Always Study Guide

Always by Guillaume Apollinaire

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

□Always□ appears in Guillaume Apollinaire's second volume of poetry, *Calligrammes*, which was published in 1918 and is thought to contain some of his best and most experimental poems. The poem was reprinted in *The Self-Dismembered Man*, published by Wesleyan University Press in 2004.

□Always□ reveals the influence of cubism, an art movement that emerged between 1908 and 1912. Apollinaire was fascinated by the way such modern painters as Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque were able to imaginatively reconstruct reality in their work. He applied their methods to □Always□ as he examined the nature of poetic inspiration and construction. In a series of separate but related images, the poem focuses on the process of exploration of the universe, from its celestial to its terrestrial boundaries, by such diverse figures as Christopher Columbus and the legendary lover Don Juan. Through creative contradictions and ambiguities, Apollinaire investigates in □Always□ the poet's desire to create fresh visions of the world.

Author Biography

Nationality 1: French

Nationality 2: Italian

Birthdate: 1880

Deathdate: 1918

Guillaume Apollinaire is considered one of the most important literary figures of the early twentieth century. His use of direct language and unconventional poetic structure had a great influence on his fellow exponents of the avant-garde, his literary descendants, and modern poetic theory, especially cubism and surrealism.

Apollinaire was most likely born with the name Wilhelm Apollinaris de Kostrowitzky in Rome on August 26, 1880. It is difficult to determine his exact name, because his mother, Angeliska Alexandrina Kostrowitzky, a Polish aristocrat, recorded several names for him. Apollinaire's father was probably Francesco-Constantino-Camillo Flugi d'Aspermont, an Italian army officer and gambler. After Flugi d'Aspermont broke off his relationship with Apollinaire's mother, she moved with her children to the French Riviera. Apollinaire was a successful student at Collège Saint-Charles in Monaco, where he often entertained his friends with his imaginative stories. He neglected his studies at the Lycée de Nice in favor of poetry writing and so failed to graduate.

After he moved with his family to Paris in 1899, Apollinaire worked as a copyist, a secretary, and a writer for the newspaper *Le matin*. One of his stories, *Que faire*? (What to Do?) was published serially in the paper and later, in 1950, as a novel. The story mixes romance, fantasy, and inventiveness into a style that characterizes Apollinaire's later work.

The revenue from his writing did not provide enough income, so Apollinaire in 1901 went to Germany to work as a tutor, a position that allowed him time for extensive reading and writing. The next year, after being rejected by a woman with whom he had fallen in love, Apollinaire returned to Paris and took a position in banking. During this time, he began his association with literary and journalistic circles, which included the poets Stuart Merrill and René Ghil. Apollinaire also started *Le festin d'Esope* (1903-1904), a small literary magazine that published many of his stories and musings.

Apollinaire supplemented his small income by distributing and selling pornography, some of which he wrote himself, including *Les exploits d'un jeune Don Juan* (The Exploits of a Young Don Juan) and *Les onze mille verges* (The Eleven Thousand Rods), both published in 1907 and later considered classics of erotic literature. After his introduction to the Spanish cubist painter Pablo Picasso in 1904, Apollinaire became intrigued with modern art and became one of its most ardent supporters. He promoted cubism in his articles and lectures on art and coined the term *surrealism*.

Apollinaire's literary reputation was cemented by the publication in 1910 of his collection of short stories *L'Hérésiarque et cie* (translated as *The Heresiarch and Co*, 1965), which was a runner-up for the Prix Goncourt in 1910. Apollinaire's two collections of poetry, *Alcools: Poèmes 1898-1913* (1913; translated as *Alcools: Poems, 1898-1913*, 1964) and *Calligrammes: Poèmes de la paix et de la guerre, 1913-1916* (1918; translated as *Calligrammes: Poems of Peace and War (1913-1916)*, 1980), which includes □Always,□ are considered his finest work.

In 1914, when attention in Paris shifted from the fine arts to the war, Apollinaire enlisted in an artillery regiment at Nîmes. His experiences in World War I influenced the poetry of *Calligrammes*. On March 17, 1916, Apollinaire was severely wounded during battle. After recovering, he returned to Paris, where he continued to write. On November 9, 1918, two days before Armistice Day, Apollinaire died of influenza.

