

The Aura in the Onset of Modernity: From Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*  
to Huidobro's *Altazor*

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## INTRODUCTION

The turn of the nineteenth century brought about a substantial period of modernization in Europe, particularly in the urban setting. The onset of modernity was particularly drastic in the city of Paris. In his essay, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” Walter Benjamin discusses how, as a result of the period of industrialization and technological advances, the cityscape reflected monumental differences in its appearance and internal functions. For example, narrow and winding streets made way for vast boulevards, which became filled with vehicles. New materials, such as glass and iron, and increasingly modern styles were introduced in the architecture. Additionally, the Parisian arcades were introduced for the first time during this period, which changed the experience of the city dweller and of living in the city. In another essay, “Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” Benjamin discusses how for the first time in history, the idea of the “crowd” came into existence, and the figure of the “flâneur” became common among the French bourgeoisie. The city became a bustling machine in which one was reduced to a mere element within its large infrastructure, both physically and socially.

Simultaneously, it was not just the city that began to modernize and physically change during the transition to what scholars refer to as “modernity.” As technology made rapid advancements, new means of artistic reproduction became available and largely popular. Walter Benjamin explores this idea in his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,” arguing that during the onset of modernity, the manual and individual methods of reproduction and making copies became replaced by mass production of a multitude of copies, thanks to the invention of photography, for example (Benjamin 252-253). He argues that because of the new means of reproduction,

art became commodified and became easily accessible, therefore losing its quality of the “aura,” which he relates to its “unique existence in a particular place” and its authenticity (253-254). This commodification of art had an effect not only on its production and reproduction, but also on its reception by the public (257, 264, 267). Rather than being a rarity to be admired which contained sublime qualities, art became widely accessible and even disposable. The onset of modernity came about with its supporters and opponents, causing a tension within artistic and literary circles due to the divided opinions about the effect of modernity on art and literature.

Some argued that modernity had a destructive effect on artistic creation and literature, believing that during the advent of modernity art had begun to lose its meaning, in both the classical sense, based in its relation to antiquity and tradition, and in relation to its sublime “aura.” Some, however, viewed the onset of modernity as a liberation for the artist and the art from antiquity and its implications of classical, traditional art. Walter Benjamin defines traditional art as containing the “aura” (or uniqueness) and authenticity, stating that “the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual- first the magical, then the religious kind. . . In other words, the unique value of the ‘authentic’ work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value” (256). Opponents of modernity in relation to art viewed its effect as negative because it eradicated the quality of the “aura,” which made an artwork authentic. Either way, it is undeniable that during this time period, artists and poets found themselves in an unfamiliar situation, stranded in a limbo between tradition and a breaking-away from existing artistic concepts.

It is in this strange time of transition that the poetic work reveals the struggles of the poet in a modern world for the first time. Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) was a

French poet who, while living in Paris, made this modernizing city one of the main subjects of his poetry. Baudelaire is a compelling figure to analyze because, as a city dweller of Paris, he observed the changes and the onset of modernity with his own eyes as they happened. His poetic lens captured the changing urban landscape and the society within it unlike ever before. Baudelaire's work reflects an observational approach, being almost a narrative chronicle of the changes that took place within the city.<sup>1</sup> The work of Baudelaire is reflective of the poet's experience in this new and unfamiliar urban landscape, revealing its many struggles. In addition, his poetry contains many ideas and themes of Romanticism, which Pedro López-Adorno defines as "subjetivismo, rebeldía, apasionamiento exaltado, conflicto entre lo ideal y lo real" (López-Adorno 52) and the portrayal of the artist's "angustias, sus deseos, sus delirios, su soledad. . . sus percepciones de superioridad y omnividencia y su recreación del mito del "elegido", del "héroe", in his essay "La Lectura Ideológica-Estética de *Altazor*" (53). Baudelaire's poetry reveals how these traditional concepts are complicated as the city and society begin to modernize. He questions the role of the poet/artist, relating it to his place within society. This is important not only in Baudelaire's present moment, but also in regards to the idea of history and time and the function of the artist within it. Both of the literary works examined in this thesis, *Les Fleurs du Mal* by Baudelaire and *Altazor* by Vicente Huidobro, reveal how the function of the artist develops as modernity takes hold. Baudelaire's poetic work explores the idea of the poet as an exiled figure during the onset of modernity, both in the physical sense due to the drastically different appearance of the

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1. <sup>1</sup> This second section is informed by Benjamin's essays focused on Baudelaire, in which he discusses the figure of Baudelaire as a flâneur and his function within the city, relating it to his poetic work. The essays explored are: "Baudelaire (II,III)," "Central Park," "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," and "On the Second Empire of Paris in Baudelaire."

city, as well as in the social sense due to the changing reception of the artistic work by the public and the changing value which art holds in society. In this growing urban landscape, Baudelaire also begins to explore the role of nature and the divine within artistic creation. One of Baudelaire's most in-depth explorations of these ideas is located in his poetry collection, *Les Fleurs Du Mal*, published in 1857. Baudelaire's work is significant because it is a precursor of the early twentieth century movements which drastically broke away from tradition, such as surrealism, cubism, and the avant-garde movements. Similarly, his work explores many of the questions which are a main focal point of the artistic and poetic movements that follow in the early twentieth century.

Many theorists have studied the figure of Baudelaire, as well as literary works such as *Les Fleurs Du Mal*. Benjamin looked at the figure of Baudelaire in regards to particular themes and concepts, such as the ideal/spleen, the crowd, the figure of the flâneur, solitude, the heroic/the demonic, allegory, and imagery of the city. He discusses the figure of Baudelaire as a poet and its presence in the public sphere, as well as the reception of his work by the public, largely analyzing Baudelaire in regards to the onset of modernity and his own thoughts about it. A. Marinoni, a Baudelaire scholar, discusses Baudelaire as a figure in opposition to modernity and contemporary life who willingly took on the experience of alienation for the sake of his poetry in his essay "The Poetry of Charles Baudelaire." Another theorist, S. Mukherjee, also analyzes the figure of Baudelaire from an ideological standpoint in his essay "Charles Pierre Baudelaire: The Man of the Crowd," discussing the work of Baudelaire in relation to the idea of art as a commodity and focusing on his role as a poet in the context of the modern city. In his essay, "Charles Baudelaire," Arthur Symons studies *Les Fleurs du Mal*, focusing on the

themes of sin and evil within the work. Another popular theme of Baudelaire's work that has been largely studied is the idea of allegory, often referenced by Benjamin and also discussed thoroughly by Patrick Labarthe in his essay "Baudelaire et la Reviviscence de L'Allégorie" in relation to Baudelaire's experience as an urban poet in the onset of modernity and capitalism. Another author who has looked at Baudelaire as a figure during the onset of modernity is Kevin Newmark, who focuses on the poem "Le Cygne" in his essay "Who Needs Poetry? Baudelaire, Benjamin, and the Modernity of 'Le Cygne,'" relating it to the work of Benjamin and the inevitable experience of poverty during the onset of modernity. He also discusses the idea that the allegorical nature of the poem aims to expose modernity as a "state of loss." Alienation and the idea of exile are also once again discussed in this piece, and Newmark also discusses the idea that the exile during the onset of modernity partially becomes voluntary for Baudelaire.

Another poet who grappled with the same questions and struggles of the poet within the onset of modernity was Vicente Huidobro (1893-1948), a Chilean poet who spent the majority of his life living in European cities such as Paris, occasionally traveling back to his country of birth.<sup>2</sup> Similarly to Baudelaire, Huidobro spent much of his life in the Parisian cityscape which was becoming more and more modernized and participating in literary discourse among the Parisian artists of the movements of the time period, although years after the death of Baudelaire. The work of Huidobro explores the question of the role of the poet in society, the creative power of the poet and the idea of

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<sup>2</sup> This section is informed by essays on Huidobro, particularly "Introducción a Vicente Huidobro" by Federico Schopf. This piece was very helpful for understanding the intellectual development of Huidobro and the ideas within his theoretical and artistic approach. Schopf discusses the way Huidobro developed his concepts and ideologies, relating his theories and manifestos to his travels to Paris and Chile, and the social and cultural contexts within them.

creation in relation to the concept of nature, particularly during the onset of modernity. Within his work, Huidobro explores temporality and the place of the poet within history, additionally exploring many futuristic concepts and grappling with the idea of chronological temporality, making it largely related to the work of Baudelaire, who finds himself in a transient place within history and time. The manner in which Huidobro approaches these concepts, however, is completely different from the approach of Baudelaire.

Huidobro is well-known for his propagation of the movement of Creacionismo, which he worked on developing for the majority of his literary career. Through this movement, Huidobro argued that the poet is a powerful creator who is capable of creating new realities outside of logical, existing, and natural limits. According to Huidobro, the poet is able to achieve this through using language in new and unconventional ways. He discusses the poet's usage of language in a conference in 1921 in which he states, "El poeta crea fuera del mundo que existe el que debiera existir. . . El poeta hace cambiar de vida a las cosas de la Naturaleza, saca con su red todo aquello que se mueve en el caos de lo innombrado, tiende hilos eléctricos entre las palabras y alumbrá de repente rincones desconocidos" (Huidobro 1). In Huidobro's vision, the poet becomes not only the vessel that conveys the ideal realm within his poetic work, but also the creator himself. The poet becomes a figure capable of creating things and ideas that do not actually exist by using language in inventive and unusual ways. The poet has the ability to change the function and meaning of words, breaking away from conventions and that which is traditionally accepted as real.



