ABSTRACT

ON MAD GENIUSES & DREAMS
IN THE AGE OF REASON IN FRENCH RÉCITS FANTASTIQUES

by Raphaël Canvat

This thesis reports on the themes of madness, unreason, and wonderment in Jacques Cazotte's *Le diable amoureux*, a late-eighteenth-century récit fantastique, and the third book of Aloysius Bertrand's *Gaspard de la Nuit*, an early-nineteenth-century prose poetry collection also considered a fantastic piece of literature. By analyzing 1750s-1850s literary sources belonging to the fantastic genre in which the experience of dreaming is central and whose authors or main characters suffer from a certain type of madness that could be defined as delusion through the informed regard of Freudo-Lacanian psychoanalysis, literary theories, and Continental Philosophy, this thesis explores the problem of ego construction and self-fashioning, asking what it might mean to become a thinking subjectivity and trying to describe that very process. The two literary sources analyzed in this paper are excellent examples of what one could call *Bildungsträumes*, that is, dreams that implement the main mechanisms of the mind and show in allegories the symbolic mental representations presiding over our psychic agencies.
ON MAD GENIUSES & DREAMS
IN THE AGE OF REASON IN FRENCH RÉCITS FANTASTIQUES

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty
of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of French and Italian
by
Raphaël Canvat
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio
2012

Advisor: _______________________
Dr. Jonathan Strauss
Reader: _______________________
Dr. Elisabeth Hodges
Reader: _______________________
Dr. Randolph Runyon
# Table of Contents

Introduction

Récits Fantastiques and Bildungsträume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter I</th>
<th>Waking Dreams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I</td>
<td>Jacques Cazotte: A Fou Littéraire’s Acts, Deeds, and Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II</td>
<td>Philosophical and Psychoanalytical Analysis of a Bildungsträume</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter II</th>
<th>Literary Dreams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I</td>
<td>Gaspard de la Nuit: The Onetic Præstige: Illusion, Fascination, and Enchantment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part II</td>
<td>Beyond the Mirror Stage: The Bildungsträume</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix

Illustration I, II, III, IV

Graph I, II, III

Diagrams

Works Cited
À Élise et Karl
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the faculty of the Department of French & Italian at Miami University for their kind and inspiring support. The communicative enthusiasm of the following individuals, Claire Goldstein, Elisabeth Hodges, Lauren Ravalico, Michel Pactat, and Randolph Runyon, was a constant reminder of the pleasures of studying art and literature in the interesting context of a Midwestern American university. The two seminars I took during my second year in the philosophy department on Psychoanalysis with Emily Zakin and on XIXe Century Continental Philosophy with Elaine Miller definitely determined the theoretical lens embraced in this final project, and I would like to say here how grateful I am for the extremely relevant and engaging insights and discussions that were provided throughout these two last semesters, I owe a special thank-you to Anna Klosowska with whom I took part in the Dijon program. Indeed, during the summer of 2011 my interest in two local authors notorious for their mad genius (Jacques Cazotte and Aloysius Bertrand) began to wriggle into my brain. Jonathan Strauss, the adviser of this thesis, provided valuable feedback, comments, and sometimes harsh criticism. As le “cheval eschappé” of Michel de Montaigne in “De l’Oisiveté” who “m’enfante tant de chimères et monstres fantasques les uns sur les autres, sans ordre, et sans repos, que pour en contempler à mon aise l’ineptie et l’étrangeté, j’ai commencé de les enregistrer : espérant avec le temps, lui en faire honte à lui-même,” I needed to learn to restrain the impetuous verve fed by this irrepressible creativity that animates us all, in academia.
Introduction

Récits Fantastiques and Bildungsträume

L’esprit net et sensé du lecteur français se prête difficilement aux caprices d’une imagination rêveuse, à moins que cette dernière n’agisse dans les limites traditionnelles et convenues des contes de fées et des pantomimes d’opéras. L’allégorie nous plaît, la fable nous amuse; nos bibliothèques sont pleines de ces jeux destinés d’abord aux enfants, puis aux femmes, et que les hommes ne dédaignent pas quand ils ont du loisir. Ceux du dix-huitième siècle en avaient beaucoup, et jamais les fictions et les fables n’eurent plus de succès qu’alors. Les plus graves écrivains, Montesquieu, Diderot, Voltaire, berçaient et endormaient par des contes charmants cette société que leurs principes allaient détruire de fond en comble.

Nerval, “Preface” in Jacques Cazotte, Le diable amoureux, 1871

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the psychiatric generation under the sway of the growth of psychoanalysis became interested as much in the writing of delirium and madness as in the behavior of hysterical women. For this generation, as for the Surrealist poets, madness and paranoia outline the strange contours of a convulsive truth, which echoes the aberration of a world that had fallen prey to the decline of Classical values, reason, and progress. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the rise of the faculty of reason as the predominant instrument for acquiring knowledge in Western cultures. Yet Diderot—one of the greatest embodiments of the Siècle des Lumières—wrote fairy tales in which unreason, wonderment, and the fantastic meet.

Should one consider the imagination “une folle du logis” and therefore simply dismiss it finally as Malebranche suggested (De la recherche de la vérité, Livre II, 1674)? Alternatively, should one agree with Descartes, who argued that the faculty of reason would be seriously impaired without its less loved counterpart: the faculty of imagination (Regulae ad directionem ingenii, Règle douzième, 1628)?

Contrary to the received wisdom, the so-called age of reason appears to be a fertile ground when it comes to the tales of madness in which the author’s faculty of imagination and its fantastic unconscious chimeras are unleashed.

For this final project, I propose to study two dreams recounted in French literature in the odd atmosphere of the Great Fear, the Revolution, and the Reign of Terror: Cazotte’s Le diable amoureux (1772) and Bertrand’s La nuit et ses prestiges, that is, the third book of Gaspard de la Nuit (1842). These literary sources share two striking features. First, the appearance of fairy-like creatures that I call ‘elemental spirits’ (Undine, Sylph, Salamander, and Gnome), and second, the importance of the archetypal figure of the ‘transvestite devil.’ I intend to investigate in detail the
significance of these ‘composite persons,’ and in particular, the significance of what I call the *deus deceptor*. Freud’s interpretation of that ‘form,’ that primordial *Gestalt* (what he calls the “daemonic force at work,” in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) underlines the paternal seduction—a register already transgendered—and significantly assimilates this subjective and yet universally shared representation with the symbol of repressed oral eroticism and narcissism. Regarding the ‘elemental spirits,’ Freud argues in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that they principally come from our instincts:

Everyone assumed the existence of as many instincts or ‘basic instincts’ as he chose, and juggled with them like the ancient Greek natural philosophers with their elements—earth, air, fire and water.¹

However, Freud explains further, there exist not four but only two main instincts: (a) the self-preservation and sexual instincts (*Eros*, sexual/life instincts) and (b) the ego instincts (*Thanatos*, ego/death instincts). The dream may implement those instincts. Some objective phenomena reported since the dawn of civilization such as sleep paralysis, nocturnal emissions, and night terrors tend to prove that in some dreams the subject cannot distinguish between the real and the dream’s hallucinations. In medieval Western folklore, demons were believed to cause nocturnal emissions.² As Descartes recalls in 1641 in a famous passage of his first meditation—a passage we will deal with at the end of this thesis through Foucault and Derrida’s debate on madness:

[En y pensant soigneusement, je me ressouviens d’avoir souvent été trompé en dormant par de semblables illusions ; et, en m’arrêtant sur cette pensée, je vois si manifestement qu’il n’y a point d’indices certains par où l’on puisse distinguer nettement la veille d’avec le sommeil, que j’en suis tout étonné ; et mon étonnement est tel qu’il est presque capable de me persuader que je dors.³]

The concept I would like to establish as *Bildungsträume* is essentially based on such experiences in which the subject does not know what is real and what is not, that is, when the subject becomes delusional and deceived into thinking through false awakenings, for instance, that the dream is actually the reality. Several features characterize the notion of *Bildungsträume*. I will establish them

---

² See *Incubus* and *Succubus*, demons or supernatural beings appearing in dreams and taking the form of a human in order to seduce and have intercourse with the dreamer. Those oneiric and fairy-like creatures are also associated with night terrors and sleep paralysis.
narrowly as we come across them throughout the analysis. In sum, the Bildungsträume involves (a) physical transportation; (b) psychological transformation linked with an Aufhebung, or ‘overcoming’; (c) self-knowledge/self-awareness the dreamer may acquire through the dream; and (d) allegories associated with masks, cross-dressing, and metamorphosis. Theorists including Freud have largely discussed the apparently bold opinion according to which one could get some sort of knowledge through dreams, that is, without passing through verbal language. For instance, the German chemist Friedrich A. Kekule von Stradonitz recounted in 1890 that he had discovered the ring shape of the benzene molecule after having a daydream of a snake biting its own tail. More recently, in a UC Berkeley Alumni magazine, Nobel Prize–winning American biochemist Kerry B. Mullis stated that altered states of consciousness gave him the idea to develop the polymerase chain reaction (PCR), a revolutionary method of DNA sequence multiplication.⁴

The reader may still wonder how and why this final project is relevant and important for us. Following in the footprints, acts, and deeds of that mental representation and ego manifestation that is the symbolic devil, which seems indeed to manifest itself in the two literary sources considered for this essay, the reader will get meaningful insight into the devil’s universal significance. Somehow, these two literary sources (Le diable amoureux and La nuit et ses prestiges), in one way or another, account for dreams. By taking the oneiric path of the dream world, and more generally, of the unconscious, the reader will learn about the human psyche, its structures, and the problem of transformation associated with ego construction and self-fashioning. Throughout the following pages, I will define the Fantastic as a literary genre implementing Bildungsträumes, and will distinguish between (a) waking dreams and (b) literary dreams. Waking dreams will be compared with madness but madness construed in a positive sense. A certain type of madness associated with megalomania and delusional fantasies—which Nerval’s Voyage en Orient (1851) or even the Rimballdian “Alchemy of the Verb” in Une saison en enfer (1873) are excellent examples of—could be construed as a philosophical quest at the end of which lies potentially the True. As Hegel himself famously said in the beginning of his Phenomenology:

The True is thus the Bacchanalian revel in which no member is not drunk; yet because each member collapses as soon as he drops out, the revel is just as much transparent and simple repose.\(^5\)

This type of dream associated with madness occurs when the dreamer goes from a normal waking state directly into a dream state, with no apparent lapse in consciousness. Such a subjective experience at the edges of sleep and consciousness is also characterized by false awakenings, out-of-body experiences, and sleep paralysis. In contrast, literary dreams may either come close to the accounts of visions experienced in hypnagogic sleep or be mere figments of the imagination. In the latter case, the literary dream could be a sort of ‘exercice de style’ based on a well-established waking dream reported elsewhere in literature. In both cases, the unconscious through the imagination is clearly at work. Such poetic verses become ultimately a genuine magical spark: the polysemy and the might of the metonymy, the metaphor, and the allegory largely used in that literature constrain the linguistic sign to transcend and self-other (se faire autre). Similarly, Jacques Lacan showed throughout his work a keen interest in this peculiar language. For instance, the notion of “Nom-du-père” (A) developed in his seminar The Psychoses can be understood as ‘the name-of-the-father and as ‘the no-of-the-father’ to emphasize the legislative and prohibitive function, respectively, of the symbolic father. Both functions are encapsulated in the phoneme combination: /nom/ that could signify ‘nom’ (name) or ‘non’ (no). According to Lacan, the laws of the unconscious language are a constant playing of metonymies and metaphors that correspond, respectively, to the two main Freudian mechanisms of the unconscious, that is, condensation and displacement. The latter example borrowed from the Lacanian corpus is an excellent example of condensation of meanings in a linguistic sign. The dream-work, and by extension the unconscious itself, works pretty much the same way. In a certain kind of avant-garde poetry I call ’hyperbolic,’ these literary devices are not only clearly present but also the clues to the functioning of selfhood emergence, self-fashioning, and ego construction, which implement various imagines (symbolic entities structuring the Self and manifesting themselves in peculiar dreams I call Bildungsträume). Finally, these literary sources may be envisioned as ‘sacred scriptures,’ which emphasize the mechanisms of a profoundly subjective mind.

Chapter I
Waking Dreams

Part I

À votre contenance héroïque, les Sylphes, les Salamandres, les Gnomes, les Ondins, enchantés de votre courage, résolurent de vous donner tout l'avantage sur vos ennemis. Je suis Sylphide d'origine, et une des plus considérables d'entre elles. Je parus sous la forme de la petite chienne; je reçus vos ordres, et nous nous empressâmes tous à l'envi de les accomplir. Plus vous mettiez de hauteur, de résolution, d'aisance, d'intelligence à régler nos mouvements, plus nous redoublions d'admiration pour vous et de zèle. Vous m'ordonnâtes de vous servir en page, de vous amuser en cantatrice. Je me soumis avec joie, et goûtai de tels charmes dans mon obéissance, que je résolus de vous la vouer pour toujours.

Jacques Cazotte, Le diable amoureux, 1871

For this analysis, we will follow the 1871 edition of Jacques Cazotte’s Le diable amoureux, which was initially published in 1772. Various reasons justify this pick. First, the long and particularly meaningful preface by Gérard de Nerval—one of the greatest and, perhaps, one of the maddest embodiments of the nineteenth-century French Romantic poets—seems to impose itself as the reference for us regarding Cazotte, his life, his work, his trial, and his alleged prophecies and revelations reported by Jean-François La Harpe. This late edition, published almost one century after the first edition’s release, starts with a five-chapter-long preface by Nerval followed by L'avis de l'Auteur pour la première édition. Le diable amoureux is subtitled “Nouvelle espagnole” in the 1772 edition, whereas it is subtitled “Roman fantastique” in the late edition we use in this critical analysis. The 1871 edition is subdivided into twenty-one chapters, which is also quite an improvement since the first edition does not have chapters at all. The late edition also numbers a short Épilogue and a Note at the end that offers the reader an alternative denouement for the novel. Finally, and as is the case for the 1772 edition, the 1871 edition is illustrated with nicely executed engravings by Édouard de Beaumont that ease and liven up the reading, as I believe, everyone will agree. However, on a more fundamental level, this apparently anecdotic and mundane fact reveals something crucial for us. Cazotte explains in L’avis de l’Auteur that he wished his novel to be supplemented and embellished with figures and pictures. Referring to Beelzebub/Biondetta’s ‘Che vuoi?’ in the Portici ruins and, albeit much more vaguely, to Rembrandt’s clair-obscur, the author
suggests that, sometimes, words and verbal descriptions may reveal themselves insufficient while dealing with notions and concepts that are difficult to share and communicate. Quoting Cazotte in L’avis de l’Auteur:

L’esprit d’un dessin, l’expression d’une gravure, ne disent-ils pas presque toujours plus et mieux que les paroles les plus sonores et les mieux arrangées? Quelles expressions rendraient, comme la gravure, le courage tranquille d’Alvare, que le caverneux Che vuoi n’ébranle pas?\(^6\)

Can an author paint things successfully with words? Or rather, and as Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) tried to enact in his work, may one express with words on paper what the painter says with colors on canvas?\(^7\) In this introductory quotation above, it seems to me that Cazotte is not solely referring to the engravings that are de facto to be found in both editions of the book but is also figuratively referring to the metaphoric, poetic, and oneiric language his novel is made of. Nerval described Le diable amoureux as a novel that belongs to what he calls “poésie fantastique.” For Cazotte was a fabulist and a poet even before becoming a novelist, he mastered early on the art of the allegorical discourse. Let us take a quick look at his biography as it is described by Nerval in the first and second chapters of the preface.

