

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

SOCIETY AND RELIGION
IN THE POETRY OF
GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

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by

Peter F. READ, B.A.

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Abbreviations used in this thesis

- BN FR Nouv. Acq. 16280, fo. I etc. Reference for documents held in the manuscript room, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
- DA Michel DECAUDIN, Le Dossier d'Alcools, Geneva, Droz and Paris, Minard, 1960.
- EP G. APOLLINAIRE, L'Enchanteur pourrissant, Jean Burgos ed., Paris, Lettres modernes, 1972.
- FDR Le Flâneur des deux rives, review devoted to the study of Apollinaire (first issue March 1954).
- GA La Revue des Lettres modernes, series Guillaume Apollinaire.
- Lettres à Lou G. APOLLINAIRE, Lettres à Lou, Michel Décaudin ed., Paris, Gallimard, 1969.
- OC G. APOLLINAIRE, Oeuvres Complètes, Michel Décaudin ed., Paris, Balland-Lecat, 1965-1966 (four volumes : I, II, III, IV).
- OPo G. APOLLINAIRE, Oeuvres poétiques, Michel Décaudin and P. -M. Adéma ed. Paris, Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', 1956.
- OPr G. APOLLINAIRE, Oeuvres en prose, volume I, Michel Décaudin ed., Paris, Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade' 1977.
- TS G. APOLLINAIRE, Tendre comme le souvenir, P. -M. Adéma ed., Paris, Gallimard, 1952.

INTRODUCTION

The bibliography of Apollinaire criticism is long and varied and during the last three decades in particular scholars all over the world have used their differing methods to filter through, elucidate and classify every work of this writer who himself ventured into every domain of literary expression. This widespread and lasting critical interest is a guarantee of the rare quality which alone allows a work to buoyantly ride over the successive waves of changing taste and fashion. Furthermore, and as Apollinaire would have wished, his work is not the exclusive property of the specialists and professionals but also reaches an increasingly large public outside the universities. Much of Apollinaire's poetry, for example, is immediately accessible, has the instant charm of song and several of the poems, such as 'Les Saltimbanques' and 'Le Pont Mirabeau', have been put to music by popular composers, recorded and made familiar to millions. The literary critic is always there in the background ready to guide those who, after a first meeting with Apollinaire, decide to penetrate beneath the surface of the texts to travel along a marvellous path which need never reach a destination but which may be compared to the path of the initiate.

The reader is most grateful to those critics who through publications share their perceptions and enrich his experience of the work in hand. But there is a danger that the sheer erudition of experienced critics, the weight and volume of their output, the very admiration which they inspire in the new reader may inhibit him if he is tempted to voice an opinion of his own. A considerable leap of imagination is required if he is to persuade himself that he can add anything of interest to such a brilliant and apparently exhaustive body of criticism. He may be led into searching for ground

untuned by earlier generations, areas which turn out to be peripheral or unimportant. Or he may feel that only crumbs remain after the banquet years of critical achievement. Such impressions are false. Despite all that has been written, important work continues and a backlog of Apollinaire criticism builds up, awaiting publication. Furthermore a literary work, be it a recognised classic, is always virgin as it is opened for the first time by a new reader. Every generation brings its own approach and particular preoccupations to an established text which is reborn each time it is rediscovered. Apollinaire's poetry, that part of his work which will be our principal concern here, infinitely subtle as it is, confirms such positive counter arguments, for every poem is an invitation, an opportunity for the reader to bring his own creativity and unique sensibility into play. And in fact we have taken Apollinaire's faith in this creative potential, perceived as the essential human quality, present in every individual, as a cornerstone of our argument.

The subject of this thesis is, as the title suggests, two-fold. A reading of Apollinaire's work revealed that his attitudes to society and religion had an important place in his poetry, while a subsequent reading of the critics left us with the feeling that the last word had not yet been said on these aspects of the poetry and their interrelationship. It took some time to reach this conclusion, however, and this process of gestation will perhaps appear more clearly if we explain that our adventure began with the discovery of Calligrammes which seemed, in comparison with Alcools, and until 1977 at least, to suffer unwarranted neglect. The September 1977 Apollinaire Colloquium in Stavelot stimulated our interest in Apollinaire's later poetry and also confirmed that outside Alcools and Calligrammes there were other texts worthy of critical interest. Why then did Marie-Jeanne Durry, whose work had guided us through Alcools, always steer clear of the war poetry? Should the fact that Apollinaire was touched by the infectious patriotism which greeted the 1914 declaration of war prevent a modern sceptic from reading beyond 'Zone'? And poems such as 'Je suis la vie' and even 'La Victoire' seemed to contradict the ready-made image, handed down by intransigent Surrealists, of Apollinaire as a chauvinistic military man veering further into conservatism at the end

of his life. Indeed Apollinaire's play Couleur du temps, staged after his death, appeared as a warning to humanity faced with the danger of total annihilation, a warning which since Hiroshima is more appropriate than ever and which by its sad sobriety starkly contradicts the spirit of celebration which animates the poetry written during Apollinaire's first days of military action. It was during a long conversation with Professor Garnet Rees in Hull in the autumn of 1977 that it became clear that what was needed was a strictly chronological approach, a reading of Apollinaire which would place his poetry in historical context and reveal the evolution of his attitudes to the war as he moved from the enthusiasm of Innocence, that of a whole generation marching to the Front, into the harshness of Experience, life in the infantry, and out to the stance of the wise man in 'La Jolie Rousse', a stance which, if we continue our use of Blakean terminology, we would refer to as Higher Innocence. Dating the poems, we found the notes to the Pléiade Oeuvres poétiques most helpful. Claude Tournadre's chronology, 'Apollinaire soldat, au jour le jour', published in Guillaume Apollinaire 12, was also invaluable and always close at hand. (1)

The publication in the revue Création in June 1978 of a manuscript version of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', put to one side by Apollinaire, was another turning point. (2) The virulent, anti-establishment, libertarian stance of some of these strophes, the contempt shown for recent Presidents of France, did not correspond to any image of Apollinaire hoping for a place in the Académie Française and the Légion d'honneur. But they do seem to prefigure those scenes from Couleur du temps which Apollinaire cut from the final version of the play and which were published for the first time in 1972. (3) Once again the leaders of the nation, the represen-

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- (1) Claude TOURNADRE, 'Apollinaire soldat, au jour le jour', GA 12, (1973), pp. 7-26.
 - (2) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, 'Ebauches pour "La Chanson du mal-aimé"', Création XIII, June 1978, pp. 7-52.
 - (3) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, L'Enchanteur pourrissant, suivi de Les Mamelles de Tirésias et de Couleur du temps, Paris, Gallimard, 'Poésie', 1972, pp. 234-238.

tatives of the people, in this case the diplomats, are presented as completely unworthy of the trust placed in them. A deep stream of emotion seems to spring to the surface in such texts. Could they be described as isolated aberrations? A hunt through Oeuvres poétiques revealed a fairly large number of texts from Apollinaire's first seven or eight years as a poet in which the themes of revolt and anarchy recur. In his poetry and elsewhere Apollinaire repeatedly reaffirms his solidarity with society's outcasts, some of whom may become outlaws, the unemployed, the métèques, the revolutionaries. And he sympathises with that current of utopian idealism which flowed strongly through the political thinking of the late nineteenth century and ran into the twentieth, an idealism personified by Apollinaire's friend, Polish anarchist Mécislas Golberg. The disagreement between the eminent specialists Pierre-Marcel Adéma and Michel Décaudin as to the extent of Apollinaire's commitment to this ideal, a disagreement which came to light in the discussion following Elzbieta Grabska's fascinating paper on Golberg, published in Guillaume Apollinaire 8, was an invitation to direct my research towards a resolution of this problem. (4) A chronological reading of all Apollinaire's poetry would show whether the fires of adolescent rebellion still burn in the work of manhood, whether it is true that here as elsewhere Apollinaire's earliest preoccupations mark the whole of his career. Apollinaire at the end of his life is acutely aware of the social responsibility of the artist. Is this sense of duty, undoubtedly exacerbated by his experience of the war, something new? Or is the will to 'plaire et instruire' a logical development of his desire to take poetry out of the Ivory Tower of Symbolism and from his earliest days to include an expression of man's social condition as an ingredient of poetry?

(4) Elzbieta GRABSKA, 'Mécislas Golberg dans l'entourage de Guillaume Apollinaire', GA 8, (1969), pp. 167-186.

Apollinaire's political inclinations have already attracted the attention of critics. Pierre Caizergues, working down like an archaeologist through years and layers of newsprint in search of lost treasures, has revealed Apollinaire's constant interest in the daily flux of current events, more concerned to entertain and inform his readers, to defend the rights of individuals and minorities, than to indicate support for any party or political movement. It would be surprising if our observations, drawn from a reading of the poetry, were to contradict Mr Caizergues' comments on Apollinaire's journalism. (5) Our study also comes in the wake of articles by J. G. Clark, and we particularly appreciate his 'La Poésie, la politique et la guerre : autour de "La Petite auto", "Chant de l'honneur" et Couleur du temps', published in 1976. (6) We extend his arguments, referring to other texts from the same period, and fit them into the larger chronological pattern which places our analysis of Apollinaire's war poetry alongside his earlier achievements. Throughout this thesis wherever possible we make use of the valuable work already done by these and other critics such as Claude Tournadre, Marc Poupon, Lionel Follet, Michel Décaudin etc., all those who have touched upon those elements of the poetry which interest us here. Their names recur regularly in the pages which follow, chapters which therefore also function as something of a meeting point for the disparate comments and conclusions of our more illustrious predecessors. Ideas overhead, thrown out in conversation or put forward in lectures may also resurface here, months or years later, as part of our own proposition. We do our best to give credit where it is due,

(5) See, for example, Pierre CAIZERGUES, Apollinaire et la Démocratie sociale, Paris, Lettres modernes, 1969.

(6) GA 13, (1976), pp. 7-63.

and with this in mind we should mention now, in advance, the debt we owe to Philippe Renaud. His name may not appear often in this thesis but his Lecture d'Apollinaire, (7) a survey of all Apollinaire's poetic career, has greatly added to our enjoyment of the poetry and so influenced our own approach, which is similarly global in its ambition. His presence is diffuse.

In America a thesis appeared in 1971 with the title Reflections of the political world in the works of Guillaume Apollinaire. (8) A large amount of critical material has been published since Mr St. Onge completed his thesis (he refers only to the first seven issues of the series Guillaume Apollinaire, for example) and a decade later we would question the rather too schematic structure of his pioneer work, the limits indicated by his three chapter headings : 'I. From anarchism to socialism : The search for an ideal, 1895-1901. II. Internationalism : A desirable goal, 1901-1914. III. Chauvinism : A judicious solution, 1914-1918'. Apollinaire's thinking does not progress steadily and logically, he does not abandon one definite position to take up another further along. He is suspicious of all systems and is constantly and curiously shifting and questioning, ready to consider any point of view which does not contradict certain basic and permanent principles. Mr St. Onge refers equally to Apollinaire's journalism, poetry and prose, but the poetry alone written between 1914 and 1918 indicates dramatic encounters of conflicting opinions and we reject the term 'chauvinist' as a suitable definition of his stance. In our chapter headings we have therefore resisted the temptation to use any term which might be interpreted as a label or a definition of Apollinaire's attitudes during the period under consideration.

(7) Philippe RENAUD, Lecture d'Apollinaire, Lausanne, Age d'Homme, 1969.

(8) Ronald René St. ONGE, Reflections of the political world in the works of Guillaume Apollinaire, thesis, Nashville, Vanderbilt University, 1971. For a review of this thesis by Pierre Caizergues see GA II, (1972), pp. 199-202.

Our intention is not to define the place of Apollinaire the poet in relation to the political leaders or parties of his day. We have intentionally avoided the word 'politics' and used the word 'society' in the title of our thesis in order to allow a survey of a fairly wide spectrum of related themes. In the first poems of Alcools and the early poems from the war, in the section 'Case d'armons', Apollinaire is a nature poet. We discuss his ambiguous treatment of urban civilisation, street life in the city 'Flambant de l'électricité'. Man in nature, man in the city, women in society, these are subjects which among others Apollinaire considers suitable for poetry. We trace his contradictions, evidence in all domains of his inherent uncertainty. One apparent conflict which accompanies anarchism, the philosophy to which Apollinaire refers early in his poetry, is that between the interests of the individual and those of the group, between liberty and duty. In Apollinaire's case the solitude which is necessarily familiar to any true creator, making a unique contribution, was compounded by his condition as an illegitimate, stateless individual. It was countered by a consequent pull towards social integration and his strong social conscience, a sense of human solidarity. These tensions may be resolved by the channelling of individual revolt against personal conditions into an expression of revolt against social injustice. Or such tension may be expressed in lines which are open to a variety of interpretations, alternatives which we sometimes include in this thesis. In 'Les Collines' for example, Apollinaire writes

c'est moi-même
Qui suis la flûte dont je joue

and this may be a proclamation of divine self-sufficiency of a mask over unwanted solitude, unsatisfactory inversion. One of the sources of ambiguity in Apollinaire's poetry is unresolved contradictions and it is not for the critic to resolve these in imposing a single interpretation on such lines.

'Les Collines' is the poem in which Apollinaire most explicitly voices his interest in the fast developing science of psychiatry and his scrutiny of the 'Profondeurs de la conscience', the vast inner universe of each human being, confirms human individuality and uniqueness. But it also suggests a potential for communion, for all men have in common this vast reservoir of unexplored, untapped possibility. Apollinaire's social vision is the necessary consequence of his passionate interest in and respect for each human being as a unique individual. His fundamental optimism is born of his faith in the future of a society which must progress through the realisation of human potential seen as a dim light in the eyes of men and women ('Marizibill') or felt in himself, his intuitions of his own immortal destiny ('Cortège'). The potential of human beings to break out of the mould of imposed expectations is an important theme in Apollinaire's poetry and the paramount desire for communication which still today makes his work so seductive is itself evidence of his vision of poetry as the pathway to self-knowledge, both for poet and reader. His poetry provides an image of the future in all its splendour.

A further tension in all of Apollinaire's poetry is created by the will of a man to shape his own future, pulling on the chains of destiny, the weight of given conditions. At times of depression, as in 'Sanglots' in 1917, Apollinaire feels that a man is bound, caught in mortality,

Et rien ne sera libre jusqu'à la fin des temps

But hope is always reborn and at his best he believes that will-power can break the chains : 'Ma volonté, ma liberté'. (9) In 'Les Collines' he insists again that

(9) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 89.

La grande force est le désir

and elsewhere he names this desire : 'Les hommes désirent l'ivresse de l'air, de la beauté, et du mot Liberté' (OPr p. 958).

Apollinaire's optimism, his faith in human potential, was not unique but shared with those movements, from Naturism to Futurism, which succeeded each other in Europe between 1895 and 1914, a faith which Marcel Raymond has compared to those 'enthousiasmes qui animaient les romantiques français et étrangers à la veille des révolutions de 1848'. (10) He stands alone however in his non-adherence to literary cabales or schools, a friend to all of them but never hesitating to take poetry wherever he found it. No formula, no rule book, no manifesto could govern his art and so in general he refuses authoritarian directives on human behaviour. His philosophy in life is consistent with his practice in art. He could never hitch his poetry to any band-wagon and his priorities were clear. For Apollinaire, art must serve no politic and he says as much in a review of Robert Guillou's Essai sur le XXe siècle in Paris-Journal, 2 January 1910, where he writes :

M. Guillou subordonne l'Art à la Sociologie, à la Statistique, à l'Histoire, etc. Il est de mode, aujourd'hui de faire le procès de la beauté et l'hypocrisie attende tous les jours à la liberté des artistes. (11)

Apollinaire's poetry castigates tyranny and also provides an image of beauty and liberty which avoids disorder. He demands the right to say everything, in hard, classical perfection or, if he so chooses, as in 'La Victoire', to sacrifice language itself. Or again in the enormous obscenity of Les Onze mille verges, to trample taboos, overstepping the mark, reaching out as far as possible in all directions.

(10) Marcel RAYMOND, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, p. 71.

(11) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Petites merveilles du quotidien, p. 118.

Like order and adventure, past and future balance in Apollinaire's poetry. His social idealism is rooted in a bed of nineteenth-century libertarian thought. When defining the future he looks to the past. At times, as in 'Cortège', tomorrow may seem pale and insubstantial beside yesterday. Indeed Apollinaire draws strength from the past, building the present on the knowledge and achievements accumulated by his spiritual ancestors, a line unbroken by time. This ideal formed part of the background to Symbolism, again during the last decades of the nineteenth century, and was clearly laid out in a text such as Edouard Schuré's Les Grands Initiés. (12) The influence of this book on Apollinaire's work demonstrates how he nursed these ideas in his heart throughout his career as the guarantee of a brilliant tomorrow.

The subject of liberty and this mention of Edouard Schuré happily provide the link between the two parts of our thesis and bring us to our analysis of the presence of religion in Apollinaire's poetry. Robert Couffignal has written a good deal on Apollinaire's attitude to religion and we hope we are not unacceptably oversimplifying the argument of his book Apollinaire if we say that he considers the poet to have received a thoroughly Catholic education, to have been a devout and then a lapsed Catholic until after 'Zone' in 1912, when he broke free of Catholicism and religious preoccupations in general. (13) Other critics have disagreed with Mr Couffignal, but no rival study has been forthcoming. In our opinion Catholicism is present in Apollinaire's poetry but appears often to be parodied or criticised, and this from the very earliest texts onwards. Christ appears but most often in a flamboyant image of resurrection, 'la flamboyante gloire du Christ', fixed in stained glass or rising into the sky. Apollinaire prefers the light and

(12) Edouard SCHURE, Les Grands Initiés, Paris, Perrin, 1889.

(13) Robert COUFFIGNAL, Apollinaire, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1966.

colour of these images to the ivory and ebony crucifix. His imagination is attuned to images of rebirth and victory. To the image of a god descended into suffering mortality he prefers that of a man raised to glorious and immortal divinity. Apollinaire takes from the Church the pomp and ceremony, the gold and glitter which correspond to his own baroque vision of paradise. And he will stay true to that iconography to the end of his life. But for him, man is the crown of creation, a god who as yet is unaware of his divinity. Resituating the idea of God in the heart of man, Apollinaire places himself on the side of the heretics, Church outsiders. He is too original, too creative, too independent to accept and absorb a ready-made formula of faith, fixed dogma offered as truth. And he is too much of a libertarian to accept humbly papal authority. Such an acceptance would be in total contradiction with the attitudes he expresses on politics and man's place and future in society. So he chooses those elements in the Church which suit him and suit his poetry and continues the tradition of those who determine to formulate their own explanation of the human condition, cut their own key to knowledge. Here at least there is no significant 'changement de front' and Apollinaire is consistent from his earliest poems to the end of his career.

Again the infinite space which Apollinaire discerns in the human soul, his intuition of a dimension untouched by the ravages of time, is important as it confirms his faith in the potentially divine status of man. For him, nothing is too much to be expected of humanity and it is this Promethean ambition, the pushing back of the limits of human possibility, which relates Apollinaire to Rimbaud, whose influence recurs at regular intervals in the poetry. Like Rimbaud, Apollinaire sees baptism as slavery. And like Rimbaud he envisages absolute freedom, a triumphal entry into the splendid cities of the future. Rejecting doctrine and faith imposed from on high, Apollinaire places the emphasis on the individual's ability to achieve enlightenment through his own efforts. Fulfilment comes through knowledge, not faith, through contact with an alternative tradition to which Apollinaire would attach himself and

which is longer than that of papal authority. His scanning of as many texts as he can lay his hands on, voraciously absorbing and storing information, is symptomatic of this search for knowledge. Initiation is the key word, initiation achieved through study and effort and, as in 1908 and 1916, through suffering which can confer powers of prophecy. Again we are looking back to Symbolism and its background, a spiritual hunger which sought satisfaction outside the established Church.

Writing to Madeleine Pagès in 1915, pleased to have found his place in a close-knit community, his regiment, Apollinaire criticised the Ivory Tower writer Sadia Levy for being 'trop exclusivement sacerdotale [...] loin de la vie ... Ses goûts artistiques sont périmés'. (14) There can be no comparison between Apollinaire's poetry and that brand of dated Symbolism from which he here distances himself. But, as Professor Ian Lockerbie has demonstrated, his vision of poetry as, among other things, a spiritual quest is part of his Symbolist inheritance. (15) It is this quest which takes Apollinaire outside the body of established orthodox Churches and into a tradition of heresy which may be described as a form of spiritual anarchism. Indeed certain elements of this thesis could find a place under either of our two headings, society or religion. Our look at the evolution of Apollinaire's attitude to women, for example, is naturally placed under the first of these headings. But in some texts Apollinaire's misogyny gives way to an idealised conception of womanhood as a harbour of perfection in which he recalls, perhaps, the litanies to the Virgin, and eventually he is even referring to 'Dieu-femme'. There is the theme of festival, present in the chapter which covers 'Ondes', in our study of the presentation of war in 'Case d'armes' and then more importantly in the section on religion in the war poetry. We

(14) TS, p. 257.

(15) See S. I. LOCKERBIE, 'Alcools et le symbolisme', GA 2, (1963), pp. 5-40.

discuss Apollinaire's strong vision of a New Jerusalem, suggested in the earliest, openly anarchist texts and still there during the war in the 'Claire-Ville-Neuve-En-Cristal-Eternel' of 'Venu de Dieuze'. But this is no heavenly utopia and Apollinaire sees the foundations of his city set firmly in the ground. The anarchists often used the language of religion, referring to Ravachol for example as a saint and martyr, sometimes claiming Jesus Christ as one of their own, a 'revolutionary hero. And Apollinaire's own anarchism was at least partly triggered by a revolt against the constraints of his rather authoritarian religious upbringing.

Apollinaire questions the status of pope and president and gives individual autonomy precedence over external authority. Of the imprisoned libertine and libertarian the Marquis de Sade, Apollinaire wrote : 'Il aimait par-dessus tout la liberté'. (16) This comment can also be applied to Apollinaire himself and our intention is to show how this philosophy, underlying his attitudes to religion and society, manifests itself in his poetry. Concurrent with this thirst for liberty and his optimistic belief that such a demand can be met, is an intuition of infinite potential which has far-reaching consequences and is fundamental to Apollinaire's poetry. His desire is not so much to change man as to see him fulfill his immeasurable possibilities, and to characterise this intuition we would quote from Edouard's diary in Les Faux-monnayeurs where André Gide writes : 'Je me penche vertigineusement sur les possibilités de chaque être'. (17)

We corroborate our arguments and any point we make with Apollinaire's own words and we also use quotations to draw the reader's attention to those texts, such as certain war poems for example, which in the past

(16) OC II, p. 227.

(17) André GIDE, Les Faux-monnayeurs, Gallimard, 'Folio', 1975, p. 114.

have been criticised without being properly read. But perhaps we should admit a certain parti pris, or rather the hope that our first intuitions would be confirmed by more thorough research. Our impression, perhaps unwarranted, was that Apollinaire was being presented or perceived as too much of an official or 'establishment' poet and that because of the success of such poems as 'Le Pont Mirabeau', so accessible, well known to school children, Apollinaire might be classed as a 'middle of the road', 'easy listening' poet. (18) Perhaps his late desire for official honours, recognition and reassurance, a need which was born of chronic insecurity, cast a shadow over his whole career. It may be objected that this concerns only our image of Apollinaire's personality, not the texts. But the way in which Apollinaire's character and behaviour are judged can alter a reader's perception of the poetry. An edge of anger in Apollinaire's poetry is overlooked. Some texts are ignored. Erotic poems and novels are dismissed as mere money spinners, unsuitable for inclusion in the Oeuvres complètes or the 'Pléiade' edition of the poet's work, and are considered hardly worthy of our attention. A certain false image of Apollinaire is consolidated when he is quoted out of context - a classic example of this is the line

Ah Dieu ! que la guerre est jolie

Apollinaire would be proud to find a place of honour in a book like Paris bleu horizon ('Album commémoratif du soixantième anniversaire de la Victoire dédié par la Ville de Paris aux Anciens Combattants de la Grande Guerre'). (19) And yet we feel uneasy when we see his sixth poem to Lou, 'La fumée de la cantine...' from December 1914 used as an introduction to this volume, placed after a letter from the Mayor of Paris. Of course this is a poem of machismonationalism, but just as the ten photographs which make up

(18) In one best-selling anthology, recently reedited, we read : 'C'est à Verlaine que se rattache Apollinaire. Il pratique lui aussi la musique de chambre et le mode mineur. Quand il cherche à en sortir, cela lui réussit médiocrement et ses efforts pour s'échapper des sentiers battus le conduisent le plus souvent à des jongleries qui restent expérimentales'. (Georges Pompidou, Anthologie de la poésie française, p. xxxix).

(19) Paris, Editions Phébus, 1978.

the contents of Paris bleu horizon offer a false image of the war, with no record of the monstrous carnage which filled the space between 'Le Chant du départ' and 'Le Défilé de la Victoire', so 'La fumée de la cantine...' is liable to fix in the reader's mind a false impression of Apollinaire's attitude to the war, which is fast altered by experience. In fact, some readers could be put off Apollinaire for life, and this is a typical case of the way in which the poet can be misrepresented. During his lifetime Apollinaire felt himself to be an outsider and indeed his adoptive nation offered him scant affection or respect, throwing him into prison, threatening him with expulsion and then, despite his courage in combat, refusing him the red ribbon he would have liked to display on his lapel. Here we hope that a new look at Apollinaire's poetry, paying particular attention to his comments on Church and State, will help to redress the balance.

As to our working methods, we should first state that we are most grateful to critics such as Robert Couffignal with whom we often disagree in that they provide pegs on which to hang counter-arguments. Also a great deal of very good research on Apollinaire's poetry has been published and we do our best to build on past work, developing those points which fit into our own argument. Michel Décaudin's comments on 'Le Larron' in Le Dossier d'Alcools, 'Apollinaire et le Symbolisme : "Le Larron"' by Claudine Gothot-Mersch, 'La Fête d'Apollinaire' by Jean Roudaut and numerous other publications have been helpful in this way. Most of the critical material referred to has been published in the first fourteen numbers of the Revue des Lettres Modernes series Guillaume Apollinaire or has been traced through the bibliography included in each of those volumes. Guillaume Apollinaire 15, dated 1981, contains no bibliography and we understand that the bibliography is to be published separately henceforth. Of course our primary sources for Apollinaire's texts are the Oeuvres complètes published by Balland and Lecat in four volumes and the two volumes

so far published in the 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', Oeuvres poétiques and Oeuvres en prose, volume I. We also make use of other source material, including the collection of unpublished manuscripts held by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Full details of all publications referred to are given in the bibliography placed at the end of this thesis.

We have chosen to concentrate on Apollinaire's poetry but we do not hesitate to refer to his prose works and journalism when we feel that this may illuminate the poetry. Of course a piece of journalism cannot be read in the same way as a poem, which is the domain of ambiguity, intentional or otherwise, where the word itself, 'poisson subtil', is a prime mover. Octavio Paz has explained this in L'Arc et la lyre, where he writes that 'La poésie vit dans les couches les plus profondes de l'être, alors que les idéologies et tout ce que nous appelons idées ou opinions forment les strates les plus superficielles de la conscience'. We owe this quotation to Raymond Jean and would agree with him when he suggests that these two levels of consciousness are not quite as separate as Paz believes: 'il faut donc compléter son analyse en précisant qu'entre la zone du désir et la zone de l'idéologie, un incessant va-et-vient dialectique s'établit, qui interdit leur séparation'. (20) In Apollinaire's case, the attentive reader can often trace this 'interference' between literary genres and a piece of prose or journalism can sometimes elucidate poetry, especially when the texts were composed at the same time. Our reading of 'La Petite auto' exemplifies and, we hope, justifies our use of this technique.

An important methodological dilemma is highlighted by Léon Cellier in his article 'Lecture de "Lul de Faltenin"' where he comments on the

(20) Raymond JEAN, Lectures du désir. Nerval, Lautréamont, Apollinaire, Eluard, p. 27.

thematic approach to poetry :

Latentation la plus insidieuse est celle que représente la critique thématique incarnée par exemple par Jean-Pierre Richard puisque les contours du poème sont fondus dans le recueil, le recueil dans l'oeuvre, comme si l'oeuvre entière ne formait plus qu'un seul poème.

Léon Cellier concludes with words which we would like to make our own : 'Bref, à choisir entre la poésie, le poète et le poème, je choisis le poème'. (21) It is true that themes run across the texts and through the years so that it becomes difficult to build a chronological structure and individual poems lose their rightful autonomy, swamped in comments on larger tracts of text. Still convinced of the interest and value of a thematic approach we have attempted to take these dangers into consideration. While guiding the reader along a thematic pathway we try to keep in mind Professor Margaret Davies' definition of the role of the critic and to direct our light so as to 'make the diamond facets of the poetry shine more brightly'. (22) We combine this attention to particular poems with a wider vision, believing that there must be a systole and diastole in all inquiry. So we advance through Apollinaire's poetry, placing texts in their historical and literary context, narrowing and widening our focus, as Apollinaire himself does, in the war poems for example, when he may close in on a circle the size of a finger then open out to evoke a whole army. From time to time the linear continuity of our progression is interrupted by a discussion and illustration of an important theme, such as festival, or image, such as the doorway, which recurs and cannot be limited to a particular period of the poet's work. The analysis of some important poems such as 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' and 'Zone' may be split and shared between the separate sections which cover the twin themes of this thesis. Our structure is therefore flexible, for a critic should

(21) Léon CELLIER, 'Lecture de "Lul de Faltenin"', GA II, (1972), pp. 65-86, (p. 66).

(22) Margaret DAVIES, review of Philippe Renaud, Lecture d'Apollinaire, in The Modern Language Review, vol. 66, 4 October 1971, pp. 900-902, (p. 901).

not enclose Apollinaire in a rigid frame of reason but show the richness and fertility of his work, seeking appropriate expression for thought which feels out in all directions. To know the forest we must sometimes branch off from the clean path cut through the trees.

It would be a mistake to enclose in an artificially geometrical pattern the poetry of a man whose personality functioned in a way which was 'plus magique et dramatique que dialectique'. (23) And furthermore, death came prematurely to cut short this poet's career. Yet there is a case to be made that at the end of his life, as experience confirmed the intuitions of innocence, Apollinaire was returning to his youthful preoccupation with the rights of the individual in a society battling with the threat of tyranny, to earlier imagery of prophecy and initiation. A study such as this must be organised in one way or another, and the structure we have chosen may be compared to an hour-glass as we follow the two themes which concern us through the poetry in parallel chapters, compressing the two themes into a single section at the centre, where we comment on the poems of 'Ondes'. Thus, as Apollinaire once demonstrated the 'Quadrature du cercle' (OPo p. 750), we prove that parallel lines can meet. We hope that this structure corresponds to the substance of our thesis, made up of separate themes which seem naturally to coincide.

(23) Michel DECAUDIN, 'Le Premier Livre d'Apollinaire', Le Monde, 10 November 1972, p. 18.

AVANT-PROPOS

Here I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have helped me in my work on Apollinaire, and in particular to the following people :

Mr Douglas Jamieson, lecturer at the University of Hull, who first caught my imagination with a great lunchtime seminar on Alcools and whose advice has more recently helped me to complete this thesis.

Mr Graham Chesters, who encouraged me to develop my interest in Apollinaire during the year 1974-1975 which I spent teaching English in Arles.

My warmest thanks go to Professor Garnet Rees. The time, wise advice and encouragement which he has so generously given me over the last few years have contributed enormously to this thesis. He is best known for his work on Alcools but during a discussion on Calligrammes Professor Rees can combine his skills as a literary critic with the experience of an artillery officer. His insights opened up Apollinaire's war poetry for me. Always authoritative, never authoritarian, Professor Rees has respected my idées fixes and allowed me to make my own mistakes, and for these I now accept full responsibility.

Professor Rees encouraged me to visit Stavelot and to work in Paris. So it was that I came to know the group of specialists, mainly French and British, whose contributions to the Lettres modernes series Guillaume Apollinaire had already been so helpful to me. Their regular round-table seminars in Paris showed me the extent to which research can be a collective, group activity. My special gratitude goes to Mr Michel Décaudin, thanks to whom research may find its true function as a preliminary to communication.

CHAPTER I

SOCIETY (i). THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Guillaume Apollinaire's method of composition, often building a text around fragments of earlier manuscripts, was well-served by his natural disinclination to throw anything away. It is partly thanks to this accumulative instinct that today we have access to a fairly large number of early poems which, though they may be of unequal literary merit, are nevertheless worthy of our attention. Apollinaire's voice is always recognizable and although his work is immensely varied it is unified by the distinctive use of certain techniques, such as that of surprise, and the recurrence throughout his career of certain themes and images. His early texts are not to be excluded from this pattern of unity and indeed, as Michel Décaudin has suggested, a reading of these poems 'nous invite à penser qu'il est entré très tôt en possession de son univers poétique et que, dans une carrière aux aspects multiples et apparemment contradictoires, il n'a souvent poursuivi que le développement de ses rêves et de ses découvertes d'adolescent'.

(1) Professor Ian Lockerbie in his 1963 article 'Alcools et le symbolisme' (2) has shown the importance of the discovery of Symbolism for the young Apollinaire and discussed the theme of spiritual questing which consequently runs through the poetry of Alcools and beyond. Professor Lockerbie sees the influence of the Symbolist conception of the role of the poet, akin to that of an Arthurian hero in search of the Grail, as manifest not only in the language of the poetry but also in the thematic content of the texts : 'De là le fait que tant d'avenues poétiques lui étaient fermées ou ne le tentaient pas -- poésie de protestation sociale, de réflexion morale, poésie satirique, etc'. (3)

(1) Michel DECAUDIN, 'A propos des Doukhobors', FDR, 3, September 1954, p. 16.

(2) S. I. LOCKERBIE, 'Alcools et le symbolisme', GA 2, (1963), pp. 5-40.

(3) S. I. LOCKERBIE, op. cit., p. 8.

This social neutrality, which is the result of the poet's splendid isolation from the ordinary events of everyday life, is hinted at by Robert Couffignal who also comments on "'la pitié sociale", qui se manifeste si rarement dans l'oeuvre d'Apollinaire'. (4)

And yet a reading of Apollinaire's poetry, including his earliest texts written when the theories of Symbolism arguably had their strongest hold upon him, seems to contradict this opinion in that many of these poems do not avoid social issues and may even be taken as the expression of a definite attitude towards intolerable injustice. In this they are consistent with the poet's work as a journalist, and do not necessarily contradict the influence of the poets of Symbolism. Many late nineteenth-century writers including both Symbolists and the following generation of anti-Symbolists who bore the name of Naturists, were not only members of a literary avant-garde but also favoured social revolution. The influence of the Naturists was, as we shall see, particularly important in that they encouraged Apollinaire to leave 'la nuit du style', to use Charles Morice's definition of Symbolism, (5) to seek inspiration in current events and his own experience of social injustice in the hope of bringing art and life closer together.

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First let us take a brief look at some of the historical events which marked the background to the flowering of Symbolism and Apollinaire's adolescence as he struggled to become a poet and to find a place in society. 1 May 1891, the twentieth anniversary of the Paris Commune, saw armed conflict between workers and troops which made civil war seem imminent in France. Apollinaire was ten years old. As he grew into adolescence, so the anarchists went to work. This was 'le temps des Assassins'. (6) François

(4) Robert COUFFIGNAL, L'Inspiration biblique dans l'oeuvre de Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 164.

(5) Charles MORICE, La littérature de tout à l'heure, p. 21.

(6) Arthur RIMBAUD, 'Matinée d'ivresse', (Illuminations)

Koenigstein, alias Ravachol, was executed 11 July 1892, after his crimes in February and March of that year. Vaillant was in action in December 1893, was executed in 1894. Also in 1894 Emile Henry made his bomb attack on the Café Terminus, the anarchist Pauwels blew himself up, Laurent Tailhade lost an eye in the Café Foyot explosion and Sadi Carnot, President of the Republic, was assassinated in Lyons by the Italian baker and anarchist Santo Jeronimo Caserio. Such violence in the streets was matched by disorder in the Chamber of Deputies as progressive members were labelled anarchist sympathisers. This gave Eugène Spuller, Minister of Education, the opportunity to make a speech, delivered on 3 March 1894, in which he proposed a reconciliation of the French people, a new solidarity which, as John Cameron has recalled, he referred to as 'un esprit nouveau'. (7) But political divisions were only to be exacerbated by the drawn-out scandal of the 'Dreyfus Affair'.

Anarchism was in vogue among writers and intellectuals during the last decade of the nineteenth century and, as we have said, political and literary avant-gardes tended to overlap. The list of subscribers to La Révolte, one of the many anarchist newspapers of the day, included the names of J. -K. Huysmans, Leconte de Lisle, Stéphane Mallarmé, Remy de Gourmont, Paul Adam and Anatole France. Zo d'Axa, editor of L'Endehors, accumulated seven years and four months of prison and fines totalling 13,150 francs for the first six months of 1892 but the list of writers appearing in his paper included Emile Verhaeren, Saint-Pol Roux, Octave Mirbeau, Camille Mauclair, Lucien Descaves, Tristan Bernard, Paul Adam and others. Libertaire and Temps Nouveaux could boast similar lists of contributors while Entretiens politiques et littéraires, directed by François Viélé-Griffin and Gustave Kahn, veered into anarchism in 1892. Paul Valéry, Paul Adam, Bernard Lazare, Henri de Régnier, Stéphane Mallarmé and Remy de Gourmont would all contribute to the

(7) J. W. Cameron, 'Apollinaire, Spuller et l'Esprit Nouveau', Romance Notes, IV, 1, Autumn 1962, pp. 3-7. J. W. Cameron suggests that Spuller's challenge, widely publicised in the newspapers, may have been a source for Apollinaire's own use of the phrase when in his November 1917 lecture 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' he called for the reconciliation of art and science in France.

paper. (8) André Salmon in his history of French anarchism La Terreur noire, remembers Paul Adam's article on the death of Ravachol, 'Un Saint nous est né' published in Entretiens politiques et littéraires. (9) La Plume, the paper with which Apollinaire was linked from his earliest days in Paris, published on May Day 1893 a special issue on anarchism, illustrated by anarchist artists Camille and Lucien Pissaro, Adolphe Willette and others. And meanwhile anarchists started to appear among the protagonists of novels : Salvat in Paris, Souvarine in Germinal, Barats and Pascal in Paul Adam's Le Mystère des foules. Little wonder that looking back on those days Remy de Gourmont would comment : 'Nous fûmes tous anarchistes, Dieu merci!' (10)

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When in February 1897 Guillaume Apollinaire arrived at the lycée in Nice to prepare for his baccalauréat, another pupil, Toussaint Luca, who was to become a close friend, noted the dark, conspiratorial air he had about him and the fact that his pockets were stuffed with newspapers and books : 'J'étais convaincu, d'ailleurs, qu'il se cachait dans cet enfant si grave et si sérieux un anarchiste, quelque disciple de Kropotkine ou de Ravachol. Et cela m'intriguait fort'. (11) Prince Peter Kropotkin was indeed on Apollinaire's reading-list. An early note-book contains lines copied from the Russian anarchist's La Conquête du pain : 'quelle triste satire dans ce nom d'économie politique que l'on donne à la science de la déperdition des forces sous le régime du salariat'. (12) André Salmon sees this young Apollinaire as more

(8) For details on literature and anarchism in France at this time, see: Emilien CARASSUS, Le Snobisme et les lettres françaises de Paul Bourget à Marcel Proust 1888-1914, Paris, Armand Colin, 1966, chapter 3, part I, 'La Toquade anarchiste', pp. 371-390. Also Jean MAITRON, Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France 1880-1914, Paris, SUELF, 1951.

(9) André SALMON, La Terreur noire, p. 253.

(10) Remy de GOURMONT, Deuxième livre de masques, quoted by Carassus , p. 373.

(11) Toussaint LUCA, Guillaume Apollinaire, souvenirs d'un ami, p. 15.

(12) BN FR Nouvelles Acquisitions 1639, fo. 12.

authentically anarchist than the intellectuals and journalists for whom revolt was a fashion and he presents us with a schoolboy who, 'deux ans à peine après avoir fait "une bonne première communion", rédigeait sur des feuilles de cahier un journal anarchiste. Un unique exemplaire. Il le louait deux sous à ses petits camarades'. (13) Toussaint Luca, claiming co-ownership with Apollinaire, would remember : 'c'était tantôt Le Vengeur, tantôt Le Transigeant [...] et il contenait des articles de fond contre nos professeurs, nos maîtres d'études et même certains de nos camarades'. (14) In a letter from 1898 Apollinaire informs Toussaint Luca that he is reading the Journal du Peuple, 'anarchiste et dirigé par Sébastien Faure', (15) while in another letter from that same period he hopes for a cataclysmic end to the nineteenth century : 'Je te quitte en souhaitant que vienne Souvarine, l'homme qui doit venir, le blond qui détruira les villes et les hommes. Que 1899 entende encore une voix comme celle de Zola et la Révolution est au but'. (16) 1898 had begun with Emile Zola's article 'J'Accuse', published in L'Aurore of 12 January. Following this it became difficult not to declare one's opinion on the 'Dreyfus Affair' and La Revue Blanche, for example, the paper with which Apollinaire would collaborate in 1902 and 1903, carried on the front page of its February 1898 issue an article headed 'Protestation', denouncing the military and judicial bureaucracy of France. Thenceforth the review carried regular 'Notes politiques et sociales' and continued a campaign against the anti-semitic clamour developing in the country. Much later, in May 1914, Apollinaire would publish an article in his own paper, Les Soirées de Paris, written by Dr. Albert Haas, looking back on the libertarian atmosphere which reigned in the rue de Choiseul offices of La Revue Blanche in those days when sometimes Stéphane Mallarmé would appear among regular visitors such as Zo d'Axa and Victor Barrucand whose 'idée fixe' was 'le pain gratuit'. Félix Fénéon, the review's proprietor, was himself a professed anarchist. Among

(13) André SALMON, La Terre noire, p. 277.

(14) Toussaint LUCA, Guillaume Apollinaire, souvenirs d'un ami, p. 41.

(15) OC IV, p. 695.

(16) OC IV, p. 696.

contributors to La Revue Blanche at that time was Julien Benda whose articles 'Notes d'un Byzantin' (December 1898), 'Journal d'un Byzantin' (March 1899) and then 'L'Affaire Dreyfus et le principe d'autorité' (October 1899) (17) are typical of a strong current of thinking at that time, coupling criticism of contemporary society with a faith in human evolution which was encouraged by the imminent arrival of a new century. The third of Benda's articles mentioned above ends with an affirmation of 'la conscience que nous avons d'appartenir à une espèce qui marche vers la perfection et qui sait qu'elle y marche'. (18) Guillaume Apollinaire will also subscribe to this utopian ideal of human perfectibility, as for example in the very early poem 'L'Ensemble seul est parfait' (OPo p. 839) where he puts himself on that same road, 'sur la route avec les anarchistes'.

Whether or not the Symbolist poets shared such ideas, there was no place for the explicit expression of social idealism in their poetry. It was this which prompted a group of young poets to form a new movement which they named Naturism, hoping to create poetry which would voice their faith in human progress and reflect the reality of the modern world being transformed by humanity, by the working man whom they wished to raise to the status of a hero. Apollinaire in a breathless letter to James Onimus in 1902 writes 'Connais St Georges Bouhélier Maurice le Blond', (19) and these two authors, Saint-Georges de Bouhélier and Maurice Le Blond, were the founders of Naturism in 1895. Apollinaire will often look back on the vigour of their rebellion. In 1908, in his important lecture 'La Phalange nouvelle' (20) he will speak of this, 'La plus importante manifestation poétique qui, frappant l'esprit des jeunes gens de ma génération, se soit opposée au symbolisme'. He recalls the sense of social responsibility which animated them, how 'l'exaltation civique aidant, ils voulurent se mêler à la foule [...] descendaient dans la rue'. In

(17) La Revue Blanche, XVII, p. 611 ; XVIII, p. 401; XX, p. 199.

(18) La Revue Blanche, XX, p. 206.

(19) OC IV, p. 715.

(20) OC III, p. 757.

the same lecture Apollinaire has particular praise for Bouhéliier , 'leur chef et qui est un grand et noble poète'. Later, replying to Camille Lemer-
cier d'Erm, editor of Les Argonautes, who accused him of bias in favour
of Jean Royère's La Phalange, Apollinaire will go even further in his commen-
dation of Naturism, emphasizing the movement's importance in literary history
and Bouhéliier's 'jeune héroïsme', referring to him as the 'véritable maître
d'un grand nombre de jeunes poètes'. (21) 1911 would see Apollinaire and
Bouhéliier collaborating as founder-members of a 'nouveau comité de lectu-
re' announced in l'Intransigeant, 2 February 1911, and according to Comoedia,
26 February 1911, this same group was planning free poetry readings at the
Odéon Theatre. (22) Then in 1917, in his appendix to Les Fleurs du mal, Apol-
linaire goes so far as to say that since Baudelaire, 'l'esprit moderne'
which he incarnated has vegetated, ignored by all literary movements except
the Naturists who, 'ayant tourné la tête, n'avaient pas l'audace d'examiner la
nouveau sublime et monstrueuse'. (23) Already in 1908 Apollinaire had ob-
served that the Naturists 'confondaient parfois le lyrisme et l'art oratoire'
(24) and these qualifications, serious as they are, were quite justified. The
poetry of the Naturists lacks the energy and novelty of their aspirations.

To what extent was Apollinaire's repeated praise for the Naturists a
recognition of the encouragement they offered him, of their influence on his
early work as a poet? His link with them began, according to Michel Dé-
caudin , with his participation in the 'Collège d'Esthétique moderne' (25)
which, with Emile Zola as honorary president, was a forum for young
artists creating a new aesthetic, seeking poetry in the lives and activities of
men and women on the streets or in the fields. Is it a coincidence that Apolli-
naire's writings and those of the Naturists will often coincide? Apollinaire's

(21) OC III, p. 769.

(22) Que vlo-ve ?, 2, July 1973, p. 19.

(23) OC II, p. 287.

(24) OC III, p. 760.

(25) Michel DECAUDIN, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes, pp. 116-117.

constant faith in the French genius, for example, matches the patriotism of Bouhéliier's articles in La Plume, collected in Les Eléments d'une Renaissance française in 1899. (26) In 1895 in his book La Résurrection des Dieux théorie du paysage Bouhéliier wrote of the poets :

Leurs chants s'enguirlandent des guirlandes d'Eté.
Ils les défont à la Victoire. Et leur pudeur s'en exaspère.
'Et on crie. Et ils s'émerveillent. [...]
C'est ainsi qu'il faut resplendir, Etre une Victoire, Epouser
son Spectre, Etre un Dieu! (27)

Of course Apollinaire, who in his Stavelot notebook wrote 'Si j'étais Dieu et Maeterlinck!', (28) will often be tempted by such Promethean ambitions, endowing his hero the great poet Croniamantal with divine powers which allow him to outface God and to know eternity (OPr p. 298), while in his notes to Le Bestiaire he compares poetry to 'la perfection qui est Dieu lui-même' (OPo p. 35). He seems to echo Bouhéliier when in 1910 he suggests the words 'J'émerveille' as part of a heraldic device to head Le Bestiaire (OPo p. 1037). And in 1917 the word 'Victoire' will have a significance which is more than simply military for the poet, as we shall see later in this thesis.

If we turn to Bouhéliier's partner, Maurice Le Blond, he insists in his Essai sur le Naturisme, published in 1896, that the poet must speak naturally and directly to the reader, for a work 'n'a de valeur que si elle est une autobiographie'. (29)

Apollinaire's poetry rings with the truth of experience and rare are the poems which are not linked in some way to the events of his life.

(26) Saint-Georges de BOUHELIER, Les Eléments d'une Renaissance française, Société anonyme de la Plume, 1899.

(27) Saint-Georges de BOUHELIER, La Résurrection des Dieux théorie du paysage, p. 57.

(28) Maurice PIRON, 'Le Cahier stavelotain de Guillaume Apollinaire', Savoir et Beauté, 2-3, 1964, p. 2714.

(29) Maurice LE BLOND, Essai sur le Naturisme, p. 30.

In his Rhineland poems, written soon after the turn of the century, he seems particularly close to the life of the countryside and the cycle of the seasons, taking his imagery from German folk-songs and the talk of the region's inhabitants, or at least as much of it as his limited knowledge of their language would permit him to understand or imagine. Here we find many of the qualities of Naturist poetry as defined by Le Blond as he attacks Symbolism:

Le culte pieux de l'épithète rare devait donc aboutir
à cette hérésie : la discorde du Poète et de la Nature.
[...] Le langage le plus expressif, le plus bel en pathé-
tique, c'est le parler universel. Un frustre proverbe a-t-il
moins de sens et de profondeur que telle phrase d'Hegel ?
Je pense aussi qu'il est de vieilles chansons anonymes, de
frissonnants et naïfs lieder qui surpassent le meilleur
sonnet du Parnasse, et maints poèmes du symbolisme. (30)

We might even link Apollinaire's 1897 poem 'La Maison de Cristal' (OPo p. 712), set in Merlin's forest, with Le Blond's assertion that the poet 'doit habiter une humble et transparente maisonnette de cristal'. (31) Certainly Apollinaire's self-identification with the knight-errant of Arthurian romance does not contradict the language of Naturism. Bouhéliier defines his Poet-Heroes as follows :

Ils sont les chevaliers d'Eternité
Ils portent les paysages déployés en bannière.
Une violette est leur croix.
Le Soleil leur écu.
Et l'Océan leur coupe. (32)

The Naturists, like Apollinaire, would sometimes brandish the black flag of anarchism. Le Blond refers to 'Le Sacrifice des martyrs anarchistes' (33) while Bouhéliier in 1898 produced a pamphlet entitled Affaire Dreyfus. La Révolution en marche. (34) Bouhéliier's Naturist manifesto, a declaration published on page four of Le Figaro, Sunday 10 January 1897, firmly situates

(30) Maurice LE BLOND, Essai sur le Naturisme, p. 43.

(31) Maurice LE BLOND, Essai sur le Naturisme, p. 98.

(32) Saint-Georges de BOUHELIER, La Résurrection des Dieux, p. 56.

(33) Maurice LE BLOND, Essai sur le Naturisme, p. 19.

(34) Saint-Georges de BOUHELIER, Affaire Dreyfus. La Révolution en marche, Paris, Stock, 1898.

poetry at the centre of the social arena. Because of its tone of bellicose extremism it could even be said to be the forerunner of F. T. Marinetti's Futurist manifesto, published in the same newspaper twelve years later. Bouhéliier proclaims that 'la plupart des juvéniles poètes sollicitent des révolutions. [...] En attendant, nous créons des poèmes'. (35) Elsewhere in this manifesto, which is fundamental to Naturism, Bouhéliier writes :

Dans la pensée de quelques jeunes poètes, les travaux quotidiens de l'homme paraissent mériter une consécration. De même que les exploits des rois, les actes ordinaires de la vie et tant de journaliers labours auxquels se soumettent les pêcheurs, les boulangers et les bouviers, sont dignes de nos odes et de notre étude.

Echoing this, the young Apollinaire would note :

Ce qui importe le plus, c'est de faire l'histoire de ces classes humbles et laborieuses que les historiens affectent de mépriser parce qu'ils appartiennent généralement à une classe privilégiée de la société. Ce sont les classes laborieuses qui constituent les forces vives d'une nation.

He gives this as a quotation from Emile Asselineau's Histoire de la sépulture des funérailles dans l'ancienne Egypte, (36) Working from these socialistic recommendations, Apollinaire's early poems, such as 'Un matin' (OPO p. 666) or 'Le Coin' (OPO p. 851), invite the reader to share his sympathy for the underprivileged strata of society, while a great strength of other texts lies in his ability to find poetry in 'les actes ordinaires de la vie', be it the life of a cow-herd in 'Rhénanes' or of the office-workers much later in 'Zone'.

By 1901 Bouhéliier had begun writing for the theatre and the avant-garde success in Paris that year was his revolutionary drama La Tragédie du nouveau Christ in which Christ returns to earth only to be executed once more, this time for the crimes of his anarchist disciples. (37)

(35) 'Manifeste de Saint-Georges de Bouhéliier' , Le Figaro, 10 January 1897, p. 4.

(36) Que vlo-ve ?, 17-18, July-October 1978, p. 13.

(37) Saint-Georges de BOUHELIER, La Tragédie du nouveau Christ, Paris, Fasquelle, 1901.

This link between religion and revolt , this placing of Christ in a context outside conventional Christianity corresponds to Apollinaire's own thinking at the time. If his Christ-figure, who plays the central role in 'Le Larron' (OPO p. 91), is indeed a member of 'la grande famille des personnages dans lesquels, s'incarna le mysticisme esthétique-anarchiste qui sévit en 1895' as Michel Décaudin suggests, (38) then he is related to Bouhélier's new Christ.

12 December 1902 Fernand Gregh published a 'Manifeste Humaniste' in Le Figaro. The Naturists accused him of plagiarism, saying that he was doing no more than recycling their ideas. When in 1947 Gregh came to defend himself he remembered that Apollinaire, a new friend, defended his ideas :

Je venais de lancer l'humanisme contre le charabia décadent de certains symbolistes. Kostrowitzky, qui, comme tous les jeunes, cherchait la bataille, adhéra à mon non-conformisme avec un tel enthousiasme qu'il écrivit et publia, quelques jours après que nous eussions lié connaissance, dans un petit journal qui s'appelait, si je ne me trompe, Tabarin, une ballade à la gloire de l'humanisme et contre les symbolistes. Que ne donnerais-je pour la retrouver! (39)

This final link with the anti-Symbolist ideas of Naturism is interesting for the picture it gives us of the turbulent, unconventional young man whom Fernand Gregh befriended. Thanks to Pierre Caizergues we now know that Apollinaire was a regular contributor to the anarchist newspaper Tabarin. In 1903 he was even invited to take over from the paper's owner and editor, Eugène Gaillet, imprisoned for libel... (40)

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(38) DA, p. 152.

(39) Fernand GREGH, L'Age d'Or, pp. 332-333.

(40) Pierre CAZERGUES, Apollinaire journaliste I. Les débuts et la formation du journaliste 1900-1906, Paris, Bibliothèque des Lettres modernes, Minard, 1980. At time of writing we have not yet been able to consult this book.

While writing for a libertarian newspaper Apollinaire was also a libertine, at least in his imagination. His first published work was an erotic novel from 1900, that other lost masterpiece (?) Mirely ou le petit trou pas cher. This was followed by his collaboration with Esnard on the serial story 'Que faire ?', in Le Matin and, in 1901, by his work on J. Molina da Silva's La Grâce et le maintien français, (41) a book which perhaps gives us a clue to Apollinaire's political attitudes in these early days. Marcel Adéma marks 'collaboration anonyme' against this title in his Apollinaire bibliography, (42) but the poet is given some credit for this contribution in da Silva's preface to the book, where he writes :

Je dois quelques remerciements à l'érudition obligeante de mon ami Guillaume Apollinaire(sic) dont les notes et la riche collection d'anecdotes sur le sujet qui nous occupe m'a (sic) été d'un réel secours. Nous croyons avoir réussi à faire un travail d'ensemble, s'harmonisant dans une unité parfaite. (43)

Pascal Pia, who owned a copy of this most rare book, considered Apollinaire's presence in the text to be 'facile à repérer' and among the references to Rimbaud's 'Le Bateau ivre' or Molière's Le Bourgeois gentilhomme he spotlights a disrespectful passage in which the authors insist that lessons in deportment are essential for those politicians who, risen from the lower ranks of society, nevertheless wish to appear elegant on important state occasions. Pascal Pia discerns Apollinaire's malicious 'pince-sans-rire' hand at work in this passage where we read that the politicians of the Third Republic 'comprirent que pour discuter les intérêts de la France, il fallait qu'au point de vue mondain, ils ne se montrassent point inférieurs vis-à-vis des représentants des puissances étrangères'. Any suspicion that Apollinaire's reaction to the behaviour of bourgeois politicians was at this time one of laughter laced with contempt is confirmed by an important manuscript version of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', omitted from his published text, in which he

(41) J. Molina da SILVA, La Grâce et le maintien français, J. da Silva éditeur, 26 rue de Nemours, Paris, 1901.

(42) Pierre-Marcel ADEMA, Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 350.

(43) Pascal PIA, 'Apollinaire et le bon ton', La Quinzaine Littéraire, 5, 15 May 1966, p. 13.

remembers :

la bourgeoise clique
Grévy, Carnot, Faure, Loubet,
Présidents de la république,
Chacun d'eux passe comme un pet
, Miserere ! mélancolique. (44)

The venomous 'Réponse des cosaques zaporogues au Sultan de Constantinople' in the definitive version of the text rings like an echo of these lines when Apollinaire writes :

Ta mère fit un pet foireux
Ettu naquis de sa colique.

His scorn almost equals that of the cossacks. The 'bourgeoise clique' are simply all the presidents who have occupied the Elysée Palace since he was born. He shows no sympathy for the murdered Carnot and when he thinks of Jules Grévy, obliged to resign and leave the Elysée in 1887 after a scandal over the trafficking of decorations, he remembers :

Mon frère et moi nous en pouffâmes
De rire, rien que d'y songer. (45)

Apollinaire's laughter often masks deep emotion. In a letter to Karl Boès, editor of La Plume, written 27 April 1902, his anger breaks through when he castigates the régime of the Tzar of Russia as reactionary and oppressive, adding that 'je tiens la politique pour haïssable, mensongère, stérile et néfaste'. (46)

1903, the year in which Apollinaire composed 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', also saw him editing his own review, Le Festin d'Esope. The vitriolic style of his letter to Boès is still present in 1903, for if Le Festin d'Esope now makes fascinating reading, and there is a fair dose of humour in its contents, the theme of violence also runs through its pages, like a trail of gunpowder, from the first issue, November 1903, which opens with Apollinaire's

(44) Création, XIII, June 1978, p. 44.

(45) Ibid.

(46) OC IV, p. 712.

gruesome 'Que vlo-ve?', to the last, August 1904, which closes with the 'Histoire d'un mauvais sujet' by Otakar Theer. Translated from the Czech, this is the tale of a young man who murders a passer-by chosen at random in the street - a surrealist acte gratuit ahead of its time:

J'ai tiré trois coups de revolver sur un bourgeois ventru,
que je croisais dans la rue. Je n'avais aucun grief personnel
'contre lui [...]'. Le bourgeois n'était pour moi qu'un symbole
de la classe sociale qui ne travaille pas plus que moi, mais
qui est riche et heureuse.

Consistency of tone is maintained elsewhere by Apollinaire's poem on the German outlaw and folk-hero Schinderhannes (OPo p. 117), which directly follows 'Ça ira...' by Henri Hertz, a short story which tells of the assassination of the Kaiser by an English anarchist in Paris and which takes its title from the famous revolutionary song. (47) There are contributions from Apollinaire's Polish anarchist friend Mécislas Golberg and a satirical 'Esquisse d'une méthode pour se faire applaudir des Bourgeois' by the Albanian nationalist Faik bég Konitza, masquerading here as 'Thrank-Spirobeg'. (48) Toussaint Luca reappears in issues 6 and 9 with his 'Hagiographie de Clément Brentano', a swipe at Catholicism, ridiculing the German poet's infatuation with the visionary Sister Anne-Catherine Emmerich whose 'crise érotique' is relegated to a place in 'l'histoire des hystériques chrétiennes'. Of course there are other, less iconoclastic features such as the regular 'Enquête sur l'orchestre' and Symbolist poems interspersed with more lively offerings from André Salmon and Apollinaire, but the contumelious spirit of Le Vengeur and Le Transigeant lives on in Le Festin d'Esope.

At the same time Apollinaire was building a reputation as a political journalist with his articles in L'Européen, a pro-Dreyfus, anti-clerical weekly,

(47) Le Festin d'Esope, 7, June 1904.

(48) Le Festin d'Esope, 2, December 1903. For details concerning Faik bég Konitza, see OPr p. 1323.

hostile to the great imperialist states of Europe, its well-informed commentators regularly denouncing Tsarist policies. Apollinaire, mindful of his own origins in long-suffering Poland, aware since his travels in Europe of the less than democratic attitudes of the new Caesars, the Tsar of Russia, the Emperor of Austria and Kaiser Wilhelm, finds a ready place between its pages during 1903 and 1904 as an expert on German affairs. (49) He writes on the condition of the working class and presents the Catholic Church as the ally of the Kaiser in his efforts to halt the rise of socialism. He resents the Church's control of education and writes that 'les Catholiques ont pris une importance plus qu'inquiétante'. He sees Germany split between 'les rouges et les noirs' and insists that 'Des prêtres allemands organisent la lutte, ils veulent dominer l'Allemagne'. (50) These articles were of interest to readers in France, where the struggle between Church and State was still a live issue, but they also indicate the contiguity of Apollinaire's rejection of Catholicism and his animosity towards political authoritarianism. A reading of these articles confirms that the reply of the Zaporogue Cossacks to the Sultan of Constantinople in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' is not only an attempt to soil and exorcise the unhappy memory of a lost love, but also voices Apollinaire's own attitude towards religious and political tyranny.

1904 also saw the laying of plans for a mobile theatre group, set to bring alternative politics to the suburbs of Paris. In January Apollinaire writes in Le Festin d'Esopé :

On nous promet un théâtre social ambulante. MM. Frick, Jean Mollet et leur excellente troupe offriront bientôt aux faubourgs parisiens des spectacles dont l'influence sera peut-être plus profonde que celle des meetings bruyants et fumeux. (51)

According to André Billy, Apollinaire was to give a lecture with each show. (52) That show never got on the road, but if it is true that Les Mamelles de

(49) OC II, pp. 570-612.

(50) OC II, pp. 574, 576 and 577.

(51) Le Festin d'Esopé, 4, January 1904. See OC II, p. 635.

(52) André BILLY, La Terrasse du Luxembourg, pp. 194-195.

Tirésias 'a été fait en 1903', as Apollinaire claims in his preface to the play (OPo p. 865), then perhaps his enthusiasm for the idea of a theatre which would 'plaire et instruire' was redirected into that other project which would come to fruition only in 1917.

These then are some of the early influences, this is the background to the first poems in which Apollinaire faces the world, often attacks it and sometimes remakes it, trying out images, obsessions and aspirations which will continue to serve his poetry until the end of his life. The first such poem must be 'Au Ciel' (OPo p. 837), dated 'Cannes 1896', one of Apollinaire's earliest surviving texts, viewing human activity from outside society, finding it absurd, laughable :

Parfois là-haut tu dois rire de nous,
Qui gesticulons, poussons des cris rauques

The sixteen-year-old poet's entomological view of humanity will recur much later in 'La Victoire' (OPo p. 309) where men will become

Des aveugles gesticulant comme des fourmis

Both poems may be seen as subversive in their rejection of language which is emptied of sense, gestures which have no meaning. In 1896 the world appears flat, a 'banal décor' for a poet testing his powers.

More tangible reasons for dissatisfaction are given in the prose-poem 'Un Matin' (OPo p. 666) where in sorrow as in anger Apollinaire describes real hardship and expresses his solidarity with the poorest of working people. The protagonist is Nyctor, a transparent mask for the poet himself, as is confirmed by a version of the same text in Apollinaire's Stavelot notebook, written in the first person and titled 'Conte véridique'. (53)

(53) Maurice PIRON, 'Le Cahier Stavelotain de Guillaume Apollinaire', Savoir et Beauté, 2-3, 1964, p. 2714.

Nyctor also appears in the 1900 text 'Histoire de Nyctor', 'une autobiographie à peine romancée', (54) in which he remembers the year of his baccalauréat :

Pendant le temps que je fus à ce lycée, malgré l'entourage, malgré l'air marin, je devins triste, rêveur, préoccupé. Comme je dormais fort peu et me relevais souvent la nuit pour me promener ou penser à une fenêtre de corridor, mes camarades m'appelèrent Nyctor et j'ai voulu garder ce nom nocturne (OPr p. 1203).

And Apollinaire will reuse the name in Couleur du temps. In that play Nyctor is a poet, a solitary, idealistic dreamer, ill-at-ease in the day-time world of action and decision-making. Therefore Nyctor may be taken to represent one trait in Apollinaire's character, that of the lonely, introverted walker whose poetry is a brand of rather melancholy Symbolism. In which case 'Un Matin' may be read as an allegory of the irruption of contemporary reality, of labour and suffering, into the hermetic sphere of fin de siècle literature. In the sixth paragraph of the text Nyctor's indolent strolling along the coast is clearly contrasted with the presence of the railway navigators, 'Fatigués d'avoir peiné dès quatre heures'. Nyctor gazes out to sea, however, and only a disaster among the immigrant workers can take him from his reverie : 'Nyctor marchait sans songer aux misères ni aux brusques morts'. The cry of a falling man impinges on his consciousness, yet hardly ruffles the calm of this Mediterranean morning. The indifference of nature, the fatalistic attitude of the other workers, are matched by the undramatic, even style of the prose and this in turn corresponds to Nyctor's own reaction to the tragedy, 'désastre fatal', which he compares to hunting accidents in the Stone Age, far off and impersonal. There is even a hint at aesthetic pleasure to be drawn from the other workers' moan of anguish, which he finds harmonious.

Yet the low key in which the narrative is set makes it all the more powerful and the moral of this tale, if there is one, loses none of its force for being discreetly expressed. Nyctor's gesture of kindness, emptying his purse

(54) See OPr p. 1154.

for the family of the dead man who earned only three francs a day, may seem aristocratic, a little patronising. But the careful description of the dying man's agony, his broken head and limbs, is starkly moving in the setting of abstract reflections on human destiny and the clear southern landscape. At the end of the text there is telling irony in the unemphatic progression, a widening of focus, from the corpse and the sullen workmen to the distant symbols of ease and prosperity, villas with gardens over white beaches, 'vue admirable'.

In 'Les Doukhobors' (OPo p. 715) Apollinaire states an opinion with rather more straightforward energy. Of this evangelical sect who believed in fraternity, poverty and pacifism, concepts which were subversive enough to have merited exile in Georgia since 1840, he writes :

Le Doukhobors, ô frères, mes frères lointains

Leon Tolstoy in an article in La Revue Blanche in January 1896 had proposed them for the first Nobel Peace Prize and Apollinaire jotted in a school notebook details of an article by Lucien Descaves following on from Tolstoy's proposal and published in the Echo de Paris, 7 November 1897. (55) In his poem Apollinaire's style may sometimes appear hesitant or stilted as he tries out the narrative power of free verse, but there are some outstanding images here such as the menacing figure of Death, bugle in hand, sounding the charge of the Tsarist troops, or the red sun seen as a 'cou tranché'. Indeed the last six lines of the poem, awaiting the brilliant compression which will form the final two lines of 'Zone', are both vivid and prophetic as the world is washed in blood-red light. The Russians' pacifism as they burn their weapons, their internationalism as they burn their flags, their hopes for world revolution,

Espérant des remous
Océaniques
Des nations, là-bas, du côté d'Occident ou d'Amérique

(55) Michel DECAUDIN, 'A propos de Doukhobors', FDR, 3, September 1954, pp. 14-16.

all these aspirations Apollinaire makes his own. Once more we are reminded of the Zaporogue Cossacks when we see Apollinaire's presentation of the Doukhobors' courageous revolt in the face of tyranny. Death, the most powerful dictator of all, is shown to be in league with the Tsar, forces of darkness in opposition to the radiant light of the sun. A blow for liberty is presented as a blow against death and its unwonted intervention in life. The supposed invincibility of death, the inequality of any struggle, is undermined by the monster's own obvious fear of liberty, a total, global liberty which Apollinaire refers to as 'la liberté réelle', and by the poet's qualification of mortality as 'La Mort qui n'existe pas'. Mysticism and revolutionary idealism merge to suggest that the power of the human imagination denying death can lead to the complete freedom of immortality for mankind.

'Les Poètes' (OPo p. 720), also from the last years of the nineteenth century, again employs the image of the guillotine, widow-maker of the French Revolution, as a herald of revolutionary hope. A scarlet sun

Laissera le sang pleuvoir sur nos fronts plus beaux

Again taking the stance of prophecy, Apollinaire foresees a century of struggle for those men and women who have the will to live in liberty. In this poem there is an expression of solidarity between the sexes which is not uncommon in his work at this time; failed love-affairs would alter his attitude to women. But the strength of Apollinaire's own fervour is quickly sapped as the text switches to his perfumed garden of erotic dreams, a mood of sad claustrophobia. Repressed sexuality displaces social idealism. In Oeuvres poétiques the seventh verse of 'Les Poètes' seems rather quirky, reading :

Là-bas trop [près] du but notre bâton brisé
et la gourde tarie et la nuit dans les bois

But the editors' notes to the poem (OPo p. 1159) give an alternative version of the text, titled 'Le blason de la vie', a version which corresponds to the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript, so carefully and clearly copied out in black ink by the poet that surely it should be taken as definitive. (56) There we read :

Là-bas, trop loin du but, notre bâton brisé

This version of the line seems more appropriate considering that the rather obvious imagery of the broken stick and empty gourd is set in a night of feverish insomnia. The poet's sexuality is wasted in solitary fantasy which leaves him unsatisfied, not 'près' but 'loin du but', this 'but' for which he yearns being the more fulfilling experience of communion. 'Les Poètes' is therefore a forerunner of 'Lul de Faltenin' (OPo p. 97) in which poem, as we shall demonstrate, the sirens of the poet's imagination are again the enemies of his primary aspirations.

'Le blason de la vie' has five extra lines added to the end of the poem, to compensate for the first eight lines of 'Les Poètes', a clarion of revolt which the poet suppresses. These five new lines are of interest in that they seem to carry a strain of music, a filtered pre-echo from 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry', first published in 1914 (OPo p. 188). In 'Le blason de la vie' we read :

O les mouches, ma vie! combien, combien de mouches!
Elles viennent au nez, aux yeux et à la bouche!

In the 1914 poem the arrival of the faceless musician 'sans yeux sans nez et sans oreilles', is marked by the presence of millions of flies. The flies are a symbol of death, in 'Un matin', where they swarm around the dying workman, 'les mouches qui venaient aux lèvres et aux yeux'; and in the war, when they will provide the title for a poem, 'Tourbillon de mouches' (OPo p. 252). In 'Le blason de la vie' they symbolise both death and solitude :

C'est le destin des lèvres d'embrasser les mouches!

It is the questioning and final acceptance of this condition which causes Apollinaire to end his poem in meek acquiescence :

Si je n'ai pas de pain, je mangerai les mouches!
Je t'accepte, ma vie! Tu vois! Mais toi, sois douce.

He has moved from a tone of revolt to one of compromise, giving up his struggle with the weight of circumstance, abandoning his faith in the power of the human will to control human destiny, to bring change and progress.

This juxtaposition of revolt and solitude, the solitude which nullifies optimism and the revolt which is itself born of solitude, recurs in the Stavelot poem, 'Il me revient quelquefois...' (OPo p. 522). The manuscript version of the poem begins :

Il me revient quelquefois
Ce refrain moqueur :
Si ton coeur cherche un coeur
Ton coeur seul est ce coeur
Et c'est pourquoi je me deux
Et moi le révolté, je suis tout seul. (57)

Apollinaire cut out this note of revolt, leaving only hopeless narcissism and a feeling of impotence in the face of destiny :

Le grand sera toujours
Le vil sera toujours
La mort mourra toujours

This is compounded by religious anguish, a sense of shame which will haunt him until after he has written 'Zone'. In the final section of the Stavelot poem he is ashamed of his sexuality, the promptings of his own too human heart, as he stands beneath sad and suffering Virgins, gold and silver ex-voto, marble and plaster statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus :

Et je fus tout honteux
Et j'ai caché mon coeur de chair

In 'Zone' the hearts of Jesus and the Virgin will again prompt him to condemn his desire :

L'amour dont je souffre est une maladie honteuse

Also in the Stavelot poem we find the poet

Regardant avec effroi
Les coeurs d'or ou d'argent qui rutilent là-bas

just as in 'Zone' he will write :

Nous regardons avec effroi les poulpes des profondeurs
Et parmi les algues nagent les poissons images du Sauveur

In 'Il me revient quelquefois...' the lines

Et je me deux
D'être tout seul

may well contain the first person singular of the verb 'se douloir', to feel pain, as the Oeuvres poétiques note to the poem points out (OPo p. 1139). But they also express the situation of the poet who is obliged by solitude to talk to himself. So they prefigure Apollinaire's brilliant exteriorisation of internal debate through the use in 'Zone' of both the first and second persons singular in reference to the self.

The poet resolves to live in the present, to take poetry where he finds it, indifferent to the future, writing in 'Il me revient quelquefois...' :

Il ne faut pas sonder les devenirs
Il vaut mieux vivre et jouir de la fraîcheur des soirs
Où l'on s'endort en rêvant aux delà sans espoir

But this philosophy of pragmatic immediacy seems so unsatisfactory that the poem declines into reflections on death. His religious upbringing was one of the root causes of revolt in the young Apollinaire, but the faith which still clings to his heart, moving him to shame, also gnaws at his vitality. Furthermore his alienation from the Church leaves him with a sense of loss so that he sometimes yearns for a return to the unbroken world of childhood, as in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' :

Comment faire pour être heureux
Comme un petit enfant candide

He still seeks a structure which will give cohesion and form to an existence which seems fragmented by the loss of his faith, an ideal which may be spiritual, social, or both. His intuition that such a unity may be recovered is expressed in the phrase 'L'Ensemble seul est parfait' (OPO p. 839). The poem which begins thus proposes a return to Eden, a vision of pastoral anarchism similar to that envisaged in the first two verses of 'Les Poètes' :

Et nus comme des dieux, débarassés des lois,
Nous irons sur la route avec les anarchistes
Et nous vaincrons d'amour la vie qu'on désaima

The narcissistic isolationism of the poets who dress their work in veils of recondite erudition, 'idéogrammes mots et vanités', is rejected in favour of a new marriage of life and art, a return to nature :

Mais la nature est seule vraie, non le grimoire

We have seen the responsibility of Naturism for this direction taken by Apollinaire's poetry. Saint-Georges de Bouhélier claimed that :

Tout homme est le tombeau où dort un dieu [...] Or les Poètes, dieux qu'éveillent les archanges, fracassent le bloc des apparences, et ils surgissent, miraculeux! (58)

Apollinaire in moments of exaltation, as when writing his poem 'Dieu' (OPO p. 838), can reply :

Voyez de l'animal un homme vous est né
Et le dieu qui sera en moi s'est incarné

Thus man in nature becomes autonomous, with neither God nor Master over him, free of laws, sharing divinity. In 'L'Ensemble seul est parfait' Apollinaire suggests that once this evolution has been achieved man's eyes will no longer stray 'toujours anxieux vers des étendards', the flags which were burned in 'Les Doukhobors', symbols of nationalism and tyranny, of divisions among men now rejected in this text whose movement, as the poet shifts from 'Je' to 'Nous', is towards cohesion and solidarity. Though caught in time and

(58) Saint-Georges de BOUHELIER, La Résurrection des Dieux théorie du paysage, p. 19.

himself a part of the whole, Apollinaire insists that a pattern, a structure, does exist :

L'Ensemble seul est parfait. Je ne puis le voir
Ni le connaître, étant partie du tout parfait.

