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BIOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS AND LITERARY EVOLUTION OF APOLLINAIRE'S EARLY CONCEPTS OF LOVE AND POETIC CREATIVITY

T H E S I S

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FOREWORD SUMMARY

The common difficulties of studying any conceptual aspect of a poet's work are intensified in the case of Guillaume Apollinaire. His poems cannot be studied without close reference to his life, since in his own words "chacun de mes poèmes est la commémoration d'un événement de ma vie." These "events" include, moreover, those of his interior life, peculiarly coloured by the special circumstnaces of his early family history. Nor can we hesitate to define the poems as "events": many of his important poems interpenetrate with other works, involving a development of earlier symbols and including parts of other poems so that none can be taken in isolation. Nor again can the major poems be taken in a simple chronological order, finally dealt with each in turn, since their content springs from a timeless rumination on past, present and future, however the material or objective reference may be localised in time and space.

This study therefore seeks to show, in Bergsonian terms, how the poet's mature concept of poetry springs from his early years and the whole corpus of his immature poetry. He was descended from two noble families, eminent in the Church, the Army and society, noted also for their artistic gifts. But Apollinaire himself was an illegitimate exile, whose mother, despite her breeding, was a social outcast, wandering from

place to place as the fortunes of love and gambling led. Young Guillaume received, nevertheless, an excellent religious education. From these early circumstances resulted three major factors in the poet's personality: his rejection of the religion in which he had been immersed, chiefly on the grounds that the Church rejected his mother; his desire to achieve through his work the respect and the "name" that would have been his automatic due had he been able to lay legitimate claim to his ancestry; and his longing for a settled family life of love and security. Hence his early attitudes of both rebellion and attraction regarding religion, his devotion to his vocation as poet, and his painful efforts to realise the sort of love that would lead to a settled life of bourgeois respectability. His appetite for physical love, inherited from both father and mother, manifested as a desire to be needed, made him impatient, jealous and domineering, traits which drove marriageable women from him and drove him to the other sort.

We thus have a triangle of conflicting but interdependent themes of biographical origin. First there is his dedication to the calling of poet, with a determination to achieve distinction and status through the publication of a highly original masterpiece. Secondly there is the theme of a quarrel between his desire for domestic love, stability and children, and the casual love he felt attracted to as an expedient allowing him freedom to devote himself to poetic creation. Thirdly there is his love and respect for a religion which he

was increasingly unable to accept because of his inability to revere the Holy Virgin and frequent the lowest type of womanhood at the same time. Eventually he was able to harmonise all these conflicts into one philosophy, a religious attitude to poetry and an esthetic based on love and the acceptance of suffering.

We therefore examine in this study first the poet's formative years, and then the emergent themes of love, lust, fertility and poetic creativity up to the great turning-point of 1907 when he matured and found himself and his esthetic.

It is hoped that this approach will distinguish the essential Apollinaire from his participation in the many literary movements that tend to obscure his originality and consistency; and that it will add new depths to the interpretation of certain of his poems. It must be emphasised, moreover, that in most of Apollinaire's work the polyvalence of his symbols requires a cautious definition of what is a "correct" meaning. It is suggested that where several interpretations are probable, they should not of necessity be seen as mutually exclusive, but should be accepted if they can be seen to arise out of the "events" of his life, and especially when they fit not merely one specific reference but are consistent with the whole evolution of Apollinaire's concepts.

CHAPTER 1.

Rome : Origins

It was Maupassant who so scathingly objected to the habit literary critics have of concerning themselves with a writer's private life instead of contenting themselves with his literary works for their own sake. Similarly, Apollinaire took infinite pains to conceal the story of Wilhelm Apollinaris de Kostrowitzky's private life. Nevertheless, if ever a man's writing was inextricably interwoven with details of his life, that is the case with Apollinaire. Much of his poetry must lack personal depth and have to rely on surface meaning if reference is not made to the events and circumstances of his early years and his reactions to them. For Apollinaire, even more than for many other writers, poetry was not so much a reflection of life, nor even a reflection of life as he met it, but a way of life to be lived. His poetry as a way of living had its origins in his own strange origins, and took from his early circumstances its distinctive character, its colour and intensity, as also its hermetic style. No writer, perhaps since Stendhal, had taken more elaborate precautions to preserve the anonymity of his private life, nor was any writer more successful during his lifetime. And it is certain that the very existence of such apparently impenetrable mystery constituted a challenge to literary bloodhounds in the thirty years following his death. If this interest added attraction to his

poetry during his lifetime, it also distracted attention from an objective assessment of it for some time afterwards; at all events, one must observe that it was only after the elucidation of the mystery surrounding his birth that critics at last made sustained attempts to assess the poet's work with conviction.

Even then, a second factor still tended to obscure the poet: his participation in, and often his exegesis of, the many new literary movements that were born during the period of his mature writing. For a university course on early 20th century French poetry, Apollinaire is the obvious choice of author, since he illustrates them all in their chronological sequence, standing in perspective at the apex of the divergent lines of schools and proliferating "isms". It was a popular view that Tzara expressed when he exclaimed "Je pense à toi Guillaume carrefour"[1]. Thus studied since 1953 from the Sorbonne to the youngest university in the antipodes, the distinctive genius of Apollinaire tends to be lost as attention passes from the individual poet to the school [2]. Although "usefulness"

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[1] Ref. Le Signe de la Vie, poem written in Prague, July 1938.

[2] A most obvious example is the interpretation of "Le Larron" given by Professor Durry in her lectures at the Sorbonne, whereby concern for literary applications obscures the truth by losing sight of the poet himself. Ref. M.-J. Durry: "Guillaume Apollinaire : Alcools", Tome I, Société d'Edition d'Enseignement Supérieur, Paris, 1954, p.233, hereinafter referred to as Durry: Alcools I.

in the study of literary history has long been regarded as a formula for a writer's immortality, and has undoubtedly increased Apollinaire's reputation in the last decade, it is essential to come back to the man's life to preserve the poet himself and understand his personal attitudes.

If any further apology is needed for beginning with the carefully examined details of the life of Apollinaire as an approach to a study of his concept of poetic creation, let it be given by Marcel Adéma, who, above all other biographers, made such an approach reliable: "[Il faut] rechercher plus encore dans sa vie que dans son oeuvre les ressorts d'une expression poétique qui le place à part dans la littérature du premier quart de ce siècle." [3] But the poet himself should have the last word on the subject. In a letter to Henri Martineau dated 19 July 1913 he wrote: "chacun de mes poèmes est la commémoration d'un événement de ma vie."

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During his lifetime, and for many years afterwards, little was known for certain of the birth and origins of Apollinaire. The poet himself allowed various stories to circulate, even fostered some; but in the light of recent investigation the truth has proved even more romantic and impressive than the romanticised legend. The following details emerge.

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[3] Marcel Adéma: "Guillaume Apollinaire le mal-aimé" [Paris, Librairie Plon, 1952] p.11.

Just after five o'clock on the morning of August 26th, 1880, in Rome's Trastevere district, a male child was born to a woman who wished to remain anonymous. She had the birth registered by a midwife at the City Hall under the name of Guillaume Albert Dulcigni [4]. The name of the father was not disclosed. On September 29th one Angélica Kostrowitzky, born in Saint Petersburg [now Leningrad], the daughter of [Michael] Apollinaris, had a child baptised in the Baptisery of San Vito with the names Guillaume Apollinaris Albert. The date of his birth given in the baptismal register is, however, August 25th, 1880. But by an Act of Recognition dated November 2nd 1880, Madame Angélique de Kostrowitzky [the name now gallicised and a particle added by way of translating the social importance of the suffix to the Polish place-name], born at Sweaborgin, Fi nland, on April 29th 1858, recognised the child she had borne on August 26th and had later baptised as Guillaume Albert Dulcigni, as her natural son, She now named him Wilhelm Albert Wladimir Alexander

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[4] As shown in the archives of the Capitol. Refer Adéma, op. cit., p.7, from which source the following details of the poet's birth and origins are taken unless otherwise stated. Further details of this very early period are given by Vittorio Orazi: "Apollinaire romano" [Milan, Garotto, 1944]. The name Dulcigni was bestowed by the clerk in accordance with the Italian custom of assigning names in alphabetical order to illegitimate offspring of unknown parents.

Apollinaris, and added her own surname, Kostrowitzky [5]. Thus, despite the elaborate initial precautions to completely conceal his identity, Wilhelm de Kostrowitzky acquired one acknowledged parent and the elements of a name he was to make his own. But out of this confusion of names, dates and places, what secret inheritance was to bless or handicap his future efforts to acquire his own identity?

On his mother's side we can go back on safe ground. Michael Kostrowicki, a Polish nobleman from Kostrowicze in the Lithuanian province of Slonin [now Byelorussia], married an Italian, Julia Floriani from Fiorina. Their daughter, Alexandrina Angeliska, was born in 1858 at Helsingfors [now Helsinki, the important cultural centre and capital of Finland, but then a little port of 6,000 inhabitants in Russian Finland]. In 1865 the reforming Tsar Alexander II ruthlessly crushed the two-year old Polish patriotic rebellion in which the Kostrowickis were implicated. The family properties were confiscated and Michael's brothers were exiled to Siberia,

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[5] This much had been known for many years, M. André Salmon assured me in 1947, and is recorded by Aegerter and Labracherie: "Guillaume Apollinaire" [Paris, Julliard, 1943], Louise Faure-Favier: "Souvenirs sur Guillaume Apollinaire" [Paris, Grasset, 1945] and André Billy: "Apollinaire" [Paris, Seghers, 1947]. However, as Mme Faure-Favier explained the situation to me [Jan. 1948] these facts were not known widely nor for certain during the poet's lifetime. It must also be borne in mind that Apollinaire himself learned these, and especially subsequent, details only as he grew up.

but he himself escaped to Italy with his wife and daughter, taking refuge with his wife's relatives. Here, under the name of Michel Apollinaris, he settled in Rome as "cameriere d'onore di capa e spada" at the Papal Court. In 1866 the eight-year-old Alexandrina Angeliska Kostrowicka was accepted, at the request of the Pope, Pius IX, into the convent of the French Ladies of the Sacred Heart at Santa Trinità dei Monti. The daughter of Michel Apollinaire Kostrowicki was offered an education reserved for the aristocracy.

Angélique de Kostrowitzky, if we may now adopt the final form of her name, was thus part Slav, part Italian, with a noble lineage going back at least to the mid-seventeenth century. She was proud and haughty. To the alternating languor and violence of the Slav was added the ardour of the Italian, and with all this she was impulsive and headstrong, impatient of all restraint. Her escapades finally forced her withdrawal from the convent in September 1874 and so, at the age of sixteen, the lovely but uncontrollable Angélique was launched on society in the hope of an early marriage.

At this point Angélique met the man who was to become the father of Apollinaire, and here we enter on less safe ground. The question of paternity is capital in the life of the poet. M. André Salmon, in an interview he gave me in 1947, was still inclined to the view that we would never know for certain. He was aware of Max Jacob's belief that Justin Weil, Angélique's companion till her death in 1918, was the father,

an opinion echoed by Duhamel's belligerent ascription of Jewish parentage; but this hypothesis is patently false, since we now know that Weil was only eleven years of age in 1880.

However, in 1949 I received a letter from M. Marcel Adéma, a Paris businessman whose literary interests had brought him under the spell of Apollinaire, and who had been preparing a doctoral thesis on the poet since 1947. His aunt had been one of the few close friends of Madame de Kostrowitzky, and he had learned from her certain clues which caused him to abandon his literary research and follow up his belief that the father of Apollinaire was a member of the Papal aristocracy. He very tentatively proposed the name of Francesco Flugi d'Aspermont. The results of his subsequent patient research were presented in the Figaro littéraire later in 1949, and again in 1950, and were fully presented in book form in 1952 [6]. His evidence, as summed up by Francis Steegmuller [7], consists of six points:

1. Apollinaire once pointed to the photograph of an army officer in his mother's home and told a friend: "C'est mon père."

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[6] Marcel Adéma: "Apollinaire le Mal-Aimé [Paris, Plon, 1952], translated by Denise Folliot as "Apollinaire" [London, Heinemann, 1954]. He reminds me also that Serge Ferrat said he heard Mme de Kostrowitzky say at her son's funeral that Guillaume's father was Flugi d'Aspermont. Moreover, the Captain Duce who acted as witness to the Act of Recognition in Rome is said to have been a friend of the d'Aspermont family. He later became a Colonel.

[7] Francis Steegmuller: "Apollinaire, Poet among the Painters" [London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963]. The friend who was shown the photograph was René Nicosia: he saw a photograph of an officer in the uniform of an Italian army captain.

2. Mme de Kostrowitzky had told M. Adéma's aunt that her elder son's father was an Aspermont.
3. Apollinaire used the name "Baron d'Ormespant" in the rough draft of a story, included in "L'Hérésiarque et Cie", which in its published form shows the modified version "Ormesan". The first form is, of course, an anagram on "Aspermont".
4. Dom Romarino, Francesco's eldest brother, contributed to the support of the Kostrowitzky family in Monaco, and obtained their education in a school that would not normally have admitted the children of an unmarried mother.
5. The resemblance of Dom Romarino to his alleged nephew.
6. The Flugi d'Aspermonts agreed in interview with Adéma [and later with Steegmuller] that Francesco was probably the natural father of Apollinaire, and admitted the resemblance of the present head of the family, Monsignore Mariano Flugi d'Aspermont, nephew to Francesco, to his presumed cousin, Apollinaire.

Francesco Flugi d'Aspermont was the scion of a very old family from the Grisons which traces its history back to the 15th century and contains many men prominent in the church and army. His father, Niccolo, led an adventurous life and became brigade general under Ferdinand II and successively governor of the provinces of Trapani, Chieli, Aquila, and Avellino where he died in 1856. Niccolo's eldest son, also called Niccolo, a doctor of medicine, became a Benedictine, adopting the name of Dom Romarino Maria. He was chosen by Pius IX as nullius abbot of the Diocese

of Monaco. The third of the four sons, Francesco, born in 1835, was a staff captain of Ferdinand II, but resigned on the fall of the Bourbons, and instead of joining the new Italian army, travelled in Europe without leaving any precise information as to his whereabouts and activities. He returned to Rome at the age of forty, handsome and still unmarried. He made his appearance as the accomplished son of an impeccable family, accepted in the most exclusive circles, a good musician, a connoisseur of painting, an inveterate traveller, impatient of all restraint and social ties, but fond of society, and a brilliant conversationalist whose great charm excused the escapades his great lust for life led him into. Angélique must surely have met him at the Papal Court by 1875 when she was seventeen.

In fact there is no actual proof that they met either then or subsequently, but it is assumed that the headstrong Angélique fell in love with Francesco, recognising in him a kindred spirit, and that the pair eloped. Neither family would have objected to their marriage, but Francesco was clearly not the marrying sort. It is presumed that during their gay passage through the pleasure capitals of Europe financed by the credit of the family name, Angélique, discovering herself pregnant, returned to Rome and had her child in the secrecy already described. Angélique's father had died a few years earlier, and little Guillaume was placed discreetly in the charge of a foster mother in Rome. Whether the affair continued at intervals thereafter is not certain.

It is said that Francesco was given money to leave the country in 1884, but that he in fact left his ship to return to his "Russian" in Naples. At all events, he effectively dropped out of sight, little having been known precisely about him before or since his appearance in Rome in 1875, and nothing at all after 1885.

The Aspermont family accepted the idea that Francesco was the father of Angélique's child, though she almost certainly had other lovers between the trips she is believed to have made with Francesco. Her second son, Albert, was born in 1882, also in Rome, this time under the name of Zevini - the clerk had evidently reached the Z's - but there is no suggestion that he had the same father, and it was not until 1888 that Angélique recognised him officially.

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Before continuing, due account must be paid to an alternative to the foregoing details furnished by M. Adéma. In 1959 Anatol Stern, a Polish surrealist poet, advanced a startling suggestion originating from a branch of the Kostrowitzky family still living in Poland [8]. One Mélanie Kostrowitzky, who frequented the Austrian Imperial Court at Schoenbrunn, bore an illegitimate male child at the age of eighteen, in 1831, whose

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[8] Anatol Stern: "Apollinaire petit-fils de l'Aiglon?" in "Les Lettres françaises", Oct. 15 and 21, 1959. Compare Raymond Warnier: "Le Poète Apollinaire est-il l'arrière-petit-fils de Napoléon?" in "Le Monde", Dec.8, 1959; "Une nouvelle Hypothèse sur les origines d'Apollinaire" in "Studi francesi" no. 10, 1960; and Steegmuller op.cit. pp. 11-19.

father, they believed, was Napoleon II, François-Charles-Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's son by his second Empress, Marie-Louise, daughter of the Emperor François I of Austria. In exile after his brief reign in infancy, he was known as "l'Aiglon" in memory of his great father, "L'Aigle", imprisoned on St. Helena. This natural grandson of Napoleon was born to Melanie in Rome, and was raised in the care of the Vatican under the name of Kostrowitzky. ["L'Aiglon" is also credited with being the father of Emperor Maximillian of Mexico]. This distant cousin of Angélique's, whose Christian name is not known, and who would have been fifty in 1880, and thus still in his prime, is claimed by Stern to be the father of Apollinaire, while Francesco Flugi d'Aspermont was only one more lover in the same age-group.

The facts of this other Kostrowitzky's existence are unsubstantiated by Roman or Vatican records [though concealment could have been deliberate], and the theory that Apollinaire was the great-grandson of Napoleon Bonaparte might well be disregarded but for the fact that the poet was very much aware of the possibility. In his short story "La Chasse à l'Aigle" [9] he relates how, in his imagination, he met a man in Schoenbrunn "portant sur sa face masquée par raison d'Etat le signe superbe d'une race auguste ... peut-être le fils de l'Aiglon". Apollinaire is known to have thought of his own face as being "le

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[9] Le Poète assassiné [Paris, Gallimard, 1947], p.209.

masque de Napoléon" and that he had the profile of Caesar [a belief similarly held by Napoleon regarding himself]. Stern's investigations revealed that Apollinaire had spoken of Melanie to his wife Jacqueline, who until her death in 1968 possessed a brooch given to Angélique by Melanie. Obviously, then, the poet knew the story of Melanie and the heir of the Bonapartes, and had known it during his stay on the Rhine in 1901-2, when he took the opportunity of visiting Vienna and Melanie's tomb.

This hypothesis has been neither proved nor disproved but one would not discount the fact that Apollinaire was capable of suggesting and even claiming as true that which he wanted people to believe. He probably enjoyed the theoretical possibility of being descended from Napoleon, and therefore deliberately made the remarks about his physiognomical resemblance; the numerous references to Napoleon throughout his work show that the question was often in his mind. If the mysterious heir existed, he would have been at the Papal Court at the same time as Apollinaire's mother, and she would have known him.

There is one document that may be relevant, though it defies investigation. This is the Extrait du Registre d'Immatriculation to be found in Registre no. 1444, Feuillet 42 of the Préfecture de Police, 1ère Division, 4ème Bureau, showing that M. Guillaume Kostrowitzky, who had arrived in Paris 7 October 1899 "pour y exercer la profession de: Employé de Commerce", declared himself to be domiciled at 9 rue de Constantinople on 11 October

1899. "Il a justifié de son identité conformément aux dispositives de l'article ler de la loi, en produisant à l'appui de sa déclaration: "Acte naissance et cert. domicile". In entering the usual details on this prescribed form, a laboured, clerkly hand has written the surname Kostrowitzky letter by letter, as if at dictation, and even taken the informant literally by writing "double-v" as vv! The date of birth is written smoothly, but the entry for Nationality was started one way and changed to "Italien Russe", presumably referring to the place of birth, as Olga-Angélique consistently referred to herself as being Russian. The line "Fils de..." is left blank as to the father, with the entry "et de: ... Kostrowitzky angélique, mariée à ... [blank]". The extraordinary and enigmatic feature of the document is that against the line "Veuf de..." an entry has been made by another, rather ignorant, hand as "Vladimir K. Enfants: 2." Remembering that Apollinaire had been given the Christian name of Wladimir, one is left wondering at this evidence that his father was one Vladimir Kostrowitzky! M. Décaudin identifies this handwriting as that of Angélique.

In this case there is a third group of possibilities: perhaps Angélique was herself not sure which was the father, since she would have known both men at the same time; in any case she may have preferred to persuade the Aspermont family of their share of the responsibility as they were more likely and able to help her. The present writer advances this hypothesis

on the slender grounds that Macarée treated "le Baron François" in this way as "père putatif" in "Le Poète assassiné". Or again a romance with the incognito she met at the court was perhaps just a might-have-been, based on nostalgic recollections of her heyday, told like a fairy-tale in the days of their poverty, and which was ever in danger of slipping across the border between fantasy and fact.

Much of "Le Poète assassiné" is veiled autobiography, however, and it might seem significant that Apollinaire should choose to add like an epilogue to that collection the more strongly personal and perhaps defiantly autobiographical story of the "Cas du Brigadier masqué", written shortly before he died [10]. The disguise is the thinnest of all those used in these stories, as if he is tired and the mask is slipping. In this story Apollinaire reviews his life in the light of his war experience, by means of a dialogue between his two selves, a favourite device of his. The "canonnier" represents him as the poet, as he makes clear, and the "brigadier" symbolises his future identity as a man. In the background, like Nemesis handing out men's destinies, is Le Roi-Lune, who, it will be remembered from the earlier story of that title, transported the poet through time and space - provided he wore a mask [11].

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[10] "Cas du Brigadier masqué, c'est-à-dire le poète ressuscité", added to the collection of Le Poète assassiné p.209 of edition quoted, when the book was first published in 1916.

[11] See "Le Roi-Lune" in Le Poète assassiné , pp. 130-135.

The brigadier, too, wears a mask which hides the future from the artilleryman, and there is mention of "un singulier masque en forme de bec d'aigle" "bargained for" at Vienna [a possible reference to secrecy imposed on Melanie]. The Roi-Lune announces "'C'est à moi de lui enlever la couronne que j'ai donnée à son grand-père.' Et en même temps il jetait de petites bombes ..." and as a result "Giovanni Moroni [the infant Apollinaire in Rome [12]] ... mourait en pensant à sa mère ..." and "le brigadier au masque aveugle souriait amoureusement à l'avenir, lorsqu'un éclat d'obus de gros calibre le frappa à la tête d'où il sortit, comme un sang pur, une Minerve triomphale". [13].

Throughout his work Apollinaire sees himself as a victim of denied heredity, forced to keep a mask on, and here he seems to be consoling himself with the thought that he has triumphed in his own right, found his identity, and so purified his blood. It is odd that this final word on identity and destiny should hark back to the Eagle theme; but then it is odd, too, that Apollinaire should always refer to himself as Polish when Aspermont parentage would have made him three quarters Italian; and one may find it hard to see that the poet resembled Flugi d'Aspermont rather than Napoleon. But in this

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[12] See "Giovanni Moroni" in Le Poète assassiné, p.229 et seq.

[13] See "Le Poète assassiné" p. 232. The passage refers to his head wound, received on active service as an artilleryman.

dialogue of past and future solves the revelation of the self that lifts the mask, the hint at what the young self wished to know above all, is not addressed to the reader but to the writer himself, which suggests doubt in his own mind.

When I last spoke to M. Adéma on 17 December 1966, he was utterly convinced of the Aspermont theory, expressing grave doubts as to Stern's story in view of the latter's reluctance or inability to produce more specific documentation such as that said to have been lost by the branch of the Kostrowitzky family that had remained in Poland. In my view, the fact that the Aspermont family accepted responsibility for <u>both</u> children suggests that they were generous regarding proof of relationship, recognition of Albert weakening the importance of their recognition of Wilhelm. Adequate assistance for the maintenance of two children could have been given to Angélique on account of Wilhelm without any mention of Albert. One is perhaps wise not to take sides in this issue but to conclude that, with or without certainty in her own mind, Mme de Kostrowitzky persuaded the Aspermonts to accept responsibility; and that Apollinaire may well not have known for certain whether he was descended from Napoleon or the Aspermonts, or alternatively if he knew the latter to be true, that he was reluctant to reject the glorious possibilities of the former. To adhere to fact, we note that he was aware of both, rejected neither, but alluded in his writing far more frequently [indeed with only one ex-

ception] to the Napoleonic line.

His last allegory will serve to bring us back to the poet's childhood while pronouncing what is probably the last word on both the Aspermont and the Napoleonic hypotheses: "J'ai un masque, canonnier, dit le brigadier mystérieux, et ce masque cache tout ce que vous voudriez voir, il occulte la réponse à toutes vos questions... et, grâce à lui, il ne vous est plus possible de connaître la vérité."

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How much Apollinaire remembered of this early existence it is difficult to assess accurately. Although in a general sense the Roman ambiance permeates his work, and his knowledge of the Italian language, literature and the thoughts of contemporaries such as Marinetti, influenced his ideas, as he admitted, specific references are confined almost solely to the prose of "Le Poète assassiné".

The Piazza Mastai, on Rome's busy Viale di Trastevere, appeared when I visited it in 1966 a rather colourless square filled with the roar of traffic. But affixed to a wall on the western side I was intrigued to find a quiet little plaque commemorating the birth "near this spot" of an obscure Italian poet. The imprecision is due to the sweeping away of much of the colourful old quarter of Trastevere [Trans-Tiber] to make room for the fine wide roads typical of Mussolini's new

Italy. And had the discussions between André Billy and the Roman municipal authorities come to fruition, I subsequently learned, there would by now have been a second plaque inscribed in similar vein; for the construction of the Viale del Re obliterated the old cul-de-sac which was the first known address of one of Rome's much better-known poets, recorded as 8, Vicolo Cieco, Piazza Mastai. It was here that the midwife, Luisa Boldi, while registering an illegitimate birth, reported the infant Guglielmo Alberto Dulcigni [renamed a month later Guglielmo Wladimiro Alessandro Apollinare di Kostrowitzky] as being in the charge of an unnamed woman who was either a wet-nurse or his mother, in which latter and more likely case this was clearly the birthplace of Apollinaire.

I am indebted to an elderly local resident who described the Trastevere of some forty years ago as a very different place from the present-day scene, and much more like the locality in which the future poet spent his earliest years with a foster-mother. It was a vibrant, colourful quarter. Opening off the narrow streets were courtyards in which on a winter evening bonfires were lit, around which the bambini would gather to sing and dance or roast chestnuts. On summer nights they would drowsily listen to the gossip and stories of their parents who would sit in front of their doors to enjoy the night air after the heat of a Roman day. It was, indeed, the atmosphere evoked

by Apollinaire in the story of Giovanni Moroni [14]. There is reason to believe, too, that young Guglielmo knew the Vatican, some biographers assuming that his mother visited him from time to time, in which case he might well have gravitated there. In any case, the Citta del Vaticano is not far from the Piazza Mastai, the way leading through the Gianicolo, whose green hill must have afforded a pleasant relief from the crowded alleys of the Trastevere, and whose fir trees bore cones which yielded edible seeds much enjoyed by small boys. Apparently the child unconsciously absorbed the beauty and majesty of the Holy See as well as receiving indelible impressions of the carnival, parades and Church celebrations that coloured these early days spent in the home of his foster-parents who are presumably delineated in the portraits of Attilia and the toy-maker Beppo.

Whatever the truth concerning this earliest period, the Aspermont family had accepted responsibility and the eldest brother, Dom Romarino, realised that something had to be done to quieten rumours touching the family's good name. He knew

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[14] "Giovanni Moroni" in "Le Poète assassiné", p.139 et seq., where he writes in the person of Giovanni: "Cette époque de mon enfance à Rome m'a laissé des souvenirs très précis. Les plus lointains remontent à l'âge de trois ans", and gives early impressions of an infant in Rome that surely came from personal experience. The idea is developed by Margaret Davies in her "Apollinaire" [Oliver & Boyd, London, 1964] pp. 8-12. This author, however, inserts highly probable but unprovable details to fill gaps in the poet's life-story. Giovanni was mysteriously removed from his parents, Attilia and Beppo, by an uncle who took him to France at the age of seven.

that Angélique's father had died before Wilhelm was born; and some time after the birth of her second son Albert in 1882, Francesco had finally dropped out of her life, perhaps as late as 1884; Angélique was therefore without financial support. She was attracted, not surprisingly, to Monte Carlo, and moved to Monaco in 1885. Her children either accompanied her or were gathered from their foster-family by a person corresponding to the fictional Giovanni's uncle, and brought to her. At all events, Dom Romarino saw to it that they were provided for, and for his Christian charity was subsequently believed to be their father, despite his elaborately discreet arrangements for payment of the allowance. Angélique herself lived the life of a demi-mondaine at the casinos of the Riviera. Nevertheless, for Wilhelm and Albert, the family was reunited for the first time.

CHAPTER 2.

Mediterranean Apprenticeship:
Educational and early literary influences

In 1889 Dom Romarino had the boys admitted, despite their illegitimacy, to the exclusive Collège Saint-Charles. Little Guglielmo from the Trastevere, aged nine and speaking Italian, now became Wilhelm de Kostrowitzky, a foreigner with a first name so unpronounceable that it was changed by his classmates to "Vilain", and with a surname which seemed to lack paternal authority. Nevertheless Sister Odile, who was in charge of the neuvième classe, was soon commenting on his beautiful French, and the little boy made friendships which were to be life-long.

From this point on we may briefly follow his growth to adolescence with less conjecture. His life is amply documented by Adéma, Steegmuller and Dr. Davies, and as concerning his childhood on the Riviera, James Onimus [15]. We are here interested only in those events and circumstances which affect his formation as a poet.

In 1891 young Wilhelm de Kostrowitzky gained first prize for French, second for Latin and an honourable mention for German, showing his special aptitude for language. It is believed that he suffered a certain amount of ridicule from his

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[15] Onimus was a childhood friend in Monaco. See "Lettres à un ami d'enfance", annotated by Mme Noémie Onimus-Blumenkranz, "Les Lettres françaises, 13 December, 1951.

classmates on account of his strange name and the absence of a father [16]. But he also had good friends such as René Dupuy [later famous as René Dalize], Louis de Gonzague-Frick and A. Toussaint-Luca, three future poets. With Dalize he shared a period of religious fervour to which he later referred in his poem "Zone", and took his first communion. He also tried to write an adventure story, in collaboration with James Onimus, entitled "Orindiculo". It was confiscated, but served to show his early propensities for wide reading, and his curiosity about anything unusual or adventurous.

Today, if one visits the candy-striped Principality, one may see on the wall of the Hôtel de Ville of Monaco a plaque witnessing that this was once the Collège Saint-Charles.

Dans cette maison
de la famille de Millo
S.G.Mgr. Theuret établit en 1581
le Collège ecclésias
de St-Charles
S.A.S. le Prince Albert ler
y transféra en 1901 la mairie
avec la justice de paix
Ici siège encore le consul national
institué par l'acte constitutionnel
de 5 janvier 1911

Not one of the municipal employees of whom I enquired had ever heard of the College, and they were most surprised when their attention was drawn to the inscription they passed every day at

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[16] Charmingly expressed by Michel Butor: "Monument de rien pour Apollinaire" in "La Nouvelle Revue Française", 1 March, 1965, p.503.

the main entrance. However, I was able to visit what had once been the young Kostrowitzky's dormitory and also the Chapel in which the pupils had prayed, and where the elevated cross suggested a giant aeroplane and the light through the stained glass window was to colour the poem "Zone" [17]. The College is perched atop the towering cliffs of the promontory which must have been a challenge to the prowess of a schoolboy, and as such were to figure in another poem.

In 1895, when the College was closed [18], he went to live with his mother in Cannes, to attend the Stanislas College as a day pupil. Living at home after being a boarder in Monaco, the 15-year-old Guillaume must have come to understand the meaning of the succession of "uncles" who had appeared in his earlier school holidays. He must also have discovered that the state of their fluctuating finances depended on "protection" given to his mother and on her propensities for gambling. He must have enquired about the identity of his father. He had surely received snubs, slights, echoes of rumours. His mother, whom he idolised, was a sinner in the eyes of the Church and an outcast in the eyes of society. Forced to make a choice, he sided with his mother against Church and society. This shock coincided with the most

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[17] Apollinaire: "Alcools, Poèmes 1898-1913" [Gallimard, 1920], p.7. Refer to Apollinaire: "Oeuvres poétiques" [Paris, la Pléiade, 1965] p.40. All further references to his poems will be made to this edition, whenever possible, thus: "Zone" O.P, 40.

[18] For complicated reasons suggested by Steegmuller op.cit. p.42.

difficult period of adolescence. Just when he needed the presence of a father, he lost the stabilising influence of his religion. It was a new Guillaume who arrived in 1897, aged 17, at the Lycée in Nice: anti-clerical, anarchistic, and developing a mask of gay bombast to cover his shy sensitivity. He was a foreign bastard and his mother was ... at best, an "entraîneuse" at the casino, a "femme galante". He had to learn to live with it.

"Le mysticisme religieux de son enfance a disparu. Comme beaucoup de lycéens, par réaction instinctive, il n'a plus la foi ..." writes Adéma [19], and again: "Il semble surprenant qu'avec des notes assez brillantes pendant son séjour au collège, Apollinaire échoua au baccalauréat." His religious fervour and its rejection are minimised by most critics, who, being French, forget that young Guillaume was not French,and read their own experience into the poet's attitude, overlooking the very special circumstances of the fatherless boy. His failure to pass his Baccalaureate is wondered at; but surely, to say that he had not got over the shock and the sense of shame and frustration, would be an understatement, since his writings show that under his mask he bore the scars for the rest of his life.

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[19] Adéma op.cit. p.14.

As the youth leaves the Lycée de Nice in June 1897, and returns to Monaco determined to devote himself full time to the art of writing, let us pause to examine some of the direc-ions that his destiny has so far given him.

All his character traits may already be seen in his heredity. His mother, half Polish, half Italian, was proud, impulsive, headstrong, violent [she could take a whip to her servants], adventurous, amorous, changeable, alternating between possessiveness and neglect towards her children, giving them an unusual degree of freedom, yet dominating them [20]. Guillaume was too like her to get along well with her [21]. But he under-stood her, sympathised with her, respected and adored her. She could not understand his passion for scribbling and was never able to understand what he wrote nor approve of his literary

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[20] Mrs. Annie Playden Postings has testified to the violence and domineering possessiveness of "Kostro", ref. Steeg-muller, op.cit. p.349. The other traits are well known.

[21] "Je lui ressemble beaucoup" he told Louise Faure-Favier, speaking of his mother [op.cit.p. 92]. "Avec ma mère, c'est tout de suite la malédiction" he told her one day in 1913 after a stormy scene over a trifle, but he added, "Oui, mais elle est si racée!" [loc.cit.] Again, ref. Rouveyre [op.cit. p.73]: "Elle me traite toujours comme si j'avais dix ans et me giflerait bien à l'occasion, ce que j'accep-terais d'ailleurs complètement."

friends [22]. This was one thing they never shared, and he became anxious to prove himself to her with an attitude reminiscent of Nerval. This clearly developed into an intense desire to prove himself to the world at large as a writer worthy of respect.

If his father was a Kostrowitzky, we would expect a Napoleonic energy and ambition, doubling the racial inheritance of his mother. If he was a Flugi d'Aspermont, we can see a reinforcement of the wanderer, the adventurer, the warrior and also the connoisseur of the arts and the brilliant conversationalist.

His environment chiefly accentuated these traits: travel, languages, an excellent education in the company of intelligent school fellows, his boon companions being interested in literature and writing. It predisposed him towards the classical heritage: "C'est à toi que je pense, Italie, mère de mes pensées" he was to write [23]. Greek mythology, the old

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[22] "Il nous avoua, ce jour-là, que Mme de Kostrowitzky n'aimait guère les amis de son fils, qu'elle tenait pour des sacripauts bons à l'entraîner dans des 'mauvais coups'" records Mme Faure-Favier [op.cit. p.82]; to which Rouveyre adds [op.cit. p.17]: "Elle ne le comprenait en rien... et lui, d'ailleurs, gardait éloigné d'elle sa vie artistique. Elle n'avait rien lu de lui que "L'Hérésiarque et Cie" qu'elle s'était acheté elle-même, et trouvait idiot." These instances refer to a later period, but serve to show that the attitude was constant.

[23] In "A l'Italie", a poem appealing to the Italians to join France in fighting Germany; written in August 1915, see "Calligrammes" OP 274.

Roman gods and goddesses, the colourful ceremony and polished manners of the Papal court, all this first came to him in the natural setting of the Mediterranean, "martelé par son effet sublime" as Roch Grey has described at length [24]. Surrounding his early years were the perfectly balanced form and majestic stability of Rome and its ancient colony, reinforced by the clarity of the Mediterranean which has always influenced its sons towards a classical purity, a love for the infinite as distinct from the indefinite to which Nordic writers are drawn by their climate and geography [25]. The ambiance of the Riviera accentuated a love of warmth and colour, and brought out in him the "bon viveur".

The sea itself, and the open night sky studded with stars, had a direct influence on his outlook, both as an un-

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[24] Ref. Roch Grey: "Guillaume Apollinaire", in the special edition of L'Esprit Nouveau devoted to Apollinaire, published by Jean Budry, Paris, 1924, which treats this question in detail.

[25] André Gide in Divers [Paris, NRF, 1931] comments on this influence in Apollinaire. Discussing Apollinaire's style with me, Mme Faure-Favier stressed a point she had omitted in her book: One day, after hearing a reading from Marcel Proust during one of her literary evenings on the Ile Saint-Louis, Apollinaire exclaimed with disapproval: "Quand les Français écriront comme ça, le français ne sera plus la langue diplomatique" and later added: "Je finirai par écrire des poèmes purement classiques, des vers comme Racine." Fernand Fleuret was also present and confirms this. The return to classicism was cut short by the poet's early death.

conscious symbol of life [26] and in their recurrence as poetic images. The warm, luxurious atmosphere of lemon groves and cypresses, sunny gardens with pomegranates, southern beauty and the blue water of the fabulous Mediterranean are often recaptured as in the poem of "Le Larron", who, like the poet "issu de l'écume des mers comme Aphrodite" [27] is drawn to a garden where:

Les citrons couleur d'huile et à saveur d'eau froide
Pendaient parmi les fleurs des citronniers tordus

Something of this sheltered atmosphere of the Riviera, impregnated with nostalgia for the childhood innocence so brutally dispelled, haunted him all his life:

Maintenant tu es au bord de la Méditerranée
Sous les citronniers qui sont en fleur toute l'année

he writes in "Zone" [28]. Again in "Les Collines" [29] he recalls:

Jeunesse adieu jasmin du temps
J'ai respiré ton frais parfum
A Rome sur les chars fleuris
Chargés de masques de guirlandes
Et des grelots de carnaval

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[26] As in "Lul de Faltenin" [in "Alcools" OP 97] and "Le Voyageur" [in "Alcools" OP 78], described in detail further on.

[27] "Le Larron" in "Alcools" OP 91, a tenuous reference to his being a "love-child".

[28] "Zone" in "Alcools" OP 39.

[29] "Les Collines" in "Calligrammes" OP 171.

Adieu jeunesse blanc Noël
Quand la vie n'était qu'une étoile
Dont je contemplais le reflet
Dans la mer Méditerranée

Indeed, one cannot overestimate the influence of

Ce flot méditerranéen
Que jamais jamais on n'oublie [30]

At a deeper level are the psychological factors of his early environment. First of all, he was fatherless, and kept out of his mother's way, moved from one place to another, visited by her only to be parted again, caressed and chastised by her only to be passed on to someone else. He must have clung to Albert for his only emotional stability [31]. His illusion of security in Monaco, of social position and wealth, was brutally dispelled at his most impressionable age. His yearning for a father, and longing for maternal love of a more constant and abiding sort, was, I believe, transmuted into religious fervour. He would spend hours kneeling in church, gazing at the figure of Christ and perhaps expressing some of his thwarted filial devotion by transferring it to his Heavenly Father.

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[30] "Rêverie sur ta venue" in "Ombre de mon Amour" p.57 and OP 402.

[31] "Deux matelots qui ne s'étaient jamais quittés." They were dressed alike in blue sailor suits, as mentioned in "Zone" and elsewhere. The younger brother, Albert, was a shy, fair-haired youth not at all like Guillaume. He went to sea, and being in Mexico in 1914, decided to settle in that country as a bank clerk. He died out there in 1919, four months after his brother [ref. L. Faure-Favier op.cit. p.94 et.seq.] Mme de Kostrowitzky regarded him as the sensible, practical member of the family, and held him up as an example to Wilhelm [see Rouveyre op.cit. p.17].

It is not impossible that in so far as the only father this imaginative child knew was a mysterious, unknown, unknowable, figure with ecclesiastical connections, he felt linked to Christ in whose mysterious birth and unseen Holy Father young Guillaume saw a distant parallel to his own situation. He may have prayed for his father to reveal himself. At all events this phase most certainly marked his emotional life and his writings for many years, not only as noted in the oft-quoted lines from "Zone", but seen in "L'Ermite", in his later Messianism, in the conception of the Trinity in "Les Collines" and his religious attitude to poetry. It occurs almost explicitly in "Un Soir":

> Un aigle descendit de ce ciel blanc d'archanges
> Et vous soutenez-moi
> Laisserez-vous trembler longtemps toutes ces lampes
> Priez priez pour moi [32]

The discipline, guidance and companionship he needed from a father found an effective substitute in the discipline and meditation offered by his religious devotion.

His relationship with his mother, too, may have intensified this religious phase. Perhaps he transferred his desire for a closer tie with the all-too-human Angélique to a spiritual closeness with his Virgin Mother. "Wilhelm . . professe pour la Vierge une dévotion particulière, il est 'secré-

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[32] "Un Soir" in "Alcools" OP 126. Ignoring here the "aigle" reference, the poem should be taken as a whole. M. Salmon suggested to the writer that the poet saw himself in a Christ-role [and refer p. 75 herein].

taire' de la Congrégation de l'Immaculée-Conception du Collège, fait retraite et s'abîme dans la méditation" [33].

It is also possible to see in this escape into mysticism the development of a buffer against the painful reality of his situation. When the first realisation of his mother's way of life dawned on him, and he rejected the Church which he felt had rejected her, he cut himself off from the source of spiritual strength and emotional protection he needed so badly. At first this would be transferred in a transitional period to a phase of daydreaming and fantasy-weaving. As W.H. Auden has written of certain family situations which influence a child in the direction of art, "to a situation where something important is lacking, a frequent response is to retire into a life of phantasy", the later attempts to understand and accept the situation, and to resolve the fantasy, producing the artistic expression [34]. The inheritance of his blood, which might have compensated for his loss of one parent and partial estrangement from the other, could not be publicly averred nor capitalised overtly. At best it was a secret asset, a reason for a belief in his destiny as the son of great forebears, one who would one day triumph over the sneers of his detractors. How he must have longed to shout, defiantly, the names of his ancestors instead

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[33] Adéma op.cit. p.13.

[34] W.H. Auden's essay: "Psychology and Art" in "The Arts Today" ed. Grigson.

of brooding silently over the injustice of his situation. He could have had wealth, social position, and the manifest enjoyment of family traditions and talents; for want of an official scrap of paper attesting the public affirmation of his parents' de facto marriage, all he gained from his ancestry was shame, a sense of guilt, frustration and insecurity both social and financial.

Nicoll points out that "the period when fantasy is most active is during childhood ... the fantasy-building system surrounds the growing child like a dense cloud on whose outer margins fall the shocks of reality" [35]. His imagination was stimulated first to hide the situation, then to understand and forgive it, and later to transmute the fact into an attractive element in the guise of a circumstance that made him interesting, different, romantic, mysterious. If his father was unknown - and the romance might outweigh the shame - just imagine who he might be ... But he remained sensitive and hurt inside. "The more sensitive an individual is," adds Nicoll [36], "the more he requires compensatory fantasies if he is to exist in reality."

Such fantasies are hard to bottle up in the mind when so constantly fed upon. With Apollinaire they were liable to break out into speech in the form of heavy embroideries of the

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[35] Maurice Nicoll: "Dream Psychology" [London, Frowd and Hodder, 1917], pp. 57-58.

[36] Ibid. loc. cit.

truth, as if sharing them would give them external reality [37]. The average young person at this stage keeps a diary to exteriorise such confidences. Elements of such confessions are indeed to be found in his "Stavelot Notebooks". He had to express himself to release the pressure, and so he wrote. Gradually this became the new form of buffer, to replace his religious meditations. In order to write his problems out, he used his practised skill at fantasy-weaving to disguise the literal truth with all the wealth of his imagination and the fruits of his wide reading. For reading was another escape, and his first efforts at writing were all encrusted with eclectic erudition whether purely literary or deviously autobiographical [38]. This tendency may be seen as an interchange between his life and his manner of writing [39].

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[37] An impulse still not curbed at the age of 22 when he told Annie Playden that she would be a countess if she married him. Ref. Steegmuller, op.cit., p.350.

[38] For example, "L'Enchanteur pourrissant", first published Paris, Kahnweiler, 1909, but probably composed 1899 [it was read to Jean Sève in 1900] and based on a schoolboy version, "Triptyque de l'Homme" in the opinion expressed to me by M. Salmon.

[39] Paul Léautaud complained: "Une biographie exacte et complète serait difficile à écrire. Chacun de ses amis savait quelque chose. Encore se contredisent-ils souvent, comme si Apollinaire avait varié sur tel ou tel point, par fantaisie, pour mystifier, ou pour dérouter." [A. van Bever and P. Léautaud: "Poètes d'Aujourd'hui" [Paris, Mercure de France, 1929, p.12]. Professor Raymond comments: "Il faut aussi compter avec son besoin de mystifier." [Marcel Raymond: "De Baudelaire au Surréalisme" [Paris, Corti, 1940, p.229].

Three other results of his early circumstances were, however, such as only to increase tension in his interior life. Having decided to accept the vocation of writer, for whatever conscious or unconscious reasons, he was utterly determined to make good at it, partly to justify himself in the eyes of his mother [and his failure to take up a professional career may have contributed to the withdrawal of financial support by Dom Romarino in 1897] and chiefly to "make a name for himself" in a sense more literal than usual. At all events, after leaving school without his Baccalaureate, he prescribed for himself a period of conscientious apprenticeship during which he read enormously, studied and discussed contemporary literature and the Symbolists, and practised writing as if he dared not fail. Secondly, his pride in, yet mistrust of, his blood produced a tension which was perhaps not worked out in his writing until the composition of "Lul de Faltenin" in 1907 since it bore not only noble traits but also the curse of profligacy. And lastly, the example of his parents produced a longing for stability and security which was entirely at variance with his inheritance of an adventurous spirit. This dual polarity produced in his life alternating movements towards a marriage of bourgeois respectability, as best typified by his engagement to Madeleine Pagès, and on the other hand a tendency to profligacy typified by his attachment to Louise de Coligny Châtillon at the very same period. The desire for a stable home life expressed itself equally in

his constant insistence on the need for a man to marry and raise children, the theme to which he devoted his play "Les Mamelles de Tirésias". But such family life as this also militated against devotion to the life of a dedicated writer, and was to produce not only the theme of some of his earlier works such as "L'Ermite" but also was to heighten that basic duality in his literary affiliations which expressed itself as "L'Ordre et l'Aventure" which he called "cette longue querelle de la tradition et de l'invention" in his last poetic testament, "La Jolie Rousse".

Though tinged with tension, this period following his transfer from the Collège Stanislaus in Cannes to the "classe de rhétorique" of the Lycée de Nice in February 1897, must have been a fairly pleasant and highly formative one. It is possible that his academic failure that year was partly due to his finding so many other interests. Here, at the age of 17, he fell in with a group of ardent admirers of the Symbolist movement, becoming close friends with Toussaint-Luca, another future writer. Symbolism, as a style of self-expression, suited his own purposes in exteriorising his problems while shrouding his secrets in a veil of mystère. He gained prestige by knowing and appreciating the works of Viélé-Griffin, Henri de Régnier, and especially Mallarmé, whose "Coup de dés", with its typographical dislocation appeared in May.

He displayed esoteric knowledge of Gothic mythology and his familiarity with the byways of history and legend. Having lost his faith, he adopted an inchoate rationalism, paraded socialist tendencies, probably championed Dreyfus, and founded with Toussaint-Luca an anarchist and symbolist newspaper, in manuscript form, and entitled first "Le Vengeur" and later "Le Transigeant". He was thus able to publish his poems, which he did under the pseudonym of Guillaume Macabre. At the same time he made his first essays at journalism, using political themes, and began to translate Boccaccio's "Fiametta" from the medieval Italian into aesthetically pleasing French.

After his Baccalaureate examination, then, he returned in June 1897 to Monaco where he was now to enjoy what were probably the happiest two years of his life: reading, writing, corresponding with old schoolfriends, and keeping abreast of current literary and political polemics. He had become certain of his vocation: indeed, he had already used the pen-name of Guillaume Apollinaire, had composed several of the stories of "L'Hérésiarque et Cie" and laid the foundations for some famous poems. Considering that his life was never to be easy, it is strange to find that Fate had decreed for him the luxury of two years of leisure in which to fit himself for his task. He conscientiously applied himself to his apprenticeship with determination to master his chosen craft.

"I am reading Balzac seriously ... He is an enormous shapeless predecessor of Zola, Bourget, Tolstoi and Elémir Bourges, but he had no grasp of social questions" the seventeen-year old critic wrote to Toussaint-Luca at this time [40]. He also mentioned in the same correspondence his reading of "Les Déracinés" by Barrès, and exclaimed: "Prose! How difficult it is! Verses are much easier to achieve." Looking back in 1915, he wrote to Breton: "There is no doubt that Mallarmé influenced me, although I considered him above all as a Parnassian, a pro-Parnassian ... Racine, La Fontaine, Perrault and also Madame Leprince de Beaumont were the great admirations of my childhood." He knew the work of Verlaine very well, but was not to read Rimbaud until much later. He guessed that only the vers libre would translate the modern world, but in 1895 it was with the alexandrine that he made his first attempts at poetry. As an example, we have the poems preserved by Toussaint-Luca: "La Maison de Cristal" and "Mort de Pan", the former full of Arthurian names, the latter of classical inspiration and signed "Guillaume Macabre". Yet by 1898 his "Mardi Gras", also dedicated to Toussaint-Luca, is couched already in vers libre [41]. It is inspired by the Nice Carnival, but it is doggedly symbolist, and very

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[40] A. Toussaint-Luca: "Guillaume Apollinaire: Souvenirs d'un ami" [Paris, La Phalange, 1920].

[41] Toussaint-Luca published these three poems op. cit. pp. 28-29.

imitative, though already showing a personal rhythm and containing lines good enough to be retained for use again in "Alcools".

Finally we have his oldest surviving manuscript, the poem "Minuit" [1895], the words of which are intermingled with pictorial illustration by a Mallarméan attention to typescript and linear displacement:

Dans
L'ombre L'heure
Sombre Pleure
D'une
Nuit
Sans
Bruit

One scarcely needs to add "trois fois" to hear the echo of Verlaine. But this document is a valuable reminder that even the bold experiments of his calligrammes had already originated in these early years, which is to say that some facets of his adult writing, decried by critics as gimmicky reactions to his contemporaries, do prove in fact to be firmly rooted in his own personal development.

Meanwhile, Angélique had met the wealthy and elegant Jules Weil, a Jewish financier born at Strasbourg in 1869. He undertook the support of his captivating "Olga de Kostrowiska" and her two sons. The boys got on well with their "Uncle", and his lavish spending filled the gap left by the withdrawal of financial support by the Flugi d'Aspermonts. As we have seen,

Guillaume used his leisure years most profitably from the point of view of his chosen vocation. Yet, although it was not a period of idle luxury, it is doubtful whether his poetry would ever have reached the heights of universal appeal if this protected existence had continued. However, like the Roi-Lune, Fate moved him on once more in time and space, at this point to acquaint him with the vicissitudes of real poverty. Happily, this further change, to a level of existence that taught him to feel the common humanity he shared with a very different class of people from those he was used to frequenting, was accomplished gradually and in another idyllic setting.

Precisely what happened is not known. Weil's finances appear to have suffered a setback [42], and the pair of inveterate gamblers may have passed the responsibility of repairing their fortunes on to Lady Luck. Perhaps it was the beginning of Angélique's "last fling" at the Casinos, born of the sheer joie de vivre over her latest love: for indeed this appears to have been her last amorous adventure and her last gambling tour and at 41

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[42] Paul Léautaud records in his Journal under the date January 20, 1919, how Mme de Kostrowitzky "spoke about the man she has lived with for twenty-five years, her 'friend', an Alsatian, great gambler, one moment rolling in money, the next penniless." Perhaps his gambling had produced a penniless period which his normal income took some time to repair. Dr. Davies says he gambled on the Stock Exchange and had had money in South African mines which were now worked out [op. cit. p.41].

she was perhaps ready to settle down [43]. Maybe the venture was precipitated by the Monegasque authorities finally succeeding in extraditing "Olga" [44] now that her ecclesiastical protection was removed. Whatever the reasons, the Kostrowitzky family left Monaco in January 1899, staying in Aix and Lyons on their way to Paris, where they arrived in April [45]. Apollinaire tells us that he read enormously in Lyons. Madame M.-J. Durry hazards a guess that Angélique had an affair with a wealthy silk manufacturer, who presumably had a fine library. I doubt the romantic attachment, but we may note that the word canut in "L'Ermite" is probably referable to this period.

Henri Fluchère, Professor at Aix University and himself an .

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[43] This liaison was to last until their death. Léautaud [loc. cit.] records that in January 1919 Mme de Kostrowitzky, then in her 61st year, visited his office at the Mercure de France to seek copies of her son's works, which she had never read. She was expensively dressed, and still living happily with Weil after 22 years. [One assumes she said twenty-five years to extend the duration of her steady attachment by the same process that led her to give her age as 52]. Both she and Weil were to die within a few days of each other two months later of the same influenza that had carried off Apollinaire a few months earlier.

[44] As suggested by Steegmuller, op.cit. pp. 24-27. André Rouveyre in Amour et Poésie d'Apollinaire [Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1955] notes the observation of a contemporary resident, Eugène Trotabas: "Another Polish lady, Mme de Kostrowicka, said to have been financed by the Société des Bains de Mer as entraîneuse certainly figured in ... raucous gatherings."

[45] Cecily Mackworth in her Guillaume Apollinaire and the Cubist Life [Murray, 1961] gives these places in the order Lyons and then Aix [p.19], but is a most unreliable source. Progress northwards seems more logical. She may even have confused Aix-en-Provence with Aix-les-Bains.

Apollinarian, assures me that he has found no trace of their stay at Aix. However, in "Le Poète assassiné" the hero Croniamantal is taken from Monaco by a Dutchman, Janssen, to a large house in the neighbourhood of Aix "que les gens du voisinage appelaient le Château" where his reading is directed to the classics and "romans de chevalerie" and where he started to learn English and studied Shakespeare. [46] The character of Janssen is drawn in unusual detail and so convincingly that one is tempted to wonder whether there is an autobiographical reference of some importance here. Dr. Davies was the first to notice that the manuscript bore further details which had been heavily scored out as if they were too near the truth: Janssen had met Nyctor's father in Boston and had promised to look after the young man who became in the published version "Croniamantal, héritier du vieux nom des Ygrées". Perhaps, concludes Dr. Davies, Francesco Flugi d'Aspermont who had once embarked for America, had indeed asked a friend to look out for the boy, and their visit to Aix was made in this connection [47].

What is certain is that the Kostrowitzky family arrived in Paris in April 1899. Guillaume walked the streets of the capital in spring, enchanted to be where he had always wanted

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[46] "Le Poète assassiné" [Gallimard, 1947, p.40],

[47] Davies op.cit. pp.38-40. Her spelling of Croniamental is not that of the text, which is given here. The Aix referred to is Aix-en-Provence, as shown in the MS.

to be: at the cultural centre of Europe, and hoping to see and recognise some of the famous poets he had revered in Nice [48]. He busied himself during the summer with his writing, probably frequenting the Bibliothèque Mazarine and perhaps roughing out parts of L'Enchanteur pourrissant. In short, Paris on his first visit was simply a prolongation of his Mediterranean apprenticeship, its literary associations intensifying his desire to write, and its libraries intensifying the bookish erudition of his approach to writing.

They stayed in the fashionable Avenue MacMahon, but Weil's fortune seems to have ebbed, and they soon left Paris for Belgium, perhaps to avoid debts. Angélique went to Spa to try her luck at the Casino. Weil himself stayed just outside the famous watering-place, in the little Ardennes town of Stavelot. Here he put up at number 12 rue Neuve, the pension of a M. Constant-Lekeux. Guillaume and Albert joined their "uncle" there, cutting fine figures as distinguished foreign visitors.

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[48] Refer Les Marges, March 1910: Guillaume Apollinaire's article "Rémy de Gourmont".

CHAPTER 3.

Ardennes Prelude - Meditations of a stylite on love and poetry

Stavelot is situated in a soft landscape of woods and streams and rolling fields, 16 kilometers from Spa. It has a long history, and still bears many signs of its illustrious past. For over a thousand years this was the capital of an ecclesiastical principality, famous for its arts, science and tanneries. The ancient town of Stabelacum was founded in 652, at what had been a Celtic settlement already known to the Vikings and Romans, by St. Remacle, whose famous châsse is still to be seen with other magnificent treasures in the fine church that replaces the original Abbey Church. [It is typical of the strange coincidences of Apollinaire's life that some of these treasures were stolen on 25 November 1911 and traced to Paris in the same year that the theft of the Gioconda from the Louvre was linked with the theft of other objects from that museum by a Belgian, Géry Piéret, who was staying with Apollinaire, basically, no doubt, by way of a return for the hospitality of the Belgians of Stavelot.] The most imposing ruins still standing are those of the ancient Abbey, set in a restful, tree-shaded garden. The young Kostrowitzky must have admired them, little dreaming that the imposing Hôtel de Ville facing them would one day house a museum established in his honour! He could not have failed to be intrigued by the history and legends of Stavelot,

nourishing such old traditions as the carnival of "la Laetare" and its picturesque Blanc Moussi figures, the white-clad clown-monks with long peg-noses.

Having got the boys settled in the pension Constant, Weil joined Angélique in Spa, but the Casino, as was later to be recorded in a police report from Spa, refused her permission to play. The couple therefore returned to Paris, arranging that the boys' board in Stavelot would be paid by postal remittance.

For a while all was idyllic for Guillaume. Reared on the Mediterranean, he was now immersed in a northern landscape which appealed to his romantic side and brought out the Slav in him, emphasising his dual heritage. As he explored the countryside, he also studied the local people, impressing the girls with his aristocratic bearing and the local schoolmaster with his erudition, especially his esoteric knowledge of magic, demonology and the occult. He attended meetings of the local literary group, La Fougère, which met upstairs in the Hôtel Constant in a room still containing the furniture of those days. As Guillaume slept on the third floor [on the south-west corner of the hôtel] he could scarcely have been better placed by fate to be reminded of his literary destiny. Although he privately satirised the circle as provincials, he did find some kindred spirits such as the engineer Jules Lhoest, who was also a man of letters.

But as the weeks went by, there was no money in the letters from Paris, and although the Constants were not yet unduly anxious, the boys' clothing became increasingly thread-bare, and their shoes badly worn. Now began the bitter-sweet prelude to Apollinaire's adult life, the first pangs of adolescent love, and the first taste of poverty and personal shame. It was all this that coloured his impressions of the charming valley of the Amblève, the romantic wooded hills that made such an ideal trysting-place and the more austere moorlands, known as the Fagne spadoise, which suited the mood of adolescent yearning. The atmosphere of this stay in Stavelot was etched into his memory by nostalgia, since it was here that he enjoyed the last vestiges of his carefree boyhood sheltered and provided for by his elders, and bade an irrevocable farewell to the innocence of youth. He arrived a relatively pampered boy, and was to leave a troubled young man, his eyes opened to the harsh realities of the world awaiting him. Small wonder that the Ardennes scene stamps his early work, the more so as during his stay there the last of summer slipped by and gave way, as if symbolically, to an autumn that was to send him on his way with the chill blast of approaching winter.

In order to assess the effect of the Stavelot interlude on Apollinaire's poetry, as well as to establish the date and circumstances of composition of early but important poems which show the genesis of his esthetic, I timed my visit to

accord with the period of Apollinaire's stay there. The weather in 1966 was unusual, and apparently resembled that of 1899, for the early autumn was warm and colourful, but ended in an especially early and severe winter which actually brought snow in September, thus confirming Apollinaire's reference to leaving whitened fields, which has puzzled some of his exegetists. Before proceeding to a brief summary of this period, however, I must acknowledge my debt to M. Armand Huysmans, the genial Stavelot artist and architect, who devoted boundless enthusiasm to the establishment in 1953 of a centre of Apollinarian studies, the Musée Apollinaire, in the old Hôtel de Ville. It was through his documentation and introductions, backed by the work of M. Camille Deleclos, that I was able to explore the poet's background at first-hand [49].

Stavelot is near Malmédy, which was then in Prussian hands, and the Walloon resistance to Prussian influence appealed

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[49] M. Armand Huysmans, Villa Epilogue, Parfondruy, Stavelot, is Conservateur du Musée Apollinaire and secretary of "Les Amis de Guillaume Apollinaire a.s.b.l." This centre grew out of his coordination of the efforts of Camille Deleclos, Jules Lhoest and Lucien Wetz to preserve Apollinariana at the Hôtel du Luxembourg [originally the pension Constant, now renamed the Hôtel du Mal-Aimé]. It was officially inaugurated 14 June 1954 and contains a useful collection of the poet's MSS, documents relating to his stay in Stavelot, and works of criticism. Its Biennales and annual Colloques Apollinaire, presided over by Professor M. Décaudin of Toulouse, have produced many interesting papers. M. Deleclos is the author of La première Muse de G. Apollinaire [A.S.B.L. Les Amis de G. Apollinaire, Stavelot] etc... Reference for the poet's stay in Stavelot should be made to C. Fettweis: Apollinaire en Ardennes [Brussels, Henriquez, 1934], and H. de Harven: "Guillaume Apollinaire en Wallonie" in La Vie Wallonne, 15 June 1925.

to young Guillaume, who readily identified himself with the Stavelotains. "Loin de rechercher la compagnie des autres villégiatures ou celles des jeunes gens de son âge et de son éducation, il se mêle au bon peuple stavelotain" notes M. Deleclos [50]. Perhaps as a result of his early childhood in the Trastevere, Apollinaire always mixed freely and naturally with all classes, including the most humble. In front of the pension Constant was a bench, on which foregathered some of the old identities of Stavelot. That they accepted him, and were led to yarn to him about local folklore and legend was due to the fact that he respected them, and recognised the value of the store of experience, rustic humour and down-to-earth appreciation of life the peasants drew on. It was still his vast store of undigested bookish erudition that heavily coloured his serious poetry of this period; and the literary affectations of the poets he had read scarcely distinguished him from the climate of La Fougère or diminished the intellectualism with which he responded to such contacts as Lhoest and Wetz, as may be seen in the many acrostics he addressed to the young ladies of the town. But now he was relatively deprived of books, and his increasing lack of funds made it painful for him to mix with his own class. The invaluable result of these circumstances, however embarrassing to him personally, was that he turned to a living source of inspiration. In his prose, by contrast to his poetry, he was thus able to pro-

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[50] C. Deleclos: Stavelot [Editions Les Amis de G. Apollinaire, Stavelot, n.d., p.42].

duce his first really original work, best exemplified by the short story "Que vlo-vé?" Here is something genuinely alive and authentic, set in the scene he knew at first hand, and expressed in the local idiom unhampered by literary influences or his personal problems.

