

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC

8

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Volume 8

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Excerpts from Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1960,
from the First Published Critical Appraisals
to Current Evaluations**

**Sharon K. Hall
Editor**

**Thomas Ligotti
James E. Person, Jr.
Associate Editors**

**Gale Research Company
Book Tower
Detroit, Michigan 48226**

STAFF

Sharon K. Hall, *Editor*

Thomas Ligotti, James E. Person, Jr., *Associate Editors*

Mark W. Scott, *Senior Assistant Editor*

Earlene M. Alber, Jane Dobija, Kathleen Gensley, Sandra Giraud, Denise B. Grove, Marie Lazzari,
Denise Wiloch, *Assistant Editors*

Phyllis Carmel Mendelson, Dennis Poupard, *Contributing Editors*

Carolyn Bancroft, *Production Supervisor*

Lizbeth A. Purdy, *Production Coordinator*

Frank James Borovsky, Laura L. Britton, Paula J. DiSante, Serita Lanette Lockard, Brenda
Marshall, Marie M. Mazur, Gloria Anne Williams, *Editorial Assistants*

Robert J. Elster, Jr., *Research Coordinator*

Ann Marie Dadah, Jeannine Schiffman Davidson, Robert J. Hill, James A. MacEachern, Carol
Angela Thomas, *Research Assistants*

Linda M. Pugliese, *Manuscript Coordinator*

Donna D. Craft, *Assistant Manuscript Coordinator*

Colleen M. Crane, Maureen A. Puhl, Rosetta Irene Simms, *Manuscript Assistants*

L. Elizabeth Hardin, *Permissions Supervisor*

Filomena Sgambati, *Permissions Coordinator*

Janice M. Mach, *Assistant Permissions Coordinator*

Patricia A. Seefelt, *Photo Permissions*

Anna Pertner, Mary P. McGrane, Susan D. Nobles, *Permissions Assistants*

Elizabeth Babini, Margaret Chamberlain, Virgie T. Leavens, Joan B. Weber, *Permissions Clerks*

Copyright © 1982 by Gale Research Company

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 76-46132

ISBN 0-8103-0219-5

ISSN 0276-8178

CONTENTS

Preface	7	Cumulative Index to Authors	577
Authors to Appear in Future Volumes	9	Cumulative Index to Nationalities	581
Appendix	563	Cumulative Index to Critics	583

Guillaume Apollinaire	
1880-1918	11
Maurice Baring 1874-1945	30
Pío Baroja 1872-1956	46
Maxim Gorky 1868-1936	66
William Ernest Henley	
1849-1903	95
Paul Heyse 1830-1914	112
Robert E. Howard	
1906-1936	127
Henrik Ibsen 1828-1906	140
James Joyce 1882-1941	157
Rudyard Kipling 1865-1936 ...	174
C. M. Kornbluth 1923-1958...	211
Amy Lowell 1874-1925	222
Roger Mais 1905-1955	239
Thomas Mann 1875-1955.....	251
Katherine Mansfield	
1888-1923	274
Charlotte Mew 1870-1928	294

Christian Morgenstern	
1871-1914	303
Charles G. D. Roberts	
1860-1943	312
Will Rogers 1879-1935	331
Edgar Saltus 1855-1921	341
M. P. Shiel 1865-1947	357
Carl Sternheim 1878-1942	366
Bram Stoker 1847-1912	383
August Strindberg	
1849-1912	404
Algernon Charles Swinburne	
1837-1909	422
Dylan Thomas 1914-1953	448
Franz Werfel 1890-1945	465
Oscar Wilde 1855-1900	486
Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz	
1885-1939	504
Elinor Wylie 1885-1928	520
Yevgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin	
1884-1937	540

PREFACE

It is impossible to overvalue the importance of literature in the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual evolution of humanity. Literature is that which both lifts us out of everyday life and helps us to better understand it. Through the fictive life of an Emma Bovary, a Lambert Strether, a Leopold Bloom, our perceptions of the human condition are enlarged, and we are enriched.

Literary criticism is a collective term for several kinds of critical writing: criticism may be normative, descriptive, textual, interpretive, appreciative, generic. It takes many forms: the traditional essay, the aphorism, the book or play review, even the parodic poem. Perhaps the single unifying feature of literary criticism lies in its purpose: to help us to better understand what we read.

The Scope of the Book

The usefulness of Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)*, which excerpts criticism on current writing, suggested an equivalent need among literature students and teachers interested in authors of the period 1900 to 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, and playwrights of this period are by far the most popular writers for study in high school and college literature courses. Moreover, since contemporary critics continue to analyze the work of this period—both in its own right and in relation to today's tastes and standards—a vast amount of relevant critical material confronts the student.

Thus, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)* presents significant passages from published criticism on authors who died between 1900 and 1960. Because of the difference in time span under consideration (*CLC* considers authors living from 1960 to the present), there is no duplication between *CLC* and *TCLC*.

Each volume of *TCLC* is carefully designed to present a list of authors who represent a variety of genres and nationalities. The length of an author's section is intended to be representative of the amount of critical attention he or she has received in the English language. Articles and books that have not been translated into English are excluded. An attempt has been made to identify and include excerpts from the seminal essays on each author's work. Additionally, as space permits, especially insightful essays of a more limited scope are included. Thus *TCLC* is designed to serve as an introduction for the student of twentieth-century literature to the authors of that period and to the most significant commentators on these authors.

Each *TCLC* author section represents the scope of critical response to that author's work: some early criticism is presented to indicate initial reactions, later criticism is selected to represent any rise or fall in an author's reputation, and current retrospective analyses provide students with a modern view. Since a *TCLC* author section is intended to be a definitive overview, the editors include between 30 and 35 authors in each 600-page volume (compared to approximately 75 authors in a *CLC* volume of similar size) in order to devote more attention to each author. An author may appear more than once because of the great quantity of critical material available, or because of the resurgence of criticism generated by events such as an author's centennial or anniversary celebration, the republication of an author's works, or publication of a newly translated work or volume of letters.

The Organization of the Book

An author section consists of the following elements: author heading, biocritical introduction, principal works, excerpts of criticism (each followed by a citation), and, beginning with Volume 3, an annotated bibliography of additional reading.

- The *author heading* consists of the author's full name, followed by birth and death dates. The unbracketed portion of the name denotes the form under which the author most commonly wrote. If an author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the real name given in parentheses on the first line of the biocritical introduction. Also located at the beginning of the biocritical introduction are any name variations under which an author wrote,

including transliterated forms for authors whose languages use nonroman alphabets. Uncertainty as to a birth or death date is indicated by a question mark.

