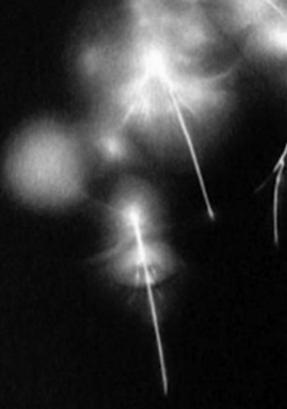


THE POETICS OF SPACE

Gaston Bachelard



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Gaston Bachelard

Translated by **Maria Jolas**

With a new Foreword by **John R. Stilgoe**

Photographs by **Hiroshi Sugimoto**

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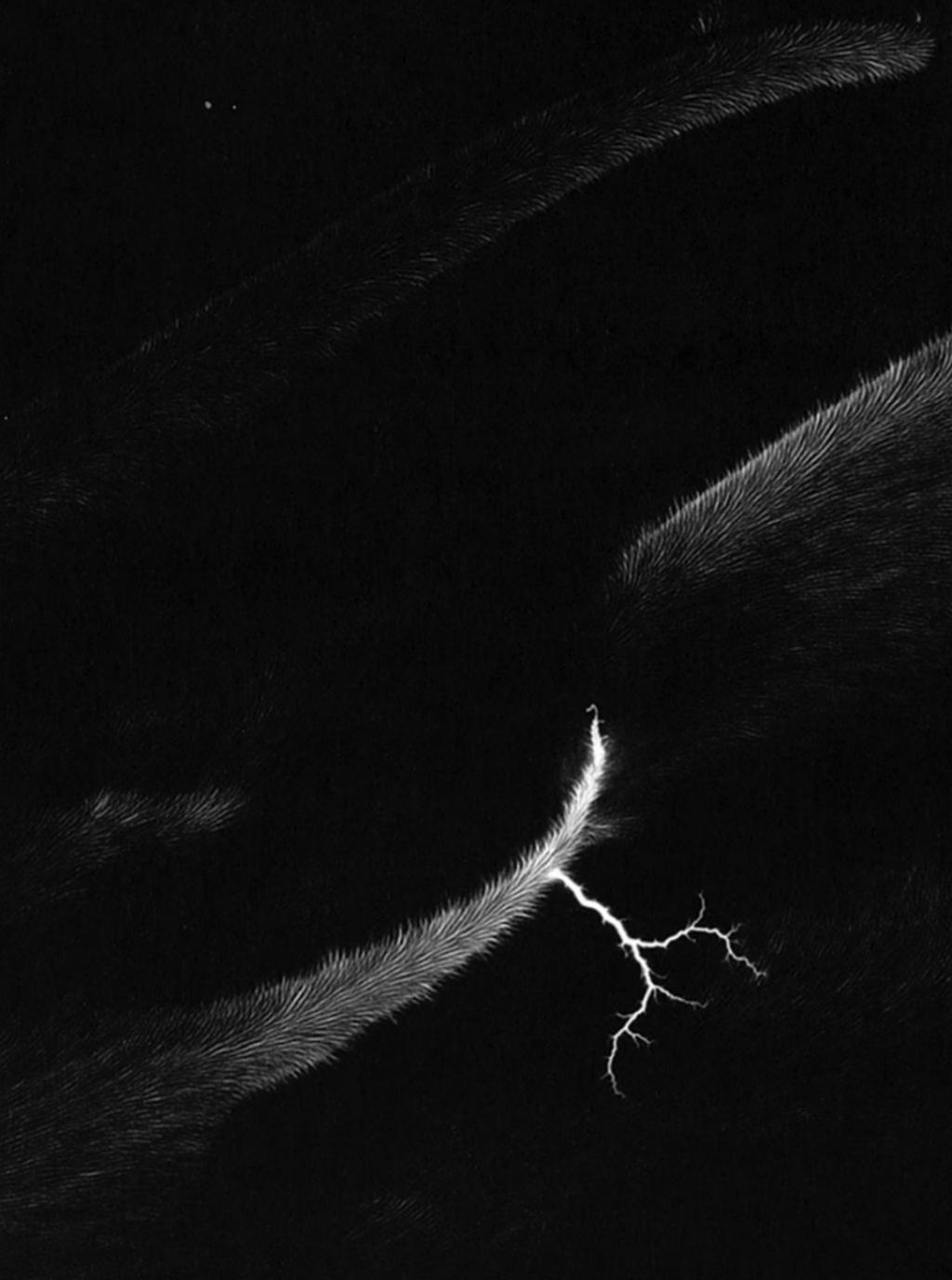
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FOREWORD TO THE 1994 EDITION





- I. Shells and doorknobs, closets and attics, old towers and peasant huts, all shimmer here, shimmer as points linked in the transcendental geometry of Gaston Bachelard. Ostensibly modest in compass, an inquiry focused on the house, its interior places, and its outdoor context, *The Poetics of Space* resonates deeply, vibrating at the edges of imagination, exploring the recesses of the psyche, the hallways of the mind. In the house Bachelard discovers a metaphor of humanness.

No other writer closes so accurately, so deftly with the meanings of domestic space. Bachelard admits that every house is first a geometrical object of planes and right angles, but asks his reader to ponder how such rectilinearity so welcomes human complexity, idiosyncrasy, how the house adapts to its inhabitants. Eschewing all simplicities of mere architectural history, mere building detail, he skews his scrutiny, moving through the house not as mere visitor, but as the master penetrator of anthro-cosmology. “A house that has been experienced is not an inert box,” he determines early on. “Inhabited space transcends geometrical space.” As he listens to the geometry of echoes dignifying—and distinguishing—every old house, every experienced house, he probes the impact of human habitation on geometrical form, and the impact of the form upon human inhabitants.

Here is indeed a magical book. Bachelard guides the reader into wondering why adults recall childhood cellar stairs from the top looking down but recall attic stairs from the bottom looking up, into musing on the significance of doorknobs encountered by children at eye level, into pondering the mysteries of fingertip memory. How does the body, not merely the mind, remember the feel of a latch in a long-forsaken childhood home? If the house is the first universe for its young children, the first cosmos, how does its space shape all subsequent knowledge of other space, of any larger cosmos? Is that house “a group of organic habits” or even something deeper, the shelter of the imagination itself?

In poetry and in folktale, in modern psychology and modern ornithology, Bachelard finds the bits and pieces of evidence he weaves into his argument that the house is a nest for dreaming, a shelter for imagining. Beyond his startling, unsettling

illuminations of criminal cellars and raisin smelling cabinets, his insistence that people need houses in order to dream, in order to imagine, remains one of the most unnerving, most convincing arguments in Western philosophy. Bachelard emphasizes not only the deeper significances of tales of peasant huts and hermit shelters, significances enduring as contemporary fascinations with lovers' cottages and readers' nooks, but also the abuse suffered by such simple structures in storm. Gales, hurricanes, and downpours haunt *The Poetics of Space*, all vicissitudes that make the simplest of simple huts shine in strength of sheltering. Storm makes sense of shelter, and if the shelter is sound, the shelter makes the surrounding storm good, enjoyable, recreational, something that Bachelard uses to open his understanding of house and universe, of intimacy and immensity.

Always container, sometimes contained, the house serves Bachelard as the portal to metaphors of imagination. With a rare grace, Bachelard handles the most fragile shell, the most delicate "cottage chrysalis," the most simple containers. "Chests, especially small caskets, over which we have more complete mastery, are objects that may be opened." What immensities flow from objects that may be opened. From Jungian psychology to sexual intimacy, Bachelard explores the significances of nooks and crannies, the shells of turtles, the garden "chambers" still favored by landscape architects. To imagine living in a seashell, to live withdrawn into one's shell, is to accept solitude—and to embrace, even if momentarily, the whole concept and tradition of miniature, of shrinking enough to be contained in something as tiny as a seashell, a dollhouse, an enchanted cottage. To imagine miniature is to glimpse others of Bachelard's wonders, the immensity of the forest, the voluptuousness of high places.

