CHAPTER 2

KEATS AND BAUDELAIRE:  
Biographical and literary
KEATS AND BAUDELAIRE: Biographical and Literary

John Keats was born on the 18th of December 1795, in Swan and Hoop livery stable, at Finsbury pavement. He was the eldest child of Thomas Keats and Frances Jennings. He had four siblings, three brothers George Keats, Thomas Keats, Edward Keats and one sister Frances Keats who was addressed as Fanny in many of his letters. Of the four Edward died in his infancy. John’s father, Thomas Keats was a lively and energetic man who worked initially as an ostler and later as manager at his father-in-law’s livery stables. He died in 1804 in an accident when he fell from a horse and broke his skull. After his father’s death his mother Frances Jennings who had by then given into drinking married another man named William Rowlings. With her second marriage John and his siblings were sent to stay with their grandparents John Jennings and Alice Jennings. John Jennings died soon after, leaving them behind in the care of his widow Alice. He left for them ample wealth, but also an uncertain and a complicated will which caused problems for the family later on. In ordinary circumstances the Keats children would have had ample. However for a grumbling, mean and unhelpful guardian in Richard Abbey they and in particular John Keats always faced financial hardships. His mother who was suffering with consumption expired in 1810. His brother George Keats married Georgiana Wylie in June 1818 and he decided to move away from England and settle at Louisville, Kentucky, America with his wife. On the 1st of December 1818 John’s other brother Thomas died of consumption. Fanny was sent to school under the guardianship of Abbey. He did not approve John’s way of life so did not allow Fanny to meet John very often. In a letter to Benjamin Bailey written on 22nd November 1817 he talks about the hardships and sorrows that he had been had been constantly following him.
but the world is full of troubles and I have not much reason to think myself pestered with many-[…]I scarcely remember counting upon any happiness- I took not for it if it be not in the present hour- nothing startles me beyond the Moment.¹

From 1803 to 1811 he attended a school at Enfield whose principal was Reverend John Clarke. It was one of the most liberal and progressive schools of the time. Important and primary source through which we get a peep into John Keats’ school education and his life there is Charles Cowden Clarke’s Recollection of John Keats where he talks about Keats as a student at Enfield. He recollects about John Keats as friendly, generous, mentally and physically vigorous, highly pugnacious, having ungovernable temper and terrier courage. His passion at times were ungovernable and there is a story about an usher in their school boxing John’s brother Thomas and on seeing this John rushed up and struck the usher who could easily put John into his pocket.

Edward Holmes one of John’s school friends also recalls his indifference to lessons. He says-

...his love of books and poetry manifested itself chiefly about a year before he left school. In all active exercises-he excelled. The generosity & daring of his character – with the extreme beauty & animation of his face made I remember an impression on me- & being some years his junior I was obliged to woo his friendship- in which I succeeded but not till I had fought several battles. This violence & vehemence – this pugnacity and generosity of disposition- in passion of tears or outrageous fits of laughter always in extremes will help to paint Keats in his boyhood. Associated as they were with extraordinary beauty of person & expression – these qualities captivated the boys and no one was ever more popular
Even though in the initial days at school he was a very notorious character given much to fighting, he atoned himself towards the later end of his school days and then after that he became a voracious reader. He even won a prize, a copy of C. H. Kauffman’s Dictionary of Merchandize.....*For the Use of Counting Houses* for voluntary translation. He enjoyed reading histories, travelogues, classical mythology, and newspapers of reforms.

It was from Abbe Beliard and *émigré* he learned fluency in French. He also attained fluency in Latin language and he was able to translate Virgil’s *Aeneid* into English by 1811. His Latin translations led him to reference books on the Greek and the Latin Myths in particular to John Lampriere’s *Bibliotheca Classica* or the *Classical Dictionary*. During this time Keats was also introduced to Leigh Hunt’s magazine *Examiner* and Burnet’s *History of His Own Time* which according to Clarke laid the initial foundations of his love for liberal civil, political, and religious ideas. These fruitful and happy school days were however marred by his mother’s death and once he lamented that

> I have never known any unalloy’d Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of someone has always spoilt my hours.

