

Mad Puns and French Poets: Visual-Verbal Punning and ‘l’art des fous’ in Apollinaire’s *Calligrammes*

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In 1912, the poet and playwright Jules Romains chanced upon a book by Jean-Pierre Brisset, entitled *Les Origines humaines*. In it – and in his various other self-published works, produced over the preceding 30 years – Brisset advanced a madcap theory of evolution, in which he used puns and word associations as the basis for his theory that men were descended from frogs. Romains and his friends, amused and delighted by Brisset’s absurd reasoning, elected him ‘Prince des penseurs’, brought him to Paris from Angers (where he worked as a railway official), and gave a banquet in his honour before taking him to the Panthéon, where he delivered a speech in front of Rodin’s *Penseur*.¹ This whole spectacle was, of course, a joke – at the expense of Brisset himself, and at the expense of the press, although few failed to recognize the mock election as a hoax. But that Brisset should have been singled out as the butt of this particular joke also betrays the interest of Romains and his avant-garde circles in the poetic value of punning. Indeed, punning and wordplay were extremely widespread in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century culture (one might think of the work of Alfred Jarry, Max Jacob, and Raymond Roussel, as well as, in the visual arts, Marcel Duchamp), and it is tempting to see this simply as part of the general spirit of *blague* characteristic of the period. But punning was also taken quite seriously as a poetic technique, part and parcel of a radically new poetic language: as Jarry said, ‘les jeux de mots ne sont pas un jeu.’² Moreover, Brisset as ‘fou littéraire’ may have been something of a figure of fun, but he also embodied broader cultural assumptions being forged in this period about the relationship between punning,

madness and creativity. For the pre-war avant-garde, then – as for the Surrealists, who enshrined him in the *Anthologie de l'humour noir* – Brisset's mad punning made him a poet.³

The aim of this article is to examine Guillaume Apollinaire's interest in punning, looking not just at the widespread use of verbal puns in his poetry (which a number of other scholars have already investigated),⁴ but especially at his use of hybrid, visual-verbal punning structures in *Calligrammes* (1918). I wish to show that for Apollinaire, puns are not just amusing jokes or puerile games, but are mobilized as a means of representing the unfettered, irrational or pre-rational mind – the mind as it truly is, and as linear discourse could not represent it. In order to demonstrate this, I will situate the calligrammes in their broader cultural context, in which punning is linked to madness, and to the childish, primitive self. This link was established via a growing body of medical and psychiatric literature, as well as through works of art and writing by the mentally ill (or, to use the terminology of the period, 'l'art des fous'), which were themselves subject to intense scientific and popular interest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This material, as we will see, had a direct impact on Apollinaire's poetic practice.⁵ Furthermore, his use of visual-verbal punning as part of an apparent valorization of madness or the irrational as an aesthetic category is one respect in which his work may be seen to anticipate that of Breton and the Surrealists.

That the pun occupies a central position in Apollinaire's poetics is suggested in his 1913 manifesto *L'Antitradition futuriste*, where we are told that punning is a means to lyricism: 'Analogies et calembours tremplin lyrique et seule science des langues'. Apollinaire then follows this statement with a sequence of apparently unrelated words generated out of sound associations alone: 'calicot Calicut Calcutta

tafia Sophia le Sophi suffisant Uffizi officier officiel ô ficelles’ – and so on.⁶ The mention of a ‘science des langues’ here seems to be a nod to Brisset – in fact this kind of punning, in which one word seems to emerge out of another in a potentially infinite chain of sound associations, was the very stuff of Brisset’s mad theorizing – of which Apollinaire was very much aware.⁷ But Apollinaire also engages in another type of punning, which seems to be much more crucial to his thought and characteristic of his practice in *Calligrammes*, and which consists in the convergence of two or more meanings onto a single signifier, in a technique which might be considered as punning in a stricter, narrower sense. To cite just two examples, one might think of the sign at the dug-out entrance in ‘Du Coton dans les oreilles’, which reads ‘Les Cénobites tranquilles’ (I will leave the reader to supply the alternative reading here), or the bilingual pun in ‘L’Inscription anglaise’, ‘chaque lettre se love en belle anglaise’ (l. 20).

In both of these cases, a single verbal signifier generates two contrasting meanings. But this type of verbal pun also finds a counterpart in the hybrid visual-verbal structures of the calligrammes themselves, which might be thought of as a kind of pun, as signs carrying two meanings – albeit communicated via different modes of expression (one meaning is communicated visually, at the level of the global layout of the poem, the other is communicated verbally, and we access this by paying attention to the local detail of word forms). We also find plenty of visual puns, of figures giving rise to more than one visual ‘reading’: the circular forms in ‘Lettre-océan’ (figure 1), for instance, may be read as a representation of the Eiffel Tower from above; as a wheel (the ‘Grande roue’ near the Eiffel Tower); a bunch of keys, or an ancient Mayan symbol – and Apollinaire encourages us to pursue these alternative readings through prompts in the text itself.