Out of the house spin worlds within worlds, the personal cosmoses Bachelard describes perhaps more acutely than any other writer concerned with space.

Language serves and delights Bachelard even as it serves and delights the reader. A master of poetic reading, perhaps a master of poetic hypervision, Bachelard writes to anyone transfixed by clear-eyed words. "Being myself a philosopher of adjectives," he admits in his chapter on miniature, "I am caught up in the perplexing dialectics of deep and large; of the infinitely diminished that deepens, or the large that extends beyond all limits." Can one hear oneself close one's eyes? How accurately must one hear in order to hear the geometry of echoes in an old, peculiarly experienced house? Bachelard writes of hearing by imagination, of filtering, of distorting sound, of lying awake in his city apartment and hearing in the roar of Paris the roar of the sea, of hearing what is, and what is not. In struggling to look "through the thousand windows of fancy," Bachelard elevates language, pushes adjectives and nouns to far-off limits, perhaps to voluptuous heights, certainly to intimacy elsewhere unknown.

And Bachelard addresses the moment, our liminal era of changing centuries in which so many verities seem shaky. He offers ways of interpreting not only the most ancient of houses but the most contemporary of office towers, shopping malls,

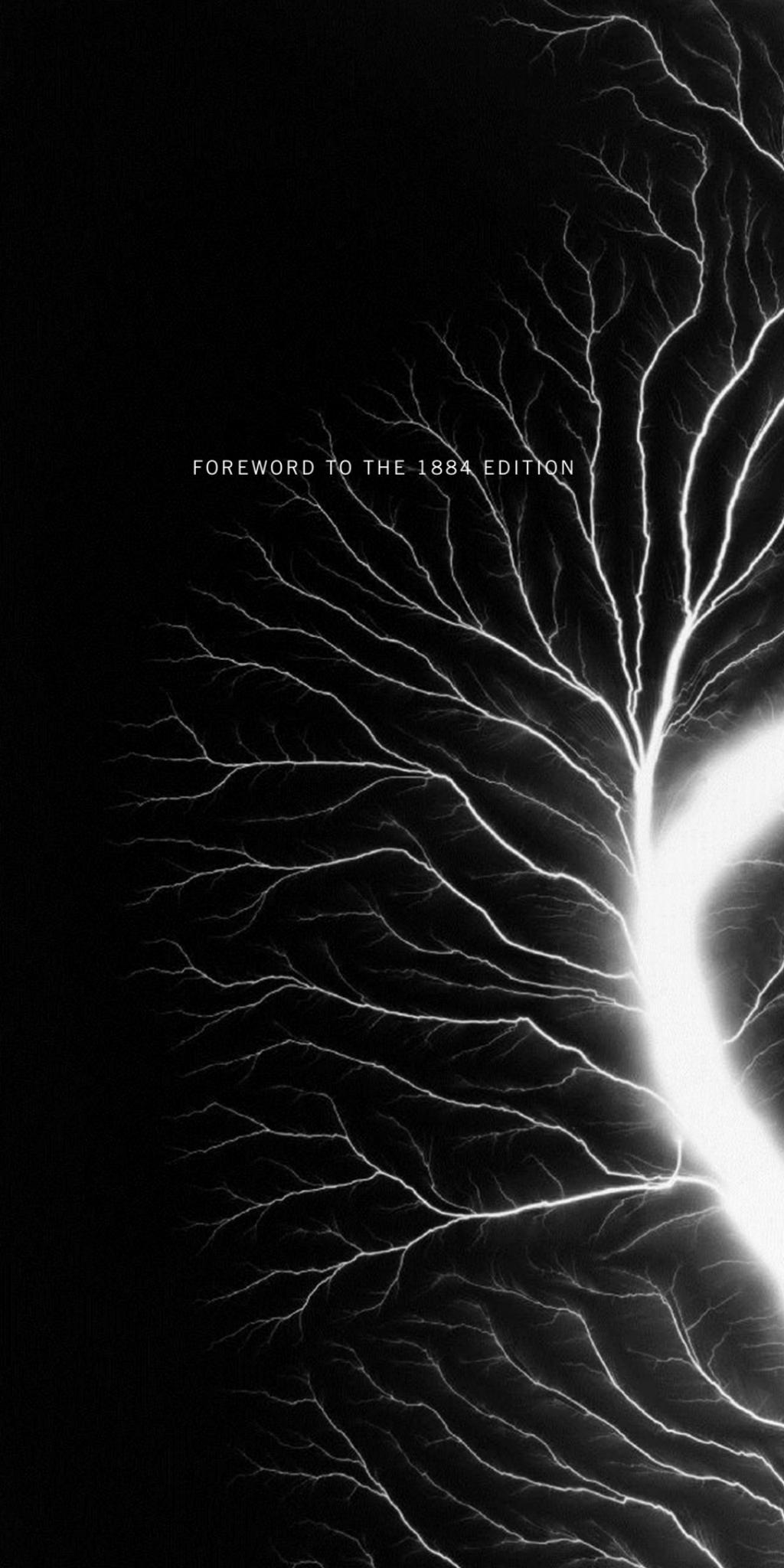
and condominium complexes. His analysis is truly cross-cultural, for it focuses on physical items known and cherished the world over, structures and objects that comprise a universal vocabulary of space, a vocabulary so crucially important that few inquirers notice it, let alone hold it up and turn it before the eye. In an age of so much homogenized space, so much shoddy, cramped, dimly lit, foul-smelling, low-ceilinged, ill-ordered structure, Bachelard offers not only methods of assaying existing form but ways of imagining finer textures and concatenations. The Poetics of Space resonates in an era suffused by television and video games, fluorescent lighting and plastic floors, air conditioning systems and too-small closets. It is a book that makes its readers dissatisfied with much contemporary structure and landscape, for it demonstrates to its readers that space can be poetry.

This book opens its readers to the titanic importance of setting in so much art from painting to poetry to fiction to autobiography. In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard reveals time after time that setting is more than scene in works of art, that it is often the armature around which the work revolves. He elevates setting to its rightful place alongside character and plot, and offers readers a new angle of vision that re shapes any understanding of great paintings and novels, and folktales too. His is a work of genuine topophilia.

The Poetics of Space is a prism through which all worlds from literary creation to housework to aesthetics to carpentry take on enhanced—and enchanted—significances. Every reader of it will never again see ordinary spaces in ordinary ways. Instead the reader will see with the soul of the eye, the glint of Gaston Bachelard.

JOHN R. STILGOE

Harvard University



FOREWORD TO THE 1884 EDITION



- I. An unusual man, with an unusual career and a still more unusual mind, Gaston Bachelard was so modest that probably few of his contemporaries will remember him as a young man, when he was slowly working his way from small jobs in public administration up to a chair of philosophy in the Sorbonne. The Bachelard they will remember is the last one, a debonair patriarch, with a marked provincial accent, dearly loved by his students to whom he was so generously devoted, but chiefly known to his neighbors as an old man fond of choosing his own cut of meat at the market or of buying his own fish.

