

# On Some Motifs in Baudelaire

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## I

Baudelaire envisaged readers to whom the reading of lyric poetry would present difficulties. The introductory poem of *Les Fleurs du mal* is addressed to these readers. Willpower and the ability to concentrate are not their strong points. What they prefer is sensual pleasure; they are familiar with the “spleen” which kills interest and receptiveness. It is strange to come across a lyric poet who addresses himself to such readers—the least rewarding type of audience. There is of course a ready explanation for this. Baudelaire wanted to be understood; he dedicates his book to those who are like him. The poem addressed to the reader ends with the salutation: “Hypocrite lecteur,—mon semblable,—mon frère!”<sup>1</sup> It might be more fruitful to put it another way and say: Baudelaire wrote a book which from the very beginning had little prospect of becoming an immediate popular success. The kind of reader he envisaged is described in the introductory poem, and this turned out to have been a far-sighted judgment. He would eventually find the reader his work was intended for. This situation—the fact, in other words, that the conditions for the reception of lyric poetry have become increasingly unfavorable—is borne out by three particular factors, among others. First of all, the lyric poet has ceased to represent the poet per se. He is no longer a “minstrel,” as Lamartine still was; he has become the representative of a genre.<sup>2</sup> (Verlaine is a concrete example of this specialization; Rimbaud must already be regarded as an esoteric figure, a poet who, ex officio, kept a distance between his public and his work.)<sup>3</sup> Second, there has been no success on a mass scale in lyric poetry since Baudelaire. (The

lyric poetry of Victor Hugo was still capable of evoking powerful reverberations when it first appeared. In Germany, Heine's *Buch der Lieder* marks a watershed.)<sup>4</sup> The third factor follows from this—namely, the greater coolness of the public, even toward the lyric poetry that has been handed down as part of its own cultural heritage. The period in question dates back roughly to the mid-nineteenth century. Throughout this span, the fame of *Les Fleurs du mal* has steadily increased. This book, which the author expected would be read by the least indulgent of readers and which was at first read by only a few indulgent ones, has, over the decades, acquired the stature of a classic and become one of the most widely printed ones as well.

If conditions for a positive reception of lyric poetry have become less favorable, it is reasonable to assume that only in rare instances does lyric poetry accord with the experience of its readers. This may be due to a change in the structure of their experience. Even though one may approve of this development, one may find it difficult to specify the nature of the change. Turning to philosophy for an answer, one encounters a strange situation. Since the end of the nineteenth century, philosophy has made a series of attempts to grasp "true" experience, as opposed to the kind that manifests itself in the standardized, denatured life of the civilized masses. These efforts are usually classified under the rubric of "vitalism." Their point of departure, understandably enough, has not been the individual's life in society. Instead they have invoked poetry, or preferably nature—most recently, the age of myths. Dilthey's book *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* represents one of the earliest of these efforts, which culminate with Klages and Jung, who made common cause with fascism.<sup>5</sup> Towering above this literature is Bergson's early monumental work, *Matière et mémoire*.<sup>6</sup> To a greater extent than the other writings in this field, it preserves links with empirical research. It is oriented toward biology. As the title suggests, it regards the structure of memory [*Gedächtnis*] as decisive for the philosophical structure of experience [*Erfahrung*].<sup>7</sup> Experience is indeed a matter of tradition, in collective existence as well as private life. It is the product less of facts firmly anchored in memory [*Erinnerung*] than of accumulated and frequently unconscious data that flow together in memory [*Gedächtnis*]. Of course, the historical determination of memory is not at all Bergson's intention. On the contrary, he rejects any historical determination of memory. He thus manages to stay clear of that experience from which his own philosophy evolved, or, rather, in reaction to which it arose. It was the alienating, blinding experience of the age of large-scale industrialism. In shutting out this experience, the eye perceives a complementary experience—in the form of its spontaneous afterimage, as it were. Bergson's philosophy represents an attempt to specify this afterimage and fix it as a permanent record. His philosophy thus indirectly furnishes a clue to the experience which presented itself undistorted to Baudelaire's eyes, in the figure of his reader.

## II

The reader of *Matière et mémoire*, with its particular definition of the nature of experience in *durée*,<sup>8</sup> is bound to conclude that only a poet can be the adequate subject of such an experience. And it was indeed a poet who put Bergson's theory of experience to the test. Proust's work *A la Recherche du temps perdu* may be regarded as an attempt to produce experience, as Bergson imagines it, in a synthetic way under today's social conditions, for there is less and less hope that it will come into being in a natural way. Proust, incidentally, does not evade the question in his work. He even introduces a new factor, one that involves an immanent critique of Bergson. Bergson emphasized the antagonism between the *vita activa* and the specific *vita contemplativa* which arises from memory. But he leads us to believe that turning to the contemplative realization of the stream of life is a matter of free choice. From the start, Proust indicates his divergent view in his choice of terms. In his work the *mémoire pure* of Bergson's theory becomes a *mémoire involontaire*. Proust immediately confronts this involuntary memory with a voluntary memory, one that is in the service of the intellect. The first pages of his great novel are devoted to making this relationship clear. In the reflection which introduces the term, Proust tells us that for many years he had a very indistinct memory of the town of Combray, where he had spent part of his childhood. One afternoon, the taste of a kind of pastry called a *madeleine* (which he later mentions often) transported him back to the past, whereas before then he had been limited to the promptings of a memory which obeyed the call of conscious attention. This he calls *mémoire volontaire*. Its signal characteristic is that the information it gives about the past retains no trace of that past. "It is the same with our own past. In vain we try to conjure it up again; the efforts of our intellect are futile." In sum, Proust says that the past is situated "somewhere beyond the reach of the intellect and its field of operations, in some material object . . . , though we have no idea which one it is. And whether we come upon this object before we die, or whether we never encounter it, depends entirely on chance."<sup>9</sup>

According to Proust, it is a matter of chance whether an individual forms an image of himself, whether he can take hold of his experience. But there is nothing inevitable about the dependence on chance in this matter. A person's inner concerns are not by nature of an inescapably private character. They attain this character only after the likelihood decreases that one's external concerns will be assimilated to one's experience. Newspapers constitute one of many indications of such a decrease. If it were the intention of the press to have the reader assimilate the information it supplies as part of his own experience, it would not achieve its purpose. But its intention is just the opposite, and it is achieved: to isolate events from the realm in which

they could affect the experience of the reader. The principles of journalistic information (newness, brevity, clarity, and, above all, lack of connection between the individual news items) contribute as much to this as the layout of the pages and the style of writing. (Karl Kraus never tired of demonstrating the extent to which the linguistic habitus of newspapers paralyzes the imagination of their readers.)<sup>10</sup> Another reason for the isolation of information from experience is that the former does not enter "tradition." Newspapers appear in large editions. Few readers can boast of having any information that another reader may need from them.—Historically, the various modes of communication have competed with one another. The replacement of the older relation by information, and of information by sensation, reflects the increasing atrophy of experience. In turn, there is a contrast between all these forms and the story, which is one of the oldest forms of communication. A story does not aim to convey an event per se, which is the purpose of information; rather, it embeds the event in the life of the storyteller in order to pass it on as experience to those listening. It thus bears the trace of the storyteller, much the way an earthen vessel bears the trace of the potter's hand.

Proust's eight-volume novel gives some idea of the effort it took to restore the figure of the storyteller to the current generation. Proust undertook this task with magnificent consistency. From the outset, this involved him in a fundamental problem: reporting on his own childhood. In saying that it was a matter of chance whether the problem could be solved at all, he took the measure of its difficulty. In connection with these reflections, he coined the phrase *mémoire involontaire*. This concept bears the traces of the situation that engendered it; it is part of the inventory of the individual who is isolated in various ways. Where there is experience [*Erfahrung*] in the strict sense of the word, certain contents of the individual past combine in the memory [*Gedächtnis*] with material from the collective past.<sup>11</sup> Rituals, with their ceremonies and their festivals (probably nowhere recalled in Proust's work), kept producing the amalgamation of these two elements of memory over and over again. They triggered recollection<sup>12</sup> at certain times and remained available to memory throughout people's lives. In this way, voluntary and involuntary recollection cease to be mutually exclusive.

### III

In seeking a more substantial definition of what appears in Proust's *mémoire de l'intelligence* as a by-product of Bergson's theory, we would do well to go back to Freud. In 1921 Freud published his essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which hypothesizes a correlation between memory (in the sense of *mémoire involontaire*) and consciousness.<sup>13</sup> The following re-

marks, though based on that essay, are not intended to confirm it; we shall have to content ourselves with testing the fruitfulness of Freud's hypothesis in situations far removed from the ones he had in mind when he wrote. Such situations are more likely to have been familiar to Freud's pupils. Some of Reik's writings on his own theory of memory are in line with Proust's distinction between involuntary and voluntary recollection.<sup>14</sup> "The function of memory [*Gedächtnis*]," Reik writes, "is to protect our impressions; reminiscence [*Erinnerung*] aims at their dissolution. Memory is essentially conservative; reminiscence, destructive."<sup>15</sup> Freud's fundamental thought, on which these remarks are based, is the assumption that "emerging consciousness takes the place of a memory trace."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, "it would be the special characteristic of consciousness that, unlike what happens in all other systems of the psyche, the excitatory process does not leave behind a permanent change in its elements, but expires, as it were, in the phenomenon of becoming conscious." The basic formula of this hypothesis is that "becoming conscious and leaving behind a memory trace are incompatible processes within one and the same system." Rather, vestiges of memory are "often most powerful and most enduring when the incident which left them behind was one that never entered consciousness." Put in Proustian terms, this means that only what has not been experienced explicitly and consciously, what has not happened to the subject as an isolated experience [*Erlebnis*], can become a component of *mémoire involontaire*. According to Freud, the attribution of "permanent traces as the basis of memory" to processes of stimulation is reserved for "other systems," which must be thought of as different from consciousness. In Freud's view, consciousness as such receives no memory traces whatever, but has another important function: protection against stimuli. "For a living organism, protection against stimuli is almost more important than the reception of stimuli. The protective shield is equipped with its own store of energy and must above all strive to preserve the special forms of conversion of energy operating in it against the effects of the excessive energies at work in the external world—effects that tend toward an equalization of potential and hence toward destruction." The threat posed by these energies is the threat of shocks. The more readily consciousness registers these shocks, the less likely they are to have a traumatic effect. Psychoanalytic theory strives to understand the nature of these traumatic shocks "in terms of how they break through the shield that protects against stimuli." According to this theory, fright gains "significance" in proportion to the "absence of any preparedness for anxiety."

Freud's investigation was occasioned by the sort of dream that may afflict accident survivors—those who develop neuroses which cause them to relive the catastrophe in which they were involved. Dreams of this kind, accord-

ing to Freud, "endeavor to master the stimulus retroactively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis." Valéry seems to have had something similar in mind. The coincidence is worth noting, for Valéry was among those interested in the special functioning of psychic mechanisms under present-day conditions.<sup>17</sup> (Moreover, Valéry was able to reconcile this interest with his poetic production, which remained exclusively lyric. He thus emerges as the only author who goes back directly to Baudelaire.) "The impressions and sense perceptions of humans," Valéry writes, "actually belong in the category of surprises; they are evidence of an insufficiency in humans. . . . Recollection is . . . an elemental phenomenon which aims at giving us the time for organizing 'the reception of stimuli' which we initially lacked."<sup>18</sup> The reception of shocks is facilitated by training in coping with stimuli; if need be, dreams as well as recollection may be enlisted. As a rule, however—so Freud assumes—this training devolves upon the wakeful consciousness, located in a part of the cortex which is "so frayed by the effect of the stimulus" that it offers the most favorable situation for the reception of stimuli. That the shock is thus cushioned, parried by consciousness, would lend the incident that occasions it the character of an isolated experience [*Erlebnis*], in the strict sense. If it were incorporated directly in the register of conscious memory, it would sterilize this incident for poetic experience [*Erfahrung*].

One wonders how lyric poetry can be grounded in experience [*einer Erfahrung*] for which exposure to shock [*Chockerlebnis*] has become the norm. One would expect such poetry to have a large measure of consciousness; it would suggest that a plan was at work in its composition. This is indeed true of Baudelaire's poetry; it establishes a connection between him and Poe, among his predecessors, and with Valéry, among his successors. Proust's and Valéry's reflections on Baudelaire complement each other providentially. Proust wrote an essay on Baudelaire which is actually surpassed in significance by certain reflections in his novels. In his "Situation de Baudelaire," Valéry supplies the classic introduction to *Les Fleurs du mal*. "Baudelaire's problem," he writes, "must have posed itself in these terms: 'How to be a great poet, but neither a Lamartine nor a Hugo nor a Musset.'<sup>19</sup> I do not say that this ambition was consciously formulated, but it must have been latent in Baudelaire's mind; it even constituted the essential Baudelaire. It was his *raison d'état*."<sup>20</sup> There is something odd about referring to "reason of state" in the case of a poet. There is something remarkable about it: the emancipation from isolated experiences [*Erlebnisse*]. Baudelaire's poetic production is assigned a mission. Blank spaces hovered before him, and into these he inserted his poems. His work cannot be categorized merely as historical, like anyone else's, but it intended to be so and understood itself as such.

