IIA
Utility and Revolution

1 Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) 'Reward Applied to Art and Science'

Bentham was the founder of utilitarianism, a school of philosophy which sought to discover rational principles for maximizing human happiness and social benefit. Though much of his vast body of writings remained fragmentary and unpublished during his lifetime, his influence was enormous. He travelled widely and in 1792 was made an honorary citizen of the French Republic. In the present extract he addresses the question as to how a wise legislator may, through reward, realize the goal of achieving 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number', turning his attention to the domain of art. Bentham maintains that the utility or value of the arts 'is exactly in proportion to the pleasure they yield' and, consistent with his premises, reaches the conclusion that 'prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry'. The extract is taken from *The Rationale of Reward*, first published in London by John and H. L. Hunt in 1825. It is important to note, however, that the papers which form the basis of this work were composed significantly earlier. They were originally incorporated into a larger, two-volume work edited by M. Dumont in 1811 and published in Paris under the title *Théorie des Peines et des Recompenses*. The editor of the English edition does not provide a literal translation of M. Dumont's work but has 'availed himself wherever he could of the original manuscripts'. The opening remarks are taken from Bentham's own 'Preliminary Observations'. The rest of the text is from Book III, 'Reward Applied to Art and Science', pp. 205–8.

The greatest happiness of the greatest number ought to be the object of every legislator; for accomplishing his purposes respecting this object, he possesses two instruments – Punishment and Reward. The theories of these two forces divide between them, although in unequal shares, the whole field of legislation.

The subject of the present work is Reward; and not Reward alone, but every other use which can be made of that matter of which rewards may be formed.

In the following work, the different sources from which rewards may be derived are examined; the choice which ought to be made between the different modifications of which it is susceptible, is pointed out; and rules are laid down for the production of the greatest effect with the least portion of this precious matter.

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Taken collectively, and considered in their connection with the happiness of society, the arts and sciences may be arranged in two divisions, viz. 1. Those of amusement and curiosity; 2. Those of utility, immediate and remote. These two branches of human knowledge require different methods of treatment on the part of governments.

By arts and sciences of amusement, I mean those which are ordinarily called the *fine arts*; such as music, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, ornamental gardening, &c. &c. Their complete enumeration must be excused; it would lead us too far from our present subject, were we to plunge into the metaphysical discussions necessary for its accomplishment. Amusements of all sorts would be comprised under this head.

Custom has, in a manner, compelled us to make the distinction between the arts and sciences of amusement, and those of curiosity. It is not however proper to regard the former as destitute of utility: on the contrary, there is nothing, the utility of which is more incontestable. To what shall the character of utility be ascribed, if not to that which is a source of pleasure? All that can be alleged in diminution of their utility is, that it is limited to the excitement of pleasure: they cannot disperse clouds of grief or misfortune. They are useless to those who are not pleased with them: they are useful only to those who take pleasure in them, and only in proportion as they are pleased.

By arts and sciences of curiosity, I mean those which in truth are pleasing, but not in the same degree as the fine arts, and to which at the first glance we might be tempted to refuse this quality. It is not that these arts and sciences of curiosity do not yield as much pleasure to those who cultivate them as the fine arts; but the number of those who study them is more limited. Of this nature are the sciences of heraldry, of medals, of pure chronology, the knowledge of ancient and barbarous languages, which present only collections of strange words, and the study of antiquities, inasmuch as they furnish no instruction applicable to morality, or any other branch of useful or agreeable knowledge.

The utility of all these arts and sciences, – I speak both of those of amusement and of curiosity, – the value which they possess, is exactly in proportion to the pleasure they yield. Every other species of preeminence which may be attempted to be established among them is altogether fanciful. Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of push-pin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either. Everybody can play at push-pin: poetry and music are only relished by a few. The game of push-pin is always innocent: it were well could the same be always asserted of poetry. Indeed, between poetry and truth there is a natural opposition: false morals, fictitious nature: the poet always stands in need of something false. When he pretends to lay his foundations in truth, the ornaments of his superstructure are fictions; his business consists in stimulating our passions, and exciting our prejudices. Truth, exactitude of every kind, is fatal to poetry. The poet must see everything through coloured media, and strive to make everyone else do the same. It is true, here have been noble spirits, to whom poetry and philosophy have been equally indebted, but these exceptions do not remove the mischiefs which have resulted from this magic art. If poetry and music deserve to be preferred before a game of push-pin, it must be because they are calculated to gratify those individuals who are most difficult to please.

All the arts and sciences, without exception, inasmuch as they constitute innocent employments, at least of time, possess a species of moral utility, neither the less real nor important, because it is frequently observed. They compete with, and occupy the place of those mischievous and dangerous passions and employments, to which want of occupation and ennui give birth. They are excellent substitutes for drunkenness, slander, and the love of gaming.

The effects of idleness upon the ancient Germans may be seen in Tacitus: his observations are applicable to all uncivilized nations: for want of other occupations they waged war upon each other: it was more animated amusement than that of the chase. The chieftain who proposed a martial expedition, at the first sound of his trumpet ranged under his banners a crowd of idlers, to whom peace was a condition of restraint, of languor, and of ennui. Glory could be reaped only in one field: opulence knew but one luxury. This field was that of battle; this luxury that of conquering or recounting past conquests. Their women themselves, ignorant of those agreeable arts which multiply the means of pleasing, and prolong the empire of beauty, became the rivals of the men in courage, and, mingling with them in the barbarous tumult of a military life, became unfeeling as they.

It is to the cultivation of the arts and sciences that we must, in great measure, ascribe the existence of that party which is now opposed to war: it has received its birth amid the occupations and pleasures furnished by the fine arts. These arts, so to speak, have enrolled under their peaceful banners that army of idlers which would have otherwise possessed no amusement but in the hazardous and bloody game of war.

Such is the species of the utility which belongs indiscriminately to all the arts and sciences. Were it the only reason, it would be a sufficient reason for desiring to see them flourish and receive the most extended diffusion.

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2 Auguste Comte (1798–1857) 'The Nature and Importance of the Positive Philosophy'

Comte is generally regarded as the founder of the modern discipline of sociology. His 'positive philosophy' exercised an enormous influence on nineteenth-century thought, both for its emphasis on the proper aims and methods of scientific enquiry and for its more ambitious claims concerning the realization of a new age of science. From 1817 he came under the influence of the social reformer Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, working as his secretary until their violent quarrel in 1824 (cf. IA5, above). Comte's principal work, the *Cours de philosophie positive* (Course in positive philosophy), was published in six volumes, from 1830 to 1842. The present extract is taken from the opening section of the first volume, in which Comte sketches the broad outlines of his new 'social physics'. Comte contends that human knowledge passes through three great stages, the theological, the metaphysical and the scientific or positive. Though the latter has irrefutably established itself in the domain of the natural sciences, enquiry into the existence of 'invariable natural laws' has yet to be extended to the study of social phenomena. The ambition of Comte's positive philosophy goes beyond the merely descriptive in so far as he maintains that insight into such general laws will offer a basis for social re-organization and for

overcoming the 'great political and moral crisis that societies are now undergoing'. In 1853 Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive* was translated and condensed into a two-volume English edition by Harriet Martineau, herself an important interpreter of economic, social and political theory and a forceful advocate of women's rights. These extracts are taken from the first volume, published under the title *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, London: John Chapman, 1853, pp. 1–2, 5–8, 14–16.

In order to understand the true value and character of the Positive Philosophy, we must take a brief general view of the progressive course of the human mind, regarded as a whole; for no conception can be understood otherwise than through its history.

From the study of the development of human intelligence, in all directions, and through all times, the discovery arises of a great fundamental law, to which it is necessarily subject, and which has a solid foundation of proof, both in the facts of our organization and in our historical experience. The law is this: – that each of our leading conceptions, – each branch of our knowledge, – passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive. In other words, the human mind, by its nature, employs in its progress three methods of philosophizing, the character of which is essentially different, and even radically opposed: viz., the theological method, the metaphysical, and the positive. Hence arise three philosophies, or general systems of conceptions on the aggregate of phenomena, each of which excludes the others. The first is the necessary point of departure of the human understanding; and the third is its fixed and definitive state. The second is merely a state of transition.

In the theological state, the human mind, seeking the essential nature of beings, the first and final causes (the origin and purpose) of all effects, – in short, Absolute knowledge, – supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings.

In the metaphysical state, which is only a modification of the first, the mind supposes, instead of supernatural beings, abstract forces, veritable entities (that is, personified abstractions) inherent in all beings, and capable of producing all phenomena. What is called the explanation of phenomena is, in this stage, a mere reference of each to its proper entity.

In the final, the positive state, the mind has given over the vain search after Absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena, and applies itself to the study of their laws, – that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblance. Reasoning and observation, duly combined, are the means of this knowledge. What is now understood when we speak of an explanation of facts is simply the establishment of a connection between single phenomena and some general facts, the number of which continually diminishes with the progress of science.

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The Law of human development being thus established, let us consider what is the proper nature of the Positive Philosophy.

