



Central Park

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by Walter Benjamin

1.

Laforgue's hypothesis about Baudelaire's conduct in the bordello draws into correct light the whole psychoanalytical perspective which he wishes to confer on Baudelaire. Such a perspective is in step, piece for piece, with the conventional "literary-historical" one.

The particular beauty of the openings of so many of Baudelaire's poems: their emergence from the abyss.

George translated *Spleen et Idéal* with "*Triübsinn und Vergeistigung*," capturing thereby the essential meaning of *Idéal* in Baudelaire.

If it can be said that for Baudelaire modern life is the foundation of the dialectical images then included therein is the fact that Baudelaire confronted modern life in a way comparable to that in which the 17th Century confronted antiquity.

If one recalls how strictly on the one hand Baudelaire as poet had to respect his own constructions, his own insights and taboos, and how precisely circumscribed were the aims of his poetic labour on the other, then a heroic aspect enters his appearance.

2.

Spleen as a dam against pessimism. Baudelaire is no pessimist. And he is not, because for him there is a taboo on the future. It is this which distinguishes his heroism from that of Nietzsche. In Baudelaire's work there are no reflections on the future of bourgeois society and that is, in view of the character of his intimate notes, astounding. From this one circumstance can be gauged how little he counted for the endurance of his works on their effect and to what a great extent the structure of the *Fleurs du mal* is a monadological one.

The structure of the *Fleurs du mal* is not determined by any ingenious ordering of the individual poems, let alone by any secret key; it lies in the ruthless exclusion of every lyrical theme which did not bear the imprint of Baudelaire's own sorrowful (*leidvollen*) experience. And exactly because Baudelaire knew that his affliction (*Leiden*), *spleen*, and *taedium vitae* was an age-old one, he was in a position to bring into relief the imprint of his own experience with the utmost precision. If one

could be permitted a conjecture, it would be this; that little could have given him so high an opinion of his own originality as reading the Roman satirists.

3.

The "appreciation" or apology strives to cover over the revolutionary moments in the course of history. For it, what matters is the reconstruction of continuity. It lays stress only on those elements of the work which have already become part of its influence. What escapes it are the rough outcrops and jagged prongs which call a halt to those who wish to go beyond.

The cosmic shudder in Victor Hugo never has the character of naked horror which haunted Baudelaire in *Spleen*. That shudder came to the poet (Hugo) out of a universe which suited the interior in which he felt at home. He felt quite at home in this ghost world. It is the complement of the cosiness of his household, which was itself not without terror.

"*Dans le coeur immortel qui toujours veut fleurir*" (In the immortal heart which ever wishes to flower) — Toward the explication of the *Fleurs du mal* and sterility. The *Vendanges* (Vintages, seasons, wine-harvests) in Baudelaire — his most melancholic word. (*'Semper Eadem': l'imprévue*) ('Always the same': the unexpected).

Contradiction between the theory of the natural correspondences and the renunciation of nature. How is it to be resolved?

Sudden sorties, secret-mongering, surprise decisions belong to the *raison d'état* of the Second Empire and were characteristic of Napoleon III. They constitute the decisive *gestus* in Baudelaire's theoretical utterances.

4.

The decisive ferment which, entering the *taedium vitae* transforms it into *spleen*, is that of self-estrangement. Of the infinite regress of reflection, which in Romanticism simultaneously expanded living space in ever expanding circles and reduced it within ever more narrowly defined boundaries, all that remains in the *Trauer* (sorrow) of Baudelaire is the *tête-à-tête sombre et limpide* (face-to-face, sombre and limpid) of the subject with itself. Herein lies the specific "*Ernst*" (gravity) of Baudelaire. It is just this which hinders the assimilation by the poet of the Catholic world view which is reconciled with that of allegory only within the category of play. The fictitiousness (*Scheinbarkeit*) of the allegory is here no longer openly avowed, as it was in the Baroque.

Baudelaire was not supported by any style and he had no school. That severely hindered his scepticism.

The introduction of allegory answers in a far more meaningful way

the same crisis of art which, around 1852, the theory of *l'art pour l'art* was intended to counter. This crisis of the arts had its grounds in the technical as well as in the political situation.

5.

Two legends surround Baudelaire. One he spread himself and in it he appears as a monster and as the terror of the bourgeoisie (*Bürgerschreck*). The other came into being with his death and inaugurated his fame. In it he appears as a martyr. This false theological nimbus is to be shattered all along the line. For this nimbus the formula of Monnier.

One could say: Happiness sent its shudder through him. About Unhappiness one cannot say anything analogous. In the natural state Unhappiness cannot enter us.

Spleen is that feeling which corresponds to catastrophe in permanence.

The course of history as represented in the concept of catastrophe has no more claim on the attention of the thinking than the kaleidoscope in the hand of a child which, with each turn, collapses everything ordered into new order. The justness of this image is well-founded. The concepts of the rulers have always been the mirror by means of whose image an "order" was established. — This kaleidoscope must be smashed.

The grave as the secret chamber in which Eros and Sexus settle their old conflict.

In Baudelaire the stars represent the rebus-image of the commodity. They are the ever-always-the-same in great numbers.

The devaluation of the world of objects in allegory is outdone within the world of objects itself by the commodity.

6.

Jugendstil is to be represented as the second attempt of art to come to terms with technology. The first was Realism. There the problem was more or less conscious for the artists who were unsettled by the new processes of technological reproduction (*loci: ev* in the papers for the essay on reproduction). For *Jugendstil* the problem as such had already succumbed to repression. *Jugendstil* no longer grasped itself as threatened by the competing technology. But just so much more comprehensive and aggressive was the critique of technology it concealed. For *Jugendstil* it was crucial to arrest technological development. Its recourse to technological motifs derives from the attempt to . . .

What allegory was for Baudelaire has sunken in Rollinat to genre.

The motif of the *perte d'aureole* (loss of the aura or halo) is to be brought out as a decisive contrast to the motifs of *Jugendstil*.

Essence as *Jugendstil* motif.

To write history means, to give dates to their physiognomy.

Prostitution of space under the influence of hashish, when it serves everything that has been (*Spleen*).

For *Spleen* the buried (corpse) is the "transcendental Subject" of historical consciousness.

The "aureole" (halo or aura) was of special importance to *Jugendstil*. The sun with its garlands of sunbeams was never more self-satisfied and people's eyes were never more radiant than in Fidus.

7.

The motif of the androgyne, the lesbian or the barren woman is to be dealt with in relation to the destructive violence of the allegorical intention. The renunciation of the "natural" should be dealt with first in relation to the metropolis as the subject of the poet.

Meryon: the sea of houses, the ruins, the clouds, the majesty and fragility of Paris.

The opposition between antiquity and the modern to be transposed out of the pragmatic context in which it appears in Baudelaire into the allegorical.

Spleen sets centuries between the present moment and that which has just been lived. It is *spleen* which tirelessly constitutes "antiquity."

In Baudelaire the "Modern" is not based solely or chiefly on sensibility. In it (Modern) an elevated spontaneity finds expression; the modern is for Baudelaire a conquest; it has an armature. It seems that this was seen only by Jules Laforgue, when he spoke of Baudelaire's "Americanism."

8.

