

Daniel Ridge, "Preface", *AmeriQuests* 12.1 (2015)

## **Preface: Cultural Modernism II: Latin America, April 3-4, 2014**

Beyond France, and even beyond the multiple francophone literary traditions established in post-colonial countries and regions, Charles Baudelaire and his work has had an important impact on the development of modernism throughout the world, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His poetry, prose, and *Salons*, as well as his essays, particularly those collected in 1863 under the title *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*, have influenced writers from England and the Americas, to Japan and South America. The two articles presented here are part of a larger project hosted by the W.T. Bandy Center for Baudelaire and Modern French Studies at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN. Our conference series, Cultural Modernism, began in 2013 with a study of the particular influence of Baudelaire and French Modernism in Quebec. Our second conference, held in the spring of 2014, focused on the role of Baudelaire and French Modernism in South America. Five guests came from Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay to discuss in an animated and passionate way the manner in which Baudelaire and his writing directly and concretely influenced their national literature.

It is well known that Baudelaire was greatly influenced by the writing of Edgar Allan Poe, whose work he translated through the 1850s. Renata Philippov, Professor of English and Literatures in English at the Federal University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, succinctly addresses the ways in which Machado de Assis may have subverted the writing of Edgar Allan Poe in order to thematically incorporate modernist concepts of alienation in his own literature. She further argues that Assis also subverted Baudelaire's poetic imagery, topoi and aesthetics into his own literary project. For those uninitiated to the Brazilian literary tradition, it should be pointed out that Machado de Assis, who was a novelist, poet, playwright and short story writer, is often regarded as one of Brazil's greatest writers. The influence of both Baudelaire and Poe on his writing is not inconsequential; Philippov's article thus marks a real contribution to Baudelaire and Brazilian literary studies.

The second article presented, by Ana María Gentile of the Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina, addresses the very concrete issue of translation. She not only touches on the history of the translation of Baudelaire's work in South American, and in Argentina, but she addresses the theoretical aspects at play in such an endeavor. As she points out, translation plays an integral role in the reception of such works, particularly when translations vary or are meant to reflect a more regional or national interpretation of a poet. In order to argue her point, she analyzes poems from *les Fleurs du mal* and *les Tableaux Parisiens*.

These two articles are important contributions to the influence of Baudelaire's concepts of modernism in Latin America, and they bear upon his approach to aesthetics, as well as the often controversial and inarguably dark themes that so often underwrite his work.