As we have seen, the first characteristic of the Positive Philosophy is that it regards all phenomena as subjected to invariable natural *Laws*. Our business is, – seeing how

vain is any research into what are called *Causes*, whether first or final, – to pursue an accurate discovery of these Laws, with a view to reducing them to the smallest possible number. By speculating upon causes, we could solve no difficulty about origin and purpose. Our real business is to analyse accurately the circumstances of phenomena, and to connect them by the natural relations of succession and resemblance. The best illustration of this is in the case of the doctrine of Gravitation. We say that the general phenomena of the universe are *explained* by it, because it connects under one head the whole immense variety of astronomical facts; exhibiting the constant tendency of atoms towards each other in direct proportion to their masses, and in inverse proportion to the squares of their distances; whilst the general fact itself is a mere extension of one which is perfectly familiar to us, and which we therefore say that we know; – the weight of bodies on the surface of the earth. As to what weight and attraction are, we have nothing to do with that, for it is not a matter of knowledge at all. Theologians and metaphysicians may imagine and refine about such questions; but positive philosophy rejects them. When any attempt has been made to explain them, it has ended only in saying that attraction is universal weight, and that weight is terrestrial attraction: that is, that the two orders of phenomena are identical; which is the point from which the question set out. Again, M. Fourier, in his fine series of researches on Heat, has given us all the most important and precise laws of the phenomena of heat, and many large and new truths, without once inquiring into its nature, as his predecessors had done when they disputed about calorific matter and the action of an universal ether. In treating his subject in the Positive method, he finds inexhaustible material for all his activity of research, without betaking himself to insoluble questions.

Before ascertaining the stage which the Positive Philosophy has reached, we must bear in mind that the different kinds of our knowledge have passed through the three stages of progress at different rates, and have not therefore arrived at the same time. The rate of advance depends on the nature of the knowledge in question, so distinctly that, as we shall see hereafter, this consideration constitutes an accessory to the fundamental law of progress. Any kind of knowledge reaches the positive stage early in proportion to its generality, simplicity, and independence of other departments. Astronomical science, which is above all made up of facts that are general, simple, and independent of other sciences, arrived first; then terrestrial Physics; then Chemistry; and, at length, Physiology.

It is difficult to assign any precise date to this revolution in science. It may be said, like everything else, to have been always going on; and especially since the labours of Aristotle and the school of Alexandria; and then from the introduction of natural science into the West of Europe by the Arabs. But, if we must fix upon some marked period, to serve as a rallying point, it must be that, – about two centuries ago, – when the human mind was astir under the precepts of Bacon, the conceptions of Descartes, and the discoveries of Galileo. Then it was that the spirit of the Positive Philosophy rose up in opposition to that of the superstitious and scholastic systems which had hitherto obscured the true character of all science. Since that date, the progress of the Positive Philosophy, and the decline of the other two, have been so marked that no rational mind now doubts that the revolution is destined to go on to its completion, – every branch of knowledge being, sooner or later, brought within the operation of

Positive Philosophy. This is not yet the case. Some are still lying outside: and not till they are brought in will the Positive Philosophy possess that character of universality which is necessary to its definitive constitution.

In mentioning just now the four principal categories of phenomena, – astronomical, physical, chemical, and physiological, – there was an omission which will have been noticed. Nothing was said of Social phenomena. Though involved with the physiological, Social phenomena demand a distinct classification, both on account of their importance and of their difficulty. They are the most individual, the most complicated, the most dependent on all others; and therefore they must be the latest, – even if they had no special obstacle to encounter. This branch of science has not hitherto entered into the domain of Positive Philosophy. Theological and metaphysical methods, exploded in other departments, are as yet exclusively applied, both in the way of inquiry and discussion, in all treatment of Social subjects, though the best minds are heartily weary of eternal disputes about divine right and the sovereignty of the people. This is the great, while it is evidently the only gap which has to be filled, to constitute, solid and entire, the Positive Philosophy. Now that the human mind has grasped celestial and terrestrial physics, – mechanical and chemical; organic physics, both vegetable and animal, – there remains one science, to fill up the series of sciences of observation, – Social physics. This is what men have now most need of: and this it is the principal aim of the present work to establish.

It would be absurd to pretend to offer this new science at once in a complete state. Others, less new, are in very unequal conditions of forwardness. But the same character of positivity which is impressed on all the others will be shown to belong to this. This once done, the philosophical system of the moderns will be in fact complete, as there will then be no phenomenon which does not naturally enter into some one of the five great categories. All our fundamental conceptions having become homogeneous, the Positive state will be fully established. It can never again change its character, though it will be for ever in course of development by additions of new knowledge.

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The Positive Philosophy offers the only solid basis for that Social Reorganization which must succeed the critical condition in which the most civilized nations are now living.

It cannot be necessary to prove to anybody who reads this work that Ideas govern the world, or throw it into chaos; in other words, that all social mechanism rests upon Opinions. The great political and moral crisis that societies are now undergoing is shown by a rigid analysis to arise out of intellectual anarchy. While stability in fundamental maxims is the first condition of genuine social order, we are suffering under an utter disagreement which may be called universal. Till a certain number of general ideas can be acknowledged as a rallying-point of social doctrine, the nations will remain in a revolutionary state, whatever palliatives may be devised; and their institutions can be only provisional. But whenever the necessary agreement on first principles can be obtained, appropriate institutions will issue from them, without shock or resistance; for the causes of disorder will have been arrested by the mere fact of the agreement. It is in this direction that those must look who desire a natural and regular, a normal state of society.

Now, the existing disorder is abundantly accounted for by the existence, all at once, of three incompatible philosophies, – the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. Any one of these might alone secure some sort of social order; but while the three co-exist, it is impossible for us to understand one another upon any essential point whatever. If this is true, we have only to ascertain which of the philosophies must, in the nature of things, prevail; and, this ascertained, every man, whatever may have been his former views, cannot but concur in its triumph. The problem once recognized cannot remain long unsolved; for all considerations whatever point to the Positive Philosophy as the one destined to prevail. It alone has been advancing during a course of centuries, throughout which the others have been declining. The fact is incontestable. Some may deplore it, but none can destroy it, nor therefore neglect it but under penalty of being betrayed by illusory speculations. This general revolution of the human mind is nearly accomplished. We have only to complete the Positive Philosophy by bringing Social phenomena within its comprehension, and afterwards consolidating the whole into one body of homogeneous doctrine. The marked preference which almost all minds, from the highest to the commonest, accord to positive knowledge over vague and mystical conceptions, is a pledge of what the reception of this philosophy will be when it has acquired the only quality that it now wants – a character of due generality. When it has become complete, its supremacy will take place spontaneously, and will re-establish order throughout society. There is, at present, no conflict but between the theological and the metaphysical philosophies. They are contending for the task of reorganizing society; but it is a work too mighty for either of them. The positive philosophy has hitherto intervened only to examine both, and both are abundantly discredited by the process. It is time now to be doing something more effective, without wasting our forces in needless controversy. It is time to complete the vast intellectual operation begun by Bacon, Descartes, and Galileo, by constructing the system of general ideas which must henceforth prevail among the human race. This is the way to put an end to the revolutionary crisis which is tormenting the civilized nations of the world.

3 Marie-Camille de G. (dates unknown) 'Fine Arts. Salon of 1834'

It is usually assumed that few if any women wrote art criticism in early nineteenth-century France. In fact the number increased as the periodical press expanded during the 1830s, and issues concerning women and the visual arts were discussed with some frequency, normally in the context of the annual Salon exhibitions. There had been a tendency for women critics to use male pseudonyms or to retain anonymity. This tendency declined as the market increased, however, since the establishment of a recognizable persona was a necessary condition of earning money by writing. Marie-Camille de G. was a member of a small group of utopian socialists who wrote and produced the short-lived *Tribune des femmes* (originally entitled *La Femme libre*), distributing it through street sales. Surnames were withheld not in the interests of anonymity but in order to avoid use of the patriarchal names of husbands and fathers. The journal was shut down in 1834 when uprisings in several French towns were answered by repressive measures from the government. This text was originally published as 'Beaux-Arts. Salon de 1834' in *Tribune des femmes*, volume II, April 1834, pp. 158–64, from which these extracts are taken. Translation

from the original source has been made for this volume by Jonathan Murphy. Delaroche's painting of *The Execution of Lady Jane Gray* is now in the collection of the National Gallery in London. Ingres's *Martyrdom of St Symphorian* is in the cathedral of Autun.

The artist must move the spectator. But such a power can only be possessed by an artist who is inspired by some all-encompassing, religious idea, for such an idea itself is a muse. Like Orpheus animating the stones, or the painters of the Vatican instilling conviction in the men who saw their pictures, an idea fills souls with enthusiasm and turns poets into prophets. The history of art can be divided into periods of *thought* and periods of *form*. Under the sway of religious thought, form is like the outpourings of an ardent soul, naïve and sublime, lacking order in its naturalness, simple and biblical, like the patriarchal language of Homer, or the free and easy charm of medieval poetry. But when this source of inspiration dries up, and incredulity takes its place at the altar, freezing the words on the lips of the priest, the predominance of thought is succeeded by a predominance of form. Art becomes severe, regular and classical. When Aristophanes has the Gods descend from Olympus down onto the stage, clothes them in rags, and makes them the butt of the jokes of the people, meretricious rhetoric takes centre stage. Similarly, in the Sixteenth century, that century of endless disputes between monks and kings and Popes, when the mystic silence of church and cloister was troubled for the first time, and the Divine dove, startled from its gothic nest, took wing and ascended to its father in Heaven, the arts came out of the temple as cold as a body bereft of life. The Renaissance was proclaimed: and this truly was the triumph of empty form over thought. Humanity and the arts form an indissoluble whole; when humanity is religious the arts flourish, fired by enthusiasm, but when it is incredulous, they wither and die, from lack of inspiration.

In the same way that humanity tires of walking an arid path where no feeling of happiness blossoms, and of having no thoughts with which its broken soul might repose, the arts, when classical periods draw to a close, and centuries like that of Augustus or Louis XIV draw their last breath, having uttered their final words in Virgil or Racine, and merit is no longer to be found but in imitation or pastiche, the arts strive to return to life, and seek out a new form of originality. The rules of rhetoric are broken, and liberty, art and *romanticism* spring forth. Soon too come the intermediaries, eclectic men in the fields of art, philosophy and politics; men with vision, marching towards a visionary future. Such an era is our own: in literature, Casimir Delavigne is side by side with Victor Hugo, and in painting, Delaroche is side by side with Ingres. It is to be hoped that in sculpture too, similar luminaries will soon emerge.