Cowden Clarke writes-

> At the far end of the pond, beneath the iron railings which divided out premises from the meadows beyond, whence the song of the nightingales in May would reach us in the stillness of the night, there stood a rustic arbour, where John Keats and I used to sit and read Spenser’s ‘Feary Queen’ together, when he had left school, and used to come over from Edmonton,
where he was apprenticed to Thomas Hammond the surgeon.
On the other side of the house lay a small enclosure which we
called the ‘drying ground, ‘and where a magnificent old
Morella cherry tree against a wall was well exposed to the sun.
Beyond this a gate led into a small field, or paddock, of two
acres, - the pasture ground of the two cows that supplied the
establishment with fresh and abundant milk.’

And this clearly points out to the fact that Keats’ love for poetry was by
then well established and nothing, not even his mother’s death could deter
him from visiting his miniature Arcadia. It also gives us an idea that even
after joining as an apprentice to Thomas Hammond a surgeon at Church
Street, he continued with poetry.

After leaving school he worked as an apprentice for Thomas Hammond.
Learning medicine in a university during those days needed a lot of money
and as Keats came from a lower middle class background surgeon’s
apprenticeship was more appropriate for him. After some years of
apprenticeship later in 1815 he became a medical student at Guy’s Hospital.
He passed an examination in July 1816 and obtained a license to practice.
However at the end of 1816 he announced his wish to abandon medicine
and take up poetry seriously. It was quite unnatural for him to do so and
this decision of his strained his relation with his guardian Richard Abbey.
However Keats had made up his mind and had no regrets for it. In fact he
never regretted his choice of vocation as he points it out in one of his letters
written to Charles A. Brown in 23 September 1819. In the letter he writes-

…In no period of my life have I acted with any self will, but in
throwing up the apothecary profession. That I do not repent
of… My occupation is entirely literary; I will do so too.
When at Enfield Charles Cowden Clarke became John’s closest friend. Slowly as he came into contact with other men of letters John started to form a circle of literary friends. His friendship with the painter Robert Haydon introduced him to the Greek plastic art, which had a profound influence on his later poems. Another important friend Keats met was Leigh Hunt and he is often referred to in his poems as ‘libertas’. It was through Hunt that Keats came to know other men of literature like William Hazlitt and P. B. Shelly. Keats also came to know William Wordsworth whom he addressed the ‘egotistical sublime’. With another friend Charles Brown he had planned a walking trip through North England and Scotland. His other friends include Charles Lamb, Benjamin Bailey and Joseph Severn, who took Keats to Italy after he fell ill and nursed him to his deathbed. During his illness a Scotsman named John Aitken offered to help him. To add to all his miseries in his life he had an unrequited love for Fanny Brawne.

Like all Nineteenth Century men John Keats did not trust the systems and dogmas and held everything with incertitude. He sought to codify his experiences and constructed a system of thoughts. However in his unending quest for reality and salvation he regarded all his resolution just tentative and found them inadequate. These patterns that he continually built and rejected were mere reactions to different situations. Keats’ poems and letters time and again points out to the fact that it is not possible to construct a perfect order through imaginative power. This perplexity is hinted by the vocabulary of doubt so often used by him in his works. This gives us an opportunity to take a peep into his attitude towards established system of religion and politics. He rejected the established institutionalized Christianity.
Critic like D.G. James believed that Keats was deeply religious but N.H. Fairchild on the other hand believed that Keats was too skeptic to accept any religion. Born in a Christian family and baptized he was familiar to Christian doctrines. He was also well acquainted to Anglican Catechism and doctrine as seen in his letter written on 13th March 1819 to his sister where he coaches her for her confirmation. He was however indifferent to them and this is evident in his two early poems—‘Give me Women, Wine and Snuff’ and ‘Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition’

In the sonnet titled “Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition” Keats wrote—

The church bells toll a melancholy round,
Calling the people to some other prayers,
Some other gloominess, more dreadful cares,
More harkening to the sermon's horrid sound.
Surely the mind of man is closely bound
In some black spell; seeing that each one tears
Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian airs,
And converse high of those with glory crown'd
Still, still they too, and I should feel a dam-
A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;
That 'tis their sighing, wailing ere they go
Into oblivion; - that fresh flowers will grow,
And many glories of immortal stamp.7

This skepticism deepened with the influence of Charles Cowden Clarke, P.B. Shelly, Leigh Hunt and in a negative way his guardian Richard Abbey. Apart from this skeptic nature there was another reason for his rejecting
institutionalized Christianity. He never believed in the Christian concept of sin and salvation. Salvation held a different meaning for him. He believed in the attainment of salvation through man’s own spiritual energy. He believed that man possessed an inherent power by which he can conquer his self centered instinct and attain the heights of selflessness.

