THE UNITY OF BAUDELAIRE'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY  
(ETHICS, MORALS, AESTHETICS)  
IN L'ART ROMANTIQUE AND THE JOURNAUX INTIMES

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By

RHODA COOK BLEND, B.A.

The Ohio State University

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Approved by:

[Signature]
Adviser
INTRODUCTION
The moral philosophy of an author is an expression of his values and such values theoretically break down in relation to the general categories of aesthetics, morals, and ethics. Centuries of philosophical works have imposed the distinction between the realms of the aesthetic, the moral, and the ethical to such a point that the words "moral philosophy" (or la morale) signified nothing tangible, or if tangible, irrelevant, to my way of thinking, for dictionaries define the term as pertinent exclusively to thoughts upon manners, customs, and conduct with reference to life in society. The Greek tradition of aesthetics and the advent of Christianity, however, with its emphasis upon la morale as found within the inner regions of the human consciousness, help us to divine the broader meaning of the term moral philosophy, as the supreme and composite expression of what we now call aesthetics, morals, and ethics. It is hoped that this thesis will indicate that Baudelaire's very spiritual and material existence, that is, on the one hand, his attitude of mind and on the other hand his way of life (in the ideal and his art, becomes the epitome of the
true oneness, or the unity which I have chosen to expose throughout the course of this thesis.

L'Art Romantique manifests chiefly the aesthetic form of moral philosophy in the realms of both creative art and critical art, whereas the Journaux Intimes is principally preoccupied with the expression of a personal ethic. Both are dependent upon the moral outlook, or the progenitor of value, with which the two works are so deftly permeated. It is with pleasure that the reader discovers a striking union in Baudelaire's thought processes and the aspirations of his ethical and moral life. It was his will to approximate in his material existence the ideals which were forever in his mind. Such is the spirit of the moral philosophy of Charles Baudelaire; it is as unified and as inspired in form and in content as his following sonnet of Correspondances:

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent
Dans une ténèbreuse et profonde unité,
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
Doux comme les hautbois; verts comme les prairies,
--Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,
Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.
L'ART ROMANTIQUE

PART I
For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.

Walter Pater, 1868
Les considérations et les rêveries morales qui surgissent des dessins d'un artiste sont, dans beaucoup de cas, la meilleure traduction que le critique en puisse faire; les suggestions font partie d'une idée mère, et, en les montrant successivement, on peut la faire deviner.

Baudelaire, L'Art Romantique.

It is difficult to disagree with M. André Ferran, author of the formidable Esthétique de Baudelaire, in his assertion that "On n'est jamais en sécurité avec ce spectateur désabusé, cet ironiste obséquieux, cet ami de l'outrance qui dissimule des pétards sous les fleurs.... Et c'est, en vérité, un fâcheux état d'âme pour aborder les études critiques de Charles Baudelaire".¹ To begin with (and aside from the difficulty of Baudelaire's personality), I admit the impossibility of comfortably placing him as a thinker and artist within one of the traditional literary periods of his time. (It is true that any artist

of the nineteenth century would have some difficulty, were he able to re-read his own works today, in considering himself as belonging exclusively to any one of the four major literary movements of the century. The period, as we shall soon see, is too turbulent, too diverse in scope for a writer not to have reflected some of this complexity in his works.) In addition, however, serious doubts have arisen with regard to Baudelaire’s continuous sincerity of treatment, or seriousness of treatment,\(^2\) of the various artists (painters, actors, writers, etc.) whom he considers in his *Art Romantique*. His choice of authors and subjects for his critical articles is broad; it includes artists as distinctive and as instrumental in promoting new theories of literature as Hugo, Gautier, Flaubert, etc. Most of these “representatives” of literary currents are treated with sympathetic effusion. There is, of course, on the part of Baudelaire, more than an element of sincere affinity with these artists, but many other works of Baudelaire, and especially his correspondence, seem to belie this enthusiasm. Ostensibly, Gautier is Baudelaire’s ideal; he is the lover and seeker of that form of *le beau* which is *l’idée fixe*. Gautier is the

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 492: "Certes, il y a bien souvent, dans ces pages, des boutades qu’il ne faut pas trop prendre au sérieux."
"poète impeccable," the "parfait magicien ès lettres françaises" to whom Baudelaire had dedicated _Les Fleurs du Mal_. There would be little or no reason to doubt Baudelaire's feelings with regard to Gautier had not this doubt been explicitly raised by his correspondence. On January 31, 1859, a letter written to him by Édouard Houssaye, director at that time of _L'Artiste_ (and in which the Gautier article originally appears), suggests Baudelaire's reluctance to write about Gautier:

Décidément voulez-vous faire l'étude sur Gautier? Si oui, donnez-la cette semaine; si non, je vais la faire faire par un autre ami de Gautier.

More direct and astonishing, however, is Baudelaire's letter to Victor Hugo written on Friday, September 27, 1859:

Relativement à l'écrivain qui fait le sujet de cet article et dont le nom a servi de prétexte à mes considérations critiques, je puis avouer confidentiellement que je connais les lacunes de son étonnant esprit. Bien des fois, pensant à lui, j'ai été affligé de voir que Dieu ne voulait pas être absolument généreux. Je n'ai pas menti, j'ai esquivé, j'ai dissimulé. Si j'étais appelé à témoigner en justice, et si mon témoignage, absolument véridique, pouvait nuire à un être favorisé par la nature et aimé par mon cœur, je vous jure que je mentirais avec fierté; parce que les lois sont au-dessous du sentiment, parce que l'amitié est, de sa nature, infaillible et ingouvernable. Mais, vis-à-vis de vous, il me semble absolument inutile de mentir.
J'ai besoin de vous. J'ai besoin d'une voix plus haute que la mienne et que celle de Théophile Gautier, de votre voix dictatoriale. Je veux être protégé!

It is possible to assume from the letter above that considerations other than those of fidelity to art prompted Baudelaire to write about Gautier the way he did; his praise was, in reality, more tepid than enthusiastic. But the bold candor of the letter to Hugo and its almost obsequious tone are even more astonishing than Baudelaire's surreptitious reservations about Gautier. Once more Baudelaire has "esquivé" and "dissimulé". M. Jacques Crépet writes à propos of Baudelaire's remark in L'Art Romantique concerning Hugo: "...le poète chéri et vénéré ...": "Quand on connaît les sentiments intimes de Baudelaire à l'égard d'Hugo, on est évidemment en droit de s'étonner."³ Baudelaire often belittled Hugo to his close friends and contemporaries in a language frequently both familiar and caustic. As early as 1845, he writes while referring to Hugo and Delacroix:

On avait le poète romantique, il fallait le peintre. Cette nécessité de trouver à tout prix des pendants et des analogies dans les différents arts amène souvent d'étranges bévues... À coup sur, la

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Seventeen years later Baudelaire did not seem to change his mind, for on August 11, 1862, commenting on his article on Hugo’s *Les Misérables* (later to be called by him "le dés honneur d’Hugo")⁵, he writes to his mother:

Ce livre est immonde et inepte.
J’ai montré, à ce sujet, que je possédais l’art de mentir. Il Hugo m’a écrit, pour me remercier, une lettre absolument ridicule.
Cela prouve qu’un grand homme peut être un sot.

In *Les Curiosités Esthétiques*, Baudelaire writes:

Cet homme est si peu élé gialque, si peu éthéré, qu’il ferait horreur même à un notaire. Hugo, sacerdoce, a toujours le front penché, trop penché pour rien voir excepté son nombril.⁶

But in his article on Hugo which appears in *L’Art Romantique*, Baudelaire’s interpretation of the meaning of Hugo’s

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⁵*À Ancelle*, 12 février 1865.
"front penché" is rather different:

Quand aujourd'hui nous parcourons les poésies récentes de Victor Hugo, nous voyons que tel il était, tel il est resté: un promeneur pensif, un homme solitaire mais enthousiaste de la vie, un esprit rêveur et interrogateur. Mais ce n'est plus dans les environs boisés et fleuris de la grande ville, sur les quais accidentés de la Seine, dans les promenades fourmillantes d'enfants, qu'il fait errer ses pieds et ses yeux. Comme Démosthène, il converse avec les flots et le vent; autrefois, il rôdait solitaire dans des lieux bouillonnant de vie humaine; aujourd'hui, il marche dans des solitude peuplées par sa pensée. Ainsi est-il peut-être encore plus grand et plus singulier. Les couleurs de ses rêveries se sont teintées en solennité, et sa voix s'est approfondie en rivalisant avec celle de l'Océan. Mais là-bas comme ici, toujours il nous apparaît comme la statue de la Méditation qui marche.7

Indeed, the affinity with Hugo that Baudelaire expresses not only in L'Art Romantique, but indirectly in the "tableaux parisiens" of Les Fleurs du Mal, is a constant problem in sincerity for most critics. Baudelaire's philosophy of art, as unsystematic and resilient as it appears, seems to oppose the philosophy of Hugo in spite of the latter's display of splendid fable-like qualities in La Légende des Siècles.8 The two never quite speak

7Ibid., p. 301.
the same language. In a letter to Manet written on
October 28, 1865, Baudelaire comments on a note that he
had received from Hugo:

Cela je crois, ne veut pas dire seulement: donnons-nous une mu-
tuelle poignée de mains. Je connais
les sous-entendus du latin de V.
Hugo jugamus destræa. Cela veut
dire aussi: Unissons nos mains
pour sauver le genre humain. Mais
je me fous du genre humain, et il
ne s’en est pas aperçu.

The articles on Gautier and Hugo (with the ex-
ception of the long and careful study on the aesthetic
of Wagner) are, as a whole, the most beautifully written
and the most complete statements on poetic theory in the
Art Romantique collection. Is it therefore not reason-
able to assume, in view of his correspondence, that Bau-
delaire for the major part, used these authors as pretexts
for expressing his own critical opinions? Baudelaire admits
this quite frankly in his letter to Hugo about Gautier
cited above: "Relativement à l’écrivain...dont le nom a
servi de prétexte à mes considérations critiques...."
Baudelaire constantly gives us the impression that it is
he himself that he is searching for in the works of every
author he attempts to analyze; it is only natural, therefore,
that he would interpret many works in the light of his own
preoccupations and obsessions. In many cases his analyses
are difficult to accept as objective interpretations of
the various authors he discusses.\textsuperscript{9}

M. Ferran attempts to explain some of Baudelaire's "échappées dangereuses" by underlining the fact that his quality of vision is primarily poetic and naturally subject to extravagances of imagination:

Une critique de poète ne saurait inspirer une confiance assurée. Ces bondissements inquiètent parfois, par crainte de la chute. Et d'autre part, les intuitions de la sensibilité sont trop délicates pour n'être pas souvent dérégées et devenir sujettes à des erreurs d'appréciation causées par des surprises de cœur et des élans de l'imagination... Ce qu'il comprend est, peut-être, parfaitement saisi d'une vue, en des nuances inappréciables aux géomètres. Mais saurait-il tout comprendre? Et même peut-il comprendre grand'chose aux œuvres qui débordent le cercle forcément limité de ses tendances, de ses goûts, de son génie? Enfin, si c'est l'amour ou la haine qui le guident, ne sommes-nous pas saisis de l'inquiétude de le surprendre un jour en flagrant délit d'injustice.\textsuperscript{10}

In addition, M. Crépet points out errors in dates of birth and publications of these authors\textsuperscript{11} (though rarely included by Baudelaire) which when considered along


\textsuperscript{10}Ferran, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 493.

\textsuperscript{11}See "Notes et éclaircissement," \textit{L'Art Romantique} p. 551.
with the preceding factors indicate that the titles of Baudelaire's critical essays, most of which bear the names of the leading writers of the time, are primarily incidental. Baudelaire's work reminds us frequently of moments in the Causiers of Sainte-Beuve which abound in digressions and expositions of theories of art and criticism while they are supposedly concerned with the characterization of the works of a particular author.\textsuperscript{12}

Our only recourse, then, in attempting to sift the sincere from the false within L'Art Romantique, resides within the complete works of Charles Baudelaire whereby many of the countless contradictions are resolved by reiterated patterns of thought, word emphasis, and chronology. With the complete works in mind and the idea that Baudelaire is primarily interested in ruminating his own possibilities as an artist and in developing his own critical theories—those of the poet, who becomes by his very nature, a critic, and the best of critics\textsuperscript{13}—, we can hope to expose Baudelaire's moral philosophy as both directly and indirectly revealed in L'Art Romantique.

It has been mentioned above that it is difficult to relate Baudelaire's philosophy of art to any particular

\textsuperscript{12} For instance, Sainte-Beuve's Du Génie critique et de Bayle.

\textsuperscript{13}"...tous les grands poètes deviennent naturellement, fatalement critiques"; and "...je considère le poète comme le meilleur de tous les critiques." L'Art Romantique, p.219.
literary tradition per se. This statement may seem surprising and the observation unnecessarily complicated in view of the fact that Baudelaire himself had chosen the words "L'Art Romantique" as the title of the particular collection of articles in question. Baudelaire's understanding of romanticism, however, and the combination of qualities to which his taste invariably leads him, actually involve, within the work, a co-existence of a romantic aesthetic and classical form. This dual quality of all true art (according to Baudelaire) seems to correspond to Baudelaire's belief in the "amour contradictoire et mystérieux de l'esprit humain pour la surprise et la symétrie."14

Baudelaire defines romanticism elsewhere (though the definition is implicit throughout L'Art Romantique) as "une manière de sentir," as "l'expression la plus récente, la plus actuelle du beau," as "intimité, spiritualité, couleur, aspiration vers l'infini, exprimées par tous les moyens que contiennent les arts," and finally, as "une conception analogue à la morale du siècle."15—the sum of the preceding definitions. The romanticism which Baudelaire could not and would not escape from, was, in addition to

14 L'Art Romantique, p. 376.

its particular sensibility, one which liberated the artist in the sense that he could forget the "poncifs académiques" and work directly at evoking "la vérité de l'image" by originality of conception and invention. No matter how ineffable the terms of Baudelaire's definition of romanticism may seem, he will be as specific in his criticism as his quality of vision will allow. He will, for instance, be faithful to "true" romanticism wherever he sees it and especially during the times when other forces are equally in play pulling at art in various directions. For example, Baudelaire often leads us to the understanding of his thought in a negative way; that is, by pointing out the distortions that the Romanticism he championed was bound to suffer. To begin with, the author of L'Art Romantique had little sympathy for the artistic output of the years 1830 to 1840 principally because of its "étalage du moi."

In spite of Baudelaire's avid praise of an inward direction of vision—the very core of romantic inspiration—, he vehemently states: "Disparaissez donc, ombres fallacieuses de René, d'Obermann et de Werther; fuyez dans les brouillards du vide, monstrueuses créations de la paresse et de la solitude..." Baudelaire preferred to replace the

16 L'Art Romantique, pp. 183, 184.

17 Ibid., p. 195.
"épanchements superficiels et puériles" of a George Sand or an Alfred de Musset with the portrayal of sensations which according to him were common to mankind in general. He longed to create, or find within the works of others, an "Être qui tend vers l'Être, un individu sublimisé qui, après un effort de concentration ou d'arrachement, cesse d'être un souffrant pour devenir le souffrant, et ne cherche en lui, dès les premiers jours, que les marques de l'humaine douleur."18

Baudelaire also objected to the "enrichissez-vous" of the reign of Louis-Philippe and its emphasis upon change, utilitarianism, and expediency in the sense that art was to perform a material service to humanity.19 The poet hoped that "enrichissez-vous" would mean the encouragement of the individual to aspire to his personal and complete spiritual perfection.20 But the materialistic morality so deeply connected with the term "enrichissez-vous" at that time was far too relative a concept to fit into the ideal that Baudelaire had in mind.

