NOTES

Preface


Chapter One

il faudra attendre la révolution psychanalytique . . . pour que son œuvre prenne une gravité qui avait échappé auparavant à ses lecteurs. . . .”

2. In the beginning of his analysis of Jensen's *Gradiva*, Freud considers “creative writers” as “valuable allies” whose “evidence is to be prized highly . . . (. . .) In their knowledge of the mind they are far in advance of us everyday people, for they draw upon sources which we have not yet opened up for science” (S.E., 9:8).


7. For an account of this episode, see the notes for “L’Après-midi d’un faune,” in the *Oeuvres complètes*, 1449-50.


9. See also the letter to Cazalis dated 7 January 1869, C, 1:295: “. . . la nature, elle est trop faussée en moi, et monstrueuse, pour que je me laisse aller à ses voies.”


17. In *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), 72, Jean François Lyotard takes Mallarmé’s “Coup de dés” as an example of a “poème-critique,” which articulates at several levels the relationship between desire and language. This “travail de figuration,” as Lyotard calls it, is the mark of the Unconscious within the structure of poetic language.

18. The letter to Coppée, 20 April 1868, *C*, 1:270 reads: “... j’ai presque perdu la raison et le sens des paroles les plus familières.” See also two letters to Cazalis dated 4 and 18 February 1869, ibid., 299-301.


20. Hérodiade’s “rêve épars” (*Noces*, 65) is again an image of fragmentation, horror, and nudity. This association between mirrors and dreams has to do with the chiasma—a figure of crossing-over. Reminding Mallarmé of “une eau-forte pleine de rêve et de vide” (*C*, 1:279), the mirror-sonnet reflects the same structural ambiguity as Freud’s dream that never reveals “whether its elements are to be interpreted literally or in a figurative sense,” *S.E.*, 5:341.

21. I fully agree with Barbara Johnson’s insightful assessment of referentiality in Mallarmé’s poetics: “Reference here is not denied but suspended.” —This by “the ceaseless production of seemingly mutually exclusive readings of the same piece of language” (*The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1980], 65).

22. That the Unconscious is not separate or prior to consciousness is evident throughout Mallarmé’s essay “Le Mystère dans les lettres”: “... je ne sais quel miroitement, en dessous, peu séparable de la surface concédée à la rétine, ...” and “Je crois décidément à quelque chose d’abscons, signifiant fermé et caché, qui habite le commun ...” (*O.C.*, 382-83).

23. The quotation is taken from the preface of *Les Noces*, 95-96.

24. The critics who insist on this rapport are Davies, Huot, and H. G. Zagona. See Bibliography.


26. ibid., 284.
Chapter Two


2. The quotation comes from Haskell M. Block's *Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963), 20.


8. This dialectical progression toward wholeness structures the two principal readings of the "Herodiade" manuscript: Huot, p. 67: "... la tension qui caractérise la 'Scène,' entre la tentation du dévoilement et la tentation du narcissisme, était destinée dès 1866 à se résoudre en une synthèse," and Davies, *Le Rêve*, 295: "... il nous est relativement facile de reconnaître . . . dans l'union des deux [Herodiade and the severed head] un symbole de la réalisation de cette perfection dans le poème ou Oeuvre."

9. These early stage directions are reproduced in the notes for Mallarmé's *Oeuvres complètes*, p. 1444.


11. Davis, *Le Rêve*, 284. Since the initial writing of this study, Leo Bersani (*The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé*) has written some very perceptive pages on Hérodiade's narcissism. Although the reading is brief and based on the Pléiade edition, Bersani underlines the narcissistic tendencies of thematic criticism that he describes as a "critical version of those immobilizing strategies by which Hérodiade seeks to possess her own image" (p. 18).


14. S.E., 18:55-56: "The dominating tendency of mental life, and perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant
or to remove internal tension due to stimuli [the 'Nirvana principle,' to borrow a term from Barbara Low]—a tendency which finds expression in the pleasure principle; and our recognition of that fact is one of our strongest reasons for believing in the existence of the death instincts." See also S.E., 23:198.


17. ibid., 188.


20. In “Le Vierge, le vivace, et le bel aujourd’hui,” *Oeuvres complètes*, 67-68, the potentiality of the creative impulse is depicted in a similar manner: “Ce lac dur oublié que hante sous le givre / Le transparent glacier des vols qui n’ont pas fui!”


22. This insight is offered by Cohn in *L’Oeuvre de Mallarmé*, 169. When placed at either the beginning or end of a verse, or used as a noun, “jadis” suggests a “paradis perdu.” For this usage, see the poems “Les Fenêtres” and “Les Fleurs,” *Oeuvres complètes*, 32-33. In the notes for the “Ouverture ancienne,” Mallarmé again associates the term “jadis” with a white innocence: “À le pâle (variant reads “neigeux”) jadis pour ancienne teinte,” *Les Noces*, 145.

23. See in particular “Don du poème” and “Les Fenêtres,” in *Oeuvres complètes*, 40 and 32.


26. ibid., 4-5, 10.