No new *thought*, as yet, animates these innovators, who work only with form, but the ground is being prepared, so that the voice of God may be heard, when his chosen representative appears.

These principles should help us to understand this year's Salon and the attitudes that people are taking towards it. Why is it that a crowd of artists and amateurs throngs around two pictures by Delaroche and Ingres in particular? For one good reason: the eclectic talent of Delaroche and the original genius of Ingres bear witness to all the problems that are currently besetting art.

The subject of Delaroche's painting is Lady Jane Gray, at the moment when the executioner is about to follow the orders of Queen Mary and bring down his axe upon her neck. She fills us with pity: she is about to die for a dream, for wanting to be dressed in royal robes, and for wanting to see her own eyes sparkle beneath a diamond crown. Mary has forced her from the throne to the Tower, and for her crown, has given her a blindfold to hide her eyes, and for a cushion to rest her head, an executioner's block. How she has suffered! What tears she has cried over her glorious past! And how gladly she now gives up a life that has contained so much suffering! Her thoughts race... does she know that the executioner's blade will grant her immortality? He stands before her, with great dignity, hiding his own pain beneath the furrows of his brow. We can almost believe that he is asking himself how it came about that a mere seventeen years could bring such grace to a girl as young and beautiful as this, and how it came to pass that she must now abandon her life of sweet comfort, and lay down her head beneath his axe. Beside her stands the Keeper of the Tower, expressionless, while to her rear her two servants swoon away. The colour of the painting is striking in its truthfulness, the drawing unexceptional, the poses natural, but it is with some disappointment that one notes that the artist was too concerned with individual detail, and that the carpet is carefully laid out, the folds of Lady Jane's dress fall too regularly, and that nothing, not the tiniest stroke, is missing. Delaroche takes up a particular idea, meticulously researches all the necessary details, and repeats them with great care, but he lacks originality. He is merely a man of great talent.

Anyone who cannot conceive of unity in variety should examine Ingres's contribution to the Salon this year. The subject is Saint-Symphorien, in prison, where he has suffered thirst, hunger and all the tortures known to man. His flesh may have bled and been lacerated into strips by the blows of the lictor, his body may be broken, but his soul stands fast. Ingres is a man of genius.

According to the distinction that we have made between eclectic artists and original artists, with Delaroche we would place Delacroix and Vernet; with Ingres we place Granet, Decamps and the elder Scheffer.

Delacroix has sent several pictures, the most worthy of note being *The Battle of Nancy*, where Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy was killed, and *The Women of Algiers*.

On coming out of the museum one is struck by a sad thought. We see battles, shipwrecks, scaffolds, landscapes, portraits, thousands of pictures, but so few pictures with any vision. We see extraordinary attempts at drawing and colour, a prodigious expenditure of talent, but the resulting paintings are nothing more than hackneyed, sterile scenes.

Painters represent women in a multitude of styles. They turn them into flowers with which they furnish exquisite boudoirs; they intoxicate them with perfumes and honeyed words; they show them at elegant society balls where you could mistake them for priestesses in their rich robes; and in interior scenes they stretch them out voluptuously, dreaming on sumptuous divans. Now they are painted like blooms in the sun, blossoming beneath the sweet breath of their lover, now, with scant regard for their modesty, their beautiful bodies are desecrated as they are dragged before the executioner. Surely, Gentlemen, we have had our fill of perfumes and beautiful

clothes, passionate embraces and scaffolds: the time has come to grant women a place worthy of them, the due place they deserve! We have seen again this year yet another Eve picking the forbidden fruit. The painter in question would be well advised to go and look closely at a picture by Jules Laure, an artist of our acquaintance, who we can thank for faithfully portraying the thoughts of a great woman. He will see Lélia kneeling beside the body of Sténio; a world of suffering weighs down on the shoulders of the young woman, and cruel disappointments have caused her beautiful face to pale. Perhaps it will occur to him that for long enough now the daughters of Eve have torn at their flesh and sacrificed their hearts for the sons of Adam, for long enough they have watered the paths of the earth with their tears: it is time a new Eden appeared. Artists! If you love *women*, if some time their beauty has filled your soul with poetry, and lent delicacy and inspiration to your brush to fix your dreams and joys on canvas, show her growing in liberty. Imagine the progression. First, crushed beneath shields, walking like a worker, suffering under the weight of her chains; her body, her thoughts, her desires, all her existence broken by the hand of her tyrant; then, beginning to look more resolutely at her master and transforming her slavery into a tutelage, which in turn she hopes to surpass. For women wish to be free, as God has breathed a love of liberty into their souls. But free to pour balm on the wounds of humanity, like a holy dove descending from the skies; free to quell the bellicose urges of man, and lead him back to God, back to the path of peace and happiness; free to embrace the universe with the intelligence of a savant, and to embrace it with love; free to serve as the bond not simply between individuals but between entire peoples. Women yearn for a pedestal in the temple, to preach to the world the sacred words that inspire hearts and show men the path into the future.

The working classes only entered the pictures of the salon with weapons in their hands, stained with mud and blood, with hate in their hearts and cruelty in their eyes. Artists! If you really feel solidarity with the people, if you have felt the strength and grandeur beneath that surface of rude ignorance, show too their weeping wounds, that those who have the power to tend to such suffering are moved to action! If you love drama, paint those awful scenes which are played out every day before your eyes, paint an unhappy father dying in a pauper's bed, filled with agony and misery. Paint his numerous children who beg for bread with their cries and their tears, paint his daughter whose income cannot possibly meet the needs of her father and her brothers, and further off, in the background, paint the rich man offering her the gold she needs to minister to her father and save his life . . . but at a terrible price! Let your canvas cry out in despair so that the world can see the anguish, the torture and the terrible sacrifices which civilization veils with a deceptive smile: let the terrible cries of hunger and the awful spectre of prostitution be seen! Let your pictures be a mirror which reflects the pain of the poor, let them seize that poverty and distill it so strong that the rich catch their breath and are brought to their senses. In Anvers, they say, a Rubens picture of Christ is veiled, as the very sight of it sends electric shocks through spectators; let your works be so, that the privileged are ashamed of their happiness, while thousands of others agonize in misery.

If you are filled with enthusiasm, enlarge your canvas so that all humanity can play out its giant drama there. Let your canvas be an elemental maelstrom, water and earth, and air and fire; – fill it with the hopes of the world. Let it transport us a

thousand leagues over the seas; fill it with mountains and forests and pyramids and temples; let it take the world in its hands, and forge it anew, let it listen to that gathering storm of progress, as the mighty voice of God calls out and urges us on to new worlds of ideas, achievements and inventions. For we march on inexorably, to a temple of joys which we dimly perceive on the horizon, whose marble columns and eternal towers we will one day see standing tall before us.

A great mission awaits the artists of today!

4 Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–52) 'On the Wretched State of Architecture at the Present Day'

This text is taken from the Conclusion to Pugin's *Contrasts*. The full description of this book is 'A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, and Similar Buildings of the Present Day; shewing the Present Decay of Taste'. The author was an architect, and the substance of his polemical publication was provided by a series of paired illustrations, each showing a supposedly representative area of a modern town juxtaposed with its imagined medieval equivalent, to the disadvantage of the former. Pugin's construction of the middle ages was utopian and his anti-modernism largely conservative. But there were two powerful and complementary critical implications to his thesis. The first was that the underlying social and ethical condition of a given society might be diagnosed both through the forms of its design and through the forms of human labour required to implement them. The second was that deleterious architectural and social consequences could be seen to follow when the forces of industrialization and mass production were harnessed to the profit motive. His work was thus formative not only of the nineteenth-century Gothic revival in England, but of a distinct critical current within the theory of the European modern movement in design and architecture. John Ruskin (IIIA9, IIIC6) and William Morris (VB4 and 5) were among those who continued this current, while the Omega Workshops in London and the Bauhaus in Germany were among the various twentieth-century enterprises in which attempts were made to put the resulting theories into practice. Pugin's views were echoed in official circles at the time and were to receive considerable support. In 1836 a select committee of the British government recommended the establishment of schools of design and public museums, principally as means to improve the standard of design in manufacture. In 1852 a Museum of Manufactures was established with the aim of satisfying the need voiced in *Contrasts* for 'a museum where the finest specimens of each style might be found'. This was later to become the Victoria and Albert Museum. And Pugin's assault on the decayed classicism of public buildings could have had no more conspicuous outcome than the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament to designs which he helped to develop. (Compare Semper's criticism of the Parliament buildings in IIIA5.) *Contrasts* was privately published by the author in London in 1836. Our text is taken from the original edition, pp. 30–3 and 35.

Perhaps there is no theme which is more largely dilated on, in the present day, than the immense superiority of this Century over every other that has preceded it. This great age of improvement and increased intellect, as it is called, is asserted to have produced results which have never been equalled; and, puffed up by their supposed excellence, the generation of this day look back with pity and contempt on all that passed away before them.

In some respects, I am willing to grant, great and important inventions have been brought to perfection: but, it must be remembered, that these are purely of a mechanical nature; and I do not hesitate to say, that as works of this description progressed, works of art and productions of mental vigour have declined in a far greater ratio.

Were I to dilate on this subject, I feel confident I could extend this principle throughout all the branches of what are termed the fine arts; but as my professed object is to treat on Architecture, I will confine my observations to that point, leaving to some more able hand the task of exposing false colour and superficial style, which has usurped nature of effect and severity of drawing, and of asserting the immense superiority of the etchings of the old schools over the dry and mechanical productions of the steel engravers of our time, whose miserable productions, devoid of soul, sentiment, or feeling, are annually printed by the thousand, and widely circulated, to remain an everlasting disgrace on the era in which they were manufactured.