Taking ‘La Colombe poignardée et le jet d’eau’ (figure 2) as another example, we see that there are various kinds of punning overlaps: at a purely visual level, the mouth of the fountain in the lower part of the page seems simultaneously to be an eye. But there are also hybrid puns that bring together the visual and the verbal. Usually in the calligrammes, letter forms do not function as ‘picture primitives’, to borrow a term coined by John Willats: they are not elementary units of shape information, and do not contribute directly to the image itself.⁸ That is to say, they could be replaced by any other letters (or just by blobs or other marks) and one would still have the same image. However, in ‘La Colombe poignardée et le jet d’eau’ – and in a number of other poems⁹ – we do find instances of letter forms functioning as picture primitives, signifying at the level of pictorial representation: the ‘C’ of ‘chères’ contributes to depicting the neck of the bird, while lower down in the composition, the ‘O’ of ‘Le soir tombe O sanglante mer’ seems to represent the mouth of the fountain from which the text / water flows. This type of visual-verbal pun forms a bridge between text and image, forcing us to apprehend both at once rather than to treat them separately.¹⁰ The way in which these individual letter forms play simultaneously into both visual and verbal structures is also mirrored in other kinds of punning overlaps in the poem: Jean-Pierre Bobillot has noted the way in which the verbal pun on ‘chères’ / ‘chair’ interacts with the dove’s wound, an image that is graphically suggested by the form of the ‘C’ that seems to cut into its flesh. Furthermore, while the fountain section of the poem is laid out as clearly identifiable octosyllables, in the dove figure the *vers* is dissolved within the synthetic visual form of the figure, freeing the poem up to multiple overlapping metrical readings.¹¹

For Apollinaire, who was acutely aware of the need for poetry to compete with the instantaneous, telegraphic languages of the modern age, the ability of the pun

to condense a wealth of meaning into a limited range of signs was extremely attractive; indeed, Walter Redfern has noted that poets more generally have often been prolific punners, the pun's economy of means and semantic richness suiting the limited scope of poetry.¹² At the same time, the poetic use of puns has often been frowned upon: like the paranomasic *rime riche* (which, in a similar way to the pun, relates two words or phrases that sound alike), it is considered 'de trop', a kind of linguistic aberration. As Jean-Claude Chevalier notes, 'De ce qu'il rassemble des réalités éloignées sous un prétexte formel, [le calembour] est méprisé par les gens de goût depuis plusieurs siècles: il apparaît donc tout d'abord chez Apollinaire comme un instrument de dérision ou de profanation.'¹³ The subversive value of the pun derives from the way in which it tends to collapse the boundaries between contrasting concepts, domains of thought and linguistic registers, which can often be a source of humour (as in 'Les Cénobites tranquilles', which links the monastic and the sexual). In this respect, punning fits with various aspects of Apollinaire's poetics: in particular, his aesthetic of surprise combinations, and his recuperation of the marginal, the overlooked detritus of language, into his poetry. But most crucially, punning plays into Apollinaire's pursuit of simultaneity – which was his stated aim in the calligrammes. The pun undoes the one-to-one matching of signifier to signified (and was frowned upon by Saussure for precisely this reason).¹⁴ That is, punning runs counter to the construction of language as a linear, univocal succession of meanings, and suggests instead a language in which meanings are allowed to co-exist, overlap and proliferate without constraint – as thoughts do within the mind.

Apollinaire's pursuit of simultaneity was motivated in part by a desire to do justice to the perceptual dynamics of modern life – to capture the new sense of the global brought about through the advent of modern travel and communications, and

the complexity, the ‘all-at-onceness’ of modern experience.¹⁵ But it was also bound up with a desire to investigate and represent the structures of the human mind more generally, as is indicated by the fact that Apollinaire initially called his visual poems not calligrammes but ‘idéogrammes’ – suggesting a form of notation capable of directly representing thought. And thought, as Apollinaire came to realize, was fundamentally visuo-spatial in nature. Alain Mercier has argued that one crucial source for Apollinaire’s thinking on this matter was a series of articles by André Godin, published in 1913 in the review *Pan* (to which Apollinaire also contributed and which he is likely to have read regularly).¹⁶ Godin’s central claim was that we do not think in a purely sequential manner, and that we tend to place ideas in spatial relationships to one another within the mental arena – indeed, he claimed that ‘nous pensons par idéogrammes’. Linear discourse is thus inadequate to convey thought, while an ideogrammatic notation might permit a close correspondence with mental structures, for the ideogram presents itself to us, as Godin puts it, ‘d’un seul coup, avec tout l’ensemble de ses rapports et dépendances’.¹⁷ Apollinaire’s visual poems were, accordingly, conceived with the intention that the reader would approach them globally, reading ‘d’un seul regard l’ensemble d’un poème, comme un chef d’orchestre lit d’un seul coup les notes superposées dans la partition, comme on voit d’un seul coup les éléments plastiques et imprimés d’une affiche.’¹⁸