Severn reports that at his death bed Keats asked him to read from Jeremy Taylor’s *Holy Living and Holy Dying*. He further says that from the grasp he could tell a confirmed deathbed conversion. Whatever the truth may be Keats throughout his life felt the need of some kind of religion or system that could ease the burden of his sufferings.

Since doctrinal Christianity was disregarded by Keats he needed a substitute and for that he looked towards Classical Mythology whose richness and beauty stirred his youthful imagination. His approach to classical Mythology develops from a joyous wonderment to agonized recognition of its inadequacy. He was so influenced by the Classical Mythology that his contemporaries have described Keats in a different ways.

Leigh Hunt in his *Imagination and Fancy* said-‘He never saw an oak tree without seeing the Dyrad’

Shelly called him ‘a Greek’ and Byron’s attitude towards Keats was that of both sneering and appreciation and in Don Juan he describes John Keats as-

Without Greek
Contrived to talk about the God’s of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
During his life time Keats was not received properly by his contemporaries. Keats’ first book of verse titled *Poems* appeared in 1817. It was published by Charles and James Ollier of Welbeck Street. The volume contained works like *I stood tip-toe, Sleep and Poetry*, some sonnets and *verse epistles to Matthew, George and Cowden Clarke*. No one took notice of the young poet. Loud cheers and much anticipation made by Keats’ friends and well wishers dampened. Keats’ brother George even went to the extent of complaining the publishers for poor promotion of the book. To this the publishers replied that they regretted that they published the book and asked to be excused from future association with the poet. They further claimed that the readers found fault with Keats’ writing and complained about it. However another publisher John Taylor and James Hessey liked Keats’ works and agreed to support Keats in his future endeavours.

Then came his work ‘*Endymion*’ towards the end of 1817. The work was to test his powers of imagination at the same time take him to the temple of fame. However contrary to what Keats expected happened. Immediately after the work was launched in the market, J.G.Lockhart reviewed it adversely in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. He was sneered as belonging to the *Cockney school* along with Leigh Hunt. He along with Hunt was sneered not only as plebian Londoners but they were also accused of sensual indulgence. ‘*Endymion*’ was described as ‘imperturbable drveling idiocy’. Attacks on him, was made month after month. These attacks without any doubt originated from an unprincipled party spirit. Keats, without thinking about the consequences had addressed his volume to his friend Leigh Hunt in a dedicatory sonnet. On the occasion of Leigh Hunt’s release from the prison he wrote another sonnet. The criticism in *Blackwood's Magazine* was not exactly on Keats's works but just ridicules to prevent their sale. The critics who were working against Keats pretended to believe that an author's person and his objectionable character are related
to his literary merits. In order to hold him up to public ridicule, they dealt unreservedly in falsehood. They represented him as affected, effeminate, and sauntering about without a neck cloth. These ideas they put forward about Keats were however far from truth.

In April 1818, John Wilson Croker in *Quarterly Review severely* criticized John Keats. He claimed that *Endymion* showed gleams of genius but at the same time the style definitely was Cockney. Croker claimed-

This author is a copyist of Mr. Hunt; but he is more unintelligible, almost a rugged, twice as diffuse, and ten times more tiresome and absurd than his prototype…¹¹

It was nothing but just undisguised rage and malice. In spite of their demerits these criticisms succeeded to carry themselves safely to the public's ear.

Shelley in his preface to *Adonais* asks,-

As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, Paris, and Woman, and a Syrian Tale, and Mrs Lafanu and Mr Barrett, and Mr Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure?¹²

Shelley’s question may remain unanswerable yet a large portion of the public read the *Quarterly Review* with confidence. Everyone looked forward to the *Edinburg Review* as an antidote to this poison initiated by the *Quarterly Review*. Mr. Jeffrey remained silent for a long time. It was only
in August 1820, after the publication of a third volume and when Keats was living his last days there appeared in the *Edinburg Review* a criticism on his poems. It went this way-

Anyone who would represent the whole poem (*Endymion*) as despicable, must either have no notion of poetry, or no regard to truth.[…] He who does not find a great deal in it to admire and to give delight, cannot in his heart see much beauty in the two exquisite dramas to which we have already alluded, or find any great pleasure in some of the finest creations ‘of Milton and Shakespeare’. — ‘We are very much inclined indeed to add, that we do not know any book which we would sooner employ as a test to ascertain whether anyone had in him a native relish for poetry, and a genuine sensibility to its intrinsic charm.  