Jacques Cazotte was born in Dijon in 1720. He was educated in a Jesuit school, and one of his brothers, the grand vicaire of M. de Choiseul, bishop of Châlons, made Cazotte come to Paris and work for the French Ministry of the Marine, a job he always took seriously, in spite of his literary ambitions, so that he became commissioner in 1747. He spent part of his life in Martinique where he held the position of controller at Iles-sous-le-vent. That is where he married Mademoiselle Élisabeth Roignan, daughter of the first judge of Martinique. However, his brother’s death called Cazotte back to France for he was the rightful heir of the former. Cazotte then asked for permission to retire and obtained it, so he could dedicate more time to his beloved passions: reading and writing. The third part of Cazotte’s life takes place in Lyon. According to Nerval,

\(^6\) Jacques Cazotte, “Avis de l’auteur pour la première édition” in Le diable amoureux (Paris: Henri Plon, 1871) 98. See illustration I in the annexe. (All our illustrations are public domain). Subsequent citations from Le diable amoureux are listed simply with the page.

\(^7\) Notably in his Magnum Opus dedicated to the study of mores (Études des Mœurs): La Comédie humaine, and in particular, in Le Chef-d’Œuvre inconnu (1831), through the old master Frenhofer’s research for the suitable model for his masterpiece, La Belle noiseuse. Cf. also the infernal depiction of Paris in the beginning of La fille aux yeux d’or (1833).
Cazotte would have received the visit of a freemason shortly after the publication of *Le diable amoureux*. Since Cazotte gave the reader a report on occult matters in his book, the mysterious man was convinced that Cazotte was not only a freemason, too, but also highly initiated in the mysteries of the society. The freemason would have recommended Cazotte avoid revealing the secrets of his society and introduced Cazotte to the Illuminati movement. Cazotte then joined the Martinists, a form of mystical and esoteric Christianity founded by Martinez de Pasqually circa 1740. This movement later propagated in different forms through the teachings of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin and Jean-Baptiste Willermoz through a sort of syncretism using the ideas of Swedenborg and Jacob Boehme. According to some persons, including Nerval and Joseph de Maistre in *Considérations sur la France* (1796), the Martinists would have had an occult influence on the events that led to the Revolution. Jacques Cazotte, who was aging, evolved in this quite odd and effervescent milieu. This is probably the very moment one could identify the beginning of his madness. If one gives credibility to the testimony of Jean-François La Harpe regarding a prediction that Cazotte made in 1788 during a sort of banquet in the presence of prestigious members of the *Académie Française*, Cazotte pretty much anticipated the Reign of Terror (September 1793 to July 1794) that quickly followed the onset of the French Revolution (1789–1799). Even though no one took him seriously, Cazotte predicted the death of several revolutionaries sitting around the table (Chamfort, Condorcet, Vicq d’Azyr, de Nicolai, Bailly, de Malesherbes, and Madame la duchesse de Grammont). However, the joke quickly turned sour when Cazotte stated that even the nobility and the royal blood would be executed (Marie-Antoinette and Louis XVI, king of France and Navarre). It is understood that this testimony must be taken with caution, and one knows that Nerval’s word was not quite his bond, either. It is very likely that Nerval and La Harpe (or both) romanticized Cazotte’s biography to stress the mystical leaning of the latter.

In the very beginning, the still young Cazotte was much more interested in writing poetry and popular songs than in writing fantastic novels. In the ballad-like style that follows, more or less, the precepts of Nicolas Boileau—*législateur de Parnasse*—and, generally speaking, the classicism movement in poetry, Cazotte published several short collections of poems. He also edited, arranged, and published *La Nouvelle Raméide* in 1766, that is, a twenty-page poem in alexandrine by his notoriously mad friend Jean-François Rameau, nephew of the famous composer Jean-Philippe Rameau. The mad genius of Rameau’s nephew was magnificently depicted in Diderot’s *Le
neveu de Rameau sometime circa 1765 and was also commented on by G.W.F. Hegel in his Phänomenologie des Geistes in 1807 as soon as the German version of Le neveu de Rameau came out. Back to the matter at hand, at the beginning of his career, Cazotte was also writing fairy tales that were supposed to be the sequel to the Middle Eastern Mille et une Nuits that became popular in Europe during the eighteenth century after Antoine Galland translated the book into French. Cazotte also wrote fairy tales in the chivalric style and even achieved some success. Nonetheless, Cazotte’s Magnum Opus was yet to come.

Le diable amoureux is famous for different reasons: this genuinely mature work shines among Cazotte’s other works because of the quality of the writing and the perfection of the details, and yet this novel surpasses all the rest by its originality. Le diable amoureux could be unequivocally compared to other half-initiatic, half-fantastic novels, the first of which, Apuleius’s The Metamorphoses, which St. Augustine referred to as The Golden Ass (Asinus Aureus, AD the late second century), but also Guillaume de Lorris’s Le Roman de la Rose (1237) and Francesco Colonna’s Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (1470), respectively, in French and Italian medieval literature, would perfectly found the paradigm of such a literary genre insofar as, in such stories, the main character has to deal with some sort of allegorical and fairy-like creatures as he goes ahead and pursues his endeavors in an oneiric world. This type of book is loaded with mysticism and poetry, but, more importantly and as we will see soon enough, those allegorical fairy tales are related to the experience of dreaming. Abided by the representation of the dream’s hallucinations, and worthy heir of his peers, the mystics, who connect the slumber phenomena with actions in the external world, Cazotte created a genuine masterpiece of this peculiar literary genre. Cazotte is a product of his time: he was simultaneously a thorough adept of the poetic school of Marot, Ronsard, and de la Fontaine, and yet he was also a naïve fabulist inspired by the legendary Persian storyteller Scheherazade of Les Milles et Une Nuits influenced by the ambient Western mysticism in which he evolved. This second and more obscure facet of Cazotte’s personality finally outweighed his other inclinations. In the late eighteenth century, countless books were dedicated to Kabbalah and occult sciences; the most bizarre speculations and beliefs of the Middle Ages were, so to speak, rising from the ashes of early modern witch-hunt stakes. The works of Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino were revived through many authors vulgarizing Alexandrian Hermeticism, Greek Neo-Platonism, and Arab Sufism, that is, all productions of transcendent philosophy within reach.
of the French salons. Everywhere, one could hear the bourgeois discussing elemental spirits, occult sympathies, charms and possessions, metempsychosis, Alchemy, and, of course, the animal magnetism of Franz Mesmer. One could ask if, toward the end of Cazotte’s life and as Nerval suggests at the end of the preface, perhaps Cazotte—who was steeped in Martinist mysticism and the myth of so-called charlatans such as Cagliostro, the Count of St. Germain, and the wandering Jew—started to believe in the reality of an enchanted universe created from scratch.

At any rate, when some of his counter-revolutionary letters were discovered in mid-August 1792, the almost octogenarian Cazotte was arrested and interrogated during the baleful September Massacres' trials. Though he escaped from his prison cell through the efforts of his daughter Élisabeth, he was recaptured and sentenced to death by one of his former Martinist peers. He was guillotined the following month for having taken part in the “chevaliers du poignard” conspiracy of the Tuileries Palace and for having plotted an escape scheme for Louis XVI by proposing his own house of Ay, in the Marne department, as provisional shelter for the deposed king.

Now that we have covered the most important highlights of Cazotte’s life along with his style, his literary background, and his counter-revolutionary and mystical tendencies through Nerval’s commentary and La Harpe’s report in the second edition of Le diable amoureux, we offer the reader a thorough and complete summary of the novel, followed by a philosophical and psychoanalytical analysis (part II).

Don Alvare Maravillas is the hero-protagonist of Le diable amoureux. At only twenty-five years old, Alvare of Extremadura—son of don Bernardo Maravillas and doña Mencia—is a captain of the King of Naples' Night Watch. Mostly interested in women, opera, gambling, and occasionally, that is, when there is nothing else to do, philosophy, Alvare is an arrogant and proud person who cannot stand to be accused of pusillanimity or cowardice. In chapter one, Alvare is in his quarters with some fellows; savoring a small bottle of Cyprus wine in the late night, they are discussing Kabbalah. While the young people talk nonsense on that matter, a quiet white-bearded old man of Flemish background silently smokes a pipe. Later that night, fate leads Alvare and Soberano, the Flemish old man, to meet and have a long conversation full of promise. Summoning a spirit by calling his name “Calderon” to get his pipe lit, Soberano is some sort of necromancer who can summon and control spirits at will. He is quite impressed when he hears what Alvare has to say about the possibility of a science “which teaches how to transform metals
and compel the spirits to obey he who summons them.”

Alvare’s naïve ignorance, right-mindedness, and rectitude of intention (109) convince Soberano that Alvare is worthy to be taught, and thus, he proposes Alvare to become his pupil. Alvare’s desire to become able to command the spirits and make them accountable for all his wishes and whims is growing inside him and, as he says, is burning him from inside (112). Alvare wants, out of hubris, to summon the devil himself to “tweak his ears,” and Soberano—albeit, a bit sceptical and stunned by Alvare’s request—acquiesces and decides to meet the following Friday in the Portici ruins, not far from Naples. In chapter two, Alvare and Soberano are accompanied by two others: Bernadillo and another one about whom not even a line is written. Soberano traces a pentacle on the ground with a reed he had used as a walking stick, and after a few recommendations and, of course, having passed on the appropriate invocation formula, the company leaves Alvare alone in the dark with no one but tawny owls. Alvare calls the name “Bélzébuth” three times. The horrible face of a sinister camel with extremely large ears appears to the neophyte and answers the following enigmatic question: Che vuoi? (Que veux-tu? What do you want?). Alvare, bolstered by his vanity, shouts back:

Que pretend-tu toi-même, téméraire, en te montrant sous cette forme hideuse? [...] L’esclave, […], cherche-t-il à effrayer son maître? Si tu viens recevoir mes ordre, prends une forme convenable et un ton soumis. […] Viens, […], sous la figure d’un épagnel.

Beelzebub then takes the form of a little puppy named Biondetta and “receives” Alvare’s orders. To begin, the master commands a fest: a fastidious banquet for his dear colleagues, still waiting next door. Alvare also wants his recently acquired bondman to appear as a “virtuose du premier talent,” as a delightful “cantatrice” (opera singer) to entertain the company while they are having dinner (124). All told, the devil will have taken up four different forms. S/he first appears as a camel; then as a spaniel; then as a Roman opera improvisatrice (Fiorentina); and finally, a little later, as Biondetto/a. The banquet is simply amazing, and the devil multiplies himself to ensure impeccable service. Everyone, including the reader, is seduced by the apparently innocent charms of the devil. After having drunk another couple of glasses of Cyprus wine, seeing the clock ticking,
Alvare orders a carriage and servants and decides to go back to Naples. On the way home, Alvare is given two pieces of advice. First, Soberano warns Alvare: “Vous nous donnez un beau regal, ami; il vous coûtera cher,” and then Bernadillo advises Alvare: “Vous êtes jeune; à votre âge on desire trop pour se laisser le temps de réfléchir, et on précipite ses jouissances.” Even though Alvare sincerely wants to get rid of Biondetta—at least, in the beginning—each time, s/he finds a way to deceive Alvare and sticks around. In chapter five, although Alvare experiences difficulty trying to fall asleep, he quickly starts dreaming:

Il semblait que le portrait du page fût attaché au ciel du lit et aux quatre colonnes ; je ne voyais que lui. Je m'efforçais en vain de lier avec cet objet ravissant l'idée du fantôme épouvantable que j'avais vu ; la première apparition servait à relever le charme de la dernière. Ce chant mélodieux, que j'avais entendu sous la voûte, ce son de voix ravissant, ce parler qui semblait venir du cœur, retentissaient en core dans le mien, et y excitaient un frémissement singulier. Ah ! Biondetta ! disais-je, si vous n'étiez pas un être fantastique, si vous n'étiez pas ce vilain dromadaire !

The following day, Biondetta resumes her seductive work on Alvare. S/he was so impressed by Alvare’s heroic behavior and temerity in the Portici ruins, s/he wants to be united with him. However, Alvare wants to make sure first that he will be able to separate from Biondetta as soon as he wants to do so: “Puis-je me séparer de vous quand je le voudrai? Je vous somme de me répondre avec clarté et precision.” Biondetta explains that Alvare just needs an “act of willpower” to be released from his liability. Nonetheless, Alvare, who is broke since he has been unsuccessful at gambling lately, needs money to get to Venice, where Bentinelli, doña Mencia’s banker, may help him out. In exchange of an oath of loyalty and protection, Biondetta is willing to lend Alvare some money. From Naples, the newly formed pair travels to Venice (chapter six). Cradled by the carriage’s oscillations, Alvare falls into a particularly long and deep sleep filled with vivid dreams. The narrator adds that, later, his mother argues that this sleep was not natural (156). After arriving at their host’s place, Biondetta and Alvare are settled. Alvare learns from the banker that a gentleman by the name of don Miguel Pimientos left an envelope from doña Mencia containing 200 sequins. Then Alvare returns to dreaming in his

---

12 Ibid., 134.
13 Ibid., 137.
14 Ibid., 145.
15 Ibid., 151.
16 A sequin is a gold coin weighing 3.5 grams (0.12 oz) of .986 gold. The coins were minted by the Republic of Venice from the thirteenth century until the takeover of Venice by Napoleon in 1797,
bedroom: “Je revins rêver dans ma chambre.” The narrator describes an intimate dinner with a highly significant setting involving three mirrors:

Je me mis à table. Biondetta, en grande livrée, était derrière mon siège, attentive à prévenir mes besoins. Je n'avais pas besoin de me retourner pour la voir ; trois glaces disposées dans le salon répétaien tous ses mouvements. Le dîner finit, on dessert; elle se retire. L'aubergiste monte, la connaissance n'était pas nouvelle. On était en carnaval ; mon arrivée n'avait rien qui dût le surprendre. Il [fit] les louanges de mon page, le jeune homme le plus beau, le plus affectionné, le plus intelligent, le plus doux qu'il eût encore vu. Il me demanda si je comptais prendre part aux plaisirs du carnaval : c'était mon intention. Je pris un déguisement et montai dans ma gondole.

The appearance of the theme of a disguise through the annual Venice Spring Carnival, along with, of course, the multiple metamorphoses of the deceitful devil, should be emphasized for the first time in this crucial scene. The mask and cross-dressing themes constitute one of the important features of what I call ‘Bildungsträume.’ In chapter II, I will connect Le diable amoureux, Descartes’s evil genius hypothesis, and Bertrand’s Gaspard de la Nuit. In the quotation above, Alvare seems to be looking at mirrors while having dinner. He probably sees himself along with reflections of Biondetta in the three mirrors arranged around him. Does he really see someone else in those mirrors? Perhaps Alvare is seeing no one but multiple reflections of himself, or rather, he is seeing imagines (plural form of ‘imago’), which really are oneiric mental representations of his own psychic agency. Biondetta could be the symbol of Alvare’s repressed desire for absolute jouissance and unquestioned mastery of another. We will come back to this crucial moment in the second part of this chapter when I define the Bildungsträume as a ‘magic mirror turned upon the Self.’ At any rate, Alvare, bewitched by the effervescent atmosphere of Venice, decides to gamble at the Ridotto. Il Ridotto (Italian: ‘The Private Room’) was a wing of Venice's San Moisè Palace. In 1638, it was converted at the behest of Venice's city leaders into a government-owned gambling house. Due to the high stakes and formal dress code, only nobles could afford to play at the casino's tables. Players had to wear three-cornered hats and masks in order to participate. Il Ridotto closed in 1774, and that is the only clue that allows us to situate historically the story of Le diable amoureux. Those events took place sometime before 1774. Unfortunately, Alvare’s luck at gambling turns, and he loses 1300 sequins in only one night. Once even though they were used at least until 1823. Alvare is carrying 700 grams of gold, which was a decent fortune back then (source: wikipedia.com).