Meanwhile, another current ran parallel to his virile, earthy one, no less important for its being ethereal and somewhat artificial. A hundred and fifty yards down from the pension, in the direction of the Abbey gardens, the old rue du Vinâve, on the left, opens into a cobblestoned sqare, Place du Vinâve, still graced by an ancient village fountain and famous today as the point at which the Battle of the Ardennes was turned. On the far side of the square stands a row of shops over one of which, a café in 1899 [51], lived Maria Dubois. Maria was one of the daughters of the café proprietor; she was the local beauty, chosen with her sister Irma to be photographed wearing local costume, as may still be seen in a surviving picture postcard made for publicity purposes. Successfully rivalling young Lhoest, Guillaume took her to the country

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[51] Then the Café des Brasseurs, not as suggested by Dr. Davies, whose references [op.cit.p.49] to the young man "courting his beloved in the fumes of the chip shop" must be accepted as part of her [usually justified] re-creation of probable background details that make her book eminently readable. Presumably she has been led astray by Robert Goffin [Entrer en Poésie, A l'Enseigne du Chat qui pêche, Brussels, 1948]. The value of Goffin's "discovery" of Annie Playden has distracted attention from a number of inaccuracies which have been unquestioningly repeated by leading critics. Goffin wrote [op.cit.] that "ses parents tenaient une humble friture".

dances, learning the maclotte at which Maria was notably expert, while an affectionate relationship developed in a setting somewhat reminiscent of Nerval. How deep and genuine was their attachment? M. Huysmans, proud of Stavelot's connections with the poet, showed me the death certificate of Mademoiselle Dubois, who could have had the pick of the local men but remained unmarried. The "Acte de Décès no.19 inscrit aux registres de l'Etat civil de 1919" reads: "L'an mil neuf cent dix-neuf, le neuvième jour du mois de février, est décédée en cette Commune: Maria-Françoise-Léonie DUBOIS, repasseuse, domiciliée à Stavelot, rue Basse, un, née en cette ville le trois janvier mil huit cent quatre-vingt-un, célibataire, fille légitime de Pierre-Joseph-Léon Dubois et de Sophie Grosjean." She was thus eighteen when Guillaume visited Stavelot, and although four months younger than the poet, survived him by only three months - a strange coincidence that she should die at the same early age as Apollinaire and so soon after his death, if she never learned of it, or was not interested.

For his part, Guillaume was a hotblooded young man who needed female company, as revealed so poignantly in a poem composed at this time [52]; he was also ashamed of his natural lust, and deeply inclined to the conventional approach of engagement and marriage as we shall see time and again; and moreover he was

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[52] "Vae Soli" , first published in 1952; see Œuvres poétiques p.519.

conventionally convinced of the necessity for a muse, though equally prepared to see unrequited love as an even better source of poetry. Whether she held his passion at bay, so that his frustration caused a quarrel, or whether she realised he was only a visitor passing through and broke off an idyll, their relationship not only forecast a pattern Apollinaire was to develop with his subsequent loves, but also sharpened the first serious theme to appear in his poems: the quarrel between sex, love, and poetry. Because these poems were worked up and added to after his departure from Stavelot, in a different frame of mind caused by the circumstances of his departure, it is proposed to complete the narration of his stay in the Ardennes before examining works of this period.

If one continues north-west past Maria's house, a road leads up a hill [now contoured by an Avenue Guillaume Apollinaire] to one of the most softly seductive pathways imaginable. Ankle deep in golden leaves, one follows it slowly climbing beneath a canopy of interlaced branches, at first accompanied by a tinkling stream beside which there now stands an elaborate shrine. Within twenty minutes from the Dubois residence one arrives at a rocky outcrop on the side of the hill of Les Erlinchamps, looking across a deep valley towards the steep slope of the Bois de Borzeu. The narrow neck of gray stone with alabaster flecks terminates in a pillar which has a sheer drop of some sixty feet, shrouded in dense foliage of oak and nut-bearing hazel, but

offering secluded views over the thickly wooded valley. This is the Devil's Rock [53], to which Guillaume led Maria, too poor to entertain her otherwise than with his charm and in such a lovely natural setting. It was also to this place that he would come to brood, solitary and troubled, over his financial situation, his romance, and his vocation as poet. At other times he would go for long walks, either with Albert or alone, up over the hills and across the unique upland plateau of moorland known as the Fagnes. With little else to do, he developed a taste for long walks, covering surprising distances, and recording his visits to such places as Roanne-Coô, whose waterfall still attracts tourists on a scenic drive from Stavelot. Perhaps the Fagne best suited his mood as anxiety deepened regarding the continued lack of money from his mother.

The Constants were now pressing him for arrears, and it is a tribute to the impressive appearance of the trio on their arrival, and the unalterable bearing of Guillaume at this stage,

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[53] Known locally as the Rocher du Diable, and marked as the Pierre du Diable on the Ordinance Survey Map 50/5-6 Kaart van Belgie opgesteld en gedrukt in het Militair Geografisch Instituut, Brussels. It is not on the moors, as suggested by Dr. Davies [op.cit., p.46], nor on the Fagne as described by Adéma [op.cit. p.25: "dans les 'Fagnes', ces landes parsemées de rochers sombres, comme la pierre du diable, isolée dans un lieu sauvage où il va souvent rêver"] and certainly not in "la fange" as suggested by the unfortunate misprint [loc.cit.]! All this has a bearing on Mme Durry's reference to the stylite of A. France's Thaïs, discussed hereunder.

that the proprietor had been so patient with the two boys who now looked so shabbily dressed. Surviving residents of Stavelot who could remember those days, when interviewed still recollected the pitiful condition of their clothes and shoes. Rather than mix with the upper strata of townspeople, the proud Apollinaire took picnic lunches [charged to his account!], and stayed out all day tramping over the Fagnes, supplementing his diet with myrtle berries and mushrooms, both in plentiful supply at this season, fortunately, as he had a large appetite. Myrtles are still gathered there by means of a contrivance which resembles a flat scoop with its leading edge formed by a long-toothed comb which plucks the berries and rolls them back into the container. It must have been more tedious for Guillaume and have stained his hands crimson. The mushrooms grow principally in the little groves of trees that dot the Fagnes.

Most critics have relied on M. Lemonnier's description of the Fagne and have repeated unquestioningly his references to its melancholy nature. For example, M. Adéma quotes the following [54]: "... terre pourrie et spongieuse prolongée dans les horizons. Aussi loin que va le regard, il n'aperçoit que le moutonnement d'une herbe courte et drue, une terre mangée d'immenses plaques de mousse... Un deuil s'apesantit visiblement sur cette contrée que les floraisons joyeuses n'émaillent pas et

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[54] Camille Lemonnier: Un Sahel noir, quoted by Adéma op.cit, p.26.

qui l'hiver comme l'été, toujours noire, hirsute, sévère avec ses eaux croupissantes et ses marais qui ne cessent un moment que pour se reformer plus loin. Les rouilleuses cavités de ses tourbières absorbent la lumière au lieu de la réfracter. La mer et le désert, cette autre désert, sont les seules images qui viennent à la pensée devant cette monotonie..." "On imagine" continues M. Adéma, attempting to assess Apollinaire's reactions, "combien de pareils paysages marquent de leur empreinte son esprit."

As a literary sleuth M. Adéma is unparalleled in the painstaking accuracy of his research into Apollinaire's background. Yet I feel he has been led astray on this occasion by his source of information. Two clues have been overlooked. One is that the Stavelot tourist publicity boasts of the Fagnes as an attraction to visitors, which hardly suggests a scene of melancholy desolation. Secondly, such a description scarcely indicates a terrain where a meditative poet could resolutely tramp without falling into a treacherous bog. In fact, Camille Lemonnier's description, highly emotive and irrelevantly referring to seasonal impressions lying outside the period of Apollinaire's stay, more aptly describes the region to the east of Stavelot where the rivers Stave and Chéfosse form an unpleasant series of marshes - marked on the local survey map as containing "marais profond, marécage et tourbière", otherwise translated from the Flemish as "deep and shallow marsh, peat bog" ["diep en ondiep moeras"] - before the run-off falls and drains into the Amblève.

The descriptions given by Christian Fettweis [55] which are specifically relative to Apollinaire's stay in Stavelot, accord rather with the paintings of the local artist Mia Simon, whose colours sing of the rich warm tones and violet sky of the Fagne spadoise noted yet again by Goffin as "la Fagne violette" [56]. The present writer hopes that the following first-hand description may present a less misleading source, whose relevance will appear in a subsequent examination of "L'Ermite".

The road from Stavelot leads up through the dazzling autumnal glory of a typical Ardennes forest, thickly carpeted with brown leaves picked out in brilliant gold patches where shafts of sunlight penetrate the vault of dark branches. Here and there a bubbling spring produces a moss-edged pool vivid with the reflected blue of the sky, and from which a little stream runs in a deep bed, contrasting with the forest floor. One emerges onto a high, level area on a long crest, conscious of the open sky and the extent of view. A charming wooden monument "à Maurice Potter, peintre de nos fagnes, 1900-1946" assures us that this is indeed the fagne of which Stavelotains are justly proud, and bears the information "565m. altitude".

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[55] Christian Fettweis: Apollinaire en Ardennes, Henriquez, Brussels, 1934].

[56] Robert Goffin, op.cit.

Firm paths lead through the flat country which is rather squelchy after autumnal rains, and is tufted with light brown grass, coarse and spiky, typical of such conditions. Large patches of myrtle bushes grow to about two feet in height, with colourful autumn foliage, but most of the berries are gone by October. Apart from the rich brown of dead bracken, there are masses of purple heather and ling gay with the hum of honey bees. In places the silver birch stands out, its trunk with pale green patches and bright copper bands supporting a delicate tracery of twigs and a rich display of autumn foliage contrasting against the deep blue, almost violet, sky. Clumps of fir stand out in dark counterpoint at intervals. Firebreaks suggest that in late summer conditions are dry in most areas, and the platforms perched atop the fire-watching towers afford an excellent vantage point from which to view the landscape and remind us that these trees have been planted to wring some economic advantage from this terrain through afforestation. Enquiry confirms that clumps of firs have for many decades been established wherever the ground was suitable. Typically, there is virtually no vegetation capable of growing from a bed of conifer needles, which sets off all the more noticeably the vermillion toadstools and the many cream and white mushrooms which thrive in the woods. One of these is easily identifiable by its club shape as clavaria [genus clarvarei], the clavaire referred to by the observant Apollinaire in "L'Ermite" but misprinted as "calvaire" as Tristan Tzara reminded us.

A foreign observer is constantly struck by the lack of interest and discrimination the French-speaking critic often shows towards the flora and fauna of a landscape, and on the other hand by the keen observation and accurate nomenclature of Apollinaire, who never confused a fir with a pine as his interpreters are happy to do. This generalised observation will have some bearing on the location of the scenes of his early poems, but meanwhile may suggest why the stylistic description by M. Lemonnier quoted above gives a false lead, and has presented critics with a landscape upon which one can project one's mood to a deceptive extent. There is no evidence for the frequent assertion that the landscape produced a melancholy mood in the poet. Certainly the stereotype picture, built up by a succession of literary critics, of an isolated, dark Devil's Rock brooding over a desolate plain stretching to a melancholy horizon, however convenient as a background for Mme Durry's interpretation of "L'Ermite", is without foundation in fact.

What, then,were the influences of Apollinaire's stay in Stavelot upon his personality and poetry? A difference of opinion is apparent. Maurice Piron sees the local landscape as clearly influencing Apollinaire's poetry in imagery and theme [57].

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[57] Refer Marcel Thirv and Maurice Piron: Deux Notes sur Apollinaire en Ardenne [Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Françaises de Belgique, Palais des Académies, 1 rue Ducale, Bruxelles, 1958].

He says that it not only heightened his taste for autumn tints and melancholy nostalgia, but also "fut féconde pour la genèse elle-même de l'œuvre qui allait naître, puisqu'elle coïncide avec la gestation des premiers thèmes apollinairiens, et qu'elle l'a, jusqu'à un certain point, influencé." Margaret Davies, however, doubts the extent of such influence. "How much Stavelot itself had to do with this development is open to question. It is an easy job for the critic to pick out the obvious images, the picturesque references to picturesque sights, the bilberries and ferns, the pine trees... In his poetry their role seems to be purely circumstantial, and they add little to his stock of important, deeply experienced imagery." [58] M. Adéma broadens the picture [59]: "Ces paysages qu'il découvre, cette conjonction de la nature et de l'amour vont avoir un grand retentissement sur la sensibilité poétique et les échos en résonneront longtemps dans son oeuvre. Beaucoup de poèmes d'Alcools, de Calligrammes, évoqueront les paysages wallons, la flore ou les coutumes locales..."

Although much has already been written in a general way of the importance of Stavelot to Apollinaire, a closer examination will not only put it in sharper focus but may be expected to reveal insights into the way in which this period affected the young poet's attitudes to life and poetry and con-

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[58] M. Davies, op.cit., p.49. One notes that firs are referred to as pines.

[59] M. Adéma, op.cit., p.27.

tributed to the development of his mature concept of what poetry meant to him. In fact, the question is somewhat complicated. First, the landscape was not confined to the Fagnes, whether these were melancholy in themselves or not. Secondly, its images affected different levels of writing to different degrees, and in different ways at different times. And thirdly, his <u>experiences</u> in that setting influenced his writing as much as the images borne in his mind, and - as a further complication - coloured those images progressively, until their association changed completely. It will be necessary to consider his prose and his poetry separately, and each in its chronology.

As regards his prose, it was the woods, valleys and musical streams of the immediate environs of Stavelot that provided the actual source of inspiration for his short story writing. For example, Que vlo-vé? was the very spirit of the Ardennes forests, as Apollinaire tells us in the opening paragraph of the story of that title. Moreover, the manners, speech and lore of the local peasants give him the whole robust stuff of the tale.

But in the case of his poetic drama he is drawing on his inner resources, and the landscape background is a mere shadow of his actual surroundings. For example, the nebulous

sylvan setting of L'Enchanteur pourrissant [60] is no more referable than Shakespeare's setting in "the Forest of Arden". The inspiration is above all bookish, drawing on his vast reading of mythology, demonology, medieval and particularly Arthurian legend, with a deep substratum of personal reference couched in a tone of self-mockery to hide his bitterness. The Enchanteur who has a mysterious father and a mortal, beautiful mother, is clearly Apollinaire himself. Angélique appears in her own name and another guise, announcing "Je ne suis pas vierge, mais reine, amante et bien nommée" [i.e. angelic, innocent, suggesting a cross-reference to the "reine innocente" of "L'Ermite"]. He himself is Merlin, the magician, master of the art of weaving word-spells, but himself spellbound by his enchanting beloved, and thus "tué par l'amour". His Viviane is, specifically, a dancer, as was Maria Dubois the exponent of local dances.

Several indications link this extraordinary work with both "L'Ermite" and "Onirocritique" to situate it chronologically in the Stavelot period. Most obvious are the references, found also in "L'Ermite", to Gauvain, owls and Lilith "ululant".

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[60] Adéma, op.cit., p.28: "C'est à Stavelot qu'il composa la plus grande partie de l'Enchanteur pourrissant." This text, for long virtually unobtainable, is now to be found in reliable form in the Oeuvres complètes de Guillaume Apollinaire, Vol. I, thanks to the energy and patient scholarship of Michel Décaudin.

We note also the probable reference to Angélique as reine in the sense of mother, with an absent father, in "la reine accouchait ... le roi guerroyait aux contrées lointaines", a minor theme in "L'Ermite". Very interesting is the explicit realisation of the nature of this poetic recreation of archetypes that rule his emotions from the depths of his consciousness [61]: "Une irréalité a pris la forme de la réalité. Et Angélique est vivante faussement dans la forêt profonde et obscure." The forest of "L'Enchanteur" is the poet's subconscious mind, a "forêt de symboles" in which the shadow of his mother, Angélique, was more real to him than the actual woods surrounding him in Stavelot. We also see him cast as the ascetic religious, as in "L'Ermite", and even more specifically linking the theme of sex conflicting with his ability to write: "Un abbé cessant d'écrire dans sa cellule" prays "faites Seigneur... éloignez les cris de femme." "Les jours de pluie," writes Adéma [62], "il s'enferme dans sa chambre et 'brouillonne'." But after a while, his physical nature would turn his thoughts from his cell of literary devotion to the girl around the corner, Place du Vinâve, and the Rocher du Diable, or rock of temptation where he took her, and hence to the sordid preoccupation of "Vae Soli". This exactly parallels the opening of "L'Ermite".

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[61] Not referred to again so explicitly until "Dans l'Abri-Caverne", where they are given the same context [OP p.259]. So many of Apollinaire's ultimate developments can be traced back to this important period.

[62] Adéma loc.cit.

Similar, too, is the departure for the city: "Le chevalier Tyolet partit à travers la forêt se dirigeant vers la cité d'Orkenise." The mention of "St. Siméon stylite" recalls the stylite references in "L'Ermite", linked also to the poet's own meditations on the Rocher du Diable on the outskirts of Stavelot, but here we have a more specific reference to sin, the town, and presumably Maria - a link with the winter-guilt feelings he associated with her in his minor poems and his masochistic attitude towards them: "pour mon orgeuil de souffrir, je suis cause de tous les péchés de ma ville pécheresse."

All this shows only the most tenuous connection between L'Enchanteur pourrissant and the actual Stavelot scene but strengthens the belief that this writing was indeed composed, or extensively reworked, in the Ardennes. After all, the basic theme - the spell-binder spellbound - is of this period. However, there is also one sudden, quite specific paragraph of pure local colour in this work, where the elves say: "Pauvre homme! Nous allons te confier un secret précieux. Va, dans la forêt des Ardennes, tu trouveras une petite rivière qui recèle des perles, c'est l'Amblève bordée d'aunes." The alders are still there, their branches dipping and swaying in the swift current that is fed by the run-off of the fagnes above the valley, though the pearls, once secreted by freshwater mussels, have long since vanished along with the last ambulant pearl-seller whose white hair and tray of samples are now but a memory

preserved on a picture postcard. The sudden introduction of this solitary and isolated reference is puzzling. It is out of key, as if it had been added later, in the course of revision.

Two points of significance arise with regard to this passage. First, its appearance in this text in no way proves that the whole composition is to be dated 1899, any more than the equally surprisingly precise reference to St. Apollinaris and the Maria Laach in the second paragraph of "Que-vlo-ve?" proves the whole of that story to have been written after the poet's visit to the Rhine in 1900. The case for the chronology of L'Énchanteur rests on internal evidence and the cross-reference of theme, attitudes and vocabulary as indicated above. If one is to be literal, the directive "Va, dans la forêt des Ardennes" suggests rather that the "pauvre homme" addressed was not already in the Ardennes! And secondly, the occurrence of this passage does not so much show the influence of the Stavelot landscape on this work as to show, by its uniqueness, that it had virtually none. Much more important was his affair with Maria, who preferred dancing to trysting with a poet, for it was this that really coloured L'Énchanteur pourrissant by suggesting the very plot, and perhaps suggested the shadowy sylvan setting word-spun by the poet in the isolation of his prison-like room from which he could not escape on wet days, because of his poverty, except by the magic of his poetic invention.

As we move a step further from the prose proper of the short story to his prose-poetry, we see a further development of the same movement from representation of the natural landscape to a recreation of an interior landscape which merely echoes the physical features of his environment. Indeed, it is in "Onirocritique" [63] above all other compositions that "une irréalité a pris la forme de la réalité" in an early forecast of surréalité.

Before proceeding further in this attempt to identify developing traits, it should be emphasised that in the case of Apollinaire, chronology is often less that of a single determinable date than that of his interior life which at some particular moment would unify a final version of earlier jottings or brouillonnement or even virtually completed work, to express his needs at that moment. Single lines, or even whole sections of a poem, may considerably antedate the work [or works!] in which they occur in published form. Margaret Davies, speaking of Apollinaire's borrowing from himself of fragments that showed special inspiration, expresses it very aptly: "He was a wary

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[63] "Onirocritique" first appeared alone in La Phalange no.20 of 15 February, 1908, but appended to L'Enchanteur pourrissant in 1909, again suggesting a chronological connection. It appears in the OEuvres poétiques, p.371 et seq. Its theme and imagery are referable to the Stavelot period, but its technique is a step beyond that of L'Enchanteur and this will be discussed more appropriately later. The work is dealt with here because of its content reference to Stavelot, and for its themes. Technically and esthetically, of course, it comes midway between L'Enchanteur and Le Brasier.

enough judge to recognise the visitations and make use of them in later doldrums, or even as propitiatory offerings to encourage further divine gusts" [64]. He would even re-use a haunting phrase within the same work, which partly explains the incantatory refrains in L'Enchanteur ["la forêt profonde et obscure"] and "Onirocritique" ["Mais j'avais la conscience des éternités différentes..."].

The obvious link between these two works is the appearance, in both, of poems about a mythical town, Orkenise. This was created by the stylite in L'Enchanteur, recalling the creative poet meditating on the Devil's Rock and the "sin" of his trysting there at night as a natural man. In "Onirocritique" Orkenise "parut à l'horizon" before the two very different creatures who had made love among the bilberries in a "faux hiver" [a fairly clear reference to Mareye, a country girl from a different world, the Fagne and the unusually early winter of 1899] and who walked towards the town through "les vallons où les pommiers chantaient" and past ploughed fields. This could well refer to Stavelot, founded by St. Remacle who had been

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[64] M. Davies, op.cit., p.51. It was James Lawler who revealed the existence of early MS material in the "Stavelot notebook" [refer J. Lawler: "Le séjour à Stavelot" in Mercure de France of 1 February 1955 and note [81] herein]. The extent of such borrowing and the resultant difficulty of establishing chronology were exposed by Michel Décaudin in his Le Dossier d'Alcools [Minard, Paris, 1965].

commemorated so famously by the art of the orfèvre [65]. In the version of L'Enchanteur it is "un bel orfèvre" who enters Orkenise and breaks hearts "dans les vergers de la contrée" but after the girls have led him to make love in the valley, there follows "leur méprise". In "Onirocritique" it is "un charretier" who enters Orkenise, bringing his heart "pour me marier", but subsequently "les gardes riaient" and in the end the gates of the town are shut against him [as those of Stavelot to the poor poet] so that he finds...

... la route est grise,
L'amour grise, ô charretier

whereas in L'Enchanteur the reference to grey is couched in terms which suggest a thematic, even chronological, connection

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[65] For example, "l'orfèvre liégeois du XVIIe siècle, Jean Goesin", refer Camille Deleclos op.cit., p.16, as also for descriptions of the reliquaries which are the most notable feature of the treasures for which Stavelot is justly famous. In his "Apollinaire à Stavelot" in the Revue Générale Belge of August 1952, this author proves Apollinaire's acquaintance with this treasure by quoting him: "Je voudrais être dans les fagnes ... je serais heureux dans la bruyère et les airelles et plus heureux que Saint Remacle dans sa châsse." The poet's identification with the orfèvre is clearer in the "poème retrouvé" OP 697, a thinner version of the Orkenise incident.

with the unusual theme of "Au Prolétaire" [66]:

Au val, les bras sont las, les chevelures grises

Such evidence suggests contemporaneous composition of the works quoted, and they reveal the contemporary main theme of young Guillaume's initial popularity in Stavelot being followed by his heartbreak and the growing suspicion and ultimate rejection by the guardians of public morality who sat on the bench in front of the pension and "tricotaient superbement."

Yet even in this prose there are constant references to love-making and the composition of poetry in the natural setting of the myrtilles of the Fagne and the orchards of Stavelot. These are obvious enough in L'Enchanteur pourrissant, where it is Viviane-Maria, the dancer-mistress, who sits on the rock while Merlin-Guillaume, the magical word-spinner, is imprisoned under it through her enchantment but continues to weave his

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[66] "Au Prolétaire", OP p.520, was finalised in 1902, as evidenced by a manuscript written on paper from a German hotel. But there is no poem like it in form, style or theme in any other part of his work of 1902, whereas the poet did show interest in politics while at Stavelot [e.g. the Dreyfus Affair, mentioned by J. Lawler], and the poem is included in those dated "Stavelot 1899". The interest is hinted at in "Le bon sommeil" of the same collection, presumably because of the usines, and his first contact with peasants and labourers. His identification with the worker is again mentioned by M. Davies in her reference to the MS version of "Le Poète assassiné" [Travaillin in his worker's smock] which refers to a place on the road from Spa.

enchantments as it were posthumously. In "Onirocritique", however, these references are rather more difficult to discern until one sees the events and themes described above as the key to this mysterious composition which takes the hierophantic esthetic of L'Enchanteur a step further. In offering the following interpretation, it is hoped to shed further light on the way in which the Stavelot interlude, with its fusion of the landscape with heartbreak, poverty and poetising, influenced the concept of poetry being forged in the mind of Apollinaire at this formative stage. This in turn should demonstrate a most important tenet of the present thesis: that despite his self-conscious apprenticeship, reading and correspondence, on the Riviera, and his initially artificial posing when he arrived in Stavelot, Apollinaire's understanding of the functions of poetry, its technique and esthetic, all arose not from academic argument or bookish inspiration [67] but directly out of the impact made on his inner life by the experiences of his day to day existence. The poet used images from the latter as symbols of the former as he sought for solutions to his needs as a sensitive human being facing a difficult environment. Concomitantly, the detailed examination of this brief period of his life will be justified as the crux of his formation. In some ways, "Onirocritique" was to

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[67] An impression one can hardly escape when reading Mme Durry's Alcools, Tome I, pp.231 et seq., for example.

Apollinaire somewhat of a mystery, in that it was to be a source of further inspiration although for a long time he was unable to recapture its esthetic or understand the technique. We can see now that it arose not so much as an inexplicable flash of genius but as a logical outcome, technically, of L'Enchanteur, and a typical product, thematically and functionally, of the latter part of his stay in Stavelot.

The opening paragraph suggests that Guillaume's problems are getting on top of him, threatening to consume him. The interpolated poem shows that the admiration of the girls of Stavelot towards him has turned to scorn, and we later gather that this is because the effect of his aristocratic bearing and the tales he must have told about his noble lineage [which he would later describe in "Cortège"] has worn thin as his clothes have worn threadbare: "les femmes ne voulaient pleurer aucun mort". "J'étais ganté", he repeats, and the suggestion is that he had been seen as aristocratic in the terms of the attitude attributed to the local women in "Au Prolétaire":

> Honteuse de leurs mains vaines de leur chair nue
> Tes pucelles voudraient un doux luxe ingénu
> Qui vînt de mains gantées plus blanches que les leurs
> Et s'en vont tout en joie un soir à la male heure [68]

We are reminded of his having told Annie Playden of his aristocratic forbears and having promised her that his ship would come home and she would be marrying into a noble, wealthy family, as

she related in her letters to Robert Goffin [69]. Therefore, just as "Les pucelles ... s'en vont à la male heure", so "les insulaires m'emmenèrent dans leurs vergers que je cueillisse des fruits semblables à des jeunes femmes" : the inhabitants of Stavelot, isolated from the larger world through which he had wandered, led him to the apple orchards to make love, perhaps in the hope of marrying him and leaving their humdrum village for an exciting, aristocratic milieu. The image of gathering apples had occured to him in a dream related in "Le bon sommeil" [70]:

> Je me souviens d'avoir rêvé
> Que l'on vivait
> Autour
> D'un grand pommier d'amour

and it was to be used as a symbol of sexual conquest in "Le Larron" [71]:

> Je confesse le vol des fruits doux des fruits mûrs
> Mais ce n'est pas l'exil que je viens simuler

while the reference to "la male heure" in "Au Prolétaire" recalls the same expression in a similar confession of sexual desire in

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[69] Robert Goffin, Entrer en Poésie [op.cit.] and MSS in the Musée Apollinaire, Stavelot.

[70] "Le bon sommeil", OP p.515. In view of the traditional attachment of "Onirocritique" to 1908, it is interesting to see how frequently internal evidence relates it to Stavelot, 1899. Compare also the reference in "L'Ermite" to the "couple lassé au verger pantelant."

[71] "Le Larron" OP p.91.

the poem "Vae Soli" [72]. He owns to the passionate extent of his love affair, while admitting that he did not draw attention to the fact that he was exiled from the aristocratic status he still claimed.

But he could not be serious in his intentions [by offering "mon coeur pour me marier"] because they were of different worlds - the girls of Stavelot were of the locality, "belonging" there, settled, with family connections. He was a wanderer in exile, who must soon move on again to rejoin his mother in a precarious existence, belonging by blood to a world he could never belong to in fact, superior to these locals by nature yet inferior to them in acknowledgeable status - a mere artisan [orfèvre] or workman [charretier] [73]. In fact, Maria and he, though they loved each other truly, were entirely different creatures, belonging to different worlds: "deux animaux

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[72] "Vae Soli" OP p.519, of which Francis Steegmuller writes [Apollinaire, Rupert Hart-Davies, 1963, p.51]: "One poem, never published by Apollinaire during his lifetime and printed for the first time only in a collection of his works issued in 1952, has survived intact and unchanged from the Stavelot summer during which the nineteen-year-old poet wrote it." In this the adolescent admits to appeasing his sexual drive by masturbation.

[73] Hence, presumably, the identification with the proletariat already noted. The impression is reinforced by the autobiographical references of Le Poète assassiné to himself as Travaillin when referring to the Spa scene. Refer to a deleted passage of the MS quoted by M. Davies op.cit. p.52 as: "Yet another departure. Love and rest..." This links also with Travaillin, the poor wanderer, who is rejected by a young girl in the latter part of L'Enchanteur pourrissant: "I am a traveller ... Travaillin in my loose yellow worker's smock ... condemned to travel or to work."

dissemblables s'aimaient." Knowing this, and knowing he could not marry her, he should not have let the affair go too far. But these "deux animaux dissemblables s'accouplaient" under the pressure of animal instinct, and his conscience troubled him with undertones of his religious training of a few years earlier: "Les charbons du ciel étaient si proches que je craignais leur ardeur. Ils étaient sur le point de me brûler." It must not be forgotten that within this complex and self-contradictory character there was not only a passionate bohemian but an equally strong petit bourgeois longing for stability and constant love even more than he enjoyed the roving freedom thrust upon him. In his inmost heart he thought of love in terms of marriage. Indeed, he was to propose marriage to Linda Molineux within the year, and to Annie Playden in the subsequent year. The poverty that hurt his pride and made marriage seem remote also thereby exacerbated his passion. But already he fears the hurt the future must bring: "Dans les myrtaies une hermine blanchissait. Nous lui demandâmes la raison du faux hiver."

Here we see the same feeling of guilt as expressed in his fear as to whether "l'hiver sait mon péché" [74], and his recognition that the passion of his love becomes the poison that kills it as his possessiveness turns to jealousy and provokes

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[74] Le Guetteur mélancolique, OP p.512.

probably unjust accusations [75]. The use of "nous" after "deux animaux" leaves no doubt as to the confessional nature of this secretive, hieroglyphical poetic prose. This is exactly parallel to the thematic development of the poems dated "Stavelot 1899", as will be shown. Meanwhile, what is his solution to this problem?

Manifestly it is to sacrifice this self-destroying love in favour of its sublimation in the higher activity of poetry. "Un sacrificateur désira être immolé au lieu de la victime": rather than sacrifice Maria's virginity and love to his dual need for sexual satisfaction and a muse, he would sacrifice his own desire. Whether this was true, or merely his logicalising of a fact that was difficult for his pride to accept, such as that Maria really deserted him for someone better dressed, less poverty-stricken, less frighteningly passionate, less of a "different creature" from an unattainable outside world, does not really concern us. The fact is that he really did turn for consolation to the creativity of poetry.

He dissects the motives of this sacrificed sacrificial priest: "On lui ouvrit le ventre. J'y vis quatre I, quatre O, quatre D." At the very core of the man, at all cardinal points, we find letters: his heart is set on literature,

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[75] Le Guetteur mélancolique, P.518: "Le Son du Cor." Compare the conclusion of "Lul de Faltenin", that illicit passion kills the very love it aspires to.

whatever direction he must follow. He has already stated in his opening paragraph that as an outcome of his love "de la gorge du singe il sortit des flammes qui fleurdelisèrent le monde." That is to say that from the mouth of one of the "animaux dissemblables" there came poems to ornament the world around him in conventional, traditional form. Indeed, these poems proceeded from the mouth of, specifically, a monkey.

In order to fully understand the significance of this reference to the lover-poet as an ape, and the connection between love and poetry, we must consider the text in detail. The following translation is offered as an interpretative basis:

"I was aware of the different eternities of man and of woman. The sky suckled its pards. Then I noticed crimson stains on my hands. Towards morning, some pirates made off with nine vessels anchored in port. The monarchs disported themselves. And the women would not weep for the dead. They preferred the old kings, livelier in love than old dogs. A sacrificial priest desired to be immolated in the place of the victim. His belly was opened. I saw in it four I's, four O's, four D's. We were served with fresh meat, and I grew suddenly after partaking of it. Monkeys resembling their trees, were violating old tombs. I called one of these animals, on which laurel leaves were sprouting. It brought me a head made out of a single pearl. I took it in my arms and questioned it, after threatening to throw it

back into the sea if it did not reply to me. That pearl was ignorant, and the sea swallowed it.

"But I was aware of the different eternities of man and of woman. Towards evening the trees flew away, the monkeys froze into immobility and I saw that I was multiplied a hundredfold. The band that I had become sat down by the seashore. Huge ships of gold passed on the horizon. And when night had completely fallen, a hundred flames came to meet me. I procreated a hundred male children, whose wetnurses were the moon and the hill."

At first sight, this appears to be pure surrealism: the non sequitur of the dream implied in its title, and the dream sensation of growing bigger like Alice in Wonderland; the scenery, though clearly referable to Stavelot in its details, is in its total effect rather of the sort that modern drugs and pop-songs have made familiar in a décor of tangerine trees and marmalade skies reminiscent of hashish-smoking Persian miniaturists; and the style has the impulsion of the paranoiac so successfully imitated by Salvador Dali and Dr. Breton's studies of the writings of his mentally deranged patients. And as such it has usually been taken; yet there is overwhelming evidence of deliberate treatment of the poet's current problem-themes. He was the illegitimate descendant of two noble and enormously talented families, unable to avail himself of his inheritance,

nameless and penniless. In order to obtain society's respect, he had decided to set out to make for himself a name as a poet, but was now faced with the conflict between the attractions of the opposite sex and the pull of an ascetic life dedicated to a really vital poetry freed from the outmoded style of Symbolism.

Having gathered **bilberries** on the spot and at the time of the year of Apollinaire's first conception of this work, I am led to connect the stains left on one's hands with the poet's angelism, and would interpret his recognisable personal symbols as follows. He had been crucified by fate [76], stigmatised in the eyes of society. He revealed his noble ancestry to his women friends, but they were now unmoved by the past, preferring to be carried off by those lusty fellows who had lorded the scene before the young aristocrat's arrival. But he was conscious of the different types of immortality offered by women [77] through the production of children and a personal posterity, and the immortality by repute sought by a man through his life's

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[76] An image paralleled in "Le Larron" with the same connotation of illegitimacy: "le larron de gauche" recalling the thief on the cross, with the double meaning of "left" being emphasised by "tu es sinistre" [OP p.94]. The role of fate is symbolised again by the stars cursed in the last paragraph of "Onirocritique". Guiding stars occur again in "L'Ermite".

[77] Dr. Davies's usually sensitive interpretations would appear to have been led astray by her sex and the wrong context when she links this to the crudities of L'Enchanteur [op. cit., p.56] seeing it as "a stereotyped stance over and against 'the eternal feminine'." Quite the reverse! For a sidelight on his self-sacrifice for women, see footnote 129.

work. He decided to sacrifice his own desires rather than his lady-love, Maria, in order to devote himself, hermit-like, to his vocation as poet. He fed on living experience, good raw meat as opposed to bookish inspiration, and so grew in stature. He saw that imitators aped and pillaged the ideas of poets long dead and entombed. He consulted one of these, whose brow was graced with the laurel wreath of public acclaim, and examined one of his pearls of wisdom. It revealed only ignorance and so he rejected it. Then he saw himself a hundred times as great, and received a hundred times as much inspiration, burning like flames. He wrote a hundred virile poems nurtured out on the hillside overlooking Stavelot, by the light of the moon. [78]

It will be seen that this is something half-way between Symbolism and Surrealism. He is using the writing like a psychiatrist's couch, unburdening himself of his problems while at the same time preserving his privacy by the hieroglyphical style and imagery. There is little verbal automatism here, and what there is is harnessed to a purpose. The dream-like succession of images is not produced by a complete dissociation of logic or passivity of purpose: he discovers nothing new about his deepest self, for his decisions were conscious before he started to write. To an extent, however, this composition helps

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[78] A chaste symbol whose connotations of sterility have not been lessened even by its subsequent exploration. Refer to Le Poète assassiné p. 38: "Apprenez tout de la nature et aimez-la. Qu'elle soit votre nourrice véritable dont les mamelles insignes sont la lune et la colline."

to produce, or records, a stage in his development, namely a reconciliation, even if provisional, towards his frustrating awareness of his antecedents. Referring to his ancestry in much the same terms as he was again to do in "Cortège", he writes: "Je me sentis libre... Tout un peuple entassé dans un pressoir saignait en chantant." Whereas in regard to marriage it was an inexpressible burden, the wealth of talent in his blood could be harnessed to good effect in his writing, expressing itself as it were in song. "Ils déterrèrent une racine transparente et en mangèrent": he had discovered his "souche de famille" as a source of sustenance. But here we find an ebb-and-flow movement typical of some of his serious personal meditations: the discovery or enunciation of a workable solution in terms of his attitudes is followed immediately by a backwash of all the doubt and despair he had apparently escaped from [79]. For he straightway gives vent to an emotional outburst as if to cry: "All the same, it's so unjust!" "Le ciel était plein de fèces et d'oignons. Je maudissais les astres indignes dont la clarté coulait sur la terre": the filth and tears with which his life on earth were fated was an unjust, unworthy heritage from

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[79] For example his overcoming of heartbreak and longing in "La Chanson du Mal-aimé", or his acceptance of the future and final severance from the frustrations of his past debated in "Les Collines" as described elsewhere: P.F. Wells: "Les Collines: Lutte et Triomphe d'Apollinaire", pp.477-487, Lettres d'Humanité [Quarterly] no.4 of Dec.1967 [Association G. Budé, Paris].

his stars. However, his ancestors were all dead and gone, and now his poems rose in triumphant song: "Nulle créature n'apparaissait plus. Mais des chants s'élevaient de toutes parts... Je ramassais les couronnes de tous les rois..." Therefore he accepted, and laid his private claim to, the past and turned from this painful problem of adjustment to the contemplation of what inspiration might bring: "Des vaisseaux d'or, sans matelots, passaient à l'horizon [80]. Des ombres gigantesques se profilaient sur les voiles lointaines." Here is a happy image, full of future promise, but again followed by a return to despair as the young poet thought how far off it still seemed: "Plusieurs siècles me séparaient de ces ombres. Je me désespérai." It was indeed many years since his illustrious forbears had held sway, and perhaps their huge shadows would not in fact reach down the generations to this young would-be conqueror. But yet again his spirits rise to the challenge as he thinks of the durability of

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[80] The unmanned ship, symbol of the unconscious laden with treasure, recalls Rimbaud's image of the "haleurs" killed by redskins letting the "bateau ivre" drift. Apollinaire's ship glimpsed in the distance was not to come home for him for many years, but he was eventually able to revert to it triumphantly in "Les Collines" [OP p.175]:

Un vaisseau s'en vînt dans le port
Un grand navire pavoisé
Mais nous n'y trouvâmes personne

This was not until it had "assez navigué dans une onde mauvaise à boire" as the Mal-aimé records. The confusion of memory, inspiration and future horizons in this ship-symbol is central to Apollinaire's development.

poetry as opposed to the transmission of heredity, for he repeats as if it were a magical incantation: "Mais j'avais la conscience des éternités différentes de l'homme et de la femme." There follows one final eddy of thought: "Des ombres dissemblables [his securely powerful ancestors and he were also creatures of different worlds] assombrissaient de leur amour [referring perhaps especially to his father] l'écarlate des voilures, tandis que [on the credit side] mes yeux se multipliaient dans les fleuves, dans les villes et sur la neige des montagnes." He travelled widely,seeing many new places with the heightened vision that came from his varied ancestry and his secret acceptance of it.

Even allowing for over-interpretation, there are thus three main strands of debate in "Onirocritique". Firstly he resolved to appease his guilty feelings in regard to Maria [probably forced by her changing attitude to him, in any case] by renouncing his dealings with the opposite sex and concentrating on poetry. Secondly he realised he must resign himself to being forever unable to lay claim to his ancestry, but that he could at least profit from it by using his inherited talents to the full in the confidence that he came from a long line of successful men. Thirdly he records the capital decision to reject all tradition and all the conventions of past generations of poets. Of course, all these were only intentions: he was to go back on all of them at

intervals, though he was indeed to hold ultimately to the last two; and his progress in life was to be characterised by the same ebb and flow as forecast by his thinking in "Onirocritique".

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If we now turn to his minor poems, those which may confidently be said to have been conceived and finally written within the Stavelot period, we find a more detailed recapitulation of the progression of "Onirocritique" in the same terms and on two of the same themes [the third is treated more secretively in the major poem, "Le Larron"] but with more specific reference to the Ardennes scene.

The fruit trees of the hillsides around Stavelot, together with the heather and myrtilles of the more distant Fagnes, vividly colour his minor poetic compositions, which are concerned, not specifically with Maria as were his early, trivial acrostics, but with his experience of love treated in the abstract. But we must note that the role of Stavelot imagery is not a constant. We see a change of tone as the stimulus of love gives way to the worry and shame of poverty on the one hand and deepening passion on the other. At first the imagery reflects his joy:

Marche le gars! Marche en gaieté,
Ce calme jour d'un calme été,
Où, sauf la source, tout se taît. [81]

Of all the places he ever visited, the Ardennes forests are the most prolific in springs, known locally as pouhons, and it was certainly of these that he was thinking when he employed such images. Even the ambivalent Fagne starts by being a happy scene in the early stage of his stay, in the warm summer:

Va parmi les [grandes] fougères
Les myrtilles et les bruyères
[Où tant d'abeilles butinèrent] [81]

Yet as his poverty makes itself increasingly felt, these very images take on a sadder note. The very title "Elégie du voyageur aux pieds blessés" suggest that the deteriorating state of his footwear was already affecting his appreciation of the scenery on his long walks [82]. The same spring is soon saddened:

La source qui est là comme un oeil clos
Pleurant avec de frais sanglots
La naissance triste de l'eau [81]

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[81] These early quotations are taken from the school exercise book in which, since his poet's apprenticeship on the Riviera, he had jotted ideas and snatches of compositions later to be worked up. It consists of 55 pages, mostly blank, some torn out, and was evidently started in 1898 on the Côte d'Azur [e.g. "Mardi Gras"] and used after his departure from Stavelot but contains no reference to his stay in Germany. This source is hereinafter referred to as the Stavelot Notebook. Brackets indicate manuscript alternatives. A parallel source is the collection entitled Le Guetteur mélancolique, especially those poems dated "Stavelot 1899" [OP pp.506 to 526].

[82] The title occurs in the Stavelot Notebook. It is worth noting that it is the image of "une vieille paire de chaussures jaunes" that persists in the Stavelot reference of "Les Fenêtres" [OP p.168].

If we refer to two early poems collected in Il y a and the poems of Le Guetteur mélancolique dated "Stavelot 1899", we can see this progression [83]. In "Fagnes de Wallonie" [84] we note that apart from "fagnes désolées" there are no transferred epithets. The images are in themselves happy and colourful, though in process of being incorporated into his interior life:

> Les bruyères fleurant le miel
> Attiraient les abeilles
> Et mes pieds endoloris
> Foulaient les myrtilles et les airelles

It is interesting to note how the painful condition of his feet here only contrast with the floral setting [85], whereas in "Élégie du voyageur aux pieds blessés" [86] it deepens to mental pain, provoking outbursts of symbolic destruction reminiscent of Baudelaire's reaction of punishing "l'insolence des fleurs":

> Tu foules les dieux sous tes pieds
> Au vert bâton que tu coupas
> Un dieu meurt ...
> .....
> Marche et tue les dieux quand ils naissent

The adverse circumstances of his life which he here seems to

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[83] These collections are included in the Oeuvres poétiques [Pléiade, 1965] to which volume page numbers refer, prefaced OP.

[84] OP p.370.

[85] Indeed, a manuscript held at the Bibliothèque Doucet still has "Et mes pieds qui riaient". The other MS is that of Ardengo Soffici.

[86] OP p.337. Published in "La Grande France" no.27, May 1902.

blame for spoiling his superficial versifying are not yet seen to be the future springs of true poetry, as in "Onirocritique".

Allied to this is the changing attitude to his love for Maria ["Mareye" in the Wallon dialect]. This alters from a mood of dalliance evinced in the artificial poetic posture of acrostics to one of involvement and happiness and then a somewhat self-conscious pose as a love-lorn romantic influenced by his reading and his imagined need, as a poet, for the stimulus such a condition should in theory offer. One feels that all this began as a gesture, seen as part of his apprenticeship as a poet, but that he became more personally involved than he had expected. Thus the natural joy of love soon gives way to jealousy when Maria goes dancing with someone else in a neighbouring village, she being a popular demonstrator of <u>la maclotte</u>:

> Sans son amant s'en est allée l'amante
> Pour danser avec un autre que lui
> Les femmes mentent mentent toujours [87]

The local man would be more expert than Guillaume in the local dance, and better dressed, but the poet takes Maria's preference more personally, and gives way to unhappy doubt:

> Dis-le-moi mon amour est-il vrai que tu m'aimes [88]

as he falls back on the only form of entertainment he can afford to offer his beloved in a now saddened landscape:

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[87] OP p.511.

[88] "Mareïe", OP p.514.

Nous irons si tu veux par la triste bruyère
Dans l'espoir d'en trouver de la blanche veux-tu
[88]

Even the rich purple heather has lost its warmth for him, and he now prefers the occasional white heather, as autumn cools to winter and feelings of guilt colour his mood:

Je ne sais plus ni si je l'aime
Ni si l'hiver sait mon péché [89]

He looks forward to this phase with almost masochistic foreboding:

J'entends parfois une voix quiète d'absente
Dire de petits mots
Qui font que j'aimerai chaque douleur présente
Et tout l'espoir de prochains maux [90]

This progression surely forecasts very accurately the course of his relations with Annie Playden and the deepening of his poetry on the Rhine, while offering the first indications of the way in which he was to see himself permanently cast by fate in the role of "le mal-aimé", one of the emergent main themes.

Having run love's gamut from dalliance through passion to deception, he is now ready to look for consolation and some avenue of sublimation. The traditional recourse is to Nature,

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[88] "Mareïe", OP p.514.

[89] OP p.512.

[90] "Acousmate" OP p.513. The idea of ineluctable fate was to be most clearly stated in "Sanglots", [Il y a, OP p.365]: "Notre amour est réglé par les calmes étoiles" written 9 April 1917 but already clearly mentioned in his Rhine lyrics.

and all through his life Apollinaire was to walk his problems out of his system. Leaving his younger brother Albert peacefully sleeping with a heart as yet untroubled, Guillaume quietly rises and sets off for a solitary walk in the country:

> Ses lèvres sont entr'ouvertes
> O les calmes respirs
> Ce matin la grande chambre est si tiède
> Dehors les oiseaux chantent
> Et des hommes travaillent déjà
> Tic tac tic tac
> Je sors sur la pointe des pieds [91]

Like some young pantheist follower of Wordsworth, he wallows in romantic sadness, seeking solace in Nature:

> Et je sais que souvent la nature entend mieux
> Les sanglots de la lyre et les pleurs de nos âmes
> Que les belles ... [92]

And, true to his romantic expectations, when he confides:

> O mon coeur j'ai connu la triste et belle joie
> D'être trahi d'amour et de l'aimer encore [93]

... Nature not only consoles but advises as to the road to travel:

> Pour consoler ma gloire un vent a dit Ecoute
> Elève-toi toujours Ils te montrent la route
> Les squelettes de doigts terminant les sapins [93]

The wind that advises him to rise up again and go forward, putting his troubles behind him, is the spirit of the Ardennes to which he is sensitively attuned: "La guitare de Que vlo-ve? était un peu du vent qui gémit toujours dans les Ardennes de Belgique...

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[91] "Le bon Sommeil", OP p.515.

[92] "Mareï", OP p.514.

[93] OP p.517.

Que vlo-ve? était la divinité de cette forêt..." [94] The direction in which he is to go is pointed out by the skeletal fingers of the fir trees of the Fagne: it is the austere road of poetry:

> Alors j'ai su que seuls pouvaient vivre en m'aimant
> Les bons vers immortels ...
> 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 [95]

The opening reference of this poem to lemon trees and May is a backward glance to the Mediterranean, probably a snatch of previously-composed lines as suggested by the unique example of erudite language typical of his earliest works, the adjective ombraculifères in the first line. Its significance as one of the poems dated "Stavelot 1899" is that it is one of the earliest examples of how the poet's mood, and consequently ideas, altered with the landscape, or even with a change of lighting: the sudden appearance of the sun on the Ardennes landscape simultaneously illumines and warms that interior landscape which symbolises his thoughts on his present situation as contrasted with the happier days of his Mediterranean youth. "J'ai promené ma rage en les

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[94] "Que vlo-ve?" is one of the earliest stories of the collection entitled L'Hérésiarque et Cie. It is published on p.163 of Oeuvres complètes de Guillaume Apollinaire, Edition établie sous la direction de Michel Décaudin, [André Balland et Jacques Lecat, Paris, 1965] Vol.I, hereinafter referred to as OC Vol.I.

[95] "Le Ciel se couvre un matin de mai", OP p.521.

soirs blancs et froids" makes it fairly clear that the poet was already given to taking long walks to cool his passions, and that the time referred to is towards the end of his stay, as winter set in.

Thus strengthened, he is able to control his impulse to wear his heart on his sleeve or go weeping to his beloved. Instead, he will pour his feelings into verse. His Slavonic character was altogether too masterful to permit him to make Maria a substitute for his mother, a confidant who would listen patiently while he talked his troubles out. In any case, she was too young to understand, his inability to pay his debts was hardly to be noised abroad in Stavelot, he had almost certainly told her all manner of false tales of his birth and condition, and she and he were obviously only ships that pass on the high seas: he needed a more permanent and an utterly discrete matrix for his confidences, consolation and inspiration. Reference has already been made in Chapter 2 to probable reasons for his having determined to be a poet. At this point young Guillaume seems to become conscious of them, so that his concept of poetry begins at last to take shape. He will retain his stoic dignity ["consoler ma gloire"] by walking alone and confiding his secret sorrows in his poetry. However, this would be even more humiliating than confession to a woman or close friend if such poems were made public. And one could hardly be a poet without

being read. Therefore his confessions must be such as to provide sufficient exteriorisation while yet preserving them from his readers. Hence the "besoin de mystification" with which his adverse critics were to charge him in later years did not arise from any disdain for common humanity but was founded in the circumstances of his early life and his psychological reaction to them. The pattern is already set in this formative Ardennes period:

> Je n'ai confié aucun secret sinon une chanson énigmatique
> Aux tourbières humides [96]

There can be little doubt that the way pointed out by the "squelettes de doigts terminant les sapins" led straight to the "chanson énigmatique" of "L'Ermite". At this point we leave the realm of artificial posturing by a romantic adolescent and approach real poetry. At the same time it may be pointed out that although the poems discussed so far have been denigrated by recent critics [97], they form a useful indicator of his developing concept of poetry, and describe in an illuminating way the ground from which the poet's main themes spring. It is instructive, too, to see the development in content from poems addressed to an individual girl, through poems about love in general, and so to poems about poetry itself and its function for the poet. But before leaving these

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[96] "Fagnes de Wallonie", OP p.370.

[97] For example by Dr. Davies op.cit., p.49: "The actual subject had no profound importance for him." He had many contradictory sides to him.

minor works, we must note one other nascent theme of his forthcoming major poem, presumably already being mulled over as Guillaume walks the Fagnes to the tune of an old refrain [98]:

> Si ton coeur cherche un coeur
> Ton coeur seul est ce coeur
> Et je me deux
> D'être seul
> J'aurais voulu venir dans une ville et vivre [99]

Romantic isolation and the ascetic demands of the poet's dedication [indicated by "squelettes de doigts"] are nevertheless a harsh road to travel - and this is the backward glance that completes in advance a summary of "L'Ermite" in the same terms of a return to the city and the fellowship of human companions. It is precisely this return to the city, Paris, that must be narrated before we can at last proceed to examine the major poetic works of his early period. For the circumstances of his departure add a new dimension of bitterness and nostalgia to his Stavelot memories before "L'Ermite" is given its final form and imprint.

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[98] Note that he had already formed the habit of composing poems on the rhythm of an air, as shown in the subscription to another poem of the same group: "Le Cercle 'La Fougère' - Air: A Menilmontant." Refer OP p.524.

[99] OP p.522. "Ton coeur" refers to his own heart: he had already adopted this fashion of addressing himself as "tu" which characterises his ruminative poems. Note that it is precisely to his own heart that he ostensibly makes his confessions in "O mon coeur" OP p.517.

The Kostrowitzky account had mounted to impossible proportions at the Hôtel Constant, 600 francs in fact, but when Guillaume wrote to his mother about it, she told him to do as she always did... Mortified with shame, he planned a moonlight flit. One can well imagine that he felt not only humiliated by this contrast with the figure he had cut on arrival, but torn by guilt and remorse at the thought of the good friends he had made in Stavelot, and the way he was betraying them. This was not the way he wanted his name remembered.

Wanting one last look at the scene of so much happiness, something for his memory to feed on [100], he addressed a final acrostic to his Maria, the embodiment of his attachments to Orkenise:

> M on amie adorée avant que m'en aille
> A vant que notre amour triste, triste défaille
> R âle et meure ô m'amie, une fois, une fois
> I l faut nous promener tous deux seuls dans les bois
> A lors je m'en irai plus heureux que les rois.

It sounds as if he confided in her that he was about to leave, though probably not the manner of his going. Presumably they had one last walk up that well-remembered path with the branches

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[100] In the words of his veiled autobiography, Le Poète assassiné: "Les premiers vents d'automne se plaignaient et Croniamantal, très triste et très honteux, perdit à jamais l'envie de revoir sa jolie Mariette pour ne garder d'elle que le souvenir." "Perdit ... envie" not only because of shame, but also because he realised that he belonged to the big city. He was a "different creature".

arched overhead bearing a few last hazelnuts overlooked by the squirrels, as he had described in happier times in "Mareï" [101]. Eventually, Mademoiselle Dubois burned the poems Guillaume had showered upon her, but kept this one. Perhaps it had for her the especial sentimental value of being his last word before he vanished from her life. Although she was the local beauty and very popular, she was, as we have noted, never to marry. But as with so many aspects of Apollinaire's life, we can only surmise as to the significance of the facts.

Meanwhile, like a soldier carrying out an unpalatable order, Guillaume, heir to a long line of military strategists, planned the withdrawal with a skill worthy of his ancestry. To avoid being caught at the obvious place, the Stavelot railway station, he looked west to Trois-Ponts; and just to make doubly sure, he aimed for a little station just beyond, Roanne-Coo, whose cascade he already knew from his tramping in the

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[101] "Mareï", OP p.514.

district [102]. Coo is 5km from Stavelot, and the brothers unobtrusively planted their belongings there in innocent-looking parcels beforehand. He abandoned an old trunk with a quantity of worn-out shoes, some old books too heavy to carry, and a quantity of manuscripts the best of which he took care to pack along with his precious "Stavelot Notebook". During the night before the dawn of the fifth of October, the boys slipped quietly out of their third-floor bedroom, using the side entrance into the archway to avoid passing through what is still the café. They

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[102] Marcel Adéma, who is scrupulously exact in biographical details, refers [op.cit., p.29] to "Trois-Ponts sur la ligne de Luxembourg-Liège où ils peuvent prendre l'express pour Paris. Guillaume se méfie néanmoins et préfère choisir une petite station, Roanne-Coo, après Trois-Ponts. Roanne-Coo est sur l'autre versant de la montagne, sans route directe avec Stavelot, personne ne supposera que les deux jeunes gens se sont dirigés de ce côté... Par les sentiers escarpés de la montagne, ils gagnent Roanne-Coo." The line from Malmédy joins the line from Francorchamps at Stavelot, however, where the road crosses it on the way to the Devil's Rock. The railway then follows the river, accompanied, naturally enough, by the main road, to Coo where the river forms the waterfall. The real reason the boys took to the mountain was to take a short cut and avoid the road near the outlets from Stavelot. In August 1902 Guillaume described the escapade to his childhood friend, James Onimus, [ref. "Lettres à un ami d'enfance" furnished by Noémie Onimus-Blumenkranz in Les Lettres françaises of 13 December 1951] thus: "Départ à la cloche de bois par un temps de gel... à travers sept kilomètres de forêt, de Stavelot à Roanne-Coo." Like most country short cuts, it was a long way round... but "heureusement pas de rencontre". As to M. Adéma's "express to Paris" stopping at Coo as well as Trois-Ponts, we seem to have missed the connection somewhere. In fact, of course, it was at Namur that the stationmaster later reported to the police having sold the boys two second-class tickets to Paris.

took with them some empty suitcases into which they were able, after their undisturbed walk through the dawn over the wooded hills, to pack their belongings at Coo, where they arrived in time to catch the 5.50 to Namur. Guilty as he felt, Guillaume was consternated to be arrested at the Belgian frontier, but once more proved his mettle by keeping a cool head: fortunately for him, as it proved to be a case of mistaken identity. He had been taken for an anarchist, on account of his name! He was soon cleared, and the boys continued on their way to Paris and a new chapter in the life of the nascent poet.

The Constant family, who had been so patient feeding and housing the two boys while trustingly awaiting settlement of the long overdue account, were understandably furious at having been taken in. They needed the money for a forthcoming wedding, and pressed charges. The Belgian police soon traced the boys' movements through the stationmaster's report from Namur, and passed the matter to their French colleagues, who located the boys in a furnished room at 9, rue de Constantinople. They had been installed there on 6 October by one Olga Karpoff, professing to be their aunt, aged 26, and resident at the same address since the previous month. By the time he was questioned by the juge d'instruction in the November, Guillaume had learned to suppress shame, and caught the haughty tone of his mother, which relationship "Olga" now admitted. He failed to see, he said,

how he could be guilty of fraud, since he had never claimed to have any financial resources of his own, and had simply obeyed his mother's instructions to leave. For her part, Angélique, with the same lofty air that had bemused the Constants, wondered with injured innocence how anyone could have presumed that she had no intention of paying. She magnanimously offered to pay as soon as her temporary difficulties over a gambling loss had been repaired - provided, of course, these insulting charges of fraud were dropped. As an artistically authenticating touch she added that some charges in the account were obviously inflated. The examining magistrate was so impressed by her performance that he agreed to these terms, even reducing the sum involved, despite the fact that Angélique had given a false name and was now claiming to be the twenty-six-year-old mother of a nineteen-year-old son. Consequently, to the life-long chagrin of the Constants, the Verviers Court dropped the charges. As recently as 1963, the Constant son could not be reconciled to the memory of Apollinaire, as demonstrated when my friend Armand Huysmans received the following postcard:

le 9-9-63

Monsieur Huysmans,

Je lis dans le Patriote Illustré un article où vous racontez les vacances d'Apollinaire, où il est dit que mes parents ont été payés par la mère de l'escroc. C'est un mensonge méchant Ils n'ont jamais rien reçu de personne.

Votre ami reste donc un malhonnête homme.

Vous qui n'y êtes pour rien, je vous salue bien cordialement.

J Constant fils des
hôteliers
68 Rue d'E... Verviers

The postcard has taken its place among the Apollinariana of the Musée Apollinaire at Stavelot, whose other inhabitants have long since taken a larger view of the incident. With tact and, one suspects, some sly humour, the Association des Ecrivains Ardennais in conjunction with the Société Royale des Beaux-Arts de Verviers on 23 June 1935, affixed to the wall of the Hôtel du Luxembourg [as the pension was then known] a commemorative plaque to show that this was where the boys had stayed, and recording simply "Ils le quittèrent à l'aube du 5 octobre 1899"! It was damaged during the bombardment of 1944, and with an even more delicious sense of humour the plaque has now sneaked - ostentatiously enough - in under the archway through which the boys slipped on that fateful night. Had the Constants kept the manuscripts instead of burning them in anger, their bill would have been paid many times over. The present owner of what is now known as the Hôtel du Mal-aimé even sells Apollinaire cigars! The poet ultimately paid his debt, if only as a tourist attraction or publicity agent, and his name is after all well

remembered. In the words of Camille Deleclos [103]: "Certes, Guillaume Apollinaire, poète de France, dut beaucoup à Wilhelm de Kostrowitzky, touriste à Stavelot. Mais notre Ardenne stavelotaine, dont mieux que quiconque il a chanté les myrtilles et les airelles, les profondes sapinières, la bruyère mauve et les pauvres champs de seigle mûr, les cors de chasse, les cerfs brâmant et les écureuils craintifs, les fagnes et leurs tristesses plénières, l'Amblève bordée d'aulnes, L'Eau Rouge et ses pouhons, cette Ardenne a de son côté contracté envers lui une dette bien plus lourde que les quelques centaines de francs laissés par sa mère sur 'l'ardoise' de la pension Constant." The Belgians are generous in their repayment of such debts, for at the same time as the plaque was put up in Stavelot, a magnificent monument was erected by the same people at Malmédy near Bevercé, on Bernister Hill. [104]. Six blocks of granite, three feet by two by one, surround a ten-foot monolith inscribed simply on its four sides:

GUIL L AUM E
APOL LI NAIR E
1899

It is surrounded by a ring of firtrees on a knoll which would overlook Malmédy but for a belt of oaks. Symbolically, one has

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[103] Camille Deleclos: "Stavelot" [op.cit.] p.44.

[104] Steegmuller has been misled, unfortunately, in the details he gives op.cit.,pp. 54-55. It is at the top of a steep, very rough road to Bevercé, twenty minutes' stiff walk from the main road near the cathedral of Malmédy.

to look at all facets of the central block to read the poet's name; and as the quotation from his last testament in poetry "La jolie Rousse", is written a few words on each of the surrounding stones, one has the appropriate impression of a three-dimensional calligramme as one is led to walk in a solemn circle:

Soyez indulgents / vous nous comparez à / ceux qui furent la perfection de l'ordre / Nous qui quêtons / partout l'aventure [105]

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Guillaume's return to Paris was not entirely coloured by regret at leaving Stavelot. The farewell "Adieu" [106] as published in Vers et Prose and later included in Alcools, when compared with the original source of "La Clef" as given in Le Guetteur mélancolique, shows how the poet used the same experience, the same images and even the same lines of an already composed poem, at different times to express his changing attitudes. The first version, taken from "La Clef" reads as follows:

J'ai cueilli ce brin de bruyère
Mets-le sur ton coeur pour longtemps
Il me faut la clef des paupières

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[105] "La jolie Rousse", OP p.313, where it reads [unlike the version given by Adéma, op.cit., p.31]:
Soyez indulgents quand vous nous comparez
A ceux qui furent la perfection de l'ordre
Nous qui quêtons partout l'aventure.

