

Aiko Okamoto MacPhail

Grimoires: Dead Languages and Ancient Books in Stéphane Mallarmé

*Friday, Nov. 6
2:00-3:00 pm
Ballantine Hall 006*

Talk followed by discussion and refreshments.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
BLOOMINGTON

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ABOUT THE TALK: This talk deals with the notion of *grimoire* as the collection of ancient and dead words in Stéphane Mallarmé and his *Igitur* in the evolutionary context of French verse from Aloysius Bertrand to Gustave Kahn. In the preface of *Gaspard de la Nuit*, Aloysius Bertrand talks about a book of magic, a *grimoire*, held by an old man. That book is *Gaspard de la Nuit*, a collection of prose poetry. Stéphane Mallarmé adapted Bertrand's notion of *grimoire* and transformed it into a poetic ur-text. The *grimoire* contains a pure language as the legacy of the past. In *Igitur*, the *grimoire* is the book that Igitur carries with him from his ancestral room and down the staircase. Igitur travels to know the essence of old languages, and to apply it to the ultimate work or *le Livre*. This paper talks about Mallarmé's *grimoire*, the science of evolution in his poetics, and the transition of nineteenth-century French verse in conjunction with the "Frontispiece" by Félicien Rops for Mallarmé's *Poésies* (see illustration at right).

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: Aiko Okamoto MacPhail teaches as Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of French and Italian, Indiana University. She has the double maîtrise in literature and philosophy from the Université de Paris VIII and Paris I and studied at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. She is currently working on the book project based on her PhD which includes Stéphane Mallarmé, the Goncourts, and *Japonisme*, and also on a second project on Mallarmé and his affiliation with French literature from the late-medieval poets to eighteenth-century thinkers and writers.

