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Ring Lardner as dadaist

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RING LARDNER AS DADAIST

BY

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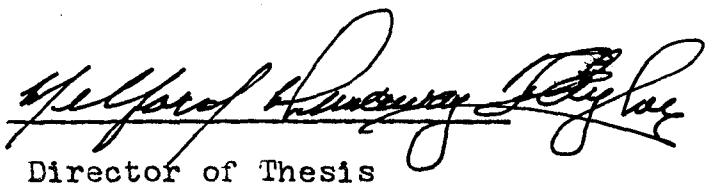

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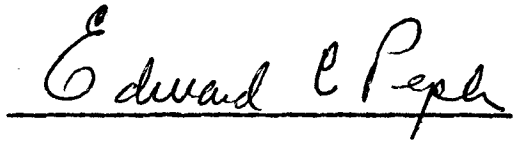

Dean of Graduate School

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PREFACE

This thesis is not a history of Dada, nor does it attempt to trace any direct influences that Ring Lardner may have on current literature. What it does strive to achieve is proper understanding of one facet of Lardner's work.

During the period that the Dadaists were actively trying to establish a new order by destroying the old (and theoretically, Dada itself), Lardner was creating nonsense playlets. His critics, for the most part, could not comprehend his intentions, so this aspect of his work was relegated to obscurity.

Half a century later, Dada has become more relevant historically; therefore, Lardner's emulation of Dadaism deserves reappraisal.

I am indebted to Dr. Welford D. Taylor for his encouragement in this endeavor. I also owe him gratitude for reading the manuscript and offering objective solutions where I was blinded. Appreciation is also due Dr. Garland O. Gunter for his helpful suggestions as second reader.

Richmond, Virginia
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INTRODUCTION

In presenting Ring Lardner as one of the Dadaists, certain problems are immediately apparent. The literary aspect of the movement is rather esoteric, and Lardner was not actively associated with its members.

Most of the books regarding Dada incorporate coverage on the two major forces that evolved: literature and the fine arts. Even though the founding members had originally conceived of creating a literary movement, with the fine arts in a subsidiary capacity, the reverse occurred. Today Dada is best known for its painters and sculptors.

Nonetheless, enough material was produced by the men of letters, who were activists in Dada from 1916 to 1925, to warrant recognition for their efforts. Although none of the writing from this cause can be classified as great literature, it did have definite effects on other writers of the era, and it created opportunities on which the surrealists could capitalize. This, in turn, has been one of the forerunners of today's abstractionist tendencies.

Proving Lardner was spiritually a Dadaist rests primarily on circumstantial evidence. The objective here is to contrast and compare Lardner's least known work to that of the proclaimed Dadaists. His short skits written in the nonsense vein are to be considered as significant enough to merit recognition as a historic link in the development of twentieth century literature.

Since source material on Dada is in great demand by current art students, books on this subject are not always readily available

in our libraries. For this reason, I have selected a few samples of Dada manifestoes and graphic art to complement this thesis. These are few in number, but hopefully, they will give a better generalized understanding of my thesis. They are found in the appendices.

CHAPTER I

In dismissing, pardoning, and excusing Ring W. Lardner's nonsense writings, his critics have failed to comprehend the point that he was striving to make. His playlets, "Thompson's Vacation," "Clemo Uti---'The Water Lilies!," "I. Gaspiri," "Quadroon," "Dinner Bridge," "Cora, or Fun at a Spa," "Abend Di Anni Nouveau," and "Taxidea Americana,"[1] are more significant than commonly assumed. By considering this segment of his work in conjunction with the rest of his writing, it becomes evident that he was deeply concerned that the vast majority of mankind had no idea, earthly or otherwise, where it was going or for what reason. These intense feelings link him intimately with the Dadaists, although he never publicly admitted any connection with them.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to clarify a problem regarding semantics. "Nonsense" in this thesis refers to a genre, not to literal denotation. That so many people have consistently applied the latter to Lardner's work is rather amazing, especially considering that approximately one-half of his writings are done in this vein.[2]

Lardner was a quiet man, who neither discussed himself or his work. The personal acquaintances who have written about him state that it was impossible to know the real Ring Lardner fully. There seems, nevertheless, to be no doubt to any of them that there was a different man behind the mask that he held up for the world to see. He denied many times that he was a creative writer, insisting that he was just a listener.[3] At least part of this claim is true, which is evident from just a cursory scanning of almost any of his

stories. His knack for reproducing the idiom of lower middle-class America is uncanny. It is so powerful that its effect tends to obscure the more important aspects of his work. Indeed, he listened carefully enough to develop the ability to lodge his genius in a vernacular so accurate that his characters live and breathe, even when they say the most absurd things. This is the technique he employs in his playlets that gives them a good part of their force. Coined words and phrases somehow seem natural utterances.

In addition to learning to use the more common vulgate, Lardner also gained a concise knowledge of all the petty motivations that drive the bulk of mankind. Because of his sensitivity, he was compelled to deprecate this asininity in writing, only orally expressing his true love of his fellow man in an inebriated state.[4] These genial lapses and his genuine concern over the misfortunes of others discredit criticism pronounding the theory that he was coldly cruel in his satire.

While Lardner was still living, some of his contemporaries published observations that have perpetuated a legend about his hatred. A small amount of research on his life coupled with astute reading of his works will disprove this unfair myth.

Clifton Fadiman did much to impair Lardner's image by advocating that he was a misanthrope. In 1933 Fadiman said:

> The special force of Ring Lardner's work springs from a single fact: he just doesn't like people. Except Swift, no writer has gone further on hatred alone. I believe he hates himself; more certainly he hates his characters; and most clearly of all, his characters hate each other. Out of this intregal-triune repulsion is born his icy satiric power.[5]

Maxwell Geismar seconded this proposal in 1924, by agreeing to Lardner's hatred of himself and his characters. He also added that there was a ceaseless masochism inherent in all of Lardner's work.[6]

It is true that several of the short stories are devoid of humor, but they deal with situations so despicable that they are appalling. Drollery would be out of place in "Haircut," "A Day With Conrad Green," "Champion," and one or two others. These, however, are the exception; they depict subhuman specimens, people who thrive on avarice, immorality, and brutal disconcern.

Disregarding the accusation of Lardner's hatred, a case can be developed presenting these bitter works as black comedy. Lardner simply cannot banter about the truly destructive effects that uncouth forces perpetrate upon society. He commiserates with the victimized, but he also indicates that they share in the guilt by allowing themselves to be trampled upon. He relentlessly charges the innocent to stop being naive, and these demands have been misinterpreted.

Some of this technique is carried over into the nonsense playlets; however, it is tempered with large quantities of Lardner's truly comic style. The combination creates a force that is lacking in the purer forms of each.

Lardner's writing career started when he was still quite young. As a college drop-out, he began newspaper sports coverage in South Bend, Indiana; moved around a bit for a few years in the Chicago area; and ended by becoming a syndicated columnist living on Long Island.[7] He rapidly changed his style and subject matter

from the narrowness of the sporting field, branching out through a broad spectrum of human behavior. And all the while he was indulging himself by experimenting in abstract humor.[8]

F. Scott Fitzgerald, Lardner's personal friend and neighbor on Long Island (The East Egg of The Great Gatsby), felt that Lardner was falling short of the achievement of which he was capable. He believed that Lardner was wasting energy because of his too ardent desire to write musical comedy for the stage. Fitzgerald only refers to the unsuccessful endeavors at conventional playwriting that his friend attempted, he is silent on the playlets. In the end, Fitzgerald thought that he settled for a mediocre standard that was unsatisfactory to himself and to his genius.[9] It is generally conceded that Abe North in Tender is the Night has Lardner as his prototype: the young man who has a brilliant start, continues to show promise, but perishes because he is too self-indulgent.

By the time the Dada movement has just about extinguished itself in 1924, Lardner had written most of his nonsense satires; however, he continued using the form to some extend for several years. In 1924, he was surprised by a request to collect his better stories for publication, and when asked for introductory comments, he complied with Dadaistic quips that were not appreciated. For anyone who knew Lardner's own evaluation of his work, these fanciful flights of the imagination should have been very revealing. What actually happened was just that everyone was baffled.

The collection is called How to Write Short Stories, and consists of the stories that had enjoyed tremendous success when

published in various magazines. While Lardner welcomed the financial independence that magazine publication brought him (he chronically worried about the security of his family), he must have deplored reader reaction. America loved his tales, never seeming to realize that he was trying to tell the public to wake up and take a hard look at itself.

The introductions in How to Write Short Stories are two-fold in meaning: they again satirize an uncomprehending audience, and in addition, they spoof Lardner himself for his failure. An example is the introduction to "My Roomy," a story about a sadistic baseball player who cannot grasp his own motivations, much less those of others.

> A house party in a fashionable Third Avenue laundry and the predicament of a hero who has posed as a famous elevator starter from the background of this delightful tale of life in the Kiwanis Club.[10]

In 1926 Carl Van Doren wrote a criticism of Lardner that comes a little closer to indicating a truer value judgment than anything that preceded it.

> Mr. Lardner, in his books at least, gives no sign of any aesthetic or intellectual concern. He laughs at affectation; he is jovial toward foolishness; he portrays dullness without anger. His instinct for the facts of life and for the comedy of facts is too strong for him to feel obligated to bring his more serious reading of existence into his accounts.[11]

This criticism is at the opposite pole from that of Mr. Fadiman, but it too falls short of a complete evaluation. Van Doren feels that Lardner's characters should not be overlooked, but evidently he does not think that his satire is weighty enough to be credited. It is Lardner's instinct for sensing moral degradation

(plus a keen observation) that Mr. Van Doren evaluates as being capable of producing only entertaining comedy. Perhaps the trends of the time prevented Mr. Van Doren from delving more deeply into cause and effect.

James T. Farrell came closer to the real motivation behind Lardner's work in an article for the New York Times Book Review in 1944. Speaking of Lardner's characters he said:

> There is a singular contradiction in nearly all these people. Living an intense social life, they are anti-social. They can never really establish human relationships with one another. Seemingly always together, they are alone, unable to reach across a world bounded by their own skins.[12]

Lardner was creating in individual personal relationships what was going on internationally, and he must have felt the frustrations just as much as the Dadaists in Zurich and Paris. His characters reflect this incomprehension perfectly. They hear audible sounds, but their reactions are out of phase. They often do not even understand what they themselves are saying.

In addition to his regular short stories, Lardner was also writing and publishing his nonsensical work, which must have represented the ultimate in non-communication to him. The stories have never been collected, and therefore, are not readily available; however, the short plays are in print, and are well worth reading.[13] The first one that he wrote, called The Tridget of Greva, was actually performed in a revue, and was a riotous success; however, its audience was just as baffled as it was amused. Unfortunately, this skit has not been anthologized with the others, but parts of it are given in Donald Elder's biography of Lardner.[14]

In Tridget three men are sitting in separate boats, talking in non sequiturs. The following excerpt is an example of what bewildered and entertained the Tridget audience:

BARHOOTER ...what was your mother's name before she was married?

CORBY I didn't know her then.

LAFFLER Do they allow people to fish at the aquarium?

(Barhooter and Corby ignore him.)

BARHOOTER (to Corby) Well, then, what was your mother's first name?

CORBY I don't know.

BARHOOTER Do you mean to say that you don't know your mother's first name?

CORBY Why no. I always called her mother.

BARHOOTER But your father must have called her something.

CORBY I should say he did! Everything he could think of!

(Laffler's and Barhooter's fishlines become tangled. Barhooter gets out of his boat, untangles the lines and resumes his place in the boat.)

This small sampling shows the necessity of thinking in other than conventional methods. Chapter III covers this aspect more fully, suggesting avenues of approach for appreciation of the playlets.

Accused of mocking the Moscow Art Theatre, in 1925 Lardner told Grant Overton that he had been writing his particular brand of nonsense long before he had ever heard of the Moscow group. He denied once again to Mr. Overton that he was a serious writer. Overton did not manage to form any critical analysis, but rather dismissed Lardner's works as being divine inconsequence.[15]

Lardner maintained that his plays were not specific satires,

but nevertheless, they fall into the realm of the surrealism that has propigated today's theatre of the absurd. The jocularity is gone now, for the most part, but the incongruous juxtaposition of dialogue and action that Lardner used is evident as being a strong force currently used.

To date there has been a very small amount of critical evaluation of Lardner's works, and what little there is, invariably concentrates upon his magnificent genius for capsulizing the American middle-class idiom. His short stories certainly deserve such consideration from the critics, but it is unfortunate that there is a virtual absence of any meaningful comment upon the delightful nonsense playlets that Lardner wrote. Most of these compositions were written during the period of the Dada movement, both in Europe and America. The nature of these works and the era in which they were written justify a critical analysis.

From the vantage point of the theatre of the absurd of the 1960's, with the very recent advent of black comedy, a re-evaluation of Lardner is bound to displace the former emphasis on idiom in the short stories, giving him due credit as a positive influence on some of the tremendous changes that American dramatic literature has experienced during the last forty years.

Before proceeding further with connection Lardner with the Dadaists, it is necessary to briefly consider this relatively unknown movement.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I.

[1]Ring W. Lardner, The Ring Lardner Reader, ed. Maxwell Geismar (New York, 1963), pp. 597-623.

[2]Walton R. Patrick, Ring Lardner (New York, 1963), p. 139.

[3]Walter Tittle, "Glimpses of Interesting Americans," Century Magazine, XC (July, 1925), 316.

[4]Sherwood Anderson, "Meeting Ring Lardner," New Yorker, IX (November 25, 1933), 36.

[5]Clifton Fadiman, "Ring Lardner and the Triangle of Hate," Nation, CXXXVI (March 22, 1933), 315.

[6]Maxwell Geismar, Writers in Crisis (Boston, 1942), p. 245.

[7]Donald Elder, Ring Lardner (Garden City, 1956), p. 25.

[8]Patrick, p. 139.

[9]F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Ring," The New Republic, CXXVI (October 11, 1933), 254.

[10]Ring W. Lardner, How to Write Short Stories (New York, 1924), p. 179.

[11]Carl Van Doren, Many Minds (New York, 1926), p. 214.

[12]James T. Farrell, "Ring Lardner's Success-Mad World," New York Times Book Review, (June 18, 1944), 18.

[13]Lardner, I, pp. 597-623.

[14]Elder, pp. 263-4.

[15]Grant Overton, "Ring W. Lardner's Bell Lettres," The Bookman, LXII (September, 1925), 46-49.

CHAPTER II

A rapid survey of the history of the fine arts is quick to reveal occasional aberrations in the usual change from trend to trend. For the section of society that concerns itself with objets d'art and belles lettres, "Good Taste" all too often dominates the products of artist and poet. Fortunately stagnation tendencies often receive a sharp jolt from deviations from time to time, which (although not always a panacea) revitalize many processes of creativity. Generally this is healthy for the arts, even when the cause stems from negativism: such is the case with Dada.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly where Dadaism began because it had so many forerunners, and it will serve no useful purpose here to catalogue a tiresome list of deviators from normal trneds. It is relevant, however, to consider briefly at least two immediate predecessors to the movement: Isidore Ducasse and Guillaume Apollinaire.

Very little is known about Isidore Ducasse, the self-styled Comte de Lautreamont. Aside from six letters, the work entitled Les Chantes de Maldoror, and what is considered to be an introduction to an unwritten poem called "Poesies," only birth and death certificates remain. In addition to these documents, there are a few recorded verbal remembrances of friends which constitute a quite limited account of this strange young man's life.[1]

Ducasse wrote Les Chants de Maldoror when he was twenty-one years old, and at twenty-four he was dead. There is hinted-at evidence that he died from ruined health, probably from venereal disease, tuberculosis, and dissipation.[2] These hints take on

credibility if his writings are used to psychoanalyze his id, even supposing that this remarkable id dictated only a fraction of his life-style.

