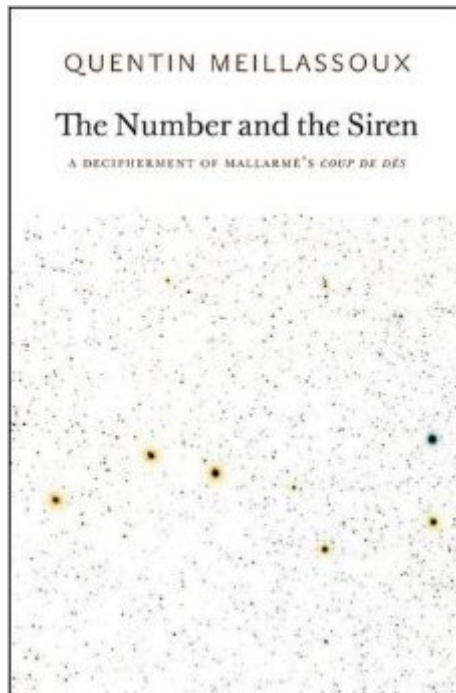


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The Number And The Siren: A Decipherment Of Mallarme's Coup De Des



Synopsis

A meticulous literary study, a detective story à la Edgar Allan Poe, a treasure hunt worthy of an adventure novel such are the registers in which will be deciphered the hidden secrets of a poem like no other. Quentin Meillassoux continues his innovative philosophical interrogation of the concepts of chance, contingency, infinity and eternity through a concentrated study of Stéphane Mallarmé's poem *Un Coup de Dés jamais n'abolira le Hasard*, patiently deciphering its enigmatic meaning on the basis of a dazzlingly simple and lucid insight with regard to the unique Number that cannot be another. The Coup de dés constitutes perhaps the most radical break in the history of modern poetry: the fractured lines spanning the double page; the typographical play borrowed from the poster form; the multiple interpolations disrupting reading. But the intrigue of this poem is still stranger and has always resisted full elucidation. We encounter a shipwreck, and a Master, himself almost submerged, who clasps in his hand the dice that, confronted by the furious waves, he hesitates to throw. The hero expects this throw, if it takes place, to be extraordinarily important: a Number said to be unique and which cannot be any other. The decisive point of the investigation proposed by Meillassoux comes with a discovery, unsettling and yet as simple as a child's game: All the dimensions of the Number, understood progressively, articulate between them but a sole condition that this Number should ultimately be delivered to us by a secret code, hidden in the Coup de dés, like a key that finally unlocks every one of its poetic devices. Thus is also unveiled the meaning of the siren that emerges for a lightning flash among the debris of the shipwreck: as the living heart of a drama that is still unfolding.

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Customer Reviews

Meillassoux was so promising- what a fall from grace to go from "After Finitude," which was a masterful philosophic treatise, to this meandering dung pile.

I read this book. There is a bit of hype about this book. It is Mallarme, but this fellow is no Jacques Derrida. Derrida put out an extraordinary reading of Mallarme in the early 70's. This book claims to decipher Mallarme, and it is true that it offers an excellent explanation of one narrow aspect of "un coup de des." But so what, it is mechanical, and it is like one note of cleverness compared to genius of Derrida.

A wild imagination but completely off the mark as far as Mallarme's poem is concerned. The number he comes up with is so farfetched as to be ludicrous. I' just going to throw the book in the trash.

Brilliant book, enticed me at once. Much easier to read than his other work "After Finitude", which is also amazing.

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