

## Fragment as Completion:

*Igitur* in a Plot for the Sublime

by

Noriko Takeda

## The author's note:

Just recently finalized as of 28 January 2019, 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) The respect by the readers

Though fragmented and apparently unaccomplished, Stéphane Mallarmé's poetic work *Igitur* has retained many readers' attention as an informative artifact.

A. R. Chisholm qualifies *Igitur* as a "prose-poem" for "a negative absolute" (79). Guy Delfel takes the work as a "conte métaphysique" (80). Wallace Fowlie regards it as containing "the poet's most profound metaphysical statement," referring to the admiring reception inaugurated by its posthumous publication in 1925 (105).

The work *Igitur* is, in fact, marked by its capturing metaphors such as "[l'ombre] laissée à elle-même" ("[the

darkness] left to itself") and "la pure lumière" ("the pure light"), which is compared to "un velours véritable" ("a true velour"). The former phrase expands a fear of darkness into a philosophical generality, and the latter heightens the power of light by the overlapping cognateness in velour. The altered actuality is swept by the expression "parmi l'indicible multiplicité des mondes" ("among the indescribable multiplicity of the worlds").

Furthermore, the climactic scene of the hero in his mirrored purification evokes Jacques Lacan's first stage of self-cognition, along with the author Mallarmé's fatal artist Hérodiade, as is indicated by Delfel (80). The work *Igitur* embodies a conceptual craft.

According to Bertrand Marchal ("Note" 1351), the work was probably written in 1869-1870. Verging on the age of thirty, the poet was at the threshold of his late stage of creation represented by a series of abstract sonnets in polyvalence.

The fragmentedness of the work *Igitur* comes from the separateness of its original form as a handwritten and unbound manuscript. The end point of sheets occasionally omits words and periods. Also, each fragmental passage postpones a dramatic closure for dissipating human conflict, just circumscribing a context for the closure.

Representing a posthumous editor, Marchal states that "Le classement des feuillets fait également difficulté. Il est malaisé, en effet, de se faire une idée précise de l'ordre

originel, le manuscrit ayant été tardivement relié d'après l'ordre recomposé par le Dr Bonniot" ("Note" 1351-52). Bonniot is the poet's son-in-law. Serge Meitinger also refers to the varied possibility of arranging the originally fragmental sheets for the work *Igitur*, by saying that "Mallarmé n'achèvera pas *Igitur*, pas plus qu'il n'achèvera *Hérodiade*, et les divers extraits qui nous restent, parfois très indépendants les uns des autres, ne s'ordonnent pas d'une façon évidente et incontestable" (47).

The readers' positive responses have presumably risen from the apparently incomplete work's virtual energy for semantic synthesis in diverse directions: the basic iteration of fragments, the layered images of oneness within the text itself, the implied author's depth of life to be assimilated with that of the readers, and the infiltration of the world into the fragmented text through its gaps.

Theoretically and practically, the concentric superimposition of oneness concentrates the reader's attention on a fixed point at which any movement of the conscious mentality halts after a circular deadlock. Moreover, concentricity is topologically equal to the horizontal alignment of fragments such as the text *Igitur*.

In short, the text superimposes circular pictures, in the concentric center of which the hero *Igitur* is placed.

The overlapped circles around a fixed self are meaningful, designating the existential turbulence that

connects an individual with his/her biological legacy, or "sa race" in the text *Igitur*'s own expression. In addition, the text states that "les choses ambiantes lui semblent provenir de lui-même, ses facultés, etc."

The turbulence is ungraspable for the individual, similar to the labyrinthine text *Igitur* itself in animation and personification.

In other words, the author/hero designated as "je" and "Igitur" is linked to his surrounding world in personification, which is expanded from his salon to the night as a motherly cradle, "la Nuit," through his house and his garden including tombs.

The text as a whole is, in fact, subsumed by the voice and the body of a human character named *Igitur*, as the text is entitled *Igitur*.

As a suite of prose in continuous truncation, the work *Igitur* represents an example of prose poetry, as is indicated by Chisholm. The fragmented piece was supposedly created to consolidate the newly established literary genre by Baudelaire with his collection of poems in prose entitled *Le Spleen de Paris*. The publication of his first poems in prose dates back to the 1850s.

Supposedly by the author's intention, the text *Igitur*'s signifying force bursts from its structure in fragmentation. The recurrent gaps between the passages renew and exhaust the readers' expectations, so that they may take each fragment as

undifferentiated, or identical.

Simultaneously, the apparently incomplete text faces the danger of deletion by either the author or the reader, which challenges the latter's attention all the more, making the text an observable body. The work awaits its own objectification.

Then, the reading of the work *Igitur* is to be focused on the meaning of its incompleteness. In other words, the text of *Igitur* is its apparently unaccomplished physicality in potential, involving inked letters, white sheets of paper, and fragmentation.

The author Mallarmé's original manuscript, which has been kept by the Parisian library, Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, since 1974 (Delègue 117), may be classified as a subtext, especially because the author did not publish it during his lifetime. Furthermore, he expressed his intention of destroying it in his testament written to his wife and his daughter just before his death on 8 Sep. 1898 (*Œuvres* 1: 821). In a photographic form, however, the manuscript is currently accessible on the Internet, offered by the Library Doucet.

The 1998 Pléiade version laboriously transcribed by Bertrand Marchal, on which this article's interpretation of the work *Igitur* is substantially based, may also be viewed as a subtext.

An instance of comparing the Mallarmé manuscript with the Marchal transcription, which the interpreter of this article

enacted mainly from 3 to 6 April 2018 at the Library Doucet,<sup>1</sup> would reveal the correctness of the transcription, along with the difference of the order of the manuscript's fragments in the two subtexts, i.e., the Mallarmé original posthumously bound in leather and the 1998 Pléiade/Marchal version.

The pair of the closest subtexts embody a direct subdivision of the potential work *Igitur*, thus offering a key to the meaning of *Igitur*'s apparent incompleteness.

For the clarification of *Igitur* as a whole, the subtexts are inevitable, as well as the readers' re-creative imagination. The fate of the unpublished work is a dialogic dissemination, i.e., another form of publication.

Challenged by the systematic evocation of *Igitur* in a suggestion by Marchal's edition, an essay of unrolling the text's methodological synthesis based on the fragmental revival follows for the next discussion of this article.

The overlapped textual loops may be viewed as a drive for the readers' inexhaustible supply of his/her responsive interpretations, of which this article's attempt is an instance. Marchal ascribes the interminability of interpretation to the unfathomable obscurity of the unaccomplished work *Igitur* ("Lecture" 261). The obscurity is qualified as "redoutable" by Yves Delègue (55).

The elucidation of the work's attempted unification for its overall structure also sheds light on the difference between completion and incompleteness, or actuality and

virtuality, since unification is an instance of completion.

From another angle, the *Igitur* text circulates around the question why the redundancy of unification stays in incompleteness. Conventionally, what lacks in the text is a drama among humans such as argument, fight, and marriage. The hero in the center is without any human counterpart to recognize his own identity from within the conflict with the counterpart. Since one's own identity is an object of the awareness of one's own, the recognition of the identity requires otherness.

