

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Reverie* (1960)

"Introduction"

Chapter IV "The 'Cogito' of the Dreamer"

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Method, Method, what do you want from me?

You know that I have eaten of the fruit of the subconscious.

Jules Laforgue, *Moralités légendaires*

I

In previous works devoted to the poetic imagination, we have tried to show the value of phenomenological method. The importance of such phenomenological inquiries lies in the complete illumination of the awareness of a subject who is struck with wonder by poetic images. This awareness, which modern phenomenology tends to associate with all the other phenomena of the psyche, seems to us to give a durable, subjective value to images which often have only a doubtful or ephemeral objectivity. By obliging us to retrace our steps systematically and make an effort toward clarity of awareness with respect to a poet's given image, the phenomenological method leads us to attempt communication with the creating consciousness of the poet. The newborn poetic image—a simple image!—thus becomes quite simply an absolute origin, an origin of consciousness. In times of great discoveries, a poetic image can be the seed of a world, the seed of a universe imagined out of a poet's reverie. The consciousness of wonder blossoms forth in all innocence before this world which

has been created by the poet. There is no doubt that consciousness is destined for greater exploits. It manifests itself more strongly as it turns to ever more highly coordinated works. In particular, the "consciousness of rationality" has a quality of permanence which poses a difficult problem for the phenomenologist: he is obliged to explain how various moments of consciousness are connected in a chain of truths. But, at least at first glance, the imagining consciousness, in opening out on an isolated image, has more limited responsibilities. The imagining consciousness, then, when it is considered in relation to separate or isolated images, might contribute themes to an elementary pedagogical system for phenomenological doctrines.

But here we are faced with a double paradox. The uninitiated reader will ask why we overload a book on reverie with the heavy philosophical apparatus of the phenomenological system.

For his part, the professional phenomenologist will ask why we choose a subject as fluid and unstable as imagery to display and demonstrate the phenomenological principles.

It might perhaps be simpler if we were to follow the tried and true methods of the psychologist who describes what he observes, measures levels, and classifies types—who sees imagination being born in children without ever really examining how it dies in ordinary men.

But can a philosopher become a psychologist? Can he bend his pride to the point of contenting himself with the notation of facts when he has already entered with all requisite passion into the realm of values? A philosopher remains, as they say today, "in a philosophical situation"; occasionally he pretends to begin everything at the beginning, but, alas! he continues . . . He has read so many books of philosophy! Under the pretext of studying and teaching them, he has deformed so many "systems!" And when evening has come and he is no longer teaching, he believes he has the right to shut himself up in the system of his choice.

And thus it is that I have chosen phenomenology in hopes of re-examining in a new light the faithfully beloved images which are so solidly fixed in my memory that I no longer know whether I am remembering or imagining them when I come across them in my reveries.

II

Furthermore, the phenomenological requirement with respect to poetic images is simple: it returns to putting the accent on their original quality, grasping the very essence of their originality and thus taking advantage of the remarkable psychic productivity of the imagination.

The requirement that the poetic image be a source of psychic activity would, however, appear excessively harsh were we not able to find an element of originality even in the variations at work on the most strongly rooted archetypes. Since it has been our intention to delve more deeply into the psychology of wonder from the phenomenological point of view, the least variation in a wonder-filled image ought to help refine our inquiry. The subtlety of an innovation revives the source, renews and redoubles the joy of wonder.

In poetry, wonder is coupled with the joy of speech. This joy must be considered in its absolute positiveness appearing as a new being in language. The poetic image is in no way comparable, as with the mode of the common metaphor, to a valve which would open up to release pent-up instincts. The poetic image sheds light on consciousness in such a way that it is pointless to look for subconscious antecedents of the image. Phenomenology, at least, is set up to consider the poetic image in its own being, distinct and independent from any antecedent being, as a positive conquest of the word. If one were to listen to the psychoanalyst, he would come to define poetry as a majestic *Lapsus of the Word*. But man is not deceived by becoming exalted. Poetry is one of the destinies of speech. In trying to sharpen the awareness of language at the level of poems, we get the impression that we are touching the man whose speech is new in that it is not limited to expressing ideas or sensations, but tries to have a future. One would say that the poetic image, in its newness, opens a future to language.

Correlatively, by using the phenomenological method in the examination of poetic images, it has seemed to us that we were being automatically psychoanalyzed and that we might, with a clear conscience, repress our former obsessions with psychoanalytic culture. As a phenomenologist, we have felt liberated from

those of our preferences which transform literary taste into habit. Because of the privileged position which phenomenology gives the present, we have been ready to welcome with open arms the new images offered by the poet. The image was present, present in us and separated from all that past which might have prepared it in the soul of the poet. Without worrying about the poet's "complexes," without rummaging about in the history of his life, we were free, systematically free, to pass from one poet to another, from a great poet to a minor poet with regard to a simple image which would reveal its poetic worth precisely through its wealth of variations.

Thus the phenomenological method would enjoin us to display the entire consciousness at the origin of the least variation in the image. One doesn't read poetry while thinking of other things. As soon as a poetic image renews itself in any single one of its traits, it manifests a primitive simplicity.

It is this simplicity, systematically revealed, which ought to result in a pure reception of the poems. In our studies of the active imagination, we shall follow phenomenology then as a school of naïveté.

III

Faced with images which the poets bring us, faced with images which we could never have imagined ourselves, this naïveté of wonderment is completely natural. But in submitting passively to such wonder, one does not participate profoundly enough in the creating imagination. The phenomenology of the image requires that we participate actively in the creating imagination. Since the goal of all phenomenology is to situate awareness in the present, in a moment of extreme tension, we are forced to conclude that, in so far as the characteristics of the imagination are concerned, there is no phenomenology of passivity. In light of the commonly held misconception, let us recall that phenomenology does not involve an empirical description of phenomena. Empirical description involves enslavement to the object by decreeing passivity on the part of the subject. The psychologist's description can doubtless add documentation, but the phenomenologist must intervene to set this documentation on the axis of intentionality.

Ah! if only this image which has just been given to me could be mine, really mine, if it could become—height of a reader's vanity!—my creation! And what a glorious experience reading would be if I could live out, with the poet's help, *poetic intentionality!* It is through the intentionality of poetic imagination that the poet's soul discovers the opening of consciousness common to all true poetry.

In encountering such limitless ambition, together with the fact that our entire book must emerge from our reveries, our phenomenological enterprise must face up to a radical paradox. Reverie is commonly classified among the phenomena of psychic détente. It is lived out in a relaxed time which has no linking force. Since it functions with inattention, it is often without memory. It is a flight from out of the real that does not always find a consistent unreal world. By following "the path of reverie"—a constantly downhill path—consciousness relaxes and wanders and consequently *becomes clouded*. So it is never the right time, when one is dreaming, to "do phenomenology."

What is our attitude to be in the face of such a paradox? Instead of attempting to reconcile the terms of the obvious antithesis between a simply psychological study of reverie and a properly phenomenological study, we shall heighten the contrast further by placing our research under the auspices of a philosophical thesis which we would first like to defend. In our view any awareness is an increment to consciousness, an added light, a reinforcement of psychic coherence. Its swiftness or instantaneity can hide this growth from us. But there is a growth of being in every instance of awareness. Consciousness is in itself an act, the human act. It is a lively, full act. Even if the action which follows, which ought to have followed or should have followed, remains in suspense, the consciousness-as-act is still completely positive or kinetic. In the present essay we shall study this act only in the realm of language and more precisely yet in poetic language when the imagining consciousness creates and lives the poetic image. Adding to language, creating from language, stabilizing and loving language, are all activities where the consciousness of speaking is increased. Within this narrowly limited domain, we are certain to find numerous examples which prove our more general philo-

sophical thesis on the essentially augmentative potential of all awareness.

But then, in the face of this accentuation of the clarity and vigor of the poetic awareness, from what angle must we study reverie in order to take advantage of the lessons of Phenomenology? For actually our own philosophical thesis adds to the difficulty of our problem. In fact, this thesis has a corollary: a consciousness which diminishes, which goes to sleep, a consciousness which *daydreams* (*rêvasse*) is no longer a consciousness. Reverie puts us on the wrong path, the downhill path.

An adjective is going to save everything and permit us to go on to the objections of a superficial psychology. The reverie we intend to study is *poetic reverie*. This is a reverie which poetry puts on the right track, the track an expanding consciousness follows. This reverie is written, or, at least, promises to be written. It is already facing the great universe of the blank page. Then images begin to compose and fall into place. The dreamer is already hearing the sounds of written words. An author, whose name escapes me, used to say that the pen point was an extension of the mind. I am completely convinced of it: when my pen leaks, I think awry. And who will give me back the good ink of my school days?

All the senses awaken and fall into harmony in poetic reverie. Poetic reverie listens to this polyphony of the senses, and the poetic consciousness must record it. The poetic image is suited to what Friedrich Schlegel said of language: it is "spontaneous creation."¹ It is such *élans* of the imagination which the phenomenologist of imagination must try to revive.

Of course, a psychologist would find it more direct to study the inspired poet. He would make concrete studies of inspiration in individual geniuses. But for all that, would he experience the phenomena of inspiration?² His human documentation gathered from inspired poets could hardly be related, except from the exterior, in an ideal of objective observations. Comparison of inspired

¹ "Eine Hervorbringung im Ganzen." We are using Ernest Renan's fine translation. Cf. *De l'origine du langage*, 3rd edition, 1859, p. 100.

² "Poetry is something more than poets." George Sand, *Questions d'art et de littérature*, p. 283.

poets would soon make us lose sight of inspiration. Any comparison diminishes the expressive qualities of the terms of the comparison. The word "inspiration" is too general to express the originality of inspired words. Indeed, the psychology of inspiration, even when accounts of the "artificial paradises" come to our aid, is obviously meager. In such studies there are too few documents with which the psychologist can work, and above all, they are not really accepted as subject matter by the psychologist.

The notion of *Muse*, a notion which should help us *give body* to inspiration and which should make us believe that there is a transcendent subject for the verb *inspire*, cannot enter naturally into the vocabulary of a phenomenologist. Already as a very young adolescent, I could not understand how a poet whom I liked so much could use lutes and muses. How can you recite, with conviction and without breaking out laughing, this first line of a famous poem: "Poet, take your lute and give me a kiss?" It was more than a child of Champagne could bear.

Not Muse, Lyre of Orpheus, phantoms of hashish or opium can only conceal the *substance of inspiration* from us. Written poetic reverie, led to the point of producing a page of literature, will, on the contrary, become for us a transmittable reverie, an inspiring reverie, that is to say, an inspiration tailored to our talents as readers.

In this case, documents are abundant for a solitary, systematically solitary, phenomenologist. The phenomenologist can awaken his poetic consciousness at the contact of a thousand images which lie sleeping in books. He *reverberates* to the poetic image in the very sense of phenomenological resonance so well described by Eugene Minkowski.³

Furthermore, let us note that in contrast to a dream a reverie cannot be recounted. To be communicated, it must be *written*, written with emotion and taste, being relived all the more strongly because it is being written down. Here, we are touching the realm of *written love*. It is going out of fashion, but the benefits remain. There are still souls for whom love is the contact of two poetries, the fusion of two reveries. The epistolary novel ex-

³ Cf. *The Poetics of Space*, (New York, 1964) Orion Press, p. 2.

presses love in a beautiful emulation of images and metaphors. To tell a love, one must write. One never writes too much. How many lovers, upon returning home from the tenderest of rendezvous, open their writing desks! Love is never finished expressing itself, and it expresses itself better the more poetically it is dreamed. The reveries of two solitary souls prepare the sweetness of loving. A realist of passion will see nothing there but evanescent formulas. But just the same it is no less true that great passions are prepared by great reveries. The reality of love is mutilated when it is detached from all its unrealness.

