

BAUDELAIRE AND GAUTIER: SOME ASPECTS OF
A LITERARY RELATIONSHIP

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An examination of the affinities between Baudelaire and Gautier in matters of aesthetic principle, as seen in the light of their personal relations, the social climate of their times, and their works.

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A.J.H.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature and society mirror each other. The writer expresses in his work his intimate relationship with his environment. Taine's determinism in literary criticism may be exaggerated but, in essence, it touches upon the basic principle upon which a culture is founded. The literature of the nineteenth century in France, from the beginnings of Romanticism, through Art for Art's sake and Parnasse to Symbolism, manifests the interaction of society and literature. The two do not always agree in their discourse, but they never cease to stimulate each other.

The danger is to classify poets too categorically, to set them too neatly within movements or even groups. The Romantics lend themselves conveniently to such classifications by the very spirit of their work. They rejected conventions and abandoned themselves to the ideal of art as liberty, boundless self-expression and exploration of their inner world. 1830 marks at once the triumph of Romanticism and the sudden change of direction which political events seemed to encourage. Intellectuals began to feel it incumbent upon them to play a part in the new society. Political and philosophical factions implored their allegiance. It seemed as if they must march with their times towards progress.

It is in this context that the work of Théophile Gautier and Charles Baudelaire must be considered. Both men participated in the conflict which was to rage between the utilitarian principle of progress through the arts and the essentially Romantic principle of art's autonomy. Gautier reacted violently against utilitarianism.

His early works show his sense of the conflict within himself and within society. By 1852, he confirmed his belief in the principle of Art for Art's sake by publishing Maux et Camées. He eliminated social and moral preoccupations from his work. Baudelaire, after a short period of interest in politics, which ended in 1848, confronted the same problem. He refused to close his eyes to the problems of the world but realised that, through an intimate study of his own experience, he could pursue his own ideal of progress, which was spiritual and not material.

Thus to some extent both men arrive at agreement on the basic principle of Art for Art's sake. Some literary historians maintain that Baudelaire venerated Gautier both as a man and as a writer. They infer that the published dedication is a statement of this veneration. The dedication which Baudelaire first submitted to Gautier for approval, and which Gautier rejected, cites however only three early works of Gautier -- Albertus, La Comédie de la Mort, España. It ostentatiously omits Maux et Camées -- the work which characterizes the mature attitude of Gautier and which is most considered in literary history.

It is the purpose of this study to examine the extent of the significance of this omission, in the light of the personal relations between the two men, of their reactions to the society in which they lived and of the aesthetic principles manifest in their work.

I

TWO LIVES

The relationship between Baudelaire and Gautier admits of two interpretations. Some critics maintain that it was one of admiration and affection on the part of Baudelaire, answered by Olympian sympathy from Gautier; others maintain it was a relationship of diplomatically veiled divergence of opinion between the two men. Ernest Raynaud seems to subscribe to the latter view when he remarks:

Oh ironie de la destinée! ces deux hommes qui se détestaient cordialement en arriveront, pour avoir joué, un jour, devant la galerie, la comédie de l'admiration mutuelle, à passer à la postérité, liés d'une étreinte indissoluble.¹

On the other hand, the eminent Baudelairian Jacques Crépet cites the opinions of Banville and Asselineau to prove the sincerity of Baudelaire's sentiments towards Gautier.² In spite of M. Crépet's rhetorical question as to whether such testimonies may be contested, there is room for discussion. It is the purpose of this part of the study to present merely the material evidence on which critical opinion is founded.

The most publicized evidence of the relationship between the two men weighs in favour of the view that Baudelaire sincerely admired and esteemed Gautier and was at pains to impress the older man both personally and artistically. The first version of Baudelaire's

¹Ernest Raynaud, "Baudelaire et la Religion du Dandysme", Revue de France, (16 October 1917), pp. 577-614.

²Jacques Crépet, "Baudelaire, Banville et Théophile Gautier", Revue de France, (15 June 1939).

dedication of Les Fleurs du Mal in March 1857 is couched in language that is flatteringly humble. Baudelaire declares himself to be: le plus dévoué, le plus respectueux et le plus jaloux des disciples.³ His emended version eliminates any obscure allusions and appears a sincere eulogy of a friend and fellow poet. In the same way, Baudelaire's article on Gautier published on 13 March 1859 in L'Artiste seems to indicate unbounded admiration for Gautier. Most of Baudelaire's explicit references to Gautier attest to this cordiality. An examination of these in the light of more subtle interactions is the task in hand.

The lives of the two men do not converge until some time in 1843 when Baudelaire visited Gautier on the occasion of the publication of a small volume entitled Vers by Ernest Prarond, Gustave Le Vavas seur, Argonne (Auguste Dozon) and, according to Jules Mouquet, Charles Baudelaire.⁴ The latter recounts the oriental courtesy with which Gautier greeted him and their discussion of 'lexicomanie', of a poet's physical hygiene:

³Dedication, first published in Le Parnasse satyrique du XIX^e siècle, (1864). For text in full, see Cœuvres Complètes de Baudelaire, ed. Yves-Gérard Le Dantec (Paris: Gallimard, Éditions de la Pléiade, 1954), p. 1379. All references to the Cœuvres Complètes are to this edition in one volume.

⁴Charles Baudelaire, Vers Retrouvés (Juvenilia-Sonnets-Manoël), introd. and notes by Jules Mouquet (Paris: Éditions Emile-Paul frères, 1929). Le Dantec includes poems from Vers (Paris: Hermann frères, 1843) and numbers them VI-XI of the "Premiers Poèmes" in his edition of the Cœuvres Complètes.

des ménagements que l'homme de lettres doit à son corps et de sa sobriété obligée.⁵

One cannot but be struck by the disparity between the two men. One of Gautier's passions had been swimming at l'Ecole Petit near the Pont d'Austerlitz in the early 1820's when his studies at the Collège Charlemagne and his painting were inadequate to use up his physical energies. His travels to Spain and Russia attest to the continuance of these physical energies throughout his life. Baudelaire, on the other hand, had installed himself in the Hotel Pimodan, quai d'Anjou, after his enforced voyage to the Indies -- and was already in 1842 expending both his physical and emotional vitality in his liaison with Jeanne Duval, the macabre mulatto. One wonders whether Baudelaire must have nodded wisely but wryly at Gautier's advice on the care of the body, for from infancy the lives and experience of these men had been profoundly different.

Gautier was born on 30 August 1811 in Tarbes⁶ of a fervently Royalist father and a genteel and beautiful mother -- both with aristocratic connections. Pierre Gautier, although only a minor official of the Land Registry was a man of intellect and knowledge. Bergerat cites Gautier as having written:

⁵ Charles Baudelaire, "Essai sur Théophile Gautier" in Art Romantique (Oeuvres Complètes, p. 1025-60).

⁶ Emile Bergerat, in his Théophile Gautier (Paris: Charpentier, 1879), p. 35, cites the birth certificate of Theophile Gautier. The recorded date is 6 p.m., 30 August. Later (p. 37), he notes that Baudelaire died on the 31st. -- the day of Gautier's birth. We suggest that his error be noted.

4

Si j'ai quelque instruction et quelque talent, c'est
à lui que je le dois.'

Of his mother Adélaïde-Antoinette, Gautier seems to have been in some awe, treating her more as a queen than as the affectionate and doting mother she was.⁶ There is no doubt, however, that Théophile's birth was a joy to his parents and that his infancy and youth were supervised with benevolent and sympathetic care.

The Gautiers left Tarbes in 1814 and settled in the rue du Parc-Royal in Paris. There, Théo discovered the pleasures of books -- Robinson Crusoe and Paul and Virginie impressed his already Romantic nature. In 1819 he became a boarder at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand where Charles Baudelaire was to study seventeen years later in 1836. The two poets' first common experience was one of unhappiness:

Je mourais de froid, d'ennui et d'isolement entre ces
grands murs tristes où, sous prétexte de me buser à la
vie de collège, un immonde chien de cour s'était fait
mon bourreau.⁹

Théo, therefore, was removed and enrolled as day boy at the Collège Charlemagne which he again disliked, but where his studies left him time to become passionately fond of swimming and to win the glorious distinction of the "caleçon rouge". During these years of study he also began to paint in Rioult's studio. At fourteen, during a vacation spent in Maupertuis, he had repaired the paintings of the Church and the decorations of the main nave.¹⁰ At the Collège Charlemagne Gautier formed an important and lasting friendship with

⁷Ibid., p. 30. ⁸Ibid., p. 34. ⁹Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁰Emile Bergerat, Théophile Gautier, Peintre (Paris: Baur, 1877).

Gérard Labrunie (later Gérard de Nerval) of whom he speaks warmly in his Histoire du Romantisme.¹¹

Meanwhile the Gautier family had moved to the place Royale, into a house soon to be occupied by the great Victor Hugo himself. Gautier first met Hugo through the good offices of Gérard, in the rue Jean-Goujon where the author of Les Orientales was still resident. From that day on, Théophile renounced painting and determined to devote himself to literature. On February 25, 1830, the famous battle of 'Hernani' took place and Théo entered officially into the ranks of the militant Romantics. And at this point began a chapter in his life which has certain affiliations with the young manhood of Baudelaire. The dandy was in vogue and the young Théo, fresh from the exhilaration of his appearance in the red waistcoat at the première of Hernani, became even more flamboyant. In a self-portrait in oils of this period, we see Gautier carefully coiffed "en lion"

presque tous les cheveux sont rejetés, en masse d'un seul côté de la tête, comme dans le médaillon de Jehan Duseigneur, fait également en 1831. . . .¹²

Thus dandy and poet already by July 1830, Gautier published at Charles Mary's his Poésies, and in October 1832 this volume was enlarged by 177 pages and published as Albertus, ou l'Âme et le péché, légende théologique. The first volume had appeared during a cholera epidemic. But the preface to Albertus was already full

¹¹ Théophile Gautier, Histoire du Romantisme (Paris: Flammarion, n.d.), p. 5-6.

¹² Bergerat, Théophile Gautier, p. 249.

of youthful bravado:

L'auteur du présent livre est un jeune homme frileux et maladif, qui use sa vie en famille avec deux ou trois amis et à peu près autant de chats.

Un espace de quelques pieds, où il fait moins froid qu'ailleurs, c'est pour lui l'univers. Le manteau de la cheminée est son ciel; la plage son horizon. . . .

Il n'a vu du monde que ce que l'on en voit par la fenêtre, et n'a pas eu envie d'en voir d'avantage. Il n'a aucune couleur politique. . . . Il fait des vers pour avoir un prétexte de ne rien faire, et ne fait rien sous prétexte qu'il fait des vers. . . . Quant aux utilitaires, utopistes, économistes, saint-simonistes et autres, qui lui demanderont à quoi cela rime, il répondra: Le premier vers rime avec le second quand la rime n'est pas mauvaise, et ainsi de suite.

-- A quoi cela sert-il?

-- Cela sert à être beau. . . .¹³

In 1855, his Jeunes-France was published by Eugène Renduel whom he had met at Hugo's. This man was the great Romantic publisher who sped about Paris in a cabriolet of steel and ebony and who boasted Balzac and Hugo on his lists.

In the following year, 1854, Théo's father was appointed receiver of taxes at Passy, and Gautier moved to his first independent establishment with his friends Morval, Houssaye and Camille Rogier -- rather than be exiled on the outskirts of Paris. It was to the Impasse du Doyenné that Théo moved, and the group gave a fancy dress party manifestly to shock the bourgeois. Adolphe Leloux, Celestin Nanteuil, Corot, Chassériau, Camille Rogier, Lorentz, Marilhat and Gautier decorated the walls with immortal paintings -- for refreshments

¹³Text quoted by Adolphe Boschot in his Théophile Gautier (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1955), p. 32-5.

were to be visual--Bergerat tells how:

Tous les gens d'esprit, tous les poètes et aussi
 beaucoup des plus jolies actrices de Paris assistèrent
 à cette fête costumée qui remplit la place du
 Carrousel de ses lumières et de ses bruits joyeux. ¹⁴

Thus life continued for Théo. In 1836 he published at Renduel's
Mademoiselle de Maupin, which he had conceived back in 1833.

