



MARXISM
AND THE HISTORY OF
ART

From William Morris to the New Left

Edited by **ANDREW HEMINGWAY**

MARXISM AND THE HISTORY OF ART

From William Morris
to the New Left

Edited by
Andrew Hemingway

Pluto  Press
LONDON • ANN ARBOR, MI

First published 2006 by Pluto Press
345 Archway Road, London N6 5AA
and 839 Greene Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

www.plutobooks.com

Copyright © Andrew Hemingway 2006

The right of the individual contributors to be identified as the authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 7453 2330 8 hardback

ISBN 0 7453 2329 4 paperback

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data applied for

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Designed and produced for Pluto Press by
Chase Publishing Services Ltd, Sidmouth, EX10 9QG, England
Typeset from disk by Stanford DTP Services, Northampton, England
Printed and bound in the European Union by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham and Eastbourne, England

Contents

Illustrations	vii
Series Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction	1
<i>Andrew Hemingway</i>	
1. William Morris: Decoration and Materialism	9
<i>Caroline Arscott</i>	
2. Mikhail Lifshits: A Marxist Conservative	28
<i>Stanley Mitchell</i>	
3. Frederick Antal	45
<i>Paul Stirton</i>	
4. Art as Social Consciousness: Francis Klingender and British Art	67
<i>David Bindman</i>	
5. Max Raphael: Aesthetics and Politics	89
<i>Stanley Mitchell</i>	
6. Walter Benjamin's Essay on Eduard Fuchs: An Art-Historical Perspective	106
<i>Frederic J. Schwartz</i>	
7. Meyer Schapiro: Marxism, Science and Art	123
<i>Andrew Hemingway</i>	
8. Henri Lefebvre and the Moment of the Aesthetic	143
<i>Marc James Léger</i>	
9. Arnold Hauser, Adorno, Lukács and the Ideal Spectator	161
<i>John Roberts</i>	
10. New Left Art History's International	175
<i>Andrew Hemingway</i>	
11. New Left Art History and Fascism in Germany	196
<i>Jutta Held</i>	

12. The Turn from Marx to Warburg in West German Art History, 1968–90 <i>Otto Karl Werckmeister</i>	213
Notes on Contributors	221
Notes	223
Index	268

Illustrations

1. William Morris, *Pimpernel*, wallpaper, 1876.
V & A Images/Victoria & Albert Museum. 16
2. ‘Carved Heads of Maori Chief’s Staves’, from Henry Balfour,
The Evolution of Decorative Art, 1893, fig. 23.
Courtauld Institute of Art: Photographic and Imaging. 20
3. Illustration of tattooed heads, figs 31 and 32 from Alois Riegl,
Stilfragen, 1893. Courtauld Institute of Art: Photographic and
Imaging. 24
4. ‘Tawhiao, The Maori King’, from *Illustrated London News*,
14 June 1844, p. 576. Special Collections, Senate House Library,
University of London. 26
5. Giotto, *The Confirmation of the Rule of the Franciscan
Order*, fresco, Bardi Chapel, S. Croce, Florence, c. 1320.
Photo Alinari. 54
6. Nardo di Cione, *The Damned* (detail of *Last Judgment*),
fresco, Strozzi Chapel, S. Maria Novella, Florence, 1354–57.
Photo Alinari. 55
7. Andrea Orcagna, *Strozzi Altarpiece*, tempera on wood, Strozzi
Chapel, S. Maria Novella, Florence, 1357. Photo Alinari. 56
8. Théodore Gericault, *Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf*, crayon
lithograph, 1821. Private Collection, London. 60
9. Richard Newton, *A Will O Th’ Wisp*, coloured etching.
Private collection. Photograph: Warren Carter. 76
10. C.J. Grant, *Reviewing the Blue Devils, Alias the Raw
Lobsters, Alias the Bludgeon Men*, wood engraving, c. 1833.
Private collection. Photograph: Warren Carter. 78
11. J.C. Bourne, ‘Working Shaft, Kilsby Tunnel, July 8th 1857’
and ‘Great Ventilating Shaft, Kilsby Tunnel’, lithograph.
Photograph: Warren Carter. 84
12. James Sharples, *The Forge*, steel engraving, 1849–59. Private
collection. Photograph: Warren Carter. 86
13. Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, oil on canvas, 349 × 776 cm, 1937.
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.
Photograph: Archivo Fotográfico Nacional Centro de
Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid. © Succession Picasso/DACS 2006. 100

14. *The Punishment of Dirkos by Zethos and Amphion* (the Farnese Bull), fig. 43 in Emanuel Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, 1907. Photograph: Warren Carter. 126
15. Apollo from Tenea, fig. 27 in Emanuel Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, 1907. Photograph: Warren Carter. 127
16. Henri Matisse, *Nasturtiums with the Painting 'Dance'*, oil on canvas, 191.8 × 115.3 cm, 1912. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Scofield Thayer, 1982 (1984.433.16).
© Succession H. Matisse/DACS 2006. 135

Series Preface

Esther Leslie and Mike Wayne

There have been quite a number of books with the title ‘Marxism and ...’, and many of these have investigated the crossing points of Marxism and cultural forms, from Fredric Jameson’s *Marxism and Form* to Terry Eagleton’s *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, Raymond Williams’ *Marxism and Literature*, John Frow’s *Marxism and Literary History* and Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg’s *Marxism and The Interpretation of Culture*. These titles are now all quite old. Many of them were published in the 1970s and 1980s, years when the embers of 1968 and its events continued to glow, if weakly. Through the 1990s Marxism got bashed; it was especially easily mocked once its ‘actually existing’ socialist version was toppled with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Postmodernism made Marxism a dirty word and class struggle a dirty thought and an even dirtier deed. But those days that consigned Marxism to history themselves seem historical now. Signs of a regeneration of Marx and Marxism crop up periodically – how could it be otherwise as analysts seek explanatory modes in a world that, through 15 years of perma-war and the New World Disorder, is deeply riven by strife and struggle? Anti-capitalism and anti-globalisation conceive the world as a totality that needs to be explained and criticised. Marxism, however critically its inheritance is viewed, cannot be overlooked by those who make efforts to provide an analysis and a consequent practice.

Our series ‘Marxism and Culture’ optimistically faces a pessimistic world scenario, confident that the resources of Marxism have much yet to yield, and not least in the cultural field. Our titles investigate Marxism as a method for understanding culture, a mode of probing and explaining. Equally our titles self-reflexively consider Marxism as a historical formation, with differing modulations and resonances across time, that is to say, as something itself to be probed and explained.

The first two books in the series address popular or mass culture. Mike Wayne’s *Marxism and Media Studies* outlines the resources of Marxist theory for understanding the contemporary mediascape, while also proposing how the academic discipline of Media Studies might be submitted to Marxist analysis. John Roberts’s *Philosophizing the Everyday* uncovers the revolutionary origins of the philosophical concept of the everyday, recapturing it from a synonymy with banality and ordinariness propounded by theorists in Cultural Studies.

The present volume shifts the attention to ‘high culture’. Taking into its broad scope the insights of a number of key figures in Marxist

aesthetics, the volume draws a balance sheet. Marxism's directedness towards transformation might make it sit uneasily in a discipline which has characteristically been about the analysis of objects that are property, objects that are in many ways related to conservation, tradition, preservation and value in its monetary guise. However, this volume reveals the pertinence of Marxist theory to manifold aspects of the art world: the materiality of art; the art market and the vagaries of value; the art object as locus of ideology; artists, art historians and art critics as classed beings; art and economy; art as commodity; the analogism of form and historical developments. The book's final chapters weight the analysis towards the moment just prior to ours, with the ascendance of the New Left in Visual Culture Studies. We hope that the research here stimulates further study of the contemporary relevance of Marxism in the field of culture, addressing further themes such as the role of funding and the role of the gallery, questions of recuperation, the demands of technology. We await proposals on these and other themes!

Acknowledgments

The project for this collection arose out of my experiences of teaching art-historical methodologies over the last 25 years and the frustration I have often felt that the interpretative and political tradition that is the foundation of my own thinking is so poorly represented in current literature about the discipline. The fact that so many friends have encouraged me to pursue it or offered to contribute confirmed that a publication along these lines is needed. Two events in particular served as further encouragement, namely the session 'Towards a History of Marxist Art History' that I co-organised with Alan Wallach for the College Art Association annual conference in Philadelphia in 2002, and the international conference on 'Marxism and the Visual Arts Now', held at University College London later in the same year and organised by Matthew Beaumont, Esther Leslie, John Roberts and myself. Both of these were well attended and prompted vigorous debate. Some of the conversations they started have since been continued in the 'Marxism and Interpretation of Culture' seminars at the University of London's Institute of Historical Research. I must also mention the important work that has been done by Paul Jaskot and Barbara McCloskey in initiating and running the Radical Art Caucus of the College Art Association. Its sessions, too, have continued to prompt fresh thinking. In addition to those mentioned above and the contributors to this volume, I want particularly to thank the following individuals for the stimulus I've received from their conversations with regard to questions of Marxism and art history in recent years: Warren Carter, Gail Day, Steve Edwards, Stephen Eisenman, Al Fried, Tom Gretton, Paul Jaskot, Janet Koenig, David Margolies, Stewart Martin, Fred Orton, Adrian Rifkin, Greg Sholette, Peter Smith, Frances Stracey, Ben Watson, and Jim van Dyke. As always, Carol Duncan's companionship and support have been vital.

Introduction

This anthology is conceived as an introduction to recent thinking about the past of Marxist art history. It is not offered in the spirit of nostalgia – a kind of dusting off of relics – but as a prompt to critique and renewal. My assumption is that much of the history the contributors tell is little known in its specifics, and that its achievements are often misconstrued and undervalued.

The dominant mood in the art-historical academy of Britain and the United States today is a kind of liberal pluralism, an attitude that fosters tolerance of a range of different perspectives – in itself not an unworthy goal – but provides little or no incentive to debate between them, or to push their differences to a point of issue. Formalist art history, queer art history, feminist art history, post-colonial art history, and the social history of art coexist, with various overlaps and combinations, and behave as a set of rival specialisms. Marxist art history is at best a small side dish in this great smorgasbord, and is usually encountered only in diluted or adulterated forms. Two widely used anthologies published in the 1990s both assume that it is essentially obsolete,¹ while a student textbook on ‘the New Art History’ that appeared in 2001 suggests that ‘classist Marxism’ – whatever that might be – has collapsed ‘under the weight of its corrupt and incompetent practical correlates’ and ‘because a rigorously conducted self-critique left most of its exponents unwilling to defend the traditional centrality of class’.² In brief, for these authors, the demise of the Soviet Union and its satellites, and the turn of China to market Stalinism, has finally discredited Marxism, while postmodern theory has remaindered it. In effect, they all assume the ‘end of history’ position trumpeted most famously by Francis Fukayama; that is, that free-market capitalism and liberal democracy is the final terminus of human societies.³

To some extent, of course, we have been here many times before. The idea that the brutalities, horrors and inequalities of the Soviet experiment discredited Marxism as a theoretical system is not exactly new. Conservatives and liberals alike have always been eager to pronounce Marxism’s obsequies. At one level, what we see yet again is an absurd – though hardly disinterested – category mistake, a confusion between a state ideology and a complex system of critical thought. After all, it is from within the Marxist tradition itself that many of the fiercest and most insightful critiques of Stalinism have come – one only has to recall the names of Trotsky, Charles Bettelheim, Tony Cliff and Herbert Marcuse to get the point. But the debacle of the

USSR reinforced the discrediting of social-democratic politics in western Europe and elsewhere, making the idea that state power could be used to meliorate the operations of capital in the interests of the broad masses of society apparently obsolete, and leading to a corruption of language whereby a reactionary regression to free-market principles was denoted by the term 'reform'. This was represented ideologically in the neo-liberal mantra that there are no alternatives to the market and the current forms of the bourgeois state, despite the immiseration of the poorest and most disempowered in all societies where neo-liberal policies have been implemented and the degradation of the political process to new depths of corruption and inanity in the long-established democracies that has accompanied it.⁴ I am not, of course, suggesting that the art-history academy in Britain and the United States, which is by and large liberal or sentimentally social-democratic in its leanings, actively endorses neo-liberalism. But on the other hand the marginalisation of the one system of thought that speaks for systemic critique, rather than changes of attitude within the existing social arrangements, is not just coincidence. In effect, the overwhelming majority in the academy also accept that there is no alternative. The best we can hope for is a micro-politics of particular interest groups. Given the social make-up of the academy and its functions within the larger order of things this is hardly surprising, but it is also disabling at both the analytical and practical levels.

Neo-liberalism and the resurgence of imperialism in the aftermath of the Cold War have brought their own contradictions, the anti-globalisation and anti-war movements being among them. Although these movements stand outside the old traditions of the left in many respects, there has also been a marked revival of interest in Marxism and other traditions of radical thought, which is registered in numerous publications. It is these developments that provide the occasion for this book.

The method and principles of a Marxist art history do not come ready made from the legacy of Marxism's founders. Although Marx intended to write on aesthetics on two occasions in his life, he never did so. Thus, as with so much else in Marxist theory, an aesthetics has to be pieced together from fragmentary statements and deduced from the larger premises underlying his and Engels's texts on other matters.⁵ As the uninitiated reader will discover from this volume, there is an important strand within Marxist art history that denies that aesthetics, understood as a general theory of the arts, is consistent with Marxism at all. Thus, from one perspective at least, one can have a Marxist theory of art that supersedes aesthetics – but even this is no simple matter given the many competing interpretations there are of Marx's method and the nature of his theory of history. All this is, of course, to say that Marxism is not any single theory, but rather a family of theories that registers the impact of a whole range of different historical circumstances on the understanding and development of the original texts, with all their

gaps and provisionality. Many of the central premises of Marxism are still subject to fierce and ongoing debate, and are likely to remain so.⁶ Moreover, in a certain sense a Marxist art history is a contradiction in terms, in that Marxism as a totalising theory of society necessarily throws all disciplinary boundaries into question as obfuscations of bourgeois thought, and, in one variant, at least, sees them as a product of the reification of knowledge characteristic of capitalist society.⁷ The attempts by Riegl, Wölfflin and others to demarcate art history's specific domain by giving art its own internal logic of development, centred on the category of style, might seem to precisely illustrate this phenomenon.⁸

But although Marxist art history has from the beginning attacked the premises of formalism, there is a way in which it is obliged to concede it certain insights, and this is because of the notion that the different spheres of intellectual production have what Engels called an 'inherent relative independence'.⁹ In a letter of 1890, Engels observed, in the face of the degradation of the Marxist method by younger 'materialists':

But our conception of history is above all a guide to study, not a lever for construction after the manner of the Hegelian. All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different formations of society must be examined individually before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political, civil-law, aesthetic, philosophic, religious, etc., views corresponding to them.¹⁰

The correspondence of Engels's later years shows him repeatedly working to correct the prevalent misconception that Marxism stood for a crude economic determinism:

According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of material life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase.¹¹

And what Engels had to say about determination in the last instance in relation to philosophy would have applied to art as well, namely that it came about

within the limitations imposed by the particular sphere itself: in philosophy, for instance, by the operation of economic influences... upon the existing philosophic material handed down by predecessors. Here economy creates nothing anew, but it determines the way in which the thought material found in existence is altered and further developed, and that too for the most part indirectly...¹²

Thus the tradition of German-language art history still speaks to us in important ways, because more than any other variant of the discipline it posited art's specific domain in philosophically sophisticated ways, and continues to raise key issues about the relation of historical explanation to aesthetics.

It should be clear from this that within the broad purview of historical materialism art was left with a considerable degree of relative autonomy, and it provided no formulas as to how the determining influence of the economic was to be understood in its relationship with all the other causal factors. Such matters could only be established on an individual basis. Thus, while Marx and Engels were insistent that the production of art had to be understood as complexly determined by social interests, they acknowledged it as a special activity, the development of which was partly the result of endless reworking of the traditions and inherited materials of its particular domain. The question for their successors was how to relate these two characteristics. Further, neither did their literary remains indicate how the so-called science of aesthetics was to be understood. That it fell within the category of ideology was clear enough, but what was its truth content, if indeed it had any? How could the questions of judgement that were its central province be related to the historical critique of class societies that seemed to be Marxism's principle task? Most importantly, was there a way in which the meanings of art (or at least some art) exceeded the category of ideology, and if so, how did they do it?

Marxists of the generation after Marx and Engels inevitably had to turn their attention to questions of culture as Marxism – particularly in Germany – was transformed into the ideology of increasingly large working-class parties within the bourgeois democratic order that sought to offer their members a holistic vision of the world to be counterposed to the culture and values of the dominant class and its allies.¹³ Leading thinkers within the Second Socialist International (founded 1889) who gave their attention to cultural questions included Georgii Plekhanov and Franz Mehring, both of whose writings were at times reference points for some of the figures covered in this anthology.¹⁴ However, by far the most original and profound Marxist writer on art of this generation was William Morris, hence his inclusion here. Caroline Arscott's chapter is representative of a new wave of Marxist scholarship on Morris's thought and practice, which should produce a recognition that his aesthetics and historical vision are far more sophisticated than has been recognised hitherto, even by his Marxist admirers.¹⁵ The originality of Morris's Marxism is partly to be understood through the fact that his particular intellectual formation within the Romantic movement made it possible for him to think about art in ways that are more akin to those of the young Marx than of more 'orthodox' Marxists such as Plekhanov and Mehring, whose outlook partook of the positivistic tendencies of the Second International. (In this regard, it is not

coincidental that unlike them Morris remained a revolutionary Marxist, and was unwavering in his rejection of reformism.)¹⁶ The Second International also provided the political frame for the first Marxist art historians proper, namely Wilhelm Hausenstein and Eduard Fuchs. Walter Benjamin's critique of the latter – the subject of Frederic Schwartz's chapter – focuses precisely on the limitations of such a scientific approach to the understanding of art's history and its import.¹⁷

The success of the Bolshevik revolutionary model in Russia in 1917 impelled a reorientation of Marxist thought, which quickly assumed international dimensions with its adoption by new parties across the world and the setting up of the Third International in 1919. Yet as the 1920s progressed, political conditions in the USSR became increasingly inimical to critical Marxist work, and the Stalinisation of the international communist movement produced similar results elsewhere. But however stifling and banal the emergent Stalinist orthodoxy and however tarnished the image of the first workers' state, the Soviet Union stood as a stimulus – and increasingly a challenge – to creative thought. Moreover, Stalinism was not a system created overnight, and until the Central Committee's decree of April 1932 'On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organisations' there were numerous competing artistic groupings within the USSR itself. Indeed, the atmosphere of debate was intensified by the Cultural Revolution of 1928–31 that accompanied the collectivisation of agriculture and the First Five-Year Plan. The renewed 'class war' policy of these years had as its cultural corollary a campaign against the bourgeois intelligentsia and the promotion of a new proletarian intellectual cadre. This was precisely the agenda of the largest and most powerful writers' organisation of the period, namely RAPP (the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), which aggressively advocated a class conception of literature, realist in subject matter and straightforward in style. Although RAPP's theorising was to feed in to the doctrine of Socialist Realism that became official doctrine at the Soviet Writers' Congress of 1934, it was not the same thing – and indeed, both the April Decree and the new doctrine partly marked a reconciliation with the traditional intelligentsia.¹⁸ Further, the essentially sociological conception of literary value that RAPP took up from the writings of Plekhanov was to be contested in the 1930s by Mikhail Lifshits and Georg Lukács, who were the first major theorists to develop an aesthetics informed by Marx's early writings, then becoming available in published form. By contrast with RAPP's incipiently instrumentalised conception of art, Lifshits and Lukács advanced a model of the aesthetic that was in effect an affirmation of the cognitive achievements of classical bourgeois culture, a position that set them against both proletarianism and modernism. This was a very different notion of realism from that associated with Stalin's vision of writers as 'engineers of human souls'.¹⁹ As Stanley Mitchell shows in his chapter on Lifshits, for both thinkers aesthetics was a terrain on which they could

contest Stalinism in a way that was impossible in other areas of intellectual life that were perceived as closer to the political.²⁰

While figures such as Frederick Antal, Francis Klingender, Meyer Schapiro and Max Raphael all had phases of contact with the communist movement and may at times have passed as fellow-travellers, this does not mean that they suspended their critical faculties – the three latter, at least, became disenchanted, and in Schapiro's case moved close to Trotskyism. As will be evident from the chapters that follow, they arrived at no common theory and their work is strikingly various in style and method. Of the four, Klingender's art history is the least interesting methodologically, and is also clearly marked by the agenda of the Popular Front line that impacted so powerfully on cultural production of the years 1935–39. Yet as David Bindman points out, the cultural correlates of Popular Front thinking, however shallow the Marxism involved, propelled Klingender into a creative rethinking of art-historical inquiry that led him to consider radically novel questions and to address aspects of British visual culture hitherto considered beneath art historians' attention.²¹

Klingender's lack of formal art-historical training may account in some degree for the freshness of his approach, as well as its limitations. But the same cannot be said of Antal, who Paul Stirton shows was deeply immersed in the German-language traditions of the discipline. Moreover, his personal formation within Germany and Austria put him in contact with a far more sophisticated Marxist culture than anything that could be found in British communist circles. In the 'Introduction' to his *Florentine Painting and its Social Background* Antal had disavowed the conventional assumption that the development of pictorial naturalism provided a criterion according to which styles were either 'progressive' or 'retrogressive', and indeed queried whether the art of 'long periods or entire centuries' should be so judged.²² This certainly flew in the face of authoritative voices in contemporary Soviet aesthetics who argued that there were absolute criteria of value, and that ancient Greek art was progressive while medieval art was inherently less so; that realism was the style of the advanced artists who identified with the cause of the workers and peasants everywhere, while modernism was shot through with symptoms of the bourgeoisie's cultural decline.²³ However, in his insistence that style and the 'thematic elements' that were in the final analysis a symptom of 'the general outlook on life' were ultimately inextricable,²⁴ Antal's position allowed for the possibility that there could be a kind of historical judgement on style. That this was the case is confirmed by his attack on *l'art pour l'art* and assertion of the value of artists such as Hogarth, Goya and Daumier.²⁵ It would be wrong to think of Antal as advocating simply a species of art history as ideology critique, with points being awarded to artworks according to the measure of their contribution to humanity's progress towards history's communist endpoint. He was far too sophisticated for that. Rather, in the face of the increasing authority

of a modernist aesthetic in Britain that conceived artistic production and response as taking place in some realm apart of transcendental values, it was necessary to assert that form and meaning were inseparable, and that some kinds of pictorial art that Bell, Fry and their admirers demeaned as having merely literary qualities, were no less worthy of art-historical attention and were themselves formally complex.

The challenge of what to do with modernist art from a Marxist perspective, which became more acute after Socialist Realism became the communist movement's official aesthetic in 1934, was approached far more consistently by Raphael and Schapiro. Like Antal, both accepted German-language art history as the most advanced model in the field,²⁶ at the same time as they subjected it to critique. Both were extraordinarily wide-ranging in their interests, and more theoretically ambitious than any other Marxist art historians of their generation, Hauser excepted. (How many art historians of any stripe have thought it appropriate to write a substantial work on epistemology, as Raphael did?)²⁷ As Stanley Mitchell's analysis of Raphael's critique of Picasso's *Guernica* reveals, Raphael viewed modernism critically, but also accepted it as the most significant art of his time. In this respect, he and Schapiro are similar, and they were friends until differences over the Moscow Trials separated them.²⁸ More than Antal, they both stood for what Schapiro called 'the ultra-empirical attention, which is the appropriate aesthetic attitude'.²⁹ However, as I argue in Chapter 7, Schapiro embraced modernist art with perhaps more sympathy, and lived into a period in which it seemed necessary to defend it because it seemed the aesthetic correlate to the survival of any critical culture within either the bourgeois democracies or the Soviet bloc.

Raphael and Schapiro should properly be identified with that current in twentieth-century Marxist thought known as Western Marxism, which was premised on a refusal of both the positivistic variant of the Second International and the philosophical crudities of the Soviet version, and stood for a more open and critical appraisal of the Marxist tradition. For the most part, Western Marxist thinkers were not only distanced from the practical struggles of the working-class movements, they were also more receptive to developments in bourgeois thought, and generally more concerned with problems of philosophy and culture than with those of economics and politics.³⁰ Three other thinkers represented in this volume are conventionally associated with this tradition, namely Benjamin, Lefebvre and Hauser. The chapters on the two former are included because of their immense influence within art-historical practice over the last three decades. Yet as Frederic Schwartz points out, the appropriation of Benjamin has been highly selective, and his most important statement on art history has been curiously neglected – one can only suspect because the methodological and political challenge it represents is so uncompromising and hard to realise. Lefebvre, too, has been very partially read, and his early writings, which belong to

the period of his two-decade involvement with the *Partie Communiste Française*, have been either dismissed or ignored. None the less, as Marc Léger illustrates, they are texts of considerable interest that exemplify the resistance of intellectuals who felt it was necessary to support the existing forms of the working-class movement, at the same time as they rejected Stalinism.³¹ They also exemplify how aesthetic questions could function as a kind of pressure point in relation to larger issues of both Marxist theory and the goal of socialist transformation.

Arnold Hauser's *Social History of Art* (1951) has often served as the scapegoat for a Marxist art history, which is at one level ironic, given that its author claimed to 'separate theory and practice in Marxism', to be 'a scientist' without 'a political task'.³² Yet even that inveterate Cold Warrior Ernst Gombrich felt obliged to acknowledge some merit in Hauser's monumental project,³³ and his other books, particularly *The Philosophy of Art History* and *Mannerism*, have seldom received their due from the art-historical left in the English-speaking countries.³⁴ In Chapter 9, John Roberts shows that Hauser was engaged in a complex dialogue with the work of Lukács and Adorno, and whatever the limitations in his analyses of specific works, some of his larger theses continue to command attention.

This book is primarily concerned with the recovery and re-evaluation of Marxist art history, and related aesthetic literature, up to c.1985. In this regard, it is in part a continuation of a project that began more than 30 years ago with the emergence of a New Left art history. I have not at this point in time thought it appropriate to include chapters evaluating the achievements of individual figures from that later moment, and consideration of developments since then would require another volume. Instead, I sketch the international history of the New Left in the art-history field in Chapter 10, while Jutta Held and O.K. Werckmeister give accounts of key developments in the German movement in the final two chapters. Our anthology is in no sense intended as the final word on this history.³⁵ If it serves to spark renewed interest and fresh critical debate, it will have done its job.

1

William Morris: Decoration and Materialism

Caroline Arscott

From the late 1870s William Morris delivered lectures on art and society, and published articles on the subject, seeking to promote a new vision of art that would rescue it from the position to which it had been relegated by modern social conditions. His involvement in liberal anti-war politics in the period 1876–78 and his subsequent involvement in socialist politics in the 1880s and beyond led him to articulate a politicised art theory that ought to be recognised as the first English-language attempt to produce a Marxist theory of art. The debate over whether Morris’s Marxist politics were compatible with his art practice (producing handcrafted luxury goods for bourgeois consumers) is a tired one and I do not intend to repeat the standard terms of the debate, which is one with which Morris himself was wearily, if anxiously, familiar. Walter Crane’s comment on the fact that Morris produced ‘costly things for the rich’ while campaigning for socialism puts the issue starkly in terms of the alternative, within a capitalist era, of making cheap goods for the common people. He explained Morris’s view that

according to the quality of the production must be its cost; and that the cheapness of the cheapest things of modern manufacture is generally at the cost of the cheapening of modern labour and life, which is a costly kind of cheapness after all.¹

The questions that this chapter seeks to address are: ‘How did Morris’s politics shape his understanding of the nature of art?’ and ‘What currents of thought were available to Morris to help him develop his aesthetic theory?’ I suggest that, although he was working in the absence of an established repertoire of Marxist writings on art, cultural debates in the latter part of the nineteenth century foregrounded the question of development and degeneration. The terms of these debates and the polarisation of positions that emerged played a part in the way he understood art. It is well established that Morris’s concern over the state of modern art and craft production, his efforts to put modern art into a historical perspective and his efforts to lay out the prospects for art derived in part from John Ruskin’s example. Ruskin in his early works, such as *Modern Painters* (1843–60) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851–53) laid the groundwork for Morris’s view of the pitiable state of modern art and craft in comparison to the flourishing,

expressive and idiosyncratic work of medieval producers. Ruskin insisted on two central suppositions: that the artistic standards of an age are an index of the religious and ethical values of that age and that they were shaped by the conditions under which artistic labour was undertaken. Modern art and architecture were seen to be lacking; the remedy was to address the values of the age and the social organisation of labour. Morris adopted and adapted these tenets to produce a body of theory very different in its political complexion from the often conservative or reactionary work of Ruskin. This chapter aims to add some other reference points, not as documented sources for Morris's thought but as intellectual resources, some of which he could have accessed, directly or indirectly, to contribute to his formulations about the link between art and society, and the question of the development and/or decline of art.

In a memoir, George Bernard Shaw recalls that Morris became friendly with him following Shaw's denunciation of the book by Max Simon Nordau, *Degeneration* (1892).² Nordau was a physician who had moved into journalism and had emerged as a prominent social critic. Morris read the English translation which appeared in 1895 and expressed disgust at the following attracted by the book. Nordau, drawing on Cesare Lombroso's sociological writings, characterised the cultural products of the modern age as degenerate.³ The whole culture was displaying pathological symptoms, he argued, 'a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria' which involved 'weakness of the higher cerebral centres', failings in the functioning of sense perception and excessive preoccupation with licentious ideas. Altogether these indicated a sickness in society at large comparable to the effects in an individual of an exhausted nervous system.⁴ Morris was attacked by name, along with Ruskin and the English Pre-Raphaelites, who were said to display the mystical tendency (as were Baudelaire, Verlaine, Tolstoy and Wagner). The recurrent faults, 'vague and incoherent thought, the tyranny of the association of ideas, the presence of obsessions, erotic excitability and religious enthusiasm', were thought to mark out these artists as degenerates as surely as the earlobes or cranium, or the give-away tattoos, of a criminal, prostitute, anarchist or lunatic.⁵ Their 'anthropological family' was, Nordau claimed, akin to that of the atavistic social deviants documented by Lombroso. These artists, who were effectively modern savages, were spreading the plague of aesthetic debauchery: 'every one of their qualities is atavistic', 'they confound all the arts, and lead them back to the primitive forms they had before evolution differentiated them'.⁶ Nordau, like Ruskin, was concerned with the link between art and society, and the question of aesthetic retrogression. He drew on right-wing anthropology and psychiatry to stigmatise the advanced practitioners in European art, music and literature and to drum up a sense of cultural crisis, calling for purity committees to undertake vigilante action and for the medical and psychiatric profession to publish denunciations of public figures. It is not surprising that

the venerable Morris was disgusted, not least because Nordau's broad-brush cultural critique was hailed by some as powerful and vested in a principled socialism. The *Daily Chronicle*, for instance, reviewing another translated work by Nordau with *Degeneration*, said 'the book is a fervid revolutionary protest in which much powerful political, economic, and social criticism is blended with the declamatory rhetoric, the Secularism and Socialist platforms.'⁷ Nordau was particularly poisonous because he adopted some of the assumptions and strategies on which Ruskin and even Morris depended. The tradition of allying social criticism to aesthetic judgement, the summary presentation of large sweeps of history and the rhetorical move of evoking a future in which current conditions had worsened disastrously were to be found in Ruskin and Morris. In this chapter I will be suggesting, in addition, that anthropology, the resource of Nordau, was a relevant reference point for Morris's writings on art too, though not the right-wing anthropology of Lombroso. It was possible for Morris to give a positive value to 'primitive' people, to understand artistic impulses as existing in 'primitive' society and even to take on something of the identity of 'the savage'.

Even outside the scholarly books and journals of the anthropologists it is clear that the idea of a modern primitive sensibility had some currency as a positive quality. Andrew Lang in his essay of 1886 for a general middle-class readership, 'Realism and Romance', suggested that civilisation is laid on over a savage interior, and consequently mankind would still thrill to the wildness of adventure and the marvels of romance despite the effects of the rational side of modern existence. Lang was a friend of Morris and we can assume that Morris was familiar with his ideas. He was arguing for the value of a rousing story such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* as superior in some ways to the grim realism and intellectual rigour of a work by Dostoyevsky.⁸ He imagined a future man who has lost the hair and nails that modern man possesses as heritage of his wild past, but stated that, for the present, there is a taste for those tales that 'may be "savage survivals"' telling of battles and monsters. 'Not for nothing did Nature leave us all savages under our white skins: she has wrought thus that we might have many delights, among others "the joy of adventurous living" and of reading about adventurous living'. The white skin may be, he is arguing, a sign of our advanced civilisation, our increased civility and urbane manners, but what about the savage self that survives under the surface, under the skin, or in the extruding hair and nails? Lang the poet, classicist, collector of fairy tales and writer on folklore and totemism is surely referring with the phrase 'savage survivals' to Edward Tylor, who was well known for his arguments about savage survivals in *Primitive Culture* (1871). Tylor set out to refute the idea that inhabitants of primitive cultures were devoid of intelligence and lacked any religious sense, and above all he wished to challenge the idea that existing 'primitive' peoples are to be understood as having degenerated from a former state of higher culture. Degeneration could occur in pockets

but overall the history of humankind showed a continuity and a progress, he thought.⁹ According to Tylor modern culture in games, certain kinds of ritual, and superstitions contained survivals of an early sense of religion. These survivals were used by him as evidence for the continuing existence of a religious sense which could be traced back to earliest society where belief in spiritual beings or, as he termed it, animism coexisted with a practical rationality and problem solving, a ‘rude, shrewd sense taking up the facts of common life’.¹⁰ The one constant feature of human society from its dawn to modern times was a belief in spiritual entities. The greatest rupture was not between savage and civilised man, but that occurring in modern times between those who acknowledged the existence of divine being and those materialists who denied the existence of God.¹¹ Tylor then, with his model of development rather than degeneration, envisaged an affinity between modern people and primitive people. The liberal implications of this formulation made it a version of the savage-in-the-modern which stood at the opposite extreme from that account of the degenerate modern savage given by Nordau.

Late nineteenth-century investigations of folklore and non-European culture and debates about the vigorous or exhausted condition of modern western society were subtended by the involvement of the European powers in imperialist adventures.¹² When Morris came to read Nordau’s *Degeneration* in 1895 or 1896, in the last year of his life, he had been active in left-wing politics for well over a decade; 1883 was the year in which he had read Marx’s *Capital*. As has often been recounted (most vividly by E. P. Thompson)¹³ he was drawn into politics through the anti-war movement of 1876–78, when the Conservative government’s foreign policy, in support of Turkish involvement in Bulgaria, became the focus of agitation. It is significant that his path into politics was marked by opposition to imperialism and that he maintained a robust opposition to imperialism in his writings until the end of his life. This in turn inflected his formulation of a politicised aesthetic. As his political views developed he became alive to the limitations of Gladstone’s bourgeois liberalism and moved towards the explicit class politics of Hyndman’s Democratic Federation, which he joined in January 1883. For the rest of his life he involved himself in the day-to-day work of the revolutionary socialist movement, maintaining a position against the parliamentary road proposed by Hyndman and Aveling and later, in 1890, against the anarchist politics of Lane, Kitz and Mowbray.¹⁴

Morris in his art theory encouraged the practice of handcraft with its possibilities for individual expressiveness. He allowed for a temperate use of the machine to reduce labour, but with the proviso that in a capitalist mode of production the machine was inevitably annexed to the drive for profit and the inequitable class system. The extraction of surplus value had made it impossible for machines to be used rationally for the abatement of toil. His scathing comments on the tag ‘labour-saving’ as a description of

machines in modern capitalist enterprises (when they were just saving wages and boosting output) and his positive regard for handcrafted goods might lead one to assume that he was hostile to the machine per se, but a close reading of his comments shows that this is not the case.¹⁵ He could conceive of the benefits of the use of machines. The worker would have to decide. The decision to compromise, and sacrifice the verve and pleasing quirkiness of hand finish for the speed and convenience of machine production, might indeed be reasonable, he argued, but that compromise could only really be assessed and accepted in some other (future) era, in which the machine and the worker were freed from the exigencies of accumulating profit and the worker existed in social equality with his or her fellows.¹⁶ It is clear then that Morris's art theory after 1883 only really concerns the role of art in socialist society; he can merely consider its adumbration in the capitalist era. As such, art is the locus of hope for the future and simultaneously the vehicle of regret for what is impossible in the present. It is entirely characteristic of Morris that the hope and the regret should be twinned in this manner. So he found handwork commendable but could not exactly be said to advocate a return to handcraft (and here the distance from his mentor John Ruskin is crucial). Handwork should allow the worker to take pride and pleasure in producing something, whether plain or ornamental – and will do so in a communist era.¹⁷ Indeed it will allow all workers to participate in the making of art and to realise most fully the human potential for aesthetic activity. Ornament would then arise from the fact of unalienated labour, where the pleasure and satisfaction that existed already in making a utilitarian object were simply amplified by the beautifying of it, in conditions where sheer need did not preclude the spending of additional time on the object. Morris considered that art serves two purposes: the enhancement of leisure in the contemplation of art and the channelling of energies in pleasurable work. In capitalism it cannot truly fulfil either purpose and yet there is an assumption in Morris that is of central importance for the case argued in this chapter, that the taking of pleasure in art is a constant factor in human society, only forfeited under the most extreme conditions.

As he contemplated the slide of the world into intensified misery, that bleak alternative to the victory of the working class and the founding of a socialist society, Morris imagined the extinction of hope, the degradation of the working class pursued to such an extent that overwork, dirt, ignorance and brutality came to have total sway. The loss of hope would be the extinction of the feeling for art in the working class; art then is an index of the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. Its extinction in the defeat of the working class would be mirrored by the inability of the ruling class to experience or foster aesthetic pleasure. He imagined the burdening of the world with hideous high-tech structures driven by a perverse science. He imagined as the only outcome 'some terrible cataclysm' and a revisiting of the primitive struggle with nature for survival. I should point out that there

is always a degree of ambivalence in Morris's account of the functioning/malfunctioning of art in capitalist society. This dystopian vision is here offered as a horrible alternate future. At times though, it stands, in his accounts, as the wretched state of existence at the present. He pushed the dystopian vision further. The visiting of 'some terrible cataclysm' would at least be a deliverance from the unhealth and injustice and despair of class society where the ruling class has definitive unchallenged sway.¹⁸ The benefit would be the eventual revival of an inherent feeling for art in a reprise of human development.

Man may, after some terrible cataclysm, learn to strive towards a healthy animalism, may grow from a tolerable animal into a savage, from a savage into a barbarian, and so on; and some thousands of years hence he may be beginning once more those arts which we have now lost, and be carving interlacements like the New Zealanders, or scratching forms of animals on their cleaned blade-bones, like the pre-historic men of the drift.¹⁹

The anthropological reference is telling. Morris indicated repeatedly that he considered the love of art and the capacity for making art to be inherent human characteristics. They could be expunged in dire circumstances but the evidence of history and anthropology indicated that they were omnipresent in human society. He points out that there are no human societies that have left any trace in which art making was not a feature (effectively this is to define the human as a social rather than a biological entity). Morris locates the source of art as interior, in human make-up – 'I believe the springs of art in the human mind to be deathless.'²⁰ – and considers the ornamental spirals of Maori decoration to arise from the same source and serve the same purpose as the interlacings of his own tapestry designs. He identifies a part-physiological, part-psychological need that art satisfies, not expressed as the craving for pleasure but rather as the pressure of restless energy that needs to be soothed by art and needs to be vented in the making of art.²¹ Notably this formulation does not conceive of the mind as disembodied, operating in a disengaged realm of pure rationality, but as embodied; it is this that makes his remarks curiously akin to Freud's account of artistic activity as sublimated energy. To this is added the constant emphasis on the embodied artist engaging in the physical process of making: swinging a hammer, or wielding a shuttle or carving tool. In Morris's view the making of art is not generically different from any kind of satisfying, productive manual operation. The fact that Morris could identify in this way with the producers of functional objects, in societies considered savage or primitive, involved a significant leap of the imagination.²² The terms in which he connected his own experience with those of distant cultures are not those of Tylor, but clearly Morris would have found Tylor's work more enabling than Nordau's. His connection with 'the primitive man of the most remote Stone Age'²³ was made on the basis that there existed universally in humankind an aesthetic impulse.

Lang spoke of the moderns being savages under their white skins, but Morris underwent an adaptation of his skin colour. Walter Crane told an anecdote concerning Morris in which visitors to the Merton Abbey Works were looking for Morris when they heard his loud and inexplicably cheery voice crying from a back room ‘I’m dying, I’m dying, I’m dying!’ All became clear when: ‘The well known and robust figure of the craftsman presently appeared in his blue shirt sleeves, his hands stained blue from the [dye] vat where he had been at work.’²⁴ This vivid depiction of the corpulent Morris as the decidedly not-dead blue man brings together his blue-shirted artisanal identification with an evocation of a European cloth-dyeing and body-art tradition in which woad was used.²⁵ In the course of this chapter I will go on to suggest an even more fundamental association of dermis, ornament and savagery in tattoos of so-called primitive societies. A focus on these themes in relation to aesthetic theory might allow us to look again at the twisting interlaced lines of Morris designs, help us to attend to the thick and thin spiralling, vegetal forms that never just stay on the surface but interlace, weaving in and out, producing a kind of chock-full fleshy depth to the design (Figure 1). Fabric and wallpaper designs clothe the body, or the house, and in the case of Morris’s work the ornament might be said to announce the corporeal rather than occlude it. The linked topics of ornamented fabric, the clothed and unclothed body and pigmented skin form a repeated motif in Morris’s late work *News from Nowhere* (1890), as the narrator Guest discovers the nature of the beautiful in a future society. All the inhabitants are well nourished, strongly muscled and comely, but the contrast between the white skin of Clara with her beautiful gown and the brown skin of the country Ellen who is barefoot and lightly clad leads Guest to recognise that there is the greatest beauty in the suntanned body.²⁶

Terry Eagleton in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990) traces the redefinition of the aesthetic in the nineteenth century and points out the way in which the Romantic challenge to Kant’s abstract formulation (discussed in relation to Schelling and Fichte in particular) was reworked yet again by Marx. The question he approaches is how the aesthetic is located: whereabouts in the range between reason and feeling or sensuousness, whether it is conceived of as ultimately abstract or concrete, whether it appears as an idealist or materialist formulation. The relationship between object and subject, form and content and humankind and nature are gauged in each position, and the position elaborated by Marx, less in his stray comments on art than in his entire philosophical and historical method, is described in terms of a recombination of elements that were sundered by previous theories of the aesthetic. If aesthetics, from the eighteenth century onwards, promises a place for the world of sense and feelings within the scope of reason, and then frets about how this can be – and this fraught and ongoing project is indeed one in which Marx participated – then Marx’s theory can be seen as offering one solution to the conundrum and be understood to envision a



Figure 1 William Morris, *Pimpernel*, wallpaper, 1876. V & A Images/Victoria & Albert Museum

social order which permits the full functioning of the aesthetic. According to Marx, the incapacity of the deprived proletarian for full sensory existence (instead the proletarian experiences sheer material need) precludes a full aesthetic experience on the part of the worker. The excessive indulgence of the bourgeois, cast adrift from use and material anchoring, produces something that appears to be aesthetic but is similarly one-sided because it

is, like money, self-referential, and corresponds to an idealist philosophical position. In Eagleton's summary: 'The human body under capitalism is thus fissured down the middle, traumatically divided between brute materialism and capricious idealism, either too wanting or too whimsical, hacked to the bone or bloated with perverse eroticism'.²⁷ The solution is to recombine these two halves and the potential of communism is that the choice between objective existence and subjective experience need no longer be made. The way that William Morris employs the notion of artistic expressiveness and aesthetic pleasure to model the harmoniousness and joy of a social order beyond capitalism does not just depend on the chance combination in his own life of an enthusiasm for art and the onset of socialist convictions. Rather we can consider the vocational location of this individual in the art world as something that gave him a particular opportunity to articulate (in his rough and ready style) the aesthetic positions that could be said to be inherent in Marxist theory – made him, in a way, a privileged exponent of this aspect of Marxist theory.

One thing that emerges particularly clearly in Eagleton's presentation is the importance of Marx's redefinition of the role and position of the body in conceiving of a rapprochement between the practical and the aesthetic, between the brutality of biology and matter and the refined capabilities of thought.

If the rift between raw appetite and disembodied reason is to be healed, it can only be through a revolutionary anthropology which tracks the roots of human rationality to their hidden sources in the needs and capacities of the productive body.²⁸

A discussion of fetishism and commodity fetishism immediately follows on from this statement and this offers one way of interpreting the phrase 'revolutionary anthropology', but, beyond this, the way that Marx conceives of human history as the history of human interaction with the natural world is understood as offering a twist on anthropological accounts of man as a toolmaker. Marx's position is established (following Elaine Scarry)²⁹ as one in which the interaction with nature involves a projection of the human body into the world through its social and technological operations. The stages of history do not, therefore, just consist of objectively existent productive forces, but of the deployment and enjoyment of the sensory capacities of human beings.

What he calls 'the history of industry' can be submitted to double reading: what from the historian's viewpoint is an accumulation of productive forces is, phenomenologically speaking, the materialised text of the human body, the 'open book of the essential powers of man'. Sensuous capacities and social institutions are the *recto* and *verso* of one another, divergent perspectives on the same phenomenon.

In other words, the world, conceived of as the social world and the world made over by man's efforts with technology, can be understood as both objectively existent and as an aspect of subjective human experience in which the senses (so vital to the aesthetic) have play. There does exist, then, the potential for the fissure between subject and object, sense and reason, to be healed. I am interested in the way that such a philosophical manoeuvre relies upon developments in anthropology which were, in turn, closely entwined with nineteenth-century art discourse.

Nineteenth-century anthropology which was concerned with the origins of humankind was also marked by a debate over the origin of art. Positions varied as to whether art was originally representational, in the service of religion or magic, and degenerated into mere geometric pattern making as the meaningful motif was copied and miscopied, or whether pattern making derived from some other source. Following the influential work of Gottfried Semper the idea became common that pattern making derived from the technical features of different crafts.³⁰ Constructional elements in one material were emphasised by the maker and eventually were carried over as sheer ornament onto wares in other materials, the most basic technique being assumed to be sorts of weaving. The rhythmic interweaving of flexible twigs around posts in wattle fencing and the geometrical criss-crossing of rush or textile matting both produce geometric patterns: the wavy or serpentine line, and zigzags. These ornamental motifs then appeared on materials other than textiles. Ornament then metaphorically clothed objects (and buildings), as patterned textile mats might literally clothe a wall.

In examining the anthropological discussions of the nature and function of ornament it is possible to map out two basic positions; one gives priority to symbolic associations and tends to see geometric ornament in terms of a degeneration of realistic representation – this we can call the semiotic position³¹ – while another allows for the chronological and logical priority of ornament (divorced from symbolism).³² In this argument the feeling for art is presented as the feeling for pure form. The key point that I want to emphasise is that this second position allows for the idea of a universal sense of the aesthetic and links the aesthetic with the very fact of being an embodied, active social being. In this case body art is acknowledged as indicator of aesthetic potential, and, in the case of tattoos, bodily ornament can image this notion of the aesthetic with great economy, since the design is both outside the body, on the epidermal surface, and inside the body, as the dye penetrates to the dermal layer.

John Lubbock can be identified with the first position. Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation* (1870) touched on the question of body art which he considered to be 'almost universal among the lower races of men';³³ he felt able to generalise, saying 'savages are passionately fond of ornaments'.³⁴ He did not, however, see a correlative artistic impulse. The beauty of the Maori tattooing was acknowledged in the book, and contrasted favourably with that of the

Sandwich Isles, where devices were described as ‘unmeaning and whimsical, without taste and in general badly executed’.³⁵ Nevertheless there is no assumption that the Maori people have any artistic taste or aesthetic impulse. The aesthetic is located in the eye of the (European) beholder: European travellers find tattoos beautiful, Lubbock explained, because they clothe the otherwise offensive nakedness of savage peoples.³⁶ The motivation of the Maoris was explained in terms of their wish to emphasise the bravery of the subject (willing to undergo the agonising process) and the tattoos’ function to serve as a mark of personal identity, a kind of signature. Fijian hairstyles are admittedly inventive but not for a moment are they considered to be artistic: ‘Not a few are so ingeniously grotesque as to appear as if done purposely to excite laughter.’³⁷ In general, personal decorations evidence individual fancy and clan markings and serve as signs of achievement. Predictably, Lubbock brings out the standard anecdote regarding primitive peoples:

Dr Collingwood, speaking of the Kibalans of Formosa, to whom he showed a copy of the *Illustrated London News*, tells us that he found it impossible to interest them by pointing out the most striking illustrations, which they did not appear to comprehend.³⁸

Like Tylor (in *Primitive Culture*) Lubbock opposes the idea that the ‘primitive’ people he is studying are the degenerate heirs of previous civilisations. He uses the anecdote about the newspaper illustrations to support his contention that primitive peoples really are at a preliminary stage of development; this involves a deficiency in artistic sensibility.³⁹ He also seeks to demonstrate a lack of moral sense and a dependence on brute force. Unlike Tylor he sees the progress from the prehistoric to the modern as one in which a fundamental shift in human nature takes place, as unredeemed savagery gives way to blessed civilisation.

The assumptions that we find in Lubbock had their echoes later in the century and became associated with the argument that ornament was a result of the gradual loss of realism and symbolic significance. A key voice in the debate was William Goodyear. In his *The Grammar of the Lotus* (1891) he argued that apparently abstract ornament can be traced back to the presentation of plant forms and that the rationale for the introduction of particular plant motifs was their significance in religious contexts.⁴⁰ This method was followed by Henry Balfour, for instance in *The Evolution of Decorative Art* (1893). He ruled out a preliminary stage of the aesthetic (in body art) by classifying it as nothing more than an animal impulse akin to a magpie seizing something shiny to decorate its nest.⁴¹ This left his main emphasis as the tracing of suppressed symbolic associations that had been lost in the tangled threads of conflated motifs, miscopying and conscious variation. The anthropologist’s task, he said, was to reconstruct the sequence. For example, he discussed the spiral ornament on Maori objects and called for the patterns to be interpreted (Figure 2). We should recognise the protruding

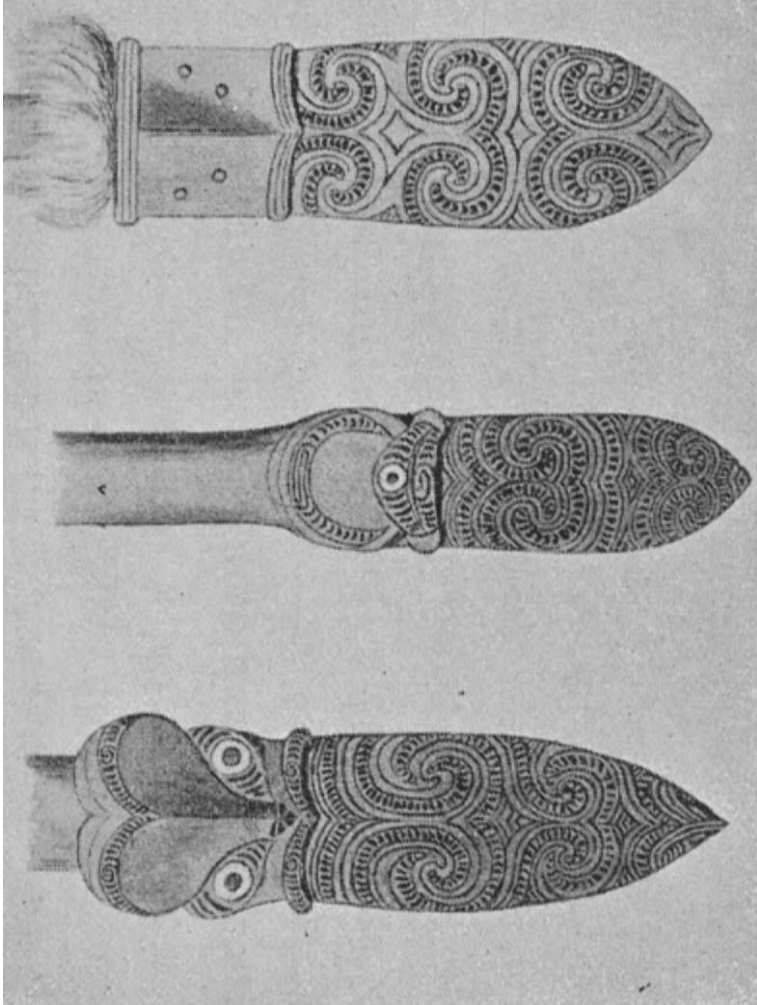


Figure 2 'Carved Heads of Maori Chief's Staves', from Henry Balfour, *The Evolution of Decorative Art*, 1893, fig. 23.
Courtauld Institute of Art: Photographic and Imaging

tongue, he asserted, significant in Maori culture as a sign of warlike strength, and so incised in designs which become incrementally conventionalised. He assembled a sequence showing that head and protruding tongue give way to conventionalised one-eyed face with tongue, and eventually to a tongue with no face at all: 'the all-essential tongue remains unchanged, symbolic to the last, but with no context, so to speak, to explain its meaning, if seen apart from other more complete, and therefore more realistic examples'.⁴² The challenge of tracing symbolic meanings was great, and at times Balfour expressed frustration:

This fusion of the parts of several designs leads to very complex derivatives, presenting frequently an apparently inextricable confusion of ideas to him who would unravel the separate lines of growth, which have, so to speak, been plaited together in various combinations, till at length the original conception is completely obscured in a web of tangled threads.⁴³

The use of a tangled web as a metaphor for ornament is deliberately self-referential and revealing as to Balfour's perception of ornamental design. For Balfour the lines of the pattern represent so much frustrating confusion.

While Lubbock, Goodyear and Balfour can be identified with the refutation of an inherent aesthetic sense in primitive peoples, and their emphasis is on the symbolism attached to ornament, another group of commentators can be picked out who understood primitive art in different terms. Owen Jones, in *The Grammar of Style* (1856), referenced Maori artefacts and Maori tattooing as examples of primitive ornament. Crucially, though, Jones did not seek to find a semiotic explanation for the motifs nor did he exclude such ornament from the realm of the aesthetic. He claimed that refined taste, judicious skill and evidence of mental kinship, 'the evidence of that desire to create', are what the modern European is surprised and delighted by.⁴⁴ His brief, enthusiastic comments, exceptional for the 1850s, set him apart from the symbolic significance position that we have been considering. The aesthetic positioning of the artefact involves the western viewer in a form of identification, as he responds with pleasure and recognises an artistic disposition like his own in the far distant maker.

By the 1890s some much more elaborate and developed theories posited 'savage' or 'primitive' ornament as evidence of a universal aesthetic sense, and relied on the examples of tattooing or body art to back up this argument. Alois Riegl was concerned to trace the historical morphology of ornament on a worldwide scale and into modern times, and to challenge Semper's method, which was dubbed 'materialist'. This argument emerged most clearly in *Problems of Style* (1893).⁴⁵ In some ways Riegl made concessions to the position that saw ornament as semiotic in origin, and so linked artistic practice to the dissemination of socially accepted or enshrined values. He cited Goodyear's *The Grammar of the Lotus*, albeit with reservations, and

was prepared to accept the argument about stylisation of plants which may originally have had ritual associations; indeed his *Problems of Style*, which is a history of curving tendril ornament, could be read as an attempt to use Goodyear against Semper.⁴⁶ Nonetheless Riegl's understanding of the way in which ornament comes about is that it comprises a basic universal aesthetic urge as well as historically contingent readiness to turn ornament to the services of ritual, or orient art to nature in phases of naturalism. The creative act is not the imitation of nature, despite the fact that he is ready to admit, as he does in the very first sentence of Chapter 1, that '[a]ll art, and that includes decorative art as well, is inextricably tied to nature'.⁴⁷ His emphasis is not on mimesis but on the transformative creative act. The translation into two-dimensional graphic form is therefore held to be more challenging and creative than a replication in a three-dimensional sculptural form. It may be, he argues, that the lotus motif was a founding element in Egyptian decoration and then persisted in altered forms; maybe (though here his scepticism is amplified) its introduction can be attributed to its symbolic importance for the sun cult – in that respect it is possible to grant a place to naturalistic reference and symbolism. But, and this is where he diverges from Goodyear, the moment of its introduction was a moment of creative transformation of nature in stylisation, as the natural object is rendered in the flat in outline, and then subject to the geometry, symmetry and rhythm of pattern making. Once the vegetal element gets into ornament it is as if art infuses it with a fresh life; it is able to twist and turn and morph and branch and blossom in an unstoppable sequence of invention and variation. Thus the tendrils that he documented in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek, Islamic and European medieval and Renaissance art, as they grow and spread and interlace, seem to instantiate the very substance of artistic creativity. The term he used later in *Late Roman Art Industry* of 1901 to describe this wellspring of artistic feeling was *Kunstwollen* and it is important to realise that *Kunstwollen* is a term that embraces both the stylistic preferences of a place or epoch (we can think of this in terms of the characteristic disposition of lines and rhythm of ornament) and a more fundamental will to make and experience art that transcends location (which perhaps can be thought to subsist in the lively, ubiquitous line itself).

Riegl's trump card against both Semper and Goodyear was that artistic feeling exists in societies without developed textile crafts and where no representational symbolism is evident. He picked the example of body art in Maori tattooing, claiming for it a sheer joy in geometric ornament.⁴⁸ Riegl reproduced his plates for the section on tattoos from Lubbock's work, but his argument is the polar opposite of Lubbock's (Figure 3). Riegl explained that the spirals could not be linked to pottery or metalwork since these materials were not worked by the Maoris. They could not be explained in terms of transmitted patterns since Maori culture was, he argued, isolated. Ornament must then be seen as the highest rather than the lowest aspect of

art because it gives most eloquent expression to the intrinsic human artistic impulse. Rather than being conceived of always as supplement, as play or fancy superadded to the substantial or reasonable, ornament could be considered as a structurally necessary aspect of art to which symbolism is conjoined.⁴⁹ I would suggest that the fact that Riegl locates ornament in and on the body is significant, in the light of the argument I have presented about Marx's employment of the technologised world as ancillary to the body in the revisiting of the aesthetic conundrum, thereby resisting the Kantian solution of isolating pure reason, and equally resisting the Romantic riposte which depended on flooding the world with subjectivity and sensation.

The climate in anthropology had changed considerably by the 1890s, when Riegl was working on his theories. Space had gradually been opening up in anthropology for an acknowledgement, firstly, of the chronological and logical priority of ornament, secondly, its independence, on occasion, from symbolic association and thirdly, ornament's possession of an aesthetic purpose as well as a pleasing appearance (to Europeans). Major General Robley, in his detailed and authoritative work *Moko: or Maori Tattooing* (1896), was explicit about the classification of this form of ornament as art, pointing out that individual tattooists were not anonymous in their own culture, but celebrated for their individual skills, like painters in the modern world.⁵⁰ Other commentators were prepared to leave a place for the purely aesthetic.⁵¹ This involved challenging seamless sequences of influence and borrowing. Alfred C. Haddon, author of *Evolution in Art* (1895), was at pains to distinguish spiral design in New Guinea from Maori scrollwork (and challenged Goodyear's account of cultural transmission). New Guinea spirals are allowed to be derivatives of bird and crocodile designs, but Maori scrollwork is said to be generated in isolation and first of all to come from an impulse to decorate the body by accentuating the rounded elements:

My impression is that the carved designs have been derived mainly from tattooing, and ... when one looks at tattooed Maori heads or carvings of human figures one finds that rounded surfaces ... are usually decorated with spiral designs; this is in such places an appropriate device, as it accentuates the features which are ornamented, and personally I am inclined to believe that artistic fitness is the explanation of this employment of the spiral, and that it has been transferred to other objects as being a pleasing design, and that connecting lines have been made to give coherence to the decoration.⁵²

Here then was a commentator who made a separate place for art among the motivations for ornament. The impulse to beautify an object was held by Haddon to be common in all ages and to all humanity and this premise allowed him to conceive of a continuity between the aesthetic forms of 'primitive' societies and those of modern western Europe.⁵³

Morris was an avid reader on a great variety of subjects. We can be sure that he knew Owen Jones's work and it is highly probable that he was

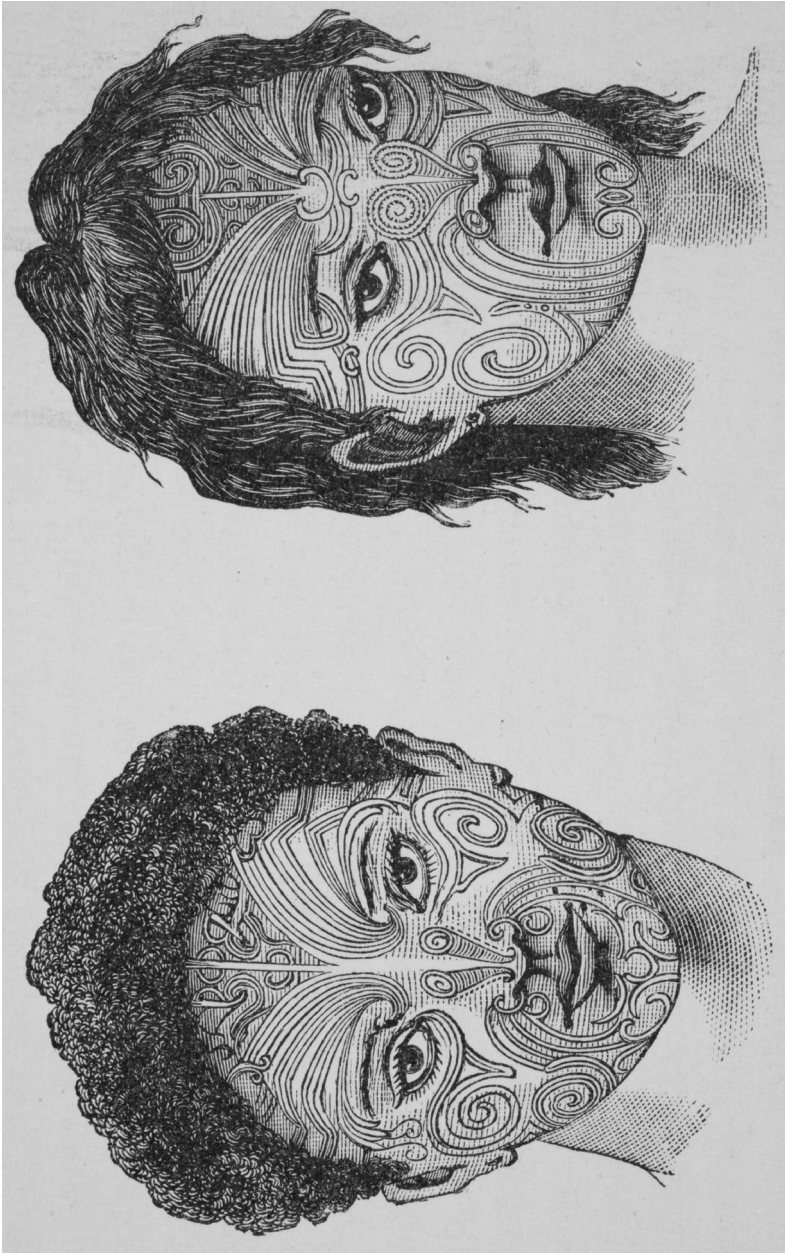


Figure 3 Illustration of tattooed heads, figs 31 and 32 from Alois Riegl, *Stiffragen*, 1893. Courtauld Institute of Art: Photographic and Imaging

familiar with Semper's. His interest in early society was stimulated by his investigations into Icelandic culture and, from the 1880s, by his political contact with Engels. In the series of articles 'Socialism from the Root Up' (1886) he gave an account of the development of primitive society in times of barbarism, from individual hunters to the emergence of primitive society organised round the gens in early agricultural times – a form of primitive communism that in turn gave way to the emergence of private property and the tribe, described as the last stage of barbarism.⁵⁴ It has been argued that he probably read Lewis H. Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877) and Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).⁵⁵ Morris collected illuminated and early printed books and had a 1637 edition of William Camden's *Britannia*, which contained engravings and described the tattooing practices of the Picts and Celts using woad, 'their *cutting, pinking* and *pouncing* of their flesh'.⁵⁶ It is interesting to speculate as to whether he knew the engraving after Le Moyne 'Truue picture of a young dowgter of the Pictes', one of the engravings of indigenous British tattooing from De Bry, *America* (3 vols, 1590–91), or other engravings from John Speed's *The Historie of Great Britain* (1611), which reproduced some engravings of Picts from De Bry.⁵⁷ The tattooed pictures on the skin of the Picts – in some cases 'their whole body was garnished over with the shapes of all the fairest kind of flowers and herbes'⁵⁸ – were illustrated and described, and these striking images would surely have fascinated Morris.⁵⁹ Perhaps he also registered the presence in England of the Maori chief, Tawhaio, who caused a sensation on his visit to the country in the 1880s. His tattooed face was depicted in the pages of the popular press and reporters questioned him about his attitudes to English female beauty, and told of his quaint manners and his prodigious appetite for roast beef and shellfish (Figure 4).⁶⁰ Robley recounts that a firework display was mounted in his honour at Sydenham:

At the Crystal Palace on the occasion of his visit, there was a special display of fireworks, which included a pyrotechnical representation of his face. Messrs Brock & Co. used blue lights to represent the tattooing marks, and it was reserved for that celebrated firm of fireworkers to achieve the apotheosis of the moko.⁶¹

Morris had a lifelong aversion to fireworks, but the ornamental lines themselves, in the dermal substance of Tawhaio's face, standing as incorporated ornament and offering evidence of a universal aesthetic impulse, might have been meaningful to him.