## IV

The greater the shock factor in particular impressions, the more vigilant consciousness has to be in screening stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less these impressions enter long experience [*Erfahrung*] and the more they correspond to the concept of isolated experience [*Erlebnis*]. Perhaps the special achievement of shock defense is the way it assigns an incident a precise point in time in consciousness, at the cost of the integrity of the incident's contents. This would be a peak achievement of the intellect; it would turn the incident into an isolated experience. Without reflection, there would be nothing but the sudden start, occasionally pleasant but usually distasteful, which, according to Freud, confirms the failure of the shock defense. Baudelaire has portrayed this process in a harsh image. He speaks of a duel in which the artist, just before being beaten, screams in fright. This duel is the creative process itself. Thus, Baudelaire placed shock experience [*Chockerfahrung*] at the very center of his art. This self-portrait, which is corroborated by evidence from several contemporaries, is of great significance. Since Baudelaire was himself vulnerable to being frightened, it was not unusual for him to evoke fright. Vallès tells us about his eccentric grimaces; on the basis of a portrait by Nargeot, Pontmartin establishes Baudelaire's alarming appearance; Claudel stresses the cutting quality he could give to his utterances; Gautier speaks of the italicizing Baudelaire indulged in when reciting poetry; Nadar describes his jerky gait.<sup>21</sup>

Psychiatry is familiar with traumatophile types. Baudelaire made it his business to parry the shocks, no matter what their source, with his spiritual and physical self. This shock defense is rendered in the image of combat. Baudelaire describes his friend Constantin Guys,<sup>22</sup> whom he visits when Paris is asleep: "How he stands there, bent over his table, scrutinizing the sheet of paper just as intently as he does the objects around him by day; how he *stabs away* with his pencil, his pen, his brush; how he spurts water from his glass to the ceiling and tries his pen on his shirt; how he pursues his work swiftly and intensely, as though he were afraid his images might escape him. Thus, he is combative even when alone, parrying his own blows." In the opening stanza of "Le Soleil," Baudelaire portrays himself engaged in just such fantastic combat; this is probably the only passage in *Les Fleurs du mal* that shows the poet at work.

Le long du vieux faubourg, où pendent aux masures  
 Les persiennes, abri des secrètes luxures,  
 Quand le soleil cruel frappe à traits redoublés  
 Sur la ville et les champs, sur les toits et les blés,  
 Je vais m'exercer seul à ma fantasque escrime,

Flairant dans tous les coins les hasards de la rime,  
Trébuchant sur les mots comme sur les pavés,  
Heurtant parfois des vers depuis longtemps rêvés.

[Through decrepit neighborhoods on the outskirts of town, where  
Slatted shutters hang at the windows of hovels that shelter secret lusts;  
At a time when the cruel sun beats down with redoubled force  
On city and countryside, on rooftops and cornfields,  
I go out alone to practice my fantastical fencing,  
Scenting chances for rhyme on every street corner,  
Stumbling over words as though they were cobblestones,  
Sometimes knocking up against verses dreamed long ago.]

Shock is among those experiences that have assumed decisive importance for Baudelaire's personality. Gide has dealt with the intermittences between image and idea, word and thing, which are the real site of Baudelaire's poetic excitation.<sup>23</sup> Rivière has pointed to the subterranean shocks by which Baudelaire's poetry is shaken; it is as though they caused words to collapse.<sup>24</sup> Rivière has indicated such collapsing words.

Et qui sait si les fleurs nouvelles que je rêve  
Trouveront dans ce sol lavé comme une grève  
Le mystique aliment qui *ferait* leur vigueur.

[And who knows whether my dreams' new flowers  
Will find within this soil, washed like a shore,  
The mystic nourishment that *would make* them strong?]

Or: "Cybèle, qui les aime, *augmente ses verdure*s" ["Cybele, who loves them, *augments her verdure*"]. Another example is this famous first line: "La servante au grand coeur dont vous étiez *jalouse*" ["That good-hearted servant of whom you were *jealous*"].

To give these covert laws their due outside his verses as well was Baudelaire's intention in *Spleen de Paris*, his collection of prose poems. In the book's dedication to the editor-in-chief of *La Presse*, Arsène Houssaye,<sup>25</sup> Baudelaire wrote: "Who among us has not dreamed, in his ambitious moments, of the miracle of a poetic prose, musical, yet without rhythm and without rhyme, supple and resistant enough to adapt to the lyrical stirrings of the soul, the undulations of reverie, and the sudden leaps of consciousness. This obsessive ideal is born, above all, from the experience of giant cities, from the intersecting of their myriad relations."

This passage suggests two insights. For one thing, it tells us about the close connection in Baudelaire between the figure of shock and contact with the urban masses. For another, it tells us what is really meant by these masses. They do not stand for classes or any sort of collective; rather, they



are nothing but the amorphous crowd of passers-by, the people in the street.<sup>26</sup> This crowd, whose existence Baudelaire is always aware of, does not serve as the model for any of his works; but it is imprinted on his creativity as a hidden figure, just as it constitutes the figure concealed in the excerpt quoted above. We can discern the image of the fencer in it: the blows he deals are designed to open a path for him through the crowd. To be sure, the neighborhoods through which the poet of "Le Soleil" makes his way are deserted. But the hidden constellation—in which the profound beauty of that stanza becomes thoroughly transparent—is no doubt a phantom crowd: the words, the fragments, the beginnings of lines, from which the poet, in the deserted streets, wrests poetic booty.

## V

The crowd: no subject was more worthy of attention from nineteenth-century writers. It was getting ready to take shape as a public consisting of broad strata that had acquired facility in reading. It gave out commissions; it wished to find itself portrayed in the contemporary novel, as wealthy patrons did in the paintings of the Middle Ages. The most successful author of the century met this demand out of inner necessity. To him, "the crowd" meant—almost in the ancient sense—the crowd of clients, the public. Victor Hugo was the first to address the crowd in his titles: *Les Misérables*, *Les Travailleurs de la mer*. In France, Hugo was the only writer able to compete with the serial novel. As is generally known, Eugène Sue was the master of this genre, which came to be the source of revelation for the man in the street. In 1850 an overwhelming majority elected him to the Chamber of Deputies as a representative from the city of Paris. It is no accident that the young Marx chose Sue's *Mystères de Paris* for an attack.<sup>27</sup> At an early date, he realized it was his task to forge the amorphous masses—then being wooed by an aesthetically appealing socialism—into the iron of the proletariat. Engels' description of these masses in his early writings may be regarded as a prelude, however modest, to one of Marx's themes. In his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Engels writes:

A town such as London, where a man may wander for hours together without reaching the beginning of the end, without meeting the slightest hint which could lead to the inference that there is open country within reach, is a strange thing. This colossal centralization, this heaping together of two and a half million human beings at one point, has multiplied the power of these two and a half million people a hundredfold. . . . But the sacrifices which all this has cost become apparent later. After roaming the streets of the capital for a day or two, making headway with difficulty through the human turmoil and the endless lines of vehicles, after visiting the slums of the metropolis, one realizes for the first time that these Londoners have been forced to sacrifice the best qualities of

their human nature in order to bring to pass all the marvels of civilization which crowd their city; that a hundred powers which slumbered within them have remained inactive, have been suppressed. . . . The very turmoil of the streets has something repulsive about it, something against which human nature rebels. The hundreds of thousands of people of all classes and ranks crowding past one another—are they not all human beings with the same qualities and powers, and with the same interest in being happy? . . . And still they crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their only agreement is a tacit one: that each should keep to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honor another with so much as a glance. The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each person in his private interest becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together within a limited space.<sup>28</sup>

This description differs markedly from those found in minor French masters, such as Gozlan, Delvau, or Lurine.<sup>29</sup> It lacks the skill and nonchalance which the flâneur displays as he moves among the crowds in the streets and which the journalist eagerly learns from him. Engels is dismayed by the crowd. He responds with a moral reaction, and an aesthetic one as well; the speed with which people rush past one another unsettles him. The charm of his description lies in the blend of unshakable critical integrity with old-fashioned views. The writer came from a Germany that was still provincial; he may never have been tempted to lose himself in a stream of people. When Hegel went to Paris for the first time, not long before his death, he wrote to his wife: "When I walk through the streets, people look just as they do in Berlin. They wear the same clothes, and their faces are about the same—they have the same aspect, but in a populous mass."<sup>30</sup> To move in this mass of people was natural for a Parisian. No matter how great the distance an individual wanted to keep from it, he still was colored by it and, unlike Engels, was unable to view it from without. As for Baudelaire, the masses were anything but external to him; indeed, it is easy to trace in his works his defensive reaction to their attraction and allure.

The masses had become so much a part of Baudelaire that it is rare to find a description of them in his works. His most important subjects are hardly ever encountered in descriptive form. As Desjardins so aptly put it, he was "more concerned with implanting the image in the memory than with adorning and elaborating it."<sup>31</sup> It is futile to search in *Les Fleurs du mal* or in *Spleen de Paris* for any counterpart to the portrayals of the city that Victor Hugo composed with such mastery. Baudelaire describes neither the Parisians nor their city. Avoiding such descriptions enables him to invoke the former in the figure of the latter. His crowds are always the crowds of a big city; his Paris is invariably overpopulated. It is this that makes him so superior to Barbier, whose descriptive method divorced the masses from the

city.<sup>32</sup> In *Tableaux parisiens*, the secret presence of a crowd is demonstrable almost everywhere. When Baudelaire takes the dawn as his theme, the deserted streets emit something of that "silence of a throng" which Hugo senses in nocturnal Paris. As Baudelaire looks at the illustrations in the books on anatomy being sold on the dusty banks of the Seine, a crowd of departed souls takes the place of the singular skeletons on those pages. In the figures of the *danse macabre*, he sees a compact mass on the move. The heroism of the wizened old women whom the cycle "Les Petites Vieilles" follows on their rounds consists in their standing apart from the urban crowd, unable to keep up with it, no longer mentally participating in the present. The masses were an agitated veil, and Baudelaire views Paris through this veil. The presence of the masses informs one of the most famous poems in *Les Fleurs du mal*.

In the sonnet "A une passante," the crowd is nowhere named in either word or phrase. Yet all the action hinges on it, just as the progress of a sailboat depends on the wind.

La rue assourdissante autour de moi hurlait.  
Longue, mince, en grand deuil, douleur majestueuse,  
Une femme passa, d'une main fastueuse  
Soulevant, balançant le feston et l'ourlet;

Agile et noble, avec sa jambe de statue.  
Moi, je buvais, crispé comme un extravagant,  
Dans son oeil, ciel livide où germe l'ouragan,  
La douceur qui fascine et le plaisir qui tue.

Un éclair . . . puis la nuit!—Fugitive beauté  
Dont le regard m'a fait soudainement renaître,  
Ne te verrai-je plus que dans l'éternité?

Ailleurs, bien loin d'ici! Trop tard! *Jamais* peut-être!  
Car j'ignore où tu fuis, tu ne sais où je vais,  
O toi que j'eusse aimée, ô toi qui le savais!

[The deafening street was screaming all around me.  
Tall, slender, in deep mourning—majestic grief—  
A woman made her way past, with fastidious hand  
Raising and swaying her skirt-border and hem;

Agile and noble, with her statue's limbs.  
And me—I drank, contorted like a wild eccentric,  
From her eyes, that livid sky which gives birth to hurricanes,  
Gentleness that fascinates, pleasure that kills.

A lightning-flash . . . then night!—O fleeting beauty  
Whose glance suddenly gave me new life,  
Shall I see you again only in eternity?

Far, far from here! Too late! Or maybe *never*?  
 For I know not where you flee, you know not where I go,  
 O you whom I would have loved, O you who knew it too!]

In a widow's veil, mysteriously and mutely borne along by the crowd, an unknown woman crosses the poet's field of vision. What this sonnet conveys is simply this: far from experiencing the crowd as an opposing, antagonistic element, the city dweller discovers in the crowd what fascinates him. The delight of the urban poet is love—not at first sight, but at last sight. It is an eternal farewell, which coincides in the poem with the moment of enchantment. Thus, the sonnet deploys the figure of shock, indeed of catastrophe. But the nature of the poet's emotions has been affected as well. What makes his body contract in a tremor—"crispé comme un extravagant," Baudelaire says—is not the rapture of a man whose every fiber is suffused with eros; rather, it is like the sexual shock that can beset a lonely man. The fact that "these verses could have been written only in a big city," as Thibaudet put it, is not very meaningful.<sup>33</sup> They reveal the stigmata which life in a metropolis inflicts upon love. Proust read the sonnet in this light, and that is why he gave to his own echo of the woman in mourning (which appeared to him one day in the form of Albertine) the evocative epithet "La Parisienne." "When Albertine came into my room again, she wore a black satin dress. It made her look pale. She resembled the kind of fiery yet pale Parisian woman who is not used to fresh air and has been affected by living among the masses, possibly in an atmosphere of vice—the kind you can recognize by her gaze, which seems unsteady if there is no rouge on her cheeks."<sup>34</sup> This is the gaze—evident even as late as Proust—of the object of a love which only a city dweller experiences, which Baudelaire captured for poetry, and which one might not infrequently characterize as being spared, rather than denied, fulfillment.<sup>35</sup>

## VI

A story by Poe which Baudelaire translated can be seen as the classic example among the older versions of the motif of the crowd. It is marked by certain peculiarities which, upon closer inspection, reveal aspects of social forces of such power and hidden depth that we may include them among the only ones that are capable of exerting both a subtle and a profound effect on artistic production. The story is entitled "The Man of the Crowd." It is set in London, and its narrator is a man who, after a long illness, ventures out again for the first time into the hustle and bustle of the city. On a late afternoon in autumn, he takes a seat by the window in a big London coffeehouse. He gazes around at the other customers and pores over adver-

tisements in the paper, but he is mainly interested in the throng of people he sees through the window, surging past in the street.