Giving the poem a salient visual layout that encourages a more spatial, non-linear mode of reading is one way of rendering the simultaneity, the multi-layeredness of thought; punning is another. Like the calligramme, which is to be read and viewed at the same time, a pun forces us to deal with more than one meaning at once; it necessitates what Walter Redfern has described as a ‘straddle position’ on the part of the reader, who must be attentive to both meanings, and also to their relationship.¹⁹

But when Apollinaire mobilizes punning structures in his calligrammes, he also mobilizes the cultural associations with which they were inextricably bound up in this period – specifically their association with madness. In giving rise to overlapping, simultaneous meanings, his use of visual and verbal puns invites us into a mental realm unfettered by the constraints of logic and of linear discourse. This link between punning and the irrational was firmly established, in medical and psychiatric literature, by the beginning of the twentieth century. In an 1897 article entitled ‘Psychologie du calembour’, the philosopher François Paulhan related puns to spontaneous, irrational thought, to childhood, dreams, madness, and the primitive.²⁰ In this, he prefigured the arguments of Freud’s *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), where sound-based, associative wordplay is related to dreamwork, to unconscious and instinctive modes of thought, and more particularly to both pathological mental states and childish practices.²¹ That is, punning was seen as a natural psychological tendency, but one that was suppressed by the development of rational thought; it would hence emerge when rational thought was no longer dominant (during dreams, hypnosis, or in cases of mental illness), or in subjects who had never attained rationality (children and *sauvages*).

We will return to unpack some of the assumptions underlying this link between punning and the irrational in due course; in the first instance, however, the question is to what extent Apollinaire himself would have been aware of this link. There is compelling evidence that he was aware of psychoanalysis by 1914, the year of the first ‘idéogrammes lyriques’;²² and his expansive, eclectic personal library did contain a number of medical journals, so he was certainly not a stranger to specialized scientific material.²³ However, the link between punning and the irrational was also well-known outside of medical circles, as a popular interest in the writings and artistic

creations of madmen emerged around the turn of the century, in the wake of Cesare Lombroso's *L'Homme de génie*, which was published in France in 1889, and which argued for a close link between madness and genius, presenting examples both of the 'madness' of recognized artists and writers, and of creative genius in the mentally ill.²⁴ In 1904, an article entitled 'Chez les fous' appeared on the front page of *Le Petit Parisien*, in which the author, Jean Frollo, considered the writings of madmen, remarking, 'il semble à lire ces monstrueux produits de cerveaux détraqués qu'on se meuve dans le monde des calembours', and alluded to Brisset ('un aliéné qui, sur un système d'allitération et de coq-à-l'âne, a prétendu fonder tout un traité de métaphysique') as a prime example of this.²⁵ The article also referred to a psychiatrist known as Marcel Réja – actually a pseudonym of Paul Meunier, a psychiatrist at the Villejuif asylum working under Auguste Marie, who had established a collection of artworks by patients.²⁶ Réja had already published an article on drawings by madmen, and would go on to publish, in 1907, a book entitled *L'Art chez les fous*, in which he noted the preponderance of punning in poetry by the mentally ill.²⁷ Réja also examined visual art by patients – including examples from Marie's collection – conceiving of this as a modern equivalent to 'les formes archaïques de l'Art', and insisting that art produced by madmen, primitives and children is 'idéographique', a direct expression of mental states: 'c'est l'image mentale qui vient s'inscrire sur le papier', he stated.²⁸ This would, of course, have appealed to Apollinaire's interest in the ideogrammatic representation of thought, and the poet may well have been acquainted with Réja's book, which despite its specialist subject was an immediate success, going into a second printing within the year of its publication.²⁹ Katia Samaltanos has even suggested that the circular forms of 'Lettre-océan' may have been inspired by a drawing reproduced in Réja's book (figure 3).³⁰