- The *biocritical introduction* contains biographical and other background information about an author that will elucidate his or her creative output. Parenthetical material following several of the biocritical introductions includes references to biographical and critical reference series published by the Gale Research Company. These include *Dictionary of Literary Biography* and past volumes of *TCLC*.
- The *list of principal works* is chronological by date of first book publication and identifies genres. In the case of foreign authors where there are both foreign language publications and English translations, the title and date of the first English-language edition are given in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
- *Criticism* is arranged chronologically in each author section to provide a perspective on any changes in critical evaluation over the years. In the text of each author entry, titles by the author are printed in boldface type. This allows the reader to ascertain without difficulty the works discussed. For purposes of easier identification, the critic's name and the publication date of the essay are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the journal in which it appeared. For an anonymous essay later attributed to a critic, the critic's name appears in brackets in the heading and in the citation.
- A complete *bibliographical citation* designed to facilitate location of the original essay or book by the interested reader accompanies each piece of criticism. An asterisk (*) at the end of a citation indicates the essay is on more than one author.
- The *annotated bibliography* appearing at the end of each author section suggests further reading on the author. In some cases it includes essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights. An asterisk (*) at the end of a citation indicates the essay is on more than one author.

Each volume of *TCLC* includes a cumulative index to critics. Under each critic's name is listed the author(s) on which the critic has written and the volume and page where the criticism may be found. *TCLC* also includes a cumulative index to authors with the volume numbers in which the author appears in boldface after his or her name. A cumulative nationality index is another useful feature in *TCLC*. Author names are arranged alphabetically under their respective nationalities and followed by the volume number(s) in which they appear.

Acknowledgments

No work of this scope can be accomplished without the cooperation of many people. The editors especially wish to thank the copyright holders of the excerpts included in this volume, the permission managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in locating copyright holders, and the staffs of the Detroit Public Library, University of Detroit Library, University of Michigan Library, and Wayne State University Library for making their resources available to us. We are also grateful to Michael F. Wiedl III for his assistance with copyright research and to Norma J. Merry for her editorial assistance.

Suggestions Are Welcome

Several features have been added to *TCLC* since its original publication in response to various suggestions:

- Since Volume 2—An *Appendix* which lists the sources from which material in the volume is reprinted.
- Since Volume 3—An *Annotated Bibliography* for additional reading.
- Since Volume 4—*Portraits* of the authors.
- Since Volume 6—A *Nationality Index* for easy access to authors by nationality.

If readers wish to suggest authors they would like to have covered in future volumes, or if they have other suggestions, they are cordially invited to write the editor.