Baudelaire did not have the humanitarian idealism of a Victor Hugo or a Lamartine. The emotionalism of a Musset was not at his disposal. Unlike Gautier, he was not pleased by his times nor could he deceive himself about them, as did Laconte de Lisle. It was not granted him to find refuge in devotion, as it was Verlaine, nor to intensify the youthful power of his lyrical elan by a betrayal of his adulthood in the manner of Rimbaud. As rich in information as the poet is in his art, he is clumsy (*unbeholfen*) in finding evasions in the face of his times. Even "the modern" which he was so proud to have discovered — how was it rung in? The holders of power in the Second Empire did not take after the models of the bourgeois class as they had been conceived by Balzac. And in the end "the modern" became a role which perhaps only Baudelaire himself could fill. A tragic part, in which the dilettante who took the role through lack of other talent often cut a comic figure — like the

heroes presented by the hand of Daumier, to Baudelaire's applause. All this Baudelaire knew without doubt; his eccentricities, in which he himself took such pleasure, were his way of making that known. He was thus quite certainly no saviour, no martyr, not even a hero. But he had something of the mime who must play the role of "poet" before an auditorium and a society which already has no further need of the real thing, and which allows him an area in which to perform only as mime.

9.

Neuroses manufacture mass-produced articles in the psychic economy. There it has the form of the obsession. These appear in the household (*Haushalt*) of the neurotic as the always-the-same in countless number. Inversely, the idea of the eternal recurrence has in Blanqui the form of an obsession.

The idea of the eternal recurrence transforms historical events into mass-produced articles. But this conception carries also in another way — one could say: on its reverse side — the trace of the economic circumstances to which it owes its sudden actuality. These announce themselves in that moment in which the security of the conditions of life is drastically diminished by the accelerated succession of crises. The idea of eternal recurrence draws its lustre from this: that the return of conditions could not be reckoned with within shorter periods of time than those eternity used to grant. The return of everyday constellations became gradually more intermittent and this excited a dull intimation that one would have to be satisfied with the cosmic constellations. In short, habit prepared to forgo a few of its rights. Nietzsche said "I love the short habits," and Baudelaire was already, in the course of his life, incapable of developing steady habits.

10.

On the melancholic's Way to Calvary (*Passionsweg*) the allegories are the Stations of the Cross. The place of the skeleton in the erotology of Baudelaire? "*L'Élégance sans nom de l'humaine armature*" (Elegance without name of the human armature).

Impotence is the fundament of the Way to Calvary (*Passionsweg*) trodden by masculine sexuality. Historical index of this impotence. From this impotence emanates equally his involvement in the angelic image of women and his fetishism. Reference should be made to the determinacy and precision of the apparition of women (*Frauenerscheinung*) in Baudelaire. Keller's "Sin of the Poet," "To create sweet images of women/Such as the bitter earth does not harbour," is surely not his. Keller's images of women have the sweetness of chimera

because he projected his own impotence onto them. Baudelaire remains in his female figures more precise and, in a word, more French, because with him the fetishistic and the angelic element almost never come together, as they do in Keller.

Social grounds for impotence: the fantasy of the bourgeois class ceased to concern itself with the future of the productive forces unleashed by themselves (comparison between their classical utopias and those of the middle of the 19th century). The bourgeoisie, were it to have been able to concern itself further with this future, would in fact first have had to renounce the idea of a pension. In the essay on Fuchs I showed how the specific “cosiness” of the middle of the century is related to this well-grounded paralysis of social fantasy. In comparison to the images of the future of such a social fantasy, the wish to have children is perhaps only a weaker stimulant to potency. All the same, Baudelaire’s doctrine of the child as that being closest to original sin here gives away a great deal.

11.

Baudelaire’s conduct in the literary market: Baudelaire was, through his deep experience of the nature of the commodity, enabled or forced to acknowledge the market as an objective (cf. his advice to young *littérateurs*. Through his dealings with editorial offices he stood in uninterrupted contact with the market. His strategies: defamation (Musset), counterfeiting (*contrefaçon*) (Hugo). Baudelaire was perhaps the first to conceive of an originality appropriate to the market, which was at the time just for that reason more original than any other. (*créer un poncif* — to invent a cliché, trivial piece of work.) Such *création* included a certain intolerance. Baudelaire wished to create a place for his poems and to this end had to displace (*verdrängen*) others. He devalued certain poetic freedoms of the romantics by means of his classical management of the Alexandrine, and the classical poetic by means of those *caesura* and blanks within the classical verse itself which were peculiar to him. In short, his poems contain certain specific precautions for the eradication of their competitors.

12.

The figure of Baudelaire enters in a decisive way into his reputation. His story is, for the petit-bourgeois mass of readers, an *image d’Epinal*, the illustrated “life history of a libertine.” This image contributed a great deal to Baudelaire’s fame, however little those who disseminated it could be counted among his friends. This image has been overlaid by another which, if its effect has been less widespread, has probably been more lasting. In it Baudelaire appears as the bearer of an aesthetic Pas-

sion, conceptualised at the same time (in *Either-Or*) by Kierkegaard. No study of Baudelaire can arrive at the force of fact which does not come to terms with this image of his life. Certainly, this image is determined firstly and in the most reinforced way by the fact that the bourgeoisie was on the point of withdrawing its commission from the poet. What social commission could take its place? It could be sought from no class; it was most readily to be drawn from the market and its crises. Baudelaire worked in response not to the manifest short-term demand, but to the latent and long-term. The *Fleurs du mal* prove that he estimated it correctly. But the milieu of the market in which that demand presented itself to him determined a mode of production and of living very different from that of earlier poets. It was necessary for Baudelaire to claim the dignity of a poet in a society no longer capable of conferring dignity. Hence the buffoonery (*bouffonnerie*) of his behaviour.

13.

In Baudelaire the poet for the first time makes known his claim to an exhibition value. Baudelaire was his own impresario. The *perte d'auréole* (the loss of halo, or aura) affects the poet first and foremost. Hence his mythomania.

The pedantic theorems with which *l'art pour l'art* was thought, not only by its defenders at the time, (not to speak of its present ones) but especially by literary history, issue simply and appropriately in the phrase: Sensibility is the true subject of poetry. Sensibility is by its nature suffering (*leidend*). If it experiences its highest degree of concretion, its richest determination, in eroticism, it finds its ultimate consummation — which coincides with its transfiguration — in Passion. The poetics of *l'art pour l'art* enters smoothly into the poetic Passion of the *Fleurs du mal*.

Flowers adorn the particular stations of this Mount Calvary. They are the flowers of evil.

That which is touched by the allegorical intention is torn from the context of life's interconnections: it is simultaneously shattered and conserved. Allegory attaches itself to the rubble (*Trümmer*). It offers the image of transfixed unrest. The destructive impulse of Baudelaire is nowhere interested in the abolition of that which falls to him (*was ihm verfällt*).

The depiction of that which is confused is not the same as a confused depiction.

Victor Hugo's "*Attendre c'est la vie*" (Awaiting is life) — the wisdom of exile.

The new *desolation* (*Trostlosigkeit*) of Paris (cf. the passage about the *croque — morts*: undertaker's mute) enters as a decisive moment into the image of the Modern (cf. Veillot D 2,2).

14.

