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(ON THE BICENTENARY OF BAUDELAIRE’S BIRTH)

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**ON DECADENCE, DECAY AND  
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D. H. LAWRENCE AND BAUDELAIRE  
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JO JONES

In *A Collier’s Friday Night*, a play written by November 1909 and inspired by Lawrence’s home life in Eastwood, the protagonist Ernest reads ‘Le Balcon’ and begins ‘L’Albatros’ from Charles Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857). His wonderstruck assessment is as follows:

That’s what they can do in France. It’s so heavy and full and voluptuous: like oranges falling and rolling a little way along a dark-blue carpet; like twilight outside when the lamp’s lighted; you get a sense of rich, heavy things, as if you smelt them, and felt them about you in the dusk: isn’t it? (*Plays* 33).

Ernest paints a picture of intimacy, the low lighting enhancing the senses of smell and touch, and the exotic and erotic are bound up together in his image of ripe fruit. “What they can do in France” is characterised by sensuality, as French writing – with Baudelaire as its representative – submerges the young English reader in excitement and pleasure. Baudelaire’s desire to depict all aspects of modern experience aligned with Lawrence’s ideas about literature: Lawrence admired the French poet’s unwillingness to shy away from the depiction of sex, and Baudelaire’s clashes with the censor in 1857 over the inclusion of poems which addressed lesbianism would resonate with Lawrence’s own crushing experiences of censorship upon the publication of *The Rainbow* in 1915.<sup>1</sup> This article explores the formative role Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* played in Lawrence’s conception of his own writing and his developing

identity as an author, mapping his engagement with the volume of poems and considering how it informed his depictions of sexuality. My intention is not to present a comprehensive study of the intertextualities between Lawrence and Baudelaire, but rather to offer a potential line of inquiry into a relationship that has been largely overlooked by critics.

The connection I suggest between the two writers is one of kinship: a relationship which is transtemporal and cross-cultural, as the question of how to write sex, desire and gender draws together the nineteenth-century French poet and the twentieth-century English writer. This first appearance of *Les Fleurs du Mal* in Lawrence's œuvre, in *A Collier's Friday Night*, marks not only his attraction to sensuality in verse – 'Le Balcon' describing the longed-for intimacy between separated lovers – but is also illustrative of his conception of himself as an outsider, as ill-suited to his environment as the albatross of 'L'Albatros' is to the city. 'Le Balcon' is suffused with unsatisfied desire, the poet yearning for a past moment with his lover as his imagination supplies the sensory memories: "I believed I was breathing the perfume of your blood", he reminisces, "And that I was drinking your breath, what sweetness, what poison!"<sup>2</sup> The erotic longing of the poem produces "triumph" in Ernest as he reads it, and "ecstasy" in Maggie who listens; in spite of Ernest's "tolerably bad French", his reading aloud unites the pair, their literary sharing standing in for sexual contact (*Plays* 33). As Ernest begins the second poem – 'L'Albatros' – they are interrupted and forced to draw apart as the French poems, symbolic of the physical intimacy between them, are rendered impossible in Ernest's Eastwood home. 'L'Albatros', which offers a metaphor of the poet as a bird only majestic in his element, but strange and pitiful beyond it, shows a desire – Lawrence's as well as that of Ernest – to frame himself as a misunderstood outsider, a man foreign to his Eastwood peers because of his poet's mind:

Le Poète est semblable au prince des nuées  
Qui hante la tempête et se rit de l'archer ;

Exilé sur le sol au milieu des huées,  
Ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher.<sup>3</sup>

[The Poet is like a prince of the clouds  
Who haunts the tempest and laughs at the archer;  
An exile on the ground in the midst of jeering,  
His giant's wings hinder his walking.]

The choice of this pair of poems in *A Collier's Friday Night* illustrates the kinship between Lawrence and Baudelaire: it is predicated on a shared identity as artists set apart from their contemporaries in their quest to write sensuality and sexuality.

