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the house. from cellar to garret. the significance of the hut

A la porte de la maison qui viendra frapper?
Une porte ouverte on entre
Une porte fermée un antre
Le monde bat de l'autre côté de ma porte.

PIERRE ALBERT BIROT
Les Amusements Naturels, p. 217

(At the door of the house who will come knocking?
An open door, we enter
A closed door, a den
The world pulse beats beyond my door.)

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

In order to solve it, it is not enough to consider the house as an "object" on which we can make our judgments and daydreams react. For a phenomenologist, a psychoanalyst, or a psychologist (these three points of view being named

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

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

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

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

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

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

memorial things are. We live fixations, fixations of happiness.[1] We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost.

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

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

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

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

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

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

When we dream of the house we were born in, in the utmost depths of revery, we participate in this original warmth, in this well-tempered matter of the material paradise. This is the environment in which the protective beings live. We shall come back to the maternal features of the house. For the moment, I should like to point out

the original fullness of the house's being. Our daydreams carry us back to it. And the poet well knows that the house holds childhood motionless "in its arms"[1]:

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

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

II

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

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

[1] Rainer Maria Rilke, translated into French by Claude Vigée, in *Les Lettres*, 4th year, Nos. 14-15-16, p. 11. *Editor's note:* In this work, all of the Rilke references will be to the French translations that inspired Bachelard's comments.

established in its imagery. In order to analyze our being in the hierarchy of an ontology, or to psychoanalyze our unconscious entrenched in primitive abodes, it would be necessary, on the margin of normal psychoanalysis, to *de-socialize* our important memories, and attain to the plane of the daydreams that we used to have in the places identified with our solitude. For investigations of this kind, daydreams are more useful than dreams. They show moreover that daydreams can be very different from dreams.[1]

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

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

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

[1] I plan to study these differences in a future work.

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

III

This being the case, we shall have to introduce a slight nuance at the very base of topoanalysis. I pointed out earlier that the unconscious is housed. It should be added that it is well and happily housed, in the space of its happiness. The normal unconscious knows how to make itself at home everywhere, and psychoanalysis comes to the assistance of the ousted unconscious, of the unconscious that has been roughly or insidiously dislodged. But psychoanalysis sets the human being in motion, rather than at rest. It calls on him to live outside the abodes of his unconscious, to enter into life's adventures, to come out of himself. And natu-

rally, its action is a salutary one. Because we must also give an exterior destiny to the interior being. To accompany psychoanalysis in this salutary action, we should have to undertake a topoanalysis of all the space that has invited us to come out of ourselves.

Emmenez-moi, chemins! . . .

(Carry me along, oh roads . . .)

wrote Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, recalling her native Flanders (*Un ruisseau de la Scarpe*).

And what a dynamic, handsome object is a path! How precise the familiar hill paths remain for our muscular consciousness! A poet has expressed all this dynamism in one single line:

O, mes chemins et leur cadence

Jean Caubère, *Déserts*

(Oh, my roads and their cadence.)

When I relive dynamically the road that "climbed" the hill, I am quite sure that the road itself had muscles, or rather, counter-muscles. In my room in Paris, it is a good exercise for me to think of the road in this way. As I write this page, I feel freed of my duty to take a walk: I am sure of having gone out of my house.

And indeed we should find countless intermediaries between reality and symbols if we gave things all the movements they suggest. George Sand, dreaming beside a path of yellow sand, saw life flowing by. "What is more beautiful than a road?" she wrote. "It is the symbol and the image of an active, varied life." (*Consuelo,* vol. II, p. 116).

Each one of us, then, should speak of his roads, his crossroads, his roadside benches; each one of us should make a surveyor's map of his lost fields and meadows. Thoreau said that he had the map of his fields engraved in his soul. And Jean Wahl once wrote:

Le moutonnement des haies
C'est en moi que je l'ai.

(*Poème*, p. 46)

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

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

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

IV

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

Over-picturesqueness in a house can conceal its intimacy.

This is also true in life. But it is truer still in daydreams. For the real houses of memory, the houses to which we return in dreams, the houses that are rich in unalterable oneirism, do not readily lend themselves to description. To describe them would be like showing them to visitors. We can perhaps tell everything about the present, but about the past! The first, the oneirically definitive house, must retain its shadows. For it belongs to the literature of depth, that is, to poetry, and not to the fluent type of literature that, in order to analyze intimacy, needs other people's stories. All I ought to say about my childhood home is just barely enough to place me, myself, in an oneiric situation, to set me on the threshold of a day-dream in which I shall *find* repose in the past. Then I may hope that my page will possess a sonority that will ring true—a voice so remote within me, that it will be the voice we all hear when we listen as far back as memory reaches, on the very limits of memory, beyond memory perhaps, in the field of the immemorial. All we communicate to others is an *orientation* towards what is secret without ever being able to tell the secret objectively. What is secret never has total objectivity. In this respect, we orient oneirism but we do not accomplish it.[1]

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

[1] After giving a description of the Canaen estate (*Volupté*, p. 30), Sainte-Beuve adds: "It is not so much for you, my friend, who never saw this place, and had you visited it, could not now feel the impressions and colors I feel, that I have gone over it in such detail, for which I must excuse myself. Nor should you try to see it as a result of what I have said; let the image float inside you; pass lightly; the slightest idea of it will suffice for you."

back in his own room, would not open that unique wardrobe, with its unique smell, which is the signature of intimacy. Paradoxically, in order to suggest the values of intimacy, we have to induce in the reader a state of suspended reading. For it is not until his eyes have left the page that recollections of my room can become a threshold of oneirism for him. And when it is a poet speaking, the reader's soul reverberates; it experiences the kind of reverberation that, as Minkowski has shown, gives the energy of an origin to being.

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

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

But over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits. After twenty years, in spite of all the other anonymous stairways; we would recapture the reflexes of the "first stairway," we would not stumble on that rather

high step. The house's entire being would open up, faithful to our own being. We would push the door that creaks with the same gesture, we would find our way in the dark to the distant attic. The feel of the tiniest latch has remained in our hands.

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

But this area of detailed recollections that are easily retained because of the names of things and people we knew in the first house, can be studied by means of general psychology. Memories of dreams, however, which only poetic meditation can help us to recapture, are more confused, less clearly drawn. The great function of poetry is to give us back the situations of our dreams. The house we were born in is more than an embodiment of home, it is also an embodiment of dreams. Each one of its nooks and corners was a resting-place for daydreaming. And often the resting-place particularized the daydream. Our habits of a particular daydream were acquired there. The house, the bedroom, the garret in which we were alone, furnished the framework for an interminable dream, one that poetry alone, through the creation of a poetic work, could succeed in achieving completely. If we give their function of shelter for dreams to all of these places of retreat, we may say, as I pointed out in an earlier work,[1] that there exists for each one of us an oneiric house, a house of dream-memory, that is lost in the shadow of a beyond of the real past. I called this oneiric house the crypt of the house that we were born

[1] *La terre et les rêveries du repos*, p. 98, Corti, Paris.

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

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

of my boredom when the complications of life made me lose the very germ of all freedom!

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

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

V

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

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

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

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

[1] For this second part, see page 29.

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

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

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

Here is how the psychoanalyst, C. G. Jung, has used the dual image of cellar and attic to analyze the fears that inhabit a house. In Jung's *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*[1] we find a comparison which is used to make us understand the conscious being's hope of "destroying the autonomy of complexes by debaptising them." The image is the fol-

[1] Harcourt, Brace and World, New York.

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

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

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

If we follow the inspiration of Jung's *explanatory* example to a complete grasp of psychological reality, we encounter a co-operation between psychoanalysis and phenomenology which must be stressed if we are to dominate the human phenomenon. As a matter of fact, the image has to be understood phenomenologically in order to give it psychoanalytical efficacy. The phenomenologist, in this case, will accept the psychoanalyst's image in a spirit of shared trepidation. He will revive the primitivity and the specificity of the fears. In our civilization, which has the same light everywhere, and puts electricity in its cellars, we no longer go to the cellar carrying a candle. But the unconscious cannot be civilized. It takes a candle when it goes to the cellar. The psychoanalyst cannot cling to the superficiality of metaphors or comparisons, and the phenomenologist has to pursue every image to the very end. Here, so far from reducing and explaining, so far from

comparing, the phenomenologist will exaggerate his exaggeration. Then, when they read Poe's *Tales* together, both the phenomenologist and the psychoanalyst will understand the value of this achievement. For these tales are the realization of childhood fears. The reader who is a "devotee" of reading will hear the accursed cat, which is a symbol of unredeemed guilt, mewing behind the wall.[1] The cellar dreamer knows that the walls of the cellar are buried walls, that they are walls with a single casing, walls that have the entire earth behind them. And so the situation grows more dramatic, and fear becomes exaggerated. But where is the fear that does not become exaggerated? In this spirit of shared trepidation, the phenomenologist listens intently, as the poet Thoby Marcelin puts it, "flush with madness." The cellar then becomes buried madness, walled-in tragedy. Stories of criminal cellars leave indelible marks on our memory, marks that we prefer not to deepen; who would like to re-read Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado"? In this instance, the dramatic element is too facile, but it exploits natural fears, which are inherent to the dual nature of both man and house.

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

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

In the novels of Henri Bosco, who is a great dreamer of houses, we come across ultra-cellars of this kind. Under the house in *L'Antiquaire* (The Antique Dealer, p. 60), there is a "vaulted rotunda into which open four doors." Four

[1] Edgar Allan Poe: "The Black Cat."

