



Poésies

Comte de Lautréamont

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Michael A. says

not really poems, more like a book of (inverted?) maxims, primarily from Pascal and Vauvenargues. I question inverted because in the notes to the Lykiard version, the footnotes are all in French so I am unsure if Lautreamont is plagiarizing them or putting a twist on them (I suspect he does both at different times due to one of his maxims being about plagiarisms). The content of the book ranges from pithy truisms to ramblings that gratuitously name-drop authors, poems, philosophers, and literary and philosophical references left and right redolent of a literary genius that probably had prodromal schizophrenia who wrote Maldoror. This is probably only worth reading if you really liked Maldoror.

Alejandro Saint-Barthélemy says

One of the most cynical books I have ever read.

The French have a knack for this.

The Oxford English dictionary definition of "cynicism" is too poor (Wikipedia doesn't help either). The DRAE (Royal Spanish Academy Dictionary) grasps the concept far better:

Shamelessness in lying or in the defense and practice of vituperable actions or doctrines.

What's a brotha to do after writing a poetical masterpiece? Live like a suicidal neurotic (Baudelaire), quit literature and work like a dog (Rimbaud) or write a sensible/utilitarian/pragmatical/bourgeois book of aphorisms, "chants of the good", finally called "Poems" (LOL).

One way or another, those aforementioned died after their greatest creations (in the case of Lautréamont, sadly, literally speaking [good to remember that Baudelaire tried to kill himself at 24]):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oPT0...>

Poetry must be made by all and not by one.

Alt. Lit./Twitter poets take that literally... oblivious that it comes from a unique poet himself, and from a book in which this hombre/monsieur, whose one and only book was a very dark one, states other "truths" such as...:

I want my poetry to be read by school girls. (LOL)

A poet must be the most useful person of his tribe (What else?)

A good appreciation of Voltaire's works is preferable to his very own works, naturally! (OFC)

French masterpieces are prize-giving speeches for schools and academic ones. (OMG)

I don't accept evil. Humankind is perfect. (Tell me more...)

I replace melancholy by courage, doubt by certainty, despair by hope, malice by good, complaints by duty, scepticism by faith, sophisms by cool equanimity and pride by modesty.

If *learning how to be a poet is unlearning how to live* (Houellebecq), that brief and borderline self-help preface to a book called "Poems" speaks volumes about the joke you are getting into.

P.S. All in all, it is never that simple with cynicism, a far more intellectual and delicate endeavour than irony, and I've noticed this in other French essays: at times (let's say around 10%) the author is being real

(Plagiarism is necessary. It is implied in the idea of progress. It clasps the author's sentence tight, uses his expressions, eliminates a false idea, replaces it with the right idea. [he was a century ahead of Barthes, and this aphorism is in tune with *Les chants de Maldoror* and, of course, even if humouristically, with this very

book of plagiarized quotes by Pascal, François de La Rochefoucauld, etc.]), in order to not be so easy to spot, but, yeah, bros & peaches, he was playing the average potential reader of the book, sorry (I imagine the average British or Amerikan falling for it, but not many Southern Europeans).

¬_(_?)_¬
