

Paris – Capital of the Nineteenth Century

The waters are blue and the plants pink;
the evening is sweet to look upon;
one goes for a stroll. The great ladies are
out for a stroll; behind them walk lesser ladies.

Nguyen-Trong-Hiep: *Paris capital of France* (1897)

I Fourier or the Arcades

De ces palais les colonnes magiques
A l'amateur montrent de toutes parts
Dans les objets qu'étaient leurs portiques
Que l'industrie est rivale des arts.

Nouveaux tableaux de Paris (1828)¹

Most of the Paris arcades came into being during the decade and a half which followed 1822. The first condition for their emergence was the boom in the textile trade. The *magasins de nouveauté*, the first establishments that kept large stocks of goods on the premises, began to appear. They were the forerunners of the department stores. It was the time of which Balzac wrote: 'Le grand poème de l'étalage chante ses strophes de couleur depuis la Madeleine jusqu'à la porte Saint-Denis.'² The arcades were centres of the luxury-goods trade. The manner

in which they were fitted out displayed Art in the service of the salesman. Contemporaries never tired of admiring them. For long afterwards they remained a point of attraction for foreigners. An 'Illustrated Paris Guide' said: 'These arcades, a new contrivance of industrial luxury, are glass-covered, marble-floored passages through entire blocks of houses, whose proprietors have joined forces in the venture. On both sides of these passages, which obtain their light from above, there are arrayed the most elegant shops, so that such an arcade is a city, indeed a world, in miniature.' The arcades were the setting for the first gas-lighting.

The beginnings of construction in iron constituted the second condition for the appearance of the arcades. The Empire had seen in this technique a contribution to the renewal of architecture along ancient Greek lines. The architectural theorist Bötticher expressed the general conviction when he said that 'with regard to the art-forms of the new system, the formal principle of the Hellenic mode' must come into force. Empire was the style of revolutionary terrorism, for which the State was an end in itself. Just as Napoleon little realized the functional nature of the State as instrument of the rule of the bourgeois class, so the master-builders of his time equally little realized the functional nature of iron, with which the constructional principle entered upon its rule in architecture. These master-builders fashioned supports in the style of the Pompeian column, factories in the style of dwelling-houses, just as later the first railway stations were modelled on *chalets*. 'Construction occupies the role of the sub-conscious.' Nevertheless, the concept of the engineer, which came originally from the Revolutionary Wars, began to gain ground, and the struggles between builder and decorator, Ecole Polytechnique and Ecole des Beaux Arts, began.

With iron, an artificial building material appeared for the first time in the history of architecture. It went through a development whose tempo accelerated during the course of the century. This received its decisive impulse when it turned out that the locomotive, with which experiments had been made since the end of the 'twenties, could only be utilized on iron rails. The rail was the first iron unit of construction, the forerunner of the girder. Iron was avoided for dwelling-houses, and made use of for arcades, exhibition halls, railway stations—buildings which served transitory purposes. Simultaneously, the architectonic areas in which glass was employed were extended. But the social conditions for its increased utilization as a building material only came into being a hundred years later. In Scheerbart's *Glass Architecture* (1914) it still appeared in the context of the Utopia.

* * *

¹ 'The magic columns of these palaces show to the connoisseur on every side, in the articles which their portals display, that industry rivals the arts.'

² 'The great poem of display recites its stanzas of colour from the Madeleine to the gate of Saint-Denis.'

To the form of the new means of production, which to begin with is still dominated by the old (Marx), there correspond images in the collective consciousness in which the new and the old are intermingled. These images are ideals, and in them the collective seeks not only to transfigure, but also to transcend, the immaturity of the social product and the deficiencies of the social order of production. In these ideals there also emerges a vigorous aspiration to break with what is outdated—which means, however, with the most recent past. These tendencies turn the fantasy, which gains its initial stimulus from the new, back upon the primal past. In the dream in which every epoch sees in images the epoch which is to succeed it, the latter appears coupled with elements of prehistory—that is to say of a classless society. The experiences of this society, which have their store-place in the collective unconscious, interact with the new to give birth to the utopias which leave their traces in a thousand configurations of life, from permanent buildings to ephemeral fashions.