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

What, then, was Henri Bosco's literary problem in his description of the ultra-cellar? It was to present in one central concrete image a novel which, in its broad lines, is the novel of *underground maneuvers.* This worn-out metaphor is illustrated, in this instance, by countless cellars, a network of passages, and a group of individual cells with frequently padlocked doors. There, secrets are pondered,

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

In another dwelling into which this novelist takes us, the ultra-cellar is no longer under the sign of the sinister projects of diabolical men, but is perfectly natural, inherent to the nature of an underground world. By following Henri Bosco, we shall experience a house with cosmic roots.

This house with cosmic roots will appear to us as a stone plant growing out of the rock up to the blue sky of a tower.

The hero of *L'Antiquaire* having been caught on a compromising visit, has been obliged to take to the cellar. Right away, however, interest in the actual story is transferred to the cosmic story. Realities serve here to reveal dreams. At first we are in the labyrinth of corridors carved in the rock. Then, suddenly, we come upon a body of murky water. At this point, description of events in the

novel is left in abeyance and we only find compensation for our perseverance if we participate by means of our own night dreams. Indeed, a long dream that has an elemental sincerity is inserted in the story. Here is this poem of the cosmic cellar:[1]

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

"Water! . . . An immense body of water! . . . And what water! . . . Black, stagnant, so perfectly smooth that not a ripple, not a bubble, marred its surface. No spring, no source. It had been there for thousands of years and remained there, caught unawares by the rock, spread out in a single, impassive sheet. In its stone matrix, it had itself become this black, still rock, a captive of the mineral world. It had been subjected to the crushing mass, the enormous upheavals, of this oppressive world. Under this heavy weight, its very nature appeared to have been changed as it seeped through the thicknesses of the lime slabs that held its secret fast. Thus it had become the densest fluid element of the underground mountain. Its opacity and unwonted[2] consistency made an unknown substance of it, a substance charged with phosphorescences that only appeared on the surface in occasional flashes. These electric tints, which were signs of the dark powers lying on the bottom, manifested the latent life and formidable power of this still dormant element. They made me shiver."

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

[1] Henri Bosco, *L'Antiquaire*, p. 154.

[2] In my study of the material imagination: *L'eau et les rêves*, there was mention of thick, consistent water, heavy water. This was imagined by a great poet, by Edgar Allan Poe, cf. chapter II.

is bound to that of mountains and of the waters that plough the land. The enormous stone plant it has become would not flourish if it did not have subterranean water at its base. And so our dreams attain boundless proportions.

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

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

The flower is always in the almond.

With this excellent motto, both the house and the bedchamber bear the mark of an unforgettable intimacy. For there exists no more compact image of intimacy, none that is more sure of its center, than a flower's dream of the future while it is still enclosed, tightly folded, inside its seed. How

we should love to see not happiness, but pre-happiness remain enclosed in the round chamber!

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

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

Then there are the stairways: one to three or four of them, all different. We always *go down* the one that leads to the cellar, and it is this going down that we remember, that characterizes its oneirism. But we go both up and

down the stairway that leads to the bed-chamber. It is more commonly used; we are familiar with it. Twelve-year olds even go up it in *ascending scales,* in thirds and fourths, trying to do fifths, and liking, above all, to take it in strides of four steps at a time. What joy for the legs to go up four steps at a time!

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

Dreams of stairs have often been encountered in psychoanalysis. But since it requires an all-inclusive symbolism to determine its interpretations, psychoanalysis has paid little attention to the complexity of mixed revery and memory. That is why, on this point, as well as on others, psychoanalysis is better suited to the study of dreams than of daydreams. The phenomenology of the daydream can untangle the complex of memory and imagination; it becomes necessarily sensitive to the differentiations of the symbol. And the poetic daydream, which creates symbols, confers upon our intimate moments an activity that is polysymbolic. Our recollections grow sharper, the oneiric house becomes highly sensitized. At times, a few steps have engraved in our memories a slight difference of level that existed in our childhood home.[1] A certain room was not only a door, but a door plus three steps. When we recall the old house in its longitudinal detail, everything that ascends and descends comes to life again dynamically. We can no longer remain, to quote Joë Bousquet, men with only one story. "He was a man with only one story: he had his cellar in his attic."[2]

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

In Paris there are no houses, and the inhabitants of the big city live in superimposed boxes. "One's Paris room,

[1] *La terre et les rêveries du repos,* pp. 105-106.

[2] Joë Bousquet, *La neige d'un autre âge,* p. 100.

inside its four walls," wrote Paul Claudel, "is a sort of geometrical site, a conventional hole, which we furnish with pictures, objects and wardrobes within a wardrobe."[1] The number of the street and the floor give the location of our "conventional hole," but our abode has neither space around it nor verticality inside it. "The houses are fastened to the ground with asphalt, in order not to sink into the earth."[2] They have no roots and, what is quite unthinkable for a dreamer of houses, sky-scrapers have no cellars. From the street to the roof, the rooms pile up one on top of the other, while the tent of a horizonless sky encloses the entire city. But the height of city buildings is a purely *exterior* one. Elevators do away with the heroism of stair climbing so that there is no longer any virtue in living up near the sky. *Home* has become mere horizontality. The different rooms that compose living quarters jammed into one floor all lack one of the fundamental principles for distinguishing and classifying the values of intimacy.

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

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

[1] Paul Claudel, *Oiseau noir dans le soleil levant,* p. 144.

[2] Max Picard, *La fuite devant Dieu,* trans. p. 121.

concretely, a variation of the metaphysically summarized situation of man in the world.

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

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

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

In fact, everything corroborates my view that the image of the city's ocean roar is in the very "nature of things," and that it is a true image. It is also a salutary thing to

[1] I had written this page when I read in Balzac's *Petites misères de la vie conjugale* (edited by "Formes et Reflets" 1952, vol. 12, p. 1302): "When your house trembles in its beams and turns on its keel, you think you are a sailor, rocked by the breeze."

naturalize sound in order to make it less hostile. Just in passing, I have noted the following delicate nuance of the beneficent image in the work of a young contemporary poet, Yvonne Caroutch,[1] for whom dawn in the city is the "murmur of an empty sea shell." Being myself an early riser, this image helps me to wake up gently and naturally. However, any image is a good one, provided we know how to use it.

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

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

VI

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

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

[1] Yvonne Caroutch, *Veilleurs endormis,* éd. Debresse, p. 30.

[2] Pierre Courthion, *Courbet raconté par lui-même et par ses amis.* Published by Cailler, 1948, vol. I, p. 278. General Valentine did not allow Courbet to paint his city-ocean on the grounds that he "was not in prison for the purpose of amusing himself."

situations that have been experienced, discover situations that have been dreamed; beyond positive recollections that are the material for a positive psychology, return to the field of the primitive images that had perhaps been centers of fixation for recollections left in our memories.

A demonstration of imaginary primitive elements may be based upon the entity that is most firmly fixed in our memories: the childhood home.

For instance, in the house itself, in the family sitting-room, a dreamer of refuges dreams of a hut, of a nest, or of nooks and corners in which he would like to hide away, like an animal in its hole. In this way, he lives in a region that is beyond human images. If a phenomenologist could succeed in living the primitiveness of such images, he would locate elsewhere, perhaps, the problems that touch upon the poetry of the house. We find a very clear example of this concentration of the joy of inhabiting in a fragment of Henri Bachelin's life of his father.[1]

Henri Bachelin's childhood home could not have been simpler. Although no different from the other houses in the oversized Morvan village where he was born, it was nevertheless a roomy home with ample outbuildings in which the family lived in security and comfort. The lamp-lit room where, in the evening, the father read the lives of the saints—he was Church sexton as well as day-laborer—was the scene of the little boy's daydreaming of primitiveness, daydreaming that accentuated solitude to the point of imagining that he lived in a hut in the depth of the forest. For a phenomenologist who is looking for the roots of the function of inhabiting, this passage in Henri Bachelin's book represents a document of great purity. The essential lines are the following (p. 97): "At these moments, I felt very strongly—and I swear to this—that we were cut off from the little town, from the rest of France, and from the entire world. I delighted in imagining (although I kept my feelings to myself) that we were living in the heart of

1 Henri Bachelin, *Le serviteur*, 6th edition, Mercure de France, with an excellent preface by René Dumesnil, who relates the life and work of this forgotten writer.

the woods, in the well-heated hut of charcoal burners; I even hoped to hear wolves sharpening their claws on the heavy granite slab that formed our doorstep. But our house replaced the hut for me, it sheltered me from hunger and cold; and if I shivered, it was merely from well-being." Addressing his father—his novel is constantly written in the second person—Bachelin adds: "Comfortably seated in my chair, I basked in the sensation of your strength."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In line with the distant light in the hermit's hut, symbolic of the man who keeps vigil, a rather large dossier of literary documentation on the poetry of houses could be studied from the single angle of the lamp that glows in the window. This image would have to be placed under one of the greatest of all theorems of the imagination of the world

of light: *Tout ce qui brille voit* (All that glows sees). Rimbaud expressed in three syllables the following cosmic theorem: "Nacre voit" (Mother-of-pearl sees).[1] The lamp keeps vigil, therefore it is vigilant. And the narrower the ray of light, the more penetrating its vigilance.

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

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

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

while a few lines above the same poet speaks:

Du regard emprisonné
Entre ses quatre murs de pierre[2]

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

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

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

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

[1] Rimbaud, *Oeuvres Complètes*, published by Le Grand-Chêne, Lausanne, p. 321.

[2] Christiane Barucoa, *Antée*, Cahiers de Rochefort, p. 5.

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

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

Je verrai vos maisons comme des vers luisants au creux des collines[1]

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

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

Etoile prisonnière prise au gel de l'instant

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

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

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

Une nuit, dix villages, une montagne,
Un léviathan noir clouté d'or.[2]

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

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

[1] Hélène Morange, *Asphodèles et Pervenches*, Séghers, p. 29.
[2] G.-E. Clancier, *Une Voix*, Gallimard, p. 172.

and the stars.[1] In his patient's dream, Neumann shows the force of the Mother-Earth (*Mutter-Erde*) archetype. Poetry comes naturally from a daydream, which is less *insistent* than a night-dream; it is only a matter of an "instant's freezing." But the poetic document is none the less indicative. A terrestrial sign is set upon a celestial being. The archeology of images is thus illumined by the poet's swift, instantaneous image.