Under such conditions, it becomes immediately evident how complex and unstable will be any debate between a psychology of reverie based on the observation of dreamers and a phenomenology of the creating image which tends to restore, even to an average reader, the innovating action of poetic language. In a more general way, one can also understand the great value in establishing a phenomenology of the imaginary where the imagination is restored to its proper, all-important place as the principle of direct stimulation of psychic becoming. Imagination attempts to have a future. At first it is an element of imprudence which detaches us from heavy stabilities. We shall see that certain poetic reveries are hypothetical lives which enlarge our lives by letting us in on the secrets of the universe. A world takes form in our reverie, and this world is ours. This dreamed world teaches us the possibilities for expanding our being within our universe. There is *futurism* in any dreamed universe. Joé Bousquet wrote: "In a world born of him, man can become anything."⁴

Thenceforth, if you consider poetry in all its fire of human becoming, at the summit of an inspiration which delivers the new world to us, what can be the use of a biography which tells us the past, the heavy past of the poet? If we had the least inclination for polemic, what a dossier we could assemble on the subject of the excesses of biography. We shall give only a sample.

Half a century ago, a prince of literary criticism set himself the task of explicating Verlaine's poetry, which he liked very little. For how can one like the poetry of an artist who lives on the

⁴ Quoted without reference by Gaston Puel in an article in *Le Temps et les hommes*, March, 1958, p. 62.

fringe of literate society: "No one has ever seen him either on the boulevards or at the theater or in a salon. He is somewhere at the other end of Paris, in a wine merchant's backroom drinking *vin bleu*."

Cheap wine! What a slight to the beaujolais they were drinking then in the little cafés of the *montagne* Sainte-Geneviève!

The same literary critic puts the finishing touches to the poet's character by describing his hat. He writes: "His slouch hat itself seemed to conform to his sad thought with its vague rim turned up all around his head like a kind of black halo for his troubled brow. His hat! And yet it too was joyful when it felt like it and capricious like a very dark woman. Sometimes it is round and naive like that of a child of Auvergne or Savoy; sometimes it perches on one ear like a tilted, dented Tyrolian cone. Or again it is facetiously terrible, like the headdress of some bandito, all askew, one side turned down, the other up, the front like a visor and the back down on the nape of his neck."⁵

Is there one single poem in all the work of the poet which can be explained by these literary contortions over the hat?

It is so difficult to link the life to the work! Can the biographer help us by telling us that the following poem was written while Verlaine was in prison at Mons:

The sky is up above the roof
So blue, so calm.

In prison! Who is not in prison in times of melancholy? In my room in Paris, far from the land of my birth, I carry on Verlaine's reverie. A sky from another time spreads out over the city of stone. And through my memory hum the bars of music that Reynaldo Hahn wrote to accompany Verlaine's poems. A whole layer of emotions, reveries and memories grows up out of this poem for me. Above the poem—not beneath in a life which I have not lived, not in the poorly lived life of the unhappy poet. Did not the work dominate his life; is not the work a pardon for the man who has lived badly?

In any event, it is in this sense that the poem can gather reveries and assemble dreams, songs, and memories.

⁵ Quoted by Antheaume and Dromard, *Poésie et folie* (Paris, 1908), p. 351.

Psychological literary criticism directs us to other interests. It makes a man out of a poet. But in great poetical successes the problem remains intact: how can a man become a poet in spite of life?

But let us get back to our simple task of indicating the constructive character of poetic reverie. In order to prepare for this task, let us ask ourselves if reverie is in all circumstances a phenomenon of relaxation and abandon, as suggested by classical psychology.

IV

Psychology has more to lose than to gain if it forms its basic notions under the inspiration of etymological derivations. Etymology can minimize the clearest differences between dream (*rêve*)⁶ and reverie. And further, since psychologists seize upon what is most characteristic, they study the astonishing nocturnal dream (*rêve*) first, and they pay little attention to the reveries which for them are only confused dreams without structure, history, or mystery. Reverie is, then, just a little nocturnal matter forgotten in the light of day. If the oneiric matter condenses a little in the soul of the dreamer, reverie falls into dream; the "gusts of reverie" noted by psychiatrists asphyxiate the psychism, the reverie becomes somnolence, and the dreamer falls asleep. Thus a sort of fatal fall marks the passage from reverie to dream. It is a poor reverie which invites a nap. One must even wonder whether, in this "falling asleep," the subconscious itself does not undergo a decline in being. The subconscious will continue its action in the dreams of real sleep. Psychology works toward the two poles of clear thought and nocturnal dream, and is thus certain of having under its purview the entire spectrum of the human psyche.

But there are other reveries which do not belong to this twi-

⁶In French there are two words which mean "dream"—*rêve* and *songe*. Throughout this translation, I have generally indicated which word was translated as "dream" only when Bachelard wanted to stress the difference between two homophonous words or when *songe*, *songer*, *songeur*, etc. had been used in the French text (Translator's note).

light state where diurnal and nocturnal life mingle. And, in many respects, diurnal reverie deserves direct study. Reverie is a spiritual phenomenon which is too natural—and also too useful in psychic equilibrium—to be treated as a derivative of the dream or to be placed categorically in the order of oneiric phenomena. In short, in order to determine the essence of reverie, it is quite sufficient to return to reverie itself. And it is precisely by phenomenology that the distinction between dream and reverie can be clarified, since the possible intervention of consciousness in the reverie bears decisive significance.

One might wonder whether there really is a consciousness of dreams. A dream can be so strange that it seems that another subject has come to dream within us. "A dream visited me." That is certainly the formula which indicates the passivity of great nocturnal dreams. To convince ourselves that they are really ours, we must reinhabit these dreams. Afterwards we make up accounts of them, stories from another time, adventures from another world. The man who comes back from afar lies with impunity. Innocently, unconsciously, we often insert a detail which adds to the picturesqueness of our adventure in the realm of the night. Have you ever noticed the physiognomy of the man who is recounting his dream? He smiles at his drama, at his fears. He is amused and wants you to be amused.⁷ The teller of dreams sometimes enjoys his dream as an original work. In it he experiences a delegated originality; and hence he is very much surprised when a psychoanalyst tells him that another dreamer has known the same "originality." The dream-dreamer's conviction of having lived the dream he is recounting must not deceive us. It is a reported conviction which is reinforced each time he retells the dream. There is certainly no identity between the subject who is telling and the subject who dreamed. For this reason, a really phenomenological elucidation of the nocturnal dream poses a difficult problem. One

⁷Very often, I confess, the teller of dreams bores me. His dream could perhaps interest me if it were frankly worked on. But to hear a glorious tale of his insanity! I have not yet clarified, psychoanalytically, this boredom during the recital of other people's dreams. Perhaps I have retained the stiffness of a rationalist. I do not follow the tale of justified incoherence docilely. I always suspect that part of the stupidities being recounted are invented.

would doubtless find elements useful in solving this problem if he further developed a psychology and, consecutively, a phenomenology of reverie.

Instead of looking for the dream in reverie, people should look for reverie in the dream. There are calm beaches in the midst of nightmares. Robeřt Desnos has noted the intrusion of dream and reverie upon each other: "Although sleepy and dreaming without being able to distinguish exactly between dream and reverie, I retain the notion of *décor*."⁸ This is the same as saying that the dreamer comes upon the splendors of the day in the night of sleep. Then he is conscious of the beauty of the world. The beauty of the dream world returns his consciousness to him for an instant.

And thus it is that reverie illustrates repose for a being, that it illustrates well-being. The dreamer and his reverie enter totally into the substance of happiness. During a visit to Nemours in 1844, Victor Hugo had gone out at twilight "to go see a few bizarre paving stones." Night was coming, the city was quieting down. Where was the city?

All that was neither a city, nor a church, nor a river, nor color, nor light, nor shadow: it was reverie.

For a long time, I remained motionless, letting myself be penetrated gently by this unspeakable ensemble, by the serenity of the sky and the melancholy of the moment. I do not know what was going on in my mind, and I could not express it; it was one of those ineffable moments when one feels something in himself which is going to sleep and something which is awakening.⁹

Thus a whole universe comes to contribute to our happiness when reverie comes to accentuate our repose. You must tell the man who wants to dream well to begin by being happy. Then reverie plays out its veritable destiny; it becomes poetic reverie and by it, in it, everything becomes beautiful. If the dreamer had "the gift" he would turn his reverie into a work. And this work

⁸ Robert Desnos, *Domaine public*. Gallimard, 1953, p. 38.

⁹ Victor Hugo, *En voyage . . . France et Belgique*. In *L'homme qui vit* (vol. I, p. 148) Hugo writes: "The sea observed is a reverie."

would be grandiose since the dreamed world is automatically grandiose.

Metaphysicians often speak of an "opening onto the world." But to listen to them, you would think they had only to draw a curtain in order to be, all of a sudden, in a single illumination before the world. What a lot of experiences in concrete metaphysics we would have if we paid more attention to poetic reverie. Opening onto the objective World, entering into the objective World or constituting a World we hold to be objective are long processes that can only be described by positive psychology. But these steps taken to constitute a stable world after a thousand readjustments make us forget the brilliance of the first openings. Poetic reverie gives us the world of worlds. Poetic reverie is a cosmic reverie. It is an opening to a beautiful world, to beautiful worlds. It gives the I a non-I which belongs to the I: my non-I. It is this "my non-I" which enchants the I of the dreamer and which poets can help us share. For my "I-dreamer," it is this "*my non-I*" which lets me live my secret of being in the world. Upon being faced with a real world, one can discover in himself the being of worry. Then he is thrown into the world, delivered over to the inhumanity and the negativeness of the world, and the world is then the denial of the human. The demands of our *reality function* require that we adapt to reality, that we constitute ourselves as a reality and that we manufacture works which are realities. But doesn't reverie, by its very essence, liberate us from the reality function? From the moment it is considered in all its simplicity, it is perfectly evident that reverie bears witness to a normal, useful *irreality function* which keeps the human psyche on the fringe of all the brutality of a hostile and foreign non-self.

There are times in the life of a poet when reverie assimilates even the real. Then, what he perceives is assimilated. The real world is absorbed by the imaginary world. Shelley gives us a veritable phenomenological theorem when he says that imagination is capable of "making us create what we see."¹⁰ Following Shelley

¹⁰ Shelley's formula could be given as the fundamental maxim for a phenomenology of painting. A greater tension is necessary in order to apply it to a phenomenology of poetry.

and poets in general, the phenomenology of perception itself must stand aside for the phenomenology of the creative imagination.

Through imagination, thanks to the subtleties of the irreality function, we re-enter the world of confidence, the world of the confident being, which is the proper world for reverie. Later we shall give many examples of the cosmic reveries which link the dreamer and his world. This union offers itself spontaneously, by its very nature, to phenomenological investigation. Knowledge of the real world requires complex phenomenological research. The dream worlds of wide-awake, diurnal reverie are dependent upon truly fundamental phenomenology. And thus we have come to believe that it is through reverie that one must learn phenomenology.