Plot Summary

Stanza 1

The first stanza of “Always” consists of only two lines. The first line is the word “Always.” The second line introduces the speaker and his or her audience (“we”), neither of whom is initially identified. This line contains a contradiction in its prediction. The “we” on whom the speaker is focusing will go further, to an unidentified place, but will not advance. This contradiction separates the concepts of going further and advancing. The word “even” suggests that the process of going further has already begun.

Stanza 2

The second stanza introduces celestial imagery, including planets, nebulae, and comets. Planets are the large bodies that revolve around the sun in a solar system. A nebula is an area of astronomical dust and gas appearing as a hazy bright patch. A comet is an astronomical mass of ice and dust that produces a long, bright tail of vaporized particles when orbiting close to the sun. The three types of celestial bodies are similar in that they are bright objects in the sky. “The Don Juan of 1003 comets” is apparently traveling to and from these objects, seeking “new forces.”

In Spanish legend, Don Juan was a nobleman who seduced many women. He has become a popular hero of plays, poems, and operas. Don Juan in “Always” could be a persona of Apollinaire himself and so of a poet. Apollinaire, who enjoyed many amorous relationships with women, liked to envision himself as a Don Juan. In this stanza, then, the speaker becomes the poet who is “going further,” perhaps to new poetic territory. The ghosts are similar to the hazy nebulae, which do not appear clearly. They also may represent something to fear as the explorer seeks “new forces.”

Stanza 3

In the third stanza, the speaker pulls the focus from specific objects in the universe to the universe or universes in general, focusing on the relationship between the explorer and the explored. The tension is between finding new universes and forgetting them. The speaker suggests that many places have been forgotten by “truly great forgetters.” The speaker also suggests that Christopher Columbus is one of these forgetters, because he thought he had found a new passage to the East Indies (later called Indonesia) and Asia when he landed in what came to be called the Bahamas. In this sense, Columbus's discovery is fleeting, like the hazy nebulae or ghosts in the previous stanza.

Stanza 4

In the last stanza, the speaker focuses on the loss of something that makes “room for the windfall,” which is defined as a bonus or a benefit. In the final line, the speaker clarifies that the loss is loss of life, which can result in a sense of victory.

Themes

Exploration

Exploration emerges as the dominant theme of □Always,□ as Apollinaire presents his view of the creative process. The poet links scientific inventions with literary creations through explorations of the boundaries of the world. The first explorer in the poem, Don Juan, imaginatively investigates the cosmos, hopping from □planet to planet,□ □nebula to nebula,□ while □never leaving the ground.□ During his explorations, Don Juan seeks □new forces□ that can replace the old, an important principle in Apollinaire's aesthetic. Christopher Columbus's explorations of the terrestrial world extend this process. He forgets old worlds (Asia and the East Indies) while in search of the new. This ability to □lose□ the old in order to □make room for the windfall□ (that is, the new) will result in a □victory□ for the explorer.

Contrast and Contradiction

Apollinaire's interest in cubism can be seen in his use of contrast and contradiction in □Always.□ When they visually fractured objects into pieces on their canvases, the cubists presented contrasting points of view that often contradicted accepted notions of reality. Apollinaire uses this technique in the poem when he juxtaposes contradictory words and images. He forces readers to view the world from different perspectives and, in this way, participate in the creative process.

The first contradiction presented in the poem is between the notion of progressing and that of advancing. The juxtaposition of these two words suggests that there are different ways to view the concept of progress, forcing readers to reexamine traditional values. As it relates to the literary world, a poem would be valued by how successfully it follows poetic conventions. Yet Apollinaire, who rejected traditional methods of prosody, or metrical structure, insisted that creative progress can be measured only by the inventiveness of the work, thereby resisting conventional notions of advancement.

The contradictions continue in the second through fourth stanzas of □Always,□ in which the legendary lover Don Juan becomes a celestial explorer and Columbus one of the □truly great forgetters.□ As the reader examines these juxtapositions, which initially appear incomprehensible, new points of view relating to the creative process open up. As a result, the contrasts and contradictions express an underlying sense of unity.

Victory

The sense of victory in □Always□ does not rely on traditional notions of success. Apollinaire offers a new definition of success in the opening stanza when he notes that going □further□ does not necessarily mean advancement. In the second stanza, he proposes celestial exploration as a way to □go even further,□ but the type of

exploration he describes would be readily rejected by the scientific community. The explorer the poet envisions traveling from planet to planet and nebula to nebula does not appear at first glance to be qualified for the job. Yet by placing Don Juan in this role, Apollinaire suggests that the heavens could be effectively viewed from a different perspective.