But what permits us to be more conclusive about Apollinaire's engagement with psychiatric discourse on punning is the fact that in 1913 he became friends with the psychiatrist Jean Vinchon, who later went on to publish a book on the art of the insane, in which he, like Réja before him, drew attention to their tendency to fragment words and recombine them to form neologisms, and to use 'jeux de mots' in their verbal compositions.³¹ Moreover, we know that Apollinaire actually visited Vinchon at work at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne, where they examined writings and drawings by the patients, and discussed the relationship between madness and creativity, as Vinchon explains:

Les aliénés que nous soignons alors intéressaient beaucoup notre hôte; il commentait durant de longues heures les dessins ou les écrits recueillis récemment dans les services et cherchait avec nous la solution du problème du génie dans la folie. Les formes élémentaires de l'art et de la poésie apparaissaient bien dans ces œuvres; il retrouvait là les sources originales du lyrisme, mais qui se perdaient sans profit dans l'immense désert de la folie.³²

Although Vinchon's book, *L'Art et la folie*, was not published until well after Apollinaire's death, it is clear, as the lines just quoted demonstrate, that the poet did discuss many of its central issues with Vinchon, and it is even possible that they broached the subject of the connections between the calligrammes and 'l'art des fous', in which punning was rife: indeed, Vinchon's book explicitly compares the dually visual and verbal production of one of his patients to Apollinaire's calligrammes.³³

So Apollinaire was very aware of the link between punning and madness, via Vinchon if not via other sources – including, of course, Brisset as the very embodiment of that link. What is particularly interesting about the psychiatric literature in this respect is that, firstly, there is a broad assumption of the equivalence between ontogeny and phylogeny. That is, as we have already seen in relation to Paulhan and Freud, children, *sauvages* and the mentally ill are all linked by their propensity to pun. Correspondingly, their aesthetic creations are seen as broadly equivalent: Vinchon, for instance, compares sculptures by psychiatric patients to primitive fetishes, viewing these irrational creations as equivalent to an early, pre-intellectual stage of human development.³⁴ Secondly, amongst a number of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theorists who associate punning with madness, Vinchon and Réja are particularly important as sources for Apollinaire because they examined both the visual and verbal productions of the insane – crossing between text and image – and because they considered that these productions, as well as those of children and ‘primitives’, may have aesthetic value. This set them apart from other contemporary commentators such as Rogues de Fursac, whose 1905 book *Les Écrits et les dessins dans les maladies nerveuses et mentales* treated the writings and drawings of the mentally ill primarily as material to assist in diagnosis.³⁵ Vinchon and Réja’s writings hence stand out as sources which would have appealed particularly to Apollinaire’s well-known primitivist tendencies, as manifested in a number of articles on primitive sculpture, which he considers as ‘de véritables œuvres d’art’, worthy of contemplation on the same terms as Western masterpieces.³⁶

Apollinaire’s primitivism is a pervasive facet of his work. A recurrent theme in his writings is the influence of ‘l’art nègre’ on modern art, and in particular the idea that in studying primitive works, the modern artist could return to the origins of

artistic creation, abandoning the constraints of modern pictorial convention, ‘ramenant l’observation artistique aux principes mêmes du grand art.’³⁷ In this respect, Apollinaire’s appreciation of primitive art emerges from a more general insistence on the role of instinct, as opposed to rational thought or convention-bound intelligence, in artistic creation. This is in evidence as early as 1907, in his article ‘Henri Matisse’, where he comments of the painter: ‘L’instinct était retrouvé’, continuing, ‘Vous soumettiez enfin votre conscience humaine à l’inconscience naturelle’ (*Pr2*, 101). We might also consider the following comments from a 1918 interview:

Je suis partisan acharné d’exclure l’intervention de l’intelligence, c’est-à-dire de la philosophie et de la logique, dans les manifestations de l’art. L’art doit avoir pour fondement la sincérité de l’émotion et la spontanéité de l’expression; l’une et l’autre sont en relation directe avec la vie, qu’elles s’efforcent de magnifier esthétiquement.

L’intelligence arrache d’ordinaire l’art hors de ses gonds, jusqu’à le rendre hallucinant; l’art véritable naît uniquement sous l’impulsion de l’intuition et ne résulte pas, retenez-le bien, de la réflexion.³⁸

Apollinaire’s insistence on the importance of instinct, of the abandonment of the constraints of logic and convention, might of course be traced back to nineteenth-century thinkers who placed an emphasis on the artist seeing innocently – experiencing the world in a way unmediated by prior knowledge and culture. Indeed, Apollinaire perhaps echoes Baudelaire’s view of artistic genius as ‘l’enfance retrouvée à volonté’³⁹ when, in his major art-critical text *Les Peintres cubistes*, he

describes Picasso as ‘un nouveau-né qui met de l’ordre dans l’univers pour son usage personnel’.⁴⁰ He also more explicitly refers his primitivism to Baudelaire when he states that the latter ‘avait prévu cette arrivée dans notre esthétique de l’esthétique des Sauvages’.⁴¹ But what perhaps differentiates him from Baudelaire and from nineteenth-century accounts of the ‘innocent eye’ is that his emphasis is not on seeing, or perception, but on thought and its structures – on primitive thought as spatial and non-linear.