Often understood as the father of modernity, his poetry among the first to conceptualise lived experience in the new urban environments of the industrial era, Baudelaire's verse was collected, appraised, admired and remoulded into a form suitable for the contemporary moment by a variety of writers and artists internationally. In his writing about Poe he praises "la littérature de décadence" as representative of transgressive modernity; it is that which the traditionalists cannot and will not understand.<sup>4</sup> The reception of and engagement with Baudelaire through the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth represents a form of "active readership", as identified by Matthew Potolsky in his study of Decadent art forms, whereby "foregrounding acts of selection, juxtaposition, and critical discernment, they piece together ostentatiously borrowed parts ... Reception is for these writers a crucial means of production".<sup>5</sup> As an interested party in Baudelairean forms and poetics, Lawrence, too, fits into this bracket of Decadent reading practice – a practice characterised by intimacy and even eroticism, as artefacts of the past are brought into the present moment and reconfigured to give the apprentice pleasure.

The term "Decadent", however, represented a point of consternation to Lawrence. In a letter of January 1909 to Blanche Jennings, he articulated a desire to distance himself from the Decadent mode: "I want to write live things, if crude and half formed,

rather than beautiful dying decadent things with sad odors [sic]" (*IL* 108). Decadence, as a literary term and movement, held a contentious position amongst modernists who wished to frame their work as forward rather than backward looking. The connections between the Decadent movement and modernism have been redrawn by recent scholarship seeking to understand this overlooked and even forgotten lineage.<sup>6</sup> Vincent Sherry has commented on the misplacement of Pound's famous mantra "make it new", made only in 1934 and therefore much later than the initial surge of modernist art in the 1910s.<sup>7</sup> This observation points towards the temporal confusion of modernism, rather than an uncategorical commitment to the present moment of modernity and the future. Sherry positions the two movements as inhabiting the same space, if not sharing the same vision: "if we think of modernism in the simplest terms as a poetics of the new, as the record of the next day of Now, decadence presents an aesthetic of the old, as the register of the last day of Then".<sup>8</sup> This conception of modern experience through a Decadent lens is akin to Walter Benjamin's angel of history: thrust onwards into the present moment but forced to look back at the ruins of progress accumulating behind him.<sup>9</sup> In spite of their disparate perspectives, both Decadence and modernism attempt to represent that which is impossible to grasp: the moment which is simultaneously specific and yet timeless, the Now which is always inevitably the past once captured in writing.

The distinction in 1909 between Lawrence's theorised poles of "live things" and "decadent things" was to diminish over several years, resulting in a tipping point between 1912 and 1914; this is the stage at which Lawrence became able to mingle together the living but fragmentary modernist impetus and his preoccupation with the beautiful and Decadent. Although Lawrence's reception of Baudelaire's œuvre begins with imitation, translating the French verse style into the English language, his engagement evolves into a new and fully fleshed modernist form during the years of the First World War. This organic reformulation – reception acting as a means of production, as Potolsky describes it – is characteristic of Lawrence's process more generally, as he reworked his own writing

many times over at different stages in his life. Baudelaire figured as an icon of modernity throughout these years of Lawrence's career, his formal innovation inspiring young Lawrence before his themes of dissolution began to resonate in the wartime. Inhabiting a decadent era allows Baudelaire to develop the tools – in the words of Théophile Gautier, the “new forms and words that we had not heard before” – with which to “translate subtle understandings of neuroses, the confessions of an ageing passion corrupting itself, and the bizarre hallucinations of an obsession with madness”.<sup>10</sup> A way of comprehending and putting into language those symptoms of a decadent age, these are the alternatives that Baudelaire offers Lawrence, and which Lawrence employs as part of his wartime modernist writing.