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

In the *Fragments from an intimate diary* that precede a French collection of Rilke's letters,[2] we find the following scene: one very dark night, Rilke and two friends perceive "the lighted casement of a distant hut, the hut that stands quite alone on the horizon before one comes to fields and marshlands." This image of solitude symbolized by a single light moves the poet's heart in so personal a way that it isolates him from his companions. Speaking of this group of three friends, Rilke adds: "Despite the fact that we were very close to one another, we remained three isolated individuals, seeing night for the first time." This expression can never be meditated upon enough, for here the most commonplace image, one that the poet had certainly seen hundreds of time, is suddenly marked with the sign of "the first time," and it transmits this sign to the familiar night. One might even say that light emanating from a lone watcher, who is also a determined watcher, attains to the power of hypnosis. We are hypnotized by solitude, hypnotized by the gaze of the solitary house; and the tie that binds

[1] Erich Neumann, *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 1955, pp. 40-41.

[2] Rainer Maria Rilke, *Choix de lettres*, Stock, 1934, p. 15.

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

O Licht im schlafenden Haus![1]

(O light in the sleeping house!)

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

1 Richard von Schaukal, *Anthologie de la poésie allemande*, Stock, II, p. 125.

2
house and universe

Quand les cimes de notre ciel se rejoindront
Ma maison aura un toit.[1]

(When the peaks of our sky come together
My house will have a roof.)

In the preceding chapter, I pointed out that it was reasonable to say we "read a house," or "read a room," since both room and house are psychological diagrams that guide writers and poets in their analysis of intimacy. We shall now read slowly several houses and rooms "written" by great writers.

I

Although at heart a city man, Baudelaire sensed the increased intimacy of a house when it is besieged by winter. In *Les paradis artificiels* (p. 280) he speaks of Thomas de Quincey's joy when, a prisoner of winter, he read Kant, with the help of the idealism furnished by opium. The scene takes place in a cottage in Wales. *"Une jolie habitation ne rend-elle pas l'hiver plus poétique, et l'hiver n'augmente-t-il pas la poésie de l'habitation? Le blanc cottage était* ASSIS *au fond d'une* PETITE *vallé* FERMÉE *de montagnes* SUFFISAMENT HAUTES; *il était comme emmailloté d'arbustes."* ("Isn't it true that a pleasant house makes winter more poetic, and doesn't winter add to the poetry of a house? The white cottage sat at the end of a *little* valley, *shut in* by *rather high* mountains; and it seemed to be *swathed* in shrubs.")

[1] Paul Eluard, *Dignes de vivre*, Julliard, Paris, p. 115.

I have underlined the words in this short sentence that belong to the imagination of repose. And what a quiet setting for an opium-eater, reading Kant in the combined solitudes of dream and thought! As for the passage Baudelaire devoted to it, no doubt we can read it the way we can read any easy, too easy, passage. A literary critic might even be surprised by the naturalness with which this great poet has used commonplace images. But if, while reading this over-simplified passage, we accept the daydreams of repose it suggests; if we pause over the underlined words, it soon brings tranquility to body and soul. We feel that we are living in the protective center of the house in the valley. We too are "swathed" in the blanket of winter.

And we feel warm *because* it is cold out-of-doors. Further on in this deep-winter "artificial Paradise" Baudelaire declares that dreamers like a severe winter. "Every year they ask the sky to send down as much snow, hail and frost as it can contain. What they really need are Canadian or Russian winters. Their own nests will be all the warmer, all the downier, all the better beloved . . ."[1] Like Edgar Allan Poe, a great dreamer of curtains, Baudelaire, in order to protect the winter-girt house from cold added "heavy draperies that hung down to the floor." Behind dark curtains, snow seems to be whiter. Indeed, everything comes alive when contradictions accumulate.

Here Baudelaire has furnished us with a centered picture that leads to the heart of a dream which we can then take over for ourselves. No doubt we shall give it certain personal features, such as peopling Thomas de Quincey's cottage with persons from our own past. In this way we receive the benefits of this evocation without its exaggerations; our most personal recollections can come and live here. And through some indefinable current of sympathy, Baudelaire's description has ceased to be commonplace. But it is always like that: well-determined centers of revery are means of communication between men who dream as surely as well-

[1] Henri Bosco has given an excellent description of this type of revery in the following short phrase: "When the shelter is sure, the storm is good."

defined concepts are means of communication between men who think.

In *Curiosités esthétiques* (p. 331) Baudelaire also speaks of a canvas by Lavieille which shows "a thatched cottage on the edge of a wood" in winter, "the sad season." "Certain of the effects that Lavieille often got," wrote Baudelaire, "seem to me to constitute the very essence of winter happiness." A reminder of winter strengthens the happiness of inhabiting. In the reign of the imagination alone, a reminder of winter increases the house's value as a place to live in.

If I were asked to make an expert evaluation of the oneirism in De Quincey's cottage, as relived by Baudelaire, I should say that there lingers about it the insipid odor of opium, an atmosphere of drowsiness. But we are told nothing about the strength of the walls, or the fortitude of the roof. The house puts up no struggle. It is as though Baudelaire knew of nothing to shut himself in with but curtains.

This absence of struggle is often the case of the winter houses in literature. The dialectics of the house and the universe are too simple, and snow, especially, reduces the exterior world to nothing rather too easily. It gives a single color to the entire universe which, with the one word, snow, is both expressed and nullified for those who have found shelter. In *Les déserts de l'amour* (p. 104), Rimbaud himself said: *"C'était comme une nuit d'hiver, avec une neige pour étouffer le monde décidément."* (It was like a winter's night, with snow to stifle the world for certain.)

In any case, outside the occupied house, the winter cosmos is a simplified cosmos. It is a non-house in the same way that metaphysicians speak of a non-I, and between the house and the non-house it is easy to establish all sorts of contradictions. Inside the house, everything may be differentiated and multiplied. The house derives reserves and refinements of intimacy from winter; while in the outside world, snow covers all tracks, blurs the road, muffles every sound, conceals all colors. As a result of this universal white-

ness, we feel a form of cosmic negation in action. The dreamer of houses knows and senses this, and because of the diminished entity of the outside world, experiences all the qualities of intimacy with increased intensity.

II

Winter is by far the oldest of the seasons. Not only does it confer age upon our memories, taking us back to a remote past but, on snowy days, the house too is old. It is as though it were living in the past of centuries gone by. This feeling is described by Bachelin in a passage that presents winter in all its hostility.[1] "Those were evenings when, in old houses exposed to snow and icy winds, the great stories, the beautiful legends that men hand down to one another, take on concrete meaning and, for those who delve into them, become immediately applicable. And thus it was, perhaps, that one of our ancestors, who lay dying in the year one thousand, should have come to believe in the end of the world." For here the stories that were told were not the fireside fairy tales recounted by old women; they were stories about men, stories that reflect upon forces and signs. During these winters, Bachelin writes elsewhere (p. 58), "it seems to me that, under the hood of the great fireplace, the old legends must have been much older then than they are today." What they really had was the immemorial quality of the tragic cataclysms that can presage the end of the world.

Recalling these evenings during the dramatic winters in his father's house, Bachelin writes (p. 104): "When our companions left us, their feet deep in snow and their faces in the teeth of the blizzard, it seemed to me that they were going very far away, to unknown owl-and-wolf-infested lands. I was tempted to call after them, as people did in my early history books: "May God help you!"

And what a striking thing it is that a mere image of the old homestead in the snow-drifts should be able to inte-

[1] Henri Bachelin, *Le Serviteur*, p. 102.

grate images of the year one thousand in the mind of a child.

III

We come now to a case which is more complex, and may even appear to be paradoxical. It is taken from a passage in Rilke's correspondence.[1]

Contrary to the general thesis I set forth in the preceding chapter, for Rilke, storms are particularly aggressive in cities, where heaven's ire, too, is most clearly manifested. In the country, apparently, hurricanes are less hostile to us. From my point of view, this is a paradox of cosmic origin. But, needless to say, the Rilke fragment is very fine, and it lends itself to interesting comment.

Here is what Rilke wrote to his fair "musician." "Do you know that when I am in a city I am frightened by hurricanes at night. It is as though, in their elemental pride, they did not see us. But they do see a lonely house in the country; they take it in their powerful arms and, in that way, they inure it, and when you are there, you would like to be out-of-doors, in the roaring garden, or at least, stand at the window and applaud the infuriated old trees that twist and turn as though possessed by the spirits of the prophets."

Photographically speaking, these lines of Rilke seem to me to be a "negative" of the house, the reverse of the function of inhabiting. When the storm rages and lashes the trees, in the shelter of the house, Rilke would like to be out-of-doors, not through any desire to enjoy the wind and the rain, but in order to pursue his own revery. So he shares, we feel, the anger reflex of the tree attacked by the anger of the wind. But he does not share the house's resistance. He puts his trust in the wisdom of the storm, in the clear vision of the lightning, and in all the elements which, even in their rage, see the abodes of men and agree to spare them.