Here we can see that the concept of anarchism does not have destructive connotations for Apollinaire and his presentation of the anarchists in 'L'Ensemble seul est parfait' is far removed from the nihilism of Souvarine, from the nightmare of urban terrorism. His anarchists are naked as Adam and Eve, and like Rimbaud he has a pagan vision of liberty in nature, a longing for a return to innocence which reaches back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and was one of the ideals of the French Revolution. Like Paul Gauguin, seeking freedom and inspiration in Brittany or Tahiti, Apollinaire when writing these poems can be attached to a current of late nineteenth-century thought which felt concern about the advance of science, saw the progress of industrialism as the advance of ugliness. He will not always feel this way, but in 'Les Doukhobors', for example, an *oilwell* ^{mine} is described as a 'Source d'enfer empuantie', the first link in a chain which will make the machine-age city uninhabitable. Similarly in 'Les Poètes' he prophesies :

Nous lutterons sans maîtres au loin des cités mortes

If liberty only exists in nature, far from the cities, this would explain the enigmatic line in 'Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon', (OPo p. 83), perhaps an echo in 1909 of this early train of thought, when Apollinaire calls out :

O liberté végétale, ô seule liberté terrestre

The infinitely varied, sappy life of nature, tangled and unpredictable, is preferred to the utilitarian regimentation of city life as he here imagines it. The young Croniamantal in 'Le Poète assassiné' is told :

apprenez tout de la nature et aimez-la.
Qu'elle soit votre nourrice véritable [...] .
N'oubliez pas que tout est preuve d'amour
dans la nature (OPr p. 249).

This optimistic view of nature leads to a suspicion of human reason. Apollinaire suggests that over-reliance on the intellect will result in poetry which is too artificial and will deprive mankind of the gift of his instinct, his primitive self, child of nature. He writes in 'L'Ensemble ^{seul} est parfait' :

Pourtant, esclaves indolents de nos pensées,
Nous avons la nature et nous n'y pouvons croire

The five lines of 'Avril qui rit ici' (OPo p. 845) which probably date from April 1900 can be read in conjunction with 'L'Ensemble seul est parfait' in that here he states explicitly his faith in the potential divinity of humanity, immortal in nature :

Libres, l'homme et la femme un jour vaincront la mort.

Here we are reminded that the union of man and woman still seems possible to Apollinaire. Suspicion has not yet set in and comparing Scandinavia with Mediterranean customs he decides that northern women are right to assert their independence and freedom :

Mais les femmes s'en vont libres et n'ont pas tort

In an unpublished manuscript from the same period he goes further :

Et c'est le rêve ardent du féminisme
Qui a raison de vouloir l'égalité (59)

By the summer of 1901, however, this generous partnership with women, a return of the affection which in practice he offers so clumsily, begins to look impossible. In his 'Adieux' (OPo p. 332) to Linda Molina da Silva he will write that such an ideal is out of place in a world where

(59) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 54. See also 'Té' (OPo p. 659): 'Nyctor a écarté toute préoccupation amoureuse il satisfait un rut qui le pousse et respecta la liberté d'amour de la femme'. Does this respect for liberty and independence already imply Apollinaire's later ideas on 'separate development', the 'éternités différentes de l'homme et de la femme' referred to in 'Onirocritique' (OPo p. 371) ?

Tous les dons sont impurs et les joyaux sont tristes
[...]
Il n'y a pas encore de cadeaux anarchistes

The withdrawal into the desert and the impossible ascetism which this poem postulates is the adventure which Apollinaire describes with some irony in 'L'Ermite', first published in 1902. The hermit will be forced back to the city.

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Apollinaire's idealised vision of a new Eden in nature, the domain of the purity, joy and generosity which anarchism represents for him in 'Adieux', is opposed by a harder reality in poems such as 'Passion' (OPo p. 532) and 'La Chaste Lise' (OPo p. 516) which consider the workaday monotony of country life. The castle on the mountainside adds a possibility of magic or drama to the landscape of the second of these poems, but this is still the world of hard labour from dawn until dusk, of small blessings gratefully accepted. The frank and unsophisticated tone of this poem matches its subject matter and the text fades down the page like light on a hillside in the Ardennes, to finish with a wryly philosophical sigh. 'Au Prolétaire' (OPo p. 520) also dates from the stay in Stavelot, though Apollinaire worked on the poem again in 1902. Here the life of the industrial worker, trapped in 'la mauvaise usine' and the 'injustes cités', is seen to be as hard as that of the farm worker. But nature here is a positive force, sweeping away industrial pollution, feeding hungry mouths. In the city there is hope of revolt, the fruit of progress and the workers' awakening reason, 'l'arbre de science où mûrit la révolte'. The imperious tone of the poem is rather presumptuous, however, and phrases such as 'l'aquilon juste et pur' and 'alcôves divines' sound artificial and hollow. This is the rhetoric of Naturism and the references to the city girls turning to prostitution in search of ease and luxury, and to the miners underground at the end of the poem perhaps denote a debt to Zola.

In fact, despite his ideal of 'liberté végétale', Apollinaire was often bored during his exile in Stavelot as he suggests in his satirical poem 'La Campagne' (OR p. 854) :

Nature, Nature
Bien plus laide que moi
[...]
,Comment peut-on vivre ailleurs qu'à la ville ?
'Ailleurs on est en exil!

Apollinaire's capacity for self-contradiction is perhaps a measure of his immaturity. The misadventures of his year in Germany lead him to suspect something rotten in the heart of Nature herself, sister of Time, present in images of flowing water, petals falling and ruined buildings. And the wind along the Rhine blows hard on those hopes of naked, pastoral liberty. The wind which sweeps the plains of 'Merlin et la vieille femme', which calls the thief in 'Le Larron' to exile,

Où's du coeur des vents les cadences plagales

seems the same as that which cuts across the 'Fagnes de Wallonie' (OPo p. 370) cold as death. The book of Rhineland poems which Apollinaire planned was to be called Le Vent du Rhin, taking its title from the wind which in 'Mai' (OPo p. 112) carries off the cherry-blossom petals, which in 'Rhénane d'automne' (OPo p. 119) blows out the candles 'que toujours les enfants rallument', as regeneration follows death. The same wind ends the autumn's agony in 'Automne malade' (OPo p. 146) and blows organ chords in the pine-woods of 'Les Femmes' (OPo p. 123). Thenceforth, the wind will be a constant har-binger of death in the poetry. In part III of 'Les Fiançailles' (OPo p. 130) death approaches 'en sifflant comme un ouragan'. 'Cours de chasse' (OPo p. 148) closes with the line

Dont meurtle bruit parmi le vent

and this same wind seems to blow through the whole poem, present in the echoing 'ent' sound spread throughout the text. Similarly in 'Arbre' (OPo p. 178)

Le vent vient du couchant

and in 1915, in the poem 'Nos étoiles' (OPo p. 398),

Le vent qui souffle vient du nord

It is the cold breath of death,

la mort

Qui du Nord est la souveraine

as he explains in 'Dans un café à Nîmes' (OPop. 400). Mortality, the old enemy, takes on a grim invincibility as she howls in the wind. The wind is a crisp and cold variation on the theme of autumnal decay, the sad passing of time.

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The poet's conception of nature as a benevolent setting for the recapture of primal innocence, Paradise regained, a result of his Mediterranean childhood, seems compromised by his experience of northern climates. His experience of life in the big city will focus the vague unease engendered by the human condition in 'Au Ciel', for example, to produce a more definite and angular vision of hardship, as in 'Le Coin' (OPo p. 851). Apollinaire describes the company he has been keeping in Paris in a letter to James Onimus from July 1902 :

A Paris hiver difficile. On arrive à croire qu'on mangera des briques. Je vais même faire des bandes dans une maison de publicité à 4 sous l'h[eu]re] ce qui est la pire des choses parmi des repris de justices, d'anciens avocats sans le sou, des aventuriers de retour des mines d'or. Je vois ceux qui veulent s'engager pour le Transvaal sans le pouvoir et me mêle à cette plèbe de meurt-de-faim. (60)

(60) OC IV, p. 714.

The need to support himself in Paris makes Apollinaire sensitive to the pitiful condition of the aged unemployed, suffering the discomfort of cold, poverty, illness. In 'Le Coin', spitting black, the men are again like characters from Zola and Apollinaire employs a similar mixture of simple realism and implied social criticism. The snatches of direct speech, introducing colloquialisms into the text, also relate the poem to 'Les Femmes', the Rhineland, 'conversation poem'. But here he goes so far as to read the minds of his characters : 'Ça y est jusqu'à la gauche'. Apollinaire's solidarity with these men is strengthened by a shared sense of isolation in an indifferent society :

Ils ne se parlent pas entre eux car il ne se connaissent pas

The inhospitable city of this poem in which

Les fiacres en roulant près du trottoir, les éclaboussent
Les passants en pardessus, sans les voir les repoussent

is the same as the Paris of 'Zone':

Maintenant tu marches dans Paris tout seul parmi la foule
Des troupeaux d'autobus mugissants près de toi roulent

Life on the edge of the pavement is still lonely, though by 1912 the carriages are horseless and have taken on a new anthropomorphic aggressiveness. The final note of pathos, worthy of François Coppée perhaps detracts from the credibility of 'Le Coin', but otherwise the use of repetition and authentic observation starkly expressed give this unpretentious poem real impact.

'Les villes sont pleines d'amour et de douleur' (OPo p. 563) is the prototype of Apollinaire's great peripatetic city poems, 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', 'Vendémiaire', 'Zone', in which the poet's wandering ends only with the dawn. Like 'La Clef' (OPo p. 553), this is a poem which Apollinaire would plunder for material for later texts ; 'Le Voyageur', 'L'Emigrant de Landor Road', 'Les Fiançailles'. But unlike 'La Clef', this is a good poem in its own right. Images surge from the text like faces in the dark and Apollinaire makes this world of gas-light and shadow his own. The insomniac sees

the sky at night with the dreaming eyes of a tramp, so that the full moon through clouds becomes a fried egg. Surrealism is not far behind. The hum of the city as dawn starts to break,

L'oraison innombrable de la vie qui se grise

this intoxication with life itself as man awakens to shape destiny, building factories higher than churches, this 'rumeur des hommes en oraison', will swell into 'Vendémiaire'.

In the oniric atmosphere of the urban night the poet discovers the liberty which he once imagined in a rural setting. But now 'la mauvaise usine' of 'Au Prolétaire' represents the victory of science over the old religions and there is no trace of nature or of 'liberté végétale' in this poem, except for that Baudelairian flower of evil which is death, on the twin plants of love and sorrow, at the start of the text. There is no partnership with women now for the poet is set in his solitude, sharing vicariously the pleasure of basement lovers, shrinking back from the women of the streets :

Mais à mes yeux de mâle horreur je me rappelle
Les passantes du soir n'étaient jamais jolies

But he is at home on the underside of the working world, with those who live on the margins of society, and if his imagination is now so free that all anger and tension have dissolved, he still harbours a latent iconoclasm, still takes pleasure in trampling a king's silhouette :

Et libre jusqu'au jour j'ai foulé sans colère
Les ombres projetées par les statues des rois

A resurgence of bitter nihilism, the 'beauté blonde' of Souvarine, his clean hands and indolent indifference, together with echoes of 'Le Forgeron' by Rimbaud, these are the elements which interact to form 'Avenir' (OPO p. 560), a poem first published on May Day 1903, in La Plume. The call for a plague on the earth is worthy of Lautréamont, a writer who was not unknown to the Symbolists and who had a place on the bookshelf of Alfred Jarry, Apollinaire's friend in 1903. In 'Avenir' Apollinaire writes that :

les lacs et les mers
Suffiront bien à effacer le sang des mains

This could be a dialogue with Ducasse who states at the end of Poésies I, a book which entered the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1870 : 'Toute l'eau de la mer ne suffirait pas à laver une tache de sang intellectuelle'. (61) Apollinaire crosses into total fantasy when he portrays himself mad as Nero, reflected in pools of blood by the light of a burning city,

Sans songer aux blessés sans regretter les vies

Perhaps he thought he was giving his readers what they wanted on May Day. Even when experiencing the barbarity of the trenches in Champagne in the First World War Apollinaire never hated humanity like this. Yet the vision of the destruction of the past in a flaming apocalypse and the theme of suffering into purity, first developed in this poem, will be important in Apollinaire's future work, in the purgatorial cleansing of the 1908 fire poems, in his hopes that a renaissance would follow the war.

The final quatrain of 'Avenir' reads :

Puis quand la peste aura purifié la terre
Vivront en doux amour les bienheureux humains
Paisibles et très purs car les lacs et les mers
Suffiront bien à effacer le sang des mains

These lines perhaps explain the image of 'Le Brasier' (OPO p. 108) :

(61) Note also the Stavelot poem 'Le ciel se couvre un matin de mai' (OPO p. 521) contains the lines :

Or le ciel était bleu comme une meurtrissure
Mais soleil je te veux louer
Car tu revins et fis claquer sur la nature
Des rayons tout à coup cinglés comme des fouets

The first paragraph of the 'Je te salue vieil océan!' soliloquy, in the first of Les Chants de Maldoror, begins :

Vieil océan, aux vagues de cristal, tu ressembles proportionnellement à ces marques azurées que l'on voit sur le dos meurtri des mousses ; tu es un immense bleu, appliqué sur le corps de la terre ; j'aime cette comparaison.

Voici ma vie renouvelée

[...]

Je trempe une fois encore mes mains dans l'Océan

It is an image of renewal through purification. The corpses which rot in the sun in 'Avenir' will reappear in part IV of 'Les Fiançailles' (OPO p. 131) where we read :

Les cadavres de mes jours
Marquent ma route et je les pleure
Les uns pourrissent dans les églises italiennes
Ou bien dans de petits bois de citronniers
Qui fleurissent et fructifient
En même temps et en toute saison

In both poems the corpses represent a lost past and the strange fertility of the lemon-groves in 'Les Fiançailles' is matched in 'Avenir' :

Le soleil et les morts aux terres qu'on emblave
Donnent la beauté blonde et la fécondité

In both poems the past has to be sacrificed, but provides fertile ground in which to root the future. Apollinaire's aesthetic philosophy will nearly always propound the building of the future on the best of the past, and such moderation contradicts the violent extremism of a text like 'Avenir'.

The link between an early anarchist poem and Apollinaire's work in 1908 is not far-fetched. We have already noted that 'Les villes sont pleines d'amour et de douleur' provides several lines for 'Les Fiançailles'. The poet's obsession with clean hands in 'Avenir' and the later neo-Symbolist verse is due to a Pilate-like sense of shame and sin, referred to in 'Zone' when he writes :

Tu n'oses plus regarder tes mains et à tous moments je
voudrais sangloter

For this poet, educated in Catholicism, his hands are agents of mortal sin, either indirectly, by holding the pen which the author 'misuses' to write Mirely ou le petit trou pas cher, Les Mémoires d'un jeune Don Juan and Les Onze mille verges ; or directly, in the onanism referred to in, for example, 'Vae Soli' (OPo p. 519), from 1899, 'Lul de Faltenin' (OPo p. 97), from 1907, or the manuscript of 'Zone' :

L'amour dont je souffre est une maladie honteuse
C'est une enflure ignoble dont je souhaite être guéri
Elle me tient éveillé jusqu'au matin dans mon lit
Elle me fait mourir d'une voluptueuse angoisse
En songeant que le corps nu de mon ancienne maîtresse
Je l'embrasse (62)

It would seem that Apollinaire's ideal of freedom and purity, like so much else, is partly conditioned by this religious education. He reaches back to an innocent land before the Fall, before the onset of shame, the inculcation of a sense of sin. For Apollinaire personally the price of freedom is his own religion, the religion which in 'Le Larron' bars the Christian from the feast, a religion which he knows is still so much a part of him that a force powerful enough to counteract or extirpate it is hard to envisage. Hence the extremism, the bitterness and the brutality of 'Avenir'. Revolt and religion go hand in hand, 'frères ennemis'.

'Un dernier chapitre' (OPo p. 562) presents a general strike and mass meeting. The inconclusive ending suggests that this may be part of some larger work never completed ; or it may simply be an exercise in style, a flexing of poetic muscles. It is more than a sketch, however, and is impressive in its economy of expression, its combination of convergent movement and concentrated detail, vivid realism laced with troubling improbability. The poem stands as an enigma, like a scene recalled in isolation from a dream. The unlikely mixture of races

(62) DA, p. 78.

in the second line of the text, as if workers of all nations had united, enhances the chimerical qualities of the scene :

Il vint des hommes blancs des nègres des jaunes et quelques
rouges

Despite the image of implosion presented by the cinematic action of the poem, Apollinaire is trying out the theme of the procession, the cortège, the pattern of later works from 'La Maison des morts' to 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry'. The vertical list of repetitions at the beginning of lines will recur in the 'Il y a' poems of 1915 (OPo pp. 280 and 423) as in other concatenations in the poetry, such as the amazing flight of exotic birds in 'Zone'. 'Un dernier chapitre' sets precedents, but also creates a distinctive atmosphere of its own. The contrasts between the beginning and the end of the poem, between the frozen last line and the urgency of the rest of the text, leaves the reader on a note of high expectancy. The unnatural quiet of the city is all the more strange for being suggested rather than described. The 'même' of the penultimate line emphasises the proletarian nature of the gathering to suggest that if the rest of the town is silent and empty, then the bourgeoisie has fled or is in hiding :

Il vint même des prêtres et quelques hommes mis avec
élégance

The priest and the bourgeois are placed in the same category. The result is a poem shot through with unease, with anticipation or menace, the sense of a gathering storm, the beginning of an end or, as the title suggests, 'Un dernier chapitre'.

Apollinaire's sensitivity to human suffering, his solidarity with those who suffer most, the authenticity of the humanitarian qualities which are often present in his early poetry, can be judged by their recurrence in later, more mature works. The stirrings of this social conscience are accentuated by a more personal revolt, against the Church, against his solitude, translated into social terms by a sympathy for anarchism, a cause which though ill-defined may be espoused wholeheartedly in particular poems. This will for change is counterbalanced however, even in these early years, by scepticism, by a contrary faith. In 'Merlin et la vieille femme' (OPo p. 88), for example, Merlin predicts the coming of a son who, as he marches purposefully along the open road, circled with light, like a young god, reminds us of Apollinaire's pastoral anarchism, in 'L'ensemble seul est parfait' :

Et nus comme des dieux, débarrassés des lois,
Nous irons sur la route avec les anarchistes

His advance on Rome appears resolute and irreversible. Yet the rest of the poem is set in a desert swept by a planet-wind, where the characters must cry out to make themselves heard at this meeting which they expected but did not arrange. Destiny rules this poem, as it rules existence and denies the individual will :

Merlin guettait la vie et l'éternelle cause
Qui fait mourir et puis renaître l'univers

This rhythm of death and rebirth is a force of nature, as real as the cycle which encloses the poem, opening in a red dawn and closing in swift nightfall. Such a circular pattern is, of course, the enemy of progress and it is his intuition of eternal gyration, of the weight of destiny pressing down on the history of men, which causes Apollinaire to emphasise so often the need to strengthen human will-power, to return so often to images of indecisiveness.

In 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' (OPo p. 46) the force which controls us is blind and hostile, a god too awful to contemplate :

Malheur dieu pâle aux yeux d'ivoire
[.]
Malheur dieu qu'il ne faut pas croire

The poet struggles against the apparent inevitability of his solitude and in the definitive version of the poem scores a victory over destiny through the strength of his imagination, the liberating power of his song. The battle is symbolised by the revolt of the Zaporogue Cossacks whose words of abuse Apollinaire also uses as mud to spatter the memory of a lost love. A relic of his ideal of pagan liberty in nature can be seen in the song 'Aubade chantée à Laetare un an passé'. These two sections of the poem match, of course, two sides of a coin, defiance and revolt on one side, on the other an ideal of beauty, liberty and love outside time but in nature :

Où sous les roses qui feuilloquent
De beaux dieux roses dansent nus

Perfectly balanced, both sections are of three octosyllabic quintils using alternate rhymes.

The manuscript version of the poem published in Création in 1978 develops the struggle between will and destiny in another way, meditating on the condition of man in society, comparing commoners, kings and politicians, not forgetting the spiritual hierarchy, God and the pope. (63) These twenty-two quintils begin with familiar lines, the last verse of 'Marizibill' (OPo p. 77). In the manuscript of 'La Chanson' we read :

Je connais gens de toutes sortes
Ils n'égalent pas leurs destins
Indécis comme feuilles mortes,
Leurs yeux sont des feux mal éteints.
Leurs coeurs bougent comme leurs portes.

These lines were indeed too good to lose, and added to the first two verses of 'Marizibill' they open that poem out from colourful anecdote to a universality which makes it one of the most memorable poems in Alcools. Here Apollinaire is at his most optimistic, revealing his fundamental confidence in humanity. He is full of compassion for those who have no power and little status. But he is convinced that they are capable of better things, are full of latent potential. If they do not equal their destinies, do not reach the limits of their possibilities, it is because they are indecisive, blown like leaves in the wind. The exercise of the human will is already seen as being essential to the achievement of full human dignity and progress. The human soul is presented as a flame which has not been completely doused, which glows in the eyes of men and which could still be fanned into the flame of creativity and rebirth. While hearts beat and men are active all is still possible.

In such a mood Apollinaire is able to see even chance and destiny as benevolent forces, the universe turning on according to 'Des lois amoureuses', so that life is worth living to the end.

Sur le chemin jamais trop long

In the final version of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' Apollinaire alters these lines so that the 'lois amoureuses' become the impersonal and less sympathetic 'chant du firmament' and life is a slope down to death :

Sur la descente à reculons

In the manuscript the phlegmatic, fatalistic side of Apollinaire's character is voiced in his conviction that all men are equal before destiny :

Les destins sont équivalents

[.]

Augustule est grand comme Auguste

And it is from this position that he begins his look at royalty. He is sympathetic towards the kings and princes of Europe, 'mon Europe', emphasising their humanity, seeing them as tragic figures, prone to sorrow, sickness and suicide. In the definitive version of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' he will use royal figures as images of his own suffering, transferring to Ludwig of Bavaria the fear of madness and suicide which haunts him when he recalls his lost love. In this manuscript version he tends to demystify and deflate the grandeur of kings, questioning their power and their right to a place in history as he looks at Leopold of Belgium, Oscar of Sweden and Norway. This reductive process went furthest in an obliterated verse reading :

Nicolas deux, l'empereur russe
Petit et superstitieux
Et son cousin le roi de Prusse
Tendant ses moustaches anxieux
Comme nous n'ont-ils pas de puces ?

This section of the manuscript, with its references to declining power and inertia, corresponds to Apollinaire's mood of fatalism which by its quiescence must engender melancholy. And a part of him regrets that the age of kings is passing.

But melancholy will give way to the mockery, contempt and anger which quicken his style as he turns the page to look on presidents and politicians. The violent, anti-bourgeois tone of Le Festin d'Esopé returns as he contemplates 'la bourgeoise clique', Presidents Grévy, Carnot, Faure and Loubet in lines which we have already quoted earlier in this chapter. The rare cameo of the two brothers together, Wilhelm and Albert, laughing in mockery as Jules Grévy leaves the Elysée, is followed by a return to the clenched fist menace of revolutionary violence and we remember those 'feux mal éteints' in the eyes of the common man as we read :

O feu, sous les cendres de l'âtre,
Orage dans les coeurs nouveaux,
Les brebis ont assez des pâtres,
Les grenouilles des soliveaux.
Carnot mourut comme Henri quatre.

New hearts, a new humanity, and the thrones of authority will be overturned when rage fans the glowing coals into flame and men take their destiny in hand. Apollinaire's thoughts flash brief and clear.

Then, after some routine anglophobia, the expression of frustrated love for Annie Playden, Apollinaire regrets never having seen the pope, of whom he speaks with scant respect, picturing him as an animal in a trap, a stray captured by the Monaco dog-catcher,

Le fouet coulant du ciapacan (64)

Shabby authority, a pope without dignity, and Apollinaire would ridicule kingship, still in the manuscript, floating monarchs into space for the pleasure of Everyman :

Mais on fera monter aux cieux
Un beau jour fou, la belle histoire,
Il m'en vient des larmes aux yeux,
Les cuisses de ces dames, voire
Les couilles des rois, leurs messieurs.

Puis, étonnés les astronomes
Contemplant aux nuits d'été
Les astres-culs ou couilles. L'homme
Vivra peut-être en liberté,
Adam avalera la pomme. (65)

An act of revolt banished Adam from Paradise. Now an act of revolt can lead him back into Avalon or Eden. Revolt still ripens on the tree of knowledge.

(64) For another manuscript reference to the 'ciapacan' and his identification as the collector of stray dogs in Monaco, see Que vlo-ve ?, 17-18, July-October 1978, p. 21.

(65) Création, XIII, June 1978, p. 49.

Is this blasphemy ? Suddenly Apollinaire shrinks back. In a typical volte-face the man becomes a child, the anarchist is transformed in a flush of Catholic shame. He feels that sinful pride has soiled the whole of his universe :

Les habits du ciel ont des trous
Ses nuages tombent en loques
C'est de l'or faux son soleil roux

Like a mischievous schoolboy he creeps back to infantile frivolity with the most inconsequential image he can find, doing the cakewalk :

Dansons, dansons le caiquevoque
Bras en pattes de kangourou

He flatters God, hangs his head, begs forgiveness :

Je suis votre petit enfant

So it seems that forces beyond the control of man, the forces of destiny which open this passage, the mysteries of religion which close this manuscript version of the poem, combine to surround the poet's will for change and subversion, as if to smother it.

° °

In that same unused strophe from 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' Apollinaire wrote the line :

L'air de ma vie est étouffant

In this context we can now briefly examine L'Enchanteur pourrissant the book which is built around the central image of Merlin in the tomb, an allegory of the poet caught by destiny, of mankind crushed by his condition. This narrative, like 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', is a consideration of the

poet's own loneliness as Apollinaire makes clear by the addition in 1909 of an introductory alexandrine, the first line of the book :

Que deviendra mon coeur parmi ceux qui s'entr'aiment ?

It is a black parody of Holy Scriptures, a blow against the Church and, as Michel Décaudin comments, L'Enchanteur pourrissant as it first appeared, in Le Festin d'Esope, without the addition of 'Onirocritique', 'est chargé de révolte et de désespoir' (OPr p. 1070). His isolation is more complete than ever, for when he looks at those around him his eyes cloud with suspicion. The death of Croniamantal in 'Le Poète assassiné' will express a wariness before the spectre of demagogy, a fear of mass brutality, a distrust of the crowd which is already present in L'Enchanteur pourrissant :

Les fourmis et les abeilles se hâtaient pour le bonheur
de leurs républiques, mais la dame du lac ne les regardait
pas , car elle méprisait les peuplades, les troupeaux et
toute congrégation en général. Elle tenait cette horreur de
l'enchanteur qui avait été son maître. (66)

Merlin's individualism is confirmed a little later when the coupling of the forest creatures moves him to fury : 'il détestait les troupeaux, les peuplades et toute congrégation en général'. (67) Merlin's suspicions are justified when the animals congregate, summoned by the obtuse knight Tyolet, for their republic is then transformed into a dictatorship. The monster Béhémoth steps from the crowd and declares his putsch with a humour and honesty worthy of Ubu :

Pour moi, je suis la voix de vous tous ; seul, j'ai
toutes les idées claires que vous avez chacun en particulier ;
et, si nul ne trouve à redire, je me proclamerai dictateur...
Je suis dictateur. (68)

(66) EP, p. 92.

(67) EP, p. 108.

(68) EP, p. 100.

His idea of social happiness is to play 'à qui disparaîtra le premier'. Perhaps at the end of his life Apollinaire will remember these words when his fear of a regimented, dictatorial society returns as a theme in his poetry.

Yet in L'Enchanteur pourrissant, alongside this mistrust of 'democracy at work', there is the intolerable pain of isolation, a solitude which is, in fact, presented as sinful. Saint Simon Stylite, the saint on a column, image of an ivory tower, declares his own haughty solitude to be sinful :

Animaux, vous avez mal fait de vous disperser. Dieu aime ceux qui se réunissent et disent ainsi sa gloire. Il enjoignit à Noé de réunir dans l'arche deux couples de tous les animaux. Il bénit les troupeaux de Laban. Il réunit les chiens sur le corps de l'impie Jézabel. (69)

This tension between the need for solitude, the condition of any creator, and the call of the community, reinforced by a natural gregariousness and a need for the reassurance of love and friendship, perfectly reflects Apollinaire's own condition as a poet, caught between the imperatives of creation and communication. In political terms the tension between individual revolt and a humanitarian concern for the condition of the people might have been resolved by adherence to some form of socialism. But Apollinaire seems to discount any system based on equality, for men may be 'équivalents' but they are not 'égaux' : 'ils ne sont pas égaux pas plus que le jour et la nuit' (OPr p. 1225). And, as Apollinaire comments elsewhere, socialism seems like a compromise with mediocrity after the boundless dreams of anarchism :

(69) EP, p. 120.

Mais le quartier Bréda s'attriste
Dans les effluves du benjoin
Que les idylles anarchistes
A la voix du père Enfantin
Soient devenues socialistes (70)

° °

When Merlin judges humanity he does so from the position of a man beyond time. In 1912 Justin Couchot, who has the title role in 'L'Infirmes divinisé' (OPr p. 349), shares this privileged viewpoint. He is asked to which political party he owes allegiance :

A tous, répondit l'Eternel, et à aucun, car ils sont
comme l'ombre et la lumière et doivent vivre ensemble
sans que rien puisse changer.

It is this fatalism, the poet's consciousness of eternity, not indifference, which counters Apollinaire's will to social revolt. His poetry is rich and his attitude cannot be categorised. Anna Balakian, comparing André Breton and Apollinaire, has stated that the latter was 'a libertarian without being a subversive because of the ambiguous circumstances of his situation'. (71) Certainly the pull towards integration, the outsider's need to feel himself part of human society, counters any desire to subvert that society. So the predominant emphasis of Apollinaire's work will be towards 'une expression plus totale du réel, non son aggrandissement', as Marguerite Bonnet says, again comparing Apollinaire to the revolutionary Surrealists. (72) Doubtless the insecurity engendered by Apollinaire's status as an illegitimate and stateless individual will

(70) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Poésies libres, p. 84. 'Le Père Enfantin' was the name commonly given to Prosper Enfantin (1796-1864), the French engineer and socialist, disciple of Saint-Simon, founder of a socialist community in Ménilmontant.

(71) Anna BALAKIAN, 'Breton in the light of Apollinaire', in About French Poetry from Dada to Tel Quel Text and Theory, pp. 42-53, (p. 49).

(72) Marguerite BONNET, 'Aux sources du surréalisme : place d'Apollinaire', GA 3, (1964), pp. 71-72.

cause him to think twice before signing any text for publication, particularly texts with a political content. But as he grows older his blood does not completely cool. His anarchism is more than a passing symptom of adolescent unease. It was Michel Décaudin who commented, after a discussion concerning Apollinaire and Polish anarchist Mécislas Golberg:

C'est Adéma qui pense que les sympathies anarchistes, d'Apollinaire n'ont été qu'un emballement de fin d'adolescence. Je suis au contraire persuadé qu'elles ont duré plus longtemps, comme le prouvent certains poèmes publiés après son retour d'Allemagne, et je l'écrirais maintenant avec plus de netteté. (73)

Apollinaire lives with uncertainty, goes through moments of disillusion, but at all times his motto could be 'Ma volonté ma liberté'. (74) After 1903 and the definitive version of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', his great personal victory over suffering and the laws of destiny, he continues to exalt humanity, knowing that it is easy neither to win nor to live with liberty. As his career develops and he builds a reputation in society as a defender of the artistic avant-garde, so the balance of Apollinaire's preoccupations may vary and alter. But, as Anna Balian says, he remains a libertarian, for the anarchism to which he refers in his early poems is not only a symptom of revolt but also the mark of a fundamental optimism as to the true nature of man. His faith in the potential for growth of each individual is as constant as his opposition to the imposition of low expectations. The anger and idealism of his beginnings will burn on, flashing through in later texts, 'feux mal éteints'.

(73) GA 8, (1969), p. 186.

(74) Undated manuscript note. BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 89.

CHAPTER II

SOCIETY (ii), 1903-1912

The victory of the poet in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' is a real one. He recognises that by expressing his suffering in poetry he adds his voice to a universal harmony, the song of human creation, which ignores the limits of time and space to make mortal man the rival of the gods. Love may pass like time, but the poet's share in the prestige of his predecessors, who live on in their creations, dispels his sense of personal failure. But the poet must live in time and though Apollinaire must have been relieved when Annie Playden finally put an end to the death-throes of their long-distance love affair by emigrating to America he found that now, after his adventures in Germany and Eastern Europe, he was alone with a living to make in Paris. The poet is a stranger in the market-place, for no price can be put on a poem, which is a virtually unsaleable commodity. Apollinaire felt that society was worse than indifferent, positively hostile to the poet and expressed his paranoia when preparing Le Bestiaire in 1908, noting that

Chaque poète est Daniel
Parmi les lions dans la fosse

Tous les hommes des lions
Voulant dévorer les poètes

(OPo p. 1038)

This sentiment would be amplified much later in Chapter 16 of 'Le Poète assassiné', 'Persécution', where Croniamantal suffers a martyr's death at the hands of the mob. Apollinaire was no Rastignac, but now he had to come to some sort of working arrangement with the society whose injustice he had been criticising and whose end he had been predicting in much of his early poetry. Apollinaire was no longer an adolescent, yet

he had no clear nationality, no father to be seen and no family to speak of, no trade apart from that of poet and occasional journalist, and not a penny to his name.

So in the poetry of Alcools written after 1903 we find there are two keys, major and minor, the voice of the moi-créateur which first swelled into 'confident maturity in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', and that of the moi-social, who in poetry appears as the poor outsider, riddled with complexes, suffering alone. Contemporary art is built on the achievements of the past, and Apollinaire, more aware than most of this inheritance, saw his own poetry with the eyes of a literary archaeologist :

Les peuples s'entassaient et je parus moi-même
Qu'ont formé tous les corps et les choses humaines
(Cortège'OPo p. 74)

The processions which recur in his poetry bear witness to his desire to draw strength from the mass, to share the living energy of humanity on the march. The search for an identity which, as Garnet Rees has shown, underlies so much of the poetry of Alcools, is an essential part of this search for integration, the discovery of the poet's place inside society. (1) Where the wind blows strong the flame of revolt burns most fiercely. But life is cold there on the edge of the circle and Apollinaire longs for the warmth of fraternity. His sympathies remain with the outsiders but in the poetry of Alcools after 1903 the desire for social integration and recognition is insistent and all the stronger while it remains unsatisfied. As Paul Eluard said in 1948, Apollinaire 'est aux côtés de Baudelaire, de Rimbaud, de Lautréamont, mais il n'accepte plus leur solitude'. (2)

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- (1) Garnet REES, 'Guillaume Apollinaire and the Search for Identity' in Order and Adventure in Post-Romantic French Poetry : Essays Presented to C.A. Hackett, pp. 162-175.
 - (2) Paul ELUARD, 'Guillaume Apollinaire', (1948), Oeuvres complètes II, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', Gallimard, 1968, pp. 895-897.

The transition from the state of dependence to one of independence and the poet's entry into the world of commerce is recorded by 'La Porte' (OPo p. 87), which must date from 1902-1903. The young man who in Stavelot had passed himself off as a down-at-heel Russian aristocrat now has to join the labouring masses for whom he has shown such sympathy in his poems, working in a bank like his more conventional brother Albert—though Albert, by emigrating to manage a bank in Mexico, shows himself to be less staid than we might imagine him to be. The weepy, childish tone of the six middle lines of the poem expresses the poet's hesitation and anguish at the moment of cutting away from his mother's apron strings, 'ô ma maman', a move which he experiences as a break with a warm and idyllic past. The doors which recur in Apollinaire's poetry are a symbol which has yet to be explained. (3) Here

La porte de l'hôtel sourit terriblement

and if it is possible that, as Robert Couffignal suggests, the doorway in 'Le Voyageur' (OPo p. 78) gives onto a lost paradise of childhood, against which Apollinaire knocks in vain(4)

Ouvrez-moi cette porte où je frappe en pleurant

in 'La Porte' the doorway certainly stands between childhood and manhood. Smiling terribly, this opening onto the world both beckons and threatens. But whichever side of the doorway he chooses, the young man risks being devoured. Music, sunlight and romance associated with an idealised Mediterranean childhood are evoked in lines 4, 5 and 6 of the poem where fish in the Ganges and fish on the old port of Marseilles, fish which in 'Zone' are 'images du Sauveur' and which here are angel-fish, add a dose of religion, the security of simple faith, to this section. In contrast lines 2, 3

(3) See pp. 330 -333 of this thesis.

(4) Robert COUFFIGNAL, Apollinaire, p. 66.

and 7 capture the seedy existence of the lonely and dejected clerk who feels insignificant and inadequate among the sharks of the Paris stock exchange,

Humble comme je suis qui ne suis rien qui vaille

The struggle between two worlds, between imagination and reality, is more acute in the manuscript (5) which includes the line

- O ma mère une lutte

And if in the published version of the poem the writer is 'cet employé pour qui seul rien n'existe', in the manuscript he was 'cet employé pour qui seul tout existe'. The poet's choice seems to be between all or nothing, and it is the latter force which seems the stronger, a more appropriate expression of his solitary despair. The poet's hesitation and the self-pity which invades the poem in line 7 are cut short by the intervention of a dominant mother who imposes silence, white on the page, before slowly delivering her judgment, the last word of which has the force of a slamming door :

Enfant je t'ai donné ce que j'avais travaillé

Finally 'thrown in at the deep end' - though only in April 1907 would Apollinaire move into his first, independent lodgings in rue Léonie, now rue Henner, situated, significantly enough, half-way between the Paris Stock Exchange area and the Bateau Lavoir in Montmartre - the young man survives. In fact he thrives on friendship if not in prosperity and while still a 'poète inconnu au milieu d'autres poètes inconnus' (6) he combines his bank job with some freelance journalism, writing for L'Européen, La Revue Blanche, La Plume, founding Le Festin d'Esope and then even editing

(5) DA, p. 142.

(6) Letter to Madeleine, 30 July 1915, TS, p. 70.

the Guide du rentier, moniteur des petits capitalistes. If ever he believed that literature could influence society or 'changer la vie', in December 1903, when questioned by The Weekly Critical Review, he doubts such a possibility : 'En tout cas, s'il y a influence, elle est due autant à la science et aux arts qu'à la littérature'. (7) His own revolutionary dreams give way to a literary bohemianism, a life-style which is proudly advertised on the cover of Les Lettres modernes, a successor to Le Festin d'Esope : 'Ces pages ne seront pas publiées avec grande régularité parce que ce serait d'abord manquer à ce bohémianisme dont nous nous réclamons d'en user autrement'. (8) Indeed the magazine only appeared once, in May 1905. But Apollinaire is as interested as ever in social questions. La Revue immoraliste in April 1905, another single-issue production from Apollinaire, Salmon, Jacob and Co., featured a rather formal essay by Apollinaire entitled 'Le Gouvernement' in which he examines the causes and possible cures of human misery. A mite less idealistic now after his days in business, he sees self-interest as the 'fondement de l'instinct humain'. Politicians have not risen in his esteem since the days of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' and they are still motivated by personal ambition. For Apollinaire 'la politique est une passion mauvaise', for just as the sick cannot be cured collectively, but only as individuals, so ideas of human happiness vary from individual to individual. Attempts to impose a collective and uniform happiness, defined on high by politicians, must result in oppression reinforced by 'Les bagnes, les bourreaux'. (9) So Apollinaire is still a humanist, as concerned as ever at human suffering, consistent in his rejection of conventional politics, his insistence that each man must be allowed to rule his own destiny. His suspicion of mass-movements will be suspended only during the regimentation of his days of active service in the

(7) Pierre CAIZERGUES, 'Réponse à une enquête', GA 10 (1971), pp. 112-113.

(8) Michel DECAUDIN, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes, p. 259.

(9) OC II, pp. 652-656.

army and already in this 1905 article the analysis of false democracy and uniformity imposed from above, which he will castigate in 1917 in his poem 'Orphée' (OPo p. 683), is fully developed. 'J'aime les hommes non pour ce qui les unit, mais pour ce qui les divise, et des coeurs, je veux surtout connaître ce qui les ronge', he will write. (10) Apollinaire's humanism is one which values variety and independence and in the crowd he respects above all the potential of each individual.

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In 1904 Apollinaire was close to Picasso and Max Jacob, to Jarry, Fagus and Félix Fénéon and in that same year he met the Fauvist painter Maurice de Vlaminck. The latter was a frustrated anarchist, an avowed admirer of Ravachol, and commenting on his own pure and brilliant paintings of this time Vlaminck wrote : 'what I could have done only by throwing a bomb -which would have led me to the scaffold- I attempted to realise in art, in painting, by using colours of maximum purity'. (11) Apollinaire had been introduced to Vlaminck by André Derain, his first friend among the painters, who had himself contributed to Le Libertaire and other anarchist publications in 1900 and 1901. No doubt Apollinaire did not fear the scaffold -or imprisonment- for his actions or opinions. But his existence imposed its own constraints which he did not allow to irk him. In 1906 he would write Les Onze mille verges, 'une superbe et splendide énormité', (12) an explosion of libertinage written while he was still cooped up at the bank, a text whose exuberance is as potent as Vlaminck's brush-strokes, the Marquis de Sade with the added ingredients of fresh

(10) OC II, p. 305.

(11) Maurice de VLAMINCK, Portraits avant décès, Paris, Flammarion, 1943, p. 110, quoted in T. SHAPIRO, Painters and Politics, p. 30.

(12) André Pierre de MANDIARGUES, Troisième Belvédère, p. 339.

air and laughter. He thought it advisable not to sign his name to this text. We find some evidence for continuing fidelity to his early political idealism elsewhere, in Alcools. In June 1908 Apollinaire praises 'un profond sentiment populaire' in the poetry of André Salmon in which 'le poète, en passant, peut aimer

'... d'un amour qu'elle ne peut comprendre
'La fille au fichu bleu qui vend de la lavande'. (13)

We think of Apollinaire's sympathy and affection for Marizibill (OPo p. 77) and his admirable insistence that despite their miserable condition such people are full of unrealised potential :

Ils n'égalent pas leurs destins

Apollinaire too has 'un profond sentiment populaire' and he tells no lie when he remarks that

Je connais gens de toutes sortes

Naturally gregarious he hated solitude and that distrust of others which he evokes in 'Hôtels' (OPo p. 147), where it is

Chacun pour soi
[. . .]
Fermons nos portes
A double tour

Locked up in La Santé in 1911, the poet begs pity for himself

Et tous ces pauvres coeurs battant dans la prison
(OPo p. 143).

Men like beasts in cages, the 'hommes apprivoisés' of 'Le Brasier' (OPo p. 108), men in chains of ignorance who cannot claim their rights, their liberty, are recurring figures in Apollinaire's poetry since the early 'Au prolétaire' (OPo p. 520) in which he calls the working man

(13) OC III, p. 828.

O captif innocent qui ne sais pas chanter

And the last section of 'Le Brasier', in which Apollinaire refers to the 'hommes apprivoisés' of the earth is probably influenced by Rimbaud's revolutionary poem, 'Le Forgeron', as we demonstrate elsewhere in this thesis.

Apollinaire described the appearance of a new, progressive daily newspaper, La Démocratie sociale, for which he would write articles, as 'Le plus grand événement de l'année 1909'. (14) Pierre Caizergues' analysis of Apollinaire's contributions to the paper shows him to be true to his usual self : 'Apollinaire apporte son soutien à l'homme méconnu, malheureux, opprimé, plutôt qu'à un parti déterminé ou à une idéologie'. (15) During the year 1910 he reports social progress in other countries, covering, for example, the foundation of a T.B. Fund in New-York - Mécislas Golberg had succumbed to the disease three years earlier - the formation of a coal-miners' union in Spitzberg, and calls for the construction of more garden cities in France, after the German example, 'une initiative qui améliorerait la condition des masses ouvrières obligées de se loger dans les quartiers mal aérés et sans végétation des villes modernes'. The anti-clericalism of some of his articles in L'Européen in 1903 and 1904 reappears now, in his article 'La Décadence de la France', for example, in favour of freedom in education, against any attempts by the Church to control the schools. He rejects Church objections to State education, writing: 'Toujours le même système. Les cléricaux crient à la persécution et il n'y a ni persécuteur ni persécuté, mais des esprits libres qui veulent donner la liberté à d'autres esprits'. In February 1910 he writes an article in favour of prison reform, 'La Prison réformatrice', and another in which he measures the advance of socialism, a movement 'qui envahit aujourd'hui

(14) Pierre CAIZERGUES, Apollinaire et 'La Démocratie sociale', p. 5.

(15) Pierre CAIZERGUES, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

la société humaine et lui apporte des avantages, encore minces cependant, en égard aux aspirations nouvelles'. (16) Here, as elsewhere, his judgement is pragmatic rather than dogmatic.

'Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon le 13 Juillet 1909' (OPo p. 83) contrasts the colours of Paris in the sun on the eve of Bastille Day, as gloriously coloured as a flag-bedecked canvas by Monet or Marquet, with the early days of the friendship of the two poets, Salmon and Apollinaire, the nights of 1903 in the basement of 'Le Départ', 'un caveau maudit', sitting in the smoke, 'mal vêtus attendant l'aube'. Ragged bohemians, 'poètes maudits' in the mirrors of their imaginations, waiting for a dawn which never comes while they do no more than sit and discuss it. The poets abandon their masks and, like Orpheus leaving the Underworld, emerge into the light :

Et nous apprîmes à rire

Their laughter is a celebration of the present and the treasures of the moment - 'Réjouissons-nous'. The sound of broken glass frees the poets from the bell-jar of Symbolist narcissism, frees them to begin a new adventure, ready to risk everything, including disaster, 'pèlerins de la perdition'. They have won the freedom to laugh, the freedom to cry and they recognise their power, which is the power of language, domain of the poets,

Epris épris des mêmes paroles dont il faudra changer le sens 'les paroles qui forment et défont l'univers'. The programme of 'La Victoire', 'à la recherche d'un nouveau langage' is implied already in these lines.

Despite Apollinaire's denial, this is the poem of 'la liberté en honneur', love and liberty, and the date is included in the title specifically to

(16) For the articles by Apollinaire, see Pierre CAIZERGUES, Apollinaire et 'la Démocratie sociale', pp. 46, 48, 54, 48, 43 and 44 respectively.

evoke the momentous events of 1789 :

Hélène ô liberté ô révolutions

(OPo p. 579).

All of Apollinaire's denials in the poem serve, paradoxically, to present a series of facts ('notre amitié a été le fleuve qui nous a fertilisés', 'nous fumons et buvons comme autrefois'), or possibilities (the hanging of 'ceux qui ne savaient pas profiter de la vie', a society without profiteers in which 'ces mains agitées travailleront demain pour nous tous'). It is a technique which devalues reality, just as the 'menues choses' which satisfy the citizens appear insignificant beside the generous possibilities offered by the poet. Reality is systematically denied in favour of a lie :

On a pavoisé Paris parce que mon ami André Salmon s'y marie

A lie which is the truth of the imagination, no longer imprisoned by the chains of given circumstances. So poetry becomes an image of freedom, a world turned upside down, in which the distance between desire and reality is abolished. Or, as the Surrealists would have it, 'Cet été les roses sont bleues ; le bois c'est du verre'. (17) Taking the Bastille does not suffice to remake the world, for

Je sais que seuls le renouvellent ceux qui sont fondés en poésie

Only the poet has the imagination to insist on a universe in which love rules destiny.

'Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon' is remarkable for its long, prose-like, unrhymed lines, and the recurrence of this apparently relaxed style in 'Cortège' (OPo p. 74) suggests that this poem too dates

(17) First manifesto of Surrealism, (1924), in André BRETON, Manifestes du surréalisme, édition complète, Paris, Pauvert, 1972, pp. 15-55 (p. 55).

from 1909. In both cases extravagant propositions are couched in terms of methodically logical argument to be denied or confirmed by the poet. In 'Cortège' however Apollinaire is turned inwards, away from the streets of Paris, concerned to fill the gulf which he finds within himself, and which makes his magnificently intuitive grasp of his surroundings seem superficial to him. The first and third strophes of 'Cortège' present the innerspace of the poet's psyche as an inverted image of the exterior universe, a reflection of interplanetary space :

A la limite où notre sol brille déjà
[...]
A la limite où brille déjà ma mémoire

This single point in space is amplified as the poet, seeking to give himself a solid identity, builds himself up from that which is sure and already existing, the past, beside which the future seems insubstantial, hypothetical. The poet's memory, his personal past, becomes history and legend, the past of all humanity.

Yet in the second and third strophes of the poem the poet does look forward, sure of his own future glory,

[...] ce feu oblong dont l'intensité ira s'augmentant
Au point qu'il deviendra un jour l'unique lumière

This future victory of poetry, which can transform our vision of reality, coincides with the victory of love in 'Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon' :

Réjouissons-nous parce que directeur du feu et des poètes
L'amour qui emplit ainsi que la lumière
Tout le solide espace entre les étoiles et les planètes
L'amour veut qu'aujourd'hui mon ami André Salmon se marie

When the universe is seen in such a light an optimistic view of human destiny, the eventual emancipation of mankind through the increasing power

of love and imagination, is inevitable. It is a euphoric vision, cursed by the voice of Rome in 'Vendémiaire', 'le ciel où l'amour guide les destinées'. Only the awful reality of the poet's time in the trenches will be strong enough, however, to grind down this faith in the power of the imagination to make all life into something marvellous. And even then the poet's optimism will be reborn under the sign of that 'bonté' to which he looks at the end of his life, back in Paris.

'Vendémiaire' was written in 1909 but, like 'Cortège', was published only in 1912. The manuscript of 'Vendémiaire' was found among Apollinaire's papers in a group of three poems, marked L'Année Républicaine, alongside 'Brumaire', which would be published as 'Cortège', and a version of 'Zone'. (18) It seems possible therefore that Apollinaire held back publication of 'Vendémiaire' and 'Cortège' because he had this project for a series of poems at the back of his mind all the while, from 1909 to the end of 1912, when 'Zone' was written, even though a volume of his collected poems, originally to be titled Eau de vie, was announced as early as 8 August 1910 by Alain Fournier in his Paris-Journal 'Courier littéraire' column. The title of 'Vendémiaire' refers, of course, to the month of the Republican calendar which dates from 22 September to 21 October and it is this which probably led Par Bergman to state that the subject of the poem is the French Revolution of 1789. (19) Bergman exaggerates. The poem is firstly a hymn to the glory of Paris, fulcrum of a civilisation, to which the rest of the world pays tribute,

Parce que tu es beau et que seul tu es noble

As the poem progresses, the poet himself identifies so closely with the great city that he becomes increasingly intoxicated, becoming more than

(18) See George SCHMITS, 'Vendémiaire', Les Etudes Classiques, XXXII, July 1964, pp. 247-262 (p. 253). According to George Schmits, Jules Romains mentions Apollinaire's project for L'Année Républicaine in his 1909 lecture 'La Poésie immédiate'.

(19) Par BERGMAN, 'ModernolatRIA'et 'Simultaneità', p. 374.

an onlooker, growing in stature to outstrip the city, up to the high-point where he cries :

Ecoutez-moi je suis le gosier de Paris
Et je boirai encore s'il me plaft l'univers

If in 'Cortège' he looks to the past in his search for an identity, here he is ready to absorb all space, so great is his boulimic appetite.

Yet the poem is spattered with blood and wine and the harmony of so many strong voices increases with the momentous force of a popular uprising. Heads roll like grapes loosed from the vine and the poem begins with the death of kings, as in times of revolution. The manuscript reveals that originally the poem commenced with a reference to anarchist violence :

Hommes de l'avenir souvenez-vous de moi
Je vivais à l'époque où finissaient les rois
Ils [tombaient] mourraient (sic) chaque jour [tour à tour]
[Sous les coups des anarchistes] silencieux et tristes
[Qui] Et trois fois courageux devenaient trismégistes (20)

So if the published version of the poem expresses a certain sympathy for the dead kings, Apollinaire's nostalgia for a passing era which corresponds to the aristocratic strain which was part of his character - Apollinaire the duellist, Apollinaire the army officer - his first instinct was to apply the tribute of the fifth line to the anarchists by beginning that line with 'Qui'. He then altered the sense by replacing 'Qui' with 'Et', crossing out all reference to the anarchists, thereby presenting a less radical, less shocking strophe, further away from the extremism of his anarchist youth to which he had temporarily returned. Michel Décaudin relates this revealing slip of the pen to contemporary events, asking whether Apollinaire could be making 'une allusion à l'exécution de Ferrer, toute récente à l'automne de 1909 ? Et faut-il s'étonner que cet événement qui remua l'opinion rappelle à Apollinaire non seulement des faits récents (assassinat du roi

(20) DA, p. 225. The lines given here are taken from the clearer and more complete version of this text given by Michel Décaudin in his article "'1909" : Obscurité et composition chez Apollinaire', Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises, 15, March 1963, pp. 119-125.

Carlos de Portugal en 1908, complot préparé pour le mariage du roi d'Espagne en 1908), mais d'autres qui peut-être frappèrent en 1900 le jeune anarchisant de vingt ans qu'il était (assassinat du roi Humbert, attentat raté contre le Prince de Galles à Bruxelles) ?' (21)

'Vendémiaire' begins with a reference to the guillotine just as 'Zone', which was also destined for that Année Républicaine which might have made up a section of Alcools, ends with the 'cou coupé' and as the first verse of 'L'Emigrant de Landor Road' conjures up an image of the decapitation of finely dressed victims. The blood spilt at the beginning of the poem flows through 'Vendémiaire', like the other rivers and currents in the text. Apollinaire knew well the geography and bloody history of Lyons, having spent some time there early in 1899 and Michel Décaudin quotes Pascal Pia's commentary on a passage of Apollinaire's story 'Histoire d'une famille vertueuse, d'une hotte et d'un calcul' :

Il faut avoir peu ou prou rôdé à la Guillotière, avoir emprunté les traboules et gravi les montées de la Croix-Rousse en reprenant souffle aux consoles des 'rendeurs', pour savoir que dans le parler canus les 'marchands de pattes' sont des chiffonniers et les 'équevilles' des ordures. (22)

The textile industry of Lyons, in the workshops around the hill of Fourvières, was a centre of revolutionary activity and the blood of the canus or silk-workers joins that of heretics and other martyrs in the

Heureuse pluie ô gouttes tièdes ô douleur

(21) DA, p. 224. For Apollinaire's interest in the guillotine and the death of kings at this time, see his article 'M. Anatole Deibler villégiature au Point-du-Jour', Paris-Journal, 11 August 1911, in Pierre CAIZER-GUES ed., Petites merveilles du quotidien, pp. 136-138. Apollinaire describes the state executioner's new house, including 'ses rideaux blancs comme une conscience d'honnête homme'. To the right is another building : 'C'est une blanchisserie anglaise, entreprise symbolique s'il en fut, de par sa situation auprès de la résidence du bourreau français ! Menace non déguisée à l'adresse des tyrans qui voudraient dominer notre pays ! N'oublions pas qu'un historien puritain voulant justifier Cromwell a dit que rougir la tête du roi, c'était blanchir le royaume'.

(22) Pascal PIA, Preface, L'Hérésiarque et Cie, Club français du livre, 1955, quoted in OPr, p. 141.

which rains on the town

tandis que les anges de Fourvières
Tissaient un ciel nouveau avec la soie des prières

Political insurrection and religious conflict meet here in Lyons just as at the beginning of the manuscript version of the poem the anarchist martyrs become 'trismégistes', attaining the status of those heretics and seekers of forbidden knowledge who successfully follow the occult path of Hermes Trismegistus. And then in Italy, of course, insurrection appears at the Vatican, where Papal authority is trampled underfoot and the animal symbols of the Church and Roman Empires are slaughtered.

'Vendémiaire' glorifies the man who awakes from the half-sleep of routine existence so that in the magic night his senses are heightened and he is sensitive to the ambient poetry of the world, the hum of life and all the latent powers of humanity captured by an imagination which invests him with such strength that, as Apollinaire says in 'Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon', 'nous avons tant grandi que beaucoup pourraient confondre nos yeux et les étoiles'. As Henri Meschonnic says, 'Vendémiaire' is 'le poème d'une fusion entre la révolution poétique, qui nous renvoie par exemple au "Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon" et la révolution politique'. (23)

If the poet's imagination is set free in darkness, in the night of 'Vendémiaire', there is another dark force which seems to inhabit the poem '1909' (OPo p. 138). The poem expresses Apollinaire's fear of female sexuality, the open, laughing mouth with white teeth lining red, red lips. But two worlds are also contrasted, two sides of society : that of the lady whose manner betrays her life of careless indolence and vanity, who

(23) Henri MESCHONNIC, 'Signifiante de "Vendémiaire"', GA II, (1972), pp. 41-63, (p. 42).

Promenait ses boucles
Son bandeau d'or
Et traînait ses petits souliers à boucles

a world of gold and rich fabrics ; and the hard, dark world of the factories,
a world of steel and of manufacturing,

Où naissaient chaque jour quelques êtres nouveaux

The contemporary Madame Récamier is fascinating, hypnotic, described with the repetitive precision of fashion writers' prose, and the poem ends with a glance back towards her. Patriotic, she appears in the colours of the nation, yet her class is no more than a thin layer across the top of society, surface glitter like foam on the ocean :

Le luxe et la beauté ne sont que son écume

The ocean of humanity, the masses, inhabit the 'quartiers énormes' of the industrial revolution and its dark cities, the world of the machine which knows no frontiers and which seemed set to create the future and liberate mankind, until World War I when the destructive force of the machine was recognised. The optimism of 'Vendémiaire', where the cities of the industrial north are gay and lyrical,

Où les ouvriers nus semblables à nos doigts
Fabriquent du réel à tant par heure

confidently virile, becomes in '1909' a threatening rumble as the pounding rhythm of the machines overpowers the serene chamber music of the song to the lady. The ocean is in movement and the line

N'entendra-t-on jamais sonner minuit

isolated on the page, has an ominous ring for the lady in her drawing room, as if when the clock strikes the tide must flood in and her era must end.

The new year came, but in January 1910 it was the River Seine which broke its banks and flooded Paris. Many homes were ruined and the inhabitants of the hardest hit areas, such as Auteuil where Apollinaire lived, had to be ferried like refugees to dry land. Apollinaire covered these events for the newspapers and André Salmon, in his Souvenirs sans fin, criticises his old friend's supposed insensitivity in his reporting. This seems surprising considering the evidence we have of Apollinaire's sensitivity to the suffering of the unfortunate in other situations, but Salmon's criticism here matches criticisms which, as we shall see, would be levelled against Apollinaire for his poetry written during World War I. Salmon writes of Apollinaire's view of the floods: 'Mais c'était écrit avec une royale impassibilité'. Guillaume se montrait là, osera-t-on dire, plus émerveillé, comme on se peut émerveiller d'une tragédie, que réellement, qu'humainement touché'. (24) Such criticisms are in both cases unjustified in that they are the result of no more than a partial or selective reading of Apollinaire's texts. Michel Décaudin has published two articles by Apollinaire from L'Intransigeant in which he comments on the floods. (25) In the first, it is true, Apollinaire is excited by the surprising and picturesque sight of streets made into canals overnight: 'J'y vais aussitôt et je me réjouis du spectacle charmant et imprévu qui m'apparaît. Me voici, non pas à Venise, comme disent les journaux, mais dans une petite ville de la Hollande'. But among the details and anecdotes of this article he does not neglect to mention the victims: 'pauvres gens que l'inondation a expulsés de chez eux se lamentent, ne sachant où aller coucher...'. And his second article, published five days later on Sunday 30 January, is much more serious as the gravity of the situation becomes apparent. Apollinaire reporting like a professional and experienced

(24) André SALMON, Souvenirs sans fin, II, p. 115.

(25) Michel DECAUDIN, 'Apollinaire et L'Intransigeant en 1910', GA 7, (1968), pp. 91-99. See also Apollinaire's article 'La Seine à faire', Paris-Journal, 27 January 1910, in Pierre CAIZERGUES ed., Petites merveilles du quotidien, pp. 85-86. Apollinaire notes that the flood 'exalte les gens de lettres'. He mentions Jean Moréas, André Gide, Maurice Barrès and Jean Richepin as well as Charles Maurras, 'l'illustré théoricien du néo-monarchisme' who for once leans too far to the left, in the lifeboat which has rescued him.

journalist, describes the condition of the homeless, giving credit to the charitable organisations which have been arranging rescue operations and sleeping-quarters. He makes a strong effort to allow readers to share his experience of the event and his emotion at the evidence of human solidarity, including as many details as possible and bringing them alive to the readers' senses by the use of a poetic device, the leitmotif which unifies the text, 'Terrible odeur humaine !' Michel Décaudin is right to compare this compassion for the homeless and disinherited with 'celle qui éclate dans la fin de "Zone"'.

In September 1911 Apollinaire would find himself cast among the damned of the earth, an experience which would produce the set of poems published in Alcools under the title 'A la Santé' (OPo p. 140). As alone as Lazarus in the tomb or a bear in a zoo, he spends a long week behind bars and as he enters his cell he is stripped of both his clothes and his identity, becoming no more than a number :

Je suis le quinze de la
Onzième

There is no anger at such injustice in the poems, as Apollinaire remembers Verlaine and his prison conversion, but he necessarily identifies with the rest of the men inside, 'tous ces pauvres coeurs battant dans la prison', and knows that he has been pushed back to the edge of 'respectable' society. The affair of Géry Pieret's stolen statues would drag on until January 1912 and this episode and its unpleasant side-issues could only exacerbate Apollinaire's insecurity and the doubts about his own destiny which would reach full expression in 'Zone' late in 1912.

In 1908, in 'Le Chat' (OPo p. 8) Apollinaire had presented himself with the picture of the successful and settled literary gentleman which he sometimes wanted to be, surrounded with all the conventions of bourgeois comfort. But near the catis 'La Souris' (OPo p. 13) in which

the poet exclaims :

Dieu! Je vais avoir vingt-huit ans,
Et mal vécus, à mon envie.

'Zone' is a monument to the poet's failure to 'fit in' and the lost time and wrong choices bemoaned in 'La Souris' are recalled once more in 1912 when Apollinaire writes :

J'ai vécu comme un fou et j'ai perdu mon temps

The working people of the beginning of 'Zone' seem to share the fraternity and security of lives spent in crowds, moving in the well regulated shifts of the modern metropolis. If here the poet can relish his role as an outsider, an observer who looks for the poetry of the new industrial world, with a stance which has something of the bemused provincial in Paris, his solitude turns to anguish as the poem progresses and he pays the price of his place on the side-lines as night falls and he finds himself among the rootless and the homeless while others sleep in comfort. In 'Zone' the poet wanders among the refugees, the poor Jews of Le Marais, the prostitutes, seeking solace from one of their number, or at the bar of a café. And the manuscript of the poem (26) gives much more space to this, the lumpen proletariat of the big city who, Apollinaire suggests, may be pushed into crime and revolt by their desperate condition :

Il ne faut pas leur en vouloir si parfois ils deviennent méchants
Rien ne pousse au mal comme de n'avoir pas d'argent

The obvious wealth of some is an incitement to revolt for those who tread the hopeless pavement.

Maintenant tu marches dans Paris tout seul parmi la foule
Des troupeaux d'autobus mugissants près de toi roulent

we read in 'Zone'. In the manuscript Apollinaire wrote :

(26) DA, pp. 77-81.

Les autos en filant écrasent dans la boue
Tous les espoirs des vagabonds, des sans-le-sous
De ceux qui sont traqués, de ceux qui se repentent
Dans les rues gaies, au pied de Montmartre, ils glissent sur la
[pente
Ils tombent dans le crime, ils tombent dans le sang
Et beaucoup ne sont pas naturellement méchants.

1912 was the year in which the 'bande à Bonnot' stole an automobile and appeared in the headlines after the first motorised bank-robbery. Bonnot himself died 28 April 1912 after a four-hour siege. Marc Poupon has related the manuscript lines given above to these events, writing :

Apollinaire pense sans doute aux anarchistes montmartrois comme Combet et Prévost, arrêtés en avril, ou à ceux de la bande à Bonnot qui se réunissaient sur la butte jusqu'au jour où ils organisèrent rue Ordener au bas de Montmartre, le premier hold-up qui, de hors-la-loi, en fit des assassins traqués par la police et promis à la guillotine, tel le soleil de 'Zone'. (27)

According to André Salmon, Bonnot and his gang inspired the majority of Parisians with 'moins de terreur que d'insolite sympathie (il faut rapporter fidèlement ce qui fut)'. (28) This opinion is supported by the description of a Parisian back-street in one of the collection of erotic poems attributed to Apollinaire in which an assassin becomes a folk-hero, immortalised in song :

Dans le lointain un marinier
Chantait la louange anonyme
D'un assassin guillotiné (29)

Apollinaire feels close to those for whom he makes apologies in the manuscript of 'Zone' and takes some warmth in the community of suffering humanity, especially among the Polish immigrants, his sorrow sharpened by the end of his relationship with Marie Laurencin, a break which followed his time at the Santé :

(27) Marc POUPON, Apollinaire et Cendrars, p. 7.

(28) André SALMON, L'Air de la Butte, p. 46.

(29) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Poésies libres, p. 64.

Je suis malheureux d'amour et le jour et la nuit
Parmi les malheureux du jour et de la nuit

If he writes that he has lived like a fool and wasted his time it is because he feels he is back where he started, during his hard early days in Paris, friends with Mécislas Golberg, struggling to scrape a living among the poorest workers in the city. And he has lost none of the sensitivity to social injustice which he had expressed in poems like 'Le Coin' ten years earlier.

CHAPTER III

APOLLINAIRE ET RELIGION (i) 1895-1907

In 1966 were published two books by Robert Couffignal on the subject of Apollinaire and religion. One of them, L'Inspiration biblique dans l'oeuvre de Guillaume Apollinaire, allows Couffignal to match Apollinaire's erudition with his own knowledge of the Old and New Testaments and to demonstrate convincingly the Biblical background to much of Apollinaire's writing, both poetry and prose. (1) The other, titled Apollinaire and published in the series 'Les écrivains devant Dieu', is an attempt to analyse Apollinaire's attitude to religion and more specifically to Catholicism as it is revealed in his work. (2) This is a touchy subject in France, (remember the controversy surrounding conflicting readings of the poetry of Rimbaud, the Surrealists' reaction versus that of Paul Claudel), and Couffignal's obviously Christian view-point could trigger fury in other critics. Jacques Gaucheron, for example, in his review of Apollinaire wrote :

Voici un abominable petit livre, et fou, et faux, où Apollinaire est gratouillé aux coudes, tiré par la veste et par la basque, chatouillé dans ses poèmes, repeint grossièrement dans ses attitudes, pour qu'enfin la suggestion naisse d'une inquiétude religieuse du poète d'Alcools. (3)

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- (1) Robert COUFFIGNAL, L'Inspiration biblique dans l'oeuvre de Guillaume Apollinaire, Paris, Lettres Modernes, 1966.
 - (2) Robert COUFFIGNAL, Apollinaire, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 'Les Ecrivains devant Dieu', 1966.
 - (3) Jacques GAUCHERON, review of R. Couffignal, Apollinaire, in Europe, 464, December 1967, p. 310.

But we suspect that Gaucheron himself would remake the poet in his own image when in opposition to Couffignal he goes on to state that in his opinion 'Tous les textes d'Apollinaire, poèmes, lettres, et même ses idées sur le mariage religieux, prouvent son athéisme, et son humanisme conséquent'. The American writer Wallace Fowlie in his 1967 book Climate of Violence more calmly echoes Gaucheron's opinion :

The religious problem did not exist for him. In late childhood he seems to have lost his Catholic faith. Without metaphysical worries, he was a very different poet from Baudelaire, for example, in his indifference to religious faith and the philosophical anguish of many of the European writers. (4)

Max-Pol Fouchet, again in 1967, also contrasts Apollinaire's stance with that of Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé faced with the 'vieux plumage' of God, writing that 'leur violence, leur révolte sont encore des signes de l'attachement. Comme Apollinaire semble plus indemne!' (5)

The pattern of Robert Couffignal's argument is that after much hesitation Apollinaire swung in 1912 definitively away from the devout Roman Catholicism of his youth into an 'athéisme passionné' which, already in 1965, he explained thus :

j'y vois, quant à moi, la rancœur contre la religion de l'enfance dégradée et souillée par un évènement insolite, qui est peut-être l'abandon du fils par son père. Apollinaire s'est retourné contre le milieu 'catholique-romain' dans lequel avait baigné sa famille, dans lequel il avait lui-même grandi. Ajoutons la réaction d'une nature amoureuse de la vie devant une morale contraignante à quoi se réduisait trop souvent, à la fin du siècle dernier, la religion catholique. (6)

But this pattern, however interesting its justification, is, like the other critics' suggestions of serene indifference, too simple to be satisfactory.

(4) Wallace FOWLIE, Climate of Violence, p. 174.

(5) Max-Pol FOUCHET, Les Appels, p. 207.

(6) Robert COUFFIGNAL, review of André Fonteyne, Apollinaire prosateur : 'L'Hérésiarque et Cie', GA 4, (1965), pp. 148-150, (p. 150).

Apollinaire's interest in religion does not end in 1912, and at moments of crisis after that date he may even be tempted back to seek comfort in the orthodox Catholicism of his childhood. Also when he moves away from Catholicism, and he does so early in life, it is to place himself as a writer, those elements of his poetry which are concerned with spiritual matters, in a widely based non-Christian tradition which is closer to heresy than to atheism. Jacques Gaucheron touches on this in another article from November 1966 when he hints at Apollinaire's interest in rites and divinities which are outside the citadel of Catholicism. He sees the poet's position as one of uneasy positivism and is here ready to make slight concessions :

Positivisme certes un peu simplet, et qui ne peut le satisfaire, d'où son goût pour les magies. [...] Les religions avec leurs dieux sont comme une sorte de poésie d'avant la poésie, une chose très ancienne dans l'esprit des hommes, et 'dont le rôle poétique est près d'être terminé'. (7)

Apollinaire does indeed reach back to a pre-Christian magic, an alternative tradition which rejects the claims to infallibility and exclusivity of Rome, his place of birth, and encourages him to claim as true ancestors the great magicians and prophets whose names are immortal as he would like his own to be. It is a line which includes such names as Orpheus, Merlin, Hermes Trismegistus, even Jesus Christ. Marcel Raymond in his book De Baudelaire au Surréalisme tells how in nineteenth-century France the poets took on the mantle of religious mystery after the credibility of the Church had been undermined by a century of sceptical philisophers. (8) There is no doubt that the young Apollinaire spent much of his time reading

(7) Jacques GAUCHERON, 'Etoile Apollinaire', Europe, 451-452, November-December 1966, pp. 31-45 (p. 42).

(8) Marcel RAYMOND, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, (1952 edition), p. 11.

the works of these Symbolist poets who had not yet found their way onto the school curriculum. And as Professor Ian Lockerbie has suggested in his article 'Alcools et le Symbolisme' these works had a crucial influence on the poet during his formative years :

Ce que je voudrais avancer, c'est que la jeunesse d'Apollinaire avait été tellement marquée par ses lectures des poètes symbolistes que dès le début il était acquis à une conception de la poésie qui en faisait une chasse spirituelle.
(9)

This Symbolist quest would lead the poet onto paths proscribed by Catholicism and sometimes, as we shall see, his efforts to shake off his childhood faith, the hold of the Church, would cause Apollinaire to face that Church in anger and revolt.



Literature was for Apollinaire, from his adolescence onwards, a vocation which Margaret Davies has compared to that of a priest. (10) This analogy is appropriate for it seems that even before he could write the young Wilhelm in Rome would sometimes put down his books to play at being a priest, taking the central role in the 'pieuse mascarade' of religious ritual. As he recalls in 'Giovanni Moroni', 'Une chaise devenait l'autel que je parais de petits candélabres, ciboires, ostensoirs de plomb que m'avait apportés la Béfana' (OPr p. 327). Later, in 1893, he became secretary of the 'Congrégation de l'Immaculée Conception' in his school

(9) S. I. LOCKERBIE, 'Alcools et le symbolisme', GA 2, (1963), pp. 5-40, (p. 8).

(10) Margaret DAVIES, Apollinaire, p. 20.

in Monaco, putting his pen to the service of the Virgin Mary. In 'Le Poète assassiné', Croniamantal who, like the characters Claude Auray and Giovanni Moroni, is one of the poet's fictional persona, will accept the hospitality offered by three monks with the words 'Je le veux bien, car n'êtes-vous pas mes frères, à moi qui suis poète ?' (OPr p. 286). Part of 'Le Poète assassiné' is an adaptation of the uncompleted novel La Gloire de l'olive, begun in 1901, in which Christians, not poets as in the final text, were victims of persecution. The scientist Horace Tograth, scourge of the poets, was originally the anti-Christ Apollonius Zabath while the greatest of poets, Croniamantal, takes the place of the prophet Enoch (OPr pp. 1273-79). Religion and poetry overlap in Apollinaire's mind.

One of the earliest of Apollinaire's poems is 'Minuit' (OPo p. 317) from 1895 whose design includes elements of traditional piety, the nun kneeling in prayer and the lamp which burns at the altar to mark the presence of God in the consecrated host. These are elements of reassurance and security while the rising movement of the dreaming poet's imagination through the stillness of the night leads on to adventure, prefiguring that 'chemin qui mène aux étoiles' which we will find in 'Pipe' (OPo p. 572), a poem from Apollinaire's 1908 neo-Symbolist period. 'Mort de Pan' (OPo p. 707) dates from 1897 according to the notes in Oeuvres poétiques (OPo p. 1157). But the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris possesses a manuscript of this poem titled 'Pan est mort' and signed 'W. de K. 3.7.95'. (11) It is a poem of which the Marist Fathers, Apollinaire's teachers in Monaco, could approve as it presents the birth of Christ as a new beginning for the universe while pagan divinities die amidst panic on Olympus. His Catholicism here is imaginative but orthodox.

(11) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 41.

In that poem 'Le chant des hymnes pieux' is heard for the last time by Venus in her temple. Apollinaire's childhood will be marked by another repertoire of hymns and litanies, learned by heart at school, the first poetry he encountered, traces of which will recur in his own later texts. The handbook of true doctrine and ideal behaviour for a child in a Catholic school has long been the catechism, large passages of which, dramatised in the form of question and answer dialogues, also have to be learned by heart. Apollinaire must have been familiar with the Catéchisme du Diocèse de Monaco imprimé par ordre de Monseigneur Charles Theuret Evêque de Monaco pour être seul enseigné dans son diocèse, published in Monaco in 1891. In this booklet we find for example the 'Litanies du Saint Nom de Jésus' (pages 8-11) and the beautiful 'Litanies de la Sainte Vierge' (pages 13-15) in which the Virgin is described as 'Miroir de Justice, Trône de la sagesse, [..] Rose mystique, Tour de David, Tour d'Ivoire, Maison d'or, Arche d'alliance, Porte du ciel, Etoile du matin, Salut des infirmes, Refuge des pécheurs, Consolatrice des affligés, Secours des chrétiens, Reine des anges'. We are reminded of the litany to Christ in 'Zone' and when Apollinaire came to transfer his devotion from the Virgin to Lou and Madeleine his 'amour mystique' (OPo p. 439) would often be translated into the patterns of prayer. Nice and Oran were almost as far from the trenches as paradise.