The figure of the lesbian woman belongs in the most precise sense among the heroic models of Baudelaire. He expresses this himself in the language of his Satanism. It can be just as easily expressed in an unmetaphysical, critical language which grasps his avowal of "the modern" in its purely political meaning. The 19th century began to incorporate women wholesale into the process of commodity production. All theoreticians agreed that their specific femininity was thus threatened; masculine traits would in the course of time appear also in women. Baudelaire affirmed these traits; but at the same time wished to deny their economic necessity. Thus it is that he comes to give a purely sexual accent to this evolving tendency in women. The model of the lesbian woman represents the protest of "the modern" against technological development. (Important to demonstrate how his dislike of George Sand is based in this context.)

Women in Baudelaire: the most precious spoils in the "Triumph of Allegory" — Life, which means Death. This quality is most unqualifiedly characterised by the whore. It is the only thing which one may not bargain for and for Baudelaire, it is the only thing that counts.

15.

To interrupt the course of the world — this is Baudelaire's deepest wish. The wish of Joshua. Not so much the prophetic; for he did not think much of change. From this wish sprang his violence, his impatience and his anger. From it too sprang the ever renewed attempts to strike at the heart of the world, or to sing it to sleep. Out of this wish came the encouragement with which he accompanied Death in its works.

One must presume that the subjects which constitute the center of Baudelaire's poetry were unattainable for a planned, goal-oriented striving: those decisive new subjects — the big city, the masses — were then also not visualized by him as such. They were not the melody which he had in mind. That was much more satanism, *spleen* and deviant eroticism. The true subjects of the *Fleurs du mal* are to be found at inconspicuous points. They are, to remain in images, the as yet untouched strings of the unheard (of) instruments upon which Baudelaire fantasised.

16.

The labyrinth is the correct route for those who always arrive at their goal early enough anyway. This goal is the market.

Gambling, flanerism (strolling), collecting — activities wagered against *spleen*.

Baudelaire demonstrates how in its decline the bourgeoisie can no longer integrate antisocial elements. When was the *garde nationale* (national guard) disbanded?

With the new production processes, which produce imitations, appearances (*Schein*) are crystallized in the commodities.

For people as they are today there is only one radical novelty, and that is always the same: Death.

Petrified unrest is also the formula for the image of Baudelaire's life, a life which knows no development.

17.

One of the *arcana* which has fallen to prostitution only with the development of the metropolis, is the masses. Prostitution opens up the possibility of a mythical communion with the masses. The rise of the masses is, however, simultaneous with that of mass-production. Prostitution at the same time appears to contain the possibility of surviving in a world (*Lebensraum*) in which the objects of our most intimate use have increasingly become mass-produced. In the prostitution of the metropolis the woman herself becomes an article that is mass-produced. It is this wholly new imprint of life in the metropolis which gives Baudelaire's reception of the dogma of original sin its real meaning. The oldest concept appears to Baudelaire tried and tested enough to master a thoroughly new, disconcerting phenomenon.

The labyrinth is the home of the hesitant. The path of someone shy of arrival at a goal easily takes the form of a labyrinth. This is the way of the drive in those episodes which precede its satisfaction. But this is also the way of mankind (the class) which does not wish to know where things are leading to.

If it is fantasy which presents the correspondences to memory, it is thinking which dedicates allegories to it. Memory brings the two together.

18.

The magnetic attraction which a few basic situations repeatedly exercised on the poet belongs to the syndrome of melancholy. Baudelaire's fantasy was familiar with stereotype images. In general he appears to have suffered the compulsion to return to each of his motifs at least once. One can compare this with the compulsion which continually

draws the criminal to the scene of the crime. The allegories are the sites upon which Baudelaire atoned for his destructive impulse. Perhaps this explains the correspondence which exists between so many of his prose pieces and the poems of the *Fleurs du mal*.

To judge Baudelaire's intellectual power by his philosophical excursions (Lemaitre) would be a great error. Baudelaire was a poor philosopher, a good theoretician, but he was incomparable only as a *Grübler* (brooder). Like the *Grübler* he possessed a stereotype of motif, an infallibility in dismissing everything which intruded, a preparedness to always place the image in the service of thought. As a historically specific type of thought the *Grübler* is the one at home among allegories.

For Baudelaire prostitution is the yeast which allows the metropolitan masses to rise in his fantasy.

19.

Majesty of the allegorical intention: destruction of the organic and living — the extinguishing of appearance (*Auslöschung des Scheins*). The very characteristic passage in which Baudelaire expresses himself on the fascination which the painted theatrical backdrop exercised upon him, should be looked up. Renunciation of the magic of distance is a decisive moment in the poetry of Baudelaire. It found its sovereign formulation in the first verse of *Le Voyage*.

For the extinguishing of appearance "*l'amour du mensonge*" (the love of falsehood or fallacy).

Une martyre und la mort des amants (The martyrdom and the death of the lovers) — Makart-interior and *Jugendstil*.

Tearing things out of the context of their usual interrelations — which is quite normal where commodities are being exhibited — is a procedure very characteristic of Baudelaire. It is related to the destruction of the organic interrelations in the allegoric intention. Cf. *une martyre* stanza 3 and 5 in its motifs of nature of the first stanza of *Madrigal triste*.

Derivation of the aura as a projection of a social experience of people onto nature: the gaze is returned.

The lack of appearances (*Scheinlosigkeit*) and the decline of the aura are identical phenomena. Baudelaire puts the artistic means of allegory at their disposal.

It is part of the sacrifices of masculine sexuality that Baudelaire must have experienced pregnancy to a certain extent as unfair competition.

It is exactly those stars which Baudelaire banished from his world which in Blanqui become the stage of eternal recurrence.

20.

Ever more callously the object world of man assumes the expression of the commodity. At the same time advertising seeks to veil the commodity character of things. In the allegorical the deceptive transfiguration of the world of the commodity resists its distortion. The commodity attempts to look itself in the face. It celebrates its becoming human in the whore.

The refunctioning of allegory in the commodity economy must be presented. It was Baudelaire's endeavour to make the aura which is peculiar to the commodity appear. In a heroic way he sought to humanize (*humanisieren*) the commodity. His attempt had its equivalent in the simultaneous attempt of the bourgeoisie to personify the commodity (*vermenschlichen*): to give the commodity, like a person, housing. This then was the promise of the *etuis* (small box), the covers, the sheaths with which the bourgeois household effects of the time were being covered.

Baudelaire's allegory bears, in contradistinction to that of the Baroque, traces of a wrath which was at such a pitch as to break into this world and to leave its harmonious structures in ruins.

In Baudelaire the heroic is the sublime and *spleen* the base form in which the demonic appears. Admittedly these categories of his "aesthetic" need to be deciphered. They may not be left standing. — The link of the heroic with antique Latin.

21.

Shock as poetic principle in Baudelaire: the *fantasque escrime* (fantastic duel) of the city of the *tableaux parisiens* which is no longer home. It is a showplace and quite foreign.

How is it that the image of the metropolis is precipitated when the register of its physical dangers is still as incomplete as it is in Baudelaire?

Emigration as a key to the metropolis.

Baudelaire never once wrote a whore-poem from the perspective of the whore (cf. *Reader for Citydwellers* 5).

Baudelaire's solitude and that of Blanqui.

Baudelaire's physiognomy as that of a mime.

To represent the *Misere* of Baudelaire before the *fond* (backdrop, foundation) of his "aesthetic Passion."