27. In “Les Dieux antiques” Mallarmé asserts that “les actes variés du soleil” constitute the basis of all myths. This “tragédie de la Nature” is frequently depicted in terms of a highly erotic and bloody battle between the tandem forces of light and darkness. See p. 1216 O.C. For an insightful discussion of the sunset image and its relationship to love, orgasm, and

28. In l'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé, 126-28, Richard discusses Mallarmé's extensive use of the image of the "pied nu" and the "pied transgresseur."

29. In "Les Formations de l'inconscient," (Seminars, 1956-57), Bulletin de Psychologie, 1956-57, Jacques Lacan describes the period of primary narcissism as one of imaginary possession of the mother. By identifying himself with the mother's object of desire, the child becomes the missing maternal phallus.


31. Laplanche, Life and Death, 102.

32. Mallarmé's recognition of the narcissistic component in all acts of interpretation is evident in the following statement: "Avec véraiçité, Qu'est-ce que, les Lettres, que cette mentale poursuite, menée, en tant que le discours, afin de définir ou de faire, à l'égard de soi-même, preuve que le spectacle répond à une imaginative compréhension, il est vrai, dans l'espoir de s'y mier" (O.C., 648).

Chapter Three

1. See Gardner Davies's description of the manuscript in Les Noces d'Hérodiade, Mystère, 231-32.


3. E. Noulet analyzes the techniques of repetition in the "Ouverture" in l'Oeuvre poétique de Stéphane Mallarmé, 108-09. See also Leo Bersani's discussion of "specularizing procedures" in the "Ouverture ancienne," pp. 7-17, The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé.

4. According to Jacques Derrida (Dissemination, 257, n. 56), Mallarmé's ambitious aesthetic formula ("peindre non la chose mais l'effet qu'elle produit" C, 1:137) was composed in a "naively sensualist and subjectivist" language. Nevertheless, "the exclusion is clear: poetic language will not be a description or imitation . . . of some substantial referent . . . , and it should not be composed of words taken as substantial or atomic units that are precisely undecomposable or uncompoundable."


7. Laplanche and Pontalis offer the following definition for the "return of the repressed": "Process whereby what has been repressed—though never abolished by repression—tends to reappear, and succeeds in so doing in a distorted fashion in the form of a compromise" (*The Language of Psychoanalysis* [New York: Norton, 1973], 398).

8. The continued relevance of this early work for the later fragments of "Les Noces" is evidenced by the fact that Mallarmé delayed its publication until 1874 and continued to include it in such late anthologies as *Pages* (1891) and *Divagations* (1896). Between the early text and the definitive version there is one very significant revision. The original title "Pénultième," which simply reiterates a key word in the text, was changed in 1891 to "Le Démon de l'analogie," thereby emphasizing textual process rather than content. For these details see the notes for the *Oeuvres completes*, 1557.


10. In discussing Mallarmé's use of analogy as a "principle of reduction and expansion," Jean Dornbush underscores its paradoxical movement in "Le Démon de l'analogie": "... while analogy unifies through resemblance, it also posits as a principle of its operation the potential disorder of the differentiation." In this sense, he continues, "it supplies the precarious 'almost' that is the comparative distinction essential to poetic relief." See his article "The Death of the 'Penultimate': Paradox in Mallarmé's 'Le Démon de l'analogie'," *French Forum* 5 (September 1980):241.


13. For a subtle reading of the fictional movement of Freud's text, see Hélène Cixous' article "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's

14. Davies makes this connection in passing in *Mallarmé et le rêve d’Hérodiade*, 287.

15. The full quotation is found in *Crayonné au théâtre*, O.C., 297: “... que l’enigme derrière ce rideau n’existe sinon grâce à une hypothèse tournante peu à peu résolue ici et là par notre lucidité: plus, que le sursaut du gaz ou de l’électricité, la gradue l’accompagnement instrumental, dispensateur du Mystère.”

16. According to Davies, all drafts for this segment were written at approximately the same time, probably after 1887. See *Les Noces d’Hérodiade, Mystère*, 96.

17. Mallarmé uses the same image in “Igitur”: “Je me rappelle que son or allait feindre en l’absence un joyau nul de rêverie, riche et inutile survivance, sinon que sur la complexité marine et stellaire d’une orfèvrerie se lisait le hasard infini des conjonctions” (O.C., 435). The connection between this image and the process of writing is reinforced in a letter to Mallarmé from Lefèbure, in which the latter refers to the poet as a “Diable de condensateur” and an “orfèvre, ... dans tous les sens” (C, 1:178).

18. Cohn compares this segment of the “Prélude” to the “love-hate battles” and struggles of “begetting” in “Ses purs ongles,” “Surgi de la croupe,” scenes from “Les Dieux antiques,” and fragments from *Le Livre* in “New Approaches to Hérodiade,” 472-81.


