

Noesis

The Journal of the Mega Society

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Note: We're supposed to be moving, but the last time we tried to move, the deal fell through. So, to be safe, if you're mailing me stuff during the last half of December, send it to my in-laws.

Another note: Ron Hoeflin sends this correction—Problem 46 in the Ultra Test should read 3 4 5 5 7 5 1 9 1 8 9 ? rather than 3 4 5 5 7 5 1 9 8 9 ?. (Eric Erlanson also informed me of the typo; three of Hoeflin's readers let him know.)

HEY! Depending on when you receive this issue, you may still have time to send in your vote for editor. Votes postmarked on or before the first of December will be counted. You are choosing among Rick Rosner, Chris Langan, and Glenn Morrison. Send your vote to Jeff Ward, 13155 Wimberly Square #284, San Diego CA 92128. The last I heard, Jeff had received only three ballots, so it's important that you vote.

Dues remain two dollars an issue. Checks are payable to Rick Rosner, not Mega or Noesis. You get a bonus issue for every two pages of published material you submit. And... anyone who finds the next two terms in this sequence by the end of 1995 gets 10 free issues:

6 2 5 5 4 5 6 4 ?

Hint: The eighth term in the sequence can also be 3.

IN THIS ISSUE

LETTERS FROM BOB DICK TO CHRIS LANGAN

CITIES OF THE WORLD FROM PAUL MAXIM

LETTER FROM ALAN AAX

PAUL MAXIM'S TRANSLATION OF AND COMMENTS ON 'THE SYNAGOGUE,'
PLUS A LETTER, POEMS AND PART TWO OF MALLARMÉ DECIPHERMENT

From: Bob Dick
To: Chris Langan

In response to your letter to me in *Noesis* 112:

Please, by all means, consider my skin thick enough to endure whatever abuse you can dish out. Spare me your favors in the invective department. Insults only damage *your* credibility, not mine.

You seem to have a remarkably short memory. You claim your CTMU is a uniter of math, religion, and "reality" (whatever that means). I directed my (rather hostile) remarks at your views from the religious aspect.

You assure me that Newcomb's Paradox is physics. Then I have little interest in it. I was criticising from the religious and interpersonal point of view.

Your letter garbles my remarks about the Pope and about Mensans. I assume (correct me if I am wrong) that as the founder of a religion you want your religion to live on after you are dead. That can only happen if you persuade a rather large number of people that it is worthwhile. There are not enough Megarians for that. Since your ideas are extremely abstruse I suggested making disciples of as many Mensans as possible. Unless you change your ways the number of your disciples is going to be zero.

My remark about the Pope was a challenge to write in language intelligent religious people can understand. I am still waiting.

In your letter you quite literally insult my intelligence. Shame on you! Here we have a new intelligence test: If you agree with Chris Langan you are intelligent. If you disagree you are not. Quick, call *Omni* magazine! Convincing people that the CTMU is good religion is what you should be doing. I suggest that the reason you do not do it is because (thru no fault of theirs) you cannot do it.

Very truly,



Robert Dick

To: Chris Langan
From: Bob Dick
Letter #2

Chris, you invited me to read more of *Noesis*. So I read the next page after your letter to me. There you asserted that everyone has his price. That is a falsehood. I got so angry I couldn't read further.

As an amateur mathematician you write in an unconventional uneducated style. Correct me if I am wrong, but here are some serious defects in your writing style:

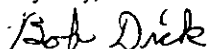
- o You should write each essay in at least three parts:
 - 1) Tell your readers what you are going to tell them.
 - 2) Tell your readers.
 - 3) Tell your readers what you told them.

- o If you are writing for any decision makers include two more parts:
 - 1) An executive summary at the beginning, no more than one or two pages, summarizing a few of your most important conclusions.
 - 2) A proposal for further work or a call for others to do certain work, at the end of your essay.

- o I have saved your most serious defect for last. Correct me if I am wrong, but I do not recall seeing any lemmas, theorems, or corollaries or proofs of these anywhere in your writing. The result is much like software written in "spaghetti code." Everything depends on everything else. As you must know, in any logical system if you can prove a fallacy you can prove anything. The way to avoid this trap is to compartmentalize with logical units: lemmas, theorems, and corollaries.

I have come to notice a bad character flaw of yours. In any dispute or conflict or disagreement you arrogate to yourself the right to have the final judgment. And in that judgment you always favor yourself. I don't care if you are superintelligent, you can't be right all the time.

Very truly,



Bob Dick

"CITIES OF THE WORLD"

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

In ancient Greece, it was unusually difficult to separate the men from the boys.

But today, in our modern world, the time has come to separate the sheep from the goats -- that is, to distinguish those who know their cities from those who don't.