[106] "Adieu", OP p.85, and compare "La Clef" OP p.553, and the version from Le Festin d'Esope OP p.1054.

A reply is given:

J'ai mis sur mon coeur les bruyères
Et souviens-toi que je t'attends

This reference to parting and remembering occurs in a context of the poet's determination to leave, since he is impelled by a search for the key to his vision:

J'ai perdu la clef de mes yeux
Mes yeux aux pierres précieuses

J'ai cherché longtemps par les villes
Où est la clef des yeux fermés

Des clefs J'en ai vu mille et mille
Reste avec moi dans notre ville
Tu ne la trouveras jamais

The poet's response to this siren-like appeal to stay and renounce his quest and his vision is the reference to the heather keepsake quoted above, followed immediately by the line:

Je m'achemine vers la ville

In short, love is seen as a hindrance to poetry, and its memory

is preferred [107]. Now, when the poet wanted a contribution for Le Festin d'Esope in December 1903, he isolated the heather lines under the title of "Le Retour". This isolation necessitated the removal of the reference to "paupières" since this was part of the contextual theme, hence the appearance of the line "Nous ne nous verrons plus sur terre" and the changing of the following "bruyères" to "bruyère". However, when this same stanza was selected for publication in Vers et Prose in 1912, it changed again, under the title "L'Adieu", to a form fit to stand on its own as an independent expression as we find it in Alcools:

> J'ai cueilli ce brin de bruyère
> L'automne est morte souviens-t'en
> Nous ne nous verrons plus sur terre
> Odeur du temps brin de bruyère
> Et souviens-toi que je t'attends

The masterly addition by the mature poet not only puts the earlier versions into their true perspective by lifting the sprig

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[107] The theme of love as a hindrance to poetry is one of his two first main themes; the preference for memory was the third to emerge [cf. "Merlin et la vieille Femme"]. The poem "La Clef" as a whole is very difficult to date. It is assumed here that the heather reference was composed at Stavelot; the phrases "Voici les portes de la ville / Où j'ai laissé mon coeur d'antan" recall the two Orkenise poems; the verse from line 11 to line 14 is virtually the same as a verse in "Rhénane d'Automne" [OP p.120] while imagery of the lake, Easter, and falling petals almost suggest his poems to Yvonne in 1909. It is clear that different parts were used at different dates, and the date of the complete work does not affect the present thematic argument. The same appeal "Passant pauvre comme moi / Chemine avec moi" is rejected in the untitled poem on p.551 OP as part of an unreal, over-romanticised situation, while his "légende prochaine" beckons from the future: "Viens la grand-route au loin poudroie".

of heather to a symbolic level, but also shows the eventual mature attitude towards all past experience: the heather as "odeur du temps" parallels his "jeunesse adieu jasmin du temps" of "Les Collines" [108], which marked the last round of his struggle to shake free of the tyranny of memories and the past. In the winter of 1899 he was taking his first unconscious step towards the realisation of this problem, when he considered this particular instance of the need to digest an experience and to look forward to the new instead of backward to the past. He realised that the Stavelot interlude was a closed chapter, not to be regretted. In fact it was a prelude rather, and invited him to look forward in his career.

There was, then, this positive aspect about his new situation: his departure had become an arrival. Instead of clinging to that almost unreal episode in the enchanted forest of the Ardennes, he now saw that he was a city man, and looked forward to the intellectual stimulus of the crowded metropolis and a sophistication of his poetic inspiration. He welcomed this return to his true intellectual setting. Presumably this was the key he sought in "La Clef" to liberate "the gems contained in his eyes": the villagers' eyes were shut ["tant d'yeux sont fermés"] and he needed open eyes, like the gem-eyed bird of wisdom he refers to in "Le Larron".

[108 "Les Collines" OP p.171.

However, this joy, which recalls his first arrival in Paris and his romantic hopes of meeting famous poets, was destined not to be fulfilled that year. Indeed, it was first to be crushed utterly by the harsh realities of his economic situation, as if Fate were putting him through a calculated tempering process, weening him now from romanticism and a false idea of what the vocation of poet must mean. His mother could not, in her present financial circumstances, support him. She had done her magnificent best to shelter him from the harsh necessity of earning a living in a hard world; but as a mother she must also help her sensitive son to grow into man's estate. The first awakening shock had been her instruction to leave Stavelot without paying. Now she must again be cruel to be kind, to make him face up to reality. Her second directive was contained in one sharp word:"Travaille!" Obediently, but with increasing hopelessness, Guillaume looked for a job, registering as an alien. With no paternal authority, and too old now to accept Jules Weil so easily, the boys were often left to themselves, but any show of adolescent rebellion was mercilessly crushed by Maman, who, it was said, was quite capable of taking a whip to servants or family [including Jules Weil] with Slavonic gusto. According to Adéma [109] Guillaume's requests for further details as to his birth were brushed aside imperiously with the

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[109] See Adéma, op.cit., p.33 for these references.

firm but vague assurance that his antecedents were such that he should be proud of them. At the same time, he says, "the maternal sin took on overwhelming proportions", as we shall see in "Le Larron". Madame de Kostrowitzky, too, suffered from these emotional crises, for she loved her sons dearly. One is inevitably struck, while considering all these formative experiences in the life of the poet, by the contrast of his meek, incurious brother, Albert. Angélique found the younger child so much easier to handle than his tempestuous, over-sensitive brother, and often held Albert up as an example to Guillaume. But the situation that was accepted by Albert was unbearable to Guillaume. "Fortunately, poetic inspiration acted as a safety-valve for the fits of discouragement in which he gave way to sad resignation" [109]. It was poetry, rather than the practical solution of work, that helped him to carry on. The poem "La Porte" is a perfect reflection of his state of mind at this time [110]. Referring to the MS rather than to the finished version of Vers et Prose included in Alcools, one sees three strands to be debated with more spirit in "Le Larron". First, a seeking for escape in illicit love with the suggestion that this is

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[110] "La Porte" OP p.87. The MS on the back of a brochure for the review Vers et Prose, 2e année, is to be seen in the Bibliothèque Doucet, the most important collection in existence. This MS, although full of false starts and corrections, is nevertheless generally agreed to represent a reworking of a poem already composed, and therefore not necessarily to be dated as post-1906.

hereditary: "Je t'ai pris mon péché, ma mère"; and secondly the guilt and masochistic desire for immolation and expiation already noted in **"Onirocritique"** and the Stavelot poems: "Je veux souffrir ... moi-même condamnant" accompanied by struggle and pain: [ma mère en lutte]
[Pour souffrir et souffrir]
[Mais souffrir ai-je assez...]

Thirdly there is the resultant hopelessness and sense of futility: "Que me fait d'être [...] ceci ou bien cela". It is also interesting to notice that the glorious prospect of everything being possible [optimism in the light of the potential of his ancestry] gives way to despair as "pour qui seul tout existe" becomes "rien n'existe" in the final version:

> La porte de l'hôtel sourit terriblement
> Qu'est-ce que cela peut me faire ô ma maman
> D'être cet employé pour qui seul rien n'existe
> ... ...
> Humble comme je suis qui ne suis rien qui vaille
>
> Enfant je t'ai donné ce que j'avais travaille

This feeling of what we would now call existentialist alienation is paralleled in "Hôtels" [111] where he realises that life is "every man for himself" with one's only hope isolation and the preservation of an interior value:

> Fermons nos portes
> A double tour
> Chacun apporte
> Son seul amour

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[111] "Hôtels" OP p.147.

Here, too, his reaction is the same: he feels he is turning in futile circles:

> Je tourne en route
> Comme un toton

He did indeed taste the depths of despair as he discovered that, after his aristocratic upbringing on the Riviera and his carefully nurtured poetic sensibility, and despite all the gifts he believed himself naturally endowed with, the only "use" that could be found for him in the real world was as a licker of stamps. He addressed wrappers at an advertising office for seven shillings and sixpence a week. A man who is humiliated believes he is worth something, but is forced to realise that his fellows do not agree. But now Guillaume was humbled: he no longer believed he was worth anything.

His deepest and most personal solution to his suffering and humiliation was to draw on his religious upbringing: he saw the parallel of the sufferings and humility of Christ, and the need for prayer and faith. This was so deep and personal, however, that it scarcely registers in his poetry except in a veil of self-mockery [a product of what Maupassant called "pudeur de sentiment"], or as a symbol of his canalisation of that attitude into Poetry and the writing of poems as an almost prayerful activity, bringing the same psychological benefits of assuagement.

We glimpse this in "Hôtels":

O La Vallière
Qui boite et rit
De mes prières
Table de nuit [112]

As more obvious palliatives, he sought on the one hand the company of women and on the other the haven of public libraries and literary jottings. Indeed, these activities sometimes fused in an ironic way. For instance, through his stubborn interest in writing, he met a part-time journalist, Esnard, who was being paid by the line for a serial in Le Matin. Determined to "get in", Apollinaire provided the padding. When it came to the point, Esnard would not pay him, so Apollinaire stole his mistress and went hungry.

In June 1900 he completed a course in shorthand, but still could not find a job as a writer at any level. At last he took employment near the Bourse, undertaking doubtful operations

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[112] "Hôtels" OP p.147. Although this is echoed, in veiled terms as described above, in "Le Larron" and "L'Ermite" and elsewhere as feelings of guilt and desire to suffer in penitence, the clearer parallel is in that other moment of deepest despair when he was imprisoned "A la Santé", though the relevant lines which are quoted here from the MS published in Le Mercure de France of 15 February 1934 were suppressed:

Et je viens de dire un rosaire
Avec mes doigts pour chapelet
O Vierge sainte écoutez-les
Ecoutez mes pauvres prières

And again:

Je viens de retrouver la foi
Comme aux beaux jours de mon enfance

on the Stock Exchange. He occupied his spare time writing, rather bitterly and hopelessly, and again frequented the Bibliothèque Mazarine, where he met its Director, Léon Cahun, a Hebrew scholar and Cabbalist, who taught him a smattering of Hebrew and Jewish ritual [113]. Cahun recognised his talent and introduced him to his son-in-law, Marcel Schwob, who in turn introduced him not only to the "enfer" of the Bibliothèque Nationale but also to his first literary contacts. His optimism once more kindled, Guillaume sent verses to La Plume and stories to La Revue Blanche. Schwob was a friend of Claudel and the young André Gide, but the young poet was not to make contacts such as these. He did, however, meet René Nicosia at the Bourse, and went walking at night with him, recapturing childhood memories of the Mediterranean, or finding enough money between them to attend a theatre. He wrote a play, A la Cloche de bois, about his Stavelot escapade, but the director of the theatre, Nicosia's uncle, about to go bankrupt, left it in his desk drawer.

The young Apollinaire had a vigorous constitution, and

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[113] Margaret Davies situates this meeting in the April to August 1899 visit to Paris [op.cit.,p.42] but Adéma places it at this point, which confirms my recollection of a conversation with André Salmon. One can accept, however, the probability of his having used the Bibliothèque Mazarine on the first visit and even of his "preparing the background" of L'Enchanteur at that time, insofar as such a background was "prepared". His addresses at these times confirm the probability. Dr. Davies makes Schwob the nephew of Cahun. The poet's introduction to the "enfer" of the "Bib. Nat." at this point matches his interest in erotic writing at this time.

a basically sanguine disposition, despite his lapses into melancholy and a negative yearning for the ease and security of his childhood. But his ego, after so many rebuffs in the literary field he had chosen [and to which his lack of success in any other occupation now perhaps forced him] needed bolstering. He seemed to have a physical and mental need for affairs with women. He needed to conquer, to restore his ego, and he was not fastidious at this time. These easy conquests later disgusted him, as he revealed first in many veiled references, and ultimately explicitly in "Zone". As soon as his seductive talent had worked, he became tyrannical, jealous, possessive, hateful. As if to a pre-ordained pattern, he was repelled, wounded, deceived, abandoned, and cast into the mould of the Mal-aimé. He longed for sympathy, but could never unburden himself of his secret torments - although once he showed Nicosia a photograph and told him "This is my father". Not only did his sexual activity bring him no satisfaction, but it also brought conflict with his mother. She was perhaps especially aware of the dangers of unbridled passion, and condemned her son's ways roundly. The resulting arguments can well be imagined when Guillaume turned and pointed out that he inherited such proclivities from his mother - here she was, living with Weil - and who was she to condemn him after placing him in this miserable condition ...

Such stresses had to be exteriorised in the writing of

a poem, and "Le Larron" fulfilled this function. So we come at last to a consideration of the three major poetic works of his early, immature period. Between them, they will be seen to resume and depend on everything discussed herein up to this point. The main themes of sex, religion and poetry, and the struggle to accept his human condition and balance the world of memory against the future, all may be seen in these first main poems in the perspective of his life up till 1900.

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As regards dating, despite what has been said earlier regarding the frequent impossibility of being exact in the face of internal evidence or multiple manuscripts and anterior fragments, the case should be stated for placing these poems as the first three of this study to be examined in detail. If concensus of opinion makes for verisimilitude, one can quote the opinions of one's colleagues. Madame Durry concludes her references to this problem in her third book [114] by saying: "Nous avons du moins ces certitudes que l'Ermite, Merlin et la vieille Femme, le Larron sont les plus anciens poèmes d'Alcools." The earliest poems of Alcools which can be dated accurately are, of course, the Stavelot poems of 1899, though it would be unfair to Madame Durry to take this statement as meaning that she would

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[114] Marie-Jeanne Durry: Guillaume Apollinaire: Alcools, Tome III, p.76, punctuation original.

place the poems in 1899 or earlier. Dr. Davies, whose book, however, is based on a thesis prepared under the direction of Madame Durry, makes a less cautious and quite unsupported statement: "It is the works ... "Merlin et la vieille Femme", "L'Ermite" and "Le Larron" ... which best reveal his preoccupations as he walked alone on the Stavelot moors" [115]. Agreed, but it is intended to add some substantiation. For the present let us accept the pronouncement of M. Adéma and Professor Décaudin, the most cautious but reliable commentators to have written about Apollinaire, who say of "Le Larron": "Ce poème ... est un des plus anciens d'Alcools. Cette forme d'inspiration, qu'il est difficile de situer avec précision dans le temps, est probablement antérieure au séjour en Allemagne" [116]. Michel Décaudin also ties the three poems together: "Le Larron est un des poèmes les plus anciens d'Alcools, proche, par la forme, par certaines particularités du langage et de l'inspiration, de L'Ermite et de Merlin et la vieille Femme" [117]. It is proposed to treat "L'Ermite" first and "Le Larron" last, in conformity with the thematic requirements of our general thesis

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[115] Margaret Davies op.cit. pp. 51-52.

[116] That is, before 1901. Refer notes OP p.1057 "annoté par Marcel Adéma et Michel Décaudin."

[117] Michel Décaudin: Le Dossier d' "Alcools" [librairie Minard, Paris, 1965] p.151; hereinafter referred to as Décaudin: Dossier.

and according to their probable order of finalisation. Additional references to chronology, not offered by the authors quoted, will be given as we proceed, and will support the order chosen.

"L'Ermite" first appeared in La Revue blanche no.228 of 1 December 1902, with two stanzas [suppressed in later publications] after the second stanza. There are, however, close resemblances in vocabulary, imagery, style and theme, to compositions of 1898 and 1899, and whole lines to be found identically in "La Maison de Cristal" suggest pre-Stavelot affinities. Moreover, there are brouillons showing previous working on the subject, though these are, unfortunately, undated [118]. For example, the student crudities of stanzas 4 and 6 and the suppressed stanzas, as also the unusual words such as logomachies, isochrones, hématidrose, riotant, and aémères,

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[118] "L'Ermite" [OP 100] in the Revue blanche version, to be found also in Décaudin's Dossier p. 163, contains additional lines, including:

Tu es un crâne féminin, certainement,
Car le gruyère est fait avec du lait de vache,
O crâne dont j'ai peur en mon âme bravache!
O tête, j'ai baisé tes dents comme un amant.

These suggest both a fear of death and a desire for it linked with the female sex. This is not so much a death-wish, as an attraction towards sex even though it spells death. Thus, in the full version, the main theme of the poem is given at the outset.

Most link references are quoted by Décaudin [loc.cit.] e.g. Lilith and one of the brouillons. Refer also "Lilith" [OP 714]. Chief cross-references are "La Maison de Cristal" [OP 712] and "Fagnes de Wallonie" [OP 370] already examined.

some of which were treasured [along with similar words later used in "Le Larron"] in the Stavelot Notebook dating from Nice, all suggest an originally youthful composition. That this early conception was taken up and worked into a provisional and composite form at Stavelot is suggested by the Fagne references and common lines occurring also in poems such as "Fagnes de Wallonie", "Il y a" and Le Guetteur mélancolique. Décaudin voices a concensus of opinion when he says "Ce poème, au moins dans sa première conception, est très ancien" [119]. There are, however, several clues and parallel references one would like to mention here, partly because some of them have not been noticed elsewhere, but chiefly because they serve to introduce and corroborate the interpretation of the work as a whole as proposed herein.

As we have already seen, the Ardennes autumn made a great impact on the young poet from the Riviera. It may be worth pointing out that he celebrated his nineteenth birthday on 26 August, the month in which he arrived at Stavelot, and his subsequent identification with "his" season is expressed in many of his later poems, associated not only with colour and fruitfulness but also tinged with sadness and fatalism.

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[119] OP 1059. L.C. Breunig [op.cit., p.910] says between 1898 and 1902. Madame Durry told me [1966] she still thought it was "commencé avant Stavelot, travaillé et terminé au retour quand Apollinaire fréquente la Mazarine"as she has it in op.cit. Tome III p.69.

His attitude to the passing of the seasons is interwoven with his attitude to women, and his fatalism is most clearly expressed in its application to the predestined course he feels is laid down for all his love affairs.

Spring represents for him a happy time of youthful innocence, expressed in nature's symbolism of flowers: it is the "jasmin du temps" of the Mediterranean. Because spring comes early and warm on the Riviera, it is fused with summer in his mind, so that summer is seldom considered separately. Petals fall and flowers become fruit in late summer and autumn, which then gives way to the death of winter:

> Oh! l'automne, l'automne a fait mourir l'été [120]

Flowers thus become nature's invitation to fruitfulness, but this fruitfulness is seen as a decay which presages death:

> Automne malade et adoré
> Tu mourras quand l'ouragan soufflera dans les roseraies
> Quand il aura neigé
> Dans les vergers
>
> Pauvre automne
> Meurs en blancheur et en richesse
> De neige et de fruits mûrs [121]

In parallel, young women are seen as flowers who lure the young man into fruitfulness:

> Je déteste les fleurs parce qu'elles sont femmes
> Et je souffre de voir partout leur nudité [122]

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[120] "Automne" OP 104.

[121] "Automne malade" OP p.146.

[122] "L'Automne et l'Echo" OP p.589., and compare "La nudité des fleurs c'est leur odeur charnelle / Qui palpite et s'émeut comme un sexe femelle" [OP p.574].

But for the poet, domesticity is inimical to the freedom required for artistic creation, and the immortality conferred by descendancy is a less desirable immortality than that offered by repute through enduring poetry.

Apollinaire's poems, like his love affairs, start in Ronsard vein as a complaint about a girl withholding her charms. Then, as she yields, he discovers inconstancy and he accuses her [e.g. Maria] of deceit and lying ["les femmes mentent mentent" [123]]. Jealousy and rage set in to poison his love ["Le Son du Cor"] and he consoles himself by taking a long walk and remembering that in any case love leads to fruitfulness and thence to death for his freedom and creativity [124].

This refusal of love on the grounds that it means death to the poet is explicitly stated in his poems on love and autumn grouped in Le Guetteur mélancolique:

> Venez venez fillettes
> Faut pas rester sur terre
> Vaut mieux vaut mieux mourir [125]

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[123] Untitled poem OP p.511.

[124] "Le Son du Cor" OP p.518, and "J'ai promené ma rage en les soirs blancs et froids" OP p.517.

[125] Untitled poem OP p.580.

Again in "Hélène" he writes:

> Quand on entend la femelle de l'alcyon
> Chanter la mort est proche et pour vivre en nos rêves
> Immortelle et belle Hélène ô tentation
> Bouche-toi les oreilles [126]

Women have become sirens, luring the sailor from the free, open seas of life to the doom of domesticity:

> Orphée amoureux fut tué par les femmes [127]

In "Le Départ" [128] the soul of the poet, although cursed for rejecting life and its game of love, prefers "la chaste gloire"

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[126] "Hélène" OP p.579. Helen is the incarnation of Eunoia, the goddess whose angels were sent to guard earth but married mortals and begat criminals. To expiate her fault, Eunoia took on the human form of woman and humiliated herself by becoming a prostitute, eternally moving from body to body. Here Apollinaire uses her to represent the eternal sex-symbol "ô tentation". If she wishes to exchange immortality in this world for the immortality of a goddess who lives in men's memories and song, she must stop her ears to the temptation of sex - a Schopenhauer idea, echoed in many siren references in the work of Apollinaire. Again it is the poetic immortality by repute, offered even to a goddess, that is preferable to the "éternité des femmes". For an even simpler statement, refer "Orphée" [OP p.26]:

> La femelle de l'alcyon,
> L'Amour, les volantes Sirènes,
> Savent de mortelles chansons
> Dangereuses et inhumaines,
> N'oyez pas ces oiseaux maudits,
> Mais les Anges du paradis.

[127] "L'Automne et l'Echo" OP p.589.

[128] "Le Départ" OP p.578. Also compare the cursed saints who had rejected life and love in "L'Ermite", and the condemnation of the Larron. Similarly the masochistic self-sacrifice of the Fagnes poems already treated, and the desire for self-immolation in the place of the beloved in "Onirocritique".

and takes a masochistic joy in self-sacrifice for a higher ideal:

O douce vie ô doux Amour que je rebute

His consolation is in his "lyre" which helps him to sing of an impossible love but harmonises his heart and his eyes - "la clef des yeux":

... O cordes de ma lyre
C'est vous qui résonnez quand je chante c'est vous
La cause de l'impossible amour que j'avoue
Et qui m'avez donné la force de le dire
Et cette lyre accorde et mon coeur et mes yeux [128]

From Ronsard he has progressed to a Mallarméan rejection of the happiness of this world in favour of the wisdom of poetic vision. But if this idealistic preference for the ascetic life proved difficult for Mallarmé to adhere to without an occasional temptation, how much more difficult was this for the hot-blooded young Apollinaire! He might indeed revolt against "the tender trap" of love, but however much he tried to harden his heart towards the flower of womanhood by reminding himself of her defects, he loved the petal-fall and respected the fruit she offered: that was in his blood, it was his destiny:

Je suis soumis au chef du signe de l'automne
Partant j'aime les fruits je déteste les fleurs [129]

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[129] "L'Automne et l'Echo" OP p.588. It is possible to produce an echo from the Devil's Rock. Italians feel a curious attraction towards obviously pregnant women. One of the most popular photographs of a famous Italian film star noted for her glamour showed her in an advanced state of pregnancy with a background of ripe lemons. This is the attitude we have to allow for in Apollinaire, however unfamiliar to Nordic critics.

This declaration which opens "L'Automne et l'Echo" is followed by a series of ideas very similar to those of "L'Ermite", and composed, I suspect, on the Rocher du Diable where he took solitary refuge to turn over in his mind the conflicting thoughts of Maria, his love for her, her attraction for other Stavelotains, her little white lies which all tactful girls must tell, and the greater call of his poetic vocation. "Je vis anxieux" he says, against a background of flower-odours he detests; and he has elsewhere explained that it is "leur odeur charnelle / Qui palpite et s'émeut comme un sexe femelle" [122] that now troubles him. "Ma vie est debout sur un socle stylite". Standing on the rock pinnacle, he considers the crowds who will acclaim him as a poet one day, and also awaits his contrite beloved, though he knows that "love is blue". Indeed, he tells us "je médite" and "j'imite des cris incertains": he meditates and attempts some tentative lines of poetry echoing his life made anxious by his adolescent yearning. These lines remind one of stanzas 5 and 6 of "L'Ermite": "anxieux seul et debout comme une borne" ... "j'attends celle qui me tendra ses doigts menus ... signes blancs aux ongles ... les mensonges." Is he referring to the "chanson énigmatique" again? In the major poem he is a Hermit, and in "L'Automne et l'Echo" he speaks of his life as a stylite on a plinth. As Madame Durry reminds us [130], Apollinaire published an article in the Mercure de

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[130] Durry op.cit. Tome I, p.194.

France of July 1904 entitled "L'Exil et la volupté, un roman sur Thaïs en 1611" showing that Anatole France's work, Thaïs, published in 1890, was inspired by Gabriel Ranquet du Puy de Velay; and Jacqueline Apollinaire many years ago told me that she had an early version of "L'Ermite" with notes on L'Exil et la Volupté [131]. There is no doubt that, meditating on the Devil's Rock, the poet was reminded of France's stylite Paphnuce, the rock-squatting monk beset by temptations of the flesh such as described also by Flaubert. Not only does the very name of this natural feature of Stavelot symbolise temptation by associating its rock phallus with the Devil, but it was the scene of his nocturnal trysting with Maria, whose attractions in Autumn led him to a winter feeling of sin. Not surprisingly, this rock, and its dual association of the temptations of the flesh by night and the meditations of the poet by day, having figured in L'Enchanteur pourrissant as here in "L'Automne et l'Echo", provided the story-line of "L'Ermite". This roughly parallels Paphnuce's departure from his stylite's rock and his journeying to the city and its temptress. But it is only a parallel. A. France gave Apollinaire the idea of the stylite Hermit as a central identification-figure, and

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[131] Madame Apollinaire permitted me to work at 202 Boulevard St. Servain just after the Liberation, to catalogue the poet's library and sift through his MSS. She was about to show me the MS in question when she received a telephone call to aid a sick relative, and I subsequently forgot to enquire further.

that is virtually all [132]. In fact, the references in stanza 12, "J'irai vers les cités", in stanza 19 "la ville m'apparut" and the passions in the verger in stanza 24 are also paralleled equally in the general theme of leaving his Rocher du Diable for Orkenise in "Onirocritique" and refer equally to the poet's personal revolt against the bucolic life of isolation.

If one examines the brouillon of "L'Ermite" to be found in the Stavelot Notebook, one finds that stanzas 14, 15, 16, 5, 17, 20, 21, 18, 19, and 23 [in that order] contain the specifically Stavelot references [stanzas 18 and 19 look as if they were added in last]; while the rest is of an earlier composition assumably, cruder and without background locality.

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[132] As the first to reveal in print the Thaïs link, Madame Durry is concerned to exaggerate this influence, and thus is led to finding tenuous parallels such as Thaïs submitting to Paphnuce's moral lessons as compared with the "poétesses nues" and "fornarines" confessing to the Hermit [Durry, Tome I, p.197]. She overlooks the fact that indeed the cases are opposite: the Hermit did not go to the city to convert anybody [nor is there any correspondence to the person of Thaïs herself], but to debauch whoever might be available! On p.203 [loc.cit.] Madame Durry writes: "La personne d'Apollinaire parle peu, l'ermite interposé entre elle et nous l'offusque plus qu'il ne nous révèle; Apollinaire raconte une histoire sans y adhérer véritablement." It is precisely because the poet is revealing himself that he has to depart from the story that gave him [literally] his point of departure. How far one can stray when led by purely literary preoccupations! It is the critic who obfuscates Apollinaire the man. Incidentally, the Aspermont family produced religious, as well as military, leaders; this is often overlooked when considering Apollinaire's interest in religion and identification with a religious figure.

This suggests a re-working and the addition of a personal and particularised element, composed while walking meditatively on the Fagnes [133]. We may refer again to "Fagnes de Wallonie", which opens:

> Tant de tristesses plénières
> Prirent mon coeur aux fagnes désolées
> Quand las j'ai reposé dans les sapinières
> Le poids des kilomètres

and is echoed in stanza 18 of "L'Ermite" as:

> Mes kilomètres longs Mes tristesses plénières
> Les squelettes de doigts terminant les sapins
> Ont égaré ma route et mes rêves poupins
> Souvent j'ai dormi au sol des sapinières

The poem continues with these lines:

> Je n'ai confié aucun secret sinon une chanson énigmatique
> Aux tourbières humides

This is a clear reference to "L'Ermite", which is the one main poetic confession of his private problems, his secret adolescent Sehnsucht und Weltschmerz to be couched in the enigmatic language of Apollinarian symbols and which bears at the same time the imprint of the Fagnes. Further indications, if such are still needed, are to be found in the references to "hiboux cloués" and "pauvres champs de seigle mûr" in stanza 17, and "clavaires" in stanza 9. Peasant farmers once had the habit of nailing up birds of prey to frighten off the marauding

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[133] A suggestion first made by the present writer [P.F. Wells: The Philosophy of Guillaume Apollinaire, Thesis, University of Wales, 1948, p.27], subsequently suggested by other critics with varying degrees of substantiation. The point will be expanded herein to illustrate Apollinaire's concept of the poetic activity, refer footnote [137].

seed-eating birds that raided their grain-crops. These also joined the corn-god symbols of fertility constructed out of straw and hung from the rafters of cottages. The fact that they were poor crops of rye gave me more trouble to locate with certainty until after much questioning of the older inhabitants of Stavelot I was able to establish that, although there is no sign of rye in that locality today, it was originally cultivated there at the turn of the century. However, it grew so poorly that it was given up as hopeless. In 1966 I cross-checked by investigation among the farmers of Bennerscheid, especially Herr Westhofen and Herr Dahs, to confirm that this was not the case in that area, which disposes of the only alternative scene for the poem. In Bennerscheid rye was grown in Apollinaire's time [and I spoke to people who actually remembered the young tutor Kostrowitzky's visit], because it would grow well, like the other main crop, potatoes. With the introduction of fertilisers subsequently, rye was replaced by wheat, a more profitable crop - but not, it was emphasised, because the rye had been poor [134]. In all this we see the acuity of Apollinaire's observation and background knowledge, as in his precise reference to clavaires which are a type of fungus still to be seen in the sapinières of the

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[134] I may add that M. Deleclos also believes that the "pauvres champs de seigle mûr" refers to Stavelot, but then he feels the same about stag-calls and other features which are just as much part of the scene in Germany.

Fagnes, and whose club-shaped form reminded the poet in stanza 9 of coral formations or human arteries.

With this background, we may now proceed to examine the poem in more detail. The plot is so simple as to barely constitute a story: A Hermit becomes disillusioned with his isolation and continence, since they have brought no revelation; he decides to return to society and yield to his suppressed desire for women, but on his journey to the town he realises that women would mean death to him and his way of life. This slender framework is nevertheless adequate for Apollinaire to express his theme of tension between his religious training and the passionate desires of his adolescence, together with the concept of poetry as a viable substitute religion, inspiring and consoling. The theme and underlying concept, the emergent style and the imagery - both bookish and localised - make this work the culmination, however immature, of all his apprenticeship and minor poems up till this point, and even hint, as we examine its technique, at the great poet yet to reveal himself.

In the first stanza we recognise the "ermite déchaux" as the va-nu-pieds poet of Orkenise now in his guise of meditative priest, seeking wisdom through relevation as he had done in the chapel in Monaco, but a prey to the conflicting sexual desires that assail the lonely, as he had described in "Vae soli". Even while contemplating life and death in the traditional pose of Hamlet and so many Italian paintings, the

battles of words [logomachies] arising in his mind from his reading of religion and heresies drive him to the point of madness ["tentations de lune"], and he is tempted to flee from the hopeless task of making sense out of life, of attaining the wisdom that will calm his desires and assuage his melancholy, by turning to women for consolation and oblivion. Even the symbol of death that he is contemplating presents itself to his tortured mind as, specifically, a female skull, he admits in a suppressed stanza: in existentialist nausea he sees the human brain as so much cheese, just as he had viewed in L'Enchanteur pourrissant the human body as so much meat, subject to death and decomposition. As he wrote by way of introduction to the Stavelot poems that open his Guetteur mélancolique,

> Et toi mon coeur pourquoi bats-tu
> Comme un guetteur mélancolique
> J'observe la nuit et la mort

Too many stars flee when he says his prayers, he tells the death's-head, in stanza 2: the knowledge that comes from words, erudition and logical argument kills the loftier, guiding wisdom of beauty contained in the poems he writes. Here we may glimpse the struggle between his religious and his poetic devotions: poetry is replacing religion, proposing the same function of revealing a harmonising wisdom in which poems gradually replace prayers and even offer cogent prohibitions as strong as moral taboos - this particular poem progressively reveals this,

as if in answer to his appeal for revelation from the divine source. But meanwhile, all his meditative exercises are frustrated by the enemy of wisdom, namely sexual desire.

In stanza 3 he finds that everything he looks at, because of the pent-up power of repression, reminds him of sex: even the clouds in the evening sky suggest buttocks, and so he prays like St. Anthony in his Temptations, to be delivered from his instincts.

His mind then flashes back to his infancy in Rome, presumably as he thinks what a part sexual desire has played in his origin: he refers to the Italian finger-guessing game of morra, and the pun "l'amour la mourre" reminds him that love is a game life demands that humans should play, so that he finds himself praying that he, too, may join in and know love.

This much, in imagery, style and theme, corresponds to Apollinaire's earliest period pre-Stavelot and early Stavelot; but now an isolated stanza from the Stavelot Notebook gives more specific instance to the theme: He is, at plot-level, awaiting the Unknown She destined to be his first love, but at the personal level he already knows it is Maria he is waiting for at the Devil's Rock, for he knows she has little white spots on the nails of her slim fingers [135], signs of the little

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[135] The fact that it was Maria is borne out by the fact that when he wrote of her retrospectively years later in "Mareye" [OP p.846], her delicate hands furnished the only image of her memory.

white lies of a lover's deception. The same discrepancy will be observable at two other points in the narrative.

Why should he be in religious torment? He is still innocent and virginal, he claims, although his desire is as plain as the lonely, upright rock against which he waits in such a troubled state. On the other hand he realises that his virginity is not a matter of choice, and he is far from innocent in intention: and it is precisely the unicorn he represents with phallic symbolism that is to be calmed by a virgin.

Perhaps, as raindrops fall in regular rhythm from the leaves overhanging his rocky perch, he feels cold as the time passes, marked by the chiming of a distant Stavelot church bell marking the passing hour, and the setting sun brings his assignation nearer: he thinks of Christ naked and cold, and recollects himself to pray rather that his inner fires be extinguished.

Because he is waiting prayerfully, he is reminded of Christ keeping vigil in Gethsemane as depicted by El Greco's "Agony in the Garden" with a similar rock in the background, and how he too had meditated and prayed so devotedly in vain. Did Christ really achieve a blood-sweat, he wonders?

He had ardently desired such a sign himself, he says in stanzas 9 and 10. By its reference to <u>clavaires</u>, stanza 9 suggests composition in Stavelot also, even if of a different time from the Notebook stanzas, which would support my earlier

suggestion that stanza 6 had a local, particularised reference that followed naturally from the Notebook stanza 5. Certainly the tone of stanzas 6 to 13 is inferior, reaching a deplorable lapse in stanza 10 where, after a tasteless display of Verlaine "A la Manière de Paul Verlaine" without that poet's self-critical mockery, he plunges to the pathos of a bleeding nose with none of Rimbaud's skill in the use of such an image:

> Une goutte tomba Sueur Et sa couleur
> Lueur Le sang si rouge et j'ai ri des damnés
> Puis enfin j'ai compris que je saignais du nez
> Et j'ai ri du vieil ange ...

Maybe this, too, is the memory of an actual occurence he was loth to omit from his confessions. Or perhaps, since "fornarines" rhymed with "latrines" in an early brouillon, it may be a bookish echo of Rimbaud's "Premières Communions". At all events, his meaning is clear: He waited in vain for revelation, a solution in answer to prayer, and revolted angrily against the whole idea of asceticism while preferring to wait for Maria. He tears off the hair-shirt of conscience and continence that had been pricking him, with a reference to the cruel silk-weavers of Lyons. Silk is so much softer than hair, as material for a shirt, that one may wonder whether this could be a reference to his stay there in terms of his father's friend cruelly putting the fear of God into him to keep him from following the d'Aspermont proclivities, just as children were once made to sign Temperance Pledges! This is tenuous, but it

is certainly Apollinaire's way of dropping in an obscure reference to colour at a personal level the main statement made at plot level. Reference to Lyons and use of the adjective "cruel" are otherwise strangely gratuitous, and it is believed to be there that he was introduced to Shakespeare, and presumably the graveside scene from Hamlet.

Having thus broken away from the restriction of his religious training, the poet has the Hermit laugh at the "saintes sans tetons" and, ready to sacrifice his virginity [136], even though it means his death [as a poet], he goes towards the city. In this stanza 12 one notes also the poet's technique of punning to produce new imagery, which forecasts that of Aragon's metamorphoses or the Jeux de Mots of Robert Desnos: it is by juggling the initial consonants p and m that he arrives at the line "Parmi les mains les peaux les mots et les promesses" in a procedure later advocated by Breton for his surrealist disciples. At the same time, this surrealist, self-generating line continues the thought of physical love-making and the deceit of women.

In stanza 14 Apollinaire uses a verse from "La Maison de Cristal" of 1895 to open the section we know from the Notebook. His departure towards human habitation becomes a

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[136] "Mourir pour ma virginité" is taken as meaning "in exchange for" not "in defence of". The context leaves no doubt whatsoever.

Mallarméan flight from the Ideal to the happiness of men. This is not a mere collage of a "useful" stanza composed earlier. The reference to Lilith advances the argument that is being developed at the suggested level in true Symbolist manner: Lilith, Adam's first wife, was a she-devil, known as the enemy of all children, as well as an incuba. Thus the first suggestion is given of the coming theme, that it is obsessive sex, not productive love, that attracts the Hermit; it is the temptation of the Devil from whose Rock the poet started that is leading him to sin and damnation and utter death, hence the tragedy-filled eyes watching him from the heavens. Perhaps the thought of these eyes is taken up again in the image of the despairing queen of stanza 15.

Stanza 13, concluding this "early" section of the poem, voices the feeble defence that he is still without blame, since he had supplicated every saint in the calendar and even those without an allotted birthday, and it was not his fault if they had not replied!

"Et je marche." Here we begin the main Notebook section, with its different complexion. As we do, I would like to draw attention to the possibility that a new technique of composition is here foreshadowed. I would suggest that the young poet did in fact go striding across the Fagne to shake off or work out the problems that beset his mind when he meditated on his stylite's rock, and that as he walked, so the

natural features of the landscape impinged on the periphery of his consciousness absorbed by the internal debate, and became interwoven with his argument by just the same unconscious process as we may observe in the elaboration of a dream or an inspired poem which is, after all, a sort of waking dream. That is to say, the images of his surroundings were taken in by his unconscious mind and used as symbols whose associations worked one on the other to produce a stream of ideas parallel to his logical thought and the logical expression of the narrative. This is taking the Symbolism of Mallarmé a step further: instead of the suggestion being mere description, it becomes argument, producing consecutive ideas according to an intuitive logic, and constituting a revelation even to the writer. In the course of a dream, the unconscious mind is capable of producing solutions to problems the conscious mind was incapable of finding because of repressive factors. The same can be true of poetic creativity under certain conditions. The pattern thus emerging in the case of Apollinaire is one of conscious meditation followed by solitary walking, whose rhythmical movement drains off physical energy, lulls logical thought and releases repressions, while the succession of images from the surroundings produces a concatenation of associated ideas bearing on the subject of original meditation.

Yeats, of course, felt that poetry arose from a kind of self-hypnosis, and Claudel has noted the same thing in connection

with solitary walking: "Le matin, quand l'homme et ses souvenirs ne sont pas réveillés en même temps, ou bien encore au cours d'une longue journée de marche en route - une espèce d'hypnose ouverte s'établit, un état de réceptivité pure, fort singulier - le poète trouve expression non plus en cherchant les mots mais au contraire en se mettant dans un état de silence, en faisant passer sur lui la nature." In essence, "le poète a été mis en train ... par une espèce d'excitation rythmique ... Et peu à peu, sous cette impulsion régulière, entre les deux pôles de l'imagination et du désir, le flot des paroles et des idées commence à jaillir." We note how Claudel places words before ideas. [137]

It is a process we shall be able to follow closely in "La Chanson du Mal-aimé", in "Lul de Faltenin" and subsequent poems, especially in "Les Collines" where the poet explains it as his method of composition. It therefore seems profitable to

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[137] P. Claudel: "Lettre à l'abbé Bremont sur l'Inspiration poétique" pp.95-96. Madame Louise Faure-Favier agreed with me on this hypothesis. She elaborated on what she had written [op.cit., p.88] concerning "le travail intellectuel et la marche à pied qui en est le nécessaire complément" in an interview at her home on the Ile St.-Louis which the poet frequented. Fettweis also presents him as a typically fagnard poet in this respect of meditative walking. The creative process I advance here, however, is in no way to be confused with the mere appearance of descriptive imagery arising from local observation. For example, in stanza 20, a line reads: "Cité j'ai ri de tes palais tels que des truffes", which suggests that, just as his painful feet obtruded into his minor poems [and perhaps into this one in the cliché déchaux], so does his hunger, which he satisfied by keeping a lookout for mushrooms in the Fagnes thickets. Though we may possibly see its origin in such cases.

bear it in mind while examining "L'Ermite" even if it is not adequately proven at this point, since it suggests a dimension which places this poem in a category higher than "Le Larron" whose overworked erudition marks no advance on the earlier section of "L'Ermite" but has earned the higher praise of Madame Durry and her followers. At the same time, consideration of this technique in no way detracts from the validity of our interpretation. One might rather say that an understanding of this method of composition is a great help in interpreting the major poems through the grasp it gives of their parallel sequences of thought at the narrative level and at the symbolic level of associated ideas. Moreover, it is this method that will affect above all else Apollinaire's concept of poetry.

I suggest, then, that as the poet walked, he meditated, and that as the scene changed from the wilderness of the Fagne to the warmth of a tiny group of cottages and a farm, and changed again to wide fields with high clouds and then to the close intimacy of the orchards on the outskirts of Stavelot, so his thoughts changed their complexion.

In any case, stanzas 14 to 21 have this in common, in contradistinction to the bookish stanzas 1 to 4 and 14 to 21, that all the images are such as could arise from a walk in the Stavelot region. Moreover, they occur in the order in which the poet would meet them as he returned in the early morning from a cross-country tramp, perhaps after spending the night sleeping

"à la belle étoile" in a fir-wood, where the resinous carpet of needles provide a soft, dry, fragrant and insect-free bed, as anyone knows who has had Apollinaire's experiences.

What is here proposed is that stanzas 1 to 13 relate the story of a Hermit [the dramatis persona of A. France's Thaïs, without his character or purpose since he is chosen only for purposes of self-identification with an ascetic figure] but that the journey taken by the original Paphnuce is replaced, from stanza 14 onwards, by the actual journey on foot made by the poet himself; while this in turn is intended to refer us to a symbolic journey not from the stylite's rock to the city so much as a change of mental position from esthetic solitude to the society of his fellows. The negative aspect of flight is from the intellectual sterility of isolation, and the positive aspect is the attraction to the physical presence of women. This journey, unlike that of Paphnuce, is abortive in that the Hermit does not satisfy the lust with which he undertook the journey; in fact, he is saved from sin in that he acts as father confessor to the young women instead of taking advantage of their charms. Why this volte face of stanzas 19 to 21? What changed the Hermit's mind? We are told only that "ma luxure meurt à présent que j'approche", and are therefore led back to look more carefully at the journey of approach described in stanzas 14 to 19 for the usual Apollinarian clues: images taken from his surroundings but used with symbolic force.

Let us, then, follow his narrative attentive to both levels of reference.

He walks under the "tragic" stars which betoken an as yet unconscious realisation that his purpose is wrong, morally [regarding Maria] and esthetically [regarding his poetry]. It is dark, and he heads towards a wood to spend the night. The firs are dark against the star-spangled night sky, and the shape of one of them, described later at Bennerscheid as solemn, with its drooping branches resembling a magician in long-sleeved robes and pointed hat [138] here reminds him of a queen, perhaps in deep sleeves and a medieval wimple with a trail of stars at its tip [an associated image in L'Enchanteur and contemporary poems]. But the "squelettes de doigts terminant les sapins" as he had described them in "O mon coeur" made him see this queenly figure in skeleton form, pointing out a different path to be trod, a harder one leading to a greater glory and immortality:

> Pour consoler ma gloire un vent m'a dit Ecoute
> Elève-toi toujours Ils te montrent la route
> Les squelettes de doigts terminant les sapins [139]

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[138] "Les Sapins" OP p.121: "Les sapins en bonnet pointu / De longues robes revêtus".

[139] The poems"O mon coeur"[OP p.517] and "Fagnes de Wallonie" [OP p.370] are to be read in conjunction with these stanzas of "L'Ermite" which are a condensation of the total significance, for the poet, of this vision of a fir-wood as a dark crossroads.

In "L'Ermite" the fir-tree with stars shining above it may have reminded him of a Christmas tree and hence of the holy innocent Queen of Heaven, who has lost her child tragically hanged on a tree at Golgotha, and who is despairing again now to see the Hermit, lost and on his way to the eternal death of the damned: for he has ceased his prayers and cursed the saints for the refusal of divine revelation:

> Un squelette de reine innocente est pendu
> A un long fil d'étoile en désespoir sévère

We must keep the original image clear in our mind's eye: the tall fir seemingly hanging by a chain of stars from the night sky, the drooping branches on either side like the arms of a compassionate, supplicating draped figure common enough in religious paintings. Note, too, that the suggested queen has not hanged herself: the skeleton is hung up, suspended from the heavens to bar the poet's path, like a sign from the tragic eyes that had watched him from Heaven as he set out on his wrong course. This idea of a skeletal reminder drawn up to confront him and redirect him is in perfect conformity with his reaction to, and symbolic interpretation of, the same fir-data given explicitly in "O mon coeur". It is reasonable in terms of Apollinaire's devotion to the Virgin who as La Reine du Ciel is traditionally depicted with a crown of stars, and in view of the context since the Hermit has been praying, and this could even be the sign he had prayed for but does not yet recognise.

Madame Durry [140], as ever more concerned with literary references than the value of each symbol to Apollinaire the man, would like to see this queen referable to Phèdre, since she is mentioned in Thaïs as being hanged by her golden belt; but far from being innocent, Phèdre is consumed by incestuous love! Alternatively, Madame Durry proposes Jocaste. Apollinaire never uses such a reference in a major poem unless it has personal symbolic reference; are we to see this queen as part of his Oedipus complex, fated to be punished? Does Jocaste symbolise the poet's mother as an innocent victim of her son's birth and destiny? But then why despair and suicide, which have no counterpart in Apollinaire's life? Madame Durry concludes unsatisfactorily that the reference "lui fournit une de ces discontinuités que dès lors il recherche." It scarcely seems worthy to blame the poet for one's failure to track down the starting-point in literature of each of his symbols. "Le souvenir qui vient du livre passe, dans sa poésie, du réel à l'irréel" concludes that critic, but one is tempted to paraphrase: "du livresque au personnel" if and when it comes from a book.

Whatever the detailed truth of this image, the essential is that whether or not it is the Mother of God with her crown of stars, the meaning of the firwood as a grim warning

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[140] Durry op.cit., Tome I, pp.200 to 201, and Tome II, p.60.

that deflects the Hermit's footsteps fits perfectly with the remaining two lines of the stanza, which other critics have not commented:

> La nuit les bois sont noirs et se meurt l'espoir vert
> Quand meurt le jour avec un râle inattendu

The strange thing is that this explanation of why the woods are dark on the night that the Hermit approaches them is given by reference to their appearance at <u>dusk</u> - a reference out of time sequence in the narrative, but applying accurately to the descriptions given in "O mon coeur" and "Fagnes de Wallonie". In short, this fir-wood had a special significance for the poet, utterly independent of the exigencies of the "story" or any literary association.

There are two clues to its meaning for Apollinaire. If one takes a walk across the Fagnes one will notice that fir-trees absorb all the light because of their fine needles and dark colour. A colour photograph taken by the present writer on the Fagnes in late afternoon shows that although the outside trees in such a copse are still green, those just inside have lost their colour and appear surprisingly black. This is the unexpected death rattle as the daylight dies and the fir-wood loses its green.

The second clue, as to the significance of the green of the fir, is available in "Lul de Faltenin":

Dans l'attentive et bien-apprise
J'ai vu feuilloler nos forêts
... les matelots désiraient
Que vergues et mâts reverdissent [141]

The green symbolises desire which brings new life, though this productivity means the black mourning of death. In the person of a good woman rightly loved, Apollinaire sees the future of the race, but an end to the free life of adventure and discovery, an end to the life of the poet.

The rake's progress of the Hermit towards the satisfaction of his lust has thus aroused the contrary image of pure womanhood in black despair and the green hope of the future dying in tragic darkness. There is no future without fertility.

If one had any doubt as to the accuracy of this interpretation of the hitherto unexplained stanza 15, it would be dispelled by the vastly clearer intention of the succeeding stanzas, which further illustrate the same thought and explain the change of mind the Hermit undergoes.

In stanza 16 he continues his journey, leaving the dark wood at dawn, but still fleeing. With the light of day,

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[141] "Lul de Faltenin", OP p.97, analysed in detail in Chapter 6. Apollinaire's continued interest in the fir-tree when on the Rhine prompts quotation from a poet he obviously knew:

O Tannenbaum! O Tannenbaum!
Wie treu sind deine Blätter!
Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit,
Nein, auch im Winter wenn es schneit...

In other words, the fir is a symbol of "remaining true", and it would be "unexpected" for a fir to lose its green.

however, the scene changes, and with it, the train of the poet's thought. First of all, the dawn closes the "regard fixe et doux de vieux rubis / Des hiboux" and replaces it with "le regard des brebis / Et des truies". As he leaves the dark wood where Woman and Death are synonomous [like "L'Amour La Mort" in "La Clef", this is more serious than "L'amour la mourre"], he also leaves the unblinking stare of the owl whose eyes are like gems. In "La Clef" it was the poet who had gems in his eyes and was to die if he did not find the key. These symbols are so rich in association that once again one must think of their use in other poems, and limit oneself to the meanings the poet himself ascribes. It is true, and Apollinaire must have seen it for himself in the woods of the Fagne, that owls' eyes, designed to catch every available scrap of light to give the birds clear vision despite the obscurity, glow an iridescent red at night, just as other nocturnal hunters' eyes glow green. Certainly the poet, too, wants to see clearly in the obscurity, and his eyes are most precious to him, like gems, when illuminated by the light of wisdom symbolised in "Cortège" much later by a line of eye-like stars that reminds us of the "fil d'étoile" and the "grands yeux" with which the heavens are seen to "s'étoiler

calmement":

> Et moi aussi de près je suis sombre et terne
> ....
> Et je m'éloignerai m'illuminant au milieu d'ombres
> Et d'alignements d'yeux des astres bien aimés
> Oiseau tranquille ... [142]

In so many poems, the owl is Pallas Athene's bird of wisdom, with gems in its eyes, furnishing the key that unlocks eyelids - even the double lids of the owl - so that vision may be possible in the bright light of day as well as in the dark of night, in the exterior world of reality and earthly love as well as the interior world of erudite estheticism and asceticism. Such harmonising vision is as yet barely intuited in "L'Ermite" however, and so we see that the life-giving sun is still too strong for the owl of stanza 16: it stays in the dark anti-life of the wood where nothing grows but the fungi. Instead, the sun awakens the farm animals which the poet finds looking at him almost accusingly as he strides forward to the town. The animals that he notices are specifically fecund females, ewes and sows, and in case we should miss the point he adds "aux tetins roses comme

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[142] The owls of "L'Ermite" and "Le Larron", with gems in their eyes, should be taken together with the references to the poet having gems in his eyes [especially in "La Clef"] and the difficulty the owl-poet has in accommodating himself to the dazzling light of the sun, clearly stated in this image in "Cortège", after which the poet learns to surrender to the sun and the owl-image is abandoned. Refer "Le Larron" OP p.93, "La Clef" OP p.553, and "Cortège" OP p.74.

des lobes" [143]. The warmth of the sun means life, and life demands fertility throughout nature, in plants no less than in animals: hence Ceres, the corn goddess of fertility is invoked as he passes the field of sheep and pigs and arrives at a field of rye. But then he sees ravens flying across the ripe grain of autumn, their black silhouettes resembling the tilde-shapes painted by Vincent van Gogh as "Ravens flying over Cornfield" in July 1890. Their very blackness ["noir comme un corbeau" as the French say] is associated with death apart from their vulture connections, and they are seen as the very antithesis of the corn, hence inimical to fertility. The raven is solitary, and prefers to live on mountains or in the desert; it is therefore, in European mythology, the witch's bird of dark knowledge, a predator like the owl, and an apt symbol here for the wizard-poet of L'Enchanteur emerging from his dark wood.

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[143] The thought is closely paralleled by Mallarmé in "L'Azur":

Le Ciel est mort. - Vers toi, j'accours! Donne, ô matière,
L'oubli de l'Idéal cruel et du Péché
A ce martyr qui vient partager la litière
Où le bétail heureux des hommes est couché

This is a more significant literary "source" than France's Thaïs. The parallel is also observable in Mallarmé's complaint that his poetic asceticism is "bleue et stérile" compared with the birth of a baby to his wife ["Don du Poème"] and we note the same symbolic colouring in Apollinaire's "malgré les autans bleus je me dresse divin", his "l'amour est bleu couleur du temps" in "L'Automne et l'Echo", also the recollection of "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" in his "Elégie du Voyageur aux pieds blessés" [OP p.337]: "Au bois tu n'as point vu de faunes; / Des nymphes tu n'eus pas l'aumône."

Of course, the word corbeaux, indicating a number of the birds, might just as well be translated as crows, which are gregarious, and this image fits equally well with our interpretations, since crows cause great damage to crops, and would indeed cast a shadow over a field of ripe grain metaphorically as well as literally. But why is this shadow described as vaine? Clearly his thought is this: not only is the owl of poetic wisdom out of its element in the warmth of the sun, but the miserable shadow cast by its sister-symbol, the raven [or crow], makes a vain showing compared with the promise of even a poor harvest of grain. In short, the poet shows up poorly when contrasted with the farmer who produces ripe rye. Up to this point, then, he is still attracted to the fulfilment of desire, but since leaving the wood it is desire linked with love leading to fertility.

But now he observes the "hiboux morts cloués" and is reminded that fertility [the farmer] kills wisdom [the owl], and he realises that his arrival at the wood has altered the direction of his footsteps, both the literal and the symbolical, as effectively as a signpost:

> Les squelettes de doigts terminant les sapins
> Ont égaré ma route et mes rêves ...

In this stanza 18, then, the arduous miles he has travelled are explicitly equated to the interior debate on his "tristesses plénières", and he names the subject of his dilemma as "rêves

poupins", recalling the "poupon chéri" of stanza 6, in terms that now reveal his conscious attitude - such dreams are adolescent, unworthy of a religious attitude to his esthetic calling [144]. To recapitulate at this turning-point: The ascetic poet was assailed by sexual desire; he thought of moving to satisfy his lust, realised that this was barren and tragic, elevated it to a preference for love, saw that this led to fertility, and now rejects this, too, since it means death to his poetic creativity.

Thus freed of his burden by the appeal of a call to higher things, symbolised by the sound of church bells as he approaches the town itself [perhaps a reinforcement of the innocent Queen of Heaven image and the bells of stanza 7],he regards the citizens benevolently: his desires flee helter-skelter.

He laughs at the attractions of luxury, comparing the palaces to truffles, gleaming white where they have been dug up

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[144] In the condensed version of "O mon Coeur" [OP p.517], the dreams dispelled by his determination to be a poet include also marriage, which is impossible, anyway, because despite his "nobility" he has no assured outlook financially; this recalls his disparaging comparison of the raven-poet with the farmer's rye-harvest:

> Je suis un roi qui n'est pas sûr d'avoir du pain
> Sans pleurer j'ai vu fuir mes rêves en déroute
> Mes rêves aux yeux doux au visage poupin

by wild boar in the forest clearings where the blue sky is once more clear overhead. The heavily-leafed branches arch so closely overhead in the Ardennes forest that an emergence into a clearing has this sense of deliverance, a feeling that suddenly the light is let in; and the wild pig that inhabit the protecting woods are well-known for their ability to smell out the tasty truffles which, like the potatoes their generic name tuber suggest, lie but a few inches below the surface, easily uncovered by snout and tusk. At the same time, this Stavelot image may have been suscitated by an almost unconscious recollection of the mushroom growth of pleasure palaces that sprang up around Paphnuce's rock and were built by bestial sensation-seekers as described in Thaïs - a link ironically overlooked by the protagonists of A. France.

Because the Hermit has been tried in the fires of temptation, he can even hear the women confess their sins of the flesh. These stanzas 19 to 21, thus link back to the hermit plot and the "older" stanzas, marked by a word-play parallel to that of stanza 12:

Sache nos coeurs cache les jeux

where the initial consonantal sounds of the s and c are reversed

as c and j on roughly the same stem-sounds [145].

In stanza 23 the Hermit absolves the "aveux pourpres. . des poétesses", which suggests in conjunction with such figments of the concupiscent imagination as "des fées" [recalling the faunes and fées of his "Elégie du Voyageur" in the vein of Mallarmé's "Après-midi d'un Faune"] that these women the poet forgives are the ones he would have aided and abetted in their sin, and that he is really forgiving all women, in their Eunoia-Helen guise, for being such a temptation. This thought is still linked with the same associations in the poem to Yvonne of Good Friday, 1903, which opens Le Guetteur mélancolique:

> Vous êtes un verger de tentations
> Pour la faim des passants ce sont des capucines
> Des lambrusques et des fleurs de la Passion
> Qui offrent tendrement deux couronnes d'épines

This is further corroborated by the final scene, where the Hermit is unmoved when he witnesses - improbable event! - a couple making love in an orchard. More probable is the thought that it is his own identity again swamping the Hermit of the plot, and that the poet is seeing, in the sense of remembering, a

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[145] The suggestion of M. Décaudin [Dossier: p.70] that "sache les jeux" as in the preoriginal is preferable, may overlook the poet's intention to juggle sounds, and is immaterial to the interpretation. That Apollinaire already knows the games [as far as his own identity is concerned, apart from his Hermit-identity] is suggested in the last five lines of the poem. Also compare, in "L'Automne et l'Echo": "Leurs bouches sèches / Me disent leurs désirs" [OP p.588],

couple [146] of whom he had been one partner as in "Onirocritique" and other Stavelot poems. It is this already-tasted forbidden fruit that he must at all costs shake free of and forget ["laisser clore mes yeux"], if he is to retain his freedom, integrity and poetic, creative wisdom. Again we have the impression that this is two poems in one, with one component of a later date and stage of experience than the other.

The final argument is underlined in the last stanza: death follows fertility, love is crucified in the sacred rites of nature, plant, animal and human:

> Aucun pauvre désir ne gonfle ma poitrine
> Lorsque je vois le soir les couples s'enlaçant
> Car je ne veux plus rien sinon laisser clore
> Mes yeux couple lassé au verger pantelant
> Et de la sainte cruauté des passiflores

Fruit symbolise the fruit of love, as in so many of Apollinaire's poems, and here the bleeding ripe gooseberries closely parallel the wounded pomegranates of "Le Larron" [the arid summer driving the birds to seek the sweet juices], but they also indicate the death rattle of nature's life-cycle, the cruelty of which is symbolised by the crucifix and thorn formation of the stamens in the flower of the passion-fruit. The word <u>râle</u> links with the "râle" of the Innocent Queen

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[146] Note that "les couples s'enlaçant" of stanza 23 have become "couple ... pantelant" in the singular under the impulsion of a personal, remembered image, even though the "pantelant<u>s</u>" would have been a closer rhyme for "sanglants".

stanza, and the thought of Christ's passion links with the religious colour of the Hermit theme: love, the warm, ruby treasure of the owl, is crucified. So, at last, the incubus is exorcised, and the poet, like the Hermit, finds peace [147].

This talisman belief that love, suffering and death are inextricably interwoven has to be invoked many times yet, however. In Le Bestiaire he is to repeat:

> Mon pauvre coeur est un hibou
> Qu'on cloue, qu'on décloue, qu'on recloue.
> De sang, d'ardeur, il est à bout. [148]

Again in "Elégie", written on the Rhine, he virtually repeats the conclusion of "L'Ermite" in the same crimson colour of evening and ripe gooseberries to the same weeping of stars:

> Qu'as-tu
> Et sur la porte était clouée une chouette
> ... ...
> Le soleil au déclin empourprait la montagne
> Et notre amour saignait comme les groseilliers
> Puis étoilant ce pâle automne d'Allemagne
> La nuit pleurant les lueurs mourait à nos pieds
> Et notre amour ainsi se mêlait à la mort [149]

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[147] Why does Madame Durry contend that this is not so? Refer op.cit. Tome I, p.202, where she writes "Toutes les images se déroulent dans une nuit à laquelle le jour ne succède que pour être aussi vainement invoqué, et dans un mouvement de fuite où l'obsédé cherche vainement la fin de l'obsession." The poet himself repeats throughout the last six stanzas that "ma luxure meurt" and "aucun pauvre désir ne gonfle ma poitrine". But then, Mme Durry has at this point the tragic eyes and hanged queen all confused with Lilith [loc.cit.]. Her summing-up on p.207 [ibid.] is similarly astray in noting merely the "son de désenchantement, de désillusion attristée et fatiguée" without seeing that his prayers were, in fact answered, and he finishes on a note both calm and positive.

[148] "Le Hibou" in Le Bestiaire, OP p.30.

[149] "Elégie", OP p.530, and compare the poem to Yvonne [OP p.544] quoted above. Gooseberries fit the context better than currants.

For, as he writes elsewhere, while in a cemetery thinking of the "tombes / D'amours mortes" [150]:

J'ai la tristesse d'être à la merci des instincts

In conlusion let us say that the "chanson énigmatique" that debates the adolescent's "tristesses plénières" on the Fagne, under the symbolism of a Hermit attempting to break his vows and desert his ascetic calling, has simply this to say: Beset with conflicting passions, the young poet realises that lust is degrading and unnatural, and that love leads to fertility but also to death, so that he will do better to adhere to the continent life of a dedicated, self-disciplined poet, "closing his eyes", as he concludes, to remembrance of incursions into sex experience.

And if literary affiliations for this are sought, we find them not only in Mallarmé's fauns, nymphs, and flights from ideal to earthly happiness and back again with doubting comparisons between poetic and human creation, but also in Baudelaire's "Hymne à la Beauté" which contains the infernal and divine, the stars, death associated with beauty, gems, the "ventre orgueilleux" of love, the flight from and towards "un Infini que j'aime", the siren and fairy, and the queen; and also these lines:

L'amoureux pantelant incliné sur sa belle
A l'air d'un moribond caressant son tombeau

The young poet's idea, however personally felt and expressed, did not lack literary ancestry, and he must have had these authors in the back of his mind.

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[150] Untitled poem, OP p.582.