Isidore Lucien Ducasse was born in 1946, in Montevideo, Uruguay, where his father was attached to the French Consulate. Nothing is known about the boy's childhood except that his mother committed suicide before he was two years old. At thirteen he was taken to France for a formal education, where classmates later recalled he remained quiet and withdrawn. No other information is extant until 1868, when the first canto of Maldoror was published.[3]

Les Chants de Maldoror is a macabre work written with an obsessive dedication to manifestations of evil. The young Ducasse has a unique flair for baroque expression which he turns into fascinating abstractions. Every possible nuance on the nature of evil is treated with a fervor akin to religious fanaticism. The intense feeling of destruction forces at work must have had a strong appeal to the founders of the Dada movement, for they "...hailed Maldoror as a masterpiece and canonized Lautreamont as an ancestor...."[4]

Indeed, from the Dadaists' own manifestos, their objectives might easily have been drawn from the pages of Maldoror. The opening paragraph appears to proclaim their intentions:

> May it please Heaven that the reader, emboldened and become of a sudden momentarily ferocious like what he is reading, may trace in safety his pathway through the desolate morass of these gloomy and poisonous pages. For unless he is able to bring to his reading a rigorous logic and a spiritual tension equal at least to his distrust, the deadly emanations of this book will imbibe his soul as sugar absorbs water.[5]

This juxtaposition of logic and distrust, which Lautreamont finds so necessary for salvation, can be comfortably accepted as the rallying point around which the Dadaists gathered. Disillusioned primarily by the chaos of conditions in Europe precipitated by World War I, this group felt an urgency to bring about a new order. As they became better organized, their ideals expanded, taking into consideration more than just the current disorder. Some of the more far-sighted members of the group predicted that their effort was self-destructive in nature, and that it would bring about new and healthy concepts. To do this it must not only anihilate itself, but must take the old regime as well.[6]

According to Hans Richter, "Dada promised total liberty. The law of chance as the last consequence of spontaneous expression led us and became a remedy against war, obedience, banality, and art: anti-art as a new art."[7] It is fortunate, perhaps, that the spirit behind the dedication developed into a more-or-less humorous attack upon conventions, because the vasy majority of the output from this movement would otherwise be too trivial for even passing consideration. It is more banal than the "banality" it deplores; however, its seeming naivete gives it a force that is lacking in quality.

It is true that a few of its members became respected artists and writers after Dada's demise,[8] but the movement, taken as a whole, is submerged in mediocrity. This does not demean the ideals that were conceived and nourished throughout the period from 1916 until 1925 (and into the 1930's in America), and it is certainly a stepping-stone used by the much more successful surrealists.

Questions the Dadaists were asking were preconceived by Lautreamont:

> Alas! What is good and what is evil? Are they one and the same thing, by which we savagely bear witness to our impotence and our passion to attain the infinite, even by the most insensate means? Or are they two different things? Yes--they had better be one and the same, for if they are not what will become of me on the Day of Judgment?[9]

The dilemma was very real to many who were appalled by the logic that was currently used to justify the war: the wholesome killing and mutilation of millions of people.[10] Disgusted and revolted by such brutal actions, it is not a very great wonder that humanitarians were desperately concerned about morality.

For those who were more verbose than their contemporaries, once again Lautreamont came to their aid. They cannot have felt too much differently than he when he wrote:

> There is only one way to put a stop to the situation: to get rid of the enemy. This is the point I wanted to establish in order to make you understand upon what foundations present society is based. Each man should create his own justice, and if he does not he is nothing more than an imbecile.[11]

There is a singular lack of humor in Maldoror, an element the Dadaists added when they adopted his proclamations for their use. It is gratifying to find quotations such as the following:

> Andre Breton, exploring still further the philosophical significance of humor, finds in it a conception of knowledge. Since the Romantic era, two forces have competed for dominance in art: 'that which persuades the interest to fasten itself on the fortunes of the external world,' and that 'which would have it concentrate upon the caprices of human personality.' If they alternate, as with Lautreamont, they are 'as in the case of Jarry, with the triumph of objective humor, which is their dialectical resolution....' Marcel Duchamp, Raymond Roussel, Jacques Vache, Jacques Rigaud...even wanted to codify this sort of humor.

> The whole Futurist movement, and the whole Dadaist movement, can claim it as their essential factor.[12]

The other French writer who also had an initial impact on the Dadaists, Guillaume Apollinaire, died in 1918, when the movement was approximately two years old. By that time Apollinaire had been relegated to the ranks of the bourgeois establishment, but certain ideas from his criticism and some of his poetic forms were adhered to.[13] In 1948 one of his editors could comment:

> The significance of Apollinaire's critical work is considerable and as yet little documented. 'L'Esprit Nouveau et Les Poetes' made a forceful impression upon the generation of writers who were looking for new loyalties immediately after the first war. Dada and surrealism drew upon the abundance of his ideas.[14]

The essay referred to, "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poetes," is somewhat lackluster, and falls short of the praise afforded by Apollinaire's enthusiastic critic; however, like Maldoror, it furnished the Dadaists additional support in their endeavor. They were certain to appreciate this:

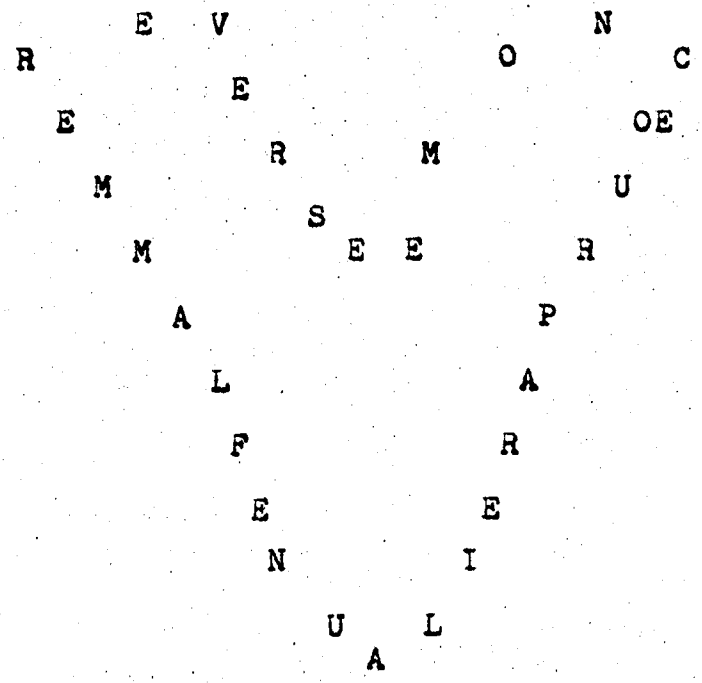
> The new spirit is above all the enemy of estheticism, of formulae, and of cultism. It attacks no school whatever, for it does not wish to be a school, but rather one of the great currents of literature encompassing all schools since symbolism and naturalism. It fights for the reestablishment of the spirit of initiative, for the clear understanding of its time, and for the opening of new vistas on the exterior and interior universes which are not inferior to those which scientists of all categories discover everyday and from which they extract endless marvels.[15]

This nebulous claim of attacking no specific school is echoed again and again by the apologists of the movement, perhaps too often. After a while, it becomes monotonous and rings falsely. The elaborate denials have a tendency to convey the impression that these writers and artists, after all, were trying to create

something that would somehow manage to self-destruct and yet survive just as the mythical Phoenix did.

Besides Apollinaire's prose writing, the Dadaists were evidently favorably impressed by the unique typography of some of his poems. Almost any sampling of Dada writing will reflect the influence of the following illustrations.

COEUR ET MIROIR[16]



HEART

MY HEART LIKE A FLAME TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

MIROIR[17]

DANS

FLETS CE
RE MI
LES ROIR
SONT JE
ME SUIS
GUILLAUME
COM EN
APOLLINAIRE
NON CLOS
ET VI
GES VANT
AN ET
LES VRAI
NE COM
GI ME
MA ON

I

MIRROR

IN THIS MIRROR I AM ENCLOSED LIVING AND TRUE AS ONE IMAGINES ANGELS AS REFLECTIONS ARE GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

Obviously the Dadaists were more interested in the shock effect produced by the unorthodox typesetting than they were in the thought content.

There is a slight controversy among the Dadaists and their critics as to just when, where, and by whom the movement was originated. It is inconsequential; but, what is important is that its adherents seem adamant upon insisting that they were making a conscious maneuver at its very inception. They do not seem to be aware that such assertions automatically negate their claims for the spontaneity of the movement.

Even so, it is generally conceded that Dada started in Zurich in the spring of 1916.[18] Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings, Germans, were operating a small bar, the Cabaret Voltaire, where a group of international intellectuals gathered to discuss ideologies. Besides Ball and Miss Hennings, there were Tristan Tzara and Marcel Janco, Rumanians; Hans Arp, French; and Richard Huelsenbeck, also German.[19] As conscientious objectors and anti-war protestors, they quickly established a spiritual rapport that eventually led to concrete action.

> The Cabaret Voltaire group were all artists in the sense that they were keenly sensitive to newly developed artistic possibilities. Ball and I had been extremely active in helping to spread expressionism in Germany; Ball was an intimate friend of Kandinsky, in collaboration with whom he had attempted to found an expressionistic theatre in Munich. Arp in Paris had been in close contact with Picasso and Braque, the leaders of the cubist movement, and was thoroughly convinced of the necessity of combatting naturalist conception in any form. Tristan Tzara, the romantic internationalist whose propagandistic zeal we have to thank for the enormous growth of Dada, brought with him from Rumania an unlimited literary facility. In

> that period, as we danced, sang and recited night after night in the Cabaret Voltaire, abstract art was for us tantamount to absolute honor. Naturalism was a psychological penetration of the motives of the bourgeois, in whom we saw our mortal enemy, and psychological penetration, despite all efforts at resistance, brings on identification with the various precepts of bourgeois morality. Archipenka, whom we honored as an unequalled model in the field of plastic art, maintained that art must be neither realistic nor idealistic, it must be true; and by this he meant above all that any imitation of nature, however concealed, is a lie. In this sense, Dada was to give the truth a new impetus. Dada was to be a rallying point for abstract energies and a lasting slingshot for the great international artistic movements.[20]

Huelsenbech claims that he and Ball named the movement, accidently discovering the French word for wooden horse.[21] Others claim that Tristan Tzara plunged a letter opener into a dictionary and came up with the word. Be that as it may, it is certain that the first publication using the new name came from the Cabaret Voltaire on May 15, 1916,[22] It bore the title of the bar and counted among its contributors Guillaume Apollinaire, Pablo Picasso, Amedeo Modigliani, Artur Segal, Jacob van Hoddis, Wassily Kandinsky, Arturo Marinetti, Cargiullo, Otto von Rees, Slodky and Blaise Cendrars, as well as all of the originators. The cover, black with a white abstract design and lettering, was created by Hans Arp.[23] The introduction was written by Hugo Ball, a facsimile of which follows, with a translation after.

Als ich das Cabaret Voltaire gründete, war ich der Meinung, es möchten sich in der Schweiz einige junge Leute finden, denen gleich mir daran gelegen wäre, ihre Unabhängigkeit nicht nur zu geniessen, sondern auch zu dokumentieren. Ich ging zu Herrn Ephraim, dem Besitzer der „Meierei" und sagte: „Bitte, Herr Ephraim, geben Sie mir Ihren Saal. Ich möchte ein Cabaret machen." Herr Ephraim war einverstanden und gab mir den Saal. Und ich ging zu einigen Bekannten und bat sie: „Bitte geben Sie mir ein Bild, eine Zeichnung, eine Gravüre. Ich möchte eine kleine Ausstellung mit meinem Cabaret verbinden." Ging zu der freundlichen Züricher Presse und bat sie: „Bringen sie einige Notizen. Es soll ein internationales Cabaret werden. Wir wollen schöne Dinge machen," Und man gab mir Bilder und brachte meine Notizen. Da hatten wir am 5. Februar ein Cabaret. Mde. Hennings und Mde. Leconte sangen französische und dänische Chansons. Herr Tristan Tzara rezitierte rumänische Verse. Ein Balalaika-Orchester spielte entzückende russische Volkslieder und Tänze.

Viel Unterstützung und Sympathie fand ich bei Herrn M. Slodki, der das Plakat des Cabarets entwarf, bei Herrn Hans Arp, der mir neben eigenen Arbeiten einige Picassos zur Verfügung stellte und mir Bilder seiner Freunde O. van Rees und Artur Segall vermittelte. Viel Unterstützung bei den Herren Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco und Max Oppenheimer, die sich gerne bereit erklärten, im Cabaret auch aufzutreten. Wir veranstalteten eine RUSSISCHE und bald darauf eine FRANZÖSISCHE Soirée (aus Werken von Apollinaire, Max Jacob, André Salmon, A. Jarry, Laforgue und Rimbaud). Am 26. Februar kam Richard Huelsenbeck aus Berlin und am 30. März führten wir eine wundervolle Negermusik auf (toujours avec la grosse caisse: boum boum boum boum — drabatja mo gere drabatja mo bonooooooooooo —) Monsieur Laban assistierte der Vorstellung und war begeistert. Und durch die Initiative des Herrn Tristan Tzara führten die Herren Tzara, Huelsenbeck und Janco (zum ersten Mal in Zürich und in der ganzen Welt) simultanistische Verse der Herren Henri Barzun und Fernand Divoire auf, sowie ein Poème simultan eigener Composition, das auf der sechsten und siebenten Seite abgedruckt ist. Das kleine Heft, das wir heute herausgeben, verdanken wir unserer Initiative und der Beihilfe unserer Freunde in Frankreich, ITALIEN und Russland. Es soll die Aktivität und die Interessen des Cabarets bezeichnen, dessen ganze Absicht darauf gerichtetet ist, über den Krieg und die Vaterländer hinweg an die wenigen Unabhängigen zu erinnern, die anderen Idealen leben. Das nächste Ziel der hier vereinigten Künstler ist die Herausgabe einer Revue Internationale. La revue paraîtra à Zurich et portera le nom „DADA". („Dada") Dada Dada Dada Dada.

ZÜRICH, 15. Mai 1916.

Hugo Ball, *Cabaret Voltaire*. The first Dadaist publication

When I started the Cabaret Voltaire, I was sure that there must be other young men in Switzerland who, like myself, wanted not only to enjoy their independence, but also to give proof of it.

I went to Mr. Ephraim, the owner of the Meieri, and said to him: 'I beg you Mr. Ephraim, please let us use your place. I should like to start an artists' cabaret.' We came to terms, and Mr. Ephraim gave me the use of his place. I went to some of my acquaintances. 'Please give me a picture, a drawing, an etching. I should like to have a little exhibition in connection with my cabaret.' To the friendly Zurich press, I said: 'Help me, I want to start an international cabaret; we'll do some wonderful things.' I was given the pictures, the press releases were published. So we had a cabaret show on February 5th (1915). Mme. Hennings and Mme. Leconte sang, in French and Danish. Mr. Tristan Tzara read some of his Roumanian poetry. A balalaika orchestra played popular tunes and Russian dances.

I got a great deal of support and sympathy from Mr. Slodki, who made the Cabaret poster, and from Mr. Arp, who loaned me some original works of art, Picasso etchings, and some pictures by his friends, O. van Rees and Artur Segal. A lot more support from Mr. Tristan Tzara, Mr. Marcel Janco and Mr. Max Oppenheimer, who all appeared many times on the stage. We organized a Russian evening, then a French one (during which works by Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Andre Salmon, Jarry, Laforque and Rimbaud were read). Richard Huelsenbech arrived from Berlin on February 26th, and on March 30th we played two admirable negro chants (always with one big drum: boom boom boom boom drabatja mo gere, drabatja no boooooooo); Mr. Laban helped and was amazed. And (on the initiative of Mr. Tristan Tzara) Mr. Huelsenbech, Mr. Janco and Mr. Tzara recited (for the first time in Zurich and the whole world) the simultaneous verses of Mr. Henri Barzun and Mr. Fernand Divoire, and a simultaneous poem of their own composition, which is printed on pages 6 and 7 of the present booklet. Today, and with the help of our friends from France, Italy, and Russia, we are publishing this little booklet. It is necessary to define the activity of this cabaret; its aim is to remind the world that there are independent men--beyond war and nationalism--who live for other ideals.

