

Symbolist Space and Habitat

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the structure of space and habitat as it appears in the perceptions of 19th-century French artists and poets, using the tools of structural anthropology, inspired by Claude Lévi-Strauss, and of semiotics. For this purpose, we followed a scheme in concentric circles including: room → house → windows → garden → city. To better understand this structure, we have analyzed each element separately. We saw that the further we advance on the scale of degrees of space's openness, the more concrete reality is denied to us. This reality is replaced by a mental decor and various moods. For the symbolists, the tendency to harmonize in an agreeable manner with nature is almost non-existent. The perception of gardens is embedded in the sphere of the dysphoric because it is associated with the isotopy of the twilight (which contains: evening, night, rain, autumn, winter and especially death). Moreover, the time which corresponds to the symbolist space is the twilight time which marks, fixes and above all provokes the march towards alienation. Therefore we can affirm, without fear of being wrong, that the perception of space in Symbolism, completely removing the romantic nature, is nothing more than a state of mind, a mental reality, which will become neurotic in the symbolists, in general, melancholic in Verlaine and delirious in Rimbaud's art.

Keywords: *Space and habitat structure; anthropology; semiotics; Symbolism; French poetry; 19th-century;*

As shown in our previous research about the symbolist space, both in French and Romanian², which this article represents the English version, once the Baudelairean experience is consumed, nature is no longer *a forest*, but *a temple*, whose constituent elements are no longer trees, but *living pillars*. This expulsion of nature makes the symbolists bound to intimacy, to the closed space, sheltered from wide perspectives, as if suffering from agoraphobia. The room (or attic), represents the zero point of the symbolist universe from where the artist, feeling sheltered, does nothing but contemplate the universe, necessarily urban. We are far from the "nature baths" of the Age of Enlightenment or the romantic walk among ruins, through forests, or on the shores of lakes.

Contemplation of the world is now done only through windows – made of glass, that miraculous substance of Jean Baudrillard – which is located by its

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²See the chapters dedicated to the symbolist poetic space (Gălățanu, 2006; Gălățanu, 2009; Gălățanu, 2013; Gălățanu, 2017).

composition and properties at the limit of worlds (Baudrillard, 1968). The walls that separate and protect the closed space of the room from the open space of the city are always part of a closed building with well-defined and oppressive shapes.

Between the house and the city there always appears a third protective belt in which nature slowly dies, most often under the degenerate pressure of the favorite seasons of the symbolists: autumn and winter. But no matter how natural it may be, the garden is never a proper open space. The taming, the "humanization" that the plant element undergoes inside the garden, not to mention its "artificial" version, the greenhouse, just as the walls, most often of stone, make the garden a semi-closed or, rather, semi-open space, another barrier against the "wide world".

The city for the symbolists is nothing more than a setting, a mental reality, as we have already seen in Baudelaire, which is organized along the various degrees of a diffuse and dysphoric perception. Only in a very exceptional way are streets, monuments or neighborhoods evoked, almost by mistake and only to color even more a pictorial, impressionistic vision of space, typical of the symbolists.

Autumn, rain, dusk, fog and especially dreams, these are the favorite representations in the symbolist arsenal, their common cultural universe.

If we want to draw the scheme of symbolist space (Lévi-Strauss, 1978)³, we must place *the room at the center of the universe*, surrounded by a first protective barrier: *the house* that communicates with the outside in an equivocal manner through *windows* and which is in turn protected by *the garden* (park, greenhouse), of course, this being in turn surrounded by walls that protect it against the opening of streets, neighborhoods, wide spaces, in a word, *the city*. We therefore see that the structure of the symbolist space is organized in concentric circles in a suite that includes: *room* → *house* → *windows* → *garden* → *city*. To better understand this structure, we need to analyze each element separately.

Symbolist room

As we said before, the room is the zero point of the symbolist universe, the headquarters of the contemplation of the universe, but also, to paraphrase a famous Barthesian title, *the degree zero of intimacy* (Barthes, 1953). Intimacy and protection, these are the main functions of the room.