In the same year, Baudelaire entered the Lycée Louis-le-Grand at the age of fifteen. In 1827, his father Francois Baudelaire had died, and Caroline Baudelaire had married, in the following year, Commander Aupick, a handsome, stern soldier who was to show a real, if uncomprehending, affection for his stepson. In 1831, Aupick was made Lieutenant-Colonel and sent to Lyon, and in this city Charles began his studies at the Pension Delorme, then at the Collège Royal. After five years came the move the Paris headquarters of the first division, and Charles entered the old school of Théo. He was a brilliant student, winning prizes in Latin and Greek and already trying his hand at verse. He was fascinated both by Chénier's Hellenism and by the pessimism of Sainte-Beuve's Joseph Delorme and the byronism of Petrus Borel. But after three years at the Collège, Charles was asked to leave on account of some dormitory scandal. He announced to his family his decision to pursue a career in literature and, with regret but admirable justness, General Aupick consented to let the eighteen-year old have a couple of years in which to finish his education according to his own tastes. He was duly installed then in the Pension Bailly, at the corner of the rue de l'Estrapade

¹⁴Bergerat, Théophile Gautier, p. 49.

and the Place du Panthéon. Here he met such young Bohemians as Levassieur, Auguste Doron, Prarond, Jules Buisson and Philippe de Chennevières who had all read enthusiastically Gautier's Comédie de la Mort and Mademoiselle de Maupin. It seems likely that Charles, in the midst of this 'jeunesse dorée', was very much aware of Gautier's literary activities. As early as 29 November 1836, Gautier had used the principle of sensuous 'correspondances' in an article on Rubens' picture of the Assumption:

On dirait un énorme bouquet de roses effeuillées; cette peinture est si fraîche, si vermeille et si fleurie qu'elle sent bon, et jette dans l'église une ravissante odeur printanière.¹⁵

Baudelaire probably became aware of the significance of this theory as a result of reading Gautier's comments.

But news of Charles' literary bohemianism reached his family.

Dr. Starbuck sketches in a few details of the group:

a noisy band with their thick black beards, their velvet caps pulled down rakishly over the right eye, with their pipes in their mouths, and a smart little grisette in bonnet and shawl leaning on their left arm nearest the heart. They slouched about the Latin

¹⁵ See Joanna Richardson, Théophile Gautier, His Life and Times (London: Reinhardt, 1958), p. 298-9. She quotes article on Donizetti's Lucrosia Scorgia:

Beaucoup de morceaux de cet opéra, qui devraient être verts de poison, s'encadreraient aisément dans la musique fraîche et rose d'un opéra buffa.

Also article on La Reine de Chypre in 1841:

le trémolo aigu des violons et le chant de la clarinette expriment à merveille la fraîcheur nocturne et le frémissement argenté de la lune sur les vagues. C'est de la musique azurée, si l'idée de la couleur peut s'appliquer à un son.

Quarter, whiling away the time, loafing in the cafés
or drinking in the low underground bars. . . .¹⁶

Charles even invited his friends home and the inevitable happened. It was arranged for him to be shipped off from Bordeaux on the ship "The Seven Seas", on the 9th of June 1841¹⁷ to make the voyage to Calcutta -- for some twelve to fifteen months. So the twenty-year old embarked, under the watchful eye of Captain Saliz, an old friend of his step-father. His fellow-passengers were middle class, respectable families whom Charles began to scandalize with his uninhibited conversation -- so much so that the prudent and shocked parents forbade their sons to frequent him. Loneliness, depression and home-sickness made him decide to end his voyage at Mauritius, where the ship docked for three weeks. There he met M. Autard de Bragard and his gentle, motherly wife. Of course the home-sick boy fell in love with this Creole lady.¹⁸ But at the end of this brief interlude, Saliz persuaded him to continue to the island of Réunion where he made arrangements for Charles to return to France on a boat captained by a friend. Baudelaire's comment to a friend was:

Ce voyage ne m'a pas été inutile. J'avais emporté
les oeuvres complètes de Balzac. J'ai eu tout loisir
de les lire.¹⁹

¹⁶Enid Starkie, Baudelaire (London: Gollancz, 1933), p. 41-2.

¹⁷Ernest Raynaud, in his Baudelaire et la Religion du Dandyisme, p. 580, dates this sailing as 29 June. Enid Starkie lists it as of 9 June, as do Yves-Gérard Le Cantec and Jacques Crépet.

¹⁸Baudelaire's poem: Sonnet à une dame créole.

¹⁹See Raynaud, op. cit.

On his return in February 1842, Paris had changed. Napoleon I's ideal of making Paris the capital of capitals was being realized. The Galerie Richer and the Cité du Vaux-Mall had been completed, the bridge of the Cité finished, the Hôtel de Ville restored as well as the Hôtel du Quai d'Orsay and the Palais des Thermes. There were now buildings for the Ecole Normale, a newly opened Théâtre italien, the Maison d'Or, the Café Niche. In addition to all this, Paris was in the midst of the 'Carnaval' with its 'bals masqués' and its anglomania. Charles was now twenty-one years old, had come into a 75,000 franc inheritance and was anxious to plunge into the excitements of Paris, free from family restraints. Accordingly, he set up house in the Ile Saint Louis at 10 quai de Béthune, then rue Vanneau, and finally at the Hôtel Pimodan (Lausun), a beautiful ancestral home still to be seen on the Ile Saint Louis.

Delighting in the new elegance of his lodgings, Charles began to live the fashionable life of a dandy. Both Le Dantec and Pascal Pia²⁰ designate this year of 1842 as being that of his "secondes liaisons littéraires" with Théophile Gautier and Théodore de Banville. It would seem that Gautier visited the Club des Maschischins at the Hôtel Pimodan, organized by Fernand Boissard,²¹ for he published an account of his Maschisch dreams in 1845 for La Presse. Baudelaire himself, however, seems to remember his first encounter with Gautier as being

²⁰ Pascal Pia, Baudelaire par lui-même (Paris: Aux Editions du Seuil, 1952) p. 159.

²¹ Alphonse Sédé, La Vie des Fleurs du Mal (Amiens: Malfère, 1926) p. 56.

in 1843, as has already been stated. Gautier, on the other hand, places their meeting in the year 1849. Vitu has cogently remarked²² that in 1849 neither Baudelaire nor Gautier was frequenting the Hôtel Pimodan. A safe and highly probable date would seem to be between 1844-45.²³ By 1843, Baudelaire had already written some fifteen or so of the poems later to be included in Les Fleurs du Mal. He had collaborated with Prarond on a play Ideolus -- never to be completed. He collaborated too in an anonymous work, Les Mystères galans des théâtres de Paris. Yet, in spite of his literary efforts, the fact of his increasing poverty and prodigality is well known and need not be repeated here. In September 1844, a "conseil judiciaire" was appointed, much to the young man's humiliation and rage. But life went on, a round of theatres, bars, women, at this time particularly Jeanne Duval, for Mme Sabatier was not to awaken his feelings until a few years later.

Gautier's life at this time seems to have only the vaguest interaction with that of Baudelaire. In 1846, Vitu reported in L'Echo²⁴ that Baudelaire and Gautier were seen in the audience of Champfleury's Pierrot Valet de la Mort at the Funambules. Both frequented Boissard's reception in the Hôtel Pimodan. Porché tells

²²Auguste Vitu, Charles Baudelaire, Souvenirs-Correspondances (Paris: Pincebourde, 1872), p. 116.

²³W. T. Bandy and Claude Pichois, Baudelaire devant ses Contemporains (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 1957) p. 21.

²⁴See L'Echo, 27 September 1846, quoted in Bandy and Pichois op. cit., p. 175.

how Théo found in Charles "une politesse excessive", noted his "gestes lents, rares, sobres, rapprochés du corps", in short that "froideur britannique" which was to antagonize so many of Baudelaire's acquaintances.²⁵ The Hôtel Pixodan was to continue as a meeting place even when the beautiful Mme Sabatier's 'soirées', at 16 rue Frochot in Montmartre became the scene of impressive literary and artistic gatherings. Every Sunday such men as Reyser, Du Camp, Henri Monnier, Dumas père, Musset, Foydeau, Heissonier and, of course, Gautier and Baudelaire would gather there. As a measure of Théophile's renown at this time, it is significant that he was proposed as candidate for the Academy by the journal Événement in 1849. But he was still determined not to be orthodox -- a legacy of the days of Hernani -- and accordingly he refused to stand for the Academy. His journalism was continuing apace, and that same year he published his Grotesques in La France littéraire. On 12 March 1849, there appeared a significant article in La Presse, from Gautier's pen, dealing with the problems of evoking music in prose -- an interesting example of Gautier's awareness of 'correspondances', though there is no evidence that he and Baudelaire had ever discussed this idea. It seems likely, however, that the two men would have discussed their aesthetics on such an evening as Cornenin recalled in his letter to Maxime du Camp: J'ai vu dernièrement, chez Théophile Gautier, un

²⁵ François Porché, Baudelaire et la Présidente (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p. 94.

Baudelaire qui fera parler de lui. . . .²⁶

The relationship between Du Camp, Cormenin and Arsène Houssaye was to bring Baudelaire and Gautier into closer contact. The Revue de Paris had been founded in 1829 by Dr. Véron but had been crowded out by the much more successful Revue des Deux Mondes. Cormenin, Du Camp, Houssaye and Gautier bought up the goodwill of this failing magazine and became part owners; the first number appeared on the 1st October 1851. The new sympathetic direction of the paper gave Baudelaire enough courage to collect all the poems he had written and to send to Gautier two batches in February 1852. One of these lots is the collection published in facsimile by Van Bever.²⁷ The composition of the other is not known but Dr. Starkie suggests that many were written in the years at the Hôtel Pinodan. A letter from Baudelaire to Gautier in February 1852 runs thus:

. . . Voici donc, cher ami, ce second petit paquet. J'espère que tu trouveras de quoi choisir. Je désire vivement que ton goût s'accorde avec le mien. Pour mon compte, voilà ce que je préfère:

Les deux Crêpuscules
La Caravane
Le Reniement de St. Pierre
L'Artiste inconnu
L'Outre de la Volupté
La Fontaine de Sang
Le Voyage à Cythère

²⁶Bandy and Pichois, op. cit. p. 115, quote Maxime du Camp who tells in Souvenirs Littéraires (Paris: Hachette, 1892) 11, p. 57-8, how he spoke to M. and Mme Aupick about letters from Louis Cormenin.

²⁷Ed. Van Bever, Douze Poèmes (Paris: Crès, 1917).

Protège-moi ferme. Si on ne grogne pas trop contre
cette poésie, j'en donnerai de plus voyante encore.

Adieu

Charles Baudelaire²⁸

The letter is headed: 25 rue des Marais-du-Temple -- Charles lived at this address from 15 June 1851 to 7 April 1852. It may be deduced that his meetings with Gautier were less frequent than in the days at the Hôtel Pimodan when mutual friends would bring them together, and the apparent cordiality of Baudelaire's letter may be deceptive and diplomatic. Judging from the results of it, Gautier's support, if actual, was not effective. It may be agreed, with Dr. Starkie, that Gautier's opinion may have been overruled by his co-directors or that it was simply not favourable to the inclusion of the poems. In any case, only two poems were published much later in the year, in October -- the conventional L'Homme et la Mer and Le Reniement de St. Pierre. Maxime du Camp recalls that Gautier had said earlier:

Il adviendra de ce Baudelaire ce qu'il est advenu
de Pétrus Borel. On disait: quand il paraîtra,
Hugo n'existera plus. Il a paru. Ce n'était rien.²⁹

This comment seems particularly significant in the assessment of the relationship between the two poets. Baudelaire would seem to pursue the friendship in order to avail himself of Gautier's influence. Gautier preserves a private indifference and a public affability.

²⁸ Charles Baudelaire, Correspondance Générale in Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Jacques Crépet (Paris: Conard, 1917), XIV p. 153.

²⁹ Maxime du Camp, Souvenirs Littéraires (Paris: Hachette, 1892) 11, p. 83.

It should also be remembered that Baudelaire had written in L'Echo des Théâtres on 25 August 1846:

Théophile Gautier est un banal enfileur de mots.
Gros, paresseux, lymphatique, il n'a pas d'idées et
ne fait qu'enfiler et parler les mots à la manière
des colliers d'osages...³⁰

-- remarks unlikely to have endeared the younger man to Gautier. Later in 1852, having sent off his poems to Gautier, Baudelaire was to write his article L'Ecole Païenne for La Semaine Théâtrale. This is in fact a diatribe against the precursors of Parnasse -- such men as Banville, Ménard, Leconte de Lisle, Laprade and, of course, Gautier. In spite of these factors, however, Baudelaire was able to publish articles on Poe in the Revue de Paris in March and April of the same year; in October there appeared his translation of Poe.

