

Stéphane Mallarmé's Printed Dance:  
The Article "Ballets" as a Scenic Totality

by

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The author's note:

Just recently finalized as of 16 June 2017, this paper is intended by the author to be part of her monograph in progress, which is tentatively entitled *Figuring the Modern: The Objectified Present in Stéphane Mallarmé and T. S. Eliot*.

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1. Mallarmé's "Signe" as a feathered sign

In the symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé's prose entitled "Ballets," the imagery of thoroughness comes forth from the early stage of reading, given the author's applied poetics for idealized objectification. The application is processed through his discussion of the performing art, ballet.

In the article, Mallarmé's pivotal words are gathered, as is noticed by many critics.<sup>1</sup> The lexis includes "La Fleur," "l'idée," "un Signe," and "la Poésie."

The multifarious terms contribute to maximize the power of his cross-cultural essay as a charged potential for signification and information. The keywords are occasionally personified with

capitalized initial letters.

Concurrently, the article's title includes the words "Ball" and "all," which makes the reader subconsciously visualize a circular cosmos from the beginning of his/her reading.

The suggestive article's conclusive word "Signe" is picturesque, driving the reader to multilaterally speculate. "Signe" has a synonymous connection with "cygne (swan)," evoking today's principal ballet piece entitled *Le Lac des cygnes*, or *Swan Lake* in English. The word "Signe" also represents poetry as an aestheticized sign: the French term "signe" corresponds to "sign" in English.

The final capitalized word "Signe" draws out the tentative conclusion that ballet is an ideal surrogate of his poetry, and poetry in general. To be ideal means to be personified.

Mallarmé's article "Ballets" was published in January 1897 as a piece of his collected essays entitled *Divagations*. The poet died in September of the following year. The article represents the poet's late intricate prose, which is highly poetized.

The original version was published in the December 1886 issue of *La Revue indépendante*. A remarkable difference between the first version and the final 1897 one is seen in their titles: "Notes sur le théâtre" and "Ballets." Concomitantly, in the 1897 definitive version, the installation of blanks within the text is regularized for setting up a tripartite whole. Also, the 1886 version's inaugural part is eliminated in the final text. To a large extent, the wording remains the same.

The original is intended to be a reportage, of which the explicative title is shown in total at the journal's table of contents: "Notes sur le théâtre (les Honnêtes Femmes; les Deux Pigeons; Viviane)." The prosaic account was condensed into the title word that evokes a cosmic expansion: "Ballets."

The article begins with the suggested Italian dominance in Paris' then-contemporary ballet scene by the initial definite article attached to the name of an Italian ballerina, Cornalba.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, ballet and poetry are semiotically interlaced: the female dancer is a summarizing metaphor ("métaphore résumant"), her body is compared to writing ("avec une écriture corporelle"), and the ballerina is a poem itself ("poème dégagé de tout appareil du scribe"). The identification of the dancer with poetry concludes his article's first part ended by the first broadest blank.

Manipulated for overall signification, the image of Mallarmé's poetry is, in fact, close to that of ballet in systematic formality as seen today. Both artifacts are characterized by whiteness.

That comparison is, however, a generalization. A further question arises: why poetry and ballet can be essentially identified? Mallarmé's elliptical answer in his article is: "le Ballet, autre, emblématique." His suggestive words designate the signifying power of the non-conventional sign, ballet, of which the speechless abstraction paradoxically alludes a lot, in the same way as a colossal object suitable for the appellation "emblème." Concurrently, the human language is the most capable thus, in a sense, truly emblematic sign, though conventional with the minimal

and challenging vehicle, i.e., printed letters in simplification. Both poetry and ballet are representative signs.

In the ending third part of his article, which concludes with the personified word "Signe," Mallarmé paraphrases the word "emblématique" into the sentence "Que peut signifier ceci (What can this signify)." The signifier is a silent dancer ("la ballerine illettrée"). The heightened image of a flower ("la Fleur") as a final signified is connected to toe shoes in the color rose full of poetic flavor ("les roses qu'enlève et jette en la visibilité de régions supérieures un jeu de ses chaussons de satin pâle vertigineux").

To put it differently, polysemy is one of the main features poetry and ballet share. As aesthetic signs, both designate something, but what is designated is pluralized and thus uncertain, as is implied by the poet in the first part of his article: "aucun atteinne à une importance de fonctionnement avéré et normal, dans le rendu." The final expression "le rendu," which means "the rendition," is generalized, thus including poetry, while simultaneously specifying ballet as the discussed rendition.

In the concluding third part, the poet sums up the semiotic activities driven by the viewing of ballet. The spectator reads ("lire") the movement of the dancer with a mass of evoked images ("rêverie") which represent the spectator's unique interpretation: "on opérera en pleine rêverie, mais adéquate." The culminant image as part of dreamy interpretation ("de ton poétique instinct") is expressed as "Fleur," a revelation of meaning, taken

as a vision ("la nudité de tes concepts" and "ta vision").

The semiotic process described by Mallarmé is similar to that of C. S. Peirce, which posits the process of interpretation as a succession of transformed interpretants, i.e., mental images.

The final expression of the third part that equalizes "Signe" and "elle" ("un Signe, qu'elle est") evokes a picture of a white swan represented by a ballerina. This is first because the conclusive sign "Signe" is a transformed dream as an ultimate interpretation. The dream, or "rêverie" in Mallarmé's article, is designated by the demonstrative pronoun "elle." As a feminine and the substitute for the capitalized noun "Signe," the pronoun "elle" simultaneously refers to a ballerina. Furthermore, the word "Signe" leads to "cygne (swan)" in a homonymic connection. The last expression is developed into the presentation of today's primordial ballet piece *Swan Lake*.

Concurrently, the article's involute expressions may be taken as an embodiment of the imagery of the performance known as *Swan Lake*, which is symbolized by flexible whiteness ("blanc") in the form of tutu's gauze worn by the heroine Odette, i.e., the divided half of the black swan named Odile. The French word "gaze" meaning "gauze" is seen in the first block of the article's first part for admiring the Italian ballerina, Cornalba.

Originated in Russia but unknown for a fairly long time in Western Europe,<sup>3</sup> *Swan Lake* is nowadays qualified as representing ballet, with its triumvirate fusion of drama, music, and ritual in eloquent whiteness. Tchaikovsky's magnetic music impresses on

the spectator the overall contrast of black and white. According to Opus Arte, the piece is "[the] pillar of the classic repertoire." The sacerdotal and sensual piece for love and marriage implies what communication is.

The keywords that evoke *Swan Lake* are frequently seen in the first half of Mallarmé's article: "la fée," "le corps de ballet," "l'étoile," "Point," "La neige," "un blanc ballabile," "les lacs de la fée," "la cory(-)phée(/fée)," "une transposition . . . au type simple de l'animal," and "énamourés volatiles." In the final and third part, the expression for royal ceremony exists: "sur des tapis de royauté."

The article's second part foregrounds the twofold image of a pair of pigeons, as well as that of the story of the performance ("une légende") and its lesson ("la Fable"). The twinned figure of the white swan Odette and the black swan Odile is summoned.

From another angle, the Mallarmé article's each self-contained word serves to announce the advent of the outstanding production *Swan Lake* with the article's predominant idealization of poetry in the illumination from ballet. The imaginary advent is all the more anticipated, given the contrast between the self-assertive terms and the article's actual and virtual syntax. As for *Swan Lake*, it has an established imagery of black and white, which makes the piece a culmination of classical ballet.

The ballet entitled *Swan Lake* was premiered in February 1877 at the Bolshoy Theater in Moscow (Beaumont 9). Mallarmé's article on ballet was first published in Paris in the December 1886 issue

of the journal *La Revue indépendante*. Though the title of *Swan Lake* is not mentioned in Mallarmé's prose, the current reader, who knows the status of the symbolic piece,<sup>4</sup> is tempted to imagine that the poet actually saw *Swan Lake* at the Paris Opera, the national academy for music and ballet.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the article's finalizing word is "Signe" with the capitalized initial letter and that the word "Opéra" is seen in the article.