The symbolist soul feels sheltered here from the night "in the slowness of the blood", from the darkness and the unknown of open space, like a child before falling asleep⁴.

³This idea of the organisation of space was inspired by the research of the father of structural anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss.

⁴Cf. : «Clôre les rideaux, lourds d'une nuit en lenteur
D'atomes, en lenteur de sang...Ah ! la nuit tendre»
(Ghil, *Berceuse de l'après-midi*)

It is well known in psychoanalysis that the temptation of closed and narrow spaces, *claustrophilia*, refers to the mental image of the cave, the privileged vulvar space of voluptuousness (cf. *L'état amoureux et l'hypnose* in Freud, pp. 134 – 141). These obvious libidinal tendencies evolve by stimulating the twilight and refined decors of the most beloved space of the symbolists, the room. Once again, the Baudelairean legacy makes its presence felt⁵. We see in the Samainian text very well expressed the two fundamental pulsations of the human being that Freud speaks about in the cited work: *the pulsation towards death* and *the pulsation towards sexuality*. In the same stanza we already have *desire* and *death*: “And the desire/ To die / Like an ecstasy in us rises and it divinizes it.”

Darkness, subtle perfumes, intimate atmosphere, the entire symbolist arsenal appears here to glorify the object of desire. The entire room itself becomes the metonymy of “the warm Flower unfolded under the sun of your sex”.

Of course, these impulses can be expressed by others in a less explicit, more subtle and more feminine manner, but keeping the vision of the enclosed space intact, as in Marie Kryszyska (Décaudin, 1992)⁶ poem, *Les Fenêtres*⁷.

Les poèmes de Ghil sont tirés de : Ghil, 1885, et du site :

<http://poesie.webnet.fr/auteurs/ghil.html>

⁵Cf. : « Sur les tapis

Assoupi

Une rose blessée et penchante agonise

Et le désir

De mourir

Comme une extase en nous monte et se divinise

[...]

Le lit massif

Bien pensif

Médite obscurément nos baisers des ténèbres.

L'air amolli

S'est rempli

De ton parfum subtil, obsesseur et complexe,

Philtre ambigu,

Suraigu

Fleur tiède épanouie au soleil de ton sexe

Tes yeux mourants

Transparents

M'ouvrent les profondeurs des verts mélancoliques. »

(Samain, *Musique confidentielle*)

Extract from: Samain, 1920.

⁶The poems of «minors» symbolist poets - where the source is not specifically mentioned – are all extracted from: Décaudin, 1992.

⁷ « Les arabesques des guipures les existences heureuses,

Talking about the "flower of sex" was certainly taboo for a 19th-century woman, but "voluptuous daydreams" represent the semantic transfer, the discursive trick necessary to refer to the same reality.

We are dealing here with the space closed in the physical sense but open to reverie ("evocations of dream lands"), to travel and the wider world, which Baudelaire expressed so well in its famous poem *The Invitation to Travel*. The same romantic reminiscence of living and loving in a dream equally animates the Baudelairean text, but otherwise luxury, the synesthesia's dear to the symbolists abound: rare perfumes, the mysticism of love intertwined with the vegetal element ("rare flowers and scents of amber") and above all, "*calm and voluptuousness*".

As in Maria Kryszyska's poem, the Baudelaire's *Invitation* ... tries to domesticate nature, to bring it into the bedroom, humanized and transformed into an *Artificial paradise*: the wood is dead ("Shiny furniture, / Dulled by time"), the flowers have withered after offering their entire fragrance.

In the prose poem, the evocative force of the voluptuousness and refinement of a room is magnified, relieved by prosodic and rhythmic constraints, like in Joris – Karl Huysmans, *Camaïeu rouge*⁸. This true inventory of objects is constituted by a complex system of objects whose meaningful values lie in the same general sphere of luxury and voluptuousness.

Inspired by the theories of the late Professor Miclău, I said in the chapter dedicated to objectology that objects have always been highlighted as signs, both by their producers and by their consumers, since Antiquity, throughout the Middle Ages, until the modern era, but only as a result of capitalist industrialization in the modern era, were people able to clearly realize the semiotic systems in which objects are arranged, precisely due to the accumulation of objects and their obvious social relevance.