But this "negative" of an image is none the less reveal-

1 Rilke, *Lettres à une musicienne*, in French translation, p. 112.

ing, for it gives evidence of a dynamism in combat that is cosmic in its proportions. Rilke has furnished many proofs —to which we shall often refer—of his cognizance of the drama that attaches to the dwellings of men. At whatever dialectical pole the dreamer stands, whether in the house or in the universe, the dialectics become dynamic. House and space are not merely two juxtaposed elements of space. In the reign of the imagination, they awaken daydreams in each other, that are opposed. Rilke is ready to concede that the old house is "inured" by its trials. The house capitalizes its victories over the hurricanes. And since, in all research concerning the imagination, we must leave the realm of facts behind, we know perfectly that we feel calmer and more confident when in the old home, in the house we were born in, than we do in the houses on streets where we have only lived as transients.

IV

Contrary to the "negative" we have just been considering, let us now take the example of a "positive" that constitutes total adherence to the drama of the house besieged by storms.

In Henri Bosco's *Malicroix,* the house is called La Redousse.[1] It is built on an island in the Camargue region, not far from the great Rhône river. It is a humble house and appears to lack resistance. We shall see what fortitude it possessed.

The author takes many pages to prepare us for the storm that is brewing. A poetic weather forecast goes to the very source from whence the sound and the movement are to come. With what art, to begin with, he achieves absolute silence, the immensity of these silent stretches of space! "There is nothing like silence to suggest a sense of unlimited space. Sounds lend color to space, and confer a sort of sound body upon it. But absence of sound leaves it quite pure and, in the silence, we are seized with the sensation of something vast and deep and boundless. It took complete hold of me

[1] Corruption of *redoute*: retreat.

and, for several moments, I was overwhelmed by the grandeur of this shadowy peace.

"It asserted itself like a person.

"This peace had a body. It was caught up in the night, made of night. A real, a motionless body."

In this vast prose-poem, we come upon passages that contain the same progression of sounds and fears as is to be found in certain stanzas of Victor Hugo's *Les Djinns.* Only here, the author takes the time to show the narrowing of the space at the center of which the house is to live like an anguished heart. A kind of cosmic anguish precedes the storm. Then the wind starts to howl at the top of its lungs. Soon the entire menagerie of the hurricane lifts its voice. If one had the leisure to analyze the dynamics of storms, what a bestiary of the wind could be found not only in these pages but throughout Bosco's work. For this author knows instinctively that all aggression, whether it come from man or from the world, is of animal origin. However subtle, however indirect, hidden or contrived a human act of aggression may be, it reveals an origin that is unredeemed. In the tiniest of hatreds, there is a little, live, animal filament. And the poet-psychologist—or the psychologist-poet, if such a one exists—cannot go wrong in marking the different types of aggression with an animal cry. It is also a terrible trait of men that they should be incapable of understanding the forces of the universe intuitively, otherwise than in terms of a psychology of wrath.

And faced with this pack, which gradually breaks loose, the house becomes the real being of a pure humanity which defends itself without ever being responsible for an attack. La Redousse is man's Resistance; it is *human virtue,* man's grandeur.

Here is the passage that describes the house's human resistance at the height of the storm: (p. 115).

"The house was fighting gallantly. At first it gave voice to its complaints; the most awful gusts were attacking it from every side at once, with evident hatred and such howls of rage that, at times, I trembled with fear. But it stood firm. From the very beginning of the storm, snarling

winds had been taking the roof to task, trying to pull it off, to break its back, tear it into shreds, suck it off. But it only hunched over further and clung to the old rafters. Then other winds, rushing along close to the ground, charged against the wall. Everything swayed under the shock of this blow, but the flexible house stood up to the beast. No doubt it was holding firmly to the soil of the island by means of the unbreakable roots from which its thin walls of mud-coated reeds and planks drew their supernatural strength. Though the shutters and doors were insulted, though huge threats were proferred, and there was loud bugling in the chimney, it was of no avail. The already human being in whom I had sought shelter for my body yielded nothing to the storm. The house clung close to me, like a she-wolf, and at times, I could smell her odor penetrating maternally to my very heart. That night she was really my mother.

"She was all I had to keep and sustain me. We were alone."

Discussing maternity in my book, *La terre et les rêveries du repos*[1] I quoted the following magnificent lines by Milosz,[2] in which the Mother image and the House image are united:

Je dis ma Mère. Et c'est à vous que je pense, ô Maison!
Maison des beaux étés obscurs de mon enfance.

(Mélancolie)

(I say Mother. And my thoughts are of you, oh, House.
House of the lovely dark summers of my childhood.)

(Melancholy)

It was imperative to find a similar image to express the deep graditude of the inhabitant of La Redousse. Here, however, the image does not come from a nostalgia for childhood, but is given in its actuality of protection. Here, too, in addition to community of affection, there is community of forces, the concentrated courage and resistance of both house and man. And what an image of concentrated

[1] José Corti, Paris.
[2] O. V. de Milosz, 1877-1939.

being we are given with this house that "clings" to its inhabitant and becomes the cell of a body with its walls close together. The refuge shrinks in size. And with its protective qualities increased, it grows outwardly stronger. From having been a refuge, it has become a redoubt. The thatched cottage becomes a fortified castle for the recluse, who must learn to conquer fear within its walls. Such a dwelling has an educative value, for in this passage of Bosco's book there is a sort of dovetailing of the reserves of strength with the inner fortresses of courage. In a house that has become for the imagination the very heart of a cyclone, we have to go beyond the mere impressions of consolation that we should feel in any shelter. We have to participate in the dramatic cosmic events sustained by the combatant house. But the real drama of Malicroix is an ordeal by solitude. The inhabitant of La Redousse must dominate solitude in a house on an island where there is no village. He must attain to the dignity of solitude that had been achieved by one of his ancestors, who had become a man of solitude as a result of a deep tragedy in his life. He must live alone in a cosmos which is not that of his childhood. This man, who comes of gentle, happy people, must cultivate courage in order to confront a world that is harsh, indigent and cold. The isolated house furnishes him with strong images, that is, with counsels of resistance.

And so, faced with the bestial hostility of the storm and the hurricane, the house's virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires the physical and moral energy of a human body. It braces itself to receive the downpour, it girds its loins. When forced to do so, it bends with the blast, confident that it will right itself again in time, while continuing to deny any temporary defeats. Such a house as this invites mankind to heroism of cosmic proportions. It is an instrument with which to confront the cosmos. And the metaphysical systems according to which man is "cast into the world" might meditate concretely upon the house that is cast into the hurricane, defying the anger of heaven itself. Come what may the house helps us to say: I will be an inhabitant

of the world, in spite of the world. The problem is not only one of being, it is also a problem of energy and, consequently, of counter-energy.

In this dynamic rivalry between house and universe, we are far removed from any reference to simple geometrical forms. A house that has been experienced is not an inert box. Inhabited space transcends geometrical space.

But can this transposition of the being of a house into human values be considered as an activity of metaphor? Isn't this merely a matter of linguistic imagery? As metaphors, a literary critic would certainly find them exaggerated. On the other hand, a positivist psychologist would immediately reduce this language to the psychological reality of the fear felt by a man immured in his solitude, far from all human assistance. But phenomenology of the imagination cannot be content with a reduction which would make the image a subordinate means of expression: it demands, on the contrary, that images be lived directly, that they be taken as sudden events in life. When the image is new, the world is new.

And in reading applied to life, all passivity disappears if we try to become aware of the creative acts of the poet expressing the world, a world that becomes accessible to our daydreaming. In Bosco's *Malicroix* the world influences solitary man more than the characters are able to do. Indeed, if the many prose-poems the book contains were to be deleted, all that remained would be the story of a legacy, and a duel between the notary and the heir. But much is to be gained for a psychologist of the imagination if to "social" he adds "cosmic" reading. He comes to realize that the cosmos molds mankind, that it can transform a man of the hills into a man of islands and rivers, and that the house remodels man.

With the house that has been experienced by a poet, we come to a delicate point in anthropo-cosmology. The house, then, really is an instrument of topo-analysis; it is even an efficacious instrument, for the very reason that it is hard to use. In short, discussion of our theses takes place on ground that is unfavorable to us. For, in point of fact, a house is

first and foremost a geometrical object, one which we are tempted to analyze rationally. Its prime reality is visible and tangible, made of well hewn solids and well fitted framework. It is dominated by straight lines, the plumb-line having marked it with its discipline and balance.[1] A geometrical object of this kind ought to resist metaphors that welcome the human body and the human soul. But transposition to the human plane takes place immediately whenever a house is considered as space for cheer and intimacy, space that is supposed to condense and defend intimacy. Independent of all rationality, the dream world beckons. And as I read and re-read *Malicroix,* to quote Pierre-Jean Jouve, "I hear the iron hooves of dream" on the roof of La Redousse.

But the complex of reality and dream is never definitively resolved. The house itself, when it starts to live humanly, does not lose all its "objectivity." We shall therefore have to examine more closely how houses of the past appear in dream geometry. For these are the houses in which we are going to recapture the intimacy of the past in our day-dreams. We shall have to apply ourselves increasingly to studying how, by means of the house, the warm substance of intimacy resumes its form, the same form that it had when it enclosed original warmth.

Et l'ancienne maison,
Je sens sa rousse tiédeur
Vient des sens à l'esprit.[2]

(And the old house
I feel its russet warmth
Comes from the senses to the mind.)

v

First of all, these old houses can be drawn—we can make a representation that has all the characteristics of a copy.

[1] In fact, it is interesting to note that the word *house* does not appear in the very well-compiled index to the new edition of C. G. Jung's *Metamorphosis of the Soul and its Symbols.*

[2] Jean Wahl, *Poèmes,* p. 23.

An objective drawing of this kind, independent of all daydreaming, is a forceful, reliable document that leaves its mark on a biography.

But let this exteriorist representation manifest an art of drawing, or a talent for representation, and it becomes insistent, inviting. Merely to judge it as a good, well executed likeness leads to contemplation and daydreaming. Daydreams return to inhabit an exact drawing and no dreamer ever remains indifferent for long to a picture of a house.

