

**Stéphane Mallarmé: Mode de Création / Création de Mode.  
Fashion, Process and *La Dernière Mode***

**Caroline Ardrey, St Anne's College**

**Submitted for the degree of D.Phil in Medieval and Modern Languages  
Trinity Term 2014**

This thesis examines the eight issues of Stéphane Mallarmé's 1874 fashion magazine, *La Dernière Mode*, focussing on ideas of process. On the one hand, it views *La Dernière Mode* as a vital phase in the evolution of Mallarmé's aesthetic and, on the other, it sees the discourse of fashion itself as being in a continual state of trial and re-definition.

The thesis begins with a citation from Mallarmé's 1886 article, 'Mimique'; this passage showcases the complex relationship between the interpenetrating themes of Time, Drama and Fiction, which form the three main chapter headings. Taking a thematic and linguistic approach, the thesis will explore literary, theoretical and philosophical mechanisms in *La Dernière Mode*, assessing ways in which these can be seen to have evolved from ideas established in Mallarmé's early verse and prose writing, and tracing their evolution over the course of the poet's later works. This study will also acknowledge the importance of crisis, both personal and social, and its influence on Mallarmé's aesthetic, showing *La Dernière Mode* to be part of a dynamic process by which the parameters of literature are tested and re-defined.

My study aims to contribute to the development of recent scholarship of Mallarmé, which acknowledges and celebrates his engagement with the material world and his interest in the aesthetic value of the practices of everyday life. Challenging views of Mallarmé as the 'ivory-tower poet' and destabilizing distinctions between his poetic and 'alimentary' works, this thesis thus makes a case for seeing *La Dernière Mode* as a testing ground for fundamental aspects of the poet's aesthetic with significant implications for the direction his œuvre would take in the 1880s and 1890s. The fashion magazine can thus, I contend, be considered as having a dynamic relationship with the poet's unattainable ideal of the 'Livre'.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, my deepest thanks go to my parents. I am confronted by a characteristically Mallarméan sense of the inadequacy of language when attempting to express my gratitude for their unfailing love and their faith in me. They have gone above and beyond the call of parental duty in their generous financial help, and in giving their time and practical support to enable me to pursue postgraduate study; without all of this, I would have been unable to embark on this project, let alone to bring it to fruition. I also give my heartfelt thanks to my sister, Felicity, for her ongoing encouragement, friendship and honest criticism, which was often much needed and has always been appreciated.

Sincere thanks go to my supervisor, Patrick McGuinness, who instilled a love of poetry and of Mallarmé within me as an undergraduate. Throughout my time at St Anne's, he has continued to fuel my enthusiasm for this field, and to foster my creative energy with literary recommendations and book loans, becoming, as Ix would say 'cet ami qui prête des livres.' Patrick combines academic brilliance with a humanity which has made for a dynamic academic partnership. I have always come away from our meetings brimming with ideas, and eager to take my research in new and exciting directions. I shall be forever grateful for his championing of my approach, and for his patience throughout the nine years I have spent under his tutelage and supervision.

I would particularly like to thank Máire Davies for her input into this project. She has been extraordinarily generous with her time and has put considerable effort into helping me to articulate and structure my ideas. Her warmth, encouragement and advice gave me renewed enthusiasm during the latter stages of the project and I am extremely grateful for her

contribution to the process of writing up my research and to boosting morale in the final stages. Many thanks to Anne Mullen for introducing me to Máire; she has played an instrumental role in enabling me to bring this thesis to a conclusion and I am most thankful.

I am also grateful to St Anne's College for making a significant financial contribution towards my studies and livelihood, first as part of the Eleanor Plumer Scholarship and, later, during my two-year spell as a Graduate Development Teaching Scholar. This funding played an important role in giving me the possibility of returning to St Anne's to undertake doctoral study, and it has been a real privilege to teach at the College. I have found the role of tutor to be an excellent counterpart to the more solitary process of academic research, stimulating creative ideas and offering some respite from my own 'despotique bouquin.'

Last, but by no means least, my dear friends, Natasha Ryan and Jenny Oliver, both deserve a special mention for their immense support throughout my postgraduate life and, in particular, for their generosity — both with their time and their love — during the final stages of this project. Tash's dedication to helping me survive the last few weeks of writing the thesis, through her willingness to read my work and her ability to combine encouragement with honest critique was vital in enabling me to reach hand-in day with my sanity (mainly) intact. I will be eternally grateful to her for all that she has done. Jenny's input, too, has been invaluable, offering sensitive criticism of even my most incoherent ramblings. Her sound advice, her caring nature and her intuitive sense of when tea and cake need to be administered have been deeply appreciated.

Although I have always been fiercely independent in my research, it would not have been possible to complete this thesis without the help and kindness of friends and family. To all those mentioned above, and to those who, inevitably, I have failed to mention — thank you.

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Notes and Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>8</b>
The ‘Livre’ .....	10
La Dernière Mode: ‘gazette du monde et de la famille’ .....	16
Tournon — ‘un tournant’: Mallarmé post-crisis .....	24
Dynamics of aesthetics and economics .....	27
‘Parure — si la foule est femme’ .....	31
Thesis outline and methodology .....	33
<b>Mallarmé and Fashion - Critical Approaches</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Early interest in La Dernière Mode.....	40
Mallarmé à la mode: the fashion magazine in Mallarmé studies .....	45
Key themes in Mallarmé’s aesthetic: Time, Drama and Fiction.....	48
Time .....	48
Drama.....	50
Fiction .....	51
Fashion in focus: Scholarship on La Dernière Mode.....	53
Journal articles .....	58
<b>Chapter One – Time</b> .....	<b>63</b>
Poetic time.....	65
Journalistic time .....	72
Manipulating time .....	78
‘Chronique, mais sans passé?’ — Journalism and History .....	81
Issue 1.....	88
Madame de Ponty: ‘La Mode’ .....	90

Ix's 'Chronique de Paris' .....	100
'Le Carnet d'Or': ' Une corbeille de jardin au mois d'Août ' .....	112
Conclusion.....	119
<b>Chapter Two - Drama .....</b>	<b>122</b>
Theatre in practice: Mallarmé's 'Virtual Theater' .....	130
Theatre as theory: 'Crayonné au théâtre' .....	137
'La Foule' .....	150
'Sur le théâtre et le livre' – towards a religion of the book.....	158
Conclusion.....	164
<b>Chapter Three - Fiction .....</b>	<b>167</b>
Towards a definition of fiction.....	169
Fiction as method .....	172
Identity and crisis .....	175
'La Fiction d'une bonne causerie' .....	185
The Press: Journalism and Fiction .....	191
Dynamics of desire in art and the economy .....	197
Conclusion.....	213
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>217</b>
Fashion in process .....	217
Le dernier mot .....	221
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>i</b>
Appendix 1 .....	i
Appendix 2 .....	ii
Appendix 3 .....	iii
Appendix 4 .....	iv
Appendix 5 .....	v
Appendix 6 .....	vi
Appendix 7 .....	viii
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias .....	ix
Works by Mallarmé.....	ix
Secondary Sources .....	x

## Notes and Abbreviations

This thesis will use the most recent Pléiade edition of Mallarmé's *Œuvres complètes* as a primary source for textual analysis of *La Dernière Mode*. However, it should be noted that this version of the text does not adhere to the original formatting, and omits the literary contributions from Mallarmé's contemporaries (a list of which is given in Appendix 2). In my own research I have also used the 1978 facsimile version of *La Dernière Mode* compiled by Éditions Ramsay, listed below, which has informed any comments on structure, page layout and typography in the magazine. The cover image to this thesis is also from the Ramsay Facsimile edition of *La Dernière Mode*.<sup>1</sup>

- OCI* Stéphane Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes: Poésies et autres poèmes* (Vol. 1), ed. by Bertrand Marchal (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).
- OCII* Stéphane Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes* (Vol. 2), ed. by Bertrand Marchal, (Paris: Gallimard, 2003).

---

<sup>1</sup> Cover image: Stéphane Mallarmé, *La Dernière Mode* (Septième Livraison, 6 December 1874) (Paris: Ramsay, 1978).

In order to define some of the key terms used in this thesis, and to explore Mallarmé's own particular use of vocabulary, this thesis will make reference to a number of different dictionaries. All definitions of terms used by Mallarmé will be considered in light of Émile Littré's *Dictionnaire de la langue française*,<sup>2</sup> unless otherwise stated. Examination of terms used in modern French will be conducted according to the *Trésor de la langue française informatisé*<sup>3</sup> and in English from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.<sup>4</sup> *The Online Etymology Dictionary*,<sup>5</sup> has served as a primary reference for etymological research.

---

<sup>2</sup> Émile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, Electronic version created by François Gannaz, (Paris: Hachette, 1873-1874) <<http://www.littre.org>> [accessed 04/04/2014]. Hereafter referred to as *Littré*.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Trésor de la langue française informatisé*, digitized by J. Dendien (Paris: CNRS Gallimard, 2002), Hereafter referred to as *TLFi*.

<sup>4</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 04/04/2014]. Hereafter referred to as *OED Online*.

<sup>5</sup> *The Online Etymology Dictionary*, (ed. by Douglas Harper), (2001) <<http://www.etymonline.com>> [accessed 04/04/14].

« La scène n'illustre que l'idée, pas une action effective, dans un hymen (d'où procède le Rêve), vicieux mais sacré, entre le désir et l'accomplissement, la perpétration et son souvenir: ici avançant, là remémorant, au futur, au passé, *sous une apparence fausse de présent*. Tel opère le Mime, dont le jeu se borne à une allusion perpétuelle sans briser la glace: il installe, ainsi, un milieu, pur, de fiction. Moins qu'un millier de lignes, le rôle, qui le lit, tout de suite comprend les règles comme placé devant un tréteau, leur dépositaire humble. Surprise, accompagnant l'artifice d'une notation de sentiments par phrases point proférées — que, dans le seul cas, peut-être, avec authenticité, entre les feuillets et le regard règne un silence encore, condition et délice de la lecture. »<sup>1</sup>

### **'Mimique', *Divagations***

---

<sup>1</sup> *OCII*, p. 178-79. N.B. The 'guillemets' here are part of Mallarmé's formulation, rather than indicating a citation, and have been left in the French style accordingly. Cf. Bertrand Marchal, 'Notice' in *OCII*, p. 632.

## Introduction

When a new fashion magazine, *La Dernière Mode*, appeared in the newspaper kiosks of Paris on 6 September 1874, friends of the poet Stéphane Mallarmé were struck almost immediately by the magazine's distinctive yet curiously familiar written style.<sup>1</sup> Subtitled the 'gazette du monde et de la famille,' this luxurious but expensive publication was produced under the direction of the mysteriously named Marasquin, and claimed to have been created in collaboration with 'les grands faiseuses, de tapissiers-décorateurs, maîtres queux, jardiniers, amateurs de bibelots et du sport.' (*OCII*, p. 508) In fact, the magazine was penned almost single-handedly by Stéphane Mallarmé, who wrote the copy under various mystifying pseudonyms including Ix, Madame de Ponty and Miss Satin. While Mallarmé has always been known for his obscure poetics, few are familiar with this intriguing fashion magazine and its literary importance has often been undermined in the field of Mallarmé studies. Contributing to the growing current of scholarship which views

---

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of 27 August 1874 to François Coppée, Luigi Gualdo refers to Mallarmé and to *La Dernière Mode* specifically: 'Je n'ai eu que le numéro spécimen du *Journal des Modes*. Est-ce que tout le texte est du maître, ou le mallarmisme a-t-il fait de tels progrès que tous les rédacteurs écrivent comme lui ? C'est tout simplement délicieux.' Letter from Luigi Gualdo to François Coppée, in Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, vol. V (1862-1871) (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p. 222.

the magazine as an integral and valuable part of the Mallarméan corpus, this thesis aims to demonstrate that, far from being a frivolous undertaking or a mere hoax, the process of writing and editing *La Dernière Mode* was a key phase in the development of Mallarmé's approach to literary creation, allowing him to test out different modes of writing and to explore the aesthetic possibilities of the mass media.

As I shall argue in this thesis, the fashion magazine enabled Mallarmé to confront the problems of articulating the experience of time, a preoccupation which, in various ways, characterizes the poet's works from the 1860s onwards. In addition, *La Dernière Mode* gave Mallarmé an opportunity to explore the performative dimension of journalistic writing, establishing a dialogue between text and readers, and preparing the terrain for his writings on the theatre, mainly written during the 1880s as part of a series for *La Revue indépendante* entitled, 'Notes sur le théâtre'. The fashion magazine can also be linked to Mallarmé's discovery of 'le Néant' (*OCI*, p. 701) during his spiritual crisis of the 1860s, precipitated by his work on 'Hérodiade'.<sup>2</sup> This served as the motor for the concept of fiction, which was to become a fundamental part of his theoretical approach to the creative process, demonstrated through the articles on literature, aesthetics and the book, written in the 1890s, and later published, with some revisions, in the *Divagations*. The close relationship between Time, Drama and Fiction in Mallarmé's œuvre is enacted by the passage from 'Mimique', cited as a frontispiece to this thesis; taking these three themes as chapter headings, this study will make the case for viewing *La Dernière Mode* as a process by which Mallarmé could experiment with different modes of writing. The thesis will thus

---

<sup>2</sup> The discovery of 'le Néant' would play an important role in the development of the poet's aesthetic following the years of crisis. In a letter of July 13 1866 to Henri Cazalis, Mallarmé writes: 'En vérité je voyage dans des pays Inconnus, et si, pour fuir la réalité torride, je me plais à évoquer des images froides, je te dirai que je suis depuis un mois dans les plus purs glaciers de l'Esthétique —qu'après avoir trouvé le Néant, j'ai trouvé le Beau.' *OCI*, p. 701.

argue that the magazine occupies a pivotal role in the development of Mallarmé's aesthetic and is vitally connected with the poet's quest to produce the ideal book, known as the 'Livre'.

## The 'Livre'

Throughout his life, Mallarmé developed an increasing obsession with the grand literary ideal of the 'Livre'; this hypothetical book was envisioned as a supreme literary work, the 'explication de l'homme, suffisant à nos plus beaux rêves' (*OCII*, p. 657). Mallarmé made many plans and calculations relating to the proposed format of this ideal book. The poet's notes relating to the 'Livre' were published for the first time in 1957 as part of Jacques Scherer's integrated text and critical work, *Le 'Livre' de Mallarmé*,<sup>3</sup> a version of these notes also features in the most recent Pléiade edition of the *Œuvres complètes* under the title 'Notes en vue du Livre'.<sup>4</sup> These often cryptic personal notes consider practical matters relating to the physical copy of the ideal work, with calculations and diagrams relating to printing and circulation figures, as well as speculating on the possible audience and necessary price of the hypothetical 'Book of Books'.<sup>5</sup> While Mallarmé's plans for the 'Livre' never actually came to fruition, these notes, alongside the essays which form the *Divagations*, help to establish some of the qualities and characteristics inherent to the ideal book, facilitating a reading of Mallarmé's works in light of the poet's concept of the 'Livre'.

---

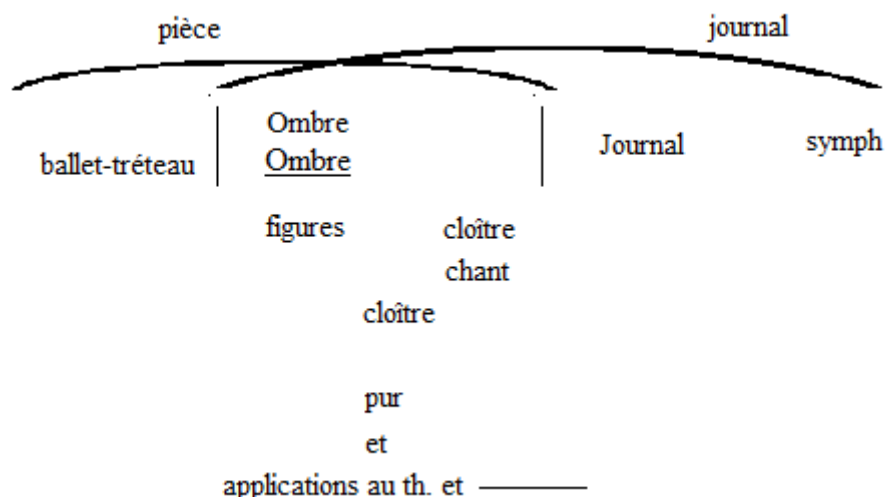
<sup>3</sup> Jacques Scherer, *Le 'Livre' de Mallarmé: premiers recherches sur des documents inédits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957).

<sup>4</sup> In this thesis all citations from the manuscripts on the 'Livre' will be taken from the 'Notes en vue du Livre' in *OCI* pp. 547-626.

<sup>5</sup> Roger Pearson, *Mallarmé and Circumstance: The Translation of Silence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 1.

Given the ambitious nature of the project, it is perhaps unsurprising that Mallarmé studies have been coloured by the poet's difficult reputation, and scholars have often struggled to reconcile the ambitious aesthetic ideal of the 'Livre' with the poet's foray into the apparently frivolous world of fashion journalism. However, the latter half of the twentieth century marked a turning point, at which scholars began to examine the relationship between *La Dernière Mode* and the remainder of the poet's œuvre; more recent studies of Mallarmé have revealed a growing interest in exploring the aesthetic status of *La Dernière Mode*, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, which will examine critical approaches to Mallarmé and fashion, situating this exploration of the idea of process in *La Dernière Mode* within the field of Mallarmé studies.

The 'Notes en vue du Livre' show Mallarmé to be actively engaged with the social, economic and technological aspects governing the production of the literary work. In the notes Mallarmé makes repeated use of the word 'journal', often as part of diagrams such as the following:



(OCI, p.994)

These complex plans highlight the role of journalism as a possible mode of bringing the ideal book into being; moreover, they demonstrate a connection between journalism and various other concepts which form part of the 'Livre'. As such, I suggest that the fashion magazine offered the poet a space in which to explore the complex network of relations which are intrinsic to the 'Livre', and allowed him test out the potential of journalism as a means of revealing the beauty in the everyday to the reading public. Indeed, the possibility for the ideal to be glimpsed through the practice of journalistic writing can be seen as part of the experimentation by which the poet arrived at the conclusion in 'Le Livre, instrument sprituel' that the journalistic form might serve as a starting point for the literary work: 'un journal reste le point de départ, la littérature s'y décharge à souhaite.' (*OCII*, p. 224)

Although undeniably a lofty goal, the 'Livre' was meant to be accessible to all. Through the medium of the book, the poet would reveal the ideal to humanity, 'par une opération appelée Poésie [...] le tout modernisé, [...] mis à la portée de tous, usuellement appliqué.'<sup>6</sup> (*OCI*, p. 578) These lines from the 'Notes en vue du Livre' highlight the status of the 'Livre' as a poetic act, through which the work of art would be made accessible to the masses. Mallarmé refers repeatedly to drama and the theatre in the notes, linking these with the performance of the text in the public space. The notion that the work of art should be modernised and applied according to ordinary practices serves to reinforce Mallarmé's status as a poet very much concerned with his own epoch.

---

<sup>6</sup> The adverb 'usuellement' comes from the adjective 'usuel', denoting something which 'est d'un usage courant; qui sert ordinairement, habituellement; qui se rencontre couramment', 'Usuellement, adv. (dans l'article USUEL, -ELLE, adj. et subst. masc.)', *TLFi*, <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/advanced.exe?8;s=3058284615>> [accessed 04/04/2014]. Given Ix's objective to 'intéresser aux habitudes du beau ordinaire' (*OCII*, p.497), one might see *La Dernière Mode* as a means of experimenting with the practical application of this aspect of the hypothetical 'Livre'.

The fashion magazine was a particularly appropriate medium for exploring ways of creating a work which would be ‘modernisé’ and ‘mis à la portée de tous’. In French, the abstract nouns ‘la mode’ and ‘la modernité’ are united by their common etymology: both terms derive from the Latin *modo* meaning ‘just now, in a (certain) manner, from *modo* (adv.) “to the measure,” ablative of *modus* ”manner, measure”.’<sup>7</sup> The feminine theme of fashion — ‘la mode’ — finds its counterpart in the masculine ‘le mode’, defined in the *Trésor de la langue française* as a ‘forme particulière sous laquelle se présente un fait, un phénomène’, a ‘méthode’ or a ‘moyen’.<sup>8</sup> The etymological connection between the terms ‘mode’ (both in the masculine and in the feminine) and ‘modernité’ thus emphasizes the common sense of process which unites fashion and modernity. Mallarmé was not the first or only writer in the nineteenth century to explore the link between ‘mode’ and modernity; others including Charles Baudelaire drew on this linguistic relationship, highlighting the increasing emphasis on method and process within the context of aesthetic modernity.<sup>9</sup> In ‘Quelques Caricaturistes français’, Baudelaire writes: ‘Le mot moderne s’applique à la manière et non au temps.’<sup>10</sup> In light of this etymological link, established by Baudelaire and implicit in *La Dernière Mode*, I contend that the magazine, with its focus on ‘la mode’, can be seen as an experiment with ways of producing a text which would be both modern and accessible to the masses.

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Online Etymology Dictionary*, ‘modern’ <[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=modern&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=modern&allowed_in_frame=0)> [accessed 15/09/2013].

<sup>8</sup> ‘mode, subst. masc.’, *TLFi*, <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/visusel.exe?12;s=1153133970;r=1;nat=;sol=1;>> [accessed 10/04/2014].

<sup>9</sup> Mallarmé was not the only literary figure in nineteenth-century France to explore sartorial matters. In 1830, Honoré de Balzac wrote a series of five articles on the art of elegant dress for the periodical *La Mode*, collected under the title ‘Traité de la vie élégante’. Then, in 1845 Jules Barbey d’Aurevilly published an essay entitled ‘Du Dandysme et de Georges Brummel’ which examines the figure of the dandy and explores the art of living in the modern age. Théophile Gautier, too, showed an interest in the aesthetic value of fashion, as demonstrated in his 1858 article ‘De la Mode’.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Claude Pichois, (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 995.

The relationship between fashion, modernity and the creative act is alluded to in *La Dernière Mode* by Miss Satin, one of the magazine's main columnist characters. In her very first column, published in the fourth issue, Mallarmé's feminine alter-ego emphasizes the magazine's aim of bringing readers the very latest developments from the world of fashion:

Pour achever de vous réconcilier, Mesdames, avec la GAZETTE DE LA FASHION, soyez assurées qu'elle aura souvent l'occasion de vous prier de tourner le Feuilleton, nous renvoyant ainsi aux illustrations que reproduiront, le plus souvent possible, la dernière création des premières maisons de la capitale: car Fashion veut dire Mode, et c'est ce dont la Gazette a la mission de s'occuper. (*OCII*, p. 563)

In this passage, the absence of the article before the word 'mode' creates a sense of ambiguity reinforcing the connection between 'le mode' and 'la mode' and highlighting the nature of fashion as a process which aspires to capture 'la dernière création'. Miss Satin's English name, the title of her column, and the insistence on the word 'Fashion' as a synonym for 'Mode' in this passage demonstrate Mallarmé's profound interest in intra- and inter-lingual relationships.<sup>11</sup> The first entry for 'fashion' in *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun as the 'action or process of making. Hence, the "making" or workmanship as an element in the value of plate or jewellery'; the dictionary definition adds that the term comes from the Latin verb 'facere' meaning 'to make', via the French, 'façon'.<sup>12</sup> The definition and etymology of the word 'fashion' reinforces the importance of the process by which the object is made, rather than placing the emphasis on its value as a product. By invoking the English word from the title of her column in this passage, Miss Satin draws attention to this etymological link and highlights the importance of process

---

<sup>11</sup> The poet's interest in the English language, its etymology and its relationship to French is clearly demonstrated in 'Les Mots anglais'. In his notes on his edition of Mallarmé's complete works, Bertrand Marchal suggests that this 'ouvrage pédagogique' was most likely to have been written in the summer of 1875, (*OCII*, p. 1791). This chronology, I suggest, hints at Mallarmé's growing fascination with etymology and linguistic relations in the mid 1870s.

<sup>12</sup> 'fashion, n.', *OED Online*,

<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68389?rskey=jPoXNh&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>>[accessed 04/04/2014].

inherent both to her 'Gazette de la Fashion' and to *La Dernière Mode* as a whole. Thus, as I shall argue in this thesis, the fashion magazine can be seen as a metaphor for the creative act and, by extension, for the 'Livre' itself.

The mutually influential relationship between *La Dernière Mode* and the 'Livre' is reinforced by the chronology of Mallarmé's bibliography. According to Jacques Scherer, 'il faut conclure que c'est vers 1873 que Mallarmé a commencé à travailler au Livre, dont l'idée avait jailli dès 1866.'<sup>13</sup> If this is the case, these notes would already have been a work-in-progress when Mallarmé started writing the copy for *La Dernière Mode*, adding weight to the argument for seeing the fashion magazine as playing a dynamic role in the development of the notion of the 'Livre'. Quentin Meillassoux however disagrees with Scherer's conclusion, dating the notes back to the period from 1888 to 1895.<sup>14</sup> While Meillassoux's argument over the genesis of the notes on the 'Livre' would mean that the fashion magazine predates the notes by some fourteen years, this does not undermine the link between *La Dernière Mode* and the 'Livre'. If Meillassoux's argument were correct, we might, instead, see the genesis of the fashion magazine as having set in motion a longstanding fascination with the mechanisms of journalism and the aesthetic possibilities afforded by the press, as demonstrated in his later articles on literature and reading.

Whether or not Mallarmé had already begun noting down his ideas on the possible shape the 'Livre' might take when he embarked upon *La Dernière Mode* is, perhaps, of little consequence. The many fluctuations in Mallarmé's approach to language and poetry, the variations in his attitude to the press, and the gradual evolution of his aesthetic, are, no

---

<sup>13</sup>Stéphane Mallarmé, *Le 'Livre' de Mallarmé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> Quentin Meillassoux, *Le Nombre et la sirène : un déchiffrement du Coup de dés de Mallarmé* (Paris: Fayard, 2011), p. 8.

doubt, as much connected with the fashion magazine as they are with well-known poetic works such as ‘Hérodiade’ and *Un Coup de dés*. This thesis thus begins with the hypothesis that *La Dernière Mode* was a fertile source of aesthetic inspiration for the poet, allowing him to experiment with themes and formal conventions which shaped his future writings, and can be seen as part of the pursuit of the ‘Livre’.

### ***La Dernière Mode*: ‘gazette du monde et de la famille’**

In order to see how *La Dernière Mode* fits into the development of Mallarmé’s œuvre, it is necessary to outline the events which led to his involvement with the periodical, and to have a clear overview of the structure and content of the fashion magazine. In this section I shall offer a brief explanation of how Mallarmé came to take on role of writer and editor of *La Dernière Mode*, before going on to outline the form and content of the periodical.

*La Dernière Mode* was not, it seems, an entirely new venture when Mallarmé took on the role of writer in the summer of 1874.<sup>15</sup> The magazine, which was owned by Charles Wendelen,<sup>16</sup> Mallarmé’s neighbour on the Rue de Moscou, had, apparently, existed as a series of lithographic fashion plates, between August and December 1873. These are referred to in *La Dernière Mode* as the ‘version sans texte’, although these images did not, in fact, constitute a complete publication.<sup>17</sup> The specimen issue of the magazine, dated 6

---

<sup>15</sup> For an eloquent outline of the chain of events by which Mallarmé came to assume the role as writer and editor of *La Dernière Mode* see Éric Benoît, *Néant sonore: Mallarmé, ou, la traversée des paradoxes* (Librairie Droz, 2007), pp. 127-8.

<sup>16</sup> Wendelen already owned two other fashion magazines, *La Saison* and *Les Modes de la saison*, as Anne Marie Kleinert observes. Cf. Anne Marie Kleinert, ‘*La Dernière Mode*: une tentative de Mallarmé dans la presse féminine’, *Lendemains*, 5 (1980), 173.

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Pierre Lecercle notes a discrepancy in the numbering of the fashion plates which undermines the claim that the magazine existed as a version “sans texte” in the year preceding the publication of the specimen issue written by Mallarmé. ‘Nous avons “dépouillé” ligne à ligne, et par deux fois ces registres [des Archives nationales]: à part les gravures accompagnant les livraisons du 1<sup>er</sup> août 1874 au mai 1875, nous n’avons retrouvé aucune autre trace de la revue. L’ ”édition antérieure” se borne à six lithographies,

September 1874, arrived in the kiosks on 1 August of that year. This initial instalment included only the main sections — the ‘La Mode’ column, the ‘Chronique de Paris’ and the ‘Carnet d’Or’. It would be published again just over a month later, on the cover date, with additional features such as the correspondence with subscribers and a column offering educational advice under the pen-name of fashion expert-cum-pedagogical specialist, Madame de Ponty.<sup>18</sup>

It was envisaged that there would be twenty-four instalments of the magazine, in the first instance, tracing the evolution of fashion over the course of one whole calendar year.<sup>19</sup> However, Mallarmé’s correspondence reveals that *La Dernière Mode* fell into financial difficulties, and Wendelen terminated his contract with the poet at the end of December 1874, to his great dismay.<sup>20</sup> In January 1875, after a brief interruption, the fashion magazine re-appeared briefly under the editorship of la Baronne de Lomaria; however, the periodical was not destined for success and on 15 May 1875, circulation of *La Dernière Mode* ceased completely after just 14 issues.<sup>21</sup> Mallarmé’s anger at this decision provoked a series of outraged letters to friends and acquaintances involved with *La Dernière Mode*, imploring them to refuse to share their contributions with his successor.<sup>22</sup> While *La Dernière Mode*

---

très irrégulièrement publiées [...]. Ainsi nous pouvons affirmer que *La Dernière Mode* commence par un immense “coup de bluff.” Jean-Pierre Lecercle, *Mallarmé et la mode* (Paris: Séguier, 1989), p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> This feature reflects Mallarmé’s own first-hand knowledge of the education system, gleaned from his day job as an English teacher, but also allowed him to promote certain texts, often with a bias towards language and grammar.

<sup>19</sup> In the fifth issue of *La Dernière Mode*, columnist character Madame de Ponty explains that ‘les vingt-quatre Courriers doivent, pour qui les feuillera plus tard, former une histoire exacte et complète des Variations du Costume pendant une année.’ *OCH*, p. 579

<sup>20</sup> This was, perhaps, not entirely surprising given that, as Lecercle notes, during the period following the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune was in a state of ‘désuétude’. ‘Un bref examen de cette decennie nous révèle que le genre semble effectivement condamné.’ *Mallarmé et la Mode*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>21</sup> *Mallarmé et la Mode*, p.20.

<sup>22</sup> On 25 January 1875, Mallarmé wrote in letters to both François Coppée and Emile Zola: ‘J’ai été volé de toute la besogne faite par moi au *Journal de Modes*...Refusez donc à tout prix votre collaboration, gratuite du reste, si une personne inconnue vous demandait la faveur personnelle que vous m’avez faite: depositaire de noms d’amis, j’ai naturellement, lors de la cessation du journal interdit qu’on s’en servit sans moi et je vous prémunis contre toute entreprise mauvaise.’ The poet had used the same words in a letter of 19 January 1875 to Albert Mérat. In this particular letter, Mallarmé also asks Mérat to pass the message on to

may not have been financially viable with Mallarmé at the helm, nobody else could provide the ‘Mallarmisme [...] délicieux’<sup>23</sup> which makes the magazine so enjoyable and so intriguing.

Having traced the history of *La Dernière Mode* through detailed archival research, Jean-Pierre Lecercle notes in his 1989 monograph, *Mallarmé et la mode*, that:

- Elle [la revue] nous invite à distinguer, dans son histoire, trois périodes:
- édition Marasquin, sans texte du [au 1<sup>er</sup> août, 1874] (date de la rubrique ‘La Mode’ de la première livraison);
  - Edition Marasquin-Mallarmé, du 1<sup>er</sup> août 1874 au 20 décembre 1874;
  - Edition baronne de Lomaria, du 7 février 1875 au 15 mai 1875.<sup>24</sup>

As this study is principally concerned with Mallarmé, and with *La Dernière Mode*’s place in his œuvre, this thesis will focus on the middle period of the magazine’s existence, discussing the eight issues produced under the editorship of Mallarmé, in the guise of his alter-ego, Marasquin.

Published fortnightly, the journalistic copy of the magazine was written entirely by Mallarmé, under various pseudonyms. The magazine consists of three main columns: each issue opens with a section on fashion, entitled ‘La Mode’, offered by Parisian couture connoisseur Madame de Ponty; this is followed by the ‘Chronique de Paris’, a feature discussing arts, books, culture and social engagements in the capital, by the wry and erudite columnist character Ix. From the fourth issue of the magazine, the pair are joined by Miss Satin, whose ‘Gazette de la Fashion’ offers discussion of the latest trends from a pan-European perspective, referencing the stores and services promoted by the magazine

---

Léon Valade, whose *Inquiétude* was published in the 3rd issue of *La Dernière Mode*. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, 1871-85 (Vol II) (ed. by Henri Mondor & Lloyd James Austin), Paris: Gallimard, 1965), pp. 52-55.

<sup>23</sup> *Correspondance complète* 1862-1871, ed. by Bertrand Marchal, (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), p. 222.

<sup>24</sup> *Mallarmé et la mode*, p. 20.

through visiting cards in the ‘Maisons de Confiance’ section of the magazine, found on the back, inside cover. Ix’s ‘Chronique de Paris’ is followed by the ‘Carnet d’Or’, a short feature, made up of two guest contributions per issue; this section covers various different topics relevant to the fashionable reader, including guidance on appliqué, lace-making and interior décor, as well as featuring menus, recipes and even suggesting remedies for common seasonal ailments, such as chilblains. A sample contents page from the first issue of the fashion magazine can be found in Appendix 1.

Although primarily a non-fiction publication, *La Dernière Mode* also featured literary contributions by renowned contemporaries including François Coppée, Théodore de Banville and Léon Cladel. Placed after Ix’s ‘Chronique’ and the ‘Carnet d’Or’, this section offers readers tantalising snippets of works by some of the biggest names in arts and books, as decreed by Ix. The contributions to the ‘Nouvelles et vers’ section in each issue are listed in Appendix 2. The short stories and poems are the only part of the magazine not written by Mallarmé himself, though the poet does put in an appearance amongst this group of literary contributors on a single occasion, in the fourth issue of the magazine, in which his prose translation of Tennyson’s verse poem ‘Mariana’ is published, under his own name. There are a number of reasons why Mallarmé might have been reluctant to publish any of his own work in the literary section of *La Dernière Mode*: perhaps he feared that publishing his poetry or prose alongside the copy of the magazine might lead astute readers to discern his pen behind the masks of Madame de Ponty, Ix and Miss Satin. Conversely, the suggestion of his presence in the rest of the magazine, combined with his notable absence amid his contemporaries might have been a means of experimenting with ideas of authorship and identity. Might he have wanted to influence the contemporary literary scene, carefully selecting choice texts from authors he wished to promote to his impressionable

female readership? After all, those in charge of literary journals, such as Catulle Mendès, editor of *Le Parnasse contemporain*, played a significant role in shaping public tastes, and in making certain authors known in literary circles; it is quite plausible that Mallarmé might have engaged with the mass media in order to exert his own influence on popular opinion during a time in which literature was careering inexorably into a period of crisis.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps, having undergone a crisis of his own, the poet simply felt that at this transitional phase in his life and poetic career, he had nothing besides the copy of the journal which he wished to publish in his own name. One might even see the translation of Tennyson's 'Mariana' as Mallarmé's chance to leave a 'carte de visite'<sup>26</sup>, as if to remind readers of his place on the modern literary scene, whilst keeping a low profile, concealed behind his flamboyant cast of columnist characters.

Whatever the reasons for his absence from the 'Nouvelles et vers' section of the magazine, Mallarmé does make a 'cameo appearance' in the 'Programme de la Quinzaine'. The 'Programme' is the penultimate section of the magazine, and serves as a directory of forthcoming publications appearing in the bookshops and new exhibitions opening in Paris; it also details current performances taking place in the capital's theatres and concert halls, and even offers guidance on sea and rail travel. This section is signed by David, 'Le Gérant', although those who want their events or services to be mentioned in the next issue are advised to send book samples and information on 'le Théâtre, les Voyages, le Monde ou Les Beaux Arts' to a certain M. Stéphane Mallarmé, found at number 29, rue de

---

<sup>25</sup> In his prose writings, Mallarmé makes a number of references to the modern crisis in literature; chief amongst these is the declaration in 'Crise de Vers' that 'la littérature subit une crise, exquise fondamentale.' *OII*, p. 204.

<sup>26</sup> Mallarmé alludes to the uncertain circumstances of literature in the late nineteenth century in his 1885 autobiographical letter to Paul Verlaine, in which he writes: 'au fond, je considère l'époque contemporaine comme un interrègne pour le poète, qui n'a point à s'y mêler: elle est trop en désuétude et en effervescence préparatoire, pour qu'il y ait autre chose à faire qu'à travailler avec mystère en vue de plus tard ou de jamais et de temps en temps à envoyer aux vivants sa carte de visite, stances ou sonnets, pour n'être point lapidé d'eux, s'ils le soupçonnaient de savoir qu'ils n'ont pas lieu.' *OCI*, p. 789.

Moscou.’ This is the only mark of the periodical’s true author, offering a clue as to the poet’s involvement in the magazine; however, these details also serve as a decoy, placing Mallarmé in an administrative rather than a creative role. The advertorial slant of the ‘Programme de la Quinzaine’ continues in the final pages of the magazine, with a section entitled ‘Les Maisons de Confiance’. This feature, printed on a double-sided page includes visiting cards from trusted retailers, tradespeople and artisans in Paris, and a couple of larger advertisements, as well as offering a space for a number of responses to letters from subscribers and advice on education, offered by Madame de Ponty.

Although the wide-ranging and eclectic subject matter of *La Dernière Mode* may seem surprising to a contemporary audience, nineteenth-century fashion magazines typically included poems and short stories, articles on literature and the theatre, and writings on fashion and culture. In terms of content, therefore, *La Dernière Mode* does not differ radically from some other fashion magazines of the period. *La Sylphide*, which was founded in 1836 and continued to be published by the Société de Journaux de Modes Réunis until 1885, like *La Dernière Mode*, promised its readers a wealth of ‘littératures’ and ‘théâtres.’<sup>27</sup> The magazine also featured wood-engraved fashion prints and a ‘Courrier de la Mode’ by real-life columnists, such as Mary d’Auberville, *La Sylphide*’s counterpart to Mallarmé’s columnist character Madame de Ponty. The main difference between *La Dernière Mode*, and other nineteenth-century fashion magazines, therefore, lies in the fictitious status of these journalistic personae.<sup>28</sup> However, a brief look at other, similar periodicals reveals another significant feature that distinguishes *La Dernière Mode* from rival publications – the price. Mallarmé’s luxury publication was considerably more

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. List of issues of *La Sylphide* on the digitized archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34444962f/date.r=La+Sylphide.langFR> [accessed 01/09/2011]

<sup>28</sup> In this thesis, I shall refer to these journalistic personae as ‘columnist characters’ alluding to their fictitious status.

expensive than its contemporary counterparts. For Parisian readers, an annual subscription to *La Dernière Mode* cost 24F, while a six month subscription was 13F; for those outside the capital, subscriptions were priced at 26F a year or 14F per six months.<sup>29</sup> *La Fantaisie parisienne*, a comparable magazine containing features of a similar nature, was much more affordable with a yearly subscription price of just 15 F in Paris, and 18 F for the ‘départements’ as per the cover of the issue from 8 August 1874.<sup>30</sup>

The comparatively high cost of *La Dernière Mode* reflects its status as a luxury publication, designed as an object of beauty to adorn the tables of Parisian salons. In an article of February 1890 on *La Dernière Mode* for the ‘Trouvailles et curiosités’ column in *La Revue indépendante*, Rémy de Gourmont describes the physical appearance of Mallarmé’s magazine:

Huit pages de format petit in-folio, enchâssées dans une couverture bleu-pâle (que le temps a douée de la “grâce des choses fanées”), tachetée çà et là, de vignettes dessinées par Morin.<sup>31</sup>

The exquisite pale blue cover and decorative drawings which adorn *La Dernière Mode* suggest that Mallarmé intended the fashion magazine to be a thing of beauty both in terms of style and substance, an object perhaps approaching the ‘Livre’ itself. The light blue colour of the magazine might, perhaps, be seen as a pale reflection of ‘l’Azur’, which symbolizes the impossible literary ideal. An image of the outer cover of the first issue of *La Dernière Mode* can be seen in Appendix 3, and the inner cover in Appendix 4. Appendix 5 shows an example of one the vignettes drawn by Edmond Morin for the magazine,

---

<sup>29</sup> The question of the monetary value of ‘Livre’ is raised in Mallarmé’s ‘Notes en vue du Livre’, emphasizing a link between the project of the fashion magazine, and the commercial aspect of the ‘Livre’

<sup>30</sup> See the cover of *La Fantaisie parisienne*, 8 August 1874.

<<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5403629f.image.langFR.r=La%20fantaisie%20parisienne>> [accessed 01/09/2011]. N.B. The subscription price of *La Fantaisie parisienne* included both text and accompanying fashion plates.

<sup>31</sup> Rémy de Gourmont ‘Trouvailles et Curiosités’, *La Revue indépendante*, February 1890, 2, 304 <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k16499m/f308.tableDesMatières>> [accessed 13/04/2014].

featured in the ‘Chronique de Paris’ section of the first issue.<sup>32</sup> It is clear from these images that the appearance of the periodical was a significant concern for the poet, reflecting the importance of overall aesthetic effect in Mallarmé’s work. In fashion, as in poetry the poet aspired to ‘*peindre non la chose, mais l’effet qu’elle produit*’ (OCII, p. 663).

Although the magazine only lasted for a short time under Mallarmé’s editorship, the periodical had a profound impact on the poet; from an aesthetic perspective, the publication was to have far-reaching implications for the trajectory which his work would take in subsequent years. In his 1885 letter to Paul Verlaine, often referred to as his ‘Autobiographie’, Mallarmé states his continuing fondness for *La Dernière Mode*, emphasizing the fact that creating the magazine provided a welcome distraction from his obsession with the ‘Livre’.

Si à un moment, pourtant, désespérant du despotique bouquin lâché de Moi-même, j’ai après quelques articles colportés d’ici et de là, tenté de rédiger tout seul, toilettes, bijoux, mobilier, et jusqu’aux théâtres et aux menus de dîner, un journal, *La Dernière Mode*, dont les huit ou dix numéros parus servent encore quand je les dévêts de leur poussière à me faire longtemps rêver. (OCI, p. 789)

This statement follows a lengthy passage in which Mallarmé discusses the project of the Livre. The juxtaposition of the two texts: one potential, one actualized, lends weight to the argument put forward in this thesis that *La Dernière Mode* forms part of a lifelong experiment, which proved that for Mallarmé every aspect of human existence had inherent aesthetic value.

---

<sup>32</sup> For a detailed description of the cover and composition of *La Dernière Mode*, see Anne Marie Kleinert’s article on *La Dernière Mode*. Anne Marie Kleinert, ‘*La Dernière Mode*: une tentative de Mallarmé dans la presse féminine’, *Lendemain*, 5 (1980), 168 – 171.

## Tournon — ‘un tournant’: Mallarmé post-crisis

This thesis will make a case for seeing *La Dernière Mode* as provoking a shift in Mallarmé’s attitude to the creative process. In doing so, it will situate the fashion magazine in relation to the personal and poetic crisis which the Mallarmé experienced during the 1860s, causing him to retreat from the world as he battled with the impossible ideal. Following a brief spell in London during 1862, Mallarmé spent the remainder of the decade working as an English teacher in provincial France. During this time, he also struggled with the impossible task of producing ‘Hérodiade’ and experienced a loss of religious faith. Writing to Henri Cazalis, the poet describes the creative impact of his discovery of ‘le Néant’:

En vérité, je voyage, mais dans des pays Inconnus, et si, pour fuir la réalité torride, je me plais à évoquer des images froides, je te dirai que je suis depuis un mois dans les plus purs glaciers de l’Éthétique – qu’après avoir trouvé le Néant, j’ai trouvé le Beau, –, et que tu ne peux t’imaginer dans quelles altitudes lucides je m’aventure. Il en sortira un cher poème auquel je travaille et, cet hiver (ou un autre) ”Hérodiade”, où je m’étais mis tout entier sans le savoir, d’où mes doutes et mes malaises, et dont j’ai enfin trouvé le fin mot, ce qui me raffermit et me facilitera le labeur. (*OCI*, p. 701)

As this letter affirms, this ‘dark night of the soul’ proved to have significant implications for Mallarmé’s aesthetic, leading him to find ‘le Beau’. Following this period of deep depression at the end of the 1860s, known as the ‘Crise de Tournon’<sup>33</sup>, Mallarmé was to return to Paris in 1871 devoting himself more fully to his literary career. The events of this period have, no doubt, contributed to Mallarmé’s reputation for obscurity; nevertheless, I contend that the fashion magazine enabled Mallarmé to put thoughts of ‘Hérodiade’ and of

---

<sup>33</sup> Pascal Durand situates this period of crisis between 1866 and 1868 but also identifies 1869 – 1872 as a time of psychological transition for Mallarmé, with implications for his poetic œuvre. Pascal Durand, *Mallarmé : du sens des formes au sens des formalités* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), p. 54.

the ‘despotique bouquin’ to one side and to engage with the world and with the creative process in a more light-hearted way, after the obscure years at Tournon.<sup>34</sup>

The early 1870s were not only a time of personal difficulty for Mallarmé; France was in a state of political and social upheaval, following defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, which took place between 19 July 1870 and 10 May 1871.<sup>35</sup> On 1 September 1870, the French army was forced to surrender at the battle of Sedan, resulting in around 3,000 deaths, 14,000 casualties and another 21,000 being reported lost or captured. The events at Sedan led to the collapse of the Second Empire and, from 4 September 1870 to 28 January 1871, Paris was under siege by the German army.<sup>36</sup> Just over a week after the end of the war, on 18 May 1871, came the Paris Commune, an uprising by Parisian republicans, fearful of the prospect that the National Assembly would restore the monarchy at Versailles. The Paris Commune brought more bloodshed as government troops descended on Paris on the 28 May of the same year; various public buildings were burned by those upholding the Commune, offering a lasting reminder of the destruction caused by the war and the political turmoil which followed.<sup>37 38</sup> In the wake of such upheaval, the French public no doubt welcomed the escapism offered by literature and the theatre. I suggest that the growing interest in fashion and the newfound cult of shopping which was beginning to emerge in

---

<sup>34</sup> Jean-Luc Steinmetz argues that, from 1874, we begin to see Mallarmé getting involved with Parisian theatre, anticipating the articles of ‘Crayonné au theatre’, which appeared during the 1880s. ‘Installé à Paris, Mallarmé eut un rapport plus concret avec le monde des théâtres, à la fois comme spectateur et comme critique – en particulier dans ses chroniques de *la Dernière Mode*, nourries de théâtre, au dernier trimestre 1874.’ Jean-Luc Steinmetz, Bertrand Marchal et. al, *Mallarmé, ou, l’obscurité lumineuse* (Paris: Hermann, 1999), p. 306.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Franco-German War’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. (Web: Britannica Inc., 2014) <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/443691/Commune-of-Paris>> [accessed 13/04/2014].

<sup>36</sup> ‘Battle of Sedan’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, (Web: Britannica Inc., 2014), <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/532104/Battle-of-Sedan>> [accessed 13/04/2014].

<sup>37</sup> The fact that Paris was only just beginning to recover from the destruction of the Paris Commune is alluded to in Ix’s ‘Chronique de Paris’ in the second issue of *La Dernière Mode*, in which he explains that ‘L’Arc de Triomphe est restauré depuis longtemps et la Colonne à peine relevée; enfin, le Nouvel Opéra, fini demain [...]’ *OCII*, p. 523.

<sup>38</sup> ‘Commune of Paris’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. (Web: Britannica Inc., 2014) <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/443691/Commune-of-Paris>> [accessed 13/04/2014].

the 1870s can be read as a form of distraction for a female population who had suffered, either directly or indirectly from the loss of life during the war and its aftermath, and from the economic instability of the Paris Commune. One might even go as far as to interpret the fascination with fashion and appearances in the 1870s as part of an attempt to re-establish an identity following the German occupation and the subsequent political uprisings. As such, as well as offering Mallarmé an opportunity to distance himself from his personal difficulties, I contend that the fashion magazine also played into a desire for escapism in the years following the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune.<sup>39</sup>

Even a cursory assessment of Mallarmé's œuvre reveals the 1870s to be a turning point in his approach to literary creation, as he moved away from the abstract poetics of *Igitur*, 'Hérodiade' and 'L'Après-midi d'un faune'. After writing *La Dernière Mode*, we see Mallarmé's œuvre tend towards a more human poetics, which uses the material world as a starting point for aesthetic practice, and places particular emphasis on the role of the reader within the creative process. It was also during this period that Mallarmé began to show an interest in journalism and the decorative arts. In 1871 and 1872 he wrote a series of articles on the International Exhibitions in London for the *Revue indépendante*. In 1872 he wrote to fellow poet José Maria de Hérédia, informing his friend of a new journalistic project:

Je recueille, maintenant, dans les divers coins de Paris, la souscription qu'il faut pour commencer une belle et luxueuse revue dont la pensée me domine: *L'Art décoratif*, gazette mensuelle.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Damien Catani notes that 'Mallarmé takes humanitarian aims one step further by suggesting that the mood of collective defeat that pervades the post-war Paris of the 1870s can satisfactorily be remedied by the socially binding and psychologically uplifting potential of the arts.' *The Poet in Society*, p. 58.

<sup>40</sup> Mallarmé, Stéphane, *Œuvres complètes*, (ed. by H. Mondor & G. Jean-Aubry) (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 624.

While the aforementioned ‘revue’ never appeared, Mallarmé’s appointment as writer and editor of *La Dernière Mode* two years later seems to have gone some way to satisfying this fascination with both ornamental objects and the journalistic form.

### **Dynamics of aesthetics and economics**

Of course, *La Dernière Mode* was a commercial endeavour as well as an aesthetic project, embodying the claim that the poet would make twenty years later in his 1894 lecture, ‘La Musique et les lettres’, that ‘tout se resume dans l’Esthétique et l’Economie politique.’ (OCII, p. 76) The poet had already established this opposition a year previously in ‘Magie’, an article first published in 1893 in the *National Observer*:

Comme il n’existe d’ouvert à la recherche mentale que deux voies, en tout, où bifurque notre besoin, à savoir l’esthétique d’une part et aussi l’Economie politique: c’est de cette visée dernière, principalement, que l’alchimie fut le glorieux, hâtif et trouble précurseur. (OCII, p. 250)

In these lines, the human intellect is established as a point of intersection between these two elements which encompass all things. Given the claim in the epigraph to *Igitur* that the ‘intelligence du lecteur [...] met les choses en scène elle-même’ (OCI, p. 475), the process of reading can be seen as a site in which the dynamic relationship between ‘l’Esthétique’ and ‘l’Economie politique’ is played out. Peter Dayan argues that this fundamental dynamic was established in the mid-1870s, making a convincing case for seeing 1875 as a critical moment in Mallarmé’s career and in the development of his aesthetic.<sup>41</sup> Of course, the financial concerns of the fashion magazine and the topical nature of journalistic writing show that the poet was already directly involved with the political economy, and experimenting with ways of reconciling this with aesthetic matters in 1874. I shall thus

---

<sup>41</sup> Peter Dayan, *Mallarmé’s Divine Transposition: Real and Apparent Sources of Literary Value* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 28.

make the case for seeing *La Dernière Mode* as a starting point for Mallarmé's exploration of the relationship between these two poles of human experience, with the fashion magazine itself a sort of alchemical fusion between 'l'Esthétique' and 'l'Economie politique'.

The offsetting of 'l'Esthétique' and 'l'Economie politique' parallels a number of other oppositions established in Mallarmé's œuvre. *La Dernière Mode* is characterized by many such dualities, for example those of the eternal and the ephemeral, the public and private spheres, and masculinity and femininity. One of the major dichotomies explored in Mallarmé's œuvre is that of functional and poetic language. In 'Crise de vers' the poet famously alludes to a contemporary desire to separate language into two strands, declaring that: 'Un désir indéniable à mon temps est de séparer comme en vue d'attributions différentes le double état de la parole, brut ou immédiat ici, là essentiel.' (*OCII*, p. 212) Scholars have interpreted this claim in different ways, with some, such as Claire Lyu arguing that Mallarmé supported this distinction,<sup>42</sup> while others including Pascal Durand,<sup>43</sup> contend that the poet disputed this tendency. In this thesis, I align myself with the latter camp, seeing the statement as a suggestion that even ostensibly unrefined and immediate modes of expression, such as journalistic prose, can reveal glimpses of a purer form of expression. Whether or not the poet agreed with this distinction, these lines of 'Crise de vers' highlight the contemporary trend of separating functional or communicative writing, such as journalism, from poetry. In *La Dernière Mode* however, Mallarmé undermines the distinction between the 'brut et immédiat' nature of journalistic prose and the 'essentiel' aspect of poetry. The destabilizing of this opposition, through the fashion

---

<sup>42</sup> Claire Chi-ah Lyu, *A Sun within a Sun : The Power and Elegance of Poetry* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 2006), pp. 42-43.

<sup>43</sup> *Mallarmé: du sens des formes au sens des formalités*, p. 148.

magazine, has obvious implications for the relationship between *La Dernière Mode* and other texts in the Mallarméan corpus.

Journalism involves a direct confrontation between the written word and the commercial and industrial environment; funded by advertising as well as through their readership, newspapers and magazines turn the text into a commodity. The process of writing *La Dernière Mode* brought with it a need to confront the ‘Economie politique’ and, I contend, opened Mallarmé’s eyes to the possible function of the commercial environment in bringing the work of art to a wider audience. Nevertheless, Mallarmé often demonstrated a rather ambivalent attitude to the press, the mass media, and the commercial context of nineteenth-century France. Even the poet’s later writings show him to be wary of the journalistic form and dismissive of its aesthetic possibilities. In the preface to René Ghil’s *Traité du verbe*, of 1886 he questions the value of journalistic language, stating that: ‘l’emploi élémentaire du discours dessert l’universel reportage dont, la Littérature exceptée, participe tout, entre les genres d’écrits contemporains.’ (*OCII*, p. 672) This statement, which would be re-iterated in ‘Crise de vers’ (*OCII*, p. 212), ten years later, suggests the poet’s view that most contemporary writing was mere ‘universel reportage’ and could not accommodate the elemental use of language. In ‘Le Livre, instrument spirituel’, meanwhile, Mallarmé writes that the influence of journalism ‘[...] est fâcheuse, imposant à l’organisme, complexe, requis par la littérature, au divin bouquin, une monotonie’. (*OCII*, p. 227)

In addition to his wariness of the press, Mallarmé was also negatively disposed towards advertising and publicity; in the ‘Enquête sur l’évolution littéraire’ with Jules Huret he writes that ‘Le vers est partout dans la langue où il y a rythme, partout, excepté dans les

affiches et à la quatrième page des journaux' (*OCII*, p. 698). The fourth (or sometimes third) page of the evening papers was typically dedicated to advertisements from national companies, and no doubt brought in a significant amount of revenue for the press.<sup>44</sup> While the poet's words to Jules Huret concede that even journalistic language might have some artistic value, the statement discounts any aesthetic potential on the part of advertising. Nevertheless, commercial publicity is integral to the structure of *La Dernière Mode* as each issue of the periodical is 'bookended' by a series of 'cartes de visite'<sup>45</sup>, while half a page is devoted to larger adverts for diverse services including the commercial passenger boat company Anchor Line steamers<sup>46</sup> and Madame Talot's 'institution de demoiselles'. Miss Satin's fashion columns meanwhile refer to local stores and designers, weaving the commercial context of the magazine's production into the text, and reinforcing the mutually dependent relationship between fashion journalism and commerce in the late nineteenth century. It is possible that the failed business venture of *La Dernière Mode* left Mallarmé feeling uneasy about the relationship between literature and commerce, though it might simply be that the poet's foray into commercial publicity in 1874 failed to redeem the advertising techniques of the press, in his eyes.

---

<sup>44</sup> Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945: Taste and Corruption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 165.

<sup>45</sup> The 'Cartes de Visite' in *La Dernière Mode* take the form of rectangular text boxes, measuring approximately 3cm x 5cm, and bearing the names and addresses of various retailers and services, mainly situated in the French capital. This was a common practice in French fashion journals of the late nineteenth century and is seen in other contemporary periodicals including *La Sylphide* and *La Fantaisie parisienne*. A sample page of the 'Maisons de Confiance' section from the second issue of *La Dernière Mode* can be seen in Appendix 6, while Appendix 7 shows the adverts and visiting cards in an issue of *La Sylphide* from 12 December 1873. Although they are not visiting cards in the traditional sense, in this thesis I will use the terms 'Carte de Visite' (Mallarmé's capitalisation) and 'visiting cards' interchangeably to refer to the small advertisements for products and services featured in this section of the magazine.

