Eliot’s first essay on Baudelaire, which was included in *For Lancelot Andrewes*, after appearing in May 1927, was a critical review of Arthur Symons’ translations of Baudelaire. It has as much to say on Symons as on Baudelaire, and is particularly critical of his transformation, rather than translation, of Baudelaire, a rendering in terms of religious aestheticism, ritual, and confession which recalls Pater, and is as incongruous with Eliot’s own period (he adds with some chronological confusion) as with that of Shaw, Wells, Strachey, and Hemingway. Using ‘violet’ pejoratively (instead of with approval, as in *The Waste Land*), Eliot illustrates how Symons, using ‘counters of habitual and lazy sentiment’, envelops the definition of Baudelaire in the ‘Swinburnian violet-coloured London fog’ of the eighteen-nineties. He had assumed that Baudelaire’s poetry was devoted to the passions, and was affected by heredity and nervous temperament. ‘If a writer sees truly’, Eliot answers, making less of his conditional clause than he ought, ‘his heredity and nerves do not matter’ – a statement that must seem inconsistent with other, more striking, assertions he made on the relationship between poetry and the writer’s nerves. Symons, he continues, suffered from the childish attitude toward religion of the ’nineties: for the disciples of Swinburne, sin was good fun as a subject; Wilde was a ‘child-actor’. To Baudelaire on the other hand, evil, vice, and sin were real. Symons’ translation was excellent for his generation, but one is now needed to show how much Baudelaire resembled Racine. Unlike Swinburne, he did not waste a word; he was, Eliot concludes, born out of his time.

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both as a classicist and as a Christian, and he acquired humility, the supreme Christian virtue, and the most difficult to achieve.

The second essay, which appeared in 1930 as the introduction to Isherwood’s translation of *Journaux Intimes*, is more general than Eliot initially suggests; it stresses the importance of Baudelaire’s prose works, studies his poetry, and holds considerable interest as a mirror of Eliot himself. As a result of Swinburne’s extravagant presentation, and the view that *Les Fleurs du Mal* was the work of an artist for the sake of art (which nobody can be, Eliot adds), Baudelaire had been misunderstood; he is, Eliot contends, a later, more limited, Goethe, though it is priggishly unreal to speak of his unhealthiness, as opposed to Goethe’s health. Most of his prose is as important as most of Goethe’s; we can see from it that Baudelaire was no Satanist, but one who discovered Christianity for himself, and asserted its necessity. Study of his own suffering made him reject the natural and human in a worldly sense, ‘in favour of Heaven and Hell’. Though technically more skilful than Gautier, he had less sense of form; he is more intent on ‘a form of life’. In a romantic age a poet can be classical only in tendency, and the counter-romanticism of Baudelaire’s stock imagery has not always worn well, though his use of the city for background and image has acted as a release for other poets. He is ‘the greatest exemplar in *modern* poetry’, his verse and language being the nearest to a ‘complete renovation’ that we have known. Equally admirable is his sincerity, though he was unable to disengage himself completely from the ‘romantic detritus’ of Byronism and Satanism; when his sorrow takes refuge in romantic flights of nostalgia, he is vague compared with Dante. Unable to make the Dantec ascent from the natural to the spiritual, Baudelaire discovered that the difference between human and animal sexual relationships is the consciousness of good and evil; he realized that the sexual act is ‘more dignified, less boring’ as evil than as the ‘natural, “life-giving”, cheery automatism of the modern world’. From this Eliot concludes that it is better ‘to do evil than to do nothing’; Baudelaire was ‘man enough for damnation’, and we can pray for his repose. Eliot implies that awareness of human fallibility is healthier than belief in human perfectibility; he indulges, nonetheless, a propensity for bravado and arresting statement, buttressed no doubt by the ample