These relationships became discernible in the Utopia devised by Fourier. Their innermost origin lay in the appearance of machines. But this fact was not expressed directly in their utopian presentation; this derived both from the amorality of the market society and from the false morality mustered to serve it. The phalanstery was to lead men back into relations in which morality would become superfluous. Its highly complicated organization resembled machinery. The imbrications of the *passions*, the intricate combination of the *passions mécanistes* with the *passion cabaliste*, were primitive analogies based on the machine, formed in the material of psychology. This machinery, formed of men, produced the land of Cockaigne, the primal wish-symbol, that Fourier's Utopia had filled with new life.

In the arcades, Fourier had seen the architectonic canon for the phalanstery. Their reactionary transformation at Fourier's hands was characteristic: while they originally served social ends, with him they became dwelling-places. The phalanstery became a city of arcades. Fourier established in the narrow formal world of the Empire the highly-coloured idyll of Biedermeier. Its fading brilliance lasted until Zola. The latter took over Fourier's ideas in his *Travail*, just as he took his leave of the arcades in *Thérèse Raquin*.

—Marx broke a lance on Fourier's behalf, defending him from Carl Grün, and stressed his 'gargantuan concept of man'. He also turned his attention to Fourier's humour. As a matter of fact, Jean Paul in his *Levana* is as related to Fourier the pedagogue as Scheerbart in his *Glass Architecture* is to Fourier the creator of Utopias.

* * *

³ 'Every epoch dreams its successor.' Michelet: *Future! Future!*

II Daguerre or the Dioramas

Soleil, prends garde à toi!
A. J. Wiertz: *Oeuvres Littéraires*
(Paris 1870)⁴

With construction in iron, architecture began to outgrow art; painting did the same in its turn with the dioramas. Preparation for the dioramas reached its peak just at the moment when the arcades began to appear. Tireless efforts had been made to render the dioramas, by means of technical artifice, the *locus* of a perfect imitation of nature. People sought to copy the changing time of day in the countryside, the rising of the moon, or the rushing of the waterfall. David counselled his pupils to draw from Nature in their dioramas. While the dioramas strove to produce life-like transformations in the Nature portrayed in them, they foreshadowed, via photography, the moving-picture and the talking-picture.

Contemporary with the dioramas there was a dioramic literature. *Le livre des Cent-et-Un*, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, *Le diable à Paris*, *La grande ville* belonged to this. These books were a preparation for the belletristic collective work for which Girardin created a home in the 'thirties with *the feuilleton*. They consisted of individual sketches whose anecdotal form corresponded to the plastically arranged foreground of the dioramas, and whose documentary content corresponded to their painted background. This literature was socially dioramic too. For the last time the worker appeared, away from his class, as a stage-extra in an idyll.

The dioramas, which signalled a revolution in the relationship of art to technology, were at the same time the expression of a new attitude to life. The town-dweller, whose political supremacy over the countryside was frequently expressed in the course of the century, made an attempt to bring the country into the town. In the dioramas, the town was transformed into landscape, just as it was later in a subtler way for the *flâneurs*. Daguerre was a pupil of the diorama-painter Prévost, whose establishment was situated in the Arcade of the Dioramas. Description of the dioramas of Prévost and of Daguerre. In 1839 Daguerre's diorama was burned down. In the same year he announced the invention of the daguerreotype.

Arago presented photography in a speech in the Assembly. He assigned to it its place in the history of technical science. He prophesied its scientific applications. Whereupon the artists began to debate its artistic value. Photography led to the destruction of the great professional standing of the miniature-portraitists. This did not happen purely for economic reasons. The early photography was artistically superior to miniature-portraiture. The technical reason for this lay in the long exposure time, which necessitated the most intense concentration on the part of the subject. The social reason for it lay in the circumstance that the first photographers belonged to the *avant-garde* and that their clientele for the most part came from it. Nadar's lead over his professional colleagues was demonstrated when he embarked on

⁴'Sun, look out for yourself.'

taking snapshots in the Paris sewers. Thus for the first time discoveries were required of the lens. And its significance became all the greater as, in the light of the new technical and social reality, the subjective contribution to artistic and graphic information was seen to be increasingly questionable.