<sup>46</sup> Roger Dragonetti sees the advertising in *La Dernière Mode* as part of the symbolism of the fashion magazine, arguing that the name of this steamship company, in French, would be 'lignes d'ancre', which, in turn, could be read as 'lignes d'encre', alluding to the fictional dimension to the magazine. Roger Dragonetti, *Un Fantôme dans le kiosque: Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992), p. 99.

### **‘Parure — si la foule est femme’**

*La Dernière Mode* offered Mallarmé the opportunity to reflect on the reception of the text and to experiment with possible methods of engaging with a mass audience. *La Dernière Mode* explores ways of appealing to a predominantly female audience and allowed Mallarmé to test out the particular aesthetic effects that this might bring about. In the ‘Notes en vue du Livre’, there are a handful of references to women, which suggest the significance of the feminine within the context of the ideal book; particularly significant, is one note in which the poet alludes to the ‘mystère de la femme’. (*OCI*, p. 961) He would later reflect on the role of the female ‘public’ in the 1893 article ‘Plaisir sacré’. To begin with, in this article, Mallarmé establishes a link between the audience and the ‘mystère’, describing ‘la foule’ and its ‘fonction par excellence de gardienne de mystère’ (*OCII*, p. 237); he then goes on to discuss the particular significance of the female audience, and the symbolic value of their clothing:

Parure — si la foule est femme, tenez, les mille têtes. Une conscience partielle de l’éblouissement se propage, au hasard de la tenue de ville usitée dans les auditions d’après-midi: pose, comme le bruit déjà de cymbales tombé, au filigrane d’or de minuscules capotes, miroite en le jais; mainte aigrette luit divinatoire. L’impérieux velours d’une attitude coupera l’ombre avec un pli s’attribuant la coloration fournie par tel instrument. Aux épaules, la guipure, entrelacs de la mélodie. (*OCII*, p. 237)

In this passage, Mallarmé establishes the aesthetic potential of female clothing, presenting women themselves, through the richness of their attire, as a vehicle for reflecting the ideal. In his 1891 interview with Jules Huret, Mallarmé would elucidate further on the aesthetic possibilities afforded by the female readership. He draws a parallel between the act of writing poetry and that of dressing up, but notes that women do not understand the aesthetic value either of poetry, or of their own ‘toilette:’

La poésie consistant à *créer*, il faut prendre dans l’âme humaine des états, des lueurs d’une pureté si absolue que, bien chantés et bien mis en lumière, cela constitue en effet les joyaux de l’homme: là, il y a symbole, il y a création, et le mot poésie a ici

son sens: c'est, en somme, la seule création humaine possible. Et si, véritablement, les pierres précieuses dont on se pare ne manifestent pas un état d'âme, c'est indûment qu'on s'en pare... La femme, par exemple, cette éternelle voleuse...

Et tenez, *ajoute mon interlocuteur en riant à moitié*, ce qu'il y a d'admirable dans les magasins de nouveautés, c'est quelquefois, de nous avoir révélé, par le commissaire de police, que la femme se paraît indûment de ce dont elle ne savait pas le sens caché, et que ne lui appartient par conséquent pas [...] (*OCII*, p. 701)

In these words to Jules Huret, Mallarmé jokingly accuses women of stealing fashion from men, claiming that they do not understand its aesthetic significance.<sup>47</sup> Women's lack of awareness of the true value of language and, indeed, of fashion may, on the one hand, make them unworthy of both poetry and fashion, but on the other it makes them ideal readers, as they are blank canvases, free from the influence of socio-political concerns.

*La Dernière Mode* offered Mallarmé the opportunity to explore the processes of reading and writing as gendered acts. Anticipating the poet's comment to Jules Huret, the columnist character, Ix, offers a similarly ironic assessment of female tastes in the very first issue of *La Dernière Mode*:

notre partie littéraire [...] part de ce point absolu que toutes les femmes aiment les vers autant que les parfums et les bijoux ou encore les personnages d'un récit à l'égal d'elles-mêmes. Leur plaire donc véritablement ou mériter cela: je ne sais pas d'ambition, changée en triomphe si l'on réussit, qui aille mieux à un ouvrage en prose ou en vers. (*OCII*, p. 496)

In these lines, reading and writing are presented as gendered acts: women are placed in a receptive role as readers, and men are ascribed the active role as writers. While on the surface, Ix's column thus implies male supremacy within the creative process (a view which would be reinforced by Mallarmé in his interview with Jules Huret in 1891), it becomes clear that the two sexes must work together, fulfilling the mutually dependent

---

<sup>47</sup> For a useful reading of the presentation of gender in this passage, cf. Barbara Johnson, *A World of Difference*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 128.

tasks of writing and reading; the work of art itself can thus be seen as a marriage of these two roles, hence the goal of art in pleasing women.

Through the mouthpiece of Ix, Mallarmé goes on to establish the importance of women as readers:

On va répétant, non sans vérité qu'il n'y a plus de lecteurs: je crois bien, ce sont des lectrices. Seule une dame, dans son isolement de la Politique et des soins moroses, a le loisir nécessaire pour que s'en dégage, sa toilette achevée, un besoin de se parer aussi l'âme. (*OCII*, p. 496)

There is a clear similarity between the vocabulary used in this passage from the first 'Chronique de Paris' in the specimen issue of *La Dernière Mode* and that used by Mallarmé in his interview with Jules Huret. As such, I contend that the fashion magazine represented an important stage in shaping Mallarmé's attitude to the acts of reading and writing, allowing him to explore the different roles of men and women in the creative process.<sup>48</sup>

## **Thesis outline and methodology**

This thesis proposes a novel approach to Mallarmé and fashion, exploring ideas of process in the poet's œuvre through the filter of *La Dernière Mode*. It stands apart from other studies of the fashion magazine in that it not only seeks to establish the status of *La Dernière Mode* within Mallarmé's œuvre, but also views the fashion magazine as a defining text, which represents a turning point in the development of the poet's aesthetic. The passage from the 1886 article 'Mimique', cited in the frontispiece to this thesis, foregrounds the reading process, and reveals the poet's view of the act of reading as

---

<sup>48</sup> Given the interest in the acts of reading and writing as gendered practices, I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* could be read in light of Julia Kristeva's theory on the 'sujet-en-procès' which is applied to Mallarmé's poetry in *La Révolution du langage poétique*. This connects with the theme of process and trial in this thesis, and also links to Damien Catani's reading of 'La Musique et les lettres' in relation to Kristevan theory in *The Poet in Society*, pp. 155 -57. Cf. Julia Kristeva, *La Révolution du langage poétique* (Paris: Seuil, 1974).

a quasi-religious practice, which incorporates musical and dramatic elements into the written text.<sup>49</sup> ‘Mimique’ has important implications for Mallarmé studies; the article reveals the complex relationship between different art forms, linking the process of spectating in the theatre with the act of reading. In the article Mallarmé discusses a booklet which he has found, describing the action in Paul Margueritte’s mime drama, *Pierrot, assassin de sa femme*, a ‘soliloque muet’ about a man who tickles his wife to death on learning of her infidelity. Describing the action on the stage, the reader of the booklet is placed in a role which is simultaneously productive and receptive, as he reads the text and must stage what he sees in his mind’s eye. The mime is thus revealed to be a self-reflexive process in which the action is performed for and in itself; this mechanism is a metaphor for that of poetry, which stages the dynamic collision of words on the page — ‘ils s’allument de reflets réciproques comme une virtuelle traînée de feux sur des pierreries’. (*OCII*, p. 211)

Over the course of his œuvre, Mallarmé develops his understanding of the reading process as a creative act, establishing the essential role of the reader in bringing the text to life. The creative dimension to the reception of art is evident in the passage from ‘Mimique’, which serves as an anchoring point for this thesis. Discussing the temporality of reading the description of the mime, the passage draws together various aspects of Mallarmé’s approach to literary creation, and offers up the themes of ‘Time’, ‘Drama’ and ‘Fiction’, which I hold to be central to Mallarmé’s aesthetic.<sup>50</sup> These three themes will thus form the

---

<sup>49</sup> ‘Mimique’ itself is part of a scheme which shows Mallarmé’s œuvre to be in a continual process of change and revision. The text originally formed the final part of a longer article, published in 1886 as part of the series of ‘Notes sur le théâtre’ for *La Revue indépendante* and was re-worked for publication in the 1897 edition of the *Divagations*.

<sup>50</sup> For a detailed reading of ‘Mimique’, see Jacques Derrida’s essay ‘La Double séance’ in Jacques Derrida, *La Dissémination*, (Paris: Seuil, 1972), pp. 215 – 267.

headings of the main chapters, serving as a starting point for the analysis of *La Dernière Mode* within the development of the poet's approach to the creative process.

The first chapter of this thesis will explore the notion of time, examining ways in which *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a dynamic process in the evolution of Mallarmé's approach to temporality. The chapter will begin by looking at the presentation of time in his verse and prose poetry, arguing that Mallarméan poetics is characterized by failed attempts to situate the speaking subject in time and to seize the present through the act of writing. The chapter will then go on to consider the particular temporality of both fashion and the journalistic form, making a case for seeing the fashion magazine as a means staging a direct confrontation with the fleeting, in an attempt to seize the elusive present. Having established the temporal conventions of fashion and journalism, I shall explore ways in which these practices are used and abused by the columnist characters, showing the temporality of *La Dernière Mode* to oscillate between past and future, operating according to a similar mechanism as the mime in 'Mimique'.

The second chapter, on drama, will examine *La Dernière Mode* in relation to Mallarmé's practical and theoretical involvement with the theatre. Casting *La Dernière Mode* as an inherently dramatic text, this chapter will make the case for seeing the fashion magazine as an arena in which to test out ways of fusing different artistic genres, reinforcing the essential status of drama and the theatre as part of the concept of the 'Livre'. The first section of this chapter will explore how ideas of performance seen in the magazine reveal the poet's increasing dissatisfaction with the physical limitations of the theatre. I shall thus cast the fashion magazine as part of a movement away from the stage, towards a drama of reading which can be seen to have evolved from the poet's struggle to produce the dramatic

poems, 'Hérodiade' and 'L'Après-midi d'un faune', during the 1860s. Chapter Two will also examine the role of Ix as theatre critic, arguing that *La Dernière Mode* allowed Mallarmé to reflect on drama and the theatre, through a form of journalism which is, itself, theatrical. Comparing the ideas expressed in select passages from Ix's 'Chronique de Paris' with those voiced by the poet in 'Crayonné au théâtre', I will present the fashion magazine as an essential phase in the formulation of Mallarmé's ideas on drama. The latter part of this chapter will explore the poet's changing relationship to 'la foule', casting *La Dernière Mode* as the site of a shift in the poet's relationship to the crowd, and paving the way for the notion of the book as a 'culte moderne', with the potential to reveal the ideal in the public sphere. The second chapter will thus show *La Dernière Mode* to be part of an experiment with ritual, performance and theatricality which influenced the direction of Mallarmé's later aesthetic and shaped his ideas on the 'Livre'.

Chapter Three will shift to a more theoretical approach, examining the idea of fiction, which would assume a particularly important place in Mallarmé's later aesthetic. To begin, this chapter will establish three different phases in the evolution of the poet's concept of fiction, which began with his reading of Descartes' *Discours de la méthode* at the very end of the 1860s. Exploring ways in which the poet's understanding of fiction developed to encompass social concerns, this chapter will examine the relationship between the creative process and Mallarmé's awareness of 'le Néant' following the crisis of the 1860s, showing how the fashion magazine plays on the inherent ambiguity of 'la dernière mode', prompting the reader to chase the ultimate fashion which is, itself, a fiction. Presenting this quest as a metaphor for the process of literary creation, I will make a case for seeing *La Dernière Mode* as an early application of a mechanism which the poet would later reveal to be that of fiction, and the driving force behind the literary work.

Having pinpointed 1874 and the production of *La Dernière Mode* as bringing about a change in Mallarmé's approach to fiction, Chapter Three will also explore the social status of literature. Here, I will argue that the fashion magazine undermines the contemporary tendency to 'séparer comme en vue d'attributions différentes le double état de la parole, brut ou immédiat ici, là essentiel', (*OCII*, p. 212) by employing the mechanisms of literary fiction, within the journalistic form. Examining ideas of advertising and the cult of consumerism, I shall show how Mallarmé seized on the symbolic value of the commercial environment, through his engagement with the press. I will demonstrate that, in spite of the apparent superficiality of the fashion magazine, *La Dernière Mode* reveals the aesthetic potential of the material world, showcasing the process of writing as a means of transforming perception, thus revealing the 'essentiel' dimension of the written word, concealed within the 'brut et immédiat' language of human communication.

By situating *La Dernière Mode* within the development of Mallarmé's œuvre and in relation to the idea of the 'Livre', it becomes clear that producing the fashion magazine was an important undertaking for Mallarmé, both on a personal level and in terms of the impact that the experience would have on his later works. The fashion magazine, no doubt, went some way to satisfying Mallarmé's desire to produce a journal on the decorative arts, and he would look fondly on *La Dernière Mode* later on in his life, despite his initial anger at the magazine's demise. While the fashion magazine may seem, at first, to be little more than an amusing distraction, allowing Mallarmé some respite from the rigours of seeking the ideal book, the remainder of this thesis will argue that *La Dernière Mode* was not a

mere ‘procrastination poétique’,<sup>51</sup> but a valuable aesthetic endeavour with distinct thematic and structural echoes of the ‘Livre’.

## **Mallarmé and Fashion Critical Approaches**

Mallarmé studies have been shaped by his difficult status and perceived impenetrability. Mallarmé’s reputation for obscurity is fuelled primarily by his near-obsession with the ‘Livre’ that ‘despotique bouquin’, referred to in the ‘Autobiographical’ letter to Paul Verlaine, (*OCII*, p. 789) as well as by the complexity and self-referentiality of his poetry and prose writings. In the past, scholarship on Mallarmé has tended to focus on the poet’s difficulty and his disengagement from everyday life, demonstrating a general reluctance to acknowledge Mallarmé’s more material side. However, the latter half of the twentieth century brought a newfound interest in Mallarmé’s engagement with the material world and with the practices of everyday life, which has continued to grow into the twenty-first century. I align myself with the more recent wave of criticism which sees Mallarmé’s apparent complexity as a means of exploring the inherent web of relations which is at the heart of his fascination with language and forms the foundation of his poetics. This thesis

---

<sup>51</sup> *Mallarmé et la mode*, p. 81.

argues that the project of the fashion magazine shows Mallarmé to be actively engaged with material culture, the commercial environment and the mass media, characterizing the genesis of *La Dernière Mode* as a process which shaped the poet's attitude both to reading and writing, influencing the direction which his œuvre would take in the years that followed. Taking a broadly chronological approach, this second introductory chapter will consider literary and theoretical approaches to Mallarmé and fashion, in order to situate the stance taken in this thesis in relation to other studies of *La Dernière Mode* and its place in the poet's œuvre, and to emphasize the critical value of the project.

There are currently a handful of studies which focus on *La Dernière Mode*: these include Jean-Pierre Lecercle's 1989 study *Mallarmé et la Mode*;<sup>1</sup> Roger Dragonetti's *Un Fantôme dans le kiosque: Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien*,<sup>2</sup> published in 1992; and Barbara Bohac's substantial 2012 study *Jouir partout ainsi qu'il sied*.<sup>3</sup> To this list I would also like to add Damian Catani's 2003 book *The Poet in Society: Art, Consumerism and Politics in Mallarmé*,<sup>4</sup> which examines the magazine as part of a study of the poet's engagement with the social and political context of late nineteenth-century France. There are also many journal articles examining select facets of *La Dernière Mode* from linguistic, thematic, historical and sociological perspectives. I shall establish the contemporary critical landscape of Mallarmé's fashion magazine, situating my methodology in relation to the studies mentioned above in the final part of this chapter. For now, however, I would like to

---

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre, *Mallarmé et la mode* (Paris: Séguier, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> Roger Dragonetti, *Un Fantôme dans le kiosque : Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien*, (Paris : Seuil, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Bohac, *Jouir partout ainsi qu'il sied: Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Damian Catani, *The Poet in Society : Art, Consumerism, and Politics in Mallarmé* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

begin by tracing the evolution of critical interest in *La Dernière Mode* and exploring scholarly approaches to Mallarmé's engagement with the material world.

### Early interest in *La Dernière Mode*

Rémy de Gourmont, a late contemporary of Mallarmé, was amongst the first to offer a critical perspective on *La Dernière Mode*. In 1890 de Gourmont published an article in *La Revue indépendante* extolling the virtues of this exquisite publication.<sup>5</sup> In the piece, he casts *La Dernière Mode* as a sort of extended prose-poem, highlighting distinctive features of the magazine's written style, which echo the poet's earlier works:

[...] si on lit, sous des vers, sous des nouvelles, les noms de Banville, Coppée, Sully-Prudhomme, Cladel, Mendès, Daudet, Méral, Valade, il est avéré que toute la partie technique et fondamentale aurait pu être signée par l'auteur de "L'Après-midi d'un faune", et il y a dans ces pages perdues (perdues, on peut le croire) de vrais et charmants poèmes en prose.<sup>6</sup>

While the adjective 'charmant' could be deemed a little condescending, de Gourmont is, nevertheless, appreciative of the poetic value of the fashion magazine, aligning it with 'L'Après-midi d'un faune'. However, I contend that in casting *La Dernière Mode* as a form of prose poetry, de Gourmont's assessment fails to acknowledge Mallarmé's understanding of the aesthetic potential of all modes of writing. I thus put forward an alternative point of view, arguing that in *La Dernière Mode* Mallarmé sought to explore the literary value of the journalistic format in its own right. Rather than seeing *La Dernière Mode* as poetry, I suggest that the fashion magazine constitutes an experiment with poesis. Confirming the timeless value of *La Dernière Mode*, de Gourmont concludes by emphasizing the aesthetic value of the fashion magazine, suggesting that it should be reproduced for future readers:

---

<sup>5</sup> Rémy de Gourmont, 'Trouvailles et Curiosités', *La Revue indépendante*, February 1890, 2, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k16499m/f308.tableDesMatières> > [accessed 13/04/2014].

<sup>6</sup> 'Trouvailles et Curiosités', 304.

‘on ferait un bien joli petit volume avec les pages élégantes de *La Dernière Mode* [...] Qui nous donnera cette joie?’<sup>7</sup>

In 1920, S.A. Rhodes, a scholar at the New York Institute of French Studies, was the first to grant this pleasure to readers of Mallarmé, publishing a text-only version of *La Dernière Mode*, intended for the benefit of scholars working on Mallarmé. Rhodes’s edition of the magazine includes a detailed introduction in English. This introduction constitutes the first critical study of the magazine (aside from de Gourmont’s journalistic article) and can be credited with bringing *La Dernière Mode* to the attention of Mallarmé scholars in the English-speaking world.

In the introduction, Rhodes explores the contextual background of the fashion magazine, claiming that *La Dernière Mode* is an:

admirable illustration of what worldly or materialistic activity can become when it emanates from the hands of an artist. Mallarmé succeeds in almost dematerializing what are, after all, marketable realities. He releases them from the burdensome weight attached to whatever is a product of necessity.<sup>8</sup>

In these lines, Rhodes touches on the relationship between the poet and his socio-political context; this is a subject of particular critical interest, which is examined in Damien Catani’s 2003 book *The Poet in Society*. Opening up the question of Mallarmé’s involvement in the commercial environment, Rhodes characterizes the poet as having a unique ability to transform material objects and exploit the mechanisms of industry and the economy for aesthetic effect. In this thesis, however, I shall argue that Mallarmé did not ‘dematerialize’ the material objects, such as clothes and accessories, which form the subject matter of *La Dernière Mode*, nor did he liberate the fashion magazine from the

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *La Dernière Mode*, ed. by S.A. Rhodes (New York: Institute of French Studies, Inc, 1933), p. 9.

‘burdensome weight’ of its financial or commercial element, but rather, he appropriated the journalistic form as a means of revealing the beauty which is to be found in all things, including environmental features, social activities and commercial products. Mallarmé thus reconciled the financial needs of the writer with aesthetic concerns to produce a publication with both material and symbolic value.

Although Rhodes’s publication of *La Dernière Mode* marked a turning point in Mallarmé studies, the edition is fundamentally flawed in that it includes only selected portions of the text from each of the eight issues of the magazine. This ‘abridged version’ of *La Dernière Mode* features Madame de Ponty’s ‘La Mode’ column and Ix’s ‘Chronique’; these are grouped according to ‘author’, rather than following the chronology of the original magazine. Rather surprisingly, Rhodes’s edition omits all but one of Miss Satin’s ‘Gazettes de la Fashion’ on the ill-judged basis that they are of inferior style, and are unlikely to have been written by Mallarmé himself.<sup>9</sup> This strange editorial decision leads Rhodes to ignore the intended composition of the magazine and thus to overlook the multiple possible ways of approaching the text. However, as I shall demonstrate in this thesis, the architecture of *La Dernière Mode* was carefully thought out, and the structure and pagination of the fashion magazine allowed Mallarmé to experiment with possible orders of reading, and with the combination of voices in the magazine. In re-grouping the various sections of *La Dernière Mode*, and ignoring Miss Satin’s role amongst the cast of columnist characters,

---

<sup>9</sup> ‘The *Gazette de la Fashion* is made up of articles which, with one single exception, are not characteristic enough to call for their complete reproduction. After a careful analysis of their style, I am almost of the opinion that they are not due to the poet’s pen, and rather than to attribute to him a few paragraphs of doubtful merit, I omit them, consoling myself with all that is authentic. Their contents, moreover, are not of sufficient interest even from the point of view we must adopt here. I may be mistaken; if so the loss is not irreparable. I am, moreover, compensating for it immediately. For there is the one exception I spoke of, the selection in the last number of the magazine. In it, the style, the expression, the thought of Mallarmé reappear unmistakably and make a colourful contrast to the rather commonplace, omitted articles. In fact, it is one of the most typical bits of writing in the journal. Let the reader judge for himself by turning to page 53.’ Rhodes, p. 9.

Rhodes's edition does not offer the same reading experience gained from approaching the magazine issue by issue. It was only in 1978 with the publication of the Ramsay facsimile version that a modern readership would be given access to the text more or less in its original format.<sup>10</sup> The way in which Rhodes presents his edition disrupts the temporal conventions of the journalistic form and overlooks the fundamental correspondence between the various sections of the magazine, which will be established in the three main chapters of this thesis.

In spite of the pitfalls mentioned above, Rhodes's edition has several redeeming features. Firstly, his critical introduction establishes a connection between the fashion magazine and Mallarmé's other writings. Rhodes maps the various sections of the magazine on to different parts of Mallarmé's oeuvre; he claims that both in style and content, Madame de Ponty's 'La Mode' column parallels Mallarmé's prose poetry, while Ix's 'Chronique de Paris' can be linked to the *Divagations*. While this distinction between specific parts of the poet's oeuvre may seem slightly reductive, Rhodes's study laid the foundations for considering the relationship between *La Dernière Mode* and Mallarmé's better-known poetry and theoretical writings. This thesis will explore the links between the different sections of *La Dernière Mode* and the various phases of Mallarmé's oeuvre, developing the parallels drawn by Rhodes, showing how the fashion magazine offered Mallarmé an arena in which to test and develop linguistic, thematic and methodological approaches to the creative process.

In February 1933, an article by Jacques Crépet appeared in the literary supplement to *Le Figaro*, as a response to the publication of Rhodes's edition of *La Dernière Mode*. In the

---

<sup>10</sup> *La Dernière Mode: gazette du monde et de la famille* (Paris: Ramsay, 1978)

feature, entitled ‘Mallarmé, chroniqueur de modes’, Crépet depicts a ‘bipolar’ Mallarmé whose dual identities are reconciled in the fashion magazine:

Qu’ on ne s’attende pas à trouver ici un Mallarmé dont l’autre ait à rougir ! Le délicat poète va subsister avec le styliste impeccable dans le chroniqueur de modes, et pour chanter la transparence de la gaze ou la splendeur des velours...<sup>11</sup>

Although Crépet views *La Dernière Mode* as a serious undertaking for the poet, he seems to imply that it is Mallarmé’s renowned poetic genius which allows him to engage in such an outlandish and apparently frivolous field as that of fashion. The article thus reveals an awareness of the dynamic of the serious and the futile, which would later be examined from a structuralist perspective by Barthes in *Système de la mode*.<sup>12</sup> Through his reading of Rhodes’s edition of the magazine, Crépet sees Mallarmé’s unique use of the journalistic form as a way of elevating the status of this everyday mode of writing, through the intervention of the poet’s artistic ‘génie’: ‘[...] ne convient-il pas de se souvenir que les poètes ont accoutumé de faire des miracles?’, Crépet asks, deeming the magazine to be ‘preuve nouvelle qu’il n’est point de tâche inférieure et que le génie relève tout ce qu’il touche!’.<sup>13</sup> Like Rhodes, Crépet sees the poetic dimension of *La Dernière Mode* to consist in a transformation of the everyday, whereas the approach taken in this thesis views the poetic act in Mallarmé’s aesthetic as a process of revealing the beauty and symbolic value which is concealed within material objects and is intrinsic in language.

While Rémy de Gourmont views *La Dernière Mode* as a work of poetry disguised as a fashion magazine and Jacques Crépet suggests that Mallarmé held a sort of poetic Midas touch, I argue that Mallarmé simply appreciated the aesthetic value of the ordinary and circumstantial. This interest in the beauty to be found in everyday practices and in material

---

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Crépet, ‘Mallarmé, Chroniqueur de modes’, *Supplément littéraire du Figaro* (9 February, 1933), p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Roland Barthes, *Système de la mode* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Mallarmé, Chroniqueur de modes’, p. 9.

objects can be seen in the years leading up to the publication of *La Dernière Mode*, through the poet's articles on the International Exhibitions in London in 1871 and 1872, and later on in the *Vers de circonstance*, as well as in uncollected articles such as 'Sur le Beau et l'Utile', 'Le Chapeau Haut de Forme' and 'Sur le costume feminine à bicyclette', written in the 1890s. Mallarmé's fascination with decorative objects, his interest in fashion, fabrics and jewellery, and the emphasis on femininity in the poet's œuvre began to capture the attention of Mallarmé scholars in the mid- to late twentieth century, with important implications for our understanding of *La Dernière Mode*, as I shall demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter.

### ***Mallarmé à la mode: the fashion magazine in Mallarmé studies***

With one or two exceptions, such as those cited above, twentieth-century scholarship on Mallarmé tended to overlook *La Dernière Mode*; however our own *fin-de-siècle* saw renewed critical interest in the fashion magazine and in circumstantial writings such as the short poems written on boxes of glacé fruits as New Year gifts, and the poet's playful experiments with the addresses of his correspondents, known as the 'Les Loisirs de la poste'. Several major studies of Mallarmé's works produced during the latter half of the twentieth-century have been instrumental in establishing the aesthetic value of *La Dernière Mode*, and affirming its position within the Mallarméan corpus. In this section, I will conduct a survey of select studies on Mallarmé which have contributed to establishing the significance of *La Dernière Mode* as part of the poet's œuvre.

One of the first studies to consider the critical significance of *La Dernière Mode* was Jean-Pierre Richard's *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*, published in 1962.<sup>14</sup> This far-reaching

---

<sup>14</sup> Jean-Pierre Richard, *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1961).

study of the poet's œuvre is still considered to be one of the most important scholarly works on Mallarmé. *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* situates *La Dernière Mode* within the context of the poet's vast œuvre and establishes the vital role which the fashion magazine played in the formulation of his aesthetic. Richard's study takes a thematic approach, exploring diverse facets of the poet's imaginary universe, starting from the premise that the many aspects of Mallarmé's eclectic œuvre are united by the same mode of consciousness and the same understanding of the human condition. In the section on *La Dernière Mode*, Richard establishes a dynamic relationship between the superficial status of the object and its symbolic value. A propos of *La Dernière Mode*, Richard suggests that 'sa frivolité de pure surface sert peut-être à étouffer en nous la nostalgie du fondamental: avec des riens on cachera le rien.'<sup>15</sup> Situating the magazine in relation to Mallarmé's discovery of 'le Néant' during his period of personal crisis, Richard shows the materiality of the fashion magazine, with its abundance of physical and tangible objects to reveal the capacity for what might seem superficial to conceal the truth of 'le vide'. *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* thus presents the fashion magazine as part of a *mise-en-abîme* by which nothingness is hidden by attractive 'nothings'. I concur with Richard that the apparent superficiality of the fashion magazine can be seen as a means of masking the awareness of absence, which followed the 'Crise de Tournon'; in the final chapter of this thesis, however, I will develop the link between the fashion magazine and 'le Néant' in a new way, characterizing *La Dernière Mode* as a testing ground for the development of the idea of fiction and its place within the social and industrial context of the late nineteenth century.

Judy Kravis's 1976 work *The Prose of Mallarmé* takes a narrower approach to Mallarmé's œuvre than Richard's vast tome, focusing specifically on the evolution of his prose

---

<sup>15</sup> *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*, pp. 298–299.

writings.<sup>16</sup> She devotes a substantial chapter of her study to *La Dernière Mode*, situating the fashion magazine in relation to the poet's other 'œuvres alimentaires' (namely *Les Mots anglais* and *Les Dieux antiques*), though she disputes the contention that any of these texts was purely a financial undertaking. Kravis starts her chapter on *La Dernière Mode* from the premise that the fashion magazine offered a testing ground for the linguistic investigation of *Les Mots anglais*, Mallarmé's scientific examination of the English language from a francophone perspective, published in 1877. Kravis suggests that *Dernière Mode* allowed Mallarmé to explore the possibilities of experimenting with different literary forms and developing etymological connections in a way which offered the poet more creative freedom than *Les Mots anglais*.<sup>17</sup> This seems a rather strange starting point, given that she acknowledges in a footnote that *La Dernière Mode* was published three years prior to *Les Mots anglais*, and that the fashion magazine cannot, therefore, have been influenced by this linguistic experiment. Rather than speaking of influence, in *The Prose of Mallarmé*, Kravis establishes a dynamic dialogue between these two works of the 1870s, which, although intriguing, seems rather superfluous to her main argument that the language of the fashion magazine is a process which calls into question the relationship between the imaginary and the real. While Kravis speaks of 'the imprint that Mallarmé makes upon *La Dernière Mode*',<sup>18</sup> this thesis aims to demonstrate the imprint which *La Dernière Mode* made upon Mallarmé, and the influence that the fashion magazine would have on the approach to literary creation taken in his later works.

In the Francophone world, Pascal Durand has made a vital contribution to scholarship on Mallarmé's journalistic endeavours in recent years, through a series of articles on the poet's

---

<sup>16</sup> Judy Kravis, *The Prose of Mallarmé: The Evolution of a Literary Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> *The Prose of Mallarmé*, pp. 87–118.

<sup>18</sup> *The Prose of Mallarmé*, p. 85.

engagement with the press and with the everyday. The research demonstrated in Durand's diverse and detailed body of articles formed the basis for a substantial book, entitled *Mallarmé: du sens des formes au sens des formalités*, which appeared in 2008. In his study, Durand seeks to 'dissiper l'halo trop esthétisant' which recent criticism has bestowed on *La Dernière Mode*, claiming that the columns of Madame de Ponty, Ix and Miss Satin 'ne seraient dus qu'à un suspens de l'Œuvre, à une sorte de relâche compensatoire dont le souvenir serait resté pregnat.'<sup>19</sup> Durand points out that the various different readings of *La Dernière Mode* have failed to consider the fashion magazine for what it is — 'un journal.'<sup>20</sup> However, *La Dernière Mode* is much more than simply a journalistic enterprise; as I shall show, whether consciously or not, the fashion magazine also represents a fundamental stage in the evolution of Mallarmé's aesthetic.

## **Key themes in Mallarmé's aesthetic: Time, Drama and Fiction**

The three elements of Time, Drama and Fiction explored in this thesis are fundamentally connected with Mallarmé's engagement with the everyday, as I shall demonstrate. This section will highlight a number of critical texts which have particular relevance to the themes at the crux of my study, showing further exploration of *La Dernière Mode* in light of these aspects to be a valuable addition to Mallarmé studies.

### **Time**

Hélène Stafford's *Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday Life: A Study of the Concept of the Ordinary in his Verse and Prose*, which appeared in 2000, is particularly relevant to the theme of Time, which will form the opening chapter of this thesis. In her study, Stafford

---

<sup>19</sup> Pascal Durand, *Mallarmé : du sens des formes au sens des formalités*, (Paris: Seuil, 2008), p. 66.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

takes a heavily linguistic approach revealing the importance of the ordinary and everyday life in the poet's œuvre as part of a complex network of interconnected vocabulary, etymological links and syntactical relations. Stafford thus claims that Mallarmé's particular use of the language of the everyday uses 'metaphors to bring magic to particularly uninspiring aspects of everyday life or to extract magic from more promising materials such as jewellery or evening dresses.'<sup>21</sup> However, I contend that there is nothing inherently 'uninspiring' about the objects and engagements described in *La Dernière Mode*. In contrast to Stafford, my study will start from a thematic perspective, seeing the fashion magazine not as part of a process of 'metaphorisation of the ordinary',<sup>22</sup> but rather as a means of revealing the inherent value of the everyday within the public sphere.

P.N. Furbank and Alex Cain's 2004 translation of *La Dernière Mode* with commentary has been instrumental in bringing *La Dernière Mode* to critical attention in the English-speaking world.<sup>23</sup> Furbank and Cain's detailed introduction to this volume, and the commentary on their translation place particular emphasis on Mallarmé's appreciation of irony, drawing attention to the poet's witty and sometimes misogynistic pronouncements in *La Dernière Mode*. However, their study also offers a clear insight the thematic links between the fashion magazine and Mallarmé's better-known verse and prose writings. Particularly relevant to this thesis is their analysis of Madame de Ponty's 'La Mode' column in the first issue of the magazine. I shall undertake a close reading of this passage in Chapter One, in light of the theme of time, with a view to demonstrating that *La Dernière Mode* offered Mallarmé the opportunity to explore motifs associated with the articulation

---

<sup>21</sup> Hélène Stafford, *Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday Life: A Study of the Concept of the Ordinary in His Verse and Prose* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), p. 163.

<sup>22</sup> *Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday Life*, pp. 151-180.

<sup>23</sup> *Mallarmé on Fashion: A Translation of the Fashion Magazine La Dernière Mode, with Commentary*, ed. by Nicholas Furbank, and Alex M. Cain, (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

of temporal experience. Engaging with Furbank and Cain's analysis, I shall argue that the presentation of time in the fashion magazine, through the emphasis placed on precious stones and 'bibelots' in this column, plays an important role in the development of Mallarmé's poetics.

## **Drama**

Recently, studies of drama, theatre and performance in Mallarmé's œuvre have placed particular emphasis on the role of materiality and the relationship with the everyday in Mallarmé's aesthetic. Focussing particularly on ideas of theatricality, ritual and performance, Mary Lewis Shaw's *Performance in the Texts of Mallarmé: The Passage from Art to Ritual* emphasizes the significance of performance in relation to the concept of the 'Livre'.<sup>24</sup> Shaw's thematic study explores diverse facets of Mallarmé's œuvre, shedding light on Mallarmé's interest in the symbolic value of rituals and characterising the poet's interest in theatricality as part of his 'cult, or religion, of art.'<sup>25</sup> Rather surprisingly, in this study Shaw devotes scant attention to the fashion magazine; many of the questions she raises could, usefully be explored with reference to *La Dernière Mode*. My thesis will thus contribute to establishing the importance of drama and performance in the magazine, showing *La Dernière Mode* to be part of a dynamic engagement with the reading public.

Roger Pearson's 2004 study *Mallarmé and Circumstance: The Translation of Silence* has been instrumental in establishing the link between the material world and ideas of performance.<sup>26</sup> Through close textual analysis, this study explores the poet's circumstantial writings, placing particular emphasis on ideas of theatricality and examining the dramatic

---

<sup>24</sup> Mary Lewis Shaw, *Performance in the Texts of Mallarmé: The Passage from Art to Ritual* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

<sup>25</sup> *Performance in the Texts of Mallarmé*, p. 246.

<sup>26</sup> *Mallarmé and Circumstance: The Translation of Silence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

nature of reading in Mallarmé. The first chapter of this study, entitled ‘Intimate Galas’, focuses on the poetics of space in ‘Crayonné au Théâtre’, with particular relevance to this thesis. Pearson establishes the dynamic of the public and private spheres to be a central theme in Mallarmé’s œuvre, arguing that the poet’s focus on the material world and on ideas of performance offered him a chance to explore the relationship between language and the world. *Mallarmé and Circumstance* acknowledges the importance of *La Dernière Mode* within the context of this complex relationship, though the clear focus of his study means that he does not examine the language or content of the magazine in any depth. Concurring with Pearson on the aesthetic value of circumstance, as well as on the inherent theatricality and performativity of reading, this study will examine the significance of *La Dernière Mode* for understanding the development of Mallarmé’s relationship with the world, and his exploration of the inherent connection between all things, through the presentation of space and material objects.

## **Fiction**

Drama, performance and theatricality in Mallarmé’s œuvre are closely linked to the notion of fiction, which will be the focus of Chapter Three of this thesis. There are two texts which deserve a mention here for their relevance to the study of fiction in Mallarmé’s œuvre. The first of these, Patrick Thériault’s *Le (Dé)montage de la fiction: la révélation moderne de Mallarmé* examines the social dimension to Mallarmé’s concept of fiction.<sup>27</sup> A far reaching-study of Mallarméan modernity, Thériault highlights Mallarmé’s relationship to post-modern theory, focussing particularly on Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘illusio’, but

---

<sup>27</sup> Patrick Thériault, *Le (Dé)montage de la Fiction: la révélation moderne de Mallarmé* (Paris: Champion, 2010) .

also referencing diverse twentieth-century theoretical approaches to literature including Jean Baudrillard's ideas on simulacra<sup>28</sup> and Deleuze's exploration of Plato's mimesis as a metaphorical nexus in *Logique du sens*.<sup>29</sup> Crucially, Thériault establishes the process of fiction as part of an 'économie du désir',<sup>30</sup> driven by a post-Freudian sense of absence or lack. In relation to this idea, in Chapter Three I shall demonstrate in how *La Dernière Mode*, too, is dynamised by an awareness of absence which pertains to society and to human existence, that is to the perceived 'vide contemporain', (*OCII*, p. 276) and to the poet's view that 'nous ne sommes que de vaines formes de la matière.' (*OCI*, p. 696)

Eric Benoît's *Néant sonore: Mallarmé ou la traversée des paradoxes* also highlights ideas of absence as being at the crux of Mallarmé's idea of fiction. In particular, Benoît sees the idea of fiction as a process of 'virtualisation', arguing that, in *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé sought both to seize the beauty of everyday life, and to ensure that this potential aesthetic value was not lost in the modern age.

C'est bien là le dessin de *La Dernière Mode*: tirer du geste mondain ce qui relève du "mécanisme littéraire", intégrer l'univers mondain et ses fictions à la "fiction" littéraire, ne pas laisser l'univers mondain étouffer notre rapport à l'esthétique (ce qui est le risque de la Mode).<sup>31</sup>

Taking account of Benoît's study, I shall compare this 'mécanisme littéraire' to the aesthetic and social mechanisms of fashion and journalism, arguing that *La Dernière Mode* enabled Mallarmé to experiment with ways of carrying out this 'integration' of the literary and social fictions.

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacres et simulation* (Paris: Galilée, 1981).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969).

<sup>30</sup> *Le (Dé)montage de la Fiction*, pp. 31-116.

<sup>31</sup> *Néant sonore*, p. 150.

## **Fashion in focus: Scholarship on *La Dernière Mode***

Although recent studies of Mallarmé's œuvre reveal a growing interest in *La Dernière Mode*, detailed analyses of the fashion magazine are still few and far between. In the introduction to this chapter, I cited a brief selection of studies focussing on the fashion magazine. Situating this thesis in relation to these existing critical analyses, this section will demonstrate a niche for a study which examines *La Dernière Mode* as a process and explores the implications of this endeavour, both for the formulation of the concept of the 'Livre', and for the approach which Mallarmé would take to literary creation in his later works.

Jean-Pierre Lecercle's 1989 monograph *Mallarmé et la mode* is currently the only critical study to offer its undivided attention to *La Dernière Mode*. An historian by training, Lecercle begins his study by tracing the events which led to Mallarmé's involvement in the project, providing vital contextual information concerning the practical and financial circumstances surrounding the magazine. In particular, *Mallarmé et la mode* examines the dubious story that a sample issue of *La Dernière Mode*, comprised solely of lithographs and with no text, had appeared a year before the publication of the magazine as we know it. He also presents factual details such as the number of copies produced and explores the magazine's financial instability. Lecercle combines this historiographical approach with close textual analysis, opening up the question of whether the periodical should be viewed simply as a source of income or as a literary project. *Mallarmé et la mode* begins from the premise that the magazine was a journalistic endeavour, distinct from the pursuit of the 'Livre', and part of a radically different process of creation: 'Le Livre supposait la

“*disparition élocutoire du poète*”; la revue, sa multiplication.’<sup>32</sup> With this premise in mind,

Lecerclé requires his reader to:

Accepte[r] pleinement les quelques principes mallarméens sur lesquels nous nous appuyons, ainsi que leurs conséquences, dont l’une, non des moindres, est l’éviction du poète Mallarmé; qu’il est donc tout prêt d’accepter *La Dernière Mode* comme un journal, et non comme un poème.<sup>33</sup>

Characterizing *La Dernière Mode* as an attempt on Mallarmé’s part to distance himself from the project of the ‘Livre’, that ‘despotique bouquin’ (*OCII*, p. 789) whose impossibility was such a source of anguish for the poet, Lecerclé emphasizes the ever-present preoccupation with the ideal book. Ultimately, this approach to *La Dernière Mode* reveals Mallarmé to be incapable of distancing himself completely from the task of the ‘Livre’; this point of view provides a fitting starting point for my own study of the magazine and its role in the context of the poet’s œuvre. However, in contrast to Lecerclé, who devotes his study to the tensions between *La Dernière Mode* and Mallarmé’s poetic project, my thesis will consider the magazine as an arena for experimenting with processes of symbolism and linguistic techniques which recur again and again in Mallarmé’s poetic œuvre, and are alluded to in his theoretical writings. Although my thematic and linguistic methodology is quite different from Lecerclé’s, the detailed historical research into the conditions of the magazine’s production, undertaken in *Mallarmé et la mode* will serve as an important reference point, informing my research and contributing to establishing the context of *La Dernière Mode*, which will be necessary to the formulation and development of my argument.

Lecerclé’s monograph on *La Dernière Mode* can be placed alongside Roger Dragonetti’s *Un fantôme dans le kiosque*, published in 1992, and Peter Brown’s *Mallarmé et l’écriture*

---

<sup>32</sup> *Mallarmé et la mode*, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59.

*en mode mineur*,<sup>34</sup> which appeared in 1998. Both of these studies consider Mallarmé's 'minor', circumstantial or 'alimentary' works, exploring the status of these lesser-known parts of the Mallarméan corpus. Peter Brown's study deserves mention here as, although it does not have particular relevance to this thesis, it is unusual in making the case for seeing these alimentary texts as ironising the quest for the ideal and the project of the 'Livre'. This provides an important starting point for a detailed analysis of the dynamic relationship between Mallarmé's 'major' and 'minor' works.

Roger Dragonetti's *Un Fantôme dans le kiosque: Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien* serves as a particularly important touchpoint for this thesis. A key critical text which places particular emphasis on *La Dernière Mode*, Dragonetti's study seeks to rehabilitate the 'œuvres alimentaires', through a detailed, though often overly-imaginative, examination of *La Dernière Mode*, alongside the poet's correspondence and the two pedagogical works *Les Mots anglais* and *Les Dieux antiques*.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to Lecercle, Dragonetti argues that the magazine is itself, a portion of the elusive 'Livre', rather than a distraction from this oppressive ideal. Dragonetti's understanding of the magazine's connection to the poetic project of the 'Livre' is particularly pertinent to my own study; although I do not suggest that in writing *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé set out to produce this ideal work, I nevertheless hold that the fashion magazine did provide an arena in which Mallarmé could test out approaches and literary techniques which recur throughout his poetic œuvre, and are alluded to in his theoretical writings, including the 'Notes en vue du Livre'

---

<sup>34</sup> Peter Brown, *Mallarmé et l'écriture en mode mineur* (Paris: Lettres Modernes Minard, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> I use the term 'pedagogoical' as I suggest that it is not strictly correct to group *La Dernière Mode* with *Les Dieux antiques* and *Les Mots anglais* as 'œuvres alimentaires'. In his 1885 letter to Paul Verlaine, often referred to as the 'Autobiographie', Mallarmé makes a clear distinction between the fashion magazine and these two 'besognes propres dont il ne sied pas parler'. While the fashion magazine might be seen as a concession to pleasure, as well as to necessity, *Les Dieux antiques* and *Les Mots anglais* were financially motivated endeavours, undertaken 'dans des moments de gêne ou pour acheter de ruineux canots.' *OCII*, p. 789.

Although Dragonetti's study is creative and often well-argued, a number of more recent critics, including Damian Catani, have noted significant inaccuracies in *Un Fantôme dans le kiosque*. Dragonetti's spirited and valuable study overlooks the rigorous historiographical work into the magazine's circulation undertaken three years previously by Jean-Pierre Lecercle. *Un Fantôme dans le kiosque* proceeds from the notion that *La Dernière Mode* was a frivolous and purely social endeavour, not actually circulated, but simply given away for the entertainment of friends and family. While, no doubt, Mallarmé did furnish select companions with copies of the magazine, and his personal correspondence reveals his friends' appreciation of the publication,<sup>36</sup> the financial and commercial concerns of the magazine were very real, as letters to Wendelen and his wife attest. Lecercle and Dragonetti's distinctly different approaches highlight a fundamental yet dynamic tension between the fashion magazine and the project of the 'Livre', which will be explored in this thesis.

Already mentioned, one of the most exciting and unusual of the post-1998 wave of works on Mallarmé and his involvement with the socio-political context of his time, is Damian Catani's 2003 book *The Poet in Society: Art, Consumerism and Politics in Mallarmé*.<sup>37</sup> Catani devotes a substantial chapter of his study to *La Dernière Mode*, and the magazine forms a focal point of his argument. *The Poet in Society* is particularly helpful in situating the magazine within the socio-political circumstances of Mallarmé's epoch, whilst also offering insight into shifts in the poet's attitude towards society and capitalism. Catani

---

<sup>36</sup> Letters from contemporaries suggest that friends in the poet's literary circle had received copies of the magazine. See, for example, the letter from Luigi Gualdo, cited in the Introduction, which describes the 'mallarmisme [...] délicieux' of the journalistic copy.

<sup>37</sup> Damian Catani, *The Poet in Society: Art, Consumerism, and Politics in Mallarmé* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

explores the implications of Mallarmé's contention that 'tout se résume dans l'Esthétique et l'Economie politique,' (*OCII*, p. 69) seeing this declaration in *La Musique et les lettres* as proof of Mallarmé's acute awareness of the relationship between poetry and society. From this central tenet, he demonstrates how Mallarmé fought against the philistinism inherent in capitalism, exploiting the very mechanism he was reacting against, in order to promote art on a large scale. My thesis too, considers Mallarmé's engagement with society in *La Dernière Mode*, though, in contrast to *The Poet in Society*, the main focus, here, will be on the place of the fashion magazine within the evolution of the Mallarméan aesthetic. This study will thus reference Catani's unique valuable insight into the social and political context of *La Dernière Mode*, which adds depth to the understanding of ways in which these social and economic circumstances might have influenced Mallarmé's approach to the creative process.

To conclude this section, I would like to consider the most recent work relating to *La Dernière Mode*, Barbara Bohac's *Jour partout ainsi qu'il sied: Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien*, which was published in 2012, when this thesis was in the early stages of its own process of evolution.<sup>38</sup> Following the tantalizing glimpse into her perspective on the fashion magazine, seen in the 2006 article 'La Dernière Mode de Mallarmé sous les feux du drame solaire',<sup>39</sup> Bohac's substantial study develops the understanding of Mallarmé's relationship with the everyday, considered by Hélène Stafford, exploring the dynamic of the serious and the futile. Placing particular emphasis on *La Dernière Mode* and the *Vers de circonstance*, Bohac argues that everyday life and the ordinary was a fertile space for symbolism, in Mallarmé's eyes. Bohac thus asserts that the fashion magazine played into

---

<sup>38</sup> Barbara Bohac, *Jour partout ainsi qu'il sied : Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Barbara Bohac, 'La Dernière Mode de Mallarmé Sous Les Feux Du Drame Solaire', *Romantisme*, 36 (2006), 129–39 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3406/roman.2006.6465>> [accessed 11/04/2014].

a contemporary interest in the symbolic value of the decorative arts, and that the single-handed creation of *La Dernière Mode* allowed him to explore this world, liberated from the constraints placed upon him by journalistic endeavours for other periodicals, such as the articles on the International Exhibitions earlier on in the 1870s.

Like this thesis, Bohac's study follows a tripartite structure. The first part of *Jouir partout ainsi qu'il sied*, examines and undermines the hierarchical view of literature, which, ultimately, led to the artificial distinction between the 'spiritual' Mallarmé of the *Poésies* and the 'material' Mallarmé of the circumstantial writings. In the second section, she examines the poet's ability to reveal beauty in quotidian objects, establishing the poet's growing interest in the everyday, as a means of bridging the gap between the material and the spiritual, following in the footsteps of Baudelaire. From this conclusion, Bohac goes on to explore the 'poétique du quotidien', through a series of close readings of the *Vers de circonstance*, *Poésies*, and of prose works such as *Igitur*, exploring how everyday objects might serve as a vehicle towards the aesthetic ideal. Bohac's detailed analysis draws together a diverse range of Mallarmé's works, opening up a space for a critical study which focuses more closely on influence of *La Dernière Mode* on the development of Mallarméan poetics.

### **Journal articles**

The number of articles on *La Dernière Mode* published in the last 'quart-dernier de siècle' (*OCII*, p. 332) attest to a newfound interest in the fashion magazine. Discussion of the periodical at conferences and in journals has continued to increase in the new millennium, highlighting the growing emphasis on *La Dernière Mode* within the scope of Mallarmé scholarship. The first notable article to appear on the horizon of studies on Mallarmé and fashion was Anne Marie Kleinert's 1980 article '*La Dernière Mode*: une tentative de

Mallarmé dans la presse féminine’, published in the German-based French studies research journal *Lendemains*,<sup>40</sup> which establishes the fundamental details surrounding the publication of *La Dernière Mode*. Following this initial exploration of Mallarmé’s foray into the world of journalism, all was quiet for some years until the arrival of Lucienne Frappier-Mazur’s article ‘Narcisse travesti: poétique et idéologie dans *La Dernière Mode* de Mallarmé,’<sup>41</sup> which was published in 1986, three years before Jean-Pierre Lecercle’s book *Mallarmé et la mode*. ‘Narcisse Travesti’ reads *La Dernière Mode* as demonstrating a fundamental relationship between poetry and ideology, arguing that the fashion magazine reveals the symbolic function of the feminine subject. This foundational work was soon followed by Mary Lewis Shaw’s 1992 article ‘The Discourse of Fashion: Mallarmé, Barthes, and Literary Criticism,’ which explores Mallarmé and Barthes’s apprehension of the symbolic value of fashion discourse.<sup>42</sup> In 1997, Eric Benoît published an article entitled ‘Fonction symbolique de l’objet dans *La Dernière Mode* de Mallarmé,’<sup>43</sup> which makes a strong case for seeing the fashion magazine as an important artistic endeavour for the poet, emphasizing the symbolic value of objects and accessories within his œuvre. Benoît develops this research in *Mallarmé et le mystère du Livre*, arguing that, in *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé appropriates journalism to project the reader beyond the ‘monde’, opening her eyes to the presence of the aesthetic within the everyday;<sup>44</sup> my thesis will develop the links between the fashion magazine and the ‘Livre’ established by Benoît, showing how, through the feminine press, Mallarmé tests out ways of revealing the ideal which stem from his early writings, and would be taken in new directions in his later work.

---

<sup>40</sup> Anne Marie Kleinert, ‘*La Dernière Mode*: une tentative de Mallarmé dans la presse féminine’, *Lendemains*, 5 (1980), 168 – 171.

<sup>41</sup> Lucienne Frappier-Mazur, ‘Narcisse travesti: poétique et idéologie dans *la Dernière mode* de Mallarmé,’ *French Forum* 7.1 (1986): 41– 57

<sup>42</sup> Mary Lewis Shaw, ‘The Discourse of Fashion: Mallarmé, Barthes, and Literary Criticism,’ *SubStance* 68, 46-60(1992):

<sup>43</sup> Eric Benoît, ‘Fonction symbolique de l’objet dans *La Dernière Mode* de Mallarmé’, *Modernités*, 9, 1997, 99-123.

<sup>44</sup> Eric Benoît, *Mallarmé et le mystère du ‘Livre’* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), pp. 51-52.

The twenty-first century has brought further developments in critical appreciation of *La Dernière Mode* and its role both within the landscape of nineteenth century literature and as part of the Mallarméan corpus. In 2000, Claire Chi-Ah Lyu's article 'Mallarmé as Miss Satin' appeared in *L'Esprit créateur*, as part of a special edition of the journal devoted to the poet's œuvre.<sup>45</sup> Lyu's article begins to establish a link between fashion and poetry in the Mallarméan corpus; this connection is explored in greater depth in her 2006 study *A Sun Within a Sun*. In the second chapter, entitled 'The frivolous other and the authentic self: fashion and poetry,' she establishes *La Dernière Mode* both as an integral part of Mallarmé's œuvre, and yet characterizes the magazine as a work which, paradoxically distinguishes itself by its otherness.<sup>46</sup>

Part of the trend for examining the poet's relationship to capitalism, technology and industrial development in the nineteenth century, Ellen Wayland Smith's 2002 article 'Passing Fashion: Mallarmé and the Future of Poetry in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' considers the modern status of the magazine, looking at the way in which Mallarmé engaged with current modes of printing and media circulation.<sup>47</sup> Drawing on Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*,<sup>48</sup> she offers a reading of *La Dernière Mode* alongside Mallarmé's journalistic writings, demonstrating the poet's fascination with modern modes of mass production and the media. In 2006, Dee Reynolds published an article entitled 'Mallarmé and the Décor of Modern Life', which

---

<sup>45</sup> Claire Lyu, 'Stéphane Mallarmé as Miss Satin: The Texture of Fashion and Poetry', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 40 (2000), 61–71 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/esp.2010.0040>> [accessed 08/12/2013].

<sup>46</sup> Claire Chi-Ah Lyu, *A Sun Within a Sun*, p. 44-45.

<sup>47</sup> Ellen Wayland-Smith, 'Passing Fashion: Mallarme and the Future of Poetry in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *MLN*, 117 (2002), 887–907 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/mln.2002.0068>> [accessed 08/12/2013].

<sup>48</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Random House, 2011), pp.211-244.

explores the poet's interest in everyday objects, viewing the poet's plans for the 'Livre' as evidence of the poet's 'Janus-like 'double postulation' towards the élite (for whom private performances would be reserved) and the masses (to whom paper copies would be distributed).' Reynolds draws on a number of texts to add depth to the view of Mallarmé as being fully engaged with the world of things; her article makes reference to a handful of Mallarmé's lesser known texts, including the *Vers de circonstance*, but emphasizes the pivotal role of *La Dernière Mode*, deeming the magazine to be 'the most notable object of [the] shift in critical opinion'<sup>49</sup> which has challenged traditional views of Mallarmé as the ivory-tower poet. Aligned with Reynolds, this thesis will contend that the fashion magazine was not only an instrumental text in transforming the landscape of Mallarmé studies, but also that its creation marked an important transitional phase within the making of the Mallarméan aesthetic. The fundamental status of the fashion magazine within the poet's aesthetic framework is further reinforced by Roger Pearson's 2004 article 'Mallarmé's Interior Designs' which explores Mallarmé's interest in the world of objects, shedding light on the poet's interest in the decorative arts, evident in *La Dernière Mode* through the contributions of the mysterious Marliani, *tapissier-décorateur*, found in the 'Carnet d'Or' section of the magazine.<sup>50</sup> While the articles cited above combine to make a strong case for understanding the aesthetic value of *La Dernière Mode*, the sheer number of journal articles which make mention of the fashion magazine reveals the body of criticism on the fashion magazine to be sadly fragmented, revealing a systematic failure to acknowledge the vital role which the magazine played in the evolution of Mallarmé's aesthetic. By placing the emphasis on process, this thesis aims to draw together the various aspects of the poet's

---

<sup>49</sup> Dee Reynolds, 'Mallarmé and the Decor of Modern Life', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 42 (2006), 268 – 285 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/fmls/cql014>> [accessed 11/04/2014].

<sup>50</sup> Roger Pearson, 'Mallarmé's Interior Designs', *Romance Studies*, 22 (2004), 3-15.

approach to literary creation, showing *La Dernière Mode* to be a pivotal text within the Mallarméan corpus.