Les feux joyeux dans les cheminées,
Les fleurs rares aux parfums charrieurs d'oubli,

Les fauteuils hospitaliers où sommeillent les voluptueuses songeries et – dans la splendeur des cadres – les évocations de pays rêves ».

⁸« La chambre était tendue de satin rose broché de ramages cramoisis, les rideaux tombaient amplement des fenêtres, cassant sur un tapis à fleurs de pourpre leurs grands plis de velours garnet. Aux murs étaient appendus des sanguines de Boucher et des plats ronds en cuivre fleuronés et niellés par a Renaissance artist. Le divan, les fauteuils, les chaises, étaient couverts d'étoffe pareille aux tentures, avec crépines incarnates, et sur la cheminée que surmontait une glace sans tain, découvrant un ciel d'automne tout empourpré par un soleil couchant et des forêts aux feuillages lie de vin, sépanouissait, dans une vaste jardinière, an enorme bouquet d'azalées carminées, de sauges, de digitales et d'amarantes. La toute – puissante déesse était enfouie dans les coussins du divan, frottant ses tresses rousses sur le satin cerise, déployant ses jupes roses, faisant tourner au bout de son pied sa mignonne mule de maroquin. Elle soupira mignardement, se rose, étira ses bras, fit craquer ses jointures, saisit une bouteille à large ventre et se versa, dans un petit verre efilé de patte et tourné en vrille, a filet de porto mordoré ».

If we have an obvious accumulation of objects in Huysmans' text, we find no trace of their social relevance. On the contrary, even if he is contemporary with the beginnings of industrialization, the author's aim is to particularize the states of mind and sensory perceptions and not to highlight the social status of the owners. These lexical suites: "curtains, flowered carpet, divan, armchairs, fabric-covered chairs, divan cushions, cherry-red satin, unfolding pink skirts", etc. create the semantic field of softness and voluptuousness. At the center of this refined universe we discover the "all-powerful goddess, the queen of graces", like an oyster in the middle of her shell. The erotic allusion is obvious.

In Stéphane Mallarmé poems, the interior is generated by following the dance of the pipe's smoke circles. The perfume and smoke take us to foggy London, in a *synesthetic* concert of discreet and refined suggestions, like in *La pipe* (Mallarmé, 1999)⁹.

Protection, refinement and "delights", these are the attributions and functions of the symbolist room. "When the city becomes intolerable to him, (the symbolist poet) returns, with relief, to the room where he keeps his entire universe: his clothes, his suitcase, and a few souvenirs. The mediocrity and penumbra of this poor room save him from a tumult and an overload to which he is not accustomed." (Sansot, 2004, p. 513).

Reverie, melancholy, and spleen, this generalized "disease" of 19th-century poets, are the most natural and legitimate states of mind that one can experience in the symbolist room, like in René Ghil's *Lieu des Lauriers*¹⁰. This poem by Ghil represents the quintessence of symbolist perception: lying on the sofa, sheltered from the bad weather in the protective space of the room, the poet lets himself be rocked by the jerky noise of the rain that he associates with the symphony of colors (« La pluie au long ennui plaque aux ruisseaux.../ Sa musique univoque.../ Dans le mauve et le glauque, et l'azure et les ors ») in order to kill his boredom and spleen. Nothing could be more symbolist than that!

⁹« Mon tabac sentait une chambre sombre aux meubles de cuir saupoudrés par la poussière du charbon sur quelques se roulaient le maigre chat noir; les grands feux! et la bonne aux bras rouges versant les charbons, et le fruit de ces charbons tombant du seau de tôle dans la corbeille de fer [...] ». All the poems of Mallarmé cited in this paper are extracted from: Mallarmé, 1999.