The Parnassian school of poetry and the philosophy

18 Ferran, op. cit., p. 500.


20 Ibid. "Il ne peut y avoir de progrès (vrai, c'est-à-dire moral) que dans l'individu et par l'individu lui-même."
of paganism,—the extreme reaction to an over-subjective romanticism and to an art for material progress, as described briefly above—was even more detestable to Baudelaire. He even finds it within himself to forgive the egotism and the "coquinerie naïve" of the early romantics when confronted with what he calls the nihilistic and "puérile utopie de l'art pour l'art." This school of art, which excluded "la morale...et souvent même la passion...se mettait en flagrante contravention avec le génie de l'humanité." Baudelaire objects to its excessive specialization of an artistic fabric (and we assume that he means the cult of the plastic) which, according to him, can only lead to sterility. He attempts to explain the causes of the turmoil and difference of opinion with regard to romanticism by giving a personal interpretation of the interaction of art and the political sentiments of the times:

Dans la première phase de notre révolution littéraire, l'imagination poétique se tourna surtout vers le passé; elle adopta souvent le ton

21 Ibid., pp. 184, 185.
22 Ibid., pp. 183, 184.
23 Ibid., pp. 295, 296. "Plastique! plastique! La plastique, cet affreux mot me donne la chair de poule, la plastique l'a empoisonné et cependant il ne peut vivre que par ce poison..."
mélodieux et attendri des regrets.
Plus tard, la mélancolie prit un
accent plus décidé, plus sauvage et
plus terrestre. Un républicanisme
misanthrope fit alliance avec la
nouvelle école... Cet esprit à la fois
littéraire et républicain, à l'inverse
de la passion démocratique et bour-
geoise, qui nous a plus tard si cruel-
lement opprimés, était agité à la fois
par une haine aristocratique sans
limites, sans restriction, sans pitié,
contre les rois et contre la bourgeoisie,
et d'une sympathie générale pour tout ce
qui en art représentait l'excès dans
la couleur et dans la forme, pour
tout ce qui était à la fois intense,
pessimiste et byronien; d'ailleurs
l'artiste qui exprimait ce désir de
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ce qui en art représentait l'excès dans
la couleur et dans la forme, pour
tout ce qui était à la fois intense,
pessimiste et byronien; d'ailleurs
l'artiste qui exprimait ce désir de
la Restauration s'était régulièrement
développée dans la gloire, la Roman-
tisme ne se serait pas séparé de la
royauté; et cette secte nouvelle,
qui professait un égal mépris pour
l'opposition politique modérée, pour
la peinture de Delaroche ou la poésie
de Delavigne, et pour le roi qui pré-
sidait au développement du juste-milieu,
n'aurait pas trouvé de raisons d'exister. 24

In the preceding passage, Baudelaire is perhaps
attempting to demonstrate what Saint-Simon would call the
chaotic epoch of critique or discord, which characterized
the conflict in which art and politics were engaged in the

24Ibid., pp. 339-340. Italicus mine. In its extreme
application this school of thought was called "Bousingo".
Here Baudelaire is thinking of Pétarus Borel,
known as Lycanthrope, whose preoccupations are known to
have exerted an influence upon Baudelaire. He is more
sympathetic to the significance of the italicized passage
years around 1830. For example, in political spheres, public opinion was almost divided into two distinct camps in this period known as the French Restoration. On one hand, there were -- as Balzac, les Goncourt, and Flaubert (especially in L'Education Sentimentale) depicted -- the pacifists, the ultra-conservatives, the believers in material and economic prosperity, and those who, in addition, opposed the idea of monarchy, aimed at a France as a leader among nations, and were completely apathetic to any form of moral idealism. Such a group was made up almost exclusively of the bourgeois populace which had reaped all the benefits of the French Revolution. On the other hand there existed a very live spark of the active spirit of that preceding Revolution. Men like Saint-Simon, Icare, Louis Blanc, Comte, Leroux, Proudhon, and their followers, objected to the Bourgeois status quo and the existing social and economic inequality; they fought openly for suffrage, education, labor organization, and a complete reorganization of the French socio-political status. This tendency was then proclaimed as "democratic." But art and politics suffered an even greater discord. For those in sympathy with the Bourgeois attitude saw in Romantic art, the spirit of revolutionaries who consciously deviated from the traditional classical codes of stylistics and who equally sought freedom in conception and invention.
And the believers in social change found Romanticism as a decadent art form whose stress upon the past, the dream, inward visions, spirituality, and religious revivalism was far from the needs of the time for active engagement in social progress and amelioration of condition through change. Thus, the artistic movement was negated by both groups and the graver writers such as Vigny (e.g. Chatterton and Moïse), and Baudelaire felt the unfortunate predicament of being misunderstood and isolated from the bulk of human thought. But the younger and more exuberant aspirants to artistic careers were both psychologically and philosophically sufferers of this reverberation and indulged in eccentric and bohemian demonstrations in order to decry with venin, bourgeois and socialistic theory. The extremists in their outrage were the clique known familiarly as the bousingots.

Soon, however, the artistic groups, either weary of public disfavor or sincerely sympathetic to social problems, allied themselves with one or the other movements. There came about divisions in Romantic thought and bitter arguments among the Romantic artists themselves. Branches of artists "romantically" exalted bourgeois ideas of honesty and the goodness of a wholesome family life. And others attempted to portray, in art, the need for action and social change. But those who refused to compromise with
either group formed what some call "la deuxième génération Romantique" or followers of the theory of art for art's sake. But this, in turn, became a relative concept as artists made separate and distinct definitions of the term. They all had in common, however, the desire to alienate themselves from social, economic, and political consciousness in order to worship at the alter of le Beau.  

_L'Art Romantique_ has thus been created in the midst of one of the most vigorous and fruitful battles in the history of literature. The sparks of the literary war are what Baudelaire will call and try to analyze as "modernité." He is left both fascinated and critical. But the resultant moral philosophy which Baudelaire evolves from all the turbulence is more pertinent to the aim of this thesis. The background of these crucial years for literature is, however, of major importance to the understanding of the evolution of the moral philosophy in question. It is somewhat inept to pretend that Baudelaire's philosophy of art or his quality of vision was solely dictated by his own genius. Perhaps too many of the preoccupations of the art of his time were pushing into the background what he felt was more important than all

\footnote{Albert Cassagne, _La théorie de l'art pour l'art en France chez les derniers Romantiques et les premiers Réalistes_, Paris, Hachette, 1906, pp. 3-71.}
the rest: the quest of "the seed of beauty in the modern age," the counterpart of beauty which was far above (e.g. "correspondences"; also revival of the idealism initiated by the Middle Ages.) Weary of distortion and sham, he will look more avidly for what there is in modern art, poetry and music which "n'a eu pour but que d'enchanter l'esprit en lui présentant des tableaux de béatitudes, faisant contraste avec l'horrible vie de contention et de lutte dans laquelle nous sommes plongés." In part, this is perhaps why he has defined "true romanticism" in terms of "intimacy" and "spirituality".

The preceding paragraphs have in part hinted at the general aspect of L'Art Romantique as concerned with a special literary "momentum" which may have had some influence upon the formulation of Baudelaire's moral ideals as both a critic and artist. The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with the moral ideals themselves as crystalized and manifested largely by the author's spiritual complexion—that is, by those ideas which have been dictated by the natural penchants of the man himself. In other words, we shall put aside the historical in the


27 L'Art Romantique, pp. 358, 359.
interests of the aesthetic.

An author's spiritual complexion and his moral ideas are interdependent; they are, and should be, one and the same, just as, and contrary to Taine, "l'homme intérieur" (soul) and "l'homme extérieur" (body) are mutually dependent upon one another and form a unity which may be called "essence". In order to understand an artist, a critic must therefore find a way to pierce the essence of a writer by becoming permeated with his works to the point where they become the critic's own expression. A writer must be understood in his own terms, and that is largely what Baudelaire has tried to do:

Il vous faut donc, pour bien représenter l'oeuvre, entrer dans la peau de l'être créé, vous pénétrer profondément des sentiments qu'il exprime, et les si bien sentir, qu'il vous semble que ce soit votre propre oeuvre. Il faut s'assimiler une oeuvre pour la bien exprimer; voilà sans doute une de ces vérités banales et répétées mille fois, qu'il faut répéter encore. Si vous méprisiez mon avis, cherchez un autre secret.\(^{28}\)

Just where to draw the line between "entering into the skin of an author," and the temptation to give an interpretation of the thought of a writer that will be agreeable

\(^{28}\) L'Art Romantique, p. 198.
to the critic, however, is a problem ever present to Baudelaire. He is frequently the critic who, "sachant reconnaître dans l'auteur son miroir, ne craint pas de s'écrier: Thou art the man! Voilà mon confesseur!"29 Thus, his quest for the spiritual complexion and the moral philosophy of the writers he considers is often indicative of the thought of Baudelaire himself.

An author, according to Baudelaire, frequently reveals his essence, or his quality of vision, or his idée fixe, by his style and by his choice of subject.30 Both style and subject are interdependent in the same way that spiritual complexion and the resulting moral philosophy form a single essence. The choice of a word, for example, may give us a key to an author's "idée fixe":

Pour deviner l'âme d'un poète, ou du moins sa principale préoccupation, cherchons dans ses œuvres quel est le mot ou quels sont les mots qui s'y représentent avec le plus de fréquence. Le mot traduira l'obsession.31

Thus, the word "lyre" for Banville expresses the supernatural intensity of life of which the soul is "contrainte de chanter."32 In his article on Banville, Baudelaire,

29Ibid., p. 416.
30Ibid., p. 415.
31Ibid., p. 352.
32Ibid., p. 353.
who is actually speaking of himself, explains exactly what is meant by the duality of essence, and the resultant reversibility of form and content. Banville's spiritual makeup is primarily lyrical:

Il y a, en effet, une manière lyrique de sentir. Les hommes les plus disgraciés de la nature, ceux à qui la fortune donne le moins de loisir, ont connu quelquefois ces sortes d' impressions, si riches que l'âme en est comme illuminée, si vives qu'elle en est comme soulevée. Tout l'être intérieur, dans ces merveilleux instants, s'élance en l'air par trop de légèreté, et de dilatation, comme pour atteindre une région plus haute.

Il existe donc aussi nécessairement une manière lyrique de parler, et un monde lyrique, une atmosphère lyrique, des paysages, des hommes, des femmes, des animaux qui tous participent du caractère affecté par la lyre.

Tout d'abord constatons que l'hyperbole et l'apostrophe sont des formes de langue qui lui sont non-seulement des plus agréables, mais aussi les plus nécessaires, puisqu'elles dérivent naturellement d'un état exagéré de la vitalité. Ensuite, nous observons que tout mode lyrique de notre âme nous contraint à considérer les choses non pas sous leur aspect particulier, exceptionnel, mais dans les traits principaux, généraux, universels. La lyre fait volontiers tous les détails dont le roman se régale. L'âme lyrique fait des enjambees vastes comme des synthèses; l'esprit du romancier se délecte dans l'analyse. C'est cette considération qui sert à nous expliquer quelle commodité et quelle beauté le poète trouve dans les mythologies et dans les allégories. La mythologie est un dictionnaire d'hieroglyphes vivants, hieroglyphes connus de tout le monde. Ici le paysage est revêtu, comme les figures, d'une magie hyperbolique; il devient décor. La
femme est non-seulement un être d'une beauté suprême, comparable à celle
d'Éve ou de Vénus; non seulement, pour exprimer la pureté de ses yeux, le
poète empruntera des comparaisons à tous les objets limpides, éclatants,
transparent, à tous les meilleurs réflecteurs et à toutes les plus belles
cristallisations de la nature (notons en passant la prédilection de Banville,
dans ce cas, pour les pierres précieuses), mais encore faudra-t-il doter la femme
d'un genre de beauté tel que l'esprit ne peut le concevoir que comme existant dans
un monde supérieur. .....................

Tout poète lyrique, en vertu de sa nature, opère fatallement un retour vers l'Éden
perdu. Tout, hommes, paysages, palais, dans le monde lyrique, est pour ainsi dire
apothéosé.33

Such is the case for Baudelaire; he is translating for us his own spiritual complexion ("une manière lyrique de
sentir") his resultant philosophy which is the product of this spiritual complexion, and the technical counterpart
of the two which is style—the choice of "le verbe." His art is thus one and indivisible. Baudelaire accepts no
compromise in the fulfillment of the unity of his artistic vision and conception, not even the compromise which in-
volves a somewhat objective interpretation of the artists he considers. But fortunately for the reader of his prose,
Baudelaire has overcome the exasperated and nuanced state of his poetry by expressing his particular type of vision

33Ibid., pp. 353-355. Italics mine.
in concrete terms.

Once again Baudelaire enlarges the understanding of a spiritual complexion or of a moral philosophy by explaining that an author reveals this particular state of mind in his works by the use of a "faculté principale" or by what Balzac has called "une passion maîtresse." The inseparability between vision and expression in a great artist is unmistakable. For example, Chateaubriand's works are studded with the author's own melancholy and boredom; the excessive, the immense and myth-like quality of Hugo's vision reveals in his work the eternal forces of nature and their "lutte harmonieuse"; the enormous complexity of a Balzac represents the catalog of a monstrous civilization—its ambitions, its furors, and its strife. But Gautier, "l'homme de Goût" (or Baudelaire), reveals an exclusive love for Beauty including all of its subdivisions and expressed in a style "le mieux approprié."\(^{34}\)

In the same way, the musician, or for that matter, any master of the arts, does not escape self-revelation. He can only express, in a harmonious manner and by tone color, what he feels and sees. Thinking especially of

\(^{34}\)"L'excessif, l'im immense, sont le domaine naturel de Victor Hugo; il s'y meut comme dans son atmosphère natale," *Ibid*., p. 311.

\(^{35}\)"Ibid*., pp. 163, 164.
Wagner, Baudelaire explains that the key to a musician's vision resides in the "élément mystique" or the "lacune" which must be filled by the hearer. The intention of the musician is the state which he effects within the listener. When listening to a musical composition of Wagner, for example, the hearer undergoes a sort of "spiritual operation" whereby his personality is liberated and he is enabled to experience the voluptuousness of circulating in "les lieux hauts." There he perceives "un immense horizon et une large lumière diffuse"; "une clarté," "une intensité de lumière," "une ardeur," "une blancheur," all emanating from the horizon. The listener has the feeling that his soul is mobile within a luminous milieu, and he experiences an "extase faite de volupté et de connaissance," for he is communicating with a region of his being which is "au dessus et bien loin du monde naturel." The intuition which this "rêverie vague" or this "extase laïque" uncovers is that "Dieu a proféré le monde comme une complexe et indivisible totalité." (The artistic piece becomes, not only an expression, but a means of knowledge). Thus, according to

36 Ibid., p. 203. "Dans la musique, comme dans la peinture et même dans la parole écrite, qui est cependant le plus positif des arts, il y a toujours une lacune complétée par l'imagination de l'auditeur." Italics mine.