The latter is one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, and had been very much crowded during the whole day. But, as the darkness came on, the throng momentarily increased; and by the time the lamps were well lighted, two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door. At this particular period of the evening I had never before been in a similar situation, and the tumultuous sea of human heads filled me, therefore, with a delicious novelty of emotion. I gave up, at length, all care of things within the hotel, and became absorbed in contemplation of the scene without.

Important as it is, let us disregard the narrative to which this is the prelude and examine the setting.

The appearance of the London crowd as Poe describes it is as gloomy and fitful as the light of the gas lamps overhead. This applies not only to the riff-raff that is "brought forth from its den" as night falls. The employees of higher rank, "the upper clerks of staunch firms," Poe describes as follows: "They had all slightly bald heads, from which the right ears, long used to pen-holding, had an odd habit of standing off on end. I observed that they always removed or settled their hats with both hands, and wore watches, with short gold chains of a substantial and ancient pattern." Even more striking is his description of the crowd's movements.

By far the greater number of those who went by had a satisfied business-like demeanour, and seemed to be thinking only of making their way through the press. Their brows were knit, and their eyes rolled quickly; when pushed against by fellow-wayfarers they evinced no symptom of impatience, but adjusted their clothes and hurried on. Others, still a numerous class, were restless in their movements, had flushed faces, and talked and gesticulated to themselves, as if feeling in solitude on account of the very denseness of the company around. When impeded in their progress, these people suddenly ceased muttering, but redoubled their gesticulations, and awaited, with an absent and overdone smile upon the lips, the course of the persons impeding them. If jostled, they bowed profusely to the jostlers, and appeared overwhelmed with confusion.<sup>36</sup>

One might think he was speaking of half-drunken wretches. Actually, they were "noblemen, merchants, attorneys, tradesmen, stock-jobbers."<sup>37</sup>

Poe's image cannot be called realistic. It shows a purposely distorting imagination at work, one that takes the text far from what is commonly advocated as the model of socialist realism. Barbier, perhaps one of the best examples of this type of realism, described things in a less eccentric way. Moreover, he chose a more transparent subject: the oppressed masses. Poe is not concerned with these; he deals with "people," pure and simple. For

him, as for Engels, there was something menacing in the spectacle they presented. It is precisely this image of big-city crowds that became decisive for Baudelaire. If he succumbed to the force that attracted him to them and that made him, as a *flâneur*, one of them, he was nevertheless unable to rid himself of a sense of their essentially inhuman character. He becomes their accomplice even as he dissociates himself from them. He becomes deeply involved with them, only to relegate them to oblivion with a single glance of contempt. There is something compelling about this ambivalence, wherever he cautiously admits it. Perhaps the charm of his "*Crépuscule du soir*," so difficult to account for, is bound up with this.

## VII

Baudelaire was moved to equate the man of the crowd, whom Poe's narrator follows throughout the length and breadth of nocturnal London, with the *flâneur*. It is hard to accept this view. The man of the crowd is no *flâneur*. In him, composure has given way to manic behavior. He exemplifies, rather, what had to become of the *flâneur* after the latter was deprived of the milieu to which he belonged. If London ever provided it for him, it was certainly not the setting described by Poe. In comparison, Baudelaire's Paris preserved some features that dated back to the old days. Ferries were still crossing the Seine at points that would later be spanned by bridges. In the year of Baudelaire's death, it was still possible for some entrepreneur to cater to the comfort of the well-to-do with a fleet of five hundred sedan chairs circulating about the city. Arcades where the *flâneur* would not be exposed to the sight of carriages, which did not recognize pedestrians as rivals, were enjoying undiminished popularity.<sup>38</sup> There was the pedestrian who would let himself be jostled by the crowd, but there was also the *flâneur*, who demanded elbow room and was unwilling to forgo the life of a gentleman of leisure. Let the many attend to their daily affairs; the man of leisure can indulge in the perambulations of the *flâneur* only if as such he is already out of place. He is as much out of place in an atmosphere of complete leisure as in the feverish turmoil of the city. London has its man of the crowd. His counterpart, as it were, is Nante, the boy who loiters on the street corner, a popular figure in Berlin before the March Revolution of 1848. The Parisian *flâneur* might be said to stand midway between them.<sup>39</sup>

How the man of leisure views the crowd is revealed in a short piece by E. T. A. Hoffmann, his last story, entitled "The Cousin's Corner Window."<sup>40</sup> It antedates Poe's story by fifteen years and is probably one of the earliest attempts to capture the street scene of a large city. The differences between the two pieces are worth noting. Poe's narrator watches the street from the window of a public coffeehouse, whereas the cousin is sitting at home. Poe's observer succumbs to the fascination of the scene, which finally

lures him out into the whirl of the crowd. The cousin in Hoffmann's tale, looking out from his corner window, has lost the use of his legs; he would not be able to go with the crowd even if he were in the midst of it. His attitude toward the crowd is, rather, one of superiority, inspired as it is by his observation post at the window of an apartment building. From this vantage point he scrutinizes the throng; it is market day, and all the passers-by feel in their element. His opera glasses enable him to pick out individual genre scenes. Employing the glasses is thoroughly in keeping with the inner disposition of their user. He confesses he would like to initiate his visitor in the "principles of the art of seeing."<sup>41</sup> This consists of an ability to enjoy *tableaux vivants*—a favorite pursuit of the Biedermeier period. Edifying sayings provide the interpretation.<sup>42</sup> One can then view Hoffmann's narrative as describing an attempt which at that time was being made. But it is obvious that the conditions under which it was made in Berlin prevented it from being a complete success. If Hoffmann had ever set foot in Paris or London, or if he had been intent on depicting the masses as such, he would not have focused on a marketplace; he would not have portrayed the scene as being dominated by women. He would perhaps have seized on the motifs that Poe derives from the swarming crowds under the gas lamps. Actually, there would have been no need for these motifs in order to bring out the uncanny or sinister elements that other students of the physiognomy of the big city have felt. A thoughtful observation by Heine is relevant here. "He was having a bad time with his eyes in the spring," wrote a correspondent in an 1838 letter to Varnhagen.<sup>43</sup> "On our last meeting, I accompanied him part of the way along the boulevard. The splendor and vitality of that unique thoroughfare moved me to boundless admiration, while, against this, Heine now laid weighty emphasis on the horrors attending this center of the world."<sup>44</sup>

## VIII

Fear, revulsion, and horror were the emotions which the big-city crowd aroused in those who first observed it. For Poe, it has something barbaric about it; discipline barely manages to tame it. Later, James Ensor never tired of confronting its discipline with its wildness; he liked to depict military groups amid carnival mobs, and show them getting along in model fashion—that is, according to the model of totalitarian states, in which the police make common cause with looters.<sup>45</sup> Valéry, who had a fine eye for the cluster of symptoms called "civilization," has highlighted one of the pertinent facts. "The inhabitant of the great urban centers," he writes, "reverts to a state of savagery—that is, of isolation. The feeling of being dependent on others, which used to be kept alive by need, is gradually blunted in the smooth functioning of the social mechanism. Any improvement of this

mechanism eliminates certain modes of behavior and emotions."<sup>46</sup> Comfort isolates; on the other hand, it brings those enjoying it closer to mechanization. In the mid-nineteenth century, the invention of the match brought forth a number of innovations which have one thing in common: a single abrupt movement of the hand triggers a process of many steps. This development is taking place in many areas. A case in point is the telephone, where the lifting of a receiver has taken the place of the steady movement that used to be required to crank the older models. With regard to countless movements of switching, inserting, pressing, and the like, the "snapping" by the photographer had the greatest consequences. Henceforth a touch of the finger sufficed to fix an event for an unlimited period of time. The camera gave the moment a posthumous shock, as it were. Haptic experiences of this kind were joined by optic ones, such as are supplied by the advertising pages of a newspaper or the traffic of a big city. Moving through this traffic involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through him in rapid succession, like the energy from a battery. Baudelaire speaks of a man who plunges into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy. Circumscribing the experience of the shock, he calls this man "a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness."<sup>47</sup> Whereas Poe's passers-by cast glances in all directions, seemingly without cause, today's pedestrians are obliged to look about them so that they can be aware of traffic signals. Thus, technology has subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training. There came a day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by film. In a film, perception conditioned by shock [*chockförmige Wahrnehmung*] was established as a formal principle. What determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the same thing that underlies the rhythm of reception in the film.

Marx had good reason to stress the great fluidity of the connection between segments in manual labor. This connection appears to the factory worker on an assembly line in an independent, objectified form. The article being assembled comes within the worker's range of action independently of his volition, and moves away from him just as arbitrarily. "It is a common characteristic of all capitalist production . . .," wrote Marx, "that the worker does not make use of the working conditions. The working conditions make use of the worker; but it takes machinery to give this reversal a technologically concrete form."<sup>48</sup> In working with machines, workers learn to coordinate "their own movements with the uniformly constant movements of an automaton." These words shed a peculiar light on the absurd kind of uniformity that Poe wants to impose on the crowd—uniformities of attire and behavior, but also a uniformity of facial expression. Those smiles provide food for thought. They are probably the familiar kind, as expressed these days in the phrase "keep smiling";<sup>49</sup> in Poe's story, they function as a mimetic shock absorber.—"All machine work," says Marx in the same pas-



sage cited above, "requires prior training of the workers." This training must be differentiated from practice. Practice, which was the sole determinant in handcrafting, still had a function in manufacturing. With practice as the basis, "each particular area of production finds its appropriate technical form in *experience* and *slowly* perfects it." To be sure, each area quickly crystallizes this form "as soon as a certain degree of maturity has been attained." On the other hand, this same system of manufacture produces "in every handicraft it appropriates a class of so-called unskilled laborers which the handicraft system strictly excluded. In developing a greatly simplified specialty to the point of virtuosity, at the cost of overall production capacity, it starts turning the lack of any development into a specialty. In addition to rankings, we get the simple division of workers into the skilled and the unskilled." The unskilled worker is the one most deeply degraded by machine training. His work has been sealed off from experience; practice counts for nothing in the factory.<sup>50</sup> What the amusement park achieves with its dodgem cars and other similar amusements is nothing but a taste of the training that the unskilled laborer undergoes in the factory—a sample which at times was for him the entire menu; for the art of the eccentric, an art in which an ordinary man could acquire training in places like an amusement park, flourished concomitantly with unemployment. Poe's text helps us understand the true connection between wildness and discipline. His pedestrians act as if they had adapted themselves to machines and could express themselves only automatically. Their behavior is a reaction to shocks. "If jostled, they bowed profusely to the jostlers."

## IX

The shock experience [*Chockerlebnis*] which the passer-by has in the crowd corresponds to the isolated "experiences" of the worker at his machine. This does not entitle us to assume that Poe knew anything about industrial work processes. Baudelaire, at any rate, did not have the faintest notion of them. He was, however, captivated by a process in which the reflexive mechanism that the machine triggers in the workman can be studied closely, as in a mirror, in the idler. To say that this process is represented in games of chance may appear paradoxical. Where could one find a starker contrast than the one between work and gambling? Alain puts this convincingly when he writes: "It is inherent in the concept of gambling . . . that no game is dependent on the preceding one. Gambling cares nothing for any secured position. . . . It takes no account of winnings gained earlier, and in this it differs from work. Gambling gives short shrift to the weighty past on which work bases itself."<sup>51</sup> The work that Alain has in mind here is the highly specialized kind (which, like intellectual effort, probably retains certain features of handicraft); it is not that of most factory workers, and least of all

unskilled work. The latter, to be sure, lacks any touch of adventure, of the mirage that lures the gambler. But it certainly does not lack futility, emptiness, an inability to complete something—qualities inherent in the activity of a wage slave in a factory. Even the worker's gesture produced by the automated work process appears in gambling, for there can be no game without the quick movement of the hand by which the stake is put down or a card is picked up. The jolt in the movement of a machine is like the so-called *coup* in a game of chance. The hand movement of the worker at the machine has no connection with the preceding gesture for the very reason that it repeats that gesture exactly. Since each operation at the machine is just as screened off from the preceding operation as a *coup* in a game of chance is from the one that preceded it, the drudgery of the laborer is, in its own way, a counterpart to the drudgery of the gambler. Both types of work are equally devoid of substance.