A tentative answer is that the poet Mallarmé intended to attain the maximum of the signifying force of language within human cognition, rather than the man power itself, by exploiting the newly established genre of prose poetry as an icon of individuality.

What is obvious is that the *Igitur* text's stratified unity makes the word "spirale" as its convergence, as the word designates the gathered circles. The keyword designates the shape of the hero/speaker's developing personality: "le bruit du progrès de mon personnage qui maintenant le continue dans la spirale." Furthermore, the shape is assumed by the covering night in personification: "Me voici arrivée après la longue spirale."

The elucidation of the circular redundancy also directs the reader to reconsider the avant-gardist attempt at individualizing conventional poetry, which resulted in the

creation of a modernist genre of prose poetry.

According to the initiator Baudelaire, the new form of poetry is to express personal feelings and thoughts: "une prose poétique, musicale sans rythme et sans rime, assez souple et assez heurtée pour s'adapter aux mouvements lyriques de l'âme, aux ondulations de la rêverie, aux soubresauts de la conscience" (275-76).

The aspiration for synthesis means the solidification of individuality and the eternization of oneself.

(2) The text's multifarious imagery for unity

1. A triadic synthesis in conflict: the paint by red, black, and white

In *Igitur*, the work's main theme, the conflict of life and death, is represented by the text's surface structure as an apparent incompleteness in fragmentation. Subsequently, the color contrast of red and black engages the reader with its nostalgic appeal, giving the text an image of prototypical achievement. The color red represents fire, whereas black stands for earth.

The archetypal color contrast is provided by the snuffing of a candle by the ancestral ghosts that appear at the beginning of the notes placed first in both the 1998 Pléiade version and the Mallarmé manuscript: "Quand les souffles de



ses ancêtres veulent souffler la bougie." The inaugural phrase is imposing with its repeated morpheme "souffle."

The contrast of life and death is theatrically reinforced by the candle's flame and the surrounding darkness. As the phrase "son souffle qui contenait le hazard" suggests, the limitation of life is a motif for the textual fragmentation.

Echoing the Shakespearean tragedies such as *Macbeth* and *Othello*, the performative work *Igitur* self-reflexively declares its theatricality as follows, simulating a stage direction: "Ce conte s'adresse à l'Intelligence du lecteur qui met les choses en scène, elle-même."

The eponymous hero *Igitur* ostensibly proceeds to throw dice and sleep in a tomb, or a bed in ashes. The repeated movement of dice gives the fragmented text an image of continuous sway for evolution. Moreover, the expression "Scène de Th." is seen.

The purported conte *Igitur's* storyline is obscure in the text's abstractness and fragmentation. It is, nonetheless, intended to be performed on the stage.

The suggested story is deployed in the hero *Igitur's* daydream in which he seeks to regain his identity, directed by his unconscious information as a heritage from his ancestors. According to the text, "Car tel est son mal: l'absence de moi, selon lui."

In Marchal's terms, the hero's search of himself is his own reconcentration, which the critic takes as the conte's

theme: "cette volonté de reconcentration du moi qui fait le sujet du conte" ("Notice" 1349). According to Fowlie, "Self-knowledge is a liberation" (109). The circular text *Igitur* evokes, in fact, the metempsychosis of the hero and his leading of the eternal cycle, given a higher perception, in a Buddhist way.

The hero is inspired by his haunted house where the animated pieces of furniture transfigure themselves into a cemetery. Nonetheless, the animation is just part of his dream, as is suggested by his figurative question: "Mais ne sont-ils pas le mirage l'un de l'autre, à travers ma réflexion." The text's reinforced fictiveness is indicated by the direct expressions such as "par l'hallucination" and "mon rêve."

It is also suggested that the hero's self-restoration in his daydream is to be accomplished as his peaceful sleep in darkness, i.e., both a return to his motherly womb and a retirement into a tomb: "maintenant qu'elle l'avait réduit à l'état de ténèbres." The covering darkness is qualified as pure, supposedly as a refinery: "les ténèbres pures, dans lesquelles je dois rentrer quittant le costume de mes nuits, pour devenir l'Ombre pure antérieure — deux ouvertures de songe."

The text implies its storyline as a whole by a single sentence in a fragment entitled "Le Minuit": "J'étais l'heure qui doit me rendre pur." The word "l'heure (the hour)"

suggests the mortal hero's passing time in the continuous life line that threads individuals.

A longer suggestion is: "L'heure a sonné pour moi de partir, la pureté de la glace s'établira, sans ce personnage, vision de moi — mais il emportera la lumière! — la nuit!"

One of the two climactic actions is for him to sleep in a tomb, or a bed of ashes, probably in search of more inspiration. Another is for a mirror to reflect the hero, as is depicted by the following definitive terms: "jusqu'à ce qu'il se détachât, permanent, de la glace absolument pure, comme pris dans son froid."

The narcissistic reflection solidifies itself, repeated on shiny walls: "se présente également dans l'une et dans l'autre face des parois luisantes et séculaires."

Though in a mirror reflection, the appearance of a human character follows the expectancies of the readers vis-à-vis the hero's solitary drama. If as a substitute, the pairing adumbrates a happy marriage.

The image of oneself in a mirror depicts the result of a purification of oneself by frozen water as a mirror: "il s'est refait (revu), voyant la glace horriblement nulle." The hero is relieved, if not saved, by observing his own revived image to be identified with himself: "quand il croit être redevenu lui, il fixe de son âme l'horloge."

As is suggested by the above quote, temporal shift is a catalyst of the hero's restoration: "elle [l'heure] recrée mon

être et me redonne la sensation de ce que je dois faire." Time is both inside and outside the hero, embodying infinite limitation ("une limite infinie"). In *Igitur*, time is spatialized into the atmospheric changes that involve day and night, a biological continuation threading the hero and his ancestors, and the conte's syntactic line. Time becomes spiral in self-reflection: "les cercles vibratoires."

As a narrative circle around the frustrated hero/speaker, the text *Igitur* depicts itself in a struggle to make him a star at the top of a fir Christmas tree at midnight.

The four-dimensional identification of time with space involves both sound waves and aural perceptions, thus commingling the animate and the inanimate: "dont le bruit total à jamais tomba dans le passé" and "L'heure n'a pas disparu par un miroir, ne s'est pas enfouie en tentures, évoquant un ameublement par sa vacante sonorité."

Moreover, subject and object are assimilated in air because the nightly expansion of darkness is personified with cognition: "elle était la Nuit pure, et elle entendit son propre cœur qui battit." The fusion also involves present and past: "retombe maintenant en une seule fois lourdement dans le passé." Being open is equal to being closed: "panneaux à la fois ouverts et fermés." In the overall assimilation, i.e., "une aussi magnifique concordance" in the text's own expression, a perfect communication should be realized, following the repeated incantation: "Tout était parfait." The

communication threads all the elements, or "l'indicible multiplicité des mondes," according to the hero/narrator.

In the self-reflexive cosmos, the author's intended homeopathy is realized. Homeopathy is a catharsis by confession. According to Guy Michaud (86), the self-cure is activated by writing: "décrire son mal pour s'en guérir." Writing *Igitur*, he was seeking a recovery from his mental problem, as is indicated by his letter to Henri Cazalis on 14 Nov. 1869 (Mallarmé, *Œuvres* 1: 748).