37 Ibid., pp. 206, 207, 208.
Baudelaire, Wagner's spiritual complexion marks "les ardeurs de la mysticité" and "les appétitions de l'esprit vers le Dieu incommunicable." The resultant moral philosophy is, of course, the famous theory of "correspondances" to be elaborated upon further.

A painter will perform the same miracle of ecstasy within the seer, but by way of color; a painter will thus betray the characteristic quality of his genius:

Un tableau de Delacroix, placé à une trop grande distance pour que vous puissiez juger l'agrément des contours ou de la qualité plus ou moins dramatique du sujet, vous pénètre déjà d'une volupté surnaturelle. Il vous semble qu'une atmosphère magique a marché vers vous et vous enveloppe. Sombre, délicieuse pourtant, lumineuse, mais tranquille, cette impression, qui prend pour toujours sa place dans votre mémoire, prouve le vrai, le parfait coloriste. 38

Thus, every artist betrays and must betray his spiritual complexion and, as we shall see more clearly in a moment, the inevitable moral philosophy dictated thereby. But it is not enough for the artist to possess a moral philosophy, for a good artist, according to Baudelaire, is, in a sense, a moralist in spite of himself. It cannot be otherwise when a spiritual complexion and a moral philosophy are

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38 Curiosités Esthétiques, op. cit., p. 856.
mutually dependant upon one another. The sincerity of an artist is determined by how much of his inner being he cultivates and ultimately expresses, (provided that the artist's "interior research" (interior regions of his being) is broad enough to reflect human aspirations.)

But the way in which an artist reveals his spiritual makeup is of utmost importance to Baudelaire; it is what, for him, distinguishes the good from the bad in art. Baudelaire insists that the artist refrain from the expression of his philosophy in a didactic fashion; preaching only serves to spoil an artistic expression, whereas a certain "laisser aller" will reveal the author's message in the most natural and effective way:

Il ne s'agit pas ici de cette morale prêchente qui, par son air de pédonterie, par son ton didactique, peut gâter les plus beaux morceaux de poésie, mais d'une morale inspirée qui se glisse, invisible, dans la matière poétique, comme les fluides impondérables dans toute la machine du monde. La morale n'entre pas dans cet art à titre de but; elle s'y mêle et s'y confond comme dans la vie elle-même. Le poète est moraliste sans le vouloir, par abondance et plénitude de nature.

39For example: an artist must contain an "esprit d'amour universel non pour l'humanité prise en elle-même, mais pour les différentes formes dont l'homme a, suivant les âges et les climats, revêtu la beauté et la vérité." L'Art Romantique, p. 374.

40Ibid., pp. 310-311.
Preaching only interrupts and falsifies the magic moment whereby the artist faithfully records, in an art form, the innermost dictates of his spiritual complexion, taking care all the while not to destroy the ideal he has conceived and is attempting to express.

For music and the fine arts, the problem of not allowing the artist's moral to appear in his work "à titre de but" is more simple because the means of these artists are more subtle to begin with. But Baudelaire constantly wished to equate the arts, and his standards were as high for poetry as they were for music and painting. In other words, an author's moral is often the "lacune" which must be filled by the reader. Just as the reader is forced to do when listening to music or studying a painting, he must find the ideal within himself that the lyrical language of the author uncovers for him, often by means of a "sorcellerie évocatoire".  

41 "Il y a dans le mot, dans le verbe, quelque chose de sacré qui nous défend d'en faire un jeu de hasard. Manier savamment une langue, c'est pratiquer une espèce de sorcellerie évocatoire." 42

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41 Ibid., p. 165.

And in a letter to Swinburne, Baudelaire writes:

Je ne suis pas si moraliste que vous feignez obligeamment de le croire. Je crois simplement (comme vous, sans doute) que tout poème, tout objet d'art bien fait suggère naturellement et fortement une morale. C'est l'affaire du lecteur. J'ai même une haine très décidée contre toute intention morale exclusive dans un poème. 43

The beauty of a poem is all that suffices; beauty will enhance the moral element within the work and cause the reader to respond to its message involuntarily. In this sense, and in this sense only, Baudelaire is espousing the theory of art for art's sake. In spite of the subjectivity of saudelairian beauty, Baudelaire understands art for art's sake in very much the same way as Flaubert: if a literary creation is genuinely beautiful, it will be truthful or moral. The moral and the beautiful coincide:

L'intellect pur vise à la vérité, le goût nous montre la Beauté, et le Sens Moral nous enseigne le Devoir. Il est vrai que le sens du milieu a d'intimes connections avec les deux extrêmes, et il n'est séparé du Sens Moral que par une si légère différence, qu'Aristote n'a pas hésité à ranger parmi les vertus quelques-unes de ses délicates

opérations. Aussi ce qui exaspère surtout l’homme de goût dans le spectacle du vice, c’est sa difformité, sa disproportion. Le vice porte atteinte au juste et au vrai, révolte l’intellect et la conscience; mais comme outrage à l’harmonie, comme dissonance, il blessera plus particulièrement de certains esprits poétiques; et je ne crois pas qu’il soit scandalisant de considérer toute infraction à la morale, au beau moral, comme une espèce de faute contre le rythme et la prosodie universels.44

True art, for both, could not be otherwise. However involuntarily expressed the moral ideas of an author are, these ideas are a necessity for a work of art to be complete and not fragmentary. The frequent absence of morality in theécole païenne renders Baudelaire hostile to its artistic creations:

Le goût immédiat de la forme pousse à des désordres monstrueux et inconnus. Absorbées par la passion féroce du beau, du drôle, du joli, du pittoresque, car il y a des degrés, les notions du juste et du vrai disparaissent. La passion frénétique de l’art est un chancière qui dévore le reste et, comme l’absence nette du juste et du vrai dans l’art équivaut à l’absence d’art, l’homme entier s’évanouit.45

Thus, Baudelaire even here remains within the classical tradition in the sense that he deems a moral

44L’Art Romantique, pp. 158-159.
necessary to a work of art and would never agree to the complete dismissal of passion or reason or the philosophy which the Christianity of the preceding centuries brought with it. Baudelaire is revolted only at the blatant display of moral ideas. He denounces Hugo's Les Misérables for this very reason and praises, on the other hand, Flaubert's Mme Bovary precisely because of the "faculté souterraine...qui traverse toute l'oeuvre." And while discussing Les Martyrs Ridicules of Léon Cladel, Baudelaire writes:

Le suprême de l'art eût consisté à rester flacial et fermé, et à laisser au lecteur tout le mérite de l'indignation. L'effet d'horreur en eût été augmenté. Que la morale officielle trouve ici son profit, c'est incontestable; mais l'art y perd, et avec l'art vrai, la vraie morale: la suffisante ne perd jamais rien.49

Once again, Baudelaire relies upon the reader to discover the hidden message of an author, or the "moral of the story":

Une véritable oeuvre d'art n'a pas besoin de réquisitoire. La logique

46Ibid., p. 294.
47Ibid., p. 383.
48Ibid., p. 408.
49Ibid., p. 423. Italics mine.
Up to this point, Baudelaire has led us to believe that an author ought to possess a moral philosophy, and since each philosophy is dictated by the very nature of an artist, its expression is in turn involuntary. But the inner nature of an artist is concerned with things spiritual; his moral philosophy coincides with this spirituality. Thus, a moral which is superimposed, or which has as its origin those things which are exterior and have little or no connection with the inner personality of the artist, is spurious by definition. Baudelaire explains then that there are certain so-called moral philosophies which, because of the very nature of their subject, have little or no place in art and are especially out of place in poetry. Baudelaire carefully defines the different literary genres and insists, in most cases, that their respective "reservoirs" of inspiration be kept separate and distinct. Their artistic faculties and moral problems are, in the same way, independent:

50Ibid., p. 401. This passage refers to Flaubert's Madame Bovary and the scandalous "procès" which left Baudelaire highly indignant. The absence of a "réquisitoire" in the novel was one of the complaints of Flaubert's prosecutors.

51Ibid., pp. 156-160.
Comme les différents métiers réclament différents outils, les différents objets de recherche spirituelle exigent leurs facultés correspondantes.  

Baudelaire insists that, "Leconte de Lisle, étant un vrai poète, sérieux et méditatif, a horreur de la confusion des genres, et il sait que l'art n'obtient ses effets les plus puissants que par des sacrifices proportionnés à la rareté de son but." The general definition of the scope of the various literary genres is expressed by Baudelaire as follows: first, every genre is to be guided by what is called an "idée fixe," or a specific end about which an entire work revolves. This "idée fixe" is, of course, a moral philosophy with which the author is endowed by his spiritual complexion; consequently, the genre which an author chooses corresponds to and is in perfect accord with his spiritual complexion and moral philosophy. (For example, the only genre which would correspond to Baudelaire's particular vision is poetry, and, in the Boileau tradition, he cultivates that genre which is most natural to him). The more an artist, writing in one genre, infringes upon an "idée fixe" which is reserved for another genre, "moins il est noble et pur, plus il

52 Ibid., p. 157.

53 Ibid., p. 372.
est complexe, plus il contient de bâtardise." Thus, **le Vrai** will be the basis and the end of scientific expositions, and will demand the concentration of pure intellect; here beauty of style will be welcomed but will only be considered as an adornment. **Le Bien** will serve as the fundamental end of moralistic works (morality, in this sense, is the inverse of poetic morality, since the morality contained in poetry is never the obvious end of the poet; as described elsewhere, a poet is a moralist involuntarily, "par abondance et plénitude de nature." ) **Le Beau** is the unique aspiration, the exclusive end of **le Goût** (defined by Baudelaire as "une sensibilité de l'imagination qui sait choisir, juger, comparer, fuir ceci, rechercher cela, rapidement, spontanément.") **Le Goût** is evidently the most important element of a poetic complexion, and the moral philosophy of a poet, **le Beau**, is dictated thereby. **Le Vrai** is also the end of historical works, but there is a special muse of history—"pour exprimer que quelques-unes des qualités nécessaires à l'historien relèvent de la muse--"; its function, thus, differs somewhat from the function of science. Only the novel,

54 Ibid., p. 156.
because of its complexity and scope, may at times be guided by le Vrai and le Beau. But poetry, the purest of the arts, according to Baudelaire, never consciously aims at anything but beauty, and since good poetry is inherently beautiful, its aim is only itself. Poetry is in this sense narcissistic, if such a term may be applied to a literary form; the source of poetry is internal (even the external world is subject to, and branded by, the spiritual complexion of the poet); poetic expression, thus, remains faithful to the interior regions from which it is derived. Poetry, through the cult of itself, mirrors its spiritual complexion, (which is that of the poet), and thus reveals its moral philosophy, or the knowledge it uncovers about itself by expression; but since poetry is, by this definition, the expression of regions which are interior, the moral philosophy, or the knowledge of itself which it communicates, is essentially intuitive. The intuition of the knowledge of the poet

56 Ibid., p. 156.

57 Cf. the sonnet, Correspondances in Les Fleurs du Mal.

58 The exact nature of this intuition will be explained shortly by way of the theory of Correspondances.
is transmitted to the reader by **le Beau**, in this case, a sort of "sorcellerie évocatoire," which is created in poetic expression. **Le Beau** in turn serves to liberate the personality and "ennoble" the soul of both reader and poet by the revelation of its intuition. An estatic pleasure results which provides the intuition:

La poésie vraiment belle emporte les âmes vers un monde céleste; la beauté est une qualité si forte qu'elle ne peut qu'ennoblir les âmes; mais cette beauté est une chose tout à fait inconditionnelle, et il y a beaucoup à parier que si vous voulez, vous poète, vous imposerez à l'avance un but moral, vous diminuerez considérablement votre puissance poétique.  

Thus the function of poetry is less **externally** tangible or moral, for example, than the knowledge acquired by historical or scientific vision. Thus, in Baudelaire's words:

La poésie, pour peu qu'on veuille descendre en soi-même, interroger son âme, rappeler ses souvenirs d'enthousiasme, n'a pas d'autre but qu'elle-même; elle ne peut pas en avoir d'autre et aucun poème ne sera si grand, si noble, si véritablement digne du nom de poème, que celui qui aura été écrit uniquement pour le plaisir d'écrire un poème.

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60 "...l'histoire mise en vers est une dérogation aux lois qui gouvernent les deux genres, l'histoire et la poésie, c'est un outrage aux deux muses." Ibid., p. 314.

61 Ibid., p. 157.
Lest the above quotation seem like a contradiction in Baudelaire's thought (that is, the complete negation of morality within poetry, an attitude which is opposed to the idea that this thesis is attempting to prove), it is necessary to allow Baudelaire to qualify his statement:

Je ne veux pas dire que la poésie n'ennoblisse pas les moeurs,--qu'on me comprenne bien,--que son résultat final ne soit pas d'élever l'homme au dessus du niveau des intérêts vulgaires; ce serait évidemment une absurdité. Je dis que si le poète a poursuivi un but moral, il a diminué sa force poétique; et il n'est pas imprudent de parier que son oeuvre sera mauvaise. La poésie ne peut pas, sous peine de mort ou de déchéance, s'assimiler à la science ou à la morale; elle n'a pas la Vérité pour objet, elle n'a qu'Elle-même. Les modes de démonstration de vérités sont autres et sont ailleurs.\(^{62}\)

Le Bien, or morality, does coincide with Le Beau, but does so involuntarily, naturally, by the very nature of the poem and the poet who created it.\(^{63}\) The spiritual elevation which the beauty of a poem affords the reader will dictate moral conduct, but moral conduct will be dictated intuitively and will come from above. The poem, 

\(^{62}\)Ibid., p. 157. Italics mine.

\(^{63}\)Cf. footnote 44.
or the poet, is the link between the reader and the divine. Morality is thus too intimate and subjective a concept to be convincingly attained by the didactic.

In addition, Baudelaire's constant desire for unity within poetic expression, that is, the oneness which is attained by a fusion of spiritual complexion, moral philosophy, and form, naturally causes him to revolt against moralistic superimpositions which introduce a foreign element into the poem. Scientific or political considerations in poetry naturally infringe upon the poetic unity of vision since scientific or political poets, in the interests of expediency and utility, have been known to sacrifice form for the expression of belief. This is Baudelaire's principal objection to Auguste Barbier and other poets like him:

Il en est de la condition de moralité imposée aux œuvres d'art comme de cette autre condition non moins ridicule que quelques-uns veulent leur faire subir, à savoir d'exprimer des pensées ou des idées tirées d'un monde étranger à l'art, des idées scientifiques, des idées politiques, etc... Tel est le point de départ des esprits faux, ou du moins des esprits

64"...l'absolue divinisation du poète," Ibid., p. 356.