Baudelaire's ire is part of his destructive bent. One approaches the matter more closely when one recognizes in these attacks a *étrange sectionnement du temps* (strange sectioning of time).

The basic motif of *Jugendstil* is that of the transfiguration of sterility. The body is depicted predominantly in those forms which precede

sexual maturity. This thought is to be linked with that of the regressive interpretation of technology.

The Lesbian woman carries spiritualization (*Vergeistigung*) into even the womb. There she plants the lily-banner of "pure" love, which knows neither pregnancy nor family.

The title "*les limbes*" should be dealt with in the first section so that there is commentary on a title in each section: in the second "*les lesbiennes*" and in the third "*les fleurs du mal*."

22.

Baudelaire's fame, as opposed to that of Rimbaud which is more recent, has not yet known any *échéance* (expiry, falling due). The uncommon difficulty in approaching the core of Baudelaire's poetry is, to speak in a formula, this: there is about this poetry still nothing out of date.

The index of heroism in Baudelaire: to live at the heart of irreality (of appearance). To this belongs the fact that Baudelaire did not know nostalgia. Kierkegaard!

Baudelaire's poetry makes the new appear within the ever-always-the-same and the ever-always-the-same within the new.

It is to be demonstrated with every possible emphasis that the idea of eternal recurrence intrudes into the world of Baudelaire, Blanqui and Nietzsche at approximately the same moment. With Baudelaire the accent is on the new which is won with heroic effort from the "ever-always-the-same"; in Nietzsche it is on the "ever-always-the-same" which man faces with heroic composure. Blanqui is much closer to Nietzsche than to Baudelaire, but with him resignation prevails. In Nietzsche this experience projects itself cosmologically in the thesis: there will be nothing new.

23.

Baudelaire would not have written poetry had he had only those motives for writing which are usual among poets.

The historical projection of the experiences which underlie the *Fleurs du mal* is what this study should offer.

Highly specific comments of Adrienne Monnier: that which is specifically France about him: *la rogne* (the irascible). She sees in him someone in revolt: she compares him with Farque: "*maniaque, revolté contre sa propre impuissance, et qui le sait*". (maniac, rebel against his own impotence and one who knows it). She mentions also Céline. The *gauloiserie* (broad joke) is the Frenchness of Baudelaire.

Another comment of Adrienne Monnier: Baudelaire's readers are men. Women are not fond of him. To the men he represents the depic-

tion and transcendence of the lewd side (*cote ordurier*) of their libidinal life (*Triebleben*). If one goes further Baudelaire's Passion reveals itself in this light as being for many of his readers a *rachat* (repurchasing, redemption, e.g. of annuity, atonement) of certain elements of their libidinal life.

For the dialectician what is crucial is to have the wind of world-history in one's sails. Thinking means for him: setting the sails. *How* they are set, that is what is important. Words are for him only the sails. It is the way they are set which makes them into a concept.

24.

The uninterrupted resonance which the *Fleurs du mal* has found up to the present day is profoundly related to the specific aspect acquired by the metropolis where it entered poetry for the first time. This aspect is the last one would have expected. The overtones audible in Baudelaire when he conjures up Paris in his verse are those of the ruinousness and fragility of this great city. This is perhaps nowhere more perfectly suggested than in "*Crepuscule du matin*" (Twilight: Daybreak) but this aspect itself is more or less common to all of the *tableaux parisiennes*: it is expressed as much in the transparency of the city as conjured up in "*Le Soleil*" (The Sun), as in the contrast effect of the "*Reve parisien*" (Parisian reverie).

The decisive basis of Baudelaire's production is the relation of tension in which, for him, a highly intensified sensitivity stands to a highly concentrated contemplation. This is reflected theoretically in the doctrine of the *correspondances* and the doctrine of allegory. Baudelaire never made the slightest attempt to construct any connection between these speculations, each so central to his concerns. His poetry arises from the interplay of these two tendencies invested in him. What was initially taken up (*Pechméja*), and continued to have an influence on *poésie pure* was the sensitive side of his genius.

25.

Silence as aura. Maeterlinck pushes the development of the auratic to the point of monstrosity.

Brecht remarked: in the Romance peoples a refinement of the sensorium does not diminish the energy of the grasp (of life) (*des Zugriffs*). For the Germans the refinement, the increased cultivation of enjoyment is always bought at the expense of a dwindling of the force of this grasp. The capacity for enjoyment loses in density as it gains in sensibility. This comment in connection with the "*odeur de futailles*" (odour of the casks) in *le vin de chiffonniers* (Ragpicker's wine).

More important, the following remark: the eminently sensuous

refinement of a Baudelaire remains free of cosiness: This fundamental incompatibility of sensuous pleasure with cosiness is the decisive mark of a true culture of the senses. Baudelaire's snobbery is the eccentric formula of this inviolable renunciation of cosiness, and his "satanism" is nothing but the constant readiness to disrupt it where- and whenever it should appear.

26.

In the *Fleurs du mal* there are not the slightest beginnings of a description of Paris. This would suffice to distinguish them in a decisive way from later "city-poetry." Baudelaire speaks into the roar of Paris as another might speak into the roar of the surf. His speech sounds quite clearly, in so far as it can be heard. But something mixes with his speech and impairs it. His speech remains mixed with this roar, which carries it along and which gives it a darker significance.

The *faits divers* are the yeast which allows the masses of the big city to rise in Baudelaire's fantasy.

What bound Baudelaire so exclusively to Latin, and especially to late-Latin literature may, in part, have been the not so much abstract as allegorical use made by late-Latin literature of the names of the gods. Baudelaire could recognize therein a procedure akin to his own.

In the opposition to nature announced by Baudelaire there lies primarily a deep-seated protest against the "organic." In comparison to the inorganic the tool-like quality of the organic is utterly limited. It has less fungibility. Cf. Courbet's testimony: Baudelaire looked different every day.

27.

The heroic posture of Baudelaire may be the most closely related to that of Nietzsche. If Baudelaire held to his Catholicism his experience of the universe is nonetheless exactly in accordance with that fixed by Nietzsche in the phrase: God is dead.

The springs from which the heroic posture of Baudelaire drew its sustenance burst forth from the deepest fundaments of the social order which was making a way for itself around the middle of the century. They consist of those experiences as a result of which Baudelaire was taught a thing or two about incisive changes in the conditions of artistic production. These changes consisted in the commodity form of the work of art and the mass nature of its public expressing themselves more immediately and more vehemently than ever before. It was just these changes which later introduced, among other changes in the realm of art, the decline of lyrical poetry in particular. It is the unique signature of the *Fleurs du mal* that Baudelaire replied to these changes

with a book of verse. This is also the most extraordinary example of a heroic posture to be found in his existence.

"L'appareil sanglant de la Destruction" (The bloody apparatus of destruction) — these are the scattered household implements which — in the innermost chamber of Baudelaire's poetry — lie at the feet of the whore; she who has inherited all the powers of baroque allegory.

28.

The *Grübler* (brooder), whose startled gaze falls upon the fragment in his hand, becomes an allegorist.

A question kept for the conclusion: how is it possible that an attitude which, in appearance at least, is as out of keeping with its time as that of allegory takes pride of place in the poetic work of the century?