The cosmic reverie as we shall be studying it is a phenomenon of solitude which has its roots in the soul of the dreamer. It does not need a barren land to take root and grow. A pretext—not a cause—is sufficient for us to enter the “solitary situation,” the situation of the dreaming solitude. In this solitude, memories arrange themselves in tableaux. Décor takes precedence over drama. Sad memories take on at least the peace of melancholy. And even that indicates a difference between dream and reverie. The dream remains overloaded with the badly lived passions of daytime life. Solitude in the nocturnal dream is always a hostility. It is strange. It isn't really *our* solitude.

Cosmic reveries separate us from project reveries. They situate us in a world and not in a society. The cosmic reverie possesses a sort of stability or tranquility. It helps us escape time. It is a *state*. Let us get to the bottom of its essence: it is a state of mind.¹¹ We have said in an earlier book that poetry supplies us with documents for a *phenomenology of the soul*. The entire soul is presented in the poetic universe of the poet.

The task remains for the mind to make systems, to arrange diverse experiences in order to attempt to understand the universe. Patience in instructing itself throughout the history of knowledge (*savoir*) is suited to the mind. The past of the soul is so distant!

¹¹ Literally: “state of soul.”

The soul does not live on the edge of time. It finds its rest in the universe imagined by reverie.

So we believe we can show that cosmic images are the possessions of the solitary soul which is the principle of all solitude. Ideas are refined and multiplied in the commerce of minds. In their splendor, images effect a very simple communion of souls. Two vocabularies should be organized to study knowledge and poetry. But these vocabularies do not correspond. And it would be useless to compose dictionaries to translate from one language to the other. The language of the poets must be learned directly and very precisely like the language of souls.

Doubtless, a philosopher could be asked to study this communion of souls in more dramatic areas by bringing in human or superhuman values which pass as being more important than poetic values. But do the soul's great experiences gain anything by being proclaimed? Can we not rely on the depth of every “echoing” so that anyone reading the same pages can participate in the invitation to poetic reverie in his own way? In our view—as we shall explain in a later chapter—the anonymous childhood is more revealing about the human soul than the remarkable childhood taken in the context of a family history. It is essential that an image ring true. Then one can hope that it will take the path of the soul and will not become bogged down in the objections of the critical spirit or become enmeshed in the heavy mechanism of repression. How simple it is to discover one's soul at the end of reverie! Reverie puts us in the state of a soul being born.

Thus, in this modest study of the simplest images, our philosophical ambition is great. It is to prove that reverie gives us the world of a soul, and that a poetic image bears witness to a soul which is discovering its world, the world where it would like to live and where it deserves to live.

V

Before outlining more precisely the particular questions treated in this essay, I would like to justify its title.

In speaking of a *Poetics of Reverie*, when the simple title “Poetic Reverie” had been tempting me for a long time, I wanted to indicate the force of coherence which a dreamer feels when he is

really faithful to his dreams, and that his dreams take on coherence precisely because of their poetic qualities. Poetry forms the dreamer and his world at the same time. While the nocturnal dream can disorganize a soul and propagate, even during the day, the madresses attempted during the night, good reverie really helps the soul take advantage of its rest and of an easy unity. Drunken with realism, the psychologists insist too heavily on the escape element of our reveries. They do not always recognize that reverie weaves soft bonds around the dreamer, that reverie is a "binding," and, in short, that in the strictest sense of the term, it "poetizes" the dreamer.

On the side of the dreamer, constituting the dreamer, we must then recognize a power of poetization which can well be designated as a psychological poetics; it is the poetics of the psyche where all the psychic forces fall into harmony.

We would like, therefore, to make the power of coordination and harmony slide from the adjective to the substantive, and to establish a poetics of poetic reverie, thus marking, by repeating the same word, that the substantive takes on the tonality of being. A poetics of poetic reverie! A great ambition—too great an ambition, since it would come to give every reader of poetry the consciousness of a poet.

Doubtless we shall never succeed completely in this reversal which would have us proceed from poetic expression to the consciousness of a creator. If we could at least begin such a reversal, which would re-establish an easy conscience in the dreaming person, our Poetics of Reverie would have achieved its goal.

VI

Now let us explain briefly the spirit in which we have written the different chapters of this essay.

Before we become engaged in research on positive Poetics, a research based on precise documents, following our custom as a prudent philosopher, we want to write a more fragile chapter, which is doubtless too personal and which must be explained in this Introduction. We have entitled the chapter "Reveries on Reverie," and we have divided it into two parts: the first is called "The Word Dreamer" and the second "*Animus* and *Anima*."

Throughout this double chapter, we have developed adventurous ideas which are easy to contradict and which, we fear, are very apt to stop the reader who does not like to find oases of leisure in a work where he is promised an organization of ideas. But since for us it is a question of living in the mists of the dreaming psychism, it becomes our duty to sincerity to tell all the reveries which tempt us, the singular reveries which often upset our reasonable reveries, and a duty to follow through to the end those lines of aberration which are familiar to us.

I am a dreamer of words, of written words. I think I am reading; a word stops me. I leave the page. The syllables of the word begin to move around. Stressed accents begin to invert. The word abandons its meaning like an overload which is too heavy and prevents dreaming. Then words take on other meanings as if they had the right to be young. And the words wander away, looking in the nooks and crannies of vocabulary for new company, bad company. What a lot of minor conflicts we must resolve upon returning from vagabond reverie to reasonable vocabulary!

And it is worse when, instead of reading, I begin to write. Under the pen, the anatomy of syllables slowly unfolds. The word lives syllable by syllable, in danger of internal reveries. The problem remains how to maintain the word intact, constricting it to its habitual servitude in the projected sentence, a sentence which will perhaps be crossed off in the manuscript. Doesn't reverie ramify the sentence which has been begun? A word is a bud attempting to become a twig. How can one not dream while writing? It is the pen which dreams. The blank page gives the right to dream. If only one could write for himself alone. How hard is the destiny of a maker of books! He has to cut and sew up in order to make ideas follow logically. But when one writes a book on reverie, has the time not come to let the pen run, to let reverie speak, and better yet to dream the reverie at the same time one believes he is transcribing it?

I am—do I really need to say it?—completely ignorant in linguistics. Words, in their distant past, have the past of my reveries. For a dreamer, a dreamer of words, they are all swollen with insanities. Besides, let anyone dream, and incubate a very familiar word for a little while. Then the most unexpected rare things

hatch out of the word which was sleeping in its inert meaning, like a fossil of meaning.¹²

Yes, words really do dream.

I want to tell about just one of the derangements of my reveries on words: for every masculine word, I dream of a feminine closely linked through marriage. I like to dream the beautiful words of the French language twice. Of course, a simple grammatical ending is not enough. It would lead one to believe that the feminine is a subordinate gender. I am not content until I have found a feminine at its root so to speak, in extreme depth, in other words in the depths of the feminine.

The gender of words—such a fork in the road. And are we ever sure of having made an equal division? What experience or what light guided the first choices? Vocabulary, it seems, is partial; it gives a privileged place to the masculine while treating the feminine very often as a derived or subordinate gender.

One of my dreams (*songes*) about linguistic qualities, then, is to lay bare the feminine depths in the words themselves.

If we have let ourselves confide all these vain dreams (*songes*), it is because they have prepared us to accept one of the principal theses which we intend to defend in the present work. So different from the dream (*rêve*) which is so often marked by the hard accents of the masculine, reverie appeared to us in effect—this time beyond the words—to be of feminine essence. Reverie conducted in the tranquility of the day and in the peace of repose—truly natural reverie—is the very force (*puissance*) of the being at rest. For any human being, man or woman, it is one of the feminine states of the soul. In the second chapter, we shall try to contribute some less personal proofs to this hypothesis. But to get any ideas, one must love chimeras a great deal. We have confessed our

¹² Ferenczi's opinion on the research into the origin of words can only elicit opprobrium from linguists. For Ferenczi, one of the cleverest psychoanalysts, research into the etymology of words is a substitute for infantile questions on the origin of children. Ferenczi recalls an article by Sperber (*Imago*, 1914, I. Jahrgang) on the sexual theory of language. One would perhaps reconcile learned linguists and clever psychoanalysts if he posed the psychological problem of the linguistics of the effective mother tongue which is learned on the mother's lap. Then the person exists at the moment when language is loosening up, bathing in liquid happiness and is, as a sixteenth-century author said, "the mercury of the little world."

chimeras. Whoever will agree to follow these chimeric indications and group his own reveries into reveries on reveries will find perhaps, at the bottom of the dream (*songe*), the great tranquility of the intimate feminine being. He will return to this gynaeceum of remembrances which comprises all memory, very ancient memory.

More positive than the first, our second chapter must nevertheless still be put under the general heading of "Reveries on Reverie." We shall use, as best we can, documents furnished by psychologists, but since we mix these documents with our own idea-dreams, it is suitable that we, as a philosopher who uses the knowledge of the psychologist, take full responsibility for our own aberrations.

The woman's situation in the modern world has been the object of much research. Books like those by Simone de Beauvoir and F. J. J. Buytendijk are analyses which get to the bottom of the problems.¹⁸ In trying to indicate more precisely how the masculine and feminine—especially the feminine—help fashion our reveries, we are limiting our observations only to "oneiric situations."

We shall then borrow most of our arguments from the Psychology of the depths. In numerous works C. G. Jung has shown the existence of a profound duality in the human Psyche. He has situated this duality under the double sign of an *animus* and an *anima*. For him and for his disciples there may be found in any psychism, whether that of a man or a woman, an *animus* and an *anima*, sometimes cooperating, sometimes in dissonance. We shall not follow all the developments which the psychology of the depths has given to this theme of an intimate duality. We simply wish to show that reverie in its simplest and purest state belongs to the *anima*. Of course, any simplification runs the risk of mutilating reality; but it helps us establish perspectives. Let us say then, that in general the dream (*rêve*) issues from the *animus*, and reverie from the *anima*. Reverie without drama, without event or history gives us true repose, the repose of the feminine. There we gain gentleness of living. Gentleness, slowness, peace,

¹⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *Le deuxième sexe*, Gallimard; F. J. J. Buytendijk, *La femme. Ses modes d'être, de paraître, d'exister*. Desclée de Brouwer, 1954.

such is the motto of reverie in *anima*. It is in reverie that we can find the fundamental elements for a philosophy of repose.

Our reveries, which lead us back to our childhood, gravitate toward the pole of the *anima*. These reveries toward childhood will be the subject of our third chapter. But, henceforth, we must indicate the angle from which we are going to study the memories of childhood.

In the course of earlier work we often stated that one could scarcely develop a psychology of the creative imagination if he did not succeed in distinguishing clearly between imagination and memory. If there is any realm where distinction is especially difficult, it is the realm of childhood memories, the realm of *beloved images* harbored in memory since childhood. These memories which live by the image and in virtue of the image become, at certain times of our lives and particularly during the quiet age, the origin and matter of a complex reverie: the memory dreams, and reverie remembers. When this reverie of remembering becomes the germ of a poetic work, the complex of memory and imagination becomes more tightly meshed; it has multiple and reciprocal actions which deceive the sincerity of the poet. More exactly, the happy childhood memories are told with a *poet's sincerity*. The imagination ceaselessly revives and illustrates the memory.

