Reader's History Meets Textual Geography: Towards a Syncretistic Theory of Reading

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In the last few decades of the twentieth century, literary theory has undergone a marvelous revolution. It has generated a discourse of contextualization, thus opening up boundaries between disciplines, yoking together questions of history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and opening up new disciplines as cultural criticism and cultural studies. In the process, mainstream theory has made a shift from questions of aesthetics and textual monumentality to questions of how, why and wherefore one interrogates a text, and the results such queries bring forth. Most of these schools have taken as their driving principle the question of the reading subject's identity in order to interrogate a text. While this shift is one that has added complexity, imagination and rigor to the ways theorists suggest that we interpret texts, it has also created a sharp divide with the more conservative schools that claim that the text in this discourse becomes merely a pretext for an interrogation that spans extra-literary domains more often than literary ones. Moreover, there is a growing feeling that postmodern criticism has exhausted its fundamental theoretical paradigms and is now doing nothing much more than testing more texts against these already established frameworks.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss one way out of this impasse; a possibility of formulating a discourse where one can provide for what identity-based criticism has failed to do: provide a space where one could bring the focus back onto textual architecture in order to reconstruct a paradigm of reading where the essential question would still remain why and how a reader interprets a text the way she does. However this paradigm would ask if there is anything in the *text* that makes a reader read the way she does, while acknowledging the identity-determined expectations of the reader.

Posing the above question would generate a reading model that is symbiotic, where one would provide a language for the process by which a text and a reader collude with each other in order to produce the meaning of the text. Put more simply, this

would do what postmodern identity-criticism has neglected to do: bring into focus the reading subject's presuppositions and expectations (partially determined by her identity), along with the text's semiotic architecture. To illustrate and concretize my suggested model, I shall use a close textual analysis of a poem by Mallarmé and delineate and explain the workings of the model.

Over the last few decades literary theory has evolved in response to two related but clearly distinct lines of questioning. While the ultimate goal of both is to describe the process of hermeneusis, they approach it from two different directions. The first, born out of a linguistic and semiotic tradition, focuses on the process by which a text engages a reader, posing questions mainly about the production and architecture of the literary text. The second, descended broadly from a more "humanistic" tradition, concerns itself primarily with how a reader interrogates a text. It describes the process by which the reader may contextualize, deconstruct or otherwise interrogate and analyze a text, as she chooses, in order to arrive at its meaning. The two branches of inquiry and research have evolved, in their turn, into several subsets of theoretical discourse which have subsequently maintained their independence by being orthogonal and sometimes even directly contradictory to each other. Nevertheless, these two strands are bound by two facts: they both focus on the final hermeneutic act, how a reader arrives at the significance of the text, and they both underemphasize one essential part of hermeneusis. This essential part is the first complex step of hermeneusis, which includes locating a text as being part of some textual system, and mapping it semantically into a schema; it is only then that the reader can proceed to interrogate the text as she chooses and enter the actual process of interpretation.

My model focuses on the mechanism of these two acts of locating and mapping. Locating is a synecdochic recognition of a text, for it recognizes a text as a part of any textual system. It can, of course, be at various levels: the reader may recognize a text as belonging to a certain genre, or using a certain topos, or sociolect or code or even all of these at once. It is crucial to understand this step of locating, for it is this act that generates certain expectations in the reader of the text, who now attempts, guided by the signs that the text offers, to map the text. Mapping involves organizing

and schematizing the words into an ordered system in her mind before she can go on to analyze the text.[1]

The three sub-processes of locating, mapping and understanding are however not necessarily in this chronological order. In fact they often are, with the exception of particularly hermetic texts, simultaneous. For a reader who is used to reading such texts, the first two processes transpire as naturally and automatically as a reflex action operating through a collaboration between the reader and the text: while extra textual factors like the reader's cultural background, gender and politics, among others, predetermine how a reader will approach a text; the text, for its part, provides her with a set of recognizable signs to facilitate her process of locating and mapping it.

The model offered here examines the dynamic between the text and the reader, not with the intent of studying the affect of the reader but to describe and emphasize a tacit pact between the reader and the text that results in what I call a symbiotic reading process.

