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IN UMBRA VOLUPTATIS LUSI

Play, jouissance and illusio in Mallarmé and Bourdieu

Translated by Robert Boncardo

In umbra voluptatis lusi. I have played in the shadow of pleasures. This so simple passage is from Petronius. It should be translated all the more precisely still: I have played in the shadow of sexual jouissance.¹

It is not without a sense of boastfulness that Bourdieu, reflecting on his reading of Mallarmé, affirms that it is “likely to provoke shudders in the pious celebrants of the seraphic poet of absence, who have turned a blind eye to it”.² But nor is he without his reasons, for it is hard not to acknowledge that his reinterpretation of the passage from ‘Music and Letters’ on the “impious dismantling of fiction”³ is a feat of arms: of such a highly frequented textual place, the sociologist effectively proposed a reading that will prove itself to be extremely fruitful insofar as it will reveal, to an unprecedented degree and in a hitherto unexpected light, the extraordinary critical insight of Mallarméan thought.⁴ This is a thought that we rediscover with Bourdieu; a thought not jealously hidden in the intransitive folds of the text or dispersed like a vapour among the ideal peaks where successive generations of commentators have wanted it to accumulate, but perfectly and reflexively open to the comprehension of the social and institutional determinations of the literary artefact.

This interpretation will have proved to be doubly beneficial: on the one hand, with respect to the properly sociological enterprise of Bourdieu, where it seems to have been determinant at a key juncture in the articulation and conceptual refinement of the problematic of the *illusio*; on the other hand, with respect to literary studies, where in the last twenty years the power of social reflexivity possessed by the Mallarméan text it highlighted has inspired works that it is not an exaggeration to describe as revolutionary, or, better, as *truly* revolutionary, for the original appraisal they propose of the work and *persona* of Mallarmé break with the most widely-held

conceptions of literary history — without doing so, for all that, in a Telquellian manner, that is, in the name of, and in conformity with, the hermeneutical expectations of an ideology of generalized subversion.⁵

As illuminating as they are, the few pages that Bourdieu devotes to the “impious dismantling of fiction” pose certain problems. Not only are they of an extreme density, but they also attest to a reading that in some places is selective and biased in its argumentation and which, if it is not itself “blind” in turn to Mallarméan thought, has the effect of spiriting away one of its most original traits: namely, the recognition of *jouissance* as the fundamental motivation of the subjective relation to the literary artefact. There is good reason to believe that Bourdieu set out to methodically and critically “repress” this factor so as to ensure the primacy of social determinations and, incidentally, from a sociological point of view, the primacy of the latter with respect to the question of the investment of the writer in the literary game. As a result, he discounted a reality which, without being exclusively or above all of social significance, proves to be no less an effect of the symbolic order and, as such, to intimately inform the problematic of the *illusio*.⁶ By delineating the principal articulations of his argumentation, I will seek here to render visible what he neglects in order not only to do justice to Mallarméan lucidity, but also, indirectly, to make explicit the idea of the libido in which Bourdieu himself would see, without for all that exploring its kinship, a twin notion to that of the *illusio*.⁷

A necessary *illusio*

The section from *The Rules of Art* entitled ‘The impious dismantling of fiction’ can initially be read as a recognition of debt to Mallarmé. Bourdieu credits his reading or re-reading of a prose piece from the *Divagations* with a theoretical advance of the first importance — an advance that would have inflected in a novel direction his conception of the relation of the artist to the literary *illusio*:

As for becoming aware of the logic of the game as such, and of the *illusio* which is its bedrock, I long believed that this was somehow precluded, by definition, by the fact that this lucidity would turn the literary or artistic enterprise into a cynical mystification or a conscious trickery. This remained true until I came to read carefully a text by Mallarmé which expresses well, even if in a very obscure manner, both the objective truth of literature as a fiction founded on collective belief, and the right we have to salvage, in face of and against all kinds of objectification, literary pleasure.⁸

The text at the origin of this critical discovery is the section on the “impious dismantling of fiction”, which represents a culminating point in the argumentation of ‘Music and Letters’. An interesting fact to note, and which does not seem to be accidental, as we will confirm, is that Bourdieu does not cite two short paragraphs that precede this section and which nevertheless form part, for Mallarmé, of the

same textual unity. The segment of the text that Bourdieu restitutes and on which he focuses his analysis is limited to these lines:

We know, held captive by an absolute formula that, doubtless, only what is, is. But to wave aside, incontinently, under any pretext, the attraction of the lure, would testify to our illogic, denying the pleasure we want from it: for the *beyond* is its agent – and its motor, I would add, if I were not reluctant to take apart impiously, in public, the fiction, and consequently the literary mechanism itself, in order to lay out the principal part or nothing. But I admire how, by means of a trick, we project, to a great, forbidden, thunderous height, our conscious lack of what, up there, gleams.

What is this good for –

For a game.⁹

These few statements sum up the denunciation of the literary *illusio* by virtue of which Bourdieu could recognize in Mallarmé a precursor to his own enterprise of sociological demystification: in the terms of a mechanism that clashes with the organicist paradigm dear to the tradition of modern aesthetics, and which conforms to the essentialist presuppositions of the “speculative theory of Art”,¹⁰ the poet here defines fiction as a social discourse destined to produce a belief in the Ideal, which itself responds to the metaphysical desire for a “beyond”, a “beyond” which constitutes its “motor”. By “dismantling” the “literary mechanism” and by laying out its “principal part or nothing”, he strips literature of its sacerdotal pomp and reveals it in its “objective truth” as a “trick”, a collective fiction without any transcendence other than that produced by its function and effect: namely, to evoke imaginarily and project illusorily, at “a great, forbidden, thunderous height” so as to compensate for the ontological “lack” of a world now disenchanted by the materialist fact according to which “only what is, is”.

It is easy to understand why Bourdieu, who was fond of assailing all forms of “social magic”, would have been seduced by this denunciation which, with an “impious” critical gesture, “wrecks the poetic sacral and the self-mystifying myth of the creation of a transcendent [...] object”,¹¹ just as he would have rejoiced in finding, in the apparatus for producing symbolic Value that Mallarmé associates with the illusory dimension of the literary “game”, a structural [*structurel*], indeed structural [*structural*], duplication of what he would have thematized – and for which he will henceforth be able to invoke an increased legitimacy – under the heading of the *illusio*.