Please understand: The following questions do not constitute an "IQ test," but rather a theme quiz. You will not be rated, graded, or degraded; you will not be marked on a curve, sigmatized, or stigmatized. No one will charge you a scoring fee, or attempt to sell you a subscription to National Geographic, no matter how well (or poorly) you score, since this quiz is purely for amusement. So get out those encyclopaedias, and test your knowledge of urbanology:

QUESTION: Which city --

- 1....is the happiest?
- 2....is most stubborn and persistent?
- 3....is most known for double-dealing?
- 4....is most eager for sex?
- 5....is least uniform?
- 6....is the largest?
- 7....is the least truthful?
- 8....is the easiest to reshape?
- 9....contains the largest amount?
- 10....has fits and starts and seizures?
- 11....is most scathing and corrosive?
- 12....is the most talkative?
- 13....is the boldest?
- 14....moves the fastest?
- 15....operates at the highest pitch?
- 16....is the neediest?
- 17....has a "certain inclination"?
- 18....has the most students of higher learning?
- 19....is the most elaborate and awe-inspiring?
- 20....is the guiltiest?
- 21....is the most predatory?
- 22....is the most delicate and refined?
- 23....oozes sluggishly along, like molasses in January?
- 24....is most conscious of race and national origin?
- 25....presents the greatest obstacles and challenges?
- 26....provides the most power and light?
- 27....is the most detailed and precise?
- 28....is the most corpulent?
- 29....is the most difficult to see through?
- 30....is the least complicated?
- 31....is the most genuine and verifiable?
- 32....is the most truthful?
- 33....is easiest to stretch or expand?
- 34....is most hideous and deformed?
- 35....is most cruel, ravening, and predatory?

(Continued)

"CITIES OF THE WORLD," QUESTIONS, Page 2 of 2.

- 36....is the strangest and most peculiar?
- 37....is the best organized and coordinated?
- 38....is hardest, thickest, and most concentrated?
- 39....wants to know everything about everything?
- 40....stands most on title, rank, and ceremony?
- 41....commits the most heinous crimes?
- 42....has the most happily married couples?
- 43....has the clearest vision and insight?
- 44....developed the earliest?
- 45....specializes most in quid pro quo?
- 46....is the most frightening?

LETTER FROM ALAN AAX

Rick Rosner:

October 31, 1995

If you want, please publish the following address change notice in *Noesis*:

From now on, please address all EIT-related correspondence to Box 2585, San Diego, CA 92037 (the previous address was Box 1391, Princeton, NJ 08542).

Also, I submit the following suggestion to Mega:

Why not consider the EIT as a test for admission into Mega? It clearly has important limitations: (a) a small data sample, (b) small number of items, and probably several others. However, at this point there are few other tests that *can* be used (the LAIT has been retired, and the Mega Test is too old by now). At any rate, I don't want to get into a long dispute over this matter (which can be argued forever). I just submit the suggestion.

Alan Aax
Box 2585
San Diego, CA 92037

"The Synagogue," by Guillaume Apollinaire (1901)

Ottomar Scholem et Abraham Loeweren
Coiffés de fuetres verts le matin du sabbat
Vont à la synagogue en longeant le Rhin
Et les coteaux où les vignes rougissent là-bas

Ils se disputent et crient des choses qu'on ose à peine traduire
Bâtard conçu pendant les règles ou Que le diable entre dans ton père
Le vieux Rhin soulève sa face ruisselante et se détourne pour sourire
Ottomar Scholem et Abraham Loeweren sont en colère

Parce que pendant le sabbat on ne doit pas fumer
Tandis que les chrétiens passent avec des cigares allumés
Et parce qu'Ottomar et Abraham aiment tous deux
Lia aux yeux de brebis et dont le ventre avance un peu

Pourtant tout à l'heure dans la synagogue l'un après l'autre
Ils baiseront la thora en soulevant leur beau chapeau
Parmi les feuillards de la fête des cabanes
Ottomar en chantant sourira à Abraham

Ils déchanteront sans mesure et les voix graves des hommes
Feront gémir un Léviathan au fond de Rhin comme une voix d'automne
Et dans la synagogue plein de chapeaux on agitera les loulabim
Hanoten ne Kamoth baqoim tholahoth baleoumim

"The Synagogue," by Guillaume Apollinaire

Ottomar Scholem and Abraham Loeweren
in green felt hats on sabbath morning go
to the synagogue that sits beside the Rhine
whose hillside vines are ripening below

They wrangle and shout about matters untranslatably vile
Bastard conceived in menses -- May the devil enter your sire
The old Rhine raises its streaming face and turns aside to smile
Ottomar Scholem and Abraham Loeweren brim with ire

since smoking is forbidden on the sabbath day
and since the Christians pass with cigarettes alit
and since both Ottomar and Abraham are prey
to love for sheep-eyed Leah whose belly swells a bit

Yet in the synagogue each one will shortly bow
to kiss the Torah pushing his hat back from his brow
amid the branches of the Feast of Gatherings
and Ottomar will smile to Abraham who sings

They'll chant asynchronously and the deep-throated bass of the men
will make a Leviathan groan like an autumn voice from the Rhine
and in the hat-filled Temple the palms will be waved again
Wreak vengeance upon the heathen Lord and scourge their race malign

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Editor's note: After receiving "The Synagogue," I asked Paul Maxim to comment on an anti-Semitic vibe I got from the poem.

STATEMENT CONCERNING APOLLINAIRE'S POEM, "THE SYNAGOGUE"

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I have been asked to comment on whether or not this work, which I translated into English, is anti-Semitic, or contains Jewish stereotypes.