Following the historical record, however, it is undeniable that what Mallarmé saw at the Paris Opera and is discussed in his article "Ballets" is a ballet piece on two pigeons, and not directly on swans. The discussed piece is designated as *Les Deux Pigeons* by the poet himself.

The production is based on La Fontaine's *Fables*, though it is not well-known nowadays.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Mallarmé's abstract article does not offer the details for the reader to clearly picturize its performance in his/her brain. The lack of information on *Les Deux Pigeons* is the first cause for the emergence of *Swan Lake* in Mallarmé's article "Ballets."

According to *Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique*, the piece *Les Deux Pigeons* was premiered at the Paris Opera on 18 October 1886 (21). Mallarmé's article was published in the same year's issue of *La Revue indépendante*.

Furthermore, Ivor Guest suggests that *Swan Lake* was unknown in Western Europe at that time (66). According to Cyril W. Beaumont, it is in 1888 that "*Swan Lake* had its first performance outside Russia" (149).

Nonetheless, according to Roland John Wiley (242-43), a one-act ballet entitled *The Swans*, which was presumably based on *Swan Lake*, was on stage in London in 1884. Regarding Mallarmé's connection with England as a teacher of English, it is probable that at least he acquired the information on the abridged *Swans*, if not actually saw it.

Despite whether *Swan Lake* was witnessed by the poet or not, the prevailing image of his article on ballet is that of black and white. This is first because the article in reportage and abstraction is in a contrast of expressivity and obscurity. Second, the combination of black and white, which is embodied by Odette and Odile, should be traced back to the ink's black and the paper's white.

For the poet Mallarmé, writing in black is to be spatialized, springing up from the fertile soil in whiteness. In the poet's expression, "l'homme poursuit noir sur blanc" ("Quant au livre," *Œuvres* 2: 215). In one of his late sonnets, which was published in 1885 and 1887, an old swan ("Cygne") is featured in its static posture of a ballerina, trailing its extensive shadow called "Fantôme."

The predominance of white is exchangeable for the contrast between black and white, since both colors represent extremity, circularly searching for each other. In other words, white contains black in itself, and vice versa. The duality of whiteness caused the Mallarmé article's fundamental two-ness.

The exchangeability of black and white is epitomized by the



replacement of white swans by black ones, which took place in 1986 as a posthumous revision of Balanchine's one-act version of *Swan Lake* (Kyodo Tokyo n.pag.).

In his article with the titling plural, "Ballets," Mallarmé subconsciously foretells the advent of the synthesis of ballet concretized as *Swan Lake* and that the poet preemptively creates his own version of the piece, while simultaneously dreaming an ideal form of poetry in a corporeal actualization.

In Mallarmé's article, besides the star dancer Cornalba, another ballerina ("Mademoiselle Mauri") is mentioned as being wonderful in pursuing divination ("par sa divination"), i.e., remarkable dance, and diffusing meaningful allusions ("désignant les allusions non mises au point"). Rosita Mauri is the prima ballerina of *Les Deux Pigeons*, which is discussed in the article's second part.

The ballerina Cornalba is a main dancer in another ballet piece *Viviane*, which is referred to in the first and third parts of the article. *Viviane* was performed at the Eden Theater in Paris, and *Les Deux Pigeons* at the Paris Opera.

Mallarmé's article as an abstract review of the ballet productions tends to be a semiotic theorization of ballet, and furthermore, art as a generic whole. In the dominance of implicitness, though, the shift to the generalization is occasionally verbalized, using the explicit rendition, for example, "une obligatoire suite des motifs fondamentaux du Ballet."

Moreover, the transformation of the bird into any imaginative

entity is initiated by the author himself: "Si l'une est colombe, devenant j'ignore quoi." At the end of the article, the transformation reaches the symbolic figure of a swan designated by the capitalized word "Signe(-Cygne)."

The tendency for synthesis is driven by the abstract report on the ballet pieces *Viviane* and *Les Deux Pigeons* without any specification of date nor details of venue other than locations, The Eden Theater and the Paris Opera. The two theaters were geographically close at that time.<sup>7</sup>

The poet implies the duality in black and white as the basis of creation involving ballet and poetry. The duality, which is surfaced as the signifier/form and the signified/meaning, is to be unified either by the intention of the author or the interpretation of the reader.

The multiple imagery of circulation in Mallarmé's article originates in the polysemy of each word entailing "Point" for negation, apparition, and toe shoes. Subsequently, the circulation involves its tendency to sum up each part into semiotic theorization. This tendency follows a dictum of ballet, which is characterized by systematization and symbolization.

The continuous reading of Mallarmé's article "Ballets" is driven by the concomitant question of how motivated, or at least appropriate, the prospective image of *Swan Lake* is in his article established in 1897. For the current reader, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century article is vital, reflecting the light from the contemporary master piece *Swan Lake*.

## 2. The details of mechanism and content of "Ballets"

### 2.1 The first part

Mallarmé's article "Ballets" is for unified doubleness. In its overall fusion, the common denominators of ballet and poetry are embodied by his polysemic prose. The semantic increase paradoxically highlights a clear-cut image of black and white, which is ascribed to a blank page and inked letters.

As formalized and ritualistic, ballet and poetry symbolize each of their own genres, i.e., dance and literature. Etymologically, the word "ballet" is from the Latin word "ballare" meaning "to dance" (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed.), and the word "poetry" via "poesy" from "poiein" meaning "create" (*ODE*, 2nd ed.). Thus, both "ballet" and "poetry" represent a point.

As the initial concretization of the above framework, the first part may be outlined as follows:

The part's motif: the ballet production entitled *Viviane*

block 1: on a solo dance

block 2: on a group dance (corps de ballet)

block 3: the one-sentence announcement of the principle of  
ballet

block 4: the details of the above principle

The part's summary: In the enchainement of ballet,

poetry, and abyssal, i.e., endless signification ("abîme"), the balletic form embodies a navel of cosmic whole, in which the communication between the author Mallarmé and the reader is primarily sought by the author's article "Ballets" itself. The dual relationship between the author and the reader is virtual in that of the dancer and the spectator. The author as one and the reader as another make up a cosmic whole.

The first part of the article consists of four blocks separated by three blanks, each in the same width. Another blank, which divides the first and the second parts, is wider than the interim blanks between the blocks of the first part. The third block in a single sentence may be viewed as a supplement of the previous block 2 or the succeeding block 4, thus foregrounding the three big blocks united as a Trinitarian part.

The triumvirate first part is summed up by the finalizing word "poème." To that summarization, various images of circulative unity are presented throughout the part: the circular dance defined by the expressions "cercle magique" and "une synthèse mobile," poetry as assimilated with ballet by the renditions "la Poésie" and "nature animée," the snow flakes to revive on stage ("ne revit pas"), the identification of the ballerina Cornalba with an airy cosmos in the initial block, and the extensive insinuation of circulation in the enchainment of words and phrases such as the saturated image of standing on point ("Point! de là on partait . . . droit à l'abîme d'art").

Moreover, the theoretical expressions that emphasize ballet's totalizing effects contribute to the making of the first part as a search for a single word which captures the essence of ballet and poetry: "une réciprocité," "le premier sujet," and "une métaphore résumant."

In contrast, the detailed description of both ballet and poetry strengthens the oneness of part 1: "des attitudes de chaque groupe," "total ne figurera autour de l'étoile," "le tour continu," "les lacs de la fée même," "l'in-individuel," and "des paragraphes en prose dialoguée autant que descriptive." The paragraphs ("paragraphes") in the last quote may be viewed as compared to solo dance ("descriptive") and duo dance ("dialoguée") in the part's prevailing assimilation of ballet and poetry.

In addition, ballet as a faithful expression of the human body controlled by a brain is insinuated by the renditions "résumant un des aspects élémentaires de notre forme" and "de raccourcis ou d'élan."