I wish I could make clear how his provincial origins and his familiarity with the things of the earth affected his intellectual life and influenced the course of his philosophical reflections. Owing to his courageous efforts, Bachelard finally succeeded in giving himself a university education, got all the university degrees one can get and ended as a university professor; yet, unlike most of us, at least in France, he never allowed himself to become molded by the traditional ways of thinking to which universities unavoidably begin by submitting their students. His intellectual superiority was such that he could not fail to succeed in all his academic ventures. We all loved him, admired him and envied him a little, because we felt he was a free mind, unfettered by any conventions either in his choice of the problems he wanted to handle or in his way of handling them.

What the reader will find in this volume marks the last stage of his philosophical career. The first pages of the introduction suggest that he himself then felt a need to explain to his public the reasons behind his recent esthetic interests.

As a young philosopher, Bachelard had devoted his attention to the problems raised by the nature of scientific knowledge, especially in physics. It was as a specialist in the philosophy of science that he first made himself known and established his reputation. Thirteen volumes, if I am not mistaken, in which scientific competence went hand in hand with philosophical acumen, amply justified his reputation. Among them, one title at least should be mentioned at this place, namely *The Experience of Space in Contemporary Physics*. What I want to make dear, however, is that, as a university professor his whole

career was founded upon his philosophical critique of scientific knowledge and his conception of a free type of rationalism, quite different from the abstract mode of thinking which the word usually designates, and wholly bent upon the art of using reason as an instrument to achieve an always closer approach to concrete reality.

At that time, the future of Bachelard's career was easy to foretell. Having specialized, as they say, in the philosophy of science, he was likely to write a dozen more books on the same subject. But things were not to be that way. Bachelard fired his first warning shot when he unexpectedly published a book curiously entitled *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*. I distinctly remember my first reaction to it. It was: What are they going to say? Who, *they*? Well, we, all of us, the colleagues. After appointing a man to teach the philosophy of science and seeing him successfully do so for a number of years, we don't like to learn that he has suddenly turned his interest to a psychoanalysis of the most unorthodox sort, since what then was being psychoanalyzed was not even people, but an element.

More volumes in the same vein were to follow during the course of years: *Water and Dreams*, *Air and Reverie*, *The Earth and the Reveries of the Will*, *The Earth and the Reveries of Rest*, in which Bachelard was resolutely turning from the universe of reason and science to that of imagination and poetry. Everything in them was new and I feel quite certain that their ultimate import has not yet been fully realized. Perhaps it never will be, for what Bachelard calls imagination is a most secret power that is as much of a cosmic force as of a psychological faculty. In his introduction to *Water and Dreams*, shamelessly relapsing into some of the oldest philosophical categories—and I think I could say why he had to do so—Bachelard distinguished between two forms of imagination, the formal imagination and the material imagination, and the main point was that he found them both at work in nature as well as in the mind. In nature, the formal imagination creates all the unnecessary beauty it contains, such as the flowers; the material imagination, on the contrary, aims at producing that which, in being, is both primitive and eternal. In the mind, the formal imagination is fond of novelty, picturesqueness, variety and unexpectedness in events, while the material imagination is attracted by the elements of permanency present in things. In us as well as in nature the material imagination is productive of germs, but of germs where the form is deeply sunk in a substance. The images of the formal imagination, that is, of the free forms, have always received the attention they deserve from the philosophers, but Bachelard was conscious of doing pioneering work in turning to the "images of matter." Of course, even such images imply a formal element, but those direct images of matter, as Bachelard calls them, are precisely those of forms given in matter and inseparable from it. By calling the attention of the philosophers to the significance of the material imagination, Bachelard was conscious of defining a new concept "necessarily required for a complete philosophical study of the poetic creation." In other words, he was then turning from the philosophy of science to the philosophy of art and to esthetics.

This could not be done without extreme care, especially on the part of a mind for so many years intent on the intricate, but always precise, moves of the scientific mind. From the very beginning, as will be seen in the first lines of this work, Bachelard realized that he would have to forget all his acquired knowledge, all the philosophical habits contracted during years of scientific reflection, if he wanted fruitfully to approach the problems raised by the poetic imagination. To me at least, the first paragraph of the introduction to this volume is one of the major modern contributions to the philosophy of art, especially to its methodology. It opens in it a new era. By carefully dissociating the principles of a correct interpretation of art from those that have always rightly presided over that knowledge, Gaston Bachelard has done about all that it is possible to do in order to establish the specificity of the philosophy of art in the general family of the philosophical disciplines.

