

ANDREW GORSKI  
Berkeley — California

## BAUDELAIRE AND DOSTOEVSKY

(AFFINITIES ON THE CONCEPT OF THE MAN-GOD)

The comments that have appeared in criticism marking the similarities in Baudelaire's and Dostoevsky's works are glancing and sketch the most apparent resemblance. They are tangential remarks that usually allude to a thematic similarity; they are remarks of the kind in Gide's lectures on Dostoevsky, a reference in one sentence or a brief footnote. Only a single comparative article has been written and it is essentially a catalogue of thematic affinities in which the author points to certain difficulties in forming a comparative base when the genres are so dissimilar as the poem and the novel<sup>1</sup>.

Considering the degree to which the French were fascinated with Dostoevsky, it would seem likely that their criticism would have probed the linkage between these two contemporaries. There appears to be no such comparative work among the French. A study of Baudelaire's reception in Russia has not yet been accomplished, though the first significant introduction of Baudelaire's poetry appeared in the Symbolist Balmont's translations and introduction to a volume published in 1895. The question of whether Dostoevsky was aware of Baudelaire's work is problematic.

Gide, Camus, Sartre display in considerable measure the impact Dostoevsky's thought had on their work. Dostoevsky's themes of freedom and self-destruction, revolt and self-deification, remorse and confession, paradise on earth, aesthetic and ethical beauty, the simultaneity of conflicting emotion and/or in thought. God and the Devil likewise became touchstones for Gide, Camus, Sartre. Dostoevsky's Kirillov substantially influenced their reflections on modern sensibility, Camus in particular. Several part of his *Myth of Sisyphus* and adaptation of *The Possessed*

<sup>1</sup> J. Ivask, *Baudelaire i Dostoevskij*, "Novyj Zurnal", [New York] 1960, No. 60.

were written with Kirillov in mind as the predicament of modern man, investigations into an anthropocentric *cul de sac*. Gide made several acknowledgements in his lectures on Dostoevsky about the similarities in Baudelaire's and Dostoevsky's moral perceptions, and in the last lecture delved into Kirillov and the man-god theme. The first association Gide made was an automatic one — Nietzsche. In Sartre's essay on Baudelaire, his poisoned eye sees a path of transcendence through the devil; the essay is overly self-occupied. An unmistakable parallel to Dostoevsky's themes is also present in the work of his contemporary, Baudelaire. In his essay *Les Paradis artificiels* a character who is called only *l'homme-dieu* is a remarkable prototype for Kirillov, and the moral issues that Baudelaire raises reach a depth of similarity with Dostoevsky that it becomes almost peculiar.

It wasn't St. Athanasius, Arianism, or Monophysitism or the heresy of tenets such as: "God became man that we might become God", that Dostoevsky was thinking of when he created Kirillov. It had nothing to do with theological polemics on the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the question of dual nature. The affinities are there, but this was far from Dostoevsky's concern in his character of modern sensibilities. Dostoevsky made Kirillov unique in the argument for confrontation with God, a new anthropogenetic direction, but one that is absurd. The idea of the man-god was first noted down by Dostoevsky in his workbooks early in 1871, almost two years after he had begun *The Possessed*. In the workbooks Dostoevsky gives very little indication of Kirillov's development. Kirillov is a virtual blank in the preparatory work. Stavrogin is also something of a dilemma in a comparison of *The Possessed* in the workbooks with the first edition. The difference in the lack of development in contrast to Stavrogin's and Kirillov's definition and importance in the novel is unusual. Wasiolek wrote in his commentary to *The Notebooks for "The Possessed"* that a greater disparity was evident between the workbooks and the published draft than for any other novel Dostoevsky wrote<sup>2</sup>. The explanation that Dostoevsky himself gave was that a new idea had come to him suddenly that changed the concept of the novel and he immediately began revising with barely any further redraft.

In 1868 a posthumous edition of Baudelaire's complete work was being prepared and published. The essay *Les Paradis artificiels, opium et haschisch* contains a chapter in the haschisch section entitled "L'Homme-dieu", and is identical to the previous edition published in 1858. This chapter offers a specific base for comparison of points of coincidence between

<sup>2</sup> *Notebooks for "The Possessed"*, tr. by V. Terras, ed. E. Wasiolek, Chicago 1968, p. XI.