As for the influence of hymns, Louis Aragon has shown how Apollinaire's rhymes often work for the ear rather than the eye so that his poetry is freely composed in a way which relates it to the traditions of folk-song and popular verse-narrative. (12) Hymns and prayers are another branch of this popular oral tradition and Max Jacob always insisted that Apollinaire

(12) Louis ARAGON, 'La Rime en 1940', Poètes casqués 1940, 3, pp. 33-40.

when composing a poem usually began by humming to himself one of two simple tunes, 'deux courtes mélodies toujours les mêmes, qui ressemblaient aux vêpres' and which he had retained from his school-days. (13) J. R. Lawler has interpreted this underlying music as an element of spiritual unity and permanence in which Apollinaire can set fragments of reality to make poetry : 'Creation becomes for Apollinaire the meeting-place of the discontinuity of language (that is, the outside world) with the continuity of an inner presence of music'. (14) Naturally we remember Gérard de Nerval for whom the music of folk-song evoked an ideal world of eternal childhood. Apollinaire perhaps treasured a music which came from his own time of innocent faith, before the world was broken by revolt and disbelief. Marie Laurencin recalled that 'Apollinaire avait une façon de réciter ses vers avec une voix basse et chantante' (15) and in 1915 he himself referred to this gregorian music as 'les trois ou quatre airs qui me servent instinctivement et qui sont la manifestation du rythme de mon existence'. (16) Here he makes clear that he considered this music to be as deeply rooted as instinct and as permanent as his own heart-beat. Marie-Jeanne Durry transcribed two pieces of music of twelve notes each on which Apollinaire composed his alexandrines (17) and Margaret Davies has suggested that these pieces resemble evening psalms, particularly 'Salve Regina Coelitum'. (18) Jean Burgos, however, in his 1970 article 'Naissance d'un langage. Apollinaire correcteur de lui-même' corrects any over-insistence on the importance of Apollinaire's 'petite musique'. A study of successive

(13) Max JACOB, 'Fox ou Picasso au Bateau-Lavoir', La Nouvelle Critique, May 1973, p. 49. This text written in 1931 was first published in Les Lettres Françaises, 1051, 22-28 October 1964.

(14) J. R. LAWLER, 'Music and Poetry in Apollinaire', French Studies, 4, October 1956, pp. 339-346.

(15) Marie LAURENCIN, Le Carnet des Nuits, p. 40.

(16) TS, p. 77.

(17) Marie-Jeanne DURRY, 'Un Secret d'Apollinaire', FDR, 4, December 1954, pp. 13-14.

(18) Margaret DAVIES, 'La Petite musique d' Apollinaire', Apollinaire et la musique, Actes du colloque, Stavelot 1965, pp. 43-48 (p. 44).

manuscript drafts of the poems demonstrates, according to Mr Burgos, that Apollinaire planned his poems on paper in a textual, unmusical way, any music or obsessive rhythm intervening only at a late stage to impose a cadence on the language. (19) Judging by the variety of form and the readiness to experiment which characterise Apollinaire's poetry it seems likely that his technique of composition also varied according to his mood.

Certainly exact references to his childhood religion flash through the images of that poetry. In 'Zone' for example the line

Pupille Christ de l'oeil

is an echo of the evening prayer 'Custodi nos, Domine, ut pupillam oculi' while the reference to the forty martyrs of Sebastopol in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' could have been taken from the text for 10 March in the Daily Missal. (20) David Berry has shown how throughout Apollinaire's work references to food not only reflect the poet's pagan appetite but are also given Christian connotations. (21) In 'Le Repas' (OPo p. 669) for example, a meal remembered from the poet's Mediterranean childhood is presented as a joyful family communion in which the absent father casts no shadow :

Tous se lèvent joyeux et adorent la vie
Sans dégoût de ce qui est matériel
Songeant que les repas sont beaux sont sacrés
Qui font vivre les hommes

Wine maybe the blood of Christ, 'mon vin par deux fois millénaire' as in 'Vendémiaire' for example, and bread, the second of the dual symbols of Christian communion, is regularly given a privileged place in the texts. A marriage feast in the Rhineland mixes bread and wine, love and religion,

(19) Jean BURGOS, 'Naissance d'un langage. Apollinaire correcteur de lui-même', Apollinaire inventeur de langages, Actes du colloque, Stavelot 1970, Paris, Lettres Modernes, 1973, pp. 21-38, (p. 35).

(20) Raymond POUILLIART, 'Lectures, souvenirs et récréation chez Guillaume Apollinaire', GA 4, (1965), pp. 90-96, (p. 92).

(21) David BERRY, 'Apollinaire and the Tantalus Complex', Australian Journal of French Studies, IX, 1, January-April 1972, pp. 55-79.

and the poet advises

Mangez les tartines comme du pain béni (OPo p. 531)

In L'Enchanteur pourrissant all the offerings brought to Merlin's Black Christmas leave the magician unsatisfied because the essential staff of life is lacking: 'Hélas! On a oublié le pain. Cette fantaisie magique est cruelle comme la volonté. Ils ont oublié le pain' (OPr p. 29). Croniamantal will share this same hunger in 'Le Poète assassiné': 'j'ai faim non de chair, ni de fruits, mais de pain, le bon pain pétri et gonflé comme les mamelles, le pain rond comme la lune et doré comme elle' (OPr p. 266).

Easter is the most important date in the Christian calendar and this festival keeps its significance as a time of rebirth in Apollinaire's mind. In the early 'Aubade chantée à Laetare un an passé' (OPo p. 49) the rebirth of love and nature coincides with the Christian festival, the rosy tinges of the sky, flowers and bare skin matching the colour of the priest's vestments. In 'Les Fiançailles' the poet relives the passion of Christ in springtime, wears a crown of thorns and emulates the victory of Christ over death in his own final triumph. During the war Apollinaire, tired of life in the barracks, will leave Nîmes on Easter Sunday, 4 April 1915, (22) and images of renewal will consequently often recur in 'Case d'armons', poems written in a wood in Champagne. And, as we have already suggested, it is significant that during that spring of 1915, writing from the heart and trusting to the inspiration of the moment, Apollinaire often uses explicit echoes of liturgical patterns, as in, for example, a fervid love poem to Lou, 'L'Amour le Dédain et l'Espérance' (OPo p. 463).

Apollinaire's reading of the Bible also makes an important contribution to his poetry of course. Robert Couffignal counts eighty-nine references

(22) Claude TOURNADRE, 'Apollinaire soldat, au jour le jour', GA 12, (1973), pp. 7-26, (p. 13).

to the Bible in Alcools and twenty-four references in Calligrammes (23) while the huge number of Bible references and paraphrases in La Fin de Babylone have enabled Jean Burgos to authenticate this 1913 novel as a work by Apollinaire. (24) But such a close knowledge of the Scriptures was born of Apollinaire's own private reading and was not necessarily linked with his Catholicism. A Catholic education concentrates on the teachings of the Church, an understanding of the sacraments and a knowledge of the catechism, spending relatively little time on the study of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament which Apollinaire favours. He looks on the stories of the Bible as he does on tales of heresy and obscure theological debates, none of which he would have been taught in school or in church. As Jean Burgos says, the Bible for Apollinaire is 'un vaste répertoire d'histoires qu'il est bien tentant de continuer à sa façon'. (25) So let us beware of judging Apollinaire's attachment to religion according to his use of Bible references.

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Apollinaire's faith in Catholicism began to dissolve early in his life. The late nineteenth-century twilight of the gods, reflected in the writings of Nietzsche for example, and Apollinaire's own leaning towards anarchism would come between the maturing poet and the Church. André Fonteyne gives the correct transcription of a sometimes misquoted phrase from the Stavelot notebook which shows Apollinaire in 1899 analysing his own disenchantment : 'En matière de religion, la première cause du doute

(23) Robert COUFFIGNAL, L'Inspiration biblique dans l'oeuvre de Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 203.

(24) Jean BURGOS, 'La Fin de Babylone un ouvrage signé Guillaume Apollinaire', GA 7, (1968), pp. 125-155.

est l'ennui chez le jeune homme et le péché'. (26) And the collection of 'Banalités' published in Lacerba in April 1914 contains another version of the same observation: 'En matière de religion la première cause du doute est souvent l'ennui surtout chez les jeunes gens' (OPo p. 659).

The word 'ennui' is common to both versions and Catholicism looks boring, restrictive to the young man who is eager for experience, on the verge of his career. He is tempted to break the frame which the Church would impose on his thought and behaviour. Two 1902 poems, 'Le Dôme de Cologne' (OPo p. 538) and 'Le Printemps' (OPo p. 556), juxtapose a prayer to the Virgin Mary with a reference to Hermes Trismegistus, showing how Apollinaire, who sees no reason why he should abandon the comforting idea of a heavenly mother watching over him, is going beyond the limits of Catholicism and searching for inspiration in the traditions of gnostic religion. In 'Prière' (OPo p. 576) he claims that he prays to the Virgin every day and that these prayers can be effective, even while insisting that 'c'est bien fini':

Je ne crois plus je ne crois plus

'Le Printemps' carries a madonna and her court of princesses around the world in search of love, from Mediterranean lemon groves to Ireland and China, a legendary quest which, translated into popular song will, he suggests, become part of European folklore. By imagining this tale he has made it real because, according to Hermes Trismegistus, 'imaginer pour un homme c'est créer'. It follows that the Virgin Mary, whose image is also fixed in his mind, is equally 'très réelle et nécessaire'. All power is thus transferred from God to man, the great creator.

'Le Printemps' is a flexing of the poet's muscles and he will continue in the knowledge that his powers are infinite for, as he writes

(26) André FONTEYNE, review of Robert Couffignal, Apollinaire and L'Inspiration biblique, GA 6, (1967), pp. 182-184, (p. 184 note 1).

in 'Le Dôme de Cologne' :

l'homme a créé les dieux
Comme dit Hermès Trismégiste en son Pimandre

'Passion' (OPo p. 532), a 1901 poem which, like 'Le Dôme de Cologne' , is set on the Rhine, features a 'Christ dont ma patrie aime la fiction', fictional because a figment of the human imagination, but of interest to the poet because of his status as a legendary figure. And Apollinaire is proud to display his priestly knowledge of theological vocabulary, words like 'dulie', meaning the adoration of saints and angels, and 'latrie', the adoration reserved for God. But this Christ seems to have lost his power to capture the human imagination and stands as a relic of a dead religion, his cross now used as a post to which a goat is attached. A frozen image of torture, he is indifferent to the real suffering of the peasants around him, just as in 'Le Dôme de Cologne'

le bon Dieu se fout
De ceux qui travaillent à sa plus grande gloire

Reading these last lines it is worth recalling that in many Catholic schools all written work was traditionally to be headed with the letters 'AMDG', an abbreviation of the words 'Ad majorem Dei gloriam', 'A la plus grande gloire de Dieu'. Apollinaire is clearly denying the habits and strictures imposed by his schooling.

Throughout Alcools Apollinaire treats Christianity with this mixture of attachment and ridicule and religion is seen in an uncertain light which corresponds to the mournful twilight which is chronicled in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' :

Beaucoup de ces dieux ont péri
C'est sur eux que pleurent les saules
Le grand Pan l'amour Jésus-Christ
Sont bien morts

The Nietzschean connection suggested here is strengthened by a letter to Karl Boès in April 1902 in which he writes knowingly of the German philosopher. (27) The second issue of Le Festin d'Esope included a study of Nietzsche by Jean de Gourmont, and Scott Bates in his Guillaume Apollinaire has pointed out other references to Nietzsche, the death of God and the divinisation of man in the writings of Apollinaire and his circle in 1903 and 1904. (28) In August 1915 he is proud to tell Madeleine Pagès that 'Nietzsche était un Polonais comme moi-même'. (29) A manuscript quatrain in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, related to the riddle of the sphinx in L'Enchanteur pourrissant, refers to the death of God as follows :

La blessure du suicide d'ingratitude
Elle tue son créateur.
L'homme est tel il a tué Dieu
Dieu créant l'homme s'est suicidé. (30)

Here, though the original creator was God, ultimate power is once more in the hands of man. The exclamation 'God is dead!' is of course a recognition of a crisis in man's vision of the order of the universe, the result in Apollinaire's day of a century of historical and evolutionary thought which had undermined or abolished the metaphysical foundations of eternity as a relevant human dimension. In its place, evident in much of Apollinaire's poetry, was born the Nietzschean philosophy of self-transformation and realisation through self-affirmation. Apollinaire's belittling of Christ and of the power of God, his satire at the expense of an architect foolish enough to devote his energies to the glorification of a Christian God contrast, in 'Le Dôme de Cologne', for example, with his self-aggrandisement as he pictures himself huge enough to mount and master the cathedral as if it were a horse, taking the reins of his destiny into his own hands.

(27) OC IV, p. 712.

(28) Scott BATES, Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 64.

(29) TS, p. 80.

(30) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 33.

Here he is swelling up towards the ubiquity and simultaneity which he will propose so often in later poetry. He is expropriating for man qualities which at school his catechism had taught him to be the property only of God :

D. Qu'est-ce que Dieu ?

R. Dieu est un pur esprit éternel, infiniment parfait, Créateur du ciel et de la terre, et souverain Seigneur de toutes choses.

D. Dieu voit-il tout ?

R. Dieu voit tout ensemble le passé, le présent, l'avenir, et jusqu'à nos plus secrètes pensées. (31)

Now it is the poet or the artist who becomes the sovereign of creation, master of time, a model for all men. In a very early poem such as 'Dieu' (OPo p. 838) this human aspiration to godhead is expressed in words which are a direct and clear expropriation of the language of the catechism. In the poem Apollinaire writes :

Je veux vivre inhumain, puissant et orgueilleux
Puisque je fus créé à l'image de Dieu

In his catechism he had learned :

D. Qu'est-ce que l'homme ?

R. L'homme est une créature raisonnable, composée d'une âme et d'un corps.

D. Qu'est-ce que l'âme ?

R. L'âme est un esprit, créé à l'image de Dieu, et qui ne mourra jamais.

D. Comment notre âme est-elle créée à l'image de Dieu ?

R. Notre âme est créée à l'image de Dieu, parce qu'elle est, comme lui, capable de connaître, d'aimer, d'agir librement. (32)

Apollinaire will use this liberty to the full. Created in the image of God, he sets out to rival his Maker. He ends 'Dieu' with the line :

Et le dieu qui sera en moi s'est incarné

(31) Catéchisme du Diocèse de Monaco, Monaco, 1891, p. 27.

(32) Catéchisme du Diocèse de Monaco, Monaco, 1891, p. 33.

An expression of this divine potential is poetry, and it is for this reason that Apollinaire writes in his Stavelot notebook 'Sij'étais Dieu et Maeterlinck'. Reading this phrase Margaret Davies makes a comment with which we must concur : 'He may never have entirely grown out of the first wish, and it took him some time to shake off the second ' (33)

Hermes Trismegistus personifies a long hermetic tradition, an alternative spiritual teaching which Christianity must consider to be profane for the power and free-thinking creativity which it confers on man, rival to the gods. The Catholic Church at least claims to supersede and abolish the ancient religions and replaces the magicians with their parchments by priests with prayerbooks. Apollinaire remembers the old magic and blames Christianity for making the world a sadder and more boring place. In Stavelot he writes :

Se sont évanouis les fées et les démons
Quand jadis en l'étable est venu Saint Remacle
Et les moines ont fait ce si triste miracle
La mort des enchanteurs et des gnomes des monts (OPo p. 842).

'Lecture' (OPo p. 714) presents a monk in his cell reading an ancient worm-eaten manuscript which looks like part of another poem written by Apollinaire himself :

'Je vois Lilith qui vole poursuivie
Par trois anges ...'

(33) Margaret DAVIES, Apollinaire, pp. 49-50.

The poet dreams of alchemy and altars in the sky, preoccupations which he shares with Nyctor, the poet's nocturnal self, in a text from around 1900 :

Tu es un homme libre (en apparence), tes grands yeux
ont souvent contemplé les étoiles, tes mains ont feuilleté les
grimoires, tes pieds ont connu les grand-routes. Tu ne
t'illusionnes point sur les pouvoirs du pentagramme (OPr p. 1172).

For Apollinaire, leaving the certainties of his childhood faith, as for Nyctor, as for Victor Hugo before them :

La nuit est une énigme ayant pour mot l'étoile. (34)

At times he will reject the hermeticism which tempts him as an explanation of the universe, as in 'L'Ensemble seul est parfait' (OPo p. 839) in which 'la nature est seule vraie, non le grimoire'. Yet the title of this poem is itself an indication of Apollinaire's will to find a structure into which he can fit fragmentary phenomena, to discover an explanation which will make the universe whole. Nyctor views the stars as Apollinaire will later watch the flares of battle, willing the scales to drop from his eyes so that what he sees will reveal its true shape, making sense of experience, filling the gaps in his understanding. In 'Merveille de la guerre' (OPo p. 271) he will write :

Comme c'est beau toutes ces fusées
Mais il serait bien plus beau s'il y en avait plus encore
S'il y en avait des millions qui auraient un sens complet et
[relatif comme les lettres d'un livre

For Apollinaire the poet, like the magician, must provide the key to the mystery, as he writes to Linda Molina da Silva :

Et moi qui tiens en ma cervelle
La vérité plus que nouvelle
Et que, plaise à Dieu, je révèle
De l'enchanteur qui la farda
Du sens des énigmes sereines (OPo p. 327).

(34) Victor HUGO, L'Année terrible, Juin XII, Paris, Seghers, 1971, p. 159.

The influence of Symbolism begins once more to appear as we examine Apollinaire's attitude here. V.-E. Michelet in his book De l'Esotérisme dans l'Art in 1891 defined the poet thus :

Il est des hommes qui ont mission de révéler la Beauté. Ce sont les Poètes. [...] Le poète doit avoir pénétré ce que Goethe appelait 'le secret ouvert'. (35)

And we remember Stéphane Mallarmé's conviction that if only the letters and words could be arranged correctly he would have before him Le Livre, the Book which would be the 'explication orphique de la Terre'. (36) Apollinaire's movement away from the Church matched that of the Symbolists. His interest in an alternative tradition, his references to mages such as Hermes Trismegistus, place him on a line reaching back beyond Christianity as far as Orpheus. This view of history and religion he shared with many of the Symbolists and can best be understood through reference to two influential books which appeared in 1889, La Littérature de tout à l'heure by Charles Morice (37) and Les Grands Initiés. Esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions by Edouard Schuré. (38) Jean Burgos in his notes to L'Enchanteur pourrissant indicates that there are many points of convergence between that book and Schuré's study, which Apollinaire must have read. (39) Madeleine Boisson has listed other books in the same genre read by Apollinaire. (40)

Charles Morice in his La Littérature de tout à l'heure writes that the artist must take up the torch carried by those who have preceded him. For Morice, as for Apollinaire, 'les NOUVEAUTES résultent de la TRADITION'. (41) He goes on to explain :

(35) See Guy MICHAUD, La Doctrine Symboliste (Documents), p. 16.

(36) See Guy MICHAUD, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

(37) Charles MORICE, La Littérature de tout à l'heure, Paris, Perrin, 1889.

(38) Edouard SCHURE, Les Grands Initiés. Esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions, Paris, Perrin, 1889.

(39) See EP, p. lxxxvii.

(40) Madeleine BOISSON, 'Sur la genèse de La Fin de Babylone,' GA 14, (1978), pp. 51-64, (p. 52).

(41) Charles MORICE, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

Au défaut des certitudes défailles d'une Religion... nous pressons les vestiges des Traditions lointaines, d'alors que l'Histoire était encore à naître, des Légendes mystérieuses que colportent, à travers le monde moderne qui s'inquiète de les entendre sans les comprendre, des peuples nomades partout en exil ; nous recueillons les enseignements des grands Penseurs, Mages et Métaphysiciens, héros de l'esprit humain ; plus avant qu'eux essaierons-nous d'aller dans les voies qu'ils ont ouvertes ; nous irons à l'école aussi des Cultes antiques, extrayant de toutes les mines la parcelle d'or éternel que nous gardait encore leur sein avare ; et quand la joie de la foi ébranlera d'enthousiasme nos âmes, nous célébrerons cette joie mystique par les Sacrifices et les Fêtes de l'Art. (42)

We shall see that Apollinaire, like Morice, looks to the Jews, gypsies and other nomadic people of the earth in his search for poetry and truth.

Edouard Schuré presents a system which links all great religions in chronological unity, contrasting the present with the golden ages of the past when religion, science and art were not felt to be antipathetic, when the Church was open to the search for knowledge. Schuré's 'Grands Initiés' join hands across history :

Ils s'appellent Krishna, Bouddha, Zoroastre, Hermès, Moïse, Pythagore, Jésus, et ce furent de puissants mouleurs d'esprits, de formidables éveilleurs d'âmes, de salutaires organisateurs de sociétés. (43)

He believes in 'l'antiquité, la continuité et l'unité essentielle de la doctrine ésotérique' (44) and admits that his comparative study of religions 'est sorti tout entier d'une soif ardente de la vérité supérieure, totale, éternelle, sans laquelle les vérités partielles ne sont qu'un leurre'. (45) This is the context in which Apollinaire wrote his poems on Orpheus and Christ in Le Bestiaire, his ready references to seers like Hermes Trismegistus and

(42) Charles MORICE, op. cit., p. 66.

(43) Edouard SCHURE, op. cit., p. xii.

(44) Edouard SCHURE, op. cit., p. xvii.

(45) Edouard SCHURE, op. cit., p. xxix.

Nostradamus. This is why in 'Palais' he seeks a language from everywhere and all times, why in 'Cortège' he, the artist, is built from elements of the past.

The esoteric beliefs which Apollinaire inherited from the Symbolists would not disappear with the end of the nineteenth century but would continue to be fashionable until the First World War. Madame Blavatsky, much admired by W. B. Yeats, would emerge as a new occult guide and the Rosicrucians would gain ground. Léon Somville in his Devanciers du surréalisme comments on the influence of this movement and quotes Florian-Parmentier :

De 1891 à 1914, Florian-Parmentier ne relève pas moins d'une quarantaine de revues spiritualistes : 'L'ensemble de la littérature ésotérique a marqué, dans ces derniers temps, un progrès extrêmement sensible' (Histoire contemporaine des Lettres françaises de 1885 à 1914, Paris, Figuière, 1914, p. 102). (46)

The eventual publication of the catalogue of books owned by Apollinaire will include Le Tarot divinatoire, clef du tirage des cartes et des sorts, (Paris, Librairie Hermétique, 1909) and a list of similar titles. He knew the Pimandre by Hermes Trismegistus, of course, probably from the 1867 French edition, published by Ménard, and Jean Burgos has shown that he also used, for example, Le Livre d'Hénoch, translated by François Martin, Paris, 1906. (47) He also probably knew La Kabbale ou la philosophie religieuse des Hébreux by A. Franck, published by Hachette in 1892. André Breton is quite justified in taking his list of nineteenth-century poets who have 'admirablement compris' esoteric beliefs from Hugo, Nerval and Rimbaud 'jusqu'à Apollinaire chez qui alternent l'influence de la Cabale juive et celle des romans du Cycle d'Arthur'. (48)

(46) Léon SOMVILLE, Les Devanciers du Surréalisme, p. 15.

(47) EP, p. 73 note d and p. 77 note c.

(48) André BRETON, Arcane 17, new edition, Paris, Pauvert, 1971, p. 115.

Schuré's theory of a thread linking religions was far from being a mere fantasy. The cult of Orpheus, for example, followed the rites of Dionysus in which delirium was achieved with wine and which could include the sacrifice of an animal or human being. Philippe de Félice informs us that :

Les anciens voyaient dans Orphée un personnage réel, un poète et un prophète, qui avait entrepris de rénover les pratiques barbares de ses compatriotes et qui, victime de la haine qu'il avait déchaînée, avait subi le martyre.

On s'expliquerait ainsi pourquoi l'iconographie chrétienne primitive a pu donner au Christ les traits du héros thrace. (49)

This influence of Orphic religion beyond Greco-Roman paganism as far as early Christianity was well known to Apollinaire, as he indicates in Le Bestiaire in which the message of Orpheus is the same as that of Hermes Trismegistus (OPo p. 3) and of Christ (OPo p. 20). Apollinaire knew Hellenic history and gives some indication of his reading on the subject in chapter 2 of La Femme assise where he mentions the writings of Commines and Thomas de Quincey, 'pour ne citer aucun écrivain contemporain' (OPr p. 423). Similarly the Arthurian legends which, as Breton says, are most important to Apollinaire, are centred on the legend of the Holy Grail, the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper, given to Joseph of Arimathea by Pilate and used by Joseph to gather the blood from Christ's wounds. This chalice, which would provide Joseph and his companions with a series of extraordinary revelations, was preceded in antiquity by the cup of sacred wine central to the cult of Dionysus in Mediterranean regions, and by the cup of beer used in the cult of the Celtic god Cernunnos in the North. At the end of 'Zone' Apollinaire drinks alcohol before turning to a sleep which is watched over by pagan gods ; and at the end of 'Vendémiaire' the poet's intoxication brings a feeling of unity between himself and all time and space in a dream of universal osmosis.

(49) Philippe de FÉLICE, Poisons sacrés. Ivresses divines, pp. 302-303.

So the theme of alcohol and intoxication, central to Alcools as the title suggests, 'chants d'universelle ivrognerie', takes on a religious significance in the context of a search for illumination and unity with Creation in a tradition which includes Dionysus, present in the grape, his blood in its juice, and Christ, whose blood is wine through the mystery of Transsubstantiation. In Apollinaire's poetry, as in Schuré's Les Grands Initiés, there is a place for all the truths of the past.

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So while Apollinaire draws away from the established Church and the exclusive authority of the Vatican, he accepts Christ as a figure in a larger pattern of great Masters, Seers and Prophets. He does not move from Catholicism to atheism. His vision of history, like his anarchism, he inherited from the nineteenth century, in particular from the Symbolists. Because they were unorthodox and heretical these ideas satisfied his need to revolt against his education while still allowing him to indulge that part of him which was attracted by spiritual and religious questions. Such theories also gave a high role to the artist which satisfied the ambitious and assertive element in Apollinaire's nature.

In the spring of 1903 Apollinaire met Alfred Jarry whose influence was immediate. The anarchistic behaviour of Jarry, waving his revolver, encouraged Apollinaire in the violent tone of Le Festin d'Esope. And Jarry's own interest in heresy as faults in the structure of the Church, a citadel to be attacked, corresponded to Apollinaire's interest in the subject as expressed in the brilliant stories which would go to make up L'Hérésiarque et Cie. Catholicism, we have shown, bored Apollinaire, Catholicism which, as Mr Couffignal admits, was a kill-joy religion, too often no more than

'une morale contraignante' (50) and which, as Charles Morice complained, rejected the true artists of the day with insults or silence. (51) Morice refers to the Roman Catholic Church as 'la grande Endormie dont le sommeil semble le sommeil de la mort'. (52) The 'ennui' which Apollinaire refers to in the Stavelot notebook is mentioned again in 'Le Juif latin', where he parodies and ridicules Christ's Passion, presenting us with a dead Jew between two policemen, one of whom is kind and inherits a fortune, the other cruel and dies the next day. Off-hand, Apollinaire comments : 'Cette histoire avait ennuyé tout le monde' (OPr p. 108). Again, in 'Le Passant de Prague' a Jew is hung between two dogs (OPr p. 86). And later Apollinaire will remember the legend of St. Ursula and her 11,000 British virgins, supposedly martyred in Cologne after a pilgrimage to Rome in October 237 and will use their sacred name to structure the story of a pornographic novel, Les Onze mille verges. He advances from impiety to sacrilege. In L'Hérésiarque et Cie priests are riddled with vice and the Church is riddled with heresy. In August 1915 Apollinaire is happy to tell Madeleine Pagès that his story 'L'Hérésiarque' is not fictional but was prophetic, written in 1900, appearing in 1902, 'avant les luttes religieuses de France et avant la période hérétique qui suivit aussitôt'. (53) Inventing such tales, his intention was to discredit the Church, which regards magic as heresy, and to hack away at the roots of Catholicism in his own soul for, as we must demonstrate, he felt that the Church cast shadow of sin and shame on the life he wished to lead.

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(50) Robert COUFFIGNAL, review of André Fonteyne, Apollinaire prosateur : 'L'Hérésiarque et Cie', GA 4, (1965), pp. 148-150, (p. 150).

(51) Charles MORICE, op. cit., p. 63.

(52) Charles MORICE, op. cit., p. 65.

(53) TS, p. 103.

Just as Apollinaire sympathises with the outsiders on the edge of bourgeois society, the anarchists, so, though he was raised as a Catholic, he is attracted by unorthodox religions, the nomadic people to whom Charles Morice refers and who have a faith which is kept alive by the mysterious transmission of tradition, through the generations, as in Edouard Schuré's Les Grands Initiés. When in 'Les Sapins' (OPo p. 121) the pine trees in the wind seem to chant an incantation in answer to the thunder rolling in the sky Apollinaire compares them to astrologers, magicians, rabbis and poets and as the dark forest holds a secret for Apollinaire, a matrix to his dreams, so each pine, like magicians and poets, inherits the wisdom and shares the destiny of the preceding generation:

Dans les sept arts endoctrinés
Par les vieux sapins leurs aînés
 Qui sont de grands poètes
Ils se savent prédestinés
A briller plus que des planètes

Apollinaire's Don Juan Tenorio has received a similar education :

Tu as eu la plus brillante éducation des Espagnes, des maîtres de toutes les langues, vivantes ou mortes, de mathématiques, de littérature et même de poésie et de musique, bref tu es endoctriné dans les sept arts (OPr p. 738).

Don Juan's education may be less magical, more conventional than that of the young pine trees, but both these examples serve to illustrate a major difference between Catholicism and the gnostic tradition, which is that the latter does not emphasise faith but depends on study and research, the assimilation of secret knowledge, giving power and responsibility to the initiate who aspires to penetrate the mysteries of existence. The humility of faith is replaced by the voracious appetite for knowledge which we recognise in Apollinaire, book in hand.

When Christians were illiterate, the Jews could read and Judaism is a religion based on sacred texts. The word of the law is paramount. If

Christianity has banished the sorcerers then Judaism, for Apollinaire, is a link with a happier, pre-Christian world. So in the original text of 'Le Passant de Prague', published in La Revue Blanche in 1902, the traveller in Eastern Europe describes the Jews as a race 'que j'aime de s'être conservée si pure à travers les temps' (Opr p. 1115). As he identifies with all outsiders, so Apollinaire is sympathetic towards the Jews for the suffering that anti-semitism has always caused them. And he loves them for their gaiety, in opposition to Christianity which he sees as a joyless faith of self-denial. In La Revue Blanche Isaac Laquedem, the Wandering Jew, proclaims :

mes routes sont heureuses. Je ne demeure nulle part et ainsi ne souffre pas d'être juif. Car tous les juifs souffrent partout un mépris immérité. Voyez, de Daniel à Dreyfus, - que n'ont-ils pas souffert dans les pays que leur sagesse honorait! (OPr p. 1115).

The reference to Dreyfus suggests that perhaps Apollinaire's interest in the Jews began with that 'affaire' and the anti-racist campaign which La Revue Blanche featured during 1898. In perpetual motion, the Wandering Jew insists 'Mais je ne parcours pas un chemin de la croix' (OPr p. 88), unlike the central character in 'Le Larron' (OPO p. 91) who is a Christian and is barred from the pleasures of the earth. 'Ils s'agitent agréablement' writes Apollinaire of the Jews (OPr p. 88) and Isaac Laquedem dances like an angel. We remember that Apollinaire learned a lot about the Jews from a Jewish dancing master, Molina da Silva, and this image of semitic gaiety stays with him. Jewish erudition is exemplified by the Rabbi in 'Le Poète assassiné' who boasts proudly 'de ma science bien connue et de mon lyrisme inimitable, sans compter tous mes dons de sorcellerie et de prophétie' (OPr p. 283). In the 1903 manuscript which Apollinaire adapts here it was again Isaac Laquedem who was speaking (OPr pp. 1253-54). Poet, prophet and magician, the Rabbi rivals

the pine trees in their wisdom. According to Pascal Pia, Apollinaire felt closer to Judaism than to Christianity and Pia lists some of the poet's Jewish friends : Max Jacob, Maurice Raynal, Louis Marcoussis, Marc Chagall, D.H. Kahnweiler, and Thadée Natanson, to whom L'Héresiarque et Cie is dedicated. (54)

A Jewish scholar, Joseph Lowin, has shown that Apollinaire's knowledge of the Hebrew language was limited. In 1901, in his poem 'La Synagogue' (OPo p. 113), he uses the word 'tholahoth', which does not exist, instead of 'tochechot'. And when the Feast of Booths coincides with the Sabbath the Jews do not wave the 'loulabim', ritual instruments of leaves and branches, as Apollinaire suggests they do. (55) But he knows that 'Les chérubins sont des boeufs ailés' (OPo p. 35), 'keroub' meaning 'winged bull' in Hebrew and, as Henri Meschonnic has shown in his 1966 article 'Apollinaire illuminé au milieu d'ombres', there are numerous other references to the Kabbala in Apollinaire's texts. (56) Certainly 'La Synagogue' is a poem full of affection and esteem for Judaism. Just as every Jew inherits in crystallised form the huge body of learning and the history which make up the Jewish religion, so the poem moves from a petty quarrel between two men to swell into an evocation of the grave beauty of the religious service, the resonant poetry of the psalms, something grand which dissolves divisions between past and present and also between men :

Ottomar en chantant sourira à Abraham

In comparison to this poem, 'Les Femmes' (OPo p. 123), which is set in a Christian context, is a poem evoking solitude and death.

Apollinaire feels solidarity with the Jews who are outsiders in

(54) Pascal PIA, 'Apollinaire partout', Carrefour, 12 July 1967, pp. 18-19.

(55) Joseph LOWIN, 'Apollinaire and his Jews', Australian Journal of French Studies, IX, 1, January-April 1972, pp. 80-83.

(56) Henri MESCHONNIC, 'Apollinaire illuminé au milieu d'ombres', Europe, 451-452, November-December 1966, pp. 141-169, (pp. 154-155).

the strongly Catholic Rhineland, as he does with the gypsies, who have a similar status. Like the Jews, like Apollinaire himself, they are rooted in their past, in the secrets they carry with them, rather than in any one geographical location. In 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' Apollinaire repeats the refrain :

Moi qui sais des lais pour les reines
Les plaintes de mes années
Des hymnes d'esclave aux murènes
La romance du mal-aimé
Et des chansons pour les sirènes

There he is proclaiming his own inheritance, this homeland of song and legend, a bollard for his soul in a poem of ceaseless moving through space and time, a reflection of his shifting and uneasy existence. The wandering players of 'Saltimbanques' (OPo p. 90), like the gypsies in the story 'La Comtesse d'Eisenberg' (OPr p. 388), 'fiers comme la liberté', remind us of Baudelaire's wandering troupe, 'Les Bohémiens en voyage'. Moving through villages 'sans églises' they are outside Christianity, but their own religion endows them with power over nature. Their animals are trained in the ways of man, and they can communicate with the orchards they will pillage :

Chaque arbre fruitier se résigne
Quand de très loin ils lui font signe

Through the continuity of the race they conquer death and with the gift of prophecy they master time, achieve the simultaneity which Apollinaire knew to be the plane on which the poet's imagination moves : 'dans notre langage, Vie et Mort ne sont qu'un seul mot, de même qu'Hier et Demain, de même qu'Amour et Haine' (OPr p. 389). Apollinaire took his interest in the gypsies well beyond his stay in the Rhineland and his article of 18 February 1910 on the traveller and friend of the gypsies George Borrow indicates his continuing affection for 'une race bizarre et encore mal connue'.(57)

(57) Pierre CAIZERGUES, Apollinaire et La Démocratie sociale, p. 42.

Part of the fascination of gypsies is the attraction towards popular superstition, the reading of palms etc., which Apollinaire inherited from his mother : 'Ma mère donnait dans la superstition. J'avoue que je ne la dédaigne pas' (OPr p. 323). The episode of 'Giovanni Moroni' which begins in this way introduces us to a monk of very dubious piety who reads cards in a den which is filled with books and scientific instruments. These look suspiciously like dangerous tools to knowledge, the occult path to illumination, far from the Christian way of faith and prayer. Apollinaire is once more bringing the Church into disrepute and evoking the strange attraction of forbidden paths of pride on which man approaches the powers of godhead.

Poems such as 'La Tzigane' (OPo p. 99), from 1902, 'Sur les prophéties' (OPo p. 186), from 1914, and 'Toujours' (OPo p. 237) from 1915, in which the poet 'prend au sérieux les fantômes', all give countenance to popular superstition. In 'Sur les prophéties' he may insist that

Il n'y a pas d'esprit religieux dans tout cela

out to overcome the scepticism of André Billy, to whom the poem is addressed. (58) But such beliefs are symptoms of a non-materialistic view of existence which enlarges the universe beyond that which is finite and tangible.

The American Mormons also interested Apollinaire because of their place on the fringe of Christianity, their unorthodox faith, their polygamous marriage. His last novel, La Femme assise, is full of documentary detail on their customs and beliefs, the fruit of the wide research he undertook to create this patchwork of fact and fiction. At the same

(58) For a useful picture of a Catholic education in France in the eighteenthies, see André BILLY, L'Approbaniste (Paris, Flammarion, 1937). The novel is partly autobiographical, set in a Jesuit college near Amiens. But the central character, Guillaume, is, like Guillaume Apollinaire, a member of the Congregation of the Virgin Mary, writes poetry, and eventually has to leave the college because of his impious behaviour. He becomes a writer in Paris...

time, towards the end of his life, Apollinaire also wrote often about the African and South Sea figures which had already featured in 'Zone'. He emphasises the religious significance of these fetishes, pointing out in April 1917 that European artists had been influenced by these objects, but only from a plastic point of view 'en faisant abstraction du caractère surnaturel qui leur était attribué par les artistes qui les sculptèrent et les croyants qui leur rendaient hommage'. (59) In July 1918 he writes an article entitled 'Sculptures d'Afrique et d'Océanie'. From his understanding of these sculptures he now draws conclusions on the meaning of all art: 'Ces fétiches qui n'ont pas été sans influences sur les arts modernes ressortissent tous à la passion religieuse qui est la source d'art la plus pure'. (60) Once more Pablo Picasso was probably more in sympathy with Apollinaire on this than other modern artists. Discussing these sculptures with André Malraux he says, many years later:

Leurs formes n'ont pas eu plus d'influence sur moi que sur Matisse. Ou sur Derain. Mais pour eux, les masques étaient des sculptures comme les autres. [.]

Les masques, ils n'étaient pas des sculptures comme les autres. Pas du tout. Ils étaient des choses magiques. (61)

In 1918 Apollinaire wrote a letter in verse to Jean Cocteau in which he explains the significance of his 'dieux nègres':

et leur cantates
Muettes s'élèvent en chœur
Je les entends j'ai fine oreille
Ce chœur des dieux touche mon cœur
Je veux les transcrire à merveille (OPo p. 834)

As the painters took inspiration from these sculptures, so Apollinaire hoped to use them for his poetry. As the Symbolists wrote poetry to

(59) OC II, p. 494.

(60) OC IV, p. 454.

(61) André MALRAUX, 'La Corde et les souris', Le Miroir des limbes, Paris, Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', 1976, pp. 740-41.

'prendre à la musique son bien', so Apollinaire hoped to transcribe the music of these primitive gods. It is still a religious harmony, but once more it is a sound which offers an alternative to the hymns he learned as a child.

This then is the background against which Apollinaire wrote much of his poetry, from the gestatory days of L'Enchanteur pourrissant, whose language of revolt and parody of the Bible is an attempt to break out of the constraints of his upbringing, to the more reasoning maturity of his last works. Like L'Enchanteur pourrissant, 'Le Larron', 'L'Ermite' and 'Merlin et la vieille femme' are early works which by their oblique syntax and use of rare vocabulary can be related to Symbolism. They also illustrate a rejection of Christianity and a search for alternatives.

'Le Larron' (OPo p. 91) was first published in La Plume in August 1903 and was Apollinaire's second poem in that review, a sequel to the anarchistic 'Avenir' (OPo p. 560) from May of the same year. Having posited the destruction of the social order with a revolutionary purge, Apollinaire now gives his readers an attack on the Church, pillar of that society. The fact that Apollinaire first recited this poem in the cellar club used by La Plume for its literary evenings, renowned since the eighteen-nineties for their anti-bourgeois atmosphere, completes the context in which the poem should be read. (62) The central character of 'Le Larron', The Thief, can be identified as Jesus Christ since Scott

(62) See André SALMON, Souvenirs sans fin, I, p. 54.

Bates has pointed out that King Agbar Uchama, King of Edessa in Babylon, invited Jesus to visit him and save him from a fatal illness. (63) This explains the line :

Que n'alla-t-il vivre à la cour du roi d'Edesse

And this line also enables us to date the poem as being from after 1902, not from before the stay in Germany as the Oeuvres poétiques notes suggest (OP p. 1057), for Marc Poupon has shown that an entry in one of Apollinaire's notebooks referring to Christ and King Agbar could not have been written before 1902. (64) A link with Edouard Schuré's Christ is provided by Austin Caxton who shows that the poem is set among the orchards of Avalon. (65) Schuré in Les Grands Initiés claims that as a young man Christ wandered around the Phoenician coast, which is where the legendary Avalon is situated. (66)

In the poem the Thief intrudes upon a community of men and women who live in unashamed enjoyment of the fruits of the earth in a convivial mixture of pagan sects which, as Marc Poupon has shown, includes Orphism, expanded to incorporate Pythagorism and the cult of Dionysus ; Nestorians, heretics from the early days of Christianity who believed that Christ was a man blessed with the word of God ; and other heretics who claim that the Trinity consists of Father, Mother and Son. For them, the Thief's orthodox Christianity is a sign of his rejection of warm and natural sexuality :

Soit ! la triade est mâle et tu es vierge et froid (67)

Claudine Gothot-Mersch in her article on 'Le Larron' has suggested that the coexistence in the poem of various ancient cults implies 'qu'il s'agit

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- (63) Scott BATES, 'The Identity of Apollinaire's "Larron" ', The French Review, XL, 1, October 1966, pp. 56-64.
(64) Marc POUPON, 'Sources allemandes d'Apollinaire', GA 14, (1978), pp. 7-49, (pp. 43-44).
(65) Austin CAXTON, 'Apollinaire et l'avalon des avalés', Les Lettres Nouvelles, September-October 1969, pp. 131-145.
(66) Austin CAXTON, op. cit., p. 137.
(67) Marc POUPON, "'Le Larron'", essai d'exégèse, GA 6, (1967), pp. 35-51.

d'une sorte de synthèse de la mythologie et des doctrines ésotériques de l'Antiquité'. (68) From the meeting of a virginal Christ with the allied forces of pagans and heretics Apollinaire makes a verse play with a Chorus to comment on the action, as in Classical drama. This is both a morality play, telling the story of Christ's coming into the world, and a drama created according to those conditions described by Nietzsche in L'Origine de la tragédie, ou Hellénisme et pessimisme, first published in German in 1872. (69) Nietzsche's book, which made his reputation, showed that theatre itself was invented in antiquity by the Greeks as a religious ceremony in honour of Dionysus and Orpheus. That Apollinaire was aware of the origins of tragedy in pagan rituals is indicated by an undated letter to Louis de Gonzague Frick, published in 1975, which ends with the words: 'Couronnez le bouc et que la comédie renaisse dût-elle être lubrique'. The ram was a symbol of virility and this, as Marcel Lobet says, in his comments on the letter, is an allusion 'aux origines de la tragédie, au culte de Bacchus ou à l'exaltation du pouvoir gésésique - comme le fait supposer la suite de la phrase'. (70) The drama of 'Le Larron', acted out to a background of singing, music and men with theatrical masks, is placed in the same context.

This community of European religions has received other visitors in the past, a procession led by Moses,

Un homme bègue ayant au front deux jets de flammes

But the visit of this representative of Christianity provokes a reaction of hard irony and rejection, the assertion that 'aucun de nous ne croirait tes récits'. There are three verses of quieter reflection on the young man's foolishness, for he could have been an artist like Orpheus, a

(68) Claudine GOTHOT-MERSCH, 'Apollinaire et le symbolisme : "Le Larron"', Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France, July-September 1967, pp. 590-600.

(69) First French edition : Frédéric NIETZSCHE, L'Origine de la tragédie, ou Hellénisme et pessimisme, translated by J. Marnold and J. Morland, Paris, Mercure de France, 1901.

(70) Marcel LOBET, 'L'Amitié d'Apollinaire et de Louis de Gonzague Frick', Que vlo-ve?, 5, January 1975, pp. 5-24, (pp.20 and 23 note 13).

scientist, magician or lover and then, finally, the repeated decree of banishment, thrown at the Thief's back to terminate the poem. Happiness, art and science seem to be the exclusive domain of the non-Christian peoples and the Thief is perceived as their enemy, come to steal their pleasure and innocence. He is the Christ of section 9 of Rimbaud's 'Les Premières communions' :

Christ! ô Christ, éternel voleur d'énergies

But the poem is not just an allegory of Christian influence in the world, for Apollinaire has invested his own person in 'Le Larron'. The Thief is Apollinaire's Christian self, an aspect of the young man who sees himself as an outsider. If in L'Enchanteur pourrissant Apollinaire identifies with Merlin, baptised son of the devil, here the Thief is Apollinaire who, like Christ, was born of a woman but had no father. The action of the poem is therefore the dramatisation of interior debate, between the poet and his conscience, in a technique which is a forerunner of the split self which would feature in 'Zone'. All the elements in this drama can be seen as aspects of Apollinaire's personality. For the Catholic this dialogue with his conscience is associated with the sacrament of Confession. So in 'Zone' the poet's past will be presented as a picture to be contemplated in a room as dark as the confessional box. In 'Le Larron' it is no coincidence that the Thief's first words are 'Je confesse'. The succulent fruit which Apollinaire evokes represent the temptations of the flesh and they are obviously sexual images :

Les oiseaux de leur bec ont blessé vos grenades
Et presque toutes les figues étaient fendues

Figs such as these are forbidden, défendues, to the young Catholic for they are coated with the taste of sin and in a poem which is full of puns the Thief leaves his knife and oars 'au pied de ce pêcher'.

Caught between the pull of his conscience, schooled by Catholicism, and the pull of his instinct, towards pleasure, the Thief himself says relatively little in the poem. There is his first rather petulant self-defence ; his reply to the taunt of illegitimacy ; his mouthwatering description of the fruits ; and then, later, his avowal of Christianity, reported to us by 'L'Acteur'. We imagine him wide-eyed before the frescoes depicting illicit love, dumbfounded by the ceremony continuing around him, by the ritual pardons and the seductive compliments of the women, by the pagan liberty which knows no shame,

Parce qu'il est bien d'être obscènes quand on s'aime

This line was in the original version of the poem in La Plume (71) and if the Thief hesitated before temptation it is this final outrageous remark which spurs him to shake it off with his sudden cry of 'Je suis chrétien'. Perhaps these words are an echo from Apollinaire's schooldays, from a hymn in the Catéchisme du Diocèse de Monaco, 'Résolution de servir Dieu', which he may well have sung. (72) The hymn's chorus is :

Je suis chrétien ! voilà ma gloire,
Mon espérance et mon soutien,
Mon chant d'amour et de victoire ;
Je suis chrétien !

Other verses run as follows :

Je suis chrétien ! à mon baptême
L'eau sainte a coulé sur mon front ;
La grâce en ce moment suprême,
De mon âme a lavé l'affront.

Je suis chrétien ! etc.

Je suis chrétien ! j'ai pour bannière
La croix de mon divin sauveur ;
Mes ennemis me font la guerre,
Mais je ris de leur fureur.

Je suis chrétien ! etc.

(71) DA, p. 150.

(72) Catéchisme du Diocèse de Monaco, Monaco, 1891, pp. 169-170.

Je suis chrétien! sur cette terre,
Je passe comme un voyageur.
Ici-bàs tout n'est que misère,
Rien ne saurait remplir mon coeur,
Je suis chrétien! etc.

Apollinaire would not forget 'le chant bleu des cantiques' as he says in 'L'Amoureuse' (OPO p. 848) in 1909. Whether or not Apollinaire recalled 'Résolution de servir Dieu' when writing 'Le Larron', it is the attitude of denial of worldly pleasures epitomised by this hymn which makes Apollinaire feel himself to be like a thief, a stranger on the earth, banished into the windy night 'comme un voyageur', with a cross as his only emblem :

Tu n'as de signe que le signe de la croix

In 'Le Larron' the tug of sexuality is presented as temptation into sin, a betrayal of cleansing baptism, and this troubled sense of shame spreads through much of Alcools. In 'La Tzigane' (OPO p. 99) the lovers admit :

On sait très bien que l'on se damne

Their love leads to Hell. It maybe that the purification ceremony of baptism instils a sense of shame, and certainly for Apollinaire, as for Rimbaud, it is a brand of slavery. In his 1908 preface to an exhibition of work by Georges Braque Apollinaire writes that 'on devient chrétien par le baptême, sans qu'il faille pour cela le consentement du baptisé'. (73) Catholicism is seen here as an unwanted imposition placed on the child by misguided parents. If this is Apollinaire's suggestion, then he is with Rimbaud who, in 'Nuit de l'enfer' in Une Saison en enfer, writes :

Je me crois en enfer, donc j'y suis. C'est l'exécution du catéchisme. Je suis esclave de mon baptême. Parents vous avez fait mon malheur et vous avez fait le vôtre. Pauvre innocent! - L'enfer ne peut attaquer les patens.

Rimbaud emphasises that the suffering caused by Catholicism is primarily psychological : 'Je me crois en enfer, donc j'y suis'. Apollinaire agrees

(73) OC VI, p. 96.

and holds that love, unashamed sexuality, can break the curse. That is why in L'Enchanteur pourrissant he promises that 'Nous nous aimerons à en perdre le baptême'. (74) Perhaps it is only with Lou in 1914 that he achieves full liberation from a sense of guilt in love. A poem such as 'Parce que tu m'as parlé de vice...' (OPo p. 396) sent to Lou in February 1915, in which he insists that lovers must do as they will, matches the attitude of healthy obscenity of the pagans in 'Le Larron' :

Le vice en tout cela n'est qu'une illusion
Qui ne trompe jamais que les âmes vulgaires

But at the time of writing 'Le Larron' Apollinaire still feels himself to be an outsider, like Croniamantal who is barred from the feast in 'Le Poète assassiné' and who complains : 'Tout cela m'est cher au plus haut degré, pourquoi, pourquoi, hélas, n'en puis-je profiter ?' (OPr p. 289). The feeling that there is something coming between him and love, to make him the eternal 'mal-aimé', is a veritable complex in Alcools. D.C. Potts in his 1972 article on 'Les Colchiques' (OPo p. 60) has shown an interesting biblical source for the poem in Leviticus chapter XVIII, verses 7 and 10, where we read :

Tu ne découvriras point la nudité de ton père, ni la nudité de ta mère. C'est ta mère, tu ne découvriras point sa nudité.

Tu ne découvriras point la nudité de la fille de ton fils ou de la fille de ta fille. C'est ta nudité. (75)

This explains the lines :

Ils cueillent les colchiques qui sont comme des mères
Filles de leurs filles et sont couleur de tes paupières

These lines are revealed as a reference to shameful desire and impossible love. In order to strengthen the link between the flowers, sex and nudity Mr Potts could also have quoted the poem which begins :

(74) EP, p. 128.

(75) D. C. POTTS, 'The Interpretation of Apollinaire's "Les Colchiques"', French Studies, XXVI, 4, October 1972, pp. 430-33.

La nudité des fleurs c'est leur odeur charnelle
Qui palpite et s'émeut comme un sexe femelle (OPo p. 674)

In 'Les Colchiques' the eyes compared to the flowers are of course those of Annie Playden and religion was one of the barriers between Apollinaire and the English girl, for he had been brought up as a Roman Catholic and she as a strict High Anglican. Annie emigrated to America and in the poem 'Annie!' (OPo p. 65) Apollinaire imagines her in Texas and comments on this separation caused by their differing brands of Christianity in lines which express his regret at the mixture of closeness and distance which always marked their relationship :

Comme cette femme est mennonite
Ses rosiers et ses vêtements n'ont pas de boutons
Il en manque deux à mon veston
La dame et moi suivons presque le même rite

This sad ending to his affair with Annie may only have reinforced a lesson on the incompatibility of Christ and Eros learned at an earlier age. It has never been explained why Apollinaire's studies at the Collège Stanislas in Cannes were interrupted in February 1897 so that the sixteen year-old moved to the lycée in Nice to prepare for his baccalauréat, a diploma he was never awarded. In the story 'Histoire d'une famille vertueuse, d'une hotte et d'un calcul' (Opr p. 181) first published in 1905, we find the story of a young man who is expelled from a college run by the Premonstrant Fathers because he was caught reading erotic literature. Michel Décaudin asks whether Apollinaire is not telling his own story here (Opr p. 1143), an idea which is supported by a text found in the papers of Alberto Savinio, a letter in which a fifth-year pupil tells the same story in schoolboy slang (OPr p. 1143). If Apollinaire was expelled from school in this way, and such a misadventure would not have been out of character, then this would be another explanation of the major themes of 'Le Larron'. When it came to publishing 'Le Larron' in Alcools, Apollinaire chose to place it directly after 'Saltimbanques', as if by this architecture of contrasts he wished to emphasise the freedom of those unbaptised travellers who claim the gifts

of nature as a right, for whom

Chaque arbre fruitier se résigne

and the unhappy exile of the Christian.

'L'Ermite' (OPo p. 100) is a satire on hopeless attempts to achieve visionary status through Christian saintliness, written in a style which mixes burlesque vulgarity and Symbolist obscurity. As with the lubricious monks in Apollinaire's stories, this hermit's sensuality leaves little scope for holiness. His first words curse the Christian martyrs and his increasing sexual frustration is a parody of Christ's Passion. He longs to sweat blood but achieves only a nose-bleed, like the child in Rimbaud's 'Les Premières communions', and like her he finds the naked torment of Christ at the centre of his erotic fantasies :

Seigneur le Christ est nu jetez jetez sur lui
La robe sans couture éteignez les ardeurs

Even the 'saints aémères', those left out of the calendar, refuse to be his allies and wryly he notes that the angel, who in sentimental prayerbook illustrations appears and blesses the hermit, does not appear either :

J'ai ri du vieil ange qui n'est point venu
De vol très lent me tendre un beau calice

This is a satire on the banal and clichéd images which the Church offers in the place of true vision and which provoke in Apollinaire the same disappointment and boredom which Rimbaud describes in part 4 of 'Les Premières communions' :

Les mystiques élans se cassent quelquefois...
Et vient la pauvreté des images, que cuivre
L'ennui, l'enluminure atroce et les vieux bois.

Instead of becoming a voyant the hermit will end as a voyeur, too weary after the tension of his fantasies to do other than look on in the midst of lascivious women and all nature panting with desire. His drooping solitude reflects that of 'Le Larron'.

The hermit's desire for purity, seen as a prerequisite of transcendence, is genuine :

Trop de tentations malgré moi me caressent

Apollinaire identifies with the hermit in that despite his more natural tendency to covet the pagan liberty which we have seen in 'Le Larron', he also feels at times that he must aim for the ascetic chastity of the single-minded initiate. So in the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript of the early poem 'L'Automne et l'écho' (OPo p. 588), the last verse reads :

Ma vie est recueillie en ma saison factice
Et je feins d'écouter la chute des fruits mûrs
Et malgré mon vœu d'être chaste et sans complice
Moi, je refoule en vain de vieux sanglots impurs. (76)

Here Apollinaire makes it clear that sexual desire can be as importunate for the poet as for the hermit during his vigil. This unhappy situation is further complicated by the poet's fear of sexual impotence, which is the hermit's final state. According to Michel Décaudin 'le mythe fondamental de L'Enchanteur est la peur de l'impuissance', (77) the same anxiety which Jean Burgos discerns behind the Monster Chapalu's words, 'Je ne serai jamais prolifique' and 'Je resterai neutre', and in Merlin's 'Je suis mort et froid. Je n'ai pu la rendre enceinte'. (78) To counter all this there is at one point in 'L'Ermite' a burst of pride, a recognition of the

(76) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 33.

(77) GA II, (1972), p. 37.

(78) EP, pp. 86 et 87 note a.

glory and power of sexuality which may itself be a route to divinity, as in the sacred orgies of Dionysus :

Malgré les autans bleus je me dresse divin
Comme un rayon de lune adoré par la mer

But more often in this poem the senses are seen as the enemies of mystic initiation.

This particular conflict is not limited to 'L'Ermite'. In 'Les Fiançailles' (OPo p. 128) in 1908 the poet aims for immortality and powers of prophecy :

Je voudrais éprouver une ardeur infinie

He asks :

Comment comment réduire
L'infiniment petite science
Que m'imposent mes sens

By this he means that he longs to reduce the influence of his senses which, he feels, are imposing narrowed experience on his soul. Here again he continues a tradition, manifest in the need for priestly celibacy, the denial of the senses, which goes beyond Christianity. Edouard Schuré in the section of Les Grands Initiés concerned with Hermes Trismegistus and Ancient Egypt tells how a disciple of Isis has to pass through a series of tests before his initiation is complete. The last and most difficult trial tests mastery of the senses. He who succumbs is unworthy, will not pass on to the tabernacle of truth. Tempted by a woman this novice cannot resist and is told :

- Tu as été vainqueur dans les premières épreuves.
Tu as triomphé de la mort, du feu et de l'eau ; mais tu
n'as pas su te vaincre toi-même. Toi qui aspiras aux
hauteurs de l'esprit et de la connaissance, tu as succombé
à la première tentation des sens et tu es tombé dans l'abîme
de la matière. Qui vit esclave des sens, vit dans les ténè-
bres. Tu as préféré les ténèbres à la lumière ; reste donc
dans les ténèbres. (79)

'Lul de Faltenin' (OPO p. 97) can be read as an allegory of failed aspirations, this fall from grace 'dans l'abîme de la matière'. In the first verse the poet-initiate fights a battle with himself which may be compared to the interior debate dramatised in 'Le Larron' :

Et j'écoutais ces choeurs rivaux

Unable to resist, he slips down into the sirens's nest, a slippery underwater cave the identity of which is clarified by reference to the poet's description of the heart of his desires in 'Le Deuxième poème secret' (OPO p. 622), sent to Madeleine in October 1915 :

O jardin sous-marin d'algues de coraux et d'oursins et des
[désirs arborescents

In 'Lul de Faltenin' the sirens' eyes, 'étoiles bestiales', lead him down far from the true light of high endeavour represented by the moving constellations in the night sky,

Dans le nid des sirènes loin
Du troupeau d'étoiles oblongues

He has failed to emulate the master poets of 'Les Sapins' who were destined

A briller plus que des planètes

His failure matches that of the hermit who complains :

Trop d'étoiles s'enfuient quand je dis mes prières

We find a counterpart to the short burst of confidence which we have already isolated in 'L'Ermite' in the central verse of 'Lul de Faltenin' which contains a moment, three lines, of revolt and self-affirmation as the poet lifts his head for the last time before sinking into shame :

Qu'importe ma sagesse égale
Celle des constellations
Car c'est moi seul nuit qui t'étoile

This creative potential is smothered however as the poet slips into a sensual mire, away from the rising path to knowledge and power. And he is doubly cheated, for if the eyes and form of the sirens fill him with

irresistible desire, this is immediately defused by anxiety and fear. Sexual impotence becomes a metaphor for poetic failure. The female sex becomes a voracious mouth, 'une grotte avide', and a bloody wound :

Les otelles nous ensanglantent

To slide into this cave means death by drowning.

The character 'Lul de Faltenin' first appears as the third of the seven swords in the Mercure de France version of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé'. (80) The sword is set among images of androgeny, personified by 'l'antipapesse', the medieval 'Papessse Jeanne', also mentioned in 'L'Ermite', a woman in man's clothing; an image of castration, in the shape of the phallus carried on a cloth ; and of shrunken masculinity, the dwarf, an image of self-denigration which haunts Apollinaire through to the first chapter of 'Le Poète assassiné' in which he writes : 'partes viriles exiguitatis insignis, sicut pueri' (OPr p. 227). Also the 'chibriape' or phallus is 'bleu féminin', colour of the Virgin Mary, the woman without sexuality. 'Lul de Faltenin', therefore, tells of a man who fails as a magician and poet but fails also to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh because, traumatised by sexual taboos, his passion is turned unhealthily in on itself. Three lines in the poem, written with the incoherence and broken syntax of a breathless, drowning man show, as Marc Poupon has suggested, that he is left completely alone, extinguished like the sun, the sirens having left their caves to fly upwards :

Vos yeux Les degrés sont glissants
Au loin que vous devenez naines
N'attirez plus aucun passant (81)

Both 'L'Ermite' and 'Lul de Faltenin' therefore present us with an image of the poet immobilised between two poles, the attraction of Dionysus, a revolt against the self-denial of Catholicism, and the traditional chastity of the novice who strives for initiation into secret knowledge.

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(80) DA, p. 96.

(81) Marc POUPON, 'Sources allemandes d'Apollinaire', GA 14, (1978), pp. 7-49, (p. 20).

'Merlin et la vieille femme' (OPO p. 88) is the third of the early poems in Alcools which remind us of Jarry's advice to the Symbolists : 'Suggérer au lieu de dire, faire dans la route des phrases un carrefour de tous les mots'. (82) But this text differs from 'Le Larron' and 'L'Er-mite' in that it is a poem of confident self-affirmation in which love-making is an explicit allegory for poetic creation and immortality is the prize. Fears of impotence seem to dissolve. The poem is set on a wind-swept plain, at a cross-roads from which Merlin, like a god, can watch all life and observe the cyclical rhythm of existence,

l'éternelle cause
Qui fait mourir et renaître l'univers

The meeting of Merlin with his 'Mémoire', the knowledge of past generations making up the collective Memory of humanity, brings a communion, a form of love-making which, in accordance with ascetic tradition, is chaste and spiritual :

L'entrelacs de leurs doigts fut leur seul laps d'amour

It is a love which rises, light and clear :

Et leurs mains s'élevaient comme un vol de colombes

The result will be a son, 'fils de la Mémoire', who will be as immortal as great art, the work of the poet-magician, 'mon ouvrage immortel'. Thus Merlin's own immortality is ensured and he can die peacefully :

Je m'éterniserai sous l'aubépine en fleurs

Again this is a poem of parody and rebellion. Merlin's lover arrives on a donkey, an imitation of Jesus Christ as he entered Jerusalem, draped in green, colour of the priest's vestments on most days of the year, and this even though she personifies a 'Great Tradition' which denies the teaching of the Church. Merlin says of his son :

Le front nimbé de feu sur le chemin de Rome
Il marchera tout seul en regardant le ciel

(82) Alfred JARRY, 'Linteau', Les Minutes de sable mémorial, first published 1894, Oeuvres complètes, I, Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', 1972, p. 171.

Marie-Jeanne Durry and Jean Burgos take these lines to mean that Merlin wishes his son to go to Rome on the straight and narrow path which he has not taken himself. (83) We know that in L'Enchanteur pourrissant Merlin tells the Wandering Jew that he has been to Jerusalem, 'mais par d'autres chemins que le chemin de la croix, et j'ai été à Rome par d'autres chemins que tous ceux qui y mènent'. (84) Here he is insisting that his road is unorthodox, labelled as heresy by the Vatican. Already in Edgar Quinet's Merlin l'Enchanteur Merlin goes to Rome and is condemned to death as a sorcerer. (85) There is no reason why he should not wish his son to be his apprentice. Merlin's work is the continuation of the tradition which might have died without him, for ancient Memory tells him :

Depuis cent ans j'espérais ton appel

The renewal of this tradition through their fruitful meeting is a threat to the Vatican, the continuation of a powerful current of opposition. And so Merlin's son on the road to Rome is advancing on an enemy. This implicit threat is realised at the end of Alcools, in 'Vendémiaire' (OPo p. 149), where the pope's crown is trampled by the leaders of the Greek Orthodox Church, the triumph of the schism which cracks the edifice of the Church.

But 'Vendémiaire' must wait, and the next stop on our road to Rome must be a reading of the poetry of 1908.

(83) Marie-Jeanne DURRY, Alcools, I, p. 222. EP, p. 147, note e.

(84) EP, p. 146.

(85) See EP, p. 147, note e.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION (ii). 1908 - 1912.

In September 1906 Apollinaire told the Revue littéraire de Paris et de Champagne, replying to that paper's survey of literary attitudes: 'Je ne possède point de "composition significative" et je le regrette'. (1) In November 1907 La Phalange published 'Lul de Faltenin', a successful poem built around a nadir of despair. 1908 was Apollinaire's year of renewal, the year of 'Onirocritique' (OPO p. 371) and 'Pipe' (OPO p. 572), published in La Phalange in February and March, and of 'Le Brasier' (OPO p. 108) and 'Les Fiançailles' (OPO p. 128), published elsewhere in May and November respectively. The failed ambition of 'Lul de Faltenin' was reborn in 1908 with new determination and a new language, creating poems which Jean Burgos has called 'le terme extrême des audaces du poète'. (2) In the September 1906 'Réponse à une enquête' Apollinaire also told the Revue littéraire de Paris et de Champagne that he envisaged an art which would be 'aussi éloigné que possible de la nature avec laquelle il ne doit avoir rien de commun. C'est, je crois, l'art de Racine, de Baudelaire, de Rimbaud'. He reaches further back in May 1908, writing to his friend Toussaint Luca: 'Je ne cherche qu'un lyrisme neuf et humaniste en même temps. Mes maîtres sont loin dans le passé, ils vont des auteurs du cycle breton à Villon'. (3) Renewal meets tradition and the liberty of

(1) OC III, p. 780.

(2) EP, p. civ.

(3) OC IV, p. 697.

the imagination encounters the order of classicism. Looking for antecedents, Apollinaire in 1908 creates poetry which in fact is a logical continuation of his own early aspirations. Just as 'Onirocritique' gloriously followed a period of silence and despair, so it was to be placed at the end of D.H. Kahnweiler's edition of L'Enchanteur pourrissant as a positive reply to the pessimism of the original text. And the other 1908 poems by their Promethean aspirations enact the advice Merlin gives to the forest animals gathered in a parody of human society :

Bêtes en folie, allez loin du Béhémoth sans origine et, je vous le dis, faites du feu, cherchez du feu, trouvez du vrai feu, et puis, si par bonheur vous en avez pu dérober, brûlez les cadavres. (4)

In 'Les Fiançailles' and 'Le Brasier' Apollinaire seeks and finds this fire and the latter poem begins as the poet incinerates his past,

Ce Passé ces têtes de morts

Jean Royère's La Phalange first appeared in July 1906 and was the voice of neo-Symbolism. His Soeur de Narcisse nue, poetry of serene obscurity and delicate intuition, was published in 1907 and it was Apollinaire's meeting with Royère in that year which prompted him to write for a review which still esteemed Mallarmé above all other poets. Apollinaire's Phalange article on Jean Royère's poetry in January 1908 defines his admiration for the neo-Symbolist in terms which emphasise the spiritual resonances of the poet's work. (5) His vocabulary is religious :

Voici que tout est miraculeux. Cette langue est claire comme les flammes de la Pentecôte et ces poèmes sont plus beaux à cause de leur obscurité.

A renewed sense of wonder and faith in the power of language to take the human spirit beyond the limits of matter characterises Apollinaire's attitude. He emphasises the poet's autonomy, his power to build his own creations

(4) EP, p. 110.

(5) OC III, pp. 780-783.

from scratch, with no necessary reference to existing surroundings :

Nous n'avons pas besoin de vérités ; la nature et la science en ont assez qui nous portent malheur. La poésie de Jean Royère est aussi fausse que doit l'être une nouvelle création au regard de l'ancienne. Quelle fausseté enchanteresse ! [..] Mais, triomphe de la fausseté, de l'erreur, de l'imagination, Dieu et le poète créent à l'envi.

God and the poet stand on equal footing. The praise of falsity is another link with L'Enchanteur pourrissant, a false Bible in which the writer is free to use Scripture, legends and history in anyway he wishes. The poet asserts his divinity by the authenticity he gives to his creations. Apollinaire's 1908 poems are as obscure as any he wrote, but they have a new inventive and supple confidence. The fragmentation, variety and irregularities of the texts confer a new authenticity, for they correspond closely to the subconscious reality of the unchained imagination. Stretching the powers of language the poet conquers gravity and annexes new space beyond the three dimensions of nature, moving as freely as a bird in the air. This is the freedom of the subconscious, in which linear time does not exist, and from this conquest of time is born Apollinaire's hope of prophecy.

There is a consistency and a coherence in all the activities which Apollinaire undertook during 1908. In April he gave one of the three lectures on poetry which were announced as L'Après-midi des poètes, in memory of Mallarmé's poem, at the Salon des artistes indépendants. They were organised by Paterné Berrichon, Rimbaud's brother-in-law and biographer. Apollinaire's lecture, 'La Phalange nouvelle', a title which reflects his alliance with Jean Royère, emphasised the importance of Symbolism to contemporary poets. (6) All three lectures in the series were published the same year under the title La Poésie symboliste. (7) Another important paper from that time

(6) OC III, pp. 757-768 (see p. 759).

(7) G. APOLLINAIRE, P.-N. ROINARD, V.-E. MICHELET, La Poésie symboliste, Paris, L'Édition, 1908. Paul-Napoléon Roinard, to whom 'Le Brasier' is dedicated, gave the first lecture, 'Nos maîtres et nos morts', presenting the first Symbolist period as one of revolt against contemporary poetry and society. He gave the formation of the Société des artistes indépendants, 'sans jury ni récompenses', and the growth of anarchism as two symptoms of this drive for liberty.

is 'Les Trois vertus plastiques' which was originally written as a preface to the catalogue of the third exhibition of the 'Cercle de l'art moderne' in Le Havre in June 1908, later used to open his Méditations esthétiques. The exhibition included Fauvist paintings (8) but Apollinaire goes further than the painters in his attitude to reality, suggesting an art which tends towards abstraction, opposing 'la vérité' and 'l'éternité' to 'la réalité' and 'la nature'. His imagery is that of Symbolism :

La racine, la tige et la fleur de lys montrent la progression de la pureté jusqu'à sa floraison symbolique. [...]

Avant tout, les artistes sont des hommes qui veulent devenir inhumains.

Ils cherchent péniblement les traces de l'inhumanité, traces que l'on ne rencontre nulle part dans la nature.

The most memorable words in this preface express his own ambivalent attitude to the past as well as prefiguring the limits of his own commitment to a style of poetry concerned with metaphysical speculation :

On ne peut pas transporter partout avec soi le cadavre de son père. On l'abandonne en compagnie des autres morts. [...]

Mais nos pieds ne se détachent qu'en vain du sol qui contient les morts. (9)

After a while, Apollinaire needs to feel his feet back on the ground, to make poetry from the reality we all share. He sees such a return to earth as inevitable.

But in a book review in La Phalange in August 1908 the very existence of objective reality is questioned when Apollinaire suggests that each day perhaps some infinite force 'anéantit le souvenir et la vérité même de ce qui existait la veille' to create a 'nouvelle réalité'. The poet must realise this possibility in his poetry :

(8) See OC IV, p. 927.

(9) OC IV, pp. 92-95.

Tel est l'ouvrage poétique : la fausseté d'une réalité
anéantie. Et le souvenir même a disparu.

He defines the poet in terms which recall lines from 'Les Fiançailles' :

Le poète est analogue à la divinité. Il sait que dans sa
création la vérité est indéfectible. Il admire son ouvrage. (10)

Here Apollinaire expresses more clearly than anywhere else his lack of confidence in the appearances of the world, his readiness to be surprised by the unexpected and his faith in the liberty conferred on the artist by the unreliability of objective observation. It is a lucid exposition of the principle which Michel Décaudin points to as 'l'unité profonde' of the disparate stories in L'Hérésiarque et Cie and which also underpins L'Enchanteur pourrissant : 'le jeu du vrai et du faux, les réalités illusoires, les illusions décevantes' (OPr p. 1110). Usually Apollinaire's art hangs between 'la limite de la vie, aux confins de l'art' and the 'limite de l'art, aux confins de la vie', as he puts it in September 1907 in 'La Serviette des poètes' (OPr p. 191). Mr Décaudin defines this space as the 'point de rencontre de l'expérience et de l'imaginaire' (OPr p. 1144). In 1908 Apollinaire swings further than usual away from experience and into the imaginary, or away from reality and into the sphere of art. Gravity pulls him back at the end of 'Le Brasier' but in the last section of 'Les Fiançailles', at the end of the year 1908, he achieves the liberation for which he aims in his theoretical writing, swinging up far enough to move outside time, see the future and match the divinity of the seers who have gone before him.

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(10) OC III, p. 802.

Apollinaire's constant desire is vision beyond the scope of human eyes. And he always yearned to leave behind his shadow, an earth-bound sign of mortality, the length of his grave. The myth of Icarus is an allegory for such an adventure in the poem 'L'Ignorance' (OPo p. 344) from the beginning of the century. He uses the same spacious alexandrines and the same dramatic structure as in 'Le Larron'. Icarus tells his own story, the days of his apprenticeship essential for any initiate, learning the secrets held by the preceding generation, preparing his own soul and strengthening his resolve through meditation and ascetic living :

Mon père m'apprit les détours du labyrinthe
Et la science de la terre et puis mourut
Et depuis j'ai scruté longtemps la vieille crainte
Du ciel mobile et me suis nourri d'herbes crues.

We think of the first part of 'Cortège' (OPo p. 74) and of the last section of 'Les Fiançailles' when Icarus expresses the exaltation of his ascension :

Soleil, je viens caresser ta face splendide
Et veux fixer ta flamme unique, aveuglément,
Icare étant céleste et plus divin qu'Alcide
Et son bûcher sera ton éblouissement.

In 'Le Poète assassiné' when Croniamantal addresses the people of Marseilles he claims to have successfully lived through the adventure which brought the downfall of Icarus. And his words are an adaptation of a speech by the prophet Enoch in the 1901 novel La Gloire de l'olive (OPr p. 1278). Croniamantal cries :

Je suis Croniamantal, le plus grand des poètes vivants.
J'ai souvent vu Dieu face à face, J'ai supporté l'éclat divin
que mes yeux humains tempéraient, J'ai vécu l'éternité.
(OPr p. 298)

It is as if the doors of his perception have been opened, liberating him from the filters imposed by the physical senses which can only consider the ephemeral, material world, afflicting man with a form of blindness.

