Fragments of A Poetics of Fire

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Faster, faster, damned flesh!

JEAN BOURDEILLETTE,
Les étoiles dans la main

Introduction

A Retrospective Glance at the Life Work of a Maker of Books

> I proclaim you, method! I shall not forget that once you glorified each age of my life.
>
> RIMBAUD, "Matinée d'ivresse," *Les illuminations*

WHEN SOME twenty years ago (or is it twenty-five—where the life of the mind is concerned, who can say just when a lasting change occurs?), I first became interested in the problem of literary imagery, quite in the margins of my regular work as a science teacher, I believed so narrowly defined a concern might be simply treated and did not require the tools of philosophy. I thought I might study images as I was accustomed to studying scientific ideas, as objectively as possible. I did not sense the paradox in studying the imagination "objectively" though it was capable of bearing the unexpected even into language. I believed that through the sheer accumulation of examples I should come to discover rules. I made my claims to objectivity unreflectively, as is customary among those who seek to cultivate a true scientific culture at the relatively small expense of rational study. Psychologists are pleased to believe the objectivity of their investigations to be a function of the number of their observations. My belief that I would come to discern the lines of a new science of poetic language exalted by the will to write if only I pursued my reading conscientiously was a similar one to theirs. As a result, I remained a complacent philosopher for quite some time. I saw myself often as a wandering botanist, gathering bouquets of "poetic flowers" here and there in my reading. The ever increasing number of images I had collected confirmed my sense of impartiality, of being in control of my own preferences, of knowing just how to appreciate everything.

Lastly, all things appearing easy, I believed that having known how to collect I would also know how to classify. It happened that the four elements—fire, water, earth, and air—suggested themselves as chapter headings or volume titles for my encyclopedia of cosmic imagery, quite a majestic basis for an elementary philosophy of the cosmic imagination. Since so many philosophers and scholars had "thought" the world in terms of one or another of these four elements before, it seemed not unreasonable to expect poetic imagery to echo cosmological naïveté, illustrating ancient doctrine anew. A certain homogeneity in human imagination spans the centuries—proof for me that imagination inheres in human nature itself. Thus I was provided a relatively natural outlet for my enthusiasm as a reader. With perfectly good conscience I could plow with abandon into readings of all sorts, confident that I would find the means to bring my harvest safely home. Every image was to find its rightful place under one of my four rubrics.

Four rubrics—four granaries! What wonderful storage for my harvest, crops, gleanings and all! And what a wonderful imaginary structure for a work without end!

But today, after so much work, my herbarium of images and commentaries filling some two thousand pages, I wish I had all of my books to write over. It seems to me that I should know better now how to express the reverberation of spoken images in the depths of the speaking soul, better now how to describe the links between new images and those with ancient roots in the human psyche. I should be able perhaps to put my finger more precisely on those moments when speech, today as always, creates something specifically human. In juxtaposing images and regrouping similar ones, I should respect better now the privileged status of what is incomparable, and might as a result work out—such wild ambition!—the principles of spontaneity itself, for where should pure spontaneity be airier or lighter than in language? Poetry is language freed from itself. In my role as philosopher I should hope to underscore continually the sometimes highly personal psychological advantages to be gained from the language of imagery. If it proved feasible, I should seek out the very origins of joy in speaking. Quite simple is the joy one feels before a new poetic image, and pure, due to its very simplicity—the unmediated joy of the speaking soul freed suddenly of all responsibility for making sense. Indeed, relieved entirely of worry over significance, even passional significance, perhaps I might achieve through the experience of imagery some semblance of spontaneity myself.

I long thought (and still do a bit) that simply in collecting poetic images I came to experience the freedom of imagination. Indeed, I had taken the first steps on the road to liberating the psyche through poetry.

It seemed to me probable that examining the poetic canon as constituted by poets down through the ages would have a far greater reach than consulting any random sample chosen among the astonishing diversity of images. It would take a vaster study than my own to permit of judgments concerning poetic architecture conceived as a cooperation between image and idea. That task would entail the study of *poetic composition*, the product of intelligence and taste, of pondering and inspiration. I was never tempted by such study, indispensable though it might be to formulating an exhaustive philosophy of literary imagination. I had my hands full enough with images. It seemed to me that by studying literary images I was on the track of that creative imaginary impulse which obliges one to write, forces one to compete in the world of letters. This meant for me that I must participate in an activity simple in its detail yet implicated in a highly specialized culture. I found myself committed to the longterm study of the effects of imagination, ever seeking to express itself in new ways, on language. The imagination of literary images posed a problem extremely narrow in scope yet quite specific, situated at the very threshold of inchoate, multiple, revitalized expression. Literature, in short, became for me a well-defined arena in which to study the imagination at work. I found that a direct psychology of written imagery might be developed without any reference to a writer's personal psychology. This was to break with the ill-founded tendency of biographers who would lead one to believe, for instance, that poetically speaking the poems of Baudelaire are the work of his mother's son—or rather, of the stepson of General Aupick. A poem or image became for me a psychological phenomenon worthy of study in its own right and, in terms of the imagination, a communicable phenomenon. The reader willing to imagine receives an imaginative impulse from a poet who lives to imagine. A certain justmindedness should be expected from any psychological appraisal of phenomena so precious and so rare as these. The study of psychological impulses [*valeurs*] differs from the study of psychology in general in that each requires individualized treatment and a particular quality of investigative fervor. The poetic object gives rise to an objective method which keeps our never-wearied, ever-dissatisfied curiosity alive.

There is no power of the psyche more confusedly described by classical psychology than that of the imagination. Not only is imagination hopelessly confounded with ability to "reproduce" what has been imagined before, thus chained to an entire history of moribund perceptions, but this same imagination, capable of generating imagery of the most fantastic kind, is attributed to absolutely any creative mental activity at all, to every instance of cleverness over the course of a life.

Imagination is attributed to scholars, politicians, even financiers. Such are the easy means biographers employ in defending and inflating their chosen heroes. But to extend the meaning of the word *imagination* in this way is to undercut all more specific psychological study. When psychologists speak of the "imagination" of a mathematician, for example, this is as much as to admit the lack of a vocabulary adequate to describing the inventive and associative capacities of rational thought.

An *idea*, in short, cannot be *imagined*. In fact, those who labor in the field of ideas are obliged to hunt images down.[1]

The invention of an idea and the imagination of an image are very different psychological exploits. Ideas are invented only as correctives to the past. Through repeated rectifications of this kind one may hope to disengage an idea that is valid. There is no original truth, only original error. Scientific ideas have a long history of error. The poetic imagination for its part has no history at all. It admits of no past preparation. The poetic image is truly the work of a spoken instant, an instant one will fail to grasp in the attempt to plot it against the untorn and untearable continuity of Bergsonian consciousness. To pick up on all of the surprises in poetic language it is necessary that one give oneself over to kaleidoscopic consciousness. As for myself, in the attempt to order somewhat the products of imagination born in language, through language, in the form of delicate and subtle amplifications of the powers of speech, I adopted a program of study suited to the solitary reader of texts I gradually became.

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Yet as I hope to exclude nothing bearing on the activity which still furnishes me my livelihood, let me make clear that despite any deviations into literature and psychoanalysis it was always my wish to keep to the straight and narrow. I remained eager to increase my knowledge of a multiplicity of conceptual constructs; and as I was equally taken by the beauties of poetic imagination, it was only after dividing my work into two more or less independent halves, one to do with conceptual matters and the other with imagery, that I could work in peace. Two half philosophers will probably never a whole metaphysician make. But I was obliged by my enlarged career to write both textbooks and recreational texts. My work as a teacher required of me that I write books documenting the philosophic basis of contemporary scientific thought. The elaborate structure of contemporary science reassured me of the rational coherence of new knowledge, knowledge unencumbered by the stolid brand of rationalism familiar to historians of philosophy. But the task of rehearsing a series of rational arguments to auditoriums filled with philosophers convinced they should discover the key to the structure of the universe through meditation upon existence, which is to say upon their own existence, seemed not just distasteful but most probably of little use. Not only is rationalism no substitute for existential thought, neither is it fundamental to philosophy. Reason comes of age anew at each encounter with new structures of scientific understanding—the organizing principles necessary if original experimentation is to be kept in line.

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[1] In my books on the philosophy of applied reason, I have always insisted on the danger to scientific thinkers of basing their beliefs on images. See, in particular, *La formation de l'esprit scientifique: Contribution à une psychanalyse de la connaissance objective* (Paris: Vrin, 1938).

Convinced as I am that active reasoning is necessary to scientific work, transforming as it does all knowledge into scientific knowledge, some attention to contemporary science seems to me a necessary prerequisite to undertaking any new rationalist study. To be *a rationalist by oneself,* in the margins of the scientific activity of one's day, is no longer possible. It is necessary that one educate oneself in rational company.[2]

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[2] Cf. Gaston Bachelard, *Le Rationalisme appliqué* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), Chap. 3: "Rationalisme et co-rationalisme, l'union des travailleurs de la preuve."

One does not think rationally by birthright, by the grace of nature, nor does one think rationally as a result of cultural training. One learns to think rationally by studying numerous instances of rational thought, each one a specialized intellectual climb above the plains of empiricism.

My work began to go a little better once I realized that I could and must lead two lives. In order to teach the philosophy of science I was obliged to keep myself informed, taking my lessons from the members of the scientific community in which I found myself, all actively engaged in scientific research. But I had need of solitude as well, the solitude of reverie, of my own reveries. I hope to explain here how these reveries became working reveries in me, how reverie works one's inner being, how the reverie of a poet can bring one inner calm. How healthful it is for the psyche to spend long months faithful to a single image, faithful to water or to all the reveries of bird flight! Although I am an old man now, my own muscles weak, how good it felt—an almost muscular sensation—to collect poetic images of smithing and the forge!

But all that is behind me now. The philosopher has taken charge once again and would have the dreamer of elements in me attempt to formulate a theory of the literary imagination. It seems well that I take a moment in the section which follows to mention a recent shift in the focus of my studies.

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All my books on reverie concerning material images related to the four elements of tradition constituted new beginnings. Relatively unconcerned with what had gone before, these different books provided an introduction to reverie, an invitation to dream, with each image they treated. In them I defended no theory, began from no hypotheses; I wished only to experience in all simplicity the wonder of new imagery, although I never dared give myself over to my imagination fully.

But in my two most recent works, *The Poetics of Space* and *The Poetics of Reverie*, I have thought it possible to introduce a new hypothesis into my psychological research, that of a psychologically active poetics. In this present study, with its even narrower focus, I would like to sketch out a Poetics of Language, to demonstrate that Poetry brings on a state of linguistic autonomy and that it is reasonable to speak of an aesthetics of language.

In order to situate an aesthetics of language properly within the body of aesthetics in general, it is necessary first to determine what connections do or may exist between it and the aesthetics of painting, of sculpture, and of music. The word *image* is so deeply rooted in the visual, in what has been drawn or painted, that time and effort will be necessary before we gain control of the new reality the word *image* takes on when combined with the adjective *literary*.

Here ends that portion of the Introduction common to both "The Poetics of Fire" and "The Poetics of the Phoenix." The texts which follow are two versions of the conclusion to that Introduction, one taken from the "The Poetics of Fire" and the other from "The Poetics of the Phoenix."

Conclusion of the Introduction to "The Poetics of Fire"

A special kind of beauty exists which is born in language, of language, and for language. The one advantage in studying the literary imagination systematically, after all, is that issues, grown narrower, seem in sharper focus. We are in the presence truly of a *gift of the imagination*, offered simply in the simplest of intimacies, that between a book and its reader. Literary imagination is an aesthetic object offered by a writer to a lover of books. The poetic image might be characterized then as a direct relationship between two souls, a contact between two human beings pleased at the chance, respectively, to speak and to listen, a renewal of language in the raising of a new voice.

A literary image—I will repeat time and time again—must be naïve. Its glory is a function of its psychological ephemerality. An image renews language by enhancing the beauty of language. It is this power of enhancement, unhappily lacking in ourselves, which we find gripping when we read the work of poets.

In terms of method, then, my decision to study poetic expression, or literary imagination in its most highly specialized form, turned out a good one. In my choice to study poetic images of fire I was luckier still, for this involved the study of inflamed speech, reaching beyond all decorative intent, at times even aggressive in its beauty.[a] Expression in inflamed discourse always exceeds thought, and to analyze it is to work out a psychology of excess. The entire psyche is involved in such expression, carried away in the flow of excessive imagery. Images of fire are dynamic in their effect, and dynamic imagination contributes its dynamism to the psyche. This quality of excess which colors so much literary imagery lays bare a psychological reality in need of some elucidation.

As I got further along in my study of the structure and dynamic quality of imaginary language and of literary imagery understood as spoken expressions of the human will, it occurred to me only slowly and rather late that literary images serve more than merely as a means of expressing ideas or of translating the pleasures of sensory experience coherently into language but possess certain immediate powers of their own. So it is only now, following the lead that I have taken in my two most recent books on poetics, that I first begin to recognize the seeds of a poetic ontology in every least bit original literary image I encounter.

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[a] *A margin note directs one to the sheet's verso, and the text:* "This will have to be modified if I do only a small book on the Phoenix." *With this comment:* "If I do only the Phoenix, I must add here: 'I dedicate this little book to an excessive image.' In that case I would title the book *The Poetics of the Phoenix.*"

With the poetic image it is possible to apprehend the very instant language cries out to be written. To know the pleasure in writing is to give oneself over to it body and soul. George Sand recognized this when she wrote: "It is of little use to think as one writes; thought and language have little in common."[3] Writing, in some respects, exists on a plane above and beyond that of speech. A literary image stands out against the surface of a spoken language which has been indentured to meaning. Indeed, the powers of poetry, providing more than relief, serve also to consolidate transcendant qualities in a work which might otherwise appear the products of mere fantasy. Once one has observed this consolidation of literary imagery through the powers of poetry in action, once one has recognized literary imagery as poetic imagery rather than a playful literary exercise, one becomes convinced that *in Poetry, Language comes into its own [la Poésie est un Règne du langage]*. The Realm of Poetry no longer seems in continuity with that of Meaning. It exists above the oscillations of signifier and signified which psychoanalysts are obliged to measure in sorting out the puzzles of life. At times a poetic image may do violence to sense. The work of the surrealists provides many examples of such violence, for them a polemical necessity essential to awakening the freedom of imagination. But now that poetry has regained its claims to verticality, the aerial exhilaration of language itself becomes its own authority.

A poetic image only really speaks to one once it has been accepted as a psychologically privileged moment of exaltation, as a *transformation of one's being through Language.* A philosophy of Poetry [*du Règne poétique*] should suggest therefore a twofold heightening of existence, regarding both ordinary material reality and the ordinary psychological reality of daily life.

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[3] Cited by Pierre Reboul in the Introduction to his edition of George Sand, *Lélia* (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1960), xxix.

It is easy to be critical of this notion of psychological and metaphysical *relief*. In this general Introduction I shall answer only the very broadest of these criticisms; subtler objections will be addressed in the body of my work itself, in the light of specific examples.

It will be easily objected that to posit a Realm of the Poetic in which the obligations of day to day language are abandoned is to fly doubly from existence, both from that of the world and from that of our own experience.[b] Existentialist philosophers seem to me too easily convinced of the permanence of being in all of its manifestations. Being for them encompasses even the billowing edges of the existential fog. Hardly out of the cradle, they exist; and the reality of the world offers them an immediate guarantee of their existence in that world. Beginning from premises such as these, spoken expression can but be an echo of the natural sounds of existence—their own existence. These existentialist philosophers discuss the world and themselves in the same terms, and always the existence of someone or something is the guarantee of Language. But existence in Language is only one form of existence. Language is never truly *autonomous*. It is ever and always an instrument, at best a civilized rendition of the scream. Language in its essence always hints at an existence prior to its own existence. Language is expression, and expression is essentially a substitute for or modality of the speaking being.

In truth, inflamed speech, poetic imagery kindled at the hearth of language, responds to proponents of the theory of linguistic stability explosively, out of its own inner dynamism. If I am able to demonstrate here that in poetic imagery there burns an excess of life, an excess of language, I will be able to discover point by point the sense there is in speaking of *the heat of language*—that great hearth of undisciplined expression in which, afire with existence, in the almost mad ambition to spark some existence beyond, something beyond existence comes into being.

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[b] *A note in the margin reads*: "Should be changed—how grandiloquent! . . . Ah well, I wouldn't be the first."

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My purpose in this preamble has been to describe all that has led me to write yet another book on the image of fire. There should be no question as to my philosophic sincerity, given that I have changed over from one investigative method to another during the course of my research. A change in method sometimes represents an opportunity to further one's education. I begin this present study therefore with an attempt at concentrated reflection upon the specific problem of poetic language.

Allow me, then, to offer a brief review of the chapters of the book to follow.

My first task will be that of establishing, by means of many examples, that the imaginary language of the poets ushers in a reign of language all the more powerful for its complete lack of didacticism. I will attempt this demonstration primarily in Part I, in three related chapters entitled "The Phoenix," "Prometheus," and "Empedocles."

Even at first reading, Chapter One should demonstrate convincingly that legends considered beyond belief, which illustrate really nothing in experience and for which no valid basis in the psychology of day to day life can be found, nevertheless live on intensely in contemporary poetry. The Phoenix henceforth is to be considered a linguistic creature in the true sense of that term, a creature of poetic language—nothing more, but not a whit less. The Phoenix is a bookish creature, reborn incessantly, reborn *poetically*, and always freshly adorned. A Poetics of Fire compasses a multitude of Phoenixes. All who read the poets of fire diligently are certain to see the prestigious firebird suddenly rise into view.

Concerning the scientific study by mythologists of legend and myth, one may always wonder whether such research is not in fact spurred on and nourished by poetic interest in a legendary image. Archeologists, after all, do have their poetic side to them.

A Poetics of Fire compasses a multitude of Prometheuses as well, endlessly renewing history through literature, poets reinventing the first inventor. It is impossible to remain objective when studying the psychological make-up of a hero. The superhuman is a psychic splendor deserving of lyric expression. It is important to note however how very rarely these outbursts of Promethean superhumanity assume a form commensurate with lyric greatness. From the Promethean viewpoint, ideas take precedence over images. The test of fire is its usefulness. Prometheanism is an affair of the intellect, although the primary impact of a great image is never lost. It will always bear explaining how a man, a superman, a half-god, child of Zeus, was able to steal fire from the chariot of the sun. This tale, with all its abracadabra, is simply told in one portentous phrase: Prometheus stole fire from the gods for human use. So unlikely a story can only be filled out if we dream upon and analyze its imagery, locating the central image in its context of reverie. One must dream a great deal while turning an auger in its matrix for that humble orifice to be transformed into a tiny sun, a sunwheel. It is thus that one may pilfer fire from the crucible, brilliant with light.

Fire and light, manual labor and intellect—these are the poles which define the field of Prometheanism in all its immensity. The subject is too vast for the field of Promethean

Poetics ever to be unified. I will attempt to unravel the complex of images and ideas surrounding the invention of fire.

Chapter Three may appear at first a bid for unity, taking as its central image a solitary man, a philosopher and writer, who has lived a full life. But the image of Empedocles on Etna is so vast, his death lent so much grandeur by the fact of the volcano, that the philosophic headlines announcing the demise of the philosopher Empedocles stand as one of the world's great poems on the subject of Death.

If our study of images were neat and schematic in terms of ideas it would be tempting to see in Empedocles an anti-Prometheus. He should be considered then as the philosopher of Nothing and Nothingness, the very symbol of the World's demise: Empedocles, Prometheus of smoke.

But all things are cast in a positive light under the Reign of Poetics. There are no images of Nothingness, and poetic imagery alone is capable of immortalizing the instant of destruction. The figure of Empedocles provides the aesthetics of annihilation its principal poetic image, that of annihilation both beautiful itself and in the interest of beauty, a supreme act whose beauty is its principal cause.

My purpose in devoting many pages to Hölderlin's *Empedocles* is to demonstrate how uninteresting the play is itself as compared with the tragic apotheosis of its closing hymn. The drama's psychological insight is upstaged entirely by the poetic quality of this hymn. Psychological explications are so much time wasted. The death of Empedocles on Etna is the province of a Poetics of Fire uniquely.

I suggested in my most recent book, *The Poetics of Reverie*, how relevant the causal dialectics of *animus* and *anima* can be to the study of reverie. But there my principal concern was with reveries of *anima*, as relaxed a form of reverie as is possible to attain. I promised in the final pages of that text to come out with another work on reveries of *animus*, which is what I have done quite intentionally here in three chapters devoted to the Phoenix, to Prometheus, and to Empedocles. All three are imposing figures. Only by giving oneself over to the will to power, to an ideal of absolute *animus* turned away from the gentleness of *anima*, can one appreciate how powerful they really are.

But what makes the character of *animus* in these three chapters loom larger still is my insistence on proving a point. I want to prove a hypothesis mentioned often in the pages above: that in Poetry, Language comes into its own. It should be the work of a poetics to establish this reign of language, to render it independent of the obligations of ideational coherence, and to free it from servitude to meaning.

But, in proving a point, one ceases to live any other life than that of pure and hardened *animus*.

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Nevertheless, I should have no peace with myself if in completing this book, which is doubtless the last I will ever write on the literary imagination, I entirely abandoned not only reveries of *anima* but those as well in which *animus* and *anima* enjoy a pleasant coexistence. I have therefore grouped together in Part II of this essay, "The Experience of Fire," a series of brief, informal chapters which return to reveries discussed already in my previous books.

This Introduction ends here. I discovered elsewhere, in a separate file labeled "The Experience of Fire," a series of drafts of a statement defending the notion of "experience." Here it is in its final version:

I have grouped all of the chapters of Part II of my essay under the general title "The Experience of Fire." My final chapter will be devoted to justifying this title. Some such attempt is indispensible, for the apparent clarity of the term "experience" [*vécu*] proves a deceptive one.[4] Characteristic of applied Phenomenology is the attempt to define "life experience" at the level of primary consciousness. That which one experiences inwardly, in one's own self, is said to enjoy the privilege of clear awareness. But this way of defining awareness of experience says too much with a single word. The term "experience" makes far too much of everyday experience which, like any other, must be refined through serious analysis.

Often today this term "experience" is used by philosophers to stake a claim, wielded against other philosophers whom they accuse rather too quickly of ignoring experience, of being content to juggle factitious abstractions, of abandoning "being" for "thinking." This problem does not seem to me so simple as this; and as I myself employ the term "experience," so often charged with existential meaning,[c] it is best that I explain what I am up to from the start.

What is it then that makes one think one has grasped life, all of life, the very depths of life, in a momentary event, in the relative intensity of some exceptional psychological choice? *Experience* remains merely ephemeral if it cannot be *experienced again*; and how can we exclude from our definition of experience those things we have *imagined*, of all our offspring the most ill-behaved? Human experience and human reality are dependent upon imaginary being. I hope to show that a poetics of life lives life in reliving it, in raising the stakes, in detaching life from the poverty and monotony of nature and passing not just from fact to impulse [*du fait à la valeur*] but—in the highest act of poetry—from egotistical impulse to one inclusive of others like oneself susceptible to valorization through poetry.

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[4] Gaëton Picon speaks quite rightly of the "confused tonality of experience" in his *L'usage de la lecture* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1960), I, 182.

[c] *Fragment, dated March 1962*: "To live in language, by language, and for language is for me the only existentialism possible."

But who really lives life anyway, experiencing nature in all of its fullness and diversity? Nature lives on in us without us. To live life well is to express life poorly; if one expresses life too well, one is living it no longer. Life within us is neither an essence to be touched at will nor a containable entity. The human being is a swarm of beings. Dim thoughts and wild imaginings produce the honey of existence, the very stuff of the poetic life. The life of a human being has no center. In what periphery may its pulse be found? Since life throbs most strongly in self-expression, where then is true life, excessive life, to be located? In what poem, what image? Human beings are never fixed in space or time as others think, and are not to be found even where they themselves tell others to inquire. Life should not be understood as a homogeneous, flowing mass which carries one's entire being along amidst the general becoming. Often, almost always, one's being is a stagnant water crossed by currents. In what direction does life flow in us?

Bergson demonstrated easily that in measuring one's experience of life the chronometer is a useless instrument, untrustworthy at best. Clocks count out other people's time, an external time incapable of measuring our own duration. But are we not ourselves the scattered seed of a thousand other temporal dimensions, alive with "times" which never find the rhythm suitable to regulating our own? Among these temporalities, which would best accent the multiple dynamisms of our inner being? It is enough to change images to change one's temporality. In the realm of fire, each of us becomes a brazier of beings. Where inner fire is concerned, our energy and life source, is not perhaps the most important rhythm that of ash which keeps tomorrow's fires burning?

Conclusion of the Introduction to "The Poetics of the Phoenix"

(continued from p.10, paragraph 2)

The perceptible, objective world is therefore left behind, and one falls back upon one's subjectivity. Objectively, the glory in a poetic image lies in its ephemerality. Sensory evocation, not the same as sensory experience, cannot maintain an image present to the senses. In short, with poetic imagery one enters a realm of aesthetics foreign to the manifestations of material aesthetics, aesthetics responsible for the creation of objects.

I once thought a philosophic revolution necessary for one to truly enter the poetic realm. I worked hard to master the overthrow of objectivity by subjectivity that phenomenology teaches. I attempted seriously—prideful comedy—to make myself believe that I myself was author and creative subject of the poetic images I read. But phenomenological method enjoined me to credit primary or personal consciousness with the creation of beautiful images. My desire to transform the mind's activity into a thing of beauty [*pancaliser le psychisme*] was sincere. It was in reading poetry that I felt myself most beautifully alive.

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To feel most beautifully alive means to be reading something beautiful, ready always to apprehend in the flow of language the sudden flash of poetry.

In endeavoring to experience these poetic flashes, both the large and the small, in my own person in accordance with the basic rules of elementary phenomenology, I discovered that poetic language opens a door upon the very heights of language. Here language beyond language, a poetic language, gives transcendence form. One might live double lives if only one might live poetically, speaking the language of poetry instinctively, as if one meant it.

But it is here, concerning the vertical tendencies of poetic language, that I wish to make a case for what distinguishes my own work from traditional psychoanalysis in making the most of poetic expression. This will be the last methodological issue[d] joined in this brief Introduction.

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In so short a preface, the objections I feel it possible to raise to observations made by psychoanalysts concerning the psychology of language are naturally not aimed at the principles of psychoanalysis themselves. The minor as well as major works of Freud possess in my opinion an inaugural tone which should convince us of the impossibility of undertaking the study of psychology without first comprehensively reforming our methods of observation. The introduction of something new [*une valeur nouvelle*] in language, whether in the form of a new clarity of thinking, a lovely image, or a clever aphorism, amounts to a *linguistic departure* [*départ de parole*] whose place in the aesthetics of the mind is to be noted by philosophers.

In the pages which follow, I would like to demonstrate first of all that Freud's followers have failed to address the issue of linguistic aesthetics, and secondly that such an aesthetics is of practical use in maintaining mental health.

I stake my entire argument on the reality of an *absolute sublimation*. Poets, according to Patrice de la Tour du Pin, "ground themselves in ascending" [*trouvent "leur base en s'élevant"*].[5] A grounding of this sort lies at the very threshold of absolute sublimation. I have suggested this notion already in previous books. I wish now to make it the principal argument in this small one.

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[d] *Fragment*: "In my Introduction, I will need to better situate discussion with respect to psychoanalysis. This is more than a conflict of methodologies. Psychoanalysts fail to attain to a linguistic liberation because they live between the two poles of signifier and signified. They oscillate back and forth forever falling short of the threshold of liberation through images."

[5] Patrice de la Tour du Pin, *La vie recluse en poésie* (Paris: Plon, 1938), 85.

There exist certain absolute images, that is to say images stripped of their excess of emotional baggage, which no longer serve to sublimate anything. Poetic distillation has been carried out successfully, poetic purity been attained; the quintessence of poetry stands naked, stripped of all residual sense. This enthronement of language on high, where it belongs, is something psychoanalysts never think to consider. All images to them remain suffused with poorly elaborated psychological matter—matter, in other words, resistant to elaboration.

For psychoanalysts there is always resistance to change, always depths below the surface. They look deep and they look hard, seeing clear into the basements of being. But there they risk losing all sense of altitude, all sympathy for the psyche's vertical impulse. For psychoanalysts, depth suggests stability, solidity, and permanence. For psychoanalysts, fine clothes are well made. The finer the clothes, the better their making, for they are cut from the whole cloth of neurosis. The innermost individuality of a brilliant mind is but this, a sort of harlequin pieced together out of tatters.

From here the elucidation of hidden psychological reality becomes possible: "You reveal too much, you must be hiding something." Judgments like this are pronounced by psychoanalysts *against* their patients. And when the need for finery, the will to ornament, the pleasure in decorative flourish becomes evident in the very language that is spoken, psychoanalysts don't always quite know how to enter into playful dialogue in order to get to the bottom of things. They condemn linguistic finery outright. When expression becomes too subtle, adding nuance to nuance, psychoanalysts read a barrier, a screen of intricate repressions. The psychoanalyst's perspicacious gaze is met by the stare of a clever and furtive inner being. As was once said, humans were given language so they could hide their thoughts. But to see this as the workings of a mind well armed in the protection of its secrets is to fail to make allowance for the exuberance of language busy at the work of imagining. It is normal for language to flow into new images.

When a patient speaks excitedly, the tendency of psychoanalysts is to read this as a bad sign. They have a nasty, condemnatory, madhouse term for such behavior: logorrhea. Psychoanalysts appear comfortable with the thought that excitement about speaking is a substitute excitement. They do not consider for a moment the positive impact it may have on the psyche. In any case, for psychoanalysts, exuberance of this sort is a surface affair. They seek psychological causalities deeper down.[e]

As a result, for those who dream of a poetically whole language, psychoanalysts seem no better than psychologists with one-track minds or, to be more exact, psychologists who only rise to the occasion halfway, knowing not the vastness of the verticality of language. And, as it never occurs to them that the powers of language are poetic powers of ascendancy, capable of reaching to the heights and beyond, they are insensitive to the practical side of such vertical impulse, that by which poets, the great linguisters, get carried away. They would be shocked to learn that these explosions of poetic speech are manifestations of a vital impulse of a very human sort. Through poetry, the vitality of language is eternally renewed. Reading poetry provides one a thousand opportunities to re-experience the infancy of language.

One of the most direct effects of language is to be discovered in language which imagines. In dreaming their way through the tangle of poetic imagery, phenomenologists are able to pick up where psychoanalysts have left off. Perhaps these two techniques in combination, with their two opposing methods—one looking backward, and the other forward to a language shamelessly unsupervised; one focused on the depths, the other on the heights—might, in their give and take, help pinpoint the articulation between impulse and inspiration, between thrust and aspiration upwards. One must always maintain one's connection to the past and yet ceaselessly pull away from it.[f] To remain in touch with the past requires a love of memory. To remain in touch with the past requires a constant imaginative effort. And these contradictory obligations are what keep a language thoroughly alive.