The intention of the artists here assembled is to publish an international review. The review will appear in Zurich, and will be called DADA Dada Dada Dada Dada.[25]

Although this was the only issue published under the auspieces of the Cabaret Voltaire, Dada magazines began appearing in major European cities, eventually even in New York.

Meanwhile, manifestoes were flourishing at a prodigious

rate, and continued to do so throughout the short life of the movement. It will suffice the purposes of this thesis to summarize three of these manifestoes as a cross-section of the intent of these compositions. The first, and probably most insignificant, is by the Rumanian poet Tristan Tzara.

Tzara, one of the most vociferous members of the group, continued to issue manifestoes throughout the movement. Despite his prodigious output, there is a quality of sameness that haunts his writings. His first manifesto, the "Manifesto of Mr. Antipyrine,"[26] appears in Appendix A of this work.

In this wildly enthusiastic diseration, Tzara proclaims the contempt with which Dada intends to regard the world. This is shown mostly through a total disregard for conventional semantics and punctuation. The ideas hidden behind this hodge-podge masquerade are naive and rather colorless.

> Perhaps at the turn of the century
>
> A harsh necessity without discipline or morality and we spit on humanity. Dada remains within the European frame of weakness it's shit after all but from now on we mean to shit in assorted colors and bedeck the artistic zoo with the flags of every consolate[27]

was shocking enough to shake an insane world out of apathy. Today it only creates curiosity as to whether or not the Dadaists gained nothing more from Lautreamont than his obsession with scatology.

Andre Breton's first manifesto[28] (Appendix B) does not rely upon innovative distortions of syntax to convey its message. Written in scholarly fashion, it is a plea for spontaneity, which Breton suspects is behind so-called 'intentional' work.

> When will the arbitrary be granted the place it deserves in the formation of works and ideas? What touches us is generally less intentional than we believe. A happy formula, a sensational discovery make their appearance in the most miserable form. Almost nothing attains its goal, although here and there something overshoots it.[29]

Breton's skepticism also embraces those who claim authoritarianism. He deplores classifying all radical ideas (radical only because they do not conform to the mediocrity of the masses) as subversive. To him freedom can only exist spiritually, something that very few will ever attain.[30]

Breton does not attempt to convince anyone that Dada is the answer. It too, he believes, is just an ephemeral escape, another effort to discover what life is all about. He ends by stating that there are still questions to be answered, and the tone is that there is still hope.[31]

Richard Huelsenbeck's "Collective Dada Manifesto. 1920,"[32] appears in its entirety in Appendix C.

Huelsenbeck's work is also on a higher plane than Tzara's, proclaiming that the true artist will not only make every effort to create, but that he will not rely upon any phase of traditional methods. To create representations of daily problems is the answer to Huelsenbeck. Every movement prior to Dada has failed to approach reality in the sense he wishes. His faith is stated as follows:

> The word Dada symbolizes the most primitive relation to the reality of the environment; with Dadaism a new reality comes into its own. Life appears as a simultaneous muddle of noises, colors and spiritual rhythms, which is taken unmodified into Dadaist art, with all the sensational screams and fevers of its reckless everyday psyche and with all its brutal reality.[33]

Huelsenbeck's conclusion is a fervant plea for a commitment to Dada, a recognition for the need for a change from traditional concepts.[34]

Along with the manifesto, the Dada publications presented other art forms. Almost every issue contained reproductions of paintings, lithographs, woodcuts, photo-montages, or some technique from the fine arts. These, of course, were such a departure from traditional art that they caused quite a public stir. In addition to this exposure, the Dada artists had another means of displaying their work: the exhibition. So many of them were held that the entire movement took on an aura of being purely a fine arts revolution. This is rather ironical because it started among writers, who then solicited artists to join them.

Nevertheless, there were a tremendous number of essays, poems, and dramatic skits written during this period. A few plays were written, but translations are practically non-existant.

The following examples of Dada poetry will supplement the manifestos in giving a generalized idea of how these people felt and how they presented their ideas. The first is by Philippe Soupault.

FLAME

A torn envelope enlarged my room
I give my memories a shove
We are leaving

I had forgot my suitcase.[35]

The next example is from Paul Eluard.

Les Fleurs

I am fifteen years old, I take myself by the hand.

Convictions of being young with the advantages of being most affectionate.

I am not fifteen years old. From the past is born an incomporable silence.

I dream of this fine, this splendid world of people and stolen grasses.

You think I'm upset; I'm not. Don't take me,--let me be.

My eyes and fatigue must be the color of my hands. Faith, what a grimace at the sun, for nothing but rain.

I assure you there are things as clear as this story of love; if I die, I do not know you any more.[36]

There are more samples of poetry to be found in Andre Breton's manifesto in the appendices.

The following was written by Kurt Schwitters, and will serve as an introduction to Chapter III, which deals with explicating Lardner's playlets.

ANXIETY PLAYS
A Dramatic Fragment

a. Sir.
b. Yes?
a. You are under arrest.
b. No.
a. You are under arrest, Sir.
b. No.
a. I shall shoot, Sir.
b. No.
a. I shall shoot, Sir.
b. No.
a. I shall shoot, Sir.
b. No.
a. I have you.
b. No.
a. I shall crucify you.
b. Not so.
a. I shall murder you.
b. Not so.
a. Think of the winter.
b. Never.
a. I am going to kill you.
b. As I said, never.

a. I shall shoot.
b. You have already said that once.
a. Now come along.
b. You can't arrest me.
a. Why not?
b. You can take me into custody, but no more.
a. Then I shall take you into custody.
b. By all means.
b. allows himself to be taken into custody and led away. The stage grows dark. The audience feels duped and there are catcalls and whistles. The chorus cries: "There's the author? Throw him out! Rubbish!"[37]

Schwitters had a definite theory worked out concerning logic that involved the combinations of letters, sounds, denotation (significance), and the association of ideas. He felt that literature had to be performed, i.e., orally presented for one interpretation, and read for a different one. In both instances the associative capacity of the listener or the reader will determine the reactions. To Schwitters a logically consistent peom will have a specific arrangement of letters, producing sounds that create images efficiently in the mind of the beholder.[38]

What appears to be rather simplistic in the quoted example is actually a very carefully premeditated arrangement of sounds.[39] Whether or not it succeeds, it does conform to Schwitters' theory. The short, staccato rhythm creates rapid-fire images that are clear, even if they are not logical to accepted thinking patterns.

According to current evaluation, the efforts of the Dadaists have succeeded in one sense. The works did not bring about their own destruction, but by the same token, none of them have been preserved as great art. Most of the collection has been catalogued only for its historical value, the part it has played in bringing about changes in the arts. Many nuances of social change are

unfathomable, but some correlations from Dada to the abstractions prevalent in late twentieth century literature are traceable.

Certain of these trends are detectable in Ring Lardner's nonsense, or Dadaistic writings. The next phase of this thesis will consider his playlets, so that some comparisons and conclusions can be drawn.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II.

[1]James Laughlin, "A Note on Lautreamont," Les Chants de Maldoror Comte de Lautreamont, trans. Guy Wernham (New York, 1965), p. v.

[2]Ibid., pp. v-vi.

[3]Ibid., p. vi.

[4]Matthew Josephson, Life Among the Surrealists (New York, 1962), p. 31.

[5]Comte de Lautreamont, Les Chants de Maldoror, ed. James Laughlin, trans. Guy Wernham (New York, 1965), p. 1.

[6]Yves Duplessis, Surrealism, trans. Paul Capon (New York, 1962), p. 16.

[7]Hans Richter, Dada, Art and Anti-Art (New York), p. 7.

[8]Andre Breton, Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Benjamin Peret, Francis Picabia, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, et al.

[9]William S. Rubin, Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage (New York, 1968), p. 12.

[10]Lautreamont, p. 9.

[11]Ibid., p. 66.

[12]Duplessis, pp. 30-31.

[13]Maurice Nadeau, The History of Surrealism, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1966), p. 75.

[14]Guillaume Apollinaire, Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire, ed. and trans. Roger Shattuck (New York, 1948), p. 18.

[15]Guillaume Apollinaire, "L'Esprit Nouveau et les Poetes," Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire, ed. and trans. Roger Shattuck (New York, 1948), p. 237.

[16]Ibid., p. 167.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Richter, p. 12.

[19]Richard Huelsenbeck, "En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism," trans. Ralph Manheim, Dada, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York, 1951), p. 23.

[20]Ibid., p. 24.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 25.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Richter, p. 15.

[25]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[26]Tristan Tzara, "Seven Dada Manifestoes," trans. Ralph Manheim, Dada, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York, 1951), pp. 75-76.

[27]Ibid., p. 75.

[28]Andre Breton, "Three Dada Manifestoes," trans. Ralph Manheim, Dada, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York, 1951), p. 109.

[29]Ibid., p. 199.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 202.

[32]Huelsenbeck, pp. 242-246.

[33]Ibid., p. 244.

[34]Ibid., p. 246.

[35]Philippe Soupault, "Flame," trans. Ralph Manheim, Dada, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York, 1951), p. 108.

[36]Paul Eluard, "Les Fleurs," trans. Clara Cohen, Dada, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York, 1951), p. 228.

[37]Kurt Schwitters, "Anxiety Plays," Dada, Art and Anti-Art, Hans Richter (New York), pp. 146-147.

[38]Ibid., pp. 148-149.

[39]Richter, p. 147.

CHAPTER III

There are numerous sources that define the principles on which Theatre of the Absurd and black comedy are heard; however, one of the more succinctly stated references is an article by Adolph Wegner, written for Books Abroad. According to Wegner, the most predominant characteristics are: incongruity, fantasy, irony, no explanation or solution, no activation, an admixture of bizarre, macabre and farcial tragi-comic elements, and vaudeville techniques. These characteristics, or at least suggestions of them, can be found in the eight Lardner playlets that appear in Appendix D. The following explications will exemplify the most obvious elements in the playlets.

The foremost of Wegener's principles, incongruity, is necessary to interrupt normal thought processes, causing the observer to focus attention on minute detail. As the Dadaists point out time and again, society does not adhere to the mores it professes; rather it indulges in the grossest insanities. Because of this, then, the wellmade plot is a lie, and only absurd representations contain the truth. These are easily reinforced with the use of fantasy. "Clemo Uti--'The Water Lilies,'" is one of Lardner's best examples in this vein. It is almost all stage directions--and what incongruously fantastic directions they are! The strange thing is, however, that they seem to make sense in a conventional manner. The Outskirts of a Parchesi Board is a fitting locale for Capitalists who do not appear, salesmen who are not listed among the characters, and over-indulgent queels. Missing discs are missed by wondering people, so what could be

more normal? Well, nothing. Unless you happen to have some curiosity as to the nature of discs. This careful blending of incongruity and fantasy at the beginning is indicative of the ending, when two queels enter, overcome with water lilies. They foolishly mimic rather ignoble human conduct, at which they excel.

"I, Gaspiri" opens strongly in this same element, being set in a public street running through a bathroom. Amidst the bathers, someone comes out of a faucet, and strangers meet on a bath mat. The dialogue is a series of non-sequiturs from beginning to end, presented in logical syntax. This juxtaposition of conversational language and fantasy creates a delightful comic effect. The reader tries to use reasoning powers and is buffeted on every line. The reading is easy, constructions are standard. English usage, and even manufactured phrases do not seem foreign (i.e. a pencil guster and bearded glue lifters); yet, the mind balks, perhaps freezes for an instant, then relaxes and is entertained.

A line-by-line explication of "I, Gaspiri" is not rewarding, indeed, not necessary. In its entirety, this skit is a general commentary on the absurdities mankind endures in the name of social existence. Lardner does not exempt himself from his indictment, for he often despaired over the need for the many, petty hypocracies demanded of him in his associations with others. Analysis of his work indicates that comedy helped to keep him from being a hopeless and bitter cynic.

The setting for "Cora, or Fun at a Spa" qualifies for this technique also. It opens in a pharmacy at a spa, moves to a

poultry yard, and ends in a mixed grill. In addition to being non-sequiturs, the dialogue also consists of puns, with an occasional play on words (i.e. "Don't bacilli!"). The choice of a vacation resort for setting is common enough, and the foolishness that takes place strongly resembles the ludicrous antics of all people on a holiday. This same conduct, however, is highly incongruous if carried beyond the vacation, and this is where Lardner's accusation becomes meaningful.

Inane incongruity is again effectively portrayed in "Abend Di Anni Nouveau." A waiter ties his horse and lies down upon a tray of hors d'oeuvres. After this, the curtain is lowered and partially destroyed to denote the passage of four days.

The next element necessary to absurdist drama is irony, which is best exemplified in "Thompson's Vacation," and "Dinner Bridge." "Thompson's Vacation" is the least Dadaistic of the eight playlets. It is included, however, because it shares with the others certain human weaknesses that Lardner deplored. "Vacation" does not delve into absurdities as much as it probes the grotesque cynicism of which man is capable. The dialogue is virtually simplistic, and very Lardnerian in its idiom. It is middle-class America talking, revealing its platitudinous, mundane, pessimistic best.

Thompson has just returned from a vacation at Atlantic City, where he managed to enjoy himself doing the usual things that are done on holidays. On his first day back, he runs into Haines, a boorish nonentity, who procedes to completely ruin what Thompson had considered to be a good time.

These two insipid characters are so lackluster in imagination that Lardner fittingly describes them as "a plain citizen" and "another." Amplification of their personalities comes from their own mouths, with such ingratiating comments as, "That's the only thing they is to do in Atlantic City, is go up in the air. If you don't do that, you didn't do nothing." Ironically, Haines little suspects that he too has never done anything that requires any amount of thinking.

It does not require very many of these "...you didn't do nothing" barbs from Haines to transform Thompson completely from a reasonably content man into abject pulp, completing the ironic touch. With a minimum amount of dialogue, and no philosophical dissection of the characters' personalities in the form of stage directions, Lardner creates two minuscule episodes that develop tremendous insight. The observer of this action emerges very keenly aware of the effects of the deflator and the despair of the deflated.

"Dinner Bridge," like "Thompson's Vacation," has character development. But unlike the latter, it is abstract and much more Dadaistic in construction. It also covers many more elements of absurd human behavior.

In the "Program Note," Lardner states that the theme is "vain search," which gives an ironic twist to the <u>double-entendre</u> title. America's well-entrenched social game, the bridge-, dinner-party is prettily lampooned through the finesse of the diners. The mannerisms of these laborers reflect a great many affectations

and hypocracies of a cultivated society. It is not enough that they are common, uneducated workers, but they also represent a cross-section of minority groups--a broad suggestion that they are culturally deprived Americans, making their shallow display even more humorous and biting. How delightful to discover Amorosi, "an Italian laborer," claiming to be in the first family set. If tracing back the family tree was amusing and ridiculous to Lardner in 1927, this futile indulgence is even more absurd almost half a century later. Amorosi's dialogue is poignant when he justifies his existence with: "He was among the pioneer Fifty-ninth Street Bridge destroyers. He had the sobriquet of Giacomo "Rip-Up-the Street" Amorosi."

In addition to the satire on ancestor worship, part of the fun is in Amorosi's use of "sobriquet," which he is sure to regard as a sophisticated appellation. The real irony follows with the date of the founding of this dynasty, which serves to emphasize the transitoriness of life, and therefore, how wasteful it is to spend time establishing meaningless ancestral linkage.

Other institutions ironically handled are: built-in obsolescence; funeral customs and attitudes; American superiority; news media sensationalism; and the boring exponent of the dinner joke. All of these are revealed through the idiosyncrasies of the various characters, with frequent references to "game" and "card."