Before the First World War intensified his interest, Baudelaire's Decadent writing strategies were required early in Lawrence's life, having been triggered by his own illness. The following analysis of an early poem, ‘Malade’, has been made possible by the recent publication of the Cambridge Edition of Lawrence's *Poems* which gives several of its iterations, revised over a period of eighteen years.<sup>11</sup> The prose poem form and the title point towards a francophone frame of reference; in employing the French word for “sickness”, we understand that Lawrence is drawing a connection between this illness and Frenchness. Peter Fifield, writing about Lawrence's fiction, suggests that “Physical affliction, then, is a fulcrum for Lawrence, an experiential pivot around which turns his development of a model of privileged, fulfilling, and ‘good’ experience”.<sup>12</sup> What we see in this early poem is how these beginning ideas of ambivalence – between illness and creativity, bodily health and mental decline – are instigated by French, if not exclusively Baudelairean, contexts. The first version, ‘Malade [1]’, is a poem of two parts, beginning in close focus on the invalid's sickroom which represents inertia and sterility (it is “a gourd scooped out / and dry”), before opening into a fantastical daydream, his mind allowing him to pass beyond the limits of his body (*3Poems* 1433). Other critics have identified images borrowed from Baudelairean poems in this text,

and it is the sole text for which Christopher Pollnitz suggests a reference to Baudelaire in the Cambridge edition of *The Poems*, citing 'Le Confiteur de l'Artiste' which also features an image of sails against the horizon (*3Poems* 1750). Susan Reid offers a second intertextuality between 'Malade' and 'Spleen' (LXXVII in *Les Fleurs du Mal*), although if Lawrence were wishing to emulate this poem, he does so to the extent of inverting its meaning in this first version of his poem.<sup>13</sup> 'Spleen' laments the poet's descent into despair, imprisoned within his own mind, whereas the 'Malade' poet is physically trapped in his sickroom although his mind allows him to escape into a creative fantasy. This does perhaps reflect the thought behind Lawrence's letter of 1909, as hope and imagination win out over the weakness of his body, meaning that he does not dwell on the "beautiful dying decadent things".

The subsequent revisions of 'Malade' in 1916 lose the optimism of the mind's freedom from the body's illness, as the poet is trapped not only in his room but also within the confines of his being. Even if he could leave his sickbed, "What is the day / but a grey cave, with great grey spider-cloths hanging low from / the roof, and the wet dust falling softly from them" (*3Poems* 1433). This is an image borrowed from Baudelaire, as Reid has indicated, and its usage here is truer to Baudelaire's original, which describes "a mute race of odious spiders / Come to stretch their threads over the depths of our brains".<sup>14</sup> By the war years, then, Lawrence's tone tends towards pessimism. Judith Ruderman has explored the complex relationship Lawrence had with illness, identifying foremost the discomfort he felt in presenting himself as an invalid but also attributing to his time spent in sickness his capacity to describe social ills. She writes, "Lawrence's experience with the plague-like disease [the influenza pandemic between 1918 and 1919], in combination with his lifelong battle with 'the bronchials', reinforced his apocalyptic vision of the war years and provided him with language to express his discontent".<sup>15</sup> Ruderman makes an important point that I want to emphasise and contextualise within Lawrence's reading of Baudelaire: as an individual frequently affected by illness,

Baudelairean poetics provided Lawrence with the tools he needed to express the sickness he found in his own body and map it onto that dissolution which he saw in his wartime surroundings. To revise the poem in 1916 reveals a rekindled but altered interest: his malady must now encompass not only physical illness but a fully affective one, which cannot be escaped. ‘Malade [3]’ ends in “I am choking with creeping, grey confinedness”, compared with the less emphatic final version published in 1928, “Ah, but I am ill, and it is still raining, coldly raining!”, which transposes a mental ill to a purely material one (3*Poems* 1687; 1*Poems* 76).