The storyline is one of the key factors that unify a narrative text and the intrigued readers continue to search for. In *Igitur*, its fragmented structure directs the readers to think about its story paradoxically all the more. There is no fragment in which the full story is presented. Each fragment just outlines, or rather contributes to, the hero's self-reflexive drama: for example, "Je voyais le personnage d'horreur." The storyline in search accelerates each reader's unique combination of the *Igitur* fragments voluminously presented in the 1998 Pléiade version.

The subtitle of the work *Igitur*, i.e., the hero's above solitary drama, is: "La Folie d'Elbehnon." The word "Folie" is synonymous with "dream." The proper noun "Elbehnon" is from the Ancient Testament, according to Rolland de Renéville (quoted in Marchal, "Notes" 1353). Then, the subtitle insinuates the collective unconscious shared by humans. The drama in *Igitur* may be viewed as a conflict between the

Trinitarian words "Igitur," "Elbehnon," and "conte."

After the general title "Igitur," the word "Déchet" is seen. Subsequently, the subtitle "La Folie d'Elbehnon" follows. The first four keywords "Igitur," "Déchet," "Folie," and "Elbehnon" designate the work's hero, its fragmented structure, the drama's framework as a dream, and the hero's moral resources, thereby summing up the work to be presented on a square stage. Then, the text *Igitur* in prose form represents the stage directions in a playbook.

In a semantic connection, the contrastive backdrop of black and red spatially grows as the expansion of night ("la Nuit") and daylight ("ce qui luit"), the umbrella image of which prevails throughout the whole text for delineating a house, or the hero/speaker's mind.<sup>2</sup> According to the text, "Avant de sortir de la chambre — Oui, c'est là qu'en sont les choses — ma personne gêne — et le Néant est là."

In addition, the color red inclusively develops into a "foyer," a motherly cradle. By the text's metaphor, night is a bearer: "la Nuit . . . elle se sait qui le porte encore." As a black and shiny ebony is identified with the personified night in the text ("la Nuit ébénéenne"), night is posited as embracing and thus overriding daylight. According to the monologue of the enlivened night, however, day, night, and earth are selfsame: "c'est de mon sein . . . que naît la lumière que *je suis*."

Then, the fragmented text *Igitur* may be viewed as the

oneness of the cognate color contrast in red and black, which objectively makes the text's each fragment homogenous, rendering the text approachable from any part.

In other words, each fragment is self-contained, simulating an IPS cell. The fragmented text may be taken as an iteration of the same single word represented by the title "Igitur," embodying each place on which a die falls at random.

The text *Igitur* is thus structured as a concentric superimposition of a same word. All the words in the text are equal in that each of them is a minimal component of poetry, whether it be semantic or formal.

The superimposition is for fusing and refining the overlapping words as a surrogate of the hero in view of a homeopathy.

The lexical superimposition is symbolized by a series of words deriving from "pur." According to Danièle Wieckowski quoting Vito Carofiglio (166), the derivations from the word "pur," i.e., "pur," "pure," and "pureté," are repeated obsessively 16 times in the text *Igitur*. The kernel word "pur" is homophonically related to the preposition "sur" that implies the continual overlap of words to be collectively refined and purified.

The fragment as all may be seen as having a trace of influence from Baudelaire's preface to his collected poems in prose, *Le Spleen de Paris*. In the preface, which is a manifesto for setting up a new literary genre of prose poetry,

Baudelaire states that the following collection of prose poems is both the beginning and the end: "tout, au contraire, y est à la fois tête et queue, alternativement et réciproquement" (275).

As an instance of the Baudelairean prose poetry, the fragmented conte *Igitur* is a showcase of Mallarmé's late poetry in the image of a casting net. The word that designates a cobweb, "arachnéen," is repeatedly seen in the text.

Simultaneously, the fragmented text for defamiliarizing an everyday salon shows how to make an egg, or resources, by giving the image of a winding spider's threads around the branched content. The text *Igitur* thus atavistically presents its origin through its signifying process for making itself an artifact, describing a self-referential circulation for eternalization.

An egg represents poetry which essentializes literary artifact. As a modification of "Humpty Dumpty," *Igitur* evokes a broken egg embodied by its fragmentation. The name "Igitur" may be viewed as a twisted anagram of "Humpty Dumpty."

The author Mallarmé actually refers to the first two lines of an English nursery rhyme, "Humpty Dumpty," in his draft for a textbook (*Œuvres* 2: 1311). The first two lines constitute a whole piece in the collection of the rhymes illustrated by Kate Greenaway, one of Mallarmé's sources for his translation (*Œuvres* 2: 1798).

A longer version of the rhyme with "Humpty Dumpty"



suggests an egg's potential to be "All the king's horses, and all the king's men." The textual regulation in rhymed verses is for an incantation for a revival of the broken egg. The whole piece is as follows:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;  
All the king's horses, and all the king's men  
Couldn't put Humpty together again! (Lamont 38)

As a reversed version of the above nursery rhyme, the text *Igitur* simulates a broken egg by its fragmentation, along with an evocation of the original rhyme for a respectable egg. *Igitur* thus attempts to make a productive ball in everlasting circulation, which represents poetry as a primordial production. Etymologically, poetry means production.<sup>3</sup>

In the dominant image of oneness, a tomb is identified with a castle in fragment/feuille 30 in the 1998 Pléiade version. The ashes become a bed, i.e., a piece of furniture. The dreamful hero *Igitur* is a metamorphosis of a swan with a slender neck compared to a phial ("fiolle"): "Sur les meubles, vacants, le Rêve a agonisé en cette fiole de verre." Finally, both are fused: "Que le personnage, . . . prenne cette fiole qui le prédisait et se l'amalgame, plus tard."

In another passage, the "fiolle" is assimilated with mentality, i.e., "folie," in apposition. Furthermore,

mentality overlaps with the absolute because of its evocative force: "qui sent en lui, grâce à l'absurde, l'existence de l'*Absolu*."

In parallel, the "fiolle" as a hero contains his shared unconscious, i.e., "néant (darkness)": "cette fiolle contient le néant." According to the previous phrase, the absence of myself ("l'absence du moi") simulates the existence of darkness ("l'existence du Néant"). The hero is also compared to a tranquilizer ("calmant") to be contained in a phial, which may be viewed as a relief for his ancestors ("les ancêtres immémoriaux"). The text states that the tranquilizer has been kept by the ancestors: "ce vieux calmant qu'elle n'a pas pris, les ancêtres immémoriaux l'ayant gardé seul du naufrage."

The enchainment of unification threads the eponymous hero *Igitur*, text, prose, poetry, a swan, a bottle, a tomb, and a foyer in a growing image of a sphinx and a pyramid. In sum, death equals life, and vice versa, as is represented by the euphoric phrase "le tombeau de mon éternité de bonheur."

In addition to the semantic conflict of red and black, the text's formal contrast of white paper and black ink backs up the fragmented text's coalescence. The text embodies a simultaneous exchange of red, black, and white. The triangular merger topologically becomes a circle, suggesting the totality of a single word.