Baudelaire and Dostoevsky, but there is likewise an abundant circuit of coincidences to be found from the *Fleurs du Mal* to *Mon Coeur mis à nu*. Donald Fanger wrote: "There is, in short, no European author who displays a more striking affinity with the mature Dostoevsky than Baudelaire — of whom he remained apparently in total ignorance"<sup>3</sup>.

The affinities are obviously present, but whether Dostoevsky was completely unaware of Baudelaire is still a matter of conjecture. In the only comparative article which has been written, Ivask stressed the thematic affinities in Baudelaire's and Dostoevsky's works: self-purging through suffering, search for God, presence of the Devil, revolt, remorse, Sodom and the Madonna, self-deification, Atheism. At one point in discussing Kirillov, Ivask writes: "Kirillov nizvergaet Boga i samogo sebja objavljaet čelovekobogom. I dlja Bodlera Bog — 'nasmešnik', i on tože voznošitsja do čelovekobožestva v očerke 'Ja stanovljus' Bogom'. No kak? Pod vlijaniem gašiša, v ékstaze narkomana, po receptu T. dé Kvinsi i E. A. Po. Zdes' net metafiziki oderžimogo Kirillova. Éto tol'ko prexodjaščee opjanenie" (Kirillov overthrows God and declares himself the man-god. And for Baudelaire, God is a 'Joker', and he too elevates himself to man-godhood in the essay 'I will become God'. But how? Under the influence of hashish, in an addict's ecstasy, according to the prescription of T. De Quincey and E. A. Poe. The philosophy which supports Kirillov is lacking. This is merely a passing intoxication)<sup>4</sup>.

To some degree Ivask is correct in implying that Baudelaire does not develop a metaphysical argument for the man-god to the extent that Dostoevsky does, but Ivask seems to maximize the difference in a way that he misses the point of similarity. Baudelaire's moral and psychological portrait of the man-god does certainly lead into metaphysical questions and the resemblance to Dostoevsky's Kirillov is fundamental. These are not merely the thought implosions of a hashish user or the mocking challenge to explore a pharmaceutical paradise. *Les Paradis artificiels* is first a book of warning and morality. Both Baudelaire's *homme-dieu* and Dostoevsky's "čelovekobog" have reached an artificial self-climax in their philosophical speculations and it is related in part to a physiological imbalance. To consider this level briefly, a coincidence is present between the euphoria of the hashish user and the instantaneous euphoria and clairvoyance that the Dostoevskian epileptic experiences before the physical seizure begins. Kirillov is an epileptic. Baudelaire does not merely describe sensuous effects; his most serious intent is to illustrate the idea

<sup>3</sup> D. Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism*, Chicago 1967, p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Ivask, *op. cit.*, p. 145. The translation is my own. I was unable to find an essay or a chapter within an essay with the title that Ivask gives in the Russian as "Ja stanovljus' bogom".

of the man-god through a character,<sup>5</sup> and not simply give a case analysis of synaesthesia.

In *Les Paradis artificiels* Baudelaire describes the magnifying effects of hashish on the individual and "le grossissement, la déformation et l'exagération de ses sentiments habituels et de ses perceptions morales"<sup>5</sup>. Baudelaire concentrates on the spiritual essence of the man-god, his moral and psychological characteristics, and then specifies and posits a certain type of individual whom he calls *l'homme-dieu*:

[...] une âme de mon choix, quelque chose d'analogue à ce que le XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle appelait l'homme sensible, à ce que l'école romantique nommait l'homme incompris, et à ce que les familles et la masse bourgeoise flétrissent généralement de l'épithète d'original...

Un tempérament moitié nerveux, moitié bilieux... ajoutons un esprit cultivé... un coeur tendre, fatigué par le malheur, mais encore prêt au rejuvenissement... une nature facilement excitable... Le goût de la métaphysique, la connaissance des différentes hypothèses de la philosophie sur la destinée humaine... cet amour de la vertu, de la vertu abstraite, stoïcienne ou mystique... (p. 374-375).

