamer of refuges dreams of a hut, of a nest, or of nooks and corners in which he would like to hide away, like an animal in its hole. In this way, he lives in a region that is beyond human images. If a phenomenologist could succeed in living the primitiveness of such images, he would locate elsewhere, perhaps, the problems that touch upon the poetry of the house. We find a very clear example of this concentration of the joy of inhabiting in a fragment of Henri Bachelin’s life of his father.¹

Henri Bachelin’s childhood home could not have been simpler. Although no different from the other houses in the overrated Morvan village where he was born, it was nevertheless a roomy home with ample outbuildings in which the family lived in security and comfort. The lamp-lit room where, in the evening, the father read the lives of the saints—he was Church sexton as well as day-laborer—was the scene of the little boy’s daydreaming of primitiveness, daydreaming that accentuated solitude to the point of imagining that he lived in a hut in the depth of the forest. For a phenomenologist who is looking for the roots of the function of inhabiting, this passage in Henri Bachelin’s book represents a document of great purity. The essential lines are the following (p. 97): “At these moments, I felt very strongly—and I swear to this—that we were cut off from the little town, from the rest of France, and from the entire world. I delighted in imagining (although I kept my feelings to myself) that we were living in the heart of the woods, in the well-heated hut of charcoal burners; I even hoped to hear wolves sharpening their claws on the heavy granite slab that formed our doorstep. But our house replaced the hut for me, it sheltered me from hunger and cold; and if I shivered, it was merely from well-being.” Addressing his father—his novel is constantly written in the second person—Bachelin adds: “Comfortably seated in my chair, I basked in the sensation of your strength.

Thus, the author attracts us to the center of the house as though to a center of magnetic force, into a major zone of protection. He goes to the very bottom of the “hut dream,” which is well-known to everyone who cherishes the legendary images of primitive houses. But in most hut dreams we hope to live elsewhere, far from the over-crowded house, far from city cares. We flee in thought in search of a real refuge. Bachelin is more fortunate than dreamers of distant escape, in that he finds the root of the hut dream in the house itself. He has only to give a few touches to the spectacle of the family sitting-room, only to listen to the stove roaring in the evening stillness, while an icy wind blows against the house, to know that at the house’s center, in the circle of light shed by the lamp, he is living in the round house, the primitive hut, of prehistoric man. How many dwelling places there would be, fitted one into the other, if we were to realize in detail, and in their hierarchical order, all the images by means of which we live our daydreams of intimacy. How many scattered values we should succeed in concentrating, if we lived the images of our daydreams in all sincerity.

In this passage from Bachelin’s book, the hut appears to be the tip-root of the function of inhabiting. It is the simplest of human plants, the one that needs no ramifications in order to exist. Indeed, it is so simple that it no longer belongs to our memories—which at times are too full of imagery—but to legend; it is a center of legend. When we are lost in darkness and see a distant glimmer of light, who does not dream of a thatched cottage or, to go more deeply still into legend, of a hermit’s hut?

A hermit’s hut. What a subject for an engraving! Indeed

¹ Henri Bachelin, Le serviteur, 6th edition, Mercure de France, with an excellent preface by René Dumenil, who relates the life and work of this forgotten writer.
real images are engravings, for it is the imagination that engraves them on our memories. They deepen the recollections we have experienced, which they replace, thus becoming imagined recollections. The hermit’s hut is a theme which needs no variations, for at the simplest mention of it, “phenomenological reverberation” obliterates all mediocrite resonances. The hermit’s hut is an engraving that would suffer from any exaggeration of picturesqueness. Its truth must derive from the intensity of its essence, which is the essence of the verb “to inhabit.” The hut immediately becomes central and positive, for in the land of legend, there exists no adjoining hut. And although geographers may bring back photographs of huts villages from their travels in distant lands, our legendary past transcends everything that has been seen, even everything that we have experienced personally. The image leads us on towards extreme solitude. The hermit is alone before God. His hut, therefore, is just the opposite of the monastery. And there radiates about this centralized solitude a universe of meditation and prayer, a universe outside the universe. The hut can receive none of the riches “of this world.” It possesses the felicity of intense poverty; indeed, it is one of the glories of poverty; as destitution increases it gives us access to absolute refuge.

