

*In Search of
the “Chimerical”
Émile Zola:
Le Rêve
illustrated by
Carlos Schwabe*

The nineteenth century was the golden age of the modern illustrated novel and Émile Zola an author in perfect tune with his time. Having started off his career at the publishing house Hachette, where he had quickly risen to head of the publicity department, Zola was well aware of the impact of images accompanying a text. In addition, his founding friendship with Cézanne back in Aix and his Parisian activity as a fearless young art critic testify of a writer deeply interested in the visual arts and to whom painting and literature were involved in much the same combat. In 1867, the hungry young Zola presented the editor Lacroix with a project concerning an illustrated edition of his debut *Contes à Ninon* with images by a friend, Edouard Manet, the scandalous painter of the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* that had shocked visitors to the Salon des Refusés in 1863.¹ Despite the commercial arguments put forward by Zola, Lacroix turned down the proposal and the project was never realized. Other illustrators, however, would accompany the long career of Zola, where illustrations played a major role in the commercial success of a book.²

Far from a Flaubert who refused to see his texts illustrated, Zola would encourage publishers to accompany his novels with etchings and lithographs by the best illustrators

in vogue: Castelli signed the haunted images of *Thérèse Raquin* as the novel appeared in volume in 1877, and among the artists requested for the *Rougon-Macquart* cycle we find names like Balzac's Bertall, André Gill, and Georges Bellenger, but also Pierre August Renoir, who contributed a splendid drawing to the illustrated edition of *L'Assommoir*, published by Charpentier in 1878.³ *Le Rêve*, the sixteenth of the twenty volumes that constitute the long *Rougon-Macquart* series, was first published in 1888 in *La Revue illustrée* with images by Georges Jeannot (fig. 1). Another artist, however, was solicited as the text was to be published in volume some years later: Carlos Schwabe, a Swiss symbolist living in Paris. Whereas Jeannot's images had presented no surprise to readers familiar with the aesthetics of Zola's illustrated novels, Schwabe's were bound to startle.

Still an unknown artist at the time he received the command for *Le Rêve*, Carlos Schwabe went from anonymity to fame almost overnight at the opening of the first Salon de la Rose-Croix in 1892 at the Durand-Ruel Gallery.⁴ The show was the work of the Sâr Péladan, and Schwabe had signed its much-acclaimed poster. Head of the idealist movement, Joséphin Péladan was a writer and the founder of the mystic Order of the Rose-Croix. His Salon attracted a huge crowd and he promoted symbolist artists and writers of his choice.



1 Georges Jeannot, *Le Rêve*, 1888.
Source: gallica.bnf.fr/Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Péladan was a dogmatic anti-modernist, praising the esoteric, mystic, and sacred dimensions of life and calling for a return to myth, legend, and religion. Here, every aspect of vulgar realism and naturalistic art was banned. So, if among Zola's readership anyone was surprised in 1893 to discover the in-volume edition of *Le Rêve*, it was legitimate: Émile Zola illustrated by a symbolist?

Influenced by humanist thinkers such as Fourier, Schwabe was an artist carried by a strong social awareness and idealism. In this essay I will contend that Zola found in Schwabe a highly sensitive interpreter, whose images capture founding dynamics of the text, most notably the role of figural thought. Schwabe's illustrations will thus give the impetus to a quest for what I here call the "chimerical" Zola. I borrow the term from the final Rougon-Macquart novel *Le Docteur Pascal*, where it describes the mystic pole within the intelligent young Clotilde, her attraction to dream and fantasy. As scholars have timely demonstrated, Zola was himself torn between a rational and a mystic stance;⁵ the idealist sensibility is a constant in his work, from the early romantic years all the way up to the last, utopist novels *Trois Villes* and *Les Quatre Évangiles*, and recent readings of *Le Rêve* have shown to what degree its idealism resonates with these works.⁶ Scholarship has systematically stressed the novel's negative outcome, however, and insisted on the failure of Angélique's "dream" for a better world. In my search for the *chimerical* Zola, I want to reverse the perspective and instead bring attention to the way Zola suggests what an explosive potential lies in the works of the imagination. I thus propose to read *Le Rêve* as a subtle reflection on the "miracle of art": as we shall see, Angélique's faculty of imagination is associated with claims of social change and justice and this mystic élan, in concert with the motif of metamorphosis that we shall see varied throughout the novel in connection to artworks, indicates

that *Le Rêve* voices a stronger faith in the subversive forces of art and literature than has been argued.

The artistic encounter in 1893 between Zola's *Le Rêve* and the symbolist Carlos Schwabe was unexpected, not the least to all those who knew Zola as an outspoken art critic. This dimension of his work is obviously of interest to us, in particular Zola's last article published in 1896 where he addressed the symbolist school in very ambivalent terms.

The art critic in 1866 and in 1896 – the criterion of originality

Since 1866 Zola had made himself a name as the most ardent defender of the impressionist avant-garde and of Manet, whom he had met at the Café Guerbois and immediately identified as the leader of a new naturalistic school.⁷ The sensuousness of the realist paintings representing scenes from everyday life, landscapes, and banal subjects of popular modern city life had resonated with Zola's own literary project. When the symbolist aesthetics emerged in the 1880s, it was widely seen as a reaction against realism for it put its emphasis on the opposite pole, the immaterial world of Ideas.⁸

In his very last piece of art criticism, the account of the Salons of 1896 that hit the presses of the *Figaro* on May 2, Zola addressed the symbolist "fashion."⁹ The article is more complex in its critique than it first may seem and it highlights a constant in Zola's definition of the artist that is worth reminding of here, namely the criterion of originality. Zola conceded that the idealist school is a rightful reaction, one that should allow a new generation of painters and writers to find their voices and seek out their specificity after the prevailing schools of naturalism and realism.¹⁰ He, who swore only by *realism, truth, nature, and life*, even

took the time to point out what every visitor to his house in Médan can still observe today, namely his affection for medieval embroidery and statuettes, gothic and renaissance aesthetics in craft and design, including stained-glass windows.¹¹ But the art critic in him was devastated by the lack of originality in the paintings filling the walls of the Salon. Whereas Puvis de Chavannes was an exceptional artist in every sense of the word “who knows and does what he wants,” the exhibition presented petty followers of the master, to Zola’s mind.¹² These copyists indulged in “a lamentable excess of mysticism,” their “unsexed virgins with neither breasts nor hips” struck Zola as a “challenge to nature, [a] hatred for the flesh and the sun.”¹³ Puvis’s tall figures “may not live in the realm of our every day lives, they no less have a life of their own, logical and complete, subject to laws determined by the artist”: “Nothing is of greater strength or health than his simplified tall figures.”¹⁴ Zola admitted a sincere admiration for the precursor but was appalled by those he considered to be his imitators.

The verdict of absence of originality was valid also for the second tendency dominating the 1896 Salons, namely the school of “plein air”¹⁵ – a judgment that has given critics reason to say somewhat hastily that the aging Zola had abandoned the painters he had so long defended.¹⁶ Zola did not hide his dismay. Now that impressionism was a buzzword, everybody adhered to the aesthetics of light and color: “They are all Manet then, all Monet, all Pissarro!”¹⁷ Wherever Zola turned his eyes he saw but pale copyists of masters! These impressionist paintings were no less denaturalized, “bloodless” and artificial than the works adhering to the idealist “fashion” where “faith is missing.”¹⁸

To Zola, who understood the artwork as “a corner of creation seen through a temperament,” nothing was worse than lack of originality: for an artist to earn his admiration the work must break new ground.¹⁹ Did he then

credit Schwabe with some originality in choosing him as the surprising illustrator of the in-volume edition of *Le Rêve*? Indeed it seems so, for in the only letter in Zola’s correspondence with his publisher Flammarion where the painter is mentioned, Zola speaks of Schwabe in precisely these terms: “I am sure this artist will give us a very artistic and original work.”²⁰ Zola always emphasized the role of the artist’s personality and subjectivity in the process of artistic creation, and this despite the rigid scientific claims of his theoretical writings. The famous ‘theory of the screen,’ formulated in a letter to Antony Valabrègue, dated August 18 1864, defines his preferred variety of the “écran réaliste” as a screen that “lies just enough to make me feel a man in the image of creation.”²¹ In some sense then Zola’s credo was in tune with the Symbolist aesthetics that stressed subjective interpretation as a key instrument in apprehending and representing the world. Zola could easily side, too, with the Symbolists concerning the importance of sensibility. Reason is not the only epistemological faculty! However, Zola’s sensibility would always stay anchored in the material world: in the senses and the body, in an all-dominating sensualism. If he too was drawn to *ideas* and certainly did not mind being called an idealist,²² he stayed forever puzzled by an idealism which turned its back on the real world and on contemporary social conditions.²³

Zola, we should remember, had started out deeply influenced by the romantic school. During his childhood and adolescence, Romanticism was the founding aesthetics for both him and Cézanne.²⁴ As a young boy, he admired the works of painters such as Greuze and Ary Scheffer, and was carried away by poets such as Musset and Victor Hugo, or the *Paul et Virginie* of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre. In the novel *L’Œuvre* from 1886, Zola had his alter ego, the writer Sandoz, state what many a reader of *Les Rougon-Macquart* intuitively senses:

Yes, our generation has been soaked in romanticism, and we have remained impregnated with it. It is in vain that we wash ourselves and take baths of reality, the stain is obstinate, and all the scrubbing in the world won’t take it away.²⁵ When in 1893 Zola ended his vast *Rougon-Macquart* cycle with the novel *Le Docteur Pascal*, he let the sensible and intelligent Clotilde recognize a founding duality in herself: she is equally drawn to the “real” or “exact” *and* to the “chimerical,” equally torn between the scientific *and* the mystic. In much the same way, all Zola’s writing is built on the constant tension between dry fact and fantastic fiction, strict documentation and boundless imagination. *Le Rêve* is the culminating moment of the chimerical Zola in *Les Rougon-Macquart*.

Le Rêve within the Rougon-Macquart cycle

When Zola began the monumental cycle *Les Rougon-Macquart* in 1870, he set out to write the natural and social history of a family during the Second Empire, the reign of Napoleon the Third that had just come to an end. *La Comédie humaine*, Balzac’s fresco of French society during the Restoration, was of course the undisputed model for Zola. Zola wanted to do the same, but painting his own time, using his own means, his own obsessions. In planning the 20 novels of the cycle Zola undertook to show how man is determined by heredity and environment, following the ideas of Taine in particular. He decided upon five “worlds” which would serve as frameworks for his naturalistic description of the different members of the Rougon-Macquart with their specific physiological properties. Characters like the unforgettable Gervaise and her lover Auguste Lantier in

L'Assommoir belong to the world of the working-class or People; a second world is that of merchants, les *Commerçants*, and in a third group of texts Zola mocks the Bourgeoisie; in a fourth, he considers the world of decision makers and politicians, *le grand monde*. A fifth world, finally, is set apart from the others. In this “monde à part,” representatives of professions as diverse as the prostitute, the murderer, the priest, and the artist are brought together.²⁶ It is in this fifth framework that we find the characters of *Le Rêve*.