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

ETIENNE GILSON

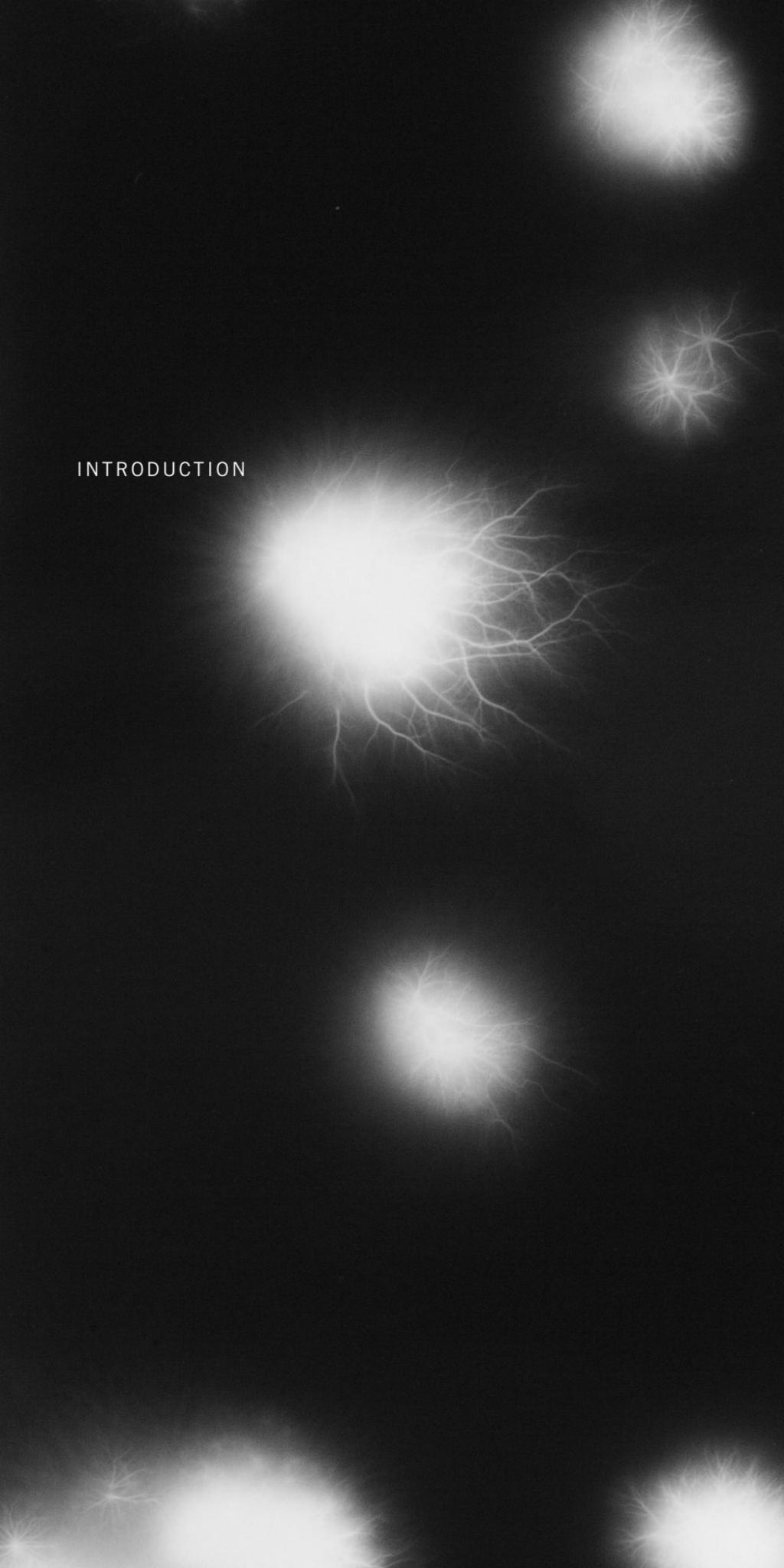
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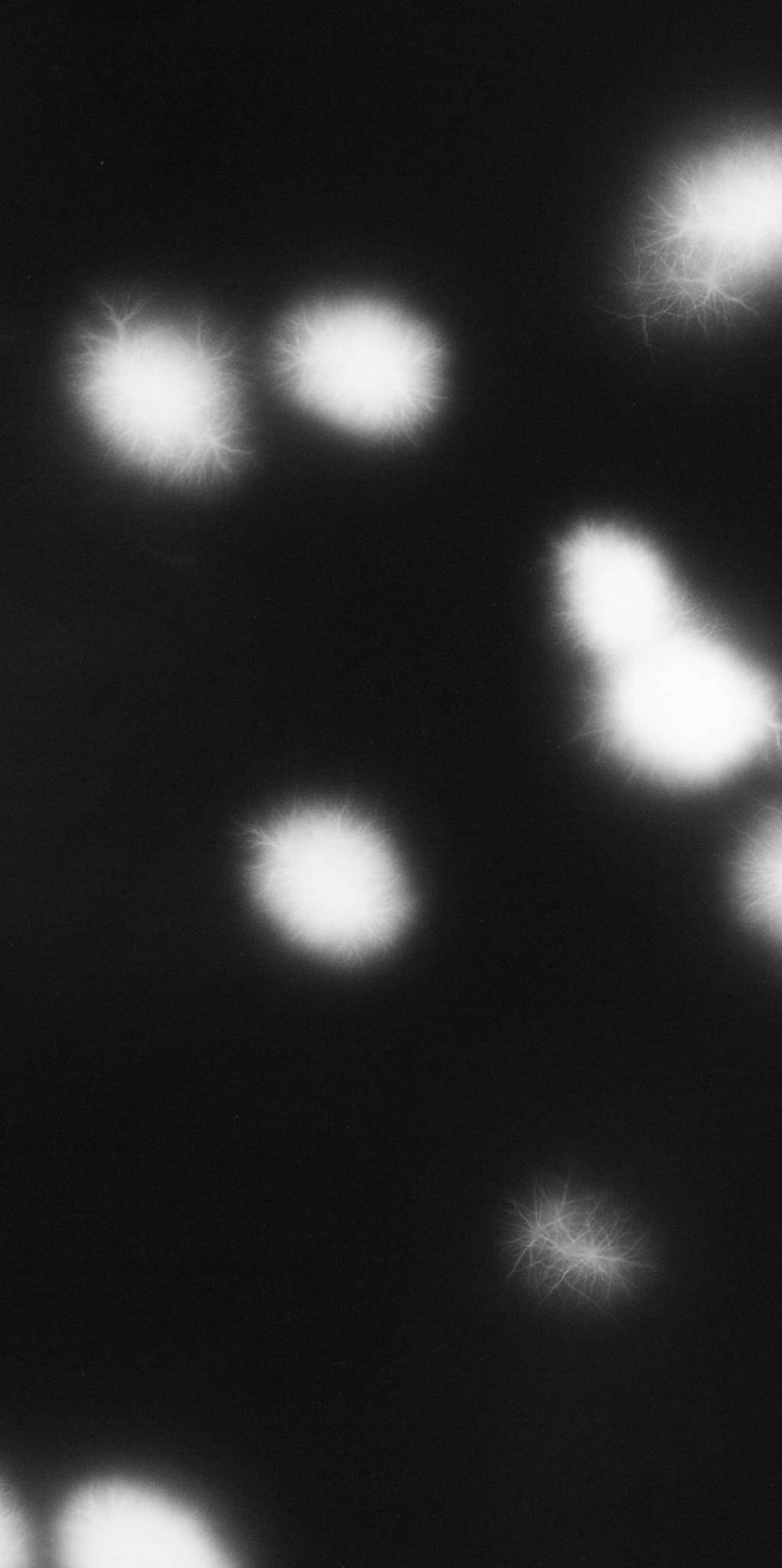
¹ French titles of books mentioned: *L'expérience de l'espace dans la physique contemporaine*, *La psychanalyse du feu*, *L'eau et les rêves*, *L'air et les songes*, *La terre et les reveries de la volonté*, *La terre et les reveries du repos*.

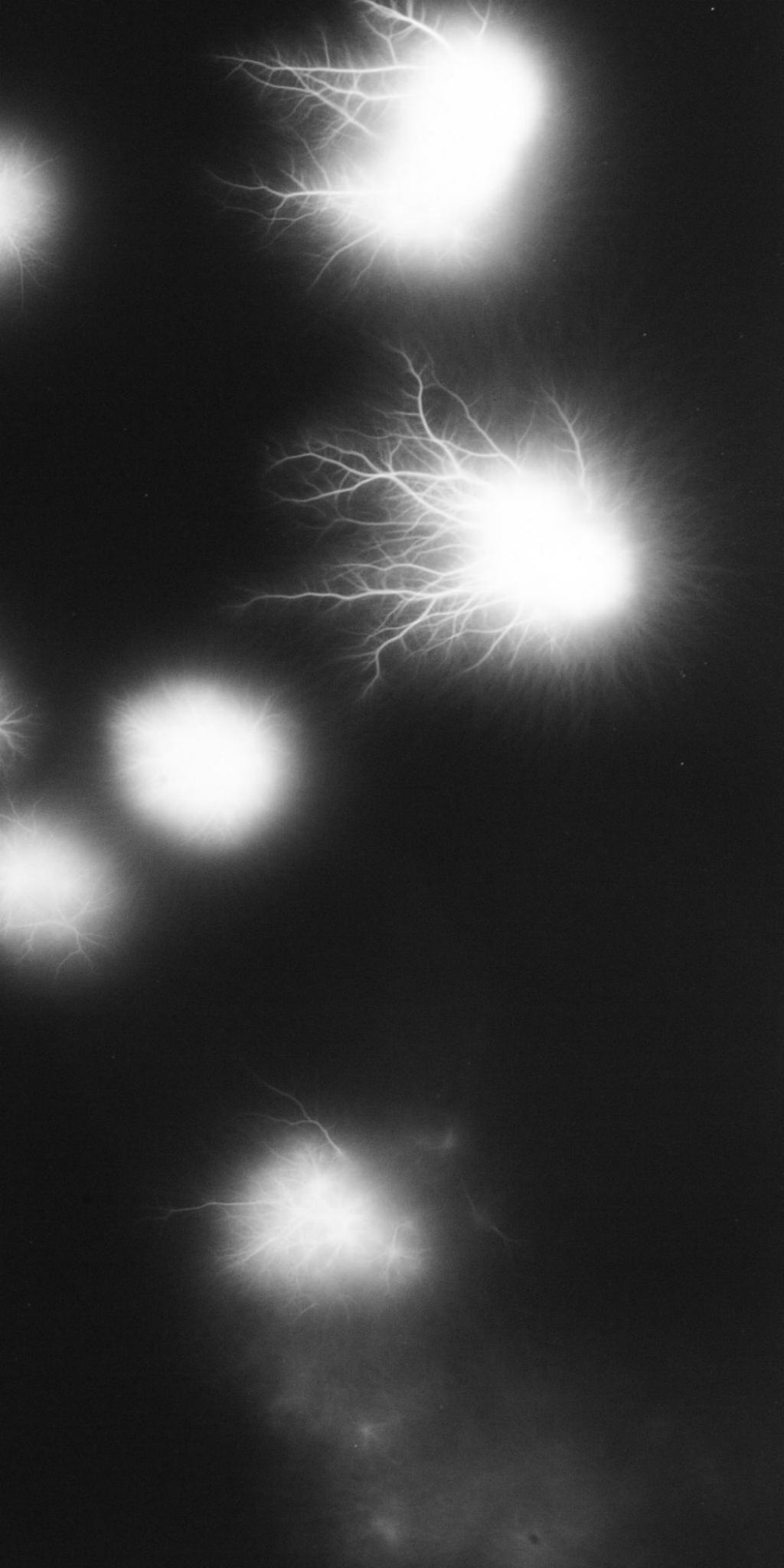
I. A philosopher who has evolved his entire thinking from the fundamental themes of the philosophy of science, and followed the main line of the active, growing rationalism of contemporary science as closely as he could, must forget his learning and break with all his habits of philosophical research, if he wants to study the problems posed by the poetic imagination. For here the cultural past doesn't count. The long day-in, day-out effort of putting together and constructing his thoughts is ineffectual. One must be receptive, receptive to the image at the moment it appears: if there be a philosophy of poetry, it must appear and reappear through a significant verse, in total adherence to an isolated image; to be exact, in the very ecstasy of the newness of the image. The poetic image is a sudden salience on the surface of the psyche, the lesser psychological causes of which have not been sufficiently investigated. Nor can any thing general and co-ordinated serve as a basis for a philosophy of poetry. The idea of principle or "basis" in this case would be disastrous, for it would interfere with the essential psychic actuality, the essential novelty of the poem. And whereas philosophical reflection applied to scientific thinking elaborated over a long period of time requires any new idea to become integrated in a body of tested ideas, even though this body of ideas be subjected to profound change by the new idea (as is the case in all the revolutions of contemporary science), the philosophy of poetry must acknowledge that the poetic act has no past, at least no recent past, in which its preparation and appearance could be followed.