¹⁰«Tuant sur un sofa, sonneur des modes las,
Amant des rimes d'or raressimes et virges
Dans les rêves le spleen, -du là-haut morne et gras,
Quand, lourde, ploq, pliq, ploq, ainsi qu'en l'eau, des verges
[...]
La pluie au long ennui plaque aux ruisseaux, dehors,
Sa musique univoque, -ainsi, dans l'insapide,
Dans le mauve et le glauque, et l'azure et les ors.
Aux paradis sans nom il va, doux et limpide... »

The Verlaine musicality of *The Lover of Rare and Virginal Golden Rhymes* seeks the most banal onomatopoeias of these *infinitely reflecting mirrors* (*ploq, pliq, ploq*) that the poet associates with the Rimbaudian colors of vowels. By associating sounds and colors, Ghil makes the words assume, beyond their inherent meaning, another, less precise, external meaning. This true gymnastics of symbolist refinement makes Ghil's poem a masterpiece of this literary trend and manages to convince us that the music of rain must necessarily have the colors purple and gold.

Besides the room, and in a rather accidental manner, other types of rooms also appear in symbolist poetry, like in Gustave Kahn's *Le hall de fête...*¹¹

The gaiety fades and the music falls asleep. Under the impact of time and death, the ancient glory of the balls gives way to memories and silence. Kahn's verse is more reminiscent of the romantic contemplation of ruins and past glory.

In any case, contemplation is the watchword of the soul of the symbolist poet, the one who always remains in the shelter of his room to look, most often out the window, or to imagine a "real" reality or a real life.

Symbolist house

Even though it is the guarantor of security, the Cerberus of enclosed space and the first barrier between symbolist intimacy and the wider world, the house does not occupy a privileged place in symbolist poetry. On the contrary, vague and undecided, gloomy and crepuscular, the image of the house belongs to a deeply dysphoric sphere that covers all registers: compassion for the unfortunate, social injustice, neurosis, illness and death.

The house, of course, means first of all architecture. The architectural code, as we have shown, is linked to the notion of spatiality, to the relationship that exists between the architectural element and spatiality. We previously classified architectural codes into: *syntactic codes* - formally architecture is divided into: arches, pilasters, beams, ceilings, vaults and *semantic codes* - the articulation of architectural elements such as: the roof, the staircase, the dome, the terrace, plus the elements that connote a certain ideology of the habitat: the living room, the dining room and their articulation into typological genres, that is, social types: the hospital, the villa, the castle, the palace and other spatial types.

The Symbolists do not particularly privilege *the syntactic architectural code*, the shape of a house only appears incidentally in their works. Instead, *the semantic code*, especially the elements related to social types and the affective stylistics of the habitat, occupies a rather important place. As I was

¹¹ « Le hall de fête, malgré les trefles et les lys de lumière,
le hall aux musiques lumineuse –
s'endort en murmures une canzone de temps lointains –
le hall de fête est désolé malgré les présences nombreuses –
Sommes – nous dormant pour le lointain des temps ».

saying, compassion for the unfortunate influences dysphoric perception, like in Paul Verlaine (Verlaine, 1954)¹², *Charleroi*¹³.

The same urban and proletarian architecture with zero aesthetic function subtly influences the revolt against the social injustices of the new industrialized world of the mid-19th century, in Verhaeren (Verhaeren, 1982)¹⁴ poem, *Les Usines*¹⁵.

The entire "tentacle city" is here and its tentacles are the houses whose form is marked by the zero aesthetic degree and whose substance is only raw: bricks. The walls are black and stretch "immense, for whole leagues". Everything is black, suffocating, and unpleasant. When the walls degrade, the human being degrades in turn.

This oppressive vision of the habitat extends equally to the realm of the pathological, first, neurosis and the onset of madness¹⁶, then serious mental illness¹⁷. In Maeterlinck's *Hospital*, the isolation is total. The windows,

¹²All the Verlaine's poems cited in this paper are extracted from: Verlaine, 1954.

¹³ « Plutôt des bouges

Que des maisons.

Quels horizons

De forges rouges ! »

¹⁴All the Verhaeren's poems cited in this paper are extracted from: Verhaeren, 1982.

