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Mallarmé's '*Livre*': Notes towards a schizotheatre

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Mallarmé's 'Livre': Notes towards a schizotheatre

Stéphane Mallarmé's 'Livre' constitutes a set of notes towards a performance project that was never realized. This essay reads these notes as schizotheatre: a theatre of crisis in which the poet, as Orchestrator, sits at the center of a web of processes and procedures designed at once to obliterate him and enable a series of audience and performer connections. Mallarmé experienced a spiritual crisis in the late 1860s, leading to his depersonalisation and derealisation, as well as his belief that he was in the midst of construing a *Grand Oeuvre* or great work. The *Livre* was to be the culmination of this, at once an impossible and, as this essay shows, an intensely pragmatic project. While Mallarmé's work has been widely celebrated in poetry and to a lesser extent in music, this essay seeks to reposition him at the vanguard of what I call a choreographic textual practice, in which the *mise en scène* of language fragments on the page constitute a 'reading' dance.

Keywords

Stéphane Mallarmé; *Livre*; schizotheatre; schizoanalysis; depersonalisation; derealisation; book theatre; performance; poetry; choreography; archives; unfinished works; notes; reading; crisis; composition; *mise en scène*

Mallarmé's '*Livre*': Notes towards a schizothatre

Lect. tout est là (Le livre, f84)

Stéphane Mallarmé's (1842-1898) '*Livre*' or 'Book,' a bundle of instructions situating fragments of idea in abstract space, with only a note of a chandelier ('*lustre*') to signify theatre, remains one of the most radical performance scores in the nineteenth century. Mary Lewis Shaw has argued that Mallarmé's unfinished experiment constitutes a radical form of performance poetry that would define the twentieth-century avant-gardes, including most influentially the work of John Cage.¹ In Cage's *Untitled Event* (1952), tightly-structured time-based scores distributed to friends and colleagues stated when they were to perform; most performers and audience members had fixed locations in space – except Merce Cunningham and his dancers, whom Cage instructed to move about freely. But while Mallarmé's place in the annals of contemporary music (through Cage as well as Pierre Boulez's Mallarméan *Pli selon Pli*) and Symbolist poetry are relatively undisputed, his place in the history of experimental theatre and the choreographies of textual practice are far less assured. For Mallarmé, the '*Livre*' was to be a series of choreographed readings; but it was also a lifelong project, a total work of art, a one-man *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which was to contain the universe in its language – and in the orchestration of its parts. Although architectural reconstructions such as Jacques Polieri's 1968 '*Le livre de Mallarmé: A Mise en Scène*'² offer compelling elaborations of his dramaturgical plans, it fails to consider Mallarmé's drama – his radically complex self-configuration – at the centre of his work, serving as its anti-structuring principle. In this essay, I argue that any staging of the '*Livre*' must take into account Mallarmé's obsessive compositional process and abstract hyperpersonalism, as well as his plans for

redistribution of the work. The *'Livre'*'s intricate development, triggered by crisis, marks it as intensely but paradoxically solipsistic, methodically concerned with his personhood and its dissolution. As such, it is more than an unfinished experiment, but a model (or anti-model) for a schizotheatre: its form porous, fragile, demanding an engaged response.

The material itself, fittingly, is piecemeal. Visiting the archives, I found the crumbling materiality, indeed the fragile mundanity – almost the embarrassment – of this auratic 'waste' highlighted a theatre of viewership, dramatizing my own part in performing an uninvited glimpse at his secretive minutiae. Mallarmé had not wanted us there. Or had he? As Barbara Johnson writes, in her visit to the Mallarméan 'casket', wisps of paper boxed desultorily at the Houghton Library at Harvard, these remains were clouded in mystique: 'I open a box, in which I find ninety-four white paper folders. Each folder is labeled with a Houghton sticker. Inside the first folder are three sheets of blank "white news" paper, the kind we used to call "math paper," folded in half. The paper shows signs of considerable age. It is not acid free. [...] I open the second folder. [...] Third folder. [...] Fourth folder. [...] Fifth folder. [...].'³ Already Mallarmé is enjoining us to perform a dance, folding, unfolding, stacking boxes; he is at the hub of a slowly decomposing *mise en scène*, staged at the scene of the library. But who is this taunting us, orchestrating from beyond the grave? Johnson's frustration is compounded with the knowledge that this debris has been widely heralded as a masterpiece: 'What forces have created the belief that this thing is a work of genius? How many human beings in the world can expect a pile of their discarded notes to burn with this kind of appeal?' Yet, she admits, she shares this fascination, tempering it with a sly hint that Mallarmé may have cultivated the aura of grandiosity surrounding these plans. 'Mallarmé could not have set

things up better if he had tried’, she argues. ‘The ways in which indeterminacy and lack here generate fascination exceed anything that could reasonably be ascribed to his intentions’. Nevertheless, ‘somehow, even about that, a doubt remains. These unburned, untitled, unauthorized, disintegrating pages offer an uncanny realization of “the text speaking on its own, without the voice of an author.”’ The ‘*Livre*’ I submit is not just Mallarmé’s *Nachlass*: as a work that stages *work* itself – conforming to none of the usual categories of theatre, poetry, literature, even diaries or production sketches – it constitutes a tangible score whose mode of operation is to reach toward actualisation. Taken as a *choreotext*, a *mise en scène* taking place on the page, it compels us to reckon with our own captivation and distanciation – an affective dance that mirrors Mallarmé’s own.

Johnson performs a series of returns. She writes, ‘Unable to discount either the fantasy of totality or the materiality of dissemination, I can do nothing but come back, again and again, into the Mallarméan fold.’⁴ Mallarmé was enacting the movement of thought and successfully, I argue, laying the grounds for such a show. Though posthumously collected – and, significantly, if tentatively, titled – in the French edition by Jacques Scherer as *Le « livre » de Mallarmé: Premières recherches sur des documents inédits* (1957) (surprisingly no edition exists in English), what has come to be known as the ‘*Livre*’ stages a concerted movement toward the possibility of a poem-event.

The ‘*Livre*’, posited as a total work, contains the world – hence also its audience – requiring actor-participants for its materialization. Thus if in the better-known *Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard* [*A Throw of the Dice Never Will Abolish Chance*] (1897), the ‘event’ (even the ‘evental-site’ or ‘event-drama’) of poetry, as Alain Badiou puts it, is pure undecidability,⁵ with the even more choreotextual notes for the ‘*Livre*’,

pure thought becomes the impossible condition toward which poetry theatrically tends. The work is not undecidable but infinitely decidable – yet there is so much (the entire universe) to decide. Choreographed in space, thought – cast as pure thought thinking itself – becomes a partial set of coordinates hovering on a cosmic grid – and instructions on a graphic score. This requires spatialisation: not just the disposition of words on the page, but their enactment in time. Mallarmé proposes to choreograph a thinking ‘self’, in a show composed of unfolding thought corpuscles, shared among reader-attendants.