Don Juan's legendary amorous adventures would have prepared him to embark on such a journey not from the detached perspective of the scientist but instead from the view of one who seeks connections, albeit previously personal ones. He perhaps would note the □new forces,□ including the □spooks□ in the universe that might be missed by traditional explorers. In the sense that he would discover multiple perspectives of reality, Don Juan would be victorious.

Apollinaire views terrestrial explorations in new ways. Usually commended for his discovery of the New World, Columbus in this poem is praised for what he has forgotten□for his imaginative ability to see the Old World in the New, concluding that he discovered a new passage to the East Indies and to Asia. This oversight becomes a victory. In the final stanza, Apollinaire challenges his readers to see the world in new ways, to be open to the possibility of failure in order to make room for □the windfall.□ Only in this sense can one ultimately be victorious.

The Process of Interpretation

Apollinaire's vision of the relationship between author and reader stems from his view of the role of the creator. Apollinaire insisted that the poet is not a recorder of experience, taking a picture of it much as a photographer would do. A poet is instead a creator of experience through his imaginative representation of it. The new visions of reality the poet creates require more active participation from readers. Readers are required to use imagination when reading a poem in order to comprehend it. In this sense, the reader participates in the creative process of the work of art.

In □Apollinaire and the Modern Mind,□ Anna Balakian explains the process of interpretation by noting that the reader must reject the passivity of the traditional method of reading□□of absorbing and feeling the message of the artist□□and assume □the more creative role of relating the sensations of the artist to his own experiences and his own faculties of imagination and association.□ As a result, the □flexibility of the visions of the artist are set to a perpetual motion of interpretations, which may in themselves be a form of creative activity.□ This technique, according to Balakian, became one of the dominant principles of the dadaists and surrealists.

Style

Ironic Contradictions

A sense of irony is produced by the contradictory imagery and language in □Always.□ Apollinaire's juxtapositions become ironic as he obscures in order to communicate. He achieves this effect by contrasting images in each stanza. In the first stanza, Apollinaire contrasts going further to never advancing, a contradiction that becomes the main thematic thrust of the poem. This contradiction is reinforced by the juxtapositions in the second stanza, in which, without ever leaving the ground, Don Juan explores the cosmos, contrasting solid objects (planets) to transitory ones (nebulae). The contrast of the realistic (comets and planets) to the fantastic (legends and ghosts) adds an element of playfulness. In the third stanza, Columbus both forgets and discovers, and in the last stanza, loss becomes a gain.

Apollinaire achieves a delicate sense of irony in the shifts of tone across the contradictions. The serious often turns mischievous. Scientific exploration is contrasted to amorous adventures in the second stanza, and the somber condition of forgetting turns into a celebration of forgetting entire continents in the third stanza. The poem ends with the loss of life, ordinarily a sad experience, but transformed through contrast into a victory.

Apollinaire extends the irony to the use of language. He uses free verse and a conversational style to address serious topics. This technique adds to the playfulness of tone. The poet's opaque contradictory language makes demands on readers that force them to slow down and examine each word instead of racing to the end of the stanza or poem to find meaning.

Balakian, writing in her *Yale French Studies* article, notes that Apollinaire □believed that words could make and unmake a universe.□ As a result, the poet used his creative imagination to □string side by side images often logically disconnected, demanding of the reader leaps and bounds of the imagination to keep pace with his self-characterized 'oblong' vision.□ Balakian concludes that Apollinaire's □dislocations of temporal and spatial perspective defy ordinary reality but are of this earth in their tactility, colors and scents.□

Cubism

Apollinaire structures □Always□ into stanzas that present four distinct images that can be viewed from different perspectives, much as a cubist painting is viewed. The poet carries this method over into his line construction. In his introduction to *Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire*, Roger Shattuck concludes that Apollinaire maintains □an integrity of line, a desire to make each line a partially self-sufficient unit which does not depend too greatly upon the succeeding line. This integrity of line extends to an

integrity of stanza and of the poem itself.□ This technique is most evident in the third stanza, in which each line forms a complete thought.

Shattuck notes that Apollinaire's lack of punctuation illustrates this integrity, for □his lines are sufficiently end-stopped to make each a unit.□ Apollinaire's use of free verse with its conversational tone causes him to end a line at a natural pause. The use of language and the design of the poem in this sense add to its directness.