We shall try to present, in a condensed form, an ontological philosophy of childhood which underlines the durable character of childhood. By certain of its traits, *childhood lasts all through life*. It returns to animate broad sections of adult life. First, childhood never leaves its nocturnal retreats. Within us, a child sometimes comes to watch over us in our sleep. But in waking life itself, when reverie works on our history, the childhood which is within us brings us its benefits. One needs, and sometimes it is very good, to live with the child which he has been. From such living he achieves a consciousness of roots, and the entire tree of his being takes comfort from it. Poets will help us find this living childhood within us, this permanent, durable immobile world.

Here in our introduction we must already emphasize that in the chapter on "Reverie Toward Childhood," we are not setting up a child psychology. We envisage childhood only as a theme for

reverie. This theme comes up in every age of life. We maintain ourselves in a reverie and in an *anima* meditation. Much different research would be necessary in order to shed light on the dramas of childhood and above all in order to show that these dramas do not disappear, but that they can be reborn, and indeed want to be reborn. Anger lasts; primitive anger awakens the sleeping childhood. Sometimes in our solitude these repressed bursts of anger nurture projects of vengeance and plans of crime. These are constructions of the *animus*. They are not the reveries of the *anima*. A different plan of inquiry would be necessary for examining them. But any psychologist studying the imagination of the drama must refer back to the childhood fits of anger and adolescent revolts. A psychologist of the depths like the poet Pierre-Jean Jouve does not fail to. Having to preface a group of stories he had entitled *Histoires sanglantes*, the poet, in a condensation of psychoanalytic culture, says that "states of childhood" are the basis of his stories.¹⁴ Unfinished dramas produce works where the *animus* is active, clairvoyant, prudent, audacious and complex. Keeping strictly to our task of analyzing *reveries*, we shall leave aside the *animus projects*. Our chapter on reveries toward childhood then is simply a contribution to the metaphysics of the elegaic time. After all, this time of intimate elegy and last-ing regret is a psychological reality. It is durable duration. Our chapter establishes itself as the working draft for a metaphysics of the unforgettable.

But it is difficult for a philosopher to tear himself away from his long time habits of thought. Even in writing a book on leisure, one's old words want to get into the act. So we believe we should write a chapter under a good pedantic title: "The *Cogito* of the Dreamer." Over my forty years as a philosopher, I have heard it said that philosophy got off to a new start with Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*. I too have probably pronounced this initial lesson. It is such a clear motto in the order of thought! But would we not be upsetting its dogmatism if we asked the dreamer whether he is quite sure of being the being who is dreaming his dream? Such a question would hardly trouble a Descartes. For him, thinking,

¹⁴ P.-J. Jouve, *Histoires sanglantes*, Gallimard, p. 16.

wishing, loving and dreaming are always activities of his mind. That fortunate man was sure that it was he, really he, and he alone who had passions and wisdom. But is a dreamer, a real dreamer who crosses the madneses of the night, so sure of being himself? We doubt it. We have always retreated from the analysis of nocturnal dreams. And thus we have reached this rather summary distinction which must nevertheless clarify our inquiry. The night dreamer cannot articulate a *cogito*. The night dream is a dream without a dreamer. On the contrary, the dreamer of reverie remains conscious enough to say: it is I who dream the reverie, it is I who am content to dream my reverie, happy with this leisure in which I no longer have the task of thinking. That is what we have tried to show with the help of poets' reveries in the chapter entitled "The *Cogito* of the Dreamer."

But the dreamer of reveries does not abstract himself in the solitude of a *cogito*. His dreaming *cogito* has, as philosophers say, its *cogitatum* immediately. Immediately, reverie has a simple object, the friend and companion of the dreamer. Naturally, we have borrowed from poets our examples of objects poetized by reverie. In living off all the reflecting light furnished by poets, the I which dreams the reverie reveals itself not as poet but as poetizing I.

After this excursion into hardened philosophy, we return in one last chapter to an examination of the extreme images of reverie which are ceaselessly attempted in the dialectic between the excited subject and the excessive world. Here I have tried to follow the images which open up or enlarge the world. Cosmic images are sometimes so majestic that philosophers take them for thoughts. By doing our best to relive them, we have tried to show that they are relaxations of reverie. Reverie helps us inhabit the world, inhabit the happiness of the world. So we have taken "Reverie and Cosmos" as the title of this chapter. It will be understood that such a vast problem cannot be treated in a short chapter. We have touched on it many times in the course of earlier research on imagination without ever treating it fully. We would be happy today if we could, at least, pose the problem a little more clearly. Imagined worlds determine profound communions of reveries. The point can be reached where one can

interrogate a heart by asking it to confess its enthusiasms inspired by the grandeur of the contemplated world, the world imagined in deep contemplation. How certainly would the psychoanalysts, those masters of indirect interrogation, find new keys for getting to the bottom of a soul if they practiced a little cosmo-analysis! Here is an example of cosmo-analysis taken from a passage by Fromentin. In the decisive moments of his passion, Dominique leads Madeleine to sites he had chosen with great care:

Above all, I liked to try out on Madeleine the effect of certain influences which are physical rather than moral and to which I myself was so continually subjected. I would confront her with certain landscape paintings chosen from among those which, invariably composed of a little greenery, a great deal of sun and an immense expanse of sea, had the infallible gift for moving me. I would observe in what sense she would be struck by them, in what respects of indigence or grandeur this sad, grave and always barren landscape could please her. As much as I could, I would interrogate her on these details of wholly exterior sensitivity.¹⁵

Thus, confronted with an immensity, the person who is being interrogated seems to be naturally sincere. The site overwhelms poor and fluid social "situations." What great value, then, an album of sites would have for interrogating our solitary being and revealing the world where we must live in order to be ourselves! We receive this album of sites from reverie with a prodigality that we would not find in many voyages. We imagine worlds where our life would take on all its brilliance, warmth and development. Poets lead us into cosmoses which are being endlessly renewed. During the Romantic period, the landscape was a tool of sentimentality. So in the last chapter of this book, we have tried to study the expansion of being which we receive from cosmic reveries. With reveries of cosmos, the dreamer knows reverie without responsibility, reverie which does not ask for proof. At the end, imagining a cosmos is the most natural destiny of reverie.

¹⁵ *Dominique*, p. 179.

VII

At the conclusion of this Introduction, let us state briefly where, in our solitude and without possible recourse to psychological inquiries, we must look for our documentation. It comes from books; reading is our whole life.

Reading is a *dimension* of the modern psychism, a dimension which transposes psychic phenomena already transposed by writing. Written language must be considered as a particular psychic reality. The book is permanent; it is an object in your field of vision. It speaks to you with a monotonous authority which even its author would not have. You are fairly obliged to read what is written. Besides, in writing, the author has already performed a transposition. He would not say what he has written. He has entered—his protests are in vain here—the realm of the written psychism.

Here, the educated psychism takes on its permanence. How profound is Edgar Quinet's passage where he speaks of the force of transmission in the Ramayana.¹⁶ Valmiki says to his disciples:

Learn the revealed poem; it gives virtue and wealth: full of sweetness when it is adapted to the three measures of time, sweeter still if it is married to the sound of instruments or if it is sung on the seven cords of the voice. The delighted ear excites love, courage, anguish, terror. . . . O the great poem, the faithful image of truth.

Slow and mute reading gives the ear all these concerts.

But the best proof of the specificity of the book is that it is at once a reality of the virtual and a virtuality of the real. Reading a novel, we are placed in another life where we suffer, hope and sympathize, but just the same with the complex impression that our anguish remains under the domination of our liberty, that our anguish is not radical. Any anguishing book can, therefore, provide a technique for the reduction of anguish. An anguishing book offers anguished people a homeopathy of anguish. But this homeopathy works above all during a meditative reading, one which is stabilized by literary interest. Then two levels of the

¹⁶ Edgar Quinet, *Le génie des religions. L'épopée indienne*, p. 143.

psychism separate, the reader participates at the two levels, and when he becomes quite conscious of the *aesthetics of anguish*, he is quite close to discovering facticity. For anguish is factitious: we are made to breathe easy.

And it is in that way that poetry—summit of all aesthetic joy—is beneficial.

Without the help of poets, what can a philosopher, weighted down with years, do if he persists in talking about the imagination? He has no one to test. He would immediately get lost in the labyrinth of tests and counter-tests, where the subject being examined by the psychologist struggles. Besides, do there really exist in the psychologist's arsenal tests of the imagination? Are there psychologists exalted enough to be constantly renewing the objective techniques for a study of the exalted imagination? Poets will always imagine faster than those who watch them imagining.

How can we enter the poetisphere of our time? An era of free imagination has just begun. From everywhere, images invade the air, go from one world to another, and call both ears and eyes to enlarged dreams. Poets abound, the great and the small, the famous and the obscure, those who love and those who dazzle. Whoever lives for poetry must read everything. How often has the light of a new idea sprung for me from a simple brochure! When one allows himself to be animated by new images, he discovers iridescence in the images of old books. Poetic ages unite in a living memory. The new age awakens the old. The old age comes to live again in the new. Poetry is never as unified as when it diversifies.

What benefits new books bring us! I would like a basket full of books telling the youth of images which fall from heaven for me every day. This desire is natural. This prodigy is easy. For, up there, in heaven, isn't paradise an immense library?

But it is not sufficient to receive; one must welcome. One must, say the pedagogue and the dietician in the same voice, "assimilate." In order to do that, we are advised not to read too fast and to be careful not to swallow too large a bite. We are told to divide each difficulty into as many parts as possible, the better to solve them. Yes, chew well, drink a little at a time, savor poems line by line. All these precepts are well and good. But one precept orders

them. One first needs a good desire to eat, drink and read. One must want to read a lot, read more, always read.

Thus, in the morning, before the books piled high on my table, to the god of reading, I say my prayer of the devouring reader: "Give us this day our daily hunger . . ."

☞ One

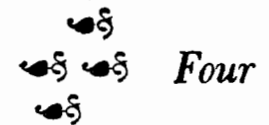
Reveries on Reverie (*The Word Dreamer*)

At the bottom of each word
I'm a spectator at my birth.

Alain Bosquet,
Premier poème.

I have my amulets: words.

Henri Bosco,
Sites et paysages



Four

The "Cogito" of the Dreamer

For yourself, be a dream
Of red wheat and smoke

You will never grow old

Jean Rousselot,

Agrégation du temps

Life is unbearable for the man
who does not always have an enthusiasm at hand.

Maurice Barrès,

Un homme libre



I

The night dream (*rêve*) does not belong to us. It is not our possession. With regard to us, it is an abductor, the most disconcerting of abductors: it abducts our being from us. Nights, nights have no history. They are not linked one to another. And when a person has lived a lot, when he has already lived some twenty-thousand nights, he never knows in which ancient, very ancient night he started off to dream. The night has no future. There are no doubt nights which are less dark when our day being still lives enough to traffic with its memories. The psychoanalyst explores these half-nights. In these half-nights, our being is still there, dragging along human dramas, all the weight of badly led lives. But already beneath this spoiled life, an abyss of non-being is open where certain nocturnal dreams are swallowed up. In such absolute dreams, we are returned to an ante-subjective state. We become elusive to ourselves, for we are giving pieces of ourselves to no matter whom, to no matter what. The nocturnal dream disperses our being over phantoms of unusual beings who are no longer even shadows of ourselves. The words "phantoms" and "shadows" are too strong. They are still too well attached to realities. They prevent us from going as far as the extremity of the obliteration of being, as far as the obscurity of our being dissolving into the night. The metaphysical sensitivity of the poet helps us approach our nocturnal abysses. Paul Valéry says that he believes dreams are formed "by some other sleeper, as if in the night,

they mistook the absent person." ¹ To go and be absent from the house of beings who are absent, such is precisely absolute flight, the resignation from all the forces of the being, the dispersion of all the beings of our being. Thus we sink into the absolute dream.