This would be a tall order for any performance event. Yet if we take Mallarmé’s project seriously, it shows us how radically he reconfigures the Platonic *agon* between poetry and theatre, positing the dissolution between genres. Poetry and theatre, reality and its representation, replaced with choreographic textuality, becomes reconciled in the movement of bodies on and with pages; there is no longer *either a script or its* actualization (its corporealization, its becoming-present to others in time), but something between one and the other. Instead of actor–character doubling, reality vs. falsehood (theatre as reality’s copy), language and thought appear together as an orchestral chorus: an impersonal force enacting a shared space of attention. The orchestral conductor (as prime actor / author, reader / attendant) is prior to yet realized within the chorus.

Thus we are confronted with a dilemma: is this mere delusion and mere fantasy (mere ‘madness’), or *is this the most that fantasy can be?* Does this stage the very limit of the performative, and thus the unacknowledged frontier of the theatrical avant-garde? Does this in effect nudge our understanding of the origins of the ‘avant-garde’ further back in time to the 1860s? And what sort of avant-garde is this? Rather than argue, with Martin Puchner, that Mallarmé’s work is ‘anti-theatrical’, a form of ‘closet drama,’⁶ I

argue that it is intensely and intimately relational, concerned with staging a self that is interconnected, porous and perpetually in a state of becoming actual *with those around it*. Instead of shunning theatricality, Mallarmé takes the theatrical to its furthest limit, staging his thought becoming-represented, in his *salon* (his living room) which becomes a theatre (a *salon*).

Writing and performance are not contradictory in this work: rather, Mallarmé sought to realise the event of a mutually entangled, potentially perpetual, nearly ungraspable unfolding of the self in the labour of thought as it spills outside of itself – in short, a schizotheatre. The spiritual crisis he described at the start of his lifelong composition process does not merely signal a bathetic personal history, but lastingly transforms his poetry into a theatre of splinters and shards. His notes choreograph a gesture of intellectual reaching, theatricalising the limits of author and genre. The ‘*Livre*’ in this view constitutes a performative and aesthetic project of nearly unprecedented scope, arguably born with a radical schizological ‘crisis’ that could not be resolved.

Mallarmé’s ‘*Livre*’ thus I contend signals the surplus – and form – toward which the rest of his work tends. This requires us to set the ‘*Livre*’ at the centre, rather than on the periphery, of his body of writing – his *corpus* (a term that echoes and perverts Mallarmé’s own vision of his personhood disappearing into his thought). The ‘*Livre*’, which encompassed and epitomized his aesthetic and critical vision, enacts Mallarmé’s ongoing attempt to shift the coordinates of his working life into a total textual *practice*.

The project tortured Mallarmé for decades, until his death at the cusp of the twentieth century: he described a ‘horrible vision of a pure work’ (*‘vision horrible d’une*

œuvre pure'),⁷ unrepresentable and absolute. Although this is arguably an enabling depiction of a real state of derealization and depersonalization, it has typically been read in tragic terms. In Jean-Paul Sartre's characterization, Mallarmé was the Absolute-subject (*'l'Absolut-sujet'*),⁸ and the 'hero of an ontological drama.'⁹ '[W]ith Mallarmé,' wrote Sartre,

is born a new sort of person, reflexive, critical, and tragic, and whose trajectory in life is decline. This character, whose *being-for-failure* does not differ essentially from a *being-for-dying*, in the Heideggerian sense, projects and assembles himself, surpasses and totalizes himself in the searing drama of incarnation and fall.¹⁰

Mallarmé epitomized an orphic journey back from the depths of interiority, but also the impossible completion of this journey's telling. As such, the lore surrounding Mallarmé's project for the *'Livre'* nourished arguments for the poetic potential of failure, articulated by scores of twentieth-century philosophers, from Sartre and Maurice Blanchot to Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and Gilles Deleuze, all of whom jumped on the Mallarmé bandwagon to draw up philosophies of incompleteness, blank spaces, silences, and aporias of their own.¹¹ Derrida's analysis may be the most incisive as regards the enactment of the *'Livre'* as a modestly collective and nearly theatrical enterprise. For *La double séance* ('The Double Session'), first published in *Tel Quel* and subsequently in *La dissémination* (1972), Derrida invited participants of the Groupe d'Études théoriques in Paris, 26 February and 25 March 1969, to reperform the *séance* (at once a magical or mystical and a temporal event): literally to gather, before a blackboard, with distributed sheets of paper he had printed out staging an excerpt from Plato's *Philèbe* in L-shape around Mallarmé's 'Mimique', set in the bottom right corner (a short text in which Mallarmé suggests that silence is the greatest 'luxury' after rhymes, and the condition as well as the joy of the act

of reading). These participants gather, as the *Tel Quel* editors note, under a ‘spacious and outmoded chandelier’ quoting the one Mallarmé evokes.¹²

Derrida reads himself reading this scene as a sort of reenactment, almost a mimetic *étude*, staged as a theatrical play of light and shadow: Derrida substitutes Mallarmé’s black lines on white paper for white lines on a blackboard, serving as his double, entering into his lair (his ‘*antre*’, a homonym of ‘*entre*’ or ‘between’), situating his reading between himself and Mallarmé, and between two Mallarmés (‘*l’entre-deux “Mallarmé”*’).¹³ Thus *La double séance* purports to mimic and complete Mallarmé’s ‘*Livre*’, but with Derrida the stated question remains that of literature, discussed in prose – rather than theatre, discussed in the language of poetry (or choreotextuality). As Derrida sees it, the question of the ‘*Livre*’ forces us to ask what literature is (‘*qu’est-ce que la littérature?*’).¹⁴ With this, Derrida elides the very theatricality that his engagement with Mallarmé’s project performs. Derrida fills Mallarmé’s gaps and blank spaces – his choreographic fault-lines or topological *mise en scène* – with language, substituting the possibility of silence, movement and mime (gestured towards in ‘*Mimique*’) with speech.

For Deleuze, working more closely with the dramaturgical and choreographic poetics of the fold, especially in *Le pli: Leibniz et le baroque* (1988), Mallarmé’s work signals a polymorphic unfolding, a play of pages: the readable and visible are intimately related to one another in Mallarmé as in Leibniz’s ‘theatre of reading’ (‘*théâtre de lecture*’), Deleuze argues. He notes that the monad itself can be construed as a book or reading room, so that ‘what is visible and what is readable, the inside and the outside, the façade and the room, are not two separate worlds (...).’ The correspondence between the legible, the visible, the intimacy of the journal, and the publicness of the theatre

constitute an *entr'expression* or 'inter-expression.'¹⁵ Mallarmé's 'monad', like Leibniz's, is for Deleuze at once a dark background and a cell: it is an interior without exterior, but it is also a façade, with doors and windows.¹⁶ Like Mallarmé's vision for the '*Livre*', the monad is impossible to visualise and paradoxically it can only exist as visualization. It is a place for seeing and the place from which one sees: in this regard, it is pure *theatron* – where this collapses into the chorus.