Later, when I shall have occasion to mention the relation of a new poetic image to an archetype lying dormant in the depths of the unconscious, I shall have to make it understood that this relation is not, properly speaking, a causal one. The poetic image is not subject to an inner thrust. It is not an echo of the past. On the contrary: through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away. Because of its novelty and its action, the poetic image has an entity and a dynamism of its own; it is referable to a direct ontology. This ontology is what I plan to study.

INTRODUCTION







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

To say that the poetic image is independent of causality is to make a rather serious statement. But the causes cited by psychologists and psychoanalysts can never really explain the wholly unexpected nature of the new image, any more than they can explain the attraction it holds for a mind that is foreign to the process of its creation. The poet does not confer the past of his image upon me, and yet his image immediately takes root in me. The communicability of an unusual image is a fact of great ontological significance. We shall return to this question of communion through brief, isolated, rapid actions. Images excite us—afterwards—but they are not the phenomena of an excitement. In all psychological research, we can, of course, bear in mind psychoanalytical methods for determining the personality of a poet, and thus find a measure of the pressures—but above all of the oppressions—that a poet has been subjected to in the course of his life. But the poetic act itself, the sudden image, the flare-up of being in the imagination, are inaccessible to such investigations. In order to clarify the problem of the poetic image philosophically, we shall have to have recourse to a phenomenology of the imagination. By this should be understood a study of the phenomenon of the poetic image when it emerges into the consciousness as a direct product of the heart, soul and being of man, apprehended in his actuality.

II. I shall perhaps be asked why, departing from my former point of view, I now seek a phenomenological determination of images. In my earlier works on the subject of the imagination, I did, in fact, consider it preferable to maintain as objective a position as possible with regard to the images of the four material elements, the four principles of the intuitive cosmogonies, and, faithful to my habits as a philosopher of science, I tried to consider images without attempting personal interpretation. Little by little, this method, which has in its favor scientific prudence, seemed to me to be an insufficient basis on which to found a meta physics of the imagination. The “prudent” attitude itself is a refusal to obey the immediate dynamics of the image. I have come to realize how difficult it is to break away from this “prudence.” To say that one has left certain intellectual habits behind is easy enough, but how is it to be achieved? For a rationalist, this constitutes a minor daily crisis, a sort of split in one’s thinking which, even though its object be partial—a mere image—has none the less great psychic repercussions. However, this minor cultural crisis, this crisis on the simple level of a new image, contains the entire paradox of a phenomenology of the imagination, which is: how can an image, at times very unusual, appear to be a concentration of the entire psyche? How—with

¹ Cf. Eugene Minkowski, *Vers une Cosmologie*, chapter IX.

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

In view of this, Minkowski's choice of what he calls an auditory metaphor, *retentir*, is very apt, for in sound both time and space are epitomized. To understand Bachelard's reference, the following excerpt from Minkowski's *Vers ne Cosmologie* might be helpful:

"If having fixed the original form in our mind's eye, we ask ourselves how that form comes alive and fills with life, we discover a new dynamic and vital category, a new property of the universe: reverberation (*retentir*). It is as though a well-spring existed in a sealed vase and its waves, repeatedly echoing against the sides of this vase, filled it with their sonority. Or again, it is as though the sound of a hunting horn, reverberating everywhere through its echo, made the tiniest leaf, the tiniest wisp of moss shudder in a common movement and transformed the whole forest, filling it to its limits, into a vibrating, sonorous world... What is secondary in these images, or, in other terms, what makes these images only images for us, are the sonorous well-spring, the hunting horn, the sealed vase, the echo, the reflection of sonorous waves against the sides-in a word, all that belongs to the material and palpable world.

"Suppose these elements were missing: would really nothing living subsist? For my part, I believe that this is precisely where we should see the world come alive and, independent of any instrument, of any physical properties, fill up with penetrating deep waves which, although not sonorous in the sensory meaning of the word, are not, for this reason, less harmonious, resonant, melodic and capable of determining the whole tonality of life. And this life itself will reverberate to the most profound depths of its being, through contact with these waves, which are at once sonorous and silent... Here to "fill up" and "plenitude" will have a completely different sense. It is not a material object which fills another by espousing the form that the other imposes. No, it is the dynamism of the sonorous life itself which by engulfing and appropriating everything it finds in its path, fills the slice of space, or better, the slice of the world that it assigns itself by its movement, making it reverberate, breathing into it its own life. The word "slice" must not be taken in its geometrical sense. It is not a matter of decomposing the world virtually or actually into sonorous balls, nor of tracing the limits of the sphere determined by the waves emanating from a sonorous source. In fact, our examples, the sealed vase, the forest, because of the very fact that they fill up with sounds, form a sort of self-enclosed whole, a microcosm..."")

no preparation—can this singular, short-lived event constituted by the appearance of an unusual poetic image, react on other minds and in other hearts, despite all the barriers of common sense, all the disciplined schools of thought, content in their immobility?

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

The language of contemporary French philosophy—and even more so, psychology—hardly uses the dual meaning of the words soul and mind. As a result, they are both somewhat deaf to certain themes that are very numerous in German philosophy, in which the distinction between mind and soul (*der Geist und die Seele*) is so clear. But since a philosophy of poetry must be given the entire force of the vocabulary, it should not simplify, not harden anything. For such a philosophy, mind and soul are not synonymous, and by taking them as such, we bar translation

of certain invaluable texts, we distort documents brought to light thanks to the archaeologists of the image. The word “soul” is an immortal word. In certain poems it cannot be effaced, for it is a word born of our breath.² The vocal importance alone of a word should arrest the attention of a phenomenologist of poetry. The word “soul” can, in fact, be poetically spoken with such conviction that it constitutes a commitment for the entire poem. The poetic register that corresponds to the soul must therefore remain open to our phenomenological investigations.