The World Exhibition of 1855 was the first to have a special exhibit called 'Photography'. In the same year Wiertz published his great article on photography, in which he assigned to it the philosophical enlightenment of painting. He understood this enlightenment, as his own paintings show, in a political sense. Wiertz can thus be designated as the first person who, if he did not foresee, at least helped to pave the way for montage, as the agitational utilization of photography. As the scope of communications increased, the informational importance of painting diminished. The latter began, in reaction to photography, firstly to emphasize the coloured elements of the image. As Impressionism gave way to Cubism, painting created for itself a broader domain, into which for the time being photography could not follow it. Photography in its turn, from the middle of the century onwards, extended enormously the sphere of the market-society; for it offered on the market, in limitless quantities, figures, landscapes, events which had previously been utilizable either not at all, or only as a picture for one customer. And in order to increase sales, it renewed its objects by means of modish variations in camera-technique, which determined the subsequent history of photography.

III Grandville or the World Exhibitions

Oui, quand le monde entier, de Paris jusqu'en Chine,
O divin Saint-Simon, sera dans ta doctrine,
L'âge d'or doit renaître avec tout son éclat,
Les fleuves rouleront du thé, du chocolat;
Les moutons tout rôtis bondiront dans la plaine,
Et les brochets au bleu nageront dans la Seine;
Les épinards viendront au monde fricassés,
Avec des croûtons frits tout au tour concassés.
Les arbres produiront des pommes en compotes
Et l'on moissonnera des cerricks et des bottes;
Il neigera du vin, il pleuvera des poulets,
Et du ciel les canards tomberont aux navets.

Lauglé et Vanderbusch: *Louis et le Saint-Simonien* (1832)⁵

World exhibitions were places of pilgrimage to the fetish Commodity. 'L'Europe s'est déplacé pour voir des marchandises',⁶ said Taine in 1855. The world exhibitions were preceded by national exhibitions of industry, of which the first took place in 1798 on the Champs de Mars. This was a result of the desire 'to amuse the working-class, and is for the latter a festival of emancipation'. The workers were to the fore as customers. The framework of the entertainment industry had not yet

⁵ 'Yes, when the entire world, from Paris as far as China, O divine Saint-Simon, follows your doctrine, then must the Golden Age return in all its brilliance, the rivers will flow with tea, with chocolate; sheep already roast will gambol in the plain, and buttered pike will swim in the Seine; fricasseed spinach will spring from the ground, with a border of crushed fried bread. The trees will bear stewed apples, and bales and sheaves will be harvested; wine will fall like snow, and chickens like rain, and ducks will drop from the sky with a garnish of turnips.'

⁶ 'All Europe has set off to view goods.'

been formed. The public festival provided it. Chaptal's speech on industry opened this exhibition.

—The Saint-Simonians, who projected the industrialization of the earth, appropriated the idea of world exhibitions. Chevalier, the first authority in the new field, was a pupil of Enfantin and editor of the Saint-Simonian paper *Globe*. The Saint-Simonians had anticipated the development of the world-economy, but not the class-struggle. Their part in industrial and commercial enterprises around the middle of the century went together with a helplessness in those questions which concerned the proletariat. The world exhibitions glorified the exchange-value of commodities. They created a framework in which their use-value receded into the background. They opened up a phantasmagoria into which people entered in order to be distracted. The entertainment industry made that easier for them by lifting them to the level of the commodity. They yielded to its manipulations while savouring their alienation from themselves and from others.

—The enthronement of the commodity and the glitter of distraction around it was the secret theme of Grandville's art. The correlative to this was the ambivalence between its Utopian and its cynical element. Its refinements in the representation of dead objects corresponded to what Marx calls the 'theological capers' of the commodity. They took clear shape in the *spécialité*: under Grandville's pencil, a way of designating goods which came into use around this time in the luxury industry transformed the whole of Nature into specialities. He presented the latter in the same spirit in which advertisements—this word too (*réclames*) came into existence at that time—were beginning to present their wares. He ended in madness.