Thus in spite of these gestures towards mimeticism and theatricality, Mallarmé's work as a theatrical (and schizological) *œuvre* remains undertheorized. Yet the two hundred or so notes Mallarmé left behind reveal a concrete plan for a performance; as theatre, they are filled with material concerns – made of bodies and chairs, rooms, props and revenues, even as the work attempts to elude the very materiality they point toward, staging – monadically – a drama *between* interior and exterior. Careful attention to the dramaturgy of these notes shows a clear plan for a *mise en scène*, indeed a practical aesthetic philosophy: these notes to self stage a central figure, the Poet (or Conceptor), also envisioned as the work's Orchestrator. The Orchestrator is subject and object, ensnared in a web of verbal gestures. Thus the dramatic poet-gesture-verb nexus that emerges with the notes for the '*Livre*' evokes more than an unrealised plan for a work to come, but an ecology of 'working', including a living room (in which the '*Livre*' is to be staged), fragments of papers – crumpled notes – and his letters to his friends Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Henri Cazalis, François Coppée, Eugène Lefébure, and Paul Valéry, among others. Taken together, these reveal something far-reaching Mallarmé was effectively deploying: his life-long vision of a total work, doubling as total performance, albeit in rarified form, arguably made whole through its procedural incompleteness.

The work – with Mallarmé as poet-orchestrator at centre – offers a script that is rich *as gesture*: it describes a theatre which stages a self (the Conceptor / Poet / Operator) experiencing himself and his world, as Henri Meschonnic suggests, phenomenologically ‘in parentheses.’¹⁷ Mallarmé presents his ‘self’ (and the universe) as a score made up of gaps and blank spaces: his personhood dissipated and dispersed. As the portrait of a psychic collapse and the graphic choreography of a poet’s descent into nothingness as well as his ascent to the heights of ecstasy, the ‘*Livre*’ offers an unparalleled depiction – a radical *mise en scène* – of the dissolution of the boundaries between the poet, his world, and his work. This is a theatre that is open, porous, utterly pragmatic in parts, radically guarded, and inconclusive. *As it stands*, the work displays the tension of writerly life, suspended between the intimacy and solitude of writing, the rituality of theatre, and the act of reading, an *entre-deux* that represents the moment of an interface between subjects.

Mallarmé’s visions thus served to define more than the impetus for, but the dramatic (anti-)structure of, the ‘*Livre*’. Without putting Mallarmé in drag back at the centre of the work (an actor playing Mallarmé?), I argue that a dramaturgical stab at rehabilitating the ‘*Livre*’ as a groundbreaking work in the history of experimental theatre requires close attention to his dramatization of himself in the crevices between words and pages: a disappearing center, the anti-Artaud, absent from his work yet pervading all of it.

Mallarmé went to Cannes from March 29 to April 6 1866 to stay with his friend Eugène Lefébure for Easter. His dramatic work *Le Faune*, which he had envisioned as a ‘heroic intermezzo, whose hero is a Fawn’¹⁸ had been rejected by Théodore de Banville and Constante Coquelin of the Théâtre-Français in September 1865 (though it would be

made famous as avant-garde ballet by Vaslav Nijinsky in 1912). He was now at work on *Hérodiade*, which he described as ‘no longer tragedy, but poem’ and a ‘mystery’ based on the story of Salomé.¹⁹ He completed only the opening section, what he called the ‘*Scène*’ (1871),²⁰ though ultimately this ‘musical overture’ (*ouverture musicale*) already presented a radical departure from his earlier endeavors; it was published in the literary magazine *Parnasse contemporain*.²¹ He had high hopes. October 30 1864, he wrote to his friend Cazalis that it was to herald an entirely new poetics: ‘I have finally started my *Hérodiade*’, he wrote. ‘With terror, for I am inventing a language that must necessarily arise [*jaillir*] from a very new poetics, which I could define in these words: *to paint, not the thing, but the effect it produces*.’²² This went beyond Symbolism, which he was also instrumental in developing; he proposed here more radically to evacuate the ‘thing’ – objecthood – entirely, offering a performative relation: movement toward a receiver.

In a letter to Cazalis 3 March 1871, Mallarmé refers to his work ‘no longer as a myth’ but a ‘volume of Tales, dreamed; a volume of Poetry, glimpsed, shuddering (*entrevu et fredonné*)’; and a volume of Criticism – in short the Universe, as it had been conceived of until then’. He wrote, ‘I do not know if it is because it is spring, but I believe that if I manage my life properly, I will have these before me.’²³ He intended to gather together poetry, drama, etc., each a totality of its own; to collect them into an impossibly capacious, universe-wide ‘Book’, but of course the status of the container (the ‘book’) was at stake in this reconceptualisation of the relationship between subject and object, the work and its collector or conduit. Indeed, the work attempts to stage time’s expansive unfolding – the very thing theatre, staged in time, normally eludes.

Mallarmé was articulating an aesthetic, pragmatic and coherent response to his material working conditions. In the terms of schizoanalysis, depression and derealisation may signal a refusal to submit to socially-coded forms of affective and social regimentation enabling a relatively normalised degree of operation in the everyday. The ‘schizological’ subject treads within a liminal zone, marking (and making apparent) a nearly ineffable border which, when pushed against, forces a breakdown or a breakthrough. Mallarmé’s visions – inscribed in the *‘Livre’* – enact this constant being toward the limit: the *‘Livre’* asks where a writer begins and where he or she ends in the meeting point between work and world; and how far thought towards a work goes before engulfing its ‘author’. In this perspective, the *‘Livre’* instantiates a movement toward a breakthrough: it performs a rehearsal for breaking free *again and again* from the constraints of socially-coded, normalizing aesthetic production (and the tyranny, among others, of genre).