The change in the frame of reference that I have alluded to, represented in this chapter by the figures of Riegl, Robley and Haddon, offers a counterbalance to the position adopted by Nordau in *Degeneration*, which disgusted Morris so much.⁶² Morris could not have arrived at the formulations he propounded in the 1880s had the intellectual terrain not been shifting. Positions concerning the roots of aesthetic experience



Figure 4 'Tawhiao, The Maori King', from *Illustrated London News*, 14 June 1844, p. 576. Special Collections, Senate House Library, University of London

were being disturbed by the reassessment of ornament that took place in anthropology. Morris should therefore be seen as a participant in the ongoing debates about art, human identity and cultural evolution. Other Marxist formulations emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century against the background of these debates; Plekhanov, for instance in his 'Letters Without Address' (1899–1900), works systematically through a vast range of ethnographic authorities including Tylor and Lubbock to arrive at the position that the aesthetic sense is not primary. He is quite clear that aesthetic pleasure follows on from activities of economic importance; play derives from labour and not vice versa. When he comes to the question of the motivations for body art and tattooing he offers action against insects and the sun and surgical procedures as possible first stimuli and then the

semiotic issues of marking out the relationship of the individual to the gens and recording the life of the individual or the community. Only after this is there any sense that this decoration appears beautiful.⁶³ Morris had a Marxist aesthetics that turned the argument a different way. For Morris the requirements of labour could not be seen as prior to another department of human life concerned with artistic feeling and aesthetic pleasure because labour was itself (ideally) the locus of pleasure; pleasure in labour was the fount of art. Furthermore, Morris believed that ornament had to participate in a rejoining of subject and object. Colour and pattern had to get under the skin, like the dye from a tattooer's needle, not just because the artist gets his or her hands dirty artisan-style, but because the aesthetic functions in an environment patterned by its crafty inhabitants and above all because the aesthetic comes from within. There is a marked focus in much twentieth-century Marxist art history and literary history on iconography and the identification of ideological positions.⁶⁴ By turning afresh to Morris as one of the first Marxist commentators on the making and the study of art we can see that there was, from a very early stage, the articulation of another way of approaching art and its history, one where the primary emphasis was on aesthetics and form.

2

Mikhail Lifshits: A Marxist Conservative

Stanley Mitchell

I

The name Mikhail Lifshits (1905–83) will probably mean little to most English-speaking readers. Perhaps one or two, interested in Marxist aesthetics, might have come across his little book *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx* (1935) originally published in English translation in New York in 1938 and reprinted by Pluto Press in 1973 with an introduction by Terry Eagleton;¹ or, less likely, his contributions to *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, published in New York in 1939 under the title *Literature and Marxism* and edited by Angel Flores.² America has served him much better than Britain. But only aficionados will have seen any other work of his in English translation, scattered among Marxist and other journals on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the English *Modern Quarterly* and the American periodicals *Science and Society* and *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

Who is he and why am I writing about him? Lifshits was the first person to put together a Marxist aesthetics by combing through the works of Marx and Engels (later Lenin) for whatever they had to say about literature and art and ordering it into a historical and thematic anthology supported by an extensive commentary.³ But this was no mere compilation, it argued for a coherent philosophy of art. The smaller *Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx* charts Marx's aesthetic views from his early dissertation on Democritus and Epicurus through to the *Theories of Surplus Value*. Lifshits's aim was not to lift an independent aesthetic system out of Marx (and Engels), for no such thing existed. The main concerns of the two thinkers lay, in any case, elsewhere: they were revolutionaries whose prime need was for a theory of society and history. On the other hand, aesthetics was no mere spin-off of their more practical and urgent studies, it was an integral part of them. Marx had no time to write his projected monograph on Balzac, nor did he contribute the article on aesthetics that he had promised to the *New American Encyclopedia*. Nevertheless, as Lifshits was at pains to show, the aesthetic dimension – its flowerings and defeats – inheres in every facet of Marx's work from his study of production to his conception of ideology.

To persuade his readership that a coherent philosophy of art could be found in Marxism, Lifshits had to overcome two obstacles. One was the

widespread view that the artistic likes and dislikes of Marx and Engels differed little from those of educated Victorians (for instance, Marx's devotion to classical Greece), that they were private predilections that had nothing to do with his politics. It is a view to be found in Peter Demetz's *Marx, Engels and the Poets* (1967) and Isaiah Berlin's *Karl Marx* (1978) and is still quite common. More importantly, it was shared by David Riazanov, head of the Marx–Engels Institute where Lifshits worked in the early 1930s. Or, at least, Riazanov held that there was no recognisable aesthetic system in Marx, and turned down Lifshits's application to work on the subject.

The other obstacle was a whole cluster of attitudes originating in the Second International and categorised in the Soviet Union in the 1930s as 'vulgar sociology' – the derivation of art directly from its class and economic basis, an approach which Engels had already warned against in a number of letters after Marx's death, at a time when theorists like Kautsky were transforming historical materialism into an economic determinism. Engels, by contrast, underlined the complex and interactive relationship between consciousness, ideology and social practice, emphasising the uneven development of ideas in relation to the base.⁴ The economy, he cautioned in a resonating phrase, was determining only in the last instance. So strong was the objectivism of Social Democratic thinking in this period that even radical thinkers, like Mehring and Plekhanov, resorted to Kantian categories in order to define questions of value and subjectivity. This economic or class determinism lasted into the Soviet period, where it flourished under different banners. And though such attitudes were officially banned, they survived or took on a new form in various ideological currents, not least in Socialist Realism.

Very little was known or published of the writings of Marx and Engels on the arts before the 1930s. Only then were Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* discovered, which provided a foundation for both an ontology and an aesthetics. Nor yet had Engels's seminal letters on realism appeared.⁵ But, more importantly, to quote Brecht from a different context, 'the circumstances weren't right'. The avant-garde wanted to wage war on bourgeois art with the same ferocity as the Reds fought the Whites. The radical magazine LEF, edited by Mayakovsky, charged the symbolist poet Valery Briussov (who had just joined the Community Party) with counter-revolution in form. Exhibits in museums and art galleries were labelled according to the artist's class origins.⁶ Constructivists rejected the easel as a parasitic appendage of bourgeois culture. Futurists called for the expulsion of Pushkin, Tolstoy, Chekhov and Gorky from the steamship of modernity. Trotsky described this avant-garde frenzy as a hangover from its petit-bourgeois revolt in the pre-revolutionary period. Lenin counter-attacked by shutting down Prolet'kult, an organisation that campaigned for a pure proletarian art. Any socialist culture, Lenin remarked, would have as its

basis the entire history of humankind, critically assimilated. Despite these rebuffs the avant-garde continued to occupy senior administrative posts in the arts until the late 1920s. Apart from Lenin's intervention, the Party took a lenient attitude to the various artistic tendencies. But with the inauguration of Stalin's First Five Year Plan in 1928 the situation changed radically. A new class-based aesthetics, based on realism, replaced the sociological formalism of the avant-garde. By the end of the First Five Year Plan this, too, was ousted (though partially incorporated) by Socialist Realism, personally supervised by Stalin.⁷

The 1920s were by no means bereft of genuine Marxist endeavours, above all the linguistic studies of Pavel Medvedev and Valentin Voloshinov and their critiques of the Formalist school. Since then, apart from Vyogtsky's work and Marr's class-based theories of the early 1930s, linguistics was neglected by Russian Marxists. Stalin's belated and commonsensical corrective to Marr, in his *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics* (1950), did nothing to advance the subject. Lifshits ignored it, and Lukács, an émigré colleague, only turned his attention to it much later in his *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen*,⁸ limiting himself, however, to Pavlov's reflex theory of language. This is a pity, since, from the eighteenth century, Russia was extraordinarily rich in linguistic developments. At the time of the 'linguistic turn' in western cultural studies, it was logical that Voloshinov, Medvedev and their mentor, Bakhtin, should have appealed much more than the more traditional Lifshits. Indeed, Voloshinov's description of the sign as the site of class struggle made him an icon of the left.⁹ For Lifshits such an assertion, if he knew it, would have been another example of 'vulgar sociology'. Nor did he countenance any attempt to adapt formalist theory to Marxism, as Mayakovsky, a poet whom he belittled, sought to do.

Lifshits's work marked a turning point in Soviet thinking about art and culture. He was far from alone and even drew sustenance from Stalin's 'Thermidor'. Yet his position was unique, and without him the aesthetic thought of the period would have been impoverished. Without him, and his colleagues, there would have been no Marxism that could counter the stereotyped naturalism that went under the name of Socialist Realism. That such a Marxism found its expression in aesthetics was a response to Stalin's suppression of revolutionary politics. Not that Lifshits or his colleagues were ever political activists. But the manner of Lifshits's work on aesthetics constituted a strategic withdrawal of the kind that distinguishes late from early Hegel in regard to the French Thermidor. In his 'reconciliation with reality' Hegel produced the dialectical insights which, stripped of their conservative husk, became revolutionary. Lifshits notes a similar phase of renunciation in Vico's work. 'In certain tragic periods of history, he wrote in 1936 apropos of Vico's theory of cycles,

the final goal is still too distant and the burden of today's sacrifices so heavy and painful that the masses succumb to a state of political apathy for years on end. Periods of quietism and indifference inevitably follow the revolutionary storms of the past.¹⁰

Lifshits denied identifying with either Vico or Hegel, for, after all, was he not living in a socialist democracy in which the revolution continued to grow? And yet those thinkers, artists and writers to whom he feels closest share a similar resignation, resembling Hegel's owl of Minerva, which takes flight only at dusk. In a later comment on the position he and Lukács occupied in the Soviet Union, a similar note is struck: 'Unlike Hegel, we profess a faith in the democracy of the historical process which also demands sacrifice, including human sacrifice.'¹¹

In using aesthetics as a platform for Marxism, Lifshits was also emulating a time-honoured tradition in Russia dating back to the eighteenth century, when literature and literary criticism were the only voices of opposition. To occupy a post in an institute, which Lifshits periodically did, inevitably involved compromise. He was a Communist. Outside the Communist Party it was possible to be more subversive, like Bulgakov with *The Master and Margarita*, but at a cost. Bulgakov's novel was unpublishable. Mandelstam's anti-Stalin poem sent him to a camp.

First in 1930, and then again in 1933, Lifshits was joined by Lukács, who emigrated to Russia shortly after Hitler's accession to power. In 1928 Lukács had submitted his famous Blum theses (Blum was his Comintern pseudonym) to the exiled Hungarian Communist Party, proposing a common front against fascism between progressive sections of the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary proletariat. His programme unfortunately coincided with the so-called Third or 'class-against-class' Period of the Comintern (of which the class-based aesthetics of First Five Year Plan was an offshoot). The Comintern refused an alliance with the Social Democrats, dubbing them Social Fascists and so depriving the working class of an ally against fascism, with disastrous results. Lukács's proposals were in all essentials realised by the Popular Front of 1935, set up with Comintern approval. But already in 1928, forced to recant his theses, he decided to retire from political life and return to theory. Not until the Hungarian uprising of 1956 would he take a direct part in politics again. The Blum theses had aesthetic implications. In his later literary theory Lukács conceived of a broad realism that could include bourgeois and socialist writers from Thomas Mann to Mikhail Sholokhov. During 1931 and 1932 he fought for this position on a commission from the International Association of Proletarian Writers. Soon the Comintern would be moving in the direction of the Popular Front and his critique of left-wing modernism reflected this shift.

Returning to Russia in 1933 as an émigré, and distanced from the Hungarian Communist Party in exile, he resumed work with Lifshits on the construction of a Marxist aesthetics. Marx's *Economic and Philosophic*

Manuscripts became available through their efforts, as did Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks* with their comments on Hegel's *Logic*. Engels's letters on realism were published. And Hegel's *Aesthetics* provided, in Engels's words, an indispensable preliminary to a Marxist philosophy of art. With these tools – Hegel's aesthetic theory, Marx's early ontology and anthropology, Engels's definition of realism and Lenin's concept of reflection (to be discussed later) – the two thinkers developed a model of aesthetics and realism that could be applied to the entirety of history, starting with cave paintings. Aesthetics, as Lifshits put it, was no mere speciality or discipline, but the philosophy of art history.

There were essentially four components to this aesthetic theory: the relationship between use value and exchange value, the uneven development between art and the economy, the goal of a classless society, and the place of realism in history. A society based on use value, it was argued, was likely to produce a higher form of art than one more economically advanced in which exchange value or the market predominated. The polarisation of use value and exchange value was at its most extreme in capitalist society, where unprecedented freedom entailed unprecedented saleability, a contradiction which only a communist order could dissolve by dismantling the market and putting production under public control. Capitalism, as Marx declared, presents the greatest threat to art. From this perspective the significant art of the past can be seen as an anticipation of communism where 'useful work' (to borrow Morris's term) is the norm. Significant art, according to Lifshits, is always realistic, and flourished in societies where use and exchange value were in relative balance (as in the Athenian democracy and the city states of the Renaissance). By realism Lifshits means an art that plumbs the depths of its time, which transcends temporary class dominations and prefigures the still-hidden motions of social development (in the spirit of Shelley's definition of poets as the 'unacknowledged legislators of the world'). It is to be distinguished from naturalism, which is only of its time and is concerned with the average rather than the typical. Nor is it a style, limited to certain novels of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, it is a rounded conception that goes back to the beginnings of civilisation, and represents the world faithfully by contending both with its opponents and its own illusions.

In May 1933 a group of like-minded writers and critics founded a journal, *The Literary Critic*, which in time acquired the status of a tendency or school of which Lifshits and Lukács were the leading lights. *The Literary Critic* was born out of the turmoil precipitated by the Party Resolution of 23 April 1932 which abolished all existing organisations and associations involved in literature and the other arts and paved the way for a single, unified body, principally the Union of Soviet Writers. Similar bodies were set up for the other arts. As in pre-revolutionary Russia, literature formed the cauldron of the debate. RAPP, the Association of Proletarian Writers, had dominated the class-against-class period. With the completion of the First Five Year

Plan, Stalin considered that a socialist base had been laid and that it was time to halt the persecution of bourgeois specialists as well as the excesses of collectivisation. In place of the RAPP slogan 'Ally or Enemy', the Party called for a new inclusiveness. The so-called Cultural Revolution of 1928–32 was over just as, internationally, the Third Period was coming to a close. The Party also questioned the cultural credentials of RAPP, accusing the Association of leftist vulgarisation and oversimplification in its dealings with loyal fellow travellers (a fellow traveller was a sympathiser who had not joined the Party). Theoretically, it condemned the 'dialectical materialist method' which RAPP sought to impose on all writers, proletarian or fellow traveller. Ivan Gronskey, chairman of the Organization Committee of the new Union of Soviet Writers, the body set up to implement the Central Committee resolution, remarked in May 1932 that the only demand that they would make of the writer was to write the truth, to 'portray our reality that is in itself dialectic'¹² and that this was the method of Socialist Realism.

Not all the Party's criticisms were fair, and the traditionalism of RAPP found its way into the practices of Socialist Realism, as did some of the RAPPists themselves, most notoriously the dogmatic Alexander Fadeyev. Socialist Realism was formally inaugurated in 1934 at an international congress attended by delegates from all over the world and chaired by the venerable Maxim Gorky, the butt of attack both from RAPP and the avant-garde.¹³ Gorky linked the new realism with its forbear in the nineteenth century. Engels's letters to Margaret Harkness and Minna Kautsky, already mentioned, were published in 1932 and used by the Party against RAPP. 'The realism I allude to', wrote Engels in his letter to Margaret Harkness, 'may crop out in spite of the author's opinions.'¹⁴ As an example he referred to the legitimist Balzac, who satirised the aristocracy and admired the republican insurrectionists. This position became canonical in Marxist criticism, but was subject to differing interpretations, as we shall see. It fitted the new mood of the Second Five Year Plan and the conciliatory beginnings of Socialist Realism. It also provided a cornerstone for the separate theory of realism propounded by Lifshits and Lukács. RAPP's ideological terror was lifted and writers could enjoy a breathing space before the new doctrine turned into a rubber stamp for Party decisions.

The Literary Critic appeared with the philosopher Yudin, a Stalin appointee, as editor. Yudin was one of the fiercest opponents of RAPP. While the views of Lifshits, Lukács and their colleagues came under increasing attack from other journals during the 1930s, Stalin's indirect patronage ensured that none of the authors suffered. Lukács's contributions included the essays published in Britain after the war under the title *Studies in European Realism*, the first book by which he became known in the English-speaking world. Under Stalin's shadow, the journal acquired the paradoxical status of a *fronde*. Lifshits told me that in the vaulted basement of the Marx–Engels Institute,

where he and Lukács spent many happy hours chatting together, they would refer to Stalin as 'der finstere Georgier' (the sinister Georgian).

Marxists could no longer take the road of open polemics, or rather less than before, but, like their nineteenth-century forbears, had to use an 'Aesopean' language. In the neglected sphere of aesthetics they found their answer. Unlike Lukács, Lifshits was never a politician. Nevertheless, their collaboration constituted a necessary retreat from the political arena back through the aesthetic to the heart of Marxism. Here was a safer means of countering Stalin's opportunism. This aesthetic turn curiously parallels the position that Adorno was taking up in the west in vastly different circumstances. While such a comparison would have enraged Lifshits, there is a similar strategic shift here that is missing from all accounts of Soviet Marxism. The crucial difference is that concepts like 'administered Socialism' or 'inauthenticity' were taboo in the Soviet Union. Aesthetics was not an escape route, it was a strategy. There was no 'outside' position for a Soviet Marxist.¹⁵ Such a position meant silence or suppression. In any case, Lifshits and Lukács were not merely opponents of the regime; they were far from disabused of the prospects of socialism in the USSR. Lukács readily declared that the worst form of socialism was preferable to the best kind of capitalism. Looking back much later to the early 1930s, Lifshits wrote to his friend: 'Those difficult times were perhaps the happiest of my life.'¹⁶ They constructed their Marxist aesthetics in opposition to the official line, but only by cooperating with official policies.

Cooperation turned into opposition through a kind of osmosis or camouflage and sometimes it was difficult to tell the two apart. The same terminology could mean different things, depending upon users or receivers. Lifshits applauded the official reinstatement of terms, which had been banished from the discourse of the 1920s, such as 'motherland', 'the people', 'glory', 'beauty', 'genius', because of their universal human significance.¹⁷ He even had a good word for the neoclassical architecture of Zholtovsky and others, until it became too ornate, because it brought back a human dimension. And it can be argued that the bureaucracy was responding to a public need after the sectarian austerity and 'infantilism' (Lenin) of political culture in the preceding decade. The resurrected vocabulary boosted morale and soon adorned propaganda posters from then until the end of the Brezhnev era. A fine stylist himself, Lifshits's terminology inevitably risked contamination from the official clichés. Words had to be chosen carefully. In the columns of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, organ of the Writers' Union, Lifshits sought to clarify his independent definition of 'the people' and 'the popular' only to be accused of losing sight of 'class' in his crusade against vulgar sociology. The regime mobilised both 'people' and 'class' in its consolidation of the new Soviet Union. It recognized two classes: the leading working class and the collectivised peasantry. In addition, there was the intelligentsia, not a class, but a social stratum, and in time the offspring

of the two major classes. Together, the working class and the peasantry constituted the people. The Russian term *narodnost* means both nation and people. The adjective *narodny* became the criterion for judging good and bad figures in the past. Ivan the Terrible was revalued as a man of the people (which is how he appears in Eisenstein's film) because he was the prime founder of the Russian state. So, too, Peter the Great, who, like Ivan, curbed the powers of the feudal nobility. In the present the two terms, 'people' and 'class', acquired a more rhetorical and instrumental resonance. While the First and Second Five Year Plans may have established the foundations of socialism, the Soviet Union was still a backward country encircled by capitalism and threatened by the rise of fascism. In this situation Stalin warned of reversions and counter-revolution, declaring, in the mid-1930s, that class struggle would sharpen with the growth of socialism, a position that differed from the more relaxed policies of the early 1930s. The ensuing show trials provided Stalin with his evidence. Lifshits commented later on the historical irony which took the comparatively mild dogmas of 1920s leftism to such hideous extremes. In the period of sharpened class struggle one could be denounced as either a class enemy or an enemy of the people or both. During the campaign against 'rootless cosmopolitanism' after the Second World War, Lifshits himself, a Jew, was condemned as an enemy of the people. Given the use of the term 'class', first in 'vulgar sociology', then in the fearful Cultural Revolution accompanying the First Five Year Plan, and finally in Stalin's terror, it is understandable why Lifshits chooses 'people' as his leading socio-aesthetic category rather than 'class', although, as we shall shortly see, he does try to bring the two together. But it is not just a tactical choice. The 'people' for him is a more transcendent and universal category. He was not alone in his preference for a broader concept than class. 'Popular', 'democratic', 'humanist' are common evaluative and interpretative terms of the Soviet period, only in part authorised by official rhetoric. Bakhtin's semi-Marxist book on Rabelais is likewise based on the category of the popular.

In Lifshits's view of history, based on Marx, Hegel and Vico, reason will triumph despite and even because of its defeats ('la raison finira par avoir raison' was one of his favourite maxims). Battles lost were also battles won, he declared, simply by having taken place, and they were not lost forever – a sentiment quite close to Benjamin's 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'. Sotto voce, indirectly, more vocally in the years preceding his death and, most freely of all, in the voluminous notes left in his archive, Lifshits applied these ideas to the Soviet experience. His few followers, notably Viktor Arslanov, find in his work a touchstone for salvaging and renewing the almost annihilated Marxism of the Stalin years. Not, however, by pitting the experiments of the 1920s against the straightjacket of the 1930s, as has long been fashionable, particularly in the west, but by calling attention to the brief moment at the start of the 1930s when a new form of realism (unlike Socialist Realism),

even a new classicism (in the work of Nesterov and Mukhina) seemed just possible. And, of course, there was *The Literary Critic* itself. In Lifshits's cyclical account, periods of classicism occurred in similarly brief moments – in the gap between a dying social formation and a new one that had not yet consolidated itself, in other words a gap between one form of class domination and another. The Renaissance flourished in such a moment. But a renewed realism or classicism was no more than a possibility in the Soviet period. Arslanov sets himself the profound task of resurrecting what genuine Marxism there was in the Soviet years, while recognising how inextricably it was intertwined with the crimes and terror. Indeed, he goes beyond the perversions of Stalin, and raises the question of revolutionary guilt in making the Revolution in the first place. Any innovation in history or art, he argues, involves transgression, and it is important that the revolutionary takes responsibility for it, even if he feels justified by historical necessity. Lenin could do this and was, therefore, according to Arslanov and Lifshits, the tragic hero of the Russian Revolution. (See the earlier quotation from Lifshits on the necessity of human sacrifice in building socialist democracy.) Lukács himself had argued eloquently for this position in his essay 'Tactics and Ethics' of 1919. Obviously this claim did not extend to Stalin, who took no such responsibility for his crimes.

II

Mikhail Alexandrovich Lifshits was born into a middle-class family in a small town on the steppes of southern Ukraine in 1905, the year of the first failed socialist revolution. This and the successful 1917 revolution, he declared, defined his intellectual formation, and he was glad not to have been born earlier or later. He felt nourished by the 1917 revolution at first hand. As a schoolboy he experienced the alternating rule of Reds and Whites, German occupation, Makhno's¹⁸ anarchy, famine and typhus from which he nearly died. The romantic appeal of the Revolution sustained him through the violence and tragedy, and enabled him as an adult to retain an optimism tempered by irony. At school he read Plekhanov, father of Russian Marxism, later to become a Menshevik opponent of the Revolution, but always respected by Lenin. Plekhanov was the first Russian Marxist to write extensively on art and literature in a lucid, attractive manner, uncommon among Russian Marxists of the time, and this left its mark on Lifshits's attention to style. A talent for drawing took him to Moscow in 1922, where he hoped to study art but was rejected as a naive, provincial realist by Vkhutemas, one of the avant-garde art institutes. After a year, having learned to ape the devices of the avant-garde, he was accepted. But disillusion with the new pedagogy cut short his career as an artist. Instead, he discovered a talent for teaching and, in his early twenties, emerged as what he would always be – a philosopher and a philosopher of art, giving

his first paper on William James and pragmatism. He immersed himself in Schelling and Hegel. Notes for a lecture he delivered on 'Dialectics in the History of Art' in 1927 (when he was 22) read almost like a chapter out of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. But this predilection for classical philosophy and art cost him dear. In 1929 the authorities in Vkhutein (the new name for Vkhutemas) charged him with right-wing deviation, and, lacking any organisational support, he was forced to leave. It was still the heyday of leftism, though not for much longer.

We have already referred to Lifshits's troubles at the Marx–Engels Institute where he was employed next. Nevertheless, he pursued his work on a Marxist aesthetics, and in 1933 the first version of his anthology of the writings of Marx and Engels on literature and art appeared. The second, fuller edition came out in 1937. In 1931 Lifshits was in danger of losing his job at the Marx–Engels Institute as a result of the anti-Deborin campaign. Anton Debordin was a leading Marxist philosopher whom Stalin accused of 'Menshevizing idealism', an accusation aimed at not a few figures as part of the reorientation of Soviet intellectual life described above. Debordin was charged with the sins of the Second International, in particular the economic determinism that inspired the Menshevik opposition to the revolution. As far as idealism was concerned, Debordin was accused of treating Marxist theory as pure methodology divorced from practice. Whatever the substance of these accusations, they became a rubber stamp for persecution. Unusually, Debordin survived to have the charge rescinded after Stalin's death. The campaign, if not the methods, pleased Lifshits because it removed one of the pillars of vulgar sociology, though to label Debordin in this way is stretching the term. Lifshits often links economic determinism with formalism (a variant of idealism) in his characterisation of vulgar sociology (of which more below). Along with Debordin two other explicit 'vulgar sociologists' fell: the art historian Vladimir Friche and the literary critic Valerian Pereverzev. For the latter Lifshits retained some regard. Riazanov, supporting Debordin, broke with Lifshits, but failed to remove him from the Institute where he remained until Lunacharsky, commissar for enlightenment, arranged his transfer to the newly established Communist Academy. Lifshits also distinguished himself as a popular lecturer at the famous evening Institute of Philosophy and Literature in Moscow. One of his students, Alexander Tvardovsky, poet and post-war editor of the relatively independent journal *Novy Mir* (*New World*), became his close friend, inviting him to contribute to its pages both as writer and internal reader. In the latter capacity Lifshits encouraged the publication of Solzhenitsyn's momentous story, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962).

Two sometimes bitter controversies in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* engaged Lifshits in the second half of the 1930s. The first took place in 1936 when 'vulgar sociology' was given its final quietus. Lifshits posed two questions: Is there an inner equation between the greatness of the artwork and its

popular character (*narodnost*)? Or are the finest compositions no more than documents of slave-owning, feudal and capitalist ideologies?

Lifshits's answer to his questions amplifies what we have already heard: great art is 'popular' in the sense of representing the interests of the exploited majority who may never have encountered a work of art. Art that serves only the interests of an exploiting class can never achieve greatness. An artist employed by such a class must in some way find a distance from it to produce anything worthwhile. What Lifshits calls 'social egoism' – the representation of a class's needs, tastes, psyche – can only damage art, and a reactionary ideology can never form the basis of a healthy culture, as the 'vulgar sociologists' thought, arguing that any system of belief could support a work of art as long as it rested on a substantial social foundation and demonstrated vigour and skill. What about the Balzac model then? The difference is that he transcends the class values that he espouses outside his work. Lifshits distinguishes such writers and artists from those who merely express a class ideology, however firmly based. The transcendence of class interest or 'social egoism' is an important touchstone for Lifshits.

Lifshits turns his attention to whether skill and imagination can redeem a reactionary ideology, as the vulgar sociologists supposed. This view, he argues, links sociology and formalism in a grotesque manner. By way of illustration he quotes two anecdotes. In the first, a museum guide explains an eighteenth-century painting to a group of visitors: 'You see before you a famous grandee from the age of Catherine. He performed various services for his class. Of course, the artist idealizes him, but look at the skill with which he has painted the magnate's satin camisole!' In the second story, a guide in the History Museum remarks: 'And there are the pincers that the Counts Sheremetev used to tear out the nostrils of their serfs. But look at the filigree craftsmanship!'¹⁹ Here is the essence, Lifshits assures us, of all vulgar sociological theory, high and low. Skill is more than a matter of craft, Lifshits argues, it is the way truth (the truth of content, he calls it) is translated into language of art. Truth of content in art means fidelity to reality, just as in the social sphere it means justice and, in the moral domain, goodness. These categories – truth, justice and goodness – he regards as ontological entities, part of the objective world, absolute values that are reflected in relative forms.

The second controversy of 1939–40 left 'vulgar sociology' behind and addressed the relationship of 'people' to 'class', which Lifshits discussed at greater length and more concretely in a separate paper, 'The Popular in Art and the Class Struggle'.²⁰ Here his characterisation of exploiting classes and their representatives is more complex. He notes, for instance, that, at the time of the Industrial Revolution, the British bourgeoisie included advocates of production for production's sake, such as David Ricardo, philanthropic economists anxious to protect the rights of individuals and small property owners, like Sismondi, and outright reactionaries like Malthus who saw

the economy as a means of curbing the proletariat and strengthening the power of the ruling classes, in particular the aristocracy. Following Marx, Lifshits saw in Ricardo an unusual apologist of the bourgeoisie, who fiercely criticised any manifestation of his class that stood in the way of maximum productivity and whose argument in favour of production for its own sake meant production beyond his own class – for humanity. Sweeping aside Sismondi's concern for the welfare of the individual, Marx had written that

although at first the development of the capacities of the human species takes place at the cost of the majority of individuals and even classes, in the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides with the development of the individual; the higher development of individuality is thus only achieved by a historical process during which individuals are sacrificed.²¹

Marx's words illuminate Lifshits's philosophy of history and his tragic (but in the end optimistic) history of art.

In another article of this period, 'What is the argument really about?',²² Lifshits recalls Marx's enthusiasm for William Cobbett, a Romantic who 'was at once the most conservative and the most radical destructive man of Great Britain – the purest incarnation of old England and the most audacious initiator of young England'.²³ What is important for Lifshits is the dual position taken by Ricardo and Cobbett, in Ricardo's case as apologist of the bourgeoisie and advocate of humanity; in Cobbett's as opponent of the Industrial Revolution and fighter for the working people. Neither man fits a precise class category. What matters to Lifshits is that they both speak for 'humanity', whether as a 'progressive' or a 'conservative' or, in the case of Cobbett, as both. Their views are class connected, but not class bound. Lifshits too easily equates 'humanity' with 'people'. But it seems clear that Cobbett is closer to the latter, as happens whenever a radical conservative challenges a new commercial class, while Ricardo, the unusual apologist for the bourgeoisie, has to be placed closer to 'humanity'.

Principled conservatism will always be more genuinely progressive and popular, according to Lifshits, than any liberalism. He refers to the great conservatives of history who retain values to which we should return – the heritage of classical times when men saw more clearly, when the human being was the measure of the universe. Indeed, he views revolution as a restoration rather than a transformation, calling it a *magna restauratio* in a play on Bacon's *magna instauratio* by which the latter meant the expansion of scientific knowledge. But it is important to note that his antinomy of conservative and liberal is confined to periods of commercialisation. Only a communist society, Lifshits argues, will resolve this antinomy, for then progress will no longer be associated with an exploitative class (the bourgeoisie), conservatism will have lost its historical justification, and

aesthetics can rejoin politics.²⁴ In his *Grundrisse* Marx pointed out that Greek art, the product of an undeveloped economy, has furnished an unsurpassed model for economically more advanced societies, and sketched some explanations for this uneven relationship between artistic and social development, which contradict the simplistic parallels between base and superstructure usually associated with Marxism.²⁵ Lifshits's aesthetics is nothing other than an attempt to give body and colour to this sketch.

In his 1939 articles Lifshits took this conservative–progressive antinomy to an extreme which cost him dear. If writers could (in the right circumstances) produce a progressive picture despite their class prejudices, they could also do so because of them. This was as true of Balzac's monarchism, he argued, as of Tolstoy's religious anarchism, which enabled him to give voice to the feelings of the predominant class in Russian society – the peasantry – then in a ferment of contradictory change and rebellion, which in turn made it possible for him to oppose his own class. The debate with Lifshits and his colleagues split into a Swiftian battle between 'despitists' and 'becasists'. Much later, Lifshits remarked how few people at the time could deal with this opposition dialectically. Instead, he, Lukács and others were accused of condoning reactionary ideology or downright royalism (in the case of Balzac).

In 'The Popular in Art and the Class Struggle' Lifshits adds to his definition of the 'popular', distinguishing between two kinds. First, there is popular life, festivals, folk art which are sometimes incorporated into 'high' art, not just for the sake of decoration but as part of the central meaning. Examples are Bruegel's peasants or Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth*. But a more universal manifestation of the popular, according to Lifshits, is to be found at certain aristocratic or classical moments of western cultural history (he rarely looks beyond the west.) The principal ones are ancient Greece, the Renaissance, the Goethe period in Germany and the Pushkin age in Russia. Paradoxically, he cites Leonardo as a product of such a moment, although the latter avoided popular life, taking part in none of the movements which attracted his contemporaries (e.g. Savonarola), but who, like Goethe in Weimar, found a retreat in the insignificant court of Milan, and was, like Goethe, sceptical of social change. Yet, in following this path, Lifshits argues, Leonardo stripped away all the accidentals of life, all the motley inheritances of the quattrocento and the Middle Ages, and raised the individual to the level of the species (as Goethe does in *Faust*). This universality, Lifshits maintains, is popular art in the highest sense, describing it as the 'lofty simplicity of a classical, aristocratic age'. Note the Winckelmannian terminology here, which is not fortuitous. Lifshits devoted a major essay to Winckelmann and applied his phrase 'noble simplicity' to a genuinely popular and classical art. By contrast, the aristocratic and classical culture of, say, Louis XIV's court was neither popular nor universal; and the neoclassicism of Winckelmann's day even less so. By the term 'aristocracy'

Lifshits means something more than the class in the narrow sense, for those artists who are employed by the nobility, like Leonardo, project visions and inventions that anticipate later ages. The aristocracy, with its base in trade and industry, made this possible, but it is the same class that put an end to the Renaissance in pursuit of its own selfish interests. Hence, Lifshits explains, the aura of pessimism and resignation that accompanies the greatest art of these periods, for all its serenity, joy, balance and beauty. Although their art may be popular in a universal sense, the artists themselves live their lives largely unconnected with the people and represent the class (or classes) by which the latter are oppressed. Only in a communist society, Lifshits predicts, will the people retrieve the art that was always theirs and prove its true popularity.

The 1939 discussions came to no conclusion and were never resumed. Lifshits's views were criticised in a Party resolution in 1940 and *The Literary Critic* was closed and its contributors silenced in the 1940s and 1950s. During the war Lifshits served as a political commissar with a naval flotilla and was decorated with the Order of the Red Banner. After the war he worked variously in the Tretyakov gallery, the Institute of Art and the Institute of Philosophy. Then, in 1950, he was victimised (as mentioned above) in the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, becoming homeless and unemployed. After Stalin's death he contributed to a number of journals – *New Times*, *Questions of Philosophy*, *The Communist* and Tvardovsky's *Novy Mir* (*New World*), referred to above. Submitting a late doctorate, he was made corresponding member (1967) and then full member (1975) of the USSR Academy of Arts.

III

His post-war role was very different from that of the 1930s, now that ideological restrictions had eased after Stalin's death and the unstoppable Thaw. Heterodox then, he now appeared orthodox, as previously banned books became available and stored-away modern works of art were put on exhibition. The younger generation, thirsting for the forbidden, had no difficulty in jettisoning their 'Marxist' catechism. Lifshits was angered not by the young, but by those erstwhile lip-serving dogmatists who had suddenly turned into complaisant liberals, admiring the good things of modernism that they had spent a lifetime decrying under Stalin. Lifshits, too, had decried modernism, but not because of Stalin. He would not change his views now. He was isolated on all sides – by the young and by the reformed dogmatists. Three of the people I interviewed about Lifshits remarked spontaneously and independently of one another: 'A tragic figure!' It was as if he was fighting a one-man rearguard battle against history. He fitted into the role of his 'great conservatives'. He shocked the public with his 1965 essay 'Why

I Am Not a Modernist' (the title taken from Bertrand Russell's 'Why I Am Not a Christian').

If modernism was now popular in the Soviet Union, at least in urban centres and among the well-educated graduates of Stalin's universities, it was not popular in Lifshits's meaning of the word, ignoring the real needs of the people and lacking universality. It was fashionable rather than popular. But it was a serious fashion, a product of disintegrating Stalinism. What was dangerous about it, according to Lifshits, was that it reproduced the nihilism of the Stalin period at the level of caricature and parody. Victor Shklovsky once described the new art to me as the carnivalisation of Marxism. Not all artists were fashionable in this sense. There were those concerned with humanitarian and ecological issues. There were religious artists who were only too fashionable. The 1960s were still a hopeful period and the charge of nihilism is more applicable to subsequent decades. Yet, even here, especially in the avid return to the art of the 1920s, with its dissolution of realism and disregard of the individual, Lifshits saw an endorsement of nihilism.

In *The Crisis of Ugliness* (1968) he declared (like Trotsky, to whom he had always been hostile) that modernism had never surpassed the stage of petit-bourgeois rebellion. It was an anarchist refusal that had never seriously contested the authority of the big bourgeoisie and never based itself on the working-class movement. Psychologically, it oscillated unstably between subjective chaos and a desperate need for order (Cubism, geometrical abstraction). For the modernist, the world had become a void that he or she tried frantically to fill with a 'will to power' or 'will to form' derived from Nietzsche and articulated by Riegl and Worringer. Reality had shrunk to the artist's materials and perceptions. As part of the general irrationalism of the imperialist period, modernism must lead objectively to fascism, irrespective of the honourable, idealistic even anti-fascist views of its practitioners, among them members of the Communist Party, like Picasso and Léger. History, Lifshits never tires of reminding us, pursues its own grim logic regardless of personal intention. Despite the 'degenerate art' exhibition, Lifshits maintains that Fascism was never intrinsically anti-modernist. At the beginning it fed on the anti-capitalist impulses of Futurism and Expressionism, until it was ready to establish its own aesthetics – a pseudo-realism that satisfied the tastes of the petty bourgeoisie, while still retaining elements of modernism. Its opportunistic denunciation of modern art can in no way, he insists, be compared to the principled critique levelled by the Communists, starting before the Revolution with Plekhanov and Mehring.

To condemn the whole of modernism as nihilistic, let alone to link it with fascism, is breathtakingly reductive. It is not a surprising attitude coming from Soviet critics, but it stems just as logically from the aesthetic theory of Lifshits and Lukács. (It is striking that similar views have been expressed about the Russian avant-garde by Boris Groys and Igor Golomstok, who argue, not unlike Lifshits, that the avant-garde prefigured the 'totalitarian

art' of the Soviet period.)²⁶ The aesthetic theory of Lifshits and Lukács is an organic whole, which would fall apart, if any attempt was made to accommodate even the most 'progressive' modernism. Indeed, this was Lifshits's complaint about the turncoat Marxists of the 1960s, who looked for a 'good' modernism. For Lifshits and Lukács, there was only one modernism, regardless of left or right inflections, just as there was only one realism, one romanticism, one classicism. By painting *Guernica* Picasso did not become a 'good' modernist. Perhaps Brecht, whom Lifshits disliked, came closest to bringing realism and modernism together without damaging Marxism, but that is another story.

IV

The posthumous essay 'On the Ideal and the Real' (1984) marks a new beginning after the debacle over modernism. It was written as a rejoinder to the most promising young Marxist philosopher of the new generation, Evald Ilyenkov, whose *Dialectic of the Concrete and Abstract in Marx's Capital* (1960) has been translated into English.²⁷ The argument is perhaps an old one – whether the material world contains ideal properties or whether these are constructs of the mind. Ilyenkov's position is that the ideal is the product of consciousness and social practice. Lifshits goes further, finding ideal forms in nature itself. Each natural process, he argues, tends towards an ideal essence, like a gas or a liquid in a pure state. So, too, in human society, taking into account the mediations of consciousness and social practice. Capitalism, for example, emerged with such clarity and relief in nineteenth-century Britain that it provided an ideal or classical form for Marx's analysis as no other capitalist development did. In the absence of this form Marx could not have made his analysis. Where Marx declares that social being determines consciousness, Lifshits compresses his definition so that consciousness is not just *determined* by 'being', it *is* 'conscious being' or 'being made conscious'. In this sense, *Capital* is social being rendered conscious through Marx's efforts. But the prime mover here is not so much his efforts as the ideal social form that pre-exists his analysis and reflects itself into his brain.

Lenin had introduced the concept of reflection in his *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (1906) as a means of rebutting various neo-Kantian theories. Like Lifshits, he argued that reflection was a property of matter not just of consciousness. But what is important for Lifshits is not reflection so much as reflectability. It is reflectability (or 'mirroriness') that makes reflection possible. Marx could only write *Capital* because British capitalism had reached a point when it was reflectable. Not all situations are reflectable, because they have not yet reached an articulate form, in other words social being is not yet self-conscious (or no longer so). Or, as Lifshits puts it, it has not yet found its 'concept'. By transposing the primacy of reflection to

the object, Lifshits erases the subject–object dichotomy that still inheres in Marxism, but is it at the cost of slipping back into Hegelianism, as his critics maintained? In one of his ‘Theses on Feuerbach’, Marx stresses the need to approach reality not just as an object, but practically and subjectively, Lifshits turns this on its head. One should regard consciousness, he suggests, not just as subject, but ‘in the objective forms it adopts in the course of history’.²⁸

All this lies at the base of Lifshits’s aesthetics. As with British capitalism, so the classical periods of art achieve a self-identity, a self-clarification or ideality. All too briefly, because they appear only in the fissures of history, between the ‘no longer’ of a dying social formation and the ‘not yet’ of a new. Lukács wrote of Lifshits that he dedicated his life to Marxist aesthetics in order to rescue humanity’s ‘cultural legacy’ for socialism.²⁹ He did not leave a large oeuvre, though his archive is full of fragments and notes, which Arslanov is publishing chunk by chunk. He planned a book expounding his ‘ontognoseology’, some of whose ideas I have sketched just above. But death cut him short. He was a teacher and essayist, most of whose work sprang from controversy, including his pioneering anthology of the writings of Marx and Engels on literature and art, which he regarded as his most important and enduring contribution. He resembled an eighteenth-century *philosophe* of whom Alexander Tvardovsky, editor of *Novy Mir*, once remarked: ‘Don’t think he talks to us fools...he talks to Voltaire. Over our heads. And what are we to him?...Phoo – oo’ – and he blew across the palm of his hand.’³⁰

3 Frederick Antal

Paul Stirton

The displacement of central European intellectuals due to the rise of fascism brought to Britain three leading Hungarian art historians – Frederick (Frigyes) Antal (1887–1954), Johannes Wilde (1891–1970) and Arnold Hauser (1892–1978). All had been active in the Hungarian Soviet Republic at the end of the First World War but since then had followed separate paths. They also went on to establish very different reputations in the English speaking world. Wilde became professor and deputy director of the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, where he taught successive generations of students in the art of the High Renaissance. Hauser, something of an outsider to the British art establishment, was a lecturer in the University of Leeds during the 1950s, his books reaching an audience beyond the confines of academic art history. But it was Antal, who never occupied a permanent position in any British museum or university, who initially exerted a more profound influence in his adopted country. He did this in two ways; firstly by introducing a rigorous method of the ‘social history of art’ inspired by classic Marxist principles, which he demonstrated in the major book *Florentine Painting and its Social Background*,¹ and secondly by focusing his interest on British artists who had received little serious attention from art historians trained in the classic techniques of the discipline. When Antal’s books on Hogarth and Fuseli were published after his death, they were instrumental in establishing a new phase in the scholarship of British art, a point made by many historians when the books were reviewed in the academic and popular press.²

By the time he arrived in Britain in 1933, Antal had already passed a considerable career as an independent scholar in central Europe.³ Born in Budapest to a wealthy Jewish family, he had initially studied law at the university there before taking up art history, first in Budapest and then in Freiburg and Paris. The early years of the twentieth century were, as Antal himself described it, the ‘heroic’ period of art history⁴ with a number of influential figures establishing schools to develop their theories of *Kunstgeschichte* and *Kunstwissenschaft*. Antal entered the mainstream of this burgeoning academic industry becoming a student of Heinrich Wölfflin at the University of Berlin.

During his tenure of the chair of art history at Berlin (1901–10), Wölfflin enjoyed immense prestige, his lectures attracting large audiences of students and the general public.⁵ As the protégé and intellectual heir of Jacob

Burckhardt, Wölfflin developed one of the most coherent methodologies for the study of art works as historical phenomena. *Classic Art*, first published in Munich in 1899,⁶ exerted a great influence on scholars throughout Europe and introduced many of the tools for historical interpretation that Wölfflin would later present in *Principles of Art History* (1915).⁷ In essence, what Wölfflin was outlining in this theoretical text was already implicit in many of his previous publications: that the history of art has its own pattern of development, and that there is a teleological sequence in which certain features in the appearance or style of the art works can be observed to follow a logical and inexorable process. To demonstrate the sequence Wölfflin identified a set of five ‘polarities’, pairs of opposed visual concepts, which, in the transition from one to the other, indicated the sequence in progress: the development from linear to painterly, from plane to recession, closed form to open form, etc. This was ultimately linked to a cyclical view of history, similar to that proposed by Winckelmann, whereby the dynamic conditions in which art works are created and used makes them a necessary part of the sequence.

If Wölfflin’s ‘system’ seems somewhat mechanistic nowadays, there was no denying its power at the time because it offered a theory of artistic development that was independent of social, economic or political forces. In other words, a history of art based on formal characteristics alone that was not subservient to other forms of history. This was one of Wölfflin’s stated aims since he believed that the new discipline of art history (*Kunstgeschichte*) should not be merely ‘illustrative of the history of civilisation’ but that it should ‘stand on its own feet as well’.⁸ It was precisely in this respect, however, that Wölfflin’s teaching seemed unsatisfying to Antal, since the ‘formalist method conceded, relatively, the smallest place to history’.⁹ Reviewing these methodological alternatives in 1949, Antal remarked that ‘Wölfflin’s very lucid, formal analyses ... reduced the wealth of historical evolution to a few fundamental categories, a few typified schemes’, going on to dismiss this approach as a reflection of the prevailing aesthetic doctrine of ‘art for art’s sake’.¹⁰ In reaction to Wölfflin’s model, Antal moved in 1910 from Berlin to Vienna, a city that was emerging as the pre-eminent centre for art-historical research in Europe.

The ‘Vienna School’, dominated at this time by Max Dvořák (1874–1921) but with the looming intellectual legacy of Alois Riegl (1858–1905) and Franz Wickhoff (1853–1909), offered a more sophisticated intellectual environment within which to study works of art. Antal later remarked on the ‘great difference in the spiritual atmosphere’ between Berlin and Vienna, not least because the art-historical institute was located within the larger framework of the Austrian Institute for Historical Research (*Kunsthistorische Institut des Instituts für Oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*).¹¹ The central figure behind the ideological principles of the ‘Art Historical Institute’ was Riegl, keeper of textiles at the Decorative Arts Museum (*Österreichisches Museum*

für angewandte Kunst) and, from 1897 until his death in 1905, professor of art history at the University of Vienna. In the last decade or so of his career, Riegl had formulated the most sophisticated and wide-ranging approach to the historical interpretation of artefacts, to the extent that he has often been described as the first modern art historian.¹² Although perhaps best known for the concept of *Kunstwollen* or ‘the will to form’, there were two aspects to Riegl’s art history that may explain his importance for later scholars. The first of these was adherence to Hegel’s idealist conception of history, in which works of art enjoyed a privileged position, not just as bearers of aesthetic meaning, but as keys to the underlying ‘world spirit’. In other words, the work of art in history was felt to reveal deep structures of the culture that produced it. Imbuing art works with a significance beyond that of simple archaeological data was one of the founding assumptions of art history as an academic discipline. Secondly, and also derived from Hegel’s view of history, Riegl’s approach to continuity of stylistic development had a profound and practical influence on his immediate followers. This fundamental principle appeared in *Stilfragen* (1893), his first major publication, in which he traced the development of lotus and acanthus motifs in ancient ornament as an example of the ‘evolutionary’ model of stylistic change.¹³ The key element was that, for Riegl, change in art was understood as part of a linear or historical continuity, quite separate from later assessments of quality or beauty. Furthermore, stylistic development was seen as neither a response to the immediate material conditions, as Gottfried Semper had advocated, nor a symptom of the relative rise or fall in civilisation, as Wölfflin believed. For perhaps the first time, this approach offered a view of cultural artefacts as part of a development through history unrelated to questions of quality or indeed to popular assumptions regarding historical periods as culturally superior or inferior. For Dvořák, and for Antal, this represented ‘the victory of the psychological and historical conception of art-history over an absolute aesthetics’.¹⁴

One of the effects of this on the research undertaken by Viennese scholars was an increasing interest in the so-called ‘dark periods’ or ‘periods of decay’,¹⁵ which Wölfflin had regarded as symptomatic of the downswing in his cyclical model and which many earlier historians had interpreted as signs of cultural decadence and decline.¹⁶ Riegl, Wickhoff and Dvořák each took a serious interest in periods or movements such as late antique, early Christian or Mannerism which had been dismissed by previous historians as insignificant or aesthetically unworthy of detailed study.¹⁷ In addition, Riegl’s influence meant that all the leading members of the Vienna School upheld the principle that formal analysis was the basic analytical tool of the art historian, seeing style as the indicator of artistic development and the bearer of deep cultural meaning. But whereas Riegl himself had placed considerable emphasis on the mechanism, or force, which drives stylistic change, (the *Kunstwollen*), Wickhoff and Dvořák sought increasingly to

develop an approach in which the social and economic context of artefacts was seen to exert a decisive influence on their form and appearance. The outstanding early example of this is often taken to be Dvořák's essay 'The Enigma of the Art of the van Eyck Brothers' of 1904, in which he suggested that the apparent stylistic originality of early Netherlandish painting was not only related to naturalist tendencies in late Gothic illumination of the previous generation, but that this was able to develop specifically within the economic and social patterns of fifteenth-century Flanders.¹⁸ Dvořák, who had always embraced a wider set of interests, went on to publish several key texts which maintained the central role of form in pictorial analysis but gave increasing weight to the expression of a 'world view' (*Weltanschauung*) rather than an internal motive force as the decisive factor.

Dvořák's contribution to the methodological basis of the Vienna school has been summed up as the introduction of an 'intellectual, history-based approach' alongside 'Wickhoff from the stylistic, and Riegl and Schlosser from the linguistic-historical standpoints'.¹⁹ He is also frequently associated with an approach inspired by contemporary 'expressionist' ideas that imbued the artist in history with greater independence of stylistic choice.²⁰ But this overlooks two of his most important intellectual legacies. Dvořák's attempts to locate artworks within the larger spirit or 'world view' of their age meant that the history of art could be seen not solely as a continuum but as a series of shifts and breaks reflecting the character of successive periods which presented significantly different social structures and formal preoccupations. It also introduced the possibility of a social history of art in which artefacts could be understood and interpreted in terms that reflected the society in which they were created.

Antal was at the centre of these debates in the years preceding the First World War when preparing for his Ph.D. under Dvořák's supervision.²¹ The material of his thesis, entitled *Classicism, Romanticism and Realism in French Painting from the Middle of the Eighteenth Century until the Emergence of Gericault*, was not published at the time, but a version of the argument appeared many years later in English as 'Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism'²² – although this was clearly influenced by ideas and approaches which Antal developed after leaving the rather introverted environment of the Vienna School.

On the outbreak of the First World War, Antal returned to Budapest, where he worked in the prints and drawings department of the Szépművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Fine Arts). This was an important phase in Antal's development as an art historian since it was here that he acquired the skills of close visual analysis, particularly the connoisseurship of old master drawings, that were much admired in his later career.²³ By 1916 he had also begun to attend the salon or discussion group known as the *Sonntagskreis* (Sunday Circle), an informal group of intellectuals and artists who met at the house of the writer and film theorist Béla Balázs (1884–1949). The

central figures of the group were Balázs and Georg Lukács (1885–1971) and their friends Leo Popper and Karl Mannheim, but the circle of about 30 extended to include musicians, such as Béla Bartók, and the art historians Arnold Hauser and Johannes Wilde as well as Antal. As an outlet for their developing ideas, in 1917 the group set up the Free School of the Cultural Sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) offering talks on a variety of subjects related to the condition of modern bourgeois culture.²⁴ Lukács, for example, spoke on Dostoevsky, Mannheim on ‘Soul and Culture’, and Antal on Cézanne. Given the fluid nature of their ideas and the range of individuals involved, it would be rash to attribute any singular philosophy or outlook to the group as a whole. But one can make general observations on the overall character of their interests from Lukács’ diaries and reported statements, dominated as they were by the seminal shift in his intellectual life. Between 1916 and 1918, Lukács was moving from an essentially ‘Romantic’ or idealist view of life and art to one informed by the historical materialism of Marx. In fact, Lukács’s full acceptance of a Marxist view of society and culture can be dated to a specific meeting of the ‘Sunday Circle’ in November 1918 when he announced, ‘Now I realise that only a consciously redeemed man can create the empirical world. I have to re-evaluate all of my thinking. If we believe in human freedom, we cannot live our lives in class-fortified castles’.²⁵

This dramatic ‘conversion’ is misleading, however, since it masks a long and complex period of self-questioning on Lukács’ part. For several years Lukács and other members of the circle had been wrestling with the relationship between the art and culture of a given period and the society which brought them into existence and which, in turn, shaped their nature and content.²⁶ Karl Mannheim, for example, worked up this same set of issues during the next decade into a body of theory which became known as ‘the sociology of knowledge’. In works such as *Conservative Thought* (1927) and *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), he argued that there was an association between forms of knowledge (or ‘modes of thinking’) and social structure, and that membership of particular social groups or classes conditioned patterns of belief.²⁷ For Mannheim, these claims were not dependent on a Marxist model of society and historical change.²⁸ For Lukács, however, and for Antal and Hauser, this was the fundamental assumption which governed their later research and writings.²⁹

In the preface to the 1967 edition of his most influential work, *History and Class Consciousness* (1923, English edition 1971), Lukács recalled the period c.1917 to 1920 as one in which he grasped the essential principles which would govern his intellectual life thereafter. Lukács was at pains to emphasise, however, that this was not a simple or logical move and that his intellectual journey had been complicated by many diversions and sidetracks, some of which were inconsistent and contradictory.³⁰ Yet Lukács was in no doubt about the overall tendency of his thinking in the years around 1918, which he summed up in the title of an autobiographical sketch called

My Road to Marx (1933). A reading of this alongside *History and Class Consciousness* reveals the central thrust of Lukács's project which was no less than the development of a comprehensive philosophy of culture on Marxist principles; but one that rejected or at least offered a radical revision of the classic Marxist model of 'base' and 'superstructure' to describe the relationship between economics and culture.³¹ In this traditional view, to quote Raymond Williams, 'art is degraded as a mere reflection of the basic economic and political process on which it is thought to be parasitic'.³² Lukács's position would prove to be controversial throughout the 1920s and beyond, attracting considerable criticism from orthodox Marxists.

A more immediate problem, however, was the relationship between Marxist theory and political activism.³³ To some extent the tension between theory and practice was resolved in the Hungarian Soviet Republic set up under Béla Kun in March 1919 following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire at the end of the First World War. Both Lukács and Antal took official positions in the provisional government, Lukács in the 'People's Commissariat for Education' and Antal as Director of Museums in Budapest (*Vorsitzender des Direktoriums*). In this role, Antal supervised the transfer of many private art collections to the public galleries and, with the assistance of Otto Benesch, organised exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts. Paralleling the work of Dvořák, who was curator of public monuments in Austria and closely involved in contemporary art, Antal also set up public art projects, found support for artists and led efforts to protect existing public monuments in Budapest and its immediate hinterland. This was short-lived, since the 'Republic of Councils' was suppressed after foreign intervention in the summer of 1919, at which point Antal, Lukács and most of their colleagues fled to Vienna.³⁴ One senses, nevertheless, that the experience of direct political engagement and the involvement in a revolutionary movement at a high, if essentially administrative, level must have been a strong influence on Antal's subsequent outlook.

The inter-war period was one of uncertainty and displacement for Antal, but it was also the period when he pursued most of the research that formed the basis of his major publications. Between 1919 and 1923 he travelled in Italy where he gathered material for a projected book on sixteenth-century art that would have elaborated some of Dvořák's pioneering work on Mannerism. This was never completed, or at least never published³⁵, but Antal did undertake the primary research on Italian art and society of the early Renaissance which would eventually appear in *Florentine Painting and its Social Background* (London, 1948).³⁶ Following this, he took up residence in Berlin where he collaborated with Bruno Fürst and Otto Pächt, editing *Kritische Berichte*, a journal devoted to the literature of art history and to issues of theory and methodology.³⁷ This preoccupation with theory allowed Antal to synthesise many of the disparate and often conflicting ideas he had absorbed during the previous decade, from the likes of Wölfflin, Dvořák,

Marx and the various members of the Sunday Circle. Here again, one senses that Lukács may be a guide to the theoretical problems and possible solutions that confronted this group of Marxist and socialist intellectuals in the Weimar years.

In the 1967 preface to *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács writes 'mental confusion is not always chaos', suggesting that this description of his own mental processes when dealing with complex problems could be taken as a metaphor for the dialectical processes of history as Hegel and Marx understood it. 'It may strengthen the internal contradictions for the time being but in the long run it will lead to their resolution.'³⁸ This drew Lukács to concentrate on issues where the 'internal contradictions' of capitalism could be observed at their most extreme and unstable. The result was a lengthy examination of the historical novel in the nineteenth century, an art form which he believed was the most characteristic expression of the bourgeois world view and, despite its unpopularity with Modernist critics, the literary form which deserved the closest attention because of its special status.³⁹ This was a controversial position to maintain, because it placed Lukács between conflicting theories of art that were themselves highly politicised in the inter-war period. In simple terms, Lukács was mounting a defence of an art form (the realist historical novel of Walter Scott, Balzac and Tolstoy) which seemed outdated to the Modernists, but which had also been compromised by the tendentious products of official Soviet policy towards the arts under Stalin. As a result, Lukács stood at the centre of a complex debate on aesthetics and politics undertaken by some of the leading intellectuals of the day, including Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch and Bertolt Brecht.⁴⁰ At the heart of this was the issue of 'realism' which, for Lukács, was not a period or style, but a literary mode that embraced the totality of society, reuniting the fragmented experience of capitalism. In elevating the work of Thomas Mann over that of Franz Kafka, for example, Lukács was emphasising the continuing relevance of this essentially 'rational' bourgeois tradition in contrast to the 'irrationalism' of much Modernist literature.⁴¹

There is a parallel to this view in Antal's identification of a naturalist or 'realist' tendency in art as the visual impulse of the aspirant middle classes. Alongside this, Antal sees class antagonism as the reason for the coexistence of divergently different styles in the art of a particular period. In fact, these two related concepts might be regarded as the thread linking all his major publications. Despite a wide range of interests, spanning the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries and embracing major figures and movements in Italy, the Netherlands, France and Britain, a recurring theme is the extent to which the bourgeoisie are able to assert their identity in the visual arts as a reflection of their political and economic position.

In *Florentine Painting and its Social Background*, this is the overriding principle, shifting the emphasis from painters and studios to the new class

of patrons, the 'oligarchic upper bourgeoisie' which had gained a 'position of economic and political supremacy over the petty bourgeoisie and the workers unique in the Europe of the time'.⁴² It proved to be an effective way of interpreting the various stylistic tendencies, especially in the art of the later fourteenth century, which had long been a problem to art historians. In Antal's reading, the major fresco cycles are seen as an arena of contested visual forms in which competing class interests can be traced to different styles or modes of depiction. Antal uses terms such as 'rational', 'naturalistic' and 'realistic' to describe the Giottesque art of the early fourteenth century which he believed expressed the world view of the progressive upper middle-classes. An example used to demonstrate this is Giotto's fresco cycle of the life of St Francis in the Bardi Chapel in S. Croce (Figure 5). Painted for the wealthy banker Ridolfo di Bardi around 1320, Antal interprets the orderly composition, the naturalistic rendering of the figures and, above all, the convincing representation of space in this fresco as an expression of the values and outlook of the new upper middle class. 'In the S. Croce frescoes it becomes particularly apparent how that task of depicting religious stories in a vivid and convincing manner demanded clarity of vision, close observation of nature and all the devices of a logical, nature-imitating naturalism'.⁴³ In contrast to this, Nardo di Cione's frescoes in the Strozzi Chapel in S. Maria Novella from the mid-1350s represent an opposing tendency in their 'archaic, hieratic composition' and limited attempt to create a convincing pictorial space (Figure 6). Antal interprets this not as some independent oscillation between opposing stylistic possibilities, nor as an internal process of evolutionary change, but as the visual expression of competing sections of Florentine society. 'These frescoes (by Nardo) were painted in the interval between the reign of the Duke of Athens (1343) and the *ciompi* revolt (1378), when the petty bourgeoisie were pushing their way forward'.⁴⁴ For these newly ascendent sections of Florentine society, Giotto's art was too 'modern', but the previously dominant class of the upper bourgeoisie who had supported the more 'naturalistic' art of Giotto and his followers were in a weaker position by the middle years of the century and could no longer assert their authority in matters of art, any more than they could in politics or economics. As a result, Nardo's fresco cycle reveals the compromise or concessions of the upper bourgeoisie to the taste of the less sophisticated petty bourgeoisie and their allies the Dominicans. The tendency is further demonstrated in the altarpiece (1354–57) in the same chapel, painted by Nardo's brother Andrea Orcagna, which displays a curious combination of 'progressive' and 'reactionary' elements (Figure 7). Unlike the traditional polyptych, the Strozzi Altarpiece employs a concisely constructed panel with a unified pictorial field, but the figures are treated in a 'stiff' linear manner while the colouring is described as 'unpictorial', relying on bold contrasts of local colour.

As exemplified in this impressive altarpiece, commissioned by one of the wealthiest families in Florence, the concentrated yet hieratic and two-dimensional idiom of the "upper-bourgeois" artist, Orcagna, represents ... a compromise on the part of the upper middle class in accepting stylistic preferences of the lower middle class.⁴⁵

Antal's approach depends on a model of the larger pattern of class relations unfolding over a period of some 150 years. To make sense of this, and to provide adequate evidence for his claims, he devotes a large part of the book to explaining the economic, political and religious context. Here he outlines, among many topics, the development of civic institutions, the structure of business and domestic life, and the relationship between secular and religious impulses in society. He also offers several key themes which informed the way pictures were viewed, such as the conflict between the 'rational' and the 'irrational', the former of which was manifested in 'sobriety' and an art which demonstrated 'a considerable degree of fidelity to nature'.⁴⁶ The opposite 'irrational' tendency favoured a return to conventional modes of depiction utilising symbolic representations of natural phenomena, which, in turn, elicited a more abstract and emotional response from the spectator. Going beyond these themes, Antal also attempted to explain how consciousness of class interests in fourteenth-century Florence was developed and how, in turn, it was 'reflected' in formal or pictorial conventions.⁴⁷ This is addressed in the opening chapter of Section 2 ('The Art of the Fourteenth Century, and the "outlook" on which it is based'), one of the most revealing parts of the book, which outlines certain underlying principles of Antal's art history.