In concentric overlap, the first part's tripod synthesis is fashioned by the initial word "Cornalba," the central one "Point," and the ending one "poème." The Trinitarian words signify the same, as Cornalba is a ballerina on point with poetic aura. The tripartite oneness circularly converges on the personified word "Poésie," which is placed at the beginning of block 2.

## 2.2 The second part

In the second part of the article, Mallarmé presents the motif of the ballet production entitled *Les Deux Pigeons*, i.e., a melodrama of birdlike lovers ("énamourés volatiles"), by a detached single line: "Deux pigeons s'aimaient d'amour tendre."

The sketch of the second part is as follows:

The part's motif: the ballet production *Les Deux Pigeons*

block 1: the mechanism of *Les Deux Pigeons*

block 2: the one-line announcement of the theme of *Les Deux Pigeons*

block 3: *Les Deux Pigeons* on stage

block 4: a tribute to a prima ballerina

The part's summary: A production of ballet, such as *Les Deux Pigeons*, is a demonstration of what ballet is. As a navel of cosmic whole, i.e., a paradise of all spirituality ("le paradis de toute spiritualité"), ballet is what a human being is.

The first block of the second part begins by following the first part's motif of unification, overlapping a particular ballet production *Les Deux Pigeons* and ballet in general. The overlap is appropriate because, according to the author, *Les Deux Pigeons* typifies ballet, which consists of birdlike movements. The simulation of birds in ballet is rendered by the expressions "une transposition de notre caractère, ainsi que de nos façons, au type simple de l'animal" and "La danse est ailes." The typical piece *Les Deux Pigeons* is designated as "la Fable" at the beginning of

the block.

The oneness of ballet is embodied by the first verb "point," the repetition of the first part's summarizing word with an exclamation mark: "Point!"

After the call "Leurre! (Snare!)" in the last sentence of block 1, the stage report starts. The outline of the production *Les Deux Pigeons*, which remains obscure in the abbreviated report in abstraction, may be traced as follows: the first act, an intermission, the second act. The then-contemporary record, *Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique*, which was published in 1886, testifies to the production's structure in two acts (21).

The procession of the ballet *Les Deux Pigeons*, which is suggested by Mallarmé's laconic report, is as follows.

The first act begins with the introduction of enamored couples embodied by ballet dancers, who represent the coupled pigeons in the fable written by La Fontaine. The following deployment of love is qualified as "cet envahissement d'aérienne lasciveté," "cet ingénu prélude," and "un gracieux motif premier."

The end of the first act is, however, contrastively marked by the discouraging flit of the protagonist, rendered as "l'inanité quelconque issue d'un gracieux motif premier" and "la fuite du vagabond."

In the final and second act, which follows an intermission ("le rappel du même site"), the return of the protagonist is celebrated by festive dance, culminated by the happy couple departing for their honeymoon.

At the end of the report, the everydayness of the production is mentioned with the profile of the author/spectator in a seat of the Paris *Opera*. The production as a reflection of life manifests ballet's respect, or "condescendance," toward the audience members.

In the intermission, the author dreams of the appearance of the prima ballerina, Rosita Mauri, who plays the role of the deserted fiancée, for foretelling the denouement of the love story. Her single appearance is simultaneously for the infatuated author/spectator ("quelque histoire d'amour").

The author repeatedly emphasizes by various expressions that ballet represents oneness in an iterated perfection: "le paradis de toute spiritualité," "rien n'a lieu, sauf la perfection des exécutants," "ce sera..," and "Ce sera..." The final commas are synonymous with nothing, or "rien."

The nothingness that the word "rien" signifies is commonness, and not inexistence, since, at the end of the block, the word corresponds to the everyday life of the spectator ("chez l'un de vous" and "[le] contemporain banal"). Simultaneously, the word "rien" suggests an essential role of art as festivity for animation, synonymous with the first part's central word "Point."

In this second part, the duality for unity makes a motif throughout the blocks, entailing personification: a ballet production *Les Deux Pigeons* and ballet in general, the coupled birds, the performance and the spectator/author, and the prima ballerina and the spectator/author.



Though imaginative, the combination of his dream and the actuality of the stage is intricate for his article's reader. The enriched but challenging combination brings a supreme image of *Swan Lake* as a fruit of the directive article.

The second part mainly discusses the ballet *Les Deux Pigeons*, of which the realness contrasts with the first part's ideality, thus being secondary. Connected to reality, involving the spectator's everyday life, the second part is featured by referential weight, i.e., semantic implications.

Conversely, the first part describes a mountainous picture, tracing the tripodic words "Cornalba," "Point," and "poème." The centered word "Point" represents a peak of a mountain, the rising stars, the moon, and the sun, as embodied by the eminent dancers called "étoiles" at the Paris *Opera*, the second and central part's main venu.

### 2.3 The third part

The final part may be outlined as follows:

The motif: the production of ballet as ballet's collaboration  
with the spectator

block 1: ballet's duality in mimic and dance

block 2: ballet's principle as both centripetal and  
centrifugal following the human body

block 3: the production of ballet as the communication between

the dancer and the spectator

The part's summary: Ballet's duality in two components, mimic and dance, is cognate with the contrast between the choreographer and the dancer, that between the dancer and the spectator, and that between the writer and the reader. Ballet, as with poetry, promotes communication. Through the nonverbal performance of ballet, which requires the spectator's interpretation, the ballerina and the spectator become one, simulating a newly married couple ("Ami") with a bouquet of roses ("la Fleur") in the same way of the poet and the reader, who deploys his/her interpretation in the form of euphoric dreams.

The first block of part 3 begins with the comparison between ballet and drama, both as performing art. Subsequently, through the generalization of their difference, the two components of ballet, i.e., dance and mimic, are discussed. The parallel between ballet/drama and dance/mimic follows the previous part's duality for unity, thus making the tripartite article as a continuous and systematic whole.

In the middle of the first block, the ballet named *Viviane* is referred to once more as an example of foregrounding ballet's principle of duality in dance and mimic. The production *Viviane* at the Eden Theater is previously discussed in part 1. The reappearance of the first piece contributes to making the article as a circular unity.

At the end of the first block, the librettist of ballet is

expected to delineate a production that enlivens both dance and mimic as bodily signs, so that their difference ("la disparate") may turn to be an eloquent interaction ("resterait à trouver une communication" and "ne comprend d'éloquence autre").

To put it differently, dance and mimic represent the two attributes of all balletic motions. In Mallarmé's expression, the term "attributes" corresponds to "attitudes" and "modes." They also represent "communication" and "éloquence."

So the purely "mimic" movement constitutes a pantomime in ballet, whereas all balletic movements are mimic as birdlike ones in translation ("La danse est ailes").

In Mallarmé's text, the semantic subdivision of mimic is concretized as the appearance of two words: "mimique" and "mime."

Since a bird is a poet in the homonymic enchainment of "Signe (Sign)"-Cygne (Swan) at the end of the Mallarmé article, it may be stated that dance mimics cerebral activities, or "idée" in Mallarmé's terminology. Then, dance is a substitute for oneself.

The ballerina's subconscious potential of gestural eloquence, which should be discovered by a genius ("génie") to illuminate ordinary creators ("Le librettiste ignore d'ordinaire"), is expressed as a blank of one-line width between the first block and the second one.

The second block's first contrast between passing fancy ("le caprice") and rhythmical emphasis ("l'essor rythmique") corresponds to that between the temporal ("historique") and the spatial ("emblématique") in the preceding first block. Similarly,

the initial expression "A moins du" echoes "Au moins" in the middle of the previous block. The iterative sameness strengthens the unity of the article as a whole.

In the reinforced image of oneness, the theorization of ballet reaches a completion with the author's suggestion that ballet is an expression of a human being in its entirety, i.e., "esprit" or "personne" with potential. The acrobatic performance at the Eden Theater is cited as an example of the brain's synecdoche, though excessive ("extra-charnelles").

The third and final block begins with the echoing of the precedent block that posits ballet as an expression of brain. In the first contrast of the unique and the ordinary, the necessity of the spectator's imaginative interpretation is put on emphasis.