What this brief excursion into Apollinaire’s primitivism shows us is that the poet was very much engaged with the idea of representing a type of mental experience that could be characterized alternately as childish, primitive or uncivilized, or irrational. And this is where Apollinaire’s punning structures come in: they form a kind of cipher, situated as they are, in the cultural imagination of the early twentieth century, at the intersection between madness – or the irrational more generally – and creativity. Grasping this significance of the pun for Apollinaire puts us in a position from which we can consider his calligrammes afresh. These visual poems are not simply or straightforwardly a paean to the modern age, or an attempt to co-opt the hybrid visual-verbal resources of advertising; Apollinaire saw them, at the same time, as a *retour aux sources*,⁴² a return to the ideogrammatic roots of writing, and to a mode of thought that was felt to be suppressed by discursive logic and by linear communication. This aspect of the calligrammes, while it has been somewhat sidelined by recent scholarship, was not lost on contemporary commentators: in one of the first critical responses to Apollinaire’s visual poems, Gabriel Arbouin wrote perceptively that they were a ‘régression’, a return to primitive, ideographic languages.⁴³ The calligrammes, in their use of visual and verbal punning structures of various kinds, constituted an attempt at representing the deep mental structures that

twentieth-century psychology had only just begun to uncover, and to which poetry, in its traditional, linear form could not hope to do justice.

Apollinaire's mobilization of visual-verbal puns might be seen to cement his position not just as the leader of a major current of primitivist thinking in early-twentieth-century culture, but also as the founding father of Surrealism, foreshadowing the interest of Breton and his colleagues in the aesthetic value of irrational or insane productions. Indeed, in 1929 Breton purchased two box sculptures by patients at Villejuif, which had originally been part of Marie's collection; meanwhile Vinchon, as Peter Read has shown, was involved in Surrealist productions in the 1920s – so Breton's interest emerges out of a cultural context that is very much continuous with that of Apollinaire.⁴⁴ Moreover, when one thinks of Apollinaire discussing and assessing writing and drawings by the patients of the Hôpital Sainte-Anne with his friend Vinchon, it is hard to resist comparison with the way in which artworks by the 'mad', childlike subject are analysed by Breton in *Nadja* – and also put on a par with both primitive sculptures and contemporary avant-garde works of art. This comparison invites reflection not only on the aesthetic engagement of these writers with the productions of the mentally ill, but also on their ethical stances in relation to the creators of those works – as well as, potentially, their position in a broader history of the reception of 'l'art des fous'. In this respect it is important to situate the early twentieth-century surge of interest in the artistic creations of the mentally ill within the context of a broad movement to reform psychiatric institutions and practices. Jean Frollo's 1904 article in *Le Petit Parisien*, cited earlier, used the creative endeavours of patients to draw attention to their humanity and support a plea for urgent reform of the asylum system, reminding readers of 'le devoir étroit qu'a la société d'assurer aux aliénés toutes les chances possibles de guérison, toutes les

garanties nécessaires de sécurité morale'.⁴⁵ Similarly, Marie's 1905 article on the works of his patients begins with a reminder that 'L'aliéné n'a pas un cerveau tellement différent du nôtre!', and constitutes an attempt to humanize the 'interné' and render him more sympathetic to the reader in an implicit bid to gain support for reform.⁴⁶ Indeed, Allison Morehead has recently demonstrated that Marie's project for a 'musée de la folie' should be read in the light of such reformist currents, his aim being not so much to display patients' art in a Charcot-esque visual taxonomy of madness, nor to argue for its aesthetic value, but rather to use 'l'art des fous' as evidence of the modern patient's comparative freedom and to contrast the modern 'méthode de liberté' with the barbaric, repressive methods of the past – ultimately supporting the anti-alienist movement and pointing towards the successes of a reformed practice of psychiatry.⁴⁷