What can be recuperated from such a disaster of the being? Are there still sources of life at the bottom of this non-life? What a lot of dreams must be known, in depth and not superficially, in order to determine the dynamism of the outcroppings! If the dream descends deeply enough into the abysses of the being, how can one believe, as the psychoanalysts do, that it always systematically retains social meanings. In the nocturnal life, there are depths where we bury ourselves, where we have the will to live no longer. In these depths, we brush intimately against nothingness, our nothingness. Are there other nothingnesses than the nothingness of our being? All the obliterations of the night converge toward this nothingness of our being. At the limit, absolute dreams plunge us into the universe of the Nothing.

When this Nothing fills up with Water, we are already coming back to life. Then, saved from the ontological drama, we sleep better. Plunged into the waters of good sleep, we are in a balance of being with a universe at peace. But is being in a balance of being with a universe really being? Hasn't the water of sleep dissolved our being? In any case, we become beings with no history upon entering into the realm of the Night: which has no history. When we sleep thus in the waters of profound slumber, we sometimes know eddies, but never currents. We experience passing dreams (*rêves*). They are not life dreams. For every dream which we recount upon returning to the light of day, there are many whose thread we have lost. The psychoanalyst does not work at those depths. He believes he can explain lacunae without paying attention to the fact that those black holes which interrupt the line of recounted dreams are perhaps the mark of the death instinct which is working at the bottom of our shadows. Alone, a poet can bring us an image, sometimes, of that distant place, an echo of the ontological drama of a slumber without memory when our being was perhaps being tempted by the non-being.

¹ Paul Valéry, *Eupalinos. L'âme et la danse. Dialogue de l'arbre*. Paris, Gallimard, p. 199.

Dreams without a history, dreams which could light up only in a perspective of annihilation are in the Nothing or in the Water. It is then self-evident that in such dreams the dreamer will never find a guarantee of his existence. Such nocturnal dreams, those dreams of extreme night, cannot be experiences in which one can formulate a *cogito*. There the subject loses his being; they are dreams without a subject.

Where is the philosopher who will give us the metaphysics of the night, the metaphysics of the human night? The dialectics of black and white, of no and yes, of disorder and order are not sufficient to frame the nothingness at work at the bottom of our sleep. What a distance is covered from the shores of Nothing, that Nothing that we were to this someone, however wan he may be, who is recovering his being beyond sleep! Ah! how can a Mind risk sleeping?

But won't the Metaphysics of the night remain a sum of peripheral views without ever being able to find the lost *cogito* again, a radical *cogito* which would not be the *cogito* of a shadow?

It is then necessary to envisage nocturnal dreams of lesser sleep in order to discover documents of subjective psychology. When the ontic losses of extreme dreams are measured better, people will be more prudent in the ontological determinations of the nocturnal dream. For example, even when it is a question of dreams which have emerged from the night and which can be unwound on the thread of a story, will someone ever tell us the veritable nature of the *inspiring character*? Is it really us? Always us? Do we recognize our inspiring being there, that simple habit of becoming which is attached to our being? Even if we can retell it, recover it in its strange becoming, isn't the dream evidence of the lost being, of a being which is getting lost, of a being which is fleeing our being?

Then a philosopher of the dream (*songe*) wonders: can I really pass from the nocturnal dream to the existence of the dreaming subject, as the lucid philosopher passes from the thought—from any thought—to the existence of the being which is thinking it? ²

² Night grammar is not the same as the grammar of the day. In the night dream, the function of the *whatever* does not exist. There is no ordinary

In other words, to follow the habits of philosophical language, it does not seem to us that one can speak of a valid *cogito* for a dreamer of nocturnal dreams. It is certainly difficult to trace the frontier which separates the domain of the nocturnal Psyche from that of the daytime Psyche, but this frontier exists. There are two centers of being-within us, but the nocturnal center is a blurred center of concentration. It is not a "subject."

Does psychoanalytic inquiry descend all the way to the ante-subject? If it penetrated into that sphere, could it find explanatory elements there for the elucidation of the dramas of the personality? That is a problem which, as far as we are concerned, remains unresolved. It seems to us that human misfortunes do not descend that deeply; man's misfortunes remain "superficial." Deep nights return us to the equilibrium of the stable life.

When one meditates upon the lessons of psychoanalysis, he is already well aware that he is being sent back to the superficial zone, to the socialized zone. Furthermore, he finds himself confronted with a curious paradox. When the patient has exposed the bizarre vicissitudes of his dream, when he has emphasized the unexpected nature of certain events in his nocturnal life, then the psychoanalyst, confident in his extensive culture, can say to him: "I know, I understand that; I expected as much. You are a man like any other. In spite of all the aberrations of your dream, you are not privileged with a singular existence."

And then it is the psychoanalyst who is charged with setting forth the *cogito* of the dreamer by saying: "He dreams at night; therefore, he exists at night. He dreams like everyone else; therefore, he exists like everyone else."

"He believes that he is himself during the night and he is just anybody."

"Just anybody? Or perhaps—disaster of the human being—anything?"

dream; there are no ordinary oneiric images. All the adjectives in a nocturnal dream are qualifiers. The philosopher who believes he can include the dream in thought would have a great deal of difficulty, while remaining in the world of dream, passing, as he does so easily in his lucid meditations, from the *whatever* to the *someone*.

Anything? Some surge of warm blood, some excessive hormone which has lost its organic wisdom.

Anything coming from any time? Some too scanty milk in the bottles of long ago.

The psychic substance examined by the psychoanalyst would then appear as a sum total of accidents. It would also remain impregnated by the dreams of long ago. On the mode of the *cogito*, the psychoanalyst-philosopher should say: "I dream; therefore I am dreaming substance." Dreams would then be that which roots itself the most deeply in the dreaming substance. Thoughts can be contradicted and, consequently, obliterated. But dreams? Dreams of the dreaming substance?

Then—let us ask once more—where do we place the *I* in this dreaming substance? Within it, the *I* dissolves and is lost. . . . Within it the *I* lends itself to supporting accidents after their validity has lapsed. In the nocturnal dream, the *cogito* of the dreamer stammers. The nocturnal dream does not even help us formulate a *non-cogito* which would express a sense of our will to sleep. It is this *non-cogito* which a metaphysics of the night should associate with losses of being.

In short, the psychoanalyst thinks too much. He does not dream enough. In wanting to explain to us the depth of our being by the residues deposited on the surface by daytime life, he obliterates the sense of the gulf that is within us. Who will help us descend into our caverns? Who will help us recover, recognize, know our double being which, from one night to the next, keeps us in existence. That sleepwalker who does not tramp along the routes of life but who descends, always descends in quest of immemorial resting places.

In its depths, the nocturnal dream is an ontological mystery. Whatever can be the being of a dreamer who, in the depth of his night, believes he is still living, who believes he is still the being of the semblances of life? Whoever loses some of his being is mistaken about his being. Even in the bright life, the subject of the verb "to be mistaken" is difficult to stabilize. In the abyssal dream are there not nights when the dreamer takes the wrong abyss? Does he descend into himself? Does he go beyond himself?

Yes, there are nothing but questions at the threshold of a metaphysics of the night.

Before going so far, it will perhaps be necessary to study descents into the less-than-being (*moins-être*) in a realm which is more accessible than the dream of the nocturnal psyche. This is the problem we wish to reflect upon, by dealing simply with the *cogito* of reverie and not with a *cogito* of the nocturnal dream.

II

If the "subject" who dreams the nocturnal dream escapes us, if it is better grasped objectively by those who reconstitute it by analyzing the accounts of it made by the dreamer, the phenomenologist cannot work on the documents of nocturnal dreams. He must leave the study of the nocturnal dream to the psychoanalyst, or to the anthropologist who will compare the nocturnal dream to myths. All these studies will bring to light the immobile, anonymous man, the untransformable man which our phenomenological point of view leads us to call the man without a subject.

From then on, it is not by studying the nocturnal dream that we will be able to divulge the attempts at individualization which animate the man who is awake, the man whom ideas awaken, the man whose imagination calls him to subtlety.

Thus, since we wish to touch the poetic powers of the human psychism, it is best to concentrate all our research on simple reverie, by trying to determine clearly the specificity of simple reveries.

And here is the radical difference for us between the nocturnal dream (*rêve*) and reverie, the radical difference, a difference deriving from phenomenology; while the dreamer of the nocturnal dream is a shadow who has lost his self (*moi*), the dreamer of reverie, if he is a bit philosophical, can formulate a *cogito* at the center of his dreaming self (*son moi rêveur*). Put another way, reverie is an oneiric activity in which a glimmer of consciousness subsists. The dreamer of reverie is present in his reverie. Even when the reverie gives the impression of a flight out of the real, out of time and place, the dreamer of reverie knows that it is he who is absenting himself—he, in flesh and blood, who is becoming a "spirit," a phantom of the past or of voyage.

It will be easy for people to object to us that there is a whole range of intermediary states which go from rather clear reveries to formless musings (*révasseries*). Through this confused zone, phantasms lead us imperceptibly from day toward the night, from sleepiness to sleep. But is it self-evident that one falls from reverie into dream (*rêve*)? Are there really dreams which *continue* reveries? If the dreamer of reverie lets himself be overcome by sleepiness, his reverie unravels; it goes and gets lost in the sands of sleep, like streams in the desert. The place is free for a new dream, a dream which, like all nocturnal dreams, has an abrupt beginning. In going from reverie to dream, the sleeper crosses a frontier. And the dream is so new that the dream tellers rarely have confidence in an antecedent reverie.

But it is not in the realm of facts that we shall find an answer to the objection of a continuity from reverie to dream. We shall first have recourse to phenomenological principles. In fact, phenomenologically speaking, that is to say in taking the phenomenological examination to be linked, by definition, to any awareness (*prise de conscience*), we must repeat that a consciousness which is growing dark, diminishing and going to sleep has already ceased to be a consciousness. The reveries of the going-to-sleep are *facts*. The subject who submits to them has left the realm of *psychological* values. So we have a perfect right to neglect reveries which go down the wrong slope and reserve our research for the reveries which keep us in a consciousness of ourselves.

The reverie is going to be born naturally, in an awareness without tension, in an easy *cogito*, providing certainties of being with regard to a pleasing image—an image which pleases us because we have just created it, outside all responsibility, in the absolute liberty of reverie. The imagining consciousness holds its object (such images as it imagines) in an absolute immediacy. In a fine article which appeared in *Médecine de France*, Jean Delay uses the term *psychotrope* "to designate the group of chemical substances, whether of natural or artificial origin, which have a psychological tropism, that is to say, which are susceptible to modifying mental activity. . . . Thanks to the progress of psychopharmacology, medical workers have at their disposal today a

great variety of psychotropic drugs allowing them to vary psychological behavior in different ways and to institute at will a regimen of relaxation, stimulation, dream or delirium."³ But if the carefully chosen substance causes psychotropisms, it is because there are psychotropisms. And a highly skilled psychologist could make use of psychotropic images. For there are psychotropic images which stimulate the psychism by inspiriting it into a sustained movement. The psychotropic image puts a little linear order into the psychic chaos. Psychic chaos is the state of the idle psyche, the less-than-being (*moins-être*) of the dreamer without images. The pharmaceuticals of the milligram then come to enrich this latent psychism.