It would be a caricature to suggest, as some have, that Antal aligned each class with a specific 'style', in the way that a social group might adopt a flag or a team's colours.⁴⁸ Nor was he aiming to write a history of taste. Antal sought to identify patterns in the world view and mode of thinking in each class that were shaped by the acquisition of certain mental skills and which corresponded to their conception of the external, 'natural' world. The 'outlook' of the upper bourgeoisie, Antal suggested, was characterised by their commercial expertise and 'a manner of thinking by which the world could be expressed in figures and controlled by intelligence'.⁴⁹ This was never intended as a psycho-social history of the fourteenth-century Florentine merchant class, but as an indication of the ways in which that group might have approached the viewing and interpreting of pictures which they had paid for and which they looked to for affirmation of their role and status. Taken as a means of interpreting modes of observing among sections of the Florentine bourgeoisie, Antal's approach finds some echoes in Baxandall's concept of 'the period eye', although the latter restricts his study to a specific social group which he further isolates from the larger context of class relations. Nevertheless, a certain similarity in approach and findings is made explicit in Baxandall's discussion of 'gauging' and the taste for ratio, proportion and the orderly description of forms in pictures.⁵⁰ While



Figure 5 Giotto, *The Confirmation of the Rule of the Franciscan Order*, fresco, Bardì Chapel, S. Croce, Florence, c. 1320. Photo Alinari

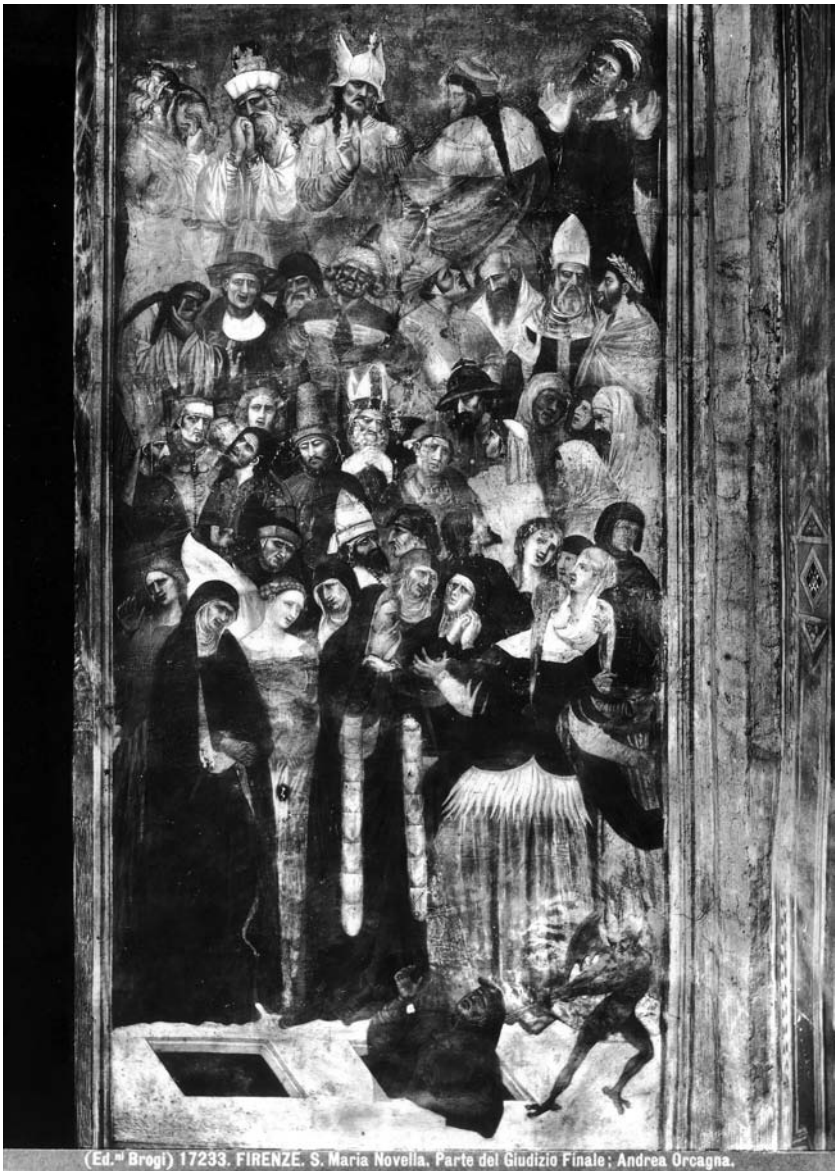


Figure 6 Nardo di Cione, *The Damned* (detail of *Last Judgment*), fresco, Strozzi Chapel, S. Maria Novella, Florence, 1354–57. Photo Alinari

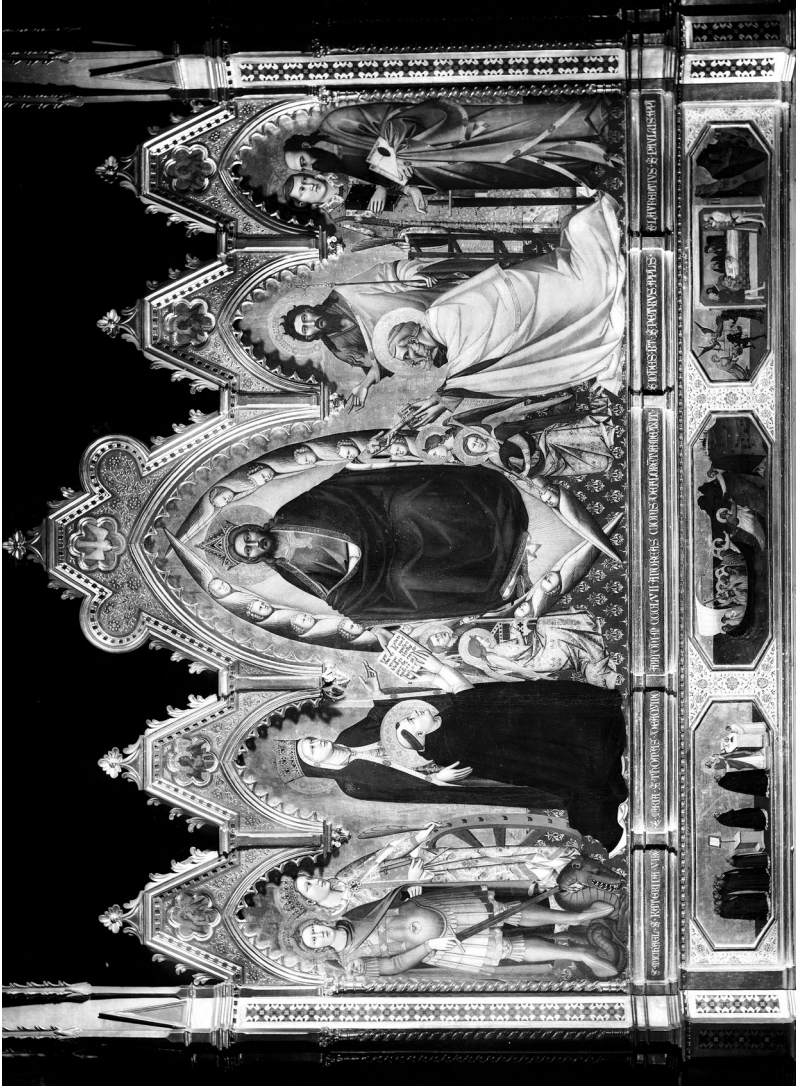


Figure 7 Andrea Orcagna, *Strozzi Altarpiece*, tempera on wood, Strozzi Chapel, S. Maria Novella, Florence, 1357. Photo Allinari

Baxandall was concerned with the ways in which the 'visual skills evolved in the daily life of a society become a determining part in the painter's style',⁵¹ Antal had a larger project, tracing the pattern of Florentine class conflict as expressed in painting. To make sense of this, Antal had to give his book a considerable chronological time-span which, unlike Baxandall's narrower set of questions, required some generalisation. Antal was also dependent on the information available from contemporary scholarship in the fields of social and economic history, which has expanded immensely since the book appeared. Despite these qualifications, it is remarkable how much of Antal's view has filtered into the general textbooks on Italian Renaissance art, although rarely, if ever, is Antal credited with its development.

A similar conflict of class and style was identified by Antal in French art between the Revolution and the Bourbon restoration, as outlined in his 1935 essay 'Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism'. Returning to themes addressed in his doctoral thesis, Antal picked out a 'naturalist' strand as the distinctive feature of progressive painting in this period, instead of the stylistic labels that had traditionally been employed. The ostensible aim of the essay was to demonstrate that, while stylistic categories like 'Classicism' and 'Romanticism' might still have some currency, they had to be re-examined if they were to reveal the deeper impulses in the art to which they were applied. In particular, he was at pains to emphasise that it was not the formal characteristics alone that made a style significant, but the meaning it carried and the extent to which it embodied the ideals of specific classes or social groups. Underlying this more general discussion of style, Antal was sketching the outlines of a major shift in artistic sensibility corresponding to the establishment of a capitalist system of economic and social relations in modern France.

One of the prompts for this line of argument was Antal's experience of museum displays in the Soviet Union, which he had visited in 1932. In particular, he had been impressed by how French art was displayed in the Hermitage utilising texts and a range of complementary material to emphasise both the continuity between fine and popular art and, more significantly, their links to social and economic change.⁵² Antal was also not alone in seeing the diversity of stylistic tendencies in French art of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as somehow indicative of a deeper political struggle. In the early years of the twentieth century the pioneering Russian Marxist Georgii Plekhanov had proposed a similar reading of French late eighteenth-century art, emphasising 'naturalism' as the latent but insistent impulse of the bourgeoisie.⁵³ The theme was also taken up by several scholars working independently of Antal to the extent that the notion of a struggle between realist tendencies and the traditional styles of the French court and academy might be seen as a major issue among art historians of the 1930s.⁵⁴ What is surprising is that this debate was almost entirely abandoned in the post-war period and that it was not

until the 1970s that books considering the art of David in terms of the political and social context of the Revolution began to appear in English.⁵⁵ For whatever reason, Antal chose not to develop his ideas in a major book. Instead, his articles relied on a few key works which allowed him to cover a substantial and complex period in relatively short texts while also suggesting some of the deeper issues at stake.

Antal's analysis depends on a view of the French Revolution and its aftermath as one of political confusion from which the bourgeoisie emerged as the dominant class establishing a full capitalist mode of production. Although there is now considerable debate among economic historians as to whether the Empire and Restoration periods did indeed mark the arrival of a mercantile bourgeois economy in France, there was little question over this, even among right-wing scholars, until the later twentieth century. Nowadays, scholars prefer to bring forward the date of full political and economic emancipation of the bourgeoisie to the July Monarchy, but there can be little doubt that the Revolution and its aftermath saw the emergence of a bourgeois consciousness and world view which led directly to the entrepreneurial culture characteristic of capitalism.⁵⁶ In any case, Antal appreciated that such fundamental changes in socio-economic relations had not been a simple or straightforward process. While sensitive to the complex allegiances, he wanted to reveal the deep shifts or breaks in French painting during this 35-year period.

To navigate his way through the divergent tendencies of the post-revolutionary period Antal fixed on Géricault, 'the greatest French artist of the early nineteenth century'⁵⁷, seeing in his response to different political and artistic developments a struggle to develop an art that expressed the new values of the age. As one might expect, the world view or consciousness that Antal was trying to uncover was that of various sections in the bourgeoisie whose fortunes had undergone a series of dramatic advances and reversals in the space of just one generation. Rejecting successively the later classicism of David, the emotionalism of 'Romantiques' such as Girodet, and the 'Rubenisme' of Gros, Géricault's late work is seen to approach a type of naturalism that introduces the major issues that will come to dominate French painting for most of the century. In addition, Géricault's work is shown to represent a new 'democratising' principle that rejects both the hierarchy of genres and the hierarchy of media that relegated genre painting and printmaking to an inferior status. This was a bold reading of French 'Romantic' art at the time, and the implications, albeit outlined with a broad brush, have never been developed. Many scholars had been struck by the stylistic diversity that characterised the Directoire and Empire, but their interpretations were based almost exclusively on the relationship between formal characteristics and academic theory.⁵⁸ Antal's reading of the period posited a new set of criteria for interpreting the 'progressive' and 'reactionary' tendencies, passing over pictures that dominated the major

books and galleries, and placing emphasis on works which had previously been regarded as minor or secondary. *The Raft of the Medusa* could not be ignored, but while it may have represented ‘the climax of one artistic current’, for Antal it also demonstrated the bankruptcy of state-sanctioned art forms and the ‘disintegration’ of a tradition that was being kept alive only by reactionary forces in the society.⁵⁹ It is Gericault’s late works – portraits, landscapes, genre paintings and prints such as *Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf* of 1821 (Figure 8) – which reveal the new spirit in nineteenth-century art and which address problems of naturalism and realism that will engage artists during the next 60 or 70 years. By implication, Delacroix and Ingres are marginalised in this overview and their work is seen as a diversion from the larger currents of the age; and this despite the fact that Delacroix, in particular, was frequently regarded as the first of the Modernists.⁶⁰ In fact, Antal closes his account with the observation that Gericault’s late pictures anticipate the work of Courbet, implying that it is only in 1848 that we see a return to the central issues of painting in the period of triumphant capitalism. Antal was too serious a historian to regard Gericault as somehow ‘ahead of his time’, but the ability to project the true consciousness of the emerging class is no less than Antal would have expected of a major artist.

Hogarth and His Place in European Art should have been the clearest, if not the definitive, expression of Antal’s larger views on the social history of art, although the status of this book remains uncertain.⁶¹ Hogarth has always been highly regarded in Britain and there has rarely been a period when he lacked serious or popular interest. In fact, he has been afforded at least one major publication and reassessment by every generation since the late eighteenth century. It is somewhat remarkable, therefore, that a Hungarian Marxist, for whom English was always a second (or, more accurately, a third or fourth) language, should be the first to interpret Hogarth’s work as the manifestation of a particular set of ideals and values characteristic of the middle classes in the period of emerging capitalism, rather than a vague notion of ‘Englishness’. This was, of course, the principal reason for Antal’s interest. Hogarth, as Antal states, ‘gave complete expression to the outlook of the age, perhaps the most heroic phase of the middle class in England, and Hogarth’s was the most pronouncedly middle-class art that England ever produced’.⁶² His work, therefore, is a mediation of the ‘utilitarian, common-sense’ values of his class, their ‘world of ideas’ and their ‘slightly sentimental appeal to virtue and industry’.⁶³ As in his previous writings, Antal saw class allegiance expressed through style, but this led him to some complex and questionable descriptive terminology when addressing British art of the eighteenth century. Hogarth was extremely eclectic with regard to his sources and Antal believed this was traceable to different allegiances in the class pattern of British society. This, after all, could be said to reflect the interpenetration of the classes at a time of relatively peaceful transition. There was no question that Hogarth was working in a period of fundamental

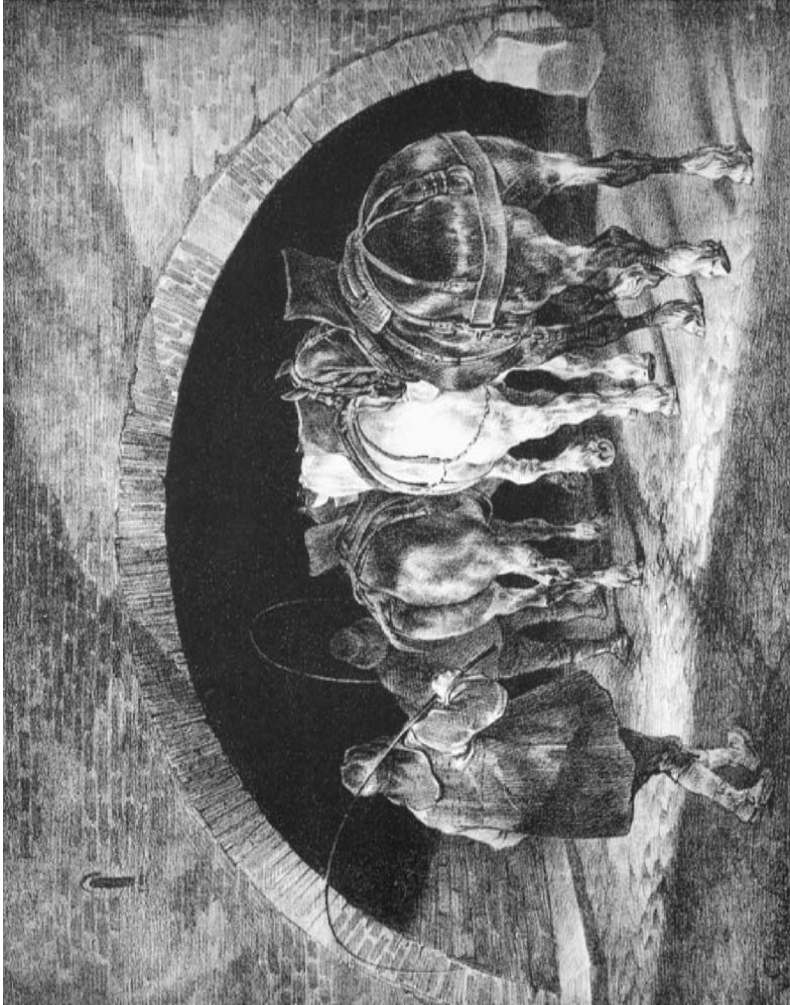


Figure 8 Théodore Géricault, *Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf*, crayon lithograph, 1821. Private Collection, London

change in the economic and political structure of Britain and that he, more than any other artist of the period, makes those changes explicit in his art. Stylistic analysis of Hogarth's work, however, gives rise to some cumbersome descriptive labels, such as 'rococo realism', which Antal regarded as the English middle-class version of a French aristocratic style. Reynolds's work is seen as 'Baroque', while Hogarth's art is felt to have 'assumed in varying degrees mannerist, baroque, rococo and even classicising features'.⁶⁴ This made Antal's book vulnerable to criticism from a new generation of empiricist scholars, such as Francis Haskell,⁶⁵ but it might be explained as the legacy of Riegl and Dvořák who had upheld the priority of stylistic analysis as the key to art historical interpretation. Antal's continuing adherence to these principles, or at least his attempts to make a link between the Marxist 'social history of art' and the basic tenets of the Vienna School, point to the gradual development of his methodology rather than any sudden adoption of new techniques. It also suggests that Antal was loathe to abandon the fundamental techniques of the Vienna School, especially since they had not been applied systematically to British art.

Antal's *Hogarth* had a curious double effect, emphasising the artist's international range while re-establishing him as a central figure in British culture of the eighteenth century. Thus Antal set Hogarth alongside Defoe, Addison and Fielding as a representative of the emerging mercantile middle class, as opposed to his traditional title as 'father of English art', which previous biographers had offered.⁶⁶ But Antal was also prepared to place Hogarth at the forefront of European art and to claim, somewhat controversially, that English art was the most progressive and innovative in Europe before the French Revolution. There is more than a hint of economic determinism here – the most advanced economic and social structure must, of necessity, support the most progressive art – but Antal measured his assessment to describe the specific characteristics that were introduced by Hogarth and his generation. 'Only in England and only during those years could an art have developed with so intensely didactic, utilitarian and moral a purpose and so vigorously combative a spirit.'⁶⁷ In this sense, the book might be seen as part of a new phase in the scholarship of British art which had been gathering pace since 1933 when European scholars began arriving in London. British art had been largely ignored by continental art historians and there were no significant studies of any British painters or movements by the early pioneers of the discipline. As one might have expected, this began to change when figures like Edgar Wind, Rudolf Wittkower and Nikolaus Pevsner turned their attention to the material at hand in British galleries and libraries. The first sign of a new and more rigorous approach can be seen in Wind's article 'The Revolution in History Painting' of 1939, which highlighted important changes to a traditional academic category at the hands of Anglo-American painters in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁸ Not only did this raise the profile of artists such as Benjamin West, John Singleton

Copley and James Barry, it demonstrated the extent to which British art was linked to wider European currents and that these were often influenced by innovations from within Britain. This was followed after the war by Ellis Waterhouse's 'The British Contribution to the Neoclassical style in Painting' (1954)⁶⁹, and *The Art of William Blake* by Anthony Blunt (1959), perhaps the first monograph on a British artist in the new art-historical manner. Antal's books on both Hogarth and Fuseli were part of this general tendency, although there was a delay owing to Antal's death, which held up their publication.

Antal's unequivocal position as a Marxist, in political outlook as well as in methods of scholarship, may explain why he never gained any position in a British university.⁷⁰ He did not lack for admirers, however, and several of the most important and influential figures in British art history and criticism looked to him for leadership. A measure of Antal's appeal in Britain might be taken from the fact that he seems to have impressed scholars from widely differing political and methodological camps. On the right, if one can use the term here, John Pope-Hennessy saw in Antal a historian who had undertaken a fundamental review of the discipline of art history and prepared the way for a major reassessment of the great periods at the heart of the canon,⁷¹ while, from the opposite end of the spectrum, John Berger was similarly drawn to Antal, as much for his personal qualities as his intellectual rigour:

One would probably have said, despite the fact that his presence straightaway shamed one out of any romanticism, that he was either a poet or a political leader. When I used to go and see him and tell him of my week's activities, I felt like a messenger reporting to a general.⁷²

The most important channel of influence was through Anthony Blunt, who made his debt to Antal clear in the short memoir published in 1973.⁷³ Blunt begins with a self-mocking account of his own early interests which serves to indicate how amateurish and narrow most writing on art was in Britain during the 1920s and early 1930s. This was, of course, before the sudden influx of German and Central European scholars who arrived in Britain as a result of the rise of fascism in Germany. Discussing his early engagement with socialist ideas and his attempts to link this to his other interests, Blunt wrote:

In art history we were of course also influenced by people outside. There were not very many Marxist art historians at that time. There was Friedrich Antal who had come from Germany in 1934 [actually 1933], and had settled in London, and who had not at that time written very much but had formulated a completed Marxist doctrine which he would expound at great length verbally.⁷⁴

Blunt confirms the decisive role Antal's ideas played in his own intellectual development when he reports how he and his contemporaries began to re-evaluate the art of the past and, more especially, their individual tastes and preferences 'according to the gospel of St Antal'. What is clear is that Blunt adopted many of Antal's methods and assumptions, in particular the identification of 'naturalism' and 'rationalism' with the tastes and aspirations of the emerging bourgeoisie. 'Giotto and Masaccio in Florence, Michelangelo and Raphael in Rome, Poussin in France and Rembrandt in Holland represented the progressive stages in the development of the bourgeoisie', whereas, '[w]e thought the Impressionists had deserted the true line opened up by Courbet and that their art was limited to an interest in purely optical effects'.⁷⁵

This memoir, prepared originally as an informal lecture for students at the Courtauld Institute, is necessarily brief and simple but there are other indicators of Antal's influence on Blunt's early writings, and most notably in *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450–1600*.⁷⁶ Blunt was closest to Antal during the preparation of this short survey, and his selection of theorists as well as the gloss he places on their work reveals again the underlying assumption that art theories, like the artists and writers who prepare them, reflect the political atmosphere and economic conditions of the society. This is perhaps most explicit in his discussion of Alberti, whose 'rationalist' theories on art, Blunt writes, emerge from the liberal, bourgeois environment of fifteenth-century Italian city states, as opposed to the 'mystical' ideas of the Neo-Platonists in Lorenzo de Medici's more princely court in the later years of the century.⁷⁷ Blunt's artistic and scholarly interests moved on from here, mainly under the influence of Rudolf Wittkower, who replaced Antal as his intellectual mentor and encouraged his work on French and Italian art and architecture of the seventeenth century.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Blunt never abandoned a belief in the determining relationship between the socio-economic conditions of a period and the artefacts produced in it.⁷⁹

Blunt's position as Antal's follower or 'pupil' was taken up by John Berger, the art critic and author who probably did more than anyone else in Britain to popularise a form of art history and art appreciation informed by modern theories of culture and political engagement. In an obituary written for the *Burlington Magazine*, Berger described Antal as 'the logical, precise, profound art historian', going on to suggest that 'in any assessment of his work the importance of his Marxism tends to be underestimated'.⁸⁰ In this, Berger seems to be addressing an issue that characterised several of the views expressed about Antal from conservative scholars hostile to his approach. Where Hauser and his work were sometimes attacked by British academics as excessively crude and simplistic, Antal presented a more formidable opponent. Not only was Antal's work felt to be more sophisticated in method; his specialist articles indicated considerable breadth of experience in primary research. As a result, some of the tributes after Antal's death

emphasised his skill in visual analysis, while avoiding the Marxist basis of his work. Even Gombrich, who was implacably opposed to the social history of art in any form, conceded that 'he had a good eye'.⁸¹

Berger's reassertion of Antal's political position had not been necessary when the main books were being reviewed in the scholarly journals. Here, Antal's Marxism and the prominent place he gave to questions of methodology were generally the main points of argument and this would continue throughout the frostiest period of the Cold War as his posthumous works appeared in print. The tone was set by H. D. Gronau's 1949 review of *Florentine Painting and its Social Background*. Gronau, a noted scholar in the field, praises Antal for the intellectual breadth and ambition of the book and for the mass of assembled facts which affect our understanding of many early Renaissance art works, but at the same time deplores how 'Dr. Antal directs his researches into the narrow channels of class-conscious dialectics, which confuse and disappoint to an extent that makes objective criticism a difficult and irritating task'.⁸² The same theme is apparent in Millard Meiss's review of the book, where the 'difficulties' are traced to Antal's 'social determinism and other assumptions of his orthodox Marxist point of view'.⁸³ That this debate rapidly became a touchstone for analyses of fourteenth-century Italian art was evident when Meiss published a book on the same territory two years later claiming to offer a different reading of the main developments and their causes.⁸⁴ *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* proved to be an influential text for the next generation of art historians, but this was largely because Meiss attributed the political and economic turmoil of the middle decades of the fourteenth century to the effects of the plague alone rather than as part of a larger pattern of shifting socio-economic relations. By proposing a single cause to a complex set of factors, and by largely ignoring issues of class in Tuscan society, Meiss's book may have been more accessible to students, but even sympathetic reviewers recognised that this was an oversimplification of the issues. In addition, much of the evidence Meiss used to support his thesis has since been discredited, although this has not undermined the book's popularity as an undergraduate text.⁸⁵

For Francis Haskell, reviewing *Hogarth and His Place in European Art*, the problems did not lie with an attempted social history of art, which he felt was simultaneously 'inspiring'⁸⁶ and 'a wonderful relief after the vague and unsubstantiated generalizations of other writers',⁸⁷ but that Antal's assumed link between class interests and style was 'dogmatic and over-simplified' or even circular in argument. Haskell takes this point further in suggesting that Antal's larger aims of setting the work of art in its historical context had been pursued by the generation after Antal, but that they had 'not on the whole done so in the manner that he followed in his own studies'.⁸⁸ Haskell himself could be described as a practitioner of the 'social history of art', in its broadest sense, and the general term was extended to several other

figures who emerged from the Warburg Institute.⁸⁹ The notion that a ‘British school’ of the social history of art grew up in the generation after Antal seems to have had some currency, particularly in the United States.⁹⁰ But any attempt to establish a common ground between the work of Haskell, Baxandall and T. J. Clark is destined to remain at a very superficial level. For neither Haskell nor Baxandall was the issue of social division – of class antagonism and class struggle – the fundamental motor of change in history. Baxandall, in particular, partly because he addressed problems close to those in Antal’s writings, seemed to represent a revised or refined form of social history of art – one with rigorously defined parameters but drained of any political reading of history.⁹¹

Among the historians on the New Left, Antal’s work prompted divergent responses. In *Art History and Class Struggle*, first published in France in 1973, Nicos Hadjinicolaou invoked Antal as the model for a ‘committed’ art history ‘based on historical materialism’.⁹² In fact, Hadjinicolaou suggested that his book was a reworking, or ‘reappraisal’, of a lost pre-war tradition exemplified by Antal, Klingender and Meyer Schapiro. Far from being a victim of ‘short collective memory’, however, Antal’s work was still sufficiently familiar to left-wing art historians to raise questions about Hadjinicolaou’s concept of artistic style and the ways in which it might exemplify meaning in a context of wider class relations.⁹³ In particular, Hadjinicolaou’s term ‘visual ideology’ was attacked as an excessively rigid concept that collapsed many of the distinctions between formal characteristics, content and social ideology. This may have been derived from Antal’s expansion of stylistic analysis to embrace style, subject matter and class-consciousness but, if so, it represented a reductionist view that was not likely to invigorate the earlier tradition.

T. J. Clark’s relation to Antal’s pioneering work is equally problematic. The two books from 1973 on the work of Gustave Courbet in the context of French politics of the mid nineteenth century⁹⁴ might have been expected to develop the interests Antal had addressed in ‘Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism’. In fact, they marked a new point of departure for the social history of art in Britain. Clark cites Antal’s work but states quite clearly in the opening chapter of *Image of the People* that what he is aiming to do is quite different from earlier historians. ‘I am not interested in the notion of works of art “reflecting ideologies, social relations or history”’, he writes, and ‘I do not want the social history of art to depend on intuitive analogies between form and ideological content’.⁹⁵ This suggests that, by the 1970s, the pre-war generation was perceived as practising an outmoded and possibly failed version of Marxist art history. Even Antal’s work, which was widely felt to represent the best of its type, was ill-equipped to meet the criteria of new forms of art history informed by feminism, semiotics, structuralism and post-structuralism.

There is no mention of Antal in recent books on historiography and methodology.⁹⁶ In North America, where his views generated considerable controversy, he seems to have been forgotten, and in Hungary he is little known, if at all.⁹⁷ Even in Britain, one seldom encounters references to Antal in publications or university courses that cover either the periods in which he specialised or the methodological problems that he addressed. Antal himself was clear about the historical contingency of art-historical method: 'Methods of art history, just as pictures, can be dated. This is by no means a depreciation of pictures or methods – just a banal historical statement.'⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the problems Antal addressed are still with us. They have not been solved, nor have they gone away. It is the socio-economic background material that has expanded exponentially since his death, not the detailed art historical analyses, which he had both advocated and practised. Antal remains one of very few art historians to have taken up such issues consistently and across a broad spectrum without compromising either his political ideals or standards of scholarship.

4

Art as Social Consciousness: Francis Klingender and British Art

David Bindman

The work of Francis Donald Klingender (1907–55) lives on in a small number of theoretical essays,¹ and mainly in *Hogarth and English Caricature* (1944) and *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (1947). These books still remain compelling though inevitably much has happened in the more than 50 years since their publication to elaborate and question their methods and conclusions. Klingender anticipates the concern of more recent art historians with artists responsive to social and political change and in the ongoing debate over the nature of ‘popular art’, though in neither case has his pioneering role been fully acknowledged. In *Hogarth and English Caricature* he opened up English satirical prints for serious art-historical study rather than just as illustrations of political events, as well as even more neglected forms of visual expression, such as popular broadsides and woodcuts, transfer-printed pottery, mechanical drawings and money tokens. While he did not invent the idea of popular art – that distinction belongs more to Champfleury in mid-nineteenth-century France, or perhaps even to Herder in the eighteenth century – he gave it a new theoretical and historical basis. It would be wrong, however, to think of the implications of Klingender’s work as only confined to British art. Apart from his books on Goya and on animals in art,² in a number of essays he offered a strong materialist critique of the idealist tradition, represented in Britain in the period of Klingender’s intellectual formation in the 1920s and early 1930s by the formalist aesthetics of Clive Bell and Roger Fry.

Klingender came to England from Germany, where he was born, in 1925. He was neither a refugee nor German by nationality – he was British by birth – but he did have deep German connections through his father’s and mother’s families. His father was the well-known animal painter Louis Klingender (1861–1950), who was born and brought up in Liverpool, but studied painting in Düsseldorf under Carl Friedrich Deiker (1836–92) and made a career in Germany, exhibiting in Berlin and elsewhere.³ In 1902, Louis Klingender moved to Goslar in the Harz Mountains in central Germany, where he curated the small museum, which still prominently displays one of his paintings. The younger Klingender was born and went to school in Goslar. His father was interned briefly in Germany as an enemy alien and possible British spy at the outbreak of the First World War. He was evidently

shunned by his former acquaintances in Goslar and reduced to near poverty,⁴ though he remained in Germany throughout the war.

The Harz was an important mining and industrial area in the nineteenth century, and, as Grant Pooke has pointed out, not wholly dissimilar to the English industrial areas that Klingender was to write about so eloquently in *Art and the Industrial Revolution*.⁵ The family returned to England after Francis's school graduation in 1925, but his father had difficulty selling his by now unfashionably Victorian-looking paintings.⁶ After an initial period in an advertising agency, the youthful Klingender worked for a time at Arcos (All Russian Co-operative Society), the Soviet trading agency that shared premises with the USSR Trade Delegation, probably starting shortly after the notorious raid in May 1927, authorised by the Home Office on the suspicion that it was a nest of Soviet spies.⁷ Whatever effect working for Arcos had on his political beliefs, it is probable that he joined the Communist Party before 1930, during the time he attended evening classes at the London School of Economics. He graduated from the LSE in sociology in 1930, receiving his Ph.D. on the 'the Black-Coated Worker in London' in 1934, published the following year as *The Condition of Clerical Labour in Britain* by the communist publishing house of Martin Lawrence. This work was an investigation into a section of those who belonged to the 'middle strata', that is to say workers without capital who were nonetheless alienated from and fearful of the working class. Klingender argued that capitalism could only be overthrown if the middle strata and the working class were to unite in a common cause.⁸

Following the completion of his thesis, Klingender was occupied with a number of sociological research projects, which provided him with such income as he had in the 1930s. Klingender was not a trained art historian like his friend Frederick Antal, though art was at the heart of his academic interests, something that he later attributed to the influence of his father.⁹ His daily life was taken up with surveys of labour relations in the film industry and elsewhere, and his first and last permanent academic post, from 1948 until his death in 1955, was as lecturer in sociology at the University of Hull, where the communist historian John Saville was among his colleagues.¹⁰ Saville has noted that Klingender's existence was always hand to mouth until he got the job at Hull.

Klingender's practice as an art critic and theorist derived entirely from his membership of the Artists' International Association, though he did not work for the organisation until 1943. It had been founded in 1933 as the Artists' International by a group of Communist Party members, most of whom had direct experience of the art organisations of the USSR, and who wished to set up similar structures in Britain to contribute to the international struggle for socialism¹¹. The AI was associated with such organisations as the British section of the Writers' International and The Workers' Music Association. Though Klingender was not a founder of the

AI he was one of the first group of 32 members in 1934, and he gave ‘a series of twelve discussion-lectures on French and English nineteenth- and twentieth-century art’ to it in 1934–35.¹² This is a matter of importance for assessing Klingender’s position, for in 1935 the AI changed its name and direction, becoming the Artists’ International Association, to ally itself with the People’s or Popular Front, enlisting intellectuals who were not party members but were anti-fascist and sympathetic to social change.

This transformation reflected larger political changes. At the First Soviet Writers’ Conference in August 1934, ostensibly on the *Problems of Soviet Literature*, Maxim Gorky had claimed that the fate of writers was linked ‘irrevocably with that of the proletariat’; they must be ‘consciously setting themselves the task of contributing by means of their literary works to the victory of socialist construction’. Writers were to be ‘engineers of human souls... standing with both feet firmly planted on the basis of real life’.¹³ In July 1935, however, a dramatic shift was initiated by the USSR in its relationship with the Communist Parties in other countries. The Seventh World Congress in Moscow, in response to Hitler’s assumption of power, proposed a strategy of ‘widening out’, to bring together all sympathisers in other countries, even those who were not party members or proletarians, into a common front against fascism.¹⁴ From 1935 onwards, the AIA redefined itself as primarily an anti-fascist organisation (in the words of its manifesto, ‘[t]he AIA stands for Unity of artists against Fascism and War and the Suppression of Culture’), drawing in a remarkable range of artists and thinkers who represented the whole range of artistic movements from abstraction to social realism, and the political opinions of Soviet-influenced Marxists like Klingender, anarchists like Herbert Read and Catholic radicals like Eric Gill.

The variety of viewpoints is exemplified in a collection of essays edited by Betty Rea and published in 1935, based on lectures given to the AIA, entitled *5 on Revolutionary Art*, to which Klingender contributed. In Margot Heinemann’s words ‘it was a consciously and deliberately *pluralist* production’.¹⁵ The editor summed up the diversity of the contributors – and the AIA – at this point:

You may agree with Mr. Read, that art within the boundaries of form can have its own revolutionaries, or with Dr. Klingender and Mr [A.L.] Lloyd, who hold that art is part of, and inseparable from, the society in which it flourishes – or does not flourish. Perhaps you will feel as Mr. Gill does, that Catholicism might produce a form of the unanimous society which so plainly does not exist in our own time, and which is after all the thing all men desire and propagate, each according to his vision. Mr. [Alick] West writes of art in one new form of unanimous society – a socialist society so young that we cannot know what untraditional forms its art will take.

Klingender's essay on 'Content and Form in Art'¹⁶ shows him to have been the best-grounded of the contributors in Marxist theory and German art history.¹⁷ Unlike the others, his argument is not at all rooted in English experience; the brief history of recent art that he gives in the essay (presumably taken from his lecture notes) is firmly French and German in content, mentioning the English Futurists in passing, and the only theoretical referents are Marx and Engels. Even so, his idea of the necessary interrelationship of form and content was mainly directed against the primacy of the former over the latter, and against the rise of abstract art in England, which he and the other contributors to the collection, apart from Read, saw as mere formalism, an extension of nineteenth-century art for art's sake. Klingender took a firm position that art was a form of social consciousness, belonging to specific groups of individuals and related to basic processes of social development.¹⁸ Art reflected ideologically the struggle between social man and nature, which required to be analysed with historical specificity according to the social group that produced the art and that group's phase of development. These were themselves determined by the productive resources and forms of organisation embodied in a class structure. Art, however, was for Klingender more than just a reflection of social reality; it was a revolutionary agent for transformation, for it had always in history reacted visibly and spontaneously to changes in the relationship between new conditions and old forms of consciousness. It followed that art was not passive but an active expression of the outlook of the most progressive class in any given society, and it was wrong to see art, as did many Marxists,¹⁹ as having no possibilities beyond capitalist consumption, though that might be its predominant condition in present society.

Of the two given aspects of art, 'form' and 'content', the latter, Klingender argued, should not be defined reductively, as it was by formalists, as merely 'subject matter' that could be diminished or disregarded, but as the response of a social group to the material conditions of its existence that needed to be given convincing form in art. Form cannot exist free of content, but is the language in which content is expressed; it must necessarily be shaped by, and be as various as, content. Klingender thus explicitly rejected the domination of form over content, expressed succinctly in Clive Bell's idea of 'significant form', rejecting also a single aesthetic scale in which abstraction is dominant. Nor was Klingender persuaded by the claim of some of his fellow authors in *5 on Revolutionary Art* that true art cannot *now* be comprehensible to the proletariat, but must await such time as their false consciousness has been overcome by the triumph of socialism.

The pioneering nature of Klingender's essay in the British context needs to be emphasised. There were other art historians in England by the mid-1930s who were Marxists, such as Frederick Antal and Anthony Blunt, but no one had previously published such a sophisticated Marxist theory of art in the English language. Having said that, Klingender's broad

argument is not especially original; it was in line with much recent Soviet and French thinking, and as a materialist theory of art it has clear origins in the work of G.V. Plekhanov (1856–1918), who wrote in 1895 the first full account of Marxism in Russian.²⁰ The basis of Klingender's central arguments can be found in Plekhanov's writings, which may be summarised as follows: 'literature and art in their origin and development can only be truly understood in the light of the materialist conception of history';²¹ 'art for art's sake', or formalism, is based on philosophical idealism and is by definition bourgeois art, in polar opposition to utilitarian art that reproduces and explains life; it is the critic's role to analyse the relationship between the mode of life and art on the understanding that the creation and appreciation of art are dependent on the artist's and public's position in relation to the current class struggle; artists or writers are only progressive when their work is based in the class that is leading society forward: in the present age, of course, the proletariat.

By 1935, not much of Plekhanov had been translated into English, and *Art and Social Life* (1912), the work in which the role of the artist, author and critic are most clearly articulated, did not appear in translation until two years later.²² Klingender would certainly have known Ralph Fox's translation of Plekhanov's *Essays on the History of Materialism*, published in 1934,²³ but that is not concerned with art or literature and is a series of essays demonstrating Marx's place in the history of philosophical rationalism. He might have known *Art and Social Life* through a German edition, or perhaps at second hand through Antal, or he might have picked up enough Russian to read it from working at Arcos.

Despite his contribution to *5 on Revolutionary Art*, Klingender was not a regular contributor to *Left Review*. One reason is clear from his attack in the October 1935 issue on one of the editors, Montague Slater, for praising an exhibition by the Soviet sculptor Dimitri Tsapline. Slater writes enthusiastically about what he admits were 'small statues [of animals] suitable for art galleries', reserving particular praise for a drilling workman and for his 'Soldier's Head' with Red Army helmet, which 'seem to belong to the stone just as much as his animal masterpiece which tells us none of the details but all the facts about a crouching lion'.²⁴ Klingender responded sharply by arguing that such sculpture was essentially bourgeois *in its form* despite its proletarian content: 'Remove the Soviet Star from the helmet of the "Red Soldier"' and he would resemble pompous German monuments to Bismarck: 'would any worker wielding a pneumatic drill eight hours a day feel the spark of personal experience if confronted with the cubist romanticism of Tsapline's "Workman"'? Tsapline's long period of study in Paris had severed his roots from the mother soil of vital experience and led him to succumb to bourgeois influences. The artist needs to learn that '[a]rt can face the facts of social reality and point towards a method of their solution, or it can hide them and provide an escape from them.'²⁵

Klingender attacked not only the artist but the critic for his lack of rigour: 'Marxian analysis... can and must *prepare* the artist for this achievement by tearing him out of the dreamland of abstraction and bringing him face to face with his problem.' It follows that 'a revolutionary critic can only judge the *content* of art by the profundity of its social experience and its *form* by the degree to which it succeeds in transmitting the inspiring message of that experience to the working class and its allies'. This remorseless critique provoked a reply not from Slater but from Ralph Fox in the November issue, under the heading 'Abyssinian Methods'. Calling him 'Colonel Blimp-Klingender', Fox accuses Klingender of a patronising attitude towards Tzapline, and applying 'only one standard for the assessment of any ideological phenomenon... its relevance in terms of social reality'.²⁶

Fox's bad-tempered, even sneering response to Klingender's cogent points reveals a fault line in English Marxist aesthetics in the mid-1930s between those like Klingender and Anthony Blunt, who were essentially international in experience and outlook, and those like Fox, A.L. Lloyd and A.L. Morton, who were increasingly concerned to reclaim an *English* past that would show socialism as the culmination of historical advance and the resolution of past national struggles. In Heinemann's words, the 'Seventh Congress helped the left to reclaim patriotism and British freedoms'.²⁷ The AIA in the late 1930s was much involved in the English road to socialism, widening definitions of culture to include 'Merry England': games, dancing and popular songs. Marxist historians wrote on the English revolution and, in 1938, the Left Book Club published A.L. Morton's *The People's History of England*.²⁸ Klingender, with his philosophical rigour and his continental background and Blunt, with his affinities with France, were wary of the general retreat from internationalism among the English left. Klingender seems to have devoted his intellectual energies in the late 1930s to Goya, though his book was not published until after the war.²⁹

Klingender seems to have been left cold by contemporary Soviet socialist realism; there are hints that his sympathies were more with the avant-garde artists of 1917, despite his theoretical rejection of abstract art.³⁰ The artist who came closest to his ideal for the time was Peter Peri, whose early career as a Hungarian constructivist and his conversion to realist figure sculptures in concrete made him an artist who used new techniques to express the vital experience of ordinary people. Peri was also championed by Blunt, who had invited Klingender to lecture in Cambridge, and was increasingly drawn to the AIA in the mid-1930s, giving a lecture entitled 'Is Art Propaganda?' for the organisation in April 1936.³¹ Klingender was probably also drawn to the caricatures of the 'Three Jameses', Boswell, Fitton and Holland, who consciously followed in the English caricature tradition, though in reality George Grosz was a major influence on their work, especially Boswell's.³²

The year 1943 was a critical one for Klingender, for he was put in charge of the AIA's new Charlotte Street centre, which allowed him to put on

exhibitions that were to be seminal for his later historical work. He also published his most substantial work of theory, his pamphlet *Marxism and Modern Art* of 1943, subtitled *An Approach to Social Realism*.³³ It represents an enrichment and deepening of the materialist basis of his 1935 essay on 'Content and Form in Art', but it also moves in a new direction, towards a more profound concern with English art and history. Rather than simply attacking abstraction in Plekhanov's terms, he now makes more specific his objections to Fry's notion, elaborated in the 1920s and beyond, of a pure painting 'free abstract and universal'. This, he argues, is tainted by the desire to reduce the response to art to one single aesthetic feeling; thereby divorcing art from life and moral questions, mystifying the aesthetic and reducing the public for art to a select and self-regarding minority.³⁴ Klingender cites Fry's remark in *Vision and Design* of 1920: 'in proportion as art becomes purer, the number of people to whom it appeals gets less'.³⁵

Fry, however, was not, as Klingender well knew, simply a reactionary, nor was he operating in an intellectual vacuum. He was, among other things, trying to reinvigorate the idea, an essential principle of art academies since the Renaissance, that the imitation of nature in art was secondary to, or an instrument of, art's 'higher' moral and aesthetic purposes. In the earlier part of the twentieth century, Fry increasingly involved himself in post-Kantian metaphysical aesthetics, in which art exists on a plane above the mundane world and could be a refuge from it – a position still restated to this day by museum directors. Fry himself admitted to embarrassment at the 'mystical' tendency of his thought,³⁶ and Klingender astutely connects his retreat into other-worldly aesthetic theories with the widespread disillusionment caused by the horrors of the First World War.

Fry's aesthetics were worth combating precisely because of their claim to radicalism. Rather than being attached exclusively to Antiquity, the Italian Renaissance or the Middle Ages, they were applied to near-contemporary artists, like Cézanne and Gauguin, who were, in England if nowhere else, still regarded as avant-garde. As Klingender sarcastically put it, Fry's interest lay in 'the tame still-lives and the harmless holiday scenes of the post-impressionists', who had become 'increasingly preoccupied with the technique of art, to the neglect of its content', and whose followers 'completed their escape from reality into the arid desert of pure form and the various other brands of neo-mysticism'.³⁷ For Klingender, art's essence is and always has been materialist; it is, therefore, in permanent opposition to the equally tenacious tradition of 'spiritualistic, religious or idealistic art', of the kind supposedly favoured by Fry and his acolytes. An art that was to express 'the interests and aspirations of the people' required nothing short of a 'resolute rejection of all forms of philosophical idealism and mysticism'. As Harrison and Wood have noted, such a binary view of art as always involved in a conflict between a progressive realism and a reactionary idealism goes back to 'Lenin's claim that history itself embodies at each

moment a struggle between two tendencies: the one ultimately progressive, the other reactionary'.³⁸ In fact it goes even further back, to Plekhanov and perhaps to Marx. Klingender argues that nonetheless human understanding could progress, and in the past *had* progressed, within the frameworks of reactionary systems of thought.

Such an uncompromisingly materialist position might have led Klingender towards aesthetic relativism, a belief that different periods and styles should all be studied as if they were of equal value. But he argues that Marx himself rejected such relativism in describing the decline of art under capitalism, on the grounds that any choice of objects to be studied will betray the historian's preferences or prejudices, and such a choice must inevitably be conditioned by the standards of the time and by class. Hence, as Klingender put it, in an aesthetic relativist position 'the problem of aesthetics proper, i.e. the problem of value, is evaded'.³⁹ Aesthetic relativism can only lead to the shallow and reductive conclusion, espoused by 'vulgarisers of Marxism', that the 'art of the past has always expressed the interests of an exploiting class'. If that were so the classics would have faded away with the advance of socialism, which they manifestly have not, and should not. Klingender argues that, on the contrary, artists are special beings who consciously or unconsciously travel mentally beyond the confines of their class to be abreast of the most advanced tendencies of their time. They are affected by wider historical movements, like the rise of empire or the Industrial Revolution, which might be invisible from the perspective of one class. Works of art are inevitably bound by their time and their makers' class, but they can also retain for later generations an intimation of what Lenin called the 'absolute', a truth that can be transmitted across time from one age to another, and which illuminates the deeper movements of history. As in philosophy, so in art; hence 'there is not a single style in the history of art which has not produced some concrete advances towards the *absolute*'.⁴⁰ Thus Tolstoy, as Lenin pointed out, could express with accuracy and brilliance the crisis among the Russian masses in his own time without necessarily consciously being in sympathy with their desires. Artists, for their part, could work within styles that might overtly proclaim absolutist or theological values, yet their implicit or unconscious resistance to them can still be visible to later generations and be what keeps them alive beyond their own time.

Klingender espouses a surprisingly wide conception of realism, despite his rejection of all forms of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, and his lack of interest in the seemingly value-free 'objectivity' of the Euston Road School. His idea of realism was not tied to one style or another; it encompassed art's origins in Paleolithic cave paintings and 'the productive intercourse between man and nature which is the basis of life'. The binary opposition between progressive and reactionary types of art was itself a product of the division between mental and material labour that 'will vanish with the final negation of the division of labour – i.e. in a Communist

world'. The history of art has, therefore, always been a struggle between these traditions, which will ultimately end in the triumph of materialism in the final resolution of the political dialectic. The Marxist art historian's job in the meantime is to discover 'the specific weight within each style, each artist and each single work of those elements which reflect objective truth in powerful and convincing imagery', on the understanding that they will not yet be able to throw off elements of the metaphysical style of their age, just as Hogarth could not throw off all traces of the 'absolutist' Baroque of his own age, nor the builders of cathedrals the religious framework of the Middle Ages. Klingender argued that realism was 'from its very nature popular', because it 'reflects the outlook of those men and women who produce the means of life'. In the end it is their idea of art that matters, and it is they who, to quote William Morris, as Klingender does in the conclusion to his pamphlet, will regain 'the sense of outward beauty' when they are liberated from the alienation of capitalist society.⁴¹

Klingender cites the authority of Marx and Lenin extensively in this 1943 pamphlet, but it is significant that he should end it with an extended quotation from Morris. With Britain and the Soviet Union now allies against fascism in the years after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, Marxists could feel comfortable in invoking Soviet texts while extolling and encouraging British patriotism, as Klingender does in his short book *Hogarth and English Caricature* of the following year, and in an exhibition of caricatures at the AIA, which makes a parallel between the current wartime alliance with the Soviet Union and the early nineteenth-century alliance between Britain and Russia against Napoleon. Hogarth had been an important reference point for the social-realist artists of the AIA from the beginning; the Communist Party artists had called themselves the Hogarth Group, and Laurence Gowing described Hogarth as 'the ideal of the socially conscious British artist'.⁴² The 'Three Jameses' also saw themselves as working in the tradition of Hogarth.

Klingender's Hogarth volume began life as the catalogue of an exhibition at the Charlotte Street Centre in London, largely based on Klingender's own and Millicent Rose's collection, now in the Prints and Drawings Department of the British Museum.⁴³ The text is only ten pages long (there are also illuminating captions to the illustrations), reducing his remarks to a series of aphorisms, yet it covers an astonishing span from the Middle Ages to his own time. Hogarth is the pivot of the argument, though it introduces among others almost totally unknown caricaturists like Richard Newton and C.J. Grant (Figures 9 and 10), and the radical token maker Thomas Spence, all of whom have attracted renewed attention, although only in recent years.⁴⁴

Klingender deliberately confined his attention to prints rather than paintings or sculptures, which in earlier ages generally could only be seen by the elite. 'Based as they were on a popular market and depending on



Figure 9 Richard Newton, *A Will O Th' Wisp*, coloured etching. Private collection. Photograph: Warren Carter

a large turnover, these prints reflected what was uppermost in the public mind', he wrote. The popularity in the full sense of prints in earlier centuries was evident from the huge volume of designs that were etched or engraved on copper and the great number of impressions taken from them that have survived to the present day. They were available to Klingender in the great collections in the British Museum, but he could also buy them for a few pence each on street stalls, like that of E.C. Kersley in the old Caledonian Market, mentioned so warmly by Arthur Elton in the acknowledgements to his revision of Klingender's *Art and the Industrial Revolution*.⁴⁵

The production of genuinely popular caricatures was, so Klingender believed, a distinctively English phenomenon that flourished particularly in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, and which grew under the paternal influence of Hogarth. Hogarth's interest in real-life satire was a response to specific social conditions that enabled him to plug into 'an undercurrent of popular satire',⁴⁶ that had persisted in medieval ornament in Europe even before it entered into the common culture through the invention of printing and printmaking in the fifteenth century. In the eighteenth century popular art flourished not only in caricature, but also in popular chapbooks and broadsheets, available to those who lived in London and in smaller towns and in the country.

For Klingender, this popular art was based on a common inheritance of storytelling and fantastic symbolism, hence it was not confined to a 'realist' artistic language. He compares Hogarth with the earlier Netherlands artists Hieronymus Bosch and Peter Bruegel, who had tapped into streams of fantasy as well as realism in the time of the first great national liberation struggle, the Reformation. Though Hogarth was a natural realist who faced contemporary life 'fairly and squarely', he was schooled in the period of the ascendancy of the illusionistic and absolutist style of the Baroque, which had a limiting effect on his prints. This is evident when they are compared to the more open and material space of Gillray's prints, 'which 'transplant... us, bodily, into the surging stream of life itself, bathing us in its scintillating atmosphere'.⁴⁷

For Klingender, Hogarth, along with his friend the novelist Henry Fielding, represented 'the progressive elements in that society', the kinds of people who were subsequently to be responsible for 'the greatest technical revolution since neolithic times: scientific farming and machine production'. Hogarth was notable for the range of life he surveyed and his ability to see the weaknesses of his own class. Klingender ties changes in the style and content of caricature subsequent to Hogarth to the political changes of the day, noting its rich exuberance, diversity of expression, and reach into all aspects of English life, attaining 'a unity of style which we today can only envy'.⁴⁸

Eighteenth-century caricature is thus given an urgency as a model for current practice and aspiration. In only a few pages of text Klingender gives

coherence to the immense production of satires in the eighteenth century, singling out the names of such then unconsidered artists as the 'brilliantly gifted' Richard Newton, and giving a wonderful thumbnail sketch of 'the sardonic Gillray, remorseless and fiercely partisan, living in obscurity with his aged publisher Mistress Humphrey until his mind was deranged by the contradictions he so penetratingly disclosed, yet could not resolve.'

How does Klingender's view of Hogarth and English satire look now? It is inevitable that the brevity of the text and the passage of time make it now look oversimplified. While it is possible still to see Hogarth as a representative of the newly emergent professional classes, his satirical narratives, the *Rake's* and *Harlot's Progresses*, and *Marriage a-la-Mode*, are surely less progressive than Klingender claimed. While Hogarth perhaps was clear-sighted about the weaknesses of his own class, he was in most respects politically conservative, working in his moral series to uphold the social hierarchies of the day.⁴⁹ Hogarth's attack on the vices of the different classes, much as one would like to believe otherwise, is not weighted on the side of that abstraction 'the people', as Klingender suggests, but, on the contrary, his prints were designed to encourage all people from aristocrat to labourer to live up to the ideals of their own class. He satirises not class per se, but those who try to move for selfish motives from the one to which they belong. In *Industry and Idleness* the obvious (and absurdly unlikely) conclusion from the narrative is that every apprentice has it in his power, by working hard and marrying the owner's daughter, to become the owner of a workshop himself, and even to aspire to become Lord Mayor of London. Though Ronald Paulson has claimed that 'Hogarth embraced both apprentices [i.e. the Idle and Industrious apprentices], both value systems' they represented,⁵⁰ it is hard to see the series as anything other than an instrument of social control, to be put up in workshops as a warning to unruly apprentices. Far from being perceived as a threat to the social hierarchy of the time, Hogarth was on good terms with merchants and dukes, who bought his satirical work avidly. In his last years he was himself the butt of satire by more authentic radicals like John Wilkes for his support of the government and his desire for courtly favour. On the other hand Klingender might have answered, as he did with Tolstoy, that Hogarth reveals facets of his own society against the grain of the public attitudes expressed in his art, as artists have done throughout the ages.

An association between realism and political progress is essential to Klingender's theory, but it can be argued that realism, even in Klingender's wide definition, did not always prove itself to be progressive. Many of the eighteenth-century satirists Klingender most admired, Gillray above all, were employed willingly as instruments of government propaganda;⁵¹ indeed, it was the government rather than the opposition that more often employed or paid off visual satirists. It is true that Gillray had a reputation as a closet supporter of the French Revolution, and Richard Newton and

Thomas Spence were passionately radical (the latter was recognised by Engels as a forerunner of socialism through his plan for the division of land), but nothing exceeds the ferocity and relish with which Gillray (himself the recipient of a pension from the Pitt government) attributed bestiality and opportunism to the French revolutionary sans-culottes. It is now clear that, despite their apparent vulgarity – their relish in exaggerating personal deformities, and frequent representation of shitting, farting and pissing – caricatures were as much part of the fashionable world as the paintings of Gainsborough or Reynolds. There was furthermore a clear hierarchy of value among caricaturists themselves, with Gillray and Rowlandson at the top, selling to the West End crowd and the tiny number of people directly involved in political life, while lower down the social scale were the cheap productions of William Dent and the broadsheets of Seven Dials.⁵²

The ‘Englishness’ of Klingender’s Hogarth contrasts interestingly with the contribution on the same artist of his friend and fellow Marxist, the widely travelled Hungarian émigré Frederick Antal. In Antal’s *Hogarth and His Place in European Art*,⁵³ Hogarth, as the title suggests, is explained in terms of the response of painters to the progress of the bourgeoisie across the whole of Europe. Hence it is possible to find even in Venice artists like Pietro Longhi (1702–86) who share something of Hogarth’s social vision and sharp dissection of genteel customs. Klingender, on the other hand, argues that two streams run through Hogarth and English caricature, one coming from the Netherlands and the other, evidently wholly indigenous, running through ‘the simple woodcuts of the English chapbooks’, which in turn relate back to medieval marginal illumination and misericords. Hogarth might have had some knowledge of comic prints after Pieter Bruegel, but the main traditions of popular prints were, as Klingender well knew, as much German in origin as Netherlandish or English. But of course the state of war with Germany in 1943 would not have encouraged such a recognition, nor would his nostalgia for the pre-industrial England of the eighteenth century, which provided ‘the essential basis for popular art, a common civilization expressing the moods and aspirations and the way of life of the broad masses of people’, and which he now, as the final thought of the book, claimed at the height of an anti-fascist war was again ‘only ... beginning to emerge’.⁵⁴

Klingender’s most extensive and substantial work on British art, *Art and the Industrial Revolution*, published in 1947, started from an AIA exhibition in 1945 suggested by the Amalgamated Engineering Union, on *The Engineer in British Life*.⁵⁵ It is altogether more reflective and wide ranging than *Hogarth and English Caricature*, though readers should be warned that the posthumous 1968 edition, edited by Arthur Elton and widely available in paperback, is quite different from the original 1947 edition, with interpolations, omissions and corrections by Elton that are only occasionally signalled and at times interfere with the argument.⁵⁶ True to Klingender’s

belief that artists necessarily engage actively with the great historical movements of their time, which for the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries he saw to be the Industrial Revolution and the consequent triumph of Victorian capitalism, he offers a new artistic canon, based not on London but on the original industrial areas of England, the Midlands and the North. The ‘father’ of this kind of art, comparable in importance to Hogarth in relation to caricature, was the then relatively little-known but remarkable painter Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–97). Wright of Derby precisely fulfilled Klingender’s criteria for the truly progressive artist, in being ‘not only a painter of philosophers, [but]... also a philosopher himself’,⁵⁷ a man with a scientific temperament wholly at one with the manufacturing and intellectual luminaries of the Lunar Society, to whom Klingender attributed the initial creation of the Industrial Revolution. Wright produced a body of work, though only within a short period of about eight years before he went to Italy in 1773, fully expressive of the decisive union between science and industry that enabled the world-changing phenomenon of the new industrialisation: ‘Wright was as much a pioneer [in industrial subjects] as he was in glorifying science.’⁵⁸ However, Klingender did *not* make the claim that ‘Joseph Wright was the first professional painter directly to express the spirit of the Industrial Revolution’, a remark that has been frequently attributed to him. That sentence was written by Arthur Elton for the 1968 edition, and with the benefit of hindsight it is hard to image a fervent materialist like Klingender attributing a ‘spirit’ to the Industrial Revolution, or giving the artist such a passive role in relation to it.

Certainly, Wright of Derby produced paintings within a limited period between 1765 and 1772 in which people are shown expressing wonder at experimentation, or which focus on machines and processes of making. The great *Experiment on a Bird in the Air-Pump*, 1768 (London, National Gallery) and *A Philosopher Giving that Lecture on the Orrery, in Which a Lamp is Put in Place of the Sun*, 1766 (Derby Museum and Art Gallery),⁵⁹ both exhibited at the Society of Artists in London, come in the former category, and the forges and blacksmiths’ shops, versions of which were exhibited in London in 1771–72, in the latter. But Wright’s paintings – brilliant though they are – do not quite bear the historical weight that Klingender puts on them. They are not really pictures about ‘science’, or at least about the kind of science that feeds directly into technology. In fact, as scholars like Benedict Nicolson subsequently realised, there is nothing new or even recent in the science or technologies represented in the paintings; the air pump and the orrery were not at all new by Wright’s time, nor were trip hammers or forges.⁶⁰ Only a later landscape view, long after his return from Italy in 1775, of *Arkwright’s Cotton Mills by Night*, c.1782–83 (private collection)⁶¹ confronts industrialisation directly, and then in a highly picturesque moonlit context. The unmistakable sense of novelty in Wright’s ‘scientific and industrial’ paintings is probably less to do with

the Industrial Revolution than with their use of light derived from earlier Dutch painting, of which Klingender shows great understanding and art-historical knowledge. It is also to do with the paintings' formal ambiguity, the way that they hover between history paintings and portrait groups and genre scenes, as in the *Air-Pump* and *The Orrery*. This ambiguity gives even mundane scenes an unexpected portentousness, or, in the case of the two versions of the *Blacksmith's Shop* (Derby Museum and Art Gallery, and Yale Center for British Art), set in the ruin of a great house and both dated 1771, a sense of humble events in great surroundings.⁶² But such issues of pictorial composition associate him more with the concerns of the London Society of Arts and the early Royal Academy, founded in 1768, where he often exhibited, than with his progressive provincial milieu.

Klingender's knowledge of the visual culture of industrialisation enabled him to recover from oblivion artists associated with each phase of the development of industry, from its heroic phase in the 1760s, when Wright of Derby was at his height, through the 'Age of Despair' of the early nineteenth century and the Railway Age, to its High Victorian triumph. Though there are impressive paintings and watercolours that respond to the sublimity of industry, Klingender finds the first 30 years of the nineteenth century easier to illustrate through the Romantic poets and early Victorian novelists, who are quoted extensively. One might expect, given the large number of paintings that relate to industrialisation in his oeuvre, that J.M.W. Turner would figure prominently, but, though a number of his works are mentioned, it is the sublime and myriad-figured paintings of John Martin that are more prominent in the book.⁶³ This may simply be due to the fact that Klingender liked to parade recent discoveries rather than established 'Old Masters' like Turner, but he was undoubtedly captivated by the idea that Martin's imaginary architecture could both be influenced by and influence 'the style in which the engineers of his own time carried out many of their greatest works'. With hindsight, Martin's paintings seem to be more at one with the speculative industrial culture itself than expressive of the dread that science had become a Frankenstein monster of doubt and despair unleashed on the world. Yet one of the greatest achievements of the volume is the rehabilitation of artists such as John Martin, several of whom, like J.C. Bourne are still less known than they deserve. Bourne's lithographs of the building of the London and Birmingham Railway of 1839 are technical wonders in their use of lithography (Figure 11), but they also give a moving picture of the painful physical processes behind the work of the many thousands of labourers involved in railway building:

Contemporary calculations which claimed that the labour performed in building this railway greatly exceeded that spent on the Great Pyramid, become credible when one sees Bourne's view of the great cutting at Tring, every foot of which was dug up and removed by hand.⁶⁴

The railway age was for Klingender an age of further crisis for the new industrial society. It led to the replacement of the paternalistic capitalists of the eighteenth century, who were at least builders of communities, by the philistine bourgeoisie, a process completed essentially by the Crystal Palace, capitalism's hour of greatest triumph. Klingender had nothing but contempt for the ostentation of these new bourgeois, whose vulgar taste was responsible for the 'decline of English painting after Turner and Constable [which was]...not unrelated to the new standard of values established by the triumphant capitalists'. Art was now the victim of 'Cashbox Aesthetics',⁶⁵ as Victorian painters were forced into painstaking representations of nature, or of banal sentiment. Klingender's witty observation that 'contemporary paintings of Highland cattle grouped meekly around a majestic bull irresistibly suggest the Victorian family' was excised from the posthumous edition by Arthur Elton, who was distressed enough by Klingender's blanket condemnation of Victorian taste to insert some paragraphs of his own into the text to excuse and argue against it.