In fragment 29, a human being ("un personnage") is

posited as a hazard in an appositional connection: "Ce hazard nié à l'aide d'un anachronisme, un personnage." It is subsequently suggested that, despite human limitation, human language ("la parole humaine" and "grimoire") can dissipate the hazard through interpretation ("négation du hazard"). In the same vein, hazard can be transformed as absoluteness ("il réduit le hazard à l'Infini"). Moreover, absoluteness may be incarnated as a human being ("il a transmué son absolu en la pureté de la race"). In this fragment, the motif of the conflict of life and death is advanced as the possibility of life as eternity under the dominance of the color contrast of red and black in cognateness.

The fragmented text *Igitur* may be viewed as representing the author Mallarmé's desire for a complete unison in his mental crisis that ushered his late phase of poetic creation. His obsession with suicide is suggested in the text: "s'il se tuait, il ne pourrait pas, grand, accomplir l'acte." The death of adolescence is the naissance of authorship.

The desired coherence is to be stratified just as the text's accumulated fragments are to be solidly unified: the integration of oneself and the world, that of completion and incompleteness, that of a text and the surrounding world, that of a text and the author, that of life and death, and that of sanity and insanity.

Nonetheless, the author left *Igitur* as fragmented, which is apparently irregular with the exchange of redundancy and

reticence. Following the text's appeal, the challenged reader brings a virtual harmony to the irregularity, simultaneously recovering the conte's storyline.

In a sense, the reader is pushed to reconstruct the text by the author's indecision for the text's surfaced synthesis. He was starting his second phase of writing, the indecision as being potentiality. At least, the fragmentation serves as a practice of homeopathy. The speaker/author is willing to dissipate his fear of sudden death: "voit l'acte qui le sépare de la mort."

The performative prose *Igitur* is achieved in the form of the author's later article "Ballets" as a concentric superimposition of poetry and ballet. In the tripartite article, the author Mallarmé captures the essence of the two artifacts, i.e., a circular completion, as is suggested by the title "Ballets" that includes the word "ball."

Another reason for leaving the fragmentation is presumably the completeness of the title word "Igitur." With the stabilizing long vowel [y:], which prepares the following pharyngeal [r], the three-syllable word is in a Hegelian self-containment, breaking a cosmos of "I" and "you (tu)" by the sharpest vowel [i]. Paralleling the meaningful sound, the word is semantically swollen, saturating the enigmatic hero's identity with the reader's increased speculations: is he a hero, the author, or a reader?

In the same vein, Marchal throws the question on the

gender of *Igitur*, which is compared to the night and the shadow, both expressed by feminine nouns in French ("Notice" 1349).

When the fragmented text is seen as the title word "Igitur" itself, just as the forward sound [i] is retrieved by the pharyngeal [r], the text begins with the title word "Igitur," becomes "Igitur" itself, and ends as "Igitur," describing a circulation for completion. For the author Mallarmé, poetry is, in fact, a word, which is featured by his late creation in a textual unity by polysemous conglomeration.

In the text *Igitur*, a unified form as a word symbolizes the text in its entirety, threading a series of oneness concretized as a hero *Igitur*, a white swan as both the hero's divided self and his partner, their decorated house, the author Mallarmé, the reader, the text's each fragment, and its overall image of red, black, and white.

In the continuous metamorphosis of sameness, the hero's bed of ashes turns out to be a floral patio in the reader's imagination vis-à-vis the fragmented thus demanding text.

Under the cover painted in red, black, and white, the diverse forms of oneness play each of their parts. From another angle, the varied elements emerge from the colored cover, i.e., a metamorphosis of the hero/author himself.

In the following subsection, the circular features that primarily contribute to making a concentric cosmos of *Igitur* are discussed in detail.

## 2. The self-contained drama

Without dramatic occurrences among humans, the text *Igitur* is an exception of conte. The possibility of happening is only outlined by the phrase "elle m'a frôlé" with the transitive verb meaning "skimmed." Its poetic story traces a conflict between the day and the night, entailing atmospheric changes and the hero's sensitive responses, i.e., "une atmosphère d'absence" in the text's own expression.

The night is personified by the initial letter as "Nuit," under the umbrella of which each earthly element becomes cognate, annihilating the privilege of humans. The abstract text *Igitur* thus prohibits any subversive human conflict. The labor force, "mathématiciens," is useless ("expirâtes").

In parallel, following the text's motif of circulative unity, the drama in the conte converges on an interplay within the hero's sensitivity. In Wieckowski's terms (167), the inner drama is "l'exploration intérieure de la conscience." According to Michaud (88), in the conte *Igitur*, nothing happens: "Il (*Igitur*) est l'archétype, anonyme et impersonnel, le héros d'un conte où il ne se passe rien."

From another angle, *Igitur* deploys a drama of the hero's pulverized self. The personified furniture may be viewed as the hero's perception. The subjectivity as all is suggested by the text as follows: "il n'y avait pas à s'y tromper c'était

la conscience de soi (à laquelle l'absurde même devait servir de lieu)."

Though designated by names, his ancestors are ghosts in ashes without speeches. Similarly, his mother, "sa mère," is just shadowy ("défense"). The hero is solitary in life in the fictional world.

At a basic level of language, there is a drama between terms. In the text *Igitur*, a syntactic stream consists of a grammatical alignment of words and a sporadic insertion of tentative words.

Marchal indicates the text's strength of grammatical order vis-à-vis the insertions as follows: "le fil syntaxique est parfois distendu à l'extrême, mais jamais rompu" ("Notice" 1349).

A typical example of insertion is the juxtaposition of two phrasal questions foregrounded by parentheses: "(pas d'astres? le hasard annulé?)"

Also, the inaugural passage of the main section entitled "Vie d'Igitur" appears to be embedded in a suite of insertions: the two dashes that make the passage a tripartite whole, the two pairs of parentheses imposed at the end of the passage, and the prepositional phrase between "obligé" and "de" defamiliarized in the center of the passage.

The usage of two contrastive conjunctions "mais" and "et" makes both the main phrase and its insertions self-contained: "Elle s'apparut, satisfaite, mais terrifiée de ce bruit

qu'elle ne voulait pas entendre, et, songea, que pour oublier ce bruit, et redevenir pure, il lui fallait revenir dans un des puits d'ombre."

The above quotation is continued by the second clause attached to the verb "songea," which is instantly scrambled by a present participle: "que ce site, étant sans doute l'attente de tous les intervalles qui avaient été différés. . . ."

Assimilated with punctuation marks, the insertion becomes explosive force within a narrative line: "elle, pure, l'Ombre." The force can be verbalized, designating a suite of laconic dialogue: "Il récite la prédiction et fait le geste. Indifférence. Sifflements dans l'escalier. «Vous avez tort» nulle émotion."

Paralleling the internal stylistic feature of the syntactic stream combined with insertions, the author's original manuscript presents the outward twoness in the horizontal flow of letters and the marked insertions. Furthermore, the longitudinal lines of the handwritten letters such as "l," "l," "f," and "p," foreground the two-dimensional expansion of the work *Igitur*.