The beginning of 'Le Poète assassiné', where it is stated that one hundred and twenty-three towns claim to be the birthplace of Croniamantal (OPr p. 227), is an oblique reference to the archetypal blind poet and seer Homer, whose supposed places of birth are equally numerous. But Apollinaire has more recent visionary ancestors. Victor Hugo in Les Contemplations recommends a patient fixity of vision which, as Léon Cellier writes, will take the poet 'par-delà une apparence, par-delà un seuil'. For Hugo, as for Apollinaire, ordinary sight may block visionary potential: 'Il ne faut plus voir les choses pour voir Dieu; il faut que l'oeil du corps s'éteigne, pour que l'oeil de l'esprit s'allume'. (11) Apollinaire is also close to Rimbaud who believed that the power of the seer could be achieved by a rejection of the social norms and habits of perception which may narrow our field of vision, by a 'dérèglement de tous les sens'. 'La Lettre du voyant' was first published in La Nouvelle revue française in October 1912 and may have influenced 'sur les prophéties' in which Apollinaire insists that everybody could be a prophet if we only rejected the generally held belief that we are 'idiots de naissance'. Here Apollinaire steps away from the solitude which in 1908 he shared with Victor Hugo to find equal potential in all men. (12)

C. A. Hackett's 1965 article 'Rimbaud and Apollinaire' lists Apollinaire's direct mentions of Rimbaud, eight references, of which seven date from after the publication of 'La Lettre du voyant'. Professor Hackett suggests that Apollinaire may well have read Rimbaud while still at school and he also points to an unpublished manuscript by Louis Aragon, who knew Apollinaire at the end of his life, affirming in 1923 that 'Apollinaire parlait longuement de Rimbaud'. (13) Rimbaud's presence spans Apollinaire's whole career. On two occasions Apollinaire compares Claudel to Rimbaud, wri-

(11) Victor HUGO, Les Contemplations, Léon Cellier ed., Paris, Garnier, 1969, p. 476.

(12) For an interesting study of the differences between Rimbaud and the poet-seers who preceded him, see Marc Eigeldinger, 'La Voyance avant Rimbaud' in Lettres du voyant, Arthur Rimbaud, Gerald Schaeffer ed., Geneva, Droz, 1975.

(13) C. A. HACKETT, 'Rimbaud and Apollinaire', French Studies, XIX, 3, July 1965, pp. 266-277.

ting, 'Celui-ci était un Louis d'or dont celui-là est le billon'. (14)

P.-M. Adéma writes, 'on ne s'explique guère son attitude en ce qui concerne Claudel, dont il écrivait, en 1915, à Louis de Gonzague Frick :

"Je reconnais le grand talent de C., cher ami, mais comme un talent de faussaire...". (15) In fact for Apollinaire, Rimbaud was a true seer, whereas Paul Claudel, because of his Roman Catholicism, the Catholicism which he proclaimed and defended so strongly after his conversion on Christmas Day 1886, was not.

Of the 1908 period Max Jacob, who met Apollinaire in 1905, said : 'Nos opinions littéraires se résumaient dans ces mots si importants à l'époque : "A bas Laforgue! Vive Rimbaud!" '. (16) It was as if they were crying 'Vive la liberté !'. In 'Onirocritique' Apollinaire writes : 'Je me sentis libre, libre comme une fleur en sa saison'. He feels himself to be capable of rising to any heights if he could loosen the ties which bind him :

Liens déliés par une libre flamme

And he would achieve more than the soaring flight of Icarus, for ultimate freedom is envisaged as a form of simultaneity which conquers all the limitations of matter, a multiplication or dilation of the self so that the poet fills all space, matching the infinite ubiquity of God. The gigantic, multi-directional metamorphoses of 'Onirocritique', for example, represent an attempt to escape three-dimensional reality, as if the poet already envisages the 'fourth dimension' which he will define in Méditations esthétiques :

(14) TS, pp. 55 and 79.

(15) Pierre-Marcel ADEMA, Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 325.

(16) Robert GUIETTE, La Vie de Max Jacob, p. 72.

'l'immensité de l'espace s'éternisant dans toutes les directions à un moment déterminé. Elle est l'espace même, la dimension de l'infini'.
(17) A pattern of self-dilation typifies some of Apollinaire's greatest poems, going beyond 1908 in 'Vendémiaire', 'Zone', 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry'. Such poems often begin with the shape of a man, small, fixed in space and time. Then comes a movement of exaltation or liberation as ties are cut and the poem seems to swell symphonically. Simultaneity of one sort or another is achieved as the poet, moving perhaps in the dimension of dream, seems to fill all space and time and images shift and leap in free association. But then comes deflation, a return to solitude, to the armchair, to the quay, to the sad bedroom or the empty building. And we remember the bathos which ends 'Le Bateau ivre' and Une Saison en enfer.

In Apollinaire's poetry this pattern can be traced back to as early as 1898, to 'Mardi Gras' (OPo p. 708), a poem which opens with the 'ciel d'ennui' of a quiet sunset and closes with a pale reawakening at dawn. In between comes the explosion of the night, flames, canon, hallucinatory movement in all directions while

Le roi Carnaval flambe

The moon, swollen, enormous,

Semble la lampe merveilleuse
De quelque gigantesque Aladdin

The stars and the moon, not the sun, hang over the greatest of these moments of magic liberation, poems which usually begin and end in the city twilight :

Et meurt le bruit,
Et meurt la nuit,
Et point le jour, le jour pâle.

The night hours are privileged, just as

La nuit est temps propice à celui qui soupire
(OPo p. 413)

Or, as Max Ernst would have it,

Le vin et les poètes travaillent la nuit
Car les sirènes chantent
Quand la raison s'endort (18)

Michel Décaudin, considering Apollinaire's constant desire to conquer time and 's'installer dans l'éternité', is surprised that the poet seems 'insensible à l'aventure d'Orphée'. He concludes that Apollinaire 'n'est pas de ceux qui forcent le destin et traversant l'Achéron'. However tempted, 'Apollinaire reste presque toujours en deçà de la grande aventure cosmique ou chtonienne que pourtant il semble avoir entrevue'. (19) The example Mr Décaudin gives is that of 'Vendémiaire' and in the discussion following this 1970 paper on the myth of Orpheus in the works of Apollinaire and Cocteau he adds :

Sans doute, ce qui apparaît le plus fréquemment, dans les grands poèmes d'Apollinaire, c'est cette impression d'insatisfaction, que, finalement, nous définissons, comme vous venez de la faire, par une sorte d'avortement, ou quelquefois par un recul presque panique du poète. (20)

The impression we have is rather of a divine exaltation which is achieved but which cannot be sustained. The adventure runs its natural course, only to be repeated at the first opportunity. These privileged moments, when the poet tarries with eternity, parallel the movement of the planets rising and setting like the forces of Gauvain, the Solar Knight :

Or, le soleil se couchait et Gauvain au loin disparaissait avec lui. Gauvain et le soleil déclinait à cause de la rotondité de la terre, le chevalier devant l'astre et tous deux confondus, tant ils étaient lointains et de pareille destinée. (21)

(18) Max ERNST, 'Le Mariage du ciel de de la terre', Ecritures, p. 362.

(19) Michel DECAUDIN, 'Deux aspects du mythe orphique au vingtième siècle : Apollinaire et Cocteau', Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises, 22, May 1970, pp. 215-227.

(20) Ibid, 'Réponses aux questions, discussion', pp. 304-305.

(21) EP, p. 14.

An amusing prose piece, which can be compared to the visionary night of 'Vendémiaire', though it is less serious in tone, describes another of these epiphanies. It is an affectionately satirical note which Apollinaire added to Verlaine's 'Les Ingénus', one of the poems used by Paul-Napoléon Roinard to illustrate his 1908 lecture on Symbolism, 'Nos Maîtres et nos morts'. Apollinaire's note begins :

Une nuit au commencement de l'été, j'errais dans Paris.
Et quelle joie pieuse et lyrique me transporta ! je vis le ciel
s'entrouvrir.

Apollinaire has a vision of Verlaine in heaven, surrounded by choirs, enveloped in celestial light. Then the sky closes and it starts to rain. (22) He is not only satirising Verlaine, converted to Catholicism, but also his own poetic technique, his own dreams of divinity.

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This pseudo-vision also confirms George Schmits' suggestion that the influence of Dante's Divine Comedy can be traced in Apollinaire's work in 1908, particularly in 'Le Brasier'. (23) The pull against gravity is equally irresistible in 'Onirocritique'. In that text, when does the ascension begin ?

Un sacrificateur désira être immolé au lieu de la victime.
On lui ouvrit le ventre. J'y vis quatre I, quatre O, quatre D.
On nous servit de la viande fraîche et je grandis subitement
après en avoir mangé.

(22) OC III, p. 928.

(23) George SCHIMITS, 'Guillaume Apollinaire : "Le Brasier"', Etudes Classiques, XXXV, 1, January 1967, pp. 34-51 ; and 2, April 1967, pp. 145-174.

According to the Talmud, the sacred Jewish text, 'Iod' is the first letter of the name Jehova. Edouard Schuré defines 'Iod' as 'la divinité proprement dite, l'intellect créateur, l'Eternel Masculin qui est en tout, partout et au-dessus de tout'. (24) So Apollinaire himself, having seen God's name, takes on the qualities of Jehova himself, 'en tout, partout et au-dessus de tout'. Now he is 'L'Eternel Masculin' and he swells, powerful, creative. Furthermore, if we read 'Palais' (OPo p. 61) we see that the fresh meat he eats in 'Onirocritique' is also 'l'intellect créateur'. Margaret Davies finds 'Palais' 'not only difficult but rather repulsive'. (25) Indeed the meat served there is not fresh :

Puis les marmitons apportèrent les viandes
Des rôtis de pensées mortes dans mon cerveau
Mes beaux rêves mort-nés en tranches bien saignantes
Et mes souvenirs faisant des godiveaux
[...]
Langues de feu où sont-elles mes pentecôtes
Pour mes pensées de tous pays de tous les temps

1908 is Apollinaire's Pentecost and the thoughts, dreams and memories, all the creativity which was turning bad like old meat, caught for want of a language in the last days of the old Symbolism, in 'Palais', find their tongues of fire in 'Onirocritique', in the new Symbolism.

So the poet is multiplied: 'je me vis au centuple. La troupe que j'étais s'assit au bord de la mer'. He becomes enormous, a new Gulliver: 'Arrivé au bord du fleuve, je le pris à deux mains et le brandis'. And he conquers time, marked by passing seasons: 'Je me sentis libre, libre comme une fleur en sa saison. Le soleil n'est pas plus libre qu'un fruit mûr'. The old ambition of facing the sun as an equal has now been surpassed, for the sun must set as the fruit must fall, while the poet now feels that he is beyond such laws. Yet time is still passing, thirty-six

(24) Edouard SCHURE, Les Grands Initiés, p. 246; (see EP, p. 181, note g).

(25) Margaret DAVIES, review of Lecture de 'Palais' d'Apollinaire, L. Follet and M. Poupon, in French Studies, XXXI, 4, October 1977, p. 484.

hours in all. 'Onirocritique' begins with a low sky of hot coals, a spectacular sunset. After the wry song of the ploughed fields, set in Orkenise and based in part on 'La Clef', the sky turns white and morning comes : 'Vers le matin, des pirates emmenèrent neuf vaisseaux ancrés dans le port'. That day is marked by the adventure of God's name, when the poet grows in power. Evening falls : 'Vers le soir, les arbres s'envo- lèrent'. And then comes the final slow dawn : 'Un troupeau d'arbres brou- taient les étoiles invisibles et l'aurore donnait la main à la tempête. Dans les myrtaies, on subissait l'influence de l'ombre'. There are no shadows at night. Returning, lengthening, they mark the end of the dream, the return of mortality, and the poet sees red sails in the sunrise : 'Des ombres dissemblables assombrissaient de leur amour l'écarlate des voi- lures'. The dawn is red, ominous, as at the end of 'Zone', and the poet despairs : 'Je me désespérai'.

Jean Burgos for once seems mystified. For Mr Burgos 'Onirocri- tique' is 'la revanche du poète' after the allegory of betrayal which makes up the original text of L'Enchanteur pourrissant. (26) So, reaching the end of 'Onirocritique' he comments :

On comprend assez mal ce désespoir quand plusieurs fois déjà, dans ce qui précède, le poète a laissé entendre quelle revanche il prenait sur ce monde désormais très éloigné de lui et dans l'espace et dans le temps. (27)

In fact Apollinaire's despair must be seen as a recognition that his revenge, taken in the form of total and divine simultaneity, can only be partial for it is only temporary. The melancholy slope of the end of 'Onirocritique' matches the downward march of Viviane at the end of the original text of L'Enchan- teur pourrissant, back to the lake bottom. And it brings us back to the recurring pattern of deflation following exaltation. The poet's isolation is emphasised by the distance between himself and the shadows on the sails, images of love. Despair is understandable because, as in 'Le Bateau ivre', 'Les Aubes sont navrantes'.

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(26) EP, p. 215.

(27) EP, p. 187, note b.

In 'Pipe' the images and aspirations of 'Minuit' from 1895 are translated into the distinctive vocabulary of 1908. The poet's climb through the night, past kneeling figures to the stars, the domain of a different light, beyond night and day, passing time, 'pur sans ombre et sans clarté', is presented as direct and single-minded. The use of the sonnet form matches this unhesitating, well-structured ascent. Some may hesitate, lowering their eyes to the ground or stopping to pick earthly flowers, the perfume of temptation which pulls them down,

Loindes vérités sidérales

just as in 'Lul de Faltenin' the poet himself ended

loin

Dutroupeau d'étoiles oblongues

The poet is guided by the owl who, by the patient intensity of his meditation and the power of his sight, piercing shadows which are closed to the eyes of men, symbolises the powers of the seer. As Léon Cellier would have it, 'le poète ne devient voyant qu'au prix d'un effort ; la contemplation est un exercice qui se prolonge ; elle exige du temps, la fixité du regard'. (28) Marie-Jeanne Durry has reminded us that the owl is a symbol of Athena, goddess of reason. (29) In 'Pipe' Apollinaire's intelligence is awake to order the intuitions of his imagination, fixing the images in the form of a sonnet. Again he is closer to the magician's lucid search for knowledge than to a Catholic ideal of faith, acceptance of the Mystery defined by the Church.

This solidarity with the tradition of Faustian research is reinforced in 'Le Brasier' when Christians burn the poet as a heretic :

Je flambe dans le brasier à l'ardeur adorable
Et les mains des croyants m'y rejettent multiple innombrablement

(28) Victor HUGO, Les Contemplations, Léon Cellier ed., Paris, Garnier, 1969, p. 476.

(29) Marie-Jeanne DURRY, Alcools, I, p. 165.

The self is multiplied and this is his moment of ecstatic liberty where, free of Christianity and sin, he no longer fears Hell :

Il n'y a plus rien de commun entre moi
Et ceux qui craignent les brûlures

Similarly in 'Les Fiançailles' he is free of the old guilt-complexes of Christianity :

A la fin les mensonges ne me font plus peur

Again he is burned at the stake, proud to be there with the heretical Knights Templar, sharing their knowledge and powers of prophecy.

The immobility of 'Pipe' recurs in lines which frame the adventure of 'Le Brasier', early in the poem where

Le fleuve épinglé sur la ville
T'y fixe comme un vêtement

and then at the end, with a return to the image of the river :

Terre
O Déchirée que les fleuves ont reprisée

Finally we are given a view of the poet, whose visions we have been sharing, now seen from the outside, still thoughtful, 'assis dans un fauteuil'. We have seen how the poem follows a pattern of rising exaltation before shrinking back to the scale of a man in an armchair. Interesting similarities exist between this technique and Alfred Jarry's early poem 'L'Opium', in Les Minutes de sable mémorial, where the poet's astral body takes a trip into visions of swelling architecture :

Les murs s'écartent, les voûtes s'élèvent comme des ballons dont on verrait l'intérieur et les colonnes poussent rapides pour soutenir l'étendue sans cesse accrue de l'architecture titanesque.

He too shrinks back to earth, to that armchair which Apollinaire will occupy :

Me voici revenu à mon fauteuil primordial, et toutes choses en état, sauf mon narghilé à opium, qu'il m'irait de recharger. (30)

But if the ending of 'Le Brasier' is bathetic so that Apollinaire doubts the power of the magic pentagramme, 'vain pentacle', the experience has nevertheless changed him :

Les flammes ont poussé sur moi comme des feuilles

This image of springtime is a mark of sexual potency in 'Lul de Faltenin',

Où les matelots désiraient
Que vergues et mâts reverdissent

Indeed in Apollinaire's poetry the pattern of exaltation and powerful dilation is an image of virile eroticism, the link between strength and creativity, sex and magic.

The gigantism of the dilated self is clearly linked to sexual potency in the poem sent to Lou, dated 1 April 1915 (OPo p. 420) in which the poet makes love on a geographical scale, lord of creation :

Et les pieds dans la mer je fornique un golfe heureux
C'est ainsi que j'aime la liberté

Here as elsewhere we are reminded of Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself' :

Space and Time! now I see it is true, what I guess'd at

[...]

My ties and ballasts leave me, my elbows rest in sea-gaps,
I skirt sierras, my palms cover continents,
I am afoot with my vision. (31)

Apollinaire's ideal of creativity, untrammelled by time and space, floating through the Milky Way in the refrain to 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', or

(30) Alfred JARRY, 'L'Opium', Oeuvres complètes, I, Paris, Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', 1972, pp. 195-198.

(31) Walt WHITMAN, 'Song of Myself', part 33, in Complete Poetry, London, The Nonesuch Press, 1971, p. 57.

moving on a more purposeful quest in 'Toujours' (OPo, p. 237),

De nébuleuse en nébuleuse
Le don Juan des mille et trois comètes

is linked with fulfilled sexuality by the comparison with 'des corps blancs des amoureuses' in 'La Chanson' and by Apollinaire's identification with the erotic adventurer don Juan in 'Toujours'. Images of masturbation, castration and impotence in 'Lul de Faltenin' and the third of 'Les Sept épées' are connected with non-achievement of sexual and/or poetic aspirations. The definitive version of 'La Chanson' has the 'chibriape' carried by

L'Hermès Ernest devenu nain

and if this is one more image of shrunken virility it can be compared with 'Crépuscule' (OPo, p. 64) in which

Le nain regarde d'un air triste
Grandir l'arlequin trismégiste

Here the dilation of the self leads to the magician becoming a triply grand master, like Hermes Trismegistus, while the dwarf looks on sadly. Sexual potency and magical power are one. As desire dies and is constantly reborn, like the phoenix, so is Apollinaire's cosmic adventure repeated. Our own analysis of erotic patterns in Apollinaire's poetry is perhaps corroborated by Raymond Jean in his comments on the poems to Lou. He writes that 'il faut en considérer le potentiel érotique comme une force structurale (cette "grande force" dont Apollinaire disait justement qu'elle était le désir)'. (32) David Berry diagnoses this recurring pattern as 'the Tantalus complex', Apollinaire's hunger always returning because he has, 'through his poetic inspiration, momentarily tasted heavenly foods, has been present at some sacrum convivium, as a result of which his appetite, now immortal and

(32) Raymond JEAN, Lectures de désir. Nerval, Lautréamont, Apollinaire, Eluard, p. 14.

suffused with metaphysical yearning, is destined never to find satisfaction in merely earthly nourishment'. (33)

In 'Le Brasier' the course of the poet's adventure seems once more to match the trajectory of the sun across the sky. The sun's chariot is a symbol of the future, and the sky presents the spectacle of a sacred drama blazing in light which he can hardly face :

L'avenir masqué flambe en traversant les cieux
[...]
J'ose à peine regarder la divine mascarade

A dark disc always masks the sun from the direct gaze of human eyes. This masked future is the same destiny which Apollinaire controls through the power of his poetry in 'Le Cheval' (OPo p. 5), also from 1908 :

Mes durs rêves formels sauront te chevaucher,
Mon destin au char d'or sera ton beau cocher
Qui pour rênes tiendra tendus à frénésie
Mes vers, les parangons de toute poésie.

Upright in the chariot of the sun, Apollinaire's ambition is to master space and time with all the grandeur of primitive man when he first tamed wild horses, as described by Edouard Schuré in Les Grands Initiés :

En domptant le cheval, il avait conquis la terre, soumis
les autres animaux ; il était devenu roi de l'espace. Montés
sur des chevaux fauves, ces hommes tourbillonnaient comme
de fauves éclairs. (34)

At the end of 'Le Brasier' man is still controlled by other animals, does not yet control destiny :

Des acteurs inhumains claires bêtes nouvelles
Donnent des ordres aux hommes apprivoisés

(33) David BERRY, 'Apollinaire and the Tantalus Complex', Australian Journal of French Studies, IX, 1, January-April 1972, pp. 55-79, (p. 79).
(34) Edouard SCHURE, Les Grands Initiés, p. 21.

The destiny of man is still out of his hands, controlled by the planets, 'la nuit où brillent les innombrables yeux des bêtes célestes à la chair impalpable' (OPr p. 274). Yet we are left at the end of 'Le Brasier' with an exhilaration born of the poet's determination to continue the struggle to take over the influence of these 'acteurs inhumains', for, as he writes elsewhere, 'Avant tout les artistes sont des hommes qui veulent devenir inhumains'. (35) He will continue courageously his quest for revelation, a solution to the riddles of the sphinx, though it may cost him his whole life :

J'aimerais mieux nuit et jour dans les sphingeries
Vouloir savoir pour qu'enfin on m'y dévorât

It is Apollinaire's marvellous 'Vouloir savoir' which here brings him closest to Rimbaud who in 'Le Forgeron' also builds his dream of flame and action :

Nous sommes
Pour les grands temps nouveaux où l'on voudra savoir,
Où l'homme forgera du matin jusqu'au soir,
Chasseur des grands effets, chasseur des grandes causes,
Où lentement vainqueur, il domptera les choses
Et montera sur Tout, comme sur un cheval!
Oh! splendides lueurs des forges! Plus de mal,
Plus! - Ce qu'on ne sait pas, c'est peut-être terrible :
Nous saurons!

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'Les Fiançailles', published six months later in 1908 than 'Le Brasier', goes further in that it ends with a proclamation of victory. Doubts are dissolved in a handsome measure of self-esteem. Flaming in the night, he shines brighter than the planets. 'Les Fiançailles' is less compact and the sunrise-sunset cycle of 'Le Brasier' is now less

clear, though Jacques de Molay, grand master of the Knights Templar to whom Apollinaire refers in the last section of the poem, was burned at the stake at sunset on the Ile de la Cité in Paris in 1314, and the final flames of the poem flash in darkness, 'ô belle ô belle nuit'. The poet takes a long time to achieve the final self-sufficiency, detachment and total commitment which transcendence requires, and in fact the loose structure of the poem is held together by the theme of uncertainty. The first eight parts of the poem see the poet struggling, hovering over memories and obsessions, cursing the limitations of his human senses, trying to build up confidence. The third part of the poem sees the poet already beyond the pull of gravity, high as the stars with eyes like the sun :

Un Icare tente de s'élever jusqu'à chacun de mes yeux
Et porteur de soleils je brûle au centre de deux nébuleuses

At first, as in 'Palais', language is inadequate and he suffers a 'tourment de silence', while reason abandons him at the prospect of his divine vision. It seems beyond human understanding :

Qu'ai-je fait aux bêtes théologiques de l'intelligence

Time is limited if he is to create the language to fit this new reality he experiences, for death is bearing down on him 'sifflant comme un ouragan'. This is the impression the whole poem gives, a race against time and the limits of language, punctuated with leaps which defy logic and shorthand flashes of vision. Apollinaire recognises the difficulty which such free-form language may cause the reader when he asks :

Pardonnez-moi de ne plus connaître l'ancien jeu des vers

The prize is won in the last part of the poem where uncertainty falls and language and experience coincide, three quatrains which seem regular and solid after the earlier stutterings and recriminations. The poet floats clear and achieves immortality through martyrdom in the setting of a medieval fête.

In 1908 Apollinaire's link with Jean Royère was important, but the influence of Mécislas Golberg, the Polish anarchist who had been an habitué of Mallarmé's Tuesday evening sessions, is not negligible in his poetry at this time. Golberg had featured in Le Festin d'Esopé n° 2, December 1903 ; n° 6, April 1904 ; and n° 9, August 1904. André Salmon recalled that he and Apollinaire had first discussed art together in those days in Golberg's miserable lodgings in the rue de la Tombe-Issoire. (36) Golberg died in 1907 and throughout his life Apollinaire tried to keep his name alive with articles in reviews in March 1905 and March 1908, a mention in 1914 and a final tribute in May 1918. (37) He also appears as the consumptive 'Léonard Delaisse' in Apollinaire's 1907 story 'La Serviette des poètes' (OPr p. 191). In the article of March 1908 Apollinaire wrote that Golberg's life of suffering 'fut tout entière consacrée à l'idéal que l'on méconnaît, à la beauté dont rient les imbéciles' and, as Elzbieta Grabska has suggested, this was the year in which Golberg's idealism had the biggest impact on Apollinaire's poetry. (38) Golberg's death must have led to a re-evaluation by Apollinaire of the work of his old comrade and mentor. Certainly Golberg's theories on the 'divinization of man and the hope of human perfection', taken from Renan and Nietzsche are in tune with Apollinaire's thinking. (39) The immobility of the poet in 'Pipe' and then in 'Le Brasier', where he takes on the shape of the magic pentangle, the effort in 'Les Fiançailles' to achieve a beatitude which is in harmony with creation, correspond to much of Golberg's philosophy. Apollinaire writes in 'Les Fiançailles':

Je ne sais plus rien et j'aime uniquement
Les fleurs à mes yeux deviennent des flammes
Je médite divinement
Et je souris des êtres que je n'ai pas créés

(36) André SALMON, L'Air de la Butte, pp. 189-193.

(37) OC III, p. 779 ; OC III, p. 791 ; OC III p. 893 ; OC II, p. 723.

(38) Elzbieta GRABSKA, 'Mécislas Golberg dans l'entourage d'Apollinaire', GA 8, (1969), pp. 167-186, (pp. 173-174).

(39) See Scott BATES, Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 64.

And in the fourth part of the poem :

J'observe le repos du dimanche
Et je loue la paresse

This is the spirit of Golberg's 'Lettre à Alexis sur la passivité' in Le Festin d'Esopé n° 2, December 1903 :

La belle vie, c'est d'aimer. La plus haute destinée, c'est
de causer avec Dieu des mondes. On regarde; on admire; on
brûle doucement sur l'autel de la destinée comme quelque pré-
cieux encens!

The letter ends with praise for those who lead lives of meditation, in motion-
less solitude :

Ils vivent sur les cimes, les séraphins merveilleux. Contem-
plons-les avant de livrer nos batailles.

This praise of buddhist passivity is combined in Golberg with a view of
life as the struggle between destiny and the will of man, human creativity :

La vie, c'est notre propre affirmation. La mort, celle
des lois inconnues, universelles. L'une et l'autre ne peuvent
se restreindre mutuellement. (40)

'Les Fiançailles' is built on this conflict between the approaching wind of
death and the will of an artist to create, 'like the God of Genesis'. (41)
Indeed 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' from 1903 balances the assertion of self
against the power of fate, one refrain, 'Moi qui sais des lais pour les
reines' etc against the other, 'Voie lactée ô soeur lumineuse' etc. It is
the refrain of self-assertion which ends that poem, as 'Onirocritique'
ends L'Enchanteur pourrissant, as courageous victory ends 'Les Fiançail-
les.

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(40) Mécislas GOLBERG, quoted by Charles Doury in his article on Lettres à Alexis, in Le Festin d'Esopé, 9, August 1904.

(41) Garnet REES, Guillaume Apollinaire : 'Alcools', p. 171.

But if 'Les Fiançailles' is built on a struggle between destiny and creativity, mortality and divinity, there is another conflict which is more clearly present in the manuscript of the poem and which shows how Apollinaire's poetry will develop in 1909. This is the conflict between high idealism, the Symbolist quest for perfection in which the poet is prophet and magician, and a more modern desire to find poetry in the inspiration of every moment, any situation. Apollinaire hints at a shift of emphasis in a manuscript of the poem where he writes :

J'ai l'orgueil de me souvenir de mes souhaits glorieux
[J'ai rêvé] des poèmes si grandioses que j'ai dû les laisser
[inachevés
Moi-même j'ai tenté de rythmer
Parce que mon souci de perfection
Dépassait [mon goût] mon goût même et les forces d'un seul
[homme
[Puis j'ai reconnu que chaque moment porte en soi sa propre
[perfection] (42)

Leroy C. Breuning has shown that composing 'Les Fiançailles' Apollinaire turned to two poems, 'Le Printemps' and 'Les villes sont pleines d'amour et de douleur', dating from 1902 or earlier and which he also used in tandem as sources for 'L'Emigrant de Landor Road'. (43) These two poems are also in conflict, the one being a poem of pure imagination, the other a reflection of autobiographical reality in European cities. Valéry Larbaud's cry

ô vie réelle,
Sans art et sans métaphores, sois à moi (44)

was first noticed in 1908 with the publication of Le Livre de M. Barnabooth and Apollinaire, it would seem, was sensitive to its impact. He knew Larbaud, who had prepared translations of Walt Whitman poems for Le Festin d'Esopé, though these were never used. (45) The influences of Larbaud, Whitman and Jules Romains, whose collection La Vie unanime also appeared in 1908, are there in the manuscript of 'Les Fiançailles'.

(42) DA, p. 205.

(43) Leroy C. BREUNIG, 'Apollinaire's "Les Fiançailles"', Essays in French Literature, 3, November 1966, pp. 1-32 (pp. 4-6).

(44) Valéry LARBAUD, 'Musique après une lecture', Oeuvres, Paris, Gallimard, 'Bibliothèque de la Pléiade', 1958, p. 57.

(45) Michel DECAUDIN, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes, p. 353.

But Apollinaire clipped the manuscript of the poem so that the final version still leans towards the aspirations of neo-Symbolism.

Confirmation of this change in Apollinaire's thinking as 1909 approaches can be found if we compare his contemptuous attitude to nature and reality in the January 1908 article on Jean Royère, (46) and in the June lecture on art given in Le Havre, (47) with the new climate of his November 1908 review of Jean de Gourmont's La Toison d'or, still published in La Phalange. Now, in November, reality is essential :

Il dispose de la rare qualité de mettre de la réalité dans ses créations. La réalité vérifie ce qu' imagine l'écrivain. Elle est semblable au sang qui court dans les veines des vivants. Elle anime un ouvrage qui sans elle n'aurait que l'existence impersonnelle des cadavres. On pourrait, définissant la réalité, dire qu'elle est le but de l'art, en quoi je ne veux rien voir d'autre que le but de la nature.

Ce style, cette vérité, cette réalité, bienheureux ceux qui savent la mettre en branle! (48)

After the neo-Symbolism of 1908 it is into '1909' (OPo p. 138) and 'Vendémiaire' (OPo p. 149) that Apollinaire injects this rediscovered reality. '1909' is the second of the two poems for it includes an adaptation of some lines from the manuscript of 'Vendémiaire'. (49) In those manuscript lines Apollinaire, always wanting to be at the forefront of any new development, congratulates himself for having seen the poetry of the city in the days before he had made his reputation :

Il naissait chaque jour quelques êtres nouveaux
Le fer était leur sang, la flamme leur cerveau
Et parmi tout le peuple habile des machines
La poésie errait, plaintive et si divine!
Je la pris dans mes bras, moi, poète inconnu
Et seul de mon temps qui m'en sois souvenu. (50)

(46) OC III, p. 780.

(47) OC IV, p. 92.

(48) OC III, p. 808.

(49) See Michel DECAUDIN, "'1909': Obscurité et composition chez Apollinaire", C A I E F, 15, March 1963, pp. 119-125.

(50) DA, p. 225.

Perhaps he is again remembering 'Les villes sont pleines d'amour et de douleur' or another city poem used in 'Vendémiaire', 'Coblence', not in Oeuvres poétiques but whose text Michel Décaudin has given in his 1969 article, 'Apollinaire inconnu'. (51)

In '1909' the passage from 'Vendémiaire' is used to dispel the dated elegance of the Madame Récamier lady whose portrait fills most of the poem. Jacques Louis David's famous portrait of Madame Récamier which hangs in the Louvre was painted in 1800, marking the birth of a century. In Apollinaire's poem we await the stroke of midnight as if the lady must be transformed or disappear as the clock strikes twelve, marking a new day and perhaps a new year. She personifies an old ideal which must now evaporate, a beauty which is so perfect that it is unapproachable :

Cette femme était si belle
Qu'elle me faisait peur

Any doubt as to the date of composition of 'Vendémiaire' (52) is dispelled by the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscript of Apollinaire's unpublished chronology of the uses of simultaneity in modern art, entitled Contrastes simultanés - Quelques dates, which shows that the poem was first read at the Salon d'automne of 1909 by Jules Romains in his lecture on 'La poésie immédiate'. (53) The chewing over of past mistakes which occurs in the 1908 fire poems is avoided in 'Vendémiaire'. Now Apollinaire is magnetically attracted, open armed, towards the outside world, a life which is electric with energy and variety :

Actions belles journées sommeils terribles
Végétation Accouplements musiques éternelles
Mouvements Adorations douleur divine

(51) Michel DECAUDIN, 'Apollinaire inconnu', Les Nouvelles littéraires, 21 August 1969, p. 2.

(52) Leroy C. BREUNIG gives the date of composition as September 1912 in his 'Chronology of Apollinaire's Alcools', PMLA, LXVII, 7, December 1952, pp. 907-923, (p. 919).

(53) BN. FR. Nouv. Acq. 16280, ff. 115, 118. This manuscript clears up queries as to the identity of the 'fragment' read by Romains in his lecture and which Michel Décaudin discusses in DA, pp. 128, 158 and 224. It was indeed part, if not all, of 'Vendémiaire'.

Pleasure is pushed to the limit of pain and Apollinaire is more at home in this movement of communion than in the 1908 transcendence achieved through an ascetic doctrine of passivity, self-sacrifice, solitary meditation. As Charles Morice put it, 'Quiconque s'élève, s'isole'. (54) But the successful experiments of 1908 have strengthened Apollinaire's confidence and he includes their fire in 'Vendémiaire',

Le feu qu'il faut aimer comme on s'aime soi-même

And he also uses his energy to renew his links with the old magic tradition and to reassert his status within it. The first stanza of the poem begins with the clarion call :

Hommes de l'avenir souvenez-vous de moi

This stands outside the rest of the text and serves a similar purpose to the first Arthurian section of L'Enchanteur pourrissant, added in 1909, placing the work on a time scale which reaches far beyond the span of a single human life. The writer takes his place in history, a link in a chain of hills.

It is no coincidence then that the first region to reply to the call of Paris is Brittany, voicing the precedence of Merlin's celtic magic, described as :

cette souple raison
Que le mystère clôt comme une porte la maison
Ce mystère courtois de la galanterie
Ce mystère fatal fatal d'une autre vie
Double raison qui est au-delà de la beauté
Et que la Grèce n'a pas connu ni l'Orient

Logical reasoning, the beauty of Athena, cannot alone penetrate the mystery to which the gnostic tradition holds the key, a supple reason which is flexible

(54) Charles MORICE, La Littérature de tout à l'heure, p. 69.

enough to comprehend the miraculous.

Now the poet is in no mood for martyrdom and heads for Rome, enemy of heretics and of the tradition which Apollinaire calls 'mes anciennes pensées', which the Catholic Church damns along with heaven itself, 'le ciel où l'amour guide les destinées'. Christ himself is liberated from the grip of Rome, true to the gnostic traditions in which he is a great seer in a line of other prophets. The Holy Cross, once a sterile symbol, is seen with 'feuillards repoussés', leaves of fertility and freedom which Christ symbolises in the face of repressive Catholicism. He is now

celui qui connaît
Une autre liberté végétale dont tu
Ne sais pas que c'est elle la suprême vertu

Now it is the poet who stands with Christ on his side, who is able to offer a chalice of sacramental wine, 'sangpur', the sweet taste of liberty, tauntingly, to the impotent and cursing Church. Rome falls and Paris rises,

Parce que c'est dans toi que Dieu peut devenir

Already in 1907, in Les Onze mille verges, Apollinaire had written :

'Rome est déchue de sa splendeur, la reine des cités a cédé sa couronne à Paris [...] Paris qui a si bien remplacé Rome à la tête de l'univers !'

(55) In 'Vendémiaire' it is the pope's crown which falls, trampled underfoot, while the she-wolf and the eagle, symbols of Rome, the lamb and the dove, symbols of Catholicism, will be slaughtered by barbarian kings. The new Roman Empire falls. On a manuscript fragment Apollinaire noted :

On m'avait dit que pape était
Presque de Dieu le synonyme (56)

Now, using the momentum which he has built up in this poem he overturns the monument to authority in whose shadow he has lived, the authority which

(55) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Les Onze mille verges, Paris, Pauvert, 'J'ai lu', 1973, p. 15.

(56) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 66.

he tried to belittle in 1903 in the manuscript of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' :

Un chien perdu lorsque l'attrape
Le fouet coulant du ciapacan :
Image du pape en sa trappe (57)

Here and now comes the realisation of the prophecy of Apollonius Zabath, leader of the 'libres penseurs' in La Gloire de l'olive :

Monde, choisis entre ta vie et celle de la papauté. [...] Le pape n'existera plus. On brisera les trirègnes trop lourdes pour les vieilles têtes papales. On massacrera les cardinaux (OPr p. 1267).

The pontif is a bridge and Apollinaire says so clearly in line 14 of 'Le Onzième poème secret' (OPo p. 635). By cutting the bridge he is finished with the judgement of Jehova. Christ and Dionysus can unite in a new, free sacrament.

Again the poem is structured by eroticism, written as a sexual metaphor, spreading, pounding, pulsing with blood, then slowing down in the final spaced out lines. From the opening sunset he looks already towards the dawn :

Astres mûrs becquetés par les ivres oiseaux
De ma gloire attendaient la vendange de l'aube

Then, at the hour of executions, the red streaks in a liquid sky will replace the light of red lamps reflected in the Seine. The executions of the anarchists in the first verse of the manuscript imply already the 'cou coupé' of 'Zone'. (58) Martyrs, heretics and anarchists die in Lyons :

Heureuse pluie ô goutte tiède ô douleur

In Sicily the blood of tragedy is spilled, in Rome the blood of Christ, in Coblence the holy mixture of water and wind and 'tout le sang de l'Europe'

(57) Création, XIII, June 1978, p. 46. The 'ciapacan' is the Monaco stray dog catcher (See Que vlo-ve ?, 17-18, July-October 1978, p. 21).

(58) DA, p. 225.

is offered to Paris. The poem is a potent mixture of blood, sex and religion, a sacrifice and a sacred ecstasy which consecrates the poet's place of honour alongside Christ, masters of creation and 'Grands Initiés'.

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In 1910 came the publication of Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée (OPo p. 1), thirty short poems, eighteen of which had been published in La Phalange in June 1908. As Michel Décaudin says, 'c'est son propre visage qu'il décrit [...] ; sous ce divertissement se montre la confiance la plus nue'. (59) The poet reveals his inherent uncertainty ('L'Ecrevisse'), a melancholy fixation with passing time and approaching death ('La Souris', 'La Carpe', 'Ibis'), countered by an elated faith in the value of his own poetry ('La Tortue', 'Le Cheval'). The procession which follows Orpheus is not only a collection of charmed animals. Orpheus founded a historical dynasty of great poets and magicians which is referred to in his recommendations of Hermes Trismegistus in the introductory quatrain (OPo p. 3) and in the link between Orpheus and Christ in the third 'Orphée' (OPo p. 20). 'La Tortue' and 'Le Cheval' affirm the magic power of the poet over nature and matter, a power which Apollinaire in turn now inherits and merits. The lines of his poetry here are tight as the reins of destiny in 'Le Cheval', and the taut precision of his expression matches the economy of movement of a charioteer finely controlling a team whose force far outstrips his own. The penultimate quatrain is the nihilistic 'Ibis', 'you will go' in Latin, just as 'nihil' means 'nothing', giving a final line which contains a double pun :

(59) Michel DECAUDIN, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes, p. 434.

Ibis, oiseau des bords du Nil

Death offers no promise beyond the dark and empty tomb. But Apollinaire prefers to end with the charmingly naïve 'Le Boeuf' in which the reference to a rather conventional God in heaven is qualified by the notes which present God as the perfection and sublime beauty which the poets seek and which may be realised in their work. The onus of creativity is shifted from God to man, who is potentially divine.

1911 saw Apollinaire unjustly imprisoned, a moment of crisis in which he pictured himself, no doubt, as another Villon, another Verlaine. From his suffering he wrung a new group of short poems, 'A la Santé' (OPo p. 140), in which he also appears as Christ in the Garden of Gethsemani:

Que deviendrai-je ô Dieu qui connais ma douleur
Toi que me l'as donnée
Prends en pitié mes yeux sans larmes ma pâleur

In the prison manuscripts there is a burst of Catholicism with prayers to the Virgin and a note of panic which reveals the depth of an emotion masked by the understated tone of the published texts. It is a shaken man who writes :

Seigneur agréez mes hommages
Je crois en vous je crois je crois

But the effort and concessions he makes towards God receive no reward :

Un écho répond toujours non
Lorsque je dis une prière

The poet has developed and come too far so that there can be no return to the innocent faith he once knew,

Comme aux beaux jours de mon enfance (60)

Cut off from the world and deprived of his identity, his primary fear in these poems is that next he will lose his sanity :

Non je ne me sens plus là
Moi-même

Darkness starts to flood his mind :

Prends en pitié surtout ma débile raison
Et ce désespoir qui la gagne

But when all else fails, finally it is reason which is revealed as his dearest possession, the essence of his being :

Nous sommes seuls dans ma cellule
Belle clarté Chère raison

Conditions of acute solitude and demoralisation have forced him back to seek comfort in the Church, and to adopt a pose of humility before God. The trimming of the manuscripts for publication marks the poet's imposition of reason on the disorder of irrationality. Reason replaces faith and after humiliation the poet is proud to contemplate and affirm the luminous beauty of human intellect, the image on which he concludes.

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'Apolliner ekriet une chose religieuse' (sic) was Mikhail Larionov's caption to his 1913 sketch of his friend the poet at work. (61) Perhaps he knew 'Zone' (OPo p. 39), Apollinaire's masterpiece of 1912. 1912, another crisis, the return of solitude and a tug of nostalgia for the warmth and security of childhood faith, Mother Church. And yet the poem does not begin

(61) Waldemar GEORGE, Larionov, p. 116.

that way. In 1955 André Breton, considering the opening lines of 'Zone', wrote that 'on peut d'autant moins leur dénier une intention de manifeste qu'ils ouvrent le plus grand recueil de poèmes de ce siècle' (62) and this artistic manifesto, 'cette profession de foi artistique' (63) has some of the boldness and confidence of Futurism. F. T. Marinetti's Le Monoplan du pape which appeared in Paris in January 1912 may have been at the back of Apollinaire's mind and certainly the first line of 'Zone',

A la fin tu es las de ce monde ancien

prefigures the first words of Apollinaire's own Antitradition futuriste of June 1913, written in scattered capitals :

A BAS LE PASSEISME (64).

The line

Tu en as assez de vivre dans l'antiquité grecque et romaine seems more relevant to Italy than to Paris. And perhaps Marc Poupon is right in seeing in the line

Pupille Christ de l'oeil

a simplification of syntax on Futurist lines, as recommended by Marinetti in his Manifeste technique de la littérature futuriste. (65) 'Zone' begins as the manifesto of a man who optimistically wishes to make art and life coincide, here and now. The words 'Ici', 'ce matin', 'ce matin', 'Maintenant', 'Aujourd'hui', all occurring in the first part of the poem, are pins with which Apollinaire determines to fix himself in the present, as are the authentic street names he mentions. The poet hopes to find poetry in the mechanised, secular life of the city, away from churches and museums :

J'aime la grâce de cette rue industrielle
Située à Paris entre la rue Aumont-Thiéville et l'avenue des
Ternes

(62) André BRETON, 'Présent des Gaulles', Le Surréalisme et la peinture, p. 333.

(63) DA, p. 38.

(64) OC III, opposite p. 876.

(65) Marc POUPON, Apollinaire et Cendrars, p. 14.

The word 'grâce' in such a prosaic sentence is conspicuous and deliberate. The old sources of grace are redundant and the factory is the new cathedral, there in the seventeenth arrondissement.

But this morning optimism is short-lived and the sound of traffic, which at first resembles the bleating of sheep, starts to unsettle and grate on the nerves. Passing cars and buses seem more aggressive, turning to anthropomorphic monsters as the poet feels his solitude in the jostling crowd :

Maintenant tu marches dans Paris tout seul parmi la foule
Des troupeaux d'autobus mugissants près de toi roulent

Apollinaire has returned to the mood of his March 1910 article in L'Intransigeant in which he complained : 'Nous laissons sans protester d'horribles autobus déshonorer les voies parisiennes'. (66) Sirens that howl, bells that bark wildly, advertisements whose colours are as discordant as a parrot's squawk, this world of brash ephemera wears away at the poet's enthusiasm, so there is not much in the city which pleases him :

Et je ne puis guère aimer à Paris que cette rue industrielle

Similarly Apollinaire's attitude to Catholicism is at first one of independence and defiance. Pius X gave his blessing to the aviator Beaumont in Rome in 1911 and this may have made him a modern pope. But there is heavy irony in Apollinaire's line :

L'Européen le plus moderne c'est vous Pape Pie X

It is offered more as a jibe than as a compliment. Robert Couffignal, commenting on Apollinaire's interest in heresy, informs us :

De fait, dès 1890, un vent de révolte ou tout au moins de contestation soufflait sur l'Eglise catholique, et devait être baptisé du nom de 'modernisme', tendance plus qu'hérésie

(66) OC IV, p. 103.

bien définie, et qui consistait à interpréter de façon humaine les mystères de la foi au mépris de tout dogmatisme. (67)

As well as condemning the tango, Pius X had hit out against the rationalist tendency in Catholic thinking with his 1907 encyclical Pascendi and papal decree Lamentabili. In 1908, the year when in 'Le Brasier' Apollinaire imagined himself burnt at the stake by the 'croyants', Pius X excommunicated the turbulent priest Alfred Loisy, head of the Modernist movement. The epithet 'moderne' was calculated to cause this traditionalist pope maximum discomfort. Apollinaire's presentation of the Ascension of Christ as a record-breaking feat of aeronautics could also be interpreted as a humorous version of humanist interpretations of the sacred mysteries. Pope Pius X, now a Catholic saint, was also well known for his 1906 encyclicals Vehementer nos and Gravissimi officii, opposing the separation of Church and State in France. As we have already seen, Apollinaire in his work as a journalist wrote in favour of their separation.

Apollinaire faces the pope as an adversary. But without love on the hostile streets the poet's mind drifts back, despite himself, despite his opposition to the Church, back to privileged days when prayers expected an answer. This may be contradictory. But 'Zone' is a poem whose beginning is 'A la fin', set in a city which is pastoral, where automobiles are ancient and Catholicism is brand new, where a reactionary pope is modern, where reality and dream, past and present mingle. 'Zone' is a reflection of the poet's confused and worried state of mind and he longs to recapture the simplicity of childhood faith. He longs for shelter and would wall himself up in that faith :

Si tu vivais dans l'ancien temps tu entrerais dans un monastère

That life of security will call to him again from across an impossible distance, in another moment of weakness, in May 1916 : 'si je m'écoutais je me ferais

(67) Robert COUFFIGNAL, 'A propos d'Hérésiarques...', GA 4, (1965), pp. 78-81, (p. 78).

prêtre ou religieux'. (68) Now he recalls quiet hours in the school chapel in Monaco, the harmony of the litanies and later visits to Chartres (69) and to Sacré Coeur in Montmartre. But the mystic elan of his litany to Christ forks off into satire, legend and fantasy, and innocence seems elusive. Forced further into introversion the poet develops a dialogue with himself, a sinner in confession, filled with shame :

L'amour dont je souffre est une maladie honteuse

The adult years which stand between himself and childhood innocence, the damning past of which he would be rid, are preserved as in a closed museum :

C'est un tableau pendu dans un sombre musée
Et quelquefois tu vas le regarder de près

This image will recur in September 1915 when he writes of his past in a letter to Madeleine : 'Tout le reste m'est à jamais indifférent. C'est une sorte de musée où je n'entre jamais'. (70) He may refuse papal authority but he still fears hell and for Apollinaire in 'Zone', as for Blaise Cendrars in 'Pâques à New-York', there is no peace, and brotherhood in Christ cannot be found in the city.

For Robert Couffignal 'Zone' is 'la liquidation d'un complexe'. (71) But nothing is resolved in this poem and we prefer Professor Garnet Rees' view of 'Zone' as 'a kind of balance sheet in which the poet takes a hard, disabused look at his life and his art'. (72) Such self-scrutiny is likely to have an effect and it is true that the poetry of 'Ondes' from 1913 differs

(68) TS, p. 349.

(69) Apollinaire visited Chartres with Raymond Charpentier, a friend who also courted Linda Molina da Silva and whose family owned a house and a windmill there. See André WARNOD, Fils de Montmartre, Souvenirs, pp. 137-138.

(70) TS, p. 162.

(71) Robert COUFFIGNAL, 'Genèse de "Zone"', Apollinaire et la musique, Actes du colloque, Stavelot 1965, pp. 73-80, (p. 80).

(72) Garnet REES, Guillaume Apollinaire : Alcools, p. 121.

in many ways from the poetry of Alcools. But at the end of 'Zone' the argument is merely cut short as fatigue and disgust come in with the dawn. The voice of Catholicism has not been definitively stifled and awaits the next appropriate moment in the poet's progress to make itself heard. Now the poet will sleep and live his dark dreams in a universe which is still sacred, though unrelated to Christianity, watched over by primitive masks, 'fétiches d'Océanie et de Guinée', symbols of religions whose mysteries are as obscure as the poet's own hopes for the future:

Ce sont les Christ inférieurs des obscures espérances

CHAPTER V

ONDES

The poetry of 'Ondes', the first section of Calligrammes, spans the period late 1912 to the eve of the outbreak of the Great War. The earliest poem in the section is 'Les Fenêtres' (OPo p. 168), written for the catalogue of a Robert Delaunay exhibition and published in Poème et Drame in January 1913, while the latest is 'Il pleut' (OPo p. 203), written in Deauville on 27 July 1914. (1) 'Les Collines' is a 'special case', a poem dating from a later period well outside these chronological limits and therefore will be discussed elsewhere. 'Ondes' is wedged chronologically between 'Zone', the latest poem in Alcools, and 'La Petite auto', the beginning of the war. It is tied and held together by 'Liens' and 'Il pleut', poems which match like book-ends, the former containing its own 'Violente pluie', the latter its 'Liens qui te retiennent'. Perhaps because of this air of splendid isolation between closed frontiers critics have tended to treat the whole of this section as a 'special case'. Jean Burgos, for example, considers 'Ondes' to be untypical of Apollinaire and, because the poetry does not seem to be rooted in L'Enchanteur pourrissant, goes so far as to suggest that it is somehow inauthentic :

il semble qu'Apollinaire, lancé un peu malgré lui dans l'aventure futuriste et, sous l'influence de Gleizes et de Delaunay, entraîné dans des voies pour lesquelles il n'était peut-être pas fait, se soit préoccupé alors beaucoup moins de l'expression de son lyrisme profond que de la mise en oeuvre

(1) See letter to Serge Férat, 29 July 1914, OPo p. 1085.

d'une certaine technique poétique propre, selon lui, à manifester 'l'esprit nouveau' ; [...] cette peinture nouvelle, qu'il n'avait peut-être pas bien comprise en dépit de son enthousiasme et qu'il ne défendait peut-être pas sur le bon terrain, allait l'entraîner vers une poésie expérimentale qui trop souvent devait l'empêcher de s'exprimer vraiment.

So for Jean Burgos 'Ondes' is an aberration with a 'retour aux sources' coming only in 1915. (2) Ian Lockerbie, however, in an article published in 1966, differentiates between the 'poèmes-méditations' of 1916-1918 and the 'choses-crées' of 'Ondes' but insists that the latter have their own value, are unique but 'ne sont pas pour cela une fausse route'. (3)

Apollinaire himself insisted on both the value and the uniqueness of 'Ondes', writing in his letter to Madeleine of 30 July 1915 :

Puis, j'aime beaucoup mes vers depuis Alcools, il y en a pour un volume au moins et j'aime beaucoup, beaucoup, 'Les Fenêtres' qui a paru à part en tête d'un catalogue du peintre Delaunay. Ils ressortissent à une esthétique toute neuve dont je n'ai plus depuis retrouvé les ressorts [...]. (4)

Yet he seems to contradict himself in February 1916, writing to André Breton :

Pour en venir à mes pièces qui vont des 'Fenêtres' à mes poèmes actuels en passant par 'Lundi rue Christine' et les poèmes idéograph[iques] j'y trouve pour ma part (mais je suis orfèvre) la suite naturelle de mes premiers vers ou du moins de ceux qui sont dans Alcools. (5)

In fact Apollinaire is right on both occasions, for there is both continuity and innovation in 'Ondes'. In 'Liens' the desire for immediacy is itself immediately countered by a pull towards the past, as in 'Zone', when the poet moves from the 'nous' of shared experience back to the 'je' of

(2) EP, pp. clv-clvii.

(3) S. I. LOCKERBIE, 'Le Rôle de l'imagination dans Calligrammes', GA 5, (1966), pp. 6-22, (p. 7).

(4) TS, pp. 70-71

(5) OC IV, p. 875.

subjectivity and introversion. This ambiguity is reflected in 'Il pleut', where the modernity of the form contrasts with a text whose subject-matter harks back to the melancholy, autumnal poems of Alcools, poetry of lost moments and failed love affairs. The fifth line of 'Il pleut',

écoute tomber les liens qui te retiennent en haut et en bas

is particularly ambiguous. Are the chains falling away to free the poet or, like the falling rain which keeps him in his hotel room, as he tells Serge Férat in a letter, (6) are the chains falling to bind him hand and foot like Gulliver? The 'ancienne musique' of the text of 'Il pleut' lingers on throughout 'Ondes', sometimes faint as the colours of the acrobats' carpets in 'Un Fantôme des nuées', colours that barely exist,

Comme un air de musique qui vous poursuit

heard on the wind from time to time, as in 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' :

J'entends mourir le son d'une flûte lointaine

In 'Ondes' the melancholy of passing time meets the exhilaration of simultaneity, as was sometimes the case in Alcools, and traditional music meets the new music of forms. And Apollinaire still returns to his usual source material to build his poems. 'A Travers l'Europe' was described by André Breton as 'le poème peut-être le plus libre de ce siècle'. (7) But Ian Lockerbie has pointed out that lines four, ten, eleven, twenty-four and twenty-five of this poem of exemplary modernism come from Apollinaire's early Symbolist allegory 'La Clef'. (8) Professor Lockerbie does not mention that lines nine, twenty-six and twenty-seven of 'A travers l'Europe' are lines sixteen, fifty-nine and sixty of 'La Clef' while lines twelve and thirteen of the 1914 poem also refer to the Symbolist

(6) Letter to Serge Férat, op. cit.

(7) André BRETON, 'Genèse et perspective artistiques du Surréalisme' (1941) in Le Surréalisme et la peinture, p. 63.

(8) S. I. LOCKERBIE, 'Alcools et le Symbolisme', p. 40.

search for a lost key to open closed eyes. Once again Apollinaire demonstrates his ability to make something new and exciting from old, outdated material.

Apollinaire's poetry is not therefore uprooted from its bed of inspiration during the period of 'Ondes'. Furthermore, he continues to use the myths and obsessions of L'Enchanteur pourrissant. In 'Coeur couronne et miroir' (OPO p. 197) for example, we find Guillaume Apollinaire 'ENCLOS VIVANT', Merlin in the tomb, immortal after death, in the dimension of angels and not a two-dimensional reflection of reality. Art which does no more than reflect reality can only be ephemeral, suggests Apollinaire, and his hint that the oval image first understood as a mirror may be something else is worthtaking. Apollinaire's calligrammes are nearly all multidimensional, polyvalent, just as the heart in the same poem is also a 'flamme renversée'. The straight and rigid identity of the poet enclosed and dwarfed by this oval orifice can be read as a continuation of the fear of impotence and castration which is fundamental to L'Enchanteur pourrissant. Another contradictory reading of the frame of the mirror would see it as a halo of light around the poet, placed beneath the heart/flame and the crown of majesty to create a noble and assertive ensemble.

The mirror of this poem reflects 'Zone', which is also a circle, moving from dawn to dawn, as the poet continues a dialogue with his own image. Similarly in 'Zone', the dimension of dream, closed and subjective, is accompanied by the shared world of exterior reality, the latter breaking in on the former. In 'Zone' the commonplace phenomena of shared reality are revalued, raised to the level of poetry. But the balance in this transitional poem is tilted in favour of the subjective world of memory and dream as the poet chooses finally to slip back into the closed mysteries of sleep. In 'Ondes' we find the same conflict. But

now the balance has shifted. The mirror image, the pull of the past are still present. And the windows of 'Ondes' may sometimes be less than totally transparent, as in 'Il pleut', the design of which resembles not only falling rain but also a pane of glass covered with a film of condensation and streaked by five finger-tips. But the literal transcription of exterior perceptions in 'Lundi rue Christine' and 'Lettre-Océan', the opening outwards of 'Les Fenêtres' to admit the light of day, the dominance of joy over melancholy and of events over legends in 'Arbre' now tip the balance. Daniel Oster's comment on the transition from 'Zone' to 'Ondes' appears to come close to the truth : 'après le miroir brisé vers le dedans, la vitre éclatée vers le dehors'. (9) Now Apollinaire is sure, as he says in 'La cravate et la montre' (OPo p. 192), that 'la beauté de la vie passe la douleur de mourir'. He seems reconciled with a world of passing time, changing appearances.

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Apollinaire's intention in 'Ondes' is to catch up with the present, to write a poetry of here and everywhere now, an intention which he expresses in his reply to an enquête in La Vie in 1914. This text can be read as a poem or as a manifesto, closer to the poet's true mind than the earlier Antitradition futuriste. It reads as follows :

Mon idéal d'art : mes sens et mon imagination, point d'idéal, mais la vérité toujours nouvelle.

Point d'hypocrisie, mais vérité du moment, point d'idéal, mais invention.

Vérité : authentiques faussetés, fantômes véritables.

Point d'idéal : mais tout ce qui existe : moi-même, mes sens, mon imagination ; les autres, leurs sens, leur imagination ; les choses, leurs aspects, leurs propriétés, les surprises, les êtres qu'elles engendrent et ce qu'elles modifient.

(9) Daniel OSTER, Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 36.

Point d'idéal : la surprise, l'invention, c'est-à-dire le bon sens toujours surprenant, toujours imprévu, c'est-à-dire la vérité.

Point d'idéal : moi-même, les autres, les choses, la vérité.

Moi-même : l'inquiétude, l'épreuve, rire aux larmes, la liberté, le présent.

Les autres : les gestes, les goûts, les coutumes, les actes méprisés et sans importance, les voix, les langages, le passé.

Les choses : les fantômes, l'inconnu, l'avenir.

La surprise : la vérité, l'éternité. (10)

Here is a fine definition of the poetry of 'Ondes', including just one mention of 'le passé' and an opening onto eternity, but a predominant emphasis on 'le présent', 'vérité du moment', 'la vérité toujours nouvelle', the poetry of surprise, opening onto other people, the revaluation of banality, 'les actes méprisés et sans importance', the conversation poems crystallised in the words 'les voix, les langages'. Above all Apollinaire repeats the phrase 'Point d'idéal'. Idealism, the poet's latent powers, human potential, the world as it could be and life as it should be, these possibilities now hold less interest for the poet. The insistence on communication, shared experience, the observation of exterior phenomena limit the poet's interest in a lonely search for wisdom, the seer's powers, the gift of prophecy. In 'Les Fiançailles', a poem of prophecy and transcendence to be achieved through suffering, he was dismayed at the limits imposed by human senses. 'Ondes' opens with praise of the senses, praise of immediacy and pleasure, against metaphysics.

Apollinaire is concerned to demystify art, and we may detect the influence of Picasso here. In an important article on the painter published in Montjoie! 14 March 1913, (11) he writes : 'On ne choisit pas dans le

(10) OC III, p. 892.

(11) OC IV, pp. 297-299.

moderne', a comment in the spirit of the haphazard listing of the qualities of his modernism in the later La Vie manifesto. Apollinaire refers to Picasso's Cubist collages and proclaims that art is now 'un métier d'ouvrier', no longer the sublime occupation of an élite, and all material is valid, offered in its beautiful everyday simplicity : 'une chanson de deux sous, un timbre-poste véritable, un morceau de journal quotidien [...]'. L'art du peintre n'ajouterait aucun élément pittoresque à la vérité de ces objets'. For the moment this new 'vérité' (to which he also refers in La Vie) replaces that greater Truth to which he sought the key in the past. Any one of these 'objets authentiques', stuck onto or painted on the canvas and which Braque used to call 'une certitude', is for Apollinaire 'le cadre intérieur du tableau'. The frontier between art and life is being redrawn. 'Lettre-Océan' includes a stamp and post-mark and such picture-poems break the frame which held poetry in its place on the page so that now art and life flood into each other. This new use of space also breaks the frontiers between various art-forms especially between poetry and painting, where visibility meets legibility. And so Orphism, the unity of the arts, is born. (12)

The 'ready-mades' of Marcel Duchamp, those elements which in reply to the enquête Apollinaire would see raised to the level of art, are also in the spirit of parts of 'Ondes'. And Duchamp has another importance for Apollinaire at this time. According to Robert Delaunay Apollinaire regrouped all the arts of the day under the title of Orphism in order to create a united front which would better convince the public, a practical and pragmatic tactic :

(12) In March 1913 this idea is taking form under the label 'dramatisme orphique', words which give a nod in the direction of Henri-Martin Barzun and which Apollinaire calls 'la définition de toutes les tendances des arts et des lettres d'aujourd'hui, depuis le cubisme des peintres jusqu'au lyrisme de nos poèmes' (OC IV, p. 294).

La raison d'Apollinaire de rassembler toutes les tendances étaient [sic] connue à l'époque, il voulait que les inquiétudes et les recherches des artistes fassent une masse, un front unique devant l'incompréhension du public et amateurs de l'époque. (13)

This desire was doubtless Apollinaire's major preoccupation at the time and he lends Marcel Duchamp a principal role in this reconciliation of art and society. On Duchamp's work Apollinaire writes :

Cet art peut produire des oeuvres d'une force dont on n'a pas idée. Il se peut même qu'il joue un rôle social.

De même que l'on avait promené une oeuvre de Cimabue, notre siècle a vu promener triomphalement pour être mené aux Arts-et-Métiers, l'aéroplane de Blériot tout chargé d'humanité, d'efforts millénaires, d'art nécessaire. Il sera peut-être réservé à un artiste aussi dégagé de préoccupations esthétiques, aussi préoccupé d'énergie que Marcel Duchamp, de réconcilier l'Art et le Peuple. (14)

The reference to Cimabue, whose 'Vierge aux anges' hangs in the Louvre, is interesting in that this artist, who in the second half of the thirteenth century gave life to the stiff and stylised Greek Byzantine style was, with his technique of chiaroscuro, a forerunner of Giotto, a precursor of the Renaissance. In the Pierre Larousse Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle we read that 'son chef-d'oeuvre est la fameuse "Madone", qui émerveilla tellement ses contemporains qu'elle fut portée processionnellement de son atelier à Santa-Maria Novella, au bruit des fanfares et des acclamations du peuple florentin, si épris, comme on sait, des choses de l'art'. Apollinaire is therefore looking back to an idealised Middle Ages, a society in which art is intimately linked with the daily life of the community and concerns everybody, not just an élite. Art and the people are one. The contemporary equivalent of Cimabue's marvellous painting is, for Apollinaire, Blériot's cross-Channel aircraft, which had been exhibited in the streets of Paris and at the Grand-Palais before being transferred to

(13) Robert DELAUNAY, Du Cubisme à l'art abstrait, p. 172.

(14) OC IV, p. 51.

the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers on 13 October 1909. It still hangs there in the deconsecrated church which constitutes that institution's museum and it may have been this sight, a horizontal cross floating in the nave, which suggested the image of Christ the aviator in 'Zone'. The link with Duchamp is appropriate in that by juxtaposing Cimabue's Madonna and Blériot's aircraft Apollinaire is asking 'What is art?'. Marcel Duchamp, whom Apollinaire knew well, especially since their stay together with Francis Picabia in the Jura in the autumn of 1912, would consistently place modern, everyday objects deliberately and provocatively in an unexpected context. Such an object, placed in an exhibition or an art gallery, is viewed with new eyes, necessarily revalued, and so the fatal gulf between art and everyday life is bridged.

The comparison with Cimabue also suggests that Apollinaire considers society to be on the brink of a new Renaissance, an era which would see the dissolving of barriers between the arts and between all human activities. Human creativity would be applied in all domains, and already Apollinaire is approaching the later proposition that poetry could exist in all areas of activity. And the new Renaissance poet would be able to claim 'Et moi aussi je suis peintre'.

Rivalise donc poète avec les étiquettes des parfumeurs
he writes in 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry', setting the meeting of commercial art and industry as an example, and indeed Duchamp will follow this suggestion with his 1921 work 'Belle Haleine, Eau de Violette' which would be photographed and used as a cover for New York Dada. (15) Such efforts necessarily tend to desacralise art, as does Duchamp's refusal to treat art as anything other than a game, devoting a large part of his time to the most noble of games, chess. Apollinaire too is at play in 'Ondes', as in 'La cravate et la montre' where he writes : 'COMME L'ON S'AMUSE BIEN'. More at ease with himself, he is closing the gap between the outside

(15) Jean CLAIR, L'Oeuvre de Marcel Duchamp. Catalogue raisonné, p. 103.

Apollinaire, laughing and joyful in company, and the introverted poet, dreaming alone at his desk.

Another reading of 'Ondes' brings Apollinaire closer to Giorgio de Chirico whose paintings raise to the level of magic common objects such as a rubber glove, a biscuit, a sea-shell, a tailor's dummy. Indeed the empathy between the two men was such that according to André Breton, Chirico passed on to Apollinaire the important task of naming his pictures, painter and poet working hand in hand. (16)

While speaking of painters we should mention Marc Chagall who is honoured in 'A travers l'Europe' (OPO p. 201) and whose figures floating in space, free from gravity, correspond to Apollinaire's own experiments with words set free on the page so that all space becomes the poet's domain.

'Tour' and 'Les Fenêtres' come down to us as the fruit of Apollinaire's friendship with Robert and Sonia Delaunay. At the studio, 3 rue des Grands Augustins, where Apollinaire stayed for six weeks in late 1912, Robert Delaunay moved into abstraction, and with his 'simultaneous contrast' of colours took his art away from the consecutive reading of the canvas required by figurative or narrative painting. So Apollinaire was encouraged to develop his own forms of poetic simultaneity: the temporal and spatial simultaneity already present in the texts of Alcools, the new picture-poems which encourage simultaneous assimilation of text and image. As Delaunay himself wrote: 'Je pense que les "Fenêtres" marquent ce qu'Apollinaire appelait la "peinture pure", comme il a cherché une poésie pure: une date'. (17) Perhaps Apollinaire is closer however to Sonia Delaunay who did much to foster a partnership of the arts, collaborating with Blaise Cendrars on

(16) André BRETON, 'Le Surréalisme et la peinture' (1928), in Le Surréalisme et la peinture, p. 18. The closeness of the two men is confirmed by a letter from Chirico in Paris-Midi, 16 March 1914, p.2, distinguishing Apollinaire from other art critics: 'Sauf M. Apollinaire presque tous parlèrent de "décors de théâtre". Or je voudrais que ces messieurs sachent que mes peintures n'ont rien à voir avec des décors ce qui d'ailleurs est suffisamment prouvé par leurs titres'.

(17) Robert DELAUNAY, Du Cubisme à l'art abstrait, p. 171.

a wonderful amalgam of language, colour and form, taking art out of the museums and galleries with her design work, producing clothes, décors, books, posters, etc.

In 1924 Francis Picabia, remembering Apollinaire, wrote that 'Les deux dernières années précédant la guerre, nous vécûmes beaucoup ensemble ; presque tous les soirs nous nous retrouvions pour aller fumer de l'opium chez des amis [...]'. (18) They went to England together in July 1912 and on Saturday 10 October 1912 Apollinaire skipped a lecture he was to give on Cubism at the Université populaire de Saint-Antoine in order to accompany Picabia and Marcel Duchamp on their trip to Etival in the Jura. Picabia recalled : 'Nous passâmes là-bas une quinzaine de jours ; nous discussions sur le Cubisme, sur les possibilités d'une nouvelle évolution'. (19) His friendship with Picabia was deeper and longer-lasting than that with Delaunay. In November 1913 he suggested that the latter had borrowed the term 'simultané' from the Futurists (20) and when in March 1914 in L'Intransigeant he referred to Delaunay's work as 'futurisme tournoyant', (21) the painter protested and Apollinaire had to resign from his post as the paper's art critic. His friendship with Picabia, however, continued through the war, Picabia sending Apollinaire money, Apollinaire sending Picabia material for his paper 391. (22) Picabia was born in 1879, so the two men were of about the same age, and like Apollinaire he had been educated by the Marist Fathers. He too had a rather troubled schooling, for he was expelled from the Collège Stanislas in Paris when he was thirteen. By nature apolitical, he had absorbed the anarchist ideas of his friends Lucien, Manzanà and Rodolphe Pissarro with whom he painted on the banks of the Loing during his Impressionist days early in the century. He

(18) Francis PICABIA, 'Guillaume Apollinaire', L'Esprit nouveau, 26, October 1924.

(19) Ibid.

(20) OC IV, p. 353.

(21) OC IV, p. 374.

(22) See letters from Apollinaire to Picabia, 22 January 1915 in Michel SA-NOUILLET, Dada à Paris, p. 536, and 21 July 1915, OC IV, p. 866 (to Picabia's wife).

spent his fortune freely and bought his first motor car in 1898, this enthusiasm being one he shared with the Italian Futurists - Marinetti's Futurist manifesto in Le Figaro (20 February 1909) had suggested that a racing car was more beautiful than the Louvre's 'Victoire de Samothrace'. In 1949 Marcel Duchamp would call Picabia 'the greatest exponent of freedom in art' and describe his career as 'a kaleidoscopic series of art experiences. They are hardly related one to another in their external appearances but all are definitely marked by a strong personality'. (23) For Apollinaire in 1914 Picabia's painting was 'un art qui n'enferme plus aucune règle'. (24) Picabia's painting was an expression of his attitude to life. As he said in 1917, 'Il faut traverser la vie, rouge ou bleu, tout nu, avec une musique de pêcheur subtil, prêt à l'extrême pour la fête'. (25) This is exactly the free spirit of 'Ondes', and Picabia's presence accentuated the most daring and joyful aspects of Apollinaire's creativity. In 'Ondes' poetry is a festival of movement, colour and music, the poems opening on the page like fireworks in the night sky, an expression of Apollinaire's conviction that 'Les canons ne me paraissent utiles qu'en artillerie', (26) a sentiment which Picabia would echo when he wrote : 'Le seul mouvement c'est le mouvement perpétuel!' (27) Picabia is one of those men 'Libres de tous liens' and just as Picabia's great abstracts 'Udnie' and 'Edtaonisl' 'peuvent se réclamer de l'affirmation de Poussin : "la peinture n'a d'autre but que la délectation et la joie des yeux"', (28) so Apollinaire's own poetry at this time attempts a new form of sensual immediacy :

J'écris seulement pour vous exalter
O sens ô sens chéris

(23) Marcel DUCHAMP, Marchand de sel, p. 142.

(24) OC IV, p. 275.

(25) 391, 5, June 1917, p. 2.

(26) TS, p. 25.

(27) 391, 19, October 1924, p. 1.

(28) OC IV, p. 349.

Picabia did not indulge in Delaunay's theorising about painting. So for Apollinaire 'Point d'idéal' was a watch-word, the moment is paramount and every poem, every line a new surprise.

According to André Breton, 'Picabia demeure le maître de la surprise, de cette surprise qu'Apollinaire tint pour "le grand ressort nouveau". [...] Et je tiens d'Apollinaire que le pouvoir de surprise, grâce auquel il s'est le mieux dépassé, il estimait en être redevable à Picabia, le premier à avoir mis ce moteur en marche'. (29) Of course surprise is essential to earlier poems, such as 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', but Picabia's company encouraged Apollinaire to accentuate this aspect of his art and so make 'Ondes' the most exciting and varied collection of poetry he had written. As Picasso and Braque worked together to develop Cubism, so Picabia shared with Apollinaire the adventure of visual poetry, joining texts to drawings so that when in 1914 Apollinaire surveys the history of what he calls 'simultanéité typographique' he will salute the importance of 'les poèmes peints par Picabia, différents encore de tous les précédents'. (30) Apollinaire will reserve for 391 his only painted poem, the only calligramme he coloured, 'L'Horloge de demain' (OPO p. 682). This poem as it appeared in 391 n° 4, March 1917, is in fact the result of a collaboration between the two men, for the large arabesques in metallic colours, in a different scale to the rest of the design were superimposed by Picabia. (31) Picabia was the first of the modern painters to be so fascinated, like Apollinaire, by the interplay of text and design, a correspondence which Apollinaire emphasised in 1914 in his letter to Fagus from Deauville in which he wrote 'Mes images ont la valeur d'un vers'. (32) Here, of course, Apollinaire means that in his picture-poems there is no tautology, the lay-out of the poem does not just provide an image of the subject of the text but adds a further poetic and polyvalent element to the work, another dimension which can be interpreted and related to the rest of the ensemble in its own right. In this too Apollinaire parallels the researches of Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp in that they were the first to abolish the tautology

(29) André BRETON, Le Surréalisme et la peinture, p. 221.

(30) OC III, p. 892.

(31) Michel SANOUILLET, Francis Picabia et '391', II, pp. 63-64.

(32) Points et contrepoints, 105, December 1972, p. 3.

which traditionally tied a picture to its title. Whereas previously a painting of a sunset was called 'Sunset', Picabia and Duchamp used language to create a less obvious, more subtle and poetic link between a work and its title, emphasizing the latter's new importance by including it on the canvas.

Le chauffeur se tient au volant
Et chaque fois que sur la route
Il corne en passant le tournant
Il paraît à perte de vue
Un univers encore vierge

Turning the pages of 'Ondes' we are reminded of this strophe from 'Les Collines', perhaps a look back to the fast car rides of 1913 and 1914, Picabia at the wheel, the shared excitement of swift changing landscapes, speeding through the curves, which Apollinaire so brilliantly channeled into his poetry at that time.

The imagination of the poets joins that of the painters among the cross-currents of influence which flow through 'Ondes'. Blaise Cendrars, 'le sonaigre de cette voix à venir' is present, injecting perhaps the stimulus of competition. L'Antitradition futuriste may have been 'une évidente parodie' (33) but F. T. Marinetti, 'un bon garçon chauve, enthousiaste mais trop sobre' (34) as Apollinaire described him in 1914, nevertheless makes his presence felt in 'Ondes'. His manifesto 'L'imagination sans fils ou les mots en liberté', dated 18 May 1913, probably encouraged Apollinaire to

(33) Michel DECAUDIN, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes, p. 474.