There is a lithograph by Senefelder which depicts a gambling club.<sup>52</sup> Not one of the individuals in the scene is pursuing the game in ordinary fashion. Each man is dominated by an emotion: one shows unrestrained joy; another, distrust of his partner; a third, dull despair; a fourth evinces belligerence; another is getting ready to take leave of the world. All these modes of conduct share a concealed characteristic: the figures presented show us how the mechanism to which gamblers entrust themselves seizes them body and soul, so that even in their private sphere, and no matter how agitated they may be, they are capable only of reflex actions. They behave like the pedestrians in Poe's story. They live their lives as automatons and resemble Bergson's fictitious characters who have completely liquidated their memories.

Baudelaire does not seem to have been a devotee of gambling, though he had words of sympathetic understanding, even homage, for those addicted to it. The motif he treats in his night piece "Le Jeu" [The Game] is integral to his view of modernity, and writing this poem formed part of his mission. In Baudelaire, the image of the gambler becomes the characteristically modern counterpart to the archaic image of the fencer; both are heroic figures to him. Ludwig Börne was looking at things through Baudelaire's eyes when he wrote: "If all the energy and passion . . . that are expended every year at Europe's gambling tables . . . were stored up, an entire Roman people and Roman history could be created from them. But this is precisely the point. Because every man is born a Roman, bourgeois society seeks to de-Romanize him, and this is why there are games of chance, as well as parlor games, novels, Italian operas, and fashionable newspapers."<sup>53</sup> Gambling did not become a common diversion among the bourgeoisie until the nineteenth century; in the eighteenth, only the aristocracy gambled. Games of chance, which were disseminated by Napoleon's armies, henceforth became

a pastime “both among the fashionable set and among the thousands of people living unsettled lives in big-city basements”—became part of the spectacle in which Baudelaire claimed he saw the heroic, “as it typifies our age.”

If we look at gambling from the psychological as well as the technical point of view, Baudelaire’s conception of it appears even more significant. It is obvious that the gambler is out to win. Yet his desire to win and make money cannot really be termed a “wish” in the strict sense of the word. He may be inwardly motivated by greed or by some sinister design. At any rate, his frame of mind is such that he cannot make much use of experience.<sup>54</sup> A wish, however, appertains to an order of experience. “What one wishes for in one’s youth, one has in abundance in old age,” said Goethe.<sup>55</sup> The earlier in life one makes a wish, the greater one’s chances that it will be fulfilled. The further a wish reaches out in time, the greater the hopes for its fulfillment. But it is experience [*Erfahrung*] that accompanies one to the far reaches of time, that fills and articulates time. Thus, a wish fulfilled is the crowning of experience. In folk symbolism, distance in space can take the place of distance in time; that is why the shooting star, which plunges into infinite space, has become the symbol of a fulfilled wish. The ivory ball that rolls into the *next* compartment, the *next* card that lies on top, are the very antithesis of a falling star. The instant in which a shooting star flashes before human eyes consists of the sort of time that Joubert has described with his customary assurance. “Time,” he says, “is found even in eternity; but it is not earthly, worldly time. . . . It does not destroy; it merely completes.”<sup>56</sup> It is the antithesis of time in hell, which is the province of those who are not allowed to complete anything they have started. The disrepute of games of chance is actually based on the fact that the player himself has a hand in it. (Someone who compulsively buys lottery tickets will not be shunned in the same way as someone who “gambles” in the stricter sense.)

This process of continually starting all over again is the regulative idea of gambling, as it is of work for wages. Thus, it is highly significant that in Baudelaire the second-hand of the clock—“la Seconde”—appears as the gambler’s partner:

*Souviens-toi que le Temps est un joueur avide  
Qui gagne sans tricher, à tout coup! c’est la loi!*<sup>57</sup>

[Keep in mind that Time is a rabid gambler  
Who wins without cheating—every time! It’s the law!]

Elsewhere Satan himself takes the place of this second. In the poem “Le Jeu,” compulsive gamblers are relegated to the silent corner of a cave that is doubtless part of Satan’s realm:

Voilà le noir tableau qu'en un rêve nocturne  
 Je vis se dérouler sous mon oeil clairvoyant.  
 Moi-même, dans un coin de l'autre taciturne,  
 Je me vis accoudé, froid, muet, enviant,  
 Enviant de ces gens la passion tenace.

[Here you see the hellish picture that one night in a dream  
 I saw unfolding before my clairvoyant eyes.  
 My own self was in a corner of the silent cave;  
 I saw myself, hunched, cold, wordless, envious,  
 Envyng those people for their tenacious passion.]

The poet does not participate in the game. He stays in his corner, no happier than those who are playing. He too has been cheated out of his experience—a modern man. The only difference is that he rejects the narcotics the gamblers use to dull the consciousness that has forced them to march to the beat of the second-hand.<sup>58</sup>

Et mon coeur s'effraya d'envier maint pauvre homme  
 Courant avec ferveur à l'abîme béant,  
 Et qui, soûl de son sang, préférerait en somme  
 La douleur à la mort et l'enfer au néant!

[And my heart took fright at the idea of envying many a poor man  
 Who ran avidly to the gaping abyss,  
 And who, drunk with the pulsing of his blood, preferred  
 Suffering to death, and hell to nothingness!]

In this last stanza, Baudelaire presents impatience as the substrate of the passion for gambling. He found it in himself in its purest form. His violent temper had the expressiveness of Giotto's *Iracondia* at Padua.<sup>59</sup>

## X

According to Bergson, it is the actualization of *durée* that rids man's soul of the obsession with time. Proust shared this belief, and from it he developed the lifelong exercises in which he strove to bring to light past things saturated with all the reminiscences that had penetrated his pores during the sojourn of those things in his unconscious. Proust was an incomparable reader of *Les Fleurs du mal*, for he sensed that it contained kindred elements. Familiarity with Baudelaire must include Proust's experience with his work. Proust writes: "Time is peculiarly dissociated in Baudelaire; only a very few days can appear, and they are significant ones. Thus, it is understandable why turns of phrase like 'if one evening' occur frequently in his works."<sup>60</sup> These significant days are days of the completing time," to para-

phrase Joubert. They are days of recollection [*Eingedenken*], not marked by any immediate experience [*Erlebnis*]. They are not connected with other days, but stand out from time. As for their substance, Baudelaire has defined it in the notion of *correspondances*—a concept that in Baudelaire is concomitant but not explicitly linked with the notion of “modern beauty.”<sup>61</sup>

Disregarding the scholarly literature on *correspondances* (the common property of mystics; Baudelaire encountered them in Fourier's writings), Proust no longer fusses about the artistic variations on this phenomenon that result from synaesthesia.<sup>62</sup> The important thing is that *correspondances* encompass a concept of experience which includes ritual elements. Only by appropriating these elements was Baudelaire able to fathom the full meaning of the breakdown which he, as a modern man, was witnessing. Only in this way was he able to recognize it as a challenge meant for him alone, a challenge that he incorporated in *Les Fleurs du mal*. If there really is a secret architecture in the book—and many speculations have been devoted to this question—the cycle of poems that opens the volume is probably oriented toward something irretrievably lost. This cycle includes two sonnets dealing with the same motif. The first, entitled “Correspondances,” begins with these lines:

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 ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
 Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
 Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

[Nature is a temple whose living pillars  
 Sometimes give forth a babel of words;  
 Man wends his way through forests of symbols  
 Which look at him with their familiar glances.

Like resounding echoes that blend from afar  
 In a somber, profound unity,  
 Vast as the night or as the brightness of day,  
 Scents, colors, and sounds respond to one another.]

What Baudelaire meant by *correspondances* can be described as an experience which seeks to establish itself in crisis-proof form. This is possible only within the realm of ritual. If it transcends this realm, it presents itself as the beautiful. In the beautiful, ritual value appears as the value of art.<sup>63</sup> *Corre-*

*spondances* are the data of recollection—not historical data, but data of prehistory. What makes festive days great and significant is the encounter with an earlier life. Baudelaire recorded this in a sonnet entitled “La Vie antérieure.” The images of caves and vegetation, of clouds and waves which are evoked at the beginning of this second sonnet rise from the warm vapor of tears—tears of homesickness. “The wanderer looks into the tear-veiled distance, and hysterical tears well up in his eyes,” writes Baudelaire in his review of the poems of Marceline Desbordes-Valmore.<sup>64</sup> There are no simultaneous correspondences, such as were cultivated later by the Symbolists. What is past murmurs in the correspondences, and the canonical experience of them has its place in a previous life:

Les houles, en roulant les images des cieux,  
Mêlaient d'une façon solennelle et mystique  
Les tout-puissants accords de leur riche musique  
Aux couleurs du couchant reflété par mes yeux.

C'est là que j'ai vécu.

[The breakers, tumbling the images of the heavens,  
Blended, in a solemn and mystical way,  
The all-powerful chords of their rich music  
With the colors of the sunset reflected in my eyes.

There is where I lived.]

The fact that Proust's restorative will remains within the limits of earthly existence, whereas Baudelaire's transcends it, may be regarded as symptomatic of the vastly more elemental and powerful counterforces that announced themselves to Baudelaire. And it is likely he never achieved greater perfection than when he seems resigned to being overcome by them. “Recueillement” [Contemplation] traces the allegories of the old years set off against the deep sky:

. . . Vois se pencher les défunes Années  
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées.

[. . . See the dead departed Years leaning over  
Heaven's balconies, in old-fashioned dresses.]

In these lines, Baudelaire resigns himself to paying homage to bygone times that escaped him in the guise of the outdated. When Proust in the last volume of his novel harks back to the sensation that suffused him at the taste of a madeleine, he imagines the years which appear on the balcony as being loving sisters of the years of Combray. “In Baudelaire . . . these reminiscences are even more numerous. It is obvious they do not occur by chance, and this, to my mind, is what gives them crucial importance. No one else

pursues the interconnected *correspondances* with such leisurely care, fastidiously yet nonchalantly—in a woman's scent, for instance, in the fragrance of her hair or her breasts—*correspondances* which then inspire him with lines like 'the azure of the vast, vaulted sky' or 'a harbor full of flames and masts.'<sup>65</sup> This passage is a confessional motto for Proust's work. It bears a relation to Baudelaire's work, which has assembled the days of recollection into a spiritual year.

But *Les Fleurs du mal* would not be what it is if all it contained were this success. It is unique because, from the inefficacy of the same consolation, the breakdown of the same fervor, the failure of the same work, it was able to wrest poems that are in no way inferior to those in which the *correspondances* celebrate their triumphs. "Spleen et idéal" is the first of the cycles in *Les Fleurs du mal*. The *idéal* supplies the power of recollection; *spleen* rallies the multitude of the seconds against it. It is their commander, just as the devil is the lord of the flies. One of the "Spleen" poems, "Le Goût du néant" [The Taste of Nothingness], says: "Le Printemps adorable a perdu son odeur!" ["Spring, the beloved, has lost its scent!"] Here Baudelaire expresses something extreme with extreme discretion; this makes the line unmistakably his. The word *perdu* acknowledges that the experience he once shared is now collapsed into itself. The scent is the inaccessible refuge of *mémoire involontaire*. It is unlikely to associate itself with a visual image; out of all possible sensual impressions, it will ally itself only with the same scent. If the recognition of a scent can provide greater consolation than any other memory, this may be because it deeply anesthetizes the sense of time. A scent may drown entire years in the remembered odor it evokes. This imparts a sense of boundless desolation to Baudelaire's verse. For someone who is past experiencing, there is no consolation. Yet it is this very inability to experience that explains the true nature of rage. An angry man "won't listen." His prototype, Timon, rages against people indiscriminately; he is no longer capable of telling his proven friend from his mortal enemy. Barbey d'Aurevilly very perceptively recognized this habit of mind in Baudelaire, calling him "a Timon with the genius of Archilochus."<sup>66</sup> The rage explodes in time to the ticking of the seconds that enslaves the melancholy man.

Et le Temps m'engloutit minute par minute,  
Comme la neige immense un corps pris de roideur.

[And, minute by minute, Time engulfs me,  
The way an immense snowfall engulfs a body grown stiff.]

These lines immediately follow the ones quoted above. In spleen, time is reified: the minutes cover a man like snowflakes. This time is historyless, like that of the *mémoire involontaire*. But in spleen the perception of time is

supernaturally keen. Every second finds consciousness ready to intercept its shock.<sup>67</sup>

Although chronological reckoning subordinates duration to regularity, it cannot prevent heterogeneous, conspicuous fragments from remaining within it. Combining recognition of a quality with measurement of quantity is the accomplishment of calendars, where spaces for recollection are left blank, as it were, in the form of holidays. The man who loses his capacity for experiencing feels as though he has been dropped from the calendar. The big-city dweller knows this feeling on Sundays; Baudelaire expresses it *avant la lettre* in one of his "Spleen" poems.

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 opiniâtrement.

[Suddenly bells are tossing with fury,  
Hurling a hideous howling to the sky  
Like wandering homeless spirits  
Who break into stubborn wailing.]

