



# An Atmospherics of the City: Baudelaire and the Poetics of Noise (Verbal Arts)

Ross Chambers

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An Atmospherics of the City: Baudelaire and the Poetics of Noise (Verbal Arts) Ross Chambers What happens to poetic beauty when history turns the poet from one who contemplates natural beauty and the sublime to one who attempts to reconcile the practice of art with the hustle and noise of the city?

An Atmospherics of the City traces Charles Baudelaire's evolution from a writer who practices a form of fetishizing aesthetics in which poetry works to beautify the ordinary to one who perceives background noise and disorder-the city's version of a transcendent atmosphere-as evidence of the malign work of a transcendent god of time, history, and ultimate destruction.

Analyzing this shift, particularly as evidenced in *Tableaux parisiens* and *Le Spleen de Paris*, Ross Chambers shows how Baudelaire's disenchantment with the politics of his day and the coincident rise of overpopulation, poverty, and Haussmann's modernization of Paris influenced the poet's work to conceive a poetry of allegory, one with the power to alert and disalienate its otherwise inattentive reader whose senses have long been dulled by the din of his environment.

Providing a completely new and original understanding of both Baudelaire's ethics and his aesthetics, Chambers reveals how the shift from themes of the supernatural in Baudelaire to ones of alienation allowed a new way for him to articulate and for his fellow Parisians to comprehend the rapidly changing conditions of the city and, in the process, to invent a "modern beauty" from the realm of suffering and the abject as they embodied forms of urban experience.



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