17 Ibid., 162.
18 Ibid., 164.
again, Biondetta can help Alvare out: she can teach Alvare how to play cards properly:

Oui ; prudence à part, on apprend les jeux de chance, que vous appelez mal à propos jeux de hasard. Il n'y a point de hasard dans le monde ; tout y a été et sera toujours une suite de combinaisons nécessaires que l'on ne peut entendre que par la science des nombres, dont les principes sont, en même temps, et si abstraits et si profonds, qu'on ne peut les saisir si l'on n'est conduit par un maître ; mais il faut avoir su se le donner et se l'attacher Je ne puis vous peindre cette connaissance sublime que par une image. L'enchaînement des nombres fait la cadence de l'univers, règle ce qu'on appelle les événements fortuits et prétendus déterminés, les forçant par des balanciers invisibles à tomber chacun à leur tour, depuis ce qui se passe d'important dans les sphères éloignées, jusqu'aux misérables petites chances qui vous ont aujourd'hui dépouillé de votre argent.\(^{19}\)

Biondetta distinguishes between games of chance (jeux de hasard) and games depending on luck (jeux de chance). Using a metaphor (Je ne puis vous peindre cette connaissance sublime que par une image), Biondetta explains to Alvare how to understand the number sequencing that presides over everything from the celestial spheres’ movement to the outcomes of random number combinations, and that, by an apparently simple mathematical combination (170). Biondetta is, so to speak, the guarantor of arithmosophic knowledge, which has to do with Kabbalah and Martinism through their connected keen interest in the symbolic science of numbers. The odds are pretty good that Cazotte’s knowledge on that matter was pretty decent, even though Nerval pretends that Cazotte had not yet been initiated into any secret society when Le diable amoureux was published (21). It seems that the tremendously symbolic moments of the book such as (a) the invocation in the Portici ruins with Soberano, Bernadillo, and the unnamed fourth man and (b) the first dream with the four columns of the bed, (c) the dinner with the three mirrors, and of course (d) the four metamorphoses taken up by the devil might be related to the Pythagorean \(\text{tetra} \kappa \tau \omicron \varsigma\) (Greek: tetractys), or tetrad, that is, a triangular figure consisting of ten points arranged in four rows: one, two, three, and four points in each row, which is the geometrical representation of the fourth triangular number.\(^{20}\) Let us not anticipate the analysis and stick to the story. With Biondetta’s help, Alvare wins back all the money he had previously lost, and thus, he pays off his debts. Growing tired of endlessly playing the same games at Il Ridotto, Alvare starts spending time in the delightful company of courtesans. A young lady called Olympia\(^{21}\) “shows

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 168-69.

\(^{20}\) See the examples of Pythagorean tetractyses in the annexe.

\(^{21}\) Olympia was a common nickname for prostitutes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the 1865 essay Preliminaries to a Treatment of ‘Olympia’ by Timothy J. Clark attests by analyzing the
interest” in Alvare. Jealously grows quickly inside the young lady’s heart. Olympia threatens Alvare in a highly menacing way, “Je te démasquerais!” (175), in the sense of ‘je te mettrai à jour,’ ‘je dévoilerai tes secrets!’ (I will unmask you; I will expose your deepest secrets). Alvare intercepts a letter Olympia sent “au pretendu Biondetto” (to the attention of the so-called Biondetto) in which she harshly threatens her rival. While packing for a trip to the house of a friend near the Brenta River, in the south of the Venetian Lagoon, Alvare hears a barely audible song (chapter eight). It is coming from a closet across from the bedroom’s door. Alvare risks a look through the keyhole. Biondetta is playing a harpsichord, following a music score, which we also have an illustration of in both editions of Le diable amoureux. She is singing a melancholic and heartfelt barcarola, a folk song sung by Venetian gondoliers, rhythmically evoking the slow movement of the famous Venetian rowing boats. Poor Biondetta is complaining about her tough situation with Olympia and her sincere love for Alvare. It is really at this very moment that one could say Alvare falls in love with Biondetta. Alvare wants to leave Venice right away and get to the house by the Brenta River. However, to do so, he needs to wait until night. Alvare goes out and strolls down the alleys of Venice in the meantime. Off an alleyway, Alvare thinks he sees Bernadillo entering a café. Later on that night and as Alvare and Biondetta are close to getting on their gondola, “a mask stabbed Biondetta”:

motivation and critical implications of Edouard Manet’s depiction of a nude prostitute in the painting “Olympia.”

22 See illustration II in the annexe.
23 See illustration III in the annexe.
24 See the verses of that barcarola (barque in French; barca in Italian) I added to the page.
À peine ai-je les deux pieds dans le bâtiment, que des cris me forcent à me retourner. Un masque poignardait Biondetta: “Tu l'emportes sur moi! meurs, meurs, odieuse rivale!”

Not surprisingly, Olympia is behind the attack. Alvare thinks Bernadillo accompanied her. At any rate, they were wearing masks. Biondetta is mortally wounded, and Alvare is shattered. Weakened and exhausted by the recent traumatic events, Alvare falls asleep again and starts dreaming:

Fatigué enfin par mes emportements, je tombai dans un abattement qui fut suivi du sommeil. Je crus voir ma mère en rêve, je lui racontais mon aventure, et pour la lui rendre plus sensible, je la conduisais vers les mines de Portici. “N'allons pas là, mon fils, me disait-elle, vous êtes dans un danger évident.” Comme nous passions dans un défilé étroit où je m'engageais avec sécurité, une main tout à coup me pousse dans un précipice ; je la reconnais, c'est celle de Biondetta. Je tombais, une autre main me retire, et je me trouve entre les bras de ma mère. Je me réveille, encore haletant de frayeur. Tendre mère! m'écriai-je, vous ne m'abandonnez pas, même en rêve.

We should note here the importance of doña Mencia, mother of Alvare, who is definitely present everywhere in Alvare’s dreams and thoughts; whereas don Bernardo Maravillas, his father, seems to be completely absent, almost as if the latter was deprived of existence in Alvare’s psyche. At any rate, through a sudden and unexpected outbreak of supernatural healing after twenty-one days of recovery (193), Biondetta is back on her feet. After a month, Alvare and Biondetta are living the perfect idyll. Everyone on the enchanted Brenta River’s banks is either jealous or subjugated by the magnificent couple. Alvare’s self-pride is equivalently increasing as his love for Biondetta blooms: “mon orgeuil égalait mon amour.”

One day, Alvare and Biondetta are on a garden’s terrace. Under the honeysuckle, a symbol of eternal love, Alvare and Biondetta are flirting. While they kiss for the very first time, Alvare’s dog, a young Great Dane, echoing Biondetta’s second metamorphosis (the spaniel), bites Alvare’s clothes and pulls a little, as if the dog wanted to warn Alvare of the dangers he is exposing himself to. The following day, Alvare is full of regrets; before doing anything compromising with a lady, he must honor his obligations to his mother, doña Mencia, and to his house, the Maravillas. On the garden’s terrace, Alvare flinches. Alvare has to return to Venice to take care of legal

---

25 Ibid., 186.
26 Ibid., 190.
27 Ibid., 204.
28 Cf. the eponymous Lais of Marie de France (Le Chèvrefeuille) or the symbolic role played by the honeysuckle at the end of Tristan et Iseut in French medieval literature.
29 See illustration IV in the annexe.
business having to do with Olympia’s assassination attempt. In the beginning of chapter twelve, Alvare is on his way back to Venice. However, a fierce thunderstorm breaks out, and Alvare finds provisional shelter in a Franciscan convent. There, he witnesses a highly symbolical vision that involves not only a tetrad but also his mother:

Deux génies descendaient dans un tombeau de marbre noir une figure de femme, deux autres génies fondaient en larmes auprès de la tombe. […] J'attache mes yeux sur la tête de la principale figure. Que deviens-je ? Je crois voir le portrait de ma mère. Une douleur vive et tendre, un saint respect, me saisissent. “Ô ma mère ! est-ce pour m'avertir que mon peu de tendresse et le désordre de ma vie vous conduiront au tombeau, que ce froid simulacre emprunte ici votre ressemblance chérie ? Ô la plus digne des femmes ! tout égaré qu'il est, votre Alvare vous a conservé tous vos droits sur son cœur […] Hélas ! je suis dévoré de la passion la plus tyrannique: il m'est impossible de m'en rendre maître désormais. Vous venez de parler à mes yeux ; parlez, ah ! parlez à mon cœur et si je dois la bannir, enseignez-moi comment je pourrai faire sans qu'il m'en coûte la vie.”

The vivid maternal hallucination gives Alvare one piece of prophetic advice: “Tu mettras un devoir à remplir et un espace considerable entre ta passion et toi; les évènements t'éclaireront.” Alvare decides then to hit the road to Turin in order to reach Extremadura and Spain through France, so he can have a real conversation with doña Mencia about his mixed feelings for Biondetta. He also leaves a note for his love informing her of his intentions. However, as soon as Alvare catches a glimpse of Turin’s bell towers, Biondetta shrieks desperately, “Alvare ! vous m’avez abandonnée.” She has caught up with him. Biondetta informs Alvare that Bernadillo “laid siege” to Alvare’s domain of Brenta with ghosts (des fantômes) of his creation (223). There is also a rumor circulating in Venice: an imp (un lutin) would have abducted a captain of the King of Naples’ Night Watch, and accordingly, this imp was no other than Biondetta. After having crossed the Alps through the Col de Tende, Biondetta and Alvare arrive in Lyon (chapter fourteen). The weather is terrible; there are thunderstorms as if the elements themselves wanted to slow down the duo. On their way to Extremadura, Alvare encounters Berth, an honest farmer, who informs Alvare that his mother is seriously sick: “elle se meurt,” and his brother, don Juan, is very upset since he received outraged letters from Naples and Venice about Alvare’s deplorable behavior.

30 Ibid., 215-17.
31 Ibid., 217-18 (my translation).
32 Ibid., 236.
In the fifteenth chapter of the 1871 edition of *Le diable amoureux*, we find an important discrepancy with the first edition. The author apparently considered it relevant to add an additional episode of four chapters, which are approximately 37 pages in the 185-page-long novel.

In the first edition of the book, Alvare simply wards off the devil with a sort of conjuration:

*Esprit malin, [...] si tu n'es ici que pour m'écarter de mon devoir et m'entraîner dans le précipice d'où je t'ai témérairement tiré, rentres-y pour toujours.*

Then the story resumes normally with the end, which is identical in both editions. In the late edition’s alternative episode that replaces Alvare’s conjuration of the devil, Alvare and Biondetta stop by a farm on their way to Extremadura because a wheel on their carriage broke. A wedding is taking place there; the farm is filled with artists, impromptu poets, and two Egyptian fortunetellers: Zoradille and Lélagise (251). By pretending to be Alvare’s legitimate wife, Biondetta gets to sleep in the same bedroom.

Biondetta then takes the opportunity to reveal herself as she is in this highly symbolic moment:

*Non, non, répliqua-t-elle vivement, Biondetta ne doit pas te suffire: ce n'est pas là mon nom : tu me l'avais donné : il me flattait ; je le portais avec plaisir : mais il faut que tu saches qui je suis... Je suis le Diable, mon cher Alvare, je suis le Diable... [...] dis-moi, [...] s'il t'est possible, mais aussi tendrement que je l'éprouve pour toi : Mon cher Bélhézébuth, je t'adore... [...] Nos affaires sont arrangées, me dit-il, sans altérer sensiblement ce ton de voix auquel il m'avait habitué. Tu es venu me chercher : je t'ai suivi, servi, favorisé ; enfin, j'ai fait ce que tu as voulu. Je désirais ta possession, et il fallait, pour que j'y parvinsse, que tu me fisses un libre abandon de toi-même. Sans doute, je dois à quelques artifices la première complaisance ; quant à la seconde, je m'étais nommé : tu savais à qui tu te livrais, et ne saurais te prévaloir de ton ignorance. Désormais notre lien, Alvare, est indissoluble, mais pour cimenter notre société, il est important de nous mieux connaître. Comme je te sais déjà presque par cœur, pour rendre nos avantages réciproques, je dois me montrer à toi tel que je suis. On ne me donne pas le temps de réfléchir sur cette harangue singulière : un coup de sifflet très aigu part à côté de moi. À l'instant l'obscurité qui m'environne se dissipe: la corniche qui surmonte le lambris de la chambre s'est toute chargée de gros limaçons: leurs cornes, qu'ils font mouvoir vivement et en manière de bascule, sont devenues des jets de lumière phosphorique, dont l'éclat et l'effet redoublent par l'agitation et l'allongement. Presque ébloui par cette illumination subite, je jette les yeux à côté de moi ; au lieu d'une figure ravissante, que vois-je ? Ô ciel ! c'est l'effroyable tête de chameau. Elle articule d'une voix de tonnerre ce ténébreux *Che vuoi* qui m'avait tant épouvanté dans la grotte, part d'un éclat de rire humain plus effrayant encore, tire une langue démesurée...* 

---

33 Ibid., 291.
34 Ibid., 267-72 (my translation).
The following day, Marcos, the owner of the farm, wakens Alvare up. Marcos informs Alvare that Biondetta left earlier that day. Alvare would have slept fourteen hours in a row; Biondetta has disappeared, and a glimmer of hope is lit in Alvare’s heart when he thinks to himself, maybe the nightmarish vision and that entire odd endeavor with the devil was just a dream (274).

At this point (chapter nineteen), the story resumes its normal course regardless of whether Alvare casts out the evil spirit (original edition) or gets outwitted by the latter (late edition). In both cases, Alvare finally arrives at the courtyard of the castle of Extremadura where his mother, doña Mencia, is waiting for him. Sobbing like a child, Alvare gives his mother a detailed account of his strange endeavors with Biondetta from the invocation in the Portici ruins to his first kiss with her on the terrace of the Brenta River house. Alvare actually dreamed the whole thing: don Pimientos is dead, Berth is sick and has been confined to bed for months, and finally, doña Mencia did not give her son 200 sequins nor she was on the brink of death. Alvare consequently acknowledges the magnitude of the devil’s deception. Doña Mencia calls a physician from Salamanca to make absolutely sure that Alvare is off the hook. Don Quebracuernos—the physician of Salamanca—embodies a clerical and a medical function. He explains to Alvare how the devil almost seduced him. Then the physician lends a sympathetic ear to Alvare who tells his story for the second time to his mother and the physician who subsequently interprets the meaning of Alvare’s secondary elaboration of the dream; don Quebracuernos could be regarded as the prototype of the analyst. Don Quebracuernos is erudite, and according to doña Mencia, he “knows the terms and will defines these things better.” He compares Alvare’s dream to De Betoverde Weereld (The World Bewitched, 1695) by Balthasar Bekker, a Dutch minister, fellow of the Royal Society of London, and author of philosophical and theological works, and Jean Bodin’s De la démonomanie des sorciers of 1580. According to Quebracuernos, although the demon seduced

35 See illustration I in the annexe.
36 See illustration IV in the annexe.
37 Ibid., 281 (my translation).
38 This tends to corroborate the idea that Cazotte had a thorough knowledge of the ideas current in early modern Europe. For instance, it is very likely that Cazotte also read the work of the Abbé N. de Montfaucon de Villars (1635-1673). In 1670, the latter developed in Le Comte de Gabalis a theory on the classical elements’ entities, i.e., the gnome, the salamander, the undine, and the sylph. Cf. Discourses II entitled “Evolution of the Divine Principle in Man: The People of the Elements.” In the beginning of the text, there was an engraving of a painting by Rembrandt (The
Alvare, the latter narrowly escaped the devil’s attempt at corruption. To prevent future accidents, the physician recommends Alvare be more careful and rely on the discretion and judgment of his mother regarding women. She is the only one who can advise Alvare correctly. This is the moral of the tale.