Whether it be short or long, each insertion represents the author's optional rendition, or recipe, for his future revision of the *Igitur* fragments. The transcript of Mallarmé's final manuscript for *Igitur* in the 1998 Pléiade version clearly presents the poet's inserted revisions as movable options, by enclosing it in angle brackets (837-68).



The transcript also suggests that the combination of a syntactic stream and insertions for setting up the text *Igitur* was in the intention of the author, since, in the final manuscript of the posthumously published *Igitur*, the marked revision is only inserted addition and partial deletion, the syntagm remaining intact. Deletion is reversed insertion. Several diagonals for the deletion of each of entire pages seem a forceful incantation for textual production, simulating an insertion.

In Mallarmé's original manuscript, the vertical lines in prolongation of the letters such as "I," "f," and "p," make a rhythmical contrast with the horizontal lines of sentences, as if for grafting, or embodying bracken shoots. In black pencil and black ink, his handwriting is svelte, though with the strong pen stroke. The smart and powerful synthesization in black emits shafts of light from the written letters. The brightness makes the viewer/reader recognize that the insertion, which characterizes the *Igitur* manuscript, represents endless development, entailing the sunlight, the birds' flight, and continuous life.

In unstable marginality, the insertion may be taken as an apposition, a repetition of the previous same expression, the narrator/hero's self-persuasion and incantation, and an apostrophe to the reader. An inclusive example is seen in the following phrase: "et qu'en mon propre moi, mon moi très-propre, je m'apparusse, multiple. . . ."

The frequency of absolute participle, such as "L'ombre disparue en l'obscurité," pushes the insertional method to the fore, as the ponderous participle is placed at the beginning of sentences and tends to be identified with the subject.

Contrastively, the personification of the inanimate, which entails time, night, and panels, retards the reader's interpretation, so that the animated object may be taken as an extra insertion, far from the sentence's subject.

Insertion also involves the reader's concretization of abstract words: the replacing of them by other accessible words. The replaceable terms constitute a repertoire, the vertical alignment of which represents a paradigmatic axis risen and fallen from each word in syntagm. Then, abstraction is a sort of insertion.

Furthermore, insertion is cognate with fragmentation, the basic structure of the text *Igitur*. Fragmentation represents the insertion of blanks. In the text, totality comes from the design of insertion.

As a partial paradigm vis-à-vis the syntagm, each insertion makes a nodal point of itself and the text's syntactical stream, thereby disseminating circulation within the fundamentally circular text, since a node represents a condensed circulation. Furthermore, insertion is a sort of synecdoche, the author Mallarmé's basic method for poetization. Mallarmé's texts seem always in view of unity.

Particularly, in the continuous narrative supposed to be

a conte, any insertion defamiliarizes itself as an obstacle to the reader, different from the poetry that essentially requires a back-and-forth reading.

It may also be posited that *Igitur*'s narrator suggests the optional renditions to the author through the insertions. Since the narrator is a divided self of the author, the former's inserted apostrophe to the latter gives voluminous expansion to the textual world, without dividing it into two halves. In the same vein, the additional insertions spatialize the text's syntactical flow in a three-dimensional way.

Simultaneously, the insertions serve as the prevention against the mimetic description by the grammatical flow of words.

The placement of epigrammatic memos, which may be viewed as stage directions, is also an instance of insertion into syntactically lengthened sentences for making a conte. Take, for example, the nonsensical cacophony for rendering the sound of thrown dice: "Le Cornet est la Corne de licorne — d'unicorne." According to the author, his conte is to be spatialized into a theatrical production in the readers' imagination: "Ce conte s'adresse à l'Intelligence du lecteur qui met les choses en scène, elle-même."

The *Igitur* text's insertional method may be taken as intended for both completion and incompleteness.

In *Igitur*'s conte, the active humans in corporeality only comprise the hero Igitur and his mother. Abstractness dispels

the ancestors ("les ancêtres"), the personage ("personnage"), and the race ("race"). Nevertheless, the above licorne may be viewed as an allegory of his father and his ancestral ghosts. In addition, the nightly darkness is personified as a metaphor of motherly protection, entailing symmetrical panels and wells. The lingering light rendered as "pulsations" designates paternal supervision.

The nightmarish text *Igitur* may be seen as a record of the incoherent speeches of a somnambulist afflicted by the uncertainty of his identity and existence. Then, the recurrent insertion may be taken as representing the repetitive injection of a drug given to the apparently delirious hero/speaker. The medicinal words "narcotique," "fiole," "folie," "démence," and "ce vieux calmant" are suspiciously placed in the text.

A typical moment of delirium is rendered by the cacophony "Le Cornet est la Corne de licorne — d'unicorne." The delirious mentality is a confusion: "cette confusion perverse et inconsciente des choses qui isole son absolu." A daydream caused by a drug is suggested by the euphoric passages as follows: "toute une mer incohérente où la parole remue à jamais impuissante" et "après avoir bu la goutte de néant qui manque à la mer (La fiole vide, folie, tout ce qui reste du château?) Le Néant parti, reste le château de la pureté."

It should be noted that the conflict of somniloquy and grammaticality, or unconscious and conscious, is within the

framework of theatrical playfulness. The fictiveness of *Igitur*'s world is solidified by the expressions "comédien jouer le tour," "le rêve où il en est," and "Le personnage. . . s' imagine être partout dans un rêve."

The insertion also represents the movement of atmosphere that fills the conte *Igitur*'s world, involving the shafts of light and the waves of sound, as well as the hero's receptive feelings. Capable of moving up and down, the insertion embodies the energy from both outside and inside, evoking the hero's synesthesia and the people that surround his haunted house facing a revolution.

Furthermore, the inserted terms embody a tremplin for the fantastic flight of both the conte *Igitur*'s and the readers', along with the abstractness of the text's vocabulary. In contrast, the text's grammatical stream under suspension is resigned to evoke a minimal happening of rituality.

Following the textual unity, the stylistic insertion comprises two directions, up and down.

Any regularity is essentially prevented by the scrambled language through cognition. Moreover, the text *Igitur* may be seen as a draft in process. From another angle, the author sensitively follows the demand of his own writing for spatial expansion.

The method of insertion is characteristic of Mallarmé's late phase of creation represented by a suite of abstract sonnets in an apparent disconnection of words. The insertion

foregrounds a single word to be recognized as a poem as a whole. In the poet's late sonnets, however, the scrambling of word order also contributes to render each of the poems to be a single word. In the poet's late career, the contrast between a word and its syntax as a big word evolved to that between each word.

The inserted words are marked and even considered as a text as a whole, since the text may be taken as an unaccomplished draft, thereby making the work *Igitur* an omnipresence of entirety.

Another technic of inversion, i.e., the scrambling of word order, is not strategically adopted in the inaugural text *Igitur*, which is supposed to be a conte with a storyline. The conventional placement of a phrasal subject at the end of a sentence foreshadows, however, the poet's later syntactic subversion. Take, for example, the inserted defamiliarization "où s'enfuit le plumage."

Inversion begins from within the syntax, whereas insertion is additionally given from the outside, which suggests the author/hero's hidden aspiration to engage himself in his surrounding entirety.