This valorization of a center of concentrated solitude is so strong, so primitive, and so unquestioned, that the image of the distant light serves as a reference for less clearly localized images. When Thoreau heard the sound of a horn in the depths of the woods, this image with its hardly determined center, this sound image that filled the entire nocturnal landscape, suggested repose and confidence to him. That sound, he said, is as friendly as the hermit’s distant candle. And for those of us who remember, from what intimate valley do the horns of other days still reach us? Why do we immediately accept the common friendship of this sound world awakened by the horn, or the hermit’s world lighted by its distant gleam? How is it that images as rare as these should possess such power over the imagination?

Great images have both a history and a prehistory; they are always a blend of memory and legend, with the result that we never experience an image directly. Indeed, every great image has an unfathomable onedric depth to which the personal past adds special color. Consequently it is not until late in life that we really revere an image, when we discover that its roots plunge well beyond the history that is fixed in our memories. In the realm of absolute imagination, we remain young late in life. But we must lose our earthly Paradise in order actually to live in it, to experience it in the reality of its images, in the absolute sublimation that transcends all passion. A poet meditating upon the life of a great poet, that is, Victor-Emile Michélet meditating upon the life of Villiers de l’Isle-Adam, wrote: “Alas! we have to grow old to conquer youth, to free it from its fetters and live according to its original impulse.”

Poetry gives not so much a nostalgia for youth, which would be vulgar, as a nostalgia for the expressions of youth. It offers us images as we should have imagined them during the “original impulse” of youth. Primal images, simple engravings are but so many invitations to start imagining again. They give us back areas of being, houses in which the human being’s certainty of being is concentrated, and we have the impression that, by living in such images as these, in images that are as stabilizing as these are, we could start a new life, a life that would be our own, that would belong to us in our very depths. When we look at images of this kind, when we read the images in Bachelin’s book, we start musing on primitiveness. And because of this very primitiveness, restored, desired and experienced through simple images, an album of pictures of huts would constitute a textbook of simple exercises for the phenomenology of the imagination.

In line with the distant light in the hermit’s hut, symbolic of the man who keeps vigil, a rather large dossier of literary documentation on the poetry of houses could be studied from the single angle of the lamp that glows in the window. This image would have to be placed under one of the greatest of all theorems of the imagination of the world.
of light: Tout ce qui brille voit (All that glows sees). Rimbaud expressed in three syllables the following cosmic theorem: "Nacre voit" (Mother-of-pearl sees). The lamp keeps vigil, therefore it is vigilant. And the narrower the ray of light, the more penetrating its vigilance.

The lamp in the window is the house's eye and, in the kingdom of the imagination, it is never lighted out-of-doors, but is enclosed light, which can only filter to the outside. A poem entitled Emmiurd (Walled-in), begins as follows:

Une lampe allumée derrière la fenêtre
Veille au coeur secret de la nuit.

(A lighted lamp in the window
Watches in the secret heart of night.)

while a few lines above the same poet speaks:

Du regard emprisonné
Entre ses quatre murs de pierre?

(Of a gaze imprisoned
Between its four stone walls.)

In Henri Bosco's novel, Hyacinthe which, together with another story, Le jardin d'Hyacinthe (Hyacinth's Garden), constitutes one of the most astounding psychological novels of our time, a lamp is waiting in the window, and through it, the house, too, is waiting. The lamp is the symbol of prolonged waiting.

By means of the light in that far-off house, the house sees, keeps vigil, vigilantly waits.

When I let myself drift into the intoxication of inventing daydreams and reality, that faraway house with its light becomes for me, before me, a house that is looking out—its turn now—through the keyhole. Yes, there is someone in that house who is keeping watch, a man is working there while I dream away. He leads a dogged existence, whereas

1 Rimbaud, Œuvres Complètes, published by Le Grand-Cléme, Lausanne, p. 531.
2 Christiane Barucoa, Antide, Cahiers de Rochefort, p. 5.