"Dinner Bridge" is probably the best of the playlets written by Lardner, even though there are some rough transitions in subject matter. His theme concerning man's ever-present quest for identity is carefully countered by man's equally persistent need

for acceptance, regardless of how insane the prospect may be. Just as long as the proposal is logically presented, great numbers of people can be persuaded into becoming believers.

The lack of explanation or solution is another important technique employed by the Dadaists and absurdists. The absence of plot in most of Lardner's skits reduces them to a series of incidents, each of which is left hanging. There is no hint of an answer to the chant of the Chorus in "Clemo Uti--'The Water Lilies'." Their inane question, "What has become of the discs?" is followed by Wama entering, excited "...as if she had had waffles."

After conjecturing that the discs might be symbols of man's questing, either in the realm of tangibles or that of non-materialistic values, the reader expects some sort of explanation. Instead he gets Wama's entrance...and nothing. This is beautifully comic and subtle: first man searching <u>en masse</u>, then the individual appearing in a hypocritical guise of having accomplished what she, in fact, has not. Lardner has comically displayed individuals assuming a single identity: the mass-mind. Afraid of exposing any singular sensibilities, everyone huddles together and each is only capable of speaking in unison with others. Such conduct does not merit a better situation than the Outskirts of a Parchesi Board.

At any rate, where does this leave the on-looker? Right back where he started, wondering along with the Chorus where the discs are.

The situation in "I, Gaspiri" is no better. The First Glue Lifter asks, "Well, my son, how goes it?" The non-explanation

that the Second Glue Lifter gives is the song "My Man," to show how it goes.

The policemen in "Abend Di Anni Nouveau" are not any more helpful. With the entire cast dead, they do not come close to offering a solution. The Waiter comments: "The trouble now is that we'll have to recast the entire play. Every member of the cast is dead." The First Policeman retorts: "Is that unusual?"

The second act poses another dilemma, equally unsolvable: three men named Louie Breese.

In "Taxidea Americana," acts two, three, and four are left out through an oversight. When act six is reached, the coaches suddenly decide to send in act three. This bit of inexplicableness is the outcome of an insane football game between Wisconsin and the Wilmerding School for the Blind.

The basic satire here is leveled at institutions of higher learning, as well as sports. Lardner was disillusioned with formal study early in life. He left college in his freshman year and never attempted organized learning again. His attitude toward sports became cynical much later. In the last years before his death, several scandals were caused by the exposure of game-fixing by gambling syndicates. For someone who had been so intimately connected to the sporting world, this was a crushing blow.

Of course, there is no answer, but Lardner reveals how deeply he resented a sportsman becoming so dishonest by presenting this ridiculous contest. That he took such corruptness as a personal affront is indicated by the name, "Wilmerding," which is a combination of his middle name and a corruption of Ring.

Wegener feels that a deliberate omission of any motivation is also necessary to create the desired illusion.[2] It can be stated with almost no qualifications that motivation is absent in the actions of nearly all Lardner's characters. They do not understand even the rudiments of human behavior, so they certainly are unable to comprehend their own feelings. And without this, they cannot be properly motivated.

One of the few exceptions from this statement is in Act V of "Clemo Uti--'The Water Lilies'." Here salesmen are pushing an unwanted commodity, an element that is largely responsible for the success of a capitalistic system. Faced with defeat, the salesmen become hysterical. This is natural, because whether or not they are capable of forming any moral judgments about selling unnecessary products, they are motivated by the fact that capitalism will fail if they do not succeed.

Vaudeville techniques are also used in the Theatre of the Absurd. Lardner's best example of this is in "Quadroon: A Play in Four Pelts Which May All Be Attended In One Day or Missed in a Group." This is an ingenuous satire on Eugene O'Neill's Mourning Becomes Electra[3] that is virtually slap-stick comedy. Lardner obviously thought that O'Neill's alliterated titles The Homecoming, The Haunted, and The Hunted to be a bit too precious. The satire adds yet another "H" for emphasis, and the whole comedy is given an air of sophistication with the Lation pronoun declension, "Hic," "Haec," "Hoc," and "Hujus" (Huius) for subtitles.

Lardner also adds clownery over O'Neill's New England dialect. It looks suspiciously as if it were deep South, rather

than North East; thus the title, "Quadroon," and the Negro dialect.

This vaudevillian farce is rounded out with a complete menu worked into each act. This is a jest at the extreme length of Electra, which requires a break for dinner when it is performed.

The last element in absurdist drama to be considered is the admixture of bizarre, macabre and farcical tragi-comic components. This is probably the least prominent of all the characteristics. A modification of this is present in "Thompson's Vacation," when Thompson has been crushed under the degrading pomposity of Haines. What little bit of self-esteem that Thompson possesses is squelched totally, leaving him terrifyingly emasculated.

This element is also evident in "Clemo Uti--'The Water Lilies'." Part of the dialogue involves an inept priest who cannot perform the functions of office, in this case, the riding of a bicycle. This is a cogent prophecy of the diminishing role organized religion has been forced to accept in twentieth century America. By describing the bicycle as "old-fashioned," Lardner touches upon one of the key issues that has created a lack of communication between a stagnated institution and a dramatically changing society upon which it depends. The inadequacy hints at the death of religion.

In "Dinner Bridge," a discussion of murder becomes farcically macabre when Amorosi says: "Well, you see, over in Italy and Switzerland, it's different from, say, Chicago. When they find a man murdered over in those places, they generally try to learn who it is and put his name in the papers. So my wife was curious about this fellow's identity and she figured that the easiest way

to get the information was to pop him."

The characteristics illustrated here are the major elements employed by the playwrights creating drama for the Theatre of the Absurd. The examples cited from Lardner's playlets are only a cross-section, and are not intended to be all-encompassing. They are, however, sufficient enough to correlate Lardner's position as a practioner of absurdist techniques to his rightful place in the fraternity of American playwrights.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

[1]Adolph H. Wegener, "The Absurd in Modern Literature," Books Abroad, XLI (Spring, 1967), 150-156.

[2]Ibid., p. 155.

[3]Donald Elder, Ring Lardner, (Garden City, New York, 1956), p. 342.

CHAPTER IV

Now that some of the satire in Lardner's nonsense writing has been identified, inevitably these questions arise: how does it relate to the times? And, what value does it have?

First of all, it is inconceivable that Lardner could have been unaware of the Dada movement. As a newspaper man it would have been virbually impossible for him not to know about current writing trends. As a short story writer who socialized in the international set, it would be highly improbably for him not to recognize changing literary styles. And, most important of all, as an extremely sensitive individual living in the 1920's, he was bound to feel the pressures that were driving the European Dadaists into a frenzied revolution.

In addition to these inferences, there is documented evidence that Lardner traveled in Europe when Dadaism was flourishing there. He first went as a newspaper reporter, then he and his wife traveled as tourists.[1] In light of this, and realizing Lardner's keen sense of observation, is it possible that he could have been ignorant of the disillusionment that was so widespread? Unlikely. What is more probable is that he shared the feelings of so many others, which are rather succinctly stated by Edmund Wilson in The Shores of Light.

> It was dada that awakened laughter when humanity had been worrying too long about the honor of the human spirit and all those other insipid abstractions...The results of the war are nonsense, superb nonsense! from any point of view.[2]

Wilson continues to reinforce his stand by denouncing an incomprehensive society that complacently accepts meaningless treaties for

a peace that will never come. In addition to these treaties he adds other absurd activities and says:

> Dada makes the most of them all and turns them all upside down. For dada is the spirit of play, of the fascinating idiocy of things. It shows the lack of connection between everything with a dazzling quickness of mind. And so it is the nonsense comedian like Ed Wynn or Joe Cook, the humorist like Lardner or Benchley, who comes nearest among Americans to the disintegrating laughter of dada and is truest to the spirit of the time.[3]

Carrying the analogy further, Wilson comments on Lardner's playlet, "Tridget of Greva," which is mentioned in Chapter I of this thesis.

> ...In a frace of Ring Lardner's, three men are discovered fishing in boats; from time to time one of them rings a bell and a maid brings them trays of drinks, walking across the water. 'Can you imitate birds?' asks one of them, at the end of a long silence. 'No,' the other replies, 'but I can construct a shack suitable for occupancy by six persons.' For after all, what is life as we know it but a series of delicious inconsequences?[4]

And in 1924, when Wilson published this article, there were indeed many who were puzzled, who were so confused , that their moralistic values were in a turmoil. Even those who actively were not seeking a new order, were engaged in questioning the old. Accepted practices were suspect, so it is not too surprising to find Ring Lardner writing parodies on reigning institutions. Aside from the satirical content on behaviorisms of the masses, it is more than incidental that he was having fun with the well-made play. In essence, Lardner was saying in the 20's, what Walter Kerr expounds in the 60's.

In an article for The New York Times Magazine, in 1968, Kerr says that details have long been ignored on the American stage. It is because of this, he contends, that recent drama

has tried to outrage its audiences. Shocking humor found in such plays as Hair, Joe Egg, and The Birthday Party, cannot be explained in conventional terms; they must be observed minutely for total comprehension. Or, to use Kerr's words:

> Perhaps we have, in our hurry toward the external, the abstract, the logical and the intellectually shapely, raced past the real mystery, the tremulous current that so often makes hash of our headwork. Logic, the effort at shapeliness, is not meant to be mysterious; it is meant to solve mystery and thereby kill it. Mystery comes back--we come back to the thrilling, agitating inexplicableness of ourselves--when we drop logic for close attention.[5]

Of course, Lardner's short quips cannot be compared to the works of playwrights such as Eugene Ionesco, Edward Albee, Harold Pinter, et al., but it certainly is not unreasonable to claim that frace from the 20's could be a precursor of things to come in the 60's. The principles involved are the same: where Lardner has three men named Louie Breese playing bridge (with a fourth who is the partner of Louie Breese), Ionesco truns people into rhinoceros,[6] Albee creates an imaginary child,[7] and Pinter has a man, carefully and painfully, doing nothing but shredding a newspaper.[8] Where is the explanation? The answer is another question: where is normality?

In the idootic race for logic, the most fundamental concepts are trampled underfoot, and anyone who stops for a close observation is labelled as an eccentric. Such is the fate of Ring Lardner. In trying to fucus attention on behavior that is inconsistent with Christian (or moral, if you prefer) doctrine, he has been ignored---or worse yet, adored for being cute. Perhaps escapism from a reality too overwhelming for acceptance can

explain why such shallow observations of his works have been offered. Post World War I society shares much in common with any other era of inflationary and materialistic values. During these periods, highly idealistic individuals and minority groups gradually emerge and make their presence known. Of course, idealistic conditions are mythical, so these people must suffer igominious treatment for indefinite lengths of time. The Dadaists and Ring Lardner are no exception to this traditional process.

An interesting emulation of the Dadaists in the fine arts evolved in the late 1960's. Painting and sculpture display a marked similarity to that of the 20's. The extensive plethora of today's "junk" art would be indistinguishable from the Dadaists' work if exhibited together.

The strains of Dadaism found in current literature are not as broadly defined, but perhaps this is only because the Dada writers are less well known than the painters and sculptors. Nonetheless, Dada's influence is endemic in much contemporary literature, especially in the dramatic genre. The absence of the well-made plot is probably the foremost effect, with absurd juxtaposition, inexplicable action to conventional dialogue or vice versa coming next. When a playwright uses these techniques, as Walter Kerr intimates, attention must be focused on specific detail.[9] The audience is provoked into thinking in abstractions, and "well-made" logic suffers. The author is successful if he sends people from the theatre in serious contemplation.

Lardner did not achieve this distinction entirely, but it is only because he was premature in his conceptualization. Even

though his success cannot be measured in terms of box-office receipts, there is the satisfaction of knowing that his efforts have a more profound value on a long range basis. Aside from baffling a few audiences, he did receive praise for working in Dada's jurisdiction. Some of his nonsense writing was published in the Transatlantic Review, in Paris, in 1924. This was called to the attention of Andre Breton, with the hint "that Ring was doing what the Dadaists and the surrealists were trying to do, and doing it better."[10]

Even if this tenuous connection with Dada does not qualify Lardner as a member in good standing, he was certainly a spiritual exponent of the movement's ideals. Deprecating all that is crass and stupid in mankind, he instinctively knew that absurd humor was the way to confront and defeat resistence to change.

It is unjust to compare his brand of ridiculousness to the polished theatre of the absurd and black comedy that currently prevail; however, it is equally unfair to ignore in his work the seeds that made it possible for Albee to make the characters in Tiny Alice the pawns of a doll house and its small inhabitants.[11] Or for Pinter to write The Homecoming with the absence of a plot.[12] Or for Tom Stoppard to present such a puzzling quandary in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.[13] The list could go on and on, but these examples are adequate to illustrate the point. They all have, as Lardner had before them, the necessary elements essential to absurdist drama: incongruity, irony, fantasy, no explanation or solution, no motivation, an admixture of bizarre, macabre and farcical tragi-comic elements, and vaudeville

techniques.[14]

It is only whimsical to debate whether or not Lardner would have developed into an absurdist playwright in the fullest sense had he not met an untimely death. The time would be spent more wisely in fitting him into the pattern that has led to current theatre trends.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

[1]Franklin P. Adams, The Diary of Our Own Samuel Pepys (New York, 1935), I, p. 211.

[2]Edmund Wilson, The Shores of Light (New York, 1[illegible]), p. 136.

[3]Ibid., p. 137.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Walter Kerr, "The Theatre of Say It! Show It! What is It?," The New York Times Magazine (September 1, 1968), 18.

[6]Eugene Ionesco, Rhinoceros, trans. Derek Prouse (New York, 1960).

[7]Edward Albee, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (New York, 1962).

[8]Harold Pinter, The Birthday Party (New York, 1968).

[9]Kerr, p. 18.

[10]Donald Elder, Ring Lardner (Garden City, New York, 1956), p. 285.

[11]Edward Albee, Tiny Alice (New York, 1965).

[12]Harold Pinter, The Homecoming (New York, 1966).

[13]Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (New York, 1967).

[14]Adolph H. Wegener, "The Absurd in Modern Literature," Books Abroad XLI (Spring, 1967), 150-156.

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APPENDIX A

1. Manifesto of Mr. Antipyrine

Dada is our intensity; it sets up inconsequential bayonets the sumatran head of the german baby; Dada is life without carpet-slippers or parallels; it is for and against unity and definitely against the future; we are wise enough to know that our brains will become downy pillows that our anti-dogmatism is an exclusivist as a bureaucrat that we are not free yet about freedom--

A harsh necessity without discipline or morality and we spit on humanity. Dada remains within the European frame of weaknesses it's shit after all but from now on we mean to shit in assorted colors and bedeck the artistic zoo with the flags of every consulate.

We are circus directors whistling amid the winds of carnivals convents bawdy houses theatres realities sentiments restaurants HoHiHoHo Bang

We declare that the auto is a sentiment which had coddled us long enough in its slow abstractions in ocean liners and noises and ideas. Nevertheless we externalize facility we seek the eternal essence and we are happy when we can hide it; we do not want to count the windows of the marvelous elite for Dada exists for no one and we want everybody to understand this because it is the balcony of Dada, I assure you. From which you can hear the military marches and descend slicing the air like a seraph in a public bath to piss and comprehend the parable.

Dada is not madness--or wisdom--or irony take a good look at me kind bourgeois Art was a game of trinkets children collected words with a tinkling on the end then they went and shouted stanzas and they put the little doll's shoes on the stanza and the stanza turned into a queen to die a little and the queen turned into a wolverine and the children ran till they all turned green

Then came the great Ambassadors of sentiment and exclaimed historically in chorus

psychology psychology heehee

Science Science Science

Vive la France

We are not naive

We are successive

We are exclusive

We are not simple

And we are all quite able to discuss the intelligence. But we Dada are not of their opinion for art is not serious I assure you and if in exhibiting crime we learnedly say ventilator, it is to give you pleasure kind reader I love you so I swear I do adore you

APPENDIX B

1. For Dada

It is impossible for me to conceive of a joy of the spirit otherwise than as a breath of air. How can it be at its ease within the limits imposed on it by almost all books, almost all events? I doubt if there is a single man who has not been tempted at least once in his life to deny the existence of the outward world. Then he perceives that nothing is so important, so definitive. He proceeds to a revision of moral values, which does not prevent him from returning afterward to the common law. Those who have paid with a permanent unrest for this marvelous minute of lucidity continue to be called poets: Lautreamont, Rimbaud, but to tell the truth, literary childishness ended with them.