One of Huidobro's primary works that I analyze in this thesis is the epic poem *Altazor*. The concepts of Creacionismo are evident in this work and relevant to my analysis of it. *Altazor* is a long epic poem which consists of a preface and multiple cantos, or songs, which follow the journey of a poet falling through space. The poem is written in first person from the perspective of the poet and traces his nonsensical experiences during his fall. As the poem progresses, there is a breakdown and fragmentation in the poet's language use which represents the poet's search for new poetics and Huidobro's implementation of Creacionismo.

The work of Huidobro has been studied by a variety of different theorists and scholars. In his essay "La Lectura Ideológica-Estética De *Altazor*" Pedro López-Adorno discusses the aesthetic and ideological elements of the epic poem *Altazor*, arguing that the main element of the poem is rupture and breaking away from organization and logic. He states that the aesthetic rupture of the poem, which is evident in both the content and the form, presents a form of poetics which attempts to reinvent the way of looking and describing the world and is a deliberate act against the bourgeoisie society of the time period. Another scholar who has analyzed Huidobro is Ana Pizarro, who discusses the roots of the avant-garde movement and its relation to the work of Huidobro in her essay "El Creacionismo de Vicente Huidobro y Sus Orígenes." She analyzes the work of Huidobro in relation to other French poets such as Apollinaire and relates creacionismo to other movements of the time such as French cubism and surrealism, arguing that Huidobro's movement was created in opposition to them. In his essay "Vicente Huidobro: The Poetics of the Invisible Texts," José Quiroga discusses Huidobro's texts in relation to nature and his anti-nature manifesto, relating them to the concept of

creacionismo and the desire to reveal the mechanisms of life. Scholars have studied Huidobro in regards to futurism and utopic goals by writers like Patricio A. Lizama in his essay “Huidobro y La Vanguardia de Los Años 30.” In this essay, he discusses Huidobro in relation to the avant-garde movement and political and revolutionary goals. He argues that Huidobro wanted to develop a new and utopian society and that his works serve as rebellion against the then-present state of culture. The avant-garde in relation to Huidobro is referenced by other scholars as well, such as by Oscar Hahn in his essay “*Altazor*, El Canon De La Vanguardia y El Recuerdo De Otras Vidas Más Altas.” In this essay, Hahn analyzes the work’s attempts to break away from tradition, relating them to the goals of the avant-garde movement. *Altazor* has also been studied by Lidia Neghme Echeverría in her essay “Vicente Huidobro: Su Obra Vanguardista Inicial” who discusses Huidobro as a modernist writer and argues that the cubist elements of *Altazor* allow Huidobro to create a multifaceted reality.

Huidobro and *Altazor*, however, have not been studied directly in relation to Baudelaire and *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Because these two poets explore very similar concepts thematically, it can be said that Baudelaire is a precursor to the work of Huidobro in the manner that he experienced these struggles within his poetry during the early part of the development of modernity. However, it is Huidobro’s own engagement with these topics that makes the relationship between these two poets compelling. This is because although Huidobro approaches these topics in his own work, he does so in a manner that is completely different from Baudelaire’s in every sense. Interestingly, there has not been much written about these two poets directly in relation to each other. There has not been a direct comparative reading of *Les Fleurs du Mal* alongside of *Altazor* and they have not

been studied together in a systematic manner. However, the thematic similarities in these two works, such as the significance of poetry and the artist, the idea of creation and the place of nature within it, and the idea of temporality and space in relation to progress are undeniable. The manner in which each of the poets tackles these ideas in their own way is compelling, because although the thematic content is similar, the individual writer's development of these topics represents a grand shift within the artistic world and society as a result of the onset of modernity.

This thesis aims to explore the relationship between *Les Fleurs du Mal* and *Altazor* by focusing on the themes presented within them, such as the figure of the poet, poetic creation and the role of nature within it, and temporality and space. The thesis focuses on the themes to analyze the works in conjunction with each other comparatively. Looking at how these concepts become problematized and perceived by these poets during the onset of modernity and the manner in which the poets manage or fail to overcome these struggles within their own work is revealing of the greater role of art within society. Studying Huidobro's writings alongside the works of Baudelaire reveals that despite a drastic shift in the world during the onset of modernity, the aura has not been lost, as Baudelaire and Benjamin believe. Through reinventing the ways in which the poet looks at the world and shifting conceptions on the idea of poetic creation, Huidobro liberates the poet and language itself from archaic and formulaic standards that prevent the aura from thriving in modernity. Huidobro's work shows that the idea of the aura is still ever present in art, although it has evolved and becomes evoked in a different manner than before.

My thesis is structured thematically into three sections, “The Figure of the Poet,” “Poetry, Creation, and Nature,” and “Temporality and Space in Relation to Progress.” Each of the sections employs an analysis of various poems from *Les Fleurs du Mal*, excerpts of *Altazor*, as well as relevant academic. I begin my analysis in the section “The Figure of the Poet,” where I focus on the representation of the poet within the two works. I discuss the ways that Baudelaire seeks to reproduce traditional notions of the poet within his writing, and how Huidobro breaks away from them and reinvents the poet. In the second section, called “Poetry, Creation, and Nature,” I analyze the views on poetic creation that the works present and how each writer views the role of nature within poetic creation. I discuss how Baudelaire struggles to evoke traditional poetic creation during the onset of modernity and how Huidobro breaks away from traditional creation through his use of language and his movement of *creacionismo*. In the section that follows, “Temporality and Space in Relation to Progress,” I discuss Baudelaire’s poetry in relation to his temporal and spatial context of modernizing Paris and how Huidobro steps outside of logical and chronological notions of time and space in *Altazor* to come up with a new means of understanding the world. I end the thesis with a conclusion in which I reference and bring together my arguments.

## THE FIGURE OF THE POET

Traditionally, the poet is a figure who draws from divine inspiration and is an elevated member of society. Baudelaire and Huidobro envision the figure of the poet completely differently. Baudelaire's notion of the poet is largely traditional and suppressed during the onset of modernity, suffering and struggling to evoke the "aura" within his work from his position of being an intermediary between the divine and the earth during the onset of modernity. While Huidobro's poet addresses the issues that Baudelaire experiences such as the limits of the poet and his suffering, he breaks free from them, placing the figure of the poet outside of the divine/earth dichotomy and giving language agency to create a new type of aura during the changes that take place during modernity.

In order to understand the way that Baudelaire views the figure of the poet, it is necessary to be familiar with his views on society in general and how the poet fits into the social scheme. In the first poem of the collection, "Au Lecteur," Baudelaire defines some of his key views on society and the world within which the poet exists. In the poem, Baudelaire argues that humans are sinful creatures driven by "La sottise, l'erreur, le péché, la lésine," (Baudelaire 1) that "occupent nos esprits et travaillent nos corps" (2). Baudelaire believes that these behaviors are inescapable, as people are innately driven by their human character to commit them. His definition of human nature as the tendency and willingness to sin plays a defining role in his view of the world and of the poet in relation to it. A section of this collection is titled "Spleen et Idéal," and through this title Baudelaire describes the duality that he observes within the world. He believes that there are two "levels" of existence in the world, the "spleen" and the "ideal." With "spleen,"

Baudelaire refers to the basic realm of vile, sinful behavior that the first poem in the collection describes, where all of humanity exists and cannot escape. However, Baudelaire also believes in the “ideal,” that is a sublime level of divinity and beauty which the poet is able to access. This idea shows that Baudelaire’s thought is largely based in the traditional, Romantic notions on poetics, in which the poet accesses a divine level that is not available to the average human, and in which the poet has a position of superiority in relation to the rest of society. The way that these ideas are affected in his work becomes clear later on during the collection of poetry when Baudelaire discusses the figure of the poet within the onset of modernity. However, while in general Baudelaire makes a distinction between the figure of the poet and the rest of society, he contradicts this idea in the last line of “Au Lecteur,” where he writes, “Hypocrite lecteur- mon semblable- mon frère!” (Baudelaire 40). By identifying himself with the reader, Baudelaire presents the idea that the poet is not completely an angelic or holy creature above the rest of humankind and its behaviors, but that he is exactly like the reader in some ways. While Baudelaire sought to maintain traditional conceptions of the poet in his work, he too found himself becoming submerged in the “spleen” of modernity. In the first few lines of the poem, Baudelaire describes how people are driven to immoral and base behaviors which make up the spleen. These behaviors make up the “spleen” in which the majority of society exists. The last line of the poem, in which Baudelaire refers to the poet as his “semblable” and his brother can be interpreted as the poet stepping down from his elevated pedestal during the onset of modernity, when he finds himself unable to completely escape from, or rise above, the vile spleen. Through referring to the reader as

a hypocrite and then identifying himself with that, Baudelaire admits that the poet during the onset of modernity is no better than the average human.

While according to Baudelaire, the poet exists in the “spleen” of human existence and partakes in sinful behaviors, he is still able to somehow transcend that and access the ideal, allowing him to see beauty in a corrupted world. This is a primary characteristic of the figure of the poet in Baudelaire’s work, the ability to transcend above the “spleen” of base human existence. In a poem called “Élévation,” Baudelaire writes,

“Mon esprit, tu te meus avec agilité,  
 Et, comme un bon nageur qui se pâme dans l'onde,  
 Tu sillonnes gaiement l'immensité profonde  
 Avec une indicible et mâle volupté.

Envole-toi bien loin de ces miasmes morbides;  
 Va te purifier dans l'air supérieur,  
 Et bois, comme une pure et divine liqueur,  
 Le feu clair qui remplit les espaces limpides” (5-12).

