

I'm not a robot



A book is a garden, an orchard, a storehouse, a party, a company by the way, a counselor, a multitude of counselors.Charles Baudelaire An analysis of Baudelaire's poem "Correspondences" will help you prepare for the lesson. The author is Charles Baudelaire Poetry genre: sonnet (14 lines, two tar and two tercotas). The basic idea: life is multifaceted and unknown. The poem Correspondence was probably written in 1855; in all editions of the collection "Flowers of Evil" it is the fourth in the cycle. In the center of the poem is the theme of the mysterious correspondences of visible nature and invisible entities. Man lives in the temple of nature. And since nature is a temple, its colors and colors, all its flavors and tones are just different codes of the same language in which it manifests itself. The poem has many visual and sensual images. The author conveys sounds and smells. The reader smells of perfume, "the spirit of amber, incense, the spirit of tansy and benzoic", "sees" green meadows, forests, endless fields. Everyone has to find their "correspondences" and to know the meaning of being. This work has become something of a manifestation of symbolism. It states that sensual things are symbols of hidden reality, and therefore there may be correspondences between their expression in smells, colors and sounds. In poetry, a lot of mysterious, intuitive, subconscious. The poet encourages readers to join in the mysterious and unknown mystery of being, to feel the integrity and unity of all things. Every reader can interpret poetry symbols in their own way, because they are always meaningful. Nature is a temple in which living pillarsSometimes give voice to confused words;Man passes there through forests of symbolsWhich look at him with understanding eyes. Like prolonged echoes mingling in the distanceIn a deep and tenebrous unity,Vast as the dark of night and as the light of day,Perfumes, sounds, and colors correspond. There are perfumes as cool as the flesh of children.Sweet as oboes, green as meadows—And others are corrupt, and rich, triumphant. With power to expand into infinity.Like amber and incense, musk, benzoïn That sing the ecstasy of the soul and senses. — William Aggeler Editor's Note: This work was borne from a conversation about art criticism between Amanda, an artist and Fictional Café's fine arts barista, and myself over lunch in a Chinese restaurant last winter in Providence, Rhode Island. (The restaurant shall remain nameless, as the conversation was much better than the food.) We tended to agree that contemporary art criticism, as well as literary criticism, had both lost much of their moorings as expressions of Aristotelian criticism. We resolved to study this anachronism further. We decided to read and write about the art criticism of the French poet, essayist and libertine Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867). Our source was the book Charles Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Literature (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006). Baudelaire is best remembered for his highly controversial poetry collection, Les Fleurs du Mal, and for translating Edgar Allen Poe into French, yet while alive he was also highly regarded for his incisive writing about art. He favored Romanticism in the arts and attended many annual art exhibits in Paris known as Salons. "The Salon of 1846" was the second salon Baudelaire wrote about. What Amanda and I set out to do, individually, was to write critiques of Baudelaire's art criticism. Amanda has finished hers, and what you read here is the result. It is, in my opinion, a work that embodies a great deal of thoughtful analysis. It is not derivative for being a critique of a critique and in that regard, it is an exemplary work of art criticism that stands on its own. — Jack Introduction Before Charles Baudelaire's "The Salon of 1846," or any creative expression (art, literature, music, etc.) of the mind, can be reviewed, the reviewer must know certain elements which are not easily discerned. The more the reviewer understands these elements, the more valid the review becomes. The reviewer must be aware of the following if the review is to be regarded as authentic: one, the subject's social, political, and economic environment; two, the genetic predisposition, or temperament and personality, of its artist/creator; and three, the sensory and mental interaction between subject and reviewer which shed light on observations, opinions or philosophies of the artist/creator. Within these three criteria lie factors that are unknown to both the reviewer and the creator, or known only to the reviewer, or known only to the artist/creator. Each of these are likely colored by the uniqueness of either party. With this in mind, a review of most works of art can only be as pure as the reviewer's understanding of it. If no reviewer is omnipotent, the review must be written within the best of the reviewer's capabilities, keeping in mind things within the reviewer's control such as those things known to the reviewer. A review—meaning a formal assessment or examination with the intention of alteration or a critical critique—its very definition further complicates the idea of a review. The reviewer must consider all these aforementioned criteria and prerequisites and turn them on the system in which the reviewer is choosing to critique. It then must be decided whether such a critique is a suitable match for what is being critiqued. Since a reviewers' biases are carried throughout ages and are impossible to completely shed, one must always consider their inclination toward or away from the reviewer's intent. The reviewer cannot know all factors which