Point by point this is Kirillov as well. Dostoevsky's typical manner in introducing a character was to first detail both appearance and temperament, then in dialogue or confessional monologue express the personal philosophy. In his essay Baudelaire proceeds in the same manner; he first introduces the man and then the idea which governs him. The following list of references to Kirillov describe his temperament:

On kazalsja neskol'ko zadumčivym i rassejannym, govoril otrvисто i kak-to ne grammatičeski [...] sidel, kak budto naxoxlivšis' [...] strašno vzvolnovalsja [...] prodolžal gost' gorjačeju skorogovorkoj, — ja četyre goda videl malo ljudej [...] Ja malo četyre goda razgovarival i staralsja ne vsrečat' [...] s prostodušnym vidom [...] začem že skryvat' iz skromnosti, blagorodnejšee dvizenie svoej duši [...] vj daveča byli tak razdražitel'ny, a teper' takoj spokojny...<sup>6</sup>

[He seemed rather thoughtful and absent-minded, spoke jerkily and ungrammatically [...] sat with a ruffled air [...] dreadfully excited [...] speaking hotly and rapidly, the guest continued, „I have seen few people for four years. For four years I have talked little and have tried to see no one” [...] good natured air [...] why be so modest and conceal the generous impulses of one's soul [...] you were so irritable this morning and are now so calm...]<sup>7</sup>.

Kirillov demonstrates a quality of nobility and a definite compassion in the way he defends Marija Lebjadkin and cares for Šatov's wife. The women are representative equivalents of mystical and stoical virtue.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, Paris 1961, p. 257. Further pages' numbers of quotations from Baudelaire and Dostoevsky in the text.

<sup>6</sup> F. M. Dostoevskij, *Besy*, [in:] *Sobranie sočinenij*, Moskva 1957, t. 7, pp. 98-125.

<sup>7</sup> F. Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, tr. by C. Garnet, New York 1963, pp. 90-115. In several instances I have slightly altered Constance Garnet's translation.

Kirillov's taste for metaphysics and a philosophy concerning human destiny is his theory of the man-god. One further characteristic that Baudelaire includes is his man-god's desire to accomplish *la belle action*. In Kirillov's convoluted logic the *belle action* becomes the sacrifice of his own life in a revolt against God. Baudelaire continues with this elaboration of his man-god:

Je crois avoir suffisamment parlé de l'accroissement monstrueux du temps et de l'espace, deux idées toujours connexes, mais que l'esprit affronte alors sans tristesse et sans peur. Il regarde avec un certain délice mélancolique à travers les années profondes, et s'enfonce audacieusement dans d'infinies perspectives (p. 377).

Part of Kirillov's credo is the division of man into two epochs, a diabolic calendar:

Togda istoriju budut delit' na dve časti: ot gorilly do uničtoženija boga, i ot uničtoženija boga do... Budet bogom čelovek (p. 124) [Then history will be divided in two parts: from the gorilla to the annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God to... Man will be God (p. 114)].

These are the infinite perspectives from which Kirillov proceeds to explain that his suicide, committed without pain or terror, will mark the beginning of a new epoch, a paradise regained: "Kto pobedit bol' i strax, tot sam bog budet" (p. 123) ("He who will conquer pain and terror will himself be a god" — p. 113). Baudelaire's *homme-dieu* reflects on the question:

„N'y aurait-il pas un autre Dieu? croyez qu'il se redressera devant celui-la, qu'il discutera ses volontés et qu'il l'affrontera sans terreur (p. 377).

The refrain of a confrontation without fear between the man-god and God is present in both Baudelaire and Dostoevsky. There are incidental passages in Dostoevsky's and Baudelaire's descriptions of rooms and objects which contribute to the self-intoxication of the man-god that are very similar. In Baudelaire:

[...] même mauvaises, les peintures [...] revêtiront une vie effrayante; les plus grossiers papiers peints qui tapissent les murs des auberges se creuseront comme de splendides dioramas [...] les personnages de l'antiquité, affublés de leurs costumes sacerdotaux ou militaires, échangent avec vous par le simple regard de solennelles confidences (p. 375)

In Kirillov's lodgings:

Komnaty vo fligele byli dovolno čisty, no oboi grjazny [...] a na stenax viseli dva bolšix tusklyx masljanyx portreta: odin imperatora Nikolaja Pavloviča [...] drugoj izobrožal kakogo-to arxiereja (p. 120—121)

[The rooms in the inn were fairly clean, though the wallpapers were fairly dirty [...] and on the walls hung two dingy oil paintings, one a portrait of the tsar [...] the other a portrait of some bishop — p. 111].