In this poem, Baudelaire shows that the poet is capable of rising above the impure human reality, which he references as “miasmes morbides.” This is evident because Baudelaire refers to his spirit that can easily move with “agilité” and he is capable of purifying himself in “l’air supérieur.” Once again, Baudelaire is making a reference to the duality he views within the world and how the poet is able to fly above the base level. Because of this, he makes a distinction between the figure of the poet and the rest of society, as the figure of the poet is able to transcend this “spleen” and reach the “l’air

supérieur.” The imagery of the poet as a flying figure in this poem becomes a common theme throughout the collection. There are many references to the poet as a winged or celestial and angelic figure (the references to the poet flying in “Élévation,” the comparison of the poet to a seabird in “L’Albatros,” the figure of the poet wearing a halo in “Perte D’Auréole”) which shows that Baudelaire views the poet to be above the rest of society, or at least more connected to the divine realms than everyone else is. However, while the other poems similarly represent the poet, they also show how this transcendence and flight become impossible during the time period in which Baudelaire lives, and within the modernizing society of which he is part. These particular moments within the text reveal the interesting tension that begins to develop between tradition and modernity as advancements and change take place.

In another poem, “L’Albatros,” Baudelaire evokes the image of the albatross, a large, majestic sea bird who glides above the water, following the ship. At first, Baudelaire refers to the albatrosses as “rois de l’azur,” who, similarly to the imagery of flying in the previously mentioned poem, “Élévation,” are floating high above the spleen and average society (6). In the poem, however, the sailors capture the bird on the ship and they poke him, laugh at him, and mock him. At this point in the poem, the bird is removed from his normal context of being high in the sky and flying, to becoming a helpless creature that is no longer able to fly and is getting attacked and ridiculed on the deck of the ship by simple men. Baudelaire compares this to his experience as a poet during the onset of modernity. In the poem, he draws a comparison between the fallen albatross and the figure of the poet during the onset of modernity. He writes,

“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.” (13-16).

Just as the albatross loses his stature as the king and a majestic creature when he leaves the sky, the poet has a similar experience when he is faced with the current human world, which for Baudelaire is the modernizing cityscape of Paris. The references to angelic, celestial, winged figures in both of these poems have undeniable religious connotations, which draw a link between religion and tradition, both being affected in the onset of modernity, as represented by the poet as a “fallen angel” type of figure, who is no longer admired and appreciated in the modern city. Rather, he finds himself struggling in the modern society, in which he is ridiculed and even weighed down by his ability to access the ideal and superior realm. In this poem, Baudelaire shows that the poet finds himself in a state of suffering during modernity. Not only is the poet suffering during this time, but he also feels alienated and exiled from society, because he is unlike everyone else. The rejection of the albatross by the sailors and their mockery represents the social exile of the poet. The way that Baudelaire presents it in his collection, being a poet is no longer seen as desirable during the onset of modernity.

In another poem called “Bénédiction,” one of the first poems of the collection, Baudelaire once again discusses the poet as a suffering figure, describing a poet being born into the world and the lamentations of his “mère épouvantée” (3) who feels cursed for having birthed a poet as a son. This reinforces the idea that the poet is not a desirable figure during modernity. Throughout the poem, the poet is referred to as “dérision” (6), “monstre rabougri” (12) “arbre misérable” (15) and a “L'Enfant déshérité” (22). These

references are similar to the previously discussed poem, “L’Albatros,” and the ridicule that the bird experiences when he finds himself on the deck of the ship. Baudelaire’s usage of these negative terms in this poem in reference to the figure of the poet shows that he believes the role of the poet and society’s opinion about his value have changed. In this poem, just like in the previous poem, the poet suffers in his existence. Here, the poet calls out to god and says,

«Soyez béni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance  
Comme un divin remède à nos impuretés  
Et comme la meilleure et la plus pure essence  
Qui prépare les forts aux saintes voluptés!» (57-60).

Baudelaire makes it clear that the poet is a figure who must suffer in the world, as the suffering he faces is given to him by God, as he refers to his suffering as “un divin remède à nos impuretés.” Since the poet sins like the rest of society, he must experience this suffering to purify him. At the same time, the reference to suffering as preparation shows that Baudelaire views the poet’s suffering as a necessary and formative element to his craft. Baudelaire’s conception of the poet in these lines portrays him as almost a martyr or a heroic figure, who needs strength and courage to exist in the modernizing world. Benjamin discusses this idea in his essay “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” stating that “Baudelaire patterned his image of the artist after an image of the hero” (Benjamin 39) and “The hero is the true subject of *la modernité*. In other words, it takes a heroic constitution to live modernity” (44). Benjamin’s quotation about Baudelaire forming his image after the hero reveals that for a majority of his career,

Baudelaire viewed modernity as an opposing force, and himself as heroic for persevering within it and continuing to write.

Additionally, the way in which Baudelaire references God is compelling in relation to the figure of the poet. In this line, he reaches out to God and to the divine. This once again shows that the element of the religious has some relevance to the figure of the poet and to the way in which he is able to write. In general, Baudelaire's work has many references that are biblical and religion-related, representing a key characteristic of Romanticism.<sup>3</sup> The theme of the poet as a figure of suffering and an exiled and alienated person is very revealing of Baudelaire's general approach towards the figure of the poet as he sees it during the onset of modernity. The suffering and exile that he experiences is inevitable. The figure of the suffering and alienated poet is directly related to Baudelaire's conception of creation and how it is inhibited during the advent of modernity as he experiences it. Because Baudelaire continues to look at the world from the stance of a traditional poet, whose role is to access the ideal and capture Benjamin's "aura" within his work, he struggles, as the modern world around him no longer makes this possible, at least not in the way in which Baudelaire envisions it. The alienation that Baudelaire experiences largely comes from the experience of shock that he has while being in the modernizing city. This shock comes from all the new stimuli which Baudelaire experiences in the city, such as the traffic, the new buildings, and the crowds of people. Benjamin writes, "The greater the shock factor in particular impressions, the more vigilant consciousness has to be in screening stimuli; the more efficiently it does so,

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<sup>3</sup> López-Adorno states that this is a key characteristic of Romanticism, "que propugna el concepto del poeta-Dios, del poeta "elegido" como una verosimilitud propia del siglo XX que ya peribe y situa al poeta-Hombre dentro de su angustioso existencialismo" (53).

the less these impressions enter long experience and the more they correspond to the concept of isolated experience” (“On Some Motifs in Baudelaire” 319). Baudelaire’s alienated experience in the city is directly related to his inability to process the stimuli which he finds, and he turns towards screening it into simpler elements that are easier to digest. Benjamin later writes, “The shock experience which the passer-by has in the crowd corresponds to the isolated “experiences” of the worker at his machine” (329). In this quote, Benjamin makes a comparison between the poet in the modernizing city to the figure of a worker in a factory. The experiences are similar. As the city begins to function in a machine-like manner, the poet becomes reduced to a miniscule part of the entirety. This, in itself, is an alienating experience. As Baudelaire experiences the changes and expansions in Paris that he describes in *Les Fleurs du Mal*, the unfamiliarity of his surroundings reduces the figure of the poet and he feels alienated.

In *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Baudelaire is clearly disillusioned with his stance as a poet in a modernizing city. For a large portion of his career, his work depicts his struggle to make sense of the world around him and come to terms with being a poet in a changed context. He begins to overcome some of these struggles in this collection, as shown by the connection he makes between himself and the reader in the first poem, as already mentioned. However, as time passes, he finds himself unable to uphold the traditional values he sought after. Referencing back Benjamin’s ideas on modernity and the changes in reproduction and perception, Baudelaire struggles with creating something that will appeal to the masses, which is necessary in the context of the onset of modernity, mass production, and consumerism. He finds himself needing to change and enter the “spleen” to survive as a poet. Benjamin states in “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,”

“Baudelaire knew the true situation of the man of letters: he goes to the marketplace as a flâneur, supposedly to take a look at it but in reality to find a buyer” (17). While it seems ideal to uphold the traditional values, it no longer becomes practical, especially as Baudelaire relies on his craft to support himself. The need to change is inevitable and becomes clear in his prose collection titled *Paris Spleen* published over a decade later, when Baudelaire presents his situation as a poet in modern Paris in a humorous way. In a piece titled “Perte D’Auréole,” Baudelaire describes an encounter between two poets. One of the poets has dropped his halo while crossing the chaotic streets of Paris. However, he decides that it is not worth it to pick it back up. He states, “J’ai jugé moins désagréable de perdre mes insignes que de me faire rompre les os. . . D’ailleurs la dignité m’ennuie. Ensuite je pense avec joie que quelque mauvais poète la ramassera et s’en coiffera impudemment.” (Baudelaire 94). This short prose piece suggests that later on during his career, Baudelaire begins to come to terms with his situation as a poet in a modernizing city. He begins to accept the changes that have taken place and comes to terms with their inevitability, realizing that a return to the past is not possible and that it is easier to go about in the present without the archaic poet’s dignity and elevated status than it is to search for something which no longer exists. The poet drops his halo which is representative of antiquity and tradition and has religious connotations. He chooses not to pick it up because it no longer serves him. The line in which the poet states that he does not want his bones to be broken by picking up the halo reveals that in order to live and survive within the modernizing city, Baudelaire believes that the poet must adapt and change his perception of himself. Holding on to tradition no longer serves the poet and even has the potential of affecting him negatively in the modern context.