Having identified the need for a study which considers the vital role of *La Dernière Mode* within the poet's career, this thesis offers an original approach to Mallarmé, placing the fashion magazine at the centre of a chronological study of his aesthetic evolution. Taking the three themes of Time, Drama and Fiction, which are key both to the fashion magazine and to Mallarmé's œuvre as a whole, the following three chapters will place the emphasis on language, showing how the vocabulary and rhetoric of the fashion magazine resonate with his verse and prose writings. The thesis will thus contribute to the recent current of scholarship which argues against the view of the poet as obscure or elitist, and challenges the view of Mallarmé as having two conflicting facets to his persona, instead presenting *La Dernière Mode* as part of an organic development in the poet's attitude to literature, language and to the aesthetic value of everyday life. Through close readings and comparative work, it will show how the poet seized elements of social, cultural and technological innovation, using the tools of modern life to establish his own innovative sense of modernity and affirming Mallarmé's own contention that 'tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre.' (*OCII*, p. 224)

## Chapter One

### Time

*‘La pureté absolue sur laquelle le temps pivote.’<sup>1</sup>*

‘J’ai toujours vécu mon âme fixé sur l’horloge’, confides the speaker of *Igitur* in the opening lines of the fragment entitled ‘Vie d’Igitur’ (*OCI*, p. 498). From the moment midnight strikes in this unfinished *conte philosophique* of the 1860s, and throughout his verse and prose writings of the following three decades, Mallarmé’s œuvre reveals a continual preoccupation with ideas of time and temporality. The pivotal role of time in Mallarmé’s aesthetic is evident in the passage from ‘Mimique’, cited as a frontispiece to this thesis; in ‘Mimique’, the present moment of the mime is revealed to be a ‘fiction,’ challenging the veracity of language, perception and, indeed, the existence of the ideal. The mime described in the article is a metaphor for the drama of language, which unfolds in a temporal no-man’s land, ‘entre le désir et l’accomplissement, la perpétration et son

---

<sup>1</sup> *Pour un tombeau* d’Anatole in *OCI*, p. 539.

souvenir: ici devançant, là remémorant, au futur, au passé, *sous une apparence fausse de présent.*' (OCII, p. 178-79) The illusory nature of the present moment described in this 1886 article highlights a conceptual problem with using language to speak of what is happening now, as the present is always already becoming the past.

Fashion and journalism operate according to a similar temporal framework to the mime: both entities are in a continual state of transformation and re-definition, engaged in a futile quest to capture the latest trend, record it in writing, and share it with the fashionable readers, all before the cutting-edge outfit, garment or accessory becomes *passé*. Of course, the fashion journalist is doomed to failure and, in this respect, the process of writing a fashion magazine is much like that of the mime as, seeking to bring news of the latest trends to the reader, the journalist looks back and forth under the pretence of writing in the present. In light of Mallarmé's keen sense of the fleeting, the magazine, which combines the similarly elusive time-frames of fashion and journalism, would seem to be a fertile arena for an exploration of the links between the world, language and time. This chapter will argue that the temporal limitations and opportunities of both fashion and journalism were a particular source of interest to Mallarmé, who had already grappled with the elusive nature of time in *Igitur* and explored ideas of temporality in his early poetry. I will thus make the case for seeing the engagement with the temporal through the project of *La Dernière Mode* as having shaped both Mallarmé's approach to time, leading to the deconstruction of the idea of the present in 'Mimique', and his attempt to abolish time altogether, seen in the experimental poem, *Un Coup de dés*, as the master's pen coincides with the ominous 'toque de minuit'. (OCI, p. 379)

The chapter will begin with a brief assessment of the role of time in Mallarmé's verse and prose poetry, demonstrating the poet's interest in temporality and in the relationship between time and the creative process. It will then go on to explore the temporal conventions governing fashion and journalism in more depth, situating the poet's experiments with time and writing in relation to *La Dernière Mode*. Crucially, in this chapter I will demonstrate that the opposition of the lasting and the fleeting establishes a dualistic temporality, placing the fashion magazine in the midst of two opposing temporal planes. I will thus show *La Dernière Mode* to be based upon an aesthetic of suspension like that described in the passage from 'Mimique'.

### **Poetic time**

References to time and allusions to diurnal or seasonal cycles abound in Mallarmé's verse and prose writings, attesting to the poet's fascination with ways of expressing temporal experience and capturing the moment in language. There are many examples of words and phrases relating to time in the 1887 edition of the *Poésies*, both in early and later poems, as well as in re-worked versions, confirming the poet's continual attempts to situate the speaking subject in the temporal realm. The words 'soir' and 'jour' (either in the singular or the plural) are used frequently, while 'crépuscule' and 'aurore' also recur numerous times. There are also around a dozen references to the seasons in the *Poésies*, including in the title of the 1866 poem, 'Tristesse d'été', which establishes an important link between time and the fluctuations of creative moods. Thus, it is clear that Mallarmé's verse poetry is characterized by a preoccupation with temporal experience.

In Mallarmé's prose poems, times of day and seasons feature prominently. The collected 'Anecdotes ou poèmes' begin with 'Le Phénomène futur', written in the mid-1860s, during the poet's years of crisis, and published in 1875; the opening lines of this poem present an image of seasonal decline, symbolizing the decadent mood of the moment, and invoking the figure of the 'Femme d'autrefois' who embodies the memory of the beauty of bygone days. This is followed by 'Plainte d'automne', first published in 1864 (originally titled 'L'Orgue de barbarie'), and 'Frisson d'hiver', written in the same year, and published in 1867, both of which explore themes of time and seasonal decline. Although the mood in these poems is melancholy, after Mallarmé emerged from his period of crisis, the preoccupation with time remained at the forefront of his aesthetic; following the crisis years, we see a shift in the poet's attitude to time, as he explored alternative ways of capturing the fleeting using the material world as a source of aesthetic inspiration — *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as part of this re-engagement with the world. As is the nature of a fashion magazine, temporal markers are used repeatedly in *La Dernière Mode*, as the columnist characters discuss the season's fashions and pick out appropriate outfits and leisure pursuits for day and night time. References to the seasons or, indeed, the word 'Saison' itself, appear in the first few lines of all but the final two of Madame de Ponty's 'La Mode' columns, while the first paragraphs of all of the 'Chroniques' contain either some mention of calendar months or subtle references to history, which situate the magazine in relation to the past. The lexical field of fashion attests to its status as a time-bound phenomenon, highlighting the potential of the fashion magazine to seize the moment in language.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> In this section I have given a very brief outline of references to times of day and of the year in Mallarmé's verse and prose poetry, showing how these relate to *La Dernière Mode*. In *Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday Life*, Hélène Stafford offers a more detailed survey of temporal markers in Mallarmé's poetry, which serves as a comprehensive investigation of temporality in the poet's œuvre and confirms the fundamental importance of time in his poetics. She notes that 'seasons, times of the day, nouns describing the past, either distant or immediate, are legion: *le jour, le soir, la nuit, le matin, l'éternité, l'été, l'hiver, le*

The emphasis placed on the changing seasons in Mallarmé's poetic œuvre reveals a clear bias towards autumn and winter. The sterility of the winter months is celebrated as the bare, frosty landscapes present a vast and unblemished expanse, offering the potential for renewal and for literary creation; however, winter also brings frustration as the attempt to create is systematically condemned to failure. The poet's experience of winter, then, can be likened to the plight of the swan in 'Le Vièrge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui...' who is unable to take flight, trapped in the 'transparent glacier des vols qui n'ont pas fui'. (*OCII*, p.36) Winter is referred to in four of the 1887 *Poésies*, (in 'Salut', 'Renouveau', 'Le Vièrge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui...' and 'Sur les bois oubliés...'),<sup>3</sup> while summer features three times (in 'Sonnet', 'Prose pour des Esseintes' and 'Tristesse d'Été') and autumn appears twice (in 'L'Azur' and 'Soupir'). Notably, spring is mentioned just once in the *Poésies*, in the first stanza of the 1866 poem, 'Renouveau', where it is presented as a malign force, spiriting away the aesthetic purity of the winter months:

Le printemps maladif a chassé tristement  
L'hiver, saison de l'art serein, l'hiver lucide,  
Et dans mon être à qui le sang morne préside  
L'impuissance s'étire en un long bâillement. (*OCI*, p. 11).

Written in the early part of Mallarmé's years of spiritual crisis, these lines allude to the cycle of sterility and creative energy associated with the changing seasons. The presentation of the seasons in the opening stanza of 'Renouveau' anticipates the discussion

---

*passé, la fin, le siècle*. Mallarmé does indeed refer to quite ordinary temporal realities by using ordinary substantives prolifically.' Based on this research, Stafford argues that Mallarmé's poetry is firmly rooted in the everyday and engaged with the experience of time. *Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday life*, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> The first three of these poems were re-worked for publication in the 1888 *Anthologie des poètes français du XIXe siècle*. This particular selection of poems creates the impression of a poet deeply interested in the aesthetic value of seasonality, emphasizing his focus on winter as a period of unfulfilled creative potential.

of the festive atmosphere of December and January in Ix's final 'Chronique' from the issue dated 20 December 1874:

L'hiver, le long hiver de décembre et de janvier n'a pas, comme aux mois retenant l'automne ou annonçant le printemps, quelque éclaircie d'un jour, bleue et lumineuse, obtenue des nuées: ses heures de fête, il les demandera aux cieus chrétiens et supérieurs, et à l'almanach (*OCII*, p. 641).

There is a striking similarity between the syntactical structure of the first line of this column and that of the second line of the stanza from 'Renouveau', cited above; in both, the repetition of the word 'hiver' causes the reader to linger on winter, conjuring up an image of the season in her mind's eye as if to prolong the season and its creative potentiality in language. However, while in 'Renouveau' time passes too quickly, and spring is cast as a bleak time for the poet, in this passage from *La Dernière Mode* Mallarmé, dressed-up as Ix, celebrates the promise of the spring which, like the end of autumn brings with it the possibility of 'quelque éclaircie d'un jour, bleue et lumineuse, obtenue des nuées'. (*OCII*, p. 641).

Published in 1866, the year in which Mallarmé's correspondence attests to the onset of his spiritual crisis, 'Renouveau' offers a gloomy picture of the experience of passing time, as the poet must confront the impossibility of seizing the potentiality of these 'cruels hivers,' (*OCI*, p. 678) which stretch out before him 'en un long bâillement.'<sup>4</sup> These opening lines of Ix's 'Chronique', in the final issue of *La Dernière Mode*, on the other hand, show the renewed possibilities of the interaction between the spiritual and the social environments. The winter months bring two modes of celebration: one of its festivals, Christmas, looks to religion for its inspiration; the other, New Year, is a social construct and is rooted in the

---

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in his *Introduction à la psychanalyse de Mallarmé*, Charles Mauron argues that it was precisely during the Spring of 1866 that the poet began to experience the symptoms of the deep depression which would plague him for the remainder of the decade, showing how spring brings with it an awareness of the impossibility of reaching the ideal in poetry. Cf. Charles Mauron, *Introduction à la psychanalyse de Mallarmé* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1950), p. 58.

‘almanach’, a diary of events and festivities including seasonal, meteorological and astrological dates.<sup>5</sup> Both ‘Renouveau’ and the ‘Chronique’ establish a dual temporality: in the poem, the clarity and possibilities of winter are offset against the destructiveness of the spring, while in *La Dernière Mode*, secular time is pitted against spiritual time, which is not subject to the same limitations of ephemerality and decay. I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* shows Mallarmé’s movement away from the theme of nature, the melancholy tone of Parnasse poetry, and the ‘ennui’ demonstrated in ‘Renouveau,’ towards a poetics which focuses on the self-reflexivity of language, aspiring to atemporality.

Although Mallarmé’s later verse poetry is serious and explores the complexity of language in often mystifying ways, his later poetics also has an exuberant and playful side, embracing the circumstantial and material both as part of the quest for the ‘Livre’ and for the sheer joy of linguistic experimentation. Despite this more optimistic mood, even his more ludic poetry shows a continued awareness of the relentless march of time. In order to demonstrate how Mallarmé’s approach to time evolved through his later poetry, I would now like to look to the 1890s, considering one of Mallarmé’s lesser known works, the *Vers de circonstance*. Like *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé’s circumstantial writings make use of everyday events and material objects as a starting point for literary creation. These short verses, which include the poems written on boxes of glacé fruits and given to friends as gifts, as well as encompassing the ‘Recréations postales’ and other short dedicatory poems, are often cited as evidence of Mallarmé’s engagement with everyday life and with the physical world, undermining the view of Mallarmé as the ‘ivory tower poet’.<sup>6</sup> However, I

---

<sup>5</sup> ‘almanac, n.’, *OED Online*, < <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/5564?redirectedFrom=almanach#eid> > [accessed 11/04/2014].

<sup>6</sup> Marian Zwerling Sugano observes that ‘in their circulation the *Vers de circonstance* attest to an extraordinary sociability, a de-solemnizing and democratizing of literature, making poetry a suitable vehicle for even the most trivial of circumstances.’ Marian Zwerling Sugano, *The Poetics of the Occasion: Mallarmé and the Poetry of Circumstance* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 196.

argue that these poetic gifts are not just charming examples of the beauty to be found in the material world, nor merely a celebration of the aesthetic value of the social practice of exchanging New Year's gifts; through the language of these short poems, the *Vers de circonstance* reveal a change in Mallarmé's attitude to time, the early signs of which can be seen in *La Dernière Mode*. The presentation of time in the 'Dons de fruits glacés au nouvel an', dating back to the mid to late 1890s, can usefully be compared to that of Ix's final 'Chronique de Paris', showing Mallarmé's growing interest in the symbolic value of social and cultural practices associated with Christmas and the New Year, and their relationship to the problem of seizing and representing time in language.

Having established the peculiar temporality of winter, which combines spiritual and secular celebrations, Ix goes on to discuss some of the rituals and cultural practices associated with the festive season, starting with a discussion of the traditions associated with this time of year:

Emblème de ce désir qui nous fait trouver un goût délicieux à toute clarté, ce fruit, les oranges, par tas à la porte des boutiques ou le long des rues promené, d'abord tache de splendeur la brume monotone: son apparition classique remémore à l'esprit de tout Parisien une date, Noël, et une autre date, le Nouvel An. Les deux solennités aussitôt choisissent, pour y installer leur culte distinct, des vitrines différentes, quoique ornées également pour la bouche et pour les yeux. (*OCII*, p. 641)

The oranges piled up in shop doorways and lining the streets are presented as symbolic objects, evoking the celebratory atmosphere of the two juxtaposed festivals of Christmas and New Year, the one spiritual, the other secular. These two temporal planes are paralleled by the dual appeal of the oranges to the senses of touch and taste, confirming their value as consumable goods and symbolic objects.<sup>7</sup> The oranges associated with Christmas are

---

Hélène Stafford, meanwhile, argues that 'one is entitled to claim with some confidence that the ordinary events of daily life provided the writer with a wealth of material for the wordplay, amusement and ingenuity of the *Vers de circonstance* [...]' *Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday Life*, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> Damian Catani reads this passage as a negative reflection on the consumerist society, pointing out that the 'symbolic value of the orange has been overshadowed by commercialisation.' *The Poet in Society*, pp. 98-

subject to decay but, by being displayed in the shop windows, they gain lasting value as aesthetic objects. Ix's exploration of the image of fruit as a Christmas gift and its relevance to time and temporality can be seen as part of a poetic schema by which Mallarmé sought ways of capturing the aesthetic value of everyday objects and consumable goods, as seen in the 'Dons de fruits glacés au Nouvel an'.

The very idea of the 'glacé fruit' embodies the paradox of the ephemeral and the eternal as the fruit, subject to decay, is preserved and given a lasting existence. This festive gift itself can thus be seen as a metaphor for the creative process through which fleeting moments are crystallized in the mind of the reader. Written during the transitional period of the Christmas and New Year holidays, the presentation of time in the 'Dons de fruits glacés au nouvel an' echoes that in the opening lines of Ix's eighth 'Chronique', offsetting the temporality of the festive season against that of everyday life. Two of these short verses, both written in 1898, offer a sombre reminder of the fleeting nature of the present:

53: Chaque gracieuseté qu'on fit  
Se change l'hiver en fruit confit.

54: Le Temps  
      nous y succombons  
Sans l'amitié pour revivre  
Ne glace que ces bonbons  
A son plumage de givre. (*OCI*, p. 294-95)

The first of these stanzas presents the ritual of exchanging gifts as bringing about a change of state, crystallizing the mood of friendship and intimacy associated with the festive season. The glacé fruits and the poem, for which the sweets are both a vehicle and a symbol, prolong the festive spirit beyond the limited time-frame of the Christmas period, not only

---

99. However, I argue that the appropriation of the orange as a festive symbol does not, necessarily, undermine its aesthetic value. Rather, like the fashion magazine and, indeed, the 'Livre' itself, the orange represents a dynamic relationship between symbolism and the commercial environment in which each benefits the other, as shall be seen in the discussion of perfume advertising in Chapter Three.

physically but also in language. The metaphorical presentation of the frost, both in the outside world and as a sugary coating on these preserved fruits, as a ‘plumage’ echoes the ‘[...] lac dur oublié que hante sous le givre | Le transparent glacier des vols qui n’ont pas fui’ (*OCI*, p. 96) in ‘Le Vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd’hui’ of 1887, which shows the potential for writing to transcend the fleeting. However, like the failed flight of the swan, the attempt to prolong the ephemeral fruit is doomed to failure, as the personification of time looms ominously over the remainder of the stanza; this poetic gift thus offers an ‘apparence fausse de présent’ as time will pass and the friendship will end in death. The heightened sense of passing time seen in these two stanzas of the *Vers de circonstance* was to become all the more poignant, as they would be exchanged upon the poet’s final New Year, before his death in September 1898.

### **Journalistic time**

Thus far, we have established that matters of time and temporality are an important theme in Mallarmé’s poetry, and explored the relationship between time and the creative process in *La Dernière Mode*. This section will examine the temporality of journalism and its relevance to the development of Mallarmé’s aesthetic framework, arguing that the temporal conventions of journalism played a key role in attracting the poet to the project of the magazine, and had a significant impact on the way in which time is presented in his later works. In the previous section, we saw the beginnings of a dualistic structure at work in Mallarmé’s œuvre, which offsets a movement towards mortality against the possibility of crystallizing the moment, be this by the symbolic exchange of glacé fruits at New Year or through the process of writing a poem. This section will show that the journalistic form, too, lends itself to a dualistic understanding of time, creating the ideal circumstances for

exploring the opposition between the lasting and the fleeting, which I contend is intrinsic to Mallarméan poetics.

Journalism, and in particular fashion journalism, has a number of formal conventions which, I suggest, attracted Mallarmé to the fashion magazine as a genre. The journalistic form offered the poet the opportunity to experiment with different voices, it also allowed him to test out the impact of various typefaces and page layouts; however, perhaps the most important aspect of journalism as far as Mallarmé was concerned, and the one I wish to explore in more depth here, is its relationship to time. Time is necessarily a major concern in the print media: the majority of different forms of journalistic writing, from fashion magazines to politically-orientated newspapers, from literary revues to racing bulletins are all rooted in time by the mere fact of having the date of publication on the front cover. In the case of *La Dernière Mode*, the exact date appears four times in as many pages, printed on the outer cover, the contents page, the inner cover and at the top of the 'La Mode' column; as if to add an additional reminder of the magazine's position at the cutting-edge of contemporary fashion and commercial matters, the 'Correspondance avec les abonnées' is also marked with the date.

The many references to the date of publication, both on the cover of *La Dernière Mode* and within its pages, represent an attempt to situate the text in relation to the measurable temporality of everyday life; paradoxically, however, this journalistic practice draws attention to the practical and structural problems which time poses for the journalist. The cover date of the specimen issue is 6 September 1874 but, as the summary of the magazine explains, it was, in fact, published a month earlier. The same features were then re-published the following month with additional sections such as correspondence with readers and a column offering advice on the education of children, attributed to Madame

de Ponty. The temporal conditions surrounding the writing and publication of the fashion magazine are extremely complex and emphasize the difficulty of situating the writing act in time, as the dates printed on the magazine were unlikely to correspond to the actual date of reading. Cultural theorist Benedict Anderson describes the ‘date on the top of the newspapers’ as emblematic of ‘the steady, onward clocking of homogenous, empty time. Within that time ‘the world’ ambles sturdily ahead.’<sup>8</sup> Referring to Walter Benjamin’s concept of ‘homogenous empty time,’<sup>9</sup> Anderson’s observation reveals how journalism accentuates the experience of passing time and the ephemerality of its own form, as it is always already on the cusp of becoming yesterday’s news. In the case of the specimen issue, the gulf between the time of writing and that of reception is especially large as those reading the specimen issue of *La Dernière Mode* would have had to wait almost six weeks for the next installment of the magazine, which would not reach subscribers until 20 September 1874.

*La Dernière Mode*’s publication timetable is carefully devised to reconcile the time of reading with that of everyday life and the leisure opportunities it offered. In the sixth issue of the magazine, the editor character, Marasquin (another of Mallarmé’s alter egos) explains the decision to publish the magazine not on the first and fifteenth days of the month, like other similar periodicals, but rather on the first and third Sundays:

Attendre notre Publication à ce jour des réunions de famille ou tout au moins du loisir, au lieu d’être surpris par elle à un moment inopportun de la semaine: voilà l’agrément que nous procurons à nos Lectrices, particulièrement celles de département. (*OCII*, p. 610)

---

<sup>8</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> In ‘Theses on the Concept of History’ Walter Benjamin establishes two types of time — ‘homogenous empty time’, which can be equated with time as measured by clocks and calendars, and *Jetztzeit*, translated as ‘now-time’. I suggest that the two temporal planes — that of calendar time and ‘festive’ time — which will be established in this chapter can be likened to ‘homogenous empty time’ and the ‘*Jetztzeit*’ respectively. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften, Selected Writings, Vol IV, 1938 - 1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 395.

Time, it seems, is one of the commodities celebrated by the magazine, and Marasquin and his imaginary colleagues are determined that their readers should have as much of it as possible in order to enjoy the publication. These lines reveal a desire to reconcile the act of reading with the rhythm of daily life, giving readers the opportunity to read the magazine on Sundays, a day of leisure, to be spent with the family. Attentive to the needs of his readers, and sympathetic to their schedules, the magazine's fictitious editor thus attempts to make the magazine compatible with the temporality of real life, that is the time of 'le monde' and 'la famille'. The adjective 'inopportun', meaning 'to arrive at the wrong moment',<sup>10</sup> suggests a certain degree of tension between these two temporal planes; aiming to reconcile this difference, the magazine thus reveals a desire to eliminate chance, in order to ensure that the magazine appears at a favourable moment. The keen awareness of time and chance prefigures Mallarmé's attempt to abolish 'le hasard' through the writing practice, alluded to in 'Crise de vers'<sup>11</sup> and enacted in *Un Coup de dés*.

The attempt to resolve the conflict between calendar time and the social experience of time by altering the magazine's publication schedule does not prove entirely successful. Marasquin points out that there is a practical problem with distributing *La Dernière Mode* bi-monthly on Sundays as, of course, several times a year there will be three Sundays a month rather than two, forcing the reader to wait an extra week for the next instalment of the magazine. In order to fill this time lapse, readers are treated to a poem by Catulle Mendès, set to music with a piano accompaniment: 'La Livraison défraîchie, quant à l'interêt du moins, reste alors longtemps sur la table du salon: or, qu'elle demeure au piano.'

---

<sup>10</sup> 'inopportun, -une adj. [En parlant d'un événement] Qui est mal venu dans les circonstances.', *TLFi* <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/advanced.exe?8;s=3242096265>> [accessed 05/04/2014].

<sup>11</sup> In 'Crise de Vers', Mallarmé notes that 'une ordonnance du livre de vers poind innée ou partout, élimine le hasard.' *OCII*, p. 211.

(*OCH*, p. 610) With the performative act of reading complete, the magazine may become obsolete and the events and fashions it describes outdated; the word ‘défraîchi’ serves to emphasize the ephemerality of the magazine, which soon loses its novelty and topical relevance.<sup>12</sup> However, by including a musical score, the magazine offers another possible mode of performing the text, prolonging the lifespan of the current issue by switching from the ephemerality of fashion and journalism to the lasting value of poetry and song. The image of the open magazine on the piano echoes the ‘texte ouvert que présente la table’, (*OCH*, p. 484) in the poet’s drafts of *Igitur*, which capture the plenitude of midnight and offer the possibility of escaping from the onward march of time, through reading.

The fashion magazine explores different ways of prolonging the reading process and preventing the magazine from succumbing to the effects of passing time. Musical scores were often incorporated into fashion magazines in the nineteenth century; Mallarmé’s use of this practice in *La Dernière Mode* constitutes an experiment with the relationship between music and text. This, I contend, anticipates the poet’s attempt to abolish time and chance through the simultaneous experience of reading offered by the random configuration of *Un Coup de dés*, through a synthesis of music and text. Mallarmé explains the effect of this construction in the preface to the 1897 edition of the text, published in the journal ‘Cosmopolis’:

L’avantage, si j’ai droit à le dire, littéraire, de cette distance copiée qui mentalement sépare des groupes de mots ou les mots entre eux, semble d’accélérer tantôt et de ralentir le mouvement, le scandant, l’intimant même selon une vision simultanée de la Page [...] Ajouter que de cet emploi à nu de la pensée avec retraits, prolongements, fuites, ou son dessin même, résulte, pour qui veut lire à haute voix, une partition. (*OCH*, p. 391)

---

<sup>12</sup> In spite of this drive towards obsolescence, Mallarmé highlights the symbolic value of the language of fashion and its lasting value in his 1885 Autobiographical letter to Paul Verlaine, in which he notes that the copies of the magazine ‘servent encore quand je les dévêts de leur poussière à me faire longtemps rêver’. *OCH*, p. 789.

The layout and typography of *Un Coup de dés* permits the pure engagement of thought, as the acceleration and slowing of temporal experience allowed by the configuration of the words on the page, and the ability to see all fragmented lines simultaneously creates a symphonic effect:

Aujourd'hui ou sans présumer de l'avenir qui sortira d'ici, rien ou presque un art, reconnaissons aisément que la tentative participe, avec imprévu, de poursuites particulières et chères à notre temps, le vers libre et le poème en prose. Leur réunion s'accomplit sous une influence, je sais, étrangère, celle de la Musique entendue au concert; on en retrouve plusieurs moyens m'ayant semblé appartenir aux Lettres, je les reprends. Le genre, que c'en devienne un comme la symphonie, peu à peu, à côté du chant personnel [...] (*OCI*, p. 392)

In this sixth issue of the fashion magazine, the fusion of music and text transforms the experience of time in a bid to overcome the extended wait for the next issue, caused by the fifth Sunday, and to mask the emptiness of this protracted period of anticipation. In the magazine there is still a clear disjunction between words and music, as the reader is encouraged to shift to a completely different mode of performance once she has exhausted the text, and lost interest in the fashions which have now become yesterday's news. The synthesis of music and language would be developed in *Un Coup de dés*, where the musicality comes from the text itself, as the typography and configuration of the words on the page create a polyphonic effect, which is not subject to the ordinary laws of time. In the 'Notes en vue du Livre', Mallarmé writes that 'Le livre supprime le temps / cendres' (*OCI*, p. 563). I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as an early experiment with ways in which music and text might be fused in order to 'suppress' the limitations placed on the aesthetic experience by time, given that reading, especially reading journalism, is generally a temporal act. The desire to ensure that the magazine does not arrive at 'un moment inopportun', and the attempt to fill the three week gap between issues can be seen as part of an approach to time which evolved from the aesthetic potential of the 'livre

ouvert' in *Igitur* and led to the attempt to abolish 'le hasard' through the symphonic construction of *Un Coup de dés*.

## **Manipulating time**

Although the relationship between writing and temporal experience in *Un Coup de dés* is far more complex than that of the fashion magazine, games with time and temporality are a key feature of *La Dernière Mode*. In the magazine, places, dates and the signatures of the columnist characters all serve to create a sense of authenticity and yet, paradoxically, they are often tools for deception. This section will show how *La Dernière Mode* makes use of calendar dates and temporal markers to create the illusion of writing in the present, moving towards a temporal mechanism which prefigures that of 'Mimique' and is characteristic of Mallarmé's poetics.

The columns in *La Dernière Mode* were likely to have been written some weeks prior to the initial publication of the magazine, meaning that the information they contain must logically be either out of date, or based upon speculation. However, each instalment of the 'La Mode' column bears the date and place of publication (always Paris), rather than that of writing; the technique of forward-dating is a trick which masks the discrepancy between the time of reading and the time of writing. This practice creates the impression that Mallarmé's journalistic persona, Madame de Ponty, is writing on the same day that the subscriber receives her copy of the magazine. The creative processes of writing and reading thus appear to be taking place simultaneously, as if the columnist character is in dialogue with her reader. By referring to calendar dates and situating the column both temporally and geographically, the act of writing the periodical establishes an 'apparence fausse de présent', but also creates the illusion of 'présence', suggesting that the processes of reading

and writing are mutually dependent performative acts, referring back and forth in time in a dynamic akin to that described in the lines from 'Mimique' cited as a frontispiece to this thesis.

Although the practice of marking the 'La Mode' column with the date of publication rather than that of writing is subtle enough to pass unnoticed, the reader is suddenly alerted to the magazine's deceptive presentation of time in the seventh issue, when Madame de Ponty erroneously dates her column 26 December, rather than 6 December. This apparently innocent mistake has a disorientating effect, projecting the reader from the period of advent into the midst of the festive season, in the precarious temporal no-man's land between Christmas and the New Year. After all, as Ix notes, the festive season is a strange period between these two celebrations, one religious, one secular, in which the normal laws of temporality do not apply. The error is also rather ominous as *La Dernière Mode* was declared bankrupt following the publication of the eighth issue, on 20 December, and ceased circulation for a brief period, before the editorial role was passed to the Baronne de Lomaria in January 1875. As it happens, in misdating her column of the magazine, Madame de Ponty projects her column into a future which would never actually be seen or reported through the eyes of the columnist characters, but allows their haunting presence to linger beyond the final issue. Thus, it becomes clear that temporal manipulation, whether deliberate or not, serves to transform the perception of time in the fashion magazine; projecting the reader into the future, the journalistic practice of writing 'au jour le jour' (*OCII*, p. 520 / 610) is revealed to be an illusion.

Whether innocent or not, the inaccurate date provides Madame de Ponty with a pretext for developing a dialogue with her readers, fusing the world of the reader with that of the

columnist characters, which is contained within the text. In the following instalment of *La Dernière Mode*, the ‘Correspondence avec les abonnées’ responds to the observations of a perceptive imaginary reader who notices the erroneous date on the penultimate issue:

Mme de V... à Rome – Très vraie chère Abonnée, votre observation, qui prouve que, si vous lisez le *Courrier de Modes* jusqu’à la dernière ligne, vous n’en commencez pas moins par la première. Madame de Ponty confesse que c’est en songeant à tout autre chose qu’elle a daté du lendemain de Noël un article écrit dans les premiers jours de décembre: il fallait bien, au lieu du 26 lire le 6. (*OCII*, p. 652)

Carrying discussion of the mistake across into the next issue reinforces the sense of continuity between the issues of the magazine, creating a narrative which bridges the temporal gulf that separates one issue from the next. The excuse that Madame de Ponty was thinking about something else when she wrote the column is significant, implying that the columnist character is so involved in speculating on the coming celebrations that she has almost managed to convince herself that she has already arrived in the midst of the festive season. Of course, this is all part of an elaborate pretence, for the columnist characters do not exist, and this fallibility is nothing more than an ‘effet de réel.’<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the fact that the columnist character’s name contains the word ‘pont’ suggests her status as an intermediary, whose words bridge the divide between past and future, situating her column in the imaginary, in-between world of the present. The use of the verb ‘songer’, which can mean both ‘consider/think of’ or ‘to dream’, suggests the role of the imagination in the creative process. The act of writing brings about a shift from chronological time, with its inability to seize the present, into the dream-like world of the

---

<sup>13</sup> Roland Barthes uses the term ‘effet de réel’ to refer to the technique of offering specific details within the context of a fictional narrative, with a view to enhancing its realistic nature. Such ‘notation[s] insignifiante[s]’ are self-referential, rather than referring to material objects or phenomena outside the text. The case of Madame de Ponty’s erroneous date marking might seem a little more complex, as the date on the columns refers outside the text, to the world of calendar time; however, given that the magazine is, in any case, dated ahead of time, and the fact that this date forms part of the fiction of *La Dernière Mode*, I suggest that the erroneous date can be seen as a device to create an ‘effet de réel’. Roland Barthes, ‘L’effet de réel’, *Communications*, 11, 1968, 84-89, <[http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/comm\\_0588-8018\\_1968\\_num\\_11\\_1\\_1158](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/comm_0588-8018_1968_num_11_1_1158)> [accessed 12/04/2014].

future, which is released from the strictures of calendar time, undermining the validity of the present.

The deconstruction of the concept of the present seen in the fashion magazine can be understood as a precursor to Mallarmé's ideas on the nature of writing and its relationship with time. Later on in his poetic career, in the 1895 article 'L'Action restreinte', Mallarmé would deny the existence of the present altogether, declaring that

[...] il n'est pas de Présent, non — un présent n'existe pas... Faute que se déclare la Foule, faute — de tout. Mal informé celui qui se crierait son propre contemporain, désertant, usurpant, avec impudence égale, quand du passé cessa et que tarde un futur ou que les deux se remmêlent perplexement en vue de masquer l'écart. (*OCII*, p. 217)

In these lines, the poet reveals his understanding of the present moment as a construct which exists only where there is a reader to bring it to life; the processes of reading and writing combine to mask the gulf between past and future. Just as the journalistic form hovers uncomfortably between anticipation and reflection, 'ici devançant, là mémorant', like the mime described in 'Mimique', so in the world, past and future 'se remmêlent perplexement', revealing the present to be nothing but a boundary between what will be and what has been. In the next paragraph of 'L'Action restreinte' Mallarmé shuns the 'premier-Paris chargés de divulguer une foi en le quotidien néant' (*OCII*, p. 217). I suggest that writing *La Dernière Mode* heightened Mallarmé's awareness of the vacuity of this 'quotidien néant', leading to the need to manipulate the reader's perception of time and mask the divide between past and future. (*OCII*, p. 217)

**'Chronique, mais sans passé?' — Journalism and History**

In the initial issue of the magazine, both Ix and Madame de Ponty begin their contributions with an attempt to situate their column in time and assert their existence within the same temporal landscape as the reader. This emphasizes the inherent problems of temporality for the journalist and, in particular, for the fashion journalist, who must keep readers up-to-speed with the latest trends. The columnist characters also reveal an acute sense of the historical value of their writing, which will serve as a record of this illusory present for future generations. This section will examine Mallarmé's exploration of the historical potential of the present, which begins in the first lines of Ix's initial column, and is then taken up by Madame de Ponty in subsequent issues. I will make the case for seeing *La Dernière Mode* as having influenced Mallarmé's understanding of writing as masking the non-existence of the present, by exploring the potential of writing as a future-oriented act.

The opening lines of Ix's first column question the very nature of the journalistic form: 'Chronique: mais sans passé? [...] car nous arrivons avec notre seul avenir, inconnu' (*OCH*, p. 495). Beginning with a rhetorical question, Ix invites readers to reflect on the meaning and etymological basis of the word 'Chronique,' which finds its classical roots in temporality. A brief look at the term in the *Littre* dictionary highlights the importance of time and chronology within the definition of the 'Chronique':<sup>14</sup>

1. Annales selon l'ordre des temps, par opposition à histoire où les faits sont étudiés dans leurs causes et leurs suites. [...]
2. *Fig.* La chronique, les chroniques, ce qui se débite de petites nouvelles courantes. [...]

Aujourd'hui, dans les journaux, partie où l'on raconte les principaux bruits de ville; et chronique politique, partie où l'on rapporte succinctement les nouvelles politiques. Chronique théâtrale. Chronique musicale.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Charles Chassé highlights Mallarmé's interest in Emile Littré's dictionary, published by Hachette in 4 volumes, between 1873 and 1877. Cf. Charles Chassé, 'Mallarmé et Littré' in *Les Clefs de Mallarmé* (Paris: Aubier, 1954), pp. 36 – 42.

<sup>15</sup> "'Chronique" subst. fem.', *Littre* < <http://www.littre.org/definition/chronique> > [accessed 23/03/2014].

The first of these definitions confirms the status of a ‘Chronique’ as a record which studies events in chronological order, rather than examining the causal link between them. The etymology of the term reveals that the form of the ‘Chronique’ is also closely bound-up with the idea of the book, deriving from the Greek ‘*biblia khronikos*’, meaning ‘(books) of time’, via the Latin ‘*chronica*’, pertaining to time, or the books of annals.<sup>16</sup> The emphasis placed on the true meaning of the word ‘Chronique’ and its place within the unfolding of historical events reinforces the importance of time and temporal concerns as a definitive feature of the magazine. I contend that this challenging of the lexis of journalism in Ix’s column can be read as part of Mallarmé’s growing interest in philology and etymology, which would be demonstrated explicitly in *Les Mots anglais*, most probably begun in 1875.<sup>17</sup>

In challenging the nature of a ‘Chronique’ without a past, Ix raises important questions about the temporality of journalism. His rhetorical question emphasizes the historical dimension of the journalistic form, confirming the status of the periodical as a text which not only looks back to the past, but also to the future, serving as a record of current events for generations to come. This mechanism anticipates the ‘utopian future perfect’<sup>18</sup> of *Un Coup de dés* in which ‘RIEN N’AURA EU LIEU QUE LE LIEU’. (*OCI*, p. 385) Offering

---

<sup>16</sup> ‘Chronicle (n.)’, *Etymonline*

<[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=chronicle&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=chronicle&allowed_in_frame=0)> [accessed 03/03/2014]

<sup>17</sup> *Les Mots anglais* was one of Mallarmé’s so-called ‘œuvres alimentaires’, though I suggest that the profound interest in linguistics and etymology, and particularly the fascination with the English language (anticipated by the supposedly controversial decision to bring ‘une Anglaise’ into the cast of columnist characters in the fourth issue of the magazine), shows *La Dernière Mode* to have inspired, if not the content of *Les Mots anglais*, then at least an additional degree of enthusiasm for the philological project. In his edition of Mallarmé’s complete works, Bertrand Marchal notes that *Les Mots anglais* was most likely written in the summer of 1875, and was influenced, amongst other texts, by John Earle’s *The Philology of the English Tongue*, published in 1873, and Chambers’ *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, which appeared in 1874. It is likely, therefore, that Mallarmé was reading these works during the latter half of 1874, when writing the copy for *La Dernière Mode*. Cf. Bertrand Marchal, ‘Notice’ in *OCII*, p. 1790.

<sup>18</sup> Dee Reynolds, *Symbolist Aesthetics and Early Abstract Art: Sites of Imaginary Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 114.

an attempt to seize this present, which will become the past, for the future reader, *La Dernière Mode* can thus be seen as a vital experiment with the poetics of temporality for Mallarmé. This preoccupation with time can be linked to ‘Un Phénomène futur’, begun in the mid-1860s and published in 1875,<sup>19</sup> in which the image of the ‘Femme d’autrefois’ appears, a haunting reminder of the past existence of beauty, offering the ‘poètes de ce temps’ a brief moment of escape from the banality of their own epoch. In light of this comparison, it is clear that Mallarmé’s foray into the world of fashion journalism presented him with an alternative arena for exploring the relationship between time and the act of writing, and allowed him to reflect on the aesthetic value of literature in his own age.

Like Ix, Madame de Ponty’s early columns show the reporting of present fashions to hover precariously between past and future. In the second issue of the magazine, the columnist character reminds readers who had followed the previous version of *La Dernière Mode*, which consisted only of fashion plates, that the current vogue for structured bodices had already been featured in the magazine one year previously:<sup>20</sup>

[...] nos Abonnées de vieille date, pouvant, certes, se rapeller que d’abord le *Corsage, cuirassé*, à proprement parler, a été déjà inauguré il y a un an, et, enfin, l’a été précisément par une des Aquarelles de *La Dernière Mode*. (OCII, p. 520)

In these lines, Madame de Ponty highlights the nature of the present as a fusion of past and future, showing how, even a year ago, the fashion magazine had an eye for coming trends and was able to foresee the popularity of the ‘*Corsage, cuirassé*’. Although keen to remind her readers that *La Dernière Mode* has always been ahead of its time, she stops herself:

[...] passons outre, d’autant mieux que devancer la mode peut être considéré par quelques-uns comme une infraction à notre véritable devoir qui est de le *faire* au

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Bertrand Marchal, ‘Notes et variantes’ in *OCI*, p. 1332.

<sup>20</sup> As noted in the Introduction, *La Dernière* magazine purported to have been in circulation for a full year when the first issue was published on the 1 August 1874; however, as Lecercle’s archival research reveals, the ‘édition sans texte’ did not appear as described, and the fashion magazine is thus founded on what he terms an ‘immense “coup de bluff.”’ *Mallarmé et la mode*, p. 23.

jour le jour. Jetons les yeux sur le présent et, au lieu de prévoir, regardons. (*OCII*, p. 520)

In this second issue, however, Madame de Ponty notes that this forward-looking gaze represents a contravention of her journalistic duty to write in the present, simultaneously creating and writing about the current trends. The repeated use of the imperative: ‘passons outre’, ‘jetons les yeux’ and ‘regardons’, emphasizes the desire to synchronize the processes of reading and writing, by creating a communal first person and uniting the columnist character and the reader in the act of looking. However, by the third issue of the magazine, the impossibility of writing about the changing fashions as and when they occur has become apparent, as the columnist character declares that the magazine aims to follow the practices of Parisian life, both in the public and the private sphere: ‘Suivre l’existence parisienne dans ses Plaisirs et ses obligations, partout cérémonieuse ou intime, voilà ce que montre une lecture même inattentive du Journal.’ (*OCII*, p.559) This shift in the approach to articulating temporal experience reveals *La Dernière Mode* to be part of a process of experimentation in which, time after time, attempts to seize the present are doomed to failure.

By the fifth issue, Madame de Ponty has completely changed her attitude to time, creating the impression that the unsuccessful attempts to capture the latest fashions in writing have confirmed the present to be mere illusion. She now joins with Ix, reinforcing the notion of the historical value of the journalistic text, established by his questioning of a ‘Chronique [...] sans passé.’ In the first paragraph of her fifth ‘La Mode’ column, she writes:

Les vingt-quatre Courriers doivent, pour qui les feuillera plus tard, former une histoire exacte et complète des Variations du Costume pendant une année, mais ce serait manquer à mon devoir d’historiographe des Toilettes et du caprice qui les varie que de ne pas tenir compte d’autres détails comme l’emploi de ces Toilettes à la Campagne ou à la Ville réglé par le *High-life* ou simplement les Etalages d’étoffes faits auparavant par les Magasins. (*OCII*, p. 579)

Madame de Ponty's statement of her duty as a historiographer, writing about the present for the benefit of future generations, once again reveals the present to be an intermediary space in which the future is in the process of becoming the past. It seems rather surprising that it takes Madame de Ponty until the fifth issue to declare her intention that fashion magazine should form a complete history of the changes in fashion over the course of 1874. In light of this rather tardy declaration, I suggest that the process of writing the fashion magazine began as a means for the poet to experiment with ways of writing in the present. However, the continued cycle of failed attempts to keep up with the constant variations and caprices of fashion provokes a change in the approach to time presented in the fashion magazine. By this fifth issue, Mallarmé seems to have reached the conclusion that writing about contemporary life through the time-bound format of journalism is not making fashion ('la *faire au jour le jour*' as Madame de Ponty puts it in her second column), but, in fact, writing history, hence Madame de Ponty's later emphasis on her 'devoir d'historiographe.' The awareness of the unattainability of the present unfolds gradually in *La Dernière Mode*; in early instalments, Madame de Ponty seeks to be ahead of her time, *creating* fashions 'au jour le jour'; then, faced with the impossibility of capturing 'la dernière mode', she becomes a follower, before finally resigning herself to the role of historiographer, and refusing to engage in competition with other rival publications, such as 'le Sport' and 'La Vie Parisienne'.<sup>21</sup> I suggest that the claim that the fashion magazine followed a pre-conceived architecture can be seen as a new approach to the attempt to seize the present moment and give it a lasting existence in writing, in the face of the failed task of reporting the changes in fashion 'au jour le jour.'

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *OCH*, p. 637.

This alternative approach is confirmed in the eighth issue of the magazine, when Madame de Ponty indignantly responds to hypothetical accusations that she has missed some of the key trends in the grand unveiling of the winter's fashions, such as the '*fanchon-frileuse*' described by rival journal *Le Sport* and the 'grand col montant droit' reported by *La Vie Parisienne*:<sup>22</sup>

« Quoi! De son dais royal formé par les étoffes de tous les siècles (celle que porta la reine Sémiramis et celles que façonnent à leur génie Worth ou Pingat,) la Mode, entr'ouvrant les rideaux ! se montre, subitement, à nous, métamorphosée, neuve, future; et c'est le temps que vous choisissez pour exploser l'ordonnance traditionnelle réglant la Toilette des enfants, depuis trois mois, jusqu'à onze ans. »

Entering into a dialogue with her readers, Madame de Ponty 'sets the record straight'.

« Merci, Mesdames: les délicieux détails que vous m'apportez, je les reçois de vous; mais je m'emresse de vous dire que, tous ces accessoires dans la Toilette de cet Hiver, je les avais mis de côté, absorbée moi-même dans l'étude lente et voilée d'une évolution actuelle du Costume; car vous dites bien, il se transforme. » (*OCII*, p. 637)

Despite writing in the present here, Madame de Ponty's statement reveals the logical impossibility of writing in the present. While this time, she has been beaten by rival periodicals, her failure to keep up with the latest trends is not her fault, but is inherent to the journalistic form given that, in order to perform an 'étude lente [...] d'une évolution actuelle du Costume,' it would be necessary to escape from time, becoming an observer, rather than a participant in the continual evolution of the present. This need to escape from time raises the fundamental temporal problem opened up in *Igitur*, in which the speaker must separate himself from time in order to assert his true presence.

---

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that history and the historical value of the work of art is an important theme in Mallarmé's œuvre. Although there is not time to examine this in depth here, the ambiguity of the French term 'histoire' as both 'history' and 'story' has implications for the understanding of the material world as being but an illusion. If, in the face of 'le rien', what we perceive to be true is but a 'mensonge glorieux', I suggest that Madame de Ponty's 'devoir d'historiographe' can be seen as a creative task rather than one of documentation.

*La Dernière Mode*'s carefully planned structure, comprising 24 issues which follow the evolution of fashion over the course of a year can be seen as a precursor to Mallarmé's calculations as to the format, circulation and publication schedule of the 'Livre'. In the 'Notes en vue du Livre', the poet's plans suggest that, like *La Dernière Mode*, the hypothetical ideal book followed a predetermined architecture, with readings taking place at regular intervals throughout the year:

Or, donner lecture de livre ainsi. Bref, ces trois  
séances de la même Lecture à 3 époques différentes  
de l'année, c'est recommencer mes Lectures 3 fois.

Les Lectures se composent pour une année de 5 livres<sup>volumes</sup>  
différents, donc lus successivement simultanément, pendant  
une semaine – ce qui se reproduit 3 fois pour à 3  
époques différents de l'an = 24 <sup>places (ou 72)</sup> x 5 = 120 <sup>(ou 160)</sup>  
(*OCI*, p. 1003)

This note not only establishes the hypothetical book's close relationship with time, but also alludes to the mode of reading which is enabled by the proposed structure. The note reveals Mallarmé's interest in the place of the 'Livre' within the social environment and highlights the performative dimension of the text. The potential reading experience offered by the 'Livre' can be seen to have evolved from that proposed by *La Dernière Mode*, as both endeavour to follow a strict schedule of publication and are bound by the parameters of time, as measured by clocks and calendars.

## Issue 1

Having examined the conceptual and theoretical status of time in Mallarmé's œuvre, and taken a general view of the way in which the temporal conventions of the fashion magazine

can be seen to have shaped Mallarmé's poetics, the final section of this chapter will explore the presentation of time in the magazine, through a close reading of three sections of the first issue of *La Dernière Mode*. First, I will look at Madame de Ponty's 'La Mode' column, dated 1 August 1874. Published in between seasons, the columnist character finds herself with nothing to report on recent trends in clothing. Instead, she turns her attention to accessories, in this case jewellery. Precious stones have an important relationship to time in Mallarmé's poetics, serving as a symbol of permanence in the face of the ephemeral. This close reading will show how the presentation of jewels in the magazine can be seen as a way of testing the potential for the motif of precious stones and decorative 'bibelots' to mask the absence of any real news and thus to bridge the temporal hiatus between seasons. The second part of this section, will examine Ix's first 'Chronique de Paris,' written during the holiday season. In this issue, Ix, like Madame de Ponty finds himself with nothing to report, instead explaining the approach his column will take and establishing some key ideas on literature and the theatre. The first 'Chronique,' like the 'La Mode' feature before it focuses on ideas of absence and insufficiency; linking the vocabulary used by Ix to that of Mallarmé's poetry of the 1860s, I shall argue that the ideas presented in this initial 'Chronique' can be seen to have evolved from Mallarmé's period of personal crisis, and the discovery of 'le Néant.' In the final section of this chapter I will undertake a detailed exploration of the linguistic and thematic presentation of time in one of the contributions to the 'Carnet d'Or' section of the magazine, which describes a flower basket, suitable for the month of August. The analysis of these three features in the first issue of *La Dernière Mode* will demonstrate how the various approaches to capturing the present in the magazine are, like those of poetry, destined to failure; this final section will establish *La Dernière Mode* as a space in which Mallarmé could test out symbolic potential of journalism by exploring key motifs which recur in throughout his œuvre.

### **Madame de Ponty: ‘La Mode’**

The initial ‘La Mode’ column, found in the specimen issue of *La Dernière Mode*, can, roughly, be divided into three parts: the first of these establishes the role of the column within the seasonal evolution of fashion, the second takes the theme of jewels and gemstones as the starting point for a reflection on the state of art in the modern age, while, in the third, Madame de Ponty enters into a discussion on the possible elements which might make up a wedding basket for a bridegroom to offer the bride as a gift in celebration of their marriage. This section will examine the three parts of this first ‘La Mode’ column in order, situating the feature within the development of ideas of time and temporality in Mallarméan poetics.

Madame de Ponty’s column, like Ix’s, begins with a reflection on the nature of time; the columnist character laments the fact that it is

Trop tard pour parler des Modes d’été et trop tôt pour parler de celles d’hiver (ou même de l’automne) [...]

Aujourd’hui, n’ayant pas même, par le fait, sous la main les éléments nécessaires pour commencer une toilette, nous voulons entretenir nos lectrices d’objets utiles à l’achever: les Bijoux. (*OCII*, p. 490)

This initial statement reinforces the status of the present as an intermediary phase: spanning much of August and September, her column arrives too late to discuss summer fashions and too early to talk of those for autumn and winter. As if to mask its elusive nature, the present moment is then asserted boldly with the use of the temporal marker ‘Aujourd’hui’, followed by the present participle ‘ayant’, which creates the impression that the writing and reading processes are occurring simultaneously. The stability afforded by the use of the word ‘aujourd’hui’ is undermined by the fact that the term could be interpreted in a

variety of ways, standing for the day of writing, the day of publication or the day of reading. By speaking of today, Madame de Ponty creates the impression that the columnist character is occupying the same moment in time as the reader, guiding her through the complicated process of negotiating the season's changing fashions as and when they emerge. The verb 'entretenir' used in this passage is also significant; meaning variously to discuss or to entertain, it emphasizes the conversational nature of the magazine, which operates as a dialogue between reader and speaker. Broken down into its component parts, the word 'entretenir' can be translated literally into English as to 'hold between', echoing the task of the columnist character who must entertain the reader, maintaining her interest throughout the long period between issues. The idea of holding or grasping is reinforced by the words 'sous la main', which suggest that the 'La Mode' column is motivated by a desire to capture this moment of creative potential and transform it into the written word. Indeed, in light of the emphasis on the need to have the necessary elements to hand, Madame de Ponty's discussion of useful items and accessories for completing a 'toilette' can be read as a model for art itself, which the poet would deem, in an article of 1887 in his 'Notes sur le Théâtre', to be the practice of creating 'de beaux et salutaires sentiments avec rien dans la main.' (OCII, p. 291)

The recourse to jewels and gemstones as a means of creating something from nothing can be seen as part Mallarmé's lifelong exploration of the metaphorical possibilities of precious stones and decorative objects. In the sonnet which begins 'Ses purs ongles...', originally published in 1868 under the title 'Sonnet allégorique de lui-même', Mallarmé presents material objects as a means of masking emptiness.<sup>23</sup> The various references to obscure and esoteric items, selected primarily for their musicality, culminate in the famous line 'aboli

---

<sup>23</sup> Commonly referred to as the 'Sonnet en -yx'.

bibelot d'inanité sonore' (*OCI*, p.37) in which the echoing vowel sounds and the image of the 'bibelot' serve to conceal the absence embodied by the 'salon vide'. The importance of emptiness and the theme of 'le Néant' will be examined in relation to the fashion magazine in Chapter Three; for now, let us return to the theme of jewels, introduced in Madame de Ponty's column, examining their significance in this temporal gulf between summer and autumn.

Madame de Ponty suggests that, in jewellery, there is 'quelque chose de permanent, et dont il sied de parler dans un courier de Modes, destiné à attendre les modes de juillet à septembre.' (*OCII*, p. 490) So it is that she invites her reader to join with her on a quest for the ideal, timeless jewel: 'cherchons le Bijou, isolé, en lui-même.' The initial capital letter on the word 'Bijou' emphasizes its status as a metaphor for the ideal, synonymous with the elusive 'dernière mode'. Embarking upon this quest in the second part of her column, Madame de Ponty develops the theme of jewels, offering a general overview of the aesthetic status of jewellery and costume in the civilized era.

La Civilisation ! lisez 'l'époque où a disparu presque toute puissance créatrice, dans la Bijouterie comme dans le Mobilier'; et, dans l'un comme dans l'autre nous sommes forcés d'exhumer ou d'importer. Importer quoi ? Les bracelets de verre filé de l'Inde et les pendants d'oreilles en papier découpé de la Chine ? non; mais, souvent, le goût naïf qui préside à leur confection. Exhumer quoi ? les lourdes parures des siècles oubliés, faites pour rehausser, par un éclat violent, les velours de théâtre et les brocarts de sacristie: point, mais la hardiesse avec laquelle elles se placent, comme des touches magistrales, sur le costume. Qui sait ? il nous faut même aller jusqu'au point de jonction antérieur de ces deux inspirations, très différentes, de l'art de l'orfèvre: c'est-à-dire dans l'antiquité classique et barbare. (*OCII*, p. 490)

In the passage cited above, the columnist character draws attention to a need to travel in time and space to overcome the emptiness of the present, in a bid to satisfy the almost insatiable contemporary craving for something new and different. The presentation of the era of civilization as being devoid of creative impetus shows early signs of Mallarmé's

concerns about the status of art in his own epoch, which would surface in his later writings. The poet voices these concerns explicitly just over a decade later, in his autobiographical letter to Paul Verlaine, in which he declares:

Au fond, je considère l'époque contemporaine comme un interrègne pour le poète, qui n'a point à s'y mêler: elle est trop en désuétude et en effervescence préparatoire, pour qu'il y ait autre chose à faire qu'à travailler avec mystère en vue de plus tard ou de jamais et de temps en temps à envoyer aux vivants sa carte de visite, stances ou sonnets, pour n'être point lapidé d'eux, s'ils le soupçonnaient de savoir qu'ils n'ont pas lieu. (*OCI*, p. 789)

In these lines, Mallarmé considers the situation of the poet in the modern age, highlighting his need to write in order to justify his existence, and emphasising the importance of gaining the approval of the masses. Moreover, the poet's words to Paul Verlaine allude to the poet's growing sense of the impossibility of writing in the present. Following Mallarmé's period of crisis in the late 1860s, and the crippling writer's block he experienced when trying to bring 'Hérodiade' into the world, one might see the eight issues of *La Dernière Mode* as a 'carte de visite', allowing the poet the opportunity to write and to engage with the world, in order to justify his existence, both from a financial point of view and from a creative perspective.

In the final part of this first 'La Mode' column, Madame de Ponty sets about describing how she would put together the perfect wedding basket, traditionally given to the bride by the bridegroom as part of the nuptial celebrations.

Les bijoux portés de Jour étant tout autres que ceux du Soir, nous aurions grand soin si, par exemple, nous devons composer une corbeille de mariage, d'y placer des uns et des autres. (*OCII*, p. 492)

The wedding basket, symbolic of the union between man and woman, offers the opportunity to unite daytime and evening attire, combining the best aspects of various outfits for a range of occasions. This marital gift is the ultimate symbol of convergence, bringing together different objects of aesthetic value. I contend that the process of putting

together a wedding basket can be seen as metaphor for that of poetic creation, using various decorative elements in order to bring out their combined effect. This, in turn, prefigures the link which Mallarmé would draw between the act of dressing up and accessorizing and the processes of reading and writing in his 1891 interview with Jules Huret:<sup>24</sup>

La poésie consistant à *créer*, il faut prendre dans l'âme humaine des états, des lueurs d'une pureté si absolue que, bien chantés et bien mis en lumière, cela constitue en effet les bijoux de l'homme: là, il y a symbole, il y a création, et le mot poésie a ici son sens; c'est, en somme, la seule création humaine possible. (*OCII*, p. 701)

*La Dernière Mode* can be seen as part of the development of an aesthetic which uses material metaphors to articulate ideas on artistic practice. I suggest that the fashion magazine can, therefore, be seen as a self-reflexive mode which is at once creative and reflects on the creative process, anticipating the 'poèmes critiques' of the 1890s, which discuss literature and also have literary value in their own right.