The dramas alluded to were Fletcher’s *Faithful Shepherdess* and Ben Jonson’s *Sad Shepherd*. Mr. Jeffrey in apology for not having done anything in the two previous years simply said- ‘We had never happened to see either of these volumes till very lately’. But even before the protests from his friends Keats declared in his *Is Criticism a true thing?* Which he had written in his copy of Dr Johnson’s critical study of *As You Like* and which he later on write to his publisher John Taylor in 1818-

Praise or blame has a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic of his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what Blackwood or the Quarterly could possibly inflict…in Endymion, I leaped headlong into the sea and thereby have become better acquainted with the
Soundings, the quicksands, & the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe…¹⁴

Keats had been dependent on others throughout his life in one way or the other. Towards the end of his life Keats felt he was being too much dependent on others. In a letter to Charles A. Brown written on 23rd September 1819 he writes-

Now I am going to enter on the subject of self. It is quite time I should set myself doing something, and live no longer upon hopes. I have never yet exerted myself. I am getting into an idle minded, vicious way of life, almost content to live upon others. In no period of my life have I acted with any self will, but in throwing up the apothecary profession. That I do not repent of…¹⁵

He clearly critiques his life and the easy way out he had throughout. He realized it and this pained him so ultimately he decided to move away from Brown.

Charles Baudelaire was born in Paris on the 9th of April 1821. His father François Baudelaire was initially a priest who was later on released from his vows under civil constitution of clergy and became a senior civil servant. After his release from his vows he married Caroline Dufays from whom Charles was born. After François died in 1827 Caroline married another man named Major Jacques Aupick. For some years Charles Baudelaire was in good terms with his stepfather, but in the late 1830s they started to have difficulties. Baudelaire could not accept his mother’s marriage to Major Aupick. All through he had been very friendly to his
mother and now he did not like the idea of sharing his mother with a stranger. He constantly felt lonely and in *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu* he wrote:

> Sense of solitude from childhood. In spite of the family – and above all when surrounded by children of my own age – I had a sense of being destined to eternal solitude.

Jean-Paul Sartre in his work *Baudelaire* (1947) has argued that due to the sudden break with his mother and the grief it caused made in Baudelaire the mortifying discovery that he was a single person and he felt that his life had been given to him for nothing.

After his mother’s marriage to Major Aupick, his stepfather’s occupation in the army compelled them to shift from one place to another and in 1832 they moved to Lyon. They remained there for four years and later came back to Paris. He had a half brother Claude Alphonse from his father’s first wife.

He started his early schooling at ‘Collège Royal’ in Lyon where he studied from 1832 to 1836. When he was studying at Lyon he was forced to board away from his mother at times even during holidays as a disciplinary action by his father when his grades slipped. Later he recalled those times as ‘grim years of claustro... wretched and abandoned childhood, full of hatred and solitude’. One of his classmates described Baudelaire as more refined and distinguished than any of our fellow pupils with refined tastes and sympathies, the precocious love of fine works of literature. Then he moved to ‘Lycée Louis-le-Grand’, Paris from 1836 to 1839. At Lycée Louis-le-Grand Baudelaire was erratic in his studies. He was at times diligent and at other times prone to idleness. However in 1839 he was expelled from the school on account of breaking discipline. Still undecided Baudelaire
enrolled as a law student in 1840 at the ‘École de Droit. He finally decided to embark upon a literary career, and for the next two years led an irregular life, socializing with other artists and writers. It was here he got addicted to opium and contracted syphilis while frequenting the prostitutes. During this time he took on a prostitute named Sara as his mistress. He lived with her and whenever his funds went low he came and lived with his brother. Major Aupick kept him on a tight allowance and whenever he got his due Baudelaire spent it as quickly as he received it. He fell heavily in debt and he never completed law.