contributed to the creation of a work and the full purpose it was intended to serve, or whether the system being used to critique it is inherently flawed and if so to what extent. Even when all these concerns have been dealt with as best one can, it is incumbent on the reviewer to attempt a critical analysis, as in the case of Baudelaire's "The Salon of 1845." The work is entitled "To The Bourgeois" and structured into sections (this review covers only the first three). This critique is written as a synopsis and a dissection of each section, followed by a conclusion. Baudelaire as Baudelaire Before delving into the critique itself, our attention must first focus on the climate in which Baudelaire wrote this salon. France, 1846: The Salon was a special event intended to give credibility to an artist whose paintings were on display. Art was curated based on the merit ascribed to it by those who considered themselves art authorities. For an artist, achieving entry into this show might be, in the worst case, a life or death situation. These self-appointed critics were not always particularly kind, especially to impressionists such as Eugene Delacroix, whom Baudelaire believed deserved the highest praise. Since the Salon had established itself as the highest recognition that could be bestowed on an artist, it is not unreasonable to see why Baudelaire would write under the title "The Salon of 1846" in an attempt to alter the current hierarchy. Baudelaire himself had a long history fighting against authority. He clashed with his stepfather, who was a military man and would later fight in the French Revolution. Some themes throughout "The Salon of 1846" were anti-establishmentarianism, the use of emotion in the evaluation of art, beauty and pleasure, praise for impressionism, and criticism of technique. Therefore, it was no surprise to which social group Baudelaire dedicated this essay. To The Bourgeois To critique this portion of "The Salon of 1846" is unproductive as it accomplishes what it sets out to with ease. For this reason, To The Bourgeois will be summarized with limited analysis. Baudelaire's "To The Bourgeois," introduction attempts to appeal to the bourgeois, or middle class (as opposed to the highbrow art critics) by way of flattery and definition of terms. Baudelaire does this by defining criticism and what art should represent to the bourgeoisie, while allowing them, through his words, to have a sense of control and dominion over the fate of art. Baudelaire attempts to rearrange bourgeois values by offering—whether an illusion or not—the idea that art is a necessary part of a fulfilling (bourgeois) existence. It is art which evokes feeling, he suggests, which in turn leads to spiritual balance. In doing so, he portrays the monopolizers [of art], as those who have robbed the bourgeoisie of beauty and pleasure. Baudelaire continues to list the accomplishments of the bourgeois in the realm of art, and praises their contributions as they have allowed access to the arts to the masses. For what Baudelaire's addressing the bourgeois is trying to accomplish, whether realistically effective or not, deigns to be a message destined to appeal to the ego of its intended recipients. The structure of his introduction is methodically and attractively laid out; Baudelaire begins with fawning, follows with instruction, then closes with gratitude. Though the flattery in which it is written sacrifices sincerity, it is nonetheless attractive for those who seek reassurance of self-importance. Notably, Baudelaire does not displace himself as the author on subjects forthcoming. His gratitude, and perhaps even humility, as mentioned above, only surface in reference to preceding deeds of the bourgeois, which are not intimately related to its place in art. He begins by describing a landscape as it is seen in all its hues, then moves on to the human form. Continuing to a woman's hand, which he insists contains hues beyond the perception of the human eye, not just of white but of reds and blues. To Baudelaire, color means two tones (one warm, one cool) and their relationship to each other. He praises nature in its ability to perfectly represent these shades, but gives equal accolades to the trained colorists. The style and feeling represented in color comes from choices based within the artist's temperament, according to Baudelaire, and leads to its melody. The melody is the color scheme, which can be best seen in its greatness when the viewer stands at a further distance. Then, a posed question: can a colorist be also a great draughtsman? Baudelaire, perhaps, attempts to be fair in his answer, though he obscures the question by differentiating the two styles of art and, as expected, exalting one over the other. The draughtsman ("with a keen eye for line") excludes the superlatives of the colorist ("whose destiny is to express nature in colour"). (p. 58). The colorist does not exclude lines but exceeds them: the superlatives of the draughtsman. Baudelaire finishes by hailing colorists as epic poets. Baudelaire's section on colour may be his most eloquent observations thus far. His background as a poet, rather than a philosopher, may better serve his writing here. His description of color and how it creates images is beautiful in style and imagination. Yet, Baudelaire does not squander this moment without further insulting the poets and his technique. This is a theme continually seen in previous sections as expressed by Baudelaire in his favoring of emotion over technique. One of Baudelaire's most intriguing and underhanded points implies that technique, as it is applied to color, will always be an abstraction because only nature can account for every molecule of color. This