But what seems to have interested Bourdieu the most is perhaps not so much the lucidity with which the poet “dismantles” the literary *illusio* and more so the care he takes, even while conceding its groundlessness, to save it. Indeed, for the sociologist, Mallarmé’s “reluctance” to “impiously dismantle, in public, the fiction”, proves to be highly significant: it convinces him that literary practice cannot forego an “enchanted relation to the game”¹² that conditions, and which is indistinguishable

from, the *illusio*. To the extent that it ends by “‘revering’, by another deliberate fiction, the authorless trickery which puts the fragile fetish outside the grasp of critical lucidity”,¹³ Mallarmé’s attitude is instructive insofar as it betrays the principal importance of the *illusio* in literary practice. Even if he highlights the ethically debatable dimension of this dual, indeed duplicitous, attitude on the grounds that, precisely, it “prejudge[s] that only a few great initiates are capable of the heroic lucidity and the deliberate generosity which are necessary to confront in their truth the ‘legitimate impostures’”,¹⁴ Bourdieu still sees here an incontestable proof of the theoretical pertinence and the practical necessity of the *illusio*, which he thereby raises to the rank of a necessary illusion. He seems particularly concerned to establish that the literary game can only derive its true “seriousness” from the collective and implicit belief in the transcendence of what is at stake in it. So much so, in fact, that the affirmation of the primordial status of the *illusio*, and thus of the fundamentally institutional anchorage of the literary artefact, imposes itself in the final analysis as one of the principal – if not *the* principal – heuristic gains of his re-reading of Mallarmé. The following passage, which is drawn from the concluding chapter of *The Rules of Art*, ‘Illusion and *illusio*’, invites us to think precisely this:

The ‘impious dismantling of fiction’ [...] leads to discovering, along with Mallarmé, that the *foundation of belief* (and of the delectation which, in the case of literary fiction, it procures), resides in the *illusio*, the adherence to the game as a game, the acceptance of the fundamental premise that the game, literary or scientific, is worth being played, being taken seriously. The literary *illusio*, that originating adherence to the literary game which grounds the belief in the *importance* or *interest* of literary fictions, is the precondition – almost always unperceived – of the aesthetic pleasure which is always, in part, the pleasure of playing the game, of participating in the fiction, of being in total accord with the premises of the game. It is also the precondition of the literary *illusion* and of the belief-effect (rather than the ‘reality-effect’) which the text can produce.¹⁵

On a first reading, the critical assessment that Bourdieu draws from his analysis of the “impious dismantling of fiction” is liable to lead us astray: logically speaking, the affirmation of the necessity of the *illusio*, which is what his analysis comes down to, cannot be derived from the observation of the very literary game played by the writer Mallarmé; it can only be motivated by what can be deduced from the choice of the poet to safeguard – to the detriment of critical intelligence but in the name of the symbolic, existential and metaphysical benefits that the non-reflexive investment in the game can still procure for *the other players* – the belief in the *illusio*. This is to say that this appraisal of Bourdieu’s ignores, or tacitly considers as an exception that confirms the rule, the very example of the lucid “player” that is Mallarmé – a “player” for whom the “rules of art” never pass unperceived and for whom literary practice, which he never abandoned, no longer expressly requires “total accord[ance] with the premises of the game”.

In fact, if Bourdieu can formulate this critical assessment, and if he can reaffirm with even more conviction that the *illusio* constitutes the necessary condition for the full symbolic and imaginary unfolding of literary activity, then it is only after having done his utmost, in his analysis of the section on “the impious dismantling of fiction”, to invalidate the motive that Mallarmé invokes, in the name of a quota of aesthetic *jouissance*, in order to justify and to guarantee investment in the literary game, above and beyond any critical denunciation or ontological deflation. Now, the rhetorical moves to which the sociologist has recourse in undermining this motive, namely by overdetermining certain aspects of the Mallarméan text and by omitting others, attest to an argumentative strategy of which the least that can be said is that it is biased and, on a number of counts, contentious. The hermeneutical pressure that his reading exerts in a sometimes tendentious manner on Mallarmé’s remarks is all the more regrettable since its effect is to flatten out one aspect of these remarks — namely, desire; an aspect which, if it obliges us to relativize the importance Bourdieu accords to the *illusio*, nonetheless confirms the fundamental grip the symbolic order has on the practice of literature. Furthermore, what the poet suggests about desire, as we will be able to see by making it explicit, resonates in a salutary way with the notion of a “sense of the game” that the sociologist puts forward, precisely — yet in a manner that is often unconvincing, or not convincing at all — so as to render explicit the very real function, as the cases of Mallarmé and Bourdieu themselves above all suggest, of certain social players who are nevertheless “lucid” with respect to the presuppositions of their respective games.

The critical repression of desire

The argument for aesthetic *jouissance* comes after the statement of the “objective truth” of literature, in the context of the final paragraph of the section on the “impious dismantling of fiction”, which Bourdieu analyses in isolation:

In light of a superior attraction like a void, we have the right to be lured on by nothingness; [the game] is drawn out of us by the boredom of things if they are established as solid and preponderant — we frantically detach them and fill ourselves up with them, and also endow them with splendour, through vacant space, for as many solitary festivals as we wish.¹⁶

The literary “game” here presents the traits that define it in Mallarmé,¹⁷ namely, that of a discourse capable of re-enchanting the brute and meaningless materiality of “things”, if not by covering them with a “veil of troubled thinking”,¹⁸ as Nietzsche thought, then at least by infusing them with the right dose of mystery or “virtuality” necessary for filling in the ontological “vacuity” [*vacance*] and to dissipate the existential “ennui”. It is by virtue of a *jouissance* or an “ideal pleasure” [*réjouissance idéale*], to which this poetic sublimation of the real leads, that Mallarmé claims the “right” to save literary activity beyond the consciousness he has of the purely phantasmatic character of its imaginary productions.