In his epic poem *Altazor*, Huidobro explores concepts similar to those of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, although in a completely different manner. While in Baudelaire, the poet acts as an intermediary between the divine and the earth, or the “ideal” and the “spleen,” he is still largely rooted in his own worldly existence within the spleen, which he must come to terms with. Huidobro, however, acknowledges that this dichotomy exists, but removes the figure of the poet from it, placing him and his creation outside of it. Huidobro begins exploring and developing his ideas on the figure of the poet early on during the work. The poem is based on the idea of a poet’s journey through time and space. The poet is falling in a void-like abyss, attached to a parachute. The narrator in the poem is the poet himself, largely writing in first person. The epic begins with the “Prefacio” in which the birth of the poet is referenced. This section is prose-like, although as the poem develops, the form changes towards free verse. The poet opens the piece by writing, “Nací a los treinta y tres años, el día de la muerte de Cristo; nací en el Equinoccio, bajo las hortensias y los aeroplanos del calor” (Huidobro 8). In these first lines of the poem, the poet already uses compelling language to create a new reality as he undertakes his journey, referencing “los aeroplanos del calor.” This phrase does not describe something real, and through this combination of language, Huidobro begins to create, removing the poet from the traditional context and use of language. This line is also a compelling opening statement because Huidobro relates the birth of the poet with the death of Christ, or, in other words, the death of religion. Huidobro’s envisioning of the poet is based in the poet replacing the figure of the divine creator, taking charge of the

act of creation rather than being a servant to divine creation, almost serving as a reincarnation of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

In Baudelaire, there are many religious references that link the poet with the divine and portray him as a sacred, angelic figure. The fact that Huidobro begins his poem with cutting off the poet from dependence on these ideas is significant, because he clearly states that the poet is born despite the death of Christ, which is representative of not only religion but also tradition and antiquity, as religion is a large part of classical art. The reference to “los aeroplanos,” an example of modern technology, places the figure of the poet in the modern context, as technological advancements are taking place and the world is becoming modernized. Also in the preface, the poet references the “Creador” who speaks about creating the world and man. He states, “Creé la lengua de la boca que los hombres desviaron de su rol” (10). While the poet is a figure that has been created by the divine, he also has his own agency to make himself learn how to speak and even change the function of what the creator intended.

Throughout a large portion of the poem, the manner in which Huidobro portrays the figure of the poet is reflective of Baudelaire’s ideas on the figure of the poet, particularly of the idea of the poet as a lone, abandoned, and suffering figure. In the preface of the poem, the poet writes, “Y héme aquí, solo, como el pequeño huérfano de los naufragios anónimos” (12). The poet compares himself to an orphan of abandoned shipwrecks, portraying the poet as a figure who is alone in the world, especially in a wrecked world. This is similar to the references which Baudelaire uses, because he also

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<sup>4</sup> López-Adorno states, “El poeta, al negar sus raíces cristianas, no hace mas que intensificarlas al sustituir un dios (el de cristianismo) por otro (el de la poesia, encarnado en su figura)” (73). However, it doesn’t seem like the poet in *Altazor* is performing this exact replacement of one god for another. It seems more like he takes in this divine creative power into his language, rather than consulting an outside force.

compares the poet to an orphan in one of his poems. However, the way in which the poet experiences his lonely state differs between the work of these two poets to an extent. While Baudelaire views his suffering and loneliness negatively, the portrayal of this situation in *Altazor* is different. In these lines, Huidobro once again uses language within these lines to alter the traditional figure of the poet by giving him agency to create nonexistent realities. This is evident in the phrase “nafragios anónimos,” in which Huidobro unconventionally combines these words. Shortly after, the poet introduces himself, stating that “Soy Altazor, el gran poeta, sin caballo que coma alpiste, ni calienta su garganta con claro de luna, sino con mi pequeño paracaídas como un quitasol sobre los planetas” (12). In this line, the poet reinforces the idea of being alone and having nothing, not even a horse to keep him company. The only thing he has is his parachute to accompany him on his fall through space. The entirety of the poem is very fragmented and contains a mixture of events which the poet experiences during his fall as well as his own reflections on himself and the world. However, even as the poet is falling and pondering his life as a poet, he still is using language to create, such as the phrase “un quitasol sobre los planetas” which presents a previously unheard of image. This separates him from Baudelaire’s figure of the poet that lacks this agency. Already in these sections, the language becomes very symbolic and metaphorical, such as the reference to the horse, which is an earthly and traditional form of sustenance and travel, and a parachute or umbrella, which is manmade and not used for its conventional purpose within the poem.

Following this section, Huidobro continues to describe the figure of the poet. He refers to him as the one that “lava sus manos en la mirada de Dios, y peina su cabellera como la luz” (12). The language in these lines presents a paradoxical image which



transcends the limitations of the physical world, such as the physical act of washing hands in the look of god, which is a transcendental figure whose glances cannot be physically touched. This reference to the poet washing his hands in the look of God and combing his hair like light also is a parallel to Baudelaire's references to the ideal and the superior, godly realm. As mentioned before, Baudelaire describes the figure of the poet as transcending above human existence, and purifying himself in the "superior air" of the divine, and Huidobro seems to be describing a similar concept in this line. The rest of the preface describes the fall of the poet and seems evocative of his gloomy destiny. In this section, it is unclear who is speaking. The narrator is speaking to the poet, and says "La vida es un viaje en paracaídas y no lo que tú quieres creer. . . . Adentro de ti mismo, fuera de ti mismo, caerás del cenit al nadir porque ese es tu destino, tu miserable destino" (14). The speaker states that the life of the poet is destined to be a journey in a parachute, without an end. The prediction of this constant and endless downfall and of the poet having a fate, one that is unchangeable and miserable, is another parallel to Baudelaire's ideas on the poet, which he envisions as having a life filled with suffering that also is not escapable. This represents a common theme between their work, at least in the beginning of Huidobro's work. However, as the poem progresses, the poet's ideas change, which will be explored further in the analysis of the latter Cantos.

One of the last sections of the Preface contains the statement, "Poeta, he ahí tu paracaídas, maravilloso como el imán del abismo. / Mago, he ahí tu paracaídas que una palabra tuya puede convertir en un parasubidas maravilloso como el relámpago que quisiera cegar al creador" (14). These lines are compelling because within them, the narrator compares the figure of the poet to the figure of a magician, who is capable of

using words to alter the objects around him to serve a different purpose. At the same time, within this line, the poet is portrayed as being rebellious against the creator, wishing to blind him by using his language. This is a parallel to the very beginning of the preface, in which the poet is born as a result of the death of Christ. This is revealing of one of the main ideas which Huidobro explores within the work, the relationship between the poet and the figure of God or the divine creator, and whether or not the poet is subject to the divine destiny imposed upon him. Overall, the preface leaves the reader with key ideas about the work, which develop further on in the cantos that follow: the poet as a suffering, falling, alone figure, the struggle of the poet between tradition and the modern, technological, mechanical nature of the present, and the poet's ability to create outside of the earthly and existing realm thanks to his own powers and ability to use language, as compared to Baudelaire's conception of the poet within the divine/earth dichotomy.

"Canto I" reinforces some of the ideas of the preface, such as the confused and alone figure of the poet. It begins with the poet being lost, and the lines "Solo en medio del universo / Solo como una nota que florece en las alturas del vacío / No hay bien no hay mal ni verdad ni orden ni belleza" (16). The poet finds himself alone in the void, in an empty space. The poet is an isolated figure; however, here his isolation and lonely state do not evoke feelings of negativity. As the quotation states, there is no good or evil in this place. The poet is alone, as in the work of Baudelaire, but here, he is also liberated from all the ideas which before trapped him. The poet cannot make sense of the modern world around him by using the old logic, and by stepping outside of this logic, he gains the agency to create through language. In these lines, the phrase "una nota que florece en las alturas del vacío" presents another image that lies outside of traditional conceptions

and visions of the world. Through the language, the poet creates that which does not yet exist, the language itself seems to become a powerful force itself. The lines in the third stanza state,

“En vano buscas ojo enloquecido  
 .....  
 ¿No ves que vas cayendo ya?  
 Limpia tu cabeza de prejuicio y moral  
 Y si queriendo alzarte nada has alcanzado” (16).

As the poet finds himself in this space, he needs to clear his head of preconceptions and ideas, he needs to let go of tradition and the past. Instead of trying to soar into the Baudelairean “ideal,” which leads to nowhere in the modernized world, where previous concepts of poetry no longer apply, the poet must give into the fall. However, as Canto I continues, the poet continues struggling with his destiny of the endless fall. The poet references himself, stating

“Soy yo Altazor  
 Altazor  
 Encerrado en la jaula de su destino  
 .....  
 La evasión imposible  
 Más débil marchó con mis ansias” (20).

The usage of words like “encerrado” and references to imprisonment and the impossibility of escape once again portray the figure of the poet as trapped in suffering, as the poet exists in his misery and is unable to change it. As the poet finds himself in

unfamiliar territory of language and creation, he also gets discouraged at times due to his unfamiliarity with the surroundings.

Later on in this same stanza, the poet once again references the death of religion and the beginning of something new, which is a reference to the poet's place in modernity. He states,

“Morirá el cristianismo que no ha resuelto ningún problema

Que sólo ha enseñado plegarias muertas

.....

Mil aeroplanos saludan la nueva era

Ellos son los oráculos y las banderas” (20).

The poet states that Christianity and religion must die, as they never solved any problems.