Polish Rider), yet one saw that Cazotte refers to Rembrandt’s clair-obscur in L’Avis de l’Auteur. L’abbé de Villars also wrote in 1698 Le Sylphe amoureux, yet the devil (Beelzebub-Biondetta) in Cazotte’s Le diable amoureux pretends to be a sylph (198). According to Nerval, and exactly in the same way as Cazotte was visited by an upset freemason after the publication of his fantastic novel for Cazotte supposedly revealed occult secrets in his book, l’abbé de Villars was also accused, after the publication of Le comte de Gabalis, of revealing the initiatic secrets of the Rosicrucians. Another great work Cazotte could have been using while writing his Diable amoureux might be Cervantes’s Don Quixote (1605). This book is considered the first European novel. To some extent, it also involves a plot in which the main character is physically transported as he travels and morally transformed through his character-building endeavors. Don Quixote and Le diable amoureux could be seen, to that extent, as initiatic novels at the center of which an anachronic knight-errant stands (note: Alvare always has his sword and his three-cornered hat cf. the illustrations in the annexe.) Some members of my panel mentioned during the defense a possible intertextuality having to do with the characters’ names in both novels. Cf. don Alvare Maravillas and don Álvaro de Tarfe in Don Quixote.
For this critical analysis, we will use essentially Lacan’s famous talk “Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l’inconscient freudien,” which comes from a symposium held in Royaumont in 1960. Lacan’s remark was first published in Écrits for the Éditions du Seuil in 1966. This text became a classic pertaining to the foundation of the concept of jouissance along with Lacan’s often discussed graph of desire. Although in a quite vague fashion that seems to be his ‘trademark,’ Lacan referred in his explanations to Beelzebub’s Che vuoi? in the Portici ruins (Que veux-tu? What do you want?). According to Lacan, this question ultimately asks that of the subject’s desires, and the famously conceptualized difference between what the subject wants and what he desires. To help us understand Lacan’s explanations, which are notoriously obscure, as if Lacan himself wanted to make the reading intentionally demanding, we will also use an article from L’Âne, a scholarly magazine dedicated to Freudo-Lacanian psychoanalysis. I will also refer to Lacan’s Séminaire V: Les formations de l’inconscient as well as basics regarding the foundational works of Freud (The Interpretation of Dreams, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, The Ego and the Id, etc.), which I gathered from various seminars and lectures. The notions that interest us the most here are condensation and displacement. Generally speaking, I follow the second topography of the mind, that is, the 1920s Freudian structural theory of the mind, which implements the Pcpt-Cs. (perception-consciousness), Pre-Cs. (pre-conscious), and Ucs. (unconscious) systems, along with the Ego, Super-Ego, and Id agencies by putting them into evidence in a quite speculative fashion with biological metaphors and animal behaviors (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, 1920), as opposed to the 1900s early seduction hypothesis based on case studies, along with the acceptance of the dream as the fulfillment of a repressed wish that goes back to childhood, notably in Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria (1901) and The Interpretation of Dreams (1899), which I partially reject as Freud did in his 1920s theoretical revision with the new drive theory that gives full scope to develop the notions of (a) self-preservative and sexual instincts, Eros, sexual/life instincts, and (b) ego instincts, Thanatos, ego/death instincts.

39 See the graphs in the annexe.
40 See illustration I in the annexe, and, in particular, the third graph of “Subversion du sujet” in Écrits.
Le diable amoureux seems to involve a full narrative supposedly experienced in a single dream, which carries out a sort of complex love triangle based on the number four and whose chief characters are (a) Alvare, (b) doña Mencia (associated with Olympia, Fiorentina, Berth, and don Miguel Pimientos), and (c) don Bernardo Maravillas (associated with Soberano, Bernadillo, Bentinelli, and the unnamed fourth man of the Portici ruins). Of course, Biondetta (the camel, the spaniel, the cantatrice, and the page) stands in the very center of this love triangle. We saw earlier that the tremendously symbolic moments of the book seem to be related to the Pythagorean tetractys (Greek: τετρακτύς), or tetrad, that is, a triangular figure consisting of ten points arranged in four rows. Moments such as (a) the invocation in the Portici ruins with Soberano, Bernadillo, and the “Other” about whom one knows nothing, (b) the first dream with the four columns of the bed, (c) the dinner with the three mirrors, (d) the four metamorphoses taken up by the devil, and (e) the vision in the Franciscan convent prove that Cazotte scrupulously followed some sort of Kabbalist modus operandi while writing his Magnum Opus. Max Milner and Georges Décote showed how Cazotte’s novel as well as the historical moment in which he wrote it, that is, in those troubled times of terror and revolution, were steeped in the mystical tradition of the Illuminati. On his way to Extremadura, in the Franciscan convent, we saw how Alvare witnesses a highly symbolical vision involving not only a tetrad but also his mother:

Deux génies descendaient dans un tombeau de marbre noir une figure de femme, deux autres génies fondaient en larmes auprès de la tombe. [...] Ô la plus digne des femmes ! tout égaré qu’il est, votre Alvare vous a conservé tous vos droits sur son cœur [...] Hélas ! je suis dévoré de la passion la plus tyrannique: il m'est impossible de m'en rendre maître désormais. [...]42

In the Épilogue, Cazotte is not referring to Rembrandt’s clair-obscur as was the case in L’Avis de l’Auteur; rather, he cites Torquato Tasso’s La Gerusalemme Leberata enigmatically, and explains that, in his book, the allegory is twofold:

[Le diable amoureux] fut inspiré par la lecture d’un auteur infiniment respectable, dans lequel il est parlé des ruses que peut employer le Démon quant il veut plaire et séduire. On les a rassemblées autant qu’on a pu le faire, dans une allégorie où les principes sont aux prises avec les passions : l’âme est le champ de bataille ; la curiosité engage l’action, l’allégorie est double, et les lecteurs s’en apercevront aisément.43

42 Cazotte, Ibid. (1871) 215-17.
43 Ibid., 288-89.
As Grosrichard rightly pointed out, the devil in *Le diable amoureux* could be the embodiment of the Reason,⁴⁴ that is, of the emerging Modern Science Cazotte was warning his colleagues about in his 1788 prediction reported by La Harpe, and quoted by Nerval in the *Preface* of the late edition of *Le diable amoureux*. During the banquet with prestigious members of the *Académie Française*, Cazotte said, "[U]nder the Reign of Reason, she [elle, la raison] shall have her [ses] temples and worshippers."⁴⁵ The idea according to which the devil in *Le diable amoureux* represents an implacable and blind reason is perfectly exemplified by the moment in which Biondetta teaches Alvare how to gamble and play cards properly (168). Indeed, her explanations are chiefly determinist and materialistic: one recalls how Biondetta distinguishes between games of chance (jeux de hasard) and games depending on luck (jeux de chance). There is no chance in this world, says the devil; everything is just an outcome of necessary combinations that are intelligible through the science of numbers. Still, according to Alain Grosrichard, doña Mencia rather symbolizes the Church, the good old moral values, and even a sort of monarchic authority (she is a matriarch, a female authority figure). Nonetheless, Alvare becomes a “déviteur insolvable” (insolvent debtor), Grosrichard explains in the fourth section of his article; by asking more and more of a creature he summoned out of his mind using forbidden magic, Alvare became increasingly dependent on a shimmering and attractive chimera. Alvare wants the devil as a spaniel, as a banquet and its sumptuous delicacies (thus, he literally feeds upon the devil), then as a cantatrice, and, finally, as Biondetta, that is, as a lover. However, torn by regrets and remorse, Alvare cannot stop thinking about the true primordial object of desire, that is, the Lacanian symbolic mother (M): he cannot help it! Doña Mencia never leaves Alvare, not even in his dreams: "Tendre mère ! m'écriai-je, vous ne m'abandonnez pas, même en rêve."⁴⁶ Yet Alvare learns through another dream that he needs to remain loyal to his mother: “Ô la plus digne des femmes ! tout égaré qu'il est, votre Alvare vous a conservé tous vos droits sur son cœur [...] Hélas ! je suis dévoré de la passion la plus tyrannique: il m'est impossible de m'en rendre maître désormais.”⁴⁷ That is why Alvare undertakes his journey from Naples to Venice, and then to his native Extremadura; he needs to be advised by his mother and gain her assent regarding Biondetta. However, regardless of whether Alvare gets ‘horrified’ by

---

⁴⁴ Grosrichard, Ibid., 17.
⁴⁶ Ibid., 190.
⁴⁷ Ibid., 216.
the nightmarish vision in the farm of the 1871 edition, or, rather, he succeeds in casting out the devil through a conjuration (original edition), Alvare gets to his place in a highly troubled emotional state: he is shattered and bursts into tears. Grosrichard describes Beelzebub/Biondetta as Alvare’s object of desire (object petit a), which is simultaneously Alvare’s cause of desire through, as the reader may have noticed, the imbalance she introduces in Alvare’s life, which until then was ‘normal.’ Yet Alvare had been warned by Soberano, who told him, “Vous nous donnez un beau regal, ami; il vous coûtera cher,”48 and by Bernadillo, who said, “Vous êtes jeune; à votre âge on desire trop pour se laisser le temps de réfléchir, et on précipite ses jouissances.”49 From this, it becomes clear that Alvare’s true object of desire is expertise, that is, some sort of personal knowledge. However, Alvare, as if exalted by his newly acquired privileges, becomes indebted to the hilt vis-à-vis his magnificent Biondetta, who, Alvare believes, can decorate him with knowledge: “Je ne pouvais douter qu’elle ne possédât les connaissances les plus rares, et je supposais avec raison que son but était de m’en orner.”50 This is from the scene on the garden terrace of the Brenta River house.51 The scene of the 1871 edition with the farm, the wedding, and the horrific revelation of the devil, was not, to that extent, necessary, albeit, that scene may be seen as a twist in the drama—a sort of nice deus ex machina—that renders the novel a little more captivating and re-emphasizes the importance of the Che vuoi? since it is, indeed, repeated for the second time on that specific occasion. This whole moral that opposes a mighty and cold-hearted reason embodied in a seductive and deceitful devil (a deus deceptor; a sort of Cartesian malin génie who misleads the philosopher looking for certainty) with a rather maternal and protecting space (Alvare’s house and the Franciscan convent) could be the upside of the twofold allegory the book is based on. On the downside, one may become, as Lacan and Freud before him, the devil’s advocate. Far from any political and mundane concerns whatsoever, on the flip side of the coin, Alvare’s oneiric journey and the various characters he encounters could be seen as the complex embodiment of his psychic agency.

If one imagines a specific love triangle based on a Freudian Ædipus complex, Alvare is on

48 Ibid., 134.
49 Ibid., 137 (emphasis mine).
50 Ibid., 205.
51 See illustration IV in the annexe.
the top whereas don Bernardo Maravillas and doña Mencia are on the bottom left and right. Finally, Biondetta/o is in the middle, which explains why the devil’s gender is undetermined at the beginning. If the reader doubts that it is relevant to project a psychoanalytical reading on a literary source that was written before the birth of psychoanalysis, the following arguments tend to demonstrate the universal meaning of Alvare’s endeavor along with some objective mechanisms of the mind, which seem to have been at stake when Cazotte wrote his Diable amoureux. At the beginning, Alvare seems to be ruled by a sort of primary narcissism. It is stressed numerous times in the novel that Alvare has a great sense of self-esteem and pride tainted with arrogance and temerity. As I said earlier, Alvare cannot stand to be accused of pusillanimity or cowardice. His burning desire to tweak the devil’s ears (113), his repressed desire for absolute jouissance and unquestioned mastery upon the other, his belief that the devil can “ornate” him with a knowledge that is normally inaccessible for the others: all of these pathologic features could be described as a type of madness, and more precisely, as megalomania, that is, a psychopathological condition characterized by delusional fantasies of wealth, power, or omnipotence, an obsession with grandiose or extravagant things. Freud explained that the dream’s narrative story must be broken down into verbal sub-unities, that is, into a network of ramified significations. These latter unities would constitute the pieces of a rebus (or picture puzzle) to be organized by the analyst to manifest the real content of the dream and to let appear what has been repressed. In the following pages, I use this theoretical postulate to demonstrate that Le diable amoureux implements a certain type of dream that reveals to us the main mechanisms implemented by the mind, along with the complex tensions existing among the psychic and symbolic entities residing in our psyche, and determining us as a very unique subjectivity. Three clear and concrete examples from Le diable amoureux corroborate this idea.

First, it seems to me that something is going on with some of the characters’ names. The name of Alvare’s father is mentioned only one time in the novel, whereas we saw how doña Mencia was omnipresent in Alvare’s unconscious (one recalls that Alvare is indeed dreaming throughout). In the Portici ruins, Alvare is accompanied by Soberano and two others. The first, named Bernadillo, was probably involved in the murder attempt on Biondetta (see chapter eight). I

---

52 See the examples of Pythagorean tetractyses in the annexe.
believe Olympia quite obviously symbolizes jealousy (linked with Eros), whereas Bernadillo symbolizes violence, cruelty, and the aggressiveness of the psyche (linked with Thanatos). More interestingly, the name ‘Bernadillo’ could be objectively seen as the verbal condensation of Alvare’s father’s, that is, Bernardo Maravillas. By contracting the latter’s first and last name, one obtains ‘Bernardillas.’ From Bernardillas to Bernadillo, there is only a short step hastily taken. It is obvious that the similarity ought to mean something. I said earlier that Alvare’s father seemed to be deprived of existence in Alvare’s psyche, but actually he is in fact everywhere through that suspicious absence. Lacan argued in his seminar The Psychoses that the notion of “Nom-du-père” (object grand A) may be understood as ‘the name-of-the-father and as ‘the no-of-the-father’ to emphasize the legislative and prohibitive function, respectively, of the symbolic father, which is therefore based on negativity and negation. Both functions are encapsulated in the phoneme combination: /nom/ that could signify ‘nom’ (name) or ‘non’ (no). Bernadillo, as a worthy oneiric condensation of Alvare’s father, chiefly represents castration. First, Bernadillo reproves Alvare’s behavior: “Vous êtes jeune; à votre âge on desire trop pour se laisser le temps de réfléchir, et on précipite ses jouissances.”54 Second, he tried to kill Biondetta with the help of Olympia. Finally, he “laid siege” to Alvare’s domain of Brenta with ghosts of his creations (223). In his dream, Alvare is fighting his father and protecting his illegitimate and evanescent love against his disapproving dad. If he had had the occasion to kill Bernadillo, Alvare probably would have done it, and the dream’s narrative would have become a perfect and fulfilled Œdipus complex. Yet, strictly speaking, Alvare’s father is absent in the novel: would Alvare have already killed his dad by not portraying him in his dream? Bernardo (the father figure), Bernadillo (the necromancer), Soberano (the Flemish Kabbalist), and even Biondetto: all rhyme formally with the nightmarish chameau (camel) of the Portici ruins. The characters represent the object grand A, what Lacan calls the lieu du trésor du signifiant (the locus of the signifier’s treasure; or the ‘treasure chest of signifiers’).55 All embody, in one way or another, condensed and displaced features of the symbolic father, who is the guarantor of a certain type of ἐπιστήμη (epistémé, “knowledge”; expertise that I will call later ‘Wissenschaft’ in reference to Hegel). We recall how Biondetta explains to Alvare how to

54 Ibid., 137 (emphasis mine).
understand the number sequencing that presides over everything from the celestial spheres’ movement to random number combination outcomes, and that, by an apparently simple mathematical combination (170). Le Chameau/Biondetto is, so to speak, the guarantor of an arithmosophic knowledge, which has to do with Kabbalah and Martinism through their connected keen interest in the symbolic science of numbers. As Lacan explains in “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious,” the Other (A) is the locus of the λόγος (Greek: Logos, the Verb), the Truth, and therefore, of the “Art.” Then again, it is the Other through the Che vuoi? that leads the path to the question of subjectivity and its desires. The Other understood in Lacanian terminology as the big other (object grand A) is the Otherness par excellence whose desire becomes the subject’s desire:

 [...] la question de l’Autre qui revient au sujet de la place où il en attend un oracle, sous la libellé d’un Che vuoi? que veux-tu? est celle qui conduit le mieux au chemin de son propre désir, — s’il se met, grâce au savoir-faire d’un partenaire du nom de psychanalyste, à la reprendre, fût-ce sans bien le savoir, dans le sens d’un : Que me veut-il?