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

These pages by Rene Huyghe corroborate my idea that it is reasonable to speak of a phenomenology of the soul. In many circumstances we are obliged to acknowledge that poetry is a commitment of the soul. A consciousness associated with the soul is more relaxed, less intentionalized than a consciousness associated with the phenomena of the mind. Forces are manifested in poems that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge. The dialectics of inspiration and talent become clear if we consider their two poles: the soul and the mind. In my opinion, soul and mind are indispensable for studying the phenomena of the poetic image in their various nuances, above all, for following the evolution of poetic images from the original state of reverie to that of execution. In fact, in a future work, I plan to concentrate particularly on poetic reverie as a phenomenology of the soul. In itself, reverie constitutes a psychic condition that is too frequently confused with dream. But when it is a question of poetic reverie, of reverie that derives pleasure not only from itself, but also prepares poetic pleasure

² Charles Nodier
Dictionnaire raisonne des onomatopees franfaises
Paris 1828, p. 46.

“The different names for the soul, among nearly all peoples, are just so many breath variations and onomatopoeic expressions of breathing.”

for other souls, one realizes that one is no longer drifting into somnolence. The mind is able to relax, but in poetic reverie the soul keeps watch, with no tension, calmed and active. To compose a finished, well-constructed poem, the mind is obliged to make projects that prefigure it. But for a simple poetic image, there is no project; a flicker of the soul is all that is needed.

And this is how a poet poses the phenomenological problem of the soul in all clarity. Pierre-Jean Jouve writes:³ "Poetry is a soul inaugurating a form." The soul inaugurates. Here it is the supreme power. It is human dignity. Even if the "form" was already well-known, previously discovered, carved from "commonplaces," before the interior poetic light was turned upon it, it was a mere object for the mind. But the soul comes and inaugurates the form, dwells in it, takes pleasure in it. Pierre-Jean Jouve's statement can therefore be taken as a clear maxim of a phenomenology of the soul.

³ Pierre-Jean Jouve.
En miroir, Mercure de France. p. 11.

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

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

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

Through this reverberation, by going immediately beyond all psychology or psychoanalysis, we feel a poetic power rising naïvely within us. After the original reverberation, we are able to experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our past. But the image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface. And this is also true of a simple experience

of reading. The image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it. It becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being.

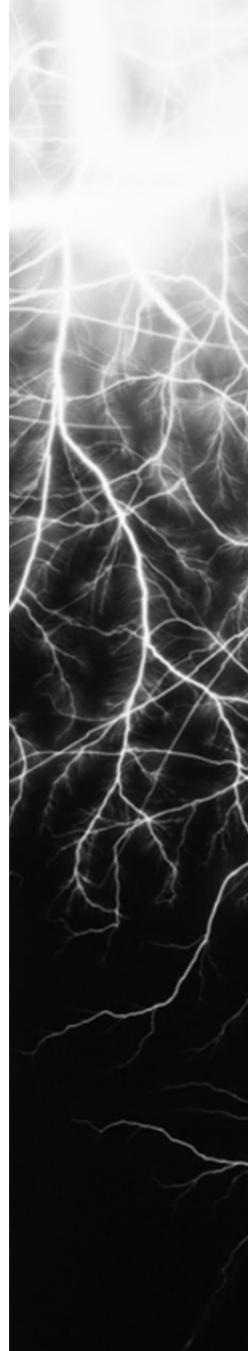
This last remark defines the level of the ontology towards which I am working. As a general thesis I believe that every thing specifically human in man is logos. One would not be able to meditate in a zone that preceded language. But even if this thesis appears to reject an ontological depth, it should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

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

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

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

- IV. By thus limiting my inquiry to the poetic image at its origin, proceeding from pure imagination, I leave aside the problem of the composition of the poem as a grouping together of numerous images. Into this composition enter certain psychologically complex elements that associate earlier cultures with actual literary ideals—components which a complete phenomenology would no doubt be obliged to consider. But so extensive a project might be prejudicial to the purity of the phenomenological observations, however elementary, that I should like to present. The







real phenomenologist must make it a point to be systematically modest. This being the case, it seems to me that merely to refer to phenomenological reading powers, which make of the reader a poet on a level with the image he has read, shows already a taint of pride. Indeed, it would be a lack of modesty on my part to assume personally a reading power that could match and re-live the power of organized, complete creation implied by a poem in its entirety. But there is even less hope of attaining to a synthetic phenomenology which would dominate an entire oeuvre, as certain psychoanalysts believe they can do. It is therefore on the level of detached images that I shall succeed in "reverberating" phenomenologically.

Precisely this touch of pride, this lesser pride, this mere reader's pride that thrives in the solitude of reading, bears the unmistakable mark of phenomenology, if its simplicity is maintained. Here the phenomenologist has nothing in common with the literary critic who, as has frequently been noted, judges a work that he could not create and, if we are to believe certain facile condemnations, would not want to create. A literary critic is a reader who is necessarily severe. By turning inside out like a glove an overworked complex that has become debased to the point of being part of the vocabulary of statesmen, we might say that the literary critic and the professor of rhetoric, who know-all and judge-all, readily go in for a simplex of superiority. As for me, being an addict of felicitous reading, I only read and re-read what I like, with a bit of reader's pride mixed in with much enthusiasm. But whereas pride usually develops into a massive sentiment that weighs upon the entire psyche, the touch of pride that is born of adherence to the felicity of an image, remains secret and unobtrusive. It is within us, mere readers that we are, it is for us, and for us alone. It is a homely sort of pride. Nobody knows that in reading we are re-living our temptations to be a poet. All readers who have a certain passion for reading, nurture and repress, through reading, the desire to become a writer. When the page we have just read is too near perfection, our modesty suppresses this desire. But it reappears, nevertheless. In any case, every reader who re-reads a work that he likes, knows that its pages concern him. In Jean-Pierre Richard's excellent collection of essays entitled *Poesie et Profondeur* (Poetry and Depth), there is one devoted to Baudelaire and one to Verlaine. Emphasis is laid on Baudelaire, however, since, as the author says, his work "concerns us." There is great difference of tone between the two es says. Unlike Baudelaire, Verlaine does not attract complete phenomenological attention. And this is always the case. In certain types of reading with which we are in deep sympathy, in the very expression itself, we are the "beneficiaries." Jean-Paul Richter, in *Titan*, gives the following description of his hero: "He read eulogies of great men with as much pleasure as though he himself had been the object of these panegyrics."⁴ In any case, harmony in reading is inseparable from admiration. We can admire more or less, but a sincere impulse, a little impulse toward admiration, is always necessary if we are to receive the phenomenological benefit of a poetic image. The slightest critical

⁴ Jean-Paul Richter
Le Titan
French translation
by Philarete-Chaslea,
1878
Vol. I, p. 22

consideration arrests this impulse by putting the mind in second position, destroying the primitivity of the imagination. In this admiration, which goes beyond the passivity of contemplative attitudes, the joy of reading appears to be the reflection of the joy of writing, as though the reader were the writer's ghost. At least the reader participates in the joy of creation that, for Bergson, is the sign of creation.⁵ Here, creation takes place on the tenuous thread of the sentence, in the fleeting life of an expression. But this poetic expression, although it has no vital necessity, has a bracing effect on our lives, for all that. To speak well is part of living well. The poetic image is an emergence from language, it is always a little above the language of signification. By living the poems we read, we have then the salutary experience of emerging. This, no doubt, is emerging at short range. But these acts of emergence are repeated; poetry puts language in a state of emergence, in which life becomes manifest through its vivacity. These linguistic impulses, which stand out from the ordinary rank of pragmatic language, are miniatures of the vital impulse. A micro-Bergsonism that abandoned the thesis of language-as-instrument in favor of the thesis of language-as-reality would find in poetry numerous documents on the intense life of language.