Klingender made no mention of Karl Marx in the first six chapters of the book, but in the last chapter, entitled 'Newfangled Men', Marx is brought out exultantly with a long quotation from the famous speech celebrating the anniversary of the *People's Paper* in April 1856. Marx notes that 'in our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary', in which 'the newfangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want.' The solution is for 'the newfangled forces of society...to be mastered by newfangled men – and such are the working men.' They are the 'firstborn sons of modern industry', for they are 'as much the invention of modern times as machinery itself'.⁶⁶ This reaffirmation of the working man is also a reaffirmation of the dialectical process; the triumph of the 'new' Victorian bourgeoisie and the consequent misery it has engendered has created its opposite, an equally new kind of man who will finally bring about a socialist society as the culmination of the dialectic initiated in modern times by the bourgeoisie's own challenge to feudalism.

While Klingender can offer no single artistic figure of the stature of Wright of Derby to represent this new phase of emergent radicalism, he does make one 'find' among the provincial artists who sought to depict industrial life in the nineteenth century: James Sharples (1825–93).⁶⁷ Sharples was a foundry worker from Bury, who after teaching himself to draw and paint had, on the strength of a very small body of work, a brief but brilliant period of national success. His life story was recounted in later editions of Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*,⁶⁸ despite the unfortunate fact that he failed to make it as an artist and was forced to return in disappointment to the foundry. Sharples was unique in not using his artistic talent to distance himself mentally from the world of industry. His masterpiece, based on a painting he made in 1844–47 (Bury Art Gallery), is the magnificent steel engraving of *The Forge* (Figure 12), which took him ten years (1849–59) to

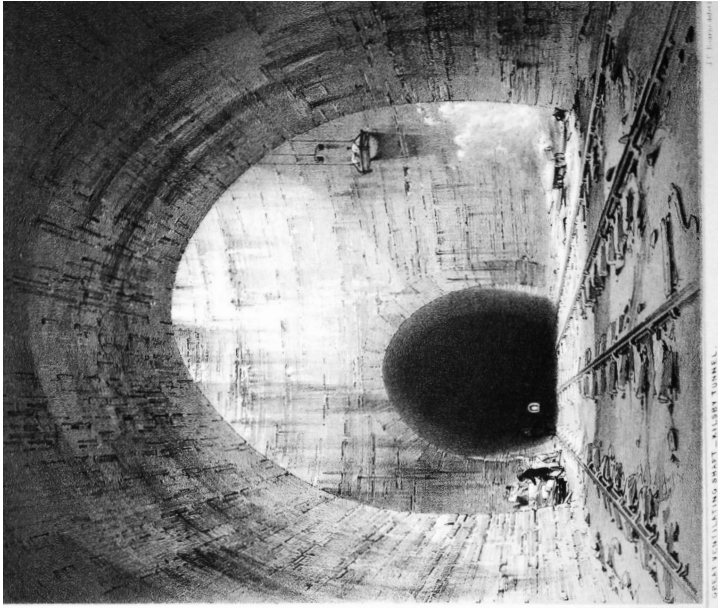
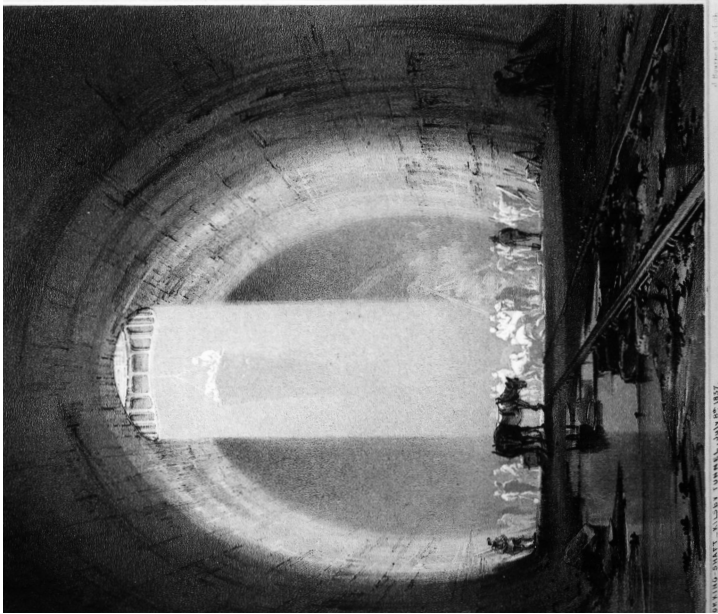


Figure 11 J.C. Bourne, 'Working Shaft, Kilsby Tunnel, July 8th 1857' and 'Great Ventilating Shaft, Kilsby Tunnel', lithograph. Photograph: Warren Carter

complete. *The Forge* is a great technical achievement and a work of great artistic intensity. It also represented for Klingender the progressive belief among the early craft unions, of which Sharples was a member, that skilled workers in industry had the ability to master the new forces of production. Sharples's *Forge* not only represents the new confidence of the 'newfangled men', but also art's ability to express a sense of historical change that goes beyond the perceptions of the class from which it came.

Klingender at no point in *Art and the Industrial Revolution* mentions Lenin or other Soviet authorities and that is probably indicative of a post-war disillusionment with Soviet policy that was observed by others who knew him at the time. John Saville notes that he left the Communist Party after the Cominform break with Tito, but that it was 'a slow drifting away rather than a sudden resignation'.⁶⁹ Yet he remained firmly Marxist in his teaching, as is borne out by the historical trajectory of *Art and the Industrial Revolution*; but it is now Marxism firmly within a British, or even English, context rather than within the context of world revolution.

The reorientation of British art offered by *Art and the Industrial Revolution*, shifting its dynamic to the industrial areas of the Midlands and the North, is breathtaking in its sweep and boldness, and the passion with which it is written, but it is no criticism to say that it is based on a number of historical assumptions that have not all stood the test of time. One problem is the way that Klingender ring-fences the Industrial Revolution as a historical entity that can be treated separately from what was going on in the commercial world of London and its overseas markets. Whatever the inventiveness of the men of the Midlands and their own sense of a separate identity, their 'industrial revolution' did not happen in isolation from the financial wealth that had been generated in London earlier in the century from overseas trade. Nor were they culturally separate from London, despite their occasional contacts with France. Wright of Derby himself is as good an example as any. Though born in Derby, he learned his profession through apprenticeship to the London painter Thomas Hudson, who had previously been Joshua Reynolds's master, and throughout his life he exhibited paintings for sale at the Society of Arts and its successor the Royal Academy. He did sell paintings occasionally to members of the Lunar Society, like Josiah Wedgwood, but more often to the local gentry, or to collectors outside the Midlands altogether.⁷⁰

If the Industrial Revolution is seen not as a self-contained historical entity but as part of a continuum with London-based commerce, then there is, as many art historians have discovered, as much a case for seeing artists like Richard Wilson and Thomas Gainsborough as being engaged with historical change, in whatever form it might take, as those based in the industrial parts of the country. London artists can also open ways into that other 'revolution', the opening of Britain to the world beyond Europe in the development of a trading and military empire. The public sphere of London in the later

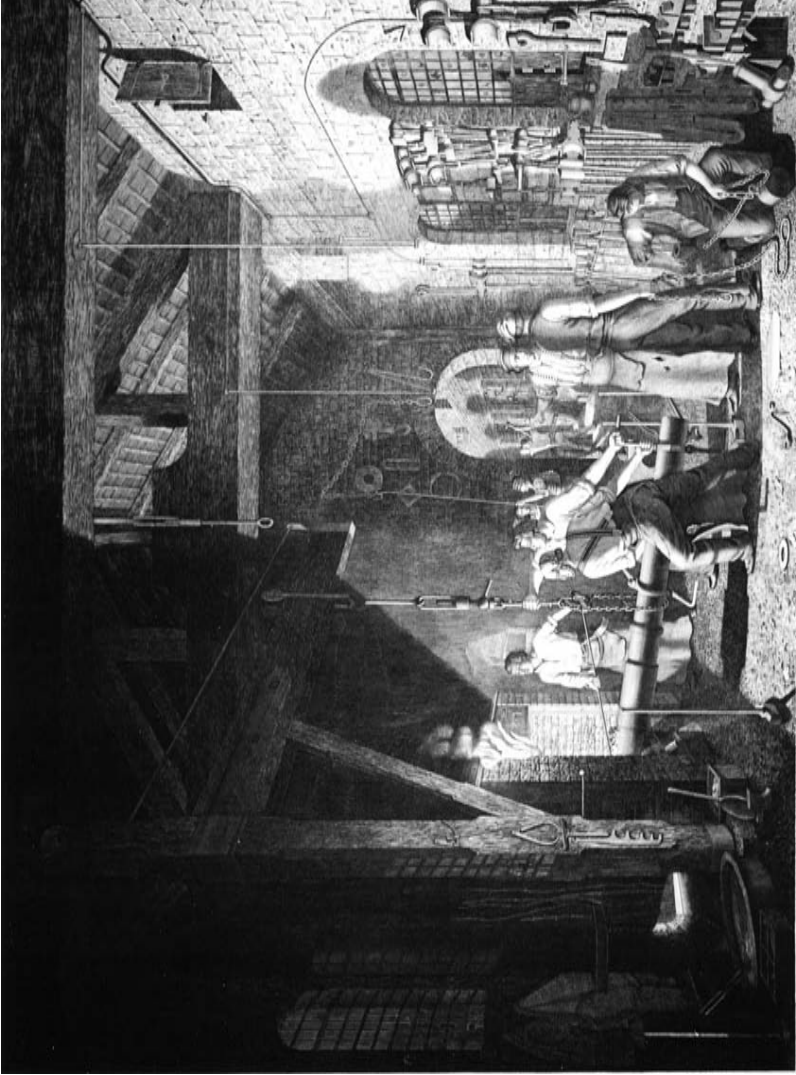


Figure 12 James Sharples, *The Forge*, steel engraving, 1849–59. Private collection

eighteenth century, in which artists struggled for autonomy and control of institutions like the Royal Academy, was arguably just as important a site of class conflict as the factories and workshops of the North and Midlands. There is also a problem in Klingender's lingering Romantic belief, shared with Lenin and the Lake Poets, that artists have *as artists* special powers to reach beyond their class and circumstances to engage with the deeper movements of history. We are more likely – now perhaps too much so – to see artists as actors on the same stage as other cultural producers, involved in complex networks that involve social mobility, entrepreneurial skills and forms of publicity, adapting as best they can the commodities they produce for the market place, which in the eighteenth century was overwhelmingly to be found in London.

It is also the case that, with certain obvious exceptions like Staffordshire pottery, most popular art, such as broadsheets and woodcut images, was made in London. There is, however, a deeper problem with Klingender's idea of popular culture as a kind of stream running through the history of mankind from the earliest times to the present, an autonomous creation by 'the people' as opposed to those of power and wealth. The issue of popular art as representative either of national culture or of the labouring classes goes back even before Marx, and it has been the subject of rich debate in recent years. I have no space to summarise this debate, but I find especially persuasive Stuart Hall's position in arguing against the idea of popular culture as an independent formation, on the grounds that, 'there is no separate, autonomous, "authentic" layer of working-class culture to be found'.⁷¹ In Hall's view, popular culture is always in a state of tension in relation to the dominant culture, represented in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by 'the magistrate and evangelical police'. Hence no object can be fully and essentially popular in itself, but only in its relationship to the dominant culture.

We have perhaps also moved on beyond the almost exclusive concern with Britain forced on Klingender by the exigencies and restrictions of war and its aftermath, and which led him to underestimate the cosmopolitanism of artistic practice and experience in the eighteenth century. Wright of Derby used the money he made from his 'industrial' paintings to escape to Italy, with the intention of improving his professional and perhaps also his social skills. Hogarth, despite his loud protestations of Englishness and his contempt for foreigners, very wisely learned all that he could from French artists. For whatever reason, of Klingender's two books on English art it is the Hogarth volume, though it is only a few pages long, that has proved so far to have been the more seminal. Studies of Hogarth, of caricature and of popular art have burgeoned over the last few years, in exhibitions, books and articles; the art of industrialisation as such has not prospered, though the taste and productions of the Victorian bourgeoisie have never been more fashionable. But then it is arguable that despite Klingender's

own personal loathing – characteristic of his time – for Victorian industrial artefacts, he set the terms for the renewed appreciation of the productions of an industrial society. This is because the teleology of his work demonstrates that art and material culture did not inhabit different worlds. While he wrote eloquently about the ‘great art’ of Hogarth and Goya, and recognised the achievements of artists throughout the ages, he also saw that popular prints and ‘low’ caricatures could match them in historical resonance. It is arguable, therefore, that his most enduring contribution to the history of art has been to help extend the study of visual culture into the demotic and useful arts, beyond the categories of art as it was, and is largely still understood.

5

Max Raphael: Aesthetics and Politics

Stanley Mitchell

I

This chapter began life as a talk for a University College London seminar. As such, it is personal and selective, since only a long book could give a comprehensive account of Max Raphael. My aim was to introduce him to an audience for whom he was little more than a name, and at the same time to convey the pleasure and understanding he gave me. Today he is an all but forgotten critic, certainly in Britain, despite several attempts to resurrect him (see Addendum). Yet as I hope to show, there are aspects of his work that remain exemplary, if not always in its solutions, at least in terms of the problems it addresses.

Who was Max Raphael? The following biographical details are mostly taken from Herbert Read's introduction to Raphael's book *The Demands of Art*.¹ For a detailed bibliography with comments I refer the reader to John Tagg's edition of Raphael's *Proudhon, Marx, Picasso* (1980).² Max Raphael was born a German Jew in west Prussia in 1889. He studied the history of art, philosophy and political economy at the universities of Berlin and Munich. Two of his teachers in Berlin were Heinrich Wölfflin (art history) and Georg Simmel (philosophy). Wölfflin's rejection of his doctoral thesis meant that he would never secure an academic post in Germany. Like Walter Benjamin, who suffered a similar rejection, he became an intellectual outsider for the rest of his life.

Munich at the time of Raphael's studies there was in a state of creative ferment. Kandinsky had settled in the city in 1908 and had initiated the first form of Abstract Expressionism. In the same year Wilhelm Worringer published his treatise *Abstraction and Empathy*, which was to provide important historical and philosophical foundations for the subsequent development of modern art and whose influence is evident in Raphael's early work. Several other artists who were to become founders of Expressionism, such as Alexei von Jawlensky, Paul Klee, Franz Marc and August Macke, were in Munich at about this time. Other artists who were to join the the Blauer Reiter group included Max Pechstein, who became a close friend. From his association with these artists Raphael developed an interest in modern French painting, and probably for this reason decided to pursue his study of philosophy in Paris, where he attended lectures by the intuitionist philosopher Henri Bergson, then at the height of his fame. He met Rodin

and the young Picasso and became familiar with the work of Matisse. Out of these experiences came his first book *From Monet to Picasso*, published in Munich in 1913, but never translated into English.

In 1911 he went back to Germany to complete his philosophical studies, but returned to Paris in 1912, remaining there until the end of the following year. Now he was working on Poussin and French medieval art, especially on the architecture, sculpture and stained glass of Chartres. A need for solitude took him to Switzerland where, until the outbreak of the First World War, he turned his attention to a variety of subjects, among them geology, biology, botany and sociology. He also made an extensive study of Shakespeare's plays and wrote a dramatic trilogy and a comedy that he later destroyed. He was conscripted into the German army during the First World War, wrote a diary, *Spirit Versus Power*,³ which he subsequently extended into a dialogue (likewise unpublished) called *Ethos*, dealing with the moral foundations of human rights and anticipating his later theory of knowledge.

Deserting from the army, Raphael returned to Switzerland and resumed contact with the world of art. He met Ernesto De Fiori, Hermann Haller, Ernest Wiegele, Alfred Schock and other artists well known at that time and published short articles on their work. In 1919 he wrote his first aesthetic study, *Idee und Gestalt (Idea and Form)*, subtitled *A Guide to the Nature of Art*, also untranslated – only a few of his works are available in English. He left Switzerland in 1920 for Berlin where he lived almost continuously until 1932. Here he became a Marxist, though I have no evidence of his having joined the Communist Party. Indeed, according to John Berger, he was dismissed by the Party as a Trotskyist. Certainly, his criticism of the proposed Palace of Soviets in Russia suggests that he was no great admirer of the Soviet Union.⁴ And his art criticism differs radically from the aesthetics of Socialist Realism, as I shall indicate.

His interests remained as diverse and complex as before. He wrote several articles on Newton's rules of reasoning. He toured the Rhineland and the region of Würzburg to study the architecture of medieval German churches. He joined the staff of the Berlin Volkshochschule, an adult-education institute where he taught on Rembrandt; on Aristotle; on Meister Eckhart, the thirteenth-century German mystic for whom he had a special affection; on Hegel, Marx and Lenin; on Husserl, Scheler and phenomenology; on the Doric temple; and on the history of dialectical materialism in Greece. This last theme, which was planned for the winter semester of 1932–33, close to the Nazi rise to power, was rejected by the institute's directorate and Raphael resigned. He turned the lecture on the Doric temple into a detailed study of the temple of Poseidon at Paestum which he had already researched in southern Italy and Sicily. In 1931 he published an article on Valéry's prose style and a longer piece on *Pyrronist Scepticism*.

During the opening years of the 1930s, as fascism unrolled in Germany, Raphael spent long summers in the Swiss alps and it was here that the first

draft of *The Demands of Art* was written, appearing in English in 1968 with an additional essay on Picasso. In 1932 Raphael moved to Paris and stayed there until 1941, when he emigrated to New York, remaining there until he took his own life in 1952. In Paris he developed a sociology of art, epitomised in the book *Proudhon, Marx, Picasso*. And he wrote a monograph on the work of his friend, the architect André Lurçat.⁵ Architecture for Raphael was the coping stone of the arts, although he wrote most of all on painting. He planned a book on sculpture which was never realised, apart from a section on Egyptian reliefs. His most important philosophical work, *The Theory of Knowledge of Concrete Dialectics*, later to be called *Theory of Intellectual Creation on a Marxist Basis*, was published in German in 1934. There followed critical articles on the architectural theories of August Perret and the project for a Palace of the Soviets in Moscow (see above). In 1939 he completed a summation of his sociological studies of the 1930s entitled *Workers, Art and Artists: Contributions to a Marxist Science of Art*.⁶ Impressive and far from complete as this list is, Raphael also began work on a major study of Flaubert during this period.

The outbreak of the Second World War prevented him from continuing a promising work on Racine. But even during his temporary detention in concentration camps in France he wrote the draft of the first half of a general theory of art, which is included as an appendix to *The Demands of Art*, not to mention studies on Homer, Shakespeare and Spinoza. In the United States he concentrated on the problem of art history as a science, suggesting that the analysis of art would only become objective when it was mathematical, a conception which informs his new studies of *Prehistoric Cave Paintings* and *Prehistoric Pottery and Civilisation in Egypt*, both of which have been published in English.⁷ But already in many of his earlier essays, for instance, on Chartres or Giotto, the mathematical fascination is present. Herbert Read, who met Raphael once in Paris, felt that he ‘was in the presence of one who shared the angelic nature of his mentor, Meister Eckhart’.⁸

His suicide mirrored the fate of a number of German refugees from fascism: Walter Benjamin, Kurt Tucholsky, Stefan Zweig, Ernst Toller, Walter Hasenclever, Carl Einstein. Ever since Wölfflin’s rejection of his doctorate, Raphael had eked out a meagre living, a state of affairs that continued and worsened during his exile. In America he sought material assistance from Max Horkheimer of the Frankfurt Institute,⁹ and the art historian, Meyer Schapiro, but found none – although Schapiro had probably been instrumental in getting permission for Raphael to travel to the United States in 1941. Raphael also dedicated a copy of his *Theory of Knowledge of Concrete Dialectics* to Schapiro. The circumstances of his death are obscure, but it seems he was affected by increasing isolation, penury and self-doubt, occupying a tiny apartment in lower East Side New York and living on the pitiful income that his wife brought home as an office cleaner.

I have limited discussion of his art criticism to Picasso's *Guernica* for reasons I give later. (The list of painters he has engaged with is tantalisingly profuse. Such studies are mostly unpublished, but some have appeared in Germany.) My sources for his critical theory are restricted to *The Demands of Art*; Proudhon, Marx, Picasso; *Prehistoric Cave Paintings* and *The Doric Temple*, all of them in English translation except for the last. I have offered some critical perspective and indicated a context that he shared with other Marxists, but there is no detailed criticism or background. At the end of this chapter I append and comment on the few appraisals of Raphael that have appeared in English since Herbert Read's 'Introduction' of 1968. That they exist at all is salutary, but on their own they could not give Raphael the place he deserves in our intellectual life, which has taken an entirely different direction.

The first reason I was drawn to Max Raphael was the following. In *The Demands of Art* he discusses the limits of creativity. 'On the margin of what man can do', he says, 'there appears that which he cannot or cannot yet do – but which lies at the root of all creativeness.' 'All great creators,' he goes on,

have felt this and have often expressed it in religious language. When Moses wished to look upon God's glory he was told: 'Thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen.' And Homer says: 'And when a god wishes to remain unseen, what eye can observe his coming or going?'

Deprived of direct and total vision, Raphael remarks, 'the creator's pride is broken in its encounter with objective reality, with the "absolute" of his epoch, and in this encounter a renewal of creative force takes place.' 'Were creativity possible without the "absolute",' Raphael adds, 'the first creation would be the last.'¹⁰ He quotes Goethe's maxim that the purpose of art is to probe the knowable and quietly revere the unknowable.

Goethe's maxim offered a corrective to the more triumphalist side of Marxism which promised to solve the riddle of history, although in other parts of his work Raphael himself subscribes to this anticipation. I had long wondered how or whether certain values, which had their roots in religion – such as reverence, grace, benediction, prayer – might be translated into a materialist vocabulary. It seemed to me that Marxism would lose if they were not. Ernst Bloch had done most in this direction. And Raphael appeared to be doing the same at this point, while elsewhere he is a militant atheist. Here he retains the radical mysticism of his mentor Meister Eckhart, applying the following dictum of the latter to the activity of true art:

To keep busy is to be involved with things superficially; to *do* something is to be informed by reason, and involved wholeheartedly. Only men who *do* are in the midst of things

without being submerged by them. In the very thick of things, they yet stand at the very outermost circle of heaven, close to eternity.¹¹

The true artist is such a man, according to Raphael.

My second attraction to Raphael lies in the declaration that ‘the work of art holds man’s creative powers in a crystalline suspension from which it can again be transformed into living energies’.¹² It is a definition that has dazzled every critic who has encountered Raphael. Peter Fuller used it as a stick to beat John Berger with for his technician *Ways of Seeing*.¹³ And Berger, a great admirer of Raphael, takes it up in his fervent piece ‘Revolutionary Undoing’ (see Addendum). The release of ‘man’s creative powers’ occurs in three stages, according to Raphael. First, when we look at a work of art, ‘we are freed from accidental, individual determinations and rendered capable of pure contemplation; next we are freed from pure contemplation and rendered capable of re-creating creation; and finally we are freed from re-creating and rendered capable of ourselves creating’¹⁴ – creating in the widest sense – not necessarily our own art, but our social selves. Schiller’s *Letters on Aesthetic Education* spring to mind. But where Schiller’s aesthetic education takes place apart from the world, as a preliminary to re-entering it, Raphael’s spectators educate themselves in the ‘midst of things’, at the heart of social conflict.

The ‘crystalline suspension’ of the artwork ‘de-materialises’ the outer world of society and nature – the source of the artist’s subject matter. Conversely, the artist’s consciousness – his feelings, will and ideas – are materialised in the same process. A new world is established which is independent of both external and inner reality and becomes a reality of its own, relatively autonomous, with its own, artistic laws. It is a domain of freedom greater than what is given by society and nature or by the mind. In his Cézanne essay Raphael describes the process in relation to nature: The artist perceives in himself and in nature untold things that lie beyond the confines of accepted cultural conventions. He goes back to the ‘Mothers’, to the region where man and the cosmos have their common origin, and he brings both together between points of depth and height, centre and periphery, where they had never before met. The ‘natural’ nature which had served either as a starting point for the experience or as a point of support for the realisation seems banal, superficial, meaningless, in contrast with the revelation of the hidden to be found in ‘painted’ nature. The created form will always contain more than what the artist put into it consciously. The created form is not to be found either in ‘natural’ nature or in man.

The Mothers are goddesses of the underworld who guard the images of the dead. They figure in the second part of Goethe’s *Faust* and, I believe, nowhere else. Faust wishes to retrieve Helen of Troy and bring her up to the world of the living. With Mephistopheles, he makes the journey in fear and trembling, but he succeeds, at least for a time – Helen has to return to Hades,

her sojourn in modern times is temporary. Helen represents perfect beauty and therefore perfect form. Form is nothing other than ‘the crystalline suspension of living energies’. Helen is a transient visitor, but her union with Faust engenders modern art in the figure of Euphorion whom Goethe associated with Byron. To create form, Raphael declares, always entails risk and mystery, and Goethe remarked that ‘form is a secret to most people’,¹⁵ a secret that for Raphael can only be captured, if just temporarily, by one who has trodden the path to the Mothers, ‘to the untrodden, not to be trod’, to ‘the deepest, furthest depths’.¹⁶

Form is creative, not imitative. It creates values or values are created through it, it does not reproduce them. Raphael chides Proudhon for asserting that art perceives beauty. No, art *creates* beauty. This, Raphael argues, is the difference between religious and secular art. Whereas in the former, God is the cause, in the latter He is the conclusion, He is created. From the father he becomes the son. In his rejection of a mimetic theory of art, Raphael differs radically from the aesthetics of Socialist Realism. And, although there are many resemblances with Lukács (whom he does not mention), the latter’s work is based on a reflection theory which Raphael rejects. It is certain that Lukács and the Socialist Realists would both have regarded Raphael’s theory of form as idealist, and denied that an artwork could possess the inner autonomy and independence from mind and matter that Raphael ascribed to it.

Raphael concedes that this autonomy is relative insofar as it is conditioned by economic relations and the various elements of the superstructure to which those relations give rise. The inner freedom of the artwork will, he argues, depend on the progressiveness and productivity of the particular class it serves. As these are flexible, so too is the autonomy of art. I remind the reader of Raphael’s quotations from the Bible and Homer, stressing that the artist must always fall short of his or her ideal or, as he puts it, the ‘absolute’ of their age. In other words, they must always reckon with necessity, and this struggle not only determines how much autonomy they will enjoy, but structures the formal process itself. Only as we approach a classless society, giving us more control over nature and social relations, will this gap between inner and outer, between freedom and necessity grow closer. In declining bourgeois society, he observes, artists tend to close their eyes to necessity, because prevailing social values are so hateful and threatening. But these artists are not truly oppositional, they have no basis in a revolutionary class and so forfeit any objectivity; they are condemned to caprice, subjectivism and *l’art pour l’art*.

Raphael condones the ‘tendentiousness’ of early proletarian art on the grounds that it represents a still insecure class that has not yet found the means of expression adequate to its content. The task of the revolutionary artist, he says, is to create these means of expression, indeed to force the pace of history to achieve them. The ability of art to transcend its material

conditioning is a constant preoccupation of Marxist critics from Marx onwards. But forcing the pace of history goes beyond this and is perhaps applicable, if at all, only to proletarian art in a socialist society. Raphael disliked Soviet art and presumably the Soviet Union, the only available socialist society at the time. Russian Futurism did indeed espouse this idea, but it was not a movement of which Raphael approved. In any case his exhortation is no more than an assertion.

No such voluntarism exists in the traditional Marxist view of transcendence, which argues simply that art both reflects, and reacts on, the world and, if significant enough, will outstrip the limits of its time, not that it has the capacity to push history forwards. The question then is: How does art do this? By its own power? That is not a Marxist answer. By an ability to reflect objective reality? From what position? By satisfying the needs of subsequent social forces? Which are they and how do they relate to our own aspirations as socialists? Marx was aware that historical development was uneven and could not be accounted for by a simple model of base and superstructure in which economic relations determined the nature of political and legal institutions, and the higher reaches of religion, morality, philosophy and art. In particular, he valued classical Greek art 'as a norm and as an unattainable model'.¹⁷ He attempted to explain this unevenness in three ways. Firstly, by contrasting the advantages of a particular kind of pre-capitalist society like the Greek with the capitalism of his own day in which exchange and commodity production predominated over use value, in which specialisation and alienation crippled human potential and in which the ensuing abstractness of human relations endangered the sensuous world of art. Secondly, by pointing to the unique mythology of the Greeks, which for the first time humanised its gods. And thirdly, by adapting a view, popular since the eighteenth century, that the ancient Greeks were the 'normal children' of humanity. 'A man cannot become a child again,' he remarks, 'or he becomes childish.' But 'does he not find joy in the child's naïveté. And must he himself not strive to reproduce its truth at a higher stage?' – a notion which Marx applies to each new historical period: 'Why should not the historic childhood of humanity, its most beautiful unfolding, as a stage never to return, exercise an eternal charm?' He concludes that this charm, far from conflicting with the undeveloped stage of society on which it grew, is inextricably bound up with the fact that these unripe conditions 'under which it arose, and could only arise, can never return.'¹⁸

Raphael rejected this conclusion as having nothing to do with Marxism and was forever trying to reformulate Marx's explanations in more satisfying terms. He denied that Greek art was normative, especially in view of the continuing discovery of cultures outside the western orbit. On the contrary, he argues, Greek art was made normative through its various revivals by the feudal Christian church, the Protestant Reformation and secular capitalism. Since Christian mythology lacked plasticity and sensuality, what better

source to borrow from than the Greek to give its art stability and worldly appeal? What better model for the humanist Enlightenment and the abstract slogans of early bourgeois democracy? What better facades for the edifices of advanced capitalism?

This is an instrumental view of the history of art, similar to the 'vulgar sociology' which Lifshits contested in Russia (see my chapter on him) and to Hauser's sociology of art. But Raphael returns to a normative interpretation of Greek culture in the following passage:

The arts of all other nations we have known (except perhaps for a portion of Chinese art) express particular metaphysical conceptions; they are dogmatic, whatever freedom they may attain in representing their subjects. Greek art is the only one that is anti-dogmatic in an absolutely radical sense, that is, dialectical. Each content it expresses is accompanied by its opposite; in other words, by giving artistic expression to the content of a myth, Greek art transforms this content in such a way that each time an opposite subject is introduced. The image of the scale with the balancing pans, an image on which the Greeks have so often drawn from the *Iliad* though to the *Oresteia*, and ending with Pyrrho's scepticism, expresses in parable the essential tendency of the Greek imagination, namely, the balance between statement and counterstatement, and their synthesis in artistic form; in short, it expresses the dialectical tendency of the Greek imagination.¹⁹

It falls to the revolutionary proletariat, he declares at the end of his study of *The Doric Temple*, to rescue the Greek myth from the bourgeoisie and to deploy it against the chaos of our times. What we do with Hellenism, he concludes, is a political matter of the greatest importance.²⁰

Here a sociological and a normative approach conjoin: Greek culture appears as a universally applicable model, at the same time it passes instrumentally from class to class until the proletariat can use it for the sake of humanity. A striking passage from his book *Prehistoric Cave Paintings* (1946) dispenses with this instrumentalism altogether. The artist, Raphael observes, faces society in two ways – with his will and his talent:

Within his will the artist has only two alternatives: either to take the side of the ruling class of his time or to propagandize the cause of the ruled class. A social-critical attitude is the utmost limit beyond which it cannot go. But the artist's ability is less subjected to society than his will. With his talent he can not only uncover the unconscious ideas underlying the ruling interests, not only disclose the concealed developmental tendencies of the ruling class before this class has the will and strength to assert them, he can go beyond this and see the universally human values in the historically determined conditions of his time and express the former in the latter in such a manner that his work – although a product of his time – transcends all temporal limits and acquires in Marx's phrase 'eternal charm' ... 'that is to say, validity for all times and of imperishable value'.

Indeed, Raphael emphasises, it is paradoxically the artwork most profoundly determined by its time that is the one likely to survive into timelessness. ‘Only the great artist,’ he remarks a little later, ‘can grasp and master the whole historical reality, lesser artists cling to the fragments of this reality that float on the surface.’ Among the lesser artists it is clear that he counts most moderns from the Impressionists onwards. The present passage concludes soberly: ‘But if the artist, by his creative effort, rises above his time, he will nevertheless remain the social slave of the compulsions of his time, of the ideas of the ruling class.’²¹ The idea that an artist can embrace objective reality both despite and through his historical limitations is common to Lifshits, Lukács – and Marx.

Two other things promote the longevity of the artwork, according to Raphael – the aesthetic dimension and the artist’s relationship to the viewer. Unlike Kant’s ‘disinterested pleasure’, Raphael’s aesthetic includes all the faculties starting with the sexual, its object is ‘the whole of man’s experience’. As in Kant, play is at the centre and is a synonym for freedom. But, like freedom, it is held in a dialectic relationship with necessity which contracts as a classless society approaches. (In Kant the two are entirely separate.) However, from Raphael’s absolute point of view, the act of play is free even from these relative restraints. For since, as he explains, art transforms the external infinite into an internal infinite, so play, which has no need of immediate gratification, can be prolonged indefinitely.

Secondly, the (great) artist, according to Raphael, includes the viewer in his work, compelling the latter and subsequent viewers to absorb the full impact of the work and to renew that effect over and over again. In so doing, the spectator participates in the form-creating process itself. Every time we take in a work, he says, we re-create it and so promote its longevity. Or, as Berger interprets this: ‘Raphael shows us that the revolutionary meaning of a work of art has nothing to do with its subject matter in itself, or with the functional use to which it is put, but is a meaning continually awaiting discovery and release.’²² John Tagg compares Raphael’s collaboration between artist and viewer with the similar programme put forward by Benjamin in ‘The Author as Producer’.²³

To sum up the theoretical part of this chapter, here are Raphael’s final words in *The Demands of Art* on the study of art:

Creative instinct manifests itself with greater freedom in art than in any other domain. A creative, active study of art, is therefore, indispensable to awaken creative powers, to assert them against the dead weight of tradition, and to mobilise them in a struggle for a social order in which everyone will have the fullest opportunity to develop their creative capacities. The details of this social order cannot be anticipated without falling into utopian dreams. We can and we must be satisfied with the awareness that art helps us to achieve a truly just order.

As a good Marxist he adds that ‘the decisive battles...will be fought at another level.’²⁴

II

By contrast to his theorising, Raphael’s practical discussion of individual artworks starts very empirically, considering lines, angles, shapes and colours in the most minute detail before he permits himself an ideological conclusion. Let us turn to Raphael’s analysis of Picasso’s *Guernica*, ‘Discord between Form and Content’, the last of his essays on individual works in *The Demands of Art*. All the other examples are ones that Raphael believes to have achieved some degree of unity between form and content. (The works are Cézanne’s *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, Degas’s *Leaving the Bath*, Giotto’s *Lamentation over the Body of Christ* and *The Death of Saint Francis* and Rembrandt’s *Joseph Interprets Pharaoh’s Dreams*.) There is no space to discuss his interpretation of any of these. I have chosen the essay on *Guernica* because the painting has become an anti-fascist and humanist icon, whereas Raphael believes it is trapped in a bourgeois ideology. The essay is very long, complex, dense and unsummarisable. What follows is a collage of his argument.²⁵

Raphael places *Guernica* in the tradition of the history painting, doubting however whether this genre is possible in a world dominated by the abstract powers of money and the machine:

No representational style is adequate, perhaps, to portray these new powers which have degraded mankind to mere material and have elevated bombs to the metaphysical status of a new omnipotent devil; at all events, no such style has as yet been invented.²⁶

What kind of painting has Picasso produced?

Raphael begins characteristically with the composition, noting the clear division of the surface into three parts: two more or less equal at the sides, and a central area about three times as wide. The triangular form in the middle connects the two bottom corners of the picture surface with its centre on the top. But the effect of the two equal sides is played down because the right side of the triangle runs on the surface, while the left side runs into depth; moreover, before they meet, both sides are interrupted by forms that shift the centre of gravity out of the triangle to the left of its apex.

Raphael notices that ‘contrary to all our reading and writing habits, the painting reads, both compositionally and in terms of subject matter, from right to left.’ ‘But even so,’ he argues,

it may be questioned whether the painting should not rather be read from both sides simultaneously. If so, the major emphasis would fall on the triangular composition in the middle, as indeed suggested by its great width; in the former case, however, the left side

would be emphasised as the resolution, more important than the content of the middle. Accordingly, our evaluation of the various components of the content will also vary. The effect of all this is to put the viewer in a state of uncertainty and irritation ruling out any easy assimilation of the work. But it also heightens the feeling of isolation, destruction and seeming disorder for the viewer, who is thus repeatedly shocked out of his habitual ways. At the same time the artist has protected himself against any a priori outside his own personal will and has thus reinforced his control over the painting, the viewer, the subject matter and his right to be arbitrary. He makes himself the sole creator of order in the midst of chaos.²⁷

Raphael compares this composition with the medieval altarpiece and the Greek pediment which, according to him, Picasso is trying to deconstruct, seeking a figuration similar to signs found on prehistoric Spanish ceramics and Paleolithic cave paintings and evidenced in *Guernica* by the acute angle open either at the top or the bottom. If this is the case, Raphael continues, the scene of death by fire at the right has been deliberately placed inside the female life form (V), the life-and-death struggle between man and horse in the middle has been placed within the male death form (Λ) and, finally, the juxtaposition of mother with child and bull – an allegory of fertility and procreation – had been set inside a V shape in the first stage and later inside a Λ shape.

But, Raphael observes,

the viewer cannot be expected to know what the signs mean and is probably unaware of their presence; they remain bits of erudition, even when he has learned to decipher them, esoteric knowledge without social or historical roots in our time.

To be sure, Raphael concedes, Picasso is free to ‘associate death by burning with the sign of life and thus to suggest the end in the beginning, the fact of death in the continuation of life’.²⁸ But he can only do this by combining two languages: the representational and the symbolic, and he is unable to resolve the oppositions between the two within one artistic form.

The signs and meanings in Picasso’s painting are in fact allegorical rather than symbolic, Raphael tells us. Like the allegory, the symbol may have multiple meanings, but they are interrelated and deepened in a phased progression from finite to infinite, acquiring a necessary character on the way; whereas the allegory is unable to form a sensuous connection with the infinite and is susceptible to endless, arbitrary decipherings. At most, it can connect in a short-circuited fashion with an abstract universal, which, Raphael argues, is what it does in *Guernica* and which I shall elucidate in a moment. Picasso’s allegory, Raphael adds, is also private, rooted neither in his own age nor in tradition; and he alone possesses the key to it. And, even if he gave us the key, the allegory would remain private and arbitrary.



Figure 13 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, oil on canvas, 349 x 776 cm, 1937. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid.

Photograph: Archivo Fotográfico Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid

© Succession Picasso/DACS 2006

The allegory embroiders a more profound principle in the painting that finds embodiment in Picasso's use of neutral or self-identical colours, blacks and whites and their variants. Raphael relates this principle to the pre-Socratic *arche*, a primal category constituting the ground of all changing and transitory things. In regard to Picasso, Raphael calls this principle 'conscious-being', that is a consonance between consciousness and being which, as we have seen, Raphael holds to be impossible and which, in an earlier pre-Marxist essay on Picasso, he describes as mystical. At the moment of *Guernica*, Raphael suggests, when the painter felt the world and himself to be threatened with destruction, he put his faith in an indestructible and immutable absolute unity. Colour is stripped of brightness and light does not vibrate between light and dark; Picasso retained only a uniform white, black and grey, without nuances, though not without variations. In order that the colours could keep this unchanging self-identity, all material characteristics of objects and living bodies had to be eliminated because their surfaces were continually altered by the action of light from the outside and the circulation of the blood from the inside. Raphael describes black and white as metaphysical colours: 'White produces fullness and density and thereby urges definition – the mere possibility of definition, no specific definition. Black...eludes definition, seems to have a tendency to elude even an attempt at definition.'²⁹

Line, which is rooted in movement, contrasts with colour. While colours are metaphysical, static and 'pre-emotional', lines are empirical, dynamic and driven by an emotion that takes the form of serial explosions of pain and terror. When Picasso brings colour and line together, we have 'the torment of the finite, frozen in its explosion, in the face of absolutely silent conscious-being, none of whose potentialities are realised. This,' Raphael remarks,

is a world without hope of salvation; mankind is reduced to a scream. Of the nine figures represented in this painting (counting both the human and animal figures), eight have their mouths open and seven are uttering cries of anguish.³⁰

No inner connection between colour and line is achieved. Colour never crosses into sensuality or objectivity, while line remains caught in the empirical and can never transcend itself into an *arche*.

After summarising a number of diverse interpretations of the painting, Raphael provides his own reading, trying, not very successfully, to steer clear of allegorical meanings. Raphael starts from the right with the woman on fire, wildly extending her arms while the rest of her body seems to be sinking into a funnel-shaped form. Picasso, he says, follows history here, showing the effect of the bombing and assuming that the viewer will know what caused the fire. At the left, he points out, the counterpart of this panic terror is a kind of imperturbability. While here, too, there is a panic scream, a mother in despair over her dead child, above her is the stoic ataraxia of the bull,

whose head is turned round, a posture familiar from Paleolithic art, where the bull's head is given in profile, the horns in frontal view. The animal's mouth is open just above the mother's and the protruding tongues imply that some oral transfer of energies is taking place. The bull, the active male standing over the receptive woman, is an agent of fecundation of which the mother, in an agony of sorrow, is yet unaware. The suggestion is that of new life succeeding destruction. Perhaps the bull denotes the sexual energy of the Spanish people or simply of life in general.

In the middle of the painting there are the dying horse and the dying man beneath. Was the man riding the horse and were both killed together by the same external cause? Or was there some sort of struggle between man and horse in which each mortally wounded the other? Or were they struck down by some external cause while they were struggling? What suggests the struggle is the spear-like weapon that pierces the horse and a small wound which may have been a blow from the sword. What suggests an external cause of death is the large wound in the shape of an up-ended lozenge, in which case the warrior would stand for a soldier of Republican Spain and the horse for Franco or fascist Spain. Raphael calls this an odd mixture of the representational and the allegorical, because it is not the actual struggle of the Civil War which is portrayed so much as the two figures succumbing to death. He assumes that the form above the horse's head is an allegory for the Nazi bomb despite the fact that an electric light bulb was drawn inside it at the last minute; and the form seems to reproduce the Greek symbol of lightning. Raphael notes that this middle section, although it depicts a struggle, is the most ambiguous part of the painting. It is also the only space on which Picasso uses stippling, abandoning the density of colour and the tension between planes surrounding it, and suggesting to Raphael an irritating void. Leaving aside the objects and examining the feelings conveyed here, we can describe this scene as the realm of the demonic, located between panic on the right and ataraxia on the left.

What of the woman with the lamp? Contrasting her with the woman at the bottom right, who provides a physical transition to the centre as she escapes from panic into struggle, the woman with the lamp provides a more spiritual transition. She is not running but trying to see; the night lamp gives a poor light, however. Held as it is right next to the bomb, it expresses deep irony: the world being destroyed is as obsolete as the night lamp and the wooden sword; the world in process of being born will not have to cope with dead tradition. Is the woman an allegory of truth? Her arm is strong, her grasp firm, and her profile incisive; she suggests something positive, the power of reason and enlightenment. Earlier studies for the painting, where the bull was shown in its full width, indicate a more unmistakable connection between the allegories of truth and fecundity: the woman's arm was level with the bull's back and almost touched it.

There are many other riddles in the painting to be explained and Raphael suggests that their formal intent may be to keep the viewer occupied with them. But, he warns, the longer the viewer remains under the painter's magic spell, the less likely is he to be moved to act; the artistic details obstruct and destroy the political impact. 'The primary effect Picasso has aimed at is shock,' Raphael remarks, and it is worthwhile quoting him at length here:

Two elements may be distinguished: surprise that so energetic a shock has been produced (for we do not see how the energy was accumulated) and that the shock, despite the intensity of the energy behind it, is so quickly ended (for we witness only its explosion). Nor is affect presented for its own sake: no more than the sensory perception is it permitted to last; were it so permitted, we might take sentimental pleasure even in the situation of terror. The after effects of any one explosion are not felt because, like waves, each is directly followed by another, so that all the after effects tending to secure the autonomy of the emotion are destroyed. Here, too, Picasso brutally assaults the viewer's sensibilities. He cuts short the development of emotion; he drives the viewer from affect to affect. The monotonous repetition of shocks shows that Picasso does not intend the shocks to be enjoyed for their own sake; he makes use of affect only to dissolve it into affectlessness. This purpose is served by the twofold development – across the painting, from panic to ataraxia and, from bottom to top, from the dead soldier to the rather exhibitionistic allegory of Reason. Both the physical and the spiritual allegory to some extent resolve horrified shock, but they do not produce catharsis in the viewer because the resolution has not arisen inevitably from the catastrophe and because the catastrophe itself is not a human one but inhuman, antihuman. The bomb was produced by a dehumanised society and its victims are portrayed as self-alienated. The former is rooted in the essence of our age, the latter in the limitations of Picasso as artist unable to transcend present history and only able to respond to its destructive forces in an allegory of hope for the future, comforting but not cathartic.³¹

As I copied out this paragraph, I thought of two critics: Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. Raphael uses a sentence from Benjamin's early *Origin of German Tragic Drama* as an epigraph to the chapter on Picasso: 'Allegories are in the realm of ideas what ruins are in the realm of things.'³² Later, Benjamin located both allegory and shock as the necessary components of a modern aesthetic which would replace the organic work of art with a more fractured form based on technology or adapted to a technological age. He had in mind film and Brecht's epic theatre. I imagined Adorno could have read the passage quoted with complete approval, for the features that Raphael lists as negative are precisely those which Adorno valued most in contemporary literature and art and found exemplified in Picasso among others. Raphael still had faith that the class struggle would bring prehistory to an end. Adorno believed that history had reached its end in the fully administered, reified, corporate capitalist world and that any kind of organic art would offer no more than a sentimental surrogate for reality.

Raphael is a classic Marxist and perhaps, like Marxism itself, he now seems old-fashioned. As neo-Marxists, Benjamin and Adorno are more fashionable and, although contemporary with Raphael, they mark out the boundary between his absolutist outlook and the relativist intellectual environment we live in today. Raphael belongs to a generation of Marxist art historians – Frederick Antal, Francis Klingender, Arnold Hauser and Meyer Schapiro – who are largely ignored now, with the exception of Schapiro. To compare him with them is a task I cannot address here, although I have suggested a partial similarity with Hauser. If Raphael's writing is often dense and awkward, there is also a sybilline majesty that breaks through from time to time and that belongs to another epoch.

ADDENDUM

John Berger's essay 'Revolutionary Undoing' was written for *New Society* in 1969, that is, a year after the publication of *The Demands of Art*, and the events of May 1968 in Paris. His enthusiasm for Raphael breathes all the fervour of that period: '...Raphael will show us as no other writer has ever done the revolutionary meaning of the works inherited from the past – and of the works that will be eventually created in the future.' He has no criticism of Raphael, praising him as 'the greatest mind yet applied'³³ to the revolutionary meaning of art. Berger dedicated his book on Picasso to Raphael (among others), and his comments on *Guernica* bear similarities to Raphael's. Raphael had prophesied that the future of art in the twentieth century would depend on a reconciliation of Courbet's materialism with Cézanne's dialectics. Berger found this reconciliation in Cubism, which he called logically though bizarrely 'the only example of dialectical materialism in painting'.³⁴ It is doubtful whether Raphael would have agreed with him.

Among the British art-historical New Left, John Tagg was the most important scholar of Raphael.³⁵ References to his various contributions to the study of Raphael can be found in the notes to this chapter. In the last of these, the article 'The Method of Max Raphael: Art History Set Back on its Feet', published in *Block* in 1980, he draws extensively on *Workers, Art and Artist*, published for the first time in Germany five years previously, which I discovered too late for my own contribution. Tagg takes us through Raphael's method and theory of value, and acquaints us with two further picture analyses by Raphael – those of Le Nain's *Peasant Family* and Poussin's *Apollo and Daphne*, the former exemplifying a 'materialist' painting, the latter a 'dialectical' one. He notes the mystical element in both Raphael and Benjamin without pursuing the topic. Though scarcely critical of Raphael, Tagg appends to the *Block* article an ominous quotation from Pierre Macherey, the Althusserian critic, attacking the idea of an organic work of art. Soon Tagg himself would be wholeheartedly embracing

Althusser's anti-humanist Marxism, which opposed everything that Raphael stood for.

There is a political motivation in the essays of Berger and Tagg that belongs to their two decades and that was lacking in the 1980s, when cultural studies had become part of the university establishment. The Althusserian epidemic had by then died down, but its legacy continued in the various academic pursuits of 'cultural materialism', 'post-structuralism' and 'deconstruction'. In a theoretical world where the 'subject' has been banished there is no room for aesthetics (or ethics). Michèle Barrett was perhaps the first to put the discipline back on the agenda in her 1987 article 'Max Raphael and the Question of Aesthetics'. Decrying the exclusive concern with the production of meaning in cultural studies, she finds Raphael useful insofar as he 'tried to explore the connections between meaning and the senses, and between meaning and aesthetic form'.³⁶ On the other hand, she feels that he fetishises the work of art, ignoring the social dimensions of reception and value, and she detects an 'unresolved conflict in his theoretical framework between an emphasis on artistic *production* (in the spirit of Walter Benjamin) and a profoundly Lukácsian subsumption of art to the category of ideology'.³⁷ This is a misreading of Lukács, but the criticism is acute. Both Raphael and Lukács stand for an organic theory of art. For this reason Barrett rejects Raphael's interpretation of *Guernica*, suggesting that the painting 'is treated more effectively through ambiguous and allegorical means than it ever could have been in a realist mode'.³⁸ But she overlooks the mystical element in Raphael, which is an important source of his aesthetic theory and is quite absent from Lukács.

Nevertheless, she opened up a potentially fruitful debate about Raphael and aesthetics. In the meantime, post-structuralism passed into postmodernism where Raphael could obviously find no place. Any discussion of aesthetics had to go against the grain, at least from a Marxist or left-wing point of view. Even Terry Eagleton's groundbreaking *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990) made little difference to the general current. And, from a Marxist point of view, it fell short of those connections in Raphael's work between meaning and the senses, meaning and form that appealed to Barrett. Eagleton polarises the aesthetic into ideology on the one hand and a philosophy of the body on the other. He does not mention Raphael. Nor was there any reference to him at an international conference held in London in 2002 on *Marxism and the Visual Arts Now*, where classical Marxism got short shrift, apart from a paper from the erstwhile Althusserian, Nicos Hadjinicolaou, and where Adorno ruled the day.

Hölderlin wrote after the failure of the French Revolution: 'Wozu Dichter in durftiger Zeit?' ('Wherefore poets in bleak times?') We may ask the same question of classical Marxism, certainly of its art history. The popularisation of Raphael may help us answer it, for he was both a poet and a Marxist.

6

Walter Benjamin's Essay on Eduard Fuchs: An Art-Historical Perspective

Frederic J. Schwartz

I

The essay 'Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian' of 1937 remains to this day one of the least discussed of the works of Walter Benjamin.¹ And it is hard to see why: the essay is ambitious in scope, was prominently published during Benjamin's lifetime (in the exiled Frankfurt School's *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*) and has long been available in English translation.² It qualifies, in fact, as a canonical text of a canonical philosopher, yet the bibliography of critical discussion on it remains thin.

Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that it is, at first, very difficult indeed to determine exactly what the essay is about. Despite the clarity of the title, the most impressive parts of the essay are not devoted to a figure the editors of the *Essential Frankfurt School Reader* called (certainly unfairly) 'a relatively insignificant Social Democratic intellectual'.³ In any case, despite the attention he receives at the hands of Benjamin, Fuchs remains relatively unstudied by historians of art, the press, Marxism, or any of the various fields that might have reason to attend to this (in fact) significant publicist, politician, confidante of Franz Mehring, collector and historian of art, manners and caricature.⁴ The Fuchs essay might seem to be more about the type of the collector, a topic which fascinated Benjamin and to which he devoted an entire convolute of his Arcades Project.⁵ But in the end, he seems not to have found Fuchs representative of the type he considered so indicative of modernity, and a reader learns little in this essay about Benjamin's complex sense of the relations between the collector and a world whose texture is determined by the presence of consumer commodities and whose politics is determined by their production under high capitalism. Most helpful, perhaps, is to look at the Fuchs essay as one of Benjamin's few sustained meditations on the history of art and its methods.⁶ To do so is to ignore large portions of the text, in particular one of Benjamin's only explicit reckonings with the history of institutional Marxism, but it is the path I shall follow here. For despite art historians' considerable interest in Benjamin's own interest in their field, the Fuchs essay remains the most forceful account of what he saw as the shape and possibilities of a materialist and dialectical history of art.

II

A reader of Benjamin's correspondence would be inclined to relate the strangely opaque and seemingly indeterminate nature of the essay to the author's own ambivalence with regard to it and its subject. Benjamin did not choose the topic himself: the piece was commissioned by Max Horkheimer, director of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, which, after fleeing Germany and briefly regrouping in Switzerland, had found a home in New York, affiliated with Columbia University. Horkheimer's own acquaintance with Fuchs (1870–1940) may have been behind his decision to commission an article about the elder socialist and author of books on satire, fashion, the illustration of manners, Chinese art, the work of Daumier and, most notoriously, erotic art. The fact that Benjamin and Fuchs shared the fate of a lonely Parisian exile might have been another reason. Yet Benjamin never warmed to the topic. 'The more intensely I engage with the work,' he wrote to his friend Alfred Cohn, 'and I'm not referring to his things on the "history of manners", the more wretched it seems.'⁷ A year and a half later, Benjamin had still 'neither in his writings nor in his person found any redeeming feature.'⁸ To Gershom Scholem, he wrote in 1935 of 'two years of adroit and ingenious stalling',⁹ but a few months later that 'no god can save me now from the study of Fuchs'.¹⁰ But the gods granted yet another reprieve: in May of 1936 Benjamin reported to Scholem that he had 'managed to obtain certain liberties' in connection with the essay (which he had still not commenced).¹¹ And in the end, he was not entirely displeased with the result. 'The finished text does not entirely have the character of penitence,' Benjamin wrote, again to Scholem. 'On the contrary, its first quarter contains a number of important reflections on dialectical materialism.'¹² It is this first quarter of the essay that contains Benjamin's discussions of the nature and possibility of cultural history and art history, and to which we must attend.

III

Benjamin's interest in the history of art is well known. His focus on the writings of Alois Riegl, especially his *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), seems to have been one of the most constant aspects of his intellectual development since he first read the work around 1916.¹³ Riegl's anti-classicism and relativism were crucial to Benjamin's argument in *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, and the art historian's attention to changes in the mode and organisation of perception over history is cited by Benjamin as a model in 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility' (hereafter referred to as the Artwork essay).¹⁴ But the art historian's example was most important for Benjamin for the way it focused attention on the unique object, on the work of art in its singularity. It was Riegl whom

Benjamin cited when he wrote of his goal of ‘an analysis of the work of art which recognises in it an integral expression... of the religious, metaphysical, political and economic tendencies of the epoch’;¹⁵ this was an art historian who ‘penetrates so far into the historical conditions that he is able to trace the curve of their heartbeat as the line of their forms’.¹⁶

Now this close attention to the singular work – some of Riegl’s later followers called it ‘structural analysis’¹⁷ – is certainly one lesson that can be gained from a study of Riegl’s work, but it is worth pointing out how selective an approach this is to that work. Benjamin ignores some of the more problematic aspects of Riegl’s form of art history – his Hegelian historicism, one that saw a grand evolution from a ‘haptic’ to an ‘optic’ mode of seeing in the history of western art, and his synthesising approach to the characterisation of entire periods of art would certainly have been off-putting, not to say offensive.¹⁸ But out of Riegl’s remarkable formal analyses, Benjamin developed his notion of the work of art as ‘monad’, which ‘with its past and subsequent history, brings – concealed in its own form – an indistinct abbreviation of the rest of the world of ideas’.¹⁹ And for Benjamin, Riegl’s extraordinary ability to grasp the central principles of individual works of art and to relate them, in their uniqueness, to a historical period is a challenge that must be met by any history of art or culture.

And it is this challenge that the other great art historian of the time, Heinrich Wölfflin, failed in Benjamin’s eyes to meet. His first reaction to Wölfflin – he is referring to the book *Classic Art* (1899) – was positive: ‘For me, Wölfflin’s book is one of the most useful I have ever read about concrete art.’²⁰ But Benjamin soon saw that Wölfflin’s project was radically incompatible with his own sense of the work of art. Wölfflin’s methodological work centred upon the isolation of the purely visual aspect of the artwork, and this formalism allowed him to do two things. First, he developed a set of categories, formal elements meant to represent the extremes within which all aspects of representation would fall. These were Wölfflin’s famous ‘principles of art history’: in terms of formal definition, linear vs. painterly; in terms of spatial organisation, plane vs. recession, etc.²¹ And he used these principles to define the common representational denominator of the works of entire periods (his test case was the distinction between classic and baroque) and thus to draw conclusions about the diachronic development of form. Benjamin’s judgement was harsh and typically extreme: in 1915, after attending one of Wölfflin’s lectures in Munich, he wrote to a friend:

I did not recognize right away what Wölfflin was up to. Now it is clear to me that what we have here is the most disastrous activity I have ever encountered in a German university. A by no means overwhelmingly gifted man, who, by nature, has no more of a feel for art than anyone else... has a theory which fails to grasp what is essential but which, in itself, is perhaps better than complete thoughtlessness. In fact, this theory might even lead somewhere were it not for... the inability of Wölfflin’s capacities to do justice to

their object... [H]e has the effect of attracting an audience that clearly has no idea what is going on: they are getting an understanding of art which is on the same level and of the same purity as their 'normal' understanding of culture... Wölfflin himself... completely lacks that awe before the work of art that even the most primitive man can somehow summon forth.²²

For Benjamin, the use of categories to define the common elements of works ignored what was unique about each one, focusing attention not on works themselves but on the abstraction of a 'style'. And he would have recognised the principles for what they were: a neo-Kantian attempt to define a priori categories of representation for the analysis of all works of art. Benjamin wanted no truck with the prevailing neo-Kantianism of the university *Geisteswissenschaften* of his time, a tendency that entered the history of art through Wölfflin and, later, Erwin Panofsky.²³

Benjamin's engagement with the academic history of art was a serious and long-term one. If his interest in the Warburg school and attempts to engage in a dialogue with Panofsky were, perhaps, tactical,²⁴ his interest in the developments of the new Vienna School around Hans Sedlmayr and Otto Pächt was sincere and productive (he reviewed the first issue of their *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, a text that represents his only purely art-historical intervention).²⁵ But none of this reveals something art historians interested in Benjamin rarely address: his fundamental ambivalence toward the discipline, a deep doubt about its possibilities that paradoxically served as the energy behind his constant re-engagement with it.

Benjamin's doubt is expressed most clearly in a letter to Florens Christian Rang, written in 1923 and thus at the time when he was grappling most closely with the art-historical work of Riegl, Warburg, Panofsky and Wilhelm Hausenstein in the context of his work on his *Habilitation* on the German mourning play. 'What has been preoccupying me,' he wrote,

is the question of the relationship of works of art to historical life. In this regard, it is a foregone conclusion for me that there is no such thing as art history... In terms of its essence, [the work of art] is ahistorical. The attempt to place the work of art in the context of historical life does not open up perspectives that lead us to its innermost core... The research of contemporary art history always amounts merely to a history of the subject matter or a history of form, for which the works of art provide only examples, and, as it were, models; there is no question of there being a history of the work of art as such... In this respect, works of art are similar to philosophical systems, in that the so-called history of philosophy is either an uninteresting history of dogmas or even philosophers, or the history of problems. As such, there is always the threat that it will lose touch with its temporal extension and turn into timeless, intense – *interpretation*. It is true as well that the specific historicity of works of art is the kind that can be revealed not in 'art history' but only in interpretation. For in interpretation, relationships among works of art appear that are timeless yet not without historical relevance.²⁶

Benjamin is profoundly sceptical that any study of works of art that takes its problematic to be fundamentally a historical one could ever yield any valid sort of knowledge about history *or* about the work of art. What for Benjamin constitutes the essence of the artwork is not what connects it in any obvious way to its historical period or other works of art. These connections are accidental, the stuff of chronological lists of artworks or artists, correlations of subject matter, or bland classifications of formal similarity. In fact, he sees the creative moment of a work of art not in its seamless connection to its time but its eruptive disturbance of the continuity of history, describing, in his *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, the true 'origin' (as opposed to the 'genesis') of the work of art as 'an eddy in the stream of becoming'.²⁷ He also rejects the situating of works in historical life by such abstractions as *Weltanschauungen*. Indeed, he would have had in mind Karl Mannheim's critical thoughts on the issue published in the *Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* that year, which Benjamin read immediately.²⁸

Yet for all his scepticism about the very possibility of a history of art, Benjamin did not give up. And ultimately, he came to the conclusion that a history of art was still both possible and meaningful. He pursued this goal along two separate lines that ultimately converged. One was what I have called a 'physiognomy of art' that had its final issue in the Artwork essay of 1935–38.²⁹ The other is what Benjamin himself called a 'dialectical' or 'historical materialist' approach to works of culture that he outlined in the Fuchs essay. There he sketches out the possibility of a form of knowledge that attends to both the 'monadological' nature of the work of art and the relationships between works that he called, in the letter to Rang, 'timeless yet not without historical relevance'. And Benjamin would not have been able to develop his vision of a materialist history of art without a thorough understanding of the deep epistemological problems that were being addressed at the time in academic art history, problems to which I shall now turn.

IV

As codified around the turn of the twentieth century in German and central European universities, the academic history of art represented a tense and ultimately unstable constellation of idealism, historicism and formalism in the study of human cultures. The fundamental *idealism* of the history of art is the legacy of its origins in, and consistent closeness to, German philosophical aesthetics.³⁰ The premise of the study of art has thus always been that the work represents not only a physical artefact and a representation of a world, but more fundamentally the activity of the human mind. Whether normative in essence (Kant's aesthetic judgment, with its subjective origins but claims to universality) or relativist (Herder's emphasis on the individuality of cultures and the incommensurability of their works),

the assumption that artistic form represents matter (words, paint, marble) in dialogue with the highest faculties of the human mind remained a *sine qua non* of art-historical discourse through (and after) Benjamin's day. (Even sophisticated theories, such as Gottfried Semper's, that balanced semantics with an emphasis on technology and function were rejected at the time as materialist.) The *historicism* of the discipline is of a piece with the changes in the human sciences in the wake of Hegel's pervasive influence at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For reactions against Hegelianism, in and beyond the history of art, concern that aspect of his thought that we should probably not call historicism but, following Mannheim and Heinz-Dieter Kittsteiner, 'philosophy of history'.³¹ The impact of Hegel on the human sciences was not so much his grand vision of a collective spirit or mind that works, through history, to overcome its alienation from the world of matter and toward self-knowledge.³² Instead, it was the way this vision of history was part of a philosophical base for the study of culture that made a claim considerably less bold and more intuitive: that the products of mind broadly and faithfully reflect the state of spirit at the time of their creation. It is this postulate of a fundamental unity of the experiences and manifestations of life that was the unquestioned core of the human sciences at the turn of the twentieth century.

This comfortable or intuitive historicism that tied art to historical epoch and made the one interpretable in terms of the other is a combination that informs almost all histories of art since the mid nineteenth century, even in the hands of those who (like Jacob Burckhardt) proclaimed their own reactions against Hegelianism. Though many continued to pursue the goal of a history of art that represented a logical, rational process that can be understood as a whole, this was not central to the discipline. What was were the two possibilities opened up by the combination of idealism and historicism: a diachronic approach that could trace the development of forms as meaningful, as reflecting, more or less transparently, changes in culture and thought; and a synchronic approach underwritten by the postulate that all objects reveal a shared state of mind that would allow this mind to be seen equally in all products of a single cultural epoch or people.

Yet such a comfortable idealist historicism was hardly a solid base for the history of art as a discipline that could define its object and defend its borders intellectually and institutionally. The object of study, for one, remained unclear: was it the artist? The physical work of art? Or the spirit it conveyed? And the very necessity of a history of art remained equally unclear. If the same cultural content is expressed in all manifestations of a people, what then is the justification of a separate field of art history? For Hegel, art was subordinate to the larger history of spirit; it was not a phenomenon in itself, but an epiphenomenon of a larger history of mind.