Let us now, therefore, examine the pretensions of the present Century to a superiority in architectural skill; let us examine the results – that is, the edifices that have been produced: and, I feel confident, we shall not be long in deciding that, so far from excelling past ages, the architectural works of our time are even below par in the scale of real excellence.

Let us look around, and see whether the Architecture of this country is not entirely ruled by whim and caprice. Does locality, destination, or character of a building, form the basis of a design? no; surely not. We have Swiss cottages in a flat country; Italian villas in the coldest situations; a Turkish kremlin for a royal residence; Greek temples in crowded lanes; Egyptian auction rooms; and all kinds of absurdities and incongruities: and not only are separate edifices erected in these inappropriate and unsuitable styles, but we have only to look into those nests of monstrosities, the Regent's Park and Regent Street, where all kind of styles are jumbled together to make up a mass.

It is hardly possible to conceive that persons, who had made the art of Architecture the least part of their study, could have committed such enormities as are existing in every portion of these buildings. Yet this is termed a great metropolitan improvement: why, it is a national disgrace, a stigma on the taste of the country; and so it will remain till the plaster and cement, of which it is composed, decay.

Of an equally abominable description are the masses of brick and composition which have been erected in what are termed watering-places, particularly at Brighton, the favoured residence of royalty, and the sojourn of all the titled triflers who wait upon the motions of the court. In this place the vile taste of each villa and terrace is only surpassed by the royal palace itself, on which enormous sums have been lavished, amply sufficient to have produced a fabric worthy of a kingly residence. It would be an endless task to point out and describe all the miserable edifices that have been erected, within the last Century, in every class of Architecture; suffice it to observe, that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find one amongst the immense mass which could be handed down to succeeding ages as an honourable specimen of the architectural talent of the time.

This is a serious consideration, for it is true. Where, I ask, are the really fine monuments of the country to be found, but in those edifices erected centuries ago,

during the often railed at and despised period of the Middle Ages? What would be the interest of the cities, or even towns and villages, of this country, were they deprived of their ancient gigantic structures, and the remains of their venerable buildings? Why, even in the metropolis itself, the abbey church and hall of Westminster still stand pre-eminent over every other ecclesiastical or regal structure that has since been raised.

No one can look on Buckingham Palace, the National Gallery, Board of Trade, the new buildings at the British Museum, or any of the principal buildings lately erected, but must feel the very existence of such public monuments as a national disgrace.

And if we regard the new castle at Windsor, although the gilding and the show may dazzle the vulgar and the ignorant, the man of refined taste and knowledge must be disgusted with the paucity of ideas and meagre taste which are shewn in the decoration; and he will presently discover, that the elongated or extended quatrefoil and never-ending set of six pateras, in the rooms called Gothic, and the vile scroll-work intended for the flowing style of Louis Quatorze, announce it as being the work of the plasterer and the putty presser, instead of the sculptor and the artist.

Nor is there to be found among the residences of the nobility, either in their town mansions or country seats, lately erected, any of those imposing and characteristic features, or rich and sumptuous ornaments, with which the residences of the Tudor period abounded.

Nor can any thing be more contemptible than the frittered appearance of the saloons and galleries, crowded with all sorts of paltry objects, arranged, as if for sale, in every corner, which have replaced the massive silver ornaments, splendid hangings, and furniture of the olden time.

Indeed, I fear that the present general feeling for ancient styles is but the result of the fashion of the day, instead of being based on the solid foundation of real love and feeling for art itself; for, I feel confident, if this were not the case, purchasers could never be found for the host of rubbish annually imported and sold: nor could persons, really acquainted with the beauty of what they profess to admire, mutilate fine things when they possess them, by altering their greatest beauties to suit their own caprice and purposes – a barbarity continually practised in what is called fitting-up old carvings.

Yes, believe me, this goût for antiquities is of too sudden a nature to have proceeded from any real conviction of the beauty of those two styles, or to have been produced from other motives but those of whim and fashion; and I do believe that, were some leading member of the *haut ton* to set the fashion for some new style, the herd of collectors would run as madly after their new plaything, as they do after the one they have got at present.

The continual purchase of these things, at extravagant prices, may benefit the broker and the salesman, but does not advance a restoration of such art or style one iota.

Were these people of power and wealth really impressed with a feeling of admiration for the glorious works of ancient days, and anxious for the restoration of the skill and art which produced them, instead of filling their apartments with the stock of a broker's shop, they would establish a museum, where the finest specimens of each style might be found, and from which the sculptor and the artist might school themselves in their principles. They would send forth men to preserve faithful

representations of the most interesting monuments of foreign lands, and extend a fostering care for the preservation and repair of those fine remains rapidly falling into decay; and, by encouraging talent where it is to be found, raise up by such means a race of artists, who, I hesitate not to say, could be found able to conceive and execute things equally fine and masterly as in more ancient days, but who, for want of such support, are compelled to leave the study of what they most admire, and in which they would excel, for some grovelling occupation by which to gain a bare subsistence.

I state this to wrest from these mere buyers of curiosities the title of patrons of art, which has so undeservedly been bestowed upon them. It was under the fostering care of the Catholic church, and its noble encouragement, the greatest efforts of art have been achieved; deprived of that, the arts in vain look for an equivalent: for its professors must either starve neglected, or sacrifice the noblest principles and beauties of their art to the caprice and ignorance of their employers.

I could not refrain from making this digression, as I feel that what I have just stated is one of the great causes of the present wretched state of art.

I trust I have now shewn satisfactorily that this country, however it may excel in mechanical contrivances, has so little to boast on the score of improvement in art, that, were it not for the remains of the edifices produced during the Middle Ages, the architectural monuments of this country would be contemptible in the extreme.

The truth of this assertion, coupled with the fact that there never was a period when there were so many lectures, academies, drawing schools, and publications on the subject, proves how little the noble arts of Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture, are suited to the trammels of a system; and nothing has tended more to produce the vile results we see, than the absurd idea that persons can be brought up as easily to practise in those exalted professions, as to fill the humble station of a trafficker in merchandise or a mechanical trade; when, in truth, few are there who ever have, or ever can, attain to great excellence in the arts, and the station they arrive at must depend entirely on their own souls and exertions – for small indeed is the instruction that can be imparted on the subject, beyond the mere mechanical use of the tools, and the general principles of drawing.

* * *

I feel acutely the fallen condition of the arts, when each new invention, each new proceeding, seems only to plunge them deeper in degradation. I wish to pluck from the age the mask of superior attainments so falsely assumed, and I am anxious to direct the attention of all back to the real merit of past and better days. It is among their remains that excellence is only to be found; and it is by studying the zeal, talents, and feelings, of these wonderful but despised times, that art can be restored, or excellence regained. (Laus Deo.)

5 Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) from 'The American Scholar'

Emerson was the leading figure of the New England Transcendentalists. These represented the American development of the ideas of European Romanticism. Opposed to the mechanistic philosophies dominant in the eighteenth century, they were committed to a

belief in the unity of nature and humanity, and claimed the priority of insight over rationality. Emerson had visited Europe in 1832–3, and in England had met Coleridge, Wordsworth and Carlyle (whose *Sartor Resartus* (see IA13) he first printed in book form). His address, 'The American Scholar', has been viewed as the manifesto for a new type of American intellectual. In its affirmation of the humble and proximate over the academic and remote, it was influential upon figures such as Whitman (see IIID9), Melville and others identified with the American cultural 'Renaissance' of the mid-1830s to 1860s. It was first delivered at Harvard on 31 August 1837 and published in the *Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, London: Routledge, 1889, pp. 514–72. The present extract is from p. 571.

If there is any period one would desire to be born in, – is it not the age of Revolution; when the old and the new stand side by side, and admit of being compared; when the energies of all men are searched by fear and by hope; when the historic glories of the old can be compensated by the rich possibilities of the new era? This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

I read with joy some of the auspicious signs of the coming days, as they glimmer already through poetry and art, through philosophy and science, through church and state.

One of these signs is the fact, that the same movement which effected the elevation of what was called the lowest class in the state assumed in literature a very marked and as benign an aspect. Instead of the sublime and beautiful; the near, the low, the common, was explored and poetized. That, which had been negligently trodden under foot by those who were harnessing and provisioning themselves for long journeys into far countries, is suddenly found to be richer than all foreign parts. The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time. It is a great stride. It is a sign – is it not? – of new vigour, when the extremities are made active, when currents of warm life run into the hands and the feet. I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provençal minstrelsy; I embrace the common. I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low. Give me insight into to-day, and you may have the antique and future worlds. What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body; – show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as always it does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the ledger, referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing; and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle; there is no puzzle; but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.

6 Robert Vaughan (1795–1868) 'On Great Cities in their Connexion with Art'

This text is taken from Vaughan's book *The Age of Great Cities*. Vaughan was an English Doctor of Divinity with a tendency to non-conformism and with a sceptical cast of mind. The

subtitle of his work was 'Modern Society Viewed in its Relation to Intelligence, Morals and Religion'. His principal concern was to identify the characteristics and tendencies of modern societies, and in particular to explain what he saw as the conflict between Feudalism – by which he meant the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a minority – and Civilization. 'If the baron be not so military as formerly', he wrote on his opening page, 'he is more opulent.' The present excerpt is notable for Vaughan's attribution of the civilizing powers of art not, as was virtually automatic at the time, to the responsible guardianship of the gentleman and the scholar, but rather to the agency of 'the trader and the citizen'. The tenor of his analyses is one of moderate and ironic republicanism. (On the subject of patronage, his views may be compared with those of the Americans Dunlap and Morse, IID2 and 3.) *The Age of Great Cities* was first published in London: Jackson and Walford, 1843. Our excerpt is taken from the original edition, chapter IV, section iv, pp. 130–6.