Mallarmé’s choreotextual poetics arguably arose from his failure to have his work staged in conventional theatres; yet this catalyzed his formulation of an aesthetics that moved deliberately beyond the confines of genre, eluding the closure of representation. He had intended *Hérodiade* for production at the Théâtre-Français, but as with the *Faune*, it was rejected by Banville and Coquelin, who considered the verse good, but the play lacking in plot.²⁴ It was around then Mallarmé slid into what he described as a spiritual crisis, marking the beginning of his conception of the *grand œuvre* or Great Work – an alchemical term indicating not only the possibility of turning base metals into gold, but mystical enlightenment and an ability to commune with the universe. These visions came at a cost: Mallarmé described a ‘descent into the Void’ (*‘le Néant’*), a dark and

debilitating state of sorrow (*désolément*). He called it the ‘abyss’: ‘unfortunately, by digging this far into verse (*en creusant le vers à ce point*), I met two abysses (*abîmes*), which drive me to despair’, he wrote. ‘One is the Void, which I have arrived at without knowing Buddhism, and I am still too disheartened (*désolé*) to believe in my poetry and get back to work, which this crushing thought has made me abandon.’²⁵ But this journey also provoked him to see ‘Beauty’ (*le Beau*): ‘In truth, I am traveling, but in unknown lands’ (*dans des pays inconnus*), he remarked, ‘and if, to escape the torrid nature of reality, I take pleasure in evoking cold images, [...] it is because I have for a month been in the purest glaciers of Aesthetics – that after having found the Void, I found Beauty – and you cannot imagine in what lucid lassitude I now adventure’ (*tu ne peux t’imaginer dans quelles lassitudes lucides je m’aventure*).²⁶

By 14 May 1867, he was experiencing derealization and depersonalization, unable to separate himself from his surroundings or recognize in himself a distinct personality. He believed he had become purely immaterial, a ‘pure Conception,’ the result of thought taking over his mundane self, so that he was dead to the world, yet open onto the ‘spiritual Universe’, which employed him as a conduit to express itself. He wrote to Cazalis:

I have just spent a frightening year: my Thought thought itself, and arrived at a pure Conception. Everything which as a result my being suffered during this long agony is unnarratable but, happily, I am perfectly dead, and the most impure region in which my Spirit may adventure is Eternity (...). It is to tell you that I am now impersonal and no longer Stéphane that you knew, – but an aptitude that the spiritual Universe has for seeing and developing itself, through what was me.²⁷

April 20 1868, he wrote to F. Coppée that he was losing his mind, yet engaged in the throes of conceiving a Great Work: ‘it has been two years since I first committed the sin of seeing the Dream in its ideal nudity (...). Now, having arrived at the horrible vision

of a pure Work, I have nearly lost my mind...'²⁸ In May, he wrote to E. Lefébure that he was 'descending again from the Absolute' towards which he had begun journeying two years prior, at Cannes. He added that he wanted to make this voyage into a 'rite' ('*Sacre*').²⁹ In July 1868, he sent an allegorical sonnet of himself ('*Sonnet allégorique de lui-même*') to Cazalis, experimenting with stylizing his splintered sense of himself.³⁰

By this point, Mallarmé had begun to figure at the centre of his work, like a 'sacred spider' in its web, patiently weaving tomes that would take decades to complete:

I have laid out the plan for my whole *Œuvre*, after having found the key to myself, key to the vault, or centre, if you will, so as not to mix metaphors, centre of myself where I stand like a sacred spider, on the main threads that have already come out of my spirit, and with the help of which I will weave *at their meeting points* marvelous laces, which I can see dimly [*que je devine*], and which already exist in the bosom of Beauty.

... I project that it will take me twenty years for these five books that will make up the *Œuvre*, and I will wait, reading only to my friends such as yourself, fragments, – mocking glory like a worn-out and useless thing. What is this relative immortality, which so often exists in the minds of idiots, compared to the joy of contemplating Eternity, taking pleasure in it, alive ('*vivant*'), within oneself?³¹

In his sketches for this arcane and magisterial, five-volume *Œuvre*, he included himself taking part in the sessions as an *Opérateur*, which he calculated would be the twenty-fifth character, the poet ('myself').³² Nor did he distinguish characters from guests; there were to be twenty-five people in the room total. The *Opérateur* was not to appear onstage as an author reading to an audience, but a reader who was to perform the role of an orchestra conductor. The centrality of this 'operator', and Mallarmé's own – staged – invisibility as poet, suggest his ambivalence towards self-representation. He was supposed to be instrumental in the theatrical operation but transparent: at once the disappearing subject and object of the work, gingerly pulling strings at the stage's edge.

Mallarmé had not wanted his ‘notes towards the book’ (*notes en vue du livre*) to be published; he expressed this in his testament, but Valéry, who had visited him on his deathbed, disobeyed, with the help of Mallarmé’s daughter, Geneviève, and her fiancé, Edmond Bonniot. Bonniot prefaced an edition of the posthumously published dramatic poem *Igitur* with a description of Mallarmé’s work habits: he jotted down notes to himself, often half-formed, on eighths of half-sheets of notepaper, stashing them away in large China boxes, describing the whole as ‘refuse’ or ‘embalming.’³³ This casket motif³⁴ recurs in Mallarmé’s notes for the ‘*Livre*’, for instance in the first tableau of the second act. The setting described is a palace in a dead city, submerged in the desert, testimony to a civilization that has disappeared. His indications are ambiguous as to whether the city exists in the past or future; what is clear is that the set described is desert-like; only a traveler’s spirit passes through it. A blank page (folio 36) suggests a play of curtains, the only concrete sign of a transition – a place of passage and rest.³⁵

Mallarmé created a theatre of delicate care and minute self-embalming, enfolding himself in a paper tomb, to protect pure ‘being’ from the ‘brutal’ world: the ‘superposition of pages like a casket’ (*coffret*) he wrote ‘defended against brutal space an intimate and infinite delicateness refolded – that of being in itself’ (*défendant contre le brutal espace une délicatesse reployée infinie et intime de l’être en soi-même*).³⁶ In a passage recalling *Igitur*, Mallarmé described his feeling of disgust with himself: ‘*j’ai le dégoût de moi.*’ He recoiled from mirrors, seeing his face lusterless – ‘ruined and lifeless’ (*dégradée et éteinte*) – crying when he felt empty (*vide*) and could ‘throw not one word onto [his] implacably white paper.’³⁷ The paper served as a reproach, but also a refuge and playground: in the ‘*Livre*’, folded pages carve out and inscribe time’s passage.

The precise number of folds was significant, as when one folds a page in half three times, to arrive (upon opening it) at four squares, multiplied by two (i.e. eight squares): ‘The session implies the confrontation of a fragment of the book with itself, or volume’ (*‘La séance, implique la confrontation d’un fragment de livre avec lui-même, ou volume’*) Mallarmé noted, industriously, ‘– thus: the unfolding of the page, as for the text, in 3, in its quadruple aspect, (: :) twice (proving that *that is that*)’ (*‘prouvant que c’est cela’*).³⁸ The folds operated as formal elements of the *mise en scène*, at once choreographing the space in time (three series of doubles, to make two quadruplets) and helping to create a compulsive order out of the fleeting images floating, at precise locations, in the mind, as on the page. By choreographing the paper in space, Mallarmé could make ‘*that*’ be: he could instantiate, enact, perform ‘being’ – and with that, his ontogenesis and decomposition, choreographing a text into which he would vanish.