Long before the time when I began to read poetry every day, I had often said to myself that I should like to live in a house such as one sees in old prints. I was most attracted by the bold outlines of the houses in woodcuts which, it seemed to me, demanded simplicity. Through them, my daydreams inhabited the essential house.

These naïve daydreams, which I thought were my own, were a source of astonishment to me when I found traces of them in my reading.

In 1913, André Lafon had written:

Je rêve d'un logis, maison basse à fenêtres
Hautes, aux trois degrés usés, plats et verdis
. . . . . .
Logis pauvre et secret à l'air d'antique estampe
Qui ne vit qu'en moi-même, où je rentre parfois
M'asseoir pour oublier le jour gris et la pluie[1]

(I dream of a house, a low house with high
Windows, three worn steps, smooth and green
. . . . . .
A poor secret house, as in an old print,
That only lives in me, where sometimes I return
To sit down and forget the gray day and the rain.)

André Lafon wrote many other poems under the sign of "the poor house." In his literary "prints" the house welcomes the reader like a host. A bit more and he would be ready to seize the chisel and engrave his own reading.

[1] André Lafon, *Poésies* "Le rêve d'un logis." p. 91.

Certain types of prints end by specifying types of houses. Annie Duthil wrote:

Je suis dans une maison d'estampes japonaises
Le soleil est partout, car tout est transparent.[1]

(I am in a house in a Japanese print
The sun is everywhere, for everything is transparent.)

There exist sunny houses in which, at all seasons, it is summer, houses that are all windows.

And isn't the poet who wrote the following also an inhabitant of prints?

Qui n'a pas au fond de son coeur
Un sombre château d'Elseneur
. . . . . .
A l'instar des gens du passé
On construit en soi-même pierre
Par pierre un grand chateau hante[2]

(Who has not deep in his heart
A dark castle of Elsinore
. . . . . .
In the manner of men of the past
We build within ourselves stone
On stone a vast haunted castle.)

And so I am cheered by the pictures I find in my reading. I go to live in the "literary prints" poets offer me. The more simple the engraved house the more it fires my imagination as an inhabitant. It does not remain a mere "representation." Its lines have *force* and, as a shelter, it is *fortifying*. It asks to be lived in simply with all the *security* that *simplicity* gives. The print house awakens a *feeling for the hut* in me and, through it, I re-experience the *penetrating gaze* of the *little window*. But see now what has happened! When I speak the image sincerely, I suddenly

[1] Annie Duthil, *La Pêcheuse d'absolu*, p. 20, Seghers, Paris.
[2] Vincent Monteiro, *Vers sur verre*, p. 15.

feel a need to underline. And what is *underlining* but *engraving* while we write?

VI

Sometimes the house grows and spreads so that, in order to live in it, greater elasticity of daydreaming, a daydream that is less clearly outlined, are needed. "My house," writes Georges Spyridaki,[1] "is diaphanous, but it is not of glass. It is more of the nature of vapor. Its walls contract and expand as I desire. At times, I draw them close about me like protective armor . . . But at others, I let the walls of my house blossom out in their own space, which is infinitely extensible."

Spyridaki's house breathes. First it is a coat of armor, then it extends *ad infinitum,* which amounts to saying that we live in it in alternate security and adventure. It is both cell and world. Here, geometry is transcended.

To give unreality to an image attached to a strong reality is in the spirit of poetry. These lines by René Cazelles[2] speak to us of this expansion, if we can inhabit his images. The following was written in the heart of Provence, a country of sharp contours:

"The undiscoverable house, where this lava flower blows, where storms and exhausting bliss are born, when will my search for it cease?

. . . . . .

"Symmetry abolished, to serve as fodder for the winds

. . . . . .

"I should like my house to be similar to that of the ocean wind, all quivering with gulls."

Thus, an immense cosmic house is a potential of every dream of houses. Winds radiate from its center and gulls fly from its windows. A house that is as dynamic as this allows the poet to inhabit the universe. Or, to put it differently, the universe comes to inhabit his house.

1 Georges Spyridaki, *Mort lucide,* p. 35, Séghers, Paris.

2 René Cazelles, *De terre et d'envolée,* pp. 23, 36. "G.L.M." Paris.

Occasionally, in a moment of repose, the poet returns to the center of his abode (p. 29).

. . . Tout respire à nouveau
La nappe est blanche

(. . . Everything breathes again
The tablecloth is white)

This bit of whiteness, this tablecloth suffices to anchor the house to its center. The literary houses described by Georges Spyridaki and René Cazelles are immense dwellings the walls of which are on vacation. There are moments when it is a salutary thing to go and live in them, as a treatment for claustrophobia.

The image of these houses that integrate the wind, aspire to the lightness of air, and bear on the tree of their impossible growth a nest all ready to fly away, may perhaps be rejected by a positive, realistic mind. But it is of value for a general thesis on the imagination because, without the poet's knowing it apparently, it is touched by the attraction of opposites, which lends dynamism to the great archetypes. In an article[1] in the *Eranos* yearbook, Erich Neumann shows that all strongly terrestrial beings—and a house is strongly terrestrial—are nevertheless subject to the attractions of an aereal, celestial world. The well-rooted house likes to have a branch that is sensitive to the wind, or an attic that can hear the rustle of leaves. The poet who wrote

L'escalier des arbres
On y monte[2]

(On the stairs of the trees
We mount)

was certainly thinking of an attic.

1 Erich Neumann, *Die Bedeutung des Erdarchetyps für die Neuzeit.* Eranos-Jahrbuch, 1955, p. 12.
2 Claude Hartmann, *Nocturnes,* La Galère, Paris.

If we compose a poem about a house, it frequently happens that the most flagrant contradictions come to wake us from our doldrums of concepts, as philosophers would say, and free us from our utilitarian geometrical notions. In this fragment by René Cazelles, solidity is achieved by an imaginary dialectics. We inhale in it the impossible odor of lava, here granite has wings. Conversely, the sudden wind is as rigid as a girder. The house conquers its share of sky. It has the entire sky for its terrace.

But my commentary is becoming too precise. Concerning the different characteristics of the house, it is inclined to be hospitable to fragmentary dialectics, and if I were to pursue it, I should destroy the unity of the archetype. However, this is always the case. It is better to leave the ambivalences of the archetypes wrapped in their dominant quality. This is why a poet will always be more suggestive than a philosopher. It is precisely his right to be suggestive. Pursuing the dynamism that belongs to suggestion, then, the reader can go farther, even too far. In reading and re-reading René Cazelles' poem, once we have accepted the burst of the image, we know that we can reside not only in the topmost heights of the house, but in a super-height. There are many images with which I like to make super-height experiments. The image of the house in the solid representation is folded lengthwise. When the poet unfolds it and spreads it out, it presents a very pure phenomenological aspect. Consciousness becomes "uplifted" in contact with an image that, ordinarily, is "in repose." The image is no longer descriptive, but resolutely inspirational.

It is a strange situation. The space we love is unwilling to remain permanently enclosed. It deploys and appears to move elsewhere without difficulty; into other times, and on different planes of dream and memory.

Is there a reader who would fail to take advantage of the ubiquity of a poem like this one:

Une maison dressée au coeur
Ma cathédrale de silence
Chaque matin reprise en rêve

Et chaque soir abandonnée
Une maison couverte d'aube
Ouverte au vent de ma jeunesse[1]

(A house that stands in my heart
My cathedral of silence
Every morning recaptured in dream
Every evening abandoned
A house covered with dawn
Open to the winds of my youth.)

This house, as I see it, is a sort of airy structure that moves about on the breath of time. It really is open to the wind of another time. It seems as though it could greet us every day of our lives in order to give us confidence in life. In my daydreaming, I associate these lines by Jean Laroche with the passage in which René Char[2] dreams in "a room that grew buoyant and, little by little, expanded into the vast stretches of travel." If the Creator listened to poets, He would create a flying turtle that would carry off into the blue the great safeguards of earth.

If further proof of these weightless houses were needed, there is a poem by Louis Guillaume, entitled *"Maison de Vent"*[3] (Wind House), in which the poet dreams as follows:

Longtemps je t'ai construite, ô maison!
A chaque souvenir je transportais des pierres
Du rivage au sommet de tes murs
Et je voyais, chaume couvé par les saisons
Ton toit changeant comme la mer
Danser sur le fond des nuages
Auxquels il mêlait ses fumées
. . . . . .
Maison de vent demeure qu'un souffle effaçait.

(Long did I build you, oh house!
With each memory I carried stones

[1] Jean Laroche, *Mémoires d'été*, Cahiers de Rochefort, p. 9.
[2] René Char, *Fureur et Mystère*, p. 41.
[3] Louis Guillaume, *Noir comme la mer*, Les Lettres, p. 60.

From the bank to your topmost wall
And I saw your roof mellowed by time
Changing as the sea
Dancing against a background of clouds
With which it mingled its smoke.
. . . . . .
Wind house, abode that a breath effaced.)

Some may wonder at this accumulation of examples. For the realist, the matter is settled: "none of that holds water! It is nothing but vain, inconsistent poetry; poetry that has lost all touch with reality." For the positive man, everything that is unreal is alike, the forms being submerged and drowned in unreality; and the only houses that are capable of possessing individuality are real ones.

But a dreamer of houses sees them everywhere, and anything can act as a germ to set him dreaming about them. Jean Laroche has written elsewhere:

Cette pivoine est une maison vague
Où chacun retrouve la nuit

(This peony is an empty house
In which each of us recaptures night.)

The peony encloses a sleeping insect in its red night:

Tout calice est demeure

(Every chalice is a dwelling-place.)

Pivoines et pavots paradis taciturnes!

(Peonies and poppies silent gardens of Paradise!)

writes Jean Bourdeillette[1] in a line that encloses infinity.