¹⁵« Rectangles de granit et monuments de briques,

Et longs murs noirs durant des lieues,

Immensément, par les banlieues ;

Et sur les toits, dans le brouillard, aiguillonnées

De fers et de paratonnerres,

Les cheminées.»

¹⁶ « Les silhouettes vagues ont le geste de la folie.

Les maisons sont assises disgracieusement

Comme de vieilles femmes –

Les silhouettes vagues ont le geste de la folie.»

(Krysinska, *Symphonie en gris*)

¹⁷« Hôpital ! hôpital au bord du canal !

Hôpital au mois de Juillet !

On y fait du feu dans la salle !

Tandis que les transatlantiques sifflent sur le canal !

(Oh ! n'approchez pas des fenêtres !)

Des émigrants traversent un palais !

Je vois un yacht sous la tempête !

Je vois des troupeaux sur tous les navires !

(Il vaut mieux que les fenêtres restent closes,

On est presque à l'abri du dehors.)

On a l'idée d'une serre sur la neige,

On croit célébrer des relevailles un jour d'orage,

On entrevoit des plantes éparses sur une couverture de laine,

Il y a un incendie un jour de soleil,

Et je traverse une forêt pleine de blessés ».

the only ways of communication with the world, the eyes of the building are closed: "Oh! don't go near the windows!" No syntactic or semantic architectural code appears here. The author takes refuge inside the hospital just as he takes refuge inside himself ("We are almost safe from the outside world") to live his total Rimbaudian type delirium: "Emigrants cross a palace!... / And I cross a forest full of wounded".

Nothing was more somber at that time than a hospital: "The hospital, that's what it meant at that time, a rare concentration of misery and pain, the living lying next to the dead, the anonymity of suffering. The hospital cumulates and doubles the cruel fate of the factory, the workshop, the unsanitary houses, the prison. (...) We abandon the drama of a single existence, its psychological profile. We throw ourselves into the ineluctable and fantastic setting of a certain city" (Sansot, 2004, p. 321).

Mallarmé himself was seduced by the theme of the hospital, a theme he treated with less violence, but also with more refinement¹⁸ to finally arrive to death, like in Georges Rodenbach's *Vieux quais*¹⁹.

Well represented, this time, the two architectural codes: syntactic and semantic ("Facades in relief, colored stained glass /... Blackened Gothic ...") are articulated to describe the buildings that border the Seine.

In fact, this description is nothing more than a gigantic metaphor of death prepared by an obvious semantic field: "The blackened Gothic, the mourning of the frontispieces, especially through the final comparison: And the moon rises in the middle of a halo/ Like a golden lamp over a catafalque".

Among the components of symbolist space, the house, with its heavy, oppressive, dysphoric forms, is, as we have shown so far, the least represented and the most feared, despite its protective role.

(Maeterlinck, *Hôpital*)

¹⁸ « Las du triste hôpital, et de l'encens fétide
Qui monte en la blancheur banale des rideaux
Vers le grand crucifix ennuyé du mur vide,
Le moribond sournois y redresse un vieux dos »
(Stéphane Mallarmé, *Les fenêtres*)

¹⁹ « Façades en relief, vitraux coloriés,
Bandes d'Amours captifs dans le deuil des cartouches,
Femmes dont la poussière a défleuri les bouches,
Fleurs de pierre égayant les murs historiés.

Le gothique noirci des pignons se décalque
En escaliers de crêpe au fil dormant de l'eau,
Et la lune se lève au milieu d'un halo
Comme une lampe d'or sur un grand catafalque ».

Symbolist window

The eyes of the symbolist artist, the windows, are the filters through which he perceives the world. Benefiting from a dual and therefore perverse nature, these large eyes are located on the border between closed and open space.

Windows are the artist's means of contact with the wider world, cloistered in the euphoric privacy of his room and protected by the dysphoric but necessary barrier of his house. Reality is nothing more than a spectacle that the poet sees or imagines he sees through the window. It intrigues through three of its attributes: the material it is made of, its position and its functioning.