The bells, which once played a part in holidays, have been dropped from the calendar like the human beings. They are like the poor souls that wander restlessly but have no history. If Baudelaire in "Spleen" and "Vie antérieure" holds in his hands the scattered fragments of genuine historical experience, Bergson in his conception of *durée* has become far more estranged from history. "Bergson the metaphysician suppresses death."<sup>68</sup> The fact that death has been eliminated from Bergson's *durée* isolates it effectively from a historical (as well as prehistorical) order. Bergson's concept of *action* is in keeping with this. The "sound common sense" which distinguishes the "practical man" is its godfather.<sup>69</sup> The *durée* from which death has been eliminated has the bad infinity of an ornament. Tradition is excluded from it.<sup>70</sup> It is the quintessence of an isolated experience [*Erlebnis*] that struts about in the borrowed garb of long experience [*Erfahrung*]. Spleen, on the other hand, exposes the isolated experience in all its nakedness. To his horror, the melancholy man sees the earth revert to a mere state of nature. No breath of prehistory surrounds it—no aura. This is how the earth emerges in the lines of "Le Goût du néant" which follow the ones quoted above.

Je contemple d'en haut le globe en sa rondeur,  
Et je n'y cherche plus l'abri d'une cahute.

[I contemplate, from on high, the globe in its roundness,  
And no longer look there for the shelter of a hut.]



## XI

If we think of the associations which, at home in the *mémoire involontaire*, seek to cluster around an object of perception, and if we call those associations the aura of that object, then the aura attaching to the object of a perception corresponds precisely to the experience [*Erfahrung*] which, in the case of an object of use, inscribes itself as long practice. The techniques inspired by the camera and subsequent analogous types of apparatus extend the range of the *mémoire volontaire*; these techniques make it possible at any time to retain an event—as image and sound—through the apparatus. They thus represent important achievements of a society in which long practice is in decline.—To Baudelaire, there was something profoundly unnerving and terrifying about daguerreotypy; he speaks of the fascination it exerted as “cruel and surprising.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, he must have sensed—though he certainly did not understand them completely—the connections of which we have spoken. His perpetual willingness to grant the modern its place and, especially in art, to assign it a specific function also determined his attitude toward photography. Whenever he felt photography as a threat, he tried to put this down to “badly applied advances” in the field; yet he admitted that the latter had been promoted by “the stupidity of the masses.” “The masses demanded an ideal that would conform to their aspirations and the nature of their temperament. . . . Their prayers were granted by a vengeful god, and Daguerre became his prophet.”<sup>72</sup> Still, Baudelaire tried to take a more conciliatory view. Photography should be free to stake a claim on ephemeral things—those that have a right to “a place in the archives of our memory”—so long as it stops short of the “realm of the intangible and the imaginative”: that is, the realm of art, in which only those things “granted the imprint of man’s soul” are allotted a place. This judgment is not exactly Solomonic. The perpetual readiness of voluntary, discursive memory, encouraged by the technology of reproduction, reduces the imagination’s scope for play [*Spielraum*]. “Imagination” can perhaps be defined as an ability to give expression to desires of a special kind—desires that have “something beautiful” as their intended fulfillment. Valéry has set out the conditions for this fulfillment: “We recognize a work of art by the fact that no idea it inspires in us, no mode of behavior it suggests we adopt, could ever exhaust it or dispose of it. We may inhale the smell of a sweet-smelling flower as long as we like; we cannot rid ourselves of the fragrance that has aroused our senses, and no recollection, no thought, no mode of behavior can obliterate its effect or release us from the hold it has on us. Anyone who undertakes to create a work of art aims at the same effect.”<sup>73</sup> According to this view, the painting we look at reflects back at us that of which our eyes will never have their fill. What it contains that fulfills the original desire would be the very same stuff on which the desire continu-

ously feeds. The distinction between photography and painting is therefore clear. It is also clear why there can be no comprehensive principle of "form-endowing" [*Gestaltung*] which is applicable to both: to the gaze that will never get its fill of a painting, photography is rather like food for the hungry or drink for the thirsty.

The crisis of artistic reproduction that emerges in this way can be seen as an integral part of a crisis in perception itself.—What makes our delight in the beautiful unquenchable is the image of the primeval world, which for Baudelaire is veiled by tears of nostalgia. "Ah—in times gone by, you were my sister or my wife!"<sup>74</sup>—this declaration of love is the tribute which the beautiful as such is entitled to claim. Insofar as art aims at the beautiful and, on however modest a scale, "reproduces" it, it retrieves it (as Faust does Helen) out of the depths of time.<sup>75</sup> This does not happen in the case of technological reproduction. (The beautiful has no place in it.) Proust, complaining of the barrenness and lack of depth in the images of Venice that his *mémoire volontaire* presented to him, notes that the very word "Venice" made those images seem to him as vapid as an exhibition of photographs. If the distinctive feature of the images arising from *mémoire involontaire* is seen in their aura, then photography is decisively implicated in the phenomenon of a "decline of the aura." What was inevitably felt to be inhuman—one might even say deadly—in daguerreotypy was the (prolonged) looking into the camera, since the camera records our likeness without returning our gaze. Inherent in the gaze, however, is the expectation that it will be returned by that on which it is bestowed. Where this expectation is met (which, in the case of thought processes, can apply equally to an intentional gaze of awareness and to a glance pure and simple), there is an experience [*Erfahrung*] of the aura in all its fullness. "Perceptibility," as Novalis puts it, "is an attentiveness."<sup>76</sup> The perceptibility he has in mind is none other than that of the aura. Experience of the aura thus arises from the fact that a response characteristic of human relationships is transposed to the relationship between humans and inanimate or natural objects. The person we look at, or who feels he is being looked at, looks at us in turn. To experience the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look back at us.<sup>77</sup> This ability corresponds to the data of *mémoire involontaire*. (These data, incidentally, are unique: they are lost to the memory that seeks to retain them. Thus, they lend support to a concept of the aura that involves the "unique apparition of a distance."<sup>78</sup> This formulation has the advantage of clarifying the ritual character of the phenomenon. The essentially distant is the unapproachable; and unapproachability is a primary quality of the ritual image.) That Proust was quite familiar with the problem of the aura needs no emphasis. It is nonetheless notable that he sometimes alludes to it in concepts that comprehend its theory: "People who are fond of secrets occasionally flatter themselves that objects retain something of the gaze that

has rested on them.” (The objects, it seems, have the ability to return the gaze.) “They believe that monuments and pictures appear only through a delicate veil which centuries of love and reverence on the part of so many admirers have woven about them. This chimera,” Proust concludes evasively, “would become truth if they related it to the only reality that is valid for the individual—namely, the world of his emotions.”<sup>79</sup> Akin to this, but reaching further because of its objective orientation, is Valéry’s characterization of perception in dreams as an auratic perception: “To say ‘Here I see such-and-such an object’ does not establish an equation between me and the object. . . . In dreams, however, there *is* an equation. The things I look at see me just as much as I see them.”<sup>80</sup> Of a piece with perception in dreams is the nature of temples, which Baudelaire was describing when he wrote:

L’homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l’observent avec des regards familiers.<sup>81</sup>

[Man wends his way through forests of symbols  
Which look at him with their familiar glances.]

The greater Baudelaire’s insight into this phenomenon, the more unmistakably was his lyric poetry marked by the disintegration of the aura. This occurred in the form of a sign, which we encounter in nearly all those passages of *Les Fleurs du mal* where the gaze of the human eye is invoked. (That Baudelaire was not following some preconceived scheme goes without saying.) What happens here is that the expectation aroused by the gaze of the human eye is not fulfilled. Baudelaire describes eyes that could be said to have lost the ability to look. Yet this gives them a charm which to a large, perhaps overwhelming extent serves as a means of defraying the cost of his instinctual desires. It was under the spell of these eyes that *sexus* in Baudelaire detaches itself from *eros*. If in “Selige Sehnsucht”<sup>82</sup> the lines

Keine Ferne macht dich schwierig,  
Kommst geflogen und gebannt

[No distance weighs you down;  
You come flying and entranced]

must be regarded as the classic description of love that is sated with the experience of the aura, then lyric poetry could hardly effect a more decisive repudiation of those lines than the following ones from Baudelaire:

Je t’adore à l’égal de la voûte nocturne,  
O vase de tristesse, o grande taciturne,  
Et t’aime d’autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis,  
Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits,

Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues  
Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues.<sup>83</sup>

[I adore you as much as the vault of night,  
O vessel of sorrow, O deeply silent one,  
And I love you even more, my lovely, because you flee me  
And because you seem, ornament of my nights,  
More ironically, to multiply the miles  
That separate my arms from blue immensities.]

Glances may be all the more compelling, the more complete the viewer's absence that is overcome in them. In eyes that look at us with mirrorlike blankness, the remoteness remains complete. It is precisely for this reason that such eyes know nothing of distance. Baudelaire incorporated the glassiness of their stare in a cunning rhyme:

Plonge tes yeux dans les yeux fixes  
Des Satyresses ou des Nixes.<sup>84</sup>

[Let your eyes plunge into the fixed stare  
Of Satyresses or Water Sprites.]

Female satyrs and water sprites are no longer members of the family of man. Theirs is a world apart. Significantly, Baudelaire's poem incorporates the look of the eye encumbered by distance as *un regard familier*. The poet who never founded a family imbues the word *familier* with a tone of mingled promise and renunciation. He has yielded to the spell of eyes-without-a-gaze, and submits to their sway without illusions.

Tes yeux, illuminés ainsi que des boutiques  
Et des ifs flamboyants dans les fêtes publiques,  
Usent insolemment d'un pouvoir emprunté.<sup>85</sup>

[Your eyes, lit up like shopwindows  
Or like yew-trees illuminated for public celebrations,  
Insolently wield borrowed power.]

"Dullness," says Baudelaire in one of his earliest publications, "is frequently one of beauty's adornments. This is the reason eyes may be sad and translucent like blackish swamps, or their gaze may have the oily inertness of tropical seas."<sup>86</sup> When such eyes come alive, it is with the self-protective wariness of a carnivore hunting for prey. (Thus, the eye of a prostitute scrutinizing passers-by is at the same time on the lookout for police. The physiognomic type bred by this kind of life, Baudelaire noted, is delineated in Constantin Guys' numerous drawings of prostitutes. "Her eyes, like those of a wild animal, are fixed on the distant horizon; they have the rest-

lessness of a wild animal . . . , but sometimes also the animal's sudden tense vigilance.")<sup>87</sup> That the eye of the city dweller is overburdened with protective functions is obvious. Georg Simmel refers to some of its less obvious tasks. "Someone who sees without hearing is much more uneasy than someone who hears without seeing. In this, there is something characteristic of the sociology of the big city. Interpersonal relationships in big cities are distinguished by a marked preponderance of visual activity over aural activity. The main reason for this is the public means of transportation. Before the development of buses, railroads, and trams in the nineteenth century, people had never been in situations where they had to look at one another for long minutes or even hours without speaking to one another."<sup>88</sup>

In the protective eye, there is no daydreaming surrender to distance and to faraway things. The protective eye may bring with it something like pleasure in the degradation of such distance. This is probably the sense in which the following curious sentences should be read. In his "Salon of 1859" Baudelaire lets the landscapes pass in review, concluding with this admission: "I long for the return of the dioramas, whose brutal and enormous magic has the power to impose on me a useful illusion. I would rather go to the theater and feast my eyes on the scenery, in which I find my dearest dreams treated with consummate skill and tragic concision. These things, because they are false, are infinitely closer to the truth, whereas the majority of our landscape painters are liars, precisely because they fail to lie."<sup>89</sup> One is inclined to attach less importance to the "useful illusion" than to the "tragic concision." Baudelaire insists on the magic of distance; he goes so far as to judge landscapes by the standard of paintings sold in booths at fairs. Does he mean the magic of distance to be broken through, as necessarily happens when the viewer steps too close to the depicted scene? This motif enters into a great passage from *Les Fleurs du mal*:

Le Plaisir vapoureux fuira vers l'horizon  
Ainsi qu'une sylphide au fond de la coulisse.<sup>90</sup>

[Nebulous Pleasure horizonward will flee  
Like a sylph darting into the wings.]

## XII

*Les Fleurs du mal* was the last lyric work that had a broad European reception; no later writings penetrated beyond a more or less limited linguistic area. Added to this is the fact that Baudelaire expended his productive capacity almost entirely on this one volume. And finally, it cannot be denied that some of his motifs—those which the present study has discussed—render the possibility of lyric poetry problematic. These three facts define

Baudelaire historically. They show that he held steadfastly to his cause and focused single-mindedly on his mission. He went so far as to proclaim as his goal "the creation of a cliché [*poncif*]." <sup>91</sup> He saw in this the condition for any future lyric poetry, and had a low opinion of those poets who were not equal to the task. "Do you drink beef tea made of ambrosia? Do you eat cutlets from Paros? How much can you get for a lyre, at the pawnshop?" <sup>92</sup> To Baudelaire, the lyric poet with his halo is antiquated. In a prose piece entitled "Perte d'auréole" [Loss of a Halo], which came to light at a late date, Baudelaire presents such a poet as a supernumerary. When Baudelaire's literary remains were first examined, this piece was rejected as "unsuitable for publication"; to this day, it has been neglected by Baudelaire scholars.