What is to be demonstrated is the antidote to myth in allegory. Myth was the easy path which Baudelaire forbade himself. A poem such as *"La vie antérieure"* (Life gone by), the title of which is close to every compromise, shows just how far Baudelaire was from myth.

Blanque quotation: *"Hommes du dix-neuvième siècle"* (Men of the 19th Century) for the conclusion.

To the image of "redemption" belongs also the firm, apparently brutal grasp (*Zugriff*).

The dialectical image is that form of the historical object which fulfils Goethe's demand for a synthetic one.

29.

Baudelaire, in posing as the receiver of alms, put the model of this society uninterruptedly to the test. His artificially maintained dependence on his mother has not only those causes stressed by psychoanalysis, but also sociological ones.

For the idea of eternal recurrence the following fact has its significance: the bourgeoisie no longer dared face the approaching development of the order of production which it had set in motion. Zarathustra's idea of an eternal recurrence and the motto on pillow anti-macassars *"Nur ein Viertelstündchen"* (Just a quarter hour) are complementary.

Fashion is the eternal recurrence of the new. Are there nevertheless motifs of redemption precisely in fashion?

The interior of Baudelaire's poems is inspired in a number of poems by the nocturnal side of the bourgeois-interior. Its counter-image is the transfigured interior of *Jugendstil*. Proust in his comments touched on only the first.

Baudelaire's distaste for travel makes the dominance of exotic images which in so many ways predominate in his poetry so much

more remarkable. In this dominance his melancholy comes into its own. Incidentally, this is a clue to the power with which the auratic element asserts its rights in his sensibility. "*Le Voyage*" is a renunciation of travel.

The correspondence between antiquity and the modern is the only constructive conception of history to be found in Baudelaire. It excluded a dialectical conception rather than contained it.

30.

A remark of Leiris: for Baudelaire, the word "*familier*" (familiar) is full of mystery and unrest; it stands for something it has never stood for before.

One of the hidden anagrams for Paris in *Spleen 1* is the word "*mortalité*."

The first lines of "*La servante au grand coeur*" (The servant with the great heart) — the words "*dont vous étiez jalouse*" (who earned your jealousy) do not have precisely *that* emphasis which one might expect. The voice draws back, as it were, from *jalouse*. And this ebbing of the voice is something highly characteristic of Baudelaire.

Remark of Leiris; the noise of Paris is not so much named — as it is, literally, in several passages (*lourds tombereaux*: heavy tip-carts) — as worked rhythmically into Baudelaire's verse.

The locus *où tout, même horreur, tourne aux enchantements* (where everything, even the horror, turns into enchantment) could hardly be better exemplified than in Poe's description of the crowd.

Remark of Leiris: the *Fleurs du mal* is *le livre de poésie le plus irréductible* (the book of poetry most irreducible) — one can understand this in the following way: that of the experience which grounded it, little has been redeemed (*eingelöst*).

31.

Male impotence — the key figure of solitude — under this sign the forces of production are brought completely to a standstill — an abyss separates the individual from his fellows.

Fog as the consolation of solitude.

The *vie antérieure* (life gone by) opens up the temporal abyss in things; solitude discloses the spatial one before human beings.

The tempo of the *flâneur* is to be confronted with the tempo of the crowd, as described by Poe. It represents a protest against the latter. Cf. the fashion for tortoises around 1839, D2a, I.

Boredom becomes an element in the process of production with its acceleration (by machinery). The *flâneur* protests with his ostentatious languor (*Gelassenheit*) against the process of production.

One encounters in Baudelaire a profusion of stereotypes, as one does in the poets of the Baroque.

A series of types, from the '*garde national*' (national guard): Mayeux, Viroloque and Baudelaire's ragpicker Garroche and the lumpen-proletarian Ratapoil.

The invective against Cupid to be sought. In connection with the invective of the allegorist against mythology, which corresponds so exactly with those of the clerics of the early Middle Ages. Cupid may have been given the epithet *jouffle* (chubby) in the passage in question. Baudelaire's loathing of him has the same roots as his hatred of Béranger.

Baudelaire's candidature of the *academie* was a sociological experiment.

The doctrine of the eternal recurrence as a dream of uncanny discoveries still to come in the field of reproduction technology.

32.

If it is accepted that the longing of the human being for a purer, more innocent, more spiritual existence than he has been granted necessarily seeks its warranty (*Unterpfand*) in nature, then it has usually found this in some kindred being in the plant or animal kingdom. Different with Baudelaire. His dream of such an existence spurns all community with all earthly nature and gives itself up to the clouds. In the first piece of the *Spleen de Paris* he says as much. Many poems take up cloud motifs. The desecration of clouds (*La Beatrice*) is the most frightful.

A hidden similarity between the *Fleurs du mal* and Dante consists in the emphasis with which the book sketches the outlines of a creative existence. One cannot imagine a book of poetry in which the poet is presented with less vanity, nor one in which he appears more powerfully. The home of the creative endowment is, in Baudelaire's experience, the Autumn. The great poet is, as it were, the creature of Autumn. "*L'Ennemi*," "*Le Soleil*." (The Enemy, The Sun.)

"*L'Essence du rire*" (The Essence of Humour) contains nothing other than the theory of satanic laughter. In it, Baudelaire goes so far as to assess even the smile from the standpoint of satanic laughter. His contemporaries often referred to something frightening in his way of laughing.

Dialectic of commodity production: the newness of the product acquires (as a stimulus to demand) a hitherto unheard-of significance; the ever-always-the-same appears palpably in mass-production for the first time.

32a.

The *souvenir* (*Das Andenken*) is the relic secularized.

The *souvenir* is the complement of the "experience" (des "*Erlebnisses*"). In it the increasing self-alienation of the person who inventories his past as dead possession is distilled. In the 19th century allegory left (*hat geräumt*) the surrounding world, in order to settle in the inner world. The relic derives from the corpse, the souvenir from deceased experience (*Erfahrung*) which calls itself euphemistically "*Erlebnis*."

The *Fleurs du mal* was the last book of poetry to have had an influence throughout Europe. And before that? Ossian, perhaps, or *Das Buch der Lieder*?

The emblems recur as commodities.

Allegory is the armature of the modern.

There is in Baudelaire a reluctance to awaken an echo, be it in the soul or in space. At times he is crass, but he is never sonorous. His mode of speech detaches itself as little from his experience, as the gestures of a perfect prelate from his person.

33.

Jugendstil appears as the productive misunderstanding by means of which the "new" has become "the modern." Naturally, this misunderstanding is already present in Baudelaire.

The modern stands in opposition to the antique, the new stands in opposition to the always-the-same. (The modern: the masses; the antique: the city Paris.)

Meryon's Paris streets: abysses, over which high above the clouds pass.

The dialectical image is one flashing up momentarily. It is thus, as an image flashing up in the *now* of its recognisability, that the past, in this case that of Baudelaire, can be captured. The redemption which can be carried out in this way and in no other is always only to be won out of the perception of that which is being lost irretrievably. The metaphorical passage from the introduction to Jochmann should be brought in here.

34.

The concept of the original contribution was not nearly so widespread or influential in Baudelaire's time as it is today. Often Baudelaire sent his poems for publication a second and even a third time, without anyone taking exception. In this he first encountered difficulties only towards the end of his life, with the *petits poèmes en prose*.