Historical Context

World War I

World War I was triggered by the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on June 28, 1914, in Sarajevo, Bosnia. The war started a month later, when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Other European countries soon made their own declarations of war. Great Britain entered on August 4, 1914, after Germany began its invasion of France. The war between the Allied and Associated powers (France, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States as well as numerous other nations) and the Central powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey) raged until 1918. The number of total casualties was extraordinary, estimated at ten million. France lost more soldiers than did Great Britain or Germany. One tenth of the French population was killed or went missing during the war. The French economy suffered as industrial and agricultural production fell to less than half of prewar levels.

In the aftermath of World War I, European society went through a period of change. Traditional beliefs in God, country, and humanity were shaken as Europeans faced the devastation of war. The feelings of confusion and dislocation that resulted led to a questioning and often a rejection of conventional morality and beliefs.

Cubism

Cubism, an art movement that emerged between 1908 and 1912, was led by the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso and the French painter Georges Braque. Artists who followed this movement were influenced by African tribal art and the work of the French impressionist Paul Cézanne. The movement lasted only until about 1920, but it helped generate new ideas about art and literature and influenced later movements, such as expressionism and imagism.

Cubists believed that an object could be expressed only by revealing it from multiple points of view presented simultaneously. Objects were thus broken up on the canvas and reassembled in abstract forms, often made up of cylinders, spheres, and cones. Picasso and Braque incorporated open-edged planes into their work that slid into each other. Color was limited and muted, and elements such as letters, musical notes, and sand added interest and texture. Later works were made with vibrant colors, often in collages created with a jumble of glued paper and objects such as playing cards and tobacco packets.

Balakian notes that Apollinaire's involvement with and support of the cubist movement made him □a better apologist for the new art than the painters themselves could have been.□ As a result, she says, stronger links were forged between art and literature, □a relationship which was to prove so significant and influential in the development of dadaism and surrealism.□

Dada

Dadaism, a movement in art and literature that was characterized by irrationality and anarchy, was started in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1916 by the Romanian poet Tristan Tzara, along with the French artist and poet Hans Arp (also known as Jean Arp), the German writer Hugo Ball, and the German physician and poet Richard Huelsenbeck, in response to the widespread disillusionment brought about by World War I. The founders meant dadaism to signify total freedom from ideals and traditions concerning aesthetics and behavior. The most important concept of dada was the word □nothing.□

In art, dadaists produced collage effects as they arranged unrelated objects in a random manner. In literature, dadaists produced mostly nonsense poems consisting of meaningless, random combinations of words and read them in cafés and bars. These constructions in art and literature stressed absurdity and the role of the unpredictable in the creative process. The dadaists came into vogue in Paris immediately after World War I. Tzara carried the school to England and the United States, where dadaist influence became apparent in the poetry of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. By 1921, dadaism as a movement had modified into surrealism. The influence of dadaism, however, continued for many years in literature and art.

Surrealism

The surrealism movement originated in France in the second decade of the twentieth century and was promoted by Apollinaire, who coined the term; by the French poet André Breton; and by the Spanish painter Salvador Dali. In 1924, Breton wrote the first of three manifestos defining the movement. Influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis, which looked at the subconscious mind of a patient, surrealists rejected traditional, rational artistic renderings of reality that called for reason, morality, and intention and instead promoted the removal of all constraints to creativity. Surrealists often worked with automatic writing, which was written expression of the unconscious mind, dreams, and hallucinatory states. Surrealists believed that the true source of creative energy could be found in the unconscious, where the seemingly contradictory elements of daily life were resolved. That energy, surrealists claimed, could be focused by the conscious mind into art.

Painters such as Max Ernst and Picasso and writers such as Louis Aragon and Paul Éluard became involved in the surrealist movement, which often had links to revolutionary political and social groups of the age. The movement continued to influence writers throughout the twentieth century, especially such American writers as Henry Miller, William Burroughs, and Allen Ginsberg and playwrights like Eugène Ionesco and Samuel Beckett, who experimented with free expression of thoughts not tied to formal poetic or dramatic conventions.