The reference to religion is a reference to tradition and antiquity in general, also regarding in the poetic sense. In this line, the poet argues that the old must be rejected and disposed to make place for the new. In the rejection of tradition and the past, language gains the agency to create. It no longer represents or imitates the world, but it creates the world, one that can be separate from reality. The airplanes to which he refers are representative of modernity and everything it encompasses, both technologically and ideologically. At this point, the poet is in a place of transition from tradition to modernity. Referencing back to the inescapability of the prison in which he finds himself, he is unable to alter the changes that are taking place while he is still viewing modernity and his fall as a trap. The poet is in despair and alone. He states,

“Solo

Solo

Solo

Estoy solo parado en la punta del año que agoniza” (22).

The repetition of the word “solo” reinforces the extent to which he feels his overwhelming loneliness. Another reference to the suffering of the poet is on page 26, when the poet is referred to as someone “con dolor de límites constantes y vergüenza de ángel estropeado.” Similarly to the work of Baudelaire, there is a reference to the poet as an angel who is suffering in the earthly world of modernity. Further on, this idea is developed when the poet states, “Se me cae el dolor de la lengua y las alas marchitas” (26.) The reference to the poet’s wings is very similar to Baudelaire’s references to birds and celestial beings in poems such as “L’Albatros” and “Le Cygne.”

For a large portion of the beginning of the poem, the poet in *Altazor* is struggling with the same experience as the poet of Baudelaire in the onset of modernity. However, Huidobro’s conception of the poet takes a drastic turn on page 30 when the poet declares his liberation, stating, “Liberación! ¡Oh! Si liberación de todo / De la propia memoria que nos posee / De las profundas vísceras que saben lo que saben” (30). The poet decides to liberate himself from every preconceived idea and every part of the expected experience. He states, “Liberado de este trágico silencio entonces / En mi propia tempestad / Desafiaré al vacío” (32). It is here, within this liberation, that the poet gains the agency to transcend above the experience of suffering.<sup>5</sup> The poet, through his rejection of what is expected of him, and equally of what he has expected of his experience as a poet, which is suffering, loneliness, confusion, breaks away from it all. He gains the agency to create

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<sup>5</sup>López-Adorno discusses the liberation in *Altazor*, which he argues symbolizes a liberation from both social and poetic conventions. He states that this is an act against the bourgeoisie society, which seeks to eliminate the need for and value of the poet. However, it seems that Huidobro is doing this more to bring power to the language and reinvent it rather than to prove a point to society.

his own storm, to rebel against what he has been told his destiny must be. This is one of the biggest differences between the work of Huidobro and the work of Baudelaire.

Although the poet does suffer and experience loneliness in the new and unfamiliar world, or in this case, while falling through an empty void, he can step outside of this experience. At the same time, the poet becomes a contradiction, inhabiting the tension which he experiences by stating,

“Soy el ángel salvaje que cayó una mañana

En vuestras plantaciones de preceptos.

Poeta

Anti poeta

Culto

Anticulto” (34).

These lines represent the tension which the poet is feeling during this time. The poet in *Altazor*, just as the poet in the work of Baudelaire, is finding himself between these contradictory elements, struggling to find a direction in which to go. He desires to liberate himself from tradition and everything that it entails in regards to his poetic work, but it has also been deeply engrained within his figure through everything he has been taught.

He finds himself, as an embodiment of the fallen angel, amidst the ideas which others have about his work, in a place in time where they are no longer completely applicable as the world around him has changed. How can he remain a poet in this changed world and adapt to it? That is the question that Huidobro’s poet struggles with, even within his attempts to liberate himself from the preconceptions within which he is

trapped. On page 46, he once again refers to himself as a wounded bird, stating “El pájaro cegado en la catástrofe celeste / Encontrado en mi pecho solitario y sediento.” The poet relates himself to the blinded bird, also referencing his loneliness and thirst. This is very similar to the image of the swan in Baudelaire’s “Le Cygne,” in which the swan is thirsty and alone when removed from his normal context, referencing the way the poet feels in a modern city. However, later on in *Altazor*, the poet actually seems to gain a different type of agency thanks to what modernity develops around him and thanks to the changes which take place. He writes,

“Cielo es aquella larga cabellera intacta  
 Tejida entre manos de aeronauta  
 Y el avión trae un lenguaje diferente  
 Para la boca de los cielos de siempre” (64).

The references to the figure of the aeronaut are compelling because it is a flying figure, just like a winged angel or a bird, except it is a futuristic figure that does not fly due to its natural ability, but rather due to technological advancement. This is representative of the poet being able to find a new means to fly, which symbolically refers to the poet finding a new means of expressing himself with the new language brought along by planes.

## POETRY, CREATION, AND NATURE

One of the other main themes of the two works, creation of poetry is directly related to the figure of the poet. This theme becomes relevant during the onset of modernity because as the figure of the poet changes and adapts because of the modernizing city, the poet must also look at how he creates and how he can continue creating within the newness. This theme is compelling within the works of Baudelaire and Huidobro, as they both explore their ideas on poetic creation and the role, or lack of participation, of nature within it. Within his work, Baudelaire presents a very romanticized version of poetic creation, which takes place thanks to the poet's relationship to the divine which allows him to become inspired and create within the worldly realm. He is also largely influenced by the role of nature within his craft. Huidobro, on the other hand, breaks away from both nature and Baudelaire's ideas on creation. In Huidobro's work, language rather than nature becomes a creative force, which is capable of creating outside the divine/earth dichotomy and outside of reality. Because language, rather than the poet, becomes the creative force, it is able to reinvent the aura during the onset of modernity and portray it within a poetic work.

The previously mentioned poem, "Élévation," presents the image of the poet as a celestial being transcending earthly existence. When the poet reaches the "pure air of the superior sky" (Baudelaire 10), he is able to "bois, comme une pure et divine liqueur, / Le feu clair qui remplit les espaces limpides" (11-12). By somehow accessing this lofty and superior realm, the poet is able to partake in the "divine liqueur" that inspires his poetry. In this sense, the poet acts more as a vessel of the divine creative power rather than being the creator himself, serving as an intermediary between the "ideal" and the



earthly realm. This is a traditional view of artistic creation, in which the artist accesses this divine, or in Baudelaire's words: "ideal" realm, from which he carries the inspiration that allows him to portray the sublime within his artistic work. This idea of artistic creation is largely related to Baudelaire's conception of the figure of the poet and his place within society- as being able to access something that is inaccessible to the rest of humanity, something that lies above and out of reach for the ordinary human.

In a poem called "Correspondances," Baudelaire writes,

"La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers  
Laisent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;  
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers." (1-4)

In this first stanza of the poem, Baudelaire romanticizes nature, portraying it as something holy and sacred. The nature which he describes "laisent parfois sortir de confuses paroles," meaning that nature plays a direct role in the creation of poetry while the poet "passe à travers des forêts de symboles." Baudelaire's conception of nature relates it directly to his craft as a poet. It is nature that releases symbolic and inspiring ideas for the poet to decipher and include in his work. Baudelaire's conception of nature includes the physical world around him which he is able to experience through his senses. It includes natural elements of the world such as vegetation, but also its other components such as scents. Therefore, for Baudelaire, nature refers to the physical elements of the world that he is able to experience through his senses. Later on in the poem, Baudelaire lists a variety of beautiful and pleasant scents, which he writes "Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies, / Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens, / Qui chantent les

transports de l'esprit et des sens.” (12-14). Baudelaire believes that a poet can be carried away to divine ecstasy through an experience of the senses, such as a sound, sight, or smell, through experiencing the physical natural world. Once again, nature plays a key role in inspiring the figure of the poet and inciting the creation that takes place as he writes. Through these sensory feelings, the poet is able to experience ecstasy and evoke a divine, spiritual, beauty which he is able to then capture into a poem. Baudelaire’s reference to “ecstasies” within this poem also relates back to the previously mentioned poem, in which the poet experiences the divine “liqueur.” In both of the poems, the act of accessing this sublime realm of reality and the act of creation are portrayed as extremely blissful.

One of the biggest contrasts in the work of Baudelaire and Huidobro is how they envision the function of nature and the natural world within the poet’s creative space. As the poem “Correspondances” shows, Baudelaire views nature as a force that helps the poet to create, almost as if the poet is a vessel through which nature, which contains infinite symbols and meaning, can speak. Huidobro breaks away from this idea, both in his theoretical work and within *Altazor*. Huidobro wrote a manifesto in which he argues for the necessity to break away from nature as a poet, referencing the physical and earthly nature which guides much of Baudelaire’s work. He describes a scenario in which “El poeta se levanta y grita a la madre Natura: *Non serviam*” (Huidobro 1). The poet decides to break away from his servitude to this type of nature, in which he imitated the natural world in his poetic work, thereby becoming independent. In the manifesto, the poet argues to his fellow poets that “Hasta ahora no hemos hecho otra cosa que imitar al mundo en sus aspectos, no hemos creado nada . . . Nunca hemos creado realidades

proprias. . . Hemos aceptado, sin mayor reflexión, el hecho de que no puede haber otras realidades que las que nos rodean, y no hemos pensado que nosotros también podemos crear realidades” (1). The main idea of this quotation is one of the major themes in Huidobro’s work, relating to the idea of poetic work and artistic creation. If, traditionally, the role of the poet was to imitate the physical natural world surrounding him, Huidobro is making a major breakthrough in this piece in regards to not only the role and power of the poet but also to the perceptions of the reality that surrounds him. The poet gains agency to not imitate and copy nature within his work, but to create something new that previously did not exist. If nature is a creative force within the physical and worldly realm, the poet’s liberation from it allows the language which he uses to become a force like nature, which can create that which does not yet exist.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is language which becomes the creator and the hero, guided by the poet. Whereas Baudelaire is largely limited to the physical and natural world, Huidobro takes a different stance on nature and creation, transcending the physical world of the earth and aiming for planets and space, placing the poet amidst interstellar creation. For Huidobro, unlike Baudelaire, the escape which modernity offers is a liberation from limitation in his poetic work rather than a destruction of the “correct” conceptions about art and its capabilities. Rather than viewing modernity as something that limits him and his poetic abilities, Huidobro sees it as an opportunity to extend his craft in a new direction. He ends the manifesto writing “Una nueva era comienza” (2), making it clear that this is a breaking away from the past, breaking away from traditional ideas on poetry. This is a powerful move on Huidobro’s