For Kirillov the paintings were a constant reminder of the temporal and the spiritual authority that he had to transcend in order to declare himself the man-god. The textual parallel extends further, but Baudelaire's concept of the man-god also pertains to Stavrogin. Kirillov and Stavrogin are inseparable as the expression of the man-god. Kirillov wants to become the man-god; Stavrogin has placed that idea in his mind. Dostoevsky's new concept of the novel was to place the Verxovenskijs and Šatov in the background in order to maximize the concept of the man-god and to introduce Stavrogin. Dostoevsky develops the union between Kirillov and Stavrogin in their common idea signals their inseparability through their telling names: Stavrogin derives from the Greek word for 'cross' (σταυρος); Kirillov derives from the Greek word for 'Lord' (Κυριος) and the Greek diminutive suffix — λλος, the little Lord upon the cross. Stavrogin's idea is the cross upon which Kirillov will make his sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. They have become priests of a Black Mass, pretenders with false ideas. Kirillov will kill himself to prove that he is God. In Baudelaire's essay, the man-god has attributes in common with Stavrogin:

L'idée de beauté doit naturellement s'emparer d'une place vaste dans un tempérament spirituel tel que je l'ai supposé. [...] D'ailleurs, comment un être si bien doué pour comprendre l'harmonie, une sorte de prêtre du Beau, pourrait-il faire une exception et une tache dans sa propre théorie? La beauté morale et sa puissance, la grâce et ses séductions, l'éloquence et ses prouesses, toutes ces idées se présentent bientôt comme des correctifs d'une laideur indiscrète, puis comme des consolateurs, enfin comme des adulateurs parfaits d'un sceptre imaginaire (p. 377—378).

This is Stavrogin the *knjaz'-krasavec*, and the *samozvanec* as Marija Lebjadkin calls him. Stavrogin is a man without qualities; a man of ideas without values and possesses a power of suggestion so strong that he enrolls a legion of devils. Beauty in Dostoevsky and Baudelaire is a Kierkegaardian *Either/Or* proposition. For Dostoevsky beauty is primarily an ethical and moral proposition, but for Baudelaire the emphasis is often on aesthetics. The dichotomy is between Dostoevsky's highest ideal of beauty, Christ, and Baudelaire's dandy; but this formula perhaps indicates an unfortunate extreme. Baudelaire is also a seeker after God, only his passage shows an alternate course and expression. Both authors are quite conscious of the instruments of a satanic and a Christian discipleship. Aesthetic and ethical questions are both of great importance in Dostoevsky and Baudelaire.

Mochulskij considered the chapter in which Stavrogin makes his confession, "U Tixona", Dostoevsky's supreme artistic creation<sup>8</sup>. The

<sup>8</sup> K. Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky. His Life and Work*, tr. by M. A. Miniham, Princeton, New Jersey, 1967, p. 459.

larger part of the chapter is Stavrogin's long monologue as he reads his personal confession to Tixon. The confession, which he plans to publish in order that it be a public and not a private penitence, is Stavrogin's display of remorse at having seduced a thirteen years old girl who then killed herself. Baudelaire describes the following spiritual groping of his man-god and his quest for some noble act:

Je suppose des fautes commises ayant laissé dans l'âme des traces amères, un mari ou un amant ne contemplant qu'avec tristesse (dans son état normal) un passé nuancé d'orages; ces amertumes peuvent alors se changer en douceurs; le besoin de pardon rend l'imagination plus habile et plus suppliante, et le remords lui-même, dans ce genre diabolique qui ne s'exprime que par un long monologue, peut agir comme excitant et réchauffer puissamment l'enthousiasme du cœur. Oui, le remords! [...] Le remords, singulier ingrédient du plaisir, est bientôt noyé dans la délicieuse contemplation du remords, dans une espèce d'analyse voluptueuse; et cette analyse est si rapide, que l'homme, ce diable naturel, pour parler comme les Swedenborgiens, ne s'aperçoit pas combien elle est involontaire, et combien, de seconde en seconde, il se rapproche de la perfection diabolique. Il „admire” son remords et il se glorifie, pendant qu'il est en train de perdre sa liberté (p. 379—380).

Baudelaire's analysis of his man-god is a paraphrase of Tixon's own interpretation of what motivates Stavrogin to confession and penitence. Tixon says:

Ja vozražat' vam i osobenno uprašivat', štož ostavili vaše namerenie, i ne mog by. Mysl vaša — vysokaja mysl, i polnee ne možet vyrazit'sja xristianskaja mysl. Dalše podobnogo udivitelnogo podviga, kazni nad samim soboj, kotoryj vy zamyslili, idti pokajanie ne možet, esli by tolko... Esli b dejstvitelno bylo pokajanie i dejstvitelno xristianskaja mysl.