He was in good terms with his stepfather till 1840’s. Aupick, a rigid disciplinarian, who was concerned for Baudelaire's upbringing and future, quickly came to odds with his stepson's artistic temperament. However ultimately when Baudelaire chose to live by writing poems his father opposed vehemently. The control over his fortune was taken from his hands, and placed in those of a legal advisor. Once Baudelaire was deprived of control over this income by the Conseil Judicaire he constantly turned to his mother whenever he needed money. He was always burdened with debts because he constantly tried to keep up the extravagant lifestyle of a dandy.

In the hope of reforming him and making a man of him, his stepfather sent Baudelaire on a voyage to Calcutta, India in 1841, under the care of a former naval captain. Baudelaire's mother was distressed both by Baudelaire’s poor behavior and Aupick’s proposed solution. No one exactly knows about the details of voyage undertaken by Baudelaire. Some believe that he completed his voyage but there are many who are of the view that he stopped at Mauritius and never reached India. Most importantly the trip did nothing to turn Baudelaire's mind away from a literary career or from his casual attitude toward life. The naval captain agreed to let Baudelaire
return home and within a year Baudelaire was back in Paris in 1842. It was in Mauritius he met Jeanne Duval, a woman of mixed race who later inspired his poems chief of which was *Black Venus*. Jeanne Duval was an illegitimate daughter of a prostitute from Nantes. She was his longest romantic association. Baudelaire in his poems later exaggerated about this aborted trip and created a legend about his youthful travels and experiences, including riding on elephants. The trip provided strong impressions of the sea, sailing, and exotic ports that he later employed in his poetry. On his death his mother proclaimed.

Oh, what grief! If Charles had let himself be guided by his stepfather, his career would have been very different... He would not have left a name in literature, it is true, but we should have been happier, all three of us\textsuperscript{17}. This particular voyage had a tremendous impact in Charles’s life and imagination. The various images, rhythms, and senses found in his later poems are products of this particular voyage.

In the later years of 1840’s he got involved in politics. During the revolution of 1848 he fought at the barricades. In the same year he cofounded the journal *Le Salut Public*. In association with Proudhon he opposed the *Coup d'état* of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte in December 1851. After this Baudelaire remained aloof from politics and adopted an increasingly reactionary attitude.

In the 1854 and 1855 he got involved with a woman named Marie Daubrun and again in 1857 he was involved to another woman named Apollonie Sabatier. Association with these women inspired Baudelaire to write many poems. The years 1861-1862 saw another face of Charles Baudelaire when he tried to secure nomination to the French Academy, most probably in a desperate bid to save his works.
In 1862 he had a minor stroke. Along with it some other signs of deteriorating health gave him a warning. They were the consequences of excessive use of alcohol, opium, and hashish. The remaining years of Baudelaire's life were darkened by despair and financial difficulties. He returned to Paris in 1866 from an extended stay in Brussels, where he had lived at a hotel called Le Grand Miroir. From a nearby graveyard he captured a bat, and kept it in his room, feeding it bread and milk. Baudelaire’s health deteriorated and later as he became serious he was shifted to a sanatorium.

On 31st August, 1867 Baudelaire died in his mother's arms in a Paris clinic. In a letter to his mother Baudelaire had written-

    We're obviously destined to love one another, to end our lives as honestly and gently as possible.  

And in another letter he writes-

    And yet, in the awful circumstances in which I find myself, I'm convinced that one of us will kill the other. 

Baudelaire worshipped his mother and could not accept her second marriage. In Mon Coeur Mis À Nu he wrote:

    Sense of solitude from childhood. In spite of the family – and above all when surrounded by children of my own age – I had a sense of being destined to eternal solitude.
Baudelaire's relationship with his mother was a close and complex one, and it dominated his life. He later stated-

"I loved my mother for her elegance. I was a precocious dandy. There was in my childhood a period of passionate love for you."

He always turned to his mother whenever he was worried about his health or when he was bored. The sense of alienation after his mother married Major Aupick and left him, got further intensified because of the harsh conditions in the boarding school. The demands of his parents, his own unfulfilled aspirations and this isolation worked together to create a complex character in him. This sense of solitude dominated him and it is often reflected in his poems. The hardships that he had to face molded him in such a manner that he tried to find happiness wherever he could. There is always a tendency in him to seek something positive in every desperate, ugly, disheartening situations and things around him.