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<sup>6</sup> In his essay “Vicente Huidobro: The Poetics of the Invisible Texts,” José Quiroga discusses Huidobro’s anti-nature manifesto, *Non Serviam*, arguing that the poetry of Huidobro serves to reveal the mechanism of life and nature, particularly in regards to the concepts of creationism. However, this is not exactly the intent of Huidobro. Rather, he seeks to mimic the mechanisms of nature and creation with his language.

part and his attempt to create rather than imitate is evident in *Altazor*, although this too has its contradictions within the work.

There are sections in which the poet seems to be a vessel of nature rather than a force that is independent. In Canto I, the poet states, “Y mientras los astros y las olas tengan algo que decir / Será por mi boca que hablarán a los hombres” (36). He directly states that the nature will speak through him, which contradicts what he wrote in “*Non Serviam*.” Equally, on page 48 he states, “Yo hablo en nombre de un astro por nadie conocido / Hablo en una lengua mojada en mares no nacidos / Con una voz llena de eclipses y distancias.” Just like in the previous quotation, the poet references speaking for the nature, or allowing it to speak through him. However, in spite of that, Huidobro is also breaking away from nature within these lines by using phrases that describe nonexistent things such as “una lengua mojada en mares no nacidos” which presents an image of nature that is not real in the physical world. This is an example of Huidobro using language to create a new reality outside of nature. This image is once again present on page 50, where the poet states, “El mundo se me entra por los ojos / Se me entra por las manos se me entra por los pies.” In this quote, he also discusses how the natural world enters him, which he is able to convey through his poetry. At the same time, the image of the world entering the poet through his body parts is also not realistic and once again conveys the act of creation outside of the natural.

Further on, the poet still wants to break away from dependency on nature. In Canto III, he states,

“Cortad todas las amarras  
De río mar o de montaña

De espíritu y recuerdo

De ley agonizante y sueño enfermo” (64).

This is very similar to the argument which Huidobro presents in *Non Serviam*, directly cutting himself off from Nature as an influence in his work. Not only does he desire to cut himself off from servitude to nature, but also from tradition, memory, and the law. In other words, he desires to achieve a total separation from what a poet is supposed to be and do, to reinvent the way the poet is configured. Later, the poet states, “Manicura de la lengua es el poeta / Más no el mago que apaga y enciende . . . Y todo lo que dice es por él inventado” (66). This quote once again puts the poet in control of the language and his poetry, presenting him as a figure with agency rather than a mere vessel of the outside world. The poet becomes a creator rather than an imitator.

In the preface of *Altazor*, the poet describes the nature of what he perceives to be true poetry. He states, “Los verdaderos poemas son incendios. . . Un poema es una cosa que será. Un poema es una cosa que nunca es, pero que debiera ser. Un poema es una cosa que nunca ha sido, que nunca podrá ser” (10). The connection which Huidobro makes between poetry and fire in these lines is compelling, because while fire is something that is created, it is also created thanks to destruction of something else by the act of burning. Simultaneously, fire is a powerful force, capable of spreading quickly. This is representative of Huidobro’s breaking away from tradition and deciding to create even if it is at the cost of traditional poetry. This shows that Huidobro views the nature of poetry to be powerful as well. The references that follow, in which Huidobro compares poetry to something that can never be but should be are compelling because Huidobro is arguing for something similar to the quality of the aura. It seems that Huidobro is arguing

that poems are capable of capturing this impossibility that lies beyond human understanding. While he words it in a completely different manner, he is referencing a similar type of sublimity or aura that Baudelaire believes poetry should and can evoke. While Benjamin and Baudelaire argue that modernity is destructive of the aura, Huidobro shows that through the liberation of previous notions, the aura within art can take on a different form and manifest itself through something new. While for Benjamin the aura is rooted in a work's unique nature and its authenticity, Huidobro demonstrates how poetry is able to evoke a different type of aura or sublime quality even within modernity, through a different and new use of language that creates something awe-inducing and something impossible which lies outside of physical and ordinary reality. While Baudelaire reaches for the aura within his work as a modern poet, he is unable to evoke it, ending up at the same point at which he started, as the world around him has changed and is no longer reflective of creation as he envisions it. Stepping outside of these failing cyclical attempts, Huidobro becomes able to evoke a different type of the aura.

The way in which Huidobro describes poetry in *Altazor* is similar to what he said in a conference in 1921, which was transcribed into an essay called "La Poesía." He describes two types of language, one for describing worldly things and the other which "rompe esa norma convencional y en él las palabras pierden su representación estricta para adquirir otra más profunda y como rodeada de un aura luminosa que debe elevar al lector del plano habitual y envolverlo en una atmosfera encantada" (1). In this quotation, he argues that one of the purposes of poetry is to break away from objective conventional meaning which comes from merely "naming" things. Instead, poetic language should elevate the reader towards a magical realm. This is very similar to Baudelaire's

conception of poetry and poetic language and his vision of the two realms that exist, the spleen and the ideal. Similarly to Huidobro, Baudelaire also believes that poetry comes from this elevation to the divine or ideal which contains the aura that Huidobro also refers to in this conference.

However, Huidobro takes his argument further, arguing that the poet is not only able to capture this sublimity in his work and bring it back to the spleen, which is what Baudelaire argues for in poems like “Élévation.” Rather, according to Huidobro, the poet is capable of creating outside of the logical and existing world thanks to his use of language. He states, “La Poesía es un desafío a la Razón. . . La Poesía es el lenguaje de la Creación” (2). This goes along with some of the main goals which Huidobro’s writing sought to achieve. During his career, Huidobro largely argued for Creacionismo as a poetic movement, in which the poet has creative power, not to capture reality and imitate it, but to create his own, as he describes in this conference. For Huidobro, the poetic power of the writer goes beyond just the words which he writes. He further explores the breaking away from the logical and rational, stating,

“La poesía no es otra cosa que el último horizonte, que es, a su vez, la artista en donde los extremos se tocan, en donde no hay contradicción ni duda. A llegar a ese lindero final el encadenamiento habitual de los fenómenos rompe su lógica, y al otro lado, en donde empiezan las tierras del poeta, la cadena se rehace en una lógica nueva” (“La Poesía” 3).

Huidobro argues for a new way of thinking, outside of the physical and the natural as it already exists within the world. What he states in this conference is directly related to his statement in “*Non Serviam*” about the creation of a new era. Huidobro is arguing that the

poet must break away from reason and everything he knows in order to create something new.

The part in which he states that within the poet, the extremes, or dualities, touch, relates to the modern setting and even in regards to Baudelaire. Baudelaire's writing and conception of the poet is largely based in the idea that the poet is able to unite the spleen and the ideal, the two very separate realms which remain separate without being joined together by artistic creation and poetry. However, Baudelaire is also stuck in a transient place between the past and its tradition and modernity and everything new that it entails, and everything old which it leaves behind. This is why Baudelaire struggles to evoke the aura in his work and finds accessing the ideal to be such a difficult task. Baudelaire refuses to, or at least does not know how to leave the past behind and to enter a new era, to think in the ways that modernity demands of the poet. Baudelaire believes that within the poet, the two extremes, the spleen and the ideal, do touch, but that the poet is able to bring the ideal into the spleen through his poetry. Huidobro's ideology reaches far beyond that. The poet not only conveys the ideal which lies outside of the spleen, he does not just bring the magical into the ordinary, but he also becomes the creator of worlds that lie beyond these two dualities. Huidobro finds himself in modernity and the drastically changing world, and uses it as an opportunity to think in a new way and reach beyond the role of the poet as an imitator of the world around him. Further on in Canto III, the poet states, "Agoniza el último poeta . . . El entierro de la poesía" (70). This is another direct reference to the death of poetry as it used to be, the burial of tradition and everything related to it. This quote portrays Huidobro's desire for a new era and to the death of institutionalized poetry as a whole. While in *Altazor* the poet struggles with his



ability to create within modernity, there is a definite progression and development of his ideology towards a completely clear desire to distance himself from traditional poetics.