My argument follows from two basic assumptions: first, that the model reader has read other texts and is competent to recognize recurring patterns, and secondly, that there will always be, in any given text, a sequence of what I call literary clichés, one of the crucial components of this model. It is the first index that a reader recognizes in order to her bearings about the text, locate it and map it into a particular schema so that a text is ready as a locus and object of interpretation. What I call literary clichés are determined by literary convention and they form oft-recurring and recognizable textual patterns. Clichés cover a large range of signs and may be found at various levels: for instance, it may be a particular topos that may be familiar to the reader (as, for example , "carpe diem"), a particular image (for example, the convention of the dying sun in an elegy) or even as specific as a particular syntagm that has become canonized (for example, "ailes protectrices"). They are the "recognizables" in a text awaiting readerly recognition.

The recognition takes place by directing the reader to the textual system it comes from. Once it is recognized, the cliché triggers an expectation in the reader. For example, the cliché of comparing the cheeks of a young woman to the petals of a fresh blooming rose is a convention from a particular descriptive system of love poetry; and a reference to it becomes a sign, or more

specifically an index of the genre. The reader, upon reading this sign may reasonably expect the text to follow with the other codes of this particular genre. A text in verse that begins with a description of a idyllic day in the countryside signals to the reader that it is reasonable for her to expect the bucolic poetry genre to follow. A literary cliché may be an index of several textual systems: it may signal to the reader by its conventional association, the text's genre, theme or style, or sometimes even all of these at once.

A recognition of a cliché generates in the reader an expectation of the text vis-à-vis the textual system she has recognized, and from then on she looks for other signifiers to confirm the expectation. While the text with its recognizable literary clichés trains the reader to understand the topography of the text, the reader looks actively for ore signifiers to support or deny her specific expectation of the text. This begins a process of mapping the text into a schema according to the recognized syntagms and the priority that a reader assigns to them in the architecture of the text. As a result of this dynamic between the recognizable and the recognized, the text is transformed into a terrain of several clichés, representing their respective textual systems, which the reader interrupts and intersects, separating syntagms to distinguish them and finally binding them together in terms of confirmation or opposition to each other.

The act of mapping is, in this way, part of a symbiotic reading process which encompasses several phenomena. Recognizing or locating a text sets into motion the process of expectation and discovery by which a reader recognizes a literary cliché, which generates an expectation in her, directing her to look for and discover other clichés from the same textual system. This active readerly strategy of pursuing literary clichés to recognize and categorize them produces a decomposition of reading, and, in effect, a segmentation of the text. The reader starts her central hermeneutic act on this segmented, fissured and dispersed textual terrain. She now starts a process of "assemblage," making connections or binding syntagms, conferring an order upon the text; and in the process, the text acquires a fluidity of form, undergoing several transformations as the reader shapes and reshapes it, as she progresses through her act of mapping in order to discern its significance. Once the reader has thus sketched out the semiotic geography of the text, she is ready to interpret.

"Le Phénomène Futur"

Mallarmé's "Le Phénomène Futur" bears a potent title. The word "phénomène"[2] signals to the reader that the text shall deal with a theme of a philosophical nature. The reference to Hegel anticipates a problem of cosmic proportions and this anticipation may even be fortified by the reader's possible recognition of the notion of the Kantian noumena behind this word. As Ursula Franklin has pointed out,[3] the phenomenon's antonym suggests both itself and the tension between the Kantian Ideal-Idea on the one hand and its realization on the other:

> For the future phenomenon unveiled in the anecdote will be the Incarnation of Ideal Beauty, its noumenal essence made flesh as it were, created by the supreme science of the Montreur. (19)

However, the reader's understanding of the full import of the Kantian or Hegelian reference is somewhat immaterial here. This is not to trivialize the actual import of such a reference in the text. Here, my interest is to see what is the relevance of recognizing the reference insofar as the reader's first exposure to the text is concerned: at this point, the simple recognition of these references will suffice. Even a reader whose familiarity with Kant or Hegel may be quite superficial now expects the text to deal with some cosmic or philosophical these and the first few lines of the text meet this expectation.