Hugo's inspiration: words present themselves to him, as do images, as a swirling mass. Baudelaire's inspiration: the words appear due to highly studied procedure at that point at which they surface, as if con-

jured into place. In this procedure the image plays a decisive role.

The significance of heroic melancholy for intoxication (*ecstasy*) (*Rausch*) and the figurative imagination is to be made clear.

In yawning a person opens himself up as an abyss: he makes himself similar to those long moments of boredom which surround him.

What's the idea? to speak of progress to a world sinking into the rigidity of death. Baudelaire found this experience of a world entering rigor mortis set down with incomparable power in Poe. What made Poe irreplaceable for him was that he described a world in which Baudelaire's literary endeavours (*Dichten und Trachten*) had its justification. Compare the head of Medusa in Nietzsche.

35.

Eternal recurrence is an attempt to link the two antinomic principles of happiness with one another: namely that of eternity and that of the yet once again. — The idea of eternal recurrence conjures out of the *Misère* (wretchedness) of (the) time the speculative idea (or the phantasmagoria) of happiness. Nietzsche's heroism is the counterpart of Baudelaire's which, out of the wretchedness of philistine routine, conjures up the phantasmagoria of the modern.

The concept of progress is to be grounded in the idea of the catastrophe. That things "just go on" is the catastrophe. It is not that which is approaching but that which is. Strindberg's thought: Hell is not something which lies ahead of us, — but *this life here*.

Redemption looks to the small fissure in the ongoing catastrophe.

The reactionary attempt to turn technically determined forms, that is: dependent variables, into constants appears in Futurism in much the same way as in *Jugendstil*.

The development which led Maeterlinck during the course of a long life to an extremely reactionary attitude is logical.

The question is to be pursued as to what extent the extremes to be grasped in redemption are those of the "too early" and the "too late."

That Baudelaire was hostile to progress was an indispensable condition of his being able to cope with Paris in his poetry. Compared to his, later city poetry must be accounted feeble, and not least where it sees the city as the seat of progress. But Walt Whitman?

36.

It is the cogent social reasons for male impotence which make the way to Calvary (*Passionsweg*) trodden by Baudelaire into one marked out for him by society. Only thus can we understand that as travelling allowance he received an ancient, precious coin out of the accumulated

treasures of this European society. On the head side it was struck with a skeleton: on the other, as emblem, it bore Melancholia, sunk in brooding (*Grübeleien*). This coin was allegory.

The Passion of Baudelaire as an *image d'Épinal* (a sentimental religious poster) in the style of the usual literature on Baudelaire.

The "*Reve parisien*" (Parisian reverie) — the fantasy of forces of production brought to a standstill.

In Baudelaire machinery becomes a cipher of destructive forces. The human skeleton is not least among such machinery.

The dwelling-like character of early factory halls had, for all its barbarity and dysfunctionality, this peculiarity: that the factory owner in them is to be thought, so to speak, as a dummy sunk in the contemplation of his machines, dreaming not only of his own, but also of their future greatness. Fifty years after Baudelaire's death this dream had been dreamed out.

Baroque allegory sees the corpse only from the outside. Baudelaire sees it also from the inside.

That the stars do not appear in Baudelaire provides the most conclusive conception of that renunciation of appearances (*Scheinlosigkeit*) which is a tendency in his poetry.

37.

That Baudelaire felt drawn to late Latin may be connected with the force of his allegorical intention.

Considering the significance of the forbidden forms of sexuality in the life and work of Baudelaire it is remarkable that the brothel plays not the slightest role in either his private documents or his work. There is in this sphere no counterpart to a poem such as "*Le jeu*" (cf. though, *deux bonnes soeurs*) ("Two bonny sisters").

The introduction of allegory is to be derived from the situation of art as determined by technical developments. And on the basis of this the melancholic disposition of this poetry may be presented.

In the *flâneur*, one could say, the idler (*Müssiggänger*) whom Socrates engaged as his partner in discussion in the Athenian market place, returns. Only there is no longer a Socrates and so he remains unengaged. And even the slave labour has come to an end which guaranteed him his idleness (*Müssiggang*).

The key to Baudelaire's relation to Gautier should be sought in the more or less clear consciousness of the younger that this destructive impulse had even with regard to art no unconditional limits. And indeed for the allegorical intention these limits are certainly not absolute. Baudelaire's reactions against the *école néopaienne* (neo-pagan school) make this connection clear. He could hardly have written his

essay on Dupont if Dupont's radical critique of the concept of art did not correspond to an equally radical one of his own. Baudelaire sought, successfully, by means of his invocation of Gautier, to hush up these tendencies.

38.

It cannot be denied that it is part of the peculiarity of Hugo's belief in progress and his pantheism that it should be in agreement with the message of knocking tables. The disquiet aroused by this fact recedes however before that which is bound up with the continuous communication of his poetry with the world of the knocking spirits. For what is exceptional is in fact much less that his poetry takes up or appears to take up motifs of spiritualistic revelation than that he displays it before the realm of the spirits. This spectacle is difficult to unite with the attitude of other poets.

In Hugo it is the masses through which nature exercises its elementary right over the city (J 32, 1).

On the concept of the multitude and the (relation) of "crowd" (*Menge*) and "masses" (*Masse*).

In allegory the original interest is not linguistic but optic. "*Les images, ma grande, ma primitive passion*" (The images, my grand, my primitive passion).

Question: When did the commodity come to the fore in the image of the city? It could be crucial to have statistical information about the intrusion of the shop-window into façades.

39.

The mystification in Baudelaire is an apotropaic, evil-averting magic, just as is the lie of the prostitute.

Many of his poems have their most incomparable passage at the beginning — there, where they are so to speak new. This has often been remarked on.

Baudelaire had the mass-produced article before his eyes as a model. His "Americanism" had therein its most solid foundation. He wished to publish a "*poncif*" (conventional piece of work). Lemaitre assured him that he had been successful.

The commodity has taken the place of the allegorical way of seeing.

In the form which prostitution took in the great cities woman appears not merely as a commodity but as a mass-produced article. This is indicated in the artificial disguise of the individual expression in favour of a professional one, such as is brought about by the applica-

tion of make-up. That it was this aspect of the whore which was sexually definitive for Baudelaire is borne out not least by the fact that in his many evocations of the whore the brothel never forms the background, as the street so often does.

40.

It is very important that for Baudelaire the "new" makes no contribution at all to progress. In general one finds in Baudelaire hardly any attempt to come to terms with the conception of progress in a serious way. It is above all the "belief in progress" which he persecutes with his hate, as if it were heresy, false doctrine, rather than a simple error. Blanqui, for his part, displays no hatred of the belief in progress; he overwhelms it on the quiet with his scorn. And it is by no means certain that he was unfaithful to his political credo in this. The activity of the professional conspirator, such as Blanqui was, does not in any way presuppose a belief in progress, but merely a determination to do away with the injustice of the time. This determination to snatch mankind at the last moment from the catastrophe which is always threatening was decisive for Blanqui in particular, more so than for any other revolutionary politician of the period. Blanqui always declined to draw up plans for that which came "later." Baudelaire's behaviour in 1848 is clearly compatible with all of this.

41.

In the end Baudelaire, faced with the limited success his work had had, threw himself into the bargain. He flung himself after the work and thus to the end proved in his own person what he considered the unavoidable necessity of prostitution for the poet.