Le Rêve is, as the title announces, not quite in Zola's ordinary naturalistic vein. For here we meet with angels and ectoplasmic apparitions; phantoms fill the air and we hear of miracles and saints. All this due to yet another Rougon-Macquart: Angélique, the young orphan girl early abandoned by her mother Sidonie Rougon, a greedy procuress and scrupulous business woman living in the popular neighborhoods of Paris.²⁷

The novel opens on Christmas Day morning in 1860, as the nine-year-old Angélique is found freezing in front of the Romanesque-Gothic cathedral in the small town of Beaumont in northern France. She is taken in and ultimately adopted by the town's ecclesiastical embroiderers living next door to the cathedral, the childless and goodhearted couple Hubert. Although their trade has been passed on for centuries in the family, Angélique soon outdistances both Hubert and Hubertine in skillfulness and artistry as she learns to embroider the rich robes of the Church's men.

Angélique thus quickly reveals the inherited artistic temperament she carries within, one that links her to, for instance, a tragic genius like Claude Lantier in *L'Œuvre* (1886). Passion, imagination, and folly are signature marks of these artist souls who, as we just saw, were placed in the same category as priests and prostitutes in Zola's planning of the cycle. If the latter are absent in *Le Rêve*, desire is no

less a significant theme and the presence of priests is prominent, bringing together the topics of sexuality, religion, and artistic creation in a story that most contemporary critics dismissed as a harmless conte bleu.²⁸

Zola had been known before to surprise his audience by making radical changes in tone and universe when passing from one novel to the next inside the *Rougon-Macquart* series. After *La Terre*, where scenes of rape, incest, and murder in the description of peasants and French rural life had caused regular outburst and scandal,²⁹ *Le Rêve* was unexpected and new coming from his pen with its medieval, mystic atmosphere of the cathedral town Beaumont. Yet, its principal themes were long among Zola's trademarks: adolescent love, the battle between the bodily senses and the spirit, art as mimetic illusion, and the critique of the Catholic Church exercising its moral and social coercion.³⁰ French society in 1888 was experiencing a strong revival of idealism, religion, and spirituality. The topics treated in *Le Rêve* were more than pertinent in the contemporary debate.

A Swiss symbolist in Paris

Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond's rich book devoted to Carlos Schwabe presents us with an idealist painter driven by a social and moral awareness inspired by the utopist theories of a Charles Fourier.³¹ Born as Emile Martin Charles Schwabe in Hamburg, Germany, the Swiss citizen Carlos Schwabe had only recently moved to Paris when Flammarion and Zola commissioned the illustrations for *Le Rêve* and Péladan solicited him for the poster of the Salon de la Rose-Croix. In Geneva he had been a student at the School of Industrial Arts. There he learned the trade of decorative painting by copying the ancient masters and by studying motifs like plants, animals, and flowers in the garden

of the School. Stylized flowers would soon count among Schwabe's favorite subjects, an Art Nouveau iconography we will see put to wonderful use in *Le Rêve*.

During the 1890s, Schwabe's work was characterized by the recurrence of hieratic, archaic, ideal angel figures inspired by his beloved first wife Maria and attesting to his interest in the Pre-Raphaelites and in old masters such as Dürer, Botticelli, and Mantegna. After *Le Rêve*, he would be sought for a number of select book illustration projects by bibliophile societies. When illustrating the poems of Baudelaire, his more sensual vein fully surfaces. Schwabe's personal vision of the artist as a close-to-Christ figure, sacrificing himself on the altar of art, strongly resonated with the dialectics of *Spleen et Idéal* emphasized by the poet. Works by Mallarmé, Catulle Mendès, and Maurice Maeterlinck complete the series of symbolist texts that Schwabe illustrated.³²

Symbolist book illustration, as opposed to that of the romantic and the realist periods, is characterized by the image seeking a certain autonomy from the text, following the principle of Baudelairian correspondences determined by complementarity rather than by redundancy.³³ One medium is thought to enrich the other, and the images may even be conceived of as a second, complementary piece of art rather than as faithful descriptions of the principal events and scenes.³⁴ Even though Schwabe took a strong painterly approach to the text, most of the images can be considered what Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine discusses as “citations” of the written text: that is, they can be brought back to Zola's choice of vocabulary or “repertoire.”³⁵ Critics disagree on whether Carlos Schwabe's interpretation of *Le Rêve* surprised Zola or not: Jumeau-Lafond argues the work upset the novelist and cites a contemporary witness who recounted having heard Zola say he found “things in the images he does not remember having put in his text;”³⁶

Danielle Chaperon, on the contrary, contends that Zola very conscientiously chose Schwabe in order that the novel's intrigue would be “transposed to the level of the illustrated book: a symbolist transplanted into a naturalistic novel immediately becomes a case of “mystic pathology,” a character of some sort” (my translation).³⁷ There is little information on Zola's reaction, but if he was indeed startled, the reason may well have been Schwabe's choice to take the text by the letter and *visualize the invisible*. Georges Jeannot's illustrations from 1888 had taken the opposite approach, only exceptionally representing Angélique's visions and thus dismissing them as folly and illusion. I want to argue that Zola found in Schwabe a congenial illustrator for his so profoundly contradictory and torn text, one that it is now time to explore in some detail.

My reading will take a twofold *intermedial* approach to *Le Rêve*: hence, the novel is analyzed both through the dialogue between Schwabe's images and Zola's writing, and through the correspondences between the verbal and the visual medium present in Zola's text. Scholars have often noted the insistence of the image in *Le Rêve* and have related it to Angélique's naïve understanding of the world, to the novel's unrealistic atmosphere and its share of legend.³⁸ I want to suggest it has further implications. The intermedial focus chosen here puts the image in the center of our attention; as we will see, it contributes to a dynamics where the “inanimate becomes animate,” art as creation is thematized, and important emphasis is given to figural thought and its – politically explosive – principle of *transfiguration*.

Announcing the colors: the novel's opening

Key words in the opening pages of Zola's *Le Rêve* immediately set the atmosphere and scenery. “Christmas Day” evokes the idea of a sacred gift arriving in the form of a child ‘being born’ to the childless Hubert couple; “Rue des Orfèvres” announces the role that fine old craftsmanship is to play; “the upper town” suggests there is a lower city and thus a vertical opposition of high and low; “the cathedral” finally, with the image of Saint Agnes represented on its central portal, puts religion and mysticism – and very much the visual arts – right into the center of the picture.

The ties between art works and the principal character Angélique are instantly established. Described as a “wavering shape”³⁹ in the snowstorm, the child is leaning against the cathedral wall, exhausted. Angélique has wandered for hours, running from violent foster parents, a tanner couple living in downtown Beaumont. Her ascension towards the cathedral suggests she instinctively seeks salvation by leaving the lower spheres for a higher transcendental world. To her mind she has reached “the end of the world,”⁴⁰ and she is physically at the end of her rope: “the only sign of life in her was the wispy steam of her breath.”⁴¹ As she clings to the cathedral wall trying to escape the storm, “sinking still deeper into these old stones,”⁴² it is as if her body were metamorphosing into the stone structure, becoming one with the building behind her.

Zola's incipit is packed with subtle suggestions of miracles and metamorphoses of flesh turning into stone and vice versa. The nine-year-old child of flesh and bone, with her mutative, “wavering shape,” is gently juxtaposed with the inanimate statue of Saint Agnes, carved in stone above her:



2 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893.
Angélique in the shape of a lily striving upwards.
Source: gallica.bnf.fr/Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



3 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893. The chained lily.
Source: gallica.bnf.fr./Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Standing on her pillar, with her white palm and her white lamb, the statue of the virgin child had a white purity and a body as spotless as snow, in its stiff and icy immobility, such as to freeze around her the mystical transports of victorious virginity. And at her feet, the other figure – the poor miserable girl, white with snow too, frozen stiff and white so that she seemed to be turning to stone – was no longer distinguishable from the great virgins.⁴³

Sharing stiffness and whiteness, the stone virgin and the girl seem to leave their respective ontological status for a moment, exchanging in a mystic communion between art and human flesh that is to lay the foundations for *Le Rêve*.

Zola saw to it that nothing here is in a fixed state: everything seems floating, moving, in transition. Accordingly, the transitory mode is key throughout the novel: the cathedral's architecture goes from Romanesque to Gothic, depending on where one stands;⁴⁴ its ornaments can be evoked as both image and verb, depending on whether its saints and martyrs are sculptures or written chronicles in the *Golden Legend*; human beings have the correctness of marbles (Hubertine),⁴⁵ the posture of a stained-glass figure,⁴⁶ or simply the elegance of a lily⁴⁷ – everything in the novel *Le Rêve* is about to turn into something else.

The phrase “a wavering shape” that introduces Angélique to the readers is motivated by the snowy scenery in which she first appears, but also instantly points to a double indecisiveness in her nature. For one, it announces the uncertain ontological status that characterizes both her and the story she is part of, I will argue.⁴⁸ For another, it underscores her identity as a child bearing the curse of the Rougon-Maquart heredity. It is the “stain of the original sin” that Hubertine will in vain try to “wipe [...] away from her.”⁴⁹ Although Angélique is transposed into a new family context of goodness and honesty when adopted by the

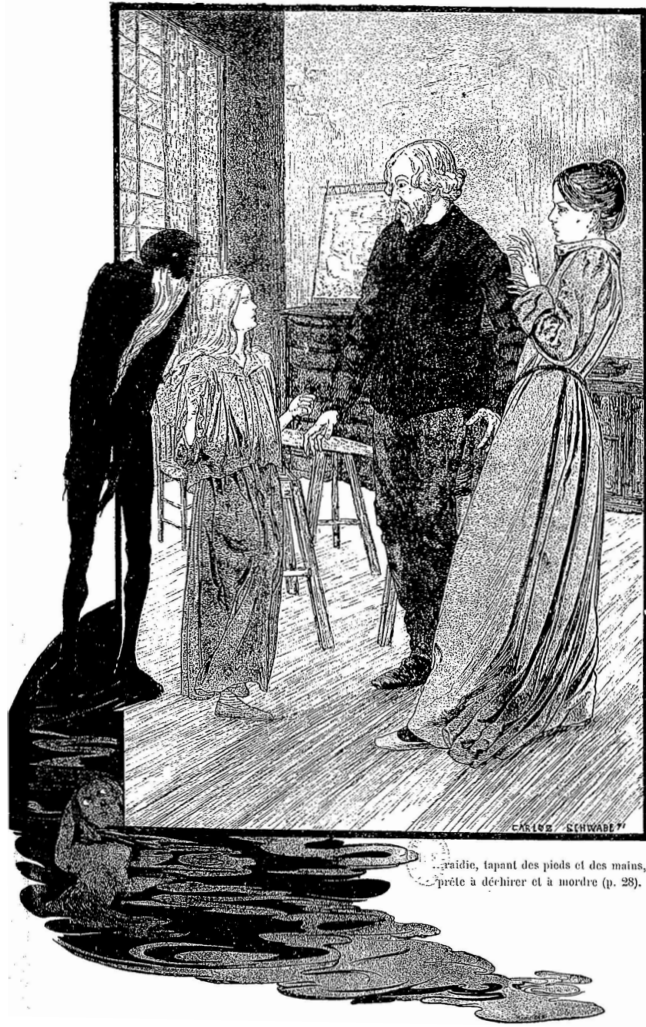
Huberts, she will remain characterized by the ambiguity between old heredity and new environment. She can metamorphose within a second, transforming from the delicate “lily” to a hissing diabolic “snake.”⁵⁰

Carlos Schwabe brilliantly renders this tension in her through some introductory images that show Angélique in the shape of a lily striving upwards (fig. 2) and growing out of a dark muddy, watery landscape from which she must be unchained before the monstrous creatures of heredity can stop emerging, tormenting her (fig. 3).⁵¹ In another illustration Schwabe insists on the clash between Angélique's biological origins and her new environment in the house of the embroiderers and makes the symbolic realm and the realistic realm co-exist within different sections of a same picture (fig. 4):

They could no longer recognize in her the little blonde lass with her violet-coloured eyes and her long neck with its lily-like grace. Her eyes had turned black in her vengeful face, and her sensual neck had swelled as the blood rose in her. Now that she was warm, stood erect, hissing like a snake they had picked up off the snow.⁵² [T]hey were frightened by this little monster, and retreated before her, alarmed at the raging devil within her. Who was she, then? Where did she come from? These foundlings are almost always the products of vice and crime.⁵³

Passion is the mark of Angélique and it must be stifled here in her new Beaumont environment. It is also a dynamic force of creation, constitutive of art and invention, as we are soon to find out.