With the ‘*Livre*’, Mallarmé appears in and disappears into the fissures and folds of the book and universe, as if to become flattened between a blank page and a blank page. He created, as an intermission for the ‘*Livre*’, a blank space: a sort of rupture or scission, through which an ‘electric arabesque’ appears, a light illuminating the room that serves as the backdrop to the work (he writes in folio 33, ‘*fond = salle,*’ ‘backdrop = room’).³⁹ The trope of the hymen, or wedding, between theatre and drama, mystery and hymn (in French, ‘*hymne,*’ ‘hymn’ and ‘*hymen,*’ ‘hymen’ are anagrams)⁴⁰ recurs, furthering his play with binary oppositions and space: ceremonially doubling verses to be spoken, and their situation on the page... contained on sheets of paper, in four volumes, separated into two halves of two volumes each, each half constituting one session (as reprised by Derrida).

Mallarmé devoted a considerable amount of time to calculating how this would all play out: his mathematical computations perform a game of symmetries, sets of pairs that could go on near infinitely, fractal structures conjugating the micro and macro, the banal and the exalted, as if the passage from finite to infinite could be realized if one only folded enough sets of pages.⁴¹ The ‘*vision magnifique et triste*’ (‘magnificent and sad vision’) he notes on folio 34, between the ‘egg’ and the ‘church’ (‘*l’œuf*’ and ‘*église*’),⁴² ‘is what...’ he writes (‘*Qu’est-ce*’), but the ‘thing itself,’ substance. He leaves a vast blank space after this sentence fragment. The language detritus, word clusters, float on the page, conjuring ‘not the objects’ but the ‘effects’ they produce. Mallarmé is ‘faithful to the book’ (‘*Je suis moi – fidèle au livre*’),⁴³ multiplying these pages for thirty years between his ‘*première ébauche*’ or first tab in 1868 at the age of 22 and his early death in 1896. He wrote on folio 78: ‘*m’identifier au livre*’ – ‘to identify myself with the book.’⁴⁴ The ‘*Livre*’ is the unfinished and unfinishable portrait of Mallarmé plying, arranging, containing and redirecting his expansive ‘self’ from within this procedural unfolding.

Thus, while the pages fold and unfold, rendering the choreotextual event book-like, this is clearly a theatrical space. Although simply set in a room (his own salon), he makes a note of a chandelier (‘*lustre*’) – in French, a cognate of light, enlightenment, lucidity, and what hangs in a concert hall over an audience’s heads, granting them the occasion to see. The chandelier is significant: folio 108 reads, ‘It is enough to satisfy our spirit – of the equivalence of light [‘*de l’équivalence de lumière*’] that a *chandelier* [‘*lustre*’] contains.’⁴⁵ Elsewhere, Mallarmé notes the chandelier as metonymic of the theatre, singularly marking out theatrical space: ‘The chandelier ensures the Th. which is

enough for the spirit' (*Le lustre assure le Th. qui suffit à l'esprit*), he writes. As Kristeva remarks, 'Th.' demarcates theatre from drama (Mallarmé juxtaposes 'Th.' with 'Dr.', for '*drame*') – that which ostensibly takes place on the page alone: in these terms, what has no chandelier.⁴⁶ But the '*lustre*' also conjured monadic spatiality – interior and exterior, including the imaginal space of fair booths, a desert city, and spiritual or interior convent (*'le couvent – nous le devenons tous,'* 'the convent – we all become it').⁴⁷ This schizological space, porous and folded over itself, nearly vaginal, populated with images that hover like ciphers, produced a carefully symbolic *mise en espace* of the poet's mind wrestling with enlightenment and the theatre of rational being it presupposes. Significantly, Mallarmé's version of 'light' is intimate: the lucid weariness whose 'rite' he attempts to stage posits self-knowledge as strictly unrepresentable and never-ending.

What he described to Verlaine as endeavoring to create 'a book, simply, in multiple volumes, a book that should be a book, architectural and premeditated, and not a collection of random bits of inspiration no matter how marvelous these should be'⁴⁸ was that of encasing himself into the folds of these pages, literally bending into himself, cloistering himself, hiding; yet anticipating readings that he would produce to exhibit his person – his discovery of this enormity of the self: 'Lect */je fais*
donc moi pour le plaisir de me montrer' ('Rdg */I do thus myself for*
the pleasure of showing myself') (folio 77).⁴⁹ His plans revolved around how, on the one hand, to draw up a verbal universe peopled by images that would fill – and could describe – the void (and visions of Beauty) he experienced; and, on the other, to invite selected guests into the folds of this *grand œuvre* and thus share it, easing his solitude and

enabling him to be productive (and gain a living in the process). And, as with his obsessive attention to the folds, his concern with the pragmatics was all-consuming.

Folio 79 notes that he would, ‘of largesse, invite... people – x tickets, etc.,’ but that he would find he was the only one to turn up (*‘une largesse en invitant... personnes – a billets, etc.. qui voudraient tant – prendre connaissance – pour me trouver le seul à venir –’*)⁵⁰ ‘Lect. tout est là,’ he wrote as the sole comment on folio 84 – ‘Reading, it’s all that/there’ (‘là’ indicates ‘that’ and ‘there’, one of many wordplays, in this case folding subject and space into one another).⁵¹ But he seems unconvinced, continuing on the next page (the verso): ‘because it is not finished/ – it can’t be’ (*‘parce que ce n’en est pas fini/ – il ne se peut pas’*).⁵² ‘All of this vain’ (*‘tout cela vain’*).⁵³ Yet he devotes pages and pages to calculating how many guests to invite; how much the tickets should cost; how many pages of this writing to distribute; and how many readings to offer per year (‘2 Rd. per year /ea inviting the other’) (*‘2 lect. par an /chacun invitait l’autre’*).⁵⁴

He clearly counted on this endeavor to constitute a source of revenue: ‘Found everything thus on a financial operation – without even the guests knowing it – among society people, but wealthy [ones] (*‘entre gens du monde, mais riche’*).’⁵⁵ His notes suggest he hoped to sell portions of the ‘Livre’ at the performances to those attending, and planned for the possibility of some (if not all) guests attending as many sessions as he would. Calculating twenty-four attendees, plus himself, he figured that he would need twenty-four copies of the double volume per double session, multiplying this by twenty sessions, to yield a total of 480 double copies, plus his twenty, which made 500. This suggested an edition of 20 or 25 – except if everyone wanted the whole ‘Livre’, and a

fragment (1/20th) of the portion they had attended, which would require 9,600 copies – ‘*il faut au moins prévoir ce cas*’ (‘one has to account for that possibility’): an expenditure, before it could turn a profit, to say the least.⁵⁶