[...] It is not disputed, that in any land where there are flourishing cities, the territorial aristocracy will be distinguished as patrons of the beautiful in art. But whence has this aristocracy derived the wealth by means of which it indulges so largely in the gratification of those tastes? Whence has it derived these tastes themselves? And whence came the men of genius possessing the power to minister to those tastes? On these questions, it is not too much to say, that as the town has made the country, giving to its lands a beauty and value they would not otherwise have possessed; so the citizen has made the noble, by cultivating in him a taste for art, which would not otherwise have formed a part of his character. For it must be obvious that the country which should be purely agricultural, producing no more than may be consumed by its own agricultural population, must unavoidably be the home of a scattered, a rude, and a necessitous people, and its chiefs be little elevated above the coarse untaught mass of their dependants. Burgesses produce both the useful and the ornamental, and minister in this manner both to the need and the pleasure of nobles and kings. What they sell not at home they send abroad. In either case, wealth is realized; lands become more valuable; public burdens can be borne; and along with the skill which produces embellishment, come the means by which it may be purchased.

In this manner, the baron has been elevated by the burgess, and courts have been refined by cities. [...] It will be admitted, that, notwithstanding some occasional and strong exceptions, there is generally in an aristocracy a spirit and dignity, an almost innate sense of the proper, which could hardly fail to bring improvement... along with it. It is nevertheless true, that the revival of the fine arts in Europe was much more the work of its merchants than of its nobles, or of its princes. Had the noble families of Europe all perished, an aristocracy of wealth and genius would have risen in place of an aristocracy of privilege, and would, no doubt, have conferred on such refinements much of that kind of patronage which has been dispensed in their favour during the last three or four centuries by other hands. Even now, were cities to cease, the fine arts would cease. It is probable they would linger last, where they made their appearance last, in the mansion of the great landholder; but ceasing to have any connexion with the trader and the citizen, they would soon die out everywhere.

It would seem to be the notion of some men that where there is no high hereditary class, possessing large hereditary wealth, there can be no successful cultivation of art, or of intelligence of any kind, in their higher forms. But the slightest acquaintance

with the history of ancient Greece should have sufficed to prevent such an error – an error which is a disgrace to the intelligence of any man not born and bred in the lowest pauperism. It may well be doubted, if the world would hitherto have seen such an age as that of Augustus, or that of Louis XIV, if it had not previously seen the age of Pericles. It is a remarkable fact, and one which the class of persons adverted to would do well to consider, that the states of Greece, which knew nothing of hereditary distinctions, which were not possessed of large wealth, which consisted of so many city communities, and were pervaded generally by the spirit of republicanism, colonization, and commerce – that it was given to those states to supply to all subsequent time the models of the wonderful in science and art, models which the proudest empires have done well to imitate, which they have rarely equalled, and never surpassed.

In saying thus much, we do not say that a large class of wealthy patrician families may not exercise a most beneficial influence on the progress of art. We only maintain that the successful patronage of the fine arts depends less on the existence of noble families, than upon the existence of prosperous cities. Without the former kind of patronage, art may be wanting in some of its higher attributes; without the latter, it would cease to have existence. Such, however, is not the common idea on this subject, even with persons who flatter themselves that they understand it very much better than their neighbours. Such is nevertheless the true idea. The republican traders of Holland could boast of a fine school of art in the seventeenth century, while a hundred years were to pass before England, with all the supposed advantages of her aristocratic institutions, could be said to possess one. We have become great in art, as we have become great in commerce, and only in that proportion. Since the seventeenth century, we have surpassed the Hollanders almost immeasurably in our naval power, in our colonial empire, and in our commercial greatness, and our school of art is just such an improvement on the Dutch school, as the wide and powerful influence which has thus come upon our affairs might have led the sagacious to expect.

Nor should it be overlooked, that the qualities of aristocratic patronage which are favourable to art in some respects, are very unfavourable to it in others. It is a patronage which is naturally restricted to works of the highest class. Its smile is hard to win, and is rarely obtained until the artist has gained a position which makes him in a good degree independent of it. Struggling genius has often had reason to be thankful that there is a lower patronage as well as a higher. It is only the aristocracy in art that are allowed to rise to some affinity with the aristocracy in rank.

It is true, democracy is not without its pride and jealousies in relation to such things. It has often dispensed its frowns so as to preclude the private citizen, however opulent, from any ostentatious indulgence of his taste in this form. The feeling of repugnance to any marked display of this kind in the case of the leading men of the state, was very strong in the Greek republics; and we find that the same causes have served to produce and perpetuate a feeling of this kind in the United States. It is a feeling which leads to two evils – it invades liberty, and it discourages art.

But while it is in the nature of a democracy to be thus jealous even of the appearance of an inroad upon the great line of equality, it generally compensates for the good which it prevents with the one hand, by the good which it confers with the

other. It discountenances the private patronage of art, but it can lavish its wealth, almost without limit, upon edifices and monuments designed to do honour to the state – and thus the waters which are shut out from many lesser channels, flow naturally in greater confluence along their permitted course.

In a republic, man learns to look on all about him as, in a sense, his equals. It is to the state only that he can bow as to a superior. He sees a majesty in art, and he knows of no connexion appropriate to it, in its more conspicuous and imposing forms, save the majesty of the state. His jealousy of assumption where all should be equal, his proud estimate of himself, the homage with which he regards that mystic image the state, and the reverence with which he looks on art, all concur to put him upon this course. Our own exemption from this feeling is one of the advantages arising from our mixed state of society.

It appears, then, that the ornamental arts owe their existence to the same causes which give existence to cities; and that society becomes possessed of the beautiful in art, only as cities become prosperous and great. It has appeared, moreover, that while there are advantages and disadvantages pertaining to the different forms of civil society, as regards their influence on art, it is a fact, that the popular states of antiquity have supplied the models in relation to this high department of civilization, which the more aristocratic, and the monarchical states of later times, have been content to imitate or mutilate, but which they have never been known to improve.

7 Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) from Salon of 1843

Heine's Salon debut had been in 1831 (see IA14). There he discussed the impact of revolution on art and art criticism, giving prominence to Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*. By the early 1840s the situation had changed. Heine remained a radical poet and social critic but the Salon seemed moribund. However, for Heine this very mediocrity was the hallmark of the period. It represented the triumph of bourgeois values throughout society, up to and including the highest genres of art. The present extract is taken from the translation by Charles Godfrey Leland in *The Salon, or Letters on Art, Music, Popular Life and Politics* (volume 4 of *The Works of Heinrich Heine*), London: Heinemann, 1893, pp. 118–21.

The Exhibition of pictures for this year excites unusual interest, yet it is impossible for me to pass even a half-way seasonable opinion as to the vaunted pre-eminence of this Salon. So far, I have only felt discontent beyond comparison when I wandered through the halls of the Louvre. These delicious colours which all burst loose screaming at me at once, this variegated lunacy which grins at me from every side, this anarchy in gold frames makes a painful, evil impression on me. I torture myself in vain in trying to set in order this chaos in my mind, and to find therein the thoughts of the time, or even the allied mark of common character, by which these pictures show themselves as the results of our time. For all works of one and the same period have a trace or trait of such character, the painter's mark, which we call the spirit of the age. Thus, for example, the canvases of Watteau, Boucher, Vanloo, reflect the graceful, powdered playfulness of *pastourelles* and fêtes, the rouged and frivolous emptiness *des fadaises galantes*, the sweetish hooped-petticoat happiness of the prevalent Pompadour rule, in which we see everywhere gaily-ribboned shepherds' crooks, and never a

sword. On the other hand, the pictures of David and his school are only the coloured echo of the Republican virtuous period which laps over into the Imperial glory of wartime; and here we find a forced inspiration for the marble model, an abstract frosty intoxication of reason, the design being correct, severe, and hard, the colour turbid, harsh, and indigestible – a Spartan broth. But what will manifest itself as the real character of the age to our descendants when they study the pictures of our present painters? By what common peculiarities will these pictures show themselves at a glance as the products of our present period? Has, perhaps, the spirit of *bourgeoisie*, of industrialism, which penetrates all French life, shown itself so powerful in the arts of design that every picture of our time bears the stamp of its coat of arms? It is especially the pictures of saints which abound in the Exhibition of this year which awaken in me such conjecture. There hangs in the long hall a Flagellation (of Christ), the principal figure in which, with his suffering air, resembles the chairman or president of some company which has come to grief, and now appears before the stockholders and creditors to give an account of himself and his transactions. Yes, the latter also appear on the scene in the form of hangmen and Pharisees who are terribly angry at the *Ecce Homo*, and seem to have lost a great deal of money by their investments. [...] The faces in the properly so-called historical pictures, representing heathen or mediæval subjects, also recall retail shops, stock gambling, mercantilism, and petty *bourgeois* life. There may be seen a William the Conqueror, who only needs a bear-skin cap to be changed into an honest National Guard, who with model zeal mounts guard, pays his bills punctually, honours his wife, and who certainly deserves the Legion of Honour. But – the portraits! The greater part of them have such a *pecuniary* expression, one so egoistic and morose, that I can only explain it by thinking that the living original during the time when he was sitting for his portrait thought of the money which it would cost, while the painter was regretting on his side the time which he must devote to the pitiable money-job. [...]