(34) OC III, p. 895.

liberate sounds and words from the conventional pattern of straight lines in regimental order across the page. Of course 'Lettre-Océan', built round the Eiffel Tower as radio transmitter and receiver, refers directly to the possibilities of universal communication born with the 'Télégraphie sans fils'. The Russian connection is equally important and as Susan Compton suggested in 1978, 'A direct line can be drawn from the Rayist poetry, through Kamensky's page poems, to Apollinaire's experiments with visual poetry'. (35) It is probable that Mikhail Larionov introduced Apollinaire to works by his friends Vasily Kamensky and A. Semenov, the Russian writers who in 1913 made poems which were the literary counterpart to Larionov's Rayist paintings.

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The feeling that he had an important role to play in this international brotherhood of creativity and artistic experiment encouraged Apollinaire to break out of the carapace of myths and obsessions which had characterised his poetry since L'Enchanteur pourrissant, to become the poet whom Pascal Pia named 'l'Apollinaire débridé de 1912 ou de 1913'. (36) 'LA CRAVATE DOULOUREUSE QUE TU PORTES ET QUI T'ORNE O CIVILISE OTE-LA SI TU VEUX BIEN RESPIRER' wrote Apollinaire in 'La Cravate et la montre'. In 'Ondes' the liberty sought and idealised in earlier texts is found in a new art which itself becomes a model of potential freedom. Jean Cocteau remembered that 'Il me parlait toujours du "poème-événement", qu'il situait au-dessus de tout autre'. Such poems 'ne commentent aucun événement. Ils sont événement qu'on commente'. (37) In 1941 André Breton

(35) Susan P. COMPTON, The World Backwards, Russian Futurist Books, 1912-1916, p. 84.

(36) Pascal PIA, Apollinaire, p. 50.

(37) Jean COCTEAU, Poésie Critique I, pp. 91-92.

commented on the autonomy of each of the poems in 'Ondes' 'dont chacun présente une valeur d'événement' (38) and in Entretiens he remembered Apollinaire as

le champion du 'poème-événement', c'est-à-dire l'apôtre de cette conception qui exige de tout nouveau poème qu'il soit une refonte totale des moyens de son auteur, qu'il coure son aventure propre hors des chemins déjà tracés, au mépris des gains réalisés antérieurement. Quelle mise en garde contre les poncifs dont on devait si peu nous faire grâce après lui! Et vous savez qu'il était de force à tenir cette gageure... (39)

As each poem is an effort to escape from the consecutive nature of literature, particularly through the use of visual patterns, so each poem is also a totally new beginning. The whole collection, which nevertheless gives an impression of unity, is an expression of the new planetary awareness of millions of simultaneous acts and voices, the autonomy of the individual who nevertheless has his place in the larger kaleidoscope of all human activity. In March 1913 Apollinaire described Henri-Martin Barzun's movement Dramatism as 'l'expression de notre siècle où l'univers et l'individu sont en correspondance mutuelle, reflétant un conflit éternel et admirable'. (40) Conflict and correspondence are the frame of 'Ondes' and if the poet enjoys the perfect liberty of creation he is also prey to the solitude of anyone who breaks new ground, a solitude which Apollinaire now rejects. So he writes such poems as 'Tour' and 'Les Fenêtres' which have no place for the word 'je', which are open on the world, poems in which the world speaks for itself and in which language, the word itself, not the poet's consciousness, is the material of poetry. The same principle lies behind 'Lundi rue Christine', an orchestration of random voices heard in a café which continues into 'Lettre-Océan', a poem containing snatches of the same conversations with the added realism of modern noises. So the poems are juxtaposed in 'Ondes', as their texts overlap, the lines 'Jacques c'était

(38) André BRETON, Le Surréalisme et la peinture, p. 66.

(39) André BRETON, Entretiens, p. 31.

(40) Fritz LAUTENBACH, 'A propos d'un article inconnu d'Apollinaire dans Der Sturm', GA II, (1972), pp. 131-150, (pp. 134-136).

délicieux ' et 'La Tunisie tu fondes un journal ' continuing 'Lundi rue Christine' in 'Lettre-Océan'. The line 'J'étais au bord du Rhin quand tu partis pour le Mexique' reminds us, however, that these poems, new and unique, are continuations of 'Les Femmes', the first of the conversation poems written ten years earlier. And though 'Lundi rue Christine' may look like a transcription of brute reality denying the traditional role of the poet, a poem 'dégagé de préoccupations esthétiques', in fact the poet's voice does quietly intervene, describing the décor, commenting on events from outside the conversations :

Trois becs de gaz allumés
[...]
Des piles de soucoupes, des fleurs un calendrier
[...]
Le chat noir traverse la brasserie
[...]
Le sol est semé de sciure

These phrases correspond exactly to the interventions of the poet among the snatches of conversation in 'Les Femmes' :

Dans la maison du vigneron les femmes cousent
[...]
Le rossignol aveugle essaya de chanter
[...]
Les femmes se signaient dans la nuit indécise

The Rhineland poem presents a world of folk legend, with poetry in proverbs, a situation rooted in one place but stretching back through time, past generations piled in the earth, their voices still heard in the old wives' tales. The 1913 poem is immediate but cosmopolitan, crossing space rather than time, in a language which is more racy and more brutal, a reflection of a new environment, changing fast, offering new thrills. So, moving from Alcools to 'Ondes', the poet / narrator approaches a form of transparency conferred by a technique which invites the intervention of voices and experiences other than his own. The creator and the world outside coexist in the present moment.

Yet despite the new primacy of language, of the present moment speaking for itself, despite a denial of the 'ideal' pushed aside by the poet's determination to experience fully the 'real', among the strands of continuity which we have already noted in 'Ondes' are woven references to preoccupations analysed in our examinations of social and religious themes in earlier poetry. So, for example, Leroy Breunig and J. -C. Chevalier note that the manuscript of Méditations esthétiques, which dates from this period, is constructed 'sur la base des sept méditations - et nous ne pouvons croire que le choix de ce chiffre sacré soit dû au hasard'. (41) If Cubism broke the rules of traditional perspective, abstract art for Apollinaire takes the next step towards total liberty, transcending the human to become universal and infinite, an expression of what he calls the fourth dimension, 'l'immensité de l'espace s'éternisant dans toutes les directions à un moment déterminé'. The poet interprets this advance as an expression of the desire to 'atteindre aux proportions de l'idéal', an escape from the three dimensions of material reality to reach 'la grandeur des formes métaphysiques. C'est pourquoi l'art actuel, s'il n'est pas l'émanation directe des croyances religieuses déterminées, présente cependant plusieurs caractères du grand art, c'est-à-dire de l'art religieux'. (42) Much of Méditations esthétiques is composed of past articles sewn together and these remarks are an adaptation of 'La Peinture nouvelle' which Apollinaire published in Les Soirées de Paris in April 1912, from before his friendship with Picabia, for example, from before the post 'Zone' poetry of 'Ondes'. They can be related to the notes written in 1910 for Le Bestiaire, for if he was looking back to the Fauvist paintings of Derain and Dufy when at that time he described painting as a 'langage lumineux' through which 'tout se colore', then after the sobriety of Cubism the new abstract art of Delaunay and Picabia was a return to his ideal of sublime beauty which he had compared to 'la perfection qui est Dieu lui-même'.

(41) Leroy C. BREUNIG and J. -C. CHEVALIER, Méditations esthétiques : Les Peintres cubistes, p. 35.

(42) OC IV, pp. 20-21.

And these ideas find their continuation within the limits of 'Ondes'. Metaphysical light shines out from within the text of 'Liens' dissolving divisions to leave humanity united in love. This unity is expressed in the sound of church-bells ringing out 'à travers l'Europe', in the Biblical reference

Tours de Babel changées en ponts

in the 'Araignées-Pontifes', leading up to the

Blancs rayons de lumière
Cordes et Concorde

in which the capital 'C' on 'Concorde' emphasises the universality of this reconciliation. Similarly in 'Il pleut' Apollinaire turns back to 1908, to 'Le Brasier' whose 'galop soudain des étoiles' and 'hennissement mâle Des centaures', 'acteurs inhumains', seem to prefigure the galloping clouds in Deauville : 'ces nuages cabrés se prennent à hennir'. In 'Les Fiançailles' the suffering of martyrdom brought transcendence and powers of prophecy as the bonds holding the poet fell away in flames, 'Liens déliés par une libre flamme'. The same experience is relived in 'Il pleut' : 'écoute tomber les liens qui te retiennent'.

The universal harmony envisaged in 'Liens' is again suggested in the magic form of the circle everywhere present in 'Un Fantôme des nuées' (OPo p. 193). The circle of spectators, the weights lifted, the juggling, the turning organ handle, the boy on the globe, his perfect cart-wheel, 'cette musique des formes' is the harmony of the spheres. Breaking the chains of destiny mankind steps forward to dominate creation, defy gravity, raising whole cities in the air, dancing on a planet. The ancient music of the organ is superseded by this new 'musique des formes', 'une musique si délicate que nul parmi les spectateurs n'y fut insensible'. Yet there is continuity and if the boy-artist in the poem seems more than human this is because a long accumulation of wisdom and secret know-

ledge passed from generation to generation finds its realisation and perfect expression in his person. The old man at the organ has a 'visage couvert d'ancêtres' and the time is ripe for the Past, which he personifies, to give birth to the Future. Watching the old man we see that

La cendre de ses pères lui sortait en barbe grisonnante
Il portait ainsi toute son hérédité au visage

And when he hides his face we see his hands

Aux doigts semblables aux descendants de son destin
Foetus minuscules qui lui sortaient de la barbe

His beard is ashen for the phoenix is born from its own ashes and the circular movements of his hands like the child's acrobatics represent the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Naturally 'l'enfant miraculeux' appears, newly born, from beneath the old man's barrel-organ. Both characters wear 'rose pulmonaire', for the boy continues the man's life.

With this troupe of travelling entertainers we return to the enchanted world of Rhineland gypsies and saltimbanques, masters of nature who carry their inherited secrets across space and time and through the landscape of Apollinaire's imagination. But the images of this poem, the old man with the barrel-organ, the slim boy on the globe and the pale colours of the scene are taken directly from Pablo Picasso's canvases. This amalgam of two universes, that of the painter and that of the poet, is a recreation in poetry of a beautiful prose passage from May 1905 when in La Plume Apollinaire published his article 'Les Jeunes : Picasso, peintre'. (43) The pagan freedom and magical powers of these beings who grow without the blinkers of false faith, unwanted indoctrination, is described as follows :

(43) OC IV, p. 65.

Il y a des enfants qui ont erré sans apprendre le catéchisme. [...] Ces enfants qu'on n'embrasse pas comprennent tant. Maman, aime-moi bien ! Ils savent sauter et les tours qu'il réussissent sont comme des évolutions mentales.

The children of 1905 continue their wandering to reappear on the Boulevard Saint-Germain in 1913. The boy in the poem is aware of his power as he moves in time with the stars and planets, genuflecting 'aux quatre points cardinaux' to make his performance a magic ritual. Turning and spinning, his movements match not only the constellations, but also the working of the imagination. The microcosm reflects the macrocosm and so the infinite universe finds its reflection in the mind of man. In the poem, 'chaque spectateur cherchait en soi l'enfant miraculeux' as if each one of them, through the sense of wonder imposed by the magic boy, recognises the infinite potential which stretches unfathomed in his own soul. Something stirs, long forgotten powers shift in their sleep just as, in the 1905 article, Apollinaire wrote :

Si nous savions, tous les dieux s'éveilleraient. Nés de la connaissance profonde que l'humanité retenait d'elle-même, les panthéismes adorés qui lui ressemblaient se sont assoupis. Mais malgré les sommeils éternels, il y a des yeux où se reflètent des humanités semblables à des fantômes divins et joyeux.

Such a humanity slumbers in us all and again we remember the eyes which glimmer in 'Marizibill' :

Leurs yeux sont des feux mal éteints

And so in 'Un Fantôme de nuées' the music of the dance creates a sympathetic harmony in nature. Just as the 'Saltimbanques' in Alcools command nature,

Chaque arbre fruitier se résigne
Quand de très loin ils lui font signe

so the dance of 'Un fantôme de nuées' calls forth the

Musique angélique des arbres

as the ancient divinities of nature reawake and for a moment we glimpse a return to that 'liberté végétale' which human harmony with free and fertile creation could bring.

This is a poem on mortality and its transcendence through art, a transcendence personified by the marvellous boy. It is an allegory of Apollinaire's own advance from an ancient and melancholy music, the thirteenth-century music of 'Le Pont Mirabeau' for example, (44) to a new music of forms in the calligrammes. Both forms of music are present in 'Un Fantôme de nuées' and in 'Ondes' as a whole. By matching on the page the forms created by the boy in the street Apollinaire realises his own divinity, creates his own immortality.

'Sur les prophéties' (OPo p. 186) is a defence of the supernatural, Apollinaire's own version of 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy'. The prosaic style of the poem is an attempt to make the unlikely seem reasonable, to convince the listener that beneath the mask of appearances is a world of marvels. The faces of superstition are 'dieux sans figure' and their presence, like that in 'Zone' of the 'Christ inférieurs', evokes dark mysteries to which few seers have access. Apollinaire stands back from total belief in such powers, but he is always ready to be astonished. Furthermore, he is hardly surprised by his own unexploited talents :

Au demeurant j'en crois pas mais je regarde et écoute et notez
Que je lis assez bien dans la main

Psychic powers are more finely developed in others :

Mais Madame Deroy est la mieux inspirée
La plus précise

The clairvoyant Marguerite he has probably heard of through Picasso as she is from Céret, one of the painter's favourite haunts. But his faith in Madame Deroy is based on personal experience for, as he wrote in his 'Vie anecdotique' of 16 October 1911, (45) she had predicted his imprisonment to him. This did not prevent the unfortunate event from taking place, of course, and

(44) See Mario ROQUES, 'Guillaume Apollinaire et les vieilles chansons',
La Revue, 15 January 1948, pp. 311-321.

(45) OC II, p. 332.

because of this, and as a concession to the scepticism of his readers, in his article, as in his poem for André Billy, he has to qualify his enthusiasm : 'Cet événement bizarre me force désormais à croire aux oracles ; il m'engage également à douter de leur utilité'. But the gypsy's secret powers owe much to his familiarity with nature, and in 'Sur les prophéties' Apollinaire turns to nature to authenticate superstition. Such powers are not religious :

Il y a avant tout une façon d'observer la nature
Et d'interpréter la nature
Qui est très légitime

Apollinaire seems ripe for the return to nature and to occult speculation which, as we shall see, the war will bring.

A poem to be read in conjunction with 'Sur les prophéties' is '69 666 ... 6 9 ...' (OPo p. 594) in which Apollinaire continues to search the mysteries of 'tout ce que l'on nomme occultisme', mixing eroticism and esoterism in the figure 69, 'impudique et cabalistique'. Hypersensitive now to the possible significance of shapes on the page he plays with the form of the figures but again keeps them at arm's length, afraid of their spell, refusing to plunge through to the other side of the mirror in case there is no return :

Et ces arcanes seraient plus sombres
Mais j'ai peur de les sonder
Qui sait si là n'est pas l'éternité

The fear he expresses here, as in 'Sur les prophéties' in which he writes

J'ai connu un sciomancien mais je n'ai pas voulu qu'il interrogeât
[mon ombre

is evidence of Apollinaire's constant suspicion that we are blinkered and that beyond human vision lies a truth which is perhaps too awful to contemplate.

Yet he is drawn by the mystery and readers of palms, readers of cards, all those who may have the gift of second-sight, fascinate Apollinaire.

His own 'Musicien de Saint-Merry' (OPo p. 188) is of their number for though blind he moves freely in the streets of the Marais and spell-binds women to lead them away across the frontier imagined in '69 666... 6 9...'

Par-delà la mort camuse

Of course Apollinaire as director of this drama could confidently guide his blind piper for he knew this part of Paris well, having spent the morning of 4 May 1913 leading a group of sight-seers around the Saint-Merry area on behalf of the 'Société des Amis du Paris pittoresque'. His five pages of notes for the tour can be consulted in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and in them, apart from references to the 'femmes folieuses' of the area, to 'une boulangerie du chapitre de St. Merri', to the 'insurgés du cloître St. Merri', we find in the notes concerning Rue de la Verrerie a reference reading : 'L'inventeur des cartes à jouer y habitait sous Charles VI'. (46) This street's connection with playing-cards is strengthened in Les Soirées de Paris n° 4, May 1912, which contains a story by André Tudesq entitled 'La Galonnière, sybille extra-lucide' in which a card-reader tells the story of the Tarot :

Mais c'est Etteilla, le grand Etteilla, qui le premier rendit publiques nos lois de l'art divinatoire. Tout ce que le Paris du temps comptait de riche et de bien né, princesses de sang, dames de la cour, douairières du faubourg Saint-Germain, grandes bourgeoises et coquettes, affluèrent à son hôtel, rue Verrerie.

Tudesq's 'Etteilla' is an anagram of Alliette, a renowned card-reader from the second half of the eighteenth century, author of numerous treatises and oracles which can also be consulted in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Apollinaire's blind musician seems to combine the qualities of Alliette the seer who, according to André Tudesq, was so fatally attractive to such a variety of fine women, with those of the poet himself leading his troupe of sight-seers - and we can imagine them to be predominantly female - through those same streets on a May morning. Certainly for Apollinaire the art of the

(46) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, ff. 119-123.

guide was close to that of the musician, particularly to the magic art of Amphion, poet and flute player, as he explains in the first adventure of Baron d'Ormesan, 'L'Amphion faux messie', in L'Hérésiarque et Cie (OPr p. 195). These magical associations placed in the context of authentic geographical details lend a strange atmosphere to the poem, an impression of eternity present in time, particularly as we find the narrator alone with a priest at the end of the tale, which is bound by the sound of church-bells, the bells of Saint-Merry ringing for the morning service and then for Angelus in the evening. The priest amplifies the spiritual dimension of the poem but is also present because of his life of celibacy, for this is another 'poème de fin d'amour' and when the women are led away the poet is completing an exorcism. But the priest will be banished from the stage version of the poem, A Quelle heure un train partira-t-il pour Paris ?, (47) to be replaced by a soldier, a representative of another predominantly male milieu. As Philippe Renaud has pointed out, line thirty-seven of the poem contains an implied attack on Catholicism and the Church's missionary imperialism :

Mission catholique de Bôma qu'as-tu fait du sculpteur

As Renaud says, 'le sculpteur congolais semble être victime de cette religion'. (48) Remembering Apollinaire's appreciation of the religious significance of African sculptures, another spiritual dimension of the poem (the conflict of two religions) becomes evident. If there is friction between Catholicism and primitive African religion it is probable that Apollinaire would be on the side he chose at the end of 'Zone'. His hopes and intuitions are more obscure than the dogmatic faith of the Church.

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(47) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, A Quelle heure un train partira-t-il pour Paris ?, unpublished manuscript, Arensberg Archives, The Francis Bacon Library, Claremont, California, U. S. A.

(48) Philippe RENAUD, 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry', CAIEF, 23, May 1971, pp. 181-195, (p. 189).

These comments on religion and superstition in 'Ondes' qualify the 'point d'idéal' immediacy with which we began. Such provisions also hold good in another domain. Marc Poupon has informed us that at the end of 1913 Apollinaire was reading the anarchist newspaper Révolution, passed on to him by Blaise Cendrars, co-founder of the anarchist paper Les Hommes nouveaux and to which he also contributed articles. (49) In one five-line section of 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' are mentioned foreign ambassadors visiting Louis XIV ; Suger the eleventh-century monk and politician who was Louis VI's ambassador to the pope and who founded the church of Saint-Denis, sepulchre of royalty ; and the days of revolution in 1832,

Quand l'émeute mourait autour de Saint-Merry

The death of kings, the passing age of royalty, always saddens a part of Apollinaire. The stage version of this poem ends with the lonely death of a king : 'Le souverain se suicide d'un coup de revolver'. But this sentiment, which adds another faintnote of melancholy to the music of the poem, is countered by the enthusiasm and energy implied in the theme of uprising which is placed at the centre of the text. And this follows on from three lines of upward movement which relate this poem to 'Poème lu au mariage d'André Salmon' and link the poet's personal aspirations to vertical growth with the new possibilities engendered by the nineteenth century's industrial revolution :

Nous nous ressemblons comme dans l'architecture du siècle
[dernier
Ces hautes cheminées pareilles à des tours
Nous allons plus haut maintenant et ne touchons plus le sol

Marc Poupon has also highlighted references in the poem to particular moments of social unrest, to the May 1913 bakers' strike during which

(49) Marc POUPON, Apollinaire et Cendrars, pp. 42-43.

two blackleg bakeries in rue de la Verrerie had their windows broken but attracted long queues of women, 'long comme un jour sans pain'. (50) Antoine Fongaro in his article 'Le vingt et un du mois de mai ...' (51) goes so far as to suggest that 'l'émeute sert de toile de fond au poème'. He does not miss the significance of the lines

En somme ô rieurs vous n'avez pas tiré grand-chose des hommes
Et à peine avez-vous extrait un peu de graisse de leur misère

two lines in which Apollinaire comes to the defence of those who, finding themselves at the bottom of the pile, occasionally try pushing upwards. As Fongaro says,

Le poète donne là une vision totale du conflit des classes :
les riches s'engraissent toujours de la misère des pauvres.
Dans cette perspective toutes les émeutes, toutes les révoltes
des misérables sont identiques. Alors il se pourrait que 'Le
21 du mois de mai' ait été placé là par Apollinaire pour rappeler
non sans humour noir, la date terrible du début de la 'semaine
sanglante', massacre systématique du peuple de Paris par les
Versaillais.

The 'rieurs' admonished are those cynics who, because of self-interest, ridicule hopes for the evolution of humanity, the poet's own assertions of human grandeur, of the unlimited potential of the individual. So the melancholy theme of the cortège, of passing time and the poet's personal distress at lost love are countered by this vertical movement which develops to open the poem out onto a more positive social perspective.

Apollinaire's opposition to the systematic imposition of low expectations, the stifling of growth by routine is repeated in 'Sur les prophéties' when the poet writes :

Tout le monde est prophète mon cher André Billy
Mais il y a si longtemps qu'on fait croire aux gens
Qu'ils n'ont aucun avenir qu'ils sont ignorants à jamais

(50) Marc POUPON, 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry', CAIEF, 23, May 1971, p. 212.

(51) GA 12, (1973), pp. 133-136.

Et idiots de naissance
Qu'on en a pris son parti

Rejecting theories of hereditary idiocy and inevitable ignorance, Apollinaire insists again on the expansion of human faculties in all men, just as in 'Un Fantôme de nuées' the miracle is there at the heart of every individual :

Mais chaque spectateur cherchait en soi l'enfant miraculeux

Antoine Fongaro's suggestion as to the importance of the date in 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' is perhaps supported by details of 'Un Fantôme de nuées' which, Apollinaire stipulates, is set on the afternoon of 13 July, the eve of Bastille Day, near the statue of Danton, another revolutionary symbol. At this time Apollinaire seems to walk the streets of Paris among the ghosts of past revolutions, as real to him as the circular movements of the acrobats.

The fundamental optimism of these attitudes is typical of the climate of the time, this brief, privileged period between the birth of the century and the outbreak of war, an era which finds its expression in the variety and joyful inventiveness of the poetry of 'Ondes'. And these poems are also the voice of a new and expanding internationalism, as if Apollinaire wished himself to stand like the Eiffel Tower as a Parisian transmitter and receiver of ideas for the whole of Europe and maybe the world. 'Liens' is dominated by images of international communication, under-sea cables, bridges, 'Sons de cloches à travers l'Europe'. 'Ondes' is the poetry of place-names, as radio, telephone, express trains and aircraft create the links which give unity to the continuing variety of nations. The forests of Africa, Turin, Paris, Vancouver, Hyères, Maintenon, New-York, the West-Indies flash before our eyes in 'Les Fenêtres'. In 'Arbre' we find Persia, Lyons, the whole of Europe, America, Leipzig, Finland, Norwegian shipping and the Transsiberian Express. 'Lundi rue Christine' is built from cosmopolitan conversations which evoke Tunis, Denmark, merchant shipping, Smyrne, Naples, China. 'Lettre-Océan' evokes the Rhineland,

a ship called 'L'Espagne', Mexico and the Eiffel Tower which we find again, of course, in 'Tour' and which stands at the centre of the radio waves which give a title to the whole collection. 'Sur les prophéties' evokes South Pacific islands, Céret in the French Pyrenees and Norway again, while the Parisian narrative of 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' is interrupted by passages of exotic simultaneity. In 'Un Fantôme de nuées' the poet mentions Belgium and a Russian workman from Longwy, 'Voyage' continues the theme of travel and its excitement : 'Où va donc ce train [...] ?' The title of 'A travers l'Europe' is itself a state of mind and a programme of action at the head of a text which evokes a Russian in Paris, the painter Chagall and, in the style of Valéry Larbaud, includes a line of Italian. Noëmi Blumenkranz-Onimus in her article 'Apollinaire et l'avant-garde internationale' (52) has summarized the poet's contacts with foreign artists, with Germany, England and Russia and it would seem that by the wonderful dissolving of frontiers in the poetry of 'Ondes' he is hoping to build his orphic unity of the arts on an international scale. It is interesting to note that Apollinaire has particularly strong contacts with Germany in the period immediately preceding the war. When in May 1914 'A travers l'Europe' appears in Der Sturm Apollinaire replaces the line of Italian with a line of German :

Ach du lieber Gott

He is on the best of terms with Herwarth Walden, the paper's editor, and in May 1914 he offers articles for Der Sturm on Chirico and Picabia in exchange for something he can publish in Les Soirées de Paris. He is also hoping to organise a Francis Picabia exhibition at Walden's Sturm Gallery in Berlin. (53) Robert Delaunay was already well known in Germany, having

(52) Noëmi BLUMENKRANZ-ONIMUS, 'Apollinaire et l'avant-garde internationale', Que vlo-ve ?, 21-22, July-October 1979.

(53) Letter from Guillaume Apollinaire to Herwarth Walden, 18 May 1914 in Paris - Berlin 1900-1933, Paris, CNACGP, 1978, p. 477, item 127.

been invited by the Russian émigré Wassily Kandinsky to participate in the first two Blauer Reiter exhibitions in Munich in 1911 and 1912. He had his own exhibition at the Sturm Gallery in Berlin early in 1913 and later that same year participated with Sonia Delaunay in the same gallery's First German Salon d'automne (Erster deutscher Herbst-Salon, 20 September - 1 December 1913) and it was on this occasion that Apollinaire made his return to Germany with Delaunay and started to make new friends here.

So when, 29 July 1914, Apollinaire wrote to Serge Férat, his Russian friend in Paris, describing as 'un joli poème' (54) 'Il pleut', this last poem of 'Ondes' in which he recalls all the 'merveilleuses rencontres de ma vie', he shares the innocence and the simplicity, the freshness of this composition, unaware as he is of the coming conflict which would destroy the fraternal simultaneity of his internationalism. All this is lost at a stroke when in 'La Petite auto' he crosses into the new era of 'Etendards', and the banners of nationalism, which he has rejected in the past, are raised once more :

Des géants furieux se dressaient sur l'Europe

Max Ernst from Cologne met Apollinaire at August Macke's house in Bonn during that autumn trip to Germany in 1913 - 'Il va sans dire que j'étais ému' he recalled. (55) Seeing what happened when war broke out, observing the unnatural twist of fate which would oppose Herwarth Walden and Guillaume Apollinaire, the twin destinies of two men who had much in common, he would comment :

Pour ceux qui sont portés à croire à l'ironie noire du destin, on pourrait rappeler le fait que ces deux hommes qui se sont connus et aimés, qui étaient hantés par les mêmes idées, ont péri 'ennemis', l'un le lendemain de la déclaration de guerre, l'autre la veille de l'armistice.

(54) Letter to Serge Férat, 29 July 1914, OPo p. 1085.

(55) Max ERNST, 'Notes pour une biographie', in Max Ernst, Exhibition Catalogue, Paris, CNACGP, 1975, p. 20.

Enfin, c'est la grande saloperie. (56)

But if Apollinaire's sudden patriotic militarism seems to contradict the libertarian internationalism with which he has sympathised in the past, his entry into the war is just the beginning, as we shall see, of a new cycle of subtly shifting attitudes in this domain, taking him from the passionate certainties of late 1914 to a final position which is less easily defined. And though the excitement of his new life in the army will encourage him to continue experimenting in that vein of festive immediacy which we have noted in 'Ondes', the soldier's familiarity with death will also renew his interest in metaphysical possibilities.

(56) Ibid., p. 24.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIETY (iv). 1914 - 1916

Apollinaire's attitude to the Great War has, until recently, been the object of more criticism than praise. The Surrealists, for example, have tended to suggest that Calligrammes is largely a glorification of events which they found disgusting as if Apollinaire, as soon as he donned a soldier's uniform, lost all his critical faculties and became an apologist for the nation's war-mongers, official poet of the politicians he had previously abhorred, marching with unflagging enthusiasm towards some glorious Valhalla. Already in 1920 Louis Aragon, in the first issue of L'Esprit nouveau, presents the poet as a romantic dreamer, unable to face reality :

Encore qu'il soit malheureusement astreint de changer les obus, les fusées en phantasmes, je crois qu'Apollinaire n'éprouva jamais à la guerre de plus forte émotion qu'au simple geste de prendre la mesure d'un doigt pour une bague d'aluminium. (1)

This criticism he amplified in an influential article which first appeared in Europe in December 1935 and was reprinted in the May 1964 issue of that magazine :

Fusées, signaux, grenades, c'est là cette 'beauté' de la guerre qui fait son entrée dans la poésie, avec le cynisme de l'abstraction, où l'obus éclaté devient un coeur, mais jamais le poète ne suit la courbe de l'éclat véritable jusqu'aux

(1) Louis ARAGON, 'Calligrammes', L'Esprit nouveau, 1, 1920.

vrais coeurs de chair où il va s'enfonçant. Ni sang, ni cadavres. Et j'ai pourtant à dire qu'il est vrai que le front ressemblait très fort à ces images d'Apollinaire à la boue près, à la merde, à la gangrène. (2)

It is perhaps ironic that Benjamin Péret in his 1945 pamphlet, Le Déshonneur des poètes, will attack Louis Aragon, together with Paul Eluard, Pierre Emmanuel and others who contributed to the World War II anthology of patriotic and resistance poetry L'Honneur des poètes, for perpetuating the 'errors' of Calligrammes :

En réalité tous les auteurs de cette brochure partent sans l'avouer ni se l'avouer d'une erreur de Guillaume Apollinaire et l'aggravent encore. Apollinaire avait voulu considérer la guerre comme un sujet poétique. (3)

If, when composing Calligrammes, Apollinaire described the beauties of the war, he broke the law first propounded by Henri Barbusse at the end of Le Feu, the novel which won the Prix Goncourt in 1916 :

- Ce serait un crime de montrer les beaux côtés de la guerre, murmura un des sombres soldats, même s'il y en avait! (4)

And if he referred to the miseries of the war he offended the Surrealists like Péret for whom, as André Breton wrote in 'Sur la route de San Romano' in 1948,

L'étreinte poétique comme l'étreinte de la chair
Tant qu'elle dure
Défend toute échappée sur la misère du monde (5)

As we shall see, the poetry of Calligrammes is perhaps extraordinary in that it has space for both horror and beauty as well as all that lies between.

Among more modern critics who have lent credence to Aragon's reading of Calligrammes, we note Marie-Jeanne Durry, who usually steered

(2) Louis ARAGON, 'Beauté de la guerre et leurs reflets dans la littérature', Europe, 421-422, May-June 1964, pp. 132-137, (p. 133).

(3) Benjamin PERET, Le Déshonneur des poètes, recited, Paris, Pauvert, 1965. See pp. 86-87.

(4) Henri BARBUSSE, Le Feu, chapter XXIV, Paris, Flammarion, 1965, p. 285.

(5) André BRETON, Poèmes, Paris, Gallimard, collection 'Soleil', 1967, p. 231.

well clear of Apollinaire's war poetry, writing in 1963 : 'Chose pour moi presque intolérable, il n'exécra pas même la guerre'. (6) Marcel Raymond can only have perused Calligrammes before writing : 'La guerre, dans les tranchées même, il l'a vécue en rêve, comme un enchantement cosmique. Ainsi l'enfant admire, sans souci des causes et effets. [...] Apollinaire souriait et soupirait en polissant des bagues pour ses belles le jour où l'obus frappa son front'. (7)

This last comment is so far from the truth that it is laughable. But it must be admitted that Apollinaire was capable of writing verse which now, as Madame Durry suggests, seems intolerable. We can point to two examples, neither of them meant for publication. Lines written to his reactionary 'marraine de guerre', Yves Blanc, now seem stupid and facile - 'Quand nous aurons vaincu le Boche lâche et vil' (OPo p. 641). And a joke in a verse-letter to Fernand Divoire in August 1915, where he imagines eating captured Germans, is not very amusing (OPo p. 817). Nevertheless, all those criticisms which we have quoted above, and others like them, are inaccurate in so far as they deal in generalisations which can in no way be applied to the totality of so varied a body of texts. To appreciate this poetry it is crucially important to recognise that Apollinaire's attitudes changed as the war progressed. And a close reading of the poems reveals at least as much doubt and interior debate as straightforward certainty.

Monique Jutrin points the way towards our own reading of the war poetry in her 1975 article 'Calligrammes : Une poésie engagée ?' where she writes : 'Rappelons qu'Apollinaire découvrit la guerre progressivement, en passant de la caserne au front, de l'artillerie à l'infanterie'. (8) But Madame Jutrin is so keen to defend Apollinaire that her judgement then

(6) Marie-Jeanne DURRY, 'Passe et dure sans t'arrêter', La Nouvelle revue française, 130, October 1963, pp. 697-708, (p. 704).

(7) Marcel RAYMOND, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, pp. 230-231.

(8) Monique JUTRIN, 'Calligrammes : Une poésie engagée ?', Que vlo-ve ?, 5, January 1975, pp. 27-42.

goes astray, so that she sees irony as the key to all his war poetry, not recognising when he is being genuinely patriotic or enthusiastic, or when doubts set in. Elsewhere she describes 'A Nîmes' as 'une parodie héroï-comique' and 'Chant de l'honneur' as 'une parodie patriotique' (9) when in fact neither of these poems are parodies. Apollinaire's country of adoption was more firmly lodged in his heart than any other of his loves. When planning his autobiographical Histoire de Claude Auray in 1907 or 1908 he wrote :

La France n'est pas un pays comme les autres, c'est le pays de la civilisation universelle, qui dit la France, dit l'humanité et la France n'appartient pas qu'aux Français de naissance, mais à tous ceux qui veulent retrouver ou qui souhaitent conserver le sens de la grande beauté et de la civilisation même (OPr p. 1211).

When Apollinaire joined the artillery he hoped he would be able to defend this high ideal of beauty and universal civilisation to which, as a foreigner, he had always been so attached.

For many soldiers real disillusion set in after the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. The young Paul Eluard is one example. In November 1915 he wrote to his father from a hospital in Paris :

Nous avons appris la patience divine, la patience devant le Mal et la Douleur. Les hommes, après cela, auront plus de foi et de confiance en la Vérité. Et nous serons les Purs, les Anciens de la Paix. Nous l'avions voulu pour toujours. Nous ne serons pas les Vaincus, mais les Vainqueurs.

We can compare this with his letter of 10 August 1916 in which he contemplates the dead, crippled and mad victims of the war : 'O ! les pauvres, les misérables nations que nous aurons après la guerre, et surtout la France et la Russie !' (10) Apollinaire, writing his last letter to Madeleine at about

(9) Monique JUTRIN, 'L'Attitude d'Apollinaire vis-à-vis de la guerre', Marginales, 139, June-July 1971, pp. 9-10.

(10) Paul ELUARD, Lettres de jeunesse, pp. 53 and 113.

the same time, in September 1916, wounded in the head, partly paralysed, tails off helplessly as he lists all the deaths in his regiment and among his friends - 'je ne sais qu'ajouter'. (11) The scales really dropped from Apollinaire's eyes when he switched from the relative ease of the artillery to trench warfare in the infantry. Until that day in November 1915 he had been fighting, if not a phoney war, at least at some distance from the Front, and, as we shall see, this change is reflected in the poetry. When in 1917 he came to collecting poems for Calligrammes Apollinaire decided to split the book into sections which correspond to his changing experiences and attitudes. Calligrammes is structured much more rationally and chronologically than Alcools, whose poems are selected from a much longer period of work. In order to chart Apollinaire's progress through the war we can turn to Claude Tournadre's invaluable chronology. (12) Our purpose here is to show how Apollinaire's attitudes to a war-effort which consumed a whole continent find changing expression in his poetry. Read in this way the whole of Calligrammes appears as a powerful anti-war statement, all the more moving and convincing for being more like a bildungsroman, shifting away from original innocence day by day, page by page, rather than a collection of poetry written with didactic intent by someone whose mind is clearly made up from the start.

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(11) TS, p. 351.

(12) Claude TOURNADRE, 'Apollinaire soldat, au jour le jour', GA 12, (1973), pp. 7-26.

Francis Picabia had predicted the Great War to Apollinaire in March 1914 (13) and indeed his 'Vie anecdotique' article of 1 April 1914 senses the turbulence gathering in the air, though Apollinaire sees revolution rather than war :

Epoque de bals et de mascarades ! L'époque sera légère,
mais troublée sans doute, car on ne danse jamais plus que
dans le temps des révolutions, ni mieux que sur un volcan. (14)

That summer in Deauville, with the caricaturist André Rouveyre to report on the season for Comoedia, Apollinaire certainly did not want or expect a war. A card to Fagus from the fashionable resort shows that he was booked into the Hôtel de l'Europe and intended to stay there until 15 August (15) and he wrote to Serge Férat from the hotel on 29 July 1914, the very eve of the war : 'On est très inquiet de la guerre. Presque tout le monde fout le camp. Moi je n'y crois pas'. (16) Though he was not a French citizen his commitment to the French war effort was immediate and he tried to join the Foreign Legion in Paris, during the first month of hostilities, like Blaise Cendrars and countless others. (17) This invalidates André Rouveyre's suggestion that when Apollinaire finally joined the artillery in Nice on 4 December 1914, it was because he was too befuddled by opium to know what he was doing. (18) In 'La Petite auto' (OPo p. 207) he describes the outbreak of war as the beginning of a new era and he must have felt uneasy, becalmed on the Côte d'Azur, blowing smoke-rings 'comme un dieu fatigué par l'amour', cut off from history :

Et tandis que la guerre
Ensanglante la terre
Je hausse les odeurs
Près des couleurs-saveurs

(Fumées', OPo p. 210).

(13) Lettres à Lou, p. 79.

(14) OC II, p. 428.

(15) Points et contrepoints, 105, December 1972, p. 3. Rouveyre would remember that in Deauville 'nous enjambons l'avenir aux grands pas de notre imagination, visant d'aller tous deux, dans la suite, dans maints pays du monde, au diable même' (André Rouveyre, Apollinaire, p. 10).

(16) OC IV, p. 780.

(17) Claude TOURNADRE, op. cit. p. 8.

(18) André ROUYEYRE, Apollinaire, p. 145.

Alberto Savinio's comment on Apollinaire's decision to join the army was : 'Il se blottit entre les jupes de la France', (19) and indeed Apollinaire, more conscious than ever since the Mona Lisa affair in 1911 of his insecure position as a stateless individual, did see the artillery as a means to integration. Savinio himself and his brother Giorgio de Chirico, immigrants in Italy of Greek origin, returned to Florence from Paris when war broke out to volunteer for military service. As Chirico says of Apollinaire : 'Il désirait donc énormément avoir un pays, une race, un passeport en règle. C'est un sentiment que connaissent la plupart des gens qui, originaires d'une nation, sont nés à l'étranger'. (20) When he signed up at the town-hall in Nice, Apollinaire applied for naturalisation at the same time. But there is no doubt that joining the army was also for Apollinaire an affirmation of his virility directed towards Lou, his new aristocratic and independent lover. A clear sign of this is the sixth poem he sent to her (OPO p. 382), written as he sat in the barracks canteen in Nîmes :

Je tire ma pipe libre et fier parmi mes camarades

The verticality of the poem, the column of 'Ils', the aggressive and affirmative rhythm, the emphasis on strength and endurance in the text with its picture of a soldier's life of smoking, drinking and wenching all bolster his 'machismo' image :

Ils sont des hommes ceux-ci qui boivent avec moi
Ils obéissent avec moi aux lois de l'homme

But he lifts the end of the poem onto a higher and more personal plane that of his dedication to an aristocratic and chivalric code, 'des plus hautes amours' :

Et qui sont ma patrie ma famille et mon espérance
A moi soldat amoureux soldat de la douce France

(19) Alberto SAVINIO, in Omaggio ad Apollinaire, Rome, Grafica, 1960, p. 60.

(20) Giorgio de CHIRICO, Mémoires, pp. 84-85.

The image of himself as a knight in armour was very real to Apollinaire in the early part of the war and was related to his Polish ancestry, to Poland 'pays de l'honneur chevaleresque, du luxe et des jolies femmes' for, as he wrote in the manuscript of 'Zone' :

Aux jours où la Pologne était un grand royaume
On y cultivait les lettres, on y formait des hommes (21)

In one of his first letters to Madeleine Pagès in May 1915 he writes of chivalric literature and courtly love, of his devotion to her portrait. She and other women are now seen as 'les petites fées qui attendent dans leur tour d'ivoire le retour des croisés'. (22) Apollinaire's Epinal image of the soldier, prompted perhaps by a photograph of his father in uniform, has not changed much since 'La Blanche neige' in Alcools (OPO p. 82) :

Bel officier couleur du ciel
Le doux printemps longtemps après Noël
Te médaillera d'un beau soleil

When Apollinaire joined the army he had little idea of what the mechanised slaughter of modern warfare would mean. Such a war had never existed before.

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Apollinaire spent four months in Nîmes, from 6 December 1914 to 4 April 1915 with a short New Year's break in Nice. This period is represented in Calligrammes by the last six poems of 'Etendards', though 'Ombre' (OPO p. 217), with its tone of complete disillusion and references to 'mes

(21) DA, p. 79.

(22) TS, p. 30.

compagnons morts à la guerre' is the odd poem out and dates from 1916. (23) He worked hard in Nîmes, passing examinations, learning to lay a gun, how to ride, hoping to rise through the ranks - he begins as a gunner, second-class. He is often happy and writes to Serge Férat (4 January 1915) : 'Je suis bien et il me semble que le métier de soldat était mon vrain métier. J'aime beaucoup ça. Mon amie prétend que je suis sans cesse à l'opéra, et c'est vrai'. (24) He is particularly proud of his uniform, the mark of his integration into the mainstream of society. From being a critic and spokesman for the avant-garde with a reputation to keep up, from being the poet on the edge of a society built on work and family groups, he discovers now the liberty of anonymity. For the first time in his life he does not feel conspicuous. In fact Nîmes equals anonymity, an irresistible pun :

Perdu parmi 900 conducteurs anonymes
('A Nîmes', OPo p. 211).

He revels in a new fraternity :

Me voici libre et fier parmi mes compagnons
('2e Cannonier conducteur', OPo p. 214). Buttoning on his tunic, the old identity crisis, his doubts as to his place in the world, seem resolved. He enjoys the ribald jokes, bawdy ballads and vulgar graffiti of barracks life and adapts his graphic experiments so as to incorporate these elements into his poetry, as in '2e Cannonier conducteur' for example. He tests a new vocabulary in the same poem :

Il pleut mon manteau est trempé et je m'essuie parfois la figure
Avec la serviette-torçon qui est dans la sacoche du sous-verge

(23) Apollinaire read 'Ombre' in a lecture he gave for 'L'Oeuvre du soldat dans la tranchée' (See OPo p. 1088). This event took place on 16 June 1916. See Pierre Caizergues, 'Apollinaire et la politique pendant la guerre', GA 12, (1973), pp. 67-101, (p. 100, note 59).

(24) OC IV, p. 780.

Poking his tongue out at the Germans, Apollinaire enjoys the irresponsible humour which is born of his situation back in the classroom with a bunch of recruits most of whom are a good deal younger than himself. Snatches of conversation and anecdote are scattered through poems like 'L'Attente' (OPo p. 417), sent to Lou on 29 March 1915, and so communicate the salty taste of this new 'life-style'.

Yet in 'Guirlande de Lcu' (OPo p. 390), he writes of 'Une flaque d'eau trouble comme mon âme', for during these hectic months there are many moments of introverted melancholy. Being older and more erudite than his companions, Apollinaire could find the evenings long and lonely :

Je me promène seul le soir de 5 à 9
(OPo p. 212)

And when he meets a friendly dog in the street he writes :

Et c'est le seul ami que je connaisse à Nîmes
(OPo p. 410)

His ardour is dampened by nostalgia for old friends, voiced in 'La Colombe poignardée et le jet d'eau' (OPo p. 213), whose elegant curved lines remind us of the arabesques of Marie Laurencin's paintings. The sunset over the sea in the pool of the fountain and the stain on the breast of the Fijian dove are blood-red and the fountain's song is melancholy, a weeping willow, streams of tears, over a lake :

le jet d'eau pleure sur ma peine

In his poem to Lou of 17 January 1915 (OPo p. 389) the poet sounds tired of the army, bored by life in Nîmes, looking for 'le printemps de paix qui va venir' and a new awareness of the horror of the battle, only hinted at previously in red petals, red lips, red stains, now intervenes :

L'ambulancier ferme les yeux devant l'horrible blessure

In the following poem to Lou he begs her

Ordonne ordonne au temps de passer plus vite

but in the beautiful 'Si je mourais là-bas...' (OPo p. 392) he fears

Un long un long destin de sang

His bravado in 'Dans un café à Nîmes' (4 February 1915, OPo p. 400) rings hollow as a drum. It amuses Apollinaire, perhaps, to try his hand at the cliché-ridden conventions of 'official' poetry:

Caporal qui vas aux tranchées
Heureux est ton sort glorieux
Là-bas aux lignes piochées
A vos fusils impérieux
Les victoires sont accrochées

Here perhaps there is some irony. But the last poem of 'Etendards', 'C'est Lou qu'on la nommait' (OPo p. 218), is more interesting for its reference to heads of state,

Les Césars devenus Vampires

expressed in the plural, not the singular of a simple reference to Kaiser Wilhelm; to the poet's irrevocable resolution, come what may:

J'en ai pris mon parti Rouveyre

and the final questioning of his own ideal of chivalric warfare, the fading image of himself as John Keats' 'a very Red-Cross knight':

Où sont-ils, ces beaux militaires
Soldats passés Où sont les guerres
Où sont les guerres d'autrefois

So in Nîmes Apollinaire swings between hope and melancholy, enthusiasm and boredom. Doubts as to the direction taken by himself and by his nation have to be kept in check for, as he wrote to his 'secretary' Jean Mollet, 3 January 1915, 'Il faut surtout être gai, sans ça tout est

foutu'. (25) It is this conscious bias towards optimism which he chooses to project when in March 1915 he selects 'Le Canonnier conducteur' for immediate publication, preferring it to one of those other poems which might appear to his readers as less than totally positive in attitude.

On the journey from Nîmes to take up active service on 5 April 1915 Apollinaire wrote Lou the poem 'Il y a' (OPO p. 423) which is both a recollection of Rimbaud - part III of 'Enfance' in the Illuminations is built in the same way - and is typical of Apollinaire's war poetry in its juxtaposition of disparate observations, the recording of phenomena as they occur, and the alternating movement between the outside world and the more slowly changing reflections of the poet's inner universe. As the scenery flashes by, so the simple repetitions of the poem match the beat and rattle of the train. Apollinaire marks his arrival in the north with another poem to Lou (OPO p. 424) and despite the mud, the fatigue, the howling wind and the certainty that he is losing touch with his lover as he moves further into this brutal, alien landscape he is still determinedly optimistic :

Malgré toi malgré tout je vois la vie en rose

Above all he is pleased to be away from the confines of the barracks :

Quatre jours de voyage et je suis fatigué
Mais que je suis content d'être parti de Nîmes

The forest in which he finds himself posted reminds him of those he knew in the Ardennes and along the Rhine and immediately he feels at

(25) OC IV, p. 850.

home, happy with the spring after a long winter. From the forest he will write an 'Anecdorique' entitled 'Agréments de la guerre en Avril'. Typical of his letters at this time is that which he wrote to André Level on 3 May 1915 in which the sound of gunfire seems hardly more threatening than the sound of a coffee-grinder and friendly nature is full of song and colour :

Les lilas, les arbres fruitiers sont en fleurs, les grenouilles coassent déjà, des hérons volent lourdement, les couleuvres se glissent parfois dans les huttes de paille et se nouent autour d'un roseau comme si Mercure même se proposait de nous annoncer enfin une paix encore improbable. (26)

The occasional bombardment is lived as a new excitement :

Je ferai mon possible pour vous envoyer une photo de notre forêt. Depuis quelques jours le calme y règne et le beau temps. Cependant il y a 8 jours encore nous avons été bien arrosés du côté de nos batteries avec des obus de gros calibre... C'est une sensation qu'on n'éprouve point ailleurs qu'ici... C'est pourquoi je ne regrette point d'y être venu. (27)

He lives like Schinderhannes, and it is perhaps this primitive existence which reminds him of his African sculptures in Paris and prompts him to write 'Les Soupirs du Servant de Dakar' (OPo p. 235). Some of this black soldier's homesickness is Apollinaire's own, and it is not too difficult for the poet to make the imaginative leap from the camp in the forest to a jungle village. In fact the poem works as an allegory of Apollinaire's own destiny for just as the African has been integrated into white society by joining the army so Apollinaire, who feared he was something of a black sheep in society, especially at such moments as the Mona Lisa affair, has sought acceptance and integration in his adopted land by donning a blue uniform :

Je suis soldat français on m'a blanchi du coup

His past is forgotten and he is a new man :

(26) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, p. 18.

(27) TS, p. 33.

Et tout
 A tant changé
 En moi
 Tout
 Sauf mon Amour

('Mutation', OPO p. 229)

During the summer he will write to his new love, Madeleine Pagès, 'Je suis maçon et bûcheron'. (28) The city-dweller discovers and likes the practical life of a frontiersman. He has never been closer to nature and does now seem to assume a romantic innocence in the face of the machinery of war as he sits and chisels his aluminium rings. Jean Cocteau compared Apollinaire's calligrammes to pressed flowers between the pages of an album of poetry : 'et c'est à un herbier que l'on pense lorsqu' on ouvre un de ses livres où les calligrammes affectent la forme gracieuse des brins de muguet'. This is a charming observation and certainly there is more flora and fauna than artillery equipment in 'Case d'Armons', the section of Calligrammes which represents his first ten weeks as a gunner at the Front. Now, as Cocteau says, 'Il herborise entre la Seine et le Rhin'. (29) The term 'active service' would seem to be something of a misnomer for the life of the men in the artillery at this stage of the war if it is compared to the hardships suffered by the infantry. The fact that 'Case d'Armons' was one of the few books actually produced at the Front itself, published in an edition of twenty-five copies during June 1915, shows that Apollinaire had time to spare. The long hours in which to dream and write he describes in 'Reconnaissance' (OPO p. 222) :

Et les canons des indolences
 Tirent mes songes vers
 les
 cieux

(28) TS, p. 97.

(29) Jean COCTEAU, Poésie critique I, p. 91.

But it is the excitement of experiment rather than the ease of indolence which is caught in this collection of twenty-one poems.

A 'case d'armons' was the box in which a gunner kept his personal effects and these pages are like a box cluttered with unexpected objects. Apollinaire's imagination dances freely while the lettering, the layout, the humour and the irreverence of these poems are all refusals of regimentation. Jottings, post-cards and carefully ordered lines, the eternal and the ephemeral, all varieties of verse are juxtaposed, jumbled up. There is music and colour, the reader's eyes slip and slide and Apollinaire achieves an even greater variety than in the high-spirited days of 'Ondes'. And he writes to Francis Picabia's wife Gabrielle Buffet on 21 July 1915 : 'Dans l'ensemble je suis devenu beaucoup plus gai qu'autrefois'. (30)

The first poem of 'Case d'Armons', 'Loin du pigeonier' (OPo p. 221), refers of course to the flat in Paris, high above the Boulevard Saint-Germain, home of the post in peace-time, home of the dove, an image of peace. As if to justify his changed life and his commitment to the war Apollinaire begins the poem with the words 'Et vous savez pourquoi'. In his reasoning there is no place for hatred and 'Loin du pigeonier' is a poem of love, dedicated in the first edition 'Au p'tit Lou'. Shaped like a heart, and also perhaps a harp, the poem is a gentle love-song cut across by the virile diagonal of heavy lettering, 'Malourène 75 Canteraine', a reference to heavy artillery and the bold resolve of the army as well as an image of rigid desire - 'Malourène' is the fourth of the 'Sept épées'. The allied forces are present in the second line of the poem, snaking across France from the sea to the east and the image of a serpent, present also in the undulating shape of the line, brings forth the pun on 'se love', the same pun which is the basis of 'L'Inscription anglaise' (OPo p. 258), sent to Madeleine on 28 May 1915. The French army is shown to be one of love,

From Nîmes Apollinaire wrote to Louis de Gonzague Frick :

Bien reçu 'la Flora', votre poème unique
Par ses vers variés est de la balistique
Et j'en ai mesuré les angles merveilleux
(OPo p. 800)

Elsewhere he wrote, in a poem already quoted above :

L'artillerie est l'art de mesurer les angles (OPo p. 807)

For Lautréamont, of course, in the second of the Chants de Maldoror, 'La poésie est la géométrie par excellence'. For Apollinaire poetry and geometry, the art of the gunner, meet on the pages of 'Case d'Armons' so that lines of verse match angles of fire and the layout of the poems resembles the disjointed spatial experiments of Cubist painting. Again in 'Vers le sud' (OPo p. 234), when the poet thinks of Marie Laurencin who still lingers in his heart though she is in Spain with a German husband, he builds his poem around a pun on 'grenade', as he does a later poem for Marie, 'Les Grenadines repentantes' (OPo p. 251). So one word represents both a lover's heart,

Nos coeurs pendent ensemble au même grenadier

and an awful weapon. In 'Visée' (OPo p. 224) the sound of battle becomes sweet music, a spray of machine-gun fire the strings of a harp, as in 'Loin du pigeonnier' :

Harpe aux cordes d'argent ô pluie ô ma musique

Art is again identified with artillery where in the midst of this rain of lead hangs the line :

Entends nager le Mot poisson subtil

Poetry remains slippery, free and spontaneous, will not be caught and smothered by the new imperatives of war. The poetry of 'Case d'armons' is both play and a labour of love, an assertion of independence and liberty

still alive amidst uniformity and routine. While obeying orders, while pinned down by gunfire, he writes in 'Visée' :

Je t'aime liberté qui veilles dans les hypogées

. But the resolution of contradictions by such poetic devices as we have seen, together with the appearance, as in 'Oracles' (OPo p. 234), of such formulas as :

O Guerre
Multiplication de l'amour

open the way for the poet's discovery of beauty in horror.

There are hints of the horror to come in 'SP' for example (OPo p. 223), in which Apollinaire prepares to face poison gases, now being used for the first time. But the threat and the resulting fear are subverted both by humour, so that tears become tears of laughter, and the irreverently disorganised layout and the distance between the title 'SP' (Secteur Postal) and subject, the content and the tone of the poem. It is this loud laughter, used to ward off fear, which Apollinaire describes in his letter to André Billy of 26 April 1915 (OPo p. 773), again working from a word-game :

Je te le dis André Billy que cette guerre
C'est Obus-Roi
Beaucoup plus tragique qu'Ubu mais qui n'est guère
Billy crois-moi
Moins burlesque ô mon vieux crois-moi c'est très comique

So satire is a powerful arm in the poet's battle with the tyrant War and laughter boosts morale in the soldier's psychological battle against fear :

Et quand l'obus miaule
On rit toujours plus fort
Tous ceux de ma piaule
Se moquent de la mort (OPo p. 814)

But Apollinaire knows that Time will tire the soldiers and on 26 April he writes to Jane Mortier : 'En définitive tout ça est très amusant, je vous assure. Pourvu que ça ne dure pas!' (31)

Apollinaire plays with time in 'Les Saisons' (OPo p. 240), sent to Lou on 11 May 1915, shifting the perspective so that the first three verses and the refrain move out of the present into the pre-war period, 'un temps béni', or else into the future with a look back to the war which itself becomes 'un temps béni', enhanced by memory. Only in the final verse does the shock of a present tense act as a brake on escapism. Lived in the present, the war drags on through the long months :

C'était un temps béni La guerre continue
Les servants ont limé la bague au long des mois
Le Conducteur écoute abrité dans les bois
La chanson que répète une étoile inconnue

It is true that the refrain and most of the verses of 'Les Saisons' are bright and jaunty. But the change of tone intervening in the last verse corresponds to the hint of frustration which is apparent in the note Apollinaire sent to Francis Picabia on 23 April 1915 : 'Belles, grandes choses, trop longues peut-être'. (32)

Ulysse que de jours pour rentrer dans Ithaque
writes Apollinaire in 'La Nuit d'avril 1915' (OPo p. 243), the last poem of 'Case d'armons', a version of which was sent to Lou on 10 April 1915. This image of wasted time far from home corresponds to Apollinaire's solitude at this time as he recognises that his love-affair with Lou cannot survive such prolonged separation :

Un amour qui se meurt est plus doux que les autres

(31) OC IV, p. 825.

(32) Michel SANOUILLET, Dada à Paris, p. 539.

Now he remembers a similar time earlier in his life and another 'poème de fin d'amour', 'La Chanson du mal-aimé'. Strains of this other music from 1903 still linger in his memory and reappear in 'La Nuit d'avril 1915', although the text of the song is altered to fit the context of war. A juxtaposition of corresponding lines from the two poems highlights their affinity :

Coeur obus éclaté tu sifflais ta romance	Et je chantais cette romance En 1903 sans savoir [...]
Et tes mille soleils ont vidé les caissons Que les dieux de mes yeux remplissent en silence	Mon coeur et ma tête se vident Tout le ciel s'écoule par eux O mes tonneaux des Danaïdes
Ton souffle nage au fleuve où le sang va tarir	Nageurs morts suivrons-nous d'ahan Ton cours vers d'autres nébuleuses
Les obus miaulaient un amour à mourir	Le grand Pan l'amour Jésus-Christ Sont bien morts et les chats miaulent
Ulysse que de jours pour pour rentrer dans Ithaque	Lorsqu'il fut de retour enfin Dans sa patrie le sage Ulysse
Mais orgues aux fétus de la paille	Et les orgues de Barbarie y sanglotent

The barbaric clatter of the machine-gun is transformed into dance music, a counterpoint to the sad melodies which dominate the centre of 'La Nuit d'avril 1915', and this sylvan gaiety,

La forêt merveilleuse où je vis donne un bal

corresponds to the 'Aubade' in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', a springtime interlude set in a 'bois joli',

Où sous les roses qui feuilloient
De beaux dieux roses dansent nus

The references to the pagan religions of ancient Greece and Rome in the 'Aubade' recur in the gestures of the latter-day gladiators of the war-poem,

Pourpre amour salué par ceux qui vont périr

and if in 'Aubade' the Christian festival of Easter, time of rebirth, is present in the references to 'Laetare', 'Pâquette' and the pink which is the colour of the priest's vestments on Easter Sunday, so in 'La Nuit d'avril 1915' the organ music and the straw on which the poet sleeps, his mind on Paradise, evoke Christmas and the birth of Christ.

The 1903 poem differs from the later work, of course, in that it is a large, rich patchwork of emotions, a great drama with an enormous cast which was composed over an extended period of time, while all the war poems are necessarily compact, composed as they were 'on the spur of the moment', each day giving birth to a new and complete text. The stars which direct human destiny, the Milky Way of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', are shooting stars, 'les obus des Boches' in 'La Nuit d'avril 1915'. Human mortality, the destiny which threatens from above in both poems, is present also in the order of another, more human authority, 'le mot fatal' of the war poem, the cry of the officer as a new attack commences :

Aux crénaux Aux crénaux Laissez là les pioches

Both poems end with a refusal of fatality, on the assertion of a human victory over oppressive destiny. But while 'La Chanson' ends with the individualistic refrain

Moi qui sais des lais pour les reines

an assertion of the poet's own immortality through his art, the victory of the 1915 poem, like the suffering which precedes it, is shared. As in the midst of the text he writes

Nous vous aimons ô vie et nous vous agaçons

using the corporate 'nous' of shared experience, so the final assertion

L'hymne de l'avenir est paradisiaque

expresses a social vision of shared salvation. In the artillery the poet has found that fraternity, a sense of 'belonging', of which he felt deprived in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' and other poems in Alcools.

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'Case d'armes' ends with the dream of a utopian future, the poet shifting his vision away from an uncomfortable present. But it was those 'Belles, grandes choses' which Apollinaire mentioned to Picabia, the nebulous beauty of the exploding rockets and shells, viewed at a certain distance from the infantry trenches, which provided titles for the next sections of Calligrammes, 'Lueurs des tirs,' and 'Obus couleur de lune'. These are mainly artillery poems, though they are not placed in neat chronological order and 'Obus couleur de Lune' contains five poems from after Apollinaire's move to the infantry. (33) He joined the infantry on 18 November 1915 and ten days later he was in the front-line trenches.

Towards the end of August 1915 Apollinaire was given the post of observer 'aux lueurs', plotting enemy positions according to the flashes of their guns and so had every opportunity to appreciate the varied effects of explosions in the night. It is in 'Lueurs des tirs' that the reader finds

(33) 'Merveille de la guerre' (OPo p. 271) ; 'Le Chant d'amour' (OPo p. 283) ; 'Aussi bien que les cigales' (OPo p. 284) ; 'Du coton dans les oreilles' (OPo p. 287); 'Exercice' (OPo p. 273).

the most notorious lines from French war poetry, in 'L'Adieu du cavalier' (OPo p. 253) :

Ah Dieu! que la guerre est jolie
Avec ses chants et ses longs loisirs

We have already noted the ambivalence of Apollinaire's attitude to the long hours of 'leisure' in the artillery. And of course the irony of the 'Ah Dieu! / Adieu!' pun in a poem whose narrative ends in death darkly colours our impression of this 'beautiful' war. Aware of the strength of the first line of this poem, Apollinaire chose to scratch it onto the bottom of his soap tin as a caption to an engraving of two soldiers dazzled by an exploding shell. This image is as ambiguous as the poem, for the soldiers are close enough to the explosion to fall victims of the shrapnel. (34) Yet Apollinaire was genuinely impressed by the spectacle of combat, nowadays referred to as 'conventional warfare' but inexistent on such a scale before 1914. His letter to Madeleine dated 2 September 1915 gives an extraordinary hill-top description of an artillery battle at night, an opera with 'une musique barbare et ininterrompue', rays of searchlights as actors, and rockets as 'danseuses singulières et exquises'. (35) He could almost have been describing Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, produced in Paris for the first time in 1913 by the Russian Ballet. This dangerous beauty was hypnotic, and not only for Apollinaire. Even Erich-Maria Remarque in his resolutely pacifist novel of 1928, All Quiet on the Western Front, notes the fascination of this firework display element of war. (36) The French painter Dunoyer de Segonzac writing to a New-York friend in 1916 looks back on his front-line experiences of the previous year with mixed feelings. Now in the Engineering Corps he writes that war is 'less fantastic here : no more nights made luminous by explosions (explosions of shells, of munitions depots, of rockets)'. (37)

(34) Pierre-Marcel ADEMA, Michel DECAUDIN, Album Apollinaire, p. 228.

(35) TS, pp. 114-115.

(36) Erich-Maria REMARQUE, Al'ouest rien de nouveau, chapter IV, Paris, Gallimard, 'Livre de poche', 1976, p. 62.

(37) Dunoyer de Segonzac, letter to John Quinn, 10 August 1916, in T. Shapiro, Painters and Politics, p. 144.

Plenty of other examples of this phenomenon could be noted. Indeed Apollinaire himself first heard of the beauty of artillery battles from a soldier who, being wounded, had no reason to harbour illusions, this when the poet was still in training in Nîmes :

Mais ce pâle blessé m'a dit à la cantine
Des obus dans la nuit la splendeur argentine
(*'A Nîmes', OPo p. 211*).

Louis Aragon and others are in fact criticising Apollinaire for recording a widely experienced aspect of war with uncommonly vivid honesty. He referred to 'Case d'armes' as 'la fixation d'un moment de ma vie'. (38) There, as elsewhere in Calligrammes, he was intent on noting events as they occurred. In September 1915 he tells Madeleine that 'La vie au surplus n'est même plus quotidienne ; elle est horaire, que dis-je secondaire !' (39) The result is 'Instamatic Poetry', the fixation of fleeting moments and sudden impressions. Concordance studies of Alcools and Calligrammes show that the words 'ici' and 'là' are absent from the earlier collection, outside 'Zone', while in later poems they occur frequently. Such notations are the pins which fix the here and the now on the page without the intervention of second thoughts or the misgivings of hindsight. As he told Madeleine, Apollinaire brought to the war his 'constante et consciente volupté de vivre, de connaître, de voir, de savoir et d'exprimer'. (40)

But can this desire for honesty and the truth of experience be reconciled with such a poem as 'Ode' (OPo p. 487), from August 1915, which opposes the 'noble guerre' to 'la paix la vilaine paix' ? In fact the whole poem is little more than a childish lie, an effort at self-deception as Apollinaire tries to find a place for himself in the midst of a relationship where he is unlikely to find a welcome. Replaced by Lou's new lover, 'Toutou',

(38) TS, p. 77.

(39) TS, p. 128.

(40) TS, p. 89.

Apollinaire tries to disguise his jealousy as gratitude, denying his loneliness :

Lou Toutou soyez remerciés
Puisque par votre amour je ne suis pas seul

In the poet's imagination Toutou and the indifferent Lou become his father and mother and though he knows he has never been further from his old lover he claims they are inseparably attached :

Lou Toutou je suis votre petit enfant
Je tiens à vous à Lou par le cordon ombilical

It is as if he recognises now as the war lengthens that his world has been turned upside down so that in this situation, which is diametrically opposed in so many ways to the life he once knew, it is quite logical to turn truth on its head, to announce that war is 'noble' and peace is 'vilaine'. He will continue to develop this looking-glass logic for Madeleine, and for himself, in September 1915 writing that 'Le Devoir change l'Enfer en Paradis' (41) and that 'grâce au devoir l'homicide qui est le plus grand crime peut devenir la prouesse !' (42) But the ending of 'Ode' reveals the fragility of his faith in this reasoning. His own lucidity leads him into doubt. After five months of combat the solitude and insecurity which lie beneath the fine phrases become apparent as his voice cracks in a hopeless appeal for affection :

Rienn'est plus noble que ce combat
Esthétique et sublime
Toutou Lou écoutez-moi
Aimez-moi

Like 'Ode', 'A l'Italie' (OPo p. 274) is from August 1915 and it is similarly naive in its apology for the war. Apollinaire admits that his existence is relatively sheltered, away from the hand-to-hand fighting :

(41) TS, p. 123.

(42) TS, p. 126.

Et dans ce jour d'août 1915 le plus chaud de l'année
Bienabrité dans l'hypogée que j'ai creusé moi-même

Holed up in midsummer shade, life is not too bad and the suffering he has experienced can only be limited if he can still write :

Nous jouissons de tout même de nos souffrances

So Apollinaire can echo the empty phrases of the Parisian propagandists, referring to 'l'âne boche' and giving an honourable mention to Théodore Botrel's bizarre ditty 'Rosalie', a soldier's love-song to his bayonet and a music hall success at that time. Parts of 'A l'Italie' are hardly worthy of Botrel and are certainly unworthy of a great poet, though of course there is still the occasional flash of genius, as in the image of the cities of France as gigantic warriors, an echo of 'Vendémiaire'. The importance of music and song which characterised the poetry of 'Case d'armes' lingers on in 'A l'Italie', but these soldiers' songs will soon disappear from his work.

'A l'Italie' was first sent to Madeleine on 25 August 1915 and parts of it were as much destined for her as for the readers of La Voce. Apollinaire had been involved in a debate with her about Romain Rolland. He first mentions his project for the poem in his letter of 14 August in which he discusses Romain Rolland, (43) and he refers again to him in his letter of 25 August. (44) It seems likely that 'A l'Italie' is at least partly intended as a reply to Madeleine's admiration for the pacifist Rolland, which Apollinaire perceives as an implied criticism, and also as a justification of his participation in the war. It is a poem of international solidarity, among allied nations, but great emphasis is given to the importance of the individual. His argument sounds sincere as he compares French intuition to German expressionism, 'ce qui est l'extérieur dans l'art et l'industrie', and Italian

(43) IS, p. 94.

(44) TS, p. 103. We return to this subject later in this chapter.

laissez-faire to German law and order. Rightly or wrongly Apollinaire now believes that Germany represents utilitarianism, mediocrity and totalitarian imperialism. He is fighting, so he says,

Non parce que j'imagine qu'il y aura jamais plus de bonheur
[ou de malheur en ce monde
Mais parce que comme toi j'aime à penser seul
et que les Boches m'en empêcheraient

There is no visionary idealism here, for the poet wishes to appear as a convincingly moderate man. His reason for fighting the war, to defend the rights of the individual, is consistent with his usually libertarian philosophy. But it is perhaps significant that he should feel it necessary to go to such lengths to explain and justify the war, to insist that God, or, at least the Vatican, is on the side of France and Italy and to claim that he is ready to continue singing the war

Durant des années
[...]
Durant des années

In fact he had no choice. A soldier does not have the right to turn around and walk away. So if a difficult existence is not to become unbearable it is important that morale should remain high, that attitudes should remain positive and optimistic. So 'Kostro' was always cheerful in company, rather like the soldier Paradis in Barbusse's novel Le Feu. The first of the war poems are themselves, as we have seen, full of this optimism, an indication that Apollinaire's behaviour and his state of mind coincide. But as the war continues, the poetry changes. Optimism becomes a mask, 'noble et tragique', held in place over darker thoughts, troubled ideas which are not revealed in public but which do appear in the poetry which Apollinaire intended to publish later, or not at all. So in 'Saillant' (OPO p. 227) from 'Case d'armes' there is 'à peine un peu d'incertitude'. As this uncertainty increases, the gap between Kostro the soldier and Apollinaire the poet widens. Behind the public self, which sometimes finds expression in official, morale-boosting poetry, there is a private voice of doubts and

misgivings, of frustration with the war. Two conflicting voices can often be detected in Apollinaire's war poetry - at least two voices - and these texts, including the public, propaganda poems like 'A l'Italie' and 'Chant de l'honneur', would find their place in Calligrammes, even though the collection was published while the war was still in progress. His most scathing criticisms of the war Apollinaire often reserved for his private correspondence.

We have already seen Apollinaire wearing the visor of a knight-errant or crusader in the early days of the war and this was the first of a series of masks. The theme of the mask itself becomes important in the war poetry and this is an indication of Apollinaire's degree of self-knowledge. The real and all too necessary gas mask soon replaces the imaginary visor, appearing in 'S. P.', 'Simultanéités' and 'Chant de l'horizon en Champagne'. In 'Du coton dans les oreilles' (OPo p. 287) from February 1916, as soldiers stumble around like drunkards amidst the chaos of battle, Apollinaire wears another mask, one of mock nonchalance and light-heartedness. Poison fills the air :

Et je mangeais du pain de Gênes
En respirant leurs gaz lacrymogènes

In 'Chant de l'horizon en Champagne' (OPo p. 265) from October 1915 the mask is clearly a metaphor for the soldier's unflinching determination to survive, to suppress the madness which wells up inside :

A savoir si la guerre est drôle
Les masques n'ont pas tressailli
Mais quel fou rire sous le masque

That such tension should turn to madness was a genuine possibility as so many soldiers lived on the edge of a nervous breakdown. Laughter itself could often be a device to cover other emotion as Pierre Emmanuel suggested in his 1968 article on Apollinaire, 'Une exquise mélancolie voilée par

l'humour'. (45) Perhaps more relevant to the war poetry is L. C. Breunig's 1964 article 'The laughter of Apollinaire' in which he refers us to the laughter of characters from a play by Eugène Ionesco or Samuel Beckett when faced with the dark side of our condition. (46) If in a poem like 'Du coton dans les oreilles' Apollinaire laces suffering with humour it is not because he is indifferent to the horror. As he writes to Madeleine on 14 September 1915 :

Je n'aime pas qu'on regarde les travers, les vices ou les laideurs de l'homme sans sourire ce qui est une façon de comprendre et une façon de remédier en quelque sorte à notre misère en la voilant de grâce intelligente, dût-on en sangloter après. (47)

So Apollinaire's enthusiasm for Alfred de Vigny's Servitude et grandeur militaires which he read for the first time in 1916 is easily understood. For Vigny, 'La dureté de l'homme de guerre est comme un masque de fer sur un noble visage, comme un cachot de pierre qui renferme un prisonnier royal' (48) and it is this iron mask of stoicism which Apollinaire needs in order to hold on to life, hope and sanity :

Endurcis-toi vieux coeur entends les cris perçants
Que poussent les blessés au loin agonisants
Hommes poux de la terre ô vermine tenace
(OPo p. 744).

The split which we have seen between the soldier and the poet is confirmed in a letter which Apollinaire sent to Madeleine on 23 June 1915 :

Toutes les photos de Madeleine sont sur mon coeur. Ses lettres sont dans mon sac. Et quand il y en aura trop je les renverrai chez moi à Paris où ma concierge reçoit les envois du brigadier G. de K. à M. Guil. Ap. et sans rien décacheter met dans l'appartement du poète ce qu'expédie le soldat. (49)

(45) Pierre EMMANUEL, 'Une exquise mélancolie voilée par l'humour', Figaro littéraire, 1174, 4-10 November 1968, p. 8.

(46) Leroy C. BREUNIG, 'The Laughter of Apollinaire', Yale French Studies, 31, 1964, pp. 66-73.

(47) TS, p. 137.

(48) Alfred de VIGNY, Servitude et grandeur militaires, Paris, Gallimard, 'Livre de poche', 1965, p. 66.

(49) TS, p. 44.

At the Front this split manifests itself when the poet becomes a disembodied observer, referring to 'Kostro' the soldier at work or resting as 'Il' and 'Tu', as in 'Chef de Pièce' (OPo p. 617) and 'Lueurs' (OPo p. 618) sent to Madeleine early in September 1915. The poet watches the gunner in 'Peu de choses' (OPo p. 627) :

Chaque fois que tu dis feu! le mot se change en acier qui
[éclate là-bas

Noting the destruction which results he observes :

C'est drôle que ça ne vous fasse rien
Ma foi

While in Nîmes Apollinaire had written to Jean Mollet that, as an artist and critic, he really had no business being in the war anyway :

Ce n'est pas notre affaire de guerroyer ou la pensée humaine
foutra le camp. On a fait la guerre pendant tout le XVII^e siècle,
mais Corneille, Racine, Malherbe avant ne se battaient pas,
ni Pascal, ni Bossuet. Nous faisons notre devoir aussi bien
que les autres, mais vraiment, c'est ailleurs qu'il devrait être. (50)

Yet five months later, up in the north, he will cite the example of a soldier who was also a poet and whose example he is now happy to follow :

Je suis gai pas malade
Et comme fut Ronsard le chef d'une brigade
(OPo p. 599).