20. Anyone who doubts the validity of this sort of pattern should read Robert Cohn’s remarkable analysis of the role of letters in Mallarmé’s poetry in *Towards the Poems of Mallarmé*, Appendix C., 265-80. For his remarks on the “crest-trough” pattern in “Un Coup de Dés,” see *l’Oeuvre de Mallarmé*, 198.

21. These expressions are taken from Robert Cohn’s article, “Mallarmé’s Windows,” 30-31.


24. In his rereading of Mallarmé’s essay “Or,” Derrida demonstrates quite convincingly the effects of the title’s syntactical ambiguity. As both noun and conjunction, the signifier “or” illustrates the infinite doubling or deferring of sense: “The limits of thematism ... have never been so striking as in the case of ‘or,’ ... first and foremost because that signifier
loses even a meaning,’ becomes extenuated, devalued, mimed out. Names no longer.” See Dissemination, 263, n. 62.


26. All of Mallarmé’s references to language as a conflictual space of life and death forces are relevant here. See in particular pages 901 and 1053 of Les Mots anglais, O.C.

27. For several examples of this usage see Scherer, l’Expression littéraire, 104-5.


29. The “orbe” metaphor was used by both sixteenth-century poets as well as contemporary writers. In his Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française, 5:4, Paul Robert cites the example: “Son sein rond et hardi comme l’orbe d’un bouclier d’amazone” from Colette’s Belles saisons. In Les Noces, p. 106, “orbe” is also an anagram of “robe” which in the “Scène,” is a metonym for the maternal breast: “robe/couler/seins.”


32. According to Derrida, Richard’s thematization of such key concepts as “pli” and “blanc” work toward the overestimation of the “word” and the restriction of the “lateral.” “The dissemination of the whites,” insists Derrida, “produces a tropological structure that circulates infinitely around itself through the incessant supplement of an extra turn: there is more metaphor, more metonymy” (Dissemination, 254-59).

Chapter Four


4. Davies, Mallarmé et le rêve d’Hérodiade, 144.
5. Davies, 263. In his *Towards 'Hérodiade': A Literary Genealogy* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1958), 57, A. Chisholm concludes that “an alliance is affected between absolute beauty and a spirit freed from 'Les anciens désaccords / Avec le corps.'”


7. This example is from Huot’s *Le Mythe d'Hérodiade chez Mallarmé*, 146. See also Jean-Pierre Richard’s *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*, 162-63.

8. The full quotation taken from Austin’s “Le ‘Cantique,’ ” 56, reads as follows: “En conséquence, la synthèse finale réside dans l'union mystique d'Hérodiade et du principe spirituel du Saint, principe symbolisé par sa tête tranchée et livrée de toutes ses entraves terrestres. Telles devraient être ‘Les Noces d'Hérodiade, Mystère.’ Merveilleuse synthèse ‘hégelienne!’” Robert Cohn attacks this approach when he reassesses Hegel’s influence on Mallarmé in *Mallarmé: Igitur* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 171-72: “. . . although one must grant an awareness of Hegel in Mallarmé's essential movement of mind, one is hardly justified in asserting more than that; second, I would claim . . . that Mallarmé did not really need Hegel, . . . that he worked out the essential ideas in his own mind and that indeed . . . Mallarmé has gone beyond, or bypassed, Hegel in his push beyond the triadic to the tetrapolar and polypolar universe of thought that is the great leap of the modern mind.” One critic who bypasses the Hegel pattern in his reading of Mallarmé is Leo Bersani (*The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé*). For his commentary on the “Cantique” as a “monologic fable of sublimation,” see 79-83.


11. ibid., 127.

12. Published in 1925 by Dr. Bonniot, these notes for the “Igitur” manuscript are cited by Robert Cohn in *l'Oeuvre de Mallarmé: Un Coup de Dés*, 253.


14. Those critics who mention this relationship are Richard, Huot, Davies, Franklin, and Cohn.
15. Cohn, *Towards the Poems of Mallarmé*, 268: “i—principe mâle, héros, lumière, centripète, rigide . . . ‘Droit comme un I: The examples are innumerable: All of ‘Le vierge, le vivace . . .’.”


19. In his reading of the “Cantique,” Chisolm (*Towards Hérodiade*, p. 150) stresses the second sense of “vigie.”


22. Mallarméan virginity inscribes a “hymeneal” logic that, as Derrida demonstrates, systematically “outwits” all ontological, dialectical, and philosophical hierarchies. For the discussion, see *Dissemination*, 212-26.

23. The full quotation taken from Richard’s *l'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* reads as follows: “Par le seul rêve de l'alternative, la danseuse immobile atteint donc à l'identité, à l'existence consciente et neutre que la danse réelle lui eût dynamiquement et dialectiquement permis de réaliser en elle,” p. 429.


25. Elaborating castration as part of the process of creative dissemination, Derrida (*GLAS and Dissemination*) shows how writing performs the continual loss/cutting-spacing and dispersal of the Word. The metaphorical system that best illustrates the process is, of course, the language of fruits and flowers.