AUTHORS TO APPEAR IN FUTURE VOLUMES

- Ady, Endre 1877-1919
 Agate, James 1877-1947
 Agustini, Delmira 1886-1914
 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey 1836-1907
 Annensy, Innokenty Fyodorovich 1856-1909
 Arlen, Michael 1895-1956
 Barea, Arturo 1897-1957
 Barry, Philip 1896-1946
 Bass, Eduard 1888-1946
 Benét, William Rose 1886-1950
 Benson, E(dward) F(rederic) 1867-1940
 Benson, Stella 1892-1933
 Beresford, J(ohn) D(avys) 1873-1947
 Besant, Annie(Wood) 1847-1933
 Bethell, Mary Ursula 1874-1945
 Binyon, Laurence 1869-1943
 Blackmore, R(ichard) D(odd-ridge) 1825-1900
 Blasco Ibanez, Vicente 1867-1928
 Bojer, Johan 1872-1959
 Borowski, Tadeusz 1924-1951
 Bosman, Herman Charles 1905-1951
 Bottomley, Gordon 1874-1948
 Bourget, Paul 1852-1935
 Bourne, George 1863-1927
 Brandes, Georg (Morris Cohen) 1842-1927
 Broch, Herman 1886-1951
 Bromfield, Louis 1896-1956
 Bryusov, Valery (Yakovlevich) 1873-1924
 Byrne, Donn (Brian Oswald Donn-Byre) 1889-1928
 Caine, Hall 1853-1931
 Campana, Dina 1885-1932
 Campbell, (William) Wilfred 1861-1918
 Cannan, Gilbert 1884-1955
 Churchill, Winston 1871-1947
 Corelli, Marie 1855-1924
 Corvo, Baron (Frederick William Rolfe) 1860-1913
 Crane, Stephen 1871-1900
 Crawford, F. Marion 1854-1909
 Croce, Benedetto 1866-1952
 Davidson, John 1857-1909
 Day, Clarence 1874-1935
 Dazai, Osamu 1909-1948
 Delafield, E.M. (Edme Elizabeth Monica de la Pasture) 1890-1943
 DeMorgan, William 1839-1917
 Doblin, Alfred 1878-1957
 Douglas, Lloyd C(assel) 1877-1951
 Douglas, (George) Norman 1868-1952
 Dreiser, Theodore 1871-1945
 Drinkwater, John 1882-1937
 Duun, Olav 1876-1939
 Fadeyev, Alexandr 1901-1956
 Feydeau, Georges 1862-1921
 Field, Michael (Katherine Harris Bradley) 1846-1914 and Edith Emma Cooper 1862-1913
 Field, Rachel 1894-1924
 Fisher, Rudolph 1897-1934
 Flecker, James Elroy 1884-1915
 France, Anatole (Anatole Thibault) 1844-1924
 Freeman, John 1880-1929
 Freeman, Mary E. (Wilkins) 1852-1930
 Gilman, Charlotte (Anna Perkins Stetson) 1860-1935
 Gippius Or Hippius, Zinaida (Nikolayevna) 1869-1945
 Glyn, Elinor 1864-1943
 Gogarty, Oliver St. John 1878-1957
 Golding, Louis 1895-1958
 Gosse, Edmund 1849-1928
 Gould, Gerald 1885-1936
 Grahame, Kenneth 1859-1932
 Gray, John 1866-1934
 Grieg, Nordahl 1902-1943
 Guiraldes, Ricardo 1886-1927
 Gumilyov, Nikolay 1886-1921
 Gwynne, Stephen Lucius 1864-1950
 Haggard, H(enry) Rider 1856-1925
 Hale, Edward Everett 1822-1909
 Hall, (Marguerite) Radclyffe 1886-1943
 Harris, Frank 1856-1931
 Hearn, Lafcadio 1850-1904
 Hergesheimer, Joseph 1880-1954
 Hernandez, Miguel 1910-1942
 Herrick, Robert 1868-1938
 Hewlett, Maurice 1861-1923
 Heym, Georg 1887-1912
 Heyward, DuBose 1885-1940
 Hichens, Robert 1864-1950
 Hilton, James 1900-1954
 Hofmannsthal, Hugo Von 1874-1926
 Holtby, Winifred 1898-1935
 Hope, Anthony 1863-1933
 Hudson, Stephen 1868-1944
 Hudson, W(illiam) H(enry) 1841-1922
 Ivanov, Vyacheslav Ivanovich 1866-1949
 Jacobs, W(illiam) W(ymark) 1863-1943
 James, Will 1892-1942
 Jerome, Jerome K(lapka) 1859-1927
 Jones, Henry Arthur 1851-1929
 Kaiser, Georg 1878-1947
 Kuttner, Henry 1915-1958
 Kuzmin, Mikhail Alexseyevich 1875-1936
 Lang, Andrew 1844-1912
 Larbaud, Valery 1881-1957
 Lawson, Henry 1867-1922
 Levenson, Ada 1862-1933
 Lewisohn, Ludwig 1883-1955
 Lindsay, (Nicholas) Vachel 1879-1931
 London, Jack 1876-1916
 Lonsdale, Frederick 1881-1954
 Loti, Pierre 1850-1923
 Lowndes, Marie Belloc 1868-1947
 Lucas, E(dward) V(errall) 1868-1938
 Lynd, Robert 1879-1949
 MacArthur, Charles 1895-1956
 MacDonald, George 1824-1905
 Machado de Assis, Joaquim Maria 1839-1950
 Mann, Heinrich 1871-1950
 Manning, Frederic 1887-1935
 Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso 1876-1944
 Marriott, Charles 1869-1957
 Martin du Gard, Roger 1881-1958
 Mencken, H(enry) L(ouis) 1880-1956
 Meredith, George 1828-1909
 Mistral, Frédéric 1830-1914
 Mitchell, Margaret 1900-1949
 Monro, Harold 1879-1932
 Moore, Thomas Sturge 1870-1944
 Morgan, Charles 1894-1958
 Morley, Christopher 1890-1957
 Murray, (George) Gilbert 1866-1957
 Nervo, Amado 1870-1919
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 1844-1900
 Norris, Frank 1870-1902
 Olbracht, Ivan (Kemil Zeman) 1882-1952
 Ortega y Gasset, Jose 1883-1955
 Péguy, Charles 1873-1914
 Pinero, Arthur Wing 1855-1934
 Pontoppidan, Henrik 1857-1943
 Porter, Eleanor H(odgman) 1868-1920
 Porter, Gene(va) Stratton 1886-1924
 Powys, T(heodore) F(rancis) 1875-1953
 Quiller-Couch, Arthur 1863-1944
 Rappoport, Solomon 1863-1944
 Reed, John (Silas) 1887-1920
 Reid, Forrest 1876-1947
 Riley, James Whitcomb 1849-1916
 Rinehart, Mary Roberts 1876-1958
 Roberts, Elizabeth Madox 1886-1941
 Rolland, Romain 1866-1944
 Rølvaag, O(le) E(dvart) 1876-1931
 Rosenberg, Isaac 1870-1918
 Rourke, Constance 1885-1941
 Roussel, Raymond 1877-1933
 Runyon, (Alfred) Damon 1884-1946
 Sabatini, Rafael 1875-1950
 Santayana, George 1863-1952
 Schreiner, Olive (Emilie Albertina) 1855-1920
 Seeger, Alan 1888-1916
 Service, Robert 1874-1958
 Seton, Ernest Thompson 1860-1946
 Slater, Francis Carey 1875-1958
 Slesinger, Tess 1905-1945
 Sologub, Fyodor 1863-1927
 Squire, J(ohn) C(ollings) 1884-1958
 Steiner, Rudolph 1861-1925
 Stockton, Frank R. 1834-1902
 Sudermann, Hermann 1857-1938
 Symons, Arthur 1865-1945
 Tabb, John Bannister 1845-1909
 Tarkington, Booth 1869-1946
 Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre 1881-1955
 Tey, Josephine (Elizabeth Mackintosh) 1897-1952
 Thomas, (Philip) Edward 1878-1917
 Toller, Ernst 1893-1939
 Turner, W(alter) J(ames) R(edfern) 1889-1946
 Vachell, Horace Annesley 1861-1955
 Valera y Alcala Galiano, Juan 1824-1905
 Van Dine, S.S. (William H. Wright) 1888-1939
 Van Doren, Carol 1885-1950
 Vazov, Ivan 1850-1921
 Vian, Boris 1878-1959
 Wallace, Edgar 1874-1932
 Wallace, Lewis 1827-1905
 Washington, Booker T(aliaferro) 1856-1915
 Webb, Mary 1881-1927

Authors to Appear in Future Volumes

Webster, Jean 1876-1916
Welch, Denton 1917-1948

Wells, Carolyn 1869-1942
Wister, Owen 1860-1938

Wren, P(ercival)
C(hristopher) 1885-1941

Wylie, Francis Brett
1844-1954

Readers are cordially invited to suggest additional authors to the editors.

Guillaume Apollinaire

1880-1918

(Born Wilhelm Apollinaris de Kostrowitzki; also Kostrowitski, and Kostrowitzky) French poet, dramatist, critic, short story writer, and novelist.

A quintessential modernist, Apollinaire is one of the most important poets of the early twentieth century. His career, despite its brevity, spanned such nineteenth-century literary movements as symbolism and such twentieth-century movements as futurism and cubism. During various periods his work shows affinities with each of these movements. Apollinaire was, however, more than an artist formed by trends and traditions, for he himself helped to shape the modernist schools that followed him.

There is a significant relationship between Apollinaire's life and his work. According to most sources, he was born in Rome, the illegitimate son of a Polish mother, and spent much of his youth traveling around Europe before finally settling in Paris. With such a background he developed a cosmopolitan outlook and became fascinated with a variety of studies. His interest in art, for example, led to his becoming a significant critic and early promoter of the cubists. He mixed with a bohemian group of artists which included Picasso and Marcel Duchamp, and he became himself an offbeat model of the definitive bohemian. Apollinaire had always lived somewhere on the fringe of a stable society, and at one point he was unjustly imprisoned in connection with the theft of the *Mona Lisa*. This experience was expressed through a series of poems written during his incarceration, one example of the autobiographical element in his writing. Another example of the relationship between Apollinaire's art and life is the wartime poetry chronicling his duty at the front during World War I. A head wound sent him back to Paris, where he died on Armistice Day of influenza.