Schwabe's reading is also immediately attentive to Zola's topological symbolism. His frontispiece (fig. 5) stresses the vertical opposition between upper and lower Beaumont, thus giving instant focus to a relation that Zola will explore both in terms of a sociocultural hierarchy and a celestial-



4 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893.
 Angélique in the house of the embroiderers.
 Source: gallica.bnf.fr./Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

versus-terrestrial dimension. In placing the cathedral at the top of the hill, showing a heart at its center and giving it giant wings embracing the city, Schwabe responds to Zola's verbal description and foregrounding of the medieval church:

The cathedral explains everything, gave birth to everything and preserves everything. She is the mother, the queen, standing enormous amidst the huddled heap of low houses, which look like a brood sheltering from the cold beneath her wings of stone. The people who live here do so only for her and by her leave; industries work, and shops sell their good, only to nourish her, to clothe her, and to maintain her, together with her clergy.[...] She is a heart beating at the centre: every street is one of her veins, and the town draws breath only when she herself breathes.⁵⁴

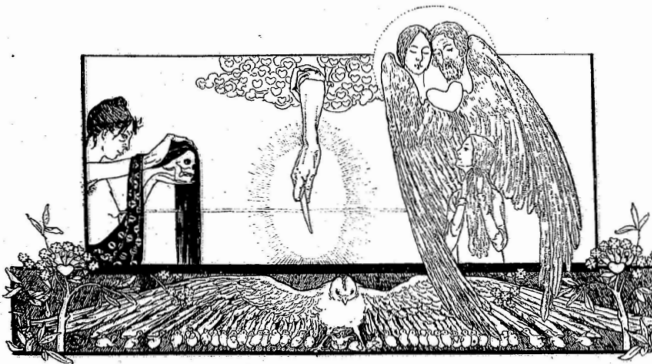
Zola's suggestive simile of the protective mother bird is reiterated by Schwabe in other two images opening and closing chapter two (fig. 6).

The cathedral is indeed a strong force of conservation: in the upper town called Beaumont-l'Église live some thousand souls whose lives circle entirely around the ancestral traditions of the church and the Bishop's palace, whereas in downtown Beaumont-la-ville, modern contemporary life is swarming with ten thousand inhabitants striving in prosperous bourgeois activities. Between the two spheres, there is no exchange and the only time Beaumont-la-ville is again mentioned is when the annual procession of the Miracle celebrating the statue of Saint Agnes descends into the streets of the modern city and spreads its antique gospel before the incredulous eyes of its citizens.

Beaumont-l'Église is thus completely set apart from the modern, secular world below. Here, where Angélique is to continue her life, a claustrophobic atmosphere reigns that is enhanced by Zola's choice to confine the events to



5 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893. The frontispiece.
 Source: gallica.bnf.fr./Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



6 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893.

The protective mother bird, closing image of chapter 2.
Source: gallica.bnf.fr/Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

a setting made up only of the house with its workshop, the garden, the cathedral, and the castle ruins of the Hauteceœur fortress. Zolian scholarship has given due attention to this claustrophobic atmosphere and the novel's structure has been described as particularly "cloisonné".⁵⁵ Colette Becker has pointed out its affinity with the genre of the *conte*, where both space and time are unhistorical.⁵⁶ Time has stopped and is circular in the peaceful house of the Huberts, where the old craftsmanship of embroidery has been passed on through generations, respecting the same original tools and ancient designs. Here prevails a "hatred of change."⁵⁷ Science and knowledge have no business here, for Hubertine reckons there is no need to send Angélique to school and she charges herself with the girl's education: "she concurred with the tried and tested view that a woman knows quite enough when she can spell and has mastered the four rules of arithmetic."⁵⁸ Angélique's only reading is the medieval account of the lives of the saints, Jacques de

Voragine's the *Golden Legend*, whose marvels thrill her. The house is a breeding-ground for legend and myth. Time here is cyclic, figural, non linear. Angélique's lack of instruction, not the least her historical ignorance, will increase the impact on her imagination of the legends and the myths told and retold during the long hours in the workshop.

The theme of passion versus obedience

The claustrophobic composition of the setting returns in the composition of the characters and themes. Zola creates a cyclical structure of repetition and identity linking three couples and their love stories with one another, all marked by the controversy of passion versus obedience.⁵⁹ As is so often the case in Zolian texts touching on religion, *Le Rêve* will align a series of characters that, sooner or later, are forced to dominate their senses and desires in the name of duty and convention.

The destinies of three tragic couples are thus mystically entangled: that of the young lovers Angélique and Félicien; that of the childless embroiderers Hubert and Hubertine; and, finally, that of the parents of Félicien, the young lady of Hauteceœur who died "at the peak of [her] happiness"⁶⁰ and Félicien's grieving father, the Monseigneur Hauteceœur, who turned Bishop in despair at the death of his beloved wife. Reflexivity and similitude is the organizing principle among these characters⁶¹, who all mirror different aspects of each other and whose common feature it is to represent terrestrial passion. Hence Angélique can be said to chiasmatically repeat Hubertine's story, just as Félicien repeats that of his father the Bishop. In Beaumont-l'Église human passion is incompatible with duty and their love story is thus bound to run up against convention. The fiercest guardians of

convention are none other than Hubertine and the Bishop, for both of them hold a passionate nature to be responsible for the tragic events in their own lives and try desperately to control it through humility and obedience.

As a young girl, Hubertine herself – just like Angélique – had fallen in love outside her cast and, against her mother's will, had decided to marry the boy. The chasuble maker Hubert was a "lesser" man and before passing away the mother put a curse on the couple that, to this day, has remained childless. Hubertine believes that she and Hubert are punished for their disobedience and she repents as best she can: "Happiness for poor folk like us lies in humility and obedience" she declares, thus teaching Angélique the rules to live by.⁶² "To obey was to live. It was necessary to obey God, one's parents, one's superiors – a whole hierarchy of respect, outside of which existence would become disordered and corrupt."⁶³

Hubertine's worst nightmare, because it is also her deepest affinity, is the passion she saw in Angélique at her arrival, a passion she must not only dominate in herself but also in her beloved husband Hubert, who is always eager to endorse Angélique's excesses: "He was only too happy to soar aloft into cloudy heights with the girl."⁶⁴ Hubert, conscious of his passionate nature, takes heed of his wife's warnings and seeks to temper his excessive character as well as that of Angélique: "You hear, Angélique? You must listen to your mother. You and I are both a bit crazy, she's the only sensible one...."⁶⁵ His submissiveness to the principles of Hubertine is finally going to seal Angélique's destiny.

In much the same way, the bishop Monseigneur Hauteceœur has chosen to live in obedience and priestly seclusion since the loss of his beautiful wife after the birth of Félicien. In order not to be reminded of the woman whose memory so haunts him he even had his son sent away to be raised by another. Félicien, who is now twenty years of age,

has learned the craft of stained-glass painting and, when Angélique first lays eyes on him, is restoring a window in the Bishop's chapel depicting Saint George slaying the dragon. For the Bishop, who believed himself to be cured of his memories, it takes only a look into the face of Félicien to see the portrait of his beloved wife come alive and have the man in him wake again:

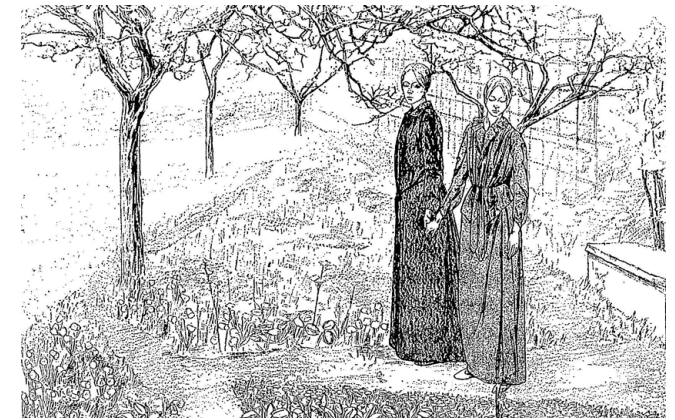
His increasing age, twenty years of prayers, God's descent into his soul: nothing had killed off his old self. And all it needed was for this child of his flesh, the flesh of the woman he had adored, to rise up before him, with laughter in his blue eyes, and his heart started beating fit to burst, filled with the belief that the dead woman had come back to life. He beat his breast, he sobbed in fits of ineffectual penitence, crying that the priesthood should be forbidden to anyone who has enjoyed a woman and contracted blood ties springing from her. [...] Ah, passion! – the evil beast that he longed to crush, so he might fall back into the extinguished peace of divine love!⁶⁶

Passion, Zola makes us understand, is a human condition that has no place in Beaumont-l'Église where the cathedral's "vast mass [...] blocked out the sky."⁶⁷ Following the laws of reflexivity that govern the text the Bishop's decision can only be one: "He would kill the passion in his son, just as he longed to kill it in himself."⁶⁸



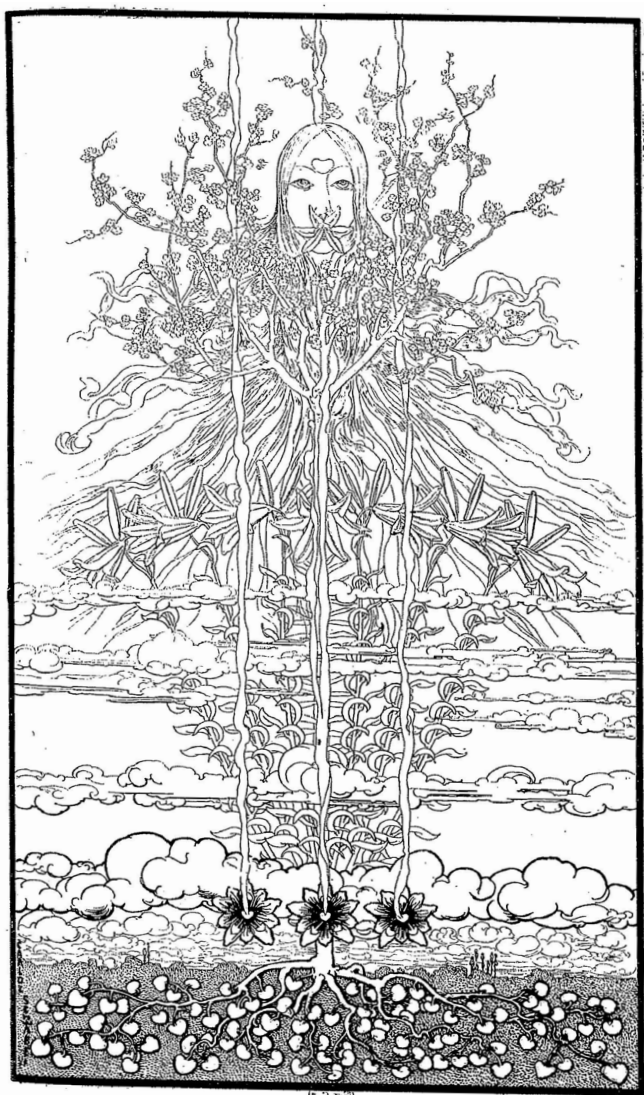
7 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893. Angélique and Hubertine. Source: gallica.bnf.fr/Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

8 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893. Angélique and Hubertine. Source: gallica.bnf.fr/Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



The figural composition of characters: from intratext to intertext

Not only do the young lovers Angélique and Félicien mimic aspects of the surrounding characters, they also draw much of their fictional identity from the lives of two saints as these are told in *The Golden Legend* and appear sculpted, embroidered, and painted in the rich Christian artworks of Beaumont.⁶⁹ Angélique is modeled on Saint Agnes, the child martyr whose sculpture she finds herself stranded under that Christmas Day morning when the story begins, while Félicien is likened either to Saint George fighting the Dragon – the very motif of the window he is restoring as they meet – or directly to the Christ and King. The dynamics of reflexivity, then, are not only *intratextually* but also *intertextually* anchored, or should we better say, *intermedially*? – for the types of Saint Agnes and Saint George are evoked through visual and verbal media alike in Zola's *Le Rêve*.