When will the arbitrary be granted the place it deserves in the formation of works and ideas? What touches us is generally less intentional than we believe. A happy formula, a sensational discovery make their appearance in the most miserable form. Almost nothing attains its goal, although here and there something overshoots it. And the history of these gropings, psychological literature, is not in the least instructive. In spite of its pretensions, a novel has never proved anything. The most famous examples are not even worth looking at. The utmost indiffer nce is in order. Incapable of embracing at one time the whole extent of a painting, or of a misfortune, where do we derive the right to judge?

If youth attacks conventions, we should not ridicule it: who knows whether reflection is a good counselor? Everywhere I hear innocence praised and I observe that it is tolerated only in its passive form. This contradiction would suffice to make me skeptical. To condemn the subversive is to condemn everything that is not absolutely resigned. In this I find no valor. Revolts exhaust themselves; these old liturgical sayings are not needed to dispel the storm.

Such considerations strike me as superfluous. I speak for the pleasure of compromising myself. Appeals to the questionable modes of discourse should be forbidden. The most convinced authoritarian is not the one you think. I still hesitate to speak of what I know best.

DIMANCHE

L'avion tisse les fils telegraphiques
et la source chante la meme chanson
An rendez-vous des cochers l'aperitif est orange
mais les mecaniciens des locomotives ont les yeux blancs
La dame a perdu son sonrire dans les bois

SUNDAY

The airplane weaves telegraph wires
and the well sings the same song

At the coachmen's bar the apéritif is tinged with orange
but the engine drivers have white eyes
The lady has lost her smile in the woods

The sentimentality of the poets of today is a subject on which we should come to an agreement. From the concert of imprecations so pleasurable to them rises from time to time to their delight a voice proclaiming that they have no heart. A young man who at twenty-three had swept the universe with the most beautiful look I know of, has rather mysteriously taken leave of us. It is easy for the critics to claim that he was bored. Jacques Vache was not the man to leave a testament! I can still see him smile as he uttered these words: last will. We are not pessimists. The man who was painted stretched out in a deck chair, so very fin de siecle lest he disturb the collections of the psychologists, was the least weary, the most subtle of us all. Sometimes I see him; in the streetcar a passenger points out to provincial relatives "boulevard Saint-Michel: the school quarter"; the windowpane winks complicity.

We are reproached for not constantly confessing. Jacques Vache's good fortune is to have produced nothing. He always kicked aside the work of art, that ball and chain that hold back the soul after death. At the very moment when Tristan Tzara was sending out a decisive proclamation from Zurich, Jacques Vache without knowing it, verified its principal articles. "Philosophy is the question: from what side shall we begin to regard life, God, the idea, or other appearances. Everything we look at is false. I don't think the relative result is any more important than the choice between cake and cherries after dinner." Given a spiritual phenomenon, we are in a hurry to see it reproduced in the domain of manners. "Give us gestures," people shout at us. But, as Andre Gide will agree, "measured by the scale of Eternity, all action is vain," and we regard the effort required as a puerile sacrifice. I do not place myself only in time. The red waistcoat of an epoch instead of its profound thought, there unfortunately is what everyone understands.

The obscurity of our utterances is constant. The riddle of meaning should remain in the hands of children. To read a book is order to know denotes a certain simplicity. The little that the most reputed works teach us about their author and their reader ought very quickly to decide us against this experiment. It is the thesis and not the expression that disappoints us. I resent passing through these ill-lighted sentences, receiving these confidences without object, suffering at every moment, through the fault of a chatterbox, a sensation of "I knew that before." The poets who have recognized this lose hope and run away from the intelligible, they know that their work can gain nothing by it. One can love a mad woman more than any other.

The dawn fallen like a showerbath. The corners
of the room are distant and solid. White background.
Round trip without mixture in the shade. Outside an

alley with dirty children and empty sacks that tells the whole story, Paris by Paris, I discover. Money, the road, the journey with red eyes and luminous forehead. The day exists that I may learn to live, time. Forms of error. Big to act will become naked sick honey, badly game already syrup, drowned head, lassitude.

Thought of little happiness, old flower of mourning, without event, I hold you in my two hands. My head has the shape of a thought.

It is a mistake to assimilate Dada to subjectivism. None of those who accept this label today is aiming at hermeticism. "There is nothing incomprehensible," said Lautreamont. If I accept the opinion of Paul Valery: "The human spirit seems to me so constituted that it can be incoherent only for itself," I further believe that it cannot be incoherent for others. I do not for this reason believe in the extraordinary encounter of two individuals, nor of one individual with the one he has ceased to be, but only in a series of acceptable misunderstanding in addition to a small number of commonplaces.

There has been talk of a systematic exploration of the unconscious. It is no novelty for poets to abandon themselves to the inclination of their spirit. The word inspiration, fallen I don't know why into disuse, was quite acceptable a short time ago. Almost all images, for example, strike me as spontaneous creations. Guillaume Apollinaire rightly believed that cliches such as "coral lips" whose success may pass for a criterion of value, were the product of this activity which he qualified as surrealist. Words themselves have doubtless no other origin. He went so far as to make this principle, that one must never abandon a former invention, the prequisite for scientific development, for "progress," so to speak. The idea of the human leg, lost in the wheel, reappeared only by chance in the connecting rod of the locomotive. Likewise in poetry, the Biblical tone is beginning to reappear. I should be tempted to explain this last phenomenon by the minimum intervention of nonintervention of the personality of choice in the new writing techniques.

What threatens to injure Dada most effectively in the general estimation is the interpretation of it by two or three pseudo-scientists. Up until now, it has been regarded most of all as the application of a system that is enjoying a great vogue in psychiatry, the "psych-analysis" of Freud, an application planned incidentally by the present author. One very confused and particularly malignant writer even seems to allege that we would profit by the psychoanalytic treatment if we could be subjected to it. It does without saying that the analogy between cubist or dadaist works and the elucubrations of madmen is entirely superficial, but it is not yet recognized that our supposed "lack of logic" dispenses us with accepting a unique choice, that "clear" language has the disadvantage of being elliptical, finally that only the works in question can reveal the methods of their authors and consequently give criticism the

raison d'etre it has always lacked.

Au lycee des pensees infinies
De monde de plus beau
Architectures hymenopterres
J'ecrirais des livres d'une tendresse folle
Si tu etais encore
Dan ce roman compose
En haut des marches

At the school of infinite thoughts
Of the most beautiful world
Hymenopterous buildings
I should write books full of mad tenderness
If you were still in that novel
Composed at the head of the stairs

Anyway, all this is so relative that for every ten persons who accuse us of lacking logic there is one who reproaches us with the opposite excess. M. J.-H. Rosny, commenting on the declaration of Tristan Tzara: "In the course of campaigns against all dogmatism and out of irony toward the creation of literary schools, Dada became the Dada movement," remarks: "Thus the foundation of Dadaism is represented not as the foundation of a new school but as the repudiation of all schools. There is nothing absurd about such a point of view; quite the contrary, it is logical, it is even too logical."

No effort has yet been made to give Dada credit for its desire not to pass for a school. Everyone continues to insist on such words as group, squad leader, discipline. They go so far as to claim that under color of exalting the individuality, Dada constitutes a danger to it, without pausing to note that it is most of all our differences that bind us together. Our common exception to the artistic or moral role given us only an ephemeral satisfaction. We are well aware that over and above this, an irrepressible personal imagination, more "dada" than the movement, will have free reign. M. J.-E. Blanche made this clear when he wrote: "Dada will survive only by ceasing to be."

Tirerons-nous au sort le nom de la victime
L'agression noeud coulant

Celui qui parlait trepasse
Le meurtrier se releue et did
Suicide
Fin du monde
Enroulement des drapeaux coquillages.

Shall we draw the victim's name out of a hat
Agression slip knot
The one who was talking perishes
The murderer rises and says
Suicide
End of the world
Rolling of shell-fish flags.

The Dadaists have from the start taken care to state that they want nothing. In other words, There's nothing to worry about, the instinct of self-preservation always wins out. When, after the reading of the manifesto: "No more painters, no more writers, no more religions, no more royalists, no more anarchists, no more socialists, no more police, etc.," someone naively asked us if we "allowed the continued existence' of man, we smiled, by no means resolved to do God's work. Are we not the last to forget that there are limits to understanding? If I am so pleased by these words of Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, it is because essentially they constitute an act of extreme humility: "What is 'beautiful'? What is 'ugly'? What are 'big,' 'strong,' 'weak'? What are Carpentier, Renan, Foch? Don't know. What is myself? Don't know. Don't know, don't know, don't know."

APPENDIX C

Richard Huelsenbeck: Collective Dada Manifesto. (1920)

Art in its execution and direction is dependent on the time in which it lives, and artists are creatures of their epoch. The highest art will be that which in its conscious content presents the thousand-fold problems of the day, the art which has been visibly shattered by the explosions of last week, which is forever trying to collect its limbs after yesterday's crash. The best and most extraordinary artists will be those who every hour snatch the tatters of their bodies out of the frenzied cataract of life, who, with bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the intelligence of their time. Has expressionism fulfilled our expectations of such an art, which should be an expression of our most vital concerns?

No! No! No!

Have the expressionists fulfilled our expectations of an art that burns the essence of life into our flesh?

No! No! No!

Under the pretext of turning inward, the expressionists in literature and painting have banded together into a generation which is already looking forward to honorable mention in the histories of literature and art and aspiring to the most respectable civic distinctions. On pretext of carrying on propaganda for the soul, they have, in their struggle with naturalism, found their way back to the abstract, pathetic gestures which presuppose a comfortable life free from content or strife. The stages are filling up with kings, poets and Faustian characters of all sorts; the theory of a melioristic philosophy, the psychological naivete of which is highly significant for a critical understanding of expressionism, runs ghostlike through the minds of men who never act. Hatred of the press, hatred of advertising, hatred of sensations are typical of people who prefer their armchair to the noise of the street, and who even make it a point of pride to be swindled by every smalltime profiteer. That sentimental resistance to the times, which are neither better nor worse, neither more reactionary nor more revolutionary than other times, that weak-kneed resistance, flirting with prayers and insecure when it does not prefer to load its cardboard cannon with Attic iambics--is the quality of a youth which never knew how to be young. Expressionism, discovered abroad, and in Germany, true to style, transformed into an opulent idyll and the expectation of a good pension, has nothing in common with the efforts of active men. The signers of this manifesto have, under the battle cry:

Dada! ! !

gathered together to put forward a new art, from which they expect the realization of new ideals. What then is DADAISM?

The word Dada symbolizes the most primitive relation to the reality of the environment; with Dadaism a new reality comes into its own. Life appears as a simultaneous suddle of noises, colors and spiritual rhythms, which is taken unmodified into Dadaist art, with all the sensational screams and fevers of its reckless everyday psyche and with all its brutal reality. This is the sharp dividing line separating Dadaism from all artistic directions up until now and particularly from FUTURISM which not long ago some puddingheads took to be a new version of impressionist realization. Dadaism for the first time has ceased to take an aesthetic attitude toward life, and this it accomplishes by tearing all the slogans of ethics, culture and inwardness, which are merely cloaks for weak muscles, into their components.

The Bruitist poem
represents a streetcar as it is, the essence of the streetcar with the yawning of Schulze the coupon clipper and the screeching of the brakes.

The Simultaneist poem
teaches a sense of the merrygoround of all things; while Herr Schulze reads his paper, the Balkan Express crosses the bridge at Nish, a pig squeals in Butcher Nuttke's cellar.

The Static poem
makes words into individuals, out of the letters spelling woods, steps the woods with its treetops, liveried foresters and wild sows, maybe a boarding house steps out too, and maybe it's called Bellevue or Bella Vista. Dadaism leads to amazing new possibilities and forms of expression in all the arts. It made cubism a dance on the stage, it disseminated the BRUITIST music of the futurists (whose purely Italian concerns it has no desire to generalize) in every country in Europe. The word Dada in itself indicates the internationalism of the movement which is found to no frontiers, religions or professions. Dada is the international expression of our times, the great rebellion of artistic movements, the artistic reflex of all these offensives, peace congresses, riots in the vegetable market, midnight suppers at the Esplanade, etc., etc. Dada champions the use of the
<u>new medium in painting</u>.

Dada is a CLUB, founded in Berlin, which you can join without commitments. In this club every man is chairman and every man can have his say in artistic matters. Dada is not a pretext for the ambition of a few literary men (as our enemies would have you believe), Dada is a state of mind that can be revealed in any conversation whatever, so that you are compelled to say: this man is a DADAIST--that man is not; the Dada Club consequently has members all over the world, in Honolulu as well as New Orleans and Meseritz. Under certain circumstances to be a Dadaist may mean to be more a businessman, more a political partisan than an artist--to be an artist only by accident--to be a Dadaist means

to let oneself be thrown by things, to oppose all sedimentation; to sit in a chair for a single moment is to risk one's life (Mr. Wengs pulled his revolver out of his pants pocket). A fabric tears under your hand, you say yes to a life that strives upward by negation. Affirmation--negation: the gigantic hocuspocus of existence fires the nevers of the true Dadaist--and there he is, reclining, hunting, cycling--half Pantagruel, half St. Francis laughing and laughing. Blast the aesthetic-ethical attitude! Blast the bloodless abstraction of expressionism! Blast the literary hollowheads and their theories for improving the world! For Dadaism is word and image, for all the Dada things that go on in the world!

To be against this manifesto is to be a Dadaist!

Tristran Tzara. Franz Jung. George Grosz. Marcel Janco.
Richard Huelsenbeck. Gerhard Preiss. Raoul Hausmann.
C. Luthy. Frederic Glauser. Hugo Ball. Pierre Albert-
Maria d'Arezzo Gino Cantarelli. Prampolini. Birot.
R. van Reese. Madame van Reese. Hans Arp. G. Thauber.
Andree Morosini. Francois Mombello-Pasquati.

APPENDIX D

Thompson's Vacation

Play in Two Acts

CHARACTERS

THOMPSON, a plain citizen.
HAINES, another.
DILLON, another.

ACT I

August 28. Thesmoking car of a city-bound suburban train. Thompson is sitting alone. Haines comes in, recognizes him and takes the seat beside him.

HAINES Hello there, Thompson.

THOMPSON Hello, Mr. Haines.

HAINES What's the good word!

THOMPSON Well--

HAINES How's business?

THOMPSON I don't know. I've been on a vacation for two weeks.

HAINES Where was you?

THOMPSON Atlantic City.

HAINES Where did you stop?

THOMPSON At the Edgar.

HAINES The Edgar! Who steered you to that joint?

THOMPSON I liked it all right.

HAINES Why didn't you go to the Wallace? Same prices and everything up to date. How did you happen to pick out a dirty old joint like the Edgar?

THOMPSON I thought it was all right.

HAINES What did you do to kill time down there?

THOMPSON Oh, I swam and went to a couple of shows and laid around!

HAINES Didn't you go up in the air?

THOMPSON No.

HAINES That's the only thing they is to do in Atlantic City, is go up in the air. If you didn't do that, you didn't do nothing.

THOMPSON I never been up.

HAINES That's all they is to do down there, expecially in August, when it's so hot.

THOMPSON They was generally a breeze.

HAINES Yes, I know what that breeze is in August. It's like a blast out of a furnace. Did you go in any of them cabarets?

THOMPSON Yes, I was in the Mecca and the Garden.

HAINES Wasn't you in the La Marne?

THOMPSON No

HAINES If you wasn't in the La Marne, you did't see nothing.