With the approach of winter, the circles in which the two poets moved drew more closely together. The Sabatier's Sundays at 16 rue Frochot became more significant occasions for Baudelaire. Though he had known Aglaé Sabatier since the days of Ferdinand Suisson's parties in the Hôtel Pimodan, it was not until this winter of 1852 that Baudelaire began to fall under her spell. In the presence of such men as Flaubert, Barbey d'Aurevilley, Maxime du Camp, Ernest Feydeau, Clésinger and Meissonier, Charles saw her with new eyes, and began to send her anonymous poems and letters to express his adoration of this famous beauty and wit. In spite of his thirty-three years, his cynicism, his 'dandysme', Baudelaire was

³⁰ See Reynaud, Baudelaire et la Religion du Dandysme, p. 41.

afraid to declare overtly his feelings, and from 1852 to 1857, the stream of admiring missives continued, with Baudelaire remaining timidly incognito. How different from the self-confident Gautier's letters! Dr. Starbuck sees Baudelaire's behaviour as that of a schoolboy. Porché, however, sees below the surface. In fact, Baudelaire was not seeking possession of Mme Sabatier. He possessed her already in a more ideal way in his fantasy, where she could exist as a superior, surreal apotheosis of womanhood. The licence of Gautier's conversation was proverbial. The letters he wrote, so pornographic and bawdy that Dr. Starbuck refuses to quote them, form a strange contrast to Baudelaire's discreet and sensitive eulogies.

By November 1856, Judith, Gautier's daughter by Ernesta Crisi, was nine years old and newly back from the Convent of Notre-Dame de la Miséricorde. Her father had left the rue Rougemont and was being encouraged by Feydeau to work on his Roman de la Nonie in the comfortable apartment in the rue Grande-Batelière. It was here that Judith, 'l'Ouragan', was to meet Charles Baudelaire:

"Ah, voilà Baldelarius! s'écria mon père, en tendant la main au nouveau venu. . . ." Déjà il avait coupé sa moustache et c'est ce qui lui donnait pour moi l'air d'un prêtre.³¹

Bandy and Pichois place this meeting as late as 1860 -- that is, after the publication of Les Fleurs de Mal. Evidence seems to support Miss Richardson, who tells how Judith aided her father in his work on the Roman de la Nonie "bandaging her dolls into miniature Tahesers

³¹Judith Gautier, Le Collier des Jours (Paris: Felix Juven, 1909), p. 155.

and making Ernesta's workbox a sarcophagus".³²

The purpose of this visit is not known. It may have been a purely social call, though it would seem likely that its purpose was to discuss Baudelaire's coming publication of Les Fleurs du Mal in the following Spring. On 7 March 1857, Baudelaire was to write to Poulet-Malassis of his dedication to Théophile Gautier:

Demain dimanche, Théophile vient au Moniteur; je veux lui montrer la dédicace avant de vous l'envoyer.³³

First of all, Baudelaire had couched his sentiments in the following terms:

A mon très cher et vénéré maître et ami, Théophile Gautier

Bien que je te prie de servir de parrain aux Fleurs du Mal, ne crois pas que je sois assez perdu, assez indigne du nom de poète, pour m'imaginer que ces fleurs malades méritent ton noble patronage. Je sais que, dans les régions éthérées de la véritable poésie, le Mal n'est pas, non plus que le Bien, et que ce misérable dictionnaire de mélancolie et de crime peut légitimer les réactions de la morale, comme le blasphémateur confirme la religion. Mais j'ai voulu, autant qu'il était en moi, en espérant mieux peut-être, rendre un hommage profond à l'auteur de l'Albertus, de la Comédie de la Mort et d'Essays, au poète impeccable, au magicien de langue française, dont je me déclare, avec autant d'orgueil que d'humilité, le plus dévoué, le plus respectueux et le plus jaloux des disciples.³⁴

The poet himself corrected the obvious error -- "de langue française" became "de lettres françaises". This done, Baudelaire took

³² See Joanna Richardson, Théophile Gautier, His life and Times, p. 28.

³³ Baudelaire, Correspondance Générale, p. 18.

³⁴ Text quoted in Baudelaire, Coeuvres Complètes, p. 1379.

advantage of Gautier's visit to the Moniteur on Sunday 8, March 1857. On the following Monday, Baudelaire announced that, with the advice and consent of Gautier, he had amended the text:

La nouvelle dédicace, discutée, convenue et consentie avec le magicien qui n'a très bien expliqué qu'une dédicace ne devait pas être une profession de foi laquelle d'ailleurs avait pour défaut d'attirer les yeux sur le côté scabreux du volume et de le dénoncer.³⁵

It seems probable that Gautier was flattered by this gesture, coming as it did at a time when his own work was causing him anxiety. His Roman de la Morie was being serialized in Le Moniteur, and was being unfavourably criticised by the editor of that paper, Julien Turgan, on the grounds that it was not a living picture, and that it smacked of second-hand erudition. It must have been a source of encouragement to Gautier to see in print:

Au poète impeccable
 au parfait magicien des lettres françaises
 à mon très-cher et très-vénéré maître et ami
 Théophile Gautier
 avec les sentiments de la plus profonde
 humilité
 je dédie ces fleurs malades
 C.B.

Here again, however, it is by mutual need that the two poets come together. One searches in vain for instances of spontaneous interaction, and affection.

Pursuing the chronological sequence of their relationship, one must note the date of the publication of the Fleurs du Mal on 25 June 1857. Many of the poems had been written before the end

³⁵ Baudelaire, Correspondance Générale, p. 16.

of 1844, when Gautier was not as yet a personal acquaintance. He had announced a collection entitled Lesbiennes early in 1846 -- never to appear. By the end of 1848 he abandoned that title and announced Les Lirbes, probably under the influence of Fourier who calls 'périodes lybiques' the beginning of Socialism and industrial discontent. But silence followed until February 1852 when he had sent the two batches of poems to Gautier, hoping the latter would procure their publication in La Revue de Paris. Thus Baudelaire had long been a poet on the verge of proving himself to critics and public. In this light we may understand the sudden exasperated outburst on 5th July from Bourdin, critic for Le Figaro, who found the poems:

for the most part the monotonous repetition of the same words and ideas. Never in the space of so few pages had he seen so many breasts bitten, nay even chewed; never did he see such a procession of devils, of foetus, of demons, cats and vermin. The book was a hospital full of all the insanities of the human mind, of all the putrescence of the human heart; if only this were done to cure them it would be permissible, but they are incurable.³⁶

The stage was set for the lawsuit against Baudelaire on the grounds of the immorality of his collection. The Coup d'Etat of December 1851 had been followed in February 1852 by the famous Decree which virtually muzzled political journalism and imposed Press censorship. Details of Baudelaire's fate at the tribunal are not relevant to this discussion, but Sainte-Beuve's suggested,

³⁶ quoted by Enid Starkie, Baudelaire, p. 255.

ill-chosen Petits Moyens de Défense³⁷ are significant in so far as they link Gautier once again, if indirectly, with Baudelaire. Baudelaire was to plead that his quest for originality had forced him to make evil his subject, since Lamartine had taken Heaven, Hugo earth, Laprade the forests, Musset passion, others (meaning himself) home and rural life, and Gautier had taken Spain. Nothing had been left. The pettiness of this line of defense is obvious and one cannot but marvel that Baudelaire accepted it. Critics who believe in Baudelaire's admiration for Gautier must find devious arguments to reconcile themselves with the fact that Baudelaire lists Gautier as no more than the poet of Spain, ignoring Émaux et Camées. Baudelaire's lawyer Ghislain d'Host Angé was to quote suggestive passages from Béranger, Musset and from Gautier in an effort to parry the charge of obscenity. A long passage from Mademoiselle de Maupin was read to the court. Gautier himself seems to have remained silent throughout the proceedings of that hot month of August.

Baudelaire's relationship with their mutual friend Mme Sabatier came to a critical point at this time. He wrote to her for the first time in his own hand-writing on 13th August 1857. He was already feeling that she had betrayed his devotion by confiding in her sister who had laughingly asked him whether he was still in

³⁷ See Pierre Dufay, Autour de Baudelaire (Paris: Cabinet du Livre, 1931), p. 54.

love with la Présidente.³⁸ Her response to his letters frightened him and he began to withdraw. The letter of 31 August betrays his panic and sadness. He ceased for a while to attend her Sunday evening gatherings. By September their relationship was again one of calm, undemanding friendship. The third volume of his translations of Poe appeared in May 1858, followed in June by a scurrilous if amusing article in Le Figaro by Jean Rousseau on 6th June.³⁹ Rousseau claimed that Baudelaire did not exist as a person, that he was no more than a character from Gautier's Jeunes-France of 1853, in which Daniel Jovard was a satire of the pseudo-intellectual, artistic set. Jovard had come to life again under the name of Baudelaire. This incident would seem to point to the fact that Baudelaire and Gautier were linked together in critical opinion, though not by bonds of mutual affection.

Charles left Paris for Honfleur in December and spent six months at Honfleur with his mother. Gautier in the meantime had moved to rue de Longchamps. Charles returned to Paris in June 1859 to find that the loss of the whole first edition of Les Fleurs du Mal had seriously harmed Poulet-Malassis' finances. In May 1858 Poulet-Malassis had published the scholarly Mémoires de Lauzun which had been arraigned for obscenity, but the court verdict was "not proven" and the edition soon sold out. The second edition, early in 1859 was

³⁸ See letter to Mme Sabatier, Tuesday, 18 August 1857 in Correspondance Générale, p. 86.

³⁹ See reply to this article: Lettre au Figaro, 13 June 1858, Coeuvres Complètes, p. 1014.

published but, on account of a preface entitled "The Tribulations of an Editor", proceedings were started against it again. The editor, Louis Lacour, was fined 100 francs and sentenced to three months' imprisonment; Poulet-Malassis was sentenced to pay 500 francs and serve one month's imprisonment. On his release, his fine publication of Unpublished Works of Piron in November 1859 sold to only a very limited public. His partner De Broise was cautious about any new venture and for this reason tried to insist on printing only a limited edition of Baudelaire's Study of Gautier. This article first appeared on 13 March in L'Artiste and after much discussion was published by Poulet-Malassis with a frontispiece by Théorond at the end of November 1859. Gautier's own study of Balzac was not selling well either, and Poulet-Malassis went bankrupt in 1862.

During these difficult years there is no evidence of Baudelaire and Gautier's being in contact with each other. Bandy and Pichois suggest, however, that it was in 1860 that Baudelaire visited Gautier and met Judith. It would seem to us that there are more grounds for believing this meeting took place in 1856. In the first place, it was the year in which Gautier became salaried editor of L'Artiste, which he, Cormenin, Houssaye and Du Camp had been running since 1851. It was therefore to Baudelaire's advantage to visit this potential ally in 1856. To place the meeting in 1860, is to suppose that Baudelaire was making a purely social call on a friend -- and it seems to us that this hypothesis has no foundation in fact. Indeed, Baudelaire's letter to Hugo à propos of his study of Gautier shows that he had been fully aware of the dissimulating

course he had been following:

Je puis avouer confidentiellement que je connais les lacunes de cet étonnant esprit. Bien des fois, pensant à lui, j'ai été affligé de voir que Dieu ne voulait pas être entièrement généreux. Je n'ai pas menti, j'ai esquivé, j'ai dissimulé. . . Mais vis-à-vis de vous, il me semble absolument inutile de mentir.⁴⁰

Crépet, in his note on this letter, remarks that many critics have used it to prove that Baudelaire felt no real affinity with Gautier, and points out that on the other hand one must weigh the evidence of the dedication to Gautier. The remark is relevant if one considers that perhaps here again Baudelaire is being diplomatic to this "voix dictatoriale" -- in which case it may be argued that neither the dedication nor the letter is a reliable indication of the truth, since both may have been pleas for support and protection. Indeed, Baudelaire says later in the letter to Hugo:

J'ai besoin de vous. J'ai besoin d'une voix plus haute que la mienne et que celle de Théophile Gautier, de votre voix dictatoriale. Je veux être protégé! J'imprimerai humblement ce que vous daignerez m'écrire.

Hugo was to reply with the famous "Vous créez un frisson nouveau".⁴¹

⁴⁰ Baudelaire, Correspondance Générale, p. 345.

⁴¹ Baudelaire, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 1487-8, letter by Hugo headed "Hautecloche House, 6 October, 1859":

Votre article sur Théophile Gautier, Monsieur, est une de ces pages qui provoquent puissamment la pensée. Rare mérite, faire penser; don des seuls élus. Vous ne vous trompez pas en prévoyant quelque dissidence entre vous et moi. Je comprends toute votre philosophie (car, comme tout poète, vous sentez un philosophe); je fais plus que la comprendre, je l'admets; mais je garde la mienne. Je n'ai jamais dit: l'Art pour l'Art; j'ai toujours dit: l'Art pour le Progrès. Au fond c'est la même chose, et votre esprit est trop pénétrant pour ne pas le sentir. En avant! c'est le mot du Progrès;

Whatever was the real motive behind this letter, it is clear that Baudelaire was, in fact, in need of support from all sides. In January 1861, the second edition of Les Fleurs du Mal passed scarcely noticed, except for three important reviews -- Alphonse Duchesne in Le Figaro on 2nd May and De Pontmartin in La Revue des Deux Mondes on 14 August. Both were unfavourable. Duchesne placed Baudelaire far below Gautier, but a little above Banville. The third by Leconte de Lisle in La Revue Européenne on 1 December was more a veiled reply to criticism against himself than an appreciation of Les Fleurs du Mal.