As he planned it, each guest was to occupy a precise location (a seat) [‘*une place*’] in the physical space of the room, doubled by the space of the page. On folio 143, Mallarmé writes: ‘One place [seat] corresponds to one page./ One session to one volume./ The Reading, ultimately, has to do with a Text. Work’ (‘*Une place se rapporte à une feuille./ Une séance à un volume. / La Lecture, enfin, a trait à un Texte. Ouvrage*’).⁵⁷ [‘*Place*,’ in this context, suggests space and seat. My translation is faulty insofar as ‘*a trait*’ conjures both ‘a line’ and ‘having to do with’ (‘*un trait*’ means a line, or segment; ‘*a trait*’ means ‘having to do with’); and ‘*ouvrage*’ indicates labor and work (also as a work of art), but also the activity of opening, from the verb *ouvrir* – to open.] As always, the orchestrator is Mallarmé, who ‘exercises his right to read the book’ (‘*j’exerce mon droit de lire le livre*’).⁵⁸

Music and dance – complementary aspects of this *grand œuvre*, which was to be popular and lyrical, as well as magic – appear and disappear in his notes for the ‘*Livre*’. On folio 222, he projects that there should be ‘concert dialog poem and symphony for stage and orch – /occupying the background of the W –’ (‘*Pièce où cette représentation avec concert dialogue poème et symphonie pour scène et orch/ – occupe le fond de l’Œ –*’).⁵⁹ And it seems he had projected dance as a sort of intermezzo (‘*bond énorme de la feuille – danse*’) (‘enormous leap of [sic] the page – dance’), but little more is indicated, though he wrote extensively about dance elsewhere.⁶⁰ Scenic design elements appear to have been minimal: in addition to the *lustre* or chandelier (which may or may not have

indicated a literal object in space), he notes a curtain, further suggesting a deconstructed theatre; and, significantly, he suggests that the reader (*lecteur*) should enter through an area left empty by seats to the right and to the left of the space, and head straight to the furniture (*meuble*), which would be made of lacquer. All this was to describe a diagonal trajectory – a diagonal fold in space. Folio 250 reads: ‘The seats – The cabinet.

curtain

The reader enters, by the space left empty by the seats to the right and to the left, and goes directly to the cabinet – of lacquer – half full obviously in a diagonal’ (*à demi plein évidemment en diagonale*).⁶¹

Cast as a heightened reading series, the form of the *Livre* had some precedent: Mallarmé hosted a regular community of listeners on Tuesday evenings, gathering many of Paris’s artistic luminaries. In his eulogy to Mallarmé on the occasion of the poet’s death, André Gide described one of these soirées in nearly mystical terms:

We would enter; it was evening; what we found first of all was a great silence; once inside, all the sounds of the street died away; Mallarmé began to talk with a soft voice, musical, unforgettable, – but! now gone. Strange thing: HE WOULD THINK BEFORE SPEAKING! (...) And for the first time, near him, one could feel, touch, the reality of thought (...).⁶²

Mallarmé already performed readings that staged thought; the *Livre* rarefied and intensified this weekly event, imagining it more completely as ritual theatre. Yet some of Mallarmé’s notes appear deliberately obscure, as if to cloak his self-observation in veiled language, softening his own reality even to himself. In the following fragment, Mallarmé suggests it was his ‘illness’ (*maladie*) he sought to ‘undo’ (*défaire*) in the *Livre*: ‘It’s

thi /to find something that should not be – *this*
illness/ To undo idea in book /its operating mechanism there/

The mystery is already no longer – the Idea is visible in it there it's crisp/glow in
titles transparency.' (*C'est cel /trouver*
quelque chose qui ne soit – ça maladie/ Défaire idée en livre
/son mécanisme opérateur là/

Le mystère n'est déjà plus – l'Idée y est visible là c'est net/lueur en titres
transparence'.⁶³ Did Mallarmé believe his solitude and visions could be shared? He said
to his wife and daughter on his deathbed, between fits of choking, that only he could
make light of these scraps. He added that what was to have come of the project was to
have been quite beautiful.⁶⁴

It was to herald a 'totally new theatre', which, as he had revealed to the poet
Sarah Helen Whitman in a letter dated 28 May 1877, would take *tout Paris* by storm,
though it would take an incalculably long time:

You would be so kind as to ask how my dramatic work is going? It is advancing,
as to me, at least; but the great attempt at a totally new theatre to which I am
devoting myself will take me many years before I can show any result externally.
Too ambitious, it is not only one genre that I am dealing with, it is all those that
partake for me of the stage: magical, popular and lyrical drama; and it is only
once this triple *œuvre* is finished that I will give it almost simultaneously, setting
fire like Nero to the three corners of Paris.⁶⁵

On 28 December of the same year, Mallarmé wrote a similar letter, full of mystery, to
Arthur O'Shaughnessy, comparing himself no longer to Nero but to an even greater,
elemental, force: '(...) I am studying everywhere the fragments of a new Theatre that is
being prepared in France and that I am preparing on my end; something that will dazzle

the sovereign people as never an emperor of Rome or Asian prince dazzled them.’⁶⁶ He had moments of disenchantment as well: a few years prior, 3 March 1871, he wrote to Cazalis that he was becoming a *littérateur* again, quite simply, and that his *œuvre* was not a myth. The notion that he could contain the universe in his *œuvre* was a pipedream, ‘*en somme les matinées de vingt ans*’ (‘the follies of youth’).⁶⁷

But what emerges from these accounts, more than the form (scribbled notes) or motifs (swords, hymens, reading, mystery, etc.) is the character and person, Mallarmé – foregrounding and effacing himself, accumulating materials in a tireless attempt to bring them to fruition, caught in his filaments, figures and calculations. He appears arrested between the introspective activity, reading, and another, in response to it, which was writing; as well as his need, which was reasonable, for listeners. His theatre was to have taken place on an anti-stage bordered by the four walls of his private salon: ‘a fantasy deprived of a public’, Kristeva bemoaned.⁶⁸ Too complex and too huge to be realized in his lifetime, and too frightening (perhaps) if carried out, as it would signal symbolically his own consummation, it could only disappoint. Yet aesthetically, the tension between distance and proximity – absorption and theatricality – fueled the work, whose monadic spiritualism required a porous border to remain expansive and ethereal; and the closure of the private salon to perform an intimate ritualism prescient of the most influential participatory and ‘relational’ art – concerned with institutions and the ethics of care.

In her essay ‘Modern Theatre Does Not Take (A) Place’ (1977), Julia Kristeva argues that after Mallarmé, theatre no longer existed outside of the play text; Mallarmé’s ‘book-theatre (...) which was never meant to have any other place than in the archivist’s

records, destined for the incinerator’, marked the disappearance of a ‘communal sacred’ or public realm of demonstration specific to theatre. For Kristeva, Mallarmé sounded the death knell of representational drama, so that ‘post-Mallarméan survivors of the modern theatre are fantasies deprived of a public, while the most advanced experiments in writing address themselves uniquely to the individual unconscious, without speculating on the fantasies of the larger group.’⁶⁹ For Kristeva, Mallarmé’s theatre suggested a solipsistic space, apolitical and literary, individual and disembodied, yet as I argue it was also *hyperpersonal* and *disindividuated*, seeking at once a public and page – as if the poet could evacuate himself, and his disembodied mind could expand so far as to fill the private enclave into which he invited trusted guests. If we substitute psychoanalysis for schizoanalysis, we find that Mallarmé’s vision postulated an enabling reconciliation between the distressing experience of a disassembled self and the cast of participants who would temporarily co-constitute it: he imagined a ‘larger group’ supporting his self, displayed (somewhat covertly) as an open wound.