He saw himself as a fallen angel. Baudelaire argued in *Le Peintre De La Vie Moderne, 1863,* (*The Painter of Modern Life*) in favor of artificiality, stating that vice is natural in that it is selfish, while virtue is artificial because we must restrain our natural impulses in order to be good. He was a snobbish aesthete, a dandy and an ultimate hero who was also a best proof of an absolutely purposeless existence: he is a gentleman who never becomes vulgar and always preserves the cool smile of the stoic. His belief in vice as natural and inherent in man and virtue as artificial helped him to look into things in a different way. Love meant loss of innocence.

But at the same time love according to him is also the highest pleasure. He believed that doing evil intentionally was a source of lust. He felt
sympathetic for the prostitute, who for him was a symbol of revolt against the ideas and ideals of a bourgeois family.

Charles Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs Du Mal* (The Flowers of Evil) appeared on June 1857. Immediately in July the Ministry of the Interior matters banned the volume accusing the author of outrage to public decency. Everyone involved with the work the author, the publisher, and the printer were persecuted and declared guilty of obscenity and blasphemy. Immediately six poems *Lesbos, Femmes damnées – Delphine et Hippolyte, Le lêthe, À celle qui est trop gaie, Les Bijoux, and Les Métamorphoses du vampire* were deleted from the work.

However the work also found a small, appreciative audience. The effect on fellow artists was according to Théodore de Banville was immense, prodigious, unexpected, mingled with admiration and with some indefinable anxious fear. Flaubert who had been recently attacked in a similar fashion for *Madame Bovary* was so impressed that he wrote a letter to Baudelaire:

> You have found a way to rejuvenate Romanticism... You are as unyielding as marble, and as penetrating as an English mist.

Greater public attention was caught by the themes of the poems. Baudelaire had chosen themes of sex and death which were then considered scandalous. In the poems he also touched on lesbianism, sacred and profane love, metamorphosis, melancholy, the corruption of the city, lost innocence, the oppressiveness of living and wine. At times Baudelaire used the imagery of the sense of smell and of fragrances, in order to evoke feelings of nostalgia and past intimacy.
Les Fleurs du Mal however quickly became a byword for unwholesomeness among mainstream critics. They agreed a few of the poems to be ‘masterpieces of passion, art and poetry’ but other poems according to them were deemed to merit no less than legal action to suppress them. J. Habas writing in Le Figaro, led the charge against Baudelaire- ‘Everything in it which is not hideous is incomprehensible, everything one understands is putrid’.

Then Baudelaire was really disheartened and responded to the outcry in a letter to his mother-

You know that I have always considered that literature and the arts pursue an aim independent of morality. Beauty of conception and style is enough for me. But this book, whose title (Fleurs du mal) says everything, is clad, as you will see, in a cold and sinister beauty. It was created with rage and patience. Besides, the proof of its positive worth is in all the ill that they speak of it. The book enrages people. Moreover, since I was terrified myself of the horror that I should inspire, I cut out a third from the proofs. They deny me everything, the spirit of invention and even the knowledge of the French language. I don't care a rap about all these imbeciles, and I know that this book, with its virtues and its faults, will make its way in the memory of the lettered public, beside the best poems of V. Hugo, Th. Gautier and even Byron.

The second edition of The Flowers of Evil without the condemned pieces, but with addition of some new poems was published in 1861. By that time Baudelaire had also made a name for himself as a critic. He had befriended
Édouard Manet (1832-83), whose works were also frequently rejected by the salon jury.

In 1845, Baudelaire declared that he shall be a true painter who could pull out of everyday life its epic side and make his readers understand just how great and poetic one is in his neckties and polished boots.

The posthumous edition of *Flowers of Evil* appeared in 1868 with an addition of more than twenty five new poems. Baudelaire deeply influenced the generation of late 19th century poets who came into the scene when "art for art's sake" had gained momentum.

T.S. Eliot a religious person himself, in an essay says that Baudelaire's Satanism was the product of partial belief.