8 Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804–72) from Preface to the Second Edition of *The Essence of Christianity*

In the same year in which he added this preface to *The Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach summarized the path of his intellectual development in one short sentence: 'God was my first, Reason my second, and Man my third and last thought'. Feuerbach originally intended to enter the ministry, studying theology at Heidelberg. In 1824 he transferred to Berlin to study under Hegel, whose speculative comprehension of religion from the standpoint of reason he at first enthusiastically endorsed, but later came to criticize from the perspective of his own 'materialist' philosophy. Feuerbach sought to go beyond Hegel by revealing conventional Christianity to be no more than a 'dream of the human mind', the projection of our own human essence onto a transcendent beyond. Feuerbach places man at the centre of his thought, maintaining that the illusions of religion and speculative philosophy need to be replaced with an account of 'the real, complete nature of man'. Although Feuerbach's unconventional ideas prevented him from attaining a secure academic position, his critique of religion and his 'sensualist' philosophy, with its emphasis on man's physical and embodied existence, were strongly influential on Marx and Engels and on a generation of later thinkers. *Über das Wesen des Christenthums* was originally published in Leipzig in

1841, appearing in a second, expanded edition in 1843, when this preface was added. It was translated into English by the novelist and free thinker George Eliot in 1854. This extract is from the reprint of that translation published by Harper & Brothers in New York in 1957, pp. xxxiii–xxxvi, xxxix, xliv.

[...] The ideas of my work are only conclusions, *consequences*, drawn from premisses which are not themselves mere ideas, but objective facts either actual or historical – facts which had not their place in my head simply in virtue of their ponderous existence in folio. I unconditionally repudiate *absolute*, immaterial, self-sufficing speculation, – that speculation which draws its material from within. I differ *toto cœlo* from those philosophers who pluck out their eyes that they may see better; for *my* thought I require the senses, especially sight; I found my ideas on materials which can be appropriated only through the activity of the senses. I do not generate the object from the thought, but the thought from the object; and I hold *that* alone to be an object which has an existence beyond one's own brain. I am an idealist only in the region of *practical* philosophy, that is, I do not regard the limits of the past and present as the limits of humanity, of the future; on the contrary, I firmly believe that many things – yes, many things – which with the short-sighted, pusillanimous practical men of to-day, pass for flights of imagination, for ideas never to be realized, for mere chimeras, will to-morrow, *i.e.*, in the next century, – centuries in individual life are days in the life of humanity, – exist in full reality. Briefly, the 'Idea' is to me only faith in the historical future, in the triumph of truth and virtue; it has for me only a political and moral significance; for in the sphere of strictly theoretical philosophy, I attach myself, in direct opposition to the Hegelian philosophy, only to *realism*, to materialism in the sense above indicated. The maxim hitherto adopted by speculative philosophy: All that is mine I carry with me, the old *omnia mea mecum porto*, I cannot, alas! appropriate. I have many things outside myself, which I cannot convey either in my pocket or my head, but which nevertheless I look upon as belonging to me, not indeed as a mere man – a view not now in question – but as a philosopher. I am nothing but a *natural philosopher in the domain of mind*; and the natural philosopher can do nothing without instruments, without material means. In this character I have written the present work, which consequently contains nothing else than the principle of a new philosophy verified practically, i.e., *in concreto*, in application to a special object, but an object which has a universal significance: namely, to religion, in which this principle is exhibited, developed, and thoroughly carried out. This philosophy is essentially distinguished from the systems hitherto prevalent, in that it corresponds to the real, complete nature of man; but for that very reason it is antagonistic to minds perverted and crippled by a superhuman, i.e., anti-human, anti-natural religion and speculation. It does not, as I have already said elsewhere, regard the *pen* as the only fit organ for the revelation of truth, but the eye and ear, the hand and foot; it does not identify the *idea* of the fact with the fact itself, so as to reduce real existence to an existence on paper, but it separates the two, and precisely by this separation attains to the *fact itself*; it recognizes as the true thing, not the thing as it is an object of the abstract reason, but as it is an object of the real, complete man, and hence as it is itself a real, complete thing. This philosophy does not rest on an Understanding *per se*, on an absolute, nameless understanding, belonging one knows not to whom, but on the

understanding of man; – though not, I grant, on that of man enervated by speculation and dogma; – and it speaks the language of men, not an empty, unknown tongue. Yes, both in substance and in speech, it places philosophy in *the negation of philosophy*, i.e., it declares *that* alone to be the true philosophy which is converted *in succum et sanguinem* [in sap and blood], which is incarnate in Man; and hence it finds its highest triumph in the fact that to all dull and pedantic minds, which place the *essence* of philosophy in the *show* of philosophy, it appears to be no philosophy at all.

This philosophy has for its principle, not the Substance of Spinoza, not the *ego* of Kant and Fichte, not the Absolute Identity of Schelling, not the Absolute Mind of Hegel, in short, no abstract, merely conceptional being, but a *real* being, the true *Ens realissimum* [the most perfect, most actual being] – man; its principle, therefore, is in the highest degree positive and real. It generates thought from the *opposite* of thought, from Matter, from existence, from the senses; it has relation to its object first through the senses, i.e., passively, before defining it in thought. Hence my work, as a specimen of this philosophy, so far from being a production to be placed in the category of Speculation, – although in another point of view it is the true, the incarnate result of prior philosophical systems, – is the direct opposite of speculation, nay, puts an end to it by explaining it. Speculation makes religion say only what it has *itself* thought, and expressed far better than religion; it assigns a meaning to religion without any reference to the *actual* meaning of religion; it does not look beyond itself. I, on the contrary, let religion itself speak; I constitute myself only its listener and interpreter, not its prompter. Not to invent, but to discover, 'to unveil existence,' has been my sole object; to *see* correctly, my sole endeavour. It is not I, but religion that worships man, although religion, or rather theology, denies this; it is not I, an insignificant individual, but religion itself that says: God is man, man is God; it is not I, but religion that denies the God who is *not* man, but only an *ens rationis*, – since it makes God become man, and then constitutes this God, not distinguished from man, having a human form, human feelings, and human thoughts, the object of its worship and veneration. I have only found the key to the cipher of the Christian religion, only extricated its true meaning from the web of contradictions and delusions called theology; – but in doing so I have certainly committed a sacrilege. If therefore my work is negative, irreligious, atheistic, let it be remembered that atheism – at least in the sense of this work – is the secret of religion itself; that religion itself, not indeed on the surface, but fundamentally, not in intention or according to its own supposition, but in its heart, in its essence, believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature. Or let it be *proved* that the *historical* as well as the rational arguments of my work are false; let them be refuted – not, however, I entreat, by judicial denunciations, or theological jeremiads, by the trite phrases of speculation, or other pitiful expedients for which I have no name, but by *reasons*, and such reasons as I have not already thoroughly answered.

Certainly, my work is negative, destructive; but, be it observed, only in relation to the *un*human, not to the human elements of religion.

* * *

Religion is the dream of the human mind. But even in dreams we do not find ourselves in emptiness or in heaven, but on earth, in the realm of reality; we only see real things in the entrancing splendour of imagination and caprice, instead of in the simple daylight of reality and necessity. Hence I do nothing more to religion – and to

speculative philosophy and theology also – than to open its eyes, or rather to turn its gaze from the internal towards the external, i.e., I change the object as it is in the imagination into the object as it is in reality.

But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, fancy to reality, the appearance to the essence, this change, inasmuch as it does away with illusion, is an absolute annihilation, or at least a reckless profanation; for in these days *illusion* only is *sacred, truth profane*. Nay, sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness. Religion has disappeared, and for it has been substituted, even among Protestants, the *appearance* of religion – the Church – in order at least that 'the faith' may be imparted to the ignorant and indiscriminating multitude; *that* faith being still the Christian, because the Christian churches stand now as they did a thousand years ago, and now, as formerly, the *external signs* of the faith are in vogue. That which has no longer any existence in faith (the faith of the modern world is only an ostensible faith, a faith which does not believe what it fancies that it believes, and is only an undecided, pusillanimous unbelief) is still to pass current as *opinion*: that which is no longer sacred in itself and in truth is still at least to *seem* sacred. Hence the simulated religious indignation of the present age...

* * *

I have sketched, with a few sharp touches, the historical solution of Christianity, and have shown that Christianity has in fact long vanished, not only from the reason but from the life of mankind, that it is nothing more than a *fixed idea*, in flagrant contradiction with our fire and life assurance companies, our railroads and steam-carriages, our picture and sculpture galleries, our military and industrial schools, our theatres and scientific museums.

9 Karl Marx (1818–1883) on Alienation

The concept of 'alienation' has been widely applied to the arts in the modern period, where it is usually taken to indicate a disaffected psychological disposition on the part of the artist. In the present text, however, Marx views alienation in social terms. He sees it as a characteristic of men's estrangement from their work and their products in the period of modern capitalist production. That which makes humans human, referred to by Marx as their 'species being', is their free, creative capacity. Capitalist commodity production robs them of this. To an extent, for Marx, the opposite of the alienated labour demanded by commodity production is to be found in the work of art; though the comparison is not explicitly made in the present text. Marx wrote these early notes in Paris in 1844. After graduating in philosophy from university in Germany, he had taken up a career in journalism. Following the censorship of his newspaper, he moved to Paris, the centre of radical politics and culture for the whole of Europe, in late 1843. The manuscript remained unpublished in his lifetime. The ideas contained in it however became influential in the twentieth century, following its first publication in the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, Moscow, 1927–35. The present extracts are from the translation of the 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts' of 1844 by Gregor Benton, in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975, pp. 323–30, 359–61.

[...] The *devaluation* of the human world grows in direct proportion to the *increase in value* of the world of things. Labour not only produces commodities; it also produces itself and the workers as a *commodity* and it does so in the same proportion in which it produces commodities in general.