The text begins with a series of images actualizing the theme of decadence that is a popular theme with the Symbolist poets. This theme starts as early as in the works of pre-Symbolist Baudelaire and is followed through by Verlaine, Rimbaud and Mallarmé and their Symbolist successors. Whatever the reason may have been for the popularity of this notion[4] in the middle and the late nineteenth century, Des Esseintes, the decadent heir par excellence in Huysmans' *A Rebours*, by the end of the nineteenth century, is established as as much of a charismatic protagonist as Werther. The apocalyptic idea of the world coming to an end, the sense of weariness of the soul, the feeling that one has already seen, learned and done everything, is one that runs consistently through the literature of the time and forms its own system of representation: "Je suis L'Empire à la fin de la decadence," (1) exclaims the speaker in Verlaine's "Langueur" in "Jadis et Naguère," and says with infinite weariness, "Ah! Tout est bu, tout est mangé! Plus rien à

dire!" (11) This is, in sum, the poetic mood prevalent at the time Mallarmé's prose-poem is written.

The reader, having picked out the seme of decadence, proceeds to recognize it as being actualized further through images of aging and sickness. This again has its precedents in Huysmans' text *A Rebours*, where Des Esseintes' obsessive pursuit of the ideology of decadence is matched with physical ill-health, and the text follows this steady process of deterioration till Des Esseintes reaches his ultimate crisis. In "Le Phénomène Futur," this motif of sickness in encapsulated in the word "décrépitude," appearing in the very first line, pointing at once to the theme of decadence that the text is going to build around. "Décrépitude" not only means aging or ill-health, it is an extreme: it is "le dernier terme de la vieillesse." This is compatible with the notion and expectation of grave crisis that the text sets up from the very first lines and this decrepitude is, as the reader shall ultimately discover, not simply physical but moral as well, and it rings of an impending apocalypse. This expectation is fortified if the reader remembers that the literal meaning of "phénomène" is something "qui se présente," "qui apparait."[5] Therefore, even independently of the "futur" in the title, the "phénomène" promises the appearance of something or somebody of importance.

The first eight lines in the poem set up for the reader the principal theme of the poem through a series of existing poetic conventions: the "ciel pâle" (1), the "pourpre usée des couchants"(3), the "arbres" that "s'ennuient" (5) and "leur feuillage blanchi" (5) are all images conventionally representing decadence and the reader may find examples of this in Mallarmé, Baudelaire and Verlaine. In "Hérodiade," for example, (which is another text celebrating the cosmic drama), the autumnal season and the purple skies (though pertaining to a sunrise rather than to a sunset) evoke crime and blood and death:

> Crime! Bucher! aurore ancienne! supplice!
> Pourpre d'un ciel! Étang de la pourpre complice! (OC 41)

The reader is also familiar with the comparison between the end of the day and the end of the world from representations of autumnal sunsets used to describe a weary state of the soul. The seme of colorlessness, emphasized in the first few lines, "le ciel pâle "La pourpre usée" and the "feuillage blanchi," reinforces the

seme of fading or aging; it uses the standard literary cliché of all-devouring time in "feuillage blanchi (de la poussière du temps plutôt que celle des chemins)" (5-6). The possibility that the pale sky "va peut-être partir avec les nuages" is ominous in its unnaturalness and hints at an impending cosmic crisis. All these images set up a background of a slowly decaying order, where, the title has promised the reader, someone will appear, or something shall happen.

Having generated and met a readerly expectation of a theme of an apocalypse, the text undercuts the previous effect of the word "phénomène" by offering another more simple meaning of the word: that of a freak. This is done in line 7, through the reference to the "maison en toile." This meaning of "phénomène" refers to another code, that of the circus, (where under the seedy roofs of make-shift tents, people come to witness shows of "faits naturels qui frappent la vue et l'imagination").[6] These "Phénomènes" may be obese women, deformed or abnormal children and they are all common sights at a fair, drawing large crowds to watch the "phénomène vivant." Now an analeptic look at the title tells the reader how at the very beginning two distinct codes are set up that the text is going to maintain independently, the code of the cosmic/apocalyptic and that of the circus. The opposition between these two central codes within one word makes the title more significant and the actualization of these codes through the poem shall constantly parody each other and the give the text its formal unity.