9 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893. Angélique as Saint Agnes.
Source: gallica.bnf.fr./Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Whereas Georges Jeannot had drawn on the many descriptions of martyrs' ordeals for his illustrations, presenting images belonging to medieval iconography and clearly depicting a page from the *Golden Legend*,⁷⁰ Carlos Schwabe never resorted to the simple solution of reproducing any of the narratives or artworks described. In contrast, he seems to intuitively have captured their narrative function, for he is immediately sensitive to Zola's different uses of reflexivity as a compositional principle and he beautifully enhances it in his images. Schwabe thus underlines the *intratextual* analogies between characters by giving them a troubling physical resemblance, making the adoptive mother and her daughter twin-like (fig. 7) or even each other's perfect reflection (fig. 8). For the intertextual mirroring, in turn, referring to the lives of the saints, Schwabe insists on the sensuality of the female body and lets Angélique's long blond hair down. Saint Agnes is the child martyr represented through a tail of hair concealing her naked body, an attribute emphasized by Zola;⁷¹ the illustrations here lay bare the passionate, indeed erotic dimension of martyrdom when picturing Angélique as Saint Agnes surrounded by swelling vegetation and gorgeous nature (fig. 9 and 10). Schwabe's abundant flower motifs are constantly erotic, thus giving resonance to the characteristic Zolian association between the topos of the garden and sexuality, explored in *Le Rêve* as it was earlier in *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*.

Schwabe thus alternates between two very different interpretations of Angélique: one where she looks like a younger version of the wise Hubertine, her hair neatly tucked away in a bun; and the other, where she takes on

the traits of the passionate Saint, with long open hair as an erotic attribute and where she recalls the girl who arrived as a foundling (cf. figure 4). Schwabe's visual typology is a brilliant counterpart to the typology operating in Zola's text and it underscores the weight of tradition, intratextual as well as intertextual. Just as he had initially stressed the transitory mode through images visualizing the principle of metamorphosis, his images now strengthen the claustrophobic feeling of cyclical life in Beaumont-l'Église instead, underpinning the impossibility of change and disruption.

Schwabe's subtle reading thus reveals two essential modes operating in the novel: a transitory mode implying transformation and change, and an opposite mode of circularity as arrested stasis. Both are equally linked to mimicry and repetition, something that suggests that, reading *Le Rêve*, we should perhaps not conceive of mimicry and repetition in terms of conservation alone if we want to grasp the full scope of the novel. I want to suggest that Schwabe's



10 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893. Angélique as Saint Agnes.
Source: gallica.bnf.fr./Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

double reading captures a fundamental structure of the text, namely its dependence on *figural thought*, characterized by its simultaneous emphasis on mimicry and change.

Jean-Louis Cabanès has timely insisted on the medieval anchorage of the novel's mimetic mirror composition, and shown that Zola was well acquainted with the works of his contemporaries Maury and Michelet on the analogical principle so typical for the medieval world.⁷² I want to pursue this line of thought by introducing Erich Auerbach's term *figura* into the discussion. In his account of figural thought, Auerbach emphasizes the possibility of "change within the same." Whereas Cabanès discussion confirms the strong focus on static immobility often put forward by critics in their reading of *Le Rêve*⁷³, Auerbach's argument on the *figura* allows us to shift focus and instead highlight the novel's other, transitory, mode.

The middle ages and figural thought

Le Rêve is a text drawing on the vogue for medievalism in 1888, a fashion that had been emphasized through the idealist movement, as we saw earlier in this essay. The reflexive, typological structure described above evokes the use of the *figura* in Christian theology, a tradition particularly strong in the European Middle Ages. Erich Auerbach, in his famous essay "Figura" (1938) and the seminal work *Mimesis* (1946), demonstrated the importance that types and exempla played for medieval Christians in their understanding of life. The word *figura* originally meant "plastic form" but soon encompassed "mold" (p. 13), "shape," "image," "appearance," "model," "copy," "statue," "portrait," "type."⁷⁴ Figural thought enabled the symbolic connection of two events or persons and invested them with a common meaning and essence:

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both, being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life.⁷⁵

This *figural prophecy or prefiguration* is essential in Christian theology for the understanding of the New Testament as a fulfillment of the Old Testament. Characters and events in the Old Testament are believed to foreshadow their corresponding fulfillments in the gospel: Adam is a *figura* or *type* in the Old Testament pre-figuring the arrival of the Christ in the New Testament, just as Noah's ark foreshadows the Church.⁷⁶

This kind of figural thinking dominated the conception of reality and history in medieval Europe and, according to Auerbach, stayed influential up until the eighteenth century. Its core is the understanding of a "new manifestation," a "changing aspect" "of the permanent."⁷⁷ The figural principle is thus a "creative, formative principle" implying "change amid the enduring essence," in other words allowing for "the shades of meaning between copy and archetype."⁷⁸

The reflexivity between Angélique and Hubertine, between Angélique and the Lady of Hauteceœur, or even between Angélique and Hubert, like that between Félicien and his father Monseigneur Hauteceœur – coupled with the intertextual resonances of the characters – point to a figural organization of the text. It seems to me that Zola poetically and playfully explores this Christian figural tradition with its obvious extensions into the visual arts (*figura* as plastic form originally belongs to the visual sphere). Statues, sculptures, embroideries, sketches, and images on stained-glass windows in *Le Rêve*, all participate in acts of metamorphosis, transubstantiation, and transfiguration, as the narrative

insists on the principles of analogy and likeness that governs the image or *figura*. Artworks coming alive in real persons and persons creating life through art are founding dynamics of the text.

As easily as a given *type* passes from inanimate to living matter in *Le Rêve*, as easily does it move from visual to verbal media and back again. Hence Saint Agnes turns up as a sculpture on the portal, as a wooden statue inside the church, as a written narrative in the Golden Legend, as an embroidered figure on the Bishop's miter designed by Félicien, and, of course, in Angélique herself, the girl of flesh and blood for whom she serves as the *figura*. The extreme porosity between ontological dimensions – that we already saw announced in the incipit – is illustrated in Félicien's drawing for the Bishop's miter where Saint Agnes becomes a spitting image of Angélique, a figure she will in turn embroider and render alive through her exceptional artistry:

But, as she stared fixedly at the saint, Angélique had just realized something that flooded her heart with joy.

Agnes looked just like her. As he had been drawing the old statue, Félicien must have been thinking of her.⁷⁹ Over and over in *Le Rêve*, works of art and human beings engage and exchange in the most intimate dialogues.

In figural thought we find the principle of *identity in essence* between copy and model that also governs the fundamental Christian doctrines of transubstantiation, transfiguration, and the Trinity.⁸⁰ The first claims that the host, in actual substance, is the flesh of Christ and that the wine is his blood; the second shows Jesus metamorphosed on the mountain as God in Man, as the eternal within the temporal, an event figurally understood to anticipate the Resurrection; the third, finally, presents the one God as three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

To transfigure is to change appearance, shape, aspect, body, form. *Le Rêve* announces the dynamics of metamorphosis as a guiding principle from its very opening pages and it keeps operating until the tragic end. Mystical transformations, where a copy is imbued with the essence of an archetype making it the fulfillment of a *figura*, seem to be poetically explored in *Le Rêve*, where Zola cannot but eventually also touch upon the theme of creation. Artistic creation is thus a given theme in the novel. It is time to let Angélique take us there.

Passion and creation – the marks of the artist’s soul

Angélique, like other characters before her in *Les Rougon-Macquart*, has the sensibility of an artist. As she learns the craft of embroidery, her artistic nature is immediately revealed. She is the most talented embroiderer and soon she has outdistanced the Huberts in artistry and creativity. Without any hesitation Zola credits her “hereditary flame.”⁸¹ It is Angélique’s passion, pride, and imagination, the traits inherited from the Rougon-Macquart family that Hubertine has in vain tried to eliminate from Angélique’s personality, that explain the enigma of her artistic talent:

Angélique had become an expert embroiderer, with a skill and a taste that made the Huberts marvel. To what they had taught her, she added her own *passion*, which gave *life* to the flowers, and faith to the symbols. Under her hands, the silk and the gold seemed to become *living things*; a mystical fervor filled the least decorations with *animation*, and she devoted herself fully to her task, with her *imagination* continually active, and her belief in the world of the *invisible* secure. Some of her embroideries had caused such a stir in the diocese of Beaumont that

one priest, an archaeologist in his spare time, and another who was very fond of paintings, had come to see her, and had fallen into raptures at the sight of her Virgins, which they compared to the naïve figures of the early masters. (my emphases)⁸²

Angélique brings alive any material she manipulates. She creates life – out of the void. Copying after models, crafting along the guidelines of tradition may be good enough for the Huberts, but not for her. Angélique’s needlework transgresses the rules, discards them in order to invent new forms of life out of the invisible. When she finishes a rose it is “so fresh that its fragrance seem[s] to waft up from the satin”:⁸³

She had a gift for drawing, a real miracle which, without any teacher, merely by virtue of her evening studies by lamplight, often made it possible for her to improve on her models, moving away from them to follow her own fantasy and create new things with the point of her needle. So it was that the Huberts [...] took something of a back seat in comparison with her, in spite of their seniority [...] being no more than her assistants.⁸⁴

After a long day in the workshop, Angélique returns to her room where she devours the *Golden Legend*, Jacques de Voragine’s medieval account of the lives of the saints. The illustrated book is her only reading: Angélique firmly believed in miracles. In her ignorance, she lived in the midst of marvels, the rising of the stars and the blossoming of the simple violets. It struck her as crazy to imagine the world as a piece of machinery, ruled by fixed laws.”⁸⁵ She gradually moves into a fantasy universe of miracles and chimera where “the invisible reigns, the only law is the whim of the supernatural.”⁸⁶ It is a phenomenal world where one hears “brazen statues laughing [...]: eucharistic hosts are changed into living flesh, images of Christ shed blood [...] a tree bows down in adoration before Jesus.”⁸⁷