So, Madame de Ponty embarks upon the creation of this hypothetical wedding basket, which will be compiled and revealed in all its glory in the mind's eye of the reader. The sacrament of marriage represents a lasting union between man and woman; the gift of the wedding basket thus has connotations of the infinite, serving as a symbol of the eternal bond between the bride and groom. Due to its status as a symbolic gift in celebration of the religious and social bond of marriage, the wedding basket is not subject to the usual laws of time and the tendency towards obsolescence which usually affects objects and practices in the world of fashion. The columnist character goes into some detail in her description of the different elements which might make up this symbolic gift:

Une corbeille de mariage ! Nous commencerions par y mettre une paire de pendants d'oreilles tout en or, d'un travail absolument artistique [...].

---

<sup>24</sup> This link between the presentation of jewels in Madame de Ponty's first column and Mallarmé's description of poetic creation as forming the 'bijoux de l'homme' is also examined by Furbank and Cain in their commentary on the translation of this column from the first issue of *La Dernière Mode*. Cf. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Mallarmé on Fashion: A Translation of the Fashion Magazine La Dernière Mode, with Commentary*, ed. by Nicholas Furbank and Alex M. Cain, (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 27.

Nous choisirions ensuite, pour Diners ou Soirées, des boutons d'oreilles et un médaillon dont le milieu serait occupé par une très grosse perle noire entourée de trois rangées de brillants; c'est un objet tout nouveau, en ce moment, chez les grands bijoutiers [...] (*OCII*, p. 492)

A first glance at the passage cited above reveals a similarity between the process of writing and that of putting together a wedding basket, full of sumptuous jewels, anticipating Mallarmé's words to Jules Huret in 1891. The length of the sentences here, layered with sub-clauses, reflects the construction of the wedding basket which, itself, is composed of many different pieces, each one formed of numerous tiny gemstones, and gaining further value from its juxtaposition with the rest. As such, the text of this first column can be seen to enact the similarity between jewels and language which Mallarmé would develop in his theoretical writings of the 1880s and 1890s, seen for example in the description of the ideal work as a process in which '[les mots] s'allument de reflets réciproques comme une virtuelle traînée de feux sur des pierreries' (*OCII*, p. 211).

There are, Madame de Ponty assures her readers, three essential objects which make up the perfect bridal gift basket:

Un petit flacon, soit en ors différents, roses, verts ou jaunes, Louis XV ou Louis XVI, à guirlande, (ou moderne en émail avec des feuillages et des oiseaux japonais), étant un objet indispensable à côté du mouchoir de dentelles, nous n'aurions garde de l'oublier; non plus qu'un éventail en soie blanche avec tableau pour les Cérémonies. (*OCII*, p. 492)

The items listed here are all key symbolic objects, which form part of a network of associations encompassing themes of time, value, and the ideal in Mallarmé's œuvre. The most important item of the wedding basket, and the one I wish to focus on in the remainder of this section is the fan. Madame de Ponty makes much of the aesthetic worth of this particular fashion accessory, declaring that 'toutefois, rien ne vaudra jamais un éventail, riche tant qu'on voudra par sa monture ou même très simple, mais présentant, avant tout,

une valeur idéale.’ (*OCII*, p.492) The use of the future tense here, to assert the unrivalled value of the fan, highlights its capacity to withstand the negative effects of time, serving as a symbol of the eternal in contrast to the transience of fashion. The significance placed upon this symbolic object is asserted three times in the sentence above, firstly through the use of the verb ‘valoir’, then by the adjective ‘riche’ and, finally, in the assertion of its ‘valeur idéale’.<sup>25</sup> Having explored the ideal value of the fan as a symbolic object in the fashion magazine, Mallarmé then went on to incorporate the fan into poetic practice, through the ‘Éventail’ poems, written and published in the 1880s.

Mallarmé’s ‘Eventails’ demonstrate the ornamental value of the text as a physical object, combining this with the aesthetic pleasure to be gained from the reading experience.<sup>26</sup> The most famous of Mallarmé’s poems on fans are the two ‘Eventails’, one for his wife, Maria, and the other for his daughter, Geneviève, which feature in the collected *Poésies*, and a third, for Méry Laurent, in the ‘Poèmes retrouvées’ In addition to these three well-known ‘Eventails’, Mallarmé wrote a series of single-stanza fan poems dedicated to friends and admired artists including the writer Georges Rodenbach, the pianist Misia Natanson, and for Catulle Mendès and his mistress Augusta Holmes, the duo behind the musical collaboration featured in the sixth issue of *La Dernière Mode*.<sup>27</sup>

Fleur, signe et, sur le lac, cygne,  
 Au son d’Augusta Holmès  
 Le battement suit la ligne  
 Du nonchaloir de Mendès. (*OCI*, p. 276)

---

<sup>25</sup> In Mallarmé’s notes, the ‘Livre’ is presented in similar terms, likened to a diamond on account of its ‘valeur [...] idéale.’ *OCI*, p. 560.

<sup>26</sup> Marshall C. Olds notes that ‘Mallarmé’s interest in fans was part of a larger network of associations, dating from the 1860s and ‘70s, that included ladies’ apparel and accessories, and collectible curios.’ Marshall C. Olds ‘Under Mallarmé’s Wing’, *FANA Quarterly*, volume XIX, no. 4 (Spring 2001), pp. 6–28.

<sup>27</sup> There are 19 of these collected in the most recent Pléiade edition of Mallarmé’s *Œuvres complètes* (1998). Cf. *OCI* pp. 273-277.

In each of these short poems, the physical object is united with language, in a self-reflexive process, which uses the fan itself both as a surface for writing and as source of inspiration for the genesis of the poem. Within Mallarméan poetics, the fan is metaphor for the book itself, its folds concealing the possibility of revelation, just like ‘repliement vierge du livre,’ described in ‘Le Livre, instrument spirituel’. (*OCII*, p. 226)

Of course, it is not only poetry which can be secreted into the folds of the fan. Traditionally, fans depicted art by some of the great painters of the period, as Madame de Ponty explains:

[la valeur idéale] d’une peinture: ancienne, de l’école de Boucher, de Watteau et peut-être par ces Maîtres; moderne, de notre collaborateur Edmond Morin. Scènes de perrons d’hôtels ou des parcs héréditaires et de l’asphalte et de la grève, le monde contemporain avec sa fête qui dure toute l’année: voilà ce que nous montrent ces rares chefs d’œuvre placés en des mains de grandes dames. (*OCII*, p. 492/3)

This passage reveals the fan’s capacity to mediate between the ancient and the contemporary. Madame de Ponty likens the work of the magazine’s own visual artist to the paintings of established masters, undermining any sense of artistic elitism. Once again aesthetic practices from past and present are juxtaposed, as she notes that the fan is an apt surface for showcasing the works of old masters such as Boucher and Watteau and for demonstrating the talents of modern artists including Edmond Morin. Uniting ancient and modern art, the fan is shown to be capable of transcending the many changes in fashion and of capturing and crystallizing the essence of the moment. The fact that these fans reveal their secret in the hands of ‘grandes dames’ is also significant, emphasizing the role of women and of femininity in revealing the work of art, whether it be an image on a fan, or a poem in a book: women’s unique status as the ideal audience for the work of art will be re-iterated in more certain terms by Ix in his first column, as noted in the Introduction.

The use of tense in this first ‘La Mode’ section offers a subtle hint of the instability of the present. There are very few examples of the present tense to be found in this column; Madame de Ponty’s tendency to speak in the conditional hints at the elusive nature of the current moment. Having filled the emptiness of the present by shifting her focus from a reflection on historic and exotic fashions into the creation of a hypothetical wedding basket, as examined above, the columnist character then projects her gaze into the future, anticipating a forthcoming change in the fashionable silhouette:

Nous n’encombrions pas de velours et de soie notre Corbeille, ces tissus étant du domaine de la Couturière; et à propos de Couturière, je me suis laissé affirmer – mais faut-il prédire ! — que nous devons nous attendre à un changement absolu dans la *tournure*. On prétend qu’elle n’a plus de raison d’exister, les tailles ne devant plus être soutenus; puisque cela est un fait presque vieux qu’elles se portent longues et même très longues. (*OCII*, p. 493)

Continuing her speculative discussion of the possible elements which might make up a wedding basket, Madame de Ponty vows to leave dressmaking fabrics such as silk and velvet to the seamstress, occupying herself with jewels and knickknacks, these ‘*riens sérieux*,’ (*OCII*, p.498) which are essential to completing any outfit.

In the passage cited above, Madame de Ponty does permit herself the indiscretion of predicting the disappearance of the bustle, which, she says, has had its day. There is a strange mix of time-frames at work here, due to the shifting tenses and moods in this passage. Madame de Ponty prefaces her report on this latest trend with a remark in the present conditional, before shifting into the passive voice, noting that ‘*je me suis laissé affirmer [...]*’. The passive, followed by the use of the imperfect tense to denote indirect speech — ‘*que nous devons*’ — suggests that the columnist character cannot take responsibility for the validity of this information, and implies that she is deliberately attempting to avoid naming her sources. The verb ‘*attendre*’ crops up once again here, emphasizing the anticipation and suspense which is inherent to both fashion and journalism.

The transitional nature of this period is confirmed by the assertion that long waistlines (which appear to be a fairly recent revival of a historic trend) are **almost** out of date. The use of the word ‘presque’ here, highlights the ephemeral nature of fashion; the constantly changing trends mean that each development is on the cusp of obsolescence even as it is being reported by the fashion magazines and before it has reached consumers. Indeed, it is notable that the description of the long waistline offers one of the few examples of the present tense in this entire first column, but it is, paradoxically, used to talk about something which, by the time of publication, will be very much yesterday’s news.

The final paragraph of Madame de Ponty’s début offering draws together the various themes discussed in the column, reiterating the outmoded nature of the long waistline and highlighting the influence of painting on the world of fashion.

La Mode, cette fois, ne viendrait-elle pas du Salon de Peinture? On a vu d’abord avec étonnement, puis non sans quelque satisfaction, un portrait et même plusieurs, où de jeunes et modernes visages dominaient une de ces longues tailles des siècles derniers. Il y aura ce point curieux d’origine à éclaircir, au commencement de Septembre, si cette résurrection doit durer la saison prochaine ! Aussi bien, maintenant, les yeux éblouis par des irisations, des opalisations ou des scintillements, ne pourrions-nous regarder, sans peine, quelque chose d’aussi vague surtout que l’Avenir. (*OCII*, p. 493)

She begins with a rhetorical question, which, once again reinforces the uncertainty surrounding current trends; this technique also invites the input of the audience, highlighting the role of the reader in the creative act. Even as the column reaches its conclusion, however, Madame de Ponty continues to struggle to situate her column, and the fashions she is reporting in relation to calendar time. Once again the present is revealed to be a pivotal moment, as she sums up recent trends using the passé composé (‘on a vu...’) and imperfect tenses (‘où de jeunes et modernes visages dominaient...’), before shifting into the future tense to speculate on what transformations September might bring (‘on aura ce point curieux à éclaircir’). Oscillating between past and future, looking back to past

trends, and anticipating those to come, these closing lines reveal the temporality of fashion journalism to be closely connected to that of the mime, described in 'Mimique'. I thus contend that the fashion magazine served as a testing ground, offering the poet a possible means of writing temporal experience; however, even in this first issue the present is revealed to be an illusion, and the desire to bring readers the latest fashions, 'au jour le jour' is destined to failure.

In promising greater clarity in the coming issues, Madame de Ponty keeps her reader on tenterhooks, eagerly awaiting the news which will come in the next issue. Of course, the following instalment will raise new questions, no doubt leaving those of today unanswered. Ending her column on the word 'Avenir', Madame de Ponty casts her gaze, along with that of the reader, into the future, eagerly anticipating the developments which the next instalment of the magazine will bring. Ending columns by looking forward into the future is a common technique in *La Dernière Mode*. This has the effect of reversing accepted ideas of beginnings and endings, as the conclusion of one column invariably serves to arouse the reader's curiosity for the next instalment. Although this first issue represents a false start for Madame de Ponty, it arrives in the midst of a creatively fertile period which contains the beginnings of the many potential fashions that could manifest themselves before the new season arrives. This, I suggest, anticipates the aesthetic of 'Le vièrge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui...' in which the sterility of winter is, paradoxically, charged with possibility.

### **Ix's 'Chronique de Paris'**

Madame de Ponty is by no means the only columnist-character to wrestle with time; Ix's 'Chronique de Paris', too, enacts journalism's inherent struggle to capture the fleeting present. In the first 'Chronique de Paris', Ix, like his female counterpart, engages in a vain quest to situate himself in time. Having challenged the notion of a 'Chronique' with no history, as discussed earlier on, the uncertainty of the present moment is asserted once again when Ix reminds his readers that 'nous arrivons avec notre seul avenir, inconnu'. (*OCII*, p. 495) The use of the temporal substantive 'avenir' echoes the closing lines of Madame de Ponty's column, in which she looks forward to the glittering future of the following fortnight; this repetition allows the reader to move seamlessly from one section of the magazine to the next, creating a continuous narrative. The mention of the future in the opening lines of the 'Chronique' means that the present moment is already infused with a forward-looking gaze. While in Madame de Ponty's first column temporal uncertainty is displayed through shifting tenses, Ix confidently asserts his presence through the present tense, before going on to concede that this future is itself, unknown, as the undiscovered potential of the future can only be unlocked through the parallel acts of reading and of experiencing time — that is, of living. In the 'Chronique', as in Madame de Ponty's column, the use of the personal pronoun 'nous', serves to create a sense of intimacy between Ix and his reader, meaning that both arrive simultaneously, as if navigating the uncertain temporal landscape of the present together.

Like Madame de Ponty before him, Ix reminds his readers of the unusual circumstances of this particular issue, which must keep readers entertained throughout the month of August and into September:

Le numéro préliminaire de *La Dernière Mode* a pour objet principal de rester sous les yeux du public presque de Juillet à Septembre; et, avec Paris, tout un mois, n'est-ce pas une période plus vague et moins définie que ne l'est elle-même l'éternité ? (*OCII*, p.495)

Ix employs a touch of hyperbole, here, giving the impression that the reader must wait not six weeks, but three months for the next issue of the magazine. The long and unstable period of late summer offers Ix an opportunity to reflect on the perception of time; he implies that the measurement of time through clocks and calendars is a rather arbitrary way of imposing boundaries on this strange, intangible concept. He links the experience of time with that of space, noting how long a month seems in Paris; this presents the French capital as a mythical place, in which the laws of time are skewed.

With no past behind him, Ix follows Madame de Ponty's example, taking a general approach in order to fill this long and uncertain period, on the borderline between summer and autumn:

Profitons de cette phase d'existence très peu actuelle, par nous traversée aujourd'hui, pour prendre un ton général, qui ne messied pas au début de nos Causeries. (*OCII*, p. 495)

Like his fashion columnist colleague, Ix uses the temporal marker 'aujourd'hui' in his opening lines, creating the impression that the reading and writing processes are occurring simultaneously, in an 'apparence fausse de présent.' This illusion both of presence and of the present is reinforced by the use of the first person plural, describing the gulf between past and future 'par nous traversée'. By employing the verb 'traverser', Ix presents the current moment in spatial terms as a gulf to be crossed and highlights the status of reading as a mental journey. The inaccessible nature of the present is reinforced by the word order of this sub-clause, which sees 'nous' separated from 'aujourd'hui' by the past participle 'traversée'. The attempt to gain mastery over time through writing, however, is implied by the use of the imperative as Ix urges his readers to join with him in taking advantage of this strangely 'un-current' present. The use of the passive voice ('par nous traversée') casts this phase of existence as a force to be acted upon, to be navigated, explored and, eventually,

overcome. The theme of travel and ideas of movement established in these opening lines will be continued throughout this column, which focuses on the holiday season.

The chronology of the reading experience is, in part, governed by the structure of the magazine. The order of the various features has been carefully thought out, with the discussions of the 'Chronique' placed between Madame de Ponty's 'La Mode' column and the literary section of the magazine, comprising discussion of new books and, of course, the literary contributions.<sup>28</sup> The juxtaposition of fashion and literature links the art of the *toilette* to that of reading:

Ce que veut chacun de ces brefs entretiens, sa place, dans le Journal, l'indique assez bien, choisie entre le Courrier de la Mode et notre partie littéraire: parler, certes, des œuvres de l'esprit, mais toujours selon le goût du jour. (*OCII*, p. 495).

Ix's 'Chronique de Paris' can thus be seen as mediating between the world of fashion and that of books and the theatre, reporting new additions to the literary and dramatic canon, from a contemporary perspective. The columnist character's name seems to confirm his status, at a cross-roads between the apparent frivolity of fashion and the 'serious' world literature. As if to highlight the pleasure to be derived from social engagements and undermine the distinction between high- and low-brow entertainment, Ix notes that there are many dates in the cultural calendar which can incite joy in a contemporary audience:

N'y a-t-il pas d'autres dates que cela? L'ouverture de l'Exposition d'ouvrages des Artistes vivants montre une cérémonie qui n'est point inférieure, aux yeux du monde intelligent; et, autant que le Salon ces Ventes de Bibelots et ces Exhibitions de l'Œuvre particulière d'un Maître, désignées, maintenant, à la sanguine ou simplement de l'ongle sur le calendrier de la fashion. Nous apparaitrons partout, le même: attentif à la somme de plaisir que peut, de ces usages nouveaux, tirer une personne contemporaine. (*OCII*, p. 497)

The passage above places the works of contemporary artists alongside trinkets, ornaments and fashion as an art form for the modern age. Using a rhetorical question, Ix provokes the

---

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix 1 for a sample contents page, from the fourth issue of *La Dernière Mode*.

reader to reflect on the meaning of the concept of art, asserting the value of these contemporary practices through the use of the temporal marker ‘maintenant’. The role of fashion as art is reinforced through the use of the verb ‘tirer’ in the final line, echoing Baudelaire’s description of the essence of modernity, which seeks to ‘tirer l’éternel du transitoire.’<sup>29</sup>

The carefully chosen vocabulary of Ix’s column is particularly important in understanding the aesthetic value of modern life and culture. The use of the word ‘cérémonie’ to denote an exhibition of work by living artists emphasizes the spiritual dimension to these everyday pleasures; this confirms Ix’s suggestion that contemporary art and the creations of the fashion houses are in no way inferior to those of bygone days. The dichotomy of the ancient and the modern is asserted through the description of these ‘usages nouveaux’: coming from the verb ‘user’, meaning to use (up) or wear away, a ‘usage’<sup>30</sup> might be considered to be a custom which has set in over time, and yet the inherent idea of these practices as having been established over time is undermined by the adjective ‘nouveaux’. The near-oxymoron of these modern customs, which have become ‘usages,’ creates a sense that the contemporary age is an era in which accepted ideas of cultural and aesthetic practices are being re-defined. The fashion magazine which, as Madame de Ponty notes, studies fashion ‘comme un art’ (*OCII*, p. 637) offers yet another means of challenging the understanding of art in the modern age.

---

<sup>29</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, p. 1163.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. ‘User, verbe’, *TLFi*,

<<http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/visusel.exe?11;s=2456632260;r=1;nat=;sol=0;>> [accessed 12/04/2014].

The interest in drawing the eternal from the transitory and capturing the spirit of the times is reinforced just a few lines later on in Ix's first column, as he extols the beauty of ephemera:

Mille secrets (histoire volage d'une soirée) se détachant du brouhaha fashionable trouveront ici, avant de se confondre dans l'éclat de l'orchestre, un écho: listes de danseurs perdues avec les fleurs effeuillées, programme du concert ou carte des dineurs, composent, certes une littérature particulière, ayant en soi l'immortalité d'une semaine ou de deux. Rien n'est à négliger de l'existence d'une époque: tout y appartient à tous. (*OCII*, p. 498)

There is a synaesthetic quality to Ix's description of the everyday, afforded through the reference to music in terms of light, as the 'éclat de l'orchestre' combines with the 'brouhaha fashionable', their secrets echoed in this column. The trinkets and knick-knacks in this passage form part of a network of symbolic objects which play an important role in Mallarmé's poetry. The lists of dancers evoke the revelation of the ideal through dance, seen in 'Ballets' and 'Autre étude de danse' in the *Divagations*, while the concert programme evokes the image of the opera which would later be established in 'Planches et feuillets,' described as a 'musicale célébration et figuration aussi de la vie, confiant le mystère au langage seul et à l'évolution mimique.' (*OCII*, p. 193) However, Ix reminds his readers that such moments of pleasure in everyday life are transient, and even the tangible objects which serve as souvenirs have but a fleeting existence: lists of dancers, flowers, concert programmes and dinner menus last no longer than a week or two.<sup>31</sup> The eternal and ephemeral are united through another oxymoron, having 'l'immortalité d'une semaine ou de deux', which establishes both the lasting effects of fleeting events, and the fleeting nature of the glimpses of the eternal afforded by everyday existence. The diverse elements which find their way into the fashion magazine combine to create what Ix deems to be 'une

---

<sup>31</sup> In her article on Mallarmé's fashion magazine Ellen Wayland Smith argues that, with this oxymoron, Mallarmé subtly raises the question of the connection between literature and mass culture. See Ellen Wayland Smith, 'Passing Fashion: Mallarmé and the Future of Poetry in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.' *MLN*, 117 (2002), 887-907.

littérature particulière'. His use of the term 'littérature', here, confirms the literary status of his column while the random assortment of elements which make up the fashion magazine go some way to confirming Mallarmé's contention in 'Le Livre, instrument spirituel' that 'tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre.' (*OCII*, p. 224)

Ix continues his début column by explaining how a direct confrontation with transience might serve as a launchpad, projecting the reader on a mental journey to an imaginary world:

Tout s'apprend sur le vif, même la beauté, et le port de la tête, on le tient de quelqu'un, c'est-à-dire de chacun, comme le port d'une robe. Fuir ce monde? on en est; pour la nature? comme on la traverse à toute vapeur, dans sa réalité extérieure, avec ses paysages, ses lieues, pour arriver autre part: moderne image de son insuffisance pour nous. (*OCII*, p. 499)

In these lines, the columnist-character suggests that everyday existence is the gateway to the ideal; the insufficiency even of beauty in the material world encourages the dissatisfied aesthete to escape into the realm of the imagination. The lines cited above thus offer an important reflection on the nature of reading itself, which projects the reader beyond the tangible world, 'pour arriver autre part'. Appropriately for this phase of late summer, Ix introduces the topical theme of travel using the verb 'traverser', suggesting a crossing of both temporal and spatial boundaries, as the reader is transported into a mental realm which is unaffected by the ravages of time. The words 'à toute vapeur' imply a process of dematerialization, rather like that seen on the part of the dancer in 'Ballets', who is described as being 'vaporeuse' as she is transfigured into pure symbol:

À coup sûr on opérera en pleine rêverie, mais adéquate: vaporeuse, nette et ample, ou restreinte, telle seulement que l'enferme en ses circuits ou la transporte par une fugue la ballerine illettrée se livrant aux jeux de sa profession. (*OCII*, p. 174)

Indeed, the chimeric haze of the dancer, like the vivid imaginings of Ix and his readers offer the illusion of sufficiency in the face of passing time.

Reminiscent of the Anchor Line Steamers — the *bateaux à vapeur* advertised on the back pages of *La Dernière Mode* — the word ‘vapeur’, used by Ix in this first column also reinforces the holiday theme, blurring the boundaries between mental and physical travel. Although, as Ix affirms, external reality can be a source of aesthetic inspiration, it is primarily its insufficiency which prompts us to use transient experiences and tangible objects as a starting point for vivid imaginings. In these lines, the columnist character evokes the ‘double azur maritime et céleste’ of this strange holiday season. The notion of the ‘l’azur’ was not unique to Mallarmé, having also been adopted by other poets in the nineteenth century including Baudelaire and Lamartine.<sup>32</sup> By drawing on this poetic cliché, Ix situates the fashion magazine within a contemporary literary context, distancing itself from the understanding of journalism as a purely factual medium. The ideal ‘azur’ is typically associated with ideas of verticality; in the magazine, too, the reference to this ‘double azur’ establishes a vertical axis, projecting the reader into the realm of the imaginary. Thus, the fashion magazine can be said to operate according to a similar mechanism to poetry, not only drawing on the nineteenth-century motif of ‘l’azur’, but situating it in a specifically Mallarméan context, by which the quest for this ideal is driven by an awareness of absence and insufficiency.

The theme of flight and of the ‘azur’ introduced in Ix’s first column echoes Mallarmé’s 1864 poem ‘L’Azur’, written during the poet’s years at Tournon when he was struck by depression and psychological turmoil. Published two years later in *Le Parnasse*

---

<sup>32</sup> As a nineteenth century poetic cliché ‘l’azur’ is commonly associated with the ideal and is presented in vertical terms; this is seen in Lamartine’s ‘L’Isolement’, in which a lone star rises between sea and sky: ‘Là le lac immobile étend ses eaux dormantes | Où l’étoile du soir se lève dans l’azur.’ Alphonse de Lamartine, *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, ed. by Marius-François Guyard (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 3. The image of ‘l’azur’ and its vertical axis can also be seen in Baudelaire’s ‘La Beauté’, where the speaker ‘trône dans l’azur comme un sphinx incompris.’ Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, p. 20.

*contemporain*, 'L'Azur' highlights the insufficiency of the tangible world and foregrounds impossibility of escaping from time's relentless march towards death. In the second stanza of the poem, the speaker expresses a desire to escape from his own spiritual emptiness and from the torment of the ideal:

Fuyant, les yeux fermés, je le sens qui regarde  
Avec l'intensité d'un remords atterrant,  
Mon âme vide, Où fuir? [...] (*OCI*, p. 14)

This rhetorical question anticipates that of Ix, who muses on the escapism of fashion and travel as part of the modern lifestyle: 'Fuir ce monde?' While the struggle of the artist is futile however, fashion seems to offer the potential to take flight into an imaginary world. In contrast with the whimsical tone of Ix's first column, this early poem portrays the ideal as a cruelly impossible concept which haunts the speaker, who borders on madness at the end of the poem, repeating, 'L'Azur! L'Azur!'.<sup>33</sup>

En vain! L'Azur triomphe, et je l'entends qui chante  
Dans les cloches. Mon âme, il se fait voix pour plus  
Nous faire peur avec sa victoire méchante,  
Et du métal vivant sort en bleus angelus!

Il roule par la brume, ancien et traverse  
Ta native agonie ainsi qu'un glaive sûr  
Où fuir dans la révolte inutile et perverse?  
Je suis hanté. L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! (*OCI*, p. 15)

It is the relationship with time which makes the ideal 'Azur' so difficult to reach. Helen Abbott notes the significance of the bells, which, 'like the ticking of Baudelaire's clock, is bound by time limits— this funereal knell seems to suggest that the only possibility of escape from the struggle to seize the ideal lies in death.<sup>33</sup> While the poet figure in 'L'Azur' displays a sense of hopelessness in the face of time and the impossibility of reaching the ideal, Ix's 'Chronique de Paris' creates a feeling of optimism, suggesting a shift in the

---

<sup>33</sup> Helen Abbott, *Between Baudelaire and Mallarmé: Voice, Conversation and Music* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013), p. 170.

poet's attitude to this aesthetic goal. Written some ten years after 'L'Azur', I contend that *La Dernière Mode* offered Mallarmé the opportunity to confront time and temporality from a more lighthearted angle in the years following his spiritual crisis during the 1860s.

In this specimen issue, Ix establishes the dualistic understanding of time, demonstrating how chronological time clashes with the temporality of journalism. As if following a cycle all of their own, the closing lines of this first 'Chronique', return to the theme of time with which the column opened.

Sans le moindre remords, apparu dans cette saison de vacances comme à son heure exacte d'apparaître, ce Journal s'interpose entre votre songerie et le double azur maritime et céleste: le temps de le feuilleter, et probablement de n'y point lire la *Présentation*. (*OCII*, p. 499)

The magazine's intermediary status, hovering between two modes of time is asserted here through the use of the word 'interpose' and the preposition 'entre' which reveal the ability of the journalistic form to unite the ephemeral and the eternal, using real events as a source for vivid imaginings. A similar dualistic time frame is established by Madame de Ponty in the sixth issue in which she offsets the temporality of fashion against the temporality of seasonal festivities:

Comme deux fils, l'un de soie ou même de laine, et l'autre d'or qui s'interrompent et se rattachent entre eux, mêlés dans leur dessin annuel, alternant ici et l'évolution de la mode durant la saison et les fêtes. (*OCII*, p. 559)

Through this metaphorical presentation of time, through the language of couture, invoking fabrics and threads, Madame de Ponty characterizes the task of the fashion journalist as one of fabrication, knitting together these two interpenetrating temporalities, while Ix, too, in this first column highlights the interaction between two opposing temporalities — in this case 'maritime et céleste' to be the space in which the creative acts of reading and writing take place.

The description of this holiday period as being the ‘heure exacte’ for the magazine to appear reinforces *La Dernière Mode*’s carefully devised publication schedule, which sees the new issue arrive on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, as explained by Marasquin in his ‘Avis’ in the sixth issue of the magazine. The use of the verb ‘apparaître,’ first as a past participle, then in the infinitive suggests the uncertain temporality of the fashion magazine, which is consigned to the past as soon as it appears in the kiosks. However, the fleeting nature of chronological time cannot contain the protracted temporality of reading, which outlasts the short duration of the magazine and the fashions documented within its pages; this, in turn, highlights a discrepancy between the time-frame of the everyday and that of the imagination.<sup>34</sup> The ‘double azur maritime et celeste,’ described by Ix, meanwhile, can be likened to the ‘complexité marine et stellaire’ of the clock in the poet’s drafts of *Igitur*, upon which the ‘hazard infinis [sic] des conjonctions’ can be read. (*OCI*, p. 483) The chance coincidence of the horizontal axis of sense experience and the vertical plane of the imaginary represents a similar time and space of aesthetic potential. Thus, I suggest that in *La Dernière Mode*, through the persona of Ix, we see Mallarmé experimenting with complex problems relating to time, coincidence and writing which would continue to preoccupy him right up to the end of his life, and more apparent than ever in *Un Coup de dés*.

The ‘double azur’ of the sea and sky described in the last paragraph Ix’s first ‘Chronique’ suggests a coincidence of the tangible and the intangible, with the present moment serving as the horizon between them. Ending on this non-space, between fantasy and reality, the

---

<sup>34</sup> In *Un fantôme dans le kiosque* Roger Dragonetti reflects on the vocabulary of this passage from Ix’s first column, highlighting a spatial understanding of time: ‘il est presque évident que ‘cette saison de vacance’ vise le lieu de surgissement de toute œuvre, de même que l’heure exacte où paraît le journal, n’est pas autre chose que le degré zéro du Temps absolu, à partir duquel se déploie le temps chronologique du *quotidien*, dans tous les sens de ce mot.’ *Un fantôme dans le kiosque*, p. 40.

final paragraph of this column projects the reader into an imaginary realm, prolonging the lifespan of this issue well beyond its 'heure exacte d'apparaître.' (*OCII*, p. 499) The presentation of the ideal as being on the cusp between sea and sky is also seen in the final lines of 'Las de l'amer repos...', in which the speaker imagines the landscape of death:

Une ligne d'azur mince et pâle serait  
 Un lac, parmi le ciel de porcelaine nue,  
 Un clair croissant perdu par une blanche nue  
 Trempe sa corne calme en la glace des eaux,  
 Non loin de trois grands cils d'émeraude, roseaux. (*OCI*, p. 12)

Once again, a vertical axis is established here, as the speaker traces a thin, pale azure line in the sky. Likened to a lake, this final stanza emphasizes ideas of emptiness and absence, while the conditional tense creates a sense of possibility, suggesting the many different forms this delicate strip of 'azur' might take. The tangible and intangible are united in the image of the sky, described in material terms as being made of 'porcelaine nue' while the crescent moon is lost in a 'blanche nue'. The repetition of the adjective 'nue' as a rhyme in the feminine form evokes the feminine space as a 'fictif foyer' (*OCII*, p.157), a blank canvas upon which the drama of reading might take place, and emphasizes the fertile aesthetic potential of this empty, intermediary space.

Looking at some of Mallarmé's verse works alongside *La Dernière Mode*, it is clear that the notion of 'l'azur', intrinsically bound-up with ideas of insufficiency and absence, is being explored here for aesthetic effect. As Ix's initial column and *Igitur* both reveal, it is a 'vacant' moment, such as summer and midnight that aesthetic potential is revealed, offering the reader the possibility of escaping into the realm of the imagination, which is unbounded by the limitations of time and space. Ix's column can thus be seen to have evolved from Mallarmé's period of crisis during the 1860s and the discovery of 'le Néant' precipitated by the task of producing 'Hérodiade'; the fashion magazine offers a means of

masking the emptiness of the present, using its insufficiency as the starting point for the creative act of reading.

### **‘Le Carnet d’Or’: ‘ Une corbeille de jardin au mois d’Août ’**

To conclude this section of the chapter, I would like to take a look at the second guest contribution in the ‘Carnet d’Or’ section of the first issue of *La Dernière Mode*, supposedly contributed by an anonymous guest. Like the columns penned by Mallarmé’s alter-egos Madame de Ponty and Ix, examined above, this section of the magazine also takes a topical stance, discussing the merits of a planted flower basket, suitable for late summer.

Floral imagery is frequently associated with time and seasonal cycles in Mallarmé’s verse and prose poetry, and the presentation of flowers in Mallarmé’s œuvre is bound up with the dichotomy of the eternal and the ephemeral. Flowers were an important poetic motif in the nineteenth century. In Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal*,<sup>35</sup> flowers are presented as a symbol of the decline of the natural world and of moral decadence. Mallarmé’s early poetry shows him to be an heir to this tradition, as demonstrated in ‘Renouveau’, of 1866, discussed at the beginning of the chapter, in which the speaker describes his descent into ‘l’ennui’:

[...] je tombe énervé de parfums d’arbres, las,  
Et creusant de ma face une fosse à mon rêve,  
Mordant la terre chaude où poussent les lilas,

J’attends, en m’abîmant que mon ennui s’élève... (*OCI*, p. 11)

In Mallarmé’s later poetry, however, we see a departure from this decadent tradition, as the poet explores the symbolic value of flowers in a way which showcases the inherent linguistic connections that would, eventually, take up a central place in his poetics — this

---

<sup>35</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, pp. 5-160

can be seen, for example, in ‘Prose (pour des Esseintes)’. (*OCI*, p. 29) In this poem, flowers are linked with the ideal through the image of the iris, which belongs to the ‘famille des iridées’; phonetically, one can pick out the words ‘desir’ and ‘idée’ within this line, showing the ‘idée’ to be, linguistically, inherent to the image of the flower, and bound up with the theme of desire. The possibility of an alternative reading highlights the key idea within Mallarmé’s poetics that language should never be taken ‘at face value’.

The symbolic significance of flowers is also evident in Mallarmé’s theoretical writings, where they are used metaphorically, as a means of discussing the creative process itself. In his 1886 ‘Avant dire’ to René Ghil’s *Traité du Verbe*, Mallarmé draws on the image of the flower in order to explain how poetry differs from the ‘universel reportage’ (*OCII*, p. 678) through its particular relationship between word and object:

À quoi bon la merveille de transposer un fait de nature en sa presque disparition vibratoire selon le jeu de la parole cependant, si ce n’est pour qu’en émane, sans la gêne d’un proche ou concret rappel, la notion pure ?

Je dis: une fleur! et, hors de l’oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d’autre que les calices sus, musicalement se lève, idée rieuse ou altière, l’absente de tous bouquets. (*OCII*, p. 678)

As in ‘Prose (pour des Esseintes)’, in this passage, the symbol of the flower is connected with the idea, as it transcends its external referentiality and takes on a musical quality. With aesthetic value in its own right, the flower demonstrates Mallarmé’s poetics of absence. Used as an example, to explain this fundamental aspect of poet’s approach to literary creation, flowers can be seen as the symbol *par excellence* in Mallarméan poetics.<sup>36</sup> As I

---

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the relationship between language and flowers is alluded to by Madame de Ponty in her ‘Conseils sur l’Education’ feature in the seventh issue of *La Dernière Mode*. In the column, she discusses grammar handbooks and dictionnaires, extolling the virtues of the *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Française*, published by Hetzel and Emile Littré’s *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française*, which was of particular personal interest to Mallarmé. The columnist character concludes: ‘Les fleurs d’abord; puis, fussent-elles de rhétorique, le bouquet: les mots du langage et sa littérature.’ *OCII*, p. 634 This can, I suggest be read as precursor to Mallarmé’s description of his particular symbolist aesthetic in the ‘Avant dire’ to René Ghil’s *Traité du Verbe*.

shall demonstrate, the presentation of a flower basket, appropriate for August, in the first issue of the magazine, constitutes an experiment with themes and linguistic motifs which are at the very heart of Mallarmé's aesthetic.

This horticultural feature begins with an exclamation: 'Une corbeille d' Août! Désir dont l' exécution paraît difficile'. (*OCII*, p. 500) This opening sentence immediately emphasizes the time-specific nature of this feature; however, as has been seen from Madame de Ponty's column, situating the work of art in this unstable period between late summer and early autumn is likely to prove challenging. The creative yet destructive nature of time is alluded to as the anonymous speaker notes that 'Le soleil qui a fait fleurir le jardin, l' a fané' (*OCII*, p. 500); this paradoxical effect is enhanced by the alliteration, which sees the garden itself placed in an intermediary space, between the burgeoning seasons of spring and early summer, and the fading of this grandeur as autumn approaches. The sense of decline seen during this transitional period is reinforced by the evocation of midday and of the afternoon, which projects the reader's mind towards the end of the day; this introduces the theme of the solar drama.<sup>37</sup> Through the repeated references to the seasons, it quickly becomes clear that this first issue of *La Dernière Mode* has been published in the midst of a transitional phase, and this column, like the remainder of the issue, is primarily concerned with seizing the beauty of this brief instant:

Une vraie corbeille de plein été sera celle qui tirera de la nature même, de ses plantes, l' aspect poudreux, vaincu et pâli par la chaleur que doit avoir toute chose à cet instant. (*OCII*, p. 500)

---

<sup>37</sup> Although there is not time to discuss this in detail in this thesis, *La Dernière Mode* can usefully be read in light of the theme of the 'drame solaire', which assumed an important place in Mallarmé's aesthetic following his translation of George Cox's *Manual of Mythology*. The theme of the 'drame solaire' is examined in detail by Gardner Davies in *Mallarmé et le Drame solaire, essai d' exégèse raisonnée* (Paris, J. Corti, 1959), while Roger Pearson develops the theme in *Mallarmé and Circumstance* pp. 129-31 For a detailed examination of *La Dernière Mode* in light of the 'drame solaire' see Barbara Bohac's 2006 article 'La Dernière Mode de Mallarmé sous les feux du drame solaire'.

These lines highlight the issue's aim of extracting something lasting from the transitory. The true 'corbeille' seems to belong to the realm of the possible, thanks to the use of the future tense, which asserts its continued existence through language.

The wilting flowers and the fading grandeur of late summer are emblematic of this seasonal decline:

La lassitude entière de l'heure est exprimée par la *Centaurea Candidissima*, feuillage pâle et mat, presque blanchi de poussière, et négligemment le même sur ses deux faces chiffonnées. Tout l'effet de la corbeille se passe entre cette plante et une autre: l'*Obelia erineus*, qui, sèche et délicate, elle, avec ses fleurettes d'un bleu dur, va par des interstices, de la bordure ovale se perdre vers le sommet du tertre. (*OCII*, p. 500)

Flowers are a symbol of the fleeting, their wilting petals capturing the spirit of the moment. The use of the word 'lassitude' here, reinforces the feeling of decline and stagnation in this long, empty period, on the cusp of autumn; this sense of emptiness is reinforced by the emphasis on pallor, with the pale, dusty, crumpled leaves and the dry, delicate *Obelia*, whose blue flowers fade to nothingness.<sup>38</sup>

The beauty of wilting flowers seen in this section of the 'Carnet d'Or' echoes the 'grâce des choses fanées' evoked in 'Frisson d'hiver'. (*OCI*, p. 86) In this prose poem of 1864, Mallarmé introduces the theme of passing time through the image of an antique Saxon

---

<sup>38</sup> The image of the Blue Flower was a key motif in German Romanticism, where it was associated with the unattainable ideal. Of course, the colour blue is also a symbol of the ideal in Mallarmé's œuvre, through the image of the 'Azur'; one might therefore see the *Obelia erineus* as emblematic of the beauty concealed within the transient. The fascination with capturing the moment on the cusp of decline is a common decadent theme, though in his essay 'Dream Kitsch' Walter Benjamin characterizes this new preoccupation with capturing fleeting phenomena on the brink of obsolescence as part of a modern aesthetic, brought about by the dawn of technology. The desire to capture the 'aspect poudreux' of this blue flower anticipates Walter Benjamin's claim that 'no-one really dreams any longer of the Blue Flower [...] no longer does the dream reveal a blue horizon. The dream has grown gray. The gray coating of dust on things is its best part. Dreams are now a shortcut to banality. Technology consigns the outer image of things to a long farewell, like banknotes that are bound to lose their value. It is then that the hand retrieves this outer cast in dreams and, even as they are slipping away, makes contact with familiar contours. It catches hold of objects at their most threadbare and timeworn point. Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin - Selected Writings, 1927-1930* (Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 3.

clock, demonstrating the potential for physical objects and past fashions to transport the reader on a mental journey through time, creating a conversation between past and present selves.<sup>39</sup> By referring to the wilted garden, this contribution to the ‘Carnet d’Or’ similarly offsets the past splendour of the flowers during the summer against the current transitional phase, moving into the autumn, emphasizing the present as nothing more than a boundary between past and future. While ‘Frisson d’Hiver’ has a sombre, pensive mood, reflecting the poet’s depressive state during the mid-1860s, the evocation of the past is optimistic and resourceful, seizing upon the changing colours of the season. One might therefore see *La Dernière Mode* as indicative of a shift in the poet’s attitude to the role of art in the face of the fleeting: although time is always passing, the fashion magazine demonstrates a desire to use the creative process as an attempt to crystallize the transient beauty of the changing seasons.

The intricate description of this flower basket can be likened to the careful construction of outfits by Madame de Ponty, who combines various elements, showcasing their aesthetic dimension. This particular leaf from the ‘Carnet d’Or’ appeals to the reader on a variety of levels, combining visual and aural as the fading colours are enlivened by flecks of red and burnt orange in a vivid symphony of colours:

Ton principal: terne; le raviver maintenant. Quelques taches, brusquement et simplement rouge et de feu, sont nécessaires: voici le *Pelargonium Diogène* (rouge), dont les cinq pétales, consumées et un peu défaites [*sic*], font aussi place à la feuille décorative du *Coleus Beauté de Vilemore*, vineuse et verte et comme atteinte déjà par l’automne. (*OCII*, p. 500)

---

<sup>39</sup> Helen Abbott makes a convincing case for seeing this poem as a dialogue between past and future, through the parenthetical refrains. ‘while calling upon the old-fashioned object of an antique Saxon clock (unsurprisingly, given the nature of Mallarmé’s exploration of the relationship between the time of language, voice and meaning), Mallarmé patterns the prose poem with refrains set aside in brackets, thus establishing a close rapport between the evocation of the past and the current moment of poetic language.’ *Between Baudelaire and Mallarmé*, p. 171.

These lines allude to the tainted quality of the garden in late summer, creating a mood of decline and renewal. The opposition between creation and destruction is emphasized by the chiasmic structure of this first sentence, with the detrimental effects of time represented on one side of the semi-colon and, on the other, the potential for the creative process to revive the fading beauty of the natural world. This particular contribution to *La Dernière Mode* thus establishes an important opposition between nature and artifice, revealing the man-made environment to be resistant to the destructive effects of time, with the intervention of the artist, either as gardener or as writer, affording longevity to the fading flowerbeds. Here, once again ideas of transition are evoked as the lively greens of summer yield to the red *Pelargonium Diogenes*; these changes serve to draw attention to the rapid passing of time. The present moment is asserted once again through the use of the temporal marker ‘maintenant’; however, this is undermined by the fact that the flowers are ‘atteinte déjà par l’automne’, their foliage ‘presque blanchi’ (my emphasis). These temporal adverbs show the current moment to be nothing more than a ‘jumble’ of things which have already happened and things on the verge of existence. This contribution to the ‘Carnet d’Or’ thus explores ways of confronting the transience of everyday existence and articulating this in language, in a manner which prefigures Mallarmé’s assessment of the act of reading, described in the citation from ‘Mimique’ with which this thesis begins.

The use of the word ‘ton’ in the passage cited above has a musical quality, introducing a link between the aural and the visual, which is continued in the remainder of the column.

Tout cela, jeté sans un dessin précis, rencontre une harmonie qui se fait toute seule et brave, habilement parée de leur teinte même, les midis et les après-midi d’août. Le grand soleil de Touraine ou de Provence, sous quel ciel français qu’on se plaise à reproduire ce motif d’horticulture, lui sied: près d’une balustrade de pierre sèche ou d’un perron, au milieu d’un gazon anglais, si l’on veut une opposition avec la fraîcheur. (*OCII*, p. 500)

The haphazard arrangement of the garden is important, here, showcasing the beauty of the aleatory; this emphasis on chance can be read as an early indication of the role which layout and configuration would take in the poet's later aesthetic as a means of confronting 'le hasard'. The gardener – a metaphor for the reader – 'throws together' these various elements, leaving the elements to chance, in a manner reminiscent of the roll of the dice in *Igitur* and anticipating *Un Coup de dés*. This 'throw' is both intentional – striving to capture the beauty of the circumstances – and 'sans un dessin précis', as the 'harmonie se fait toute seule.' The link between this passage and the poetics of *Un Coup de dés* is reinforced by the fact that this article is not attributed to any journalistic persona, but is signed 'Au Parc Monceau' anticipating the idea that in the creative act 'RIEN N'AURA EU LIEU [...] QUE LE LIEU'. (*OCI*, p. 385)

The symbolic value of these flowers also anticipated the aesthetic described in Mallarmé's 'Avant dire' to René Ghil's *Traité du Verbe*, discussed earlier. The claim that, in the garden, the 'harmonie [...] se fait toute seule' anticipates the musical quality assumed by the flower as it transcends its physical status and becomes pure symbol. The symbolic value of clothing and dressing up is also established here, through the personification of this harmony, described as 'habilement parée.' This theme would be developed in Mallarmé's later work and stated explicitly in his interview with Jules Huret, in which the poet likens the practice of writing to that of dressing up, presenting language in material terms as the 'joyaux de l'homme.' (*OCII*, p. 701)

This anonymous contribution to the 'Carnet d'Or section' concludes by reinforcing the careful composition of this flower basket and the novel effect this creates.

Quatre plantes presque ordinaires (car la plate-bande atteint, selon la grandeur, le prix d'un Louis ou de deux): et un aspect bizarre et nouveau dans nos jardins;

entrevu déjà chez les Anglais, sans que toutefois l'impression en ait encore été, comme ici, expliquée. (*OCII*, p. 500)

In these final lines the emphasis is placed very much on ideas of perception and seeing, adding weight to the idea of the new not as a quality in itself, but rather as a means of transforming the familiar. The use of the word 'entrevu' here, as in Madame de Ponty's first column, once again highlights the idea of the new as existing in an intermediary space, to be glimpsed in temporal interstices. Novelty seems to consist in according an 'aspect bizarre' to the ordinary, as demonstrated here, as commonplace plants take on a new dimension through the careful composition of this seasonal flower basket. Thus, it becomes clear, even in journalism, that the practices of reading and writing do not manage to represent the events of the world 'in real time' but rather seek to achieve novelty by offering a 're-presentation' of the world of sense experience. In this short feature from the 'Carnet d'Or' section of the first issue, the careful composition of the 'Corbeille d'Automne' shows the 'aspect bizarre et nouveau' of plants which, alone, would be 'presque ordinaires'. The mutually dependent acts of reading and writing thus transcend the fleeting temporality of the material world, instead creating a lasting 'réminiscence de l'objet, baignée dans une neuve atmosphère'. (*OCII*, p.213)

## **Conclusion**

*La Dernière Mode* marks the beginning of a new approach to time and temporality in Mallarmé's œuvre. As has been established, the fashion press defines itself by its relationship to time, both in form and in content. Given the poet's interest in temporality and in seasonal cycles, demonstrated, in particular, in his verse and prose poetry of the 1860s, it is not difficult to see why the fashion magazine, with its emphasis on transition and re-definition might have appealed to Mallarmé. In *La Dernière Mode*, the poet's exploration of the fleeting beauty to be found in the natural world takes an alternative

direction, as he explores temporal experience in a social context, both in the public and in the private domain.

The fashion magazine operates according to a similar temporal mechanism to Mallarmé's early poetry, with the ephemeral pitted against the possibility of the eternal, expressed in his poetic works through terms such as 'l'infini', l'Idée' and 'l'Azur', and in the magazine by the unattainable 'dernière mode'. In this sense *La Dernière Mode* is also vitally connected with *Igitur* —in the philosophical 'closet drama', as in the fashion magazine, the ultimate goal is to separate the subject from passing time, achieving, respectively, either pure existence or the last / latest fashion.

The engagement with temporality in *La Dernière Mode* can be read in light of Mallarmé's discovery of 'le Néant' in the 1860s. The awareness of the futility of existence and of passing time expressed in the fashion magazine anticipates that of later writings such as the *Vers de circonstance* which offer a ludic celebration of the moment, while nevertheless acknowledging the destructive effects of the onward march of time. I argue that *La Dernière Mode* stands at a pivotal moment in the evolution of Mallarmé's aesthetic, marking a departure from Parnassian ideas of temporality and decline, and from a Baudelairean sense of 'ennui', towards a new poetics which was at once more material and more spiritual than the poet's pre-crisis works.

Fashion journalism offered Mallarmé the ideal arena for experimenting with this dynamic relationship between the material and the spiritual, and between the eternal and the ephemeral. Like poetic language, fashion works in a similar manner to the mime, existing for and in itself: it is, to quote Madame de Ponty, the 'Bijou, isolé et en lui même' (*OCH*,

p. 490). It is only in an atemporal world where the present is embodied in its fullness that the last / latest fashion might be found. Instead, bound by the limitations of clocks and calendars, the columnist characters in *La Dernière Mode* are forced to refer back and forth in time, in a bid to situate themselves in the moment. However, from issue to issue the impossibility of this endeavour becomes apparent as the various tricks they use to manipulate time and mask the emptiness of the moment systematically fail. The task of the fashion journalist, like that of the poet, thus confirms the claim that Mallarmé would make in 'L'Action restreinte', in 1895, that 'il n'est pas de Présent' (*OCII*, p. 217). Instead, the magazine uses references to time in order to stage an imaginary present, fabricating a rich and magical tapestry of fashions and festivities, which serves to conceal 'le vide contemporain derrière' (*OCII*, p. 276).

## Chapter Two

### Drama

*'Le théâtre est d'essence supérieure.'*<sup>40</sup>

In his theoretical writings, Mallarmé both celebrates and denigrates the theatre. He extols the 'magnificence' of the stage, 'cet assemblage miraculeux de tout ce qu'il faut pour façonner de la divinité', (*OCII*, p. 180) and yet finds himself disappointed by its inferiority to reading. Lamenting the state of contemporary drama in the 1892 article 'Solennité', the poet deems that 'un livre, dans notre main, s'il énonce quelque idée auguste, supplée à tous les théâtres', (*OCII*, p.201) confirming the superior aesthetic potential of the book. This ambivalence towards drama marked Mallarmé's poetry and prose writings; throughout his career he wrestled with the temptation and impossibility of the theatre, never completing his dramatic poem 'Hérodiade', begun in 1864, at the age of 22, and abandoning the heroic interlude of 'L'Après-midi d'un faune', which he would return to in 1875, following the financial collapse of *La Dernière Mode*.<sup>41</sup> It was also at the end of the 1860s, with the onset

---

<sup>40</sup> 'Le Genre ou des modernes,' *OCII*, p. 179.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Bertrand Marchal, 'Notices et variantes' in *OCII*, p. 1167.

of the ‘crisis years’, that Mallarmé began to experiment with different approaches to reading, moving towards an idea of drama which would take place on the page, rather than on the stage, shown through the prose narrative of *Igitur*, a philosophical ‘conte’ whose different episodes can be likened to ‘acts’ in a play. In the 1880s, Mallarmé took a critical stance, writing a series of articles on drama entitled ‘Notes sur le théâtre’ for the *Revue indépendante*; these critical writings, published between 1886 and 1887, explore themes of dance, theatricality and performance, offering valuable insight into the poet’s view of the relationship between drama and reading. In the years which followed, the poet would republish the ‘Notes sur le théâtre’ with some revisions, alongside later articles for the *National Observer*, as part of the ‘Crayonné au théâtre’ section of the *Divagations*.

The ideal book is a work in which many different artistic genres and concepts intermingle; it serves as a nexus for the many aspects of literature which Mallarmé refers to in his theoretical prose writings, and which are evident throughout the *Divagations*, as well as in his verse and prose poetry, narrative writing, journalistic articles, and, of course, in his correspondence. The articles of ‘Crayonné au théâtre’, alongside later writings on art, literature and reading, demonstrate Mallarmé’s emphasis on drama and theatricality as a central element of the ‘Livre’. The ‘Notes en vue du Livre’ also attest to the importance of drama and performance in revealing the ideal in the public sphere. These mystifying diagrams and jottings draw heavily on the vocabulary of the theatre, establishing a number of key terms which are central to the ideal book, including ‘Théâtre’, ‘Drame’, ‘Mystère’, ‘Héros’, ‘Hymne’, ‘Idée’ and ‘Livre’, which all appear with an initial capital, highlighting their fundamental importance to the ‘Livre’. Many nouns associated with literature, the theatre and performance, in lower case letters are also seen in the notes, showing the diverse

interpenetrating ‘genres’ which would form part of this hypothetical ‘master-work’.<sup>42</sup> The word ‘drame’ (or abbreviations thereof) occurs more than thirty times in Jacques Scherer’s edition of Mallarmé’s notes on the ‘Livre’, while ‘Théâtre’, and abbreviated forms of the word, appears some twenty-seven times attesting to the relationship between drama and the revelation of the Idea.<sup>43</sup> Examples of drama and performance are abundant in Mallarmé’s poetry and prose writings, and these various genres are all represented in his diverse works. From the bathetic character of the ‘Pitre châtié’ in the *Poésies* to the sublime image of the dancer, in ‘Ballets’ Mallarmé’s entire œuvre represents an arena in which page and stage unite.

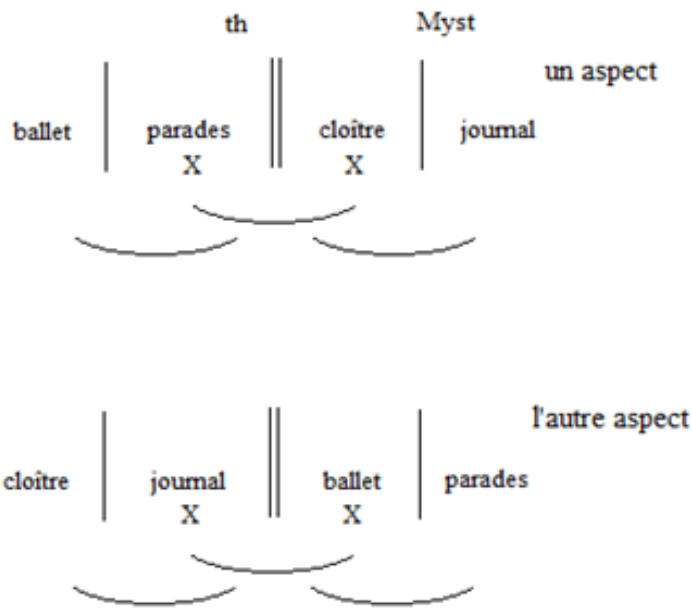
In the ‘Notes’ Mallarmé alludes to the role of journalism within the architecture of the ideal book, reinforcing the possibility that the journalistic work might serve as a means of testing out some of the isolated components of the total ‘Livre’. The notes feature a number of diagrams which link some of the key concepts associated with the idea of the ‘Livre’; in

---

<sup>42</sup> Eric Benoît offers a detailed explanation of these key terms, and offers the term ‘genre’ to qualify these aspects of the ‘Livre’ in *Mallarmé et le Mystère du Livre* (Paris: Champion, 1998), p. 24.