In this completing third block, the imagery of oneness is culminated, entailing the romanticized picture of a symphony ("une fugue") between a spectator and a ballerina, which is deployed in the former's accumulative imaginations.

The first echoing word "imaginatif" is extended by the cognate expression "des mille imaginations" ("a thousand imaginations") in the second-to-last sentence of this final block, thus continuing to enlarge the image of unity.

Synonymous with "dream," imaginations are brain's flowers, which bloom by the viewing of ballet ("un coup d'œil jeté sur un ensemble de chorégraphie"). The relation between the brain and the imagination corresponds to that between the brain and the performance. The imagination combined with performance makes a

cosmic whole. For human beings, reality is simply an imagery formalized by imaginations. As for the performance, it is typified by ballet as a representative of performing arts.<sup>8</sup>

Then, the article is for an ideal development of oneself, whether it be the author, the dancer, the spectator, and the reader. The article posits oneself as a combination of one's own body (i.e., ballet) and one's consciousness as a reflection of reality including oneself (i.e., poetry). The article is basically a collaboration of poetry and ballet.

The conscious recognition of oneself is not simply oneself. Mallarmé's article "Ballets" is a search for the ungraspable oneself to be idealized in the heightened consciousness of oneself. One's desire to grasp oneself is a drive for objectification, that is, creation of art.

The third and final part ends with the expression "(qu')elle est," which homonymously leads to "ailé," signifying "flown." The article's final phrase thus implies that the reader's imagination continues to develop after the reading of the article, as well as the ongoing activities both in ballet and poetry.

The interpretative synthesis to be actualized by the spectator/reader is preempted in the text by the triangular letter "A" for the word "Ami (Friend)," this divided self of the author/spectator.

#### 2.4 A provisional summary:

the article performing from within a book

The article "Ballets" concretizes a quadruplet formation involving the text, the author's intention, the reader's decoding, and his/her speculation. The formation corresponds both to a book shape and a squared stage.

The motivatedness between the text's form and its content may be extended as follows.

In the first part, a word that summarizes ballet, i.e., "Poésie," is sought and indicated, following the oneness of the part itself.

In the second part, the discussed ballet piece is bipartite: it is in two acts and on two birds. Moreover, the quality of the piece is second-rate ("médiocre").

In the third part, the triumviral relation, which is required for re-creating the article, is foregrounded, the tripod of which is represented by the author, the dancer, and the reader. Within the text, the triangular relation is set up by the dancer, the spectator, and the latter's interpretive imagery responsive to the dancer's performance. The spectator's facial and gestural response is a mirror for the dancer to check his/her dance. The respondent interpretation as a liaison is embodied by a rose ("Fleur"), which simulates a well-formed head of a person.

The linkage between the form and the content is also embodied by the triangular accent of the making, the text, and the interpretation, these Trinitarian entities for setting up cultural phenomena, i.e., objectification. At the beginning of the first

part, the ballerina Cornalba foregrounds production, whereas the second part develops La Fontaine's fable. The third and final part is concluded by the reflective word "vision."

The second entity, the text, is concretized as *Les Deux Pigeons*, i.e., a title of three words in Mallarmé's article. The tripartite division of the term "text" implicitly prioritizes both the second entity and Mallarmé's article "Ballets," which adumbrates the writer's pride.

In addition, the first and the third parts emphasize the text's formality by depicting mountainous pictures based on the tripodic words and the capitalized letter "A." Contrastively, the second part foregrounds its semantic weight in realistic references. The sandwiched signified parallels that between the inked letters and the sheets of pages, thereby reinforcing the image of book form. Topologically, the sandwich form represents the concentric two circles with the potential of voluminous expansion.

For the author Mallarmé, the book's ideal form is a sphere, the real shape of the world, or "le monde" in French, since he dreams of the entering of the world into a book. In the author's words, "le monde est fait pour aboutir à un beau livre" (*Œuvres* 2: 702).

All three parts aim at a spherical completion either by the vertex of triangles (that of a mountainous picture in part 1 and that of the letter "A" in part 3) or by earthen conglomeration (the realness discussed in part 2). Furthermore, in the central part 2, the virtual letter "A" in the word "Académie" for officially designating the Paris Opera evokes a rise of the earth to replace

the sunny ball. The superimposition of the globe and the heavenly sphere is a prime vision formed in the reader's mind in Part 2. The round vision is prepared and retained by the imagery of point given by the first part's major word "Point" and the third part's capital "A."

The letter "A" also conceives the image of a white sail, which evokes Mallarmé's favorite yacht on the Seine. The sail represents rising clouds, seeking for a celestial apogee, as with the pages for the poet's avant-gardist text, *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*. In the evocative enchainment, the shape of cubic dice leads to that of the stage and the theater. The rise of a sail also simulates the bouncing of a ball and the jumping of a ballerina in her white tutu.

Synchronically, the final part's key word "Ami" that represents a spectator in a theater reinforces its signifying power in the echoes from the previous part's hidden word "Académie."

In the conclusive image of a ball as all in equality, ideality and reality assimilate themselves to become a perfect artifact, a peak of objectification.

Moreover, the image of a central ball conveyed by two wings is also evoked by the text as a whole because of its second part for a rising earth and the first and final parts for a fairy vision.

The first part's major word "Point" is synonymous with "rien," the second part's apparently minor term. Both "Point" and "rien" represent zero, finality, and a sphere. Mallarmé's article "Ballets" requires the interpreter to read both syntagmatically



and paradigmatically, which renders itself as an epitome of poem in prose.

The article is synthesized by the title word "Ballets," following the concept that poetry is a single word in development.<sup>9</sup> The article's oneness is also imposed by the author/speaker's first person narrative voice. The force of the voice is intensified by the shift for theorization. Take, for example, the superimposition of tentative phrases around the ballerina and the metaphor at the end of block 1. The powerful voice makes the author/narrator a cosmic whole in concurrence with the text's developing imagery of a mirror ball as a consequence of duality for unity.

Moreover, throughout the article entitled "Ballets" with the plural "s," the author tends to theorize the concreteness of ballet such as each piece and each dancer, thus positing the simultaneity of generality and particularity, or abstractness and concreteness.

Mallarmé's article is both a homage to ballet and an attempt to appropriate it for the overall, or four-dimensional completion of his verbal art.

Around the same text entitled "Ballets," the author and the reader dream different dreams. The author searches for a perfection of his poetry aided by ballet, while the reader tries to complete his/her interpretation by an established imagery of ballet, which is epitomized by *Swan Lake*.<sup>10</sup>

While the reader's intended completion by ballet's supplemental image is in essence a replacement, the author's dream of perfected poetry as a cosmic all should depend on the replacement.

Art itself is fictional, represented by the frozen kiss, or "quelque baiser très indifférent en art," in *Les Deux Pigeons*.

From another angle, since Mallarmé's abstract poetry is close to music, the general composition of ballet in performance and music may be viewed as an actualization of the perfection of Mallarmé's poetry in three-dimensional development. The poet's enthusiasm about ballet is thus reasonable.

Mallarmé's cross-cultural article "Ballets" drives a fourfold interaction between poetry/form, ballet/content, the writer, and the reader to make up a virtual book that appropriates all. Moreover, the role of the four interactional entities exchanges each other, so that, for instance, ballet may become verbalized art.

The article "Ballet" is divided into three parts, each of which is separated into smaller blocks. The tripartite division corresponds to that of the text, the author, and the reader, that of present, past, and future, and that of poetry, narrative, and drama, for the text's four-dimensional development. The image of the text's spatial growth increases all the more, overlapping with the image of the dancers' formation on stage that is discussed in the article.

In the collaboration with ballet, the text in multiple division topologically transforms itself in the consecutive imagery of triangle, square, and circle, thus making itself an inclusive world and, eventually, a cosmic totality, which circularly returns to a word, a minimal whole of the text. The iterative return is epitomized by the rolling connection between high and low in a

single sentence, which is crystallized into the dancing toe shoes, in the final part. Ballet's basic entirety, a dancer, is also tripartite with his/her head, trunk, and limbs.