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[e] *Fragment*: "As paradoxical as this may appear, it was in examining unexpected literary imagery that I first sensed the insufficiency of psychoanalytic treatment. Poets, drunk with new language, in their desire to sing, in their quest for essentially original imagery—poetry or nothing at all—leave common readers and the community of explicative language far behind. Psychoanalysts look *beneath* an image to 'explain' it; they rarely think to look *overhead*."

A whole philosophy of language, then, must combine the teachings of psychoanalysis with those of phenomenology. To psychoanalysis must be added poeticoanalysis if all of the playfulness of language is to be accounted for and all of its expressive means and capabilities are to be given free rein.

When it comes to performing the poeticoanalysis of an expressive personality with any finesse, psychoanalysts can hardly be counted on. Psychoanalysts who love and make time for poetry every day of their lives are few and far between. One's poeticoanalysis then will have to be a matter of refining the inner joy one takes in one's own imagination. Every psychoanalysis of the self shall henceforth begin with poeticoanalysis of the self. While it is easy to psychoanalyze oneself when one is old, to obtain a passionate, high-quality poeticoanalysis it is better to be young. My long tale of methodological torment thus does not end simply. The more work I do, the more diverse I become. To achieve a unified existence one would have to live every age of one's life at once.

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Yet, insofar as this book is concerned, the issues seem clear. I hope to show that a poetics may be constituted around a single image. If successful, this will argue unambiguously in favor of a more general thesis often mentioned in my earlier books: that Poetry, or Poetics, is a veritable *Reign of Language.* To explicate poetic language in the terms of ordinary language is to fail to recognize what is special about each. The realm of poetry must first be entered if its coherence is to be appreciated.

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[f] *Fragment*: "To climb well it is necessary that one begin in the depths. To climb well it is necessary that one put those depths out of mind."

In truth the Phoenix never ceases to live, to die, and to be born again in poetry, through poetry, and for poetry. The poetic forms the Phoenix assumes are astonishing both in their innovation and diversity. These poetic Phoenixes are so young it is hard at times to recognize traditional form beneath the tangle of poetic guises. The gallery of poetic Phoenixes assembled in this book could be expanded at will were I simply to read more or more widely. And I feel certain some new Phoenix or extraordinary, phoenixical creature will be discovered in the work of each new poet. This Phoenix will sometimes hardly have a name, and will hide its head at times in metaphoric splendor. Sometimes just a pinch of Phoenix or of aromatic spice suffices for the fabulous bird to rise.

In literature, the Phoenix may be born again
    from nothing
    from the ashes of one feather
    from the sound of its last syllable
as when, for instance, a poet needs a word to rhyme with onyx.[6] [g]

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[6]
Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur onyx,
L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient, lampadophore,
Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le Phénix
Que ne recueille pas de cinéraire amphore

Sur les crédences, au salon vide . . .

From Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poésies,* including several poems published for the first time (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), 126.

[g] *In notes on reading taken prior to his work on "The Poetics of the Phoenix,"* G. B. *had earmarked this sonnet in "yx" as fitting material with which to develop the theme of "poetry beyond sense" (his margin note), a theme echoed in "The Poetics of Fire" in its Introduction especially:* "The Realm of Poetry no longer seems in continuity with the Realm of Meaning. *It exists above the oscillations of signifier and*

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In this respect the Phoenix actually is a literary creature. Readers not entirely convinced of this should wander through the Phoenix Museum found in the last chapter of this book. They will learn there that to understand the splendors of phoenixical imagery the somber dialectics of life and death do not suffice. For the poet the Phoenix is a pure pulsation of beauty, a *birth* into poetry. The death of the Phoenix is but prelude to the rebirth of a creature poetically more beautiful still. The Phoenix is a literary creature indeed, product of a literature of intensity.

But has such not always been the case?

This brings me to what has most troubled me as an author. To write a book devoted to the Phoenix requires a rich erudition. The task calls for an historian well-versed in both the study of mythology and that of religion, able to make sense of the many Phoenixes from the East who made their homes in Egypt. I have read with enthusiasm all the books that I could find, and studied carefully Jean Hubaux and Maxime Leroy,[7] as well as the chapters on the Phoenix in Carl-Martin Edsman's *Ignis divinus.*[8]

And yet, while I have admired the courage that it must

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signified . . ." Those notes themselves read as follows: "In mailing the celebrated sonnet to Cazalis in 1868, containing the often cited line:

Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore,

Mallarmé wrote: 'I excerpt this sonnet I once dreamed of composing [this summer] from a book I hope to write on the subject of Language. It is inverted [*inverse*], which is to say its meaning, if it has one—but even if it has not, its poetry to me seems a sufficient consolation—is evoked through an internal mirage of the words themselves.' This sonnet was first called 'Sonnet allégorique de lui-même [An Allegorical Sonnet on Itself].' The title corresponds quite well to this self-referentiality which reinforces the ontology of its poetic expression: 'I took this subject from a totally worthless sonnet, self-reflexive in every respect.'(Quoted by Henri Mondor, *Vie de Mallarmé* [Paris: Gallimard, 1941], 267-68)."

[7] Jean Hubaux and Maxime Leroy, *Mythe du Phénix dans les littératures grecque et latine* (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Liège, 1939), fasc. 82.

[8] Carl-Martin Edsman, "*Ignis divinus*": *Le feu comme moyen de rajeunissement et d'immortalité—contes, légendes, mythes et rites* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1949).

have taken to order and arrange these symbols, frozen forever now in their pure historicity, one question comes perpetually to mind: how is the archeologist expected to live in this charnel house of images? Mustn't the poetic character of mythologic imagery have some place in the strictly objective interests of historians? The idea that one could arrive at an objective assessment of facts so much beyond belief as these, by repressing their poetic resonance entirely, strikes me as impossible. Archeologists, after all, take too much joy in their discoveries not to be poets themselves. As I am not sufficiently learned to receive their teachings fully, my outlook has been that of the phenomenologist throughout: I have taken interest in their interests, reading the many scholarly books with my imagination wide awake, always in the hopes of finding nourishment for my phoenixical imagination. And no Phoenix from out of the cold dead past, not one, has left me indifferent.

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With a view to organizing somewhat the ensuing discussion, whose purposes and interests are many, let me indicate briefly the shape my small essay is to take.

In Chapter One, neither willing nor able to adequately connect the images at work in myth to those so much more freely imagined by poets, I begin by presenting several somewhat facile syntheses of images and ideas to be found in the archeological literature. We will see how the ancient image finds a role to play in unsophisticated, hastily drawn commentaries which all but ignore more recent imagery. In comparison with the effective use to which the Phoenix has been put by contemporary poets, these paraphrases of the mythic image will seem altogether inert.

In Chapter Two, preliminary as well, I look to the real world for pre-texts of images which may serve to legitimate for timorous psychologists the wild image of a bird of light become a world event. The Phoenix is a bird which has been considered an animal. It has its place in learned volucraries.[9] I will confess this much here: I glimpsed the Phoenix flying in the sky before its name was known to me. My own case should provide an opportunity to study how connections are made in a lesser imagination, for which a bit of reality is always necessary if an extraordinary image is to be produced.

Only in Chapter Three, my last, will I discuss the Phoenix as characteristically found at the heart of a poetics. Here all influence of history is lost, tradition has no role to play. Phoenixes today, the Phoenixes of poets today, are without ancestors. They drag no train of symbols along behind them, illustrate no old ideas. They are purely literary images, completely vital and alive, beneficiaries of the Surrealist revolution. They are the eminent realities of a natural surrealism. The reasonable literary critic will find it easy to denounce them as excessive, reluctant to admit that poetic language today, thanks to continuous surrealist activity, has the right to any excess. Some of the images in our Museum, if ever fanned to flames by interpretation, might serve as phoenixical bombs some latter-day surrealist might use against the fortress of the rhetoricians.

But let us begin with polemics less noisy than these. Let us touch base with tradition.

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[9] Pierre Belon du Mans, *L'histoire de la nature des oiseaux avec leurs descriptions, et naïfs portraits retirés du naturel* (Paris, 1555), is quite useful and accurate in its observations. Chapter XXXV, two and a half pages long, is devoted entirely to the Phoenix which thereby takes its factual place among the other birds. The Phoenix, however, has a curious manner of brooding its eggs. Some authors, Belon reports, claim that the female "both lays her eggs and hatches them on the back of the male." The copy of this book in the Bibliothèque Nationale is in excellent condition—yet the pages which concern the Phoenix are stained. The readers who have sought instruction regarding this extraordinary bird must have been numerous indeed.

1

The Phoenix, A Linguistic Phenomenon

> Language transcends all being, beginning with language itself. Trembling fearfully it takes to the air; and often, after giving life to language, one can never take hold of it again.
>
> PIERRE JEAN JOUVE, *Proses*

I

CAN THE PHOENIX, an image of pure fantasy yet as well a simple and specific being studied by mythologists, provide fitting subject matter for a phenomenology of the imagination? This question has long given me pause. In studying creative acts of the imagination it is doubtless most reasonable to work with images which have no history, that is to say with images born of our own dreams. This is especially so given that phenomenological examination of an image requires that the phenomenologist internalize and re-experience the psychological phenomenon to be elucidated. If it can be demonstrated, however, that an *extraordinary* image is produced normally along the axis of dreams, and that the image of the Phoenix subsists frictionlessly in language; if it is possible for us to show specific instances in which the Phoenix takes on, retains, or reassumes a poetic existence in a triumph of linguistic sublimation; then we will have demonstrated, in a particularly difficult and even desperate arena, that phenomenology leads us to interpret even highly traditional images in new ways.

What strikes one first about the ancient image is how the extraordinary is the rule. The imagination is forced immediately to come to terms with a fabulous being. The Phoenix in fact is doubly the stuff of fable. It both bursts into flame of its own fires, and rises again from its own ash. We, who no longer believe what our imaginations tell us, must attempt to live this double miracle out. Because people once believed in the existence of the Phoenix, it will be necessary for us to believe in it a little bit ourselves, to know it as it once was known. I am obliged as a phenomenologist then to believe in an unbelievable image, and yet to do so without slipping into out-and-out credulity. Help is provided by poets who have reinfused the legendary bird with life through subtle imagistic variations. It is precisely through adherence to the poetic being of the image that it becomes possible to realize the necessary fusion of prudence and enthusiasm. Admiration in this way serves as a substitute for belief—belief not in a real creature but rather in a creature born of heightened language, a *poetic creature*. In considering this Phoenix as imagined by the poets we will find that we have entered the pure Realm of the Poetic.

I will need to demonstrate that the image of the Phoenix is essentially an image become Verb, an image which gives rise to a multiplicity of metaphors. While a painter like Alberto Martini may well entitle a canvas representing the Phoenix burning in its fiery nest *Love*, this title too far exceeds the image of a flaming bird.[1] The metaphors of painters leap over intermediary thoughts too rapidly. Poets will help us to dream more.

It is through language that the fabulous takes flight most fully. Fabulous images need to be told time and time again, variations at each telling always contributing something new. A visual image is but the work of an instant. The veritable fable is the spoken fable, told and not recited, avowed in all truth and enthusiasm, not declaimed. In short, fable belongs to the realm of poetry; its function goes beyond the fixity of a made image. The Phoenix of the poets, exploding with flaming and inflammatory words, finds its place at the center of a boundless metaphoric field. An image of this sort does not leave the imagination undisturbed. It is ever born again of the detritus of its spent expressions—ever and again shaking the lazy phenomenologist up.

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[1] Gustav René Hocke, *Die Welt as Labyrinth* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1957), fig. 248.

II

If I were a psychological pollster unexpectedly offered an opportunity to interrogate a number of human subjects, I would enjoy the chance to draw up what professionals term a battery of *tests of the imagination*. One of the tests of the imagination of fire would consist in the simple association of two words: *fire* and *bird*. There would be no need for leading questions, no need to add: "What does this expression mean to you?" Verbs are called into play as soon as two big words collide. Language itself in such a case is shaken from complacency, freed from those habits which tend to complete a sentence without deep expressive energies being brought to bear.

A test of the imagination must be *liberating* always. This is a difficult liberation to bring off, because all communication tends to foreground denotative significance. We ask "meaningful" questions even if we are willing to accept a certain range of response, content with anarchy itself. Psychoanalysts are well aware of the reverberation that a word may have in the depths of the psyche. They make use of this operational shock in uncovering repressed memories. But the ambitions of those who test the imagination are vaster still, undoubtedly too vast—for of what use, after all, are ambitions that are not too vast? Tests of the imagination must reverberate ahead, not just behind, detecting psychic powers which imagine even too intensely, probing that part of the mind which believes in the beauty—which is to say, in the reality—of firebirds. Imagination alone is capable of teaching language to transcend itself.

Fire and *bird*. By this complex of terms, valorized through their union and out of which the firebird is born, multiple realities are joined: a flame takes flight; wings of lightning split the dark of a stormy night; a handful of resplendent birds brightens a summer sky.

But all these images we wish to examine (before considering those with more traditional attachments to the Phoenix) are *dynamic* images rather than substantial ones. Our firebirds are not images of the substance of fire, but rather images of speed. Firebirds are *flashes of fire*.

When these flashes of fire, lightning or flight, surprise us in our contemplation, they appear to our eyes as *heightened, universal moments* not so much ours as given to us, moments which mark the memory and return in dreams, retaining their imaginary dynamism. We might term them, in fact, Phoenixes of Reverie.

III

Before seeking to understand the root image, allow me to describe what in my own experience might well have served as its imaginary pretext.

I saw my first firebird plunge into the river near where I lived. It was a bright hot day when that river best deserves its name, the Aube [Dawn], made wider by childhood, still and blue as the sky. The firebird surged from the waters like an arrow fired at the heavens. Was it the bird of light or the astonished, solitary child who gave that startled cry? The bird, in a flash, was off again into the sky, disturbing the mirror, trailing droplets of water that had been perhaps its only prey. A kingfisher, blue as iron from the fire, descended from beyond the treetops! The bird once gone, the dreams began. Did not this firebird make its nest in the June sun? But such a criminal offense against still water! In nature, anything moving quickly is criminal. Might not this flame from the sky have admired itself peacefully in the water's mirror? How could a bird so gorgeous yet be so voracious in its appetites? What a dramatic cross between kingfisher and silver bleak! Might so much cruelty dropping from out of the sky have stirred the philosophy of a child?

Even a minor event in the life of a child is an event of that child's world and thus a world event. A memory such as mine becomes, in its very singularity, a naturally enacted cosmic drama. When a memory can be elevated to the universal in this way, it is hard to say whether it refers back to a moment in historic time or to the birth of a legend. My Kingfisher is the Phoenix of my Land of Recollection.

After my prodigal had returned into the void, astonishment turned to melancholy. Another time, when I was no longer young, I saw the kingfisher again on the same river. It was another sunny summer day, the two of us there together! I experienced the joy of adding dimension and depth to an image by coupling it with legends I had read in books. As legends serve to express the world's beauty, it is fitting that they should return to one in the contemplation of an extraordinary image. A bird moving at lightning speed is the fundamental image of the Phoenix.

The great Phoenixes whose prestige I had admired in the history of Myth lived one year or one hundred years; mine, ours, could last but an instant. But what an instant is that which comes to symbolize the very height of happiness!

The Phoenix-kingfisher is yet to touch my life again. We encounter so little of importance over the course of our days on earth. Has one person in one hundred glimpsed the kingfisher first hand? Perhaps a hunter who aims at everything he sees. But, in taking such careful aim, does he really see? Once his catch has long been bagged, does he recall that summer sky, those ripples on the river? How could he ever think or dream the bird had met its end out of the excess of its glory? Or does he recall instead, descending from the sublime to the ridiculous, that old Epicurean tag: "Pretty feathers, scant meat"?[2]

This seems more evidence that to look closely may be a means not to dream at a distance. Dreamers *see* so far as they are willing to sharpen their vision, contemplating the world, an object worthy of attention. The living arrow, firebird, image of flame, stands at a world's center.

But, for a change of pace, perhaps we might speak of poets.

IV

The cosmic analysis of several poems will show better than any philosophic ramblings the virtues of an image brief and rare, a veritable icon of rapidity.

This image was described by T. S. Eliot as an instant of light:

After the kingfisher's wing
Has answered light to light, . . . the light is still.[3]

To achieve this stillness, it is necessary first to have known stillness emerging out of lethargy. So long as limpid water drowses in the summer sun, light remains forgetful of its own creative spark. But the violence of the luminous dart brightens the flat light of the waters. The poet experiences this instant of active light as a veritable *break in time* [*relief du temps*]. Eliot's poem ends with these two lines:

Ridiculous the waste sad time
Stretching before and after.[4]

Cosmic time seems here to heighten ordinary time, which for the most part runs on unproductively. The poet here has scaled the universal heights in order to experience that flash. The torpor of reverie is shaken as in a dream. One must keep one's eyes wide opened and yet believe in nothing one sees.

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[2] "Both humans and cats detest the bright-colored kingfisher." Chapman Pincher, *Secrets et mystères du monde animal* (Paris: Stock, 1952), 150.

[3] T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*: "Burnt Norton," 137-38.

[4] *Ibid.*, 177-78.

Yes, that was quite a day, a Phoenix day, with neither a before nor after. Everything, every last thing in the universe, grew in that light.

And on that day the poet made a poem.

Eliot's kingfisher, his Bird of Arabie, his scentless Phoenix, is an image looted from the grandeur of a sudden poetic insight. It provides a worthy illustration of the Poetics of the Instant, pivotal chapter in the Poetics of Time.

T. S. Eliot as a metaphysical poet managed to strip the firebird's fulguration bare as a rupture in time. Another, more subtle author has surrounded that Phoenix of the countryside, the kingfisher, flying fire, fiery flower growing in the light of the imagination, in a multiplicity of contradictions instead, heaping up antitheses at each phrase. The Good Lady of Nohant describes her encounter with a waif in one of Berry's country lanes in this way:

> The *Chemin de Napes*, where none of you, dear readers, are likely ever to set foot, as it leads nowhere worth the risk of getting mired on the way, is a breakneck path bordered by a ditch in the slimy water of which grow the most beautiful *nymphaeae* in the world, whiter than camellias, more fragrant than lilies, purer than the vesture of virgins, surrounded by salamanders and grass snakes living in degradation among the flowers, while the kingfisher darts like live lightning along the banks, skimming the rank, luxuriant vegetation of the swamp with its fiery trail.[5]

The novelist has chosen here to crown her literary effusions with the bird of fire. Some might find the moderation of the English poet preferable; but perhaps consideration of these texts together will permit us to define what I would gladly term a *field of imagery*. These two poles define a range of imagination running from gluttonous excess to an inability to fix on any image in particular, a compulsive joining together of water lily and bird, live flower and flower of fire. Analysis of this bipolar rhythm reveals an imagination working to choose between hyperbole and restraint. I open myself to both tendencies, well aware that restraint in an image is the product of repression just as exuberance may well tend to mechanical exaggeration. But at least my freedom to imagine is restored by these extremes, and all necessity to associate signifier with signified left far behind.

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[5] George Sand, *François le Champi* (rev. ed.; Paris: Michel Lévy, 1858), "Notice," 2.

I mean by these remarks to conjure up the notion of a fully autonomous imagination with no connection to reality. Indeed I have chosen as my example a creature of the real world, a kingfisher with solid ornithological credentials, and yet two lines of imagery are to be noted, two imaginary necessities which have no point at all in common. The kingfisher, a bird with neither temporal nor cosmic function, has been transformed into a being both temporally and cosmically exceptional with two sweeps of the pen. These literary texts, one by T. S. Eliot and the other by George Sand, witness to the delirium of signification.

River dreamers may be reminded here of tales of *rarae aves*, rare birds, but these lack blood enough to face the rigors of a poetics of fire. For me to better validate the case that I have made thus far concerning my personal Phoenix, one would have to have seen eagles, vultures, condors, these and all other bolt-bearing birds capable of rending the sky. More than one author of a medieval volucrary slipped a Phoenix in among such mighty birds as these, mixing historic legend with legendary tales of travel. Those who have traveled far and seen much feel that they have earned the right to loosen their imaginations. As I will point out from time to time in the course of my analyses, it is this which explains our need to record the creatures of our dreams alongside those we encounter in reality.

I have avoided all temptation here to clarify the history of myth. Laborers more qualified than I have made that attempt already. But objective understanding of evidence is one thing, subjective response quite another. Erudition and unschooled impressions must go hand in hand. Should you wish to feel the marvelous tales of the Phoenix resonate within, you must discover the root image of the bird of fire in yourself, in memory or in your fondest dreams. Lacking this, you will travel widely in the fields of folklore and mythology as a mere scholar, learning more and yet believing less and less. The ever growing body of facts accumulated by the archeologists, historians of religion, and mythologists will lend your work an ever greater *objectivity* in accordance with the wise laws of archeological science. But this same objectivity, swelling with the number of well-ordered facts, risks to close you off from that side of yourself that dreams. This is why when a poem has been written under the sign of the Phoenix one is inclined to see only mythological pastiche. A poem however must be true, humanly true. Forgotten Phoenixes can come to life again in the beauty of a poem, reimmersed in the atmosphere of dreams, rediscovered in the wonderment of sunbirds. Archeological findings serve therefore as opportunities for the poetic imagination. Poets take endless personal pleasure in reading works of scholarship which demonstrate that long ago their most fantastic images were taken seriously.[6]

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[6] J. Hubaux's and M. Leroy's important book, *Le myth du phénix dans la littérature latine et grecque* (Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Liège, 1939), helps one discover the original image of the Phoenix under various guises. They devote many pages, for example, to establishing the relationship between the *eagle* and the *Phoenix*. The eagle is more than just king of the skies. For anyone who dreams about power [*des valeurs*], the fire in a piercing gaze finds its model in the eagle's eye. The imperious individual wishes to see as straight and far as the bird of the zenith. What a pleasure it is then to learn from an aside that the eagle is a Phoenix! The active presence of the ancient symbol is revealed in a detail: the eagles of the Roman legions were perfumed and annointed. It must not be forgotten that the Phoenix is the bird of aromatics, scented fire. The eagle then witnesses in *reality* to the *imaginary* powers of the Phoenix.

What distinguishes phenomenological examination in this regard is belief, however slight, in the unbelievable images dug out of the dim past by archeological investigations. With luck it is possible to hold onto this phenomenological nuance, summoning it back before each new image. If one learns too much, however, return to what Mallarmé termed the "deep-running waters of innocence [*les eaux vives de la naïveté*]" becomes more difficult. In such a case the phenomenologist is obliged to transform the innocence of traditional images into personal innocence. For it is with innocence that fantastic images must be approached. Phenomenologists are lucky in their method, which permits them the simplicity of first impressions in their encounters with fantastic imagery. Phenomenological investigation alone enjoys the privilege of distinguishing what is natural from what has been fabricated, images that have been experienced from those that have been faked. The contrivances of human intelligence can thus be set aside. There is an underlying innocence at the core of this procedure. One discovers the Phoenix to be a natural image of the experience of fire and an advertisement for the Poetics of Fire at one and the same time.

V

Let us turn now, after this preliminary consideration of the possibility of experiencing the Phoenix ingenuously in the simple events of a sunny summer day, to more traditional images, and attempt to participate in the *cosmic drama* of the Phoenix.

It is important first of all to remember that the Phoenix is a *universal creature*, unique and solitary. It presides over the magic moments of life and death, a strange synthesis of the powerful images of nest and pyre, attaining greatest glory in its final conflagration: an ultimate image which would take as its inevitable title "The Triumph of Death."

Yet whence doth Death triumphant come? Both myth and philosophy begin with a choice: Myself or the Universe. A decisive causal dialectics suggests itself here as appropriate for dreaming upon the conflagration of the Phoenix, for which either the Sun or the inner substance of the Phoenix itself is responsible. Does the bird take flame by concentrating the sun's rays or, hearth alive with fire, does it prepare its own demise?

In some versions of the legend the sun ignites the pyre with a single ray of dawn light. The Phoenix fired by a hair of Phoebus is truly a celestial bird, enjoying a solar fate in both life and death. The beginning and end of the Phoenix's life are in alignment with the heavenly signs. Its fate is a solar drama [*une héliodromie*]. The Phoenix speaks *astral truths*. If one moves in the direction these legends point, it becomes possible to experience a thinking form of reverie at work making sense of celestial phenomena. In the brilliance of its death the Phoenix becomes celestial fire. There is abundant evidence that such astronomic significance has been ascribed to the life of the Phoenix throughout the centuries. Some legends, for example, specify that the Phoenix has three hundred and sixty feathers, "as many as there are days in the year." More modern reveries have hastened to correct this, adding five feathers more. But poor the dream that counts!

Along the other branch of this dialectic, pertaining to more personal fire, one dreams the essence of the Phoenix better. Or to put this differently, it is in the excess of imagery of the experience of fire that one is able to discover the veritable phenomenologic meaning of the Phoenix, formed in one's earliest consciousness out of flaming desire to take flame. To imagine the legend of the Phoenix sincerely I must always become the Phoenix of myself!

This ideal of fire longed for yet not suffered in the flesh amounts to a maternal preparation of the Phoenix's pyre like a final cradle, a cradle of death. The marvelous bird gathers aromatic spices which are dampened fires, fires still in check.

For a dreamer of words like myself, the term "aromatic" contains its own buried heat. Dreamers anticipate the tremendous ardor of fire in the heat of spices. In the Phoenix posed upon its nest of aromatics, burning on its pyre of odiferous plants, we have an element in the mythology of odor. Some myths draw their energies from odor alone. There is a critical fire in spices ready to burst forth when the maximal aromatic concentration has been attained. In that moment each spice will produce its own Phoenix. A dialectic of imagination opens up in reverie concerning spices which either retain their substance or disperse it. Two verbs are necessary to express this twofold power: to embalm and to exbalm. In selecting its spices, the Phoenix choreographs and perfumes its own annihilation—the very essence of incense, existing only as it dissipates.

But reverie is not always so reassuring as it is in the case of the major elements. Reverie seeks to imagine its own circumstances, thinking or believing that it thinks. Reverie would seek to inform one just how the Phoenix sets itself afire. Mythologists report the existence of texts explaining that fire results from the Phoenix beating its wings. We should need no reminder that the beating of wings is a form of personal friction, that rubbing is the original source of warmth. Shall we read wings beating over a kindling spark as a metaphor for breathing fire into life? Does a sufficient kindling of reasonable cause exist to explain this prodigy?

But nothing could be more foreign to the adequate explanation of an image than the notion of causality. To look for the cause behind an image is to lose touch with what is most essential about it, and to forego the opportunity to experience the immediacy of its psychic powers. An image is always more singular than its explanation. For this reason, in my recent research on the imagination I have distanced myself from the methodology of psychoanalysis. To comprehend the singularity of an experience one must avoid the leveling effects of comparison. The causality sought by psychoanalysts confronted by an image seems heavy-handed, never living up to one's first leap of admiration. Phenomenology, on the other hand, permits and even encourages one to experience the subtlety of an image in all its detail, amplified through poetic expansion. All things are transformed through the magnifying powers of poetry. Aspects of an image alter the temporal modes of the imagination. We learn for instance from the fragment of a legend that the Phoenix beat its wings, but did this occur before, during, or after the incendiary act? In so sublime a moment as that of being's combustion, time ceases. Beating its wings upon its nest the Phoenix has already become a wing of fire, fire taking flight, a flying flame, the breath of wind that fans the flames. Deep in reverie one feels certain fire itself has wings, that a wing in sunlight is a living flame. In legend there are countless images where fire is described as incombustible, resistant to itself. The wing of fire's essence lies in its immunity to its own flames, in its containment of fire within. The metaphors contract, reverse themselves. A cluster of poetic images becomes a Poetic reality.

As I have tried to make clear, there is no question of my attempting to summarize here, no matter how succinctly, the history of a myth so special as that of the Phoenix. Is it in fact a myth at all? In the words of Marie Delcourt: "The Phoenix is more an image than a legend."[7] This is as much as to say that the Phoenix is a mythic *image* which appears in myths of greater complexity. One's erudition in matters of mythology would have to be quite vast were one to trace the influence of such an image. If in the preceding pages I have made use of certain elements borrowed from this tradition, it has been in order to prepare the way for the essentially literary problem of most concern to me: must a figure be rooted in tradition for a poetics of the Phoenix to develop—and, more generally, must the history behind a legend be known for its poetic powers to be felt? My goal then is rather precise. My hope is to show that the Phoenix is a more or less *natural* image of the Poetics of Fire.

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[7] Marie Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite, Mythes et rites de la bisexualité dans l'Antiquité classique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), 55.

Narratives which utilize tradition in bad faith make for rather poor parody. Voltaire's *The Princess of Babylon*, for instance, a page by page paraphrase of the legend of the Phoenix, makes for difficult rereading. Voltaire's Phoenix plays the role of joking adviser to the suitors of the Princess and is killed by one of them. But before dying the bird dictates a will with instructions for its funeral. The beautiful princess herself is to prepare the scented bed on which the ashes of the bird are to be laid:

> Her lovely hands built a small pyre of cinnamon and clove. What was her surprise when having spread the bird's ashes on the funeral pyre she saw it burst into flames of itself! All was presently consumed. Where there had been ash before there lay only a large egg from which the princess saw her bird emerge more brilliant than ever. It was one of the most beautiful moments she had experienced in her entire life . . .[8]

At times in this story, an impure mix of genres, Voltaire's society Phoenix, that king of birds frequenting an oriental court, that living talisman contributing to a beautiful girl's happiness, speaking with her alternately as chaperon and nurse, regains its allegoric value. It is the symbol of universal resurrection. The caterpillar changes to a butterfly; all buried animals are born again as grass; all interred flesh is only fertilizer. The Phoenix's privilege is to be reborn of its own self, not of the "ashes" of others.

Additionally, because it is a bird, Voltaire's Phoenix proves of help when it comes to distant travel. When the need arises for the princess to run quickly or to fly high, Voltaire provides her with a team of griffins so she can accompany the Phoenix. And the Phoenix's ability to travel the continents in all directions provides Voltaire a convenient means *to carry his narrative* from Mesopotamia to China and from China to England. Advantage is taken of these voyages to study local customs. Voltaire's Phoenix is a journalist and nothing more.

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[8] François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Oeuvres choisis de Voltaire*, ed. Georges Bengesco, 10 vols. (Paris: Librairie de Bibliophiles, 1887-92), III, Romans (1888): *La Princesse de Babylone*, 148.

In this tiresome tale's last three pages it is Voltaire's turn to be reborn from his own ashes, Voltaire who stands in Paris once again, Voltaire who confronts the high and mighty of his day. How courageously he flings his barbs at the censors now!