* * *

Fashion: Mr Death! Mr Death!

Leopardi: *Dialogue between Fashion and Death*

The world exhibitions erected the universe of commodities. Grandville's fantasies transmitted commodity-character onto the universe. They modernised it. The ring of Saturn became a cast-iron balcony, upon which the inhabitants of Saturn take the air of an evening. The literary counterpart of this graphic Utopia was represented by the books of Fourier's follower, the naturalist Toussenat.

—Fashion prescribed the ritual by which the fetish Commodity wished to be worshipped, and Grandville extended the sway of fashion over the objects of daily use as much as over the cosmos. In pursuing it to its extremes, he revealed its nature. It stands in opposition to the organic. It prostitutes the living body to the inorganic world. In relation to the living it represents the rights of the corpse. Fetishism, which succumbs to the sex-appeal of the inorganic, is its vital nerve; and the cult of the commodity recruits this to its service.

Victor Hugo published a manifesto for the Paris World Exhibition of 1867: 'To the Peoples of Europe.' Their interests had been championed earlier and more unequivocally by the delegations of French workers, of which the first had been sent to the London World Exhibition of 1851, and the second, of 750 members, to that of 1862. The latter was of

direct importance for Marx's foundation of the International Workingmen's Association.

—The phantasmagoria of capitalist culture attained its most radiant unfurling in the World Exhibition of 1867. The Second Empire was at the height of its power. Paris was confirmed in its position as the capital of luxury and of fashion. Offenbach set the rhythm for Parisian life. The operetta was the ironical Utopia of a lasting domination of Capital.

IV Louis-Philippe or the Interior

Une tête, sur la table de nuit, repose
Comme une renoncule.

Baudelaire: *Une martyre*⁷

Under Louis-Philippe, the private citizen entered upon the historical scene. The extension of the apparatus of democracy by means of a new electoral law coincided with the parliamentary corruption that was organized by Guihot. Under cover of this, the ruling class made history while it pursued its business affairs. It encouraged the construction of railways in order to improve its holdings. It supported the rule of Louis-Philippe as that of the private businessman. With the July Revolution the bourgeoisie had realized the aims of 1789 (Marx).

For the private citizen, for the first time the living-space became distinguished from the place of work. The former constituted itself as the interior. The counting-house was its complement. The private citizen who in the counting-house took reality into account, required of the interior that it should maintain him in his illusions. This necessity was all the more pressing since he had no intention of adding social preoccupations to his business ones. In the creation of his private environment he suppressed them both. From this sprang the phantasmagorias of the interior. This represented the universe for the private citizen. In it he assembled the distant in space and in time. His drawing-room was a box in the world-theatre.

Digression on *art nouveau*. The shattering of the interior took place around the turn of the century in *art nouveau*. And yet the latter appeared, according to its ideology, to bring with it the perfecting of the interior. The transfiguration of the lone soul was its apparent aim. Individualism was its theory. With Vandervelde, there appeared the house as expression of the personality. Ornament was to such a house what the signature is to a painting. The real significance of *art nouveau* was not expressed in this ideology. It represented the last attempt at a sortie on the part of Art imprisoned by technical advance within her ivory tower. It mobilized all the reserve forces of interiority. They found their expression in the mediumistic language of line, in the flower as symbol of the naked, vegetable Nature that confronted the technologically armed environment. The new elements of construction in iron—girder-forms—obsessed *art nouveau*. Through ornament, it strove to win back these forms for Art. Concrete offered it new possibilities for the creation of plastic forms in architecture. Around this time the

⁷ 'A head rests upon the night-table like a ranunculus.'

real centre of gravity of the sphere of existence was displaced to the office. The de-realized centre of gravity created its abode in the private home. Ibsen's *Masterbuilder* summed up *art nouveau*: the attempt of the individual, on the basis of his interiority, to vie with technical progress leads to his downfall.