This fact simply means that the object that labour produces, its product, stands opposed to it as *something alien*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labour is labour embodied and made material in an object, it is the *objectification* of labour. The realization of labour is its objectification. In the sphere of political economy this realization of labour appears as a *loss of reality* for the worker, objectification as *loss of and bondage to the object*, and appropriation as *estrangement*, as *alienation*. [...]

Up to now we have considered the estrangement, the alienation of the worker only from one aspect, i.e. his *relationship to the products of his labour*. But estrangement manifests itself not only in the result, but also in the *act of production*, within the *activity of production* itself. How could the product of the worker's activity confront him as something alien if it were not for the fact that in the act of production he was estranging himself from himself? After all, the product is simply the résumé of the activity, of the production. So if the product of labour is alienation, production itself must be active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation. The estrangement of the object of labour merely summarizes the estrangement, the alienation in the activity of labour itself. [...]

We now have to derive a third feature of *estranged labour* from the two we have already looked at.

Man is a species-being, not only because he practically and theoretically makes the species – both his own and those of other things – his object, but also – and this is simply another way of saying the same thing – because he looks upon himself as the present, living species, because he looks upon himself as a *universal* and therefore free being.

Species-life, both for man and for animals, consists physically in the fact that man, like animals, lives from inorganic nature; and because man is more universal than animals, so too is the area of inorganic nature from which he lives more universal. Just as plants, animals, stones, air, light, etc., theoretically form a part of human consciousness, partly as objects of science and partly as objects of art – his spiritual inorganic nature, his spiritual means of life, which he must first prepare before he can enjoy and digest them – so too in practice they form a part of human life and human activity. [...]

The animal is immediately one with its life activity. It is not distinct from that activity; it *is* that activity. Man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and consciousness. He has conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges. Conscious life activity directly distinguishes man from animal life activity. Only because of that is he a species-being. Or rather, he is a conscious being, i.e. his own life is an object for him, only because he is a species-being. Only because of that is his activity free activity. Estranged labour reverses the relationship so that man, just because he is a conscious being, makes his life activity, his *being*, a mere means for his *existence*.

The practical creation of an *objective world*, the *fashioning* of inorganic nature, is proof that man is a conscious species-being, i.e. a being which treats the species as its own essential being or itself as a species-being. It is true that animals also produce. They build nests and dwellings, like the bee, the beaver, the ant, etc. But they produce only their own immediate needs or those of their young; they produce one-sidedly, while man produces universally; they produce only when immediate physical need compels them to do so, while man produces even when he is free from physical need and truly produces only in freedom from such need; they produce only themselves, while man reproduces the whole of nature; their products belong immediately to their physical bodies, while man freely confronts his own product. Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to each object its inherent standard; hence man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty.

It is therefore in his fashioning of the objective that man really proves himself to be a *species-being*. Such production is his active species-life. Through it nature appears as *his* work and his reality. The object of labour is therefore the *objectification of the species-life of man*: for man reproduces himself not only intellectually, in his consciousness, but actively and actually, and he can therefore contemplate himself in a world he himself has created. In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labour therefore tears away from him his *species-life*, his true species-objectivity, and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him. [...]

An immediate consequence of man's estrangement from the product of his labour, his life activity, his species-being, is the *estrangement of man from man*. When man confronts himself, he also confronts *other* men. What is true of man's relationship to his labour, to the product of his labour and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, and to the labour and the object of the labour of other men.

In general, the proposition that man is estranged from his species-being means that each man is estranged from the others and that all are estranged from man's essence.

* * *

This estrangement partly manifests itself in the fact that the refinement of needs and of the means of fulfilling them gives rise to a bestial degeneration and a complete, crude and abstract simplicity of need; or rather, that it merely reproduces itself in its opposite sense. Even the need for fresh air ceases to be a need for the worker. Man reverts once more to living in a cave, but the cave is now polluted by the mephitic and pestilential breath of civilization. Moreover, the worker has no more than a precarious right to live in it, for it is for him an alien power that can be daily withdrawn and from which, should he fail to pay, he can be evicted at any time. He actually has to *pay* for this mortuary. A dwelling in the *light*, which Prometheus describes in Aeschylus as one of the great gifts through which he transformed savages into men, ceases to exist for the worker. [...]

The simplification of machinery and of labour is used to make workers out of human beings who are still growing, who are completely immature, out of *children*, while the worker himself becomes a neglected child. The machine accommodates itself to man's *weakness*, in order to turn *weak* man into a machine. [...]

[. . .] Any *luxury* that the worker might enjoy is reprehensible, and anything that goes beyond the most abstract need – either in the form of passive enjoyment or active expression – appears to him as a luxury. Political economy, this science of *wealth*, is therefore at the same time the science of denial, of starvation, of *saving*, and it actually goes so far as to *save* man the *need* for fresh *air* or physical *exercise*. This science of the marvels of industry is at the same time the science of *asceticism*, and its true ideal is the *ascetic* but *rapacious* skinflint and the *ascetic* but *productive* slave. Its moral ideal is the *worker* who puts a part of his wages into savings, and it has even discovered a servile *art* which can dignify this charming little notion and present a sentimental version of it on the stage. It is therefore – for all its worldly and debauched appearance – a truly moral science, the most moral science of all. Self-denial, the denial of life and of all human needs, is its principal doctrine. The less you eat, drink, buy books, go to the theatre, go dancing, go drinking, think, love, theorize, sing, paint, fence, etc., the more you *save* and the greater will become that treasure which neither moths nor maggots can consume – your *capital*. The less you *are*, the less you give expression to your life, the more you *have*, the greater is your *alienated* life and the more you store up of your estranged life. [. . .]

10 Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) on Historical Materialism

Marx and Engels met in Paris in 1844 in response to Engels' publication of two articles in the radical journal edited by Marx, the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. After Marx's expulsion from Paris at the instigation of the Prussian authorities, their collaboration continued in Brussels during 1845–7. *The German Ideology*, a 700-page manuscript written in 1845–6, contained the first exposition of their materialist philosophy of history. It was written against the dominant Hegelian philosophical idealism, in which both had been trained. In place of the emphasis on spirit as the motivating factor of human life, Marx and Engels stressed actual social relations, and in particular economic power. They did not however separate questions of 'spirit' from those of society, much less deny their existence altogether. What they did, in effect, was reverse the traditional polarity: they read the world of ideas as dependent on the form of material reality. 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.' The implications for the world of the mind, art practice included, are fundamental. Overtaken by the revolutions of 1848, and unpublished in their lifetime, *The German Ideology* first appeared in the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, Moscow 1932. The present extracts are taken from the translation by W. Lough, C. Dutt and C. P. Magill, edited and introduced by C. J. Arthur, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970/74, pp. 37, 42, 46–8, 58–9, 64.

Preface

Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations. Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas,

imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away. Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts. Let us teach men, says one, to exchange these imaginations for thoughts which correspond to the essence of man; says the second, to take up a critical attitude to them; says the third, to knock them out of their heads; and – existing reality will collapse.

These innocent and childlike fancies are the kernel of the modern Young-Hegelian philosophy, which not only is received by the German public with horror and awe, but is announced by our philosophic heroes with the solemn consciousness of its cataclysmic dangerousness and criminal ruthlessness. The first volume of the present publication has the aim of uncloaking these sheep, who take themselves and are taken for wolves; of showing how their bleating merely imitates in a philosophic form the conceptions of the German middle class; how the boasting of these philosophic commentators only mirrors the wretchedness of the real conditions in Germany. It is its aim to debunk and discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality, which appeals to the dreamy and muddled German nation. [...]

A. IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM

First Premises of Materialist Method

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premises can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. Of course, we cannot here go either into the actual physical nature of man, or into the natural conditions in which man finds himself – geological, orohydrographical, climatic and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production. [...]

The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they *really* are; i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc. – real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting-point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as *their* consciousness.

This method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment. Its premises are men, not in any fantastic isolation and rigidity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this active life-process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead facts as it is with the empiricists (themselves still abstract), or an imagined activity of imagined subjects, as with the idealists.

Where speculation ends – in real life – there real, positive science begins: the representation of the practical activity, of the practical process of development of

men. Empty talk about consciousness ceases, and real knowledge has to take its place. When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent branch of knowledge loses its medium of existence.

* * *

B. THE ILLUSION OF THE EPOCH

Civil Society and the Conception of History

[...] From this it follows that this transformation of history into world history is not indeed a mere abstract act on the part of the 'self-consciousness', the world spirit, or of any other metaphysical spectre, but a quite material, empirically verifiable act, an act the proof of which every individual furnishes as he comes and goes, eats, drinks and clothes himself.

This conception of history depends on our ability to expound the real process of production, starting out from the material production of life itself, and to comprehend the form of intercourse connected with this and created by this mode of production (i.e. civil society in its various stages), as the basis of all history; and to show it in its action as State, to explain all the different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, etc. etc. and trace their origins and growth from that basis; by which means, of course, the whole thing can be depicted in its totality (and therefore, too, the reciprocal action of these various sides on one another). It has not, like the idealistic view of history, in every period to look for a category, but remains constantly on the real *ground* of history; it does not explain practice from the idea but explains the formation of ideas from material practice; and accordingly it comes to the conclusion that all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism, by resolution into 'self-consciousness' or transformation into 'apparitions', 'spectres', 'fancies', etc. but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to this idealistic humbug; that not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history, also of religion, of philosophy and all other types of theory.

* * *

Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and

determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age [...]