Bourdieu devotes a good part of his argumentative effort to “dismantling” this “proof by pleasure”. For him, Mallarmé falls back on an *ad hoc* argument by making pleasure the “aesthetic equivalent of a *cogito*” that consists in the following affirmation:

...yes, literature exists, since I *rejoice* in it. But can one be completely satisfied with this proof by pleasure, *jouissance* (*aisthesis*), even if one understands that poetry gives itself meaning by giving a meaning, even if imaginary, to the world? And is not the pleasure aroused by the voluntarist fiction of “solitary festivities” doomed to appear as fictive, since it is clearly linked to the will to lose oneself in this game of words, to “pay oneself in the face currency of one’s dream”? The invocation of the famous phrase of Marcel Mauss is not as out of place as it seems. In effect, Mallarmé does not forget as his commentators do that, as he says at the beginning, the crisis is also ‘social’; he knows that the solitary and vaguely narcissistic pleasure that he wants to do everything to save is doomed to be perceived as an illusion if it is not rooted in the *illusio* [...] And he concludes that, to save this pleasure which we only take because we ‘want to take it’ as well as the Platonic illusion which is its ‘agent’, he has no other choice than to take the course of ‘revering’, by another deliberate fiction, the authorless trickery which puts the fragile fetish outside the grasp of critical lucidity.¹⁹

The voluntarism with which Bourdieu predicates Mallarmé’s relation has to the literary artefact — a relation Mallarmé would “do everything” to save through essentially “decisionist” [*décisoires*] acts — is surprising, both with respect to the text of ‘Music and Letters’ (in which it has no basis except in the segmented statements “the pleasure we want from it” and “solitary festivals”), as with the habitual preoccupations of the sociologist to the extent that these latter lead him to highlight, against the illusory pretensions of the subject to mastery, the social and thus largely unconscious and “unperceived” dimension of the motives that determine the adhesion of the subject to the *illusio* and to their investment in the literary game. But the function of this voluntarist overdetermination is obviously to show that the “truth” of the Mallarméan *cogito* is not at all evident, that it is “willed” and thus that this “proof by pleasure” is a mysticism, which is to say an appeal to something unconditioned (for instance, poetry that “give itself meaning” all by itself) that has, as such, little or no critical legitimacy. In this way Bourdieu claims to demonstrate that this “proof” also constitutes, just like the *illusio*, a “decisionist fiction”, the sole difference being — and the difference is capital — that this individualist type of denegation does not have sufficient force of conviction to make it credible and to durably support the investment of the majority of people in literary activity: for him, only the *illusio*, this “trick without an author” — a “trick” that, at the social level, consecrates literary discourse as one of the games that are “the most surrounded with prestige and mystery”²⁰ — possesses such a force.

If it is not without reason that Bourdieu is suspicious of “magical” explanations for aesthetic empiricism, in contrast his interpretation seems more to betray his own

will than to reveal the will of Mallarmé to “root” the literary artefact in the *illusio*. At the very least, he appears to be in a hurry to repress the aesthetic *jouissance* that Mallarmé invokes as a fundamental determination of the literary game and which the ensemble of his remarks, if we consider them attentively, identify as being a motivation which, without being confined to an exclusively individual register, seem to escape in part the conceptual parameters of the *illusio*. This repression seems all the more premeditated since Bourdieu neither quotes nor analyses the first two paragraphs of the section of the “impious dismantling of fiction” where this aspect is most decisively:

Something else... It seems as if the scattered quiverings of a page only wants either to defer or to hasten the possibility that something else.²¹

Even if it remains mysterious, the causality with which Mallarmé associates here the investment in literary activity — and, more precisely, the investment in *reading*, which is perhaps not exactly the same thing — is far from insignificant; the “secret disposition” to which this causality is assimilated, while it might resist in part both nominalisation and phenomenalisation, does not appear any less to exert on the subject an elementary and irrepressible action such that nothing “can satisfy [it]” [*ne doit satisfaire*]. It is under the pressure of this “disposition”, which simultaneously reveals a fundamental form of existential indisposition, that we are led to seek in literary activity “*something else*”: that is, that *other* thing that we cannot find in the order of the real and to which we are condemned, for this reason, to being “desperately” subjected to as an incessantly returning lack, just as the evidently circular structure of this paragraph suggests (“*Something else* [...] the possibility that something else”).²² It is with respect to this *something else*, which seems to capture the essence or the universal form of the phantasm, that reading takes on the allure, the solemnity and the liturgical rhythm of a “practice” similar to that of a religion and destined to channel and sublimate, as the following paragraph makes explicit, the anxiety in the face of an ontological void by the evocation of a fictional “beyond”.

From this perspective, the “secret disposition” that Mallarmé evokes appears singularly close to what psychoanalysis will thematize under the heading of the “cause” or the “thing” of desire. In fact, it is even closer since the principal paragraph of the section on the “impious dismantling of fiction”, if read carefully, places this “disposition” under the auspices of a “literary mechanism” whose “principal part or nothing” proves to be explicitly indexed to a “lack”. It is not the smallest sign of the symbolic lucidity of the poet that he associates the primary “motor” of literary activity with the “nothing” of a desire conceived not as an excessive plenitude or as an excess of energy, but rather as a lack, which is to say as an economic and dynamic resource whose force of active negativity, comparable to a gust of wind, cannot be better described than by the following expression: “a superior attraction like a void”. To the extent that it proceeds, anchored as it is in desire, from this power of a “superior attraction”, the fiction “dismantled” in ‘Music and Letters’ denotes a construction of the symbolic order. However, prior to being a social montage, it presents itself as what should be called, without committing the sin

of anachronism and to do full justice to the critical lucidity of the poet, a drive montage [*un montage pulsionnel*].²³ Correlatively, before being a social production, the “*something else*” that fiction has for its role to project illusorily in the sky “to a great, forbidden, thunderous height” — and in this it is in perfect conformity with the elementary structure of the phantasm as an imaginary projection — this “*something else*” refers fundamentally to the production of desire. Besides, the entirety of the Mallarméan text suggests that the Idea, understood in the sense of the Platonic *eidos* or metaphysical “beyond”, is first of all, and primarily, an effect of desire, which is to say that in its most elementary sense it is translated into the luminous shimmer of a lack: “Glory of the long desire, Ideas”.²⁴

Thus, the two paragraphs that Bourdieu does not quote lead to a reconsideration of the entirety of this section by Mallarmé from a perspective in light of which this section reveals itself to be a veritable analytics of desire: that is, as an operation of “dismantling” that is not limited — yet even this would already be something very significant for an enterprise revealed to be sociological *avant la lettre* — to highlighting the conventional and institutional components of literature, the vain mystery of its social being, but which clarifies literature right up to the critical point of showing where its structural scaffolding seems no longer to obey anything other than the economy of desire — an economy that, in its *élan*, is itself revealed to be directed towards a *nothing* and fixed by an index of *reality* such that perhaps only the text of a theoretician of psychoanalysis like Jacques Lacan can give it an equally original figuration, without for all that ever being, no more here than anywhere else, originary. This new appraisal of the Mallarméan “dismantling”, by linking the “enchanted relation to the [literary] game” to the “cause” or the “thing” of desire, and thus to a form of *jouissance* that is less voluntarist than Bourdieu supposed, obliges us to reconsider certain modalities of the relation of the poet to the investment in literature and, in addition to these modalities, certain determining aspects of the problematic of the *illusio*.