Meanwhile, Gautier was still enslaved by his journalism. In March 1861, he signed a contract with Gervais Charpentier for Le Capitaine Fracasse. He was often affectionately received by the sensitive and cultivated patron of the arts, the Princess Mathilde. In May he wrote La Féliah. On 2 May there appeared the first of the twenty-five articles to be collected in his Abécédaire du Salon of 1861; at the end of the same month, he presented the Emperor with the early part of the Trésors d'Art de la Russie. On 15 July 1861 came Baudelaire's sequel to the dedication of Les Fleurs du Mal in La Revue Fantaisiste:

Figurez-vous, je vous prie, La langue française à
l'état de langue morte. . . . Si dans ces époques,
situées moins loin peut-être que ne l'imagine
l'orgueil moderne, les poésies de Théophile Gautier

c'est aussi le cri de l'Art...Tout le verbe de la poésie est là.
Ite! Que faites-vous donc quand vous écrivez des vers saisisissants:
les Sept Vieillards et Les Petites Vieilles que vous me dédiez et
dont je vous remercie? Que faites-vous? Vous marchez. Vous allez
en avant. Vous dotez le ciel de l'Art d'on ne sait quel rayon
macabre. Vous créez un frisson nouveau.

sont retrouvées par quelque savant amoureux de
 beauté, je devine, je comprends, je vois sa joie.
 Voilà donc la vraie langue française! la langue des
 grands esprits et des esprits raffinés!⁴²

This article again coincides curiously with the time when Baudelaire was seriously considering an effort to secure election to the French Academy. His friends could not believe that he was serious. Sainte-Beuve virtually laughed in his face, but letters to his mother between July 1861 and February 1862 show that he was entirely in earnest.⁴³ He visited members of the Academy to solicit their support. In the letter of 25 December 1861, he recounts:

Lamartine a voulu me détourner de mon projet, on me disant qu'à mon âge on ne devait pas s'exposer à recevoir un soufflet (il paraît que j'ai l'air jeune). De Vigny, que je ne connaissais pas, s'est fait fermer pour être seul avec moi et m'a gardé trois heures. C'est le seul qui jusqu'à présent s'intéresse à mon affaire, et la preuve, c'est qu'il m'a fait dire hier de retourner chez lui dans dix jours, après avoir vu quelques autres membres, afin de lui rendre compte de mes impressions.⁴⁴

In the Revue Anecdotique of the first fortnight of January 1862, one finds an account of Baudelaire's interview with Villemain, of whom the poet wrote:

M. Villemain est un cuistre et un sot, un singe

⁴² See Baudelaire, Oeuvres Complètes p. 1101.

⁴³ Baudelaire, Correspondance Générale: a) Letter to Mme Aupick, p. 321: Plusieurs personnes m'engagent à profiter de la vacance actuelle (Scribe) ou des vacances prochaines pour poser ma candidature à l'Académie. b) Letter of 25 July 1861, p. 325: "Être de l'Académie est, selon moi, le seul honneur qu'un vrai homme de lettres puisse solliciter sans rougir..."

⁴⁴ Baudelaire, ibid., p. 21.

solennel, à qui je ferai peut-être payer fort cher, si Dieu ne prête vie, la manière dont il m'a reçu.⁴⁵

On the 20th January 1862 came Sainte-Beuve's article in Le Constitutionnel, entitled "Des prochaines élections à l'Académie". The author began thus:

On s'est demandé d'abord si M. Baudelaire, en se présentant, voulait faire une niche à l'Académie, et une épigramme; s'il ne prétendait point l'avertir par là qu'il était bien temps qu'elle songeât à s'adjoindre ce poète et cet écrivain si distingué et si habile dans tous les genres de diction, Théophile Gautier, son maître. On a eu à apprendre, à épeler le nom de M. Baudelaire à plus d'un membre de l'Académie, qui ignorait totalement son existence. . . .⁴⁶

Sainte-Beuve had evidently not forgotten the incident of February 1859 when Babou, in the Revue Française, had attacked him for not having commented upon the publication of Les Fleurs du Mal. Baudelaire disliked Babou and had written to Sainte-Beuve disowning all association with the article. The critic was not a man to forget a slight, however. Baudelaire, on the other hand, replied in a letter to Sainte-Beuve cordially thanking him for his praise:

Comment n'avez-vous pas deviné que Baudelaire, ça voulait dire: Auguste Barbier, Théophile Gautier, Banville, Flaubert, Leconte de Lisle, c'est-à-dire littérature pure?⁴⁷

Etienne Charavay published this letter from the handwritten copy he had access to and noted that many words were underlined:

⁴⁵ Baudelaire, Correspondance Générale, XVII, p. 45, letter to Sainte-Beuve.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Bandy and Nichols, Baudelaire devant ses Contemporains, p. 186.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 57.

Or les médecins aliénistes ont remarqué que, dans la première phase des affections mentales, le malade ne peut écrire sans éprouver le besoin de mettre les mots en vedette, de les détacher et de les souligner."⁴⁸

It is not entirely irrelevant to remark here that several intimates of Baudelaire noted the growing wildness in Baudelaire's eyes from 1861 onwards, so that his attitudes and opinions may be taken to be increasingly ambivalent, particularly so where such a precarious relationship as that with Gautier is concerned. There is a danger, however, of overstating the importance of this relationship. It was, at best, spasmodic in its force and direction. Nadar gives us a striking portrait of Charles:

En voyant cette tête toujours singulière s'évasant du collet de la houppelande invariablement retroussé, nez vigoureusement lobé entre ces deux yeux qu'on n'oubliait plus: deux gouttes de café, sous des sourcils retroussés -- lèvres serrées et amères, mauvaises, cheveux argentés avant l'âge, tantôt trop courts, tantôt trop longs, visage glabre, cléricalement rasé jusqu'au scrupule -- le passant saisi, comme inquiet, songeait: "Celui-là n'est pas tout le monde."⁴⁹

Gautier was to give his own portrayal of his contemporary in his notice for the definitive edition of Les Fleurs du Mal in 1868:

Sa figure s'était amaigrie et comme spiritualisée: les yeux semblaient plus vastes, le nez s'était finement accentué et était devenu plus ferme; les lèvres s'étaient serrées mystérieusement et dans leurs commissures paraissaient garder des secrets sarcastiques.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 57, note (2).

⁴⁹ Nadar, (Felix Tournachon, dit -), Charles Baudelaire Intime - Le Poète Vieillot (Paris: Blazot, 1911), p. 41-2.

⁵⁰ Notice by Théophile Gautier for definitive edition of Les Fleurs de Mal (Paris: Michel Levy, 1868), p. 10.

The truth of it was that 1862 was to be a difficult and discouraging year for both Gautier and Baudelaire. Théophile was unhappy in his marriage -- less unhappy perhaps than bored with Ernesta -- and exhausted by his endless journalism. He no longer felt contemporary in that gay world of the Second Empire. From 30 April to 10 June 1862 he was sent off to London to report on the Second International Exhibition for Le Moniteur Universel, while still laboriously working on the Capitaine Fracasse which had been on his mind for a quarter of a century. It finally appeared in October 1863 and ran to four magnificently successful editions. 1862 for Baudelaire was to be the year of his first terrifying brush with insanity. He wrote:

J'ai cultivé mon hystérie avec jouissance et terreur.
Maintenant j'ai toujours le vertige et aujourd'hui
le 23 janvier 1862, j'ai subi un singulier avertissement,
j'ai senti passer sur moi le vent de l'aile de
l'imbécillité.⁵¹

Three days later, on 26 January, he wrote to Vigny, mentioning vaguely his malaise:

J'ai été sérieusement malade, mais, abstraction faite
de la santé, de la paresse, du travail, et de plusieurs
autres considérations, j'éprouvais un certain embarras
à me retrouver devant vous.⁵²

And yet a year later Baudelaire was still preserving a precarious balance between extraordinary perceptive insight and manic despair.

On 2 September 1863 he published his L'Oeuvre et la Vie de Delacroix who had died in the preceding August. In it he speaks

⁵¹Baudelaire, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 1233.

⁵²Baudelaire, Correspondance Générale, XVII, p. 54.

of Gautier's rare 'crise d'indépendance'.⁵³ The epithet was omitted by the editors of the Oeuvres Complètes in 1868 since Gautier had written a prefatory study for the edition and it was felt hardly seemly to include this note of censure.

There seems to have been no contact between the two poets in that year of 1863-1864; tired of the misunderstanding and distrust of his fellow countrymen, Baudelaire left for Brussels to give a series of lectures under the auspices of Le Cercle des Arts. The first, on the 2nd May, dealt with the work of Delacroix; the second was on Théophile Gautier and the third on Les Paradis Artificiels. The first lecture was well received. The Gautier lecture was delivered to an audience composed largely of schoolgirls and their teachers before whom Baudelaire made the fatal mistake of appearing risqué. He began:

Je suis d'autant plus touché de l'accueil que vous avez bien voulu me faire, que c'est avec vous que j'ai perdu ma virginité d'orateur, virginité qui n'est d'ailleurs pas plus regrettable que l'autre.⁵⁴

The incensed and shocked school mistresses marshalled their pupils out and left an almost deserted hall, except for Camille Lemonnier, a twenty-year old who was, thirty years later, to write a movingly sincere and appreciative account of this lecture in La Vie Belge.⁵⁵

⁵³ See Baudelaire, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 376.

⁵⁴ Poulet-Malassis in La Petite Revue, 21 January 1865.

⁵⁵ Camille Le Monnier, La Vie Belge (Bruxelles: Fasquelle, 1905) pp. 68-73.

Baudelaire spoke of "Gautier, le maître et mon maître. . . . Je salue en Théophile Gautier, mon maître, le grand poète du siècle". He had used his 1859 essay on Gautier for the text of his lecture so that ostensibly his attitude had not changed. After this point, however, the thread which linked the two men becomes very tenuous. In June 1865, Sainte-Beuve mentions them in the same article:

Quand je lis des vers nouveaux, que je parcours un de ces frais recueils qui viennent de paraître, ou choix de poésies dans un journal, je me dis presque aussitôt: "Ah, ceci est du Musset" ou bien "C'est encore du Lamartine (ce qui est plus rare;)" ou bien "Ceci rappelle V. Hugo dernière manière;" -- ou: "Ceci est du Gautier, -- du Banville, -- du Leconte de Lisle, -- ou même du Baudelaire." Ce sont les chefs de file d'aujourd'hui, et ils s'imposent aux nouveaux venus.⁵⁶

Obviously Baudelaire and Gautier still saw each other on occasions, since Gautier's daughter Judith was much admired by Baudelaire both for her beauty and her intelligence. We may presume that Baudelaire had grown to know her in Gautier's home.⁵⁷

Baudelaire had not long, however, to spend in the company of friends, for in 1867 on 31 August he was to die in his mother's arms, paralysed and inarticulate. The funeral mass was at Saint Honoré, in Passy. Verlaine was to comment later:

On remarqua beaucoup l'absence à ces tristes obsèques, de Théophile Gautier, que le Maître avait tant aimé, et de M. Leconte de Lisle qui faisait profession d'être

⁵⁶ Sainte-Beuve, "De la Poésie en 1865" in Le Constitutionnel, 12 June 1865.

⁵⁷ See Judith Gautier, Le Collier des Jours, p. 67.

son ami, en dépit des relations un peu ironiques de la part de Baudelaire, qui avaient existé entre le défunt et le barde creole.⁵⁸

Gautier excused his absence on the grounds that he had to write his weekly article for La Presse. On the following day, he wrote to his daughter Estelle:

Je te remercie bien tendrement de la façon charmante et discrète avec laquelle tu as fait allusion à ce jour néfaste qui est celui de ma naissance et dont le retour augmente d'un chiffre un âge déjà suffisamment respectable Il va falloir demain recommencer mon métier de croquemort et faire une nécrologie de ce pauvre Baudelaire. Crénom! comme il disait, c'est embêtant d'enterrer ainsi tous ses amis et de faire de la copie avec leur cadavre⁵⁹

Baudelaire, as fate would have it, had died on Gautier's birthday. After his death, Gautier seems to have had revived interest in Baudelaire, for he published in January 1868 his study of the dead poet in l'Univers illustré.

Thus stands the evidence of actual contact between the two poets. Much has been written from varying standpoints. Jules Levallois dismisses all the overt homage to Gautier with short measure:

Cela fait partie des salamalocs de Baudelaire à Gautier. N'en croyez rien. Baudelaire n'a jamais vu, chez Gautier qu'un "banal enfileur de mots sans idées", et du reste, il l'a écrit.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Letter, dated 19 October from Verlaine to Léon Deschamps in La Plume of 15 November 1890, quoted in Bandy and Pichois, Baudelaire devant ses Contemporains, p. 235.