Apollinaire's earliest publication, *L'enchanteur pourrissant* and *L'hérésiarque et cie*, are collections of short stories which exhibit a major trait of all his subsequent works: the unrestricted use of imagination. Fantastic characters and situations are used freely throughout these stories. Like the symbolist writers before him, Apollinaire repudiated the realistic approach to writing and the limits it imposed. But rather than following symbolism's self-imposed exile from everyday reality, Apollinaire's works display a whole-hearted attempt to confront and transform wordly experience in all its aspects, from the advancements of technology to the tragedies of war. As Anna Balakian has observed, Apollinaire's ambition was "to change the world through language." Among the author's other works of fiction, the novel *Le poète assassiné* (*The Poet Assassinated*) introduces the poet as a creator of new worlds, a role that Apollinaire himself took on in his major works, the poetry collections *Alcools* and *Calligrammes* (*Calligrams*).

Both *Alcools* and *Calligrams* are notable for their stylistic experimentation and the novelty of their themes. Apollinaire based many of his poems on subjects not often treated in serious poetry before him, particularly subjects from contemporary life. He also treated traditional poetic themes, such as the poet's experience of war or romance, in ways that ex-



The Granger Collection

pressed an astonishing willingness to contemplate the severest emotions from new points of view. However, Apollinaire's unique and liberating sense of humor serves more to clarify rather than diminish the poignancy of his often tragic themes. He frequently achieves this effect through the stylistic innovations which a number of critics view as his most significant contribution to modern poetry. Apollinaire's first major collection of poetry, *Alcools*, was in many ways traditional in style until, at the last moment, he instructed the printer to leave all punctuation out of the manuscript. The stylistic result is apparent throughout the works of poets writing after Apollinaire. In addition to its technical importance, *Alcools* contains what critics regard as Apollinaire's most successful individual poems, such as "Zone" and "La chanson du mal-aimé" ("Song of the Ill-Beloved"), which transcribe the full range and complexity of their author's vision.

When Apollinaire returned to Paris after his service in the First World War, he saw the staging of his drama *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (*The Breasts of Tiresias*). After considering other designations for the play, he finally subtitled it a *drame surréaliste*. This epithet was later adopted by the surrealists to describe their delirium-like approach to art and experience. Throughout Apollinaire's works, from his concrete poems written in the shape of various objects to pornographic extra-

vaganzas like *Les onze mille verges* (*The Debauched Hospodar*), there exist numerous examples of those artistic traits which lead the surrealists and other literary experimentalists to claim him as one of their predecessors. Undoubtedly the most outstanding quality of Apollinaire was his constant vitality and his willingness to take risks. It is perhaps this spirit that makes Apollinaire's name synonymous with literary innovation.

(See also *TCLC*, Vol. 3.)

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- L'enchanteur pourrissant* (short stories) 1909
L'hérésiarche et cie (short stories) 1910
 [The Heresiarch and Co., 1965; also published as *The Wandering Jew, and Other Stories*, 1967]
Le bestiaire; ou, Cortège d'Orphée (poetry) 1911
Alcools (poetry) 1913
 [Alcools, 1964]
Méditations esthétiques: Les peintres cubistes (criticism) 1913
 [The Cubist Painters: Aesthetic Meditations, 1913]
Le poète assassiné (novel) 1916
 [The Poet Assassinated, 1923]
Vitam impedere amori (poetry) 1917
Calligrammes (poetry) 1918
 [Calligrams, 1970]
L'esprit nouveau et les poètes (essay) 1918
Les mamelles de Tirésias (drama) 1918
 [The Breasts of Tiresias published in journal *Odyssey*, 1961]
La femme assise (novel) 1920
Il y a (poetry) 1925
Les onze mille verges (novel) 1948
 [The Debauched Hospodar, 1953]
Couleur de temps (drama) 1949

S. A. RHODES (essay date 1938)

[Apollinaire] wanted his *Calligrammes* to speak to the eye as well as to the mind and the senses. He carved some of them, accordingly, in the shape objects assume and suggest in the universe. But behind this external semblance lies concealed an inner image of the poetic reality they emulate and contain. The reader must unveil every poem for himself. His heart-shaped poem *Coeur* resembles a candle-flame burning upside down; his *Œillet* exhales the perfume of a carnation, and is fashioned like a flower; his *Jet d'Eau* imitates the graceful cascade of a fountain. Its syllables echo the melancholy swash of falling waters. (p. 303)

Some of his *Calligrammes* seem to be composed with disconnected images. The imagination must leap from one to the other, perform somersaults that contradict the laws of logic and academic gravity. Others are told in a tone of confidence, seeming to have sprung without premeditation from a conversation, a promenade in the countryside, a ride along the boulevards. He aimed to bridge the distance that divides poetry and daily living. He did not seek to put into figurative speech the formless aspects of things he conceived, however. He knew the limitations of his typographical innovations. "They are an idealization of free-verse," he declared, and a typographical

precision at a time when typography is ending its career brilliantly, at the dawn of other means of expression through the phonograph and cinématograph." He believed, nevertheless, that they afforded a new sensibility a means of expressing itself anew. Croniamantal, the hero of his novel *Le Poète assassiné*, writes his last poem in regular verse as

Luth
 Zut!

and immediately after he composes his last irregular poem also, so as to break with all verse. He wished to do away with all rhetoric and formalism in art. He did not apologize for his seeming verbal eccentricities, or for their shortcomings. "It is the first book of its kind," he observed regarding *Calligrammes*. "Others will follow on the road to perfection." To the very end of his life he held firmly to this faith. "If I end my experiments," he confided to André Billy, "it will be because I shall have become weary of being treated as a scatterbrain, for innovations seem absurd to those who are satisfied to languish in a rut." (pp. 303-04)

Of the two novels Apollinaire wrote, the better known, *Le Poète assassiné*, is a social travesty of Rabelaisian quality and intensity, more Quixotic, and closer to the heart of the poet than any of his other prose writings. This tale of the mock-heroic massacre of the poets is especially interesting on account of the light it throws on the inner inquietude and pessimism of the poet. "Real glory," bellows Horace Tograth, the antagonist of the poet in the novel, "has forsaken poetry for science, philosophy, acrobatics, philanthropy, sociology, etc. There is no more room for poets in modern society. The prizes awarded to them belong to the workers, the acrobats, the philanthropists, the sociologists, etc. Let them disappear. Lycurgus banished them from the Republic; let them be banished from the earth." Thus begins, in the story, the massacre of the innocents, until all are killed, including its hero Croniamantal, save the prince of poets who, being held in protective imprisonment, escapes death, and is present, later, at the unveiling of a statue to the memory of the martyred Croniamantal.