* * *

Je crois. . . à mon âme: la Chose
Léon Deubel: *Oeuvres* (Paris 1929)⁸

The interior was the place of refuge of Art. The collector was the true inhabitant of the interior. He made the glorification of things his concern. To him fell the task of Sisyphus which consisted of stripping things of their commodity character by means of his possession of them. But he conferred upon them only connoisseur's value, rather than use-value. The collector dreamed that he was in a world which was not only far-off in distance and in time, but which was also a better one, in which to be sure people were just as poorly provided with what they needed as in the world of everyday, but in which things were free from the bondage of being useful.

The interior was not only the private citizen's universe, it was also his casing. Living means leaving traces. In the interior, these were stressed. Coverings and antimacassars, boxes and casings, were devised in abundance, in which the traces of everyday objects were moulded. The resident's own traces were also moulded in the interior. The detective story appeared, which investigated these traces. The *Philosophy of Furniture*, as much as his detective stories, shows Poe to have been the first physiognomist of the interior. The criminals of the first detective novels were neither gentlemen nor apaches, but middle-class private citizens.

V Baudelaire or the Streets of Paris

Tout pour moi devient allégorie.

Baudelaire: *Le Cygne*⁹

Baudelaire's genius, which drew its nourishment from melancholy, was an allegorical one. With Baudelaire, Paris for the first time became the subject of lyrical poetry. This poetry is no local folklore; the allegorist's gaze which falls upon the city is rather the gaze of alienated man. It is the gaze of the *flâneur*, whose way of living still played over the growing destitution of men in the great city with a conciliatory gleam. The *flâneur* still stood at the margins, of the great city as of the bourgeois class. Neither of them had yet overwhelmed him. In neither of them was he at home. He sought his asylum in the crowd. Early contributions to the physiognomy of the crowd are to be found in Engels and in Poe. The crowd was the veil from behind which the familiar city as phantasmagoria beckoned to the *flâneur*. In it, the city was now landscape, now a room. And both of these went into the construction of the department store, which made use of *flânerie* itself in order to sell

⁸ 'I believe . . . in my soul: the Thing.'

⁹ 'Everything, for me, becomes allegory.'

goods. The department store was the *flâneur's* final coup.

As *flâneurs*, the intelligentsia came into the market-place. As they thought, to observe it—but in reality it was already to find a buyer. In this intermediary stage, in which they still had Maecenas, but were already beginning to familiarize themselves with the market, they took the form of Bohemia. To the uncertainty of their economic position corresponded the uncertainty of their political function. The most spectacular expression of this was provided by the professional conspirators, who without exception belonged to Bohemia. Their first field of activity was the army, later on it became the petty bourgeoisie, and on occasion the proletariat. However, this group saw in the real leaders of the latter its adversary. The Communist Manifesto put an end to its political existence. Baudelaire's poetry drew its force from the rebellious pathos of this group. He took the part of the asocial. He achieved his only sexual relationship with a whore.

* * *

Facilis descensus Averni.
Virgil: *Aeneid*¹⁰

It is the unique quality of Baudelaire's poetry that the images of the Woman and of Death intermingle in a third—that of Paris. The Paris of his poems is a sunken city, and more submarine than subterranean. The chthonic elements of the city—its topographical formation, the old abandoned bed of the Seine—have indeed found in him a mould. Yet with Baudelaire, in the 'death-loving idyll' of the city, there is decidedly a social, and modern, sub-stratum. The modern is a main stress in his poetry. As spleen he shatters the ideal (*Spleen et Idéal*). But it is precisely the modern which always conjures up prehistory. That happens here through the ambiguity which is peculiar to the social relations and events of this epoch. Ambiguity is the figurative appearance of the dialectic, the law of the dialectic at a standstill. This standstill is Utopia, and the dialectical image therefore a dream-image. The commodity clearly provides such an image: as fetish. The arcades, which are both house and stars, provide such an image. And such an image is provided by the whore, who is seller and commodity in one.