Paradoxically, the text *Igitur*'s stylistic features are set by its allowance for insertions. The grammatical but reflective sentences seem to search for something lacked, anxious and convulsive. In the author's expression, "ma Pensée s'est pensée" (*Œuvres* 1: 713). *Igitur*'s aspirational voice

sounds unfinished, endless, and evasive, which corresponds to the work's fragmental form in totality.<sup>4</sup>

The unfinishedness that causes difficulty in interpretation seems to hide the appropriate words for clarity. The typical example is the usage of the word meaning myself ("moi"), instead of what designates an outer object, thus returning the hero/speaker's voice back to its starting point, i.e., myself, and negating the dramatic procession of the conte's story: "je vais m'oublier à travers lui, et me dissoudre en moi." The return of the hero's voice to himself is, however, follows the work's main theme as the hero's search of his own identity.

The voice as a process also reflects the circularity of the work *Igitur* as a whole, besides its stylistic feature in the combination of the vertical insertion and the horizontally prolonged syntagm. The unfinishedness causes endless reading. For the speaker/author, the circular narrative is for continuing to soothe himself by a cathartic confession.

Trying to be a subject to save oneself as its own object, the text *Igitur* is in an oedipal desire to become all. The text is a twisted development of the author Mallarmé's manifesto: "le monde est fait pour aboutir à un beau livre" (*Œuvres* 2: 702). For the adolescent author/speaker/hero, the text *Igitur* is to be a plentiful book as a complete world.

In the image of appropriating its context as a whole, the work *Igitur* mingles its interior and its exterior. In the

work, the inside and the outside are undifferentiated, or rather, they are on the way to becoming distinct from each other.

The undifferentiation takes as its icon the hero's chamber attributed to his own mind. The entanglement involves the author/hero's aspiration to make himself and his prose poetry omnipotent and omniscient, along with his supposition of literature as all from within language.

The interior combined with the exterior, which is symbolized by the text *Igitur*'s embracing word "race," is also a source of the work's endless production of meanings. In the text, the hero has been projected outside the time by his race ("Igitur a été projeté hors du temps par sa race"). The interactive connection of the inside and the outside is compacted into a territorial transgression: "les occurrences externes du jeu des mondes." A vivified synthesis is achieved by the expression "elle s'apparut hors d'elle." The personified night in a Hamletian long monologue is also a conflation of inside and outside, entailing a sudden shift of subjects that enchain time, bird, and ghost.

The comprehensive word "race" is a derivation of "glace" in which the hero re-claims his identity. The cognateness of the two feminine nouns for concentration is implicitly emphasized by the repetition of the common qualification "pure."

The work *Igitur* is a synthesized whole of duality: a



chain of interior/exterior, inferior/superior, body/mind, reality/dream, drug/water, theater/life, and insertion/syntagm, the semantic antagonism of which is traced back to the oxymoronic combination of words. Since a word is a self-contained oneness, each component of duality, which is basically expressed by a single word, represents a synthetic unity such as the up-and-down insertion.

As an engaging work, *Igitur* is a hub of intertextual expansion involving De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, and Apollinaire's "Cors de chasse." The ironic subtitle that features a senseless riding, "au lieu de descendre à cheval sur la rampe," evokes *Igitur*'s connection with the Spanish novel *Don Quixote de la Mancha*.

The work *Igitur* embodies the moment of its own birth, as well as that of the birth of its author. The image of emergence is symbolized by the text's repetitive letters in the shape of sprouts.

Then, the work *Igitur* may be viewed as a reworked version of Genesis with the apparition of earthly objects from confused darkness: "voici l'unique heure qu'il ait créée: et que de l'Infini se séparent et les constellations et la mer." The midnight, or "Le Minuit" as "l'unique heure," is a moment for creation, may it be literary or divine, thus sanctifying poetry. *Igitur*'s intertextual connection with the Old Testament is reinforced by the word "naufrage."

The text *Igitur*'s blankness of the rendition, which is felt as an exceptional difficulty for interpretation by the reader, may be ascribed to the oxymoronic combination of words that present puzzling pictures: for instance, a soul attached to a clock ("mon âme fixée sur l'horloge"), time as becoming presence ("L'heure n'a pas disparu par un miroir"), and personified space ("L'ombre disparue"). The puzzle is part of the antagonism in black, red, and white as a starting point of the discussion of this article.

Particularly, the oxymoronic rendition "l'étoile nacrée" is successful, harmonizing celestial height with oceanic depth in a grammatical and rhyming connection of a noun and an adjective. The simultaneity of the hero's right and left hands is also a development of an oxymoron for unification: "portant d'un côté, leur volume, de l'autre, la lueur de leur conscience."

The oxymoron is semantically disruptive, though the syntax remains grammatically acceptable, as the oxymoronic word is a paradigmatic substitute of another comprehensible one. Take, for example, the word "l'obscurité," which may be seen as a substitute for the more understandable word "la luminosité," in the following rendition: "L'ombre disparue en l'obscurité."

The frequency of sudden negation, which is suggested by Michaud (89), alerts the reader to the oxymoronic structure as a key to his/her interpretation: for example, the rhymed

denial just after a dash (“— qui nie”) and the prolonged negation immediately following a pause (“«Vous avez tort» nulle émotion” and “(esprit), la contrepartie”). The first incident in the *Igitur* conte, i.e., the hero’s prevention against his ancestral ghosts’ attempt at blowing out a candle, by shouting “pas encore!” pushes the paradoxical imposition to the fore.

The lexical paradox corresponds to the conte’s theme as the hero/author’s trial for his own settlement in his surrounding world that includes ancestral apparitions. Though he embodies a hazardous existence, he believes in his potential for being absolute, i.e., a world, as is suggested by the rendition “il a transmué son absolu en la pureté de la race.”

The epigrammatic memos, which are often seen among the narrative passages placed at the beginning of the work *Igitur* in the 1998 Pléiade version, also foreground oxymoron in the apparently spontaneous juxtaposition of terms for emerging ideas such as “Folie utile.” The frequency of the adjacent placement of single words, such as “Indifférence,” “Preuve,” and “Corridor,” embodies the triadic fusion of virtual words in oxymoronic combination. The lexical independence entails the presentation of subtitles for the fourfold work, or “Morceaux.”

The oxymoron makes the reader focus on each of the exclusive and thus self-assertive words, thereby temporarily

rendering the text as a succession of separate words, each of which constitutes an extended text in the continuous syntagm of the work *Igitur*. Then, the work swells with an accumulation of the sub-texts as imaginarily developed words.

The oxymoron's unexpectedness is intensified by the readers' frustration vis-à-vis the grammatical and thus apparently reliable sentences' lack of explanation. Though temporarily discouraging, the strengthened abruptness renews the readers' expectations to find the reason for the work's unique images, by continuing to read the text.

Simultaneously, the readers have an image of shared sememes of the words in oxymoronic combinations, which is initiated by the continuous syntagm of the text and accelerates the readers' deciphering in a search for more sememes in common.