The other full novel of Apollinaire, *La Femme assise*, presents picturesque side-pictures of the Montparnasse of the post-war era. Aside from that, it reveals the poet's proneness for romanesque situations. It is a patchwork of whimsical and bizarre yarns which are darned together with difficulty. The tales collected in *L'Hérésiarche et Cie*, and in the volume that contains *Le poète assassiné*, are of a higher calibre. They are truculent narratives of heretics and lunatics, of knavery and mystery. Here the exotic and prosaic, the ironic and melodramatic mingle together to form a strange panorama of society on the verge of a chimerical reality. They recreate the spirit and atmosphere of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *Contes cruels*, and are worthy of being classed beside them. (pp. 305-06)

Apollinaire associates his sentimental journey with the variegated spectacle of life in the adolescent years of the century. His poetry becomes in turn a multicolored reflection of that multifarious reality. His intellectual and emotional nimbleness and alertness commingle to set off the fireworks of his creative imagination. He sees everything, senses everything, experiences everything. In consequence, his inspiration is multiple, ever new and refreshing. He fuses and confuses the lines of demarcation artificially erected between social and poetical territories. His field lies in the *terra incognita* of art, where he sows the seeds of his earthly captivity, and where he harvests strange flowers that may seem to the alien in spirit like hybrids

between lovely orchids and some forbidding cacti. He remains a passionate poet, mindful of the mechanism of daily activities, and yet courageously faithful to his poetic pilgrimage. For there is enough routine in life to mould or distort the human heart. His poetry is the expression of a vibrating mode of life, a restatement of its ultimate and potent values. It represents a genuine attempt to create a form of simultaneous lyricism—globular, integral, mystical. It is an illustration of that “reorganization of lyricism,” he wished to engineer, that “inner restraint” he advocated, that “surrealism” which he finally introduced into the poetic vocabulary, in contrast to the “surnaturalism” embraced by the previous generation of poets.

The ways of the poet within this “inner restraint” are not always smooth or easy to tread upon. His poems are often like fabulous, beautiful conches. The creatures that were lodged in them once upon a time have escaped, some with cries of pain, others humming unearthly strains. Something of their melodies has continued to vibrate within their spiral chambers. The winding, inner ways of Apollinaire’s poems, the vowels and consonants that wall them, have likewise retained for ever the echo of the music he has sung into them. Placed against our mind’s ears, they resound with a harmony of exquisite timbre, though they may seem, indeed, bizarre to the external eye.

Apollinaire composes a music in the necromantic laboratory of his sensibility disturbing alike to the glossaries of men and to their tranquillity. His imagination sails upon a sea of restless quests, and his words, like sea-foam, swell upon a sea of restless quests, and his words, like sea-foam, swell over its waves, rhythmically, unfathomably escaping towards unseen shores. (pp. 306-08)

He felt he was the mouthpiece of his age. He invented new sounds, new voices, drawn from body and heart, from earth and sky. He mixed the elements of this alchemy with cunning witchery. And he brought out of his inner fire a magic gold that was held to be counterfeit in the outworn exchange of versifiers. But underneath his strangely alluring alloy glitters a metal that would find currency in Parnassus. (p. 308)

S. A. Rhodes, “Guillaume Apollinaire,” in *The French Review* (copyright 1938 by the American Association of Teachers of French), Vol. XI, No. 4, February, 1938, pp. 303-19.

DAVID I. GROSSVOGEL (essay date 1958)

Guillaume Apollinaire appended a foreword to a previously written play of his own, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*. . . . Though couched amidst irrelevant remarks about Malthusianism, this preface attempted more than merely to raise some cheerful nonsense to the level of a pamphlet: it was in effect Apollinaire’s *ars dramatica*.

The preface begins as a protest—and at first, the very protest seems anodine. Apollinaire wants to lift the theater out of the rut into which it has fallen because of vulgar naturalism. Reference is made to the successors of Victor Hugo and to the vacuity of subsequent “local color,” the inevitable pendant of that skillful deception—naturalism—which Apollinaire wishes to supersede. In this phase of its development, the author’s theory is too negatively circumscribed to afford much promise. Indeed, Jeanine Moulin (*Guillaume Apollinaire: Textes inédits* . . .) reminds the modern reader that this *drame surréaliste* which today enjoys a cognomen that has gathered literary fame, was to have been labeled simply *surnaturaliste*; Pierre Albert-

Biot, Apollinaire’s publisher, suggested the more ambiguous term *surréaliste* whose implied extensions proved so felicitous.

But the suggestive word benefits even the theorist, and in calling for a return to “nature,” though stipulating that this never be through servile imitation, Apollinaire finds his description adumbrating an esthetics: “When man wished to imitate walking, he fashioned the wheel that in no way resembles a leg. He thus achieved surrealism without knowing it.” The theorist is now ready to turn from controversy to the development of his own concepts. He finds that a more viable drama will strive to concern itself with its own particular esthetics rather than with the usual surface imitations of life. . . . [Apollinaire] is discovered demanding of the theater essentially what Antonin Artaud (*Le Théâtre et son double* . . .) was to formulate: “The theater will be able to become itself again—that is to say, a means of providing true illusion—only by giving the spectator genuine dream precipitates.”

Since the drama will be an essential and collective experience rather than a game made possible because of coincidentally valid facets (repeatedly, in preface and prologue, Apollinaire warns against *trompe-l’oeil* shallowness), the audience will be drawn into the dramatic rite. He mentions as a hoped-for means of achieving this integration a double theater in the round, one that will bound the spectators from without as well, through an external, circular stage.

This theater, not about life but generating instead a life truly its own, will reject the strictures of any one genre. Such is anyway the author’s cast: “It is impossible for me to decide whether or not this drama is serious. [. . .] I preferred to allow a free flow to that *fantaisie* which is my way of interpreting nature, *fantaisie*, which, according to the days, evidences varying degrees of melancholy, satire or lyricism.” The word *fantaisie* is a felicitous one—the conscious author assumes the mantle which he and his public know to be his and suggests through the word those qualities of imaginativeness, conceptual freedom, spontaneity, and surprise found in his poetic opus. . . . That Apollinaire’s artistic climate indeed required that *fantaisie* alluded to, is confirmed by the withering of subsequent drama which was not granted such a climate. In *Couleur du temps*, “Drama in Three Acts and in Verse” . . . there remains little more than the author’s war-inspired and maudlin sentiment.