The split between the protagonist and the poet, apparent when he addresses himself as 'tu', is symptomatic of this mobility of opinion, a developing interior debate, a return, in fact, to the self-questioning of 'Zone'. The stance he chooses in the war is certainly not so rigid as it at first seems.

The letter to Jean Mollet which we have quoted shows Apollinaire wondering if he is right in his decision to join the military combat. Yet by

(50) OC IV, p. 850.

18 July 1915 he is writing a bad-tempered letter to Madeleine attacking Romain Rolland whose Au-dessus de la mêlée went into its thirty-third edition in 1915, because he refuses to join in the hostilities. (51) Apollinaire refers to Rolland's attitude as 'désagréables et très déplacées manifestations presque en faveur de l'Allemagne' and this leads to a debate with Madeleine in which Apollinaire is led to concede a lot of ground. Firstly in his letter of 14 August 1915 he recognises 'qu'il y a quelque chose d'Européen en lui et même dans son attitude. [...] Donc il faut regarder froidement les choses et l'attitude de R.R. vue de point de vue de Sirius est peut-être sans aucune importance. Il se peut même qu'il ait raison'. (52) He continues, however, in the same letter to try, with uneasy reasoning supported by reference to Christianity and socialism, to discount Rolland's arguments. Then, on 22 October 1915, he returns to the subject and turning back on himself praises Rolland's 'esprit européen' as a link between himself and Madeleine : 'je suis reconnaissant après tout à Romain Rolland'. (53) Indeed with Valéry Larbaud and then Blaise Cendrars, Apollinaire had been the most cosmopolitan of pre-war French poets and his travels had included a visit to Germany in 1913. He had started his career as a journalist by writing on German affairs, and 'Vendémiaire' and the poetry of 'Ondes', for example, revel in the excitement of the new possibilities of communication and contact between the peoples of Europe and the world. His flag-waving in support of the war is in contradiction with that energetic internationalism which characterises his past. In December 1915, after the Romain Rolland argument, he recreates the proud simultaneity of 'Vendémiaire' when he writes in 'Merveille de la guerre' (OPo p. 271) :

Je lègue à l'avenir l'histoire de Guillaume Apollinaire
Qui fut à la guerre et sut être partout
Sans les villes heureuses de l'arrière
Dans tout le reste de l'univers

(51) TS, p. 64.

(52) TS, p. 95.

(53) TS, p. 229.

In the intimacy of his notebook Apollinaire had written a slightly different version of the poem, placing himself everywhere,

Dans les villes heureuses dell'arrière
Chez les neutres et chez l'ennemi (54)

When it came to publishing the poem he had suppressed this line which could be read as a sympathetic link between himself and men like Rolland in neutral Switzerland, the suffering Germans on whom he was firing.

Observing himself, observing the stoicism of the infantrymen, Apollinaire longs in February 1916 to still the voices in his head, and he writes to André Derain :

J'attends que monte en moi la simplicité de mes grenadiers
(OPo p. 741).

In Apollinaire's war poetry, as in 'Vendémiaire', appearances can only be 'des masques sur des faces masquées'. The final and most striking example of this is the story 'Cas du brigadier masqué c'est-à-dire le poète ressuscité', which closes Le Poète assassiné, '-J'ai un masque, canonnier, dit le brigadier mystérieux, [...] et, grâce à lui, il ne vous est plus possible de connaître la vérité' (OPr p. 383). Here again the masked soldier and the resurrected poet are the same character split in two to create a dialogue. And here, as in Apollinaire's war poetry, when the mask is removed the whole truth of the war is revealed : horror, hardship, beauty and madness.

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(54) Pierre-Marcel ADEMA, 'Un manuscrit inédit de "Merveille de la guerre"', GA 13, (1976), pp. 99-104, (p. 104).

As we have already seen, even in the enthusiastic early days of 'Case d'armes' the war sometimes seemed long to Apollinaire/Ulysses. Happy as he was to rediscover the flora and fauna of the forest, he proves in a poemlike 'Echelon' (OPo p. 233) that he was aware of the other life in the trenches not far away, the white trenches in the chalky soil of Champagne, presented as a scar on the face of nature. The evenings in Nîmes were lonely for a man who had been used for so long to displaying his talent for conversation at the centre of the brilliant artistic community of Paris. In the forest the youngmen of his company grew more and more taciturn as time passed :

Depuis si longtemps qu'ils sont loin de tout ils savent à peine
[parler
(OPo p. 441. 18 April 1915).

He was lucky to have a friend in René Berthier, twenty-two years old, poet, mechanic and chemist from Toulon. (55)

An appreciation of one of the acutely nasty dimensions of war appears perhaps for the first time in his letter to Madeleine of 1 July 1915 when, after leaving the gentle forest of his first posting, he arrives in a new sector. This letter is worth quoting :

Ma chère fée, je vous écris parmi l'horrible horreur de millions de grosses mouches bleues. Nous sommes tombés dans un lieu sinistre où à toutes les horreurs de la guerre, l'horreur du site, l'abondance épouvantable de cimetières se joignent à la privation d'arbres, d'eau, de véritable terre même. [...] nous voici dans des trous infects, au point qu'y étant, d'y penser j'ai envie de vomir. (56)

It is this diabolical landscape which he describes in 'Côte 146' (OPo p. 613), sent to Madeleine on 2 July 1915, which begins :

(55) See Lettres à Lou, p. 307.

(56) TS, p. 47.

Plaines Désolation enfer des mouches Fusées le vert le blanc
[le rouge

[...]

O plaine partout des trous où végètent des hommes

And it is to those flies which thrive on rotting flesh that he refers in 'Tourbillon de mouches' (OPo p. 252) from August 1915, a poem whose subject matter does not correspond to the title which hovers over the text. The same flies recur in 'A Madeleine' (OPo p. 614) from 11 August 1915 in which the exchange of letters between the two friends, who are now betrothed, is perceived as a pure harmony over the infested plain,

Sur l'océan sanglant de ces pauvres années
Où le jour est atroce où le soleil est la blessure
Par où s'écoule en vain la vie de l'univers

Admitting here in the intimacy of his love-letter the futility of this bloodshed he suggests that the killing should stop,

Qu'il serait [temps] ma Madeleine de lever l'ancre

thus ending his text with a pun which opposes the ink which flows in the service of love and art, imaginary voyages, and the blood which flows in the service of a paralysing war.

Images of gas, the sinister and intangible enemy, recur again and again. 'Roses guerrières' (OPo p. 500) for example, sent to Lou in September 1915, abridged for 'Case d'armons' as 'Fête' (OPo p. 238), opposes the scent of roses, the perfume of love, to the smell of gas, 'le parfum horrible des combats'. It leaves the soldiers wheezing, 'une armée qui halète', and the sickness silts up their lungs like some 'effluve fatal'. On 2 October he tells Madeleine of the blue clouds of tear-gas which 'flottent comme des feux follets dans une prairie' (57) and in 'Les Neuf portes de ton corps' (OPo p. 619) and 'Il y a' (OPo p. 280), both from September, he has already described their awful action on their victims' eyes :

(57) TS, p. 174.

O mon ignorance semblable à des soldats aveugles parmi les
[chevaux de frise sous la Lune liquide des Flandres
à l'agonie

and

Il y a un fantassin qui passe aveuglé par les gaz asphyxiants

On 5 October he himself inhales some of the gas which will corrode his lungs. By the smell he identifies it as 'gaz hilarant. Ça ne m'a pas fait rire au demeurant'. (58)

Apollinaire's experience of such depressing realities made him impatient with the bombastic patriotism of non-combatant poets whose verse he found in reviews and newspapers. 'Il y a', his poem of matter-of-fact reporting of events, was probably intended as an antidote to such distant idealism for it was included in a letter to Madeleine in which he writes : 'J'ai reçu le bulletin lyrique idiot où Paul Fort prince des poètes à la man- que, chante les batailles de loin et en un langage vraiment stupide'. (59) He focusses on this problem again five days later when he describes the present as 'un moment douloureux de l'Art où il risque de retomber dans le mécanisme rhétoricien où il a trop longtemps été'. (60) As a soldier who knows combat he has few of the illusions about glorious abstractions which are nurtured by those who are left behind. If ever he echoes their songs of honour and glory, then this is in moments of weakness in which he enters into contradiction with his own deeply held convictions. Unfortunately the soldier's frustration and feeling of solitude can only be increased by the distance which experience creates between himself and the civilian population who are fed on too much rhetoric and not enough truth :

Comme ces milliers de blessures ne font qu'un article de
[journal

(58) TS, p. 180.

(59) TS, p. 167.

(60) TS, p. 180.

as he says in 'Ombre' (OPO p. 217). And this implied criticism of the press is repeated in letters to André Level (3 December 1915 and 4 February 1916) in which he bemoans the difficulties of communication between soldier and civilian who live worlds apart, in war and in peace. (61)

Apollinaire was able to obtain valuable respite from the war by turning to his interior paradise of erotic dreaming or the springtime of love which he keeps so beautifully alive in November snow in, for example, 'Chevaux de frise' (OPO p. 302). As the present time and place became increasingly intolerable for him, so he escaped in another way by turning his poetry with increasing emphasis towards the future, casting his imagination forwards to the après-guerre. The poem '14 Juin 1915' (OPO p. 231) typifies this shift in which Apollinaire on the move, uneasy, 'voyageur égaré', insists

Qu'il faut être de ce temps

Yet he sustains himself with hope for the future, ending with the line :

Mais l'Espoir

In 'Guerre' (OPO p. 228), also from 'Case d'armes', Apollinaire, in visionary mood, advises new recruits to be stoical :

Ne pleurez donc pas sur les horreurs de la guerre

They too can bolster their morale by looking to the future, to the peace for which he now yearns, 'Après [...] Après après'.

But in combat dreaming is dangerous, and circumstances force the soldier to focus onto the most limited of objectives, his own survival and the achievement of the aims of the action in progress. 22 September 1915 was the date of the first great Champagne offensive in which Apollinaire

(61) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, pp. 65 and 75.

participated. It would last several days and nights. Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front is again a useful reference in that chapter VI of the novel gives a magnificent description of one of these great artillery bombardments when all hell was let loose for days on end. The effect of this experience on Apollinaire's poetry is immediate. 'Désir' (Opo p. 263) was written on or soon after the night of 24 September as Apollinaire states in the text, and it was sent to Madeleine on Wednesday 6 October, the day of the second general offensive in Champagne. (62) In the poem he may look back to his love who is outside the war-zone. But before him :

Mon désir est la région qui est devant moi
[...]
Mon désir est là sur quoi je tire

He can look no further than the range of the artillery, has to accept the new perspective and narrowed focus of a man aiming a gun :

Alidades des triangles de visée pointez-vous sur les lucurs
('Chant de l'horizon en Champagne').

At this moment, as the shells howl through the air, he sees that war is sterile, can give birth to nothing, for the screams of the shells, fired by men, are not the cries of a woman in labour :

Nuit violente ô nuit dont l'épouvantable cri profond devenait
[plus intense de minute en minute
Nuit qui criait comme une femme qui accouche
Nuit des hommes seulement

At last the war is seen in its true, bleak, black and chalky white colours, and though five months earlier the forest danced to the music of machine-guns, the song of the shells, now he knows the deafening noise of all-out battle :

Et tel obus siffler de la démente
Ou le tac tac tac monotone et bref plein de dégoût

Apollinaire's imagery changes with his experience.

(62) Claude TOURNADRE, op. cit., p. 19.

On 8 October 1915, two days after the second great offensive, he writes 'Dans l'abri-caverne' (OPo p. 259). It is a poem of disorientation in which the shell-shocked poet feels his soul to be a gaping chasm through which he is falling :

Moi j'ai ce soir une âme qui s'est creusée qui est vide
On dirait qu'on y tombe sans cesse et sans trouver de fond
Et qu'il n'y a rien pour se raccrocher

In this state he no longer has any social ideal to sustain him and in fact the future he evokes is closer to Yeats' 'Great Beast slouching towards Bethlehem' than to some New Jerusalem :

Ce qui y tombe et qui y vit c'est une sorte d'êtres laids qui me
font malet qui viennent de je ne sais où
Oui je crois qu'ils viennent de la vie d'une sorte de vie qui est
dans l'avenir dans l'avenir brut qu'on n'a pu encore
cultiver ou élever ou humaniser

For the first time perhaps, looking around him, Apollinaire is frightened for the future. And his love for Madeleine, his refuge, his château, an image of the beauty he has tried to preserve and protect through the war, now appears as a mirage or a house built on sand :

Puis je pense que je l'imagine en vain
Je ne la connais par aucun sens
Ni même par les mots

His experience has imposed stark lucidity even in the domain of love, and the poet asks of the girl he loves without knowing her :

Existes-tu mon amour
Ou n'es-tu qu'une entité que j'ai créée sans le vouloir
Pour peupler la solitude

Art itself, the poet's raison d'être, seems to be put into question after his experience of infernal ugliness in the firing line :

Et mon goût de la beauté est-il donc aussi vain

Is Apollinaire here questioning the validity of his own earlier discovery of beauty in this war ?

Three days later he has regained his footing and writes a less panic-stricken poem, 'Le Palais du tonnerre' (OPo p. 254). There is an obsessively detailed photographic realism about this poem, as if the poet wishes to catalogue the contents of his universe, now bounded by walls of white soil, to create the security of familiarity, an enclosed and reassuring world in which everything has a name and a place. Indeed 'le petit palais de tonnerre' does appear as 'ce domaine idéal', a small palace of safety and comfort, in comparison with the surrounding landscape described in the first part of the poem with references to rats, ghosts, rigid death and fearful movements. An image like that of the regulation spade seen as a stiff wide-eyed corpse stares out of the text at the reader. The horrid trench like an empty corridor in a nightmare is frightening. But just as the poem features the same long, seemingly endless lines he had already tried in 'Dans l'abri caverne', so the ungainly and repetitive reasoning of the last twenty-two lines of the poem is untypical of Apollinaire whose rambling argument here again suggests fatigue and shock.

The best of these poems from the last period of Apollinaire's career in the artillery must be 'Chant de l'horizon en Champagne' (OPo p. 265) from 27 October 1915. The dust has settled and the poet who in the two previous poems has been turned in on himself, seeking shelter, speaks out again, calling to those at home on behalf of the whole army, the battlefield itself :

Que les civils et les femmes écoutent ces chansons

These songs of suffering and the final call for action are directed behind the lines, to where decisions are made. The voices are identified, individualised in the persons of the wounded, Christ-like stretcher-bearer, of

the dying Breton who stares up and pleads

Priez pour moi Bon Dieu je suis le pauvre Pierre

With the virgin soldier who should still be at school and who reflects on time which is lost forever, Apollinaire again reconsiders the beauty of war, the only beauty the young man knows, though this should be his season of love. An innocent victim, he reminds us of 'Automne malade' in Alcools where

Des éperviers planent
Sur les nixes nœcettes aux cheveux verts et naines
Qui n'ont jamais aimé

Knowing no other, he finds his muse in the beauty of warfare, as Apollinaire did before. But for Apollinaire now that 'floraison blanche dans les cieux' is seen as 'la terrible lueur'. In 'Le Chant d'amour' (OPo p. 283) he writes of :

Le tonnerre des artilleries qui accomplissent le terrible amour
[des peuples

And in 'Simultanités' (OPo p. 285) the same beauty has become :

Les atroces lueurs des tirs

In all these poems, written after the great offensives, the epithets are telling.

But the poet's heart, 'mon coeur triomphant', beats strongly and this poem is powered by the joy of survival. Rediscovered in the calm which follows the battle, the horizon takes the shape of Noah's rainbow, a peacock's tail, and the poet, now feeling that the sleeping have been woken, that

Le grand Pan est ressuscité

calls on the decision-makers to feel the same spirit, to have done with this

war once and for all :

Je suis comme l'onde
Allons ouvrez les écluses que je me précipite et renverse tout

If the army advances, heaven and earth will move with them, an irresistible force. The rebirth of Pan marks the renewal of man's pagan union with nature.

So the poem presents a new spring in autumn, a return to the greenery of 'Case d'armons', the poet's joy and hope finding he is still alive, but also because nature represents life itself after the orgy of mechanical destruction. Nature is fragile and like the soldiers has suffered on the battlefield,

Où la colombe porte un casque

Metal is fierce, screaming death :

L'obus miaule
Je te tuerai

The men who barely poke their noses from cover are like buds in spring, or even the autumn sun :

Le soleil à peine boutonne

The gunners are 'roux comme des taupes' ; blue like Mediterranean bays ; or like the sky, 'bleu comme le jour'. And the horizon seals the pact between man and creation :

Moi l'horizon je combattrai pour la victoire

The same contrast between nature and the machinery of death is present in 'Le Chant d'amour' where 'Le tonnerre des artilleries' rumbles threateningly over

Les vagues de la mer où naît la vie et la beauté

while in 'Un Oiseau chante' (OPop. 301), from 17 October 1915, the bird is asked :

Ton chant si doux répète-le
A la mitrailleuse funeste

The innocent Eden of his first poems, far from the machines, far from the cities, still lives in the poet's heart.

Now, despite his cry at the end of 'Chant de l'horizon en Champagne', he has little faith in the ability of the brute force of the mechanised army to achieve a victory if we are to judge from his letter to André Level, 5 November 1915 :

Je crois bien au contraire que le rôle le plus important est aujourd'hui encore à la diplomatie et que les armées doivent seulement l'appuyer ; au point de vue diplomatique la situation est encore très possible si l'on est adroit. La question d'offensive est réduite au second plan pour mille raisons que je ne peux plus développer, dont je ne veux même pas parler [...] . (63)

Having seen so much destructive energy expended for so little gain, he is approaching the opinion of Anatole de Saintariste who in La Femme assise will say to Corail :

Je voudrais vous conquérir. Les captives aiment les conquérants, mais j'ai trop longtemps fait la guerre pour croire à la réalité des conquêtes, qui, je le crois, sont impossibles.
(OPr p. 492)

In fact he is returning through experience to the wisdom of his youth when, in L'Histoire de Nyctor from the beginning of the century, Nyctor describes war as 'le stérile amour! ' : 'Non les canons n'enfantent rien' (OPr p. 1173). Yet in another letter to Level, 4 February 1916, he will contradict himself by insisting that the war 'ne se terminera que par les armes'. (64) His confusion, his frustration that the diplomats are letting men die without

(63) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, p. 58.

(64) Ibid. , p. 74.

seeming to make an effort to save them, come through in his letter to Level of 16 October 1915 :

Je vous assure qu'il y aurait mieux à faire pour tout le monde, même pour moi, si on voulait, si on savait, car on ne sait pas. C'est en ceci comme en tout, en art notamment, on ne sait pas, on ne sait plus, car on a su autrefois [...] . (65)

It was in this state of mind, in this aftermath to the autumn bombardments, that Apollinaire made the most important decision of his military career, which was to move from the artillery to the infantry, a switch he made on 18 November.

Why did he make the change ? He had seen life in the infantry trenches when he had visited them as a liaison officer in the artillery. (66) In August 1915 he had told Madeleine that 'Les artilleurs sont des princes vis-à-vis des fantassins'. (67) Maybe the intervening artillery bombardments had changed his mind. Perhaps he had 'itchy feet', needed to move, pushed by his old dislike of immobility. In 'Le Canonnier conducteur' (OPo p. 214) for example, in February 1915, he had seen the infantry as the unstoppable force which would lead the advance to victory :

Fantassins
Marchantes mottes de terre
Vous êtes la puissance
Du sol qui vous a faits
Et c'est le sol qui va
Lorsque vous avancez

But the two most important reasons were his need to take some leave and his desire for promotion. In July 1915 he wrote to André Level that 'Les fantassins sont plus gais que les artilleurs ; c'est sans doute parce que les uns vont au repos et pas les autres'. (68) And his 11 October letter to

(65) Ibid., p. 54.

(66) Letter to Eugène Montfort, OC IV, p. 912.

(67) TS, p. 78.

(68) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, p. 31.

Madeleine explains that this was because artillery life was considered less strenuous and so gunners were supposed to get enough rest at their posts. (69) André Level's efforts to persuade him to stay where he was (70) were met by Apollinaire's insistence, in a card dated 1 August 1915, that 'Je suis très bon marcheur'. (71) By the autumn, as he pushes on with his verbal seduction of Madeleine, he is determined to see her at Christmas. (72) On 14 November, still in the artillery, he tells her in desperation that he fears they will have to wait four more months. (73) And so when he writes to announce the switch to the infantry he is happy to add: 'Je crois que du fait de mon passage dans l'infanterie ma permission se trouve avancée'. (74) As for his desire for promotion, he told André Level in August, 'J'aime les responsabilités et loin de m'y dérober les recherches'. (75) He explained his ambition in an undated letter to Eugène Montfort:

Ma carrière militaire ne commencerait à être brillante que si j'arrivais à être officier et pouvoir faire vraiment quelque chose. Mais si la guerre durait autant que vous dites, je serais navré de n'être que sous-officier. L'avancement, ami, n'est pas plus facile dans l'artillerie que dans le train, peut-être moins.

[...]

Mon rêve serait maintenant de passer dans l'infanterie comme sous-lieutenant, mais ça m'a l'air difficile à effectuer ce changement. (76)

Having achieved his aim, despite the difficulties, he writes to Madeleine as a sub-lieutenant in the infantry, that 'j'en avais assez d'être sous-off'. (77) On 23 February 1916 he tells the artist J.-E. Laboureur: 'Pour ce que vous me dites à propos des armes, la plus intéressante pour l'avancement, est l'infanterie, c'est pourquoi j'ai changé'. (78) The aristocratic side

(69) TS, p. 200.

(70) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, pp. 32 and 42.

(71) Ibid., p. 36.

(72) TS, p. 252.

(73) TS, p. 257.

(74) TS, p. 269. Once in the trenches, Apollinaire will again mention leave in his letters of 30 November, 5 and 8 December (TS, pp. 274, 283 and 287).

(75) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, p. 40.

(76) OC IV, pp. 912-913.

(77) TS, p. 268.

(78) OC IV, p. 787.

of Apollinaire, his desire to emulate his father, the dashing Italian officer Francesco Flugi d'Aspermont, had asserted itself.

The title of the final section of Calligrammes, 'Le Tête étoilée', retrospectively grants Apollinaire's head-wound, sustained in the infantry, the prestige of a halo. The poet considers in 1917, as he collects these texts, that the impression given in 1909 - 'nous avons tant grandi que beaucoup pourraient confondre nos yeux et les étoiles' (OPo p. 84) - is now justified, so that his increase in stature must equal that of the harlequin in 'Crépuscule' (OPo p. 64), finally conferring on the poet the coveted rank of Trismegistus. If two of the poems in this section, 'Carte postale' (OPo p. 297) and 'Un Oiseau chante' (OPo p. 301), antedate the switch to the infantry, five of the ten poems in 'Obus couleur de Lune' are infantry poems.

Apollinaire's transfer to the trenches in November could not have come at a worse time, just as winter really set in. The first snow fell on 14 November. (79) But Apollinaire's spirits were still high and the renaissance to which he refers in his love poem 'Chevaux de frise' (OPo p. 302) must in part have been caused by the fact that it was sent to Madeleine on 18 November 1915, the day he was officially promoted to the rank of sub-lieutenant in the 96th Infantry Regiment. (80) The past tense of the first

(79) TS, p. 257.

(80) Claude TOURNADRE, op. cit., p. 20.

thirteen lines of the poem place the poet in the future, looking back on the war from a situation of peace and comfort so that, reassured, he can fill his text with love and flowers, transforming the cold, white landscape of the present with images of blossom on fruit trees and spray on the Mediterranean. But 'Le Départ' (OPO p. 295) from 19 November 1915, five lines which Apollinaire uses to open 'La Tête étoilée', returns to the frontier of winter, cold and sorrowful, a return to the melancholy of the poet's 'saison mentale' as the snowy petals of 'Chevaux de frise' now fall like autumn leaves. 'Exercice' (OPO p. 273) is Apollinaire's adieu to the artillery. Sent to Madeleine on 22 November 1915 the text presents four gunners who, backs to the artillery, are 'couverts de poussière Depuis la tête jusqu'aux pieds', like the 'Marchantes mottes de terre' of the infantry. The poignancy hangs on the last line, which seems to accept the inevitability of a bad end :

Ainsi se prolongeait l'ascèse
Qui les exerçait à mourir

On 28 November as he writes to Madeleine his pulses race and he regrets nothing, proud to be in the thick of the action. Already his reaction is one of awe : 'D'ailleurs mon amour, réellement, c'est l'infanterie qui est l'arme méritante. Le reste ... popote bourgeoise ... mais l'infanterie !!! C'est inouï. Je monte demain soir en première ligne pour neuf jours. Que ton amour me protège'. (81) Once in the front-line trenches he is totally bowled over by the hardships, the lack of essential supplies such as coal and water, the stoicism of the soldiers, all of which he describes in his long letter of the evening of 1 December 1915. (82) 'Le Départ' was written as he sat in a German cemetery, depressed at the thought of Blaise Cendrars returning home from the Foreign Legion with one arm missing.

(81) TS, p. 271.

(82) TS, p. 277 (letter misdated 2 December).

Now he learns that the loss of a limb here in the trenches is regarded as a blessing : 'Leur rêve, c'est la bonne blessure (un bras coupé)'. (83) A model officer, he is full of kindness for his men, letting his sergeants sleep in his shelter, teaching one young illiterate to read. (84) His sensitivity to human suffering is acute now as he writes that the nation 'n'aura jamais une admiration assez grande pour les simples fantassins, soldats admirables qui meurent glorieusement comme des mouches'. (85) Any irony to be detected in this juxtaposition of insects and glory was probably unintentional. By the evening of 2 December any remaining illusions have been stripped away and he enunciates the truth. Note especially the 'maintenant', perhaps an admission of past misconceptions : 'Je sens vivement maintenant toute l'horreur de cette guerre secrète sans stratégie mais dont les stratagèmes sont épouvantables et atroces'. (86) A week later he states eategorically, 'je déteste cette guerre'. (87) Apollinaire's letters to Madeleine at this time make moving reading. In the infantry he has practically stopped writing to Lou, sending her four peremptory notes before breaking off completely, as if she were unworthy of such profoundly felt descriptions. There is little place in his letters for eroticism henceforth, as if his imagination were caught in the mud of this new reality. And even in his letters to Madeleine one point upon which he insists is the inadequacy of language before the task of communicating the strange and horrible experience of life in the trenches. Dada in Zurich felt the same way and their expression of the bankruptcy of language found its reflection, as we shall see, in Apollinaire's work in 1917. He writes now to Madeleine that 'En réalité, aucun écrivain ne pourra dire la simple horreur, la mystérieuse vie de la tranchée'. (89) 'Les souffrances de l'infanterie sont au-

(83) TS, p. 277.

(84) TS, p. 280.

(85) TS, p. 279.

(86) TS, p. 281.

(87) TS, p. 288.

(88) Lettres à Lou, pp. 217-220.

(89) TS, p. 279.

dessus de tout ce qu'on peut imaginer, surtout en cette saison et dans cette sale région'. (90) Then, in March 1916, just before his head-wound : 'Pas de description possible. C'est inimaginable'. (91)

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that from the beginning of December to the day of his inevitable head-wound — the life of an infantry officer was usually a short one — Apollinaire wrote no more than fifteen poems. Several of these, such as 'Paris' (OPo p. 638) from February 1916, or the 'Inscriptions' (OPo pp. 745, 746) from March, are brief sketches or inconsequential poems of circumstance on subjects removed from combat. It is becoming impossible to wring poetry out of the war, and he has little time for such occupations. (92) 'Merveille de la guerre' (OPo p. 271) which opens 'Obus couleur de Lune' is, however, one important poem from the front-line trenches, written in December 1915. The war is a cannibalistic festival and the soldier at first marvels at the ephemeral beauty of the flares, a beauty which the poet expressly attaches to its concomitant suffering :

Pourtant c'est aussi beau que si la vie même sortait des
[mourants

Indeed as the beauty dies so the poet turns in on himself to reflect on this flashy brilliance without meaning, illuminating the plight of dying men and leaving a smell of roasted flesh in the smoke. If there were nothing but light, millions of rockets in the sky, if the sky swallowed up the soldiers as the earth does, that would be a true and beautiful apocalypse, not this failure in which the skies just flicker, refusing the miracle of apotheosis and assumption into paradise which Apollinaire satirised with his Christ-aviator in 'Zone' :

(91) TS, p. 344.

(92) See his letter of 7 February 1916 : 'C'est fantastique comme dans l'infanterie on peut travailler pour soi ! Rappelle-toi le nombre de poèmes faits dans l'artillerie et combien en ai-je faits dans l'infanterie, peut-être pas un ...' (TS, p. 318).

Il n'avale que les âmes
Ce qui est une façon de ne pas se nourrir
Et se contente de jongler avec des feux versicolores

Darkness and suffering follow the bright lights every time, as death closes life. Apollinaire describes the rockets up above the men in their ditches :

Elles accouchent brusquement d'enfants qui n'ont que le temps
de mourir

We think of Samuel Beckett and En attendant Godot : 'Elles accouchent à cheval sur une tombe, le jour brille un instant, puis c'est la nuit à nouveau'. (93)

The solidarity which binds Apollinaire to the men of his company results in his image of indivisible unity, a river flowing through the line of trenches, filling every hole. This image expands so that the river fills all of space, as Apollinaire alone did in the simultaneity of his pre-war poetry. But when he looks to the future, now all progress and reconstruction is seen on an evolutionary scale :

Ce sera plus long à réaliser que non la fable d'Icare volant

He no longer seems to nurture utopian dreams of the immediate post-war period as he did in 'Guerre' (OPO p. 228), from the summer of 1915, when he promised that :

Après après
Nous prendrons toutes les joies
Des vainqueurs qui se délassent

For himself he sees death, now the time has come to draw up his testament :

(93) Samuel BECKETT, En attendant Godot, Act II, Paris, Les Editions de minuit, 1952, p. 126.

Je lègue à l'avenir l'histoire de Guillaume Apollinaire
Qui fut à la guerre et sut être partout

This self-affirmation is countered, as the darkness counters the light, by the bathos of the final images, the solitude of a man facing death :

Car si je suis partout à cette heure il n'y a cependant que moi
[qui suis en moi

He feels again that emptiness which he knew after the great bombardment in Champagne and which he described in 'Dans l'abri-caverne'.

The slimy octopuses of 'Océan de terre' (OPo p. 268) are nightmare monsters, pecking at the fragile glass of reason, and this use of images pulled up from the depths of the subconscious makes the dedication to Giorgio de Chirico appropriate. The sounds of battle are transposed as the boom of canons becomes beating hearts and rattling gun-fire the staccato beaks on the window-panes which are made of the poet's tears, 'les fleuves qui s'écoulent de mes yeux'. If the glass breaks the earth-ocean must flood in and the poet be covered. All shelter is ultra-fragile as the ground shifts and shudders. And one conspicuously lucid line is placed amidst the dream :

Et puis nous sommes tant et tant à être nos propres fossoyeurs

Again to modern ears these words seem shot through with our own existential anguish which is itself largely a product of the atrocious wars of this century.

The confused identity of the octopuses in 'Océan de terre', both an exterior threat and a personification of the soldiers themselves, pale beings sunk in their damp, deep world, a confusion which is proper to the dimension of dreams, is resolved in 'Chant de l'honneur' (OPo p. 304), in which Apollinaire compares himself to the octopus as he suffers with his men :

J'ai plus que les trois coeurs des poulpes pour souffrir
Vos coeurs sont tous en moi je sens chaque blessure
O mes soldats souffrants ô blessés à mourir

In fact the primary fault of 'Chant de l'honneur' is this transition from ambiguity to plain rhetoric. Dated '17 Décembre 1915', Apollinaire writes this poem in the 'Tranchée de Hambourg' which he entered on 9 December. (94) These eight days seem longer to the poet :

Depuis dix jours au fond d'un couloir trop étroit

We wonder how in such conditions, now that he faces the war with righteous hatred, Apollinaire can refer to Honour, Beauty and Duty, to 'gestes glorieux' and 'la grandeur de ces trépas pieux'. He seems to echo those appeals to Patriotism, Self-sacrifice and Religion, the Great Abstractions in whose names the armchair generals perpetrated such suffering, sending so many to their deaths. It is true that towards the end of his life Apollinaire was, on occasion, receptive to reactionary propaganda, the Action Française approach, and there is an element of this vulnerability in 'Chant de l'honneur'. But then he did not have the benefit of hindsight which we enjoy. And furthermore he was not speaking from the relative security of old age or political platforms to encourage others to march off to their deaths. He is writing from a God-forsaken hole in the ground, amidst filth and rotting flesh. His poem is one of exacerbated idealism in the face of an awful recognition of futility. It is one of uncertainty, sleeplessness and acute suffering in which the poet is consciously trying to crank up his own morale and that of his men lest they sink into the despair which rises around them 'comme une marée', lest they drown

Dans les éboulements et la boue et le froid
Parmi la chair qui souffre et dans la pourriture

(94) Claude TOURNADRE, op. cit., p. 21.

This environment is totally hostile, for if the air is full of shrapnel ('un fleuve d'obus'), the earth would betray them like a vampire's kiss. The trench, a soldier's only shelter, is, he tells Madeleine, partly built of corpses (95) and is malevolent :

Tapie au fond du sol je vous guette jalouse

This could be the voice of a medieval enchantress, Viviane or a 'Belle Dame sans merci', as in 'La Tranchée' from 7 December 1915 (Opo p. 636), where Apollinaire's old fear of castration recurs as the sinisterly seductive voice of the trench offers the solace of eternal sleep :

Je guérirai tes peines tes soucis tes désirs ta mélancolie

Now he feels that mankind has created his own hell, rejecting the salvation of brotherhood :

Le Christ n'est donc venu qu'en vain parmi les hommes
Si des fleuves de sang limitent les royaumes

It is in this situation that the poet puts pen to paper in a conscious struggle to impose order on chaos, to find some dignity in death, like the man who thinks of beauty while committing a crime. And it is significant that the thought of crime should now spring to Apollinaire's mind as he contemplates the war. He sees that the men in his company are grave. They have no time to talk of women, to chisel aluminium rings : 'ils sont sérieux, jamais grossiers et disciplinés' he tells Madeleine. (96) Their regiment has lost 28,000 men and 90 officers since September, as far as they know. (97) In such conditions the poet considers it his particular duty to try to keep alive some precarious flame of hope and humanity :

(95) TS, p. 276.

(96) TS, p. 278.

(97) TS, p. 288.

C'est pourquoi faut au moins penser à la Beauté
Seule chose ici-bas qui jamais n'est mauvaise

Apollinaire is true to his vision of humanity as the crown of creation,

ce jardin exquis l'humanité
Aux fleurs d'intelligence à parfum de beauté

and the conservation of this core of purity, despite months of barbarity, in a landscape denuded of all natural beauty, is little short of miraculous. Early in the poem Apollinaire speaks honestly of his dead soldiers, still standing as though resting against the parapet, anonymous and unspectacular. If we are shocked by the strangely dispassionate tone of these lines, then it is because such an experience is so foreign to us. Apollinaire will write for the Mercure de France :

Celui qui n'a pas vécu en hiver dans une tranchée où
ça barde ne sait pas combien la vie peut être une chose
simple. [...]

Celui qui n'a pas vu des musettes suspendues au pied d'un
cadavre qui pourrait sur le parapet de la tranchée ne sait pas
combien la mort est une chose simple. (98)

This latter observation refers to an authentic detail of trench life on which Apollinaire also comments in his 5 December letter to Madeleine : 'Le cadavre a été enlevé. Tant mieux, on s'y habitait trop. Les hommes suspendaient leur musette à ses pieds qui passaient comme des patères'. (99) And in fact Jules Romains refers to a similar scene in his documentary novel, Prélude à Verdun : 'les hommes accrochaient volontiers leur képi, ou la courroie d'une musette, à une main, desséchée et toute noire, qui sortait de la paroi, à bonne hauteur [...] '. (100) Death enters the living body without even knocking it over. It is unspectacular. And in the trenches horrible details are simply commonplace. If then the vocabulary of 'Grâce

(98) OC II, p. 476.

(99) TS, p. 283.

(100) Jules ROMAINS, Les Hommes de bonne volonté, XV, Prélude à Verdun, Paris, Flammarion, 1938, p. 179.

Vertu Courage Honneur' seems inappropriate to the unheroic simplicity of the reality conveyed by the first four strophes of the poem it is because such words, strung together in easy, empty cliché, amount to an admission of failure. He says as much in the final section of the poem in which the central character of this drama, 'Le Poète', addresses the poets of the future,

O poètes des temps à venir ô chanteurs

In answer to the call of 'La France' he is attempting to write what he believes the nation expects, what his soldiers need to hear. But in all humility, with references to weeping and sobbing, he hopes that the poems of the future will be 'bien mieux'

Que ceux que je m'efforce à moduler ce soir

His gift of effortless composition has abandoned him. And the querulous tone of this line indicates that he is far from the self-confidence of those spring days in the forest when he wrote to Lou :

L'avenir m'intéresse et mon amour surtout .
Mais l'art et les artistes futurs ne m'intéressent pas
(OPo p. 448)

Having composed this 'Chant de l'honneur', it is not surprising that Apollinaire should be impressed by Alfred de Vigny's Servitude et Grandeur militaires, the work of a poet who hates war yet admires the stoical courage of the soldiers whom, in the last line of the book, he describes as 'Saints et Martyrs de la religion de l'HONNEUR!' Yet in the same letter of 23 February 1916 in which Apollinaire enthuses to Madeleine about this 'chef-d'oeuvre de la littérature française au 19e siècle [...] cette merveilleuse chose', he fears that he is becoming mindless : 'Il me semble que je traîne mes pieds dans la boue des grands chemins depuis un temps infini. Je deviens un automate, sans pensée véritable'. (101) Vigny's text presents him

with a precedent, a justification of his condition, a straw of comfort and understanding to which he can cling. However numbed he may feel after three months in the infantry, he can still get angry in another letter of the same day when he thinks of the bourgeois press, which he now suggest could be abolished :

D'un côté on voit trop de particularisme réactionnaire chercher à monopoliser le patriotisme, d'un autre côté les journaux bourgeois racontent des fumisteries comme si les soldats étaient assez bêtes pour les croire. (102)

One characteristic of the last eighteen months of Apollinaire's life will be the alternation and attempted reconciliation of the anti-establishment opinions expressed here and the traditional values of 'Chant de l'honneur'.

During the two weeks 4 - 19 February 1916 Apollinaire was billeted in the cottage of an old couple in the village of Hautvilliers in Champagne. (103) When he is not busy with manoeuvres, exercises, parades he has the chance to rest a little, taste the champagne. He composes some good-humoured poetry, 'Le Vigneron champenois' (OPo p. 296) and 'Aussi bien que les cigales' (Opo p. 284), though in the first poem the champagne bottle's associations with pleasure and celebration are countered by the comparison with the artillery, and in the latter poem the memories of an idealised southern childhood,

La joie adorable de la paix solaire

are opposed by the repeated insistence on digging, an evocation of trenches and graves, the battlefield imperative of digging to survive. The spoken interjections of 'Le Vigneron champenois': 'Bonjour soldats [...] J'envoie mes bouteilles partout [...] Allons Adieu messieurs tâchez de revenir', and the daring lay-out of 'Aussi bien que les cigales' combine in 'Du coton dans

(102) TS, p. 334.

(103) TS, p. 316.

les oreilles' (OPo p. 287) to produce a complex collage of sound and vision which proves that given the time and a table to lean on Apollinaire is still ready to experiment, is as fascinated as ever by the possibility of creating a new poetic language. He wrote to Madeleine on 29 January that he was planning 'un long poème qui sera le chant de ma nouvelle oeuvre' (104) and perhaps 'Du coton dans les oreilles', begun during a lecture on gas warfare, is that new incarnation of poetry. It is a long poem in which the excitement of creativity and novelty expressed in the form, contradicts the contents of the text, the images of destruction. Voices in megaphones struggling to make themselves heard jostle on the page with the deafening din of battle, sudden noises marked on the first page by heavier capitals. Exclamation is countered by a question mark, and there are so many questions in the poet's mind that his soul resembles a battlefield, 'mon âme toujours en guerre'. This reflecting interior/exterior action corresponds to the shifts of time in the text, flashing backwards,

Crois-tu qu'il y aura la guerre

and forwards,

Tu retrouveras
La tranchée en première ligne

The noise of the present includes not only explosions and shouting but also music, 'chansons déchirées' and military bands, and then moments of silence :

Le silence des phonographes
[. . .]
Et les regards des guetteurs las
Qui veillent le silence insigne

There is also the quietness of coenobite monks whose ascetic community matches that of the soldiers and whose cloistered space on the page represents a dreamed-of tranquility as well as the relative security of the soldier's

shelter, his 'cagnat'. Images from the front range from the smaller discomforts like nits in the hair, with the cinematic close-up on an insignificant but typical movement,

Le petit geste du fantassin qui se gratte au cou où les totos le
[démangent

to the major tragedies of war :

soldats aveugles perdus parmi les chevaux de frise sous la lune
[liquide
des Flandres à l'agonie sous la pluie fine

When he came to publish this poem in Calligrammes Apollinaire altered the text to make it more sombre and pessimistic, taking out the section centred on the military button, ' (RF) Courage Ivresse Vie', and making the rain section one of whispered horror where in the original version these lines were rather anodyne, including as they did a reference to chocolate cream. This technique of darkening for publication, unusual for Apollinaire, is repeated in 'Souvenirs (OPo p. 299), sent to Madeleine 10 March 1916, then published in SIC in July with the addition of the last two lines which, with their combination of Nietzschean and Apollinarian themes, the death of God and the death of kings, give the end of the text an ominous twist, an addition to the shudder at the centre :

Mais le rat pénètre dans le cadavre et y demeure

This 'Mais' was in contradiction with the other sometimes pretty scenes of everyday life. The additional lines tip the balance further in its favour.

By the time he wrote 'Souvenirs' Apollinaire was back on the march through Champagne, moving from hamlet to village, and this 'situation d'Errant' (105) reminds him of earlier days, the Wandering Jew and the gypsies :

(105) TS, p. 338.

'On est comme inexistants, des Bohémiens'. (106) On 11 March 1916, the day after 'Souvenirs', he sent 'L'Avenir' (OPo p. 300) to Madeleine, a poem written in a moment of repose, of watching time pass, dreaming, smoking a pipe, waiting for orders, a flat and banal existence sheltered by the 'gabions', baskets filled with earth, heightened by the optimistic presence of a fountain, straw that still glints like gold and a future to be built by the hands of men. This is Apollinaire's last poem to Madeleine. 'Chef de section' (OPo p. 307) must have been written for her, but it was never sent. It is another hymn to the joys of physical love, a theme abandoned since 'Le ... poème secret' (OPo p. 637) of December 1915, since the poet's meeting with Madeleine in Oran over the New Year holidays. The last line of the poem, a switch from the poet's desire to the officer's duty suggests that the poem was written between 15 March, the day of his return to the front-line trenches, and 17 March 1916, the day a splinter of shrapnel pierced his skull.

When Apollinaire's war poems are placed in their context and the conditions in which they were written are more clearly apprehended, then they are revealed to be richer, with more facets than was admitted by critics who in the past did not have access to the surrounding texts, letters and unpublished poems now available. The flashing brilliance of certain lines dazzled readers, leaving many aspects of the poetry, including Apollinaire's increasingly sombre presentation of the war, unnoticed, without commentary.

Careful dating and chronological ordering of the texts reveals this evolution in Apollinaire's attitudes, an evolution marked by the poet's constant

solidarity with his comrades-in-arms. When he expresses enthusiasm, then suffering and disillusion in his poems he speaks for a whole army, slowly advancing, casualties multiplying, sinking more deeply into the sticky marshland of the war. In his uncertainty he speaks for countless individuals, unable to reconcile the fine abstractions of their idealism with the sordid realities of their experience. From this fraternity of military life, for the poet a place found in the community, grew that consciousness of the artist's duty towards society which would mark Apollinaire's final months and last works.

Alcools need no longer take precedence over Calligrammes. Once Apollinaire's attitudes to the war have been better understood they no longer appear as a stumbling block before an appreciation of the poet's complete works. And we can move on to read the last poems, from 'le temps de la Raison ardente'.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIETY (v). 1916-1918

Apollinaire did not see much of the spring of 1916. He spent fifty-four days on his back, partly paralysed, being moved from hospital to hospital, until finally he was trepanned on 9 May at the Villa Molière in Paris. His short stay in the trenches, the shells and the gas, had definitively ruined his health. The poet of 'Case d'armes' had no quarrel with the war. Now, one year later, the fear of death imposes a different lucidity and he sees the war as a dark cold shadow on the earth, the shadow of hatred. So when he writes 'La Mort & Vie attend son tour' (OPo p. 747) after his operation, he refers not only to his own poor condition but also to that of a whole world whose suffering matches his own :

La Haine crie où fut l'Amour
L'Iris est l'Ombre des Tulipes
Comme la Nuit après le Jour

In November he writes to Yves Blanc in the same funeral tone. Back in hospital he feels so ill that he expects to die within a week :

Le mois qui court encor ne s'achèvera pas
Sans que votre poète apporte son trépas
(OPo p. 644)

His morale is at its lowest ebb and not just because of his own state of health. In 1916 the war had become a real hecatomb on both sides

and in a letter to Georgette Catelain, 20 October 1916, in which Apollinaire describes his uncharacteristic bouts of quarrelsome bad temper, he condemns this useless carnage : 'Pour le reste, se débarrasser des Boches signifie en l'occurrence se débarrasser du plus grand nombre de Français mâles, par surcroît'. (1) As he looks back at atrocity, everything for which he believed he was fighting is questioned. He desperately needs a foothold as he asks himself in the same letter, 'ce qu'est la civilisation, et où elle se niche, ou si la douceur est un fait de civilisation. Il y a beaucoup de sauvages qui sont la douceur même'. Can the devastation he has witnessed be the fruit of civilisation, the civilisation he has been fighting to defend ?

And yet in that same autumn, when asked to contribute to a soldier's newspaper, the Rire aux éclats, Apollinaire dutifully runs off 'On les aura ' (OPO p. 1031), using the name of the paper as a pun which is remarkable if one remembers that it was a splinter of shrapnel which had perforated Apollinaire's skull :

Ah ! que c'est bien de rire aux éclats
Des 210, des 150 ;
Que c'est bien de n'être pas las,
De sourire dans la tourmente

Maybe today we read an irony here to match that of 'L'Adieu du cavalier'. Nevertheless he has donned a mask of jovial optimism, building his poem around a phrase which figured on thousands of posters, a centre-pin of government propaganda, 'ON LES AURA!' Writing this poem for immediate publication Apollinaire looks to his readers, his comrades at the Front. The needs of this readership, as Apollinaire understood them, took precedence over subjective considerations, his personal state of mind, meditations which he reserved for his private correspondence and for poetry which he did not submit for publication. This dichotomy between the public figure and

(1) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, 'Lettres inédites du mal-aimé à une amie', Figaro littéraire, 1174, 4-10 November 1968, p. 11.

the private man will continue to characterise much of Apollinaire's writing henceforth. There are two voices, often in conflict,

Car il y a tant de choses que je n'ose vous dire
Tant de choses que vous ne me laisseriez pas dire

as he will state with sad explicitness at the end of 'La Jolie Rousse'.

The fourth and last poem which we have from the nine months of 1916 which followed Apollinaire's head wound is a New Year poem, 'Mes souhaits pour 1917' (OPo p. 833). Here he expresses his disapproval of the profiteers making fortunes from the war and we sense the unease of a poet who cannot readapt to life in a city where commerce takes the place of the binding solidarity of combat, the brotherhood of men who face a common enemy. Francis Poulenc has recalled how in 1917 the first nights of Parade and Les Mamelles de Tirésias, or an exhibition by Picasso and Matisse, caused such a stir that the whole of Paris seemed to forget the war. (2) Remember how Pierre Reverdy in the first issue of Nord-Sud in March 1917 was already looking beyond the war, whose outcome seemed to him to be a foregone conclusion, writing in an editorial tribute to Apollinaire: 'La victoire est désormais certaine. C'est pourquoi il est temps, pensons-nous, de ne plus négliger les lettres et de les réorganiser entre nous, parmi nous'. Such a renewal of interest in the arts could only be favourable to Apollinaire. But as well as being a writer he was still a serving army officer and never appeared in public without his uniform. His first loyalty was still towards his comrades at the Front. In February 1916, in his poem 'Paris' (OPo p. 638) he saw the capital as a

Hypogée où l'on riait trop

(2) Francis POULENC, Moi et mes amis, p. 94.

and in a poem of February 1918 (OPo p. 689) he rejects outright the idea that the nation at war should establish a Ministry for the Arts, using the opportunity to hit out at shirkers, cowards and profiteers. The infernal suffering which was continuing in the trenches just eighty kilometres away was always to the forefront of his mind.

So this is how we must view the image of Apollinaire which has been passed on to us by those who met him for the first time in these very difficult days. Their anger and hatred of the war which had been imposed upon them by an older generation made them allergic to Apollinaire's public image. André Breton, for one, could be very hard on his old master. In 1928, in Le Surréalisme et la peinture, for example, he presents an Apollinaire who is swerving into arid conservatism - 'la mort allait l'arrêter à temps'. (3) In 1941 he saw the end of Apollinaire's life menaced by a 'faillite individuelle plus ou moins complète'. (4) More recent critics have been influenced by this so that even Pascal Pia, considering Les Mamelles de Tirésias, wonders whether, in 1917, 'sa blessure et sa trépanation laissaient encore intacte la conscience qu'il avait de lui-même et de son art. (5)

Of course his terrible physical suffering was hard to bear and Apollinaire wrote to Yves Blanc : 'Je suis encore très nerveux, irascible à l'excès, j'en ai paraît-il pour plus d'un an à me remettre du traumatisme capital qui a manqué me faire mourir'. (6) He had grown fat during his months in hospital and his uniform hardly fitted him now, just as his mask of official optimism barely covered his sorrow when he remembered the trenches. This tension was exacerbated by another form of

(3) André BRETON, Le Surréalisme et la peinture, p. 10.

(4) André BRETON, Entretiens, p. 230.

(5) Pascal PIA, Apollinaire par lui-même, p. 167.

(6) Letter of 25 July 1916, OC IV, p. 685.

suffering in June 1917 when he found himself openly attacked by those who should have been his friends. The newspaper Le Pays of 24 June 1917 carried a good-humoured interview with Apollinaire in which he seems to be laying plans with real optimism. But a few days later appeared a protest from an influential group of avant-garde artists : 'Peintres et sculpteurs cubistes, nous protestons contre la fâcheuse liaison que l'on tend à établir entre nos oeuvres et certaines fantaisies théâtrales ou littéraires qu'il ne nous appartient pas de juger'. (7) By putting their names to this pompous epistle the eight artists concerned, all of whom Apollinaire had bravely defended and encouraged in his newspaper articles, caused a wound which Apollinaire described in a letter to Reverdy as 'la plus grande peine' of his life. (8) Vulnerable, perhaps over-sensitive at this time, he relived the suffering of 1908 when he wrote in 'Les Fiançailles' that

Mes amis m'ont enfin avoué leur mépris

In Vitam impendere amori in 1917 he writes :

Voici que s'en vient la saison
Et des dédains et du soupçon

It is this man who feels sick and lonely whom Georges Gabory, in a 1967 article, remembers meeting at 202 Bd. Saint-Germain. Apollinaire communicated his unease to his young admirer who found him 'distant, pontifiant' and who sensed that he was 'ambitieux de troquer sa veste bleu horizon contre un habit vert'. (9) And it is true that Apollinaire hoped for the accolade of a place in the Académie Française, just as he felt he deserved the Prix Goncourt for Le Poète assassiné. (10) In his efforts to keep his

(7) See Michel DECAUDIN, 'Le Pays et Les Mamelles', GA 4, (1965), pp. 15- 24 (p. 19). The letter was signed by Metzinger, Gris, Diego Rivera, Lipchiz, Henri Hayden, Lhote, Kissling and Severini.

(8) OC IV, pp. 890-891.

(9) Georges GABORY, 'Apollinaire ou la leçon d'écriture', Kentucky Romance Quarterly, XIV, I, 1967, pp. 91-98, (p. 95).

(10) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, 'Lettres inédites du mal-aimé à une amie', op. cit.

name before the public and to build a reputation as 'a man of letters' he was having to lead a life which could only worsen his already precarious state of health. In the spring of 1917 he was having to rise at five every morning to go to work as a foreign affairs journalist at Paris-Midi and then to go on to his official duties in the Government Censorship Office. At the same time, as he told Georgette Catelain, he was working on numerous other projects including a new edition of Les Fleurs du mal and a new collection of his own poetry. (11) He had to make a living, and some sort of official recognition would make this task much easier, enabling him to give up those jobs which were a danger to his health and which interfered with those projects which he considered most important. He needed security.

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Apollinaire could be proud of the fact that in 1917 the young writers making up the important SIC and Nord-Sud constellations still regarded him as an exemplary figure and his poems as reference-points in their explorations. Yet if Apollinaire could be seen as the pivot of a certain Parisian avant-garde it looked in 1917 as though Paris might be superseded as the centre of innovatory creativity by Zurich, a city whose neutrality encouraged radical experiment. Here was born a new movement which, Michel Décaudin has said, 'par son audace, déborde Apollinaire tout en séduisant ses jeunes amis'. (12) In the face of such developments he would have to look to his laurels lest the spirit of Dada should contaminate the dignity of the Parisian art world. In fact this was already happening.

(11) Ibid.

(12) Michel DECAUDIN, 'L'Avant-garde autour d'Apollinaire', L'Information littéraire, May-June 1969, pp. 116-123, (p. 119).

The banquet given in Apollinaire's honour on 30 December 1916 at the Palais d'Orléans, Avenue du Maine, had degenerated into a chaotic slanging match with young rowdies throwing balls of bread when the old guard, Mme. Aurel, Mme. Rachilde, Paul-Napoléon Roinard, tried to recite their speeches and poems. 'Vraiment, on ne se croirait pas en France', exclaimed Roinard (13) and the occasion looks now like a rehearsal for the famous Saint-Pol Roux banquet at the Closerie des Lilas in 1925 at which Breton and Company, in their most iconoclastic mood, caused havoc. Rachilde was at the top table on both occasions. (14) It was Jacques Vaché who in Paris personified the spirit of Dada at war with his free-wheeling disdain for all art and artists and who, with a revolver in his hand in the style of Alfred Jarry, made an appearance as an agent provocateur in the audience of Les Mamelles de Tirésias. (15) If at that time, as Dadaist Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes has said, 'les jeux étaient faits, la boule roulait vers le zéro dans le grand casino de l'art', (16) then what place would there be for the Parisian 'man of letters', the very image which Apollinaire was working to consolidate ?

In this light Dada must appear as a further element contributing to the insecurity which, as we shall see, characterises his last poems. Yet his attitude to Dada was extremely ambivalent. He felt that it would be prudent to keep a distance between himself and Dada but many of his own experiments and attitudes corresponded, as he well knew, to those of the men in Zurich. His last poems are too honest to mask this ambiguity. And indeed if we expose all the links between Apollinaire and Dada then he begins to appear as a somewhat independent member of the same family.

(13) Louise FAURE-FAVIER, Souvenirs sur Guillaume Apollinaire, p. 165.

(14) See André BRETON, Entretiens, pp. 115-117.

(15) Georges HUGNET, L'Aventure Dada, p. 66.

(16) Georges RIBEMONT-DESSAIGNES, Déjà Jadis, p. 42.

But then independence was itself one of the hall marks of Dada. We must not allow the official persona of Apollinaire as a war-hero, trying to find a place for himself in a rigidly xenophobic society, to obscure the fact that the disgust of Dada with the civilisation which had produced the Great War coincided with Apollinaire's own attitude to the war after his educative experience in the trenches. Already in 1915 he had chided Georgette Catelain for having too much respect for the 'conventions de beauté' and told her that 'C'est justement l'art que je voudrais bannir des arts ou sinon l'art surtout l'artiste et celui qui fait tout en artiste'. This lack of reverence for the closed world of literary cocktails, studios, galleries and museums is basically Dadaist as is the provocative manner with which Apollinaire tells his correspondent that he no longer has any time for an artist 'qui attache plus de prix à un diamant qu'à une boîte d'allumettes'. (17) The tone of this remark, which takes Apollinaire's effort to bring together art and life to its logical conclusion, inevitably brings to mind the 'ready-mades' of Marcel Duchamp, experiments which raised everyday objects such as a bicycle wheel, in 1913, or a bottle rack, in 1914, to the status of art and which marked a farewell to the old attitude towards works of art as relics of an official religion now seen to be spiritually bankrupt. The switch in Duchamp's thinking which led to the creation of these proto-Dada works, and indeed began the liberating process which earned Duchamp the status he now has, in fact began during the two weeks spent with Francis Picabia and Apollinaire at Etival, in the Jura in the autumn of 1912. After this trip Duchamp abandoned brush and easel and wrote the text 'La machine à 5 coeurs. La route Jura-Paris' which is dated 1912, figures among the notes in Duchamp's 'La Boîte verte' and which was the starting point of his unfinished masterpiece 'La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même', known as 'Le Grand verre'. (18) Some critics, Robert Lebel and Jean Clair

(17) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, 'Lettres inédites du mal-aimé à une amie', op. cit. p. 9.

(18) Arturo SCHWARTZ, Notes and Projects for 'The Large Glass', pp. 32-36.

for example, emphasise the importance of the stay in the Jura (19) while others, notably Michel Sanouillet, see the trip by Duchamp, Picabia and Apollinaire to see Raymond Roussel's absurd drama Impressions d'Afrique which ran for a week at the Théâtre Femina in February 1911 and again for about a month at the Théâtre Antoine in May 1912, as the birth of Dada. According to Sanouillet it is from that evening at the theatre 'qu'il faudrait dater le vrai début de la longue révolte illustrée par Dada, le Surréalisme, et leurs prolongements'. (20) Either way Apollinaire was there as a participant in the events and discussions which set the snow-ball rolling.

Picabia for one always maintained that, despite his old friend's weakness for medals and uniforms, 'Apollinaire aurait certainement été "Dada", comme Duchamp et moi, s'il n'était pas mort aussi prématurément'. (21) Of course it is well known that he refused to send a text to Tristan Tzara's Zurich publication Dada. But in so doing, in his letter to Tzara in February 1918, he in fact comments with approval on the contents of the magazine. He is forbidden from collaborating by circumstances which are beyond his control: 'je serais imprudent si j'agissais autrement'. (22) Such paranoia was justified by the tense, witch-hunting atmosphere of Paris after three and a half years of war when anyone communicating with foreigners, particularly if an exchange of strange texts which could be interpreted as coded messages was involved, was open to suspicion. (23) Back in the more relaxed days of early 1915 Apollinaire had happily contributed to Der Mistral, a German-language newspaper published in Zurich the first issue of which, in March, contained only one French text, Apollinaire's

(19) Robert LEBEL, Sur Marcel Duchamp, pp. 25-26. Jean CLAIR, Marcel Duchamp ou le grand fictif, p. 101.

(20) Michel SANOUILLET, Picabia, pp. 24-25.

(21) Francis PICABIA, 'Guillaume Apollinaire', L'Esprit nouveau, 26, October 1924.

(22) Michel SANOUILLET, 'Sur trois lettres de Guillaume Apollinaire à Tristan Tzara', GA 3, (1964), pp. 5-12, (p. 9).

(23) See Michel SANOUILLET, Dada à Paris, p. 98. Working in the Official Censorship Office, Apollinaire was well placed to know of such dangers.

'2° Cannonier conducteur', captioned 'Unser Freund Apollinaire Redakteur vom Mercure de France sendet dem Mistral diesen Feldpostbrief'. The poem fills half of one of the paper's four pages and appears beside a poem on the horrors of trench warfare, 'An die Soldaten' by Johannes Becker. The truth is that Apollinaire had more contacts with Dada than anyone else in France at that time. Firstly he received nearly all their publications. From Barcelona he received the first four issues of Picabia's 391 (January - March 1917) and Picabia's wife, Gabrielle Buffet, brought him numbers 5, 6 and 7 from New-York (June - August 1917). (24) From an unpublished letter by Apollinaire to H. -P. Roché we know that he was also sent from New York The Blindman, Marcel Duchamp's first Dada publication which appeared in the spring of 1917. (25) André Breton first discovered Tzara's Dada in Apollinaire's flat in Paris. (26) Furthermore Apollinaire's name often appeared inside these publications, whether he liked it or not. Picabia's peripatetic 391 referred to Apollinaire in nearly every issue with mecanomorphic portraits of the poet, as in 391, n° 3, page 4 where he is pictured as a motor-pump with the words :

Celui qui ne fait pas l'éloge du temps passé
Voilà Guillaume Apollinaire
Gloire au poète

or in gossip columns, as in 391 n° 3, page 8, where Picabia claims that Apollinaire is planning to come and join him in Barcelona. Apollinaire sent Picabia a poem, 'L'Horloge de demain' (OPO p. 682), which appeared in 391 n° 4, page 5, coloured by Picabia, and 391 n° 10, page 2, December 1919, featured the poem 'A Francis Picabia, dated 'Février 1914' (OPO p. 731). In fact 391 owed a great deal to Apollinaire, for the magazine was an audacious sequel to Alfred Stieglitz's New York avant-garde magazine

(24) Michel SANOUILLET, Dada à Paris, p. 96.

(25) See Paris - New York, Echanges littéraires au vingtième siècle, Paris, CNACGP, 1977, P. 30, n° 17. Henri-Pierre Roché, author of Jules et Jim, was Marcel Duchamp's friend and compatriot in New York.

(26) André BRETON, Entretiens, p. 58.

291 which was itself a glossy Americanised version of Apollinaire's Les Soirées de Paris. (27) Without asking Apollinaire's permission Hugo Ball had given 'Arbre' a prominent position in the first and only issue of his Cabaret Voltaire in June 1916 and Tristan Tzara, finding himself with no poem from Apollinaire for Dada 2 in December 1917 instead wrote a congratulatory article himself: 'Guillaume Apollinaire: Le Poète assassiné, Les Mamelles de Tirésias'. Most moved by Apollinaire's death, Tzara wrote to Picabia on 23 November 1918, asking for an obituary notice for Dada 3 (28) and at the same time wrote an article and a poem, 'La Mort de Guillaume Apollinaire', both of which appeared in SIC n° 37-39, January 1919.

If the Dadaists regarded Apollinaire as one of their kith and kin it was because they knew him better than those who present him as a champion of officialdom, suffering from a premature rigor mortis of the spirit during the last two years of his life. His experiments in poetry paralleled those of the Dadaists who determined to reinvent a language which had been soiled and rendered useless by misuse during the war. Poems like 'Arbre', 'Un Poème' (OPo p. 360) and, indeed, 'A Francis Picabia' are milestones on the road towards the irrational juxtapositions of Dada poetry. It may be said that the most characteristic and extreme of Dada's experiments with language was the creation of the phonetic poetry which Hugo Ball presented at the first big Dada gala at the Zunfthaus zur Waag in Zurich on 14 July 1916. Later, on 25 June 1917 at the Galerie Dada on the Zurich Bahnhofstrasse there was a whole evening of this phonetic or abstract poetry. Look at the first three lines of Ball's 'O Gadji Beri Bimba' which he recited on that first evening, dressed in a cardboard suit, at a solemn, liturgical pace :

(27) Twelve issues of 291, featuring reproductions of works by Picasso, Braque etc. and African sculptures, appeared between March 1915 and February 1916. Note that 291 n° 1 included Apollinaire's poem 'Voyage' and a caricature of Stieglitz by Marius de Zayas which had appeared in the final issue of Les Soirées de Paris in July 1914. N° 2 contained an article entitled 'Les Soirées de Paris', a drawing by Picabia and a text by Alberto Savinio whose dramatic poem, a masterpiece, 'Les Chants de la mi-mort', had also appeared in the final Soirées de Paris. 291 n° 3, May 1915, contained a calligramme entitled 'A bunch of keys', by J. B. Kerfoot.

(28) Michel SANQUILLET, Dada à Paris, p. 471.

gadji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori
gadjama gramma berida bimbala glandri galassassa lauitalomini
gadji beri bin blassa glassala laula lonni cadorsu sassala bim
(29)

Compare them with four lines which Apollinaire composed probably before the war :

Le ladamon sourbine ofaule
; Cremilidet qui s'enélin
Parfeur epal tu les calaule
Comme untrop vieux hurafilin

These lines were to have been declaimed by 'L'inventeur' in a version of the dramatic poem 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' ; they come from a manuscript fragment of that poem. (30) So already in 1913 Apollinaire was experimenting on the frontiers of language and abstraction. Phonetic poetry may have been invented by Paul Scheerbart whose 1897 volume Ich liebe dich contained a syllabic poem entitled 'Kikakoku Ekorolaps'. (31) Hugo Ball and indeed Apollinaire himself may have been influenced by Christian Morgenstern whose book Galgenlieder, nebst dem 'Gingganzt' was extremely popular in Germany, going into its twelfth edition when Apollinaire was there in 1913. As well as an abstract poem, 'Das Grosse Lalula', this volume contains a calligramme in the shape of a funnel, 'Die Trichter'. (32) But, according to Hans Richter, 'Parmi les contemporains c'était surtout Apollinaire qui avait remis en question le langage traditionnel'. (33) He had done so in L'Antitradition futuriste which opens with the words 'A BAS LE Pominir Aliminé SSkorsusu otalo EIScramlr MENigme', a resounding cry which Michel Scuphor, leading exponent of phonetic poetry in France,

(29) Hans RICHTER, Dada - art et anti-art, pp. 37-38.

(30) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 61. These lines may also have been written for a 1913 version of 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry', reworked for performance on stage and entitled A Quelle heure un train partira-t-il pour Paris ? (unpublished manuscript, Arensberg Archives, Francis Bacon Library, Claremont, California, USA). Or they may come from a second version of this pantomime, written after Apollinaire's return from the front in 1916, entitled L'Homme sans yeux sans nez et sans oreilles (unpublished manuscript, collection P. -M. Adéma).

(31) See Hans RICHTER, Dada - art et anti-art, p. 40.

(32) Christian MORGENSTERN, Galgenlieder, nebst dem 'Gingganzt', Berlin, Cassirer, 1905. New edition, Basle, Zbinden Verlag, 1972. See pp. 20 and 34.

(33) Hans RICHTER, Dada - art et anti-art, p. 158.

sees as 'déjà plus proche de Dada que les Futuristes'. (34) In the same manifesto he devotes a section to 'ANALOGIES ET CALEMBOURS' where it is the sound of the syllables which creates the links in the chain of language : 'calicot Calicut Calcutta tafia Sophia Le Sophi suffisant Uffizi officier officiel ô ficelles Aficionado' etc. Here we feel Apollinaire's closeness to Duchamp whose Dada proverbs were inspired by the technique of word-association which Raymond Roussel used to create his Impressions d'Afrique. Duchamp's creations in the genre include : 'Paroi parée de paresse de paroisse. A charge de revanche et à verge de rechange. Sacre de printemps, crasse de tympan'. (35) Others would feature in his film Anémic Cinéma in 1926. And the manuscript of Apollinaire's Futurist manifesto included the name of Raymond Roussel among those who were rewarded with a rose. (36)

The pure bruitisme of a Dada recital had already been anticipated to some extent by the sounds of shoes, records, buses and sirens which featured in 'Lettre-Océan' (OPO p. 183). And in Novembre 1917, in 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' Apollinaire suggested that a poet might like to include the sound of an aircraft engine in a poem. (37) Admittedly such ideas, while changing somewhat the face of poetry, were not born of Dada's desire to wipe the slate clean in all domains and so in poetry, as Hugo Ball said, 'renoncer à une langue que le journalisme avait ravagée et rendue impossible'. (38) But we do detect such a spirit in Apollinaire's great 1917 poem 'La Victoire' (OPO p. 309) which is devoted to 'la recherche d'un nouveau langage' to replace the old words which have been rendered invalid and made spineless, 'comme des malades sans volonté'. Chronic disorders

(34) Giovanni LISTA, Futurisme. Manifestes proclamations documents, p. 62.

To decipher the enigma, read only the capital letters.

(35) Hans RICHTER, Dada - art et anti-art, p. 157.

(36) Giovanni LISTA, Futurisme. Manifestes proclamations documents, p. 61.

(37) OC III, p. 904.

(38) Hans RICHTER, Dada - art et anti-art, p. 38.

may require desperate remedies and so Apollinaire is prompted to hasard the extreme propositions of 'La Victoire'. Hugo Ball describes his own drastic measures with extreme seriousness : 'Nous devons avoir recours à la plus profonde alchimie du mot, et même la dépasser pour préserver à la poésie son domaine le plus sacré'. (39) It is the same determination to keep poetry alive, crossing all frontiers and if necessary momentarily leaving even the word behind, which motivates Apollinaire's insistence in parts of 'La Victoire' when he writes :

Mais entêtons-nous à parler
Remuons la langue
Lançons des postillons
On veut de nouveaux sons de nouveaux sons de nouveaux sons
On veut des consonnes sans voyelles
Des consonnes qui pètent sourdement
Imitez le son de la toupie
Laissez pétiller un son nasal et continu
Faites claquer votre langue etc.

And in fact one of Apollinaire's suggestions here, the invention of a language of consonants without vowels, prefigures the efforts of Raoul Hausmann who in 1918 with his 'Lautgedichte' produced poems from the juxtaposition of unrelated letters, the size of the letters on the page regulating the sound level, thus going one step further into abstraction, beyond the syllabic creations of Hugo Ball. (40)

Such experiments could only be taken so far; the poet soon found himself in a literary cul-de-sac. André Breton, speaking in Barcelona in 1922, suggested that it was Apollinaire's 'amour du scandale' which lay behind his late enthusiasm for 'les innovations les plus douteuses, comme certains poèmes onomatopéiques tout à fait insignifiants'. (41) Breton at

(39) Ibid., p. 38.

(40) See Dawn ADES, Dada and Surrealism Reviewed, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978, p. 95, item 4 : 36. Note also that Apollinaire's 'Un poème' (OPO p. 360), a Dada text both in style and content, was published in SIC in February 1917. 'La Victoire' first appeared in Nord-Sud the following month.

(41) André BRETON, Les Pas perdus, p: 159.

that time was intent on denigrating Dada to the greater glory of Surrealism, but it is interesting to see him confirming Apollinaire's awareness of what the Dadaists were doing. Furthermore Breton's definition of Apollinaire's motive in espousing such innovations contains a deal of truth. He must have been aware that those lines from 'La Victoire' which we have quoted would shock many readers - it is amusing to see the poet who is supposed to have crossed over to the side of the Establishment now accused of a love of scandal - but whatever their shock-value may have been, Apollinaire wrote them in all seriousness. When a journalist from Le Pays, referring to this same passage, asked him 'N'est-ce pas un simple amusement ?' he replied : 'C'est une chose très sérieuse, au contraire. [...] Tout le monde, même les hommes d'Etat et de guerre, peuvent faire leur profit des enseignements contenus dans ce poème-là'. (42) 'L'artiste rend l'homme meilleur' wrote Tristan Tzara in Dada 2 (43) and it was this social conscience as well as the will to create a new poetry, which also moved Apollinaire's pen. In 1917 he was more conscious than ever of the poet's social duty, calling on Plato, in 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes', to hear the poets before banning them from the Republic, for the good of the community. Apollinaire, like other poets, was struggling on the frontier of language because it was essential that mankind should think differently, see better.

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The glances cast towards Zurich, the reaching forward towards a Victory which represents more than just a victory of arms over the enemy,

(42) Le Pays, 24 June 1917, in OCIII, p. 940.

(43) See Marcel JEAN, Histoire de la peinture surréaliste, p. 69.

are matched in 1917 by a seemingly contradictory movement, a turning back towards the certainties of the past. Fuite en avant. Fuite en arrière. Both directions provide possible alternatives to an untenable position in an insufferable present. The projection of oral anarchy in a language without rules,

Auquel le grammairien d'aucune langue n'aura rien à dire is balanced by his affection for Laclos, Sade, Restif and Nerciat whom he praises as standard-bearers of liberty and fathers of 'l'esprit moderne' in his Appendix to Les Fleurs du mal (44) Again on 1 July 1918 he will write of the eighteenth century as an ideal era of individual liberty now lost forever. (45) Jean Cocteau called Apollinaire 'Cet exilé du dix-huitième siècle' (46) and it is true that during these last years when Cocteau knew Apollinaire he often feels deeply uneasy, idealising the past, losing his faith in progress. In his 'Anecdote' of 16 October 1916 Apollinaire comments on a Futurist manifesto in which Marinetti preaches a 'nouvelle religion morale de la vélocité'. Slowness is stigmatised as sinful, 'immonde', and only speed is pure. Though he thinks that Marinetti exaggerates, Apollinaire is most kind in his comments, obviously hoping that such forceful tracts may boost morale in the allied war effort. (47) Exactly a year later, however, on 16 October 1917, his 'Anecdote' 'Vitesse et progrès' hits out at 'la manie que l'on a de confondre la vitesse et le progrès', describing the art which results from this state of mind as shoddy and ephemeral. He points to the 'infériorité de notre époque vis-à-vis de ces siècles d'ignorance qui nous ont laissé des monuments durables de leur patience d'où s'engendraient la raison et le savoir'. (48) Asking for more time

(44) OC II, p. 286.

(45) OC II, p. 521.

(46) Jean COCTEAU, Poésie Critique I, p. 73.

(47) OC II, p. 480.

(48) OC II, p. 500.

Apollinaire sounds short on energy, afraid of being outflanked and overtaken. His 1913 faith in the inspiration of the moment and contemporary artists has, at least momentarity, evaporated. The same disaffection is found in an article from 16 August 1918 in which Apollinaire praises the verse of Béranger, asking 'combien de nos poètes majeurs contemporains seraient capables de composer cette strophe'. Now it is the nineteenth century which he prefers, 'époque admirable, celle du romantisme, où des poètes comme Hugo, Lamartine, Béranger, traduisaient vraiment dans leurs poèmes les sentiments et l'âme de la nation!' (49) He is not happy at having to make a choice between being a poet of the people, for whom poetry must have the approachability of a song, and keeping his place in the front line of the avant-garde.

In 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes', in November 1917, Apollinaire could achieve no more than an uneasy synthesis between his emphasis on order and 'devoir national', backed up with references to the seventeenth century, and the forces of surprise and innovation. Recalling this lecture, André Breton remarks that Apollinaire was 'un médiocre théoricien'. (50) Much of what he was preaching seemed to be the contrary of what he had practised in the adventurous poetry which Breton valued most. Whether or not this is true, it seems likely that Apollinaire was influenced, when it came to writing up his lecture, by the scandal which had followed the appearance of Parade earlier in the year and in which he had to some extent become enmeshed. He felt that he had to defend 'L'Esprit nouveau' from charges that it was unpatriotic. In May 1917 he had written the programme notes for Parade, the ballet on which Erik Satie, Jean Cocteau and Pablo Picasso had collaborated. (51) His commitment was total, praising the combined

(49) OC II, p. 528.