Regarding matter, we can talk about the duality of glass: a solid body and at the same time transparent, translucent and brittle. It is natural because it is made of sand and artificial because it is the result of a technological process, being created by man. Glass is a miraculous substance, semi-natural and semi-artificial at the same time, supernatural, which allows one to see its contents as the eyes allow one to see the soul. As Baudrillard said in the cited work, "glass is the zero degree of matter". Referring to their position, as he said before, the windows separate two worlds, the inside and the outside, while still allowing you to take a look at the "other side".

Regarding their function, still respecting the dual character, windows let the light pass through, but at the same time, they reflect it and, with it, all the perceptible images. This last quality of "mirroring" had an amazing literary career throughout the 19th century: the romantic mirror, the motif of the double, etc. Bachelard states: "Mirrors are objects too civilized, too immutable, too geometric to be able to adapt themselves to dream life (...). The mirror encloses within itself a hidden world that escapes him. On the contrary, the fountain is for him (Narcissus) an open path..." (Bachelard, 1942, p. 34).

We saw in the symbolists, the negation, the total refusal to look out the window to plunge into their own dementia in Maeterlinck's *Hospital*. Other poets, on the other hand, respect and take advantage of the main function of the window, that of a point of observation. Contemplation is the watchword of the symbolist soul and they contemplate, precisely by looking through the window, the contemporary space, without interfering, as in René Ghil's *La ville au loin...*²⁰.

In fact, most symbolists enjoy its miraculous properties and the splendid relationships of glass with light, just like Albert Mockel in his poem *Vitre*²¹. All the virtues of glass appear here: transparency, reflection, purity and mystery, and, moreover, a sparkling pictorial vision floods the poem.

²⁰« Par les vitres en haut, la Ville, - aux Yeux - à perte [...] »

Monte haut des quadratures de pierre, et lourd

Le temps des dômes [...] »

²¹« Libre et pure de tout réseau

la Vitre, en léger prestige,

Mallarmé looks into these mirrors as if into a magic globe to observe all the figures that have been reflected in him over the years and to plunge into the world beyond in search of a voluptuous ghost²².

Others prefer to tint, personalize and shade the glass while taking advantage of the play of light and color, just like Marie Kryszewska in his poem *Les Fenêtres*²³.

Situated at the border between two worlds, windows allow contact but not exchange. On an even higher plane of openness, but still at the limit between closed and open space and equally circumscribed by the dichotomy *natural/vs./cultural*, we discover *the greenhouse*. Even though it is emblematic of the ambiguity of space and the symbolist world, the greenhouse appears only accidentally in the poem; we rather guess its presence, like in the famous *Green* of Paul Verlaine²⁴. If it weren't for the last stanza of the poem, which, through its intimacy, even voluptuousness, as well as through the idea of sleep, inconceivable outdoors in 19th-century literature, we would never have guessed that the action was taking place in a greenhouse and not in a garden²⁵.

Halfway between closed and open space, between nature and culture, between windows and garden, the greenhouse is the perfect symbolic compromise. The next degree of openness of space and the first truly open part is the garden.

éphémère et limpide érige
le rêve transparent des eaux.

[...]

nul reflet des hautes dérives
n'habite le trop clair miroir,
et les feux d'étoiles déclives

percent ses ondes sans le voir.»

²²« De singulières ombres pendent aux vitres usées.

Et ta glace de Venise, profonde comme une froide fontaine, en un rivage de guivres dédorées, qui s'y est miré? Ah! je suis sûr que plus d'une femme a baigné dans cette eau le péché de sa beauté; et peut-être verrais-je un fantôme nu si je regardais longtemps.»

(Mallarmé, *Frisson d'hiver*)

²³« Les bougies des lustres miroitent, dans les glaces, leurs grappes joyeuses,

Et sur la vitre qui est d'opale, on voit glisser des ombres fugitives, aux rythmes de musique plus vagues que des souffles.

[...]