* * *

Le voyage pour connaître ma géographie
Record of a journey. (Paris 1907)¹¹

The last poem of the *Fleurs du mal*: *Le Voyage* 'O mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps, levons l'ancre.'¹² *The flâneur's* last journey: death. Its goal: novelty. 'Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau.'¹³ Novelty is a quality which does not depend on the use value of the commodity. It is the source of the illusion which belongs inalienably to the images which the collective unconscious engenders. It is the quintessence of false consciousness, of which fashion is the tireless agent. This illusion

¹⁰ 'The road to Hell is easy.'

¹¹ 'The journey to discover my geography.'

¹² 'O death, old captain, it is time, let us weigh anchor.'

¹³ 'To the depths of the unknown to find something new.'

of novelty is reflected, like one mirror in another, in the illusion of infinite similarity. The product of this reflection was the phantasmagoria of the 'history of civilization' in which the bourgeoisie drank its false consciousness to the dregs. Art, which began to have doubts about its function, and ceased to be 'inséparable de l'utilité' (Baudelaire), was forced to make novelty its highest value. Its *arbitrer novarum rerum* became the snob. He was for art what the dandy was for fashion.

—Just as in the 17th century allegory became the canon of dialectical imagery, so in the 19th century did *nouveauté*. And the newspapers marched shoulder to shoulder with the *magasins de nouveauté*. The press organized the market of spiritual values, upon which at first a boom developed. The non-conformists rebelled against the surrender of art to the market. They rallied round the banner of *L'art pour l'art*. From this slogan there sprang the conception of the total work of art, which attempted to isolate art against the development of technology. The rites with which it was celebrated were the counterpart of the distractions which glorified the commodity. Both left out of consideration the social being of man. Baudelaire gave way to the delusion of Wagner.

VI Haussmann or the Barricades

J'ai le culte du Beau, du Bien, des grandes choses,
De la belle nature inspirant le grand art,
Qu'il enchante l'oreille ou charme le regard;
J'ai l'amour du printemps en fleurs: femmes et roses.
Baron Haussmann: *Confession d'un lion devenu vieux*¹⁴

Das Blütenreich der Dekorationen,
Der Reiz der Landschaft, der Architektur
Und aller Szenerie-Effekt beruhen
Auf dem Gesetz der Perspektive nur.
Franz Böhle: *Theater-Katechismus*¹⁵

Haussmann's urbanistic ideal was one of views in perspective down long street-vistas. It corresponded to the tendency which was noticeable again and again during the 19th century, to ennoble technical exigencies with artistic aims. The institutions of the worldly and spiritual rule of the bourgeoisie, set in the frame of the *boulevards*, were to find their apotheosis. Before their completion, *boulevards* were covered over with tarpaulins, and unveiled like monuments.

—Haussmann's efficiency fitted in well with the idealism of Louis Napoleon. The latter encouraged finance capital. Paris experienced a great speculative boom. Speculation on the stock-exchange pushed into the background the forms of gambling that had come down from feudal society. To the phantasmagoria of space, to which the *flâneur* was addicted, there corresponded the phantasmagoria of time, to which the gambler dedicated himself. Gambling transformed time into a narcotic. Lafargue defined gambling as a miniature reproduction of the mysteries

¹⁴ 'I worship the Beautiful, the Good, great things, beautiful nature inspiring great art, whether it enchants the ear or charms the eye; I love the spring in flower: women and roses.' Baron Haussmann: *Confession of a lion who has grown old*.

¹⁵ 'The wealth of decoration, the charm of the countryside, of architecture and of all scenery-effects only depend upon the law of perspective.'

of the market-situation. The expropriations caused by Haussmann engendered a wave of fraudulent speculation. The judgments of the Court of Cassation, which drew its inspiration from the bourgeois and Orleanist opposition, increased the financial risk of Haussmannization. Haussmann attempted to shore up his dictatorship and to place Paris under an emergency régime. In 1864 he expressed his hatred for the rootless population of the great city in a speech in the Assembly. This population kept increasing as a result of his works. The increase of rents drove the proletariat into the suburbs. The Paris *quartiers* thereby lost their characteristic physiognomy. The red belt appeared. Haussmann gave himself the name *artiste démolisseur*.¹⁶ He felt a vocation for his work and stressed the fact in his memoirs. Meanwhile, as far as the Parisians were concerned, he alienated their city from them. They no longer felt at home in it. They began to become conscious of the inhuman character of the great city. Maxime du Camp's monumental work *Paris* owed its origin to this consciousness. The *Jérémiades d'un Haussmannisé* gave it the form of a biblical lament.