"What do I see, my dear fellow? You—*here*? I find you in a place of ill repute—a man who sips quintessences, who consumes ambrosia? Really! I couldn't be more surprised!"

"You know, my dear fellow, how afraid I am of horses and carriages. A short while ago I was hurrying across the boulevard, and amid that churning chaos in which death comes galloping at you from all sides at once I must have made an awkward movement, for the halo slipped off my head and fell into the mire of the macadam. I didn't have the courage to pick it up, and decided that it hurts less to lose one's insignia than to have one's bones broken. Furthermore, I said to myself, every cloud has a silver lining. Now I can go about incognito, do bad things, and indulge in vulgar behavior like ordinary mortals. So here I am, just like you!"

"But you ought to report the loss of your halo or inquire at the lost-and-found office."

"I wouldn't dream of it. I like it here. You're the only person who has recognized me. Besides, dignity bores me. And it amuses me to think that some bad poet will pick up the halo and straightway adorn himself with it. There's nothing I like better than to make someone happy—especially if the happy fellow is someone I can laugh at. Just picture X wearing it, or Y! Won't that be funny?" <sup>93</sup>

The same scene is found in Baudelaire's diaries, except that the ending is different. The poet quickly picks up his halo—but now he is troubled by the feeling that the incident may be a bad omen. <sup>94</sup>

The man who wrote these pieces was no *flâneur*. They embody, in ironic form, the same experience that Baudelaire put into the following sentence without any embellishment: "Perdu dans ce vilain monde, *coudoyé par les foules*, je suis comme un homme lassé dont l'oeil ne voit en arrière, dans les années profondes, que désabusement et amertume, et, devant lui, qu'un orage où rien de neuf n'est contenu, ni enseignement ni douleur." <sup>95</sup> ["Lost in this base world, jostled by the crowd, I am like a weary man whose eye,

looking backward into the depths of the years, sees only disillusion and bitterness, and looking ahead sees only a tempest which contains nothing new, neither instruction nor pain.”] Of all the experiences which made his life what it was, Baudelaire singled out being jostled by the crowd as the decisive, unmistakable experience. The semblance [*Schein*] of a crowd with a soul and movement all its own, the luster that had dazzled the flâneur, had faded for him. To heighten the impression of the crowd’s baseness, he envisioned the day on which even the fallen women, the outcasts, would readily espouse a well-ordered life, condemn libertinism, and reject everything except money. Betrayed by these last allies of his, Baudelaire battled the crowd—with the impotent rage of someone fighting the rain or the wind. This is the nature of the immediate experience [*Erlebnis*] to which Baudelaire has given the weight of long experience [*Erfahrung*]. He named the price for which the sensation of modernity could be had: the disintegration of the aura in immediate shock experience [*Chockerlebnis*]. He paid dearly for consenting to this disintegration—but it is the law of his poetry. This poetry appears in the sky of the Second Empire as “a star without atmosphere.”<sup>96</sup>

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## Notes

1. Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, ed. Yves-Gérard Le Dantec (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1931–1932), vol. 1, p. 18. [Benjamin’s note. “Hypocrite reader—my fellow creature—my brother!” The quotation is from “Au lecteur” (To the Reader), the introductory poem of *Les Fleurs du mal* (first edition 1857; second and enlarged edition 1861).—*Trans.*]
2. Alphonse Prat de Lamartine (1790–1869), popular poet and orator, helped shape the Romantic movement in French literature. He served as foreign minister in the provisional government of 1848, and was the author of *Méditations poétiques* (Poetic Meditations; 1820), *La Chute d’une ange* (The Fall of an Angel; 1838), and *Histoire des Girondins* (History of the Girondists; 1846).
3. Paul Verlaine (1844–1896) was one of the major French poets of the later nineteenth century. His main works include *Fêtes galantes* (Elegant Diversions; 1869), *Romances sans paroles* (Songs without Words; 1873–1874), *Sagesse* (Wisdom; 1880–1881), and *Les Poètes maudits* (Accursed Poets; 1884). Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891) was a French poet and adventurer whose poetry had a profound influence on modern literature. His major works include *Une Saison en enfer* (A Season in Hell; 1873), a hallucinatory work of autobiography, and *Les Illuminations* (1886), prose poems.
4. Victor Hugo (1802–1885), poet, novelist, dramatist, and statesman, was the

most important of the French Romantic writers. While his novels, such as *Les Misérables* (1862) and *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), remain his best-known works, his legacy to the nineteenth century was his lyric poetry. Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), German poet and critic, fled Germany because of his liberal views and lived in Paris after 1831. His best-known works include *Reisebilder* (Travel Images; 1826–1831), *Buch der Lieder* (Book of Songs; 1827), and *Romanzero* (Ballad Collection; 1851).

5. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) was a German philosopher and historian of ideas. His book *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (Experience and Poetry; 1906) put forward a hermeneutics based on empathetic understanding as an active, productive process. Ludwig Klages (1872–1956), German philosopher, psychologist, and anthropologist, exerted a wide influence in the first half of the twentieth century. His central thesis—most exhaustively expressed in *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (The Intellect as Opponent of the Soul; 1929–1933, 3 vols.), but also evident in his graphological treatise *Handschrift und Charakter* (Handwriting and Character; 1917)—was that an originary unity of soul and body has been destroyed by the human rational capacity. Strongly influenced by Nietzsche, Bergson, and Bachofen, Klages' ideas have gained notoriety because of their absorption into Nazi ideology, whose anti-Semitism Klages shared. C. G. Jung (1875–1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist who served as president of the International Psychoanalytic Association (1911–1914). He met Freud in 1907 and became his leading collaborator, but grew increasingly critical of his approach. Jung's book *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1911–1912; translated as *The Psychology of the Unconscious*), which posited the existence of a collective unconscious dominated by archetypes, caused a break between the two men in 1913.
6. Henri Bergson (1859–1941), French philosopher, elaborated what came to be called a process philosophy, which rejected static values in favor of values of motion, change, and evolution. He was also a master literary stylist, of both academic and popular appeal. His *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (Matter and Memory: Essay on the Relation of the Body to the Mind) appeared in 1896.
7. Here and elsewhere in this essay, Benjamin distinguishes between two functions of memory, *Gedächtnis* and *Erinnerung*, the former understood as a gathering of often unconscious data, and the latter understood as an isolating of individual "memories" per se. This distinction is roughly paralleled by the one between the terms *Erfahrung* (tradition-bound, long experience) and *Erlebnis* (the isolated experience of the moment.) See note 11 below.
8. Bergson argues that the concrete living present, which consists in the consciousness one has of one's body as a center of action, necessarily occupies a moment of duration very different from our ideas of chronological time. Every perception fills a certain "depth of duration" (*épaisseur de durée*), prolonging the past into the present and thereby preparing the future. As a constantly varying spatio-temporal "rhythm," a flow of states, duration is the basis of matter, which, insofar as it is extended in space, must be seen as a present which is always beginning again. See Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 137–139, 186, 205, 244, and passim.



9. Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Pléiade, 1962), vol. 1, p. 44 (*Du côté de chez Swann*).
10. Karl Kraus (1874–1936), Austrian journalist and dramatist, edited and wrote for the journal *Die Fackel* from 1899 to 1936. He is best known for his savage satires of journalistic rhetoric. See Benjamin's essay of 1931, "Karl Kraus," in *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927–1934* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 433–458.
11. This is Benjamin's most concentrated definition of *Erfahrung*, experience over time. In the pages that follow, he will contrast it with *Erlebnis*, the isolated experience of the moment. In notes connected to the composition of "Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire," Benjamin writes that experiences in the sense of *Erlebnisse* are "by nature unsuitable for literary composition," and "work is distinguished by the fact that it begets *Erfahrungen* out of *Erlebnissen*." See *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 1183. See also Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 802 (Convolute m2a,4): *Erfahrung* is inseparable from the representation of a continuity.
12. *Eingedenken* is Benjamin's coinage from the preposition *eingedenk* ("mindful of") and the verb *gedenken* ("recollect," "remember"). The resultant term has a more active sense than *erinnern* ("remember") and often verges on the notion of commemoration.
13. Freud's *Jenseits des Lust-Prinzips* (Beyond the Pleasure Principle) first appeared in 1920. Its primary contribution to psychoanalytic theory is a revision of Freud's early insistence that dreams avoid trauma. Based on his work with war veterans suffering from shell shock, Freud concluded that neurotics are in fact characterized by a compulsion to revisit or relive the traumatic scene.
14. Theodor Reik (1888–1969) was an Austrian psychoanalyst and, after 1911, a collaborator of Freud's.
15. Theodor Reik, *Der überraschte Psychologe* (Leiden, 1935), p. 132. In English, *Surprise and the Psycho-Analyst: On the Conjecture and Comprehension of Unconscious Processes*, trans. Margaret M. Green (New York: Dutton, 1937), p. 131.
16. In the present context, there is no substantial difference between the concepts *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* as used in Freud's essay. [Benjamin's note. Freud's assumption, in the original wording, is that "das Bewußtsein entstehe an der Stelle der Erinnerungsspur."—*Trans.*]
17. Paul Valéry (1871–1945), French man of letters, is best known for his prose work *La Soirée avec Monsieur Teste* (An Evening with Monsieur Teste; 1896) and his verse masterpiece, *La Jeune Parque* (1917). His criticism is often cited in Benjamin's later writings. He was elected to the Académie Française in 1925.
18. Paul Valéry, *Analecta* (Paris, 1935), pp. 264–265. [Benjamin's note]
19. Alfred de Musset (1810–1857), French poet, playwright, and translator, ranks alongside Hugo, Lamartine, and Vigny as one of the great Romantic poets. He combined an intense lyricism with a propensity to shock through revelation of his vices: laziness, self-indulgence, a facile talent, and an attraction to opium.
20. Valéry, "The Place of Baudelaire," in *Leonardo, Poe, Mallarmé*, trans. Malcolm

- Cowley and James R. Lawler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 195. Valéry's introduction dates from 1926.
21. Jules Vallès (1832–1885), French socialist journalist and novelist, was a member of the Paris Commune and founded the revolutionary journal *Le Cri du peuple* (1871). His best-known work is the three-volume autobiographical novel *Jacques Vingtras* (1879–1886). Clara-Agathe Nargeot (née Thénon; 1829–?) was a French painter who did a portrait of Baudelaire. Armand de Pontmartin (1811–1890) was a conservative critic whom Baudelaire called a “drawing-room preacher.” Paul Claudel (1868–1955), French poet, dramatist, and diplomat, was associated with the Symbolist movement. Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), French poet and man of letters, was a leader of the Parnassians, a poetic school that strove for detachment, technical perfection, and precise description in its verse. The school derives its name from its anthology *Le Parnasse Contemporain* (1866–1876). Nadar (pseudonym of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon; 1820–1910), French writer, caricaturist, and photographer, was one of the great portraitists of the nineteenth century. Among his many innovations were his natural posing of his subjects, a patent on the use of photographs in mapmaking and surveying, the first aerial photograph (made from a balloon), and the first photographic interview.
  22. Constantin Guys (1805–1892), French painter, is the subject of Baudelaire's essay “Le Peintre de la vie moderne” (1859). Guys produced watercolors, engravings, and drawings of café life, military scenes, and the fashionable Parisian society of the Second Empire. For Baudelaire, Guys became the representative modern artist through his ability to capture and combine the ephemeral and the eternal in the modern world.
  23. André Gide, “Baudelaire et M. Faguet,” in *Morceaux choisis* (Paris, 1921), p. 128. [Benjamin's note. Gide (1869–1951), French novelist and man of letters, received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1947. See “André Gide and Germany” and “Conversation with André Gide,” in Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927–1934* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 80–84 and 91–97.—*Trans.*]
  24. Jacques Rivière, *Etudes*, 18th ed. (Paris, 1948), p. 14]. [Benjamin's note. Rivière (1886–1925), French novelist and critic, edited the *Nouvelle Revue Française* from 1919 until his death. He championed such figures as Proust, Stravinsky, and Nijinsky.—*Trans.*]
  25. François-Arsène Houssaye (1815–1897), French journalist, was befriended by Gautier and met, through him, the leading writers of his day. His criticism appeared in virtually every leading newspaper and journal. *La Presse*, the first mass-circulation newspaper, made important innovations. It mixed traditional coverage of politics and the arts with elements of fashion, gossip, and scandal; and it introduced the *feuilleton-roman* (the serial novel), which supplied a new mass readership with sensationalist literature.
  26. To endow this crowd with a soul is the very special purpose of the flâneur. His encounters with it are the experience that he never tires of telling about. Certain reflexes of this illusion are an integral part of Baudelaire's work. It has continued to be an active force to this day. Jules Romains' *unanimité* is an admirable late flowering of it. [Benjamin's note. Jules Romains (1885–1972), French nov-