Before moving on to consideration of the next major poetic work, we may note that the moral and esthetic conclusions worked out in "L'Ermite" and the bucolic setting of Stavelot are underlined in Le Poète assassiné:

> J'ai toujours vécu en elle [nature], mais mal vécu en somme, car on ne doit pas vivre sans amour humain, sans compagne. N'oubliez pas que tout est preuve d'amour dans la nature. Moi-même hélas! Je suis maudit pour n'avoir pas suivi cette loi avant laquelle n'existe que sa nécessité qui est le destin [151].

Here he makes the wise tutor of Croniamantal speak like an enlightened version of the Hermit, and concludes: "J'ai mortifié ma chair et pratiqué de dures pénitences. Je voudrais que votre vie fût heureuse." This is the beginning of a more mature philosophy which sees the mainspring of the universe, God, destiny, love, as a force which must be incorporated into poetry and not be regarded as inimical to it. At this early stage when "L'Ermite" was written, the poet still feels with Janssen that "... quelques hommes disgraciés ne doivent pas connaître l'amour. Cela arrive surtout parmi les poètes et les savants." [His ancestry included celibate prelates as well as profligates.] This sidelight may serve to reinforce the interpretation of "L'Ermite" given above, as well as introducing that of "Merlin et la vieille Femme", and also to explain it by giving some perspective in terms of the development of Apollinaire's concept of the nature and role of poetry. For example, it retrospectively illumines the poet's early attempt at formulating the relation of religion and destiny, and the apparent quarrel between poetry

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[151] "Le Poète assassiné", OC p.250.

and love. It also foreshadows the gradual evolution of his orientation from religion centred on the Immaculate Conception of the Innocent Queen of Heaven, so dear to the heart of the Polish people, through the guiding stars of destiny which recur in "La Chanson du Mal-aimé", to poetic creativity as a substitute, and then on to complete acceptance of, and fusion with, the universal law of love which embraces all these and to which "nul être ne saurait être rebelle" [151], not fir-trees or cornfields, ewes or sows, owls or ravens, or even poets. "Les rustres la connaissent et même les végétaux, les matières inertes." [151]

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"Merlin et la vieille Femme" [152] is older than its first appearance in Les Rubriques nouvelles No. 6 of June 1912 might suggest. Its title, together with content notes and a brouillon, is to be found in the Stavelot Notebook. The work shows affinities with "La Maison de Cristal" dating from his school-days, and with L'Enchanteur pourrissant, so that it is customary to date it as 1899 - 1900 [153].

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[151] "Le Poète assassiné", OC p.250, both quotations.

[152] "Merlin et la vieille Femme", Alcools, p.74, or OP p.88.

[153] Durry, Tome I, p.208: "Il date vraisemblablement de 1889-1890." Décaudin gives a preoriginal text in his Dossier, p.144. Madame Durry gives excerpts from "Lancelot du Lac", édition Jean Petit, 1533, on p.302 op.cit. with a parallel text from L'Enchanteur pourrissant. Although free of the erudite vocabulary of "L'Ermite" and "Le Larron", "Merlin et la vieille Femme" has a touch of the crudities of both, such as the opening reference to "un flux menstruel" which occurs also in L'Enchanteur pourrissant. The form of alexandrine quatrains rhyming abab is the same in all three poems.

The sources for the story of Merlin are several. Nenius tells a tale in Historia Britonum of a boy, Ambrosius, whom Geoffrey of Monmouth identifies as the young Merlin in his Historia regum Britanniae, which gives us our earliest source of information about the prophet magician and links him with Uther Pendragon and the birth of Arthur. Chrétien de Troyes is concerned rather with the adventures of Arthur's knights [c. 1165-1175], but it is Robert de Borron who, in "Joseph d'Arimathie" and the surviving part of "Merlin" unifies the linked story of Merlin at the turn of the 12th Century. The prose version [the "vulgate versions" of 1225 - 1230, especially "Merlin" and "Lancelot del Lac"] develop Merlin's part in the Arthurian legend, and these were certainly known to Apollinaire, including the final treacherous enchantment by Niniane. Now whereas Apollinaire referred to Viviane in his brouillon, and has given us in L'Enchanteur pourrissant the story of the Vivienne of "Lancelot" [whom he calls "Viviane ou Evième", showing knowledge of different sources] learning the magic arts of Merlin without sacrificing her virginity as part of the bargain, he has preferred the similar incident earlier described by Robert de Borron concerning Morgane le Fay for the story of his poem "Merlin et la vieille Femme". This is presumably because Morgane is better known for her "mirages", which suit the purpose of his symbolism. Moreover, although this figure has strong connotations of sex because of her male harem in her Castel de Sans Retour on Mont Gibel in Sicily,

she certainly does not represent love, least of all Merlin's self-sacrificing love for Vivienne [154], who also is briefly mentioned in the poem, under the name of Viviane, and as the object of Merlin's true, blinding love, the different nature of which is equally explicit in L'Enchanteur pourrissant.

According to Robert de Borron, Morgane promised to give herself to Merlin on condition that he would teach her "tant d'enchantemens qu'il n'ait feme en ceste terre qui plus en sache", and finding her to be of great beauty "il l'enama moult durement". After which encounter she would have no more of him; but when he had been bewitched by Vivienne and shut away for eternity in a sepulchre, Morgane responded to his appeals, before again returning to her captive lovers in the Sicilian fastness, by leaving him the consolation he requested: "Morgane entendit les paroles de Merlin. Elle n'osa répondre [for fear of Viviane] et posa près de la tombe, sans être vue par la dame du lac, une provision de mirages" as Apollinaire described it in the conclusion of 'L'Enchanteur pourrissant. The poem does not actually describe this transaction, as has always been popularly supposed; on the contrary, Morgane is already old and ugly on her first appearing to Merlin, and according to Robert de Borron it was only after she had given herself to magic and debauchery that she lost her famed beauty.

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[154] Self-sacrificing because Merlin had foreknowledge of the treachery of this "white serpent", and had already rehearsed the deception with Morgane's mirage.

An element of this reference taken over for the purposes of the poem, however, is the background idea of an exchange of Merlin's spells [word magic] for Morgane's mirages [magically created scenes]. We note that whereas in L'Enchanteur pourrissant Morgane created for her own purposes purely imaginary scenes, for instance to deceive the Druids, in the poem she recreates scenes of the past, such as she evidently left Merlin with in his tomb. Those were, we may recall, a store of tableaux from his past life to feed on in his otherwise sterile living death, enabling him to continue to prophesy even though he no longer "lived" in the fuller sense in this world. Those prophesies were to outlive him, we gather, proclaiming his renown even after his final, complete, death. Thus his name would live irrespective of whether Viviane loved him truly or not. By way of a sidelight, we may note also that Quinet's "Merlin l'Enchanteur" of 1860 has it that Merlin went to Rome, where he was condemned as a sorcerer. After escaping, he left Rome and entombed himself with Vivienne; he prophesied, and Vivienne bore him a son. Thus in this version Merlin enjoyed both immortality by repute and immortality by descendancy. Quinet's symbolical and allegorical poetry may have influenced Rimbaud; could Apollinaire have been unaware of this sympathetic source? At all events, we now have enough data on the nature of Merlin, Morgane and Viviane to consider the text itself.

The story of "Merlin et la vieille Femme" is extremely simple. Merlin, meditating in a desert, is met by Morgane; at first he recoils from her as from a rival, but then joins with

her; she weaves a mirage of love for his delight, and they part - she withdrawing to her fortress, and he to fulfill his destiny of falling in love with Viviane and being incarcerated by her, presumably when she finds him on his way back from Rome. The argument concerns the nature and significance of Merlin and Morgane's union of forces.

Elucidation of the theme is less simple. Indeed, Madame Durry opines that "Merlin et la vieille Femme est un poème difficile à interpréter", and confesses that "certains détails, je l'avoue, m'en restent encore obscurs." [155] Apollinaire's identification with Merlin, as in L'Enchanteur pourrissant, is beyond doubt. Madame Durry reminds us that the final version of L'Enchanteur pourrissant showed the addition of a prefatory chapter "reliant ... le destin de Merlin à celui d'Apollinaire, et soulignant ... qu'Apollinaire se met en Merlin." [156] Some sources say that Morgane, like Merlin [157], was fathered by the Devil, which would make her his half-sister, or symbolically his female principle. At all events, we can expect some degree of

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[155] Durry, Tome I, p.207 and 208 respectively. Her pupil, Dr. Davies, ventures only one paragraph [op.cit., p.53] on this poem echoing our own brief analysis of sixteen years earlier [op.cit., p.41]. We are therefore led to considerably expand the interpretation here, especially as nothing of importance seems to have been added by any leading critic of "Merlin et la vieille Femme" that bears on the consistent development of Apollinaire's concepts of the poetic art and function.

[156] Durry, op.cit., p.209.

[157] As Apollinaire relates Merlin's birth in L'Enchanteur pourrissant [OP p.55, opening paragraph]. Morgain, Morgan le Fay or Fata Morgana, was also regarded, especially in Italian versions, as the fairy half-sister of Arthur.

self-revelation from the poet, though veiled in the usual obscurity of symbols.

The first two stanzas set the scene of the meeting about to take place at plot-level, but its significance for the poet is shown, as usual, by the associative imagery. The scene is illuminated by a sun and sky whose imagery vividly paints in a background of the female fertility cycle and parturition. The mother who gives birth is said to be also the light of the sun, and the poet hails her as "my mother", thus acknowledging his personal implication in the argument at the suggested level:

La lumière est ma mère ô lumière sanglante

Merlin, at a barren crossroads, is meditating about life and the eternal cause of death and rebirth symbolised by the setting sun. The situation is precisely that of the Hermit in the first stanzas of "L'Ermite", and the background colour and symbolism are those of Mallarmé's "Victorieusement fui" [158]. The crossroads may well symbolise a point of decision, a difficult one whose flowerless character is indicated by a rather feeble pun, "La rose des vents", which nevertheless contributes to his apparent intention by suggesting that he is blown in all directions of the compass while cogitating: again we are reminded of the "tentations de lune et de logomachies" of the perplexed Hermit.

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[158] Mallarmé watches the sun set in crimson "suicidal" splendour but knows that it is to be reborn the next day; this life-giving symbol of immortality leads him to compare the poem it has inspired him to create with the beauty of his sleeping daughter, created by his physical love. The theme of "Merlin et la vieille Femme" is also closely allied to that of Mallarmé's "Après-midi d'un Faune".

Onto this scene, both literal and metaphorical, comes an old woman in magic green, riding on a mule "suivant la berge du fleuve en aval". The presence of a river in the "plaine déserte" is logically puzzling, but is explicable at plot-level: the description betrays its origin in "Lancelot du Lac", for it is Morgane seeking Merlin: "Et tant chevalcha amont et aval qu'el trova Merlin." [159]

But it is also possible to explain this lady riding "up hill and down dale" with connotations of green fertility in the sense of the symbolic level, since it is scarcely likely that Apollinaire, having invented the barren scene, should now slavishly include contrary elements simply because they appeared in his source-book. The woman's appearance offers sources of refreshment in the barren country of the poet's dry philosophising, just as later in the poem she will cause flowering bushes to appear. Specifically, we may add, these are may-blossom, whose Spring love-rites she will deceive as "elle fait son aubépine"! The pun may be permitted as Apollinaire would be well aware of the coy implication: this Morgane, who is said to have played "Miss Innocent" using magic to preserve her virginity, was the same Morgane who kept a male harem in her Sicilian castle "du haut du Mont Gibel" and wove the fata morgana, as the mirages of the Straits of Messina are called in Italy, in order to lure young men into

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[159] Credit for this valuable clue belongs to Madame Durry [see Tome I, p.211]. She does not explain the alternation between "Lancelot" and Robert de Borron's "Merlin".

her clutches. Once they had served the eternal female purpose they were thrown aside like vegetables. This is the side of the Morgane figure emphasised in Italian literature, and therefore perhaps in Apollinaire's mind. To cite an example of this emphasis, we recall that Boiardo relates in his "Orlando inn·morato" how Morgane's sister, Fata Alcina, bore Astolpho to her island and when she wearied of him turned him into a myrtle-tree. If the symbolic value of Morgane is the lure of sex, as opposed to the "true love" that Viviane represented [complete with the lover's agonised doubts as to whether she really loved him, as described in L'Enchanteur pourrissant], then Morgane is another example of the constant siren-image that runs through Apollinaire's poems until the theme of the destructive lure of sex is worked out in "Lul de Faltenin". In fact we see in "Merlin et la vieille Femme" how both his sexual desire [projected as Morgane of Gibel] and woman's desire for fertility [represented by his destined love, Viviane] spell disaster for the poet, and the Destiny he attributes to his fate is that "loi à laquelle nul être ne saurait être rebelle."

Once Merlin leaves his philosophical search for wisdom through word-magic, looking up and seeing Morgane, he is caught up in a world of deceptive mirage [all women, Apollinaire told us in his minor poems from Stavelot, are deceivers], with eros generating the magic, and himself the victim. In this richly symbolic encounter between one enchanter, the poet, and another enchantress, the woman, we see another of the Hermit's "tentations de Saint

Antoine". It is an age-old confrontation, and Apollinaire emphasises that both "l'antique Merlin" and the "vieille sur une mule à chape verte" are old. The temptation fails. Merlin recoils. And so Morgane employs her renowned trick: she conjures up a mirage of springtime, in which they are both young. The significance for the hermit-poet symbolised by Merlin in the wilderness cogitating on the causes of death and rebirth, is that his memory recalls from his past pictures on which he had decided to "laisser clore mes yeux," distracting him from his purpose, tempting him to yield and make easier other similar temptations, one of which would inevitably lead him to lose his head, fall in love, lose his magical power and be lost for ever.

At this point we must pause to make a preliminary mention of a false track initiated early in the history of Apollinaire criticism by Madame Durry and followed unquestioningly by such eminent exegetists as Michel Décaudin [160]. According to this interpretation these two enchanters are so old as to be timeless, and therefore, in an ambivalent sense, also young; so that they represent Man and Woman, and illustrate the principle of love that renews both them and their surroundings with the promise of springtime succeeding winter, fertility replacing barrenness, giving the denial of the Hermit's aseity. But Apollinaire was far from accepting this transforming and creative role of love at this stage of his development. Such an interpretation completely ignores the consistent development of his concepts of the role he

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[160] Reference should be made to the whole of Madame Durry's exegesis, Tome I pp.208 to 221; also to M. Décaudin's Dossier, p.145.

must play as Poet, and contributes to the misconception that Apollinaire was a derivative, inconsistent innovator who indulged in pointless and wilful obscurity [161]. One misconception leads to another, and on the slender assumption that "le chemin de Rome" of the penultimate stanza means "the road to Rome" rather than Quinet's road from Rome, and that this reference must colour the whole poem in retrospect, raising the "transforming love" to the level of religion, Dr. Davies writes that Madame Durry "ably demonstrates that this union of Merlin at the crossroads, in springtime, with Morgane, his equal, his 'très ancienne Mémoire',and the resulting birth of a son who, haloed in fire, shall march towards Rome, reveals the young poet's decision to tap the whole past of myth and legend and eventually Christianity for his subjects." [162]. Even ignoring the strained translation, the "quotation" which is nowhere to be found in the poem, the non-definition of the union in question and the fact that it did not take place in springtime but amid a mirage which counterfeited April in contrast to the actual place and season, we are still constrained to ask two pertinent questions: If this was the young poet's capital decision, the motive and message of the poem, why did he feel it necessary to be "wilfully" obscure, and where are the evidences of his decision, such as subsequent poems tapping the whole past of myth and legend and Christianity?

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[161] A point raised by Margaret Davies [op.cit. p.53], who intuitively feels that Madame Durry has left out some vital factor [p.54], yet still charges Apollinaire with "wilful obscurity" [p.53].

[162] M. Davies op.cit. p.54.

We must return to this false lead when, later in the poem, we have to examine the nature of the union between Merlin and Morgane.

Meanwhile we note that Merlin recognises Morgane for what she is: a rival magician who, while remaining on her mountain, can project at a distance an image convincing enough to seduce a lonely man and draw him to her. Knowing the situation, he can indulge it without risking being caught in its toils and transported to sexual slavery at the Castel de Sans Retour as inescapable as Viviane's eternal entombment, and without the consolation of an heir. He therefore enjoys the mirage, and then goes unscathed on his way - to meet a fuller conclusion in a flesh-and-blood encounter with Viviane.

Now whether or not Merlin represents Apollinaire the man, challenged by love's invitation to immortality in its early guise of sexual distraction, he certainly represents Apollinaire the poet who sees that sex exacts a price: his death as a poet for his life as a man. Faced with the immediate lure of sex and the subsequent tragic alternative of the "different eternity of women", Merlin strikes his breast in grief and exclaims "Rival!"

In short, Apollinaire's problem - the deep-seated raison d'être of the poem - is to circumvent, at least for the present, the mutually exclusive alternatives of love and poetic creation. He consistently admits that he must eventually capitulate to nature's law of love [Morgane, another manifestation of Eunoia, forecasts Viviane, already predicted as the deceiving

"Inconnue" of "L'Ermite"] and will be left powerless as one dead: "mon être glacé" is a prolepsis for the conclusion of L'Enchanteur pourrissant, "Je suis mort et froid." But meanwhile, what solution can he seek in the immediate confrontation with Morgane? It is to prefer the shadow to the substance, to feed on memories of the woman he has rejected [Maria or Woman in general], to retain Love but not the beloved. The flower of love he will nurture must be "l'absente de tout bouquet".

As Merlin the man gives way to Merlin the poet, so does Morgane the dangerous sex-symbol of Gibel fade into Memory, the harmless creator of images, with whom the poet can flirt without losing his magic power to create poems. The antithetic "rival" becomes the sympathetic "semblable", completely changing the symbolic value of Morgane. It is this duality, the purpose of which is obvious only when Apollinaire's other works and themes are considered as the larger context, that has caused problems in the interpretation of "Merlin et la vieille Femme".

The transformation process is observable in the key stanza 4, where Merlin addresses his exterior self, as Apollinaire is already wont to do with characteristic tutoiement: He is fearful for the ice-cold poet-magician in him who, although dedicated to a search for wisdom through his magic art, is doomed to be overwhelmed because of the burning flesh of his virile self. He therefore invites him to behold, meanwhile, the approach of his wraith-like bride, Memory, and consider what a handsome though

unhappy son he is wishing upon himself. It is essential here to note that from this point onwards Apollinaire is not writing of a flesh-and-blood love passage, but of an ethereal intercourse in his mind taking place between the poet's creative urge to produce poems, and the poet's memory, each element being "semblable", a like part of his complex self. Thus, whereas Merlin at first thinks Morgane is a real woman and recoils like an ascetic before her femininity, he subsequently sees that she is not real, but only the projected image of an enchanter like himself; he is therefore able to accept her. In stanza 4 and thereafter, Apollinaire says in effect: "I could not accept real Woman yet. For the moment it must be merely memory, make-believe, mirage. The real thing, Viviane, must wait, and then it will be the end of the poet-magician."

Difficulties have resulted from Madame Durry's interpretation of the expression "ma semblable" which refers to Morgane. This misinterpretation is based on her confusion of Morgane with Viviane. To explain Morgane as "ma semblable" the exegetist has quoted Apollinaire's references to the similarities between man and woman as given in L'Enchanteur pourrissant, and these refer quite specifically to Viviane, the flesh-and-blood woman, who will be his young enchantress, not to Morgane the ethereal mental image, the old substitute of "Vae Soli".

M. Décaudin, in his Dossier d'Alcools [163], explains

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[163] Décaudin: Dossier, p.145. Refer to OC p.92 for the dialogue with Simon le Magicien, and OC p.96 for the other references to the rest of the argument in L'Enchanteur pourrissant.

that for Apollinaire Morgane "est la semblable de Merlin, parce que, comme il le dit dans L'Enchanteur pourrissant, 'Je t'ai tout appris, tout ce qui me ressemble.'" Like Madame Durry [assumably, since he acknowledges no source for his opinion], M. Décaudin overlooks the fact that Merlin is here speaking to La Dame du Lac, who is Viviane, not Morgane, and also to make it clear that the words "tout ce qui me ressemble" are not, of course, appositional to the lady addressed, but constitute Merlin's definition of "la vérité" as earlier given in response to the request by Simon le Magicien:

> Simon le Magicien: Dis-moi la vérité puisque tu savais tout.
> L'Enchanteur : Tout ce qui me ressemble.

The argument in L'Enchanteur pourrissant is quite clear: "Man and woman do not resemble each other, but their children do resemble them both. We resemble each other in that I taught you everything, the truth that I represent... But inasmuch as I loved you, you resembled all other women and are quite different from me... My love and my verses were destined for you from before my birth." All of which is prophetically true in the symbolic sense that the poet will devote his art to the discovery of life's truths, and also devote much of his poetry to a succession of loves until he discovers and surrenders to the final one. But in response to this the Lady of the Lake runs away from him without consoling and justifying him by confirming the genuineness of her love, and betraying the same crude signs of her womanliness and still only potential fertility as are mentioned in the first stanza of "Merlin et la vieille Femme." Thus Viviane is not

truly his "semblable", whereas Morgane is so on all counts.

The progeny referred to in L'Enchanteur pourrissant are physical children who unite the traits of their parents, whereas the poem refers more particularly to the writer's brain-children, the poems he wants to write. In short, Morgane, despite the first impression created by the poet's initial use of a source known to us in medieval literature, does not ultimately represent Woman and Love, but substitutes for them. Failure to grasp the poet's quick adaptation of original data at story-level to his own personal requirements at theme level, has led Madame Durry, in her efforts to explain Morgane as a symbol of Woman, to write of her that although she is a woman she is nevertheless "like" Merlin [his "semblable", despite the differences between man and woman detailed in L'Enchanteur - and, we may add, in "Onirocritique"] because she is so old as to have lost "les caractéristiques de la femme". This ambivalent concept, of a woman in love who is too old to be womanly but seduces an old man, leads her into more obvious errors: "Elle n'a pas eu une vie de femme, mais une vie passée dans l'attente d'un instant d'union amoureuse, qui aurait pu ne jamais se produire; sa vie n'a été [until this moment] qu'une mimique de vie et l'est presque encore dans le seul instant concédé pour arriver à la vraie vie." [164] Here there are clear

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[164] Durry Tome I, p.215. Reference should be made to the whole of her argument on pp.214 to 217 ibid., and to the relevant section of L'Enchanteur pourrissant, OC p.96.

departures from the "facts". First, Morgane can scarcely be considered as deprived of a "vie de femme" while she kept a male harem on Mount Gibel. Secondly, the "instant d'union amoureuse" did not in fact take place, since Apollinaire states in the poem that "l'entrelacs de leurs doigts fut leur seul laps d'amour" - and the description of Viviane's relations with Merlin in L'Enchanteur pourrissant [165] reminds us that the first trick learned by an ambitious enchantress was to make the lover believe that he had had such a union by way of payment - and Morgane, in stanzas 8 and 9, clearly creates a mirage to that effect. It follows that, there having been no "instant concédé" she cannot "arriver à la vraie vie" - and we must see that it is Apollinaire who, in this "mimique de vie", is in fact avoiding contact with real life in order to preserve his esthetic life.

There is, then, no need to refer to L'Enchanteur pourrissant to see why Morgane is accepted as Merlin's "semblable". She is his soul-mate in several senses: apart from her varied roles in medieval literature as a kindred magician, she is the originator, as we have emphasised, of the fata morgana. Thus in Apollinaire's narrative, Morgane conjures up the scenes and Merlin is the word-spinner who enjoys and describes them. They are both creators [though not in the physical sense, as they are too old], and each needs the other, which is why Morgane sought Merlin by her magic art. Memory has the same role to play:

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[165] L'Enchanteur pourrissant, OC p.56.

it conjures up scenes from the past, and the poet puts them into enchanting words, thereby giving the evanescent visions permanent form. The "marriage" of the poet and his memory is an obvious allegory for the creation of a poem by a poet who is standing aside from everyday life like a dedicated Symbolist esthete. That is why Morgane and Merlin simply link hands, and their union takes place on the mental plane of shadowy mirage.

Once this confusion is perceived, the argument of "Merlin et la vieille Femme" is seen to be entirely consistent with those of "L'Ermite" and "Le Larron" in terms of the differences between man and woman described in L'Enchanteur pourrissant and "Onirocritique".

Before leaving this troublesome stanza 4, however, we should complete its elucidation by considering the closely allied reference to "ce soleil de chair", which, too, has given some difficulty to commentators. Again we may go back to Madame Durry, as most have followed her suggestion that this is a reference to the poet's heart: "Le soleil de chair en lui, son coeur, grelotte, et l'enchanteur crie un défi au soleil du monde" [166]. This would suggest that the poet, who intends to remain frigid, will be overcome by the burning flesh of the man. However, "soleil de chair" as a metaphor for "coeur" does not have a true Apollinairean ring: he is more likely to have said outright "mon sexe concupiscent" if he had meant his desire. On

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[166] Durry I, p.213. The "défi au monde" is not explained.

the other hand, "ce soleil" seems to refer us back to the sun mentioned in terms of the flesh in the very first stanza, where it certainly represents woman first in her role of child-bearing and secondly in her fertility cycle still awaiting impregnation. This corresponds closely, too, to Apollinaire's discussion in L'Enchanteur pourrissant of the differences yet resemblances between man and woman. Merlin tells Viviane that Man is the leader, bread-giver and creator: "Lui, c'est un troupeau avec son berger, c'est un champ avec son moissonneur, c'est un monde avec son créateur. Elle, c'est le printemps inutile, l'océan jamais calme, le sang répandu." Woman is by herself the useless attraction of springtime, disgustingly awaiting fertilisation. All Woman has to offer is fertility - when Man yields to her blandishments, which distract him from "real" creativity and eventually swamp it in domestic cares. Thus in Apollinaire's own adolescent terms, "le destin ... dont ce soleil de chair grelotte" more likely means that Woman [167] shivers at the thought of a man remaining virginal in order to remain creative in his own way, as a poet. This is also the argument of "Le Larron", as will be shown. The only difference between the two interpretations, that the man's desire will extinguish the poet's creativity, or that

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[167] Or even, more specifically, his mother, in view of the clearly maternal setting of the opening stanza. This would suggest that the theme first arose out of his everyday existence from remonstrances voiced by his mother concerning his vocation as poet, after all the money spent on his education. This would be a parallel case to that of "Le Larron" where the theme equally arose out of a family argument. Hence, here, the tone of justification of the poet's activity and the validity of his product - to boost Apollinaire's own morale and dedication.

Woman's insistence on love's creativity will overwhelm Man's type of creativity, is one of emphasis: in the latter case, Apollinaire has shifted all the blame onto woman! This, too, seems more typical of young Guillaume.

Having clarified Apollinaire's observations on the differences between man and woman as opposed to his reference to Morgane in her identity of "ma Mémoire" as "ma semblable", and having linked the role of "le soleil de chair" to the argument, we may now restate stanza 4 as the introduction of the main theme of the poem. At a crossroad in his life, he has made an important decision, and he interrogates himself as to what will be the outcome. He has rejected love, preferring Memory, this old woman, another part of his total Self. What can the issue of such a union be but "malheureux et beau"? As corroboration for this interpretation we again recall that this was the picture we were left with at the conclusion of "L'Ermite", when the ascetic desired nothing but to "laisser clore mes yeux", on the haunting scene of lovers in an orchard, echoing Mallarmé's Faun: "Couple adieu, je vais voir l'ombre que tu devins." It is now understood to be a picture of the poet preferring to create with his memories as his only partner.

This decision, a logicalisation of Merlin's instinctive beating of his breast at the sight of Morgane, is the gesture of stanza 5: it destroys the power of the disasters forecast for him ["son geste fit écrouler l'orgueil des cataclysmes"] as he

defies nature, and now Memory recreates an illusion of the spring-time of love and confidence, bringing back an April day of his youth:

Le soleil en dansant remuait son nombril

This sun, which in the first stanza had been his life-giving inspiration, like a second mother giving him his second, spiritual, rebirth, and whose incarnate counterpart had trembled to think of his destiny, now rejoices as if his decision has been justified. Its belly-dance reminds us of the sexual associations of the "jeu des nombrils" in "L'Ermite" but is more significantly to be illuminated much later in "Les Fiançailles":

> Je mire de ma mort la gloire et le malheur
> Comme si je visais l'oiseau de la quintaine
>
> Incertitude oiseau feint peint quand vous tombiez
> Le soleil et l'amour dansaient dans le village [168]

When uncertainty and fear as to the result of his dedication ["malheureux et beau" or "la gloire et le malheur"] are forgotten, both love and the poet's wisdom dance together. But at this early stage, love and wisdom are still incompatible, in the poet's eyes, and we may see how the young Apollinaire avoids the issue for the time being. Viviane, in L'Enchanteur pourrissant and "Merlin et la vieille Femme", represents in her sanguine associations woman, fertility and enslavement in a living death. Morgane in L'Enchanteur pourrissant is Merlin's platonic "lover" or half-sister, afraid of her enemy Viviane; and in "Merlin et la vieille Femme" she is "la vieille femme", unequivocally

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[168] "Les Fiançailles", OP p.128.

equated to Memory and the past [169], the object of the poet's narcissistic love, towards which relationship Viviane, on the same side as the poet's mother and Nature, is inimical. Morgane's product is Art [Memory's is poetry], whereas Viviane's will be a child: again they clash. But in this battle between productive love and sex, it is the substitute for sex - Memory, the projected "substitute" for Morgane - that wins, because she is neutral and does not commit the poet to the consequences of a decision either way.

So Memory revives the lost innocence of love in the poet's earlier years - springtime and heroic ideals - by conjuring up the memory of a youthful April day. In the next stanza, the sixth, the poet notes, with scant reference to the Merlin plot at story-level, that the ways that lead from the west, where the maternal sun is setting, were covered with symbols of death and revulsion [including "fleurs" seen as in his minor poems as the symbol of "le printemps inutile"]. In other words, stanzas 5 and 6 admit that he has revolted against Woman's ways, his mother's ways, since these are repellent and lead to death for a poet. He prefers to recreate, with Memory's help, the innocent love of his early years.

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[169] It is impossible to understand how Morgane "est aussi la promesse d'avenir" as Décaudin suggests [op.cit., p.145], nor how this suggestion is reinforced by the poet's reference to past and future in "Cortège", where he simply compares the respective values of past and future. Memory is concerned only with the past, and how can the past be the promise of the future except as a guide to its formation? And that is an entirely unrelated proposition.

And so he joins hands with Memory, and she performs for him, miming life, taking the form of a young girl from his past in a scene where she was telling him what every lover wishes to hear, that she had been waiting for him all his life. But this was of course mere illusion,and the poet points this out abruptly as if to pierce the veil of the spell he has woven round the reader: he returns us from the projected wraith symbolising Memory to Morgane herself, reminding us that at the story-level she is the Morgane of the fata morgana, still in her island, looking down from Mount Gibel whence she created her mirages:

> Elle balla mimant un rythme d'existence
> Criant depuis cent ans j'espérais ton appel
> Les astres de ta vie influaient sur ma danse
> Morgane regardait du haut du mont Gibel [170]

Had Morgane represented Love, and had Merlin now been making love with her while Love created springtime, why would Apollinaire have suddenly had her back on Mount Gibel looking down? Merlin knows he is dealing with a mere projected image, just as the poet is enjoying his "mirage" of love projected into his consciousness by his memory. In stanza 9 this is quite explicit. Merlin exclaims: "How sweet it is to dance when a mirage is created for one in which there is singing, and when, the winds of horror appearing to become breezes of laughter and to chase

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[170] Margaret Davies is surely right in suggesting that this Memory is also ancestral, waiting to be tapped for centuries in his heritage. Refer op.cit., p.54.

away the premonitory fantoms, I have made blank gestures amid the solitude." It will be noticed that there is no need to tamper with the syntax by changing the text from feignant to feignent [171]. The main clause refers to its being sweet to dance, the subordinate clauses stating the conditions, namely, "when the dancing takes place in a mere mirage, and when I have been making innocent, virginal gestures." The magician-poet realises that he is in reality alone, and that this happy illusion of youthful love has been no more than "un pur effet de l'Art." Again we hear an echo of Mallarmé's faun who asked "Aimai-je un rêve?" and realized that the illusion was

> Le visible et serein souffle artificiel
> De l'inspiration ...

And this attitude suits him perfectly, since it provides a solution to his problem; his reaction is that of Mallarmé's faun: "Regonflons des SOUVENIRS!"

Part of the effect of Apollinaire's suppression of punctuation is that it becomes difficult to see precisely which person is speaking in a dialogue. Stanza 8, quoted above, is spoken by Morgane: "Elle balla, ...criant "Depuis cent ans etc. ..." Again in stanza 12 it is clearly Morgane speaking, as indicated by the feminine inflexion of "j'eusse été tôt lasse." However, this speech takes up with unbroken logic the references of the earlier one: "depuis cent ans ... les astres de ta vie influaient

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[171] As has been done with Tristan Tzara's approval, to the satisfaction of Madame Durry and M. Décaudin [refer Durry Tome I, p.216].

sur ma danse" is continued, after Merlin's interruption, by their consequences: "Et j'ai vieilli... pendant ta vie je danse..." Madame Durry has not noticed that this is a dialogue with stanzas 9,10 and 11 spoken by Merlin. This is indeed a ruminative interior dialogue typical of Apollinaire's poems: stanzas 3 and 4 are obviously spoken by Merlin on his confrontation by Morgane. Stanza 8 is spoken by La Mémoire, the projection of Morgane, and the last line serves to remind us that it is Morgane, too, who has spoken. Merlin responds in stanzas 9 to 11 with his approval of the mirage, and Morgane replies in 12. Stanza 13 is manifestly spoken by Merlin "disant 'Qu'il monte!' etc..." carrying on into 14 and 15. The further complication is that it is not simply a dialogue between Merlin and Morgane, but inasmuch as the projection Mémoire is a part of the poet represented by Merlin, the thoughts expressed by Mémoire are also the poet's. Stanzas 8 and 12 are thus ambivalently applicable to Morgane and the poet's memory or memories; but stanzas 9 to 11 are logically applicable only to Merlin the poet. Madame Durry's attempt to make them apply to Morgane is what led her to ascribe an inadequate love-life to the sex-symbol of Mount Gibel - none of which would have served in the slightest way Apollinaire's prime purpose of debating his own problems. Interpreting these stanzas as coming from Merlin, we can now see that the pirouetting of the poet's memory recreates happy scenes of innocent love which are "gestes blancs" both at the story-level for Merlin, who is not thereby entrapped, and in

the symbolic sense that in making his memory perform for him the poet remains pure and detached from the distractions of women.

In stanza 11, after reviewing this previous flirtation, the poet excuses himself by claiming, as he was to do again in "Le Larron", that whereas other predatory males "proclamaient leurs rapines" he had never gathered flowers other than those who had wanted to be "deflowered". This particular memory, he adds through the voice of Memory, is now old:

Et j'ai vieilli vois-tu

The girl of the original experience, the "aubépine en fleurs" of that far-off April day, made to dance again for the poet as a never-changing memory, would in real life have become weary in an old woman's mortal body, by going through the painful "rythme d'existence". In its parallel ambivalence, this expression also applies to Morgane herself. For, as related by Elie and Robert de Borron, Morgane lost her beauty when she took up magic, and appeared her original beautiful self only during her "mirages" designed to entrap young men - and then aged again, became old and ugly, the moment her dance stopped: "aspirée et de luxure et de dyable, elle pierdi si otreement sa biauté, que devint laide, ne puis ne fu nus qui a bele le tenist, s'il ne fu enchantés" [172]. Merlin enjoyed his passage with the beautiful projection of the fata morgana unscathed because he knew that in reality Morgane herself was old and ugly. And Apollinaire could

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[172] Quoted by Madame Durry herself, Tome I, p.210.

enjoy his memories, created by the power of his Memory, because he knew that in reality [or his adolescent conception of it] love was an ancient, ugly trap. Morgane admits this:

> Et j'ai vieilli vois-tu pendant ta vie je danse
> Mais j'eusse été tôt lasse et l'aubépine en fleurs
> Cet avril aurait eu la pauvre confidence
> D'un corps de vieille morte en mimant la douleur

Whereas the magician-poet was living in real life, she was only "dancing", weaving an imaginary existence through her art; and she would soon have wearied of Merlin, as was the custom with her and her sister Alcina, had Merlin been deceived and fallen into her trap permanently. In which case that flowery April bower would have witnessed the truth that was hidden from the lover's eyes - an old woman, dead to the spiritual, esthetic life, going through the age-old mimicry of love's anguish.

And so, in stanza 13, their linked hands part in realisation of the truth behind the charade, and as they are raised like a flock of doves, night closes back in on the scene that had been illuminated by memory, for the sun has by now set on the landscape in which Merlin had had this encounter.

Having thus seen through the tender trap, and even obtaining some enjoyment out of it without being entrapped, Merlin leaves that place, journeying towards the East: he is now looking to the new day and the future where the sun is to be reborn after its lurid setting, symbolising "l'éternelle cause / Qui fait mourir et puis renaître l'univers" which he now understands. Death will extinguish him, but as surely as the sun will rise

he will have his immortality in what he leaves behind. So, let the sun rise! He now gives his considered answer to his question of stanza 4 as to the sort of creation his shadowy union might produce:

Le fils de la Mémoire égale de l'Amour

This is obviously the key and central message of the whole poem. The poet has shunned Woman, and created with the aid of his memory, and the product [the poem] is equal to that of love [a child]. Man's "éternité" [173] is as valid as woman's, and his memory of women is a better muse than a real woman who would shackle him, kill his poetry, and grow old.

So, whether this product is a real creature, made out of clay like Adam, or whether it is mere shadow or a projected image of a man [the poem projected by the poet as his shadow in the light of the sun of inspired creation is to become a stock image with Apollinaire] it will certainly be his child, his deathless work. "Proclame ma renommée!" Merlin cries to Morgane from his tomb [174]: "Let my poetry justify my life and defeat my death!"

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[173] Or "vérité" as Saint-Exupéry calls it, debating the same issue regarding Fabien's widow in Vol de Nuit. Décaudin's interpretation [Dossier p.145] that "La Mémoire est l'égale de l'Amour car tous deux abolissent le temps" is inaccurate [in that the poem refers to "le fils de la Mémoire" not memory itself] and clearly inadequate in its reference to time.

[174] L'Enchanteur pourrissant, OC p.62. "Tes mirages ne sont pas inutiles aux cadavres; je te prie d'en laisser une bonne provision près de ma tombe à la disposition de ma voix": his voice will live on as memory provides the material.

Qu'il monte de la fange ou soit une ombre d'homme
Il sera bien mon fils mon ouvrage immortel
Le front nimbé de feu sur le chemin de Rome
Il marchera tout seul en regardant le ciel

The second pair of lines are obscure, presumably because Apollinaire is aware of having just written several lines which are "dangerously" self-revealing since they have nothing to do with the manifest story; here he must insert a reference to Merlin, which he does apparently in terms of the Quinet version already quoted. On the way from Rome, whence he escaped after trial, Merlin retires to his tomb with Viviane who bears him a child, "fils de l'amour, mais aussi de la mémoire, puisqu'il est né dans la mort" as Décaudin puts it [175]. However, to justify this, we must close our postulated quotation marks after immortel, and understand the two lines in question to be inserted by the narrator, so that they refer to Merlin who, alone on the road, muses aloud about the final drama now awaiting him. Martyred by Rome [in that his mother was rejected by the Church?] or with his brow wearing not merely the laurel wreath mentioned for the derivatory poet in "Onirocritique" but the tongues of fire reserved for the really inspired poet later to be described in such poems as "Les Fiançailles" [176], the poet will continue to walk through life alone - until he meets his Viviane.

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[175] Décaudin, Dossier, p.145. He fails, however, to justify the reference of the second il to Merlin.

[176] Refer OP p.136.

If, however, as Madame Durry has it [177], il is spoken by Merlin, it must have the same reference as the previous pronoun il of two lines earlier. Now that pronoun referred equally to two entities, grammatically and logically speaking: "Whether he rises from the clay or whether he is a shadow of man, he will certainly be my son, my immortal work." The progression of thought is: "Poem or child, he or it will walk alone." How can the three descriptions "haloed with fire", "looking at the sky" and "being on the Rome road" apply to both sorts of progeny at the same time? Basically the thought is: "Even if I do not leave physical children, my poems will stand on their own feet", but opting for the reference to poetry alone hardly makes sense of "nimbé de feu" except as a transferred epithet, and makes no sense of the reference to Rome or to watching the sky unless Apollinaire intended to write religious poetry to lead people to Rome, and then how would his work walk "tout seul"? Madame Durry takes the other alternative of a physical son, and even though stretching the text to re-word it as "n'avancera-t-il pas vers Rome" she is unable to do better than to suggest that Merlin's son, the child of a semi-supernatural father and a super-natural mother [Morgane, the union having been taken as a literal fact], will pay homage on behalf of "les puissances féériques et magiques d'un surnaturel différent de l'apanage de Merlin". One can only ask again: What has

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[177] Durry I, p.221 to 222. As she has clearly and admittedly failed to interpret the references to "fange" and "ombre", this confusion follows naturally.

this to do with the symbolic level, or Apollinaire himself? The poet was not interested in Merlin or Morgane, except insofar as they enabled him to discuss his own problems. All Madame Durry's problems stem from her failure to see how Apollinaire can "parvenir à substituer sa légende propre à la légende qu'il pousse vers une transposition poétique" [178]; and if she wished to restrict herself to a purely literary interpretation, she would solve her problems by accepting M. Décaudin's suggested reference with the justification given herein.

The last stanza is mercifully straightforward. The poet accepts his ultimate painful fate at the hands of his Viviane and the sort of immortality she offers: "Je m'éterniserai sous l'aubépine en fleurs".

"En tout cas", Madame Durry sums up [178], "ce poème... est à n'en pas douter un poème-carrefour", which is why we have spent so much time examining interpretations previously proposed as well as suggesting a new and more consistent one. There is one final observation to be made before leaving this remarkable poem, however, and it may well be in accord with Apollinaire's belief that his more inspired poems had that quality of prophesy he claimed to share with Merlin. Harking back to the stanzas 9 and 10 with their prophetic "fantômes avant-coureurs" and lemurs ["en bruit prophétique" as he said in L'Enchanteur pourrissant [179]], we note that his poems, produced after union with Memory,

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[178] Durry I, p.222, both quotations.

[179] L'Enchanteur pourrissant, OC p.68.

are indeed "gestes blancs" made in a barren wasteland in the deeper sense that they do not reflect the "cause qui fait mourir et puis renaître l'univers": memory is sterile, or produces at best "mules" which transmit no life of their own. Here we may recognise the last of the main themes to appear in embryo in his early works: the quarrel between the past and a future which will allow love its proper place, productive on both levels; a quarrel whose solving was to be retold in retrospect in "Les Collines" as the greatest problem of his life. Again, although he still regards love in the terms of L'Enchanteur pourrissant [179] as Circe, whose swine [captured lovers, like Morgane's] cannot see the sky unless they turn their backs on the earth, nevertheless there is the dawn of the mature attitude in "vienne le printemps des nouvelles douleurs ... je m'éterniserai": it is a long-range forecast of his final statement in "Les Collines" which at last sees love inseparable from suffering but in a purely creative light.

We conclude this analysis with a summary of our interpretation. The poet is meditating on the cause of death and rebirth, which he perceives to be Woman, or the law of nature behind her. He sees a woman approach, in his mind's eye. He realises that she means enslavement and death to him as a poet, but also that he must eventually take part in the purpose of the universe - procreation for the continuance of the species. Meanwhile, he decides, he will simply hold Woman in his mind's eye, and feed on memories in order to go on creating poems - as valid a product as physical children.

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[179] L'Enchanteur pourrissant, OC p.95.

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In early 1900, Apollinaire found a sympathetic friend in an acquaintanceship struck up by chance in a brasserie near the Gare Saint-Lazare. This was a cultivated young Jew whose family had come from Spain. Always attracted by the Jewish people, young Guillaume was happy to be invited to the home of his new friend, where he found a warm welcome into the sort of family circle he had never had. He fell in love with the eldest daughter, Linda, aged 16, to whom and to whose little seven-year-old sister he wrote poems. He valued this home life, and the Molinas understood his private troubles, treated him like a son, and encouraged him to write. Embarrassingly enough, he declared his love for Linda, who returned only friendly indifference. For poor young Guillaume, platonic love was a frustrating relationship he scarcely understood, but he allowed his unrequited love to inspire poetry, while seeking physical satisfaction elsewhere. These minor poems, "les dicts d'amour de Guillaume Apollinaire à Linda la Zézayante" as he called them when he used them to open his collection Il y a, contain echoes of all his major works of this early period. "La Cueillette" brings in the petal-fall and transience of love of the Stavelot poems: "Chaque fleur qui se fane / C'est un amour qui meurt!" In "La Force du Miroir" he flirts, like Merlin, with a projected image, and concludes:

> La force du miroir trompa plus d'un amant
> Qui crut aimer sa belle et n'aima qu'un mirage

In the untitled poem commencing "Je vis un soir la zézayante" there are references to "une gemme" suggestive of "La Clef", the "J'aime!" uttered by le Larron, the palais de Rosemonde, Viviane and l'enchanteur, along with the refrain to be used again in "La Chanson du Mal-aimé":

> 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,
> Moi, qui sais des lais pour les reines
> Et des chansons pour les sirènes ...

He is amazed that Linda can yawn with indifference like Viviane, when he holds a new revelation of truth and the ability to captivate by his poetry, a secret truth he has revealed through the enchanter who ornamented his Viviane with the sense of his enigmas. Is this a reference to "Merlin et la vieille Femme" as an attempt to express his new-found wisdom regarding women and poetry, just as his minor Stavelot poems referred to his "chanson énigmatique", "L'Ermite"? Is Linda the Viviane who ran away without saying she loved him, and her image in the mirror the "mirage" his memory is left with? The final poem in this series addressed to Linda, the unjustly savage "Adieux", seems to confirm this. "Grâce aux printemps vous ne serez plus belle", he warns her. In rejecting him, he tells her:

> Vous attendez le ravisseur longtemps promis
> Qui déploie comme un mirage du mont Gibel
> Le bonheur d'être deux toujours et endormis.

For whereas he had been gentle [unlike "les oiseaux de proie [who] proclamaient leurs rapines"] she was inviting more brutal

treatment:

> Car l'endemain viendront des chevaucheurs encore
> ... ...
> Qui, joie! seront vainqueurs, Ma joie! vainqueurs encore
> Par la caresse lente ou même à coups de fouet.

Then she would be sorry she had deceived him ["ongles tachés de blanc"] and rejected him. This is all most unfair, since she never deceived him, and he never apparently tried to seduce her. Even after his blind, destructive fury which he unleashes with more than a hint of sadism, he has to admit something nearer the truth: "Et pourtant c'est bien vrai, je n'eus aucun désir", and thanks to her he has understood at last "que seuls pouvaient vivre en m'aimant ... les bons vers immortels"; and he concludes, as he began the debate of "Merlin et la vieille Femme" in order to obtain inner peace and grasp the "sens des énigmes sereines":

> Non, je ne veux aucun de ces coeurs que l'on donne
> ... ...
> Ni de l'amour humain qui fait trop d'embarras

Embarrassment indeed, for Mademoiselle Linda discreetly left for Cabourg with her family to avoid "la rage et le doute et le nom des poètes" rather as one day Miss Playden would do.

But if his brush with pure love for Linda occasioned "Merlin et la vieille Femme", his seeking physical satisfaction elsewhere occasioned the condemnation of his mother, and so called forth another enigmatic poem to soothe his ego. And so we come to the third of the three major poems of Apollinaire's early "Sturm und Drang" period.

LeRoy C. Breunig has made the most specific attempt to date the poems of Alcools. "Le Larron was probably written between the Stavelot and the Rhineland sojourns" he writes [180]. However, as to facts: "Le Larron" appeared in La Plume of 1 August 1903, though it had been declaimed in public by the poet in April 1903 [181] and must therefore be anterior to that date. The manuscript in the Doucet collection, number 7213/26, is in the poet's youthful handwriting, almost copperplate, and without corrections - in short, by no means a "first state". The version which appeared in Vers et Prose in October 1912 contains a few minor alterations, and the final version of Alcools is further improved. Seeking to fix the other limit, one may feel that there is a suggestion of the poet's first brush with the law, and his being made to feel an alien, which would suggest a date after the court case of 1900, a supposition strengthened, as will be shown, by a strong theme of justification of his amours in response to his mother's remonstrances - a situation arising in 1900. The pervasive colouring of the Mediterranean could of course be attributed to the heightened sensibility of the exile [a trait frequently to be seen in the work of many writers such as Shelley, or Katherine Mansfield, to name the first to come

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[180] LeRoy C. Breunig: "The Chronology of Apollinaire's Alcools" in PMLA of December 1952. This means 1900.

[181] André Salmon told the writer in January 1948 that this was the poem that brought them together at their first meeting in the caveau Au Soleil d'Or; it was declaimed by Apollinaire for a soirée of La Plume.

to mind] but is far from ruling out the possibility - let us say the probability - of many of these stanzas having been composed originally on the Riviera and having been used, reformed, rearranged, to suit Apollinaire's purposes in 1900. This would account for the heavy overlay of erudite references and recherché words which the youthful poet had collected from his wide reading of that early period, retained partly to obscure the personal element.

One notes that the line "la nuit, ta mère incestueuse" in "L'Ignorance" [182] echoes "L'inceste solaire et nocturne" of "Le Larron", but this one may take to be a case of a felicitously symbolical reference being re-used years later in a poem of a very different content. The use in "L'Ignorance" of the symbols soleil and ombre with the significance of Apollinaire's later period, and the expression "dieu oblong", accord with the reference of this poem to the poet's exploration of the unconscious and "ignorance" of the "ancien jeu des vers". M. Décaudin writes "Ce poème se rapproche par sa forme et son inspiration du Larron" [183], but are these clearly implications of contemporaneity? The form is similar, and the "inspiration" in the sense of mythological reference is indeed mythological, though not similarly heteroclitic or overlarded; but the vo-

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[182] "L'Ignorance" OP p.344.

[183] OP notes p.1115. The expression "dieu oblong" recalls "la vue est oblongue" of "Le Larron", interestingly enough, although "feuillolent" reminds us of "Lul de Faltenin". We may well have here another example of early material used for a later purpose.

cabulary, imagery and inspiration [in the sense of motivation or content] are quite different, typical of a much later date, and there is no documentary evidence to place the work at any particular date before 1914.

Much more parallel is the passing reference in "Tierce Rime pour votre âme" [184] which is to be found on a post-card addressed to Miss Linda da Silva and dated 3 July 1901:

> Des larrons useront de plus d'un stratagème
> Pour ouvrir le portail qui forclot l'ennemi
>
> Et l'un venant de droite avec la claire gemme
> L'offrira de dehors à votre âme en dedans;
> Un autre, le sinistre, alors s'écriera: "J'aime!

This seems to be, in the particular context of the efforts of one side of his personality to "force the portals" of his new love, Linda, a recollection of the generalised debate of "Le Larron" as to his concupiscent proclivities:

> Et si tu n'es pas de droite tu es sinistre

For indeed, whatever their side-trappings of scenery or surface intentions, these major works of Apollinaire refer to burning personal problems which are the mainspring of his poetic expression. This is why one not only risks losing the man in the literature, but also missing the central significance of the work as distinct from peripheral topics. "Le Larron" deals primarily with the problem of his relations with women. As Margaret Davies has aptly put it: "Untrained, inept, exiled, deprived, yet perdurable - it was not a situation which was going

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[184] "Tierce Rime pour votre âme", OP p.330.

to help in his problem with women, and this, too, was a burning one, the need to satisfy his feverish desire and his instinctive tenderness ['sheer lust' and 'passionate reverence'] ideally in one object." [185] Hence the reference to sexual conquest in a poem to a girl he loved, and respected to the point of asking her hand in marriage, whereas for her part it was an attachment of youthful innocence. Thus while suggesting a date of composition prior to July 1901, falling within the period when Guillaume was fending for himself in Paris and being involved in recriminations from his mother for his seeking solace in loose affairs with women, this poem also points to the basic theme of "Le Larron".

Michel Décaudin has justly pointed out that it is useless to attempt to situate the scene of "Le Larron": it is an amalgam of early civilisations [186] in a sort of pot-pourri reminiscent of L'Enchanteur pourrissant. This setting has nevertheless led Madame Durry to express the following opinion of the intention of the poem as a whole: "Je pense que le Larron est, pour une part, une simple prise de position dans une querelle d'écoles poétiques. Nous avons affaire à une

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[185] Davies op.cit. p.52.

[186] The question of the scene in which the action of "Le Larron" takes place has been adequately covered by Décaudin: Dossier, p.152.

pièce anti-parnassienne." [187] "Pour une part" allows of the other part being bibliographical references to his illegitimacy [188]; further than this, that critic has not seen, as one gathered during a conversation as recently as December 1966.

Basically, we have in this poem an argument between a Thief and a Chorus, with interpolations by on Old Man, a Woman and an Actor.

The Thief, we learn in the first stanza, is a foreigner and an exile. We have no hesitation in recognising him as the poet, for the fourth stanza adds that his father was a riddle ["un sphinx"] and his mother a charming creature of the night - a relationship Apollinaire had already seen himself as

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[187] Durry, op.cit. p.231. Dr. Davies, preparing her thesis under the direction of Professor Durry, apparently felt constrained to follow her directrice d'études, which the present writer, some sixteen years earlier, before Madame Durry had begun to specialise in the work of Apollinaire, had been unable to do; his original interpretation taken up as peripheral by Madame Durry [ibid. pp.69-73] is here returned to. Our difference is basically that Professor Durry has all along been primarily interested in Apollinaire's poems as material useful for students of literary movements in the early 1900's, whereas the present writer is more interested in the individual expression of Apollinaire the personal poet - a point of view elsewhere taken, happily, by Dr. Davies.

[188] Durry, op.cit. Tome I, pp.69-73.

sharing with Merlin [189], and the 27th stanza says he was a poet and mystic. This person is not a professional thief, but someone who has been detected in a particular type of theft, the object of which is some sweet, ripe fruit. For this moral crime he is now asked to account.

This, then, is the plot of the poem, scant action though there is, and it may well be based on the theft of the golden "apples" [or pomme granates, more correctly, as indicated by grenades in stanza 7] from the garden of the Hesperides. The golden fruit ["couleur d'huile", which recall nostalgic memories of the lemon-trees of his innocent childhood on the Riviera] were, as will be remembered, responsible for sowing discord between Pallas, the virgin goddess of wisdom, and Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, love and fecundation. The theft of these fruit by the Larron, a universal symbol

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[189] Décaudin is surely ultra-cautious, and in his turn misled by reference to contemporary literature rather than to the poet's main motive in writing, when he says [Dossier, p.152]: "Ne cherchons pas non plus à réduire le personnage du larron à un symbolisme trop précis. Quelques allusions personnelles ont été décelées avec sagacité par Madame Durry [actually by the present writer in the first instance, vide p.44 of his thesis "The Philosophy of Guillaume Apollinaire", University of Wales, 1948, noticed by Adéma op.cit. p.290] dans la quatrième et surtout la cinquième strophes, qui évoquent la mère du poète et ses [the mother's] amours. Mais elles ne sont qu'épisodiques et il serait dangereux d'en conclure que le larron est Guillaume lui-même. Il se rattache plutôt à la grande famille de personnages dans lesquels s'incarna le mysticisme esthético-anarchiste qui sévit en 1895." The poet may have been influenced by such writings, but one might as well say that the Enchanteur is not Apollinaire, but just another literary evocation of Merlin. In any case we have such cross-references in other poems as:

Aux vergers d'Avallon par les pommes tenté
Le chantre en maraudant a laissé choir la myrrhe

[Untitled poem, OP p.571] where the singer-poet is clearly identified stealing fruit.

of sexual conquest already employed by Apollinaire in his Stavelot period [190], is thus the cause of discord between wisdom and fertility. This theft is also, at the manifest level of the plot, the occasion of recriminations by a "third party" - the Chorus, which as a commentator on the action, opens the discussion as if to put the Thief on trial for an un-Christian act.

This indicates two themes: the relation of chastity [with its alternatives of either pure love or profligacy] in Guillaume the man to the artistic creativity of Apollinaire the poet; and their relation on the other hand to his "wisdom" or knowledge of life, which, too, is necessary to him as a poet. Hence perhaps the discernment by critics of strands of comment on "literature" and "religion", without the connecting link of a common motivation in the personal life of the poet. In the presentation of the discussion [provoked by criticism from his mother, but having already arisen out of Apollinaire's esthetic meditations as well as the promptings of his conscience which are a product of his religious education], it is unwise to seek too rigid an identification of the other dramatis personae beyond the fact that they represent different points of view presented

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[190] For instance in his dream related in "Le bon Sommeil" OP p.515 ["un grand pommier d'amour"] and in "Onirocritique" OP p.371 ["pour que je ceuillisse des fruits semblables à des femmes", "un fruit mûr", and "des grappes de lunes"], and the untitled poem, OP p.571 ["par les pommes tenté / Le chantre en maraudant..."].

by personifications set against his interior landscape of erudite background - once more, a forest of symbols in which a mental debate is dramatised.

Very approximately one might venture to say that the Larron is Guillaume the inner personality who answers his mother's charges. The Actor would be the poet as he exists in the extended world of the senses, the "tu" which his "je" looks on as a composite of his past selves, to use the definition suggested by later poems. This inside and outside duality is echoed in the poem to Yvonne:

> Et l'un [of the thieves] venant de droite avec la claire gemme
> L'offrira de dehors à votre âme en dedans; [191]

where the poet speaks of the difficulty one has in perceiving with clarity the soul that remains within unless one has the gem of wisdom in one's eyes.

The Chorus seems to be the collective voice of all his women friends, agreeing with his mother's criticism by opposing profligacy, but also urging true love in the interest of continuing the human race. Thus it voices the basic attitude of the poet's mother, but does not represent her alone. His mother's voice is heard off-stage, as it were, quoted by the chorus: it is the "voix ligure", the voice of his childhood spent among the Ligurians, the original inhabitants of Monaco. Hence, perhaps, the reference to this voice being "en nénie", that is to say maternal, taking <u>nénie</u> [alternative form of <u>néné</u>,

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[191] "Tierce Rime pour votre âme", OP p.330.

nichon] rather than as a form of nenni [192], since the "voix ligure" is not forbidding but warning, not pronouncing an interdiction so much as offering advice based on a mother's personal experience. Or it may be regarded as a continual complaint his mother is forever raising, taking the word nénie in the sense suggested by Madame Durry [193].

Is it too difficult to regard the "Old Man" fairly literally as Justin Weil? It is perhaps his appeasing voice that is heard speaking on behalf of Guillaume, restraining the mounting tirade of Angélique.

The argument requires patient elucidation of symbols, the selection of whose interpretations must always be guided by the overall intention of the poem rather than over-interpretation of any detail in isolation. For example, Scott Bates is at pains to discount ligure as Ligurian, preferring to translate it as "having a beautiful voice", postulating a Celtic root [194]. "En nénie" may similarly be disposed of to further dispute references to the poet's mother - but to what purpose when "ô maman" still stands unequivocal and

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[192] Archaic nennil, "no", used elsewhere by Apollinaire e.g. Le Poète assassiné, p.61: "M. Pingu: Nenni! Je me trompe..." Probably originated at Stavelot, where Apollinaire noted the Wallon usage of Nenni [ref. J.R. Lawler: "Apollinaire inédit: Le Séjour à Stavelot", Mercure de France, 1 Feb. 1955].

[193] Durry I, p. 2.

[194] Scott Bates: "The identity of Apollinaire's Larron", The French Review, October 1966.

indisputable [195]?

The Chorus lays the accusation in stanza 1. This is done sympathetically, despite the epithets "malheureux malhabile", and with the comment that as the defendant is obviously sorry for what he has done, he should be forgiven as an ignorant foreigner, good at heart. This, of course, is merely the story level. On the symbolic level, the Larron is charged with unlawful sexual conquest, and is therefore required to justify his actions or mend his ways.

This poem is not a mere academic exercise by the apprentice-poet in his youth. Apollinaire wrote his major poems because he felt compelled to write in order to seek an adjustment between his interior life and the external world, a balance progressively to be seen as a superior vision [at the moment he calls it "wisdom"] capable of harmonising the two. This quest for the light of wisdom is what he has been explaining [to himself, principally] in the poems we have studied up till now, though so far it has been seen merely as a desire for inner peace, a solution to the problem of harmonising his desire to be a poet, his sexual desire, and his need for enduring love. Therefore one must consider a third level of interpretation: the personal level of the poet's innermost motivation for writing the particular poem. For this reason some exegetists seem unconvincing. We must again acknowledge Madame Durry's work, since it is the earliest published and

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[195] This reference was discussed in an interview given to the writer by Madame Faure-Favier at her home, 45, Quai de Bourbon, Ile Saint-Louis, 1947. Refer also to her Souvenirs sur Guillaume Apollinaire, Grasset, Paris, 1945, and the Doucet MS 7213 of "La Porte".

the most extensive, by taking from it our first such example: here [196], "Le Larron" is seen as a revolt against the Parnassians, contrasting pagan mythology and mournful Christianity as sources of poetic material. Madame Gothot-Mersch [197] rightly points out that "il ne s'agit pas de culture, ni d'art de vivre, ni même d'art tout court", but falls into the same error by substituting anti-symbolism for the anti-parnassian argument. Scott Bates [198] identifies the Larron as Jesus, and interprets the whole poem as revolving around the heresy described in "L'Hérésiarque". To all these the objection must again be made: Why should Apollinaire write an obscure poem on such a topic? He had already discussed the heresy, for example, in clear terms in a prose work. The obscurity of Symbolist poetry was usually employed to hide a personal problem that had to be exteriorised. [199]

Marc Poupon comes nearer the truth when, after an excellent piece of research [200] into the many erudite references to pagan religions and Christian heresies, he sees the Larron as, if Christ, then the poet also. Indeed, he realises that the poem must be more personal than others have allowed, and

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[196] Durry I, p.231.

[197] Madame Gothot-Mersch: "Le Larron", R.H.L.F. of July 1967.

[198] Bates, loc.cit.

[199] It is therefore not proposed to refer specifically hereinafter to every attempt to interpret Apollinaire's symbols, e.g. Mme Mechtild Cranston's interpretation of the fruit as fire-symbols on the grounds that they are round like the sun [given in Guillaume Apollinaire No.6, 1967, ed. Décaudin, R.L.M.].