The reader binds "maison en toile" and "Montreur de choses Passées" in line 7 with the code of the circus first introduces by the title in the word "phénomène" and this provides the narrative space for the text to unfold. The setting with its fairground and showman is familiar to the reader from "Le Pître Chatié," "La Déclaration Foraine" and "Réminiscence." The time picked is conventionally poetic; it is the hour when "les douleurs des malades s'aigrissent (Baudelaire, "Le Crépuscule du Soir," *Les Fleurs du Mal*, 31)[7] and it is also the hour "qui excite les fous."[8]

"Immortelle" (9) refers to timelessness, and in the context of this ongoing process of decay and decrepitude and (op)positioning immortality and malady together, it evokes the sense of inevitability. The notion of sin and the accumulating sin of centuries finds its roots in the Schopenhauerian idea of the "péchés des siècles"(10)

and this notion also happens to be the dominant literary mood of the time, as the reader may think of Musset's "Rolla" and Rimbaud's "Soleil et Chair." The punishment is represented through images of sickness and decay, the accomplices of these sickly men are "chétives" (10) and even the women who are pregnant with their "fruits misérables" (11) shall perish as the earth will perish. The prophetic note is lent yet more force with this image of the woman pregnant with a cancerous fetus: it breaks all conventions of pregnant mothers as symbols of hope and a new future. This deliberate subversion of a conventional image of hope aims at producing an affect of fright in the reader through the further suggestion that there is no cure for this irreversible process of decay.

Against a background of cosmic decay, doom and despair, the reader is led back to the circus fairground and the Montreur who pronounces his "boniment"(14). So far this "boniment" reads like a simple sales pitch, as it should be. If it strays at all from the circus code it does so by replacing the freak, so common at a circus ground, by a "Femme d'Autrefois"(18). The rest is, given the context, grammatical. "Spectacle" (15) is part of the code and the "vivante" (17) overdetermined by the idea of a un phénomène vivant,[9] refers the reader again to the title of the text.

It is from line 14 onwards that the text of this "boniment" undergoes a remarkable transformation. From the prosaic sales talk it enters the terrain of the literary with its intertextual, mythological, and philosophical allusions, thus breaking down the boundaries between the two independent codes of the solar/cosmic and that of the low-life of the circus. The next few lines are an attempt to present an ideal of beauty, imagination and inspiration.

The "folie," (19) "originelle et naïve" (19), all carrying the motif of inspiration and originality, offers a contrast with the decaying masses that are gathered at the fair. The "extase d'or" draws from the grammar of eulogies on a beautiful woman's hair and Mallarmé's prose-poem "La Déclaration Foraine" (another text where the woman's beauty is presented from a platform to the masses at a fair) presents a very similar scene:

> "La chevelure vol d'un flamme à l'extrême
> Occident de désirs pour la tout deployer
> Se pose (je dirais mourir un diadème) . . ." (OC, 282)

This idealized goddess's hair is gold, which conventionally represents innocence and perfection. This woman's hair is referred to as a living fire in "La Declaration Foraine" and from Baudelaire's "La Chevelure" the reader may recall "Extase!" (3) and finally the reader can be led to recognize the "extase d'or" as containing almost exactly the hypogram of the toison d'or. All these associations carry a suggestion of the supernatural, that meets the readerly expectation generated by the word "phénomène."

The figure of the "Femme d'Autrefois" is a familiar one to the reader: it is a proto-Venus figure. Her nudity and the perfection of her body sexualize her image: her "corps" (23) is described to have a "chair heureuse"(24), her breasts, while carrying the seme of maternity in the "lait éternel" (25) are hard as if also with desire and her supple legs "qui garde le sel de la mer première" (26-27) are turned into sexual objects with the gustatory allusion. All of this may remind the reader of Botticelli's image of Aphrodite rising from the sea or "La Naissance de Vénus." Even though the woman is of yore, she is remarkably well-kept and seems to be bursting with fecundity and the vitality of life: thus the "phénomène" is overdetermined by the Greek meaning of *phaino* which is *briller*.