A lightness of tone often weakens imagery, and it takes great talent to make surface irony work deep. Though the irony of Voltaire's Phoenix is without reverberation, this is nothing that poetic flair cannot reanimate. Another Phoenix, that of Cyrano de Bergerac, escapes the artifice of parody; his is the "marvelous bird" of poetic radiance. In the Land of the Sun there lives a people of birds, one of whom instructs Cyrano on his fantasy voyage, telling him:

> I see you are impatient to learn who I am. Among you I am known as the Phoenix. In each world there is but one Phoenix alive at a time for a period of one hundred years. At the end of a century, upon some mountain of Arabia among the embers of its pyre of aloe boughs, cinnamon, and incense, it unburdens itself of a large egg and then takes flight in the direction of the Sun, a country to which its heart has long aspired. It will have made every effort previously to accomplish this voyage, but the weight of its egg with a shell so thick it takes a century to hatch will ever have put off the attempt.
>
> You will surely find it difficult to comprehend this miraculous production, and so I will explain it to you. All Phoenixes, of course, are hermaphrodites, but even among Phoenixes there is one extraordinary above all others, for . . .[9]

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[9] Cyrano de Bergerac, *L'autre monde* (Paris: Stock, 1947), 253.

With this "for" the explanation ends. Cyrano is well aware that the best way to explain the extraordinary is to compound it.

In making reference to the legend of the Phoenix, this admirable storyteller has hoped to ground his tale's modern sense of the fantastic in tradition. He seems to be saying to his readers: "You there, who don't believe my travels: have you forgotten that in ages past the Phoenix was believed to be a creature with its home in the Land of the Sun?" Birds, all birds, possess a core of fire. It is thus that "birds have been marked by nature with the secret wish to fly this high," high enough to live upon the sun, that globe of fire, homeland to all creatures fiery in their essence. Cyrano, an incendiary if ever there was one, dreamed of becoming a son of the Sun. He dreamed the Phoenix as Voltaire did not.

In the pages which follow, the order of commentaries on literary texts is an editorial choice made necessary by the absence of pagination in the relevant pages of G. B.*'s manuscript.*

The literary act of scribbling the word Phoenix on a page may seem a gratuitous one, but this fantastic image is so natural to European culture that it ends up serving a real psychological function. John Cowper Powys' astonishing novel *Weymouth Sands* is a case in point. Powys is careful in his positioning of the *word* Phoenix as control between reasoning thought and imagining image. Two "patients," one simple-minded and the other mad with prophecy, have escaped from an asylum. Sylvanus the "prophet," Powys tells us, could not, as the door swung open, "help thinking of this worthy man's [the other patient's] obstinate illusion that he was a Phoenix."[10]

Powys goes on immediately to share with us a precious secret regarding the attachment of the unconscious to its history of images:

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[10] John Cowper Powys, *Weymouth Sands* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1934), 518.

> These old classical, biblical, medieval appellations, how they hung about the world! They were an endless armoury of masks always available for purposes of auto-hallucination. How curious it was—when anyone thought seriously about it—the particular famous names that mad people assume! Like ghostly simulacra they were, these ancient syllables, doomed to drift about on the tradewinds of Time . . . till they were seized upon, like these magic syllables Phoenix, to cover up the tragic nakedness of a new generation of witless anonymity!

In this text by Powys it is the *word* Phoenix, the word alone, which unleashes reverie. All of us have experienced moments when the mind, empty of thought, is filled with syllables which come to form a very ancient word with no relation to our life today, a word *of which we were not thinking*! There are words dreaming within us! Does the Phoenix of Powys belong to a world of meaningless expressions or to one where cultural memories are joined to natural images by the unconscious? His book has the double depth of cosmic poetry and the psychology of the abyss. His Phoenix must be understood as a *free* image which has settled upon a psychological poet, a molder of psychic energies, who lends each one of his characters a due share of madness.

But an image functions only so well as does the mind to which it falls. Whereas the Phoenix of the mad Prophet is patterned after his drunken imagination, the Phoenix of his dull-witted companion enjoys a nearly tangible, immediate reality. Having worked as an ornithologist when in his right mind, George Protty subsequently

> had become a skilled amateur taxidermist. Then he had fallen sick of a villainous influenza, an attack that made him delirious for weeks, and even after his bodily recovery left him with wits fatally impaired.
>
> "I could stuff a Phoenix for you!" he had remarked once to Mr.

> Ludlow, the Antiquary, and it was in the mythic feathers of the only rare bird he had never stuffed that he came to Hell's Museum.[11]

Powys underscores the realism of this image even further. He has his dull-witted hero approach the hearth and his clothing catch fire. He waves his arms about, flapping them like wings:

> Heart-rending, too, were the curious sounds the poor man kept muttering, sounds that some unconscious imagination in his demented brain—the brain of an ornithologist—caused to approximate to the anguished croakings of some great bird in mortal distress.[12]

Thus Powys' Phoenix is caught up by turns in an idiom with echoes of cultivation and the boasting of an artisan who fails to see beyond the bounds of his profession. A great dreamer, Powys offers us two images of the Phoenix which are in different ways excessive, evacuated either by Powys himself or through the torturous artifice of taxidermy. He relies in this on nothing in mythology. We are confronted with a kind of natural myth born of the auto-hallucination of a dreamer of images or, more simply, a dreamer of words.

Psychiatrists may well demand: "Is any of this true? Has any of this been clinically observed?" Myself a philosopher of the poetic imagination, I find Powys' description wholly true because it has been written down, because it has appealed to a great writer who has dignified it through the written word in an eventful narrative fraught with psychological tension. For anyone who studies the imagination, the "clinic" of a great writer like Powys is more meaningful, possesses more weight and more psychological reality, than any real psychiatric clinic could. In a sense we are afforded an opportunity to visit an *insane asylum* in the writer's company, freed from the haphazards of simple observation, guaranteed exposure to an un-

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11. *Ibid.*, 518-19, 520.
12. *Ibid.*, 527.

derlying drama heightened by *dramatic interest* in a carefully crafted work of art. The typical clinic's abracadabra of madness gains coherence at the hands of a writer who allows a mad image, a grain of insanity, its furthest reverberations in the mind.

Weymouth Sands is a great work which conflates the real and the imaginary. Any reader must admire the talents of a writer capable of imagining the workings of the mind.

Again, I find myself confessing what I love to read.

Someone will probably object here that the image of the Phoenix in Powys is lacking the high tone of poetry, lacks "magnificence." The novelist thought it enough to provide two different psychological translations of the image. Poets, in their versions, more often than not turn this process of translation around, magnifying life in the bright light of dreams. A philosophy of the imagination must address the problem of this double translation, that of psychological reality into the stuff of imaginary aspiration, and its inverse, that of utterly extraordinary imagery into the very fabric of the human drama.

We will be led by the poets along this axis of magnetic poetry [*la poésie magnétique*], a poetry which always grows, which ever magnifies the splendor of the Phoenix as an agent of the beauty of the world.

Let us then enter our Poetic Museum of Phoenixical Imagery.

★

The poets of our time, modern poets, have given up the simple exploitation of mythology. They prefer a direct contact with the powers of legend. They instinctively recognize that birds are creatures of space, a "beyond" far greater than any to be found on earth. This broadened beyond expands the horizons of *heightened life*. The bird in full flight constitutes a center of poetic space. If its wings are ablaze with color it is property of the poetics of fire. If we dream a bit further, the bird seems destined to the flames. Sometimes a poet will arrange a series of works into a legend which is truly natural, a legend of nature which takes shape so effortlessly one feels it can have nothing to do with history or myth. Ideas and acquired knowledge can here be forgotten, for nature is about to speak. When one listens for example to "Song of Safe-Keeping," the poetic sequence by Yves Bonnefoy,[13] one is witness to the autonomous creation of legend through poetry.

Out of what desert night of the soul has a bird, the bird, cried out to the poet?

> The bird called out to me, I came . . .
> . . . .
> I gave in to the dead noise stirring within me.
>
> Afterwards I struggled, forcing the words
> which obsessed me
> To show clear in my cold breath on the window.
> The bird sang darkly, cruelly on . . .
> . . . .
> Later I would hear the other song
> Awaken in the bleak depths of the bird's song
> now grown silent.[14]

A *wave of being* begins softly, then courses through the poem in a flood, the cruel, dark song of death rising upward, awakening to life, the first sign of a bird both nocturnal and solar.

The poem which follows in the sequence is called "Foliage with Light," but in it light is still but a sound awakening the song in people's hearts:

> The bird in the tree of silence
> With its simple, spreading, eager song

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[13] Yves Bonnefoy, "Le chant de sauvegard," *Hier régnant désert* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1958), 49-61.

[14] *Ibid.*, 50.

Had held our hearts, had led
All voices in the night,
Voices dying with real words,
Words stirring in the branches,
Crying out again, loving in vain
All that is lost.

The light of dawn arrives, touching this ravaged heart:

It all began with dawn's cruel song,
A liberating hope, true poverty.[15]

A clearing is reached after this walk in the shadows; a hymn to fire rises up. One would probably need to have developed one's phoenixical sensibilities to recognize the bird of fire thus transposed into the sleeping and awakening of song. No sooner is the word Phoenix spoken, however, than one senses the prophetic creature's presence. Those who would experience the Phoenix subtly and with poetic nuance would gain from rereading this poetic suite in which the Phoenix takes shape literally in a poet's song. The poetic image of the Phoenix here is in a way entirely autonomous. Listen to the poem which culminates this *literary evolution* over the course of which the miraculous bird has slowly taken form:

Phoenix speaking to fire which is destiny,
Bright landscape throwing shadows,
I am the one you await he says,
I have come to lose myself in your grave land.

He looks at the fire. How it enters
And inhabits a dark soul
And how, when dawn comes through the windows,
It grows silent, sleeping lower than the fire.

He feeds it with his silence,
Wishing every fold of an eternal silence

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[15] *Ibid.*, 51-52.

Settling over it like sand
Might lengthen out its immortality.[16]

This poem is called "The Eternity of Fire." The Phoenix is, quite properly, the symbol of living eternity.

All these poems I have cited are preceded by the following quatrain:

Let the bird be shredded into sand, you said,
Let it serve as our shore, high in its dawn sky.
Yet, tossed from the vault of celestial song,
The bird already mourns, plummeting into the
clayfields of the dead.[17]

Those who need to *see* before they can dream will find Bonnefoy's Phoenix enigmatic. Those who must understand before they can imagine will fail to follow his imagery in its development, preferring imaged illustrations of the ancient legend, not recognizing that the bird which rises from its own ash is prefigured in the song itself, reborn out of silence at each new verb. This view of the Phoenix as castaway, "tossed from the vault of celestial song," makes a poem of the nightly drama of the sun which like the bird enshrouds itself in dusk to be reborn at dawn. The Phoenix, whose "song descends from higher than the trees, / More natural than any other our sad branches know," is brought to life by Bonnefoy through the marvelous universe of language, a universe which speaks.

★

Let us remember that for Nietzsche music fell under the sign of the Phoenix. The phrase "Phoenix music" for him served as an *echo* of the image of regeneration:

> I now wish to relate the history of *Zarathustra*. The fundamental idea of the work, *Eternal Return*, the loftiest embrace of life that

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16. *Ibid.*, 60.
17. *Ibid.*, 49.

> can ever be attained, was first conceived in the month of August 1881. I made a note of the idea on a sheet of paper dated "Six thousand feet beyond humanity and time." That day I happened to be wandering through the woods alongside the Lake of Silvaplana, and stopped to rest not far from Surlei beside a huge rock towering aloft like a pyramid. It was then the thought struck me. In retrospect, I can see that exactly two months before this inspiration I had had an omen of its coming in the form of a sudden and decisive change in my tastes—most notably in music. The whole of *Zarathustra* might well be classed under the rubric of music. The essential condition of its production in any event was the rebirth in me of the art of hearing. In Recoaro, a small mountain resort near Vicenza where I spent the spring of 1881, my friend and maestro Peter Gast, who had also been reborn, and I discovered Phoenix music to be hovering over us, in lighter and brighter plumage than it had ever worn before.[18]

★

A poet whose imaginary depths belong to fire may experience pain and even death when deprived of the splendors of light. In the suffering of his eye, blinded by a wound received in celestial battle, Gabriele d'Annunzio *lives* this image out. He is smoldering ash and ardor for new life; his pyre burns in his own eye. Long passages of his *Nottorno* fall as a result under the sign of the Phoenix:

> The demon has rekindled his inferno in my eyes, and in his madness blows upon the dreary pyre as in the most desperate hours of his endless martyrdom.

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[18] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), *Ecce Homo*, trans. Alexandre Vialatte (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), 120-21.

Bachelard's notes include a transcription of Aphorism 568 from Nietzsche's Morgenröthe *entitled "Dichter und Vogel [Poet and Bird]"*: "The Phoenix showed the poet a scroll which was burning to ashes. 'Do not be dismayed!' the bird said, 'it is your work! It does not have the spirit of the age and even less the spirit of those who are against the age; consequently, it must be burned. But this is a good sign. There are many kinds of daybreak.'" [The text Bachelard used was taken from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Aurore*, trans. Henri Albert (Paris: Mercure de France, 1943)].

> My miserable, burning flesh seems mere brushwood at the blaze's edge.[19]

Pain burning deep in the eye is bitter pain, a quite intimate drama of vision and light which enflames one's entire being. "Who covers me with burning ash?" demands the poet; but, in his charred flesh, he experiences the pride of rebirth:

> My heart's peak sparkles through the ashes.
> I am my own ash, my own Phoenix, opaque and radiant.
> I will survive the fire, drunk with immortality.

These lines which describe the Phoenix experientially are set against the backdrop of a forest in flames. Pine trees crackle in the monumental odor of burning resin, "but all remain upright like unvanquished martyrs."

Hope returns, nevertheless, in small resurgences of life:

> I discover here and there along the sides of ditches where the fire has passed some tufts of green grass and a cluster of small pink and violet flowers.
>
> My soul, astonished, reads in this allusion to itself.[20]

And the chapter ends with a hymn to the glory of the Phoenix:

> I hear Phoenixes singing!
> Intoxication rises in me
> Like a celestial river.
> I feel my god within me.
>
> The song I hear them singing
> Fills the air with myrrh
> And triumphant bitterness.
> I feel my god within me.
>
> All ash is seed,
> All twigs new shoots,
> All deserts spring.
> I feel my god within me.

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[19] Gabriele d'Annunzio, *Nocturne*, trans. André Dodoret (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1923), 183. (*Nottorno*, the original Italian, was published in 1921).

[20] *Ibid.*, 185.

The entire forest, all palms now,
Stands tall in the ether,
Unburdened of the pull to earth.
I feel my god within me.

Upon the Idumaean palms,
Neither stirring nor bending them,
Resuscitated Phoenixes are singing.
I feel my god within me.[21]

Passages such as these raise the question whether specific forms of physical suffering and suffering in general are deserving of literary treatment. D'Annunzio's writing has been criticized by some. But for those with a passion for images, the movement from life into image is a natural one. Images know suffering as well, and one's own pain can only be experienced fully through the resonance of its expression.

A Phoenix then has nested in a human eye. This Phoenix, as experienced by a poet, expresses in the form of a retinal drama the immensity of human longing to possess a fiery eye. Although it is an eye languishing somewhere between blindness and illumination, shadowed with despair, it constitutes a renascence of light and represents the courage of renewal.

★

An exceptional image[a] is occasionally found even at the seat of more traditional ones, bearing both the name and the poetic aura of the Phoenix. The Phoenix of Pierre Jean Jouve in his collection *Lyriques* is one of these.[22] Close analysis of all five poems making up his "Phoenix" would doubtless spread our focus rather thin. The series combines deep psychological insight with cosmic beauty wrought of poetic meditation on the concentrated gaze. The poems themselves are phenomena of the gaze, the Phoenix not an object so much as a state of sight. Many are the adjectives used to describe the gaze as fiery, flashing, or luminous, but the task of expressing this psychological projection with nuance is a job for a philosopher poet. Phoenixes emerge from the very originality of Jouve's creation as lines of fire flashing across the poet's melancholy:

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[21] *Ibid.*, 194.

[a] *This passage was found in a folder labelled "The Phoenix of Pierre Jean Jouve" with this note in its margin:* "Describe carefully the power of poetic individuation in the images of modern poetry."

[22] Pierre Jean Jouve, *Lyriques* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1956), 9-15.

> As ocean waves die each upon the next to crown the eagermost
> in glimmerings,
> The poet listens to Time etch the outlines of an iron
> quill beside his heart.[23]

A creature has surged from the text in its eagerness to be, a psychological shock which takes the writer unawares. A Phoenixical instant has come to superimpose itself upon the flatness of existence. In listening to Time the poet hears Time's miracles. The Phoenix is an Instant, a Poetic Instant. What surges forth is not to be described; the poet's genius instead consists in his ability to bring it on.

The fires of sensation grow more acute as well, a phoenixical sensibility combining happy sexuality with the gravity of the eternal.

In the third poem, Jouve describes the resurrection of the Phoenix as a resurrection of the gaze. A sort of absolute eye broadens its dominion to encompass the world:

> The perfections in your dress and of your being gathered in
> the flames
> . . . .
> Create a giant jet black fire impenetrable to any gaze
> A fire of friendly resurrection in which your Eye alone
> appears.[24]

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[23] *Ibid.*, 9.
[24] *Ibid.*, 12.

The rebirth of our own phoenixical desire in a new gaze with new inner lustre is announced at poem's end:

> Once dead at heart, a heart once brown now red again,
> reborn,
> Again become the shine in eyes the glowing breast,
> Such is the law of miracles and revealed to some
> Take up the work where it left off, the laughter
> and the whole design.[25]

This creative energy in the pupil or phosphene, a reach of the retina towards light, is of course nothing planned. In the shadows of the night the phoenixical eye awaiting birth is already a solar being. With the poet we experience an intensity of light together with the naked truth of dawn spreading its own light upon the universe. Poetic lucidity operates in the space between sensation and dream, between the language of meaning and that of sublimation. In his prose poem "Beauty" Jouve invites us to experience the *verticality* of language: "no life but that of verticality outside is possible, through an assemblage of sounds, colors, and words. The beauty of certain of yesterday's phrases seems washed in eternity . . ."[26][b]

★

Implicit Phoenixes

For my purpose, that of demonstrating the importance of literary imagery to contemporary life, the image of a Phoenix which does not cry its name aloud is more precious than a long didactic poem. The examples of "implicit Phoenixes" which follow are meant to prove the Phoenix to be an archetype of the imagination of fire.

In a poem written directly in English and which he translated into French himself,[27] Jean Wahl definitively placed the stamp of philosophy upon the miraculous bird or *oiseau joie*—a creature entirely "without cause," swept up in the joy of awakening the universe. I have no idea if Wahl, who cites Heraclitus, was aware that his poem would shine in the light of the myth of the Phoenix. But his images are so fresh that it seems possible to see the myth as having been renewed by them, reborn in fact not once but twice. What a pleasure it is to read and experience the poem in two languages, twice imagined, twice conceived, twice freeing itself from the constrictions of sclerosed literary tradition!

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[25] *Ibid.*, 15.

[26] Pierre Jean Jouve, "Beauté," *Proses* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1960), 94.

[b] *Margin note*: "I can't find what I've already written concerning this text from *Proses*."

Here is the poem in its entirety:

Bird Joy
My joy on thyself poised,
Without cause,
In this deep lurid world,
Not like the rational joy of the mystics,
But like Heraclitus laughing or a comic chorus in
  Prometheus,
Without cause,—causing thyself,
Heavy with sighs absorbed and light with rays infused,
Mightily soaring,
Then quivering in the high flutter of thy wings,
With singing ebullitions,
That pierce time and sting eternity,
Now I hear thy little cry,
Bird Joy!

Oiseau Joie
Ma joie, sur toi-même équilibrée,
Sans cause
Dans ce monde profond et blafard,
Non pas comme la joie rationnelle des mystiques,
Mais comme Héraclite qui rirait ou comme un choeur
  comique au milieu du Prométhée,

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[27] Jean Wahl, *Poésie, Pensée, Perception* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1948), 58-59.

Sans cause—te causant toi-même,
Lourde de soupirs absorbés et légère de rayons recueillis,
Je te vois planer puissamment
Et vibrer dans le haut battement de tes ailes;
Puis tes ébullitions chantantes
Percent le temps, piquent l'éternité.
Maintenant, j'entends ton petit cri,
Oiseau Joie!

In his comments on the origins of "Bird Joy,"[28] Wahl looks for but fails to find any great philosophic antecedents which might have inspired the poem. He mentions Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, even Descartes. He recalls poetic images from Wordsworth, Shelley . . . and in the final lines of his self-analysis, sensing how much the Bird Joy's *élan* is a transcendence of primal anguish, he evokes Kierkegaard and Heidegger.

With a country eye I observe in amusement as Wahl searches in vain through the intellectual contents of his culture for the creative impulse behind "Bird Joy." To me it would seem that the answer to Wahl's questioning could hardly be simpler: his poem, like the Bird itself throbbing with the song of eternity, is a poem without any cause whatever, be it circumstantial, psychological, or cultural. The very poem itself is a Phoenix.

"Bird Joy" stands in the poetic reverie of the philosopher poet as a manifestation of an archetype. Here, as in all creative acts, it is the archetype which is the cause of what has no cause, a cause often so primal that it leaps beyond the poverty of psychological and psychoanalytical case history.

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[28] *Ibid.*, 62-64. Wahl recalls experiencing "a Kierkegaardian feeling of inexplicable joy," citing this passage from Kierkegaard: "for precisely the fact that it is a little thing which makes it so joyful is proof that the bird is itself joy or is joy itself," but he adds: "Still, at the moment I sat down to write, I no longer had the least conscious recollection of these lines from Kierkegaard." The verse "Then quivering in the high flutter of thy wings" seems to him "a reminiscence—but of what poem, [he] isn't able to say."

The poetic act is an essential gesture which transcends images associated with reality in an instant. Wahl's "Bird Joy" seizes joy on the wing, as in the two great lines of William Blake he cites elsewhere in the same text:

> But he who kisses the joy as it flies
> Lies in eternity's sun rise.[29] [c]

The Phoenix of poetic imagining burns most often in full flight, bursting across the sky like an explosion of light. So it is with the implicit Phoenix of a poem in Claude Vigée's *Struggle With the Angel*:

> *The bird who sold me the ruby of space*
> *Tears heaven's branches with its fire*
> *Live rock spurts from a dim breath*
> *Spilling and retrieving the heart's light.*[30]

★

In the cosmology of a poet where all things conspire to make up a world, it may be the bird which rejuvenates the tree, signaling all nature's rebirth. It is thus to the Phoenix who awakens the forest that the last note falls. In Henry Bauchau's "The Tree of Ghengis Khan," a secretly recognizable, implicit Phoenix sounds this mighty cosmic signal of rebirth. The tree of the poem's title confesses its impatience awaiting the return of the birds:

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29. *Ibid.*, 228.

c. *Blake's poem "Eternity" (c. 1793) is from the poet's* Notebook:

> *He who binds himself a joy*
> *Does the wingèd life destroy;*
> *But he who kisses the joy as it flies*
> *Lies in eternity's sun rise.*

This poem is number 43 in William Blake, The Complete Writings, *ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); it is number 29 in the French text used by Bachelard: William Blake,* Oeuvres, *trans. Pierre Leyris (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1977), II.*

30. Claude Vigée, "Les plaisirs d'Ariel," *La lutte avec l'ange* (Paris: Librairie Les Lettres, 1950), 56.

> No one knows any longer the number of my branches nor the
> count of my tribes of leaves. The birds in my foliage
> singing are past number, past number the melodious deaths
> and rebirths.
> Broken nests, delicate plumage, the skeleton of what was
> once an eagle or a nightingale, all returns to the root,
> to the dark braying jaw of Saturn, shattering and driving
> The energies of life even unto the overshadowed heavens.

The propulsive forces which are to revitalize the branches of the tree are birdlike in their energy as if a new feathered tribe were being born among its roots, pouring out from the roots of the world and bursting forth into daylight, "home to the great pastures of the sun."[31]

★

Great images communicate with one another, bolster one another, and melt into one another, growing together in *magnificence*. Anyone who reads Claude Vigée's prose poem "The Sleep of Icarus" with the necessary passion of admiration will perceive this syncretism of images in action.[32] In a flash of winged imagery the resurrection of Eastertime offers itself as a "fire of renewal," reawakening the "sleeping desire"[33] of Icarus at last:

> Divine algae goes before me sowing the feathers of immense abandon flesh is heir to. The eye, however, lights the seagull's long white triangles which slowly turn beneath the helix of the open air. Sail on, anchorless ship, to sweet encounters, towards a surer star beneath a neutral sky. When your wings have melted of anguish in the night and when derisive dawn has set your flight

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[31] Henry Bauchau, "L'arbre de Gengis Khan," *Géologie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), Collections "Métamorphoses" LIV, 83.

[32] Claude Vigée, "Le Sommeil d'Icare," *La lutte avec l'ange*, 77-91.

[33] *Ibid.*, 91. This phrase is from the sonnet's concluding stanza:
Naked as the dawn and as vain as the rocks,
Sharpening my sleeping desires with regret,
I want to fly into the sun in opening my eyes.

> on fire you will go down, spilling light, your blood reflecting in the ocean an illusory sun . . . O bird of flame, before the ending of my song light up the melted crystal moon this summer morn with fiery reflections in the grit of springs . . . O flashing sparrow-hawks, I conjure you to sculpt me a stair in the holy substance. Torch these underwater woods. A fiery furnace burst forth from the swollen iron lodes. I shall bleed the bird of prophecy of its secret, lost in the winds between the desert and the moon.[34]

Page after page, and without the word Phoenix ever being spoken, phoenixical imagery enriches the legend of Human Flight, rendering it cosmic. Unnamed, the image of the Phoenix is the *source* of all of this resurgent imagery. The entire poem is afire. New images gush forth glowing red, the true offspring of unfettered imagination. Poetry here is a hearth, and images the fuel which must be constantly replenished if imagination should sustain its peak. Maintaining a narrative line in retelling the old tale of a man who dared too much is thus no longer necessary. Cohesion based on images of fire is more powerful than coherence of ideas. A poem is best unified by its poetic force alone. To experience the Phoenix one must experience the fire of limitless conflagration which renews the World. This conflagration-resurrection is the powerful lesson to be learned from dreaming without reserve upon the mighty image of the Phoenix.

★

Sometimes an image concentrates so much ardor within, dressing itself in so many colors, it seems that the Phoenix would express its being through the very *multiplicity* of its masks. The image of the Phoenix produces its effect without the word Phoenix being spoken. We have the example of a *masked* Phoenix of this kind in a prose poem by Octavio Paz. In scaling the heights, a black bird takes on the transparency of light, the icy whiteness of the swan. But this whiteness

[34] *Ibid.*, 84, 85, 89.

becomes dazzling when inflamed by fire. Through an incendiary dynamism the bird becomes a cosmic being, a creature of the world in flames were it to end with a dramatic explosion.

The poem reads:

> Black bird, your beak shatters the rocks. Your enshrouded kingdom blurs the fine line separating sunflower from iron, rock from bird, lichen from fire. You tear burning answers from the heights.[35] Light's translucent throat is cleft in two, and the black of your armor sparkles with unbroken cold. You yourself are already numbered among the shadows. Your white crest shimmers everywhere at once, a swan drowning in its own whiteness.[36]

All reasonable readers will be out of breath by now, unprepared to share in this feast of words, this orgy of qualitative transmutation: iron, sunflower, rock, bird, lichen, and fire. Readers who would always know the link between an image and reality set images which disregard reality aside. Had the word Phoenix been pronounced, some cultural memory would perhaps have been found to back their interaction with the text. But a Phoenix may be conquered by enthusiasm for images alone. The text continues:

> You settle on the summit and nail your lightning down. Then, bending to the task, you kiss the crater's frozen lips. The hour of bursting is come, an explosion that shall leave as its sole trace a long scar across the sky. You cross the corridors of music and disappear in a flourish of horns.

It is thus in an explosion of fire ripping open the sky that the bird of the Poet becomes a cosmic creature, a resplendent sunset being resounding like an orchestra of horns and cymbals at the close of day. The title of Paz's book is *Eagle or Sun?*, but in the case of this particular poem Eagle *and* Sun would be more correct, acknowledging the cosmic equation in all its magnificence:

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[35] "You tear burning answers from the heights" —what a motto for a philosophy of absolute sublimation!

[36] This poem, "Daring Note," belongs to a collection published by Octavio Paz in 1951 as *¿Aguila o sol [Eagle or Sun]?*, the title chosen for a collection of his works in Spanish with a French transcription by Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Aigle ou Soleil?* (Paris: G. Fall, 1957), 67.

Eagle + Sun = Phoenix.

This synthesis is born spontaneously in a poetically liberated imagination.

★

Beyond the distinction between explicit and implicit Phoenixes

I have drawn a distinction between explicit and implicit Phoenixes merely in an attempt to elucidate the issues. Yet the distinction is a formal one. The fact is that in contemporary poetry, when a poet calls our attention to a Phoenix explicitly the affair is likely to be a wholly *personal* one. Poetry in our time has superseded traditional mythology and no longer has need of the canvas of myth to embroider a poem with imagery.[37] Poetry, one might even say, is now developing its own mythology. Claude Lévi-Strauss, in a profound insight, has defended the notion that a myth is but the ensemble of its variants, that new variants are absorbed into a myth automatically.[38] In the case of the Phoenix this incorporation of singular variants into the central image is even more striking. The Phoenix is the sum total of its poetic expressions, a play of multiple correspondences: fire, balm, song, life, birth, and death. It is nest and infinite space. It has two sources of heat, the nest and the sun. Heat of song and heat of spice, all combine to set the bird aflame: the arousing, masculine fire of songs that awaken; the cradling, feminine warmth of spices that put to sleep. The hermaphrodism of great images here once again reveals itself, transposed into a much more subtle, hence much truer form.[d]

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[37] It has been said that myth is a primitive form of poetry. But perhaps in comparing myths we have come to view them objectively, reinforcing our beliefs about them. Poetry requires a less rigid, more mobile, and freer adherence.

[38] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "La structure des mythes," *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1958), Chap. XI, 240. Lévi-Strauss speaks of "a problem which has so far been one of the major obstacles to progress in the study of mythology, namely the quest for the authentic or earliest version. I suggest that one define a myth, instead, as the ensemble of all of its variants taken together."