The poem is written in a light, satiric tone, and shows a first-hand observation of Jewish customs and religion. It portrays the Jews as different from Christians (or goyim), which was literally true in many parts of Europe around the turn of the 20th century. I think the key question is, does the poem ask us to condemn or despise Jews -- somehow, I don't receive that impression. In other words, I think one must take a considerable step from "satire" or "caricature" (which are literary devices) to "anti-Semitism," which is a sociopolitical dogma. The poem mentions "Leah," who is pregnant and unmarried; this might conceivably be construed as a stereotype (i.e., the theme of the "Jew bastard"), until we learn that Apollinaire was himself illegitimate, and felt no sense of shame or stigma accruing therefrom. The poem depicts Ottomar and Abraham as being pious and devout, and communicates a sense of group sentiment during the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth); can that be considered anti-Semitic? I hardly think so. Finally, in its closing stanza, the poem mentions "Leviathan," and slightly misquotes a verse from Psalm 149... I receive the impression that Apollinaire did this to identify the Jews he is describing with their Old Testament origins, which does not seem like an unfavorable or unflattering thing to do, even though the Leviathan is introduced humorously.

In appraising this work, it might be well to remember that it was written while the Dreyfus affair was raging in France (Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer on the French General Staff, had been falsely convicted of treason). This cause câlibre convulsed France for many years, and stirred up much anti-Jewish hysteria, but I don't find any of this attitude reflected in Apollinaire's poem. Apollinaire undoubtedly manifested the attitudes and stereotypes of his culture, but he was, at the same time, a well-travelled and broadminded individual, who was at the forefront of the Parisian avante-garde, and hence could hardly have been called a bigot.

The question of anti-Semitism and art has swirled around for many years, with particular focus on figures such as Wagner, who was a notorious anti-Semite, and published at least one article condemning Jewish culture. But at the same time, Wagner was the greatest opera composer who ever lived, thus seeming to raise a conundrum for modern Jews, to wit: Should they rightfully enjoy Wagner's music, while overlooking his anti-Jewish bias? Frankly, I do not know of any Jewish music-lover who has deprived himself of the pleasure of Wagner's music, despite the fact that he was Hitler's favorite composer. I guess the moral is that a certain point is reached at which art and politics must go their separate ways...

To recapitulate, I feel that "The Synagogue" is satiric, but not anti-Semitic, and that its esthetic value warrants attention. Even if some wish to perceive it as anti-Semitic (and that is their prerogative), I would not go so far as to suppress it. In the first place, we have a First Amendment in this country, which suggests that even anti-Semites be allowed to express their point of view. In the second place, art has traditionally enjoyed certain immunities and privileges. Once we start suppressing satirists, we soon find ourselves in the same camp as Hitler and his book-burners -- and in my opinion, that is not a very good camp to be in.

LETTER FROM PAUL MAXIM

As a NOESIS subscriber and contributor, I should like to express my general approval for the editorship of Rick Rosner. I don't think one has to look very far for the root causes of Rick's success in this role. For one thing, issues are now being produced with great alacrity, giving the Society a sense of forward momentum, and Rick is to be thanked for the amount of time and energy he puts into this function. Furthermore, almost everything submitted to him gets published -- i.e., he is acting as a conduit, and so contributors obtain almost complete freedom of expression.

Now, some members of the Society may take exception to this arrangement, claiming that the "conduit" is really the Cloaca Maxima, and should be dammed, so as to impose a greater degree of "selectivity" on what appears in the journal, but I think it would be a great mistake to do so. In part, my attitude has been conditioned by my experience in some of the other high-IQ groups: for example, when I joined the Triple Nine Society, I was not able, for an entire year, to get its Editor (Dennis Wilson) to publish any of my poems -- not a very nice way to greet a new member.

Shortly after I joined ISPE in 1992, I sent its Editor a humorous poem entitled "Antiphon" (enclosed herewith), which he refused to publish on grounds that it offended his sense of prudery -- in other words, he felt obliged to protect the other members of ISPE from having their morals permanently impaired by reading my piece. Later on, I found out that he had no such scruples against using TELICOM as a libel-weapon against two ISPE officers who were expelled and denounced, one in 1990 and one in 1991, without any opportunity to offer a defense. I also found out, much to my chagrin, that "politically incorrect" members of ISPE never get their submissions published in TELICOM, and that all one requires to become "politically incorrect" is to offend or contradict its Glorious Leaders, who were never democratically elected.

If this is the direction that certain contributors wish to turn NOESIS, then by all means, let censorship be imposed. On the other hand, if it seems desirable to retain the journal as an open forum for the free interchange of ideas, let us continue along the current path. Frankly, I would rather hear a thousand crackpots prate, than allow one creative idea to be repressed as offensive to some censor, who strains to impose his prejudices on those who do not share them. It seems to me that the readers of NOESIS are intelligent enough, in the long run, to separate the crackpots from those who are not quite so cracked, and do not need an arbiter to perform this function for them.

As the age-old question asks, who will protect us from our protectors?

P. M.

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A string quartet declared it had no second fiddle,
since both its violins contended to be first.
The 'cellist shrewdly played both ends against the middle,
inflecting raucous notes whenever they rehearsed.

Cried Fiddler Number One, "Your tempi are too fast...!"
while "1A" soon rejoindered, "Yours are much too slow!"
So back and forth they struggled, auditors aghast,
to add another string -- a chokestring -- to their bow.

The 'cellist's wife was named Viola:
on stage, she followed hubby's cue --
but backstage, home in Mineola,
contrived to call the tunes, and sometimes turn the screw.