⁵⁹ See letter to Estelle Gautier, 1 September 1867, quoted in Bergerat, Théophile Gautier, p. 307.

⁶⁰ Jules Levallois, Mémoires d'un Critique, quoted by Raynaud, Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Garnier, 1922), p. 310.

Henri Dérieux⁶¹ on the other hand believes Baudelaire to be sincerely indebted to Gautier as a poet.

The evidence is not conclusive though it seems to point to the fact that Baudelaire and Gautier were certainly never real companions. The affection which Baudelaire displays at times may then be exaggerated or insincere. The extent of this insincerity must, however, ultimately be considered in the light of the extent of his agreement with Gautier on the subject of the relationship of art to morals. It is for this reason that it would seem necessary to place this evidence in its social and historical context before attempting any evaluation.

⁶¹Henri Dérieux, "La Plasticité de Baudelaire et ses Rapports avec Théophile Gautier", in Mercure de France (1 October 1917) pp. 416-31.

II

CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON BAUDELAIRE AND GAUTIER

If, as Miss Richardson has remarked, "a man must perform within the *décor* of his times, his part must integrate with the contemporary play", then the relationship between Gautier and Baudelaire, and their area of agreement on the question of morality in art, must have been influenced by the climate of their period.¹

It is therefore relevant to recall that 1830 saw the enthronement both of Louis-Philippe, the bourgeois monarch, and of Romanticism. The 'tricolore' replaced the white flag. Louis-Philippe recognized the principle of popular sovereignty; the press and the tribune were freed; the property qualification was lowered to 200 francs for electors, to 500 francs for eligibles. 198,000 citizens benefited from this reform. Bourgeois government took the place of government by nobles and clergy. In literature, Victor Hugo's *Hernani* won its battle and gained an empire of ardent, idealistic young minds. Conflict between literature and society was inevitable. On the one hand was shrewd, materialistic economy; on the other was flamboyant extravagance. Of the society of the 1830's, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote to John Stuart Mill:

"Le système d'administration pratiqué depuis dix-sept ans a tellement perverti la classe moyenne en faisant un constant appel aux cupidités individuelles de ses membres que cette classe devient peu à peu pour le reste de la nation une

¹Richardson, *Théophile Gautier, his Life and Times*, Introduction, p. 15.

petite aristocratie corrompue et vulgaire, par laquelle il devient honteux de se laisser gouverner. Si ce sentiment s'accroissait dans la masse, il pourrait amener plus tard de grands malheurs."²

In this society, deprived of moral ideals, there was a diversified minority which dreamed of social progress as opposed to the preservation of the peaceful bourgeois 'status quo'. Saint-Simoniens, Fourieristes, positivists, independent progressivists like Pierre Leroux, republicans and anarchists -- all sought extension of suffrage rights, diffusion of education, organisation of labour -- in fact, a reconstitution of society. The bourgeoisie on the other hand wanted peace. It opposed both the strangely violent literature of Romanticism and the disturbingly socialistic ideas of the democratic revolutionaries. Literary Romanticists and political revolutionaries, however, did not join forces against the bourgeois. On the contrary, the revolutionaries and democrats saw the Romantics as tardy idealists oblivious of the wider interests of humanity, engrossed in the sterile analysis of their own emotions. Thus, as Cassagne says: "Révolutionnaires aux yeux de la bourgeoisie, les romantiques étaient pour la démocratie des réactionnaires."³ Literature, therefore, began to adapt itself to the climate in society. Bourgeois opulence was not without its attractions for the writers and artists of the day. Sainte-Beuve was to remark: "l'industrie pénètre dans le rêve et le fait à son image."⁴

²Alexis de Tocqueville, letter of August, 1847, to John Stuart Mill, quoted by Albert Cassagne in his Theorie de l'Art pour l'Art en France (Paris: Dorbon, 1959), p. 7.

³Cassagne, op. cit. p. 14.

⁴Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, "De la littérature industrielle" in La Revue des Deux Mondes, 1839, quoted by Cassagne, op. cit. p. 21.

Writers began to collaborate with the commercial press. Business began to stifle art:

"On changeait en un trafic vulgaire ce qui est une magistrature et presque un sacerdoce; on venait proposer de rendre plus large la part faite jusqu'alors dans les journaux à une foule d'avis menteurs, de recommandations banales ou cyniques, et cela au dépens de la place que réclament la philosophie, l'histoire, les arts, la littérature, tout ce qui élève en lo charmant l'esprit des hommes; le journaliste, en un mot, allait devenir le porte-voix de la spéculation."⁵

The fruits of the artists' intellect were bought and sold without reference to his rights of possession, so much so that in 1847 Le Travail intellectuel was founded by a group of economists to protect the rights of the intellectual, who was now playing according to the rules of a commercial society. Social and bourgeois art was the order of the day, and never was art further from the ideal of pure art.

Romanticism realized that it could not withstand bourgeois taste. Baudelaire began his Salon de 1846, addressing the bourgeoisie, with the words:

"Vous êtes la majorité - nombre et intelligence; -- donc vous êtes la force, -- qui est la justice. Les uns savants, les autres propriétaires; -- un jour radieux viendra où les savants seront propriétaires, et les propriétaires savants. Alors votre puissance sera complète, et nul ne protestera contre elle."⁶

His attitude was to undergo profound change but the testimony stands for that time. Authors and artists alike began to uphold the solid, middle-class virtues of moderation, morality and marriage. On these

⁵Louis Blanc, Histoire de Dix Ans, t.V, quoted by Cassagne, op. cit. p. 21.

⁶Baudelaire, Coeuvres Complètes, p. 605.

topics, they were certain of an appreciative audience; on more controversial political and social topics, however, art was not expected to be articulate. The public and critics alike wanted a non-inflammatory literature, at a safe distance from revolution, either intellectual or social, to confirm them in their path. Musset was praised by Hazard at his reception into the Academy for having remained solely a man of letters not meddling in politics. Supporting the separation of art and state, Cousin maintained that: "le seul objet de l'art est le beau. L'art s'abandonne lui-même dès qu'il s'en écarte."⁷

It was the Bohemians like Gautier, Houssaye, Merval and others who refused to conform either to the bourgeois norm of non-controversial mores or to the norm of the successful, commercialized journalist-author. The idea of art for art's sake was already implicit in this movement of artistic disengagement. There may be seen a basic agreement between bourgeois art and Romantic art -- that of the independence of art from politics and social morality. Bohème was therefore to oppose violently the revolutionaries like Saint-Simon, who began to believe that art should have a social utility. Lamartine's 'Harmonies', Vigny's despairing laments, Hugo's 'Notre Dame de Paris' were all criticised in 1831 for their lack of social purpose. The idea abounded that literature should be the expression of contemporary society. Lamennais pronounced:

L'art n'est que la forme extérieure des idées, l'expression
du dogme religieux et du principe social dominant à certains

⁷Victor Cousin, article in La Revue des Deux Mondes 1845, t. III, quoted by Cassagne, op. cit., p. 39.

époques.⁸

Gradually many of the Romantic leaders began to associate themselves with contemporary ideas. Hugo was to declare:

...le théâtre est une tribune, ...le théâtre est une chaire; ...l'auteur de ce drame sait combien c'est une grande et sérieuse chose que le théâtre. Il sait que le drame, sans sortir des limites impartiales de l'art, a une mission nationale, une mission sociale, une mission humaine...⁹

Lamartine's Jocelyn of 1836 was "une épopée humaine." George Sand became a fervent supporter of Saint-Simon. Baudelaire, was to declare:

s'appeler romantique et regarder systématiquement le passé, c'est se contredire..... Le romantisme est l'expression la plus actuelle du beau.¹⁰

This reorientation of Romanticism toward modernity was to some extent continued by the 1848 Revolution. Socialism and Bonapartism were absorbing the public mind. Baudelaire founded, with Champfleury, the Salut Public, but once the monarchy was overthrown, once the progressive coalition of moderates and Socialists like Lamartine and Louis Blanc came and went, once the new constitution of October 1848 became a reality and dreams of Utopia receded, many, and Baudelaire among them, found themselves faced with the old problem -- should art be neutral or socially involved? Baudelaire however still maintained his stand,

⁸Félicité de Lamennais, Esquisse d'une philosophie, livre VIII, chap. III, quoted by Cassagne, op. cit. p. 51.

⁹Victor Hugo, in preface to Jacques Bonvin (12 February 1835).

¹⁰Baudelaire, Cœuvres Complètes, p. 610.

declaring: "L'art est désormais inséparable de la morale et de l'utilité."¹¹

On the other hand, Lucamp, Cormenin, Arsène Houssaye and Gautier, in their new Revue de Paris, in August 1851, intended to treat no political questions in their journal. The 2nd December and the formation of the Empire, however, gave the government the right to suppress any newspaper thought to be harmful to the régime. Maxime du Camp commented:

Le décret du 17 février ne visait que le journalisme politique mais pour ricochet il frappait, il ruinait les écrivains qui vivent du journal par la critique d'art par le roman, par le compte rendu scientifique. Bien des journaux avaient été administrativement supprimés après le coup d'état; à Paris même, pour ce grand corps avide de nouvelles et curieux de lecture, il n'en restait que treize.¹²

In consequence, men of letters, rather than becoming partisan poets, either were silent or were forced onto the side of l'Art pour l'Art.

Hugo, safely in exile, was able to write: "L'Art pour l'art peut être beau, mais l'art pour le progrès est plus beau encore."¹³ By 1855 even the Revue de Paris was tending towards social art: Théophile Gautier and Houssaye quickly resigned.

Then came the lawsuits against the four men who were least concerned with matters other than their art -- Baudelaire, Flaubert and the Concourt brothers. Baudelaire was quickly to forget his faith in 'useful' art and to become one of the outwardly most intransigent supporters of l'Art pour l'Art. In contradiction to his ideas of 1848,

¹¹Baudelaire, in preface to Chansons by Pierre Dupont 1852, See Coeuvres Complètes, p.361.

¹²Maxime du Camp, Souvenirs littéraires (Paris: Hachette, 1892) I, p. 306.

¹³Victor Hugo, William Shakespeare.

he now found progress grotesque and decadent.¹⁴ Romanticism, if dying, was not entirely dead, and offered to young seekers after an ideal an art which seemed free and unphilistine. The Romanticism of Albertus, of La Comédie de la Mort and España, in short of Gautier's first manner, had a continuing appeal for men like Baudelaire. Writers like Leconte de Lisle protested against social art, and sought to clarify their position:

Quelque vivantes que soient les passions politiques de ce temps, elles appartiennent au monde de l'action; le monde spéculatif leur est étranger: Ceci explique la neutralité de ces études.¹⁵

Thus the time which elapsed between the revolution of 1830 and that of 1870 manifests a vigorous social force which served to condition public and official attitudes towards literature. Both Baudelaire and Gautier came of age intellectually within this period. Since it seems fair to assume that the two men were never drawn together by bonds of sincere mutual friendship, and since their passion for poetry seems to have led them finally to take up similar positions before the problems of state intervention in literature and poetic liberty, the question arises as to why Baudelaire in the first preface to Les Fleurs du Mal, fails to cite Amour et Canées as one of the works for which he admires Gautier. The slim volume of poems epitomizing the spirit of l'Art pour l'Art in 1852 would seem the obvious work for which Gautier should

¹⁴ See "Exposition des Beaux-Arts en 1855" and "Salon de 1859" in Oeuvres Complètes, p. 693 and p. 771.

¹⁵ Charles Leconte de Lisle, preface to Poèmes Antiques (1852).

be commended - if, that is, Eudelaire's intention is to commend his contemporary on the grounds of his 'disengagement' from problems of social morality. It is necessary therefore to consider briefly the three works actually cited by Eudelaire, in an effort to discern what elements or circumstances differentiate them from Maux et Coûtes.

Albertus, published in 1832, is very much the work of a young poet eager to deserve the favours of the established master, Victor Hugo. In the preface, Gautier claims the right of the artist to be independent of his society, the right to ignore the maladies and upheavals of his century. The poet:

n'a aucune couleur politique; il n'est ni rouge, ni blanc,
ni tricolore; il n'est rien, il ne s'aperçoit des révolutions
que lorsque les balles cassent les vitres.¹⁶

It was, however, the product of his environment to a large extent. Gautier was plunged in a world where artists rubbed shoulders with elegant young poets. Maxime du Camp has remarked:

Ce poème est intéressant, car il reproduit les idées ambiantes de l'époque. Gautier venait de sortir de l'atelier de Delcort, mais ce n'est pas à cela qu'il faut attribuer l'abus des noms de peintre qui se rencontrent dans Albertus, - si: dans les 3 premières strophes. -- Le Cénacle avait rêvé d'unir la littérature et la peinture; mariage de raison que le divorce rompit bientôt et devait rompre, car la genèse et les procédés de ces deux arts, le but qu'ils cherchent à atteindre, l'impression qu'ils peuvent produire offrent de telles différences qu'il y a entre eux "incompatibilité d'humeur."¹⁷

He was living in the Bohemia of the 1830's which was a refuge amid social disorder. The 'petit Cénacle' of Petrus Borel, Nerval, Auguste Vaguet,

¹⁶ Gautier: Preface to Albertus.