What is significant about Baudelaire is his theological innocence. He is discovering Christianity for himself; he is not assuming it as a fashion or weighing social or political reasons, or any other accidents. He is beginning, in a way, at the beginning; and being a discoverer, is not altogether certain what he is exploring and to what it leads...²⁴

Even though Baudelaire is chiefly known for his poems, his critical essays are also important and have gained attention worldwide. His essays on art are published under the collective title ‘*Curosités Esthétiques*’, and those on literature and music under the title ‘*L'Art Romantique*’. For Baudelaire the starting point for his aesthetic analysis was a lived experience and not just principles of aesthetics or abstract preconceptions about the beautiful. In 1846 he condemned philosophical poetry as a false genre and saw that art has its value in itself.
By 1859 Baudelaire had become very weak and looked much more aged comparatively to his age because of his illnesses, his long-term use of laudanum and his life of stress and poverty. His financial difficulties increased again towards the end of his life particularly after his publisher Poulet Malassis went bankrupt in 1861. In 1864 he left Paris for Belgium in hope of selling the rights to his works and also giving lectures. His long-standing relationship with Jeanne Duval continued on-and-off. Baudelaire's relationships with actress Marie Daubrun and with courtesan Apollonie Sabatier, though the source of much inspiration, never produced any lasting satisfaction. He smoked opium, and in Brussels he began to drink excessively. Baudelaire suffered a massive stroke in 1866 and for the last two years of his life remained in a semi-paralyzed state in ‘maisons de santé’ in Brussels. Later he was brought back to Paris, where he died on 31 August 1867. Baudelaire is buried in the Cimetière du Montparnasse, Paris. Now that we have looked into the life of both the poets, let us briefly consider them. There are considerable amount of similarities that we find in them. Both Keats and Baudelaire lost their father when they were very young. Their mothers remarried, which created problems for both of them. After his mother got remarried Keats started to live with his grandparents. Baudelaire was forcefully separated from his mother and sent to a boarding school. These separations not only created problems in their family relationship but also in the financial front to some extent. Keats’ mother died when he was still in school but Baudelaire led a miserable life of separation, missed his mother throughout, because of his soured relation with his step father Major Aupick. In fact he hated his step father for taking his mother away from him. Time and again he addressed poems and letters to her and whenever he was in financial crises he used to go to her for help and ultimately when he died she was with him. Both Keats and Baudelaire had to face failure in their love affairs. Keats pined for Fanny Brawne’s love. Even though at one point of time they were close to coming together,
various circumstances, chief of which was his ill health, stopped them from getting married. His unsuccessful relation with Fanny Brawne always pained him, but at the same time inspired him for his different works. In his *Bright Star* Keats speaks about the two things very important to his life, of which one was his love for her. Baudelaire too experienced unsuccessful relationship with different women like Jeanne Duval a woman of mixed race whom he had met on his journey to India, Apollonie Sabatier a courtesan, and Marie Daubrun an actress. These women inspired many of his works. Both men were unhappy when it came to love life.

Another point of similarity we find is that both suffered ill health. Keats suffered with consumption which ultimately took him away. It was in the family and his mother and a brother had died of it. He might have had contracted it while taking care of his brother Tom. Baudelaire had contracted syphilis and was suffering on that account. He had enrolled himself at the ‘École de Droit’ in 1840. This was when he decided to embark upon a literary career. He led an irregular life, socializing with various people and might have contracted syphilis while frequenting prostitutes. Both Keats and Baudelaire were addicted to opium. Keats might have had initially started to take it for medicinal purpose. It was an age which legally allowed the use of ‘laudanum’, which was a mixture of poppy and alcohol. It was used as a pain-killer and tranquilizer. Many men of the time started using drugs especially laudanum or opium as medicine but they got addicted to them. Especially as he was suffering from consumption Keats might have had started to take it as pain killer but later he got addicted to it. Baudelaire’s case was different. His wayward lifestyle had made him pick up the habit of taking opium to which he later got addicted.

Both men had given up their professions to take up poetry as vocation. Keats had worked as an apprentice for Thomas Hammond and after some
years of apprenticeship, later in 1815 he had become a medical student at Guy’s Hospital. He even passed an examination in July 1816 and obtained a license to practice but at the end of 1816 he announced his wish to abandon medicine and take up poetry seriously. Baudelaire had enrolled as a law student in 1840 at the ‘École de Droit. Before completing his studies he had decided to take up literary career, and for the next two years he led an irregular life, socializing with other artists and writers. For their decisions both had to pay dearly. They earned the wrath of their guardians when they chose poetry over medicine and law. Their finances were cut and further Keats was not even allowed to meet his sister Fanny who was then in school.