The "nudité sanglante de ses lèvres" (21-22) offers the first possibility of a double reading. On the one hand the bloody nudity of her lips are a periphrasis of ruby lips, or "lèvres vermeilles"; if ruby lips are traditionally a standard icon of beauty, then the blood takes this seme of redness even further, to an extreme. The blood inserts also an erotic element into the description of these lips. However, at the same time, the blood in this passage describing a fecund, maternal and archetypal Ur- Mother/Woman subverts the code of Ideal Beauty that the text has already introduced as a theme and evokes the monstrous, meeting the reader's expectation of the freak, generated earlier by the circus code. This legitimizes the use of the word "boniment" (which can mean a "parade de charlatan" or "ce qui peut tromper"[10]): the reader has been delivered with a monster after having been explicitly promised a beautiful goddess.

The reader proceeds to read the passage as a marked contrast between the "Femme d'Autrefois" and the sickly decrepit crowd that huddles closer together to have a look at this marvel. This is bound also with the decadent imagery located earlier in the text

and "se rappelant leurs pauvres épouses, chauves, morbides et pleines d'horreur" (27-28) is read also in terms of the previous description of the "Femme d'Autrefois": as this Woman has "une extase d'or" for hair, these men are "chauves" (28) and as her "chair" (24) is "heureuse" (24) they are "morbides et pleines d'horreur" (28).

The last paragraph picks up the tone of prophecy that the narrator in the text had used towards the beginning of the poem. The tense shifts abruptly to the future. The gist of this particular paragraph is a prophecy that says that most men of this blighted age will meet the image of this Ideal Beauty with blankness for they are completely incapable of comprehension; however, the poets will be rejuvenated at the sight of this Muse and will, for a moment, experience inspirational glory. That this "Femme d'Autrefois" serves the function of the Muse is made explicit here, for it is said, at the first sight of her, "les poètes de ces temps, sentant se rallumer leurs yeux éteints, s'achemineront vers leurs lampe" (35-7). The reader, if she knows that the "lampe" in Mallarméan idiolect is associated with the creativity of the poet, knows that this is a reference to the allegorical lamp of the poet. The poem ends with this arrested image of the *hommage* of the *poètes maudits* before this dazzling vision of beauty as despair and darkness close in on them from the outside.

The literary clichés recognized by the reader have guided her to the significance of this text. The title indicates at first the two levels of meaning and significance through its double reference: the first to a woman representing idealized Beauty against a background of decay and despair, and the second to the possibility that this Beauty might be of a monstrous nature.[11] Thus the two "phénomènes" are merged into one identity by the "boniment" but whatever be the nature of this strange Muse, it brings forth inspiration and poetry is immanent.

To conclude, the primary purpose of this paper has been to probe into the possibility of providing a theoretical model of reading that takes into account the need in theory to revitalize the idea of textual monumentality and to explore the dynamic between an active reader that pries a text open and an autonomous text that colludes with her to produce significance.

Appendix A

Defining Terms: Some Methodological Notes
To implement my model and to demonstrate the mapping effect on a text, I have had to create a few conventions and introduce some new terminology. I introduce and explain these below:

I. Conventions:
   A) Segmentation:
      In order to follow through the process of reading I have dissected the text into several segments; for the most part the segments have been according to their natural breaks in paragraphs, but on occasion I have taken advantage of appropriate junctures or pauses in the narrative.
   B) Underlining:
      The underlined sections are the highlighted portions that are a result of the reader's prioritization of the text. These are tools that the reader uses to impose a structure on the text. This does not mean that the other sections are necessarily inconsequential to that reading. A basic infrastructure of the text can be arrived at without exhausting all the possibilities of the text; any additional sign overlooked by a reading will simply build further on this structure. Furthermore, any other system of recognized clichés, generating and meeting other expectations in other readers will produce independent but structurally similar orderings of the text.
   C) Parentheses:
      What lies within the parentheses indicate the way the reader first reads the signs that she encounters. A parenthesis will describe the function of the recognized syntagm for the reader; that is whether the syntagm refers to a particular code or theme. As soon as any sign is recognized by the reader to be a part of a general descriptive system, an expectation is generated in her.
II. Terminology within the parentheses:
   A) SYN: It stands for a syntagm, a phrase of words bound by grammar. It is however, in this particular context, somewhat more specific. It is the recognizable syntagm that comes to the reader suggesting a new motif in the text. It is still not bound to any already appeared syntagm and the reader isolates it in order to bind it with other syntagms, which shall be represented as Syn.1.a, Syn.1.b and so forth.
      I have argued that in the reading process the reader recognizes literary clichés which generate certain expectations. In my reading of Mallarmé, however, we see that the reader's segmentation

and prioritization of the text is not determined solely by literary clichés. Any syntagm may generate the expectation and the literary clichés help the reader perceive the suggested motif as a structurally significant motif in the text.[12] In the schematically highlighted segments I have not attempted to distinguish between the literary clichés and the other syntagms that give the reader information about what codes the text is going to use or what themes it is going to actualize.