¹⁷ Maxime du Camp, Théophile Gautier (Paris: Macheffe, n.d.), p. 161.

Celestin Nantouil, Alphonse Brct, Jules Vabre, Napoléon Tom, Philothée O'Noddy and Joseph Bouchardy was perhaps one of the first groups of l'Art pour l'Art, not yet contemplative and disenchanted as that of 1850 was to be, but still young, ardent, eager for the fray.¹⁸

Albertus then was written at the peak of Saint-Simonism, of Fourierisme, and of the various religions of progress, humanity and emancipation. Gautier shows his scorn for the whole era; he negates progress in favour of an exclusive cult of beauty:

l'art, c'est la liberté, le luxe, l'efflorescence, c'est
l'épanouissement de l'âme dans l'oisiveté.¹⁹

Gautier at this time, however, is already aware that he is outgrowing the extravagant literary gestures of the Petit Cénacle. He makes clear that he is in fact now a young man who shares his time between his family, two or three friends and a few cats. Art is already a consolation for him, an escape. The collection consists of twenty poems added to the long poem "Albertus ou l'Âme et le Péché, légende théologique". The influences of Hugo, of Sainte-Beuve and of Musset have been discerned by René Jasincki. The satanism so much in vogue, the theme of the 'Fatal Woman',²⁰ the Byronic 'dandysme' which is manifest in the various

¹⁸See René Jasincki, Les Années romantiques de Théophile Gautier (Paris: Vuibert, 1929), p. 71.

¹⁹Gautier, preface to Albertus.

²⁰Cf. Mario Fraz, The Romantic Arony (London: Collins, 1960), pp. 229-235. It is surprising to note that among the multitude of references Dr. Fraz cites to support his thesis, no mention is made of Albertus, whilst Mlle de Maupin, Fortunio and Une nuit de Cléopâtre, Le roi Candale and La morte amoureuse are considered to illustrate this Romantic theme.

digressions, the asides to the reader, the foreign words -- all witness to the desire of the Gautier of this period to surprise, to thrill his public. Yet the underlying theme of the poem is seen to be that of disillusion. Sainte-Beuve saw in it a lesson: "sur le néant et le mensonge du plaisir: on croit mettre la dent dans une orange et l'on mord dans la cendre".²¹

It is not difficult to see why Baudelaire was able to find in Albertus some kindred spirit. The hero believes neither in good nor evil. He seeks oblivion:

Qu'importe après tout que la cause
Soit triste, si l'effet qu'elle produit est doux?
-Jouissons, faisons-nous un bonheur de surface;
Un beau masque vaut mieux qu'une vilaine face
-Pourquoi l'arracher, pauvres fous? (XXIII-LXXII)

Gautier, whilst showing signs of that cult of formal beauty which was to characterize his later work, has put much of himself into his hero.

The work is alive today mainly because Gautier put so much of his generation and of himself into it. Despite the obvious romanticism, there is expressed here, with youthful sincerity, the profound dissatisfaction of Gautier himself -- a dissatisfaction later to lead him to the denial implicit in l'Art pour l'Art. Baudelaire must surely have appreciated and respected his 'duality' in the older poet and would certainly, too, have wished to see it deepened and expressed in the graphic manner of Enroux et Camées, but the very notion leads to a

²¹ Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, Nouveaux Lundis VI, quoted by Jasinski in Les Années romantiques de Théophile Gautier, p. 116.

certain contradiction in terms. The dissatisfaction and universal doubt are expressed with a certain cynical humour in this early work.

Baudelaire remarks that it is Albertus which brings to the literature of the time an element which had been manifest only in such a book as Notre-Dame de Paris: the grotesque. He sees a development of this 'grotesque' element beginning in Les Jeunes-France, continuing in Une Larme du Diable through to Mademoiselle de Maupin. Both of these works express in fact something of the modernity which Baudelaire saw as the particular heroism of art. It is, however, not that modernity that Baudelaire has depicted in his own evocations of the dark secrets of a nineteenth century Paris, with its prostitutes and beggars, its loneliness and turmoil. Gautier's particular modernity in this work lies in his consciousness of the dangers threatening the spiritual life of his period. In the face of the utilitarian mania, the poet has proposed a certain naive immorality. Young as was Gautier at the time of this publication, his macabre flamboyance must be recognized as a reaction to the sterile bourgeois morality that was gaining ascendancy. He was asserting the artist's right to concentrate on whatever he chose, even on himself if it so pleased him.

It is impossible to pass on to La Comédie de la Mort without considering briefly Mlle de Maupin published in 1836. This is Gautier's first work after his conception of the doctrine of l'Art pour l'Art in 1835. The Préface, however, was written in May 1834, at the time of state control of theatrical repertoires. It is a diatribe against that same bourgeois morality that had occasioned the tone of Albertus. The young poet proclaims that moral value has nothing to do with aesthetic

value, and that criticism has lost its way in the maze of "progress". Hatred between critics and the Romantics had reached its climax and Gautier took up his pen primarily to reply to an attack in 'Le Constitutionnel' (of Jan. 1834) on his Grottesques. He ironically explains:

Une chose certaine et facile à démontrer à ceux qui pourraient en douter, c'est l'antipathie naturelle du critique contre le poète...Vous ne vous faites critique qu'après qu'il est bien constaté à vos propres yeux que vous ne pouvez être poète...Je conçois cette haine. Il est douloureux de voir un autre s'asseoir au banquet où l'on n'est pas invité, et coucher avec la femme qui n'a pas voulu de vous...²²

Fraught with sensuality and dilettantism, the novel nevertheless forecasts that return to the Greek ideal which was to underly art for art's sake. Baudelaire maintained later that:

Cette espèce d'hymne à la beauté avait surtout ce grand résultat d'établir définitivement la condition génératrice des œuvres d'art, c'est-à-dire l'amour exclusif du Beau, l'idée fixe.²³

Commenting upon the role of beauty in the novel, Baudelaire goes on to remark that: "La part du Beau dans Mademoiselle de Maupin était excessive"; but that this excess was justifiable because Gautier's aim was to express the beauty of love and not the passion at this time nor the moral aspects of it. It is obvious that Baudelaire admired in Gautier's work its purity, its casting aside of values irrelevant to aesthetics.

Two years later there appeared, from the pen of Gautier,

²²Gautier, preface to Mademoiselle de Maupin.

²³Baudelaire, "Théophile Gautier" in Ouvrages Complètes, p. 1029.

La Consécration de la Mort on the romantic theme of life in death and death in life. This long poem shows, more clearly than any other of Gautier's works, his latent nihilism. Seized with doubts as to the possibility of a future life, the poet sees everywhere proof of the vanity of belief and of the ephemeral nature of existence. Death is an inescapable part of the cycle in which we move:

Mélas! tout monument qui dresse au ciel son faite
 Enfonce autant les pieds qu'il élève la tête,
 Avant de s'élançer, tout clocher est cavernu.²⁴

Not only are we faced with the inevitable physical death, but we run the risk of spiritual death, 'l'invisible néant, la mort intérieure', which goes unmourned and unnoticed and which, to Gautier, must have seemed imminent in that self-satisfied society of the 1830's.

Looking back at man's efforts to find the secret way out of his destiny, Gautier finds only sad, regretful figures who testify to failure. Faust sought knowledge and realized too late that love had greater meaning; Don Juan went in frantic search of love and found it elusive; Napoleon pursued power, only to long in the end for peace and quiet places. Thus love, knowledge, power -- all are vain and all end in death:

Le néant! voilà donc tout ce que l'on trouve au terme.²⁵

The only antidote to this acceptance of death is the joyous acceptance of life itself. In the absence of celestial hope, man must find delight in terrestrial pleasures.

²⁴ Gautier: Consécration de la Mort.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

The theme of death, the 'goût du néant,' which pervades most of La Comédie de la Mort re-appears from time to time in Espana, published seven years later in 1845, after Gautier's journey through Spain in 1841.

Gautier's discovery of Spain in 1841 was a re-discovery of light and colour and movement. Espana appeared in 1845, a poetic sequel to his prose Voyage en Espagne. The collection is a series of subjective impressions of that country, couched in the romantic language of the 1830's - 'alabaster skins', 'weeping dawns', 'torrents of blue-black hair', 'cruel mountains' abound. Yet beneath the still Romantic expressions, there lies a more sober spirit. In these forty-three poems there is no restless melancholy, no surge of passion and desire. Instead, one finds a more profound appreciation of external reality, a love of the visible, audible, tangible things that Éaux et Comées will transmute so precisely and unemotionally. Only twenty-five of the pieces are really Spanish in inspiration; the others are brief meditations engendered by visual reality. The artist is not subjugated to the object. Rather the object serves to translate a state of mind, of spirit, which is still essentially romantic. One looks in vain for the objective descriptions that Brunetière and Lanson see as the heralds of naturalism.²⁶

²⁶ See Ferdinand Brunetière, L'Évolution de la poésie lyrique en France au dix-neuvième siècle, (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1895), p. 245: "On passe du subjectif à l'objectif, et du Romantisme au Naturalisme. La soumission à l'objet devient la loi de l'art..."

See also Gustave Lanson, article of January 1899 in La Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France: "C'est le vrai commencement de la période naturaliste quand aux Poèmes de Rodrigue, aux Herrani, succéderont les Ismaïl et les Carrien."

España appears to represent two tendencies. It affirms the artist's delight in the sencorial world, whilst at the same time it hints of the struggle in Gautier between a love of life and a horror of death. In La Fontaine du Cimetière, a sombre landscape leads him back to his preoccupation:

Je me sentis saisi par un frisson de fièvre;
Cette eau de diamanant avait un goût de mort!

In Stances, Gautier sees in a peasant woman rocking a cradle with her foot, and fingering a sheath of cloth, the image of death in wait:

Cette étoupe qu'on file et qui, tissée en toile,
Donne une aile au vaisseau dans le port engourdi,
A l'orgie une nappe, à la pudcur une voile,
Linceul, revêtira mon cadavre verdi.

As if rebuking himself for his own lapses, Gautier censures Valdès-Léal for his macabre evocations of death and decay:

Hélas! depuis le temps que le vieux monde dure,
Nous la savons assez, cette vérité dure,
Sans nous montrer, Valdes, ce cauchemar affreux....

Zurbaran's portrayals of ecstatic monks lead him in the same way to rebel against any negation of life before death, any preoccupation with life after death. To the ascetics, he cries:

Forme, rayon, couleur, rien n'existe pour vous;
A tout objet vous êtes insensibles,
Car le ciel vous enivre et la croix vous rend fous.

Gautier is in fact plunging into the sights and sounds that Spain offers him. He is, in the years 1839 to 1845, during which time he compiled the España collection, on the threshold of that maturity that will allow him to dispel from his poetry all vain tormenting meditations on physical death. Yet on that very threshold, there is seen the nihilism that haunted his earlier works. Spain is particularly conducive to that kind of duality which, on the one hand,

adores the earthly and, on the other, dreads the spiritual aspects of existence. This duality would seem to us the nucleus of Gautier's nature at this time. España is a work of transition from the awful awareness of death in La Comédie de la Mort to that calm, joyful consciousness of our ephemeral world which is transfixed in Eaux et Feu. In this sense only does España mark a new departure. The 'Adieux à la Poésie' is then perhaps Gautier's farewell to an inner, unresolved Romanticism. He embarks thereafter on a surer course towards an ideal now confirmed by his realization that the bourgeois public cannot appreciate an art detached from society's criteria. Art for Art's sake offers the only solution to the artist whose Romanticism has not adapted to its décor.

These three works then witness to a struggle in Gautier between delight and despair. It is the spiritual testimony of these works which allowed Dauclaire to cite them in his first dedication, for they embody a quality with which the younger poet must have sympathized, ill-explored and ill-accepted by Gautier as it was.