These are the problems faced with the rise of a 'cultural history' that the decisive works of Riegl and Wölfflin sought to address. In his *Renaissance*

and *Baroque* of 1888, Wölfflin neatly characterises the tautological form of knowledge generated by this common, debased form of cultural history. The approaches to art as ‘an expression of the age’, he writes, produce

a good deal that is ridiculous, summarising long periods of time under concepts of a very general kind which in turn are made to account for the conditions of public and private, intellectual and spiritual life. They present us with a pale image of the whole, and leave us at a loss to find the threads that are supposed to join these general facts to the style in question.³³

Such a method, he writes in *Classic Art*, ‘takes us only so far – as far, one might say, as the point at which art begins’.³⁴

Wölfflin and Riegl solved the problem by an isolation of the art historian’s gaze to the irreducibly visual aspect of the work of art – by formalism, in other words. And their formalism must at some level be seen as a philosophical gambit. For to defend the autonomy of the discipline, both were forced to make the implicit claim that visual form had its own, autonomous history, one separate from other manifestations of the spirit and one that is in itself fully adequate for the analysis of the work of art. Thus Riegl’s polemical rejection of iconography as a ‘secondary field’; thus his constant repetition of the true object of the art historian’s study as ‘outline and colour on the plane or in space’.³⁵ But this gambit became the most unstable aspect of the discipline to which they bequeathed it. Consider Riegl’s postulate of the form of late Roman art ‘offering us a faithful image of the disturbed spiritual conditions of the time’, for it leads to some very strange conceptual acrobatics.³⁶ In a tour de force of historical analysis, Riegl defines the late Roman style and goes on to offer erudite parallels from other areas of culture, only to back off and state that ‘to conflate phenomena from two different fields would not be scholarly and is thus not permissible’.³⁷ Why ‘unscholarly’? Riegl has backed himself into a corner: he says that only poetic spirit or *Wollen* can be understood by looking at poetry, and that art has its own, separate cause, at the same time as he has to assume that parallel phenomena are caused by a common spirit. And in trying to define the area of competence of the new discipline, he creates a fundamental problem: he cannot explain whether changes in form are the result of extra-artistic factors or whether they have their own laws; whether the history of art has an internal, immanent history, or is part of a larger evolution.

Wölfflin fared no better in his recourse to formalism as a basis for an autonomous history of vision and representation. He had a stronger starting point: his engagement with the work of Konrad Fiedler and Adolf von Hildebrand led him to a neo-Kantian sense of the visual as a separate way of knowing the world, with its own categories, a form of knowledge and not merely an epiphenomenon of it; but he too failed to answer what he realised was the fundamental question of a history of art: whether changes

in style were the result of artistic developments alone, or the result of extra-artistic causes.³⁸

These were the internal contradictions that vexed ambitious thinkers about art and history of Benjamin's generation. Panofsky sought to address them from a neo-Kantian position, seeing visual form as Cassirean 'symbolic form': he thus broke down the distinction between form and subject matter, tinkering, in other words, with art history's formalism.³⁹ Hans Sedlmayr and Otto Pächt deployed gestalt psychology and theories of physiognomic expression to explain the way forms produced meaning: by recourse to the natural sciences, they tinkered, very tentatively, with art history's idealism.⁴⁰ Benjamin's Fuchs essay shows him to be vexed by the very same set of problems created by the previous generation of art historians and their uneasily constituted discipline. His solution, however, was far bolder. He attacked the history of art where it seemed to be on the firmest ground: its common-sense historicism that seeks to understand an object in the context of its creation, to interpret a work in terms of the conditions obtaining at the time of its creation. This historicism was always, and still remains, a cornerstone of art history, even in its post-1968 form as a social history of art. And thus, Benjamin's attack is a challenge that still reverberates today.

V

But we are jumping the gun here. It has been necessary to trace out the intellectual framework of the art-historical project in such detail in order to understand the strategy of Benjamin's attack on the field in the Fuchs essay. For Benjamin takes on all three of the philosophical pillars of the academic history of art and subjects them to critique, but in a most surprising way.

He starts with a passage from a letter sent by Friedrich Engels to Franz Mehring in 1893. Mehring was the Marxist most closely concerned with the history of literature and culture in the period of the Second International; and this letter from the elder master to the Social Democratic Party's spokesman on cultural matters is therefore important. Benjamin quotes Engels:

It is above all this semblance of an independent history of state constitutions, of legal systems, and of ideological conceptions in each specialized field of study which deceives most people. If Luther and Calvin 'overcome' the official Catholic religion, if Hegel 'overcomes' Fichte and Kant, and if Rousseau indirectly 'overcomes' the constitutional work of Montesquieu with the *Contrat social*, this is a process which remains within theology, philosophy and political science. This process represents a stage in the history of these disciplines, and in no way goes outside the disciplines themselves.⁴¹

Benjamin sees here a critique of many aspects of the histories of culture as they existed in the *Geisteswissenschaften* at the end of the nineteenth century: the broad sweep of history that sees (in art) one style as succeeding another,

a logical and necessary move from Gothic to Renaissance, then to Baroque and Neo-Classicism, and that at best homogenises the works of history into mere examples of the abstraction of style, and at worst implies a philosophy of history taken as a process of continual progress. And Benjamin criticises Fuchs himself for falling into this trap: in Fuchs's work, 'the course of the history of art history appears "necessary," the characteristics of style appear "organic," and even the most peculiar art forms appear "logical".'⁴² The stakes here for Benjamin are high, as he relates this to the evolutionary thinking that took the form, in Second International Marxist thought, of a blind belief in progress, the conviction that the working classes' accession to power was inevitable and would occur 'automatically'.⁴³ For Benjamin and others, this view was politically laming, leading naturally to revisionism and the abandonment of active politics; moreover, it represented a mirror image of the bourgeois ideology that equated the natural sciences and technology with progress per se (and the critique of Marxist notions of progress would find its most powerful expression, of course, in the 'Theses on the Philosophy of History').

The second point Benjamin draws from Engels's comments concerns the idealism of cultural history in all its forms, its tendency to represent its objects 'as completely detached from their effect on human beings and their spiritual as well as economic processes of production'.⁴⁴ 'Cultural history,' he writes later in the essay,

presents its contents by throwing them into relief, setting them off. Yet for the historical materialist, this relief is illusory and is conjured up by false consciousness... The products of art and science owe their existence not merely to the effort of the great geniuses who created them, but also, in one degree or another, to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries.⁴⁵

The final point Benjamin finds in Engels's letter concerns the inevitable formalism of specific disciplines in the wake of Hegel. Engels

places the closed unity of the disciplines and their products in question. So far as art is concerned, this thought challenges the unity of art itself, as well as that of those works which purportedly come under the rubric of art.⁴⁶

Fuchs himself had already attacked Wölfflin on this count. Benjamin writes:

Fuchs had to come to grips with formalism. Wölfflin's doctrine was gaining acceptance at the same time that Fuchs was laying the foundations of his own work. In *Das individuelle Problem*, Fuchs elaborates on a thesis from Wölfflin's *Die klassische Kunst*. The thesis runs as follows: 'Quattrocento and Cinquecento as stylistic concepts cannot be characterized simply in terms of subject matter. The phenomenon... indicates a development of artistic

vision which is essentially independent of any particular attitude of mind or any particular idea of beauty.⁴⁷

Fuchs had replied as follows: 'It is precisely these formal elements that cannot be explained in any other way than by a change in the mood of the times.'⁴⁸ Yet Benjamin finds the materialism that is one (unrealised) potential of Wölfflin's approach to form to be far more interesting than Fuchs's attempt to look beyond the realm of art; the art historian's formulation, he writes, 'also contains useful elements. For it is precisely historical materialism that is interested in tracing the changes in artistic vision ... to more elementary processes – processes set in motion by economic and technological transformations in production.'⁴⁹ Again, Benjamin criticises Fuchs: for looking for larger causes instead of more specific material ones. In abstracting a complex social context into a 'mode of production' that looked suspiciously like a *Zeitgeist* and functioned with every bit as little epistemological efficacy, Fuchs had replaced one form of idealism with another one, albeit one that called itself 'historical materialism'.⁵⁰

Thus far, Benjamin's points seem relatively straightforward as a materialist critique of bourgeois art and cultural history (and of a methodologically unsound version of cultural history from a revolutionary standpoint). Moreover, in his use of Engels's letter, he asserts quite clearly that historical materialism as it existed had the intellectual tools to criticise those aspects of an idealist history of art that seem most objectionable: their idealism and formalism (and any philosophy of history that might also be present). His own contribution, clearly, would lie elsewhere. As I've already indicated, it is in his critique of art history's intuitive contextualising historicism that Benjamin is at his most radical, and here he found all existing approaches from a Marxist position to be utterly undialectical, as useless for knowledge as they were for politics. 'For the dialectical historian concerned with works of art,' writes Benjamin,

these works integrate their fore-history as well as their after-history; and it is by virtue of their after-history that their fore-history is recognizable as involved in a continuous process of change. Works of art teach him how their function outlives their creator and how the artist's intentions are left behind. They demonstrate how the reception of a work by its contemporaries is part of the effect that the work of art has on us today. They further show that this effect depends on an encounter not just with the work of art alone but with the history which has allowed the work to come down to our own age.⁵¹

In the wake of reception theory and a sort of hermeneutics that has become commonplace in art historiography – one thinks of Gadamer's work on 'horizons of experience' and the constitutive workings of a tradition – Benjamin's point might seem fairly pedestrian. But hermeneutics' notion of changing distance as constitutive of interpretation still tends to posit

a historical truth in the past toward which the historian might reach. Precisely this notion of interpretation in Fuchs's work, however, is criticised as inadequate:

In his thinking, an old dogmatic and naïve idea of reception exists alongside the new and critical one. The first could be summarized as follows: what determines our reception of a work must have been its reception by its contemporaries... Next to this, however, we immediately find the dialectical insight which opens the widest horizons in the meaning of a history of reception.⁵²

The 'widest of horizons': for Benjamin, this could stretch across the whole of human history. And this can be achieved by a dialectical move. It is a truism that all interpretation of the past occurs from the context of the present, its concerns and its possibilities of knowledge; Riegl himself admitted as much when he acknowledged that the meaning and coherence of late Roman art could only appear to a generation of art historians attuned to Impressionism, that a *Kunstwollen* (will-to-art) of the past could only reveal itself to a *Kunstbegehren* (desire-for-art) of the present.⁵³ But in a shift whose Nietzschean logic of perspectivalism is evident, Benjamin proposes turning this limitation, this embarrassment, this source of error, this ghost in the machine of historicism into the necessary condition of adequate knowledge – both of history *and* of the work of art.

The knowledge of the historicist, Benjamin writes, the ideal of which is Leopold von Ranke's 'how it really was',⁵⁴ is an inadequate form of knowledge. His argument here draws on Georg Lukács's argument in his 1922 essay 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat'. In several passages of the Fuchs essay, Benjamin refers to the garden-variety notion of culture as fetishised, 'reified' or thing-like (*dinghaft*), echoing Lukács's argument that under capitalism, the logic of commodity fetishism – Marx described this as seeing commodities as having intrinsic qualities and values as opposed to being the result of social relations and having a value that in fact represents social labour – not only leads to a faulty understanding of objects on the market but instead becomes the model for all forms of knowledge and action under capitalism, bringing about the 'subjugation of men's consciousness to the forms in which this reification finds expression'.⁵⁵ Benjamin's argument relies most heavily not on the first section of the well-known essay, which deals mostly with the natural sciences and the creation of a 'second nature' in society, but on the second section, about the 'antinomies of bourgeois thought', where Lukács traces how the phenomenon of reification invades western philosophy and recasts it according to the logic of the commodity.

Lukács points to bourgeois thought's acceptance of facticity as a priori, an acceptance of the empirical as non-deducible, the treatment of the subject-object duality not as a challenge but as an aporia.⁵⁶ The result

is a philosophy that is passive and trapped in theory, rendering thought merely 'contemplative'.⁵⁷ Precisely this is Benjamin's criticism of historicism: 'every dialectical presentation of history is paid for by a renunciation of the contemplativeness which characterizes historicism'.⁵⁸ The words 'passive' and 'contemplative' are used throughout the essay to describe the historical attitude against which he sees a Marxist history of culture and art as having to fight. (Not coincidentally, it is the 'contemplative' approach that Benjamin describes as characteristic of the auratic work of art in the *Artwork essay*.) For Benjamin, to perceive the meaning of a work of art as residing in the past, to approach it with a form of scholarship that accumulates or uncovers unchanging facts about it, is to fall into the trap of a contemplative attitude to history.

Indeed, he argues, the historical event or work of art is not somewhere else, in a remote time that is over, dead and buried; and scholarship should never be post-mortem. For the past is not finished, and thus the meaning of things made at a remote point in history is not fixed. Both are available for the present. Benjamin accepted no philosophy of history as presented to him by bourgeois or traditional Marxist scholars, but he was able to discern behind historicism's linear and unidirectional sense of historical time, one that relegated the past steadily and increasingly remote from the present, a philosophy of history in its own right, moreover a reified one based on the natural sciences and one that rendered the historian passive.⁵⁹ Indeed, it rendered history *dead*: in his letter to Rang of 1923, Benjamin drew attention to the spurious logic that treated the artwork in the past according to the same criteria of human life:

The concatenation of temporal occurrences... does not imply only things that are causally significant for human life. Rather, without a concatenation such as development, maturity, death, and other similar categories, human life would fundamentally not exist at all. But the situation is completely different as regards the work of art.⁶⁰

To consider a work of art to have exhausted its meaning in the past, and to be fully explicable only in its moment of origin, is a category error.

To wrench the historically remote work of art into the present, to demand of the present that it illuminate the work of the past, represents not only Benjamin's approach to historicism but also his solution to the problem of interpretation of works of art that are, in their essence, ahistorical. As opposed to a dead past, Benjamin proposes his notion of the 'constellation' as the necessary condition for an internal element of the monadological work of art to release itself and become visible to a corresponding time in the present: the researcher

must abandon the calm, contemplative attitude toward his object in order to become conscious of the critical constellation in which precisely this fragment of the past finds

itself with precisely this present.... For it is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intimated in that image.⁶¹

It is the dialectic that sees the historian as acting upon history, releasing meanings in the work of art that represent an engagement with the past that is untouched by reification: 'All more intimate engagement with a work of art must remain a vain endeavour, so long as the work's sober historical content is untouched by dialectical knowledge.'⁶²

VI

Let us stop here and interrupt our account of Benjamin's thought, one that must, necessarily, stress the internal logic of this view of art in history but at the same time inevitably renders any reading of it passive. Indeed it is easy enough to read such an account as, in various inadmissible ways, figurative, in ways that render dialectics simple or self-evident and that naturalise Benjamin's ideas, leading us to contemplate them as in some way congruent with those we have already absorbed untouched. The fact is that Benjamin's ideas cannot be naturalised; they intentionally resist logic and demand departures from business as usual from the very beginning.

For the sparks that seem to animate Benjamin's dialectical notion of the artwork in history are based on the tension set up by two tenets that are utterly counterintuitive, tenets that the contemporary humanities tend not to accept and with which any reader must actively engage before nodding assent. Benjamin's vision of a dialectical history of art that escapes passive contemplation of history is based on notions that have already been alluded to but need to be reconsidered in the light of a critique of historicism that is powerful but undeniably and uncomfortably speculative.

The first tenet concerns the nature of historical time. Benjamin rejects the natural sciences' conception of time as homogeneous and quantifiable, a notion of time that sees any duration to be equivalent to an identical duration at any other point in history. The adequacy of this 'chronological' or 'atomistic' time to historical knowledge was, in the German hermeneutical tradition, often the object of critique; and with the various forms of vitalism and *Lebensphilosophie* around the turn of the century, coupled with the so-called 'crisis of historicism' in the 1920s, the topic had a particular urgency. It was also part and parcel of a reaction against the prevailing neo-Kantianism in German universities at the time.⁶³

It is easy enough to criticise a notion of atomistic time, but that raises the question of what model of temporality to substitute for it. Answers were legion: for Heidegger, time was not, properly speaking, historical, but rather a 'historicity' constitutive of *Dasein*. Or one could try to grasp an 'inner time' of experience, a lived time with rhythms and durations that are different from

those of the clock. The historical time of Second International Marxism as well as bourgeois liberalism was one that moved towards a historical *telos* in a manner characterised as 'progress'. Other models were available too: that of paradise and fall, or a secular version of golden age and decline; that of the sudden emergence of a Messiah; a cyclical sense of history, or a nihilistic one of self-contained and intransitive eras. Benjamin's answer was a politicised Messianism: he saw historical time as essentially empty time; it simply registers varying kinds of domination and leads, if anywhere, toward an accumulation of disasters and manifestations of barbarism.⁶⁴ It is, however, shot through with sparks or flashes of redemption, though this redemption would not be a gift or emerge from a deity beyond the control of humankind; instead, these flashes need to be grasped, and grasping them would mean turning them into revolution that could stop the progression of empty time and fulfil its potential for a state that could be called social justice or human happiness. These flashes of redemption are what a work of art can reveal from a contemporary standpoint, or what a contemporary standpoint can liberate from a work of art from a remote era. In this vision, past and present can not only be juxtaposed but brought together, allowing the past to be continued at a particular moment and the intervening time suspended: it is a vision of historical time as radically discontinuous, punctual, and coalescing around 'moments of danger' in which the past can become 'citable in all its moments', moments of human historical and political agency. And to reconcile this vision of history with that of contemporary hermeneutics, however sophisticated, is the challenge that lurks unanswered below the surface of much cultural history inspired by Benjamin, though it is yet to be undertaken.

The second tenet is the monadological conception of the work of art that Benjamin shared with Adorno, but which is also very distant from current approaches to images. Benjamin's view of the work as monad is one that draws a distinction between artworks and images or representations in a way that contemporary practitioners of both art history and visual culture resist. It is one that sees the image not as actively involved in social life, or at least not as interesting in this capacity. Its instrumental or stylistic connections to its historical moment are irrelevant or accidental; instead Benjamin postulates that the forces of an historical moment are concentrated within the work by purely artistic means. The work of art is thus hermetically sealed from history in a way that allows it to occupy the temporal vacuum of Benjamin's philosophy of history, at the same time as this seal allows the social forces that obtain at the time of the work's creation to be potentiated within it. The artwork as monad, in other words, is not a heuristic device or a methodological figure, but an ontology of the work of art that does not provide an easy answer to art history's occasional and problematic formalism, but raises it instead to a new exponential level.⁶⁵

So the work of art is closed. It cannot be understood in its windowless totality merely by an accumulation of knowledge about its circumstances of creation or by comparison with other objects of its time with which it will, inevitably, have superficial similarities. Those are matters of the surface, historical accident; real access cannot be achieved by stylistic analysis but only by more cunning means. And these means are predicated on not accepting works of art as finished or exhausted in their effect and available only as reified objects of knowledge or possession, but as having a vast reservoir of potency across historical time: 'Historical materialism sees the work of the past as still uncompleted.'⁶⁶ It studies an 'object not out of a tangle of mere facticities but out of the numbered group of threads representing the weft of the past fed into the warp of the present'.⁶⁷

How then does the historian achieve this sort of dialectical knowledge, sidestepping historicism's 'eternal image of the past' for a proper and unique experience of it?⁶⁸ It is, one could say, a matter of attitude or stance (*Haltung*).⁶⁹ One could call the historicist attitude before the work of art or history 'aestheticist'; Benjamin calls it one of 'appreciation'.⁷⁰ To release the historical object from its 'pure facticity',⁷¹ Benjamin proposes various kinds of swift, active, even violent work,⁷² summoning the 'destructive side of dialectics'. 'The historical materialist blasts [*sprengt*] the epoch out of its reified "historical continuity"', hers is a consciousness of the present 'which explodes [*aufsprengt*] the continuum of history'.⁷³ For the potency held within the work of the past, once released from its thing-like status by the construction of an effective constellation, are enormous: 'The replacement of the epic element by the constructive element proves to be the condition for this experience. The violent forces [*die gewaltigen Kräfte*] bound up in historicism's "Once upon a time" are liberated in this experience.'⁷⁴ This rhetoric of catastrophe and danger is one that connects the Fuchs essay to the later 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', which also concerns the active, indeed desperate role of the historical materialist in history, and also the ballistic imagery of the Artwork essay. In the Fuchs essay too, Benjamin writes of 'the speed of traffic and the ability of machines to duplicate words and writing outstrip[ping] human needs. The energies that technology develops beyond this threshold are destructive.'⁷⁵ Benjamin is writing here about the Social Democrats' 'bungled reception of technology',⁷⁶ but he is also clearly referring to the conditions in which knowledge of history and works of art must renounce its 'contemplative' approach and take the violent energies pent up in the works of the past into its own hands.

VII

In a well-known passage of the Fuchs essay, we read that 'there is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. No cultural history has yet done justice to this fundamental state of affairs.'⁷⁷

As an aperçu, this statement can stand effectively on its own. Its context, however, was quite specific: the endless discussions in Marxist cultural theory about the status of the legacy of classical and bourgeois culture, the discussions about what was called the cultural *Erbe*. Benjamin refers directly to 'the concept of heritage [*Erbe*], which has again become important today';⁷⁸ and indeed, the 1930s and the realignments of the Popular Front saw a new urgency in these discussions, one that is behind Ernst Bloch's *Heritage of Our Time* (1935) and the so-called 'Expressionism Debate'.⁷⁹

The Fuchs essay takes a position in this discussion, but a contradictory one. On the one hand, Benjamin clearly accepts the legacy of the culture of the past; and he does so in a way that accepts it unabashedly as comprised of works of art. He does so ambitiously: instead of simply accepting this legacy untouched for its prestige and legitimating function, he sees it as the fuel of active politics. This is a view that makes a dialectical understanding of art and its history not only potentially useful to revolution but its very spark, its catalyst.

This might seem to be a very flattering, at least affirming, proposition to scholars aware of the politics embedded in the relics of the past and keen to make them function in the present. But there is another side to Benjamin's stance in the Fuchs essay, a position that is not the kind taken in print but instead occupied by the author in practice. And it is one that warns us against a passive imitation of Benjamin's view, the nearly irresistible temptation to follow his tracks through the arcades or in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. For Benjamin shows that the history of art or culture as a practice would not take place within the institutions that had once legitimated it – and that do so once more. The work of a dialectical history of art that Benjamin imagined in his Parisian exile did not take the form of university teaching and writing for refereed journals. He had been cast far from such a life, and was trying to determine how the line, then so thin, between writing and revolution could be crossed. Since the moment of danger in which that sort of practice could be conceived has clearly past, the revolutionary potential of its philosophy of history and view of the artwork can no longer simply be assumed. Benjamin's idea of a proper history of art represents a specific historical conjuncture. It has now retreated, monad-like, and taken that moment, with its tremendous destructive energies, with it.

'There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.' Benjamin continues: 'No cultural history has yet done justice to this fundamental state of affairs.'⁸⁰ At one level, of course, much of the art-historical scholarship of the last decades has done exactly that. Social histories have rewritten art's history 'from below', and various forms of art history and visual culture have considered the imbrication of the image with political power and resistance in some detail. But that does not really seem to be what Benjamin meant. Doing justice to injustice hardly means to contemplate it, catalogue it or describe it. A Benjaminian history of art,

a dialectical approach to the past, would not be limited to scholarship and its institutions. Yet these institutions determine the limits of the history of art today, in a way that they did not in the brief moment of danger in which Benjamin reconsidered the discipline.

7

Meyer Schapiro: Marxism, Science and Art

Andrew Hemingway

Despite the fact that Meyer Schapiro long outlived some of the main figures covered in this collection, unlike them he is known for no great scholarly opus. His doctoral dissertation apart, the two monographs he published in his lifetime were middlebrow picture books on Cézanne and Van Gogh,¹ which, while exemplary within their genre, are not profound works of original scholarship, and suggest more his capacity as an inspirational lecturer than as one of the most exacting art historians of his time. With regard to his reputation in the latter category, Schapiro's reputation rests primarily on a sequence of articles and essays that he published from 1931 onwards, many of which are now available in book form in the five volumes of his *Selected Papers* that have appeared since 1977, and which are probably the principal way in which his work is encountered today. Valuable as these volumes are, they present obstacles to an historical understanding of Schapiro's work in that they are definitely a 'selected' presentation of his output, and they are organised thematically rather than chronologically. Many reviews, articles and papers of considerable interest are omitted, and Schapiro was evidently reluctant to include texts that contained views he no longer saw as representative.²

Among Schapiro's numerous and lengthy letters to the novelist James Farrell from 1938–43, which were mainly written during the Schapiro family's summer sojourns in Vermont, several allude to his difficulties in writing, and also to the pressures of his teaching commitments during the remainder of the year.³ However, these familiar academic complaints are not enough to explain the relatively small scale of Schapiro's characteristic texts, or the laborious editing and polishing some of them went through before they appeared in the *Selected Papers*. More telling is his observation in a review of 1936 that 'anyone who has investigated with real scruple a problem of art history knows how difficult it often is to establish even a simple fact beyond question and how difficult it is to make a rigorous explanation'.⁴ This sense of the challenge of precision in cultural analysis – which is also manifested in the dispassionate and measured terms of his prose – was reinforced by a distrust of large theoretical statements in a field that was not yet sufficiently developed to justify them. When in 1942 Farrell urged him to write a book on aesthetics, Schapiro described such a

project as ‘an unrewarding job’ and something he would at best tackle in his old age; rather, he ventured, ‘I shall write on some problems of aesthetics, perhaps with the help of experiments and concrete analyses of single works of art’.⁵ At the root of these positions lay an epistemological stance and a view of the condition of the Marxist project that it is easiest for me to lay out through a mix of political biography and textual analysis.

Schapiro’s first publication was a retrospective review of Emanuel Loewy’s *Die Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griechischen Kunst* (1900),⁶ which appeared in the magazine *The Arts*, then the foremost modernist organ of the visual arts in the United States, where he rubbed shoulders with the likes of Waldemar George, Leo Stein, Diego Rivera and Stravinsky. Its author was only 21, and had graduated from Columbia University the year before with honours in philosophy and art history, and was starting the research into late antique and early medieval art that would eventually issue in his 1929 doctoral dissertation on the Romanesque sculptures of the French abbey of Moissac.⁷ While he was an undergraduate, Schapiro studied modern art in the galleries on Saturdays and familiarised himself with the writings of formalist critics such as Roger Fry and Willard Huntington Wright.⁸ Correspondingly, his essay starts out by boldly asserting that in rereading Loewy’s book ‘we become aware how much the modern arts have changed our view of the archaic and primitive’, so that the development from archaic to Hellenistic sculpture, which Loewy presented as a secular progress ‘today... seems to us a history of decay’. Loewy’s account was marred by ‘errors of artistic judgment and interpretation’ because ‘he overlooks entirely, in his zeal for a scrupulous record, that the change from arbitrary conceptions, from observed facts, generalized and treated abstractly, to literal representation and mere imitative forms, corresponds to a loss of artistic power’. According to Schapiro, the ‘anatomical discoveries’ of the archaic period seem ‘vigorous and fresh’ because of the way they are integrated with ‘design’, whereas the anatomical refinements of the Hellenistic look ‘academic and pompous’ because the artists’ research was ‘anti-artistic’.

‘Design’ and ‘realism’ (more accurately naturalism) are for Schapiro at this point antithetical qualities, and concern with the latter can only be at the expense of the former. With the growth of ‘realism’, ‘design must decay, because design is imaginative, arbitrary, emotional; it limits nature, it transforms appearances into eccentricities analogous to the human mind’. Thus whereas, except for some details, Loewy found the Hellenistic Farnese Bull (Figure 14) near ‘the highest perfection for a group in the round’, to Schapiro it had the effect of ‘a *tableau vivant*, utterly chaotic, with only the slightest pretense to artistic effect’. Conversely, while for Loewy the fact that the archaic Apollo of Tenea (Figure 15) suggested an artist who ‘started, not from the observation of nature, but from his own consciousness’, for Schapiro this was the source of its value, the back of this work being

a splendid and beautiful example of what a *plastic* coordination is, a unity which proceeds from an imaginative handling, which imposes arbitrary proportions, flattens particular planes, emphasizes specific lines, all for the sake of a sculptural ensemble, as unified and harmonious as a fine façade.⁹

Obviously ‘design’ stands here as something akin to Bell and Fry’s ‘significant form’, but for Schapiro it also entails a kind of apprehension of reality with cognitive potential. Moreover, Schapiro avoids the circularity and vulgar Kantianism of that concept by suggesting that the appeal of design may be grounded in psychological universals. Having observed that the ‘rhythm of music and poetry... are referable to the rhythmical character of life processes – respiration, pulse, peristalsis, growth, etc.’ he continues:

so the appreciation of *visual* order may perhaps spring from the nature of mental imagery, from the mind’s manner of conceiving with ease, directness, power, clarity, and distinction, forms which were presented to its senses in confusion, overlapping, encroachment and complexity. It is not that the mental images are beautiful, just as the monotonous repetition of a heart beat is no aesthetic delight, but that their mutual relations, the order of their succession or dominance, correspond to what we call design, or express themselves as such... Good design is felt as a harmony analogous to the most efficient manner of perception, a means whereby the function is expanded and indulged in, and all values attached to fine seeing, heightened.¹⁰

I have given so much attention to this early text for three reasons. Firstly, because it illustrates so clearly a conception of value grounded in modernist aesthetics, which permeates all of Schapiro’s later writings, whether they concern the medieval or the modern. Indeed, it helps to explain why he took up such an unfashionable research topic as Romanesque sculpture in the first place. Although he would show himself later to be keenly aware of the historical contingency of modernist criteria and the dangers of applying them to the arts of other cultures in a way that turned them into mere ‘analogs of our own’, he would also assert that

the application to older art of the new concepts of structure and expression, which have been developed in modern practice, is a progress intellectually; for besides widening the scope of taste to include many hitherto impenetrable works, they have deepened our understanding of the formal mechanics and expressiveness of art in general and have brought us closer to the artist’s process.¹¹

Secondly, it implies a conception of the aesthetic as rooted in common experience, thus fundamentally democratising it, which was probably owed in the first place to the teachings of John Dewey and Franz Boas, with whom he studied at Columbia.¹² And, thirdly, because it shows an interest in the relations between the aesthetic and broader understandings of psychology and the body that demonstrates his commitment to a kind



Figure 14 *The Punishment of Dirkos by Zethos and Amphion* (the Farnese Bull), fig. 43 in Emanuel Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, 1907. Photograph: Warren Carter

of materialist explanation. This comes out in his later work both in his quite frequent allusions to the connections between the ways in which the body is represented and emotional states, and in his occasional recourse to psychoanalytic concepts of repression and displacement.¹³

Socialism was part of Schapiro's life from his childhood. His father, a secularised Jewish immigrant from Lithuania, read the socialist magazines the *Jewish Daily Forward* and *New York Call* in their Brooklyn home, and Schapiro himself joined the Young People's Socialist League at twelve or

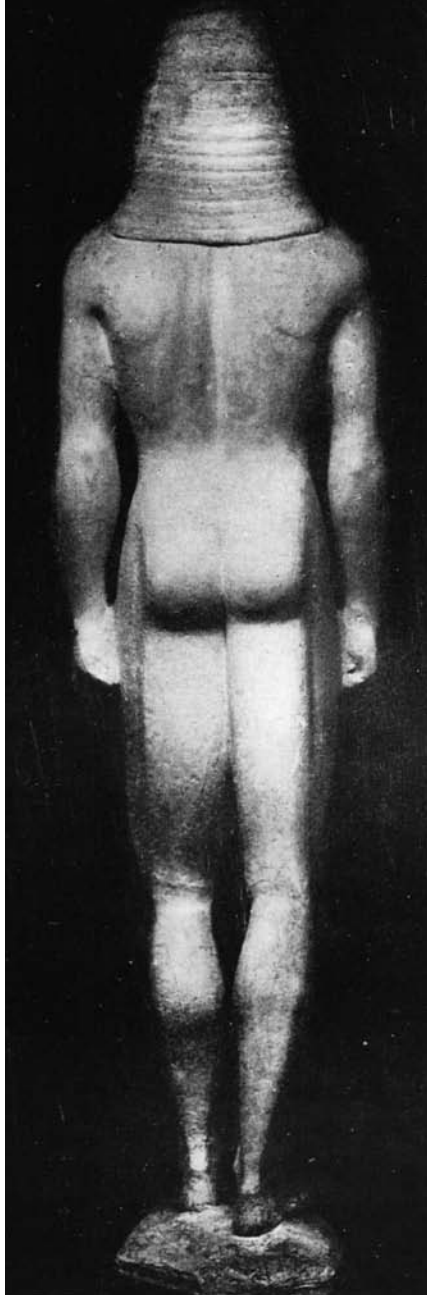


Figure 15 Apollo from Tenea, fig. 27 in Emanuel Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, 1907. Photograph: Warren Carter

thirteen.¹⁴ Years later he would recall being barracked by fellow Columbia students for advancing a socialist position during a freshman class on contemporary civilisation.¹⁵ However, by his own account, Schapiro was not much politically engaged in the 1920s, and he himself seems to have been one of those who was transformed by what he called the ‘the 1930–1933 discovery of Marxism’.¹⁶ The political framework for this ‘discovery’ was provided by the American Communist Party, a seemingly inauspicious setting inasmuch as in the early 1930s the party had just emerged from a decade of destructive factional infighting as a fully Stalinised apparatus that was positively discouraging to critical Marxist thought.¹⁷ But even if the intellectual mediocrity of the American party leaders was unmistakable, the full meaning of Stalin’s perversion of the Bolshevik ideal was not so readily apparent in the early 1930s, when the CPUSA could still attempt to make use of an original Marxist thinker of the stature of Schapiro’s friend Sidney Hook – at least until his differences with the doctrinaire orthodoxies of the Third International became too obtrusive to be overlooked. Three years older than Schapiro, Hook also grew up in Brooklyn, though, as he points out in his autobiography, in tough Williamsburg, rather than in the more middle-class neighbourhoods of Flatbush or Schapiro’s own Brownsville. Both attended the Brooklyn High School for Boys, where they were near contemporaries.¹⁸ Whereas Schapiro’s interests in the second half of the 1920s centred on early medieval art, Hook, who had taken his bachelor’s degree at the far more working-class City College of New York,¹⁹ was studying for a Ph.D. in philosophy at Columbia, writing a dissertation on the metaphysics of pragmatism. Like Schapiro, Hook had become involved with socialism as a teenager, but unlike him he was involved with the communist movement from 1919 or 1920, and when he entered Columbia in 1923 he was ‘an avowed young Marxist’.²⁰ Moreover, in 1928 Hook travelled to Germany on a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship to spend a year studying post-Hegelian philosophy, where he became friends with the independent Marxist Karl Korsch, whom he later helped immigrate to the United States. The following year he visited the USSR to continue his researches at the Marx–Engels Institute in Moscow at the invitation of its director, David Riazanov – later a victim of the purges.²¹

Philip Rahv would tell James Farrell in 1939 that Schapiro knew more about Marxism than anyone he knew, ‘including Sidney Hook’. The choice of comparison is telling, but in the early 1930s it is likely that Hook’s original readings of Marx would have been an important example for him, even allowing for his own philosophical expertise and facility in German.²² In 1928, Hook had published a two-part article on ‘The Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism’ in the *Journal of Philosophy*, which was in part a critical review of Lenin’s *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, in the English translation of which he had played a role.²³ This remarkably learned piece already laid out key premises of Hook’s position in the 1930s in its insistence

that the distinguishing feature of Marxism was not so much its specific socio-historical interpretative claims as its method, and that understanding of Marx's philosophical stance was crucial to the politics of Marxism as revolutionary praxis. 'From the point of view of technical philosophy,' Hook asserted, 'historic justice has not yet been done to Marx and Engels', and the key to their achievement was to be found in their early writings such as *The Holy Family*, the as yet only partially published *German Ideology*, and the 'Theses on Feuerbach.'²⁴ Hook was emphatic that Marxism was not a monism and did not rest on any form of materialist metaphysics. Historical materialism entailed the view that 'human social activity is historically determined by economic development', but this did not mean that Marx and Engels substituted for Hegel's 'idealistic fatalism' a 'materialistic fatalism operating through economic laws'. However, Engels himself, in his later years, had sometimes been a bit shaky on this latter point and had occasionally slipped into a reflection theory of knowledge and the 'fatuity of the correspondence theory of truth'.²⁵ The overall message of Hook's article was that the Marxism of many of Marx's 'self-styled "orthodox disciples"' misrepresented his philosophy, but also that the key to what was valuable in that philosophy lay in its 'striking anticipation of the *instrumentalist theory of knowledge*', so that a truly grounded recovery of Marx's revolutionary principles depended on a historical materialism that took 'its cues from the scientific pragmatism of Dewey'.²⁶

In 'The Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism', Hook had sharply criticised Lenin's position in his only philosophical work, but he had also intimated a contradiction in his assertion that the October Revolution of 1917 'was due in part to Lenin's belief that Marxism must be interpreted as a voluntaristic humanism rather than as the teleological fatalism embraced by Social-Democrats everywhere else'.²⁷ The implications of this were worked out in an article of 1931, in which, under the heading 'der Kampf um Marx', Hook pointed out that there was 'a virtual war among socialists as to the real spirit and meaning of Marx's thought', a war in which there were four main contenders: self-styled orthodoxy, revisionism, syndicalism, and what he called the 'reformation' of Luxemburg and Lenin. Although the 'Leninist-Marxists' continued to 'pledge lip allegiance' to 'theoretical constructions' of Social Democracy that betrayed Marxism, their interpretation came 'nearer than any other to the appreciation of Marxism as a *philosophy of social revolution*'.²⁸ The title of this article was reused as the main title for Hook's 1933 book *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx: A Revolutionary Interpretation*, and it formed the basis of the book's first part. In this, Hook gave a chapter to refuting Sorel's syndicalist 'heresy' – which at least was not guilty of the reformist delusion; but his main target was the 'Siamese twins' of orthodoxy and revisionism: the mechanistic interpretation of Marx's economic doctrines as 'a closed deductive system' that Kautsky had taken over from Engels, and the neo-Kantian conception of Marxism

as an objective science that Bernstein had proffered as the philosophical basis for the reformism of the German Social Democratic Party, the logical outcome of which had been the party's support of German imperialism and the mass slaughter of the European working class in the First World War.²⁹ Orthodox Marxism was 'an emasculation' of Marx's system, and the revisionist notion of the party turned it into 'a benevolent organization with eschatological trimmings'.³⁰ Once again, Hook argued that 'whoever believes that sensations are literal copies of the world, and that of themselves they give knowledge, cannot escape fatalism and mechanism', and thus the true philosophy of Leninism was not to be found in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, but in Lenin's 'practical writings', and quintessentially, of course, in *What is to be done?*³¹ Lenin represented the 'return to Marx'.

Hook's *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* is an important work of Western Marxism, which should take its place in the canon alongside Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* and Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* of a decade earlier, both of which he acknowledged in the book's introduction.³² Despite their common criticisms of some moments in Engels's late writings and their antipathy to neo-Kantianism, for Hook, Lukács's version of the dialectic linked Marx far too closely with German idealist philosophy, and according to him Marx's method was 'naturalistic, historical and empirical throughout'. Indeed, at one point he says flatly: 'Marx was an empiricist' – although we should be clear Hook does not mean by this an adherent of philosophical empiricism and that he is rather stressing the differences between Hegel's deductive dialectic and what he understood as the 'genuinely experimental' character of the Marxist version.³³ None the less, Hook was emphatic that Marx's 'own best weapons were the weapons of dialectical criticism', and that Marxism was a not an 'objective science' in the sense that the natural sciences might claim to be, but a 'class science' – as all social sciences were – in which subjective and objective were fused, because it was conceived to advance the conscious goals of a specific social group.³⁴ As with Lukács, for Hook objective social knowledge and the perspective of the proletariat are not in tension, but actually necessary to each other. Yet for all his endorsement of Leninism, Hook's writings – like Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* – set out a conception of Marxist science that the Third International could not tolerate, and like that work, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* was condemned from within the communist movement – ironically as a 'revisionist' work. But whereas Lukács renounced his greatest achievement to continue working within the movement, Hook turned against it.³⁵

In several ways, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* can help us to understand Schapiro's politics, since I take it as the most sophisticated exposition of the viewpoint that drew young intellectuals radicalised by the depression to the self-styled Leninism of the communist party, not realising – at least to begin with – that the doctrinal ideology of the Third

International could not be refigured as an experimental revolutionary philosophy. Certainly Schapiro was in Hook's circle in the early 1930s, and was active in the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford, a front organisation whose object was to mobilise support amongst the middle class for the communist candidates in the 1932 elections.³⁶ Moreover, Schapiro's correspondence with Hook from the early 1930s suggests their relations were not affected by Hook's break with the party, and that Schapiro's own view of it was highly critical – to the extent that he observed in mid 1933 that the organization would probably benefit from being made illegal.³⁷ However, before saying more on Schapiro's politics, I want to consider the ways in which Hook's work may help us understand his development of a Marxist theory of culture.

According to Hook, 'to be a Marxist means to be a revolutionist', and correspondingly the choice facing contemporary capitalist society is between communism and barbarism.³⁸ But although Hook believed that the Russian Revolution had brought a 'release of creative energy...unparalleled in the history of mankind', given the nature of the dialectic, this did not mean that communism involved a total rupture with the past. Communist culture was not 'merely destructive to the inheritance of the past', rather earlier achievements would be reinterpreted in 'a new cultural synthesis':

The permanent, invariant and universal aspects of human experience, as reflected in art and literature, reappear in a new context so that the significant insights of the past become enriched through the reinterpretation of the present.³⁹

And in arguing against the monist interpretation of Marxism by Kautsky and Plekhanov, Hook gave a quite effective account of the theoretical parameters of the 'relative autonomy of the esthetic experience'.⁴⁰ Changes in cultural and intellectual life did 'arise out of the social processes', but they were mediated through forms and traditions of 'autonomous domains with logical relationships uniquely their own', and the nature of determination 'in the last instance' was ultimately related to the uses of cultural products. Reading Hook's formulations on this point, anyone familiar with the rudiments of Marxism will recognise that they owe a lot to Engels's late letters, from which he quoted liberally, publishing his own translations of four of them in an appendix.⁴¹ My point is not that Schapiro got his Marxist theory from Hook – in early 1932 both were involved in a project to publish a collection of essays on the 'Marxist Study of American Culture' for which Schapiro would have written on the fine arts, and the ideas may have come as much from his side. It is rather that there was a quite sophisticated and scholarly dialogue taking place grounded in a wide knowledge of Marxist writings.⁴²

In explaining the nature of Marx's dialectic, Hook argued that his work could only be understood properly once the 'doctrines he is opposing' were understood.⁴³ The arguments about the relationship between Marx and Hegel that he set out briefly in *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* were

developed at much greater length in his 1936 book, *From Hegel to Marx*, which was intended as the first of a three-part study of the sources of Marx's thought. The larger points that need to be taken from this are that for Hook, Marx's thought had become a historical object and that Marxist method entailed a continuous and unending process of critique. Opening a chapter in the earlier book, tellingly titled 'Problems of Historical Materialism', he observed: 'A proper test of the claims of historical materialism could be made only by applying its propositions to the rich detail of politics, law, religion, philosophy, science and art. This would require not a chapter but an encyclopedia.'⁴⁴

Schapiro too was filled with a Deweyan sense of the provisional and experimental status of the truths of both Marxism and the history of art. In a well-known review of a volume of writings by Vienna School art historians, he observed that in the United States the discipline was for the most part lacking in both empirical and theoretical rigour, adding, significantly, that it was 'notorious' how little it had been affected by 'the progressive work of our psychologists, philosophers and ethnologists'.⁴⁵ Yet while he recommended the work of Pächt, Sedlmayr and others as exemplary in its attention to the interplay between concept formation and empirical analysis, in almost every other regard he was sharply critical. The Vienna School might draw on Gestalt psychology and on logical positivism in some degree, but it was also premised on a characteristically Germanic distinction between what was understood as the 'merely descriptive and classifying' procedures of the natural sciences which governed the collection of 'outward signs and evidences', and a science of interpretation that was the only way to 'penetrate and "understand" totalities like art, spirit, human life and culture'.⁴⁶ Schapiro rejected this distinction as for the most part mystification and harmful to the sciences of nature and culture alike: 'Actually, there is little difference, so far as scientific method is concerned between the best works of the so-called first and second sciences of art. They both depend on relevant hypotheses, precise observation, logical analysis, and various devices of verification.'⁴⁷ Moreover, historians did not deal with absolute wholes, totalities in the Hegelian sense, but rather they addressed 'isolated aspects of the work of art from defined points of view'. The Vienna School's break with earlier methods was less profound than it appeared, since while they might show an advance in their approach to questions of form, like scholars concerned primarily with questions of attribution and historical precedents, they remained preoccupied with 'individual objects' and tended to 'isolate forms from the historical conditions of their development, to propel them by mythical racial-psychological constants, or to give them an independent self-evolving career'. In brief, the School still purveyed a variant of Riegl's concept of *Kunstwollen*, and it had no 'adequate conception of history' to direct its historical interpretations equivalent to the 'scientific rigor' its members demanded in their analyses of forms.⁴⁸

We can get a sense from ‘The New Viennese School’ of what Schapiro thought he was opposing. But obviously it did not seem appropriate in the august pages of the College Art Association’s *Art Bulletin* to lay out the challenge of Marxist art history as a class science.⁴⁹ Two months after the review appeared, he did this in a letter to a former student in which he observed: ‘of course there are more valiant and overt ways of fighting than through books and lectures on art, but the fight against bourgeois society takes place on every front – economic, political and cultural’. Doubtless with writers such as Sedlmayr in mind, he continued:

Bourgeois art study, as a profession, is usually servile, precious, pessimistic, and in its larger views of history, human nature and contemporary life, [generally] thoroughly reactionary. We do not overcome these things by *abandoning* the study of art, but by giving it a Marxist direction.

However, as Schapiro’s assessment of the Vienna School and his current writings illustrated, such a history would not ‘give up the techniques of research into details & fact developed during the last 100 years – on the contrary, it insists upon scientific method throughout’, while rejecting as unscientific ‘the typical methods & theories of interpretation of men like Riegl, Wölfflin & Dvořák’, who were the best of modern art historians to date.⁵⁰

This division of tone and style runs through Schapiro’s published writings of the 1930s and 1940s, distinguishing his articles and reviews for left-wing magazines such as *New Masses*, *Marxist Quarterly* and *Partisan Review* from those for professional art history publications. Writing to Farrell in 1942, he observed of the article ‘Courbet and Popular Imagery’, which had appeared in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* the year before, that ‘the more important relations to political life and classes’ it identified would be missed by most of his colleagues, ‘or seem merely incidental and outside their own province’.⁵¹ Yet the Marxist framework is unmistakably present in the more academic art-historical writings, and partly in the leitmotiv of history as humanity’s self-emancipation that Schapiro took from the early Marx, and which Hook had done so much to publicise in the United States. Hook pointed out more than once that historical materialism was premised first of all on the critique of the religious residue in German idealism, citing the quotation from Aeschylus’s Prometheus in the preface to Marx’s doctoral dissertation: ‘In one word – I hate all the Gods.’ Schapiro embraced fully what Hook called Marx’s ‘animus against religion’,⁵² and in 1942 was so incensed by a conference at Columbia that questioned the value of science as a guide to ethics, that he proposed a counter-statement that would assert that ‘science remains the only reliable way of obtaining the knowledge with which to guide our actions in changing the existing order’, ‘the absolute values taken for granted in the conference have been exploded

long ago', and 'the return to theology is itself a sign of intellectual and moral breakdown, not a recovery'.⁵³ Correspondingly, in his writings of these years on medieval sculptural decorations, Schapiro emphasised both the way the church's secular interests governed its theological programmes, and at the same time the ways in which what he perceived as the secular interests of the laity managed to find expression in marginal figures and themes.⁵⁴ In 1938 he wrote to Farrell with regard to Chartres: 'I do not think of the stories as superstitious when I see them in stone and glass, for they show in their artistic force the power of man to imagine and to shape things even when his scientific understanding is so limited; but it is this power which underlies also the capacity finally to overcome superstition.'⁵⁵

It might seem that Schapiro's commitment to a modernist aesthetic would have come into conflict with the communist movement's essentially instrumentalist view of art and the reductive model of realism that stood as its official aesthetic from 1934 onwards. But this was not a point of tension – to judge from the public record – until after his break with the movement. In 1932 he published a brilliant essay on 'Matisse and Impressionism' in a Columbia magazine, prompted by the artist's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art of the previous year. Matisse was exemplary of the 'radical transformation of art in the last thirty years', and also stood as the artist who was most effective in bringing it about. But, Schapiro went on, Matisse's 'Notes of a Painter' was misleading in presenting his work as simply the antithesis of Impressionist 'formlessness', and in a carefully argued series of formal and iconographic analyses he showed how Matisse's modernism was essentially dependent on the style he denigrated, which stood for both 'really modern' vision and, correspondingly, a view of nature that 'dominates most of the art of the nineteenth century'. 'Even the formal aspects of his abstract manner are inconceivable without Impressionism', Schapiro wrote, so that in his *Nasturtiums and Dance* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Figure 16), for instance, 'a decorative composition is abstracted from the viewpoint of everyday vision', comparable to that of 'so frankly a realistic painter as Degas'; and thus 'in the abstract design of Matisse it betrays the underlying Impressionistic view of objects, however altered by a pattern'. This is an essentially dialectical argument, which anticipates that Schapiro made against the view of each new modernist style as a purely formal reaction against a preceding one in his review of MoMA's Cubism and Abstract Art exhibition of five years later.⁵⁶ As on that later occasion, Schapiro insisted that form was inseparable from other aspects of a work's meaning.⁵⁷ Although Schapiro's enthusiasm for both Impressionism and Matisse is evident, his caution that 'the liberation of individualism' that was 'an intrinsic character of Impressionism...paralleled in other aspects of modern life' was 'not necessarily an advantage in the creation of good art' should also be noted.⁵⁸

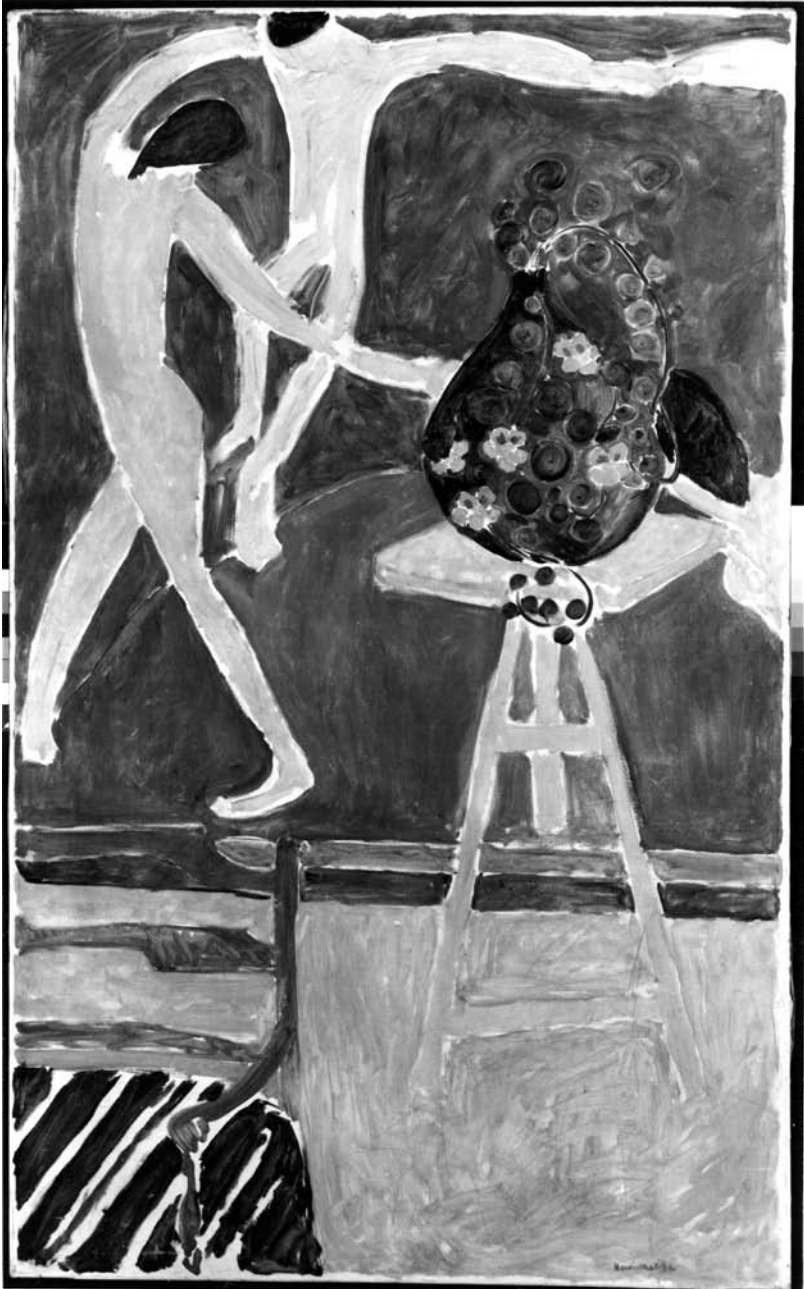


Figure 16 Henri Matisse, *Nasturtiums with the Painting 'Dance'*, oil on canvas, 191.8 × 115.3 cm, 1912. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Scofield Thayer, 1982 (1984.433.16)

© Succession H. Matisse/DACS 2006

For all its covert dependence on the Marxist conception of culture, 'Matisse and Impressionism' stands in apparent contrast to a review of the communist John Reed Club's exhibition 'The Social Viewpoint in Art' from early in the following year. In this, Schapiro took the club roundly to task for its 'confused effort to designate a united artistic front, to rally together all painters who represented factories, workers and farmers, in opposition to painters who represent bananas and prisms', singling out the inclusion of both American Scene paintings by Thomas Hart Benton and a modernist view of Paris by Stuart Davis as symptomatic of the incoherence of its rationale. Schapiro's point was a basic one, namely that the political import of works was not to be found in the objects depicted. Criticising both the club's 'mistaken devotion to mural painting as a "social" form of art' and its inclusion of easel paintings destined primarily for private homes, he suggested that it should rather have aimed for a display of a 'carefully prepared series of pictures, illustrating phases of the daily struggle, and re-enacting in a vivid forceful manner the most important revolutionary situations', and examples of cooperative work by artists such as series of cheap prints, cartoons, posters, banners and signs. In the dispute that followed, one of the exhibition's organisers accused Schapiro of coming close to Trotskyism in assuming that 'proletarian art can exist only in a classless society'.⁵⁹ Schapiro was not a Trotskyist as such, in 1933 or later, but he would certainly have accepted Trotsky's view that social revolution was something that would last 'not months, not years, but decades', and that in the process of 'fierce class struggles' the proletariat would have neither the time nor the resources to make a culture of its own. Even in the USSR, Trotsky had written in 1924, 'there is no revolutionary art as yet', only 'the elements of it', and this art, when it came, would inevitably reflect 'all the contradictions of a revolutionary social system'.⁶⁰ The situation could only be more backward in the United States, where there was not the material base for such an art and where the outlook of the vast majority of the proletariat did not even reach the level of what Lenin called 'trade-union consciousness'. This, it seems to me, is the fundamental premise underlying Schapiro's judgements on the relationship between modern art and revolutionary art in the 1930s, and afterwards. It was not that one was intrinsically good and the other was intrinsically bad, it was rather that the economic and social base fostered a high level of attainment in one and not in the other – hence the title of his most elaborate published statement on the question, delivered at the American Artists' Congress in February 1936, is 'The Social Bases of Art'. In this, he argued:

The social origins of such forms of modern art do not in themselves permit one to judge this art as good or bad; they simply throw light upon some aspects of their character and enable us to see more clearly that the ideas of modern artists, far from describing eternal and necessary conditions of art, are simply the result of recent history.⁶¹

Two years later, he would reaffirm that ‘the conception of an art expressing the ideas and experience of the revolutionary movement remains a valid one’, pointing out that whilst most propaganda was ‘artistically of a low order, this is not a necessary condition’ – a view doubtless confirmed by the examples of Brecht and Rivera, both of whom he knew and admired. There was ‘no inherent antagonism of propaganda and art’, and ‘most works created simply to express the artist’s feelings’ or as ‘formal constructions’ were also deficient.⁶² But, like Trotsky, whom he now openly avowed as an idol, he expected the allegiance of artists to be voluntarily given and to emerge organically out of the process of social and political transformation.

This brings us to Schapiro’s break with the communist movement and its implications. As with the founders of the reformed *Partisan Review* – the literary organ of the New York John Reed Club, reconstituted as an anti-Stalinist publication in 1937 – Schapiro’s disenchantment with the Communist Party came partly because of the turnarounds of the Popular Front and the Party’s shift to a class collaborationist line.⁶³ This led it to adopt an absurd style of American populism, which seemed an opportunistic and disingenuous betrayal of proletarian internationalism, and to replace the doctrine of revolutionary art with a compromised notion of ‘people’s culture’ that was anti-intellectual and more unfriendly to modernist experimentation than its predecessor. The Party’s full endorsement of the New Deal as politically progressive did not come until the latter part of 1937, but the change in its cultural line was evident earlier, partly because communist and fellow-travelling artists, writers and actors were drawn into the federal art projects, and particularly those of the Works Progress Administration, launched in August 1935. By late 1936, Schapiro was attacking the public art of the New Deal in the pages of the Artists’ Union magazine *Art Front*, and in the November presidential elections he voted for the socialist Norman Thomas, who ran on a straight ‘Socialism vs. Capitalism’ platform. (To put this in perspective, it is worth remembering that even such a milk and water socialist as Dewey was anti-New Deal). The clincher for Schapiro, as for so many others, was the Moscow Trials, and by early February 1937 he was an open supporter of the American Committee for the Defence of Leon Trotsky, which Dewey chaired, and Hook was instrumental in setting up.⁶⁴ However, Schapiro’s trajectory is unlike that of most of the ‘New York Intellectuals’, in that he remained a revolutionary Marxist. This separates him sharply from Hook, whose anti-communist Committee for Cultural Freedom he refused to join, and in 1943 the pair had a rancorous exchange over the character of the war in the pages of *Partisan Review* – Schapiro’s position being intransigently anti-imperialist, so that he refused to endorse the United States and its allies.⁶⁵ By 1940 Hook was describing Schapiro and Farrell as ‘political onanists’ because of their steadfast commitment to revolutionary politics, while two years later Farrell referred to Hook as the ‘embalming fluid of socialism’.⁶⁶ For Schapiro, ‘professional anti-

Stalinism' led to a complete gullibility with regard to the war aims of the United States.⁶⁷

However, for a true Marxist intellectual, the events of the late 1930s and the following decade could not but force some kind of taking stock. How had the Bolshevik experiment culminated in a state that contradicted the principles of socialism on almost every front, and that would enter into alliance with a fascist power and act in as imperialist a manner as the capitalist nations? Could Marxism as a revolutionary philosophy survive its perversion into the state ideology of a totalitarian regime? As Farrell observed in his diary in the dark days of 1940, 'Marxists claim that their ideas correspond to reality. But that is a question. Do they?'⁶⁸ For Hook, these developments caused a fundamental reassessment of epistemology and ethics,⁶⁹ and a move from revolutionary politics to an obsessive anti-communism and apologies for American imperialism. Schapiro, by contrast, stayed an admirer of Lenin – for Hook, now a figure with absolute responsibility for Stalinism – and he continued to defend the Bolsheviks' Jacobin morality on the same kind of Deweyan principles as Hook once had.⁷⁰ However, he did come to reject the Leninist model of the party and developed a new interest in Luxemburg's critique of it.⁷¹ This partly explains why although he and Farrell maintained relations with both wings of the American Trotskyist movement throughout the decade – having refused to take sides in its factional disputes – they did not identify as Trotskyists. Despite their enormous admiration for Trotsky as a revolutionary type, both felt there were deficiencies in his conception of dialectical materialism that were connected with the degradation of the Leninist model under Stalin, and that needed to be revised through an instrumentalist critique. Thus Schapiro wrote to Farrell in 1943 that he did not agree with Engels and Trotsky in their conception of dialectical materialism as 'a formal science and as a set of laws', although 'they were correct in their idea that experience itself, the world of man and the world of non-human nature show characteristic features of process, movement, concreteness, crucial increment in change, interaction, and (in man) continuity and mutual determination of theory and practice'. Because of the transformation of historical materialism into a 'formal dialectic' in the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy, he continued:

I think it is one of the more important tasks of our times to analyse Dewey's philosophy from this point of view, to show to what extent the best in his thought agrees with Marxism, and then to reveal the contradictions and confusions that exist in his thinking because he has not carried out his program of thought consistently, compromising with traditional American political and social ideas, fearing to study social conflicts deeply, ignoring the vast contributions of the revolutionary movement of the nineteenth and twentieth century, and refusing to face the failure of his ideas about education, society, politics, war, culture (and even art).⁷²

This continuing concern with the methods of the natural sciences and with pragmatist philosophy explains Schapiro's friendships with distinguished logicians and philosophers of science such as A.J. Ayer, Ernest Nagel, Otto Neurath and Edgar Zilsel. It also accounts for his sharp criticism of Erwin Panofsky's 1943 essay 'The Study of Art as a Humanistic Discipline', with its attempt to demarcate the humanities from the sciences and its association of Marxist critique in the arts with totalitarianism, despite his friendship with and respect for the scholarship of its author. The term "humanistic" is not identical with "human", Schapiro acidly remarked, 'it has an archaic flavour and smells from decrepitude every time it is dusted off and presented as a fresh ideal'. Being modern (in contrast to an assumption of classical values, which had lost their once progressive association) put us in a better position to understand the 'universally human' than any earlier civilisation, and 'the label "humanistic" isolates the arts and philosophy from the sciences and social life and intimates pretentiously that the arts are a separate region in which the human being is truly formed'.⁷³ In fact, 'we recognize that the students of the humanistic discipline since the early period have been responsible for some of the blackest crimes of history', and that 'in the camps of nonfascists and fascists are products of both humanist and nonhumanist disciplines'.⁷⁴ For Schapiro, modern science and modern art (and especially Cubism) were precisely kindred in their approach. Just as the philosophers and scientists of the early twentieth century had broken with their predecessors' model of knowledge as 'a simple, faithful picture of an immediately given reality', and saw in scientific laws 'a considerable part of arbitrary design or convention and even aesthetic choices', leading to 'a constantly revised picture of the world', so had artists. Thus, 'a radical empiricism, criticizing a deductive, contemplative approach, gave to the experimental a programmatic value in all fields'.⁷⁵ Both contributed to the larger work of human freedom.