To believe or not to believe

*For a brief instant he would believe, and turn instinctively to religion; then,
after a moment's thought, his longing for faith would vanish, though he
remained perplexed and uneasy.*²⁵

Bourdieu very pertinently correlates the consciousness of the primacy of the symbolic exhibited by Mallarmé in ‘Music and Letters’ with the “crisis of verse” with which his name has more generally been associated.²⁶ Nevertheless, we can reproach the sociologist for not having taken the full measure of what the poet glimpsed through the broken mirror of representation — and which a more general consideration of his text would have us emphasize. For while it may stem from a “general lack of totalisation [or] of a totaliser”²⁷ at the ontological level, Mallarméan thought is not reducible to a materialist or an atheist position. It opens onto a more fundamental truth that touches, precisely, on the “thing” of desire: it effectively suggests that even when it is put into doubt the absolute retains, to use

an expression from the Heidegger's *Nietzsche* — an expression that translates very precisely the point of view taken by the poet — a “force of awakening and of elevation”.²⁸ Moreover, the Mallarméan text would have us think of this “force” as an unsurpassable human reality by signifying in passing the perennial or invincible nature of the Ideal, beyond all of the twists and turns of the history of thought — an invincibility we can translate in metaphorical terms, taking up an image that has become emblematic of late modernity, as the survival of the gods in the very consciousness of their absence. In fact, the different hypostases of transcendence appear here from the same perspective in which they will appear in the work of Georges Bataille, such as, notably, the eternalization of the gods by a language that interminably speaks and denounces them and which suspends their existence on the inchoate logic of desire. The “antiphon to plaintiff hymns” that the character of the Nurse sings of in the ‘Old overture of *Hérodiade*’ offers a striking image of this logic: since the sky towards which she raises her eyes and from which she falls fatally is “hidden”, nothing of this “antiphony” can henceforth be heard except the empty resonance of the song with which it has finished by fusing with and of which only the rhythmic power can be felt — a power that, in a manner as irrepressible as it is irrational, is marked by desire.²⁹

As such, the critical “knowledge” to which the Mallarméan text gives us access reveals itself to be decisive at a level other than that of any regional knowledge (sociological knowledge, for example), even if, properly speaking, it encompasses no truth: what it makes appear is the desire of the subject *qua* an obligatory — *desperate* — relation to the “beyond”: This relation is a transcendental or quasi-transcendental relation insofar as it still involves universality, even if it does so in the absence of universals. It is a theological or quasi-theological relation insofar as it still involves faith, if only in a purely formal manner that substitutes the “*something else*” for God.

This inchoate logic of desire allows us to explain how a subject like Mallarmé is still drawn to treat literary activity with “seriousness”, all the while knowing that it not only constitutes a game but a “mad game”;³⁰ it allows us to better understand the motivations, which are less willed than suffered, by which he “launch[es] [himself] madly [*forcément*]”, which is to say, etymologically, “outside of meaning, [*hors de sens*] into Dream, despite [his] knowledge that Dream has no existence”³¹ and to enjoy [*jouir*] in good conscience the illusions of literature. Mallarmé himself proposed a very eloquent representation of such a subject, that is, of a desiring subject conscious of the determinations that desire exerts upon him, when he wrote in the form of what appears to be a faithful self-portrait³² that “[his] entire admiration goes straight to the great, inconsolable Seer, the obstinate seeker after a mystery he knows does not exist, and which he’ll pursue, eternally, for that very reason, with the bereavement of his lucid despair, for that mystery *would have been* Truth!”³³ It is striking to note that, if it presents itself as a “knowledge” of the inexistence of “Truth”, the lucidity that characterizes Mallarmé’s “great Magician” does not exclude its “pursuit”. On the contrary, it even seems to define this reflexive subject as

a subject conscious of his non-mastery, which is to say as a being who knows himself to be irresistibly submitted to the “superior attraction” that the Idea *qua* lack induces. This is why the cognitive or existential gain to which it attests is tainted with a “despair” and the practical form that it takes is expressed by reference to “mourning”, which determines in the subject an attitude that we could conceive — to take up the expression that Barthes employed to qualify the Freudian *fort-da* — as an “active practice of absence”.³⁴

By taking account of desire and the economy of *jouissance*, by revealing a logic subjacent to that of the social game, we are thus lead to re-evaluate the subjective relation to the Ideal that Mallarmé describes in ‘Music and Letters’, specifically with respect to literary activity. This prevents us from thinking about this relation in exclusive terms, that is, in terms of a complete pre- or non-reflexive adhesion, or, inversely, in terms of a complete critical distancing: to the extent that the Ideal is, first of all, and primarily, a phantasmatic production of desire, it effectively follows that we can never say that we are done with it — except, precisely, if we are duping ourselves. The “superior attraction” that it exerts on the subject, whether this be in the form of a metaphysical “beyond” or of a Value invested with social prestige with which Bourdieu associates the *illusio*, appears as a determination that we can, at best, recognize but from which we cannot extract ourselves except in a posture of bad faith. This is to say that lucidity, such as we find it in the critical point of view adopted by Mallarmé, cannot be confused with a rationalism that would claim to have been done with faith. On the contrary, this lucidity is characterized, rather, by the affirmation, if not of the predominance of faith over critical consciousness, then at least of the indissolubility of their relation. It is in this sense that it is also a demand for a certain “right” to the *jouissance* of the literary game — that it is the assumption of a passion which inclines the subject towards a “desperate” pleasure and as such offers itself as a modern form of *amor fati*.³⁵