III

EMMAUX ET CAMÉES AND LES FLEURS DU MAL

Emmaux et Camées represents then that position which Gautier had in some ways been forced to adopt by the climate of his period. Social pressures undoubtedly forced his generation to take up exaggerated postures, either of fierce utilitarianism or of haughty artistic disengagement. Baudelaire too was not remote from this conflict. As has been seen, Baudelaire, in 1846, was ostensibly sympathetic towards the bourgeois public. His founding, with Champfleury, of the Salut Public in 1848 testifies to his awareness and sense of social responsibility. Yet by 1855, he was convinced of the futility of such involvement. In his Exposition Universelle de 1855, discussing the modern idea of progress applied to the fine arts, Baudelaire confessed:

J'ai essayé plus d'une fois, comme tous mes amis, de m'enfermer dans un système pour y prêcher à mon aise. Mais un système est une espèce de damnation qui nous pousse à une abjuration perpétuelle; il en faut toujours inventer un autre, et cette fatigue est un cruel châtement. Et toujours mon système était beau, vaste, spacieux, commode, propre et lisse surtout; du moins il me paraissait tel. Et toujours un produit spontané, inattendu, de la vitalité universelle venait donner un démenti à ma science enfantine et vieillotte, fille déplorable de l'utopie. J'avais beau déplacer ou étendre le criterium, il était toujours en retard sur l'homme universel, et courait sans cesse après le beau multiforme et versicolore, qui se meut dans les spirales infinies de la vie. Condamné sans cesse à l'humiliation d'une conversion nouvelle, j'ai pris un grand parti. Pour échapper à l'horreur de ces apostasies philosophiques, je me suis orgueilleusement résigné à la modestie; je me suis contenté de sentir; je suis revenu chercher un asile dans l'impeccable naïveté...¹

¹Baudelaire, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 690.

He arrived at this agreement with the idea of disengaged art after a process of trial and disillusionment.

Gautier on the other hand, from the time of his introductions to his first collections had steadfastly proclaimed the independence of the artist, whilst curiously mirroring his insecurity. Gautier's work before the Enaux et Camées collection had been the fruit of an inner division and uncertainty which was implicit in the very division between the arts and society. Enaux et Camées represents a denial and a disengagement from this conflict. It withdraws from the arena, as does the whole movement of Art for Art's sake.

Art for Art's sake took as its basic principle the total autonomy of art, whereby the moral is replaced by the aesthetic.

Gautier wrote:

Nous croyons à l'autonomie de l'art; l'art pour nous n'est pas le moyen, mais le but; tout artiste qui se propose autre chose que le beau n'est pas un artiste à nos yeux; nous n'avons jamais pu comprendre la séparation de l'idée et de la forme... Une belle forme est une belle idée car que serait-ce qu'une forme qui n'exprimerait rien...?²

Thus art is to defend no thesis, to tend towards no explicit statement regarding moral values. Its aim is beauty, and beauty in itself is truth lifted above the contingent. Moral reflections in art are inadmissible since reality offers no such equivalent. The work of art in itself needs no justification; the inner logic of a work expresses the implicit morality of beauty.

²Gautier, in his introduction to L'Artiste of 14 December 1856, quoted by Cassagne in La Théorie de l'Art pour l'Art en France.

Determined to reject society's assessment of morality and its view of the artist's responsibility to support it, Gautier frequently implied that art could depict good and evil with impunity. Feydeau recounts that Gautier stated clearly: "Proscrire de l'art la peinture du Mal équivaudrait à la négation de l'art même."³ He asserted the artist's right to describe any area of human experience; to show goodness vanquished and evil triumphant, to demonstrate the delights of vice and the misfortunes of virtue provided that he refrain from drawing any moral conclusions. Baudelaire pointed out in his Etude sur Théophile Gautier, that : "Les modes de démonstration des vérités sont autres et ailleurs."

In consequence, since Art for Art's sake is concerned only with the aesthetic values in reality, its objective will lie in the expression and forms of beauty. Beauty is the only idea worthy of expression. Its forms will be various, each demanding of the artist a craftsmanlike effort. Gautier's poem L'Art urges the artist to choose as his media the least tractable so that he will not be tempted to fall short of his ideal. In other words, the form of a poem, of any work of art, must be the product of a carefully perfected technique. The formal beauty of the original subject will be transposed into the formal beauty of the poem. The original idea of a Chinese vase, for example, will be replaced by the beauty of the poem which represents a Chinese vase. In this sense, ideas are transcended by forms.

³Ernest Feydeau, Théophile Gautier (Paris: Plon, 1874).

Art for Art's sake then did not exclude, a priori, subject matter which might arouse moralistic discussion. It merely affirmed that the artist should not be expected to take up any position in such a discussion. To describe is not to judge; to discern is not to identify with, or to castigate, one or the other. The fact remains, however, that in Emaux et Camées Gautier not only excludes all moral judgement from his poetry but he does not describe any facet of the human condition where good and evil might be evident.

In the poem Préface, Gautier makes it clear that he has deliberately detached himself from the turmoil of his period:

Sans prendre garde à l'ouragan
Qui fouettait mes vitres fermées,
Moi, j'ai fait Emaux et Camées.

The collection comprises a series of recollections, memories and reveries. There is no underlying unity of theme. The very title, Emaux et Camées, points to the fact that these poems are nothing more nor less than a series of carefully designed verbal paintings. Some of the pieces, however, afford interesting glimpses of the man's preoccupations. Although, in the main, Emaux et Camées is the work of an artist for whom the exterior world is all-engrossing, there are unguarded moments when his old fear of death creeps in under a new disguise. The poem Bûchers et Tombeaux begins thus:

La squelette était invisible
Au temps heureux de l'Art païen;
L'homme sous la forme sensible,
Content du beau, ne cherchait rien.

Gautier goes on to regret those happy days when life enveloped death, when art shed its harmony on the sadness of the tomb. Now death is everywhere, alas, and too few artists are capable of casting a veil

over it, of relegating it to its real place. He cries out significantly:

Mais voile-toi, masque sans joues,
Comédien que le ver mord,
Depuis assez longtemps tu joues
Le mélodrame de la Mort.

This is a far cry from the willing Romantic engrossment in death that was evident in La Comédie de la Mort. Here Gautier is renouncing his obsession with death, whilst still evoking all its grotesque fascination.

The poem La Source expresses the same consciousness of inevitable death. Gautier traces the course which the stream imagines - out of the earth, through flowers, under vast bridges, out to the sea. But in reality its fate is inglorious:

Mais le berceau touche à la tombe;
Le géant futur meurt petit;
Née à peine, la source tombe
Dans le grand lac qui l'engloutit.

The poet seems, however, in both those poems to be deliberately denying the validity of such considerations. In the first poem, he urges us in fact to try to ignore death; in the second, he detaches his theme from any human context, as if thereby keeping death at a distance.

Throughout this collection, Gautier makes clear that he is still a prey to feelings of despair and loneliness but that he has found consolation in sensuous pleasures. The poem Tristesse en Mer depicts such a feeling, in wry, half-mocking terms:

Allons, peines d'amour perdues,
Espoirs lassés, illusions
Du socle idéal descendues,
Un saut dans les moites sillons!

But consolation appears in the glance of a pretty woman and Gautier is

quickly drawn back into worldly pleasures:

Dans ce regard, à ma détresse
 La Sympathie, aux bras ouverts
 Parle et sourit, soeur ou maîtresse.
 Salut, yeux bleus, bonsoir, flots verts!

For Gautier, the ideal of Beauty is everywhere accessible by means of any beautiful object and the love it inspires in Man. In La Iluc, this idea is expressed in a dialogue between Feeling and Reason. Reason points out that the poet's elevation of spirit towards the cloud is, in fact, the pursuit of an illusion. Feeling, however, replies that it is the elevation of the spirit, the loving itself that is of importance:

A l'Idéal ouvre ton âme;
 Mets dans ton coeur beaucoup de ciel,
 Aime une nue, aime une femme,
 Mais aime! C'est l'essentiel.

All goes to prove that Gautier has now reached a point in his development where he wishes to see only the exterior world. Enaux et Camées presents us with a delicate vision of external reality, a well-defined area of sensuous experience. André Gide has aptly remarked, referring to Gautier's statement that the inexpressible does not exist:

Quand on considère la désolante pauvreté de son répertoire, l'aridité de son Parnasse, on se prend à douter si ce bel axiome ne revient pas tout simplement à nier l'existence de tout ce qu'il ne peut pas exprimer. Et certes, cette ignorance, cette résolution de ne voir que le monde extérieur, ou peut-être plutôt, cette cécité pour tout ce qui n'est pas le monde extérieur est le secret même de son assurance...⁴

⁴ André Gide, "Théophile Gautier et Charles Baudelaire" in La Nouvelle Revue Française (1 November 1917).

Cide has perceived that Gautier's sense of the despair and ecstasy of the human condition is superficial compared with that of Baudelaire. Emaux et Camées demonstrates the fact that Gautier's problem is an elementary one -- that of the acceptance of the simple antithesis of life and death. Baudelaire on the other hand, felt not only this antithesis, but others less easily accepted. His temperament was an amalgam of disconcerting complexity. Strange contradictions and seemingly absurd paradoxes continually forced him to probe agonizingly into areas of himself which Gautier had managed to reject. The antithesis of Baudelaire's Fleurs du Mal is not exterior and verbal as in Hugo, but profound and intimate:

Elle écloit spontanément dans ce coeur catholique, qui ne connaît pas une émotion dont les contours aussitôt ne s'évadent, que ne double aussitôt son contraire: comme une ombre, ou mieux comme un reflet dans la dualité de ce coeur. C'est ainsi que partout en ses vers la douleur reste mêlée de joie, la confiance de doute, la gaieté de mélancolie, et qu'il cherche inquietement dans l'horrible un tempérament de l'amour.⁵

Whereas for Gautier, the physical world could dispel spiritual conflict, for Baudelaire the physical world leads him incessantly to probe for spiritual significance. His theory of the 'correspondances' is proof of this. All is inter-connected in the baudelairian universe. Aesthetic values and moral values lie side by side in an imponderable embrace. In Les Fleurs du Mal, the poet seeks to extract from evil its intrinsic beauty.

The collection Les Fleurs du Mal has been seen as a spiritual

⁵Cide, op. cit.

journey through life. Its six books each represent an aspect of that journey. Spleen et Idéal, in its very title, expresses the fundamental antithesis of existence. Man is drawn in two opposite directions -- towards heaven and towards hell, towards the horror of life and towards its ecstasy. Spleen or 'ennui' is the base, the negative, the self-destructive posture of Man. 'Idéal' is that elevation of the spirit which aspires to a transcendental vision and understanding, an infinity of experience by means of sensuous pleasures and almost mystical contemplation. Love, wine, drugs, all that induces an intoxication in the poet, are means of approximating to the ideal whilst, at the same time, being means of degrading and exhausting his capacities. The poet faces an impossible dilemma. The gulf between fulfilment and perdition is immense and yet the path to either leads him to the brink of that gulf.

In the second book, Les Tableaux Parisiens, Baudelaire observes the modern scene. Before the pathetic procession of the aged, blind, destitute and depraved figures of a great city, he perceives the innate heroism of man's condition in modern society. Implicit in each poem is a compassion and a sense of personal tragedy in the social order. In Le Jeu, for example, Baudelaire reveals his admiration before the spectacles of tenacious courage:

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

The third book, Le Vin, sings the praises of this means of combatting despair and chagrin. Wine is a diversion for the poet faced with the

horrors of life. In the fourth book, Les Fleurs du Mal, the poet realizes the impossibility of escape. He contemplates the temptations to which he and others have fallen prey. The demon of destruction leads him into all the perversions of the flesh:

Il me conduit ainsi, loin du regard de Dieu,
Haletant et brisé de fatigue, au milieu
Des plaines de l'Ennui, profondes et désertes.

The fifth book, Révolte, describes the inevitable sequence to these experiences. The poet arrives at a stage where, exhausted by suffering, he doubts the usefulness of his efforts to resist destruction. With a strange serenity, he greets death.

Throughout this collection runs a profound and disturbing commentary on the human condition. Indeed it is difficult to believe that such a book can have been condemned as pornographic and immoral. In his projected preface to the collection, Baudelaire had announced:

Des poètes illustres s'étaient partagé depuis
longtemps les provinces les plus fleuries du
domaine poétique. Il m'a paru plaisant et
d'autant plus agréable que la tâche était plus
difficile, d'extraire la beauté du Mal.