[...] dokument ètot idet prjamo iz potrebnosti serdca, smertelno ujazvlenogo... Pust' gladjat na menja, govorite vy; [...] vy kak by ljubuetes' psixologiej vašeju i xvataetes' za každyju meloč', što by tolko udivit' čitatelja...

[...] v samom namerenii velikogo pokajania cego zaključaetsja uže nečto smešnoe dlja sveta, kak by falšivoe...<sup>9</sup>

[I could hardly attempt to argue with you, let alone beg you to give up your intention. Your idea is a lofty idea, and a Christian thought could not express itself more amply. Repentance can go no farther than the admirable act, the self-chastisement which you have in mind, if only... if only it is really an act of penitence and a Christian thought.

[...] this document comes straight from the need of a heart which is mortally ulcerated...

„Let them look at me”, you say [...] it is as you were admiring your own psychologizing, and you cling to each detail so as to amaze the reader...

[...] in the very intent of this great penitence there is something ridiculous in the eyes of the world, as though it were false... — pp. 719—724].

Stavrogin is ridiculing God and exploiting Christian values in an act of deception, not confession. It is not remorse, but the idea of remorse that

<sup>9</sup> F. M. Dostoevskij, *U Tixona*, New York 1964, pp. 69—79.

governs Stavrogin, and his noble act becomes the pretense to penitence. Both Stavrogin and Kirillov have noble deeds to perform and both deeds are false. Each believes he may have personally discovered some unique and good thing in his spiritual lost and found, but the expression is false. While Kirillov is absurdly affirmative in his suicide, Stavrogin takes his life out of a demonic frustration. The distortions and deformations which Baudelaire's *homme-dieu* experiences are very much the same as Dostoevsky's Kirillov and Stavrogin. A comparative reading of Baudelaire's *Les Paradis artificiels* with *The Possessed* would further reveal a catalogue words, phrases, and descriptions of uncanny coincidence. You are tempted to suggest that Dostoevsky was aware of Baudelaire, of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, of *Les Paradis artificiels*.

Baudelaire's essay was published several times and in various drafts from as early as 1851. As I told above, the final draft, in which the chapter "L'Homme-dieu" first appeared, was published in 1858, and again in the posthumous first complete edition of Baudelaire's work in 1869. Its reception in Baudelaire's own lifetime was lukewarm. His reputation in the press was of a scandalist and a degenerate, with caricatures appearing that represented Baudelaire as Medusa's head spewing venom. The obscenity trial was a scandal throughout Europe and had come to a conclusion not long before Dostoevsky's first trip to Western Europe. Dostoevsky spent a great deal of time in the 60s in Paris, London, Zurich, Wiesbaden, and wrote *The Possessed* in Dresden. Considering the circles into which Dostoevsky was introduced and his acquaintance, though usually strained, with a Frenchified Turgenev, these are only two sources through whom Dostoevsky may have learned of Baudelaire. Dostoevsky also had a genuine inclination toward reading scandal of any kind. Some of the ideas for scenes, characters, and stories came from the pages of scandal sheets. Baudelaire would have been an ideal subject for one more moral indictment of the West. But nowhere, apparently, in any of Dostoevsky's correspondence, workbooks, journal, or diaries is any mention made of Baudelaire. Considering the time and Baudelaire's reputation, perhaps he was too inconsequential a literary figure and merely an image of immoral notoriety whom Dostoevsky would not note by name in his own writing. Regardless of whether Baudelaire's and Dostoevsky's man-gods were spontaneous and separate creations or not, there is an enormous commonality between them that comprehends biography, psychology, philosophy, literary work. The features of these two contemporaries in their writing are so similar that even a random look through Baudelaire will frequently recall something corresponding in Dostoevsky. Consider Baudelaire's title for the essay, *Les Paradis artificiels*, and the association with Stavrogin's false dream of paradise in his confession comes to mind. Consider Baudelai-