★

For Paul Eluard "the Phoenix is the couple Adam and Eve, which both is and is not the first."[39] It is the renewal of an absolute beginning. The poems Eluard has collected under the title *Phoenix* are poems of the new life and new happiness which come when new love calcinates old woes and sets them burning with new flame. The age-old drama of the human heart is thus reduced to one act of poetic faith: because of Eve, Adam becomes a poet, which is to say more than a mere man. Through love he who was mere ash may know the Phoenix's awakening. The final words of the Eluardian formula require translation to a higher plane: in the supreme act of the Phoenix those who are not first become first. In turning to ash the Phoenix both feels and knows that it will soon be fire.[e]

★

To burn even as ash—to have already risen up above the cooling ash—such must have been Eluard's great phoenixical dream:

> I truly have no longer need of wings
> To calcinate my heaviness.[40]

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[d] *G. B. planned to discuss the hermaphrodism of the Phoenix at length.*

[39] Paul Eluard, *Le Phénix* (Paris: Seghers, 1954), 7.

[e] *Margin note:* "I find nothing written on Eluard which begins better." *G. B. had spoken of images of fire in an hommage to Eluard,* "Germe et raison dans la poésie de Paul Eluard," *in the revue* Europe 93 *(1953). This article is reproduced in* Le droit de rêver *(Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), 169-75.*

[40] Paul Eluard, "Ailleurs Ici Partout," *Poésie ininterrompue* II (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), 45.

I never reread these lines without falling into a deep reverie which changes with the mood of the day. Sometimes I accept the long patience of repose as if repose were an endless erosion of suffering, an endless burn-off of memory on the road to attaining a consciousness of ash. But in other moments of reverie these verses of Eluard unburden me and my thoughts fly off on happier wings; poetry has delivered me, given me back my morning.

In a softer form and quietly, in but two lines, Eluard here provides us all the benefit of images whose rhythm is that of the Phoenix and which may in somber moments be allowed to reverberate into the rhythm of life and death. Yet must inflated notions always be set into cruel dialectic? That which sleeps in us and is reborn and sleeps and is reborn creates a rhythm which is rendered doubly salutary through poetic treatment. The Phoenix, a creature born of the mighty contradiction between life and death, is sympathetic to all contradictory beauty. Its image helps us to legitimate the contradictions to be found in passion. This is why the Phoenix time and time again, without the help of ancient myth, is born again in poetry. The Phoenix is an archetype of every age, inherent in the experience of fire; for we will never know for certain whether fire derives its meaning from images of external reality, or its power from the fires of the human heart.

2

Prometheus

An Opening (*margin note*)

I need hardly insist that the systematic, fragmentary poetic examination I have been conducting of legend and myth is in no way intended to improve upon the long and detailed labors of archeologists whose investigations continue to clarify the lines of filiation and transference of myth throughout the ages. They have discerned an organizational continuity in this process of transmission, one accompanied by recurrences of ritual and belief. It would seem that the historians of myth will never tire of calculating influences. The history of poetic reverie, by contrast, is neither so long nor so complex as that described by mythologists. We must access the energies of ancient poetry through fragments alone, for nothing more remains to us. The entire *fragmentist* school of the age of Novalis and Friedrich von Schlegel viewed this direct encounter of images from a mythic past with poetic reverie as a propitious one. Knowledge was understood to be the very stuff of reverie. Learning about past beliefs accorded one the right to dream upon poetic beauty. In truth, there exist no beliefs not interwoven with reverie, and personal reverie is essential if one would hope to reexperience beliefs once lost or forgotten.

What I should like to rekindle in the light of poetry is the *attraction* fragments of legend have for poets. What are the roots of this attraction? What is the source of its *élan*? To what heights does it attain? It would take a major study to fully account for this human dynamology [*cette dynamologie de l'hu-*

main]. I myself hope to provide only partial answers, satisfied to contribute to human poetics where only a single image, that of Prometheus, is concerned.

The fact is, in the cultural epoch in which we are living all educated persons organize their thinking around one figure of Prometheus or another. But things are never quite clear concerning this central figure's exact role. There is a personal Prometheus for everyone. In his various guises Prometheus has become a *commonplace* of human sensibility, universally understood and yet, despite his great renown, essentially unknown. The figure of Prometheus, though dominant and emblematic,[1] seems a paradox, its power fractured into many images. Though emblem Prometheus may be, the fate of emblems in the worst of cases is to serve the interests of parody as easily as those of exaltation. Must we be reminded that a highly regarded author of our time could think it entertaining to reduce the revolt of Prometheus against Zeus to a slap in the face, a gratuitous act, given one passerby by another on the boulevard in Paris? It is enough that the names of these two passersby be Zeus and Prometheus for this author to purport to have presented us a personal Prometheus of his own.[2]

It is naturally not here that any profound poetic reflections on the fragments of legend concerning Prometheus are to be sought. Images depicting the myth of Prometheus are sometimes so unique that it seems requisite to demonstrate that no *gratuitous* imagery exists. It suffices only that one dream a little, that the objects of one's reverie be sufficiently diverse, for one to apprehend inevitably, in any singular image, the seeds of poetic imagining. Where one image grows dim another brightens. Each shines with singularities, its poetic existence reconfirmed.

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[1] When Gustave Moreau (1826-1898) painted his virile figure of Prometheus martyred in his side in 1868, the painting was so successful it became an emblem . . . a commercial emblem. This emblematic figure in fact, like an imprimatur of value, was even found on cans of sardines. The painting and one such can are reproduced together in Ragnar von Holten's attractive *L'art fantastique de Gustave Moreau* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1960), figs. 12 (misnumbered 16) and 13.

[2] André Gide, *Le Prométhée mal enchaîné* (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1899).

I wish to consider at this time one of the fundamental Promethean images, Prometheus the hero who stole fire from the gods for human use, and attempt to elucidate the synthesis of poetic reveries that legitimate it. The poetic Prometheus will show us the way to an aesthetics of human life.

Working Outline of the Chapter

I will discuss the following:

—from the sun's wheel to the fire of Prometheus
—the put-out eye and the fiery gaze.[a]

After this I will consider dreams of rubbing which blend patience with skill. It is necessary always that one move from knowledge to action, from head to hand, from concept to execution. Put simply, there are but two *mechanical* means of making a fire, rubbing and striking—or, more precisely, soft, slow friction on the one hand, and hard, quick friction on the other, women's fire and men's fire.

After having done with images of the creation of fire drawn from real life, I will note how human gratitude has credited the one responsible for the creation of so great a force with greater powers still. The legend of Prometheus has been expanded to include a figure of Prometheus who molds clay into human form and then breathes life into this humanized clay.

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[a] *The theme "The put-out eye and the fiery gaze" is addressed directly in a separate text, an analysis of a scene from Euripides'* Cyclops, *found under the rubric "Prometheus" and published here following this working outline for the chapter. See below p. 70.*

But is there no connection between Prometheus the giver of fire and Prometheus the breather of clay into life? To appreciate the essential unity of these two figures would require only that one have experienced firsthand the kindling of a fire in the forest, the spread of life to tinder at a gentle breath. If blowing gently on a fire's first sparks sparks one's dreams, imagine blowing upon glowing embers rediscovered the next day beneath the ashes!

Place the two or three pages I have written concerning "blowing on a fire" here.[b]

Onomatopoeia.

Spoken fire [*le feu parlé*].[c]

Few dreamers have combined these two great images, the creation and the experience of fire, the two Prometheuses. Make reference to the dream of Gérard de Nerval.[d]

Take up the matter of humanity's struggle with the gods, of Prometheus' struggle with Zeus. Prometheus struggling with a counter-Prometheus. The challenge. Psychoanalysts[e] will pre-

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[b] *I have come across no further treatment of this subject.*

[c] *Fragment*: The crystal of a flame enchants the dreaming eye, but crystallization is a fine dream for the ear as well. The poetic act should translate for the ear all of the pleasures of the eye. The sounds of fire induce their own vocabulary. In the detail of images *poetic fire* can be felt. The poet discovers not just *correspondences* but *syntheses*.

[d] *This reference is to Nerval's dream in* Aurelia *(Part I, section X), a commentary on which was discovered separately under the rubric "Prometheus, the Llama of Nerval." See below p.71.*

[e] G. B. *was unfamiliar with Freud's astonishing interpretation of the myth of Prometheus the bearer of fire stolen from the gods ("Zur Gewinnung des Feuers" [1932],* Gesammelte Werke, *XVI, 3-9), confirming the hypothesis of Jean Laplanche in "La sublimation,"* Problématiques *III (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980), 149 and following. See the French translation of Freud's text by J. Laplanche and J. Sédat, "Sur la prise de possession du feu,"* Résultats, idées, problèmes *II (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 191-99.*

Freud would read the myth of the Titan Prometheus, "a culture-hero who was still a god," as "a defeat of instinctual life (Niederlage des Trieblebens)*." According to Freud, the price to be paid for controlling fire is renunciation of the pleasure of putting it out with a stream of urine. "It is well known that in myth the gods are permitted to satisfy* fer to read this struggle with Zeus as a struggle with the father. Return to the "Prometheus Complex," this time along the lines of a Poetics.[f] The world inflamed. Involvement in a world of excess. Meditation on Prometheus quickens one to action yet holds one in check. A person who sets a fire, who activates fire, magnifies but also controls and regulates the forces of the world.

Promethean imagery in poetry always has the psychological effect of *uplifting* human nature. An aesthetics of the mind [*du psychisme*], or mental processes which both consolidate and energize the life of the spirit, are to be placed under the sign of Prometheus.

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every longing a human child is obliged to renounce, as we have seen in the case of incest. Speaking in analytic terms, we should say that instinctual life—the id—is the god defrauded when the quenching of fire is renounced: in the legend, a human desire is transformed into a divine privilege. But in the legend the deity possesses nothing of the characteristics of a super-ego but remains a representation of the paramount life of the instincts . . . [The Bringer of Fire], in renouncing an instinct (Triebverzicht), *had shown how beneficial and at the same time how indispensable such renunciation was to civilization. And why should legend treat a deed of so much benefit to civilization as a crime deserving of punishment? Well, if through all its distortions it allows us to get a glimpse of the fact that acquiring control over fire presupposes an instinctual renunciation, at least it makes no secret of the resentment which the culture-hero could not fail to arouse in mortals driven by their instincts" ("Sur la prise de possession du feu," 193).*

Freud recognized, nonetheless, that "the obscurity of the Prometheus legend, as that of other fire-myths, is increased by the fact that early humans were bound to regard fire as analogous to passion, or more properly as a symbol of the libido" (194).

Freud hoped to further penetrate the secrets of myth by coupling the myth of Prometheus abductor of fire with that of Hercules vanquisher of the Lernaean hydra, after reversing the latter tale's manifest content through inversion of its opposing terms: water and fire.

It seems not without interest to note that at the end of this Freudian analysis the temerity of its interpretation gives way to a certain modesty: "Prometheus . . . had forbidden the quenching of fire; Heracles permitted it in a case where fire's spread threatened disaster. The latter myth would correspond apparently to the reaction of a later epoch of civilization to the acquisition of power over fire. It looks as though this approach might take us quite a distance toward plumbing the secrets of the myth; but admittedly, our feeling of certainty (Gefühl der Sicherheit) *should accompany us only a short way."*

[f] *This reference is to the "Prometheus Complex" as treated in* The Psychoanalysis of Fire (1938).

ANALYSIS OF TWO TEXTS MENTIONED IN THE OUTLINE

The following analysis of a scene from Euripides' Cyclops *relating to the theme of "the Put-Out Eye, the Fiery Gaze" was discovered in a file labeled "Prometheus" (see note* a *above).*

Let us reread the scene in which wily Odysseus readies himself to put out the Cyclops' eye:

ODYSSEUS
I hope to stop his going on this spree
by saying he shouldn't give his wine away,
but keep it for himself and live in bliss.
Then, as soon as the wine puts him to sleep,
I'll take my sword and sharpen up the trunk
of an olive tree I saw inside the cave.
I'll put it in the coals and when it's caught,
I'll shove it home, dead in the Cyclops' eye,
and blind him. Just like a timber-fitter
whirling his auger around with a belt,
I'll screw the brand in his eye, round and round,
scorch out his eyeball and blind him for good.
. . . .

CORYPHAEUS
Our will is made of unbreakable rock . . .

ODYSSEUS
O Hephaestus, ruler over Etna,
free yourself from this vile neighbor of yours!
Sear out his bright eye at one blow! O Sleep,
child of black Night, leap with all your might
on this god-detested beast! . . .

How many reveries arise from careful reading! Does not the Cyclops' single eye in the center of his forehead spew forth a whirlwind of fire? That one eye must be pierced in all its roundness, screwing round and round. Rotation intensifies vengeance. Carving the trunk of an olive tree to arrow sharpness with a sword is not enough. Odysseus hardens the wood by fire, blackening its green in the heat. The wood must be made to glow like iron. There are fires raging deep in the Cyclops' eye; his gaze enflamed, a counterfire is required to extinguish it. The deadly weapon here becomes an auger in its fire pit; the reverie that wants a fire out unites with reveries which give it life. In putting out the fire of a gaze, in beating it back to its innermost hearth, one comes to experience its opposite, the image of fire kindled in the forest. The birth of fire and the death of fire join in the one image. (*G. B. noted here in the margin his intention to refer back to the passage in the* Odyssey (*IX,* 308-400) *on which these lines from Euripides are based*).

The following analysis of the dream of Nerval, mentioned in the outline, from Part One, section X of his Aurelia, *was found under the heading "Prometheus, the Llama of Nerval."* (*see note* d *above*).

That the giver of fire should also have formed human beings of clay is more than a mere matter of coincident creative powers. To mold a life is already to breathe the power of flame into it. Great dreamers rediscover this double creation of fire and form. In this passage Gérard de Nerval, having traveled far in the dead of night, sets out to explore a city at work:

> I entered a workshop where I saw laborers modeling an enormous animal out of clay. Its shape was that of a llama but for two large wings. The monster appeared to be traversed by a fire which infused it little by little with life. It writhed there, penetrated by a thousand purple threads which took the form of arteries and veins, inert matter fecundated as it were by fire, clothed instantaneously in a vegetation of fibrous appendages, pinions and

> woolly tufts. I stopped short in contemplation of this masterpiece, for it seemed that here the secret of divine creation stood revealed.
>
> "We've discovered the secret of original fire," I was told, "the fire which brought the first creatures to life . . . Once it flowed even to the surface of the earth, but today the fountains have run dry."

Thus energy and form are taken on at one and the same time. The modeled clay twists forward slightly as if eager to fulfill the genius of the modeler's design all by itself. Life is flame, flame is life. Life rises up in flame, hence Nerval's llama must have wings.

Nerval's reverie itself, which we can pursue through meditation on his text, is situated in a realm between the human and the divine. No sooner has Nerval dreamed the Promethean act, the vitalization of matter, than he comes upon another workshop in which jewelers are fashioning metals unknown on earth, "one a red similar to cinnabar, and one sky blue. The ornaments were neither hammered nor engraved, but acquired their shape and color from a mixture of chemicals and blossomed forth like a form of metallic foliage." Is such not a fitting prelude to the Promethean act? Nerval questions a worker: "'Could you not create human beings as well?' . . . But [the worker] answers: 'Human beings are made above, not below: how can we create ourselves?'"

Although the Promethean act may not be carried out, it can be dreamed. The Prometheus into whose circumstance we find ourselves transported by the dream of Nerval both can and must offend the master of all things, human and other. I persist in existing; therefore I continue to create . . . to create myself.

It is important to note that, though it seems certain the actor in Nerval's dream is Prometheus, his name is never mentioned. Perhaps the secret behind this silence is to be found in the last lines of Nerval's *Pandora*:

I next saw Pandora only a year later, in a cold Northern capital . . .

"O son of the gods, father of mortals," she cried, "stay a moment. It's Saint-Silvester's Day again today. Another year has passed . . . Where have you hidden the fire of the heavens that you stole from Jupiter?"

I did not want to answer her. The name Prometheus displeased me always in a singular fashion, for I could still feel the eternal vulture's beak at my side from which Alcides had delivered me.

O Jupiter! when will my agony end?

FRAGMENTS AND WORK NOTES CLARIFYING THE PROJECT'S OUTLINE

Introduction to the Concept of Human Aesthetics.
Prometheus: Human, More Than Human.
Absolute Sublimation.

Where the mind is able to function in an orderly fashion, progressively developing, this activity takes on the significance of a work of art, a human aesthetics. As one grows more aware of this resonance of knowledge in an aesthetics of the mind, as one's eagerness to learn is matched by an acceleration in the growth of one's knowledge, a diffuse Prometheanism of a sort associates itself with learning. We learn in general from others and from books; but learning here becomes *ours* in a deeper sense, *uplifting* us above ourselves, above ordinary nature. Workers of spirit find themselves invigorated by a sort of prideful power.

The many figures of Prometheus inherited from past myths and cultures have rooted themselves in us, making psychological techniques of *self-transcendence* possible. No sooner have archeologists uncovered some new feature of Promethean physiognomy than we start in to aestheticize it. But if these imposing figures of Prometheus are to have any psychological effect on us, they must be experienced as attempts—or, better yet, temptations—to transcend our own natures, to experience the human, more than human. As we shall see in what follows, much that appears inconsequential reawakens in us wellsprings of imagination paralyzed by the excessive prudence of our civilized behavior. Let us focus for the moment only on those aspects of Promethean experience which propel us towards being beyond.

To experience this ascendance of being, however, requires a clear consciousness of its initial condition (*Margin Note*: needs further work).

It would seem that insofar as the activities of culture are concerned one is the Prometheus of one's own self, the past but so much clay beneath one's dreaming fingers. Things in need of doing have been done with studious attention, yet all remains to be accomplished, including ourselves. If this scattered and opportunistic, cultural Prometheanism might only be harnessed to the work of real becoming! But here, in a book which trusts its forward drive to images, such cannot be our task.

All of the texts I will be discussing find their place within a dialectics of imagination and reduction. In the first several of these documents, Promethean essence has been reduced excessively. Mythology, for example, transmitted too familiarly, in overly human terms, is reductive from the first, closing avenues to poetic expansion. On the other hand, we will consider cases where the opposite is true, where sublimation tends to its absolute form as outlined in my Introduction to *The Poetics of Space*.[g] Here we will be certain to have crossed beyond the realm of facts and to have truly entered that of poetics. To have successfully bound up the bundle of one's sublimations is tantamount to having framed a true, *Promethean* poetics.

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[g] *C.f.* La poétique de l'espace *(Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), Collection "Quadriges," 13:* "Sublimation in poetry towers above the psychology of the mundanely unhappy soul. For it is a fact that poetry possesses a felicity of its own, however great the tragedy it may be called upon to illustrate. Pure sublimation, as I see it, poses a methodological drama, for, needless to say, phenomenologists cannot ignore the deep psychological reality behind the processes of sublimation so long studied by psychoanalysis. Their task is to turn our attention, phenomenologically, to images which have not been lived, to images not produced in life but created by the poet. The unlived must be lived out; one must open oneself up to the overtures of language."

Between these two extremes of excessive reduction and absolute sublimation a complex struggle is played out between reduction to human scale and poetic expansion. This is the case, for instance, with figures of Prometheus drawn from lyric drama. In order for one to profit from the psychological impact of the image of Prometheus his figure must be read as corresponding to a need for transcendant being. Prometheus is in this way *more than human*. But because the playwright often must depict the circumstances of an action dramatically, there is need to have this *more than human* come to terms with forces that are *counter-human*. For example, Goethe stresses the fury of the struggle between Prometheus and Zeus. Challenge is the initial impetus towards victory.

The text cuts off here. This allusion is probably to Goethe's "Prometheus Ode" (a monologue addressed to Zeus) and to the unfinished play Prometheus *(1773-74) in which it appears:*

PROMETHEUS

Veil thou the face of thy heavens, Zeus,
With clouds of mist,
And menace, like boys who lop
The thistles' heads,
The oak-trees and the mountain-tops.
Still to me unmolested
My earth remains,
And my hut
Which thou didst not build,
And my hearth,
The warmth whereof
Thou enviest me . . .
. . . .
Who helped me
Stand against the Titans' arrogance?

Who saved me from the hand of death,
Or slavery?
Didst thou not all thyself accomplish,
Holy, ardent heart?
Still glowing, young and good,
Deluded, thanks to him
Who sleeps above exalted.
I esteem thee? Why?

(*Monologue of Prometheus in his studio*, Prometheus, *Act III.*)

Act I of the play opens with a dialogue between Prometheus and Mercury:

PROMETHEUS

. . . .
Their will opposed to my will!
One against one
Methinks leaves nothing!
. . . .

MERCURY

Pitiful! *That* to thy high Gods,
To the Eternal?

PROMETHEUS

High gods? I am no god,
Yet look on myself as not less worthy.

Fragment:

For Ballanche [*Oeuvres* (Paris and Geneva: Librairie de J. Barbezat, 1830), III, 110], "Prometheus is man creating himself by the energy of his own thought." Be each day the Prometheus of thine own soul's force.

I will have a great deal more to say about the text in which Goethe compares himself to Prometheus.

The text to which this note refers is from Part III, Book XIV of Goethe's autobiography, From My Life: Poetry and Truth

(1814). *Goethe, boasting of his "fertile talent," invokes Prometheus, recalling the reverberations his Prometheus monologue had had throughout German literature. The monologue had first been published in 1785 in Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi's essay "On the Doctrine of Spinoza," a polemic against Lessing in the quarrel between pantheism and monotheism. The passage from Goethe's* Poetry and Truth *follows as G. B. copied it down. It dates to some years after 1857:*

"The common fate of human beings, which all of us must bear, cannot but fall most heavily upon the shoulders of the individual whose intellectual powers develop earliest and most broadly . . . [I]n the final analysis, human beings are always thrust back upon themselves . . . When still quite young I discovered often that in the greatest emergencies what we hear is 'Physician, heal thyself!' And how frequently I had been compelled to exclaim, with a painful sigh, 'I have trodden the wine-press alone.' While I was thus searching for something to confirm my independence, I found that the securest basis for it was my fertile talent which for several years had not abandoned me for a moment . . . As I reflected on this natural gift and saw that it was my very own possession, which no outside influence could either facilitate or hinder, I was glad to make it the philosophical basis for my whole existence. The idea transformed itself into an image: I was struck by the old mythological figure of Prometheus separated from the gods who populated the world for himself out of his own workshop. I was keenly aware that one had to isolate oneself in order to produce something of significance. Those works of mine which had received so much praise were the offspring of solitude. Having now a quite broad relation to the world I was not without ability or desire to invent, but execution was stalled because I actually had no style in either prose or verse, but had to start all over again with every new work, fumbling for a way to treat its subject matter. Since it was necessary to decline, indeed to shut out, anyone's help with this, I imitated Prometheus by separating myself from the gods, and this was all the more natural for me since my character and inclination were such that one sentiment would always crowd out and obliterate the rest.

"The fable of Prometheus came to life in me. I tailored the old Titanic garments to my size and without further reflection began to write a play portraying the difficulties Prometheus experienced with Zeus and the new Olympian gods when, on his own initiative, he gave form to human beings and with Minerva's help brought them to life, founding a third dynasty. Truly the gods then ruling had every cause to complain, risking to appear as they did unlawful intercessors between the Titans and humankind. Set as a monologue into this singular composition is that poem ["The Prometheus Ode"] whose significance in German literature stems from its having prompted Lessing to declare his views to Jacobi on some important points of philosophy and sentiment . . .

"Although, as indeed occurred, this subject matter may give rise to philosophical, even religious reflection, it belongs most properly to the realm of poetry. The Titans are the foil to polytheism, just as the devil may be viewed as the foil to monotheism. But neither he nor the one God to whom he stands in contrast is a poetic figure. Milton's Satan, though gallantly portrayed, remains in a disadvantageously subaltern position as he attempts to destroy the splendid creation of a Superior Being. Prometheus, on the other hand, has the advantage of being able to create and form in defiance of higher beings. What's more it is a beautiful thought, and one appropriate to poetry, that human beings were created not by the supreme ruler of the world but by a lesser figure, one however sufficiently worthy and important to do so because a scion of the oldest dynasty. Greek mythology in general offers us an inexhaustible wealth of symbols both human and divine."

Prometheus As Trickster.
The "Couple" Prometheus and Epimetheus.

Japhet had four sons: Atlas, Menoetius, Prometheus, and Epimetheus. The two youngest are often considered as opposites, forming together as it were a set of twins locked in an oversimplified dialectic: "there seems to be no sufficient reason for abandoning the obvious sense of 'Fore-thinker' which the Greeks themselves took to be the meaning of Prometheus in opposition to the 'After-thinker' Epimetheus, thus contrasting the wise with the foolish brother, the sage with the dunce." James George Frazer, *Myths of the Origin of Fire* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 196-97. With the opposition "Pro" and "Epi" all apparently falls into place. *Pro*metheus is more intelligent than *Epi*metheus. Intelligence after the fact is less valuable than intelligence before the fact. After the fact, one recognizes only one's own foolishness. Prometheus therefore may be taken as the model of innate intelligence.

Kerenyi speculates whether Prometheus and Epimetheus did not originally form "a hybrid creature, the primordial man" (*ein Zwitterwesen, den Ur-Mann*), with Pandora as primordial woman (*die Ur-Frau*). In *Niobe*, taking his inspiration from Hesiod,[h] Kerenyi reconsiders the complementarity of Prometheus the trickster and Epimetheus the fool, asserting that the pair constitute a corporate unity (*ungeschiedene Einheit*). Prometheus and Epimetheus are like two facets of a single *Gestalt*: "The pair Prometheus and Epimetheus represent the human race, or more exactly the race of men. Without Promethean wiles (*Schlauheit*) and Epimethean foolhardiness (*Dummheit*) there would have been no humanity at

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[h] *Hesiod suggested in passing a subtler opposition than this, one between the quick thinking of Prometheus and the mental wanderings of Epimetheus* (Theogony, 510-11):

> ... Προμηθέα
> ποικίλον αἰολόμητιν, ἁμαρτίνοόν τ' Ἐπιμηθέα

all" (41). This characterization recurs constantly in Kerenyi's early works. In "Le mythe du fripon et la mythologie grecque" he goes so far as to state that "Prometheus' exploits reveal him to be a trickster and a fool simultaneously: Prometheus is both Prometheus and Epimetheus" (*Le fripon divin*, 159). Foolhardiness is thus the flip side of cleverness—which is as much as to say that cleverness is *also* foolhardy.

Cleverness, indeed, is not the same as true intelligence. Wily Prometheus in the final analysis would seem a "reduced state" of the greater, *poetic* Prometheus. (To be elaborated further.)

Works by Karl Kerenyi consulted by G. B.:

Prometheus, Das griechische Mythologem von der menschlichen Existenz (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1946).
Niobe, Neue Studien über antike Religion und Humanität (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1949).
La mythologie des Grecs, Histoires des dieux et de l'humanité, trans. Henriette de Roguin (Paris: Payot, 1952); from *Die Mythologie der Griechen* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1951).
La religion antique, trans. Y. Le Lay (Geneva: Georg, 1957).
"Le mythe du fripon et la mythologie grecque" in *Le fripon divin, un mythe indien*, anthology of works by Carl Jung, Karl Kerenyi, and Paul Radin, trans. Arthur Reiss (Geneva: Georg, 1958).

The Prometheus Complex.
The Intellectual Mastery of Fire.

Allow me to return to a passage from *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 26:

> There is in human beings a veritable *will to intellectuality*. We underestimate the need to understand when we place it, as pragmatism and Bergsonism have done, under the absolute dependence of the principle of utility. I propose, then, to place together under the term *Prometheus Complex* all those tendencies

which impel us *to know* as much as our forebears, more than our forebears, as much as our teachers, more than our teachers.

The following is a fragmentary discussion found under the rubric "The Prometheus Complex."

The Prometheus Complex—a paragraph in which I will return to the figure's complexual character.

Some mention of *disobedience* accompanies most references to the myth of Prometheus. It is here that the contemporary relevance of the complex can be felt. All that is retained of the myth of Prometheus is the temptation to disobey. Conceived in this way the complex seems preeminently up-to-date, though traces of content similar to this are easily discerned in older legends still. I will comment here on several of these in the voluntarily neutral style of ethnology.[3] For example, in the long account of a "myth concerning the origins of fire" from Polynesia described by Frazer (*Myths of the Origin of Fire*, 59 and following), a man is careful not to instruct his son in the manner of cooking food. The father is suspicious of the boy who is "full of fun, and fond of practical jokes" (59). Curiosity induces the child to steal fire. The plot is a complicated one, full of incident. When the fire of the elders is discovered missing, the boy, on top of his theft, must lie to his father "who ha[d] cautioned him against taking any fire with him"—"but again the sober spirit of the elder [is] no match for the trickiness of the younger . . ." (61).

As if every theft and every act of disobedience harkened back to Prometheus, Frazer notes here as self-evident: "There is something in the legend of the rude Tonguese that reminds one of the Prometheus of the classic Greeks" (61).

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[3] At this point I owe the reader a confession: I cannot bring myself to feel as strongly for the ethnological as I do for the archeological Prometheus. But perhaps some restraints on my tendency to leap to the majestic would do me good!

Fragment: In what spirit is one to read a book like Frazer's? Along what lines shall one maintain one's interest in his text? Each legend is followed by another, always another. The variations themselves grow monotonous. For a dreamer, reading Frazer's book is like being punished with extra homework [*comme un pensum*].

But we can go further than this. The hero Prometheus is a symbol of *constructive* disobedience. One must disobey the fathers to outdo them. To disobey in order to take action is the byword of all creative spirits. The history of human progress amounts to a series of Promethean acts. But autonomy is also attained in the daily workings of individual lives by means of many small Promethean disobediences, at once clever, well thought out, and patiently pursued, so subtle at times as to avoid punishment entirely. All that remains in such a case is an equivocal, diluted form of guilt. I would say that there is good reason to study the dynamics of disobedience, the spark behind all knowledge.

Fragment:
Prometheus. The Intelligence Complex.

Prometheus enjoys an intellectual mastery over fire. He is a thief of fire. When one would steal a treasure, dreams of greed and of the sweet possession of the goods one covets must be set momentarily aside. One's struggle is with others, one's conscious focus on audacity alone. Find in my notes where Jung has it that Prometheus represents consciousness.

I have discovered four notecards (including one, the text of which is published below) making reference to this same remark by Jung. The passage, removed from its context, seems to have held a key which led G. B. in his meditations to associate Prometheus with consciousness:

I described the Prometheus Complex in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* without knowledge of Jung's opinion on this point. Some twenty years later I read: "Fire-making is a pre-eminently conscious act and therefore 'kills' the dark state of union with the mother."

Prometheus Entire. The Three Languages.

The establishment of a Promethean poetics, a poetics of Prometheanism, presupposes the availability of a psychology open to all aspects of the mind.[i] Only a psychology complete in this way, sensitive to all of the inversions of the real and the imaginary, could account for Prometheus in his entirety. Prometheus is a borderland being, neither human nor god, perhaps human and god both. Descriptive psychology remains at a loss concerning the workings of the mind in that grey area between what is human and what is divine. This subject matter calls for nothing more or less than a poetics constantly animated by participation in the active sublimation of all psychological facticity. Ultimately what maintains and perpetually renews our interest in Promethean imagery is poetic energy, an energy released through a poetics of the mind.