When asked about those twins, the fractious violins,
she quavered, quodlibet: "They're leading with their chins!
We scraped along for years, through bass and treble clef,
till flitting round my ears, they drove me dumb and deaf.

"As I diddle with my 'cello, in impromptu or duet,
there's no other hefty fellow can excite my heartthrobs...yet
when those virtuosi flank us, of a sudden I'm unstrung,
since their ardors to outrank us wore my sound hole to a bung.

"The minuets we used to play
were con amore, not con brio --
but since my good vibes ebbed away,
I think I'll join another trio."

FAMILY SECRETS

Those of us who have lived long (or alertly) enough remember the birth of some startling innovations, which filled us, at the time, with wonder and awe, though taken for granted now, seem commonplace. For example, my brother-in-law, the optometrist, brought home the first contact lens to show my sister, wearing it in one eye, like a modern-day Cyclops, or like Erich von Stroheim, world's greatest monoculist.

Of course, she guessed wrong which eye it was planted in.

He was a clever and ingenious fellow, with a clear vision of his own success. They had a garden behind their house, adorned with phlox, sweet William, lilac and buddlea bushes, which he liberally sprinkled with Nutrinure, a kind of dried sheep-flop designed for gentleman farmers.

He became a nursing-home owner, just when this business was starting to boom, and so boomed along with it, warehousing old ladies with urinary incontinence while pocketing their government subsidy stipends. With the money he made, he bought a house in the suburbs, escaping from Brooklyn even before the Dodgers did... He was the first on his block to sell to a schwartz, and in three years the whole neighborhood went black, as if someone had lowered a proscenium curtain, or pulled a hood over a sentenced prisoner's head.

Yes, he was quite a pioneer, my blockbusting brother-in-law; maybe some day, if I'm really, really unlucky, I'll wind up a patient in one of his nursing homes, just before he sells out to the body-snatchers.

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THE GLADIATOR

An ancient Japanese swordsman grew so proficient in the use of his blade that he switched to wood instead of steel just to give his opponents "a little more of an edge." Nevertheless, no one could defeat him, as he diced them and sliced them like dollops of *sukiyaki*.

At length, believing himself invincible, he renounced the sword entirely, taking up instead a weapon made of coathangers and cardboard wadding, that could not cut at all, but merely scratched. Still, his victims continued to topple as before, though his combats came to resemble "splinter parties."

At last, one of the vanquished cried, with his dying breath,

"I wish you had used the pitiless steel against me; the wood blade would only have dented my reputation, but your dinned coathook has strung me out like a *kisano*

to flap in the wind of posterity's derision!"

The great warrior paused for reflection, realizing that he had inflicted shame as well as suffering on his foes: a clear breach of the Samurai Code of Ethics, that wields great influence over the gentry classes. He wrote a poem renouncing all overt weaponry: "Henceforth," he cried, "I shall use nothing in combat save the hardened edges of my hands and feet, the point of my chin, and the spittle of my tongue."

He was formidable, this man. But now, his opponents refused to fight him, claiming he was unarmed. "Win or lose," they cried, "we shall wind up losing face, and that is one part a swordsman is hard put to replace." (Actually, they were much more fearful of his *kung-fu* drop-kick, spearheaded by a phalanx of razor-sharp ungula, with which he deballed or disembowled his foes.)

So, for a while, there was peace. But the emperor, having heard of our hero's prowess, commanded a demonstration. Reluctantly, the warrior climbed back into his armor, and while beset with swarms of furious mercenaries, who attacked him like kamikazis from every side, flipped them and tripped them and clipped them, himself unscathed.

"Well done," cried the Prince; "I see that you are a man of infinite courage and resourcefulness. But how, I ask, can you be so cutting without a knife?" — "Sire," responded the samurai, catching his second wind, "would your imperial majesty still be ruler without your courtiers and glittering entourage?" — "Of course," snapped the Prince; "my lineage guarantees it." — "Begging your highborn pardon," responded the gladiator, "I too retain command, even without accoutrements." This response so infuriated the Emperor, that he ordered the great warrior to commit *hara-kiri*, as a mark of loyalty, and for daring to compare himself with the royal person. — "Since you are considered invincible," he sneered, "there is no one more fitting to skewer you than yourself!"

On the evening before the scheduled execution, three hundred rebel warriors stormed the imperial compound. The palace guard fought bravely, but was at length overwhelmed; the Invincible Samurai was freed, and became the new emperor. Immediately, he ordered lavish indemnification for the families of all his former victims, plus enshrinement to grace their skeletal remains — but when these were gathered, alas, they proved too numerous for even the royal ossuary to hold — so he had them fashioned instead into dagger-handles, and conferred as trophies on all his trusted men, who cherished them ever after, revering them as the "bones of contention" that undergirt his reign.

* * * * *

Thus, if a Nipponese should smile at you, and say, "Good sir, I have a bone to pick with you today," do not be hoodwinked by his "what, me worry?" guise... there may be something pointed lurking behind the smile.

CATASTROPHIC

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I crossed a cat with a porcupine,
and everything turned out just fine:
She shed no dander, she fluffed no fur,
and dogs were TERRIFIED of her.

She stalked like Hitler through the house,
dismaying many a wretched mouse,
whose bowels loosened when he spied
a feline so well fortified.