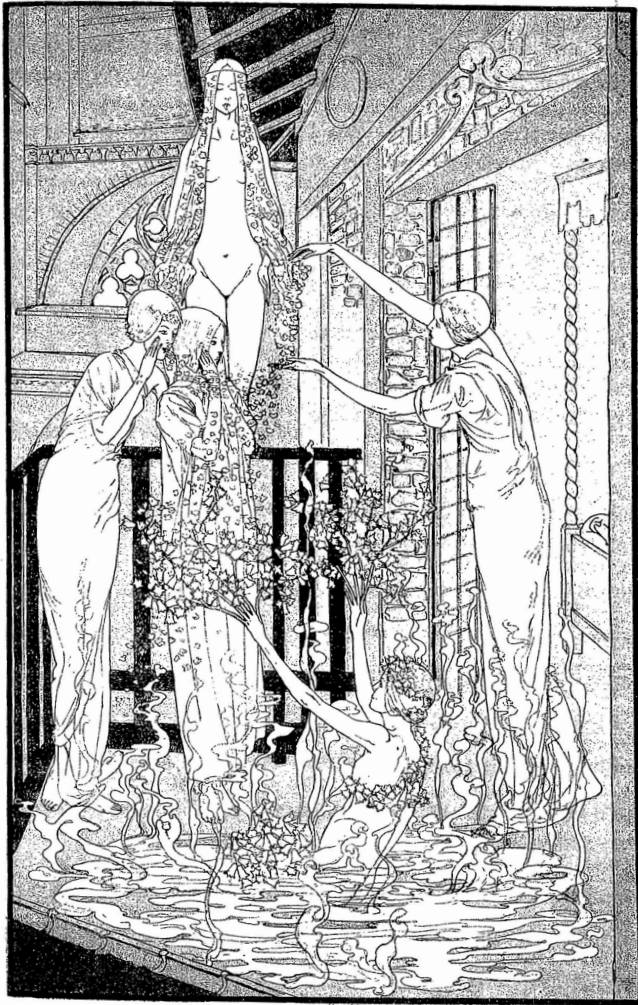
In this environment of myth and legend, the invisible is constantly present: “miracles seemed quite natural to her, and on the same plane as her everyday existence.”⁸⁸ Saint Agnes and the other child martyrs from Voragine’s *Legend* are just as real to her as are the figures and phantoms sprung out of the oral legends told in Beaumont about the ladies of Hauteceœur called “the Happy Dead,” women who like Félicien’s mother had all died young, “at the peak of their happiness.”⁸⁹ All these chimerical creatures that accompany Angélique have real existence in her phenomenal world and, accordingly, Carlos Schwabe represents them next to her (fig. 11).

Angélique has a strong imagination and fiction progressively takes over, fired by her growing into “womanhood”:⁹⁰ Miracles armed her for her struggle through life, just as grace had armed the martyrs. And she herself created miracles, all unbeknownst to her: they sprang into being from her imagination fired with fables, and the unconscious desires of her puberty; these miracles grew big with all of which she was unaware, summoned up by the mystery that dwelt in her and in the things around her.⁹¹ As Zola comments upon her reverie, he is uncompromising in his verdict on man’s relation to God:

Everything emerged from her to return to her; man created God to save man; there was only the dream. Sometimes, in amazement, she would touch her face, deeply troubled, doubting her own materiality. Was she not an appearance that would vanish away, after giving birth to an illusion?⁹²

Is everything we read but a hallucination? Should we maybe take the title *Le Rêve* literally? Zola is masterfully confusing us. And one wonders if it is not the better to have us understand the nature of literature and fiction itself.

In a final comment on its title, the novel ends “All is but a dream.”⁹³ In a capital scene Zola has had Angélique ask



11 Carlos Schwabe, *Le Rêve*, 1893.
 Angélique surrounded by imaginary creatures.
 Source: gallica.bnf.fr/Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

– she who is in some way a substitute for the writer since she incarnates the artist’s nature’s passion, pride, and imagination: “If it *is* nothing but a dream – the dream I have projected onto my surroundings now coming back to me – what does it matter?”⁹⁴ There are moments when Zola indeed allows us a metareading of his novel as a poetic reflection on literary creation itself.

Transubstantiation in the moonlight: the creation of Félicien

From her balcony at night, Angélique sees the Bishop’s chapel with its stained-glass windows from the twelfth century representing the legend of Saint George slaying the dragon. They are lit, for Félicien is restoring them. In some very suggestive and beautifully composed scenes Zola shows to what degree Angélique is an artist, creating the visions she sees out of the invisible.⁹⁵ Starting out in ink-black night, Zola progressively reduces the dark, creating tints, shades, shadows, lines, and moving apparitions for Angélique to dream around. All her senses are awakened:

Was it the St George of the stained-glass window who, *on the silent feet of a painted image*, was treading underfoot the tall grass to come over to her? The window was indeed starting to fade, and she could no longer see the saint so clearly; he was like a small purplish cloud, evaporating in a haze. (My emphasis)⁹⁶

The metamorphosis allowing the figure of Saint George to detach itself from the stained-glass window, walk through the two gardens, and appear as a young man standing under Angélique’s balcony, is slow and gradual. But one night in May he is there, and her auditory faculties testify of mute footsteps in the grass: “It was the noise of footsteps, cer-

tainly, the *footsteps of a vision* gliding over the ground” (My emphasis).⁹⁷

The reader has the impression of standing in the middle of Zola’s creative workshop watching an act of fictional creation take place:

And then, in the light, creation continued its course. What had emerged from a dream finally assumed the shadowy shape of a body. For at first all she could make out was a faint shadow moving in the moonlight. Whatever could it be? The shadow of a branch swaying in the wind? Sometimes it would vanish away, and the field lay sleeping in the deathly immobility, and she thought that what she had seen must have been a hallucination. Then it was no longer possible to doubt; a patch of darkness had crossed a moonlit space, slipping from one willow to the next.⁹⁸

He resembled St George, or a superb Jesus [...] just as she had expected him to look. *The marvel had at last been accomplished, the slow creative power of the invisible had brought forth this living apparition.* He emerged from the unknown, from the tremulous life of things, from the murmuring voices, from night’s shifting shadows, from all that had enfolded her and made her feel so faint. Thus it was that she saw him hovering two feet above the ground, in *the supernatural aura of his coming* [...] (My emphases)⁹⁹

Zola’s quasi-mystical understanding of the artist as someone who creates life is here addressed in religious terms that again bring to our attention the principle of transfiguration within the novel’s construction, to which Schwabe’s images have helped guide us. I have tried to suggest its importance for the metamorphic relation between artworks and human beings in a context of figural thought, and it now remains for us to see what uses Zola makes of the word *transfigure* as it explicitly occurs in his text.

The term appears on six occasions in *Le Rêve*.¹⁰⁰ A first category regroups examples associated with the theme of artistic creation: for instance, the chasuble described by Félicien to Angélique as a masterpiece of embroidery shows Christ's Transfiguration as a motif depicted in needlework:

a dalmatic, considered to be the finest in existence, the imperial dalmatic on which is celebrated the glory of Jesus Christ on earth and in heaven, the Transfiguration, the Last Judgment, with its various participants embroidered in shot silk, in silver and gold.¹⁰¹

In the same vein, and just thereafter, the term is associated directly with the artist's creative passion in a telling description of Angélique: "she remained transfigured by these tales, and her face still bore the radiance of her artistic passion."¹⁰²

But it is with the second, related, use of the word that I would like to end this essay: one where the act of transfiguration is understood as the unveiling of a hidden nature, that allows a character to step outside of its predetermined social conditions and thus revolt against the prevailing hierarchy. It reconnects us with the socially aware Zola of previous *Rougon-Macquart* novels and clearly announces the works of his last period, *Trois Villes* and *Les Quatre Évangiles*. This use of the term *transfigure* is illustrated in the following example where it refers to the revelation of the true nature of Félicien who is hiding behind the costume of a painter of stained glass:

Félicien was surely lying: she sensed full well that he was not poor, that he was concealing his identity beneath this worker's garb; and this counterfeit plainness, the whole story he'd concocted just so that he could inveigle his way to her, put her on her guard, however amused and happy she might be, deep down, since *his subterfuge transfigured him, and meant she could see the royal prince that he must be, absolutely certain as she was that her dream was coming true.* (My emphasis)¹⁰³

The term again appears in a similar use in this silent monologue from the Bishop, bewildered by his son's passion for a little embroiderer:

This whole fairy tale was the last straw, and filled him with anguish. To think of it! – a poor girl, a nameless girl, a little embroiderer seen by the light of the moon, transfigured into the slender Virgin of the Legend, adored in a dream! And he had finally uttered a single word in reply: 'Never!' (My emphasis)¹⁰⁴

Angélique and Félicien both recognize in each other their true beings and qualities behind the costumes; the ability to see beyond the appearances is the secret of their love.

A conte bleu as social critique

The possibility of a multitude within the same person – suggested by Zola's uses of the term *transfiguration* – thus emerges to outline a social critique of a culture claiming Christian values and yet maintaining an artificial separation between individuals who are categorized into classes that never meet, let alone mix. The love between Angélique and Félicien is impossible because they belong to different social spheres: she is a foundling adopted by craftsmen, whereas he is the son of an aristocratic bishop and the last descendant of one of France's finest families, the Haute-cœurs. The theme of transfiguration in *Le Rêve* thus contributes to question the legitimacy of costumes worn and, in doing so, ultimately ends up pointing to the theatrical falseness of spectacle and ceremony, in the novel intimately associated with the Catholic Church.

Not only does the Catholic Church, with its dogmatic, ascetic view on life, uphold an unjust social hierarchy but, in addition, it refuses the material dimension of love. As much as Angélique admires the stoic sufferings of the

saints, she is deeply confused by the *Golden Legend's* fantastic accounts of their martyrdom: "Prosperity and health are disdained, and joy begins with those privations that kill the body."¹⁰⁵ Bodies are torn, burnt, molested in every way – and the martyrs feel nothing? Angélique is much more sensible to the miraculous dimension of the stories than to their dogmatic teaching of renunciation: "In the *Legend*, it was the marvelous aspects that had captivated her, more than contempt for the world and the longing for death. Ah yes, of course she wanted to get married! – and to love and be loved, and to be happy!"¹⁰⁶

The same way Zola's last alter ego Pierre Froment approaches Catholicism – fascinated by its marvels and beauty but instinctively revolted by its taboos and condemning attitude towards the pleasures of the senses and claims of social justice – Angélique is as innocent as she is complete in her devotion to love. It is the Catholic Church, with its conservative values upholding a social system where classes do not mix, that will deny her and Félicien their happiness just as Hubertine and Hubert had been denied theirs through the same archaic structures.

Profoundly anticlerical in all his work, Zola would never stop revolting against injustice and ideological tyranny. The social Catholicism of Pierre Froment takes on corrupt papal Rome – in vain – but his utopist dream of a New Church, representing a social Christianity where individuals enjoy equality of chance, lives on. His four sons, named after the four Evangelists Matthew, Marc, Luke, and John, are the characters of Zola's last and unfinished cycle the Four Gospels.