- elist, poet, and playwright, was the author of *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* (Men of Good Will; 27 vols., 1932–1946) and other works. He moved to the United States in 1940.—*Trans.*]
27. Eugène Sue (1804–1857), French author, is known for his serial novels which attracted a wide readership. His most popular were *Les Mystères de Paris* (The Mysteries of Paris; 1842–1843) and *Le Juif errant* (The Wandering Jew; 1844–1845).
  28. Friedrich Engels, *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England: Nach eigener Anschauung und authentischen Quellen*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1848), pp. 36–37. [Benjamin's note. In English, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. Florence Wischniewetzky (1886; rpt. London: Penguin, 1987), pp. 68–69. Engels' study was first published in 1845.—*Trans.*]
  29. Léon Gozlan (1803–1866) was a journalist, novelist, and playwright. He was the author of *Le Triomphe des omnibus: Poème héroï-comique* (Triumph of the Omnibuses: Heroic-Comic Poem; 1828) and *Balzac en pantoufles* (Balzac in Slippers; 1865). Alfred Delvau (1825–1867) was a journalist and a friend of Baudelaire's. Among his works is *Les Heures parisiennes* (The Parisian Hours; 1866). Louis Lurine (1816–1860), French writer, was the editor of the anthology *Les Rues de Paris* (The Streets of Paris; 1843–1844).
  30. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 19, *Briefe von und an Hegel* (Letters to and from Hegel), ed. Karl Hegel (Leipzig, 1887), part 2, p. 257. [Benjamin's note]
  31. Paul Desjardins, "Poètes contemporains: Charles Baudelaire," in *Revue Bleue: Revue Politique et Littéraire* (Paris), vol. 14, no. 1 (July 2, 1887): 23. [Benjamin's note. Paul Desjardins (1859–1940), a literary critic and professor of rhetoric, was the organizer, from 1910 to 1940, of the "Decades of Pontigny," a series of meetings at the abbey in Pontigny attended by intellectuals from across Europe and designed to further the tradition of European humanism. Benjamin directed a meeting on his own writings at the abbey in May 1939. On Benjamin's relationship to Desjardins and his institution, see the "Chronology" at the end of this volume.—*Trans.*]
  32. Characteristic of Barbier's method is his poem "Londres," which in twenty-four lines describes the city, awkwardly closing with the following verses:

Enfin, dans un amas de choses, sombre, immense,  
 Un peuple noir, vivant et mourant en silence.  
 Des êtres par milliers, suivant l'instinct fatal,  
 Et courant après l'or par le bien et le mal.

[Finally, within a huge and somber mass of things,  
 A blackened people, who live and die in silence.  
 Thousands of beings, who follow a fatal instinct,  
 Pursuing gold by good and evil means.]

Auguste Barbier, *Iambes et poèmes* (Paris, 1841).

Barbier's tendentious poems, particularly his London cycle, *Lazare* [Lazarus], influenced Baudelaire more profoundly than people have been willing to admit. Baudelaire's "Crépuscule du soir" [Half-Light of Evening] concludes as follows:

ils finissent  
 Leur destinée et vont vers le gouffre commun;  
 L'hôpital se remplit de leurs soupirs.—Plus d'un  
 Ne viendra plus chercher la soupe parfumée,  
 Au coin du feu, le soir, auprès d'une âme aimée.

[they accomplish  
 Their fate and draw near the common pit;  
 Their sighs fill the hospital ward.—More than one  
 Will come no more to get his fragrant soup,  
 At the fireside, in the evening, by the side of a loved one.]

Compare this with the end of the eighth stanza of Barbier's "Mineurs de Newcastle" [Miners of Newcastle]:

Et plus d'un qui rêvait dans le fond de son âme  
 Aux douceurs du logis, à l'oeil bleu de sa femme,  
 Trouve au ventre du gouffre un éternel tombeau.  
 [And more than one who in his heart of hearts had dreams  
 Of home, sweet home, and of his wife's blue eyes,  
 Finds, within the belly of the pit, an everlasting tomb.]

With some masterful retouching, Baudelaire turns a "miner's fate" into the commonplace end of big-city dwellers. [Benjamin's note. Henri Auguste Barbier (1805–1882) was a French poet and satirist whom Baudelaire admired but criticized for moralistic tendencies. His *Iambes* (1831) satirized the monarchy of Louis Philippe.]

33. Albert Thibaudet, *Intérieurs* (Paris, 1924), p. 22. [Benjamin's note. Thibaudet (1874–1936) was an eminent French literary historian.—*Trans.*]
34. Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris, 1923), vol. 6, p. 138 (*La Prisonnière*). [Benjamin's note]
35. The motif of love for a woman passing by occurs in an early poem by Stefan George. The poet has missed the important thing: the stream in which the woman moves past, borne along by the crowd. The result is a self-conscious elegy. The poet's glances—so he must confess to his lady—have "moved away, moist with longing / before they dared mingle with yours" ("feucht vor sehnen fortgezogen / eh sie in deine sich zu tauchen trauten"). From Stefan George, "Von einer Begegnung" (Encounter), in *Hymnen; Pilgerfahrten; Algabal* (Berlin, 1922). Baudelaire leaves no doubt that *he* looked deep into the eyes of the passer-by. [Benjamin's note]
36. This passage has a parallel in "Un Jour de pluie." Even though it bears the name of another writer, this poem must be ascribed to Baudelaire. The last verse, which gives the poem its extraordinarily somber quality, has an exact counterpart in "The Man of the Crowd." Poe writes: "The rays of the gas lamps, feeble at first in their struggle with the dying day, had now at length gained ascendancy, and threw over everything a fitful and garish luster. All was dark yet splendid—as that ebony to which has been likened the style of Tertullian." The

coincidence here is all the more astonishing as the following verses were written in 1843 at the latest, a period when Baudelaire did not know Poe.

Chacun, nous coudoyant sur le trottoir glissant,  
Egoïste et brutal, passe et nous éclabousse,  
Ou, pour courir plus vite, en s'éloignant nous pousse.  
Partout fange, déluge, obscurité du ciel.  
Noir tableau qu'eût rêvé le noir Ezéchiël!

[Each one, elbowing us on the slippery sidewalk,  
Selfish and savage, goes by and splashes us,  
Or, to run the faster, gives us a push as he makes off.  
Mud everywhere, deluge, darkness in the sky.  
A somber scene that Ezekiel the somber might have dreamed!]

[Benjamin's note]

37. There is something demonic about Poe's businessmen. One is reminded of Marx, who blamed the "feverishly youthful pace of material production" in the United States for the lack of "either time or opportunity . . . to abolish the old world of the spirit." Baudelaire describes how, as darkness descends, "baleful demons" awaken in the air "sluggish as a bunch of businessmen." This passage, from "Crépuscule du soir," may have been inspired by Poe's text. [Benjamin's note]
38. A pedestrian knew how to display his nonchalance provocatively on certain occasions. Around 1840 it was briefly fashionable to take turtles for a walk in the arcades. The flâneurs liked to have the turtles set the pace for them. If they had had their way, progress would have been obliged to accommodate itself to this pace. But this attitude did not prevail. Taylor—who popularized the slogan "Down with dawdling!"—carried the day. [Benjamin's note. Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915), American efficiency engineer, devoted the last fifteen years of his life to developing the so-called Taylor system, expounded in his book *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911).—*Trans.*]
39. In Glassbrenner's character, the man of leisure appears as a paltry scion of the *citoyen*. Nante, Berlin's street-corner boy, has no reason to bestir himself. He makes himself at home on the street, which naturally does not lead him anywhere, and is as comfortable as the philistine is within his four walls. [Benjamin's note. Adolf Glassbrenner (1810–1876) was a German writer best known for his humorous and satirical sketches of Berlin life.—*Trans.*]
40. Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776–1822), German writer, composer, and civil servant, is best-known for his short tales, many of which combine Romantic and gothic elements. "Des Vettres Eckfenster" (The Cousin's Corner Window) is a late tale (1822), a dialogue in which a poet attempts to instruct his cousin in the art of seeing.
41. What leads up to this confession is remarkable. The visitor notes that the cousin watches the bustle down below only because he enjoys the changing play of colors; in the long run, he says, this must be tiring. In a similar vein, and probably not much later, Gogol wrote the following line about a fair in the Ukraine: "So many people were on their way there that it made one's eyes

swim.” The daily sight of a lively crowd may once have constituted a spectacle to which one’s eyes needed to adapt. On the basis of this supposition, one may assume that once the eyes had mastered this task, they welcomed opportunities to test their newly acquired ability. This would mean that the technique of Impressionist painting, whereby the image is construed from a riot of dabs of color, would be a reflection of experiences to which the eyes of a big-city dweller have become accustomed. A picture like Monet’s *Cathedral of Chartres*, which looks like an image of an ant-hill of stone, would be an illustration of this hypothesis. [Benjamin’s note. Nikolai Gogol (1809–1852) is known as the father of realism in Russian literature. He was the author of *The Inspector General* (1836), *Cossack Tales* (1836), and *Dead Souls* (1842). Benjamin quotes from his story “Propavshaya gramota” (The Lost Letter). Claude Monet (1840–1926) was one of the greatest of the French Impressionist painters.—*Trans.*]

42. In his story, E. T. A. Hoffmann makes some edifying reflections—for instance, on the blind man who turns his face toward the sky. In the last line of “Les Aveugles” [The Blind], Baudelaire, who knew Hoffmann’s story, modifies Hoffmann’s reflections in such a way as to deny their edifying quality: “Que cherchent-ils au Ciel, tous ces aveugles?” [“What are all those blind people looking for in the heavens?”] [Benjamin’s note. Biedermeier refers to a middle-class style of furniture and interior decoration popular in early nineteenth-century Germany; it is similar to Empire style, but simpler and more sober. A *tableau vivant* (literally, “living picture”) is a scene presented onstage by costumed actors who remain silent and still as if in a picture.—*Trans.*]
43. Karl Varnhagen von Ense (1785–1858) was a German diplomat and man of letters. His wife, Rahel, was a leading intellectual and salon figure in early nineteenth-century Berlin.
44. Heinrich Heine, *Gespräche: Briefe, Tagebücher, Berichte seiner Zeitgenossen* (Heine in Conversation: Letters, Diaries, Accounts of His Contemporaries), ed. Hugo Bieber (Berlin, 1926), p. 163. [Benjamin’s note]
45. James Sydney Ensor (1860–1949) was a Belgian painter and printmaker whose works are characterized by their troubling fantasy, explosive colors, and subtle social commentary.
46. Valéry, *Cahier B* (Paris, 1910), pp. 88–89. [Benjamin’s note]
47. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, p. 333 (“Le Peintre de la vie moderne”). [Benjamin’s note]
48. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1932), p. 404. [Benjamin’s note]
49. In English in the original.
50. The shorter the training period of an industrial worker, the longer the basic training of a military man. It may be part of society’s preparation for total war that training is shifting from techniques of production to techniques of destruction. [Benjamin’s note]
51. Alain, *Les Idées et les âges* (Paris, 1927), vol. 1, p. 183 (“Le Jeu”). [Benjamin’s note. Alain (pen name of Emile Chartier; 1868–1951), French essayist, took his pseudonym from a fifteenth-century poet. His collected essays, *Propos*, found a primarily youthful audience.—*Trans.*]
52. Aloys Senefelder (1771–1834), Czech-born inventor, was the first to devise pro-

- cesses of lithography (1796) and color lithography (1826). He served as inspector of maps at the royal Bavarian printing office in Munich.
53. Ludwig Börne, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 (Hamburg and Frankfurt, 1862), pp. 38–39. [Benjamin's note. Börne (born Löb Baruch; 1786–1837), writer and social critic, lived in exile in Paris after 1830. A member of the Young Germany movement, he was one of the first writers to use the feuilleton section of the newspaper as a forum for social and political criticism.—*Trans.*]
  54. Gambling nullifies the lessons of experience [*Ordnungen der Erfahrung*]. It may be due to an obscure sense of this that the “vulgar appeal to experience” (Kant) has particular currency among gamblers. A gambler says “my number” in the same way a man-about-town says “my type.” Toward the end of the Second Empire, this attitude was widespread. “On the boulevards it was customary to attribute everything to chance.” This way of thinking is fortified by betting, which is a device for giving events the character of a shock, detaching them from the contexts of experience. For the bourgeoisie, even political events were apt to assume the form of incidents at a gambling table. [Benjamin's note]
  55. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, part 2, book 9. In the sentence preceding, Benjamin writes: “Der Wunsch . . . gehört . . . den Ordnungen der Erfahrung an.”
  56. Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1883), p. 162. [Benjamin's note. Joubert (1754–1824), French thinker and moralist, was an associate of Diderot and Chateaubriand. He took part in the first phase of the Revolution as a justice of the peace in his hometown, Montignac, but withdrew from politics in 1792. His *Pensées*, culled from his journals, were first published in 1838.—*Trans.*]
  57. These lines come from Baudelaire's poem “L'Horloge” (The Clock), the last poem in the “Spleen et idéal” section of *Les Fleurs du mal*. The third stanza of the poem begins: “Trois mille six cents fois par heure, la Seconde / Chuchote: *Souviens-toi!*” (“Three thousand six hundred times an hour, the second-hand / Whispers: ‘Remember!’”)
  58. The narcotic effect that is involved here is time-specific, like the malady it is supposed to alleviate. Time is the material into which the phantasmagoria of gambling has been woven. In *Les Faucheurs de nuit* [Reapers by Night; 1860], [Edouard] Gourdon writes: “I assert that the mania for gambling is the noblest of all passions, for it includes all the others. A series of lucky *coups* gives me more pleasure than a nongambler can have in years. . . . If you think I see only profit in the gold I win, you are mistaken. I see in it the pleasures it procures for me, and I enjoy them to the full. They come too quickly to make me weary, and there are too many of them for me to get bored. I live a hundred lives in one. When I travel, it is the way an electric spark travels. . . . If I am frugal and reserve my banknotes for gambling, it is because I know the value of time too well to invest them as other people do. A certain enjoyment that I might permit myself would cost me a thousand other enjoyments. . . . I have intellectual pleasures, and want no others.” In the beautiful observations on gambling in his *Jardin d'Epicure* [Garden of Epicurus; 1895], Anatole France presents a similar view. [Benjamin's note]
  59. Benjamin refers to a quintessential work by the fourteenth-century Italian painter Giotto di Bondone—namely, his portrait of “Wrath” (*Iracondia*), one of

the seven vices depicted in the frescoes of the Arena or Scrovegni Chapel in Padua (ca. 1305–1306). The portrait shows a female figure rending her garments in a fit of rage.