Psychologists of the Jungian School are proponents as it were of a *complete* psychology. They have broadened the domain of psychological research so that it now extends from the most distant archetypes of the collective unconscious to the tensions underlying extremes of individual spirituality.

But what has this to do with the legend of Prometheus? A Jungian psychologist would see in the tale more than a simple theft of fire. The bearer of fire is a bearer of light, the light of spirit, of metaphoric clarity, of consciousness. What Prometheus stole from the gods to bestow upon humanity was consciousness. The gift of fire-light-consciousness opened the door to a new human destiny. This destiny of consciousness, of spiritual knowledge, however, is not an easy one. Gerhard Adler describes the drama of this new circumstance of spiritual calling in this way:

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[i] *Fragment:* Kerenyi cites the words spoken by Thomas Mann on the occasion of Freud's eightieth birthday in 1936: "Interest in myth is as intrinsic to psychology as interest in psychology is to all poetry" (cited in Kerenyi, *La mythologie des Grecs*, 5).

> The story of Prometheus reflects all the terrifying dangers inherent in a gift of the light of consciousness; so much so that he who brought this light to mortals had, of tragic necessity, to break the law of the gods, and thus atone for his deed with an eternal wound to the center of his instinctual life.[4]

Glory of consciousness, brutality of instinct!

How can we fail to see in Adler's brief interpretation a translation of myth into a sort of *supra-language* in which questions are framed in terms of the prevailing mode of spirituality?

The fact is that to arrive at a *complete psychology* of a legend such as that of Prometheus requires study of at least *three* languages.

First there is the ordinary *language of utility*. Many of the myths noted by Frazer point explicitly to the usefulness of fire in cooking food. It is for this that the Prometheuses of Tasmania, Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia are revered . . . There would be no end to the praises of fire to be sung in ordinary language, easily translated into every human tongue. By contrast, all of the myths recorded by Frazer speak of human unhappiness resulting from the want of fire.

But to give voice to the importance of fire to humans it seems one must speak another language than that of mere utility, that one be able to communicate the value in vital heat by means of a sort of *infra-language*. Our internal organs are so many hearths. A whole range of idioms which make use of fever as a metaphor are used in describing human instincts. An existentialism of the senses—could any other kind exist?—has need of such an infra-language. Fire must be felt to be a valuable possession safely smoldering beneath the ashes. The attraction in buried fire speaks through a thousand torrid dreams. Treasures burn as do we with covetous desire for them. Our Promethean dreams are fueled by half conviction that the fire is in us, that our bodies hold their own reserves of inner fire. In many of the myths Frazer records, fire is first drawn from the human body.

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[4] Gerhard Adler, *Essais sur la théorie et la pratique de l'analyse jungienne*, trans. L. Fearn and J. Leclercq (Geneva: Georg, c.1948), 192.

It is striking that Jungian psychiatrists consider the "punishment" of Prometheus to have been aimed at the seat of his instinctual life. The gods do not deprive Prometheus of fire. On the contrary, his body is consumed by fire. The eagle comes to torment his being at its fiery crucible, his liver, still alive and functioning. The firebird arrives each day to freshen his agonizing wounds, to devour his liver which regenerates again and again. Prometheus, his liver scarred by fire, will not fully attain the stature of hero until a psychologically and archetypally complete description of the hell of his internal organs has been given.

It is by transcending natural language by means of a *supralanguage* that Adler seeks the pathways of lucidity. Fire would be too material a gift if not accompanied by light. Light would be but a poor gift itself if judged solely in terms of its utility, divorced from the realm of lucid consciousness.

This lucidity is the arena in which a Super-Prometheanism is to develop.

Further Notes

Compare Adler's interpretation to the rationalized "explication" found in the article in the *Encyclopedia* on Prometheus:

> Prometheus, belonging to the family of Titans, was persecuted by Jupiter along with them. He was forced to take up his abode in Scythia in the Caucasus, never to leave there while Jupiter reigned. The chagrin of leading a miserable life in a savage coun-

> try is the vulture which devoured his liver, or perhaps this vulture is a living image of the philosopher's deep and painful meditations. The inhabitants of Scythia were crude in the extreme, and lived with neither law nor custom. This wise and cultivated prince taught them to live more humanly; perhaps this explains why it is said that he formed human beings with Minerva's help. Finally, the fire that he borrowed from the gods must be the many forges he set up in Scythia. Perhaps *Prometheus*, fearing not to find fire there, had carried some with him in a fennel stalk which keeps fire well for a number of days. *Prometheus*, at last, weary of his sad stay in Scythia, came to Greece to live out his final days, where he was honored as a god or, at the very least, a hero. He had an altar in Athens within the walls of the Academy itself, and games were established in his honor consisting of a race from this altar into the city holding flaming torches aloft which must not go out.

This article was written by Jaucourt.

Prometheus steals fire from the mountaintops, and suffers the gods' vengeance upon the Caucasus.

Prometheus is martyred by a bird.

Fire, a bird, a daring man, are denizens of the heights.

Psychoanalysts are often tempted to consider greater than human impulse as a human, all too human trait. In this reversal, the gods above are brought back to their origins.

Language of utility. — Don't forget that fire is the principal mode of sacrifice.

Ethnological accounts consider only the practical day-to-day usefulness of fire. But there is an entire philosophic tradition which would see Prometheus as the initiator of the arts. See, for example, this myth recounted by Protagoras:

> Once upon a time, there existed gods but no mortal creatures . . . When it was time to bring [these last] into the light, the gods charged Prometheus and Epimetheus with the task of equipping

> them and of allotting suitable powers to each. Epimetheus begged Prometheus to allow him to do the distribution himself . . . Now Epimetheus was not a particularly clever fellow, and before he realized it he had used up all the available powers on the brute beasts . . . Prometheus, therefore, being at a loss to provide any means of salvation for humanity, stole from Hephaestus and Athena the gift of skill in the arts, together with fire—for without fire it was impossible for anyone to possess or use such skill . . . It was through this gift that humans gained the means of life . . .
>
> —Plato, *Protagoras*, 320c-322a.

Aeschylus elevated the cultural importance of Prometheus as a rational hero even further, depicting him as the inventor of science:

> PROMETHEUS.—Do not think that out of pride or stubbornness I hold my peace; my heart is eaten away when I look at myself, when I see myself insulted as I am. Who was it but I who in truth dispensed their honors to these new gods? I will say nothing of this; you know it all; but hear what troubles there were among humankind, how I found them witless and gave them the use of their wits and made them masters of their minds. I will tell you this, not because I would blame them, but to explain the good will of my gift. For they at first had eyes but saw to no purpose; they had ears but did not hear. Like the shapes of dreams they dragged through their long lives and handled all things in bewilderment and confusion. They did not know of building houses with bricks to face the sun; they did not know how to work in wood. They lived like swarming ants in holes in the ground, in the sunless caves of the earth. For them there was no secure token by which to tell winter nor the flowering spring nor summer with its crops; all their doings were indeed without intelligent calculation until I showed them the rising of the stars, and the settings, hard to observe. And further, I discovered to them numbering, pre-eminent among subtle devices, and the combining of letters as a means of remembering all things, mother of the Muses, skilled in crafts.
>
> —Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 436-61.

Come back to Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*:

"Let me now contrast the glory of activity, which illuminates Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, with the glory of passivity . . . Human beings, rising to Titanic stature, gain culture by their own efforts and force the gods to enter into an alliance with them, for, newly wise, both the existence and the failings of the gods are in their hands. But what is most wonderful in this Prometheus poem, whose fundamental premise is a veritable hymn to impiety, is its profoundly Aeschylean demand for *justice*. The immeasurable suffering of the bold 'individual' on the one hand and the divine predicament and intimation of a twilight of the gods on the other, the way the power of these two worlds of suffering compels a reconciliation, a metaphysical union—all this recalls in the strongest possible terms the center and main axiom of the Aeschylean view of the world, which envisages Moira enthroned above both gods and humans as eternal justice.

"In view of the astonishing audacity with which Aeschylus places the Olympian world on his scales of justice, we must keep in mind that thoughtful Greeks possessed in their mysteries an immovably firm foundation for metaphysical thought, and that their occasional bouts of skepticism could be vented upon the Olympians. The Greek artist in particular had an obscure feeling of mutual dependence when it came to the gods; and it is precisely in the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus that this feeling finds its symbolism . . .

"But Aeschylus' interpretation of the myth does not exhaust the astounding depth of its terror. Rather the artist's delight in becoming, the cheerfulness of artistic creation that defies all misfortune, is merely a bright image of clouds and sky mirrored in a black lake of sadness . . . The grounding of the Prometheus myth is to be found in the extravagant value which naïve humans attached to *fire* as the true palladium of ascending culture. But that human beings should freely dispose of fire without receiving it as a present from heaven, either as a lightning bolt or as the warming rays of the sun, struck these thoughtful primitives as criminal, a theft of divine nature.

Thus the very first problem in philosophy immediately produces a painful and irresolvable contradiction between humans and gods, and drags it before the gates of every culture like some huge boulder. The best and highest possession humankind is able to acquire is obtained by sacrilege and must be paid for with consequences involving the whole flood of sufferings and sorrows with which the offended divinities have afflicted the nobly aspiring races of humanity."

3

Empedocles

I

To MEDITATE upon Empedocles' death atop Mount Etna is to promote a Poetics of Fire. The Image goes beyond the Act, and is itself a permanent poetic act of transcendence.

The death of Empedocles should not be seen as merely another incident in the history of philosophy. What, we may ask, makes the image of Empedocles so central to the spiritual life of anyone who dreams of life and death and fire? It is assuredly not the balance sheet of the man's social life; nor is it the philosophy scattered through the fragments of his thought which has wrongly been described as fundamental. No indeed! The image of Empedocles is one of the great images of the Poetics of Annihilation. In the Empedoclean act the individual looms large as fire and becomes the principal actor in a veritable cosmic drama.

The outcome of the drama of Empedocles is not decided in a dialectics of acceptance and denial. Denial is possible where ideas are concerned, never images. The interpretive dialectics which suggest themselves here are many in number. To dedicate oneself to fire, is this not to become fire? Or perhaps to dedicate oneself to fire is to succeed in achieving a state of Nothingness. It is a long way from the majesty of flame to that of Nothingness. Or again, perhaps such grand and totalizing fire is one's guarantee of total purification. But is not purification a guarantee of rebirth? In the Philosopher's heart phoenixical hope springs eternal. Here possibilities for interpretation begin to emerge; and if the drama of Empedocles' life is interpreted in terms of his philosophy, one turned to time and time again down through the ages, any transposition becomes possible, every one a fit object of philosophic reverie. Those of us capable of accepting all possibilities (for all must be accepted) enter thereby the realm of the Poetics of Fire. Here ideas themselves have dreams, and every one might well be termed Empedoclean. Each is an unconsummated pre-act, a delicate synthesis of tension and terror—a phenomenon familiar to every serious dreamer of flames. A number of testimonials will follow. Although we are not carried away by temptation ourselves as the philosopher once freely chose to be, the fact that once he was is known to us. We dream endlessly that individuals are free still to confront this possibility. Empedocles, the hero of a freely chosen death by fire, triggers and perpetuates these dreams in us. The human destiny he represents is one of *fatal imagery*. There are times we are obliged by fire to imagine death. It was by such a fatal image that Empedocles was overcome.

In contrast to the myriad philosophies which claim that we are *cast* into existence, we confront here a Philosopher who *casts himself* into the arms of death. While both birth and death are glorious Instants, birth is not a matter of one's choosing. Empedocles experiences freedom for the first time when he *casts* himself to death. Moments of decision like these are worthy objects of study for a Poetics of Time.

Empedocles' Act takes place in an Instant upon a Summit. These four Capitals work together here, and a Poetics of Fire must undertake to elevate their tone. Psychological explanation will not suffice; poetic explication written in poetic capitals is called for. The dilemma is a clear one: is the Act of Supreme Will on the Summit of the Mountain of Fire human circumstance or cosmic event? If it is to be read as human drama, more psychological background and a focus more on the action at center stage will be necessary. Distant causality will be seen to play as great a role as factors nearer the drama at hand. This eloquent psychology, despite its limited means, serves to distance us from the munificence of the drama's denouement. Psychologically explained in this way, the Philosopher becomes just one more down-trodden individual, a disappointed citizen or abandoned political leader, caught in the web of social drama as any ordinary specimen of human psychology might be. The fervor of poetic sincerity will be missing from any such work of minor psychological fiction in which the fantasies of psychologists of social drama are given free rein. To move from psychology to theater the tone must be heightened. Psychologists who fail to see theatricality as vital to poetry will find themselves unable to account for this change in register. How many vain attempts have playwrights made to *lay the groundwork* for Empedocles' final scene, undergirding Legend with a storyline! As the number of quaint and puerile secondary characters, kings and women, is increased, the central character, Mount Etna, is forgotten. How is one then to study the psychology of the Volcano, bellowing and groaning forth temptations, sleeping so long as the philosopher sleeps and awakening as his cosmic intelligence awakens? While the playwright is busy complicating the psychological drama of Empedocles further and further, his cosmic drama boils to a head; the Philosopher answers the Volcano's call, stirred by merely human unhappiness no longer. The Volcano has in mind more than just a victim, more than simply any human sacrifice whatever. The Volcano wants Empedocles. And in this cosmic drama's aftermath the names Empedocles and Etna are forever joined. No longer is it possible to recollect the one without remembering the other. Poets will have little use for those who would establish the date of the philosopher's death by charting the volcano's eruptions. Legends need not be dated for they are eternal, revitalized each time a poet dresses them in imagery anew.

Legends concerning the summit are immovable. Prometheus nailed upon the Caucasus, Empedocles scattered to the four winds by mountain fire: in legends such as these the

Summit becomes a character in its own right. And the Etna of Empedocles is truly both the summit of a man and summit of a world. (*Margin note*: this last section to be rewritten.)

The summit isolates. It overlooks the sea, the true and only sea, the sea great dreamers dream of gazing o'er as have so many of the culture's heroes. Edgar Allan Poe, as an inhabitant of the New World, is one poet who looks to the Mediterranean to lend his cosmic reveries the nobility of ancient thought. In proclaiming his *Eureka*, Poe goes so far as to imagine himself upon the Mountain of Fire's Summit! From here the human, more than human has the power to see all, to take his bearings in all directions and so embrace in a *single primal vision* east and west, north and south, all that rises and all that sets:

> He who from the top of Aetna casts his eyes leisurely around, is affected chiefly by the *extent* and *diversity* of the scene. Only by a rapid whirling on his heel could he hope to comprehend the panorama in the sublimity of its *oneness*. But as, on the summit of Aetna, *no* man has thought of whirling on his heel, so no man has ever taken into his brain the full uniqueness of the prospect; and so, again, whatever considerations lie involved in this uniqueness, have as yet no practical existence for mankind.[1]

Thus the *ideality of Etna* is forever glorified!

While the name Empedocles is not pronounced in Poe's *Eureka*, the Philosopher's memory is palpable nonetheless throughout the meditation. In order to dream his philosophical dreams of a Unified World and to contemplate Existence, Poe travels to the very site where for Empedocles Being and Non-Being were proximate. Here the essence of the world is present in all its fullness and splendor. Here the infinities of space find their center. Yet annihilating fire is to be found here too in all of its *enormity*. The Nothing is enormous here, the sea immense.

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1. Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), *Eureka: Essai sur l'univers materiel et spirituel*, trans. Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1864), 5.

I hope to demonstrate the importance of this concrete dialectic of being and non-being to both the Empedoclean site and the Empedoclean act. We will begin with a look at the many poetic echoes of this dialectic in the tragedies and odes of the great poets, attempting through their works to come to terms with the attraction of this symbol of annihilation. It is a symbol which remains unresolved in the glory of the Poetics of Fire. Travelers today who climb to the top of Mt. Etna are reminded of Empedocles. It would prove a disappointment, though, were one to fall into the crater—a poetic gesture *manqué*. Indeed, the only way for one to live out the Empedoclean Act is through one's poetry.

After taking a look at the great plays, I will, in the second part of my discussion, present a number of less striking images which evidence only partially developed or barely perceptible temptations. Even images only hinted at, such as these, incontestably bear the sign of the workings of Empedoclean imagination. This should signal our arrival in a poetic realm where the images of a psychological complex play themselves out in small imagistic cruelties, a realm of extremes where masochistic and sadistic tendencies go hand in hand. The butterfly plunging into the flame of a candle is undoubtedly the victim of a phototropism—this is the conclusion immediately drawn by any student of animal psychology. But what about the dreamer? What about the poet who has no need to see in order to dream?[2] It will be ours to discover whether a

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[2] See, for instance, Goethe's poem "Blessed Yearning [Selige Sehnsucht]":

Tell it the wise alone, for when
  Will the crowd cease from mockery!
Him would I laud of living men
  Who longs a fiery death to die.

In coolness of those nights of love
  Which thee begat, bade thee beget,
Strange promptings wake in thee and move,
  While the calm taper glimmers yet.

No more in darkness canst thou rest,
  Waited upon by shadows blind,

sufficient number of Empedoclean images may be collected without danger.

But why not begin grandly?

II

A work like Hölderlin's *The Death of Empedocles*, never finished though returned to over and over, always from a radically altered perspective, will help me demonstrate the difficulties there are in moving from human to cosmic drama.

Three versions of the play were published together for the first time in a French translation by André Babelon.[3] The first, a *tragedy* written between the fall of 1797 and June 1799, includes only the first two acts. The second version, written in 1799, is presented as a *drama* in five acts though only a fragment of the first act was completed. Appended to it is "a scene-by-scene synopsis (combined with an *étude théorique*)." This version, a reworking of the first, "takes on by the last scenes of the first act the character of free verse, Hölderlin's ultimate lyric form and unique to his late work."[4] The third version, probably dating to early 1800, bears the drama's definitive title *Empedocles On Etna*. "It is an entirely new work imbued with an entirely new atmosphere which sets aside all previous versions" in which can be sensed "tragedy's attempt

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A new desire has thee possessed
 For procreant joys of loftier kind.

Distance can hinder not thy flight;
 Exiled, thou seekest a point illumed;
And, last, enamoured of the light,
 A moth art in the flame consumed.

And while thou spurnest at the best,
 Whose word is "Die and be new-born!" [*Stirb und werde!*]
Thou bidest but a cloudy guest
 Upon an earth that knows not morn.

G. B. *notes in the margin*: "Return to this *Stirb und werde!* [*Meurs et deviens!*]."

[3] Friedrich Hölderlin, *La Mort d'Empédocle*, trans. with an introduction by André Babelon (Paris: Gallimard, 1929).

[4] From the Introduction by André Babelon, 8-9.

to grasp and fully translate all of the poetry of Empedocles' character."[5] The text as written concludes with a projected scene-by-scene outline of subsequent acts.

I describe this sequel outline here to familiarize the reader with its most important passages. Some time spent with Pierre Bertaux's *Hölderlin, Essai de biographie intérieure*[6] will help one to better appreciate this veritable *drama of literary creation.* Hölderlin was hard at work on his new project by early summer 1797, very soon after the publication of the first volume of *Hyperion*. But why then so many drafts and new beginnings with a project so straightforward, so lofty in its purpose? Hölderlin suffered neither material nor social constraint, and he pursued his work on the project tranquilly at first, writing his friend Neuffer in November 1798: "I've been here a little more than a month, and all this time I have been working on my play . . . and enjoying the fine autumn weather."[7] Here then stood the work in the auspicious light of autumn at the threshhold of a fine productive winter. Hölderlin's lyric genius was at its height. There was nothing to hold his work back, and yet the talents best suited to bringing it to term were unable to do so. The conclusion to be drawn from a failure of this kind seems clear: if the death of Empedocles is to be made the subject of a tragedy, the "tragedy" must begin with its fifth act, or even with the final scene. If Empedocles' death is to be made the subject of a drama, it must be a drama with a single character only. We encounter here what would amount to an internal contradiction in dramatic theory—need I add that the decor must not be literal, that the volcano on stage must be replaced by a symbol? This is as much as to say that the only form appropriate to the subject of Empedocles' death is that of a poem philosophical in nature situated at the border between life and death, being and non-being, flame and smoke, fire and ash—not easy to bring off. What grandeur might there be attained if only fire were a character truly! Fire in such a case would play the role of the world's *animus*, worthy partner to the Empedoclean *animus* face to face with the volcano.

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[5] *Ibid.*, 11.

[6] Pierre Bertaux, *Hölderlin, Essai de biographie intérieure* (Paris: Hachette, 1936), Chapter II: "Les versions successives de l'*Empedokles*," 169-217.

[7] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin: Hellingrath, 1923), III, 346, as cited in Pierre Bertaux, 169.

Pierre Bertaux is quite right when he points out the elimination from one version of Hölderlin's play to the next of walk-ons serving only to allow Empedocles' own essence to emerge, and in sensing Hölderlin's "satisfaction" at arriving at a one-character drama. If we examine this development in Hölderlin's work as a purely *literary phenomenon*, a phenomenon of poetic creativity, we find in it a true transcendence of the classic law of the three unities of action, time, and space. These are here subsumed into a *unity of character* with unity of action centered around a Decision, unity of time collapsed upon the Instant, and unity of place preserved upon a Summit. The play to be written has become a sort of psychological pyramid bearing Empedoclean essence at its summit. This degree of condensation could not survive dramatic recitation. The play's dynamism of psychological transcendence can only be conserved in a hymn, an ode, or the stanzas of a poem.[8]

The Empedoclean act is so enormous it exists beyond the bounds of behavioral psychology. Hölderlin is often said to have suffered from a veritable "fear of determinacy." His hero's decision breaks with determinacy entirely. The Empedoclean act is without cause. It is the act of a human consciousness aware of its absolute solitude.

Yet through all of Hölderlin's many drafts and revisions this solitude remains unconvincing. It is difficult not to be struck by the fact that in the last draft an entirely new character appears, Manes the Egyptian, a figure from another time and a philosopher representing another school of thought. The dialogue between Empedocles and the Egyptian is no longer human but in many respects cosmic. This gesture beyond Greek philosophy would seem to represent desire on Hölderlin's part to divorce himself from texts and history, to bear the weight of his hero's destiny alone. Empedocles in this respect is the true hero of being face to face with essential nothingness. We have reached the heights of heroism here, heroism both gratuitous and causeless.[9]

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[8] "[T]he fragments of *Empedokles* are pieces not of a tragedy but of a tragic poem" —Pierre Bertaux, 178.

The task of working out this Poetics of Pure Heroism proved a veritable torment to Hölderlin the poet. In the two-page, scene-by-scene outline Babelon places at the end of his translation, each act is accompanied by indications of the *tone* Hölderlin was seeking. Act Four, Scene One. Three characters—Empedocles, Pausanias, Panthea; a hero, a man, and a woman. *Elegisch* or *Heroisch*. In Scene Two, Empedocles alone, the tone sought is one of subtle, resolved opposition: *Elegisch heroisch?*, *Heroisch elegisch?*. In Scene Three, probably to have known the double glory of *animus* shared between Empedocles and Manes, the tone becomes *Heroisch lyrisch?*; and finally, in Scene Four, Empedocles alone again, *Lyrisch heroisch?*

The correct *poetic tone*, then, could not be found. The evolution of poetic tone throughout the work remains *up in the air*. This evolution ought to have provided a fine opportunity for meditation in both *anima* and *animus*, from the elegiac to the lyric—something indeed for a "dreamer of words" to dream upon!

But if one is to die a hero, braving Empedoclean death by volcanic fire, one must first abandon and dissolve all memories, entrusting these to *anima* at last, erase all elegies to the sweet and easy life of devotion, and forget what cannot be forgotten.

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[9] A telling detail: Empedocles is said to have left only a sandal behind him in the world!

Hölderlin writes bluntly: "A lyric form suitable to the myth remains to be discovered."[10] We might translate this more literally: after failing repeatedly in his attempts to write a version of the myth of Empedocles, the myth of in-*animus* death by fire, the poet discovered that a lyric form suitable to the myth of voluntary death remained to be discovered.

Empedocles' end is one of rupture; his destiny runs at counter-currents to the course of ordinary life. Wilhelm Dilthey for his part perceived quite clearly that Hölderlin's Empedocles, "sovereign and solitary," makes a total break with "external fate" (*äusseres Schicksal*):

> [Hölderlin] strives to represent the growing awareness of a contemplative individual whose private passions have grown silent. Struggle against the limitations on our existence (*Dasein*) and against reliance on invisible forces in obtaining the necessities of life . . . is the history of the human soul's ascendancy over private passions and the will to satisfy them . . . When this history is felt to be the greatest, strongest, and most powerful aspect of one's life, one is somehow led past all limitations out into the realm of freedom—even if this be found in the arms of death.[11]

The death of Empedocles marks the extremity beyond which one's being sheds all of its experience, real or imagined. Here lies Fire. The tiny speck of existence that is a human's being yearns to become the immensity of fire. The *Dasein* too sure of its roots shall be a *Feuersein* in the tree of flame's immensity.

It happens that Hölderlin's Empedoclean Poetics are not consecrated to fire alone. In his view fire is but a means to obtaining ether, and death by fire a contribution to the resurrection of the Etherean gods. Empedocles' sacrifice helps to purify the world by making what is pre-divine divine. It would seem that when a superior man who has been purified through meditation is offered up to impure terrestrial fire, this facilitates the transmutation of terrestrial fire into celestial, etherean fire.

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[10] Cited by Bertaux, 231.

[11] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung, Lessing-Goethe-Novalis-Hölderlin* [1st ed. 1906] (4th ed.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 416-17. *The citation from Dilthey appears in German in Bachelard's manuscript.*

Hölderlin has a reputation as the philosopher of the fifth element, ether. But ether is nothing if not an element of flight from what is elemental. There can be no *material image* to testify to its interiority, for ether as an element has none.

For Hölderlin, then, Empedocles is the hero of etherean becoming. He seeks in death return to a celestial homeland. Death is a return to the Father at long last in a blaze of spirit:

> . . . I feel so light
> Up here, so well, and rich enough and glad
> And glorious. Here I dwell, where Father Etna
> Tenders with hospitality his fiery chalice
> Filled to the brim with spirit, garlanded
> With flowers grown in his own garden.[12]

The sacrifice of a son will liberate the paternal spirit imprisoned in the Volcano:

> You become alive to me, and manifest.
> No longer hide, bound spirit, from my sight,
> Grow bright for me because I fear you not.
> Now death is what I seek. It is my right.
> Already, gods, the ancient wrath like sunrise
> All around me and beneath roars by.
> Down with you, down, my poor complaining thoughts!
> Painstaking heart, my need for you is past.
> No more scruples, no more wavering now.
> It is the god who calls. . . .[13]

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[12] Friedrich Hölderlin, "Empédocle sur l'Etna" in *La Mort d'Empédocle*, 159.
[13] *Ibid.*, 161.

At the crater's edge, standing before the flames, Hölderlin celebrates "Spirit, the ancient Father." We are truly in the presence here of death in all its *masculine glory*. The cosmos which is to receive Empedocles' spirit "just now come into its own" and freed from nostalgia for feminine comforts is masculine in its essence.

On occasion Hölderlin's Hellenic culture leads him down the road to disaster. He invokes the gods by name. A grade-school Olympus weighs his poem down. Where absolute death is concerned, must one really die to join the family of gods or to become a truly Cosmic being, force, or spark? Empedocles chose. He chose death in a stubborn act of will:

> I am but a twinkle, a glimmering that soon shall pass.[14]

How much this twinkle in the cold of cosmic winter tells us! It is a sign clearly marking the transition from fire to ether. Ether then is cold fire, fire emitting light in the absence of matter, fire which illuminates the spirit.

In delivering himself up to fire the philosopher accepts the fate of Spirit which, alive no longer, refuses to be slowed by life. There remains in ether neither earth nor smoke, mud nor water, effluvium nor motion. Even odor and air are as nothing. But before one arrives at this point, in preparing for the liberation of matter, of all matter, one must ever be dreaming of fire, dreaming of what lies beyond fire. Ether as an element may only be obtained by means of fire. Ethereal poetry is fated to eternally *transcend* the poetry of fire. One may not take up one's abode directly in this world of Ether, upon this Super Olympus of "paternal Ether"[a] gazing down upon the high and mighty, where Hölderlin made bold to live. Even in his meditation on the fate of Empedocles the poet failed to realize this Super Empedocleanism fully. Human tragedy slowed his poetic imagination to a standstill. "Sei du, Gesang! mein freundlich Asyl!. . . ."[b] Hölderlin's *Empedocles* was meant to be a poem, not a tragedy.

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[14] *Ibid.*, 170.

[a] *This allusion is to Hölderlin's poem "An den Aether" (1796).*

III

A book one has begun to write over and over again without success preoccupies one's mind far more than another on which work has gone forward with sufficient and encouraging address. It is quite plausible to imagine Hölderlin, anxious about his work, thinking about Empedocles often. Study of the complex hesitation-creation as it works itself out in literary writing would pose a number of problems for a psychology of nuance. Psychologists study the hesitation to act but rarely consider *the hesitation to write*. It is facile to dismiss this problem by insisting that to write is after a fashion to act, for writing involves erasure and to erase means having to write over. The sublimated life of the writer is a thing of great complexity. Tracing the hesitation to write through all its meanders would allow one the opportunity to measure the incorporation of the Poetic into life and the *sublimation* of life into Poetry. There is interference between Poetry and the Experience of Life. The human psyche behaves poetically, which accounts for one's pleasure in writing.

But let us look now at a situation in some respects the reverse of Hölderlin's hesitancy. Matthew Arnold set out to write his own *Empedocles*, and finished his. But no sooner was his verse drama complete than he began to find fault with it. His self-criticism allows us a glimpse of the hesitations he had had to overcome before he could begin to write in the first place. For Arnold the pleasure of writing turned to unhappiness at having written, a lesson those of us who tend to write too much might take to heart!

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[b] *"May you, O song, my friendly refuge be"—from Hölderlin's "Mein Eigentum [My Possessions]" (Fall 1799).*

Arnold halted the sales of his *Empedocles On Etna* before more than fifty copies had been sold. And he would eventually include the text in his *Complete Works* only upon Browning's insistence. Compared to Arnold's self-criticisms, the hesitations which prevented Hölderlin from finishing his work seem, if one may venture to say, more serene. In writing his *Empedocles* Arnold failed utterly to escape the anguish gripping his heart. As he explained to Arthur Hugh Clough in a letter in 1853: "yes—*congestion of the brain* is what we suffer from—I always feel it and say it—and cry for air like my own Empedocles."[15]

Arnold's *Empedocles*, then, failed to secure him peace of mind. His work was marked by a profound sense of failure coming on the heels of success. This is one more proof of the impossibility of structuring dramatic treatment of Empedocles' fate around the psychology of human passions. There are passages in Arnold's work, however, entirely redeemed by Poetry. His text is in its essence the *poem of an Instant*, combining an Instant in a man's life with an Instant in the life of a World.