<sup>43</sup> According to a survey I conducted of the use of these terms in Stéphane Mallarmé, *Le ‘Livre’ de Mallarmé*, ed. by Jacques Scherer (Paris: Gallimard, 1977).

several of these diagrams, the word ‘journal’ is explicitly connected to performative genres:



(OCI, p. 579)

Given the apparent importance of the notion of journalism, both within Mallarmé’s concept of the ideal book, and as demonstrated in the *Divagations*, the magazine could be seen as an arena in which the relationships between concepts fundamental to the ‘Livre’ are tested out. Linking the ‘journal’ to the performance arts highlights the common potential of both page and stage for translating the idea into the public space. The journal is also connected with the ‘cloître’, emphasizing the religious dimension to the ‘Livre’. I argue that *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as part of an exploration of this web of connections which links the ‘journal’ with both the performance arts and ritualistic acts, uniting the secular and the spiritual, the public and the private, and opening up the dramatic dimension to the practice of reading.

Mallarmé’s relationship with drama and the theatre can be seen as having evolved through two different phases. The first phase was practical, as the poet explored the aesthetic value of theatre and performance through closet dramas and dramatic poems; the second phase,

beginning with the 1885 article ‘Richard Wagner, rêverie d’un poète français’ and continuing into the following decade, saw Mallarmé take a critical stance, allowing him to explore the relationship between literature and the performing arts. This would pave the way for the articles on literature, the ‘Livre’, and the religion of the book, in the 1890s. Dividing Mallarmé’s œuvre up in this way reveals a gap in the evolution of the poet’s engagement with the theatre, during the 1870s. However, Mallarmé was by no means disengaged from ideas of drama and performance during this decade — his personal correspondence from the 1870s attests to his growing fascination with the poetics of the theatre. In a letter of 1877 to Sarah Helen Whitman, the poet talks of embarking upon a long-term project which harnesses all the aspects of performance.

La grande tentative d’un théâtre entièrement nouveau à laquelle je m’adonne me prendra plusieurs années [...]. Trop ambitieux, ce n’est pas à un genre que je touche, c’est à tous ceux que comporte selon moi la scène: drame magique, *populaire* et lyrique; et ce n’est que l’œuvre triple terminée, que je la donnerai presque simultanément, mettant comme un Néron le feu à trois coins de Paris.<sup>44</sup>

At this point in his life, Mallarmé seems heavily concerned with innovation, keen to produce a new and ambitious work which fuses poetry and drama, whilst appealing to the masses. In this letter, Mallarmé undermines the idea of drama as a genre in itself, instead casting the theatre as a fusion of many different aesthetic modes, each with their own value as part of the ideal work. Describing his newly-conceived project as being ‘trop ambitieux’ this letter contains a subtle hint of the impossibility of completing this grandiose work, which would straddle the gulf between humanity and the ideal through language, being at once ‘magique, populaire et lyrique.’ *La Dernière Mode*, with its descriptions of fantastical creations, its appeal to a mass audience, and its beautifully crafted prose, voiced through the mouthpieces of these columnist characters, might be seen to have influenced the

---

<sup>44</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance (Vol. II 1871-1885)* (ed. by Henri Mondor & Lloyd James Austin) (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), p. 151.

conception of this over-ambitious tripartite work; indeed, the fashion magazine could even be considered a prototype of this new form of theatre, which would unite all the many genres encompassed by the stage.

I contend that, more than any other work by Mallarmé, *La Dernière Mode* is fundamental to understanding the transition between the poet's theatrical endeavours in the 1860s and his critical writings of the 1880s and 1890s. This chapter will cast 1874 as a pivotal moment in Mallarmé's approach to drama, performance and theatricality, arguing that the fashion magazine allowed him to experiment with ways of combining the roles of dramatist and critic. The presence of the columnist characters is central to the theatrical status of *La Dernière Mode*; in the magazine *Ix*, Madame de Ponty, Miss Satin and their 'supporting cast' of guest contributors are each given a distinct, individual voice through differences in the content and written style of their columns, lending the text a polyphonic dimension. However, the journalistic personae of *La Dernière Mode* are shrouded in mystery — the reader is given little information about their 'identity', other than odd details such as their gender and nationality, making them appear rather one-dimensional. As such, the columnist characters in the fashion magazine are little more than positions from which to speak. I argue that Madame de Ponty, *Ix*, Miss Satin, and the remainder of the fictitious contributors to *La Dernière Mode*, can be seen as conforming to Mallarmé's concept of the 'Type'. The 'Type', introduced in 'Richard Wagner, rêverie d'un poète français', is a vague and undeveloped character, 'dégagé de personnalité', upon which the spectator or reader can project their own interpretation, bringing the character to life in the 'fictif foyer' of the mind.<sup>45</sup> (*OCH*, p. 157) Many of Mallarmé's 'dramatic' figures can be identified with the

---

<sup>45</sup> As Nikolaj Lübecker observes, 'Mallarmé argues that the more abstract an onstage character is, the easier it will be for the spectator to invest himself in the piece by helping to bring forth this character ('le Type'). The resistance to incarnation thus constitutes an appeal to the imagination of the spectator and this appeal, conversely, invites us to engage in a process of imagination that can produce an incarnation.' Nikolaj

‘Type’, including Igitur, Hérodiade and Loïe Fuller; this theatrical figure can be seen as a mirror of the self, ‘car il compose notre aspect multiple: que de prestiges correspondant au fonctionnement national, évoque l’Art, pour le mirer en nous.’ (*OCII*, p. 157)

The dramatic aspect of *La Dernière Mode* is reinforced by its preoccupation with the props of modern life; in the magazine, as in Mallarmé’s poetry, decorative trinkets, ornaments and fashion accessories allow the poet to showcase the beauty and symbolic value of everyday objects. The theatrical nature of the magazine is coupled with a critical aspect, afforded by the reflexions on drama and the theatre in Ix’s ‘Chronique de Paris’. Standing at a crossroads between Mallarmé’s failed attempts to produce a drama of language in ‘Hérodiade’ and ‘L’Après-midi d’un faune’, and his role as theatre critic in the mid-1880s, I contend that the fashion magazine can be seen as both theatrical and meta-theatrical in that it uses the mechanisms of drama, whilst also offering a critical perspective on ‘real-life’ theatrical performances taking place in Paris. This chapter will assert that the dramatic techniques used in the magazine, and the ideas on drama, theatre, performance and reading expressed through the mouthpieces of the columnist characters bear witness to the poet’s changing attitude to drama, paving the way for the articles of ‘Crayonné au théâtre’ and for the theoretical writings on literature, published during the 1890s.

This chapter will take a thematic approach, examining the language of drama and performance in *La Dernière Mode* in relation to Mallarmé’s wider œuvre. The first section will situate the fashion magazine in the context of his exploration of the poetics of the theatre during the 1860s. Although I acknowledge the importance of the closet drama of

---

Lübecker, *Community, Myth and Recognition in Twentieth-Century French Literature and Thought* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), p. 64.

*Igitur*, for reasons of space and focus, this chapter will devote attention to the genesis of ‘L’Après-midi d’un faune’ and ‘Hérodiade’, making the case for seeing the fashion magazine as participating in the same dramatic aesthetic. Having examined the practical applications of theatricality and drama in Mallarmé’s early works, the chapter will then go on to consider the poet’s critical writings on the theatre, placing particular emphasis on the articles collected under the heading ‘Crayonné au théâtre’. In this part of the chapter I will make a case for seeing the fashion magazine and, in particular, Ix’s ‘Chronique de Paris’ as revealing early formulations of ideas on drama, which the poet would later develop and express in his own voice.

The middle part of this chapter will explore the theme of ‘la foule’ which is closely connected with Mallarmé’s ideas on drama, the theatre and society. In doing so, it will cast the 1870s and, in particular, *La Dernière Mode* as a transitional moment in Mallarmé’s attitude to the masses. The relationship between the work of art and the crowd is an important aspect of the ‘Livre’; the ‘Notes en vue du Livre’ place especial emphasis on the performative aspects of the book as a means of revealing the Idea in the public sphere. In light of this connection, I will make the case for seeing *La Dernière Mode* as establishing important links between journalism and performance which would form a vital part of the poet’s conception of the ‘Livre’.

The final part of this chapter will assess the presentation of the act of reading in *La Dernière Mode*, situating the poet’s interest in public and private rituals as part of the quest to establish literature as a ‘culte moderne’. (*OCII*, p.657) This section will focus on the presentation of reading as a sacramental and sacrificial act in the fashion magazine, showing *La Dernière Mode* to be a testing ground for the development of concept of the

book as a ‘spiritual instrument.’ Looking at the poet’s interest in performative acts, both in the public and in the private domain, and examining the change in the poet’s approach to the masses, this chapter will thus characterize *La Dernière Mode* as a turning point in the development in Mallarmé’s aesthetic, introducing key ideas of drama and performance and exploring the relationship between secular and spiritual rituals, which would become important symbols in his later poetics.

### **Theatre in practice: Mallarmé’s ‘Virtual Theater’**

Even as a child, Mallarmé showed a profound fondness for drama. The poet seems to have been particularly fascinated with the multiple voices and identities which could be assumed through performance. In *Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama* Haskell M. Block notes that Mallarmé’s interest in theatre and performance began at an early age:

A love of performance seems to have been instinctive in the poet as a boy; for himself as well as for his family at Sens, Mallarmé at the age of sixteen and seventeen performed spectacles in which he played all the parts on an improvised “stage”.<sup>46</sup>

A clear parallel can be drawn between the adolescent poet’s desire to eliminate the collaborative aspect of drama by simultaneously playing all the parts in his own imaginary spectacles and his abolition of journalistic collaboration in *La Dernière Mode*, achieved by adopting the masks of these various columnist characters. The many (dis)guises adopted by Mallarmé, the various playful and self-consciously symbolic names he assumes, and the emphasis on drama, dressing-up and decoration all contribute to the theatrical dimension of the fashion magazine. Stepping into these eclectic roles in *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé explores the possibilities of a different kind of drama, in which the multiple voices of the journalistic personae are all brought to life through the reading process.

---

<sup>46</sup> Haskell M. Block, *Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 6.

The interest in characterisation and the way in which the ‘Type’ is brought to life through the written word in *La Dernière Mode* can be seen to have evolved from the poet’s experiments with drama in the 1860s, which saw him turn away from the physical space of the theatre in favour of a ‘Virtual Theater’ which would dispense with the tools of representation, taking place on the page rather than on the stage.<sup>47</sup> Mallarmé’s early work allowed him to explore the aesthetic possibilities of dramatic techniques and to develop ways of incorporating elements of the theatre into the literary text. In a letter of 30 October 1864, Mallarmé announced to Henri Cazalis that he had begun work on ‘Hérodiade’, describing his trepidation, ‘car j’invente une langue qui doit nécessairement jaillir d’une poétique très nouvelle, que je pourrais définir en ces deux mots: *Peindre non la chose, mais l’effet qu’elle produit.*’ (OCI, p. 663) This would mark the beginning of an increasingly turbulent relationship with the theatre.

The ambitious project of ‘Hérodiade’ proved to be a source of anguish for Mallarmé. In June 1865 he wrote to Henri Cazalis, declaring that ‘cette œuvre solitaire m’a stérilisé’; in the letter he vowed to leave ‘Hérodiade’ for the ‘cruels hivers’, instead bringing his much anticipated faun into the world:<sup>48</sup> ‘dans l’intervalle, je rime un intermède héroïque, dont le

---

<sup>47</sup> Evelyn Gould applies the term ‘Virtual Theater’ to a selection of texts which she sees as being inherently dramatic, though not physical or representational theatre. Gould sees this tradition as beginning with Diderot’s *Le Neveu de Rameau* and takes Mallarmé as the most recent proponent of this form of textual drama, placing particular emphasis on ‘Hérodiade’ and ‘L’Après-midi d’un faune’. I shall use the term ‘Virtual Theater’ in this chapter to refer to Mallarmé’s idea of a theatre of reading, staged in the mind. Evelyn Gould, *Virtual Theater from Diderot to Mallarmé* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

<sup>48</sup> Mallarmé had previously mentioned his plans to create a work featuring the character of the faun in a letter of 7 January 1864 in which the poet tells Henri Cazalis the news of his marriage. Linking the character with this event, Mallarmé tells his friend, ‘si jamais je mets un petit faune au monde, il sera légitime.’ Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance complète 1862-1871*, ed. by Bertrand Marchal (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), p. 163. From these words we can conclude that, at this point, Mallarmé was still excited by the possibility of producing the drama of the faun.

héros est un Faune.’ (*OCI*, p. 678) In this letter, Mallarmé alludes to the innovative form that the ‘faun intermezzo’ would take, and emphasizes his great ambitions for the work:

Ce poème renferme une très belle et haute idée, mais les vers sont terriblement difficiles à faire, car je le fais absolument scénique, non possible au théâtre, mais exigeant le théâtre. (*OCI*, p. 678)

These words to Henri Cazalis reveal Mallarmé’s preoccupation with the ‘idée’, during the mid-1860s; the use of the verb ‘renfermer’ presents the poem as a receptacle in which the idea is concealed. The notion that the work should be dependent on the theatre, but not possible in the theatre highlights the poet’s new-found interest in a dramatic mode of writing which would use the tools and mechanisms of the theatre, but would take place not on a physical stage, but in an intermediary space, between the text and the mind of the reader. Evelyn Gould seizes upon Mallarmé’s words in this letter to Cazalis, claiming that ‘when Mallarmé redefines his “L’Après-midi d’un faune” [...], he opens an inquiry into his own fundamentally ambivalent fascination with the virtuality of the theatre.’<sup>49</sup>

Despite his reservations about the limitations of the physical space of the theatre, in the letter to Cazalis, discussed above, Mallarmé also shares details of his intention to submit his ‘Monologue d’un faune’, as it was known in this first incarnation, to the Théâtre Français, which he did in August 1865, as planned.<sup>50</sup> As Rosemary Lloyd notes, the drama of the faun was not well-received by the reading panel, which included Mallarmé’s friend Théodore de Banville and Constant Coquelin, the actor envisaged for the starring role. The

---

<sup>49</sup> *Virtual Theater*, p. 141.

<sup>50</sup> Lloyd James Austin traces the evolution of ‘L’Après-midi d’un faune’, explaining that ‘l’on connaît trois “états” du poème: le ‘Monologue d’un faune’, composé sans doute en 1865 en vue d’une représentation au Théâtre Français qui n’a pas eu lieu; l’*Improvisation d’un faune*, préparée vraisemblablement en 1875 pour le troisième *Parnasse contemporain* qui le refusa, et révélée seulement en 1948 ; enfin, “l’Après-midi d’un faune”, publié en 1876. L.J. Austin, *Essais sur Mallarmé* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 175.

play was rejected on the grounds that it would not appeal to public tastes, as Mallarmé explains in a letter of 16 October 1865 to Théodore Aubanel:

Les vers de mon *Faune* ont plu infiniment, mais de Banville et Coquelin n'y ont pas rencontré l'anecdote nécessaire que demande le public, et m'ont affirmé que cela n'intéressait que les poètes.

J'abandonne mon sujet quelques mois dans un tiroir pour le refaire plus tard. (*OCI*, p. 683)

As it turned out, the faun drama was to be shelved for more than a few months, as the final version of 'L'Après-midi d'un faune' was not published until 1876. While the 'Monologue d'un faune' might not have been in keeping with the interests of theatre goers, the form, subject matter and written style of *La Dernière Mode* are designed to entertain;<sup>51</sup> the fashion magazine might thus be seen as a response to the criticism of Banville and Coquelin, following the rejection of the 'Monologue d'un faune'

Abandoning the faun, Mallarmé returned to his other adolescent protagonist, Hérodiade. The unfortunate outcome of Mallarmé's first attempt at creating a stage production served as a catalyst for his movement away from the physical space of the theatre. Although it seems that the poet had initially envisaged 'Hérodiade' as a stage performance, with earlier manuscripts featuring stage directions, Mallarmé now planned to re-invent 'Hérodiade' as a poem – this was to be a decisive moment in the development of his poetics. Later on in the same letter to Aubanel, cited above, Mallarmé explains his motivation for the re-conception of the drama, outlining the advantages of this new literary hybrid:

[...] je commence "Hérodiade", non plus tragédie mais poème (pour les mêmes raisons) et, surtout parce que je gagne ainsi l'attitude, les vêtements, le décor et l'ameublement, sans parler du mystère. (*OCI*, p. 683)

---

<sup>51</sup> Rosemary Lloyd gives a detailed account of the events surrounding Mallarmé's failed attempts to bring the faun to the world. Citing Bertrand Marchal, Lloyd notes that this was not the first time Banville had reminded Mallarmé of the need to consider how his work would be received by the general public, when writing stage dramas. Mallarmé seems to have heeded the advice on the need to engage with a less niche audience when producing the fashion magazine. Rosemary Lloyd, *Mallarmé: The Poet and His Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 49-51.

This statement reveals the aesthetic merits of the theatre, in Mallarmé's eyes. Alluding to the 'attitude' of the theatre, the poet reveals his fascination with drama as a mode, as well as suggesting the possibilities afforded by appropriating elements such as costume, set and props, which he wished to retain in his new conception of 'Hérodiade' as a poetic rather than a dramatic work. Transforming 'Hérodiade' from a stage play to a poem allowed Mallarmé to exploit the tools of the theatre, whilst enjoying the imaginative possibilities afforded by the poetic form.

While, perhaps not 'absolument scénique' as Mallarmé hoped 'Hérodiade' to be, *La Dernière Mode* nevertheless gains a theatrical dimension through its presentation of space. The various columns in the magazine can be read as scenes, with each column taking the form of a journalistic soliloquy; the individual issues can thus be seen to constitute discrete acts in the drama of fashion. All of the advantages of the theatre listed by Mallarmé in his letter to Aubanel are present in *La Dernière Mode*, conjuring up a vivid picture of the drama of everyday life, both in the public and the private sphere. Madame de Ponty's 'La Mode' column seizes on the possibilities of costume, conjuring up 'toilettes et toilettes encore, teintées ou noires, images placées hors du texte et dans le texte et plusieurs écrites même avec la plume.' (*OCII*, p. 558) This vibrant assortment of ideal fashions combines ball gowns and theatre-going attire with outfits suitable for a day at home, to 'garder la maison, abritée contre la longueur des heures par cette soie ou ces dentelles.' (*OCII*, p. 558)

*La Dernière Mode* explores the aesthetics of space in a way which can be seen to have evolved from the task of 'Hérodiade' and 'L'Après-midi d'un faune'. Décor and furnishings, too, are an essential feature of *La Dernière Mode*. Marliani, the *tapissier-décorateur* is the only guest contributor to appear in more than one issue, emphasizing the

importance of space and décor within the fashion magazine. There are three articles on interior décor across the eight issues of *La Dernière Mode*. The first of these, found in the second issue of the magazine, discusses converting a Jewish Dutch oil lamp to gas.<sup>52</sup> More relevant to the current matter of dramatic décor in *La Dernière Mode* are the two descriptions of ceiling panels, one removable and suitable for a rental property, the other appropriate for a new dining room, found in the fourth and seventh issues of the magazine, respectively. In the remainder of this section I will focus on the second of these, the ‘Panneau d’une salle à manger nouvelle.’

Examining the second of Marliani’s ceiling panels, suggested for a dining room, it becomes clear that the language of interior design closely parallels that of the theatre, suggesting that the domestic environment might be seen as a dramatic space in which the world’s ‘intimate galas’ (*OCII*, p. 162) might play out. In the article, Marliani describes this decorative panel which ‘avec sa soierie de l’Inde ou du papier de riz du Japon, donnera le ton (par exemple exotique) à toute la pièce’. The words for ‘room’ — ‘pièce’ and ‘salle’ — of course, are part of the lexis of the theatre, and their interchangeability in this article suggests a dramatic dimension to the domestic environment. These rich oriental materials contribute to the theatrical effect, transporting the reader to an exotic world in her mind’s eye. Marliani goes on to explain the evocative potential of the visual and plastic arts: ‘tout tableau, peint ou brodé, a comme un voile d’immobilité jeté sur la vie mystérieuse de ces paysages fluviaux ou marins: comment, ce fond de mer ou de fleuve, le posséder véritable ?’ (*OCII*, p. 627) Incorporating the aspects of the theatre into the domestic environment offers the possibility of ‘possessing’ this imaginary world, inhabiting it through the imagination.

---

<sup>52</sup> Marliani’s ‘Adaptation du Gaz aux lampes Juives de Hollande’ is examined by Damian Catani in the context of Mallarmé’s engagement with society in *The Poet in Society*, pp. 86-89.

Marliani's proposed ceiling panel is altogether more elaborate than the usual silk or rice-paper covered fixtures. The feature described here is made of two vast sheets of glass, which can be filled with water, in order to house an aquarium.

Dans la profondeur du mur, mitoyen soit avec une chambre contiguë, soit avec le dehors, jardin ou cour, pratiquer une ouverture, grande à volonté, mais à un mètre au moins d'élévation du plancher. Comme pour un bassin, cimenter la *section* des murs, traversés par le conduit ordinaire de la Dhuys ou de la Vanne, jet à droite, déversoir à gauche pour l'eau que contiendra cet espace vide, une fois deux vastes et fortes glaces sans tain dressées ! Un de ces rectangles de verre, celui situé extérieurement, ouvre un fragment à coulisse, au-dessus du niveau d'eau ordinaire, pour l'air ou *ce qu'il plaît d'introduire*; l'autre demeure tout d'un morceau. *Ce qu'il plaît d'introduire*, c'est les poissons et les crustacés les plus rares de nos côtes ou des archipels lointains; dorades, racasses, polypes, étoiles, poissons-télescopes du Japon, etc; c'est les plantes. (*OCII*, p. 627)

Here, the theatrical language continues as the word for an opening — 'ouverture' — can also be read in musical terms, reinforcing the link between the language of performance and that of interior design. Openings and apertures are an important theme in Mallarmé's poetics, offering a space in which the ideal can be glimpsed: indeed, in this instance it is in the 'espace vide' that this marvellous feat of interior design is housed. The emphasis on the 'ouverture' and the 'espace vide' as containing the water, with its own living work of art, which might include fish and plants, draws attention to the importance of empty spaces as the stage upon which the drama of language, and of existence might play out. Ideas of perception are reinforced by the 'glace sans tain' which has a prismatic effect, suggesting a transformation of perception allowed by this decorative construction; this image is reinforced by the telescope fish whose great, bulging eyes offer a vivid and hyperbolic metaphor for the act of seeing. However, Marliani's ceiling panel, like 'Virtual Theater', is nothing more than a means of masking the 'vide [...] derrière', symbolised by the bare ceiling which is concealed behind.

Given the dramatic dimension to the magazine, established through the use of costume, space, décor and characterization, I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* can be seen to have evolved from the projects of ‘Hérodiade’ and ‘L’Après-midi d’un faune’ in the early part of the 1860s, which opened the poet’s eyes to the possibility of a vivid drama, taking place within the mind of the reader, rather than in the physical space of the stage. Marliani’s contribution describing a ceiling panel for the dining room can be seen as a microcosm of this drama, which fuses the intimate space of the home with the lexis of the theatre, in order to explore the dramatic potential of language, evoking a vivid and fantastical drama in the domestic environment. *La Dernière Mode* makes use of the journalistic form and appeals to the reader’s experience of everyday life in the home and in the public sphere, inviting her to use her material surroundings as a starting point this process of virtual dramatization.

### **Theatre as theory: ‘Crayonné au théâtre’**

The 1880s brought a shift in Mallarmé’s attitude to the theatre. Following his abortive attempts at writing a stage play and his subsequent experiments with creating a ‘Virtual Theater’, Mallarmé approached the stage from an alternative angle, taking up the role of theatre critic. This presented its own challenges for the poet who notes in the ‘Bibliographie’, found at the end of *Divagations*, that the mediocre nature of drama during the latter part of the nineteenth century made it almost impossible to write good theatre criticism, comparing his challenging task to that of admired predecessors Gautier, de Janin, Saint-Victor, Banville and, perhaps most importantly, Catulle Mendès. In the article, first published in the *Revue blanche* in 1896, the poet declares his sporadic theatre-going habits and voices his dissatisfaction with contemporary drama. The shortcomings of modern theatre described in ‘Bibliographie’ suggest that, even towards the end of his life, the poet still felt a need to re-define the idea of drama, re-incarnating it as a literary mode which

might take place beyond the confines of the stage. ‘Bibliographie’ also gives the poet cause to highlight the redeeming features of the journalistic form, which enabled him to carry out this dramatic campaign.

Tous les morceaux suivants, à l’exception en CRAYONNE AU THEATRE, de ‘Les Fonds dans le ballet’ retrouvable en la *Revue franco-américaine*, première livraison éditée par le prince André Poniatowski et du paragraphe ‘Le seul, il le fallait’ inédit, puis de ‘Planches et feuillets’ au *National Observer*, exposent, selon la teneur à peu de chose près, un campagne dramatique que je fis en la *Revue indépendante*.. et inoubliable dans des conditions assez particulières – je n’allais que rarement au théâtre: d’où peut-être la chimérique exactitude de tels aperçus, et quand j’y indiquais quelque éloignement pour les feuilletons ou comptes rendus après ceux, professionnels et merveilleux, d’un Gautier, de Janin, de Saint-Victor, d’un Banville, non, du tout, je ne songeais pas, sérieusement, que le genre honoré par ces grands lettrés, ressusciterait aujourd’hui et prodiguerait un éclat qui s’apparente au leur à tous, net, suprême, imposant, avec Catulle Mendès capable de se produire quotidiennement magnifique en vers des occasions moyennes: j’essaie, devant de tels rideaux de raison, de prestige, de loyauté et de charme sur cela, qui continue pour moi, un manque d’intérêt ou l’usage actuel du théâtre, avec furie et magie drapés, de ne percevoir pas le vide contemporain derrière. (*OCII*, p. 275)

The frustration with contemporary drama which Mallarmé describes in this passage was evidently brewing long before these articles were written during the 1880s and 1890s. ‘L’Après-midi d’un faune’ and ‘Hérodiade’ reveal both the allure and the insufficiency of the theatre, in the poet’s eyes; this is supported by the letters he exchanged with friends and literary contemporaries whilst writing these dramatic poems. Moreover, in the citation above, Mallarmé highlights an awareness of the aesthetic mediocrity of everyday life with its ‘occasions moyennes’.

In these lines from ‘Bibliographie’, Mallarmé makes some pertinent remarks about the cultural context of his own ‘quart dernier de siècle’, (*OCII*, p. 211) giving the reader a sense of the context in which the ‘Crayonné au théâtre’ section of the *Divagations* was produced. Mallarmé’s distaste for modern drama is also evident in *La Dernière Mode*, in particular, in the ‘Chronique de Paris’, voiced by the columnist character, Ix. This section will take a comparative approach, examining Mallarmé’s attitude to drama and the theatre

demonstrated in his critical writings of the 1880s and 1890s in relation to that seen in *La Dernière Mode*. Exploring both the ideas on theatre expressed in the fashion magazine, and the language used to discuss the theme of drama, I will make a case for seeing the fashion magazine as a space in which the poet could test out the role of theatre critic, voicing often controversial ideas on contemporary drama, safely concealed behind the mask of the columnist characters. The chapter will thus argue that the eight instalments of the ‘Chronique de Paris’ can be seen as embryonic fragments of what would eventually, via the articles for the *Revue indépendante* become the ‘Crayonné au théâtre’ section of the *Divagations*, referred to in the ‘Bibliographie’.

To begin, I will briefly outline Ix’s presentation of drama in the ‘Chronique de Paris’, situating the feature in relation to Mallarmé’s theoretical writings, with particular emphasis on the articles in the ‘Crayonné au théâtre’ section of the *Divagations*. In the magazine, the persona of Ix is charged with the task of discussing ‘Théâtres’, ‘Livres’, and the ‘Beaux-Arts’, but it quickly becomes clear that, for the columnist character, as for his ventriloquist creator, reading, which unites all three elements, reigns supreme. Ix states that the aim of this column to ‘parler des œuvres de l’esprit, mais toujours selon le goût du jour’; (*OCII*, p. 495) while he does, to an extent, fulfil this aim, the columnist character departs on many long digressions or, one might say, ‘divagations’, which lead him to consider the nature of reading, offer more general reflections on the concept of the theatre, and muse on the relationship between art and the everyday.

It is of note that, in the first issue of the magazine, Ix does not mention a single book, poem or theatrical performance, and refers only obliquely to contemporary art exhibitions; despite this, he finds sufficient fodder for his column, offering details on the approach that

the column will take in future instalments. This, I suggest, characterizes this first ‘Chronique’ as a space in which Mallarmé, behind the mask of Ix, might attempt to develop some general, preliminary approaches to the role of critic. Judy Kravis notes that

the different editions of the ‘Chroniques de Paris’ in *La Dernière Mode* give comparatively little detail about the plays being performed at the time. This is not simply because Mallarmé was again bowing to the needs of his ‘abonnées’ [...] but also because the influence that the theatre had on his writing did not have much to do with the theatre as it then was.<sup>53</sup>

While Mallarmé was not always positively disposed towards the theatre as it then was, this is not to say that his experience of the theatre did not have a significant impact on his writing — Mallarmé’s verse and prose poetry is characterized by repeated attempts to engage with the theatre and to re-define the idea of drama, seizing its aesthetic advantages, whilst avoiding the limitations of physical representation, which the poet had confronted with the original submission of the faun monologue.

Following the attempts to create a ‘Virtual Theater’, Mallarmé’s later theoretical writings develop the understanding of reading as a dramatic process. The relationship between drama and reading is introduced in Ix’s very first ‘Chronique de Paris’; in this début column he extols the virtues of the private practice of reading, whilst highlighting the inferiority of contemporary drama, in a manner which anticipates the view expressed by Mallarmé, under his own signature in the mid-1890s. In his first column, Ix begins by celebrating the literature of the period:

Je serai, ignoré, cet ami qui prête des livres [...] la surprise, magnifique et charmante, que je garde à qui m’écouterait même distraitement, c’est de montrer que nulle époque, autant que la nôtre ne produit d’œuvres faites pour être lues dans les heures de silence; désintéressées, ce qui, pour l’élite veut dire intéressantes. (*OCII*, p. 496)

---

<sup>53</sup> *The Prose of Mallarmé*, p. 120.

Ix claims that recommending and sharing books is an easy task as the non-representational nature of reading enables the reader to conjure up her own imaginary world; discussing plays, however, is more difficult, and one risks wasting precious moments in front of poor or one-dimensional performances. In the 1870s, at this early stage in the evolution of Mallarmé's aesthetic, however, the connection between reading and theatre remains at the level of juxtaposition and comparison; in 'Crayonné au théâtre' and in the 'Notes en vue du Livre', the poet would present the ideal work as a synthesis of many genres, while in *Un Coup de dés*, he moves closer to this all-encompassing literary work, creating a poetic transcription of the 'mise-en-scène spirituelle exacte' (*OCI*, p. 391) enabled by the creative process.

The vocabulary used by Ix in the lines from his first 'Chronique', cited above, anticipates that of 'Bibliographie'; in both texts, the poet uses the word 'magnifique' demonstrating how, in the hands of the poet-cum-critic, the mediocre genre of theatre criticism, like journalism, can reveal something of aesthetic value. The adjective 'charmante' in Ix's first column anticipates the veneer of 'charme' which, as Mallarmé argues in 'Bibliographie', conceals the mediocrity of modern drama. However, while for Ix, there is genuine attraction to be found in reading, for Mallarmé the charm of theatre criticism is merely a means of masking the impoverished state of contemporary drama. Particularly striking is the opposition of the adjectives 'désintéressées' and 'intéressantes' in Ix's first column, which find their echo in 'Bibliographie', through the 'manqué d'intérêt' of modern drama. The similarities between the vocabulary of Ix's praise of contemporary literature, and that used by Mallarmé to critique modern theatre suggests that the fashion magazine offered the poet a chance to voice his attitude to the art of his time through the mass media, whilst safely concealed behind the mask of his mysterious alter-ego.

Indeed, Ix shows himself to be critical of the state of modern theatre. Having sung the praises of contemporary literature, he then compares the practice of reading to that of spectating in the theatre, showing literature to be far superior. Here, he brings in ideas of time and temporality, suggesting that the privileged position of reading comes, at least in part, from the capacity of the book to transcend the fleeting.

Un livre est tôt fermé, fastidieux, et on laisse le regard se délasser dans ce nuage d'impressions qu'à volonté dégage, comme les anciens dieux, la personne moderne pour l'interposer entre les aventures banales et soi. Quelle inévitable trahison, au contraire, dans le fait d'une soirée de notre existence perdu en cet antre du carton et de la toile peinte, ou du génie: un Théâtre ! si rien ne vaut que nous y prenions intérêt. (*OCII*, p. 496)

While even a dull book can be closed, allowing the reader's gaze to travel beyond the 'aventures banales' of the text and into the realm of the imaginary, the lights of the stage simply serve to compound the 'cauchemar spécial' (*OCII*, p. 496) of a poor performance in the theatre. The emphasis on the materials which make up the stage serve to highlight the mediocrity of physical representation: the artifice of the theatre is evident from the flimsy cardboard and backdrop. Ix's remark, that a book can be closed, allowing the reader to luxuriate in the haze of chimeric impressions left behind, puts the reader in mind of the final poem from Mallarmé's *Poésies*, 'Mes bouquins refermés sur le nom de Paphos'. (*OCI*, p. 99) This particular poem serves as a bookend for the collection and characterizes the written word as a starting point for a journey into the vast landscape of the imagination — for Mallarmé, it is when the book is closed that the creative process of reading really begins.<sup>54</sup> The mind of the reader thus replaces the text itself as the space in which this

---

<sup>54</sup> This idea of closing the book is important to the understanding the drama of the reading process and is reiterated in Théodore de Banville, in Mallarmé's triptych, 'Symphonie Littéraire.'

Et quand je ferme le livre, ce n'est plus serein ou hagard, mais fou d'amour, et débordant, et les yeux pleins de grandes larmes de tendresse, avec un nouvel orgueil d'être un homme. [...]  
C'est que cet homme représente en nos temps le poète, l'éternel et le classique poète, fidèle à la déesse, et vivant parmi la gloire oubliée des héros et des dieux. Sa parole est sans fin, un chant d'enthousiasme, d'où s'élance la musique, et le cri de l'âme ivre de toute la gloire. (*OCII*, p. 284)

dramatic process might take place. It is, as Mallarmé would write in ‘Mimique’, this void ‘entre les feuillets et le regard,’ which allows for the ‘condition et délice de la lecture.’ (OCII, p. 179)

Having compared the joy of reading with the dubious pleasure of going to the theatre, Ix reaches the conclusion that ‘le grand théâtre de notre Temps, vaste, sublime, presque religieux, est à trouver.’<sup>55</sup> (OCII, pp. 496-97) The quest for the ideal form of theatre for the modern age proved to be an ongoing project for the poet who, even in 1895, still saw contemporary theatre as providing insufficient material for successful theatrical criticism. However, in Mallarmé’s œuvre, this cultural vacuum becomes a space of possibility and creative potential; it is the quest itself that enables literary creation and this process is allowed to continue *ad infinitum* as the sublime work reveals itself to be impossible. One might see *Igitur*, ‘Hérodiade’ and ‘L’Après-midi d’un faune’ as part of a process of trial and error which would never be complete, but would fuel the poet’s own theatre criticism and shape his poetics, leading to the mental performance required by *Un Coup de dés*. The columnist character of Ix can thus be seen as allowing Mallarmé to distance himself from the search for the ideal work, allowing him the opportunity to reflect both on the state of contemporary drama from an outsider’s perspective, and to look ahead to the possibilities which innovations in modern drama might bring.

In the first issue of *La Dernière Mode* Ix states his stance on drama and the theatre, distinguishing his particular approach from that of the major newspapers.

---

<sup>55</sup> By the mid 1880s, Mallarmé seems to have reached the conclusion that this great theatre of the modern age was to be found in dance. In the 1885 essay ‘Richard Wagner: rêverie d’un poète français’, he writes ‘[...] la Danse, seule capable, par son écriture sommaire, de traduire le fugace et le soudain jusqu’à l’Idée – pareille vision comprend tout, absolument tout le Spectacle futur – cet amateur, s’il envisage l’apport de la Musique au Théâtre faite pour en mobiliser la merveille, ne songe pas longtemps à part soi... déjà, de quels bonds que parte sa pensée, elle ressent la colossale approche d’une Initiation.’ OCII, p. 154.

Aux Feuilletons traditionnels des lundis ou des lendemains de répétitions générales, envoyés, sous la bande des grands journaux politiques, dans chaque intérieur bien longtemps avant qu'on ne nous reçoive, laissons (pour ne faire avec personne double emploi), la fonction de classer ou d'analyser la pièce, de la juger, de la définir avec compétence. Toute notre esthétique tient dans ces paroles: Y a-t-il, en telle salle, lieu à s'amuser ? et: Ici l'on rit; on pleure là, ou: La vraie représentation est, dans cette nuit de gala, non ce qu'éclaire la rampe, mais le lustre; ou bien (selon l'ordre) se passe sur la scène et pas dans les loges. (*OCII*, p. 497)

In this initial column, Ix sets his approach apart from contemporary journalists and critics writing on culture and the theatre, placing *La Dernière Mode* in an intermediary space, between the opposing camps of journalistic and literary writing. In denying a critical stance, he confirms his status as a spectator and allies himself with the reader. Ix's aesthetic is based upon reception, demonstrating that the appreciation of literature and drama is a subjective matter with each performance provoking an infinite range of possible responses. Ix has little time for the arbitrary distinctions of genre nor for the inflexible judgement of critics, he shows no interest in classification and analysis, but believes in the joy of aesthetic experience, confirming the theatre as 'le foyer des plaisirs pris en commun.' (*OCII*, p. 181)

The distinction between the task of the critic or journalist and that of the creative writer established by Ix in his initial column pre-empts Mallarmé's own offsetting of these two modes of writing in 'Crayonné au théâtre'. Echoing his columnist character, Mallarmé writes:

À côté de lasses erreurs qui se débattent, voyez ! déjà l'époque apprête telle transformation plausible; ainsi ce qu'on appela autrefois la critique dramatique ou le feuilleton, qui n'est plus à faire, abandonne très correctement la place au reportage des premiers soirs, télégrammatique ou sans éloquence autre que n'en comporte la fonction de parler au nom d'une unanimité de muets. Ajoutez l'indiscrétion, ici les coulisses, riens de gaze ou de peau attrapés entre les châssis en canevas à la hâte mis pour la répétition (délice la primeur ne fût-ce que de redites): ce qu'au théâtre consacra la presse de fait divers. Le paradoxe chez l'écrivain supérieur longtemps fut, avec des fugues et points d'orgue imaginatifs, se le rappelle-t-on, d'occuper le genre littéraire créateur de quoi la prose relève, la Critique, à marquer les fluctuations d'un article d'esprit ou de mode. (*OCII*, p. 161)

In this article of 1887, as in the magazine, it is clear that the distinction between the task of the critic and that of the ‘écrivain supérieur’ is not as clear-cut as it might first appear. In using the past tense, Mallarmé declares this opposition between criticism and creation to be over, heralding a new era in which poetry and prose, journalism and drama are united in one language. The musical metaphors in this passage emphasize the dual-faceted nature of human language, demonstrating an essential musicality concealed within the ‘brut et immédiat’ language of the press which can be revealed only by the ‘écrivain supérieur.’ The very word ‘supérieur’ is reminiscent of the poet’s declaration at the beginning of ‘Le Genre ou des modernes’ that ‘le théâtre est d’essence supérieure’, (*OCII*, p.179) suggesting the elevated status of the literary author who is able to reveal this theatricality within ‘un article d’esprit ou de mode.’

The task of the superior author is rooted in paradox. In the above citation from ‘Crayonné au théâtre’, Mallarmé’s situates his interest in changing the literary landscape within the context of his own ‘époque’; this emphasizes the poet’s engagement with the present and his interest in fusing the tools of the artist — namely the creative imagination — with those of popular culture. The ornaments of the ‘écrivain supérieur’, these ‘fugues et points d’orgue imaginatifs’ enact the duality of language: the word ‘fugue’ reveals the musical nature of language in the hands of the ‘poète’, showing the inherent polyphony of the literary text; the noun can also mean ‘flight’, emphasizing the writer’s goal in taking off towards a literary ideal. The term ‘points d’orgue’, meaning the high-point or apogee, reinforces the link between musicality and verticality, yet also denotes a *fermata* or pause sign in music (♯). The ‘point d’orgue’ in its musical sense is important in terms of our study of drama and performance in Mallarmé’s œuvre. A *fermata* is a performance direction, a symbol ‘which means that the note or rest so indicated must be held longer than

usual (at performer's discretion).'<sup>56</sup> The 'point d'orgue' thus symbolizes a suspension; Mallarmé's use of the term to refer to a tool of the 'écrivain supérieur' thus reinforces the argument made in the previous chapter that Mallarmé's œuvre hinges upon an aesthetic of suspension. The *fermata* is an ambiguous symbol which seems to obscure more than it directs; after all, a pause sign overrides the written duration of the note, meaning that a semibreve which ordinarily lasts for four beats might go on for any length of time, leaving the overall effect up to the reader. As such, the image of the 'point d'orgue' as marked by the 'écrivain supérieur' has implications for the reader's involvement in the reading process, slowing or hastening delivery of information. It is this mobility, these 'fluctuations' which add drama to the journalistic text. In borrowing the terminology of music to describe the task of the literary author, Mallarmé shows how the creative writer surpasses the one-dimensional journalistic format, creating a work which blurs the boundaries not only between literary genres, but between different art forms including music, drama and literature.

As in 'Crayonné au théâtre', Ix's column in the first issue of *La Dernière Mode* actively undermines the distinction between creative and critical writing, instead placing the magazine in an intermediary space, hovering between drama and the press. Ix uses apostrophe to the reader and rhetorical questions which create a sense of complicity between the journalist and the reader. The questions which preoccupy Ix in assessing the fortnight's must-see plays and performances serve to establish a dialogue with the reader, involving her in the world of *La Dernière Mode* and confirming the status of both theatre-going and magazine reading as collaborative creative processes. 'Toute notre esthétique

---

<sup>56</sup> *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, (ed. by Michael Kennedy, Joyce Bourne) (Oxford: OUP, 2004), p. 285.

tient dans ces paroles: Y a-t-il en telle salle, lieu à s'amuser ? et: Ici l'on rit, on pleure là. ' (OCII, p. 497) Rather than focussing on technical matters, Ix's unique brand of theatre criticism is concerned with the reader's personal emotional response, characterizing the reading process as a task which is simultaneously subjective and collective. While the aesthetic pleasure of theatre-going is a shared event, the response to the spectacle is peculiar to each individual. The continual shifting from the public to the private is enacted in language through the transition from the first person plural ('nous') to the third person singular ('on').

Ix's opposition of laughter and tears conjures up the image of the comedy and tragedy masks traditionally associated with drama, revealing the theatre to be a space of polarities and uncertainties. Roger Pearson holds the poet to be an:

heir to the tradition of melodrama, where — in 'Crayonné au theatre — Mallarmé finds a further example of the 'attente' which he considers to be lacking in most contemporary drama. For at a melodrama, too, nobody knows whether to laugh or cry. Like the multifaceted chandelier suspended over the ideal theatre, the tears hover in the spectators' eyes: 'Apitoyé, le perpetuel suspens d'une larme qui ne peut jamais toute se former ni choir (encore le lustre) scintilla en mille regards.'<sup>57</sup> (OCII, p.163)

In this first 'Chronique' from *La Dernière Mode*, the spectrum of possible emotional responses to the drama is further emphasized by the linguistic construction of Ix's statement, which has the meticulous architecture of a line of verse. Starting with 'ici' and ending in 'là', these emotions are enclosed within two opposing locations; the spatialization of mental processes takes places neither here nor there, but between 'ici' et 'là'. Separated by a comma, these two, as yet non-existent, spaces seem to mirror one another, in an infinite sequence of reflections. Laughter and tears are physical representations of the infinite scope

---

<sup>57</sup> Roger Pearson, *Mallarmé and Circumstance*, p. 67.

of human emotions; the expression of these non-verbal responses transforms the psychological response of the spectator into an involuntary physical action.

In Mallarmé's poetry, laughter and tears often represent climatic points: elusive moments of poetic '*jouissance*' and fleeting instances of sexual ecstasy. In two of Mallarmé's fan poems, 'Eventail de Méry Laurent' and 'Autre Eventail de Mademoiselle Mallarmé', suppressed laughter is finally expressed with the folding out of the fan. In the 'Eventail de Méry Laurent', the fan conveys a secret message which causes the holder of the fan to break into a smile: 'Cette frigidité se fond | En du rire de fleurir ivre.' (*OCI*, p. 68) In 'Autre Eventail de Mademoiselle Mallarmé', the speaker watches 'un rire enseveli | Se couler du coin de ta bouche | Au fond de l'unanime pli!' (*OCI*, p. 31) Here, the dramatic spectacle of human emotion echoes the drama of language, the curling of the lips mirroring the gradual unfolding of the fan and the passage of the sun in the cycle of the solar drama. The evocation of laughter and tears thus anticipates Mallarmé's exploration of the dramatic unfolding of emotions, evoked through the reading process. Within Ix's new journalistic aesthetic, laughter and tears and mental and physical spaces, are pitted against one another in the quest for 'la vraie représentation', this 'art dramatique de notre Temps, vaste, sublime, presque religieux' which Ix claims 'est à trouver,' (*OCII*, p. 497) a quest reflecting elements of Mallarmé's own search for 'l'œuvre pure.' (*OCII*, p.211)

In this first column, Ix explores the dichotomy of truth and illusion, highlighting the revelatory power of the 'lustre.' In judging that, perhaps, 'la vraie représentation est [...] non ce qu'éclaire la rampe, mais le lustre', Ix draws the reader's attention to the dual

meaning of the ‘lustre’,<sup>58</sup> as both physical object which is a source of light, and as a mysterious ambient quality, sensed by the spectator. Deeming the footlights insufficient to reveal this elusive, true theatre, Ix presents the ‘lustre’ in both its literal and figurative guises as an essential component of drama. In his later writings, Mallarmé repeatedly suggests the transformative power of drama, casting it as a catalyst towards the pure work of art. However, for the poet, as for Ix, ‘lustre’ is not just a chandelier or even the quality of light on the stage or in the salon, but serves as a lens through which to view the ideal. In ‘Crayonné au théâtre’, Mallarmé himself makes this connection, confirming the suggestion made through the mouthpiece of Ix more than ten years previously:

ainsi [...] resplendit le lustre, c’est à dire, lui-même, l’exhibition prompte, sous toutes les facettes de quoi que ce soit et notre vue adamantine, une œuvre dramatique montre la succession des extériorités de l’acte sans qu’aucun moment garde de réalité et qu’il se passe, en fin de compte, rien. (*OCII*, p. 163)

Here, Mallarmé casts the ‘lustre’ as a filter or a prism, a multifaceted mode of perception which allows the spectator to glimpse the ideal. The idea of transforming perception once again reinforces the subjective nature of theatricality, demonstrating the infinite variety of responses which a performance might elicit on the part of the spectator. Later, in his essays on dance, the poet confirms the status of drama as a filter through which the aesthetic quality of all things can be perceived: ‘toujours le théâtre altère à un point de vue spécial ou littéraire, les arts qu’il prend.’ (*OCII*, p. 178)

Madame de Ponty alludes to the transformative power of the theatre in her ‘La Mode’ feature in the fourth issue of the magazine. In this column, she emphasizes the distinction between the theatrical costumes and outfits suitable for wearing in town or in the great outdoors. ‘Je crois maintenant devoir donner, principalement pour montrer, une fois, la

---

<sup>58</sup> The ‘lustre’ also refers to the five year cycle performance cycle of the ‘Livre’. Cf. Bertrand Marchal, ‘Notice’ in *OCI*, p. 1379.

différence qu'il y a entre l'éclat obligatoire au Théâtre et la sobriété qui sied mieux la Ville, même quand la ville c'est la Forêt.' She goes on to describe a 'Costume de chasse' worn by the actress Mademoiselle Delaporte in a recent production of *Philiberte*. She notes that the dynamics of perception in the theatre are quite different from that in the outside world: 'Affronter le plein air, cet habit ne le peut, ayant besoin de la lumière spéciale de la rampe.' (*OCII*, p. 560) This reflection on the distinction between theatrical costume and fashion suggests the transformative power of drama and reinforces the importance of seeing and perception in the theatre. In the theatre, the ordinary is presented in a new light and is thus synonymous with the poetic act by which 'l'objet nommé baigne dans une neuve atmosphère.' (*OCII*, p. 213) Thus it becomes clear that, for Mallarmé, drama enacts a 're-presentation' of the everyday to reveal its aesthetic value and demonstrating that 'tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre.' (*OCII*, p. 224)

### **'La Foule'**

This 'monde' was, first and foremost the material world; however, Mallarmé also engaged with 'le monde' in its social sense, that is with '[...] la société des gens qui aiment luxe et divertissements.'<sup>59</sup> As a 'gazette du monde et de la famille', *La Dernière Mode* endeavoured to 'suivre l'existence parisienne dans ses plaisirs et ses obligations, partout, cérémonieuse ou intime.' (*OCII*, p. 559) In light of this, Mallarmé's involvement with the fashion press can be as seen part of an experiment with the relationship between literature and society. *La Dernière Mode* was written during a period when artists were beginning to explore the aesthetics of appearances. One of the defining works in exploring this

---

<sup>59</sup> Cf. 'monde, subst. masc.', *TLFi*, <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/visusel.exe?14;s=3158516700;r=1;nat=;sol=3;>> [accessed 12/04/2014].

connection was Renoir's painting 'La Loge', produced in 1874.<sup>60</sup> The painting, which shows a fashionably dressed woman with opera glasses, sitting in a theatre box, emphasizes the importance of the theatre as 'a social stage where status and relationships were on public display.'<sup>61</sup> The idea of the audience as the site of its own drama, paralleling that on the stage, can be linked to Mallarmé's growing interest in the dramatic dimension of the everyday, as well as to the poet's increasing emphasis on 'la foule' and on the role of the masses in the revelation of the ideal. Broadly speaking, Mallarmé's relationship to 'la foule' can be seen to have evolved through three phases. In his early writings, the poet presents a negative picture of the crowd, as can be seen in his 1862 article 'L'Art pour tous'. Following the poet's experiments with stage production and with the eventual movement towards a 'Virtual Theater', we begin to see a change in Mallarmé's attitude to 'la foule'. The poet's articles of the 1880s on drama and the theatre show an increasing emphasis on the role of the crowd in revealing the work of art; this, as I shall demonstrate, is closely connected with the his view of reading as an inherently dramatic act. In the 1890s, Mallarmé's approach to 'la foule' developed in a different direction, as he developed his idea of literature as a spiritual phenomenon. Within this 'religion of the book'<sup>62</sup> the poet thus takes on a priest-like role, acting as an intermediary between 'la foule' and the 'Idée'. This section will explore the evolution of Mallarmé's attitude to 'la foule' in the 1860s and 1870s, beginning with 'L'Art pour tous', before going on to compare the presentation of the crowd and ideas of spectatorship in 'Un Spectacle interrompu' and *La Dernière Mode*. I shall thus argue that the fashion magazine can be seen as part of a transitional phase in

---

<sup>60</sup> Pierre Auguste Renoir, *La Loge* (1874), oil on canvas, 31 1/2 x 24 5/8 in. (80 x 63.5 cm) (Courtauld Gallery, London).

<sup>61</sup> The Courtauld Gallery, 'Renoir at the Theatre: Looking at *La Loge*' <<http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/exhibitions/2008/re noir/furtherinfo.shtml>> [accessed 08/04/2014].

<sup>62</sup> *Mallarmé and Circumstance*, p. 238.

Mallarmé's approach to the 'la foule', and to the practices of everyday life, paving the way for the poet's presentation of literature as a 'culte humain' (*OCII*, p. 236) in the 1890s.

In his early writings, Mallarmé appears contemptuous of 'la foule'. In 'L'Art pour tous' the poet argues against the teaching and mass consumption of poetry.<sup>63</sup> He describes the public's admiration for the poetic form as being 'bête', suggesting that their taste in art is little more than a herd instinct, and inferior to the aesthetic sensitivities of the poet: 'Comme tout ce qui est absolument beau, la poésie force l'admiration; mais cette admiration sera lointaine, vague, — bête, elle sort de la foule.' (*OCII*, p. 361) The crowd may read poetry, Mallarmé says, but they do not *understand* it, as artists do. Thus, the poet dismisses the crowd, lamenting the 'inéptie de son goût' and the 'nullité de son imagination'. (*OCII*, p. 362) Citing Baudelaire, Mallarmé claims that the artist who depends on the base judgement of the crowd is lowering himself to their level. It is not that 'la foule' is beneath the poet, but rather that the poet is above the crowd; from this lofty height, he has the ability to reveal the ideal to the masses.

Rappelons-nous que le poète (qu'il rythme, chante, peigne, sculpte) n'est pas le niveau au-dessous duquel rampent les autres hommes; c'est la foule qui est le niveau, et il plane. Sérieusement avons-nous jamais vu dans la Bible que l'ange raillât l'homme, qui est sans ailes ? (*OCII*, p. 362)

Here, Mallarmé introduces a provocative rhetorical question, likening the poet to an angel, he suggests the artist's quasi-divine status. This anticipates the presentation of the poet as a priest-like figure, performing the sacrament of literature in 'Planches et feuillets': 'le

---

<sup>63</sup> Although 'L'Art pour tous' reads rather like a tirade against 'la foule', Damian Catani argues that Mallarmé's criticism of the crowd is not a clear-cut case of intellectual elitism. In *The Poet in Society*, he suggests, instead that the poet felt that the work of art was devalued by the establishment, which fed children literature as part of their education, and by bourgeois culture, which would have reading poetry reduced to the same status as other cultural practices such as theatre-going. 'The 'masses' should not be fed poetry as part of a broad 'culture générale', like going to concerts or visiting art galleries; they should, on the contrary, become acquainted with its unique capacity to shape and figure the fundamentals of human emotional experience. Thus Mallarmé is not against the idea of 'l'art pour tous' as such, but against the misuse of art for reasons of social vanity.' *The Poet in Society*, p.16.

poète [...] éveille, par l'écrit, l'ordonnateur de fêtes en chacun; ou, convoque-t-il le public, un authenticié de son intime munificence éclate avec charme.' (*OCII*, p. 197) However, there is a significant degree of distance between the poet as 'master of ceremonies' in this 1893 article, and the angelic poet of 'L'Art pour tous'. I contend that *La Dernière Mode* offered Mallarmé the opportunity to explore the relationship between the poet and the crowd, using the columnist characters as intermediaries to descend from the heights of the aesthetic and allow the poet to take up his place amid 'la foule'.

The suggestion that performance and theatricality might serve as a way of engaging with the crowd is introduced in 'L'Art pour tous', as Mallarmé goes on to declare that 'l'homme peut être démocrate, l'artiste se dédouble et doit rester aristocrate.' (*OCII*, p. 362). Here, Mallarmé suggests that it is by splitting himself in two that the artist can preserve his superiority whilst engaging with 'la foule', in order to carry out his poetic duty of revealing the ideal. In *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé does not just 'double up', he plays all the parts, breaking down the fourth wall and engaging directly with his bourgeois audience. So it is that, through the theme of drama, *La Dernière Mode* explores the dynamic between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy which, themselves, can be read as a metaphorical presentation of the people and the poet. Indeed, in 'L'Art pour tous' Mallarmé presents an aesthetic hierarchy which, one might argue, is played out through the fashion magazine, thanks to the nobiliary particle in the name of Madame de Ponty, which suggests her aristocratic status. Descending from the upper echelons both of society and of art to engage with the people, the fashion columnist could be seen as 'bridging' the divide between the aesthetic ideal and the crowd.

The dynamic relationship between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy introduces ideas of social hierarchy and the theme of commercialism. Part of Mallarmé's distaste for the crowd, as expressed in this 1862 polemic, lies in his fear that poetry should become an object of consumption.

Et maintenant cette foule qui vous *achète* pour votre bon marché vous comprend-elle ? Déjà profanés par l'enseignement, une dernière barrière vous tenait au-dessus de ses désirs, — celle des sept francs à tirer de la bourse, — et vous culbutez cette barrière, imprudents [...] (*OCII*, p. 363)

The fact that poetry has become both a marketable commodity and a pedagogical tool profanes this 'instrument spirituel'. One might see this view, expressed by the poet in his early twenties, as standing at odds with the calculations in the 'Notes en vue du Livre', which consider the circulation figures and price of the hypothetical book. I argue, therefore, that Mallarmé's interest in the public and in a mass audience developed from his engagement with the press during the 1870s and 1880s. *La Dernière Mode* represents a turning point in the poet's attitude towards the crowd, with crucial implications for the aesthetic value of the press, as well as for the status of the literary text in the capitalist environment.