She flushed a gopher from its hole,
and made it dance the rigmarole
by feinting, at their close conjuncture,
more pinpricks than an acupuncture.

She overturned a garbage can,
then swerved a twelve-ton moving van,
whose driver nearly dropped his load
to see a thornbush cross the road.

She chased a bobcat up a limb,
and almost got the best of him,
for when he threatened to attack her,
she flexed more spines than a chiropractor.

Yes, Prickly Pussy was her name,
and far-resounding spread her fame --
but when she brushed against my knee,
I sent her back to Bide-A-Wee.

A cuddly cat is fun to hold
in Lapland, when the nights grow cold --
but if a hedgehog was her sire,
you'd best embrace a Herefordshire.

Most cats are bristly to begin,
hence have no need for barbed-wire skin...
Imagine how your beard would feel,
extruding hairs of stainless steel!

My great invention could not last;
the prickle-cat was soon outclassed --
for when her barbs had all been shed,
we called her, "Old Eraser-Head."

Text-Reversal Overlay Diagram (DORT/TROD)

For Mallarmé's CIGAR-SONNET

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290	.erutaréttileugava Toutelaâmerésidée	272
307	TerutarsicérpportsneseLi Quandlentenouslaexpirons	248
331	iveuqecrappleéereLsecnemmoc Dansplusieursrondsdefumée	223
356	utisne-sulcxEli-t-e Abolisenautresronds	204
375	lovervèlalaàsecnamors Attestequelquecigare	184
395	edrueohcelisniAuefedres Brûlantsavammentpourpeu	161
418	iabrialcnoseDerapés Quelacendresesépare	142
437	eserdnecaleuQuepruopt Desonclairbaiserdefeu	121
458	nemmastnalûrBeragiceuq Ainsilechoeurdesromances	97
482	leuqetsettAsdnors Àalèvrevole-t-il	80
499	ertuanesilobAeémufedsd Exclus-ensitucommences	58
521	norsrueisulpsnaDs Leréelparcequevil	41
538	noripxeàlsuonetneldnau Lesenstropprécisrature	19
560	QeémuséremâàletuoT Tavaguelittérature.	1

The Mallarmé Decipherment Project...

A CRYPTOPOEM BY MALLARMÉ: THE CIGAR-SONNET

PART II

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Introduction. This article is the second in a series analyzing Mallarmé's hermetic sonnet, Toute l'âme résumée ("The whole soul summed up/ begun again"), which he published in 1895 as "a game." In our opening article, we showed how the poem is designed around a cryptogrammatic sequence, which begins when the letters of la cendre ("ash") are subtracted from son clair baiser de feu ("its bright kiss of fire"), so as to yield eleven residue letters (SOIR BAYS FEU). These are then subjected to further processing so as to yield a "hidden cigar name," etc., via a sequence of three additional steps which we posed as a problem for the reader. But before solving the cryptogram, we must first survey some additionally arcane aspects of Mallarmé's technique.

The Text Reversal Overlay Diagram. On an accompanying page, we present the DORT/TROD diagram constructed for the Cigar-Sonnet, by overlaying (on a line-by-line basis) the poem's backward version atop its forward version, once all interword spaces have been removed. This construction was one of Mallarmé's principal hermetic tools, since it provided him with a powerful and flexible device for juxtaposing one part of the text with another, thereby creating significant letter-configurations, or logograms (which must, of course, be subjected to further analysis).

One "gimmick" Mallarmé employed in constructing this diagram was to first restore elided letters, such as the missing "a" in l'âme, as well as that in l'expirons. When this is done, it accomplishes a specific function, that can be seen at the right end of double line 7: i.e., the word sépare now overlays itself ("coming and going"), thus demonstrating that it represents the poem's central word. This is no accident, since (as we noted in Article I), it also indicates the principal operation in Mallarmé's cryptogrammatic process: i.e., letter-subtraction. Sépare is additionally a homophone for c'est par, meaning "it is equal (to 100)," suggesting that equalities (that is, mathematical relationships) may play an important role in this text.

Also in line 7, we note that the letters in la cendre have lined up immediately beneath the right end of the backwarded son clair...; this hints at the all-important operation which begins the poem's decipherment sequence. Hence, a lot can be learned from the DORT/TROD construct, if it is: a) correctly devised, and b) correctly interpreted.

The Role of Number. One of the most impressive aspects of Mallarmé's hermetic methodology is the extent to which he was able to imbue his works with a hidden numerical component. For example, when we subtracted the letters of la cendre from son clair baiser de feu, we failed to note that they manifest a simple numerical relationship: that is, the number-value of the minuend is 186, while that of the subtrahend is 62, placing them in the relationship 3:1 (the "difference" must therefore be "2"). In a symbolic sense, what Mallarmé is telling us is that this letter-subtraction operation is "as easy as 1-2-3." But there is another subtle symbolism involved here, since (as we noted in Article I) la cendre was intended to represent the comet, moving between the Sun (son clair baiser de feu) and the Earth. The dichotomy of Earth and Sun is familiar to everyone, but the novel element in Mallarmé's astronomic religion was the introduction of a third component: i.e., the comet, which by passing between Earth and Sun acts as a celestial intermediary, messenger, or psychopomp. Hence, in Mallarmé's

representational scheme, "one third" has both numerical and metaphysical significance.