THOMPSON I had some real beer in the Mecca.

HAINES Say, that stuff they give you in the Mecca is dishwater. They's only one place in Atlantic City to get real beer. That's the Wonderland. Didn't you make the Wonderland?

THOMPSON No.

HAINES Then you didn't have no real beer. Did you meet many dames?

THOMPSON Only a couple of them. But they was pips!

HAINES Pips! You don't see no real pips down there in August. The time to catch the pips down there is--well, June, July, September, May, or any time in the fall or winter or spring. You don't see them there in August. Did you go fishing?

THOMPSON No.

HAINES Oh, they's great fishing around there! If you didn't go fishing, you didn't do nothing.

THOMPSON (rising) Well, here we are.

HAINES I think you're a sucker to pick out August for a vacation. May or June or September, that's the time for a vacation.

THOMPSON Well, see you again.

ACT II

Four minutes later. A downtown subway express. Thompson is hanging on strap. Dillon enters and hangs on the next strap.

DILLON Hello there, Thompson.

THOMPSON Hello.

DILLON How's everything?

THOMPSON All right, I guess.

DILLON Ain't you been on a vacation?

THOMPSON Yeah.

DILLON What kind of a time did you have?

THOMPSON Rotten.

DILLON Where was you?

THOMPSON Nowhere.

Clemo Uti--"The Water Lilies"

CHARACTERS

PADRE a Priest
SETHSO
GETHSO Both Twins.
WAYSHATTEN a Shepherd's Boy.
TWO CAPITALISTS.*
WAMA TANNISCH her daughter
KLEMA a Janitor's third daughter
KEVELA their mother, afterwards their aunt.
/TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This show was written as if people were there to see it./

*NOTE: The two Capitalists don't appear in this show.

ACT I

(The outskirts of a Parchesi Board. People are wondering what has become of the discs. They quit wondering and sit up and sing the following song.)

CHORUS

What has become of the discs?
What has become of the discs?
We took them at our own risks,
But what has become of the discs?

(Wama enters from an exclusive waffle parlor. She exits as if she had had waffles.)

ACTS II & III

(These two acts were thrown out because nothing seemed to happen.)

ACT IV

(A silo. Two rats have got in there by mistake. One of them seems diseased. The other looks at him. They go out. Both rats come in again and wait for a laugh. They don't get it, and go out. Wama enters from an offstage barn. She is made up to represent the Homecoming of Cassanova. She has a fainting spell. She goes out.)

KEVELA Where was you born?

PADRE In Adrian, Michigan.

KEVALA Yes, but I thought I was confessing to you.

(The Padre goes out on an old-fashioned high-wheel bicycle. He acts as if he had never ridden many of them. He falls off and is brought back. He is in pretty bad shape.)

ACT V

(A Couple of Salesmen enter. They are trying to sell Portable Houses. The rest of the cast don't want Portable Houses.)

REST OF THE CAST

We don't want Portable Houses.
(The Salesmen become hysterical and wald off-stage left.)

KEVALA What a man!

WAYSHATTEN (the Shepherd's Boy) Why wasn't you out there this morning to help me look after my sheep?

CHORUS OF ASSISTANT SHEPHERDS

Why did you lay there asleep
When you should of looked after his sheep?
Why did you send telegrams
When you should of looked after his lambs?
Why did you sleep there, so old,
When you should of looked after his fold?

SETHSO Who is our father?

GETHSO What of it? We're twins, ain't we?

WAMA Hush, clemo uti (the Water Lilies).

(Two queels enter, overcome with water lilies. They both make fools of themselves. They don't seem to have any self-control. They quiver. They want to play the show over again, but it looks useless.)

SHADES

I, Gaspiri

(The Upholsterers)

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS
Adapted from the Bukovinan of Casper Redmonda

CHARACTERS

IAN OBRI, a Blotter Salesman.
JOHAN WASPER, his wife.
GRETA, their daughter.
HERBERT SWAPE, a nonentity.
FFENA, their daughter, later their wife.
EGSO, a Pencil Guster
TOTO, a Typical Wastebasket.

ACT I

(A public street in a bathroom. A man named Tupper has evidently just taken a bath. A man named Brindle is now taking a bath. A man named Newburn comes out of the faucet which has been left running. He exits through the exhaust. Two strangers to each other meet on the bath mat.)

FIRST STRANGER Where was you born?

SECOND STRANGER Out of wedlock.

FIRST STRANGER THat's a mighty pretty country around there.

SECOND STRANGER Are you Married?

FIRST STRANGER I don't know. There's a woman living with me, but I can't place her.

(Three outsiders named Klein go across the stage three times. They think they are in a public library. A Woman's cough is heard offstage left.)

A NEW CHARACTER Who is that cough?

TWO MOORS That is my cousin. She died a little while ago in a haphazard way.

A GREEK And what a woman she was!

(The curtain is lowered for seven days to denote the lapse of a week.)

ACT III

(The Lincoln Highway. Two bearded glue lifters are seated at one side of the road.)

(TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The principal industry in Phlace is horading hay. Peasants sit alongside of a road on which hay wagons are likely to pass. When a hay wagon does pass, the hay hoarders leap from their points of vantage and help themselves to a wisp of hay. On an average a hay hoarder accumulates a ton of hay every four years. This is called Mah Jong.)

FIRST GLUE LIFTER Well, my man, how goes it?

SECOND GLUE LIFTER (Sings "My Man," to show how it goes.)

(Eight realtors cross the stage in a friendly way. They are out of place.)

CURTAIN

Quadroon

A PLAY IN FOUR PELTS WHICH MAY ALL BE ATTENDED IN ONE DAY OR MISSED IN A GROUP

(Author's Note: The characters were all born synonymously; that is, in the "S'uth,' they are known as halfcastes. The only time the play, or series of plays, was performed with a whole-cast, it was stopped by a swarm of little black flies, which don't bite, but are annoying. One time, in Charlotte, Utah, I forget what did happen.

At this point, a word or two concerning the actors may not embarrass you. Thomas Chalmers and Alice Brady are one and the same person. I owned some Alice-Chalmers before the crush in the market and had to give Kimbley & Co. twelve dollars hush money. I asked Mr. Nymeyer one of the partners to get me out of Wall Street and he said he had already moved me as far as Nassau. That is the kind of a friend to have in the stock market. He says one of the men in the firm paid $195,000 for a seat. Imagine when you can get for $22.00 to a Ziegfeld opening if you know Goldie or Alice. I can generally most always get one for nothing if he invites me to Boston or Pittsburgh to look at one of his shows and see whether I can improve it. Those kind, as Percy Hammond would say, are usually so good that they can't be improved and after I have heard the second comic's first wow, I wish I had stayed in the hospital, where men are orderlies.

Speaking of hospitals, I turned the last one I visited into a pretty good roadhouse. Harland Dixon came up and tap-danced, Vince Youmans and Paul Lanin dropped in twice and played, and Vic Arden made the piano speak a language with which it was entirely unfamiliar. Phil Chman would have been there, too, if the doctor had given me a little more nerve tonic and Mrs. Bechlinger, the housekeeper, had had two pianos. Our gracious hostess told me, con expressione, that she had never heard of Messrs. Youmans, Lanin, Ardne, and Dixon, but had read my stuff ever since she arrived in this country, ten years ago. This gave me a superiority complexion over all musicians and tap-dancers until, at parting, she called me Mr. Gardner. And dropping the subject of roadhouses entirely for the moment, Miss Claudette Colbert came up to call one day and almost instantly, piling in like interferers for Marchmont Schwartz, appeared fifteen internes, to take my temperature. Previously they had treated my room as vacant.

This play, as hinted in the subtitle, is actually for separate plays with four separate titles: "Hic," "Haec," "Hoc," and "Hujus." It can be seen that the original author was a born H lover. He was promised the latter, "If you ever have a daughter, I will provide her with a vehicle." Well, Bill had a daughter, but Manny passed on without leaving her even a roller-coaster. However, he had a great grandson, Eugene ("Greasy") O'Neill, who acquired a fine sense of after-dinner speaking by playing the outfield for Cincinnati and coaching football at W. and J. He took up the work where the old man left off, at the top of a blank sheet of fools cap paper, and I kind of monkeyed with it until it now begins at ten in the morning and lasts until Walter Winchell goes to bed.

Remarks have been brandied back and forth concerning the difference in the number of lines given the male and female characters in the piece. The women have a great deal many more lines to speak than the men. There is, of course, a two-fold purpose in this arrangement. The first fold is that it pleases the women. The second fold is that it promotes harmony in the cast. During the intermissions, the ladies, God use his own judgment, have said so much that they are out of lewd words. End of notatum.)

HIC

Part One of "The Quadroon"

CAST

(In Order to Confuse)

CHRISTINE, his sister, played by Alla Nazimova
LAVINIA, her daughter, played by Alice Brady
CASE JONES, a midwife, played by William A. Brady

SCENE: A Park Avenue Push-Wagon, Armistice Day, 1860

Luncheon Intermission of Half an Hour

The Roth Lunch
127 West Fifty-second Street
November 22, 1931

Special Luncheon, 65 Cents.

Chopped Tenderloin Steak
or Calves' Liver and Bacon.
Carrots Shoestring Potatoes String Beans
Choice of Desserts
Rice Pudding Strawberry Tart
Tea, Coffee or Milk.

HAEC

Part Two of "The Quadroon"

CAST

CHRISTINE, his sister, played by Alice Brady
LAVINIA, her daughter, played by Alla Nazimova
FRANKIE AND JOHNNIE, played by A.H. Woods

SCENE: Department of Plant and Structures. An evening in 1850.

(CHRISTINE and LAVINIA meet off-stage, dancing.)

LAVINIA Did you-all evah see me-all in "Heida Gabler"?
CHRISTINE Does yo'all mean "Hedda Gabler," by William Anthony McGuire?
LAVINIA Yo'all done said zac'ly wot Ah'm drinin' at. How did yo'all lak me?
CHRISTINE Well, Ah seen Mrs. Fiske.
FRANKIE AND JOHNNIE Let's you and I run up to Elizabeth Arden's and free ourselves from fatigue with an Ardena Bath.

Dinner Intermission of One Hour and a Half*

Typical Dinner, $1.50

Medaillon of lobster au caviar
Grapefruit
Supreme of fresh fruit, Maraschino
Blue Point oyster cocktail
or
Cream of lettuce, Parmentier
Clear green turtle, Amontillado

(Choice)
Filet of sole, Farci Isabella
Broiled Boston scrod, Maitre d'Hotel
Tartelette of Fresh mushrooms, Lucullus
Country sausages, apple sauce
Breaded spring lamb chop with Bacon, tomato sauce
Chicken hash au Gratin
Roast sugar cured ham, cider sauce
Omelette Glace aux Confitures
Cold--Fresh calf's tongue with chow chow

Stewed celery or fresh string beans
Mashed or French fried potatoes

(Choice)

Pudding creole Coffee eclair
Assorted cakes
Vanilla, raspberry or chocolate ice cream and cake

*It will doubtless promote good fellowship and good service if, when entering the hotel's dining-room, you say to the man in charge: "Hello, Maitre d'Hotel."

Delicious apple Apple pie
French pastry Coffee, tea or milk

Make the Plaza Central
vour New York Home During the
Entire Performance. Ask Arnold.

HOC

Part Three of "The Quadroon"

CAST

LYNN FONTANNE, a Mrs. Lunt, played by Grace George
CASEY JONES, a midwife, played by Bert Lahr
FRANK CASE, proprietor of the Algonquin, played by Alice Brady

SCENE: Jimmy Walker's Wardrobe Trunk.

(The Mayor and the Prince of Wales meet outside the stage door, dancing.)

THE MAYOR New York is the richest market in the world.
THE PRINCE Not only that, but the New York Theatre Market is an unrivalled concentration of spending power.
THE MAYOR The New York Magazine Program reaches that market exclusively.
FRANK CASE Pardon me, Officer, but can either of you boys play a cellophane?

Passengers will Please not Linger in Washrooms until
Other Passengers Have Completed Their Toilets.

HUJUS

Part Four of "The Quadroon"

CAST

CHRISTINE, her sister, played by Alla Nazimova
LAVINIA, their little one, played by Alice Brady
FRED ASTAIRE, a hoofer, played by Morris Gest

SCENE: An ambuscade in the Astor lobby.

(FRED and LAVINIA dance.)
LAVINIA The minute you try Pebeco Tooth Paste you know by its "bitey" tang that there is a tooth paste that really "gets somewheres."

FRED Will you love me always?
LAVINIA As long as you keep kissable.
(She kills him with an oyster fork.)

(Leave your ticket check with an usher and your car will come right to your seat.)

Dinner Bridge

CHARACTERS

CROWLEY, the foreman
AMOROSI, an Italian laborer
TAYLOR, a Negro laborer
CHAMALES, a Greek laborer
HANSEN, a Scandinavian laborer
LLANUZA, a Mexican laborer
THE INQUISITIVE WAITER
THE DUMB WAITER

PROGRAM NOTE

This playlet is an adaptation from the Wallachian of Willie Stevens. For a great many years, Long Islanders and Manhattanites have been wondering why the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge was always torn up at one or more points. Mr. Stevens heard of the following legend: that Alexander Woollcott, chief engineer in charge of the construction of the bridge, was something of a practical joker; that on the day preceding the completion of the bridge, he was invited to dinner by his wife's brother; that he bought a loaded cigar to give his brother-in-law after the meal, and that the cigar dropped out of his pocket and rolled under the unfinished surface planking. Ever since, gangs of men have been ripping up the surface of the bridge in search of the cigar, but an article the shape of a cigar is apt to roll in any and all directions. This is what has made it so difficult to find the lost article, and the (so far) vain search is the theme of Mr. Stevens' playlet.--Adapter.

SCENE: An area under repair on the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge. Part of the surface has been torn up, and, at the curtain's rise, three of the men are tearing up the rest of it with picks. Shovels, axes and other tools are scattered around the scene. Two men are fussing with a concrete mixer. Crowley is bossing the job. Crowley and the laborers are dressed in dirty working clothes. In the foreground is a flat-topped truck or wagon. The two waiters, dressed in waiters' jackets, dickies, etc., enter the scene, one of them carrying a tray with cocktails and the other a tray with caviar, etc. The laborers cease their work and consume these appetizers. The noon whistle blows. The waiters bring in a white table cloth and spread it over the truck or wagon. They also distribute six place cards and six chairs, or camp stools, around the truck, but the "table" is left bare of setting implements.

FIRST WAITER, to CROWLEY Dinner is served.

(CROWLEY and the laborers move toward the table.)

TAYLOR, to AMOROSI I believe I am to take you in.

(AMOROSI gives TAYLOR his arm and TAYLOR escorts him to the table. The laborers all pick up the place cards and find out where they are to sit.)

CROWLEY, to AMOROSI Here is your place, Mr. Amorosi. And Taylor is right beside you.

(Note to producer: Inasmuch as TAYLOR and AMOROSI do most of the talking, they ought to face the audience. In spite of their nationalities, the laborers are to talk in correct Crowninshield dinner English, except that occasionally, may every fourth or fifth speech, whoever is talking suddenly bursts into dialect, either his own or Jewish or Chinese or what you will.

All find their places and sit down. The two waiters now reenter, each carrying one dinner pail. One serves CROWLEY, and the other serves AMOROSI. The serving is done by the waiters' removing the cover of the pail and holding it in front of the diner. The latter looks into the pail and takes out some viand with his fingers. First he takes out, say, a sandwich. The waiter then replaces the cover on the pail and exits with it. All the laborers are served in this manner, two at a time, from their own dinner pails. As soon as one of them has completed the sandwich course, the waiter brings him the pail again and he helps himself to a piece of pie or an apple or orange. But the contents of all the pails should be different, according to the diner's taste. The serving goes on all through the scene, toward the end of which everyone is served with coffee from the cups on top of the pails.)

CROWLEY, to AMOROSI Well, Mr. Amorosi, welcome to the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge.