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

- v. Even at the level of an isolated poetic image, if only in the progression of expression constituted by the verse, the phenomenological reverberation can appear; and in its extreme simplicity, it gives us mastery of our tongue. Here we are in the presence of a minuscule phenomenon of the shimmering consciousness. The poetic image is certainly the psychic event that has the least importance. To seek justification of it in terms of perceptible reality, to determine its place and role in the poem's composition, are two tasks that do not need to be undertaken until later. In the first phenomenological inquiry of the poetic imagination, the isolated image, the phrase that carries it forward, the verse, or occasionally the stanza in which the poetic image radiates, form language areas that should be studied by means of topo-analysis. J. B. Pontalis, for instance, presents Michel Leiris as a "lonely prospector in the galleries of words,"⁶ which describes extremely well this fibered space traversed by the simple impetus of words that have been experienced. The atomism of conceptual language demands reasons for fixation,

⁵ Henri Bergson
L'Energie Spirituelle
p. 23

⁶ J. B. Pontalis
Michel Leiris ou la psychanalyse inteninable
in *Les Temps Modernes*
December 1955, p. 931.

forces of centralization. But the verse always has a movement, the image flows into the line of the verse, carrying the imagination along with it, as though the imagination created a nerve fiber. Pontalis adds the following (p. 932), which deserves to be remembered as a sure index for a phenomenology of expression: "The speaking subject is the entire subject." And it no longer seems paradoxical to say that the speaking subject exists in his entirety in a poetic image, because unless he abandons himself to it without reservations, he does not enter into the poetic space of the image. Very clearly, the poetic image furnishes one of the simplest experiences of language that has been lived. And if, as I propose to do, it is considered as an origin of consciousness, it points to a phenomenology.

Also, if we had to name a "school" of phenomenology, it would no doubt be in connection with the poetic phenomenon that we should find the clearest, the really elementary, lessons. In a recent book, J. H. Van den Berg⁷ writes: "Poets and painters are born phenomenologists." And noting that things "speak" to us and that, as a result of this fact, if we give this language its full value, we have a contact with things, Van den Berg adds: "We are continually living a solution of problems that reflection can not hope to solve." The philosopher whose investigations are centered on the speaking being will find encouragement in these lines by this learned Dutch phenomenologist.

⁷ J. H. Van den Berg,
The Phenomenological Approach in Psychology.
An introduction to
recent phenomenological
psycho-pathology (Charles
C. Thomas, Publisher.
Springfield, Illinois,
1955, p. 61).

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

For a phenomenologist, the attempt to attribute antecedents to an image, when we are in the very existence of the image, is a sign of inveterate psychologism. On the contrary, let us take the poetic image in its being. For the poetic consciousness is so wholly absorbed by the image that appears on the language, above customary language; the language it speaks with the poetic image is so new that correlations between past and present can no longer be usefully considered.

The examples I shall give of breaks in significance, sensation and sentiment will oblige the reader to grant me that the poetic image is under the sign of a new being.

This new being is happy man.

Happy in speech, therefore unhappy in reality, will be the psychoanalyst's immediate objection. Sublimation, for him, is nothing but a vertical compensation, a flight upwards, exactly in the same way that compensation is a lateral flight. And right away, the psychoanalyst will abandon ontological investigation of the image, to dig into the past of man. He sees and points out the poet's secret sufferings. He explains the flower by the fertilizer.

The phenomenologist does not go that far. For him, the image is there, the word speaks, the word of the poet speaks to him. There is no need to have lived through the poet's sufferings in order to seize the felicity of speech offered by the poet—a felicity that dominates tragedy itself. Sublimation in poetry towers above the psychology of the mundanely unhappy soul. For it is a fact that poetry possesses a felicity of its own, however great the tragedy it may be called upon to illustrate.

Pure sublimation, as I see it, poses a serious problem of method for, needless to say, the phenomenologist cannot disregard the deep psychological reality of the processes of sublimation that have been so lengthily examined by psychoanalysis. His task is that of proceeding phenomenologically to images which have not been experienced, and which life does not prepare, but which the poet creates; of living what has not been lived, and being receptive to an overture of language. There exist a few poems, such as certain poems by Pierre-Jean Jouve, in which experiences of this kind may be found. Indeed, I know of no oeuvre that has been nourished on psychoanalytical meditation more than Jouve's. However, here and there, his poetry passes through flames of such intensity that we no longer need live at its original source. He himself has said:⁸ "Poetry constantly surpasses its origins, and because it suffers more deeply in ecstasy or in sorrow, it retains greater freedom."

Again, on page 112: "The further I advanced in time, the more the plunge was controlled, removed from the contributory cause, directed toward the pure form of language." I cannot say whether or not Pierre-Jean Jouve would agree to consider the causes divulged by psychoanalysis as "contributory." But in the region of "the pure form of language" the psychoanalyst's causes do not allow us to predict the poetic image in its newness. They are, at the very most, opportunities for liberation. And in the poetic age in which we live, it is in this that poetry is specifically "surprising." Its images are therefore unpredictable. Most literary critics are insufficiently aware of this unpredictability, which is precisely what upsets the plans of the usual psychological explanations. But the poet states clearly: "Poetry, especially in its present endeavors, (can) only correspond to attentive thought that is enamored of something unknown, and essentially receptive to becoming." Later, on page 170: "Consequently, a new definition of a poet is in view, which is: he who knows, that is to say, who transcends, and names what he knows." Lastly, (p. 10): "There is no poetry without absolute creation."

Such poetry is rare.⁹ The great mass of poetry is more mixed with passion, more psychologized. Here, however, rarity and exception do not confirm the rule, but contradict it and set up

⁸ Pierre-Jean Jouve
En Miroir
Mercure de France, p. 109.

Andree Chedid has also written: "A poem remains free. We shall never enclose its fate in our own." The poet knows well that "his breath will carry him farther than his desire." (*Terre et poesie*, G.L.M. §§ 14 and 25).

⁹ Pierre-Jean Jouve
loc. cit., p. 9:
"La poesie est rare."

a new regime. Without the region of absolute sublimation—however restrained and elevated it may be, and even though it may seem to lie beyond the reach of psychologists or psychoanalysts, who, after all, have no reason to examine pure poetry—poetry's exact polarity can not be revealed.

We may hesitate in determining the exact level of disruption, we may also remain for a long time in the domain of the confusing passions that perturb poetry. Moreover, the height at which we encounter pure sublimation is doubt less not the same for all souls. But at least the necessity of separating a sublimation examined by a psychoanalyst from one examined by a phenomenologist of poetry is a necessity of method. A psychoanalyst can of course study the human character of poets but, as a result of his own sojourn in the region of the passions, he is not prepared to study poetic images in their exalting reality. C.J. Jung said this, in fact, very clearly: by persisting in the habits of judgment inherent in psychoanalysis, "interest is diverted from the work of art and loses itself in the inextricable chaos of psycho logical antecedents; the poet becomes a 'clinical case,' an example, to which is given a certain number in the psychopathia sexualis. Thus the psychoanalysis of a work of art moves away from its object and carries the discussion into a domain of general human interest, which is not in the least peculiar to the artist and, particularly, has no importance for his art."¹⁰

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

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

Ne sutor ultra crepidam.