The Modern Pythagoras. Mallarmé's attempt to infuse his hermetic writings with a disguised numerical component represents probably the most successful modern instance of Pythagoreanism in literature, since like the ancient Greek sage, Mallarmé apparently believed that "number lies at the root of all things." Pythagoras's view (as it has come down to us) was that numbers were not simply convenient but ancillary devices for measuring and counting. Rather, he ascribed to them a unique independent existence as entities in their own right, and viewed them as intermediaries between the sensory world and that of ideas.

Also underlying Mallarmé's use of number is the fact that many ancient civilizations (Greek, Hebrew, Roman) did not have an independent set of digits, but were forced to make letters do "double duty" as numerical signs. This later gave rise to the kabbalistic concept that "every letter is a number," and vice versa. But Mallarmé did more than simply convert letters to their numerical equivalents, since he also utilized every possible means for introducing numerical relationships into his texts, such as use of positional notation, letter-frequency counts, and the like. Hence, when we encounter a word such as résumée ("summed up again"), it must be construed in a mathematical, and not simply a metaphorical sense. The big problem is to determine exactly what has to be "summed up again," and what the result could possibly signify.

The Morphological Letter. When we examine certain letters, it is not difficult to see that they are composed from a fusion of "subsidiary" letters: for example, $c + l = d$. Hence, if we wanted to count the number of c's (or c-forms) in a text, we might also have to take into account those letters which contain "c" as a typographical component, such as d, e, o, and q. One of the reasons why Mallarmé was very fussy about his typography was that he frequently employed such a technique to imbue his texts with a hidden numerical aspect.

In the Cigar-Sonnet, the "counting component" employed by Mallarmé is "morphological l," as is hinted at by the construction, l'âme. We normally read this, "the soul," but esoterically it means "l-soul." The "upright stroke" is, of course, the original tally-mark, and it appears morphologically in no fewer than 20 letters, constituting "a score"; they are: b, d, h, k, l, p, q, B, D, E, F, H, I, K, L, M, N, P, R, and T. When we count up all the occurrences of "l" in the poem, we find that it appears 18 times on a "stand-alone" or ordinary basis, and 29 times as a component of other letters, for a total of 47...initially, these numbers do not appear to convey any especial significance, but they will occur again.

The Grand Summation. The next step in this process is to prepare a Table in which the poem's morphological l-components are tabulated, on a line-by-line basis (Fig. II). Additionally, a tabulation can be made of the running totals for the line-by-line l-counts (Col. C), and when these 14 running totals are summed, they come out to 360. It seems we have arrived at an astronomically significant number, representing the completion of a circle, or cycle, as well as the heliocentric longitude of the Earth on the date of the Autumnal equinox, when the astronomic year is said to begin (in 1881, this occurred on September 22, at 21.50 hours).

Now, when we attempt to connect this number with Comet 1882 II, we find several interesting correspondences, to wit:

a) In miles per second, "360" represents a rough approximation to the comet's top perihelion velocity. (For Comet 1882 II, this was somewhat higher: about 378 m.p.s.)

b) On September 17, 1882, at around 3:56 p.m., Comet 1882 II passed its equinoctial colure at a heliocentric longitude of 360 degrees.

c) It takes about six hours (360 minutes) for such a comet to completely "round" the Sun, thereby being shunted from an incoming to an outgoing path.

d) Measuring from the Autumnal equinox of 1881, this comet's transit, perihelion, high point, and nodal passages all occurred on the 360th day following the beginning of astronomical year 1881-1882.

Col. A. Poem's Line Number	Col. B. Number of l- Forms	Col. C. Running Totals, Col. B.	Col. D. Running Totals, Col. C.
1	2	2	2
2	4	6	8
3	5	11	19
4	3	14	33
5	3	17	50
6	4	21	71
7	3	24	95
8	4	28	123
9	3	31	154
10	4	35	189
11	2	37	226
12	5	42	268
13	3	45	313
14	2	47	360
	47	360	1911

Fig. II: Tabulation of Morphological l-Components in the Cigar-Sonnet.

Since the Cigar-Sonnet deals esoterically with the soul-cycle, as symbolized by a comet's return to perihelion, it was quite appropriate for Mallarmé to use "360" as a numerical symbol embodying the same concept, and we arrive at "360," one of the poem's arcana, through a "resuming" process involving its l-components. Here, "l" is also the initial for lueur ("glimmer, glimpse, pale light"), which describes the comet's physical appearance, while the letter's name is homophonous with alle ("she") and aille ("wing"); this may serve to suggest why Mallarmé often depicted the comet as a "wing" or a fan, or endowed it with female attributes, as part of his concealment technique.

Many Happy Returns. In Col. D of the tabulation, we show line-by-line running totals for the entries in Col. C. Of course, these are purely artificial numbers, but when they are summed, they produce a significant result, since (when Mallarmé wrote this poem), "1911" represented the anticipated year of return for Comet Halley, which has a period of about 76 years, and had last appeared in 1835. No discussion of comets could be complete without some mention of Halley's the most famous and "dependable" of all, and the comet which first demonstrated its periodicity. Moreover, unlike the sungrazers (whose orbital paths are extremely elongated), Halley's orbit is cigar-shaped, and so represents the perfect astronomical embodiment of Mallarmé's "cigar."