Here is an example of this poetic mastering of the Empedoclean Instant:

> Oh, that I could glow like this mountain!
> Oh, that my heart bounded with the swell of the sea!
> Oh, that my soul were full of light as the stars!
> Oh, that it brooded over the world like the air!
>
> But no, this heart will glow no more; thou art
> A living man no more, Empedocles!
> Nothing but a devouring flame of thought —
> But a naked, eternally restless mind![16]

For the dreamer of life and death, each and every cosmic element offers deliverance. But the mortal's heart has been ravaged first by the flames of thought and only then by those of the Volcano. Thought must be rendered up to flame, to "the nimble, radiant life of fire."[17]

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[15] Cited in French by Louis Bonnerot in the Introduction to his bilingual edition of Matthew Arnold, *Empédocle sur l'Etna* (Paris: Aubier, 1947), 43.

[16] *Ibid.*, 151.

Elemental death is death both by and for the Cosmos. The human being is in life but a confusion of tendencies. The philosopher, in death, must make a choice.

Louis Bonnerot is correct in considering the line "Nothing but a devouring flame of thought" the "most highly revealing" in the poem.[18] He compares it to the line where Milton captures Satan's essence: "Myself am Hell."

Arnold-Empedocles, Bonnerot explains, thus shared an "intuition of the last great death" which leads one through the mountain pass of life and out into a yawning Cosmic infinitude under the sign of flame.

But, in the moment of death, one becomes what one already is. It is necessary to be flame if one is to abide in hell or throw oneself to Etna. Empedocles belonged to the volcano long before he cast himself in.

To describe a fiery *farewell* of this kind psychology alone will not suffice. Without studying Arnold's work in its detail we may yet note the imbalance which exists between the act itself and the motivation behind it. Hearing Arnold's Empedocles ask a "final service" of the elements,

> Before the sophist-brood hath overlaid
> The last spark of man's consciousness with words . . . ,

strikes one as patently ridiculous.[19] Imagine giving up one's life in order to escape the annoying chatter of philosophers!

Worse still, Arnold succeeded no better when it came to imbuing his *Empedocles* sufficiently with aesthetic causality. As Empedocles approaches death a young disciple plays the

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17. *Ibid.*, 153.
18. *Ibid.*, 54.
19. *Ibid.*, 135.

lyre in a ravine, singing of the beauty of the world, of trees, of dew, of soft winds. But the dialectic clearly is that between the shaded repose of the lowlands and the fires bursting red hot from the mouth of the volcano.

Our conclusion is again the same: the Act of Etna and the Act of a Man are compatible only in the realm of poetry. Historical truth is secondary here, where an instant in the life of a man and an instant in the life of the world are as one. Etna will forever remain a hearth in which some bit of the philosopher is burning. This image, which escapes history just as it escapes psychology, *is poematic in its essence*. As the image is communicated through Language it participates in the power of Language. An image I am unable to visualize myself adorns itself with words, ornaments itself with words, renews itself through words. The many connections it sustains with reality are but so many moorings one must resolutely cut if one hopes to enter the realm of poetry.

A truly great image, then, is sufficient unto itself. It cannot be stretched so wide as an anecdote. To make of it a tragedy is to diminish its glory. Tragedy is a bureaucracy of passions, multiplying human conflicts, shattering destinies. Where human tragedies such as these are concerned, the Cosmos is merely something to be longed for. It is otherwise than through tragedy that Etna may become a character. Fire attains the dignity of personhood in the work of neither Hölderlin nor Arnold. While Arnold conjures up a clear vision of the Titan crushed beneath the mountain, making the earth roll when he stirs, groaning in the rumble of lava with sulphurous vapor for his breath, the poet believes none of this—just one more demonstration of how difficult it is to make poetry out of culture.

IV

In his study of Matthew Arnold, Louis Bonnerot refers to numerous other attempts which have been made by writers to create dramatic works on the subject of Empedocles' death.

Need we be reminded that Nietzsche often entertained the notion of writing a play on the fate of Empedocles? His *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, in fact, includes plans for not one but three dramatic works.[20] The first dates to the fall of 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War, the second to the spring of 1871. The former was to be composed of four acts, the latter five. A subsequent outline modifies this second schema only slightly. A few scenes were sketched out roughly, but alas! the magisterial text itself was never written.

Nietzsche describes Empedocles' quest in this way:

> He feels that the purpose of his existence is to repair the evil caused by hatred, to preach the idea of unity to a world filled with hatred, to carry healing wherever pain, the consequence of hatred, is to be found. It pains him to live in a world of torment and contradiction. He is unable to explain his presence there other than as the result of an error. He must in the dim past have committed some crime, a murder or an act of perjury . . .

In the course of these two outlines a woman appears. She has not yet been given a name in the first but is simply "Woman, nature incarnate." In the second she is called Corinne, and has been joined by numerous other characters, a great many indeed. They weigh with the complexity of the hero's life. One can only wish this fragment had preserved the final tableau, the drama's culmination, rather than the back and forth of its opening scenes, but it would seem to have remained adrift in Nietzsche's mind. As literary fate would have it, Nietzsche's ambitions as a playwright were to end here. In 1870 he offered this synopsis of the final act:

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[20] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Naissance de la philosophie à l'époque de la tragédie grecque*, trans. Geneviève Bianquis (Paris: Gallimard, 1938), 148-55.

> Before the Temple of Pan. "Great Pan is dead . . ." The people gather around the crater. Empedocles, crazed, proclaims the truth of palingenesis before he disappears. A friend dies with him.

In its most developed version, the fifth act opens like a *fête nocturne*: "Mystical discourse on pity. Destruction of eros [*Daseinstriebes*]. Death of Pan. Flight of the people." Corinne stands at Empedocles' side. Two rivers of lava pour from the volcano.

> They [Empedocles and Corinne] are unable to escape. Empedocles feels himself a murderer, infinitely deserving of punishment. He hopes to be reborn in the aftermath of an expiatory death. It is this which draws him towards Etna. He attempts to save Corinne. Corinne dies along with him. "Would Dionysos flee Ariadne?"

I have allowed myself to quote from this text at so much length in order that readers might judge for themselves. This sampling should be ample testimony to the impossibility of elevating scenic structure to the heights of this finale.

Does it matter if the play ends in a fit of madness, or in pent-up remorse over an error? Does Empedocles cast himself into the flames, or is he rather overcome by lava advancing faster than a man and woman can flee? Not flames, but lava! What a let-down in terms of cosmic imagination!

But Nietzsche never wrote the final hymn. His poetic genius might have overcome the psychological contradictions of the pre-heroic life. He might have gotten over his own Empedocles Complex through imagery. I will take the opportunity to describe the power of this complex in a moment.

The failure of these three great poets, Hölderlin, Arnold, and Nietzsche, delivers me I believe from the need to examine any lesser works. I consider these failures proof of the inadequacy of psychological explanation. Psychological causality does not explain a poem. Means must be found to appreciate *lyric* causality, causality in images. In Empedocles' casting himself into Etna we have an image-act, an act-image, whose reverberations are to be discerned in any imagining soul, in any mind which would hold magisterial images up to reality.

Let us examine together these image-acts, these act-images, a little more closely, even if we find ourselves unable to keep track of the many inversions which doubly energize the dreamer's mind.

V

If we are to attempt to take stock of imagined life, which becomes the poetic life of the dreamer who restores dramatic acts to life, nothing at all must be forgotten: Empedocles *cast himself* into the crater of Etna.

> To cast oneself into the flames,
> to cast oneself into the sea,
> to cast oneself into the abyss,

to offer oneself up, in a single act, to fire, to water, and to gravity—here, in the instant human desire gives itself over freely to non-desire, human will itself may be apprehended clearly. Being and nothingness are abstract opposites insofar as contradiction is concerned: I desire and will be able to desire no longer. It is out of those acts we never will perform that poets fashion their poems, *casting themselves into imagery*.

Casting oneself into a cosmic image is certainly the most total of all forms of adherence to the realm of the Poetic. Where images reign, where the essence of the world can be condensed into an image, ideas no longer count. The image controls everything, experience as well as reason.

Since in my books on the imagination I am always careful to pair abstract metaphysical subject matter with concrete imagery, I will attempt to demonstrate the way an image, through its nuance, can make philosophic idioms like "opening upon the world" and being "cast" into the world concrete. Philosophers deconcretize language in order to reassure themselves that they are thinking. The tendency in the realm of the Poetic is the opposite: poets clothe words, which would wear out otherwise, in images. In casting oneself into a cosmic image one both opens oneself up to the world and opens a new world up. An image to which one adheres totally grows larger and becomes the center of a world. But the notion of being "cast into the world" is made concrete initially only in formulae which replace the world with one of its major elements. Philosophic meditation leaves the philosopher standing *before* the world. The effect of poetry is to cast the dreamer *into* a world.

The Empedoclean Act lends poetry a psychological significance which transcends contemplation. Indeed, few literary images would be capable of accounting for this willing leap into the flames, this passage from contemplation into active participation. But there are hints of temptation in any Empedoclean image. Here Death tempts us concretely, Death demonstrable and absolute, Death in an image and by an image.

But the temptation of Death by fire is always overcome. It is rather subtle then as temptations go, bearing the fine mark of the imagination. It may be experienced in safety simply in dreaming the legend of Empedocles. While an attack of vertigo at the edge of an abyss may leave the psyche painfully scarred, the delicate Empedoclean vertigo of the Poetics of Fire is a literary vertigo. And one may read the legend of Empedocles with nary a shudder.

I propose to say something more about this civilized or *literary vertigo* as it reveals itself in the small detail of images I have encountered. The link between masochism and sadism in literature is one of subtle ambivalence. Here the sadistic and the masochistic rule by turns. With Empedoclean imagery one is never really certain whether writers are casting themselves into the flames alongside their heroes or not.

They observe, and by doing so perhaps encourage their heroes' flameward progress. This would amount to an act of sadism in the form of an image. The Philosopher is cast into the mouth of the Volcano. What a distance there is between *sharing* and *claiming to share* in such a fate! Literature is a World. The Reign of Poetry has dominion over a World.

VI

From the simple standpoint of literary expression, we may think of Empedocles as a powerful *pole of allusions* exerting its attraction over more distant allusions which become perceptible themselves as we allow ourselves to dream a bit while reading. For anyone who has dreamed of Empedocles, a candle's flame is a fly's Etna. Small images depend on larger ones. Imagination magnifies all. Coming together thus, annihilation and insignificance are joined. Life must be nothing indeed to be extinguished by mere candleflame.

But self-destruction by fire, the discovery in fire of one's own nothingness, read the other way becomes the very sign of human greatness. Let us not forget Goethe's: "Him would I laud of living men / Who longs a fiery death to die."[21]

When writers choose to write of fire they are dreaming their own far distant Empedoclean ends in what amounts to nothing more or less than an *implicit allusion* to Empedocles. In 1906, Paul Claudel wrote to his friend Gabriel Frizeau that, after finishing his series *The Tree*, he hoped to write a series of plays entitled *Fruit*. "After *Fruit*, I shall write *Fire* which will serve, God permitting, as my funeral pyre."[22] The term of his work would be "the term of his life."

The conclusion to a piece of writing and a life are thus seen in the same light as the fate of Empedocles. Claudel's own fate turned out differently, but the ephemeral image which begins in *fruit* and ends in *fire* should be noted in our collection of images of fire as "implicitly Empedoclean."

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[21] See note 2 above, p.95.

[22] Cited by Henri Mondor, *Claudel plus intime* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 70.

VII

Sometimes it is through resistance to Empedoclean imagery, by means of contradiction, that the path to Empedoclean seduction comes to light.

Our temptation to cast ourselves into the flames is not fulfilled. We balk already at the thought of even minor burns. This provides us an initial protection at least against what is too hot to handle, a physiological defense which allows us to enjoy Empedoclean temptations in all safety. In the final analysis, the image of Empedocles is one of those rare images which has never had a victim.

It is for this reason that the Empedocles Complex appears in *transposed form*, and that it is capable of returning to life with tremendous violence in poetry.

I seem not to have adequately stressed in my earlier essay on *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* the nuance which distinguishes the power of the senses in real life from the power of the senses in imagined, imagining, imaginary life. The Empedocles Complex as once transposed permits us to dramatize our reveries before fire, rendering them *excessive*. By means of excessive imagining we enter the realm of the poetic, and thus read the poets dynamically.

Poets bring new life to our complexes of solitude. To read a poem about the death of Empedocles is to *become* the solitary hero—and the poet as well:

And gladly, did not love restrain me,
    Deep as the hero plunged I'd follow.
    Und folgen möcht'ich in die Tiefe,
Hielte die Liebe mich nicht, dem Helden.[23]

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[23] Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poèmes*, trans. Geneviève Bianquis (Paris: Aubier, 1943), 156.

Psychoanalysts show bare interest in these *complexes of solitude*, or at least if they discover the traces of one they base their interpretations on familial, social, or domestic factors. The psychoanalyst who came across these lines by Hölderlin would respond to the poet something like this: "As it is love which *restrains you*, there would appear to be something you are trying to escape. Your beloved smothers you in affection, hence you dream of death. You love her deeply in return and so, Empedoclean that you are, you find yourself hating her at least a little. You are consumed by two opposing flames." The Empedoclean philosopher's great lesson, it seems, was to have pointed out the intimate, tenacious union between hatred and love. Empedocles was precursor to the philosophy of ambivalence. He inscribed love and hatred in the very mechanism of the Universe. How could this same ambivalence not be present in the human heart? And how then could it not be found at the heart of that dynamic super-element, fire. Fire is benevolent and cruel. It is a god, truly.

With this we find ourselves back in the realm of images, at the dynamic center of excessive imagery. We have, in a certain manner, been transposed ourselves by an Empedocles Complex which has been itself transposed into the realm of poetry. Solitude in reading is ours once again, a means to escape the socialized investigations of the psychoanalysts. The poetic can be lived by us apart from our experience of the mundane. As Geneviève Bianquis has put it: "What does it matter if such moments are fleeting so long as they are imperishable."[24] When an Empedocles Complex is present in a poem we experience that imperishable instant of figurative, Cosmic death.

In moments such as these the superiority of the Poetic over the Psychological becomes apparent. The more resolutely one puts off all traces of psychology, curing oneself of what Nietzsche, I believe, termed "the plague of biography," the more certain one will be of having entered the realm of Poetics.

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[24] *Ibid.*, "Introduction," 14.

This imaginary complex calms itself in a writer's works or work. And with this we have arrived at the very heart of our study of literary activity, at the very seat of the Poetics of Fire. What might have become of Nietzsche's imaginary life had he succeeded in creating his *Empedocles?*

Empedoclean temptations are to be found even in the anti-Empedoclean outbursts of Zarathoustra. One venerates the flames of hell even in mocking them, and the splendors of Etna's fate are but poorly suppressed in anti-Empedoclean imagery. The two opposing orders of violence inhabit the same realm. Listen as Nietzsche curses the Volcano rising from the sea "not far from the happy Isles of Zarathoustra":

> "Out with you, Firehound! Out from your depths," I cried, "and confess how deep those depths are! What is the source of what you snort up here? You drink plentifully from the sea, your salty eloquence shows that! Indeed, for a hound of the depths your nourishment lies too much at the surface! The most I take you for is earth's ventriloquist . . ."

This term Ventriloquist alone stands as sufficient mockery of all the rumblings of the Earth and terrifying din of the Volcano. To make fun in this way is to free oneself of childish fright. Beside the many child-adults frightened of the Dog of the Abyss, Nietzsche seems a man, a veritable superman.

He derides all the Volcano's demons, declaring:

> "You know to bellow and to darken with ashes! Best braggarts and the world experts in the art of making the mud seethe."[25]

It matters little that these imprecations are followed by a tirade against the revolutionaries of the day. If Nietzsche hopes to draw comparisons between the troubles of society and the cataclysms of the subterranean world, he wastes his own time and his reader's both. Only the image is real; the volcano alone possesses true dynamic power. The real life in Nietzsche's work is to be found in his images. We see him here in hot pursuit of excessive imagery—he *declaims* inflammatory words, incensed words directed not to an audience but to Etna as imagined by a rebellious Empedocles who believes in shouting No to the temptations of the void.

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[25] These fragments from *Thus Spake Zarathoustra*, Book II, are excerpted from *Pages mystiques de Frédéric Nietzsche*, trans. with commentaries by André Quinot (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1945), "Les grands événements," 139-40.

Yet, in cursing the volcano, Nietzsche *belongs* to the volcano. He confesses in another poem to a flame-like nature of his own:

Ecce Homo

Yes, I know from whence I came!
Ever hungry like a flame,
I consume myself and glow.
Light grows all that I conceive,
Ashes everything I leave;
Flame I am, assuredly.[c]

But far more than the flame of a hearth fire, the Philosopher is Flame of a Volcano:

> My life is a consuming fire, and so long as its victim shall live so long shall pour forth the holy smoke of its holocaust. This perfumed cloud will fly into the distance, out over the sea, stirring the solitary Navigator's heart.[d]

In the resonance of these poems is it possible to avoid the sense that an Empedoclean fate remained alive in Nietzsche the philosopher's dreams?[e] Empedocles ends up a wisp of smoke, a perfumed cloud *overhanging* the sea. Nietzsche never tells us the tale; everything is there in the one master image. Images suffice because of their vastness. Images make one as big as the world. The Poetics of Fire require no storyline. A storyline is but the string on which the pearls are strung, hardly worth a second thought once one has been transfixed by the richly jeweled marvels of fire.

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[c] Pages mystiques de Frédéric Nietzsche, 92-93. *This poem, written by Nietzsche in Geneva during the winter of 1881-82, was published as "Ecce Homo" in "Jokes, Cunning, and Revenge: Prelude in German Rhymes,"* The Gay Science; *see* Nietzsche's Werke *(Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1921), V:* Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, *no. 62, 30. Quinot's translation of Nietzsche's first three lines has been somewhat modified.*

[d] Ibid., 93. *This fragment [*Nietzsche's Werke *(Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1921), XII, no. 653, 352)], written during the same period as the poem cited above, was not included by him in* The Gay Science.

VIII

Sometimes a fire just getting started is already active in the flesh. A human being is a living pyre. René Char, in the dedication to his fine book *In Search of Base and Summit*, gives expression to the ardor in an inborn pyre, a personal Empedoclean image. One can be "burned alive," the poem tells us, "by fire no greater than oneself."[26]

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[e] *It would seem surprising that* G. B. *paid no attention to the poem on p. 151 of Quinot's edition, written in 1883 and published in* Dithyrambes de Dionysus [Dionysos-Dithyramben] *in 1888 as "Vouloir suprême [Letzter Wille]," in which Nietzsche's genius of abbreviation has condensed the last line into but two words:* siegend, vernichtend, *the very essence of Dionysius-Empedocles. See* Nietzsche's Werke *(Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1921), VIII, 412.* G. B.*'s reading of Quinot's volume must have been temporarily interrupted and never resumed. In fact, numerous markings in the margin, evidence of attentive reading, appear only through p. 144 —the remaining pages were never cut. The poem reads in its entirety:*

Last Will

So to die
as once I saw him die —
the friend who like a god
cast glances of lightning into my dark youth:
— wanton, profound,
in the slaughter a dancer —

of fighters the cheerfullest,
of victors the most difficult,
a destiny standing upon his destiny,
firm, reflecting, preflecting —:

trembling with joy of victory,
rejoicing that he *died* in victory:
by dying, commanding
— and he commanded *destruction* . . .

So to die
as once I saw him die:
victorious, *destroying* . . .

An Empedocles of this sort is on fire even prior to his final plunge. So grandiose is such a philosopher's dream of combustion, he offers himself up to the volcano for the volcano's own sake. It is necessary to think: "If I cast myself into the fire, my own ardor will fan the flames. We will burn together, the two of us, and share together the splendid life of fire." Incendiary and fire become one. The philosopher, a choice combustible, purifies vulgar worldly fire, enhancing its worth. But this purgative process is set in motion already by images of fire. All poets and all dreamers stir continually the fire beneath the mountain. It is they who are the life of the volcano; its destiny is theirs. Something would be lacking in the poetry of volcanoes if the private drama of Empedocles had not found its *apotheosis* upon the summit of Mount Etna.

In the case of René Char, a poet who feels burning within himself fire equal to Fire, flames before the Flame, it is necessary to speak of an inner pyre, a pyre longed for which exists in order to extinguish flames of inner fire. The pyre of Hercules was of this kind. With the tunic of Nessus burning him alive, his skin afire, the time had come for Hercules to yield up human flames to the flames of the pyre. The pyre of Hercules is neither widow's pyre nor disciple's pyre for it consumes not the past. The *presence* of the image triumphs over history and legend and culture. Is not the *tunic of Nessus* devouring Hercules' flesh a truly unforgettable image, a remordent remorse, a burn which burns again, still burns, will burn forever? Why does such an image remain morally viable even if one has but a poor or vague remembrance of its source in legend? The expression "burning memory" apart from any image or analysis is only an expression but one at least which puts the image forth, starting it to life as a result. Each one of us is in possession of a secret pyre.

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[26] René Char, *Recherche de la Base et du Sommet*, followed by "Pauvreté et Privilège," Collection "Espoir," gen. ed. Albert Camus (2nd ed.; Paris: Gallimard, 1955), 7.

But let us not forget that Hercules was living flame throughout his life, the "Glory of the Air." As Paul de Saint-Victor has put it: "His former solar nature . . . smoldered secretly within his human form . . ."[27] All the labors of Hercules were labors of rage which glorified his rage; the fires of rage nourished his existence. "One might have said," Saint-Victor continues,

> that the monsters he slew took their revenge in merging with his being. The Nemean lion which he made into a cloak, the head of the Erymanthian boar with which he covered his head, seemed thus reincarnate and furiously alive within him.

The lion, solar in its essence, stirs the solar Hero with its fires. Fire lies at the root of Hercules' exploits, and fire is essential to his death.

His pyre merely finishes off what the fires of his volcanic anger have begun. *Volcano* is the term Saint-Victor chooses: "The volcano of pain rising within him erupts . . . Frightful invectives issue forth. He cries out for a thunderbolt [to end his torment]."[28] Saint-Victor goes on to evoke "the myth of Solar Hercules, whose twelve labors represent the twelve signs of the firmament. An extraordinary image comes to mind, that of a zodiac constellated with monsters which grow to fill the heavens." He concludes:

> The holocaust would soon be consummated. In a radiant whirlwind, from the summit of Mount Etna, a transfigured Hercules

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[27] Paul Jacques Raymond Binsse, le Comte de Saint-Victor (1827-1881), *Les deux masques*, 3 vols. (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1880-1885), II: *Les antiques* (1882), 70.

[28] *Ibid.*, 81-82.

> will fly skyward towards Olympus, all ablaze, to take his seat among the gods.

Of course these many images are only *oratorical*. They *describe* nothing.[f] But even an oratorical image must have its place in the kingdom of fire. The oratorical image may describe nothing, but it serves to *elevate* thought to the heights of the imagination.

An entire generation of mythologists has attempted to link human destiny to celestial events.[g] A field of excessive metaphors has been established linking the psychology of heroes to celestial cosmology. Cosmic reveries somehow became incarnated in the figures of legend. In dreaming large, humanity grew to fill the world. A detailed dictionary now permits one to pass from psychological meaning to mythological meaning and back again. In analyzing legends dialectically, in terms of both the humanizing and the cosmicizing tendencies of language, one may understand things human and things cosmic doubly, or rather imagine them twice: Hercules' pyre *becomes* the setting sun . . .

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f. G. B. *notes*: "Hercules' pyre burns furiously of necessity. There is no time for fastidious destruction, each atom receiving its due of smoke. The psychology of the devouring fire of the tunic of Nessus would have to be subtler, more searching than this. But I lack the philosophic temperament for working out a psychology of atrocity."

g. *This is probably a reference to theses stemming from the work of* Max Müller.

Epilogue

Here, by way of natural conclusion, a brief note found among my father's papers concerning Fire. From it we learn that neither of the two "sides" of his work must be sacrificed to the other.

The sage inquires of one pointing out an image: "What do you conceal from me in pointing out this image so? You point, but this demonstrates nothing. No one able to demonstrate would deign to point."

The more brilliant an image the more troubling its ambiguity, for its ambiguity is that of the depths.

Respectable people prefer their images both superficial and ephemeral: water flowing clear over a sandy bottom, reflecting a distant sky . . . But heaven and earth together account for the verticality of an image. All that rises harbors the powers of the depths within.

Endnotes

Gaston Bachelard's occasional carelessness in documenting his sources, while typical of French scholarship of his generation, was only exacerbated by the fragmentary state in which this particular manuscript was left, never having been prepared for publication. Footnote references, where indicated, were often partial or inaccurate, a state of affairs left largely unchanged in the French edition on which the present translation has been based. These original notes, corrected where necessary, along with a small number of useful explanatory remarks by Suzanne Bachelard, have been kept in place, at the bottom of the page, within the body of the text itself. My own additional commentary, including original language transcriptions of passages cited as well as notes on the translation, has been assembled in the endnotes which follow. These are keyed to Bachelard's text first by page number, followed by the words or phrase appearing at the left margin of the line in which the item to be glossed occurs. For instance, a note on page xii is listed after the key phrase **intensity . . . in the flesh**. Where it has seemed useful to remark on footnotes to the text, the relevant endnotes are keyed to page number, as above, and then to the number of the note itself. I have chosen to provide full original language transcriptions of passages to which Bachelard refers and which he cites, including but not limited to passages of French, in order to enable readers with an interest in tracing certain ideas back to their textual sources to do so conveniently. Where Bachelard himself made use of French translations of material in other languages, I try to indicate the specific translation he used, with page references wherever possible.

P.xi **In 1959, after:** *La Poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957).

P.xi **and *The Poetics*:** *La Poétique de la rêverie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960).

P.xi **study of:** This reference is to Bachelard's *Le Psychanalyse du feu [The Psychoanalysis of Fire]* (Paris: Gallimard, 1938).

P.xi **with itself.":** Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher (1768-1834), *Monologen* (1800). For an English version, see *Schleiermacher's Soliloquies*, trans. Horace Leland Freiss (Chicago: Open Court, 1926).

P.xii **intensity . . . in the flesh:** The French reads: *dans les muscles* [in the muscles].

P.xii **distinguish clearly:** "The reader familiar with Bachelard's earlier work will know that the Jungian distinction between *animus* and *anima*, first proposed in *La Terre et les rêveries du repos* [1948], refers to the deep-seated duality in the psyche of men and women alike. This duality is at the source of the human disposition to organize and make projects (*animus*), and the equally human inclination to imagine and daydream (*anima*) . . . Either principle can reveal psychological verities, but the *anima*, in stressing the potential for openness and receptivity in human nature, is especially suited to a phenomenological approach and, more particularly, to an exploration of poetic reverie." Roch C. Smith, *Bachelard* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 124. In *The Poetics of Reverie* [1960], trans. Daniel Russell (New York: Orion Press, 1965), 62, Bachelard himself notes: "So that there would be no confusion with the realities of surface psychology, C[arl] G[ustave] Jung had the excellent idea of situating the masculine and the feminine of the depths under the double sign of two Latin substantives, *anima* and *animus*. Two substantives for one single soul are necessary in order to communicate the reality of the human *psychisme* . . . But in our reveries . . . our entire soul is impregnated with the influence of the *anima*. And here we are at the very core of the thesis we wish to defend in the present essay: *reverie is under the sign of the anima*. When the reverie is truly profound, the being who comes to dream within us is our *anima*." See *La Poétique de la rêverie*, 52-53.

P.xv **to be found:** See this volume, pp.17-18.

P.xvi **subsequent version:** See this volume, pp.91-92, from the beginning of the chapter through "worthy objects of study for a Poetics of Time."

P.xvii **proaching . . . speak]:** Square brackets in the original.

P.xviii **fn.1:** Antonio Machado (1875-1939), "En el corazón tenía" from his collection *Soldades* (1899-1907). The Spanish, here taken from his *Poesías Completas* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1946), 22-23, reads:

"En el corazón tenía
"la espina de una pasión;
"logré arancármela un día:
"ya no siento el corazón."

. . . .

Mi cantar vuelve a plañir:
"Aguda espina dorada,
"quién te pudiera sentir
"en el corazón clavada."

P.xix **[I]f it is possible:** The text cited here as the start of a sentence corresponds to the middle of a phrase as found in Chapter I [p.29]. It is unclear whether this is a different, earlier version of the text, literally *le début du chapitre*, or whether it has been improperly cited.

P.xx **both the study:** See this volume, p.26.

P.xxii **of the *Complete Works*:** Henri Bergson, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959).

P.xxiii **and *Le droit*:** See Gaston Bachelard, *The Right to Dream*, trans. J. A. Underwood (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1988).

P.xxiii **were all burned:** Bachelard, "because he was dissatisfied with them," burned these pages himself several weeks before his death [Suzanne Bachelard, in correspondence, 28 August 1989].

P.3 **RIMBAUD:** Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), "Matinée d'Ivresse [Morning of Drunkenness]," *Illuminations* [c.1874]: "Nous t'affirmons, méthode! Nous n'oublions pas que tu as glorifié hier chacun de nos âges." The poem's concern with alcohol (fire-water) suggests that *méthode* here may be playful if not ironic. As epigraph to an earlier work, *The Poetics of Reverie* [1939], Bachelard chose these lines from Jules Laforgue's "Hamlet, ou les suites de la piété filiale" in

Moralités légendaires (Paris: Mercure de France, 1921), 24: "Méthode, Méthode, que me veux-tu? Tu sais bien que j'ai mangé du fruit de l'Inconscience! [Method, Method, what do you want from me? You well know that I have eaten of the fruit of the Unconscious!]"

P.5 **and . . . *poetic composition*:** The French *poésie composée* here seems intended as a foil to the idea of spontaneity, stressing the suggestion of conscious intentionality—a sense which the more obvious rendering *compound poetry* fails to capture.

P.6 **stepson of:** When the natural father of French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) died in 1827 at the age of 60, the boy's then 26 year old mother, whom he greatly loved, remarried. The boy experienced his stepfather, Major (later General) Jacques Aupick, as an unwanted intruder, a circumstance much stressed by biographers.

P.12 **fn.3:** "Il ne vaut rien de penser en écrivant; la pensée et la parole s'en trouvent mal." Bachelard misquotes here. The text actually reads "Mais il ne vaut rien . . . [But it is of little use . . .]"; and, while the line is indeed to be found in Reboul's Introduction, it is one he excerpted from another text of Sand's, her autobiographical *Lettre de planche sur Lélia*, Part V, dated February 23, 1833.