"Le poète, placé sur un des points de la circonférence de l'humanité renvoie sur la même ligne en vibrations mélodieuses, la pensée humaine qui lui fut transmise; tout poète véritable doit être une incarnation..." Ibid., p. 185
Thus, Baudelaire bursts forward and declares that the idea of poetry which has as its purpose the spreading of "les lumières parmi le peuple, et, à l'aide de la rime et du nombre, de fixer plus facilement les découvertes scientifiques dans la mémoire des hommes," is the most ridiculous and unsustainable of errors. For this reason Baudelaire has little or no regard for authors of "les romans honnêtes" and the "école du bon sens" or what Baudelaire calls, "l'école de la vengeance." Poets who are called poets because they are "honnêtes" are even more horrifying to him. The pedestal which Baudelaire reserves for poetry causes a revulsion within him when he beholds, for example, a line from Augier's Gabrielle, "O poète, je t'aime!" exclaimed by the wife of a husband to characterize his honesty. Honesty has nothing to do

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65 Ibid., p. 320.
66 Ibid., p. 323.
67 Ibid., pp. 282, 283.
with that which makes a poem beautiful.

Il y a en effet dans l'erreur publique une confusion très facile à débrouiller. Tel poème est beau et honnête; mais il n'est pas beau parce qu'il est honnête. Tel autre, beau et déshonnête; mais sa beauté ne lui vient pas de son immoralité, ou plutôt, pour parler nettement, ce qui est beau n'est pas plus honnête que déshonnête. 68

The Ecole Bourgeoise and the Ecole Socialiste are equally detestable to Baudelaire because of their constant cry: "moralisons! moralisons!" with "une fièvre de missionnaires." 69 Art becomes nothing more than a question of propaganda, and art born from occasion or impulse will never satisfy the eternal need of mankind for beauty.

The very reason for Hugo's failure as a poet, according to Baudelaire, was brought about by his inherent obsession, from the very beginning, for the weak and downtrodden, for the ostracized, and for the cursed. Indeed, "l'idée de la justice s'est trahie, de bonne heure, dans ses œuvres, par le goût de la réhabilitation." 70 True art, according to Baudelaire, serves as a refuge for its creator and for

68 Ibid., p. 319.

69 Ibid., p. 284.

70 Cf. Hugo's "Oh! n'insultez jamais une femme qui tombe! Un bal à l'hôtel de ville, Marion de Lorme, Huy Blas, Le Roi s'amuse, etc.

71 L'Art Romantique, p. 384.
the small aristocracy of literary people; its preoccupations in the realm of the ethereal are far above the level of the "vulgar herd":

...Récéminer, faire de l'opposition, et même réclamer la justice, n'est-ce pas s'empillistiner quelque peu?72

There is another major reason for Baudelaire's objection to the schools of art for progress as described briefly above. Just as important as Baudelaire's insistence upon a fidelity to pure art (which led him to exclaim that "la poésie se suffit à elle-même" since poetry "est éternelle et ne doit jamais avoir besoin d'un secours extérieur")73 is this poet's denial of the natural goodness of man. The amelioration of man's condition which was championed by the schools of "art for progress" presupposes this natural goodness. In the preface to his "Les Misérables, for example, Hugo writes:

Tant qu'il existera, par le fait des lois et des moeurs, une damnation sociale créant artificiellement, en pleine civilisation, des enfers, et compliquant d'une fatalité humaine la destinée qui est divine...tant qu'il y aura sur la terre, ignorance et misère, des livres de la nature de celui-ci pourront ne pas être inutiles.74

72Ibid., p. 146.
73Ibid., p. 319.
74Ibid., p. 383.
Baudelaire responds to this preface as follows: "'tand que...' Hélas! autant dire TOUJOURS!' Baudelaire's obsessive belief in "le péché original" and the fatal mark which has been found in man since the sin's commission, would never permit him to be optimistic enough to believe in the possibility of a social utopia which was the end of "les œuvres de Charité." Human nature, by definition, would preclude any such hope.

Hélas du Péché Original, même après tant de progrès depuis si longtemps promis, il restera toujours bien assez de traces pour en constater l'immémoriale réalité.

Baudelaire goes so far as to state that an art which has as a point of departure the innate virtue imbedded in man is not Christian and is actually pernicious. For le Bien has always been "le produit d'un art" and art is not natural; the very word artificial (artifex) supposes a deviation from nature or from the imperfect, in the interest of the ideal. The Scriptures themselves have

75Ibid., p. 383.
76"J'ai pensé bien souvent que les bêtes malfaisantes et dégoûtantes n'étaient peut-être que la vivification, corporification, scélosion à la vie matérielle, des mauvaises pensées de l'homme. Ainsi la nature entière participe au péché original." A Alphonse Toursenel, 21 janvier 1856.
77L'Art Romantique, p. 286.
78See footnote 44.
been designed by man for the very reason that man is not virtuous by nature. Thus, how can art attempt to ameliorate the condition of humanity by playing upon human instincts, if, within the Christian tradition, those instincts are evil to begin with? 79 All fatality, then, to the true poet, is Justice and may not be tampered with. 80 Art, if it wishes, may be useful for social betterment if it constantly describes the real "condition" of mankind no matter how ugly and pessimistic that reality may be. By describing what is, the artist is, in part, doing his job. For the reader, or at least the reader in whom Baudelaire is interested, carries with him "un guide philosophique et religieux qui l'accompagne dans la lecture du livre." 81

L'Art est-il utile? Oui. Pourquoi? Parce qu'il est l'art. Y a-t-il un art pernicieux? Oui. C'est celui qui dérange les conditions de la vie. Le vice est séduisant, il faut le peindre séduisant; mais il traîne avec lui des maladies singulières; il faut les décrire. Étudiez toutes les plaies comme un médecin qui fait son service dans un hôpital, et l'école du bon sens, l'école exclusivement morale, ne trouvera plus où

79"Qu'est-ce que c'est que l'homme naturellement bon? Où l'a-t-on connu? L'homme naturellement bon serait un monstre, je veux dire un dieu..." A Alphonse Toussenel, 21 janvier 1856.

80Le Art Romantique, p. 148.

81Ibid., p. 285.
mordre. Le crime est-il toujours châtié, la vertu gratifiée? Non; mais cependant, si votre roman, si votre drame est bien fait, il ne prendra envie à personne de violer les lois de la nature. La première condition nécessaire pour faire un art sain est la croyance à l'unité intégrale. Je défie qu'on me trouve un seul ouvrage d'imagination qui réunisse toutes les conditions du beau et qui soit un ouvrage pernicieux.82

So Baudelaire will reject the deformations of a true morality, as practiced by so many of his contemporaries and replaces this conception by what he feels to be the more meaningful moral philosophy of art and especially of poetry: "Ainsi le principe de la poésie est, strictement et simplement, l'aspiration humaine vers une Beauté supérieure, et la manifestation de ce principe est dans un enthousiasme, un enlèvement de l'âme; enthousiasme tout à fait indépendant de la passion, qui est l'ivresse du cœur, et de la vérité, qui est la pâture de la raison."83

82Ibid., p. 264.
83Ibid., p. 159.
L'ART ROMANTIQUE

PART II
A certain confusion and multiplicity of meaning with regard to the word "moral" in art is inevitable and evident in this essay and must be clarified before expanding in concrete terms, the exact texture of Baudelairean morality. For what Baudelaire has demanded in other artists is obvious enough, but the nuances which he effects and distinguishes are not always as clearly delineated. These nuances, however, serve (as Baudelaire himself hints, for example, in the quotation which heads Part I) as clues to his very personal moral philosophy pe r se.

Baudelaire has told us, for example, in a passage which has pivotal importance for this study, that a novelist may at times be guided by le Vrai and le Beau:

Le Roman est un de ces genres complexe où une part plus ou moins grande peut être faite tantôt au Vrai, tantôt au Beau.¹

¹L'Art Romantique, p. 156.
We know that *le Beau* (a word that abounds in the quotations chosen from the text) is an artistic fabric which Baudelaire is wont to reserve exclusively for poetry,\(^2\) and so we realize that there is something special about the poetic world and that a novelist may only at times approach such a region. Since Baudelaire has always esteemed the novel as a literary genre,\(^3\) one is led to believe that there are two "worlds" which constitute the artistic and that they are equally valid and may be achieved separately or simultaneously. This dichotomy is characteristic of all Baudelairean thought: it is clearly a product of the duplicity of his vision which seeps into every thought that he has uttered or expressed in literary terms. André Gide, could not resist speaking of Baudelaire as the sort of person who "ne connaît pas une émotion dont les contours aussitôt ne s'évadent, que ne double aussitôt son contraire, comme une ombre, ou mieux: comme un reflet dans la dualité de ce coeur. C'est ainsi que partout en ses vers

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 156.

\(^3\)"Le roman, qui tient une place si importante à côté du poème et de l'histoire, est un genre bâtard dont le domaine est vraiment sans limites. Comme beaucoup d'autres bâtards, c'est un enfant gâté de la fortune à qui tout réussit. Il ne subit d'autres inconvénients et ne connaît d'autres dangers que son infinie liberté." Ibid., ed. Le Dantec, Théophile Gautier, p. 1028. Cf. also the poet's unfinished projects for novels in Journaux Intimes, pp. 31-33.
la douleur reste mêlée de joie, la confiance de doute, 
la gaieté de mélancolie....

"4 Thus, in view of the 
unity and the cohesion of conception in Baudelaire's 
thought processes and artistic achievements, the duality 
would naturally reign in this all inclusive sphere of 
moral philosophy, or value theory, in relation to liter-
ary creation. Since, as has been explained before, a 
moral philosophy is based upon spiritual makeup, such 
a philosophy must be, like its progenitor, double, one 
element being temporarily in the ascendancy, but both 
elements basically ever-present. These two elements or 
qualities of spiritual makeup, are, finally, what I shall 
call the analytic and the synthetic.

More specifically, then, Baudelaire has led us to 
believe at one time, that, when necessary, a true artist 
may describe the bare reality of life if such reality be 
seen and expressed by him with all of the implacability 
of a La Rochefoucauld. 5 Such minute description will 
reveal an artist's principal preoccupation and his moral 
philosophy in terms of "values" which are deftly placed

4André Gide, Incidences, Paris, Gallimard, 1924, 
p. 170. Also "...l'homme est sans cesse et à la fois 
homicide et suicide, assassin et bourreau..." Cf. also 
the sonnet Correspondences which expresses the good and 
evil in perfume symbolism.

5Cf. footnote 82 in Part One of L'Art Romantique. Also 
"Le Vice est séduisant, il faut le peindre séduisant," 
L'Art Romantique, p. 284.
before the reader. This particular type of vision, however, is the product of a quality of mind which is analytic in character, and corresponds in genre to the novel. The novelist is more often concerned with the phenomenon, or nature, and beauty to him consists of perfection in the imitation or idealization of natural phenomena of the physical and social world which he achieves by accentuation of the elements that are considered by him to be important. The novelist rarely deviates, however, from the temporal model (physical nature) which he is analyzing in scrupulous detail. Such is the quality of le Vrai. The novelist’s moral philosophy is revealed in both the logic and the freedom of choice which he personally manifests in the process of creation.6

The poet’s quality of vision, on the other hand, is synthetic or lyrical7 in character and, as such, plays upon the spiritual qualities or the noumenon, of the reality which is generally described by the novelist. In other words, the poet idealizes reality and invents a type of beau idéal in his process of creation:

Le beau idéal est ce qu'on est forcé
d'exprimer de spéculatif, systématique,

7Ibid., pp. 353-355.
Reality, therefore, is twofold: temporal and spiritual (le Vrai and le Beau).

Poetic vision attains the spiritual world by a type of lyrical outlook; the Beau that the poet seeks belongs to the invisible or to inner content—the intensité, sonorité, limpidité, vibravité, profondeur et retentissement dans l'espace et dans le temps⁸ that is contained in a given object according to the poetic eye. Or, in Emersonian terms the Beau which the poet captures is the "over-soul" of each phenomenon which changes the aspect, colors the meaning and renders the phenomenon more vital. The highly developed interior being of the lyrical thinker "transcends" the temporal in order to divine reality's symbolic meaning with reference to the spiritual world. Thus, it is the imagination, the sensés, the sentiment, and the most subtle intelligence of the lyrical mind which conceives the knowledge of the spirituality of natural phenomena and will eventually establish a very real spiritual unity between one object and all others.

⁸Quatremère de Quincy, De l'imitation dans les arts.
⁹L'Art Romantique, p. 23.
Il y a en effet, une manière lyrique de sentir.

Tout l'être intérieur, dans ces merveilleux instants, s'élançe en l'air par trop de légèreté, et de dilation, comme pour atteindre une région plus haute.

Ici le paysage est revêtu, comme les figures, d'une magie hyperbolique; il devient décor.

......un genre de beauté tel que l'esprit ne peut le concevoir que comme existant dans un monde supérieur....

......Tout, hommes, paysages, palais, dans le monde lyrique, est pour ainsi dire apothéosé......10

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(a) "La poésie est ce qu'il y a de plus réelle, c'est ce qui n'est complètement vrai que dans un autre monde," Puisque réalisme il y a, ed. Le Dantec, p. 985.
(b) Cf. also Hugo's Préface de Cromwell.
(c) "Matériellellement mon individu est une partie de l'univers; mais spirituellement ma pensée s'étend à l'univers. Je suis contenu dans l'univers et l'univers est contenu en moi. C'est cette opposition qui résume tout le problème philosophique de la connaissance." Pascal, Pensee 488. Ed. Brunschvicg.
(d) "Le ciel est un très grand homme," Baudelaire, L'Art Romantique, p. 305.

Baudelaire is not, of course, the first to have made such a dichotomy; the history of the study of aesthetic in France will reveal that this poet is somewhat in the tradition of the first French aestheticians such as Victor Cousin (his essay on Du Vrai, Du Bien et Du Beau), Jouffroy (his work on Cours d'Esthétique), and Lammenais—all engaged in their work from 1819 to 1846.

Thus, it is the task of the poet to imagine, conjecture, and meditate upon the meaning of man and nature in a way which is extra-real or "extra scientifique." In conceiving a novel, for example, the poet will very often work in the following manner:

Concevoir un canevas pour une bouffonnerie lyrique ou féerique, pour une pantomime, et traduire cela en un roman sérieux. Noyez le tout dans une atmosphère des grands jours. * Que ce soit quelque chose de bergant, -- et même de serein dans la passion. -- Régions de la poésie pure.

In this sense the poet is a "pure" philosopher, for poetic reality lies beyond, or is exclusive of, the material value of things. So the poet must "traduire, dans un langage magnifique, autre que la prose et la musique les conjectures éternelles de la curieuse humanité. En décrivant ce qui est, le poète se dégrade et descend au rang de professeur; en racontant le possible, il reste fidèle à sa fonction; il est une âme collective qui interroge, qui pleure, qui espère, et qui devine quelquefois."

By the leaps and bounds in meditation which are

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11 L'Art Romantique, p. 313.