His words have a deceptively cavalier ring to them. It is evident from the intensity of his work that Les Fleurs du Mal were more than agreeable and amusing exercises. They were the justification of his hardships, the crystallization of his experience. Indeed, in a letter to Ancelle, he confessed: "Dans ce livre atroce, j'ai mis tout mon coeur."⁶ Les Fleurs du Mal are not merely the perverse comments of

⁶Letter of 18 February 1866 in Correspondance Générale, XVIII, p. 279.

an observer who has purposely chosen those elements of experience most likely to shock his public. Baudelaire's 'dandysme', and his interpretation of the role of the dandy, account for and explain his purpose. For the poet, the dandy is he who stands aloof from triviality, who has revolted with aristocratic pride. His is, in fact, a heroic stance: "Le dandysme est le dernier éclat d'héroïsme dans les décadences."⁷ In his essay on the dandy, Baudelaire remarks that in some ways 'le dandysme' verges on spirituality and stoicism. With this attitude the poet can approach humanity, can mingle with the crowd without being diminished by that contact. In fact 'dandysme' can play the same fortifying role as religion:

Pour ceux qui en sont à la fois les prêtres et les victimes, toutes les conditions matérielles compliquées auxquelles ils se soumettent, depuis la toilette irréprochable de toute heure du jour et de la nuit jusqu'aux tours les plus périlleux du sport, ne sont qu'une gymnastique propre à fortifier la volonté et à discipliner l'âme. En vérité, je n'avais pas tout à fait tort de considérer le dandysme comme une espèce de religion.⁸

Trivial as may appear at first this infatuation with the posture of the dandy, it reveals a profound concern with the impact of experience and its effects on the sensibility of the poet. Baudelaire was seeking a means of protection which would enable him to confront the totality of experience without flinching, without

⁷Baudelaire, Peintre de la vie moderne in Oeuvres Complètes, p. 903.

⁸Ibid., p. 907.

taking refuge behind conventional judgement and prejudices. The themes which run through his work are those which demonstrate the universality of his vision. In his essay on Constantin Guys, Baudelaire defines the distinction between the artist and the man of the world:

HOMME DU MONDE, c'est-à-dire homme du monde entier, homme qui comprend le monde et les raisons mystérieuses et légitimes de tous ses usages; ARTISTE, c'est-à-dire spécialiste, homme attaché à sa palette comme le serf à la globe.⁹

The great city, in its modernity, is the element of the man of the world, that collection of grandeurs and beauties which results from an agglomeration of men and monuments, the profound and complex charm of a capital aged by the glories and tribulations of life.¹⁰ The city is the antithesis of nature. Baudelaire maintains in his Eloge du Maquillage that eighteenth century thinkers were wrong to consider nature as the source of all possible Good and all possible Beauty. They were negating, in his view, the idea of original sin. Virtue is artificial, supernatural, since it has had to be taught in all cultures by means of gods and prophets. "Le Mal se fait sans effort, naturellement, par fatalité."¹¹ Thus the artificial, be it evident on a woman's painted face, in the elaborate architecture of

⁹ Ibid., p. 837.

¹⁰ Baudelaire, Salon de 1859 in Oeuvres Complètes, p. 818.

¹¹ Baudelaire, Peintre de la vie moderne, in Oeuvres Complètes, p. 912.

a city, in the paradise of drugs, is a refinement of a primitive state. He goes on to deduce that "le bien est toujours le produit d'un art."

The beautiful for Baudelaire is therefore that which is superior to nature, which transcends it. Its main characteristic must be:

le sentiment surnaturel, la puissance d'ascension vers les régions supérieures, un vol irrésistible vers le ciel, but de toutes les aspirations humaines et habitacle classique de tous les grands hommes.¹²

It contains a bizarre, surprising element precisely because it is supra-natural. If this were not the case, photography would be the highest form of art. In Le Public moderne et la photographie Baudelaire remarks:

De jour en jour l'art diminue le respect de lui-même, se prostitue devant la réalité extérieure, et le peintre devient de plus en plus enclin à peindre, non ce qu'il rêve, mais ce qu'il voit.¹³

Imagination, then, must be the supreme faculty in the artist. It decomposes the created world and creates a new one. "Elle produit la sensation du neuf."¹⁴ By its mysterious operations, it leads the artist towards the possible, the infinite. Baudelaire even maintains that imagination plays an important role in morals, for what is virtue without imagination? One can as easily imagine virtue

¹² Baudelaire, Exposition Universelle de 1855 in Oeuvres Complètes, p. 701-2.

¹³ Baudelaire, Salon de 1859 in Oeuvres Complètes, p. 772.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 773.

without pity, virtue without heaven. In short, the poetic imagination is that which ennobles reality, which enlivens matter and, to some extent, elucidates the inherent morality of creation.

Yet Baudelaire stresses the necessity of linking creative imagination with technical skill:

Plus on possède l'imagination, mieux il faut posséder le métier pour accompagner celle-ci dans ses aventures et surmonter les difficultés qu'elle recherche avidement.¹⁵

It will be this skill which will enable him to take the exterior world and extract from it its quintessence. External reality is imbued with its own inner realities which the artist and poet must decipher and translate. In his Salon de 1859, Baudelaire asserts that: "...tout poète qui ne sait pas traduire un sentiment par un assemblage de matière végétale ou minérale n'est pas un artiste."¹⁶ In the same passage, he remarks that those artists who wish to express nature, without the feelings it inspires, undertake a strange operation which consists of killing in themselves the thinking and feeling man. He reproaches them for having taken up "le dictionnaire de l'art lui-même; ils copient le dictionnaire croyant copier un poème." A sense of the natural must go hand in hand with a sense of the supernatural. At no point does Baudelaire admit the idea that art can ignore a profounder reality than that which is accessible through the senses. His theory of the 'correspondances', as has been noted, is proof of this. The echo which one sensory perception finds

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 765.

¹⁶ Baudelaire, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 812.

in another of a different order is paralleled by the analogy between the formal world and the ideal world. It is in the poet's ability to communicate with that higher world that will lie his universality. When he ceases to communicate with the ideal, he limits his vision to the narrow world of exterior reality. He rejects the obvious paradox which exists between the world he sees and the world he seeks. He negates the validity of the human conflict.

It is on this score that Émaux et Camées must have seemed lacking to Baudelaire in one of the principal qualities of poetry. Agreeing with Poe, Baudelaire must have felt the absence of the:

...struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness --
 this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly
 constituted - [which] has given to the world all
 that which it (the world) has ever been enabled
 at once to understand and to feel as poetic.¹⁷

As the critic Raynaud has pointed out, Gautier is an observer whereas Baudelaire is a visionary -- visionary in the sense that he sought beneath the surface for an invisible world.¹⁸ By widening the scope of sensory experience and by seeking to relate that experience to his vision of an ideal world, he inflicted upon himself the intolerable task of living in a world fraught with conflict and dual appearances. Gautier had glimpsed this world only to reject it in favour of the less challenging world which his talent and temperament could better deal with. The inexpressible ceased to

¹⁷ Edgar Allan Poe, The Poetic Principle (New York: Dell, 1959), p. 158.

¹⁸ Ernest Raynaud, Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Garnier, 1922), p. 294.

exist.

The fact, however, that profound moral questions are neither represented nor implied in Émaux et Camées does not signify that Gautier's aesthetics forbade their inclusion. It signifies rather that his aesthetics permitted their omission. It is the personality of the poet that governs such a choice and it is on the personal level that disagreement exists between the two poets. The area of agreement between them is wide. Both agree that the artist is free to choose his subjects. He is free to treat them in the light of his personal experience and convictions, even if these run contrary to conventional attitudes within society. The artist may or may not raise moral questions, provided that he preserve aesthetic standards. Both agree that Good and Evil, if represented in poetry, must be judged as 'dramatis personae', that is, aesthetically and not morally.

In his essay on Théophile Gautier, Baudelaire admits that vice, or Evil, needs careful manipulation if it is to be acceptable in a work of art. It must be represented in all its moral ugliness and deformity, yet, at the same time, be prevented from disrupting the aesthetic perfection of art:

Ce qui exaspère surtout l'homme de goût dans le spectacle du vice, c'est sa difformité, sa disproportion. Le vice porte atteinte au Juste et au Vrai, révolte l'intellect et la conscience. Mais comme outrage à l'harmonie, comme dissonance, il blessera plus particulièrement certains esprits poétiques, et je ne crois pas qu'il soit scandalisant de considérer toute infraction à la morale, au beau

moral, comme une espèce de faute contre le rythme et la prosodie universels,¹⁹

The artist, in Baudelaire's view, will not be necessarily indifferent to Evil because he refuses to condemn and banish it from his work. On the contrary, his art will assuage his conscience by establishing that delicacy of feeling which will, in fact, be a finely-distilled beauty.

Thus Baudelaire agreed basically with Gautier on the question of the treatment of moral issues, as far as the older poet committed himself on that point. Émaux et Camées represents a perfectly legitimate silence on problems of morality. Baudelaire could not overtly criticize Gautier's choice of subject matter nor his treatment of it. He could not, however, admire that choice since he was himself obsessed by those fundamental problems which Gautier had avoided.

The first dedication, which Baudelaire submitted for Gautier's approval, appears then as a statement of the younger poet's real affinities with Gautier.²⁰ He agrees that Good and Evil do not exist in poetry since moral values are totally irrelevant to aesthetic values. He assures Gautier indirectly that he subscribes to the basic principle of Art for Art's sake. Indeed, he has given greater proof of his faith in that principle than Gautier by daring to allow moral values to underlie aesthetic values and by demanding, in consequence, that critics clearly discern between the two areas of

¹⁹Baudelaire, Art romantique, Théophile Gautier in Oeuvres Complètes p. 249.

²⁰Cf. Baudelaire, Oeuvres Complètes, p. 1397.

expression. Gautier, on the other hand, would seem to have doubted by 1852 that this separation is self-evident. He has carefully hidden his uncertainty under his adherence to the irreproachable principle that beauty alone is the sole value in art.

Baudelaire, aware that Gautier in Eaux et Camées had found it necessary to avoid subject matter that might invite moral judgment, does not consider that avoidance necessary or even desirable. Therefore, in accordance with his convictions and preferences, Baudelaire has cited Albertus, La Comédie de la Mort, and Espanña as the three works of Gautier which most appeal to his tastes by expressing something of the poet's own view of the human condition. Baudelaire omits Eaux et Camées not because its author was not justified in omitting spiritual aspects, but because he was mistaken in believing that it was necessary to remain silent on such issues. Justly and with complete sincerity, however, Baudelaire acknowledges the technical excellency of Eaux et Camées by referring to Gautier as the master, the 'magicien ès langue française' [sic], for whom his admiration is humble and respectful.

Thus the dedication, seen in the light of the difference which exists between Les Fleurs du Mal and Eaux et Camées, seems to be sincere as far as it goes. It is not what Baudelaire says which implies disagreement but rather what he does not say. Les Fleurs du Mal sets out to be an authentic statement of one man's experience, be it good or evil. Eaux et Camées, withdrawing from the conflicts and doubts which beset society with the individual, sets out to be an area of silence, of calm beauty which will express only those aspects of

experience of which a man can be sure. The dedication applauds Gautier's technical skill and his appreciation of the physical world, whilst, at the same time, it tacitly regrets that the older poet lacks, in Emaux et Camées, that sense of the inexpressible, elusive meanings which underlie external reality.

CONCLUSION

The lives of Baudelaire and Gautier witness to the basic differences between them. Their acquaintanceship seems to have been superficial. Each man was, at times, flattered by the attentions of the other. Baudelaire sought support from the admired and respected older poet whose aesthetics corresponded to his own basic principles and whose influence, at times, might have helped the younger man in his struggle for publication.

Both men came of age intellectually within the same period, when attitudes to literature were moulded by bourgeois tastes. A self-satisfied society forced artists to make a difficult choice. Some succumbed to the utilitarianism of the times and used their art as a vehicle for social polemics. Baudelaire himself verged upon this for a short time until he became disillusioned. Others, with Gautier at their head, withdrew disdainfully from an involvement which they had always suspected and which Romanticism had initially rejected.

Gautier's early works, Albertus, La Comédie de la Mort, and España, mirror his sense of conflict. He is aware that his problems are not to be solved by 'progress'. Nihilism and disillusionment, framed in Romantic contexts, pervade his poetry. By 1852, Gautier's attitudes become crystallized. Emaux et Camées epitomizes the doctrine of Art for Art's sake. The autonomy of art allows withdrawal and disengagement on two levels. The poet treats of neither social nor personal conflicts in his work. A divorce is effected between aesthetics and morality.

Baudelaire, on the other hand, can acknowledge such a divorce

only if the alternative is a confusion of aesthetics and morality in the minds of the public and critics. Unlike Gautier, he is prepared to present his work as a unity of aesthetic and moral experience, as complex as life itself, but which demands to be judged as poetry and not as morality. The pursuit of beauty is, for Baudelaire the pursuit of truth, the latter emerging of its own accord and indisputably moral, whatever its context in the real world.

Thus the suspicion of insincerity in the dedication and in many of Baudelaire's remarks is to some extent well founded. The differences between the two men are personal. Gautier was content, in his maturity, to put conflict aside, to avoid it. He chose to observe existence in its least disturbing aspects, content to pursue the innocent beauties of the world while renouncing those which he could not directly perceive. Baudelaire refused to simplify the complexity of human existence either in his life or in his art. The difference between Baudelaire and Gautier should perhaps, in the last analysis, be judged in terms of that courage, whose absence in one man allows him to justify his retreat and whose presence in another forces him on to perdition.

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