I am pursuing futile dreams. Through its light alone, the house becomes human. It seems like a man. It is an eye open to night.

But countless other images come to embellish the poetry of the house in the night. Sometimes it glows like a firefly in the grass, a creature with a solitary light:

Je verrai vos maisons comme des vers luisants au creux
des collines?

(I shall see your houses like fire-flies in the hollow of the hills.)

Another poet calls houses that shine on earth "stars of grass"; and Christiane Barucoa speaks elsewhere of the lamp in the human house as an

Étoile prisonnière prise au gel de l'instant

(Imprisoned star caught in the instant's freezing.)

In such images we have the impression that the stars in heaven come to live on earth, that the houses of men form earthly constellations.

With ten villages and their lights, G. E. Clancier nails a Leviathan constellation to the earth:

Une nuit, dix villages, une montagne,
Un léviathan noir cloué d'or?.

(A night, ten villages, a mountain,
A black, gold-studded Leviathan.)

Erich Neumann has analyzed the dream of a patient who, while looking it the stars from the top of a tower, saw them rise and shine under the earth; they emerged from the bowels of the earth. In this obsession, the earth was not, however, a mere likeness of the starry sky, but the great life-giving mother of the world, the creator of night

1 Hélène Morange, Astrophiles et Perroches, Séphos, p. 29.
2 G.-E. Clancier, Une Voix, Gallimard, p. 176.
and the stars. In his patient’s dream, Neumann shows the force of the Mother-Earth (Mutter-Erde) archetype. Poetry comes naturally from a daydream, which is less insistent than a night-dream; it is only a matter of an “instant’s freezing.” But the poetic document is none the less indicative. A terrestrial sign is set upon a celestial being. The archeology of images is thus illumined by the poet’s swift, instantaneous image.

I have dwelt somewhat at length on this apparently commonplace image, in order to show that images are incapable of repose. Poetic reverie, unlike somnolent reverie, never falls asleep. Starting with the simplest of images, it must always set the waves of the imagination radiating. But however cosmic the isolated house lighted by the star of its lamp may become, it will always symbolize solitude. I should like to quote one last text which stresses this solitude.

In the Fragments from an intimate diary that precede a French collection of Rilke’s letters, we find the following scene: one very dark night, Rilke and two friends perceive “the lighted casement of a distant hut, the hut that stands quite alone on the horizon before one comes to fields and marshlands.” This image of solitude symbolized by a single light moves the poet’s heart in so personal a way that it isolates him from his companions. Speaking of this group of three friends, Rilke adds: “Despite the fact that we were very close to one another, we remained three isolated individuals, seeing night for the first time.” This expression can never be mediated upon enough, for here the most commonplace image, one that the poet had certainly seen hundreds of time, is suddenly marked with the sign of “the first time,” and it transmits this sign to the familiar night. One might even say that light emanating from a lone watcher, who is also a determined watcher, attains to the power of hypnosis. We are hypnotized by solitude, hypnotized by the gaze of the solitary house; and the tie that binds

us to it is so strong that we begin to dream of nothing but a solitary house in the night.

O Licht im schlafenden Haus!

(O light in the sleeping house!)

With the example of the hut and the light that keeps vigil on the far horizon, we have shown the concentration of intimacy in its refuge, in its most simplified form. At the beginning of this chapter, on the contrary, I tried to differentiate the house according to its verticality. Now, still with the aid of pertinent literary documents, I shall attempt to give a better account of the house’s powers of protection against the forces that besiege it. Then, after having examined this dynamic dialectics of the house and the universe, we shall study a number of poems in which the house is a work in itself.

1 Richard von Schuckl, Anthologie de la poésie allemande, Stock, II, p. 185.


3 Rainer Maria Rilke, Choix de lettres, Stock, 1954, p. 15.