12 Fusées, p. 33. *The former paradisiacal state of man.

13 L'Art Romantique, p. 314.
afforded the poet\textsuperscript{14} in the lyrical world of which he is innately a part, the poet realizes (without analysis)\textsuperscript{15} a universal inseparability of all things, or a unity of the visible and the invisible -- the Beau which he aspires to understand. The unity, a spiritual reality, of which the poet has an undeniable intuition, is explained to us by Baudelaire in terms of a Beau Moral which is the unique aspiration of the true poet: his idée fixe. The Beau Moral is equal to universal analogy and therefore Baudelaire's aesthetic values are necessarily linked with the realms of the moral and the ethical. For example, the aesthetic belief in universal analogy necessarily entails moral good according to Baudelaire:

\begin{center}
Je ne crois pas qu'il soit scandalisant de considérer toute infraction à la morale, au beau moral, comme une espèce de faute contre le rythme et la prosodie universels.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{center}

Thus, the artistic creation of universal harmony is a moral act. The aesthetic belief in moral analogy also

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} "D'autres peuples, plus favorisés sentent tout de suite, tout à la fois synthétiquement." \textit{Ibid.}, p. 174.
\item \textsuperscript{15} "Et l'harmonie est trop exquise Qui gouverne tout son beau corps, Pour que l'impuissante analyse En note les nombreux accords."
\item "Toute Entière," \textit{Les Fleurs du Mal}. This poem is concerned with the beauty of universal analogy.
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{L'Art Romantique}, p. 159. Italics mine.
\end{itemize}
relates to the ethics of all times.

Les nations et les races se transmettent-elles des fables, comme les hommes se léguent des héritages, des patrimoines ou des secrets scientifiques? On serait tenté de le croire, tant est frappante l'analogue morale qui marque les mythes et les légendes et clos dans différentes contrées........................
...............Cette analogie morale dont je parlais est comme l'estampille divine de toutes les fables populaires.17

And the conception of universal analogy, through the symbolization constructed by the lyrical poet, is once again a moral attitude:

Nous arrivons à cette vérité que tout est hiéroglyphe, et nous savons que les symboles ne sont obscures que d'une manière relative, c'est-à-dire selon la pureté, la bonne volonté ou la clairvoyance native des âmes.18

So the Beau Moral is the poetic character in all things, the universal metaphor (which will be explained further by the theory of Correspondances), a force which also contains ethical and moral values, which the poet discovers, extracts, expresses, and relates to an overall spiritual reality.19


18Ibid., p. 305.

19Ibid., p. 372.
The "immortal instinct" for beauty within the poet enables him to find it even in the evil and ugliness which may often surround him (here the novelist describes the reality of the ugliness whereas the poet transforms the baseness into beauty). Speaking of Gautier, Baudelaire tells us:

Heureux homme! homme digne d'envie! il n'a aimé que le Beau; il n'a cherché que le Beau et quand un objet grotesque ou hideux s'est offert à ses yeux, il a su encore en extraire une mystérieuse et symbolique beauté. Homme doué d'une faculté unique, puissante comme la fatalité, il a exprimé, sans fatigue, sans effort, toutes les attitudes, tous les regards, toutes les couleurs qu'adopte la nature, ainsi que le sens intime contenu dans tous les objets qui s'offrent à la contemplation de l'ceil humain. 20

Beauty will ennable the souls of poet and reader and transport both to an entirely different sphere of consciousness. For example, the morbid reality of a cadavre, described by Baudelaire in Une Charogne in Les Fleurs du Mal, through a twist of poetic feeling and poetic contemplation, will be transformed into beauty. Thus, the poet, contrary to most novelists, creates out of "la laideur" and "la sottise", "un nouveau genre d'enchantement." 21 A possible method of transforming

20 Ibid., pp. 334-335.
21 Ibid., p. 357.
ugliness into beauty and novelty in actual expression is explained in the Banville article as follows:

Mais ici encore sa bouffonerie conservera quelque chose d’hyperbolique; l’excès en détruira l’amertume, et la satire, par un miracle résultant de la nature même du poète, se déchargera de toute sa haine dans une explosion de gaieté, innocente à force d’être carnavalesque.22

The poet has a rather special way of looking at things. It is as if he contemplates and gazes through a prism glass which deforms natural phenomena to attain the beauty of its inner meaning.

Ce qui n’est pas légèrement difforme à l’air insensible; --d’où il suit que l’irrégularité, c’est-à-dire l’inattendu, la surprise, l’étonnement sont une partie essentielle et la caractéristique de la beauté.23

And:

Les méprises relatives au visage sont le résultat de l’éclipse de l’image réelle par l’hallucination qui en tire sa naissance.24

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22Ibid., p. 357. Cf. also Tableaux parisiens and Journaux Intimes.

23Fusées, p. 18.

24Ibid., p. 14. M. Crépet writes à propos of this remark: "Remarque qui a pu être dictée à Baudelaire par ses préoccupations surnaturalistes: ce type de méprises n’apparaît-il pas en effet comme une victoire de l’imagination 'la reine des facultés' et ne s'apparente-t-il pas à l’effort inventif de l’artiste dont le regard corrige l’objet en le déformant?" Vol. III, p. 266.
Thus, the recognition and expression of poetic beauty ("le sens intime et universel") and the transposition of certain forms of life into an artificial beauty—the enhancement of reality (Cf. L’Éloge du maquillage des femmes)—constitute poetic creation. Beauty becomes the poetic Ideal and the poet’s moral philosophy in terms of art and aesthetics.

It now remains to examine beauty or the exact nature of the unity to which it is equated: le Beau Moral. Up to this point, beauty had to be described in such unfortunate terms as "spiritual reality" or "poetic reality" since its actual quality will vary in direct proportion to the vision and the spiritual complexion of the individual poet. Thus, beauty, which is the poetic ideal, is a subjective ideal and necessarily contrary to the platonic concept of the absolute and the objective. Subjectivity, to Baudelaire, is necessary and preferable:

\[ \text{Je veux parler des poèmes, où...le poète a décrit la beauté, telle qu'elle posait pour son œil original et individuel...} \]

The quality sui generis of Beauty (a phrase which Baudelaire constantly repeats), is indispensable. As long as

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25 The platonic element of Baudelaire’s thought lies within the preoccupation with an idée fixe: Beauty; but Beauty, in turn, is not defined objectively by Baudelaire, his concept being infinitely subjective.

26 L’Art Romantique, p. 375.
a reader may intuit the resonance of spiritual reality, God, the Soul, and the unity of creation within a poem, the poet is preoccupied with le Beau which he interprets originally, according to his own vision.

The Baudelairean Beau Moral is exactly, and finally, the theory of correspondances or universal analogy of which the sonnet of the same name holds the most perfect explanation.  He states that "la première condition nécessaire pour faire un art sain est la croyance à l'unité intégrale."  

Baudelaire's preoccupation with correspondances is intense and manifests itself in practically every prose work as well as in most of his poetry. In L'Art Romantique, Baudelaire is more often the critic who, as explained before, projects his theories of art into the ideas of the writers he chooses for critical examination. For example, the idea of correspondances is reflected particularly in his essays on Wagner, Gautier, and Hugo. In this case, however, and following the preceding explanation of the Beau Moral as manifested in an original manner by every poet or artist who is worthy of the name,

27 Four other poems however are preoccupied principally with the same theory: La Vie antérieure, Toute entière, Le crépuscule du soir mystique, and À Clymène.

28 L'Art Romantique, p. 284.
the theory of correspondances can be related without too much assumption, to the works of the authors cited above. In addition, Baudelaire was once more not the first to have divined correspondances: Hoffman, Swedenborg, Lavater, Fourier, Balzac, de Quincy, De Maistre, Stendhal, Nerval, not too mention Saint Paul, quoted so often by the others, have all imagined the existence of universal analogy, or correspondances. But to return to Baudelaire, and an explanation of le Beau Moral and universal analogy, a passage from the article on Gautier will explain that:

C'est cet admirable, cet immortel instinct du Beau qui nous fait considérer la terre et ses spectacles comme un aperçu, comme une correspondance du Ciel. La soif insatiable de tout ce qui est au-delà, et que révèle la vie, est la plus vivante de notre immortalité. C'est à la fois par la poésie et à travers la poésie, par et à travers la musique que l'âme entrevoit les splendeurs situées derrière le tombeau.

It was Baudelaire's belief that though the world was "multiforme," it was "un et compacte"; "Dieu a proféré le monde comme une complexe et indivisible totalité." Everything in this world was believed by him to


30 L'Art Romantique, p. 159.

31 Ibid., p. 306.

32 Ibid., p. 206.
relate to the world above which cannot be perceived intellectually. Intelligence has dried up what the senses may still reveal and that is the knowledge that we all live in the midst of a system of invisible signs which are manifested through the visibility of sense perception. In other words, everything—movement, form, number, color, perfume, etc., --in the spiritual as well as in the realm of the temporal or the natural is "significatif, réciproque, converse, correspondant." Thus, in the works of excellent poets, such knowledge is imparted in many a manner, but principally by way of the choice of metaphor, epithet, or simile (the stylistic counterparts or universal analogy) which constitute an exact mathematical adaptation of correspondances:

Chez les excellents poètes, il n'y a pas de métaphore, de comparaison ou d'épithète qui ne soient d'une adaptation mathématiquement exacte dans la circonstance actuelle, parce que ces comparaisons, ces métaphores et ces épithètes sont puisées dans l'inépuisable fond de l'universelle analogie, et qu'elles ne peuvent être puisées ailleurs.

34 L'Art Romantique, p. 305.
36 L'Art Romantique, p. 305.
Baudelaire was the kind of poet, therefore, whose pleasure resided in searching throughout "la nature extérieure et visible des exemples et des métaphores" which served "à caractériser les jouissances et les impressions d'un ordre spirituel." 37 Thus, in the following quotation Baudelaire will prove the fact that a lyrical thinker who conceives the mystery of life as le Beau and correspondances (which, by its all inclusiveness, must involve all of the arts and the unity of criticism, 38) by an almost religious fidelity to conception, will dictate artistic morality thereby.

La nature qui pose devant nous, de quelque côté que nous nous tournions, et qui nous enveloppe comme un mystère, se présente sous plusieurs états simultanés dont chacun, selon qu'il est plus intelligible, plus sensible pour nous, se reflète plus vivement dans nos coeurs: forme, attitude et mouvement, lumière et couleur, son et harmonie. La musique des vers de Victor Hugo s'adapte aux profondes harmonies de la nature; sculpteur, il découpe dans ses strophes la forme inoubliable des choses; peintre, il les illumine de leur

37L'Art Romantique, p. 329.

38"Et la conjecture sur l'appropriation morale, sur la destination de tous ces mondes, nos voisins inconnus, ne prend-elle pas aussi naturellement sa place dans les immenses domaines de la poésie?" Ibid., p. 313.
Such is the moral philosophy of the poet, Baudelaire. It is a Beau Moral, the combination of words signifying both artist and moralist; its quality—that which his lyrical spiritual complexion indispensably devines.

LES JOURNAUX INTIMES

(Ca. 1857)
Baudelaire was not merely a poet; he was also, in very much the same way as Pascal had been, a moral investigator. His early religious upbringing had given him the habit of the examen de conscience for confession, and he continued this self-examination in later years. He tried to see clearly into himself, not to shrink from what he brought to light, and to set down what he had found in order to draw conclusions which would fit mankind in general.¹

The Journaux Intimes reveal Baudelaire the man, the soul, the independant thinker or the "damned poet" just as L'Art Romantique represents Baudelaire as the artist and creative critic. It may be said that the Journaux Intimes constitute the moral and the ethical while L'Art Romantique deals primarily with the aesthetic. This "triple impression" (of which Baudelaire so often speaks when obsessed by the three basic symbols of universal unity²) forms the component parts of his moral

¹Enid Starkie, Baudelaire, London, Victor Gollancz, no date, p. 466.

²Cf. quote in L'Art Romantique, p. 303.
philosophy and are one integral unit. Though both the moral, the ethical and the aesthetic may be discussed separately, none of them can be dissected and analysed (purely) without an appeal to the other two, and finally to the liaison between the three, which, for the greatest of artists, is never broken. The complete unity of the essence of an artist's moral philosophy (morals, ethics, aesthetics) is the rare quality of the most sincere artists who, through disinterested devotion to art, are unable to deviate from the inner dictates of their soul in their way of life or in artistic expression. The Journaux Intimes illustrate, better than any other prose work of Baudelaire, the genesis of the moral philosophy to be crystallized later as the natural and indispensable dictation of a spiritual complexion—an absolute quality of vision.

In certain aspects of content and style both Fusées and Mon Coeur mis à nu are obviously the works of a moralist in the traditional French sense of the term, for they are made up almost wholly of pithy sayings, acute observations on meaning in the universe, rules for personal conduct, and opinions in the realm of artistic creation and the social manners of the day. The influence of the seventeenth century moralists is ever-present; there are continuous flashes of La Rochefoucauld's severity and complete
"dépouillement," and of Saint-Simon's wisdom and perception regarding manners and customs. Even the impersonality of tone under which a vibrant inner being is hiding manifests Baudelaire's liaison with his brilliant French heritage. His unfinished projects such as "Moeurs du 19e siècle,"³ "Portraits et anecdotes,"⁴ "M. de Pommartin, --un homme qui a toujours l'air d'arriver de sa province,"⁵ along with hosts of other ideas jotted down in haste to serve for portraits of his contemporaries, echo with certainty Jean de La Bruyère. There are eulogies of J.-J. Rousseau and Chateaubriand—writers of mémoires—whom Baudelaire desired to imitate.⁶ But the religious beliefs and much of the theology which Baudelaire "selects" from Pascal is even more startling. An actual bet on the existence of God is present in Mon Cœur mis à nu:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Calcul en faveur de Dieu} \\
\text{Rien n'existe sans but.} \\
\text{Donc mon existence a un but. Quel but? Je l'ignore}
\end{align*}
\]

⁴Ibid., p. 66.
⁵Ibid., p. 75.
⁶There is also a striking similarity between the content of Delacroix's journals and those of Baudelaire: cf. excerpts of Delacroix's journals quoted in his article on the painter in L'Art Romantique; also Ferran, p. 218, who illustrates the similarity of Delacroix and Baudelaire with regard to work and women.
Ce n'est donc pas moi qui l'ai marqué
C'est donc quelqu'un plus savant que moi.
Il faut donc prier ce quelqu'un de m'éclairer.
C'est le parti le plus sage.7

Even Baudelaire's acceptance a priori of God resembles the
structure upon which the entire Apologie de la Religion
is founded:

De la religion, je crois inutile
d'en parler et d'en chercher les
restes, puisque se donner encore
la peine de nier Dieu est le seul
scandale en pareilles matières.8

Baudelaire's horror of the nonchalance with which ordinary
men react in their human condition of misery resembles
the Pascal who so often wished to place a thorn in the
beloved pillow belonging to Montaigne:

A propos du sommeil, aventure
sinistre de tous les soirs, on
peut dire que les hommes s'en-
dorment journellement avec une
audace qui serait inintelligible
si nous ne savions qu'elle est le
résultat de l'ignorance du danger.9

Other similarities in thought, and especially in the
antithetical and paradoxical style between Baudelaire
and Pascal are the following:

7Journaux Intimes, p. 54.
8Ibid., p. 35.
9Ibid., p. 16.
Baudelaire

a) La Théologie.
Qu'est-ce que la chute sic
Si c'est l'unité devenue
dualité;
C'est Dieu qui a châtié.
En d'autres termes, la
création
Ne serait-elles pas la chute
de
Dieu? 10

b) Cruauté et volupté,
sensations identiques comme
l'extrême chaud et l'extrême
froid. 12