Furthermore, if it is judicious to interpret the relation of the writer to the Ideal on analogy with religious belief, as Bourdieu does, it is on the express condition that we make it clear that literary faith, like faith in God, is infected with doubt. Even a summary consideration of the phenomenon of faith, and all the more so of faith during modernity, cannot not know of the doubt that often strains it and to which, after all, it accommodates itself quite well. By analogy, the very voluntaristic appeals of certain actors of the contemporary literary world, who enjoin us to refound literature in a “myth” or in some other form of belief in a transcendence of which they themselves concede the facticity, are not as contradictory as they may seem:³⁶ the faith in the literary fiction that animates them and whose renewal, consolidation and extension at the social level they hope for, is not so different, at root, from the form of belief the Ancients had in their myths, who at once both believed and did not believe in them.³⁷ In fact, such appeals seem to confirm that the “coexistence in the same mind of contradictory truths”, some of which participate in myth and others in rationality, is a “universal fact”.³⁸

Recognizing the “universality” of this fact is not simply to highlight what the man of reason or rationalism depicted by the metaphysical tradition owes to the desiring subject; it also allows us to understand, at a more particular level, in what sense the relation to the Ideal of a player as equivocal as Mallarmé, “*homo totus ambiguus*”,³⁹ escapes the accusation of cynicism. In fact, if it is true that the cynic sins by naivety insofar as he misrecognizes the power of illusions by characteristically claiming for himself the moral superiority of knowing that the game is vain and proceeds from no Truth,⁴⁰ it seems even more difficult to associate the poet with this posture: as we have seen, the entire critical originality of Mallarmé seems on the contrary to reside in the extremely lucid manner by which he underscores the pragmatic “reality” of illusion by taking into account the truth-effects or reality-effects produced by lack. This is manifestly why the critic Pascal Durand, who has analyzed in detail the general disposition of the poet with respect to the *nomos* of Letters and has described it as a “*reflexive adhesion*” for which there exists “no other example in the history of poetry and literature”,⁴¹ does not go so far as to describe him as a cynic. Nevertheless, the question imposes itself of knowing whether it is sufficient at the conceptual level to explain the profound motivation and the hidden logic of this disposition, as Durand⁴² does and as Bourdieu’s argumentation implicitly invites us to do, by invoking the poorly-defined principle — a principle that, if it is definable at all, is itself somewhat “magical” — of a “sense of the game”, that is, of the very thing that “removes the need for cynicism”.⁴³ In fact, the “secret disposition” to which Mallarmé himself alludes seems to respond in a more satisfying manner to this question, even if it too entails a degree of indetermination: by inviting us to think of the investment in literary activity by reference to a libidinal fact “in the name of which” *it* [ça] continues to read and to write, against or in exteriority to all good critical sense, this disposition recommends itself *a fortiori* to the metalanguage of the analysis of desire, proving itself by that fact to being susceptible to profiting from the resources of theorization available to this metalanguage. This “secret disposition” recommends itself all the most insistently since by considering in a more general sense the text and the person of Mallarmé from a psychoanalytic perspective allows us to specify their nature as being directed in the somewhat deviant direction of a disposition towards a *jouissance* that would be... “perverse”.

The mystification in letters

For Bourdieu, the “repugnance” to which the poet confesses in proceeding to the “impious dismantling in public of fiction” follows from his more general will to “kee[p] secret the ‘literary mechanism’ — or not [to] revea[l] it except in the most strictly shrouded form”. It is by this double and somewhat obscurantist attitude, worthy of one of the “great initiates”,⁴⁴ that Mallarmé dissociates literary *jouissance* from critical consciousness and thus preserves the integrity of the former from the potentially dysphoric effects of the latter. As surprising as it might appear

on a first reading, insofar as it reprises the disparaging remarks that a good number of his contemporaries made about Mallarmé, namely those of mystagogy and charlatanism,⁴⁵ this interpretation is not unfounded: in fact, if we consider the care that the poet himself takes in his work to organize, through the skilfully arranged pyrotechnics of his “lampbearer” poetics, these “fireworks” from which there is supposed to blossom forth phenomenally the “ideal pleasure” and which bring aesthetic *jouissance* to a climax, we can suppose that he was fearful of compromising the power of fascination and the luminous magnificence of this spectacle by doubling it with a critical perspective — a perspective susceptible of introducing in an untimely manner the “cumbersomeness of a near or concrete reminder”⁴⁶ of human-all-too-human reality and of its “substructures”.⁴⁷

But again, the position Mallarmé adopts to “keep the secret” does not appear to aim only at protecting the *jouissance* proper to the literary game; it also seems, and perhaps above all, to *participate* in it: certain indications in the text and the Mallarméan *ethos* lead us, in fact, to think that this disposition towards the creation of mystery is not only determined by circumstances but that it refers more broadly to a definitive aspect of the game the poet plays with the symbol and the literary institution and which, by this very fact, is symptomatic of the specific type of *jouissance* that he draws from it. Following this hypothesis, the consciousness he has of the artificiality of literature would constitute, in the manner of a constraint that it is necessary to circumvent to the extent that it threatens the pleasure of all those who do not have the moral stature or the “sense of the game” necessary for “confront[ing] in their truth [...] ‘legitimate impostures’”, as Bourdieu supposes, the motif of a game and of a *jouissance* that flourishes around a mystery and which seems directed against the *outsiders* represented, in the imaginary of this esoterism, by “non-initiated” readers.

This hypothesis appears all the more credible since it is well before the period in which he accedes to a consciousness of the institutional reality of literature — a period that we can plausibly associate with the great critical prose pieces of the *Divagations*, namely the years 1880-1890 — that Mallarmé manifests, in his relation to the game, a certain duplicitous attitude that, incidentally, is marked, in his mode of *jouissance*, by something of a perverse inflection. We can inform ourselves of this in the light of facts and documents that go right back to the first years of his literary career. One of them proves to be particularly illuminating: a letter that Lefébure sends to Mallarmé in the month of May 1867 in response to another letter that has been lost to us. This document provides a privileged perspective on the basis of which we can clarify the nature of desire at work in the poet. What it has the advantage of highlighting, beyond the lineaments of the poetics that he is then in the process of elaborating, is the “secret disposition” of Mallarmé or, to be more precise, the disposition for the secret that seems to preside over his libidinal and institutional investment in literary activity. Lefébure writes:

I have sufficiently well understood your poetic theory of Mystery, which is very true, and confirmed by history. Up to the present, every time man

has glimpsed the truth, that is, the logical constitution of the universal, he has rejected it in horror and has turned towards infinite illusion and, as Baudelaire says, has perhaps only invented heaven and hell so as to escape the Nevermore of Lucretius and Spinoza. It is thus that I understand the end, or, as you say, the arrow of modern poetry, of the steeple of the romantic cathedral, of which you would be the rooster, since you place yourself on high. But an infinite sadness comes over me in thinking about this: at such an elevation, who, with the exception perhaps of yourself and of the angels who do not exist, could gently caress your feather while murmuring: O you beautiful rooster! Furthermore, I fear that people will not dishabituate themselves swiftly of enigmas for which they know the answer, and the impossibility of a religion, in the face of the terrible light which shines forth from the Sciences, seems to me to be one of the great misfortunes of humanity.⁴⁸

While rich in metaphysical considerations, marked as they are by the spirit of the time, Lefébure's remarks also reflect quite concrete aesthetic preoccupations: they allow us to understand that, under the heading of a "poetic theory of Mystery", Mallarmé proves himself to desire the creation of a symbolic art that would exploit the resources of enigma so as to create or recreate the effect of transcendence dissipated by the "terrible light which shines forth from the Sciences". But what is more significant is that Lefébure also gestures towards the dose not only of mystery but of mystification that enters into such an enterprise: not without ridicule, the correspondent denounces the spiritual "elevation" the poet claims for himself and who is thereby guilty of wanting to extract himself from humanity and to raise himself up to the top of the "steeple of a romantic cathedral" and to convert himself into a purveyor of enigmas — that is, in sum, to adopt the position of the "subject supposed to know". Moreover, in the dispatch to his letter, Lefébure sums up well the nature of this symbolic posture by addressing his salutations to "[his] dear rooster/sphinx": while the figure of the rooster says everything about what Mallarmé's desired position entails with respect to pride and presumption, that of the sphinx says everything it implies of mystification. We can thus observe what Lefébure recognizes — so as to condemn it — what this theory has in common with what Bourdieu reveals — so as to condemn it as well — with regard to the symbolic posture that takes the form of a critical imposture and with which he associates Mallarmé by comparing him to a "great initiate": with more than a century between them, the two men highlight the duplicity that the game of the poet entails.

Evidently, Mallarmé disregarded the criticisms of his friend and made a career, at least partially, from the desire that expresses itself through this "poetic theory of Mystery", it being the case that the majority of his mature works can be read as so many enigmas and games of veils in which it is the "Nothing" (of language, of representation, of being) that seems to be so meticulously half-said, evoked, suggested, in short signified selectively to the "proper listeners", who are also the proper readers. Without even needing to return to the esoteric slogans and the

virulently anti-democratic complaints of an essay like “Artistic heresies”,⁴⁹ where the young poet axiomatically pronounced that “man can be a democratic, while the artist doubles himself and must remain an aristocrat”,⁵⁰ it is necessary to recognize that the ensemble of Mallarmé’s work is determined in an obscure manner by a somewhat perverse desire to create secrets and, correlatively, to discriminate.⁵¹ To the well-attested will of the poet to play the game of literature there thus appears to be attached a more occult desire, but one no less pregnant in its effects, for playing on others. It is this desire that seems to play itself out once again, and thus to find a certain source of satisfaction, in the troubled critical context of the “impious dismantling of fiction”, whose declaration or equivocal denunciation of “fiction” cannot consequently be linked only — nor indeed primarily — to the structural obligation the poet would have to reinforce the collective belief in the *illusio*.

That the disposition towards duplicity, which is conditioned by this desire, does not belong exclusively to Mallarmé; that it also defines the symbolic posture of Baudelaire and that with the latter it no doubt imposes itself more generally as one of the definitional traits of the *ethos* of the modern writer — all this does not relativize its critical importance. In fact, everything leads us to believe that it is because he was able to profit from this disposition in a way that conformed with the implicit norms and expectations of the literary field that Mallarmé acquired within this field a preeminent status: that is, his literary success owes much to the lucid — albeit not, of course, completely conscious — manner with which he dialectically moulded his desire according to the exigencies and the specific configuration of the symbolic aristocracy to which the field of restricted production of the time can be assimilated, this field being, as we know, a very select and competitive milieu where the faculty of duplicating oneself and deceiving one’s peers and readers seems not only to be a skill but also an express condition of the logic of distinction that is its foundation. The above-cited letter of Lefébure has the distinct advantage of signifying this work of libidinal investment and of ideological conformity, in short of the assimilation of a literary *habitus*, by illuminating the site of production of an aesthetic thought no doubt still uncertain and groping but no less resolved to constitute itself as a work which, by drawing on the resources of mystery, already promises to respect — by the very fact of pointing to it — the “invisible barrier”⁵² that the literary field erects and thanks to which it supports and sustains itself “aristocratically” in the social universe. In this sense, the case of Mallarmé offers an eloquent example of the work of “negotiation between the drives and institutions”⁵³ that Bourdieu called — but without having given it all the critical attention it deserved, it seems — the “work of socialization of the libido”; a work “which transforms the drives into specific interests, interests that are socially constituted and exist only in relation to a social space at the heart of which certain things are important and

others indifferent, and for socialized agents who are constituted in such a way that they make differences that correspond to objective differences in this space”.⁵⁴

Envoi

By inscribing the “beyond” of ‘Music and Letters’ in the framework of an illusion of a social nature associated with the *illusio*, Bourdieu contributed to highlighting one of the most original implications of the Mallarméan recognition of the symbolic order. His interpretation has given visibility to what appears today to have constituted one of the best kept secrets of the Mallarméan text: the social “truth” of literature as an institutional mechanism for the production of symbolic value, which is to say as a fiduciary organisation not only homologous to a specular and speculative game like that of finance, but also, more generally, which is emblematic of the ensemble of games composing the social universe, or of what the poet called for this very reason the “domain of Fiction”.⁵⁵

All the same, we can regret that the sociologist ignored that which, in the section on the “impious dismantling of literature”, reveals itself to also have its origins in the symbolic without for all that directly linking up with the social, namely the economy of *jouissance*. The re-reading that I have proposed of this section invites us to link the “beyond” produced and constitutively sought out by literary activity not primarily to the causality and the social phenomenality of the *illusio*, but to the causality of desire: after this re-examination, it is as a phantasmatic production, and thus by reference to an investment and to a “game” of a libidinal order, that this “beyond” imposes itself as the alpha and omega of this “mad game of writing”. This is why, with Mallarmé, we can truly say of this game that we “draw [it] out of us” in the manner of a “reality” that belongs to the intimate and paradoxical alterity of our *inner self*; and this is also why, in part against Bourdieu, we have to concede that this game is not so much willed as *desired*, that is, conditioned by this “secret disposition” which insists sensibly in the subject but consists, properly speaking, in nothing. It is precisely, this “nothing” that ‘Music and Letters’, in accordance with psychoanalytic theory, defines as the driving force of the economy of lack.