re's title for the chapter, "L'Homme-dieu" and you associate Kirillov's dialogue with Stavrogin when he announces that he will soon become the man-god and Stavrogin responds: "Bogočelovek?" ["You mean the god-man?"], and Kirillov answers: "Čelovekobog, v ètom raznica" (p. 252) ["No, the man-god. That's the difference" — p. 238]. When you think of Baudelaire's man-god as a product of some drug induced delirium, as Ivask does, then consider Kirillov's satori with mankind and the history of mankind as he explains the moments of illumination that an epileptic experiences. In various works Dostoevsky describes the moments before an epileptic seizure, particularly in *The Idiot*, where he even contrasts it with hashish, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, and the visions and the intuitive insight in a kind of possession that borders on the mystical. Gide wrote that Dostoevsky's "persistence in making epilepsy intervene as a factor in his novels sufficiently indicates the role he assigned this disease in moulding his ethical conceptions and directing the course of his thought"<sup>10</sup>. Both Baudelaire and Dostoevsky describe their man-gods as penetrating into some supernatural possession in an amplified and intense condition, outside space and time, and then afterward feeling somehow aggrandized, yet unable to convey their experience. In this distortion a physical and a spiritual synaesthesia has occurred and the mind begins to perceive in a new order, a separate balance. Dostoevsky was an epileptic and Baudelaire a user of hashish. Through the title of his essay, *Les Paradis artificiels*, Baudelaire indicates how false this seeming satori is. His man of modern sensibilities begins to feel like a man-god, an unreasonable gambler with fate. The condemnation is as severe as when that same sensibility in *Les Fleurs du Mal* reaches the inevitable verdict of death for himself, not sudden suicide, but an indifferent passage into death and time is inconsequential.

Baudelaire's aphorism from his *Fusées*, "God is the only being who in order to reign does not need to exist," is Kirillov's precise sentiment, if not the essential thesis of why he must confront God. Titles and lines from the poems and prose poems, the *Fusées*, *Mon Coeur mis à nu*, and Baudelaire's prose could be developed into a book of comparative analysis with Dostoevsky; no mere article could be near adequate, but only connote the possibilities. The problem Ivask raises of difficulties in comparing themes expressed in poetry with the descriptive, catch-all method of the novel is not an impossible impediment. There is an abundant similarity and it was only on the narrow piece of common ground of *Les Paradis artificiels* and *The Possessed* on the theme of the man-god that a comparison of Baudelaire's and Dostoevsky's prose was made.

<sup>10</sup> A. Gide, *Dostoevsky*, New York 1961, p. 152.

BAUDELAIRE I DOSTOJEWSKI  
(PODOBIENSTWA W KONCEPCJI CZŁOWIEKA-BOGA)

STRESZCZENIE

Nie licząc krótkich i przypadkowych szkiców literackich poświęconych pokrewieństwu między dziełami Baudelaire'a i Dostojewskiego, jeden chyba tylko artykuł porównawczy, zawierający inwentarz szczegółowy, dotyczy tego tematu. Jedno, osobliwe raczej, podobieństwo między dziełami tych pisarzy dotyczy tematu „człowieko-boga” (*L'homme-dieu — człowiekobog*), w czym Baudelaire miał niewątpliwie pierwszeństwo.

W eseju Baudelaire'a *Les Paradis artificiels (Sztuczne raje)* oddzielne rozdziały zostały poświęcone procesowi psychologicznemu i jego moralnym następstwom, gdy człowiek sam dla siebie kształtuje pozycję „człowieko-boga”. Esej ten ukazał się po raz pierwszy w 1858, ponownie zaś ogłoszony został w edycji pośmiertnej w latach 1868—1869. Gdy Dostojewski pisał swe *Biesy* i rozwijał temat człowieka-boga, esej Baudelaire'a opublikowany był już dwukrotnie przedtem. Ówczesny klimat filozoficzny Europy był tego rodzaju, że spontanicznie i zupełnie niezależnie dostarczył Baudelaire'owi i Dostojewskiemu swoistych impulsów do stworzenia koncepcji człowieka-boga. Jest wysoce problematyczne, czy Dostojewski w czasie tworzenia swego dzieła był zależny od Baudelaire'a.

Dość daleką formą ewolucyjną w stosunku do tej koncepcji był niewątpliwie „nadczołowiek” (*Übermensch*) Nietzschego, co przedstawił A. Gide po swych studiach o Dostojewskim. Podobieństwa między *L'homme-dieu* Baudelaire'a a „człowiekobogiem” Dostojewskiego są tak wyraźne, że genealogia tej koncepcji wymaga ponownego gruntownego zbadania. U Nietzschego można zauważyć dość oczywiste związki z koncepcją Dostojewskiego; może również istnieją podobne związki między Baudelaire'em a Dostojewskim.

Przełożył Jan Trzynadłowski