Et tandis que la vitre miroite comme de l'eau dormante, que de charme inquiétant et que de confidences muettes, entre les plis des rideaux blanc, rouges ou roses. »

²⁴« Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles et des branches

Et puis voici mon cœur qui ne bat que pour vous. »

²⁵« Sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler ma tête

Toute sonore encore de vos derniers baisers ;

Laissez – la s'apaiser de la bonne tempête

Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez » (*Ibid.*).

Symbolist garden

The neurotic and introverted symbolist by definition leaves the closed and protective space of the walls to throw himself into the middle of nature (an ordered and humanized nature, of course) and to venture behind the last redoubt that separates his pathological sensitivity from the cruel reality of the completely open space of the city: *the garden*.

But before plunging into the middle of the garden, the symbolist soul clings, for a last contemplation from the inside out, to the terraces, the house's last bastion against nature²⁶.

We find few examples in French symbolist poetry that would lead us to think of a public garden, for the symbolist garden is rather a personal space, a flower garden²⁷.

Rather dream than reality, the further we advance on the scale of degrees of space's openness, the more concrete reality is denied to us, as we have already seen in Baudelaire. This reality is replaced by a mental decor and various moods. In the symbolists the tendency to harmonize in an agreeable manner with nature is almost non-existent. The perception of gardens is embedded in the sphere of the dysphoric because it is associated with the isotopy of *the twilight* (which contains: *evening, night, rain, autumn, winter* and especially *death*). Moreover, the time which corresponds to the symbolist space is the *twilight time* which marks, fixes and above all provokes the march towards alienation.

The garden with all the nature it contains represents the antechamber of alienation and death, the death of the vegetal element under the impact of autumn, first²⁸, then, the death of the being. The garden ruined by the merciless season becomes a metaphor for the human end.²⁹ Here we see a

²⁶ « Ah ! sur les terrasses en prenant nos épaules
longtemps, parmi la nuit d'étoiles à meurtrir
notre gloire, passons! »
(René Ghil, *Nuit aux terrasses*)

²⁷ « On ne peut plus s'asseoir, tous les bancs sont mouillés;
Crois-moi, c'est bien fini jusqu'à l'année prochaine,
Tous les bancs sont mouillés, tant les bois sont rouillés,
Et tant les cors ont fait ton ton, ont fait ton taine. »
(Jules Laforgue, *L'Hiver qui vient*)

²⁸ « Sous les villosités violettes des tartres
Les blancs Olympiens ont pris des tones caducs
Et, des arbres sans seve, et des plants sans suc
L'automne qui descend les vêt comme des martres ».
(Robert de Montesquiou, *Sous les villosités violettes*)

²⁹ « Ma vie, où des vols de colombes
Neigeaient autrefois dans l'azur,
Est un jardin rempli de tombes
Avec des hiboux sur son mur.
[...]

final barrier against open space: the garden walls. Symbolist agoraphobia precisely demarcates its borders. Finally, we see the death of beauty itself (the flowers), like in Adolphe Rette's *Le crépuscule des fleurs*³⁰.

Having now reached the end of our journey through modern French poetry, which we have analyzed in particular with the means offered by the theoretical foundation of structural anthropology and semiotics, we can say, as a final conclusion of our research on the perception of space in Symbolism, completely removing the romantic nature, is nothing more than a state of mind, a mental reality, which will become neurotic in the symbolists, in general, melancholic in Verlaine and delirious in Rimbaud's art. Space will not become "real", concrete and immediate, until after the end of the 19th century, with Cendrars and especially Apollinaire, the champion of poetic modernity in the 20th century, who opens the way to surrealism, a current equally tributary to Rimbaudian delirium.

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Leurs débris jonchent les allées
Et, sous le vieux porche jauni,
L'ennui des plaines désolées
Monte et s'enfonce à l'infini. »
(Jean Lorrain, *Jardin d'hiver*)

³⁰« J'essaie de cueillir un bouquet: chaque corolle perd sa tige, se désagrège, tombe en fine poudre...

Je ferme les yeux : un jour verdâtre filters ; les fleurs pales, pales; les voici blanches, aux tones de cire, cadavéreuses ».

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