 [...] the Other’s questions—that comes back to the subject from the place from which he expects an oracular reply—is that which takes some such form as ‘Che vuoi?’ ‘What do you want?’ is the question that best leads the subject to the path of his own desire, assuming that, thanks to the know-how of a partner known as the psychoanalyst, he takes up the question, even without knowing it, in the following form: ‘What does he want from me?’

In his graphs, Lacan represented this question that, so to speak, gets back at the subject, as an interrogation mark at the center of which the funest Che vuoi? stands. This is a genuine Hegelian dialectical reversal worthy of the most crucial moments of the Phänomenologie des Geistes regarding the role of negativity as the motor by which the dialectic functions. In the Hegelian system, the German notion ‘Aufhebung’ has the apparently contradictory implications of preserving and changing, and eventually advancing (the German verb aufheben means ‘to cancel,’ ‘to keep,’ and ‘to pick up’). In sublation, the third movement of the dialectic, a term or concept is preserved and changed through its dialectical interplay with another term or concept. This new term that comes into play in the story’s equation is, of course, no other than Biondetta. This oneiric entity

---


manifests itself in the very peculiar type of dream I establish as Bildungsträume. The term or ‘concept,’ that is changed and preserved is the main character of such a dream. He undergoes a metamorphosis through the dream of formation, whose definition is essentially characterized by (a) physical transportation; (b) psychological transformation involving an Aufhebung, or, ‘overcoming’; (c) self-knowledge/self-awareness the dreamer may acquire through the dream; and (d) allegories associated with masks, cross-dressing, and metamorphosis. The Bildungsträume is a life-changing and character-building experience. Let us recall how Alvaré, alone in the dark of the Portici ruins, called the devil’s name three times under the tutelage of the Flemish Kabbalist named Soberano and the watchful eye of tawny owls—Greek: Γλαῦκος (Glaukos); ‘glaring eyes,’ often referred to as the owl of Athena or owl of Minerva—symbol of absolute knowledge as Hegel emphasized in a famously crucial quote at the end of the preface to Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts (Elements of the Philosophy of Right, 1820):

A further word on the subject of issuing instructions on how the world ought to be: philosophy, at any rate, always comes too late to perform this function. As the thought of the world, it appears only at a time when actuality has gone through its formative process and attained its completed state. This lesson of the concept is necessarily also apparent from history, namely that it is only when actuality has reached maturity that the ideal appears opposite the real and reconstructs the real world, which it has grasped in its substance, in the shape of an intellectual realm. When philosophy paints its grey in grey [Cf. Rembrandt’s clair-obscur], a shape of life has grown old, and it cannot be rejuvenated, but only recognized, by the grey in grey of philosophy; the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk [i.e., at night when it is time to sleep].

The second example from Le diable amoureux that seems to corroborate the idea according to which the dream’s narrative must be broken down into verbal sub-unities to be organized by the analyst to manifest the real content of the dream lies in the description of the devil’s first apparition: “une tête de chameau horrible, autant par sa grosseur que par sa forme, se présente à la fenêtre; surtout elle avait des oreilles démesurées.” The devil heard his name, and appeared as a baleful camel with disproportionate ears, to hear what the subjectivity who had summoned him wanted. Il ouit (he heard) Alvaré and asked him back, “What do you want” (Che vuoi?). Alvaré

---

59 Ibid., 119 (emphasis mine).
basically answered, ‘Je veux jouir de toi’; however, that is not what Alvare gets. By asking this existential question that is, ultimately, that of subjectivity, the devil compels Alvare to reflect and finally find out what he truly desires. The master becomes the slave and vice versa. To get rid of the devil, Alvare simply needed an act of willpower. Instead, he let himself go to self-abnegation and surrender: he became passive.

The third example has to do with doña Mencia. In Venice, we saw that don Miguel Pimientos left an envelope from doña Mencia containing 200 sequins for Alvare, and on his way to Extremadura, we saw how Alvare encounters Berth, an honest farmer, who informs Alvare that his mother is seriously ill: “elle se meurt.” Yet we learn at the end that don Pimientos is dead, Berth is sick and has been confined to bed for months, and doña Mencia did not give her son 200 sequins nor she was on the brink of death. Doña Mencia has been displaced on several levels in Alvare’s dream. First, we can find her, or rather, some of her maternal and seductive features condensed in the person of Biondetta, Fiorentina, and Olympia, which obviously rhyme formally with doña Mencia. Second, don Pimientos along with Berth’s medical condition have been displaced on doña Mencia, since, in the dream, Alvare is deceived into thinking that she is on the brink of death.

Now that we have reviewed those three examples of implementation of mind mechanisms in Alvare’s Bildungsträume, let us go back to the deus ex machina of the story, that is, the moment in which Biondetta reveals her true nature. The devil explains:

Tu es venu me chercher : je t’ai suivi, servi, favorisé ; enfin, j’ai fait ce que tu as voulu. Je désirais ta possession, et il fallait, pour que j’y parvinsse, que tu me fisses un libre abandon de toi-même. Sans doute, je dois à quelques artifices la première complaisance ; quant à la seconde, je m’étais nommé : tu savais à qui tu te livrais, et ne saurais te prévaloir de ton ignorance [...]

Indeed, at the moment of the wedding and the second revelation of Biondetta’s true face, which was not part of the novel in the first edition, Alvare knows or, at least, he believes that Biondetta is

---

60 Jouir has several connotations in French: jouir in the sense of ‘rejoicing in,’ but also, in a rather sexual sense, jouir in the sense of ‘having an orgasm,’ ‘to climax.’ I’m making a pun in French with the similarity between ‘j’ouï’ and ‘je jouis’ to stress the sexual drive, which compels Alvare to summon the devil in order to make him responsible for all his desires and whims by “tweaking his ears.”

61 Ibid., 236.

62 Ibid., 272.
a Sylph, that is, an elemental of air. The come into play and the revelation of Biondetta’s true face brings about Alvare’s awakening: “Ais-je dormi? Serais-je assez heureux pour que tout ceci n’ait été qu’un songe?” Immediately afterwards, Alvare goes back to Salamanca to see his mother, doña Mencia. Before entering the courtyard of the castle, Alvare reflects:

Je m’ensevelirai dans un cloître... Eh! qui m’y délivrera des chimères engendrées dans mon cerveau? Prenons l’état ecclésiastique. Sexe charmant, il faut que je renonce à vous, une larve infernale s’est revêtue de toutes les graces dont j’étais idolâtre; ce que je verrais en vous de plus touchant me rappellerait...

The questions Alvare asks himself regarding who will deliver him from the chimeras engendered by his mind are quickly answered by doña Mencia. The physician of Salamanca will embody this remedial function. Nonetheless, Alvare has first to overcome self-pride and shame to provide a detailed and heartfelt account of his weird endeavor with Beelzebub/Biondetta. He consequently acknowledges the magnitude of the devil’s deception: his mother was not on the brink of death, and the farm at which the wedding and the *deus ex machina* took place is no more than a figment of his imagination. The same goes for many characters—real or imaginary—Alvare thought he had encountered throughout his journey. Of course, the main trickery remains the multiple metamorphoses undergone by Beelzebub, and chiefly the one Alvare fell in love with. According to Quebracuernos, although the demon seduced Alvare, the latter narrowly escaped the devil’s attempt at corruption. Nonetheless, what interests us the most lies in the beginning of the interpretation. It is indeed suggested that Alvare provided the disguises the demon needed:

Certainement, seigneur Alvare, vous venez d’échapper au plus grand pétil auquel un homme puisse être exposé par sa faute. Vous avez provoqué l’esprit malin, et lui avez fourni, par une suite d’imprudence tous les déguisements dont il avait besoin pour parvenir à vous tromper et à vous perdre.

In other words, not only did Alvare summon the demon, but he is also the one who allowed the devil to parody and take up different forms. In Freudian terminology, Alvare provided the psychic material along with the unconscious processes the devil needed to remain masked and deceptive. One learns from theology that the demon is always a transvestite: he changes his appearance to deceive his prey. Beelzebub/Biondetta took different forms to turn Alvare’s pretentions upside

---

63 Ibid., 274.
64 Ibid., 276-77 (emphasis mine).
65 Ibid., 282-83.
down. The master became the slave and vice versa.\textsuperscript{66} Beelzebub/Biondetta with his/her multiple disguises and transformations is a general symbol of our unconscious mind processes, which are chiefly condensation (its signification possesses a ‘surplus value’ that goes beyond its initial signifiers) and displacement (its meaning is always differed and deferred through a genuine intra-character ‘jeux de renvois’). Biondetta is the condensation of the symbolic mother and father, whereas Bernadillo, to give another obvious example of this peculiar mechanism, is an objective condensation of Alvare’s father’s name. On the other hand, we also saw how don Pimientos and Berth’s medical condition were displaced on the person of Alvare’s mother. On a rather meta level and given that this archetypal figure is found in literature, one could say that this \textit{Bildungsträume} also portrays important literary devices such as metaphors, metonymies, and, more generally, what one could call ‘transfiguration.’ Finally, the devil, that is, that symbolic, psychic, and oneiric manifestation, asks the question of the subjectivity. He is a \textit{deus deceptor} and a \textit{deus ex machina}. In other words, the devil is the one who asks who Alvare is by asking him, ‘What do you truly desire?’ The devil is the motor of an \textit{Aufhebung}: an existential overcoming, which the main protagonist of the fairy story undergoes. Alvare wants to learn and become cleverer through ‘practical wisdom,’ a sort of Aristotelian φρόνησις (Latin: \textit{prudentia}), but to be taught, he needs to be deceived by his own mind. Aren’t we told, ‘C’est en faisant des erreurs que l’on apprend?’ Ultimately, Alvare comes out morally transformed through the \textit{Bildungsträume}, and one may assume, he will become, from now on, a wiser and more mature person.

\textsuperscript{66} Cf. “L’esclave, [...], cherche-t-il à effrayer son maître?” on page 121, and, “Hélas ! je suis dévoré de la passion la plus tyrannique: il m’est impossible de m’en rendre maître désormais” on page 216.
Chapter II
Literary Dreams

Part I
Gaspard de la Nuit and The Oneiric Prestige: Illusion, Fascination, and Enchantment

J’ai une petite confession à vous faire. C’est en feuilletant, pour la vingtième fois au moins, le fameux Gaspard de la Nuit d’Aloysius Bertrand (un livre connu de vous, de moi et de quelques-uns de nos amis, n’a-t-il pas tous les droits à être appelé fameux?) que l’idée m’est venue de tenter quelque chose d’analoge, et d’appliquer à la description de la vie moderne, ou plutôt d’une vie moderne et plus abstraite, le procédé qu’il avait appliqué à la peinture de la vie ancienne, si étrangement pittoresque.

Baudelaire, Lettre à Arsène Houssaye, August 1861

For this analysis, along with Bertrand’s biographic elements, I used in particular the work of Cargill Sprietsma: Aloysius Bertrand: Une vie romantique (1927, a bit outdated), and Les diableries de la nuit (2007) and Transfigurer le réel (2008) recently published in Dijon for the Gaston Bachelard Center. Since Louis Bertrand, known as Aloysius Bertrand, was not famous during his lifetime, not much is known about him. He was born in Ceva, Piedmont, Italy (then part of Napoleonic France), in 1807, and his family settled in Dijon in 1814. There he developed a keen interest in the Burgundian capital and its local authors. He studied at the Collège Royal de Dijon from 1818 to 1826, and became later a reporter who published poetry in literary magazines and had a keen interest in theater. His poems later become a great source of inspiration for the Symbolist and Romantic poets. His friendship with members of the Académie des Sciences, des Arts et des Belles-Lettres de Dijon and La Société d’Étude along with his contributions to various literary magazines (Le Globe, Le Provincial, Le Patriote de la Côte-d’Or, Les Annales romantiques, Le Cabinet de lecture, and Le Mercure de France) led to his recognition as a promising and talented young writer by Victor Hugo, Chateaubriand, and Sainte-Beuve. Indeed, in Le Provincial, Bertrand published the very first verses of Alfred de Musset, and promoted throughout the avant-garde, which in the nineteenth century was, of course, French Romanticism. Encouraged by good reviews and critical comments,

67 I’d like to thank professor Francis Claudon (Université Paris Est Créteil) under whose direction both books were published. Professor Claudon was kind enough to take the time to rummage through his basement and send me these books, which are currently out of print.
Bertrand moved to Paris shortly with little success. He met Hugo, Charles Nodier at the Library of the Arsenal, and the famous literary critic Sainte-Beuve. Nevertheless, Bertrand’s career never really ‘took off,’ because he was from an extremely modest background, and a sense of shame mixed with belittled self-esteem compelled Bertrand to leave those privileged milieus, and consequently to return to his austere life in Dijon to resume his simple writing activities with local newspapers. *Gaspard de la Nuit* was sold in 1836 but was not published until 1842 after Bertrand, who was in great financial and medical distress at that time, died rather pathetically of tuberculosis in Paris (1841). It took another twenty years for Charles Baudelaire to rediscover the book and make it pass into posterity by mentioning *Gaspard de la Nuit* in *Paris Spleen* (*Petits poèmes en prose*, 1869) as a great source of inspiration and, more importantly, as the first bona fide example of prose poetry in French literature. Indeed, Baudelaire's prose poems are based on Parisian contemporary life instead of the medieval and fantastic background, which Bertrand employed. *Gaspard de la Nuit* is now a classic of poetic and fantastic literature. Aloysius Bertrand has been alternately referred to as a ‘poète maudit’ by literary critics because he died before his works received due recognition and as a ‘poète cabalistique,’ a ‘surréaliste dans le passé’ by the twentieth-century avant-garde, and, in particular, by André Breton in his famous *Manifeste du Surréalisme* (1924) because of Bertrand’s uncanny, nostalgic, and yet fantastic depiction of the ‘old life,’ which Baudelaire was already rhapsodizing about in the dedication to *Paris Spleen*.