Pascal

Sources des contrariétés
Un Dieu humilié et
jusqu'à la mort de la
croix; un Messie triomphant de la mort par sa
mort. Deux natures en
Jésus-Christ, deux avènements, deux états de
la nature de l'homme. 11

La nature de l'homme n'est
pas d'aller toujours,
elle a ses allées et venues. La fièvre a ses
frissons et ses ardeurs;
et le froid montre aussi
bien la grandeur de l'ardeur de la fièvre que
le chaud même. 13

Le goût du plaisir nous
attache au présent. Le soin
de notre salut nous suspend
t'à l'avenir.
Celui qui s'attache au
plaisir, c'est-à-dire au
présent, me fait l'effet
d'un homme roulant sur une
pente, et voulant se ras-
crocher aux arbustes, les
arracherait et les empor-
rait dans sa chute. 14

Nous courrons sans souci
dans le précipice, après
que nous avons mis quel-
que chose devant nous
pour nous empêcher de
le voir. 15

10Ibid., p. 73.
11Blaise Pascal, Pensées et Opuscules, éd. Léon
Brunschvicq, Paris, Hachette, Pensee 765.
12Journaux Intimes, p. 63.
13Pascal, op. cit., Pensee 354.
14Journaux Intimes, p. 78.
15Pascal, op. cit., Pensee 183.
The passages quoted above are not identical; they do not possibly entail plagiarism. The singularly modern turn of mind which Baudelaire reveals (and which will be elaborated on further) is more a product of the nineteenth century. The faint similarities simply offer some indication that Baudelaire is traditional as a moralist in the sense that he has been breathed upon by his predecessor and that Pascal, perhaps more then many other French moralists, has been assimilated by Baudelaire and has been imprinted upon him spiritually. The stringent cry of solitude, wonder and desire for knowledge of the universe that reason alone is powerless to afford, and of the sense of guilt stemming from original sin—in summary, the uneasiness and misery of the Christian soul before the attainment of communion with God make Baudelaire and Pascal âmes soeurs. 16

Baudelaire a une vie morale intense, il se tord dans le remords, il s'exhorte chaque jour à mieux faire, il lutte, il succombe, il est accablé

The notion of an ascetic ethic marks an affinity between Baudelaire and Pascal in the sense that they both look upon a moral life as a constraint which has to be endured; both had to be whipped to work. Pascal's hair shirt and nailed belt are familiar to his readers as the physical expression of self-flagellation that was going on inside of him. Baudelaire's self-discipline is evident in the following passage:

Si quand un homme prend l'habitude de la paresse, de la rêverie, de la faînéantise, au point de renvoyer sans cesse au lendemain la chose importante, un autre homme le réveillait un matin à grands coups de fouet et le fouettait sans pitié jusqu'à ce que, ne pouvant travailler par plaisir, celui-ci travaillât par peur, cet homme, --le fouetteur, --ne serait-il pas vraiment son ami, son bienfaiteur?

De même en politique, le vrai saint est celui qui fouette et tue le peuple pour le bien du peuple.18


18Journaux Intimes, pp. 17, 18.
...Ma perpétuelle volupté de mon tourment ordinaire, c'est-à-dire du travail. 19

But if the reading of the Journaux Intimes of Baudelaire unquestionably hints at the possibility of its author being a dilettante as a moralist, he will soon manifest an originality which belongs almost exclusively to himself and to his own age. The combination of the true artist and the subtle moralist is still rare to the French reader of the nineteenth century, and rarer still is the side of Baudelaire which re-evaluates and transposes the traditional moral code. There is a side of the moral problem in Baudelaire, the side which is infinitely more important, and which, in part, has actually formed the baudelairean fascination for subsequent artists. It is perhaps the combination of harsh realism and the imaginative fantasy with which Baudelaire, as a more powerful artist than many of his contemporaries who attempted the same thing, has upset age-old beliefs—the then rather new combination of le Beau and le Vrai as

19 "Il envisage la vie morale sous l'aspect d'une contrainte, d'un mors blessant une bouche rétive et jamais d'une recherche gémissante ni d'un véritable élan su coeur." Sartre, op. cit., p. 53.
elaborated upon in *L'Art Romantique*. The ideas which Baudelaire uproots are the comfortable lies which have been repeated from century to century so that they had become so imbedded in human reasoning that it was considered scandalous for one to deviate from them. It is the general aura of the *Journaux Intimes*—for there is such an aura (the specific elements of Baudelaire's strange moral complexion will be considered shortly). There is a general mood which emanates from the works of great authors which is as valid as content itself; no artist who is worthy of the name will vulgarly declare himself a revolutionist in so many words. This is perhaps why M. Mauclair has found it fit to state:

Et de tout ceci [the *Journaux Intimes*] naît un moraliste, au vrai sens du terme, un "moraliste immoraliste," c'est-à-dire un homme qui n'accepte aucune des valeurs de la morale courante, en nie la stabilité, les revise librement et refuse de confondre le préjugé traditionnel avec la vérité morale.\(^{20}\)

It is also perhaps why J.P. Sartre has made the similar remark:

... il [Baudelaire] préfère être condamné... que blanchi au nom d'une éthique plus large et plus féconde qu'il devrait inventer lui-même.\(^{21}\)

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\(^{21}\) Sartre, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
Baudelaire has never stated that the ideas contained in
the remarks of the critics just quoted were his guides.
The thoughts, however, are inescapable from the many
axioms that Baudelaire sets forth in the haughty indig-
nation and the glacial and serene irony so characteristic
of him.

Such a revolutionary attitude is not sterile.
More reasons, however, why Baudelaire has been proclaimed
by countless critics to be the father of modern poetry
and why the Journaux Intimes is the most direct epito-
mization of the reasons he deserves the title that he
has enjoyed only posthumously, still remain to be examined.
The major reason is, as this thesis is attempting to bring
more squarely into the foreground, that Baudelaire has
projected the most piercing expression of the modern
conscience into lyric poetry. Such a conscience created
a moral philosophy, or value theory, of which his lyric
poetry sings so powerfully and accurately in harmonized
dissonance. It depicts the revival of some aspects of
Middle age thought, when there existed an awe and aching
sorrow to the complexity of existence, its antithesis and
contradiction, its perplexing gratuitousness, its heavy melancholy and insupportable boredom strangely mingled with the guilt of sin and the longing for the days which are no more. No artistic product of such a conscience, which in many circles was forced to carry the unjust epithet of "the literature of decadence," was yet more vibrant in its action,—its inquiry and its humility

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22"Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux, Riche mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très vieux, Qui...S'ennuie avec ses chiens, comme avec d'autres bêtes."
Spleen, LXXIX, Les Fleurs du Mal.

"J'ai cultivé mon hystérie avec jouissance et terreur," Journaux Intimes.


24"Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse comme un couvercle Sur l'esprit gémissant en proie aux longs ennuis, Et que de l'horizon embrassant tout le cercle Il nous verse un jour noir plus triste que les nuits;"
Spleen LXXX.

25Original sin, cf. also Un Voyage à Cythère.

26La Vie Antérieure. Cf. also Reversibilité: "Ange plein de santé, connaissez-vous les Fièvres, Qui, le long des grands murs de l'hospice blafard Comme des exilés, s'en vont d'un pied traînard, Cherchant le soleil rare et remuant les lèvres? Ange plein de santé, connaissez-vous les Fièvres?"
in the face of the mystery of the universe. Its action was hope, plan, dream, memory, and mysticism. Its aim was to perceive itself as if it were another and to make of it an order as perfect and immortal as the universe. Its tragedy was its failure to extract one's own essence in order to look upon it with aloofness. Its merit was its humble recognition of man's human state and of his impotence in the face of his greatest desire, the source of all his efforts—a redemption from the Dantesque inferno into which human life is eternally steeped.

Baudelaire’s character epitomizes such a human conscience. His cry was more penetrating because his state was more extreme. His sensibility was one which magnified and his intellect dissected his interior regions and gave an immortality and a philosophical importance to his sens. He had an almost morbid preoccupation with

27 Élévation.
"Derrière les ennuis et les vastes chagrins
Qui chargent de leur poids l'existence brumeuse,
Heureux celui qui peut d'une aile vigoureuse
S'élancer vers les champs lumineux et sereins!

Celui dont les pensers, comme des alouettes,
Vers les cieux le matin prennent un libre essor;
--Qui plane sur la vie et comprend sans effort
Le langage des fleurs et des choses muettes."

his own personality, driven thus by the agony he felt
at his own imperfections—the sin and evil within him—in
view of the harmony he knew and the Beauty of order
he conceived by way of art, in the universe.\textsuperscript{29} Such moral
intensity and acute sensibility caused his solitude; he
was born with a feeling of loneliness, for few men have
had the perfumed security of a mother by whom they were
coddled and protected from infancy, and his petulance was
far more than the result of a belovèd mother's re-marriage:

\begin{quote}
Sentiment de Solitude, dès mon enfance.
Malgré la famille, et au milieu des
camarades, surtout, sentiment de
destinée éternellement solitaire.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

The solitude which tormented him was the sterility he found
in human relationships: "Modernité. Le gouffre infran-
chissable qui fait l'incommunicabilité reste infranchi."\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29}Un Voyage à Cythère,
"...Le ciel était charmant, la mer était unie;
Pour moi tout était noir et sanglant désormais,
..............................
--Ah! Seigneur! donnez-moi la force et le courage
De contempler mon coeur et mon corps sans dégoût!"

\textsuperscript{30}Journaux Intimes, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{31}This is a basic feeling in works of Chateaubriand,
Obermann, Constant, Stendhal; modern literature has also
been impregnated with this feeling; cf. F. Mauriac's
"Le Désert de l'amour."
It was a solitude which had its share in the evident misanthropic streak within his works, for the evil which upset him and which so many others refused to recognize caused the bitterness and the solidifying isolation of his being:

Quand j'aurai inspiré le dégoût et l'horreur universels, j'aurais conquis la solitude.32

What Baudelaire has become obsessed with had not been indelibly imprinted upon the society of the time. For one, he had become aware of the shock of two infinities in the nature of man which caused a strange reverberation within him and a gratuitousness for which he was not responsible.33 Pascal had proven man to be a speck in the midst of two extremes, but Baudelaire experienced the horror and the ecstasy of being in the power of two extremes at different times and simultaneously—the effect of being antithetically a "paresseux nerveux":

Tout enfant, j'ai senti dans mon coeur deux sentiments contradictoires, l'horreur de la vie et l'extase de la vie: c'est bien l'effet d'un paresseux nerveux.34

Baudelaire experienced the torment of recognizing himself, in true contradictory fashion, as both angel and beast.

33Essence of Le Mauvais Vitrier.
34Journaux Intimes, p. 96.
The cognizance of such a phenomenon caused the modern revival of Middle Age inquisitio, explained in the following parable from Fusées:

Comme je traversais le boulevard et comme je mettais un peu de précipitation à éviter les voitures, mon auréole s'est détachée et est tombée dans la boue du macadam. J'eus heureusement le temps de la ramasser, mais cette idée malheureuse se glissa un instant après dans mon esprit, que c'était un mauvais présage; et dès lors l'idée n'a plus voulu me lâcher; elle ne m'a laissé aucun repos de toute la journée. 35

The constant intervention of bad within good was an observation which haunted Baudelaire continuously.

As a moralist, or an acute observer of human nature—its motives and patterns, he felt it imperative to recognize both the good and the evil, which, according to him, had their origin in the divine order of things; man was created to indulge expressly and gratuitously in both extremes; 36

Il y a dans tout homme, à toute heure, deux postulations simultanées, l'une vers Dieu, l'autre vers Satan. L'invocation à Dieu, ou spiritualité, est un


36 The utter gratuity of evil is explained by the moral parable "Le Mauvais Vitrier" of Spleen de Paris. The resemblance to Gide's Lafcadio is striking.
désir de monter en grade; celle de Satan, ou animalité, est une joie de descendre. 37

Baudelaire adds that "les joies qui dérivent de ces deux amours sont adaptées à la nature de ces deux amours." 38

Awareness of such basic truth, according to Baudelaire, is moral cognizance. As a man, and in human dealings, the poet in question was often preoccupied with the joy of voluptuousness which was evil and derived from the satanic quality within him:

Moi, je dis: la volupté unique et suprême de l'amour gît dans la certitude de faire le mal. Et l'homme et la femme savent de naissance que dans le mal se trouve toute volupté. 39

But in moments which were more fortunate, Baudelaire found it within himself to say that "-Sans la charité, je ne suis qu'une cymbale retentissante." 40

As an artist, with the desire to "monter en grade," and the ever-present lust for spirituality (epitomized in the period after 1860 especially) as described in L'Art Romantique, Baudelaire's interest in God and Good is more

37Journaux Intimes, p. 62.
38Ibid., p. 62.
39Ibid., p. 11.
40Ibid., p. 44.
often in the ascendancy. Throughout Les Fleurs du Mal his disgust with reality is evident (cf. for example, Un Voyage à Cythère) and the reader intuits the poet’s desire for the liberation of his personality to acquire the freedom, not of the labyrinth, but of transcendentalism:

Des cloches tout à coup sautent avec furie
Et lancent vers le ciel un affreux hurlement,
Ainsi que des esprits errants et sans patrie
Qui se mettent à geindre opiniâtrément. 41

That is why Baudelaire has always proclaimed that "le bien est toujours le produit d’un art," 42 a transformation of the evil and ugliness and constraint that life holds; that is why he attempts to evoke, in prayer, the following:

...quand saurai-je donc faire
Du spectacle vivant de ma triste misère
Le travail de mes mains et l’amour de mes yeux?
Le Mauvais Moine 41

Life, for him, was too often devoid of charm save in its voluptuousness (evil) which he both adored and despised simultaneously, 43 and his spiritual makeup rebelled against such evil determinism. Soon, the only motivating force

41 Spleen, LXXX, Les Fleurs du Mal.
43 Cf. Voyage à Cythère.
L’Ennemi:
"Ma jeunesse ne fut qu’un ténébreux orage,
Traversé çà et là par de brillants soleils;"
in life became the voluptuous "charme du jeu," which, before long, made him glacially remark:

Mais s'il nous est indifférent de gagner où de perdre?44

Such an attitude had perhaps enforced the convictions in the maxims contained in Les Journaux Intimes. Those convictions are centered about a unity of morals, ethics, and aesthetics which are products of the evasion from banal reality that Baudelaire sought after: self-flagellation induced by the will to work artistically, dandyism, and mysticism.