(50) André BRETON, 'Ombre non pas serpent mais d'arbre en fleurs', FDR, I, March 1954, pp. 4-6, (p. 6).

(51) OC IV, pp. 444-445.

efforts of these innovators to achieve a new harmony of the arts and to present the public with 'la magie de leur vie quotidienne', 'une sorte de sur-réalisme' which he saw as the watershed of a new source of creativity, the first of 'une série de manifestations de cet Esprit Nouveau', a series in which he no doubt intended to play a glorious role. The scandal which greeted Parade must therefore have surprised and disappointed him and also made him aware of the extent to which the press and public opinion were victims of the stultifying influence of the war. Anything untraditional could be considered unpatriotic as forces of reaction in all areas closed ranks. The avant-garde artist who tried to experiment ventured into a mine-field. So, according to Ornella Volta in her edition of the Ecrits of Erik Satie, Parade was qualified as 'la plus grande bataille de la guerre' by Jean Cocteau and as 'une entreprise de démoralisation des Français en guerre' by most of those who attended the first night :

Le plus blessant de ces derniers est peut-être Jean Poucigh qui, tout en déclarant que cette oeuvre, dans son ensemble, est 'outrageante pour le goût français', n'écrit pas un seul mot de la partition. Dès que sa chronique paraît dans Les Carnets de la Semaine (n° 103, 27 Mai 1917), Erik Satie lui répond par une carte postale ouverte, sur laquelle il a écrit simplement : 'Monsieur, vous n'êtes qu'un cul, mais un cul sans musique! Il reçoit par retour une assignation en justice 'pour injures publiques et diffamation'.

Soutenu par l'opinion, que l'état de guerre contribue à rendre hostile à toute avant-garde qui ne soit pas militaire, le critique obtient gain de cause. Quant à Erik Satie, ce n'est que de justice, et grâce à l'intervention d'une personnalité haut placée, qu'il évitera la prison, après plusieurs mois de déboires. (52)

Apollinaire, in all innocence, had discerned in Satie's score, which included the sounds of typewriters, sirens, propellers, morse tickers, etc., Cartesian qualities which made it perfectly French, 'si nette et si simple que l'on

yreconnaftra l'esprit merveilleusement lucide de la France même'. (53) He became further involved in the affair when, hoping to help the composer, he put Satie in touch with Maître José Théry who had acted for him in the Mona Lisa débâcle. (54) Unfortunately Maître Théry had already been engaged to represent Jean Poueigh and it seems that this misunderstanding somewhat soured relations between Satie and Apollinaire. The latter would have liked to have appeared for the defence, but Satie did not give him the opportunity. Apollinaire wrote to a friend in July 1917 that had he been present as a witness 'Me Théry n'aurait pas été aussi dur qu'il semble l'avoir été d'après les comptes rendus qui ont été publiés'. (55) And in May 1918 he will tell Cocteau that he has 'beaucoup d'admiration et d'amitié' for Satie and regrets that the latter 'doute de moi'. (56)

The link in Apollinaire's mind between his November lecture on 'L'Esprit nouveau' and the earlier Parade becomes more apparent if we recognize that if Parade was the first realisation of a new spirit of creativity, according to Apollinaire's programme notes, then his own play Les Mamelles de Tirésias, produced on 24 June 1917, was, in his opinion, the second. He headed the programme of this, his 'drame surréaliste', with the words 'Esprit Nouveau' and also informed the audience that they would enjoy 'Choeurs, Musique et Costumes selon l'esprit nouveau'. He had even tried to get Erik Satie to write the score. Georges Auric has told how, at Apollinaire's request, he and Satie had attended a preliminary reading of the play. Both were unimpressed: 'Satie, lui, demeurait silencieux et nous partîmes atrocement embarrassés'. (57) Early in April Apollinaire would write to Bakst complaining of his difficulties in finding a musician with whom he could collaborate. (58) Les Mamelles de Tirésias was originally

(53) OC IV, p. 444.

(54) Letter to José Théry recommending Satie, 24 June 1917. See 'Index permanent des lettres d'Apollinaire', GA 14, (1978), p. 168.

(55) Letter to a friend, 13 July 1917, in Erik Satie, Ecrits, p. 272.

(56) OC IV, p. 896.

(57) Georges AURIC, 'Apollinaire et la musique', La Revue musicale, 210, January 1952, pp. 147-149.

(58) 'Une Lettre d'Apollinaire à Bakst', GA 7, (1968), pp. 177-178.

to have been preceded by a speech by Apollinaire on 'l'esprit d'avant-garde' (OPo p. 1178). It seems likely therefore that it was the idea for this talk which would reappear in the guise of 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' five months later.

Aware now of the general hostility towards the avant-garde, and having seen how even relationships between artists and natural allies could be poisoned in such a climate, Apollinaire had to present his ideas on progress in such a way as to touch the large audience he hoped for without triggering a reaction of outrage. Furthermore let us remember that the old insecurity, Apollinaire's perception of himself as an outsider, an alien on the edge of society, reinforced by the Mona Lisa episode, had only recently been replaced by his new identity, that of French citizen and war-hero. He could not now jeopardise this hard-earned social integration by appearing to be unpatriotic. So he tried to reassure his audience by rooting his 'Esprit nouveau' back in the seventeenth century and by asserting that even when claiming the most complete liberty of expression and invention the modern artist 'se réclame avant tout de l'ordre et du devoir qui sont les grandes qualités classiques par quoi se manifeste le plus hautement l'esprit français'. (59) This emphasis on duty is something new though there is continuity in his thinking in so far as the spontaneity of his exhilarating flights of imagination was usually guided by the light of reason, as in 'Onirocritique' for example. He told André Breton that Racine and La Fontaine were the favourite poets of his childhood (60)

(59) OC III, p. 903.

(60) Letter of 14 February 1916, GA 3, (1964), p. 22.

and in September 1915 he wrote to Yves Blanc of his fervent admiration for 'ceux qu'avec raison on appelle les classiques'. (61) Some of the rigour and austerity of Racine will form the poems of Vitam impendere amori and Couleur du temps. It seems as though Apollinaire is here moving along the same road as Picasso who, after his years of commitment to Cubism would return, after the war, to a more classical style, drawing like Ingres while at the same time continuing to experiment. Some of the ideas and opinions voiced in 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' had already been aired by Apollinaire elsewhere (62) and if as C.A. Hackett claims the 1917 lecture was 'placé sous l'invocation de Rimbaud' (63) then it fits into a line of influence which links several periods of Apollinaire's work.

But could Apollinaire 'have his cake and eat it' ? Could he satisfy the press and the public with this language of duty and patriotism, hoping to hold the attention of the nation, and at the same time stay at the forefront of a young avant-garde which was becoming increasingly turbulent and uncompromising ? If he is uneasy it is because he knows that he cannot be old Victor Hugo and young Rimbaud both at the same time. Marie-Jeanne Durry indeed sees Apollinaire's tone of confident assertiveness as a mask and asks whether his aggressivity 'n'y était qu'un moyen de défense et cachait mal un embarras devant quelque chose en lui qui, sans qu'il voulût se l'avouer, lui paraissait à lui aussi contradictoire ?' (64) Is it worth noting that on 26 November 1917 the poet did not go out to face his public but stood in the wings of the Vicux Colombier watching the reactions as the actor Pierre Bertin read out his text ? Perhaps he just had a

(61) OC IV, p. 672.

(62) In his article 'Le Cinéma à la Nationale', L'Intransigeant, 1 March 1910, p. 1, Apollinaire wrote on the necessary reconciliation of art and science, praising their marriage in the cinema and the phonograph. See Michel Décaudin, 'Apollinaire et le cinéma image par image', Apollinaire, Turin, Giapichelli and Paris, Nizet, 1970, pp. 19-28 (p. 19). See also Michel Décaudin, 'Sur la composition du Poète assassiné', La Revue des sciences humaines, October-December 1956, pp. 437-456 (p. 437).

(63) C.A. HACKETT, 'Rimbaud and Apollinaire', French Studies, XIX, 3, July 1965, pp. 266-277, (p. 270).

(64) Marie-Jeanne DURRY, 'Passe et dure sans t'arrêter', La Nouvelle Revue française, 130, October 1963, pp. 697-708, (p. 707).

headache. (65) Perhaps the uniform which he wore and which no longer fitted him very well, the aura of militant nationalism which he himself had cultivated, resulted in a form of social typecasting which now left him feeling slightly out of character.

If in 1917 we must take seriously words which we may otherwise consider to be 'un simple amusement' it is also true that an ideal like that of Honour, which bolstered Apollinaire's morale in the trenches, is now no longer taken so seriously by the poet himself. There is a sure dose of bitter satire mixed into the last part of La Femme assise where Anatole de Saintariste, a convalescing army officer, tells a friend that he intends to found a Religion of Honour. He foresees an increase in the suicide-rate as a result of this, and such a death may be a crime or a sin - 'mais quel beau péché que celui où l'honneur vous entraîne' (OPr p. 490). In fact the poet who wrote 'On les aura !' no longer has any faith in the force of arms : 'j'ai trop longtemps fait la guerre pour croire à la réalité des conquêtes qui, je le crois, sont impossibles' (OPr p. 492). The glamour has gone and, as he writes in 'Tristesse de l'automne' (OPo p. 601),

La guerre continue au rythme monotone
Des grands canons jetant leurs tragiques clartés

(65) Already on 26 November 1916, at a poetry reading in the Salle Huyghens in Montparnasse, Jean Cocteau had read Apollinaire's part of the programme because Apollinaire, present, was suffering from 'un glorieux mal de tête'. See Etienne-Alain HUBERT, 'Une Matinée poétique donnée à la "Salle Huyghens" en 1916', GA 4, (1965), pp. 112-114.

The hardest blow of all, changing sadness to anger, was the loss of René Dalize, killed in action on 7 May 1917, his oldest friend to whom Calligrammes is dedicated. Dalize had written an article entitled 'Les Vieux ont soif' for Les Soirées de Paris n° 11, December 1912 in which he prophesied the closed future of his generation, offered a vision of all Western Civilisation 'sombé dans un effroyable carnage de sang'. Apollinaire would remember this article when he came to write his 'Anecdote' for 1 September 1917, 'Sur la mort de René Dalize' :

'Les vieux ont soif', s'est-il écrié dans un essai publié quelques jours avant la déclaration de guerre en parodiant un titre célèbre, cri fatal que l'esprit cruel de la vieillesse toute-puissante ne lui a pas pardonné, et c'est pourquoi les vieillards, maîtres de la mort, se sont abreuvés de son sang précieux. (66)

Here Apollinaire hits hard and true, turning on the real culprits, attacking not the German soldier who fired the fatal shot but the Masters of War, avid old men who send young men to their deaths. Dalize was just one of 1,357,000 young Frenchmen, 27 % of the male population aged between 18 and 28, who perished in a war which also left 600,000 invalids. (67) The disastrous campaigns of 1916 and 1917 sent the figures flying up towards these totals and if ever Apollinaire had nurtured illusions about the glory of combat perhaps now, remembering Dalize, he admitted to himself, like Louis XIV, 'J'ai trop aimé la guerre'. The spirit of his obituary for Dalize recurs in the poem 'Je suis la vie' (OPO p. 742) which is indeed headed 'Quand je songe à Dalize...'. (68) There is anger in the poem, heart-felt emotion, but no despair. Significantly in the face of the hecatombs Apollinaire insists on man's indomitable desire to live. And there

(66) OC II, p. 497.

(67) Henri GUILLEMIN, Nationalistes et nationaux 1870-1940, p. 154.

(68) If this poem was 'envoyé du front' (see OPO p. 1162) it must date from before 16 March 1916, date of Apollinaire's head-wound. The death of Dalize, 7 May 1917, must have reminded Apollinaire of this poem, prompting him to add the words 'Quand je songe à Dalize...'.
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is none of the easy chauvinism which is nurtured by war, for life is universal :

Je suis la Chair des Hommes ...

Love, Creativity and all that is good in mankind is glorified with no concessions to the divisions of frontier or language. Life is a goddess, a force of nature, while those forces which divide mankind are identified as pale and jealous harridans who, like the women who tore Orpheus apart, destroy all that is good and natural :

- Et l'on m'a dit qu'Elles s'appelaient 'Les Patries!'

Nationalism is responsible for war, a crime against humanity, a unity in which every man has a right to his share of happiness :

 Tout le monde a couché sur l'orgueil de mon corps,
 et j'ai versé la jouissance à tout le monde
 aux faibles comme aux forts,
 j'ai donné leur part de la Chair des Hommes...

The climax of the poem comes in the penultimate stanza in which the poet reaffirms his faith in the glory of human achievement, celebrates the beauty of the human form :

 Les jalouses Patries m'ont déchirée un jour,
 Moi, la Pensée, Moi, l'Art, et Moi, l'Amour!
 Mais malgré leurs flèches sûres,
 mon corps est splendide toujours.

But the final verse marks a return to melancholy, the twilight of the emotions which ends so many of Apollinaire's poems. He remembers the men who are still fighting, lost in love and death, lips and trenches, and who

Déjà, aux creux du lit moite, encore, se recouchent ...

If we quote this poem at some length and commit the sin of paraphrase this is to draw attention to a text which is usually overlooked but which clearly reveals Apollinaire's most mature attitude to the war. The images and themes which he employs guarantee the whole-hearted authenticity of the sentiments expressed in that they spring from the deepest sources of his inspiration, harking back to the poetry of Alcools. His insistence on the continuing glory of unrealised human potential reminds us of that flame which burns in 'Marizibill', for example, and which can never be extinguished :

qu'on me vende ou qu'on me prostitue,
je ne sers que les grandes choses...

He has rediscovered and he reasserts his faith in the unity which transcends those false frontiers which set one man against another when all should share the same destiny.

The sorrow at present folly and the hopes for mankind's future which complement each other in 'Je suis la vie', find expression also in Les Mamelles de Tirésias and Couleur du temps. In 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes', as we have seen, Apollinaire calls on Plato to listen to the poets before he bans them from the Republic, for they are writing 'pour le plus grand bien de la collectivité à laquelle ils appartiennent' (69) and this plea defines his own intentions in writing these plays. Remembering the playwrights of fifth century Athens producing exemplary drama for the united population of the polis he uses the preface of Les Mamelles de Tirésias to compare his own role with that of Aristophanes writing comedy for his fellow citizens (OPo p. 867). Rejecting the well worn conventions of bourgeois realism and the drawing room farce he turns for inspiration to popular culture, to the 'trésor de l'art populaire' which he recommends to contemporary dramatists in July 1918. (70) Les Mamelles is full of the energy of the

(69) OC III, p. 908.

(70) Etienne-Alain HUBERT, 'Une interview d'Apollinaire en juillet 1918 présentée et traduite de l'espagnol', GA 7, (1968) pp. 179-187, (p. 186).

circus, the colour of medieval street theatre, the good-natured bawdiness of La Farce de Maître Patelin, all put to good use in the cause of repopulation, the renaissance of France. It was a subject which had interested him since at least 1910 and in La Femme assise he writes that 'La repopulation, à tout prendre, est avant tout une question de propagande' (OPr p. 471). (71) In the interests of propaganda Apollinaire also turns to Guignol, who lends his brand of knockabout humour to the play. Guignol's home was Lyons, where he first appeared at the end of the eighteenth century, and in his poem 'Guignol-Poilu', written for the well known puppeteer Gaston Cony, Apollinaire writes :

Je te vis surtout lyonnais

Always involved in scrapes with authority

Honnête, tu nargues la Loi

the adventures of Guignol and his son Guillaume were the epitome of popular theatre. The most famous of their set pieces was Le Déménagement à la cloche de bois and of course A la cloche de bois was the title of Apollinaire's first play, now lost, written after his stay in Stavelot in 1899. Guignol was also a vehicle of social satire and Gaston Cony used the humour of the anarchistic puppet to communicate a new message during the war, an idea which pleased Apollinaire :

O mon cher Guignol militaire,
Toi, qui ne rosses plus, ma foi,
Ni commissaire, ni gendarme,
Mais zigouilles les sales Boches (72)

(71) In Paris-Journal, 14 February 1910, Apollinaire refers to 'la dépopulation de la France'. See Petites merveilles du quotidien, Pierre Caziergues ed., p. 97. France's birth rate had been falling since the eighteen-sixties and in 1906 it was the lowest in Europe. See Raoul de FELICE, Les Naissances en France, Paris, Hachette, 1910, pp. 11 and 16. If Apollinaire knew this then the idea for a play on repopulation, made more necessary by the war, may well have dated back to 1904 as he told Pierre Varenne in June 1917 (OC IV, p. 887).

(72) Hughes RICHARD, 'Apollinaire retrouvé', Journal de Genève, 195, 22 August 1970, p. 13. Note also that Jarry's Ubu, whose influence can be discerned in Les Mamelles, was born as a glove-puppet. Apollinaire had some German puppets hanging in a corner of his flat on Bd. S. - Germain.

Apollinaire's technique is the same, though his message in Les Mamelles is rather more peaceful, less destructive.

This is not the place to unravel the closely woven themes of Couleur du temps, a play whose sobriety is born of introversion and a contemplation by the poet of his experiences during the war. Once more Apollinaire exteriorises interior conflict to create drama. With his friends Francis Picabia and Marie Laurencin in Barcelona, Marcel Duchamp in New York, the Delaunays in Portugal, the question of whether the artist's place is in the midst of the war or outside it, preserving the nation's cultural identity, was not merely hypothetical. The temptation of departure is voiced by Van Diemen :

Partez partez pour sauver votre oeuvre
Elle est votre patrie sauvez-la
Elle appartient à l'humanité
Partez vous en êtes responsables

(OPo p. 922)

Other questions which Apollinaire raises are still relevant today, as when the poet writes of a world dehumanised by machines, the new century's faith in science the liberator undermined by the effects of mechanical warfare so that man becomes no more than a grain to be ground in the machine :

Il pense mais il est l'esclave des machines
Les trains dictent leurs lois à l'homme dans l'horaire
L'homme n'était plus rien c'est pourquoi nous fuyons
Pour retrouver un peu de liberté humaine

(OPo p. 936)

The couple Nyctor and Mavise seem to offer an image of refuge in love, but even this fails and there can be no flight from the world. It is man's solitude, the impossibility of communication and the absurdity of his condition as Apollinaire expresses it in the refrain which makes this play so astonishingly modern :

Qu'importe les frelons à la ruche
Qu'importe gloire richesse amour
Et qu'importe qu'importe les hommes
Adieu adieu il faut que tout meure

(OPo p. 930)

Apollinaire speaks directly to us today when, with his bloody Shakespearian ending, he warns of an ultimate holocaust which could destroy all humanity. As the war continued, interminable, Apollinaire asked questions but could give no answers.

There is one patch of optimism perhaps, an aspiration towards a new internationalism which would be born of the suffering of war as men learn the futility of conflict :

Il naît un Etat un grand Etat
La nation de ceux qui ne veulent
Plus de mots souverains plus de gloire
Et comme les premiers chrétiens
Ils sont tous prêts dans la douleur
Prêts à devenir universels

(OPo p. 938)

This is the point of view which is defended very strongly by a character called 'L'Homme' in two manuscript scenes of Couleur du temps, published only in 1972. (73) 'L'Homme' is opposed by six 'Diplomates', gathered to negotiate a peace treaty, and though their quarrel will form the basis of the argument between Mavise and Ansaldin on the relative merits of nationalism and internationalism in Act II scene ii of the play, in the manuscript the conflict is presented with a seditious clarity, coldly satirical, which is missing from the definitive text. The grotesque and bickering diplomats are obviously incapable of resolving any conflict or even recognising the importance of their responsibilities. They are united however by their support for the concepts of

(73) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, L'Enchanteur pourrissant suivi de Les Mamelles de Tirésias et de Couleur du temps, Paris, Gallimard, 'Poésie', 1972, pp. 234-238.

Patrie nationalité races
Dont l'individu n'est qu'une particule

And they all agree that in the scales of human destiny such concepts as 'raison' and 'liberté individuelle' carry no weight at all. 'L'Homme' is a noble and dignified figure. He says he speaks for all those whose first loyalty is to the human race as a whole, who would live in a world of progress and brotherhood while still retaining their national identities :

Mais ceux dont je parle ne seront pas des étrangers
Dans le pays de leur âme
Ni de mauvais citoyens

His patently reasonable proposals are regarded as scandalous and insane by the diplomats whose language degenerates into animal squawking. They do not even recognise his right to speak :

Faites-le sortir
Il n'est pas diplomate

J. G. Clark in his 1976 article on 'La Poésie, la politique et la guerre' considers the anti-governmental stance of these two manuscript scenes to be the authentic secret voice of Apollinaire's deepest feelings at that time. (74) His contempt for the politicians is genuine and echoes that which he expressed fifteen years earlier in the manuscript of 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', for example. (75) But Apollinaire chooses to cloud the issue by expressing the bellicose nationalism of the diplomats through the more attractive voice of Mavis who is herself moved to reflect on the power of Ansaldu's counter-arguments in her hesitant soliloquy in Act II, scene iii (OPo p. 939). It is this uncertainty which best characterises Apollinaire's state of mind. When he came to prepare his text for public

(74) J. G. CLARK, 'La Poésie, la politique et la guerre ; autour de "La Petite auto", "Chant de l'honneur" et Couleur du temps', GA 13, (1976), pp. 7-63.

(75) Création, XIII, June 1978.

performance he once more drew back from making any statement which might be construed as defeatism or disloyalty to his comrades at the Front. At the same time the voice of 'L'Homme' which rings with sincerity was countered by the voice of Apollinaire's own equally authentic patriotism.

Nevertheless the renewed sympathy for internationalism which is suggested by 'Je suis la vie' and parts of Couleur du temps is confirmed by a strain of thought running through his journalism. In his 'Anecdote' of 16 August 1918, for example, he praises Béranger's 'La Sainte Alliance des peuples' and describes such dreams as 'Utopies si l'on veut, mais utopies du premier ordre et bien dignes d'être caressées'. (76) Another article, 'La Guerre et nous autres', from October 1917 (77) is interesting in that it begins as a poem of praise for French democracy in the unmistakable tone of straightforward patriotism which characterises Apollinaire's 'public' voice, but then develops into an argument which betrays his impatience and true aspirations. The manuscript title of the article was 'La Guerre du Droit des Gens' and in the published text he compares the war to the French Revolution: 'Il semble bien que, suite à ce que la Révolution voulait faire pour les individus, la guerre actuelle le fasse pour les peuples'. These words support the theory that in Couleur du temps Apollinaire himself is speaking through 'L'Homme' who bravely calls to the politicians :

Il est nécessaire que les droits humains soient proclamés
Le Christ acquit aux hommes leurs droits spirituels
La Révolution française inventa leurs droits philosophiques
Mais bientôt viendra l'occasion de proclamer
Leurs droits physiques et politiques (78)

(76) OC II, pp. 525-528.

(77) OC III, pp. 899-900.

(78) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, L'Enchanteur pourrissant suivi de Les Mamelles de Tirésias et de Couleur du temps, p. 237.

If it seems that Apollinaire is comparing the effects of the war to the effects of a social revolution, then this is confirmed when we read on and discover the welcome which Apollinaire expects society to offer to the man returning from the Front. The soldier must be rewarded by a genuine amelioration of the situation he knew before the war began. He will not be fobbed off with vague promises :

il faut que la guerre aboutisse non seulement au triomphe d'une idée et d'un système qui est celui du droit et de la justice, mais qu'elle aille jusqu'au triomphe des revendications qui existaient avant cette lutte gigantesque et de celles qui sont nées tandis qu'elle se déroulait.

Tout le reste est littérature nonobstant les plaintes légitimes que l'on est en droit de formuler à l'égard des défaillances et des incompétences qui ont pu apparaître et auxquelles il a été nécessaire de remédier.

The whole of his weight is behind the claims of the ordinary soldier just as at the beginning of the war he shared his patriotic fervour. His solidarity is constant and complete. Such articles as this could cause concern to those who were wondering what effect an army of hungry young men returning from the war could have on the nicely organised and carefully censored society which had been set up during the hostilities. The frankly anti-establishment bias of this article is transformed into cynical laughter when, in an unpublished manuscript fragment of the poem 'Allons plus vite', he describes a procession through Paris and surveys the pious hypocrisy of the profiteers :

Il vient ensuite l'archevêque
Suivi des Prêtres de Paris
'Car le bon Dieu s'est mis avec
Les patrons Ah! j'en ai tant ri
Avec les prêtres de Paris
Allons plus vite nom de Dieu
Allons plus vite (79)

(79) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo 67. The Fonds Doucet manuscript of the poem includes a line expressing bitterness at the death of a soldier which Apollinaire also deleted in the published version :

Ton frère est mort un trou au front (OPo p. 1118)

Once more we recall the laughter of Apollinaire and his brother as they watched the politicians and which he remembered in 1903 as he worked on 'La Chanson du mal-aimé'.

Are we trying to make Apollinaire into a Bolshevik ? His old friend André Salmon, with whom Apollinaire attended the first performance of Parade in May 1917, (80) spent part of his youth in Russia and in 1918 wrote his long poem 'Prikaz', the most important work of French poetry directly inspired by the revolution, in which he hoped for a definitive victory by the Reds. (81) Apollinaire himself, in his obituary for René Dalize, says that there are two major themes 'qui préoccupent aujourd'hui tous les hommes : la guerre et le socialisme'. (82) Of course such a comment tells us nothing of Apollinaire's political sympathies. André Billy in 1965 could not say whether Apollinaire, if he had not died in 1918, would have been a communist, but he did remember one point : 'Lorsque éclata la révolution d'octobre et que la Russie fit avec l'Allemagne une paix séparée, il refusa de s'indigner comme on faisait autour de lui. "Qui sait, disait-il, s'il ne sortira de tout cela quelque chose de grand ?"' (83) Did he see the revolution itself as the 'grande lueur à l'Est' ? (84) He wrote to Luigi Amaro in Italy :

Amaro écoutez
La Russie chante la 'Marseillaise' (OPO p. 368)

to express his sympathy for the Russian people moved to revolt against the tyranny of the Tsar. Later, in July 1918, he will write of his admiration

(80) André SALMON, L'Air de la Butte, p. 155.

(81) André SALMON, Prikaz, Paris, La Sirène, 1919. Later Salmon wrote a play on the theme of the Russian revolution, Natchalo, produced at the Théâtre des Arts in Paris in April 1922. See Paris-Moscou 1900-1930, CNACGP, 1979, pp. 430 and 432.

(82) OC II, p. 499.

(83) André BILLY, Préface, OPO, p. xlii.

(84) See Michel DECUADIN, in the discussion following Zdzislaw Rylko, 'Apollinaire et les théories de l'avant-garde poétique en Pologne', GA 8, (1969), pp. 82-83.

for the Soviet artists, the great flowering of revolutionary art and 'le grand désintéressement des poètes moscovites', producing poster-poems for the streets. (85) And if he knew what Małakowski was doing in Moscow he was also watching developments elsewhere in the world. In 'Le Roi-Lune' for example we are carried to New Zealand with Ludwig of Bavaria who 'salua le labeur socialiste de la Nouvelle-Zélande' (OPr p. 315), a glimpse, as Michel Décaudin says, of the "'socialisme sans doctrine" que Richard Seddon pratiqua en Nouvelle-Zélande de 1893 à 1906, donnant à son pays la législation la plus avancée du monde' (OPr p. 1292).

Yet at the same time as he is praising the agit-prop artists of Moscow he is able to write of the ultra-reactionary royalist newspaper L'Action française that it 'seule a su déterminer un autre courant, plus libre, plus intelligent, plus ouvert, malgré les apparences' (OPr p. 927), though the last three words indicate that he knew he was stepping onto thin ice. He would even write a letter to the same paper, presenting the 'Boches' as barbarian hordes longing to pillage Paris, pressing for punitive reparations after the war. (86) One of his last articles, the 'Anecdote' entitled 'La Poésie', 1 November 1918, presents Charles Maurras as an exemplary poet whose style is a synthesis of liberty and moderation. (87) If we turn to the poem which wins Apollinaire's enthusiastic support, 'Ode historique. La Bataille de la Marne', we are not surprised to find it full of empty jingoism :

Race allemande qu'enfle et grise
L'impunité de la traîtrise etc. (88)

(85) OC II, p. 738.

(86) Pierre CAIZERGUES, 'Apollinaire et la politique pendant la guerre', GA 12, (1973), pp. 67-101, (p. 88). See this same article, pp. 79-86, for further discussion and texts concerning Apollinaire's attitude to the Russian revolution.

(87) OC II, pp. 537-539.

(88) Charles MAURRAS, Oeuvres capitales, IV, Paris, Flammarion, 1954, p. 322;

Such contradictions leave Apollinaire beyond the frontiers of any political camp. Invariably paradoxical he is consistent only in his overriding love of liberty. What attracted him to a right-wing royalist like Maurras was his romantic admiration for that strong, adventurous spirit of independence which he saw personified by such figures as Edward Wortley-Montague, for example, the eighteenth-century traveller, scholar and, according to Apollinaire, great lover, whom he offers as his ideal of liberty in action in July 1918. (89) This same 'Anecdote' describes Apollinaire's own vision of a Brave New World born of the disciplines of war in which 'enrégimentés, cantonnés dans leurs nationalités, leurs races, leurs syndicats professionnels et politiques, les hommes réunis en troupes dociles ne songent même plus qu'il y ait eu des temps où l'on pouvait faire ce qu'on voulait'. It seems to him now that the war he fought in the name of liberty has in fact imposed on mankind patterns of dull obedience which leave the individual lost in the herd. His vision of human potential is still intact so he can still compose his 'If I ruled the world' poem, 'Si on me laissait faire' (OPo p. 859) in which he tells how he would free the caged birds and transform a world of misery and bowed, despairing figures into one in which man can enter into his true and glorious estate. But he fears that the tide is flowing in another direction and the misuse of language during the war will continue so that the word 'democracy' will become a synonym for repression and slavery. This was his meaning when he wrote in his Appendix to Les Fleurs du mal those few lines which are heavy with prophesy :

Les grandes démocraties de l'avenir seront peu libérales pour les écrivains ; il est bon de planter très haut des poètes-drapeaux comme Baudelaire.

On pourra les agiter de temps en temps afin d'ameuter le petit nombre des esclaves encore frémissants. (90)

(89) OC II, p. 521.

(90) OC II, p. 288.

'Orphée' (OPo p. 683), a poem from about the same time, April 1917, voices the same fears :

Maintenant tout est énorme
Et il me semble que la paix
Sera aussi monstrueuse que la guerre

As political demonstrations file through Paris with flags flying and the bands playing to the rhythm of marching feet the poet thinks of the war and misses the gentler world he knew before, before the nation became a war machine. The mould is set and again he fears for the fate of the individual under the thumb of Ideology :

O temps de la tyrannie
Démocratique
Beau temps où il faudra s'aimer les uns les autres
Et n'être aimé de personne
Ne rien laisser derrière soi
Et préparer le plaisir de tout le monde
Ni trop sublime ni trop infime

It is a regimented society with no surprises, no superlatives.

The same regrets, with flashes of anger, recur in 'La Petite auto' (OPo p. 207), for this poem is a collage the earliest part of which, the calligramme of the motor-car, dates from the days in Nîmes and is mentioned in a poem sent to André Rouveyre 14 January 1915 (OPo p. 780), while the twenty-one lines beginning 'Les chiens aboyaient vers là-bas' and ending 'Et contre lesquels aboyaient tous les chiens sur la route' date, like 'Orphée', from the spring of 1917. (91) If the earliest parts of the poem present the outbreak of war as a moment of birth and renewal and the drive through the night as a great initiation, the lines written in 1917 recall the summer of 1914 with the disenchantment of experience. The soldiers are marching to death, not glory and they look

(91) The Oeuvres poétiques notes suggest that this poem is a collage made up of several pieces written at different times (OPo p. 1086). J.G. Clark comments on this and dates the final additions to the poem as being from spring 1917, when Apollinaire was using violet ink. See 'La Poésie, la politique et la guerre', op. cit., pp. 8 and 30-31.

back for a last time at 'la vie colorée', the old world 'si doux si joli' for which Apollinaire pines in 'Orphée'. Colour and joy belong to peacetime ; a soldier's life is not a happy one. André Rouveyre, describing how Apollinaire and himself watched the volunteers marching off to war from the windows of the Comoedia offices after their return from Deauville, describes a scene full of colour and noise : 'Des fenêtres du journal, sur le boulevard Poissonnière, nous voyions passer des troupes de centaines de jeunes gens, réunis et serrés, comme si déjà leur groupement les défendait. Des drapeaux jaillissaient d'eux, avec le Chant du Départ, cette mâle et impérissable clameur'. (92) For Apollinaire in 'La Petite auto' this vision is transformed so that the soldiers become the 'troupeaux dociles' of his nightmare future, silent, fed with propaganda, led like lambs to the slaughter, sheep to the precipice :

Et des bergers gigantesques menaient
De grands troupeaux muets qui broutaient les paroles
Et contre lesquels aboyaient tous les chiens sur la route

The politicians make propaganda while others make money :

Un marchand d'une opulence inouïe et d'une taille prodigieuse
Disposait un étalage extraordinaire

In the manuscript Apollinaire went further, adding

Où l'humanité était une marchandise (93)

So he chooses his targets carefully and again insists that the gigantism and regimentation which will characterise the future came into being with this war in which men are valued as a merchandise to be bought and sold.

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(92) André ROUYEYRE, Apollinaire, p. 14.

(93) J. G. CLARK, 'La Poésie, la politique et la guerre', op. cit., p. 31.

So Apollinaire, in the guise of a pillar of the Establishment, finds himself in opposition to the false democracy being prepared as a sequel to a war he has grown to hate. If in 1918 he can reject 'l'esprit atrabilaire de l'anarchie' (94) he is himself often irritable, uneasy, still a stranger in his own land, like many other soldiers back from the front. In his behaviour he alternates between the dignified charm of a wounded officer and moments of aggressivity, an attitude which Jean Cocteau, describing Apollinaire in 1918, has referred to, rather preciously, as 'un contraste entre son devoir d'anarchiste et une petite fleur bleue'. (95) In the midst of these contradictions, composing 'L'Oiseau et le bouquet' (OPo p. 751) for Louise Faure-Favier's novel Ces choses qui seront vieilles, published in 1919, Apollinaire returns to the old question, 'je suis heureux mais qui suis-je', a question which was supposedly resolved, a demon exorcised, when the poet buttoned up his blue uniform for the first time. It is a return to a theme of Alcools, just as in 'Tristesse de l'automne' (OPo p. 601) we rediscover the melancholy which the passing seasons bring, or the sweet and heavy taste of old wine in 'Un cahier d'anciens croquis' (OPo p. 603) from 1917. There Apollinaire remarks on the freshness of love and his own powers of creativity, but in such terms -

Tirer d'un neuf du vieux cerveau

- that he sounds like an old man as he turns the pages of the past. The note of resignation on which he ends the poem,

Vivre et mourir ô mieux ô pire

the sense of advancing age and the renewed consciousness of his own mortality are an exacerbation of the sentiments expressed in a 1917 letter

(94) Etienne-Alain HUBERT, 'Une Interview d'Apollinaire en juillet 1918 présentée et traduite de l'espagnol', op. cit., p. 186.

(95) Jean COCTEAU, Poésie Critique I, p. 73.

to Philippe Soupault whom he sees as a member of 'cette jeune génération pour qui je suis déjà presque un ancêtre'. (96) In 'Tristesse d'une étoile' (OPo p. 308) he refers to an unidentified torment, the 'secret malheur qui nourrit mon délire', which poses a greater threat to his lucidity than his head-wound. In 'La Petite auto' he looks back to a time when he felt that his own soul contained 'toutes ces armées qui se battaient' and in the last two years of his life his soul is still a battlefield for, whatever assertion he makes, an opposing argument is nearly always present in his mind.

The desire for renewal which marks the best of Apollinaire's last poems is countered by the weight of sorrow and insecurity. In 'Les Collines' he calls for silence from those who surround him :

Taisez-vous tous vous qui chantez
Ne mêlez pas l'ivraie au blé

Such aggressive intolerance and exaggerated self-assertion is often a mask over insecurity. 'Les Collines' reaches out to the great creations of 1908 when Apollinaire gave up 'l'ancien jeu des vers' :

Une autre fois je mendiais
L'on ne me donna qu'une flamme
Dont je fus brûlé jusqu'aux lèvres

The victories which he scores in 1917, again searching for a new language to express a new age, are forged in the flames which now return to his poetry in Vitam impendere amori, 'La Jolie Rousse' and, more importantly, in 'Les Collines'. They are achieved at the cost of suffering and in the climate of heroism and anguish which also characterised 'Le Brasier' and 'Les Fiançailles'. If 'La Victoire' and 'La Jolie Rousse' are among his greatest poems it is not because they were written by a man who after his years of experience had reached maturity and found a place in society

(96) OC IV, p. 894.

and a philosophy which seemed comfortable. It is because they were written by a man who was unsure which mask to wear, which way to turn, but who nevertheless, as always, was able to make great poetry from suffering.

Of course 'La Jolie Rousse' is built from the struggle between order and adventure. So is 'La Victoire' with its juxtaposition of Dadaistic spluttering and a pure and reverential alexandrine,

La parole est soudaine et c'est un Dieu qui tremble

which is, incidentally, a good definition of automatic writing avant l'heure. But these poems also illustrate the struggle between Apollinaire judge and pioneer and Apollinaire in his weakness who calls

Avance et soutiens-moi

('La Victoire')

Ayez pitié de moi

('La Jolie Rousse'),

between an Apollinaire who is exalted and self-confident and an Apollinaire self-conscious and paranoid :

Je courbe tristement la tête
Devant l'ardent*moquerie
Ce rire se répand
Partout

('La Victoire')

Mais riez riez de moi

Hommes de partout surtout gens d'ici

('La Jolie Rousse').

The alienation of the soldier in his ill-fitting uniform walking the streets from which so many men have disappeared, where only commerce is admired and there is no home for heroes, this is the background to 'La Victoire'. It is the world turned upside down which Apollinaire describes in an unpublished manuscript poem called 'Soldes', a rough prototype of 'La Victoire' to which it will contribute four lines, images of blindness, and there we read :

Les héroïnes gantées dans les magasins
Préparaient la victoire et moi j'étais si lâche
Leurs rires amassés en grappes de raisin
Annonçaient tout l'automne ô ma mémoire lasse (97)

'La Victoire' itself ends with five lines which insist on the importance of clear-sighted vision if the world is to be renewed. But the text is full of blind men, whose condition is made real with a perfectly apposite simile,

Des aveugles gesticulaient comme des fourmis

blind men who blunder out of his worst memories of trench warfare, stumbling soldiers blinded by gas. He described them in September 1915 when he wrote in 'Les Neuf portes de ton corps' (OPo p. 619) :

O mon ignorance semblable à des soldats aveugles parmi les chevaux
de frise sous la lune liquide des Flandres à l'agonie

Imagine them in Paris, lost in a department store, in the middle of the sales. In 'La Victoire' Apollinaire feels himself to be lost like this, as blind as Gloucester and Lear. And what is worse, the ground seems to shift beneath his feet as he feels his way around :

La rue où nagent mes deux mains
Aux doigts subtils fouillant la ville
S'en va

He could not feel more unsteady.

Such darkness as this is a metaphor for absolute impotence in a poet like Apollinaire who would sing with 'la voix que la lumière fit entendre', that light which he adores in Le Bestiaire, in 'Les Trois vertus plastiques' and so much of his art criticism. The poet is one who stands on the frontier of the known universe, 'De l'illimité et de l'avenir' in 'La Jolie Rousse', and also in 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' where the

light 'qui seule éclaire la nuit qui nous entoure' is the light thrown by the poets who lead us into the darkworld of dreams and out to 'les univers qui palpitent ineffablement au-dessus de nos têtes'. (98) It is this universe, 'TOUT UN MONDE NEUF', which is imagined in the mysterious calligramme 'Les Profondeurs' (OPo p. 607), a world characterised by 'la glace' and 'le Feu' - remember that in 'Les Collines' we read

Il neige et je brûle et je tremble

- and which is shaped like an animal, perhaps one of the 'claires bêtes nouvelles' which feature in the sky of 'Le Brasier', a poem which, like 'Les Collines' (i. e. 'Les Hauteurs') and 'Les Profondeurs', postulates initiation and renewal through suffering (trial by ice and fire). Within the silhouette of the two figures in the lower half of 'Les Profondeurs' we read: 'J'ai la prescience de Choses si subtilement neuves qu'elles empliront l'espace'. So if hands reach out and upwards in this calligramme it is because the new world can be sensed by delicate fingertips. Elsewhere Apollinaire wrote

Flambe flambe ma main ô flamme qui m'éclaire
Ma main illuminant les astres à tâtons

(OPo p. 593)

a fragment which it is difficult to date but which must have been written in 1908 or 1917, days of flame and visionary exploration. Apollinaire's vision of himself in these texts, his outstretched hands as sources of light, is clarified for us by a text from 1928 in which André Breton describes the adventure of Picasso :

La route mystérieuse où la peur à chaque pas nous guette,
où l'envie que nous avons de rebrousser chemin n'est vaincue
que par l'espoir fallacieux d'être accompagnés, voici quinze
ans que cette route est balayée par un puissant projecteur.
Voici quinze ans que Picasso, explorant lui-même cette route,
a porté fort avant ses mains pleines de rayons. Nul avant lui
n'avait osé y voir. (99)

(98) OC III, p. 908.

(99) André BRETON, Le Surréalisme et la peinture, p. 5.

The gesture is the same in 'La Victoire', but the reaching fingers cast no light. Darkness surrounds the seer and he is unable to keep the promise of 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes', incapable of guiding us forward. Parts of the poem are prophetic, insistently courageous, as the poet exhibits all the 'volonté' which he sees as the essential force in all human endeavour,

Moi qui suis plus têtue que non l'hydre de Lerne

and which supports the efforts of the figures in 'Les Profondeurs'. But at the same time he is going through a crisis as great as that of the drowning man in 'Lul de Faltenin'. In 'La Victoire' the struggle is that of a drowning Icarus whose wings have failed, whose anguished eyes watch the gulls wheel above him, just as in 'Lul de Faltenin' the sailor is taunted by the flight of the sirens :

La mer qui a trahi des matelots sans nombre
Engloutit mes cris comme des dieux noyés
Et la mer au soleil ne supporte que l'ombre
Que jettent des oiseaux les ailes éployées

These lines from 'La Victoire', so close to 'Lul de Faltenin', remind us that Apollinaire's critical appraisal of himself was as constant as his criticism of society. So his attitudes are never rigid and he never slips into the complacency of those who are at ease in the world, those whose pretensions he demolishes in 'La Victoire' :

On imagine difficilement
A quel point le succès rend les gens stupides et tranquilles

After the daring juxtapositions of 'La Victoire', in which the reader recognises a poet who is burning energy like a locomotive, cutting the ties of moderation in his effort to keep pace with fast moving progress, 'La Jolie Rousse' appears calm and reasonable. The poet is no longer

on the frontier but has turned back to face us, to state his case, to ask our indulgence. The fear which makes him turn is that of leaving behind too many sympathisers, of making enemies of the public, by moving too far too fast. An isolated avant-garde seems no more attractive to him now than the old, rarefied elitism of Symbolism from which he had struggled to emancipate poetry. This is above all a poem of fraternity as Apollinaire explains the adventure he shares with other poets and would like to share with us all, as he opens his heart to tell us of the nobility of his love. The poem is marked with the seal of 'la bonté', a term which figures the fathomless shape of the future, which by its vastness and silence must offer an infinite range of choice to those who approach it. 'La bonté' is a term which reaches beyond the domain of the arts, just as the poet's claims on our confidence are as much those of a man of action as those of a poet. 'La bonté', with its connotations of generosity and fulfilment, surely suggests the poet's continuing faith in the shining future of which he always dreamed. 'Le rire c'est la bonté des hommes' wrote Tristan Tzara in his December 1917 article on Apollinaire in Dada 2, (100) and there is this element of joy in the term as Apollinaire uses it. It does not appear for the first time in 'La Jolie Rousse' as Scott Bates has suggested (101) for we find 'la bonté' in 'Rencontre' (OPo p. 653), a 1913 poem which in the language of proverbs celebrates a life of confident adventure and rich fecundity :

Passant mêle à ta vie l'orgueil et la bonté
Surmonte l'ennemi et bois à sa santé

And in the twenty-fifth stanza of 'Les Collines' 'bonté' is the state which will follow seven years of suffering, 'le temps de la grâce ardente' when man will approach divinity, rise to his full stature.

(100) Tristan TZARA, Oeuvres complètes I, p. 396.

(101) Scott BATES, "'Les Collines", dernier testament d'Apollinaire', GA 1, (1962), pp. 25-39, (p. 33).

In order to win our confidence the poet lays his cards on the table, like a fortune-teller turning the Tarot pack. If he speaks without false modesty here, the tenor of his proposals is eminently sincere. It is all the more moving therefore to see the first part of 'La Jolie Rousse' balanced by the last few lines in which Apollinaire's dignified self-confidence seems to evaporate and a plea for support becomes a plea for pity. He asks for pity, from those very people he blames for not allowing him to speak the whole truth, making them responsible for his own feelings of inadequacy. His honesty is complete, for if in this poem he at first appears as both a brilliant poet and a man of the world, he does not hide his weaknesses. Those who disapprove of any stance which Apollinaire has taken should note how in this text he confesses his sins and errors and ends Calligrammes with lines which reveal, as Paul Eluard has said, 'cette mélancolie affreuse du poète désespéré'. (102)

At the end of 'La Jolie Rousse', as the poet's feelings of solitude well up to the surface, we wonder whether Apollinaire was looking back across the Great War to July 1914 when Alberto Savinio's text, 'Les Chants de la mi-mort' appeared in Les Soirées de Paris n° 27. Reevaluating his experience since then, perhaps Apollinaire remembers that Savinio had foreseen the war, presenting it as a metallic nightmare, peopled by zombies and robots. His drama, which was influenced by Apollinaire's poem 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry', (103) features as its central character a faceless man who, early in the text, is described in terms which remind

(102) Paul ELUARD, 'Guillaume Apollinaire', Oeuvres complètes II, pp. 895-897.

(103) 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' was published in Les Soirées de Paris in February 1914, five months before 'Les Chants de la mi-mort'. Alberto Savinio was to write the music for the stage version of Apollinaire's poem, A Quelle heure un train partira-t-il pour Paris ? Francis Picabia and Marius de Zayas were to design the décors. (See note 30). Other characters in Savinio's drama are 'L'Onirocritique' and 'Les hommes-cible'. Savinio told Nino Frank that it was Apollinaire who persuaded and then encouraged him to write 'Les Chants de la mi-mort' (Nino Frank, unpublished lecture in 'Hommage à Albert Savinio', Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 18 March 1981).

us of Apollinaire's presentation of himself at the start of 'La Jolie Rousse'. Savinio writes :

Homme sans voix sans yeux et sans visage,
fait de douleur fait de passion et fait de joie ;
il connaît tous les jeux, il fait toutes les culbutes,
il parle tous les langages - ...

Even more striking is the end of Savinio's text where the faceless man finds himself alone on stage :

Je suis seul :
méfiant mais vaincu je m'abandonne sans force
aux mains terribles et douces ...
Ayez pitié de moi!

Whatever Apollinaire's sources, whatever his doubts about his own ability to continue to bear his responsibility as an artist, the overall effect of the last two poems of Calligrammes is positive, not pessimistic. Human reason, enhanced by imagination, can still create a radiant future :

O Soleil c'est le temps de la Raison ardente

The sun which rises here is the same as that which he drew for Siegler-Pascal in August 1914, 'Le Soleil de la Paix', in whose rays he wrote :

La Victoire
La liberté universelle
Liberté Liberté chéri (104)

Less naive than he was in 1914 perhaps, Apollinaire still believes in 1917 that from the bestiality beauty could be born, that from the conflagration humanity could rise, phoenix-like,

Plus pur plus vif et plus savant

• •

Apollinaire's love for his fellow man is indomitable. But what impresses one in reading 'La Jolie Rousse' is that his love is now also extended unconditionally towards womankind. This is the season of reconciliation, the joining together of Order and Adventure, Time and Eternity, elements which have always coexisted in his poetry, and Man and Woman whose destiny in Apollinaire's work has been one of eternal incompatibility. This unavoidable disharmony constitutes a fatal flaw in the human condition which he illustrates in many poems, notably 'La Maison des morts' (OPo p. 66), and for which he holds woman responsible. This mistrust of half the human race is already evident in Stavelot when Apollinaire decides that

Les femmes mentent mentent ' (OPo p. 511)

and will develop by 1903 in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' into a painful recognition of

La fausseté de l'amour même

Woman laughs as her lover dies whether she be the vampire of the early 'J'ai rêvé que j'allais à mon enterrement' (OPo p. 850), the lady of 'L'Adieu du cavalier' (OPo p. 253) or Tristouse in 'Le Poète assassiné' (OPr p. 299). This obsession with the 'éternités différentes de l'homme et de la femme' becomes the leitmotif of 'Onirocritique' (OPo p. 371) and in Les Onze mille verges Apollinaire even contemplates 'leur séparation prochaine et définitive. Les mœurs, l'esprit, les coutumes et les goûts des deux sexes différent de plus en plus'. (105) In 'Cortège' (OPo p. 74), disagreeing with Cornelius Agrippa, he states his belief in the inferiority of women and in 'Arbre' (OPo p. 178) he jokes that a woman who claims to be intelligent is just a woman disguised as a man.

(105) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Les Onze mille verges, Paris, Pauvert, 'J'ai lu', 1973, p. 95.

For Jean Burgos this attitude has a literary source and 'provient en fait directement des Prophéties de Merlin', having come too early in Apollinaire's life to have been born of personal experience. (106) Here we have an opportunity to pick up an earlier thread of this thesis (see p. 25) and to note that in some of his first texts Apollinaire is more sympathetic towards the aspirations of women. One such poem compares the two halves of Europe and though he prefers the climate of the southern nations he commends the women of the north for their degree of emancipation then, as now, well in advance of Mediterranean customs :

Avril qui rit ici connaît-il votre Nord
Les aurores y sont aurores boréales
Mais les femmes s'en vont libres et n'ont pas tort
(OPo p. 845)

Among the unpublished texts in the Bibliothèque Nationale there are twelve lines clearly typed in purple ink, 'Sodome n'était pas mais devait s'élever', a poem which is a network of references to hermaphrodites and homosexuality, signs of Apollinaire's own troubled sexuality in late adolescence, and which ends

Et c'est le rêve ardent du féminisme
Quia raison de vouloir l'égalité (107)

Given the context of these lines it may be that this equality is envisaged by Apollinaire only in terms of a sexual apartheid marking the 'different eternities' of men and women. But in 'L'Amoureuse' (OPo p. 848) the young Apollinaire is full of compassion for the woman who is abandoned, left nursing the baby. This poem, which is almost certainly autobiographical, was written before Apollinaire had settled into his 'mal-aimé' syndrome

(106) EP, p. lxxxix.

(107) BN FR NouvAcq 16280, fo. 54.

in which it is always the man who is wronged and who suffers most. (108)
Apollinaire was himself the lover

Qui crut aimer sa belle et n'aima qu'un mirage
(OPo p. 323)

- he knew Madeleine Pagès, for whom he wrote more love poems than for any other woman, even less well than he had known Annie Playden. It is a tribute to Jacqueline Kolb that after years of suspicion he should be inspired to write such a poem as 'La Jolie Rousse', full of love and gratitude for a woman. It is she who heals the rift between Apollinaire and her half of humanity.

But in this field as in others the war was an educative experience for Apollinaire. He went to war inspired by an idealism which he considered to be a purely male quality, for the difference between men and women is a 'différence d'origine, différence idéale'. (109) Women cannot share such idealism, he thought, because they are slaves to their instincts, particularly the instinct of reproduction, and are consequently impure, an impurity symbolised by the flow of menstrual blood which Apollinaire referred to as 'les larmes rouges de la perdition'. (110) Having marched off to play his role in history, leaving the women at home, Apollinaire writes poems to Lou and Madeleine full of comparisons between love and war. The woman

(108) The pale young lady of the poem is probably Apollinaire's idealised vision of his own mother, seduced and then abandoned. Apollinaire here imagines his own conception and birth. His Danish friend, Pierre Madsen, wrote of Mme. de Kostrowitzky: 'Elle ne le comprenait en rien et parlait de lui comme si elle l'avait eu par accident, à quatorze ans, disait-elle'. See André Rouveyre, Apollinaire, p. 17.

(109) La Revue des lettres et des arts, 1 May 1908, OC IV, p. 89.

(110) EP, p. 174. Menstrual blood also appears in 'La Synagogue', 'Le Dôme de Cologne', 'L'Ermite', the manuscript of 'Zone' (DA p. 78), 'Le Cortège priapique' and 'Scène nocturne du 22 Avril 1915', after which date the image disappears from Apollinaire's poetry.

is subject to the man as the enemy is subject to the strength and resolution of the gunner. For Apollinaire the acts of love and war are both affirmations of his virility and of his superiority. His contacts with the realities of combat, however, lead to a certain disillusion with this stereotyped ideal of aggressive virility and the world of women comes to represent in his eyes qualities such as peace and understanding which increase in value as the quality of his life in the army deteriorates. He sees that the war, a male domain, does not lift up men's hearts but brutalises them. So he writes to André Level, 25 September 1915 :

Je vois peu de progrès moraux, c'est une chose assez attristante et cependant que de belles choses en dehors de ce progrès moral si nécessaire. A ce point de vue les femmes me paraissent ma foi supérieures aux hommes. (111)

While the men are laying waste the land and each other the women are working to repair the damage done, often caring for the casualties. Lou earns Apollinaire's admiration in this way (OPo p. 379), as does Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia whom he encourages in her work for both wounded prisoners and wounded Frenchmen. (112) Six months later, in July 1915, he tells her that women are 'les dépositaires de l'Avenir humain'. (113) This admiration had every opportunity to grow when Apollinaire returned to Paris with weak lungs and a head-wound. 'Tristesse de l'automne' (OPo p. 601) is a poem from this period of prolonged illness which makes more sense in the manuscript than in the version given in the Oeuvres poétiques which omits the final two lines. These lines identify that song which the poet describes as softer than a Breton lullaby or the voice of Memnon :

C'est la chanson d'amour et de reconnaissance
Qu'élèvent vers vous tant de blessés de France (114)

(111) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, p. 47.

(112) Letter to Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, 22 January 1915, in Michel Sannouillet, Dada à Paris, p. 536.

(113) OC IV, p. 866.

(114) BN FR Nouv Acq 16280, fo. 37. The manuscript is written on the back of a card announcing the demise of a Monsieur Aimé Guyot, 'Ancien épicier en gros, Président du Conseil des établissements de l'Etoile Blanche', who died on 14 October 1916. So 'Tristesse de l'automne' probably dates from the autumn of 1916. Apollinaire's poem 'Sonnet pour une opale d'Asie...' (OPo p. 858) is also a poem of gratitude, written for Mme. Tittoni, administrator of the Italian Hospital, Quai d'Orsay, where the poet was a patient.

This is therefore a poem of thanks offered by Apollinaire to a nurse who is leaving the hospital having earned the affection of the soldiers she has cared for. Apollinaire names her 'le soldat de toutes les bontés' and of course Jacqueline Kolb, for whom he wrote his great poem of 'bonté', 'La Jolie Rousse', was also a nurse. She is the 'bel éclair qui durerait', a phrase which resolves the major contradiction underpinning Apollinaire's poetry, the opposition between the ephemeral and the eternal. Wounds close, as the magnet attracts metal, and so the future is founded. Jacqueline is also 'adorable' and the poet celebrates her nobility in terms which approach the sacramental. In La Femme assise she appears as 'la jolie Corail' who with her red hair and pale complexion is compared to a 'goutte de sang sur une épée' (OPr p. 423), an image which reminds us of the bleeding lance in the miraculous procession of the Grail :

Et tot cil de laiens veoient
 Le lance blanche et le fer blanc,
 S'issoit une goutte de sanc
 Del fer de la lance en somet,
 Et jusqu'a la main au vallet
 Coloit cele goutte vermeille. (115)

Read again that quatrain from 'La Jolie Rousse' in which Apollinaire employs such a marvellous variety of images to describe his 'adorable rousse' :

Ses cheveux sont d'or on dirait
 Un bel éclair qui durerait
 Ou ces flammes qui se pavanent
 Dans les roses-thé qui se fanent

It is the same language which Apollinaire uses in the last five lines of 'Les Collines' to describe the great secret of the future, a holy of holies, a tabernacle to be penetrated :

(115) Chrétien de TROYES, Le Roman de Perceval ou le Conte du Graal, William Roach ed., Geneva, Droz, 1956, lines 3196-3201.

Des bras d'or supportent la vie
Pénétrez le secret doré
Tout n'est qu'une flamme rapide
Que fleurit la rose adorable
Et d'où monte un parfum exquis

So it becomes evident that the sacred and the erotic coalesce in the person of Jacqueline, herself a secret to be penetrated, a happy sequel to the disappointment and failed process of initiation marked by the successive stages of Apollinaire's poetic unveiling and seduction of Madeleine for whom he wrote, in 'Le Neuvième poème secret' (OPo p. 634) :

J'adore ta toison qui est le parfait triangle
De la Divinité

In 1917 Apollinaire's mind is on marriage, but this is not the first time that he has associated the ideas of initiation and matrimony. In 'Le Poète assassiné' there is a passage headed 'Entrée des Ateliers' (OPr p. 255) in which Croniamantal suffers through darkness and extreme cold, overcoming fear, smashing time itself with the power of his will, until he attains the moment of revelation as the door opens and, bathed in light, two individuals join in marriage : 'et quand la porte s'ouvrit ce fut dans la brusque lumière la création de deux êtres et leur mariage immédiat'. This is a marriage between Croniamantal and l'Oiseau de Bénin whose studio, of course, resembles the Bateau-Lavoir. Such a meeting of minds gives new significance to the title of 'Les Fiançailles', for the poem is dedicated to Pablo Picasso to whom Apollinaire cries 'Prophétisons ensemble ô grand maître' at the point of revelation and initiation. In 1917 the light of flames flashes in the hair of Jacqueline. A woman is now worthy of inspiring and sharing the poet's adventure. 'Vitam impendere amori' has become his motto.

We must recognise that Les Mamelles de Tirésias satirises the aspirations of feminism and that the title of La Femme assise, referring as it does to a counterfeit coin and, by analogy, to the falsity of women, takes Apollinaire back towards his old misogyny. Nevertheless he will marry Jacqueline Kolb in the spring of 1918, having progressed a long way since the spring of 'Les Fiançailles' ten years earlier. An entry in his diary in February 1918 shows Apollinaire working on the idea of God made in the image of woman, 'Dieu-femme'. (116) God is a woman. Perhaps to Apollinaire in 1918, as the war continues, man does not seem worthy of consideration for the job.

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In 1918 Apollinaire wrote almost no poetry. We are left with 'Vous me parlez d'un ministère' (OPo p. 689) and 'Souvenir des Flandres' (OPo p. 691), written in response to a newspaper enquête and a charity appeal respectively, his 'Calligramme en forme de morceau de sucre' (OPo p. 690), 'Mon cher petit Rouveyre' (OPo p. 794) and 'Si j'étais un pihi' (OPo p. 775). In that poem Apollinaire writes :

Si j'étais un pi-hi
J'aurais du moins une aile
Pour t'aller voir Billy
Mais la vie est cruelle

Should we conclude from this sentiment and the paucity of his poetic output that in 1918 he does now consider himself to be the poet whose wings have failed, as in 'La Victoire', and that he has been silenced by uncertainty or lost faith in poetry? In L'Information on 4 November 1918 appeared a

(116) Diary entry 10 February 1918. See OPr p. 1450.

beautifully vigorous article by Apollinaire entitled 'Peaux d'oranges'. (117) He seems to look back on his old proud and confident self, when he wrote in 'Les Collines' that

c'est moi-même
Qui suis la flûte dont je joue
[...]
Et je pèle pour mes amis
L'orange dont la saveur est
Un merveilleux feu d'artifice

Now, significantly, he passes the mantle he then wore onto the shoulders of a new generation of artists whose works he describes as 'oranges savoureuses que les jeunes gens pèlent en se jouant'. All his energy is devoted to this defence of 'les audaces désintéressées de la jeune littérature et de la jeune peinture' and he attacks, as in days of old, the false wisdom of reactionary critics: 'Vous vous vantez de votre incompréhension. C'est une infirmité dont il n'ya pas lieu d'être fier'. In fact in 1918 Apollinaire's nib is never dry. Back in October 1915, very worried about how he would keep a wife and pay the rent once the war was over, he had written to Madeleine 'Je me demande si je ne lâcherai pas la littérature pour un temps, pour les affaires ou autre chose. Mais quoi? J'y songe...'. (118) In May of that year he had written to Jacques Chardonne, a young publisher, to emphasise that he intended to write novels after the war (119) and what he does in 1918 is sacrifice poetry - a man starves on poetry alone - to other forms of literary activity, working to make a reputation as a journalist, critic, novelist and playwright, though, of course, Calligrammes appeared in April 1918. So on 16 July 1918 he writes to his old friend Larionov 'je travaille beaucoup' (120) and indeed his plans are ambitious. He writes

(117) OC II, p. 787.

(118) TS, p. 215.

(119) Letter of 16 May 1915, Le Figaro littéraire, 1094, 6 April 1967, p. 2.

(120) Waldemar GEORGE, Larionov, p. 124.

numerous articles, often about England, using material gleaned from his reading of English newspapers, finishes Couleur du temps and Casanova, puts together Le Flâneur des deux rives and La Femme assise and plans new novels, L'Abbé Maricotte (OPr p. 945), Les Nuages (OPr p. 970), and Le Marchand d'oiseaux (121) as well as Raspoutine and La Dame blanche des Hohenzollern (OPr p. 1436) for the series 'L'Histoire romanesque'. He also plans a stage version of the novel Les Nuages ('1er Acte', OPr p. 1041), (122) and a new medieval romance about a black knight and a virgin queen, 'Tragédie' (OPr p. 1041).

In 1918 Apollinaire is determined to use the mass media of the day to reach the largest possible audience. But he never forgets poetry and in fact the worse the state of the nation may be, the more important poetry appears. His praise for Charles Maurras in the article 'La Poésie' is perhaps easier to digest if we recognize the underlying theme of this article. Apollinaire compares Maurras and Paul Souday, writers who, he says, differ in their theories on literature and politics :

Qu'importe ? la disparate paraîtra moins cruelle dans les circonstances qui ont provoqué leur rapprochement. N'appartiennent-ils pas tous deux à une même communion, celle de la divinité d'Homère ? La royauté de la poésie ne réunit-elle pas ces deux prosateurs dans le même parti royaliste ? Ce sont en outre deux républicains de la République des lettres. Et leurs divisions sont peu de chose au regard de ce qui les associe dans un même amour pour la divine poésie. (123)

In the past, poems like 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' and 'Onirocritique' have been Apollinaire's personal victory over pain and inner conflict. Now in 1918, poetry is the healer of a society which is sick of war, a symbol of peace in a world which is split, the privileged meeting place where harmony replaces discord.

(121) Pierre-Marcel ADEMA, 'La Vie du poète... clef de son oeuvre', Les Pharaons, 23, summer 1975, pp. 12-21, (p. 20).

(122) OPr p. 1470 note to '1er Acte' should read 'A rapprocher du projet de roman de la page 970', not 'page 968'.

(123) OC II, p. 539.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION (iv). 1914 - 1916

We have seen that in July 1914, during his last short summer of peace, Apollinaire was in Deauville with André Rouveyre. The two men, at a loose end one Sunday morning, decided to attend Mass especially to hear a certain Monseigneur Bolo whose sermons, Rouveyre reports, were notorious. Unfortunately 'le bon prélat' did not turn up. (1) No great significance can be attached to this anecdote, though the fact that Apollinaire in holiday mood is able to take his place in a church congregation, prompted by curiosity, indicates that he is now at some distance from the sense of guilt and shame which haunts 'Zone'. As Robert Couffignal has said, Apollinaire will chronicle the new excitement of the war in poetry written 'sans ombre de remords, sans crainte de péché'. (2) Since 'Zone' his poetry has been that of a free man, no longer the 'lapsed Catholic' who averts his guilty eyes from the open door of a church.

The outbreak of a war usually marks a renewal of religious fervour, just as the suicide rate apparently diminishes. Traditional values are reinforced throughout society and the soldiers bow their heads as the Church

(1) André ROUVEYRE, Apollinaire, p. 13.

(2) Robert COUFFIGNAL, Apollinaire, p. 94.

blesses the army. On both sides of the conflict the archbishop stands with the cabinet-minister to reassure the people of the justice of their crusade. Not all the soldiers at the Front are blessed with visions of the Blessed Virgin, but the majority of them will turn out for the spiritual sustenance of church parade. Apollinaire the soldier, now proud to be one of the crowd, followed the current and there seems to be a real breach in the barrier set up between himself and Catholicism when he writes to Lou to describe a mass he attended on Sunday 18 April 1915 : 'J'étais très, très ému, mais ça m'a donné beaucoup de courage'. (3) Sharing the warmth of a community joined in song it seems that he was especially moved by the hymns, the stirring sound of this military male-voice choir, a rediscovery of the music which was the background to his education and saturated much of his poetry. Eight days later he writes again to Lou to tell her : 'hier assisté à la messe, prié pour toi, on chantait et je chantais aussi [...] . J'étais ému extrêmement'. From memory he quotes several verses of the hymns sung, allowing us to identify them as 'A Notre-Dame de Lourdes à qui les Allemands ont lancé un défi (cantique de la revanche)' and 'A Jeanne d'Arc'. (4) As the titles suggest, they are a distasteful mixture of piety and aggressive nationalism. But this was the tonic which took Apollinaire back, for a few days at least, to the habits of his religious childhood. This encounter of the military and the ecclesiastical is considered worthy of his dignified correspondence with André Level, to whom he writes on 26 April 1915 : 'La messe de dimanche dans un village voisin, dite par un capitaine de cavalerie, étole et éperons, m'a rendu dans une grange deux dimanches véritables, comme je n'en avais pas eu depuis longtemps dans le civil'. (5)

(3) Lettres à Lou, p. 302.

(4) Lettres à Lou, pp. 323-324.

(5) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE - André LEVEL, Correspondance, p. 17.

Earlier in the month, on 10 April, when Apollinaire wrote 'La nuit d'avril 1915' (OPo p. 243), he brought this church music back into his poetry by ending his text with a look towards salvation :

Mais
 orgues
 aux fétus de la paille où tu dors
L'hymne de l'avenir est paradisiaque

Gleaming straw and a star in the sky again suggest the story of Bethlehem in another poem to Lou from 27 April 1915 (OPo p. 450) in which

La nuit
S'étoile et la paille se dore

His camp in the forest suggests life in a stable to Apollinaire and his reference to the newly born Christ perhaps hints at his ideal of a reborn humanity after the labour of war.

In his letters to Madeleine, Apollinaire invokes the name of religion to reassure her and, no doubt, her mother as to his good character and suitability as a prospective husband. He tells Madeleine that he agrees with her on religious matters and as proof of this informs her that he still wears the medals which his mother gave him as a child. (6) Held to be a protection from danger, for Apollinaire these medals had the value of a relic, a tangible link with a mother who represented the security and unchanging affection which he needed. When to end their relationship Apollinaire tells Madeleine in May 1916 that 'je me ferais prêtre ou religieux', (7) he is trying to soften the blow for her by suggesting that withdrawal from their engagement is matched by a desire on his part to withdraw from the

(6) TS, p. 120.
(7) TS, p. 349.

whole world. Perhaps he is also hinting at the physical impotence he feels after his awful wound. If certain scholastic and pedagogical traits of Apollinaire's character correspond to some aspects of the monastic life, his return to the faith during the spring of 1915 was short-lived. Only one month after the military mass which so moved him he writes to Madeleine on 25 May 1915, to tell her how he has been offended by the sight of a bishop in military uniform, on horseback : 'Je n'aime guère ces retours. Ils me paraissent déraisonnables, bien que je ne sois contre aucune croyance et qu'en ayant parfois, je conçois très bien qu'on ait la foi très ancrée en soi'. (8) Already he perceives objectively his own renewal of faith as a limited episode, though the fact that it occurred at all indicates to him how much his childhood religion is part of his very fibre. He can now reflect on the faith without bitterness or real hostility and indeed he recognises the comfort which religion can bring the suffering soldier. The poem he sends to Madeleine on 9 October 1915 ends with images of madness :

Balace des batteries lourdes cymbales de la folie
(Opo pp. 1099-1100)

When he comes to publishing the poem for wider consumption in Calligrammes he softens the conclusion, cutting out that harsh tone which implies a criticism of the war to transform the cymbals of madness into church-bells :

Douilles éclatantes des obus de 75
Carillonnez pieusement
(OPo p. 262)

The reconstruction of smashed church towers and the ringing of bells is a symbol of renaissance which the poet will embrace towards the end of his life, as in 'Souvenir des Flandres' (OPo p. 691).

(8) TS, p. 30.

But writing 'Les Soupirs du servant de Dakar' (OPo p. 235), sent to Lou in June 1915, Apollinaire is back to his old satirical self, including a vivid sketch of an oily and lascivious bishop,

Si doux si doux avec ma mère
De beurre de beurre avec ma soeur

This is a flash of the Apollinaire of L'Hérésiarque et Cie, while his poem 'Refus de la colombe' (OPo p. 249) is, as Jean Burgos has pointed out, a concise résumé of L'Enchanteur pourrissant, an anti-nativity :

Mensonge de l'Annonciade
La Noël fut la Passion (9)

This return to the profound sources of his inspiration is significant. Stepping in from the side-lines of society, determined to participate fully in the life of the nation, Citizen Kostro was tempted by official religion. But when renewed contact with death, now in the war a part of daily life and for the first time an imminent personal threat, prompts him to question the mystery close around him, as he has done before, he does not look to the authority of the Church, the dogmas of the faith, for an answer. He reaches far back and true to himself expresses his questioning in terms of traditions which seek strength through a quest for knowledge, not faith. So in a letter to Madeleine, 2 September 1915, he approves her views on church marriage and the religious education of children. But he also hints at the independence of his thinking on religion, an interest reborn with the war, adding : 'Toutefois depuis cette guerre il m'est venu des pensées plus décidées qui ne seront d'ailleurs bien claires qu'à la paix'. (10) In this clear confusion to which he refers we can detect a return to the magical tradition in which

(9) EP, p. lxxxviii.

(10) TS, p. 113.

he had sometimes sought a place among the immortals. It is our intention to trace this line of thought through the poetry which Apollinaire will compose henceforth. First, however, we must examine the importance of another theme in Apollinaire's poetry, a theme which runs deeps and perhaps expresses a primitive pulse, the pulse of a whole race, the memory of rituals and lost ceremonies, needs which have been buried but not destroyed beneath layers of civilisation.

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The flares and explosions of the artillery battles of the Great War, as the two sides flung mountains of metal at each other across no-man's land, seemed to turn night into day. Apollinaire, when he arrives in the zone of combat, is so amazed by this spectacle that he is led to compare the war to an almighty festival which in its violence splits the earth and the heavens and awakens the sleeping gods. As he writes in 'Chant de l'horizon en Champagne' (OPo p. 265) :

Ecoutez renaître les oracles qui avaient cessé
Le grand Pan est ressuscité

Jean Roudaut in his 1963 article 'La Fête d'Apollinaire' has examined this subject and concludes that 'La fête telle qu'elle est désirée au cours d'Alcools et louée comme lieu de la "grâce ardente" dans Calligrammes a nettement pour Apollinaire une valeur religieuse'. (11) To back his argument Jean Roudaut turns to Roger Caillois whose book L'Homme et le sacré (12) analyses

(11) Jean ROUDAUT, 'La Fête d'Apollinaire', Critique, XIX, 199, December 1963, pp. 1034-1045.

(12) Roger CAILLOIS, L'Homme et le sacré, Paris, Gallimard, 1950. In this thesis we refer to the 1972 edition of L'Homme et le sacré, 'Edition augmentée de trois appendices sur le sexe, le jeu, la guerre dans leurs rapports avec le sacré'.

the function of popular festivals in human society, applying Caillois' reading of festivals to Apollinaire's texts. Bearing in mind the chronological evolution which we detect in Apollinaire's war poetry we would like to continue his comparative study and draw our own conclusions.

According to Roger Caillois, festivals are episodic explosions of collective euphoria and unconventional behaviour in which the members of a society reject authority, breaking the laws and patterns of routine which govern conduct at other times. The festival functions as a motor of social renewal, producing a purgative chaos which enables society, once the disorder has ended and the dust has settled, to begin a new evolution, reforming from zero. Caillois calls the festival 'Le sacré de transgression' (13) for he sees this overthrowing of the social order, most clearly observable in primitive societies, as a reconstruction of the myth of creation, a return to the primeval chaos which preceded the intervention of the gods to form the world and impose order. He refers to Greek and Roman festivals, Kronia and Saturnalia, to the tribal festivals in Fiji and the Sandwich Islands, to the Jewish festival of Purim for which the Talmud prescribes 'qu'on devait boire jusqu'à l'impossibilité de reconnaître l'un de l'autre les deux cris spécifiques de la fête, "Maudit soit Aman" et "Béni soit Mardochée"'. (14) He shows us what remains of the Western European equivalents of these festivals, at Hallowe'en and New Year, when the dead walk among the living, and those festivals where a puppet king is constructed and then burned. (15) Caillois explains that 'Actes interdits et actes outrés ne semblent pas suffire à marquer la différence entre le temps du déchaînement et le temps de la règle. On leur adjoint les actes à rebours. On s'ingénie à se conduire de façon exactement contraire au comportement normal'. (16) Social and sexual taboos are trampled.

(13) Roger CAILLOIS, op. cit., p. 143.

(14) Ibid, p. 153.

(15) Ibid, pp. 156-157.

(16) Ibid, p. 155.

This is a time of recklessness and of prodigious consumption of carefully amassed wealth. It is a time of promiscuous fraternity when work is stopped, individual occupations suspended and all classes and types meet in the anonymous melting-pot. So the festival 'constitue une ouverture sur le Grand Temps, le moment où les hommes quittent le devenir pour accéder au réservoir des forces toutes-puissantes et toujours neuves, que représente l'âge primordial'. (17)

According to Roger Caillois, however, twentieth-century Europe has squeezed the authentic festivals of transgression out of existence. Our celebrations are mere shadows of the old festivals. But to his original text he adds an appendix, 'Guerre et Sacré', in which he suggests that modern warfare has filled the vacuum left by the disappearance of festivals, liberating instincts condemned by the restrictions of 'civilised behaviour'. Like the old festival, war is the 'Temps de l'excès, de la violence, de l'outrage. [...] L'une et l'autre ont leur discipline propre, mais n'en paraissent pas moins explosions monstrueuses et informes en face du déroulement monotone de l'existence régulière'. (18) In war, killing, usually the worst of crimes, becomes the order of the day. And war is a bottomless pit for the nation's resources - Caillois provides some astonishing statistics to prove the extent of this prodigality in his later book, Bellone ou la pente de la guerre. (19) In war man enters the domain of death whose presence confers 'une valeur supérieure à ses diverses actions. Il croit y acquérir, comme par la descente aux enfers des anciennes initiations, une force d'âme disproportionnée aux épreuves de la terre'. (20) It is a baptism of fire. This idea of rebirth, Caillois

(17) Ibid., p. 136.