The following analysis is based on the prolegomenon by Bertrand “Gaspard de la Nuit,” on the preface, and on the third book of *Gaspard de la Nuit*, “La nuit et ses prestiges.” First, I will show how and why the preface tends to prove that the third book is the most important, or at least, the central book of Gaspard’s research.\(^6^9\) We will see that there are numerous references to the third book in the prolegomenon. Since it is also worth analyzing the intertextual references and common features, which exist between Cazotte’s *Le diable amoureux* and Bertrand’s *Gaspard de la Nuit*, we will draw some conclusions regarding the subjective experience established as *Bildungsträume*, and the related character-building experience linked to selfhood emergence and ego construction (chapter II, part II). It is very likely that *Gaspard de la Nuit* was substantially inspired

---

\(^6^9\) The French composer Maurice Ravel (March 7, 1875 – December 28, 1937) sort of put me on the right track. The latter wrote a suite called “Gaspard de la Nuit” based on the poems “Scarbo,” “Ondine,” and “Le Gibet,” which are found in the third book of *Gaspard de la Nuit*. 
by *Le diable amoureux*, and I will provide evidence. We saw how Cazotte’s work drew on mystic, Kabbalistic, and counter-revolutionary considerations, some of which go back far in the past. This simply means that Cazotte and Bertrand were worthy heirs of an anterior hermetic tradition, which has to do with symbolism, allegories, the oneiric realm, and thus the Fantastic. It remains to be demonstrated that this tradition, its symbols, and visual and allegorical imagery that are carried through a certain type of poetic language have a universal significance.

For this critical analysis, we use the 1848 edition of *Gaspard de la Nuit*, which was initially published in 1842. This new and expanded edition of the book numbers additional verses and prose poems gathered from literary magazines and compendia by M. Charles Asselineau who also wrote the preface for the book. This short introduction offers the reader some biographical information about the author, his background, and his publications and prose poems. Gaspard de la Nuit, as he is described in the prologue “Gaspard de la Nuit,” is supposed to be the author of a collection of prose poems allegedly organized into seven books, and subsequently published by Bertrand. Gaspard is the eponymous character of the book. In this very first part signed “Louis Bertrand,” the narrator runs into a mysterious person who seems to be erratic in his sayings.

Gaspard would be some sort of Romantic poet, looking for what he calls “the Art”:

— J’avais résolu, dit-il, de chercher l’art comme au moyen-âge les rose-croix cherchèrent la pierre philosophale ; l’art, cette pierre philosophale du dix-neuvième siècle ! Une question exerça d’abord ma scolastique. Je me demandai : Qu’est-ce que l’art ? — L’art est la science du poète. — Définition aussi limpide qu’un diamant de la plus belle eau.70

It is really striking that Biondetta of *Le diable amoureux* and Gaspard de la Nuit are supposed to be the devil himself: “Quoi ! Gaspard de la Nuit serait... ? — Eh ! oui... le diable ! — Merci, mon brave !... Si Gaspard de la Nuit est en enfer, qu’il y rôtisse ! J’imprime son livre.”71 Moreover they cross-dress: at the beginning of the story, Biondetta is called “Biondetto,” and s/he is Alvare’s pageboy whereas Gaspard cross-dresses to deceive clergymen: “M. Gaspard de la Nuit s’attise quelquefois en jeune et jolie fille pour tenter les dévots personnages.”72 This constitutes the first

70 Louis Bertrand, *Gaspard de la Nuit, Fantaisies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot* (Bruxelles: Librairie européenne de C. Muquard, 1868) 5. Subsequent citations from *Gaspard de la Nuit* are listed simply with the author’s name, the page, and, if relevant, the poem’s title.
71 Bertrand, Ibid., 20.
72 Ibid., id.
point of convergence between these two literary sources. For the demon is supposed to deceive his prey, and he more likely takes different forms as we have seen in *Le diable amoureux*. Similarly, a parallel could be drawn with Descartes’s meditations, wherein the evil demon is also a transvestite: he is as clever and deceitful as he is powerful, and directs all his efforts to mislead the philosopher looking for certainty. Descartes’s “malin génie” is not, strictly speaking, gendered; his cross-dressing is essentially deceptive, not sexed. At any rate, the evil genius, or transvestite devil, is a *deus deceptor*, a deceptive god who seems to be preponderant in the structure of the psyche. It is to that extent that one may construe Descartes’s “malin génie,” Cazotte/Alvare’s Beelzebub, and Bertrand’s Gaspard as transvestite devils. As we have seen in the previous chapter, surely, the devil is a *deus deceptor*; however, one may also become the devil’s advocate, and hear what that oneiric manifestation has to say as Alvare did in the Portici ruins and as Bertrand is about to do in Dijon. Sometimes, and as is the case in *Le diable amoureux*, the devil may take different forms, including the form of a *deus ex machina*, who asks the question of the subjectivity through a baleful Che vuoi?

Before turning to *La nuit et ses prestiges*, the third book of *Gaspard de la Nuit*, let us examine another peculiarity pertaining to the experience of dreaming in the prolegomenon of *Gaspard de la Nuit*.

In the beginning, Louis Bertrand sits on a bench somewhere in Dijon, Burgundy. Like Alvare’s encounters with the Flemish Kabbalist in the Portici ruins, Bertrand runs into a rather bizarre person who will soon turn out to be M. Gaspard de la Nuit. The latter—as we have seen—has been looking for “the Art.” The prologue seems to be structured in several parts, each part corresponding to one book of *Gaspard de la Nuit*. The poem collection’s structure is made clear by the perpetual return to Bertand’s question: “Et l’art, lui demandai-je?” Each time, Gaspard describes a different method he adopted in his attempt to find the science of the poet, which is supposedly the nineteenth-century philosopher’s stone. We saw earlier how Alvare is eager to learn about a science “which teaches how to transform metals and compel the spirits to obey he who summons them.” One sees here how Alvare’s and Gaspard’s research is similar. Gaspard, which funny enough rhymes formally with Alvare, also seems to be afflicted with megalomania and delusional fantasies of wealth, power, and omnipotence insofar as he desires to acquire a secret and initiatic ἐπιστήμη (epistémé, “knowledge” ; expertise) somehow related to the Self. In other

---

73 Ibid., 7, 9, 15.
words, Gaspard is interested in Alchemy. After having defined the Art, Gaspard recounts how he came across a mysterious book in some secondhand bookseller (bouquiniste) in Dijon. In a bookstall, he found by chance a small book written in baroque language. The title of the book features a heraldic symbol: an amphiptere, that is, a winged dragon along with a banderole with two words: “Gott – Liebe” (German for God and Love). After this, everything suggests that Gaspard is projected into some sort of strange world. This very moment could correspond with Alvare’s invocation in the Portici ruins. Similar to the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers, Gaspard looked for the Art in Nature first (book I: École flamande). Then he looked for it in Geometry, architectural monuments, and humankind (book II: Le vieux Paris). One day though, Gaspard was contemplating the church of Notre-Dame of Dijon. While he was considering the bell ringer (le Jacquemart) striking noon, he heard laughter: it was a gargoyle. This nightmarish vision echoing Le diable amoureux’s deus ex machina of the late edition inaugurations the third path M. Gaspard will follow to find the Art (book III: La nuit et ses prestige):

Cette aventure, continua-t-il, me donna à réfléchir. — Je réfléchis que, puisque Dieu et l’amour étaient les premières conditions de l’art, ce qui dans l’art est sentiment, — Satan pourrait bien être la seconde de ces conditions, ce qui dans l’art est idée. — […] — Saint Augustin en a, de sa plume, légalisé le signalement : Daemones sunt genere animalia, ingenio rationabilia, animo passiva, corpore aerea, tempore eterna. Cela est positif. Le diable existe. Il péore à la chambre, il plaide au palais, il agiote à la bourse. On le grave en vignettes, on le broche en romans, on l’habille en drames. On le voit partout, comme je vous vois.

This third path seems to correspond to the third book of Gaspard de la Nuit. This constitutes Gaspard’s last story. He will then draw some conclusions: first, the devil does not exist, which is a strange statement when pronounced by the devil himself. Second, the Art exists in God, and in God only. Moreover, more importantly, his whole research for the Art was a dream:

74 The fact that Alchemy runs Gaspard de la Nuit is well established by the literary critic (e.g. Max Milner). See also Émilie Granjon “Le diable alchimique dans Gaspard de la Nuit: une figure plurielle” in Claudon, Francis ed. Transfigurer le réel: Aloysius Bertrand et la fantasmagorie (Dijon: Centre Gaston Bachelard, 2008) 189-202.

75 See illustration I in the annexe.

76 Cf. “Elle articule d’une voix de tonnerre ce ténébreux Che vuoi qui m’avait tant épouvanté dans la grotte, part d’un éclat de rire humain plus effrayant encore, tire une langue démesurée...” in Cazotte, Ibid., (1871) 267-72.

77 Ibid., 16.
Et alors le soleil qui luisait par un pertuis, les moineaux qui becquetaient mes vitres, et les cloches qui marmonnaient une antienne dans la rue m’éveillèrent. J’avais fait un rêve.\textsuperscript{78}

The latter citation echoes what was foreshadowed right after Gaspard’s visit to the secondhand bookseller. Indeed, already at that point the question, or rather, the fundamental hesitation between what belongs to the realm of reality and what belongs to the oneiric world was raised: “Ô surprise ! révais-je?”\textsuperscript{79} Gaspard de la Nuit is a fantastic novel par excellence as is the case for Le diable amoureux wherein Alvare is dreaming throughout as well. Both Le diable amoureux and Gaspard de la Nuit implement a mise-en-abîme artifact although they do so with different means, and that is, eventually, the reason that determined the distinction between waking dreams (chapter I) and literary dreams (chapter II). With Cazotte, it is extremely difficult to know for certain what is going on. Indeed, in L’Avis de l’Auteur for the first edition, Cazotte pretends to have dreamed the entire story in one night, and to have written it all the following day on awakening: “[Q]u’il nous soit permis seulement de dire un mot de l’ouvrage. Il a été rêvé en une nuit et écrit en un jour.”\textsuperscript{80} We saw how Alvare is dreaming several times, so to speak, within the dream. This experience looks like a sort of wake-initiated lucid dream, which occurs when the dreamer goes from a normal waking state directly into a dream state, with no apparent lapse in consciousness. Indeed, we do not know when Alvare falls asleep nor do we know when he wakes up. Furthermore, Cazotte himself pretends to have dreamed the whole thing. In the story itself, Alvare must have been delusional and talking nonsense for at least several weeks, since he has undertaken a journey from point \(a\) (Naples) to point \(b\) (Extremadura). Moreover Alvare’s, or, rather, Cazotte’s, dream is punctuated by false awakenings, which tend to strengthen the mise-en-abîme artifact along with the depiction of the dream as a waking dream, that is, a subjective experience at the edges of sleep and consciousness—a transitional state between wakefulness and sleep—that includes lucid dreams, hallucinations, out-of-body experiences, and sleep paralysis. This state is referred to as Hypnagogia in psychology and psychophysiology.\textsuperscript{81} Gaspard de la Nuit, on the other hand, seems to be based on such an experience without necessarily being an authentic account of a waking dream experienced

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{80} Cazotte, Ibid., 100.
by Bertrand himself. It is rather a sort of ‘exercice de style’ in prose poetry based on the concept of a Bildungsträume as Bertrand could have read it in Le diable amoureux.

Now that we have covered Bertrand’s biography along with his alleged encounter with Gaspard, that is, the devil himself, who supposedly gave Bertrand a collection of prose poems, let us look at the preface of the so-called true author of these poems, that is, at Gaspard’s preface:

L’art a toujours deux faces antithétiques, médaille dont, par exemple, un côté accuserait la ressemblance de Paul Rembrandt et le revers celle de Jacques Callot. — Rembrandt est le philosophe à barbe blanche qui s’encolimaçonne en son réduit, qui absorbe sa pensée dans la méditation et dans la prière, qui ferme les yeux pour se recueillir, qui s’entretient avec des esprits de beauté, de science, de sagesse et d’amour, et qui se consume à pénétrer les mystérieux symboles de la nature. — Callot, au contraire, est le lansquenet fanfaron et grivois qui se pavane sur la place, qui fait du bruit dans la taverne, qui caresse les filles de bohémiens, qui ne jure que par sa rapière et par son escopette, et qui n’a d’autre inquiétude que de cirer sa moustache. — Or, l’auteur de ce livre a envisagé l’art sous cette double personnification.82

Perhaps, and as it was already the case in Le diable amoureux, in Gaspard de la Nuit, “l’allégorie est double, et les lecteurs s’en apercevront aisément.”83 In these pieces of paper, Gaspard tried to find “la vague aurore du clair-obscur [Italian: Chiaroscuro],” a reminiscence of Rembrandt also emphasized in the subtitle of the book itself: “Fantaisies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot.” I mentioned earlier that Cazotte referred to Rembrandt’s clair-obscur in L’Avis de l’Auteur for the first edition. Let us look at this passage and notice how Gaspard de la Nuit’s subtitle could be a direct reference to Le diable amoureux’s Avis de l’Auteur:

Le Diable amoureux est orné de figures faites par ces hommes de génie que la nature se plaît à former, et dont l’art, par ses règles asservissantes, n’a jamais refroidi le génie. De Strasbourg à Paris, il n’y a presque pas de cheminée qui ne porte l’empreinte du feu des compositions du premier, de la fumée ondoyante de ses pipes et du flegme philosophique de ses fumeurs. Quelles phrases donneront jamais une idée plus nette du clair-obscur que la quatrième de nos estampes [see annexe’s illustration I, II, and IV], dont l’auteur, ayant à représenter deux chambres, a si ingénieusement mis tout l’obscur dans l’une et tout le clair dans l’autre ? Et quel service n’a-t-il pas rendu, par cet heureux contraste, à tant de gens qui ont la fureur de parler de cet art sans en avoir les premières notions ? Si nous ne craignions pas de blesser sa modestie, nous ajouterions que sa manière nous a paru tenir beaucoup de celle du fameux Rembrandt.84

82 Bertrand, Ibid., 21-22.
83 Cazotte, Ibid., 289.
84 Cazotte, Ibid., 22 (emphasis mine).
The first poem of the third book of *Gaspard de la Nuit* is “La Chambre Gothique.” *Chambre* being, of course, the very locus of the slumber, the space of the dream, and *gothique* echoing the prologue’s book written in *baroque* language and whose cover featured a heraldic symbol. Even though *Gaspard de la Nuit* was written in the nineteenth century, the reader is projected immediately toward a picturesque fantastic world wherein elemental spirits such as the Gnome, the Undine, the Salamander, and the Sylph live side by side. These elemental spirits encountered by Gaspard may be seen as the allegorical representations of our psychic agencies through the allegorical discourse implemented by Bertrand’s poetic imagery. In the first quotation that comes from the very first stanzas of the first poem, Gaspard is clearly falling asleep and starts dreaming:

Oh ! la terre, — murmurai-je à la nuit, — est un calice embaumé dont le pistil et les étamines sont la lune et les étoiles !

Et, les yeux lourds de sommeil, je fermai la fenêtre qu’incrusta la croix du calvaire, noire dans la jaune auréole des vitraux.

Encore, — si ce n’était à minuit, — l’heure blasonnée de dragons et de diables ! — que le gnome qui se soûle de l’huile de ma lampe !