In the work *Igitur*, the oxymoron comes from the method of insertion. Also, the inserted text represents an oxymoronic combination of the small insertions and the inserted body of sentences in extension.

Furthermore, the work *Igitur*'s sentences as a whole represent another form of insertion: they cleave the white pages, hastily in a resonant, grammatical, but unexplained alignment of words.

Then, an oxymoronic combination of black (inked letters) and white (sheets of pages) emerges as a vision of prose poetry. As a combination of contrasts, oxymoron is a base for

fusing duality, i.e., making and spatializing circulation, in collaboration with the readers' interpretation. The established circulation is recognized by the reader as a single word, which is to be identified with the title word "Igitur."

To put it differently, the *Igitur* sentences, which are grammatically prolonged but nonsensical, have the image of being covered by the white veil for dissimulating meanings. Along with the vision of black letters burgeoning under the white sheets of paper, the sentences appear to pierce the surrounding spatial vacancy connected to the white pages, searching for something worth being verbalized, or a primordial word.

Then, in the picture of the sentences inserted into the white blank of pages, which is embodied by the strong pen stroke in the original manuscript, the work seeks for the flowering of verbalization from the white sheets as a fertile earth. The puzzling word "pulsations," which apparently refers to the lingering light at midnight, along with the frequent flight of birds, implicitly renders the earthen sheets as a white body, making itself a metaphor of textual meanings emerging from black letters.

The work's hidden intention may be ascribed to the author's incestuous ambition for completing his art of poetry. For the completion, the author attempts to draw his creative energy from his ambivalent devotion to either motherly nature

as incarnated in the patriarchal predecessor Baudelaire or his own linguistic and artistic capacity.

The work *Igitur* is a synthesis of manifold insertions: the general title *Igitur*, the text's main phrases as cleaving the white sheets of paper, the text's subordinate phrases inserted into the main phrases, the main phrases' allowance for further insertions, the text itself as collected fragments, and the fragmented text's virtuality for additions.

Another insertion is the reader's imaginative addition of words to the challenging text *Igitur*. Particularly, the above-cited conclusion of the sentence by the egotist word "moi" leads the reader to search for a more relational rendition. The seemingly inappropriate words constitute themselves, however, a pool for replaceable expressions.

Then, the work as a whole looms up in an image of a growing tree, the insertions as embodying graftings. The cognateness of the various insertions represents the hero/author's divided self. From every angle, the work *Igitur* is a development of oneself, who is named *Igitur*. Using another metaphor, the text is an icon of the planet Earth with the potential of vegetal growth. The text follows its own oedipal desire to become all.

The insertion may also be seen as a superscript to Baudelaire's readable prose poetry. Mallarmé's *Igitur* is a reworked version of the Baudelairean poems in prose, the accessibility of which is explored by *Igitur*'s metaphysical

depth in abstraction and insertion.

From another angle, the text *Igitur*'s apparent progress as a manuscript directs the reader to focus on the insertion as a forefront of the text's making. The surfaced insertion also pushes the reader to search for its intertexts, i.e., its sources of influence. It is in a plot for completing itself through the interaction with the reader.

In the work *Igitur*, the confusion of identity involves the author and the reader, the author and the narrator/hero, the syntax and the insertion, and the writing of the text and the written text itself. In the reader's imagination, the entanglement makes the text swell into a sphere of all in equality, as is rendered by the text itself in the following terms: "supérieurs et inférieurs, ce qui est tout un." The method of insertion is a first step to reach the highest, i.e., the pointed condensation of circulative unity.

Then, the circular oneness of the text *Igitur* paradoxically comes from each of the inserted expressions that adds only a slight sense of volume to the text's language. Thrown into a phrase, the inserted words temporarily cut out the syntagm of the phrase that is simultaneously bounced, in restoring itself.

Confused with the difficulty of reading, the insertion as a form of language awaits to be noticed as a key to the reader's interpretation of the apparently incomplete text. The insertion is both noticeable and unnoticeable in the conte's

syntactic flow, which is both actual and virtual.

The covering insertion is symbolized by the text's foregrounded props: a series of partitions ("panneaux" and "parois") and a pair of wells ("un puits identique"). Placed above and below, the selfsame wells in circulation suggest the metamorphosing oneness of *Igitur*'s world.

In the text *Igitur*, the combination of a syntactic continuity and an insertion represents that of the succession of life and the hero in a conscious search of his own identity. The human brain is highly regarded by the following terms: "la pure clarté de leur conscience."

Symbolized by a thrown dice, he was born as a hazard in a series of biological turmoil, which is both circular and linear, i.e., "l'inconditionnel pour exister subitement" and "cette confusion perverse et inconsciente des choses qui isole son absolu," according to the text. Correspondingly, *Igitur*'s daydream is in a circular advance: "spirale" but "fuyante."

Despite the hero/narrator's sentimental visions, life continues, using death as its resources: "ancêtres," "cendres," "l'étendue de couches d'ombre," and "un génie supérieur."

Also, the text *Igitur*'s formal duality within the text itself parallels the semantic chiasm between the author and the hero as fundamentally identical. The virtual picture of the author manipulating the hero as his divided self makes the text spatially grown.



What the author seeks is presumably the eternity of his mind and creativity, which is represented by a single word as poetry. Eventually, the drama deployed in *Igitur* is that of words, or language: in the author's expression, "dans le vide duquel j'entends les pulsations de mon propre cœur" and "le bruit du progrès de mon personnage qui maintenant le continue dans la spirale."

The following passage transmits the metamorphoses of oneself in a duality for inner combinations, entailing the preceding image of paired panels ("panneaux"):

Ce scandement n'était-il pas le bruit du progrès de mon personnage qui maintenant le continue dans la spirale, . . . je vais m'oublier à travers lui, et me dissoudre en moi.

In another passage, others are reduced to shadows, i.e., ghosts and cremated ashes ("cendres"): "toutes ces ombres apparues pures avec le volume de leur destinée et la lueur épurée leur conscience."

In *Igitur's* world, there is only oneself in a conceptual mirage. The egocentric drama implies the mimetic inescapability that the delineation of human existence should be speculative, referring to language.

Then, the interior drama *Igitur* represents a congregation of overlapping words for manifesting the potential of oneself as a language user. The fragmented text also suggests that

oneself is endlessly developed by language, this first medium of communication in a systematic connection, because concept is a form of physicality.

(3) *Igitur* in contextual entirety

The work *Igitur* triggers a drama between the hero/author and the reader. The work awaits the reader's re-creation of its own fragmental rendition.

Furthermore, the drama between the work and the world, or fiction and reality, is deployed. The work resets the reader's world view.

In the reader's re-creation of the work, s/he traces its plot set up by both the author and the convention of language, poetry, art, and culture.

The work *Igitur* is both dependent on and independent from both the author and the reader, following the rules of this world in ontological connectedness diversified into the difference of cultures.

Mallarmé's *Igitur* is a swan's song to his youth. As a calligraphic condolence to himself, the poet's farewell letter directs the reader to rethink the writings by the conscripted Japanese students in the Second World War, which are collected in a volume entitled *Kike wadatsumi no koe* [*Listen to the Oceanic Voices*]. Each epistolical text was handwritten in a critical moment, and posthumously printed.