AMOROSI Thank you, I really feel as if this was where I belonged.

HANSON, politely How is that?

AMOROSI On account of my father. He was among the pioneer Fifty-ninth Street Bridge destroyers. He had the sobriquet of Giacomo "Rip-Up-the-Bridge" Amorosi.

TAYLOR, sotto voce, aside to HANSEN This fellow seems to be quite a card!

LLANUZA I wonder if you could tell me the approximate date when your father worked here.

AMOROSI Why, yes. The bridge was completed on the fifth day of August, 1909. So that would make it the sixth day of August, 1909, when father started ripping it up.

TAYLOR, aside to HANSEN, in marked Negro dialect I repeats my assertation that this baby is quite a card!

AMOROSI, in Jewish dialect But I guess it must be a lot more fun nowadays, with so much motor traffic to pester.

TAYLOR And all the funerals. I sure does have fun with the funerals.

CROWLEY, in Irish brogue Taylor has a great time with the funerals.

HANSEN, CHAMALES and LLANUZA, in unison Taylor has a great time with the funerals.

AMOROSI, to TAYLOR How do you do it?

TAYLOR, in dialect Well, you see, I'm flagman for the outfit. When I get out and wave my flag, whatever is coming, it's got to stop. When I see a funeral coming, I let the hearse go by and stop the rest of the parade. Then when I see another funeral coming, I stop their hearse and let the rest of the procession go on. I keep doing this all morning to different funerals and by the time they get to Forest Hills, the wrong set of mourners is following the wrong hearse. It generally always winds up with the friends and relatives of the late Mr. Cohen attending the final obsequies of Mrs. Levinsky.

CROWLEY, HANSEN, CHAMALES and LLANUZA, in unison Taylor has a great time with funerals.

AMOROSI I'm a trumpet medium myself.

TAYLOR, aside to HANSEN This boy will turn out to be quite a card!

LLANUZA Why do you always have to keep repairing it?

AMOROSI Perhaps Mr. Crowley has the repairian rights.

TAYLOR, guffawing and slapping HANSEN or CHAMALES on the back What did I tell you?

LLANUZA, in dialect But down in Mexico, where I come from, they don't keep repairing the same bridge.

AMOROSI, to LLANUZA If you'll pardon a newcomer. Mr. --, I don't believe I got your name.

LLANUZA Llanuza.

AMOROSI If you'll pardon a newcomer, Mr. Keeler, I want to say that if the United States isn't good enough for you, I'd be glad to start a subscription to send you back to where you came from.

LLANUZA I was beginning to like you, Mr. Amorosi.

AMOROSI You get that right out of your mind, Br. Barrows, I'm married; been married twice. My first wife died.

HANSEN How long were you married to her?

AMOROSI Right up to the time she died.

CHAMALES, interrupting Mr. Amorosi, you said you had been married twice.

AMOROSI Yes, sir. My second wife is a Swiss girl.

HANSEN Is she here with you?

AMOROSI No, she's in Switzerland, in jail. She turned out to be a murderer.

CROWLEY When it's a woman, you call her a murderess.

TAYLOR And when It's a Swiss woman, you call her a Swiss-ess.

(One of the waiters is now engaged in serving AMOROSI with his dinner pail.)

WAITER, to AMOROSI Whom did she murder?

(WAITER exits hurriedly without seeming to care to hear the answer.)

AMOROSI, after looking wonderingly at the disappearing WAITER What's the matter with him?

TAYLOR He's been that way for years--a born questioner but he hates answers.

CROWLEY Just the same, the rest of us would like to know whom your wife murdered.

TAYLOR, HANSEN, CHAMALES and LLANUZA, to CROWLEY Speak for yourself. We don't want to know.

CROWLEY Remember, boys, I'm foreman of this outfit. (Aside to AMOROSI) Who was it?

AMOROSI (Whispers name in his ear.)

CROWLEY I don't believe I knew him.

AMOROSI Neither did my wife.

CROWLEY Why did she kill him?

AMOROSI Well, you see, over in Italy and Switzerland, it's different from, say, Chicago. When they find a man murdered

over in those places, they generally try to learn who it is and put his name in the papers. So my wife was curious about this fellow's identity and she figured that the easiest way to get the information was to pop him.

TAYLOR I'm a trumpet medium myself.

(WAITER enters and serves one of the laborers from his dinner pail.)

WAITER How long is she in for?

(WAITER exits hurriedly without waiting for the answer. AMOROSI again looks after him wonderingly.)

HANSEN, to AMOROSI Did you quarrel much?

AMOROSI Only when we were together.

TAYLOR I was a newspaper man once myself.

LLANUZA, skeptically You! What paper did you work on?

TAYLOR It was a tabloid--The Porno-graphic.

(WAITER enters to serve somebody.)

WAITER, to TAYLOR Newspaper men must have lots of interesting experiences. (Exits without waiting for a response)

AMOROSI I suppose you've all heard the story--

THE OTHER LABORERS, in unison Is it a golf story?

AMOROSI No.

THE OTHERS, resignedly Tell it.

AMOROSI, in dialect It seems there was a woman went into a photographer's and asked the photographer if he took pictures of children.

(WAITER enters to serve somebody.)

WAITER How does it end? (WAITER exits hurriedly.)

AMOROSI She asked the photographer if he took pictures of children. "Why, yes, madam," replied the photographer--

TAYLOR He called her "madam."

AMOROSI The photographer told her yes, that he did take pictures of children. "And how much do you charge?" inquired the madam,

and the photographer replied, "Three dollars a dozen." "Well," said the woman, "I guess I'll have to come back later. I've only got eleven."

(The other laborers act just as if no story had been told.)

LLANZUA Down in Mexico, where I come from, they don't keep repairing the same bridge.

TAYLOR, to HANSEN Can you imitate birds?

HANSEN No.

TAYLOR, to HANSEN Can you imitate birds?

CHAMALES No.

TAYLOR Can anybody here imitate birds?

THE OTHER LABORERS, in unison No.

TAYLOR I can do it. Long before I got a job on this bridge, while I was helping tear up the crosstown streets, I used to entertain the boys all day, imitating birds.

AMOROSI What kind of birds can you imitate?

TAYLOR All kinds.

AMOROSI Well, what do you say we play some other game?

CROWLEY, rising Gentlemen, we are drawing near the end of this dinner and I feel we should not leave the table until some one has spoken a few words of welcome to our newcomer, Mr. Amorosi. Myself, I am not much of a talker. (Pause for a denial.)

TAYLOR You said a full quart.

CROWLEY Therefore, I will call on the man who is second to me in length of service on the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge, Mr. Harvey Taylor. (Sits down.)

TAYLOR, rising amid a dead silence Mr. Foreman, Mr. Amorosi and gentlemen: Welcoming Mr. Amorosi to our little group recalls vividly to my mind an experience of my own on the levee at New Orleans before Prohibition. (He bursts suddenly into Negro dialect, mingled with Jewish.) In those days my job was to load and unload those great big bales of cotton and my old mammy used to always be there at the dock to take me in her lap and croon me to sleep.

(WAITER enters, serves somebody with coffee.)

WAITER What was the experience you was going to tell? (Exits hurriedly.)

TAYLOR It was in those days that I studied bird life and learned to imitate the different bird calls. (Before they can stop him, he gives a bird call.) The finch. (The others pay no attention. He gives another call.) A Dowager. (TAYLOR is pushed forcibly into his seat.)

AMOROSI, rising to respond Mr. Foreman and gentlemen: I judge from Mr. Taylor's performance that the practice of imitating birds is quite popular in America. Over where I come from, we often engage in the pastime of mimicking public buildings. For example (he gives a cry.) The American Express Company's office at Rome. (He gives another cry.) Hotel McAlpin. (A whistle blows, denoting that the dinner hour is over.)

CROWLEY, rising Shall we join the ladies?

(All rise and resume the work of tearing up the bridge. The waiters enter to remove the table cloth and chairs.)

WAITER (the more talkative one) How many Mack trucks would you guess had crossed this bridge in the last half hour? (He exits without waiting for a reply.)

Cora, or Fun at a Spa
An Expressionist Drama of Love Death and Sex--

CHARACTERS

(In the order in which I admire them)

A FRIEND OF THE PRESIDENT.
PLAGUE BENNETT, an Embryo Steeplejack.
ELSA, their Ward.
MANAGER OF THE PUMP ROOM.
A MAN WHO LOOKS A GOOD DEAL LIKE HEYWOOD BROUN.
MRS. TYLER
CORA.
POULTRY, GAME IN SEASON, ETC.

ACT I

A pharmacy at a Spa. The Proprietor is at present out of the city and Mrs. Tyler is taking his place. She is a woman who seems to have been obliged to leave school while in the eighth grade. Plague Bennett enters. His mother named him Plague as tribute to her husband, who died of it. As Plague enters, Mrs. Tyler is seen replacing a small vial in a case behind the counter.

PLAGUE Well, Mrs. T.

MRS TYLER "Mrs. T.' indeed! I see you're still the same old Plague!

PLAGUE What are you doing?

MRS TYLER: What do I look like I was doing, spearing eels? I'm just putting this bottle of germs back in its place. The little fellows were trying to escape. They said they didn't like it here. I said, "Don't bacilli!"

(A Friend of the President enters)

PLAUGE Hello, Doctor.

(He calls him Doctor)

FRIEND OF THE PRESIDENT (As if to himself) That old devil sea!

PLAGUE Well, Doctor, I'm going to Washington tomorrow.

(he repeatedly calls him Doctor)

*Mrs Tyler appears only when one of the other characters is out of the city.

FRIEND OF THE PRESIDENT What of it?

PLAGUE Well, they tell me you and the President are pretty close.

FRIEND OF THE PRESIDENT He is.

(End of First Act)

ACT II

A poultry yard at a Spa. The chairs and tables are in disarray as if a blotter salesman had been making his rounds. The Manager of the Pump Room is out of the city and the poultry are being fed by Mrs. Tyler. A Dead Ringer for David Belasco enters, crosses stage.

MRS. TYLER You old master you! (Aside) I can never tell whether he's in first speed or reverse.

(Dead Ringer for David Belasco exits. Manager of the Pump Room returns to the city unexpectedly and Mrs. Tyler goes into pictures. Manager of the Pump Room stands in center stage as if he had been everywhere)

MANAGER OF THE PUMP ROOM (Aside) I wonder what is keeping Elsa. (Looks right) Ah! There she comes now, dancing as usual!

(Elsa enters left, fooling him completely. She is not even dancing. She looks as if she had taken a bath.)

ELSA Well--

MANAGER OF THE PUMP ROOM (Turns and sees her) Elsa! I was just thinking about you. I was wondering what was keeping you.

ELSA I presume you mean who.

(The curtain is lowered and reaised to see if it will work)

MANAGER OF THE PUMP ROOM What's the difference between that curtain and Ziegfeld?

ELSA It works. And that reminds me that I just met a man who looks something like Heywood Broun. Here he comes now, dancing as usual.

(A Man Who Looks A Good Deal Like Heywood Broun enters)

MANAGER OF THE PUMP ROOM (Aside) I'll say so'.

MAN WHO LOOKS A GOOD DEAL LIKE HEYWOOD BROUN What's that?

MANAGER OF THE PUMP ROOM Why, this young lady was just saying she thought you looked something like Heywood Broun.

MAN WHO ETC. (Throwing confetti in all directions) She's conservative.

(End of Second Act)

ACT III

A Mixed Grill at a Spa. Two Milch Cows sit at a table in one corner, playing draughts. In another corner is seated a gigantic zebu.

FIRST MILCH COW Don't you feel a draught?

SECOND MILCH COW No. But we'd better be going. That gigantic zebu is trying to make us.

FIRST MILCH COW He thinks he is a cow catcher.

SECOND MILCH COW (As the rise) They say there are still a great many buffaloes in Yellowstone Park.

FIRST MILCH COW So I herd.

(The Milch Cows go out, followed at a distance by the Zebu. Cora enters. She is dressed in the cat's pajamas. She looks as if she had once gone on an excursion to the Delaware Water Gap)

CORA (Aside) I wonder if it could be!

(Plague Bennett and A Friend of the President enter in time to overhear her remark)

PLAGUE (To Friend of the President) Go on without me, Doctor. (He still calls him Doctor. Friend of the President exits and Plague turns to Cora) You wonder if it could be who?

CORA Why, I just met a man who looks a little like Heywood Broun. Here he comes now, dancing as usual.

(A Man Who Looks a Good Deal Like Heywood Broun enters)

PLAGUE (Aside) He does, zt that!

MAN WHO ETC. At what?

PLAGUE This little lady was just saying she thought you looked a little like Heywood Broun.

MAN WHO ETC. A little! She's putting it mildly!

(Finds he is out of confetti and exits. A poisoned rat dashes into the open air, seeking water)

PLAGUE That rat acts like he was poisoned.

CORA God! You ought to saw me last night!

(End of Third Act)

Abend Di Anni Nouveau
A Play in Five Acts

CHARACTERS

ST. JOHN ERVINE, an immigrant.
WALTER WINCHELL, a nun.
HEYWOOD BROUN, an usher at Roxy's.
DOROTHY THOMPSON, a tackle.
THEODORE DREISER, a former Follies girl.
H.L. MENCKEN, a kleagle in the Moose.
MABLE WILLEBRANDT, secretary of the League of American Wheelman.
BEN HECHT, a taxi starter.
JOHN ROACH STRATON, a tap dancer.
CARL LAEMMLE, toys and games, sporting goods, outing flannels.
ANNE NICHOLS, a six-day bicyclist.

ACT I

(A hired hall. It is twenty-five minutes of nine on New Year's Eve. A party, to which all the members of the cast were invited, is supposed to have begun at thirty-four minutes after eight. A waiter enters on a horse and finds all the guests dead, their bodies riddled with bullets and frightfully garbled. He goes to the telephone)

WAITER (telephoning). I want a policeman. I want to report a fire. I want an ambulance.

(He tethers his mount and lies down on the hors d'oeuvres. The curtain is lowered and partially destroyed to denote the passage of four days. Two policemen enter, neither having had any idea that the other would come. They find the waiter asleep and shake him. He wakes and smilingly points at the havoc)

WAITER Look at the havoc.

FIRST POLICEMAN This is the first time I ever seen a havoc.

SECOND POLICEMAN It's an inside job, I think.

FIRST POLICEMAN You WHAT?

WAITER The trouble now is that we'll have to recast the entire play. Every member of the cast is dead.

FIRST POLICEMAN Is that unusual?

SECOND POLICEMAN When did It happen?

WAITER When did what happen?

SECOND POLICEMAN I've forgotten

(End of Act I)

ACT 2

(The interior of an ambulance. Three men named Louie Breese are playing bridge with an interne. The interne is Louie Breese's partner. Louie leads a club. The interne trumps it.)

BREESE Kindly play interne.

INTERNE I get you men confused.

BREESE I'm not confused.

THE OTHER TWO BREESES Neither of us is confused.

(They throw the interne onto Seventh Avenue. An East Side gangster, who was being used as a card table, gets up and stretches)

GANGSTER Where are we at?

BREESE Was you the stretcher we was playing on?

GANGSTER Yes.

BREESE There's only three of us now. Will you make a fourth?

GANGSTER There's no snow.

(End of Act 2)

ACTS 3, 4 AND 5

(A one-way street in Jeopardy. Two snail-gunders enter from the right, riding a tricycle. They shout their wares)

FIRST SNAIL-GUNDER Wares! Wares!

A NEWSBOY Wares who?

FIRST SNAIL-GUNDER Anybody. That is, anybody who wants their snails gunded.

(Three men suddenly begin to giggle. It is a secret, but they give the impression that one of them's mother runs a waffle parlor. They go off the stage still giggling. Two Broadway theatrical producers, riding pelicans, enter almost nude)

FIRST PRODUCER Have you got a dime?

SECOND PRODUCER What do you think I am, a stage hand?

FIRST PRODUCER Have you seen my new frace?