Thus, Baudelaire's revolt at ordinary existence--its loneliness and indifference, its unresolved antithesis, its evil, and its impurity, caused him to create a oneness of the orders which are both temporal and spiritual--a form of evasion by which life on earth could be endured. This is the psychological reality which I have found to be the basis and the genesis of the moral philosophy belonging to Baudelaire. It is a product of his moral makeup--his "mauvaise conscience" and his cognizance of such a modern malady. There is perhaps another reason for his quality of mind which, to my way of thinking, complements the evasive. Jean-Paul Sartre affords us an

44Journaux Intimes, p. 15.
interesting discussion in his work on Baudelaire by the existentialist author maintains that Baudelaire's vision of evil and his emphasis upon it were motivated by his love of *le Bien* and *le Beau*. Only by violent contrast could the flagrant sinner and lover of negative roads to truth approach the spiritual realm which he coveted and exalted. Sartre's brilliant discovery may in part explain why Baudelaire, who damned his own soul by insisting upon the existence of *le mal* and *la parfaite conscience dans le mal* and who, on the other hand worked at the creation of *le Bien* and *le Beau*, can exist in the type of harmony which is formed by modern consciousness. The moral maxims of Baudelaire are both psychological and philosophical. They are psychological in their flight from the natural monotony and cursèdness of ordinary existence by the cult of the artificial (e.g. art, misanthropic dandyism, interest and indulgence in *le vin*, *le haschich*, *l'opium*, etc...). And they are philosophical in their deliberate cult of *le mal* for the sake of a striking display of *le Bien* and *le Beau* by means of violent contrast. Both aspects of the maxims are reci-  

45 J.P. Sartre, *op. cit.*.  
procal and true, for if Baudelaire were only the ivory tower poet who moved within the orbit of esoteric or mystical realms he would not be involved with morality as a social problem. His interest in the disillusionment of France in 1848, which he avidly discusses in the *Journaux Intimes*, his preoccupation with the human values in urban communities displayed in *Tableaux Parisiens* of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, the témoignages of many of his friends (e.g. Houssaye, Asselineau, etc.) all belie the idea that Baudelaire desired to be ignorant of social mores. In fact, social mores fascinated him; large portions of the collection of writings in *L'Art Romantique* are reserved for reflexions upon modes in society. Unfortunately, however, the reader must constantly admit that Baudelaire has not the slightest interest in reform of a social nature. He seems to descend into the depths of life with the interest of a disinterested moralist—as a writer who seeks knowledge and who impartssto his readers a penetrating and ineffectual picture of society.

47 *Journaux Intimes*, pp. 56-58.

for the world of action. He was only interested in what modern society held which was eternal in value. Such writings have validity for aesthetics only, but who is omniscient enough to deny the validity of the aesthetic for its own sake?

So Baudelaire will soon come to the conclusion that preoccupation with things extraneous to individual perfection by way of a "culte de soi" (dandyism) and art are vain and irrelevant:

Il ne peut y avoir de progrès (vrai, c'est-à-dire moral) que dans l'individu et par l'individu même.

Life in society weigh upon the glorious rôle of the artist:

Le Poète est semblable au prince des nuées
Qui hante la tempête et se rit de l'archer;
Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées,
Ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher.

L'Albatros

His dreams were too vivid for vulgar interruption by the world of action in which a militant moralist engages himself:

-Certes, je sortirai, quant à moi, satisfait
D'un monde où l'action n'est pas la soeur du rêve;

49 "Être un homme utile m'a toujours paru comme quelque chose de bien hideux." Ibid.

50 Le Reniement de Saint Pierre.
It now remains to examine the quality and nature of the Baudelairean évasions. Baudelaire's interest in mysticism is evident throughout Les Journaux Intimes; it began in childhood and was finally crystallized after 1860, when, in full maturity as an artist, mysticism was recognized by him as a force. His constant skepticism with regard to orthodox Catholicism was too firmly imbedded within him to allow for total conformity. It is unfair to consider Catholicism as a religion to recrute Baudelaire as a believer. The following line from Le Reniement de Saint Pierre should remove some of the doubt:

—Saint Pierre a renié Jésus... il a bien fait!

Fusées itself begins with the following epigrams:

Quand même Dieu n'existait pas la Religion serait encore Sainte et Divine.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Dieu est le seul Être qui, pour pénérer, n'ait meme pas besoin d'exister. 52

What Catholic ritual afforded Baudelaire was the reality of mysticism, or rather the fulfilment of a need for spiritual contact with that element in the universe which exerted a force, called by him, "une dynamique morale."

He believed religious rites to be memories of the para-


52Ibid., p. 7.
disiacal state of "l'arrière monde" or "le monde moral"
--Baudelaire's constant aspiration on earth. The Journaux
Intimes abound in the cult of such a mysticism ardently
expressed in the following telegraphically styled (corres-
ponding to the electrical quality of the mystical communi-
cation which the lines explain in content) self-imposed
maxims and projects for essays:

Connais donc les jouissances d'une vie
âpre; et prie, prie sans cesse.
La prière est réservoir de force.
(Autel de la volonté. Dynamique morale.
La sorcellerie des sacrements. Hygiène
de l'âme).53

La force de l'amulette démontrée par
la philosophie. Les sois percés, les
talismans, les souvenirs de chacun.
Traité de dynamique morale.
De la vertu des sacrements.54

Prayer has no longer a conventional end; it serves as
will and the source of stamina for artistic creation
through which knowledge is attained. The knowledge is that
of the reality of an ancient existence, or of a collective
soul contained by all men from the beginnings of life
and man is graced by that knowledge intermittently.
Prayer serves to invoke the moments by which knowledge
can be attained; the mystical sensations produced have a

54 Ibid., p. 101.
definite rapport in quality with the spasms of the elements:

Il y a dans la prière une opération magique. La prière est une des grandes forces de la dynamique intellectuelle. Il y a là comme une récurrence électrique.55

Jouissances spirituelles et physiques causées par l'orage, l'électricité et la foudre, tocsin des souvenirs amoureux, ténébreux, des anciennes années.56

Such beliefs are those of a mystic whose interest in the phenomenon, or physical nature, is not that of the ordinary man. The mystics transcend physics or the natural sciences. Their interest is replaced by ardent preoccupation with the quality of meaning—or the magic of universal rapport.

Psychologically, of course, and as has been suggested before, the mysticism of a Baudelaire may have grown from a desire for evasion from commonplace existence and material values as well as the moral yearning for an order and harmony within the individual being which would correspond to that which was obvious in the universe and was difficult to achieve for the complex personality. Thus ensued Baudelaire's almost morbid preoccupation with that personality which strove to be equated with universal

55 Ibid., p. 25.
56 Ibid., p. 20.
unity. He attempted, by a form of mysticism, and by rigorous interior investigation and unrelenting concentration, a way to effect such an order. The individual, or the holy reminder of a godly age, was to be preserved and revered at all costs:

Auto-idolatrie
Harmonie politique du caractère.
Eurythmie du caractère et des facultés.
Augmenter toutes les facultés.
Conserver toutes les facultés.
Un clute (magisme, sorcellerie évocatoire)
Le sacrifice et le vœu sont les formules
Suprêmes et les symboles de l'échange.57

The ethical vow and the sacrifice which Baudelaire undertakes along with his prayer becomes what is known as le Dandy... Such a vow or sacrifice was not difficult for a man such as Baudelaire. His belief in the natural depravity of man,58 his disgust with the politics of his time (1848-1857), his skepticism with regard to human relations (his analyses of love are strangely the inchoate expression of what Proust will so pessimistically develop years later in the second volume of his work A la recherche du temps perdu),59 his eternal solitude in

57Ibid., p. 23.


59Journaux Intimes, p. 13.
the midst of a materialistic society ("Je m'ennuie en France surtout parce que tout le monde y ressemble à Voltaire"), his scorn for women and their interested souls (e.g. the scandalous denunciation of Georges Sand), and the almost pathological lack of affection and scorn for human creatures (with the exception of his mother, Caroline Aupick—and that for reasons adequately explained by countless critics) unless they were practically or totally unknown to him personally (e.g. De Maistre and Poe, who, he says, "m'ont appris à raisonner"); had never been known to Baudelaire personally and he was thus able to deify them) all serve to make le dandysme the ethic which was most natural to him.

In a discussion of the philosophy of Baudelaire, le dandy becomes a key word. For Baudelaire, le dandy has little to do with the ordinary connotation of the word; only its narrow interpretation would involve a definition of the dandy as a person of pose as manifested by an excessive care of the toilette for its own sake, or, as

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60 Ibid., p. 71.
61 Ibid., pp. 68-70.
62 Ibid., p. 40.
the *Dictionnaire Larousse* puts it: "Dandy: homme élégant, à la mode," and *Dandysme: prétention à l'élegance, au suprême bon ton." Baudelaire himself, negates this definition in the following lines:

Le dandysme n'est même pas, comme beaucoup de personnes peu réfléchies paraissent le croire, un goût immodéré de la toilette et de l'élegance matérielle. Ces choses ne sont pour le parfait dandy qu'un symbole de la supériorité aristocratique de son esprit.63

Therefore, I define the Dandy, for one, as a person who volunteers to become a stranger to the world by dispensing with the more ordinary passions possessed by his fellow man. It is the supreme and over-all evasive measure. The Dandy develops a sense of "exteriority" with regard to the banal and cultivates only the human qualities which are divine in nature to such a point that this divinity constitutes his entire essence. The Dandy becomes, therefore, unnatural—or better, supernatural; he is pure essence. He dominates every bourgeois platitude and every triviality that the soul may contain and thus purges that soul. He becomes unified, integral, essential—the absolute end of the term "culte de soi." And finally,

he cultivates an ethic which is the counterpart of the ethereal realms which he creates in his aesthetic of Beauty:

C'est bien là cette légèreté d'allures, cette certitude de manières, cette simplicité dans l'air de domination, cette façon de porter un habit et de diriger un cheval, ces attitudes toujours calmes mais révélant la force, qui nous font penser, quand notre regard découvre un de ces êtres privilégiés en qui le joli et le redoutable se confondent si mystérieusement: "Voilà peut-être un homme riche, mais plus certainement un Hercule sans emploi." 64

L'idée que l'homme se fait du beau s'imprime dans tout son ajustement, chifonne ou raidit son habit, arrondit ou aligne son geste, et même pénètre subtilement, à la longue, les traits de son visage. L'homme finit par ressembler à ce qu'il voudrait être. 65

For Baudelaire, then, le Dandysme as an ethic becomes "le témoignage et la récompense d'un effort vers une discipline et une maîtrise tenté par un être en quête de perfection morale." 66 And by the excessive cult of all that is delicate and impeccable— from the spiritual to the physical—"il doit trouver un moyen d'atteindre le beau:

64 Ibid., p. 95.
65 Le Peintre de la vie moderne.
66 Ferran, op. cit., p. 68.
ce regard agile qui découvre dans l'élegance d'un vêtement
ce qu'elle doit à l'imperceptible variation d'une ligne
est le même qui, dans les visions d'une vie immatérielle,
entrevoit cette démarcation subtile qui sépare le beau
perçu par tous et banalisé--du Beau idéal et inexprimable."

Mr. Ferran was probably inspired when he wrote the preceding
lines by the following passage of Baudelaire in Les Jour-
naux Intimes:

Je crois que le charme infini et
mystérieux qui gît dans la contempla-
tion d'un navire, et surtout d'un
navire en mouvement tient, dans le
premier cas, à la régularité et à la
symétrie qui sont un des besoins
primordiaux de l'esprit humain, en
même degré que la complication et
l'harmonie, ---et, dans le second cas,
à la multiplication successive et à
la génération de toutes les courbes
et figures imaginaires opérées dans
l'espace par les éléments réels de
l'objet.

L'idée poétique qui se dégage de
cette opération du mouvement dans les
lignes est l'hypothèse d'un être vaste,
immense, compliqué, mais eurythmique,
d'un animal plein de génie, souffrant
et soupirant tous les soupirs et toutes
les ambitions humaines.

Herein lies the perfect coincidence of the moral, the
aesthetic, and the ethical. It is the Dandy, then, that
rounds out the moral philosophy of Baudelaire and creates

67Ibid., p. 68.
68Journaux Intimes, p. 32. Italics mine.
the unity and the harmony in his thought. The Dandy permeates his entire being; he is, ethically, the perfectionist in all things; he is impassible and outstanding; he is the aristocrat who scorns the mediocre sensibilities around him who cannot understand that which he perceives with but one glance, and which he, by way of labor, develops into a philosophy of life. He is also, morally, a profound Christian who has a need for singularity (e.g. the Dandy, as the Monk, wears a costume that is completely black in color) in order to rise above the "vulgar herd" and at the same time cultivates the interior regions of his being which moan for liberation and transcendentalism. He is the mystical ascetic, who, in the manner of Saint Antoine, is revulsed at the animal within him, throws off his baser instincts to invoke God by the cult of a Dynamique Morale. And finally, in Aesthetics, he is the artist, who, by divine inspiration, creates his way toward the revered Beauty of universal harmony, the vision of which is as ecstatic as Léon Bloy's belief in moments which afford him "le souvenir de la présence de Dieu."

Etrange spiritualisme! Pour ceux qui en sont à la fois les prêtres et les victimes, toutes les conditions matérielles compliquées auxquelles ils se soumettent, depuis la toilette irréprochable à toute heure du jour et de la nuit jusqu'aux tours les plus périlleux du sport, ne sont qu'une gymnastique
propre à fortifier la volonté et à discipliner l'âme. En vérité, je n'avais pas tout à fait tort de considérer le dandyisme comme une espèce de religion.69

The Dandy has an ethical and moral code, which, though unique in principle and in end, is as inexorable for its followers as the code imposed by the strictest of theologies:

Le dandyisme, qui est une institution en dehors des lois, à des lois rigoureuses auxquelles sont strictement soumis tous ses sujets, quelles que soient d'ailleurs la fougue et l'indépendance de leur caractère.70

The maxims which Baudelaire sets forth as the Dandy's moral code are the following: first, he must work solely for the perfection of his own individuality which, he believes, is the only moral progress possible: "Il ne peut y avoir de progrès (vrai, c'est-à-dire, moral) que dans l'individu et par l'individu même."71 The Dandy cultivates himself to such a point that he develops what the psychologist narrowly labels as the "narcissus complex": "Le Dandy doit aspirer à être sublime sans interruption; il doit vivre et dormir devant un miroir."72 The motives

70Ibid., p. 91.
71Journaux Intimes, p. 60.
72Ibid., p. 54.
tourney ordinaire, c'est-à-dire, du Travail"77) to attain the divine rôle which he has established for himself. His is not the rôle of the symbolic Môfse, who, chosen to fill the rôle of genius, regrets that he is condemned to live in the isolation that accompanies such a rôle. He is rather voluntarily solitary—a genius striving for the unity of his being, for perfect communion with that being and God: "L'homme de génie veut être un, donc solitaire."78 Artistic creation is thus a major factor in the fulfillment of the Baudelairean rôle: "Plus l'homme cultive les arts, moins il bande. Il se fait un divorce de plus en plus sensible entre l'esprit et la brute."