This position also illuminates Schapiro's relations with the European émigré intellectuals, with whom he mixed in the late 1930s and 1940s, among whom were – in addition to Neurath and Zilsel – the Frankfurt School in exile, Max Raphael, Alfred Rosmer, Boris Souvarine and Edgar Wind. It is important to register that despite his passionately held political convictions, Schapiro could remain on friendly terms with those with whom he disagreed on key issues, such as Kracauer, Souvarine and Raphael – although the latter broke off their relations. Thus friendship does not mean coincidence in opinion. While he admired Adorno and Benjamin, and wrote a review for the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* in 1938,⁷⁶ his characterisation of an editorial by Horkheimer as containing 'a pessimistic, somewhat whining, criticism of the present state of society', and ending 'in a self-comforting faith in Roosevelt as a humanitarian under whose rule we are safe from fascist degeneration', may serve to mark their differences.⁷⁷ Quite simply, Schapiro retained a belief in the potential of the organised working class

that was entirely absent from Frankfurt School analyses of the late 1930s. Although he shared Adorno's aversion to claims made for the aesthetic status of jazz and to Hollywood cinema, his hostility to the American popular arts was significantly cast in far more political terms – namely that they were the cultural arm of US imperialism.⁷⁸ This points to something fundamental about the reception that Hook and Schapiro had made of Lukács's ideas, namely that they did not adopt the concept of reification, with all that implied about the opacity of social relations in late capitalist society.⁷⁹ For Schapiro, Adorno's ideas were 'overdone, exaggerated',⁸⁰ which I suspect means that they were too close to a Hegelian deductive logic and insufficiently grounded in empirical inquiry. Which is partly to say that for Schapiro the dialectic was a kind of tool that one could apply if it was useful; it was not, as it was for Adorno, the necessary negative moment in all thought that aimed at the true.⁸¹

In the later 1930s and early 1940s, Schapiro was writing a book on realism in French art and literature from which his 'Courbet and Popular Imagery' article was extracted.⁸² But despite his huge admiration for Balzac, Stendhal, Courbet and Daumier, this was not because nineteenth-century realism could stand as a model for art of the present – after all, that essay concludes that the view of history in Courbet's *Enterrement à Ornans* was 'already retrospective and inert'⁸³ and suggests that rather than being a revolutionary work, it measured the workers' defeat in 1848. For Schapiro, realism in the visual arts was an essentially nineteenth-century bourgeois aesthetic, and his interest in it was as the forcing ground of the more radical culture of modernism. The great phases of European social insurgence had each issued in 'an art of social protest, whether symbolical or realistic, doctrinal or humanitarian', but 1848 had marked a divide, in that while before that year radical politics was essentially motivated by bourgeois interests in opposition to 'feudal privilege or the alliance of the latter with a financial aristocracy', afterwards, with the complete victory of the French bourgeoisie, the radical movement became the vehicle of working- and lower-middle-class discontents, and correspondingly anti-bourgeois. Given the social origins of artists and their ties to the bourgeoisie as the main patron class, they might be anti-bourgeois in some of their attitudes, but they were unable to identify with the project of proletarian revolution.⁸⁴ Having helped to create a 'critical conception of culture', the bourgeoisie found itself confronted by a class that demanded a genuine equality, not just a formal political and social equality. As a result, it began to look more favourably on 'the older institutions that had once been criticized – especially religious authority and fixed moralities', and 'to recast the old formulations of its values', only bringing them out for 'holiday occasions'. Correspondingly, there came a shift in culture, whereby art, 'from being an instrument for the critical exploration of one's world...gradually shifted its ground to the individual more private and passive elements within culture, to the sphere

of intimacy and pleasure'.⁸⁵ In so far as a great monumental art illustrating social revolution had emerged in the twentieth century in Mexico, it was because the Mexican revolution was an essentially bourgeois revolt that garnered 'the support of almost the entire cultured strata of the country in the struggle against the great landholders and foreign imperialists'. By this measure, Socialist Realism, as the art of a repressive state bureaucracy was necessarily *retardataire*, and indeed showed 'a mediocrity and artistic conservatism unequalled in any capitalist country'. Contemporary Soviet art, Schapiro wrote in 1938, was essentially academic and dull: 'it corresponds to a labor and bureaucratic aristocracy that is plebeian and enjoys a petty bourgeois leisure'. It was 'neither revolutionary nor socialist nor realist'. The subordination of art to the interests of the state was not a 'necessary Marxist view', and indeed ran counter to 'the whole tradition of socialist freedom and the democratic values of the proletarian revolution'.⁸⁶

As Schapiro told a university audience in 1948, reiterating an argument he had made twelve years before at the American Artists' Congress, the 'individualism of modern art, far from being a denial of social relationships', was the 'fruit of a certain mode of social relationship', a mode 'that was itself the consequence of centuries of struggle to overcome the repressions of or limitations on freedom and individuality vested within old established institutions and laws'.⁸⁷ Modern art was inherently democratic and internationalist in its values, and it stood for an 'attitude of constant self-transformation and growth' in the individual. It might seem that we are encountering a kind of characteristic Cold War stance here, except that Schapiro thought his own society was almost as unfriendly to modernism as the totalitarian states were – 'relatively few of the wealthy in this rich nation support art' – and he stressed that the idea of individual freedom embodied by modern art was 'a source of deep conflicts and difficulties within modern life because of the disparity between assumed values (the legally or juridically described values, the constitutionally defined values) and the actuality of life for the great majority of people.' Contemporary American society, Schapiro observed, was not 'a truly democratic society', and the hostility modern art prompted was the result of this.⁸⁸

Schapiro saw the movement of modern art in the period prior to the First World War as having an 'ethical content', because the 'progressive emancipation of the individual from authority, and the increasing depth of self-knowledge and creativeness through art' matched with a larger struggle for the individual's right to self-realisation, and 'a trend towards greater freedom', across a range of different fields.⁸⁹ In that period, cultural life had 'a kind of militancy' that gave it 'the quality of a revolutionary movement', but in the reactionary cultural climate of the early 1950s – 'our painful discouraging age' – modernism seemed to show 'a slackening or stagnation' and was lacking in the 'idealistic individualism' of the earlier

moment, which was premised on greater confidence in being able to re-order social institutions to 'humane ends':

While the new art seems a fulfilment of an American dream of liberty, it is also in some ways a negation. In suggesting to the individual that he take account of himself above all, it also isolates him from activity in the world and confirms the growing separation of culture from work and ideal social aims.⁹⁰

This essentially pessimistic view of contemporary culture is filled out in the important 1957 essay 'Recent Abstract Painting', although here the tone has become rather more disconsolate. Paintings and sculptures, Schapiro pointed out, were 'the last hand-made personal objects' within a social order dominated by the division of labour. In a world in which the life of most individuals was subordinate to unsatisfying practical activity, 'the object of art is, therefore, more passionately than ever before, the occasion of spontaneity or intense feeling'. Abstract art met this need best, because it refused 'communication' in a world in which communication had been utterly instrumentalised and reduced to a notion of the most efficient stimulus to produce a given response. More than any other art, it corresponded to 'the pathos of the reduction or fragility of the self within a culture that has become increasingly organized through industry, economy and the state'. Although it had no specific political message, abstract painting was 'the domain of culture in which the contradiction between the professed ideals and the actuality [of our culture] is most obvious and often becomes tragic'.⁹¹

Leaving to one side the persuasiveness of these formulations, one might have expected that the author of this text – so redolent of the Marx of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* and of certain Frankfurt School pronouncements – would have felt some sympathy with the New Left. But although he opposed the Vietnam War, like so many former radicals of his generation, he kept aloof from the new radicalism, taking no public stance on the student occupation of Columbia of 1968 or on the violent police repression that brought that episode to an end.⁹² This did not prevent his work from having a greater effect on New Left art history in the United States and Britain than that of any other earlier Marxist art historian, his interpretations acting as a spur to important studies of medieval sculpture, Courbet, Impressionism, and Abstract Expressionism. But this influence was more a response to individual hypotheses than it was to the underlying system of his work, which can only be teased out from the unwieldy corpus of texts he has left us piece by piece. It is as a preliminary to a Marxist reading of that system that this essay is offered.

8

Henri Lefebvre and the Moment of the Aesthetic

Marc James Léger

In the mid to late 1920s the Communist International entered a stage of provisional stabilization. At this time, many young intellectuals were drawn to Marxism and they brought to party politics a renewed interest in theoretical analysis. Henri Lefebvre joined the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF) at the same time as did fellow *Philosophes* – a group of French intellectuals named after the short-lived journal they produced and forerunners of existentialist philosophy – and shortly following the adherence of the Surrealists. As with many Western Marxists, art was central to Lefebvre’s conception of historical materialism.¹

Indeed, Lefebvre’s biographer, Rémi Hess, asserts that Lefebvre’s lifelong preoccupation was with the possibility of living one’s life lucidly as a work of art.² Of the Dada artist Tzara, Lefebvre said: ‘From the beginning, what I liked the most about Tristan Tzara was that he could do without writing. His work was his life and his life was his work, that is, a certain way of living.’³ Lefebvre’s approach to culture, art and social transformation was always at the heart of his Marxism. As he wrote in 1959:

I became a Marxist in the name of a revolutionary romanticism that comprises a radical and total refusal of things as they are. I did not enter the party to make politics, but because Marxism announced the end of politics.⁴

He wrote later that he joined the PCF in part because of his interest in Eisenstein, Mayakovsky, Yessenin and others.⁵ Lefebvre’s concern with aesthetics is thus embedded within a broad conception of Marxism which does not conceive of art as an epiphenomenal concern; aesthetics is not separate from revolutionary politics. Correspondingly, Lefebvre wrote a number of works specifically on art and culture, the most prominent of which are *Rabelais et l’émergence du capitalisme* (written 1949–53, published 1955), *Contribution à l’esthétique* (1953), *Musset* (1955), *Pignon* (1956), *Trois textes pour le théâtre* (1972) and *La Présence et l’absence* (1980). Beyond these specific works, many of his other writings consider cultural theory as a fundamental aspect of his critical theory. This essay will argue that aesthetics holds a prominent place in Lefebvre’s work, and that his interest in the field is fundamental to understanding the works by him that have been influential

in cultural theory in recent years, such as *La Critique de la vie quotidienne* (1947), *La Vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne* (1968), *La Révolution urbaine* (1970), and *La Production de l'espace* (1974). The failure to recognise this continuity in his thought has been caused by a failure to undertake a Marxist interpretation of his post-war writings on culture. Central to Lefebvre's work, and consistent throughout, is a critical theory of cultural activity in relation to capitalist commodification. Through the theory of 'moments', Lefebvre developed a concept of art that is related to historical process and economic alienation, but which also, in its dependence on the material basis of everyday life, and its difference from other registers of social life, represents a disalienation of the familiar through the fulfilment of species being, that is, through the creative transformation of the everyday.

EXCEPTING THE WORK ON ART AND CULTURE

Despite Lefebvre's evident involvement with questions of aesthetics, no significant scholarly attention has been given to his cultural theory within the history of Marxist art criticism or elsewhere. On the basis of the reception of his works, it is evident that the 'cultural' works – the literary portraits and the *Contribution à l'esthétique* – have been retrospectively interpreted in the light of their historical location as the product of an embattled PCF intellectual and also as the product of a man needing to earn a living in the decade after the Second World War. After Lefebvre's break with the PCF in 1958, his cultural and aesthetic writings turned toward a revolutionary romanticism which was not as cramped by party guidelines as were his writings from the 1940s and 1950s. His break with and subsequent expulsion from the PCF were marked by two publications, *Problèmes actuels du marxisme* (1958) and his then well-received autobiography, *La Somme et le reste* (1959), texts that examined problems that could not be openly addressed while still a party member. Given his attempt to understand his personal situation in relation to historical conjunctures, his autobiography could also be considered one of his literary portraits. Lefebvre's ideas on art are still of interest today in that they provide an approach to aesthetics which is materialist but non-reductive, and which is able to account for specificities of time, place and subjectivity within cultural production. If Lefebvre's contribution to aesthetics has been overshadowed by the importance that is generally given to his theoretical focus on alienation and everyday life, it is appropriate to consider the context in which his work was produced so that text and context may together reinscribe the untimeliness that cast his work into the obscurity they were written to illuminate.

Lefebvre's principal aesthetic writings were produced within the last decade of his involvement with the PCF and bear the scars of his compliance with party discipline. Given the fact that these works attempted to finesse a critical theory within the terms of Socialist Realism, they have not since

received critical attention for the non-reductionist materialist theory of art they enunciate. Furthermore, few have discerned that his work was Socialist Realist in name only, since it bore little resemblance to official Soviet cultural policy, but with its dissident emphasis on Hegelian and humanist Marxism, was more in keeping with avant-garde modernism. One marked characteristic of his writing at this time is its popular character – the works were produced as accessible Marxist studies of famous French figures. The accessible character of the cultural writings, their context as works produced during Lefebvre's strained relation to the party, the concurrence of other theoretical contributions and the notoriety of his role in the student movement of the late 1960s have allowed many scholars to gloss over the question of aesthetics in his post-war writings.

These various factors have made it difficult to determine the significance of Lefebvre's contribution to aesthetics in the immediate post-war period and the relation of these writings to materialist cultural theory. The slight influence they have had on Marxist aesthetic theory does not require that we resurrect a forgotten Lefebvre, but, by considering the context in which he wrote, we can begin to understand the discursive parameters within which his work could be produced and why it is that it has not received more critical attention.

Mark Poster provides an early example of the historical reception of Lefebvre's aesthetic writing, arguing that

a glance at his long publication list reveals that Lefebvre retreated to the relatively uncontroversial sphere of literary criticism (a tactic also used by Lukács in a time of political orthodoxy) from the years of his auto-critique until his break with the CP in 1956.⁶

Poster's estimation that the aesthetic works were uncontroversial ignores the fact that PCF officials withheld his *Contribution* for over three years before allowing it to be published and subsequently translated into as many as 20 languages.⁷ For him, the significance of writings like the *Contribution* is not their content, but their status as part of Lefebvre's strategy within party politics. In other words, one is left to speculate that had he not stayed in the PCF as long as he did, had he left sooner, along with other intellectuals like Sartre, the cultural works would not have been written.

In his book on French Marxism, Michael Kelly also dismisses Lefebvre's aesthetic theory, suggesting that it was something like a displaced activity at a time when party discipline prevented him from addressing more serious concerns:

Lefebvre realized that fundamental divergences remained between his position and that of his party comrades. His 'clarification' on the materialist dialectic [from the autocritique of 1949] contained only the bare minimum acknowledgement of them. For the following

half dozen years he avoided any major work on the question, preferring to direct his attention rather to sociology and aesthetics than philosophy as such.⁸

Kelly misses the point that Lefebvre never concerned himself with 'mere' sociology or aesthetics. By underestimating the theoretical position of the aesthetic works within PCF politics and attributing them to a post-war patriotism, Kelly avoids any serious consideration of the role of art within Lefebvre's Marxist theory.⁹ The dismissal of the category of art is also evident in Michel Trebitsch's comment:

Between 1948 and 1957 he did not publish a single work of Marxist theory, unless one takes the view that his 'literary' studies on Diderot, Pascal, Musset and Rabelais were in fact indirect reflections on the dialectic of nature, alienation and the individual.¹⁰

The more recent monograph on Lefebvre by Rob Shields displays a comparable lack of interest in these works and offers only a passing mention of their relation to broader themes in Lefebvre's writing. In contrast to Poster and others, however, Shields perceptively attributes the cultural works to a 'radicalised romanticism', but describes these as 'mere interpretations' and adds no further comment, least of all about their relation to party politics.¹¹ It is to this latter context that we can look for some indications of Lefebvre's motivations at the time.

MIREN IN THE STRUGGLE

In the period between 1939 and 1956, the fortunes of French Communism went through various ups and downs: the PCF was declared illegal in 1939; its literature was banned by the Vichy government in 1942; Resistance members and Communists were celebrated in 1945; in 1947, PCF officials were expelled from government and Marxists were barred from the Sorbonne; in 1956 they regained prestige with their opposition to colonial conflict in Algeria and Egypt. Because of his involvement with the party, Lefebvre experienced these events in a very direct way. His career as a party intellectual was at its height in the short period between 1945 and 1947, but was troubled thereafter. In 1947, at the onset of the Cold War, the PCF adopted Soviet Zhdanovism along with a number of related official theoretical positions. Zhdanov's Report of 1947, a rejoinder to Truman's Marshall Plan, divided the world into 'two camps' and pitted the Soviet Union against the United States. Operating within the 'imperialist camp', the PCF was to spearhead the struggle against the American domination of Europe. In order to combat internal deviationism, the PCF leadership became especially dogmatic in matters of political ideology. If many of Lefebvre's writings in cultural theory have not outlived their moment, it is largely due to their function as

intellectual counterpoints to Soviet policy in matters of Marxist philosophy at this time.

Zhdanovism describes bourgeois aesthetic forms as mechanistically determined superstructural reflections of bourgeois political economy. In relation to this, a revolutionary art (such as Socialist Realism in the Soviet Union) becomes a prescriptive doctrine that determines art forms in terms of accessible and politically exemplary content. One of the doctrines that followed cultural Zhdanovism was Lysenkoism – a dogmatic theory which held to an absolute difference between ‘bourgeois’ and ‘proletarian’ science. The science debate revolved around the figure of Lysenko, who rejected new developments in hybrid wheat (developed in the United States) as undialectical. As an article of Lysenkoist dogma, hybrid wheat could not contribute to communist society *because* it was a product of American science, and American science, according to the doctrine of ‘two camps’ could only be bourgeois science. For Lefebvre, as for many dissenters, the rejection of chromosomal science reduced species to static forms and as such denied heredity as a dialectical process.

Involved with agricultural communities and rural sociology at that time, Lefebvre dreaded the rejection of new methods that could improve the lives of whole populations and made efforts to denounce Lysenkoism as non-dialectical.¹² The ‘two sciences’ debate carried on into the early 1950s and was reinforced by the party’s uncritical acceptance of Stalin’s writings on dialectical materialism and linguistics. One of the positions adopted by the PCF was that the social sciences were ‘superstructural’, or related to class interests, while the pure sciences were not, or rather, *should* be made scientifically objective by eliminating their class character and making them properly proletarian.¹³ For Lefebvre, the question became instead whether or not art-as-superstructure was distinct from other forms of knowledge, and he made some efforts to address this problem in the *Contribution*. His position was that the separation between the two sciences had become accepted without critical examination. The literary studies and works on aesthetics were his contributions to the active struggle with Zhdanovism and Lysenkoism within the French Communist Party.¹⁴

Lefebvre’s first effort in this direction was his book on Descartes, published in 1947. The project, as he stated, was to sweeten a complex theoretical programme through accessible writing. Accessible works, a Zhdanovist principle, were required by the party at the time. What Lefebvre added to this, however, was a twist in the orthodoxy of class position through Lenin’s notion that the idealist philosophers (Spinoza, Leibniz) approached materialism through their idealist sides.¹⁵ Lefebvre’s cultural works, then, starting with the book on Descartes, addressed the contributions of bourgeois idealist thought to the development of materialism. In taking this approach, Lefebvre confounded expectations of class representativeness.¹⁶ The subsequent work on Diderot (1949) contained a related programme:

to show how Diderot's thought exceeds a mechanistic form of materialism and contains elements of dialectics. Without doubt, this approach had some bearing on Lefebvre's defence of Hegelian dialectics, which PCF members believed was no longer relevant since the question of Hegel had been settled with Marx's inversion of the dialectic. The orthodox Stalinist view on dialectical materialism was that Marx had prefigured the historical inevitability of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and all that the party needed to do was to work toward this end. By contrast, Lefebvre never adopted the static model of dialectical materialism, but believed that events could change the direction of theory and that levels of alienation would continue to exist even in a socialist society.

While Lefebvre insisted on remaining with the PCF during this period, he did so in a prolonged effort to contribute to its theoretical and political development. In the opening epigraphs to the *Contribution à l'esthétique*, Lefebvre cites Zhdanov on Socialist Realism and Marx on art in general. The line attributed to Marx, 'Art is the greatest joy that man gives to himself', was invented by Lefebvre as a token of non-adhesion to Stalinism.¹⁷ The quote from Zhdanov was necessary as part of a strategy to save the book from censorship.¹⁸ One of the pointed ironies of this juxtaposition was its attack on the moralistic outlook of Zhdanovism, which generally refused sexual themes as well as the possibility of sensuous pleasure being derived from art and also judged it by its putative contribution to a model of human progress that culminated in the Soviet state.

The cultural works were microcosms of broader but not more significant philosophical differences between Lefebvre and party officials. As Lefebvre wrote:

Art and the forms of art break with everyday life and return to it, after a series of ascending and descending spirals in the prestigious sky of forms... Philosophically formulated, this intuition foresees or announces that the 'reversal' of philosophy effectuated by Marx in relation to the Hegelian system will spread to all of the so-called superior activities. The problem of 'reversal' does not limit itself to philosophy. At any given time, psychology and the aesthetic encounter it.¹⁹

This statement expresses his belief that Marx had not superseded philosophy in favour of economic and political theory. Rather, the emphasis on the Hegelian notion of *Aufhebung* – both to surpass and to preserve at a higher level – means that philosophy is preserved and surpassed in the method of dialectical materialism. Lefebvre's polemic was aimed at an undialectical reductionism. His theory held that the proletariat is a critical negation of the existing conditions of capitalism and not an empirically fixed guarantor of revolutionary progress.

FROM CRITIQUE TO CONTRIBUTION

With his work on aesthetic theory, Lefebvre attempted to bring philosophical considerations to bear on the reductive version of dialectical materialism that was common with party officials and subordinate intellectuals in the post-war period. Lefebvre's *Contribution à l'esthétique* was written at the same time as the *Critique de la vie quotidienne* and also in the same period as Mikhail Lifshits's influential 500-page publication on Marxist aesthetics, *Marx–Engels über Kunst und Literatur* (1949). Lefebvre developed his most significant contribution to Marxist thinking, the materialist conception of everyday life, at the same time as his more popular writings on art and literature. The *Contribution* and the *Critique* should therefore be thought of as related but not analogous texts.

In *The Critique of Everyday Life*, Lefebvre outlined not only a critical theory of capitalist society, but also a number of important reflections on the art of the twentieth century which cannot be found in the *Contribution*. Perhaps most controversial is his polemic against Surrealist practice, which he criticised for repudiating everyday life and humanity itself rather than transforming the world. In a reference to Marx's critique of Eugène Sue's novels, Lefebvre stated that the Surrealists 'promised a new world, but they merely delivered "mysteries of Paris"'.²⁰ He contrasted this with Brecht's work, which went beyond transparency and attempted a more serious project of clarifying contradictions and struggling against alienation. Lefebvre's innovation with the *Critique* was to argue that the everyday was not necessarily known. Although conceptions of the everyday can be found in the work of Nietzsche, Simmel, the Surrealists, Lukács and Heidegger, Lefebvre sought to align the everyday with the notion of alienation rather than the banal or the trivial. The everyday in this sense becomes dialectically bound up with the potential for disalienation, for an opening onto new possibilities. Lefebvre wished to elevate the category of the lived or the concrete to a theoretical level without at the same time overestimating it, as phenomenology had done.²¹ As early as the mid-1930s, Lefebvre explored the reasons why the working class was not conscious of the mechanisms of its own exploitation. In *La Conscience mystifiée* (1936), as well *Le Matérialisme dialectique* (1939), he developed the theme of alienation, which alone could explain capitalist social relations and which drew from Marx's early philosophical works. In rejecting the Surrealists' *poetic* solutions to alienation, Lefebvre attempted to develop some theoretical tools for a new approach to art theory and production.²² While his work on aesthetics coincided with the PCF's adoption of Zhdanovist reductionism, he nevertheless sought to engage with the debates on Socialist Realism, which he distinguished himself from by using the term 'new realism'. In the pages below, I focus on a number of key aspects of the *Contribution* and follow this with some remarks on Lukács.

The *Critique*, nevertheless, remains an important double in the writing of Lefebvre's aesthetic theory.

Addressing the notion of the specificity of art, Lefebvre cautiously considers art's connection with knowledge. The theory of knowledge, he argues, is merely logical and abstract if it does not engage with living thought and with the concrete world. As such, the theory of knowledge should elucidate and orient practice. A reciprocal movement exists between concrete knowledge of the world and the theory of knowledge. In a similar manner, philosophical thought moves between living art and the theory of art. There is therefore for Lefebvre a theory of art that corresponds to dialectical materialism. In contrast to some of his contemporaries, Lefebvre argued that there can be no Marxist art as such, but that there is a Marxist theory of art. In presenting this similarity between art and knowledge, he suggests modelling the Marxist history of art on the materialist history of philosophy. He writes:

The history of philosophy ... established in a materialist and dialectical manner, will demonstrate how certain philosophical ideas (those of the dominant class, or ascendant, or declining) have acted on writers and artists; they have always folded themselves in with the ideological content of works of art. And this, however, without allowing us to define art as the incarnation of ideology, as the conception of the world of a social class, which confuses art with ideology and its history with the history of knowledge.²³

He breaks therefore with the division between a philosophy of aesthetics and aesthetic practice.

Lefebvre's method at this time was sociological and historical. Inasmuch as his work addressed social structure, he gave priority to the contingent, the conjunctural, and the possible, over any notion of fixed determinant forms operating as inflexible laws. For Lefebvre, structure is provisional and variable, an ephemeral *moment* that tends towards freedom, involves personal reflection and is sensed as lived bodily experience. In the end, it is not so much the beauty of theory that is important. As Rob Shields puts it, for Lefebvre, 'it is what happens that counts, not the temporal qualities of our experience of events'.²⁴ In relation to art, the practice of the new realism contains philosophical reflection within itself and opens onto the consciousness of its own practical activity; it becomes scientific in a Marxist sense. As such, it tends toward a consideration of all developments in theory and practice, as does science. Lefebvre warns that knowledge, however, weighs heavily on the practice of contemporary art and risks interrupting experimentation. As a materialist practice, the new realism throws a retroactive light on the art of the past and discovers in art a struggle between aspects of idealism and materialism, form and content. This historico-practical understanding replaces previous attempts by philosophy to provide a systematic theory of aesthetics.

We begin to discern what practical activity means for Lefebvre in thinking about his concept of the 'total man'. Against economic and historical determinism, the concept of total man incorporates the sum of all aspects of life, including the physical, physiological, psychological, historical, economic and social. Alienation in any of these areas of life is not necessarily produced by alienation at the level of production (the economic base), but each is related to 'the movement of historical totality'.²⁵ As can be gathered from the title of his autobiography, 'the sum and the remainder', Lefebvre never argued that the perspective of totality is ever achieved.

Lefebvre's aesthetic theory is invested in the work of the early Marx and in its emphasis on the human foundation of nature. In the theory of alienation, Marx advanced a critique of what had remained hidden in political economy. Estranged labour estranges nature from humanity, humanity from itself, and humanity from life species. For Lefebvre, Marx's humanism is a profoundly romantic humanism that reclaims rest, leisure, sensuality, creativity and spontaneity; aspects of life that are compromised by capitalist relations. Humanity is at once natural, historical, biological, social, psychological and cultural. Its essence is material as well as practical, creating and transforming itself (its nature) through social practice. Work not only produces objects, but, in a dialectical process, produces the human world.

In these terms, art is the product of a specific kind of work that characteristically struggles against the division of labour in an attempt to grasp the 'total' content of life and of social activity. This same struggle marks the relations of production, and the conditions of aesthetic production, as the site of alienation. Just as art's autonomy developed as a consequence of the commodification of cultural production, revolutionary art is the consciousness of this specialisation and separation of the artist from the general social activity of the age. Art is a specialised activity that resists specialisation. The artist struggles to overcome the impoverishing aspects of alienation in the process of participating in social life, and by adapting elements of play and fantasy to the elaboration of the language of art. He or she shows a need to create a sense-object. Disalienation is a property of the activity of the artist, not of the object. As Lefebvre argues in the *Contribution*,

The creative activity of art is not and cannot be an ideal theoretical activity, nor an isolated activity, *sui generis*. It is a particular kind of work and is highly specialised, resting on the totality of human work, on the work of the masses who transform nature. The work of art is a product (unique, exceptional) of labour in the making of which its creator has vanquished, with technical means and instruments, a natural material.²⁶

Related to this understanding of the production of the work of art is a theory of aesthetic sensation. The senses are imbricated with practical activity and consciousness. Through everyday life, the senses are humanised and

transformed. Lefebvre gives examples of this by discussing how the organ of the eye becomes adequate to its use and is developed as a human power:

In a painting, the human eye has found the appropriate object; the human eye has formed and transformed itself first through practical and then through aesthetic activity, and by knowledge: it has become something other than a mere organ; for the painter at least ... truly prefiguring the realm of freedom, and producing the work of art.²⁷

Through a historical and social process, the eye becomes human and overcomes its elementary nature. In contrast to a priori and phenomenal determinations that understand the senses as given properties of human subjects, Lefebvre follows Marx in arguing that the senses become means of social existence through practical, concrete activity. For Lefebvre, this answers many problems in aesthetic theory:

Marx therefore answers the fundamental question left in suspense by aestheticians: where do the diverse forms of art emerge from? They do not emerge from the diverse ways of achieving Beauty, or from the diverse categories of the judgment of taste ... nor from the diverse incarnations of the Concept. They emerge from the senses. This seems obvious. In fact, it required Marx and the radical critique of idealism to arrive at this simple truth.²⁸

Subjective taste, then, corresponds to an object, which it finds or creates. The artist, furthermore, attempts to surpass the limits of private activity and to incorporate into the work of art the multiplicity of manifestations of life.

The concepts of form and content are described at great length by Lefebvre and appear as the theoretical keywords of the *Contribution*. He is cautious though in insisting that the separation of form and content is a common problem in ideological and idealist mystification. The ability to grasp content *as such* is a pretence of philosophy. There is no form without content and no content without form. This counter-paradox is derived in part from his distinction between formal and dialectical logic. The dialectical combination of theory and practice in materialist praxis, according to Lefebvre, consists of imposing a form on a content:

Since there is no content that is not mediated by form, form has a decisive importance in all fields. In aesthetics and in artistic creation, content without form represents an abstraction equal to pure formalism, if not worse, since this abstraction is disavowed.²⁹

Lefebvre sought to overcome this opposition by dividing content into a number of subcategories. The *biological content*, he argued, relates to the sexual or libidinal impulses, to sensuality and to one's entire being. This relates to aesthetic sense as described above. The *emotional* or *affective*

content is also something that takes shape and is transformed. Like the senses, it is related to a social content. The relation of art to social practice also expresses a *practical content*. With this last subcategory, Lefebvre addresses questions of social demand (whether economic, ideological, or taste oriented) as a material support of aesthetic activity. The practical content involves questions of labour, technique, materials, utility, mode of production – the means by which the artist appropriates the object (nature) and transforms it.

Finally, there is the more difficult question of *aesthetic content*. Unlike other forms of ideology and other superstructures, art for Lefebvre addresses itself directly to sensibility and not to reason; art is different from knowledge. This does not prevent art from containing elements relating to ideology, the intentions of the artist, class struggle, historical determinations and so on. The *aesthetic content* opens onto the history of social and cultural formations. For Lefebvre, only dialectical materialism can determine how ‘great works’ often express through their form a rich conception of the world. In this regard, he takes issue with reflectionist accounts of class belonging. He describes the various aspects of the work of Diderot, for example, as representing a number of class positions, from the ascendant bourgeoisie, to feudal property interests, the petty bourgeoisie and the populace. Nor is the question of class in Lefebvre an either/or proposition, as the doctrine of ‘two camps’ had attempted to make it.

On the question of the universality of great works, Lefebvre considers what it is that makes Diderot’s novel *Le Neveu de Rameau* a much better work than *Le Père de Famille*. In the latter, Diderot expresses the moralising aspect of his class, a feature that Lefebvre refers to as the illusory character of his class ideology. It is a mediocre work in comparison to *Le Neveu de Rameau*, which happens to be critical of the values of an aristocratic society in the process of decomposition. The more successful work of art contains a critical content, a realism that enhances the form of the work. This elaboration of the form derives from a research into the relation of form and content. Lefebvre writes,

Realism is not achieved strictly through content by opposing content to form, the object to elaboration, the concrete to the abstract. It is achieved by surpassing this opposition, that is to say, by conceiving anew, but enriched in relation to classical art, the internal dialectic of all art and each work of art; the difference and unity of the content and of the form, with the primacy of the content.³⁰

Historically speaking, the question of realism is central to Marxist aesthetics, and despite Lefebvre’s involvement with a number of avant-garde movements that accentuated negative dialectics and techniques of defamiliarisation (such as Dada, Surrealism, and Situationism), he always privileged an approach that could in some way represent the world, though

without ever believing in transparency or an unmediated reflection. In the *Contribution*, Lefebvre struggles with the demands of classical Marxist realism that were inherited from Engels, and those of his own day. The basis of this realism means that the artist participates in social life and through his or her work presents characters and situations that are 'typical' and that are capable of grasping the basic 'tendencies' of living reality, without at the same time diminishing the artist's subjective involvement with these questions. Among the references to Engels's work, Lefebvre cites in particular his letter to Minna Kautsky (1885) which emphasises the conscious grasping of realistic tendencies by the author.

The question of typicality within Marxist aesthetics is addressed mostly by Georg Lukács. In the essay 'Narrate or Describe?', Lukács contrasted two tendencies in nineteenth-century literature with different approaches to realism.³¹ According to Lukács, Balzac, for example, participates in the struggles of his day through an 'experiencing narration' which is achieved because of his lived relation to social change. Zola, on the other hand, renounces social activity in favour of an 'observing description' or 'naturalistic documentation' that is particular to writers of the Second Empire, a transitional period of capitalist society. While Balzac sympathises with the interests of a waning aristocracy, he is, according to Lukács, better able to represent the objective laws of social and historical development.³² Balzac participates in the struggles of his times, even though his political affiliations are with the declining social class. While Lefebvre shares with Lukács an emphasis on the problematic of alienation, his concern with art production leads him to reject aspects of Lukács's pessimism. Lukács's view of the Balzac attitude, while correct as historical analysis, is unhelpful as an aesthetic method for the present day, in particular because Lukács's analysis of aesthetic creation stays on the level of an authorial unconscious. Despite the enduring qualities of Balzac's work, Balzac himself was not and could not have been conscious of the reasons for which his work has had a lasting value. For Lefebvre, as for Brecht, maintaining a dichotomy between an objective realism (historical materialism) and a partisan realism (tendency literature) would be disastrous for a contemporary artist. The contradictions and ambiguity of an artist like Balzac and the emphasis on the productive unconscious is no longer useful to the new exigencies of art, that is, the conscious reflection of the world through the aesthetic content of the work. Though Lefebvre acknowledges the inevitability of traces or transitions of unconsciousness in artistic production, he posits theory as an attempt to reduce delays in consciousness. These delays are defined not in terms of historical necessity but in relation to the need to respond to emergent historical exigencies.³³ Lefebvre's criticism does not entail a rejection of the achievements of previous writers such as Balzac, nor does it imply a denial of Lukács's contribution. He instead puts forward a position on the new realism that takes issue with the reductive character of official party policy

on aesthetic production. As such, his position is partly bound as a theory to the problem of party literature.³⁴

In his autobiography of 1959, Lefebvre is much more frank about his disappointment with the results of Socialist Realism under the restrictions of party guidelines. The temptation of a simple theoretical programme resulted in a stultifying neglect of historical and individual psychic complexity. The results, he lamented, had been:

An extraordinary number of folk ensembles, peasant dancers and singers. A few spectacles and traditional ballets. *No plays for the theatre*. Some films, some uneven and often mediocre novels, because these people associate themselves with the modern conditions of production. They have spoken to us a great deal about 'socialist realism' and they have force-fed us folklore...³⁵

For Lefebvre, the new realism witnessed a Pyrrhic victory, premised on abstraction and an interest in outmoded forms. In the *Contribution*, he attempted to propose a schema for new directions. The 'new sensibility', he argued, locks its novel consciousness of practical content within antiquated forms. It should be allowed to experiment, and to take into consideration new achievements in aesthetic practice. Aided by the knowledge of dialectical materialism, he argued, the artist can freely and humanly become conscious of the new means and the new exigencies of the times, advancing art with a grasp of content through formal elaboration. Socialist Realism is taken by Lefebvre as a fact of historical and global dimension.³⁶ Artists and critics must begin with this world situation. Among the numerous guidelines Lefebvre proposed is an emphasis on historical materialism and class consciousness:

We must modestly analyse works in which the proletariat, as the ascending class, the leader and destroyer of class society, discovers itself, recognises itself, expresses itself, brings forth a new content, troubles and renews traditional forms. We must also criticise them lucidly in the name of the scientific knowledge of art, of aesthetics.³⁷

With aesthetic activity having become conscious, Lefebvre argued, Lukácsian art criticism is no longer helpful to artists working in the present day. While both focused on the concept of alienation, and both linked the development of aesthetic philosophy with the condition of the working class, Lefebvre understood romanticism to be progressive and not merely the culture of a declining bourgeoisie.³⁸

With the *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, Lefebvre changed many of his previous positions on the historical role of the working class. Beginning with *La Conscience mystifiée*, he questioned the theory that the working class would inevitably become the bearer of a revolutionary ideology. The proletariat's social practice was highly embedded in practical realities. In

contrast to Lukács, Lefebvre avoided any fixed definitions of the proletariat and sought instead to look to its changing circumstances, which, by the 1960s, Lefebvre felt had outpaced any ability to achieve revolutionary aims. With the *Critique*, he made a first attempt at a cultural analysis of the position of the working class within consumer society. A Marxist cultural project, he concluded, needed to be reinvented. Though there are determinations to any future developments, the future is open to the possible and the contingent. 'To live,' he wrote, 'is to solve these problems, by exiting all vicious circles before they become magic circles.'³⁹ A criticism sometimes made of Lefebvre is that he separated Marxist theory from proletarian politics.⁴⁰ For others, this separation represents Lefebvre's refusal to essentialise the position of the working class and to ignore its living relation to the world. Individual subjects are different from one another and have particular belongings; moreover, subjects are polyvalent and desiring, elaborated across disciplines and in a transversal, mediated relation to the world.⁴¹ Lefebvre's concept of 'everyday life' contrasts with Lukács's pessimistic view of the banality of life under capitalism, what he called *Alltäglichkeit*, or the 'trivial life'. Lefebvre's concept of the 'total man', premised on the philosophical work of Marx, emphasised the subject of praxis and of becoming, the subject who is capable of producing his or her own life as a work of art. He writes:

The proletarian qua proletarian can become a new man. If he does so, it is not through the intervention of some unspecified freedom which would permit him to liberate himself from his condition... It is through knowledge that the proletarian liberates himself and begins actively superseding his conditions. We should understand men in a human way, even if they are incomplete; conditions are not confined within precise, geometrically defined boundaries, but are the result of a multitude of obstinate and ever-repeated (everyday) causes.⁴²

Consciousness proceeds from the subject; it is a subjectivisation of the world through social, practical and creative activity. Like Lukács, Lefebvre believed that class consciousness was largely mystified and that an effort must be made to grasp the conditions of life. Where he most clearly departed from Lukács is perhaps on the question of totality.

Lefebvre's approach to dialectical materialism shares with a number of Western Marxist intellectuals (Lukács, Gramsci, Korsch) a focus on the concept of concrete totality, and functions, as Martin Jay argues, as an antidote to the 'abstract determinations of political economy'.⁴³ Jay notes Lefebvre's dialectical approach to totality as incorporating a concept of the infinite (becoming) and the finite (structure) in nature. Lefebvre's distinction between open and closed totalities is perhaps best summarised in his theory of *moments*, which appeared in *La somme et le reste* as an afterthought to his works on aesthetics. We might consider Lefebvre's philosophical theory of moments as anti-formalist. Whereas his view of totality involves the

numerous *strata* of history, nature, consciousness, knowledge and ideology, the theory of moments adds to this the *modalities* of contemplation, action, struggle, love, play, rest, death, celebration, poetry, repression, work and so on. Lefebvre's approach to totality views difference as a creative force of becoming and understands this specifically in terms of social critique. His sources include Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. As an element of humanist Marxism, Lefebvre orients this view of becoming in relation to the individual who transcends cultural and economic social arrangements but who nevertheless is realised within the everyday. Creative moments of overcoming open onto the possible. Inspired by the reading of Proust, moments are Lefebvre's theoretical reconciliation with the concept of duration. Within every individual or social consciousness, moments are formed which involve lived time, which is both historically broad and contingent. Moments are substantial though indefinable and comprise a partial power within an open totality. This becoming involves a process of structuration that is intelligible and practical and is without complete discontinuities; becoming involves recollection. The theory of moments is an effort at de-ontologisation and emphasises the field of possibilities and virtualities. Lefebvre describes his theory of moments in relation to art:

Would not the creative activity of art (of works) be such a 'moment', searching through time, from epoch to epoch, historically and within each artist, to contain itself, to maintain in itself the totality of its own becoming and its conditions, and surpassing these in the very action of maintaining and containing them? Seeking therefore to create the stable and profound 'work' in which this movement defines itself, and closes and opens itself onto the totality of the world?

Such a moment would be the moment of the beautiful, or rather, of the beautiful work.⁴⁴

A moment tends toward the absolute but never achieves it. In his aesthetic theory, Lefebvre was concerned that in the attempt to characterise the 'typical' or the essential, the importance of what was both lived and conceived might be lost. A satisfactory mode of expression, a new realism, would communicate the uncertainty of lived reality by basing it not on the determination of class but on the relative degrees of freedom and the struggle against alienation.⁴⁵ This freedom is expressed in the uncertainty of the lived, the failures of will and of liberty, and the certitude of the real, and therefore also, on what is possible, the possible-impossible.

CONCLUSIONS – TRAVELS WITH LEFEBVRE

Lefebvre's works in aesthetic and cultural theory consisted of a number of theoretical departures from the official aesthetics of the communist movement. These texts did more than simply counter the debates within

the PCF concerning the distinction between the social sciences and the natural sciences, and the possibility of a proletarian science. As we have seen, Lefebvre's answer to these debates was that aesthetics and the social sciences, like the natural sciences, are related to humanity's appropriation of nature, including its own nature, in an effort towards freeing itself from need. Aesthetics could not be reduced to various determinations in the mode and relations of production, but had its own distinctive qualities. The *Contribution* and the texts written for a general readership were far more grounded in a serious Marxist project than the reception of these works has led us to believe.

Lefebvre's cultural works are relevant to the exploration of the relationship of individual artists to their historical conditions as well as to their class position. Since working on *La Conscience mystifiée*, Lefebvre and co-author Norbert Guterman had begun a polemic challenging some of the tenets of vulgar Marxism–Leninism. Their attention to the problem of alienation and mystification meant that consciousness could not simply be reduced to a notion of transparent reflection and to a doctrinaire emphasis on the 'truth of class'.⁴⁶ For Lefebvre, neither the concept of expression nor that of reflection exhausts the movement of consciousness. As he demonstrated in the *Critique*, consciousness can be illusory. This relates to his theory of moments, of possibility and becoming, and to the notion of open and closed totalities. For instance, on the subject of praxis, he wrote:

Praxis cannot close itself and cannot consider itself closed. Reality and concepts remain open and this opening has many dimensions: nature, the past, human possibilities. It is not enough to say that the notion of praxis attempts to grasp or can grasp the complexity of human phenomena. We must add that it grasps their growing complexity. Open to all sides, praxis (reality and concepts) does not, however, stray into indeterminacy. Only a certain kind of thinking, traditional analytic thought, confuses closure with determination, open-endedness with indetermination.⁴⁷

With the studies of Descartes, Pascal, Diderot, Rabelais, Musset and Pignon, Lefebvre developed a materialist method that would demonstrate the complexity of bourgeois thought, as Rémi Hess says, by showing how any given consciousness is more than what a thinker could have physically grasped.⁴⁸ Aspects of consciousness remain hidden, some are barely perceptible, and some go beyond the individual's lived experience. Lefebvre never systematised his method.⁴⁹ He did, nevertheless, borrow from *Capital* and the *Grundrisse* a 'regressive–progressive method' that begins with the present conjuncture and reads into the past as a way of elucidating both temporalities.

One of Lefebvre's main points of contention at this time was the structuralism of his colleague Lucien Goldmann. Goldmann understood aesthetic works as the products of individuals who were members of specific

social groups. The world views of these groups structurally mediate the consciousness of the individual artist. Lefebvre chose to illustrate the difference between his and Goldmann's theory with the image of the travel diary. The structuralist method begins with the map of all that could have been seen by the traveller and therefore with the completed journey; it may even collect a number of travel journals in order to create a complete picture into which it then inserts individual subjects. Lefebvre contrasts to this a dialectical method which gives relative priority to the contingent, or conjunctural, over the structural. Structure exists, but only as a moment of becoming, as he says, 'because it designates the elements common to a series of successive instants that constitute a moment (it is the ensemble of elements which are graspable through concepts)'.⁵⁰ Structure is variable and provisional. Lefebvre does not seek to eliminate structure, but to explain it and not give it priority over diachrony, content, history, or transversality. As such, his method offered a critique of social history's emphasis on context as well as structuralism's reliance on historical rupture as a mode of explanation. The artist does not passively reflect his life, but attempts to resolve conflicts and proposes a solution through the use of poetic representations; these are aesthetic and not purely ideological representations.⁵¹ In contrast to Goldmann's 'world view', which is premised on the 'complex of ideas, aspirations and feelings which link together the members of a social group (a group which in most cases, assumes the existence of a social class)', Lefebvre disengages the ideological from the aesthetic and proposes, as in his study of Alfred de Musset, an artistic world view.⁵² He argues, moreover, that it is the receivers of the work who discover the work through their own understanding. With the works on Musset and Rabelais in particular, he sought to complicate Goldmann's 'ideologisation of Marxism' and his emphasis on a reductive conception of class consciousness which unduly formalised the analysis of specific individuals.⁵³

Late in his life, Lefebvre expressed his exhaustion at having to account continuously for the role of economic conditions in the production of art. He observed that whilst it is true that Goethe had to eat every day as a condition to his writing *Faust*, one cannot dwell on this fact alone in order to appreciate the work.⁵⁴ The elements that are involved in the production of art include the grasping and failures of consciousness, knowledge, incomplete knowledge, social practices, forms of representation, technique, language, realities of nationality, conceptions of nature, dominant ideologies, popular beliefs and types of subjectivity. In reflecting on the question of base and superstructure, Lefebvre insisted that Marx himself never reduced culture to a mere effect of the class struggle. The dialectical method eschews a simplified scheme of analysis and requires that class be studied in relation to society and culture. He drew from Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) a concern with the question of uneven development between form and content, in other words, the fact that we may still consider

beautiful works of art that were products of earlier economic and social conditions to which we cannot return. What interested Lefebvre on this subject was Marx's attention to the role of mediations between base and superstructure; this he called the 'domain of sociology'. The work of art comes into being within historically determined conditions and in relation to a given level of the development of the productive forces. It has a material basis. However, the movement between base and superstructure is dialectical and the work of art in turn can affect the nature of the economic base and its related social conditions. The artist thus attempts to give form to representations of the world that make sense within class society. His or her activity is a form of practical knowledge that is distinct from other forms of knowledge and that functions at a level of autonomy with regard to material production and other superstructural strata.

In retrospect, Lefebvre was not completely satisfied with his aesthetic theory, for it failed, as he stated, to resolve the question of the universality of art, which since Plekhanov had remained merely relativised according to historical and geographical particularities. In *La Somme et le reste*, he wrote that the *Contribution* had relied too heavily on the question of form and content. It did contain, he added, some directions that he felt were of continuing significance, namely: the work of art possessing an internal dialectical movement as an appropriation of nature; the production of art and the work of art as a struggle against alienation from within alienation; and, thirdly, the distinction of the artwork from other kinds of human production, though it nevertheless enters social practice and everyday life.

While it may seem that Lefebvre's aesthetic writings are far removed from today's concerns, this can only be attributed to a failure of memory. In developing his theory of moments and in reworking the concept of everyday life, Lefebvre proposed an interdisciplinary understanding of artistic production. If he later dedicated himself to the question of social space, it was because he saw in urban restructuring an economic phenomenon of global dimension and that was poorly understood. The same could be said for the merging in the 1960s of cultural avant-gardism with the affirmative strategies of the culture industries, and the further estrangement of cultural difference and cultural production from the critique of consumer capitalism. Because they consider the interrelationship of all aspects of life, and because they acknowledge different kinds of alienation, Lefebvre's writings on art and culture deserve to be examined alongside his writings on space and everyday life. Concomitantly, the latter have begun and will likely continue to be significant to contemporary art history and visual culture studies.

9

Arnold Hauser, Adorno, Lukács and the Ideal Spectator

John Roberts

There are three major philosophical and political figures who thread their presence through the life and work of Arnold Hauser: Marx, Georg Lukács and Theodor Adorno. If the first naturally entails the other two, the second clearly stands in conflict with the third; yet as admired friends (for certain periods of Hauser's life) and intellectual sounding boards, both Lukács and Adorno play significant roles as critical models and supporters. As is well known, Hauser knew Lukács from the time they spent together in the Sunday Circle discussion group in Budapest in 1915–16. Committed to the spiritual regeneration of Hungarian intellectual life, the membership of the group reads like a roll-call of those Hungarian socialists and liberals who were to have such a widespread impact on European culture from the 1920s onwards: Frederick Antal, Karl Mannheim, Ervin Šinko, Emma Ritóok and Béla Bartók amongst others. Lukács was 30 and had already published widely; Hauser was 23 and was only just beginning to think of himself as an art historian. The authority that Lukács had amongst the group was enormous, provoking descriptions of him as the 'aesthetic Pope', 'Saint Lukács' and even 'Socrates' (by Hauser himself).¹ After the dissolution of the group, Hauser lectured, along with Lukács, Antal and others at the Free School of Humanities as part of a series organised by the writer Béla Balázs, who was intent on extending the group's public profile. Whatever hopes the contributors had, though, as regards a new culture of idealism for Hungary were swept away by the impact of the Russian Revolution and the politicisation of Lukács himself, vividly affected in his role as Cultural Commissar during the Hungarian revolution in 1919. As Lukács transformed himself into a figure of action during the 133-day Republic, many of the other Sunday Circle contributors were won to the Revolution and socialist politics.

Hauser was one of these, retaining a view of himself as a critical Marxist throughout his life. As with Lukács, who escaped to Vienna after the counter-revolution, Hauser became an exile. In 1919 he left for Italy and in 1922 moved to Berlin and then in 1925 to Vienna himself, where he remained until 1938. On the eve of the war he left for England, where he established his permanent base and where the majority of his writing on aesthetics and art were published, and where he found part-time employment as a lecturer at

Leeds University. In fact, by the time *The Social History of Art* (1951)² was published he was approaching 60, revealing a very different career pattern to that of his more famous peers. Indeed, it was a few years after the publication of *The Social History of Art* that Hauser appears to have been at his most desperate, turning to Adorno, whom he had recently befriended, for help in finding a university job that he believed was commensurate with his abilities and achievements.

Hauser had met Adorno in Frankfurt in January 1954 and from then until the end of the 1950s conducted an extensive (if formal) correspondence, until they fell out.³ However, during this period the two men appeared to be intellectually very close. In fact Adorno and Max Horkheimer praised *The Social History of Art* highly and invited Hauser to lecture at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. But if academic success had eluded Hauser so far, it was to continue to do so. The early correspondence with Adorno is very poignant in this respect. In January 1954 Adorno recommends Hauser for the vacant chair in sociology at Heidelberg. Nothing materialises. In July Adorno writes to the Free University in Berlin recommending Hauser for the position of professor in philosophy. Nothing materialises. Although obviously disappointed, Hauser's search for financial security is subtly underlined in the letters by a desire on his part to join Adorno in Frankfurt. This proves impossible in the end but Hauser clearly feels this is where his intellectual home is, or might be at least. In this respect what dominates the early correspondence is a striking mutual flattery in which Hauser unveils his increasing sympathy for Adorno and Adorno praises Hauser without reservation, as if Hauser was desperate to show himself intellectually willing and Adorno was intent on protecting with kindness what he obviously saw as a very bruised man. In a letter of July 1954 Adorno talks about Hauser's *The Social History of Art* as 'epoch-making' and one of the most important texts published in 'our time' on the science of culture.⁴ Similarly, in a letter of 13 July he says he is 'completely engrossed' in *The Social History of Art*, and wants to make it his own, 'eigen ich es mir ganz und gar zu'.⁵ In a reply on 16 July Hauser refers hopefully, almost gratefully, to 'the flattering affinity of our thinking'.⁶

Little of intellectual substance is actually said in this early correspondence, but nevertheless it is clear that despite Adorno's tone of patrician largesse they shared many points of interest and concern at a time when the Cold War made it difficult to construct any kind of anti-positivist cultural debate on the left. Clearly what attracted Adorno to *The Social History of Art* was its reinvigoration of a socialised aesthetics in which questions of art's autonomy could be discussed as a practical problem of social and cultural division rather than merely as a symptom of cultural decline. In this, Hauser's critical disengagement of the social history of art from a conservative Hegelianised art history (in particular Wöfflin) and a conservative Hegelian Marxism and orthodox Marxism chimed with Adorno's own concern with an aesthetic

theory that was sensitive in non-formalist ways to the particularities of the art object.⁷ Both Adorno and Hauser pursue a radicalised nominalism grounded in artistic subjectivity rather than a generalised and historicist account of form and style. In short, the study of the modern artwork, of modernism, was shaken free from the amorphousness and abstractedness of academic Hegelianism, orthodox Marxist economism and neo-Kantian formalism.

In the 1940s and 1950s this struggle for the *cultural* visibility of the artwork ran counter, of course, to the commonsense progressivism of the Stalinised, fellow-traveller left. Both Adorno's Frankfurt School writings of the 1950s and Hauser's *Social History of Art* are embedded in the critique of the 'vulgar Marxist' elision of the self-consciousness of the modern artwork with formalism. For Hauser, working in Britain in the 1950s, the continuing force of this verdict on the left is not to be underestimated. In 1950, for instance, Lawrence & Wishart published A.A. Zhdanov's collection of speeches on culture, *On Literature, Music and Philosophy*, including the infamous speech he gave at the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 as an intervention into the debate on culture and art. The speeches still make chilling (and bathetic) reading, and show how impacted the cultural debate still was in the communist movement in the 1950s.

Under the slogan of 'overthrow rotten academicism' they called for innovation, and this innovation reached its most insane point when a girl, for instance, would be portrayed with one head and forty legs, one eye looking at you and the other end at the North Pole.⁸

The plays of this Jean Genet are presented with much glitter on the Parisian stage and Jean Genet is showered with invitations to visit America. Such is the 'last word' of bourgeois culture. We know from experience of our victory over fascism into what a blind alley idealist philosophy has led whole nations. Now it appears in its new repulsively ugly character which reflect the whole depth, baseness and loathsomeness of the bourgeoisie.⁹

The rhetoric may be extreme, even for many Party defenders of socialist realism and populism, but the tone of anti-bourgeois vehemence was well rehearsed on the left at the time. Modern art was seen – with the exception perhaps of Picasso's convergence of history painting and cubism in *Guernica* – as the reified expression of a bourgeois culture in terminal decline.¹⁰ This apocalypticism was reinforced by a popular culture and an academic senior-common-room culture that took modern art to be an elaborate fraud. It is always easy to forget how persecuted modernist art, poetry and theatre actually were in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly in Britain. Moreover, when modernism was defended (within small intellectual circles both inside and outside the world of artistic production) the force of the dominant cultural positivism forced practitioners into highly aestheticised defences

of modernist practice, as in Patrick Heron's critique of John Berger's social realism in the pages of the *New Statesman and Nation* and *The Twentieth Century*. In this sense there was very little space for a social history of art that took aesthetic and extra-aesthetic forms of attention equally seriously. This is why Hauser's *The Social History of Art* was so misconstrued by its detractors. On the right, as with Ernst Gombrich for example, it was viewed as an act of cognitive violence against the particularities of the aesthetic, whilst on the left it was felt to be non-committal on what constituted socialist history and cultural practice. Hauser's critique of the available social traditions of engagement with art was made invisible.¹¹

This lack of a critical audience for Hauser's work has been perceived as the cost of his exile from a European philosophical tradition which could have sustained and developed his thinking. This was very much the view of Adorno, whose antipathy to Oxbridge empiricism after his brief sojourn in England is well known. But the obvious problems of exile within an antipathetic philosophical culture should not outweigh the more specific ideological entrenchments and reactions of the discipline of art history itself. Hauser was a professional art historian writing art history 'outside' of the profession itself. By this I mean that as a sociologist and philosopher of culture working within and against Hegelian Marxism, the connoisseurial verities of official Courtauld/St Andrews art history offered few points of reception. The days when art historians such as Anthony Blunt could write for the *Left Review* and debate the political implications of contemporary European art were long over. Art history in Britain was in deep ideological retreat: from Hegel, technology, sociology and of course Marxism. The conventional boundaries of the discipline remained firmly, piously intact. Hauser's identity as a modern European intellectual, therefore, was foreshortened and disparaged by an academic art history that, quite simply, had no workable means of engaging with his terms of reference. For despite the even tone, and its respectful judgements of high culture and the modern literary and artistic canon, *The Social History of Art* ultimately is out to attack what he sees as the massive bifurcation of art from its public after 1848 and the development of the modern capitalist state. This was not something traditional art history took as having a bearing on matters of aesthetic judgement. Crucial to the concluding volume of *The Social History of Art*, on nineteenth-century French culture and the origins of modernism, is the fundamental post-Russian Revolution debate on technology, democracy and art. For Hauser, the rise of the modern proletariat, the development of mass means of reproduction and the demand for socialism in France after 1830 go hand in hand with a modern reading public and the possibility of a working-class popular art. From 1830 the serial novel (serialised in newspapers) 'signifies an unprecedented democratisation of literature and an almost complete reduction of the reading public to one level'.¹² As such, it is quite common at this time amongst this incipient critical public for literary

judgements to be made from the perspective of topical political and social issues. Indeed, 'no one is annoyed at seeing art subordinated to political ideals'.¹³ However, after 1848, with the failure of the bourgeois revolution, the suppression of socialism and the onset of the Bonapartist reaction, modern art became 'homeless and began to lose all practical function'.¹⁴ The Second Empire may be the period of the great naturalists, such as Flaubert, but generally this was a period of popular-cultural decline, a period of 'bad taste' and 'inarticulate trash'.¹⁵ Accordingly, the post-1848 period of French culture is also a period of crisis for a popular audience for serious art. With the cultural marginalisation of the naturalists, the possibility of a broad cross-class audience for art that deals with contemporary social issues also declines.

This narrative of art's public crisis after 1848 is, of course, the great overarching theme which connects Hauser to Lukács, Adorno and the Western Marxist tradition. The sociological details may be different, but the question remains the same: How is it possible for art and literature to produce and sustain a critical public in conditions where looking, reading and learning are manipulated and suppressed by mass entertainment and the seductions of the commodity form? Hauser's response, however, is different from that of Lukács and Adorno in key respects. For Lukács, as is well known, this crisis represents the triumph of bourgeois reification in the working class and the atomisation of class consciousness. The response of artists, therefore, should be to treat artistic struggles as a direct extension of social struggles. That is, art should situate itself in its struggle for a critical public within the wider struggle between socialism and capitalism. But for Lukács, this is never a matter of presenting 'correct' or topical political themes, but of generating a consciousness of capitalism as a totality – hence the importance of literature and realism for Lukács in his war against the effects of social atomisation. For Lukács, the realist novel of the early half of the nineteenth century was the high point of bourgeois cultural achievement, insofar as it was able to create a synoptic view of the struggle between classes as a fictive totalisation of the social world. This novelistic totalisation of the social world was, therefore, a far more progressive form of literary production in a culture where the reification of social relations brought about a fragmentation of social and political consciousness in the working class.¹⁶ This is why Lukács was such a fierce critic of modernism and the modern theory of allegory as responses to this crisis (although ironically he treats Benjamin's sympathetic analysis of Baroque allegory as a confirmation of his own position). Modernism and its allegorical appropriation of the aesthetic fragment denies the typical and 'destroys the coherence of the world'.¹⁷ As a result, it leaves the consciousness of the subjects of the novel in a reified state and prevents the writer from investing the actions of his or her hero with any socially transformative potential.

In essence, it confines writers, their subjects and audience to a melancholic world of 'abstract particularity'.¹⁸

With the development of modern competitive capitalism and modern forms of social administration, the attack on 'abstract particularity' and the defence of the early bourgeois novel becomes a defence of a classical, ideal public for art in historically unpropitious circumstances. This is because for Lukács the fundamental struggle between capitalism and socialism is also about reclaiming and defending the memory and future possibility of an undivided humanness and creativity, of which the cultural achievements and public virtues of ancient Greece (though not its specific forms) remain a guiding model, as they did for Marx. Lukács's ideal reader and spectator, therefore, is one for whom the philosophical embodiments of literature and art engage the reader and spectator in a process of intense self-transformation and shared ethical dialogue with others. Moreover, it is only literature and its philosophical criticism which can achieve this, because it involves the reader in sustained critical study. This is why the figure of the critic himself or herself is in fact Lukács's ideal reader and spectator, someone who is capable of seeing beyond the seductions and thrall of immediate details and sensations to the underlying universal plan or structure. In short, the ideal reader or spectator is Lukács himself; and the Communist Party the place where such readers and spectators might be trained.

This yearning for a lost or muted ideal reader or spectator is also constitutive of Adorno's post-war aesthetic philosophy. But if the crisis of art's reception is as vivid in Adorno as in Lukács, it is addressed from an opposing perspective. Adorno may remain committed to the notion of an ideal, trained reader or spectator, but he is absolutely opposed to the historical veracity of achieving this within a classical framework. For Adorno, the crisis of art's public in the modern epoch is also, at the same time, the release of a multitude of aesthetic subjectivities, which in their autonomy from the state, the Church and political parties, question the very claims to reason and freedom of bourgeois society: 'by congealing into an entity itself – rather than obeying existing social norms and thus proving itself to be "socially useful" – art criticises society just by being there'.¹⁹ 'In an age of repressive collectivism, the power of resistance to compact majorities resides in the lonely, exposed producer of art.'²⁰ In this light, modernism's melancholic fragmentation and abstract particularity is divested of its aesthetic insubstantiality to become the very means of resistance to, and self-definition of, the modern itself. Adorno's defence of modernism is, essentially, a recognition of the overwhelming failure of classical culture to cognise the realities of a divided and unreconciled capitalist world. Hence ugliness and the fragmentary and disaffirmative take on an unprecedented truth content, insofar as they render problematic the self-repression of bourgeois reason and progress. Thus, Adorno's defence of modernism involves a different sense of philosophical responsibility

in the face of the artwork. For Adorno the relationship between ethics and aesthetics does not reside in the execution of a historically proven form which then might sustain a resistance to the forces of anomie and reaction, but in a commitment to the critical transformation of the formal categories of art itself as an ethical ideal. Consequently, if this involves a wider engagement with the problems of modern culture than literature, it also involves a revision of Hegel's demand that art is in greater need of philosophy under modernity than in antiquity. As Hegel says in the *Aesthetics*: 'Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating again, but for knowing philosophically what art is.'²¹ Hegel's advance over Kant to an understanding of art as a conceptual and cognitive entity, however, was at the expense of the heterogeneity of the object itself; the artwork was simply the bearer of 'spirit' alongside other metaphysical systems, reducing the facticity of each work to the mood of a particular *Weltanschauung*. Lukács's philosophical aesthetics is the clear inheritor of the philosophical cognition of the artwork as the embodiment of an external unity. For Adorno, however, such a priorism can only lead to the identity of the thing with its other and thus to a theoretical prejudgement of truth in the name of an abstract and heteronomous truth, as with Lukács's version of realism against modernism. Adorno's overriding preoccupation, therefore, was to philosophically reinvent matters of judgement in order that they might be equal to the art of the epoch. This meant re-evaluating the philosophical character of the modern artwork from a non-identitary, negative position. The philosophical truth of the modern artwork lies not in its claims on conceptual access to some notion of the social totality (albeit metaphoric), but through its fragmentary formal identity itself, that is its actual non-reconciliation with social reality. As such, this disaffirmative and non-reconciliatory reading of the art brings to philosophical consciousness a qualitatively different set of demands for the ideal reader and spectator of the modern epoch. For Adorno's negative Romanticism is principally a commitment to art's powers of self-transformation.

This means that the ethics of the ideal reader or spectator are, at a fundamental level freed from the political demands and sentiment of class-specific interests. In Adorno, the ideal reader or spectator is first and foremost a defender of the formal qualities of the authentic work of art, and not its would-be radical or partisan content. Indeed, Adorno inverts the terms of engagement of the partisan, calling on the ideal reader or spectator to defend the authentic work of art *as* a political and class-specific act. Thus, there is a way of reading Adorno's philosophical aesthetics as reproducing the demands of the ideal classical reader and spectator at a 'higher' level, and therefore reformulating the cognitive ambitions of the classical spectator for the modern epoch. But even if this is plausible, Adorno's reader and spectator imply a quite different understanding of the public domain. Adorno's radical nominalism, his absolute commitment to

looking at the artwork as a source of non-reconcilable particularity, leaves him with little sense of the artwork as a transmittable shared experience. If art is to resist its accommodation to the external forces of instrumental reason it must demand from its interpreters an absolute existential fidelity to the ultimate non-conceptual content of its truth. That is, the interpretation of the work must always accept the limits of any discursive reconstruction of its identity.

For Adorno, then, the crisis of art's reception in the modern epoch cannot be contested or ameliorated by treating art as a form of social praxis with clearly definable discursive responsibilities to 'explain' and 'educate'. In fact art's respect for its audience and for human autonomy lies in a refusal to accept the claims of art's social function. Art respects the masses by opposing what the forces of domination assume the masses deserve. In this sense the artwork acts as a form of remembrance (for a world before domination), rather than as an outright intervention into social reality; art transforms consciousness not by dictating to the reader or spectator the virtue of a particular idea or set of contents, but through the truth of its forms. From this perspective Adorno's ideal reader or spectator is one who defends the pre-figurative truth of the artwork against the transformation of art into a mere fact or datum of communication. Consequently, Adorno advances an extraordinary reversal in terms for the Marxist understanding of art and its audience under modernity. Adorno's emphasis upon sustaining the non-reconcilable identity of art produces a radical decentring of art and its readers and spectators from any dialogic encounter with a common culture. Art can only sustain its authenticity by defeating all attempts to render it a readily available, shared experience. In essence, then, the Adornian ideal reader or spectator is one who learns to read the modern work of art closely as a 'self-enclosed' and non-communicable experience.