The real aim of Haussmann's works was the securing of the city against civil war. He wished to make the erection of barricades in Paris impossible for all time. With the same purpose, Louis Philippe had already introduced wooden paving. Nonetheless, the barricades played a role in the February Revolution. Engels gave some thought to the technique of barricade fighting. Haussmann intended to put a stop to it in two ways. The breadth of the streets was to make the erection of barricades impossible, and new streets were to provide the shortest route between the barracks and the working-class areas. Contemporaries christened the undertaking: 'L'embellissement stratégique.'¹⁷

* * *

Fais voir, en déjouant la ruse,
O République, à ces pervers
Ta grande face de Méduse
Au milieu de rouges éclairs.
Chanson d'ouvriers vers 1850¹⁸

The barricade was resurrected anew during the Commune. It was stronger and safer than ever. It extended across the great boulevards, often reached first-storey level, and shielded the trenches situated behind it. As the Communist Manifesto ended the epoch of the professional conspirators, so did the Commune put an end to the phantasmagoria that held sway over the freedom of the proletariat. It shattered the illusion that the task of the proletarian revolution was, hand in hand with the bourgeoisie, to complete the work of 1789. This illusion dominated the period from 1831 to 1871, from the Lyons Uprising to the Commune. The bourgeoisie had never shared this misapprehension. Its struggle against the social rights of the proletariat began right

¹⁶ 'Artist in demolition'.

¹⁷ 'Strategic beautification.'

¹⁸ 'Reveal, by exposing the fraud, O Republic, to those evil men your great Medusa's face amidst red lightning-flashes.'

from the great revolution, and coincided with the philanthropic movement, which masked it and which experienced its most significant development under Napoleon III. Under him, there appeared the movement's monumental work: Le Play's *Ouvriers européens*. Side by side with the concealed position of philanthropy, the bourgeoisie had at all times occupied the open one of the class struggle. As early as in 1831 it recognized in the *Journal des Débats*: 'Every manufacturer lives in his factory like the plantation-owner among his slaves'. The failure of the old working-class insurrections was brought about by the fact that no theory of revolution showed them the way, but on the other hand this was also the condition of the immediate power and enthusiasm with which it set about the construction of a new society. This enthusiasm, which reached its peak in the Commune, at times won over to the working class the best elements of the bourgeoisie, but in the end led it to defeat at the hands of its worst elements. Rimbaud and Courbet declared themselves for the Commune. The burning of Paris was a fitting conclusion to Haussmann's work of destruction.

* * *

My good father had been in Paris
Karl Gutzkow: *Letters from Paris* (1842).

Balzac was the first to speak of the ruin of the bourgeoisie. But it was surrealism which first allowed its gaze to roam freely over it. The development of the forces of production had turned the wish-symbols of the previous century into rubble, even before the monuments which represented them had crumbled. This development during the 19th century liberated the forms of creation from art, just as in the 16th century the sciences freed themselves from philosophy. A start was made by architecture as engineering. There followed the reproduction of Nature as photography. The creation of fantasies was preparing to become practical as commercial art. In the *feuilleton*, creative writing bowed to the exigencies of layout. All these products were on the point of entering the market as commodities. But they still lingered on the threshold. From this epoch spring the arcades and the interiors, the exhibition-halls and the dioramas. They are residues of a dream-world. The utilization of dream-elements in waking is the textbook example of dialectical thought. Hence dialectical thought is the organ of historical awakening. Every epoch not only dreams the next, but while dreaming impels it towards wakefulness. It bears its end within itself, and reveals it—as Hegel already recognized—by a ruse. With the upheaval of the market economy, we begin to recognize the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled.

Acknowledgement

'Paris, Hauptstadt des XIX Jahrhunderts' is published in *Illuminationen* by Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main. We are grateful for their permission to print our translation.