P.14 **"Prometheus," and:** Chapters on both Prometheus ("Fire and Respect: The Prometheus Complex") and Empedocles ("Fire and Reverie: The Empedocles Complex") first appeared in 1938 in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*.

P.15 **may pilfer:** This paragraph refers to Chapter Two.

P.16 **how relevant:** See my note to p.xii.

P.20 **mind's activity . . . *pancaliser*:** In a footnote to *Air and Dreams*, Bachelard explains: "To answer objections which some have made to the use of 'pancalism,' let me remind my readers that I borrowed it from Baldwin's terminology. By it I mean that 'pancalistic' activity tends to transform all contemplation of the universe into an affirmation of universal beauty" (p.61). I owe this reference to Edith R. Farrell's translation of Bachelard's *Water and Dreams* (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1983), 198. For the source of this term, see James Mark Baldwin, *Genetic Theory of Reality, Being the Outcome of Genetic Logic As Issuing in the Aesthetic Theory of Reality Called Pancalism, With An Extended Glossary of Terms* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915).

P.21 **s'élevant":** This "great motto" of Patrice de la Tour du Pin's is also cited by Bachelard in *The Poetics of Reverie* (p.81).

P.25 **fn.6:** As translated by Roger Fry [Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poems* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1936), 186-87], this first quatrain of Baudelaire's sonnet reads:

Her pure nails very high dedicating their onyx,
Anguish, this midnight, upholds, the lampbearer,
Many vesperal dreams by the Phenix burnt
That are not gathered up in the funeral urn . . .

A more recent translation by Keith Boley [Stéphane Mallarmé, *Mallarmé: The Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 168-71] scans more comprehensibly in English, but drops the word "onyx" entirely:

While high her sheer nails offer up their pink
Agate this midnight, lanternary Anguish
Upholds a crowd of evening dreams now sunk
In phoenix fires: no urn gathers their ash.

P.26 **the Phoenix Museum:** See this volume, pp.47-64.

P.26 **fn.g, Mallarmé . . . [this summer]:** The words *cet été* [this summer] were elided from this citation, presumably by Bachelard himself.

P.26 **fn.g, from a totally:** The full text of this letter to Henri Cazalis, dated July 15, 1868, is reproduced in Mondor's edition of Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance, 1862-1871* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), I, 278-79.

P.29 **PIERRE JEAN JOUVE:** Pierre Jean Jouve, "Le Verbe," *Proses* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1960), 14: "Le Verbe dépasse tout être et d'abord le verbe. Il tremble d'effroi, puis il s'envole, et bien souvent on ne peut plus parvenir à lui après l'avoir fait naître."

P.32 **name, the Aube:** Bachelard was born on June 27, 1884 in the village of Bar-sur-Aube along the quiet river whose name it bears—about 200 km. southeast of Paris in eastern Champagne.

P.33 **What a dramatic:** The silver bleak or small river bleak [*ablette argentée*] is a shiny white freshwater fish common to the inland waterways of France. Compare George Sand: "Des myriades d'ablettes argentées s'ébattaient au soleil dans les petits lacs creusés sur le sable."

P.34 **lous . . . "Pretty feathers:** The French reads: "Les belles plumes cachent de la mauvaise viande."

P.34 **fn.2:** The French reads: "Les hommes et les chats trouvent détestable le martin-pêcheur aux couleurs voyantes."

P.34 **fn.3:** T. S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" dates to 1943. Bachelard used *Quatre Quatours*, trans. Pierre Leyris (Paris: Le Seuil, 1950).

P.35 **fn.5:** "Le chemin aux Napes, où aucun de vous, chers lecteurs, ne passera probablement jamais, car il ne conduit à rien qui vaille la peine de s'y embourber, est un casse-cou bordé d'un fossé, où, dans l'eau vaseuse, croissent les plus beaux nymphéas du monde, plus blancs que les camélias, plus parfumés que les lis, plus purs que les robes de vierge, au milieu des salamandres et des couleuvres qui vivent là dans la fange et dans les fleurs, tandis que le martin-pêcheur, ce vivant éclair des rivages, rase d'un trait de feu l'admirable végétation sauvage du cloaque." The English has been modified extensively from *François the Waif*, trans. J. M. S. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1894), "Preface," 8.

P.36 **rare birds:** The French reads *oiseau bleu*, or blue bird. Both this expression and the English "rare bird" are derived from the Latin *rara avis:* "1) A person of a type seldom encountered . . . 2) That which is seldom found; an unusual occurrence, etc. Something very remarkable. 3) A rare bird." *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd. ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), XIII, 193-94.

P.36 **one author . . . volucrary:** A volucrary was a medieval treatise on birds. See this note to Bachelard's *Lautréamont* [1939], trans. Robert S. Dupree (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1986), 96: "A coinage based on Latin *volucris*, 'flying creature,' and 'bestiary.'"

P.38 **running waters:** The source of this phrase has not been located.

P.42 **fn.8:** "Ses belles mains dressent un petit bûcher de girofle et de cannelle. Quelle fut sa surprise lorsqu'ayant répandu les cendres de l'oiseau sur ce bûcher, elle le vit s'enflammer de lui-même! Tout fut bientôt consumé. Il ne parut, à la place des cendres, qu'un gros oeuf, dont elle vit sortir son oiseau plus brillant qu'il n'avait jamais été. Ce fut le plus beau des moments que la princesse eût éprouvés dans toute sa vie. . . ."

P.43 **fn.9:** "Je vois bien que vous êtes gros d'apprendre qui je suis. C'est moi qui parmi vous on appelle phénix. Dans chaque monde il n'y en a qu'un à la fois, lequel y habite durant l'espace de cent ans; car au bout d'un siècle, quand sur quelque montagne d'Arabie il s'est déchargé d'un gros oeuf au milieu des charbons de son bûcher, dont il a trié la matière de rameaux d'aloès, de cannelle et d'encens, il prend son essor, et dresse sa volée au soleil, comme la patrie où son coeur a longtemps aspiré. Il a bien fait auparavant tous ces efforts pour ce voyage, mais la pesanteur de son oeuf, dont les coques sont si épaisses qu'il faut un siècle pour le couver, retardait toujours l'entreprise. Je me doute bien que vous aurez de la peine à concevoir cette miraculeuse production; c'est pourquoi je veux vous l'expliquer. Le phénix est hermaphrodite, mais entre les hermaphrodites, c'est encore un autre phénix tout extraordinaire, car. . . ."

P.44 **marked by nature:** The French reads: "la nature a imprimé aux oiseaux une secrète envie de voler jusqu'ici. . . ." This reference, presumably to Cyrano, has not been located.

P.44 **fn.10:** Bachelard used *Les sables de la mer*, trans. Marie Canavaggia (Paris: Plon, 1958), 454. There are numerous errors in this translation; for example, "witless anonymity" is mistakenly rendered "anonymous half-wits [*d'anonymes simples d'esprit*]," and—as in Bachelard's use of it—"obstinate illusion" has been attributed to the wrong "patient," etc.

P.46 **fn.11:** In the French, 255-56.

P.46 **fn.12:** In the French, 462.

P.48 **fn.14:**

L'oiseau m'a appelé, je suis venu,
. . . .
J'ai cédé au bruit mort qui remuait en moi.

Puis j'ai lutté, j'ai fait que des mots qui m'obsèdent
Paraissent en clarté sur le vitre où j'eus froid.
L'oiseau chantait toujours de voix noire et cruelle,
. . . .
Plus tard j'ai entendu l'autre chant, qui s'éveille
Au fond morne du chant de l'oiseau qui s'est tu.

P.49 **fn.15:**

L'oiseau dans l'arbre de silence avait saisi
De son chant vaste et simple et avide nos coeurs,
Il conduisait
Toutes voix dans la nuit où les voix se perdent
Avec leurs mots réels,
Avec le mouvement des mots dans les ramures
Pour appeler encore, pour aimer vainement
Tout ce qui est perdu.

Tout commençait avec ce chant d'aube cruelle,
Un délivrant espoir, une vraie pauvreté.

P.50 **sad branches:** Yves Bonnefoy, "Le chant de sauvegard," 61.

P.50 **fn.16:**

Phénix parlant au feu, qui est destin
Et paysage clair jetant ses ombres,
Je suis celui que tu attends, dit-il,
Je viens me perdre en ton grave pays.

Il regarde le feu. Comment il vient,
Comment il s'établit dans l'âme obscure

Et quand l'aube paraît à des vitres, comment
Le feu se tait, et va dormir plus bas que feu.

Il le nourrit de silence. Il espère
Que chaque pli d'un silence éternel,
En se posant sur lui comme le sable,
Aggravera son immortalité.

The English is modified from Yves Bonnefoy, *Selected Poems*, trans. Anthony Rudolph (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), 66-67.

P.50 **fn.17:**

Que l'oiseau se déchire en sables, disais-tu,
Qu'il soit, haut dans son ciel de l'aube, notre rive.
Mais lui, le naufragé de la voûte chantante,
Pleurant déjà tombait dans l'argile des morts.

P.51 **fn.18:** The German, taken from *Nietzsche's Werke* (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1922), XV: *Ecce Homo*, 85-86, reads: "Ich erzähle nunmehr die Geschichte des Zarathustra. Die Grundconception des Werks, der Ewige-Wiederkunfts-Gedanke, diese höchste Formel der Bejahung, die überhaupt erreicht werden kann —, gehört in den August des Jahres 1881: er ist auf ein Blatt hingeworfen, mit der Unterschrift: '6000 Fuss jenseits von Mensch und Zeit.' Ich gieng an jenem Tage am See von Silvaplana durch die Wälder; bei einem mächtigen pyramidal aufgethürmten Block unweit Surlei machte ich Halt. Da kam mir dieser Gedanke. —Rechne ich von diesem Tage ein paar Monate zurück, so finde ich, als Vorzeichen, eine plötzliche und im Tiefsten entscheidende Veränderung meines Geschmacks, vor Allem in der Musik. Man darf vielleicht den ganzen Zarathustra unter die Musik rechnen; —sicherlich war eine Wiedergeburt in der Kunst zu hören, eine Vorausbedingung dazu. In einem kleinen Gebirgsbade unweit Vicenza, Recoaro, wo ich den Frühling des Jahrs 1881 verbrachte, entdeckte ich, zusammen mit meinem *maëstro* und Freunde Peter Gast, einem gleichfalls 'Wiedergebornen,' dass der Phönix Musik mit leichterem und leuchtenderem Gefieder, als er je gezeigt, an uns vorüberflog."

P.51 **fn.18, There are many:** The English text is taken from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts On the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. H. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 227-28. The German, here taken from the text of *Morgenröthe* in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: Deutscher Verlag de Gruyter, 1980), III, 329-30, reads: "Dichter und Vogel. — Der Vogel Phönix zeigte dem Dichter eine glühende und verkohlende Rolle. 'Erschrick nicht! sagte er, es ist dein Werk! Es hat nicht den Geist der Zeit und noch weniger den Geist Derer, die gegen die Zeit sind: folglich muss es verbrannt werden. Aber diess ist ein gutes Zeichen. Es giebt manche Arten von Morgenröthen.'"

P.52 **fn.19:** The Italian, from *Nottorno* (Milan: I Fratelli Treves, 1921), reads:

Il dèmone ha riacceso in fondo al mio occhio tutti i fuochi; e soffia sul tristo rogo con tutta la sua follia, come nelle più disperate ore di questo martirizzamento senza remissione.

L'arsura mi riduce tutto il corpo misero in un fastello di stipa al margine della vampa. (311)

. . . .

Chi mi fascia di cenere cocente? L'apice del cuore sfavilla, e traversa la cenere.

Sono la mia cenere e sono la mia fenice. Sono opaco e risfolgoro.

Sopravvivo al rogo, ebro d'immortalità. (312)

. . . .

. . . ma tutti in piedi come i matiri invitti. (313)

. . . .

Scopro qua e là, su i cigli dei fossi, dov'è giunto l'incendio, un ciuffo d'erba verde, uno stelo carico di piccoli fiori rosei o violetti.

L'anima attonita allude a sé stessa. (316)

. . . .

Odo cantare le Fenici!
L'ebrietà si precipita
in me come fiumana celeste.
Sento in me il mio dio.

Odo cantare le Fenici
un canto che ha l'odore della mirra
e il giubilo dell'amarezza.
Sento in me il mio dio.

Tutta la cenere è seme,
tutti gli sterpi son germogli,
tutto il deserto è primavera.
Sento in me il mio dio.

Tutta la selva è rinata di palme,
tutta la selva è alta nell'etere, immune
dalla servitù d'ogni peso.
Sento in me il mio dio.

Cantano in vetta alle palme idumèe,
senza piegarle né crollarle,
cantano le Fenici rinate.
Sento in me il mio dio.
. . . . (329-30)

P.53 **our focus:** Bachelard's French here contains what I take to be an inadvertent double negative: *perdrait . . . le prix de la concentration.*

P.54 **fn.23:**

Comme les vagues de la mer meurent les unes dans les autres pour produire une lueur à la crête des plus avides,
Le poète écoute le Temps qui inscrit très près de son coeur les traits d'une plume de fer.

P.54 **fn.24:**

Tes perfections de vêture et d'être au fond des flammes s'assemblaient

. . . .

Pour un feu géant tout noir par aucun regard traversé
Feu de résurrection amie où ton seul Oeil va paraître.

P.55 **This creative energy:** A phosphene is a bright visual image produced by mechanical stimulation of the retina, as by pressure on the eyeball through the closed eyelids.

P.55 **fn.25:**

Renaître après coeur mort, coeur rouge après coeur brun,
Redevenir éclat des yeux lueur du sein,
Telle est la loi de miracle et révélée à quelques-uns
Reprendre au point même l'ouvrage et le rire et tout le dessein.

P.57 **fn.28:** Wahl was author of the compendious *Etudes Kierkegaardiennes* (Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1938).

P.57 **fn. 28, itself":** Søren Kierkegaard, *Samlede Vaerker* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1963), XIV: "Lilien paa Marken og fuglen under Himlen," 159: "thi just det, at det er Lidet, der gjør dem saa glade, er Beviset for, at de selv ere Glaeden og Glaeden selv." The English is taken from "The Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air" in Søren Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses*, trans. Walter Lowrie (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 348. The incomplete French citation reads: "Si l'oiseau se réjouit de si peu de chose, c'est qu'il est lui-même la joie."

P.58 **fn.c:** Blake's *Notebook* was published only posthumously.

P.58 **fn.c, Lies in:** The French translation by Pierre Leyris reads: "Mais qui sait embrasser une joie en plein vol / Vit en l'aube éternelle."

P.58 **fn.30:**

L'oiseau qui m'a vendu le rubis de l'espace
déchire de son feu les ramures du ciel
d'un souffle obscur jaillit cette roche vivante
qui disperse et reprend la lumière du coeur.

In italics in the original. This complaint is the cry of the wind "lançait dans le jour des mouettes d'étoiles."

P.59 **fn.31:**

Nul ne connâit plus le nombre de mes branches, ni le chiffre de mes tribus de feuilles. Innombrables sont les

nations d'oiseaux qui chantent dans mes feuillages.
Innombrables les morts et les renaissances mélodieuses.
Nids brisés, plumages délicats, squelette qui fut l'aigle ou
le rossignol, tout retourne à la racine, à l'obscure
mâchoire de Saturne qui broie, qui brise et qui propulse
La force de la vie jusqu'au ciel dominé.

The previous verse ends with the phrase: "Là où sont les grands pâturages du soleil."

P.59 **fn.33:**

Je veux nu comme l'aube et vain comme les pierres
Aiguisant de regrets mes désirs endormis
Voler dans le soleil en levant les paupières.

P.60 **fn.34:** "L'algue divine me précède, elle sème les plumes de l'immense abandon auquel la chair se doit. Mais l'oeil allume la mouette aux longs triangles blancs qui tourne doucement sous l'hélice du large. Vogue, voilier dépourvu d'ancre, à d'heureuses rencontres, vers un astre plus sûr, un ciel que rien ne charge: lorsque ton aile aura fondu d'angoisse dans la nuit, qu'incendiera ton vol une aube dérisoire, tu descendras en dispersant ta lumière et ton sang réfléchira dans la mer un soleil illusoire . . . Avant que mon chant ne tarisse, allume, oiseau de flamme, la lune de cristal fondue en ce matin d'été avec un reflet de tes feux dans le gravier des sources . . . Pour me sculpter un escalier dans la substance sainte je vous conjure maintenant fulgurants éperviers; incendiez ces bois sous-marins, qu'une fournaise ardente fasse jaillir du minerai les filons dilatés. Entre la lune et le désert je saignerai l'oiselle révélatrice du secret égaré sous les vents."

P.61 **fn.36:** The entire poem reads:

"Nota Arriesgada

Templada nota que avanzas por un país de nieve y alas, entre despeñaderos y picos donde afilan su navaja los astros, acompañada sólo por un murmullo grave de cola aterciopelada, ¿adónde te diriges? Pájaro negro, tu pico hace saltar las rocas. Tu imperio enlutado vuelve ilusorios los precarios límites entre el hierro y el girasol, la piedra y el ave, el fuego y el liquen. Arrancas a la altura réplicas ardientes. La luz de cuello de vidrio se parte en dos y tu negra armadura se constela de frialdades intactas. Ya estás entre las transparencias y tu penacho blanco ondea en mil sitios a la vez, cisne ahogado en su propia blancura. Te posas en la cima y clavas tu centella. Después, inclinándote, besas los labios congelados del cráter. Es hora de estallar en una explosión que no dejará más huella que una larga cicatriz en el cielo. Cruzas los corredores de la música y desapareces entre un cortejo de cobres."

P.62 **fn.38:** Lévi-Strauss adds: "In other words, a myth is a myth so long as it is so perceived." The French reads: "difficulté qui a constitué jusqu'à présent un des principaux obstacles au progrès des études mythologiques, à savoir la recherche de la version authentique ou primitive. Nous proposons, au contraire, de définir chaque mythe par l'ensemble de toutes ses versions. Autrement dit: le mythe reste mythe aussi longtemps qu'il est perçu comme tel."

P.63 **fn.39:** The French reads: "le Phénix, c'est le couple—Adam et Eve—qui est et n'est pas le premier."

P.63 **fn.e:** See *The Right to Dream*, trans. J. A. Underwood (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1988): "Germ and Reason in the Poetry of Paul Eluard," 131-36.

P.63 **fn.40:**

Je n'ai vraiment plus besoin d'ailes
Pour calciner ma pesanteur.

P.65 **entire *fragmentist*:** Novalis, the pen-name of Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772-1801), author of philosophical romances, taught that there are in the universe many verities and realities which can be known only through sympathetic intuition. Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), romantic philosopher and literary historian.

P.68 **Make reference:** Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855), French translator, playwright, and poet.

P.68 **fn.e:** For an English translation see "The Acquisition and

Control of Fire," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), XXII (1932-1936), 187-93.

P.68 **fn.e, *god,*":** English, 188; German, 4: "ein noch göttlicher Kulturheros."

P.68 **fn.e, *god,*" . . . "*a defeat*:** English, 191; German, 7.

P.69 **fn.e, *mortals*:** English, 189; German, 5-6: "Den Göttern teilt der Mythus bekanntlich die Befriedigung aller Gelüste zu, auf die das Menschenkind verzichten muß, wie wir es vom Inzest her kennen. Wir würden in analytischer Ausdrucksweise sagen, das Triebleben, das Es, sei der durch die Feuerlöschentsagung betrogene Gott, ein menschliches Gelüste ist in der Sage in ein göttliches Vorrecht umgewandelt. Aber die Gottheit hat in der Sage nichts vom Charakter eines Über-Ichs, sie ist noch Repräsentant des übermächtigen Trieblebens . . . [Der Feuerbringer] hatte Triebverzicht geübt und gezeigt, wie wohltätig, aber auch wie unerläßlich ein solcher Triebverzicht in kultureller Absicht ist. Und warum mußte eine solche kulturelle Wohltat überhaupt von der Sage als strafwürdiges Verbrechen behandelt werden? Nun, wenn sie durch alle Enstellungen durchschimmern läßt, daß die Gewinnung des Feuers einen Triebverzicht zur Voraussetzung hatte, so drückt sie doch unverhohlen den Groll aus, den die triebhafte Menschheit gegen den Kulturheros verspüren mußte."

P.69 **fn.e, *analogous to*:** English, 190; German, 6: "Die Undurchsichtigkeit der Prometheussage wie anderer Feuermythen wird durch den Umstand gesteigert, daß das Feuer dem Primitiven als etwas der verliebten Leidenschaft Analoges—wir würden sagen: als Symbol der Libido—erscheinen mußte."

P.69 **fn.e, *way.*":** English, 192; German, 8: "Prometheus hatte die Löschung des Feuers verboten, . . . Herakles sie für den Fall des Unheil drohenden Brandes freigegeben. Der zweite Mythus scheint der Reaktion einer späteren Kulturzeit auf den Anlaß der Feuergewinnung zu entsprechen. Man gewinnt den Eindruck, daß man von hier aus ein ganzes Stück weit in die Geheimnisse des Mythus eindringen könnte, aber freilich wird man nur für eine kurze Strecke vom Gefühl der Sicherheit begleitet."

P.70 **on this:** The English text is from Euripides, *The Cyclops*, trans. William Arrowsmith (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1969), ll.451-63, 596, 599-602. Bachelard used Euripides, *Cyclope*, trans. Louis Meridier (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1925). The original Greek reads:

Οδ. κώμου μὲν αὐτὸν τοῦδ’ ἀπαλλάξαι, λέγων
ὡς οὐ Κύκλωψι πῶμα χρὴ δοῦναι τόδε,
μόνον δ’ ἔχοντα βίοτον ἡδέως ἄγειν.
ὅταν δ’ ὑπνώσσηι Βακχίου νικώμενος,
ἀκρεμὼν ἐλαίας ἔστιν ἐν δόμοισί τις,
ὃν φασγάνωι τῶιδ’ ἐξαποξύνας ἄκρον
ἐς πῦρ καθήσω· κἆιθ’ ὅταν κεκαυμένον
ἴδω νιν, ἄρας θερμὸν ἐς μέσην βαλῶ
Κύκλωπος ὄψιν ὄμμα τ’ ἐκτήξω πυρί.
ναυπηγίαν δ’ ὡσεί τις ἁρμόζων ἀνὴρ
διπλοῖν χαλινοῖν τρύπανον κωπηλατεῖ,
οὕτω κυκλώσω δαλὸν ἐν φαεσφόρωι
Κύκλωπος ὄψει καὶ συναυανῶ κόρας.

. . . .

Χο. πέτρας τὸ λῆμα κἀδάμαντος ἔξομεν.

. . . .

Οδ. Ἥφαιστ’, ἄναξ Αἰτναῖε, γείτονος κακοῦ
λαμπρὸν πυρώσας ὄμμ’ ἀπαλλάχθηθ’ ἅπαξ,
σύ τ’, ὦ μελαίνης Νυκτὸς ἐκπαίδευμ’, Ὕπνε,
ἄκρατος ἐλθὲ θηρὶ τῶι θεοστυγεῖ . . .

P.72 **dry.":** Gérard de Nerval, *Aurelia* (Paris: José Corti, 1943), Part I, section X, 44. The French reads in its entirety:

"J'entrai dans un atelier où je vis des ouvriers qui modelaient en glaise un animal énorme en forme d'un lama, mais qui paraissait devoir être muni de grandes ailes. Ce monstre était comme traversé d'un jet de feu qui l'animait peu à peu, de sorte qu'il se tordait, pénétré par mille filets pourprés, formant les veines et les artères et fécondant pour ainsi dire l'inerte matière, qui se revêtait d'une végétation instantanée d'appendices fibreux d'ailerons et de touffes laineuses. Je m'arrêtai à contempler ce chef-d'oeuvre, où l'on semblait avoir surpris les secrets de la création divine.

—C'est que nous avons ici, me dit-on, le feu primitif qui anima les premiers êtres . . . Jadis il s'élançait jusqu'à la surface de la terre, mais les sources se sont taries.

Je vis aussi des travaux d'orfèvrerie ou l'on employait deux métaux inconnus sur la terre: l'un rouge qui correspondait au cinabre, et l'autre bleu d'azur. Les ornements n'étaient ni martelés ni ciselés, mais se formaient, se coloraient et s'épanouissaient comme les plantes métalliques qu'on fait naître de certains mixtions chimiques.

—Ne créerait-on pas aussi des hommes? dis-je a l'un des travailleurs.

Mais il me répliqua:

—Les hommes viennent d'en haut et non d'en bas: pouvons-nous nous créer nous-mêmes?"

The division into paragraphs and the variant *semblait correspondre* are taken from the first edition (Paris: Editions de la Pléiade, 1927), 79-80.

P. 73 **O Jupiter!:** Gérard de Nerval's *Pandora* was first published, though incompletely, in *Le Mousquetaire* (31 October 1854). The French has been taken from the critical edition of the text edited by Jean Guillaume (Namur: Bibliothèque de la faculté de philosophie et lettres, 1968), 104-5:

"Je n'ai revu la Pandora que l'année suivante, dans une froide capitale du Nord . . .

— 'O fils des dieux, père des hommes, criait-elle, arrête un peu. C'est aujourd'hui la Saint-Silvestre comme l'an passé . . . Où as-tu caché le feu du ciel que tu dérobas à Jupiter?'

Je ne voulus pas répondre: le nom de Prométhée me déplaît toujours singulièrement, car je sens encore à mon flanc le bec éternel du vautour dont Alcide m'a délivré.

O Jupiter! quand finera mon supplice?"

Alcides is another name for Hercules.

P.74 **avenues:** An erratum in the French reads *l'excès* for *l'accès* here.

P.74 **fn.g:** The English text is modified from Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Orion Press, 1964), xxvi. The original French reads:

"La sublimation, dans la poésie, surplombe la psychologie de l'âme terrestrement malheureuse. C'est un fait: la poésie a un bonheur qui lui est propre, quelque drame qu'elle soit amenée à illustrer.

La sublimation pure telle que nous l'envisageons pose un drame de méthode, car bien entendu, le phénoménologue ne saurait méconnaître la réalité psychologique profonde des processus de sublimation si longuement étudiés par la psychanalyse. Mais il s'agit de passer, phénoménologiquement, à des images invécues, à des images que la vie ne prépare pas et que le poète crée. Il s'agit de vivre l'invécu et de s'ouvrir à une ouverture de langage."

P.76 **Yet look on:** The English text of the "Prometheus Ode" is from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), *Satyros and Prometheus*, Glasgow Goethe Society Publication II, trans. John Gray (Glasgow: Glasgow Goethe Society, 1898). Bachelard used the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade edition of *Théâtre de Goethe*, gen. ed. André Gide, trans. Blaise Briod (Paris: Nouvelle Revue Française, 1942): *Prométhée*, pp.188-89. The original German reads:

PROMETHEUS *in seiner Werkstatt*

Bedecke deinen Himmel, Zeus,
Mit Wolkendunst
Und übe, dem Knaben gleich,
Der Disteln köpft,
An Eichen dich und Bergeshöhn!
Mußt mir meine Erde
Doch lassen stehn

Und meine Hütte, die du nicht gebaut,
Und meinen Herd,
Um dessen Glut
Du mich beneidest.

. . . .

Wer half mir
Wider der Titanen Übermut?
Wer rettete vom Tode mich,
Von Sklaverei?
Hast du nicht alles selbst vollendet,
Heilig glühend Herz?
Und glühtest, jung und gut,
Betrogen, Rettungsdank
Dem Schlafenden da droben?

Ich dich ehren? Wofür?

. . . .

and these lines from Act I:

PROMETHEUS

. . . .

Ihr Wille gegen meinen!
Eins gegen eins,
Mich dünkt, es hebt sich!

. . . .

MERKUR

Elender! Deinen Göttern *das*,
Den Unendlichen?

PROMETHEUS

Göttern? Ich bin kein Gott,
Und bilde mir so viel ein als einer . . .

P. 76 **self by:** Pierre Simon Ballanche (1776-1847), *Essais de*

palingénésie social: "Prométhée, c'est l'homme se faisant lui-même par l'énergie de sa pensée."

P.77 **between pantheism:** "Goethe [in *From My Life: Poetry and Truth*] is alluding to the lively Spinoza debate which broke out in 1785 when Jacobi published an account of a conversation he had with Lessing shortly before Lessing's death [*Über die Lehre des Spinozas in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau: Gottlieb Loewe, 1785)], claiming that Lessing had admitted to Spinozistic philosophical principles. At the time Spinoza's teaching was generally identified with atheism and thus this 'confession' of Lessing's had considerable shock value. According to Jacobi, this conversation had been initiated when he had shown Lessing Goethe's 'Prometheus' poem (which Jacobi was the first to publish in his account of the Lessing conversation, without Goethe's prior knowledge or consent). Lessing had supposedly replied that the sentiments expressed in 'Prometheus' were exactly the same as his." *From My Life* (see note to p.78 below), 517, fn.153.

P.77 **trodden the:** *Isaiah* 63:3.

P.78 **inexhaustible wealth:** The English text is from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *From My Life: Poetry and Truth*, trans. Robert R. Heitner, in *Goethe's Collected Works* (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1987), IV, 468-70. Bachelard used *Goethe, Ses mémoires et sa vie*, 4 vols., trans. Henri Richelot (Paris: Hetzel, 1863) I, 641-43. The German, taken from *Aus Meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* [1811] (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1970), III, Book 15, 526, reads:

"Das gemeine Menschenschicksal, an welchem wir alle zu tragen haben, muß denjenigen am schwersten aufliegen, deren Geisteskräfte sich früher und breiter entwickeln . . . so ist doch immer das Final, daß der Mensch auf sich zurückgewiesen wird, und es scheint, es habe sogar die Gottheit sich so zu dem Menschen gestellt, daß sie dessen Ehrfurcht, Zutrauen und Liebe nicht immer, wenigstens nicht grade im dringenden Augenblick, erwiedern kann.