In November 1911, Lawrence wrote his first review, of Jethro Bithell’s *Contemporary German Poetry* (1909), wherein he offered an image of the French poet as assertive guide: “Baudelaire, a while back, sent round with a rather red lantern, showing it into dark corners, and saying ‘Look here!’; considerably startling most folk” (IR 187). He had also read Bithell’s anthology *Contemporary Belgian Poetry*, and preferred the writing of Verhaeren and Albert Mockel to that contained in the German collection: to Lawrence’s mind, the Belgians followed more authentically the lamplit pathway of Baudelaire, drawing from his “central well of fire” in a way which the Germans struggled to imitate (188). “And why is sex passion unsuited for handling, if hate passion, and revenge passion, and horror passion are suitable” Lawrence asked, bristling at the literary restrictions present in German poetry – and, implicitly, in English writing – which Baudelaire and the Belgians refused to be subject to (188–9). Lawrence would himself attempt to tap into the Baudelairean “central well of fire” and write “sex passion” in his poetry of the same period. ‘Lotus and Frost’, composed between summer 1911 and March 1912, contains echoes of the titular “fleurs du mal”, featuring the poet’s unrequited sexual desire for an unresponsive woman. His arousal blossoms, flower-like, “Till, naked for her in the finest fashion, / The flowers of all my mud swim into sight”: this allusion to Baudelaire poses the same question as his review of *Contemporary German Poetry*, as the poet is unable to understand why his beloved spurns desire and instead “turns / A look



of hatred on the flower that burns / To break and pour her out its precious dew" (*IPoems* 76). These difficulties in expressing desire represent a transitional period for Lawrence: at this stage he turns to Baudelaire for help, employing the "fleurs du mal" concept, but finds himself unable to respond to scorn or dismissal. "Sex passion" is relegated to the "beautiful dying decadent things"; it does not develop and is arrested before it can blossom as "all the lotus buds sink over / To die unopened" (77).

Although it presents a similar theme of sexual incompatibility to 'Lotus and Frost', the later poem 'Frost Flowers' – probably composed around February 1917 – exemplifies a new strategy of representation, as Lawrence engages with the ambivalence that desire conjures and is able to hold "sex passion" and "hate passion" together. Whereas in 'Lotus and Frost', the poet's sexual desire is extinguished by hatred and violence, by the time he composes 'Frost Flowers' the two modes of feeling are interdependent. The five-year period between 1912 and 1917 was a tumultuous one, as Lawrence met his life partner Frieda in March 1912 and left England to travel abroad with her in May; the declaration of war in August 1914 would then confine him to his homeland. The outbreak of the First World War triggered contradictory feelings, as Lawrence found himself torn between bitterness towards the destruction war wrought and the possibility of social rejuvenation in its aftermath. By 1917, capturing sexual feeling in writing may be the "live things, if crude and half formed" of his 1909 letter, but they must also be the "beautiful dying decadent things" in order to accurately represent desire. The fusion of these two poles can be understood as a realisation of Lawrence's modernist expression, not yet fully formed in his earlier work.

'Frost Flowers' is a consideration of the poet's relationship to the urban landscape; as a flâneur wandering the streets, he is an observer of the crowds of the city. Lawrence had composed other flâneur poems, having taken a teaching post in Croydon in October 1908 which introduced him to city life, and revised a number of these throughout the war: the urban environments of 'Hyde Park at Night, Before the War' and 'Piccadilly Circus at Night' simultaneously

stifle sexuality and encourage erotic yearning. Illustrative of his wartime cynicism, the final two stanzas of ‘Frost Flowers’ comingle organic imagery and violent passions:

They are the issue of acrid winter, these first-flower young  
 women;  
 their scent is lacerating and repellent,  
 it smells of burning snow, of hot-ache,  
 of earth, winter-pressed, strangled in corruption;  
 it is the scent of the fiery-cold dregs of corruption,  
 when destruction soaks through the mortified, decomposing  
 earth,  
 and the last fires of dissolution burn in the bosom of the ground.

They are the flowers of ice-vivid mortification,  
 thaw-cold, ice-corrupt blossoms,  
 with a loveliness I loathe;  
 for what kind of ice-rotten, hot-aching heart must they need to  
 root in! (*IPoems* 222–3)

The poet’s gaze lights particularly on the modern woman, whom he finds attractive yet repellent. It is a conception of female beauty which he shares with the poet of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, whose ‘Hymne à la Beauté’, to offer one example, begins:

Viens-tu du ciel profond ou sors-tu de l’abîme,  
 Ô Beauté? ton regard, infernal et divin,  
 Verse confusément le bienfait et le crime ...<sup>16</sup>

[Do you come from heaven above or climb out of the abyss,  
 Oh Beauty? Your gaze, infernal and divine,  
 Pours forth a confusion of benevolence and crime ...]

