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| Baudelaire, (Charles-Pierre) Charles (1821-1867) |
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| Charles Baudelaire is a pivotal figure of modernist aesthetics. His contributions to poetry, the prose poem and criticism, as well as his focus on urban modernity and the psychological consequences of industrialization, have had an undeniable impact on modernism. He is amongst the first to have connected historical modernity to aesthetic modernity, in works such as *Les Fleurs du mal*, *Spleen de Paris (Petits poèmes en prose)*, and *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*. |
| Charles Pierre Baudelaire was born 1821 in Paris to Joseph-François Baudelaire and Caroline, née Archembaut Defayis. His father died in 1827, his mother married Jacques Aupick (a future general, ambassador and senator under the Empire), and he was sent to boarding school in 1828. He did not get along with Aupick. In the years 1839-41, he led a life of dissipation and literary bohemianism in the Latin Quarter of Paris. He became a disciple of Théophile Gautier. His family sent him on voyage to the East Indies, but he went no further than the present day Réunion (Bourbon Is.), which inspired his writings on the sea and exoticism. On his return, with the help of his inheritance, he led the life of a dandy, in the luxurious Pimodan hotel. He began a lifelong yet troubled relationship with the mulâtresse Jeanne Duval (‘Vénus Noire’). This was a happy period in which he started to write some of the FLEURS DU MAL poems. By 1844, his dandy lifestyle threatened his inheritance, and his family imposed a court order limiting him to 200 francs per month, leading him to live miserably.  1845 began his period of art criticism, with the *Salon* of 1845, the *Exposition Universelle* of 1855, and the *Salon* of 1859. In 1846-47, he discovered the works of Edgar Allen Poe and translates Poe’s *Tales* (eventually published in 1855). He was actively involved in the 1848 Revolution. Greatly disappointed and disillusioned, as were many writers and artists of his generation, he turned to literature. In the years 1852-55, he published poems in various reviews. After many years of preparation, the Fleurs Du Mal were published in 1857. Accused of immorality for the poems, he published a second edition with 35 new poems in 1861.  File: Charles Baudelaire 1860.jpg  Charles Baudelaire 1860 1  Source: Image available at <http://www.printmag.com/illustration/the-visual-art-and-design-of-famous-writers/>  The years following the publication of the Fleurs (1857-64) are accompanied by constant illness, opium addiction, hashish overuse, and the burden of debt, which forces him to produce a lot of written material. He exiled himself to Belgium in 1864, where had hopes to do some lecturing and negotiate the sale of his works. He did some lectures, but floundered in Brussels, and wrote some Poemes en Prose. He suffered an aphasial attack in 1866, which led to half paralysis, and was brought back to Paris. He died on August 31, 1867.  Baudelaire was part of the *Parnasse*, a movement that anticipates modernism by rejecting the Romantic idea of the self in favour of artistic perfection, exactness of expression, transcendence of beauty, the prioritization of the power of words, and the rejection of stereotypical language. Yet if the Parnasse was a rejection of Romanticism, it was also its inheritor. The Parnasse contained at once an aesthetic of autonomous, free expression that came from Romanticism, and the drive towards rigorous formalism of the ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ movement that was championed by Parnassian Théophile Gautier.  The Fleurs Du Mal manifests an artistic formalism that simultaneously evokes themes common to Romanticism: the ideal of beauty and escape to the exotic on the one hand, and the morbid gloom of melancholy that was so prevalent in the previous generation of writers such as Vigny, Lamartine and Sainte-Beuve, on the other. With this book, in which he declares that he ‘put all my thought, all my heart, all my religion (in disguise), all of my hate’ (letter to Ancelle, 1866), he attempts to create a pure poetry that can retrieve beauty from evil. This no longer involves the usual subjects of lyrical poetry (bucolic themes and the harmonies of nature), but contrasting the ideal and exoticism with the grey morbidity of the new urban realities of the industrial Nineteenth Century. Many other dualisms abound in this book, such as Satanism and mysticism, purity and debauchery, spleen and ideal, reverie and ennui. His verse evokes sensations through ‘correspondances’ between sound and image and anticipates RIMBAUD and MALLARMÉ.  The *Petits Poëmes en prose*, or *Spleen de Paris*, are very similar thematically to the FLEURS DU MAL, and are a ‘pendant’ to these. These prose poems search for the ‘new’ that preoccupied Baudelaire and subsequent Modernists like RIMBAUD. They attempt to escape the restriction of verse in order to reach for the ‘lyrical movements of the soul, the undulations of reverie, the somersaults of conscience’.  Baudelaire helped to define the modern as much through his poetry as through his criticism. He wrote numerous essays and studies, and art criticism. He announced innovators of the modern like Courbet, Daumier, Delacroix, Manet, and Poe.  List of Works Criticism and Essays *Salon de 1845* (1845)  *Salon de 1846* (1846), illustré par Raymond Pelez  Du vin et du haschisch (1851)  L'Art romantique (1852)  Exposition universelle (1855)  Morale du joujou (1853, rewritten in 1869)  Salon de 1859 (1859)  Réflexions sur quelques-uns de mes contemporains (1861)  Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris (1861)  Le Peintre de la vie moderne (1863)  L'œuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix (1863)  Curiosités esthétiques (1868)  L'Art romantique (1869) Diaries Fusées (1851)  Journaux intimes (1851-1862)  Mon cœur mis à nu (1864) CorrespondenceLettres Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘Mesmeric Revelation’ (1848), Tales (1856)  Longfellow’s *Hiawatha* (1860)  Thomas Hood’s *Bridge of Sighs* (1868) Poetry *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857)  *Le Poème du haschisch* (1858)  *Les Paradis artificiels* (1860)  *La Chevelure* (1861)  *Petits poèmes en prose — Le Spleen de Paris* (1862, 1864) Tales La Fanfarlo (1847), short story Theatre *Idéolus*  *La Fin de Don Juan*  *Le Marquis du 1er housards* |
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