Imagists

The poets of the early decades of the twentieth century experimented with new forms and styles in their concern with the truthfulness of language. A group of poets prominent during this period, the imagists, had an important effect on modernist poetry in this sense, modernism being a style that reflected the social and philosophical fragmentation of modern life. Imagist writers rejected traditional clichéd poetic diction, or the choice and arrangement of words, and regulated meter in favor of more natural expressions of language written in free verse. *Des imagistes*, an anthology by Ezra Pound, one of the leading proponents of the movement, was published in 1913. The anthology contained examples of what Pound considered imagist verse by James Joyce, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), William Carlos Williams, Frank Stuart Flint, Ford Madox Ford (also known as Ford Madox Hueffer), and Amy Lowell, among others. Pound included in the work his imagist doctrine, which insisted on a direct treatment of what the poet is expressing, the discarding of any language that does not contribute to the presentation of this essence, and an emphasis on a sequence of musical phrases rather than on consistent, regulated meter.

Critical Overview

Reviews for *Calligrammes*, which includes □Always,□ are positive for the original edition and remain so for subsequent editions. M. B. Markus, in his review of the 1980 edition for *Library Journal*, cites the □ebulliency and epic vision of the poems,□ which □demonstrate Apollinaire's acceptance of World War I as a new realm of experience and creative possibility.□ Markus notes that the poet □abandoned punctuation, syntax, linear and discursive style for free verse . . . and contemporary idiom.□

In her commentary on □Always,□ Anne Hyde Greet concludes that the poem is one of Apollinaire's □prophetic□ works, revealing □his old love of science-fiction imagery.□ The paradoxical nature of the first two lines, Greet argues, is made clear in the philosophy of his lecture □L'Esprit nouveau et les poetes,□ given in 1917. Greet writes that in this lecture Apollinaire declared that progress, □which is limited to the manipulation of external phenomena, exists on the level of scientific invention; newness, which man can find within himself, exists, apart from progress, in science and especially in art.□

Margaret Davies, reviewing the 1980 edition of *Calligrammes* for *Modern Language Review*, determines the collection to be a □fascinating labyrinth□ of □very diverse material□ that switches □from the inward turning of *Alcools*,□ a collection of Apollinaire's poems published in 1913, to an extroverted □enthusiasm.□ Davies identifies in *Calligrammes* □the radical dislocations and discontinuities that were the result of [Apollinaire's] search for simultaneity□ and □the new type of 'lecture' which is solicited from the reader.□ She finds within the poems □the inevitable and continued Apollinarian ambiguities, which culminate in the final choice of anxiety and conflict as the essential condition of his aesthetic.□ The poems reveal the □interesting effects which can arise when the visual form actually contradicts the semantic message of the words.□

In the introduction to the 1980 volume, S. I. Lockerbie concludes that *Calligrammes* is □the second major volume of poetry on which rests Guillaume Apollinaire's reputation as one of the great modern poets in French literature,□ *Alcools* being the first. The poems reveal □a novelty of accent and composition which clearly rests on aesthetic assumptions different from those underlying□ his previous works. The assumptions □can conveniently be drawn together under the concept of modernism.□ Lockerbie states that the mood in these poems □reflects much greater confidence and enthusiasm for life□ than those in *Alcools*, showing a change that resulted from □the rapid technological advances of the early years of the twentieth century and the general widening of horizons brought about by such inventions as the motorcar, the airplane, radiography, cinematography, and radio communications.□ Lockerbie concludes that □now [Apollinaire] seemed the triumphant master of his own destiny.□

Anna Balakian, in her article on Apollinaire for *Yale French Studies*, writes that the poet's importance □lies not so much in being the originator of an attitude as in having stated it more provocatively and held to it more persistently than his contemporaries.□

Balakian argues that Apollinaire's □ideas on art did not remain in the realm of theories but were illustrated consciously in the major part of his poetic work.□

In her review of *Calligrammes*, Balakian concludes that the collection □is a more striking example of [Apollinaire's] inventive approach to writing□ than is his earlier collection, *Alcools*. Balakian finds that in *Alcools*, the poet displays a □vigorous imagination□ that □often accepted the challenge of new vistas revealed by the inventions pertaining to the war.□ She adds that in *Calligrammes*, Apollinaire effectively uses □juxtaposition and discarded symmetry and order much more than in his previous works.□ The poems in *Calligrammes* are □circumstantial in the sense that their point of departure is a factual event or concrete detail of the color of the times.□ Balakian argues that the poems □fearlessly□ illustrate Apollinaire's theory that symbolism should sometimes contain contradictions and so set □a new relationship between the artist and his audience.□ Balakian concludes that this theory had a profound influence on other poets.