The ultimate expansion of a two-dimensional circle is a spherical form. Mallarmé's intention seems to make his article "Ballets" a voluminous sphere simulating both the globe and the sun: the globe as a final extension of stage, the sun as an ideal source of light for embracing the performance as a whole.

Helped by the signified as a stage performance, ballet, the signifier as the written text entitled "Ballets" becomes a three-dimensional object at first in the reader's imagination, actualizing the dream of the author. Also, the signifier and the signified become identical in the image of a circular sphere, realizing a perfect union without any interruption in communication.

Summarizing the entire text as an inclusive whole, the article's title "Ballets" may be viewed as a replacement of the suggestive author's name "Mallarmé." The two words rhyme, with the four mutual letters, "a," "l," "l," and "e." Then, the crowning title "Ballets" indicates the creative author's pride, while simultaneously enhancing a human being as a respectable cosmos, within which ballerinas deploy their own performances, as with the author/poet.

The word play continues in the second term "Cornalba," which is an anagrammatic evocation of the word "corbeau." "Le Corbeau" is the title of Mallarmé's translation for Edgar Poe's poem "The

Raven." The heroic bird's name reminds the reader of the ballerinas' rhythmical movements such as hopping, jumping, and flying.

The article thus begins with the image of a black bird, a raven ("corbeau" from "Cornalba"), and ends with the image of a white bird, a swan ("cygne" from "un Signe, qu'elle est"). The final words "elle est" homonymously lead to "ailé," meaning "winged." The article is encircled by a vision of paired birds in the color contrast of black and white. For today's reader, the vision is from *Swan Lake*.

In the article, various instances of circulation tend to mobilize the text to be risen. Take, for example, the correspondence between the title and the text, the whole text and each word as a text's seed, and the reader's tentative interpretation from and back to the text.

Basically, the author's paradigmatic manipulation of the text makes the text's spatial development at first in the reader's imagination, thereby actualizing the author's dream of a book as a world. The manipulation comprises the frequent cutting of the syntagm, the predominant abstraction as a displaced word choice, and the interactive distinction of the words as the signifier and the performing art, ballet, as the signified.

## 2.5 An outline of the textual schema

For elucidating Mallarmé's article in abstraction and ellipsis, which tends toward theorization as condensation, it may be useful

to repeat efforts to grasp the text as a synthetic whole, among which the tracing of the text's structural design is applicable for analyzing the text in its entirety.

The basic structure of the article "Ballets" is obvious: a unity in article form consisting of the dual discussion on ballet and poetry. Semantically, the prevailing duality in the framework of an article is for accelerating the assimilation of poetry and ballet.

From another angle, the oneness of the tripartite article, which is summed up by the title "Ballets" in a plural word, necessitates the article's function by which each textual element's uniqueness, i.e., its mutual difference to be ascribed to duality, should be fused in singularity both semantically and formally. The grand design may be viewed as preceding the writing of details.

In other words, the article "Ballets" is an epitome of the Hegelian triangle. Evoking an image of completeness with triple value in truth, beauty, and goodness, the simplest triangle is one of the most persuasive pictographs for explaining objectification as an artistic tendency in human cognition. Mallarmé himself was a supporter of the Hegelian thought.<sup>11</sup>

Synchronically, in Mallarmé's text, multifarious occurrences of duality appear to be accumulated to be coalesced in a saturated explosion in the limited framework of the tripartite article so as to activate the apparently-preordained function for merged duality: the white paper and the black letters, the one-word title

and the below developing text, the cutting word in isolation and the virtual syntagm, the division of the whole text into parts, and the detailed semantic two-ness to be ascribed to the combination of poetry and ballet.

In the article's overlapped circulations, the bemused reader cannot make certain whether the text's function for fusing duality is preset by the article or added by the accumulated instances of duality in the article. From another angle, the article in a spherical image makes both the views possible. The spherical form represents all in equal. Moreover, the article "Ballets" gives the reader an image of total equality from the beginning, though it may be subconscious, since the article begins with the title that includes the word "ball."

Supported by the leading image of all in equality, the article's central combination of ballet and poetry becomes all the more acceptable. Furthermore, the success of the combination embodies a completion of a poem in prose, that is, Mallarmé's article entitled "Ballets."

The article "Ballets" is then coordinated to make the reader regard it as a successful poem in prose, provided with spherical circulations. It should be noted that the author's poems in prose as a whole are collected in his volume *Divagations*, in which his article "Ballets" is also placed.

In Mallarmé's article "Ballets," the unification of duality is conducted in an all-embracing way involving both space and time, i.e., vertically and horizontally within the author's resonant

narration.

Fundamentally, the written text is for communication for semantic/physical growth. The textual development is embodied by a vision, i.e., the text's total meaning.

The text's basic positivity is reinforced by the author Mallarmé, who ends his article with a vision reflected by a ballerina. The vision is subsequently concretized as *Swan Lake* by today's reader.

Then, the final image of the article "Ballets" is that of a sphere as an increased accumulation of omnipresent circles. Basically, a sphere represents a form envisioned and sought for by the observer, embodying a peak of perfection as circles in assemblage. The prototypical sphere is one's own brain, which becomes the most cherished object for anyone in search of anything.

The reader's interpretation of the article "Ballets" reaches an intermission, by finding the final sentence's word "vision" as a semantic core of the article that s/he is reading. The word "vision" designates his/her brain and thus him/herself.

Mallarmé's article represents a committed mirror that reflects the reader and his/her life to be transformed, if only as a mirror image, into an embellished production simulating the discussed ballet performances. Fundamentally, as fake, art only makes the viewer dream, though the dreamed vision can be cathartic and forceful.

Concurrently, as the article is on ballet, its textual continuity is to be summed up by the single word "Ballets," which

also functions as the article's general title. From another angle, the article entitled "Ballets" embodies the accumulative repetitions of the word "ballet" in the singular because, as a sign for replacement, a word may be viewed as a substitute of another word.

Furthermore, ballet itself is characterized by duality, which is dissolved in its forced stylization. First, as is indicated by Mallarmé, the opposition of dance and mimic exists. In dance, the conflict between stretch and contraction is turned to a connector between the two movements under ballet's unifying stylization. In the image of a closely-knitted veil or a finishing powder, the stylization may be summed up as the "symmetry and synthesis in classical ballet," quoting the words of Deirdre Reynolds (38). Grange Woolley's summary is: "strict formalism" (102).

The stylization is in turn a mold for geometric precision, serving as a binder for fusing movements, which would theoretically become a condensed point as an embodiment of maximum. From another angle, the stylization brings continuation and expansion to ballet's condensed core, thereby providing ballet with both paradigmatic and syntagmatic development.

The stylization first serves as an external catapult for ballet's intrinsic movements supposed to be concentrated into a point for maximal expansion. The triggered expansion by the catapult is subsequently streamed by the stylization as also a mold. The movement in stream nonetheless still retains the potential for utmost expansion.



The stylization is concretized by each choreographer. Choreography may be defined as an instance of stylization, which allows the choreographer's originality within the framework of the balletic movement's circularity. In the third part of Mallarmé's article, the covering stylization corresponds to "un coup d'œil jeté sur un ensemble de chorégraphie."

Ballet's stylization is a variation of its core movement in circulation, which is developed as what it is by the variation. The basic design of the stylization is thus a circle depicted by an all-around and simultaneous stretch. Then, the balletic movement in variation is supposed to always evoke a circle as a tentative completion, which incessantly revives space.

Furthermore, ballet's stylization is for unifying each instance of staged ballet in the temporal flow, following the circulation as ballet's core movement.

To animate space is a first step to set up ballet, this performing art for an ideal development of human body. The animation can be actualized in multi-directional ways including the speedy shifts of movement or of attention.