B) MOD: It stands for module; in cybernetic theory it is a defined cluster, in my model it is a cluster of words and a governing component of a text. A module may be a theme, a code or even a general descriptive system that becomes a central and repetitive structure in the text. Syntagms become modules after a few repetitions or variations. There may be several principal modules in the text setting up an architecture of the text where different syntagms refer to these respective modules. Syntagms that are also repetitive motifs in the text but are not principal motifs do not attain the status of a module.

C) a, b, c: stand for extensions of a syntagm or a module.

D) cf: stands for a reference to a previous syntagm or module.

E) x: Extension of a parallel syntagm or module by way of affirmation.

F) Extension of a parallel syntagm or module by way of opposition.

Before I document the mapping effect in Appendix B, let me offer a brief synopsis of the actual process: a reader isolates in her mind the first signifier that she encounters. She retains this in her memory in order to bind it on the basis of a semantic relation with other syntagms in the text. A few such bindings lead to a module, and a repetition of the same procedure generates more modules. The reader identifies these as modules in the text. Based upon the expectations now triggered by these modules she identifies other syntagms as extensions of the principal modules of the text. Therefore any given section of the text may look like the following:

...Syn.1, Mod.1)...(Syn.2, Mod.1.a)... (Syn.3, Mod.1.b. cf, x. Syn.1) and so on.

One may wonder about the point of developing this seemingly complicated and elaborate sign-system to describe a process that one believes should come naturally and instinctively to any reader. At the same time, most of us recognize in ourselves an urge to organize a complex polysemous text in order to make sense of it. I have tried to provide a language for this rather complex process of ordering the text.

Appendix B

Segment 1.

"Un *ciel pâle* (Syn.1) sur *le monde qui finit de décrépitude* (Mod.1, code: apocalyptic, cf. Syn.1), va peut-être *partir avec les nuages* (Mod.1.a): *les lambeaux de pourpre usée des couchants déteignent* (Mod.1.b) dans une rivière dormant à l'horizon submergé de rayons et d'eau. *Les arbres s'ennuient* (Mod.2, Mallarméan poetic intertext, *Plainte d'Automne*, theme: decadence) et, sous *leur feuillage blanchi* (Mod.2.a) (de la *poussière du temps* (Mod.2.b theme: decadence, topos: passing time) que celle des chemins), monte *la maison de toile du Montreur de choses Passées* (Mod.3 code: circus) maint réverbère attend *le crépuscule* (poetic chronos, lyrical) et ravive les visages d'une *malheureuse foule* (Syn.2), *vaincue par la maladie immortelle et le péché des siècles* (Mod.1.c & Mod.2.c), d'hommes près de leurs *chétives complices* (Syn.3) *enceintes des fruits misérables avec lesquels périra la terre.* (Mods.1.d & 2.d: code: apocalyptic, theme: decadence)

Segment 2.

"Dans le silence inquiet de tous les yeux suppliant là-bas le soleil qui, sous l'eau, s'enfonce avec le deséspoir d'un cri, (Mod.1.e) voici le simple boniment: (Mod.3.a) "Nulle enseigne ne vous régale du spectacle intérieur (Mod.3.b) car il n'est pas maintenant un peintre capable d'en donner une ombre triste. J'apporte, vivante (et preservée à travers les ans par la science souveraine) une Femme d'Autrefois" (Mod.3.c, cf. title) (12-16).

Segment 3.