Scott Bates, in his book-length study of Apollinaire, writes that the collection is □strikingly freer, the freest in Apollinaire's poetry since his first adolescent experiments.□ Bates believes that Apollinaire noted □the need of bringing even more of the twentieth century into his simultaneous vision of it in order better to influence it in return.□ As a result, Apollinaire □adopted a synthetic style, incorporating various techniques of European art and poetry around him.□

In his afterword to his translated edition of selected poems from *Calligrammes*, including □Always,□ Donald Revell writes that the □vivid and witty□ poems express □the fullest and most beautiful horizons of Apollinaire's combat, contoured to sweet reason and to new, new music.□ They are, he claims, the □final, finest of his poems.□

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Wendy Perkins is a professor of American and English literature and film. In this essay, she examines Apollinaire's focus on the creative process.

Anna Balakian, in her article on Guillaume Apollinaire in *Yale French Studies*, notes that in the early decades of the twentieth century, a rift that had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century between art and science was growing wider. Artists concluded that □science seemed to be the destroyer of the marvelous and the mysterious.□ In addition, after scientific inquiry produced inventions such as the electric light, the cinema, and the subway, □the supremacy of the scientist in the history of human progress□ appeared assured.

Unlike others, who felt challenged by the supremacy of the scientist, Apollinaire was fascinated by the new world scientists were creating. As a result, Balakian states, Apollinaire □sought conciliation between the work of the scientist and of the modern artist.□ This conciliation becomes the main focus of his poem □Always,□ which explores the role of the poet as a creator of new worlds.

Like the modernist authors of his age, Apollinaire rejected forms of art that were attempts to imitate reality, such as photography. Balakian explains that Apollinaire determined reality to be □dependent not on physical nature but on the mind's creativeness.□ As a result, Balakian writes, □he found in the cubists the truest competitors of the imaginative technologists.□ In an effort to fuse creatively with reality, cubists expressed objects by breaking them up on canvas and presenting them from multiple points of view simultaneously.

In his introduction to the 1980 edition of *Calligrammes*, S. I. Lockerbie writes that Apollinaire □had the creative genius to transform aesthetic concepts that were in general circulation into powerful and appealing poetry.□ Lockerbie explains that □central among these aesthetic ideas was the notion that the modern work of art must adequately reflect the global nature of contemporary consciousness.□

In the twenty-first century, people are continually bombarded with different kinds of information transmitted in different forms. Lockerbie claims that Apollinaire knew that in order to □mirror such a multiple form of consciousness, the work of art had to abandon linear and discursive structures, in which events are arranged successively.□ The simultaneity that Apollinaire proposed would necessitate □a type of structure that would give the impression of a full and instant awareness within one moment of space-time.□ This arrangement, according to Apollinaire, created a fresh view of reality, a process that becomes the subject of □Always.□

In □Always,□ Apollinaire links the worlds of scientific and poetic invention in his exploration of the poet's creation of new worlds through conflict and contradiction, a process that encourages multiple points of view. As he juxtaposes contrary, often obscure images, Apollinaire forces readers to see in different ways and thus take part in

the creative process. He does not insist on any absolute visions of reality but instead, through his playful juxtapositions, suggests that anyone can become an explorer and an inventor.

Each of the four stanzas contains a separate statement that the reader must derive from the text. Balakian notes that Apollinaire tries □to infuse his work with unexpected sparks: visions concretely resplendent and limitless, meant to surprise and mystify the reader□ in order to involve the reader in the interpretative process. The surprise begins in the first stanza with the seeming contradiction of its two lines. The □we□ is most likely the poet and the reader, both taking an active part in the exploration and interpretation of the world. In Apollinaire's aesthetic, the reader contributes to the creative process begun by the poet by gathering together the fragments of the poem in an effort to discover meaning.

The speaker confounds the search for meaning by claiming that when □we□ go even further, we do not advance. Still, a careful examination of the apparent contradiction of this line helps the reader understand the speaker's point. Apollinaire suggests that the discovery of different perspectives does not necessarily mean advancement in the traditional sense of progress. The new vision that may be achieved through the collaboration of poet and reader may not be accepted as a realistic vision of the universe, but it can be an accurate vision.