The subject of religion thus kept fascinating Zola as a writer until the end. The priest and the poet share common objectives in that they both envisage a better world, but their means to achieve it differ radically. Schwabe's images do not try to contradict Zola's critique of religious

dogma. Subtle in their suggestiveness they are open to a plurality of meanings. The painter seems content to affirm, loud and strong, man's right to – and need for – dreams and reveries, not the least as an instrument of artistic creation. In this, the illustrations are true to Zola's novel, the feat of which lies in the fact that it defends this right to the chimerical, while showing what a castrating, negating, life-denying force religion is, especially when inculcated into a temperament such as Angélique's, who is naturally disposed to reverie but denied the knowledge that could balance and temper her oneiric side.

Le Rêve is a tribute to dreams, fiction and art just as much (if not more so) as the account of their defeat. Angélique's dream for justice fails, but it is hardly because of the deceitful and illusionary nature of fiction; on the contrary, the reader of *Le Rêve* is constantly reminded of the inherent power of fiction: through Angélique's imaginative faculty, through the legends and artworks that charm her, through the theme of metamorphosis itself. The dream fails because the dogmatic Church, representing the authoritative and conservative forces in society, strangles it. Imagination and fiction are not targets in *Le Rêve*, dogma and injustice are. Although Angélique's destiny is a tragic one, her instinctive and sane claim for terrestrial love and happiness is likely to deeply move readers.¹⁰⁷ The Zola *engagé* we have met here, under the insignia of the 'chimerical' Zola, undeniably gives a political force to Angélique's revolt.

Le Rêve, I have suggested, is a novel that thematizes artistic creation and cleverly links it to the idea of change and transformation. The intermedial focus of this essay has demonstrated the presence of a transitory mode that contrasts with the static mode so often emphasized in readings, creating a fascinating tension in the novel. The many acts of metamorphosis and transfiguration that fill Zola's text may well imply that Angélique's dream does not necessarily

have to end there on the church steps after her marriage to Félicien, but should continue on: for one, into the future fiction of Zola's ultimate works, for another, into readers' awareness, and accomplish the "miracle of art" that way.

- 1 "Lettre à l'éditeur Lacroix. Paris 8 mai 1867," Émile Zola, *Le Bon combat. De Courbet aux impressionistes. Anthologies d'écrits sur l'art*, ed. Jean-Paul Bouillon (Paris: Hermann, 1974), 305-306.
- 2 Charles Grivel even contends that a literary narrative must be translated into images in order to exist at all in the public sphere at that time. See his article "Zola. Comment voit-on? Illustration, non illustration," *Les Cahiers Naturalistes* 66 (1992): 125, note 1. For an introduction to the illustrated novel in the nineteenth century, see Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds., *Histoire de l'édition française 3. Le temps des éditeurs: Du temps du romantisme à la Belle Époque* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), especially the third part entitled "Le culte de l'image" (p. 329-383) and the fourth part "Des livres pour tous" (p. 409-568). See also Philippe Kaenel, *Le Métier d'illustrateur 1830-1880: Rodolphe Töpffer, J.-J. Grandville, Gustave Doré* (Paris: Edition Messene, 1996) and Philippe Hamon, *Imageries. Littérature et image au XIXe siècle* (Paris: José Corti, 2001).
- 3 See Élisabeth Parinet, *La Librairie Flammarion: 1875-1914* (Paris: IMEC éd., 1992), 53-56. For more information on Renoir's contribution see *Workers' Daughters on the Outer Boulevard (Illustration for Emile Zola's "L'Assommoir")*, 1877/78, The Art Institute of Chicago: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4104441> and Jean-François Thibault, "Renoir illustrateur de *L'Assommoir*," *Les Cahiers Naturalistes* 66 (1992): 147-156.
- 4 Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond, *Carlos Schwabe. Symboliste et visionnaire* (Paris: ACR Édition, 1994), 18-19.
- 5 See, for instance, Colette Becker, introduction to *Le Rêve*, by Émile Zola (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1975) and Sophie Guermès, *La Religion de Zola. Naturalisme et déchristianisation* (Paris: Champion, 2003).
- 6 See *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 76 (2002), in particular the following essays: Colette Becker, "Le Rêve d'Angélique": 7-23; Jean-Louis Cabanès, "Rêver *Le Légende dorée*": 25-47 and Sophie Guermès, "La 'philosophie cachée' du Rêve": 49-65. Although seven of Schwabe's images are reproduced in this issue of the journal, they are not discussed by any of the authors.
- 7 Zola's art criticism is assembled in Émile Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, ed. Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine (Paris: Gallimard, 1991) and in Émile Zola, *Le bon combat. De Courbet aux impressionistes. Anthologies d'écrits sur l'art*, ed. Jean-Paul Bouillon (Paris: Hermann, 1974).
- 8 Cf. Jean Moréas' literary symbolist manifesto in *Le Figaro* dated 18 September 1886.

- 9 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 471: "nous avons affaire à une mode, à toute une bande de truqueurs rusés et de simulateurs avides de tapage." Zola's account concerns two Salons: the traditional Salon and the one organized since 1890 at the Champ-de-Mars by the Société nationale des Beaux-Arts, founded by Meissonier and Puvis de Chavannes.
- 10 Gaëtan Picon, in his foreword to Zola, *Le Bon Combat*, 20, points out that Zola nevertheless remained blind to the revolution of painters like Van Gogh and Gauguin, and to a certain point to Cézanne whose importance he did not see in full, because of his insistence on a certain realism.
- 11 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 471-472: "Et je suis loin de dire qu'il n'y a pas eu des tentatives curieuses, des trouvailles intéressantes, dans ce retour du rêve et de la légende, de toute la flore délicieuse de nos anciens missels et de nos vitraux. Au point de vue de la décoration surtout, je suis ravi du réveil de l'art, pour les étoffes, les meubles, les bijoux, non pas, hélas! qu'on ait créé encore un style moderne, mais parce qu'en vérité on est en train de retrouver le goût exquis d'autrefois, dans les objets usuels de la vie." "I am far from saying that there have not been any curious attempts and interesting finds in this return of dream and legend, all the flora of our delicious old missals and our stained glass windows. In terms of decoration especially, I'm delighted by the awakening of art for fabrics, furniture, jewelry, not alas! that we have created a modern style, but because we are actually rediscovering the exquisite taste of the past, in the common objects of life." (My translation)
- 12 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 471: "Lui, sait et fait ce qu'il veut."
- 13 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 471: "c'est un débordement lamentable de mysticism"; 472: "ces vierges insexuées qui n'ont ni seins ni hanches"; 471: "ce défi à la nature, cette haine de la chair et du soleil."
- 14 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 471: "Elles peuvent ne pas vivre de notre vie de tous les jours, elles n'en ont pas moins une vie à elles, logique et complète, soumise aux lois voulues par l'artiste"; "Rien n'est d'une force ni d'une santé plus nettes que ses hautes figures simplifiées." Zola here reiterates an admiration for Puvis de Chavannes that he had expressed as early as in 1875 when describing the painter as a "truly original talent that had forged itself far from all academic influence": Zola in *Le Messager de l'Europe*, June 1875 cited in Dominique Fernandez, *Le Musée d'Émile Zola. Œuvres et citations choisies par Ferrante Ferranti* (Paris: Stock, 1997), 140: "un talent réellement original, qui s'est formé loin de toute influence académique." In *Le Voltaire*, dated June 18-22 1880, he reiterates his praise. In a similar way, though in terms more reticent, Zola had been intrigued by yet another precursor, Gustave Moreau. In articles from 1876 onward he discussed Moreau's "symbolism" as "particularly interesting" and as the most "surprising manifestation of extravagance" and "search for originality." *Le Messager de l'Europe* in June 1876 cited in *Ibid.*, 159.
- 15 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 469.
- 16 For a discussion see Sara Pappas, "Reading for Detail: On Zola's Abandonment of Impressionism," *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* no 4 (2007): 474-484.
- 17 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 469: "Tous des Manet alors, tous des Monet, tous des Pissarro!"
- 18 Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture," 469: "cette file continu de tableaux exsangues"; 471: "La foi manque, il ne reste que le troupeau des impuissants et des habiles." "Ici, je crois bien que le coupable est le très grand et le très pur artiste Puvis de Chavannes. Sa queue est désastreuse, plus désastreuse encore peut-être que celle de Manet, de Monet et de Pissarro." / "His queue of followers is disastrous, maybe even more disastrous than that of Manet, Monet and Pissarro." (My translation)
- 19 "Les Réalistes du salon" published in *L'Événement* May 11 1866: "La définition d'une œuvre d'art ne saurait être que celle-ci: Une œuvre d'art est un coin de la création vu à travers un tempérament."
- 20 Letter from Émile Zola to Ernest Flammarion dated July 4, 1891, cited in Jumeau-Lafond, *Carlos Schwabe*, 36: "[j]e suis certain que nous aurons avec lui une œuvre très artistique et très originale."
- 21 Lettre à Antony Valabrègue, Paris August 18 1864, Zola, *Le bon combat*, 302: "se contente de mentir just assez pour me faire sentir un homme dans une image de la création."
- 22 In a letter to Charles Couïba, the editor of the journal *Le Cœur* and published in its July-August edition, 1893, p. 2, Zola writes: "Il ne me déplaît d'ailleurs pas du tout d'être traité d'idéaliste. J'ai toujours mis nettement en moi le créateur à part du théoricien."
- 23 Cf. Zola, *Écrits sur l'art*, "Peinture": "Rien n'est fâcheux comme la peinture d'idées. Qu'un artiste mette une pensée dans un crâne, oui! mais que le crâne y soit et solidement peint, et d'une construction telle qu'il brave les siècles. La vie seule parle de la vie, il ne se dégage de la beauté et de la vérité que de la nature vivante." Zola's idealism is not a moralism: his pamphlet from 1866, *Proudhon et Courbet*, published in *Le Salut public*, Lyon, on July 26 and August 31, is a raging critique against Proudhon's utilitarian appropriation of Courbet's realism, denouncing it as incompatible with the very function of art, while instead promoting the idea of an ideologically free and, when necessary, immoral art.
- 24 See Henri Mitterand, *Zola I, Sous le regard d'Olympia: 1840-1871* (Paris: Fayard, 1991)
- 25 Émile Zola, *His Masterpiece*, trans. Ernest Alfred Vizetelly (1886, Project Gutenberg E-book). The French original reads: "Oui, notre génération a trempé jusqu'au ventre dans le romantisme, et nous en sommes restés imprégnés quand même, et nous avons eu beau nous débarbouiller, prendre des bains de réalité violente, la tache s'entête, toutes les lessives du monde n'en ôteront pas l'odeur."
- 26 Émile Zola, *Les Rougon-Macquart*, ed. Henri Mitterand (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de La Pléiade, 5 volumes, 1960-1967), volume 5, "Notes générales" and "Premier Plan remis à Lacroix," 1734f. (Cited by Philippe Hamon, "L'image dans la fabrique : avant-textes," *Item*, on line March 15 2007 (<http://www.item.ens.fr/index.php?id=76037>))
- 27 See for instance Zola, *La Fortune des Rougon* (1871).
- 28 Indeed, the critics' first reaction to the novel when it was initially published in 1888 was one of surprise, and it occasioned slight mockery by some. For instance, Anatole France in *Le Temps*, dated October 21 1888, was so perplexed that he became blind to the obvious qualities of Zola's text: "la pureté de M. Zola [...] lui a coûté cher: il l'a payée de tout son talent. On n'en trouve plus trace dans les 300 pages du *Rêve*. [...] Cette fois-ci l'erreur est complète, et on ne saurait imaginer un roman plus déraisonnable que *Le Rêve*." In a letter to A J van Santen Kolff dated March 6 1889, Zola sums up the novel's reception in these terms: "*Le Rêve* a été en général bien accueilli partout, quoique peu compris." See Émile Zola, *Correspondance. Les Lettres et les arts* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1908), 299.
- 29 Cf. "Le manifeste des cinq," *Le Figaro* dated August 18, 1887.