This is evident within the progression in *Altazor*, not only regarding the figure of the poet and how he changes throughout the poem, but also the language which the poet uses and writes the poem in. During the first sections of the poem, when the poet is largely trapped in suffering and his lonely experience, he uses language rather conventionally. Although he presents many fragmented images and scenes, the language is possible to understand. However, as the figure of the poet becomes liberated from preconceived ideas, antiquity, and tradition, the language he uses becomes very strange and playful. The poet begins experimenting with language and its meaning, reinventing how it can be used. This starts to become especially evident in Canto IV, when the poet starts acting more loosely and has overcome the feeling of being trapped in modernity. The poet begins to play even more with language and present a series of nonsensical images that become more and more distant from conventional thinking and understanding as the poem goes on. This becomes very visible with the play on the word “Ojo” on page 76, when the poet repeats the word with many variations, such as “Ojo rio / Ojo montaña / Ojo mar” etc. He further begins twisting the words themselves to become more and more nonsensical. He states,

“Viene la golontrina  
 Ya viene la goloncima  
 Viene la golonchina  
 Viene la golonclima” (82)

which are all plays on the word “golondrina,” however, they do not contain much sense within them. As the poet enters Canto V, the poem becomes more and more abstract and fantastical, much more surreal and seemingly lacking sense. For example, the poet starts talking about things like “la serpiente que se nutre de colores” (100) and “el horizonte es un rinoceronte” (104). Within this canto, the poet also begins a very long wordplay on the word “Molino” which presents a series of nonsensical and very abstract images. This surreal, abstract, fragmented imagery gets stronger and stronger in Canto VI, when the poet states things like

“Y las llamas  
 y en mi reino  
 Ancla noche apotheosis  
 Anundado” (132).

In the remaining two cantos, the imagery and words used completely lose any sense, turning into sounds rather than anything containing meaning. For example, the poet states, “Ia ia / Laribamba / Larimbambamplanerella” (138). The poem ends with the stanza

“Lalalí  
 Io ia  
 I I I o  
 Ai a I ai a I I I I o ia” (140)

which represents the poet’s complete liberation from not only traditional poetry and his role as a poet, but also from language itself. In his essay, López-Adorno argues that *Altazor* is a piece largely based in rupture, stating that “En el particularísimo caso de

*Altazor* se expone toda una poética, toda una cosmovisión, centralizadas en la ideología de la ruptura . . . Al mismo tiempo, representa un momento de integración y de rechazo de diversas codificaciones estéticas: románticas, simbolistas, modernistas, futuristas y cubistas” (López-Adorno 51). Further on, he argues that Huidobro’s poem serves as a criticism of existing poetic discourse. He states that this “resuelta ser una “deslectura” conciente, un proceso remotivador que se manifiesta en el cuerpo del poema” (52). By integrating untraditional poetic techniques, such as the use of nonsensical language and sounds rather than words as the poem progresses, Huidobro strives to achieve the rupture that Lopez-Adorno describes.

## TEMPORALITY AND SPACE IN RELATION TO PROGRESS

Another thematic comparison between the two poets relates to their conception of time and space. Baudelaire's conceptions of space are very traditional and related to the physical world around him. He envisions time in a chronological way, visualizing the passage of time as progress and the onset of modernity around him, simultaneously equating it to destruction of poetry and art as he believes they should be. Huidobro, however, completely surpasses this linear conception of time, playing with it, stretching it, and even completely stepping outside of it. Eliminating traditional conceptions of time from his work allows him to overcome the limitations that they impose on Baudelaire, allowing him to evoke a new type of aura despite the changes experienced as a result of the onset of modernity.

A lot of the alienation that Baudelaire experiences within his poetry is spatial and relates to the presence of the modern buildings and crowds, which have replaced the physical image of the city as he knew it. This is evident in "Le Cygne," where he contemplates the changing landscape of the city. Baudelaire begins the poem by calling out to Andromache, a figure from Greek literature who was a widow after the death of Hector, her great and powerful husband. Already in the opening line of the poem, he draws a comparison between the mourning for one of the greatest characters in Greek mythology and himself mourning for Paris, signifying that the loss he feels for the old city is immense. Additionally, this is a reference to antiquity and the classical, which relates him once again to tradition and to the passage of time. Baudelaire makes a direct reference to the past, connecting his own situation as the poet in a modernizing city to the figure of a widow of a time long gone. Baudelaire states, "Le vieux Paris n'est plus (la

forme d'une ville / Change plus vite, hélas! que le coeur d'un mortel)" (7-8), observing that while the city around him has changed, he himself has not and is incapable of changing simultaneously with it. The temporal progress which has taken place in the city has a very direct relationship with the physical spaces within it. Baudelaire then writes, "N'a bougé! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs, / Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie / Et mes chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs." (30-32). Every element of the modern city which he observes becomes an allegory for Baudelaire, as all of the new buildings and monuments which he sees evoke images of the old Paris. It seems that Baudelaire is walking around the modernized city and searching for familiarity and a connection with the city which is no longer present as it used to be in the past. This is an interesting way of looking at the physical city. While Baudelaire does not directly discuss temporality in this poem, it is a clear reference to the passage of time and the changes that it brings. Baudelaire's observations of the physical spaces within the city are compelling because the physical evidence of progress which he observes for him only evokes the past. Baudelaire, finding himself in the "spleen" of the industrialized city, has trouble evoking images of the "ideal" which he is used to being able to easily reach as a poet.

In addition, Baudelaire compares himself to a bird once again in this poem. He recalls an image of a swan struggling on the dry concrete, away from water, placing it away from its natural habitat and turning it into a figure of exile. Baudelaire compares the swan to other exiled beings: captives, lost sailors, slaves, orphans, and, most importantly, himself. He believes that the modern city does not have a place for the poet, as a poet is no longer a respected figure with any dignity. It is clear that Baudelaire views the modernization of the city as an obstacle for the poet, and he regards the new cityscape

with nostalgia and intense feelings of loss. In “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” Benjamin writes,

“With Baudelaire, Paris for the first time became the subject of lyrical poetry. This poetry is no local folklore; the allegorist’s gaze which falls upon the city is rather the gaze of alienated man. It is the gaze of the flâneur, whose way of living still played over the growing destitution of men in the great city with a conciliatory gleam. The flâneur still stood at the margins, of the great city as of the bourgeois class. Neither of them had yet overwhelmed him. In neither of them was he at home” (Benjamin 169-170).

In this quotation, Benjamin explains the disconnect that Baudelaire felt between himself as a poet and the modern city. In his view, Baudelaire becomes an “alienated man” because he can neither be a complete traditional poet nor a complete modern poet. The traditional views of the poet and of poetry as Baudelaire envisions them are no longer applicable during the onset of modernity due to the changing society and the way in which technological advancements have affected art. However, because Baudelaire is unwilling to let his notions change along with the world around him, he is unable to successfully modernize his poetry, which is evident within the struggle that his work presents. Another one of Benjamin’s critiques of Baudelaire relates directly to modernity and Baudelaire’s conception of time. In an essay titled “The Study Begins With Some Reflections On the Influence of *Les Fleurs Du Mal*,” Benjamin writes that

“Spleen is nothing other than the quintessence of historical experience. Nothing seems more contemptible than to invoke the idea of progress against this experience. Furthermore, in representing a continuum it radically contradicts

Baudelaire's destructive impulse, which is, on the contrary, inspired by a mechanical conception of time. Nothing can be pitted against the overwhelming power of spleen except the new, and deploying the new is the true task of the modern hero" (96).

The way Baudelaire envisions the passage of time makes it impossible for him to adjust to the advancing modernity around him. Baudelaire seems to be looking at time as a chronological progression, but he is unable to accept it. He views the flow of time as destructive to what he knew, and because of this he is unable to fit within the modernizing world around him and create the newness that Benjamin argues for in this passage.

*Les Fleurs du Mal* is not the first work in which Baudelaire manifests his ideas against the onset of modernity. In one of his earlier essays called "Le public moderne et la photographie," he writes,

"La poésie et le progrès sont deux ambitieux qui se haïssent d'une haine instinctive, et, quand ils se rencontrent dans le même chemin, il faut que l'un des deux serve l'autre. S'il est permis à la photographie de suppléer l'art dans quelques-unes de ses fonctions, elle l'aura bientôt supplanté ou corrompu tout à fait, grâce à l'alliance naturelle qu'elle trouvera dans la sottise de la multitude" (Baudelaire 295).

Through this quotation, Baudelaire makes his opposition against progress and the role of technology in art clear. Benjamin also discusses the effect of the onset of modernity on art, and many of his ideas are applicable to Baudelaire's search for poetry in the modern city. Benjamin partakes in this discourse in his essay "Art in the Age of Its Technological

Reproducibility,” where he discusses the “aura,” referring to the sublime quality that an original work of art possesses as a result of its unique presence in time and space.

Benjamin argues that modernization and advancements in technology have allowed reproduction of art to become mechanical, leading to the disintegration of the “aura,” and that its defining aspects such as “creativity and genius, eternal value, and mystery” are no longer valid with mechanically reproduced art (Benjamin 218). These sublime values were what traditional art, both visual and literary, sought to achieve. However, Benjamin looks at the effect of modernization on art as liberation from traditional and archaic standards. Baudelaire agrees with Benjamin that photography, which mechanically reproduces art and makes multiple copies, makes it lose its value by turning it into a commodity. However, he does not view it as a liberation of art but as a damaging process.