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

Ne psuchor ultra uterum.

- VII. In other words, as soon as an art has become autonomous, it makes a fresh start. It is therefore salient to consider this start as a sort of phenomenology. On principle, phenomenology liquidates the past and confronts what is new. Even in an art like painting, which bears witness to a skill, the important successes take place independently of skill. In a study of the painting of Charles Lapicque, by Jean Lescure, we read: "Although his work gives evidence of wide culture and knowledge of all the dynamic expressions of space, they are not applied, they are not made into recipes... Knowing must therefore be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge. This is the price that must be paid for an oeuvre to be, at all times, a sort of pure beginning, which makes its creation an exercise in freedom."¹¹ These lines are of essential importance for us, in that they may be transposed immediately into a phenomenology of the poetic. In poetry, non-knowing is a primal condition; if there exists a skill in the writing of poetry, it is in the minor task

¹⁰ C. G. Jung
On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to the Poetic Art in Contributions to Analytical Psychology
trans. by H. G. Be Cary F. Baynes. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928.

¹¹ Jean Lescure
Lapicque
Galanis, Paris, p. 78.

of associating images. But the entire life of the image is in its dazzling splendor, in the fact that an image is a transcending of all the premises of sensibility.

It becomes evident, then, that a man's work stands out from life to such an extent that life cannot explain it. Jean Lescure says of the painter (loc. cit., p. 132): "Lapicque demands of the creative act that it should offer him as much surprise as life itself." Art, then, is an increase of life, a sort of competition of surprises that stimulates our consciousness and keeps it from becoming somnolent. In a quotation of Lapicque himself (given by Lescure, p. 132) we read: "If, for instance, I want to paint horses taking the water hurdle at the Auteuil race-course, I expect my painting to give me as much that is unexpected, although of an other kind, as the actual race I witnessed gave me. Not for a second can there be any question of reproducing exactly a spectacle that is already in the past. But I have to re-live it entirely, in a manner that is new and, this time, from the standpoint of painting. By doing this, I ,create for myself the possibility of a fresh impact." And Lescure concludes: "An artist does not create the way he lives, he lives the way he creates."

Thus, contemporary painters no longer consider the image as a simple substitute for a perceptible reality. Proust said already of roses painted by Eistir that they were "a new variety with which this painter, like some clever horticulturist, had enriched the Rose family."¹²

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

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

By the swiftness of its actions, the imagination separates us from the past as well as from reality; it faces the future. To the junction of reality, wise in experience of the past, as it is

¹² Marcel Proust
Remembrance of Things Past, Vol. V: *Sodom and Gomorrah*.

defined by traditional psychology, should be added a junction of unreality, which is equally positive, as I tried to show in certain of my earlier works. Any weakness in the function of unreality, will hamper the productive psyche. If we cannot imagine, we cannot foresee.

But to touch more simply upon the problems of the poetic imagination, it is impossible to receive the psychic benefit of poetry unless these two functions of the human psyche—the function of the real and the function of the unreal—are made to co-operate. We are offered a veritable cure of rhythmo-analysis through the poem, which inter weaves real and unreal, and gives dynamism to language by means of the dual activity of signification and poetry. And in poetry, the commitment of the imagining being is such that it is no longer merely the subject of the verb "to adapt oneself." Actual conditions are no longer determinant. With poetry, the imagination takes its place on the margin, exactly where the function of unreality comes to charm or to disturb—always to awaken—the sleeping being lost in its automatisms. The most insidious of these automatisms, the automatism of language, ceases to function when we enter into the domain of pure sublimation. Seen from this height of pure sublimation, reproductive imagination ceases to be of much importance. To quote Jean-Paul Richter:¹³ "Reproductive imagination is the prose of productive imagination."

- IX. In this philosophical introduction—doubtless too long—I have summarized certain general themes that I should like to put to the test in the work that follows, as also in a few others which I hope to write. In the present volume, my field of examination has the advantage of being well circumscribed. Indeed, the images I want to examine are the quite simple images of felicitous space. In this orientation, these investigations would deserve to be called topophilia. They seek to determine the human value of the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love. For diverse reasons, and with the differences entailed by poetic shadings, this is eulogized space. Attached to its protective value, which can be a positive one, are also imagined values, which soon become dominant. Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination. Particularly, it nearly always exercises an attraction. For it concentrates being within limits that protect. In the realm of images, the play between the exterior and intimacy is not a balanced one. On the other hand, hostile space is hardly mentioned in these pages. The space of hatred and combat can only be studied in the context of impassioned subject matter and apocalyptic images. For the present, we shall consider the images that attract. And with regard to images, it soon becomes clear that to attract and to repulse do not give contrary experiences. The terms are contrary. When we study electricity or magnetism, we can speak symmetrically of repulsion and attraction. All that is needed is a change of algebraic signs. But images do not adapt

¹³ Jean-Paul Richter
Poétique ou introduction à l'esthétique
translated, 1862, Vol. 1,
p. 145.

themselves very well to quiet ideas, or above all, to definitive ideas. The imagination is ceaselessly imagining and enriching itself with new images. It is this wealth of imagined being that I should like to explore.

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

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

In order to give an idea of how complex is the task of the psychologist who studies the depths of the human soul, C. G. Jung asks his readers to consider the following comparison: "We have to describe and to explain a building the upper story of which was erected in the nineteenth century; the ground-floor dates from the sixteenth century, and a careful examination of the masonry discloses the fact that it was reconstructed from a dwelling-tower of the eleventh century. In the cellar we discover Roman foundation walls, and under the cellar a filled-in cave, in the floor of which stone tools are found and remnants of glacial fauna in the layers below. That would be a sort of picture of our mental structure."¹⁴ Naturally, Jung was well aware of the limitations of this comparison (d. p. 120). But from the very fact that it may be so easily developed, there is ground for taking the house as a tool for analysis of the human soul. With the help of this tool, can we not find within ourselves, while dreaming in our own modest homes, the consolations of the cave? Are the towers of our souls razed for all time? Are we to remain, to quote Gerard de Nerval's famous line, beings whose "towers have been destroyed"? Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are "housed." Our soul is an abode. And by remembering "houses" and "rooms," we learn to "abide" within ourselves. Now everything becomes clear, the house images move in both directions: they are in us as much as we are in them, and the play is so varied that two long chapters are needed to outline the implications of house images.

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

¹⁴ C. G. Jung
Contributions to Analytical Psychology
translated by H. G. and Cary F. Baynes.
New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928, pp.
118-119. (Bollingen Series, Vol. XV). This passage is taken from the essay entitled:
"Mind and the Earth."

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

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

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

After all these chapters devoted to intimate space, I wanted to see what the dialectics of large and small offered for a poetics of space, how, in exterior space, the imagination benefited from the relativity of size, without the help of ideas and, as it were, quite naturally. I have put the dialectics of small and large under the signs of miniature and immensity, but these two chapters are not as antithetical as might be supposed. In both cases, small and large are not to be seized in their objectivity, since, in this present work, I only deal with them as the two poles of a projection of images. In other of my books, particularly with regard to immensity, I have tried to delineate the poet's meditations before the more imposing spectacles of nature.¹⁵ Here, it is a matter of participating more intimately in the movement of the image. For instance, I shall have to prove in following certain poems that the impression of immensity is in us, and not necessarily related to an object.

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

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

¹⁵ Cf. *La terre et les reveries de la volonté* Corti, Paris, p. 378 and the following pages.

furnished me with a further opportunity to expose the intellectualism of metaphor and, consequently, to show once more the activity that is characteristic of pure imagination.

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

G. B.



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