If it is true, as Bourdieu himself affirms, that the notion of the libido is synonymous with that of the *illusio*, it is in the sense in which a text like that of Mallarmé subordinates it to the investment in the literary artefact. But it is also comes at a price, as I hope to have shown, of revising certain fundamental aspects of the problematic of the *illusio*, in particular the nature of the pre-reflexive adhesion or the critical distanciation that the *illusio* inspires in the subject. No doubt the rhetorical orientation of the Bourdieusian interpretation of the “impious dismantling of fiction”, with everything it entails of omissions and points of overdetermination, betrays, beyond its well-known suspicion with respect to psychoanalysis, the lack of will on the part of the sociologist to open this field of questions. Still, while predicting a successful future for “socioanalysis”, Bourdieu seems to have delegated to others

the task of conjugating the study of the drives with that of the institution, just as he highlighted the epistemic necessity of such an articulation.

Notes

1. Pascal Quignard, *Les Ombres errantes. Dernier royaume*, Vol. 1, Paris, Gallimard 'Folio', 2002, p. 16. Republished with the kind permission of *Fabula*. Patrick Thériault, 'In umbra voluptatis lusi', *ConTEXTES* [Online], 9, 2011, URL <http://contextes.revues.org/4791>
2. Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 6, n. 3.
3. Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Music and Letters', in *Divagations* (Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 187 (*modified trans.*).
4. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995). Bourdieu also published this section in the form of an article: 'Le démontage impie de la fiction: l'esthétique négative de Stéphane Mallarmé', in *Literature, Culture and Society in the Modern Age*, under the direction of Edward J. Brown, Stanford, Department of Slavic Languages and Literature, 'Stanford Slavic Studies' (1991), pp. 145-150.
5. Pascal Durand is the principal artisan of this new appraisal (cf. his recent work, which synthesizes, articulates and enriches numerous contributions on the subject: *Mallarmé. Du sens des formes au sens des formalités*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 'Liber', 2008). Without being directly inspired by Bourdieusian sociology, the works of Vincent Kaufmann (*L'Équivoque épistolaire*, Paris, Minuit, 'Critique', 1990 and *Le Livre et ses addresses (Mallarmé, Ponge, Valéry, Blanchot)* (Paris, Méridien Klincksieck, 1986), or those works, which are freer at the formal level, of Daniel Oster, *La Gloire* (Paris, P.O.L, 1997 and *L'Individu littéraire* (Paris, PUF, 'Écriture', 1997) are also characterized by their attempt to draw out the element of sociality implicated in the Mallarméan text, by being at least equally attentive to its gesture of enunciation [*geste d'énonciation*] as to its enunciation [*énoncé*].
6. For a critical summary of the history and of the theorization of the problematic of the *illusio*, see Paul Costey, 'L'illusio chez Pierre Bourdieu. Les (mes)usages d'une notion et son application au cas des universitaires', *Tracés, Revue de Sciences humaines*, No. 8, L'illusion, avril 2005, online since January 20 2009. <http://traces.revues.org/index2133.html>.
7. Pierre Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*, Paris, 'Points/Essais' (1995), p. 153.
8. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 274.
9. Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Music and Letters' in *Divagations*, *op. cit.*, p. 187. Bourdieu does not cite the end of this section by Mallarmé that continues on from these paragraphs, but he takes them into account elsewhere in his analysis.
10. See Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *L'Art de l'âge moderne. L'esthétique et la philosophie de l'art du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris, Gallimard, 'NRF/Essais', 1992).
11. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 275.
12. Pierre Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

13. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
15. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-334.
16. Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Music and Letters' in *Divagations*, *op. cit.*, p. 187. Following the statement "...in light of a superior attraction", Mallarmé refers us to a note: "This point of view is no less pyrotechnical than metaphysical, but a fireworks show, at the level and by the example of thought, bursts out with ideal pleasure", *Ibid.*, p. 197.
17. See Eric Benoît, 'Le monde virtuel des *Poésies* de Mallarmé: une poétique de la "fiction"', in *Romantisme. Les Poésies de Stéphane Mallarmé. 'Une rose dans les ténèbres'. Actes du colloque d'aggrégation des 22 et 23 janvier 1999*, sous la direction de José-Luis Diaz (Paris, SEDES, 'Société des études romantiques', 1999), pp. 163-170.
18. Cited by Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *L'Art de l'âge moderne*, *op. cit.*, p. 283.
19. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
21. Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Music and Letters' in *Divagations*, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
22. Note that Mallarmé thematizes this circular character of reading in the context of another critical section: "To read — That practice — To lean, according to the page, on the blank, whose innocence inaugurates it, forgetting even the title that would speak too loud: and when, in a hinge, the most minor and disseminated, chance is conquered word by word, unfailingly the blank returns, gratuitous earlier but certain now, concluding that there is nothing beyond it and authenticating the silence", Stéphane Mallarmé, 'The Mystery in Letters', in *Divagations*, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
23. Elsewhere Jacques Lacan uses the expression "montage"/"démontage de la pulsion", *Le Séminaire. Les Quatre Concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*, Livre XI (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 'Points/Essais', 1973), p. 181.
24. Stéphane Mallarmé, *The Poems in Verse*. Translation and Notes by Peter Manson (Ohio: Miami University Press, 2012), p. 113.
25. Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature* (London: Penguin Books, 1959), p. 86.
26. Bourdieu insists on this point: "Breaking with musical *mimesis*, still very near to myth or rites, poetry leaves the natural order so as to situate itself, consciously, in the intrinsically human order of convention, of the "arbitrariness of the sign", as Saussure will say, of 'human artifice', as Mallarmé says", Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 275.
27. Pierre Campion, *Mallarmé. Poésie et philosophie* (Paris, PUF, 'Philosophies', 1994), p. 115.
28. Cited by Eric Benoît in *De la Crise du sens à la quête du sens: Mallarmé, Bernanos, Jabès*, Paris, Cerf, 'Cerf littérature', 2001, p. 13.
29. Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes*, t. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-139.
30. Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes*, t. II, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
31. In its totality, the passage is as follows: "Yes, *I know*, we are merely empty forms of matter, but we are indeed sublime in having invented God and our soul. So sublime, my friend,

that I want to gaze upon matter, fully conscious that it exists, and yet launching itself madly into Dream, despite its knowledge that Dream has no existence, extolling the Soul and all the divine impressions of that kind which have collected within us from the beginning of time and proclaiming, in the face of the Void which is truth, these glorious lies!”, Stéphane Mallarmé, *Selected Letters of Stéphane Mallarmé* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 60.