Confronted with such a success, an efficient dreamer (*songeur*) cannot stop short. The chemical substance brings the image. But wouldn't whoever brings us the image, the image alone, be giving us all the benefits of the substance? *In the psychological order, simulating the effect well is being very close to bringing back the cause.* The being of the dreamer of reverie is constituted by the images he conjures up. The image awakens us from our torpor, and our awakening is announced in a *cogito*. One more valorization, and there we are in the presence of positive reverie, a reverie which produces, a reverie which, however weak its product, can well be named poetic reverie. In its products and in its producer, reverie can well take on the etymological sense of the word "poetic." Reverie assembles being around its dreamer. It gives him illusions of being more than he is. Thus, upon this less-than-being (*moins-être*) which is the relaxed state where the reverie takes form, there emerges an outline in relief—a relief which the poet will know how to swell into a more-than-being. The philosophical study of reverie calls us to nuances of ontology.⁴

And this ontology is easy, for it is the ontology of well-being (*bien-être*)—of a well-being made to measure for the being of the dreamer who knows how to dream it. There is no well-being

³ Jean Delay, "Ten Years of Psycho-Pharmaceutics in Psychiatry," in *Médecine de France*. Paris, Oliver Perrin, p. 19.

⁴ I am nostalgic for remedies with beautiful names. Only a hundred years ago, there were such beautiful sentences in medicine. When the doctor knew how "to throw some vehicle in the humors," the sick person understood that he was going to be animated.

without reverie. No reverie without well-being. Already, through reverie, one discovers that being is a possession (*bien*). A philosopher will say that being is a value.

Must we forbid ourselves that summary characterization of reverie as happiness under the pretext that happiness is psychologically a flat, poor, puerile state—under the pretext too that just the word "happiness" extinguishes all analysis, drowns the psychism in banality? Poets—we shall quote some soon—will bring us the *nuances* of a cosmic happiness, nuances so numerous and so diverse that it will be fairly necessary to say that the world of reverie begins with the nuance. And thus it is that the dreamer of reverie gets an impression of originality. With the nuance, one comprehends that the dreamer knows the *cogito* being born.

The *cogito* which thinks can wander, wait, choose—the *cogito* of reverie is immediately attached to its object, to its image. The shortest route of all is between the imagining subject and the imagined image. Reverie lives from its primary interest. The subject of the reverie is astonished to receive the image, astonished, charmed, awakened. Great dreamers are masters of the glittering consciousness. A sort of multiple *cogito* renews itself in the closed world of a poem. Other consensual powers will, of course, be necessary in order to take possession of the poem in its totality. But already in the flash of an image, we find an illumination. What a lot of stippled reveries come to enhance the dreaming state! Aren't two types of reverie possible according to whether one lets himself flow into the succession of happy images or whether he lives at the center of an image while feeling it radiate? A *cogito* is assured in the soul of the dreamer who lives at the center of a radiating image.

III

Suddenly an image situates itself in the center of our imagining being. It retains us; it engages us. It infuses us with being. The *cogito* is conquered through an object of the world, an object which, all by itself, represents the world. The imagined detail is a sharp point which penetrates the dreamer; it excites in him a concrete meditation. Its being is at the same time being of the image and being of adherence to the image which is astonishing.

The image brings us an illustration of our astonishment. Perceptible registers correspond to each other. They complement each other. In a reverie which is dreaming on a simple object, we know a polyvalence of our dreaming being.

A flower, a fruit, or a simple, familiar object suddenly comes to solicit us to think of it, to dream near it, to help it raise itself to the rank of companion to man. Without the poets we would not know precisely how to find direct complements for our dreamer's *cogito*. Not all the objects of the world are available for poetic reveries. But once a poet has chosen his object, the object itself changes its being. It is promoted to the poetic.

What joy there is then in taking the poet at his word, in dreaming with him, in believing what he says, in living in the world he offers us by putting the world under the sign of the object, of a fruit of the world, or a flower of the world!

IV

The beginning of life is the beginning of a dream; thus Pierre Albert-Birot suggests that we live the happiness of Adam: "I feel that the world enters me like the fruits I eat; yes, truly, I nourish myself with the World."⁵ Each fruit well tasted, each fruit poetically exalted is a type of happy world. And while dreaming well, the dreamer knows that he is a dreamer of the goods (*biens*) of the world, of the *closest* goods that the world offers him.

Fruits and flowers are already living in the being of the dreamer. Francis Jammes knew that: "I can scarcely feel any sentiment which is not accompanied by the image of a flower or a fruit."⁶

Thanks to a fruit, the whole being of the dreamer becomes round. Thanks to a flower, the whole being of the dreamer relaxes. Yes, what relaxation for the being in this single line by Edmond Vandercammen: "I spy a flower, adorable leisure . . ." ⁷ The flower born in poetic reverie, then, is the very being of the dreamer, his flowering being. The poetic garden dominates all

⁵ Pierre Albert-Birot, *Mémoires d'Adam*, p. 126.

⁶ Francis Jammes, *Le roman du lièvre*, appended notes, p. 271.

⁷ Edmond Vandercammen, *L'étoile du berger*, p. 15.

the gardens of the earth. In no garden of the world could one pick this carnation, Anne-Marie de Backer's carnation:

He left me all I need to live
His black carnations and his honey in my blood.⁸

A psychoanalyst will quickly diabolize these two lines. But will he tell us that immense fragrance of a poet's flower which impregnates a whole life? And that honey—the incorruptible being—associated with the fragrance of blackness retained by the carnations, who will tell us how it keeps the dreamer alive? Upon reading such poems in complete sympathy, one feels that a past of what *could have been* is united with a past of what was:

Abortive memories are worse than necessary
They talk endlessly to invent life.

Thus the images of the poet's reverie dig life deeper, enlarge the depths of life. Let us pick that flower once again in the psychic garden: "The silver peony sheds its petals in the depths of fables."⁹ To what depths of psychic reality the surrealism of women descends!

Flowers and fruits, beauties of the world; in order to be dreamed well, they must be spoken and spoken well. The dreamer of objects only finds the accents of ephemeral enthusiasm. What support he receives when the poet tells him: "You have seen well; therefore you have the right to dream." Then, hearing the voice of the poet, he enters the chorus of the "celebration." The celebrated beings are promoted to a new dignity of existence. Let us listen to Rilke "celebrate" the apple:

Dare to speak what you call apple.
That softness which first condenses
In order, with a softness set up in the taste,

to reach clarity, alertness, transparency,
to become a thing of this place which means
both the sun and the earth—¹⁰

⁸ Anne-Marie de Backer, *Les étoiles de novembre*, p. 16.

⁹ Anne-Marie de Backer, *loc. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁰ Rilke, *Sonnets à Orphée*, I, no. XIII, in *Les élégies de Duino et les sonnets à Orphée*, translated by Angeloz Aubier, 1943, p. 167.

Here, the translator found himself confronted with such a condensation of poetry that, with our analytical language, he had to disperse it a little. But the centers of condensation remain. The softness "set up in the taste" concentrates a softness of the world. The fruit that one holds in his hand gives a pledge of its ripeness. Its ripeness is transparent. Ripeness, the time economized for the benefit of one hour. What a lot of promises there are in a single fruit which joins the double sign of the sunny sky and the patient earth. The poet's garden is a fabulous garden. A past of legends opens a thousand paths to reverie. Avenues of the universe radiate out from the "celebrated" object. The apple celebrated by the poet is the center of a cosmos, a cosmos where the living is good, where one is sure of living. "All the fruits of the apple tree are rising suns," says another poet to "celebrate" the apple.¹¹

In another sonnet to Orpheus, the orange is the center of the world, a center of dynamism which transmits movements, frenzies and exuberances; for the maxim for life which Rilke proposes to us here is "Dance the orange" (*Tanzt die Orange*):

Dance the orange. The warmest countryside,
Project it out from you, that it may radiate ripeness
in the air of its land! . . .¹²

Young girls must be the ones to "dance the orange," being light like perfumes. Perfumes! memories of the native atmosphere.

For Rilke, the apple and the orange are, as he says of the rose, "inexhaustible objects."¹³ "Inexhaustible object" is truly the sign of the object that the poet's reverie makes emerge from its objective inertial. The poetic reverie is always new before the object to which it attaches itself. From one reverie to the next, the object is no longer the same; it renews itself and this renewing is a renewal of the dreamer. Angeloz gives an extensive commentary of the sonnet which "celebrates" the orange.¹⁴ He situates it under the influence of Paul Valéry's *The Soul and the Dance* (the dancing lady is "the pure act of metamorphoses"); also under the influ-

¹¹ Alain Bosquet, *Premier Testament*, p. 26.

¹² *Sonnets I*, no. XV, translated by Angeloz, p. 171.

¹³ *Sonnets II*, no. VI, *loc. cit.*, p. 205.

¹⁴ Rilke, *loc. cit.*, p. 226.

ence of passages André Gide wrote in *Fruits of the Earth* on "The round of the pomegranate."

In spite of an inopportune point, the pomegranate, like the apple, like the orange, is round.

The beauty (*beauté*, f.) of the fruit is rounder the more it is sure of its feminine powers. What a reinforcement of pleasure for us when we dream all these reveries in *anima*!

At any rate, when one reads such poems, he feels himself in a state of *open symbolism*. Immobile heraldry can only retain antiquated aesthetic values. To dream of them well, it would be necessary to be unfaithful to the emblems. In front of the flower of fruit, the poet returns us to the birth of a happiness. And there precisely, Rilke finds "the happiness of eternal childhood":

See the flowers, the faithful of the earth
He who would carry them away into the
intimacy of sleep and would sleep
deeply with things—: O how light he would return
different in the face of a different day, from
the common depth.¹⁵

For the great renewing, it would doubtless be necessary to carry the flowers away into our dreams of the night. But the poet shows us that flowers are already coordinating generalized images in reverie. Not simply perceptual images, colors and fragrances, but images of man, of the delicacies of feeling, of warmth of memory, of temptations to make an offering, everything that can flower in a human soul.

Faced with this extravagance of fruits which invites us to taste the world, faced with those World-Fruits which solicit our reveries, how is it possible not to affirm that the man of reverie is cosmically happy. A type of happiness corresponds to each image. You cannot say of the man of reverie that he is "thrown to the world." For him the world is all welcome, and he himself is the principle of welcome. The man of reverie bathes in the happiness of dreaming the world, bathes in the well-being of a happy world.

¹⁵ *Sonnets à Orphée*, II, no. XIV, *loc. cit.*, p. 221.

The dreamer is the double consciousness of his well-being and of the happy world. His *cogito* is not divided into the dialectic of subject and object.

The correlation between the dreamer and his world is a strong correlation. It is this world experienced through reverie which refers most directly back to the being of the solitary man. The solitary man directly possesses the worlds which he dreams. It is necessary not to dream if one is to doubt the worlds of reverie; it is necessary to come out of the reverie. The man of reverie and the world of his reverie are as close as possible; they are touching; they interpenetrate. They are on the same plane of being; if the being of man must be linked to the being of the world, the *cogito* of reverie will be expressed in the following manner: I dream the world, therefore, the world exists as I dream it.