The second stanza appears as a separate unit of the poem, focusing on Don Juan's exploration of the universe. This stanza, however, contributes to the underlying unity of the poem's focus on the creative impulse through its linking of cosmographic explorations of new forces and the construction of art. Apollinaire blends realism and fantasy as he confounds the reader with his inclusion of the paradoxical Don Juan, an odd choice for a cosmological explorer. The legendary lover may be Apollinaire's persona, and this hypothesis is supported by the poet's biographical details. The □1003□ shooting comets may be an image of war, which Apollinaire experienced firsthand. In this sense, the imagery suggests that the experience of war taught the poet to view the world in new ways.

Don Juan becomes an appropriate explorer in a universe that Apollinaire suggests must be viewed from diverse perspectives for it to be understood in its fullest sense. Unlike traditional space explorers, who view the cosmos from an objectively analytical position, Don Juan focuses on personal connections, because they form the basis of his experience. Don Juan takes any □spooks□ he encounters seriously, refusing to find rational explanations for them.

An avid reader, Apollinaire could have used □1003□ to represent the year the Norse mariner Thorfinn Karlsefni left Greenland with three ships for a three-year exploration of the western continents. Karlsefni did not establish any settlements, therefore not making progress in the traditional sense, but his explorations would have provided him with new visions of his world.

This theme of exploration is carried over into the third stanza, which focuses on Christopher Columbus. Apollinaire confounds the reader's attempts to find meaning when he characterizes Columbus as a forgetter. Looking at the concept of forgetting in a new way, however, the reader may be able to understand Apollinaire's odd image. The stanza appears to begin with a complaint, because on the surface forgetting an entire universe does not seem to be a preferable state. In the second line, Apollinaire gives the condition of forgetting a positive quality, insisting that the reader must study the □truly great forgetters,□ because they have so much to teach about forgetting □this or that corner of the world.□ If the reader considers the history of Columbus's exploration, an interpretation can be derived.

When he reached what came to be known as the Bahamas, Columbus believed that he had found a new passage to the East Indies and Asia. In this sense, his discovery is an act of forgetting an old continent or universe and discovering a new one. The image of forgetting can be linked to the hazy nebulae or ghosts in the previous stanza, which suggest an ephemeral, or fleeting, state of matter. In a sense, Columbus did not □advance□ in a traditional way, but his explorations resulted in the discovery of a new world. Columbus triggered extraordinary changes in the concept of the world as the people of the East began to intermingle with the West. Another way to look at the act of forgetting is to consider that the new territory Columbus claimed for Spain was eventually lost by the Spaniards. Still, the independence gained by the inhabitants of North America helped create a new world for them.

The final stanza presents another mysterious image that resists interpretation. The speaker juxtaposes the seemingly contrary words □lose□ and □Victory.□ Yet the speaker suggests that if it is viewed in a positive sense, the act of losing can be interpreted as a victory. Losing one's life force allows a new one, a □windfall,□ to emerge□what Don Juan and Columbus are searching for in their cosmological and terrestrial explorations. The creative act sometimes necessitates □forgetting,□ or the rejection of the old in the process of constructing the new.

The final stanza links to the first and creates a harmonious whole. The contradiction between going further but never advancing is recreated in the juxtaposition of loss and victory at the end. New, sustaining visions can be created through an imaginative engagement with the universe.

Lockerbie argues that Apollinaire's conclusions about the nature of poetry in the modern world □led to a radical dislocation of poetic structure.□ In his efforts to encourage readers to view different perspectives simultaneously, Apollinaire juxtaposes thoughts that, taken as a whole, seem to suggest □considerable disorder.□ The discontinuities, Lockerbie claims, are □much more radical [than in traditional verse], forcing the reader into a greater effort of synthesis to discover the underlying unity.□ As a result, the reader is required □to reassemble the apparently random fragments in a new order.□ □Always□ is a striking example of this innovative process. As he encourages readers to join his creative expeditions in the poem, Apollinaire challenges them to discover fresh and invigorating visions of the world.

Source: Wendy Perkins, Critical Essay on □Always,□ in *Poetry for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2006.

Topics for Further Study

Read another of Apollinaire's poems from *Calligrammes* and prepare to lead a class discussion comparing and contrasting it to □Always.□

Investigate the symbolist school of poetry and write an essay discussing its influence on Apollinaire's poetry.

Write a poem of three or four stanzas of self-contained images that as a whole express thematic unity.