11 Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) on the Bourgeoisie

In the mid-1840s Marx and Engels had become active in radical politics and journalism. Marx, then exiled in Brussels, was invited by a leftist group in London, the League of the Just, to write their programme. This he and Engels did during December 1847 to January 1848. The group, meanwhile, had changed their name to the Communist League, and they adopted the 12,000-word programme as their Manifesto. The observation of its opening lines, that 'a spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism', appeared prophetic in the light of subsequent events, as revolution broke out in several countries during 1848. In addition to its well-known rallying cry for the workers of all nations to unite, the Manifesto also contained vivid analyses of the dynamic of modern bourgeois society. Retrospectively, and unexpectedly, it seems that Baudelaire and Marx were writing about the same thing, albeit from different perspectives: the one mapping society's transient, shifting phenomena in the modern city (cf. IIB13), the other analysing its underlying causes in the mode of production. In particular, Marx emphasized the dynamic, revolutionary nature of modern capitalism: 'all that is solid melts into air'. Originally published in London, in German, in February 1848, *The Communist Manifesto* has subsequently been translated and reprinted the world over. The present extracts are taken from the English translation of 1888 by Samuel Moore, in the Penguin edition, London, 1967, pp. 80–6.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. [...]

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable 'third estate' of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, corner-stone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive

of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors', and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment'. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom – Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which Reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind. [...]

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of

rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West. [...]

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground – what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour? [...]

Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells.

12 Théophile Thoré (1807–1869) from 'Salon of 1848'

Thoré reviewed each of the annual Salons between 1835 and 1849 (see also IIIB8). He had responded at an early stage in his career to the ideas of St Simon (IA5) and retained a strong engagement in political thought and activity. The Salon of 1848 took place in the wake of revolution. The events of February not only interrupted the operations of the Salon jury but led to the temporary dismantling of the system of privilege on which those operations were based. As a convinced republican, Thoré took the opportunity of his review to celebrate the resulting anarchy (though not to approve incompetence in the works on display), to bid an ironic farewell to a regime committed to 'material interests and the baser passions', and to welcome in a 'new, poetic and civilizing art'. Under these conditions only the works of Delacroix held his attention long enough to produce a reasoned critical judgement. By December, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had been adopted as president. The following year Thoré was exiled under threat of death for his part in an unsuccessful revolt. He was not to return to France until after the amnesty of 1859, though he continued writing in exile, adopting the pseudonym William Bürger in 1854 (see IIIB8 and IIIC9). The 'Salon de 1848' was first published in *Le Constitutionnel*, Paris, 1848. It was reprinted in *Salons de T. Thoré*, Paris: Libraire International, 1868, pp. 557–65, from which this translation has been made by Jonathan Murphy. On the occasion of the reprint, Thoré appended a brief note in his persona as William Bürger, to the effect that the 'Salon of 1848' was of interest as a souvenir of the hope and enthusiasm inspired by the revolution – at the time.

The revolution of February surprised the jury of the academy in the midst of its functions. The weighing of souls had begun: the light, free sketches of Lessore had already been rejected, and that famous woman's torso, the delight of the crowd, had been hung in the right place. But at the first hint of the insurrection, the worthies of the Civil List snatched up their glasses and wigs and took to their heels.

The jury itself, the management of the Beaux-Arts, and the old administrative staff of the museums have all gone with the abolishing of the List. Nothing yet has been set up in their place; only Jeanron has been appointed Keeper of the Pictures at the Louvre. Since the beginning of the upheavals, the arts have all been left to fend for themselves. [...]

The first step to protect the arts that should have been taken after the revolution was to gather all the artists together and invite them to elect a permanent committee to represent them to the Republic, which would have been able to help them formulate and express their wishes. Instead, all that has happened is the setting up of a commission to hang the work in the Salon. The meeting took place at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where the teachers called in all the students. And guess who got the most votes . . . M. Léon Cogniet. For the rest, with the exception of two members of the old jury, Messieurs Brascassat and Abel de Pujol, the make-up of this temporary committee – a fair expression of all the tendencies and all the different styles – serves to prove that a system of universal suffrage gets nearer to the truth than any other. One of the more bizarre twists of the election was the name Couture coming out of the urn after that of Abel de Pujol, and the name Théodore Rousseau coming out after that of Brascassat. Among the sculptors, the assembly also passed two jurors from the old régime, while also proclaiming the names of Barye, Rudé, David [d'Angers] and other independent artists.

May the peace remain, now that the artistic community has placed those formerly banished by the academy at its head, and that we now have at the very top of the state a poet, a labourer and the historian of the ex-king Louis-Philippe. February 24th seems almost a century ago.

M. Jeanron and his staff have worked miracles in hanging so many pictures on the walls of the museum, and in getting so many blocks of stone, plaster and marble up onto the first floor. But it was extremely important that this national exhibition should not be put off, and there was no question of resolving in time the questions that the choice of a new jury and a new location would have raised. But we are assured that in years to come, the galleries of the museum itself will not be used for such temporary exhibitions. The king's departure will free up a considerable amount of space in the Louvre, the Tuileries and in all the national monuments.

So the 5,180 works presented for selection before the revolution have all been passed without examination, and the only task of the artists' commission has been to oversee the classification, to ensure that no work worthy of serious consideration be hung in some dark corner. But it must be said that this over-hasty classification leaves much to be desired: this author notes in particular a Meissonier portrait, a forest scene by Diaz, and several other distinguished landscapes lost in the midst of some rather more outlandish creations.

This 1848 Salon is indeed an extremely curious spectacle. There are paintings here the like of which one never sees, even in the most far-flung provincial antique shops. Yet the Salons have always contained some such works, their presence sanctioned by the Civil List jury, as that jury was always more concerned with keeping out its enemies than it was with examining the merits of individual works. What has changed today is the prodigious number of these eccentric images. But public response is an adept teacher. One may legitimately hold out the hope that the reception accorded by the public to several hundred such daubings might convince the daubers in question to embrace another career. Only yesterday (perhaps I should say: a hundred years ago) – under the reign of the last Bourbon, these poor journeymen who had strayed into the arts could still cry out that they were being neglected or persecuted, and lacked nothing but exposure to a wider public. But exposure to ridicule is now what they

face. One hopes that these estimable citizens will no longer persist in attempting to force entry into the world of art; the new Republic will offer them an honest trowel instead of a brush.

For my part, despite the slightly comic nature of the present Salon, I am not entirely convinced of the necessity of there being a jury at all, except for the question of the layout of the Salon. I would even go so far as to back, at the next national exhibition, the trying-out of a policy of unlimited freedom, provided that some intelligent committee be appointed to separate the genuine works of art from the indescribable rubbish. Any lunatic has the right to speak in a public place, but at the risk of being booed by the crowd or silenced by a more eloquent orator. Freedom will always be the best means of achieving justice and social order.

What is unusual, and slightly saddening, is that from this jumble of bizarre creations no genuinely new talent has emerged. But perhaps one should expect this: how indeed could artists be expected to flourish under a régime dedicated to the glorification of material interests and the baser passions? Amongst those that God had predestined for poetry the weakest have passed away, like Hector Martin; only the strongest and the most patient have taken their rightful place, in spite of those times of oppression. The present generation has almost run its course. The hopes of the Republic are carried by those young and vigorous generations yet untried, whose vocation will be nurtured by a national teaching programme, instilling noble thoughts and ideas, and promoting the creation of a brilliant, human, universal ideal of art. I am confident that before a year has elapsed, we will see in the next Salon (and even more so in the new public monuments) some daring attempts at achieving this new, fecund and durable art.

This then will be the last inventory of such bric-à-brac; pictures like lost children, destined to die without ever having lived – or illegitimate offspring, with no right to a name. The Republic, besides encouraging the growth of this new, poetic and civilizing art, will deliver us from these parasites which have sucked its blood and sapped its strength. One of the principal benefits of the new Republic and of the freedoms to come will be to ensure that the people have work that befits their individual talents; working for the glory and the success of France, they will find happiness in their own lives. Charity, to be successful, must be aimed at others. The charity that begins at home, despite what the proverbs tell us, leads only to egotism and anarchy.

Eugène Delacroix has always been a master of that supreme art that stirs the hearts and minds of a people, turning history into memorable images. His painting deserves the radiant place it has on the cupolas and ceilings of our monuments. His *Liberty leading the People* has just been transferred to the Luxembourg, where it now hangs beside *The Massacre of Chios*; both being episodes of great import and beauty in contemporary settings. It is said that he has just begun an *Equality leading the People*; for our recent revolution is the true sister of that national one to which he paid homage eighteen years ago. This time, the entire population made a contribution, and the spoils of victory will be shared out equally amongst them. One can only hope that Delacroix makes haste, and that both paintings will soon be on display, hanging side by side above the head of the President in the National Assembly. Delacroix is like a great epic poet, who, when working on a massive scale, occasionally decorates the

margin of the manuscript with precious verses. The epic painter, resting between large projects, fills his canvases with imagination, feeling and colour.

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The painting *Arab Actors and Clowns* contains about a dozen figures, executed with the sort of proportions one usually finds in Poussin. In the midst of Moors or Jews, resplendent in richly coloured costumes, and women seated or reclining in a variety of postures, two arab players are acting out a sort of pantomime in the open air. There are majestic figures, draped in strange tissues, like sixteenth-century Venetians in a Titian painting; voluptuous, coquettish women, whose tawny faces glow in the sunlight; an extraordinary variety of pure tones, in red, orange, blue and silver, broken tones of leaf-brown, pearl, coffee, lilac and roses, set against a green landscape, all under the deep skies of the Orient. It is a masterpiece of light, reminiscent of the *Jewish Wedding in Morocco* in the Luxembourg.

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Worthy of note after the Delacroix are Diaz and Meissonier, together with a few other landscapes and portraits, a few bigger canvases, two marbles by Clésinger and Pradier, and several large statues. Then comes the great number of unexceptional works, and those mildly pleasing in their eccentric naivety. But I will detain the reader no longer with talk of this year's Salon. There are more interesting spectacles which await us in the world of politics. Today, we can do better than making art or poetry: we can make living history.