Both Lukács's and Adorno's ideal readers and spectators are strong partisan figures, in which are reflected the critical demands of the mass cultural age. In Hauser, by contrast, the ideal reader or spectator is less of an ethically insistent presence and more of a diversified and contingent concept. This is because for Hauser the 'watershed' of 1848 and the rise of modern forms of mass communication and administration are not treated as producing an irreconcilable split between art and its possible public. That is, the absence of a 'unified' serious public for art after 1848 in France, is not judged as an ideal point of origin that has to be redeemed or matched. Thus the crisis of art's reception under modernity is less a problem of defining an ideal reader or spectator who can best contest this sense of historical closure, than an opportunity to examine the new diversification of art and its audience. Accordingly, the principle concern of *The Social History of Art* is how a sociology of art's institutions might throw light on the adaptation of art to changing social forces and the balance of class power. In this way, Hauser is concerned to rectify what he sees as the failure of historical materialism to

trace the interrelations and divisions between high culture and mass culture in ways that avoid the absolutism of a Lukácsian or Adornian position. What preoccupies Hauser, above all else, is to develop a methodology that will address the predicament of art and its public without transforming this predicament into a heteronomous *fait accompli*. However, this does not mean that Hauser does not share Lukács' and Adorno's concern with the derogation and degeneration of aesthetic attention under capitalism, but that this never becomes an issue of epistemological refinement and an ethical burden. For what drives Hauser's sociology of modernity is a strong version of art as embodied technology. Hence the massive development of the forces of production and radical transformation of the relations of production in the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth is not presented as a narrative of *decline* for art despite its reifying and atomising effects. Art and technology for Hauser are dialectically inseparable. In this, *The Social History of Art* as a whole, but particularly the final section of Volume 4, is the first sustained materialist defence of art as *technik* in an English-speaking art-historical context. As a consequence, it is the first introduction of Benjamin's theses on technology and art into a British culture dominated – particularly on the left – by romanticised, craft-based notions of skill, popular appeal and aesthetic value. Hauser had read Benjamin's 'L'Oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée' in the 1936 volume of *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, which was the only available publication of 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility' until the 1960s.²² In Britain in the 1950s Benjamin had little or no audience; his writing wasn't translated until the late 1960s and early 1970s. This places Hauser's *The Social History of Art* in a very privileged position, insofar as he uses Benjamin's theses on art and technology to divest a theory of cultural crisis of an undifferentiated sense of cultural decline, and therefore, of the 'primitive' and nostalgic nostrums which were dominant on both the right and left. As he says in *The Social History of Art*:

The logical mistake they make [Carlyle, Ruskin, William Morris] consisted in an all too narrow definition of technics, in failing to recognize the technical nature of every... manipulation of things, of every contact with objective reality. Art always makes use of a material, technical, tool-like device, of an appliance, a 'machine', and does so so openly that this indirectness and materialism of the means of expression can even be described as one of its most essential characteristics. Art is perhaps altogether the most sensual, the most sensuous 'expression' of the human spirit, and already bound as such to something concrete outside itself, to a technique, to an instrument, no matter whether this instrument is a weaver's loom or a weaving machine, a paint brush or a camera...²³

In Britain in the early 1950s this defence of the labour theory of culture was far in advance of any comparable attempt at a sociology of culture, as,

for example, Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* (1958), which was still attached in many ways to the 'organicism' it was critiquing.²⁴ This is because Hauser had a clear understanding of what a defence of the labour theory of culture implied for a defence of cultural democracy. The whole history of industrial art, he argues, can

be represented as the continuous renewal and improvement of the technical means of expression, and when this is developing normally and smoothly, it can be defined as the complete exploitation and control of these means, as the harmonious adjustment of ability and purpose, of the vehicles and content of expression.²⁵

Questions of value in art, therefore, are not compromised by advancements in the technological production of art, but are actually grounded in, and emerge through, this process. Art is simply the description we give to the inseparability of technological prosthesis and human expression. This allows Hauser to base his analysis of modernity and art on an 'open' model of communication and the dialogic, rather than on a narrative of redemption as in Adorno and Lukács. Indeed what is remarkable (and some would say highly questionable) about this reading of modernity, in contrast to Adorno's, is the lack of a grand sense of the loss of historical reason. Unlike Adorno's sense of the artwork's necessary culpability in a post-Holocaust world of faded utopias, Hauser's modernity appears evolutionist and almost sanguine. In the final section of Volume 4 of *The Social History of Art*, there is some evidence for this in the way the ideological struggles that underwrite the early avant-garde's anti-capitalism are given a pallid, stylistic treatment. But what Hauser's sociology loses in its failure to register the darkness and divisions of modernity, it makes up for in its sensitivity to its different publics and the possibility of art's non-aesthetic intervention into everyday life. In this, Hauser is always acutely aware that the work of art is never just for a subject in the abstract, but part of a wider process of socialisation that can have unpredictable emancipatory effects. Thus he is particularly attuned to those points in the development of mass culture where quantity turns into quality. As he says of Charles Dickens: 'Dickens penetrates into wider circles than Balzac. With the aid of the cheap monthly instalments, he wins a completely new class for literature, a class of people who had never read novels before.'²⁶ This sense of the expansion of literary and rudimentary cultural skills through the technological impact of mass culture is something that always underscores Hauser's ideal reader and spectator. Dickens's novels, for Hauser, may be the work of a petit-bourgeois anti-intellectual with a sentimental attachment to working-class authenticity, but their cognitive complexities and wide range of experiences produced forms of identification and dis-identification which provide scope for increased self-consciousness. As Hauser declares in *The Philosophy of Art History* (1958): 'The products of mass culture not only ruin people's taste [but] also

open the eyes of the majority for the first time to fields of life which they never came in contact with before.²⁷ Now, Adorno might well have been prepared to accept this evaluation, but he would have never justified it as a matter of cultural practice.

It is perhaps no surprise, therefore, that Hauser's reading of modernity in terms of the suppressed communicative potential of art should have been an influence on Peter Bürger's sociology of the avant-garde and Habermas's anti-Adornian communicative-action theory. Habermas, like Hauser, takes it as axiomatic that the 'truths' of art can be released into everyday experience through rational discussion. As Habermas said in reply to his postmodern critics in the early 1980s:

If aesthetic experience is incorporated into the context of individual life-histories, if it is utilised to illuminate a situation and to throw light on individual life-problems – then art enters into a language game which is no longer that of aesthetic criticism but belongs, rather, to everyday communicative practice.²⁸

However, Hauser does not have a communicative-action theory of art as such, rather, what he does possess is a view of art as a potential discursive force in individual life histories. Thus, although it is important to acknowledge the part Hauser's sensitivity to the discursive function of art plays in Habermas's anti-Adornian aesthetic theory, we should also be clear that Hauser is not a precursor or model for Habermas and communicative-action theory. Hauser's critical relationship to Adorno and Lukács is far more complex and troubled than his development of a dialogic theory of art would suggest. This is overwhelmingly evident in Hauser's most theoretically 'dialogic' text, *The Sociology of Art* (1982), first published in German in 1974.²⁹ In many respects this is Hauser's final engagement with orthodox Marxism and the legacy of Adorno and Lukács, and a revision of his more conventional ideal spectator in *The Social History of Art*. Accordingly he returns to the crucial issues of art's relationship to 'knowledge' and 'totality' in order to reposition himself within, and against, Adorno's and Lukács's opposing models of the ideal reader and spectator. For Hauser as with Adorno and Lukács, aesthetic evaluation is overwhelmingly an ethical dialogue between the self and the other as a potential mastery over unreason. But Hauser, unlike Adorno and Lukács, sees this as principally a practical category, in which aesthetic judgements and learning are productive forces in the lives of the subject and others. The notion of self-transformation through exposure to the transcendental promise of the artwork – so central, in their respective ways, to both of Adorno's and Lukács' models of the ideal reader and spectator – is divested, therefore, of what I would call a submission to the idea of art as 'other'. The consciousness of the artwork becomes a matter of 'ordinary' cognition. However, this is not to confuse matters of practicality with matters of abstract political effectivity or scientific adequacy or any

other kind of shibboleth of those keen to elide all mention of knowledge in art with instrumentalism. As Hauser argues:

We try in art, as we do in moral practice and in the individual sciences, to discover the nature of the world with which we have to deal and how we may best survive in it. Works of art are deposits of experiences and are directed, like all cultural achievements, towards practical ends.³⁰

As a source of knowledge, the artwork achieves its ends through the disparate creative and cognitive uses to which it is put in the individual's own life. As such, its truth relation to the world is not contained in any intellectual transmittance of the truth content of the work of art itself, but in how the content is evaluated and put to work.

'Truth' always resides in the work of art. That is it is a law – however, stylised, fantastic, or absurd the structure may be as a whole – the elements from which a work of art is put together derive from the world of experiences and not from a supersensual, supernatural world of ideas.³¹

The truth content of the artwork, therefore, is identifiable as an 'intellectual' experience insofar as it enjoins the reader and spectator in a consciousness of his or her own existence and the existence of others. Art's importance lies in its 'participation in the human endeavour to come to terms with reality and survive in the struggle for existence'.³² In this sense, art is always 'concerned with altering life' and a means of 'taking possession of the world'.³³

This reader-reception theory of spectatorship is a suggestive response to the problem of art's social dysfunctionality, because it places the contingent uses of the artwork over and above any abstract ethical defence of the artwork's formal values. In the 1980s and 1990s this approach became a mainstay of theories of spectatorship of popular culture. The dominant reader or spectator of popular culture is one who treats the form or text as a source from which divergent meanings can be made. As a result there is little or no respect for authorial intentions and the formal integrity of the work. The 'undisciplined' reader or spectator takes what is appropriate to his or her own needs and interests, ignoring the contextual meanings in which the work is embedded. Cultural studies in the 1980s and 1990s treated this kind of reader or spectator as liberatory in its rejection of the reader or spectator who learns to subordinate his or her interests to the demands of authorial intention.³⁴ For Hauser this would certainly have had a great deal of appeal. Hauser's ideal reader or spectator is likewise concerned with opening up aesthetic judgement to the evaluations and needs of everyday experience. But Hauser was not strictly writing about the included consumer of popular culture, he was writing about the excluded consumer of art. In this he retains an Adornian and Lukácsian commitment to the artwork as the ever-present

reminder of cultural and social division, and therefore not something that is simply assimilable to reader-reception theory. Unlike contemporary cultural-studies theorists, he is opposed to collapsing the 'ordinary' user of art into the 'ordinary' user of popular culture; art's truths may have a discursive impact on individual life histories in the way popular culture does on a mass scale, but the apprehension of these truths involves forms of understanding and sensitivity that popular culture cannot afford to countenance in its pursuit of profit, sensation and community.³⁵ In these terms, Hauser's ideal spectator is an interesting resolution of the class-bound consumer of art. Instead of fighting to defend the idea of aesthetic or proletarian vigilance in matters of aesthetic evaluation, he opens up the educated spectator of art to an extra-aesthetic account of use value. In conditions of mass technological dissemination, the destruction of left-modernism, and the market integration of art, the pursuit of an overweening ideal spectator produces a fantasy of resistance. The production and evaluation of meaning must begin from a sense of art's historical contingency and, therefore, from the immediate problems of contemporary production and reception. For Hauser, ironically, this has Lukácsian-type ambitions. The contingent conditions of production and reception of the artwork are both permeated by, and reveal, the traces of the social totality. But this knowledge is not, as it is with Lukács, to be sought and channelled self-consciously in any singular practice, which as Adorno identified, reifies the idea of 'totality' in Lukács's aesthetics in the preferred form of the social realist novel. On the contrary this knowledge is to be found in a plurality of forms and activities, and as such recognises that many different kinds of art acquire their value in 'conjunction with the totality of life'.³⁶ That is, because art is produced out of the struggles and necessities of existence, it is *already* embedded in the social totality of life.

Interestingly, Hauser calls this 'activist' impulse of the artwork realist, taking care to distinguish this concept from any confusion with a vulgar Marxist or conventional stylistic notion of realist aesthetics. This is certainly fortuitous for my broader argument in this essay. Because, as I have argued elsewhere, the importance of Hauser's contribution to the 'de(right-wing)-Hegelianisation' and 'de-Kantianisation' of art history and philosophical aesthetics in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s is in his realist insistence on a differentiated and stratified understanding of the crisis of art's production and reception.³⁷ That is, in rejecting the aestheticism of neo-Kantianism and the philosophical heteronomy of a conservative Hegelian Marxism, Hauser's turn to sociology owes a significant debt to the realist implications of Marx's method in the *Grundrisse*.³⁸ When Marx talks in the *Grundrisse* about historical materialism as an interrelational approach to individuals and social groups, there is a clear implication that Marxism is not a metatheory, but the explanatory and dialectical setting for interdisciplinary work. All Hauser's writing from *The Social History of Art* onwards pursues this interdisciplinary ideal. As he argues in *The Philosophy of Art History*, the artwork is the

outcome of at 'least three different types of conditions: psychological, sociological and stylistic'.³⁹ Essentially, Hauser's aim is to break with both empiricism and the reductive materialism of orthodox or vulgar Marxism through an insistence on the multiple mechanisms underlying the production and consumption of art.⁴⁰ In this regard what was exemplary about Hauser's writing in the 1950s and 1960s was that it began to analyse the artistic subject, art object and audience as a conceptually distinct, if ontologically related, set of problems. Thus the notion of art's audience was extracted from the realms of art-historical vagueness to be grounded in specific class and institutional settings, just as the interpretation of the object was divested of pseudo-objectification. The interpretation of art is 'necessarily involved in [a process of] misrepresentation'.⁴¹ Similarly the artistic subject was lifted out of the homogeneity of the precedents of tradition or the 'constraints of bourgeois society' to function as an agent of his or her own dissonant and dissident reason. The artist is 'always creating for himself new possibilities in no way prescribed by his society',⁴² what Hauser calls the interrelationship of spontaneity and convention.⁴³ It is a mistake, therefore, to settle for a Hauser who explains the aesthetic reductively in terms of social and material forces.⁴⁴ On the contrary, Hauser's achievement, specifically in *The Philosophy of Art History* and *The Sociology of Art*, is to treat the question of value in art as a determinate historical and cultural problem without prescribing how this problem might be 'resolved' socially and formally. In this, his sensitivity to the necessary self-consciousness of the modern artwork and self-becoming of the artist under the conditions of art's alienation is Adornian. But in opposition to Adorno, he treats the adverse conditions of modernity as the means *through* which art's practical values are to be tested. This makes his sense of the historical bereavement of art weak, but it makes his sense of the contingent dialogic possibilities of art strong. For what remains important about Hauser's work is its resistance to any theorisation of aesthetic value outside of the concrete realisation of artistic practices and their audiences. As such, if this makes his 'practical' ideal spectator less available to defend the achievements of modernist high culture or even the place of art in the revolutionary critique of political economy, it at least allows a more inclusive conversation about the problem of value in art to prevail. And, whatever the limits and fantasy of this 'inclusion' might actually mean under current historical conditions, this continues to be the critical horizon of any social and dialectical history of art worthy of the name.

10

New Left Art History's International

Andrew Hemingway

The project of a Marxist art history, like any other political project, is necessarily a collective one. In this essay I sketch the movement out of which our contemporary practice issues in the form of an institutional and bibliographical account. This is followed by a consideration of the theoretical issues that were raised by the work of the 1970s and 1980s and on the significance of its heritage for us today.

INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANS

Like the radical student movement of the 1960s from which it drew its dissident energies, the art history of the New Left was an international phenomenon. In effect, it was the product of groupings of various strengths in Britain, France, Germany and the United States, which achieved some degree of common cause through personal contacts, conferences, and the diffusion of translated material in the small periodicals each generated. Pre-eminent amongst these groupings in its size and level of organisation was that in Germany, where the student movement had been given a focus in the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS), which split from the Social Democratic Party in 1961. The SDS was not only exceptionally effective in critiquing the undemocratic character of university education and demonstrating against US imperialism, it was also theoretically engaged with the highly sophisticated Marxism of the Frankfurt School, which offered one of the most productive strands of cultural analysis within the broad tradition of Marxist thought. In 1968, year of mass student demonstrations throughout Germany, a group of progressive art historians formed the Ulmer Verein für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften (UV) at the Congress of the Verband Deutscher Kunsthistoriker (VDK) in Ulm, with an agenda for the radical reform and democratization of art history, partly driven by the continuing presence of former National Socialists within the German university system. Two years later, in a session on 'Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung' at the VDK Congress, a group of younger art historians gave papers united by a common insistence that the discipline could not be seen simply as an objective science, and arguing its ideological complicity with various social interests.¹ In 1974 the UV launched its own organ, *Kritische Berichte*, which took its title from

the famous inter-war journal of the same name, and a series of books eventually appeared under its imprint.² By 1977, the UV claimed around 400 members and had effectively become a rival to the VDK, no longer just an offshoot.³ The intellectual ground for this impressive collective achievement had evidently been laid in the 1960s, as the beginning of the following decade saw the appearance of a sequence of major Marxist art-historical publications, including Michael Müller and Reinhardt Bentmann, *Die Villa als Herrschaftsarchitektur* (1971),⁴ Michael Müller et al., *Autonomie der Kunst: Zur Genese und Kritik einer bürgerlichen Kategorie* (1972) and O.K. Werckmeister, *Ende der Ästhetik: Essays über Adorno, Bloch, das gelbe Unterseeboot und der eindimensionale Mensch* (1971). *Kritische Berichte* in the 1970s was the forum for a whole range of gifted historians, including Horst Bredekamp, Jutta Held, Klaus Herding, Jost Hermand, Berthold Hinz, Kathryn Hoffmann-Curtius, Wolfgang Kemp, Hans-Ernst Mittag, Norbert Schneider and Martin Warnke among others. In addition to its engagement with the problems of art-historical pedagogy and the museums (critical exhibition reviews were a particularly lively component of the journal), its innovative features included articles on the social history of architecture, on the arts under National Socialism and on the history of photography. Although appraisals of the work of Antal, Hauser and Raphael appeared in its pages, its contributors seemed relatively unconcerned by the example of earlier Marxist art history, but instead, and unsurprisingly in the context, treated the theory of the Frankfurt School as the key model with which they had to engage.⁵ However, the attitude of Werckmeister (who had been based in the United States at the University of California at Los Angeles since 1965), as articulated in a forceful essay of 1973 titled 'Ideologie und Kunst bei Marx',⁶ seems to have been shared by many.

Werckmeister argued that the Marxist aesthetics of the Soviet bloc and of the Frankfurt School, however different in some respects, were both symptoms of the fact that the goal of revolutionary change was off the agenda in 'a politically stabilized, static socio-economic order'. Marx himself had not formulated an aesthetics, not because he never found the time, but because it was fundamentally incompatible with his notion of art as an activity 'free of any social purpose', which was perennially estranged from its own essence throughout history and was subsumed under the category of ideology in class societies. The very project of aesthetics as a science of art in general that covered a whole range of diverse practices was itself precisely the kind of ideological abstraction to which Marx and Engels had counterposed their own science of history. Far from art being the embodiment of a special kind of truth as aesthetics proposed,

the more historical research relates the messages of art works from the past and present to the socially conditioned functions for which they were originally intended, the more the concept of ideology, by which their seeming truths and values are reconverted into

the subjective beliefs and purposes of those who lived with it, imposes itself as the fundamental category of a history of art true to its name.⁷

Trenchant as the presentation of Werckmeister's argument was, his conception of the relationship between art and ideology seems undialectical, and there will be plenty of Marxists who find his conception of Marx's method too straightforwardly naturalistic to register adequately the complex relations between the dialectic and empirical inquiry that characterises his mature writings.⁸ However, the relationship between dialectic and naturalism in Marxist method is a matter of continuing debate, and Werckmeister's work matches with a long tradition in Marxist thought that has generated work of considerable stature.⁹

It is a sign of the alienation of the 1960s student generation from the dominant institutions and values of contemporary bourgeois culture – the evident complicity of museums and academic institutions with capitalist interests and state power – that the art historians of the New Left in other national contexts would arrive at the same conclusion, even though they did so by different theoretical routes. Despite the range and exemplary character of the work of the UV historians, surprisingly little of it has appeared in English,¹⁰ and many in the British and American art-historical New Left do not seem quite to have grasped its collective import. Further accounts of the German art-historical left are given in the essays by Jutta Held and O.K. Werckmeister in this volume.¹¹

When art historians from Germany met with invited representatives from Britain (T.J. Clark) and the United States (David Kunzle) at a colloquium on Marxist art history in Marburg in June 1979 and heard reports on the left art-history movements in their countries, these seemed very small and under-organised by comparison with the German scene.¹² With regard to the United States, this can have been less the effect of a lack of student militancy than of the absence of any significant party of the left and the virtual eradication of Marxism as an intellectual tradition within the nation during the Cold War. In fact, Students for a Democratic Society (1960–70) boasted an organisation equal to that of the German SDS. But the formation of the American art-historical New Left was less coordinated and more bound up with the rise of militant artists' organisations and the women's movement than its German counterpart. In this regard, it is relevant that art historians' main professional organisation in the United States, the College Art Association (CAA), is also that for artists. The first sign of a radical critique of both art history and art practice from within the professions was the formation of the New Art Association (NAA) of the CAA in January 1970 as 'an active and critical group' within the larger organisation. Among the art historians who participated in this were Carol Duncan, Edward Fry, Patricia Hills, Eunice Lipton, Linda Nochlin, D. Stephen Pepper and Alan Wallach. In October and November of that year, the NAA held a three-

day conference at the State University of New York at Buffalo, attended by more than a hundred participants. 'We are against the artificial segregation of the study of art from other disciplines and its careful protection from social issues', and 'We are against the fragmentation of knowledge which suppresses the real implication of our cultural heritage by providing an ideology which upholds the racist, patriarchal and class structure of our society', its manifesto asserted.¹³ At the CAA's annual meeting at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago in February 1971, the swanky official banquet contrasted with the NAA panel on the theme of 'The Politics of Culture: An Open Forum on the Political and Economic Underpinnings of the Visual Arts' held across the hall, which included satirical presentations by the Art Workers Coalition.¹⁴ Unfortunately, all this energy was not given focus by a clear political or theoretical agenda, and after a disastrous second convention held at the School of the Dayton Art Institute in Dayton, Ohio, in October, the NAA petered out.¹⁵

The New Art Association was more concerned with issues of artists' economic needs, academic employment and pedagogy than with theory.¹⁶ But that theory was needed was evident to socialist-feminists involved with the first of the feminist art journals, *Women and Art*, who in 1972 published a special supplement 'On Art and Society' which reprinted Meyer Schapiro's then little-known paper 'The Social Bases of Art' and Max Raphael's previously untranslated 'Workers and the Historical Heritage of Art' amongst other texts.¹⁷ The alliance between radical artists and art historians was also vividly represented by an *anti-catalog*, produced by a number of different artists' groupings who banded together in late 1975 under the name of Artists Meeting for Cultural Change (AMCC) to critique the Whitney Museum of American Art's decision to display the collection of Mr and Mrs John D. Rockefeller III as a bicentennial exhibit of *Three Centuries of American Art*, despite the private character of the collection and the fact that it included work by only one woman artist and none by black artists. 'Such a celebration of exploitation and acquisition was hardly an appropriate homage to our long-buried revolution', the AMCC asserted. In the face of an exhibition that constructed the "'history" of American art from the standpoint of the ruling class', the Catalog Committee of the AMCC produced an eighty-page collective text that sought to 'demystify' that history under such headings as 'The Love of Art and the Love of Public Relations', 'Black Art and Historical Omission', and 'Looking for Women in the Rockefeller Collection'.¹⁸ The *anti-catalog* was not academic art history, but more a combination of artists' book and artist activism played out in the form of art-historical critique – and none the worse for that. Like so many other initiatives of the period, it was a space in which a critical and historical discourse was generated outside the constraints of academia and mainstream art publishing. What it lacked in terms of scholarly polish, it more than made up for in terms of political edge and collective agency.¹⁹

The same year that AMCC formed, three art historians at the University of California at Los Angeles – T.J. Clark, David Kunzle, and O.K. Werckmeister – initiated the idea for a session on ‘Marxism and Art History’ at the annual CAA conference of 1976, which led to the formation of the Caucus for Marxism and Art History, subsequently renamed the Caucus for Marxism and Art to acknowledge the broadening of its base to include politically radical artists such as Rudolf Baranik, Ursula Meyer, Martha Rosler, May Stevens and Allan Sekula. The Caucus organised sessions (usually more than one) at the CAA’s conferences over the years 1976–80, sessions that drew large audiences and prompted vigorous debate. At the first of these occasions, statements by the speakers were available in mimeograph sets, and the proceedings of the meetings of 1977, 1978 and 1979 were also published. However, the Caucus had neither enough members nor sufficient funds to launch a journal of its own, and by 1979 leading figures such as Clark and Werckmeister were losing interest in it and it was having difficulty generating sufficient papers by North American scholars to justify a session, or indeed its own continuance. In this regard, the fate of the Marxist Caucus contrasts strikingly with the continued growth and vitality of the CAA Women’s Caucus for Art (launched in 1972) and the succession of feminist institutional initiatives and art magazines in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1980, both the Marxist Caucus sessions at the CAA conference in New Orleans were given over to women speakers addressing questions of feminism and ‘the politics of sexuality’ – although this was conceived as a gesture of solidarity with the Women’s Caucus, many of whose members chose to boycott the event to protest the fact that Louisiana had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.²⁰ In 1976, the CAA had devoted a whole issue of its quarterly *Art Journal* to feminist art history, and in 1982 the first anthology on the theme appeared.²¹ By contrast, not only were the Marxist art historians unable to realise a collective volume illustrating Marxist approaches, they either published in the new British journal *Art History*, or tried to make a space in non-specialist Marxist periodicals such as the brilliant but short-lived *Marxist Perspectives* (1978–80) or the California-based *Praxis: A Journal of Radical Perspectives on the Arts* (1975–82). Their weakness also contrasted with that of American left-wing historians, who in 1973 had established the Mid-Atlantic Radical Historians’ Organization, and in the following year launched the dynamic *Radical History Review*, which was (and remains) alert to cultural matters.²²

In the years around 1950, Antal and Hauser had both assumed (mistakenly at that point) that a ‘social history of art’ was becoming the common sense of the discipline.²³ Two decades later, this seemed to those in the Marxist Caucus to be precisely the problem. At its first session in 1976, there was reportedly ‘considerable debate around the difference between a Marxist approach to art and the social history of art as practiced by historians not calling themselves Marxist’, and in his paper T.J. Clark observed the way in which ‘experience’

substituted for ideology in that kind of art history ‘which feels the need to refer to those historical realities with which artist and patron are constantly in contact, but which dares not name those structures which mediate and determine the nature of that contact’, citing Michael Baxandall’s *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, but also doubtless thinking of J.J. Pollitt’s *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* (both published in 1972).²⁴ Clark argued that art history had to be fought on its own terrain, that Marxism should demonstrate its superiority to ‘bourgeois art history’ by showing that its own procedures generated a more complex and real grasp of artworks than its rival, for all that rival’s ‘much vaunted “contact with the object”, its spermatorrhoeic love affair with “creativity” and “genius”’. By Marx’s own example, revolutionary politics was not to be separated from theoretical work or patient labour in the libraries and archives. The emphasis of Werckmeister’s paper was rather on the inherent contradictions that Marxist art history faced within ‘a capitalist society which shows no sign of being actively changed in a direction envisaged by Marxist political theory’: a ‘critical art history, by its own dynamic as a social science, is bound to turn against the ideological functions which art is assigned in capitalist institutions’. It was obliged ‘to become one of the critical factors within this society’ and to aim for producing in students the ‘coherent historical consciousness which is the condition for political consciousness’.²⁵ The two statements were not contradictory, but in retrospect they seem to foretell a difference of emphasis with regard to art history’s political instrumentality that would be reinforced by other differences.

Despite these acute opening statements, the Marxist Caucus did not generate a sustained theoretical or political debate – or at least none that has left a printed record. The most significant theoretical statement it published was Peter Klein’s critique of Hauser’s social history of art, which argued that Hauser’s model was ‘overly schematic’, and effectively represented a mapping of Wölfflinian style history onto a social and cultural history that owed more to Weber and Mannheim than it did to Marx. Hauser’s positions on ideology and aesthetic value were self-contradictory and implied ‘an abdication of critical, scientific rationality’. All told, they represented an ‘undigested amalgam of ethical idealism and historical materialism’ that betrayed the fact that he, unlike his friend Lukács, had not escaped the thinking of pre-First World War Budapest intellectual circles. His was the ‘harmless, castrated Marxism’ of ‘a typical left bourgeois’, comparable to ‘most members of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Habermas, etc.)’.²⁶ This onslaught on historicism was matched by a paper on the implications of the changing historical reception of works of art for ideology critique by the Paris-based Greek art historian Nicos Hadjinicolaou, intended to defend arguments against aesthetics he had already advanced in his 1973 book *Histoire de l’art et lutte des classes*.²⁷ In the context, it seems striking that there was no attempt to assess the heritage of Meyer Schapiro’s work, apart from a

rather inept attempt by Donald Kuspit to identify the dialectical element within it.²⁸

In the event, the CAA Marxist Caucus saw the presentation of a number of papers that would issue in some of the classic essays of Marxist art history of the 1970s by scholars such as Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, Serge Guilbaut, David Kunzle and Eunice Lipton.²⁹ But that the pool of such scholarship was severely restricted is illustrated by the fact that the most powerful contributions to the last of the published *Proceedings* were by non-American scholars, namely Michel Melot, of the French *Histoire et critique des arts* group, and the Caucus's UK representative, Adrian Rifkin.³⁰ After 1980 the Caucus dissipated. This does not mean, of course, that Marxist art history simply disappeared from the scene, and many of the individuals who had been involved in the Caucus continued to produce politically engaged work, but they did so without the collective focus the Caucus had briefly provided.

In Britain, where academic art history was a relative latecomer and a much smaller affair than in North America, there was no professional body for the discipline until the formation of the Association of Art Historians (AAH) in 1974. Although from 1976 onwards both session themes and individual papers at the AAH's annual conference demonstrated interest in the conjunction of art and social history, and T.J. Clark gave a plenary paper at the 1977 meeting,³¹ the first clearly Marxist-oriented session was that headed 'Art/Politics', organised by Adrian Rifkin for the 1980 conference. Throughout the 1980s the AAH's annual meetings provided the occasion for a sequence of forums with some Marxist papers, but after the end of the decade such contributions were distinctly in a minority.³² Under the liberal and imaginative editorship of John Onians, its journal *Art History* (launched in 1978) was quite receptive to Marxist work³³ – as was the *Oxford Art Journal*, which was set up by a group of Oxford postgraduates in the same year. However, it is symptomatic of the sociology of British education that the most important and stimulating textual focus for critical art history in Britain was not the discipline's official journal, but a magazine put out on a shoestring budget by a group of art and design historians at Middlesex Polytechnic under the Constructivist-sounding title *Block*, which was launched in 1979.³⁴ Of necessity, this group was primarily oriented towards art practice and more concerned with design history and the mass media, since outside the universities art historians were employed mainly to teach art and design students and worked in institutions at that time far more open to various forms of media studies and to interdisciplinary work.³⁵ *Block*'s bold sans serif titles and its double-column layout were also part of its challenge, making it feel more like a topical magazine than some dusty academic journal.

Block is partly a register of the extraordinary vitality of the educational culture that was created by the 1960s student generation before the

Conservative Party's education cuts and the so-called 'reforms' that imposed oppressive management regimes, increasingly onerous workloads and a philistine culture of relentless quantification on the colleges and polytechnics, subsequently re-branded as 'new universities'. The radicalism of the 1960s also had an afterlife in a whole range of cognate publications with which *Block* and its contributors were in dialogue, publications such as the stencilled papers of Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *Camerawork*, *History Workshop Journal*, *Radical Philosophy*, *Red Letters* and *Screen*. From the outset, *Block's* quality of vibrant cultural radicalism partly came from the artists its editors managed to involve, including, amongst others, Rudolf Baranik, Susan Hiller, Mary Kelly, Barbara Kruger, Nancy Spero and May Stevens. Moreover, artists did not only provide examples of their work; some – Terry Atkinson, Peter Dunn, Lorraine Leeson, Tony Rickaby, Martha Rosler and Jo Spence among them – contributed major critical and historical pieces. For instance, Rickaby's article on the Artists' International Association was a groundbreaking piece of research on communist cultural history, while Spence's on Heartfield's photomontage remains an exemplary instance of Marxist–feminist analysis.³⁶

The Marxist orientation of many of *Block's* contributions in the journal's first three years was pronounced. However, it was a Marxism very different in flavour from that of the groupings I have referred to in Germany and the United States, because of the particular direction of New Left cultural analysis in Britain more broadly. In this regard, the main disciplinary loci for theoretical work were not art history, but historical, literary and film studies, the latter in particular constituting a kind of perceived avant-garde. In all these areas in the 1970s it seemed to many as if the Marxism of Louis Althusser was at the cutting edge of 'theoretical practice', to invoke that philosopher's own terminology. But what accompanied Althusser's Marxism – and indeed at the time to many seemed readily compatible with his particular variant – were a semiology drawn from Barthes and a theory of the subject drawn from psychoanalysis, and more specifically from Lacan.³⁷ Apart from an article by John Tagg on Raphael in the second issue, the *Block*-ites generally showed little interest in the earlier achievements of Marxist art history, and the work of Althusser and his follower Pierre Macherey generally served as a measure for the past.³⁸ Both Alan Wallach and Adrian Rifkin wrote of the need for Marxist art historians to make a proper appraisal of their own ancestry, and particularly the work of Antal, but this call was not heeded in the pages of *Block* or elsewhere.³⁹ Part of the problem was that the category of style, so crucial to the art history of Antal, Hauser and Schapiro because of their need to supersede the German-language art history that offered the most sophisticated theoretical models to date, seemed to have been remaindered by the arrival of structuralist theories of meaning, which claimed greater scientific exactitude and were

seen as inherently superior to models of style history tainted with Hegelian idealism. The fact that Saussurean linguistics itself was vulnerable to the charge of idealism was recognised by some, but this did not lead to any deeper appraisal of the value of style, which was seen as one cause of the overly generalised correlations between art and ideology in the work of Antal and Hauser.⁴⁰ In the fervid embrace of French intellectual trends, the achievements and complexities of the German-language tradition of art history were consigned to the has-beens.

I do not want to suggest that some of *Block's* more reflective contributors were unaware of problems in the *Screen* theory model, that the 'applicability to the visual image of a theory primarily developed in relation to the literary text' could not be assumed, or that 'the seductiveness of Barthes' rhetoric should not blind us to the idealism in the implicit separation of signification from production', for instance.⁴¹ Neither do I want to belittle the seriousness with which these issues were addressed. But it seems now (as it did to the author then) that theory always needed to be corrected through yet more theory in a condition of perpetual change, so that fundamental problems of the relationship between say the systems of Lacan and Foucault and historical materialism were never worked out, and the practice of Marxist historical analysis itself was not developed in relation to the new model – partly perhaps because it could not be. This was a problem that Rifkin identified in a note appended to the incisive assessment of the challenges facing a Marxist art history that made up his opening talk at the 1980 'Art/Politics' session as it appeared in *Block*:

I would have liked... to have dealt with some new obstructions, some of which arise not from a dogmatic Marxism, but from an over openness that tends to eclecticism, to a mingling of different conceptual structures, with little regard either for their concrete philosophical relation to each other, or to their political and social character.⁴²

Unfortunately, although some major essays in Marxist historical work appeared in *Block*,⁴³ this reckoning between historical materialism and these sundry more recent developments did not take place in its pages. A sign of the times was Griselda Pollock's article 'Vision, Voice and Power: Feminist Art History and Marxism' of 1982. While at one level this was a critique of some established variants of feminist art history and a call for them to be corrected through a sophisticated Althusserian Marxism, in arguing that feminists should make a 'fruitful raiding of Marxism for its explanatory instruments' to advance their own agenda, Pollock left the relationship between Marxism and feminism as political projects undefined, and, correspondingly, seemed to assume that no theoretical reconciliation between the two was possible.⁴⁴ When in 1985 *Block's* editors looked back on the ten issues that they had seen through the press, they made clear that the orientation of the magazine was firmly of the left, but made no reference

to Marxism or socialism.⁴⁵ The savage attack on the institutions of British social democracy and the trade unions (and particularly the shattering defeat of the 1984–85 miners' strike) by the Thatcher government provides one context for this. But another is the concurrent sense of intellectual disarray produced by the advent of postmodernism. We can take John Tagg's 1985 article 'Art History and Difference' as more broadly symptomatic of the intellectual mood. 'Five to ten years ago', Tagg wrote, 'it was possible to imagine a central unified project, crucially marked by the conjunction of Marxism and Art History', but 'the confidence of ten years ago seems now in need of its own explanatory archaeology'. His conclusion was that 'no singular strategy can do anything but conceal the inherent complexities and necessary diversity of response'. It was not that the supposed 'Marxism–Feminism–psychoanalysis' triplet would not hold together because they were conceptually incompatible, nor was it that the particular forms through which the three might be reconciled had yet to be achieved; it was rather that there was simply no 'homogeneous Reality' to which they all referred. Rather than being contradictory, social reality was simply diverse. Lacking an adequate concept of totality, lacking an adequate conception of the dialectic, Althusserian Marxism (with its feminist and semiological additions) collapsed in the face of the challenges of the postmodern. Lyotard trumped Marx!⁴⁶ Thereafter, Marxist art history became increasingly rare in *Block's* pages.

Another important focus for New Left art history, and one with a different theoretical focus, was History Workshop, which represented the alliance between politically engaged art historians and the new history from below associated with Marxist scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm and E.P. Thompson. Althusserianism was debated in the pages of the journal *History Workshop*, but implicitly, at least, it was Gramsci who provided the framework for its underlying project. As with *Block*, *History Workshop* was also a space in which the relations between Marxism and feminism were negotiated, and in 1982 the journal changed its subtitle from *A Journal of Socialist Historians* to *A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians*. The issue of Autumn 1978 had included a special feature on 'Art, Politics, and Ideology', which contained articles by the historians Hobsbawm and Louis James, the design historian John Heskett and the artist Tony Rickaby, and an introduction by Raphael Samuel that argued for a more visually aware social history and a more socially aware history of art.⁴⁷ To this end, History Workshop organised intermittent 'Art and Society Workshops' between at least 1977 and the early 1980s, active players in these events including, among others, Tom Gretton, Hannah Mitchell, Stanley Mitchell, Alex Potts and Adrian Rifkin. Moreover, throughout the decade the journal published a small number of important articles on art-historical themes.⁴⁸ Yet valuable as all this work was in broadening out art history's remit and extending it beyond the familiar canon of great works into the realms of printed ephemera and

other 'low' materials, it did not centrally address the key questions of the aesthetic and the constitution of art history's special domain.

In a summary dismissal of Marxist art history, Donald Preziosi has suggested that it was counterposed to an ill-defined notion of the bourgeois discipline, which functioned as a kind of straw man.⁴⁹ This is not the case. During the early and mid 1980s, New Left art historians in all the countries considered here published a sequence of swingeing exhibition critiques that indicted both the conceptual inconsequentiality of catalogues and displays, and the conservative political assumptions that underpinned them.⁵⁰ In Britain, landscape painting functioned as a kind of ideological pressure point, both because of the intense mythologising that surrounded landscape in the culture at large, and because of the tensions between the Thatcher government's modernising project (which included a symbolic assault on motifs within British conservatism associated with the party's aristocratic residues) and its simultaneous ratcheting up of elements from traditional nationalist rhetoric to silence its internal critics and justify its bellicose foreign policy.⁵¹

The 1970s had seen a sequence of innovative exhibitions around British landscape painting at London's Tate Gallery, which already intimated a new approach to the field informed by social and intellectual history.⁵² However, none of these took note of the new Marxist social and cultural history of rural England associated, most notably, with Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé, E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams. The turning point in this regard was the 1980 publication of John Barrell's *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730–1840*, which opened with an acknowledgment of the transformation that Thompson's work in particular had wrought in understanding Georgian history. The book's essays represented

an attempt to study the image of rural life in the painting of the period 1730–1840... taking advantage of the new freedom that Thompson's works have given us to compare ideology in the eighteenth century, as it finds expression in the arts of the period, with what we may now suspect to have been the actuality of eighteenth-century life.⁵³

Barrell's academic base is literature, and he did not pretend that *The Dark Side of the Landscape* was art history as such. None the less, this and his other work in eighteenth-century studies acted as a reference point for a sequence of subsequent publications by David Solkin, Michael Rosenthal and Ann Bermingham.⁵⁴ Of these, the first was the most controversial, taking the form of a catalogue to the Tate Gallery's 1982 exhibition *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction*, which from the title alone announced a radical break with the preoccupations of gentlemanly connoisseurship. This promise was realised both in Solkin's substantial volume of 251 pages – unusually large for an exhibition catalogue at that time – and in the didactic arrangement

of the display. Although Solkin's text made only an endnote reference to Thompson, he did pointedly align himself with the by now controversial Barrell,⁵⁵ and insistently described eighteenth-century society in terms of class division. Although he seemed to avoid the term ideology (preferring the Barthesian 'mythology'), he defined the attitudes that underpinned form and iconography in Wilson's landscapes with a profound knowledge of eighteenth-century poetry and political theory, which for the most part had great explanatory power. Exhibition and catalogue alike – the latter having been ironically sponsored by Britoil – made an extraordinary impact, and were denounced in editorials in the *Daily Telegraph* and the conservative arts magazine *Apollo* for intruding Marxism into the gracious world of Georgian Britain and a national institution funded by public money. But they were also attacked in organs of liberal opinion such as the *Guardian*, *New Statesman*, and *Times Literary Supplement* for implying that the viewing of great art was not a self-sufficient experience to which historical knowledge (particularly of a Marxist-tinged kind) was an irrelevant distraction.⁵⁶ Barrell, and those associated with him, would keep British art of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a politically charged area into the 1990s.⁵⁷

Despite the theoretical volatility of the French student movement and despite the role that art students had played in the events of May and June 1968 in Paris, it is striking that in the nation where student rebellion had come closest to a revolutionary issue the New Left established a collective voice in art history quite late on. The *Histoire et Critique des Arts* group, launched in 1977, addressed itself to students (explicitly 'étudiantes et étudiants') and all art professionals,

to combat in a manner as collective and systematic as possible the prevailing conceptions and practices, effects of the social and political domination of the bourgeoisie, to transform the relations between those who practise the arts and those who study them, and to propose other ways of addressing the interpretation, conservation, diffusion and 'consumption' of works of art and archaeological remains.

It would combat the 'total domination of bourgeois thought in the domain of the arts' from a Marxist perspective, acknowledging the divergent tendencies that claimed to be Marxism, but refusing any exclusive variant.⁵⁸

Histoire et Critique des Arts was impressively international in orientation. It arranged for Ulmer Verein historians to speak in Paris, and conferences it organised at Besançon on 'Les Réalismes' and at Grenoble on Daumier featured German, Italian, British and American speakers.⁵⁹ Its journal printed translations of articles and papers by historians representing the same nationalities. One of the notable achievements of *Histoire et critique des arts* (the journal having the same name as the organisation) was its sequence of themed issues, which in addition to those devoted to the conference proceedings at Besançon and Grenoble, also addressed questions of the

avant-garde, museums, the Marxist approach to art history, and exhibitions.⁶⁰ However, praiseworthy as this internationalism is, it also seems to hide a weakness – namely the inability of the group to generate very much original material of its own. Thus in addition to the strong presence of scholars such as T.J. Clark, Linda Nochlin, Klaus Herding and David Kunzle at the aforementioned conferences was their representation in the journal, where they often seemed numerically to outweigh the French contributors.⁶¹ For example, the issue on avant-gardes contained translations of articles on American painting in the Cold War by Max Kozloff and Eva Cockcroft that had already appeared in *Artforum*, together with an article by Serge Guilbaut, who was then based at UCLA. The only contribution from the Histoire et Critique des Arts group itself was an article by Nicos Hadjinicolaou.⁶² The issue devoted to Marxist art history contained translations of articles by T.J. Clark, John Tagg and Klaus Herding, and a collective contribution by Tom Cummings, Deborah Weiner and Joan Weinstein. The only substantial French article was the first of a projected two-part Althusserian critique of Hadjinicolaou's *Histoire de l'art et lutte des classes*.⁶³ This is not to imply that the French contributions were underdeveloped or lacking in quality, and in the course of its brief life *Histoire et critique des arts* printed substantial essays by Hadjinicolaou, Maurice Domino, Patrick Le Nouëne and Michel Melot, as well as shorter contributions by Laura Malvano, Maria Ivens and others.⁶⁴ Moreover, as with *Kritische Berichte*, it was particularly vigorous in its critiques of contemporary exhibitions as symptoms of the stultifying ideology surrounding art in bourgeois societies. Thus it printed three substantive appraisals of *L'Art en France sous le Seconde Empire*, a large exhibition shown at the Grand Palais in 1979 that celebrated the lavish luxury goods of the haute bourgeoisie under a repressive regime, presenting them effectively as the worthy counterpart of a political power that matched with the presumptions and aspirations of their present-day counterparts.⁶⁵ However, despite these promising beginnings, *Histoire et critique des arts* appeared only from 1977 to 1980.

BALANCE SHEET

A broad pattern is discernable, I think, and indeed is fairly well understood in outline if not particulars. The New Left of the 1970s generated a substantial body of Marxist art history, but the momentum of this project declined in the following decade due to a complex of political, institutional and ideological factors, and the fragile organisational base withered away or was turned to other purposes. However, in addition to the external factors, the project's internal limitations also need to be considered, and it is to them I now turn.

The impact of 1960s radicalism amongst intellectuals, academics and students, in both Europe and the United States, led to a boom in Marxist

publications, the like of which had not been seen since the 1930s. This new market for Marxism extended into the realm of culture and the arts, so that within three years a publisher as geared to mass sales as Penguin could think it worthwhile to issue two anthologies on the related themes of *Radical Perspectives in the Arts* and *Marxists on Literature*.⁶⁶ In addition to several specific historical studies, the decade also saw the appearance of a sequence of major works of Marxist literary theory that sought to review the history of work in the field and establish the grounds for contemporary critical practice, notable among these being Fredric Jameson's *Marxism and Form*, Terry Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology* and Raymond Williams's *Marxism and Literature*.⁶⁷

Art history produced individual essays of great interest, but no major book-length synthesis of equivalent stature. John Berger's famous *Ways of Seeing* (1972) was an original work of popularisation that became a staple of art-school teaching, but it was limited in its depth by its orientation to the mass market of the original television series.⁶⁸ Nearer the mark was a work to which reference has already been made, namely Nicos Hadjinicolaou's *Art History and Class Struggle*, which appeared in English translation in 1978.⁶⁹ The book is not without its merits, and the early chapters do useful work in laying out a critique of art history as a bourgeois discipline. However, although in the preface to the English edition Hadjinicolaou mentioned the work of a number of earlier Marxist contributors to 'art history and materialistic aesthetics', in the main text he claimed that 'the only important studies which have so to speak laid the foundations for a science of art history' were by Antal.⁷⁰ The key to this dismissive attitude towards most earlier Marxist practice in the field was Hadjinicolaou's alignment with the Marxism of Louis Althusser and his followers Nicos Poulantzas and Pierre Macherey – indeed, *Art History and Class Struggle* can be seen as an attempt to do for art history what Macherey had done for the study of literature in *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire*.⁷¹ This explains the book's insistent demarcations between science and ideology, its vehement anti-humanism and anti-Hegelianism, and its writing out of issues of value as no more than the observer's self-recognition in an artwork's 'visual ideology'.⁷² Lukács's work was essentially dismissed for confusing the scientific study of literature with aesthetics, and the Frankfurt School thinkers simply passed unmentioned.⁷³ It is significant that the one text that could stand as equivalent in theoretical sophistication to those volumes by Jameson, Eagleton and Williams I mentioned earlier, namely Arnold Hauser's *The Philosophy of Art History* (1958), was not considered by Hadjinicolaou as an instance of Marxist thinking at all, and he limited himself to observing that he did not find its address to theoretical questions 'entirely satisfactory'.⁷⁴ Given the Hegelian character of Hauser's Marxism this was not surprising.

As a rallying cry to right art history through the stark and stringent procedures of Althusserian 'theoretical practice', *Art History and Class*

Struggle may have hit the spot in the Paris of the early 1970s, but the translated version met critical opposition both from those attached to a more humanistic Marxism and from those who thought it failed to live up to more recent theoretical developments.⁷⁵ Even in the heyday of British Structuralist Marxism, critical assessments of Althusser's work were appearing in the pages of *New Left Review* – ironically, at the same time as the journal and its associated publishing house played a key role in making it accessible to English-speaking audiences.⁷⁶ Further, in 1975 New Left Books published a collection of essays by the Italian Marxist Sebastiano Timpanaro that were full of scathing judgements on both Althusser and the Structuralist thinkers whose ideas he had imported into Marxism. Like Althusser, Timpanaro stood for an anti-Hegelian Marxism, but one that rejected his 'theoreticist' model of science and 'supreme disdain for the empirical', as well as the inability to conceptualise individual agency except as an ideological effect. Against the Structuralist model, Timpanaro advocated a revived materialism and renewed attention to the limits placed on human activities by biology and the natural order.⁷⁷

Despite the fundamental flaws in Althusser's philosophy, it is only proper to acknowledge the energising effect of his writings on left cultural criticism in Britain in the 1970s. Terry Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology*, for instance, sought to formulate the principles of an Althusserian 'science of the text' as an alternative to Raymond Williams's work, which while it was 'one of the most significant sources from which a materialist aesthetics might be derived', was also marred by "'humanism" and idealism'. However, by contrast with Hadjinicolaou, Eagleton offered significant criticisms of Althusser's and Macherey's formulations on the relationship of literature and ideology, and rejected the 'theoretical prudery' with which Marxist criticism so often backed off from thorny questions of value. He also showed himself far more sympathetic to the work of Lukács and the Frankfurt School.⁷⁸ As things turned out, the most notorious laboratory for the development of Althusserian cultural theory in Britain was not in literary theory but in film studies, and especially in the grouping associated with the journal *Screen*, which epitomised that fusion of Marxism, structuralism, semiology and psychoanalysis (dubbed by Jonathan Rée the '*nouveau mélange*')⁷⁹ that was taken as the hallmark of avant-garde discourse at mid decade. In *Screen*-style criticism Althusser effectively came to supersede Marx, and the fundamental incongruities between the linguistic idealism of Structuralist thought and Marxist materialism were blurred over in an ontological sleight of hand by describing language itself as 'material'. Licensed by Althusser's own portentous claims for Lacan's importance,⁸⁰ the innovations of Structuralist Marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis were assumed to provide the grounds for a relatively straightforward reconciliation between two traditions of thought radically different in their objects and philosophical premises, and which earlier thinkers had not found so easy to bring into alignment.

Moreover, what Timpanaro called Althusser's 'scientific pomposity' and tendency to confuse 'terminological acquisitions' with 'conceptual advances' were reproduced by his British followers,⁸¹ who frequently inclined towards a vehement denunciatory style that seemed to confuse theoretical diktat with argumentative cogency and political radicalism.

At the end of the decade, Althusser and his followers were subjected to withering criticisms in two major publications: E.P. Thompson's long essay 'The Poverty of Theory', and the anthology *One-Dimensional Marxism*. Thompson's essay is by turns brilliant and acute, intemperate and unbalanced, and it distorts the object of its attack in some degree, asserting unfairly that Althusserianism was 'Stalinism reduced to the paradigm of Theory'.⁸² A more balanced critique was advanced in *One-Dimensional Marxism*, which included a critical dissection of *Screen* by Kevin McDonnell and Kevin Robins that, while expressing admiration for the journal's 'promethean ambitions' to achieve a grand theoretical synthesis that would do once and for all for the bourgeois ideology of the subject, exposed massive problems with both the components of the proposed fusion and with its aesthetic and political implications.⁸³ Yet significantly, the art historians whose work was most overtly indebted to Thompson's and Williams's culturalist Marxism, that is the grouping that was transforming English landscape studies, kept entirely mum on the matter. Indeed, to judge by their publications, it is striking how very limited their engagement with Thompson's work was. None of them referred to the famous 'Peculiarities of the English' essay or the exchanges with Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn with which it was associated, none referred to his critique of Althusserian Marxism.⁸⁴ It was as if the writings of Thompson and Williams could be appropriated for the insights they offered into particular historical problems, but the distinctive character of the Marxism that underpinned them required no discussion. In the context, the very association of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British paintings with class division seemed, if not exactly subversive, at least an impolite challenge to the establishment – as doubtless it still does in some quarters. But in reality the new history of British art was more Marxisant than Marxist: its contribution was to the development of a comprehensive social history of art that accepted class as an aspect of social ontology, but was not much concerned with class struggle and saw no necessary alignment between its inquiries and Marxism as either a theory or a politics. In the 1980s, Barrell developed an interpretation of eighteenth-century British writings on the arts grounded in J.G.A. Pocock's concept of 'civic humanism', and which took its cue more from Foucauldian discourse theory than from the Marxist concept of ideology.⁸⁵ This model has been widely influential, but it has led to an approach in which ideas are only loosely connected with the contest of social interests, and where the concept of hegemony is effectively a dead letter.

Although Althusserian Marxism made a mark in the pages of *Block*, it did not have as much influence on art-historical practice in Britain and the United States as it did on film theory and literary studies.⁸⁶ Hadjinicolaou's historical contributions on French art around 1830 found a readership,⁸⁷ but they probably contributed in a diffuse way to the interest in the reception history of works of art, in which regard they complimented the example of T.J. Clark's writings rather than offering a methodological exemplar. Overall, Clark's work provided a far more potent model because it accorded art objects themselves – or at least some art objects – a more active and even occasionally dramatic role in the historical process than Hadjinicolaou had done, and correspondingly was far more concerned with the individual agency of the artist producer. By comparison, Hadjinicolaou's attempts to demonstrate the applicability of his theory in *Art History and Class Struggle* appeared wooden and formulaic. Indeed, Clark's two books on art and the French revolution of 1848, *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France, 1848–1851* and *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution*, both of which appeared in 1973, seemed to set the terms of Marxist art-historical debate in Britain and the United States more than any other publications. That this should have been the case was doubtless due primarily to their sheer quality and the way they keyed in to current intellectual and political trends, but it also suggests that contemporaries – this one included – were either ignorant of the German-language developments in the field or unwilling or unable to invest the time in engaging with them.⁸⁸ Although Clark listed a number of texts by earlier Marxist art historians in the common bibliography to both volumes, in the theoretical prologue to the second he observed that 'when one writes the social history of art, it is easier to define what methods to avoid than propose a set of methods for systematic use, like a carpenter presenting his bag of tools, or a philosopher his premises.'⁸⁹ This seeming theoretical openness may also have been part of the books' appeal. Indeed, what is striking about them and Clark's other statements from the time is his refusal to be confined by the theoretical fences that others were committed contemporaneously to erecting and guarding. The acknowledgments to Lacan, Lévi-Strauss and Macherey seem consistent with the tendency of the so-called Structuralist Marxism so prominent in the period,⁹⁰ but this does not sit easily with the Hegelian tropes in Clark's writing and his insistence on the power of dialectical thinking,⁹¹ so at odds with the relentless anti-Hegelianism of Althusser.

This conjunction certainly caught the eye of Peter Wollen when he commented on the important article on Manet's *Olympia* that Clark published in *Screen* in 1980. Not that Wollen attacked Clark for Hegelianism as such, but he felt the need to correct Clark's conception of contradiction through a somewhat opaque discussion of Lucio Colletti's critique of what he perceived as unscientific residues of Hegelian dialectic in Marx.⁹² In his reply, Clark did not directly rebut Wollen's arguments about the dialectic,

but we can take as a kind of rebuttal his quotation of a passage from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* characterising the condition of consciousness in capitalist societies as defined by 'obfuscations, discontinuities, blankness and uncertainty' and scarcely amenable to 'complete determination'. The 'search for determinacy' might remain the goal, but the nature of reality did not permit the kinds of scientific certitude implied in the rhetoric of the Althusserians. Yet the fact that Clark chose to situate himself in relation to *Screen's* theoretical project at this juncture is also significant, given that journal's association with the defence of avant-garde film practice – as is his aligning of his position with voices in the journal that spoke for 'an impatience...with the idea that texts construct spectators', that is with a loosening up of the Structuralist project, and an acknowledgment that '*films [and other art objects] are read unpredictably, they can be pulled into more or less any ideological space, they can be mobilised for diverse and even contradictory projects*'.⁹³ Moreover, he did firmly repudiate Wollen's misapprehension that the position underlying his argument was one that had as its concomitant some Lukácsian concept of realism, and affirmed his belief that there were 'moments at which modernism was compelled, and not just by exterior circumstance, to exceed its normal terms of reference and sketch out others in, in preliminary form'. These moments, despite their scrappiness, had been part of modernism, 'and it seems at present they are the ones we shall have to retrieve and learn from'.⁹⁴ Thus, in the early 1980s Clark emerged as a defender of modernism on the basis of a kind of left-Greenbergianism, a Greenberg corrected, as it were, through the Hegelian concept of negation.⁹⁵ This model was to have enormous influence in Britain and the United States, partly through the Open University's modern-art courses, although in the process of dissemination its critical force as a kind of Marxist critique was largely lost.⁹⁶ Clark's espousal of the avant-garde set his work in stark contrast with that of other major figures of the art-historical New Left such as Hadjinicolaou and Werckmeister, who, despite the different theoretical paths by which they arrived at their positions, were united in rejecting any notion of a Marxist aesthetic. Indeed, Hadjinicolaou viewed the avant-garde in its recent forms as essentially a market ideology, and a concept without analytical value: 'The notion of the avant-garde and all its synonyms, as well as the middle-class ideology which underlies it, should be abandoned to the defenders of the established order.'⁹⁷

Despite Clark's withering disdain for the bourgeois cultural production of his time – 'the absence...of a bourgeoisie worth attacking in the realm of cultural production' – this concern with defending the 'cognitive power' of modernist practices put an increasing distance between him and others on the left, partly because his original concern with some special moments in modernism's history, when it had a critical force, seemed to broaden out into 'the painters we most admire' – a locution reminiscent of middlebrow cultural journalism.⁹⁸ Clark's newly advertised concern with the aesthetic

effectively saw him addressing the same kinds of question of art's specificity that had preoccupied earlier 'humanist' Marxist art historians such as Hauser, Raphael and Schapiro. And it seemed to some to compromise the hard-fought struggles to establish art's historicity in the face of the ideological complicity of bourgeois artistic culture with the barbarisms of class oppression and imperialism, all dressed up as humanistic values, which it had been the main project of the New Left to uncover. In a stinging review of Clark's 1984 book *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*, Adrian Rifkin would claim that its author was engaged in 'a pragmatic aestheticising of history that precludes the aim of an historical sociology or semiology of art', a project that pulled social history 'into shape [in effect out of shape] to serve the history of art'. Overall, the book was 'conservative art history'.⁹⁹ Clark, in turn, set himself against 'the dominant orthodoxy' of the 'present-day Left academy', that assumed 'pictures have nothing important – nothing specific or difficult, to tell us'.¹⁰⁰ In part, what both Rifkin and Hadjinicolaou had picked up on was the way in which Clark's project seemed defined in terms that tied it more to the internal reform of art history than to the demands of a revolutionary politics.¹⁰¹

It will be evident from the above, I hope, that the art-historical New Left, for all its brief elan, was not united in a shared theoretical project, and that its relationship with the examples of earlier Marxist art history, and with the diverse and complex traditions of Marxist thought more broadly defined, were various and not adequately debated. But by the mid 1980s a fundamental fault line had emerged between those who viewed Marxist art history as necessarily antithetical to aesthetic judgements – which were simply questions of ideology – and those who thought the cognitive claims of art were an intrinsic part of the Marxist project. That fault line has not been bridged since, and is not likely to be any time soon since it derives from fundamental divisions within Marxism itself. (Readers can judge the merits of each side by consulting the now large body of work produced over the years by the two key figures of the art-historical New Left, namely Clark and Werckmeister.)¹⁰² Matters were further muddled by the shifts in the political climate in the Reagan–Thatcher years and the arrival of art history's own '*nouveau mélange*' under the name of 'the New Art History', a development marked by the publication of an anthology of essays under that title in 1986. Here was precisely that 'cheerful diversification of the subject' against which Clark had warned more than a decade before.¹⁰³ In fact, the anthology in question provided a space for some to take their distance from this new brand name, and notably Rifkin, who described the very idea of a 'new' art history as 'an anxious liberal stratagem to market a faded product in a new package' and a 'basically reactionary' attempt to 'police the boundaries' of the discipline.¹⁰⁴ But the problem was not just with the heterogeneous mix of models the 'new' embraced, it was with the social history of art itself, since for the most part this had remained captive to accepted notions of 'quality

and progress' and refused to question the authority of the object 'series' of sanctioned great works that set the parameters of art-historical inquiry. The historical sociology of art, which it had once seemed would cut the ground from under all the familiar bourgeois obfuscations around the category art, was now seen to be inadequate to the task, or at least in the spirit (and by the methods) in which it was being generally undertaken. 'Quality,' Rifkin argued, functioned as 'a talismanic warding off of change whose own origins and functions are repressed' and he implied that currently feminist practices were more successful in contesting established shibboleths than 'Marxist or social or sociological histories of art'.¹⁰⁵ Contemporaneously, Hadjinicolaou warned against a social history of art that reduced Marxism to 'a few tesserae which could bring to perfection the panoramic mosaic of traditional art history': 'the social history of art is really easy: it has no proper subject matter, it does not commit one to anything and one can practice it in a very profitable way.'¹⁰⁶ The course of events since has entirely confirmed these judgements.

In the increasingly reactionary political climate of the 1980s, Marxist art history was doomed to shrivel as a fashionable option and become confined to the far smaller number of those for whom any reconciliation with the idea of capitalism as an historical endpoint was impossible, and who preferred a historically aware and critical assessment of post-structuralism to swallowing it whole. While the veterans of the New Left were able to find niches in university and college departments and even to enjoy successful careers, this was not because their political positions had found acceptance, but rather because academic art history now tolerated their type of practice as one of a number of separate 'approaches' to the discipline – a discipline that in any case seemed increasingly porous and unable to define or defend its particular object of study. The liberal academy accepted Marxism as one of a number of *perspectives*, and in the climate of post-Cold War triumphalism assumed that Marxism was effectively over and done with. After all, was it not one of those grand meta-narratives that post-structuralism had discredited? At the same time, the post-structuralist rejection of epistemology and embrace of perspectivism made principled debate near impossible. However, what had occurred was a political defeat, not an intellectual one. Developments in the area of feminism, gender studies and post-colonial theory brought home with renewed force that Marxism is not, and cannot be, a theory of everything. But none of these developments offered anything in the way of a general theory of history and society that supplanted Marxism's systemic critique of capitalism. Nor did they remainder the complex debates around philosophy and method that continue within the Marxist community. Marxism has remained a vital tradition of thought, not simply because of the achievements of its founders, but also because their system contained within itself an acknowledgment of the historicity of all intellectual production and its necessary dependence

– in particular ways – on the shifting conditions of other social practices. Marxism thus conceives itself as an historical object, and as a tradition that must be continuously self-critical to be true to its most basic premises. It is correspondingly obliged to take into account the new understandings that emerge across the whole range of intellectual fields, even when those understandings are pronounced in terms antithetical to Marxism. This is not to say, of course, that it should simply ingest each new development that comes along, but it must explain them and take whatever is true from them, if necessary modifying its own findings in the process. This is a difficult, complex and unending task. But the continuing achievements of Marxist science depend on it. Whether we shall find much collective encouragement to do this in the general conditions of our times depends on factors that are beyond our control. The omens are not good. But then it has always been Marxism's ambition to provide the tools that would enable human beings to end their object status in the historical process and become its identical subject–object, even against the odds.¹⁰⁷

11

New Left Art History and Fascism in Germany

Jutta Held

THE FIRST PHASE OF FASCISM RESEARCH

To a large extent, the theoretical basis and methodological tools of New Left art history were not worked out in an interdisciplinary way with reference to the few Marxist works that had been realised in exile. These texts were as good as unknown and their distinct qualities had first to be rediscovered.¹ The paradigmatic shift around 1968 by no means evolved only within the discipline in reaction to ruling theoretical and methodological terms that had come to be regarded as deficient. Far more, it was the peace movement, or rather the anti-nuclear, anti-Vietnam war and anti-authoritarian movement in the universities and within the whole educational system, that provided the crucial political impulses that led to new orientations and from there to paradigm restructuring. The then-young art historians began with questioning the prevailing canonical themes of the discipline and focused on bringing into the discussion explosive and contemporary problem cases which had no systematic status within traditional art history. The resulting works were strong and pioneering when they put into practice the new Marxist guidelines that had been developed through cross-disciplinary thinking, tested them in relation to empirical objects and thus opened new perspectives onto historical analysis. There were perhaps two major theme complexes around which the New Left in Western Germany constituted itself in, or at the fringes of, art history: on the one hand the problem of realism, involving a wide range of questions of judgement, of canon definition, of media and the pragmatics of artistic planning and of style;² on the other hand, the problem of fascism. Traditional art history offered hardly any handle for engaging either problem and therefore new theoretical foundations had to be produced in order to address them adequately. In relation to the first problem, impulses from aesthetics as well as from oppositional artistic practice dominated. In relation to the second, the impulses came from the historical sciences, most of all from political science and sociology, which had been working to develop an effective theory of fascism.