SECOND PRODUCER No. I was out of town that night.

(END OF ACTS 3, 4, AND 5)

Taxidea Americana
A Play in Six Acts

Translated from the Mastoid by
Ring W. Lardner

CHARACTERS

FRED RULLMAN, an acorn huckster.
OLD CHLOE, their colored mammy.
THOMAS GREGORY, a poltroon.
MRS. GREGORY, his mother, afterward his wife.
PHOEBE, engaged to CHLOE.
PROF. SCHWARTZ, instructor in Swiss at Wisconsin.
BUDDY, their daughter.
STUDENTS, policemen, members of the faculty, sailors, etc.
TIME--The Present.
PLACE--Madison, Wisconsin.

ACT 1.

(In front of the library. Two students in the agricultural college creep across the stage with a seed in their hands. They are silent, as they cannot place one another. Durand and Von Tilzer come down the library steps and stand with their backs to the audience as if in a quandary.)

DURAND Any news from home?

(They go off stage left. Senator LaFollette enters from right and practices sliding to base for a few moments. Ruby Barron comes down the library steps.)

RUBY Hello, Senator. What are you practising, sliding to base?

(The Senator goes out left. Ruby does some tricks with cards and re-enters the library completely baffled. Two students in the pharmacy college, Pat and Mike, crawl on stage from left and fill more than one prescription. On the second refrain Pat takes the obbligato.)

PAT I certainly feel sorry for people on the ocean to-night.

MIKE What makes you think so?

PAT You can call me whatever you like as long as you don't call me down.

(They laugh.)

CURTAIN

(Note: Acts 2, 3, and 4 are left out through an oversight.)

ACT 5

(Camp Randall. It is just before the annual game between Wisconsin and the Wilmerding School for the Blind. The Wisconsin band has come on the field and the cheer leaders are leading the Wisconsin battle hymn.)

CHORUS

Far above Cayuga's waters with its waves of blue,
On Wisconsin, Minnesota and Bully for old Purdue.
Notre Dame, we yield to thee! Onio State, hurrah!
We'll drink a cup o' kindness yet in praise of auld Nassau!

(The Wilmerding rooters applaud and then sing their own song.)

CHORUS

We are always there on time!
We are the Wilmerding School for the Blind!
Better backfield, better line!
We are the Wilmerding School for the Blind!
Yea!

(Coach Ryan of Wisconsin appears on the field fully dressed and announces that the game is postponed to permit Referee Birch to take his turn in the barber's chair. The crowd remains seated till the following Tuesday, when there is a general tendency to go home.)

CURTAIN

ACT 3

(Note: The coaches suddenly decide to send in Act 3 in place of Act 6. A livery barn in Stoughton. Slam Anderson, a former Wisconsin end, is making faces at the horses and they are laughing themselves sick. Slam goes home. Enter Dr. Boniface, the landlord of a switch engine on the Soo lines. From the other direction, Farmer Hookle enters on a pogo stick.)

DR. BONIFACE Hello, there, Hookle! I hear you are specializing in hogs.

BOOKLE I don't know where you heard it, but it's the absolute truth.

DR. BONIFACE Well, do you have much luck with your hogs?

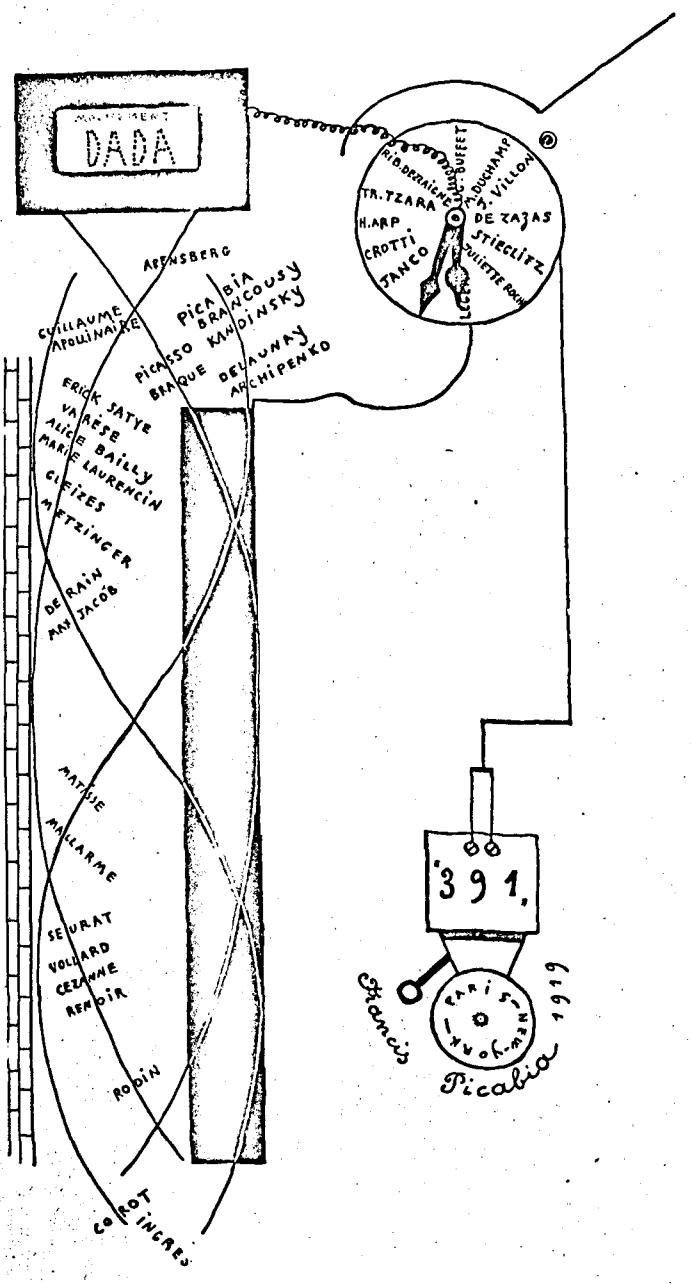
BOOKLE Oh, we never play for money.

CURTAIN

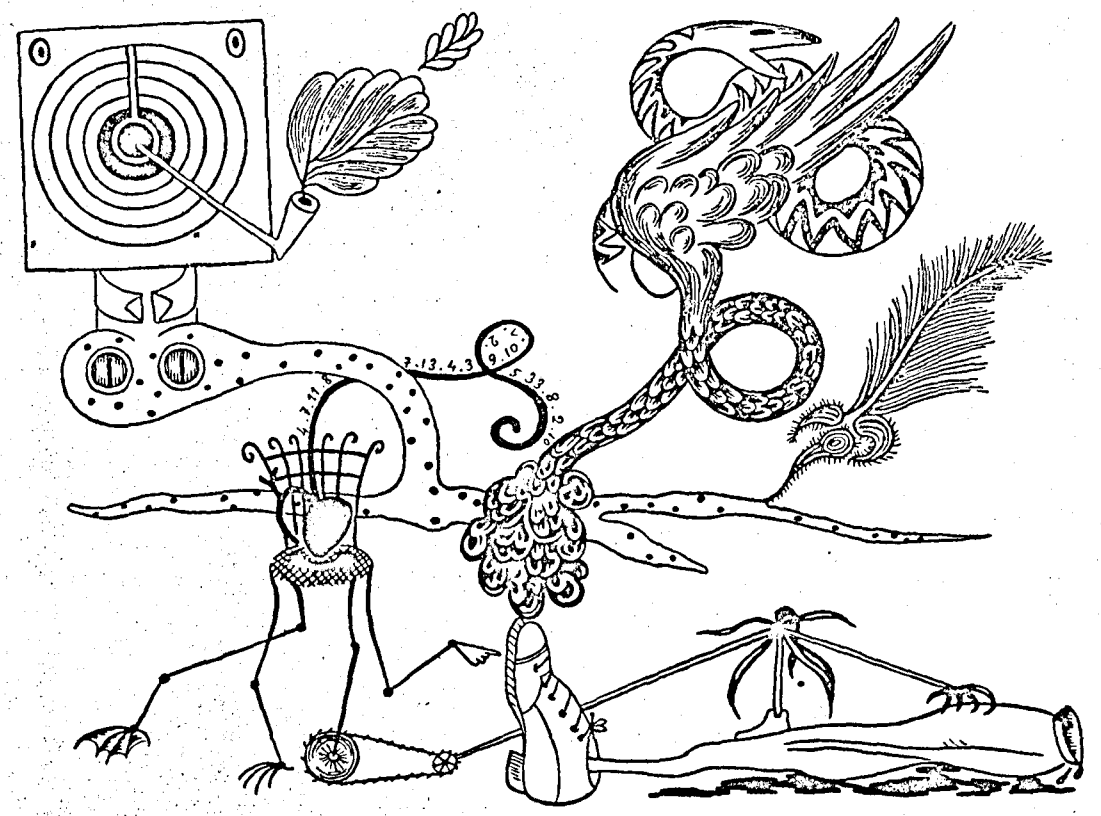
APPENDIX E

Cover of the catalog of the "Salon Dada," Galerie Montaigne, Paris, 1922. From the Library of the Museum of Modern Art.

Zerox copy from Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism, by Alfred H. Barr and Georges Hugnet. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947, p. 33.



"The Dada Movement," by Francis Picabia, published in Anthologie Dada, Paris, 1919. Zerox copy from Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism, by Alfred H. Barr and Georges Hugo. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947, p. 21.



"Landscape," A surrealist composite drawing or "exquisite corpse," by Andre Breton, Tristan Tzara, Valentine Hugo, and Greta Knutsen. Zerox copy from Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism, by Alfred H. Barr and Georges Hugnet. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947, p. 42.

Splendeurs et misères des débrouillards

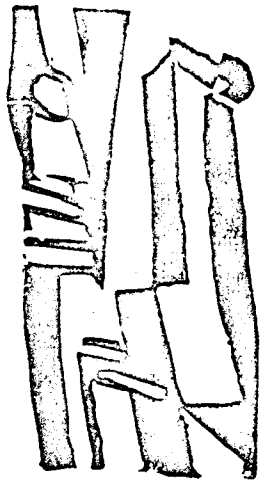
Aus der steilen, transparenten Nudel
Quillt ein Quantum Quitten-Quark empor,
Ballt sich (physisch) zum gewürzten Strudel,
Kreist: ein Duft-Ballon aus einem Rohr.

Wann (und wo?) war Schweben delikater?
In der Spannung wird man blass, wie Chrom.
Lehr- und Schüler folgen dem Theater.
Doch der Stern geniesst sich autonom.

Hohe Hirnkraft wallt zu diesem Glase.
Da bestülpt der sachlichste Adept
Das Gestirn mit einem Stengelglase,
Darin dottrig etwas Ei verebbt.

Ferdinand Hardekopf

Demnächst erscheint: „DAS HIRNGESCHWÜR"
Direktor: SERNER
Verlag Mouvement Dada.
Mitarbeiter: R. Hülsenbeck, R. Hausmann, H. Arp, V. Eggeling, F. Jung, A. Bailly, A. Giacometti, W. Richter, F. Hardekopf, G. Grosz, T. Tzara, W. Serner.
10 Nummern Fr. 18.—, Einzel-Nr. Fr. 2.—, Luxus-Ausgb. Fr. 20.—



H. RICHTER

1

Richard Huelsenbeck: **Verwandlungen**

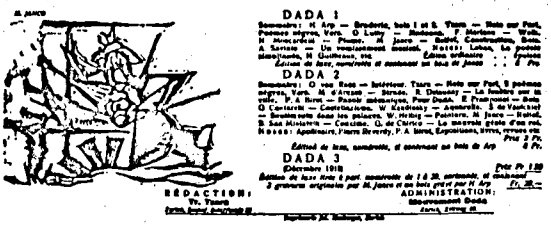
(Roland Verlag München, Mk. 2.50, geb. Mk. 3.50)

Cacadoufarbige Butzenscheibenohren rennen um Klumbumbus gelber Stern Bauch quer durch Hund zellen platzen. Out. Cacadou wird Butter Jamaika Cognac Stahl wird Tanz Butterweg ist Korkenzieher für infantile Oteros in Säcken Chinesen spelen Jahrelang nach Petrol. Einer aus Confidence mästet einen Strichpunkt rot. Apoplexie. Drachensalat, telegraphisch, wie doch. Toréadore de la verte cravatte sous les yeux gâteaux empaillés au bout des fils névralgiques petite petite dit le poète la tribune du cœur et de Genève par excellence pâques. Es ist nicht leicht, Geschwindigkeiten ein gutes Gewissen zu besorgen. Ueberhaupt heftige Seiten. ist zu kaufen. H. A. W. S. T. T.

COW-BOY

Sur le Far West
où il y a une seule lune
Le Cok Boy chante
à rompre la nuit
Et son cigare est une étoile
filante
SON POULAIN FERRÉ D'AILES
N'A JAMAIS EU DE PANNE
Et lui
la tête contre les genoux
danse un Cake Walk
New York
à quelques kilomtères
Dans les gratte-ciels
Les ascenseurs montent comme des thermomètres
Et près du Niagara
qui a éteint ma pipe
Je regarde les étoiles éclaboussées
Le Cow Boy
sur une corde à violon
Traverse l'Ohio

Vincente HUIDOBRO

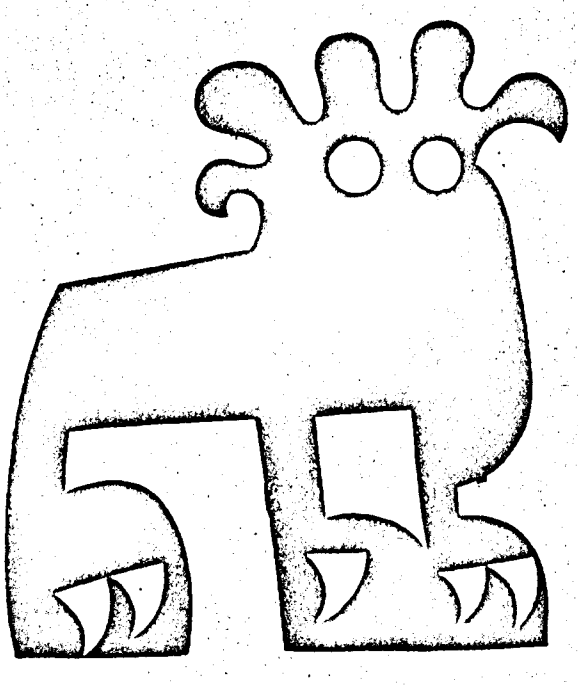


2

3

SELS DE MINUIT

arc voltaïque de ces deux nerfs qui ne se touchent pas
près du cœur
on constate le frisson noir sous une lentille
est-ce sentiment ce blanc jaillissement
et l'amour méthodique
PARTAGE EN RAYONS MON CORPS
pâte dentifrice
accordéon transatlantique
la foule casse la colonne couchée du vent
l'éventail des fusées
sur ma tête
la revanche sanglante du two-step libéré
répertoire de prétentions à prix fixe
la folie à 3 heures 20
ou 3 fr 50
la cocaïne ronge pour son plaisir lentement les murs
des yeux tombent encore



1. Hans Richter, woodcut, 1919. 2. Hans Arp, woodcuts, Dada No. 3, Zurich. 3. Hans Arp, poster, and Tristan Tzara, drawing "Des Nos oiseaux," Zeros copy from Dada: Monograph of a Movement, edited by Willy Verkauf, New York: Hastings-House, Publishers, 1961, p. 24.

VITA

Buford Donald Fisher was born on September 5, 1935, in Winters, Texas. His parents moved to New Mexico when he was an infant, and he continued to live there until college age. Graduated from high school in Tucumcari, New Mexico, in 1953, Mr. Fisher then attended Texas A & M College from 1953 to 1957. After receiving his BA degree in English Literature in 1957, he entered the United States Air Force as a Second Lieutenant. Returning to civilian life in 1963, after gaining the rank of captain, he moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he is currently residing.