Here there appears a privilege of poetic reverie. It seems that in dreaming in such solitude we can touch only a world so singular that it is foreign to every other dreamer. But the isolation is not so great, and the deepest, most particular reveries are often communicable. At least, there are families of dreamers whose reveries grow firm, whose reveries deepen the being which receives them. And thus it is that great poets teach us to dream. They nourish us with images with which we can concentrate our reveries of repose. They present us with their psychotropic images by which we animate an awakened oneirism. In such encounters, a Poetics of Reverie becomes conscious of its tasks: causing consolidations of imagined worlds, developing the audacity of constructive reverie, affirming itself in a dreamer's clear consciousness, coordinating liberties, finding some true thing in all the indisciplines of language, opening all the prisons of the being so that the human possesses all becomings. Those are just so many often contradictory tasks lying between what concentrates the being and what exalts it.

V

Of course, the Poetics of Reverie which we are outlining is in no way a Poetics of Poetry. The documentation on the awakened oneirism with which reverie provides us must be worked on—often worked on at length—by the poet in order to take on the

dignity of poems. But, in the end, those documents formed by reverie are the most propitious matter to fashion into poems.

For those of us who are not poets, it is one of the access routes to poetry. Poets help us channel the flowing substance of our dreams (*songes*) and maintain it in a movement which adheres to laws. The poet retains the consciousness of dreaming distinctly enough to manage the task of writing his reverie. What a promotion of being it is to make a work out of a reverie, to be an author in reverie itself!

What relief is given to our language by a poetic image! If we could speak his high language and rise with the poet into that solitude of the speaking being who gives a new sense to the words of the tribe, we would be in a realm which is not entered by the active man for whom the man of reverie "is nothing but a dreamer" and for whom the world of reverie "is only a dream."

Of what importance to us, the dream (*songe*) philosopher, are those denials of the man coming back after his dream (*rêve*) to objects and men! The reverie *has been* a real state in spite of the illusions denounced after the event. And I am sure that I was the dreamer. I was there when all those beautiful things were present in my reverie. Those illusions were beautiful, and therefore beneficial. The poetic expression gained in the reverie adds to the richness of the language. Of course, if one analyzes the illusions by means of concepts, they will disperse at the first impact. But are there still, in this century, professors of rhetoric who analyze poems with ideas?

In any case, by looking a little, a psychologist always finds a reverie beneath a poem. Is it the poet's reverie? One is never sure, but by loving the poem, he sets about giving it oneiric roots, and thus it is that poetry nourishes within us reveries which we have not been able to express.

The fact will always remain that reverie is an original peace. Poets know it. Poets tell it to us. By a poem's exploit, reverie goes from a nirvana to poetic peace. In a book on Stefan George, Henry Benrath wrote: "Every creation springs from a sort of psychic nirvana."¹⁶ It is through reverie, in an awakened oneirism,

¹⁶ Henry Benrath, *Stefan George*, p. 27.

without going as far as nirvana, that many poets feel the forces of production fall into place. Reverie is that simple state where the work takes on its convictions by itself without being tormented by censorship. And thus it is that for many writers and poets the liberty of reverie opens paths to the work: "It is a bizarre disposition of my mind," writes Julien Green, "to believe a thing only if I have dreamed it. By believing, I do not mean simply possessing a certainty, but retaining it within oneself in such a way that the being finds itself modified because of it."¹⁷ What a beautiful text for a philosophy of reverie is the one which says that the dream coordinates life, prepares beliefs for a lifetime.

The poet Gilbert Trollet entitles one of his poems "Everything is Dreamed First" and he writes:

I wait. Everything is repose. Then innervated future
You are image within me. Everything is dreamed first.¹⁸

Thus creative reverie animates the nerves of the future. Nerve waves run along the lines of images shaped by reveries.¹⁹

In a passage from *The Antiquary*, Henri Bosco gives us a beautiful document which ought to help us prove that reverie is the *materia prima* of a literary work. The forms taken from the real need to be inflated with oneiric matter. The writer shows us the cooperation of the psychic reality function with the function of the unreal. In Bosco's novel, a character is speaking, but when a writer reaches that depth and lucidity at the same time, one can make no mistake about the intimacy of the confidence: "No doubt that in that singular time of my youth, what I was living, I thought I was dreaming and what I was dreaming, I thought I was living it. . . . Very often, those two worlds (of the real and the dream) interpenetrated and, without my knowing it, created a third equivocal world for me between reality and

¹⁷ Julien Green, *L'aube vermeille*, 1950, p. 73. The psychiatrist J. H. Van den Berg took the Green quotation as an *exergue* for a study of Robert Desoille, *Evolution psychiatrique*, no. 1, 1952.

¹⁸ Gilbert Trollet, *La bonne fortune*, p. 61.

¹⁹ In going beyond all human destiny, a visionary like Blake could say: "Everything which exists today was imagined long ago." And it is Paul Eluard who refers back to this absolute of the imagination (Paul Eluard, *Sentiers . . .*, p. 46).

dream (*songe*). Sometimes the most evident reality would melt into the mists there while a strangely bizarre fiction would illuminate my mind and make it marvelously subtle and lucid. Then the vague mental images would condense in such a way that one would have thought it possible to touch them with his finger. Tangible objects, on the other hand, would become phantoms of themselves, and I wouldn't be far from believing that one could pass through them as easily as he cuts through walls when he is walking around in dreams. When everything was back in order, I would get no other indication of it than a sudden and extraordinary faculty for loving noises, voices, fragrances, movements, colors and forms, which all of a sudden became perceptible in another way and yet with a familiar presence which delighted me."²⁰

What an invitation to dream what one sees and to dream what one is. The dreamer's *cogito* moves off and goes to lend its being to things, to noises and to fragrances. Who is existing? What a relaxation for our own existence!

In order to have the sedative benefits of such a passage, it is necessary to read it *in slow reading*. We understand it too quickly (the writer is so clear!). We forget to dream it as it has been dreamed. In dreaming now, in a slow reading, we are going to believe in it, we are going to profit from it as from a gift of youth, to put our reverie youth into it, for we too, in the past, thought we were living what we were dreaming. . . . If we accept the hypnotic action of the poet's passage, our dreaming being will be returned to us from distant memory. A sort of *psychological memory*, calling an ancient Psyche back to life, calling back the very being of the dreamer we were, sustains our reading reverie. The book has just spoken to us of ourselves.

VI

The psychiatrist has doubtless encountered the phantomalization of familiar objects in numerous patients. But in his objective relationships, the psychiatrist, unlike the writer, does not help us make the phantoms *our* phantoms. Taken from the documents of

²⁰ Henri Bosco, *L'antiquaire*, p. 143.

the analysts, phantoms are only *hardened mists* offered to *perception*. Having named them, the analyst does not have to describe to us how these phantoms participate in our imagination through their intimate substance. On the contrary, the phantoms which take form in the writer's reverie are our intercessors to teach us to sojourn in the double life, at the sensitized frontier between the real and the imaginary.

A poetic force leads these phantoms of reverie. This poetic force animates all the senses; reverie becomes polysensorial. From the poetic passage, we receive a renewal of the joy of perceiving, a subtlety of all the senses—a subtlety which bears the privilege of a perception from one sense to another, in a sort of aroused Baudelarian correspondence. Awakening and no longer soporific correspondences. Ah! how a passage which pleases us can make us live! Thus in reading Bosco, one learns that the poorest objects are sachets of perfume, that, at certain times, internal lights render opaque bodies translucent, that every sonority is a voice. How the cup from which one drank as a child rings! From all over, coming from all objects, an intimacy lays siege to us. Yes, truly we dream while reading. The reverie which works poetically maintains us in an intimate space which does not stop at any frontier—a space uniting the intimacy of our being which dreams with the intimacy of the beings which we dream. It is within these composite intimacies that a poetics of reverie is coordinated. The whole being of the world is amassed poetically around the *cogito* of the dreamer.

On the contrary, active life, the life given animation by the reality function is a fragmented life, fragmenting outside us and within us. It rejects us to the exterior of all things. Then we are always *outside*. Always opposite things, opposite the world, opposite men with their mottled humanity. Except in the great days of true loves, except in the times of Novalis' *Umarmung*, a man is a surface for man. Man hides his depths. He becomes, as in Carlyle's parody, the consciousness of his clothes. His *cogito* assures his existence only within a mode of existence. And thus through artificial doubts, doubts in which—if it dare be said—he does not believe, he establishes himself as a thinker.

The dreamer's *cogito* does not follow such complicated pre-

ambles. It is easy; it is sincere; it is linked very naturally to its complementary object. Good things, soft things offer themselves in complete innocence to the innocent dreamer. And the dreams (*songes*) accumulate in front of a familiar object. The object is then the reverie companion of the dreamer. Easy certainties come to enrich the dreamer. A communication of being develops in both directions between the dreamer and his world. A great dreamer of objects like Jean Follain knows those hours when reverie becomes animated in an undulating ontology. An ontology with two united poles reverberates its certainties. The dreamer would be too much alone if the familiar object did not welcome his reverie. Jean Follain writes:

In the closed up house
he focuses on an object in the evening
and plays that game of existing.²¹

In "that game of existing" how well the poet plays! He indicates his existence to the object on the table, to an infinitesimal detail which gives existence to a thing:

The least crack
in a windowpane or a bowl
can bring back the felicity of a great memory
the naked objects
show their fine line
sparkle all of a sudden
in the sun
but lost in the night
gorge themselves as well on hours
long
or short.²²

What a poem of tranquility! Say it slowly; there will descend within you an *object time*. How the object we dream helps us forget time and be at peace with ourselves! Alone "in the shut up house" with an object chosen to be a companion in solitude what assurance we have of being in simple existence! There will come

²¹ Jean Follain, *Territoires*, p. 70.

²² Jean Follain, *loc. cit.*, p. 15.

other reveries which, like those of a painter who likes to live the object in its ever particular appearances, will be able to return the dreamer to the picturesque life, other reveries too which will come from very distant memories. But an attraction to a completely simple presence calls the object dreamer to a sub-human existence. The eyes of Bérénice's ass gave Maurice Barrès such dreams (*songes*). But the sensitivity of the dreamers of looking (*rêveurs du regard*) is so great that everything which looks comes (up) to the level of the human. An inanimate object opens itself to the greatest dreams (*songes*). The sub-human reverie which equalizes the dreamer and the object becomes a sub-living reverie. To live this non-life is to carry to extremes "the game of existing" where Follain leads us on the gentle slope of his poems.

Object reveries sensitized to that extent lead us to reverberate to the object drama suggested to us by the poet:

When there falls from the hands of the serving girl
the pale round plate
the color of the clouds
the pieces must be picked up
while the chandelier trembles
in the masters' dining room.²³

That it is pale and round, that it is the color of the clouds, in the prestige of these simple words poetically united, the plate takes on a poetic existence. It is not described, and yet whoever dreams a little will not confuse it with any other. For me it is the Jean Follain plate. Such a poem could be a test of the adherence of ordinary life to poetry. What solidarity exists between the beings of that house! With what human pity the poet can inspire the chandelier who trembles at the death of a plate! What a magnetic field there is between the servant and the masters, between the plate and the crystal of the chandelier for measuring the humanity of the beings of the house, of all the beings, men and things. Helped by the poet, how well we awaken ourselves from the sleep of indifference! Yes, how can we remain indifferent in front of such an object? Why look farther when we can dream on the clouds of the sky by contemplating a plate?