Couleur du temps sends the prophetic poet Nyctor, a scientist, and a magnate in a plane-born quest for Peace. Protracted stopovers on a battlefield to rescue the mother of a dead soldier, and on a desert island to snatch away a repentant criminal, fail to prevent the discovery of Peace—a beautiful woman encased in a polar ice-block, “this peace so white and beautiful / So still and, in a word, so dead,” over whom the four men fight and die. Many of the symbols are familiar: their neoteric had been the poet Apollinaire’s for many years; the visionary Nyctor is the chanter of *La Chanson du mal-aimé* and “*La Jolie Rousse*”; the plane has already appeared in “*Zone*,” etc. But those unredeemed symbols now remain solemnly pedestrian. Nyctor is earthbound through partisan concerns; the plane, whose modernism no longer stuns nor uplifts, has become merely an unwieldy conveyance; the island from which “*le solitaire*” is removed, although it is hopefully anticipated as harboring “*Serpents and also poetical monsters / Which we shall invent in order to please you*” is a flat and moralizing landscape alongside that of “*Onirocritique*.” Mavise, *la fiancée*, a momentary echo of the already saddened poet in “*La Jolie Rousse*,” protests: “*Though drunken with a will to fight / They would compel me to accept / The ignominious and sad*

peace / That blankets this deserted isle," but she is rapidly sacrificed as merely a woman to Nyctor and remains in the end a useless and passive commentator.

Apollinaire claims to have written all but the prologue and the last scene of *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* in 1903. The life and color which it evinces by comparison with *Couleur du temps* place it at any rate before the tragic spring of 1916. The title suggests the pertness and the ambiguity of the play: Thérèse's breasts fly out as toy balloons that she might shed her womanhood and become a "man"—Tirésias. Her husband, the moralizing force in this play concerned with repopulation, then takes over the duties of child-bearing, a task he prolifically accomplishes only to have a more subdued Thérèse return to him as the curtain falls.

[Pascal Pia (*Apollinaire par lui-même*)] notes that in chapter IV of Apollinaire's *Le Poète assassiné* . . . , the embryo of a similar plot had been sketched. . . . (pp. 30-3)

The same novel, in which a Lacouff first appears (he does so later in *Les Mamelles*), also contains a number of other burlesque outlines whose purpose is to ridicule the then prevalent forms of drama. In these outlines, the author is merely spoofing, albeit with verve reminiscent of Jarry. . . . However, in transferring such a satirical outline to the full dimensions of the stage, Apollinaire has had to shift his sights. What had been a simply destructive protest will now attempt to be construction as well: the protest gives way to the exemplar. Whereas the spurious plot outline merely pretends to be a play in order to mock real plays, the real play now created by Apollinaire will seek substance, in conformity with the ideals of the preface—from within itself rather than through parody. It might not be amiss to note here that Apollinaire's third and last dramatic attempt extant, *Casanova* . . . , which is called *comédie parodique*, fails, betraying in its very title the substance of those ideals. *Casanova* was to have been the libretto for a comic opera, an episode drawn from the Italian adventurer's life, and as such, the pastiche of an Italianate genre which Apollinaire might have remembered from the pre-war days when he had written *Le Théâtre italien*. . . . Perhaps the subdued author of *Vitam Impendere Amori* . . . was consciously seeking elsewhere an effervescence no longer in him. Whether or not such speculation be valid, the contrived and glossy fun of *Casanova* remains bookish and static even in its sallies: the promise of the stage has not been fulfilled.

In *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, Apollinaire has chosen laughter from the start, the indecision of his preface notwithstanding. Pascal Pia, who believes that *Les Mamelles* was written in 1916, bases a part of his evidence on a tone which he finds reminiscent of the first poems of *Calligrammes*. Availing himself of a fun-seeking device at least as old as Aucassin's visit to Torelore, Apollinaire has retained, as in his comic sketch, the inversion of sexual functions. In line with this facetious mood, the play favors puns, elementary figures of intellectual laughter, which it occasionally strings out at length. . . . (pp. 34-5)

Apollinaire acknowledges in his preface that he would have no objections to formulate were even the comic elements to gain the upper hand. . . . He takes note of accusations according to which he has availed himself of means used in revues and defends himself against these accusations, but only casually, as he has no fundamental objection to them either.

However, whether Apollinaire's comic ambivalence be genuine or simply retrospective, his humor eventually acquires other dimensions; the play is quite obviously not simply a

revue. The puns, while still at the intellectual level, partake of multiple extensions: in II, iv, for example, the *scène-Seine* play on words indicates universality as well as dramatic essence and condensation. In so doing, it echoes the fundamental equivocation of the entire play which is laid in Zanzibar (frequently identified with Paris by participants), a city that derives its name from a homonymous dice game whose attribute is the megaphone shaped like a huge dice box and used by various actors at intervals throughout the play. The pun upon which the physical locus of the play is established has moved, like that of its hero, beyond mere intellectual oscillations—it truly partakes of two inherencies.

Such devices, if they merely seek to extend the fun-making into new dimensions, and properly scenic ones, are innocuous enough. However, Apollinaire's preface speaks of "sufficient newness to shock and rouse to indignation." The word "striking" is used to designate the new esthetics that aim at a spectator "struck." Shock is indeed a mechanism of laughter—just as newness is concomitant with artistic transmutation. But neither requires outrage to the beholder. Artistic newness is a re-creation in which the spectator participates, and the shock that leads to mirth is sufficiently mild to be overcome through laughter. Thus the implications of Apollinaire's troubled awareness are not that the experiment might fail, making its author merely another writer of farces, but rather that the farce might prove unable to disguise the perpetration of new modes. At this level the mirth shields a revolutionary, someone who wishes to upset, whose voice, when it sought no protective mask, had pleaded in "*La Jolie Rousse*": "Pity on us forever struggling at the brink / Of the unbounded and of what is yet to come."

This is the voice that had elevated all things surprising, the new and the unknown, to the level of an esthetics and whose literary testament, *L'Esprit nouveau*, was read by Apollinaire in 1917: "The new spirit is also to be found in the astounding. The astounding is that which is most alive and most fresh in that spirit." Few of Apollinaire's commentators have failed to note his motto "I astonish"—one spoken evidently in full cognizance of its etymon.