- 30 In a letter to A. J. van Santen Kolff, dated March 5 1888, Zola speaks of wanting to do a follow-up of his novel from 1875, *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*: "Depuis des années, j'avais le projet de donner un pendant à La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret, pour que ce livre ne se trouvât pas isolé dans la série. Une case était réservée pour une étude de l'au-delà." For a comparison between the two novels see A. A. Greaves, "A Question of Life or Death: A Comparison of *Le Rêve* and *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*," *Nottingham French Studies* vol. 19, no 2 (1980): 16-24.
- 31 Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond, *Carlos Schwabe*, 9. He shared this interest in Charles Fourier with Zola, whose last works *Trois Villes* and *Les Quatre Évangiles* are highly influenced by Fourier. For a brilliant analysis of the last Zola, see Michel Butor's lectures at the University of Genève in 1988-1989, available online: <https://mediaserver.unige.ch/play/54960>
- 32 Catulle Mendès, *L'Évangile de l'enfance de N.S. Jésus-Christ selon St Pierre* (Armand Colin, 1894). Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal*, (Paris: edition for Charles Meunier, 1900). Stéphane Mallarmé, *Poésies* (Paris: edition de la *Revue indépendante*, 1887). Maurice Maeterlinck, *La vie des abeilles* (Paris: Société des amis du livre moderne, 1908 (1910)).
- 33 On this new paradigm of illustration promoted by, for instance, Uzanne and Maurice Denis see Antoine Coron, "Trois termes, trois moments: illustrations, livres de peintres, artists' books" *Le Livre illustré* (Saint-Étienne: Cahiers de la Serre, no 19, octobre 1987); Antoine Coron, "Livres de luxe" in *Histoire de l'édition française IV*, eds. Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin (Paris: Fayard, 1986) 409-437.
- 34 Schwabe proposed original watercolors, which were transposed into black and white engravings by Ducourtioux for the printed volume. Schwabe's choice of technique shows that he conceived of the illustrations as pieces of art in their own right, which should be able to stand for themselves. And indeed some of his originals found their way to the Munich Secession exhibition in 1893. See Jumeau-Lafond, *Carlos Schwabe*.
- 35 Jean-Pierre Leduc-Adine, "Roman, illustration/réception. A propos du Rêve" in *Modernités* no. 20. *Champ littéraire fin de siècle autour de Zola*, ed. Béatrice Laville (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2004), 41-56.
- 36 Gustave Soulier, "Carlos Schwabe," *Art et décoration* (Paris, May 1899): 129-146, 135, note 1, cited in Jumeau-Lafond, *Carlos Schwabe*, 37. Laura Morowitz in her article "Zola's *Le Rêve*: Symbolism and Medievalism in the Fin-de-Siècle," *Excavatio* 1997, 9: 93-102 largely follows the same path.
- 37 Danielle Chaperon, "L'Autre cathédrale, *Le Rêve* d'Émile Zola et de Carlos Schwabe," in *La Cathédrale*, ed. Joëlle Prunghaud (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Université Charles de Gaulle, Lille 3, 2001), 101: "Loin de censurer Schwabe, il lui aurait laissé carte blanche afin de transposer l'intrigue de son roman à l'échelle du livre illustré: un symboliste transplanté dans un roman naturaliste devient immédiatement un cas de 'pathologie mystique,' un personnage du roman, en quelque sorte."
- 38 In his rich account of nineteenth century literature, Philippe Hamon argues that the image is often associated with the feminine sex, indeed with the naive and childish. He mentions Angélique as an example of this and categorizes her as a "consommateur d'images", rather than as a "producteur d'image", hence portraying her as passive in regard to images (*Imageries*, 439). Cabanès notes the strong presence of "une iconographie fictive" in the novel and especially relates it to the illustrated version of *La Légende dorée* that Angélique is, again, naively reading ("Rêver *La Légende dorée*", 26, 39f, 42f).
- 39 Émile Zola, *The Dream*, trans. Andrew Brown (London: Hesperus Press, 2005), 3.
- 40 *Loc. cit.*
- 41 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 42 Émile Zola, *The Dream*, trans. Elisa E. Chase (1893), Project Gutenberg E-book, 6. I here exceptionally refer to this first English translation, for the phrasing seems closer to the French original: "[il ne lui restait que] de s'enfoncer dans ces vieilles pierres" (Émile Zola, *Le Rêve*, (Paris: Garnier Flammarion/Centre National des Lettres, 1975). Andrew Brown has: "huddling deeper into the shelter of those old stones."
- 43 Zola, *The Dream*, 5. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 47: "la statue de la vierge enfant avait la pureté blanche, le corps de neige immaculé, dans cette raideur immobile du froid, qui glaçait autour d'elle le mystique élan de la virginité victorieuse. Et, à ses pieds, l'autre, l'enfant misérable, blanche de neige, elle aussi, raidie et blanche à croire qu'elle devenait de pierre, ne se distinguait plus des grandes vierges."
- 44 Zola, *Le Rêve*, 94. Its "ancient Romanesque portal" is "already almost Gothic in style," Zola, *The Dream*, 3.
- 45 Hubertine is first described as "ayant la sérénité correcte d'un marbre," Zola, *Le Rêve*, 47.
- 46 Zola, *The Dream*, 12: "with her rather long oval face, very pure, her violet eyes wan with tenderness, and the delicate rising curve of her neck that made her resemble the little virgin on a stained-glass window." Zola, *Le Rêve*, 53: "sa jolie figure de gamin blonde, à l'ovale un peu allongé, très pur, ses yeux de violette que la tendresse pâlisait, l'élan délicat de son col qui la faisait ressembler à une petite vierge de vitrail."
- 47 Zola, *The Dream*, 10.
- 48 This transitory aspect of her and the novel's other characters is essential for my reading, for it creates an opposition in the text to the *other* fundamental structure operating *Le Rêve* that we are soon to meet: that is, the static structure, the *cloisonné*, that critics have strongly focused on, see for instance Hamon (2001), Cabanès (2002), Duboile (2002), Becker (2002), Guermès (2002).
- 49 Zola, *The Dream*, 59. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 100: "la tache du péché originel à effacer."
- 50 Zola, *The Dream*, 10.
- 51 Bringing to mind the principles determining Schwabe's poster for the Salon de la Rose-Croix: in a composition clearly stressing the verticality of the picture, Schwabe had placed two female figures on a staircase moving upwards on the steps. The one standing highest is almost immaterial, bathed in light. In the palm of her right hand lies a burning heart connecting her to the ideal, celestial spheres above her. She is said to be the allegory of Faith. The second woman, standing lower, is darker and more material, her face and dress more realistically presented. She in turn is Purity, climbing up the stairs towards Faith, while leaving at her feet a broken chain from which her left ankle has just been liberated. In the foreground, separated from the women on the heavenly stairs by dark water, sits Humanity, represented as a naked, formless, muddy figure with algae dripping from its fists, staring longingly upwards. See Jean-David Jumeau-Lafond, *Carlos Schwabe*, 18-19.
- 52 Zola, *The Dream*, 10. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 51: "Un tel orgueil impuisant, une telle passion d'être la plus forte soulevaient son corps de petite femme, que les Hubert en demeurèrent saisis. Ils ne reconnaissaient plus la gamin blonde, aux yeux couleur de violette, au long col d'une grâce de lis. Les yeux étaient devenus noirs dans la face méchante, le cou sensuel s'était gonflé d'un flot de sang. Maintenant qu'elle avait chaud, elle se dressait et sifflait, ainsi qu'une couleuvre ramassée sur la neige."