[200] Marc Poupon: "Le Larron: Essai d'exégèse" in Guillaume Apollinaire Vol. 6 [La Revue des Lettres modernes Nos. 166-169], 1967, p.35 et seq.

the identification of Apollinaire in his Messianic role may be justified in the terms advanced herein by way of introduction. However, as in all other cases, this interpretation does not fit all the references, and one in particular has been overlooked in stanza 2. M. Poupon senses this when he asks: "Pourquoi dit-il au vers 7: 'Et sachez que j'attends de moyennes tortures'?" but is too intent on the Christ-interpretation to see that this has nothing to do with the scourging of Jesus. Perhaps M. Poupon comes nearest the truth when he writes, a few paragraphs later: "Reconnaissons-le sans réticence; avide d'identification comme il l'est, après s'être reconnu en Gauvain, Perceval, Merlin, Orphée etc., il s'est retrouvé dans le Christ." The case for this succession of identifications is crystal clear, especially when the symbol-persona is a mystic, hermit, prophet, seer, or a musician or poet who fulfills those functions; such is the tone even of Apollinaire's last literary testament, "Les Collines", which summarises his search, through the medium of poetry, for peace-giving wisdom. But the reference to Gawayne, for instance, is not strictly accurate: he did not identify himself with the pure Arthurian knight in the same sense as with Merlin or Orpheus. Nevertheless, the purity of Gawayne which gave him such strength in his encounters with life's misadventures, and in the search for truth in the form of the Grail, did appeal to the youthful, idealistic pupil whose devotion to the Virgin Mary had gained him a school prize. He had, moreover, translated part of the Gawayne story, which accounts for the

pedantic spelling of proper names in "La Maison de Cristal" [201], and had connected that knight's prowess [in the series of poems reminiscent in language and tone of L'Enchanteur pourrissant and the three major poems] with the thought that the chaste Christian knight set apart from the common law of nature could rely on the poet's imagination for immortality by repute instead:

> [Giglain fils de Gauvain] s'assit et pensa: "Serait-ce en vain
> Que je suis un héros et de la loi commune
> Ne peut-on pas sortir?" Mais lors il se souvint
> ... ...
> Puis il s'enorgueillit pensant aux hommes pâles
> Qui diraient ses hauts faits... imaginés par eux. [202]

His familiarity with the Gawayne legend permits us to see the obscure reference in stanza 2 which has caused so much difficulty to critics.

In particular we must refer to the story of Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, the plot of which pivots about the trial of the knight's chastity. It will be remembered that the Green Knight leaves Gawayne in his castle with his wife unchaperoned, and imposes one condition: that Gawayne shall not steal anything, but faithfully return the Green Knight's possessions even though it is the Lady that gives them. The Lady in fact gives him some kisses, despite his determination to be utterly chaste. Being a man of scrupulous honour, Gawayne is in a quandary when the

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[201] "La Maison de Cristal" is the second of the series of poems known as "Triptyque de l'Homme" to be found on pages 711 to 713 of OP.

[202] "L'Orgueilleux", OP p.713, third in the "Triptyque".

Green Knight returns and demands that he give back anything that he has taken without permission, that is to say, stolen. If Gawayne returns the kisses he will be compromised, in the power of the fearsome giant, and liable to torture. If he conceals the fact, he is a thief, liable to be beheaded. But there is also the matter of the compensatory gift of a talisman which the Lady gives Gawayne to protect him against retribution, and Apollinaire refers to a talisman with this role in stanzas 12 and 24.

Surely this is the background to which the poet refers in stanza 2:

> Je confesse le vol des fruits doux des fruits mûrs
> ... ...
> Et sachez que j'attends de moyennes tortures
> Injustes si je rends tout ce que j'ai volé

Why else would he refer to "tout ce que j'ai volé" when he is accused of only one theft, namely "des fruits"?

The women of the Chorus have allowed him to "steal" their kisses; if he is now said to be a thief, he will scarcely be forgiven for "returning them". This is typical Apollinarian erudite humour in the ironical vein of his other references to the chaste Gawayne. Moreover, the verbal punishment he receives from his mother [203] is "injuste" insofar as he is "returning

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[203] See Adéma op.cit., p.39: "Guillaume n'échappe pas aux besoins d'une constitution vigoureuse et se plaît fort à la recherche des aventures féminines... sans se montrer difficile sur le choix de sa partenaire... Le caractère violent de Mme de Kostrowitzky provoque des scènes pénibles où elle rudoye l'infortuné Guillaume." Madame Faure-Favier confirmed, in interview, his mother's condemnatory tirades on the subject of his affairs with women at this time.

the love" of these women, as he makes plain; and by way of further excuse he says in stanza 7 that they were ripe for the plucking and he was not the first to enjoy their availability since "other birds had already pecked these fruits":

> Les citrons couleur d'huile et à saveur d'eau froide
> Pendaient parmi les fleurs des citronniers tordus
> Les oiseaux de leur bec ont blessé vos grenades
> Et presque toutes les figues étaient fendues

Further, in stanza 10 he points out that the lovers concerned freely forgave him, saying "Voleur je te pardonne".

This, then, is Guillaume's specious reply to his mother's criticism, but he is aware of the Nemesis judging his actions, as Gawayne had been uneasily aware of the Green Knight's forthcoming examination and threatened retribution. The poet's only hope, as for Gawayne, lies in the talisman offered in stanza 12 and interpreted in stanza 24. The main argument and motive of this poem is an examination of what is involved in his loss of chastity, the circumstances of this loss, and consideration of what talisman may protect him against the dire consequences. Although he has begun by treating the detail of his amours with flippancy, albeit not without witty sophistry, he knows he must take the matter seriously because it affects his integrity as a man and his vocation as a poet.

The third stanza is therefore given to the voice of mature reason. The Old Man pours oil on the troubled domestic waters first by suggesting that his mother should take his affairs seriously, as real love, only after he has had a preliminary fling: this is done, as mentioned earlier, in words which may

well have been actually used by Justin Weil to avoid a scene between mother and son that threatened to ruin a meal-time:

Vous parlerez d'amour quand il aura mangé

Next he flatters the young man into being docile, teachable, and attentive to the wisdom of his elders: he is handsome, he will have every chance of love and happiness, even though, a love-child born on the Mediterranean shore, "issu de l'écume des mers comme Aphrodite", he has been washed up on a foreign strand. It is possible that Angélique is punningly referred to as one of those "mères comme Aphrodite", meaning that he is the offspring of a love-goddess or a sex-symbol in the modern sense.

The Chorus repeats its opening accusation: he is a marauding foreigner; but now adds new data: he is "sick" in that he has innate compulsions, inherited from both his father and his mother. His father was a mystery ["Un sphinx"] and his mother had to keep her union dark; and whereas the Chorus excused him in that he was a foreigner in a strange land, friendless, and therefore <u>needing</u> the consolation of women, it now wonders with misgivings whether he was genuinely hungering when he stole the fruits. That is to say, the collective voice of his women friends and mother, whose point of view the poet now considers in this interior debate, wonders whether he in fact is merely "taking after his father", pretending to need something simply for the pleasure of taking it. Is he, in short, a mere profligate?

In stanzas 5 to 7 the Larron replies, standing in the witness box like the chaste Gawayne who has been forced, by a Lady who was actually in league with Nemesis, into the position of a thief, having taken what was not rightfully his since he was not married to the donor. He addresses himself to the women first, the "possesseurs de fruits mûrs": "What can I say to these insults?"

In all previous interpretations of this much studied stanza, exegetists have failed to bear in mind the whole context of debate, nor have they remembered that this question is addressed to the women-friends, as well as to his mother, all those who "possess fruits". Therefore the insults can only be those already referred to ["ces insultes"]. The sphinx-like character of his father is stated as a fact; the insults are the implication of immorality on his part, not his father's, and specifically the insulting epithets "malhabile et malade". What is he to say then? Is he to listen to his mother's Ligurian [in either sense] voice, which speaks in concert with the women that he is accused of wronging, and is he to accept the charge?

> Puisqu'ils n'eurent enfin la pubère et l'adulte
> Du prétexte sinon que s'aimer nuitamment

Despite the Mallarmean syntax, the construction is clear: if he does listen ["ouïr"] and accept, it must be "since they, the young girl and the adult, had no pretext unless it was to love each other nightly." The puisque could be that of expostulatory familiar argument. To paraphrase: "All you women, what shall

I say to these insults? Am I to listen to your voice, Mother, echoing the experiences of Monaco? For when all is said and done, you as a young girl and that mature man had no excuse other than wanting to make love every night [or: that your love had to be clandestine]."

Here is almost certainly a reference to, and comparison of, both the earlier experience between "la pubère" and the poet's sphinx-like father, who posed a riddle the young man had to answer or die, and also the later Ligurian affair of the adult Angélique with the mature Justin Weil. There is an essential difference: the former resulted in issue, and the latter did not. The fruitful love was hallowed by Nature; the non-fruitful one had no other excuse than his own: an exile needed love and security, a factor that had not been present in the first case. Apollinaire's defence is that true love must be legalised in marriage, or above all be validated by an earnest intention of raising a family; but that at present he merely needed consolation and companionship, just as his mother did with Justin Weil.

This new interpretation seems highly probable, since the next two stanzas follow naturally as further support for such a line of argument. The plural address votre shows that he is once more addressing the women-friends: "These fruit,

quite round, like souls, and pine-cone nuts [204] lay strewn about in your garden on whose shores, I, the shipwrecked sailor, at last rested my oars; cool refreshing fruit hung there temptingly and they had already been spoiled." His observation of the fact that lemons ripen while the tree is already flowering again is no less acute than the reference to the fondness, in dry areas, of birds for pommegranates, or the splitting of ripe figs; but all three images insist that the fruit should have been picked, or had been tasted ["blessé" because of the red juice running down the skin of the pommegranate, Aphrodite's symbol] or had been left too long on the tree. The symbolism is abundantly clear: he needed consolation on this foreign shore, and saw that the women who offered themselves were all too ready: he was not a seducer who had led any of them astray, spoiling their virginity, or pretending intentions of permanent union and issue.

The Actor now speaks, in stanza 8, the persona, that part of the poet's mind reviewing his actions as the "être-pour-autrui", and commenting on them. He tells the "thief" to sit down after his spirited self-defence, to relax in order to listen more receptively to the Ligurian voices - plural, meaning those of his mother and Justin Weil - and in typical Apol-

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[204] Images from the Riviera and Trastevere; and we recall Mallarmé's reference in "L'Après-midi d'un Faune":

> Tu sais, ma passion, que, pourpre et déjà mûre
> Chaque grenade éclate et d'abeilles murmure;
> Et notre sang, épris de qui le va saisir,
> Coule pour tout l'essaim éternel du désir.

Pine-cones furnish a well-known Dionysian symbol, moreover.

linairean manner adds background colour to the action [the speaking of the Ligurian voices] by erudite and ambivalent reference to Cinyra, the cult of Aphrodite, and to effeminate [non-virile, non-productive] men, with secondary images of the Hebrew lyre and the music-lovers. Is the intended allusion that here is a music-lover with a musical instrument he cannot play on, an impotent man with a love-goddess? If so, it would strengthen our suggestion that both Apollinaire's father and Weil are referred to, contrasted on the basis of the fertility of the union. All through this poem runs the value-judgement that love-making without issue is against nature.

Inasmuch as the words of the Actor are certainly addressed to the poet ["Sit and listen..."] and are uttered on behalf of Angélique and Weil or with reference to them ["... listen to the Ligurian voices"] the il of the first line could only refer to a male person other than the poet's exterior self and Weil. This leaves Apollinaire's father or his interior self as possible referents. Normally he refers to his interior self as "je" and his exterior self as "tu", and in "Assieds-toi" he has observed this rule. The il must therefore refer to his father. This matches the last previous reference to a third person, "l'adulte", which was used by the Larron in reply to the Chorus's reference to his father.

He, says the Actor in a logical follow-up to the charge made by his alter ego [the Larron in stanza 5], came onto the scene in a way which reminds the poet of an erotic frieze he

has seen, and the next eight lines describe in the past tense the fresco. It must be remembered at this point and throughout the following discussion, that the sculptures of India and the ancient Middle East are certainly erotic, but not obscene or pornographic, since they relate not to illicit pleasures but to grave fertility rites: the purpose is to show men the true purpose of sex and love-making and as such are no different from the words of the Christian marriage vows which proclaim that love is to be hallowed in marriage primarily "for the procreation of children". In this fresco, men wearing theatrical masks [recalling the Greek theatrical mask that gives us our word character] were talking the ancient Chaldean language with women who wore fertility symbols about their necks - necklaces made of gallstones from the Tanagra cock. Tanagra was known to Apollinaire for its Boetian terracotta, as we may read in his short story "Les Pèlerins piémontais": "des chapeaux... particuliers aux femmes du comté de Nice et pareils à ceux que portaient les dames grecques, comme on peut voir aux statuettes de Tanagre." This indicates a connection in his mind between the Ligurian and Tanagra. But Tanagra was also known for its fighting cocks which provide a symbol of fertility more interesting to Apollinaire in a poem where fertility is the main theme, especially as the erotic frieze is described as depicting couples making love. The particular couple of lovers the poet has in mind, while ostensibly referring to the frieze, are Angélique and his father; this is

why the poet describes their activity as it affects him personally: it is seen symbolically as "l'inceste solaire et nocturne dans les nues", a piece of symbolism which enables Apollinaire to exteriorise a revulsion that he can nevertheless keep secret.

Freud's revelation of the Oedipus complex in literature was new and influential at this period. The idea of the son wanting to kill his father and marry his mother, seen as the child's resentment of his father's intrusion and his own desire to re-enter the maternal womb for comfort and security, fits perfectly the contemporary circumstances of the young poet. He had resented his father's role instinctively perhaps, but his father had never been present to come between him and his mother; would he not now even more resent Weil's reincarnation of the father-figure? In addition, he was just now being thrust out of his mother's protection into the harsh world to earn his own living ["Enfant, je t'ai donné ce que j'avais: travaille!"] while Weil occupied the place by her side - without the justification his true father had had. It will be remembered that Apollinaire had been reading Anatole France, and had been influenced by his Thaïs in the composition of "L'Ermite" on a theme of love and fertility. We may now recall the last chapter of France's Livre de mon Ami, which explains how many myths and fairy tales see the sun as being born out of the night only to re-enter the womb of night and be reborn the next day. It is a symbol we have evoked tentatively in our

consideration of "L'Ermite" by comparison to Mallarmé's "Victorieusement fui"; it is quite clearly referred to by Apollinaire in his poem "L'Ignorance":

> Pour éviter la nuit ta mère incestueuse
> Dieu circulaire et bon ...

and with the same sexual reference in "Lul de Faltenin":

> Le soleil d'hier m'a rejoint [205]

His philandering, then, is given this other excuse, that it was an attempt to compensate for the [apparent] loss of the affection his mother would have bestowed had it not been for Justin Weil. To make the subject of the fresco immediately relevant to his argument, therefore, he concludes his description by saying that the women of those couples said, each in turn, "Voleur je te pardonne" - they forgave the "theft" of their virginity, gladly given, and indeed advised the lover to take the salt first, and <u>then</u> the wheaten bread: to take love-making first as an apéritif, because it will lead him on to engage in the main course of reproduction. Morgane prepares the way for Viviane. This is the siren function of offering a little as bait, in order to fulfil Nature's purpose.

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[205] "L'Ignorance",OP p.344; "Lul de Faltenin" OP p.97; and "Le Printemps" OP p.537 ["le naufrage solaire... de voir mourir un dieu"]; and for a fuller explanation, refer P.F. Wells: "The Hermit and the Mermaid", Actes du Xe Congrès de L'A.U.L.L.A., University of Auckland Bindery, 1966. Is there a fleeting echo here of the riddle Apollonius of Tyre had to answer: "Scelere vereor, maternam carnem vescor. Quero patrem meum matris mee filium, nec invenio. Qui vault au tant dire comme j'ay vergogne de mon pechié, je mangue la char de ma mere; je quiers mon pere, filz de ma mere et ne le puis trouver." ["Histoire et Cronique d'Appolin de Thir" MS Catalogue Royal 20 C ii ff 210 et seq.]

Stanza 11 elaborates on this adolescent attitude of the poet's. Love affairs, he has the women say, are delicate, like flowers, and soon fade, whereupon "Your lips will find cold porridge rather flat." This metaphor of taking a meal is sustained partly for consistency at the story-level, partly to round out the argument [206]. In effect the advice is: Love is a honeyed flower, soon fading. An old love is like gruel gone cold. Renew the skin to keep the contents fresh [the image is that of the leather bottle, the bouc being another of Aphrodite's symbols and whose skin was preferred for wine-skins] - flowers are fresh and beautiful compared with a staple diet of the fruit [beans] that they turn into if allowed to fade and ripen. The irony for the Larron is that of offering him beans, forbidden fruit for Pythagoreans or those pledged to chastity. He already has strong enough impulses! The irony that the poet sees is that fresh young love becomes stale custom, and energising, inspiring emotion turns into a clogging, static situation. In a poet's world, love is fine, but a permanent union and children would be the end of his creativity. The youthful answer is: change the beloved and keep the emotion of love fresh.

In stanza 12, still looking at himself from the outside, he recognises that this is an adolescent attitude, anti-social, anti-religious. One cannot over-stress that throughout

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[206] The references to Dionysian banquet rites are admirably described by Marc Poupon [Guillaume Apollinaire No.6, ed. Décaudin, R.L.M. 1967], and add depth and colour to the interpretation given here. Refer also to footnote [222] below.

his life, as evidenced by his proposals of marriage or his writings from "L'Ermite" to Les Mamelles de Tirésias, he unswervingly believed that love should lead to marriage, children, family security and social stability. Therefore he has one woman accuse him: "You call on no god! Do you believe in blind chance, then? Do you think you know the laws of life better than social tradition, despite the way men behave? Won't you accept my talisman of happiness, my necklace of fertility?" In other words, he sees the woman's point of view in its social background as she warns him that happiness comes through marriage and a family, and this is what she offers in the fertility symbol - the talisman that would protect the poet from life's retribution whether he clings to Gawayne's purity or whether he goes against Nature's purposes by sacrificing chastity without gaining lasting happiness in true fulfilment.

In stanza 13, therefore, the spokesman for the women appeals to him: "Fruit-stealer, turn your lyrical eyes on me. You are so male: fill your bowl with fruit!" This is a clear appeal for fertility. Here, as throughout the poem, the erudite references are of absorbing interest, but can easily deflect one's attention into side-issues [as, to a certain extent, they are intended to do] whereas taken collectively they simply support the main line of argument.

In stanza 14 the woman asks, as all his women friends must have asked when wondering at that inner nobility that contrasted with his poor exterior: "But who are you? You come

to us from Russia ["grâce au vent scythe"] just as so many other peoples have visited these shores, loved, and passed on all too soon." But, as so often in this type of composition, Apollinaire adds depth to the surface story which remains in keeping with the manifest plot: he is at the same time thinking of the succession of "conquests" his mother knew on those southern shores. Confirming this is the thought that the winking of the passing columns of soldiers directed at the girls they have known [207] is doubled by the winks of Apollinaire's schoolfellows that betokened suspicion of the nocturnal lovers, a situation now revivified by Weil's presence. It is interesting to note that this second example of a doubling of the reference is observable as having taken place progressively, as shown by a comparison of the stanza as it appeared in La Plume and its form in Alcools, with an intermediate stage in the version of Vers et Prose. Why was this stanza twice altered? Presumably because, each time the poet read it, he was more conscious of the underlying significance of the plot-level reference, and it was this deeper significance that was more important and forced its way to the surface.

Now the Chorus takes up the discussion, and this time holds the floor for the remaining 17 stanzas with only the briefest interruptions from the Actor and from the Woman, who

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[207] Madame Durry has commented on the reference to racial invasions of Liguria [op.cit. I, p.26] and the reference to his schoolfellows' mockery is elaborated by Michel Butor in his "Monument de Rien pour Apollinaire".

merely restates her case. One may fairly expect that the Chorus, who opened the trial by preferring the charge and hearing the Larron's reply of "Guilty, but in extenuating circumstances" ["Je confesse le vol mais..."], having listened to the Actor as defence witness and the Woman as plaintiff, will now sum up the arguments and give judgement. This indeed it does, but, not unexpectedly, wholly in terms of Apollinaire's three-cornered problem of love versus fertility versus poetry. Moreover, this summing-up is given, typically, not solely in the form of logical argument but also through a series of symbolical tableaux.

These tableaux are presented according to the tenets of Symbolism as the poet has used the technique before, to suggest rather than state, by personifying and concretising. This serves his purpose of expressing the points he wishes to make, but by means of symbols that can be taken in several ways at once, allowing first one and then another line of reference to emerge on the surface so as not merely to obfuscate his deepest intention but also to enrich the progression of thought. Hence the two different streams of interpretation that exegetists have propounded: the religious [S. Bates and M. Poupon] or the literary [Madame Durry, Madame Gothot-Mersch and others]. If some critics have been forced to admit insoluble difficulties, it is through seeing "their" interpretation as exclusively correct, or in judging that either of them is more important to the poet than the deeply personal theme that they

have elsewhere glimpsed. It is the stratification of overlaid themes that causes Décaudin to be cautious in accepting either, and leads him to note only the disturbing effect of the whole [208]. If in treating this obscure section we here urge the primacy of a third interpretation, it is in full recognition of the possibilities of the other two, but stressing that this personal theme is constant throughout the whole poem, and in poems preceding and following this one; that it underlies and is the reason for the poet's consideration of religion [morals] and literature [writing]; and that if religion or literature were the only or the main theme, the poet would not have needed to veil the whole work in obscure symbolism, least of all in order to attack Symbolism.

It is not proposed to delve into each erudite reference in detail, since others [particularly M. Poupon] have already achieved this extensive task; instead, the references will be summarised and their indication of the third interpretation will be observable.

Stanza 15, referring specifically to Moses, says in essence: "Look at religions - the Jews, for instance." Stanza 16 invites us to consider superstitions. Stanza 17 asks us to consider nature: the chattering insect dies of chastity in a forest containing birds that produce gems [gemmipares also means gemmating, thus evoking another means of reproduction, that by budding] and toads which eat insects and which, according to

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[208] Décaudin, Oeuvres Poétiques, p.1057: "troublant et mystérieux".

the superstitions of those who sought treasures in owls' eyes, bear gems in their heads [and are bisexual]. Stanzas 16 and 17 thus contrast two birds: the owl, Pallas Athene's bird; and the gorgeous jungle bird of paradise; wisdom is thus compared with beauty. Treasure-seekers are interested in both - that is to say, both offer values. This is the same duality as offered in a condensed form in "Cortège" between the night-owl of silent flight, blinded by the light of the sun, and the bird of paradise which reflects the sun in gem-like flashes and permanently inhabits the vault of heaven because, in popular belief, it had no legs. [209] The poet-symbol of the bird used to the upper air, and unable to come down to earth is, after all, that of Baudelaire's "Albatross". The gem-like flashes of poetic wisdom illumine the poet.

But pursuing the secondary references of these symbols, we note that the insect chatters and the toad produces a flute-like song [much admired by Apollinaire and his friend Rouveyre [210]], and that the male insect is well known to die after copulation, so that its song is killed by fertility; while the toad, connected by its gem-bearing nature and through witchcraft to the owls, lives on, being bisexual, or, as Coleridge called this quality as it affects the poet, androgynous. Gems in the eyes ["les yeux des chouettes / Attiraient quelque-

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[209] "Cortège" OP p.74. Traders cut their legs off before shipping them to Europe. They enjoyed a tremendous vogue in the 1890's.

[210] As André Rouveyre informed the writer in interview, 1948.

fois les chercheurs de trésors"] and gems in the head, the beauty in the poet's eye, and that created by the poet's brain and expressed as music [poetry] as opposed to the chattering of the instinctive insect "tué par l'amour". We have already met this theme of the eye losing its gems through the influence of love, in "La Clef"; and the theme of love leading to fertility and killing wisdom and poetry is the theme of "L'Ermite" and other owl references.

In Stanza 18 a Roman Triumph passes, recalling the laureates of the classics, the evil and the innocent are paraded, the anguish of captive birds which symbolise immortality in Pythagorean terms, and the fertility of geese engendered by the gander - again this is a parallel contrast between beauty and fertility and the different kinds of immortality conferred by these.

Stanza 19 at first sounds like a further detail of the Triumph, the widows taking precedence because of the fine sons they will have raised, while their husbands - like the male insects - are already dead. But there are undertones of Pallas Athene in the religious triangle, and even perhaps of black magic.

All these riders in the procession are projected, says stanza 20, into their future [which is our present], cinders or flowers, just like the <u>alcancies</u> thrown in Italian processions; that is to say, they have left us the ashes of their poets and the human stock of the Latin race whose blood

flows in Apollinaire's veins: the heritage from Rome is both mental and physical, the dual immortality.

Let us admit at once that we are all on unsure ground at this point, since many things are possible with such rich symbols used only in this one context, and, by the same tokens, nothing is definite or exclusive. However, if we take the general intention in the light of the broad context of the poem as a whole, we see that the Chorus has basically indicated a series of considerations. These are: religion, superstition, nature; the Jews and the Romans representing Hebrew and Latin of the classics, with Greek mythology; chastity, reproduction and poetry; immortality through descendance and immortality through literary heritage. Then, as the Chorus comes back from these general reflexions to the particular case in hand, lowering its visionary eyes and fastening them upon the Larron whom it addresses in the last two lines of stanza 20, we must note that it develops first the theme of sex, and then that of religion, later relating them to the writing of poetry - but never, surely, debating such superficial issues as schools of poetry.

So, says the Chorus, returning to the defendant, we shall go on receiving your Florentine kisses - "even though this evening you came to our garden both wise and thieving." "Sage et voleur": a curious combination, but in the light of the foregoing the meaning may be clear enough. In what sense is the poet-lover a thief? What he takes is offered freely. But it is offered with the trust that love-making will lead to fulfilment,

so that the kisses are stolen in the sense that they are not paid for in terms of fertility. But by now the Chorus has accepted this - it will accept the sterile evidences of affection, symbolised by the perversion of Florentine kisses, without proclaiming the fact ["sans le dire"], on the grounds that his motive in avoiding fertility is the acquisition of wisdom: he is "sage" because he is "voleur".

However, the women cannot be expected to like this proposition, since they are Apollinaire's idea of what women ought to be - the country's future strength. They therefore berate the thief, accusing him in references that follow the train of associative thought from "baisers florentins" [211]. The baisers florentins as an obscene way of avoiding fertility was to be taken up again in "La Chanson du Mal-aimé:

> Regret des yeux de la putain
> ... ...
> Amour vos baisers florentins
> Avaient une saveur amère
> Qui a rebuté nos destins

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[211] Seeing that critics have not apparently understood this reference, attention is also directed to the poem "69 6666 ...6 9..." [OP p.594]:

> 69
> Deux serpents fatidiques
> Deux vermisseaux
> Nombre impudique

These are the "serpents qui s'entr'aiment."

and contemporaneously in "Adieux":

> ... ... je n'eus aucun désir
> ... ...
> Malgré l'amour terrestre aux baisers florentins
> Non, je ne veux aucun de ces coeurs que l'on donne,
> ... ...
> Ni de l'amour humain qui fait trop d'embarras.
> Tous les dons sont impurs ... ...
> Et l'amour est maudit pour ce qu'il peut donner,
> Il n'y a pas encore de cadeaux anarchistes

This is the eternal adolescent demand for "free love", but the young Apollinaire, conscious of the inherent contradiction of wanting it both ways, perceives that nothing in life is truly "free". How can he justify perversion with a prostitute by idealistic motives? Having admitted being "at the mercy of my instincts", he must, indeed, expect "de moyennes tortures". One of these tortures is to be accused of obscenity, and he cannot honestly hope to excuse himself by saying that "il est bien d'être obscènes quand on s'aime" as he wrote in the La Plume version of stanza 21, which is why he emended this to the more open reference: "Cette furtive ardeur des serpents qui s'entr'aiment". So the Chorus of condemnation rails: "Your sort revel in obscenity" and details some examples. Madame de Kostrowitzky did, indeed, express sweeping criticisms of the circle of writers her son frequented [212]. This fact probably reminded the poet of the unjust accusations levelled against the early Christians, who were misleadingly said to "love one another" and drink blood to seal their [mystical] union.

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[212] As attested by some of the victims of her tongue, and reported, for instance, by Madame Louise Faure-Favier, op. cit., Chapter 4.

Belphégor or Priapus, god of procreation, the sun of Baal's shameful practices, the silence of Harpocratus, and the dog - possibly Helen's, but much more likely Onan's again - are all examples not merely of obscenity, since this might have been excusable between true lovers, but of practices condemned on the grounds that such sexual perversions cheated God's design for humanity. And so this train of thought leads to the defensive cry "Je suis chrétien". We note that it is the Actor who reports these words as coming from the thief, the latter very specifically identified as "le larron des fruits". In other words, this defence is uttered in the external world by his exterior self, echoing his attempt at justification before his mother and Justin Weil [the only people likely to permit themselves such personal criticism], whereas his interior self already feels self-justified by his motives.

In reply to this asseveration, the Chorus reverts to the earlier fresco-image: the fertility symbols will [if he continues in this course, however self-justified] always jingle at the throats of the women he will meet, and men's masks will fall as the reality behind the Dance of Life is revealed. The attitude of the Chorus seems to harden again as they tell him to go away, on the grounds that the shadow will put out the fire. This is the thought that will be developed in "Lul de Faltenin": the dark simulacrum of love will extinguish the true flame of love just as surely as fear of conception leads to perversity. Apollinaire was certainly aware of this as a reality in his

personal life, as indicated by Margaret Davies[213], as well as in his correspondence with Onimus concerning Annie and elsewhere. This equivocal shadow recurs as the "deuil de ta chair" of stanza 27, mourning for the unborn offspring.

But now the Chorus links another thought to the slowly evolving argument that seems to seep rather than flow:

> Ah! Ah! le larron de gauche dans la bourrasque
> Rira de toi ...

... like the neighing of stallions. Why the introduction of this apparently extraneous "thief on the left", and why this outburst, mocking the poet? We are by now familiar with the Apollinairean train of thought, progressing through an association of ideas which uses each symbol as a stepping stone, or as it were a Janus portal, meaning one thing as he is attracted towards it and then another as he notes it down and is propelled by one of its other connotations forward in a direction that may surprise his conscious mind but always follows his unconscious preoccupation.

He has been talking of Christianity's view and the purpose of love. The connotation of the Thief for the Christian is that of the Cross, where there were two thieves, one on Christ's right, and another on His left. The one on the right repented, believed, and was saved for eternal life [another kind

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[213] Davies op.cit., p.40, and the Letter to James Onimus given in Les Lettres Françaises, 13 December, 1951, in his well-known reference to Annie.

of immortality, the religious kind]. The thief on the left was unrepentant and damned, and so perished. The Larron is unrepentant, and with his sterile deception of Love may yet be damned and perish, despite his credulous belief in immortality by repute as a poet. Thus it is his heredity that mocks him as he is unmasked when confronted by the symbols of fertility.

Stanza 23 is the voice of the woman again appealing for fertility: "Look at me, lyric poet, and be a fruitful hero!" But in stanza 24 a number of strands are suddenly brought to the surface and shown to be interwoven as the Chorus resumes to bring down its final verdict. This is announced by the promised shaking throughout the night of the sistra:

Ah! Ah! nous secouerons toute la nuit les sistres [214]

Since the sistrum is the emblem of Isis, sister-wife of Osiris, and goddess of fecundity, the verdict is as inevitable as any other of the laws of life, and only the sentence is still in doubt. Was not the Ligurian voice of his mother the talisman to protect him from this ineluctable verdict and retribution?

> Et si tu n'es pas de droite tu es sinistre
> Comme une tache grise ou le pressentiment

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[214] Remarks on form would be intrusive here, as not affecting the exegesis. Yet it should be borne in mind as a background to the argument that Apollinaire can be regarded nowadays as the first of the mixed-media artists. The "Ah! Ah!", far from being pedestrian expressions of surprise to be translated as "Oh! Oh!" should be heard rather as the prophetic ancestral voices of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan", sung by the female Chorus on a rising crescendo and a falling diminuendo, followed by the prolonged musical rattle of a sistrum. This poem is the dramatisation of an interior debate, needing to be performed on a stage with choreography and choral speaking accompanied by percussion and concrete music - or at least interpreted with imagination and a sensitive ear.

For if he is not repentant for his thievery, he is damned. If his love is to remain unfruitful, he is doomed to have no immortality. And here the symbol turns its face again; for to be sinister has another meaning, the popular idea of malevolence being based on the heraldic reference to the "left-handed child" or "love-child" of the bar sinister: he is illegitimate. And the heraldic symbolism reminds us that if he cannot claim descendance from his father, he must claim it on the distaff side... He is a dark stain on the family escutcheon, and it is an ill omen for the future.

Another switch in stanza 25: consideration of the two thieves clearly postulates the central Figure from whose right and left they are positioned, the very reference line in the moral issue. But consideration of the three on Golgotha reminds the poet immediately of the purpose of Christ's coming on earth [215]. He draws only an immediately relevant purpose from the matter, arguing that, since the Absolute came down to earth, that descent proves "that two become three before having been". In other words it is the divine example, since when God the Father descended to earth it was to produce a son by Mary. He who couples must produce a third person: "qui double devient triple". That this meaning is intended is proved by the obvious application of this idea in the next

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[215] The Nestorianism associated with Edessa is quite possibly even at this point in the poet's mind, and supports the present interpretation, albeit immaterially.

two lines, for the women of the Chorus avow that it is pregnancies that stir them, and "only bellies can deny aseity." Again we note the dual application to religion and to poetry. The heresy of aseity [existence without origin] is paralleled by the women's attitude that only pregnancy can deny the claim by men to be self-sufficient, not love-making for love-making's sake on the specious grounds of man's poetic creativity giving literary immortality. The argument runs as if Guillaume has been chided for his affairs with women, and has countered with: "What about you and Weil? Your union is not only wrong in the eyes of the Church, and against the customs of society, but is contrary to all natural law throughout history." To which she replies, with the support of her experience, "Yes, but if it is wrong for us on a permanent basis, it is more wrong for you on the temporary basis of a deliberate succession of relationships."

So, in stanza 26 the question of morals is looked at:

Vois les vases sont pleins d'humides fleurs morales

"Fleurs morales" may suggest the results of a highly moral [negative] attitude to sex. But in 1900 he was writing to Linda in terms of a visit to another garden to pluck flowers [not fruit, but the same thought]:

O Belle, cueille-les, puisque nos fleurs de rêve
Se faneront demain!
... les fleurs vont mourir dans la chambre profane [216]

The flower as a symbol of luring beauty or siren sex in, or exemplified by, young womanhood, is constant throughout Apollinaire's contemporary poems: Nature uses the beauty of flowers to lure insects to fertilise them and produce fruit [217]. M. Poupon has shown the rich possibilities of symbolism in the "vase" [218], but it should be sufficient here to refer to another example of the linking of fleur and vase by Apollinaire, especially as "Le Larron" seems to contain a quintessence of so many minor poems composed between 1900 and 1903 for Linda and Yvonne:

Beaux fruits défendus
Paradis perdu
Vase où toute fleur
Meurt avec bonheur
Jonchée de pétales
De rose hivernale [219]

This reference is again picked up elsewhere [220]:

Je suis la rose
Fraîche et mi-close
Je me marie
Je suis flétrie

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[216] "La Cueillette", OP p.318. The défleuri of "Merlin et la vieille Femme" and "Lul de Faltenin" and the falling petals that bestrew the symbolic orchards of this period make this thought abundantly clear.

[217] For examples refer: "Le Printemps" OP p.556; "L'Automne et l'Echo" OP p.589; untitled poem OP p.574; untitled poem OP p.582. The symbolism of flowers is discussed on pp. 112 - 115 herein.

[218] Marc Poupon, loc. cit. p.37.

[219] "Lettre-poème" to Yvonne, OP p.545.

[220] Untitled poem, OP p.570.

Evidently, to the poet, love is a flower that soon fades in the stifling atmosphere of a permanent union, as he again says in "La Cueillette":

> Mets-les dans une coupe et toutes portes closes,
> Alanguis et cruels, songeant aux jours défunts,
> Nous verrons l'agonie amoureuse des roses

The meaning is constant: the Larron is not to be admitted to the Garden of Love "for pleasure only". To fully understand the attitude expressed in stanzas 26 and 27 we may link all these parallel references to "Tierce Rime pour votre âme" addressed to the innocent Linda:

> Votre âme est une enfant que je voudrais bercer
> En mes bras trop humains pour porter ce fantôme
> Ce fantôme d'enfant qui pourrait me lasser

Her soul is like a child he would like to cradle - but his arms are too human not to weary of the burden of such an insubstantial fantom. He sees that the position he adopted in "Merlin et la vieille Femme" is untenable because of the strength of his instincts: Mallarmé might be satisfied to cry "Je tiens la reine", but not Apollinaire. He recognises his uncontrollable impulsion to turn the pure relationship into a sexual one. Thus he finds himself pulled in two directions at once, and symbolises this position in the image of the two thieves on the cross. He even describes their different attitudes as if to alert his beloved Linda against his earthier side, the unrepentant thief, product of the bar sinister:

> Votre âme est dans la paix comme cloître endormi.
> Des larrons useront de plus d'un stratagème
> Pour ouvrir le portail qui forclot l'ennemi.

Et l'un venant de droite avec la claire gemme
L'offrira de dehors à votre âme en dedans
Un autre, le sinistre, alors s'écriera: "J'aime!"

In the case of Linda, the girl's soul is not an orchard, nor even a garden, but a cloister of peace, for he is looking at her spiritually as well as physically. But thieves, he warns, will employ more than one device to force an entry. The Thief on the Right, offering the gem of wisdom and poetry, will appeal from outside the cloister to her soul within; but another, the Thief on the Left, the sinister, unregenerate man, will say "I love you!" He goes on to say that this love also includes a desire for the domestic peace of an evening and security in the twilight of his life. But he sees this prize as destined for another: "Et l'on dérobera le parfum que j'aimais" since family life is not for the poet. He has used the "sour grapes" argument that love fades in marriage, anyway [perhaps with reference to the picturesque lack of perfect harmony observable between Angélique and Justin Weil], but again the picture is the same as when the woman rattles her fertility-symbol necklace and the man is unmasked: the Larron is discovered to be an outsider in the Dance of Life, one who retreats from the prospect of fertility, mocked by his earthy nature even when it is being suppressed by the nobler side of him that carries the gem of wisdom and poetry inimical to fertility.

Thus it is that the next line makes clear sense even without all the allusions to the Orphic mysteries correctly adduced by M. Poupon:

Va-t-en mais dénudé puisque tout est à nous

For if members of this cult share everything with strangers, why is this unhappy stranger sent away naked and empty-handed? The Orphic references must be seen as background toning for the main recital at story-level. At story-level the reaction is clear: Since the poet is a thief, wanting to enjoy the sex rites without paying for them in terms of fertility, he is told to go away - empty-handed because everything [the true enjoyment of the fruit of love] belongs to the women who are fruitful. If he would but listen to the chorus of voices borne on the wind, the songs of the shore ["cadences plagales", the siren of "Lul de Faltenin", echoing M. Poupon's siren interpretation of Ligure, inviting the free mariner to land and be "naufragé" by marriage], he would take cupid's bow to kill the unicorn which maidens subdue by surrendering their virginity.

In stanza 27, "L'ombre équivoque et tendre", equivocating love, is but the mourning of his flesh, and means mourning for the women also, in terms of their unborn children. Let him go away, since he has not seen the light in his darkness, the purpose of love-making, and none of them will believe his stories of being so special that he can escape the laws of nature mentioned in stanza 12.

He is, however, sent away with regret, they say in stanza 28, for indeed, was he not brilliant and attractive, with his voice and trappings of a mystic poet? - and they would have loved him truly. If only, they add in stanza 29, the

beggar-king [a dramatised reference to his shabby-gentility] had accepted the fertility-symbol ["la pierre prise au foie d'un vieux coq de Tanagre"] instead of preferring the "roseau triste" and the "funèbre faix". The roseau may be the bitter consolation offered to Christ on the cross, but is at the same time, and with more force, the Mallarmean symbol of the poet's reed. Similarly the faix may be the dead burden on the cross, but is more closely paralleled as the contents of the womb, "funereal" as the "deuil de ta chair". After all, the Larron used both poetry and Christianity as defence, and in either case he has a funereal burden as punishment for his celibacy. Pursuing this thought, the Chorus asks had he not understood the Nestorian heresy? He might have examined the heavens and made love to poetesses [the opportunity rejected in stanza 23 of "L'Ermite"] and spared the demons of his flesh. Here again, there are several other incrustations of reference which, however, simply enrich the total impression but in no way deflect the continuing argument.

It is, naturally, the final stanza that sums up this oracular judgement: Go then, continue to wander believing in your Christianity and poetic vocation, your shadow existence! [The word ombre may well already have the symbolic value of "poem" as in later poetry, prefigured as Merlin's "ombre d'homme", which would leave unchanged the meaning of "naïvely believing in your peoms".] So be it, concludes the Chorus. The Trinity is all male [Father, Son and Holy Ghost, not Father, Mary and Son: the idea of the incarnation exemplifying

fertility is allowed to be a heresy]. The Larron is virginal and cold: his only symbol is the sign of the cross - self-sacrifice without issue made into an ideal. Tactile sensations are only relative, belonging to the world of the senses like physical love, but vision [the clear sight of those with gems in their eyes] is true, foursquare. This contrast of "le tact" and "la vue" [distinguishing the faculties "de vue et non de visions" as does Mallarmé in his "Prose pour Des Esseintes"] can scarcely be fully understood other than by reference to the later expression of such ideas when they were more fully developed, as in the contrast drawn by "Les Fiançailles" [221] between "le toucher monstrueux" with its world "que m'imposent mes sens" and the "feu oblong" which allows him to prophesy, or write meaningful poems, only when he has at last learned how "le soleil [his fiery symbol of poetic inspiration] et l'amour dansaient dans le village". It was to be a long period of credulous wandering as a believer before he could reconcile and harmonise the conflicting elements of earthly love and poetic inspiration.

In its bare essentials, and in relation to "L'Ermite" and "Merlin et la vieille Femme", "Le Larron" may thus be seen to continue and develop Apollinaire's meditations on the theme that preoccupied him throughout the years of his early manhood. In "L'Ermite" he decided that sex and love were inimical

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[221] "Les Fiançailles", OP p.133.

to poetry, and he must remain an ascetic. In "Merlin et la vieille Femme" he admitted the claim of love and fertility as an ultimate necessity, but rejected it meanwhile in preference for innocent memory. By the time he wrote "Le Larron" he realised that his physical nature simply would not permit this solution: he adopted the compromise of giving rein to sexual desires while still eschewing marriage. But this raised two more problems: first, he must use every means to avoid begetting children who would suffer the same fate as illegitimacy had thrust on him; and secondly, he knew that his course of action was against the Christian teaching with which he was impregnated. He looked nostalgically back to pagan times and bacchanalian revels, but found that even there the intention was not mere licentiousness but fertility. He also admitted that since the incarnation of Christ, despite the wishful thinking of heresies, innocence of the flesh was no longer possible. Inner peace demanded either continence or fruitful marriage [222]. In short, he accepts his mother's correction, and although he is to lapse once more in Germany and suffer a private hell for it,

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[222] Compare Marc Poupon [loc.cit. p.48]: "après lui [Christ], l'innocence de la chair n'est plus possible: le salut exige la continence, le rachat la souffrance, et la luxure désormais s'appelle péché et mène aux flammes de l'enfer." Also refer to "Mort de Pan", OP p.707. This is not a final solution for himself, however, since the poet wished to cheat death of every sort of mortality. We note the Enchanter's advice to Apollonius de Thyane [L'Enchanteur pourrissant, OC p.91]: "O puceau philosophe, abstiens-toi de fèves... mais ne doute pas de la mort", and compare it with the irony at plot-level of offering the virgin philosopher-poet "un plat de fèves" in stanza 11 of "Le Larron".

he will return to this point of view in "Lul de Faltenin" with even more conviction and supportive argument. Meanwhile, we note the consistency of his theme.

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Little has been remarked herein of Apollinaire's technique and form in the three major poems examined. Development in this sphere depends much more than is generally recognised on development of his themes. Questions of form must engage our attention increasingly when we examine the Rhine poems and "La Chanson du Mal-aimé", as slowly the two aspects, content and form, grow closer together in Apollinaire's total concept of poetry. In the minor Stavelot poems we saw him practise his hand at versification in a prolongation of his apprenticeship period on the Riviera. One may wonder whether there is in fact any technical advance. In complexity of thought on the subjects of poetic creation, inspiration and the role of memory, and the themes of sex, love and creativity, parts of these three poems approach Mallarmé in their general intention - but they fall woefully short in technical competence and their rare flashes of pure poetry. The poet seems to be at a stage in his development comparable to that of the adolescent whose ideas frustratingly outstrip his powers of expression. There are changes observable. The outgoing interest of self-confidence expressed in simple, external images diminishes as the last shreds of affluence give way to poverty. The very freshness of his imagery is lost as he leaves the Belgian countryside for

the lodgings and pavements of Paris and still more reading - the only entertainment he can afford. His eyes no longer register his surroundings as his attention is directed inwards. Later he will indeed see the data of his urban environment as an inspiring source of new imagery, but at this stage he feeds on a mind filled with bookish erudition and scenes from mythology and other writers. There are, indeed, some persistent images welling up from his Mediterranean childhood, but these now become impregnated with nostalgia for innocence, ease and security, which they henceforward symbolise. Elsewhere his imagery is marred by adolescent attempts to shock with obscenity - not to reinforce an important point, but simply to strive for recognition by first gaining attention: it is noteworthy that in both "L'Ermite" and "Le Larron" the grossity occurs in the opening stanzas. In this use of outrageous imagery, according to André Salmon [223], Apollinaire eventually succeeded when he chose "Le Larron" to recite in Le Caveau Au Soleil d'Or, for he earned the applause of contributors to La Plume and the friendship of the fellow-writer. In mitigation one should also add that this aspect reflects a disenchantment with his new life and a revolt against the circumstances that made his prospects of marriage discouraging. Any attempt to repress his desire intensified it to the point where it corrupted the most

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[223] So M. Salmon assured the writer in an interview in 1948, adding that in this the young Apollinaire was only echoing the contemporary trend. This is obviously confirmed in Jarry's "Ubuesque" style.

innocent attachment based on his need for sympathy and companionship. His attitude to women and love was soured, so that his rage expressed itself in destructively revolting imagery where women were concerned. At the same time his rhythm, that element most sensitive to the mood of any poet, is as pedestrian as his rhyme could be facetious [224]. It is not as inventive as in his minor poems, but ponderous as he strove in a laboured way to pour a quintessence of his thinking into what he must have intended should be his major works.

Whether or not his early choice of the Symbolist manner was due to prevailing fashion and preferred reading, it is clear that he found the tenets of Symbolism in tune with his taste for esthetic withdrawal, and that the resultant obscurity effectively disguised his personal references as he posed as the Hermit or Merlin. In "Le Larron" the association of ideas evoked by his imagery and erudite symbols in the mind of the reader also adds an enrichment in the total reference. The interesting thing is that with increasing frequency, as has been pointed out above where applicable, Apollinaire allows the associated ideas to actually direct his thought. It is this aspect of his use of Symbolism that becomes more and more important to him as he seeks his own style and method of self-

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[224] For example: l'anthandre and l'entendre and the puns of "L'Ermite". Note also, in the last three stanzas of "Le Larron", as if in a progressive falling-off: ladre, Tanagre; firmament, démons; ombre, oblongue.

expression. We observe, too, something resembling the workings of the unconscious mind in dreaming: his deep-seated problems are expressed dramatically in a plot which is scarcely more than a situation, but visualised with great intensity.

These scenes are quite unreal, yet presented realistically and colourfully, with a somewhat theatrical lighting that gives tone and significance to the action or situation. They are timeless backgrounds, not to be localised, as if to emphasise their universal and symbolic value. In "Merlin et la vieille Femme" the scene melts and changes as do the central figures. In "L'Ermite" it changes as the Hermit moves - although his movement is itself only symbolic of a change of mental position. In "Le Larron" the scene of the trial melts into that of a frieze. In all three cases the central figure himself changes under the impulsion of conflicting inner motives, most of which are exteriorised as concretisations or personifications. As we analyse these changes, which are seen to be coexistent facets of the one personality, we notice that the scenery changes in harmony with them, so that each scene is chiefly a projection of the mood or attitude of the central persona. The Hermit moves from the desert of his sterile meditation to the lush orchard of sensual enjoyment, but closes his eyes on the latter; Merlin fades from his wilderness to flowery bowers, and back to the desert; the Larron is seen first against the bright golden Mediterranean garden scenery, then the nocturnal undertones of the Dionysian frieze, before emerging into the light again.

In all three poems the scene opens in that especially colourful glow of the setting sun, whether happily golden or balefully red, plunges into twilight and night, eventually to emerge into cold morning light as if the poet has had a dream or a dream-like experience. In all three the central figure starts out apparently confident but inwardly torn with doubts and warring emotions, which soon become manifest and are allowed to struggle openly until a new or chastened attitude is reached. In each case the central figure is torn out of his original context, tormented with questions, and propelled forward into a future weighted with a destiny already forged in his past. In establishing the biography of Apollinaire's formative years, we have attempted to indicate the apparent strokes of fate that would impress him with an intuition of destiny, a force he becomes increasingly preoccupied with. Already it is felt as an ineluctability in the progress of his interior life, as if the answers to his problems already exist and must reveal themselves if he can but penetrate the mystery by accurately observing and interpreting events. At the same time the poet shows a growing belief that the key to this elucidation is contained in the writing of poetry. Thus to a certain extent we may see that these works are not merely reflections of his inner life expressed in the imagery of his exterior life, but are themselves an essential part of the poet's life during which he renews himself for the struggle of existence. It is this dynamic quality that distinguishes Apollinaire's work from that of most Symbolist

poets, and points to an evolving concept of the nature and function of poetry.

Not surprisingly, therefore, his style varies as a function of the events of his life. For as long as his life, especially his love-life, runs fairly smoothly, he writes openly on any trivial subject that presents itself as an excuse for poetic expression, experimenting with and practising his techniques. But as soon as he feels himself rejected and lonely, he turns inward again, reverting to his Symbolist style to exteriorise his problems. As he does so, he considers the nature of poetic expression itself, becoming increasingly conscious of his dependance on poetic creation. This had already been seen as a consolation in his minor Stavelot poems, and now also as a kind of compensation in that his poemsmight bring a measure of recognition and significance, even identity and respect. As this seemed increasingly feasible, especially when he read his work in public, the idea of immortality by repute grew. This awareness was then fed back into his themes, encouraging poems about poetry that chiefly analyse the function and requirements of creative writing. We have dealt at length with the postulated requirements: whether by ascetic continence, or memory, or philandering, some accommodation with his instincts must be arrived at, whereas the more obvious requirements of his physical existence, money, food and shelter, seem scarcely to have gained his interest. As to function, he only toys with the Ronsardian theme of immortality being conferred on the be-

loved object of a love-poem; such expressions of outward emotion were evidently not considered so important as his secret emotions and his own immortality. Faintly, too, there emerges the concept that poetry is a kind of oracle, a source of inspiration [a more dynamic concept than the passive one of consolation] teaching him not merely how to put up with life's problems, but how to solve them. There is, then, a gradual exploratory movement from meditating on his problems in his spiritual desert and expressing them in obscure poems, as if seeking the prophylaxis of a psychiatrist's couch, towards discovering the "gem" of a new philosophic wisdom that will enable him to see life more truly and live more successfully. This movement is paralelled by a development away from Symbolism used to mystify and enrich towards a less controlled association of images that will inspire new ideas. In other words, he starts with a problem, and the idea is shaped progressively by the writing, so that he ends with a new concept. It is on this basis that we can distinguish his immaturity from his maturity in the development of his concept of poetry.

Technique, theme, and the events of his private life, all are inextricably interwoven. For this reason we must consider the events of 1900 to 1901 which divert his attention once more to the external world, which is to say away from problem-solving and the analysis of the mechanics of that function in his poetry, and consequently deflect his technique from Symbolism to a manner more appropriate to a description of the world around him.

Chapter 4.

Rhine Overture

With the departure of the Molina family to Cabourg, young Guillaume renewed his acquaintance with his old friend René Nicosia. He continued to "vivoter", turning his hand to anything that would bring in a meagre income, but throughout his vicissitudes he never lost sight of his determination to earn his living by his pen. He even accepted a commission to write an erotic book for a shady publisher. "Mirely, ou le petit trou pas trop cher" was his first experience of the profitability of pornography. Perhaps it also acted as a safety-valve for this streak in his nature. But he also tried to write in a higher vein, for he attempted a novel, "La Gloire de l'Olive", and submitted "L'Hérésiarque" to a publisher. It is of interest to note, too, that when writing publicity material for an election campaign at this time, he used a new name, "Guillaume Apollinaire", as he wrote in a letter to his friend James Onimus [225]. The Nicosias made him welcome in their home, and Madame Nicosia, who gave pianoforte lessons to Gabrielle de Milhau and who had become a friend of her pupil's mother, the Viscountess de Milhau, recommended Guillaume

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[225] Letter to James Onimus, op.cit.

to them [226]. At a subsequent interview, Apollinaire briefly met an attractive English governess who had already been in the employ of the Viscountess for a year; whether on account of this meeting, as he gallantly told her later, or because he needed regular employment and leaped at the chance of earning his money more congenially, the young man accepted a post as tutor in French. Shortly afterwards, the Viscountess announced that she was taking a tour by car through Germany, where she had estates, and that the new tutor could continue in her service with higher pay. The motor car was a novel form of transport, and Apollinaire could not resist the opportunity to see more of the world. With her tutor, Kostrowitzky as she knew him, as escort, the Viscountess de Milhau set off on 22 August 1901 for Cologne in

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[226] Refer Adéma, op.cit., p.46, since Apollinaire says in the letter to Onimus op.cit., that he met the Viscountess "grâce à Lagoanère". Details may have become blurred in his memory by the time he wrote this oft-quoted letter. The events here chronicled are recounted by M. Davies op. cit., Chapter IV; and with more accuracy by F. Steegmuller [op.cit., Chapter 3] and M. Adéma [op.cit., p.46 et seq.] from which last source biographical details continue to be taken except where the writer's research in Germany indicates inaccuracies. Names and titles are given with some variation by these authors, but the following facts are verifiable at Bennerscheid where the people concerned are best remembered: The white-haired Frau Hölterhoff was the widow of a German industrialist of Cologne; her daughter Elinor married the French Vicomte de Milhau, who divided his time between his residences in Normandy and Paris. The Viscountess was thus German by birth but "wurde französische Staatsangehörige" as explained by the present owner of Neuglück. This is the reverse of the information given by Dr. Davies [op.cit.p.71]. Elinor thus became a wealthy widow when her husband committed suicide in Normandy [Château de Barrières-sur-Mer, Calvados], and was known as "die Grafin" in her homeland, to the gratification of her snobbish mother, Frau Hölterhoff. The subsequent tragic history of Elinor and Fräulein Gabriele is correctly related in documents at Neuglück.

her de Dion Bouton, while the governess, Miss Annie Playden, accompanied Gabrielle and the Countess's mother, Frau Hölterhoff, by train. They all eventually met up at the family villa in Honnef.

The exact location of the villa will probably never be known, which is regrettable since the origin of certain images in Apollinaire's poems would, by eliminating other sources, have helped to date and localise a number of his works. A search at the Stadtbauamt revealed that the required records were destroyed in a World War II air-raid. The University of Bonn holds records of the Hölterhoff possessions [227], a perusal of which, together with local opinion and a survey of sites once owned by the family, supports the view that the villa has long ceased to exist. From textual study we know only that it had a weathercock, a garden with cypresses, and was near the Rhine and a cemetery containing the grave of a suicide.

However, Apollinaire's experience of Germany was by no means limited to the rather special atmosphere of the fashionable little holiday resort of Honnef. From there the Viscountess toured the region, going as far as Düsseldorf and Cologne, in order to renew acquaintances and visit her properties, and

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[227] Herr Jonen, who administers the Hölterhofstiftung for the University, kindly assisted in the sifting of documents going back over a century but chiefly relating to the branch of the family represented by Matthias, Otto and Elly Hölterhof. A descendant of theirs, Frau Olga Diesterweg [532 Bad Godesburg, Ubierstrasse 80] suggested a site in the Frankenweg. M. Adéma referred the writer to M. André Billy who, however, has only added his opinion that the villa no longer exists.

Apollinaire went everywhere with her, observing and noting. Frau Hölterhoff owned a curious villa in the little hamlet of Bennerscheid, near Oberpleis, on the opposite side of the Rhine from Bonn. This was Neuglück, so named because it had been rebuilt on the site of Alt Glück, a small villa dating from 1850, bought by the Hölterhoffs in 1881. Over a period of 50 years it had been remodelled and added to by a certain Zimmermann and his three sons, according to the whims and vagaries of the Viscountess who is still remembered in the village as the eccentric "Gräfin mit der Fischhaut" [228]. The result of her eccentricities was a gnomish conglomeration of disparate rooms of eclectic styles, outwardly a mass of little roofs and windows that defies description. It was from this extraordinary place that Apollinaire wrote to his mother and brother Albert: "J'ai été pendant une semaine en voyage. Nous sommes restés en panne un soir à Rhöndorf et nous avons voyagé ensuite en chemin de fer pendant sept jours... Nous resterons à Honnef assez longtemps pour meubler la villa." [229]. Why they were

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[228] On account of her eczema. References to the Countess and Neuglück are available from Werner Heinen of Oberpl is [refer Die Insel, Geschichte einer Kindheit [Bonn]], Professor Warnier of Marseilles, and the son of the Oberpleis chemist of that time whose souvenirs may be consulted at what is now the "Historisches Waldschlosschen Neuglück, Café-Restaurant", prop. Heinrich Pinnen, Bennerscheid bei Oberpleis. Herr Pinnen explains the name Neuglück as coming "vom Gruss des Bergmannes Glück auf."

[22] Letter quoted by E.M. Wolf [whom Apollinaire visited at Bonn University, and who subsequently became Professor of French there] in his "Apollinaire und das Rheinland" [Dortmund, Husen, 1937] p.596. This was the first university thesis on Apollinaire, the second being that of the present writer [op.cit.], a reminder that the poet was for many years better known outside France than in his adopted country.

stranded only a couple of kilometers outside Honnef, and had to furnish the Honnef villa unless it was barely completed, is a mystery. It is clear, however, that the poet was constantly on the move in the area.

While Apollinaire was able to explore the Rhineland, he had much to occupy his intellectual curiosity. On his visits to Cologne he made the acquaintance of a schoolteacher, visited his home, and learned as much as he could about the locality and the German people. From this period dates his successful ventures into the field of journalism, which revealed a mature ability to understand and convey the Zeitgeist. His rubrique in La Grande France entitled "Questions franco-allemandes" was signed "Guillaume Apollinaire".

Happy, extrovert, interested in his excitingly new and stimulating surroundings, Apollinaire wrote clear, informative prose, or simple descriptive poems which took on the colour of German romanticism under the influence of the poet's readings. Even today one cannot visit La Crau or Mont Sainte-Victoire in the French Midi without seeing them through the eyes of Van Gogh or Cézanne. The "romantic Rhineland" could not make its first impact other than in an echo of Heine. Such a poem is "Nuit rhénane", which opens the group of poems "Rhénanes" included in Alcools [230]. It may be noticed that

[230] The "Rhénanes" of Le Guetteur mélancolique are reproduced OP pp.528 to 539, those from Alcools OP pp. 111 to 125, and other Rhine poems are included in Alcools separately. "Nuit rhénane" is given in OP on p.111.

during and as a result of this stress-free period of new-found happiness, Apollinaire produced a proportionally large number of limpid lyrics which show a marked improvement on the products of that parallel period of the previous autumn in Stavelot. Moreover, as first impressions wore off, and the "romantic view" gave way to more accurate and personal observation, his poems reveal an increasing degree of originality and confidence. The lively characteristics of his Ardennes prose now appear in his Rhenish poetry, affecting not only subject matter but also his style.

This development is observable if one examines the Rhine poems collected chiefly in the "Rhénanes" of Alcools and the "Rhénanes" of Le Guetteur mélancolique. At first the poet must have felt a tendency to continue in the same vein as that of his previous poems, for he tells Anna:

> Vous m'auriez écouté vous parler de Pythagoras

and:

> J'aurais écrit des vers pleins de mythologie
> Sur vos seins... [231]

In "Plongeon" [232] his circumstances evoke a memory of that other river in autumn, the Amblève, for as he enjoys the vigour of youth in a refreshing swim he thinks of "les perles du fleuve". As he watches the Rhine steamers go by we hear, perhaps, a literary echo of Mallarmé's "adieu suprême" in the

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[231] "Dans le jardin d'Anna", OP p.347, written in Autumn as shown in line 12, dated 1901 in OP p.1116. "Anna" is presumably a disguise for Annie, in that the third line would scarcely have been addressed to a German girl.

[232] "Plongeon" OP p.535.

line: "Et des vapeurs pleins de mouchoirs descendent le Rhin". But that is all. In "Crépuscule" [233] he sees only the romantic Rhine in front of his eyes as he watches it slide past from one of the steamers:

> La nuit arrive tout à coup
> Comme l'amour dans ces ruines
> Du Rhin là-bas sortent le cou
> Des nibelungs et des ondines

Another harking back to old modes of thought and expression is to be seen in "Elégie", which, dated Honnef 1901, admits that "La maison près du Rhin était si romanesque" but also has imagery lifted from "L'Ermite", such as the nailed-up owl, and the setting sun that paints the orchard scene crimson:

> Et notre amour saignait comme les groseilliers
> ... ...
> Et notre amour ainsi se mêlait à la mort

The scenery was romantic, a sympathetic backdrop for a romantic attachment still imagined as being inimical to the life of ascetic dedication required of a poet.

Of course, he could play at being romantically attached, if only to provide appropriate material for little poems suitable to the occasion. Certainly he made gallant gestures towards the pretty young English governess, and there is even a backward glance to Linda. For he did not lose touch with his acquaintances in Paris: one such was Jean Sève, whose good offices obtained for him the publication by Marius and

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[233] "Crépuscule" OP p.533, dated Honnef 1901 in Le Voile de Pourpre of May 1909 along with "Elégie" also dated Honnef 1901.

Ary Leblond in La Grande France, September 1901, of his first poems to appear in print [234]. The first, "Ville et Coeur", reflects the new extroversion "de mon coeur surpris de vie, énormément"; though the second, "Epousailles", harks back in that it is dedicated "à une qui est au bord de l'Océan", that is to say Linda. Similarly, "Rhénane d'Automne" shows traces still of his habit of echoing other poems in references to the ululation of owls, and the image of autumn leaves as "mains coupées".

Inevitably in such a linguistically-gifted and seasoned traveller as Apollinaire, his attention turns to the people of Germany and their language. In "Rolandseck" [235] he speaks of dreaming of "les princesses légendaires" while waiting for the ferry slowly pulling across the Rhine on its chain, but he is also analytically aware of "trois dames au parler hanovrien" whose action in plucking petals from a rose and dropping them into the river, far from occasioning a symbolic reference to "die Vergänglichkeit aller irdischen Dinge" is simply noted, as in the keenly observed anecdotal style of his reporting. His reference to the Rhine "Qui semble une veine de Ton Corps si noble" suggests a man at peace with himself and his Maker. His detection of "le parler hanovrien" reminds us of the progress he was making in the German language

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[234] "Ville et Coeur" OP p.335, addressed in the early autumn of 1901 to Linda at Cabourg; and "Epousailles" OP p.336.

[235] "Rolandseck", OP p.351.

even though at first he may have ...

> ... parlé d'amour de façon imprécise
> Presque toujours en français

as he says in "Rolandseck". His interest was not limited to this time-honoured way of getting to know the natives and their language, however, as may be seen in "La Synagogue" [236].