When we have dreamed as intensely as this in the hollow of a flower, the way we recall our lives in the house that is lost and gone, dissolved in the waters of the past, is no ordinary way. It is impossible to read the four lines that follow without entering into a dream that is endless:

[1] Jean Bourdeillette, *Les étoiles dans la main*, Séghers, p. 48.

La chambre meurt miel et tilleul
Où les tiroirs s'ouvrirent en deuil
La maison se mêle à la mort
Dans un miroir qui se ternit.[1]

(The room is dying honey and linden
Where drawers opened in mourning
The house blends with death
In a mirror whose lustre is dimming.)

VII

If we go from these images, which are all light and shimmer, to images that insist and force us to remember farther back into our past, we shall have to take lessons from poets. For how forcefully they prove to us that the houses that were lost forever continue to live on in us; that they insist in us in order to live again, as though they expected us to give them a supplement of living. How much better we should live in the old house today! How suddenly our memories assume a living possibility of being! We consider the past, and a sort of remorse at not having lived profoundly enough in the old house fills our hearts, comes up from the past, overwhelms us. Rilke[2] expresses this poignant regret in unforgettable lines which we painfully make our own, not so much for their expression as for their dramatic depth of feeling:

O nostalgie des lieux qui n'étaient point
Assez aimés à l'heure passagère
Que je voudrais leur rendre de loin
Le geste oublié, l'action supplémentaire.

(Oh longing for places that were not
Cherished enough in that fleeting hour
How I long to make good from far
The forgotten gesture, the additional act.)

[1] Jean Bourdeillette, *op. cit.* p. 28. See, too, (p. 64) his recollection of a house that is lost and gone.
[2] Rilke, *Vergers*, XLI.

Why were we so quickly sated with the happiness of living in the old house? Why did we not prolong those fleeting hours? In that reality something more than reality was lacking. We did not dream enough in that house. And since it must be recaptured by means of daydreams, liaison is hard to establish. Our memories are encumbered with facts. Beyond the recollections we continually hark back to, we should like to relive our suppressed impressions and the dreams that made us believe in happiness:

Où vous ai-je perdue, mon imagerie piétinée?[1]

(Where did I lose you, my trampled fantasies?)

If we have retained an element of dream in our memories, if we have gone beyond merely assembling exact recollections, bit by bit the house that was lost in the mists of time will appear from out the shadow. We do nothing to reorganize it; with intimacy it recovers its entity, in the mellowness and imprecision of the inner life. It is as though something fluid had collected our memories and we ourselves were dissolved in this fluid of the past. Rilke, who experienced this intimacy of fusion, speaks of the fusion of being with the lost house: "I never saw this strange dwelling again. Indeed, as I see it now, the way it appeared to my child's eye, it is not a building, but is quite dissolved and distributed inside me: here one room, there another, and here a bit of corridor which, however, does not connect the two rooms, but is conserved in me in fragmentary form. Thus the whole thing is scattered about inside me, the rooms, the stairs that descended with such ceremonious slowness, others, narrow cages that mounted in a spiral movement, in the darkness of which we advanced like the blood in our veins."[2]

Indeed, at times dreams go back so far into an undefined, dateless past that clear memories of our childhood home appear to be detached from us. Such dreams unsettle our daydreaming and we reach a point where we begin to doubt

[1] André de Richaud, *Le droit d'asile*, Séghers, p. 26.
[2] Rilke, *Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge*, (Fr. tr. p. 33).

that we ever lived where we lived. Our past is situated elsewhere, and both time and place are impregnated with a sense of unreality. It is as though we sojourned in a limbo of being. And poets and dreamers find themselves writing things upon which metaphysicians would do well to meditate. Here, for instance, is a page of concrete metaphysics which by overlaying our memory of the childhood house with daydreams leads us to the ill-defined, vaguely located areas of being where we are seized with astonishment at being. In his novel *House of Breath*[1] (p. 40), William Goyen writes: "That people could come into the world in a place they could not at first even name and had never known before; and that out of a nameless and unknown place they could grow and move around in it until its name they knew and called with love, and call it HOME, and put roots there and love others there; so that whenever they left this place they would sing homesick songs about it and write poems of yearning for it, like a lover; . . . . . ." The soil in which chance had sown the human plant was of no importance. And against this background of nothingness human values grow! Inversely, if beyond memories, we pursue our dreams to their very end, in this pre-memory it is as though nothingness caressed and penetrated being, as though it gently unbound the ties of being. We ask ourselves if what has been, was. Have facts really the *value* that memory gives them? Distant memory only recalls them by giving them a value, a halo, of happiness. But let this value be effaced, and the facts cease to exist. Did they ever exist? Something unreal seeps into the reality of the recollections that are on the borderline between our own personal history and an indefinite pre-history, in the exact place where, after us, the childhood home comes to life in us. For before us—Goyen makes us understand this—it was quite anonymous. It was a place that was lost in the world. Thus, on the threshold of our space, before the era of our own time, we hover between awareness of being and loss of being. And the entire reality of memory becomes spectral.

[1] Random House, New York.

But it would seem that this element of unreality in the dreams of memory affects the dreamer when he is faced with the most concrete things, as with the stone house to which he returns at night, his thoughts on mundane things. William Goyen understands this unreality of reality (*loc. cit.* p. 56): "So this is why when often as you came home to it, down the road in a mist of rain, it seemed as if the house were founded on the most fragile web of breath and you had blown it. Then you thought it might not exist at all as built by carpenter's hands, nor had ever; and that it was only an idea of breath breathed out by you who, with that same breath that had blown it, could blow it all away." In a passage like this, imagination, memory and perception exchange functions. The image is created through co-operation between real and unreal, with the help of the functions of the real and the unreal. To use the implements of dialectical logic for studying, not this alternative, but this fusion, of opposites, would be quite useless, for they would produce the anatomy of a living thing. But if a house is a living value, it must integrate an element of unreality. All values must remain vulnerable, and those that do not are dead.

When two strange images meet, two images that are the work of two poets pursuing separate dreams, they apparently strengthen each other. In fact, this convergence of two exceptional images furnishes as it were a counter-check for phenomenological analysis. The image loses its gratuitousness; the free play of the imagination ceases to be a form of anarchy. I should like, therefore, to compare Goyen's image in the *House of Breath* with one that I quoted in my book *La terre et les rêveries du repos* (p. 96) and which, at the time, I was unable to relate to any other.

In *Le domaine public* (p. 70) Pierre Seghers writes:[1]

[1] My imagination having been stimulated as a result of the day-dreams set in motion by reading William Goyen, I have extended the original quotation, used in 1948.

Une maison où je vais seul en appelant
Un nom que le silence et les murs me renvoient
Une étrange maison qui se tient dans ma voix
Et qu'habite le vent.
Je l'invente, mes mains dessinent un nuage
Un bateau de grand ciel au-dessus des forêts
Une brume qui se dissipe et disparaît
Comme au jeu des images.

(A house where I go alone calling
A name that silence and the walls give back to me
A strange house contained in my voice
Inhabited by the wind
I invent it, my hands draw a cloud
A heaven-bound ship above the forests
Mist that scatters and disappears
As in the play of images.)

In order to build better this house in the mist and wind, we should need, according to the poet,

..... *Une voix plus forte et l'encens*
Bleu du coeur et des mots

(..... A more sonorous voice and the blue
Incense of heart and word.)

Like the house of breath, the house of wind and voice is a value that hovers on the frontier between reality and unreality. No doubt a realistic mind will remain well this side of this region. But for the poetry lover who reads with joy and imagination, it is a red-letter day when he can hear echoes of the lost house in two registers. The old house, for those who know how to listen, is a sort of geometry of echoes. The voices of the past do not sound the same in the big room as in the little bed chamber, and calls on the stairs have yet another sound. Among the most difficult memories, well beyond any geometry that can be drawn, we must recapture the quality of the light; then come the sweet smells that linger in the empty rooms, setting an aerial seal on each room in the house of memory. Still far-

ther it is possible to recover not merely the timbre of the voices, "the inflections of beloved voices now silent," but also the resonance of each room in the sound house. In this extreme tenuousness of memory, only poets may be expected to furnish us with documents of a subtly psychological nature.

VIII

Sometimes the house of the future is better built, lighter and larger than all the houses of the past, so that the image of *the dream house* is opposed to that of the childhood home. Late in life, with indomitable courage, we continue to say that we are going to do what we have not yet done: we are going to build a house. This dream house may be merely a dream of ownership, the embodiment of everything that is considered convenient, comfortable, healthy, sound, desirable, by other people. It must therefore satisfy both pride and reason, two irreconcilable terms. If these dreams are realized, they no longer belong in the domain of this study, but in that of the psychology of projects. However, as I have said many times, for me, a project is short-range oneirism, and while it gives free play to the mind, the soul does not find in it its vital expression. Maybe it is a good thing for us to keep a few dreams of a house that we shall live in later, always later, so much later, in fact, that we shall not have time to achieve it. For a house that was final, one that stood in symmetrical relation to the house we were born in, would lead to thoughts—serious, sad thoughts—and not to dreams. It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality.

The following anecdote contains a certain wisdom.

It is told by Campenon, who has been discussing poetry with the poet, Ducis: "When we came to the little poems, indited to *his home, his flower-beds, his kitchen garden, his little wood, or his wine-cellar* . . . I could not help remarking jokingly that, a hundred years hence, he risked obliging his commentators to rack their brains. He began to laugh, and told me that having desired vainly ever since

he was young, to have a house in the country, with a small garden, he had made up his mind, at the age of seventy, to give them to himself on his own authority as a poet, and without putting his hand in his pocket. He had begun by acquiring a house, then, as the charm of ownership increased, had added the *garden,* the *little wood,* etc. None of this existed outside his imagination; but it sufficed for these little fancied possessions to take on reality in his eyes. He spoke of them and derived pleasure from them as though they were real; and so powerful was his imagination that I should not be surprised if, on frosty April nights, he didn't show signs of anxiety about his Marly vineyards.