‘Le Gnome,’ also called ‘Scarbo’ at the end of “La Chambre Gothique,” is the first elemental spirit encountered by Gaspard during his oneiric journey. Scarbo is a sort of sadistic and demonic creature coming straight from hell: “Mais c’est Scarbo qui me mord au cou, et qui, pour cautérer ma blessure sanglante, y plonge son doigt de fer rougi à la fournaise !” As Bernadillo in *Le diable amoureux*, Scarbo symbolizes violence, cruelty, and the aggressiveness of the psyche (linked with *Thanatos*). The second poem, of which Scarbo is the eponymous character, is entirely dedicated to that nightmarish creature somehow reminiscent of the preface’s laughing gargoyle. The nightmarish vision of the Notre-Dame de Dijon’s laughing gargoyle inaugurates the third path Gaspard follows to find the Art. It seems that this moment corresponds very well with *Le diable amoureux*’s episode of the Portici ruins insofar as in both cases a nightmarish vision triggers the *Bildungsträume*’s beginning. One knows from the preface that Gaspard is none other than the devil, whereas in *Le diable amoureux*, Biondetta, who pretends to be a Sylph, that is, an air elemental, is none other than Beelzebub himself. As is the case in Alvare’s dream, Gaspard’s *Bildungsträume* is a genuine inner search for self, calling into question the subjectivity’s very essence by asking the

---

85 Bertrand, “La chambre gothique” 75-76.
86 Bertrand, “La chambre gothique” 76.
question of its desire. Throughout this inner quest, Gaspard will encounter three elemental entities, which are each eponymous of at least one prose poem: “Scarbo,” and “Le Nain” for the earth elemental; “Ondine” for the water elemental, and “La Salamandre” for the fire elemental. Only one is missing: the air elemental. If Bertrand was somewhat inspired by a possible reading of either Villars’s *Le Sylph amoureux* or Cazotte’s *Le diable amoureux*, he might have followed the idea according to which the devil very likely takes up the deceptive appearance of a Sylph, and its innocent charms and talents. Thus, Bertrand could not add a poem entitled ‘Sylph’ because, if there was to be a Sylph at all, Gaspard himself should have been that air elemental. As Biondetta, Gaspard is “abandonné dans le vague de l’air à une incertitude nécessaire, sans sensations, sans jouissance, esclave des évocations des cabalistes, jouet de leurs fantaisies.”87 S/he is “faite de rosée, de vapeurs terrestres et de rayons de lumière, des débris d’un arc-en-ciel condensés. Où est le possible ? Où est l’impossible ?”88 Gaspard and Biondetta are the condensation of our psychic agencies, and therefore, they represent some facets of the author’s unconscious system. Let us look at the general structure of the third book. *La nuit et ses prestiges* is composed of eleven short prose poems, which feature the elemental spirits as they are encountered in the oneiric universe by the narrator, Gaspard. Here is the third book’s table of contents:

I. *La Chambre Gothique*
II. *Scarbo*
III. *Le Fou*
IV. *Le Nain*
V. *Le Clair de Lune*
VI. *La Ronde sous la Cloche*
VII. *Un Rêve*
VIII. *Mon Bisaïeu*
IX. *Ondine*
X. *La Salamandre*
XI. *L’Heure du Sabbat*

The first four poems deal with the Romantic and therefore existential theme of the suffering poet through the archetypal figure of Scarbo, an evil midget who takes pleasure in Gaspard’s pain and sadness. On the other hand, Scarbo, as was the case for Biondetta in *Le diable amoureux*, is the guard of a treasure made of gold and counterfeit coins. Indeed, in *Le diable amoureux*, Cazotte, Ibid., 198 (emphasis mine).

87 Cazotte, Ibid., 198 (emphasis mine).
88 Cazotte, Ibid., 201 (emphasis mine).
amoureux, we saw how Biondetta lends Alvare some money and teaches him how to gamble properly, so that he can regain all the money he lost while playing at Il Ridotto. (As we have seen, Alvare actually becomes indebted to the hilt vis-à-vis the devil.) In La nuit et ses prestiges, Scarbo is a sort of fairy-like leprechaun hiding all his coins in a pot of gold, that is, so to speak, ‘at the end of the rainbow.’

Scarbo, gnome dont les trésors foisonnent, vannait sur mon toit, au cri de la girouette, ducats et florins qui sautaient en cadence, les pièces fausses jonchant la rue.

Comme ricana le fou qui vague, chaque nuit, par la cité déserte, un œil à la lune et l’autre – crevé ! – Foin de la lune ! grommela-t-il, ramassant les jetons du diable, j’achèterai le pilori pour m’y chauffer au soleil.\(^{89}\)

At the end of “Le Fou,” a cochlea (from Greek κοχλίας, ‘spiral, snail shell,’ in the text: un limaçon) is seeking its way out through the stained-glass windows of Gaspard’s bedroom:

Tandis que, les deux cornes en avant, un limaçon qu’avait égaré la nuit cherchait sa route sur mes vitraux lumineux.\(^{90}\)

At the beginning of the following poem “Le Nain,” the cochlea, still on the stained glass window, metamorphoses into a butterfly: “[Un] furtif papillon, éclos d’un rais de la lune ou d’une goutte de rosée.”\(^{91}\) Four lines later, the butterfly, or, rather, the moth since it is indeed active at night, retransforms into a hideous larva (from Latin larva, “ghost-like, masked,” in the text: une larve monstrueuse et difforme, à tête humaine). Echoing Descartes’s larvatus prodeo (je m’avance masqué), our unconscious behaves like an actor wearing masks; it comes forward in dreams, masked, on the surface of consciousness. This nightmarish vision of larvae is also reminiscent of Le diable amoureux’s deus ex machina, during which we saw how the delusional Alvare thinks he sees larvae on his bedroom’s walls lit by the moonlight:

[L]a corniche qui surmonte le lambris [the dado, the wall of the chambre s'est toute chargée de gros limaçons: leurs cornes, qu’ils font mouvoir vivement et en manière de bascule, sont devenues des jets de lumière phosphorique, dont l'éclat et l'effet redoublent par l'agitation et l'allongement.\(^{92}\)

---

89 Bertrand, “Le Fou” 79-80.
90 Bertrand, “Le Fou” 80.
91 Bertrand, “Le Nain” 81.
92 Cazotte, Ibid., 272 (emphasis mine).
Those insects, successively larvæ, then cochleæ, and finally butterflies, of course, symbolize the metamorphosis undergone by the main protagonist of the Bildungsträume as he progresses in his oneiric universe. We have known since the beginning that Gaspard is asleep, and we just figuratively learned through the allegory of the butterfly’s metamorphosis from the caterpillar (butterfly larvae) stage to the last ecdysis, that is, the adult, sexually mature, stage of the insect also known as the imago\(^\text{93}\) that Gaspard is about to be psychologically transformed through the dream of formation.

In the following poem “Le Clair de Lune,” another clue tends to strengthen the idea according to which the third book corresponds to the moment in which, in the preface, Gaspard was considering the bell ringer (le Jacquemart) striking noon and heard the gargoyles’ laughter. There is one discrepancy, however; this time, it is not noon but midnight:

Mais bientôt mon oreille n’interrogea plus qu’un silence profond. Les lépreux étaient rentrés dans leur chenil, aux coups de Jacquemart qui battait sa femme. […]

Et moi, il me semblait, – tant la fièvre est incohérente, – que la lune, grimant sa face, me tirait la langue comme un pendu ! \(^\text{94}\)

In “La Ronde sous la Cloche,” the hour is once again covertly recalled through the number twelve that immediately recalls the twelve strokes of midnight. Furthermore, Le Roman de la Rose is directly mentioned in this poem. This is not by chance. Indeed, Le Roman de la Rose is the paroxysmal example of the kind of fantastic and fairy story-like literary source one studies here. In these works, the fragmented facets of the Self are allegorically represented in a dream, as is clear in Le Roman de la Rose in which the poet (l’Amant) is seeking to conquer La Rose’s heart, but as he goes ahead in his oneiric universe into the garden by the river, the poet encounters hindrances like Tristesse, Félonie, Vilénie, Amour, Haine etc., which are all embodiments and personifications of human feelings and drives. Let us look at “La Ronde sous la Cloche”:

Douze magiciens dansaient une ronde sous la grosse cloche de Saint-Jean. Ils évoquèrent l’orage l’un après l’autre, et du fond de mon lit je comptai avec épouvante douze voix qui traversèrent processionnellement les ténèbres.

\(^{93}\) This notion of ‘imago’ I am establishing corresponds to the Lacanian idéal du moi (ideal of the Self). See the diagrams and general definitions of the Mirror Stage in the annexe.

Aussitôt la lune courut se cacher derrière les nuées, et une pluie mêlée d’éclairs et de tourbillons fouetta ma fenêtre, tandis que les girouettes criaient comme des grues en sentinelle sur qui créve l’averse dans les bois.

La chanterelle de mon luth, appendu à la cloison, éclata ; mon chardonneret battit de l’aile dans sa cage ; quelque esprit curieux tourna un feuillet du Roman de la Rose qui dormait sur mon pupitre. 

In “Un Rêve” and “Mon Bisaïeul” (My Great-Grandfather), Gaspard has various visions. At the very end of “Mon Bisaïeul,” in which Gaspard encounters his elders, dead for years, the protagonist in his bedroom raises the fundamental question of the reality of what he is experiencing. In other words, he doubts and hesitates; he doesn’t know if he is awake or asleep, if it is noon or midnight:

Et je me demandais si je veillais ou si je dormais, — si c’étaient les pâleurs de la lune ou de Lucifer, — si c’était minuit ou le point du jour ?

In “Ondine,” an elemental spirit visits Gaspard in his sleep. This Undine (a water nymph from mythology) could be associated with the Incubus and Succubus, that is, demons or supernatural beings believed in Western folklore to appear in dreams and take the form of a human to seduce and have intercourse with the dreamer. Those oneiric and fairy-like creatures were also associated with night terrors, nocturnal emissions, and sleep paralysis. As is the case for Alvare in Le diable amoureux—except this time, it is an Undine, and not Beelzebub pretending to be a Sylph; but is there really a difference?—dangling an initiatic knowledge before the dreamer, an elemental spirit is trying to seduce the latter:

Chaque flot est un ondin qui nage dans le courant, chaque courant est un sentier qui serpente vers mon palais, et mon palais est bâti fluide, au fond du lac, dans le triangle du feu, de la terre et de l’air.

The expression: “le triangle du feu, de la terre et de l’air” (the triangle of the fire, the earth, and the air) should be compared to the examples of Pythagorean tetractyses of Kabbalistic inspiration

95 Bertrand, “La ronde sous la cloche” 85-86.
96 Cf. previous discussion of the Lacanian grand Autre: le lieu du trésor du signifiant (A); the treasure chest of signifiers, i.e., the symbolic father. See the diagrams and general definitions for the Mirror Stage in the annexe.
in the annexe’s diagrams. The four triangles at the bottom probably represent four steps of conception of the philosopher’s gold, that is, the realization of the Magnum Opus, which is not necessarily seen as something tangible and operative, but rather the allegorical Grand Œuvre should be construed as a self-overcoming (un dépassement de soi). One recalls indeed “l’art, cette pierre philosophale du dix-neuvième siècle […] est la science du poète,” and only right-mindedness and rectitude of intention can legitimately motivate such a quest for the figurative Science, “which teaches how to transform metals and compel the spirits to obey he who summons them.”

However, Gaspard resists the charms of the watery creature:

Et comme je lui répondais que j’aimais une mortelle, boudeuse et dépitée, elle pleura quelques larmes, poussa un éclat de rire, et s’évanouit en giboulées qui ruisselèrent blanches le long de mes vitraux bleus.

In “La Salamandre,” the theme of the hearth of the chimney, and the fireplace’s heraldic mantels is brought to the fore through the Salamander, that is, the fire elemental. Let us recall Cazotte’s words in L’Avis de l’auteur pour le première édition of Le diable amoureux:

Le diable amoureux est orné de figures faites par ces hommes de génie que la nature se plaît à former, et dont l’art, par ses règles asservissantes, n’a jamais refroidi le génie. De Strasbourg à Paris, il n’y a presque pas de cheminée qui ne porte l’empreinte du feu des compositions du premier, de la fumée ondoyante de ses pipes et du flegme philosophique de ses fumeurs.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the art of confectioning fabulous chimneypieces was reaching its apogee: ornamental stone carvings drawing on heraldic and gothic architecture were flourishing at the four corners of Europe. One may assume that the chimney’s hearth was a natural place for basic alchemical operations such as calcination, for instance. Gaston Bachelard also recalls that fire is associated with Romantic poets.

More generally, Bachelard explains:

---

99 Bertrand, Ibid., 5.
100 Cazotte, Ibid., 108 (my translation).
101 Cf. “Elle articule d’une voix de tonnerre ce ténébreux Che vuoi qui m’avait tant épouvanté dans la grotte, part d’un éclat de rire humain plus effrayant encore, tire une langue démesurée…” in Cazotte, Ibid., (1871) 267-72 (emphasis mine).
102 Bertrand, “Ondine” 91.
103 Cazotte, Ibid., 22.
104 See Bachelard, La Psychanalyse du feu (Paris: Gallimard, 1938).
La rêverie a quatre domaines, quatre pointes par lesquelles elle s’élance dans l’espace infini. Pour forcer le secret d’un vrai poète [...], un mot suffit : “Dis moi quel est ton fantôme ? Est-ce le Gnome, la Salamandre, l’Ondine ou la Sylphide ?”

Let us look at some verses of “La Salamandre,” and notice how Gaspard is indeed melancholic and in a quite ‘spleeny mood’:

Il est mort, il est mort, le grillon mon ami ! Et j’entendais comme des soupirs et des sanglots, tandis que la flamme, livide maintenant, décroissait dans le foyer attristé.

Il est mort ! Et puisqu’il est mort, je veux mourir ! Les branches de sarment étaient consumées, la flamme se traina sur la braise en jetant son adieu à la crémailière, et la salamandre mourut d’inanition.

In “L’Heure du Sabbat,” the reader deals with the theme of the witches’ Sabbath, that is, the so-called meetings of people practicing witchcraft, forbidden magic, and other rites. During the Middle Ages to early modern period up until the late eighteenth century, witch hunts and witchcraft trials often involving moral panic, mass hysteria, and lynching, were numerous. It is common knowledge that executions by hanging using the dire gallows (les gibets: ‘l’Abbaye de Monté-à-Regret’), executions by decapitation through the guillotine (‘épouser la Veuve’), and death by burning using the baleful stake (le bûcher) somehow reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition’s auto-da-fés were widely used. It is also very likely that either the so-called witches or even the pernicious whistleblowers along with the clergy members suffered from megalomania and delusional fantasies. Let us look at the beginning of this poem:

C’est ici ! et déjà, dans l’épaisseur des halliers, qu’éclaire à peine l’œil phosphorique du chat sauvage tapi sous les ramées ;

Aux flancs des rocs qui trempent dans la nuit des précipices leur chevelure de broussailles, ruisselante de rosée et de vers luisants ;

Sur le bord du torrent qui jaillit en blanche écume au front des pins, et qui bruine en grise vapeur au fond des châteaux;

“L’Heure du Sabbat” also clearly brings the theme of the gibet and the bûcher: “Une foule se rassemble innombrable, que le vieux bûcheron attardé par les sentiers, sa charge de bois sur le dos, entend et ne voit pas. Et de chêne en chêne, de butte en butte, se répondent mille cris confus,

---

106 Bertrand, “La Salamandre” 94.
107 Bertrand, “L’Heure du Sabbat” 95 (emphasis mine: this seems sexually connoted).
lugubres, effrayants : Hum ! hum ! – Schup ! schup ! – Coucou ! coucou !” 108 Finally, the philosopher stone’s quest through the medieval figure of the wandering Jew returns:  

C’est ici le gibet ! – Et voilà paraître dans la brume un juif qui cherche quelque chose parmi l’herbe mouillée, à l’éclat doré d’une main de gloire. 109

An old belief could explain this obscure symbol of the bücher and the gibet associated with the quest of the wandering Jew for the philosopher’s stone. The most famous alchemists of the Middle Ages, Raymond Lully (circa 1232–1315) and Paracelsus (born Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493–1541) would have said that the Mandragora Officinarum likes growing near places where people have been executed. This plant of the Mandrake genus was associated with superstitious practices and witchcraft. The plant is described in encyclopedias as a hermaphrodite and self-fertile plant, whose leaves grow in a rosette (circular arrangement of leaves). It was also associated with the alchemical Homonculus (Latin for “little man”). According to highly superstitious beliefs, the hanged men’s semen would feed and fertilize the Mandrakes growing in the stakes and gallows’ shade. 110 The plant may be highly poisonous and contain alkaloids, that is, a hallucinogenic and narcotic substance. In particular, the Mandrake was used in traditional medicine to treat melancholia, convulsions, and mania. However, at a high dosage, Mandragora Officinarum leads to disorders and side effects such as delirium and madness. Some scholars 111 have argued that the Great Fear of 1789 that lead to the French Revolution, and consequently to the Reign of Terror, could also have been due to another type of food poisoning that may induced altered states of consciousness. Namely, the presence of Claviceps purpurea fungus in the cereal harvests (ergot poisoning also referred to as ergotism) could have induced mania, psychosis, headaches, nausea, vomiting as well as seizures and psychotomimetic hallucinations, which mimic the symptoms of psychosis, including delusional fantasies and deliria. 112 Similarly,

108 Bertrand, Ibid., 96.  
109 Bertrand, Ibid., id.  
historians have claimed that ergotism was the cause of the bewitchment accusations that spurred the Salem witch trials in colonial Massachusetts between February 1692 and May 1693.\footnote{Linnda Caporael, “Ergotism: The Satan Loose in Salem” in \textit{Science} n°192 April 1976: 21.}

Ultimately, everything seems to point out the fact that \textit{Gaspard de la Nuit}, and, in particular, \textit{La nuit et ses prestiges}, meets the requirements of the literary genre identified as the fantastic that is understood as a work of literature in which there is a fundamental hesitation between the realm of the real and the realm of the dream universe. \textit{La nuit et ses prestiges} also meets the requirements of the oneiric experience of formation I call \textit{Bildungsträume}. Gaspard’s sayings and deliria also tend to prove that he is afflicted with a certain type of madness associated with melancholia, megalomania, and delusional fantasies. We saw throughout this chapter how \textit{Gaspard de la nuit} could have been substantially inspired by \textit{Le diable amoureux}. The subtitle of the book \textit{(Fantaisies à la manière de Rembrandt et de Callot)} is a possible reference to the preface of \textit{Le diable amoureux}. Put side by side these two works shed light on one another.