(18) Ibid., p. 220.

(19) Roger CAILLOIS, Bellone ou la pente de la guerre, Brussels, La Renaissance du livre, 1963.

(20) Roger CAILLOIS, L'Homme et le sacré, p. 228.

suggests, is present in much of the vocabulary and mythology of war : 'On fait d'elle comme une déesse de la fécondité tragique'. (21) Of modern warfare in general he writes : 'Elle est inhumaine, c'est assez pour qu'on puisse l'estimer divine. On n'y manque pas. Et voici qu'on attend de ce sacre le plus puissant l'extase, la jeunesse et l'immortalité'. (22)

Some points of Caillois' definition of festival are immediately discernible in Apollinaire's reaction to the war. But Apollinaire had known many popular festivals before the war. In fact his life and his poetry had always been coloured by them. His presentation of the festivals he experienced in childhood and as a young man both corroborates Roger Caillois' definition of the nature of festival and suggests that Apollinaire's perception of the war as festival was prepared by earlier experiences. These earlier festivals, as he presents them, are nearly always characterised by various forms of transgressive behaviour, which is often violent and sometimes homicidal. Apollinaire repeatedly includes crowd scenes and processions in his work and Ian Lockerbie in his study of 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' has pointed out that Apollinaire 'adorait tout ce qui était rassemblement, défilé, fête'. (23) His earliest memory, as he confides to Giuseppe Raimondi in a letter of February 1918, was of a fair in Bologna when he was three or four years old. He was scared to death by the clowns and he tells Raimondi that this was 'une première, ma plus grande, ma véritable frayeur'. (24) The clowns, he adds, 'sont restés pour moi quelque chose de mystérieux' and so from the beginning of his life these masked festivities held for Apollinaire qualities of danger and

(21) Ibid., p. 227.

(22) Ibid., p. 234.

(23) S. I. LOCKERBIE, 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry', CAIEF, 23, May 1971, pp. 197-209.

(24) OC IV, p. 895.

mystery. 'Giovanni Moroni', the short story first published in 1903 and into which Apollinaire sets vivid episodes which must be memories from his earliest years, recalls the carnival of Rome, which Giovanni watches as he is held aloft by his father. This scene develops into a macabre episode in which the home of the family, who are at table and about to enjoy their pasta, is invaded by masked revellers, drunk and calling for wine. Frightened, the child weeps at the sight of one of the company, a bearded man dressed in the red and black of a devil. When the group moves on he is left behind, not drunk but dead, stabbed in the heart (Opr pp. 325-327). Murder is perceived as an ingredient of festival and we are left with the impression of the rape of a family.

This episode may not be autobiographical, in which case it is all the more significant as an illustration of Apollinaire's definition of festival as an occasion of transgression and violence which precedes a return to order. He sketches out the lines of this pattern in his April 1905 article on Picasso in which he writes : 'A Rome, au moment du Carnaval, il y a des masques (Arlequin, Colombine, ou "cuoca francese") qui le matin, après une orgie terminée parfois par un meurtre, vont à Saint-Pierre baiser l'orteil usé de la statue du prince des apôtres'. (25) After a night of excess the quietened revellers kiss the foot of authority. In 'Giovanni Moroni' Apollinaire refers to the fifteenth-century Duke of Modena, the 'duc de Borso' who was renowned for the massively expensive celebrations he organised (OPr p. 326). Similarly in his poem '1904' (OPo p. 355) Apollinaire refers to carnivals in Strasbourg, Rome Nice and Cologne to emphasise the money spent, the feasting, always an important element of a festival or 'feast day'. He mentions 'Crésus Rothschild et Trologne' and all this corroborates Roger Caillois' presentation of festival as an opportunity for hugely extravagant spending. But the carnivals of '1904' are not violent. They have the atmosphere of the Roman carnival presented in

(25) OC IV, p. 65.

'Les Collines' as an image of youth, now lost. 'Mardi Gras' (OPo p. 708) however, from 1898-99, again confirms Caillois' analysis of festival as well as prophesying Apollinaire's experience in the artillery. This carnival is a violent explosion of colour and the night is filled with music and light, bound by the calm of the day, sunset to sunrise. The disorder of the occasion is expressed in the broken, exclamatory structure of the text. Renewal is made possible as the old king is burned :

Tandis qu'au loin le roi déchu,
Le roi des fous est brûlé par son peuple, las!
Hélas! Carnaval, le roi Carnaval flambe!

Amidst the costumes, champagne, the 'pluie multicolore' of the fireworks, booms the artillery, sixteen years before the war :

Et le canon là-bas tonne son glas.

This is the 'Carnaval charnel et sacrilège' which in 'Le Dôme de Cologne' (OPo p. 538) marks the melting of the snows, the rebirth of spring. Festival is sacrilegious in a way which forces the gods to intervene, to reorder the world for a new humanity.

The canons boom in 'Mardi Gras', and in 'Le Dôme de Cologne'

Les chevaux des chars hennissent en crescendo

During artillery bombardments Apollinaire will encounter truly cataclysmic sound for the first time, but excessive noisiness is an essential quality of festival. So in a book review in L'Intransigeant, 19 April 1911, Apollinaire quotes Eugène Montfort's description of the bacchanales which mark the beginning of the grape harvest in Naples. Apollinaire finds 'les traces du paganisme plus visibles ici que partout ailleurs' and Montfort also presents a people whose behaviour is guided by ancient and irresistible instinct :

Le prétexte chrétien de cette fête est de célébrer la madone de Piedigrotta. C'est une réjouissance extrêmement curieuse. Il s'agit de faire un bruit énorme, incomparable. Cent mille Napolitains soufflent, jusqu'à bout de souffle, dans d'énormes trompes en fer blanc. Ils ne sont pas gais, ils ne rient pas, ils soufflent dans leurs trompes. C'est la tradition de la bacchanale qui les pousse et ils ne résistent pas! (26)

Drowned in violent noise, the primitive festival spills the blood which is the price of rebirth and which is an essential ingredient of the festival of war. Already in 'Onirocritique' this aspect of the bacchanalia is envisaged, as in a prophecy, when Apollinaire writes: 'Tout un peuple entassé dans un pressoir saignait en chantant. Des hommes naquirent de la liqueur qui coulait du pressoir'. This vision is a multiplication of Christ bleeding in the wine-press in 'Vendémiaire', the mixture of intoxication and suffering which precedes resurrection and characterises Apollinaire's days in the artillery. So at Christmas in Nîmes in 1914 the poet waiting to move into action foresees the suffering of his comrades in the midst of their celebrations:

Voix hautes ou graves le vin saigne partout

(OPo p. 382)

In Couleur du temps Madame Giraume weeps for her dead son,

Mon fils une grappe de raisin
Dont on a exprimé tout le vin

(OPo p. 929)

But now, so much later in the war, as the sacrifice continues, hopes of rebirth are flattened by the weight of a mother's sorrow, of fatality, 'Voix des morts et des vivants'.

In the sensual riot of 'Vendémiaire' Apollinaire's thirst is limitless and his consciousness expands concurrently. Similarly in 'Merveille de la guerre'

(26) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Petites merveilles du quotidien, (Pierre CAIZERGUES ed.), p. 66.

(OPo p. 271) from December 1915 the poet is filled with a sense of his own ubiquity and infinite power after participating in a festival which goes beyond violence to cannibalism :

Il me semble assister à un grand festin éclairé à giorno
C'est un banquet que s'offre la terre
Elle a faim et ouvre de longues bouches pâles
La terre a faim et voici son festin de Balthasar cannibale

David Berry has pointed out that in 'Sur les prophéties' the infallible Madame Salmajour seems to have acquired her powers of prophecy after witnessing a similar rite in the South Seas, 'une scène savoureuse d'anthropophagie'. (27) Superhuman powers are born in the festival. In 'Merveille de la guerre' the poet's mouth waters at the smell of roasted flesh : 'l'air a un petit goût empyreumatique qui n'est ma foi pas désagréable'. As the unthinkable becomes reality so the poet goes beyond provocation to enter the realm of total transgression.

If, as we have seen, in the immediate pre-war period Apollinaire's zest for living was at a peak so that life seemed a permanent festival coloured by Delaunay and Picabia, then his enthusiasm had enough momentum to carry him into the war where the excitement of new experience compensated for the constraints of military life. The new and dangerous beauty of war is a new festival which in Nîmes he compares to those of his childhood :

C'est une bataille de fleurs
Où l'obus est une fleur mâle

(OPo p. 407)

In a battle he seeks the sound of carnival music, 'la chanson fine et nette des balles et l'orchestre d'artillerie' (OPo p. 636). And in 'Agent de liaison'

(27) David BERRY, 'Apollinaire and the Tantalus Complex', Australian Journal of French Studies, IX, 1, January-April 1972, pp. 55-79, (p. 72).

(OPo p. 433) from April 1915 the front-line is seen as Xanadu :

Quel prince du Bengale donne un feu d'artifice cette nuit

The poem 'Fête' (OPo p. 238) will be composed with the same idea in mind as the night combat becomes

Feu d'artifice en acier

the same imagery as that of his last poem to Lou, 'Roses guerrières' (OPo p. 500) from September 1915, which begins :

Fête aux lanternes en acier
Qu'il est charmant cet éclairage
Feu d'artifice meurtrier
Mais on s'amuse avec courage

Poetry for Lou, prose for André Level, the image is the same : 'La plus grande fête va commencer. Ça [sic] va être épique'. (28)

Preparing 'Case d'armons', Apollinaire will put himself in the place of a black volunteer to write 'Les Soupirs du servent de Dakar' (OPo p. 235). He compares the war to tribal battles and then to a primitive jungle festival. Once more the theories of Roger Caillois and Apollinaire's vision coincide :

Sous la tempête métallique
Je me souviens d'un lac affreux
Et de couples enchaînés par un atroce amour
Une nuit folle
Une nuit de sorcellerie
Comme cette nuit-ci
Où tant d'affreux regards
Eclatent dans le ciel splendide

Black magic, eternity in time, the liberation of forces which electrify the hysterical night, ecstasy or nightmare, the 'atroce amour' of the war, watched by the gods, in Africa by a 'double fétiche de la fécondité'... from

(28) GA 14, (1978), p. 185. This letter is not included in the volume Correspondance, Guillaume Apollinaire - André Level.

this orgy must spring new life :

Le temps est aux instincts brutaux
Pareille à l'amour est la guerre

(OPo p. 407)

As Apollinaire puts it to Soffici in July 1915, 'la plaine dénudée est sans cesse ensemencée par le métal de mort d'où doit germer la nouvelle vie'. (29) As we have already seen, the last words of 'La Nuit d'avril 1915', the lines which close 'Cased'armons', conceive the future as a renaissance :

Mais
orgues
aux fétus de la paille où tu dors
L'hyme de l'avenir est paradisiaque

Like a seed in the ground, the foetus of the new France is taking shape, and the 'Claire-Ville-Neuve-En-Cristal-Eternel' (OPo p. 242) which Apollinaire envisages for the future seems a continuation of Rimbaud's dream in 'Adieu', a poem which Apollinaire knew well :

Cependant c'est la veille. Recevons tous les influx de
vigueur et de tendresse réelle. Et à l'aurore, armés d'une
ardente patience, nous entrerons aux splendides villes. (30)

But Apollinaire moved up into the infantry trenches in November 1915. The passing of time and a landscape which fills with ruins and cemeteries, the poet's own experiences in the trenches of Champagne and the slaughter of Verdun and in the Somme in July 1916, all this would build up and crush the crystal vision. As many of Apollinaire's great poems end, like 'Vendémiaire', in punctured elation so, inevitably, the intoxicating experience of the war would become 'la fête manquée'. The reversal of values imposed

(29) OC IV, p. 763.

(30) In the manuscript of 'Cortège', Apollinaire asks 'Pourquoi faut-il être si moderne ?' (DA, p. 126). This is his reply to Rimbaud's 'Il faut être absolument moderne' in 'Adieu'.

by war, in which killing one's fellow-men becomes a commendable, indeed imperative, action, the social promiscuity of life at the Front, the extreme familiarity of the living with the dead, such aspects of a soldier's existence strengthen the analogy between war and festival. But the analogy can only be stretched so far. As the Great War dragged on so the atrocities multiplied beyond all imaginable limits, far beyond any examples offered by history. Apollinaire's perception of the war as a festival which would lead to regeneration was wrong-headed. As Pascal Pia writes, 'Sans doute Apollinaire faisait-il erreur en croyant assister à la genèse d'un monde nouveau, alors qu'il ne participait qu'au premier acte de la fin d'un monde. Mais c'était là une erreur fort répandue, et dont les combattants avaient besoin'. (31) Apollinaire's war poetry is unique, both profoundly personal and original. But it is also the expression of a shared experience, common to himself and his comrades. Apollinaire does not write of the war with the wisdom of hind sight, carefully formulating the message he wishes to deliver; he writes as a witness who exposes the immediacy of his experience day by day, minute by minute. The details which are magnified, the moments of experience which are preserved for us in his poetry, are pointers or clues which enable us to relive, moment by moment, the life which Apollinaire shared as an equal with all the soldiers of his regiment, even though he was more mature and experienced than most of them. His alertness and receptiveness of mind, sometimes amounting to a certain innocence in the face of history, allowed experience and the atmosphere of the moment, shared attitudes to the war, to enter directly into the text. So in his poetry he combines brilliant creativity with a form of transparency which, because of his constant solidarity with his comrades, makes him an authentic spokesman of the day. During his days in active service at the Front his poetry is not so much a guiding light, but rather the voice of the army.

(31) Pascal PIA, Apollinaire par lui-même, p. 120.

Given Roger Caillois' analysis of the socio-psychological significance of modern warfare it therefore appears that Apollinaire's presentation of the war as festival not only expressed his own immediate impression of the spectacle before him but also functioned as a literary channel for the shared sub-conscious of European societies, instincts moving men to reenact a tragic version of those ancient sacred rituals, the festivals of which they have been deprived but which live on in ancestral memory. If this is true then, ironically, that aspect of Apollinaire's war poetry which most displeased the Surrealists, his presentation of the war as a spectacular festival, is to a certain extent a realisation of the Surrealist ideal of the transcription of subconscious currents of thought, welling up to the light, flowing into the text without the intervention of logic, the directive authority of premeditative reason.

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This tapping of the collective unconscious lies beneath layers of more conscious meditation on man's place in the universe, a concern which is amplified by a new awareness of mortality imposed by the risks of warfare. The poetry of 'Cased'armons', a festival of words coloured by the flares in the sky, energised by the thrill of danger and the poet's feeling of rejuvenation in a new world with new company, coincides with a more solemn strain of poetry which is the fruit of Apollinaire's long hours of solitude during sleepless nights in the artillery camp. He contemplates the clear sky and the shadowy forest, both of which are made more impenetrable by an enhanced awareness of all that is unknown, as the surrounding darkness and the days ahead are invested with mystery, the possibility of death. These hours of meditation are the private side of Apollinaire's war. The day's tasks completed, he stands alone as a sentry on the edge of the

unknown, peering into darkness, or sits and writes in the camp-fire's circle of light, passing quiet and thoughtful hours :

Guerre paisible ascèse solitude métaphysique
(OPo p. 224)

That spring he becomes more serious than ever, considering the fragility of life, recalling that poetry is one of the few human achievements which can measure up to timeless space and so returning to some of his earlier ambitions, his faith in the poet as seer.

Apollinaire pictures himself as a hermit in the desert in one letter, (32) but there is no satire at the expense of the failed seer he once presented in 'L'Ermite'. There is a holy dignity in his writing. He tells Madeleine in August 1915 that poetry is the expression of his divinity, reconciling man with infinity, that other dimension which otherwise would taunt him with his own insignificance. So poetry is the greatest of all joys : 'La vie n'est douloureuse que pour ceux qui se tiennent éloignés de la poésie par quoi il est vrai que nous sommes à l'image de Dieu. La poésie est (même étymologiquement) la création. La création, expression sereine de l'intelligence hors du temps est la joie parfaite'. (33) This of course is a continuation of the thinking already expressed in his notes to Le Bestiaire. And if he includes in his poetry circles no larger than the size of an aluminium ring, 'Mesure du doigt', he is equally mindful of the planets spinning in space, the universe and infinity. If, alone in the darkness, he feels that 'La mort règne sur terre' as he tells Lou in his poem of 15 April 1915 (OPo p. 438), he finds a material symbol for immortality in the presence of the nightingale of which he speaks in his poems to Lou of 20 April (OPo p. 444), 22 April (OPo p. 445) and again in his poem of 1 June 1915 (OPo p. 599) where 'Le rossignol garrule'. The first of those three poems suggests

(32) TS, p. 48.

(33) TS, p. 89.

that Apollinaire has perhaps been reading John Keats in his leafy bower, for as day turns to night in the forest he listens to the song of the nightingale and comments :

Et je voudrais qu'il prît le ton de l'ode

This may be mere coincidence, but just as John Keats in his 'Ode to a nightingale' wrote

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird

so Apollinaire, in his 'Scène nocturne du 22 avril 1915' (OPo p. 445), composed just after midnight, ends with the 'Choeur des jeunes filles mortes en 1913' who, like Keats, see the nightingale's song as continuous and immortal :

Et le rossignol dans le bois
Chante toujours comme autrefois

Apollinaire is looking to Nirvana in these meditations on immortality and 'la joie parfaite', and according to James R. Lawler Apollinaire had with him in the artillery a book of poems by the Indian mystic Rabindranath Tagore, Gitanjali, published in London in 1912 with an introduction by W. B. Yeats, then translated by André Gide and published in France in 1913 as L'Offrande lyrique. (34) 'L'Amour le dédain et l'espérance' (OPo p. 463), sent to Lou in May 1915, insists on the primacy of the spirit over the flesh and longs for the unity of souls in a limitless ocean, the conciliation in ecstasy of love and death, true to Hindu tradition. If the last seven lines are written as a litany, an echo of chapel days in Monaco, elsewhere the poem is marked by Tagore, mainly it seems by poem 42 of L'Offrande lyrique, which Lawler quotes in his article. As in Hindu temple carvings the gods

(34) James R. LAWLER, 'Le Dernier livre d'Apollinaire', Essays in French Literature, 9, November 1972, pp. 63-77, (pp. 72-75).

make love, so in 'L'Amour le dédain et l'espérance' erotic ecstasy is a pathway to perception of Oneness in creation, that realisation of divinity which Apollinaire expects from poetry. There is perfect harmony between his subject-matter and the medium in which he chooses to express himself. And so it is natural for Apollinaire to employ religious vocabulary in his erotic poetry both to Lou and to Madeleine, as in 'Chevaux de frise' (OPo p. 302) from November 1915, for example :

Si je songe à tes seins le Paraclet descend
O double colombe de ta poitrine

Or in 'Le Deuxième poème secret' (OPo p. 622) from 9 October 1915, which goes further in the same register :

O toison triangle isocèle tu es la divinité même à trois côtés
[touffue innombrable comme elle

In 'Chef de section' (OPo p. 307), included in Calligrammes, Apollinaire writes :

Les prêtres de ma bouche encenseront ta beauté

But this is a censored version of 'Le Quatrième poème secret' (OPo p. 631) from 19 October 1915 in which Apollinaire suggesting perhaps that sexual pleasure, like the crucifixion of Christ, opens the gates of heaven, slips into imagery which many would consider sacrilegious :

Ma bouche sera crucifiée
Et ta bouche sera la barre horizontale de la croix
Et quelle bouche sera la barre verticale de cette croix
O bouche verticale de mon amour
Les soldats de ma bouche prendront d'assaut tes entrailles

Elsewhere however Apollinaire proposes utter chastity for himself, the purity of an initiate. The poem he sends to Lou on 14 April 1915 (OPo p. 436) is full of magical, alchemical symbols in which again he proposes

a spiritual journey which transcends the love of the flesh to attain

Une volupté pure
Sans ces attouchements
Que font déments
Tous les amants

Apollinaire is again casting himself as Merlin for whom, in 'Merlin et la vieille femme', so many years previously, the act of procreation, matching the rhythm of existence, was also a spiritual rather than a sensual ecstasy :

Puis les pâles amants joignant leurs mains démentes
L'entrelacs de leurs doigts fut leur seul laps d'amour

The 'Clarté' of the lovers' hands in the thirteenth quatrain of this same early poem is the same 'CLARTE' which shines repeatedly through the poem to Lou. It can be compared to the transcendent 'ardeur infinie' longed for in the sixth part of 'Les Fiançailles', to

ce feu oblong dont l'intensité ira s'augmentant
Au point qu'il deviendra un jour l'unique lumière

in 'Cortège', and also perhaps, by analogy, to the enigmatic 'loi des odeurs' which in 'La Mandoline l'oeillet et le bambou' (OPo p. 209) prefigures a law 'qu'on n'a pas encore promulguée et qui viendra un jour régner sur nos cerveaux bien + précise et + subtile que les sons qui nous dirigent'. Apollinaire is here moving from the experience of the couple, intoxicated by the heady perfume of love and opium, to the image of an ideal universe. In all these poems perfume and light are images of a love which will strengthen and grow to become a universal law ensuring that

L'hymne de l'avenir est paradisiaque

Beyond the closed circuit of sadistic love which fused the couple together in a bedroom in Nîmes, Apollinaire at this time lives his relationship with Lou through poetry, which is the path to immortality. Clarity and purity are now the keys to another initiation, to the high road of forbidden

knowledge, the spectacle already reached for in 'Le Brasier' :

Ainsi j'évoque celle
Qui te prendra ma belle
Par l'Art magicien
Très ancien
Que je sais bien

Les philtres les pentacles
Les lumineux spectacles
T'apportent agrandis
Les Paradis
Les plus maudits

Of course Apollinaire here is trying for an alchemical sublimation of frustrated desire, making an effort to come to terms with a chastity which is imposed by circumstances and with the realisation that he has now lost any love that Lou may once have brought him. But this solitude which forces him into meditation does reawaken a genuine desire to decipher destiny, to renew contact with a tradition which has always sought to express the mystic's intuitions of secret knowledge in the artist's sacred formulas. This is the magical Art 'Que je sais bien' and this is why in his next poem to Lou, 15 April 1915 (OPo p. 438), Apollinaire insists that, writing poetry,

Je trace aussi mystiquement les signes
Du Grand Bonheur

This poem is steeped in the calm of the hour at which it was written, two a. m., a time which fosters meditation on the danger which stalks the soldier and moves the poet to question 'cette étoile mystique' which symbolises the enigma of mortality. The poem, which is full of religious imagery, has the intimate tone of a prayer. And the occasional German shells which interrupt this communion of a clear spring night are sacrilegious intrusions,

Le chapelet sacrilège des obus boches

Paramount is a sense of wonder at the vast scale of the night which dwarfs the individual, so fragile, caught in the nets of time :

J'écris tout seul à la lueur tremblante
D'un feu de bois

As in 'Rêverie' (OPo p. 454), sent to Lou on 11 May, he longs for 'un temps béni', to be running free again in nature, barefoot on the beach as in his Mediterranean days and now, as then, to bow his head in reverence before a vaster ocean,

Puis à genoux
Prier devant la mer qui tremble

Reading these lines we turn the pages back to the mysteries of 'Vendémiaire',

Ce mystère fatal fatal d'une autre vie

and the poet's vision of

Les hommes à genoux sur la rive du ciel

and forward to 'La nuit descend comme une fumée rabattue' (OPo p. 741) from February 1916 in which the infantrymen kneel before affronting the unknown space between the trenches, the lines enclosing all the mystery of No Man's Land, the domain of death.

This humility on the edge of the ocean, the ocean of Tagore's poetry, the endless ocean of 'L'Amour le dédain et l'espérance' and of poems XXXVI and XXXVII to Lou, is the humility of prayer, defined in 'Scène nocturne du 22 Avril 1915' (OPo p. 445) as

Abaissement qui élève

Indeed poetry is defined here as the 'fils multiforme' of Prayer, Joy and Remorse, a further echo of an earlier definition in 'Merlin et la vieille

femme' where the poet's 'ouvrage immortel' was already a young man crowned with light advancing on Rome,

Le fils de la Mémoire égale de l'Amour

The rising movement of prayer which characterises Apollinaire's poetry in 'Scène nocturne du 22 Avril 1915' recalls the gaze of the young man in the earlier poem, marching forward with his eyes fixed on heaven. Of course this poem to Lou could also be compared to 'Pipe' from 1908 and it is also characterised by a play on the rhyme 'demeure' and 'heure' which links it to the meditation on passing time in 'Le Pont Mirabeau'.

Eyes question the stars and once more the poet is seeking access to knowledge outside the frontiers marked by Church authority. 'Loin du Pigeonnier' (OPo p. 221) is one of the most polyvalent calligrammes of the war, a 'fils multiforme' of the poet's imagination. Significantly this calligramme, placed as the opening text of 'Case d'armons', begins with the image of a snake, the serpent which proffers the forbidden fruit of knowledge :

Et vous savez pourquoi

The poem is set 'dans la Forêt', home of Merlin, home of sorcery, while behind, between earth and heaven, stand the blue hills 'en sentinelle'. The sentry holds the password and so the hills hold a secret. They calmly guard the knowledge which the initiate must achieve - a theme to be developed later in 'Les Collines'. The poet traces out the mystic signs of 'Grand Bonheur' and so in 'Loin du Pigeonnier' he perceives the magic shape of the hexahedron in the barbed wire which separates the soldier from the unknown space which stretches before him. He sets a swastika at the heart of 'Saillant' (OPo p. 227), where a serpent rises from the grass and a toad, the witch's familiar, sings of dark jewels. And he places another swastika,

magical cross, ancient symbol of the sun, in his poem sent to Yves Blanc on 19 November 1915 (OPo p. 643). If the hexahedron of 'Loin du Pigeonnier' reflects the form of the magic pentagon whose shape the poet adopts at the end of 'Le Brasier', then 'Toujours' (OPo p. 237), still from the spring of 1915, also renews the adventure of 1908 as the poet crosses the cosmos,

Même sans bouger de la terre

The poet who writes

Toujours
Nous irons plus loin sans avancer jamais

and who 'prend au sérieux les fantômes', seeking 'les forces neuves' in the name of humanity, in 'Pipe' in 1908 climbed among saints and poets towards 'des vérités sidérales', advancing but making 'aucun mouvement'. The 'Grand Bonheur' of poem XXXVII to Lou, the 'Grande Chose' of 'Chef de pièce' (OPo p. 617) from September 1915, the 'Merveilleuse Rose' of 'Guirlande de Lou' (OPo p. 390) from the beginning of that year, these are esoteric, rosicrucian formulas for aspirations which at times are anchored in social and historical reality and which otherwise enter the domain of metaphysical adventure, twin preoccupations which coincide in the secret of the password, the New Jerusalem of 'Venu de Dieuze' (OPo p. 242),

Claire-Ville-Neuve-En-Cristal-Eternel

The same great future is characterised in 'Guerre' (OPo p. 228) as

Feu Cristal Vitesse

a line which joins the flames and purity of 1908 to the ice and flame of 'Les Collines'.

All the qualities which make up 'la Victoire', the future for which the soldier is ready to risk his all in 'Toujours', the victory over time and space,

Rose qui jamais ne se fane

in 'Rêverie' (OPo p. 454), come together for Apollinaire at this time, fairly early in the war, in his image of the nation. His love of France, always considered as guardian of civilisation and mother of liberty, is exacerbated by the soldier's joy at his own acceptance by the nation and takes on a new, almost mystical significance. Escaping from the vicious circle of repeatedly unhappy love-affairs he feels himself a part of some greater pattern and his immersion in the varied immensity of the nation corresponds now to the individual's immersion in the eternal space of the universe. Like Jean Mollet (OPo p. 826) and Léo Larguier (OPo p. 599), Apollinaire becomes a 'soldat mystique'. From the unity of contraries, the individual and the universal, a movement from the personal to the universal which matches that process of dilation which we have already noted in, for example, 'Vendémiaire', comes a perception of the simultaneity of divinity. The poet's love is now, in 'Venu de Dieuze' (OPo p. 242) :

Amour sacré amour de la Patrie

And in 'Echelon' (OPo p. 233) the nation is addressed as in a prayer to the Blessed Virgin:

O rose toujours vive

O France

Embaume les espoirs d'une armée qui halète

A whole culture, accumulated knowledge and moral authority, built up by succeeding generations across history, all this is held within the frontiers of the nation, is rooted in the land itself, a secret held in the blue hills of the Vosges to be defended by an army aware of 'nos origines profondes' (OPo p. 232). Human destiny is marked in the stars, and the army is

backed by the irresistible force of history, rooted in geographical reality. In his poem '14 Juin 1915' (OPo p. 231), Apollinaire presents the French side of the war as an indissoluble marriage of heaven and earth :

Le glaive antique de la Marseillaise de Rude
S'est changé en constellation
Il combat pour nous au ciel

This patriotism will itself become almost a religion for Apollinaire during the toughest part of his war, in the trenches in February 1916, the time that he discovers Alfred de Vigny's Servitude et grandeur militaires. Vigny's noble ideal of military and social honour and Apollinaire's patriotism are personified by Anatole de Saintariste, a character from the novel La Femme assise which Apollinaire put together in 1917, and whose name suggests that he is saintly, artistic and aristocratic. In chapter 7 of the novel (OPr p. 472), we learn that Monsieur de Saintariste, an officer and a poet, 'bles-sé au bras', has his own personal faith :

Tous les sentiments religieux d'Anatole de Saintariste s'étaient transportés dans le domaine de l'honneur social. Il aimait par-dessus tout son pays, ou plutôt la collectivité qu'il constituait (OPr p. 472).

Apollinaire himself found shelter in this religion at the time he wrote 'Chant de l'honneur'. Anatole de Saintariste is also of interest for his analysis of the hypocrisy of latter-day Tartuffes who find it expedient to support and even to practise the nation's official religion without believing in it :

On voit aujourd'hui ce qui ne s'était vu que dans l'Empire romain à la fin du paganisme : des fidèles qui observent une religion, la soutiennent, la défendent et l'honorent sans y croire (OPr p. 488).

This is doubtless Apollinaire's own attitude towards those who find it politic to make an ally of the Church. And there may even be an element

which encourage Apollinaire to indulge in transcendental conjectures, as he progresses through 1915 and into 1916 the war will allow increasingly limited amounts of time and space for meditation and the poet, moving from the artillery to the infantry, will become increasingly bogged down in a reality which will allow no rest, no escape.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGION (v). 1916-1918

His period of convalescence was for Apollinaire more than a recovery, it was a resurrection. When he wrote 'Apprêtez un bouquet fait d'ache et d'immortelles' (OPo p. 644) he was convinced that the tomb yawned at his feet. So his return to life after trepanation seemed all the more miraculous. Wounded in the head, he had worn his own crown of thorns, and just as Christ chose to descend into humanity, to suffer and share human destiny, so the poet, with millions of his fellow men, suffered experiences of which Dante could only dream. Apollinaire was, of course, well aware of these analogies. And having come through the Valley of Death he felt himself, like those who live for a while among the dead in 'La Maison des morts' (OPo p. 72), to be 'fortifié pour la vie'. His 'tête étoilée' reminds him also of a pagan goddess, Minerva, the Roman Athena, who was born through the skull of Zeus, god of war. She is goddess of reason and inherited from her mother, Metis, the wisdom and ingenuity which make her, dressed in the military armour in which she was born, the counsellor of both gods and mortals. Apollinaire makes explicit his identification with Minerva in the beautiful 'Tristesse d'une étoile' (OPo p. 308) where he writes :

Une belle Minerve est l'enfant de ma tête
Une étoile de sang me couronne à jamais
La raison est au fond et le ciel est au faite
Du chef où dès longtemps Déesse tu t'armais

During the days of combat he was Zeus, his energies devoted to war. Now he combines the qualities of the warrior and of the sage and so has the stature to shine like a star in the human firmament, like Christ and Minerva a guide to mankind. Resurrection, his own realisation of the myth of the phoenix, renews his faith in his powers of prophecy and leadership. This faith comes through strongly in 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' in which Apollinaire explains :

Les poètes enfin seront chargés de donner par les téléologies lyriques et les alchimies archilyriques un sens toujours plus pur à l'idée divine, qui est en nous si vivante et si vraie, qui est ce perpétuel renouvellement de nous-mêmes, cette création éternelle, cette poésie sans cesse renaissante dont nous vivons.

[...]

Le monde entier regarde vers cette lumière, qui seule éclaire la nuit qui nous entoure. (1)

In his notes to Le Bestiaire in 1908 the art of the painter is for Apollinaire 'un langage lumineux' (OPO p. 33). But he makes it clear that it is also the role of the poet to articulate the voice which tears the veil of eternity, the 'cri inarticulé qui semblait la voix de la lumière'. After his head-wound poetry for Apollinaire is still 'la voix que la lumière fit entendre' and if in 1908 the mark of the poet is his striving to express 'cette divine bonté, cette suprême perfection' (OPO p. 35), in 'La Jolie Rousse' 'la bonté' is still there before us, a land to be explored, 'contrée énorme où tout se tait', silent as the voice of light. In Le Bestiaire the poet, seeking 'la perfection qui est Dieu lui-même', takes his place in the Great Tradition which reaches

(1) OC III, p. 908.

up to him via Orpheus, Christ and Hermes Trismegistus. His merging then of Christianity and the religions of antiquity, the combination of Christ and Orpheus, recurs in this later meeting of Christ and Minerva, a divine simultaneity which is amplified in Act III of Couleur du temps in which the gods gather and fill the sky, united around the sun. There Apollo meets Christ, who with his 'front écorché' seems the most powerful of these gods. Indeed Christ is present elsewhere in the play, in the figure of the unknown soldier, son of Madame Giraume, fiancé of Mavise, whose head-wound is fatal. As he is laid to rest his mother becomes the Virgin at the foot of the cross. This scene from Couleur du temps in which Madame Giraume describes her son,

Mon fils une grappe de raisin
Dont on a exprimé tout le vin

(OPo p. 929)

as he lies in a military graveyard again reminds us of 'Vendémiaire', in which Apollinaire foresaw

Des armées rangées en bataille
Des forêts de crucifix

Like Christ in the wine-press the soldier spills his blood for mankind and the destiny of this unknown soldier is that which Apollinaire imagines as his own, had his head-wound proved immediately fatal. The soldier is the 'hostie de la patrie' (OPo p. 929), so uniting bread and wine, and Nyctor, the poet who represents a part of Apollinaire's character in this psychodrama, and with whom Apollinaire identifies closely, is 'l'âme de la patrie' (OPo p. 921). The same women who wept for the soldier will weep for Nyctor at the end of the play. Both these characters have elements which permit us to identify them with Christ and Apollinaire himself.

Yet there is no question of a return to orthodox Christianity. Apollinaire's plan for a novel, L'Abbé Maricotte (OPr p. 945), from 1918, bears

witness to his renewed interest in religion, a return with this lascivious priest, who dreams of 'une incarnation divine et regarde avec concupiscence sa voisine' (OPr p. 947), to the world of L'Hérésiarque et Cie. Maricotte, whose heretical quest is justified in that it leads to a visionary meeting with God, nevertheless recants and Apollinaire is consistent in his view of the pope and his Church when he writes of the repentant abbot :

Il est calme, il a renoncé à tout mysticisme. Il n'est qu'un catholique soumis.

Il se compare à un de ces puissants tramways que les rails et le wattman mènent. Le pape et les commandements sont tout cela (OPr p. 956).

He is also faithful to his interest in superstitions, remnants of past wisdom, passed on through the chain of generations. He writes in another fragment, 'Je voudrais que toujours [...] ' (OPr p. 958) :

Oh ! pourquoi trop souvent mépriser les superstitions : tout se tient et la chaîne ne se brise pas.

[...]

Qui sait si de qui chante ne résulte pas la pluie et que sais-je de la mauvaieseté du sel renversé ? Des sages l'ont su dans les temps comme d'autres sauront d'autres choses. Ils avaient observé et le dirent aux hommes qui l'ont presque oublié.

The chain holds good. The poet can renew memories which fade. Past generations speak through the poet, their heir, and this certainty expressed in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé', renewed in 'Vendémiaire' in which Apollinaire evokes

Tous les fiers trépassés qui sont un sous mon front

is reasserted in 1917 in 'Sanglots' (OPo p. 365) :

Or nous savons qu'en nous beaucoup d'hommes respirent
Qui vinrent de très loin et sont un sous nos fronts

This correspondence between the individual and all of history and beyond, the fathomless past, is matched at the end of Apollinaire's life by a presentation of the inner universe, the space beneath the star/scar on the poet's forehead, as a reflection of the infinity turning above the heads of men, as great a mystery, equally infinite. The calligramme in which figures reach upwards towards the mysterious shapes of eternity is therefore called 'Les Profondeurs' (OPo p. 607). In 'L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes' the poets are our guides on two pathways :

Ils vous entraîneront tout vivants et éveillés dans le monde nocturne et fermé des songes. Dans les univers qui palpitent ineffablement au-dessus de nos têtes. Dans ces univers plus proches et plus lointains de nous qui gravitent au même point de l'infini que celui que nous portons en nous. (2)

And in 'Tristesse d'une étoile', on Minerva's coat-of-arms,

La raison est au fond et le ciel est au faite

Of course Apollinaire's fascination with the human sub-conscious reaches back a long way. Marc Poupon suggests that it was Blaise Cendrars who introduced Apollinaire to modern psychoanalysis, providing him with the material for his 'Anecdote' of 16 January 1914, 'La Disparition du Dr Otto Gross'. (3) This article, in which Apollinaire shows himself aware of the importance of Freudian research, of its future reverberations in society and the arts, contains, according to both Blaise Cendrars and Marc Poupon, the first use of the term 'psycho-analyse' in a non-medical, non-specialist journal. (4) Already in his 'Anecdote' of one month earlier, 16 December 1913, entitled 'M. Paul Bourget et les aliénés' he had written : 'Je dînais dernièrement parmi quelques aliénistes' and claimed to be on friendly terms with these 'jeunes médecins'. (5) Marie Laurencin's mother was cared for

(2) Ibid.

(3) OC II, p. 412.

(4) Marc POUPON, Apollinaire et Cendrars, pp. 42-43.

(5) OC II, p. 406.

by a psychiatrist, Dr Vinchon, whom Apollinaire knew, (6) and later of course André Breton, student of the neurologist Joseph Babinski, assistant to Dr Raoul Leroy in a military psychiatric hospital in Saint-Dizier, would become friendly with the poet. (7) In an article which appeared in L'Intransigeant on 5 April 1911, 'Tribune libre. La Sorbonne est ébranlée', Apollinaire writes of research being done in Austria, a new area opened to him by American friends, he says, in 1908 or 1909 : 'J'entendis encore beaucoup parler des laboratoires de psychologie autrichiens'. (8) This is perhaps confirmed by Apollinaire's 1909 commentary on de Sade's 1785 novel Les 120 Journées de Sodome :

On y trouve une classification rigoureusement scientifique de toutes les passions dans leurs rapports avec l'instinct sexuel. L'écrivain, le marquis de Sade y condensait toutes ses théories nouvelles et y créait aussi, cent ans avant le docteur Krafft-Ebing (sic), la psychopathie sexuelle. (9)

This phrase 'la psychopathie sexuelle' recurs in La Femme assise to describe the case of Sacher-Masoch, whose son Apollinaire knew (OPr p. 422) and this late novel opens with a comment on the erotic dreams of a young girl, no doubt, according to Michel Décaudin, 'la première allusion à la psychanalyse dans un roman français' (OPr p. 1336, note 2). Finally, in his notes for L'Abbé Maricotte, Apollinaire presents a discussion of the mysteries around and within mankind, proposing as an example the fact that 'l'amour sexuel n'a jamais été étudié scientifiquement, l'amour sexuel dont l'étude ferait avancer l'humanité extraordinairement. On n'a rien inventé dans cet ordre' (OPr p. 956).

(6) Detail communicated by Pierre-Marcel Adéma in conversation, 2 February 1978.

(7) For further details on André Breton, Surrealism and psychiatry, see L'Evolution psychiatrique, XLIV, I, January-March 1979, especially Dr J. Garrabé, 'Prolegomenes à un manifeste de la surpsychiatrie', pp. 5-27.

(8) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Petites merveilles du quotidien, p. 62.

(9) OC II, p. 237.

In 'Le Musicien de Saint-Merry' Apollinaire wrote :

Je chante toutes les possibilités de moi-même hors de ce monde
[et des astres

His faith in human progress, in the unfathomed reserves of 'bonté' within each man, still to be tapped and released, is constant. His increasing awareness of the depths of the human psyche strengthens his conviction that there is a correspondence between inner and outer universes, that a part of infinity, of eternity, like a spark stolen from the stars, is there in the human soul. It is the mark of our divinity.

° °

So we are led to 'Les Collines' (OPo p. 171), the long poem in which the interpenetration of past and present, infinite and finite, universal and particular, is given its most complete expression. Placed among the pre-war texts of 'Ondes', 'Les Collines', by its size and noble regularity of form, indeed stands out like a high hill in a broken lowland landscape. We are reminded of Merlin who stands alone at the beginning of 'Merlin et la vieille femme' :

Merlin guettait la vie et l'éternelle cause
Qui fait mourir et puis renaître l'univers

It is the solitude of the soldier among civilians, of a man who has faced death and himself been reborn, and a recognition of the powers conferred by this experience is a partial explanation of the extreme self-assertiveness of parts of 'Les Collines'.

The poem stands in 'Ondes' like a fragment of the future inserted in the present. Similarly the souls of the dead, spirits of the past, move in present time among the living, a meeting of the natural and the supernatural:

Les secourables mânes errent
Se compénétrant parmi nous
Depuis les temps qui nous rejoignent
Rien n'y finit rien n'y commence
Regarde la bague à ton doigt

This circularity, the power of memory and imagination to conquer time, joins past and present. And the circle of the ring is also present in the 'monsieur qui s'avale', a humanised version of Ouroboros, the ancient and freudian symbol, a snake which bites its own tail, man's scrutiny of his own soul, Narcissus questioning his own reflection :

Je m'arrête pour regarder
Sur la pelouse incandescente
Un serpent erre c'est moi-même
Qui suis la flûte dont je joue

Early in the poem the wheel turns upwards into a space which is dotted with aircraft, eagles and angels, so that the natural sky above and metaphysical space, the dimension of gods and angels, are one in the word 'ciel'. As the same time Paris awakes, a girl rising gently from sleep :

Mais vois quelle douceur partout
Paris comme une jeune fille
S'éveille langoureusement
Secoue sa longue chevelure
Et chante sa belle chanson

And the image of the wakening city prefigures the birth of a new future as Venus rises from the waves again :

L'écume serait mère encore

As the wheel turns further, carrying the poet to his highest point, higher than the eagles, the future comes into view and joins past and present to complete the cycle of time.

The drop into the abyss is as vertiginous as this soaring flight, for the depths of human consciousness mirror the heights to which the poet aspires. Apollinaire portrays the human spirit reaching up, beyond the quicksand of time, to explore and fill universal space. But that spirit itself contains the infinite space of entire universes :

Profondeurs de la conscience
On vous explorera demain
Et qui sait quels êtres vivants
Seront tirés de ces abîmes
Avec des univers entiers

Again we see the shape of the calligramme 'Les Profondeurs'. Dream and conscious reality also overlap in the first four verses of the poem. There is a dog-fight over Paris, the sight of a battle remembered, and the metamorphosis of this vision into a series of associated images recalls the free flow of the imagination in the final moments of sleep. Then comes a break and in verse four the poet wakes not in a trench but in Paris, gentle after the violence of his dream, a warm soft morning in comparison to other dawns he has known. Awareness follows dream on the path

Par où l'esprit rejoint le songe

The poet would take us as far as we can go along that path, beyond the limits of our accepted, everyday reality to the edge of vast and strange domains.

Another cycle in 'Les Collines' is that which structures so many of Apollinaire's great poems, the cycle of time from the morning as Paris awakes to the moon which rises in the penultimate verse, the flames which flash in the nocturnal mystery of the poem's final lines. Here is the same rise and fall which marks such poems as 'Le Brasier' and 'Vendémiaire' for example, and the poet swells, dilates, rises to tower above mankind, so gigantic that he can hold the world, a planet, or life itself in the palm of his hand :

Et j'ai soupesé maintes fois
Même la vie impondérable

[...]

Et je pèle pour mes amis
L'orange dont la saveur est
Un merveilleux feu d'artifice

It is a magical process this reaching for the stars, reaching for the title of Trismegistus, 'trois fois grand', and it recalls 'Crépuscule' (OPo p. 64) in Alcools where,

Ayant décroché une étoile
Illa manie à bras tendu

[...]

Le nain regarde d'un air triste
Grandir l'arlequin trismégiste

The circus continues in 'Les Collines' and now Apollinaire is the entertainer who sets up his stage in the market-place to demonstrate the magic powers conferred by his talisman, a charm which is usually a stone marked with the sacred formulas of secret spells :

Je viens ici faire des tours
Où joue son rôle un talisman
Mort et plus subtil que la vie

The fall to earth comes in verse thirty-six where, after his journey through the magic theatre of the heavens, the poet writes :

Maintenant je suis à ma table
J'écris ce que j'ai ressenti
Et ce que j'ai chanté là-haut

lines which correspond to the end of 'Le Brasier' where the poet writes:

Et voici le spectacle
Et pour toujours je suis assis dans un fauteuil

And just as this homely picture of the earth-bound poet is followed in 'Le Brasier' by a final resolution to continue the quest, so the last verse of 'Les Collines' expresses the poet's determination to penetrate the secret

whose form he has glimpsed. His poetry is itself an image of this possible divinity, a product of humanity caught in time which by its beauty enhances life and touches eternity :

Ornement des temps et des routes
Passe et dure sans t'arrêter

The poet's claims to prophecy are stronger now than ever before, one man's claims to superhuman powers. The power of the scientist is magnificent and his future discoveries play a large part in the poem. But his power is second to that of the prophet, for he can only create what the poets and prophets have already imagined. Their intuition takes precedence over the scientific knowledge of which their rivals sing the precision :

Ils sauront des choses précises
Comme croient savoir les savants

'Prophétisons ensemble' was the call in his last great poem of prophecy, 'Les Fiançailles', and the link with his aspirations of 1908 is made in verse thirty of 'Les Collines' where he recalls the days he was tied to the stake, apprentice and heir to the prophetic Knights Templar, tortured by a flame

Dont je fus brûlé jusqu'aux lèvres

'Connaissance' and 'Savoir' are key words in 'Les Collines' and the quest for illumination is again on that path to knowledge trodden by the heretical Templars, the path forbidden to faithful orthodox lest it should lead to pride, the quality which underpins this poem. Again we are placed before the occult tradition, a line of seers, a chain of hills across the plains of history.

Voici le temps de la magie

he now proclaims, and this magic is a prize to be won, outside the sphere of faith and submission, across frontiers drawn by the Church. Merlin, Hermes, seers and prophets, their magic is an inextinguishable flame passed on through time,

Torche que rienne peut éteindre

The dated image of Symbolist beauty is dead, the solitary corpse of a beautiful woman laid on the deck of the phantom galleon which ends its voyage in strophe twenty-nine. But Apollinaire takes up the torch once held by the Symbolists and we can only concur with Ian Lockerbie's reading of this aspect of the poem :

Ce grand poème montre qu'Apollinaire avait atteint le but qu'instinctivement il avait cherché tout au long de sa carrière poétique : trouver à une conception de la poésie héritée du Symbolisme une expression plus en rapport avec le vingtième siècle. [.] On ne peut pas appeler la poésie qui résulte de cet effort de rénovation une poésie symboliste, mais il semble vrai de dire que l'essentiel du Symbolisme y reste en suspens. (10)

'Les Collines' contains the seeds of a prodigious future. Surrealism, voice of the subconscious, is prefigured in the champagne which foams like a snail

Tandis que chantait une rose

This last line echoing perhaps the opening to a letter which Jean Cocteau remembered receiving from Apollinaire : 'L'oiseau chante avec ses doigts'. (11) And the poem reaches forward to our present, an age of computers in which machines calculate and write in our place. Yet at the same time Apollinaire is true to the endless tradition of those who, like the Symbolists, hope to suggest the truth of the mystery, to pass through the doors of gold and ivory.

(10) S. I. LOCKERBIE, 'Alcools et le symbolisme', GA 2, (1963), pp. 5-40, (p. 40).

(11) Jean COCTEAU, Opium, Journal d'une désintoxication, p. 224.

The doorway, so important in 'Les Collines', is itself a recurring image in Apollinaire's poetry, though it does not always have the same significance. It would seem, however, that the door is either closed on lost innocence or else stands between the poet and some mystery which lies before him. The door in 'Le Voyageur', for example, where the poet cries

Ouvrez-moi cette porte où je frappe en pleurant

may well be a doorway onto childhood innocence, as Robert Couffignal has suggested (12) and the poet's voice has the same tone as two lines in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' :

Comment faire pour être heureux
Comme un petit enfant candide

This search for lost innocence again links Apollinaire with the nineteenth century, with texts which Marcel Raymond has called poetry 'du paradis perdu et retrouvé' :

'Le don de la poésie du XIXe siècle, a dit G. Ungaretti, un espoir inassouvi d'innocence'. De 'l'innocent paradis des amours enfantines' de Baudelaire, au 'chant raisonnable des anges' ouï par Rimbaud, au cygne mallarméen, un même souffle se propage qui soulevait déjà, mutatis mutandis, la poitrine de Rousseau. (13)

We have seen that Apollinaire also, especially in his early poems, looks back, like Rousseau, to a lost Eden. Women are often the personification of mystery for Apollinaire and so are associated with doors, as in his poem to Linda (OPo p. 329), 'femme et mobile comme une porte', where he writes :

J'irai gémir à votre porte comme un chien.

In 'Montparnasse' (OPo p. 353) the closed door is guarded by an angel - all Catholic children are shadowed by a guardian angel :

(12) Robert COUFFIGNAL, Apollinaire, p. 66.

(13) Marcel RAYMOND, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, p. 44.

O porte de l'hôtel un ange est devant toi
Distribuant des prospectus
On n'ajamais si bien défendu la vertu

And when Apollinaire wishes to insult a woman he suggests that her door is left open to all. 'Les Sept Epées' in 'La Chanson du mal-aimé' ends with the words :

Merci que le dernier venu
Sur mon amour ferme la porte
Je ne vous ai jamais connue

He feels that the mystery is still intact, however, and the last of these three lines is similar to his adieu to Marie Laurencin in the manuscript of Vitam Impendere Amori:

Tu ne m'as pas dit ton secret
(OPo p. 1073)

Significantly, when Annie returns so much later in 'Fusée-Signal' (OPo p. 363) she is associated with the line

Néanmoins tu feras bien de tenir la porte ouverte

Though he tried to slam the door on this memory, his lost love is still there, settled near Galveston in Texas as he imagined her before in 'Annie' (OPo p. 65). In the ballad of Orkenise in 'Onirocritique' (OPo p. 371) if the carter is lucky and joins his love within the town Apollinaire must be the 'va-nu-pieds', the wandering 'mal-aimé', who leaves his heart behind closed doors :

Puis, les portes de la ville
Se fermèrent lentement

The same image returns in a poem to Lou in January 1915 (OPo p. 390) :

Allons c'est moi ouvre la porte je suis de retour enfin

and in these erotic poems such as 'Les Neuf portes de ton corps' (OPo p. 619) the doorway's significance is, as this title suggests, clear and precise.

In this last-mentioned poem Apollinaire writes

O portes ouvrez-vous à ma voix
Je suis le maître de la Clef

and here the poet recalls his early seminal poem 'La Clef' (OPo p. 553), an imitation of Maeterlinck for whom the lost key was an obsession. (14)
In 'La Clef' the dead converse with the living

Et souviens-toi que je t'attends

and try to persuade them to stay in the cemetery, to move into the tomb, called a 'logis'. These elements will, of course, be reused in 'La Maison des morts' (OPo p. 66), a house which has no key for

Un ange en diamant brisa toutes les vitrines

The doorway, be it in glass, is opaque and in these poems Apollinaire echoes Francis Jammes who in 1906 calls out to the silence of God

Ouvrez-moi donc la porte où je heurte du poing! (15)

Like the shadowy, bearded knights who pass along the mountain in 'Le Voyageur' he is cut off from the 'other side', and like them he weeps. We are reminded of Paul Gauguin's great painting of 1897, 'D'où venons-nous ? Qui sommes-nous ? Où allons-nous ?' And always the oracle's reply is enigmatic :

La vie est variable aussi bien que l'Euripe

In Le Poète assassiné the door of the Bateau-Lavoir, the door of the Roi-Lune's cave (OPr p. 255 and OPr p. 304) open onto magic worlds of mythology and simultaneity, art and eternity. In the 'Cas du

-
- (14) See Claudine GOTHOT-MERSCH, 'Les avatars d'un poème d'Apollinaire, "La Clef"', Revue des langues vivantes, 34, 1968, pp. 58-71.
(15) Francis JAMMES, Clairières dans le ciel, quoted by J. B. Barrère, Le Regard d'Orphée ou l'échange poétique. Hugo - Baudelaire - Rimbaud - Apollinaire, p. 246.

brigadier masqué c'est-à-dire le poète ressuscité' the mask takes the place of a door :

- J'ai un masque, cannonier, dit le brigadier mystérieux, et ce masque cache tout ce que vous voudriez savoir, tout ce que vous voudriez voir, il occulte la réponse à toutes vos questions depuis que vous êtes revenu à la vie, il rend muettes toutes les prophéties et, grâce à lui, il ne vous est plus possible de connaître la vérité (OPr p. 383).

The knights of Arthurian legend, visors masking their faces, perhaps had access to this truth, 'cette souple raison' which we find in 'Vendémiaire', the truth

Que le mystère clôt comme une porte la maison

At least they travelled in search of the Grail, and a twentieth-century equivalent of their quest is perhaps to be found in Couleur du temps where as blue turns to black the new adventurers plunge into space :

Et la nuit s'ouvre magiquement
Comme un porche béant entrons vite
Dans le palais inconnu

(OPo p. 923)

The mystery can be pierced, and though Couleur du temps ends in disastrous failure, in 'Les Collines' at least all are invited to enter 'le palais inconnu'.

'Les Collines', therefore, is above all a poem of initiation. Traditionally initiation imposes suffering, requires determination. To everything there is a season, and here we are in winter. This purgatory is one of wind, snow and flame:

Il neige je brûle et je tremble

The poet sees himself as :

Un arbre élané que balance
Le vent dont les cheveux s'envolent

After the autumn of Symbolism, this is a season of purification before the thaw, before the springtime of 'bonté'. After his stay in Munich in 1902 Apollinaire had written in 'Automne malade' (OPo p. 146) :

Automne malade et adoré
Tu mourras quand l'ouragan soufflera dans les roseraies
Quand il aura neigé
Dans les vergers

Now in 'Les Collines' this cycle is as much a reality as then :

Il vient un temps pour la souffrance
Il vient un temps pour la bonté

His poem to Lou written on 17 January 1915 (OPo p. 389) contained a 'Cri vers le printemps de paix qui va venir' and peace is the essential ingredient, of course, of the season of 'bonté' which he still awaits. Suffering he now believes must last through the magic, transmutative figure of seven years :

Sept ans d'incroyables épreuves

Only this purgatory can create the purity which will permit an approach to the golden tabernacle which stands at the end of the poem, the holy of holies, the secret domain towards which the supplicants work in all religions of the Great Tradition. Uncertainty, the old enemy, the 'oiseau feint peint' of 'Les Fiançailles', has no place in this quest which requires courage and single-mindedness :

La grande force est le désir
[...]
La volonté seule agira

The tabernacle of gold glints in flickering light and the exquisite perfume recalls 'la loi des odeurs' which Apollinaire foresaw in 'La Mandoline l'oeillet et le bambou' (OPo p. 209). The words 'Mystère odorant' featured in an

alternative title for that poem (16) and, to repeat Professor Lockerbie's observations, the final strophe of 'Les Collines' is 'un exemple frappant de synesthésie, cet instrument pour évoquer l'insaisissable par lequel un Baudelaire, un Mallarmé, un Rimbaud s'efforçaient d'atteindre les régions pures !' (17) Apollinaire follows on their upward pathway and his solitude is that of the seeker after metaphysical truth, the seer whose hair is blown by planet winds.

Yet the poet's solitude in his great poems of the past, in 'Le Brasier' for example, where Apollinaire boasts of his self-sufficiency,

Je suffis pour l'éternité à entretenir le feu de mes délices
is softened now by a constant feminine presence. The pattern of past poems, in which the poet's loneliness and failure in human relationships is compensated for by his victory over time and space, the realisation through art of that part of himself which is eternal, is broken in 'Les Collines'. His love is now markedly present in the poem and he writes for her directly :

Et viens que je te baise au front
[...]
Regarde la bague à ton doigt

Again it is clear that there has been a shift in his attitude towards woman and his adventure is now shared. Man flies high :

Moins haut que l'homme vont les aigles

But the lady in the poem also rises :

Et le tiers nombre c'est la dame
Elle monte dans l'ascenseur
Elle monte monte toujours
Et la lumière se déploie
Et ces clartés la transfigurent

(16) See OPo p. 1086.

(17) S.I. LOCKERBIE, 'Alcools et le symbolisme, GA 2, (1963), pp. 5-40, (p. 40).

There is a touch of humour here, one of the ingredients of the six verses of 'petits secrets' of which this is the last, for the lady in question is first of all the Blessed Virgin.

O Vierge signe pur du troisième mois

he wrote in the penultimate section of 'Les Fiançailles', and if once, in 'Zone', the assumption of Christ made him the first aviator, the assumption of the Virgin is now that of a lady in a lift. But in the context of the whole poem, of the love expressed here and in 'La Jolie Rousse', the transfiguration in the light of 'le ciel splendide' is authentic. Apollinaire's affection for the Virgin still echoes across the years. From Benodet in Brittany in August 1917 he will send a post-card to Jacques Doucet :

J'aime à Benodet dans l'église
Notre Dame de Pitié
Moitié
Bleue et moitié cerise

(OPo p. 1140)

And for Jacqueline he will write a poem in which all is blue, the blue of the Virgin, 'bleu comme une prière' (OPo p. 602). The devotion he felt for the Virgin in childhood and early adolescence, the world to which he now says 'Adieu', is largely transferred to the woman who personifies in 'Les Collines' 'le temps de la Raison ardente'. A memory of Annie flashes across the sky in 'Fusée-Signal' from 1917 (OPo p. 363). But Jacqueline is also present, all in white, the other colour of the Virgin, and the whiteness of her nurse's apron, as dazzling as the snowy landscape viewed from the air in 'Les Collines', outshines the memory of past love, memories which are themselves a chain of blue hills. In 'La Jolie Rousse' she is

Un bel éclair qui durerait

the same magic quality which in 'Les Collines' is expressed in the line

Passe et dure sans t'arrêter

Once more woman personifies the mystery of existence, the secret to be learned, the tabernacle to be opened.

The misery of mortality is present in the poem, but the poet's mortality is that of Christ, a man incapable of sin, the meeting of humanity and divinity :

Je peux mourir mais non pécher

Near the end of the poem comes the cry

Ah ! pleure pleure et repleurons

the despair of Christ on the cross, the victory of death which throws its shadow across Couleur du temps :

Adieu Adieu il faut que tout meure

But in 'Les Collines' this despair is countered by the ardent desire, will and certainty which power the poem, sustaining Apollinaire through the dazzling metamorphoses of the imagination, and which hold together this text which is long but not a collage, in which Apollinaire becomes a 'poète de longue haleine', no longer working through a series of spurts of inspiration. This is the determination through suffering, the ability to vanquish doubt, the perseverance which marks the successful initiate.

Furthermore, if the poet's solitude, of which he is proud, is supported by the love of a woman, the fire he steals is for all mankind, offered 'au monde entier', a new Salvation. The seven years of suffering are perhaps Apollinaire's reckoning of the duration of the war. But there is more to it than that, for if courage and self-sacrifice are the qualities which a nation's heads of government always demand from citizens at war,

Apollinaire counters their call, for the suffering he proposes is other :

Cene sera pas du courage
Ni même du renoncement
Ni tout ce que nous pouvons faire

The consequence of initiation is not self-sacrifice but self-realisation. The poet sings the praises of pioneers and prophets, but also sings human potential. Apollinaire expects more from mankind than most would believe possible and in spite of the madness and brutality of past and present, humanity still has a future, can still grow towards perfection. Flagging and downcast, humanity will nevertheless continue to mature, bring forth strange fruits, new worlds :

Il découvrira d'autres mondes
L'esprit languit comme les fleurs
Dont naissent les fruits savoureux
Que nous regarderons mûrir
Sur la colline ensoleillée

Before the war, in 'Sur les prophéties', he had insisted that men are conditioned to underestimate themselves and their destiny and so to despise each other. In 'Les Collines' he reaffirms his faith in the emancipation of humanity, the flaring of the flame which glimmers in his soul, and mankind, the human spirit, not technology, will create its own salvation :

On cherchera dans l'homme même
Beaucoup plus qu'on n'y a cherché
On scrutera sa volonté
Et quelle force naîtra d'elle
Sans machine et sans instrument

The initiation of which we have spoken, the purgatory which the poet suffers in 1908 and here in 'Les Collines', the purification which must precede rebirth, is now proposed for all mankind. To 'le monde entier' he offers no less than divinity :

C'est le temps de la grâce ardente
La volonté seule agira
Sept ans d'incroyables épreuves
L'homme se diviniséra
Plus pur plus vif et plus savant

His point is that everything is possible and as in his late calligramme 'L'Oiseau et le bouquet' (OPo p. 751) he is calling for a suspension of disbelief : 'ne sois pas incrédule'. From the same period comes 'Quadrature du cercle ou les 2 tables' (OPo p. 750) in which the poet achieves the impossible :

Ainsi vont les choses en ce monde et la quadrature du cercle réputée
[impossible advient tous les jours

And again when we read the high claims of 'Les Collines', the line

Plus pur plus vif et plus savant

we recall 'La Maison des morts' in which ordinary people are purified and fortified by contact with the dead, made extraordinary for

Leur puissance leur richesse et leur génie

Now, with his own health failing, Apollinaire's love of life and respect for humanity is intact, stronger than before. He continues his own battle against time and mortality, his personal quest for perfect beauty, but also proposes, as strongly as he ever did, a further social dimension, a shared fulfilment which he names 'bonté', a free society of unity and variety, the sum of all the possibilities the poet can imagine for his fellow men and women, 'des milliards de prodiges', possibilities

Qui se dévoileront bientôt
Et feront de vous cent morceaux
A la pensée toujours unique

a sum of possibilities which amount to human divinity.

In 1918 Apollinaire wrote a letter to art critic Roland Chavenon which, though written in the context of the hermeticism of Cubist painting, perhaps illuminates his own intentions as an artist at this time :

D'autres venus après Picasso et Braque se sont bornés à dévoiler à un public ignorant et peu apte à les goûter, les secrets d'un art nouveau.

Il n'y a pas d'exemple, ni ancien ni nouveau, d'un véritable initié dévoilant des mystères. A-t-on jamais vu de pape abandonnant la chaire de saint Pierre et annonçant qu'il ne croit plus?

Ceux qui dévoilent les mystères des Arts et des Lettres ne sont pas des initiés.

Vous l'êtes, au contraire, vous aiguisez la curiosité du public et lui livrez les riches réflexions qui amèneront peu à peu son esprit à se laisser charmer, mais sans comprendre, surtout, sans comprendre. (18)

His conception of the role of those initiates referred to here corresponds closely to that which is conferred on 'Les Collines', the 'Grands Initiés' of his generation. As in 'Les Collines', the poet's faith in modernity and renewal is expressed in terms which reestablish his links with Symbolism, the precedence of suggestion over description proposed by Mallarmé. And in the context of mystery and initiation he manages to include a characteristic blow against the Vatican, his suggestion that more than one pope may have lost the faith without leaving his throne. In 'Les Collines' all humanity is infused with divine potential :

L'homme se divinisera

This belief is not expressed in the letter to Chavenon, where Apollinaire flatters his correspondent by emphasising the place of the pioneer, the visionary who passes back from the frontier his coded intuitions. But Apollinaire cannot be satisfied with a personal glory which takes him beyond humanity and now he can only dream of a liberty which is shared. He ties

(18) OC IV, p. 897.

his destiny to that of mankind. His 1917 poem 'Si on me laissait faire' (OPo p. 559) illustrates this. Here, the atmosphere of his dreams is expressed in the glint of gold, the heavy perfume of incense, a baroque High Church vision, a Greek Orthodox décor which gives form to the synaesthesia of 'Les Collines'. The scene of magic and dignity he describes is an image of a new humanity which, set free from ugliness and shame, can at last live up to a grandiose destiny. As the son of Merlin held his head high, Apollinaire sees humanity no longer hunched under the weight of imposed passivity and obedience, self-imposed suffering, but upright, 'Le front nimbé de feu' :

Au lieu de fronts courbés au lieu de pénitences
Au lieu de désespoir et des prières il y aurait partout
Les reliquaires les ciboires les ostensoirs
Etincelant au fond des rêveries comme ces
Divinités antiques dont le rôle poétique
Est près d'être terminé

Prayer and penance, the marks of a religion he rejects, are associated with despair. But Apollinaire still clings to his love of Church ceremonial, a dream of childhood previously recalled in 'Zone' where he wrote :

Vous n'aimez rien tant que les pompes de l'Eglise

The terms in which the poem is couched imply perhaps an underlying resignation on the part of a man who sees little hope of his wishes being realised, an acceptance of improbability in the words 'Si on me laissait faire'. The poem begins with a tribute to the power of time, and any admission by Apollinaire of this inescapable reality is always tinged with melancholy. And it ends in uncertainty, hesitation. Yet in this poem where the sacred and the temporal mingle, Apollinaire is true to his dream of ultimate and total liberty, a change in the hearts of men which would fill the world with beauty, would allow man himself to take over the role of the gods. In his early poem 'Au Prolétaire' (OPo p. 520) he dreamed of 'alcôves divines' and called the working man :

O captif innocent qui ne sait pas chanter

Now at the end of his life, a life cut short, a bird set free is still his
chosen image of liberation :

Si on me laissait faire j'achèterais
Les oiseaux captifs pour leur rendre la liberté
Je les verrai avec une joie sans mélange
Prendre leur vol et n'avoir pas même l'idée
D'une vertu nommée reconnaissance
A moins que ce ne soit gratitude

Gratitude is not expected because for the bird rising into space, freedom,
taken for granted, is the natural element, paradise regained.

CONCLUSION

Apollinaire's death came too early. But then this is true for any poet, whatever his age. He wrote little poetry during the last year of his life, and yet we cannot imagine that his career in this domain had faded so soon to its natural conclusion. It is vain to speculate on what might have been. Looking back over the poetry we are left with an impression of incorrigible optimism, overriding those contradictions and inconsistencies which are themselves the symptoms of Apollinaire's readiness to take risks, to try new ground. The more he changes, the more he is the same and we have shown that a faith in human destiny runs as a unifying thread throughout his career. This idealism and the liberty he defends in all domains are lasting signs in Apollinaire's poetry of the influence of the mystical anarchism which formed part of the background to Symbolism.

As he matures we may detect a shifting of emphasis, and Apollinaire is not the only poet to have moved away from beginnings coloured with melancholy, an autumn in springtime, towards a more energetic maturity. W. B. Yeats is one contemporary example. With this in mind, it is tempting to split Apollinaire's poetry into three consecutive and overlapping sections, as his gaze shifts from Past, to Present, to Future. In the first section we would place his earliest poems and much of Alcools, where he looks back to the nineteenth century, struggles with the myths and language of Symbolism, with the grip of Catholicism, and searches for an alternative in the history of religions, expressing sentiments of revolt which are an echo of the

eighteen-nineties, anarchist terror and the Dreyfus Affair. 'Zone' and then 'Ondes' fix poetry in the here and now, a present time and place which includes the whole planet, nations brought together through mass communication and high-speed travel. This is the second section, and the festival of present excitement continues into the war, heightened by the stimulus of new sensations, the pleasure of fraternity. But as the months pass, war reveals her true nature and it becomes increasingly difficult to express experience, to inhabit the present. Already, in the poem 'Guerre', from 'Case d'armes', Apollinaire diverts his eyes from 'les horreurs de la guerre' to seek relief in Victory, 'Après après'. From an intolerable present, Apollinaire's imagination shifts forward into the future. Feeling lost for words in 'Chant de l'honneur' he looks to the 'poètes des temps à venir'. Finally, however, his stance is that of a prophet as in his last poems he looks forward to the renaissance of man.

This is no more than a tentative proposal for a possible structure. We are satisfied, however, that the cross-play of references from all periods of Apollinaire's work reveals the unity and homogeneity of his poetry, and this despite the volte-faces, or the evolution in attitudes revealed by our close tracking of his progress through the war, for example. One other thing of which we can be sure is that research on Apollinaire will continue. The new American edition of Calligrammes with an introduction by Professor Ian Lockerbie, published too late for this thesis, is one example of an important work which will undoubtedly add a great deal to our appreciation of the poetry. (1) And at the time of writing we await impatiently the publication of Apollinaire après Alcools by Claude Debon and Apollinaire Journaliste by Pierre Caizergues. The first volume of each of these two-volume works should be available some time in 1981. (2) We cannot resist mentioning two

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- (1) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Calligrammes, translated by Anne Hyde Greet and S. I. Lockerbie, introduction by S. I. Lockerbie, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1980.
- (2) Claude DEBON, Guillaume Apollinaire après Alcools I, Le poète et la guerre, Paris, Lettres modernes, 1980. Pierre CAIZERGUES, Apollinaire journaliste I. Les débuts et la formation du journaliste 1900-1909, Paris, Lettres modernes, 1980.

recent publications which we have been able to consult and which tend to corroborate comments we make in our section discussing Apollinaire's links with Dada. The first is Apollinaire's correspondence with Marinetti, a volume published in Italy and containing photographs of a manuscript of the Antitradition futuriste. There it is confirmed that he does indeed award a rose to Raymond Roussel, though he refers to him as 'l'auteur d'Impressions d'Afrique'. (3) What influence did this play have on Apollinaire's theatre? And secondly the publication by Pierre Caizergues of an article by Apollinaire which appeared in the Mercure de France, 16 June 1918, and is headed 'Le cas de Richard Mutt'. Apollinaire criticises the American Society of Independent Artists for refusing Marcel Duchamp's notorious ready-made 'Fontaine', an inverted urinal signed 'R. Mutt 1917', considered unfit for exhibition. He eloquently defends the absolute liberty of the artist and also the principle of the ready-made itself, an everyday object raised to the level of art. He finishes by castigating French newspapers for their systematic opposition 'à tout ce qui est jeune et neuf, en art aussi bien qu'en science et qu'en littérature'. Mr Caizergues notes that this 'Précieux écho [...] nous invite à nuancer notre position sur les rapports d'Apollinaire sinon avec le mouvement dada, du moins - et c'est le plus important - avec l'esprit dada. Mais l'échotier savait-il que Marcel Duchamp avait, pour l'occasion, adopté ce pseudonyme de Richard Mutt?' (4) We would certainly agree wholeheartedly with the first part of Mr Caizergues' note. Furthermore, we have shown that Apollinaire received from H. -P. Roché in New York Duchamp's review. The Blindman. The terms and title of Apollinaire's 'Le cas de Richard Mutt' article confirm that he had read the second issue of that review, titled The Blind Man P. B. T., New York, May 1917. This included an editorial, 'The Richard Mutt Case', written by Marcel Duchamp in collaboration with Henri-Pierre Roché and Beatrice Wood as a defence of

(3) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, Lettere a F. T. Marinetti, Milan, Pesce d' Oro, 1978.

(4) Guillaume APOLLINAIRE, 'Echos et anecdotes inédits, réunis par Pierre Caizergues', Cahiers du musée national d'art moderne, 6, 1981, pp. 12-15, (p. 15).

'Fontaine' and accompanied by a photograph by Alfred Stieglitz of the offending object, captioned: 'Fountain by R. Mutt. The Exhibit Refused by the Independents'. Apollinaire was therefore in direct contact with New York Dada and to Mr Caizergues's question we would reply that our poet must have known very well that his old friend Duchamp was masquerading behind the pseudonym 'R. Mutt'. (5)

Research continues on Apollinaire's links with artists and writers in other countries. There may be something to be said on Apollinaire and the English avant-garde, for Wyndham Lewis and the Vorticists based their 'Blast manifesto', in their review Blast n° 1, London 1914, on Apollinaire's Antitradition futuriste. Apollinaire also awards a rose to Roger Fry, friend of the Vorticists and organiser of exhibitions in London of works by European avant-garde artists. Work remains to be done on Apollinaire and the theatre and also on the presence of popular culture in all of Apollinaire's work. The circus, music hall, popular songs, Fantomas novels, the films of Georges Méliès, Charlie Chaplin etc. would all find their place in such a study. A Dossier de Calligrammes, a companion volume to Michel Décaudin's Dossier d'Alcools, would be the most valuable new contribution to Apollinaire studies which we can at present imagine. Closer to the subject of this thesis, it might be interesting to examine more closely Apollinaire's interest in esoterism, the occult, Jewish mysticism, perhaps working out from the texts related to these subjects which still stand in his book-case on the top floor of 202 Boulevard Saint-Germain. An analysis of Apollinaire's library of books and magazines, kept more or less intact by his wife Jacqueline and more recently by Mr Gilbert Boudar, would itself be of interest. As for Apollinaire and esoterism, we have here held back somewhat from this subject for fear of being lost in a labyrinth. We suspect that Apollinaire

(5) See Arturo SCHWARTZ, The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp, pp. 466-467. Schwartz gives the text of the editorial 'The Richard Mutt Case'. Apollinaire's article includes a word for word translation of this whole editorial.

For The Blind Man and 'Fountain', see also Jean Clair, L'Oeuvre de Marcel Duchamp, catalogue raisonné, pp. 89, 90, 150 and 154.

felt the same way, for such paths are dark and mysterious and lead away from our common world of shared experience and passing time. Few readers are touched by the oblique, hermetic language of esoterism. Apollinaire's interest in sacred texts and occult thinking was lasting and genuine, but how deep did it go ?

Our own hesitation here, in the doorway to the unknown, is no doubt just one of the inadequacies of this study. Self-criticism would have us rewrite the whole thing. But it is expedient, necessary even, to resist such instincts. Otherwise, like the man who having finished painting a bridge finds that it is time to go back to where he began and to start again, the writer would never complete a project; never place the final full stop.

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