In actuality, the comet's next appearance came a little earlier than expected (i.e., 1910), thanks to a little gravitational "fillup" by Jupiter -- but astronomers of the early 1890's had no way of knowing this, and so, at the time Mallarmé's poem was conceived, "1911" would have seemed to represent the most reasonable date of anticipation for Halley's return (the return of the sungrazing comets, which have much longer periods, cannot be accurately predicted). I conclude, therefore, that the "resumed" date of 1911 was deliberately "factored" by Mallarmé into his poem's construction, and so represents part of its "l-soul," since we arrived at it through an extension of the process that first yielded "360."

The Personal Factor. It is also possible to profitably employ the same "resuming" process with the numerical values of the letters in the poem's opening line, as shown in Fig. III. Here, the simple sum of letter-values comes out to 198, which does not seem especially significant. But when we perform a tabulation of running totals, as was done in Fig. II, they sum to 1847, a number which, divided into two pairs of digits,

appears to recapitulate the poem's l-count: that is, 18 "normal" l's, and 47 overall occurrences of the l-form. Furthermore, it is not necessary to look very far in order to ascertain this number's personal significance to Mallarmé, since it marks the first of his youthful tragedies: i.e., it is the year of his mother's death. Thus, via this tedious and problematical process, we arrive at the ultimate symbolic association of "soul" with elle and comet: that is to say, Mallarmé envisages his mother's soul returning in the form of a comet, constituting his divine sign, his guardian and protector. The entire poem is therefore a propitiatory exercise for the repose of his mother's soul.

Conclusion of the Cigar-Cipher. As we left this in Article I, we were supposed to perform two additional steps on the "residue" letters, SOIR BAIS FEU, and then subject them to some "four bias" or "basis four" operation in order to arrive at the poem's hidden cigar-name. Here is the solution:

	Letter- Values	Running Totals
T	20	20
o	15	35
u	21	56
t	20	76
e	5	81
l	12	93
a	1	94
m	13	107
e	5	112
r	18	130
s	5	135
é	19	154
u	21	175
m	13	188
é	5	193
e	5	198
	198	1847

Step 4: Add "H" to the residue letters. These 12 letters may now be anagrammed to form HIS FOU BAISER ("his mad kiss"), or HIES FOUR BIAS, as well as a variety of other recombinations. The justification for adding this "h," the aspirant letter, is contained in a rather humorous concept which was bandied around toward the end of the 19th century, to the effect that every spoken utterance automatically contained it (see Bombaugh, "Oddities and Curiosities of Literature," Dover Edition, P. 31). Because the poem speaks of "exhalation" (Line 2), this presumption does not seem overly far-fetched. In addition, since "H" in France is called ash, it is allusively equivalent to la cendre ("ash"), which we subtracted in Step 3, and so replaces what had previously been removed. Now, if we arrange the eleven residue letters to spell 'IS FOU BAISER, this represents a "case in point," since both in French and Cockney, initial "h" is seldom pronounced. The real cryptogrammatic reason for adding H is because it is needed to produce a "B" in the poem's hidden cigar-name, via the letter-transformation described below.

Fig. III: Sum of letter-values in opening line.

Step 5. The 12 letters are now alphabetized, and arranged in three groups containing four letters each: A B E F, H I I O, R S S U.

Step 6. This is the cryptogrammatic transformation per se. It represents a modified form of the "Caesar cipher" of antiquity, in which plaintext letters are displaced a determined number of positions in alphabetic sequence, so as to arrive at the ciphertext. Mallarmé apparently gave the name "FOUR BIAS" to his variant on this cipher-method, because the first three letters in each group are shifted backward four positions in alphabetic sequence, while the fourth letter is shifted backward only three, producing the following result:

Input Letters:	A	B	E	F	H	I	I	O	R	S	S	U
No. Places Shifted Backward:	-4	-4	-4	-3	-4	-4	-4	-3	-4	-4	-4	-3
Resultant (Output) Letters:	W	X	A	C	D	E	E	L	N	O	O	R

Step 7: At first glance, the output letters do not seem highly indicative, but they can be rearranged to form CORONA DE LWXE, which represents an almost perfect cigar-name, save for the fact that "W" has replaced "U" in LWXE. Even more importantly, they also signify an astronomical phenomenon: namely, the spectacle of a sungrazing comet at perihelion, at which point its tail embellishes the brightness of the Sun's corona. Astronomers of today know precisely what this looks like, since on 21 October 1965, Comet 1965 VIII (the "twin sister" of Comet 1882 II) was photographed rounding the Sun, and this photo has since been republished in numerous astronomic texts.

Another way of rescrambling the 12 output letters yields ENCODE LAX ROW, which appears to refer to the bottom row in the transformation process (Step 6), since these letters "lag" behind the top row in alphabetic sequence. Hence, considering this in conjunction with HIES FOUR BIAS, it appears as though Mallarmé's cryptogram has the capacity of defining itself, through an appropriate rearrangement of its component letters.