"Quelque folie, originelle et naïve, (Mod.4, theme: beauty and inspiration, Syn.3 cf. y. Syn.2) une extase d'or (Mod.4.a, Syn.4. cf. y. "chétives," Syn.3), je ne sais quoi! par elle nommé sa chevelure, se ploie avec la grâce des étoffes autour d'un visage qu'éclaire la nudité sanglante de ses lèvres (Mod.4.c, Syn.5) A la place du vêtement elle a un corps (cf. x. Syn.5); et les yeux semblables aux pierres rares (Mod.4.d), ne valent pas ce regard qui sort de sa chair heureuse (Mod.4.e): des seins levés (Mod.4.f, cf. x. Syn.5) comme s'ils étaient pleins d'un lait éternel (Mod.5 seme: the maternal), la pointe vers le ciel (beauty?) aux jambes lisses qui gardent le sel de la mer première (Mod.4.g, Mod.5.a).

Segment 4.

"Se rappelant leurs pauvres épouses, *chauves* (Mod.4.h, cf. y: "une exstase d'or"), *morbides et pleines d'horreur* (Mod.4.i, cf. y. "chair heureuse"), les maris se pressent: elles aussi par curiosité, *mélancoliques* (cf. y. "heureuse"), veulent voir."

Segment 5:

"Quand tous auront comtemplé la noble créature (Mod.3.d, seme: ideal), vestige de quelque époque déjà maudite (cf. x. Mod.2.c "péché des siècles"), les uns indifférents, car ils n'auront pas eu la force de comprendre (Mod.6 theme: élite vs. la foule), mais d'autres navrés (cf. mélancoliques) et la paupière humide de larmes résignées se regarderont; tandis que les poëtes de ces temps, (Mod.6.a élite) sentant se rallumer (Mod.4.i) leurs yeux éteints, s'achemineront vers leur lampe, (Mod.4.j), le cerveau ivre un instant d'une gloire (Mod.4.k, Mod.6.b) confuse, hanté du Rythme (Mod.6.c) et dans l'oubli d'exister à une époque qui survit à la beauté. (Mod.4.l, Mod.6.d: ideal/poetry/inspiration).

Appendix C

The Mapping Effect

Segment 1.

"Un *ciel pâle* (Syn.1) sur *le monde qui finit de décrépitude* (Mod.1, code: apocalyptic, cf. Syn.1), va peut-être *partir avec les nuages* (Mod.1.a): *les lambeaux de pourpre usée des couchants déteignent* (Mod.1.b) dans une rivière dormant à l'horizon submergé de rayons et d'eau. *Les arbres s'ennuient* (Mod.2, Mallarméan intertext, *Plainte d'Automne*, theme: decadence) et, sous *leur feuillage blanchi* (Mod.2.a) de *la poussière du temps* (Mod.2.b, theme: decadence, topos: passing time) que celle des chemins, monte *la maison de toile du Montreur de choses Passées* (Mod.3, code: circus) maint réverbère attend *le crépuscule* (poetic chronos) et ravive les visages d'une *malheureuse foule*, (Syn.2) *vaincue par la maladie immortelle et le péché des siècles* (Mod.1.c & Mod.2.c), d'hommes près de leurs *chétives complices* (Syn.3) *enceintes des fruits misérables avec lesquels périra la terre* (Mods. 1.d & 2.d: code: apocalyptic, theme: decadence).

Segment 2.

Dans le silence inquiet de tous les yeux suppliant là-bas le soleil qui, sous l'eau, s'enfonce avec *désespoir d'un cri* (Mod.1.e), voici *le simple boniment* (Mod.3.a): "Nulle enseigne ne vous régale du *spectacle intérieur* (Mod.3.b) car il n'est pas maintenant un peintre capable d'en donner une ombre triste. J'apporte, vivante (et preservée à travers les ans par la science souveraine) *une Femme d'Autrefois* (Mod.3.c, cf. title).

Segment 3.

Quelque folie, originelle et naïve (Mod.4, theme: beauty and inspiration, Syn.3, cf. y. Syn.2), *une extase d'or* (Mod.4.a, Syn.4 cf. y. "chétives," Syn.3), je ne sais quoi! par elle nommé sa chevelure, se ploie avec la grâce des étoffes autour d'un visage qu'éclaire *la nudité sanglante de ses lèvres*

(Mod.4.c, Syn.5). *A la place du vêtement* elle a un corps (cf. x. Syn.5); et *les yeux semblables aux pierres rares* (Mod.4.d) ne valent pas ce regard qui sort de *sa chaire heureuse* (Mod.4.e): des *seins levés* (Mod.4.f, cf. x. Syn.5) comme s'ils étaient *pleins d'un lait éternel* (Mod.5 seme: the maternal), la pointe *vers le ciel* aux jambes lisses qui gardent *le sel de la mer première* (Mod.4.g, Mod.5.a).