- 53 Zola, *The Dream*, 17. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 59-60: "Certains jours, quand ils voulaient la dompter, elle en arrivait à des crises de folie orgueilleuse, raidie, tapant des pieds et des mains, prête à déchirer et à mordre. Une peur, alors, les faisait reculer devant ce petit monster, ils s'épouvantaient du diable qui s'agitait en elle. Qui était-elle donc? d'où venait-elle?" Ces enfants trouvés, Presque toujours, viennent du vice et du crime."
- 54 Zola, *The Dream*, 15. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 57: "La cathédrale explique tout, a tout enfanté et conserve tout. Elle est la mère, la reine, énorme au milieu du petit tas des maisons basses, pareilles à une couvée abritée frileusement sous ses ailes de pierre. On n'y habite que pour elle et par elle; les industries ne travaillent, les boutiques ne vendent que pour la nourrir, la vêtir, l'entretenir, elle et son clergé. [...] Elle bat au centre, chaque rue est une de ses veines, la ville n'a d'autre souffle que le sien."
- 55 Philippe Hamon, in *Imagerie* (291f), uses the term "cloisonné" for *Le Rêve*. Other scholars who, in a similar way, insist on the reflexive structure of the novel to highlight the closed, compartmentalized and arrested dimensions of *Le Rêve* are Cabanès, "Rêver *La Légende dorée*"; Becker *Introduction* and "Le Rêve d'Angélique"; Guermès "La 'philosophie cachée' du *Rêve*"; Christophe Duboile, "Les Jeux spéculaires dans *Le Rêve*," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 76 (2002): 97-103 and Olivier Got, "Le système des jardins dans *Le Rêve*," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 76 (2002): 85-96.
- 56 Becker, "Le Rêve d'Angélique" 2002.
- 57 My translation of "par haine du changement," Zola, *Le Rêve*, 78. The English translation reads "since they hated change that much," Zola, *The Dream*, 36.
- 58 Zola, *The Dream*, 17. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 59: "D'ailleurs, elle pratiquait cette opinion ancienne qu'une femme en sait assez long, quand elle met l'orthographe et qu'elle connaît les quatre règles."
- 59 See also Becker, *Introduction* 1975 and Becker, "Le Rêve d'Angélique" 2002.
- 60 Zola, *The Dream*, 57. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 97: "Dans la famille, les femmes mouraient jeunes, en plein bonheur".
- 61 For a rich discussion of the importance of the analogical principle of the image in nineteenth century French literature, see Hamon, *Imageries*, 2001.
- 62 Zola, *The Dream*, 48. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 89: "Le bonheur, pour nous misérables, n'est que dans l'humilité et l'obéissance."
- 63 Zola, *The Dream*, 18. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 60: "Elle lui enseignait le renoncement et l'obéissance, qu'elle opposait à la passion et à l'orgueil. Obéir, c'était vivre. Il fallait obéir à Dieu, aux parents, aux supérieurs, toute une hiérarchie de respect, en dehors de laquelle l'existence dérégulée se gâtait."
- 64 Zola, *The Dream*, 46. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 87: "Il partait volontiers avec l'enfant, sur l'aile d'un nuage."
- 65 Zola, *The Dream*, 48. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 89: "Tu entends Angélique, il faut écouter ta mère. Nous sommes deux fous, elle seule est raisonnable...J'ai eu tort, j'ai eu tort..."
- 66 Zola, *The Dream*, 136-137. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 174: "L'âge, vingt années de prières, Dieu descendu en lui, rien n'avait tué l'homme ancien. ...Il se frappait la poitrine du poing, il sanglotait dans la pénitence inefficace, criant qu'on devrait interdire le sacerdoce à ceux qui ont goûté la femme, qui ont gardé d'elle des liens de sang. [...]...Ah! La passion, la bête mauvaise, qu'il aurait voulu écraser, pour retomber à la paix anéantie de l'amour divin."
- 67 Zola, *The Dream*, 53. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 94: "la masse énorme qui bouchait le ciel."
- 68 Zola, *The Dream*, 137. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 175: "Il tuerait la passion dans son fils, comme il voulait la tuer en lui."
- 69 The parallelism between the principal characters and two saints, of course, has not escaped critics. Cabanès (2002), for one, has emphasized this exchange, or 'impregnation'. I borrow the word "impregnation" from Philippe Hamon (*Imageries*, 212, 214, 221) who gives many examples of nineteenth century novels in which the invention of photography and new printing technics seem to have inspired narrative structures recalling the process of the imprint and playing with the different meanings of the word 'reproduction'.
- 70 According to Elisabeth Emery, Jeanniot "copied a number of the sixteenth century woodcuts of saints referred to in Zola's text, including the frontispiece to the 1549 edition Zola had consulted." See Emery, "The *Golden Legend* in the Fin de Siècle: Zola's *Le Rêve* and Its Reception," in *Medieval Saints in Late Nineteenth Century French Culture*, ed. Elisabeth Emery and Laurie Postlewait, (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2004), 87.
- 71 Zola's emphasis on Angélique's hair is discussed by Cabanès, "Rêver *La Légende dorée*," 45.
- 72 Cabanès, "Rêver *La Légende dorée*," 27-32.
- 73 Maury presents the hagiographic accounts as "imitation circulaire" according to Cabanès, who speaks of the novel's "clôture du mimétique" and finds that Angélique is "prise dans la clôture du même" ("Rêver *La Légende dorée*," 27; 26; 44) Also see note 55.
- 74 Erich Auerbach, "Figura" [1938], trans. Ralph Manheim from the original German text in *Neue Dantestudien* (Istanbul, 1944, 11-71), in Erich Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 15.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 53. "Figural prophecy implies the interpretation of one worldly event through another; the first signifies the second, the second fulfills the first. Both remain historical events; yet both, looked at in this way, have something provisional and incomplete about them; they point to one another and both point to something in the future, something still to come, which will be the actual, real, and definitive event." (*Ibid.*, 58)
- 76 *Ibid.*, 30; 50; 38.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 12. "Throughout Ovid *figura* is mobile, changeable, multiform, and deceptive." *Ibid.*, 23.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 49.
- 79 Zola, *The Dream*, 85. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 123: "Mais, à regarder fixement la sainte, Angélique venait de faire une découverte, qui noyait de joie son cœur. Agnès lui ressemblait. En dessinant l'antique statue, Félicien certainement songeait à elle."
- 80 See Erich Auerbach, *Figura*, 30-31: "[F]or [Tertullian] the *figura*, in the simple sense of "form", is a part of the substance, and in *Adversus Marcionem* (5, 20) he equates it with the flesh. Just above (4, 40), he had spoken of bread in the Eucharist." *Ibid.*, 60: "This becomes eminently clear in the sacrament of the sacrifice, the Last Supper, the *pascha nostrum*, which is the *figura Christi*. This sacrament, which is figure as well as symbol, and which has long existed historically – namely, since it was first established in the old covenant – gives us the purest picture of the concretely present, the veiled and tentative, the eternal and supratemporal elements contained in the figures." In the context of Zola's *Rougon Macquart* series it is interesting to note Auerbach's observation as he comments on Lucretius: "The important transition from the form to its imitation, from model to copy, may best be noted in the passage dealing with the resemblance of children to their parents, the mixture of seeds, and heredity" (*Ibid.*, 16).
- 81 Zola, *The Dream*, 104. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 142: "C'était une flamme héréditaire rallumée en elle."

- 82 Zola, *The Dream*, 38. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 80: “En dehors de ce qu’ils lui avaient appris, elle apportait sa passion, qui donnait de la vie aux fleurs, de la foi aux symboles. Sous ses mains, la soie et l’or s’animaient, une envolée mystique élançait les moindres ornements, elle s’y livrait toute, avec son imagination en continuels éveils, sa croyance au monde invisible. Certaines de ses broderies avaient tellement remué le diocèse de Beaumont, qu’un prêtre, archéologue, et un autre, amateur de tableaux, étaient venus la voir, en s’extasiant devant ses Vierges, qu’ils comparaient aux naïves figures des Primitifs.”
- 83 Zola, *The Dream*, 44. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 85: “si fraîche que l’odeur semblait s’en exhaler du satin”.
- 84 Zola, *The Dream*, 38. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 80: “Elle avait le don du dessin, un vrai miracle qui, sans professeur, rien qu’avec ses études du soir, à la lampe, lui permettait souvent de corriger ses modèles, de s’en écarter, d’aller à sa fantaisie, créant de la pointe de son aiguille. Aussi les Hubert ... s’effaçaient-ils devant elle ... ils en arrivaient modestement à n’être plus que ses aides.”
- 85 Zola, *The Dream*, 59. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 99: “Angélique croyait fermement aux miracles. Dans son ignorance, elle vivait entourée de prodiges, le lever des astres et l’éclosion des simples violettes. Cela lui semblait fou, de s’imaginer le monde comme une mécanique, régie par des lois fixes.”
- 86 Zola, *The Dream*, 59. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 99: “l’invisible règne, l’unique loi est le caprice du surnaturel.”
- 87 Zola, *The Dream*, 59. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 99: “on entend des statues de bronze rire... des hosties sont changées en chair vivante, des images du Christ laissent échapper du sang.”
- 88 Zola, *The Dream*, 60. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 100: “le miracle lui semblait naturel, de niveau avec son existence quotidienne.”
- 89 Zola, *The Dream*, 57. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 97: “en plein bonheur.”
- 90 Zola, *The Dream*, 53. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 93: “toute la floraison enchantée de la femme.”
- 91 Zola, *The Dream*, 60. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 100: “[le miracle] l’armait pour le combat de la vie, comme la grâce armait les martyrs. Et elle le créait elle-même, à son insu: il naissait de son imagination échauffée de fables, des désirs inconscients de sa puberté; il s’élargissait de tout ce qu’elle ignorait, s’évoquait de l’inconnu qui était en elle et dans les choses.”
- 92 Zola, *The Dream*, 60. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 100: “Tout venait d’elle pour retourner à elle, l’homme créait Dieu pour sauver l’homme, il n’y avait que *le rêve*. Parfois, elle s’étonnait, se touchait le visage, pleine de trouble, doutant de sa propre matérialité. N’était-elle pas une apparence qui disparaîtrait, après avoir créé une illusion?”
- 93 Zola, *The Dream*, 193. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 230: “Tout n’est que rêve.”
- 94 Zola, *The Dream*, 169. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 206: “Si elle n’est qu’un rêve, *le rêve* que j’ai mis à mon entour et qui me revient, qu’importe!”
- 95 Cabanès (“Rêver La Légende dorée” 30f) makes an interesting connection to Michelet’s reading of Jeanne D’Arc when discussing Angélique’s creative imagination: the maid had a capacity to create existences and so has Angélique. While discussing the phenomenon as a “psychologie de la résistance” in regard to Jeanne d’Arc, Cabanès however seems to want to reduce it to a “psychopathologie de la croyance” with respect to Angélique.
- 96 Zola, *The Dream*, 61-62. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 101-102: “Était-ce le saint Georges du vitrail qui, de ses pieds muets d’image peinte, foulait les hautes herbes pour monter vers elle? La fenêtrée justement pâlisait, elle ne voyait plus nettement le saint, pareil à une petite nuée pourpre, brouillée, évaporée.”
- 97 Zola, *The Dream*, 62. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 102: “C’était un bruit de pas, certainement, des pas de vision effleurant le sol.”
- 98 Zola, *The Dream*, 62-63. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 102: “Et alors, dans la lumière, la création continua. Ce qui venait du rêve finit par prendre l’ombre d’un corps. Car elle n’aperçut d’abord qu’une ombre effacée se mouvant sous la lune. Qui était-ce donc? l’ombre d’une branche balancée par le vent? Parfois, tout s’évanouissait, le champ dormait dans une immobilité de mort, elle croyait à une hallucination de sa vue. Puis, le doute ne fut plus possible, une tache sombre avait franchi un espace éclairé, se glissant d’un saule à un autre.”
- 99 Zola, *The Dream*, 64-65. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 104: “Il ressemblait au saint Georges, à un Jésus superbe [...] c’était ainsi qu’elle l’attendait. Le prodige s’achevait enfin, la lente création de l’invisible aboutissait à cette apparition vivante. Il sortait de l’inconnu, du frisson des choses, des voix murmurantes, des jeux mouvants de la nuit, de tout ce qui l’avait enveloppée, jusqu’à la faire défaillir. Aussi le voyait-elle à deux pieds du sol, dans le surnaturel de sa venue.”
- 100 Zola, *The Dream*, 84; 90; 91; 114; 137; 161. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 122; 127; 127; 152; 175; 198.
- 101 Zola, *The Dream*, 90. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 127: “la dalmatique impériale, où est célébré la gloire de Jésus-Christ sur la terre et dans le ciel, la Transfiguration, le Jugement dernier [...]”
- 102 Zola, *The Dream*, 91. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 127: “elle en restait transfigurée, elle gardait au visage le rayonnement de sa passion d’artiste.”
- 103 Zola, *The Dream*, 84. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 122: “Félicien mentait, elle sentait bien qu’il n’était pas pauvre, qu’il se cachait sous ce vêtement d’ouvrier; et cette simplicité jouée, toute cette histoire pour pénétrer jusqu’à elle, la mettait en garde, amusée et heureuse au fond, le transfigurant, voyant le royal prince qu’il devait être, dans l’absolue certitude où elle vivait de la réalisation entière de son rêve.”
- 104 Zola, *The Dream*, 137. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 175: “Quoi! Une fille pauvre, une fille sans nom, une petite brodeuse aperçue sous un rayon de lune, transfigurée en vierge mince de la Légende, adorée dans *le rêve*!”
- 105 Zola, *The Dream*, 22. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 63: “La prospérité, la santé sont en mépris, la joie commence aux privations qui tuent le corps.”
- 106 Zola, *The Dream*, 49. Zola, *Le Rêve*, 90: “Dans la Légende, le merveilleux l’avait prise, plus que le mépris du monde et le goût de la mort. Ah! Oui, certes, elle voulait se marier, et aimer, et être aimée, et être heureuse!” In Zola’s naturalist aesthetics the body and the senses occupy a fundamental place in man’s inner life and existence. Just as Zola lost his childhood faith, Pierre Froment in *Trois Villes* loses his faith and ends up leaving the priesthood to get married and have children.
- 107 Colette Becker (“*Le Rêve* d’Angélique”: 10) reminds us that *Le Rêve* attracted a great many readers from the very start (with 110 000 books sold in 1902) and that it still today counts among the best-selling Zola novels.