Huidobro, on the other hand, also references tradition and antiquity right from the beginning of *Altazor*. In the preface of the epic poem, the poet encounters the figure of the Virgin, who states that she is wearing a halo that “tiene algunas saltaduras, lo que prueba mi ancianidad” (Huidobro 10). However, while the figure of the Virgin is wearing the halo that proves her antiquity and relates her to tradition, she is simultaneously juxtaposed with the modern when she states that her hands “son transparentes como las bombillas eléctricas” (10). The juxtaposition of the Virgin, a traditional figure of antiquity, with mechanical imagery of lightbulbs is representative of the space in which the poet of modernity finds himself in. While what used to be, the traditional, is no longer there, it still lives on and is present in the mentality of the poet and everything he has known about his craft. Similarly to Baudelaire, Huidobro also references the traditional,



but the way in which he places it in a modern context is completely different. Rather than lamenting for the traditional as it used to be the way Baudelaire does in poems like “Le Cygne,” Huidobro appears to alter the traditional to fit in the modern context more than it did previously. Rather than being able to accept the figure of the Virgin only in its traditional sense or only be able to reject it, the Virgin becomes almost a futuristic figure, encompassing the elements of the modern within herself. Huidobro does not find himself needing to completely throw away the ties to the past, but rather reinvent them. The virgin soon states, “Hablo una lengua que llena los corazones según la ley de las nubes comunicantes.. . Ámame, hijo mío, pues adoro tu poesía y te enseñaré proezas aéreas” (10). This reference shows that the past seeks to enchant the poet with the promise of teaching him how to fly, a metaphor for writing and creating poetry. However, in the modern world, the tricks that antiquity promises are no longer viable. The poet is not able to fly, as he keeps on falling in the parachute.

The first Canto describes the fall of the poet. It states,

“Cae

Cae eternamente

Cae al fondo del infinito

Cae al fondo del tiempo

Cae al fondo de ti mismo

.....

A través de todos los espacios y todas las edades” (18).

Already in the first canto, the writer begins to twist traditional ideas on temporality and space. The fall of the poet in this poem is eternal, this is the first way through which the

poet breaks away from a chronological passage of time, in which the past, present, and future, are viewed linearly. This chronological passage of time does not exist in the poem; rather, the events that take place are fragmented bits and pieces rather than a progression. The poet falls through time and space, and also through himself, which is another distinction from the conventional ways of thinking about the self and outside spaces. The poet falls within himself, just as he is falling through infinite time and infinite space, which seems to unify him with the outside world. Rather than being separate, the poet becomes part of Huidobro's strange conception of temporality and space. Through the language which he uses, Huidobro is capable of creating a new vision of space and time that is not based on a linear and chronological conception. This is drastically different from how Baudelaire views himself in regards to time and space within the poem "Le Cygne." In Baudelaire's poem, the time is conceived to be a direct and chronological progression, from antiquity and tradition to the modern and present. The poet in Baudelaire's work, cannot adapt to the new. However, Huidobro breaks away from these ideas on time; time in Huidobro's work does not move forward chronologically, it is not even a progression. It seems to be a simultaneous existence of fragmented events, fragmented places and spaces that do not fit together in the traditional way of thinking about temporality and space.

Huidobro also thinks about temporality in relation to progress and advancement.

This evokes some of the worries which he experiences about modernity. He states,

"Mira a lo lejos viene la cadena de hombres

Saliendo de la usina de ansias iguales

Mordidos por la misma eternidad" (38-40)

In this quote, he relates the image of the factory, which is representative of modernity, to eternal suffering. While the onset of modernity is representative of progress and change, here he equates it to eternity, which portrays a steadier image of time. He also references the future, stating

“Después de mi muerte un día

.....

Se habrán islas en el cielo

Habrà un gran puente de metal en torno de la tierra

.....

Gigantescas ciudades del porvenir

En donde el hombre-hormiga será una cifra.

.....

Ah la hermosa vida que preparan las fábricas” (40).

Just like in the previous quotation, the poet again exposes some of the fears that he faces in relation to what the future and modernity will bring in these lines. He also explores the way he envisions spaces in relation to time, stating that as the future arrives, the spaces within the world will become more and more abstract. There are also many images related to temporality in relation to the figure of the falling poet. On page 30, he discusses the fall of the poet, also referencing him as an angel, stating “La caída eternal sobre la muerte / La caída sin fin de muerte en muerte . . . Cantando como un ciego perdido en la eternidad.” The way in which he plays with temporality in these lines is compelling because he is discussing a finite event, death, stating that it is an eternal, or endless fall which leads to it. This is very contradictory and shows how he is no longer looking at

time chronologically or logically, as something eternal cannot be ended by a singular event, and an event cannot be preceded by eternity.

He continues playing with the idea of eternity in Canto IV, in which he states “No hay tiempo que perder / A la hora del cuerpo en el naufragio ambiguo / Yo mido paso a paso el infinito” (74). In this quotation, there are many contradictory ideas about temporality. He states that there is no time to lose, which does not make sense as his fall is eternal. During eternity, time is no longer applicable, as it becomes one moment stretched into forever. His reference to measuring the infinite is also contradictory, as it is not possible to measure something that is endless. All of these examples show how Huidobro is breaking away from traditional, chronological, linear passage of time. In his work, time no longer plays a defining or threatening aspect, as it ceases to move in the manner in which Baudelaire envisions it. The poet can no longer be threatened by the passage of time and destruction of the past, or the onset of the future, because these ideas are no longer applicable to the world which Huidobro envisions. In Canto V, the poet states this directly, writing “Jugamos fuera del tiempo” (106), making it clear that time no longer matters to the poet, and no longer has an effect on him. This is also representative of the poet breaking away from tradition and relates back to Huidobro’s idea of creacionismo, in which the poet becomes the creator of his own worlds, fired by his own ideas and conceptions, rather than that what is considered rational and true by conventional standards.

Huidobro’s references to time are interesting in regards to the developments that were taking place around the same time as he wrote this piece. Around this time, Albert Einstein worked on his theories of physics, drastically shifting the way in which we

looked at the physical world surrounding us and the relationship that we have with it. In *Altazor*, Huidobro is aiming to do the same, except regarding the relationship that we have with language. In his essay “Cosmic Impacts and Quantum Uncertainties: *Altazor* and the Fall 'From' Reference,” Scott Weintraub analyzes the poem *Altazor* from a linguistic standpoint, arguing that the poem is a “reconfiguration of a fall from the referentiality of the linguistic sign via the material fall of language itself” (Weintraub 119). He uses the poem to demonstrate how the falls within it also represent changes in scientific understanding, “from classical physics to our current quantum worldview” (122). This is representative of what Huidobro aims to achieve with language. Just as our perception of the outside world and our relation to material things had been altered by Einstein through a dramatic shift in scientific understanding, Huidobro aims to achieve the same within poetry. He was striving to change the relationship that we have with language, and the interaction of language with the world. Through his poetry, he changed the way that the world is experienced and formulated, creating a new vision of the “aura” and a new means of artistic creation.

## A NEW AURA

As Baudelaire found himself in the onset of modernity, he struggled with evoking the aura in his work. By attempting to evoke the aura in a traditional sense, he was unable to completely adapt and in some ways refused to adjust to the world around him. As the physical changes in the city took place, Baudelaire's poet no longer could access the ideal in the same way as before, and this reflected in the suffering he felt as well as the limitations that he experienced in relation to poetic creation and experiencing the world around him, spatially and temporally. As the analysis in the section "The Figure of the Poet" shows, Baudelaire had a mostly rigid idea of who the poet is and should be. However, as the world around him transformed both physically and socially, the figure of the poet as Baudelaire conceived him to be could no longer exist successfully, and Baudelaire found himself conflicted, both apprehensive and fascinated with the modernity around him. Baudelaire's notions of the poet are directly related to his conception of poetic creation, which I explored in "Poetry, Creation, and Nature." Because of the modernizing and evolving cityscape, Baudelaire could no longer connect to the "ideal" in the same way as the traditional poet was capable of doing. His conception of poetic creation was outdated in a changed world, which not only made him feel lost, but also prevented him from accessing the "ideal." This is why in the work of Baudelaire, the aura gets lost. At the same time, Baudelaire's notions of time and space were rigid and logical, which is why he viewed the progress around him as destructive. Baudelaire struggles with evoking the aura in his work because his view of the poet and poetic creation is no longer applicable in the new, urbanizing landscape and modern society.

Huidobro, however, experienced the same struggles, but managed to step outside of them. As I state in “The Figure of the Poet,” Huidobro placed the poet outside of the ideal/spleen dichotomy that Baudelaire’s poet existed in, allowing the poet to create outside of existent reality. Although Huidobro struggled as a poet with similar problems, such as alienation, abandonment, as suffering in the unfamiliar modern world, he was also capable of changing his approach towards himself as a poet and the world around him. Rather than striving to maintain an archaic stance that was not possible in the modern world, Huidobro reinvented the poet and used modernity and the breaking-away from tradition to his advantage. This is directly related to how Huidobro changed his perspective and usage of language, which I discuss in “Poetry, Creation, and Nature.” Huidobro reinvented the way that language is used, and by changing the functionality of language, he also changed the power that it has, allowing it to become a creative force. Through using language in inventive and creative means, Huidobro’s poet was actually able to transcend the limits which Baudelaire found himself in. As I show in the section “Temporality and Space in Relation to Progress,” Huidobro’s ability to create outside of the conceptions of the world that Baudelaire saw allowed him to evoke the aura that had disappeared from poetry during the onset of modernity. Although the aura in Huidobro’s work is different from Benjamin’s conceptions of it, it nonetheless exists and presents the reader with a certain sense of striking sublimity. The side-by-side reading of these two works shows the necessity of changing thought processes as the physical and social world changes and progress. This is relevant in our own culture in regards to the technological advancements that we are experiencing, particularly the rise of Internet and social media culture that affect the manners in which we share and experience art. Rather than looking

at these processes as destructive to art and poetry, we must reevaluate our thinking and reinvent the artistic aura within our own times.



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