Compared to the earlier ‘Lotus and Frost’, the “fleurs du mal” of ‘Frost Flowers’ – “flowers that come first from the darkness, and feel

cold to the touch, / ... pungent, ammoniacal almost" – have changed in the poet's vocabulary by 1917 (*IPoems* 222). Whereas before they represented male desire, "flowers of all my mud" rising from the water, now the flowers of evil are reserved for the modern woman. She is paradoxical, "burning snow" and "fiery-cold", an impossible combination of hot and cold, beautiful but dissolute. To pick up on a frequently quoted maxim of Baudelaire's, "La femme est *naturelle*, c'est-à-dire abominable" ["woman is *natural*, that is to say abominable", original emphasis].<sup>17</sup> Although the main themes of the Baudelairean flâneur poet are present, in his fascination with the city and its erotic opportunities and decadent modernity, this use of the organic flower imagery is Lawrence's own preoccupation – illustrative, perhaps, of a more prominent interest in the symbol of Baudelaire's "fleurs" rather than the content of his collection.

His tirade against the 'Frost Flowers' functions also as a commentary on the poet himself, as a man who desires them. Walter Benjamin's incisive reading of Baudelaire's 'A une passante' understands the flâneur's momentary shock at seeing a beautiful woman in the street not as "the excitement of a man in whom an image has taken possession of every fiber of his being; it partakes more of the shock with which an imperious desire suddenly overcomes a lonely man".<sup>18</sup> His reaction is less that of the creative spark of a genius in response to beauty and rather illustrative of the demands of modern existence, as he must recognise the distance between himself and the stranger and the fact that it is insurmountable. It is a unique characteristic of Baudelaire, claims Benjamin, that "the image of woman and the image of death intermingle in a third: that of Paris".<sup>19</sup> This proximity of desire, death and city is of course also present for Lawrence, as the war generation are all the more beautiful because of, and in spite of, their decadence. The war is the culmination of a decadent age, a civilisation which has reached its most modern point, its people and their art inhabiting that "moment of extreme maturity which ageing civilisations determine from the vantage point of their setting suns", as Gautier poetically phrases it in his 'Préface' to *Les Fleurs du Mal* in 1868.<sup>20</sup>

If there is a collective desire for death, the poet is caught up in this movement, experiencing conflicting emotions of desire and horror. For Lawrence, his image of Baudelaire has transitioned from a figuration of the individual's sickness which we witnessed in 'Malade' and is now representative of a larger social ill in the years of the First World War.

Lawrence's organic symbolism continues into his war novel *Women in Love* (1920), the phrase "les fleurs du mal" appearing several times to qualify characters both suffering from and embracing their modern malaise. "Les fleurs" come to figure the ambivalence which saturates the narrative: the marsh-flowers of 'Water-Party' which grow from decaying plant matter, the participants in the London café culture who are young, healthy and degenerative, and Birkin's pragmatic adoption of the moniker to illustrate the decadence of their era. These flowers are emblematic of an organic mode of production, cyclical and dependent on dying back in order to regrow – one which his human characters also emulate. Returning to Potolsky's Decadent reading practice, it is possible to understand the vital spark of Lawrence's novel to be produced by his connection to the previous and now-dead generation. Like the marsh-flowers, Birkin's "pure flowers of dark corruption – lilies" and Ursula's "rose of happiness" sprout from the compost that is Baudelaire's titular phrase (WL 173). Taking as his starting point Baudelaire's Decadent perspective, Lawrence's conception of his own moment branches into two pathways: that of degeneration and that of regeneration.