Segment 4.

Se rappelant leurs pauvres épouses, *chauves* (Mod.4.h, cf. y: "une extase d'or"), *morbides et pleines d'horreur* (Mod.4.i, cf. y. "chair heureuse"), les maris se pressent: elles aussi par curiosité, *mélancoliques* (cf. y. "heureuse), veulent voir."

Segment 5.

Quand tous auront contemplé la *noble créature* (Mod.3.d seme: ideal), vestige de *quelque époque déjà maudite* (cf. x. Mod.2.c "péché des siècles"), les uns indifférents, car ils *n'auront pas eu la force de comprendre* (Mod.6, theme: élite vs. la foule), mais d'autres *navrés* (cf. mélancoliques) et la paupière humide de larmes résignées se regarderont; tandis que *les poëtes de ces temps* (Mod.6.a: élite), sentant *se rallumer* (Mod.4.i) *leurs yeux éteints, s'achemineront vers leur lampe* (Mod.4.j), le cerveau ivre un instant d'une *gloire* (Mod.4.k, Mod.6.b) confuse, *hanté du Rythme* (Mod.6.c) et dans l'oubli d'exister à *une époque qui survit à la Beauté* (Mod.4.l, Mod.6.d: ideal/ poetry/inspiration).

Notes

[1] A graphic effect of mapping is shown in Appendix B.

[2] Hegel's ideas, Ursula Franklin points out in her book, may have come distilled to Mallarmé through a contemporary article by Edmond Schérer. In his article Schérer talks about how Hegel claimed that the universe had something in common with man and that the "vraie réalité" is not matter but mind. The object is only the "corps de l'idée" and the "phenomenon" is only an expression of the law. Whether Mallarmé ever actually read Schérer or Hegel is debatable and immaterial; we do know however that Hegelian ideas were popular and fashionable with the Symbolists. Thus it provides the late nineteenth-century poetry with a rich source of words and terminology loaded with meaning that the poet and the reader could refer to and recognize.

[3] Ursula Franklin, *An Anatomy of Poesis,* North Carolina Studies in Romance Language and Literature, (Valencia: Artes Graficas Soler, 1976).

[4] There exists a plethora of books discussing and explaining this cult of decadence in the nineteenth century, offering historical, sociological

and psychological reasons for the spread of this cult: Otto Spengler has an excellent study on this, Max Nordau offers some intriguing ideas too.

[5] Defintions from the Grand Larousse du 19e siècle.

[6] Definition from the Dictionnaire Grand Larousse du 19e siècle.

[7] Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres Complètes*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968).

[8] Grand Larousse du 19e siècle.

[9] Grand Larousse du 19e siècle.

[10] Grand Larousse du 19e siècle.

[11] This may recall the alternate descriptive system of Beauty from Baudelaire's "Hymne à la Beauté": "O Beauté! Monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénu."

[12] In other words, all syntagms that the reader highlights are not literary clichés.

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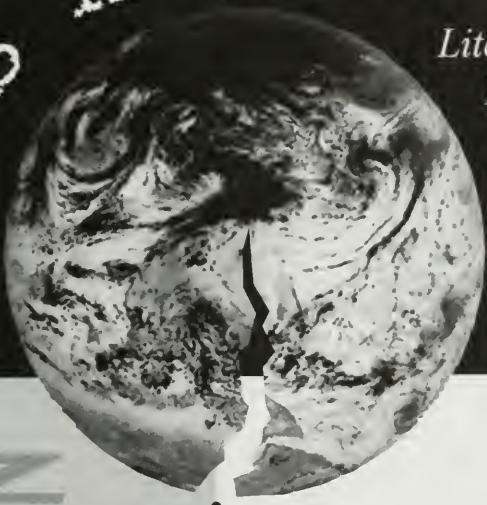
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