Ich hatte jung genug gar oft erfahren, daß in den hülfsbedürftigsten Momenten uns zugerufen wird: 'Arzt hilf dir selber!' und wie oft hatte ich nicht schmerzlich ausseufzen müssen: 'ich trete die Kelter allein!' Indem ich mich also nach Bestätigung der Selbständigkeit umsah, fand ich als die sicherste Base derselben mein productives Talent. Es verließ mich seit einigen Jahren keinen Augenblick . . . Wie ich nun über diese Naturgabe nachdachte und fand, daß sie mir ganz eigen angehöre und durch nichts Fremdes weder begünstigt noch gehindert werden könne, so mochte ich gern hierauf mein ganzes Daseyn in Gedanken gründen. Diese Vorstellung verwandelte sich in ein Bild, die alte mythologische Figur des Prometheus fiel mir auf, der, abgesondert von den Göttern, von seiner Werkstätte aus eine Welt bevölkerte. Ich fühlte recht gut, daß sich etwas Bedeutendes nur produciren lasse, wenn man sich isolire. Meine Sachen, die so viel Beyfall gefunden hatten, waren Kinder der Einsamkeit, und seitdem ich zu der Welt in einem breitern Verhältniß stand, fehlte es nicht an Kraft und Lust der Erfindung, aber die Ausführung stockte, weil ich weder in Prosa noch in Versen eigentlich einem Stil hatte, und bey einer jeden neuen Arbeit, je nachdem der Gegenstand war, immer wieder von vorne tasten und versuchen mußte. Indem ich nun hierbey die Hülfe der Menschen abzulehnen ja auszuschließen hatte, so sonderte ich mich, nach Prometheïscher Weise, auch von den Göttern ab, um so natürlicher, als bey meinem Character und meiner Denkweise Eine Gesinnung jederzeit die übrigen verschlang und abstieß.

Die Fabel des Prometheus ward in mir lebendig. Das alte Titanengewand schnitt ich mir nach meinem Wuchse zu, und fing, ohne weiter nachgedacht zu haben, ein Stück zu schreiben an, worin das Misverhältniß dargestellt ist, in welches Prometheus zu dem Zeus und den neuen Göttern geräth, indem er auf eigne Hand Menschen bildet, sie durch Gunst der Minerva belebt, und eine dritte Dynastie stiftet. Und wirklich hatten die jetzt regierenden Götter

sich zu beschweren völlig Ursache, weil man sie als unrechtmäßig zwischen die Titanen und Menschen eingeschobene Wesen betrachten konnte. Zu dieser seltsamen Composition gehört als Monolog jenes Gedicht, das in der deutschen Literatur bedeutend geworden, weil dadurch veranlaßt, Lessing über wichtige Puncte des Denkens und Empfindens sich gegen Jacobi erklärte . . .

Ob man nun wohl, wie auch geschehn, bey diesem Gegenstande philosophische, ja religiöse Betrachtungen anstellen kann, so gehört er doch ganz eigentlich der Poesie. Die Titanen sind die Folie des Polytheïsmus, so wie man als Folie des Monotheismus den Teufel betrachten kann; doch ist dieser so wie der einzige Gott, dem er entgegensteht, keine poetische Figur. Der Satan Milton's, brav genug gezeichnet, bleibt immer in dem Nachtheil der Subalternität, indem er die herrliche Schöpfung eines oberen Wesens zu zerstören sucht, Prometheus hingegen im Vortheil, der, zum Trutz höherer Wesen, zu schaffen und zu bilden vermag. Auch ist es ein schöner, der Poesie zusagender Gedanke, die Menschen nicht durch den obersten Weltherrscher, sondern durch eine Mittelfigur hervorbringen zu lassen, die aber doch, als Abkömmling der ältesten Dynastie, hierzu würdig und wichtig genug ist; wie denn überhaupt die griechische Mythologie einen unerschöpflichen Reichthum göttlicher und menschlicher Symbole darbietet.”

P.79 **don: Macmillan:** Bachelard used James George Frazer, *Mythes sur l'origine du feu*, trans. G. M. Michel Drucker (Paris: Payot, 1931), 239.

P.79 **mordial woman:** Karl Kerenyi (1897-1973), *Prometheus, Das griechische Mythologem* [see p.80], 20. For an English version see “The Brothers of Prometheus,” *Prometheus: Archetypal Image of Human Existence*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New York: Pantheon, 1959), Chap. III: “The Prometheus Mythologem in the *Theogony*,” 36.

P.79 **fn.h:** These lines from Hesiod read: “clever Prometheus, / full of various wiles, and scatter-brained Epimetheus.”

P.80 **all" (41):** Karl Kerenyi, *Niobe, Neue Studien über antike Religion und Humanität* [see p.80], 41. The German, taken from "Bild, Gestalt und Archetypus," *Apollon und Niobe* (Munich: Langden-Müller, 1980), 284, reads: "Die Doppelgestalt Prometheus-und-Epimetheus stellt das Menschengeschlecht, genauer: das Männergeschlecht dar, welches zur Strafe die erste Frau erhält. Schlauheit und Dummheit kennzeichnen, einander ergänzend, das Menschentum."

P.80 **Prometheus and:** Karl Kerenyi, "Mythologische Epilegomena," in Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Karl Kerenyi, Paul Radin (1883-1959), *Der göttliche Schelm: Ein Indianischer Mythen-Zyklus* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1954), 167. Bachelard used "Le mythe du fripon et la mythologie grecque [The Trickster Myth and Greek Mythology]" [see p.80], 159. The original German reads: ". . . [aus] den Taten des Prometheus hingegen das schlaue und das dumme Gesicht zugleich: Prometheus und Epimetheus."

P.80 ***Prometheus . . . Existenz*:** For an English version see *Prometheus: Archetypal Image of Human Existence*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New York: Pantheon, 1963).

P.80 ***der Griechen*:** For an English version see *The Gods of the Greeks*, trans. Norman Cameron (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1951).

P.80 ***La religion antique*:** For the original German see *Die antike Religion*, reprinted as *Die Religion der Griechen und Römer* (Munich: Droemer and Knaur, 1963).

P.81 **forebears, as:** The English is modified from Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, trans. Alan C. M. Ross (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 12: "Il y a en l'homme une véritable *volonté d'intellectualité*. On sous-estime le besoin de comprendre quand on le met, comme l'ont fait le pragmatisme et le bergsonisme, sous la dépendance absolue du principe d'utilité. Nous proposons donc de ranger sous le nom de *complexe de Prométhée* toutes les tendances qui nous poussent à *savoir* autant que nos pères, plus que nos pères, autant que nos maîtres, plus que nos maîtres."

P.82 **one of:** James George Frazer, *Myths of the Origin of Fire*, 61; in the French, 78-81.

P.83 **union with:** The English is taken from Carl Gustave Jung, *Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to A Case of Schizophrenia*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon, 1956), 211. Bachelard used *Métamorphoses de l'âme et de ses symboles: analyse des podromes d'une schizophrénie*, trans. Yves Le Lay (Geneva: Georg, 1953), 356. The original German, taken here from the 4th revised edition of a text published originally in 1912 as *Symbole der Wandlung: Analyse des Vorspiels zur einer Schizophrenie* (Zürich: Rascher, 1952), 311, reads: "Die Feuerbereitung ist ein Bewusstseinsakt par excellence und 'tötet' daher den dunkeln Zustand der Muttergebundenheit."

P.83 **fn.i:** Thomas Mann (1875-1955) entitled his *Festvortrag* (or Birthday Talk) "Freud und die Zukunft [Freud and the Future]." The line cited in the original German, taken here from *Die Mythologie der Griechen* [see p.80], 7, reads: "das mythische Interesse genau so eingeboren, wie allem Dichtertum das psychologische Interesse eingeboren ist."

P.84 **fn.4:** See Gerhard Adler, *Studies in Analytical Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1948): "A Psychological Approach to Religion," 180.

P.86 **This article:** Louis de Jaucourt (1704-1779), "Prométhée" in *L'Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des metiers* (Paris: Briasson et.al., 1751-65), XXVII, 560.

P.87 **through this:** The English is modified from *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Charles, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961): *Protagoras*, 318-19. Bachelard used Platon, *Pythagoras*, trans. Alfred Croiset (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1941). The original Greek reads: "Ἦν γάρ ποτε χρόνος, ὅτε θεοὶ μὲν ἦσαν, θνητὰ δὲ γένη οὐκ ἦν. . . . ἐπειδὴ δ᾽ ἄγειν αὐτὰ πρὸς φῶς ἔμελλον, προσέταξαν Προμηθεῖ καὶ Ἐπιμηθεῖ κοσμῆσαί τε καὶ νεῖμαι δυνάμεις ἑκάστοις ὡς πρέπει. Προμηθέα δὲ παραιτεῖται Ἐπιμηθεὺς αὐτὸς νεῖμαι . . . ἅτε δὴ οὖν οὐ πάνυ τι σοφὸς ὢν ὁ Ἐπιμηθεὺς ἔλαθεν αὐτὸν καταναλώσας τὰς δυνάμεις . . . ἀπορίᾳ οὖν ἐχόμενος ὁ Προμηθεύς, ἥντινα σωτηρίαν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ εὕροι, κλέπτει Ἡφαίστου καὶ Ἀθηνᾶς τὴν ἔντεχνον σοφίαν σὺν πυρί —ἀμήχανον γὰρ ἦν ἄνευ πυρὸς αὐτὴν κτητήν τῳ ἢ χρησίμην γενέσθαι . . . καὶ ἐκ τούτου εὐπορία μὲν ἀνθρώπῳ τοῦ βίου γίγνεται . . ."

P.87 **Muses, skilled:** The English is taken from *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, eds. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, trans. David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960): Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 327-28. Bachelard used Eschyle, *Prométhée enchaîné*, trans. Paul Mazon (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1921). The original Greek reads:

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ

μή τοι χλιδῇ δοκεῖτε μηδ᾿ αὐθαδίᾳ
σιγᾶν με· συννοίᾳ δὲ δάπτομαι κέαρ,
ὁρῶν ἐμαυτὸν ὧδε προυσελούμενον.
καίτοι θεοῖσι τοῖς νέοις τούτοις γέρα
τίς ἄλλος ἢ ᾿γὼ παντελῶς διώρισεν;
ἀλλ᾿ αὐτὰ σιγῶ· καὶ γὰρ εἰδυίαισιν ἂν
ὑμῖν λέγοιμι· τἀν βροτοῖς δὲ πήματα
ἀκούσαθ᾿, ὥς σφας νηπίους ὄντας τὸ πρὶν
ἔννους ἔθηκα καὶ φρενῶν ἐπηβόλους.
λέξω δέ, μέμψιν οὔτιν᾿ ἀνθρώποις ἔχων,
ἀλλ᾿ ὧν δέδωκ᾿ εὔνοιαν ἐξηγούμενος·
οἳ πρῶτα μὲν βλέποντες ἔβλεπον μάτην,
κλύοντες οὐκ ἤκουον, ἀλλ᾿ ὀνειράτων
ἀλίγκιοι μορφαῖσι τὸν μακρὸν βίον
ἔφυρον εἰκῇ πάντα, κοὔτε πλινθυφεῖς
δόμους προσείλους ᾖσαν, οὐ ξυλουργίαν·
κατώρυχες δ᾿ ἔναιον ὥστ᾿ ἀήσυροι
μύρμηκες ἄντρων ἐν μυχοῖς ἀνηλίοις.
ἦν δ᾿ οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς οὔτε χείματος τέκμαρ
οὔτ᾿ ἀνθεμώδους ἦρος οὔτε καρπίμου

θέρους βέβαιον, ἀλλ᾽ ἄτερ γνώμης τὸ πᾶν
ἔπρασσον, ἔστε δή σφιν ἀντολὰς ἐγὼ
ἄστρων ἔδειξα τάς τε δυσκρίτους δύσεις.
  καὶ μὴν ἀριθμόν, ἔξοχον σοφισμάτων,
ἐξηῦρον αὐτοῖς, γραμμάτων τε συνθέσεις,
μνήμην ἁπάντων, μουσομήτορ᾽ ἐργάνην.

P.89 **nobly aspiring:** The English is modified from Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), IX, 69-71. Bachelard used *La naissance de la tragédie*, trans. Geneviève Bianquis (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), IX, 52-53. The original German, taken here from *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in Drei Bänden* (Munich: Carl Hauser, 1954), IX, 57-9, reads: "Der Glorie der Passivität stelle ich jetzt der Glorie der Aktivität gegenüber, welche den *Prometheus* des Äschylus umleuchet . . .

Der Mensch, ins Titanische sich steigernd, erkämpft sich selbst seine Kultur und zwingt die Götter, sich mit ihm zu verbinden, weil er in seiner selbsteignen Weisheit die Existenz und die Schranken derselben in seiner Hand hat. Das Wunderbarste an jenem Prometheusgedicht, das seinem Grundgedanken nach der eigentliche Hymnus der Unfrömmigkeit ist, ist aber der tiefe äschyleische Zug nach *Gerechtigkeit*: das unermeßliche Leid des kühnen "Einzelnen" auf der einen Seite, und die göttliche Not, ja Ahnung einer Götterdämmerung auf der andern, die zur Versöhnung, zum metaphysischen Einssein zwingende Macht jener beiden Leidenswelten—dies alles erinnert auf das stärkste an den Mittelpunkt und Hauptsatz der äschyleischen Weltbetrachtung, die über Göttern und Menschen die Moira als ewige Gerechtigkeit thronen sieht. Bei der erstaunlichen Kühnheit, mit der Äschylus die olympische Welt auf seine Gerechtigkeitswagschalen stellt, müssen wir uns vergegenwärtigen, daß der tiefsinnige Grieche einen unverrückbar festen Untergrund des metaphysischen Denkens in seinen Mysterien hatte, und daß sich an den Olym-

piern alle seine skeptischen Anwandlungen entladen konnten. Der griechische Künstler insbesondere empfand im Hinblick auf die Gottheiten ein dunkles Gefühl wechselseitiger Abhängigkeit: und gerade im Prometheus des Äschylus ist dieses Gefühl symbolisiert . . . Aber auch mit jener Deutung, die Äschylus dem Mythus gegeben hat, ist dessen erstaunliche Schreckenstiefe nicht ausgemessen: vielmehr ist der Werdelust des Künstlers, die jedem Unheil trotzende Heiterkeit des künstlerischen Schaffens nur ein lichtes Wolken- und Himmelsbild, das sich auf einem schwarzen See der Traurigkeit spiegelt . . . Die Voraussetzung jenes Prometheusmythus ist der überschwängliche Wert, den eine naive Menschheit dem *Feuer* beilegt als dem wahren Palladium jeder aufsteigenden Kultur: daß aber der Mensch frei über das Feuer waltet und es nicht nur durch ein Geschenk vom Himmel, als zündenden Blitzstrahl oder wärmenden Sonnenbrand, empfängt, erschien jenen beschaulichen Ur-Menschen als ein Frevel, als ein Raub an der göttlichen Natur. Und so stellt gleich das erste philosophische Problem einen peinlichen unlösbaren Widerspruch zwischen Mensch und Gott hin und rückt ihn wie einen Felsblock an die Pforte jeder Kultur. Das Beste und Höchste, dessen die Menschheit teilhaftig werden kann, erringt sie durch einen Frevel und muß nun wieder seine Folgen dahinnehmen, nämlich die ganze Flut von Leiden und von Kümmernissen, mit denen die beleidigten Himmlischen das edel emporstrebende Menschengeschlecht heimsuchen . . ."

P.91 **Empedocles:** A philosopher and scientist of Acragas (Agrigentum) in Sicily, born in the first quarter of the fifth century B.C. "He belonged to a rich and distinguished family, and it is said was offered the kingship of the city but refused it. He was a most versatile genius, interested in biology, medicine, and physics (he discovered that air is a substance, distinct from empty space), the inventor of the art of rhetoric, a mystic and an eccentric, but he is chiefly famous for his philosophical doctrine. He endeavored to

reconcile the perception of changing phenomena with the logical conception of an underlying unchanging existence, and found the solution in four immutable elements, earth, air, fire, and water, whose association and dissociation produce the various changing objects of the world as we know it. This association and dissociation result from the action of two opposing forces, Love and Discord, which eternally construct, destroy, and reconstruct . . . His death is variously recounted; according to one story he threw himself into the crater of Mt. Etna . . ." *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, ed. Paul Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), 158.

P.94 **fn.1:** The original English is taken from *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: AMS Press, 1965), XVI: *Eureka*, 186, published originally as *Eureka: An Essay On the Material and Spiritual Universe* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1848). Baudelaire's translation (1st ed.; Paris: Louis Conard, 1836) reads: "Celui qui du sommet de l'Etna promène à loisir ses yeux autour de lui, est principalement affecté par *l'étendue* et par la *diversité* du tableau. Ce ne serait qu'en pirouettant rapidement sur son talon qu'il pourrait se flatter de saisir le panorama dans sa sublime *unité*. Mais comme, sur le sommet de l'Etna, aucun homme ne s'est avisé de pirouetter sur son talon, aucun homme non plus n'a jamais absorbé dans son cerveau la parfaite unité de cette perspective, et conséquemment toutes les considérations qui peuvent être impliquées dans cette unité n'ont pas d'existence positive pour l'humanité."

P.95 **fn.2:** The English version of "Selige Sehnsucht" is from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *West-Eastern Divan* [1819], trans. Edward Dowden (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, undated), 19. Bachelard used a bilingual German-French edition, *Le Divan occidental-oriental*, trans. Henri Lichtenberger (Paris: Aubier, 1950), 81-83. The original German, here taken from *Goethes Werke* (Hamburg: Christian Wegner, 1967), II, 18-19, reads:

Sagt es niemand, nur den Weisen,
Weil die Menge gleich verhöhnet,
Das Lebend'ge will ich preisen,
Das nach Flammentod sich sehnet.

In der Liebesnächte Kühlung,
Die dich zeugte, wo du zeugtest,
Überfällt dich fremde Fühlung,
Wenn die stille Kerze leuchtet.

Nicht mehr bleibest du umfangen
In der Finsternis Beschattung,
Und dich reißet neu Verlangen
Auf zu höherer Begattung.

Keine Ferne macht dich schwierig,
Kommst geflogen und gebannt,
Und zuletzt, des Lichts begierig,
Bist du, Schmetterling, verbrannt.

Und so lang du das nicht hast,
Dieses: Stirb und werde!
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunklen Erde.

P.96 **first time:** Hölderlin did not himself publish any part of any of these versions.

P.97 **of *Hyperion*.:** This was the first volume of a projected three, published in Tübingen and Stuttgart by J. G. Colta between 1797 and 1799. For an English version, see *Hyperion, or The Hermit in Greece*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965).

P.97 **fn.7:** In German the letter, dated Homburg von der Höhe, November 12, 1798, reads: "Es ist etwas über einen Monath, dass ich hier bin, und ich habe indessen ruhig, bei meinem Trauerspiel . . . im Genuss der schönen Herbsttage gelebt."

P.99 **appears, Manes:** Manes appears actually to have been a Persian, not an Egyptian.

P.100 **fn.10:** Bachelard has inverted Bertaux's translation of Hölderlin's phrase (p.231, fn.2), writing "Le mythe lyrique reste à déterminer" for Bertaux's rendering "Reste à déterminer le mythe lyrique." The original German reads: "Das Lyrischmythische ist noch zu bestimmen." See Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin: Hellingrath, 1923), III, 266.

P.100 **fn.11:** The English text is modified from Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Works*, eds. Rodolph A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), V: *Poetry and Experience*, "Friedrich Hölderlin: Empedocles" (trans. Joseph Ross), 351. The original German, from *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung, Lessing-Goethe-Novalis-Hölderlin* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 287, reads: "Er will darstellen, was, wenn die partikularen Leidenschaften schweigen, in dem nachdenklichen Menschen aufgeht und beständig wächst. Die Auseinandersetzung mit unserem bedingten Dasein, mit den Notwendigkeiten des Lebens, wie sie aus unserem Verhältnis zu den unsichtbaren Kräften kommen . . . Sie ist die Geschichte unserer Seele, die wichtiger ist als all unsere partikularen Leidenschaften und Erfolge . . . Und wo diese Geschichte als das Wirklichste, Stärkste, Höchste in einem Menschen durchlebt wird, führt sie ihn irgendwie aus allen Bedingtheiten des Daseins in die Region der Freiheit, und sei es im Tode."

P.101 **fn.12:** The English texts are taken from Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, bilingual ed., trans. Michael Hamburger (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 324-29. The original German, taken from *Der Tod des Empedokles* in this same edition, reads as follows. It is Empedocles speaking:

> Hier oben, hier, und reich genug und froh
> Und herrlich wohn'ich, wo den Feuerkelch
> Mit Geist gefüllt bis an den Rand, bekränzt
> Mit Blumen, die er selber sich erzog,
> Gastfreundlich mir der Vater Aetna beut. (324)

P.101 **fn.13:** The German reads:
Lebendig wirst du mir und offenbar,
Mir birgst du dich, gebundner Geist, nicht länger,
Mir wirst du helle, denn ich fürcht es nicht.
Denn sterben will ja ich. Mein Recht ist diß.
Ha! Götter, schon, wie Morgenroth, ringsum
Und drunten tost der alte Zorn vorüber!
Hinab hinab ihr klagenden Gedanken!
Sorgfältig Herz! ich brauche nun dich nimmer.
Und hier ist kein Bedenken mehr. Es ruft
Der Gott — . . . (326-29)

P.102 **Olympus . . . "paternal:** The German reads: "Vater Aether."

P.102 **fn.14:** The German reads: "Ein Schimmmer nur, der bald vorüber muss . . ."(342-43). The French translation Bachelard used, a more poetic "Je ne suis qu'un scintillement, une étoile dans la course de l'hiver," reads: "I am but the twinkle of a star in the winter sky."

P.103 **Experience of:** In physics interference is a technical term used to refer to the phenomenon of two or more waves of the same frequency combining to form another.

P.103 **write his own:** Matthew Arnold, *Empedocles On Etna and Other Poems* (London: B. Fellowes, 1852).

P.103 **fn.b:** The English text is modified from Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, 127. In German this verse reads in its entirety:

Sei du, Gesang! mein freundlich Asyl! sei du,
Beglückender! mit sorgender Liebe mir
  Gepflegt, der Garten, wo ich wandelnd
  Unter den Blüthen, den immerjungen,

In sicher Einfalt wohne . . . (126)

P.104 **ally include:** Arnold's *Complete Works* were published as *The Works of Matthew Arnold*, 15 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1903).

P.104 **ing's insistence.:** Robert Browning (1812-1889), British poet.

P.104 **gripping his:** Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-1861), British poet.

P.104 **fn.15:** The original English has been taken from *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. Howard Foster Lowry (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), Letter 42 [dated Edgbaston, February 12, 1853 (although the passage would seem to have been written at 6:00 p.m. Sunday, the following day)], 130.

P.104 **fn.16:** See "Empedocles On Etna" in *The Works of Matthew Arnold*, II, 289.

P.105 **captures Satan's:** John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, line 75: "Which way I fly is Hell — Myself am Hell." Bonnerot makes reference as well to Book III, lines 469-71: "he, to be deemed / A god, leaped fondly into Aetna flames, / Empedocles" (54, fn.72).

P.105 **"intuition of:** Bonnerot, 43. Bachelard misreads here. Bonnerot is citing Henri Frédéric Amiel (1821-1881), *Journal Intime* [first published posthumously in 1883-84], ed. Bernard Bouvier, 2 vols. (Paris: Stock, 1931), I, 309. The entry is dated Bellape, July 22, 1870, and reads in its extended form: "Je n'ose respirer ni remuer, il me semble que je suis suspendu à un fil au-dessus de l'abîme insondable des destinées. Est-ce là un tête-à-tête avec l'infini, l'intuition de la grande mort?"

P.105 **fn.17:** *The Works of Matthew Arnold*, II, 290.

P.105 **fn.19:** *Ibid.*, 278.

P.107 **committed some:** This text is found on p.139 of the Bianquis translation. The original German, here taken from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke*, 19 vols. (Leipzig: Alfred Kröner, 1913), XIX, 191, reads: ". . . als die Aufgabe seines Daseins tritt hervor, das wieder gut zu machen, was das νεῖκος schlimm gemacht habe, innerhalb der Welt des νεῖκος den Gedanken von der Einheit in der Liebe zu verkündigen und selbst zu helfen, wo er das Leiden, die Folge des νεῖκος findet. Schwer wandelt er in dieser Welt der Qual, des Gegensatzes: dass er in ihr ist, kann er sich nur aus einem Fehltritt erklären: in irgend einer Zeit muss er einen Frevel, einen Mord, einen Meineid begangen haben." The Bianquis edition appears not to follow the order of the German text.

P. 107 **"Woman, nature:** French, 150. The German, here taken from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke*, 19 vols (Leipzig: C. G. Naumann, 1896), IX, 185, reads: "Das Weib als die Natur."

P. 107 **fn.20:** See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Gateway, 1962); however, the specific fragments to which Bachelard here refers appear not to have been included in this edition.

P. 108 **of palingenesis:** Palingenesis is the doctrine of successive rebirths, or metempsychosis.

P. 108 **of palingenesis . . . with him.:** French, 151. The German reads: "Bei dem Pantempel. 'Der grosse Pan ist todt!' Das Volk, um den Krater versammelt: er wird wahnsinnig und verkündet vor seinem Verschwinden die Wahrheit der Wiedergeburt. Ein Freund stirbt mit ihm." (186)

P. 108 **[*Daseinstriebes*].:** French, 154. The German reads: "Nachtfeier. Mystische Mitleidrede. Vernichtung des Daseinstriebes, Tod des Pan. Flucht des Volks." (189)

P. 108 **flee Ariadne?":** French, 154. The German reads: "Zwei Lavaströme, sie Können nicht entrinnen. Empedokles und Korinna. Empedokles fühlt sich als Mörder, unendlicher Strafe werth, er hofft eine Wiedergeburt des Sühnetodes. Dies treibt ihn in den Ätna. Er will Korinna retten. Ein Thier kommt zu ihm. Korinna stirbt mit ihn. 'Flieht Dionysus vor Ariadne?'" (189)

P. 111 **work . . . "the term:** The phrase "the term of his life" is Bachelard's, not Claudel's.

P. 111 **fn.22:** The letter, dated October 19, 1905, is reproduced in Paul Claudel, Francis Jammes, Gabriel Frizeau, *Correspondance, 1897-1938*, preface and notes by André Blanchet (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), No.40, 65. Claudel's series *The Tree*, published in 1901 by Mercure de France, was made up of five plays: *Tête d'Or* (2nd version); *l'Echange*; *le Repos du septième jour*; *la Ville* (2nd version); and *la Jeune Fille Violaine*

(2nd version). Claudel never completed the curious project described in this letter. Not only did he not organize subsequent plays in the order he lays out here, *Fruit* followed by *Fire*, but from the first the collective title *Tree* was dropped. —*Correspondance*, 389, fn. 40 (October 19, 1905).

P.112 **fn.23:** The English is taken from Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments*, 30-31. The German as well as the French appears in Bachelard's text.

P.113 **least . . . You are consumed:** An erratum in the French reads *s'embraser* for *t'embraser*.

P.114 **sche, I believe:** The source of this reference has not been located.

P.114 **fn.25:** The English text is substantially modified from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathoustra*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Viking, 1966), Part II, Chap. 40, 131. The original German, here excerpted from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in Drei Bänden* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1973), II, 386, reads:

"'Heraus mit dir, Feuerhund, aus deiner Tiefe!' rief ich, 'und bekenne, wie tief diese Tiefe ist! Woher ist das, was du da heraufschnaubst?

Du trinkst reichlich am Meere: das verrät deine versalzte Beredsamkeit! Fürwahr, für einen Hund der Tiefe nimmst du deine Nahrung zu sehr von der Oberfläche!

Höchstens für den Bauchredner der Erde halt' ich dich . . . Ihr versteht zu brüllen und mit Asche zu verdunkeln! Ihr seid die besten Großmäuler und lerntet sattsam die Kunst, schlamm heiß zu sieden.'"

P.115 **fn.c:** The English text is taken from Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974): "Jokes, Cunning, and Revenge: Prelude in German Rhymes," no.62, 66-67. Quinot's French version was modified from "Oui, je sais ma nature: / insatiable comme flamme, / j'arde et me dévore" to "Oui, je sais quelle est mon origine! / Inassouvie comme la flamme, / J'arde et me consume." The original German reads:

Ja! Ich weiss, woher ich stamme!
Ungesättigt gleich der Flamme
Glühe und verzehr'ich mich.
Licht wird Alles, was ich fasse,
Kohle Alles, was ich lasse:
Flamme bin ich sicherlich!

P.115 **fn.d:** It has not been possible to verify the German text.

P.116 **fn.e:** The English is taken from *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Redding Ridge, CT: Black Swan Books, 1984), 38-39. The German reads:

Letzter Wille
So sterben,
wie ich ihn einst sterben sah —
den Freund, der Blitze und Blicke
göttlich in meine dunkle Jugend warf:
— muhtwillig und tief,
in der Schlacht ein Tänzer —,
unter Kriegern der Heiterste,
unter Siegern der Schwerste,
auf seinem Schicksal ein Schicksal stehend,
hart, nachdenklich, vordenklich —:

erzitternd darob, dass er siegt,
jauchzend darüber, dass er *sterbend* siegte —:

befehlend, indem er starb,
— und er befahl, dass man *vernichte* . . .

So sterben,
wie ich ihn einst sterben sah:
siegend, *vernichtend* . . .

Quinot renders this last line: "*Vainqueur*, Destructeur. . . ." He contends that Nietzsche modeled the phrase on a fragment from the outline of his own play *Empedocles*, IX, 130-36 (*Pages mystiques*, 151).

P.117 **tells us.":** Bachelard refers to Char's dedication as a poem, although it is not one in the strictest sense.

P.117 **Incendiary and fire:** This conceit is more vivid still in French, amplified by a pun: "L'incendiaire et l'incendie ne font qu'un." Compare these lines from Bachelard's *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*: "Un incendie détermine un incendiaire presque aussi fatalement qu'un incendiaire allume un incendie." — Chap. 2: "Feu et rêverie, le complexe d'Empédocle," 31.

P.117 **neath the mountain.:** See Mickey Hart and Robert Hunter, "Fire On the Mountain," in particular this line: "Almost ablaze still you don't feel the heat."

P.117 **fn.26:** The entire passage reads: "On ne peut pas devenir fou dans une époque forcenée bien qu'on puisse être brulé vif par un feu dont on est l'égal [One may not go mad in an age of madness, though one may be burned alive by fire no greater than oneself]."

P.118 **fn.27:** The French reads: "Son ancienne nature solaire . . . couvait sourdement sous sa forme humaine."

P.118 **fn.28:** The French reads: "On eût dit que les monstres qu'il avait broyés se vengeaient en s'assimilant à son être. Le lion de Némée, dont il s'était fait un manteau, la hure du sanglier d'Erymanthe qui couvrait sa tête semblaient alors s'incarner et revivre furieusement en lui . . . Le volcan de douleur qui fermente en lui fait éruption . . . Il en sort . . . des invectives formidables, des appels lancés vers la foudre . . . Bientôt l'holocauste sera consommé. Du sommet de l'Oetna, dans un tourbillon rayonnant, Hercule transfiguré va s'élancer vers l'Olympe, et s'asseoir, tout en feu, au milieu des dieux."

P.121 **would deign:** This passage relies on wordplay unavailable in English: "Le méditant dit au montreur d'images: 'Que me caches-tu en me montrant cette image? Qui montre ne démontre pas. Qui démontre répugne à montrer.'"

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