The organic cycles of *Women in Love* produce a sense of timelessness, the never-ending, or ending and beginning again, which offers a strategy for understanding the chaos of the war years. In his 1919 foreword to *Women in Love*, Lawrence wrote: "I should wish the time [of the novel's setting] to remain unfixed, so that the bitterness of the war may be taken for granted in the characters" (WL 485). This seemingly paradoxical decision to erase any reference to the First World War in order to make its presence greater shows Lawrence's attitude towards the war in 1919: an event oppressively

timeless and omnipresent in the era of modernity. ““But why isn’t the end of the world as good as the beginning?”” argues Birkin in ‘Water-Party’ (173). An alternative to inevitable destruction is introduced, as the moment of destruction is transposed into a moment of renewal and regeneration. For Baudelaire, artistic endeavour is comprised of equal parts modernity and agelessness, as he states: “Modernity: it is the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, one half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable”.<sup>21</sup> This is the ambivalence that Birkin struggles to make understood in his discussion with Ursula, as while human history folds together timelessness and newness, individual narratives are destined to end. Birkin elaborates with the Baudelairean motif: ““It means a new cycle of creation after—but not for us. If it is the end, then we are of the end—fleurs du mal if you like. If we are fleurs du mal, we are not roses of happiness, and there you are””. Teleological and progressivist histories of humanity have been abandoned; the First World War leads Lawrence to see history as cyclical, to imagine the end of the world coinciding with a new beginning. Of course, this is an organic mode – the swamp flowers growing from decaying plant matter – and Lawrence’s conception of human growth and history is imitative of this natural mode of regeneration and production.

The final chapters of *Women in Love* describe a literal and figurative escalation to the Alps, where its characters must progress beyond their limits or be extinguished. The imagery describing the relationship between Gudrun and Gerald is akin to the “burning snow” and “hot-ache” of the frost flowers from Lawrence’s 1917 poem, as Gerald appears “strong as winter”, his heart like “a flame of ice”, before he perishes in the snow (WL 402). Gerald participates in the bohemian Decadent scene, the London crowd who call themselves “flowers of mud”; his role in the ‘Crème de Menthe’ and ‘Totem’ chapters is as the observer of the plant-like bodies of the Russian Maxim, “his limbs like smooth plant-stems”, and Pussum, who “unfolded like some red lotus in dreadful flowering nakedness” (384, 78, 69). Despite Gudrun’s likening of him to an automaton, his movements “a horrible, mechanical twitching forward over the face

of the hours”, Gerald too is a frost-flower, grown out of a corrupt environment and made cold by his position as a modern individual (464). His body, recovered from the mountain, is frozen and held in stasis, not decaying but extending the moment of death. Baudelaire’s ‘Une Charogne’, which imagines the beloved’s death and her decaying corpse, frames death not as an ending but as a beginning, the body a centre of activity: “One would have said that the corpse, swollen with a slight breath, / Was living and multiplying.”<sup>22</sup> The corpse, captured in a ripe moment of decay by the poem, paradoxically represents vitality and possibility. Although not physically decaying, Gerald’s body produces mental and spiritual growth in Birkin as his mind opens to encompass greater possibilities: “If humanity ran into a cul-de-sac, and expended itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new, more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation” (WL 479). Baudelaire’s conception of decadence allows Lawrence to present Gerald’s death not exclusively as an ending, but as an opportunity for growth and expansion as Birkin faces forward and looks into humanity’s future.

The passage of time through Lawrence’s œuvre illustrates the changing way in which he evokes Baudelaire’s mode of writing, from an imitative exploration which distinguishes young Lawrence from his monolingual peers in rural Nottinghamshire, to a new collaborative and cosmopolitan conception of poetics and philosophy. The kinship between D. H. Lawrence and Baudelaire, initially generated by Lawrence’s admiration of Baudelaire’s open treatment of sex and desire, grew into a shared inquiry of how to capture the modern experience of being in the world, navigating the paradoxes of newness and backwardness, progress and decadence. As the Decadent movement opened up pathways of thinking for the following generation of modernists, so did Baudelaire’s work offer a precedent to Lawrence in his formative years and allowed him to transpose nineteenth-century conceptions of the modern to his own moment in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Acknowledgement: With many thanks to Christopher Pollnitz, whose astute comments on an earlier draft of this article – and his detailed knowledge of the chronology and different versions of the poems, in particular – were invaluable.