Thanks to the overall binder as stylization, various instances of balanced two-ness are guaranteed in ballet: solo and corps de ballet, pas de deux, plier and sauter, and dance and mimic. In short, ballet represents distinctive interaction.

The variation of the basic forms that originates from "plier" and "tendre" is for indicating the completeness of both the basic forms and the variation itself.<sup>12</sup> The key posture that links basic

forms to variations is arabesque. The variation includes mimic, the counterpart of dance, according to Mallarmé.

Then, ballet simultaneously negates continuation and distinction in order to be an absolute point, i.e., "emblème" in Mallarmé's terminology. The emblematic point originates from the oneness of the human body.

Also by the poet himself, ballet's above simultaneous negation is rendered as follows: "La Danse figure le caprice à l'essor rythmique." ("Ballet represents a passing fancy in rhythmical emphasis.") Mallarmé's metaphoric rendition indicates the rapid and contrastive exchange of movements in ballet such as that from "plier (squat)" to "sauter (jump)," which condenses the performance as a whole into an overlapping oneness in the image of concentric cosmos. In Mallarmé's expression, "raccourcis ou d'élans" corresponds to the connection of "plier" and "sauter." Metaphorically, ballet is a continuation of each isolated word in self-sufficiency, simulating poetry.

Ballet's above self-negative, or rather overprotective, unification comes from its basics as a series of movements from the solar plexus, which may be traced back to the symmetry, i.e., two-ness of the human body. According to Suzanne de Soye (44),

La danse académique étant excentrique, l'impulsion de tous les mouvements vient du plexus solaire, il n'y a pratiquement pas de mouvements *conduits*, à part quelques mouvements de bras.

Then, the art of ballet consists of sublimating the absoluteness of the framework of the human body, depending on the solar plexus for dispatching all-around movements. The dispatch is embodied by ballet's basic forms and their variation. Take, for example, a pair of continuous movements in opposite directions such as "plier (squat)" and "relever (rise)," which serve as catapults in exchange for each other.

In the same vein, Jacqui Greene Haas stated that "Since the abdominals are located in your center, let all of your movement radiate from this point" (25).

The dancer's bodily framework is a source of ballet's stylized rigidity to overcome. In a sense, ballet's stylization, i.e., unifying enclosure, embodies the limitation of a human body. Ballet thus exists for a completion of the human body.

From another angle, a human being represents a brain around which corporality operates. The centrality of the brain, which is fixed to the human being, is beautified by the performing art, ballet, which centers on the solar plexus, the abdominal brain, in mimic.<sup>13</sup> Theoretically, the limit of the streamline in ballet's stylization depends on the average distance between each dancer's brain and his/her solar plexus, which tend to overlap each other.

Ballet's searched sublimation represents an idealization of humanness, thus evoking an image of extreme beauty. Ballet is an apparatus for making a euphoric cosmos, as well as Mallarmé's article "Ballets."

Following the rules of the human body, the art of ballet is

natural, without any superstitious bias. Subtly avoiding acrobatics, ballet embodies the basics of Western dance. Ballet may be qualified as one of both the least and the most ambitious artifacts, as with Mallarmé's poetry.

As an organic globe, the human body represents an overarching third-ness that integrates its own subdivisions in duality. The two-ness of the body is part of the dual system of a human being involving the combination of the head and the body and that of mentality and physicality.

Then, ballet's movement may be summed up as an overlapped maximal point with potential for multidirectional shift; paradoxically, the center of movement represents a cease. Just like syllabic languages such as French and Japanese, the balletic movement accepts regular halt, for which its basic lessons use bars and the sound of acoustic piano.

As the pivot of Western dance, ballet has manifested its potential to be branched in various forms of dance such as modern, jazz, and contemporary. In parallel, poetry represents the basis of literature.

Mallarmé's article "Ballets" reveals the principle of dance and physics. Also, the revelation given to today's reader by the 19th century poet confirms the fact that the form of ballet as what is seen nowadays was established at the beginning of the 19th century in France.<sup>14</sup>

In the article "Ballets," duality is coalesced and grown to be a sphere by the poet's voice, i.e., the text's multidirectional

continuity, as well as by the reader's imaginative interpretation. The triangle merger is accelerated by the tripartite text, which is, on one hand, divided into three parts and, on the other, into words, phrases, and sentences. Just like ballet's stylization as a connector, the unfixed frame of phrases, i.e., the connectivity inherent in each single word, paradoxically foregrounds the text's duality in between the words and the sentences, while simultaneously reinforcing the trilogy by self-assertion.

As with ballet, language as basis of poetry is in forced stylization, in that language is in a system bound by rules. Codified both formally and semantically, language's stylization is more forced than that of ballet. This is because language represents a symptomatic icon of the human brain, the director of every bodily movement, whereas ballet is a symbolic derivative of the solar plexus, a branch of the brain.

The completeness of the representative ballet *Swan Lake* may be ascribed to its contrastive, i.e., black-and-white exposition of ballet's fundamental duality as a sign of the solar plexus that is itself a sign of the brain.

In parallel, the symbol of language is a word, which represents a primal icon of the brain. A word is also a self-contained and minimal node that constitutes syntagmatic continuation.

In ballet, the spectator's interpretation is principally freed because each movement of ballet is without conventionally-fixed meaning. According to Mary Lewis Shaw (55), dance, or ballet, is not "arbitrarily prescribed by convention," nor "codified," but

"inherently open-ended." Mallarmé's question on the balletic movements, "Que peut signifier ceci," comes from the movements' nonconventional meanings. The question is seen in the last block of his article "Ballets."

Unlike the linguistic sign, there is no dictionary for explaining ballet's movement, which is gestural and polysemic. The diverse glossaries of the balletic terminology in French are mainly for labeling each movement and pose, which is stylized but without predetermined meaning. The range of the ballet viewer's subjective interpretation is thus expanded, excluding the choreographer's private intention and the iconic and indexical designations of the movement involving both dance and mimic.<sup>15</sup>

According to C. S. Peirce, signs are classified into the icon, the index, and the symbol (Savan 33). Unlike the symbol with the conventionally-fixed meaning, the icon and the index signify in an unstable way, depending on the decoder. The icon indicates the object that resembles itself, whereas the index designates the object at which it points. The signification of the icon and the index thus varies by the decoder's way of viewing.

Each of the balletic movements is either an icon or an index. The meaning of the signal movements is, however, shared among the connoisseurs, thus more or less traditionally-determined. The conventionality is suggested by the explication of gestures in the journal indicated in note 15 in this study.

The relative freedom of decoding inherent in ballet is summed up by the personified word "Fleur" in the third part of Mallarmé's

article. Synonymous with "vision," "rêverie (dream)," and "poetry," the enlarged word "Fleur" designates the spectator's interpretation developed by his/her viewing of the dancer's performance. The word "Fleur" is an apposition of "ton poétique instinct," i.e., the spectator/reader's response. Mallarmé's extended renditions for the summarizing word "Fleur" are: "d'inspiration, le lire" and "A coup sûr on opérera en pleine rêverie, mais adéquate."

In Mallarmé's article, ballet as a whole makes up a circular perfection, along with each movement and each step both in self-containment. Simultaneously, a core image of ballet originated in the solar plexus embodies an overlapped oneness.

Then, an action of the kernel plexus corresponds to a compression of a word as a symbol of language. A word may be extensively taken as poetry itself, epitomized by Mallarmé's poem in self-assertive words. The plexus is also continuous with an entire body and, subsequently, ballet as a whole.

Thus, each self-contained element in ballet, whether it be a dancing body or a suite of steps, represents a word, in the same way as ballet in its entirety.

The word "plexus" is synonymous with "Point" and "rien," both as the Mallarmé article's pivotal terms that delineate the potential of action. The word "Point" signifies "on the point of moving" as a conjugation of the verb "poindre" that means "appear." As for "rien," it is used as a synonym of "Point" in the Mallarmé article, since two periods follow the word "rien" in its second

part.