idea caters once again to the impressionist styles, while shying away from draughtsman lines. Though Baudelaire does not expressly say that color and technique are mutually exclusive, but it is no secret to which his favor gives precedence. Conclusion It is the opinion of this reviewer that although Baudelaire's writing has merit for what it is, there are some flaws in his opinions and perceptions. Art cannot be evaluated based purely on a set of boxes to be checked off and universally applied. To do so would be insulting to the very practice of its creation and the subjectivity in which it exists. What art means to each individual gives birth to their own standards by which to critique, which is why some may prefer their houses filled with abstractions while others favor finely painted portraits. To restrict the criteria is to control not the reaction of the viewer, which is inherently sparked by observation, but rather to judge and condemn it so that it is shamed into conformity. Like many authors, Charles Baudelaire was a product of his time, attempting to further his agenda with passion within the trajectory of that which he deemed to be right. His opinions, thoughts and beliefs have been influential, or at least of interest, to many throughout history. Whether such ideals can be collectively applied or should be adhered to is best determined within the scope of freedom of thought for those who choose to believe either or none. Regardless of which side one delights on, most would agree Baudelaire's "The Salon of 1846" left its mark on the world of art and those who continue to study it. *** Amanda's first book was published when she was just eighteen years of age. She believes in making the world a better place through understanding, kindness and access to the arts. Amanda is a member of aforementioned the Association of Rhode Island Authors and enjoys spreading the word about new and emerging artists. You can learn more about her at her website. This is her first feature on The Fictional Café. The poem "Correspondences" by Charles Baudelaire is a quintessential representation of the Symbolist aesthetic that permeated French poetry in the 19th century. It's a meditation on the interconnectedness of the senses, thoughts, and the natural world. Baudelaire portrays Nature as a "temple," a sacred space full of symbols and "living spirits" that speak in a language that transcends human speech. This perspective emphasizes the unity of the universe, where each element finds its echo in another. The opening stanza portrays nature as a space imbued with symbolism. "Man journeys through a wood of symbols there." The forest serves as a metaphor for the world itself, a landscape filled with hidden meanings that "kindle, as he goes, with friendly fires." These "fires" might symbolize human understanding or epiphanies, brightening as one progresses in understanding the world's underlying correspondences. The second stanza delves into the idea of unity, where "Color and sound and fragrance correspond." Baudelaire introduces the notion of synesthesia, the blending of one sense into another. This is depicted through "long-drawn echoes in a far-off bond" that blend into a "deep and shadowed unity." This speaks to the idea that all elements in the universe, whether they are colors, sounds, or scents, are interconnected and exist in harmonious relation. Baudelaire's description of the universe as "Vast as the night and as vast clarity" speaks to the dichotomy of darkness and light, mystery and understanding, that coexist in this intricate web of correspondence. The third and final stanza contrasts different kinds of perfumes that symbolize a range of human experiences and emotional states. Some are as "fresh as the cheek of a child," evoking innocence and purity, while others are "triumphant, rich, defiled," embodying the complexities and contradictions of the human condition. The stanza closes with an invocation of "amber, incense, musk, and benzoïn," scents that are traditionally associated with religious rituals, suggesting a sort of transcendence achieved through understanding these correspondences. The poem culminates in the notion that the intermingling of the senses leads to a "transport of the soul," an ecstatic state where intellectual and sensory experience combine to lift the soul into a higher realm of understanding. The last line encapsulates this synthesis most poignantly: "Where the transport of the soul and the senses sing." The language here suggests a celebration, a hymn to the cosmic unity that binds us to the world and to each other. Thus, "Correspondences" serves not only as a poetic manifesto for Baudelaire but also as a lens through which we can view the world as a complex tapestry of interconnected symbols and meanings. Baudelaire invites us to enter the temple of nature and partake in a journey toward intellectual and sensory enlightenment. Copyright (c) 2025 PoetryExplorer.com. All rights reserved. This poem is a work of fiction and should not be used for commercial purposes without the explicit permission of the author. The poem "Correspondences" by Charles Baudelaire is a masterpiece of Symbolist poetry, exploring the interconnectedness of the senses, thoughts, and the natural world. It is a meditation on the unity of the universe, where each element finds its echo in another. The poem is divided into three stanzas, each exploring a different aspect of the human experience. The first stanza, "Man journeys through a wood of symbols there," sets the stage for the journey. The second stanza, "Color and sound and fragrance correspond," explores the relationship between the senses. 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