Step 8. The Second "Flicking of Ash." Decipherment of the poem's "hidden name at last provides us with a "real" cigar from which to logologically "flick the ash" -- that is, from which to subtract la cendre. This operation, which we initially performed on son clair baiser de feu, represents the "fulfillment" of Mallarmé's implicit instructions in lines 7 and 8 of the poem...in other words, a real cigar is not "kept burning" by removing the ash just once; it must be done again. Similarly, the "boiling off" of cometary debris occurs every time the comet nears the sun, and since we are dealing with periodic comets, this operation, too, must be envisaged as repetitive. It is therefore not difficult to understand why a second "flicking of ash" (via letter-subtraction) is important in fulfilling the poem's underlying idea-complex, which also involves the soul-cycle, as described in Book X of Plato's Republic (the famous "Myth of Er"). To show that this is not an ancillary association, la cendre may easily be anagrammed into "Er candle," which is another representation for the comet.

corona de lwxe	-- (the "hidden" cigar-name)	Fig. IV: The Second
c r na de l e	-- (<u>la cendre</u> is subtracted)	Subtraction of Ash
o o wx	-- (the "final residue")	

Step 9. Analysis of Results. This "final" residue consists of an entirely new (and greatly reduced) set of letters. Here, "O,O" represents two smoke-rings, in fulfillment of lines 3 and 4 of Mallarmé's poem (...plusieurs ronds de fumée/Abolis en autres ronds). It also symbolizes two orbital cycles, signifying that the "comet" is periodic. In mathematics, "0,0" represents "the origin" -- that is, the central or zero point, from which all numeration commences; this ties in very closely with Orphic doctrines which postulated that the soul descended from heaven to Earth, and eventually reascended to its heavenly abode. Hence, heaven is the soul's origin, and in the case of a periodic comet, it is the Sun. Like the comet and the soul, the poem eventually returns, via a devious letter-manipulative process, to its "origin point."

Recapitulation. Some reasons for believing that Mallarmé's "Cigar-Cipher" has been correctly solved include the following:

1. We arrived at the name of a specific, high-quality cigar, which at the same time denotes an astronomic phenomenon that fascinated Mallarmé.
2. The two successful subtractions of la cendre simulate two "flickings of ash," and also suggest two returns to perihelion by a periodic comet.
3. The cryptogram's input and output letters may be anagrammed, respectively, into "HIES FOUR BIAS," and "ENCODE LAX ROW," suggesting that the cryptogram is describing itself.
4. la cendre was found directly under son clair (baiser de feu) in the DORT/TROD diagram, while sépare constituted its central word.
5. The orbit of Halley's Comet (the poem's hidden image) is cigar-shaped.
6. The "game" implicit in this cryptogram satisfies Mallarmé's description of the poem as un jeu.

10 November 1995

Ms. Lise Lynge, Ph.D.
ISPE Special Projects Coordinator
Box 101, DK-2610
Rødovre, DENMARK

Dear Lise, Based on your letter of November 3, in which you responded to the materials I sent you concerning my Mallarmé Decipherment Project, I get the impression that you don't really understand the nature of the Project, nor the importance of publishing it in TELICOM. Hence, I shall try, once again, to clarify its needs:

1. This project is open-ended, and will not be completed in my lifetime, nor in yours. As was noted in the materials I sent you, there are thousands of undeciphered cryptopuzzles resident in Mallarmé's published works, and to date I have solved only a handful of them, mainly because of their great difficulty. Obviously, this Project cannot be termed "complete" until most of these puzzles are solved, and this will require the efforts of many analysts over a considerable period of time -- let us say, the next century. Hence, although you are correct in stating that, to date, I have been the sole investigator, this is by no means a "one person project," and no single investigator could ever bring it to completion. For this reason, one of my principal objectives has been to recruit the assistance of other high-IQ individuals who enjoy word-games, and might be interested in furthering the cause of literary history, by adding a few more startling facts to what is currently known about Mallarmé.

2. Since all you offered me, in response to my request for publication in TELICOM, was an "obituary notice," once the project is completed (which it will never be), I have become rather dubious as to whether ISPE's Special Projects Program, as it is presently being administered, can provide adequate assistance to projects of this type. As I see it, the only way that other members might be motivated to participate in this project is if they read and understand one or more of the numerous articles I have written about it, which explain Mallarmé's objectives and techniques. By refusing to allow me to publish this material in TELICOM, you are preventing me from placing the "nuts and bolts" of the Project before my fellow members, and are (in effect) interfering with my communications to them. Thus, I am forced to conclude that, rather than assisting with the development of this project, you are obstructing it.

3. As I indicated to you in the materials I sent, articles on Mallarméan decipherment have already appeared in publications such as INTEGRA, WORD WAYS, and NOESIS...none of these publications has a "Special Projects Program," nor a "Special Projects Coordinator," and yet they were able to accommodate my expository writeups. But ISPE, which continually boasts of all that it does to stimulate the intellectual achievement of its members, will not allow its members access to this new and challenging material...This tells me something significant about the true nature of ISPE, which tends to contradict much of its official propaganda. So, as far as my project is concerned, your efforts as Coordinator have not borne fruit...if you are handling other projects the same way, I think you might as well resign right now, and spare the rest of us a great deal of grief and frustration.

Sincerely yours,

PAUL MAXIM, Fellow
P.O. Box 120
New York, N.Y.
10012-0002, U.S.A.

P.S.: Since you offered to provide me with a "termination notice" in TELICOM, once my Project was completed, I am willing to furnish you with a similar Notice in NOESIS, once I hear that you have stepped down as Special Projects Coordinator