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Maldoror: (Les Chants De Maldoror) (New Directions Paperbook)



Synopsis

This macabre but beautiful work, *Les Chants de Maldoror*, has achieved a considerable reputation as one of the earliest and most extraordinary examples of Surrealist writing. *Maldoror* is a long narrative prose poem which celebrates the principle of Evil in an elaborate style and with a passion akin to religious fanaticism. The French poet-critic Georges Hugnet has written of Lautréamont: "He terrifies, stupefies, strikes dumb. He could look squarely at that which others had merely given a passing glance." When first published in 1868-69, *Maldoror* went almost unnoticed. But in the 1890s the book was rediscovered and hailed as a work of genius by such eminent writers as Huysmans, Émile Zola, Maeterlinck, and Remy de Gourmont. Later still, Lautréamont was to be canonized as one of their principal "ancestors" by the Paris surrealists. This edition, translated by Guy Wernham, includes also a long introduction to a never-written, or now lost, volume of poetry. Thus, except for a few letters, it gives all the surviving literary work of Lautréamont.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You should own this book...and you should buy it right now if you don't own it. Lautréamont's epic prose poem dedicated to the subject of evil is probably one of the best surrealist works we've been lucky enough to have bestowed on us. It jumps all over the map, but it never once loses steam or sags under the weight of its subject matter. This is actually the only book I stopped reading halfway through and went back to the beginning so I could underline all the good parts. And there are a LOT of good parts. Even if you could give a whit about evil, you must sit in awe of the pure grace and

strength of Lautremont's writing. It's like a pie made from the flesh of angels. So dig in.

On one's first encounter with Lautremont's "Maldoror", it will appear a virtually formless, incoherent and incompetent work -- "a compilation of a sick mind" -- until, that is, one becomes habituated to its style. Hailed as one of the pioneering works of surrealism, this is undoubtedly one of the most original and explosive meditations on pure evil. Lautremont's glorification of crime and murder, his blasphemy, his rhapsodic celebration of revolt, are, without a doubt, unsurpassed. Never has a book more malignantly oozed more evil, misanthropy and menace. It will jar any so-called "decent" person out of his/her comfortably smug composure.

"Maldoror" is the best surrealist anti literature has to offer, without a doubt. The work of an obviously, eh...unconventional? psyche, it viciously tears a gaping hole in sentimentality and anything else that does not reek of absolute rebellion. If you've ever felt even the slightest rancor against society and the hollow men surrounding you all day every day, you can be sure that you will take a liking to this book. Bataille and Sade are great, but can't hold a candle to little Isidore. Perversely delicious.

Many people to whom I've recommended this book end up with this publication. I noticed that one reviewer was bored by it. I assure you, you would NOT have been bored by the translation by Alexis Lykiard (going under the title MALDOROR AND COMPLETE WORKS). Lykiard truly captures the rabid bite, godlike arrogance, obnoxiously erudite vocabulary, genius humor, and vortex of profound madness that is Lautremont's Maldoror.

Not for the timid, Maldoror is one of the darkest and most provocative novels ever written. The Comte De Lautremont (Isidore Ducasse) was a favorite of the Surrealists for his fever dream depictions and nightmarish visions. Murder, blasphemy, violence and horror reign supreme in the charnel house world of Maldoror. Comparable to Sade, Maldoror is an unrelenting and unrepentant vision of glorious evil. Ducasse's malevolent creation makes the novels of today seem as child's play. This malignant book was banned soon after its first printing in France and remained so for years due to its graphic and heretical content. Highly recommended for those desirous of a glimpse of the darkest recesses of the human soul.

This book is explosive. It is an assault on the senses, the spirit, and the conscience of the reader. Written in 1873 by a young man who died in obscurity at the age of 24, it was cited by Breton and

the Surrealists as a primary influence. It is a novel of violent revolt against God, man, and in its imagery, literary convention. Proceed with caution as the protagonist leads you through his devastating, often disgusting, paroxysms of rebellious violence against most everything Western civilization holds sacred. Essential dark literature, not for the faint of heart.

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