It is one of the decisive questions for the understanding of Baudelaire's poetry: in which ways had the face of prostitution altered with the growth of the great cities. For so much is certain: Baudelaire gives expression to this change, it is one of the chief objects of his poetry. With the rise of the great cities prostitution came into possession of new secrets. One of these is the labyrinthine character of the city itself. The labyrinth, whose image had passed into flesh and blood in the *flâneur*, is at the same time colourfully framed by prostitution. Thus the first arcanum which it disposes of is the mythical aspect of the city as labyrinth. To this belongs, self-evidently, an image of the minotaur at its centre. That he should bring death to the individual is not crucial. What is really crucial is the image of the death-dealing forces which he embodies. And this, too, for the inhabitant of the metropolis, is something new.

42.

The *Fleurs du mal* as arsenal; Baudelaire wrote certain of his poems in order to destroy others written before his own. In this way Valéry's well-known reflection might be enlarged upon.

It is exceptionally important — and this, too, to be said to complement Valéry's note — that Baudelaire stumbled on relations of competition in poetic production. Of course, personal rivalries between poets are nothing new. Here, however, it is a question precisely of the transposition of such rivalry into the sphere of competition on the open market. It is this, not the protection of a prince, which is to be conquered. But in this sense it was a real discovery of Baudelaire's that he was ranged against *individuals*. The disorganization of the poetic schools, and of "style" is the complement of the open market which reveals itself to the poet as the public. With Baudelaire the public as such moves for the first time into the field of vision — this is the precondition for his not having fallen prey to the "appearances" (*Schein*) of poetic schools. And inversely: because the "schools" presented themselves to his eyes as merely superficial structures, the public seemed to be a more lasting reality.

43.

Distinction between an allegory and a parable (*Allegorie und Gleichnis*).

Baudelaire and Juvenal. What is decisive is that when Baudelaire depicts depravity and vice he always includes himself. The gesture of the satirist was unknown to him. Certainly this applied only to the *Fleurs du mal*, which show themselves in this stance to be quite different from the prose writings.

Fundamental observations on the relationship which exists for the poets between their prose writings and their poetry. In their poetry they open up a region of their own interior not normally accessible to their reflection. This is to be demonstrated for Baudelaire — with reference to others such as Kafka and Hamsun.

The duration of a literary work's influence stands in inverse relation to the conspicuousness (*Augenfälligkeit*) of its subject matter (*Sachgehalt*). (Truth content (*Wahrheitsgehalt*)? see essay on the *Elective Affinities*.).

The *Fleurs du mal* have certainly gained in stature through the fact that Baudelaire left no novel.

44.

Melanchthon's term *Melencolia illa heroica* (this heroic melancholy) characterises Baudelaire's gift most perfectly. Melancholy bears in the 19th century a different character, however, to that which it bore in the

17th. The key figure of the early allegory is the corpse. The key figure of the later allegory is the “*souvenir*” (*Andenken*). The “*souvenir*” is the schema of the transformation of the commodity into a collector’s object. The *correspondances* are the endlessly multiple resonances of each *souvenir* with all the others. “*J’ai plus de souvenirs que si j’avais mille ans*” (I have more memories than if I were a thousand years old).

The heroic tenor of the Baudelairean inspiration shows itself in this, that with him memory (*die Erinnerung*) recedes in favour of remembrances (*des Andenkens*). In his work there are noticeably few “childhood memories.”

Baudelaire’s eccentric peculiarity was a mask behind which, one could say out of shame, he sought to conceal the supra-individual necessity of his way of life, and, to a certain extent, his fate.

From his 17th year Baudelaire led the life of a man of letters. One cannot say that he ever termed himself an “intellectual” (*Geistiger*) or engaged himself on behalf of the “things of the mind” (*das Geistige*). The trademark for artistic production had not yet been discovered.

45.

On the truncated ending of materialist studies (in contrast to the ending of the Baroque book).

The allegorical mode of seeing which shaped style in the 17th Century no longer did so in the 19th. Baudelaire was isolated; as an allegorist his isolation was in certain respects that of a straggler (*Nachzügler*). (His theories emphasise this belatedness [*Rückständigkeit*] sometimes in a provocative way.) If the style-shaping power of allegory in the 19th century was weak, so too was the seduction to routine which left so many traces in the poetry of the 17th. This routine inhibited to a certain degree the destructive tendency of allegory, its emphasis on the fragmentary in the work of art.

*Translated by Lloyd Spencer
with the help of Mark Harrington*

Notes to the translation of *Central Park*

1.1 LaForge’s hypothesis: Laforge interpreted a dream of Baudelaire’s as indicating that he was sexually inhibited even with prostitutes and probably visited bordellos mainly as a voyeur. René Laforge, *L’échec de Baudelaire. Etude psychoanalytique sur la nevrose de Charles Baudelaire* (Paris, 1931). A more recent attempt to use the same dream material (from a letter of Baudelaire’s dated 13 March 1856) to throw light on the character of the *Fleurs du mal* and on Baudelaire’s writing itself is provided by Michel Butor in *Histoire Extraordinaire* (London, 1969).

1.3 *Trübsinn*: dejection, low spirits.

Vergeistigung: spiritualisation, investing with spirit (compare CP 21.10). Benjamin recognised that it was a certain 'elective affinity' which lay at the basis of the interest in Baudelaire of the poets and prophets of aestheticism, Mallarmé and the Symbolists and, in Benjamin's own time, Stefan George and the circle around him. Nevertheless a good deal of Benjamin's energy was directed at overcoming the mystification encouraged by George and his followers.

George's translation of '*Idéal*,' by substituting for a noun a participle, brings out the active side of the concept; spirit (*Geist*) is something with which things are — in the notion of *Vergeistigung* — invested; in this way the fetishistic character of this form of spiritualism is brought to the fore.

Spleen has resonances which the German *Trübsinn* simply could never carry. These include the rage, the frenzy, the ire which Baudelaire invokes; they include other aspects of the doctrine of the four humours, and the analysis of melancholy in particular, which Benjamin, who had incorporated this into his study of Baroque *Trauerspiel*, was in a good position to comprehend.

2.2 *Leiden*: suffering, also in the sense of the Passion of Christ cf. 10.1 and 10.2. *leid-vollen*: literally, full of suffering, but *leidenschaftlich*: passionate.

3.5 *Gestus*: a key word in Benjamin's exposition of Brecht's epic theatre, meaning both "gesture" and "gist," cf. *Understanding Brecht* (NLB, London, 1973), pp. 11, 19.

4.1 *Scheinbarkeit*: *Schein* or appearance is a key category of German idealist philosophy, and of Benjamin's study of the phantasmagoria of the 19th century. *Scheinbarkeit*, the quality of being (mere) appearance, or, here, revealing its status as appearance. Cf. 19.1 and 19.2.

5.1 Monnier. Adrienne Monnier (cf. 23.3 and 23.4) with whom Benjamin evidently had several discussions about Baudelaire.

6.1 *Jugendstil*: literally, the style of youth, the specifically German form of Art Nouveau, covered a wide range of artistic media and styles. The ideas of *Jugendstil* were related to the sentiments and stereotypes, the "heroes" of George's poetry. In a note S5,3 in the *Arcades* project Benjamin suggests that *Jugendstil* should be related to the *Jugendbewegung*, or Youth Movement. Fidus (cf. 6.8) was an artist who drew for publications of the Youth Movement.