This ethical engagement with the suffering of the 'interné' and concomitant movement towards reform of psychiatric practice is arguably reflected in *Nadja*, where Breton's insistence on the lack of clear boundary between *folie* and *non-folie* comes as a restatement of Marie's opening gambit.⁴⁸ Moreover, Breton's diatribe against the asylum and its practices makes it clear that these can only assist Nadja's passage into mental illness, while a gentler, more empathetic approach characteristic of a reformed psychiatry (which Breton associates with the privileged 'maison de santé particulière') might be more successful in bringing her back to 'un sens acceptable de la réalité'.⁴⁹ And yet, even leaving to one side the thorny historical facts of Breton's abandonment of Nadja, and his candid admission of this within his text, his ethical stance is made problematic by the way in which he aestheticizes her – treating her not as an artist in her own right, but arguably as an image, a work of art whose aestheticized status is conferred by his own creative gaze. The drawings and

collages by Nadja included in the text function not so much as evidence of her creative personhood – and consequently of Breton’s ethical obligations towards her – but as aspects of a Galatea-like work of art subsumed into his own creative vision. Indeed, the fact that Nadja, unlike many relatively peripheral figures in Breton’s text, is never fully represented through her photographic portrait, confirms his denial of her status as fully-fledged subject.

There is little evidence even of a semblance of properly ethical engagement with the mentally ill in Apollinaire’s work.⁵⁰ Just as Breton aestheticizes and thus distances Nadja, the relationship between poet and insane subject is indirect, mediated by artistic production. While Apollinaire may be interested in the visual and verbal punning practices of the insane, and in the poetic uses to which these practices might be put in his calligrammes, the creators of these works barely enter into his frame of reference. Subsumed into a primitivism characteristic of the early twentieth-century avant-garde’s interest in a childish, savage and irrational ‘other’ – a primitivism which mingles fascination and fear, and which itself focuses not on real, potentially dangerous, threateningly foreign *people* but on art objects that can be happily assimilated into the safe space of the museum, gallery or bourgeois interior – Apollinaire’s engagement with the punning art of the insane is characterized by an aestheticizing stance that bypasses human empathy and ultimately keeps the insane subject reassuringly at arm’s length.

Notes

¹ Louis Latzarus, ‘La Victime’, *Le Figaro*, 14 April 1913, p. 4. See also Émile Deflin, ‘Le Prince des penseurs est dans nos murs’, *L’Intransigeant*, 14 April 1913, p. 2, and [Anon.] ‘Le Prince des penseurs à Paris’, *Le Temps*, 15 April 1913, p. 5. For a broader

account of this episode, see Marc Décimo, *Jean-Pierre Brisset, Prince des Penseurs, inventeur, grammairien et prophète* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2001), esp. pp. 11–48; see pp. 545–57 for further contemporary press accounts of the election.

² Alfred Jarry, *La Dragonne*, in *Œuvres complètes III*, ed. by Henri Bordillon et al. (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1988), p. 496; cited in Décimo, *Jean-Pierre Brisset*, p. 172.

³ André Breton, *Anthologie de l'humour noir* (Paris: Société nouvelle des éditions Pauvert, 1979), pp. 219–22.

⁴ See Jean-Claude Chevalier, 'La Poésie d'Apollinaire et le calembour', *Europe*, 44:451–2 (November–December 1966), 56–76; Anne Hyde Greet, 'Wordplay in Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*', *L'Esprit créateur*, 10.4 (1970), 296–307, and 'Puns in Apollinaire's *Alcools*', *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature*, 6 (1965), 308–29.

⁵ Katia Samaltanos and Anna Middleton have both documented Apollinaire's interest in medicine and psychiatry, but have tended to see Apollinaire as a go-between whose major role was to disseminate medical and psychiatric discourse to artists, and have not examined in detail the ramifications of this interest in terms of his own poetic practice. See Katia Samaltanos, *Apollinaire: Catalyst for Primitivism, Picabia, and Duchamp* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984); and Anna Middleton, 'Medical Discourse and Avant-garde Art in France, 1905–1925' (unpublished PhD thesis, Bath Spa University College / University of the West of England, 2004).

⁶ Guillaume Apollinaire, *Œuvres en prose complètes*, ed. by Michel Décaudin and Pierre Caizergues, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1977–93), II, 938; henceforth *Pr1*, *Pr2*, *Pr3*.

⁷ Several works by Brisset figured in Apollinaire's library: see Gilbert Boudar and Michel Décaudin (eds), *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de Guillaume Apollinaire*, vol. I (Paris: CNRS, 1983), p. 40. According to Marc Décimo (*Jean-Pierre Brisset*, p. 186), an invitation to the 'journée Brisset' of 13 April was also found here. Marcel Duchamp also attests to the involvement of 'Apollinaire et ses compagnons' in this celebration: see Marcel Duchamp, 'Propos', in *Duchamp du signe, suivi de Notes*, ed. by Michel Sanouillet and Paul Matisse, rev. ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), pp. 165–69 (p. 168).