The theater is quite properly a place of wonderment and, therefore, developing a genuinely theatrical esthetics might indeed have been for Apollinaire not only a congenial but a fruitful issue. Thérèse's breasts flying out to the audience (and later, as the curtain comes down, being tossed out as plentiful rubber balls to that audience) gave evidence of the author's concerns. Whereas Jarry's initial shock had suddenly severed stage and audience, this action allows Apollinaire a mechanism of surprise while at the same time it facilitates psychological communication across the footlights (all this quite apart from the cumulative effect of the sexual note which must certainly have been hoped for by the author of *Ombre de mon amour*). The audience thus intimately participant was the one for whom the theater in the round had been planned. (pp. 36-8)

Avowedly, the play is a cubist experiment, one that came to life under the sponsorship of the cubist publication *Sic*. . . . [Marcel Adéma] recalls how a certain number of cubist painters disavowed Apollinaire after the performance, accusing him of having ridiculed them. This particular protest is curious in view of the close contact Apollinaire had enjoyed with so many of the group and its sympathizers, like Picasso, Braque, Chirico, Picabia, and the many articles he had written for *Les Soirées de Paris* on behalf of the new school. These articles, gathered in 1913 and published as *Les Peintres cubistes* (originally titled

Méditations esthétiques) contain some of the first and more perceptive definitions of cubism attempted hitherto.

Apollinaire first defines the new movement's program—methods and aims:

Wishing to attain dimensions of the ideal, no longer limiting themselves to humanity, the young painters offer us works that are more cerebral than sensual.

What makes cubism different from the old style of painting is the fact that it is not an imitative art but a conceptual art striving to achieve creation.

He sees four tendencies of this new art, or better, two paths of what he calls the *art pur* and two others of a trend that fails to merit that denomination. Among the genuine art forms are scientific cubism and orphic cubism. Scientific cubism strives to create new artistic entities with elements derived not from the "reality" of vision but from the reality of a true knowledge. Orphic cubism substitutes, for the essentially factual components of scientific cubism, components entirely created by the artist though endowed by him with vital "reality." To further delineate these two art forms, their anti-forms are also described. Corresponding to a debasement of scientific cubism is physical cubism built with elements merely understood by the eye, while orphic cubism gives way, at an inferior level, to instinctive cubism, which is the compound of shapes created by an artist lacking either fundamental artistic perception or belief. (p. 38)

How close the positive aspects of this program are to the dramatic ideals set forth in the preface of *Les Mamelles* need hardly be emphasized. Picasso is naturally cited as an exponent of both scientific and orphic cubism and the reference to Picasso in Apollinaire's play as the author of "a canvas that moves" calls to mind the fact that, in turning to the stage, Apollinaire had tried to create a play "that moves." Properly speaking, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* is an attempted cubist drama, one that will, in conformity with the cubist esthetics, reject imitation for creation and hope to achieve thereby an artistic truth derived from the medium itself. (pp. 38-40)

This attempt to give an additional dimension to the reality of the canvas, one already evident in Cézanne, undoubtedly accounts for the meaning of "a canvas that moves." And in this way, the puns alluded to (*scène-Seine*, Zanzibar, etc.) attempt first an intellectual and then an artistic oscillation between the idea and the stage reality. However, in reference to the visual demands of the stage, these intellectual or semi-intellectual transmutations give way to wholly physical ones. Thus it is that Thérèse undergoes sexual changes on stage; that her husband creates a baby reporter by mixing in his crib scraps of things associated with the journalistic trade. . . . As ambiguous as the ambivalent hero whose oscillations are visible on stage, are those further modulations emphasized by the very voice of the stage—most frequently by the "people" of Zanzibar, actually a sound-effects man (an obvious reminiscence of Jarry's stage theory) whose presence within the action creates and cancels a number of the sounds which that action requires. (pp. 40-1)

Thus, the new drama was orphic, according to Apollinaire's definition, when its cubism established areas of ambiguous intellectual inferences, and scientific when the stage relied on

visual, mechanical tricks to implement its dramatic simultaneities.

The supreme achievement of this ambiguous art was to have extended its area of ambivalence to include the audience in its fluctuation. The supertheater in the round was to have been in reality a single cubist unit—the play engulfing stage and audience alike—of which the spectatress previously mentioned remains a vestigial witness. It is ironic that this climactic aim should have been in fact the undoing of the entire experiment. The failure of Apollinaire's cubist drama, whose esthetics were so closely patterned on the successful experiments of the cubist painters, was a failure to account for the basic differences between the dramatic and other art forms. Indications of this potential failure are deducible fairly early from the poet's excessive cult of surprise. (p. 41)

[Apollinaire's] experiment was fated, in common with all experiments, to elicit first the laughter of the uninitiated before being able to induce response. Such awkward laughter, born of uneasiness rather than of assimilative triumph, must be imputed to Apollinaire himself if his sincerity (confirmed by his cubist ethics and the dramatic esthetics of Jarry which *Les Mamelles* so frequently illustrates) is to be credited. The intimate experience which the theater in the round would have anticipated, demanded first human presence and second, total dedication. . . . Healthy laughter, already frustrated by the absence of realistic surfaces, becomes spiritless or hostile through such accumulative alienation.

In fact, the mechanical aspect of its performers slowly mires the action of these two acts whose dynamism seldom appears to stem from true spontaneity: the experimenter repeatedly betrays the comic author and the latter finds himself betrayed in turn. Harbingers of laughter must offer an initial threat to the intimate familiarity of spectator and actor: the figures of Apollinaire elicit at best mild admiration.

In *Les Mamelles*, the quest for laughter not infrequently dominates the experiment and the play loses form. It is no longer easy to understand readily why the husband speaks with a distinctly Belgian accent off stage and loses it after he has appeared. . . . It is hard thereafter to tell whether the original performance had the gendarme and the journalist played by women for any particular purpose or merely because of nonchalance towards the over-all validity of the performance. One inclines to the latter belief after having failed to find any essential reason for their existence and noting the episodic form of the play as it moves fitfully to its ineffectual conclusion.