Rearrange the lines of your poem into a picture that expresses its meaning. Use some of the more visual poems in *Calligrammes*, such as □Fan of Flavors□ or □Cotton in Your Ears,□ as models.

Compare and Contrast

1910s: Cubism, one of the most influential art movements in the early twentieth century, presents multidimensional views of reality. Cubist painters render these views by incorporating cylinders, spheres, and cones in abstract visions of the human form or of landscapes or still lifes.

Today: Contemporary art often engages political and social themes, such as human rights or gender issues. Artists do not limit themselves to traditional artistic techniques but instead experiment with performance and multimedia works.

1910s: Poetry often presents an austerely pessimistic view of contemporary society as a reaction to industrialization and war. Poets such as T. S. Eliot (□The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock□) and William Butler Yeats (□The Second Coming□) express pessimism most often through the depiction of general, social experience rather than in specific, personal terms.

Today: Poets such as Sharon Olds (□Taking Notice□) and Margaret Atwood (□They Eat Out□) continue what has come to be considered the pessimistic zeitgeist, or moral and intellectual trends, of the twentieth century. Pessimism is most often expressed in a personal style that reflects the author's own experience and point of view.

1910s: World War I begins in 1914 and lasts until 1918 and is the largest war to date. Approximately ten million people are killed, and twenty million are wounded. Poets such as Wilfred Owen (□Dulce et Decorum Est□), Siegfried Sassoon (□The Power and the Glory□), and Apollinaire express the devastation of the war in their work. Their poetry does not always engage in a protest of this war. More often, these writers question in a general sense the motives for war and the glorification of the soldier.

Today: The United States, with aid from thirty-four other countries, invades Iraq in 2003, initiating a war plagued by controversy. Soon after the invasion, the poet Sam Hamill calls on approximately fifty of his peers to express their views about the war in their poetry. Fifteen hundred poets respond immediately with poems of protest that Hamill forwards to the White House. Poets from around the world, including Julia Alvarez (□The White House Has Disinvited the Poets□) and Robert Bly (□Call and Answer□), join Poets against War and write poems that voice their opposition.

What Do I Read Next?

Cubism (1998), by David Cottington, is a comprehensive overview of this important art movement.

Stanley Appelbaum's *Introduction to French Poetry* (1991) is a collection of poems by several important French poets, including Voltaire, Victor Hugo, Arthur Rimbaud, and Apollinaire, that includes critical and biographical information on each poet.

T. S. Eliot's □The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock□ (1915), one of the most celebrated poems of the age, captures the pessimism and sense of hopelessness of the war years. It can be found in Eliot's *Collected Poems, 1909-1962* (1963).

□Ocean of Earth,□ another selection in *Calligrammes* (1918), is often cited as one of Apollinaire's most inventive poems.

Further Study

Berry, David, *The Creative Vision of Guillaume Apollinaire: A Study of Imagination*, Anma Libri, 1982.

Berry traces the development of Apollinaire's theories on creativity and their application in his poetry.

Davies, Margaret, *Apollinaire*, St. Martin's Press, 1965.

Davies explores biographical information about Apollinaire and presents analyses of his work.

Mackworth, Cecily, *Guillaume Apollinaire and the Cubist Life*, Horizon, 1963.

Mackworth analyzes the cubist artists' influence on Apollinaire's life and work.

Steegmuller, Francis, *Apollinaire: Poet among the Painters*, Farrar, Straus, 1963.

In this study, Steegmuller outlines Apollinaire's relationship with the artists of his age.

Themerson, Stefan, *Apollinaire's Lyrical Ideograms*, Gaberbocchus, 1968.

Themerson concentrates on the style of Apollinaire's later poetry.

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Shattuck, Roger, "Introduction," in *Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire*, translated by Roger Shattuck, New Directions, 1971, p. 26.

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's"For Students" Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on "classic" novels frequently

studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of "classic" novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members—educational professionals— helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man–the character is listed as "The Narrator" and alphabetized as "Narrator." If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. • Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name "Jean Louise Finch" would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname "Scout Finch."
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an “at-a-glance” comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author’s time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes “The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,” a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children’s Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

"Night." Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234–35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the "Criticism" subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on "Winesburg, Ohio." Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335–39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. "Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition," Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9–16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133–36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. "Richard Wright: "Wearing the Mask," in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69–83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59–61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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