When they started their literary career both men were adversely received by the age. Keats’ first book of verse titled Poems appeared in 1817. The volume contained works like I stood tip-toe, Sleep and Poetry, some sonnets and verse epistles to Matthew, George and Cowden Clarke. No one took notice of the young poet. Loud cheers and much anticipation made by Keats’ friends and well wishers dampened. ‘Endymion’ came out towards the end of 1817. The work was to transport him to the temple of fame. However contrary to Keats’ expectations happened. Immediately after its launch, J.G.Lockhart reviewed it adversely in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. Keats was sneered as belonging to the Cockney school along with Leigh Hunt. Attacks on him, was made month after month. Charles Baudelaire’s Les Fleurs Du Mal (The Flowers of Evil) appeared on June 1857. Immediately in July the Ministry of the Interior matters banned the volume accusing the author of outrage to public decency. Everyone involved with the work the author, the publisher, and the printer were persecuted and declared guilty of obscenity and blasphemy. Immediately six poems Lesbos, Femmes damnées – Delphine et Hippolyte, Le léthe, À celle qui est trop gaie, Les Bijoux, and Les Métamorphoses du
vampire were deleted from the work. One man was criticized on account of his association Liegh Hunt and the other for his frank indecency.

Both Keats and Baudelaire did not believe in the traditional ideas of society. They begged to differ from the conventional ideas of church, religion and matters of literature. So a brief biographical sketch just show us how closely similar their life were.
End Notes:

1. John Keats; *Selected Letters of John Keats* (Introduction by P.S.Sastri); MacMillan India Limited; Madras; 1993. (to Benjamin Bailey written on 22nd November 1817) p.30

2. Cerdic Watts; *A preface to Keats*; London; Longman House; 1985 (p-6)

3. *------------------------------------------------------------------------( p-7)

4. *------------------------------------------------------------------------( p-7)

5. John Keats; *Selected Letters of John Keats* (Introduction by P.S.Sastri); MacMillan India Limited; Madras; 1993. (to Charles A. Brown in 23 September 1819)

6. doctrinal manuals often in the form of questions followed by answers to be memorized

7. John Keats; *The Poems of John Keats*; Rupa Paperback; 2000; New Delhi

8. Leigh Hunt; *Imagination and Fancy*; London; Smith, Elder & Co.; 1891( p283)

9. Lord G Byron; *Don Juan*, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/21700/21700-h/21700-h.htm Release Date: June 6, 2007 [EBook #21700]

   [Last updated: August 3, 2012] Bk XI. L 60

10. Refers to a group of poets and essayists writing in England in the second and third decades of the 19th century. The term came in the form of hostile reviews in Blackwood’s Magazine in 1817


12. P B Shelly; *Preface to Adonias*; London; Reeves and Turner; 1886

13. Mauris Cross(Ed); *Selections from Edinburg Review* ; Vol II; Paris; Buadry’s European Library; 1835; p 246

14. Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley(Ed); *Romantic Revisions*; Great Britian; Cambridge University Press; 1992(R-1,pp. 373-4)
15. John Keats; *Selected Letters of John Keats* (Introduction by P.S. Sastri); MacMillan India Limited; Madras; 1993. (to Charles A. Brown written on 23rd September 1819)

16. Charles Baudelaire; *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu, journal intime*; Paris; Maximilien vox; 1945

17. Merrisa Livvet; *Not All Flowers are beautiful*; http://www.marisalivet.com/2/post/2012/06/not-all-flowers-are-joyful.html

18. Charles Baudelaire (Trans: Rosemary Lloyd); *Selected Letters of Charles Baudelaire: The Conquest of Solitude*; USA; University of Chicago Press; 1986

19. ---------------------------------------------------------------

20. Charles Baudelaire; *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu, journal intime*; Paris; Maximilien Vox; 1945

21. Charles Baudelaire (Trans: Rosemary Lloyd); *Selected Letters of Charles Baudelaire: The Conquest of Solitude*; USA; University of Chicago Press; 1986

22. Arthur Symons; *Charles Baudelaire: A Study*; U.K.; Amazon; 1920

23. Charles Baudelaire (Trans: Rosemary Lloyd); *Selected Letters of Charles Baudelaire: The Conquest of Solitude*; USA; University of Chicago Press; 1986