Moreover, the color white in a virtual image of blackness embraces ballet, a word, poetry, language, the article itself, the globe, and the sun as the umbilicus of the cosmic sphere. Blackness represents enforced redness, assimilating itself with a color of invisible light, i.e., white. In a narrow sense within ballet, the color white represents stylization.

In the article "Ballets," the third and final part is divided into three blocks, which renders the number three as definitive. The blocks' numbers of the three parts, i.e., four, four, and three, reinforce the finality of the number three because, in both the first and second parts, one block consists of a single sentence, which may be instantly merged into either the above or the below longer block.

For the reader, the three-dimensional development of the textual triangle is triggered by the text's overlapping phrases with semantic increase.

The growing text's movement becomes more intricate by the topological exchange between triangle (the text's vehicle and tenor), square (the page and the stage), and circle (the text's tenor).

### 3. A conclusion:

The article "Ballets" in search for an inclusive whole

In the third part of the article, the poet indicates the



codification of dance, by which the ballerina casts herself for establishing a choreographed artifact, i.e., "incorporation visuelle de l'idée," using the expression "personne à qui ce moyen s'impose d'établir un ballet."

His article on ballet converges on the word "Point" with the capitalized initial letter "P" and the adjoined exclamation mark. In the final part, the word "Point" transforms itself into the capitalized "A" in the word "Ami" that embodies the spectator's fruitful interpretation of the ballet production. Qualified as "A," the word "Point" is, in fact, a first-rate word.

"Point" is a conjugated form of the verb "poindre," meaning "appear." In ballet, the word indicates the form of a ballerina vertically standing in toe shoes. In the first Russian performance of *Swan Lake*, for example, the dance on point by the prima Karpakova was appreciated as rhythmically light (Wiley 50).

Used also for negation, the word "Point" evokes the author's focal poem entitled "Salut," which begins with the word "Rien." The poem's succeeding expression "cette écume" (this bubble) and the inverted sirens that appear at the poem's end simulate ballerinas. Then, both poetry and ballet represent salvation, i.e., "salut." Simultaneously, the negative meaning of "point" and "salut" implies that the two artifacts embody sublimation in self-effacement and transparency.

From the poet's abstract article, which is a voluminous challenge for the reader, the inexhaustible imagery springs up with the fullest semantic potential, pointed toward the upper sky,

according to "the celestial operation" ("machinerie d'empyrée") in Mallarmé's expression. The word "machinerie" is connected to the verb "point" in his article.

Looking up, the reader has the same feeling as the ballerina on point. Vis-à-vis Mallarmé's article, the reader's basic experience is difficult reading, and not directly the action presented by ballet.

The article is characterized by the contrast of the unifying title "Ballets" and the below involuted expressions. Two pictures are thus seen: one of the condensed title dissolving into the below prose and another of the phrases squeezed into the upper title in a word.

From another angle, the performative prose is risen to grasp the upper title, "Ballets," the plurality of which designates the overlapping of ballet and poetry as an idealized fusion of art forms.

The title as a word "Ballets" represents poetry as a word. The dancing prose below the title "Ballets" is intended to acquire the upper status as poetry, which is concretized as the title word "Ballets." Along with the unified form, the word "Ballets" is semantically poetized, meaning the idealized poetry in personification.

The sequence of the article embodies an irregularity of word order, i.e., the inversion of words, the main effect of which resides in the replaced verbs such as the headed "Point." The unexpected appearance of verbs upsets the syntagmatic flow to be

squeezed into an image of being spatially expanded. Mallarmé's late prose is performative, overlapping the replaced verbs' extra movement and the poet's continuous voice.

The syntactical irregularity accelerates the isolation of each word, which promotes the reader's original interpretation, so that each word becomes more meaningful.

As an idiolect, the unconventional sentences surface the author's personal voice in the first-person narrative. Mallarmé's prose is a combination of subjectivity and objectivity, i.e., the poet's auditory presence as his voice and the system of language in private manipulation.

The reader is at a theater which presents Mallarmé's active writing. The summarizing expression "(une) incorporation visuelle de l'idée" is for his poetry, and not primarily for ballet. In the first part of his article, the poet asserts by the italicized rendition that the ballerina does not simply dance: "*la danseuse n'est pas une femme qui danse.*" In the second part, he ascribes ballet to an aide for sense-making, if skillful: "*le Ballet, adjuvant et le paradis de toute spiritualité.*"

Nonetheless, ballet composes itself as a part of his poetry. For both the author and the reader, ballet represents the semantic content to be interpreted and experienced.

Both poetry and ballet represent a core of Western culture, i.e., the idealization of being human. Furthermore, the core is vivified by Mallarmé's late sophisticated language for uplifting ballet, which was established as seen today in 19<sup>th</sup>-century France.

Mallarmé's article directs the reader to see what experience is within the framework of language. Experience means creation and re-creation. Concurrently, the article is developed in four dimensions through the reader placed outside the text, involving the actuality of performing arts with traditions and conventions. The article advances the reader's analysis of the text, which is two-dimensional within language.

Concerning the author/poet, his own experience in the article "Ballets" is concretized as prose poetry, i.e., a kind of ballet in language. In the article's terminology, the "historic" and the "emblematic" make up prose poetry. The poet actually wrote a series of prose poems collected in his *Divagations*, in which his reportage "Ballets" is also included. Different from his readable early prose poems, Mallarmé's late ones are sinuous just as his critical account "Ballets," which may be taken as an example of prose poetry.

The article "Ballets" as a poem in prose presumably exists within the intention of the author himself. According to him, "le suggérer, voilà le rêve" (*Œuvres 2*: 700). The suggestive prose thus represents a dream ("rêve"), which is poetry as a final product for the poet. In his article, a dreamful picture is also depicted by ballet as a shadow of poetry, or its semantic replacement.

Mallarmé's article represents a circular oneness with the first part and the final part that claim the same: ballet as a moving synthesis ("une synthèse mobile"), which is ascribed to the solar plexus. The suggestive synthesis is full of imagery, simulating poetry.

In the circulation, the article dissimulates which is more predominant, ballet or poetry. From another angle, the article, which is Mallarmé's own language, simultaneously extols both, while making itself as the overpowering controller. The article's victor is the author/maker's verbal art, i.e., the synthetic poem in prose in Mallarmé's fashion, which is the fusion of individual, i.e., Mallarmé's originality, and collective, i.e., the linguistic and poetic conventions.

The duality of individual and collective, or private and public, constructs language in "parole" and "langue" in the Saussurean terminology. Mallarmé's article is persuasive because it ends in revealing the basics of language, the constituent of the article itself.

Within the framework of language, the Mallarmé article "Ballets" produces a cosmic sphere as a reader's mental imagery, which is a dream, i.e., "rêverie," "Fleur," and "Poésie," in the article's terminology.

Though enclosed in his/her brain, the reader's mental imagery is capable of external communication and objectification, actualizing, for instance, stage productions. Mallarmé's article is positive and advancing.

Between the two summarizing parts, the central four blocks discuss the realist ballet piece *Les Deux Pigeons* in a theorizing abstraction. According to the poet, in ballet as a book, all is melted in an illuminating harmony: a group of virtuosos ("astres" as pages) and the ranked dancers in total ("jamais qu'emblème point

quelqu'un").

By writing the article, which foregrounds ballet as an ideal embodiment of poetry, the author has actively connected poetry and ballet, both as performance just like writing itself. The action of writing as an objectification is emphasized by his scrambled prose as a process for making sense. The action is succeeded by the reader engaged in the interpretation of the challenging prose. The prose is reproducing itself both formally and semantically for the contrastive vision of *Swan Lake* to be conclusively shaped in the reader's interpretation.

The three indicators for interaction, i.e., Mallarmé's article, the discussed ballet pieces, and the decoding of the article, complement each other. The article provides language to the speechless performance, ballet, in explaining the implications of the performance that provides, in exchange, an image of three-dimensional growth to the article's meaning. Both the text's elucidation and ballet's spatialization are embodied by the reader's cognition that develops both temporally and spatially, involving a prospective completion of ballet actualized by *Swan Lake*.