Finally, it seems that Bertrand has been looking for himself in those papers. Moreover, this applies as well for Gaspard, who is, of course, Bertrand’s oneiric counterpart—even though the author’s true identity remains veiled. A shimmering oneiric counterpart, a mask, veils the true subjectivity.
Part II
Beyond the Mirror Stage: The Bildungsträume

For this discussion, we focused simply on authors from a quasi-identical topographical and historical background, that is, 1750s–1850s France; in those troubled times of the Great Fear, Revolution, and Terror. We saw how and to which extent those works share striking common features. Nonetheless, it became quickly evident that a whole new constellation of authors could be brought close to the type of subjective and dream-like experience at the edges of madness and delusional fantasies reported by Cazotte through Alvéar and by Bertrand through Gaspard. Apuleius’s Asinus Aureus (AD late second century), Guillaume de Lorris’s Le Roman de la Rose (1237), Francesco Colonna’s Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (1470), Jean Bodin’s De la démonomanie des sorciers (1580), Torquato Tasso’s La Gerusalemme Leberata (1581), Miguel de Cervantes’s El ingenioso hidalgo don Quixote de la Mancha (1605), Balthasar Bekker’s De Betoverde Weereld (1695), the Abbé N. de Montfaucon de Villars’ Le Comte de Gabalis (1670), and in particular, his Sylph amoureux (1698): all these works are new possible fields of investigation and potential comparisons still to be made. Furthermore, the scope of inquiry remains wide open regarding this oneiric phenomenon of a peculiar type I found as Bildungsträume insofar as, I believe, the Surrealism movement was extremely interested in those borderline experiences at the edges of wakefulness, rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, hypnagogia, and madness.

Descartes’s Méditation première, along with the evil genius’s thought experiment, is an excellent philosophical starting point for understanding that strongly connoted and yet blurry notion of madness. Derrida and Foucault’s debate on that matter will be the foundation of our paradigm regarding a certain type of madness close to mood disorders and psycho-pathological conditions such as megalomania, melancholia, and delusional fantasies. As Derrida pointed out rightly in his response to Foucault’s interpretation of Descartes’s Méditation première, the “Cogito” also involves a passage through the moment of radical madness. Indeed, Foucault in his Histoire de la folie and more specifically on pages 54–57 asserts that Descartes dismisses madness outside the

114 Very interestingly, the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili called in English Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream, and in French simply Songe de Poliphile (Poliphilo’s dream) was printed by Aldus Manutius in Venice in December 1499. Yet, and as we’ve seen earlier, Le diable amoureux takes place in Venice for the most part.
realm of philosophy: “Le coup de force serait opéré par Descartes dans la première Méditation et il consisterait très sommairement en une expulsion sommaire de la possibilité de la folie hors de la pensée elle-même.”

Yet it seems almost self-evident that the hyperbolic doubt alongside the evil genius hypothesis relies merely upon a mad lookalike thought experiment better be described in terms of deliria. Contrary to Foucault’s claims, resorting to the evil genius hypothesis demands the possibility of a total madness that is beyond control. This madness affects not only the rex extensa but also the res cogitans, and even more:

[L’hypothèse du Malin Génie requiert la possibilité d’un] affolement total, c’est-à-dire d’une folie qui ne sera plus seulement un désordre du corps, de l’objet, du corps-objet, hors de la cité policée et rassurée de la subjectivité pensante, mais d’une folie qui introduira la subversion dans la pensée pure, dans ses objets purement intelligibles, dans le champ des idées claires et distinctes, dans le domaine des vérités mathématiques qui échappaient au doute naturel.

Descartes posits in his first meditation the slumber and the dream as a more universally shared and more ‘common’ experience than that of madness. In an epistemic point of view (and Descartes is precisely interested in the foundation of epistemological knowledge), Derrida states that the dream constitutes for Descartes the hyperbolic exasperation of the madness hypothesis, which would only partially and contingently affect some regions of the sensible perception. In addition, Derrida continues in saying that, in this view, the sleeper or dreamer is madder than the mad person:

De ce point de vue, le dormeur, ou le rêveur est plus fou que le fou. Ou du moins, le rêveur, au regard du problème de la connaissance qui intéresse ici Descartes, est plus loin de la perception vraie que le fou. C’est dans le cas du sommeil et non dans celui de l’extravagance [et de la folie] que la totalité absolue des idées d’origine sensible devient suspecte, est privée de “valeur objective” selon l’expression de [Martial] Guéroult.

Yet if the dream is on an epistemic level a common and universally shared experience and if, on the other hand, the absolute totality of the ideas coming from our sensations becomes suspect and deprived of “objective value” in the oneiric universe, we are then facing a huge issue regarding the

---

116 Cf. Hilary Putnam’s thought experiment of the brain in a vat.
117 Derrida, Ibid., 81-82 (emphasis mine).
118 Derrida, Ibid., 79.
‘composite persons’ encountered in dreams. Indeed, the elemental spirits and the transvestite devil seem to be a recurrent scheme that repeats itself in literature and more particularly in the literary genre that accounts for dreams, that is, in the Fantastic. In response to Martial Guérout, it seems that it may be true that “dans le cas du sommeil [...] la totalité absolue des idées d’origine sensible devient suspecte, est privée de ‘valeur objective.’” However, if the content (the characters, the plot, and the moral) of the dream is subjective, then the form (the abstract structures) implemented in the dream could be universal as Le diable amoureux, Gaspard de la Nuit, and probably several other books tend to attest by trying to report graphically and visually what their respective authors saw during their figurative ‘transports.’

To conclude, I would like to make a comparison between the Lacanian Mirror Stage and the notion established as Bildungsträume. This new concept is associated with the German notions of Wissensgesellschaft (l’Économie du Savoir) and Traumhaft (le Fantastique), that is, the phantasmagoric, dreamlike, and fantastic realm: the metaphorical world of the Sandmännchen, wherein the dreaming subject actually learns. The Bildungsträume resembles the Mirror Stage in many ways. The Mirror Stage as developed by Jacques Lacan is that moment in which the six- to eighteen-month-old child (S) anticipates the mastery of his corporal unity by capturing his own image (a) in the mirror. However, this psychic stage seems to possess such a great plasticity and polymorphism that it is difficult to know for sure if it has to do with a myth, a fiction organized by structures, or an actual experience. The subject of the unconscious is, at first, governed by the anarchy of drive (id). Looking at the mirror, the ideal ego (a’) becomes a unity projection. Through the primary narcissism associated with the Lacanian imaginary axis, the subject along with his objects of desire locks himself in (a). Simultaneously, or rather, in an immemorial fashion since the symbolic precedes the imaginary register and retroactively affects the imaginary, the ego ideal along with the language (λόγος) and the notion of the law emerge, that is, the Lacanian symbolic, the ‘treasure chest of signifiers’ (A), appears to the Self.119 This image may be reflected either in a genuine mirror, or through a situation that serves as mirror, that is, a situation in which the subject reflects itself with an introjection mechanism or what Lacan calls the establishment of a relationship between the Innenwelt (internal world) and the Umwelt (the external world).

119 See the diagrams and general definitions of the Mirror Stage in the annexe.
As Alvare’s dinner in Venice, the Mirror Stage implements a highly significant setting consisting of mirrors and reflections of imagines, which really are oneiric mental representations of our own psychic agency. The transvestite devil and the elemental spirits may be construed, to that extent, as condensed and displaced elements of our psychic agencies. The Bildungsträume takes the dreamer into an oneiric world in which magic mirrors turned upon the Self are the symbolic keys of the absolute knowledge and yield distorted facets of the Self. These dreams make apparent through quasi-kaleidoscopic visions the imagines, that is, l’object petit a, l’object grand A, le Moi-Idéal, and l’Idéal du Moi that are created as a consequence of selfhood emergence. The Bildungsträume makes apparent in representation and allegories those symbolic entities residing in our psyche and determining us as thinking subjectivities. However, in those subjective experiences at the edges of madness and delusional fantasies one reaches the limits of language. The reference to paintings and the research for the clair-obscur (Italian: Chiaroscuro) along with the reference to the Romantic poets’ sadness, existential suffering, and madness echoes the difficulties and aporias that may be encountered by the philosopher looking for himself and certainties on that matter. However, words and verbal descriptions may reveal themselves insufficient while dealing with notions that are difficult to share. The recourse to Vorstellung (representation) and Vorstellungskraft (imagination) allows to situate and, so to speak, to remedy the apparent aporia of the subjectiveness and ineffability of the Bildungsträume. This also explains the numerous references in this literary genre of a peculiar type to opera pantomimes, theater, architecture, heraldic, and, simply, what one could call with Gaspard de la Nuit: “the Art.” As we have seen in Le diable amoureux and La nuit et ses prestiges, the Bildungsträume emphasizes the subject’s metamorphosis from the larva stage to the last ecdysis, that is, the imago stage: the adult, sexually mature, stage of the insect. This emphasizes the constant struggle for adaptation and survival not only for humankind but also for the entire animal kingdom. The burning desire of the Romantic poets to become a figurative

---


121 This notion of imago has a long story of significations that could be traced far in the past. It stands for the early Proto-Indo-European “aim” (similarity, resemblance). It gave in Latin imago, which noteworthy means image, imitation, ghost, but also, appearance, echo, thought etc. Here are the two actual meanings of imago in contemporary English: (a) the final developmental stage of an insect after undergoing metamorphosis and (b) an idealized concept of a loved one, formed in childhood and retained unaltered in adult life (source: wikidictionary.com).
Adept, that is to say, to match the Self with the “ideal of the Self” \((I(A))\) and the symbolic father \((A)\) along with the urge to find the primordial object of desire, that is to say, to find the symbolic mother \((M)\), illuminates the arduous reading of those works. The philosopher’s stone and the Grand Œuvre of the poet appear eventually as a sort of desexualization of the sexual instincts, that is, as a sublimation of Eros and Thanatos within the Art, which could be seen figuratively as the Science of the nineteenth-century avant-garde poetry. However, when Γαλάκτω, the owl of Minerva, begins its flight at the onset of dusk, one may wonder if the Wissenschaft (Greek: ἔπιστήμη, knowledge) carried through the Bildungsträumes is subjective, and therefore pertains to simply ego construction and self-fashioning, that is, the Aristotelian φρόνησις (Latin: prudentia) as suggested in Le diable amoureux and Gaspard de la Nuit, or, on the contrary, one may also wonder if this mysterious Wissenschaft should rather be associated with an objective knowledge (an expertise), as the chemists Friedrich A. Kekule von Stradonitz and Kerry B. Mullis have suggested by telling us the secret of their ingenious and crafty discoveries. The frustration of the poet associated—as we have seen—with mood disorders and psycho-pathological conditions is a necessary consequence of the apparent impossibility to give account of the Bildungsträumes. The Art, and in particular, visual imagery techniques such as engravings and paintings, or, from another register, metonymies (displacement) and metaphors (condensation), and more generally, Vorstellungskraft, reveals itself as the only palliative stopgap. As Napoléon Bonaparte (1769–1821) famously said, *Un bon croquis vaut mieux qu’un long discours.*

---

122 A picture is worth a thousand words (trans. modified).
Illustration I: Alvare summoning Beelzebub/Biondetta in the Portici ruins

Jacques Cazotte. *Le diable amoureux, Nouvelle Espagnole* (À Naples: Ex libris Martin Aldao, 1772) 14
Illustration II: Alvare spying on Beelzebub/Biondetta in the closet of the Venetian apartment

Jacques Cazotte. *Le diable amoureux, Nouvelle Espagnole* (1772) 78
Illustration III: The music score of Beelzebub/Biondetta’s barcarola

Jacques Cazotte. *Le diable amoureux, Nouvelle Espagnole* (1772) 80
Illustration IV: Alvare flinching on the terrace of the Brenta River

Jacques Cazotte. *Le diable amoureux, Nouvelle Espagnole* (1772) 102
Examples of Pythagorean tetractyses of Kabbalistic inspiration found online (source: google.com)

Diagrams found online (source: google.com) and General Definitions for the Mirror Stage

- $S$ the divided subject (Dasien) the true self (sujet) by opposition to the alienated self (moi)
- $S$ the imaginary subject the real subject, to become the subject of the unconscious (id)
- $M$ the mirror the signifier of the primordial object; the symbolic mother
- $A$ the big other (grand autre) the treasure chest of signifiers; the symbolic father
- $a$ the object of desire (petit autre) the cause of desire (in the diagram: the flowers)
- $C$ the body (corps propre) the unified imago of the self (in the diagram: the vase)

- $i(a)$ the ideal-I (moi idéal) the specular/virtual image of the self, illusion, mere reflection
- $i'(a)$ the ideal-I (moi idéal) – the specular/virtual image of the self, illusion, mere reflection

- $I(A)$ the ideal of the Self (idéal du moi) – the inner image of oneself as one wants to become
- $i'(a)$ the ideal-I (moi idéal) – the specular/virtual image of the self, illusion, mere reflection
- $i'(a)$ the ideal-I (moi idéal) – belongs to the symbolic register

Es autre

moi Autre
Works Cited

Primary Sources


---. *La Nouvelle Raméide, poème revu, corrigé et presque refondu, par M. Rameau, Fils et Neveu de deux grands Hommes qu’il ne fera pas revivre*. Amsterdam: unspecified, 1766.


Secondary Sources


Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries, and Online Resources
Gallica.bnf.fr.
Wikidictionary.com.
Wikisource.com.
Wordreference.com and cnrtl.fr.

Formatting