Closing oneself and one’s guests into the salon together was not to reject the ‘communal sacred’, but to enact an alternative first and foremost intimately. This schizological and anti-psychiatric proposition assumes the opposite of Freud’s neurotic spectator, who sympathizes at a distance with the actor’s suffering by projecting his or her own neuroses onto characters onstage.⁷⁰ With Mallarmé, reader-attendants are invited into the Conceptor-Orchestrator’s ‘lair’ to sit in the space with him. The challenge for Mallarmé is to determine if they will be able to accept the enormity of his proposition, to take it as seriously as he does – hence, perhaps, his reticence. Indeed, Mallarmé’s mixture of self-rapture and self-deconstruction in this condensed yet infinitely expanding formula

can be read as a *mise en espace* of the poet's mind, full of vectors pointing inward and outward through emblematic space: a score serving to mark its ever-moving coordinates (not unlike Richard Foreman's sets, though his vectors appear literally as strings pulled through the stage, never over the audience's seats, which are separated out in rows⁷¹).

The locus, or space, of Mallarmé's theatre – the room where the audience / reader, reader / poet, poet / orchestrator, and other doubles are to be played out – foregrounds a productive tension between the movement and the page, silence and speech. In this sense, Mallarmé's '*Livre*' is a 'stage' in the temporal sense: a period, a process, so entwined in Mallarmé's person it cannot but end at his death; yet as with death, it does not end there, just as a self is not separate from others. Mallarmé's notes theatricalize this unravelling of individuation: with the '*Livre*', the world is not individual or impersonal but *a-personal*, composed of tendencies that come together and move apart. Mallarmé was convinced he was the nexus of a *grand œuvre*; if this stance was not so radical, its articulation was unparalleled.⁷² It took the de-institutionalization of the avant-garde from established theatre to its furthest point. Indeed, with Mallarmé, a further question arises: *what is theatre?* And, *what can theatre be?* Mallarmé was working in nineteenth-century Paris, when avant-gardes of every sort, from André Antoine and the Théâtre Libre to Aurélien Lugné-Poe and the Théâtre de l'Œuvre were taking the means of production into their own hands, from ticketing to playbills. Yet with Mallarmé, the sheer pressure of working in time marked the inadequacy of public expression before any theatre could take place. It is the trajectory of this attempt that makes his plan for the *Grand Œuvre* into an *œuvre*, performing an enduring aesthetico-political act: a gesture towards the representation of 'selfhood'. This is radically schizological in that it enacts a motion away from itself and

in towards itself, conjugating the sublime and the psychotic, the 'I' and 'not-I', as the poet moves into his own silence, in order better to invite the same in others.

We are to do so with 'self-presence': as Mallarmé wrote in a letter to J. Boissière, 24 November 1892: 'one must be never absent from oneself' (*'Le tout est de ne pas être absent de soi-même'*).⁷³ This *présence à soi* requires a perpetual *écoute*: a state of being 'all ears', attuned. It is not sufficient to listen to others, we must equally – Mallarmé whispers – tend inward. Thus if Barthes famously attributed the original 'death of the author' to Mallarmé, he himself seems with the '*Livre*' to have positioned himself as an author in the oldest and most radical sense: a compositor, enabler and medium – in effect, an actor and mime, who indicates what is hidden beyond the gates of everyday intelligibility. In this way Mallarmé's '*Livre*' must be understood as a choreotextual script, a work that moves within itself and requires co-presence: the author invites his audience to witness and complete what he partially occasions. This para-authorial positioning stages a schizological 'self' at the centre of a web of destabilizing operations, so that in relinquishing singularity and directive agency, Mallarmé instantiates a set of relations, first of all between coextensive versions of his fractured and dematerialized 'self'. This is not merely or purely language that speaks, rather than the author as 'individual', as Barthes contended of Mallarmé⁷⁴; instead, the choreotextual enterprise Mallarmé sets up radically displaces – rearranges – bodies (and language) in space, to herald a new aesthetic *order* of mutually constitutive being.

In schizoanalytic terms, Mallarmé dissolves psychological dualism, by which there is agency, action and will (as socially desirable principles), on the one hand; and objects (also socially desirable), on the other, onto which the former are supposed to act.

Instead he is already the subject and object of an unfolding and infinitely processual disindividuated event: he stages his own abstraction from the scene of performance, which he also, in abstracted form (as ‘Orchestrator’) proposes to attend. As a cluster of sketches figuring the literary and performative *aporia* of subject formation, the ‘*Livre*’ realizes the necessarily unfinished process of unraveling the notion of the ‘self’ as a dramatic fiction. By enacting an open process of composition, configuring the work of entanglement in the extreme, the work is only contingently unfinished or undecidable: rather, it invites thinking at the limits of textuality, textual practice, and the theatrical space within which the choreotextual performance of temporary individuation appears. So while Mallarmé publically bemoaned his work’s incompleteness, and has been taken at that word, in effect the more radical contribution he offers is a textual choreography – enacted as an open and polysemous event – which remains. Indeed, Mallarmé’s contribution to poetry and theatre, literary theory, poststructuralism, deconstruction, schizoanalysis, contemporary music, theatre and performance may be attributed to his radical *disclosure*. Although not as he had (ostensibly) intended it, the ‘*Livre*’ enjoins us to wrestle with the fragility of open structures and other minds; to question our figures of containment and dispersal; of proximity, assembly, and ‘public’ life.

From a schizoanalytic perspective, Mallarmé was ‘mad’ *as* his vision could not be realized, yet that was the productive tension in his work; ‘madness’ in this sense is contingent, reflecting as much as it is reflected by a ‘mad’ society, which the work posits as untenable and uninhabitable. In an interview with Jules Huret in 1891, Mallarmé explained: ‘As far as I am concerned, the situation of the poet, in this society which does not allow him to live, is that of a man who isolates himself to sculpt his own tomb.’⁷⁵ The

‘Book’ is his tomb, and it stages – provocatively – his attempt to dwell within, while pointing towards it, showing that this situation provokes (and was born from) radical social as well as personal crisis. Thus the structure of the work is aesthetically, formally, an explosion, rather than a whole; it comes in parts because there is no filler for the cracks.