Mallarmé's writings of the 1880s demonstrate a continued ambivalence towards 'la foule'. In 'Richard Wagner, rêverie d'un poète français', Mallarmé suggests that the potential for the revelation of the ideal through poetry is inherent in the crowd: However, echoing 'L'Art pour tous', he claims that 'la foule' is ignorant of the existence of this ideal, settling instead for the banality of contemporary drama, which the poet sees as superficial and devoid of aesthetic merit:

Un poète français contemporain, exclu de toute participation aux déploiements de beauté officiels, en raison de divers motifs, aime [...] à réfléchir aux pompes souveraines de la Poésie, comme elles ne sauraient exister concurremment au flux de banalité charrié par les arts dans le faux semblant de civilisation. — Cérémonies d'un jour qui gît au sein, inconscient, de la foule: presque un Culte !(*OCII*, p. 157)

The credulous crowd contents itself with the mediocrity of stage performances, in a ‘faux semblant’ of civilization. This can be seen as an evolution of Mallarmé’s fear, expressed in ‘L’Art pour tous’, that poetry might become part of the politics of appearances, with the masses reading poetry as part of a ‘culture générale’. The ‘faux semblant’ of civilization, described in ‘Richard Wagner, rêverie d’un poète français’, can also be linked to the ‘apparence fausse de présent’ in ‘Mimique’, casting the modern age as an illusion which blinkers the crowd and distracts them from ‘le rien qui est la vérité.’ (OCI, p. 696)

It is clear that Mallarmé was already beginning to establish the idea of civilization as a destructive force, masking the truth of ‘le rien’, in the 1870s. A similar assessment of the contemporary era can be seen in Madame de Ponty’s ‘La Mode’ column in the first issue of *La Dernière Mode* in which she writes: ‘La Civilisation! Lisez “l’époque où a disparu Presque toute puissance créatrice, dans la Bijouterie comme dans le Mobilier.”’<sup>64</sup> (OCII, p. 490) Referring, this time not to drama, but to jewellery and furniture, this statement suggests that the world of the decorative arts, like that of the theatre, is nothing more than a superficial construct which hides true beauty from the masses. Thus, I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* gave Mallarmé the opportunity to voice his concerns about the state of contemporary art and public tastes through the channel of the mass media.

A similar distaste for civilization and ambivalence towards ‘la foule’ can be seen in ‘Un Spectacle interrompu’. This prose poem of 1875 describes a popular show, *La Bête et le Génie*, starring a clown and a bear, from the unique perspective of the poet. Appropriately,

---

<sup>64</sup> A longer version of this quotation was given in Chapter One, as part of a close reading of the approach to time in this first ‘La Mode’ column.

the ‘bête’ echoes Mallarmé’s description of ‘la foule’ in ‘L’Art pour tous’, highlighting the nature of the prose poem as an exploration of the interaction between the poet and the crowd. ‘Un Spectacle interrompu’ begins with an exclamation, ‘Que la civilisation est loin de procurer les jouissances attribuables à cet état !’ (*OCII*, p. 90) While in *La Dernière Mode*, Madame de Ponty presents civilization as being devoid of the presence of the ideal, in this prose poem, man is presented as being unable to apprehend the ideal. ‘Civilization offers the artifice of ‘réalité’ (Mallarmé’s emphasis), which serves merely to ‘fixer l’intellect moyen entre les mirages d’un fait’ (*OCII*, p. 90). Thus, it becomes clear that, in the 1870s, Mallarmé was still, on the whole, negatively disposed towards the unenlightened ‘foule’ who settle for the mediocrity of popular theatre. In the opening lines of ‘Un Spectacle interrompu’ the poet-figure expresses his surprise that ‘une association entre les rêveurs n’existe pas, dans toute grande ville, pour subvenir à un journal qui remarque les événements sous le jour propre au rêve.’ (*OCII*, p. 90) I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* might be seen as an attempt to create exactly this kind of periodical, looking at social engagements and everyday practices in relation to ‘le rêve’. After all, ideas of dreams and the imaginary are a recurrent theme in the fashion magazine – the verbs ‘rêver’ and ‘songer’ appear repeatedly in both Madame de Ponty and Ix’s columns, while nouns such as ‘rêve’ and ‘fantaisie’ show material objects and the ordinary to be a starting point for a vivid theatre, staged in the mind.

In ‘Un Spectacle interrompu’, the poet expresses his desire to present this performance in an alternative light to perspective offered by the popular press: ‘Je veux, en vue de moi seul, écrire comme elle frappe mon regard de poète, telle Anecdote, avant que la divulguent des reporters par la foule dressés à assigner chaque chose son caractère commun.’ (*OCII*, p. 90) Here, Mallarmé makes an important point about both the crowd and the press; he

emphasizes the banality of the press, which appeals to the credulousness of the crowd, upholding the ‘mirages d’un fait’. Instead, the poet proposes a ‘re-presentation’ of the scene, which focusses not on the action, but rather on the effect which the spectacle brings about in its audience. However, in spite of his superior vision, the poet wishes to ‘jouir comme la foule du mythe inclus dans toute banalité, quel repos et, sans voisins où verser des réflexions, voir l’ordinaire et splendide veille trouvée à la rampe par ma recherche assoupie d’imagination ou de symboles.’ (*OCII*, p 91) This dual desire, on the one hand to seek out the symbolic value of the spectacle and, on the other, to ‘sit back and enjoy the show’ like ‘la foule’ echoes the view, expressed in ‘L’Art pour tous’, that the poet must divide himself (‘se dédoubler’) in order to maintain his aesthetic superiority. Like the speaker of ‘Un Spectacle interrompu’, Madame de Ponty, Miss Satin, Ix et al, enter into a dramatic dialogue with the reader, and yet they are at a remove from ordinary life, merely following the day-to-day existence of the quotidian, with ‘ses plaisirs et ses obligations.’ (*OCII*, p. 559). I therefore suggest that the appropriation of the journalistic form allowed Mallarmé to explore the status of the poet, who is both engaged with the masses and yet, at a remove from the crowd, afforded superiority and distance through his ability, unlike ‘la foule’ to perceive the ‘vide contemporain derrière’ (*OCII*, p. 276)

Although Mallarmé remained ambivalent to ‘la foule’, I argue that the project of the fashion magazine led the poet towards an appreciation of the crowd. In his later writings, the poet appears more positively disposed towards this ‘foule qui commence à tant nous surprendre comme élément vierge, ou nous-mêmes, remplit envers les sons, sa fonction par excellence de gardienne du mystère,’ as the poet would describe the masses in ‘Plaisir sacré’, in 1893. (*OCII*, p. 237) *La Dernière Mode*, I suggest, offered Mallarmé the possibility of engaging with this ‘multitude satisfaite par le menu jeu de l’existence, agrandi jusqu’à la politique,

tel que journallement le désigne la presse,' not through music, which the poet would later deem to be 'le dernier et plénier culte humain', but rather through the modern cult of fashion. Seizing the press directly, I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* offered Mallarmé the opportunity to reveal the aesthetic value to be found in everyday life, transcending this 'menu jeu de l'existence' through its very own channels, in order to reveal the inherent beauty of ordinary practices to the masses.

### **'Sur le théâtre et le livre' – towards a religion of the book**

The ritualistic nature of the work of art is a recurrent theme in Mallarmé's later writings. In his 1886 article 'Sur le théâtre et le livre', Mallarmé establishes a fundamental relationship between drama and the ideal book.

Je crois que la Littérature, reprise à sa source qui est l'Art et la Science, nous fournira un Théâtre, dont les représentations seront le vrai culte moderne; un Livre, explication de l'homme, suffisante à nos plus beaux rêves. (*OCII*, p. 657)

In this article, Mallarmé emphasizes the dramatic nature of the 'Livre', characterizing the book itself as a process of revelation, by which 'l'explication de l'homme' is staged in language. The image of the theatre is reinforced by the use of the word 'représentations', denoting not only the performance of the book, but also hinting at the process of reading as a 're-presentation' of the world, to reveal the beauty in the material. The emphasis on the 'Livre' as a fusion of 'l'Art' and 'la Science' highlights the status of the ideal book as a means by which the truth (or the 'glorieux mensonge') might be revealed, via a fusion of theory and praxis.<sup>65</sup> The link between 'Art' and 'Science' highlights the importance of

---

<sup>65</sup> In the *Trésor de la langue française* dictionary, art is presented as being 'opposée [...] à la science, conçue comme pure connaissance indépendante des applications' and is defined as an 'ensemble de moyens, de procédés conscients par lesquels l'homme tend à une certaine fin, cherche à atteindre un certain résultat.'

connections within Mallarmé's œuvre, anticipating his claim in 1891, in the 'L'Entretien sur l'évolution littéraire' with Jules Huret, that: 'les choses existent, nous n'avons pas à les créer; nous n'avons qu'à en saisir les rapports; et ce sont les fils de ces rapports qui forment les vers et les orchestres.' (*OCH*, p. 702) This theatre of the book, can be seen as a 'religion' in its etymological sense – deriving from the latin 'religare' to bind fast<sup>66</sup> – suggesting drama of reading as linking together the many aspects of the 'Livre', not only 'l'Art' and 'la Science', but also the 'Idée', the 'Héros' and all the other terms which, in the 'Notes en vue du Livre', are presented as fundamental to the concept of the ideal book. The description of the performances of the book as a 'culte moderne' establishes this literary drama as a new form of religion for the poet who had lost his faith during the crisis of the 1860s.

While in the 1880s Mallarmé was beginning to establish ideas of literature as a 'culte', the 1870s saw him explore the potential for ordinary practices to take on the value of aesthetic sacraments. The noun 'solennité' and terms such as 'magnificence' are used repeatedly by both Ix and Madame de Ponty, while adjectives such as 'cérémonieux' and 'spirituel' also recur frequently, emphasizing the ritualistic dimension to intimate acts such as that of the 'toilette' and social engagements such as theatre-going. This section will place the

---

<sup>66</sup> The possible etymologies of 'religion' highlight its relationship to reading, and to the idea of seizing the connection between all things, which is at the heart of Mallarméan poetics. Moreover, the noun suggests the status of religion as an intermediary between humanity and the divine (or in Mallarmé's case, the ideal), making religion an ideal term to apply to Mallarmé's understanding of the 'Livre'. 'According to Cicero [religion] derived from *relegere* "go through again" (in reading or in thought), from *re-* "again" (see *re-*) + *legere* "read" (see *lecture* (n.)). However, popular etymology among the later ancients (Servius, Lactantius, Augustine) and the interpretation of many modern writers connects it with *religare* "to bind fast" (see *rely*), via notion of "place an obligation on," or "bond between humans and gods." In that case, the *re-* would be intensive. Another possible origin is *religiens* "careful," opposite of *negligens*. In English, meaning "particular system of faith" is recorded from c.1300; sense of "recognition of and allegiance in manner of life (perceived as justly due) to a higher, unseen power or powers" is from 1530s.' 'Religion (n.)', *Online Etymology Dictionary*  
[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=religion&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=religion&searchmode=none)  
 [accessed 14/04/2014].

emphasis on the presentation of reading in *La Dernière Mode*, suggesting that the early signs of the poet's conception of literature as a 'culte' can be detected in the fashion magazine, voiced through the mouthpiece of Ix. As such, this section will show *La Dernière Mode* to play a pivotal part in the poet's evolution from 'L'Art pour tous' which viewed the crowd as a malign force, profaning the work of art, to the desire to produce a literary bible, the 'Livre', which would be 'mis à la portée de tous.' (OCI, p. 578)

The idea of reading as a ritualistic act is introduced by Ix in his first 'Chronique de Paris'. We will remember from Chapter One that, at this early stage of the magazine's evolution, Ix has very little to report, and so turns his attention to offering a general overview of the aims of his column, and to reflecting on the practices of reading and theatre-going. In this column, Ix describes the two, similar pleasures of attending a première and cutting the sealed pages of a new book:

Solennités tout intimes, l'une: de placer le couteau d'ivoire dans l'ombre que font deux pages jointes d'un volume; l'autre luxueuse, fière et si spécialement parisienne: une *Première* dans n'importe quel endroit. (OCII, p. 497)

The description of both reading and theatre-going as being 'solennités tout intimes' suggests a ritualistic dimension to these two different modes of experiencing literature. In both cases, there is an emphasis on the new, highlighting ideas of virginity and potentiality, which are central to Mallarmé's aesthetic. The act of reading, which takes place in the private space, can be seen as an almost sexual act, as the phallic knife is inserted into the dark void between the pages, which are fertile with symbolic potential. This act of separating the two pages anticipates the emphasis on intermediary spaces in 'Mimique', as the possibilities of the book lie dormant between the pages, to be revealed through the sacrificial act of separating the fold, this 'hymen vicieux et sacré.' This act consummates

the relationship between text and reader, reinstating silence: ‘entre les feuillets et le regard règne un silence encore, condition et délice de la lecture’ (*OCII*, p. 179)

Mallarmé returns to the image of brandishing a paper knife to cut open a new book in ‘Le Livre, instrument spirituel’.

Voici, dans le cas réel, que, pour ma part, cependant, au sujet de brochures à lire d’après l’usage courant, je brandis un couteau, comme le cuisinier égorgueur de volailles.

Le repliement vierge du livre, encore, prête à un sacrifice dont saigna la tranche rouge des anciens tomes; l’introduction d’une arme, ou coupe-papier, pour établir la prise de possession. (*OCII*, p. 226-27)

In this 1895 article, once again the act of reading is presented as a ritualistic practice; however, the portrayal of this sacrifice in ‘Le Livre, instrument spirituel’ is far more violent. In this article, two modes of reading are offset: on the one hand, we are presented with low-brow literature, which is merely a consumable object and, on the other, there is the ideal book, which can be ‘claimed’ through the act of reading. While the ‘repliement vierge du livre’ is hinted at in *Ix*’s presentation of the intimate ritual of opening a new book, in ‘Le Livre, instrument spirituel’, the sexual dimension to this act is made explicit, emphasizing the finality of the first paragraph of this ‘divagation’, which notes that ‘tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir à un livre’. The book, presented as a new beginning in *La Dernière Mode* now becomes an end, a ‘minuscule tombeau [...] de l’âme.’ (*OCII*, p. 224)

There is a fundamental connection between the book and the tomb in Mallarmé’s œuvre, linking the practice of writing with that of funeral rites, and reinforcing the sacrificial aspect of the ‘Livre’. Mallarmé wrote a number of poetic ‘tombeaux’, which draw on the symbolic nature of the poem as a receptacle; this a common theme in nineteenth-century poetry, prevalent in Baudelaire’s verse and prose poetry (seen, for example, in ‘Le Flacon’<sup>67</sup> and,

---

<sup>67</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, p. 45.

taking up the necrological theme, in ‘Sépulture’<sup>68</sup>, both found in *Les Fleurs du Mal*). The idea of the poetic tomb took up an important place in Mallarmé’s aesthetic in the 1870s. Bertrand Marchal notes that it was in 1876 that the poet produced the first manuscript of his ‘Tombeau d’Edgar Poe’, published in *E. Allan Poe, A Memorial Volume*, the following year.<sup>69</sup> The poetic ‘Tombeau’ was a form which Mallarmé would experiment with repeatedly in the coming decades. In 1886, following the publication of ‘Richard Wagner, rêverie d’un poète français’, Mallarmé penned a poetic ‘hommage’ to the composer, for the *Revue wagnérienne*, while in 1894 the poet wrote ‘Le Tombeau de Charles Baudelaire’. (*OCI* pp. 38-39) In 1896, Mallarmé would produce his last ‘Tombeau’, dedicated to his friend Paul Verlaine, published on 8 January 1897, upon the first anniversary of his death. The ‘Tombeau’ poems emphasize the ability of the work of art to transcend the fleeting, and are bound up with Mallarmé’s aesthetic of absence. The poetic tomb can only be brought to life through the death of the poet; thus, these devotional poems to the deceased embody a poetics in which ‘l’œuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète, qui cède l’initiative aux mots [...]’ (*OCII*, p. 211)

Mallarmé’s interest in the aesthetic and symbolic value of the tomb is explored in Ix’s ‘Chronique de Paris’ in the sixth issue of *La Dernière Mode*. Published on 15 November, the week after the feast of All Saint’s Day, this particular feature takes a reflective tone, presenting the book as the ultimate devotional offering in memory of the dead, in the wake of the publication of *Mes Fils*, a tribute by Victor Hugo to his sons, Charles and François-Victor, both of whom died in the early 1870s.

La pieuse offrande qu’aux jours funèbres des souvenirs et des fleurs, le génie fait  
homme de ce siècle voua à la mémoire de chers être perdus, c’est un livre !

---

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, p. 66.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Bertrand Marchal, ‘Notices et variants in *OCI*, p. 1195

Victor Hugo a apporté sur la double tombe parisienne de ses deux fils, quelques pages justes, sereines, amies, lumineuses, qui vont aussi servir de préface à leur œuvre bientôt rééditée. (*OCII*, p. 604)

Referring specifically to Hugo's *Mes Fils*, offers Ix the chance to voice the symbolic value of the poem as a memorial object. Having effected both an elocutory and a physical disappearance, the poet is immortalized in language, and can be brought back into existence in the mind, through the reading process. Mallarmé's recognition of the spiritual significance of the poem as a devotional object to the dead, in *La Dernière Mode*, no doubt, played an important role in the formulation of the concept of the poetic 'tombeau', inspiring the 'Hommages' of the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed, Mallarmé himself would attempt to undertake a similar task to Victor Hugo, at the end of this decade, following the death of his own son, Anatole in 1879. However, while Hugo managed to publish *Mes Fils*, which unites the sons' own 'éclat' with his 'splendeur paternelle', Mallarmé would find himself unable to complete the 'Tombeau d'Anatole', instead leaving only a series of fragmentary notes.<sup>70</sup> In the face of 'le Néant' and the profound awareness of mortality which coloured his writing after the crisis of the 1860s, I suggest that *La Dernière Mode* allowed Mallarmé to explore the spiritual significance of reading and writing as ritualistic acts, contributing to the poet's conception of writing as a sacrificial act, within the cult of the book.

This dynamic of life and death, played out in the acts of reading and writing is alluded to later on in this same column from the sixth issue of *La Dernière Mode*, through the discussion of Théodore de Banville's collection of poems, *Princesses*. Continuing the topical metaphor of death and resurrection, Ix describes how, through poetry:

Banville [...] a rescussité l'âme et le corps de Sémiramis, d'Ariane, d'Hélène, de Cléopâtre, d'Hérodiade, de la reine de Saba, de Marie Stuart, de la princesse de Lamballe et de la princesse Borghèse. Tout ce qui de cruauté, d'orgueil, de luxe et de candeur, inhérents à la Femme même, s'est à travers les longs âges perpétué en

---

<sup>70</sup> 'Pour un Tombeau d'Anatole' in *OCII*, pp. 513-545.

des exemples précieux jusqu'à sa venue à lui, seul capable d'accepter un tel trésor ! le poète le fait vivre dans une galerie de quelques Sonnets extraordinaires. (*OCII*, p. 604).

The processes of reading and writing, here, are both presented as acts of 'resuscitation', with the poet bringing these historical and mythological figures to life in the mind, emphasizing the status of the poem as a 'Virtual Theater'. Here, ideas of spectatorship are evoked, once again, as these sonnets are displayed in the metaphorical 'galerie' of the mind, emphasizing the poetics of space and creating an almost holographic effect.

Extolling the virtues of Banville's new creation, Ix declares: 'À vous de plonger les yeux, Mesdames, dans ces tableaux profonds à l'égal de miroirs, où vous croirez toujours un peu vous contempler.' (*OCII*, p. 605) Here, the visual aspect to the symbolic potential of these sonnets is reiterated, linking the reading process to the theatre, through its etymological origin as a place for seeing. More importantly, however, I suggest that, in this image, Mallarmé introduces the idea of the 'Type', discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The interest in historical, mythological and fictional figures as examples of the 'Type' would be explored in the poet's writings on drama and the theatre in the 1880s, seen, for example in the 1886 article 'Hamlet' and demonstrated through Mallarmé's fascination with Loïe Fuller in his writings on dance. Ix's reflection on the various women brought to life in Banville's sonnets thus reinforces the inherent dramatic nature of the reading process.

## Conclusion

This chapter has established *La Dernière Mode* to play a pivotal role in Mallarmé's attitude to the theatre. Standing at a crossroads between the poet's struggle to produce a 'Virtual Theater' during the 1860s and his assumption of the role of theatre critic in the 1880s, the fashion magazine combines theory and practice, allowing the poet to experiment with ways of creating a theatre which exists entirely in language and is made accessible to the masses.

Although the 1870s was not a particularly prolific decade for Mallarmé in terms of his ‘theatrical’ output, and he would not begin his foray into theatre criticism until the 1880s, *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as the site of a transition in which Mallarmé explores different approaches to drama, both from within the text and from an external perspective.

*La Dernière Mode* then, is at once theatrical and meta-theatrical. Writing the entire copy of the fashion magazine through the mouthpieces of the columnist characters allowed Mallarmé to inhabit a dramatic universe in which he was able to experiment with ways of effacing the authorial persona, whilst simultaneously reflecting on the theatre, on theatrical practices such as dressing up, and on the nature of spectatorship. The experiments with the connection between journalism and the theatre would have significant implications for the poet’s understanding of ways in which the ideal might be transmitted in the public sphere.

The emphasis on both drama and ‘le journal’ in the ‘Notes en vue du Livre’, and the exploration of the relationship between journalism and literature in Mallarmé’s writings from the 1890s demonstrate the possibility of fusing these two elements in order to reveal the ideal. *La Dernière Mode* thus represents a space in which the poet could test out the combined effects of journalism and theatricality, seizing upon elements such as costume, décor, furnishings and even attempting to reveal elements of ‘le mystère’ to ‘la foule’ through the mass media. This raises important questions about the status of the work of art and the role of the artist in the modern age, anticipating the poet’s re-evaluation of the relationship between literature, society and the mass media in ‘Crise de vers’ and in articles such as ‘Étalages’ and ‘Le Livre, instrument spirituel’. In *La Dernière Mode* reading is shown to have a ritualistic value, opening up the idea of literature as a contemporary cult. I therefore suggest that *La Dernière Mode* marks the beginning of a period in which

Mallarmé would begin to explore the place of the 'Livre' in modernity, moving towards an idea of the consciousness of the crowd as a space in which the ideal might be revealed, a 'scène libre, au gré des fictions.' (*OCH*, p. 176)

## Chapter Three

### Fiction

*'Toute méthode est une fiction.'*<sup>1</sup>

In 'Mimique', Mallarmé describes the mime and the illusion of the present created by the performance as establishing a 'milieu, pur, de fiction.'<sup>2</sup> This fiction can be seen as an intermediary space in which language masks the emptiness of external 'reality'. In Chapter One I argued that the temporal manipulations in the magazine serve to create the illusion of the present, while Chapter Two put forward a case for seeing *La Dernière Mode* as an exploration of the dramatic potential of the journalistic text, staged in the mind of the female 'foule'. (*OCII*, p. 276) In this chapter, I shall show how, for Mallarmé, literature can be seen as a fiction, which engages in a complex dynamic of concealing and revealing, undermining the validity of all that we perceive to be real. The term 'fiction' is used around

---

<sup>1</sup> *OCI*, p. 504.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that Mallarmé uses the term fiction either with or without a capital letter. Mallarmé frequently uses capitals for the initial letters of nouns which would not ordinarily be capitalised in French. I see this use of capitalisation as a means of emphasizing the importance of certain terms and key ideas within his aesthetic, particularly those which are relevant to the Idea. In light of this, all quotes in this chapter have retained Mallarmé's use of capitalisation as per Bertrand Marchal's 1998/2003 edition of the poet's *Œuvres complètes*.

a dozen times in Mallarmé's theoretical writings and published personal correspondence.<sup>3</sup> While, at first glance, this relatively low incidence of the term in Mallarmé theory, notes and personal correspondence might suggest that it is not a particularly significant feature of his œuvre, as scholars including Patrick Thériault and Eric Benoît have argued, the notion of fiction is a central philosophical and theoretical tenet in Mallarméan poetics. Tracing the evolution of the term from the 1860s to its presentation in Mallarmé's later writings, I shall argue in this chapter that 1874 and, specifically, the publication of *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a pivotal point in the development of Mallarmé's particular idea of fiction.<sup>4</sup>

The chapter will begin by forming a general definition of the idea of fiction within Mallarmé's œuvre, showing the concept to have developed from the poet's discovery of the 'le rien' or 'le Néant' in the wake of his period of personal crisis during the 1860s. It will then go on to explore how Mallarmé's concept of fiction developed from his reading of Descartes' *Discours* in the late 1860s; I shall suggest that the process of writing *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a practical application of this theoretical concept of fiction, paving the way for the new idea of fiction as a public phenomenon, evident in Mallarmé's writings of the 1880s and 1890s. Mallarmé's personal notes and correspondence at the beginning of the 1870s reveal the notion of fiction to be synonymous with the idea of a 'causerie'. Exploring the links between fiction and language as a means of communication, the second part of this chapter will show how the poet developed the concept of fiction,

---

<sup>3</sup> *Néant sonore*, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Nikolaj Lübecker puts forward a convincing argument for seeing the mid-1870s as the point at which Mallarmé began to show an interest in politics and social concerns. He cites Mallarmé's two articles on Edouard Manet, 'Le Jury de Peinture pour 1874' et M. Manet and the 1876 article 'The Impressionists and Edouard Manet' as representative of the poet's interest in exploring the links between society and aesthetics. Nikolaj Lübecker, 'Le "Triumphal renversement" - le rapport entre esthétique et politique chez Mallarmé', *Revue Romane*, 36 (2001), 266.

moving away from Cartesian ontology, towards a new understanding of the term as an intimate connection between kindred spirits. I shall thus make the case for seeing the fashion magazine as an experiment with ways of facilitating a direct communication between text and reader, through the act of writing.

The final sections of this chapter will contend that Mallarmé's later works demonstrate his understanding of fiction as a means of revealing the Idea within the public sphere. In this concluding part of the chapter, I will explore the relationship between *La Dernière Mode* and 'Étalages', examining the use of advertising and the interest in commerce demonstrated in the 'Maisons de Confiance' section of the magazine. I will thus make the case for seeing the project of the fashion magazine as having influenced Mallarmé's attitude to the press and to the commercial environment of the late nineteenth century. The chapter will conclude with a close reading of Miss Satin's 'Gazette de la Fashion' from the eighth issue of the magazine, which will demonstrate how the fiction of writing, like the commercial environment, is driven by a process of desire and delayed gratification. It will thus establish a common mechanism operating in aesthetics and in the socio-political environment, presenting *La Dernière Mode* as an instrumental process by which Mallarmé came to recognize the mutual dependence of 'l'Esthétique et l'Economie politique'.

### **Towards a definition of fiction**

In *La Musique et les Lettres*, Mallarmé presents fiction as the driving force behind literature:

Nous savons, captifs d'une formule absolue, que, certes, n'est que ce qui est. Incontinent écarter cependant, sous un prétexte, le leurre, accuserait notre inconséquence, niant le plaisir que nous voulons prendre: car cet *au-delà* en est l'agent, et le moteur dirais-je si je ne répugnais à opérer, en public, le démontage

impie de la fiction et conséquemment du mécanisme littéraire, pour étaler la pièce principale ou rien. Mais, je vénère comment, par une supercherie, on projette, à quelque élévation défendue et de foudre ! le conscient manque chez nous de ce qui là-haut éclate.

À quoi sert cela —

À un jeu.

En vue qu'une attirance supérieure comme d'un vide, nous avons droit, le tirant de nous par de l'ennui à l'égard des choses si elles s'établissaient solides et prépondérantes — éperdument les détache jusqu'à s'en remplir et aussi les douer de resplendissement, à travers l'espace vacant, en des fêtes à volonté et solitaires. (*OCII*, p. 67)<sup>5</sup>

In this passage Mallarmé asserts that humanity is bound by the spell of language, claiming that the literary mechanism is driven by a desire to reach this unknown 'au-delà'. These lines reveal fiction to be a process, driven by the attraction of something which is beyond the boundaries of human comprehension. There is a clear ambiguity in the last sentence of the main paragraph, as the word 'manque' could be interpreted as either a noun or a verb, suggesting both the conscious absence of the ideal and a lack of awareness of the ideal.<sup>6</sup> This 'au-delà', if it exists, is beyond human comprehension; thus, any projection of it in the material world is nothing more than a 'glorieux mensonge'.<sup>7</sup> Even though the poet finds the idea repugnant, he hints at the probable non-existence of the ideal by refusing to

---

<sup>5</sup> The passage in question has been examined by a number of scholars including Georges Poulet, Bertrand Marchal, Eric Benoît and Patrick Thériault. Cf. *Études sur le temps humain: La distance intérieure*, (Paris: Plon, 1950), pp. 333-334; Bertrand Marchal, *La Religion de Mallarmé*, (Paris: Corti, 1988), pp. 389-391; Eric Benoît, *Néant sonore: Mallarmé ou la traversée des paradoxes*, (Geneva: Droz, 2007), pp. 59-68, and Patrick Thériault, *Le (Dé)montage de la Fiction: la révélation moderne de Mallarmé*, (Paris: Champion, 2010), pp. 8-18. This citation from *La Musique et les Lettres* has also been influential in the development of literary and aesthetic theories in the twentieth century. The passage in question forms the starting point for Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'illusio', put forward in the 1992 work *Les Règles de l'art*. For Bourdieu *illusio* is a field or social context which a person must relate to in order to appreciate a work of art or social convention: it can be seen as a game, whose rules govern the reading process. *La Dernière Mode* takes place within its own system and so could be understood as pertaining to the idea of 'illusio'. While there is not time to examine the concept of 'illusio' in any detail in this thesis, I suggest that this sociological reading of 'La Musique et les lettres' could be a relevant avenue of exploration for future studies of the fashion magazine in light of fiction. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Reminiscent of the 'Cérémonies d'un jour qui gît au sein, inconscient, de la foule' in 'Richard Wagner, rêverie d'un poète français.' *OCII*, p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> Writing to Henri Cazalis on 28 April 1866, Mallarmé writes that 'je veux me donner ce spectacle de la matière, [...] proclamant devant le Rien qui est la vérité, ces glorieux mensonges!' *OCI*, p. 696.

dismantle this artificial construction. Mallarmé characterizes fiction as a practice of deception which consists in acting as if this ‘au-delà’ did, in fact, have a concrete existence. Literature can therefore be seen as a game, projecting the reader towards an ideal which is known to be non-existent. It would be chasing an equally impossible goal to attempt to form an exact definition of Mallarmé’s concept of fiction; as I shall demonstrate, the term is in a continual state of transformation. In this chapter, I will show the poet’s concept of fiction to have developed through three phases. The initial phase sees fiction as a philosophical method by which language articulates the experience of existence while the second sees the poet expand the parameters of the term to encompass the intimate dialogue which takes place between kindred spirits. In the third phase, we see a departure from the abstract philosophical understanding of fiction, as Mallarmé explores the relationship between fiction and the social and commercial context of literature.

In an early version of ‘Catholicisme’ Mallarmé draws on the shared meanings of fiction and poetry in Latin and Greek respectively, stating that ‘Fiction [...] traduit à mon sens Latin l’antérieure poésie’ (*OCII*, p.326). Drawing on English and Classical languages for his understanding of the term, Mallarmé reveals the concept of fiction to be bound up with the idea of creation, and synonymous with literature. Mallarmé’s idea of fiction is also inherent to the concept of the ‘Livre’, as his later prose writings attest. In ‘Le Livre, instrument spirituel’, the poet foregrounds the role of fiction as part of the ideal book:

Le livre, expansion totale de la lettre, en doit tirer, directement, une mobilité et spacieux, par correspondances, instituer un jeu, on ne sait, qui confirme la fiction. (*OCII*, p. 226)

These oft-cited lines highlight the status of the book as taking place within the mode of fiction, presented as a state of mobility, which starts in language. Fiction can be seen as a means by which the world is transformed through language. Games and wordplay are

inherent to this process, which takes place in a continual cycle of concealing and revealing. Indeed, with its masked identities and transvestite voices, the whole premise of *La Dernière Mode* could be seen as a game, one of these ‘riens sérieux’, (*OCII*, p. 498) which reveals the correspondence between all things and undermines the elitism which permeated earlier works such as ‘L’Art pour tous’, instead setting in motion a perpetual ‘jeu [...] qui confirme la fiction.’

### **Fiction as method**

The seeds of the connection between literature and fiction in Mallarmé’s poetics began to germinate around 1866, in the wake of a series of failed attempts to bring ‘Hérodiade’ into being. In a letter of April of that year, to Henri Cazalis, Mallarmé writes:

Oui, *je le sais*, nous ne sommes que de vaines formes de la matière – mais bien sublimes pour avoir inventé Dieu et notre âme. Si sublimes, mon ami ! que je veux me donner ce spectacle de la matière, ayant conscience d’elle, et cependant, s’élançant forcément dans le Rêve qu’elle sait n’être pas, chantant; l’Âme et toutes les divines impressions pareilles qui se sont amassées en nous depuis les premiers âges, et proclamant, devant le Rien qui est la vérité, ces glorieux mensonges ! Tel est le plan de mon volume Lyrique, et tel sera peut-être son titre, *La Gloire du Mensonge*, ou *Le Glorieux Mensonge*. (*OCI*, p. 696)

Here, the poet establishes his idea of literature as a fiction, which conceals ‘le Rien qui est la vérité.’ The poet would later reformulate this idea of literature as a ‘mensonge’, proclaiming in a letter of 1867, again to Cazalis, that he had ‘fait une assez longue descente au Néant pour pouvoir parler avec certitude. Il n’y a que la Beauté; — et elle n’a qu’une expression parfaite, la Poésie.’ (*OCII*, p. 715) Descending further into crisis, the poet saw poetry as the perfect expression of Beauty and the only truth in the face of the futility of existence. Although Mallarmé’s conclusions on the parameters of truth and illusion in these two letters are slightly different, both present poetry as a means of concealing the futility of existence and the unattainability of the ideal. The construction of the superficial in the face of nothingness can thus be seen as the ‘supercherie’ of fiction, a process by which, as

Jean-Pierre Richard suggests, ‘avec [d]es riens, on cache le rien’.<sup>8</sup> In the remainder of this section I shall explore ways in which the fashion magazine can be seen as a means of experimenting with this process of trickery, through the journalistic form.

Although Mallarmé established the notion of the ‘mensonge’ in the midst of his period of spiritual crisis, it was not until the end of the 1860s that the term ‘fiction’ entered his vocabulary. Following his period of intense psychological distress, Mallarmé began reading Descartes’ *Discours de la méthode*; as he read, he scribbled some notes on what he had understood, and the ideas sparked by this philosophical text. It is in these notes that the poet puts forward the idea of fiction, defining it as a process by which language articulates the workings of the human mind.

Toute méthode est une fiction et bonne pour la démonstration. Le langage lui est apparu l’instrument de la fiction: il suivra la méthode du langage (la déterminer). Le langage se réfléchissant. Enfin la fiction lui semble être le procédé même de l’esprit humain – c’est elle qui met en jeu toute méthode, et l’homme est réduit à la volonté.<sup>9</sup> (*OCI*, p. 504)

Thought to have been written in 1869, this passage reveals Mallarmé’s view of fiction as the expression of pure thought, with no external referentiality. Mallarmé’s reading of Descartes introduces ideas of language and identity, emphasizing the possibility for language to be pared down to the pure expression of the speaking subject or, in Cartesian terms, the ‘cogito’.<sup>10</sup> These lines from the poet’s notes present language as a process rather than a product; fiction, the modus operandi of the ‘Livre’, is an ‘instrument spirituel’, which does not reveal any external ideal, but rather is self-reflexive. Here, we see the starting

---

<sup>8</sup> *L’Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*, p. 22

<sup>9</sup> *Néant sonore*, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> For an eloquent analysis of this passage from Mallarmé’s notes, in light of language and the cogito, see Gayle Zachmann, *Frameworks for Mallarmé: The Photo and the Graphic of an Interdisciplinary Aesthetic* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2008), pp.64–65.

point for the concept of fiction as a ‘*mécanisme littéraire*’, which Mallarmé would allude to in *La Musique et les Lettres*.

The importance of ideas of method and process in Mallarmé’s œuvre, indicated through this early interest in the idea of fiction, also links to the multifaceted definition of the word ‘mode,’ which marries process and fashion, through its different meanings in the masculine and feminine. In *Tigersprung*, Ulrich Lehmann establishes a relationship between mode and fiction in *La Dernière Mode*, conflating these in a single term — ‘modification’.<sup>11</sup> For Lehmann, this ‘modification’ takes place through a blurring of the boundaries between the imaginary and the real. I suggest that Mallarmé’s fascination with fashion journalism is rooted in the medium’s potential to serve as a space in which he could challenge established conventions of fantasy and reality through the method of language. As Madame de Ponty notes in the fourth issue of the magazine: ‘Quoique réel et très réel, son rôle [le *Courrier*] dans l’ensemble de ceux de la saison, est de porter le cachet véritable de la Fantaisie.’ Language, of course, is the method by which the ‘cachet [...] de la Fantaisie’ is manifest in the world.

Offering the first written example of the poet’s use of the term ‘fiction’, Mallarmé’s reading of Descartes’ *Discours* and the notes which he wrote at this time mark a definitive point in his personal and poetic life; by 1869 he was finally emerging from the depression which had plagued him and compromised his poetic endeavours since the infamous ‘Crise de Tournon’. On the cusp of a new decade, his personal correspondence documents a renewed surge of creativity, manifested through an interest in philosophy. The poet’s reading of the

---

<sup>11</sup> Ulrich Lehmann, *Tigersprung: Fashion in Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000), p. 88.

*Discours* and his appropriation of the Cartesian method of philosophical enquiry thus mark a new beginning for Mallarmé — the start of a quest for the ‘Livre’ which would begin and end with fiction.

## Identity and crisis

Having established the origins of Mallarmé’s concept of fiction in the aftermath of the ‘Crise de Tournon’, this section explores the significance of the fashion magazine as a therapeutic process, helping the poet to overcome the deep depression which began with the project of ‘Hérodiade’. Examining the link between fiction and questions of identity, raised in the poet’s work of the 1860s, I contend that *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a vital stage in Mallarmé’s quest to return to writing after the crisis years, by offering the chance to experiment with different fabricated speaking subjects.

Mallarmé spent the summer of 1869 working on the prose fiction, *Igitur*. The endeavour was intended as a means of slaying the psychological demons which had plagued him and sabotaged his creative activities in the preceding years, as he explained in a letter to Henri Cazalis dated 14 November of the same year:

C’est un conte, par lequel je veux terrasser le vieux monstre de l’impuissance, son sujet, du reste, afin de me cloîtrer dans mon grand labeur déjà réétudié. S’il est fait, je suis guéri *Simila similibus*. (*OCI*, p. 748)<sup>12</sup>

In this letter, Mallarmé characterizes the creation of *Igitur* as a mode of therapy, the search for some respite from the deep depression of his years at Tournon and a means of confronting the awareness of ‘le Néant’ revealed to him by the attempt to produce

---

<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of *Igitur* as a therapeutic project, see Charles Mauron, *Introduction à la Psychanalyse de Mallarmé*, (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1950), pp. 62-63.

‘Hérodiade’.<sup>13</sup> If *Igitur* represented an earlier attempt at exorcising his demons through literary creation, one might see the process of writing the fashion magazine as an alternative mode of rehabilitation, this time not homeopathic, but, perhaps, allopathic.<sup>14</sup> The use of the consequential conjunction ‘afin de’ and the preposition ‘par’ foregrounds the importance of writing as a process, in this case one with significant value for Mallarmé on both a personal and an aesthetic level. *Igitur* offers an early example of Mallarmé’s unique appropriation of the term fiction and serves as a starting point for the development of the poet’s ideas on language and philosophy.<sup>15</sup>

Mallarmé’s idea of fiction represents a development of Descartes’ theory, whereby the act of thinking which is at the crux of the ‘cogito’ is replaced by the act of writing; within this formulation, language serves as an outward ‘demonstration’ of the thought process. In light of the ‘cogito’, language can thus be understood as a possible way of asserting the existence of the Idea in the face of chance. This is seen initially in the prose fragments of *Igitur* and is presented in a slightly different way, through the explosive configuration of *Un Coup de dés*.

---

<sup>13</sup> Rosemary Lloyd notes that Mallarmé’s personal correspondence during this period reveals both the poet’s withdrawal from the world and his self-assertion through language: ‘While Mallarmé’s years of exile were obviously felt as that – as a period of isolation and deep depression – his letters reveal that it was also a time of self-creation.’ *Mallarmé: The Poet and His Circle*, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Mallarmé’s two-pronged approach to healing, both physical and spiritual, might be inferred from the inclusion of two remedies, one for the common cold, the other for chilblains, in the sixth issue of the magazine. The copy of the magazine explains the opposing approaches taken by the doctors who prescribe each of these remedies. ‘Deux médecins, l’un allopathe, l’autre homeopathe appartiennent à la Rédaction; et ce ne sera pas une des moindres surprises montrées par le Journal que la double consultation signée de noms très parisiens, qui s’offrira, en cas de mal régnant, aux adeptes de chacune de ces thérapeutiques, sur deux feuillets juxtaposés du *Carnet d’Or*.’ *OCH*, p. 609.

<sup>15</sup> A number of studies have considered the relationship between *Igitur* and Mallarmé’s reading of Descartes’ *Discours*. Notable amongst these are: Heather Williams, *Mallarmé’s Ideas in Language*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 49-50; Bertrand Marchal, *La Religion de Mallarmé*, (Paris: Corti, 1988), p. 92, and Robert Greer Cohn, *Lecture de Mallarmé* (Paris: Corti, 1985), p. 264.

In *Igitur* the speaker explains that ‘[...] dans un acte où le hasard est en jeu, c’est toujours le hasard qui accomplit sa propre Idée en s’affirmant ou se niant’, this mechanism is set in motion by ‘une parole jetée sur les dés’ (*OCI*, p. 476). In *Un Coup de dés* meanwhile, the consequences of the dice throw — itself a metaphor for thought — are played out on the page, through the apparently random configuration of words on the page revealing that ‘Toute Pensée émet un Coup de dés.’ (*OCI*, p. 387) While the frivolous and superficial world of the fashion magazine may seem at a far remove from the profoundly philosophical basis of Mallarmé’s concept of fiction, in fact the focus on the material allowed Mallarmé to test out ways of creating fictional identities, asserting the existence of these columnist characters through the act of speaking and surrendering themselves to the chance mutations of fashion.

*Igitur* offers perhaps the first example of fiction as a means of confronting the fragility and incomprehensibility of existence in the uncertain years following the ‘Crise de Tournon’. During this period of crisis, Mallarmé confided in Henri Cazalis that he felt that he had lost his sense of self. In a letter of 14 May 1867, he writes: ‘je suis maintenant impersonnel et non plus Stéphane que tu as connu.’ (*OCI*, p.714) This sense of emptiness which the poet now considered to be inherent to the human condition could be remedied only by literary creation.<sup>16</sup> *Igitur* presents the fiction of a speaking subject who exists and understands the world through language alone: the protagonist’s suicide serves to pre-empt the resurgence of the emptiness masked by the text. However, the prose fiction was never published during Mallarmé’s lifetime and remains a fragmented text, a series of unfinished drafts and re-

---

<sup>16</sup> In fact, even during his period of depression, Mallarmé wrote extensively, and the ‘impuissance’ described above has been characterized by scholars including Mary Lewis Shaw, as referring to a spiritual rather than a creative impotence, *Performance in the Texts of Mallarmé* p. 151.

writes; this suggests that the poet was not cured by the homeopathic process of writing *Igitur*, as he had hoped in 1869.<sup>17</sup>

The new decade brought continued attempts to forge an identity in language, through a selection of varied poetic heroes including *Igitur* and the varied cast of *La Dernière Mode*, as well as through a return to the character of the faun. Thus the poet found himself trapped in an endless cycle of false starts, rather like the columnist characters of *La Dernière Mode* who struggle to make themselves present on the same temporal plane as the reader. Although this search for authorial identity might, at first glance, seem to be at odds with Mallarmé's emphasis on the 'disparition élocutoire du poète' (*OCII*, p. 211) as a condition for the ideal work, in fact, the crisis provoked by the loss of identity shows Mallarmé's œuvre to be governed by the simultaneous and conflicting quest to 'on the one hand to transcend the bo(u)nds of personal identity and on the other to secure and reinforce it more firmly against the threat of effacement and self-loss,' as Rachel Killick asserts.<sup>18</sup> In light of this, we can see the Mallarméan fiction as an intermediary space, a site of conflict between the desire for self-effacement and self-assertion. This conflict is played out in *La Dernière Mode*, through the one-dimensional journalistic personae who serve to mask the true identity of the magazine's creator.

The uncertainty surrounding identity in *La Dernière Mode* can be seen through tensions in the presentation of the journalistic personae. In the sixth issue, Marasquin offers a review

---

<sup>17</sup> The fragmentary nature of *Igitur* is discussed by Heather Williams, who highlights the various approaches to the text, noting how, since the publication of the Bonniot Manuscript, scholars from Gardner Davies to Yves Bonnefoy have sought to portray the text as a homogenous unit. Williams, however, commends Marchal's approach to the manuscripts, highlighting the sense of disjuncture which is created by the presentation of the text in his most recent Pléiade edition of Mallarmé's complete works, used in this thesis. Heather Williams, *Mallarmé's Ideas in Language* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Rachel Killick, 'Mallarmé's Rooms: The Poet's Place in *La Musique et les Lettres*', *French Studies* (1997), 51, 2, 155-168.

of the magazine's progress, discussing its structure and the content thus far; perhaps the most important feature of this 'Avis', however, is his portrayal of the columnist characters. In the editorial review, Madame de Ponty is singled out for her dual-faceted identity: Marasquin notes that she has produced 'six courriers de la mode [...] sous la signature d'une femme du monde qui est aussi un littérateur distingué.' (*OCII*, p. 610) The use of the preposition 'sous', here, perhaps implies something lurking beneath this 'signature', which also serves as a form of linguistic mask. From a linguistic point of view, the word 'signature', too, points to the creative process of writing; defined in the *Trésor de la langue française* as the 'action de signer', the instability of her pseudonym is suggested by the suffix '-ure', which typically denotes an act, process or state of being.<sup>19</sup> 'Signer', in turn, can mean simply to make one's mark on a document or paper, but can also refer to the process of signification which constitutes the creative act.<sup>20</sup> A signature is typically used to validate a legal document; the fact that the 'La Mode' column, like the other features in the magazine, is **signed** by a fictional character has implications for the authenticity of her column as a whole. All of this combines to suggest that Madame de Ponty is in a continual state of becoming, asserting and re-defining her identity through the act of writing.

The validity of Madame de Ponty's identity is further undermined by Marasquin's depiction of her as an androgynous figure: in society she is 'une femme' but as a creator, she takes on masculine characteristics, becoming 'un littérateur distingué'. The construction of this sentence immediately draws attention to the conflicting genders either side of the verb 'être'; through this particular syntactical structure, the columnist-

---

<sup>19</sup> "ure; n suffix, ME, fr. OF, fr. L -ura 1: act: process: being." Meriam-Webster, *Dictionary of Suffixes, prefixes and combining forms*, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> 'Signer, verbe trans.', *TLFi* < <http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/advanced.exe?8;s=83607870;> > [accessed 13/04/2014].

character's very being is called into question, causing the reader to wonder whether the name of Madame de Ponty might, in fact, be a fraudulent signature, or a pseudonym — the mark of a fictional identity.

Madame de Ponty is by no means the only columnist character whose authenticity is implicitly questioned in this 'Avis'. Marasquin's description of Ix and his columns also serves to place the magazine in an uncertain space, hovering between the imaginary and the real. He notes that 'La Chronique, après sa présentation faite par lui-même et derrière son masque, intéresse la Lectrice aux *fantaisies* de notre causeur Ix, qu'on reconnaîtra quelque jour.' (OCII, p. 610/611). The claim that Ix's Chronique is 'faite par lui même,' gives the column itself a sense of authority and authenticity; however, its validity is almost instantly undermined by the fact that this 'lui-même' is, itself, a fictional construct. There are a number of possible interpretations of Marasquin's presentation of this columnist character: by exploring these, we begin to see how the apparently one-dimensional 'universal *reportage*' (OCII, p. 212) of the press might be expanded to reveal secret and hidden meanings which are intrinsic to the method of language. The suggestion that one day Ix will be recognised by his readership could be interpreted in two different ways: of course, one immediately assumes that the creative genius of this mysterious columnist-character will, eventually, gain him recognition or even celebrity amongst his readers. However, in Marasquin's apparently innocent statement, there is also a suggestion that one day, the reader will perceive the 'mallarmisme [...] délicieux,' which pervades the magazine, allowing her to discern the true identity of the voice behind the mask.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Letter of 30 November 1874 to François Coppée from Luigi Gualdo à propos of *La Dernière Mode* in Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance* (Vol. V) ed. by Henri Mondor & Lloyd James Austin, (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), p. 222.

The letter X can be seen as a point of convergence, at which two planes intersect, with the two diagonal lines themselves a conflation of horizontal and vertical. Alternatively, reduced to a two letter transliteration of the letter 'X', this columnist-character could be seen as a metaphor for a process of deletion or effacement — it is as if the author himself has been replaced by his column, his name left to serve as (dubious) evidence of his hand in its creation. Sacrificing himself, to be reincarnated in the text, the authorial persona thus represents the dual concerns of self-assertion and self-effacement which are inherent to the process of writing. Of course, in the name of Ix, we might also see the symbol of the cross — the ultimate motif of that spiritual myth *par excellence*, the Crucifixion. The fiction (in the Mallarméan sense) of the cross is the method by which the presence and love of God was demonstrated, through the sacrifice of Christ and the story of this revelatory act is told through the method of language, in complex series of symbolic refractions. As such, associated with the cross, the letter X can be considered as a symbol of revelation. For Mallarmé, who had lost his Catholic faith during his profound spiritual crisis of the 1860s, art had become the poet's religion and his spiritual refuge. The process of literary creation by which physical objects and individuals become incorporated into the world of the text, taking up a lasting place in the mind, can be seen as echoing the sacrifice of Christ who left an empty grave, instead taking up an eternal existence in the spiritual realm. Rather like Christ, Ix and his colleagues serve as intermediaries between the creator (as opposed to the Creator) and the people, who interact through the medium of language.

Ix hovers precariously between being and non-being, existing only through the method of language. This uncertain status is reinforced by the symbolism of the Greek letter 'Chi',

written in capitals as X, which represents a crux or crisis point.<sup>22</sup> Introducing language games through etymology, and by drawing on both Latin and Greek, was second nature to the poet who, twenty years after the publication of *La Dernière Mode*, would declare that ‘fiction traduit à mon sens Latin l’antérieure poésie.’ (*OCH*, p. 238) From this same Latin perspective, one might read the columnist character’s name in Roman numerals as the number nine, IX – in French ‘neuf’. As Roger Pearson points out, the word ‘neuf’, in French is a homonym, also meaning ‘new’; the name of Ix thus embodies the preoccupation with novelty which is inherent both to the magazine’s aesthetic and to the *zeitgeist*.<sup>23</sup>

Latin and Greek may not have been the only language systems to influence the naming of *La Dernière Mode*’s most mysterious character. For Mallarmé, the expansion of the letter was a process that crossed the boundaries of language, drawing on ancient and modern tongues from East and West, as well as using invented words such as the famous ‘ptyx’ of the ‘Sonnet en -yx’ (echoes of which are clearly evident in the name of Ix). (Cf. *OCI*, p. 131) Given the complex calculations on the ‘Livre’ in the poet’s notes, it is possible that the symbolic system of mathematics may also have inspired the creation of this puzzling pseudonym. In an equation, the letter ‘x’ typically stands in place of an unknown quantity, symbolising an infinite number of figures and functions. In light of this algebraic practice which, rather neatly, was devised by Descartes, we could see the letter X and therefore the name of Ix as ‘parfait terme compréhensif’, a universal symbol of infinite possible value (or, indeed, of no value at all).<sup>24</sup> In the Cartesian co-ordinates system, meanwhile, x- is the

---

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, in poetry, the Greek letter “Chi” is the etymological source of the word “Chiasmus”, *Online Etymology Dictionary*, (ed. by Douglas Harper), 2013, <[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=chiasmus&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=chiasmus&allowed_in_frame=0)>.

<sup>23</sup> Roger Pearson, *Mallarmé*, (London: Reaktion, 2010), p. 103.

<sup>24</sup> ‘The [...] convention of using letters from the end of the alphabet, such as x and y [...] was introduced later by Descartes.’ David Johnson, Thomas Mowry, *Mathematics: A Practical Odyssey* (Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning, 2012), ch. 13, p. 19.

horizontal axis of a graph, which is offset against the y- axis, thus hinting at the columnist character's status as the locus of a symbolic interaction between the horizontal plane of existence in the material world and the vertical plane of the ideal.<sup>25</sup> Given the poet's interest in mathematics, demonstrated through his reading of Descartes and revealed in his letter of 1870 to Henri Cazalis, it seems plausible to suggest that Mallarmé might have drawn on the symbolic potential of algebra when writing the copy for the fashion magazine, just four years later.

The persona of Ix is thus full of possibilities and uncertainties. Questions over identity such as those explored earlier in relation to *Igitur*, as well as the mysteriousness of the magazine's columnist characters, are also associated with both the concept of fiction and with the philosophical method by which the poet might find his voice. The use of pseudonyms and the uncertain identities of the columnist characters is a key source of doubt in the magazine. The idea of the pseudonym itself establishes the magazine as a fictional domain with the prefix 'pseudo-' denoting something fake or fabricated, a fiction or illusion.<sup>26</sup> In the magazine's three-month review Marasquin reveals an awareness of the destabilizing nature of these pen-names, and appeals to the reader to place her trust in the columnist characters — 'A vous, Mesdames, d'avoir toute confiance en ce pseudonym étranger d'une Parisienne connue: Miss Satin.' (*OCH*, p. 611) It is worth noting, here, that Marasquin does not ask the reader to have confidence in Miss Satin herself, but only in her pseudonym, suggesting language to be a true and trustworthy medium, even if the columnist characters themselves have no physical existence. Alluding to the persona

---

<sup>25</sup> Karl Smith, *Mathematics: Its Power and Utility*, (Belmont, CA: Thompson, 2009), p. 547.

<sup>26</sup> 'Forming nouns and adjectives with the sense "false, pretended, counterfeit, spurious, sham; apparently but not really, falsely or erroneously called or represented, falsely, spuriously"'. 'pseudo-, comb. form.' *OED Online*  
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/153742?rskey=6OFfIv&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> [accessed 06/04/2014].

behind the pseudonym, Marasquin encourages the reader to look beneath the surface of Miss Satin's slippery sounding soubriquet, suggesting that there is more to this linguistic mask than meets the eye. Moreover, according a 'pseudonym étranger' to this 'Parisienne connue', Mallarmé reveals how language can be used to transform perception, making what is familiar seem strange and exotic, and placing the columnist characters in an uncertain space between familiarity and estrangement. Fiction can thus be seen as a process of falsification by which polarities are united, with implications for the way in which the world is perceived and understood.

In *La Dernière Mode*, the fictionalisation of identity often takes the form of a movement towards alterity. The columnist characters' 'otherness' is manifested in a variety of ways — namely through femininity (Madame de Ponty and Miss Satin, as well as many of the guest contributors), mysteriousness (Ix, Marasquin in particular) and foreignness (Miss Satin; Zizy, bonne mulatre de Surat, Marliani). Amongst the regular journalistic personae, this state of alterity is, perhaps, most completely embodied by Miss Satin. Her first column in the fourth issue of the magazine anticipates her reader's horror at discovering the addition of a new column written by 'une Anglaise'; both English and female, she is a marginal figure within the socio-political context of 1870s France. Miss Satin's persona is further distanced from the conditions of the magazine's production by her initials, MS, which are a reversal of those of her creator, SM. This rather flimsy linguistic mask once again reinforces the dichotomy of self-assertion and self-effacement which is inherent to the creative process. Miss Satin thus serves as the ultimate fictionalized identity for the poet. Read in light of the Cartesian cogito, we might see these pseudonymical columnist characters not only as a 'jeu' but as the 'JE qui confirme la fiction.'

### **‘La Fiction d’une bonne causerie’**

The first sections of this chapter have emphasized the philosophical underpinnings of Mallarmé’s concept of fiction and situated its origins in the poet’s period of personal crisis. However, despite the apparent seriousness of Mallarmé’s concept of fiction, I contend that the process of writing the fashion magazine allowed the poet to reconcile the profound personal and spiritual significance of fiction with its more material side, revealing fiction to be a dual-faceted concept, depending on the interplay between public and private. In his personal correspondence with his close friend Henri Cazalis, Mallarmé equates the notion of fiction with the idea of a ‘causerie’; in the fashion magazine, meanwhile, the columnist characters describe their own articles as ‘causeries’. This section will explore the links between the intimate ‘causeries’ referred to by Mallarmé in his personal correspondence and the journalistic ‘causeries’ in *La Dernière Mode*, making the case for seeing the language of the feminine press as the public counterpart to the private fiction alluded to by the poet in his correspondence.