"La Synagogue", dated September 1901 at Unkel [a few kilometers south of Honnef] on its first publication in Le Festin d'Esope, is perhaps one of the most original poems of Apollinaire's early period. The subject is of a sort until this point found only in his prose, a piece of witty observation concerning a couple of Jews quarrelling with each other on their way to the Synagogue ...

> Parce que pendant le sabbat on ne doit pas fumer
> Tandis que les chrétiens passent avec des cigares allumés

But soon they will be united as they kiss the thora and chant the holy words that give them their common identity.

This poem is of interest, from the point of view of the poet's development, both as to subject matter and as to form. First, it represents a continuation of a trend only glimpsed heretofore, as in such minor works as "Au Prolétariat" [237], for here Apollinaire is interested in other people's

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[236] "La Synagogue", OP p.113, first published in Le Festin d'Esope of January 1904. Refer L.C. Breunig's study of this poem in Le Flâneur des deux Rives, no. 4.

[237] Apollinaire's interest more specifically in sociology and politics was first brought to critical attention by J.R. Lawler in his "Apollinaire inédit: le séjour à Stavelot", Mercure de France, 1 Feb. 1955, and has never been adequately followed up [but vide the present writer's chapter on Apollinaire's politics in his thesis op.cit. pp. 204-219.]

beliefs and way of life. This little study of a couple of devout Jews is both discerning and sympathetic, showing their individuality and personalities and, in juxtaposition, their solidarity and the harmonising effect of their corporate lives within the framework of their religion. Incidentally it shows the greater maturity the poet is capable of when his emotions are in balance. Here, then, is an inkling of his later beliefs in a unanimistic brotherhood of mankind transcending race and religion. Secondly, the form reveals a progressive liberation from the traditional classical versification of the major poems, and even from the regular versification of his lesser lyrical poems. We note that the relatively regular rhythm of the opening stanza is broken in the succeeding verses as the calm of the Sabbath by the Rhine which flows placidly at Unkel is broken by private dispute, only to become more regular again in stanza 4 as the individuals gradually approach harmony:

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

More important are the use of snatches of conversation [and the obscenity this time is honestly functional as descriptive reportage] and the inclusion of a line in Hebrew. Here are the small beginnings, shortly to be developed in "Les Femmes", of what in their ultimate form will be termed "poèmes-conversation."

The introducation of this type of content as material now considered suitable for poetry is explicable by two factors: one, the success of his ventures into journalism and reporting which further encouraged his interest in and observation of his fellows; and the other, the freeing of his interior life, for this interval, from obsessions with poverty, social insignificance, and the need for feminine solace. The overt interest of his prose, related to his exterior life, now flowed into the gap left in his poetic preoccupation.

Was it really "fate", as Apollinaire imagined [perhaps from an adolescent tendency to shift responsibility] that pushed him into situations where poetry was wrung from him under agonising interior strains? Or was it not the nature of his personality and natural proclivities in his relations with women, conditioned by his reaction to the circumstances of his birth? The role of fate was a question he pondered in the latter half of his stay on the Rhine - again, admittedly, due to circumstances in part beyond his control. For at the end of December 1901 the Countess made a decision that changed his environment and conditions completely, when she decided they must move to Neuglück to winter there.

At first Apollinaire fed on recent sights and travel experiences gained as a tourist, continuing to write mostly in prose and chiefly about the places he had seen and people he had talked with. Naturally, he now also turned his attention to the local scene: a collection of less than a dozen stone

cottages and the cultivated fields surrounding them. As at Stavelot, he indulged his capacity for walking. According to Frau Schmitz [238], the last surviving inhabitant of Bennerscheid to have known "the young Kostrowitzky" personally, he befriended a schoolmaster of the neighbourhood and on one occasion accompanied him to assist in looking after a party of schoolchildren on an excursion to the Drachenfels. Frau Schmitz, who was one of those children, remembers him as a strapping young man with a jovial smile, always ready to pick up a straggler and carry him on his broad shoulders. Perhaps this memory was strengthened by the fact that he gave her his last piece of chocolate to sustain her on the return journey. He was genuinely fond of children, she says, and it was such incidents that gave him access to her home, where he spent his evenings enquiring about folklore and the countryside, and learning the local dialect.

For Guillaume was, as ever, intensely and personally interested in people of all ages and conditions, with no trace of snobbish or intellectual barriers in his attitude. One

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[238] The writer is indebted to Frau Schmitz for her recollections, and to her neighbours, Herr Otto Dahs and Herr Westhofen, on whose report of the accounts given by relatives now deceased the background of Apollinaire's stay in Bennerscheid is based herein. Accounts by critics quoted earlier vary, and do not always tally with on-the-spot investigations by a speaker of German.

relative and neighbour of the Schmitz family proved to be a kindred spirit. This was Johannes Dahs [239], the wealthiest farmer of the district. His son, Otto, whom a neighbour, Herr Westhofen, described as "very like his father", still lives in the same farmhouse. Otto Dahs is a very lively wit, well informed, widely travelled, and with a forceful personality. A hard drinker like his father, he expanded of an evening from the taciturn Bauer type he at first appeared, to reveal himself a talented story-teller full of shrewd comment and wisdom. It is easy to see how such a man could be written off as a mere peasant [240]; whereas in Johannes Dahs Apollinaire knew the real man as a stimulating companion - far more his intellectual peer than any of the narrow souls cooped up in the Haus Neuglück. To the genial influence of Johannes Dahs might be ascribed the raciness and authenticity of "Schinderhannes" [241], which lacks, however, the good humour and tolerant sympathy of the Unkel poem. The robber and his uncouth band are depicted for the sake

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[239] Not Dachs, as given by M. Davies, op.cit. p.75. He died in 1939, aged 67, but his widow still survived in 1966.

[240] "A lumpish lot, even today" writes Francis Steegmuller, op.cit. p.64, of the peasants the poet is judged to have associated with.

[241] "Schinderhannes" OP 117, first published in Le Festin d'Esope No. 7 of June 1904, dedicated to Marius-Ary Leblond [actually Marius and Ary Leblond, the brothers who gave him one of his earliest entries into print in La Grande France, Sept. 1, 1901], of which Décaudin says in his Notes [OP p.1063]: "Le caractère pittoresque de cette pièce laisserait penser qu'elle date de la première partie de son séjour." The actual story of Schinderhannes was heard by Apollinaire in Honnef.

of their affinities with the poet's less mature side:

On mange alors toute la bande
Pète et rit pendant le dîner
Puis s'attendrit à l'allemande
Avant d'aller assassiner

However, in "Les Femmes" [242] Apollinaire takes another great stride forward in both content and technique. It was first published in Le Festin d'Ésope No. 3 of January 1904, where it is dated "Honnef, décembre 1901". Its composition at Honnef is substantiated by the image of the cypress and the references to viticulture, the vines around the Schmitz house being negligible. There being no reference in his correspondence to his frequenting peasants' houses in Honnef, where he had plenty to do and see, suggests that the interior scene, the names and the ambiance of the poem were taken from Bennerscheid. The basic conception of this shut-in atmosphere of a village cottage isolated by the snow also suggests Bennerscheid, as do the reference to the schoolmaster and the image of the snow-laden fir, itself the subject of a poem "Les Sapins" dated December at Neuglück. The kitchen details correspond well enough to that of the Schmitz cottage, and Frau Schmitz thought she could identify some of the names used in the conversation, but these are fairly common features. At all events, this was a prolific month for the poet, during which he moved between the two places several times, and there can be little doubt that he retouched his work at Neuglück, with not much else to do as the winter closed in.

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[242] "Les Femmes", OP p.123.

To one reared on the Mediterranean, used to open doors and windows and an outdoor life, even with the experience of inclement weather in Paris where he nevertheless walked a great deal, the experience of being shut up indoors by the deep snow and bitter cold was a very new one. Indeed, it was to affect Apollinaire more deeply than he could foresee. At first it was the novelty and the romantic aura that impressed him. And in fact he had a remarkable proclivity for protecting himself against the vicissitudes of his physical environment by concentrating on their picturesque aspect, as demonstrated much later, during the Great War, in the bivouacs at the front. At this point, then, his reaction, and the atmosphere he portrays, are calm: shut in, but in a cosy, secure shelter against the hostile elements.

Although what we have called his early major poems have taken up a great deal of attention, both on account of their obscurity and their capital importance in revealing the poet's development, this poem, "Les Femmes", is in its own right a work of art of greater validity than anything he had yet produced. As such it merits close consideration [243]. It seems logical to examine its form first since it is the physical element, particularly the rhythm, that supplies the first effect the reader feels, preconditioning the mood in which he approaches

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[243] This poem is scarcely given mention by the critics elsewhere quoted herein, except for Madame Durry op.cit. Tome III, pp. 102 to 108 who accords it the same importance as that given here, though with different emphasis.

the sense of the words. In this instance it is married to the subject matter in a most skilfully dynamic way.

The consistency of the rhyme pattern a b b a which gives unity to the quatrains rather than the couplets, as the term rime embrassée suggests, is strengthened by making the lines at first run on from one stanza into the next to knit the whole opening conversation. Similarly, the rhythm of the poem opens, after the arresting first line, in the regularity of alexandrines with the caesura placed quietly in the middle. But this even tenor is broken, although the lines remain twelve-footed, by a pattern of 5-7 responded to by 7-5, creating a feeling of unease as the conversation introduces thoughts of suffering and death. This pattern is further dislocated [the occasional, isolated 6-6 only serving to emphasise this] by the breath-catching 8-4 lines, especially in lines 15, 22, and 30, where Dreams and Care, love and suffering, and the boneyard of death are mentioned respectively Harmony is then gradually restored as the even 6-6 pattern occurs at first as the end line of a stanza,then in the last pair of lines in stanzas 6, 7 and 8, then firmly and finally established in an unbroken succession of six lines as the women cross themselves in acceptance of life's troubles.

The construction of the poem similarly illustrates the theme. Opposition of direct speech and description, underlined by use of italics for the former, parallels the opposition between the natural world of trees, wind, owl and dog

outside and the nightingale and the human world inside - but both tend to interpenetrate as well as show connections through their parallelism. For in the first place, one of the speakers seems to be gifted with the poet's perception normally reserved for the descriptive parts in roman script, and another fills the role of simple description: "Le chat s'étire après s'être chauffé"; while on the other hand the narrator adopts the peasant mentality with his reference to Herr Traum and Frau Sorge [perhaps influenced by Heine's poem of similar title]. Again, as regards imagery, the nightingale inside really belongs outdoors, and the dog outside belongs indoors. In the second place, we notice that the cold of the outside world attempts to invade the interior, requiring the stoking up of the fire. In the same way, the fear that strikes the nightingale dumb, when its predator the death-dealing owl hoots so as to kill the beauty of its song, is a basic fear of death which is fought off by the women through their religion. They know that the cold that produces a cough in the young girl may carry off the grandmother just as it is hastening the end of the sexton. At the same time, death itself will be offset by the young girl's love and the marriage of Gertrude and Martin [neighbours, like the Schmitz and Dahs families] which will ensure new lives. Therefore the young will occupy themselves with the business of everyday life, and they see that the cold winter means a good wine harvest for the living. Of course, there is this further parallelism between their physical and

spiritual lives, for the metamorphoses of vine-roots into dead bones,and blankets of snow into shrouds, remind us that apart from the wine harvesting, there is also the Grim Reaper waiting for Winter's toll of human lives. Just as their stoking of the fire to keep the cold out parallels love and marriage to offset death, so their eating and drinking is paralleled by the prayers of the old woman. These prayers are the outcome of a life impregnated with religious devotion, such as may also be observed in the younger members of the family who embroider "une étole pour la fête du curé" or see religious associations in the cypress tree ["pape en voyage"] and the solemn canticle of the wind ["le vent dit des phrases en latin"]. Religion is their spiritual sustenance, and it is fitting that the first line of the poem has the women working and the last line has them showing their devotion as darkness, in the metaphorical sense also, gathers in.

Here, then, we have a compassionate, penetrating portrait of a Catholic peasant family, offering a positive message, done in greater depth than the sketch of "La Synagogue" which simply tells of the unifying effect of religion, and rising to the universal level. For it treats of the basic realities of the cycle of life, or the Totentanz suggested by "Le vent fait danser en rond tous les sapins". Here are young love mixed with chagrin, beauty mixed with cruelty and

suffering [244], marriage, work with a background of hardship and poverty, old age with its fear of death, and death itself, and the answers to these: work dedicated to God, thoughts dedicated in prayer, and the woman's role of perpetuating the species in the long term, getting on with the workaday tasks in the practical world while preserving spiritual values. In this short poem Apollinaire says more about "l'éternité des femmes" than in all his previous bitter, exaggerated diatribes against woman and his own rejected role in the Law of Life. Man is right out of the picture - he is out rabbitting for food - and this close world secured against the misfortunes of life revolves entirely around the women. The first and last words of the poem are theirs, "puisque tout est à nous" as they said in "Le Larron". The picture is at last a mature one. The poet even states for the first time the great theme of his last years: that beauty harmonises, and actually consists of, suffering and fear of death borne with goodness, as he expresses it in "Les Collines":

> C'est de souffrance et de bonté
> Que sera faite la beauté

These women accept life with all its bittersweet juxtapositions. The poet understands this, and there is hope that he, too, may come to share their attitude.

As in construction, so in style, the poet has built

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[244] Nightingales were blinded by their captors in the belief that this made them sing - a symbol telling us that suffering produces beauty in art.

up his atmosphere : through the proper names, however maltreated metrically, German words and direct translations such as "Dieu garde" ["Gott behütet", a common Rhenish expression] and "mon petit coeur" ["mein Herzchen"].

But the factor which above all else conveys the peculiarly intense low-key atmosphere of this poem is the use of coincidence in timing linking the events detailed above. This is a device almost certainly known to Apollinaire in Edgar Allan Poe and best exemplified in that writer's "Fall of the House of Usher". Simple events take on a strange significance when symbolic "correspondences" are suggested by the mere juxtaposition of actually unrelated but coincidentally simultaneous happenings. This procedure is typical of peasant superstition as discussed one wintry night at Bennerscheid during 1966. According to a family tale, one of a group gathered around the domestic hearth noticed a black coal silhouetted against the red glow of flames, and remarked how like a Death's Head it looked. The women agreed, and their eldest brother crossly poked the fire to obliterate the image. At that moment there was a crash as a picture fell to the floor from its place on the wall. It was a photograph of Grandmother. Here there was a well-rehearsed dramatic pause, and the storyteller added: "She died that winter." Did Apollinaire hear such stories when he was warming himself at a cottage fire? In any case, he had already been perhaps half-consciously influenced by time-event correspondences in the composition of "L'Ermite",

and was clearly so in the early stanzas of "La Chanson du Mal-aimé". A further development, in "Lundi Rue Christine" is over-conscious and demonstrates how far "Les Femmes" is from the rather contrived "poème-conversation" of the later period, but the same principle was eventually to be used as a masterly technique in "Les Collines", as will be shown. How many germs of new ideas we may discern in this poem! There are even at least the rudiments of cubist collage. It may be significant that this sudden leap of his awakening genius happened while he was free of his usual tensions, which would throw a new light on the accepted idea that they gave rise to his poetry rather than giving it its characteristic cast.

Finally, his personal imagery is the same as in earlier works, but far more dense and functional: especially the bird-symbolism of the songbird opposed by the predatory bird of wisdom, the ululating owl; but also the tree symbolism of cypress [associated with churchyards, reminding him of church dignitaries] and the vine [with harvest connotations as well as the biblical "Ye are the fruit of the vine" as used again in "Vendémiaire"] and, of course, the fir whose meaning is now renewed and enriched in the land of the Tannenbaum.

It is the striking image of the firtree that supplies the subject of another outstanding poem, "Les Sapins", dated 1901 at Neuglück [245] and therefore composed near Christmas of that year, when the winter had really tightened its grip. While it is still almost purely descriptive, there is the suggestion that the poet is now cooped up in his little room at the end of the passage, unable to go out at all, and therefore limited to describing what he can glimpse from his meagre gable window: five of the Bennerscheid cottages and a belt of firs [246]. As we read the poem we see the first signs of a certain deprivation of human society intensified by the chilly atmosphere - mental as well as physical, since he was treated as a servant - of Neuglück. This is manifested in increased introspection as he stares out at the trees.

In the first stanza the firs are seen as astrologers in conical hats and long robes, for their tops are pointed and their ragged foliage sweeps the ground, looking black against the snow. As if regretting the previous summer's lively bustle on the Rhine, the poet imagines them waving to their fallen brothers who are now masts on the Rhine ships - a thought to be conjured up again later in "Lul de Faltenin".

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[245] "Les Sapins" first appeared in Le Voile de Pourpre No. 2 of May 1909 with other poems of the Rhineland, dated "Neu-Glück 1901". In this case we have two especially valuable MSS at the Fonds Doucet in that one shows the composition of the poem from its first tentative conception through a vast number of corrections, and the other the "fair copy".

[246] The room vanished during still further alterations, the location now being marked by a photograph of the poet. The firs have long been replaced by pines and beech.

In the next two stanzas, again as if seeking cheerful associations, he remembers the festive season, no doubt celebrated austerely by the parsimonious Viscountess as far as the tutors were concerned. These firs had been taught the magic arts by their predecessors, the older firs standing there since ancient times; and here is the first hint of a return to self-identification with his subject-matter, for he says that these trees are poets, and we glimpse the old poet-magician theme as if it is a half-forgotten attitude stirring. But they know themselves to be destined for illumination as Christmas Trees, a spiritualised role their ancient magic symbolism has been converted to [especially here where the Gräfin had introduced this custom to Bennerscheid, according to local informants].

Thus when the autumn wind [stanza 4] soughs in the firs, they sing like musicians of many past Christmases, but also like magicians of even more ancient beliefs that preceded Christianity [247]. In winter, the next stanza tells us, they turn into rows of white cherubim [whose office is to sing praises to the God of the Old Testament] whereas in summer they are Rabbis [continuing the thought of the Jewish religion]or old ladies [perhaps associated with the contemporary Christian church, but certainly with the devotion of "Les Femmes"]. He concludes by likening them to itinerant medieval physicians bearing healing balm, but forecasts their uprooting with

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[247] An illumination of the symbolic value of the fir in "L'Ermite" and "Les Femmes".

groans "sous l'ouragan" "quand la montagne accouche", in the image later used similarly to represent the destruction of the past and liberation of the poet in "Les Collines":

Ainsi l'ouragan
Déracine l'arbre qui crie [248]

These threads, the old trees as magicians and poets, the idea of predestination, magic giving way to Christianity as the Jewish religion had given way, and as perhaps in turn the Christian religion will give way under stress as the storm breaks over a dimly-envisaged "accouchement", all hint at a belief that he will produce something great, and will shine, but that the process will be painful and that his religious comfort will be lost. At all events, these things were all shortly to come about, and the seeds were already sown. There is, perhaps significantly, a marginal line roughed out alongside the end of the poem in the brouillon manuscript: "Les arbres qui veulent se sauver pendant l'ouragan". In the poet's own messianic terms, there is a touch of Gethsemane here. Like the nightingale, he must suffer before being able to produce a true, pure song [such as "La Chanson du mal Aimé"], but in human terms he shies at the price to be paid in advance.

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[248] "Les Collines", OP p.171, stanza 3; and compare line 7 of "Le Vent nocturne", OP p.96.

This thought is repeated in even gloomier tones in "Le Vent nocturne" of the same date, accompanying "Les Sapins" in the same number of Le Voile de Pourpre [249]. In this poem it is the pinetrees that are groaning in torment, but this time the elves of the Rhine are calling the name Attis and making fun of it "parce qu'un de tes pins s'abat au vent gothique":

> Les villages étaints méditent maintenant
> Comme les vierges les vieillards et les poètes
> Et ne s'éveilleront au pas de nul venant
> Ni quand sur leurs pigeons fondront les gypaètes

Once more the emotional storm was flattening the poet, once more "les oiseaux de proie proclamaient leurs rapines / D'agneaux", and this image of the bird of prey employed in "Merlin et la vieille Femme" looms larger now, and more violently: it is the German Lämmergeier ["Lamb-vulture"], Gypaëtus barbatus [250], and its victim is a pigeon - but poets and virgins, old men and villages, all are enclosed in a winter torpor and nobody will awaken to footsteps... Attis, the Phrygian youth driven mad by Cybele, castrated himself and died. The objective lyrics of the Rhine are now infiltrated by subtle personal references, as usual hidden in erudite allusions to continence - this time

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[249] "Le Vent nocturne", OP p.96

[250] The Lämmergeier is the largest bird of prey in Europe. A photograph "'tiré' par un photographe de Cologne" as described by Adéma op.cit., p.58 shows that Apollinaire had now grown a moustache. The vulture Gypaëtus is named barbatus because of the feathers sprouting from beneath its beak. "Physiquement il se 'germanise', prend un aspect rude ... un visage de Junker, froid."

brutally self-inflicted and shown to be as fatal to the man as love is to the poet. Or rather, as love had been seen as being fatal to the poet. The possibility is now envisaged that this experience of love is necessary to the poet. The vicious circle of conflicting desires has closed now that Guillaume is cut off from the absorbing world of novelty that had fed his creative faculties as a poet. Thrown back on himself with no distracting stimuli, the asceticism that was to have saved the poet from being consumed by the "soleil de chair" is consuming the man, and with him, the poet, too.

How long he had nurtured such feelings towards the governess, Annie Playden, we cannot say for certain. As we have seen, Apollinaire gallantly gave Annie's attractiveness, glimpsed during his interview with the Viscountess, as one reason that persuaded him to accept the post. But Annie's English reserve and strict upbringing, backed by the Hölterhoffs' stiff insistence on the proprieties of bourgeois morality, not to mention the initial language barrier, are scarcely likely to have been overcome without his devoting more time and energy than were warranted when his surroundings were so absorbing. On the other hand, when this latter source of interest was cut off, and he was housebound by the snow, and because, furthermore, the Hölterhoffs, by treating them both as servants, made them eat separately from the family, so isolating them in the evenings, the two young people were thrown together as never before. In fact, Guillaume had never known such concentrated

and protracted propinquity with a member of the opposite sex.

Here we must once more pause to consider biographical details, though indeed for virtually the last time, since the poet's relations with Annie constitute the last factor of importance in his formative period. All his previous affairs with women were resumed in this one, and all his subsequent loves were epitomised in his love for Annie. The progress of this relationship hardened in a mould that was to precondition his future attempts to find security in a woman's love, a mould so rigid that Apollinaire firmly believed in predestination, in particular his own destiny to be ill-loved. "Ame tendre, coeur jaloux, il sera mal aimé, car il aimera mal, toujours craintif d'être dupé et trahi." [251] Yet this is at the same time all part of his concept of poetry which, too, was taking durable shape. For if the young man shrinks from the beckoning abyss that invites him to risk his freedom, peace of mind and dedication to poetry by surrendering his fate to the mercies of this blue-eyed, blonde siren Loreley, he also sees the whole experience as a necessary prerequisite for poetry of real depth and significance. Whereas he had adopted Maria and Linda as Muses "on principle", he now seemed to sense that he was approaching something well beyond his control that would wring him dry of emotion. Yet could he refuse the final challenge to risk himself as a man in order to become a true poet?

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[251] Adéma op.cit., p.58.

Would the tree be uprooted during the process of the poet's birth when the vulture seized the pigeon? Would fear be allowed to still the song of the nightingale after it had suffered its blinding agony?

Just what happened that winter, biographers cannot be certain of. Knowing the data of Apollinaire's character, and given the few clues expressed enigmatically in his poems or speciously in his letters to Onimus and Madeleine, one still needs to consider the other factor, namely the character of Annie. In this latter consideration, critical attention has in some cases been side-tracked by the discovery of a little old English gentlewoman whose existence tends to obfuscate the more important issue of Apollinaire's poetry.

For long after Apollinaire's death it was not known for certain that he did have a love affair during his sojourn on the Rhine. Many of his friends doubted the existence of the Annie he sang of, and refused to believe that he ever went to London to pursue her. It was some twenty years before E.M. Wolf of Bonn University, preparing a thesis on the local associations of the still little-known writer of "Rhénanes", visited Bennerscheid and found that the locals did remember an English governess for whose surname the researcher could obtain only a rough phonetic equivalent. Unfortunately, communications were then cut off by the war, at the end of which the present writer, armed only with the clue that Annie was the "Emigrant de

Landor road" [252] who went to the United States [falsely believed to be Galveston, Texas, as suggested by the misleading "Annie" [253], and being near London, went there to ascertain that there was a Landor Road. The Tate Library being situated close by, it seemed easy to turn up Kelly's Street Directory of Brixton for 1910, comparing it with the current one to see which families still lived in Landor Road, hoping that by knocking on their doors one might discover whether they knew of a relative or neighbour named Annie who had emigrated to the United States [254]. The name Playden meant nothing when by ill-luck there was nobody at home in number 75, and so these blunders came to nothing. Fortunately, however, a Belgian named Robert Goffin made a happy attempt to reconstitute the orthography of the surname from Wolf's clue, and, putting a toll call through to London, located the family without ever leaving his home. Having discovered Annie's address in the States, he corresponded with her and also asked an American colleague to interview the lady, who had married a Mr. Postings, been widowed after 25 years, and now lived with her younger sister, Mrs. Vockins. From LeRoy C. Breunig's interview, the letters Mrs. Postings had written to Goffin [they are now

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[252] "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" is the title of a poem from Alcools [OP p.105].

[253] "Annie" OP p.65. Apollinaire was not given her address.

[254] The poem "Annie" was first published in Les Soirées de Paris No. 8 of September 1912, with "Le Voyageur", and 1910 then seemed a probable date for the event. On page 174 of Kelly's Directory for 1909-1910 was the entry: "75: Playden, Henry", which disappeared in 1922, and currently entries were made only for shop owners.

preserved in the Stavelot Musée d'Apollinaire] and a subsequent interview in 1962 by Breunig and Steegmuller [255] useful facts about her stay in Honnef and Bennerscheid have been obtained. However, our American colleagues were faced with a delightful old lady it was difficult to associate with the vibrant young Annie who remains the true object of the search. Her version of her relations with "Kostro" depicted herself as a "silly young goose" who did not know he was a poet, only that he scribbled journalistic articles in the privacy of his room. She said he paid her courteous and gallant attentions from the first, but that he later became impetuous and importunate so that she rejected his advances. The suggestion is that she had never accepted any advances, and that once she realised the implications of the enquiry she was very regretful of having been "discovered".

"I really can't understand what all the things you tell me about have to do with me" she protested to Breunig and Steegmuller in 1962, reportedly blushing. "I was such an ignorant little goose at the time, so much younger, really, than twenty. I was so mean to Kostro ... Perhaps if I'd been good to him there wouldn't be the beautiful poems?" Even the interviewers, captivated as they obviously were in the presence of

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[255] See Francis Steegmuller, op.cit., p.345 et seq. Her address is: Mrs. A. Postings, c/o Vockins, 221 Bedford Road, Katonah, N.Y. Reference is made herein to the account of the first interview by L.C. Breunig [Barnard University], "Apollinaire et Annie Playden", Mercure de France of 1 April 1952, summarised by Steegmuller [op.cit., p.69] who also gives an account of the 1962 interview in an appendix, p.345.

the 83-year-old Mrs. Postings, were struck by this shrewdness on her part. Indeed, the poetry sprang precisely from the rejection of the poet - but what would the rejection have meant if nothing had preceded it? "I'm sorry if I was too mean, but what could I do? Kostro couldn't properly make love to me in words, since I knew so little French and his English was almost non-existent, and neither of us spoke German - the countess hired us because we couldn't: she wanted Gabrielle to learn English and French." This was, of course, true of the time when they were first engaged, but misleading in that Apollinaire spoke German well by the time they were at Bennerscheid. [256] Otto Dahs spoke to us of his father receiving postcards from the poet in German, subsequently, showing that Guillaume learned to write as well as speak the language, even mastering the Gothic script. Again, the earlier interview in 1951 shows that whatever his command of English was on appointment [though we recall his stay at Lyons and his introduction to the language and literature at that early date, together with his manifest gift for languages], he rapidly acquired the requisite ability. For when he called on her in London, he introduced himself to her younger sister in English "which he spoke very carefully

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[256] "Apollinaire very quickly learned German" as Steegmuller himself reports, op.cit., p.70. Dahs shrewdly refused to part with the poet's correspondence, which is kept in the family coffer. It is not without monetary value.

and correctly." [257] However, she continues: "And I wasn't one to allow him to do anything else. I'd been warned so before leaving home. My sister and I were the most rigidly brought-up girls in Clapham."

Viewed dispassionately, the interview protests her innocence unconvincingly, since the supportive facts are true only as they relate to an earlier and irrelevant date, and prove nothing. The lady is naturally concerned to preserve her reputation, even after an interval of over half a century. When first approached she was dumbfounded to find that she had been the muse of an important poet, and spoke unguardedly about that distant period. But having been given some of the poet's relevant works to read, in which she could presumably have understood allusions closed to us but which she professed to be unable to understand, and also some of the works of criticism that referred to the till then unknown Annie, she very wisely refuses to reply to any more questions, not even the most anodyne and of purely literary interest put to her by the present writer. A lady approaching 90 cannot be expected to take a dispassionate interest in literary research on a foreign poet, least of all when the reputation of her girlhood and family upbringing are at stake. Naturally and properly, no exegetist has unduly pressed the point in open publication, although Margaret Davies has been unable to stifle her

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[257] Mrs. Posting's own words reported by Breunig after his 1951 interview, quoted by Steegmuller himself on pp. 89 to 90 op. cit.

disbelief [258], and the exigencies of accurate research into poems of this period [259] ineluctably force exegetists to assume what seems obvious.

It does seem necessary, by way of preparation for an assessment of such works as "La Chanson du mal Aimé", to point out that the attempts of our American colleagues to completely whitewash the episode has on the one hand led to some quite inaccurate "data" being offered, accepted and repeated, and, on the other hand, more importantly, to unjustified literary assessments made to bolster the proposition that it was unrequited love that produced Apollinaire's first great work. As an example of the former, L.C. Breunig's report [260] that Annie organised a Sunday School for the Bennerscheid children led one to check back in the village. Miss Playden was brought up in the Church of England; the village and its surroundings were staunchly Catholic, the idea of Sunday School being com-

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[258] "It is a favourite sport among biographers to conjecture whether the two lovers actually slept together ... but everything seems to indicate that they did" [op.cit.,p.76] is Dr. Davies's introduction to the discussion and its relevance to poems such as "Signe". The establishment of this view is also necessary here to support, albeit in retrospect, the proposal of a subjective element in "Les Sapins", hitherto considered an objective poem, for example by Mme Durry [op.cit. Tome III, p.133].

[259] Especially such fascinating literary puzzles as "Les sept Epées" whose symbolism was first most brilliantly penetrated by J.R. Lawler, with this relationship as the key, in Le Flâneur des deux Rives of September 1954

[260] L.C. Breunig, op.cit.: "Annie herself organised a small Sunday School for the German children of the neighbourhood as soon as she reached Neuglück", repeated in 1963 by Steegmuller, op,cit.,p.69, and by M. Davies in 1964, op. cit., p.76.

pletely foreign to them, and such contact with another sect quite unacceptable. Moreover, the English governess left no memories of a charming, innocent young Sunday School teacher, the forced type-image apparently sought; she is remembered as being haughty and indifferent. It was the young Herr Kostro who was interested in the children, and when Fräulein Playden was dragged along by him, she was quite uninterested in the peasants and their children to whom she appeared sulky and essentially disdainful. This attitude is borne out by the tone of her reference to Apollinaire's association with Johannes Dahs: "he and Apollinaire often went to the tavern in the next village; Johannes played the flute - 'that's about all he did do'." [261] The elder Dahs was a hard worker, like his son, as his widow attests, but also musically gifted and with the same lusty taste for the enjoyment of life in leisure hours that Gebrielle's tutor displayed in his off-duty hours. Miss Playden primly preferred to keep herself to herself.

Such inaccuracies in the poet's background data tend to produce warped literary assessments. For example, Steegmuller professes to read in "La Chanson du mal Aimé" Apollinaire's "news that his own love has been unreciprocated" despite the claim of the title [262]. He then proceeds to confusedly identify the beloved as having "an inhuman glance and a scar

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[261] Steegmuller op.cit., p.70. Uckerath and Oberpleis were the neighbouring centres for their amusement.

[262] Steegmuller op.cit., p.117, as also the subsequent quotation.

on her neck" which obscures from him the wonderful use of parallel imagery, and so to the judgement that the poet was considering going to a brothel, and hence that regarding Annie "what he was seeking was less romance than release"[263] [despite the distance from the resources of Paris, and the proposals of marriage in London]. Inevitably the critic is constrained to give a denigrating assessment of the whole poem: "Little wonder that in attempting to elevate a calf affair into a universal image of disappointment in love itself, Apollinaire had to call on all the resources at his command, including all the ornamentations of Symbolism. The miracle is that the 'Chanson' attains as high a place as it does in the world's great love poems." It would have been, indeed, and this does injustice to the poet; his integrity, too, has to be respected. Let us prefer rather the contrasting judgement of Marcel Adéma [264]: "Son échec lui inspire cette Chanson, l'un des plus beaux poèmes qu'il écrira jamais. Les accents déchirants ... ont une sincérité émouvante."

Finally, from Apollinaire's own hand we have two references to his implication in the affair. The first, written just afterwards, but in the present tense, is contained in a letter dated July 1902 to his childhood friend James Onimus: "Je pars le 22 août 1901 depuis je vois toute l'Allemagne et

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[263] Steegmuller op.cit., p.122.

[264] Adéma op.cit., p.61.

couche avec la gouvernante, anglaise 21 ans, épatante des nichons et un cul[!]..." [265] The second, much later, and tendenciously addressed to his current fiancée, Madeleine Pagès, refers to her "ex-rival" of the "Chanson du mal Aimé" in a soothing disclaimer which nevertheless admits the essential aspects of physical and emotional involvement: "mon premier amour à vingt ans, une Anglaise rencontrée en Allemagne ... qui m'aima, puis fut déconcertée d'aimer un poète être fantasque; je l'aimai charnellement mais nos esprits étaient loin l'un de l'autre..." [266]. This has to be judged in the same light as his immediately preceding underplayed references to Marie, and his hypocritical dismissal of his relations with Louise de Coligny [still current when he wrote!] as "gentillesses sans conséquences". Even so he is constrained to admit the physical attraction, and if he had not loved Annie emotionally, why must he add "Je fus la voir deux fois à Londres, mais le mariage était impossible" and sum up with "j'en souffris beaucoup"?

The first statement may be overplayed, and the second underplayed. Nevertheless, we may reasonably conclude that, led by the circumstances of enforced propinquity and isolation,

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[265] Since the form and punctuation varies in the many quotations of these words, the version given here reproduces the original.

[266] Letter dated "30 juillet 1915" in which he writes "Je réponds avant tout à votre lettre de votre fête où le lendemain vous me buviez en lisant Alcools. [...] Je suis bien content qu'au travers de ces pages vous ayez beaucoup lu de ma vie. Je vous ai dit de ne pas être jalouse..." after which he speaks of Marie and Lou, then of Annie. The letter is reproduced in Tendre comme le Souvenir [Gallimard 1952], a collection of his letters to Madeleine Pagès edited by Adéma, p.66 et seq.

the Lämmergeier did assault the pigeon. It also appears that the young tutor became himself the victim of his lust, for there are indications in the letter to Onimus and in "La Chanson du mal Aimé" that intermingled with his emotional involvement there was an unhealthy appeal to his baser instincts in this relationship. Let us quote the mildest critic: "Already some of the Rhine poems had suggested that for Apollinaire the affair with Annie was a frustrating one, with Annie allowing certain exasperating liberties but puritanically guarding her jewel." [267] No wonder she strove to free herself from him when the spring sunshine released the pair from their claustrophobic, Sartrian hell.

In fact he was very willing to "make an honest woman of her", despite Steegmuller's already quoted suggestions that his intentions were "less romance than release". Unhappily, he pressed his suit too violently, as usual: according to Annie's letters to Goffin, he took her up to the top of the Drachenfels, begged her to marry him, and threatened to push her over the cliff and say it was an accident if she refused. She accepted - and once safely at the bottom again, rejected her promise made under duress. Knowing Apollinaire's contradictory desire for respectability and marriage, we need not doubt his sincerity, even though he claimed, in order to persuade her by less violent means, that he had expectations of a title and a fortune [a pathetic expression of what he so

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[267] Steegmuller, op.cit., p. 117 and p. 122.

keenly felt himself denied of in fact]. He could not believe that she rejected him on the grounds of his violence, since this only proved [to his way of thinking] how much he loved her; and we are reminded of his short story "L'Otmika", depicting rape as an acceptable method of courtship in the land of his forbears [268]. The other reason she must have advanced is the one later repeated when he followed her to London to ask her father for her hand in marriage. "Il est assez mal reçu chez les Playden qui n'approuvent pas du tout les relations de la jeune fille avec un catholique romain" writes Adéma [269]. Steegmuller's refusal to believe that Apollinaire was serious in his intentions to marry Annie we have already seen to be tendenciously connected with Mrs. Postings's present status; and his suggestion [270] that Guillaume's efforts to impress "the pietistic Playdens" were carelessly or deliberately bungled may reflect as much an American's unawareness of religious sectarian susceptibilities in England as a biographer's misunderstanding of the complexity of his subject's character. Meanwhile, the important factor is that Annie had been reared in an anti-Catholic atmosphere, and was suffering guilt and revulsion as her upbringing had taught her to expect.

It is therefore of some related significance, however overlooked until now, that his appreciation of the unifying and

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[268] "L'Otmika" OC p.153, possibly written at roughly this period.

[269] Adéma op.cit., p.61

[270] Steegmuller op.cit., pp. 90 to 91, and p. 94, para. 2.

calming effects of religion and the Catholic faith in particular, shown right up until that fateful winter that started with the composition of "Les Femmes", is shattered immediately after the affair with Annie and her rejection of him when she escaped from his overpowering presence in spring. The rest of the Rhine poems show not only a growing hate for all women, but a rejection of religion just as was forecast in "Les Sapins" and "Le Vent nocturne" as being concomitant with his uprooting in the storm of his emotions. Instead, a feeling of predestination - his destiny to suffer rejection - takes its place. No longer, as after Stavelot's "faux hiver", does he masochistically welcome this suffering, but now he knows he must learn to accept it, and worse still without the help of his religious faith which was much deeper than his superficial blasphemies.

We cannot fail to notice the repetition of the Stavelot cycle in his life and in his poetry. The first autumn impact of the northern scenery is welcomed with artificial evocations of shallow attachments and a romanticised view of the local scene, then a more objective recognition of his surroundings follows but gives way all too soon to a typical brooding attitude to sex, leading to introspection and the foreboding atmosphere of the sleeping house Neuglück where nobody would awaken to the sound of footsteps in the night. Renewal of contact with the outside world restored the poet's equilibrium, no doubt, and brought forth more poems celebrating

the still exciting Rhine. But through them echo once more the Stavelot themes of remorse [presumably for having seduced a hitherto innocent girl], guilt and shame.

The poem "Signe" [271], for example, reminds us of "Le Vent nocturne" by its reference to love, the wind of strife shaking the tree in torment, and the loss of religious faith, all seen as predestined by a melancholy Fate. "Je suis soumis au Chef du Signe de l'Automne" [italics supplied], he writes, "Tel un noyer gaulé dit au vent ses douleurs", while the doves of innocence [272] take flight and are gone for ever.

First, however, there occurs a hiatus in his relationship with Annie. Almost certainly the Viscountess had a shrewd suspicion of what was going on under her roof, judging from the tone of the lectures she gave to the governess, as related by Mrs. Postings herself. Guillaume was offered a holiday with the suggestion that he should travel and see more distant parts of Germany; and this would give everyone a respite from the situation.

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[271] "Signe", OP p.125, has not been dated with accuracy, though it is most probably referable to 1902. In warning that it could be dated as late as 1904, L.C. Breunig ["Chronology of Apollinaire's Alcools" in PMLA Vol. LXVII No. 7 of Dec. 1952], however, presumes that the lines of "Signe" resembling lines of other poems were necessarily first composed in those other poems. In fact the case could be the reverse or partly one, partly the other.

[272] In Apollinaire's bird-symbolism, the victims of birds of prey develop from pigeons through doves to the Paraclete; while the predators [apart from Minerva's owl] give way to the nobler eagle, as the poet's concepts evolve. An early reference to this wind is given in "Merlin et la vieille Femme" as "les vents apportaient ... des malheurs" followed by "un vol de colombes", where these metaphors have not yet become symbols but are still acquiring their special associations.

The Milhaus were going to Münich for Easter, and the tutor leaped at the chance to do some more travelling and distract himself with more new sights and experiences, especially as this time he would be on his own, unfettered. He left for Cologne first, arriving there in time for the Carnaval, where "il prend part à la liesse collective, et la licence, de mise ce jour-là, ne lui fait pas oublier Annie" [273]. Echoes of the wind of torment following the poet's surrender to love comporting a loss of religious faith as prophesied in "Le Vent nocturne" are explicit in the first poem of this "release" period of his German "Wanderjahr", "Dôme de Cologne" [274], which marks the first station of his pilgrimage. His mood and the progress of his ideas are here expressed after he has seen the Carnival procession and has stood before the lofty, soaring twin spires of the Kölner Dom. It is as if the Dance of Life represented by Venetia, Marizibill, Kobbes and the Bestevater in the "Carnaval charnel et sacrilège" confronts the Gothic symbol of Christianity.

His new sympathies and attitudes are made crudely plain, towards both sex and religion. Venetia is humiliated and her virginity is mocked as being obscenely dedicated to the church, an attitude which rewards her only with wearisome nervous tensions. The poem is more revealing with regard to

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[273] Adéma op.cit., p.53.

[274] "Dôme de Cologne" OP p.538. The Carnaval and its employment in this poem are admirably described by Mme Durry op.cit. Tome III, p.108 et seq.

Apollinaire's poetic problem-solving than has hitherto been noticed. Probably this is because such interior debate as we have seen has been voiced in erudite obscurity under a veil of symbolism; here it is less a matter of debate than a statement of parti pris, and we are witnessing the first example of his new method of exteriorisation, based on apparently objective description of the scene and events about him, less elaborately [though no less effectively] hidden now that solutions and decisions seem to be so much clearer to him. His basic problems are now out in the open and camouflaged, rather than buried and hidden. In openly discussing Venetia's case, he is in fact describing his newly abandoned position. He is committing himself to the "modern" viewpoint that the Church's veto on sexual enjoyment is psychologically harmful. If he must choose between a state of Grace and his Nature, then he opts for Nature. He will no longer compromise his personality, his character in the Greek sense, by denying his personal imperative as a man. He no longer rejects the advice given to Croniamantal:"Quelques hommes disgraciés ne doivent pas connaître l'amour. Cela arrive surtout parmi les poètes... J'ajoute que je n'ai pas voulu de l'amour, mais je le jure, je ne recommencerais pas une vie semblable. J'ai mortifié ma chair et pratiqué de dures pénitences. Je voudrais que votre vie fût plus heureuse." He is echoing Janssen's words: "on ne doit pas vivre sans amour humain, sans compagne ... je suis maudit pour n'avoir pas suivi cette loi avant laquelle n'existe que sa nécessité qui est le

destin." [275] In this acceptance of his "destin" one cannot but contrast "Dôme de Cologne" with his reaction to the church in the same locality before his winter at Neuglück expressed in "La Vierge à la Fleur de Haricot à Cologne" dated 1901 [276]. In this poem, "deux Saintes... pensent béatement... Et s'extasient" before the blonde "Vierge la plus douce du royaume" and are so depicted irrespective of whether the painter "peignit par piété chrétien ou d'amour". Believer or agnostic, his attitude, as in "Les Femmes" and elsewhere in 1901, is tolerant: he concedes the value of religious faith to the believer. But he becomes increasingly irritated by vows of virginity, and he is soon to be heard ridiculing the "ribambelle" of eleven thousand virgins who followed Ursula, martyred by the Huns and buried in this very cathedral of Cologne. Their memory is mocked in his reference here to the guards, who "sont gris / Des onze mille vierges". This is no longer the gentle doubt "Du Christ dont ma latrie aime la fiction" expressed in "Passion" [277], but the blasphemous suggestion of the final stanza: that the only adoration he can offer the Virgin is his love for women:

> .... tourné vers une statue au regard tendre
> J'ai dit à la mère de Dieu Toi qui souris
> Mets au bord des chemins des rosiers tout fleuris
> Et les cueilleurs de roses diront tes prières
> Quand les routes en mai deviendront des rosaires

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[275] See Le Poète assassiné, OC p.250 and p.147 herein.

[276] "La Vierge à la Fleur de Haricot à Cologne", OP p.534, dated 1901 in Le Voile de Pourpre No. 2 of May 1909.

[277] "Passion" OP p.532, dated Neuglück 1901 in Le Festin d'Esope No. 4 of Feb. 1904.

As against his mocking of Venetia, the representative of virginal womanhood, he shows approval of Marizibill the prostitute who is faithful in her fashion to her "gros amant Drikkes". If one follows up further references to this Marie-Sybille of Cologne [278], one finds that henceforth his sympathies lie with this ressucitated Eunoia-figure of suffering sexual love [in contrast to the references discussed in footnote [126] herein], now in "Dôme de Cologne" and "Marizibill" and later in "Zône" [279]. Meanwhile Apollinaire's main comment in "Marizibill" is less concerned with the prostitute than his own outlook:

> Je connais gens de toutes sortes
> Ils n'égalent pas leurs destins
> Indécis ...
> Leurs yeux sont des feux mal éteints

In short, he does not intend to continue with lust smouldering in his eyes, but to make up his mind to accept life's challenge, break with his already weak faith, and face up to his destiny.

This destiny had already been forecast in "Le Vent nocturne": to fall in love, suffer, and become a great poet at

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[278] She appears in L'Amphion faux Messie, story No. 5: "Cox-City", OC p.215, and especially in "Marizibill", OP p.77. The same character appears with the same name in Heine's "Kobes I" [Letzte Gedichte], being part of Cologne's traditional lore.

[279] "Zône", CP p.39, which was "probablement composé pendant l'été ou l'automne de 1912" according to the note in OP p.1042. In this Apollinaire, speaking of "une pauvre fille" says "j'ai une pitié immense" and explains: "Ces femmes ne sont pas méchantes elles ont des soucis". Incidentally, the thought of stanza 3 of "Dôme de Cologne" ["sois moderne"] is echoed in "Zône" by "L'Européen le plus moderne c'est vous Pape Pie X", which shows that these attitudes are by no means fixed in 1901.

the cost of his faith. We are not surprised, then, to see these decisions and new attitudes linked in "Dôme de Cologne" to form a post-winter response to "Le Vent nocturne". He sees the Cathedral as a horse ["grand cheval houppé / De croix"] which may baulk at his attitude, neigh its protests and shy at the challenge, but it is only the product of society's bourgeois morality, and the poet will know how to handle it:

> Regimbe hennis renâcle
> Mes durs rêves formels sauront te chevaucher
> Mon destin au char d'or sera ton beau cocher
> Qui pour brides prendra les cordes de tes cloches
> Sonnant à triple croches
>
> Mais le Dôme est l'église d'un Dieu merveilleux
> Créé par l'homme car l'homme a créé les dieux

It is his poetry that will surmount this obstacle, and his destiny will guide him. Meanwhile the bloated face of the King of Carnival is dipped into the stoup of Holy-water: the license of the man-in-the-street's secular life, "charnel et sacrilège", confronts the prohibitions and mocks the sanctification of the Church:

> Dans un bénitier plein Kobbes trempe sa trogne
> Près d'un cuirassier blanc qui sans vergogne
> Pince les fesses d'une demoiselle de Cologne

And what thunderbolt of retribution is unleashed? The church whose Gothic towers soar from the market-place of the common man is not only mute but offers clear proof through its history that "le bon Dieu se fout". Indeed, it is outdated in its bustling, modern setting, and needs bringing up to date if it is to be of any use. Admittedly, the setting sun shining through the stained glass windows reminds the poet that Christ

sheds His blood like a pelican for its family, but amid the gilded shop signs he admonishes:

> Mais sois moderne et que tes prêtres déifiques
> Tendent entre tes tours des fils télégraphiques
> Et tu deviendras luth alors et l'ouragan
> Fera gémir aux fils un hymne extravagant

Apollinaire seems loth to finally turn against the church, despite the bravado of his blasphemy. The tone of this stanza, as in the last, is one of plaintive regret that the church will not "move with the times" and allow the poet to succumb to his instincts without his being cut off; but again the storm must blow and produce a groan, only this time the "accouchement" is felt to be certain, as an acceptance of the realities of the present scene promises "un hymn extravagant", a new soaring song which will embrace life as it is in his contemporary world, secular life with its commercial advertisements, telephones, alcohol and sex... Indeed here is a new Apollinaire, and we are to see this programme fully implemented. But for the moment suffice it to note that the main effect of his sojourn on the Rhine has been to turn his attention from the inner realm of fantasy based on his reading and erudition to the outside world in all its actuality; and to make him see himself not as a "vates épileptique" cut off from life and love, but as a part of it, who must sing of it. He may well be forgiven for thinking that the wind of torment had blown, and that the poet in him had been born at no tragic cost to himself other than the loss of his faith through self-exclusion. But the "destiny" to which he handed over the reins with such confidence, namely

his own character, had not yet exacted the price of poetic greatness when he continued his German odyssey. His love affair with Annie had still to run its course.

He continued his way to Berlin, Dresden, Prague and Vienna [not omitting to visit the tomb of Mélanie], all of which gave him the material and inspiration for such excellent prose works as "Le Passant de Prague" and "La Chasse à l'aigle". Briefly he rejoined the Milhau family in Munich. Perhaps to his astonishment, the break had done its work for Annie, too. She had recovered her equilibrium; one might say her sense of proportion had been regained now that she had enjoyed a respite from Guillaume's presence; and she now had the strength to reject him. Quite prepared to discover he had "got over" his affair with her, even to let her down gently, he had to swallow the fact that it was she who had "got over" him. This his make-up would not allow, and he found himself ineluctably led to attempt to retain Annie's affections as a matter of pride. The more she resisted, the more he became a slave to his desire.

In a manuscript written on a piece of paper bearing the heading of a Munich hotel [280], the storm of torment yet again blows in the orchards of love:

> Tu mourras quand l'ouragan soufflera dans les roseraies
> Quand il aura neigé
> Dans les vergers

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[280] "Automne malade" OP p.146, exists in the Doucet collection in MS, the first sheet being headed Zu den Vier Jahreszeiten, the title of which hotel may have suggested the theme of his "mental season".

It is couched in terms of prophecy after the event, not only harking back to the conclusion of "Dôme de Cologne" with its "rosary" of Rosenmontag, but right back to the bird of prey symbolism of "Le Vent nocturne":

> Au fond du ciel
> Des éperviers planent
> Sur les nixes nicettes aux cheveux verts et naines
> Qui n'ont jamais aimé

The other composition dating from Munich is the piece of prose which Apollinaire subsequently divided into lines and stanzas to present as a poem [281]. In this he describes a mortuary in which "Arrivé à Munich depuis quinze ou vingt jours / J'étais entré" to view ...

> ... toute cette bourgeoisie
> Exposée et vêtue le mieux possible
> En attendant la sépulture

Under the impulsion of his imagination,

> Soudain
> Rapide comme ma mémoire
> Les yeux se rallumèrent

and the dead come to life, and a young man falls in love with one of them:

> Une morte assise sur un banc
> Près d'un buisson d'épine-vinette
> Laissant un étudiant
> Agenouillé à ses pieds
> Lui parler de fiançailles
> ... ...
> L'étudiant passa une bague
> A l'annulaire de la jeune morte

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[281] "La Maison des Morts", OP p.66, appeared as a short story in prose entitled "Obituaire" in Le Soleil of 31 August, 1907, and is included as a poem in Alcools, the form from which this quotation is made.

However, by the time the lilac bloomed, as it would at Honnef in May, "Hélas! la bague était brisée". Presumably the allusion is to the poet's being in love with an Annie who is now as one dead to him, amid broken promises [chiefly the product of his wishful thinking or bullying] symbolised in terms of Eichendorf's "Zerbrochenes Ringlein", as in "L'Automne" [282] :

Une chanson d'amour et d'infidélité
Qui parle d'une bague et d'un coeur que l'on brise

As boats slip their moorings and float away, he is left alone disconsolately skipping flat stones on the water, and formulates this consoling thought:

... y a-t-il rien qui vous élève
Comme d'avoir aimé un mort ou une morte
On devient si pur qu'on en arrive
Dans les glaciers de la mémoire
A se confondre avec le souvenir
On est fortifié pour la vie
Et l'on n'a plus besoin de personne

It is interesting to see Apollinaire slipping back to patterns of similar past experience, echoing the last stanza of "L'Ermite" and the solution of "Merlin et la vieille Femme", as if memory purifies his desire and will be sufficient.

He returned to Honnef on his own, visiting en route Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Mainz and Koblenz, all of which fed his prose work. To this wonderful spree in March and April, succeeded the soft springtime of May in the attractive environs of Honnef. The ambiance seems to have fanned the last few sparks of Annie's interest, according to

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[282] "L'Automne" OP p.104.

the poems composed at this point, though even this may have existed mostly in the poet's imagination. In fact the references to his love are given in the past tense in both the poems dated May 1902 [283]. In "Les Cloches" he recounts his feeling of guilt when he revisits Neuglück:

> Nous nous aimions éperdument
> Croyant n'être vus de personne
> Mais nous étions bien mal cachés

Again with the imagery of the boat slipping away on the Rhine, and the orchards fading from view, the fallen petals recall the symbol of the pucelle défleurie and the white spots on the nails of the deceiving girl of Stavelot:

> Les pétales tombés des cerisiers de mai
> Sont les ongles de celle que j'ai tant aimée

It is of interest, too, to see how his distinction between one broken love-affair and another is blurring, just as Maria was to be confused with Marie Laurencin in a Nervalian continuum:

> Les pétales sont comme ses paupières [284]

In the same poem he describes "un ours un singe un chien menés par des tziganes" which reminds us of "La Tzigane" [285], in which this feeling of shame, discovery and guilt are shown even more clearly and expressed in a context of unavoidable destiny

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[283] "Les Cloches" OP p.114 is dated Oberpleis, May 1902 in Vers et Prose Vol. 4 of Dec. 1905. "Mai" OP p.112, is dated at Leutesdorf, May 1902, in the same review.

[284] Refer note 19 on p.733 of OC. Apollinaire refers elsewhere to the pale grey-lilac of Annie's eyelids, e.g. "Les Colchiques", OP p.60.

[285] "La Tzigane" OP p.99.

as if to excuse his persistence:

> La tzigane savait d'avance
> Nos deux vies barrées par les nuits
> Nous lui dit adieu et puis
> De ce puits sortit l'Espérance

The bluebird of happiness flew away just as the doves of innocence had taken "leur dernier vol" although they forced their relation to continue in "heavy, guilt-ridden sexuality" as Dr. Davies puts it [286]; and we may add that Annie was no Margaret to assist this Faust's belated prayers [287]:

> L'amour lourd comme un ours privé
> Dansa debout quand nous voulûmes
> Et l'oiseau bleu perdit ses plumes
> Et les mendiants leurs Ave
> On sait très bien qu'on se damne

This poem marks the end of the affair and of the poet's rational hope of prolonging or revivifying it. It also suggests that he excluded himself from divine love by a conscious choice of debased earthly love; and that the feeling of destiny in which he enveloped this movement was rather a process of self-discovery and self-realisation. The feeling that certain things "had to" come out of his character into his external life was apparently interpreted as the ineluctability of Fate: possibly an unconscious excuse for weak self-control. This

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[286] M. Davies op.cit., p.78.

[287] Annie does not appear to have been a religious person, but a young woman whose normal instincts were repressed by a religiously strict upbringing. Removed from her own environment and under pressure, her lapse seems not uncharacteristic of this type. She seems to have been stubborn and negative rather than strong in character, but she may have discussed religious guilt with Guillaume.

somewhat involved attitude was to play an important role in the shaping of his esthetic concepts and constitutes one of the last marks of his formation as a man and poet.

After May 1902 all his poems speak of his lost love, and only his attitude to this event changes as it bites deeper. By the summer it is no question of a rejected lover's gentle melancholy, utilisable as material for poetic composition: Guillaume's love has turned to hate because of hurt pride and frustration, as witness "Un Soir d'été" [288]. If one may hasard a guess as to the method of composition, Apollinaire started off with one of his happy fragments which he would jot down and use later as a sort of incantation or a starting point likely to inspire further verses of the same level:

Le Rhin
Qui coule
Un train
Qui roule

These lines had appeared in the Munich manuscript of "Automne malade", altered to:

Le Rhin
Qui coule
La vie
S'écoule

The incantation fails, because whereas it was based on observation of details of the external world sensitively juxtaposed as in a Japanese haiku, the poet is now brooding and in-

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[288] "Un Soir d'été" OP p.529.

troverted: the next stanza is concerned with the fanciful, artificial image of nixies in the nostalgic setting of "bruyère". Again we see this harking back to similar situations, which one might venture to say gives to Apollinaire's emotional reactions a cumulative effect. This is not merely a reaction to rejection by Annie, but it is linked to the feeling of rejection experienced in Stavelot's bruyère, and not merely exemplified in Maria, but extended to the larger issue of society's rejection. The present hurt awakens all the previous ones, and forshadows what will amount to a veritable psychosis in the chef d'oeuvre which is gestating: "La Chanson du mal Aimé" When he attempts to return to external actuality, la fontaine, it is probably less the attractive Rhenish village pump that he has in mind than the picturesque but plainer one in the middle of the Place du Vinâve in front of Maria's house:

Toutes les filles
A la fontaine
J'ai tant de peine

Hence his bitter reaction at the mere sight of girls gathered around the stone fountain in Germany:

A la fontaine
J'ai tant de haine

This "fated" reaction is considered almost philosophically in "Les Bacs" later that summer of 1902 [289]. As he watches the ferry crawling back and forth, back and forth across the Rhine,

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[289] "Les Bacs" OP p.536, dated Andernach 1902. There is also a typewritten MS dated more specifically Andernach August 1902.

held on its course despite the current by a heavy chain slung low in the river to allow the steamers and barges to pass, the poet sees an allegory of his own situation. Although the scene may change from the Mediterranean, to Belgium, to Germany, he is always making the same predestined journey across the river of life, never getting anywhere, tied to his guiding chain while others go free in the mainstream. When the bell rings for the ferry, the ferryman in his little house on board, has to turn out in all weathers to make his customary, wearisome run:

> Sous les étoiles
> Le vieux passeur jure en damné

Again he sees himself as damned,as in "La Tzigane". True to his new method of carefully observed local detail, he describes the ferryman's sandales d'étoffe, which save him from slipping on the wet deck, but introduces a larger dimension in noting that he "invoque le bon saint Christophe" who served God by doing the only thing he could do well, thus becoming the patron saint of ferrymen in particular and travellers in general. This is the only possible explanation for the seventh stanza:

> Sur l'autre rive Entrez Jésus
> Passez beau gars Venez la belle
> Le bac est mieux qu'une nacelle
> Pour prier pour aimer dessus

which seems to echo the poet's comment on the religious painter of "La Vierge à la Fleur de l'Haricot à Cologne" who painted the Virgin so as to inspire faith and adoration for

centuries in others, but ...

... maître Guillaume
Peignit par piété de chrétien ou d'amant

Perhaps the thought of the last four lines of "Dôme de Cologne" is less shallowly blasphemous than at first appears, and heralds that devotion to love as a "loi avant laquelle n'existe que sa nécessité" and which is to be elevated from the most earthy form to its highest. Meanwhile, the thought is drowned in his present mood, recalling the words of "Hôtels":

Je tourne en route
Comme un toton [290]

Indeed, the typewritten version of August shows his mood pushing so hard towards adequate expression that it produces overstrained lines corrected in the version published in Alcools:

Les bacs du Rhin s'en vont et viennent
Et passeront jusqu'au trépas
Dans l'eau claire on ne voit pas
Les lourdes chaînes qui les tiennent

ending with the dispirited thought, as weary as the Ferryman of his subject:

Tout est passé lassé cassé

This gloomy acknowledgement of his fate has indeed changed his view of the same picture described in the previous year in "Rolandseck", "Crépuscule or "Nuit rhénane". Even "l'or du Rhin", the golden blaze of the sloping vineyards seen perhaps

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[290] "Hôtels" OP p.147, which also mentions the rejection of his prayers ["... et rit/ De mes prières"] and adds that "Chacun apporte / Son seul amour".

at its best across the river from Andernach, has vanished from his sight.

And what of the cause of it all [accepting the poet's view that it was Annie's fault rather than that of his own nature]? In "Les Colchiques" [291], his hatred of women in general, expressed in "Soir d'été", is not unexpectedly given more personal venom. He sees as symbolical the pale mauve Autumn Crocuses which "battent au vent dément" [again the wind of torment] and whose delicate colour reminds him of Annie's eyes:

> ... tes yeux sont comme cette fleur-là
> Violâtres comme leur cerne et comme cet automne
> Et ma vie pour tes yeux lentement s'empoisonne

The movement of saddened departure, previously expressed in the imagery of small boats slipping away down river, is here sharpened as the herd of cows moves out of the beautiful but deadly field, "vénéneux mais joli", and ...

> ... abandonnent
> Pour toujours ce grand pré mal fleuri par l'automne

One cannot but notice how often the poet describes the rear

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[291] "Les Colchiques", OP p.60. While realising that this poem cannot be attributed to the Autumn of 1901, the editors of OP [refer p.1047] confess to seeing a difficulty in that "à l'automne 1902, Apollinaire n'était plus en Allemagne" without being able to suggest another date. The difficulty is removed by visiting the Rhineland in late August and noticing that signs of autumn can indeed be seen in that month, and the poet's autumnal mood ["ma saison mentale"] would be sufficiently justified by the early appearence of the Herbstkrokus [Colchicum autumnale] in the cooler locality of Siegkreis.

view of slowly receding objects and people:

> Oh! l'automne l'automne a fait mourir l'été
> Dans le brouillard s'en vont deux silhouettes grises [292]

It is as if the poet sees life slipping away from him, turning its back on him, fading into a sad, misty memory. Obviously he wished to forget Annie and his constant failure in love, but this was to prove difficult. In "Mille Regrets" [293] he tries to bury his painful experience, but it is far from being preserved in an elevating form in the glaciers of his memory:

> Un soir rhénan transparent pour ma nostalgie
> Dans l'auberge survint deux par deux une noce
> ... ...
> Ci-gît m'amour ...
> Du dicke Du L'amour revient en boumerang
> L'amour revient à en vomir le revenant

Here, too, is that curious transitional movement between religious and secular love observable since the Cologne poems and at Andernach, stemming even perhaps from a somewhat different linking in "L'Ermite", for the sight of "la noce de la ville en face à l'autre rive" in Rheinbreitbach elicits the comparison:

> La mienne aussi mon vieux était blonde aux yeux doux
> Mais pas d'ici Seigneur que votre règne arrive
> ... ...
> Je me souviens Amour que votre règne arrive

The sun had set for him over the Rhine, the warmth had gone, and he seemed to sense that this Rhine idyll had been

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[292] "L'Automne" OP p.104. Even "Les Bacs" in the typewritten August version has "s'en vont".