32. See Bertrand Marchal in the preface to Stéphane Mallarmé, *Correspondance complète (1862-1871), suivi de Lettres sur la poésie (1872-1898)* (Paris, Gallimard, ‘Folio/Classique’, 1995), p. 15.

33. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Selected Letters of Stéphane Mallarmé*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

34. Roland Barthes, *Fragments d’un discours amoureux* (Paris, Seuil, ‘Tel Quel’, 1977), p. 21.

35. The final tercet of *Salut* formulates in a certain sense the maxim of this *amor fati*: “Solitude, reef, star/ to whatever this is that was worth/ the white disquiet of our cloth”, Stéphane Mallarmé, *The Poems in Verse*, *op. cit.*, p. 9. The preceding strophes of this sonnet-epigraph suggest the lucid “maintenance” of a poet who knows how to keep a good distance from the poetic illusion so as to enjoy [*jouir*] his “lovely drunkenness” without being drowned disastrously in the “Nothing” of a radical alterity associated, as it happens, with the sea [*mer-mère*] in which “far away, a siren troupe/ is drowned, and mainly bottoms up”, *Ibid.* See the exhaustive interpretation I have proposed of this poem in *Le (dé)montage de la Fiction: la révélation moderne de Mallarmé* (Paris, Honoré Champion, ‘Romantisme et modernité’, 2010), pp. 31-112.

36. Thus, in an interview the writer Richard Millet recently deplored the fact that “literature is no longer sufficiently powerful and no longer engenders literary myths, or myths of the writer. It’s over! [...] There are no mythical figures, no more myths”. The question the interview posed to the writer, following this complaint, highlights well the performative contradiction such a “disenchantment” seems to lead back to: “If I understand you to the letter, how can you continue to write?”. ‘Richard Millet, interview avec Jacques-Pierre Amette’, in *Le Nouveau réactionnaire*. URL: <http://www.nouveau-reac.org/textes/richard-millet-interview-avec-jacques-pierre-amette>.

37. Paul Veyne, *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes ?* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, ‘Points/Essais’, 1983), p. 94. See also p. 32 and p. 148.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

39. Roger Dragonetti, *Le Fantôme dans le kiosque. Mallarmé et l’esthétique du quotidien*, Paris, Seuil, ‘Couleur des idées’, 1992, p. 17.

40. I am here drawing on remarks by Slavoj Žižek: “The position of the cynic is that he alone holds some piece of terrible, unvarnished wisdom. The paradigmatic cynic tells you privately, in a confidential low-key voice: ‘But don’t you get it that it is all really about (money/power/sex), that all high principles and values are just empty phrases which count for nothing?’ What the cynics don’t see is their own naivety, the naivety of their cynical wisdom that ignores the power of illusions”, ‘Why Cynics Are Wrong. The sublime shock of Obama’s victory’, *These Times*, 13 November 2008. URL: http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/4039/why_cynics_are_wrong.

41. Pascal Durand, *Du sens des formes au sens des formalités*, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

42. Ibid., p. 15.

43. Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

44. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

45. One can agree with Bourdieu's judgement only if one concedes his conception of readability *qua* the adequation between an objective code of reading and the artistic competence of the reader (see Jacques Dubois, *L'Institution de la littérature*, préface de Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Bruxelles, Labor, 'Espace Nord', 2005, pp. 182-184). Note that this judgement considerably relativizes the recognition of debt that the sociologist formulates with respect to the poet in the first lines of his analysis. In this, he is perhaps not entirely disinterested at the institutional level: by recognizing this debt, Bourdieu gives the impression of completing the critical gesture that Mallarmé had been content to sketch out for a minority of his readers. In fact, next to this poet who remains a mystifier, the sociologist adopts the ameliorating posture of the "impious" democratic divulger of the truth: "Faced with the pharisaical denunciations of my 'denunciations', I have often regretted not having followed the example of Mallarmé, who, refusing to 'perform, in public, the impious dismantling of the fiction and consequently of the literary mechanism, to display the principal part or nothing', chose to save the fiction, and the collective belief in the game, by enunciating this seminal nothingness only in the mode of denegation. But I could not be satisfied with the answer he provided the question whether one should utter publicly the constitutive mechanisms of social games that are as shrouded in prestige and mystery as those of art, literature, science, law or philosophy..." Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

46. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Divagations*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

47. Ibid., p. 195.

48. Cited in Mallarmé (Stéphane), *Correspondance (1862-1871)*, vol. I (Paris, Gallimard, 1959), p. 250, note 2.

49. *Hérésies artistiques. L'Art pour tous* (published in 1862), in *Œuvres complètes*, t. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 360-364.

50. Ibid., p. 362.

51. On this point Jankélévitch remarks that the secret "brings together in the very act by which it separates", that it "only says no to one in order to say yes to another" and that it can thus be compared to a "great jealous love that loves *against* someone and which has a need for refusal, for distinctions, for contrast", Vladimir Jankélévitch, *L'Ironie* (Paris, Flammarion, 'Nouvelle Bibliothèque scientifique', 1964), p. 53.

52. Pierre Bourdieu, cited by par Jacques Dubois, dans *op. cit.*, p. 180.

53. Pierre Bourdieu, in 'Avant-propos dialogué avec Pierre Bourdieu', from Jacques de Maître, *L'Autobiographie d'un paranoïaque* (Paris, Anthropos, « Psychanalyse », 1994), p. IX.

54. Pierre Bourdieu, *Raisons pratiques*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

55. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes*, t. II, *op. cit.*, p. 76.