In both the texts, the image of finality inherent in systematized language crystallizes explosive aspirations for continued life.

Forced to do a suicidal attack by an aircraft, a 23-year old student Ichizo Hayashi wrote to his mother in his letter dated 31 March 1945, the day before the attack in Korea:<sup>5</sup> "I will cast myself with the Bible and a hymnbook in my plane" (346).

Recalling his sister's stage costume in red velvet,<sup>6</sup> in observing the shiny sea, Minoru Wada wrote to his parents in his letter dated 26 March 1945 about the death of his fellow soldier in training for a ride in a torpedo for suicidal attack (381-82).

A month before his involuntary attack, on 18 April 1945, he felt his death as "an inevitable burden" "once having learned to think" (383).

He also wrote in his diary dated 6 May 1945: "Unable to give up, the second hand of my watch continues to turn" (384).

Secretly wrapped in oilpaper under a pile of rice in a lunchbox to evade censorship, his diary kept in several pocket notebooks was handed to his parents when they were allowed to see him at the military base (387).

Both *Igitur*'s hero/author and the Japanese conscripted students were victimized by the modernist obsession in which a human being is pushed to turn into an efficient machine for utmost profit, i.e., a sophisticated object for mass

production. The subconscious compulsion made imperial absolutism aestheticized, led to suicide units and atomic bombs.

As with *Igitur* in the superimposition of the hero/author/reader, the Japanese conscripted soldiers sought for the priority of their own life in an organic system, which is ironically a collective ideal in the current AI era.

One of the conscripted students, Akira Meguro, wrote to his father on 16 September 1941 in China, about a month before his death in a field hospital at the age of 24:

My dear father, you have created our beautiful home; there would never be such a world filled with peaceful harmony. That is a beautiful artifact you have left. As your children, we were warmly raised in that home. Without any deficiency, a warm atmosphere always filled our dinnertime. What I have always remembered and cared for since I came here is only that artifact you have made. I recognize the value of life just to have been reminded that you let me know that beautiful harmony. It was long. I owe you, my father. You are so thoughtful. Please be assured and relieved to know that I will only make my most efforts in this war. Then, I will depart now. . . (41-42)

The Japanese epistolical writings represent wills, whereas *Igitur* was intended as the poet's homeopathy during his mental

crisis. The superimposed images of oneness as an embodiment of the author/hero's potential parallel the Japanese conscripted students as building an inclusive *Igitur*.

Besides Akira Meguro, Hisao Yamagishi wrote (68): "I wholeheartedly and mostly hope for peace." Tadashi Kawashima claimed (90): "Peace—a peaceful world is foremost."

As a verbal artifact that makes a self-contained world, each literary text leads the reader to review and remake the contextual real world in which s/he lives.

Both the conscripted students and *Igitur* attempted to save oneself by writing. As is indicated by Mallarmé, the world is made to achieve itself as a beautiful book: "le monde est fait pour aboutir à un beau livre" (*Œuvres* 2: 702). The dream of an achievement is totally dreamed by Mallarmé's *Igitur* as a testament.

Mallarmé's fragmented work *Igitur* is a casting net for his later creation in total. His suggestive expression "toile arachnéenne," which means a spider's web, hints at the conclusive metaphor.<sup>7</sup> From the net as the disrupted text, the potential of the author's future creation comes out in the form of the text's implicit meanings. The leaking potential necessitates the text's basic structure of fragmentation, the reappearance of which depicts circulation.

The circular combination of a comprehensive title with the tacit text that follows is also a characteristic of both *Igitur* and the author's late poetry in general.<sup>8</sup> *Igitur* is a

portal site of Mallarmé's late phase of creation.

In its stratified imagery of circular oneness, the text *Igitur* continues to lead the reader to remake its fragmented form with his/her imaginary and thus inserted collaboration with the author.

*Igitur*'s world circulates around the hero/author as a hub, and the world as a whole is subsumed by the reader/author as an observer, which represents a human drama unseen in the text. The work *Igitur* suggests that any happening is perceived, and not directly got, but collaboratively re-created as a fated testimony.

Then, in the circular oneness of *Igitur* in homeopathy, both the author/creator and the work/creation take precedence over each other, searching for the actualization of their own potential, i.e., all/absolute, or "blanc" in a word, which designates Mallarmé's cherished color white. The word "Igitur" is synonymous with "blanc."

For the work *Igitur*, its apparent incompleteness represents a completion in white, or "blanc." The brightest color represents purity, absoluteness, and blankness as an ultimate potential, i.e., the existent but elusive energy that is closest to completion in this actual world. The world is in an apparent limitation, or in *Igitur*'s terms, "une limite infinie," visualized by the contrast of black and white.

For the author Mallarmé, neither a definite revision of his *Igitur* manuscript nor its publication was necessary, as

the manuscript is complete with its finishing white of its sheets of paper, which are all the more whitened in daylight. Moreover, the word "Igitur" embodies perfection as a single word in unification, entailing the blank, i.e., the white space between its black 6 letters subsumed by the initial "I."

Starting with his incomplete but complete work *Igitur*, the poet Mallarmé attempted to achieve the sublimation of his late career, i.e., the creation of poetry as an ultimate word.

The strenuous road presumably led him to recognize that, at his death bed at the latest, perfection is the blankness of paper itself, which is represented by every single word in written letters.

Then, as both a letter and a numeral, the initial "I" of the title *Igitur* presents perfection, as is suggested by the numerical expressions in the *Igitur* text, "11" and "12."

The letter "I" identifies the poet Mallarmé himself with superiority, while simultaneously signifying that the circular work *Igitur* begins with the letter "I" and temporarily ends with the same letter "I."

Denoting a start of vertical line, which is oxymoronicly inserted into a sheet of paper, the letter "I" represents a beginning of writing, i.e., the inauguration of the world in cognition for its own salvation.

Then, the work *Igitur* is a flowering of the letter "I."

1 This article's interpreter owes a lot to the Library Doucet in Paris for permitting her to look at the fragile manuscript of *Igitur*, along with its photographic version online, in their well-lit reading room near the pantheon on 3 to 6 April 2018. Without their help, her textual critique would have missed necessary steps for interpretation.

2 For the interpretation of *Igitur*'s house as the metaphor of his mind, see Marchal, "Lecture" 262. According to Gayle Zachmann, "Consciousness is represented as a dark room" (79).

3 According to J. A. Cuddon, the meaning of the word "poetry" is traced back to the Greek word "poieîn" that signifies "to make" (721). (S. V. "poesie")

4 According to Fowlie (113-14), "The [*Igitur*] sentences never give the impression of finality or adequate transmission. They are searching for themselves and their own expression."

5 The students' letters quoted in this article are written in Japanese. The translation is by this article's author.

6 The stage costume may be considered as worn by his sister at an in-group concert for private music lessons, instrumental or vocal.



7 Mallarmé compares himself to a sacred spider (“une araignée sacrée”) in his letter to Théodore Aubanel dated 28 July 1866 (*Œuvres* 1: 704).

8 For the comprehensive title of Mallarmé’s late poetry, see Takeda, *Translation* 20.

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