¹ Mary Lewis Shaw, *Performance in the Texts of Mallarmé: The Passage from Art to Ritual* (Pennsylvania Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). She compares Mallarmé’s work to early twentieth-century performance art by the Futurists, Dadaists and Surrealists, all influenced by the Symbolists. On Mallarmé’s role in print culture and the history of the book, see Anna Sigrídur Arnar, *The Book as Instrument: Mallarmé, The Artist’s Book, and the Transformation of Print Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

² Jacques Polieri, Gabrielle Goff and Martin Goff, ‘Le livre de Mallarmé: A Mise en Scène’, *The Drama Review: TDR* 12. 3 (1968), pp. 179-182.

³ See Barbara Johnson, ‘Discard or Masterpiece? Mallarmé’s *Le ‘Livre’*’, in *The Marks in the Fields: Essays on the Uses of Manuscripts*, ed. Rodney G. Dennis and Elizabeth Falsey (Cambridge, MA: The Houghton Library, 1992), pp. 145-150.

⁴ *Ibid* 145-147.

⁵ Alain Badiou, ‘Meditation Nineteen: Mallarmé’, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Fentham (London: Continuum [1988] 2005, 2006), pp. 191-198.

⁶ Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality and Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

⁷ Maurice Blanchot, *L’espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955): 35. Translations mine unless noted.

⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, ‘L’engagement de Mallarmé’, *Obliques* 18-19 (1979), pp. 169-194, cited in Henri Meschonnic, ‘Mallarmé au-delà du silence,’ in Stéphane Mallarmé, *Écrits sur le livre (choix de textes)*, ed. Henri Meschonnic (Paris: Éditions de l’éclat, 1985): 11-62, p. 38.

⁹ In *ibid* 37.

¹⁰ In *ibid* 27.

¹¹ See esp. Robert G. Cohn, 'Mallarmé's Wake,' *New Literary History* 26.4 (1995), pp. 885-901 and Cohn, ed., *Mallarmé in the Twentieth Century* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1998) on Mallarmé's extraordinary influence: Steiner contended Mallarmé had, with Heidegger, a greater impact than the two world wars combined; Kristeva argued he metamorphosed the use of language; others influenced include Valéry, Proust, Claudel, Gide, Thibaudet, Blanchot, Sartre, Poulet, Richard, Foucault, Barthes, Symons, Gosse, Huneker, Yeats, Eliot, Wilson (who suggested he was the closest literary equivalent to Einstein), Pound, Joyce, Stein, Debussy, Nijinsky, Block, and Levinson (who contended he founded modern dance, with *Divagations*).

¹² See Jacques Derrida, 'La double séance,' in *La dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972): 199n.

¹³ *Ibid* 207.

¹⁴ *Ibid* 203.

¹⁵ In Gilles Deleuze, *Le pli: Leibniz et le baroque* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1988): 44.

¹⁶ *Ibid* 39.

¹⁷ *Écrits* 20.

¹⁸ Stéphane Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bertrand Marchal, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1998) [hereafter *OC*]: xlviii.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *OC* 1222.

²¹ *OC* 1218.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ *OC* 759.

²⁴ *OC* 1218. See also Frantisek Deak, *Symbolist Theater: The Formation of an Avant-Garde* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 61 on Banville and Coquelin's rejection.

²⁵ *OC* xlix.

²⁶ In *Écrits* 146

²⁷ *OC* xlix-1.

²⁸ OC 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Charles Chadwick's 'Mallarmé's "Sonnet Allégorique de Lui-Même" - Allegorical of *Itself* or of *Himself*?' in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 31.1&2 (2002): 104-110 reveals how reluctant scholars have been to acknowledge Mallarmé's schizological state at the centre of his work.

³¹ In *Écrits* 149-150.

³² OC 1379.

³³ Henri Mondor, 'Préface', in Jacques Scherer, *Le « livre » de Mallarmé: Premières recherches sur des documents inédits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957): vii-x.

³⁴ Cf. 'Notes pour un Tombeau d'Anatole' in OC 513-545.

³⁵ See *ibid* 1381.

³⁶ In *Écrits* 147.

³⁷ *Ibid* 95.

³⁸ Folio 143 in OC 1000; see *ibid* 1379.

³⁹ OC 554.

⁴⁰ On anagrams, see esp. Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique: l'avant-garde à la fin du XIX^e siècle. Lautréamont et Mallarmé* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), pp. 582-592.

⁴¹ Thus, on folio 115, Mallarmé notes:

20 vol. of 384 – in 4 parts, thus 5 by 5 (384 x 5 = 1920) or 1 play. 2 = 3840 p. or 10 of 384. There are only 2 – which makes once, 2 plays in one sense, another time 2 plays in the other. The same text twice.

Thus 384 x 5 | 384 x 5 (the 384 being given as samples that are complete or 96 x 4)

= these 9696 96 96 96

A B C d e

= 480, or the greatest development of one part, as ¼ (OC 573).

⁴² *Ibid* 554.

⁴³ *Ibid* 558.

⁴⁴ *Ibid* 564.

⁴⁵ *Ibid* 571.

⁴⁶ *Ibid* 572. See Kristeva *Révolution* 582-592.

⁴⁷ *OC* 565.

⁴⁸ Cited in *Le 'Livre'* xv.

⁴⁹ *OC* 564.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid* 565.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid* 571.

⁵⁵ *Ibid* 591.

⁵⁶ *Ibid* 590.

⁵⁷ *Ibid* 583.

⁵⁸ *Ibid* 584.

⁵⁹ *Ibid* 609.

⁶⁰ *Ibid* 617.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² André Gide, 'Stéphane Mallarmé (*In Memoriam*),' in André Gide, *Œuvres complètes d'André Gide*, ed.

L. Martin-Chauffier, vol. 2, pp. 445-454, p. 453.

⁶³ Folio 177, in *OC* 595.

⁶⁴ See *Le 'Livre'* viii-ix.

⁶⁵ In *OC* liv.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ In *OC* li.

⁶⁸ 'Modern Theater Does Not Take (A) Place,' in *Sub-Stance* N°18/19 (1977), pp. 131-134, p. 131.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ See Sigmund Freud, 'Psychopathic Characters on the Stage' (1905), in J. Strachey et al, eds., *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953/1974), vol. 7, pp. 305-310.

⁷¹ Kristeva argues that in post-Mallarméan theatre (she cites Yvonne Rainer, Richard Foreman and Michael Snow), the stage/audience separation is superficially problematic: ‘the new locus of representation no longer develops out of a mechanical mixture of actors and audience’; instead, a ‘poly-logical’ and ‘poly-topical’ paradigm emerges creating a plurality of discourses and loci for theatre. In ‘Modern Theater’ 134.

⁷² Blanchot, reading Mallarmé, argues that works always motion out from a shifting centre: ‘A book, even fragmentary, has a centre that attracts it: a centre that is not fixed, but shifts from the pressure of the book and the circumstances of its composition’ (*L’espace littéraire* 7).

⁷³ Cited in *Écrits* 48.

⁷⁴ Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author’, in *Image – Music – Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London: HarperCollins, 1977), pp. 142-148, p. 143.

⁷⁵ Cited in Deak 59.