[293] "Mille Regrets" OP p.531, dated in Les Marges of 10 May 1935 as Rheinbreitbach, August 1902.

another of Morgana's mirages of love, an unreal interlude which was now over, and he must face a grim return to the reality of earning his living in Paris. He returned to Bennerscheid, whence he had started this episode, to the trees that had been his prophetic confidents:

> Puis j'ai jasé d'amour de l'amour regretté
> Avec tous les sapins changés en bonnes femmes

His term of service with the Viscountess being fulfilled, he requested his release, and, a year to the day after his engagement, he received from her a testimonial. As M. Adéma records: "... le sentiment de l'inutilité de ses efforts, sa vanité blessée, le font lâcher pied. Il abandonne et fuit." But, as the same chronicle goes on to point out [294], in the Wilhelm de Kostrowitzky who left his tutorship at Neuglück on 24 August 1902 the whole of Guillaume Apollinaire was contained.

> "C'est en cette courte période de sa vingtième année qu'un grand poète s'est révélé à lui-même. Il n'a presque rien publié encore, mais il a composé déjà tout le premier cycle apollinairien.
>
> "Son séjour rhénan complète et fixe ce que l'aventure ardennaise avait révélé sans lui donner sa forme définitive.
>
> "Il a en puissance tout ce qui sera l'essence, les caractéristiques, les curiosités de son talent.
>
> "Il ne fera plus que développer, perfectionner, les thèmes qu'il a découverts..."

The poet's formative period is over; he returns to Paris to produce his first major work, one which makes a dramatic watershed in his career and ushers in his maturity.

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[294] M. Adéma, op.cit., p.57, both quotations.

Chapter 5.

London Lament

Rejoining his mother and brother in Paris, 23 Rue de Naples, Apollinaire found modest employment at a bank in the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, and from this September, 1902, concentrated on launching himself as a writer. He sent the fruits of his year in Germany anywhere and everywhere, until some were accepted, and then more. He seems to have been too busy "promoting" himself to write any poems of major importance. Still smarting from his rejection by Annie, he consoled himself the following Easter, as he noted in his diary for 27 April 1903, by courting his next-door neighbour, Yvonne. This episode was the occasion for some ephemeral acrostics and minor poems, the better of which are collected under the title of "Poèmes à Yvonne [1903]". [295]

The fact that he first spoke to her on Good Friday evoked a number of references to the Easter Passion; and the imagery of spring flowers such as lilac, and especially the Passion Flower already noted at Honnef the previous May, inevitably brought thoughts of deflowering expressed as petal-fall, leading on to the symbolism of fruit. On a smaller scale and in a lower key, since Yvonne was evidently not so "cruel" to the poet as Annie had been, the whole cycle is repeated.

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[295] "Poèmes à Yvonne [1903]" OP pp.543 to 547 and refer "Carte postale à Yvonne" p.852. Also refer Adéma, op.cit., p.60.

and elsewhere, being reduced to the shorthand symbol of "vos ongles cruels"; and these same petals falling in spring recall those of the Rhine, which were like Annie's eyelids:

> Les pétales tombés des branches fruitiers
> Sont vos ongles cruels couleur de fleur de mai
> Les pétales flétris sont comme vos paupières

Again we see the cumulative nature of his emotion in this imagery, as his ferry goes back and forth on its chain of destiny forged by his own character.

The third poem, "Lettre-Poème", records the third stage of the cycle:

> Beaux fruits défendus
> Paradis perdu
> Vase où toute fleur
> Meurt avec bonheur
> Jonchée de pétales

As in the conclusion of "Dôme de Cologne", this love is linked idolatrously with the Virgin, presumably since Yvonne's Zodiacal sign was that of Virgo:

> Pour vous faire honneur
> Dans ma litanie
> Moi je vous bénis
> Vierge au Zodiaque

As usual, the beauties of this "fille-fleur ô reine" eventually "ont tué mon coeur", and once more...

> ... ... je suis fou
> D'une qui s'en fout
> Qui en aime un autre

and the poet is left carrying his torch: "Je tiens la chandelle".

The deceiving petal-fall of line 5, and the Vierge of line 17 are echoed first in stanza 8 of "Le Printemps":

Les pétales tombés des pêchers qui fleurissent
Sont les ongles cruels des tendres bien-aimées
Les cerisiers défleuriront au mois de mai

and secondly in stanza 24 of that poem:

O vierge signe pur d'un pur troisième mois

Although the editors of Le Guetteur mélancolique offered 1902 as the date of "Le Printemps" [297], it is fairly clear from internal evidence that we have here a number of Rhine references ressucitated and related to the end of the affair with Yvonne, so that the composition may be dated approximately May 1903.

One is led by numerous references to see Yvonne as a substitute for Annie, the imagery of spring 1903 in Paris being overlarded with images of the previous spring on the Rhine, as if this minor affair is a more "digestible" version of the major one, dwelt on to constitute a way of overcoming the hurt of the previous experience.

The first three stanzas, later isolated to form "Les Fiançailles" in Alcools [298], suggest that this spring has ressucitated and perpetuated a lost happiness of love. Whereas in "La Tzigane" "l'oiseau bleu perdit ses plumes" amid the Honnef cypresses, now...

Le printemps laisse errer les fiancés parjures
Et laisse feuilloler longtemps les plumes bleues
Que secoue le cyprès où niche l'oiseau bleu

The young woman who has made this miraculous rebirth of love

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[297] Refer OP p.1134.

[298] "Les Fiançailles", OP p.128.

possible at Easter is spoken of as "une madone" instead of a malevolent enchantress or even a benevolent, suffering Marizibill - Eunoia; and the pigeons or doves have now evolved from victims of birds of prey into "des Paraclets" as if the love sacrifice is a ritual act of worship. This thought, with which the complete poem "Le Printemps" opens, is again enunciated in the closing stanza, confirming that this is indeed the main theme of the work. Moreover, in the last stanza it is stated in terms clearly reaffirming the conclusion of "Dôme de Cologne":

> O Notre-Dame très réelle et nécessaire
> Mets au bord des chemins des rosiers tout fleuris
> Pour que de leurs mains les cueilleurs de roses prient
> Quand les routes en mai deviendront des rosaires

The interesting difference is the new conclusion arising from the thought, whose source is repeated almo t word for word in this later poem, that Man created God "comme écrit Hermès Trismégiste en son Pimandre" [299]. This new conclusion, that"imaginer pour un homme c'est créer", going back to the distinction of eternal differences between man and woman detailed in L'Enchanteur pourrissant, now allows a more creative and positive outlook. It allows the poet to leave his introvert world again and enjoy and celebrate the world of actuality

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[299] This reference to author and title occurs not only in "Le Printemps" and "Dôme de Cologne" but also elsewhere, and particularly in Le Bestiaire [OP p.33]: "...la voix que la lumière fit entendre / Et dont parle Hermès Trismégiste en son Pimandre". This, too, links "Merlin et la vieille Femme" ["la lumière est ma mère" with "Le Brasier" ["Descendant des hauteurs où pense la lumière"]. Obviously the idea was influential in Apollinaire's development.

around him:

Et vrai tout est joyeux réel et hors de moi

The wind has died down, no longer the nightmare exhalation of torment:

Les vents ont expiré couronnés d'anémones

The choice of this particular spring flower [Greek anem[os]-ōnē, "daughter of the wind"] can scarcely be accidental. The inference is that the wind has at last blown itself out and the "accouchement" has taken place, the pain being crowned with beauty as its offspring. The product is not the pale, insubstantial "fils de la mémoire" that "Merlin et la vieille Femme" deemed equal to "[celui] de l'amour"; the dichotomy of escapist memory and hurtful love has been resolved. This is the product of an acceptance of the suffering that arises from love, and the offspring will be the more lusty for being born of a harmonising union which takes account of reality. "Nimbé de feu" may now be realised as an expression looking forward to "Le Brasier". Indeed, we hear no more of this wind, so prevalent in poems of 1900 to 1903, except in recapitulatory references such as that of "Les Collines".

Moreover, Apollinaire's new attitude no longer precludes a return to his deep-rooted adoration of the Virgin, and once again, as he had virginally described the image in "L'Ermite":

Les étoiles le soir couronnent la Madone

Biographers and exegetists have perhaps overlooked the importance to the poet of his relationship with Yvonne to which he evidently owed this healing and re-creative influence. His harmonising of earthly love and religious love, albeit still Baudelairean, now permits him in the body of the poem to make a dispassionate evaluation of his current attitude. Since the poet is ineluctably devoted to love, he needs to come to terms with all it implies:

> Mes soeurs j'aime l'Amour

Person ifying love as Cupid, he suggests in stanza 4 that he has strayed, but that love must be sought even though [stanza 5] the corruption of lovers blinded by obscenity had sullied the source and limited the scope of its divine inspiration:

> ... ... l'Amour qui par divin dépit
> Sur les iris céleurs d'yeux morts faisant pipi
> Ternant la source et l'horizon de son haleine

And so the young lovers hasten to their activities in Yvonne's "vallon décevant", "où des pigeons peut-être ont devancé l'Amour". Thus Cupid's dart [Guillaume's] avenges the God of Love in a symbolic orchard where the Mediterranean fruit [Yvonne's] is pierced. It is instructive to note that the dart, the fruit in the orchard in the valley, and the plucking or piercing, have all, as symbols, here become abundantly clear and localised ... and henceforth disappear from the poet's vocabulary. Again we see that as Apollinaire's personal problems are clarified and approach solution, so his imagery as well as his technique evolve, and the symbols develop like

the birds of prey and their victims, or atrophy like the orchard and valley. The young man suspected that he was not the first to visit this particular "valley of love" [and we recall that it was Yvonne who took the initiative in speaking to Guillaume first] and this is put forward, as in "Merlin et la vieille Femme" and "Le Larron", by way of excuse. What is new in all this is that the poet feels it is just that he should be punished by the normal course of another love affair for his debasement of love on the previous occasion. He therefore accepts the usual outcome from the "ongles cruels des tendres bien-aimées" this time, without the accustomed savage recriminations.

Stanzas 8 to 12 are obscure: as the petals fall from a cherry orchard they represent shrinking towns. Solitary hamlets without a church steeple [like Bennerscheid? or is this a symbol for young girls away from home and unprotected by religious faith?] fall victim to the bird-catchers [the predator birds are now openly human] whose death-dealing gestures are so secretive that the villages swept by the wind [of tormenting passion?] lose the song of the birds [like the nightingale of "Les Femmes"], and even the brightest flowers become grey. This seems, in the context, to suggest that love should not be secretive, but should be hallowed in order to replenish the population. At all events, this is a theme the poet was to develop for the rest of his life, as exemplified in Les Mamelles de Tirésias, and would explain the need he felt to "justify" this latest theft from another of the

"possesseurs de fruits" he presumed to be "mûrs".

This train of thought leads the poet back, in stanza 12, to Yvonne and her Monaco associations of Mediterranean gardens full of ardent flowers whose pollen invites the life cycle to produce fruit, even though they be ...

> ... des fleurs de la Passion
> Qui offrent tendrement deux couronnes d'épines

Then suddenly this green veil of fertility is torn to reveal the impetuous sea and the "naufrage solaire" of the god who died for love:

> Puis tout à coup l'horizon vert s'est déchiré
> Montrant le violet des mers impétueuses
> Le naufrage solaire aux princesses heureuses
> De voir mourir un dieu qui dût les adorer

This stanza, once again reminiscent of Mallarmé's "Victorieusement fui", shows, behind the façade of fertility and the attraction of flowers, the death of love [the thorns of the Passion]: the passing of days spent to the sound of the sea of life and the promises of lovers "Qui crurent aux aveux évoqués par l'anneau". The poet appears to be evoking a fusion of his mother's amours in Monaco with his own abortive affair of the "zerbrochenes Ringlein". The "ville marine" with its Casinos, temples dedicated to Mammon, is obviously Monte Carlo, where the innocent doves are weary, and treacherous women let down ladders from their windows to welcome clandestine lovers.

In stanza 19, the Rhine image of the boat that slips away is given a Mediterranean setting with the "caps digitaux" of Monaco and its deep harbour and caves, but now the boat

is filled with the women of his creative imagination, and the whole world acclaims the boatmen who row the beautiful princesses of all nations to a lotus-eating realm of new love and oblivion:

> Et les chansons d'Europe issues des laides plèbes
> Redisaient l'ardeur des rameurs du renouveau

The poet appears to be calling for a reawakening from torpor to the renewal of life through loving: "L'Amour que votre règne arrive" is again the theme, as he had forced himself to state it from the depths of his misery at Leutesdorf.

In stanza 23 Apollinaire pulls these threads together to illustrate this new principle, whose background is given in the opening and closing stanzas:

> J'ai créé votre allégresse éblouie et tendre
> Puisque imaginer pour un homme c'est créer

Here is a harbinger of the poet who is to invent lays for such sirens and will constellate the heavens.

He is now armed with a new, positive faith in poetry. It is the means of harmonising the disparity between sacred and profane love; it is a means of creating "despite" love and the frustration of its fruition; and it hails an effort towards a renouveau both as a liberated attitude to love and an acceptance of the symbols of the modern world around him. In short, this is the fulfilment of his vision in the market-place before Cologne Cathedral restated before Notre-Dame in Paris. He can now envisage a more complete harmony between the "carnaval charnel et sacrilège" of the "laides plèbes" such as Drikkes,

and the Church; between his earthly loves and his reverence for the Virgin; between the contemporary world and the hitherto "special" world of "suitable" poetic images and material. Above all, he can create as a poet while still living as a man.

With the solution of so many problems behind him, after the soul-searching of his enigmatic major works and the suffering of his affair with Annie, all seemed to indicate a promising entry into the period of his maturity. But "l'amour revient en boumerang", and he had to undergo one more trial.

In September 1903 an Albanian acquaintance, Faïk beg Konitza, invited Apollinaire to visit him in London and to stay at his lodgings in Oakley Crescent, Hampstead Heath. Eager to complete his "grand tour" of Europe, he also yielded to the temptation to seek out Annie Playden. She consented to take him sightseeing, as hospitality due to a foreigner, whence his poem "Hyde Park" [300]. The Park indeed furnished him with an even better illustration of his new attitude than had the Cologne market-place: its dual function of free expression for both speakers and lovers, permitted to an extent that still shocks foreigners, was seized on by the observant Apollinaire:

> Les Faiseurs de religions
> Prêchaient dans le brouillard
> ... ...
> Regards sacrés
> Mains énamourées
> Et les amants s'aimèrent
> Tant que les prêcheurs prêchèrent

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[300] "Hyde Park", OP p.354.

But Annie's rejection of his renewed advances and offers of marriage were firmer than ever, backed as they now were by her home environment and her father's resolve. His wound, almost healed by the passage of a year and the ministrations of Yvonne, now flared up worse than ever. After a month of torture in London - yet another Autumn of heartbreak - he returned to Paris to brood and struggle with himself. His efforts to stifle this hopeless love that threatened to tear his laborious integration apart, was exteriorised in an extraordinary composition entitled "La Chanson du mal Aimé" [301].

A great deal has been written about this poem, his first to be accepted as a work of real stature. It has attracted critical attention because of its disparity of tones; its curiously rambling construction which contains several virtually distinct poems in a unity which is more that of a piece of music, and its most hieroglyphic of all Apollinaire's stanzas, "Les sept Épées". But we are here interested only in those aspects of the composition which illustrate Apollinaire's developing concept of poetry as a means of harmonising tensions creatively.

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[301] "La Chanson du mal Aimé", OP p.46, written in 1903 according to Apollinaire who thus dated it on its first appearance in the Mercure de France No. 285 of 1 May 1909, but presumably finished in 1904, since the last section apostrophises June, when he had returned from his second trip to London. Refer OP p.1046 and L.C. Breunig's chronologies in P.M.L.A. No. 7 of Dec. 1952 and in La Table Ronde of Sept. 1952.

Briefly, these aspects are of several kinds in "La Chanson du mal Aimé": specifically he discusses his visit to Annie in London in the introduction; overtly he vents his rage in "La Réponse des Cosaques Zaporogues au Sultan de Constantinople"; secretively he exteriorises the innermost details of his sexual hurt in "Les sept Epées"; thematically he deals with his struggle to free himself from the past and its haunting memories; while esthetically and technically he has recourse to his new acceptance of the contemporary world and the using of its symbols to find a solution to his problem through an almost psycho-analytical use of word-association which proves to be the culmination of a slowly evolved device.

The poem, presented in italics, is broken into four sections by three short intercalated poems in roman type, each loosely illustrating a point introduced in the immediately preceeding stanza of the main body. There are two strands of thought unifying the whole work: the realisation that Annie does not love him, giving rise to the generalisation that love is dead; and the attempt to struggle free of memory, the past, and the resultant crippling melancholy. The implications for both the man and the poet, arising from these ideas are interwoven, naturally.

In the first section of fourteen stanzas the poet recounts the experience of his visit to London: the first five stanzas describe the dawning realisation that his love-affair is over; the next four give his immediate deadened reaction of

regret; the next four express his need to forget and to look forward to other experiences; while the last stanza introduces an example of such a new love as may be anticipated. It thus forms thematically a micropattern of the whole poem, since the rest of the composition amplifies his reaction to what is past, and his resolution for the future.

The special interest of this introduction is that it would appear to have been originally composed on the spot, after Apollinaire has seen Annie home, and while he is walking back alone through London's foggy November streets, ruminating on his plight. His habit of taking long walks to work his problems out of his system through rhythmical physical effort has already been noted with regard to his solitary meditation on the Belgian Fagne, when we also noted not only the intrusion of images from the periphery of his consciousness so as to provide symbols of his inner debate, but also that the free association of those images affected the direction of his thoughts. Now, it is clear that Apollinaire, in the early part of his stay in London, actually believed he still had some hope of recapturing Annie's love [if that is what it had ever been]. To that end he had left what employment and security he had in Paris, venturing abroad to England to persuade her to marry him. Presumably he was too proud, and even too unbalanced by the strength of his passion, to consider the practical impossibility of such a proposition. He could scarcely, as her father would have put it, support her in the style to which she was accustomed. The

ludicrous difference between their backgrounds was illustrated when she visited Konitza's digs and Guillaume's host offered her a bed to share with her lover. Some biographers believe [and there are supportive indications in his behaviour and his writings] that Guillaume was at this time distraught to a degree verging on a nervous breakdown, beside himself to a point where his own shadow suggested the Doppelgänger of Musset's imagination similarly overwrought by fatigue and passion [302]. Such a pitch of frenzy had been indicated during the period of his first rejection on the Rhine, when he had threatened to kill Annie. In "Le Passant de Prague" he describes a visit to the royal castle of the Hradschin [303] in terms that make it clear he is referring to himself, the possible descendant of l'Aiglon:

> Il m'indiqua une améthyste.
> - Voyez, au centre, les veinures dessinent une face aux yeux flamboyants et fous. On prétend que c'est le masque de Napoléon.
> - C'est mon visage, m'écriai-je, avec mes yeux sombres et jaloux!
> ... ... J'étais pâle et malheureux de m'être vu fou, moi qui crains tant de le devenir.

Moreover, in his letter to James Onimus, dated July 1902, from the Villa Hölterhoff, Honnef, he wrote: "Si je n'obéis pas aux conseils de ma mère qui m'enjoint de revenir pour la fin du mois, je marche aussi à la désagrégation cérébrale." [304]

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[302] Refer to stanzas 36 and 37. Alfred de Musset preferred to relive his sufferings rather than forget them. In his "Nuit de Décembre" he describes an alter ego "qui me ressemblait comme un frère". Apollinaire was much given to dichotomising his personality into "je" and "tu", and the disparity between his interior and exterior worlds was never greater than now. It is a point of view also taken by M. Davies, op.cit. p.86.

[303] "Le Passant de Prague", OC p.110.

[304] The letter to James Onimus, Les Lettres Françaises, 13 December 1951.

This was written shortly after "Le Passant de Prague".

With the circumstances of rejection duplicated, and himself the more poverty-stricken and without prospects, he was in a hypersensitive state as he walked through the streets at night, extenuated, desperate, unconsciously aware of the utter hopelessness of his quest but unable to recognise the brute facts of reality in his conscious mind. Sometimes in a dream one faces the reality of repressed problems without at first recognising the details presented by the dreaming mind or their import; for they occur under the guise of symbols that fade one into the other according to the laws of an incomprehensible logic which is more that of the visionary or artist. A poem composed while walking in deep reverie would fulfil the same function as such a dream. The first five stanzas relate an actual incident, a walk at night in a London street, the poet's conscious mind diffused and in suspension as he broods, only partly aware of his shadowy surroundings made unreal by the fog. If one takes a walk from number 75 Landor Road in the direction of the Underground Station the poet had to use to cross the city to his digs, one notices that the features fit the narrative remarkably well. Almost opposite is the Landor Hotel, built in 1880, and the street leads darkly through three-storeyed houses away from Brixton to a brightly-lit area of shop fronts with the Bedford Arms on one corner and the Clapham North Underground station opposite. The distance is long enough to have given the poet time to compose these stanzas.

Indeed, they open on a walking rhythm of iambics, breaking into heart-pounding anapests as his thoughts of Annie surface. Presumably, on emerging from the house, he stands for a moment on the pavement to accustom his eyes to the murky gloom, and realises that a disreputable figure that has come up to him from the Brixton direction or from the Landor Hotel is going in the same direction as he is, and will be on his heels for the length of the dark street. A foreigner in the world's largest city after nightfall would naturally draw back to let such an unsavoury character pass ahead of him, especially in view of the nasty look given him. This situation would explain how it was that the voyou came "à ma rencontre" and yet the poet says "je suivis ce mauvais garçon". Forced to follow him, but at a safe distance, following somewhat fearfully and blindly indeed, he dimly realised that he had been similarly following Annie in a metaphorical sense. To reach Annie he had had to cross the Channel and becoming aware of the tall terraced buildings on either side that held him to his course between walls of unfamiliar red brick, the interior thought and the exterior view fused to produce the image of the passage through the Red Sea, with himself the Pharaoh, since he was following, and his unknown companion of the night the Hebrews. At the call of their religion, the Hebrews had decided to leave Pharaoh against his wishes, after living in his domaine for so long; and suddenly the poet's indignation against Annie's "desertion" boils over in an image

which fits the overwhelming of Pharaoh:

> Que tombent ces vagues de briques
> Si tu ne fus pas bien aimée

After all, she was the only woman he had ever really loved, he says; or more exactly, the one he had desired most and been most intimate with. The thought of their precise relations may have inspired a certain guilty revulsion, echoing that of "La Tzigane", for he remembers that his Pharaoh-identity was married to his own royal sister.

By now the voyou would have reached, and the poet would be approaching, the corner of the street with its shop fronts, whereupon another unsavoury creature appeared:

> Au tournant d'une rue brûlant
> De tous les feux de ses façades
> ... ...
> Une femme lui ressemblant
> ... ...
> Sortit saoule d'une taverne

To fit the picture, the Bedford Arms, on the corner of Bedford Road and Landor Road, would have to open onto the right-hand pavement, the same side as number 75, which is not the case. However, a little research reveals that in 1937 it was pulled down and rebuilt; and a photograph of the old Bedford Arms, in the possession of the landlord, shows that in 1903 the door from the public bar did in fact open onto Landor Road. As the voyou disappeared around the corner, therefore, this drunken woman would abruptly replace him on the pavement ahead of the poet. She was "une femme lui ressemblant" inasmuch as she was of the same class and race as the voyou, and she, too, gave the

poet a horrifying look. The fascinating feature of this stanza is that the shock of the appearance of this foul creature coincided with the poet's sudden enlightenment: for she ...

> Sortit saoule d'une taverne
> Au moment où je reconnus
> La fausseté de l'amour même

This realisation of the "falsity of love" [a term that will need analysis later] is clearly linked to the chance incident as if by demonstrable logic: "C'était son regard ..." A recapitulation and examination of the thought process involved gives a valuable insight into Apollinaire's nascent method of reasoning through poetic composition.

In essence we have three elements in this incident: the poet, as selective, interpretative observer; the physical data of his surroundings together with chance events and coincidences of simultaneity; and the poet's interior world of memories, at present filled with the problem of Annie. Through the natural association of ideas, whose workings have a very real validity within any one personality, the poet allows a fusion to take place between a succession of objects in the exterior world and their evoked symbols from his interior world around which have crystallized the elements of his preoccupying problem. Apollinaire had clearly already experimented with this principle in a rudimentary fashion in "L'Ermite"; as a conscious technique in "Les Femmes"; and now, more fully, he exploits it for the purposes of self-discovery in a way that makes good psychiatric sense, whether or not he was aware of the less well

known or understood ramifications of Freud's contemporaneous work. The exegetist who would seek a full interpretation of such poems has first to establish the actual incident described, then identify the symbols that provide the "argument" or colour it; and thirdly note the motivation of the writing, which lies in the poet's personality.

In this instance the poet is aware on the one hand of the street and its two denizens, and on the other of the fact that he is there because he has followed Annie, although with a lack of success he has not yet consciously analysed or assessed. To recapitulate briefly: He finds himself following a hooligan in a London street. The action of following is common to the two worlds, and so the two objects followed are fused; hence the hooligan becomes 'un voyou qui ressemblait à / Mon amour", an identification perhaps strengthened by the feeling that they were all blond foreigners, as he had noted in "Hyde Park". The narrow streets of London are like passages through walls of red bricks, and his Biblical reading supplies an association with the Red Sea linked to the pursuit idea. Therefore the hooligan in this new setting must be the Hebrews and himself the Pharaoh. But Pharaoh was cruel and unjust, his pursuit punitive revenge. This was too near the actual truth of piqued pride, and is repressed. He reacts by exclaiming that he would be Pharaoh if he did not truly love Annie, expressing this in terms that fit the imagined setting: let the "onde ouverte de la Mer Rouge" fall on him and overwhelm his pursuit as it had

in the pictured analogy if he has not been a true lover. This possibility he still refuses to admit. But then, by chance, the hooligan is replaced in reality by a similar creature of appropriate sex, revolting in her drunken condition and physical appearance; this in a flash is linked to the idea, arising by lingering association, that the Pharaoh's object of love was his own sister. The union itself is unnatural, improper. And since the poet's own object of pursuit, Annie, was linked with the present person before his eyes, the revulsion is transferred to Annie, so that "je reconnus / La fausseté de l'amour". Once he has admitted this, he realises consciously that his love is far from pure, and the whole principle of his attraction to his "beloved" is wrong - hence the falsity is not merely that of Annie but of "l'amour même".

This process of revelation by analogies then permits him to digest his predicament. First he details instances of fidelity, in a series of four stanzas to be found separately in a Doucet manuscript, as if they might have been a ready-made addition: he admits that he clings to these happy images of kings more fortunate than Pharaoh,

> Lorsque le faux amour et celle
> Dont je suis encore amoureux
> Heurtant leurs ombres infidèles
> Me rendirent si malheureux

We note that the poet here shows himself to be quite aware of the way his thought processes worked on that occasion in a London street. It may fairly be regarded therefore less as an

uncomprehended inspiration than as an increasingly well understood technique.

But regret, he continues, is the foundation for hell, and the logical solution to his distress is obvious: he must forget the past.

> Regrets sur quoi l'enfer se fonde
> Qu'un ciel d'oubli s'ouvre à mes voeux

In fact, he now realises fully for the first time that he has spent far too much time wasting his thought in the sterile past of insubstantial shadows, and he had been right to turn to Yvonne at Easter:

> J'ai hiverné dans mon passé
> Revienne le soleil de Pâques

And so he now turns against "la mémoire" extolled in "L'Ermite", "Merlin et la vieille Femme" and "La Maison des Morts":

> Mon beau navire ô ma mémoire
> Avons-nous assez navigué
> Dans une onde mauvaise à boire

Already we have seen this image of the "beau navire" change from a vessel of memory to a vessel of imagination capable of carrying his princess creations to a land of forgetfulness in "Le Printemps". He must create new loves, not flirt with dead ones in a "Maison des Morts". He therefore follows up the dichotomy of "mon amour" as the beloved [Annie] and "l'amour même" as love itself, and admits at long last that he will never see her again:

Adieu faux amour confondu
Avec la femme qui s'éloigne
Avec celle que j'ai perdue
L'année dernière en Allemagne
Et que je ne reverrai plus

The first objective of the psychoanalyst is at this point achieved: the patient has recognised and consciously admitted the truth that he had repressed. He also knows the cure: he must think of the future and creatively seek new loves. Appealing to the stars that once again symbolise his imagined destiny, he rises to one of the lyrical heights of this poem:

Voie lactée ô soeur lumineuse
... des corps blancs des amoureuses
... ... suivrons-nous d'ahan
Ton cours vers d'autres nébuleuses

As an example of the possibility of such new loves, he conjures up an image of happy love in springtime, but having already invoked the memory of Yvonne by referring to the previous Easter, he returns to her again in "L'Aubade chantée à Laetare un an passé". This is not addressed to Annie, from whom he had parted already more than a year before, but to "Laetare". This is a reference to Mid-Lent Sunday, when the introit begins "Laetare Jerusalem" [Rejoice ye, Jerusalem], and thus recognises that in the middle of his forlorn "lenten" period from August 1902 to November 1903 came the relaxation with joy and love offered by Yvonne, which explains the title reference to its having been sung "un an passé". Fundamentally, however, this is a mistake on the poet's part, since Yvonne, too, belongs to the past. It was a slip into old habits that had led to his taking

an example not from his creative imagination fastened on the future, but from memories of the past:

> Je me souviens d'une autre année
> ... ...
> J'ai chanté ma joie bien-aimée
> Chanté l'amour à voix virile

He is well aware of the emasculating effect of his love-lorn state and the need to fight. This is the next problem he must solve now that he has recognised it.

He returned from London in defeat, bruised and humiliated, and the poem continues with a Paris setting. In the second section, stanzas 18 to 23, he takes stock of his present attitudes. Pan, Cupid and Jesus, the ideals of nature, love and religion, all appear insufficient in his present world of harsh reality [305]:

> Le grand Pan l'amour Jésus-Christ
> Sont bien morts et les chats miaulent
> Dans la cour je pleure à Paris

On the positive side is left only his belief in poetry, and even here he feels that it is cruelly disappointing that his poetry has not protected or comforted him better. How could he be unable to rise above his misfortunes,

> Moi qui sais des lais pour les reines
> Les complaintes de mes années

For once he feels that the writing out of his troubles, their exteriorising in "la romance du mal aimé", has not sufficed

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[305] The poem "Le Coin" [OP p.851], for which a fair MS exists on paper dated Dec. 1902, Jan. 1903, may well describe his view of the depressing poverty of his surroundings in Paris at this period of his life.

to restore peace. The ideals he has depended on in the past have perished; is poetry, too, to fail him? Before he attempts to answer this question, he once more submerges in a backward glance to his past love: "l'amour est mort" yet "j'adore de belles idoles" which are "Les souvenirs lui ressemblant." In this tenuous and self-torturing way he can claim: "Je reste fidèle et dolent". This is another harking back to old patterns, taking refuge in memories, although he knows this is no longer effective, since it brings pain for the man and sterility for the poet. To vent his emotion and frustration, he interrupts his pretensions to fidelity by an outburst of obscenity couched in terms of the reply of the Cossacks who clung stubbornly to their loyalty in a dire situation in the land of his ancestors. Indeed, in all this he is typically Slav, a fact we are prone to forget because of the fact that he writes in French.

In the next section of the main body of the poem, stanzas 27 to 41, we find him once again walking through the streets at night, with only his shadow for company. In stanza 27 he returns to the one consistent object of his genuinely faithful devotion, poetry, as his only hope of salvation. He repeats the most lyrical stanza he has produced in the poems so far [306], the invocation to the Milky Way, which he uses as an incantation to encourage more inspired lyricism. It sounds, moreover, a more positive note of appeal to the future and a

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[306] Actually it had already been roughed out on the back of a MS of La Femme assise.

"cours vers d'autres nébuleuses." This appeal fails in part, since the cats in the backyards of his slice of Paris offer no inspiration to poetry. He thus finds nowhere to look other than into the past. He recalls the look of regret in the prostitute's eyes - regret for love which has perished for ever; he thinks of his and Annie's "love" which was really only perverted sex whose sterility frustrated life's real purposes for both of them. Faults are fully confessed now as the bitter taste of that unnatural embrace is seen symbolically:

> Amour vos baisers florentins
> Avaient une saveur amère
> Qui a rebuté nos destins

As he inadvertently thinks of Annie's attractiveness he steels himself by reminding himself that her "perverse eyes" were but lures to tempt him from his career as poet into ideas of marriage:

> Dans ses yeux nageaient les sirènes

But all these efforts to convince himself that he has had a lucky escape fail:

> Mais en vérité ...
> Si jamais revient cette femme
> Je lui dirai Je suis content

He therefore makes a supreme effort in stanza 30 to wipe his heart and mind clean in order to regain the happiness he had known as a child:

> Mon coeur et ma tête se vident
> Tout le ciel s'écoule par eux
> O mes tonneaux des Danaïdes
> Comment faire pour être heureux
> Comme un petit enfant candide

Like the forty-nine daughters of Danaus, condemned to forever pour water into leaking vessels, he cannot retain any of the stars' offerings of inspiration and hope for the future. In fact, he realises, to be consciously aware of the solution is one thing, but to embrace it is another. He is condemned to pain for an obsession he cannot shake off:

> O mon amour je t'aimais trop
> Et maintenant j'ai trop de peine
> ... et la folie
> Veut raisonner pour mon malheur
> Comment voulez-vous que j'oublie

Even as late as the war years he was to write in "Toujours" [307]:

> De nébuleuse en nébuleuse
> Le Don Juan de mille et trois comètes
> ... ...
> Cherche les forces neuves
> ... ...
> Qui donc saura nous faire oublier

Every memory hurts: the happier the moments had been, the more painful their recollection now, like daggers in his heart. Following the image of the Virgin of the Seven Dolours he gives examples of these in "Les sept Epées".

In an attempt to exorcise the spectre of memory, the poet conjures up a series of polyvalent images in seven hieroglyphic stanzas, the first five under the guise of swords each of which bears a name. Each has a colour, also, and a time or season. Thus the first, Pâline, is silver, associated with the snow of winter, probably localised in Bennerscheid, and through

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[307] "Toujours" OP p.237.

its Ghibelline reference to destiny suggesting that he and Annie were of different family, race and religion, and could never hope to marry. The second, Noubosse, is rainbow-hued, associated with both spring and marriage, the gift of Carabosse, a fairy godmother recalling the earlier lines of stanza 29:

> Et nos baisers mordus sanglants
> Faisaient pleurer nos fées marraines

The third is the feminine blue of a sterile summer [the epithets are transferred], though none the less priapic, named Lul de Faltenin [presumably a combination of the Belgian dialectic vulgarism lul with the Latin phallus tenens] and associated with the shrinking in size of the thieving Hermes ["voleur de fruits"] presumably after one of his frustrated thefts during which "une nappe" has onanistically replaced "le vallon" [308]. The fourth, Malourène, has the green and gold tones of the Rhine autumn, associated with riverside evenings and the familiar Rhine image of boats and their singing rowers.

It is interesting to note thus far that the seasons began with winter and ended with autumn, as did Apollinaire's affair with Annie; that the adverse destiny of the first stanza is referable to that of "La Tzigane"; that the second stanza refers to an early, joyous sword thrust comparable to that of Cupid's dart in Yvonne's valley of love; but that the third indicates

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[308] The possibility of lovers' pet names for parts of the body may be suggested, as in Apollinaire's references to Poucet and the fingers whose stories are noted in the Belgian period. Ernest may thus have been erogeneous, too.

a retreat into sterile onanism, and the fourth is perhaps only a memory, like a song hanging on the air in the evening.

The fifth, Sainte-Fabeau, the most beautiful of quenouilles, links with an image of death and assignation reminiscent of Honnef's cemetery and cypresses where the bluebird lost its plumes; each night this one flames [in passion?]. As to quenouilles, leaving aside the suggestions of bedposts or a pun linking the distaff side with a virile male reference, we see the thought later amplified in "Enfance" [309], where the poet, assuming the identity of a young girl, writes of "les flocons que le vent / Prenait à ma quenouille", explains:

> Et pour moi les cyprès n'étaient que des quenouilles,
> Et mon jardin, un monde où je vivais exprès
> Pour y filer un jour les éternels cyprès

In the fifth épée the most beautiful distaff is a cypress before which the thieving wind kneels; in "Enfance" the cypress is a distaff on which the girl spins the yarn of eternal cypresses [distaffs]. In short, Annie was the most preferred of women with whom the poet would have settled down and yielded to the "éternité des femmes", as is substantiated by his proposals of marriage and the burthen of the last stanza, the seventh sword. It is the

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[309] "Enfance", OP p.651, published in Les Visages de la Vie No. 6 of 1909, was signed by the poet with the pseudonym of Louise Lalanne. One is reminded of Hugo's lines in "À Villequier":

> Je sais que le fruit tombe au vent qui le secoue,
> Que l'oiseau perd sa plume et la fleur son parfum;
> Que La création est une grande roue

in which he meditates on "nos destins ténébreux" after the loss of a loved one.

same involved thought expressed concerning her in "Les Colchiques", flowers which are "... comme des mères / Filles de leurs filles", which might just as well have been expressed with future orientation as "... comme des filles / Mères de leurs mères" blowing in the pollenating wind.

The night of stanza 5 is followed by morning in stanza 6, which brings separation for lovers as the cocks crow. It is the stanza of farewell:

Adieu voilà votre chemin

... and the suggestion is that the road to be followed must be the poet's lonely road to glory. The seventh stanza has no identity as a sword, no name, colour or localisation. For this is an experience he has never known: marriage and the fading of a wife, "une femme une rose morte". This is not mere pretended disdain for something he cannot have [whether because of Annie's wounding refusal or the now acknowledged impossibility of such a union]; on the contrary it is in complete accord with his many previous references to his preference for poetry's glory over the anonymity of married contentment, and to the fading of love he believed to take place within marriage:

Chaque fleur qui se fane
C'est un amour qui meurt

was the way he expressed it in "La Cueillette", employing the image of gathering a flower to keep it prisoner in a vase. Or again, in an even closer parallel to the "rose morte" he

speaks for the woman in "Chanson":

Je suis la rose
Fraîche et mi-close
Je me marie
Je suis flétrie [310]

Finally, the poet introduces the last section, stanzas 49 to 59, by using for the third time, the same incantation to the stars. This time the composition seems to be dated June 1904, as if it is a seven-month diary of his efforts to conquer his fixation through poetic inspiration:

Juin ton soleil ardente lyre
Brûle mes doigts endoloris
Triste et mélodieux délire
J'erre à travers mon beau Paris

At this point the poet seems to break through and produces poetry once more descriptive of the scene about him, able to find music even in electric trams. But the mere sight of a gypsy in a café recalls the Rhine gypsies, so that the cafés ...

... Crient tout l'amour de leurs tziganes
... ...
Vers toi que j'ai tant aimée

From November to June he has tried to forget, using his poet's lyre to charm his pain away until his fingers are bruised, yet still without forgetting Annie.

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[310] "Chanson", OP p.570. The writer's own interpretation of "Les sept Epées", formulated without reference to the various alternatives elaborated more recently, is presented without discussion for reasons of brevity and its applicability to the special line of enquiry involved here. Interest in these stanzas per se, however, would demand reference especially to J.R. Lawler's study in Le Flâneur des deux Rives of Sept. 1954.

We must also note that he had revived the memory by making a second visit to London in May, being rebuffed yet again with ambivalently regretful finality on Annie's part, and a terrified irrevocability on the part of her parents. In fact the poor girl, in order to be sure of escaping his possessiveness and threats ["Each man kills the thing he loves" was taken literally by Annie when Apollinaire thus quoted Oscar Wilde to her], told him she was about to emigrate to the United States. Since he was not easily to be deceived, she found herself trapped by her own fabrication, and having been forced to make genuine enquiries about employment there, decided to accept one offer Apollinaire and Annie finally parted at Waterloo Station, though as a Muse she continued to haunt the poet. It should be added that Apollinaire's inability to "forget her" was also partly due to the fact that Annie did not reject him as firmly as her parents did, for despite her fear of him she had committed herself to him and found the final break hard to make. As evidence for this, M. Décaudin quotes her post-card of 26 May 1904 written in broken French, and posted <u>after</u> the final farewell at the station:

> Merci pour carte chère Je pense à toi N'oublier pas ton photographie pour moi. Mille baiser. Penser à moi Annie
> Bonjour à ton mère [311]

"La Chanson du mal Aimé" in its totality thus suggests that even though the poet has lost faith in nature,

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[311] Décaudin, <u>Dossier</u> p.100.

love and religion as consolers, he clings to his belief in poetry as a source of comfort; but that this is not wholly effective as yet. Does it seem to be failing him, or acting too slowly? It would appear that this question, too, is discussed in the main body of the poem, and involves us in an examination of both his esthetic background and his nascent new technique.

First, it is clear that memory is no longer seen as a remotely possible refuge; it is a curse that hampers his ability to enjoy the present moment, or to describe his present surroundings, much less does it allow him to look to the future and new stars betokening a new destiny. Now, the current esthetic in the circles he frequented on his return to London favoured a rejection of the past and a return to the present. It may well be that the intrusion of stanzas 56, 57 and 58, besides being an heroic effort to overcome his inability to hear in his present surroundings anything more musical than the calling of cats mentioned in stanza 18, may also represent a conscious effort to illustrate some of the tenets of Fantasism. Any such label as Fantasist is bound to distort our view of Apollinaire, the individual poet, who was following a consistent line of esthetic development from the programme heralded in "Dôme de Cologne" right through, ultimately, to Futurism. But it helps us to distinguish his originality and the evolution of his concept of poetry if we glance briefly at this esthetic background, part of which lent strength to his own

already-formulated purposes. [312]

Fantasism may best be described as a movement headed by André Salmon, Max Jacob and Apollinaire with Laforgue as precursor, characterised by contempt for the world of everyday reality, marked by irony, mystification, and, especially in the case of Jarry, intellectual revolt against society. This is a trait seen already in Apollinaire's curiously atypical expressions such as "laides plèbes" and the trogne of the Carnival, so much at variance with his deep and abiding sympathy shown in "Au Prolétariat", the early references to Marizibill, and the poem "Le Coin". The movement also comports despair at life's incoherence which is expressed not romantically but by melancholy and a tendency to escape into a world half way between that of everyday life and that of the dream. Insofar as this constitutes a manifestation of the fashionable revolt against Symbolism, the interest is no longer in the symbol nor the thing symbolised, but rather in the connection between the two, and in that intermediate world in which the connection is made. This aspect has best been described by Aegerter and Labracherie, who were virtually the first critics to study Apollinaire and were nearer the poet's ambiance than writers of the later wave of criticism since 1950: "Au monde réel se substitue le royaume de l'esprit

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[312] Madame Durry has described, for her part, the similar influence of Verlaine, whose "Sonnet boîteux" from Jadis et Naguère and "There" from Amour are especially close, in their setting of foggy London streets lit by shop fronts and red advertisements. Refer Durry op.cit. Tome II, pp. 63,64.

libre, l'univers intérieur qui, n'accordant guère de place aux choses sensibles, n'admet plus comme évidentes que les images désaccordées du rêve... Ils vivent à mi-chemin de l'irréel, imaginant ... des associations verbales." [313]

It will immediately be seen that most of these tenets are illustrated in the opening stanzas of "La Chanson du mal Aimé" and that they were features of Apollinaire's esthetic having a well-documented history in the poet's search for his identity and style, needing no explanation in external influences. His association with Fantasism was chiefly a manifestation of that tendency especially notable among French writers and artists to band together for collective strength even when the ideas of the individuals concerned were markedly disparate - the Impressionists and Fauves are other examples - and Apollinaire contributed as much as he took from this collective movement.

The Fantasists were not mere escapists, however, as the foregoing might suggest. Aegerter and Labracherie also point out that they had a stoical attitude to their fate: "l'on doit surmonter, dépasser toute émotion, la tenir pour une illusion, une erreur ... Echapper à toute duperie possible par une moquerie, c'est montrer que, pour notre compte, nous ne sommes pas dupes." [314] This was moral support Apollinaire needed, and such expressions as "Je reconnus la fausseté de l'amour même"

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[313] Aegerter and Labracherie, op.cit. p.201.

[314] Ibid. p.208.

may well owe its uncharacteristic nature to the influence of his friends and the pose he maintained. The self-mockery is, of course, only a variant of his mystification aimed at preserving his emotional privacy. In any case, if we see "La Chanson du mal Aimé" as chiefly the record of his hapless struggle to escape from the memory of Annie, we must also pay due recognition to the very positive notes that rise above the travail of his interior battleground.

For in one sense his efforts to escape from the tyranny of the past were to give him a direction and an impetus that were to send him into that positive future he so ardently desired; and his faith in poetry as the noblest support in the battle of life, although so sorely tried at this time, was being tested and refined. Moreover, the techniques he sought wherewith to achieve expression of that faith and permit implementation of its promises, are observable here, for he doggedly employs them with intuitive wisdom and a desperation that makes them obvious.

We have seen in the introductory stanzas that one aspect of his technique required sensitive passivity. This he achieved most readily by taking long walks through the city streets, often at night, usually humming a little tune that fixed the rhythm his words would shape themselves around.

So much has been written about this musical background [315] that we need only note the factor here. One may add that another well-known factor which has perhaps not been seen as linked in parallel, is Apollinaire's habit of repeating a successful, previously composed stanza to "start himself off" at a superior level of inspiration, which would similarly condition the metre and also the rhyme-scheme: we have referred to "Voie lactée ô soeur lumineuse" for this reason as an incantation designed to invoke his "muse". The essential feature in all this is that in his mentally passive state the poet allowed his surroundings to provide images which become symbols of his innermost preoccupations, and that the progression of his thought was dictated far more by the association of ideas set up through the succession of externally originated images than by a logical concatenation of the elements of his motivation in writing. This technique thus allowed Apollinaire to probe his own unconscious, and so seek a new harmony between the interior world of his "je" and the exterior world of his "tu".

We can see, then, that the element of negative escapism in "La Chanson du mal Aimé" progressively gives way to a positive

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[315] This is no new secret, as Mario Rocques hummed for us some of these airs in Cardiff in 1968; but more recently a "Colloque" at Stavelot produced Apollinaire et la Musique [éditions "Les Amis de G. Apollinaire" A.S.B.L., Stavelot, 1967]; and Mme Durry has summed up this aspect in op.cit. Tome III pp. 141 to 144, quoting the poet's own words: "Je compose généralement en marchant et en chantant sur deux ou trois airs qui me sont venus naturellement..."

search for a new understanding of life, and a new technique to realise it. This latter aspect is clearer in the third section of the poem, where in stanza 31 we may see another depth in his words:

> Mon coeur et ma tête se vident
> Tout le ciel s'écoule par eux

This is perhaps the first expression of his growing awareness of the need to relax, become passive, and "empty himself" especially of the niggling details of the particular love affair. The generalisation of his experience could be a positive factor in his creativity. Clinging to the past and feeding on its pain in self-pity was the cloying error of the Romantics. Exteriorising that situation in symbols was useful enough therapeutically, but did not produce an original poetry of communication - and it must be remembered that Apollinaire was never satisfied with this sort of "poetry for himself", which is shown right up to the last words from his deathbed: "J'ai tant de choses à dire." Moreover, we have partly deformed his motive until now, deliberately since it fitted not only the popular view of the burthen of his <u>chanson</u> - the effort to forget Annie - but also, by and large, the poet's own current view of his primary purpose. Yet,while examining the more positive aspects of the poem, we can also reappraise the line:

> Je ne veux jamais l'oublier

as something more than merely a low point in the ebb-and-flow of his struggle to forget. It may also be taken as an indication

that he in fact does not wish simply to forget Annie. His real problem is to be able to remember her without such feelings of obsession and pain as will stifle his creativity as a poet and his orientation towards his future as a man. This somewhat different evaluation of the poem accords with the interpretation advanced above for "Les sept Épées".

Again we see how the poet's problem of technique is bound up with the problems that Apollinaire faced as a man. Similarly with his esthetic: as a man he must come to grips with the here and now, his future must be shaped in the present. As a poet he realises that his work will lack vitality if it is based on either the past or some shadowy world of symbols, or even that of Fantasism. He was a fairly shrewd judge of the relative merits of his own poems, as he shows by his selection of work for Alcools as well as in his letters to Madeleine. He knew that his best work so far was in the short stories and the Rhine lyrics: they had life in them because they were based on observation of what other people could see. In corroboration, they had been accepted for publication. He needed to take his material, his imagery, even his language, less from his reading and more from everyday life. Here was more reinforcement for his preference toward the current scene. Besides, his bucolic interludes were done, he was now a city-dweller among city-dwellers, and his city housed the quintessence of the intelligence of Europe, as he later explained at

length in "Vendémiaire" [316]. Physically, this city was the most beautiful and exciting in the world, in his estimation; an appropriate reaction was to describe the buildings and people about him as accurately, observantly and sensitively as he had described the countryside and its flora and fauna, while making a similar relation of the scene to his private motivation. We may tend to underestimate the difficulties of seeing the city as a soul-landscape for the poets of the turn of the century; for although Baudelaire and Verlaine had borne the brunt of innovation [317], Apollinaire was still breaking new ground.

This movement, technical, esthetic and philosophical, is seen in its most concentrated form in stanza 34:

> Mon âme et mon corps incertain
> Te fuient ô bûcher divin qu'ornent
> Des astres des fleurs du matin

As yet hesitating, both as poet and man, he is tempted to flee from the promised sun as the morning stars pale at the approach of day. Insofar as this betokens the dawn of a new day, this image is partly symbolic of a future to be welcomed with a positive attitude. On an earlier occasion he had expressed this

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[316] "Vendémiaire", OP p.149. Moreover, he came to see his role as being to express Paris to Paris, as symbolised in "Lettre-Océan", OP p.183, and elsewhere.

[317] Precursive occurrences such as Wordsworth's "Westminster Bridge" or Gautier's "Soleil couchant" lack the personal involvement Apollinaire achieves already in the concluding stanzas of "La Chanson du mal Aimé".

thought with precocious clarity:

> Jamais les crépuscules ne vaincront les aurores
> Etonnons-nous des soirs mais vivons les matins [318]

But here, too, is an echo of the Mallarméan esthetic earlier noted in "L'Ermite", where the poet fled from night to day, from starry meditation to earth's fertile actuality: "Et je marche je fuis". But now the sun is seen as a "bûcher divin", an idea difficult to adumbrate at this point, but becoming increasingly clear in "Lul de Faltenin" and dazzling in "Le Brasier" when he makes up his mind and commits himself irrevocably:

> J'ai tout donné au soleil
> Tout sauf mon ombre [319]

This sun, yet to rise, is the symbol of his divine inspiration, source of visions which casts a shadow of a man onto the surface of this world, symbolising the poem itself as his poetic image ["une ombre d'homme" as he had said in "Merlin et la vieille Femme"]. Hence he addresses his shadow, which he trails through this world [320], as a god, since it is the product of the symbolic sun:

> Et toi qui me suis en rampant
> Dieu de mes dieux morts en automne
> ... ...
> O mon ombre ô mon vieux serpent
> Au soleil parce que tu l'aimes
> Je t'ai menée...

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[318] Untitled poem, OP p.526, dating from Stavelot.

[319] "Le Brasier" OP p..08.

[320] In his early poems he sees himself as being ineluctably attached to it, or married to it: "Une épouse me suit c'est mon ombre fatale" were the terms used in "Signe" parallel to his reference her to his "ténébreuse épouse que j'aime."

Love, nature, religion, the old gods had died in his autumn of rejection, but his poetry with the wisdom of the serpent survives, and it prefers the daylight, for the shadow is stronger in the light of the day, just as his poems are more virile when so inspired.

> Ténébreuse épouse que j'aime
> Tu es à moi en n'étant rien
> O mon ombre en deuil de moi-même

He and his poems are united indeed, poetry being part of the man. But at present they are shadowy, insubstantial, because they are in mourning for him as he trudges through his night of melancholy. One sees here another application of the technique of the opening stanzas, as he explores every possible association of the image of the shadow he finds himself left alone with in order to explore every aspect of his problem: it is united with him, a part of him projected by the light; it creeps along his path, his alter ego seeking a way; it is insubstantial, like poetic creation; it is black, like his mood, and so "in mourning". In this way Apollinaire realises that this complaint of the ill-loved is little more than vapid, romantic self-pity unless he can infuse into it something more virile and actual than sterile memories of Annie.

After yielding one last time to his "sept épées de mélancolie" with their more stoical conclusion, therefore, he returns in the final section to this central problem, which may now be seen to be the poet's main objective in the chanson. In stanzas 50 and 51, after a final incantation invoking the stars, he

sees that their inspiration is constantly towards melancholy, predisposing him towards the madness he feared:

> Les démons du hasard selon
> Le chant du firmament nous mène
> A sons perdus leurs violons
> Font danser notre race humaine
> Sur la descente à reculons
>
> Destins destins impénétrables
> Rois secoués par la folie
> Et ces grelottantes étoiles
> De fausses femmes dans vos lits

In these, the most poetical stanzas of the poem, Apollinaire suggests that the laws of chance exploited by the poet through a consciously free but unconsciously motivated association of ideas, according to the inspiration of the stars, drive human beings backwards down a dangerous slope to madness. Poetry inspired by melancholy leads to madness and suicide. Under the shivering stars Apollinaire conjures up images of deceiving women and, once again, "ce malheureux roi de Bavière, Louis II" mentioned in "Le Passant de Prague" in similar proximity to his own deception in love, melancholy and fear of madness,[321]

Hence the brusque change of tone, which, while constructionally balancing the modernity of the poem's opening, also demonstrated the poet's flight from the stars to the throbbing

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[321] "Le Passant de Prague", OC p.111. Louis [Ludwig] II, King of Bavaria [1845-1886] was a descendant of Maximilian [which may have had some bearing on Guillaume de Kostrowitzky's interest]. After being forced by public opinion to break from the unwholesome and overwhelming influence of the romantic Wagner, he gave way to extravagant delusions, and was declared insane in 1886, and his uncle [the Prince Luitpold of stanza 52] assumed the Regency. Louis was found drowned in the Starnberger See together with his doctor, who had unwisely gone walking alone with his patient, whose physical strength was enormous.

life of the city proper. These stanzas appear more extrovert, as if he is purged by his seven-month meditation, for all its lapses and backward glances that have "brûlé mes doigts endoloris". He hails the June sun unequivocally, and in a new, sadly chastened yet productive ["mélodieux" suggests "producing music"] excitement, hails the cleared vision with which at long last he can see his surroundings once more:

J'erre à travers mon beau Paris

and is cured of his thoughts of suicide by this new awareness of beauty.

Stanza 57 not only embraces the actual scene, but celebrates it in a pre-Futuristic acceptance far more assured than the brash, self-conscious prefiguration of "Dôme de Cologne". In the penultimate stanza, using a procedure later to be employed to perfection in "Les Collines", he dares to allow the memory of Annie to arise only to show that he has now mastered it. He has divested it of the obsession and pain that inhibited his creativity, and so the memory takes its proper place in the poet's creation: a melodious depth added to what would have been a mere description of the cacophony of city life:

Les cafés gonflés de fumée
Crient tout l'amour de leurs tziganes
De tous leurs siphons enrhumés
De leurs garçons vêtus d'un pagne
Vers toi toi que j'ai tant aimée

After two stanzas describing the noise and bustle of the city, the sight of some gypsies in a café arouses memories of the gypsies on the Rhine, and so their love song is permitted to

bring in a reference to his own love. Even allowing for the possible indignation or hurt of the final stanza [322], this mention of Annie assumes its correct proportions in the poem and, one may believe, henceforward in his life. The import of these otherwise arbitrarily intercalated stanzas consequently appears to be that Apollinaire has left the quiet dark streets where the starry sky is inscribed with melancholy fate for the man and sterility for the poet, and now drowns himself in the throbbing pulse of the present, ready to explore the latent poetry of the actual scene with the virility of a Vlaminck.

In short, the poem ends with a minor manifesto and a defiant demonstration of his new, positive attraction to the present and an esthetic of modernity; and it has also described and demonstrated his technique for giving such material significant depth by passively following the train of associated ideas this imagery can offer. In this view "La Chanson du mal Aimé" is rather more than a mere lovelorn song whose melody links disjointed, disparate fragments. Apollinaire has left the paradaisal gardens of love and the escapism of memory. His eyes have been opened by suffering to near distraction, and now

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[322] Actually, this stanza may now be emptied of its indignation, since it appears in a different context at this point. When originally addressed to Linda [OP p.327] it had this effect ["Moi qui sais des lais... Ce bayement long m'éluda"]; in stanza 19 it was more hurt than indignant: "je pleure à Paris / moi qui sais des lais..."; and now in the final stanza it could even be intended triumphantly: "j'ai tant aimé / Moi qui sais des lais..."

he looks reality squarely in the face. In brief he has grown up.

Apollinaire did not, of course, completely and irrevocably mature at a fixed moment; there had been precocious glimpses of maturity, and there were to be lapses into immaturity. Even "La Chanson du mal Aimé" in one sense amounts to little more than a lapse followed by a recovery of the vision of "Dôme de Cologne" and "Le Printemps". Essentially his progress was that he saw himself with increasing clarity as one of the "rameurs du renouveau" once he had admitted that "imaginer pour un homme c'est créer". He realised that love was not inimical to poetry after all, but that he was destined to fall in love and suffer many times yet.

Chapter 6.

Paris: Birth of a Poet

Back in Paris after Annie's departure for the United States, Apollinaire again busied himself building up his reputation as a writer, seeking publicity and, through it, publishers. "Apollinaire saisit très vite la nécessité de se faire connaître" [323] and he cultivated the right connections, using his undeniable charm to widen the circle of acquaintances among writers and editors. As editor of "Le Guide du Rentier" he even managed to help his impecunious friends [and thereby himself] by gaining their contributions. But there were a few echoes of his parting from Annie at Waterloo Station [324]. Two poems show us how his prise de position detailed in the latter part of "La Chanson du mal Aimé" had fared with the passage of a little time.

The first poem is "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" [325], which is generally believed to have been written in 1904, after his second visit to London. Presumably, too, the poem represents an effort whereby Apollinaire "met à profit les souffrances de l'amour en les chantant" as he explained in his

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[323] Adéma op.cit. p.63, and for this period refer pp.63 to 71.

[324] For Annie's description of this incident, see Robert Goffin: Entrer en Poésie [Paris, Poésie '48] p.138.

[325] "L'Emigrant de Landor Road", OP p.105, dedicated to André Billy, one of his new connections soon to become a life-long friend.

letter to Madeleine: this time it is successful in that his memories do not bog him down but functionally deepen his work just as they had deepened his understanding of other sufferers.

In this composition Apollinaire boards his cross-Channel steamer for France, saying farewell to England and Annie; but he puts himself in the position of an imaginary emigrant who buys a second-hand suit [326] and boards a trans-atlantic ship bound for America [327], saying goodbye to England for ever. In short, he is not only describing his own heartbreak at final severance from his beloved, but is using his suffering imaginatively and creatively ["imaginer ... c'est créer"] and thus extending his personality through empathy, so giving his work a much wider application. This is clearly a superior approach to that he had previously made through the hermetic world of symbolism. He is no longer indulging in mere self-pity either, but is showing pity for others in similar conditions, thus universalising his reference. In fact he was to remember for a long time the sight of those pathetic emigrants waiting at Waterloo Station to begin a new, dimly foreseen life. Furthermore, he finds it in his heart to put himself sym-

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[326] The shop he evidently had in mind may well have been one still to be seen at the other end of Landor Rd. Compare "Réclame pour la Maison Walk Over" OP p.733.

[327] Apollinaire was a sufficiently typical Frenchman to be very hazy as to his geography. Consequently his picture of the United States complete with monkeys and birds of the imagined tropical "type" having beautiful plumage but no song has been coloured by reports of Central and South America as later seen by his brother Albert or in the Douanier Rousseau's imagination.

pathetically in Annie's place, for she is the prototype of these emigrants, and indeed she must be suffering more than he is, since she is leaving her native country and all her family and friends. We may thus see how much more mature the poet has become in his attitudes, and note the consequently greater validity of the work. Apollinaire's idea of love has now deepened to include self-sacrifice or at least an acceptance of suffering. Until now the young poet had in reality been writing about mere sexual attraction.

We observe the persistence of certain imagery: the shadows of the crowd mingle without any bond of love; his own shadow is "blind" because it has lost the guidance of love. In stanza 6, in an abrupt change of metre, we have the introduction of the Andernach image of the years of his life "chained together" by fate. Many of the days of this last year, in particular, were barren, desolate: "c'étaient des journées veuves", metaphorically bereaved like all those beaten by adverse fate ["vaincus des cieux qui pleuvent"] - wherein he shows a sensitive appreciation of those who, like himself but for different reasons, are breaking with the past in order to seek a new life in another country. This idea is echoed in his concluding reference to:

> Des cadavres de jours rongés par les étoiles
> Parmi le bruit des flots et les derniers serments

as he recognises again the waste of days given to the melancholy inspired by the stars described in his Chanson, with a background of the sound of "la mer impétueuse" [mentioned in "Le Printemps]

and Annie's broken engagement. When he sees a pathetic little bouquet of flowers floating on the water as the quayside recedes into the distance, it looms large in his consciousness and he admits in a faint suggestion that he would at this moment have exchanged the glory that is to be his goal henceforth for the love those flowers represent:

Il aurait voulu ce bouquet comme la gloire

All his past memories of England flash before his eyes [328] just as they must do for an emigrant: The link with the past is broken - what of the future? For a start, he employs his Fantasist self-mockery by saying that his rêverie about the past is shattered by the strident blast of the ship's siren - "une sirène moderne" whose modernity in no way obscures the symbolism of the mythological sirens who show their mockery ["tiriez aux mers la langue"] in "Lul de Faltenin" like the histrion in "Un Soir". But the positive note is still there: he asseverates his determination to turn from melancholy memories and devote himself to the present day.

The second poem is "Un Soir" [329] generally assumed to have been composed at this same period. If the emigrant was

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[328] Compare the poem "1904" [OP p.355] where he does in fact recall his experiences "A Rome, à Nice et à Cologne", and the trogne of the Carnival, ending with the striking line: "Que ne t'avais-je entre mes bras".