Indeed, maxims for work at art constituted a great portion of the *Journaux Intimes*. By creation, the ordinary passions may be dissipated: "Le jeu, même dirigé par la sâlence, force intermittente, sera vaincu, si fructueux qu'il soit, par le travail, si petit qu'il soit, mais continu."79 Artistic labor makes the gap between the masses and the genius even broader by an immortality of the genius gained

77Ibid., p. 39.
78Ibid., p. 92.
79Ibid., p. 25.
thereby: "On dit que j'ai trente ans; mais si j'ai vécu trois minutes en une...n'ai-je pas quatre-vingt-dix ans?"
..."Le travail, n'est-ce pas le sel qui conserve les âmes momies?" The maxims of the Dandy perform, thus, the three-fold function of a moral philosophy:

| ethical: | Concentration |
| aesthetic: | Puissance de l'idée fixe |
| moral: | La franchise absolue, moyen d'originalité. |

Baudelaire, as a Dandy, will allow nothing to interfere with spiritual inspiration, his idée fixe. All earthy matter which bogs down authentic realities must be diluted in the same way that one may dissipate a particle of dust by gallons of limpid water:

A chaque lettre de créancier, écrivez cinquante lignes sur un sujet extra-terrestre et vous serez sauvés. The dandy "manifesto" declares the supremacy and the power of things spiritual: "Ce qui est créé par l'esprit est plus vivant que la matière." Thus, Baudelaire will exalt and condone any institution that serves an ivresse of spirituality—the quality which gives free reign to

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80 Ibid., p. 31.
81 Ibid., p. 19.
82 Ibid., p. 13.
the imagination. For this reason, Baudelaire cannot be called a religious author in the ordinary sense of the term. As previously quoted, Baudelaire has stated that "Quand même Dieu n'existerait pas, la Religion serait encore Sainte et Divine." The service of the Church is the elevation it affords the individual who is desirous of fleeing "n'importe où hors de ce monde," and those in the service of God are righteous mainly because they are "les serviteurs et les sectaires de l'imagination." Baudelaire seems to grasp at the spiritual straws which are the sparse remains of society in his epoch. Asserting the validity of the Church in no way brands one as an orthodox follower of such an institution. The religion which Baudelaire holds personally is that which is universal. He reveres all cults (mystic and pagan) which are preoccupied with the order of things and the rapport between the divine and the temporal which can be obtained by conjecture and imagination. Such a religious attitude involves the belief in the fact that the symbol of man is a divine memento:

Il y a une religion universelle, faite pour les alchimistes de la Pensée, une religion qui se dégage de l'homme considéré comme memento divin.84

83 Ibid., p. 9.
84 Ibid., p. 86.
To man, and only to man, are left "pressentiments et signes envoyés déjà par Dieu..."\textsuperscript{85}

The knowledge of such a transcendent quality (that of being a divine memento) is indelibly imprinted within Baudelaire; his very way of life was haunted and enriched at the same time by such a belief--his religion. The Dandy, who by color of costume, signifies the "ténèbres vastes et noires," also portrays the richness of singularity and Beauty in its impeccable "ajustement". Everyone of Baudelaire's acts is permeated with his basic ideal of human saintliness. And if his unfortunate deviations from the rôle of the Saint pur seem to present some contradiction, that is, if many of his eccentric and even cruel actions appear to belie the basic unity of his existence, the philosophical importance of such actions will help to restore that unity. For example, Baudelaire's preoccupations with wine, hashish, opium, "tournure d'esprit satanique," etc., are meant to bring the divine within him into constant relief. Unfortunately, the mortal anguish which resulted from the failure of these "paradis artificiels" to produce the desired effect makes the Dandy aware of the futility of his moral code. The cult of the

\textsuperscript{85}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 39.
Dandy was bound to entail a metaphysical revolt and, finally, total death (cf. the curve of *Les Fleurs du Mal*) because of its superhuman aspirations and the impossibility of their realization. The natural end of the Dandy can only be suicide...

La règle monastique la plus rigoureuse, l'ordre irrésistible du Vieux de la Montagne, qui commandait le suicide à ses disciples enivrés, n'étaient pas plus despotiques ni plus obéis que cette doctrine de l'élégance et de l'originalité, qui impose elle aussi à ses ambitieux et humbles sectaires, hommes souvent plein de fougue, de passion, de courage, d'énergie contenue, la terrible formule: Perinde ac cadaver! 86

But the tragic strength of Baudelaire refused to allow him to die though he wished for it many a time, and he resembles, thus, the Promethean legend of man, who, constantly thwarted in his search for the Ideal, manages to bring himself together once more for a moment of grace and sublimity, but unfortunately, only to be thrust down once more, and more violently ("Ne cherchez plus mon coeur; les bêtes l'ont mangé." Causerie). Such was the curve of his life. Whatever he suffered, however, was soothed more than adequately by moments in which he was able to remember a beatitude that rightfully belonged to him as a member of the collective human race. As such a manner

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of being, the times when men lived in a state of para-
dise before the Fall are handed down to him intermittently,
as flashes, known as mystical experiences. By the reality
of such an experience, Baudelaire was convinced of the link
which attached him to a basic unity, and this, for him,
constituted all of his "raison d'être."

Mystical experiences or their secular analogy
with which we are concerned, ensue, when, in an involuntary
moment, induced by something which is seen, heard, felt,
or read, the senses become keyed, vital, and fused. They
are miraculously endowed with the power of affording, at
that time, an intuitive knowledge. The mystery of uni-
versal harmony is revealed by confused whisperings in the
human mind; a new desire for life and an inexplicable
sadness ensue (this sadness, or underlying melancholy, or
feeling of regret is the basic component of the modern
conscience of which I spoke earlier); one is free and mobile
within a supernatural milieu, and the other is in the all-
consuming presence of le Beau. The mystical experience
produces, thus, an effect which is two-fold: psychological and philosophical. Psychologically Baudelaire will
explain its effect thus:

J'ai trouvé la définition du Beau,—de
mon Beau. C'est quelque chose d'ardent et
de triste, quelque chose d'un peu vague,
laissant carrière à la conjecture. Je
vais, si l'on veut, appliquer mes idées
à un objet sensible, à l'objet,
par exemple, le plus intéressant
dans la société, à un visage de
femme. Une tête séduisante et belle,
une tête de femme, veux-je dire,
c'est une tête qui fait rêver à la
fois, --mais d'une manière confuse,
de volupté et de tristesse; qui
comporte une idée de mélancolie, de
lassitude, même de satiété.--soit
une idée contraire, c'est-à-dire une
ardeur, un désir de vivre, associés
avec une amertume refluante, comme
venant de privation ou de désespoir.
Le mystère, le regret sont aussi des
caractères du Beau.

Une belle tête d'homme n'a pas besoin
de comporter, excepté peut-être, aux
yeux d'une femme,--aux yeux d'un homme
bien entendu,--cette une idée de volupté
qui dans un visage de femme, est une
provocation d'autant plus attrayante que
le visage est généralement plus mélancolique.
Mais c'est tête contiendra
aussi quelque chose d'ardent et de triste,
des besoins spirituels, des ambitions
ténébreusement refoulées, --l'idée d'une
puissance grondante, et sans emploi,--
quandfois l'idée d'une insensibilité
vengeresse (car le type idéal du Dandy
n'est pas à négliger à ce sujet),--
quandfois aussi,--et c'est l'un des
caractères de beauté les plus intéressants,
--le mystère, et enfin (pour que j'aie
le courage d'avouer jusqu'à quel point
je me sens moderne en esthétique), le
malheur. --Je ne prétends pas que la Joie
ne puisse pas s'associer avec la Beauté,
mais je dis que la Joie en est un des
ornements les plus vulgaires;--tandis que
la Mélancolie en est pour ainsi dire
l'illustre compagne, à ce point que je
ne conçois guère (mon cerveau serait-il
un miroir ensorcelé?) un type de Beauté
où il n'y ait du Malheur.--Appuyé sur--
d'autres diraient: obsédé par--ces idées,
on conçoiot qu'il me serait difficile de ne
pas conclure que le plus parfait type de
Beauté virile est Satan,--à la manière de Milton.
And philosophically, the "mystical" experience will have
the following effect:

Dans certains états de l'âme presque
surnaturels, la profondeur de la vie se
révèle tout entière dans le spectacle,
si ordinaire qu'il soit, qu'on a sous
les yeux. Il en devient le symbole.87

The words tout entière in the preceding quotation show us
the philosophical unity which such supernatural moments
afford the artist. A stanza of the poem in the Fleurs du
Mal collection reads thus:

O métamorphose mystique de tous mes
sens fondus en un.
Son haleine fait la musique comme sa
voix fait le parfum.

Thus, by way of the senses, which must dictate poetic
creation, human life and the work of art become divine
by nature and both establish the significance and the
reality of the concatenation of all things in an integral
unity.

Tout est nombre. Le nombre est
dans tout. Le nombre est dans l'in-
dividu. L'ivresse est un nombre.88

La musique donne l'idée de l'espace.
Tous les arts, plus ou moins; puis-
qu'ils sont nombre et que le nombre
est une traduction de l'espace.89

88Ibid., p. 7.
89Ibid., p. 95.
In this manner, both the *Journaux Intimes* and *L'Art Romantique* are means by which, in the domaines of the moral and ethical and then in the aesthetic, is formed a moral philosophy which is one and indivisible.
CONCLUSION

"Quelque incohérente que soit une existence l'unité humaine n'en est pas troublée." Les Paradis Artificiels

The unity of Baudelaire's moral philosophy has perhaps been manifested in this thesis by way of the example of two major prose works: L'ART ROMANTIQUE and LES JOURNAUX INTIMES. Each work, with its emphasis on a particular facet of that moral philosophy outlines the integral moral world of Baudelaire as a fascinating absolute at a time in human progress when theories of relativity were the accepted credo.

A discussion of the moral philosophy of an author (sa morale) necessarily entails an elaboration of his aesthetic ideals, his moral values, his quality of vision and the aspects of his material life. The artist, then, becomes all-comprehensive, and the achievement of complete understanding of an author is, after all, the major purpose of the critic. The scope of the prose works of Baudelaire (not so much in quantity but in content and the treatment of that content) is far too broad, and to hope to capture it in its entirety would be much too ambitious for the writer of this thesis. Fortunately, however, when confronted with the permeating unity of the moral philosophy of
Baudelaire, very few texts may still reveal the major components of that moral philosophy and the cohesion of its forms. A choice of texts becomes necessary, and that is why I have selected the two works, which, to my way of thinking, illustrate better than any others in prose the three elements -- which I have arbitrarily separated for purposes of clarity -- that unfold what is called a moral philosophy: the moral, the ethical, and the aesthetic. These philosophical terms are, in reality, indivisible in baudelairean realms where there is found such an intimate rapport between the three that they form an inseparable Oneness.

The Moral, for example, or the quality of vision, or the weltanschauung, is that which gives birth to value; the Ethical, or the material aspect of life—conduct—is dictated by the values conceived by a moral outlook and involves actual rules for behavior; and finally, the Aesthetic, or literary creation, becomes the artistic counterpart of the moral and the ethical, and as such, reveals an individual vision (the soul of the poet), and his way of life. The aesthetic itself may be subdivided into two categories: 1) the work of creative genius and 2) the ideals of the creative critic, or artistic theory. These are also interdependent. Criticism, for Baudelaire, becomes as personal and as impressionistic as creation and is not necessarily inferior to a
given work of art.\textsuperscript{1}

Morally, Baudelaire is decidedly of a spiritual or lyrical complexion; that is, one which deals \textit{imaginatively} with abstractions which are, for him, inner meanings, mysterious rapport, ideal visions, and the infinite quality within all of the finite\textsuperscript{2}; he is wont to distort the commonplace nature of things in order to enhance that nature with the beauty and wholesomeness of richer significance. His mind becomes, thus, an arabesque design, in love with beauty for its own sake.

\textit{L'enthousiasme qui s'applique à autre chose que les abstractions est un signe de faiblesse et de maladie.}\textsuperscript{3}

And the vibrant sensitivity which was innately a part of him showed him also the evil of his being. The constant memory of original sin was revealed to him, and he, as a member of the collective human race, was forever conscience stricken by the reality of such a sin.

\textit{Hélas! du péché originel, même après tant de progrès depuis si}

\textsuperscript{1}This is diametrically opposed to the point of view taken by Wellek and Warren in \textit{Theory of Literature}, Harcourt, Brace, and Co., New York, 1949, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{2}C.f., \textit{Curiosités Esthétiques}, Salon de 1845.

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Journaux Intimes}, p. 13.
longtemps promis, il restera toujours bien assez de traces pour en constater l’immémorable réalité. 4

Morally, therefore, Baudelaire is fundamentally duplex and conceives both the validity of imaginative inquiry and the negation of man’s sinful nature. But the portrayal of such a spiritual complexion is a moral act in itself, according to Baudelaire. It is moral to admit the evil of man’s real nature by a complete dépouillement of all except the essence and central core of human existence (le Vrai, as explained in Part two of L’Art Romantique). It is moral again to artistically transform the ugliness of truth by the poetic vision which is enabled to create beauty out of all baseness (le Beau, as explained in Part two of L’Art Romantique).

And the two moral obligations, translated into a work of art, become the only necessary content of great art. The creation is a moral act in and of itself.

Je défie qu’on me trouve un seul ouvrage d’imagination qui réunisse toutes les conditions du beau et qui soit un ouvrage pernicieux. 5

The poetic of a mind which thrives upon the abstract is solitary and lives by art alone; its art performs all of the humanitarian functions, or the supreme humanitarian

4L’Art Romantique, Victor Hugo.
5L’Art Romantique, p. 234.
function—"an offer of the highest quality to one's moments, and simply for those moment's sake." Thus, Baudelaire's ethic becomes, in the positive sense and in the ideal, self-cultivation, purity of the soul, and artistic creation (le Dandy) which all serve to purge the guilt of sin and to make life on earth worthy of living by creative pictures of beauty. And negatively, in all realms but the aesthetic, of course, his ethic is ineffectual (for the world of action), and sterile, as is earth from which worms and bugs have been extracted.

Beaucoup d'amis, beaucoup de gants,—
de peur de la gale. ⁶

L'Art est un agent civilisateur. ⁷

Être un homme utile m'a paru toujours quelque chose de bien hideux. ⁸

Aesthetically, and as a creative artist, Baudelaire has constantly revealed the elements of his moral and ethical beliefs. He manifested his taste for the beauty of intimacy and spirituality, qualities which he had also inherited from the Romantic literary momentum of which he was a part. Through the cult of Beauty and intense artistic examination, he conceived the integral unity of the universe and the "correspondence" of the temporal and the spiritual. He believed as well in the collective function of literature, music, and painting in the

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⁷Mon Cœur Mis à Nu, p. 75.
⁸Ibid., p. 57
portrayal of the Beauty of universal analogy. And from this "triple impression" resulted "la morale des choses."\(^9\)

His literary techniques were the stylistic correspondants of such an aesthetic attitude. His rhythm is pure, subtle, pre-labored and deliberated. Here he was a classicist. And the evocative and lyrical quality of his creation which characterized his vision in a true unity, were the products of his own genius and his own age. In summary, he leaves his reader to intuit his particular religious sense and to affirm that he was a type of genius almost singularly apart, who represented the greater tensions of his time—and ours.

As a creative critic, he insisted that the author depict his own love of God and his original portrayal of Beauty.\(^10\) He was avidly interested in the co-existence of _le Vrai_ and _le Beau_—the analytic and the synthetic—as the essential components of great art.

Thus, unfortunately for him—for his tortured existence, for the contradiction of the ideal of saintliness in a fragile and sinful body—but fortunately for us, we have forever in our reach, an example of the purest of artists, one who theoretically strove to live, create, and die according to the ideals of his Art which (if nothing else) he succeeded in deifying.

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\(^9\)__L'Art Romantique__, p. 303.

\(^{10}\)__Ibid.__, p. 374.
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