²³ Jean Follain, *loc. cit.*, p. 30; this poem is entitled "The Plate."

In dreaming before an inert object, a poet will always find a drama of life and non-life:

I am a gray pebble; I have no other titles
I dream while hardening the dreams of my choice.²⁴

It is up to the reader to attach his preamble of sorrows to this poem, to relive all the petty sorrows which make up the gray look, all the troubles which make a heart of stone. In this poem from the *Premier Testament*, the poet calls us to the courage which hardens life. Besides, Alain Bosquet knows that to tell man's whole being, it is necessary to exist as the stone and the wind:

It is an honor to be the wind
It is a happiness to be the stone.²⁵

But are there "still lifes" for a dreamer of things? Can things which have been human be indifferent? Don't things which have been named come back to life in the reverie on their name? Everything depends upon the dreaming sensitivity of the dreamer. Chesterton writes: "Dead things have such a power for taking over the living mind that I wonder if it is possible for anyone to read the catalogue of an auction without coming across things which, when abruptly recognized, would make elementary tears flow."²⁶

Only reverie can awaken such a sensitivity. Dispersed at auction, offered to any taker, won't each gentle thing find its dreamer? A good writer from Champagne, the Trojan Grosley, said that his grandmother, when she did not know how to answer his childhood questions, would add: "Go on with you, when you're big, you will see that there are a lot of things in a *chosier*."

But is our *chosier* really full? Isn't it rather encumbered with objects which do not bear witness to our intimacy? Our glass-doored whatnots are not really *chosiers* in the style of the grandmother from Champagne. Whenever someone curious comes into the parlor we exhibit our curios. Curios! just so many objects which do not speak their names immediately. We want them to

²⁴ Alain Bosquet, *Premier Testament*. Paris, Gallimard, p. 28.

²⁵ *Loc. cit.*, p. 52.

²⁶ G. K. Chesterton, *La vie de Robert Browning*, translation, p. 66.

be rare. They are samples of unknown universes. One must have "culture" in order to extricate himself from the middle of this bric-a-brac of sampled universes. To keep company with objects, there must not be too many. One does not dream well, in beneficial reveries, before dispersed objects. The object reverie is a faithfulness to the familiar object. The dreamer's faithfulness to his object is the condition for intimate reverie. The reverie maintains the familiarity.

A German author could somehow say: "Each new object, well considered, opens a new organ within us." (*Jeder neue Gegenstand, wohl beschaut, schliesst ein neues Organ in uns auf*). Things do not go so fast. It is necessary to dream a great deal in front of an object for the object to bring about within us a sort of oneiric organ. The objects privileged by reverie become the direct complements of the dreamer's *cogito*. They value the dreamer; they hold the dreamer. In the intimacy of the dreamer, then, they are the organs of reverie. We are not available for dreaming no matter what. If our object reveries are deep, they occur in the harmony between our oneiric organs and our *chosier*. Thus our *chosier* is precious to us, oneirically precious since it gives us the benefits of *attached reveries*. In such reveries, the dreamer recognizes himself as a dreaming subject. What a proof of being it is to recover both our I-dreamer (*moi-rêveur*) and the very object which is welcoming our reverie in a faithfulness of reverie. Those are connections of existences which one could not find in the meditation upon the nocturnal dream. The reverie dreamer's diffuse *cogito* receives from the objects of its reverie a tranquil confirmation of its existence.

VII

Philosophers of the strong ontology who overtake being in its totality and keep it integrally even in describing the most fleeting modes will quickly denounce this dispersed ontology which attaches itself to details, perhaps to accidents and which believes it is multiplying its proofs by multiplying its points of view.

But in the course of our life as a philosopher, we have insisted upon choosing subjects for our studies according to our capacities. And a philosophical study of reverie attracts us by its character

which is both simple and well defined. Reverie is a manifest psychic activity. It contributes documentation on differences in the *tonality of the being*. At the level of the tonality of being a differential ontology can then be proposed. The dreamer's *cogito* is less lively than the thinker's *cogito*. The dreamer's *cogito* is less sure than the philosopher's *cogito*. The dreamer's being is a diffuse being. But on the other hand, this diffuse being is the being of a diffusion. It escapes the punctualization of the *hic* and of the *nunc*. The dreamer's being invades what it touches, diffuses into the world. Thanks to shadows, the intermediary region which separates man from the world is a full region, of a light density fullness. This intermediary region deadens the dialectic between being and non-being. The imagination does not know non-being. Its whole being can easily pass for a non-being in the eyes of the man at work, under the pen of the strong ontology metaphysician. But, on the other hand, the philosopher who gives himself enough solitude to enter the region of shadows bathes in an atmosphere without obstacles where no being says no. He lives by his reverie in a world homogenous with his being, with his demi-being. The man of reverie is always in space which has volume. Truly inhabiting the whole volume of his space, the man of reverie is from anywhere *in* his world, in an *inside* which has no *outside*. It is not without reason that people commonly say that the dreamer is *plunged* in his reverie. The world no longer poses any opposition to him. The I no longer opposes itself to the world. In reverie there is no more non-I. In reverie, the *no* no longer has any function: everything is welcome.

A philosopher enamored of the history of philosophy could say that the space in which the dreamer is plunged is a "plastic mediator" between man and the universe. It seems that in the intermediary world where reverie and reality mingle, a plasticity of man and his world is realized without one ever needing to know where the principle of this double malleability lies. This characteristic of reverie is so true that one can say, conversely, that where there is malleability, there is reverie. In solitude, it is enough that a dough be offered to our fingers to set us dreaming.²⁷

²⁷ Cf. *La terre et les rêveries de la volonté*, ed. Corti, chap. IV.

Contrary to reverie, the nocturnal dream hardly knows this soft plasticity. Its space is encumbered with solids—and solids always have a reserve of sure hostility. They keep their forms and when a form appears, it is necessary to *think*, it is necessary to name. In the nocturnal dream, the dreamer suffers from a hard geometry. It is in the nocturnal dream that a pointed object wounds us as soon as we see it. In the nightmares of the night, objects are evil. A psychoanalysis which would work on the two shores, on the objective and the subjective sides, would recognize that the evil objects help us, one might say, to succeed in our "abortive acts." Our nightmares are often coordinations of abortive acts. They often make us live abortive lives. And how is it that psychoanalysis, so abundant in studies of dream-desire, has devoted so little space to the study of dream-remorse? The melancholy of certain of our reveries does not descend as far as those experienced, re-experienced misfortunes which a nocturnal dreamer can always dread reliving.

We cannot keep from ceaselessly renewing our efforts to indicate the difference between the night dream and the reverie of an alert consciousness. We are well aware that, by eliminating from our inquiries literary works which are inspired by nightmares, we are closing off perspectives directed at the human destiny and, at the same time, that we are depriving ourselves of the literary splendor of apocalyptic worlds. But we had to discard many problems if we wanted to treat the problem of the reverie of an awakened consciousness in all simplicity.

If this problem were clarified, perhaps the oneirism of the day could help us know the night oneirism better.

One would perceive that there are mixed states, reverie-dreams and dream-reveries—reveries which fall into dream and dreams which take on the color of reverie. Robert Desnos has pointed out that our nocturnal dreams are interrupted by simple reveries. In these reveries, our nights find gentleness again.

A wider inquiry than ours into the aesthetics of the oneirism should envisage a study of the artificial Paradises such as they have been described by writers and poets. What a lot of phenomenological ambitions would be necessary to uncover the "I" of different states corresponding to different narcotics! At the very

least, it would be necessary to classify these "I's" in three species: the "I" of sleep—if it exists; the "I" of the narcosis—if it retains any value as individuality; the "I" of reverie, maintained in such vigilance that it can permit itself the happiness of writing.

Who will ever determine the ontological weight of all the imagined "I's"? A poet writes:

This dream (*songe*) in us, is it ours
I go alone and multiplied
am I myself; am I another
are we only imagined.²⁸

Is there an "I" which assumes these multiple "I's"? An "I" of all these "I's" which has the mastery of our whole being, of all our intimate beings? Novalis writes: "Die höchste Aufgabe der Bildung ist, sich seines transzendentalen Selbst zu bemächtigen, das Ich seines Ichs zugleich zu sein."²⁹ If the "I's" vary in tonality of being, where is the dominant "I"? In looking for the "I" of the "I's" won't we find, by dreaming like Novalis, the "I" of the "I," the transcendental "I"?

But what are we looking for in the artificial Paradises—we who are only an armchair psychologist? Dreams or reveries? What are the determinant documents for us? Books, always books. Would the artificial Paradises be Paradises if they were not *written*? For us, as readers, these artificial Paradises are Paradises of reading.

The artificial Paradises were written to be read, with the certainty that the poetic value would provide the means of communication from the author to the reader. It is in order to write that so many poets have tried to live the reveries of opium. But who will tell us the respective roles of experience and art? On the subject of Edgar Allan Poe, Edmond Jaloux makes a penetrating remark. Edgar Allan Poe's opium is an *imagined opium*. Imagined before, reimagined after, but never written during. Who will show us the difference between experienced opium and magnified

²⁸ Leo Libbrecht, "Enchanteur de toi-même" in *Poemes choisis*, Paris, Seghers, p. 43.

²⁹ Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. Minor, 1907, vol. II, p. 117. "The supreme task of culture is to take possession of its transcendental self, to be at once the I of its I."

opium? We, the readers who do not wish to know, but wish to dream, we must follow the ascension which goes from the experience to the poem. "The power of man's imagination," concludes Edmond Jaloux, "is greater than all the poisons."³⁰ Edmond Jaloux says further in speaking of Edgar Allan Poe: "So he lends the poppy one of the most striking peculiarities of his own spirituality."³¹

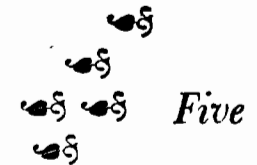
But there too, can't the man who lives the psychotropic images find the impulses of the psychotropic substance in them? The beauty of images adds to their effectiveness. The multiplicity of images relays the uniformity of the cause. A poet does not hesitate to give himself over entirely to the effectiveness of the image. Henri Michaux writes: "No need for opium. Everything is a drug for the man who chooses to live on the other side."³²

And what is a beautiful poem if not a touched up madness? A little poetic order imposed upon aberrant images? The maintenance of an intelligent sobriety in the utilization—intensive all the same—of imaginary drugs. Reveries, mad reveries lead life.

³⁰ Edmond Jaloux, *Edgar Poe et les femmes*. (Geneva, 1943), Ed. du Milieu du Monde, p. 125.

³¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 129.

³² Henri Michaux, *Plume*, p. 68.



Reverie and Cosmos

"The man who has a soul obeys only the universe."

Gabriel Germain,
Chants pour l'âme d'Afrique

"To define how Milosz thinks the world is to paint the portrait of the pure poet of all time."

Jean de Boschère,
Preface to *Poèmes de O.V. de L. Milosz*

I inhabited a proverb so vast
that I needed the universe to fill it.

Robert Sabatier,
Dédicace d'un navire