[329] "Un Soir" [OP p.126]. A MS in the Fonds Doucet is on writing paper from Austin's Fox Railway Restaurant, which he frequented from 1904.

stoically looking back to the past with thoughts of the future in the back of his mind, the persona of "Un Soir" is looking resolutely forward with thoughts of the past in the back of his mind. First of all we note that the bird of prey has now become an eagle, the poet's preferred bird-symbol for himself from now on. He is trying out his wings both as a man and as a poet with a new prospect. But he is far from sure of his strength as yet, for as he descends from the heights [whether of meditation or poetic composition] he is beset with fears as to his ability to carry out his plans, for he wants to be one of the "rameurs du renouveau" and not among those who "n'égalent pas leurs destins" ["Marizibill"]. His appeal for support to an intercessor is presumably addressed to the Virgin, taking the lamps of the city as candles burning for Her. For the city itself has no heart; it is metallic, mechanical, but it is the only star to guide him, although it is drowned "dans tes yeux bleus". Granted the colour of his own eyes and the change of vous to tu, this can only be a reference to Annie, linked as if by force of memory as in the conclusions of "La Chanson du mal Aimé" with the tramcars sputtering their electric sparks. This is the new illumination, taking the place of the light of the setting sun similarly employed for background lighting in earlier poems such as "Merlin et la vieille Femme", and it is bound up with the inclement London of a well-wrapped-up Annie as the roar and flash of the trams is associated with her arm slipping

through his:

Quand les tramways roulaient jaillissaient des feux pâles
Sur des oiseaux galeux
Et tout ce qui tremblait dans tes yeux de mes songes
... ...
O vêtue ton bras se levait

But these two stanzas are in the past tense. He shakes free of memories before they choke him once again, and adopts his Fantasist pose of stoicism and self-mockery:

Vois l'histrion tire la langue aux attentives
Un fantôme s'est suicidé

He draws our attention to the attitudinising poet poking out his tongue at all who would take him seriously [himself included]. For Annie to have sailed away after delaring her love dead, is for a ghost to have committed suicide. He boldly proclaims that the memory that haunted him is a ghost that has been laid. He faces the future with determination to play out his allotted part in life, which is to accept the loves destined for him along with the suffering he believes inseparable:

Jouons donc cet amour aux dés

It is still the attitude he expressed in "La Tzigane" as "l'espoir d'aimer en chemin". This acceptance of predestined love and suffering is then expressed in terms of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem:

Les chemins sont fleuris et les palmes s'avancent
Vers toi

in which the "chemins ... fleuris" echo the "chemins des rosiers tout fleuris" of "Dôme de Cologne", and the palmes may also symbolise the promised gloire of "Les sept Épées" and of "L'Emigrant de Landor Road".

In short, we have here a confusion of personalities and references typical of the technique Apollinaire demonstrated in his London poem. The first stanza is addressed to the Virgin; but the second, in the same terms, refers to Annie. And as Annie had been a traitress like Judas ["l'apôtre au figuier" is introduced by the word suicidé] then the poet of the third stanza is seen as the Christ of the fourth stanza. The message of the conclusion is addressed to himself [from his "je" to his "tu"]: Face up to your destiny of love and suffering as Jesus did. Seeing his devotion to poetry as a replacement for, or perhaps as a variant of, religion, this comparison of himself with Christ need not be surprising. It has been suggested several times in earlier poems, and will be again. Many years ago, when discussing Apollinaire's religious beliefs, his close friend André Salmon explained that they had both agreed that "nous sommes tous des Christ." [330] Each of us follows His pattern in our own terms. But Apollinaire had already hinted in "Les Bacs" that some people found it impossible to be Saints in the accepted sense of ascetics or even anti-feminists, himself least of all; and that Saint Christopher had set the example of worshipping by doing whatever he could do best, whether ferrying a boat or writing poems. His "religion of poetry" now beginning

[330] In the course of a long interview accorded the writer in 1948, M. André Salmon discussed at length their religious beliefs of those days. Apollinaire undoubtedly saw Jesus as a fatherless Man, like himself [compare "des Christ inférieurs" of "Zone", OP p.44] seeking a spiritual father as a replacement, and that search becoming a noble way of life.

to take shape was far from irreligious, much less blasphemous, in his own eyes.

Not surprisingly, there is only one more reference in his work to the problem of relating sex to his vocation as poet, and this is in the context of his new dictum of "imaginer pour un homme c'est créer". It is in "Lul de Faltenin" [331] that all loose ends of his immaturity will be tied up, so that he can at last venture into the realms of true inspiration.

The publication of "Lul de Faltenin" in La Phalange on 15 November 1907 [along with "La Tzigane" and "Les Colchiques"] was to mark the definite emergence of Guillaume Apollinaire as a recognised poet of substance. His subsequent regular appearance in reputable reviews earned him at last the long sought reputation with a wide public that gave a name and identity to the young man who had felt handicapped by the anonymous circumstances of his birth. To appreciate the cause and nature of this important turning-point in his life and career, we have to distinguish two factors marking the years 1903 to 1907: his change of emphasis from writing poetry to seeking publication; and his entry into a new circle of friends and interest.

In the first place, Apollinaire directed all his attention towards getting his name into print. The urgency with which he

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[331] "Lul de Faltenin" OP p.97 is known in MS dated 15 Nov. 1907, and as the editors of OP put it cautiously [p.1058]:"Selon certains témoignages, le poème aurait été composé en 1907." It appeared on 15 November 1907 in La Phalange.

undertook this campaign derived from his vocational persuasion that it was high time he had "arrived", but it was sharpened by the indigence of his circumstances and directed by his refusal to take seriously any means of earning money other than writing. Accordingly, he drew on his stock of already composed work which still awaited publication, rather than spend time on new poems. For example, in January 1904 he gained acceptance of Le Festin d'Esope in "La Synagogue" and "Les Femmes"; and in March these were followed by L'Enchanteur pourrissant, gaining him attention as a serious writer of some achievement. He strengthened this reputation in July by an article in Le Mercure de France on Thaïs. His virtual inactivity as a creative poet was not, however, quite the negative outcome of this programme that it might appear. Coinciding with a sudden influx of new ideas, as it did, this period which lasted until the appearance of 'Lul de Faltenin" should rather be regarded as what German critics call a schöpferische Pause, a necessary gestation preparing the poetry of his maturity.

For when Madame de Kostrowitzky moved to Le Vésinet, Apollinaire frequented Le Chatou, where by a happy chance he met Vlaminck and Derain. The remarkable vitality of Vlaminck must have been a healthy corrective to any inertia left by his exhaustion after the affair with Annie. But, more important, this contact with a new area of intellectual and esthetic ferment introduced the poet to the lively field of painting at a particularly exciting point of its development. In May he was

introduced to Picasso, whose fertile explorations into esthetics intensified and influenced his own; and to Max Jacob, whose personality and mysticism struck another responsive chord in Apollinaire's character. For some time, to be truthful, Apollinaire understood surprisingly little of the revolution in the plastic arts being prepared by Derain, Braque, Vlaminck and Picasso whose company he frequented assiduously at the now famous "Bateau lavoir" of the rue de Ravignan where Jacob and Picasso were neighbours. This was partly through his ignorance of contemporary art, and partly through an apparent timidity.

This ignorance was caused primarily by lack of exposure to current works by the young painters, but it was also self-induced to a certain extent. His need for bolstering support led him into a precocious enthusiasm for, and a precariously based espousal of the fresh ideas of, his painter friends. When, in April 1905, he contributed a short appreciation of his new friend Picasso to the one and only issue of La Revue immoraliste, he saw only those traits that he was interested in developing in himself. [332] Properly decrying

[332] A characteristic notable even in his most serious and informed exegesis of Cubism later on. In art criticism Apollinaire's writings, though of great historical interest, are not valued nowadays as being accurately informative. They tell us more about the poet than about the painters. One is reminded of St.-Exupéry's portrait of Rivière in Vol de Nuit. Hence, presumably and in part, the almost hostile attitude evinced by Marie Laurencin in an interview accorded the writer on the subject of Apollinaire's seeking for collective strength with the painters. Compare Apollinaire's own words regarding his writer friends: "une communauté de pensées et de méthodes nous a pour ainsi dire réunis." [Quoted by Adéma, op.cit. p.91].

the then current idea that Picasso was a young "désenchanté", Apollinaire, in his very first incursion into contemporary art criticism, wrote: "Je pense au contraire," giving this cocky statement a line to itself, with the assurance that permitted him to masquerade as a financial expert in Le Guide du Rentier, and continued: "Tout l'enchante et son talent incontestable me paraît au service d'une fantaisie qui mêle justement le délicieux et l'horrible, l'abject et le délicat." [333] Blessed as we are with hindsight, we can dismiss this as a shallow offering on the subject of some of Picasso's greatest work [334] - but who else had noticed it with informed enthusiasm? Unabashed, the young poet proceeded to publish the first major article on Picasso a month later in La Plume.

But it should also be remembered in mitigation of his rushing into print to defend his friends with more enthusiasm than enlightenment, that despite his meagre employment at the Banque de Châteaufort et Poitevin, rue Chaussée d'Antin, where he started in September 1905, Apollinaire was desperately poor. Any scrap of writing that brought in money was justified at that time. Hence his bitter resentment towards those reviews that published his contributions without payment: glory for the poet was welcome, but the man had to eat [335]. This situation

[333] La Revue immoraliste, April 1905.

[334] We quote Picasso's own evaluation of his work of this period as given in an interview just after the Liberation, when he was uncovering and sorting out his possessions.

[335] Letters to James Onimus, Mercure de France cit.

became so bad that in 1906 he apparently wrote no poetry at all, and sank to churning out the concentrated pornography of Les Mémoires d'un jeune Don Juan and his infamous Onze Mille Verges. From another point of view, this writing and his concurrent frequentation of prostitutes combined to help him detach himself from the obsession of Annie, and was to provide part of the motivation for "Lul de Faltenin" in that the poem was to sum up his reaction to this aspect of the period.

As to his apparent timidity as the other factor in his slowness to throw in his lot with the painters in an enlightened fashion, this was occasioned by an innate sense of politics. He was on the threshold of realising his greatest ambition: to become known. In his efforts to obtain recognition and impress the "right people" in order to get into print, he adopted a literary strategy of "beaucoup d'amis, le moins possible d'ennemis ... [formule] qu'il fait sienne désormais et dont sa bienveillance naturelle lui facilite l'observation." [336] He thus tended to appear conservative, or at any rate cautious in admitting to participation in innovations. A good illustration of these principles was afforded as late as 1908. In April of that year the "Salon des Artistes indépendants" held a series of three lectures on the subject of "Entretiens sur les temps héroïques", the third of which was given by Apollinaire and entitled "La Phalange nouvelle" [337]. In this, while berating

[336] Adéma op.cit. p.90.

[337] La Poésie symboliste: "La Phalange nouvelle", L'Edition, 1908, p.131 et seq.

the imitators ["les singes" of "Onirocritique", published on 15 February of that year in La Phalange] he showed himself mistrustful of any innovation not based on tradition: "Quelle serait la caractéristique d'une tradition, sinon la continuité? ... de quelle tradition peuvent se réclamer les jeunes gens qui, sans souci de création, tentent en vain de ressuciter les systèmes poétiques morts..." The whole lecture is a masterpiece of politic caution, but indeed this attitude towards innovation, paradoxical in one of the greatest innovators of the pre-war years, was to remain constant to the end of his days.

Not surprisingly, then, he admired Picasso's blue and pink periods to the extent of showing their influence in the little poetry he did write, though he was to be shocked all over again, as much as any bourgeois non-initiate, at "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" in 1907. How then are we going to be able to account for Apollinaire's daring leap into the avant-garde in 1908 with such poems as "Le Brasier"? In order to further explain "Lul de Faltenin" as the pivot of his development, we must take a brief glance at the few poems that witness to the schöpferische Pause of these four preparatory years.

The first, "Le Mendiant" [338], continues the suicidal mood of "Un Soir". In a moment of depression, longing for the recognition that seems so desperately slow in coming, the poet sees himself as a cursed beggar with thoughts of death as the

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[338] "Le Mendiant" OP p.565 was published on 1 April, 1905.

only hope of relief from his poverty:

Sois-tu maudit Rien n'est tombé dans ma sébile

But he persists; as with his editors:

Je reviendrai demain dans mon infortune
Voir flamber l'aurore l'Electre du matin

In this more optimistic image, although he sees rejection of his work as rejection of himself, the old Oedipus complex is restated in its female counterpart Electra, as the sun is drawn to "la nuit ta mère incestueuse", but still the poet clings to the knowledge that that same sun must rise in a new day, as he foresaw in "La Chanson du mal Aimé". And although after such a long wait he is attracted to negative thoughts of Thanatos, the personification of death, he adopts the Fantasist attitude in a line used in "Un Soir", and waits for such suicidal thoughts to pass, telling himself to forget his pains:

Puisque tu veux nier la douleur positive
Adapte un masque hilare et drape l'oripeau
Va L'histrion tire la langue aux attentives
J'attends que passe Thanatos et son troupeau

We note in passing that "Le Suicidé" [339] describes three lilies over his tomb, replacing the seven swords of melancholy: "l'un sort de ma plaie", "l'autre sort de mon coeur" and "l'autre sort de ma bouche". This is the body the passer-by of "Le Mendiant" would find; but one gathers that if only the anonymous citizen may hear his voice ["ma plainte", the flower of his lips] the other wounds will heal, too.

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[339] "Le Suicidé" OP p.566.

The healing process and gradual reorientation already noticed in "L'Emigrant de Landor Road" gains strength as publishers do allow the passer-by to hear his voice. In "Salomé" [340] one has to look hard to realise that the backward glance with its thoughts of cruelty and death is still a basic ingredient. Again it is hidden in fantasy and irony. Salome, who dances willingly "pour que sourie encore une fois Jean-Baptiste" as she naïvely tells the king, admits to her mother that "mon coeur battait battait très fort à sa parole". But parental control of the outcome of her dancing kills something in the girl's heart,

> Et tous les lys quand vos soldats ô roi Hérode
> L'emmenèrent se sont flétris dans mon jardin

One notices how the imagery of dancing remains constant from the time of Maria, L'Enchanteur pourrissant and "Merlin et la vieille Femme", but that the equally familiar withering of flowers is now applied to that particular flower currently associated with death in "Le Suicidé" and "La Dame" [341]. There is no doubt that the

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[340] "Salomé" OP p.86, first published in Vers et Prose, December 1905 - January 1906 number. As is suggested by the editors of OP [Notes, p.1055] "l'ironie cache la peine profonde que causa la conduite d'Annie à son égard" for "il y introduit une fantaisie qui n'a que l'apparence du détachement."

[341] "La Dame", OP p.127, appeared under the title of "Le Retour" in Le Festin d'Esope of December 1903 as if to suggest melodramatically that the poet would kill himself over Annie. If so, the threat to kill himself was no more effective than the threat to kill her. But of course the lines "Les lys du jardin sont flétris.../ Quel est donc ce mort qu'on emporte?" go back to "La Clef" and to a brouillon, "La petite Souris".

years from 1903 to 1907 were haunted by the darkest fears, "le lys des effrois" which arose from his wound every time a ray of light illuminated it, as the poet revealed in "Le Suicidé". But while this aspect of "Salomé" may well refer to Annie's instinctive softening towards the pathetically suffering poet being thwarted by her parents, we notice that the daughter of Hérodiad hides her sorrow in more dancing - this time to be taken as ironic and probably representing Apollinaire's poetry since 1903:

> Nous creuserons un trou et l'y enterrons
> Nous planterons des fleurs et danserons en rond

Again the thought is to bury the past tragedy in irony and continue.

But the mockery of the Fantasists gives way in "Saltimbanques" and "Crépuscule" [342] as the influence of Apollinaire's forward-looking new friends makes itself felt. The former, taking as its subject "les baladins" dear to Picasso at this time, nevertheless has them receding into the distance in Apollinaire's rejection symbol; and in an echo of "des hameaux sans clocher" of "Le Printemps" here "les villages sans églises" again have orchards whose fruit-trees are "resigned" to being pillaged. There is a hint of Rhine memories, too, in the last two lines:

> L'ours et le singe animaux sages
> Quêtent des sous sur leur passage

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[342] "Saltimbanques" OP p.90 and "Crépuscule" OP p.64 were originally embedded in a common mould quoted in OP p.1056. They appeared as separate poems in Les Argonautes of Feb. 1909. The dedication of "Crépuscule" in Alcools to Marie Laurencin is a later addition.

The begging mountebanks and their bear are linked to the begging gypsies of "La Tzigane" with their dancing bear, but now the poet has identified himself as "Le Mendiant" as if acknowledging that that old prophecy has been fulfilled. Oedipus is now the blind beggar who has accepted his fate. On the other hand, there are no real backward glances in "Crépuscule". The Harlequin and Harlequiness though still linked with "Des sorciers venus de Bohème" and haunted by "les ombres des morts" show life in terms of the traditional figures of the Commedia dell'Arte adopted by Picasso in the contemporary setting of the circus. The poet, however unsure of the present, may be glimpsed in the guise of a shadowy figure:

> Un charlatan crépusculaire
> Vante les tours que l'on va faire

and even if he cannot foresee the future, he is becoming surer that it will not be without issue:

> L'aveugle berce un bel enfant

As so often the case, it was a chance encounter that sparked off the poem that marks the end of this dark period of uneasy balance during which Apollinaire never quite lost hope of the coming sunrise.

In January 1907 Apollinaire was delighted to meet up again with Louis de Gonzague Frick, an old school friend from the Collège Saint-Charles. Memories of Monaco flooded back, this time happy ones with the prospect of a close and trusted friend to share them with. In April he moved into a flat in rue Léonie

[about to become rue Henner] so that for the first time he had a place to call his own, in which he could surround himself with his favourite books and see what friends he liked. This new luxury encouraged him to resume writing again in a series of short poems, mostly quatrains, linked by the theme of creatures in a Bestiary which was to become Le Bestiaire, ou le Cortège d'Orphée:

> Je souhaite dans ma maison:
> Une femme ayant sa raison,
> Un chat passant parmi les livres,
> Des amis en toute saison
> Sans lesquels je ne peux pas vivre. [343]

The form of this composition was peculiarly suitable to encourage the poet to write again, for it could be put aside and taken up as the exigencies of earning his daily bread dictated. His new circumstances and the resumption of purposeful writing reawakened his poetic genius and strengthened his confidence: "Apollinaire a su exprimer en quelques notations discrètes, souvent voilées par l'humour, une confidence plus profonde qu'il n'y paraît." [344] Once more he saw himself as Orpheus, and

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[343] "Le Chat", the sixth poem in the collection, OP p.8. The first state of this work was published in La Phalange of 15 June 1908, entitled "La Marchande des quatre saisons, ou le bestiaire mondain". The project was first conceived in the studio of Picasso, who was doing woodcuts of birds. With the addition of twelve later poems [not treated here], and illustrated by Raoul Dufy, the work was completed in 1910 and given the definitive title of "Le Bestiaire, ou le Cortège d'Orphée". It was published by Deplanche but proved a financial loss at the time.

[344] OP p.1038.

was able to write in the second poem, "La Tortue":

Mes doigts sûrs font sonner la lyre

This line makes an informative contrast with his "doigts endoloris" of June 1903, as if he is deliberately cancelling the past. Indeed, the words and tone of the third poem, "Le Cheval", are more than reminiscent of "Dôme de Cologne", but show a firmer belief in his destiny:

Mes durs rêves formels sauront te chevaucher
Mon destin au char d'or sera ton beau cocher

Above all, then, in this earlier group of eighteen poems, we notice the firmness of the renewed resolve:

Le travail mène à la richesse.
Pauvres poètes, travaillons! [345]

Finally, in the little poem "La Marchande" he considers love again, fearful of "les volantes Sirènes"even when in their least dangerous season "vers la mi-décembre, où ces oiseaux font leurs nids, et l'on pensait qu'alors la mer était calme." [346] But he also recognises that there are still "les Anges du paradis", for in reality, as if as an answer to the wish he expressed in "Le Chat", to complete his joy in his own flat, his books and his friends, he also met a young woman whom he felt to be an angel rather than his old enemy the siren.

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[345] "La Chenille", OP p.16. "La Tortue" is given in OP p.4, and "Le Cheval" on p.5.

[346] "La Marchande" [i.e. "la femelle de l'alcyon"] was renamed "Orphée" along with the change in title of the collection, and may be found in OP p.26. The poet's note on the Siren is given in the notes he added to accompany the poems [refer OP p.35].

It was Pablo Picasso who, with perspicacity, introduced him to Marie, jokingly saying that he had found a "fiancée" for him. "Tout dans Marie Laurencin, vive, espiègle, intelligente, séduisit Apollinaire. Elle-même ne résista pas à son charme et rapidement ils devinrent inséparables ... elle habite à la Chapelle, la rue Léonie est proche et elle s'y rend fort souvent, mettant une gracieuse touche féminine dans le logis de son ami... elle est son ombre, une partie de lui-même. Il dit d'elle: Elle est gaie, elle est bonne, elle est spirituelle, c'est un petit soleil, c'est moi en femme!" [347]

It was obvious to Apollinaire that the turning-point had at last come, and the sun had risen. Renewal of his long friendship with not only Onimus and Frick, but also René Dalize and Toussaint Luca, caused him to look back to the formative years of his youth on the Mediterranean, and his first apprenticeship as a poet. He felt it was time to reassess his life and his career to date, especially as his thoughts turned positively to the future. Should he dare, after all he had suffered, once more yield to love? Could he now break through and compose something truly original that would enable him to compete worthily with his new friends whose paintings were clearly forging ahead into exciting new realms? What, in his achievement so far, promised the most likely line of development? What, in his life, needed resolving if he were to consider marriage with Marie?

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[347] Adéma op.cit., p.96.

Once more he turned to poetic meditation and creation to clarify his position and enable him to plan his future. The outcome was recorded in "Lul de Faltenin".

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The setting of this poem is clearly the sea and cliffs of Monaco, images evoked by Frick, towhom it is dedicated. Already in 1905, however, Apollinaire had published a sonnet entitled "La Fuite" [348] which mentions the sirène, matelots, rameurs, choeurs and méduses which figure in "Lul de Faltenin"; the "méduses violettes" of "La Fuite" are explained more accurately with reference to their translucent mauve tentacles as "méduses ... aux chevelures violettes" in "La Méduse", one of the later poems of Le Bestiaire, following "Le Poulpe". This recollection of rowing boats with his friends was sufficiently deeply etched to be revived as late as 1912, in "Zone":

> Maintenant tu es au bord de la Méditerranée
> Sous les citronniers qui sont en fleur toute l'année
> Avec tes amis tu te promènes en barque
> L'un est Nissard il y a un Mentonasque et deux Turbiasques
> Nous regardons avec effroi les poulpes des profondeurs
> Et parmi les algues nagent les poissons ...

However, where these images in "La Fuite" and more clearly "L'Enfant d'Or" seem to relate to Angélique and her lover's gifts, or simply to nostalgia in "Zone", in "Lul de Faltenin" their role is that of a vehicle for the last of Apollinaire's

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[348] "La Fuite", OP p.649, published 15 June in La Plume; compare the later version "L'Enfant d'Or", OP p.577, published in Les trois Roses of Oct.-Nov.1918. Other references are to "Zone", OP p.42, and in Le Bestiaire to "Le Poulpe", OP p.22, and "La Méduse", OP p.23.

debates on the subject of sex, love and poetic creativity in their three-cornered opposition. [349]

Establishing first the objective incident or manifest narrative, we see that the poet has been out in a small boat, watching the seagulls skimming over the waves or making a patch of white on the water that reminds him of sirens, as he described elsewhere:

> Voici le toquet panaché des sirènes
> Il trompa les marins qu'aiment ces oiseaux-là [350]

He is rowed ashore by his friends and climbs up the rocks to a cave, ostensibly to get a closer look at one of the nests, but chiefly to show off his prowess. The cliffs on the promontory and to the west of Monte Carlo are precipitous as well as very high, and contain a number of almost inaccessible caves sloping down into the rock, worn by dripping water. One of these, which suits the description given in the poem and whose westerly location is tenuously indicated by the origin of his friends of "Zone", had newly been explored in the discovery of "Grimaldi man", and, although in the news in Apollinaire's youth, had not been made accessible as it now is. After his difficult climb he is hot from his exertion, and so he fans himself with a branch of withered leaves fallen from one of the trees that cling precariously to the upper face of the cliffs at Mentone. This

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[349] The connection between the Mediterranean Sea, the "royal lineage" of "La Fuite" and "Onirocritique", and the sexual theme of Apollinaire's heredity and his mother's amours, is made elsewhere in the writer's "The Hermit and the Mermaid", Actes du Xe Congrès de l'AULLA of Feb.1966, p.29, which links "L'Ermite", "Le Larron" and "Lul de Faltenin".

[350] Untitled poem, OP p.567.

action scares the gull, which bobs its head in the fashion peculiar to those birds when their nest is threatened, thinking that the man was brandishing a weapon. He tries to reassure the gull:

> Une arme ô ma tête inquiète
> J'agite un feuillard défleuri

On his way up, he has cut himself on the sharp rocks, but gladly accepts the pain "de mes blessures bien-aimées" because he is exhibiting his physical prowess and daring. Flocks of gulls swoop towards him, "flairant la route à ma rencontre". Again we notice the exactness of his observation and the authenticity of the experience, as this is the characteristic way in which a colony of gulls whose females are nesting on inaccessible rocks attempt to drive off an invader. Now he is sorry for the terrified female with bright eyes and mouth opened wide and soundlessly in the typical defensive attitude of the gull. Although it had seemed an attractive venture viewed from sea-level, now that he has obtained a close view of the gull on its nest in the mouth of the cave, he is ashamed of having disturbed it. Moreover, his two arms ache, a fact which hurts his pride as well as his muscles, a double humiliation which brings a flush to his cheeks, since his real motive in climbing had been to show his prowess. He explores the cave while he is up there, descending into its darkness by steps made slippery by dripping water. When he emerges again, the sun is blinding, but he must climb down again - a

feat even more difficult, as any climber knows, especially as his arms and shoulders hurt atrociously. Safely back at the bottom of the cliff he is ashamed by his performance, since it has cost him so much pain. Looking back to the objective, he sees that it has lost its attraction and all he has gained is his wounds.

As in other poems having this function of self-examination, we may see that this exploit is an allegory of the way he has lived of recent years. Disappointed by his affair with Annie, he had attempted to bolster his ego by cheap sexual conquests without love. Speaking of "le plaisir évident qu'il trouve à fréquenter certaines 'maisons'" during 1906, Marcel Adéma sees it as "simplement le goût du plaisir, l'accomplissement d'un acte éminemment utile à l'équilibre humain en général et au sien en particulier." [351] But in fact the poet was rather more sensitive and deep-thinking than to behave in an animal fashion without a twinge of conscience. He had used his fellow human beings for his own gratification and to soothe his hurt pride. Was this not to be rejected with due penitence before he could look upon Marie with the respect that led to love and marriage? Looking back he could see only cheap "victory", and he had not come through morally unscathed, for he had compromised his principles regarding love that must lead to fertility, and had risked killing his capacity for true love. Nor had it en-

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[351] Adéma, op.cit., p.89.

couraged him to write any worthwhile poetry. As he looked forward to the dazzling new day of hope for happiness in Marie's love and satisfaction in his career, he felt the fresh surge of inspiration to write something constructively new that would be as valid as the advances made by the painters.

After this cursory interpretation of the fairly obvious second level of meaning, we may proceed to examine the symbols and technique Apollinaire employs, in order to appreciate the even deeper levels of signification the work contains for the poet. We are aided by the existence of his original manuscript [352] which shows us in its many alterations and rearrangements how deeply he sought not merely to describe an objective experience with a shallow symbolism, but to plumb the depths of self-expression by his personal method of association of ideas. Not surprisingly, the logic and chronological order of the description has been sacrificed, or even broken into as in stanza 7, to achieve this.

The title, with its "Lul" and "Faltenin", the hermetic sex references of "Les sept Epées", informs us that sex is the true subject of the work. The first stanza, by contrasting sirènes and anges, shows us in what connection the question of

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[352] This much worked-over MS, dated 15 November 1907, was reproduced in La Revue des Sciences humaines of Oct.-Dec. 1956 and again by Décaudin in Le Dossier d'Alcools, p.159 [in printed form] to which references are made herein. Refer also to articles by René Louis in Le Flâneur des deux Rives of June and Sept. 1954, and that by Scott Bates in the June 1955 number; and Leroy C. Breunig in La Revue des Sciences humaines, Oct.-Dec. 1956 entitled "Le Manuscrit de Lul de Faltenin".

sex is to be examined. This contrast refers us to the same opposition of the early poem "La Marchande" retitled "Orphée" in Le Bestiaire:

> La femelle de l'alcyon,
> L'Amour, les volantes Sirènes,
> Savent de mortelles chansons
> Dangereuses et inhumaines.
> N'oyez pas ces oiseaux maudits,
> Mais les Anges du paradis.

Here the poet tells us that the female halcyon, Cupid, and sirens, are all cursed "birds" [winged creatures, even the "dieu ailé"] whose attractions spell death to such free souls as seamen [and, by inference, all men whose mission of exploration and discovery sets them apart in life]. One should not hearken to such creatures as these, he says, but to Angels. Probing further, we remember that this mythical bird of happiness nested on the water at the winter solstice, producing by its magical power a period of calm weather. This suggests that love has a calming effect and brings happiness to the poet ... for a limited period. After the "halcyon days" the siren returns to its destructive work. But surely, Marie could be no siren; the religious connotations of her name rather suggested a fourth winged creature, an angel [353], and therefore he could listen to her call with condidence that she would later not

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[353] A thought made more explicit later when he added "La Colombe" to his Bestiary [OP p.28]. Note also that the change of title from "La Marchande" to "Orphée" suggests a shift of emphasis and a problem of attitude overcome: whereas the early symbol, the enchantress, put to sleep, imprisoned or killed, the poet, the siren can be resisted by the poet Orpheus.

turn and destroy him as Annie had done.

But the unregenerate Lul de Faltenin has to consider the complications and implications of this decision he is drawn to make, and the terms of expression in the parallel first stanza are more complicated. It is not a question here of simply opposing to the "cursed" winged creatures of sexual attraction an angelic creature of pure love and instinctively choosing the angel. Just as when he put himself on trial in "Le Larron", he seems to feel he must first repent for his past, completely dissociating himself from the sirens, and confess and be excused [in his own eyes] before considering the angel; and he must also see how his poetic creativity is affected, which involves a second theme and a parallel series of associative references in the symbols. The seagull has this duality of reference to both the sex - love opposition, and also to poetic vision. We deal with the former theme first.

The cruel beak and feet of the scavenger seen close up remind Apollinaire of sirens, whereas when he had seen them in exhilarating flight, skimming before the white horses on the crest of a wave when he was out at sea, only the pure white of their soft wings had attracted his attention, suggesting angels and luring him ashore. This first stanza couched in the imperfect tense is really a flash-back in the manner of Mallarmé's "Après-midi d'un faune", stating the terms in which the whole incident about to be recounted has to be seen: "J'écoutais ces choeurs rivaux". He has to consider whether this angelic call of true

love is really a siren lure, liable to still the song of the boatmen. The opposition of these two songs, that of the rowers before they land Orpheus, and that of the siren who had been calling him, is restated in "La Fuite" in a parallel so close as to be instructive here:

> La chanson des rameurs sur les vagues se traîne
> La reine et son amant l'écoutent les yeux clos,
> Sans crainte d'un récif ni d'un chant de sirène
> Qui s'incantent peut-être au choeur des matelots. [354]

There is no other explanation in "Lul de Faltenin" of the possible points of origin of "ces choeurs rivaux", since the gulls, now that he has landed, oppose only their "terribles bouches muettes" to his own "grands cris".

Adopting the present tense in stanza 2 to recount the narrative, the poet explains that the stick that frightens the birds is actually waved ...

> Pour écarter l'haleine tiède
> Qu'exhalent contre mes grands cris
> Vos terribles bouches muettes

Surely, no degree of sensitivity would detect the warmth of a seagull's breath? Again we must have reccurse to another poem, this time "Zone", not as it appeared in Les Soirées de Paris of December 1912 [the year of his rupture with Marie], but in its preoriginal brouillon which expands the reference of what would

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[354] The word lèvres in stanza 4 reads originally in the MS récif, as in "La Fuite", making the parallel even doser. Refer OP p.649.

become line 82 in the final version of Alcools [355]:

L'haleine des femmes est fétide et leur voix est menteuse

Here the poet was recalling this same period of his self-abasement in Paris which had produced a feeling of revulsion towards women [accompanied by pity for the prostitute as an individual] immediately after which he recalls the memory of boating with his Mentonasque friend. It appears, then, that just as he had been referring to seagulls as first sirens and then angels [without ever mentioning the gulls themselves] he is now referring to them as low women whom he has recently frequented. We have to note that instead of employing his early Symbolist manner, using the actual object [the gull] to suggest a siren or angel and symbolise sexual attraction, the poet has, in "Lul de Faltenin", gone straight to the siren without mentioning seagulls until the vague "oiseaux" of the last stanza. He thus progresses from the normal technique of the Symbolists by taking up his position at the middle term: the sirer points back to the original objective experience [gull] and on to the suggested level [love's false lure] at the same time. This is to some extent the Fantasist modification of Symbolism, "à mi-chemin de l'irréel" [356], but also the outcome of Apollinaire's own method whose evolution we have traced and which is henceforth to become his most valued technique of linking external images to the

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[355] The brouillon is quoted by Décaudin in his Dossier, pp. 73 to 81, the quotations made herein being found on p.78 and p.81.

[356] Discussed on pages 325 and 326 herein.

deepest realities of his unconscious. In this poem he stays in this middle zone, using the flexibility of its rapidly shifting associative values to annihilate time, space and the concatenising logic of the external world. This produces obscurity for the reader, but is admirably suited to the poet's purpose of ruminating, in the inchoate here-and-now of Bergsonian pure duration, upon the problems that beset him, seeking not a solution falsified by a logicalised spatial representation of coexistent and interpenetrating data of immediate consciousness, but a solution that springs spontaneously from his personality as a whole. Viewed in this way, the passage from siren to angel and on to the prostitute's humiliating mouth via the wings, bobbing head and open beak of the unmentioned seagull, shows the deeper, truer logic of Surrealism.

At the same time, since the whole incident is to be seen symbolically, all its "stage properties" are symbolic at the level of the sex theme. The climber displays a feuillard in his guise of "Phallus tenens", and it is already défleuri. This level of interpretation explains the "haleine tiède" in the terms of revulsion amplified in the suppressed lines of the "Zone" brouillon:

> Et j'humilie à une pauvre fille horrible ma bouche
> Je baise cette sorte de plaie chevelue et rouge

This action is motivated by pity in "Zone":

> Je suis avec une putain ...
> ... ...
> Et j'ai une pitié immense pour son ventre
> C'est pour ne pas la vexer qu'avec dégoût j'y entre

In "Lul de Faltenin" the other part of the motivation is given:

> J'agite un feuillard défleuri
> Pour écarter l'haleine tiède
> Qu'exhalent ...
> Vos terribles bouches

In other words, Lul admits that in frequenting prostitutes he was basically trying to rid himself of the sex urge. This is corroborated in the preoriginal "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 ...

Stanza 3 expresses his disenchantment. From sea-level the birds had looked attractive, but close up they prove revolting:

> Il y a là-bas la merveille
> Au prix d'elle que valez-vous

These lines, introducing the question of relative values, give us our first clear indication of the second theme. This "attainment" had cost him his earlier poetic vision, specifically of a white angel, but in the broader sense he admits that sexual gratification was killing his poetry, not permitting it as "Le Larron" had proposed. In this context the admission that "elle me fait mourir" is more accurate than his long-standing claim that it was woman that killed the poet, or even that the poet was "tué par l'amour". Faced with the challenge of his love for Marie, based on intellectual compatability and a community of artistic interest, rather than on merely physical attraction such as Annie's, he is at last making a true distinction between sex and love. By comparison with this higher standard, recollection of his profligacy causes him to blush: "Le sang jaillit ... à

mon aspect", and he is led to his confession:

... et je l'avoue
Le meurtre de mon double orgueil

This avowal emerging from the deletions of the manuscript of "Lul de Faltenin" shows Apollinaire as being dissatisfied with his first wording:

... je l'avoue
Mon assassinat de la veille

His pride was involved, and à double titre: he had been killed both as a poet and as a man. Not only his poetry but his capacity for real love was being deadened as the destructive, revolting siren replaced the angel. This is the deeper echo of the double humiliation of the narrative level whereby his pride in his strength as a man had been defeated in his climb, and the objective also had proved a disappointment.

Stanza 4 elaborates the comparison between siren and angel. If the boatmen had rowed him safely away from the attractive lips at sea-level, was he not now faced by the flock of sirens swooping towards him to inflict the wounds [the concomitant of the blood which "jaillit de mes otelles"] he took a perverse delight in accepting? In "La Fuite" the word récifs replaces lèvres, as was originally proposed in the manuscript, emphasising that the bird thought to be an angel might well prove to be a siren luring him ashore under an attractive disguise. The possibility that the attraction he felt towards Marie might thus be in reality a lure that would destroy his poetry had to be faced, and the fact that at this point the

manuscript is exceptionally worked over [some fifteen alternative lines are sketched before the final four are evolved] suggests his efforts to include this thought. For in provisionally amplifying his reference to the sirens he singles out one of them as superior:

> [L'un d'eux est si beau que les autres]
> [L'un d'eux effaçait tous les autres]
> [Aucune fleur n'a son parfum]
> [Il rayonne et sa chair est tendre]

The last-quoted line perhaps echoes his reference to Marie as "mon petit soleil". The masculine ils refers, of course, to "animaux charmés", the birds enchanted by his imagination and desire for love. But this attempt is abandoned and the thought evidently rejected. Marie is no siren, and so she will appear under a different heading [basically that of the angel] two verses later, in stanza 7:

Meanwhile, in stanza 5 he describes how he had felt he must succumb to the power of the sirens, offering as an excuse for his having yielded to them the reason he had given in "Zone":

> Leurs yeux ...
> Eclairent ma compassion

And, after all, what does it matter, he asks:

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

For he is a poet, like Orpheus, who can escape their clutches. He is not bound by the lesser stars represented by the bright, beady eyes of these creatures; he is at the god-like level of a

creator of heavenly constellations. For in an ultimate sense it is not they who charm him, but he who creates the "animaux charmés" and therefore can destroy the enchantment. Astronomically, man is an insignificant speck, but then man is also the astronomer who has seen all this, and the poet is a seeker of self-knowledge and wisdom. "Imaginer c'est créer pour un homme" as he had said, in the same Monte Carlo setting of "Le Printemps". He has allowed the seagulls to assume the power of sirens; but he sees the poetry in life, however he may get hurt.

In stanza 6 he describes how he therefore yielded out of compassion for the women whom they represent despite the disgust of his self-awareness:

> Sirènes enfin je descends
> Dans une grotte avide J'aime
> Vos yeux Les degrées sont glissants

His descent into the cave, down the slippery steps [literal and metaphorical] into the darkness "avid" to swallow him, has about it a good deal of symbolism redolent of Freud's theories of the wish to re-enter the womb. This links with the reference to the sun elsewhere in the poem, to the "naufragé" of "Le Larron" in which work the sun is swallowed by its incestuous mother, the night - a fate avoided in "L'Ignorance" [357] - and also to the "naufrage solaire" and "dieu noyé" of "Le Printemps". It may

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[357] "L'Ignorance", OP p.345:

> Pour éviter la nuit, ta mère incestueuse,
> Dieu circulaire et bon je flotte entre les nues
> Loin de la terre où luitta fille ténébreuse

The last line is given as it appeared in its first state, in the Revue Franco-Wallonne of July 1914 with other early poems. This emphasies that the attraction of the sun takes him far from the moon and stars of the night and their sterile inspiration.

therefore suggest that Apollinaire has yielded partly for this other reason of seeking the comfort of a mother-substitute. At all events, this descent into the cave clearly follows his brandishing of the "feuillard défleuri" in the dream-like logic of the poem, accompanied by feelings of danger, humiliation and disgust. Immediately afterwards his desire has evaporated:

> Au loin que vous devenez naines
> N'attirez plus aucun passant [358]

Standing back from the experience he cannot believe that they have ever attracted anyone: they will certainly no longer attract him. This is the reinforcement of the first two lines of stanza 3. The parallel expression in "Zone" regarding this reaction is even clearer: "Je suis avec une putain qui me paraissait belle" [italics supplied] emphasises that whereas she had appeared beautiful, "C'est avec dégoût" that he now views her. Shakespeare had already described the disillusionment in his sonnet on lust as "Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame" which is "enjoy'd no sooner than despisèd straight". With this activity of his recent years relived and rejected, Apollinaire now turns to consider a totally different type of woman in stanza 7, the "femme ayant sa raison" he had wished for and who had just appeared, surely, as Marie Laurencin:

> Dans l'attentive et bien-apprise
> J'ai vu feuilloler nos forêts

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[358] In preferring this word naines to the easier rhyme mêmes rejected in the MS, Apollinaire echoes the "Hermès ... devenu nain" noted in the similar connection of "Les Sept Epées".

In the heedful, well-bred woman he has seen the future of his race in the symbol of the leafing forests - a reversal of the image in "L'Ermite" where the wood lost its green fertility. The image is then amplified in the following three lines [which recall the image of "Les Sapins" [359]]:

> Mer le soleil se gargarise
> Où les matelots désiraient
> Que vergues et mâts reverdissent

Here Apollinaire reveals the whole intention of his use of the siren symbol in this coastal setting. Although the sailors may be suggested by his companions in the rowing boat, the connotation is with the fatal lure of sirens. Those who desire to see the masts and yards [yard-arms] grow green again are seafarers. They are free souls who, like poets [and Orpheus was a seagoer also], live apart from land-bound men, espousing a life of adventure and discovery. But they weaken after prolonged exertion, and yearn for domestic life ashore. On land the trees, from which are made the sterile masts that catch the power of the wind, would be producing leaves. Here again is the fertility theme we have traced through "L'Ermite", "Le Larron" and "Onirocritique", leading us to recognise the sea as the time-honoured literary symbol of sexual life equally well-known to psychologists in the interpretation of dreams. Its denizens

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[359] "Les Sapins", OP p.121, whose fir image is discussed on p.256 herein.

> Les sapins ...
> ... ...
> Saluent leurs frères abattus
> Les bateaux qui sur le Rhin voguent

in mythology are the sirens, concretisation of the desires of seamen who have been deprived by their vocation of the fertility of the land. The attractive sea-women call seductively to these men, who, in their desire to reach them, run their ship onto a reef, losing the vehicle of their discovery. When they reach the shore half-drowned and exhausted, they find that the sirens are, on close acquaintance, revolting creatures with cruel destructive claws as illustrated in Le Cortège d'Orphée. "Ces oiseaux maudits" do not even offer the longed-for fertility in exchange for "l'éternité des hommes", for they devour their victims. Herein lies another stratum of the double murder: women like Marizibill, who offer sex without love, assassinate both the man and the poet. They kill a man's desire without its having led to the union hallowed by nature's law of fertility; and the poet loses in such quests the original vision of Madonna-like beauty that could have inspired poetry. This interpretation explains in retrospect the hitherto unexplained second line of the poem "Sirènes / [vous] tiriez aux mers la langue", for this type of woman mocks life and fertility represented by the sea. Indeed, this line now further illuminates the reference of "Le Printemps", where the poet saw behind the foliating trees in the orchard and gardens the vast symbol of what Dylan Thomas called "the force that through the green fuse drives the flower":

> ... ... tout à coup l'horizon vert s'est déchiré
> Montrant le violet des mers impétueuses
> Le naufrage solaire aux princesses heureuses
> De voir mourir un dieu qui dût les adorer

The princesses who watch the sun-vessel sink are happy with their victory over a god who has to obey the law of love and nature. Stanza 7, addressed to the ocean of life, shows the same sinking sun giving a drowning gurgle where the sailors have yielded to their desire for fertility. In other words Apollinaire has admitted that he had been wrong to yield to the siren-prostitutes like a lonely sailor [as in "Le Larron"], and has said that he will never be so tempted again; and he here makes a distinction: his attraction towards Marie is of a quite different sort, representing love, fertility and domestic happiness. However, he recognises that this always means a loss of freedom, the vehicle of his poetic discovery. He has apparently accepted this by acknowledging Marie as his true love and destiny, as he had forecast he must eventually do with regard to Viviane in "Merlin et la vieille Femme". He has yet to realise [in the concluding stanza] that the self-sacrifice of the poet will be rewarded in that the sun of inspiration will rise again. The whole poem is like a cauldron of ideas seething simultaneously, but this seventh stanza is surely the central reference point, since Apollinaire has at this point uniquely interrupted his objective narrative as if to make his meaning clear.

He returns to the rock-climber who is emerging from the cave as if an interior battle has been fought and a decision arrived at. The movement is the familiar one of "L'Ermite", "Merlin et la vieille Femme" and "Le Larron" - a struggle at first hidden in a calm scene but revealed by an unusual symbol,

a passage through the black of night, and an emergence into the light of day with a new hope.

Je descends et le firmament
S'est changé très vite en méduse
Puisque je flambe atrocement
Que mes bras seuls sont les excuses
Et les torches de mon tourment

After the darkness of the cave, the light of day hurts his eyes, and the heat of the sun stings his bleeding wounds like a sting from the violet tentacles of the jelly-fish he associates with the sea "dans les golfes profondes" [360]. This sky which changes to an instrument of torture is given more significance when we note in the manuscript a rejected line:

[Quand de mon petit firmament]
Je descends ...

The lesser firmament was the projected night-sky of the cave, where he had boasted of his poetic creativity:

Car c'est moi seul nuit qui t'étoile

This was in line with the conclusion of "Le Printemps":

J'ai créé votre allégresse éblouie et tendre
Puisque imaginer pour un homme c'est créer

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[360] Refer to "Le Printemps" OP p.558, where we read also: "Et puis le jour revint..." and "Et l'on vogua ... Cueillir des coeurs nouveaux". Perhaps "Lul de Faltenin" is a condensed and specialised version of this other poem, much as a Cubist might paint from an earlier work a denser, more significant version of an inner vision first revealed by the earlier exercise of abstraction. Apollinaire must have observed this method of procedure characteristic of Picasso, whence perhaps its lack of chronological perspective which resembles the nascent flat-pattern of "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" of 1907. It was a technique he had partly employed by re-using parts of earlier poems and themes, and he was certainly leading towards this effect of simultaneism, as in "Lundi rue Christine" and "Lettre-Océan".

but he is now humbled, stumbling forth into the light of the sun whose ascension had been prophesied as he fled from under the stars in "La Chanson du mal Aimé". The pain of this return to the sun is explained thus:

> ... le firmament
> S'est changé très vite en méduse
> Puisque je flambe atrocement
> Que mes bras seuls sont les excuses
> Et les torches de mon tourment

Despite the several mitigating reasons hinted at earlier, Apollinaire here confesses honestly: his two arms [his prowess] are his only excuse, that is to say his desire for an easy conquest to bolster his ego was the <u>real</u> pretext for his shameful behaviour; and that prowess, viewed in the light of day, now hurts him to think of. There is also the suggestion that his poetry inspired by the pale stars of the imagined night is mere vanity compared with what might be inspired by the greatest star of all. This thought must have been growing in his mind as he realised progressively how far ahead Marie and her painter friends were of the poets, and himself in particular.

The last stanza sums up the symbolised argument and restates his new position:

> Oiseaux tiriez aux mers la langue
> Le soleil d'hier m'a rejoint
> Les otelles nous ensanglantent
> Dans le nid des Sirènes loin
> Du troupeau d'étoiles oblongues

He had been far from the light of truth in the sirens' nest, but the painful period of poetic sterility and equally sterile and humiliating consolation with low women was now over. However,

this précis lacks the depth of adequate interpretation that Apollinaire's dense symbolism calls for here.

Again the manuscript shows us fifteen lines rejected before the finally selected five lines emerge, and in this case some of the imagery would remain poetic mystery without the indications of the poet's earlier thought processes. The first line sums up his attitude to the women of easy virtue: they are sirens, destructive especially in that they mock the law of fertility. In the second line he says that the sun of yesterday is with him once more: literally, he has emerged from the cave and counts the time spent in it as a night; at the level of the cave's Freudian symbolism, the man admits he has wasted his time in such sterile activities, and has returned [as in "Le Printemps"] to see the sunny innocence of his Monaco childhood, loving openly and honestly. This sun which now joins him may well recall his description of Marie: "C'est mon petit soleil" [361] in the same terms as those used in "La Chanson du mal Aimé" when contrasting the melancholy stars of the night sky [leading from memory-fed desire to madness] with the sun and creative warmth of Yvonne's love: "Revienne le soleil de Pâques". And at the third level the poet is contrasting the concomitant black period of sterility, when he wrote virtually nothing, with the new surge of inspiration and confidence which heralds a new day of

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[361] Recorded by Adéma op. cit., p.96, and referred to above in connection with the rejected lines concerning one superior seagull such as had originally appeared as an angel.

poetic creativity.

It is interesting to note how his ideas of love, life and poetic creativity are so closely identified: sterile sexual activity is parallel to looking back to the past and lapsing into corrosive melancholy, a barren attitude to life which produces no poetry. But real love, like the sun, warms and leads to fertility, as explained in "L'Ermite"; and poetically it illuminates and encourages the writer's kind of fertility. This close parallelism between love and poetic creativity explains how the sun becomes henceforth the symbolic inspiration of both. There is thus the constructive suggestion here that yielding to love with Marie will not mean the death of the poet, but new and truer life for him. It may therefore be the beginning of Apollinaire's fight against memory and the past with the new objective of elevating sex to love, and earthly love to spiritual love of all mankind, and thence to a religious mysticism where love and revelation through poetic creation fuse into a way of life.

The third element of this summarising stanza refers back to the otelles of stanza 3, the "blessures bien-aimées" of stanza 4, and the pain of stanza 8:

> Les otelles nous ensanglant
> Dans le nid des Sirènes ...

At the surface level we have inferred abrasions to the climber's shoulders. But the technical reference of the unusual word otelle to medieval heraldry is precisely the sort of background

Apollinaire so often employs to give personal depth to a situation beyond the immediately symbolised one. We have seen this technique in all the early major works that allow him to debate his problems. For the uninitiated reader they add a touch of mystery beloved by all Symbolists, while to their author they represent an opportunity to exteriorise secret details of the progressively digested facts of his painfully wounding origins. We are indebted to the scholarship of LeRoy C. Breunig's research into this reference [362]. The Traité élémentaire du blason of Alphonse Labitte [Paris, 1892] defines it thus: "Otelles: bouts de fer de lance." It is therefore a weapon, which recalls the reference of stanza 2:

> Une arme ...
> J'agite un feuillard défleuri

and is thus cognate with Cupid's dart of "Le Printemps":

> Loin du val des fruits l'enfant s'est dressé pour
> Lancer des flèches d'or aux beaux citrons mouvants

The enfant there is l'Amour of the preceding line; the "vallon décevant" is the equivalent of one of the "grottes des alentours" of stanza 19, revived by Lul as "une grotte avide" whither the sirens' eyes attract him, and in which was the same association of avid eyes and a wasting of time dedicated to the stars of gloomy, sterile melancholy until the sun rises:

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[362] LeRoy C. Breunig: "The Manuscript of Lul de Faltenin" in La Revue des Sciences humaines of Oct. - Dec.1956, from which subsequent definitions are also taken herein.

Les yeux des squales
Jusqu'à l'aube ont guetté de loin avidement
Des cadavres de jour rongés par les étoiles
Parmi le bruit des flots

This background sea of stanza 16 was tiède, like the haleine tiède in "Lul de Faltenin", and could scarcely be regarded as infidèle when it was ...

Sans regret apportant aux rives le canot
Où le printemps chantait ...

Moreover, the idea of "de loin" [like those of "les yeux", "les étoiles" and "avide" and the coming dawn] is echoed in "Lul de Faltenin", and the rejected lines of the manuscript show that indeed even the Archer [the boy Cupid in "Le Printemps"] had also been present in the poet's thought:

[Loin de [ces] leurs étoiles oblongues]
[Loin de mes deux meutres ...]
[Quel archer d'otelles [obl] sanglantes]
[Semblablement nous [bless] [au loin]]
[L'Archer]
[Archer mon]
[L'Archer d'otelles ensanglantes]
[Sembla[men]blement nos cercles loin]
[Des marches d'ét]
[Loin de leurs étoiles oblongues]
[S[an]emblable au]

Les otelles nous ensanglantent
Dans les nids des sirènes loin
Du troupeau d'étoiles oblongues

Here we see twelve attempts to reconcile the Archer [who starts out with a capital initial, like l'Amour, loses it and then disappears along with his flèches] with the idea of his distance from the stars and murder which are localised in the sirens' cave. When this attempt fails, and Cupid's arrows vanish along with l'Archer, the otelles become the only wounding

reference to be retained, along with the idea of distance [whether in time or space we have yet to see]. At the same time we notice the attempt to associate oblong with stars being almost deflected to otelles apparently because of the phonetic resemblance but restored presumably because it rightfully [in the associative logic of Apollinaire's creating mind] belonged to étoiles.

Compounding and reducing these thought-processes, we see that in the poet's mind, as his idea strove for verbal expression towards its final, dense, even eliptical, form, it was Cupid who fired his dart from a distance and drew blood in the sirens' cave, which though constellated by stars created by the poet, was far from the light of the "oblong" stars. Critics have failed to perceive the opposition of the étoiles to these new étoiles oblongues, parallel with the opposition of the stars to the sun; and indeed, Apollinaire henceforth refers to stars preferably as astres if they are "good" or guiding stars, as distinct from the étoiles which connote melancholy and a predestination to suffering and disappointment. For the moment we may retain the idea of distance symbolising opposition, but also the idea of distance in time which is perhaps taken over in the choice of the word otelle whose usage is distant in time past. We have first to consider the weapon-wielder.

Professor Breunig identifies the archer tentatively as "le grand Dieu solaire dont Apollinaire portait le nom patronymique et qui, après avoir tué les cyclopes à coups de flèches,

fut condamné pour un certain temps à garder des troupeaux." Assuredly this secondary association of yet another archer was in the periphery of Apollinaire's mind when he dropped the capital "A", since it appears in the expression "troupeau des étoiles", and Apollinaire's association of himself with the sun runs right throughout his poems. But as Homer always distinguished Apollo from Helios, the sun, Apollinaire shows himself dedicated to his sun-symbol, especially henceforth in its value as the sun of poetic inspiration, without identifying himself with it. He believed that, born in late August, his fortunes and physical strength rose and fell with the sun in its solstices; he opposes night and day, or unhappy, barren nostalgia, even suicidal defeatism under the stars, against virile forward-looking creation under the illuminating and warming sun; but he never represents himself as the sun. The sun that is swallowed by the night or drowned on the horizon of the sea, only to be reborn in hope, is not the poet, but his guiding star - the brightest star of the firmament. Breunig must therefore be correct when he says "si la descente du marin blessé suggère les troubles sensuels de l'auteur, celle du soleil évoque ses angoisses spirituelles..." But in adding in apposition "... ses élans irréalisables vers les espaces stellaires" we must remember that the sun drives out the stars, being a superior light, and it is dangerously imprecise to conclude that "Marin, soleil et poète se mêlent alors dans le moi du narrateur". Actually the climber-mariner is the persona of

the poem, and, as we have seen, represents Apollinaire's relations to sex, love, fertility and poetic creation. The climber is the man seeking sex, but finding it ugly and sterile. The mariner is the man seeking fertility in the love of a good woman. The mariner turned climber represents man seeking to scale the heights as a poet inspired by the vision of angelic beauty.

Apollo, then, was not the sun; and it was Apollo whose symbols were the lyre and the bow, for as well as representing manly beauty, music and prophecy, he was the god of righteous punishment. In Apollinaire's view, the natural law of the universe was that love must lead to fertility, and transgression of this rule would bring its own punishment. If we take the archer as Apollo, therefore, without being sidetracked into questions of his identity with the sun, we see his wounding activity as a just punishment. This thought of the justice of suffering, glimpsed in "Un Soir", fits the whole tenor of "Lul de Faltenin", which is primarily concerned with profligacy and its outcome. At the same time it adds strength and depth to the primary identification of the archer as Cupid, the god of love, to which we are drawn by the inescapable close parallel of the argument, imagery and symbolism of "Le Printemps": for if Cupid's dart wounds, it is to be accepted as fair punishment, since the wounding takes place "dans le nid des sirènes". Cupid's dart of "Le Printemps" entered the "beaux citrons mouvants" such as Yvonne and may be seen as another form of the phallic <u>feuillard</u>:

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Et leurs coeurs sont percés La flèche marque l'heure
Où elles ont un soir ouï cette source qui pleure
Cette source nocturne et vu l'Amour vengé

This association of Apollo and Cupid as dispensers of punishment deepens the sense in which Cupid is "avenged". Cupid or Amor, son of Venus and Mercury [the latter also identified as Hermes to whom Apollinaire has elsewhere referred] is to the poet a personification of the law he expressed in Le Poète assassiné, and is represented as a naked infant boy. If the poet resists the call of fertility he may therefore expect punishment. Hence his suggestion that both parties are wounded: "Les otelles nous ensanglantent" in the siren situation.

Does Breunig's explanation of otelles as weapons equally well fit the earlier reference of "Le sang jaillit de mes otelles"? Does blood flow from the arrow-head, and are the weapons the poet's? Assassination and murder are mentioned, but not suicide. However, we must allow an objective genitive here, since "mon assassinat" is present in an attenuated form in "le meurtre de mon ... orgeuil", which might explain "mes otelles" as those he receives, so that "de mes otelles" may be read as indicating that the blood flows "from where I receive the darts". In the sense that Cupid's dart is the principle behind the poet's wielding of his weapon [feuillard], the otelle is a metaphor for the feuillard of Phallus Tenens. In other words, Cupid causes the poet to inflict a wound [we recall "qui dût les adorer" from "Le Printemps"] in which process the god-like poet, too, is wounded and his poetic inspiration drowned.

Moreover, a second explanation of otelle is "une blessure enflée" according to Père Menestrier as quoted by Breunig. Far from casting doubt on the acceptability of the above interpretation, this offers a supporting alternative. The idea of "blessure enflée" or "enflure blessée" is possibly not absent in the "enflure ignoble" of the "Zone" brouillon earlier quoted, especially in view of Breunig's third suggested connotation, touching which he tells us that "d'après certains héraldistes 'otelles' provient de la racine latine hastella, petit bâton, qui a donné le mot "ételle", morceau de bois". This he links with "étoile", whereas we would emphasise the connection between this rod or stick with the "feuillard défleuri" already brandished like a weapon, so that we come back to the role of the phallus in the escutcheon. If we tie these polyvalent associations together, we may be permitted to see another perspective in these references, namely on the pattern of the larron de gauche. The whole point of mentioning features of an escutcheon surely would be to refer to his family history, and would constitute an awareness of the wounding role played by illicit love of which he, Guillaume de Kostrowitzky, was the victim. This suggestion is perhaps supported by the introduction of the child [Apollinaire was a love-child] into the title as well as the body of the poem "L'Enfant d'Or" already linked with its predecessor "La Fuite" and with "Lul de Faltenin" by its setting, imagery and subject. This would be the last appearance of the other excuse for his philandering, namely

that it was "in the blood".

But whether some or all of these possibilities are "correct" - in the sense that they in fact existed in the poet's total pristine conception before verbal expression was achieved - the final impression of the condensed line "les otelles nous ensanglantent" cannot be other than that both parties are hurt "dans le nid des sirènes", and that it is just, since they are "loin du troupeau des étoiles oblongues".

It now remains only to elucidate the idea of distance and the application of the epithet "oblongue" to the stars. The idea of distance, so stressed in the manuscript, must refer to distance in time in its application to the heraldic aspect of Apollinaire's family history. As it applies to the more physical connotation of the otelle-feuillard, it stresses the opposition of the Cupid-driven activity in the fetid dark of the Sirens' lair, described more literally in "Zone", as against the "flock of oblong stars" so far removed from the artificial stars "de mon petit firmament". The context of the poem's argument, obviously summed up here however obscurely, suggests that the poet would compare the inferior erotic love in the cave ["L'ombre équivoque et tendre ... le deuil de ta chair" of "Le Larron"] with the nobler love which he steps out to greet in the open air; and at the same time contrast the poems composed to date [feeble constructions of his imagination which he had imagined as marvellous lights in his little firmament], as against the oblong stars of the true firmament which flames brightly and

humiliatingly outside. In fact, Apollinaire's usage of the adjective "oblong" applied to light or vision, does appear in this aura of rightness and truth. In the conclusion of "Le Larron" he conveys its meaning by context as the opposite of relatif [recalling "équivoque"]:

Le tact est relatif mais la vue est oblongue

The world of appearances, what one can see and touch, is relative; a thought developed in one of his next great poems, "Les Fiançailles", dedicated to Picasso [363]:

Comment comment réduire
L'infiniment petite science
Que m'imposent mes sens
... ...
Monstre de mon ouïe ... tu pleures
... ...
Et tes griffes répètent le chant des oiseaux
Le toucher monstrueux m'a pénétré m'empoisonne
Mes yeux nagent de loin
Et les astres intacts sont mes maîtres

By contrast, "la vue" in the sense of his new vision inspired by the sun is the conceptual reality of the Cubists, "oblongue" in its foursquare "rightness". This vaster firmament is described in "Le Brasier" [364] as "hauteurs où pense la lumière",

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[363] "Les Fiançailles", OP p.128, which opens with a repetition of the first three stanzas of "Le Printemps" thus tying these poems inextricably. The "engagement" is, of course, to his new concept of poetry which parallels his new love.

[364] "Le Brasier", OP p.108, appeared shortly after "Lul de Faltenin", in Le Gil Blas of May 1908, and marked Apollinaire's return to great, inspired poetry:

Je trempe une fois encore mes mains dans l'Océan
Voici ... ma vie renouvelée
Ses flammes sont immenses

where "le soleil revint ensoleiller les places / D'une ville marine" in a repetition of the Monte Carlo lines of "Le Printemps". In a further description in the same poem he mentions "le troupeau des sphinx" who are up there in that sky:

> ... là-haut le théâtre est bâti avec le feu solide
> Comme les astres ...

In attempting to surrender to this sun and these greater stars, solid, oblong or intact, he sees himself as Icarus, in "L'Ignorance", floating near the sun, far from the earth and the night stars, "étant céleste et plus divin qu'Alcide":

> Je vois un dieu oblong flotter sous le soleil

It becomes increasingly clear that all these poems interpenetrate, are built one on the other in cross-references and re-employment of symbols, imagery or complete lines, even whole stanzas as Apollinaire delves deeper and deeper. This is natural enough when the poet is seeking a total vision through the writing of a new sort of poem, produced by exploration of his unconscious, rather than self-contained esthetic exercises. The pursuit of this new concept of the flaming light, however, does not properly belong to an examination of Apollinaire's early work. We must be content, in considering the last stanza of "Lul de Faltenin", to simply note that the full flowering of the poet's mature concept of poetry as the instrument of discovery of a harmonising vision which embraces love and creativity, is already intuited here.

As Lul the climber comes out of his cavern to return

to his friends on the seashore, smarting, and humiliated by his falsely-orientated exploits, so does Guillaume Apollinaire the mature poet and man emerge, looking towards the guiding sun that is to symbolise henceforward the source of all love and poetic inspiration, as he confidently seeks higher and purer levels in love:

> Colombe, l'amour et l'esprit
> Qui engendrâtes Jésus-Christ
> Comme vous j'aime une Marie.
> Qu'avec elle je me marie. [365]

in life:

> Je trempe une fois encore mes mains dans l'Océan
> Voici ... ma vie renouvellée [366]

and in creation:

> Il n'y a plus rien de commun entre moi
> Et ceux qui craignent les brûlures [367]

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[365] "La Colombe", Le Bestiaire, OP p.28.

[366] "Le Brasier", OP p.109.

[367] Ibid.

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