One will likewise impugn the entire cubist experiment when its devices are viewed as stage actions rather than illustrative material for that experiment. *Casanova*, an undramatic stage materialization of an aspect of the author's earlier romanticism (albeit presented as a pastiche) and *Couleur du temps*, the ponderous restatement of a number of conceits, point to the primary failure of *Les Mamelles*: the failure of a drama to draw substance from its own soil. The failure is the more noticeable in that, as a truly perceptive theorist, Apollinaire had understood this dramatic necessity. The form of *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* as it now exists would appear to be the instance of an initial betrayal of the dramatist by the experimenter and thereafter betrayal of the experimenter by the uneasy dramatist seeking to disguise the experimenter's excesses.

Upon such grounds, the dramatic experiment could not fructify: the experimental is awkwardly obvious, surprise frustrates the communion, mechanical artifacts inhibit the human. Even the

farce is seldom funny, for unlike Jarry, whom Apollinaire admired for his genuine truculence, the author himself seems to have remained outside the circle of his synthetic creation. And so the cubist drama remains an odd assemblage of disjointed parts out of whose hermaphroditism the dream world was to have soared. (pp. 44-6)

David I. Grossvogel, "Les enfants terribles: Jarry, Apollinaire, Cocteau," in his *The Self-Conscious Stage in Modern French Drama* (copyright © 1958 Columbia University Press; reprinted by permission of the publisher), Columbia University Press, 1958 (and reprinted as *20th Century French Drama* by Gordian Press, 1967), pp. 19-67.*

L. C. BREUNIG (essay date 1964)

Mr. [C. A.] Hackett admits that in the work of Apollinaire "there are individual verses, refrains and short lyrics which have more than a period interest," but he concludes that the best work is "that which reflects the work of other and greater poets, such as Villon, Rimbaud and Verlaine."

Such an evaluation is based, it seems to us, upon an oversimplification. . . . (p. 67)

Certainly the poetry of Apollinaire is more complex. It contains elements, it must contain elements, which account for its continued appeal a half-century later. Without attempting . . . to discuss them all we would like to examine a single but a very essential element, or rather a tone in this poetry which would seem to have considerable resonance in the nineteen sixties. The contemporaries of Apollinaire, those of the "banquet years," were not particularly sensitive to it, but thanks to Surrealism we are able to hear it more clearly. It is the laughter of Apollinaire.

In 1940 Breton published his *Anthologie de l'humour noir*, a collection which in addition to such masters of "black humor" as Swift, Lichtenberg and De Quincey includes the Surrealists Vaché, Rigaud, Dali, Prévert and, among the few writers of the immediately preceding generation, Apollinaire. In his presentation Breton recalls the sound of Apollinaire's laugh as he himself had actually heard it before the poet's death in 1918. "It made the same noise as a first burst of hailstones on a window pane." The implication is that this laugh had nothing contagious about it; it caused no merriment but rather a shudder. Was it not a sudden outburst of the more inhuman, unfeeling, destructive side of the poet's nature?

The excerpts from Apollinaire in Breton's *Anthology*, most of them in prose, are not among his more significant work, and what Breton fails to stress is that one can hear these "hailstones" not only in many of the weird tales of *L'Hérésiarque et Cie* or the more sinister episodes of *Le Poète assassiné* and *La Femme assise* but also in the pages of lyric poetry upon which Apollinaire's reputation stands, in *Alcools* and *Calligrammes*.

What is the nature of this laughter? For ears which are attuned to it today it has a remarkable resemblance with that which is heard less perhaps in the novel or the poetry of the last few years than in the theatre of the avant-garde. Indeed Breton, if he so desired, could publish a new edition of his *Anthology* for the present decade to include, in all fairness, more of the Surrealists of his own generation such as Artaud and Vitrac (whom he had "excommunicated") and in addition excerpts from Ionesco, Beckett, Genet, Tardieu, Arrabal, Obaldia, Vian

and others. He could give, for example, the scene from Vitrac's *Les Mystères de l'amour* in which the author, having failed to commit suicide, comes on stage still bleeding and laughing uproariously; the passage from the beginning of Ionesco's *Les Chaises* where the pathetic old man and his wife shake with laughter as he repeats the same inane story ("Alors on arri. . .") that they have heard every evening for the last sixty-five years. . . . This is not comedy in the traditional sense. The author does not wish to elicit laughter but rather, as Ionesco specifically indicates at the end of *Jacques ou la soumission*, "to provoke in the audience a painful sentiment of malaise. . . ." (pp. 67-8)

[Our aim] is merely to invite the reader to look again at the lyric poetry of Apollinaire with today's very somber laughter still echoing in his ears.

We discover first that we do not need to rely on Breton's testimony alone, for Apollinaire describes his own laugh. . . .

You make fun of yourself and like the fire of hell your laughter crackles / The sparks of your laughter gild the depths of your life / It's a painting hung in a somber museum / And sometimes you go to have a close look at it.

Breton's image has changed here into that of little crackling flames, but the troubling effect is the same. The poet is speaking to himself. Heautontimoroumenos-like he is both the one laughing and the one laughed at. And as he steps up closer to himself he realizes that beneath the gentle, tender sentimental self lies the infernal, destructive force which was to chill Breton.

In some poems Apollinaire transfers this laugh to another character, usually a woman, and portrays himself as the victim. In such cases he becomes the traditional "mal-aimé," Guillaume who suffers from the perverse capriciousness of Mareye, Annie, Marie, Lou and Madeleine and who in his more grief-stricken moments sees himself as Orpheus being torn to pieces by the Maenads. This theme is of course as old as poetry itself, but the distinctiveness, the modernity, if you will, of Apollinaire lies in the very intensity of the harsh, sadistic laugh which reveals a monstrous degree of insensitivity. At times it becomes an atrocious grimace, mechanical, fixed, like a whinny, and creating between the two beings a wide, mysterious void which alienates them beyond all hope. The haunting sound of this laughter echoes throughout the work. (p. 69)

An awareness of this sound helps us to reread certain poems with a deeper sense of their meaning. The very possibility that Salome ("Salomé") is not broken-hearted over the death of John the Baptist, that her feverish burst of frivolity is perhaps authentic makes the death of her victim even more horrible. (p. 70)

The sound is even more disquieting, however, when it emerges from the poet himself. In "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon" Apollinaire recalls the birth within him of his black humor. . . . Here Apollinaire takes the place of the Maenads. The dying Orpheus seems to symbolize all the sorrow, and of course the self-pity within the poets themselves, sentiments which they suddenly demolish with a guffaw that bursts forth like breaking glass. (pp. 70-1)

One of the most powerful examples of these explosive outbursts comes in the middle of "La Chanson du mal-aimé." The Zaporogian Cossacks, who have just received the order to surrender to the Sultan of Constantinople, compose with a burst