6.8 Fidus illustrated the cover of the journal of the Free German Youth after their mass meeting in October 1913 at the Hohe Meissner, a meeting which saw the high point of Wyneken's influence. Fidus specialised in youths in rather cloudy nakedness. He later attempted to place his talents at the service of National Socialism but was rejected as being too decadent.

7.2 Meryon: Meryon's graphics depicting the streets and the architecture of Paris were much admired by Baudelaire. (Cf. Benjamin's discussion of their relationship in *CB* (London, NLB, 1973, re-issued 1983), p. 86 ff.)

10.1 *Skeleton/armature*. The French *armature* refers to both the animal skeleton, and to the armature of a machine.

10.2 Keller. Gottfried Keller, 19th century Swiss novelist and poet.

10.4 The essay on Fuchs. In *One-Way Street* (NLB, London, 1979), pp. 349-386 see esp. p. 358.

12 Epinal, a French town famous for its production of religious paintings, sentimental and consoling.

18.2 *Grübler*: an untranslatable word which deserves to become part of our English vocabulary, as has "*flâneur*." A *Grübler* is an excessively reflective, brooding individual. As an intellectual type he is well characterised in late Medieval and Renaissance and Baroque theories of melancholy. Cf. for example Robert Burton's (1638) *Anatomy of Melancholy*; also Benjamin's own discussion in *Origins of German Tragic Drama* (NLB, London, 1977), pp. 145-158. For the most comprehensive and authoritative study of the

theories of melancholy see *Saturn and Melancholy* by Klibansky, Saxl and Panofsky (Nelson, London, 1964). (Benjamin draws on the 1923 study of Dürer by Panofsky and Saxl in which this study first received a firm basis.)

23.3 *la rogne*: temper. *Etre en rogne*: to be cross, in a temper.

24.4 Reader for Citydwellers by Bertolt Brecht. Cf. *Understanding Brecht*, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

26.2 *faits divers*: brief news items.

30.1 Leiris: Pierre Leiris, a friend of Benjamin's, who planned to translate the "Work of Art" essay into French.

30.6 *eingelöst*: honoured, redeemed, turned into cash.

32. *Unterfand*: a pledge, such as a pawn pledge, pawn token.

32.4 *rachat*: a repurchase, a buying back (theology: redemption). Benjamin uses words which evoke the world of pawn-broking, in these contexts where spiritual and psychological ploys are under discussion.

32a.1 *Souvenir*: the word occurs frequently in Baudelaire where it refers to a memory. *Souvenir* and Benjamin's German term *Andenken* (remembrance) includes a meaning, obvious to English-speakers, of a keepsake, an inanimate memento.

32a.2 *Erlebnis*. Benjamin opposes two forms of "experience," *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. *Erlebnis* refers to a more vivid, often momentary, lived experience. The misuse of the term *Erlebnis* within the tradition of *Lebensphilosophie*, from Dilthey through to Bergson, but also to some of the more mystificatory German thinkers who stood close to Fascism induced in Benjamin a critical distance from the term, whose genealogy and social origins and content Benjamin attempted to decode. Cf. the discussion of changes in the nature of experience in 'On Some Motifs,' *CB* (London, NLB, 1973), pp. 107-155. From quite early on Benjamin uses the term *Erlebnis* critically, or negatively; for instance in his scorn for Martin Buber's appeal to the Jewish *Erlebnis*.

Erfahrung is the more general term, and — at least in pre-capitalist society — represents the most common form of experience. It is simply everything experienced or learned by experience. *Erfahrung* is thus not antagonistic to habit, for we learn by experience or practice. The fruits of such experience (*Erfahrung*) can be passed on from generation to generation, can be encoded in parables and stories. The intensities of the *Erlebnis* occur only relatively seldom. They can be cultivated by the select, and lyrical poetry attempts to translate into words what is incommensurable in *Erlebnis*.

Benjamin is suspicious of the intensity of present experience except where it includes as a component an authentic attitude or response to the past. Benjamin pursues the opposition between types of experience *Erlebnis* (which can degenerate into a vacuous intensity of the present) and *Erfahrung* (which has an essential relation to continuity with the past) into the opposition he draws between different types of memory: *Erinnerung* (recollection, reminiscence) (based on the kind of continuity embodied in *Erfahrung* but, just for that reason, under threat) and *Gedächtnis* and *Andenken*, the active remembrance of the past, on the basis of real discontinuity (cf. CP 44.2). Irving Wohlfarth ('On the Messianic Structure of Walter Benjamin's Last Reflections,' *Glyph*, No. 3, 1978, pp. 148-212) gives a detailed and helpful account of these distinctions.

33.4 The 'now' — *das Jetzt*. Benjamin's notion of a *Jetztzeit*, or time of the Now (developed in his theses 'On the Concept of History') is not unrelated to the mystic *nu*, or the role it plays in the more or less secular critique of historical time in Franz von Baader, Ludwig Klages, Martin Heidegger or Ernst Bloch.

33.4 The metaphorical passage from the introduction of Jochmann cf. Carl Gustav Jochmann, *Die Rückschritte der Poesie*, GS II (2), p. 577-78.

34.4 Long moments: what Benjamin says is that the yawning person makes himself similar to the boredom (*Langweile*) which surrounds him. Lange Weile: literally, long moments.

43 Essay on the *Elective Affinities*. Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften* (GSI(1), 123). The distinction between 'truth content' and 'subject matter' is developed by Benjamin in a passage translated into English in Hannah Arendt's introduction to Walter Benjamin *Illuminations* (London, Fontana, 1973), p. 4 f. In amended translation it reads:

Critique is concerned with the truth content of a work of art, commentary with its subject matter. The relationship between the two is determined by that basic law of literature according to which the more meaningful the truth content of a work is, the more inconspicuously and intimately it is bound up with the subject matter. If, therefore, it turns out to be precisely those works which endure whose truth is most deeply embedded in their subject matter, their *realia* become all the more striking in the work in the course of time as they fade from the world. Thus subject matter and truth content, united in the work's early period, separate during its afterlife; the truth content remains in concealment while the subject matter comes to the fore. The interpretation of the striking and the odd, that is of the subject matter, becomes thus more and more a prerequisite for any later critic. One may liken him to a paleographer in front of a parchment whose faded text is covered by the stronger outlines of a script referring to that text. Just as the paleographer must start by reading the script, the critic must begin by commenting on the work. And from this activity there immediately arises an inestimable criterion of his judgment: only now can he ask the critical and fundamental question — whether the appearance of the truth content is due to the subject matter, or the life of the subject matter due to its truth content. For in separating from one another in the work, they decide its immortality. In this sense the history of works of art prepares their criticism and it is thus that historical distance increases their power. If, to use a simile, one views the growing work as a burning funeral pyre the commentator faces it as would a chemist, the critic as an alchemist. Where wood and ash remain the sole objects of the former's analysis, for the latter the flames remain an enigma: the enigma of being alive. Thus the critic enquires after truth, whose living flame goes on burning over the heavy pyre of the past and the light ashes of what has been lived through. (Transl. altered.)

44.1 Melanchthon: Early Renaissance scholar influential in dissemination of doctrine of melancholy, especially its elevation into theory of visionary artistic genius through creative misreading of Aristotle and Plato.