"In this connection, he told me that a decent, honest country fellow, having read in the papers some of his lyrical pieces on the subject of his estate, had written to offer his services as overseer, adding that all he asked was a place to live and whatever wages might be considered fair."

Housed everywhere but nowhere shut in, this is the motto of the dreamer of dwellings. In the last house as well as in the actual house, the day-dream of inhabiting is thwarted. A daydream of elsewhere should be left open therefore, at all times.

An excellent exercise for the function of inhabiting the dream house consists in taking a train trip. Such a voyage unreels a film of houses that are dreamed, accepted and refused, without our ever having been tempted to stop, as we are when motoring. We are sunk deep in day-dreaming with all verification healthily forbidden. But lest this manner of travel be merely a gentle mania of mine, I should like to quote the following passage from Thoreau's Journals, of October 31, 1850:

"I am wont to think that I could spend my days contentedly in any retired country house that I see; for I see it to advantage now and without incumbrance; I have not yet imported my humdrum thoughts, my prosaic habits, into it to mar the landscape." On August 28, 1861, Thoreau addresses in thought the fortunate owners of the houses he has seen: "Give me but the eyes to see the things which you possess."

George Sand said that people could be classified according to whether they aspired to live in a cottage or in a palace. But the question is more complex than that. When we live in a manor house we dream of a cottage, and when we live in a cottage we dream of a palace. Better still, we all have our cottage moments and our palace moments. We descend to living close to the ground, on the floor of a cottage, then would like to dominate the entire horizon from a castle in Spain. And when reading has given us countless inhabited places, we know how to let the dialectics of cottage and manor sound inside us. This was experienced by a great poet, Saint-Pol Roux, whose book, *Féeries Intérieurs* (Inner Enchantments), contains two stories that need only be compared to obtain two quite different pictures of Brittany, and indeed two different worlds. From one world to the other, from one dwelling to the other, dreams come and go. The first story is entitled: *Adieux à la chaumière* (Farewell to the Cottage, p. 205) and the second: *Le châtelain et le paysan* (Squire and Peasant, p. 359).

The minute they entered the cottage, it opened its heart and soul: "At dawn, your freshly white-washed being opened its arms to us: the children felt that they had entered into the heart of a dove, and we loved the ladder—your stairway—right away." Elsewhere the poet tells how generously a cottage radiates peasant humanity and fraternity. This dove-house was a hospitable ark.

One day, however, Saint-Pol Roux left the cottage for the manor-house. "Before leaving for a life of 'luxury and pride,'" according to Théophile Briant,[1] "his Franciscan soul lamented, and he lingered a while longer under the lintel of Roscanvel." Briant quotes him as follows: "One last time, oh cottage, let me kiss your humble walls, even in their shadow, which is the color of my woe. . . ."

The Camaret manor, which became Saint-Pol Roux's home, is undoubtedly a poetic creation, in every sense of the word; it is the realization of a poet's dream castle. For he first bought a fisherman's cottage situated right by the sea, on the crest of the dune that the inhabitants of this

[1] Théophile Briant, *Saint-Pol Roux*, p. 42, Séghers, Paris.

Breton peninsula call the Lion of Toulinguet. With the help of a friend, an artillery officer, he then drew up plans for a manor house with eight towers, the center of which was to be the house he had just bought. An architect modified somewhat this poetic project and the manor with the cottage heart was built.

"One day," Théophile Briant recalls (*loc. cit.* p. 37), "to synthesize the little Camaret peninsula for me, Saint-Pol Roux took a sheet of paper and drew a stone pyramid showing the hatchings of the wind and the roll of the sea. Underneath it he wrote: 'Camaret is a stone in the wind on a lyre.' "

A few pages back we discussed poems that sing of breath and wind houses, poems with which we seemed to have attained the *ultimate degree of metaphor.* And here we see a poet who follows the working draft of these metaphors to build his house!

We should find ourselves indulging in similar daydreams if we started musing under the cone-shaped roof of a windmill. We should sense its terrestrial nature, and imagine it to be a primitive hut stuck together with mud, firmly set on the ground in order to resist the wind. Then, in an immense synthesis, we should dream at the same time of a winged house that whines at the slightest breeze and refines the energies of the wind. Millers, who are wind thieves, make good flour from storms.

In the second tale in *Féeries Intérieures,* Saint-Pol Roux tells how he lived a peasant's life at the same time that he was lord of the Camaret manor. Never, perhaps, have the dialectics of cottage and manor been so simply or so powerfully inverted as here. "As I stand riveted to the first steps of the perron by my hob-nailed boots, I hesitate to emerge suddenly from my rustic's chrysalis in the rôle of lord."[1] And further on (p. 362) he writes: "My flexible nature adapts itself easily to this eagle's well-being, high above town and sea, a well-being in which my imagination loses no time conferring supremacy upon me, over elements and persons. And soon, bound up in my egoism, I forget, up-

[1] p. 361.

start peasant that I am, that the original reason for the manor house was, through antithesis, to enable me to really see the cottage."

The word *chrysalis* alone is an unmistakable indication that here two dreams are joined together, dreams that bespeak both the repose and flight of being, evening's crystallization and wings that open to the light. In the body of the winged manor, which dominates both town and sea, man and the universe, he retained a cottage chrysalis in order to be able to hide alone, in complete repose.

Referring to the work of the Brazilian philosopher, Lucio Alberto Pinheiro dos Santos,[1] I once said that by examining the rhythms of life in detail, by descending from the great rhythms forced upon us by the universe to the finer rhythms that play upon man's most exquisite sensibilities, it would be possible to work out a rhythmanalysis that would tend to reconcile and lighten the ambivalences that psychoanalysts find in the disturbed psyche. But if what poets say is true, alternating daydreams cease to be rivals. The two extreme realities of cottage and manor, to be found in the case of Saint-Pol Roux, take into account our need for retreat and expansion, for simplicity and magnificence. For here we experience a rhythmanalysis of the function of inhabiting. To sleep well we do not need to sleep in a large room, and to work well we do not have to work in a den. But to dream of a poem, then write it, we need both. It is the creative psyche that benefits from rhythmanalysis.

Thus the dream house must possess every virtue. However spacious, it must also be a cottage, a dove-cote, a nest, a chrysalis. Intimacy needs the heart of a nest. Erasmus, his biographer tells us, was long "in finding a nook in his fine house in which he could put *his little body* with safety. He ended by confining himself to one room until he could breathe *the parched air* that was necessary to him."[2]

And how many dreamers look everywhere in their house, or in their room, for the garment that suits them!

[1] Cf. *La dialecte de la durée*, Presses Universitaire de France, p. 129.
[2] André Saglio, *Maisons d'hommes célèbres*, Paris 1893, p. 82.

But I repeat: nest, chrysalis and garment only constitute one moment of a dwelling place. The more concentrated the repose, the more hermetic the chrysalis, the more the being that emerges from it is a being from elsewhere, the greater is his expansion. And, in my opinion, as the reader goes from one poet to the other, he is made more dynamic by his reader's imagination if he listens to Supervielle inviting the entire universe to come back into the house through all the wide-open doors and windows.[1]

Tout ce qui fait les bois, les rivières ou l'air
A place entre ces murs qui croient fermer une chambre
Accourez, cavaliers qui traversez les mers
Je n'ai qu'un toit du ciel, vous aurez de la place.

(All that makes the woods, the rivers or the air
Has its place between these walls which believe they close a room
Make haste, ye gentlemen, who ride across the seas
I've but one roof from heaven, there'll be room for you.)

The house's welcome is so genuine that even what may be seen from the windows belongs to it.

Le corps de la montagne hésite à ma fenêtre:
"Comment peut-on entrer si l'on est la montagne,
Si l'on est en hauteur, avec roches, cailloux,
Un morceau de la Terre altéré par le Ciel?"

(The body of the mountain hesitates before my window:
"How can one enter if one is the mountain,
If one is tall, with boulders and stones,
A piece of Earth, altered by Sky?")

When we have been made aware of a rhythmanalysis by moving from a concentrated to an expanded house, the oscillations reverberate and grow louder. Like Supervielle, great dreamers profess intimacy with the world. They learned this intimacy, however, meditating on the house.

[1] Jules Supervielle, *Les amis inconnus*, p. 93, p. 96.

IX

Supervielle's house is a house that is eager to see, one for which seeing is having. It both sees the world and has it. But like a greedy child, its eyes are bigger than its stomach. It has furnished us with one of those exaggerated images that a philosopher of the imagination is obliged to note right away with a reasonably critical smile.

But after this holiday of the imagination we shall have to return to reality, in order to speak of daydreams that accompany household activities. For they keep vigilant watch over the house, they link its immediate past to its immediate future, they are what maintains it in the security of being.

But how can housework be made into a creative activity?

The minute we apply a glimmer of consciousness to a mechanical gesture, or practice phenomenology while polishing a piece of old furniture, we sense new impressions come into being beneath this familiar domestic duty. For consciousness rejuvenates everything, giving a quality of beginning to the most everyday actions. It even dominates memory. How wonderful it is to really become once more the inventor of a mechanical action! And so, when a poet rubs a piece of furniture—even vicariously—when he puts a little fragrant wax on his table with the woolen cloth that lends warmth to everything it touches, he creates a new object; he increases the object's human dignity; he registers this object officially as a member of the human household. Henri Bosco once wrote:[1] "The soft wax entered into the polished substance under the pressure of hands and the effective warmth of a woolen cloth. Slowly the tray took on a dull luster. It was as though the radiance induced by magnetic rubbing emanated from the hundred-year-old sapwood, from the very heart of the dead tree, and spread gradually, in the form of light, over the tray. The old fingers possessed of every virtue, the broad palm, drew from the solid block with its inanimate fibers, the latent powers

[1] Henri Bosco, *Le jardin d'Hyacinthe*, p. 192.

of life itself. This was creation of an object, a real act of faith, taking place before my enchanted eyes."