⁸ John Willats, *Art and Representation: New Principles in the Analysis of Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 7–8.

⁹ Other examples of letter forms functioning as picture primitives may be found in the calligramme within 'La Petite auto' where a series of letter 'O's seem to figure the heads of the travellers (in Guillaume Apollinaire, *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. by Marcel Adéma and Michel Décaudin (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1965), p. 208; henceforth abbreviated as *Po*). In 'Du Coton dans les oreilles' (*Po*, p. 287) the 'O' of 'Omégaphone' represents the opening of the verbally designated object, in a visual-verbal pun that complements the multiple possible readings of the verbal signifier. In an epistolary calligramme to Louis de Gonzague Frick (*Po*, p. 797), Apollinaire makes an 'M' represent the ears of a horse, and a question mark figures its eyes; in 'Les Profondeurs' (*Po*, p. 607) another manuscript calligramme, the hands of one of the figures are suggested by the pointed letter forms of 'AME' and 'AMOUR', themselves linked by their shared sounds.

¹⁰ See my article 'Perceiving text and image in Apollinaire's Calligrammes', *Paragraph*, 34.1 (2011), 66–85: even without these 'bridges', it is debatable whether one could deal with visual and verbal aspects of the calligrammes separately.

- ¹¹ Jean-Pierre Bobillot, 'Du visuel au littéral: quelques propositions', in *Poésure et peinture*, exh. cat (Marseille and Paris: Musées de Marseille / Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1993), pp. 88–109 (88–90).
- ¹² Walter Redfern, *Puns* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 101.
- ¹³ See Chevalier, 'La Poésie d'Apollinaire et le calembour', p. 75.
- ¹⁴ Catherine Bates, 'The Point of Puns', *Modern Philology*, 96:4 (1999), 421–38 (p. 424). See also Jonathan Culler, 'The Call of the Phoneme: Introduction', in *On Puns: The Foundation of Letters*, ed. by Jonathan Culler (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 1–16 (12).
- ¹⁵ See for example his comments on 'la forme rompue' of his poems capturing 'ce que je puis rendre de la vie infiniment variée': Apollinaire to André Breton, 14 February 1916, in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by Michel Décaudin, 4 vols (Paris: André Balland et Jacques Lecat, 1965–66), IV, 875.
- ¹⁶ Alain Mercier, 'André Godin et Guillaume Apollinaire: signes, hiéroglyphes, idéogrammes', *Revue des lettres modernes. Guillaume Apollinaire*, 13 (1976), 131–36.
- ¹⁷ André Godin, 'Sémantique et logogénie', *Pan*, 6.3 (March–April 1913), 229–32 (p. 230).
- ¹⁸ 'Simultanisme-librettisme', *Pr2*, 976.
- ¹⁹ Redfern, *Puns*, p. 84. William Empson makes a similar point in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (New York: New Directions, 1966), p. 102.
- ²⁰ François Paulhan, 'Psychologie du calembour', *Revue des deux mondes*, 142 (July–August 1897), 862–903.

²¹ Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Psychological Works, VIII. Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. by James Strachey and Anna Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1960), esp. pp. 28 and 119–20.

²² Apollinaire refers to psychoanalysis in his January 1914 article ‘La Disparition du Dr Otto Gross’ (*Pr3*, 177–78), but is unlikely to have read Freud’s texts. See Peter Read, ‘Apollinaire et le docteur Vinchon: poésie, psychanalyse et surréalisme’, in *Apollinaire en archipel*, ed. by Laurence Campa (*Revue des sciences humaines*, 307 (July–September 2012), 35–59 (pp. 35–41) for a useful summary of the evidence.

²³ These included issues of *La France médicale* and *La Chronique médicale*; see Gilbert Boudar and Pierre Caizergues (eds), *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque de Guillaume Apollinaire*, vol. II (Paris: CNRS, 1987), pp. 29 and 55.

²⁴ Cesare Lombroso, *L’Homme de génie*, trans. by Fr. Colonna d’Istria (Paris: Alcan, 1889). The link between punning and madness is commented on here (pp. x, 281).

²⁵ Jean Frolo, ‘Chez les fous’, *Le Petit Parisien*, 29 July 1904, p. 1.

²⁶ Marie’s apparent establishment of a ‘musée de la folie’ (see his article ‘Le Musée de la folie’, *Je sais tout*, 9 (15 October 1905), 353–60) is frequently cited as an example of the public’s interest in madness in the early twentieth century. However, as Allison Morehead has recently shown, this ‘museum’ was in 1905 no more than speculative, much less actually open to the public: see ‘The Musée de la folie: collecting and exhibiting *chez les fous*’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 21.1 (2011), 101–26.