<sup>1</sup> Upon its publication in 1857, the author and publisher of *Les Fleurs du Mal* were prosecuted for presenting an “outrage aux bonnes mœurs” [an affront to common decency]. Six poems from the collection were banned: ‘Lesbos’, ‘Femme damnées’, ‘Le Léthé’, ‘A celle qui est trop gaie’, ‘Les Bijoux’ and ‘Les métamorphoses du vampire’. Their common theme was female sexuality and desire between women; poems such as ‘Une Charogne’, which addressed necrophilia, went untargeted by the censor. Baudelaire went on to extensively revise *Les Fleurs du Mal*, adding thirty-five new poems for a second edition which appeared in 1861. The six banned poems were collected under the title ‘Les Épaves’ – “the wreckage”, or “flotsam and jetsam”, but were not legally publishable in France until 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Baudelaire, ‘Le Balcon’, *Les Fleurs du mal* in *Œuvres complètes I*, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 36–7; “Je croyais respirer le parfum de ton sang”, “Et je buvais ton souffle, ô douceur ! ô poison !”. All translations my own unless otherwise specified.

<sup>3</sup> Baudelaire, ‘L’Albatros’, *Les Fleurs du mal* in *Œuvres complètes I*, 9–10.

<sup>4</sup> Baudelaire, ‘Notes Nouvelles sur Edgar Poe’, *Œuvres Complètes II*, ed. Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 319–37, 319.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Potolsky, *The Decadent Republic of Letters: Taste, Politics, and Cosmopolitan Community from Baudelaire to Beardsley* (Philadelphia, PA: U of Pennsylvania P, 2013), 4.

<sup>6</sup> See Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, ‘The New Modernist Studies’, in *PMLA*, 123.3 (2008), Vincent Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2015), and Kate Hext and Alex Murray, eds, *Decadence in a Time of Modernism* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins UP, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence*, 30.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1992), 245–55, 249.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal précédées d’une notice par Théophile Gautier* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1868), 5–75, 17

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<<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951002006772e&view=1up&seq=405>> [accessed 29.06.21]; “des idées neuves avec des forms nouvelles et des mots qu’on n’a pas entendus encore”; “traduire les confidences subtiles de la névrose, les aveux de la passion vieillissante qui se déprave et les hallucinations bizarres de l’idée fixe tournant à la folie”.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Malade’ was first composed in February 1910, featuring the prose poem form, and it was later revised into free verse in 1916 for publication in *Amores* (1916). See *3Poems* 1749 and 1931 for versions [1] and [3] of ‘Malade’, as well as its final collected form in 1928 in *1Poems* 76.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Fifield, *Modernism and Physical Illness: Sick Books* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2020), 33.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Reid, *D. H. Lawrence, Music and Modernism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 34.

<sup>14</sup> Baudelaire, LXXVII ‘Spleen’, *Les Fleurs du mal* in *Œuvres complètes I*, 75; “un peuple muet d’infâmes araignées / Vient tendre ses filets au fond de nos cerveaux”.

<sup>15</sup> Judith Ruderman, ‘D. H. Lawrence’s Dis-Ease: Examining the Symptoms of “Illness as Metaphor”’, *D. H. Lawrence Review*, 36.2 (2011), 72–91, 77.

<sup>16</sup> Baudelaire, ‘Hymne à la beauté’, *Les Fleurs du mal* in *Œuvres complètes I*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Baudelaire, ‘Mon cœur mis à nu’, in *Œuvres complètes I*, 676–708, 677.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2006), 77.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>20</sup> *Les Fleurs du mal précédées d’une notice par Théophile Gautier*, 17; “ce point de maturité extrême que déterminent à leurs soleils obliques les civilisations qui vieillissent”.

<sup>21</sup> Baudelaire, ‘La modernité’, *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* in *Œuvres complètes II*, 694–7, 695; “La modernité, c’est le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent, la moitié de l’art, dont l’autre moitié est l’éternel et l’immuable”.

<sup>22</sup> Baudelaire, ‘Une Charogne’, *Les Fleurs du mal* in *Œuvres complètes I*, 31; “On eût dit que le corps, enflé d’un souffle vague, / Vivait en se multipliant”.