In the process of the reader's cognitive development triggered by the author, the article "Ballets" becomes a big ball in saturated circles simulating the planet Earth, i.e., the world. This realizes the author's dream that a book should be a world.

The positivity is within the text's intentionality because of the text's basic structure as the superimposition of each

phrasal group, i.e., the connectivity inherent in each single word. Since each group is modifiable, depending on how to recognize a phrase, the groups tend to overlap, which drives the spatial growth of the text.

The article "Ballets," of which the title is not specified by any definite article, represents a vision of the performing art, ballet, entailing the future image of *Swan Lake*. The vision is also implied by the text as an illustration of the semantic potential of the upper title, which is concretized by the reader.

Ballet's rooted past is denoted by Mallarmé's resonant French words, as ballet was developed with the royal initiation in 17<sup>th</sup>-century France. Begun in Italy, ballet was established in Russia via France. With such expansive tenor and expressive vehicle, Mallarmé's article embodies an instance of totality in art, directing the reader to today's dance scene. The article's totality comprises both actuality and potentiality.

The article's title "Ballets" implies that, for the author Mallarmé, ballet is a spherical mirror that gives a reflection of poetry, which is ideally contorted by ballet, a kind of poetry. While viewing ballet, the author/poet/spectator sees an idealized imagery of himself as poetry and ballet.

Furthermore, the spherical mirror represents a metaphor of each word in self-sufficiency which corresponds to both a constituent of poetry and poetry itself. The word as a mirror ball produces the image of being semantically swollen, evoking the collectively-pronounced English words in suite with only one tonic

accent.

In addition, the image of a mirror ball represents a completion of a diamond, Mallarmé's favorite jewel.<sup>16</sup>

The ideal diamond for human beings is the crystalline lens. At the forefront of theater viewing, the lens is an icon of the human brain, involved in the image of a mirror ball formed by Mallarmé's article "Ballets."

Ballet is an objectification of poetry that indicates what poetry is. The overall form as a sphere also suggests that ballet is an artifact in which the subject/dancer and the object/dance are one and the same,<sup>17</sup> different from the written or printed form of poetry that the writer can retrospectively observe and revise. What poetry lacks but ballet has is a union of subject and object in three-dimensional expansion.

Nevertheless, both ballet and poetry are signs with meanings. Sharing the commonality as signs, ballet can be translated and eternalized by poetry in print. Mallarmé's article "Ballets" in the image of a big ball is a result of collaboration of ballet and poetry: ballet as live performance and poetry as reproducible art.

From another angle, Mallarmé's article "Ballets" becomes, or, is perceived by the reader, a spherical mirror, in presenting ballet as a mirror reflection of poetry, besides the world that surrounds ballet and poetry, both as professional commerce.

Fundamentally, diversity and inexhaustibility, which characterize Mallarmé's writing, represent a spherical form's indicators, epitomized by the Big Bang and its aftermath. This is



because a sphere embodies countless accumulations of circulations. Concomitantly, a sphere entails the image of acme.

From the reader's angle, Mallarmé's article "Ballets" is a simultaneous exchange of diversity, inexhaustibility, thoroughness, ideality, and the image of spherical mirror, which leads him/her to appreciate the author's ingenious skill.

In the article, a unified image threads ballet, poetry, each single word, a mirror ball, and the human brain.

The author's motivation of writing about ballet presumably comes from ballet's similarity to poetry, which may render his verbal art more productive.

Ballet is a sign and a metaphor, as is defined by the author at the end of the article's first part. A metaphor is a doubled sign with weight, since, being a substitution, it brings forth another sign, or "something else" in *ODE's* rendition (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd ed.).

In a metaphor, another is conceived. A metaphor thus unites a subject and an object, thereby making a perfect, or circular and self-sufficient signification.

In sum, a metaphor is expressive. A metaphor's density of expression dissimulates what the expression means.

In ballet as a metaphor, the form is more assertive than the content. Furthermore, with covering stylization and frustrating speechlessness, ballet's vehicle imposes itself more than any other performing art. The formal precedence also characterizes poetry as a self-assertive sign with the opacity of meanings. The

self-assertion is the sign's designation of itself. Following Roman Jakobson's classification ("Linguistics" 25), both ballet and poetry may be taken as a "poetic" message. "Poetic" means artful.

In addition, the artfulness is paradoxically, or most artfully, realized by the self-effacing expressivity of ballet as whiteness and poetry as condensation.<sup>18</sup>

In ballet, the subject as a dancer and the object as a dance are one and the same, which renders ballet all the more expressive, while simultaneously intensifying the self-signification that characterizes poetry and artifact in general.

Ballet's heightened expressivity in circular signification is paradoxically reinforced by speechlessness. The cultivated power, which is supposedly the most appealing to the poet Mallarmé, leads to poetry's formal density. He qualifies ballet as emblematic; it means that ballet embodies a visible essence of poetry. Reflectively, poetry is a printed ballet.

#### Notes

1 See Chase 24, Pearson 58-59, and Shaw 53. According to Roger Pearson, "in 'Ballets' . . . the ballerina's dance is famously described as a 'poème dégagé de tout appareil du scribe'" (58).

2 Ivor Guest describes the then-current Italian success at the central theater, *Paris Opera*, by the following expression: "While

it was found necessary to have an Italian prima ballerina at the head of the Opéra ballet" (63).

3 Guest suggests that, though premiered in 1877 in Moscow, *Swan Lake* was "still unknown" in 1887 outside Russia. See Guest 66.

4 According to the 2015 autumn issue of the *Festival Hall News*, *Swan Lake* is "a byword for classical ballet" (2).

5 The official name of the Paris *Opera* is indicated as "l'Académie nationale de musique et de danse" in *Les Annales du théâtre et de la musique* in which the premiere of the ballet *Les Deux Pigeons* is reported (23). According to François Brunet (124), the Paris *Opera* is "le lieu où tout devrait être parfait."

6 Martin Wright states that "*Les Deux Pigeons* never had the international success of *Coppélia* or *Sylvia*" (372). A new version of *Les Deux Pigeons* was created by the English choreographer Frederick Ashton in 1961 ("Ashton, Sir Frederick").

7 For the location of the two theaters, see Guest 63.

8 According to Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron (135), "The best known form of aesthetic dancing is *ballet*."

9 For the concept of poetry as a word, see Takeda 11-17.

10 Robert Giroux indicates that, according to Mallarmé, ballet has the potential to be a plastic embodiment of poetry, explicating the poet's words in his untitled essay on dance in *Divagations*: "le rendu plastique, sur la scène, de la poésie" (231).

11 Giroux indicates the Hegelian thought that backs up Mallarmé's discussion on dance (231). Jean-Pierre Richard posits Mallarmé's discover of the Hegelian thought in 1866 (185).

12 Suzanne de Soye states that "plier" and "tendre" are ballet's fundamental movements on which the good execution of each step depends, as well as the quality of an entire production (191). On the same page, she defines "tendre" as returning to a normal position after "plier." Technically, "plier" means "bend legs sideways."

13 For the solar plexus as the abdominal brain, see Dumont 3-4.

14 For the establishment of the balletic form in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in France, refer to Suzuki on page 026.

15 In a recent booklet for popularizing ballet, the meanings of mimic gestures, such as "I am sad," "Die," and "Shall we dance," are explained with cartoons (Pia 40).

16 According to Richard (189), Mallarmé regards a diamond as a pure force for reiteration ("le pur pouvoir de recommencement").

17 Shaw resumes the indivisibility of subject and object in dance as "the capacity of dance *to be precisely what it signifies*" (62). The critic's resume is her interpretation of Mallarmé's remarks on dance, "énoncer signifie produire" (*Œuvres* 2: 162).

18 The term "ballet blanc," which notifies the whiteness inherent in ballet, was coined after the popularization of the piece *La Sylphide*. See Binney 23, for the coinage of the term and the initiating ballet characterized by the long romantic tutus in white.

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