Although in his notes on Descartes’ *Discours*, the word ‘fiction’ relates to the complex and abstract field of logical philosophy, Mallarmé uses the term in a much more casual sense in a letter of 24 January 1870 to Henri Cazalis, undermining the view of fiction as part of a poetic elitism and reinforcing its social aspect. In the letter, Mallarmé writes

Si ce n’était pas pour prolonger la fiction d’une bonne causerie, cher, je n’écrirais pas ces choses, qui n’ont d’autre valeur que de nous mener à cette observation de coin du feu que les bonnes âmes sont un monde à part.’ (*OCI*, p. 739)

This letter, composed shortly after the poet’s engagement with the *Discours de la méthode*, once again emphasizes the spiritual dimension of fiction, which is intrinsic to the process of writing. This time, however, the poet finds fiction not in philosophical enquiry or in the pure expression of poetry, as we will see him do later in the articles of the 1880s and 1890s,

but rather in the simple, everyday pleasure of corresponding with a close friend. Not merely a private, personal method of philosophical demonstration, this alternative understanding of fiction can be seen as a mode of revelation which might take place between two individuals. As such, we might see fiction itself as occupying an intermediary space, bridging the divide between the public and the private domains.

The understanding of fiction as a two-way dialogue is elucidated in Mallarmé's fragmentary notes on the science of conversation, dating from 1869 to 1870, around the same time as his notes on Descartes' *Discours*.<sup>27</sup> For the purposes of this Chapter I would like to take a closer look at the first of these, which highlights the role of fiction in the poet's understanding of 'la Conversation'.

la Conversation; non dans une conversation, ce qu'elle est au moment (c'est fini) ni dans la partie de son Abstraction que nous voulons connaître, mais dans sa Fiction, ici telle qu'elle est exprimée par rapport à ces deux phases qu'elle réfléchit. Arriver de la *phrase* à la *lettre*, par le mot; en nous servant du signe ou de l'écriture, qui relie le mot à son Sens (*OCI*, p. 508).

Mallarmé's distinction, here, between 'la Conversation' and 'une conversation' is important — the former is a process of signification, while the latter is merely a transitory discussion.<sup>28</sup> Conversation as a proper noun occupies an intermediary space between language in its 'brut et immédiat' state as a verbal utterance, and its abstraction, the lasting meaning which the word imprints in the mind of the reader. Inherent to 'la Conversation', fiction is a mode of communicating the idea, a process of signification by which, through language, 'le mot' finds its meaning. Fiction is therefore a reciprocal process, which takes place between speaker and audience — these two 'bonnes âmes' — and is dependent on

---

<sup>27</sup> Helen Abbott carries out an important analysis of these notes in *Between Baudelaire and Mallarmé*, looking in particular at five fragments which seem to follow on from one another in the form of a philosophical enquiry. Helen Abbott, *Between Baudelaire and Mallarmé*, pp. 115-122.

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, one might see the word "conversation" as a conflation of lines — 'vers', and also as a process, thanks to the suffix 'ion'.

the engagement of both for its existence. The same meeting of kindred spirits can, I suggest, be seen in *La Dernière Mode* through the intimate confidences which Madame de Ponty shares with her ‘chères lectrices’ and the discussions of the public and private ‘solennités’ of theatre-going and reading by Ix, the self-styled ‘ami qui prête des livres.’ (*OCI*, p. 496)

The vocabulary employed by Mallarmé in his deeply personal letter to Henri Cazalis has implications for understanding the idea of fiction within *La Dernière Mode*. In wishing to prolong the ‘fiction d’une bonne causerie,’ Mallarmé emphasizes the joy of writing for writing’s sake and alludes to the spiritual significance of the process of self-expression. The warmth and intimacy of this connection is emphasized by the fact that this observation is made ‘de coin du feu’ (*OCH*, p. 162); this evokes the image of the hearth, suggesting that the revelation of the ideal might take place within a domestic space. Moreover, the familiar environment of the fireside creates a sense of proximity between these two kindred spirits, revealing the power of written expression to overcome any psychological or physical distance which might separate them.

Throughout Mallarmé’s œuvre, the poet exploits the potential for language to transcend the void between physical and psychological worlds. In *La Dernière Mode*, the ‘Correspondance avec les abonnées’ uses dialogue to overcome the physical distance between the Paris-based columnist characters and their readers, who hail from far and wide, from diverse corners of France, and abroad. Of course, the uncertainty over the existence of the columnist characters reveals that it is not only geographical boundaries which are transcended through the correspondence: this particular section of the magazine responds to imaginary letters from subscribers, through the mouthpieces of the fictitious columnist characters, transgressing the frontier between the imaginary and the real. The magazine’s

readers are not given access to the original letters sent in and the identities of the correspondents are even more mysterious than those of the columnist characters themselves. Typically, this 'letters page' addresses individual readers, who are identified by their geographical location, their title and the first letter of their surnames; this leaves readers free to conjure up an image of the magazine's readership in their own minds.<sup>29</sup> As such, through the written medium of the magazine, one imaginary world communicates with another in a process which we might liken to the fiction described in Mallarmé's personal notes on the science of conversation.

It is significant that Mallarmé should use the noun 'causerie' in this letter to refer to the intimate personal correspondence between these two close friends; this term was popular in journalistic circles in the mid- to late 1800s, and typically referred to an article written in a relaxed, light-hearted linguistic style. The word 'causerie' and the verb 'causer' are used repeatedly by the columnist characters to refer to their own writing in *La Dernière Mode*.<sup>30</sup> The concept of the journalistic 'causerie' was established by Alexandre Dumas and was used in his two periodicals *Le Mousquetaire* and *Le Monte-Cristo*, published as a two volume collection in 1860. In the introduction to his collected *Causeries*, Dumas claimed the form to be a peculiarly French mode of expression, 'une condition de notre langue bavarde.'<sup>31</sup> Indeed, the term 'causerie' originally denoted a 'bavardage' and the term was typically used in a pejorative sense; Mallarmé's identification of the fiction

---

<sup>29</sup> Rather like the 'Type' described by Mallarmé in 'Richard Wagner, rêverie d'un poète français', which should be vague in order to allow the reader to project her own interpretation onto the dramatic persona, and thus play a role in the characterization of a theatrical performance. Cf. *OCII*, p. 157.

<sup>30</sup> There are numerous examples of the use of the noun 'causerie' and the verb 'causer'. E.g. Ix (*OCII*, p. 495 and p. 545), Mme de Ponty (*OCII*, p. 521).

<sup>31</sup> Alexandre Dumas, 'Études sur le Cœur et le talent des poètes' (*Le Mousquetaire*, 23 March 1854) in *Causeries* (Web: Le Joyeux Roger, 2012) <<http://www.alexandredumasetcompagnie.com/images/1.pdf/Causeries.pdf>> [accessed 14/04/2014].

inherent in a ‘bonne causerie’ undermines the notion of the ‘double état de la parole’, instead demonstrating that the ideal is intrinsic to the ‘mots de la tribu.’ (*OCI*, p.38)

This particular journalistic form was also adopted by Sainte-Beuve whose weekly ‘Causeries du lundi’ appeared in several major French newspapers including *le Constitutionnel*, *le Moniteur* and *le Temps* between 1849 and 1870.<sup>32</sup> These took the form of articles on art and literature, revealing a more serious critical side to this type of journalistic writing. The various manifestations of the ‘causerie’ in French journalism during the years leading up to the publication of *La Dernière Mode* reveal the multifaceted nature of this mode of writing in which serious and frivolous matters are intertwined. In light of Dumas’ reflections on the light-hearted, chatty nature of the French language and its aptitude for the written form of the ‘causerie’, this particular mode might be seen as particularly appropriate for expressing these ‘riens sérieux’ (*OCII*, p. 498) to which Ix alludes in the very first issue of the magazine. Mallarmé’s remark in his letter to Cazalis also confirms the dual-faceted nature of the ‘causerie’ or ‘fiction’, which is at once as light-hearted as chit-chat or letters between friends and yet also has a profound spiritual significance for both writer and recipient.<sup>33</sup>

In the fifth issue of the magazine, Madame de Ponty uses the verb ‘causer’ in the first person plural, establishing her column as an intimate space in which she and her reader are in dialogue. Having warned of the extremely large range of fabrics and unfamiliar names

---

<sup>32</sup> Cf. ‘Causeries du Lundi’, *Encyclopédie Larousse Online*, (Paris: Editions Larousse 2012) <[http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/oeuvre/Causeries\\_du\\_lundi/112174](http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/oeuvre/Causeries_du_lundi/112174)> [accessed 14/03/2014].

<sup>33</sup> Pascal Durand notes that Alexandre Dumas lays claim to having coined the term ‘causerie’ to refer to articles in his periodical *Le Mousquetaire*, “Ce que causer veut dire” (Ch. 3) in *Entre presse et littérature: Le mousquetaire, journal de M. Alexandre Dumas (1853-1857): actes du colloque organisé à Lyon (8 décembre 2005) et à Liège (7-8 décembre 2006)*, ed. by Pascal Durand, Sarah Mombert, (Liège: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l’Université de Liège, 2009), p. 45.

amongst the coming fashion collections, she appeases her reader, guiding her back to the matter in hand: ‘Allons! Venez, rassurez-vous et causons’ (*OCII*, p.580) The series of imperatives here gives a strong message to follow the counsel of the columnist-character, casting the space of the fashion column as a safe and informal environment in which to enter into dialogue with the speaker. Miss Satin’s first ‘Gazette de la Fashion’, meanwhile is described as a ‘première causerie’, and her columns distinguish themselves from those of Parisienne counterpart Madame de Ponty by being both shorter and more light-hearted in tone. Miss Satin’s femininity and her foreignness create a sense of physical and spiritual distance from the male-dominated literary culture of Paris; however, the fiction of this ‘causerie’ seems to bridge this gulf of unfamiliarity, enabling the reader to feel at ease, and allowing her to begin to familiarize herself with the style of this cross-channel columnist.

In *La Dernière Mode* the distinction between the imaginary and the real is destabilised through the repeated references to the fantastic and the many allusions to concealing and dissimulating which we see in the magazine. Marasquin, too, alludes to the notion of the ‘causerie’ in his resumé of the magazine’s first six issues, using the term ‘causeur’ to refer to Ix. ‘La CHRONIQUE, après sa *présentation* faite par lui-même et derrière son masque, intéresse la Lectrice aux *fantaisies* de notre causeur Ix, qu’on reconnaîtra un jour.’ (*OCII*, p. 611) Marasquin’s words here, emphasize the fictional nature of the ‘causeries’ of *La Dernière Mode*: ‘Notre causeur’ speaks from behind a mask, sharing his ‘fantaisies’ with the reader; this mask is not a physical mask, but a linguistic one which serves to highlight the deceptive nature of appearances in *La Dernière Mode*. One possible meaning for the noun ‘fantaisie’ is a ‘production de l’imagination’, meaning that the term would seem to

be synonymous with fiction.<sup>34</sup> The allusion to Ix's 'fantaisies' draws attention to the role of the imaginary in the 'Chronique', and hints at the questioning of the accepted distinction between truth and illusion in the magazine.

In *La Dernière Mode*, the products of the imagination become jumbled in with those created by artisans, as well as with the many man-made objects and ephemera brought into being through modern manufacturing techniques. Although the spiritual turmoil of the 1860s led Mallarmé to focus on some rather abstract questions of identity and religion, as reflected in his notes on Descartes' *Discours* and documented through the prose fiction of *Igitur*, it was also in this 'post-Tournon' period that his fascination with objects, trinkets and other ephemera took on a role of particular importance in the poet's aesthetic framework. Thus, we might see the production of *La Dernière Mode* as a turning point within the development of Mallarmé's œuvre, transforming his attitude to the creative process and prompting him to embrace the aesthetic possibilities of the world of things, undermining the opposition between beauty and utility.

### **The Press: Journalism and Fiction**

Mallarmé's growing fascination with the possibilities afforded by the mass media can be linked to his increasing engagement with social and economic life. In the *Divagations*, Mallarmé refers to fiction repeatedly, exploring its place in the modern, industrial age and reflecting on its role in relation to journalism and the press. This section examines the presentation of fiction in Mallarmé's later writings in comparison with that seen in the

---

<sup>34</sup> 'fantaisie, subst. fém', *TLFi*, <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/advanced.exe?8;s=902491665;>> [accessed 13/01/2014].

poet's earlier notes and correspondence, in order to show how *La Dernière Mode* can be seen to have contributed to a shift in the poet's understanding of the concept of fiction and its role both in society and in modernity.

Mallarmé's later works, such as 'Étalages', first published in the *National Observer* in 1892, acknowledge journalism as the foundation of the publishing industry; the poet seized on this to reach a mass audience, using the press as a starting point for revealing the ideal to the masses. 'Étalages' explores the relationship between journalism and fiction:

Plutôt la Presse, chez nous seuls, a voulu une place aux écrits – son traditionnel feuilleton en rez-de-chaussée longtemps soutient la masse du format entier: ainsi qu'aux avenues, sur le fragile magasin éblouissant, glaces à scintillation de bijoux ou par la nuance de tissus baignée, sûrement pose un immeuble lourd d'étages nombreux. Mieux, la fiction proprement dite ou le récit imaginaire, s'ébat au travers de 'quotidiens' achalandés, triomphant à des lieux principaux, jusqu'au sommet; en déloge l'article de fonds, ou d'actualité, apparu secondaire. (*OCII*, p. 221)

This passage presents the press in architectural terms, as a towering shop, unstable but full of possibilities. As Pascal Durand notes, Mallarmé uses a pun here, playing on the term 'article de fond', which refers to a feature article, such as those found in the daily press during the nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup> In the quotation, Mallarmé claims that the journalistic form has the ability to transcend the status of a mere 'article de fond', revealing the beauty found within the everyday. In this extended metaphor, the traditional 'feuilleton' is the ground floor providing a crude basis for writing, which is then 'built up' to lofty heights through the act of reading, which unlocks the metaphorical potential of language. This process takes place on a vertical axis, with the factual basis of the article itself relegated to secondary status, crushed beneath many metaphorical storeys, decorated with jewels and mirrors which reflect glimpses of the ideal. Thus, in 'Étalages', through the creative process, the

---

<sup>35</sup> *Mallarmé: Du sens des formes au sens des formalités*, p. 168.

functional value of the object – in this case language and the press itself – is subordinated as the aesthetic value of language is foregrounded.

Throughout the passage from 'Etalages', cited above, Mallarmé uses material metaphors and vocabulary associated with architecture and ornaments to demonstrate the process by which the ideal might be revealed through the language of the people. The lexical field of 'Etalages' and the vertical axis of this process of construction are both reminiscent of Marliani's interior design guides, which open up the symbolic dimension of the language of the material. In light of this similarity, we might see the columns of the magazine and its guest contributions as a metaphor for the transformation of journalistic language into something of aesthetic merit, brought about through the reading process. The image of the shop places the article within the context of the commercial environment of the late nineteenth century. This is the world of arcades and department stores, of the Galeries du Louvre and Au Bon Marché, wryly described by Miss Satin in the fifth issue of the magazine; in *Etalages*, however, this setting is transformed, used as a metaphor for the creative process by which the ideal is revealed in the language of the everyday. Just as a fashionable woman, or even Madame de Ponty herself, might pick different garments in a shop, combining them to create the overall aesthetic effect of an outfit, so the poet can refine the linguistic 'raw material' used by the press, whilst also benefiting from the tools of publicity and circulation in the mass media. Everyday life as reported in the press is, therefore, a well-stocked outlet, offering the poet a wealth of linguistic jewels which can be fashioned into objects of beauty. Fiction is the process which happens when the imagination takes off beyond the scope of the everyday events reported in the daily papers, allowing words themselves to come to the fore; it can be viewed as existing on a vertical axis, effecting a movement towards the 'sommet'. In 'Etalages', Mallarmé describes the

revelation of the ideal as a mirror, reflecting the ‘scintillation de bijoux’ and bathed in the ‘nuance de tissus’; these references to jewels and fabrics reinforce the link between literature and the capitalist environment, presenting the ideal as an object of desire, rarely glimpsed within a rapidly changing consumer environment.

While the press offers serious, factual information, in ‘Etalages’, fiction is afforded a ludic quality thanks to the use of the verb ‘s’*é*battre’, meaning to gambol or frolic; this highlights the mobile quality of language and its potential to be released from the strictures of the press by the poet. Fiction can thus be seen as an intermediary space, existing beyond the physical delimitations of the book and at a remove from its socio-political context. With alternative meanings including ‘se divertir’, the word also highlights the pleasure to be derived from allowing the mind to wander, reminding us, once again, of the magazine’s task to ‘entretenir’, that is, to entertain by holding the reader in a position of suspense, hovering in the gulf between fantasy and reality. As such, fiction itself can be seen as the creative task *par excellence*, a fusion of the endeavours of both poet and reader, operating through the medium of language. The fictional dimension of *La Dernière Mode* allows the poet to take off beyond the actual book itself and to enjoy the process of escaping into the realm of the imagination. Although the tone of ‘Etalages’ hints at Mallarmé’s disdain for the press, the article also acknowledges a narrowing of the gulf between literature and consumerism, and reveals the possibility of seizing the new industrialized climate of Paris for aesthetic ends. I suggest that the poet’s interest in the possibility of using the capitalist environment as a launchpad towards the ideal and may have been fuelled by his experiences writing and editing the copy for *La Dernière Mode*, and the pleasure he derived from the magazine both as a process and as a product.

Although, as discussed, *La Dernière Mode*, along with the critical and journalistic writings of the 1880s and 1890s, reveals the poet to be warming to the benefits of engaging with the press, Mallarmé never wholly reconciled himself to the commercial, financial, and linguistic constraints of journalism. The poet's notes on the 'Livre' document numerous attempts to unite finance and fiction. On one page he considers the monetary value of the ideal book, calculating how much he would need to charge per volume, based on the potential customer base:

mon journal  
 arrive à tirer 360 à mille au lieu de demander mille fr. à  
 360 personnes par vol  
 Demandant 100 f. de chaque vol. qui n'est pas — d'avance — (OCI, p. 566)

In these fragmentary notes, the 'Livre' is presented as a fiction with no existence beyond the poet's own dreams and aspirations. On this page, Mallarmé describes the hypothetical ideal work as 'mon journal', emphasizing the links between journalism and the ideal work of art, and drawing attention to the aesthetic possibilities afforded by the press; this may also allude to the temporal aspect of the 'Livre', presenting it as a work 'in touch' with contemporary life. In *La Dernière Mode*, too, the columnist characters occasionally refer to the magazine as 'notre journal', narrowing the gulf between the fashion magazine and the 'Livre'. Crucially, the presentation of the 'Livre' as a 'journal' and the calculations regarding the number of copies to be sold, found in the 'Notes en vue du Livre', show Mallarmé to be acutely aware of the fact that even the ideal book could not function independently of the capitalist structure. Moreover, the emphasis placed on journalism in these notes shows the poet to be aware of the need to exploit the potential of commerce to transmit the idea, whilst also using it as a means of covering the costs of practicalities such as printing.

In 1891, in his ‘Entretien sur l’évolution littéraire’ with Jules Huret, Mallarmé expresses his continuing distaste for certain elements of the popular press. He declares that: ‘Le vers est partout dans la langue où il y a rythme, partout, excepté dans les affiches et à la quatrième page des journaux. Dans le genre appelé prose [...]’ (*OCII*, p. 698) According to journalistic conventions in nineteenth-century France, the fourth page of the newspaper was deemed to be a prominent, eye-catching space for consumers and was thus dedicated to advertising, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis.<sup>36</sup> Although Mallarmé’s later writings reveal him to be a staunch critic of such commercial publicity, in 1874, something seems to have sparked the poet’s interest in the aesthetic possibilities offered by advertising. The visiting cards in *La Dernière Mode* reveal that the aesthetic and the commercial could co-exist harmoniously, each working for the benefit the other; this once again demonstrates the poet’s undermining of the opposition between beauty and utility, which is central to Mallarméan modernity. It was not only through *La Dernière Mode* that Mallarmé revealed his growing interest in the aesthetic value of advertising; writing to Emile Zola, that same year, the poet declared that,

Quant à moi, qui admire une affiche, dessinée et coloriée comme plus d’une, à l’égal d’un plafond ou d’une apothéose, je ne connais pas un point de vue en art qui soit inférieur à un autre; et je jouis partout ainsi qu’il sied.<sup>37</sup>

This claim that Mallarmé could take pleasure in all forms of art, including colourful, well-drawn advertisements, seems to anticipate the view, expressed some twenty years later in

---

<sup>36</sup> By 1874, the status of the fourth page of the newspaper as a space purely for advertising was a long-established convention. In his 1843 monograph “Les journalistes” Honoré de Balzac notes the detrimental effect this structure has had on the status of literary criticism in French journalism and the effects of this for the bookselling industry: “[...]depuis le jour où la quatrième page des journaux est devenue le champ fertile où fleurissent les annonces, la critique des livres a cessé. Ceci est une des causes de la diminution progressive de la vente des ouvrages littéraires, à quelque catégorie qu’ils appartiennent.” (Honoré de Balzac, *Les Journalistes: Monographie de la presse Parisienne* (Paris: Boucher, 2002).

<sup>37</sup> Letter to Emile Zola, 6 November 1874, in *Correspondance*, vol 2, éd. by H. Mondor et L. J. Austin, Paris, Gallimard, 1965, p. 51. For more information on Mallarmé and advertising, see <http://orbi.ulg.ac.be/bitstream/2268/87331/1/Myst%C3%A8re%20dans%20l'%C3%A9talage.pdf>> [accessed 12/12/12].

‘Étalages’, that fiction dwells in the journalistic text, frolicking playfully and ‘trionphant à des lieux principaux.’ (*OCII*, p. 221)

In *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé experiments with ways of integrating advertising into the structure of the magazine, blurring the boundaries between the world of the text and the commercial context in which the magazine was produced. While in his letter to Zola, Mallarmé claims to admire the colourful lithographic posters which became popular in France in the 1870s,<sup>38</sup> the visiting cards in *La Dernière Mode* offer an entirely different experience of advertising. Monochromatic and rather sparse, these empty rectangular shapes on the back page of the magazine leave plenty to the imagination. (Cf. Appendix 6) As such, the visiting cards operate on the level of suggestion, evoking the promise of the luxurious wares and services on offer to the Parisian consumer and allowing her to luxuriate in the fantasy of procuring the many exquisite goods described and advertised in the magazine. Mallarmé refers to the potential of advertising in the ‘Notes en vue du Livre’, once again emphasizing its role in making the ideal work a financially viable endeavour:

La réclame paie l’impression et papier (loterie) — et le  
prix est à partager entre le vendeur et l’auteur. (*OCI*, p. 612)

This acknowledgement of the financial benefits afforded by engaging with the commercial environment of late nineteenth-century Paris can be linked to the promotion of certain designers, publishing houses and shops in *La Dernière Mode*, both in the body of the text, and through the use of visiting cards. Then, as now, it pays to advertise.

## **Dynamics of desire in art and the economy**

---

<sup>38</sup> For further historical background on posters and advertising during this period, see Max Gallo, *L’affiche: miroir de l’histoire, miroir de la vie*, (Paris: R. Laffont, 1973).

The definition of fiction given at the beginning of this chapter emphasized its roots in a desire to reach the unattainable ideal. Advertising plays on this desire, offering the tantalising possibility of satisfying the consumer's craving for new objects, as part of a mechanism which can be likened to that of fiction. The 'Cartes de Visite' in *La Dernière Mode*, found on the back cover of the magazine in a section entitled 'Les Maisons de Confiance', and the half-page adverts, such as those for trips with Anchor Line steamers, offered the poet a means of combining aesthetic and socio-economic matters through the work of art. A huge selection of goods and services in Paris are named in this section, including fashion houses, milliners, hotels, interior designers, educational establishments, toyshops and exotic grocery stores — even dentists feature in this essential directory for fashionable Parisians. Each issue comprises twenty visiting cards — twelve on the penultimate page and eight on the outside of the back cover. The layout of this section remains the same throughout the eight issues of the magazine, divided into three columns, as can be seen in Appendix 6. The middle column contains the correspondence with subscribers, arranged in a dense block of text. This layout is particular to *La Dernière Mode*, rather than being a typical way of organizing the advertisements and visiting cards in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century fashion magazines. In *La Sylphide* visiting cards are arranged horizontally in pairs or groups of three, as can be seen in Appendix 7. In light of this, we might see the decision to place the visiting cards alongside the correspondence with subscribers as a means of drawing together the imaginary world of the text and the real, commercial environment of nineteenth century Paris, supporting Marasquin's claim in the 'Avis' that no other periodical is both true to the practical needs of its readers and in tune with their aesthetic sensitivities in the same way as *La Dernière Mode*.

The ‘Cartes de Visite’ build up a lavish and cosmopolitan image of the French capital in the mid- 1870s, revealing all that was of interest to the wealthy and fashionable female reader of the period. An introductory paragraph states the section’s objective of keeping readers up-to-date with the most important details relating to fashion and lifestyle in Paris; this aim is re-iterated in every issue of the magazine.

Les ‘Maisons de Confiance’, dont le nom suit, présentent aujourd’hui leur carte aux lectrices de *La Dernière Mode*.

Associées au luxe de la Couverture et participant à la rédaction même du Journal, grâce au voisinage de la *Correspondance avec les Abonnées*, nos annonces s’offrent sous un titre spécial, comme les Cartes de Visite des Grands Magasins de Paris. Sans publier un amas d’adresses assemblées par le hasard ou en vertu de combinaisons étrangères à l’intérêt du client, nous fournissons les renseignements nécessaires à une personne, même éloignée de Paris, pour suivre de tous points de la mode. Avoir son nom sur une de ces Cartes, dont le nombre ordinaire ne va pas au-delà de vingt, est une recommandation pour une maison qui désire se rappeler d’une saison à l’autre au Public.<sup>39</sup>

This introductory paragraph reveals the deliberate attention paid to layout in *La Dernière Mode*, highlighting the carefully considered position of the ‘Cartes de Visite’ within the overall structure of the magazine. The title of this section — ‘Maisons de Confiance’ — also adds a personal touch to the reading experience. The word ‘confiance’ not only highlights the reliability of these enterprises, but also suggests that sharing of secret information, emphasizing the intimacy of the dialogue between the columnist characters and the readers. One might see this trusting relationship as echoing the special affinity between friends described in Mallarmé’s letter to Henri Cazalis; as such, the correspondence with subscribers, too, could be interpreted as the ‘fiction d’une bonne causerie.’

---

<sup>39</sup> Stéphane Mallarmé, *La Dernière Mode*, (Paris: Editions Ramsay, 1978), np.

In giving this section a ‘titre spécial’ and promoting only trusted establishments, the advertisements which accompany the magazine are presented as an integral part of *La Dernière Mode*, and are designed to serve as an important document for those following the transformations in Parisian fashion. The paragraph, cited above, which (with minor changes from issue to issue) prefaces the ‘Maisons de Confiance’ section in every issue, highlights the fact that the section is focussed on the needs and interests of the reader, rather than being included simply for financial or commercial reasons. This short blurb thus establishes a dialogue between the magazine’s readership and the local tradespeople of Paris, and demonstrates the potential for journalism and the written word to serve as a dynamic force within the burgeoning Parisian economy, as well as within the realm of the aesthetic. Appealing to a largely female readership, the ‘Maisons de Confiance’ section highlights the growing importance of women as readers, and confirms their new-found importance within the consumerist environment of the late nineteenth century.

In his ‘Avis’ in the sixth issue of *La Dernière Mode*, Marasquin reflects on the dual concerns of the magazine, which must deal at once with aesthetic and practical matters for the benefit of the reader.

Pas de Journal qui ait, plus que *la Dernière Mode*, le souci d’une publicité loyale et de bon ton: on y a inauguré l’annonce faite à l’aide de CARTES DE VISITE appartenant déjà aux premières maisons de Paris. Le Courrier de la Mode restant une étude, entièrement désintéressée, des variations du goût, le nom d’aucun magasin ni d’aucune faiseuse n’y paraît (détail précieux); et pour débarrasser ce *Premier-Paris* particulier à ma Publication, de toute préoccupation étrangère et commerciale, autant que pour développer les Cartes, très brèves, je publie maintenant un article spécial, la *Gazette de la Fashion*, présentant à nos Lectrices tous les renseignements quotidiens, luxueux et pratiques. (*OCII*, p. 611)

In this passage, Marasquin sets *La Dernière Mode* apart from other magazines on account of its desire to unite advertising with the important matter of good taste. Madame de Ponty’s ‘La Mode’ column is the voice of pure aesthetics and Marasquin underscores the

need to ensure that her column remains entirely free from any practical or commercial concerns. The ‘Cartes de Visite’, on the other hand, represent the magazine’s commercial engagement and provide the link by which the aesthetic dimension of the periodical is united with its financial status. Miss Satin is instated in the fourth issue of the magazine to serve as a thread by which these two elements of the world are joined together. Miss Satin’s arrival could be interpreted as a marker of Mallarmé’s growing interest in the aesthetic possibilities afforded by the capitalist environment of the late nineteenth century. Alternatively, we might see his decision to introduce a new columnist-character into the world of the magazine as a way of resisting the threat to aesthetics posed by consumerism, uniting the two aspects in order to preserve art in the face of capitalism. Whatever the reason for Mallarmé’s decision to bring Miss Satin into the magazine’s cast of columnist characters, her presence draws attention to the interdependency of art and commercialism in the modern age.

The position of this commercial directory at the end of the magazine, next to the luxurious outer cover, reinforces the potential for advertising to serve as a launchpad, projecting the reader’s imagination beyond the limitations of the physical text and into the realms of fantasy. The effect of this structure is similar to that of the *Poésies*, which concludes with the sonnet ‘Mes bouquins refermés...’. Acting as a bookend to the collection, this final poem reveals the finished book to be a gateway into an imaginary world, which is revealed in the mind of the reader and exists outside of the realms of time and space. Like this final poem, the visiting cards, too, represent both an end and a beginning: once the reader has read the magazine, she embarks upon a mental journey to an ideal department store, browsing the products and services of Paris in her mind’s eye. The visiting cards tempt the reader to stray into a fantasy world in which she can possess an infinite range of possible

and impossible products, by offering details of where she might obtain such luxurious goods. However, the imaginary garments and objects evoked by the magazine cannot be procured in reality, so the craving for material goods evoked by the ‘Cartes de Visite’ is inevitably frustrated. As such, the desires of the reader of *La Dernière Mode* can be likened to the hunger of the speaker in ‘Mes bouquins refermés...’, a ‘faim qui d’aucuns fruits ici ne se régale.’ (OCI, p. 45) <sup>40</sup>

The ‘Cartes de Visite’ not only link the fashion magazine to the commercial context of *La Dernière Mode*; they also reveal the magazine to be driven by a similar mechanism of anticipation and delayed gratification. This creation and frustration of desire operates on a variety of levels, dynamizing the reading process both within individual instalments and from one issue to the next. The magazine presents the reader with manifold fantastic possible dresses, outfits and interiors, establishing a world which, aesthetically speaking, far exceeds the boundaries of reality. The indulgent imaginary world of the magazine, with its promise of future fashions, evokes an insatiable desire for objects which are yet to be created. Of course, the eventual arrival of these new trends in the real world can never live up to the vision evoked in the reader’s mind by the magazine. Thus frustrated, the reader eagerly awaits the new fantasies that the next instalment will bring, repeating this same

---

<sup>40</sup> In his article, ‘La Fiction comme superchérie divine: l’effet de fiction dans la poésie de Mallarmé’ Stéphane Pillet highlights the status of this particular sonnet as one in which fiction plays a central role. In the poem, the dichotomy of presence and absence serves as a driving force, projecting the imagination to fill the empty space created by desire.

Le nom de Paphos provoque chez le poète une rêverie mais il s’attache surtout au pouvoir de l’esprit (“le seul génie”) à créer un lieu fictif (“paysage faux”). L’imagination se fait fort de reconstruire l’image du manque et de l’absence [...] Le sein qui n’est plus existe donc à nouveau dans l’esprit du poète. Il y a alors une recréation qui prend néanmoins une dimension fictive. La fiction de Mallarmé permet de reconstruire par l’esprit l’objet absent. Cet objet absent peut également et surtout être l’Idée qui, par “un leurre” qu’est une poésie, apparaît dans l’esprit du lecteur.

Stéphane Pillet, ‘La Fiction comme superchérie divine: l’effet de fiction dans la poésie de Mallarmé’, *Fabula* < <http://www.fabula.org/effet/interventions/12.php> > [accessed 15/12/2012].

cycle issue after issue. According to theories of economics, the capitalist structure, too, is dynamised by this dialectic of desire and disappointment. In *The Economy of Desire*, Daniel Bell Jr. writes that:

Capitalism distorts the creative power that is human desire by constantly creating new objects/idols for its fascination. It entices desire with an endless array of distractions. The enchantments of capitalist production are distractions precisely because they cannot satisfy our desire. And as far as capitalism is concerned, this is a good thing, for satisfied desire would spell an end to capitalism, which depends on the frenetic power of unquenched desire to drive its productive engines.<sup>41</sup>

Fashion journalism operates in a similar way, not only distorting desire, but harnessing it in order to tempt the reader to stray into the world of fantasy. In *La Dernière Mode*, too, there is a constant search for ‘new objects/idols for [the reader’s] fascination’. On a commercial level, it is essential that the reader’s quest for novelty is never fulfilled; the magazine’s future success depends upon this ‘unquenched desire’, not only for dresses themselves, but also to find out more about the coming transformations in fashion. The reader craves further knowledge, believing that it will bring her closer to the impossible goal of being *à la mode*; it is this continually frustrated desire to be at the cutting edge of fashion which heightens her anticipation of the next instalment. This cycle of temptation and deferred gratification prolongs the reading process, maintaining the reader’s attention from one issue to the next and encouraging her to keep buying the magazine. From both an aesthetic and economic perspective, *La Dernière Mode* plays both on fashion’s tendency towards obsolescence and upon capitalist structures, to create a thoroughly modern mode of literary creation which operates according to a similar mechanism as the mime, leaving the reader hovering in a suspended space between the ‘le désir et son accomplissement.’

---

<sup>41</sup> Daniel M. Bell Jr., *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), p. 168.

In *La Musique et les Lettres* Mallarmé notes that literature in the modern age is characterised by a failure to satisfy our desires. He declares that:

Strictelement j'envisage, écartés vos folios d'études, rubriques, parchemin, la lecture comme une pratique désespérée. Ainsi toute industrie a-t-elle failli à la fabrication du bonheur, que l'agencement ne s'en trouve à portée: je connais des instants où quoi que ce soit, au nom d'une disposition secrète, ne doit satisfaire (*OCII*, p. 67).

The uncertain nature of gratification and the dominance of lesser forms of writing make reading a desperate practice in the contemporary era, highlighting the modern crisis in literature. Mallarmé claims that the joy of reading for pleasure cannot be commercially produced or created at will, but is experienced in unexpected places; such brief instances of pleasure heighten curiosity, but can never satisfy the desire for 'le Beau' — as such, he establishes the reading process itself as a quest for an impossible ideal. The world of fashion is governed, too, is governed by a desire for the impossible, as the reader is tempted by the promise of dresses and outfits which can never exist in reality. Fashion journalism fuels this dynamic of desire and its frustration, by offering glimpses of these exquisite possible creations, allowing the reader to develop a vivid picture of the ideal 'look' in her mind's eye.

In this final section, let us return, briefly, to the quotation from *La Musique et les Lettres* in which Mallarmé states his repugnance at the idea of operating, in public, 'le démontage impie de la fiction', situating this in relation to the dynamic of desire and disappointment discussed above. In this passage, the poet suggests that reading itself is a mere trick or illusion, a 'leurre' or 'superchérie' which provokes us to chase a pleasure which is not accessible by human agency alone. So it is that the mechanism of fashion echoes the 'mécanisme littéraire' which consists in a quest for the unknown and impossible ideal, 'ce qui là-haut éclate'. The verb 'éclater' presents the ideal in terms of light and illumination, reinforcing the movement from darkness to light as a metaphor for the creative process,

discussed in Chapter Two. In this extract from *La Musique et les Lettres*, images of height and depth are evoked once more, as the ‘au-delà’ is presented as the ‘motor’ which drives the creative process. This mechanism seems to ‘kickstart’ a movement towards the mysterious ‘attirance supérieure’ of the ideal; this is demonstrated by the verb ‘projeter’, which reinforces the mobility of the creative process, as it takes off on a vertical axis towards the ideal. The verb ‘étaler’ meanwhile echoes the extended metaphor of ‘Etalages’, which presents the written word as a department store, a vast and precarious edifice, towering high into the heavens and reflecting glimpses of the ideal. This ascension is countered by the image of lightning, which moves downwards, creating a sudden, electric connection between earth and the heavens. The metaphor of lightning draws attention to the sudden, unexpected nature of the revelation of the ideal in language and emphasizes its mysterious quality. The passage concludes with the evocation of the reading process as a private ritual, rather like the ‘solennités tout intimes’ (*OCII*, p. 644) described by Ix in the first issue of the magazine.

Through a reading of this passage from *La Musique et les lettres*, it becomes clear that the dynamic of desire and disappointment seen in both the magazine and, more broadly speaking, in the capitalist environment, operates in a similar manner to the fiction of the text. In *Le (Dé)montage de la fiction*, Patrick Thériault argues that Mallarméan poetics is based on an ‘Economie du désir’ in which desires are created but not satisfied:

La fiction mallarméenne correspond donc à l’ordre de la représentation en tant qu’Economie où est mis à profit le désir. Un désir tout aussi impossible à satisfaire qu’à annihiler, dont la dynamique paradoxale explique seule qu’on soit porté contre tout bon sens – et à plus forte raison contre la ‘formule absolue’ selon laquelle ‘n’est que ce qui est’ – à projeter un ‘au-delà’ inaccessible, ‘à quelque élévation défendue et de foudre [...] La fiction se dit de l’”*autre chose*”, de la réalité conventionnellement admise de l’être, de ‘ce qui est’ Elle est rêve, virtualité, potentialité, hypothèse, bref ce en vertu de quoi les ‘choses solides et

prépondérantes’, comme l’écrit Mallarmé, peuvent se ‘douer de resplendissement.’<sup>42</sup>

Thériault’s understanding of fiction as an ‘Economie’ is important here, demonstrating the common mechanisms which drive fiction and commerce. Indeed, we might see the creation and frustration of desire in *La Dernière Mode* as a metaphor for the process of fiction itself, by which les ‘choses solides et prépondérantes’ take up a place in the virtual space of the mind, where they can be revealed in their true splendour. Thériault’s analysis also highlights the importance of paradox, arguing that fiction is defined in relation to reality, establishing itself as ‘l’*“autre chose”*

Literature and marketing are both driven by absence or lack, which is the chief motor of desire. Advertising works by making consumers feel that something is missing from their lives; in order to sell a product, marketing strategies need to reveal a possible, better world to the consumer, apparently accessible by purchasing the product in question. This world is then conjured up in the reader’s imagination, using the publicity media as a starting point to build up a picture of the ideal object in the mind’s eye, making it appear accessible through commercial channels. The Mallarméan fiction, too, is driven by the emptiness of the material world, using desire as a dynamic force to project the reader into the realm of the imagination. From the ‘inanité sonore’ of the ‘bibelot’ to the sea of white space in ‘*Un Coup de dés*’, the fiction of the Mallarméan text hinges upon the ability of language to make the absent object present. However, while the final goal of advertising is to convince consumers to purchase the latest product, the joy of fiction lies not in the end result, but rather in the very process of imagining and pursuing these impossible desires. As well as working for aesthetic effect, it is in the financial interests of the magazine to exploit the

---

<sup>42</sup> *Le (Dé)montage de la Fiction*, pp. 14-15.

allure of these ideal objects and the desire for knowledge of the new, in order to convince readers to purchase the next instalment at the kiosques, or to become regular subscribers. In the case of *La Dernière Mode*, the magazine's dual aesthetic and economic concerns should also encourage readers to patronize these 'Maisons de Confiance'; however, these commercial aims are actually secondary to the process of imagining itself, evoked by desire.

As Marasquin reminds us in his 'Avis', Miss Satin's columns work in tandem with the visiting cards, referring to goods advertised on this back page; some of the additional features of the magazine, such as Marliani's interior décor guides in the 'Carnet d'Or' and the travel recommendations in the magazine also relate to products and services advertised in *La Dernière Mode*. The copy of the magazine thus combines with the commercial context in which it is being produced to fuel this cycle in which desires are created and frustrated. The way in which Mallarmé reveals the aesthetic potential of the products in the fashion and beauty industries can be more deeply understood through a close reading of one of the 'Gazette de la Fashion' features, which link the commercial context of nineteenth-century Paris to the world of the fashion magazine. In the remainder of this section, I will focus on Miss Satin's 'Gazette' from the eighth issue of *La Dernière Mode* examining the way in which popular contemporary products, services and accessories are presented in this section of the magazine.

In this final 'Gazette de la Fashion', Miss Satin offers more detailed insight into the products and services advertised by the visiting cards; she notes that this is a necessary endeavour given that they are 'reservées, silencieuses, comme il sied lors d'une présentation.' (*OCII*, p. 640) In this particular issue, she focuses on some of the parfumeurs

whose visiting cards feature in the directory of 'Maisons de Confiance', including Pinaud and Meyer, whose fragrances were a popular luxury item in the nineteenth century (and are still available to purchase today, under the name of Pinaud). This column emphasizes the symbolic value of perfumes, extoling the virtues of their 'goûts étranges mais délicieux, dont, respiré, la senteur fait rêver comme simplement prononcé, le nom.' (OCII, p. 640) In likening the evocative power of the names of these perfumes to the scents themselves, Miss Satin draws attention to the synaesthetic power of language. The use of the construction 'faire rêver' highlights the inspirational quality of the language of fashion; the phrase also anticipates Mallarmé's assessment of the effect which *La Dernière Mode* would continue to have on him in 1885, in his autobiographical letter to Paul Verlaine. (OCII, p. 789)

Earlier in this chapter and throughout this thesis we have seen Mallarmé's fascination with the symbolic possibilities of names, as evidenced, for example, by the pseudonyms of the journalistic personae in *La Dernière Mode*. In this eighth 'Gazette de la Fashion' we see how the commercial world exploits the symbolic and aesthetic value of proper nouns to evoke material desire and prompt consumers to exert their purchasing power. The emphasis which this column places on the effect of the name of a perfume opens up questions of brand identity and highlights the role of language in capturing the attention of potential consumers. Modern marketing is heavily focussed on the thoughts and feelings which a brand name evokes in the minds of the purchasing public. In recent years, studies of product names have concluded that certain phonemes have particular effects on the consumer, with implications for their perception of the product in question.<sup>43</sup> Proper nouns in advertising

---

<sup>43</sup> For example, a study by Richard R. Klink in 2003 revealed that "Products with brand names containing front vowel sounds, as opposed to back vowel sounds, are perceived as: (a) smaller, (b) lighter (relative to darker), (c) milder, (d) thinner, (e) softer, (f) faster, (g) colder, (h) more bitter, (i) more feminine, (j)

can thus to be seen to be self-referential and operating according to a similar linguistic system to poetry, rather than having a basic communication function. Mallarmé was obviously ahead of his time in recognising the aesthetic effects of brand names, as can be seen through his emphasis on the symbolic potential of the names of perfume in this particular ‘Gazette de la Fashion.’ Of course, while studies in consumer behaviour are interested in the marketing value of this effect, Miss Satin’s column disregards the commercial implications of a perfume’s name, instead prizing the aesthetic value of this branding. By comparing the aesthetic and commercial importance of the name of a product or perfume, it becomes clear that there is one fundamental difference between the way in which symbolism is exploited in the consumerist environment and in art. While in a commercial context, the thoughts and feelings evoked by the name and description of a perfume are intended to drive consumers to develop brand loyalty, and to buy more of a particular scent, from an artistic point of view, the dreams which the product conjures up through its name are an end in themselves, guaranteeing the aesthetic value of the product. This emphasis on imagination for imagination’s sake allows the written word to transcend its communicative or informative function, constituting the ‘expansion totale de la lettre’, which is central to the Mallarméan concept of fiction.

It is not only the names of perfumes and products which have the power to open up incredible imaginary worlds in the mind of the reader. The reflections on visiting cards and perfumes in the ‘Gazette de la Fashion’ reveal that beauty can be found everywhere from scent bottles to street names. In her column from the eighth issue of the magazine, Miss

---

friendlier, (k) weaker, (l) lighter (relative to heavier), and (m) prettier. Richard R. Klink “Creating Brand Names With Meaning: The Use of Sound Symbolism” *Marketing Letters* 11:1 (2000): 5 – 20.

Satin notes that addresses too can become intermingled in the vivid mental picture evoked by perfumes, their bottles and their names.

L'adresse de la Maison, qui ne la sait? Mais est-il même utile de la connaître? Et je considère, comme autant d'*ex-voto* appendus aux chapelles de la beauté par des dames reconnaissantes, les exemplaires de ce tableau qui, dans toutes les parfumeries de Paris, de la province et de l'étranger mêle l'enseigne, les rues, et même les numéros (*A la Corbeille fleurie, 30, boulevard des Italiens, et 37, boulevard de Strasbourg,*) à ses guirlandes, à ses enfants, à ses nuages. (*OCII*, p. 641)

Here, Miss Satin highlights the fact that the address of a parfumeur, like the name, is an intrinsic part of the perfume itself, and, along with the packaging, contributes to the overall effect of the scent; indeed, the perfume is an indefinable blend of aural, visual and olfactory elements, in which the shape of the bottle and the sound of the name are as evocative as the scent itself. Miss Satin's interest in the aesthetic value of the addresses of the great parfumeurs anticipates Mallarmé's 'Loisirs de la poste', published in the early 1890s, which are now collected under the heading of *Vers de circonstance*. In these short poems, Mallarmé played around with the addresses of friends and correspondents, creating light-hearted poems, which were then sent through the mailing system.<sup>44</sup> The 'Loisirs de la poste' show Mallarmé to be undermining the distinction between practical and aesthetic matters, relegating the functional value of the address to secondary status. Miss Satin could be said to be doing the same; in highlighting the evocative symbolism of the name of a perfume, she bears witness to the intrinsic fiction which lies dormant in the language of the everyday and, when glimpsed, has the power to transcend the functional value of language, or as

---

<sup>44</sup> The 'Loisirs de la poste' used the addresses of friends and contemporaries as the starting point for short poems, which were then sent through the postal system. It seems that the postal workers in France at this time appreciated the game, and, as far as we know, most of the letters seemed to reach the addressee successfully. In the preface to the 'Recréations postales', Mallarmé writes: 'Cette petite publication, tout à l'honneur de la Poste. Aucune des adresses en vers collectionnées ici n'a manqué son destinataire.' *OCI*, p. 245. Bertrand Marchal notes that this was not quite true, as not all the verses were sent through the postal system (in fact, not all of them are actually formed of addresses) Cf. *OCI*, 1247; however, the verses do, nevertheless reveal a fascination with the linguistic possibilities of the social and material world.

Mallarmé puts it in ‘Etalages’, to ‘déloge[r] l’article de fonds, ou d’actualité, apparu secondaire.’ (*OCII*, p. 221)

In this column Miss Satin also questions the ‘utility’ of knowing the address of a fashion house or parfumeur, asking her readers ‘L’adresse de la Maison, qui ne la sait? Mais est-il même utile de la connaître?’ (*OCII*, p. 641) This rhetorical question draws attention to the fact that the address of Pinaud & Meyer’s headquarters has undergone a process of virtualisation, taking up an indelible place in the mind of *La Dernière Mode*’s fashionable readership. No longer ‘useful’ in directing the reader to the place where she can procure the product, the address becomes imbued with an evocative, sensory quality. In this passage, Miss Satin places the emphasis on the aesthetic value of the sounds and images evoked by the street names and numbers, negating the importance of the factual information conveyed by these details. Through this process, the parfumeur’s address becomes part of the totality of the perfume, intrinsic to its identity as an aesthetic object. No longer a geographical location, the address of the parfumeur is not an end itself, but rather a starting point for a journey which takes place in the mind of the reader, projecting her imagination towards the ideal.

In the passage from the ‘Gazette de la Fashion’, cited above, Miss Satin highlights the spiritual value of perfume, revealing how physical objects, available in the commercial environment can serve as a launchpad into a virtual, imaginary world. In the passage, the columnist character describes the addresses of parfumeurs as ‘ex-votos’, offerings of gratitude to a deity or saint, and uses the metaphor of a ‘chapelle de la beauté’ to refer to the places where the great parfumeurs of the city sell their wares. The use of religious metaphors emphasizes the spiritual dimension of fashion and the language of fashion

journalism, establishing perfume as a ritualistic substance, intrinsically bound up in the beliefs and practices of the contemporary cult of appearances. In this passage from her final column, Miss Satin also implies that fashion and the quest for beauty has replaced religion in modern society, with crowds flocking not to the churches but to department stores, fashion houses and parfumeurs. In her description, Miss Satin draws on a range of different religious and cultural myths, including the Ancient Greek mythology evoked by the names of these perfumes, and the idea of a magical elixir, reminiscent of fairy tales and of the Arabian nights. Miss Satin's column thus reveals that, in the modern age it is not God, or even the gods, that we idolize, but beauty itself; it is not religious or moral values which we seek but the 'vertu' to be found in potions such as the 'Lait d'Hébé', which 'pourrait être le nectar versé à l'Olympe par cette déité, car la fiole contenant le liquide merveilleux renferme, autant que de la souplesse, de la force.' (OCII, p. 641). We might, therefore, see Miss Satin's examination of the magic of perfume in *La Dernière Mode* as a means of exploring the possibility of creating a 'culte moderne' (OCII, p. 657).

It is not only through talk of clothing, accessories or beauty products that the magazine engages with commercial matters; Mallarmé's involvement in promoting certain publishing houses is of especial interest in understanding how the poet might have used the columns of *La Dernière Mode* for his own personal and financial benefit. The 'Conseils sur l'éducation', section of the magazine, also apparently penned by Madame de Ponty, suggests recent publications to mothers which might be of educational value to their children. There appears to be a certain level of commercial bias involved in these recommendations — in the fifth issue of the magazine, Madame de Ponty announces that *La Dernière Mode* will not be entirely impartial when it comes to literary recommendations

and, when suggesting useful ‘back-to-school’ books, she claims that those from Hachette publishing house are the preferred option:

Nous ne faisons à cet exercice de notre indépendance qu’une exception en faveur des livres publiés par la maison Hachette, qui, en ce moment, augmente, pour la rentrée de l’année scolaire 1874 – 75, son vaste catalogue d’ouvrages presque officiels et recommandés par le Conseil de l’Instruction publique avant de l’être ici (*OCII*, p. 554).

Hachette’s books and educational materials are promoted a number of times over the course of the eight issues of the magazine, although Madame de Ponty is keen to ensure that other publishers also receive a mention. Continuing her feature for ‘la rentrée’, Madame de Ponty lists the various publishing houses endorsed by the fashion magazine, as if ranking them in order of preference:

Toutes les Librairies Classiques, du reste, je cite d’abord la maison Hachette, puis Delagrave, Delalin et Belin, rivalisent de bon goût et d’intelligence dans la production de livres scolaires anglais et allemands, dénués de tout aspect démodé ou morose autant que d’une annotation oiseuse ou pédantesque qui accompagnèrent jadis l’introduction de pareils volumes dans les collèges, les pensionnats et les familles. (*OCII*, p. 595).

Although he may well have been working in collaboration with Hachette, or had particular reasons for favouring the publishing house above all others, it was, no doubt, in Mallarmé’s best interests to maintain a positive relationship with other publishers. In light of the views expressed in Miss Satin’s column, as well as in the ‘Correspondence avec des Abonnées’ we might see the magazine as hovering precariously between ‘l’Esthétique et l’Economie politique.’ Circulating in the commercial environment, *La Dernière Mode* serves as a vehicle for fiction, but in order for the ideal to be revealed, ‘trionphant à des lieux principaux’, it must compromise its integrity, promoting commercial ventures which, in their turn, offer the final support upon which the magazine depends for its existence.

## Conclusion

The first chapter of this thesis established Mallarmé's œuvre and *La Dernière Mode*, in particular, as based on an aesthetic of suspension. This third and final chapter has revealed this idea of suspension to be part of the Mallarméan idea of fiction. Within the poet's aesthetic framework, fiction can be understood as the essence of the work of art; it thus serves as a thread which ties together the diverse elements of *La Dernière Mode* and, indeed, of the Mallarméan corpus as a whole. A method, rather than a product in its own right, fiction is not confined to the strictures of logical philosophy and psychology, but can be applied to any area of human existence, from religion to fashion. The close etymological bond between the English word fashion and fiction, which Mallarmé also views 'conformément à son sens anglais'<sup>45</sup>, shows the two concepts to be closely related, sharing a common sense of mobility.

Throughout this chapter and, indeed, this thesis as a whole, it has become clear that Mallarmé's œuvre is founded upon a series of dynamic oppositions. The gulf between these polarities offers a space in which the fiction of the text can be revealed. *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a fictional work in so far as it reverses commonly-held oppositions between ends and beginnings, public and private practices, and between journalism and literature. Perhaps the greatest challenge to established distinctions lies in the magazine's mediation between two different modes of expression, undermining the separation made by his contemporaries between the 'brut et immédiat' language of the everyday and the 'pur et essentiel' language of poetry. For Mallarmé there is only one language and the task of the artist is to reveal its aesthetic potential, to 'donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu' as he would put it in 'Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe.' (*OCII*, p. 38) The magazine establishes itself as existing in the mode of fiction, effecting a transformation which allows the language of

---

<sup>45</sup> Bertrand Marchal, 'Notice' in *OCII*, p. 1349.

the journalistic form to transcend its 'brut et immédiat' state, taking off on a vertical axis at occasional moments, to reveal glimpses of the ideal, reflected in the mind of the reader.

Fiction can be seen as a mobile concept, as described in 'Le Livre, instrument spirituel.' The fiction of the Mallarméan text is revealed in a series of shifts, changes and transformations which see language move towards a purer mode of expression. This mobility is set in motion by the poet and requires the presence of 'la foule' in order to be realised. As we learn in 'Mimique', 'c'est au poète, suscité par un défi, de traduire ! le silence aux après-midis de musique.' (*OCII*, p. 178) The word 'traduire', here, highlights the transition from one mode of expression to another. In carrying out this task of translation, by refining and re-defining the language of the everyday, the poet transforms the reader's perception and understanding of the universe. *La Dernière Mode* is particularly effective in demonstrating this process in action as it takes the familiar and the everyday, and uses these material objects as the catalyst for a process of virtualisation. The co-existence of commercial and aesthetic concerns in the magazine confirms Mallarmé's assertion that 'tout se résume dans l'Esthétique et l'Economie politique', and reveals these two aspects of contemporary existence to be inextricably linked. *La Dernière Mode* can thus be seen as a process of experimenting with the reconciliation of opposing entities, with the fiction of language taking place in this intermediary space.

Throughout this final chapter, I have made the case for seeing the fashion magazine as being driven by the same mechanism as the literary fiction described by Mallarmé in *La Musique et les Lettres*. The process of fashion journalism aspires to the elusive 'dernière mode', under the pretence of writing in the present; however, this present is revealed to be

an ‘Allégorie somptueuse du Néant,’ conforming to the same dynamic as the mime.<sup>46</sup> Although Mallarmé’s idea of fiction began in ontological philosophy, the fashion magazine can be seen as part of a process in which the poet began to explore the social and economic implications of literature. The fictional aspect of *La Dernière Mode* is combined with the commercial reality, carving out a new conception of literature for the modern age. This prefigures the ‘Notes en vue du Livre’, which both puts a commercial value on the ideal work of art in order to guarantee its financial security and seeks to make itself accessible to all. Engaging with the commercial environment and appealing to a mass readership for aesthetic ends, *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a pioneering work in the formulation of Mallarmé’s aesthetic modernity.

---

<sup>46</sup> In a letter to Villiers de L’Isle-Adam of 26 September 1867, in the midst of his ‘Crise de Tournon’, Mallarmé declares his intention to produce two books, ‘à la fois nouveaux et éternels, l’un tout absolu “Beauté” l’autre personnel, les “Allégories somptueuses du Néant”’, though the poet also describes his inability to produce these. (*OCII*, p. 724)

## Conclusion

‘Feindre, quelle qu’en soit l’inanité à un point de vue quelconque, de couper en trois morceaux épars une Conversation unique sur un sujet dont les parties sont étroitement liées [...]’ (*OCII*, p. 545); such is the task of Ix as he attempts to divide his attention between the three interpenetrating themes of books, theatre, and the fine arts in his ‘Chronique de Paris’. In this thesis my task, too, has involved separating out three interconnected and mutually dependent subjects — those of ‘Time’, ‘Drama’, and ‘Fiction’ — which, as I have demonstrated, are fundamental to Mallarmé’s poetry and prose writings, and, indeed, to the concept of the ‘Livre’. Examining the place of *La Dernière Mode* in Mallarmé’s œuvre in light of these aspects has shown the creation of the fashion magazine to be an integral process in the development of Mallarmé’s aesthetic, an aesthetic which is, itself, in a constant state of transition and re-definition.