60. Proust, "A propos de Baudelaire," in *Nouvelle Revue Française*, 16 (June 1, 1921): 652. [Benjamin's note. This is a translation of Benjamin's German translation of Proust. For a more literal translation of the original French, see *The Arcades Project*, p. 309 (Convolute J44,5). Proust speaks of "un étrange sectionnement du temps" ("a strange sectioning of time") in the world of Baudelaire.—*Trans.*]
61. Baudelaire's idea of natural correspondences—reflected in his poem "Correspondances," cited below in the text—derives mainly from the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), who envisioned a universal language in which everything outward and visible in nature was a symbol pointing to an inward spiritual cause. Baudelaire develops his idea of modern beauty (*beauté moderne*) at the end of his "Salon de 1846" (section 18).
62. Charles Fourier (1772–1837), French social theorist and reformer, called for a reorganization of society based on communal agrarian associations which he called "phalansteries." In each community, the members would continually change roles within different systems of production. Synaesthesia is a condition in which one type of stimulation evokes the sensation of another, as when the hearing of a sound produces the visualization of a color.
63. Beauty can be defined in two ways: in its relationship to history and in its relationship to nature. Both relationships bring out the role of semblance, the aporetic element in the beautiful. (Let us characterize the first relationship briefly. On the basis of its *historical* existence, beauty is an appeal to join those who admired it in an earlier age. Being moved by beauty means *ad plures ire*, as the Romans called dying. According to this definition, "semblance of beauty" means that the identical object which admiration is courting cannot be found in the work. This admiration gleans what earlier generations admired in it. A line by Goethe expresses the ultimate wisdom here: "Everything that has had a great effect can really no longer be evaluated.") Beauty in relation to *nature* can be defined as "that which remains true to its essential nature only when veiled." (See *Neue deutsche Beiträge*, ed. Hugo von Hofmannsthal [Munich], 2, no. 2 [1925]: 161 [Benjamin, "Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften" (Goethe's Elective Affinities).—*Trans.*].) *Correspondances* help us to think about such veiling. We may call it, using a somewhat daring abbreviation, the "reproducing aspect" of the work of art. The *correspondances* constitute the court of judgment before which the art object is found to be a faithful reproduction—which, to be sure, makes it entirely aporetic. If one attempted to reproduce this aporia in the material of language, one would define beauty as the object of experience [*Erfahrung*] in the state of resemblance. This definition would probably coincide with Valéry's formulation: "Beauty may require the servile imitation of what is indefinable in things" (*Autres rhumbs* [Paris, 1934], p. 167). If Proust so readily returns to this object of experience (which in his work appears as time recaptured), one cannot say he is revealing any secrets. It is, rather, one of the disconcerting features of his technique that he continually and loquaciously



builds his reflections around the concept of a work of art as a copy, the concept of beauty—in short, the hermetic aspect of art. He writes about the origin and intentions of his work with a fluency and an urbanity that would befit a refined amateur. This, to be sure, has its counterpart in Bergson. The following passage, in which the philosopher indicates all that may be expected from a visual actualization of the uninterrupted stream of becoming, has a flavor reminiscent of Proust. “We can let our day-to-day existence be permeated with such vision and thus, thanks to philosophy, enjoy a satisfaction similar to that of art; but this satisfaction would be more frequent, more regular, and more easily accessible to ordinary mortals” (*La Pensée et le mouvant: Essais et conférences* [Paris, 1934], p. 198). Bergson sees within reach what Valéry’s better, Goethean understanding visualizes as the “here” in which the inadequate becomes an actuality. [Benjamin’s note. The last phrase of this note—“in dem das Unzulängliche Ereignis wird”—is an allusion to the Chorus Mysticus that ends Goethe’s *Faust*, Part II. *Ad plus ire* literally means “to go to the many,” to join the masses that have died.—*Trans.*]

64. Marceline Desbordes-Valmore (1786–1859), French actress and writer, was the author of children’s stories and poetry (collected in *Poésies*, published in 1842). The phrase “hysterical tears” appears in English.
65. Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 8, pp. 82–83 (*Le Temps retrouvé*). [Benjamin’s note]
66. Jules-Amédée Barbey d’Aureville, *Les Oeuvres et les hommes (XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, part 3, *Les Poètes* (Paris, 1862), p. 381. [Benjamin’s note. Barbey d’Aureville (1808–1889), French critic and novelist, was a long-time friend of Baudelaire. Timon, a misanthropic Athenian, is the hero of Shakespeare’s *Timon of Athens* (ca. 1607–1608). Archilochus (6th century B.C.) was a Greek lyric poet and writer of lampoons, in whose work the poetry of heroism yields to that of feeling and reflection.—*Trans.*]
67. In the mystical “Colloquy of Monos and Una,” Poe has, so to speak, taken the empty time sequence to which the subject in the mood of spleen is delivered up, and copied it into the *durée*; he seems blissfully happy to have rid himself of its horrors. It is a “sixth sense” acquired by the departed, consisting of an ability to derive harmony even from the empty passage of time. To be sure, it is quite easily disrupted by the rhythm of the second-hand. “There seemed to have sprung up in the brain *that* of which no words could convey to the merely human intelligence even an indistinct conception. Let me term it a mental pendulous pulsation. It was the moral embodiment of man’s abstract idea of *Time*. By the absolute equalization of this movement—or of such as this—had the cycles of the firmamental orbs themselves been adjusted. By its aid I measured the irregularities of the clock upon the mantel, and of the watches of the attendants. Their tickings came sonorously to my ears. The slightest deviation from the true proportion . . . affected me just as violations of abstract truth are wont, on earth, to affect the moral sense.” [Benjamin’s note]
68. Max Horkheimer, “Zu Bergsons Metaphysik der Zeit” (On Bergson’s Metaphysics of Time), in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 3 (1934): 332. [Benjamin’s note]

69. See Bergson, *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit* (Paris, 1933), pp. 166–167. [Benjamin's note. See, in English, *Matter and Memory*, p. 139.—*Trans.*]
70. In Proust, the deterioration of experience manifests itself in the complete realization of his ultimate intention. There is nothing more ingenious or more loyal than the way in which he casually, and continually, tries to convey to the reader: Redemption is my private show. [Benjamin's note]
71. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, p. 197 ("Quelques Caricaturistes français"). [Benjamin's note]
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 222–224 ("Salon de 1859: Le Public moderne et la photographie"). [Benjamin's note. The quotations from Baudelaire that immediately follow in the text are likewise from this essay (p. 224). Baudelaire's critique of photography is cited at greater length in *The Arcades Project*, pp. 691–692 (Convolute Y10a,1–Y11,1).—*Trans.*]
73. Valéry, "Avant-propos" [Foreword], *Encyclopédie française*, vol. 16: *Arts et littératures dans la société contemporaine*, I (Paris, 1935), 16.04–5/6. [Benjamin's note]
74. "Ach, du warst in abgelebten Zeiten meine Schwester oder meine Frau!" This is a line from Goethe's poem dedicated to Charlotte von Stein, "Warum gabst Du uns die tiefen Blicke" (Why Did You Give Us Deep Gazes). The poem was discovered in 1864 in a letter of April 14, 1776, to Frau von Stein, Goethe's beloved.
75. The moment of such a success is itself marked as something unique. It is the basis of the structural design of Proust's works. Each situation in which the chronicler is touched by the breath of lost time is thereby rendered incomparable and removed from the sequence of days. [Benjamin's note]
76. Novalis, *Schriften* (Berlin, 1901), part 2 (first half), p. 293. [Benjamin's note. Novalis (pseudonym of Friedrich Leopold, Freiherr von Hardenberg; 1772–1801) was a poet and theorist, and a central figure of the early German Romantic period. His works include the verse collections *Blütenstaub* (Pollen; 1798) and *Hymnen an die Nacht* (Hymns to the Night; 1800), and the unfinished novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802).—*Trans.*]
77. This conferred power is a wellspring of poetry. Whenever a human being, an animal, or an inanimate object thus endowed by the poet lifts up its eyes, it draws him into the distance. The gaze of nature, when thus awakened, dreams and pulls the poet after its dream. Words, too, can have an aura of their own. This is how Karl Kraus described it: "The closer one looks at a word, the greater the distance from which it looks back." (Karl Kraus, *Pro domo et mundo* [Munich, 1912], p. 164.) [Benjamin's note]
78. See Walter Benjamin, "L'Oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 5 (1936): 43. [Benjamin's note. See "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (section III), in this volume.—*Trans.*]
79. Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 8, p. 33 (*Le Temps retrouvé*). [Benjamin's note]
80. Valéry, *Analecta*, pp. 193–194. [Benjamin's note]
81. From "Correspondances," in *Les Fleurs du mal*.

82. Goethe's poem "Selige Sehnsucht" (Blessed Longing) was published in the volume *West-östlicher Divan* (Divan of West and East; 1819).
83. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, vol. 1, p. 40. [Benjamin's note. This is the first stanza of Poem XXIV (untitled) of the "Spleen et idéal" section of *Les Fleurs du mal*.—*Trans.*]
84. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 190 ("L'Avertisseur" [The Lookout]). [Benjamin's note]
85. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 40 ("Tu mettrais l'univers entier dans ta ruelle" [You'd Take the Whole World to Bed]). [Benjamin's note]
86. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 622 ("Choix de maximes consolantes sur l'amour" [Consoling Maxims on Love]). [Benjamin's note]
87. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 359 ("Le Peintre de la vie moderne" [The Painter of Modern Life]). [Benjamin's note]
88. Georg Simmel, *Mélanges de philosophie relativiste: Contribution à la culture philosophique*, trans. Alix Guillaïn (Paris, 1912), pp. 26–27. [Benjamin's note. The original title of Simmel's essay is "Exkurs über die Soziologie der Sinne" (On the Sociology of the Senses; 1911).—*Trans.*]
89. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, p. 273 ("Salon de 1859," section 8, "Le Paysage" [Landscape]). [Benjamin's note]
90. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 94 ("L'Horloge" [The Clock]). [Benjamin's note]
91. See Jules Lemaître, *Les Contemporains: Etudes et portraits littéraires* (Paris, 1897), pp. 31–32. [Benjamin's note. Benjamin refers to a passage from Baudelaire's notebooks: "To create a new commonplace [*poncif*]*—that's genius. I must create a commonplace.*" See "My Heart Laid Bare" and *Other Prose Writings*, trans. Norman Cameron (1950; rpt. New York: Haskell House, 1975), p. 168 ("Fusées," no. 20). See also Baudelaire's "Salon de 1846," section 10.—*Trans.*]
92. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, p. 422 ("L'Ecole païenne" [The Pagan School]). [Benjamin's note]
93. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 483–484. [Benjamin's note. "Perte d'auréole" was rejected by the *Revue Nationale et Etrangère* in 1865, two years before Baudelaire's death, and was first published in 1869 in the posthumous edition of his *Petits poèmes en prose*, also known as *Le Spleen de Paris*.—*Trans.*]
94. It is not impossible that this diary entry was occasioned by a pathogenic shock. The form the entry takes, which links it to Baudelaire's published work, is thus all the more revealing. [Benjamin's note. For the diary entry in question, see "My Heart Laid Bare" and *Other Prose Writings*, p. 165 ("Fusées," no. 17).—*Trans.*]
95. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, p. 641. [Benjamin's note. He quotes from the conclusion of the final section of "Fusées."—*Trans.*]
96. This phrase comes from section 8 of Friedrich Nietzsche's uncompleted, posthumously published early work *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* (Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks). In its original context, it refers to the Presocratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus, whom Nietzsche presents, in a typically self-reflecting vein, as a proud solitary, flaming inwardly while outwardly looming dead and icy.