²⁷ Marcel Réja, *L’Art chez les fous* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1907), pp. 113–14. Réja also cites Brisset as an example, pp. 199–206.

²⁸ Réja, *L’Art chez les fous*, pp. 31, 64 and 72.

²⁹ Michel Thévoz, *Art brut, psychose et médiumnité* (Paris: La Différence, 1990), p. 79.

³⁰ Katia Samaltanos, *Apollinaire: Catalyst for Primitivism, Picabia, and Duchamp*, p. 96. Samaltanos claims (p. 86) that Apollinaire mentioned Réja in an article, ‘Les Médecins-poètes’, published in *Le Mercure de France*, no. 453 (1 May 1917). A short text with this title does feature in this issue (p. 186), but it is by a certain Dr. E. Callamand, and does not mention Réja.

³¹ Jean Vinchon, *L’Art et la folie* (Paris: Stock, 1924), pp. 41–42, 52, and 100. Read, ‘Apollinaire et le docteur Vinchon’, gives a fully-documented account of Apollinaire’s friendship with the psychiatrist, which was close enough that they continued to correspond throughout the Great War.

³² Jean Vinchon, ‘Guillaume Apollinaire en salle de garde’, *Le Progrès médical*, supplément illustré, no. 1 (1924), n.p.

³³ Vinchon, *L’Art et la folie*, p. 70.

³⁴ Vinchon, *L’Art et la folie*, pp. 59–60. Natasha Staller presents evidence that this ontogeny-phylogeny equivalence had a wide acceptance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; see *A Sum of Destructions: Picasso’s Cultures and the Creation of Cubism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 69.

³⁵ J. Rogues de Fursac, *Les Écrits et les dessins dans les maladies nerveuses et mentales* (Paris: Masson, 1905). For a further example of such treatment of ‘dessins de fous’, see also B. Pailhas, ‘Dessins et manifestations d’art chez deux aliénés circulaires: contribution à l’étude des dispositions artistiques et plus spécialement de leur intermittence dans la déséquilibration psychique et la folie’, *Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, 21 (1908), 162–74,.

³⁶ ‘Mélanoophilie ou mélanomanie’ (1917), *Pr3*, 252–55 (p. 255); Apollinaire also considered childish artistic expression in a 1914 article: see ‘Dessins d’enfants’ (*Pr2*, 755–56). For a full discussion of Apollinaire’s Primitivism, see Jean-Claude Blachère, *Le Modèle nègre: aspects littéraires du mythe primitiviste au XXe siècle chez Apollinaire, Cendrars, Tzara* (Dakar: Nouvelles Éditions Africaines, 1981), pp. 26–70.

³⁷ ‘Sculptures d’Afrique et d’Océanie’ (1918), *Pr2*, 1416.

³⁸ Interview with Pérez-Jorba, *La Publicidad*, 14 July 1918, *Pr2*, 992–93.

³⁹ Baudelaire, ‘Le Peintre de la vie moderne’, in *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Claude Pichois, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1975–76), II, 690 (original emphasis).

⁴⁰ Apollinaire, *Méditations esthétiques. Les Peintres Cubistes*, *Pr2*, 24.

⁴¹ ‘La Sculpture d’aujourd’hui’ (unpublished article of 1913), *Pr2*, 595.

⁴² ‘Dans ma poésie, je suis simplement revenu aux principes puisque l’idéogramme est le principe même de l’écriture’, Apollinaire, ‘Les Poèmes figuratifs de M. Guillaume Apollinaire’, *Paris-Midi*, 22 July 1914, p. 2.

⁴³ ‘Devant l’idéogramme d’Apollinaire’, *Les Soirées de Paris*, July–August 1914, repr. in *Le Gueux mélancolique: poèmes inédits*, ed. by André Salmon (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), pp. 142–44 (144).

⁴⁴ See Morehead, ‘The Musée de la folie’, p. 114; Read, ‘Apollinaire et le docteur Vinchon’, p. 44.

⁴⁵ Frolo, ‘Chez les fous’, p. 1.

⁴⁶ Marie, ‘Le Musée de la folie’, p. 353.

⁴⁷ Morehead, ‘The Musée de la folie’, esp. pp. 119–21.

⁴⁸ André Breton, *Nadja* [1928] (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 171.

⁴⁹ Breton, *Nadja*, p. 167.

⁵⁰ In 'La Disparition du Dr Otto Gross' (*Pr3*, 177–8), Apollinaire laments Gross's internment in a psychiatric institution; but while Breton engages in a broader questioning of the practices of asylums and their injustice, the implication of Apollinaire's article seems simply to be that Gross's internment was unjust because he was not mad.