### **Fashion in process**

*La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a turning point in Mallarmé’s life and career as a poet. Biographically speaking, the fashion magazine occupies a pivotal role, bridging the gap between his struggle to create a pure work of poetry in the 1860s, in the run-up to and during his years of personal and poetic crisis, and his newfound interest in re-defining both

journalism and drama, beginning in the 1880s with the articles of ‘Crayonné au théâtre’. Mallarmé’s engagement with such varied modes of writing demonstrates his profound faith in language, both as the means by which the ideal might be reached, and paradoxically, as a means of escaping from the oppressive task of pursuing the ‘Livre’. With the publication of *La Dernière Mode*, 1874 represents a different moment of ‘crisis’ for the poet, this time, not in the modern understanding of the term, but rather in its etymological sense.<sup>47</sup>

This study of process in *La Dernière Mode* has shown the fashion magazine to be a product of crisis, part of an attempt to write in a present which is known to be non-existent. While, at first glance, fashion might appear to be superficial, in fact, for Mallarmé, all modes of writing are driven by the same desire to attain an ideal that is a ‘glorieux mensonge’, be that ‘la dernière mode’ or the ‘explication orphique de la terre.’ (*OCII*, p. 788) In light of this, I have made the case for seeing the fashion magazine as a tentative prototype for the ‘Livre’, in which the poet could test out methods of revealing the ideal in language. Experimenting with the potential of fashion discourse to set in motion this ‘attirance supérieure’ of the unknown ideal, ‘qui là-haut éclate,’ (*OCII*, p. 67) *La Dernière Mode* can be seen to operate according to the mechanism of fiction, by which banal everyday objects transcend their limited scope and are transformed through the creative process, to reveal their ‘resplendissement à travers l’espace vacant, en des fêtes à volonté et solitaires’ (*OCII*, p. 67).

The apparent superficiality of fashion parallels the superficiality of all writing, serving, like the ‘bibelot’ in ‘Sonnet en –yx’ (*OCI*, p.37), to conceal the fiction of reality which would,

---

<sup>47</sup> crisis (n.) early 15c., from Latinized form of Greek *krisis* “turning point in a disease” (used as such by Hippocrates and Galen), literally “judgment, result of a trial, selection,” from *krinein* “to separate, decide, judge.” < [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=crisis&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=crisis&allowed_in_frame=0) > [accessed 10/04/2014]

paradoxically, be the only truth for the poet in the aftermath of his spiritual crisis. When, in *La Musique et les Lettres*, Mallarmé refuses to commit the ‘impious dismantling of fiction’, it is, I suggest, in part because the act of writing enacts its own deconstruction, revealing all language to be surface and symbol. This conclusion began with a citation from Ix’s third ‘Chronique de Paris’, in which the columnist character voices the ‘inanité’ of the practice of writing. Ix’s claim that his journalistic task is one of falsification, creating an artificial distinction between three inherently linked themes, can be seen as a reflection not only on the limitations of his journalistic task, but also on the inadequacy of language to express the inherent connection between all things.

Occupying a pivotal position between Mallarmé’s creative impotence at the end of the 1860s, and his role as theatre critic in the 1880s, *La Dernière Mode* offers a testing ground for methods of constructing a literary fiction, whilst simultaneously allowing the poet to reflect on his findings. In *La Dernière Mode*, the columnist characters critique the journalistic form and the commercial environment from within, inhabiting the world of journalism in order to undermine its limitations and disadvantages, transcend its negative aspects, and to seize on its aesthetic potential. *La Dernière Mode* can be seen as a precursor to Mallarmé’s re-definition of the journalistic form in ‘Crayonné au théâtre’, in which he creates a mode of criticism with literary value in its own right. The fashion magazine thus explores the relationship between poetic and prosaic language, challenging the contemporary tendency to divide language into two states, ‘brut et immédiat ici, là essentiel.’ The publication of *La Dernière Mode* also anticipates the initial appearance of several of the ‘Anecdotes ou poèmes’, which explore the social role of the poet — most notably ‘Un Spectacle interrompu’ and ‘Le Phénomène futur.’ Mallarmé was no doubt writing and revising these around the time that he wrote the copy for the fashion magazine;

*La Dernière Mode* can therefore be viewed as part of Mallarmé's exploration of the roles of poet-as-critic and critic-as-poet.

*La Dernière Mode* explores the role of literature and of the artist in the social environment, allowing him to identify the advantages which the press might offer in the quest to reveal the ideal in the public sphere. However, as this study has shown, Mallarmé was wary of the commercialisation of literature and the mass media, which threatened to make a commodity of the written word. Given the poet's long history of writing for the press, from his reviews on the International Exhibitions of the 1870s, through the theatre criticism of the 1880s, to the theoretical articles of the 1890s, not to mention *La Dernière Mode*, one might wonder what caused Mallarmé to harbour such contempt for the press, voicing this distaste, perhaps somewhat ironically, through journalism itself. This study of *La Dernière Mode* has led me to draw the conclusion that Mallarmé's criticisms of the mass media do not pertain to the form itself, but rather relate to the banality of contemporary journalism and its servitude to the capitalist environment. *La Dernière Mode* thus opens up an important aspect of the poet's view of his epoch as a period of crisis in literature, revealing the need for the realm of art and, by extension, artists, to change with society and to engage with the commercial and industrial environment in order to thrive in the modern age. *La Dernière Mode* offered Mallarmé a space in which he could experiment with the relationship between art, commerce and economics, through the mass media, appropriating the popular press for aesthetic ends, whilst also attempting to sustain a viable business venture. While this thesis has demonstrated the possibility for the press to have artistic as well as monetary and informative value, the untimely demise of *La Dernière Mode* indicates the difficulty of striking a balance between financial and artistic concerns. In light of this, one might see the dawn of the age of capitalism as presenting the poet with

a new challenge — that of reconciling ‘l’Esthétique et l’Economie politique’ (*OCII*, p. 76) — which Mallarmé would explore in the ‘Notes en vue du Livre’.

### **Le dernier mot**

As I have argued, *La Dernière Mode* offered an arena for literary innovation and experimentation, with important implications for the direction that the poet’s career would take in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Revealing the aesthetic dimension to journalistic prose through the eight issues of the magazine, Mallarmé created a work which challenged the boundaries of genre and provoked a re-interpretation of what constitutes art. Reinforcing the link between the mass media and the possible form of the ‘Livre’, the fashion magazine stands as a testament to the poet’s increasing interest in commercialism as a means of transmitting the Idea within society. The hybridization of art and mass culture is an essential facet of Mallarméan modernity and *La Dernière Mode* can thus be seen as an important stage not only in shaping the poet’s own approach to creation, but also in influencing the direction which art would take in the twentieth century. Engaging with the mass media via the project of *La Dernière Mode*, Mallarmé revealed the aesthetic value to be found in the events and the material objects of modern life, and tested ways of revealing this through contemporary modes of writing, printing and publicity. The poet’s venture into the feminine press through the project of *La Dernière Mode* allowed him to experiment with the mass media as a means of revealing the aesthetic in the public domain. As such, Mallarmé seized on the tools of the modern age in order to establish a radical form of modernity, one might even say ‘post-modernity’, which sees the process of creation as a means of unlocking the beauty concealed within all things. Although the magazine was a commercial failure, aesthetically speaking, the eight issues of *La Dernière Mode* were a

great, if overlooked, success. Constituting an essential process in Mallarmé's quest for the Livre, the magazine was not, as some have suggested, a literary hoax but rather a serious aesthetic endeavour, a 'jeu qui confirme la fiction' (*OCII*, p. 226).

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Sample contents page, taken from Issue 4 of *La Dernière Mode*, following the addition of Miss Satin's 'Gazette de la Fashion'.

<p>LA DERNIÈRE MODE <i>Gazette du monde et de la famille</i></p>	
<p>QUATRIÈME LIVRAISON 18 OCTOBRE 1874</p>	
<p>SOMMAIRE &amp; LÉGENDES</p>	
<p>TITRE ET FRONTISPICE DE MORIN</p>	
<p>TEXTE</p>	
<p>LA MODE. — Les Fêtes. Trois costumes de Chasse et une Toilette de Mariée : Accointances entre la Couturière et les Chancelleries, puis une étiquette sur la rive droite et une habitude sur la rive gauche. — Le Papillon emblème ? non, parure. . . . .</p>	<p>Madame MARGUERITE DE PONTY. Miss SATIN.</p>
<p>GAZETTE DE LA FASHION . . . . .</p>	
<p>CHRONIQUE DE PARIS (THÉÂTRES, LIVRES, BEAUX-ARTS, ÉCHOS DES SALONS ET DE LA PLAGE) . . . . .</p>	<p>IX.</p>
<p>LE CARNET D'OR (LA TABLE, L'AMEUBLEMENT FAIT PAR LES DAMES, LE JARDIN ET LES JEUX).</p>	
<p>SEPTIÈME FEUILLET : Menu d'un Dîner de Famille . . . . .</p>	<p>Le CHEF de BOUCHE chez BRÉBANT.</p>
<p>HUITIÈME FEUILLET : Recette du Gombo (Plat de Relevé) . . . . .</p>	<p>UNE DAME CRÉOLE.</p>
<p>NEUVIÈME FEUILLET : Plafond mobile d'un Appartement en location . . . .</p>	<p>d'après MARLIANI.</p>
<p>NOUVELLES ET VERS.</p>	
<p>VERS : <i>At Home</i> (sonnet) . . . . .</p>	<p>ERNEST D'HERVILLY.</p>
<p>NOUVELLE ET TRADUCTION : <i>Les Voies de fait</i> (suite et fin) . . . . .</p>	<p>ALPHONSE DAUDET.</p>
<p><i>Figures d'Album</i> : I. MARIANA, traduit de l'anglais de TENNYSON . . . .</p>	<p>STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ.</p>
<p>PROGRAMME DE LA QUINZAINE (DISTRACTIONS OU SOLENNITÉS DU MONDE) .</p>	

## Appendix 2

List of literary contributions in the ‘Nouvelles et vers’ section of *La Dernière Mode*

- Issue 1. Poem, ‘La Dernière pensée de Weber’, by Théodore de Banville.  
 Story, ‘L’Aveu’, by François Coppée.
- Issue 2. Poem, ‘Conseil’, by Sully Prudhomme.  
 Conclusion of ‘L’Aveu’.
- Issue 3. Poem, ‘Inquiétude’, by Léon Valade.  
 Story, ‘Les Voies de fait’, by Alphonse Daudet.
- Issue 4. Poem, ‘At Home’, by Ernest d’Hervilly.  
 Conclusion of ‘Les Voies de fait’.
- Issue 5. Poem, ‘Le Veilleur de nuit’, by Emmanuel des Essarts.  
 Story, ‘La Petite servante’, by Catulle Mendès.
- Issue 6. Poem, ‘Marguerite d’Ecosse’, by Théodore de Banville.  
 Story, ‘L’Hercule’, by Léon Cladel.
- Issue 7. Poem, ‘Menuet’, by François Coppée.  
 Conclusion of ‘L’Hercule’.
- Issue 8. Poem, ‘La Vierge à la crèche’, by Alphonse Daudet.  
 Story, ‘Eudore Cleaz’, by Théodore de Banville (first instalment only).

# Appendix 3

PREMIERE LIVRAISON 6 SEPTEMBRE 1874

LES SUIVANTES  
LE PREMIER ET LE TROISIEME DIMANCHE DU MOIS

NUMERO SPECIMEN

RE

LES MODES  
AVEC  
LE CONCOURS DES GRANDES FAISEUSES

CARNET D'OR  
PAR DES TAPISSIERS-DECORATEURS  
DES MAITRES QUEUX  
DES JARDINIERS, DES AMATEURS DE BIBELOTS  
ET DU SPORT

CHRONIQUE  
INFORMATIONS MONDAINES  
—  
NOUVELLES  
ET  
VERS  
PAR LES PRINCIPAUX CONTEURS ET POETES  
DE L'EPOQUE

PARIS  
9, rue de Châteaudun, 9

PRIX

EN VILLE 24 fr.

POUR LA FRANCE 26 fr.

Avec la Lithographie à l'Aquarelle. 1 fr. 25

Avec les gravures du Texte seules. 0 fr. 50

Première Livraison, 6 September 1874 in Stéphane Mallarmé, *La Dernière Mode* (Paris: Ramsay, 1978).

## Appendix 4

PREMIÈRE LIVRAISON DIMANCHE 6 SEPTEMBRE 1874



GAZETTE

PARIS Un an . . . . . 24 f. Six mois . . . . . 18	DIRECTEUR : <b>MARASQUIN</b> 9, Rue de Chateaudun, 9	FRANCE Un an . . . . . 26 f. Six mois . . . . . 14
---	--	--

*PARAIT*

LE 1<sup>er</sup> ET LE 3<sup>e</sup> DIMANCHE DU MOIS

AVEC LE CONCOURS

DES GRANDES FAISEUSES, DE TAPISSIERS-DÉCORATEURS  
DE MAÎTRES QUEUX, DE JARDINIERS  
D'AMATEURS DE BIBELOTS ET DU SPORT



TOILETTE DES PREMIERS JOURS D'AUTOMNE

NOUVELLES & VERS

DE THÉODORE DE BANVILLE, LÉON CLADEL  
FRANÇOIS COPPÉE  
ALPHONSE DAUDET, LÉON DIERX, ERNEST D'HERVILLY  
STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ, CATULLE MENDÈS  
SULLY PRUDHOMME  
AUGUSTE VILLIERS DE L'ISLE ADAM, ÉMILE ZOLA, ETC.

14  
173

## Appendix 5



Appendix 6

# LES MAISONS DE CONFIANCE

DONT LE NOM SUIT

PRÉSENTENT AUJOURD'HUI LEUR CARTE AUX LECTRICES DE LA DERNIÈRE MODE

ASSOCIÉES AU LUXE DE LA COUVERTURE ET PARTICIPANT À LA RÉDACTION MÊME DU JOURNAL GRACE AU VOISINAGE DE LA *Correspondance avec les Abonnées*, NOS ANNONCES S'OFFRENT, SOUS UN TITRE SPÉCIAL, COMME LES CARTES DE VISITES DES GRANDS ÉTABLISSEMENTS DE PARIS. SANS PUBLIER UN AMAS D'ADRESSES ASSEMBLÉES PAR LE HASARD OU EN VERTU DE COMBINAISONS ÉTRANGÈRES À L'INTÉRÊT DU CLIENT, NOUS FOURNISSONS LES RENSEIGNEMENTS NÉCESSAIRES À UNE PÉRIODE, MÊME ÉLOIGNÉE, POUR SUIVRE DE TOUS POINTS LES HABITUDES PARISIENNES.

EDUCATION ANGLAISE  
**COLLEGIATE SCHOOL**  
 DIRIGÉE PAR M. JAMES LUNN  
 A ÉCAL, PRÈS BOURG  
 (Élève de Prospectus)  
 BOURGBOURNONNE & PARIS  
 M. D... G, rue de la Tour-d'Auvergne

PIANOS AUTOMATIQUES  
**A. J. LACAPE**  
 PREMIER MÉTIER DE PARIS À QUATRE MANÈGES  
 24, boulevard Saint-Martin

MONTAGNES D'ÉCOSSE  
 Ladies' Walking and Travelling Costumes in  
 Scotch Tartan  
**HOMER PLING**  
 47, rue de Valenciennes, Saint-Hippolyte

SPRENT, SPRENT ET PRIPPS  
 ORNEMENTS MARITIMES  
 Hôtels et appartements meublés ou non meublés  
 VINS DE GRANDS CRUS  
 101, rue de Rivoli

CHENIERE DU PASSAGE DE L'OPÉRA  
**CHENIERES AMAZONNES ET PARURES**  
 POUR DAMES  
 Groupes spéciaux et Modes nouvelles  
 (En parle : Psyché, Épithé, Dextère)  
 25 et 27, galerie de l'Opéra

Madame LEMERRE  
 (ANCIENNE MAISON LAROCHE)  
 Spécialiste de ses Adresses depuis l'Époque  
 d'Égypte  
 101, rue de Rivoli et 101, boulevard  
 24, Passage Clavier

## CORRESPONDANCE AVEC LES ABONNÉES

20 Septembre 1874.

M<sup>me</sup> LA MARQUISE M. DE L... A RENNES. — Nous remercions beaucoup que votre *Notre Spécimen* ait été reçu par vous défriché et froissé ; mais, les facteurs portent pas de gants ; et, pour faire entrer le journal dans leur boîte, ils le plient souvent en quatre et l'écrasent de partout. A qui s'en prendre ?

M<sup>me</sup> R... A NANTES. — Nous vous avons expédié une roulette à aiguilles, pour relayer les patrons ; elle sert à cet usage et plus fréquemment encore à briser le patron de grandeur naturelle sur l'étoffe, qui se taille bien plus facilement, grâce à sa bousille.

M<sup>me</sup> LA MARQUISE DE R... A NICE. — Nous vous ferons beaucoup de descriptions de Toilettes nouvelles, tant que l'espèce dont nous disposons, nous le permettra, notre portrait ces Toilettes, les combiner ou les monter, est une de nos principales préoccupations.

M<sup>me</sup> DE C. L... A NANTES. — Ne vous plaignez pas, Madame, de la richesse de nos costumes ; il est toujours possible de supprimer quelques ornements à une toilette compliquée ; tandis qu'il est souvent fort difficile de les y ajouter, quand elle est par trop simple.

M<sup>me</sup> LA VICOMTESSE DE T... A TOULON. — Notre *Chronique de Paris*, ainsi que le *Progression* et *Gazette de la Quinzaine*, vous renseigneront exactement sur toutes les *Prévisions Révisionnaires* et la valeur de chaque pièce nouvelle ; ceci, du reste, a été annoncé dans la *Chronique de Présentation*. Vous aimez beaucoup le théâtre, écriviez-vous, je suis heureux que votre journal s'en occupe au point de vue littéraire, mais, en fait, que technique (et c'est la première fois qu'un journal de Modes mentionne cette double chose), la *Dernière Mode* s'occupe, dans chaque livraison, et des Scènes et des Salles parisiennes. Que d'autres Abonnées nous encouragent dans cette voie très-nouvelle et nous soutiennent avec confiance.

M<sup>me</sup> V... BONS ET MASTREUX, A LYON. — A partir de ce numéro-ci, qui est le deuxième de l'édition avec Teigne, la *Gravure* noire de la première page représentera toujours un Groupe de deux personnages.

M<sup>me</sup> LA MARQUISE DOMINIQUE DE S... A NANCY. — Vous êtes bien aimable de vous intéresser à notre publication, d'abord, puis d'y intéresser les personnes de votre connaissance ; beaucoup de nos Lectrices ont fait de même, car de nombreuses demandes d'abonnement nous sont arrivées par recommandation.

M<sup>me</sup> LA BARONNE DE H... A TOULON. — Nous avons choisi pour vous le *Nécessaire de toilette* au prix indiqué ; ce cadeau de fête est simplement raisonnable et je crois que vous en serez satisfaite. Comptez sur notre exactitude à vous l'expédier la veille de la *St-Michel*.

M<sup>me</sup> E... A TOULON. — Il sied, oui Madame, de garnir une robe en faille grise avec du bleu clair ; mais il ne faut que des lacés ou des boutons, sans quoi vous n'auriez rien que de laid ; la nuance bleu, très-pâle.

A PRÉSENTES DE NOS LECTRICES : Vous pouvez obtenir un second Patron tous les mois, moyennant 2 fr. par semaine, mais il faut que nous puissions choisir le patron (qui sera celui de la *Lithographie* à l'*Aquarelle* publiée le second Dimanche de chaque mois). Si vous nous indiquez, en dehors de ce choix, le patron que vous désirez, celui-ci coûtera 1 fr. En cas spécial nous vous enverrons.

La *Correspondance* est aujourd'hui plus variée que la dernière fois ; quoique nos Abonnées soient nombreuses, il faut que nous ayons le plaisir de faire les connaissances avec chacune. Les quelques mots, par nous expédiés tout à l'heure dans divers coins de la France et à l'Étranger, traitent non-seulement de questions relatives au service du journal qu'il importe d'éclaircir tout de suite, mais aussi de commissions très-variées que nous nous offrons de faire pour nos Abonnées seules, dans tous les magasins de Paris, notamment dans recommandés par nos Cartes. Plusieurs points de Mode sont même résolus, en réponse à des questions posées dans la quinzaine ; ce qui nous permet de prendre dès à présent notre rôle de *Conseillère*. Toutefois, il y a encore mille autres motifs à *Correspondance* dont nous nous souvenons : Arts particuliers sur la Mode, Explications plus détaillées qu'elle ne fait dans le Texte d'une de nos Toilettes ou d'une de nos Brochettes d'Améliorations, de Table, etc. *Conseiller* relative à une bonne œuvre. Au prochain, enfin, qui habituellement à prendre la plume, soit pour me charger d'une acquisition à faire en leur nom, soit pour demander au journal des conseils sur le sujet qui leur, avant tout autre, les leurs au cœur, l'Éducation des enfants, je dédie deux paragraphes spéciaux sur ces choses si différentes ; joints à cette *Amélioration Littéraire*, à la *Correspondance*, sous des titres divers :

### LES OCCASIONS

de *Nobélis*, *Fantaisies*, votre robe de Filles et de Châteaux pendant les saisons d'Été ; Nos Marchés dans les Magasins ou à l'Hôtel des Ventes, ou Échanges entre Gens du Monde. Toutefois, il faut attendre, pour donner à ce chapitre tout son intérêt, la rentrée des amateurs, Dames et Messieurs, à la Ville et l'Éclat subtil que prennent les étalages de luxe au premier dimanche de l'été.

INSTITUTION POUR LES JEUNES FILLES  
 (DAME LUNETTE A'VALON)  
**MADAME TALOT**  
 20, rue Poissonnière  
 (Côté les églises de l'Église et de la Grande-Armée)

ALIMENTATION RECONSTITUANTE  
**JUS DE BIFTECK**  
 BEEFSTEAK BERRY  
 SELON LA FORMULE DE DOCTEUR BUCHER, DE METZ  
 PHARMACIE DEBODE & DEFFIN  
 de Calais Clés  
 41 rue de Clémence et 10 rue Lafayette

40,000 Adresses pour 10 francs  
 10, rue de la Harpe et 10, rue de  
**LE FLORAL**  
 COIFFURES ORNEMENTALES  
 pour l'habillage des Plantes d'appartement, etc.  
 À l'apportant sur des Agrégations de France  
 26, rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires

CORBEILLE FLEURIE  
 PARFUMERIE PINAUD-MEYER  
 EXTRAIT D'IKORA  
 LAIT D'HÈNE, CHÈME NEIGE  
 30, boulevard des Capucines 37, boulevard de Strasbourg

SOUVENIRS DE SUISSE  
 GRANDE COLLECTION DE STÉRÉOSCOPES  
 DE FINE ET D'ALBA  
 DE VITES & DE MONUMENTS  
 La Compagnie Photographique  
 176, rue de Rivoli

AU GRAND HOTEL  
**LABROUSSE**  
 Soupeur par Lés, Coiffeur, Tailleur et Rites  
 Plusieurs Modes d'Appartements  
 18, boulevard des Capucines

**AU SPHINX**  
 DESSINS ARTISTIQUES DE BAINS  
 Tapiserie sur Canvas, Bordure sur Canvas  
 BAIN, TOILE, ETC.  
 Tous les modèles du jour  
 10, avenue de l'Opéra  
 (en face le cercle d'Orléans)

**MODES DE MARIE BAILLET**  
 21, rue de la Chaussée d'Orléans

**CHRÉTIEN**  
 DENTISTE  
 (de 10 heures à 4 heures)  
 OPÉRATIONS, PAIN DE DENTS  
 61, rue Saint-Jacques

**J. FERRY**  
 Les Chambres de Bain pour la saison d'été  
 ET LA SAISON D'ÉTÉ  
 Louis XV et de l'Orléans - Amélie  
 TIGRES BREVETÉS  
 11, rue Notre-Dame

**CONSEILS SUR L'ÉDUCATION**

Un Professeur dans un des Lycées de Paris a bien voulu nous présenter aux lecteurs éclairés, toutes les fois qu'il s'agira de recommander un Ouvrage scolaire d'Éducation, digne des éloges maternels, une méthode, etc. ou même un Maître et une Maîtresse; nous avons, par le fait de cette bonne fortune, de véritables consultations universitaires.

Voici, par exemple :  
 Les ouvrages touchent à leur fin; et pour l'éclairer, que le honneur nous dans une de nos grandes Librairies classiques, des embouchements éternels de livres grecs, latins, français et étrangers, dégageant l'odeur du papier frais imprimé, annonçant le supplément d'une année nouvelle. L'enfant ou le jeune homme à cette fois, sort; le temps est passé des bouquins rebourrés, et il n'est pas un des volumes publiés, reliés et depuis longtemps, par Hachette, par Lemerre et par quelques autres, qui ne puisse, grâce et accord de préférence à l'intérieur courue à l'extérieur, se trouver aux mains d'une jeune fille elle-même, et satisfaire le Personnel autant que le Lycée.

Nous citerons au nombre de ces ouvrages pleins d'usabilité, l'Anthologie des Poètes Français depuis le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à nos jours (1 vol. in-18, 6 fr.); recueil qui, lorsqu'il s'agit de lire de classe, devrait pour l'enfant un livre de lectures et juxtapose, pour la première fois nos richesses poétiques contemporaines à nos richesses classiques. L'Anthologie des Proseurs paraîtra prochainement, complétant des leçons de Littérature Française où, les préceptes, ce sont les exemples eux-mêmes.

Tout un cours historique de la Langue Française est confié par le même éditeur à M. Marty-Lucas, philologue d'un esprit pénétrant et actif; il s'annonce par un ouvrage qui peuvent étudier les maîtres: de l'enseignement de notre langue (1 vol. petit in-12, 1 fr.), et s'ouvre par une Grammaire élémentaire (1 vol. petit in-12, 2 fr.) à la fois neuve et traditionnelle, contenant les règles permanentes et les usages modernes.

Nous noterons au fur et à mesure, de leur apparition, tous les titres d'une petite Bibliothèque Scolaire, précieuses par la valeur de l'enseignement autant que par l'intérêt du format.

Langues Étrangères: le dictionnaire à images, publié par Fureu et Jouret, sous la direction de M. Lebeau. Mille et mille gravures, très-soignées captivent l'intérêt de l'enfant et, quand le mot anglais, allemand, ou même français n'est pas au lieu, semble échapper à sa mémoire. Il y retient, se passionne à ses yeux: arbre, maison, animal et meubles, etc. Les autres livres font pour leur part dans l'usage de l'enfant les profondes racines qu'y a tout langage béguin d'abord par lui et chanté, c'est les Mythologies et Aïeux, par M. Kuff, (1 vol. in-18, chez Hachette). Invoquent le petit Français à tous les détails directs aussi qu'une éducation de savoir et de savoir éparpillés parmi les foyers de la Grande-Bretagne: littérature populaire, souvenirs de nos jours.

Adressez d'une façon générale à toutes les femmes d'intérieur, cette dernière partie de notre Correspondance, qui ne point pas un man de destinataire, sera, nous n'en doutons pas, un accès familier et certain près de chaque Lettrice.

Madame DE P.

IMPORTATION EXPORTATION  
**LE PROPAGATEUR**  
 PRODUITS ALIMENTAIRES  
 DE TOUTES LES PAYS DU MONDE  
 Liqueurs et fruits exotiques: tous préparés  
 Jardins d'Orléans Vente et députation  
 Algérie Boulevard Haussmann, 38

**MARLIANI**  
 TAPISSIER - DÉCORATEUR  
 Des Assemblées d'États, d'Appartements de Châteaux et de Villas  
 tout composés par lui-même  
 11, rue de Provence

LA PLUS ANCIENNE MAISON DE PARIS  
**Maison DOUCET**  
 TROUSSEAUX, LAYETTES  
 Spécialité de lingerie fine  
 21, rue de la Harpe

Maison PRIVAT  
**HENRI LAUDRON, S**  
 GANTS DE LUXE  
 CHEVREUIL, TISSU, SOIE, DARTON  
 FABRICATION  
 12, rue de la Harpe

**LA DERNIÈRE MODE**

**GAZETTE DU MONDE & DE LA FAMILLE**

PUBLIÉE AVEC LE CONCOURS DES GRANDES FABBRIQUES DE PARIS ET DE TAPISSERS-DÉCORATEURS, MAÎTRES QUREUX, JARDINIERS, AMATEURS DE BIÈLOTS ET DU SPORT

**INFORMATIONS MONDIAIRES**

CONTES ET VERS PAR LES PRINCIPAUX PORTES ET CONTEURS DE L'ÉPOQUE, MUSIQUE, BEAUX-ARTS

Huit pages de luxe, sous une couverture de luxe, avec des gravures noires représentant des toilettes de dames et des costumes d'enfants; une lithographie à deux tirages avec le plus grand soin, colorée et retouchée à l'aquarelle. A la première livraison du mois est joint un patron découpé de grandeur naturelle.

DEUX LIVRAISONS PAR MOIS : LE 1<sup>er</sup> ET LE 3<sup>e</sup> DIMANCHE

**PRIX DE L'ABONNEMENT :**

PARIS.....	Un an.....	24 fr. *	Avec	11 fr. *	Sans
	Six mois.....	13			
DÉPARTEMENTS.....	Un an.....	26 fr. *	la lithographie	13	en lithographie
	Six mois.....	14			

**ÉTRANGER :**

Angleterre, Belgique et Suisse, Alsace-Lorraine.....	Un an... 30 *	Avec	14 *	Sans	En un... 18 *
	Six mois... 16 *				
Hollande, Italie, Espagne, Portugal, Autriche, Allemagne et Danemark.....	Un an... 32 *	la	15 *	lithographie	Six mois... 9 *
	Six mois... 17 *				
Turquie, Méditerranée, Russie, Suède, Norvège, Grèce, Caucase, Égypte, Espagne et Angleterre, Australie, États-Unis.....	Un an... 34 *	lithographie	16 *	coloriée.	[ La France adresse une Liste des Prix, suivie par une adresse exacte, à toute personne en faisant la demande. ]
	Six mois... 18 *				

Il est fait plusieurs éditions du Journal LA DERNIÈRE MODE NOTAMMENT, UNE BI-BIBLIOTHÈQUE, AVEC TEXTE, POUR LES MARCHANDS DE MODS; ET UNE AUTRE SANS TEXTE, LEUR DONNANT SIMPLEMENT LA PLANCHE DE CHIFFRES

Adresser un Mandat-Poste à l'ordre de M. MARASQUIN, Directeur, 9, rue de Châteaudun, 9 L'Administration ne fait pas d'Abonnement de moins de six mois

AVIS. — L'Administration du Journal se charge de faire, pour les Abonnés, toute acquisition à Paris: en Toilette, Amusement, Livres, etc., et de l'expédier dans les vingt-quatre heures. Ecrire à M<sup>re</sup> CHARLES, en envoyant un Mandat-Poste à l'ordre de M. MARASQUIN.

VENTE DES CLICHÉS DE LA DERNIÈRE MODE ET ENTREPRISE DE GRAVURES SUR ACIER POUR JOURNAUX DE MODS ÉTRANGERS

'Les Maisons de Confiance' in Stéphane Mallarmé, *La Dernière Mode* (Deuxième Livraison, 20 September 1874) (Paris: Ramsay, 1978).

## Appendix 7

**SAPO<sup>3</sup> FIEL BD** BREVETÉ S. G. D. G.  
**SAVON A L'AMER DE BŒUF**

Nettoyant toute étoffe pour ainsi dire sans frotter, et n'altérant pas les tissus ni les nuances même les plus délicates.

**SAVON BALSAMIQUE BD.** BREVETÉ S. G. D. G.  
 AU GOUDRON DE NORVÈGE.

Souverain contre les engelures, crevasses, irritations et toutes affections de la peau.

DÉPOT CENTRAL DES SAVONS BD.  
 26, rue Cadet, Paris.

**PATE ÉPILATOIRE ORIENTALE**

Elle enlève aux Dames le Duvet sur le visage, sur les bras, détruit les racines sans altérer la peau.

10 Fr. — Envoi franco

*Des Prospectus très détaillés sont envoyés sur demande*

**M<sup>ME</sup> BELANGER, 90, RUE DE RIVOLI, PARIS**  
**PARFUMERIE ORIENTALE**

FLACON 2 F. A PARIS. HAUTÉ DE LA PEAU. Fraîcheur, purifié Détruit Boutons, Foux, Effarcescence. Blanchit, adoucit.

**GLYCÉROLINE**

DONNANT



3 FLACONS 5 F. PARTOUT. CLARTÉ DU TEINT Belle carnation Détruit Eczemas, Peticules, Dartres. Recessitine Pimpierme.

12, rue des Petites-Écuries. Détail chez les Parfumeurs, Coiffeurs 3, rue Bergère, 3.

**PRODUIT NOUVEAU**

Approuvé par la Commission hygiénique. Exposition de 1872. (Mention honorable).  
 MÉDAILLE D'ARGENT 1873.

**MARGARINE-MOURIÈS**

Remplaçant le **Beurre** pour la cuisine et la pâtisserie.  
**PELLETERIN fils et C<sup>o</sup>, B. S. G. D. G.**  
 7, rue des Lombards, 7, Paris.

**M<sup>ME</sup> ADOLPHINE KÖNIG**

**ROBES & CONFECTIONS**

62, rue d'Aboukir, 62.  
 PARIS.

**M<sup>ME</sup> OSTROSKY**

MODES ET COIFFURES

23, rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin, 23  
 PARIS

**MADAME BRÉANT-CASTEL**

ROBES & CONFECTIONS

19, rue du Quatre-Septembre, 19  
 PARIS.

**MANUFACTURE**

**LEMAITRE ET RIDOUX**

18, boulevard Voltaire, PARIS, boulevard du Prince-Eugène 18  
 MAISON DE CONFIANCE FONDÉE EN 1801

Achetez toujours directement en fabrique, vous profiterez d'une économie de 25 0/0 et vous obtiendrez une garantie sérieuse.

**Converts et Trévevrière** sur métal extra-blanc (découverte nouvelle), inoxydable et inaltérable même au feu.

**Abandonnez le Roid** sur métal jaune, qui n'est rien autre chose que du cuivre pour le métal extra-blanc.

**Vente directe aux consommateurs**  
**EXTRAIT**  
**DE NOTRE CATALOGUE GÉNÉRAL**

 <p>12 Couverts table 1<sup>er</sup> titre 59 »              12 — dessert — 53 »              12 Cuillers à café — 15 »              1 — potage — 10 50              1 — ragout — 7 50              1 — sauce — 6              1 — sucre — 7 50              1 — punch — 7              1 — fruits — 5 50              1 Truelle à poisson — 10 50              12 Couteaux table — 31 »              12 — dessert — 27 »              1 Service à dépec. — 13 »              1 — à salade — 13 »</p>	
--	---

Gravure des lettres en capitales, anglais, gothique à 5 centimes la lettre.

Expédition toujours franco d'emballage et francs de port, au-dessus de 34 fr.

Demandez le Catalogue de la Manufacture Lemaître et Ridoux, 18, boulevard Voltaire, Paris.

Échange contre argentier et vieux couverts en cuivre.

**SANTÉ A TOUS** rendue sans médecine par la délicieuse farine de Santé de Dubarry, de Londres, dite :

**REVALESCIERE**

Vingt-six ans d'invariable succès.

Elle combat avec succès les dyspepsies, mauvaises digestions, gastrites, gastralgies, glaires, vents, aigreurs, acidités, pituites, nausées, renvois, vomissements, constipation, diarrhée, dysenterie, coliques, phthisie, toux, asthme, étouffements, étourdissements, oppression, congestion, névrose, insomnies, mélancolie, diabète, anémie, chlorose, faiblesse, épuisement, tous désordres de la poitrine, gorge, haleine, voix, des bronches, vessie, foie, reins, intestins, muqueuse, cerveau et sang. 75,000 cures annuelles, y compris celles de S. S. le Pape, le duc de Pluskow, Madame la marquise de Bréhan, etc.

N<sup>o</sup> 40,842: Mme Marie Joly, de cinquante ans de constipation, indigestion, nervosité, insomnies, asthme, toux, flatulences, spasmes et nausées. — N<sup>o</sup> 46,270: M. Roberts, d'une consommation pulmonaire, avec toux, vomissements, constipation et surdité de 25 années. — N<sup>o</sup> 46,210: M. le docteur-médecin Martin, d'une gastralgie, et irritation d'estomac qui le faisait vomir 45 à 48 fois par jour pendant huit ans. — N<sup>o</sup> 46,218: le colonel Watson, de la goutte, névralgie et constipation opiniâtre. — N<sup>o</sup> 48,714: le docteur-médecin Shortland, d'une hydrophobie et constipation. — N<sup>o</sup> 49,522: M. Baldwin, de l'épuisement le plus complet, paralysie de la vessie et des membres, par suite d'excès de jeunesse.

Plus nourrissante que la viande, elle économise encore 50 fois son prix en médicaments. En boîte: 1/4 kil., 2 fr. 25; 1/2 kil., 4 fr.; 1 kil., 7 fr.; 12 kil., 60 fr. — Les *Biscuits de Revalescière* en boîtes, de 4, 7 et 60 fr. La *Revalescière chocolatée*, en boîtes de 2 fr. 25 c.; de 576 tasses, 60 fr. Envoi contre bon de poste, les boîtes de 32 et 60 fr. franco.

— Dépôt chez les pharmaciens et épiciers. — **DR BARRY et C<sup>o</sup>, 26, place Vendôme, à Paris; 77, Regent Street, Londres; 59, rue du Rhône, à Genève; 2, via Operto, Turin; 12, rue de l'Empereur, Bruxelles.**

## Bibliography

### *Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias*

- Dictionnaire de la langue française [Electronic Resource]* ed. by Emile Littré, Electronic version created by François Gannaz, (Paris: Hachette, 1873-1874) <<http://www.littre.org>> [accessed 14/04/2014]
- Encyclopædia Britannica [Electronic Resource]* (Web: *Britannica Online*) <<http://www.britannica.com>> [accessed 14/04/2014]
- Encyclopédie Larousse Online [Electronic Resource]* (Paris : Editions Larousse, 2012) <<http://www.larousse.fr>> [accessed 14/04/2014]
- Merriam, G. & C., *A Dictionary of Prefixes, Suffixes and Combining Forms*, Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged [Electronic Resource] (Web: Merriam-Webster, 2002) <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/help/dictnotes/combi.htm>> [accessed 14/04/2014]
- The Online Etymology Dictionary [Electronic Resource]* (ed. by Douglas Harper), (Web: 2001) <<http://www.etymonline.com>> [accessed 14/04/2014]
- The Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) [Electronic Resource] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) [accessed 14/04/2014]
- Le Trésor de la langue française informatisé [Electronic Resource]* (Web: ALILF, CNRS) <<http://atilf.atilf.fr>> [accessed 14/04/2014]

### *Works by Mallarmé*

- , *La Dernière Mode*, ed. by S.A. Rhodes (New York: Institute of French Studies, Inc, 1933)
- , *Œuvres complètes*, (ed. by H. Mondor & G. Jean-Aubry) (Paris: Gallimard, 1945)
- Mallarmé, Stéphane, *Correspondance, 1871-85* (Vol II) (ed. by Henri Mondor & Lloyd James Austin), Paris: Gallimard, 1965)
- , *Le 'Livre' de Mallarmé*, ed. by Jacques Scherer, (Paris: Gallimard, 1977)
- , *La Dernière Mode: gazette du monde et de la famille* (Paris: Ramsay, 1978)
- , *Correspondance* (Vol. V) ed. by Henri Mondor & Lloyd James Austin, (Paris: Gallimard, 1981)
- , *Correspondance complète 1862-1871*, ed. by Bertrand Marchal, (Paris: Gallimard, 1995)
- , *Œuvres complètes*, (2 Vols) ed. by Bertrand Marchal, (Paris: Gallimard, 1998/2003)
- , *For Anatole's Tomb*, trans. by Patrick McGuinness, (Manchester: Carcanet, 2003)
- , *Mallarmé on Fashion : A Translation of the Fashion Magazine La Dernière Mode, with Commentary*, ed. by Nicholas Furbank, and Alex M. Cain, (Oxford: Berg, 2004)

## Secondary Sources

- Abbott, Helen, *Between Baudelaire and Mallarmé: Voice, Conversation and Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)
- Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006)
- Anderson, Jill, *Australian Divagations : Mallarmé & the 20th Century* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002)
- Aristotle, *Aristotle on the Art of Fiction: An English Translation of Aristotle's Poetics* (Cambridge: CUP Archive, 1968)
- Arnar, Anna Sigrídur, *The Book as Instrument: Stéphane Mallarmé, the Artist's Book, and the Transformation of Print Culture* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2011)
- Austin, Lloyd James, *Essais sur Mallarmé* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1995)
- , *Poetic Principles and Practice : Occasional Papers on Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Valéry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- Babuts, Nicolae, *Mimesis in a Cognitive Perspective: Mallarme, Flaubert, and Eminescu* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction, 2011)
- Badiou, Alain, *Petit manuel d'inesthétique* (Paris: Seuil, 1998)
- Badir, Sémir, 'Problème de la Mode', *AS - Actes Sémiotiques [Electronic Resource]*, 117, 2014 <<http://epublications.unilim.fr/revues/as/4969>> [accessed 04/04 2014]
- Bakhtin, M. M., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981)
- Balzac, Honoré de, *Les Journalistes : Monographie de La Presse Parisienne* (Paris : Éditions du Boucher, 2002)
- Barthes, Roland, 'L'effet de réel', *Communications*, 11 (1968), 84–89  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.3406/comm.1968.1158>> [accessed 12/04/2014]
- , *Système de la mode* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983)
- Baudelaire, Charles, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Claude Pichois (Paris : Gallimard, 1961)
- Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulacres et simulation* (Paris :Galilée, 1981)
- Bell, Daniel M, *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012)
- Bellet, Roger, *Stéphane Mallarmé : l'encre et le ciel* (Seysse: Champ Vallon, 1987)
- Bellow, Juliet, *Modernism on Stage: The Ballets Russes and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013)
- Benjamin, Walter, *Gesammelte Schriften, Selected Writings, Vol IV, 1938 - 1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003)
- , *Illuminations* (London: Random House, 2011)
- , *Selected Writings, 1927-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005)
- Benoît, Éric, *Mallarmé et le mystère du 'Livre'* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998)
- , *Néant sonore: Mallarmé, ou, La traversée des paradoxes* (Geneva: Droz, 2007)
- , 'Fonction symbolique de l'objet dans *La Dernière Mode* de Mallarmé', *Modernités*, 9, 1997, 99-123
- Bersani, Leo, *The Death of Stephane Mallarme.* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Besnier, Patrick, *Mallarmé, le théâtre de la rue de Rome* (Paris: Editions du Limon, 1998)
- Blanc, Dina, 'Mallarmé On the Press and Literature: "Étalages" and "Le Livre, Instrument Spirituel"', *The French Review*, 71 (1998)

- Blanchot, Maurice, *Le Livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971)
- Block, Haskell M., *Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama* (Greenwood Press, 1977)
- Bohac, Barbara, *Jourir partout ainsi qu'il sied : Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012)
- , 'La Dernière Mode de Mallarmé Sous Les Feux Du Drame Solaire', *Romantisme*, 36 (2006), 129–39 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3406/roman.2006.6465>>
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Les Règles de l'art* (Paris: Seuil, 1992)
- Bové, Carol Mastrangelo, *Language and Politics in Julia Kristeva* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2006)
- Boym, Svetlana, *Death in Quotation Marks : Cultural Myths of the Modern Poet* (Cambridge, MA ; London: Harvard University Press, 1991)
- Brown, Peter, *Mallarmé et l'écriture en mode mineur* (Paris: Lettres Modernes Minard, 1998)
- Cabral, Maria de Jesus, *Mallarmé hors frontières: des défis de l'œuvre au filon symbolique du premier théâtre maeterlinckien* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007)
- Campbell, Colin et al, *The Shopping Experience [Electronic Resource]* (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 1997)
- Carter, Michael, *Fashion Classics from Carlyle to Barthes [Electronic Resource]* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2003)
- Cassedy, Steven, *Flight from Eden [Electronic Resource]* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990)  
<<http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft8h4nb55x;brand=ucpress>> [accessed 13 March 2014]
- Catani, Damian, *The Poet in Society : Art, Consumerism, and Politics in Mallarmé* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003)
- Caws, Mary-Ann, 'Mallarme and Duchamp: Mirror, Stair, and Gaming Table', *L'Esprit créateur*, 20, no. 2 (Summer 1980), 51-64;
- Chassé, Charles, *Les Clefs de Mallarmé* (Paris: Aubier, 1954)
- Cohn, Robert Greer, *Mallarmé's Prose Poems : A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- , *Lecture de Mallarmé* (Paris: Corti, 1985)
- , *Towards the Poems of Mallarmé* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1965)
- Cohn, Robert Greer, and Gerald Ernest Paul Gillespie, *Mallarmé in the Twentieth Century* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998)
- The Courtauld Gallery, 'Renoir at the Theatre: Looking at *La Loge*'  
<<http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/exhibitions/2008/renoir/furtherinfo.shtml>> [accessed 08/04/2014].
- Crary, Jonathan, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001)
- Crépet, Jacques, 'Mallarmé, Chroniqueur modes', *Supplément littéraire du Figaro* (9 February, 1933)
- Davies, Gardner, *Mallarmé et le Drame solaire, essai d'exégèse raisonnée* (Paris : J. Corti, 1959)
- Dayan, Peter, *Mallarmé's 'Divine Transposition' : Real and Apparent Sources of Literary Value* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986)
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Logique Du Sens* (Paris: Minuit 'Critique', 1969)
- Derrida, Jacques, *La Dissémination* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972)
- Dragonetti, Roger, *Un fantôme dans le kiosque : Mallarmé et l'esthétique du quotidien* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992)
- Dumas, Alexandre, *Causeries [Electronic Resource]*: (Web : Le Joyeux Roger, 2012),  
<<http://www.alexandredumasetcompagnie.com/images/1.pdf/Causeries.pdf>>

- Durand, Pascal, 'Entre "foule" et "public", Les Oscillations Mallarméennes', *Publications de la Sorbonne*, Penser l'art et la culture avec les sciences sociales. En l'honneur de Pierre Bourdieu, 2003, 105–20
- , 'Le Mystère Dans l'Étalage. Mallarmé et La Réclame', *Littérature et publicité de Balzac à Beigbeder*, 2012, 99–109
- , *Mallarmé : du sens des formes au sens des formalités* (Paris: Seuil, 2008)
- , Sarah Mombert, *Entre presse et littérature: Le mousquetaire, journal de M. Alexandre Dumas (1853-1857): actes du colloque organisé à Lyon (8 December 2005) et à Liège (7-8 December 2006)* (Liège: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège, 2009)
- Dumas, Alexandre, 'Études sur le Cœur et le talent des poètes' (*Le Mousquetaire*, 23 March 1854) in *Causeries* (Web : Le Joyeux Roger, 2012)  
<<http://www.alexandredumascompagnie.com/images/1.pdf/Causeries.pdf>> [accessed 14/04/2014].
- La Fantaisie parisienne*, 8 August 1874.  
<<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5403629f.image.langFR.r=La%20fantaisie%20parisienne>> [accessed 01/09/2011]
- Finke, Ulrich, *French 19th Century Painting and Literature: With Special Reference to the Relevance of Literary Subject-Matter to French Painting* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972)
- Frappier-Mazur, Lucienne, 'Narcisse Travesti: Poétique et idéologie dans *La Dernière Mode* de Mallarmé', *French Forum*, 11 (1986), 41–57
- Gallo, Max, *L'affiche: miroir de l'histoire, miroir de la vie* (Paris: Parangon, 2002)
- Garelick, Rhonda K., *Rising Star: Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siècle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998)
- Gordon, Rae Beth, 'Aboli Bibelot? The Influence of the Decorative Arts on Stéphane Mallarmé and Gustave Moreau', *Art Journal*, 45 (1985), 105  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/776787>> [accessed 20/02/2014]
- , *Ornament, Fantasy, and Desire in Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992)
- Gould, Evelyn, *Virtual Theater from Diderot to Mallarmé* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)
- Gourmont, Rémy de 'Trouvailles et Curiosités', *La Revue indépendante*, February 1890, 2  
<<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k16499m/f308.tableDesMatières>> [accessed 13/04/2014]
- Granada, Gloria Melgarejo, *Fragments et obstacles: Mallarmé et le 'génie' du livre inachevé/poésie et dédoublement esthétique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009)
- Jardine, Alice, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986)
- Johnson, Barbara, *A World of Difference* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)
- Johnson, David, Thomas Mowry, *Mathematics: A Practical Odyssey* (Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning, 2012)
- Kennedy, Michael, and Joyce Kennedy, *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Killick, R., 'Mallarmé's Rooms: The Poet's Place in *La Musique et Les Lettres*', *French Studies*, LI (1997), 155–68 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/fs/LI.2.155>> [accessed 12/04/2014]
- Kleinert, Anne Marie, '*La Dernière Mode*: une tentative de Mallarmé dans la presse féminine', *Lendemain*, 5 (1980), 167–78

- Klink, Richard R., 'Creating Brand Names With Meaning: The Use of Sound Symbolism', *Marketing Letters*, 11 (2000), 5–20  
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1008184423824>>[accessed 12/04/2014]
- Kravis, Judy, *The Prose of Mallarmé: The Evolution of a Literary Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976)
- Kristeva, Julia, *La Révolution du langage poétique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974)
- Kumagai, Kensuke, *La Fête selon Mallarmé: République, catholicisme et simulacre* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009)
- Lamartine, Alphonse de, *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, ed. by Marius-François Guyard (Paris: Gallimard, 1963),
- Landy, Joshua, *How to Do Things with Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)
- Lecerclé, Jean-Pierre, *Mallarmé et la mode* (Paris: Séguier, 1989)
- Lees, Heath, *Mallarmé and Wagner: Music and Poetic Language* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)
- Lehmann, Ulrich, *Tigersprung: Fashion in Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002)
- Lesky, Albin, *A History of Greek Literature*, Apollo ed. (New York, NY: Crowell, 1966)
- Lloyd, Rosemary, *Mallarmé: The Poet and His Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005)
- Lübecker, Nikolaj, *Community, Myth and Recognition in Twentieth-Century French Literature and Thought* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011)
- , *Le Sacrifice de la sirène: 'Un Coup de dés' et la poétique de Stéphane Mallarmé* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2003)
- , 'Le "Triomphal renversement" - le rapport entre esthétique et politique chez Mallarmé', *Revue Romane*, 36 (2001)
- Lyu, Claire Chi-ah, *A Sun within a Sun: The Power and Elegance of Poetry* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh, 2006)
- , Claire Lyu, 'Stéphane Mallarmé as Miss Satin: The Texture of Fashion and Poetry', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 40 (2000), 61–71 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/esp.2010.0040>> [accessed 08/12/2013].
- Marchal, Bertrand, *La Religion de Mallarmé: poésie, mythologie et religion* (Paris: Corti, 1988)
- Marder, Elissa, *Dead Time: Temporal Disorders in the Wake of Modernity (Baudelaire and Flaubert)* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001)
- Mauron, Charles, *Introduction à la psychanalyse de Mallarmé* (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1950)
- McCarren, Felicia M, *Dance Pathologies: Performance, poetics, Medicine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998)
- McCombie, Elizabeth, *Mallarmé and Debussy: Unheard Music, Unseen Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
- McGahey, Robert, *The Orphic Moment: Shaman to Poet-Thinker in Plato, Nietzsche, and Mallarmé* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 1994)
- McGuinness, Patrick, "'Beaucoup de bruit pour rien": Mallarmé's Ptyx and the Symbolist "Bric-À-Brac"', *Romanic Review*, 86 (1995), 103–14
- , 'From Page to Stage and Back: Mallarmé and Symbolist Theatre', *Romance Studies*, 13 (1995), 23–40
- , *Symbolism, Decadence and the Fin de Siècle: French and European Perspectives* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000)
- Meillassoux, Quentin, *Le Nombre et la sirène: un déchiffrement du Coup de dés de Mallarmé* (Paris: Fayard, 2011)
- Millan, Gordon, *Mallarmé: A Throw of the Dice: The Life of Stéphane Mallarmé* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1994)

- Morris, William, *The Beauty of Life*, Abridged ed. (London: Brentham Press, 1974)
- Motte, Dean De la, and Jeannene M. Przyblyski, *Making the News: Modernity & the Mass Press in Nineteenth-Century France* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999)
- Navarri, Roger, *Écritures de l'objet*, *Modernités*, 9 (Bordeaux: Presses Univ. de Bordeaux, 1997)
- Olds, Marshall, 'Under Mallarmé's Wing', *French Language and Literature Papers*, 2001 <<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/modlangfrench/27>> [accessed 08/12/2013]
- Paxton, Norman, *The Development of Mallarmé's Prose Style* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1968)
- Pearson, Roger, *Mallarmé and Circumstance: The Translation of Silence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- , 'Mallarmé's Interior Designs', *Romance Studies*, 22 (2004), 3–15 <<http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/abs/10.1179/ros.2004.22.1.3>> [accessed 24/03/2014]
- , *Stéphane Mallarmé* (London: Reaktion, 2010)
- , *Unfolding Mallarmé: The Development of a Poetic Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)
- Pies, Stacy, 'Un Fil Visible': Poetry and Reportage in Stéphane Mallarmé's "Un Spectacle Interrompu", *French Forum*, 29 (2004), 1–18 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/frf.2004.0052>> [accessed 24/03/2014]
- Pillet, Stéphane, 'La Fiction comme supercherie divine: l'effet de fiction dans la poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé', *Fabula* "Colloques en ligne" <<http://www.fabula.org/effet/interventions/12.php>> [accessed 24/03/2014]
- Puchner, Martin, *Stage Fright [Electronic Resource]: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002)
- Rabaté, Jean-Michel, *Tout dire ou ne rien dire: logiques du mensonge* (Paris: Stock, 2005)
- Rancière, Jacques, *Le Partage du sensible: esthétique et politique* (Paris: la Fabrique, 2000)
- , *Mallarmé: la politique de la sirène* (Paris: Hachette, 1996)
- Pierre Auguste Renoir, *La Loge* (1874), oil on canvas, 31 1/2 x 24 5/8 in. (80 x 63.5 cm) (Courtauld Gallery, London).
- Reynolds, Dee, 'Mallarmé and the Decor of Modern Life', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 42 (2006), 268–85 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/fmls/cql014>> [accessed 12/04/2014]
- , *Symbolist Aesthetics and Early Abstract Art: Sites of Imaginary Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- La Revue indépendante*, Fév. 1890, 2, p. 304, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k16499m/f308.tableDesMatières> >
- Richard, Jean-Pierre, *L'univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1961)
- Robb, Graham, *Unlocking Mallarmé* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 1996)
- Roy, Donald, and Victor Emeljanow, *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Ruppli, Mireille, *Mallarmé: la grammaire & le grimoire* (Geneva: Droz, 2005)
- Shaw, Mary Lewis, *Performance in the Texts of Mallarmé: The Passage from Art to Ritual* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993)
- , 'The Discourse of Fashion: Mallarmé, Barthes and Literary Criticism', *SubStance*, 21 (1992), 46 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3684901>> [accessed 12/04/2014]
- Sheringham, Michael, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Smith, Karl, *Mathematics: Its Power and Utility*, (Belmont, CA: Thompson, 2009)
- Stafford, Hélène, *Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday Life: A Study of the Concept of the Ordinary in His Verse and Prose* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000)

- Stanguennec, André, 'Fiction poétique et vérité morale chez Mallarmé', *Littérature*, 111 (1998), 11–27 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3406/litt.1998.2486>> [accessed 18/07/2013]
- Steinmetz, Jean-Luc, 'Mallarmé en corps', *Littérature*, 17 (1975), 105–28 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3406/litt.1975.986>> [accessed 13/04/2014]
- , *Mallarmé: l'absolu au jour le jour* (Paris: Fayard, 1998)
- , *Stéphane Mallarmé: L'absolu au jour le jour* (Paris: Fayard, 1998)
- Steinmetz, Jean-Luc, Bertrand Marchal, et al., *Mallarmé, ou, l'obscurité lumineuse* (Paris: Hermann, 1999)
- Sugano, Marian Zwerling, *The Poetics of the Occasion: Mallarmé and the Poetry of Circumstance* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992)
- Temple, Michael, *Meetings with Mallarmé: In Contemporary French Culture* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998)
- Thériault, Patrick, *Le (dé)montage de la Fiction: la révélation moderne de Mallarmé* (Paris: Champion, 2010)
- Tiffany, Daniel, *Infidel Poetics: Riddles, Nightlife, Substance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009)
- 'Trésor de la langue française informatisée'  
<<http://atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/visusel.exe?11;s=2924562870;r=1;nat=;sol=0;>> [accessed 13/032014]
- Wayland-Smith, Ellen, 'Passing Fashion: Mallarme and the Future of Poetry in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *MLN*, 117 (2002), 887–907 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/mln.2002.0068>> [accessed 12/04/2014]
- Williams, Heather, *Mallarmé's Ideas in Language* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004)
- Wolfreys, Julian, John Brannigan, and Ruth Robbins, *The French Connections of Jacques Derrida* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 1999)
- Wollen, Peter, 'The Concept of Fashion in The Arcades Project', *boundary 2*, 30 (2003), 131–42
- Zachmann, Gayle, *Frameworks for Mallarme: The Photo and the Graphic of an Interdisciplinary Aesthetic* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2008)
- Zeldin, Theodore, *France, 1848-1945: Taste and Corruption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980)