Objects that are cherished in this way really are born of an intimate light, and they attain to a higher degree of reality than indifferent objects, or those that are defined by geometric reality. For they produce a new reality of being, and they take their place not only in an order but in a community of order. From one object in a room to another, housewifely care weaves the ties that unite a very ancient past to the new epoch. The housewife awakens furniture that was asleep.

If we attain to the limit at which dream becomes exaggerated, we experience a sort of consciousness of constructing the house, in the very pains we take to keep it alive, to give it all its essential clarity. A house that shines from the care it receives appears to have been rebuilt from the inside; it is as though it were new inside. In the intimate harmony of walls and furniture, it may be said that we become conscious of a house that is built by women, since men only know how to build a house from the outside, and they know little or nothing of the "wax" civilization.

No one has written better of this integration of revery into work, of our vastest dreams into the humblest of occupations, than Henri Bosco, in his description of the old faithful servant, Sidoine (*op. cit.* p. 173): "This vocation for happiness, so far from prejudicing her practical life, nurtured its action. When she washed a sheet or a tablecloth, when she polished a brass candlestick, little movements of joy mounted from the depths of her heart, enlivening her household tasks. She did not wait to finish these tasks before withdrawing into herself, where she could contemplate to her heart's content the supernatural images that dwelt there. Indeed, figures from this land appeared to her familiarly, however commonplace the work she was doing, and without in the least seeming to dream, she washed, dusted and swept in the company of angels."

I once read an Italian novel in which there was a street sweeper who swung his broom with the majestic gesture

of a reaper. In his daydream he was reaping an imaginary field on the asphalt, a wide field in real nature in which he recaptured his youth and the noble calling of reaper under the rising sun.

We should need, then, purer "reagents" than those of psychoanalysis to determine the "composition" of a poetic image. The fine determinations required by poetry bring us into the field of micro-chemistry, and a reagent that had been adulterated by the ready-made interpretations of a psychoanalyst could cloud the solution. No phenomenologist re-living Supervielle's invitation to the mountains to come in through the window would see in it a sexual monstrosity. This is rather the poetic phenomenon of pure liberation, of absolute sublimation. The image is no longer under the domination of things, nor is it subject to the pressures of the unconscious. It floats and soars, immense, in the free atmosphere of a great poem. Through the poet's window the house converses about immensity with the world. And as metaphysicians would say, it too, the house of men, opens its doors to the world.

In the same way, the phenomenologist who follows women's construction of the house through daily polishing must go beyond the psychoanalyst's interpretations. I, myself held to these interpretations in some of my earlier books.[1] But I now believe that we can go deeper, that we can sense how a human being can devote himself to things and make them his own by perfecting their beauty. A little more beautiful and we have something quite different.

Here we have the paradox of an incipience of a very customary action. Through housewifely care a house recovers not so much its originality as its origin. And what a great life it would be if, every morning, every object in the house could be made anew by our hands, could "issue" from our hands. In a letter to his brother Theo, Vincent van Gogh tells him that we should "retain something of the original character of a Robinson Crusoe" (p. 25). Make and remake everything oneself, make a "supplementary

[1] Cf. *La psychanalyse du feu.*

gesture" toward each object, give another facet to the polished reflections, all of which are so many boons the imagination confers upon us by making us aware of the house's inner growth. To have an active day I keep saying to myself, "Every morning I must give a thought to Saint Robinson."

When a dreamer can reconstruct the world from an object that he transforms magically through his care of it, we become convinced that everything in the life of a poet is germinal. The following long fragment by Rilke, in spite of a certain overloading (gloves and costumes) gives us a feeling of naïve simplicity.

In *Lettres à une musicienne,* Rilke writes to Benvenuta that in the absence of his cleaning woman, he had been polishing his furniture. "I was, as I said, magnificently alone . . . when suddenly I was seized by my old passion. I should say that this was undoubtedly my greatest childhood passion, as well as my first contact with music, since our little piano fell under my jurisdiction as duster. It was, in fact, one of the few objects that lent itself willingly to this operation and gave no sign of boredom. On the contrary, under my zealous dustcloth, it suddenly started to purr mechanically . . . and its fine, deep black surface became more and more beautiful. When you've been through this there's little you don't know! I was quite proud, if only of my indispensable costume, which consisted of a big apron and little washable suède gloves to protect one's dainty hands. Politeness tinged with mischief was my reaction to the friendliness of these objects, which seemed happy to be so well treated, so meticulously renovated. And even today, I must confess that, while everything about me grew brighter and the immense black surface of my work table, which dominated its surroundings . . . became newly aware, somehow, of the size of the room, reflecting it more and more clearly: pale gray and almost square . . ., well, yes, I felt moved, as though something were happening, something, to tell the truth, which was not purely superficial but immense, and which touched my very soul: I was

an emperor washing the feet of the poor, or Saint Bonaventure, washing dishes in his convent."

Benvenuta's comment[1] on these episodes detracts from their charm somewhat when she tells us that Rilke's mother, "while he was still a mere child, forced him to dust the furniture and perform other household tasks." But one cannot help sensing the *nostalgia for work* that emanates from this fragment by Rilke, or realizing that this is an accumulation of psychological documents from different mental ages, since to the joy of helping his mother is added the glory of being one of the great of the earth, washing the feet of the poor. The whole thing is a complex of sentiments, with its association of politeness and mischief, of humility and action. Then, too, there is the striking line with which it opens: "I was magnificently alone!" Alone, as we are at the origin of all real action that we are not "obliged" to perform. And the marvelous thing about easy actions is that they do, in fact, place us at the origin of action.

Removed from its context, this long passage seems to me to be a good test of the reader's interest. Some may disdain it or wonder that it should interest anyone; whereas to others it may seem alive, effective and stimulating, since it offers each one of us a means of becoming aware of our room by strongly synthesizing everything that lives in it, every piece of furniture that wants to be friends.

There is also the courage of the writer who braves the kind of censorship that forbids "insignificant" confidences. But what a joy reading is, when we recognize the importance of these insignificant things, when we can add our own personal daydreams to the "insignificant" recollections of the author! Then insignificance becomes the sign of extreme sensitivity to the intimate meanings that establish spiritual understanding between writer and reader.

And what charm it confers upon our memories to be able to say to ourselves that, except for the suède gloves, we have lived moments similar to those lived by Rilke!

1 Benvenuta, *Rilke et Benvenuta*, French translation, p. 30.

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All great, simple images reveal a psychic state. The house, even more than the landscape, is a "psychic state," and even when reproduced as it appears from the outside, it bespeaks intimacy. Psychologists generally, and Françoise Minkowska in particular, together with those whom she has succeeded interesting in the subject, have studied the drawings of houses made by children, and even used them for testing. Indeed, the house-test has the advantage of welcoming spontaneity, for many children draw a house spontaneously while dreaming over their paper and pencil. To quote Anne Balif:[1] "Asking a child to draw his house is asking him to reveal the deepest dream shelter he has found for his happiness. If he is happy, he will succeed in drawing a snug, protected house which is well built on deeply-rooted foundations." It will have the right shape, and nearly always there will be some indication of its inner strength. In certain drawings, quite obviously, to quote Mme. Balif, "it is warm indoors, and there is a fire burning, such a big fire, in fact, that it can be seen coming out of the chimney." When the house is happy, soft smoke rises in gay rings above the roof.

If the child is unhappy, however, the house bears traces of his distress. In this connection, I recall that Françoise Minkowska organized an unusually moving exhibition of drawings by Polish and Jewish children who had suffered the cruelties of the German occupation during the last war. One child, who had been hidden in a closet every time there was an alert, continued to draw narrow, cold, closed houses long after those evil times were over. These are what Mme. Minkowska calls "motionless" houses, houses that have become motionless in their rigidity. "This rigidity and motionlessness are present in the *smoke* as well as in the window curtains. The surrounding trees are quite *straight* and

[1] *De Van Gogh et Seurat aux dessins d'enfants*, illustrated catalogue of an exhibition held at the *Musée Pédagogique* (Paris) in 1949. Dr. F. Minkowska's comments on the drawings appear on page 137 of Mme. Balif's article.

give the impression of standing guard over the house" (*loc. cit.* p. 55). Mme. Minkowska knows that a live house is not really "motionless," that, particularly, it integrates the movements by means of which one accedes to the door. Thus the path that leads to the house is often a climbing one. At times, even, it is inviting. In any case, it always possesses certain kinesthetic features. If we were making a Rorschach test, we should say that the house has "K."

Often a simple detail suffices for Mme. Minkowska, a distinguished psychologist, to recognize the way the house functions. In one house, drawn by an eight-year-old child, she notes that there is "a knob on the door; people go in the house, they live there." It is not merely a constructed house, it is also a house that is "lived-in." Quite obviously the door-knob has a functional significance. This is the kinesthetic sign, so frequently forgotten in the drawings of "tense" children.

Naturally, too, the door-knob could hardly be drawn in scale with the house, its function taking precedence over any question of size. For it expresses the function of opening, and only a logical mind could object that it is used to close as well as to open the door. In the domain of values, on the other hand, a key closes more often than it opens, whereas the door-knob opens more often than it closes. And the gesture of closing is always sharper, firmer and briefer than that of opening. It is by weighing such fine points as these that, like Françoise Minkowska, one becomes a psychologist of houses.