CAPITAL AND THE STATE IN VIEW OF FASCISM RESEARCH

The keywords came from Horkheimer and Adorno. No slogan has been quoted as often as Horkheimer's famous dictum: 'Wer aber vom Kapitalismus nicht reden will, sollte auch vom Faschismus schweigen' ('Those who do not want to talk of capitalism should remain silent about fascism.') Consequently, an *Aufarbeitung* (clearing up) of fascism would mean to circumscribe and eliminate its basis.³ From this, the guiding principles of the first phase of fascism research were drawn: it was about the role of capital as a main perpetrator in the rise of the National Socialists within state and society. The anti-capitalism of the left in the 1960s and 1970s was motivated and sharpened by its anti-fascism. Precisely what was typical of this first phase was that in all disciplines the general principles that underpinned the development of fascism were interrogated. A positivistic factography was rejected as much as a pure phenomenology based mainly on the self-understanding of the people involved.⁴ Both approaches renounced exploration of the underlying structure of history, the exposure of which alone could yield a consistent answer to the question of the determinants, the genesis, function and class base of fascism – as well as of the forms of society it produced.

This foundational theoretical work did not so much give insight into sociological details – the delegitimation of positivist research was characteristic. Instead, a radical theory of fascism was expected at one and the same time both to be practice-oriented and to strengthen the capacity to act in the face of history through the exposure of fascism's decision-making structures. Science was supposed to lead to a political anti-fascism, the consolidation of which was considered vital, because all theoreticians who understood that the roots of fascism lay within capitalism were convinced of the survival of fascist potentialities under the skin of democracy. Whether fascism was a singular epochal phenomenon or rather a type of rule grounded in a specific type of social formation was a widely discussed question, one not purely of historical but also of political interest.⁵ The liquidation of the democratic government of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973 became a contributory factor in this debate, giving an urgency to the typology of fascism.

Here, we can only condense those major complexes and debates central to the early theory and research of fascism that had consequences for art-historical conceptions. The Marxist left in the 1960s had a habitual recourse to Horkheimer's maxim, as mentioned above, and through this followed the analysis of fascism that had been established within the circle of the communist parties in the 1920s and 1930s. At that time, fascism was understood as an international problem, and as latent and inherent in all capitalist societies. The Dimitrov thesis of 1935, which was recognised and propagated by the Comintern, argues that fascism is the openly terroristic dictatorship of the

most reactionary, most chauvinistic, most imperialistic elements of finance capital.⁶ It forms the superstructure within late capitalism, functioning as its agency, and – it was the KPD's conviction – was the last stage of capitalism before the revolution. Within this phase, the state becomes subordinated to the finance oligarchy, its power merging into that of capital. The GDR historians who were involved in the early West German debate about fascism essentially followed this line.⁷ Fascism was defined as the form of appearance, or as the 'expression', of monopoly capitalism, which, in times of crisis, displaces the capitalist structure of competition. State capitalism,⁸ which abolishes the liberal market in favour of planning and manipulation, can also do without the mechanisms and forms of public life that stem from the principle of competition: the structures of democracy and conflict of opinion that form the basis of all organs of the bourgeois public, the press, the arts, science, and so on. A rationalisation of all sectors and their subordination to state control is made possible. With the liquidation of the independent sphere of the economy, the economic subject, the substratum of all cultural definitions of the bourgeois individual, ceases to exist. It was this economic theory of fascism that provided the foundation for Adorno and Horkheimer's sketch for a theory of culture in late capitalism.⁹ Within this process of the concentration of capital, individuals become mere foci of reactions, corresponding to the dictates of the culture industry.

The determination of the relation of state and capital was basic to a causal analysis of fascism, and thus discussion long concentrated on this issue. The communist parties in the 1930s and, following in their wake, research in the GDR, understood Hitler's 'seizure of power' as the result of an agreement between the steel and the electrochemical industry on prospective rearmament. When in 1936 – and this is something on which the historians agreed – there was dissension within the alliance of the different branches of industry to which the state had subordinated itself, the result was not a disintegration of industrial power, but a shift of power within the oligopoly towards the electrochemical industry.¹⁰ Alfred Sohn-Rethel's essays from 1937–41, which were not published and recognised until 1973,¹¹ contradicted the simple instrumentalism of the GDR historians who saw the state as the spoils of changing fractions of the capital. According to his observations, the point of departure – and the crux for the fascist development – lay in the transformation of industrial production due to the rationalisations following the First World War. Industry split between those companies that wanted to maintain the world market economy (among them Siemens, which was supported by Brüning) and on the other side the so-called Harzburger Camp (with which Hitler sided), which wanted to uncouple from the world market and instead revive the domestic market by means of a war economy (Thyssen, Flick, Borsig et al.). The latter position, which prevailed, was thus not based on a position of economic strength but rather on one of weakness and crisis,¹² in which the capitalist market had to be destroyed in order to

save capitalism. Sohn-Rethel, too, sees 1936 as the turning point; however he does not attribute the expansionist politics to the irrational politics of the National Socialists, who had by then gained autonomy over the central branches of industry, but rather to the will of industry to enhance absolute surplus value while severing its ties to the market. Fascism was not so much the result of the strength of capital, able to permit itself to do without democratic institutions, but, on the contrary, of its weakness, which made it dependent on the protection of the fascist state.

The GDR historians' monopoly theory (and in a more moderate form also that of Sohn-Rethel) took as its starting point exclusively the power relations between the different monopoly groupings that seemed capable of manipulating the state. According to Tim Mason,¹³ however, Hitler's rise to power was possible due to a power vacuum. In contrast to the theories of monopoly and manipulation, he stressed the primacy of the political realm, which was imposed no later than 1936 and expanded the autonomy of the state. It was then entrusted with central functions of control, including the 'necessary' cultural dirigisme, to which we will turn later. A specific form of autonomy was necessary in order for the state to play a mediating role between the different fractions of capital (heavy industry, consumer goods manufacture and agriculture), which it forced into a consensus that could not have been achieved through democratic means. Around 1933 all bourgeois political organisations were agreed that an authoritarian government was necessary. According to Mason, however, imperialist and expansionist politics are not so much attributable to industry's interests but are rather due to (totally irrational) state politics. It is not accidental that those theories that try to explain fascism economically insist on the relations between different fractions of industry and capital. Specifically from an anti-fascist perspective, the role of the main actors and their room for manoeuvre have to be clarified in order to insist on the preventative limitation of political power. The political constellations of the Cold War played a considerable role in this discussion. It was not by chance that the GDR theoreticians declared that above all capital was responsible, which strengthened their anti-capitalist arguments, while according to the western analysis (Mason), it was not so much the economy but rather the independent activities of the state that concealed the fascist threat.

During this first phase of fundamental analysis of its different functions there was little interest in the social origins of fascism. However, following Manfred Clemenz,¹⁴ one would have to distinguish between the function of fascism, which was clearly the stabilisation of bourgeois society, and its genesis, which was to be found in political articulations of social conditions. Clemenz criticises the GDR historians for their purely functional theory, in which the distinctions between fascist and other forms of rule were blurred. The historical conditions of the 1920s and 1930s in Europe, in which the

relations between state and society were already in transformation, would have to be included in the analysis as the preconditions of fascism.

FASCISM AS A MASS MOVEMENT

With this, a shift in the focus of debate and a broadening of historical investigations became apparent. Research began into those strata of society that had been the bearers of political power, specifically the middle classes, in which National Socialism found its crucial support.¹⁵ Consequently, the mass basis of fascism came into view and the perspective from which the role of the state was perceived changed. The state had assumed central disciplinary functions – the pacification of the masses – which first of all meant the suppression of the working class and all its collective organisations. Therefore, the state was not only responsible for directing the power struggle among capitalist interest groups, but also for curbing the masses in the interests of capital as a whole.

Accordingly, the distinguishing characteristic of fascism is seen not only in its social function, but in the social formation. The integration and manipulation of the masses, the organisation of a plebeian anti-communism¹⁶ and the elimination of opposition by terrorist methods are all a part of fascism; all these things recommended it over seemingly impotent democracy. It was these phenomena of the mass movement that were brought into focus in Reinhard Kühnl's works of the late 1960s.¹⁷ Combining economic theories of fascism with the Marxist analyses of the New School of Social Research and the Frankfurt School, and drawing on theories of the masses from the 1930s deriving from Le Bon and Freud, Kühnl's work was presented as a socio-psychological supplement to, and a correction of, the Marxian fixation on the economic.¹⁸

With this shift in accent in fascism research, the centre of attention switched to the cultural field of action and concurrently intensified the cooperation between the social and the cultural sciences. This became most obvious in the second phase of fascism research in the context of the journal *Argument* (see below). The constitution of a fascist public sphere through the suppression of the bourgeois public sphere, which was recognised as a constitutive moment of the fascist movement, was the common theme between the sciences at this point. This was the case even though the investigations at first found themselves under the spell of manipulation theory. Where the bourgeois public sphere was the space in which the political agendas of the social classes were debated and symbolised, Kracauer and Benjamin saw the fascist public sphere as a reduction of the public to the aesthetic, embodied in the 'mass ornament', which supposedly compensates for a denial of the articulation and satisfaction of real needs.¹⁹ This fascist public sphere, with its ritualised forms of behaviour, had the function of mediating between the organisational aims of the state and the subjective hopes and wishes of

individuals. Here was the place where the fascist state inculcated the bodies and souls of the people, as it were visibly and publicly. But before we take a closer look at this second phase of fascism research, it is necessary to describe the contribution which art history made to the formulation of the economic theory.

ART HISTORY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIRST PHASE OF FASCISM RESEARCH

Art history's concern with fascism was at first related to the history of the discipline: to the penetration of its scientific statements and also of its specific objects, the arts, by fascist motifs under German National Socialism.²⁰ After the initial silence on fascism, the first attempts at discussion were at best characterised by so-called 'helpless anti-fascism',²¹ which was noticeable in all disciplines. On the one hand, there were attempts to incorporate at least some of the arts produced under National Socialism into the continuum of the discipline by means of the established methods of the history of style, stylistic comparison and iconography, and thereby to ignore or marginalise the semantic burdening of the stylistic and iconographic aspects of the arts during that period.²² The second tactic tried, conversely, to eliminate the National Socialist arts from the history of art altogether.²³ It demonised fascism and perceived it as the eruption of the absolutely alien and irrational. The National Socialist arts were thereby excluded from the determinations of style history and iconography and seemed to exist without a prehistory or aftermath. As a consequence, one sought to exclude the arts of the Third Reich from the canon as non-art, and with this qualitative judgement get rid of the problem. Both approaches underestimated the explosiveness of the topic, which was not to be captured on a phenomenological level (to which German post-war art history was strictly and generally limited). It turned out that only with the New Left were the subjective and objective preconditions in place to initiate an appropriate – meaning a radically historical – analysis of this extreme object, for which the premises of the prevailing post-war science had to be critically revised.

The left movement, and especially left art history, was distinguished by the fact that it sought for a more concrete relation to the public than was possible through traditional publication media. It attempted through the occupation of public space to build up a counter-public with multiple centres²⁴ – which gave special meaning to the exhibition medium. This guaranteed the occupation of a real space, secured increasing attention (through the physical presence of the recipients) and established structural rules of value, through which a field of tension could be produced in relation to the presented object. In addition, most practitioners preferred the collective – and some the material – labour which was demanded in exhibition making to the solitary labour of thought behind a desk. As a result, new scientific work arose primarily from exhibition projects. Around

them a nucleus of personnel grew up, which gave a certain stability to the efforts of left art history outside the universities and thus helped to broaden their field of competence.

Two large exhibitions held in Frankfurt had a lasting effect on the concept of history in the discipline. In 1972, the Historical Museum was reopened with a complete restaging of some departments, in which more space was given to the information media. For the first time in a West German museum, documents and information that sharply delineated social struggles and oppression were displayed equally with works of art. Deprived of their aura, paintings and sculptures were presented radically as pointers to the class struggles of their times.²⁵ The second of these explosive Frankfurt exhibitions, *Kunst im 3. Reich. Dokumente der Unterwerfung (Art in the Third Reich: Documents of Oppression)*, took place in 1974.²⁶ Both of the exhibitions challenged the governing approach to history, which had been firmly established through an alliance of scientific discourse, public opinion and institutions in post-war Germany. All sides instantly realized that what was at stake in these exhibitions was not just a widening or exchanging of scientific paradigms, but hegemonic struggles, which as a result were fought with corresponding bitterness.²⁷

The Frankfurt exhibition of 1974 consciously limited its displays to reproducing National Socialist self-perception. It was not the extensive artistic spectrum of the 1930s which was to be shown, but exclusively that kind of art that was demanded and supported by National Socialism. This included works on display in the Munich *Haus der Kunst* as well as sculptures and architectural schemes from the immediate sphere of influence of state and party.

In this way, the exhibition explicitly renounced the option of having the modern arts banned by National Socialism serve as a model by which National Socialist art could be readily discredited with public approbation. As indicated before, it was stated that comparison at the level of the superstructure, and correspondingly iconographic or stylistic comparison, could not uncover the nature of this art. Only confrontation with the reality of National Socialism would produce that effect. The exhibition did not want to offer art in comparison with art, as was usual in art exhibitions, but aimed to use the principle of collage to produce a shock effect in Benjamin's sense, with documentary photographs and eyewitness accounts of the extermination camps, slave labour and the war clarifying the political aims that the artists and their works had served. Imagery of idealised women was confronted with photographs of Polish slave labourers, the reality of war with the heroic fighter in painting. The deployment of the old method of motif-association, by shifting between media so that painting was confronted with documentary photography, brought the ideologisation and concealment of reality through artificial imagery to the light of day. The basis of this exhibition technique was a holistic, systemic understanding of the historical

structures of a time period. Within this, the arts were understood as the emanations of a reality that was in the first place politically and economically determined. The discrepancies that opened between the political reality and the aesthetic images did not contradict this concept of an 'expressive totality', which was founded upon the notion of the mirroring function of the superstructure in relation to the base. Ideological distortions within the mirroring process are either built into the concept or even thought of as constitutive of it.²⁸ The conclusion of the exhibition was that the 'essence' of the National Socialist epoch, understood as a complex unity idealised in aesthetic projections that covered up its underlying truth and thereby ideologised it, was counter-revolution. This helps to explain the recourse of Nationalist Socialist art to the long-exhausted forms of bourgeois or even feudal absolutist art characteristic of the nineteenth century. The exhibition consciously left out oppositional movements (which could have been illustrated through contemporaneous but nevertheless aesthetically deviant images) in order to focus only on the coercive mechanisms and political and economic determinations of the fine arts and thereby argue for the identity of the epoch and its arts. This radical economism, which refused the possibility of human intervention or alternative, which we also saw in the politico-logical definition of fascism, seemed to be necessary in order first of all to delineate a left position and then to oppose it to bourgeois positivism. The concept of totality,²⁹ derived from Hegel and taken up by Lukács, in which the appearances and differing levels of reality are connected, was foundational for the maxim that the truth of an artwork does not lie in its aesthetic appearance, but within the social system in which it functions. Thus the essence of a work does not lie within its aesthetic and semantic articulation but in its relation to the social totality. This thesis was much easier to demonstrate in relation to the questionable arts of National Socialism rather than the works of classical or modern art, which had a high social value.

Characteristic of this early phase of a self-styled Marxist art history was the reconstruction of the epochal relations with the base to clarify the origins and symptomatic forms of cultural phenomena. In art-historical explanations of fascism – as in those in political science – the role and historical position of capital was the focus of attention. This was accomplished most convincingly in demonstrating the relation between art and capital in National Socialism through the example of architecture.³⁰ Acting as its own client, the state took care of the interests of private business in capital realisation through monumental building projects, which stimulated the economy and lowered unemployment rates. According to Hinz, the commemorative monuments, which had little or no social function, served this primarily economic purpose. These monuments had no use value (house building was not at all a central concern); they were pure appearance. The monumentalisation of architecture corresponded with the monopolisation of the construction

economy. The uneconomic nature of these functionless constructions and their expensive materials (in this context Hitler regularly condemned a purely economic thinking) brings this paradox of capitalism into broad daylight. With this radically economic explanation, Hinz relegated the traditional art-historical method of style criticism or iconography to a subordinate role. The attempts to prove the characteristics of those buildings as non-art through an art-historical analysis of form or to assign them to a 'normal' line of architecture of power were rejected as being, at best, helpless anti-fascism.³¹ This materialist paradigm proved to be so suggestive that it was also tested in other areas of architectural history. For example, in research on the Gothic, Kimpel formulated the thesis that the formal determination of the cathedrals was led essentially by the modernisation of building technology and the building economy.³²

It was only subsequently – after capitalism was discussed as Horkheimer's dictum had demanded – that the ideological function of monumental architecture came into play. This could essentially be described as a technique of domination. The commemorative character of the buildings corresponded in a macabre way with the politics of dispossession of the people, the first stage of which was fascist buildings, then armament and ultimately the war of plunder.³³

It was harder to demonstrate the economic argument with regard to National Socialist painting. The determination of architectural production (the production of an appearance instead of a use value) had been stimulated by Wolfgang Haug's critique of commodity aesthetics.³⁴ This critique of the aesthetic in late capitalism shaped the categorial framework for the analysis of painting as well, as, here again, the dichotomy between exchange value and use value is crucial.³⁵ The pressures of the capitalist market transform modern art into a motor of constant innovation, superfluous to the market of useful goods, and it could thus be derided as being a consequence either of cultural bolshevism or of the international Jewish art trade, and so be liquidated. This cleared the way for the reinstallation of old and threadbare genre painting. Here again, Hinz is not concerned primarily with the critique of certain iconographic or stylistic absurdities, nor with the critique of ideology, but with a materialist critique that grasps at the systematic character of the arts. In its underlying tendency, painting was not much different from architecture, and followed Nationalist Socialism's strategies for overcoming the crisis of capitalism by breaking with the market and its laws. By contrast, in its appearance, in its themes and styles, painting has the ideological function of covering up those mechanisms, of making capitalism's laws of movement unknowable. Within this general struggle, Hinz sees three phases: in the first, a harmless naturalness of basic life situations associated with nineteenth-century genre painting was suggested. This is followed by an art that transcendently 'upgraded' these existential conditions, thereby affirming peasant life and traditionalism. In parenthesis,

one must add that Heidegger's interpretation of van Gogh's shoes (which he erroneously takes to be peasant shoes) can be related to this phase of pungent insistence on ontologised archaisms of peasant life.³⁶ At the end of the Third Reich, Hinz sees a re-feudalisation of the arts, articulated in the mythological erotic genre. The customers for such works from the ruling stratum thus gave up their previous claim to cultivate painting as an example for the national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), in favour of an elitist, 'tasteful' aesthetic.

Despite its superficial naturalism, National Socialist painting is correctly classified as being extremely unrealistic. The cognitive function of art, which according to Lukács and also Brecht (although their concepts diverge on other points) is tied to realism,³⁷ is turned into its opposite. With this characterisation of National Socialist art, the totalitarianism thesis was fundamentally rejected from an art-historical point of view in the early 1970s.³⁸ On closer inspection, the superficial equation of representational art under National Socialism with the art of socialist realism is untenable even on a syntagmatic level; and it is even less tenable with regard to the pragmatic aspect. What disqualifies the arts is not that they were at the service of something at all, but rather what they were at the service of. Around 1970 the consensus amongst Marxists – independent of whatever fraction you were affiliated with – was that the equation of the socialist and fascist regimes in their artistic 'emanations' was to be rejected. The totalitarianism thesis, which had served as an instrument of anti-communism during the Cold War, at that time was seen as definitively refuted, both intellectually and politically. That it was to be revived after 1989, notwithstanding, only proves the relation of scientific discourse to political power.

With the differentiation between the concept of realism and apparent objectivity in artistic language, abstract painting, which in the 1960s had been rejected generally both by oppositional artists as well as by critics for being unrealistic, was opened up to new interpretations and evaluations. One 'fraction' of left art history, which was grouped around the journal *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, rediscovered the Prolet'kult and began a reappraisal of it.³⁹ Here, the (historically imaginable) revolutionary content of abstract art was stressed. It was not by chance that some representatives of this position were later afforded opportunities of acceptance within established art institutions. The other fraction saw this kind of art as working in the service of perennial capitalism (specifically in relation to post-war abstract art) and condemned it for fulfilling a similar ideological role to National Socialist art.⁴⁰ However these interpretations are to be judged, they indicate that even the semantics of artistic practice cannot be sensibly evaluated without locating them precisely within the social field. Through this a major insight was gained for the founding of a social history of the arts, around which discussions within leftist art history would focus in the years following.⁴¹

The result of this art-historical discussion of fascism and fascist art was a differentiation of the concept of realism, and, in addition, the discovery that an intrinsic relation binds the arts to the economy prior to the function of conveying ideology. With it came a third fundamental insight, which became productive for art history in general, namely the media character of the arts.⁴² The arts function and produce their effects in combination with other media, together with which, in their different roles, they constitute a (fascist) public. Architecture was 'organically' related to mass parades, and photography and film were deployed to synthesise and spread this aesthetic amalgam of national community through images. All media – magazines, radio, cinema – worked together and related to each other in order to permeate the most remote villages and the furthest farmhouse parlours with the fascist formation of *das Volk*, to keep it present and infiltrate it into each subject's consciousness. Included in this media compact were the so-called applied arts and, in particular, advertising, which, after the Second World War, would be examined under the name of 'visual communication'. This became the model for all reception-oriented art theories, which were understood from hereon as communication theories.⁴³ The multimedia staged theatricality and self-dramatisation of fascism (which has since then become common in western post-fascist culture) replaced the argumentative discussion culture of the enlightened bourgeois public sphere.

Manipulation theory, which at first predominated within the left paradigms of cultural studies – and specifically in the newly invented media sciences,⁴⁴ had been developed in the debate around fascist and late capitalist ideological practices. At this point, Horkheimer and Adorno's thesis on the culture industry should be recalled.⁴⁵ The fascist formation of a unified media for the first time made the distinction between high and low art and culture obsolete in a broader sense. This was also an effect of late capitalist commodity production, which could impose itself under the shelter of the fascist regime. At the same time, this blurring of boundaries, negating the difference between the oppositional high arts and the lower arts that served mass consumption, validated the Frankfurt School's critique, and especially Adorno's. Above all, media scientists set this critique of mass media against the theory sketched by Walter Benjamin, who supposed that within technicised media there were opportunities for independent use as well as an increase in, and democratisation of, public communication.⁴⁶ A starting point for this discussion was the observation of the unity of the media and their modes of functioning within fascism. The objects of art history – painting, sculpture and so on – could in the future no longer be examined independently of their relation to other (primarily technological) media in late capitalism, if the aim was to determine their (relative) value within western cultures.

Through researches into the unity of the media under fascism, the inadequacy of a purely phenomenological analysis of the artwork became

apparent. The individual work was not significant as an aesthetic organism, but functioned as an element of a system, as a strategic potential which developed its pictorial power only in relation to other media (particularly through photographic and filmic reproduction). In this way, the artwork became subordinated to National Socialist cultural politics as part of a media system for the development of a non-elite fascist public: the imaginary community of the *Volk*.

The publication *Die Dekoration der Gewalt* of 1979, which resulted from insights into the cultural industry and the unity of the fascist media, shifted the critique of fascism from a critique of economy to a critique of mass media. With it, the production of ideology through visual media necessarily becomes the centre of attention, whereas this had initially been treated as secondary and was correspondingly neglected. At this point, we turn to the second phase of New Left art history and its analysis of fascism.⁴⁷

THE SECOND PHASE OF FASCISM RESEARCH

Theories of ideology

Whereas at the outset the function of capital was central to the analysis of fascism, the second phase was determined by questions of ideology theory. Ideology entered the field through researches into the fascist mass movement, which provoked questions about the management of subjects, fascist methods of producing social reactions and the utilisation of forces of cohesion.⁴⁸ While in the first phase the guidelines of research had been those of scientists and historians concerned with theories of the state, the second phase was dominated by the questions of cultural scientists and historians working in cultural history. Where the stream of communication before had taken only one direction: from forums devoted to the theory of fascism, from *Argument* and the journal *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, now research findings flowed from art history (and other empirical sciences) to these 'centres' of left theory building.

At the same time, this second approach, which sought to grasp fascism through the theory of ideology, fell in a phase of differentiation within the left, which it supported and to which it in due course contributed. Where the economic form of fascism analysis had been carried out in all important forums alike,⁴⁹ now the familiar division between the orthodox and unorthodox left appeared, which was mirrored, and perhaps even reinforced, in works concerned with the theory of fascism.⁵⁰

In this phase, a wider viewpoint was taken that took analysis beyond the role of capital as the cause and function of fascism. We have already encountered Tim Mason speaking of the primacy of the political and rejecting the assumption of direct control of the state by particular groups of capitalists. The character of class struggles and the defeat of the working-

class movement in the run-up to fascism were taken into account as major factors in Mason's analysis. Through this, the question of the mass base of fascism was posed, so that National Socialism as a social movement became an issue for research. Even if capital had the power to prepare Hitler's way, the approval of the masses was the precondition of his success. The 'advantage' of the National Socialist regime lay in its success in organising a mass consensus that democratic processes could never have realised. In German research on fascism, it was Reinhard Kühnl's works that insistently pointed to this conclusion.⁵¹ Now, too, Wilhelm Reich's research into the mass psychology of fascism from 1933 could be taken up productively. In the 1930s, there had been an intensive debate on the theory of the mass throughout Europe, based on the influential works of Le Bon and Freud. In France especially, this had involved, not least, visual artists and writers.⁵²

In West Germany, the *Argument* circle played a considerable role in shaping the debate, having cleared the ground through a thorough redescription of the most influential theories of ideology in parallel to the analysis of fascism.⁵³ These complex and rich researches cannot be discussed here even in outline, only some central points that affected art history can be indicated. Starting out from the historically most important theories of ideology since Marx and Engels, from Lukács and the discussion in the GDR, it was the concepts of Gramsci and Althusser that were seized upon most positively.

The crucial step beyond the Marxist conception of a dualistic splitting of social relations into base and superstructure, material and ideological relations, being and consciousness, was carried out by Althusser in his category of the ideological state apparatuses.⁵⁴ Through this, ideology was released from its fixation on states of consciousness, it was no longer primarily related to class consciousness or false consciousness, but understood rather as a material social force. The state, the church, the educational systems are in Althusser's sense central ideological forces, which organise different ideological practices. From this Althusserian position (which was prepared for by Gramsci), the *Argument* circle was trying to grasp dialectically the mechanisms of socialisation from above, which for Althusser determined ideology. Althusser's theory set out from a structuralist understanding of the state apparatuses (and complementary to that from a psychoanalytical understanding of the subject inspired by Lacan), so that within its framework the socialisation of individuals, the effects of the structure on the subject, can only be thought of as subjugation. In Althusser's conception, the individual – according to an anthropologically defined structure of needs – fundamentally seeks to escape from society. The *Argument* circle aimed to overcome the strict dualism between society and individual, which was not surmounted by Althusser, and to achieve a more mobile always-already mediated relation between the two, and so to be able to show the specificity of ideological subjugation. In so doing, it sought to comprehend the process

of consensus formation in society, which does not come only from above, but within a constant toing and froing corresponding to the relations of power in class struggles, which are also transmitted through the state apparatuses. Impulses from 'below' are reformulated or distorted as they pass through the channels of the state, and are given back in ideologised form to society, which finally accepts them as representations of compromise and symbols of social cohesion. Roland Barthes has described this process as the expropriation of the experiences, the desires and the imagination of the lower classes and ranks.⁵⁵ The ruling apparatuses appropriate the people's potentialities (*Volkvermögen*), ideologize and reify them, until their original language is wrapped up in a myth that denies its origin and history, so that instead it testifies in favour of the prevailing situation.

This theory, which acknowledged that ideology always represents itself as the universal and not just as representative of particular interests and ideas, that it produces forms of consensus that also permeate viewpoints and perspectives from below, was developed, not least of all, to permit understanding of fascism's mass appeal. It was conceived as a correction and rounding out of the economic theories, which were incapable of illuminating the subjective effects of fascism. In the situation around 1980, when right-wing populism and racist activities increased to an alarming degree, those considerations were motivated by the political aim to develop more effective strategies against fascism than those offered by the manipulation theory. Where the latter only clarified the 'bad intentions' of the ruling class, its critics were more concerned with its actual working mechanisms.⁵⁶ Through the debate with Althusser's theory a position was reached which understood ideology not primarily as an ideal construct, but as a strategy through which divergent 'materials' belonging to different practices and discourses that lent themselves to ideological use could be concentrated in an effective and powerful configuration. The individual elements of this formation were not fascistic in themselves but they became so through their discursive relationship, for which the semantic potential of the different elements formed an indispensable foundation. The fascist re-articulation of pre-existing and absolutely traditional values such as *Volk*, nation and bourgeoisie lay in the fact that they were detached from their historical connotative relation to bourgeois and progressive values such as democracy and equality, and melded into a coherent reactionary discursive formation within which they became associated with the *Führer* principle, the idea of race (Jews against Germans) and anti-bolshevism. The fascist new order reflected back semantically on its singular elements like *Volk* and nation, which, although they could be of oppositional origins, were thereafter quasi-contaminated and contributed to new ideological effects.⁵⁷

More important in this operation than the semantic relations of the singular elements, the 'substantial' qualities that tie them to history, is the syntagmatic plane of their interrelation. This insistence on the signifiers as

corresponding to the presentational character of the fascist articulation can be observed within the different cultural as well as scientific fields. It is not that meaningful goals, a change of the basis of society or a future vision are projected, but that participation in the totality of society is theatricalised within the present. In this view, the ordering of the signifiers in relation to each other (the masses and the monumental architecture or the great spaces) plays the major content-producing role. The staging, the rite, the performance of the ideological are more important for an ideological practice which is concerned with the mobilisation and simultaneous disciplining of the masses than an exacting ideological construction.⁵⁸ Meanings hereby are produced through actions, they lie in the staging itself rather than in the ideal kernel 'behind' the phenomena.

Analyses of fascism within the second phase, which set out from the most advanced theories of ideology and verified as well as developed them in relation to the specific material of fascist practice, gained a whole new territory for cultural analysis and especially for art history. The first touchstone for the understanding of ideology as a strategic bundling, producing coherences of different and even heterogeneous ideas, and the function of ideology to organise the subjugation of the individuals as an act of voluntary integration into the community of the *Volk*, was the sculptures of Arno Breker.⁵⁹ Wolfgang Fritz Haug sought to clarify that it was not the individual form qualities that were characteristically fascist about the works, such as the muscular bodies, the taut postures and so on, which had been identified by art historians. It was, far more, the associative connections, which involved other regions of the ideological, that determine the effect of those works. The image of male beauty at the same time called forth ideas from other strands of the discourse around the body and concretised them, strands such as the image of the healthy and athletic body, the Nordic race, discipline, manly struggle and athleticism. It also presents, contrarily, the (absent) counter-image of the other race, of the ugly, the pathological and the excluded. Only if the forming of such a semantic cluster succeeds in integrating images from different fields of perception and practice can a wide-ranging ideological result be achieved. If nowadays those insights have become part of an art history informed by social history, around 1986 they were little current or supported, and contributed to an understanding of the semantics of form as arising from the historical process, instead of – as was usual in traditional art history – from stable, seemingly metaphysical meanings of forms.

The making of the fascist subject from an art-historical viewpoint

On the basis of theses on fascist ideology developed in the *Argument* circle, an exhibition was planned and realised in 1987 in the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (NGBK).⁶⁰ In my opinion, this exhibition marks the end of the left examination of fascism, which afterwards (and maybe only then)

flowed into the mainstream of normal historical analysis. The exhibition assumed that for the majority of Germans, National Socialism was not experienced as a terror regime, and that it was not the axis between the IG-Farben and Auschwitz that was crucial to them, but rather the positive experience of communality, the collective change in which they had actively participated by aligning with the 'movement'. Only a few had experienced everyday life under National Socialism as a concentration camp. From this starting point, the exhibition related to the new concept of everyday history, which at that time was being tested by the cultural sciences and led to violent discussions, most of all in the historical sciences. For the prevailing paradigms of political, economic and intellectual history it proved a challenge, as it sought out history not where it was made but where it was endured, not – so the thesis went – by submissive unchanging history-less subjects, but by acting and productive, and frequently contradictory ones, which were manipulated and recast through subjective experiences. In the *Argument* circle the development of a theory of culture to complement the theory of ideology was also seen as necessary. Where the concept of ideology was supposed to grasp socialisation from the 'top down', within practices and institutions organised by the ruling power, the concept of culture grasped for the 'horizontal' forms of socialisation through the self-activity of individuals.⁶¹

Methodologically, the exhibition worked through a mode of presentation that tried to reconstruct the power of fascism to fascinate, to deconstruct its mechanisms and their 'uncanny relation'⁶² between subjective hopes (and the apparent gain in meaning of the individual under National Socialism) and the disciplinary power and force of the regime. The planning group expected the exhibition to be a scandal, as the Frankfurt exhibition and the first large Breker exhibition after the war had been. Anti-fascists and leftists had protested sharply against these first two exhibitions, most of all because they had feared applause from the right, and did not want National Socialist art to be revalued through an exhibition – which, as a public medium, already signalled structural cultural acceptance.⁶³ This could – so it was feared – endanger the hegemonic anti-fascist consensus. In the event the scandal failed to materialise, even though the exhibition had ventured to tackle the minefield without any more anti-fascist precautions than the others. The promise of the exhibition to evoke the fascination of National Socialism through a restaging no longer unleashed emotional reminiscences: the continuity was interrupted.⁶⁴ But it was not only the reception of this exhibition that indicated a postmodern distance from once powerful practices and images. In addition, the group of left authors fell under the sway of the intellectually predominant new (postmodern) historicism.⁶⁵ Moving on from the clusters of meaning which, according to Haug, produced the ideological effect of Breker's works, it was only a step to a semantic pluralism that produced indifference, and which paralysed not only the fascist but also the anti-fascist

impetus. A taboo on fascist images was made superfluous, as there was no longer any imagined power emanating from them. Methodologically, the critique of ideology (focusing on politics) had already been replaced by the gentler method of deconstruction, which tried to destabilise the imaginary within the subjective unconscious. Thus the objective of the project was also curtailed. The attempt to get the contradictory semantic potentials of the images to form into the unequivocal coordinates of fascism failed. With the ambiguities of images no longer to be curbed, the result could only be the unsettling of any position of interpretation and thereby the delegitimisation of any authority to order and hierarchise interpretations. But in the face of this capitulation to perspectivism in the present-day west, is it possible to ground a left position and to constitute a left politics?

12

The Turn from Marx to Warburg in West German Art History, 1968–90

Otto Karl Werckmeister

MARXIST ART HISTORY IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC

The resurgence of Marxist art history after 1968 throughout western Europe took different forms, depending on political conditions in each state. In the Federal Republic of Germany, it inserted itself into a challenge to the institutional and personal persistence of academic elites from the National Socialist dictatorship into the newly constituted democracy. It was aimed at the defensively apolitical conservatism of the prevailing West German art-historical establishment, which had politically compromised itself before 1945.

The academic challenge ran parallel to a change of government drawn out over more than three years. In 1966, the Christian Democrats, in office since the inception of the Federal Republic in 1949, saw themselves obliged to form a coalition government with the Social Democratic opposition. This in turn provoked the formation of a self-avowed ‘extra-parliamentary opposition’ on the left, which threatened to jeopardise the Federal Republic’s prized constitutional stability. Then, as a result of a close election in 1969, the Christian Democrats were ousted by a coalition of Social Democrats and Free Democrats led by Social Democratic Chancellor Willy Brandt. By that time, the ‘extra-parliamentary opposition’, with a fully developed Marxist ideology in place, was entrenched in the public sphere. Another kind of Marxist challenge came from the German Democratic Republic, put in place as a Soviet response to the foundation of the Federal Republic sponsored by the western Allies. It was a communist-dominated ‘people’s democracy’ which styled itself the first ever socialist state on German soil. Any left-wing cultural opposition in the Federal Republic intent on radicalising democracy found itself obliged to take a maximum distance from the GDR’s ‘Marxist–Leninist’ state doctrine.

In this situation of political strife, junior scholars who promoted Marxist art history as a vehicle of anti-establishment scholarship took recourse to Marx’s and Engels’s early writings, that is, those antedating the foundational texts at the core of communist orthodoxy. Their aim was a potentially revolutionary cultural critique of capitalist society rather than the political empowerment of the working class, let alone any socialist state formation.¹

Such a take on Marxist theory, deliberately disengaged from the practice of art history in the GDR, could draw on the example of only a handful of marginal scholars in exile who had practiced a self-avowed Marxist art history in the decade after the Second World War, most notably the two Hungarians Arnold Hauser and Frederick Antal, and the German Max Raphael. These authors were bent on discerning class relations in styles and art forms as identified by conventional art history before them. Abiding by accepted periodisations, they stopped short of inserting their accounts into any long-term historical perspective of capitalist development and revolutionary change in the Marxist tradition.

In order to make up for the gap between the rudimentary state of Marxist art history and the theoretical cutting edge of the Marxist tradition, West German Marxist art historians, like their colleagues in other disciplines, absorbed the body of literature emanating from the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research. Founded in 1924 as a research centre to serve the workers' movement, since the start of the Depression this institute had started to retrench into academic scholarship. After its emigration to New York in 1934, it had deliberately stayed clear of left-wing politics. In the years following its return to Frankfurt in 1950, it had become a dominant influence in the public and academic culture of the Federal Republic, going against the grain of its predominantly conservative politics. In 1968, in the midst of widespread student unrest, two of its former and current members, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas, sought to revalidate its Marxist origins.²

WARNKE AND BREDEKAMP

Art-historical scholars associated with the neo-Marxist movement were acting from within the Ulmer Verein (Ulm Association, hereafter UV), a dissident spin-off from the German Art Historians Association (Deutscher Kunsthistorikerverband), the mainstream professional organisation. The UV was founded in 1968 to promote the interests of junior scholars through a democratic opening of publication venues, congresses and, ultimately, university appointments. Within one or two years, its journal, the *Kritische Berichte*, became the West German platform for neo-Marxist art history. At the 1970 Congress of the German Art Historians Association, its most prominent members organised a provocative session, titled 'The Work of Art Between Scholarship and Weltanschauung', a trenchant reckoning with the persistence of the Nazi past in the art-historical discipline.³

Two of the Ulm Association's most prominent members were Martin Warnke, appointed to a professorship at Marburg University in 1970, and his student, Horst Bredekamp, who in 1975 received his doctorate from Warnke. The rise to pre-eminence of these two scholars over the next 30 years within the art-historical establishment of the Federal Republic as professors at the

universities of Hamburg and Berlin respectively is central to the turn from Marx to Warburg, which is the theme of this chapter.

Warnke's book *Bau und Überbau* (*Structure and Superstructure*) of 1976, developed out of his seminars at Marburg, and Bredekamp's book *Kunst als Medium sozialer Konflikte* (*Art as a Medium of Social Conflicts*) of 1975, developed from his doctoral dissertation, were the two outstanding works of Marxist art history published during the decade.⁴ Both offer comprehensive analyses of medieval art – architecture in Warnke's case, religious imagery in Bredekamp's – as a vehicle of class relations – consensual ones in Warnke's case, conflictual ones in Bredekamp's.

In *Bau und Überbau*, Warnke proceeds from a sociological analysis of the published body of written sources about medieval building. He elucidates the cooperation between distinct segments of medieval societies that was necessary in order to raise ecclesiastical architecture up to super-regional standards of accomplishment, out of reach for single patrons. He shows how kings and bishops, monks and burghers, noblemen and commoners had to resolve their social antagonisms and pool their rights and resources for the purpose of an architecture meant to transfigure the coherence of Christian communities over and above class divisions.

In *Kunst als Medium sozialer Konflikte*, Bredekamp deals with the protracted and often deadly debates about the legitimacy of religious imagery from early Christianity to Iconoclasm and on to the Hussite reformation. Behind them he uncovers class struggles between secular rulers and ecclesiastical institutions for political control and economic exploitation of their subjects. He shows how they used pictures of Christ and the saints as power symbols in their contest for the religious allegiance of a population spellbound by the magic of images. More radical than Warnke, Bredekamp thus revalidated Marx's early critique of religion as an instrument of power in the hands of the ruling class, as outlined in the notes for his article 'On Religious Art' of 1842.⁵

THE TURN TO CONSERVATIVE POLITICS

Between 1978 and 1982, Marxist scholars in the capitalist democracies of Europe and the United States found out that their axiomatic anti-capitalist postures ran counter to the democratic majority support of newly elected conservative governments. These were bent on redressing the worldwide recession under way since 1973 through an unrestrained capitalist development fuelled by deficit spending, energised through an arms race with the Soviet Union and enforced by the political disempowerment of the working class.

In this changed political environment, the revalidation of Marxist scholarship, art history included, lost most of its ideological resonance in the public sphere, since it was no longer able to redeem its claims to

democratic support. It was outflanked by a myopic social history of art, intent on artistic practices, milieus of patronage, and cultural functions of artworks, but refraining from any synthesis with political history at large. Non-political post-structuralist theories of social diversity and competing claims to self-empowerment advanced by upstart minorities stopped short of the totalising political dynamics projected within the Marxist tradition.

It took West German art historians, led by Warnke and Bredekamp, nearly ten years to fashion the work of Aby Warburg and his library into a new, compelling paradigm for such a depoliticised social history of art with a German pedigree. It was made to suit the newly ascendant 'citadel culture' of self-assured capitalism now dominant in the Federal Republic of the 1980s,⁶ with its residual anxieties about social injustice and the threat of war.

WARBURG'S ASCENDANCY

An international Warburg Congress held at Hamburg in 1990 certified Warburg's posthumous elevation to the status of a pivotal figure for German art history of the day.⁷ It happened to fall in the year of German unification, with the political, economic and social systems of the Federal Republic left intact and dominant, those of the German Democratic Republic dismantled and discredited. When German unification could be hailed as a triumph both of democratic freedom over communist oppression and of productive capitalism over bankrupt socialism, it was a bad time for a defence of the Marxist tradition.

From now on, forging a long-term cultural historicity for the 'Berlin Republic', the reconstituted national state became a political concern for art history as well. Its habitual yearning for traditions antedating, and untainted by, the National Socialist dictatorship was imbued with a new sense of urgency. Central to this quest was the long-held assumption that the displacement of Jewish scholars under Hitler had deprived German art history of its most enlightened practitioners.

Recovery of the Warburg Library's tradition, the most significant group contribution to German art history by Jewish scholars, tied in with this agenda. The worldwide reputation these scholars had attained after their escape to England and the United States confirmed the lasting viability of this tradition. Soon after the Hamburg Congress, the recovery was institutionalised under Warnke's leadership by restoring the original building of the 'Bibliothek Warburg' at Hamburg to become a fully operative research centre.

At the Hamburg Congress, Bredekamp hailed Warburg as one of the most influential thinkers of the century, on a par with Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud, and reclaimed the Warburg tradition to back up the international standing West German art-historical scholarship had attained on account of its professional modernisation.⁸ The critical achievements of

some of its participants for the political renewal of West German art history 20 years earlier were left out of the equation. The congress transfigured Warburg as a fountainhead of two of the most urgent concerns of cultural history of the day: a supra-historical science of images and an anthropology of artistic culture.

It was not the critical dissolution of the ‘Renaissance’ ideal into a self-serving ideology of the Florentine merchant class or into a superstitious vehicle of Reformation propaganda, the achievement of Warburg’s ‘first period’, which fired up the imagination of most Congress speakers. Rather, it was Warburg’s later speculations about the life-sustaining power of images as an anthropological constant factor, the target of his journey for the ‘serpents’ ritual’ of the Arizona Indians,⁹ and the grand project of his *Mnemosyne Atlas* in the making.¹⁰

The Congress never addressed the social history of art as a methodological concern. Warburg’s peculiar version of it was simply taken for granted as the premise of his search for the anthropological foundations of pictorial culture. It could be acknowledged as yet another scheme for the interrelation of art and society, whose unresolved nexus had become all but commonplace in international art history of the time.

WARBURG’S SOCIAL HISTORY OF ART

Warburg’s social history of art was limited to the artistic culture of the Renaissance and the Reformation, and was not advanced with claims to stand as a paradigm beyond his field of inquiry. With sober-minded accuracy, he managed to disentangle the professional, sociological and ideological mechanisms of that artistic culture. Yet, unlike Marx and writers on art within the Marxist tradition, he never cared to anchor its functions as part of larger economic, social, and political processes transcending his immediate subjects.

It is the expansion of pictorial culture into seemingly non-artistic fields such as pageantry or printed broadsheets, where a vital impact of imagery on social life is most apparent, that has attracted art historians to Warburg’s approach. No matter how inclusive, though, even this expansion takes visual culture for granted as a potent force without measuring it against the historical realities it purports to represent, that is, it stops short of ideology critique germane for the Marxist tradition pursued during the 1970s by Warnke, Bredekamp, and other contributors to the *Kritische Berichte*. Warburg’s approach exuded a peculiar appeal for art-historical scholarship during the 1990s, which had become uncertain of aesthetic standards and prone to submerge art into visual culture in exchange for an expanded social relevancy of pictorial representation. Unlike Marxist-inspired art history of the 1970s, it tended to disregard both the aesthetic distinctions

of art from visual media in general and the social circumscription of art as a privileged realm.

Warburg's concentration on one historical period, at least as far as his investigations into the social history of art are concerned, was narrowed down still further to a single-minded focus on the cultural ambitions of the Florentine merchant class. It was this class that he obsessively scrutinised for its attempts to strike a balance in its public self-display between financial calculus, catholic faith, and astrological superstition. What attracted him was its yearning for the self-assertion, and self-awareness, of the individual, a notion of the 'Renaissance' ideal he took from Jacob Burckhardt's writings.

In Warburg's telescoped correlation of art production and social formation, money takes the place of work as the mainstay of the wealth that underwrites artistic culture. Segments of society beyond the direct participants in this transaction between art and money fall from view. Artists' professional accomplishment consists in the delivery of a beautiful visual setting, the learned profundity and emotional ambivalence of which can animate the patron's self-reflection.

Thus, single-handedly, Warburg transformed early 'Renaissance' painting from a timeless aesthetic ideal of emancipated humanism into an unapologetic class culture of enterprising merchants. That class culture he transfigured into an unacknowledged ideology of the modern subject, intent on mastering the business world without losing its ethical bearings. At the historic turning point of 1990, such an ideology appealed to the culture of ascendant capitalism in the 'Berlin Republic'.

WARBURG'S RECOVERY

Warburg's move from a social history of art to a fundamentalist anthropology of pictorial expression, which enralls current historiography about him, went in tandem with Germany's political trajectory from the self-secure Wilhelmine Empire to the crisis-ridden Weimar Republic. His micro-analytical inquiry into the 'serpents' ritual' of the Arizona Indians and his macro-synthetic project of the Mnemosyne atlas are extremes of a flight from historical constraints. Both conjure up a time-transcending imagery of uncertain origin, drawn upon but not invented by its makers, and transfigured into a quasi-metaphysical anthropology apt to stabilise self-consciousness.

Many speakers at the Hamburg Congress of 1990 took the implicit claim to a supra-historical profundity of art-historical scholarship as Warburg's legacy for themselves to reanimate, if not to duplicate. With not a moment's reflection about the historic date of their meeting, they made the individual's quest for cultural self-orientation into the key issue of 'modernity' ('die Moderne'). With unrivalled flamboyancy, Kurt Forster compared the

Warburg Library with an electric power plant and the Mnemosyne Atlas with El Lissitzky's photomontages.¹¹

Warburg and most, if not all, of his immediate associates were averse to any philosophy of history that subordinates art as a discrete component. Therein lies their irreconcilable difference from the intellectual tradition of the left that leads from Hegel to Marx and on to contemporary thinkers such as Bourdieu or Habermas. Rather, Warburg's pre-eminent philosophical authority was Friedrich Nietzsche, not only for his conception of a classical antiquity in which the 'Dionysian' mindset was valorised above all else, but also for his ideal of art as a life-enhancing cultural device. Both these tenets underlie his definitions of art as a spiritual resource for the well-to-do merchant class of fifteenth-century Florence. It figures that the turn from Marx to Warburg under way in West German art history since the beginning of the 1980s coincided with the ascendancy of Nietzsche as the principal reference figure for the public and academic culture of the Federal Republic.¹²

In the decade following the Hamburg Congress, both Warnke and Bredekamp continued to invoke the Warburg legacy for their successful institutional ventures of art history at the universities of Hamburg and Berlin respectively. It enabled them to anchor key ideas of modernisation current in German political culture in the historiographical authority of tradition. Warnke's project for the Warburg-Haus, labeled 'Political Iconography,' is focused on a typology of pictorial formulae for political culture that cuts across historical periods and political systems.¹³ The programme of the Helmholtz Centre for Cultural Technology, founded in 1998 by Bredekamp at the Humboldt University in Berlin as an interdisciplinary venture, projects a historically grounded science of images as vehicles of knowledge and communication, no longer confined to art and aesthetic expression.¹⁴

CONCLUSION AND CRITIQUE

Radical art history today entails a two-fold response to the historic turn from Marx to Warburg in German art history during the 1980s, sketched out above. It can spell out both the continuities and distinctions between the theoretical premises, methodological procedures, and thematic interests in the work of its two protagonists before and after.

As part of an effort at recovering what Marxist art history of the 1970s achieved, it can revalidate the results of Warnke's and Bredekamp's books from that decade, *Bau und Überbau* and *Kunst als Medium sozialer Konflikte*, which have had less of an impact on the field of medieval art history than they deserved. An ideology critique of political iconography and cultural technology, the new concepts advanced by the two authors in the later parts of their careers, is bound up with their institutional ascendancy in the unified Federal Republic of the early 1990s. At a time when a robust

economic and political self-assurance was flanked by the recovery of long-term intellectual traditions for the reconsolidated German state, Warburg was more readily embraced than Marx. Fifteen years later, in plain political and economic crisis, the resurgence of the left in the political culture of the Federal Republic makes this move appear to be a passing one.

Notes on Contributors

Caroline Arscott is a Senior Lecturer at the Courtauld Institute of Art. She is the author of numerous essays and articles, and co-editor, with Katie Scott, of *Manifestations of Venus: Essays on Art and Sexuality* (Manchester University Press, 2000). Her forthcoming book is provisionally titled *Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris: Interlacings* and discusses allusions to the heroic body and military themes in Burne-Jones's painting and William Morris's design work.

David Bindman is Emeritus Professor of History of Art at University College London. In addition to numerous articles, catalogues and essays, he is the author of several books, the most recent being *Hogarth and his Times: Serious Comedy* (University of California Press, 1997) and *Ape to Apollo: Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (Reaktion, 2002). He is editor of *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, vol.3.3 (Eighteenth Century), to be published by Norton in 2007.

Jutta Held is Professor in History of Art at the University of Osnabrück. She is the author of several books, including, most recently, *Caravaggio. Politik und Martyrium der Körper* (1996) and *Avantgarde und Politik in Frankreich: Revolution, Krieg und Faschismus in Blickfeld der Künste* (Reimer, 2005), and has edited a number of anthologies. She is also editor of *Kunst und Politik: Jahrbuch der Guernica-Gesellschaft*.

Andrew Hemingway is Professor in History of Art at University College London. He is the author of numerous articles and essays, and of the books *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) and *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926–1956* (Yale University Press, 2002).

Marc James Léger is Associate Professor in Art History at the University of Lethbridge. His articles have appeared in a number of journals, including *Afterimage*, *Parachute* and the *Journal of Canadian Studies*. He has recently completed his Ph.D. dissertation in Visual and Cultural Studies on contemporary critical public art practices.

Stanley Mitchell is Emeritus Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Derby and Senior Honorary Research Fellow in the History of Art at University College London. He is the author of numerous articles and essays, and translator of Lukács's, *The Historical Novel* (Merlin Press, 1962)

and *Essays on Thomas Mann* (Merlin Press, 1965), and Walter Benjamin's 'Short History of Photography' (*Screen*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1972). His translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* for Penguin Classics is due to appear in 2007.

John Roberts is Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art at the University of Wolverhampton. He is the author of numerous articles, essays and reviews, and of several books, the most recent of which are *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester University Press, 1998), *Philosophizing the Everyday: Revolutionary Praxis and the Fate of Cultural Theory* (Pluto Press, 2006) and, co-editor, with Dave Beech, of *The Philistine Controversy* (Verso, 2002).

Frederic J. Schwartz is Reader in History of Art at University College London. He is the author of numerous articles and essays, and of the books *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (Yale University Press, 1996) and *Blind Spots: Critical Theory and the History of Art in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Yale University Press, 2005).

Paul Stirton is Senior Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of several books, and of numerous articles, essays and exhibition catalogues on British and Hungarian art. He is the co-editor, with Juliet Kinchin, of *'Is Mr Ruskin living too long?': Selected Writings of E. W. Godwin on Victorian Architecture, Design and Culture* (White Cockade, 2005).

Otto Karl Werckmeister is Mary Jane Crow Distinguished Professor Emeritus in Art History at Northwestern University. He is the author of numerous articles and essays and several books, the most recent of which are *Icons of the Left: Benjamin and Eisenstein, Picasso and Kafka after the Fall of Communism* (University of Chicago Press, 1999) and *Der Medusa Effekt: Politische Bildstrategien seit dem 11. September 2001* (Form + Zweck, 2005).

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Eric Fernie (ed.), *Art History and its Methods: A Critical Anthology* (London: Phaidon, 1995); Donald Preziosi (ed.), *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Fernie's level of understanding is illustrated by the fact that he refers to Marxism as 'dialectical materialism' (pp. 347–8), a term Marx never used and which effectively denotes the later degradation of his thought, while Preziosi hardly mentions it at all and his glossary entry on 'Marxist Art History' is written in the past tense (p. 580). Preziosi's coverage was only to be expected given his judgement on 'the social history of art' in his earlier book *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 159–68, where he writes as if post-structuralism were simply the highest stage of intellection in the humanities and social sciences, and seems completely ignorant of the Marxist critiques of it. Among the most important of these are: Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Poststructuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London: Verso, 1987); Christopher Norris, *Reclaiming Truth: Contribution to a Critique of Cultural Relativism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1996); and Alex Callinicos, *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989). Callinicos's book prompted an exemplary exchange with Paul Wood – see Paul Wood, 'Previous Convictions', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1991), pp. 95–100; 'Marxism and Modernism: An Exchange between Alex Callinicos and Paul Wood', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2 (1992), pp. 120–5.
2. Jonathan Harris, *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 285. 'Classist' is an absurd piece of North American-minted terminology, which reduces class structure and the concomitant exploitation and subjection to an attitude problem.
3. Francis Fukayama, 'The End of History?', *National Interest*, vol. 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18. Fukayama, of course, is only concerned with Marxism–Leninism as a state ideology, not with Marxism as such.
4. For a brilliant sketch of our times and their political prospects, see David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
5. The best anthology is Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Literature and Art*, ed. Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (New York: International General, 1974). For a fuller selection, see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Literature and Art* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976).
6. The interested reader may consult journals such as *Historical Marxism*, *Monthly Review*, *Rethinking Marxism*, *Science and Society* and *Socialist Register*, or *New Left Review's* first series.
7. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Materialist Dialectics*, tr. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin, 1971), pp. 103–10.
8. E.g., Heinrich Wölfflin, 'Introduction', in *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art*, tr. M.D. Hottinger (New York: Dover, n.d.).
9. Frederick Engels to Conrad Schmidt, 27 October 1890, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.), p. 503.

10. Frederick Engels to Conrad Schmidt, 5 August 1890, *ibid.*, pp. 496–7.
11. Frederick Engels to J. Bloch, 21–22 September 1890, *ibid.*, p. 498.
12. Frederick Engels to Conrad Schmidt, 27 October 1890, *ibid.*, p. 506. One of the most useful attempts to address these issues in relation to the classical Marxist heritage remains Raymond Williams's *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
13. For the generational sequence, see Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: Verso, 1979), chs 1 and 2. For the transformation of Marxism within German social democracy, see George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), part 5, chs 5–6.
14. See Georgii Valentinovich Plekhanov, *Art and Social Life*, ed. Andrew Rothstein (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1953); Franz Mehring, *The Lessing Legend*, tr. A.S. Grogan (New York: Marxist Critics Group, 1938).
15. See Steve Edwards, 'The Colonization of Utopia', and Caroline Arscott, 'Four Walls: Morris and Ornament', in the catalogue to the exhibition of work by David Mabb – David Mabb, *William Morris* (Manchester: Whitworth Art Gallery, 2004), pp. 12–39, 60–9; Steve Edwards, 'The Trouble with Morris', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter 2002), pp. 4–10; Stephen Eisenman, 'Communism in Furs: A Dream of Prehistory in William Morris's *John Bull*', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 87, no. 1 (March 2005), pp. 92–110; Peter Smith, 'Never Work! The Situationists and the Politics of Negation', in Matthew Beaumont, Andrew Hemingway, Esther Leslie and John Roberts (eds), *'As Radical as Reality Itself': Essays on Marxism and Art for the Twenty-First Century* (forthcoming). The exceptional work of the artist David Mabb should be seen as a contribution to this revision – see above.
16. On this point, see Florence Boos's introduction to 'William Morris's Socialist Diary', *History Workshop Journal*, issue 13 (Spring 1982), pp. 1–16.
17. For Hausenstein, see Charles W. Haxthausen, 'A Critical Illusion: "Expressionism" in the Writings of Wilhelm Hausenstein', and Joan Weinstein, 'William Hausenstein, the Leftist Promotion of Expressionism and the First World War', in Rainer Rumold and O.K. Werckmeister (eds), *The Ideological Crisis of Expressionism: The Literary and Artistic German War Colony in Belgium, 1914–1918* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1990), pp. 169–92, 193–218.
18. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Cultural Revolution as Class War', in Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–31* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 8–40; Brandon Taylor, *Art and Literature under the Bolsheviks*, 2 vols (London and Boulder, Colo.: Pluto Press), vol. 2, chs 2 and 3.
19. Quoted in A.A. Zhdanov, 'Soviet Literature: The Richest in Ideas, the Most Advanced Literature', in Maxim Gorky et al., *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism in the Soviet Union* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977), p. 21.
20. For Lukács's position in the debates of the 1930s, see Rodney Livingstone's 'Introduction' to Georg Lukács, *Essays on Realism*, tr. David Fernbach (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 1–22. See also 'Lukács and Stalinism', in Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács: From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, tr. Patrick Camiller (London: New Left Books, 1979), pp. 193–213.
21. The same Popular Front mindset underlies Klingender's attempt to fashion Goya as an early people's artist in his *Goya in the Democratic Tradition* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1948), which was mainly written over the years 1937–40. It also informs the major work by the American art historian Oliver Larkin, *Art and Life in America* (New York: Rinehart, 1949), which appeared in the following year. See Alan Wallach, 'Oliver Larkin's *Art and Life in America*: Between the Popular Front and the Cold War', *American Art*, vol. 15, no. 3 (Fall 2001).

22. Frederick Antal, *Florentine Painting and its Social Background* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap, 1986), pp. 2–3.
23. Mark Rosenthal, 'Relative vs. Absolute Criteria in Art', *Dialectics*, no. 8 (1938), pp. 21–2. See also Angel Flores (ed.), *Literature and Marxism: A Controversy by Soviet Critics* (New York: Marxist Critics Group, 1938); Gorky et al, *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934*.
24. Antal, *Florentine Painting*, p. 4.
25. Frederick Antal, *Hogarth and his Place in European Art* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), pp. 213–17.
26. On this tradition, see Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982).
27. Max Raphael, *Zur Erkenntnistheorie der konkreten Dialektik* (Paris: Excelsior, 1934; reprinted by Verlag Neue Kritik, Frankfurt, 1972).
28. Andrew Hemingway, 'Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1994), p. 28, n.85.
29. Meyer Schapiro, 'Philosophy and Worldview in Painting', in his *Worldview in Painting: Art and Society, Selected Papers*, vol. 5 (New York: Braziller, 1999), p. 70. Cf. 'Toward an Empirical Theory of Art', in Max Raphael, *The Demands of Art*, tr. Norbert Guterman (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), pp. 207–38.
30. Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, chs 2–4.
31. Lefebvre's important early philosophical work *Le Matérialisme Dialectique*, tr. Jonathan Sturrock, *Dialectical Materialism* (London: Cape, 1968) has also not received the attention it deserves.
32. 'Arnold Hauser–György Lukács: On Youth, Art and Philosophy (A 1969 Radio Meeting)', *New Hungarian Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 58 (Summer 1975), pp. 97–8. My thanks to Petra Tanos for this reference.
33. E.H. Gombrich, 'The Social History of Art', in his *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art* (London: Phaidon, 1963), pp. 85–94. Considering Gombrich's political alignment with figures such as Karl Popper and Friedrich Hayek, the implications of his declared indebtedness to their writings on epistemology and psychology for his theory of art have not received the critical attention they merit.
34. Arnold Hauser: *The Philosophy of Art History* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1963); *Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap, 1986).
35. For instance, space constraints prevented any coverage of the Venice School of architectural history, on which see Gail Day, 'Strategies in the Metropolitan Merz: Manfredo Tafuri and Italian Workerism', *Radical Philosophy*, no. 133 (September/October 2005), pp. 26–38.

1 WILLIAM MORRIS: DECORATION AND MATERIALISM

My thanks to Rebecca Virag and Chrissie Bradstreet who have helped me to locate material for this project. I would also like to thank Uschi Payne for assistance with illustrations. I am grateful to the many friends and colleagues who have had an input, and I would like to thank especially Andrew Hemingway, Alex Potts and Katie Scott for making useful suggestions.

1. Walter Crane, 'William Morris and his Work', in Crane, *William Morris and Whistler: Papers and Addresses on Art and Craft and the Commonwealth* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1911), pp. 38–9.
2. George Bernard Shaw, *Morris As I Knew Him* (London: William Morris Society, 1966), pp. 23–4.
3. Nordau dedicated the book to Lombroso, his 'Dear and honoured master' – Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (1892), tr. from the 2nd edn (London: Heinemann, 1895), p. vii.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 536–7.

5. Ibid., pp. 241, vii.
6. Ibid., p. 555.
7. Nordau, quoted in publisher's notice at beginning of volume, *ibid.*, n. p.
8. Andrew Lang, 'Realism and Romance', *Contemporary Review* (1886), pp. 683–93. This image of Lang's has a bearing on the argument I make concerning Morris's response to the conjunction of the courtly environment and the wild wodehouses' dance in an illumination to Froissart, in my essay 'Four Walls: Morris and Ornament', in the catalogue to the exhibition of work by David Mabb, *William Morris* (Manchester: Whitworth Art Gallery, 2004), pp. 60–9.
9. The degenerationist theory was proposed by those wishing to identify the origins of human society with the Biblical patriarchs. See Morse Peckham, *Victorian Revolutionaries* (New York: Braziller, 1970), p. 194.
10. Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray, 1871), vol. 1, p. 62.
11. Ibid., p. 453.
12. See Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
13. E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (1955) (New York: Pantheon, 1976).
14. Nicholas Salmon, 'The Political Activist', in Linda Parry (ed.), *William Morris 1834–1896*, exhibition catalogue (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996), pp. 60–4.
15. William Morris, *News from Nowhere, or an Epoch of Rest, Being Some Characters from 'A Utopian Romance'*, first published in the *Commonweal* 1890 and in book form in 1896 (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 2004), p. 84–6. Old Hammond describes labour-saving machines as follows: 'they were made to "save labour" (or, to speak more plainly, the lives of men) on one piece of work in order that it might be expended – I would say wasted – on another, probably useless piece of work'. The only increase in quality that he was prepared to concede was in the machines themselves as opposed to the goods they churned out: they were 'quite perfect pieces of workmanship ... wonders of skill, invention and patience'.
16. William Morris, 'The Aims of Art' (1886), in *Signs of Change* (1888), reprinted in William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art* and *Signs of Change*, introduced by Peter Faulkner (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), pp. 87–8; see also 'How We Live and How We Might Live' (1885), *ibid.*, pp. 24–5, where the idea is introduced that machines will be used to alleviate toil and ensure sufficient production to ensure social stability, and then be phased out as leisure time expands. This argument is referred to 'some cultivated people, people of the artistic turn of mind' who might balk at the idea of machine production. 'Yet for the consolation of the artists I will say that I believe indeed that a state of social order would probably lead at first to a great development of machinery for really useful purposes, because people will still be anxious about getting through the work necessary to holding society together; but that after a while they will find that there is not so much work to do as they expected, and that then they will have leisure to reconsider the whole subject.'
17. Morris did not conceive of art as a specialist or exclusive activity in a future communist society; it would be an aspect of everybody's array of activities, though there might be individuals with exceptional skills or vision who chose to concentrate on artistic work. The figure of Mistress Philippa the stone carver in *News From Nowhere* is presented as an exceptionally gifted individual (and the fact that the other stone carver is her daughter introduces the idea that such gifts might be inherited). Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 159. Morris's view of the social location of artistic work has much in common with that of Marx and Engels as set out in *The German Ideology*: 'The exclusive concentration of artistic talent in particular individuals and its suppression in the broad mass, which is bound up with this, is a consequence of the division of labour ... In a communist society

- there are no painters but at most people who engage in painting among other activities'. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology, Part One, with Selections from Parts Two and Three*, ed. C.J. Arthur, mainly written 1845–6, published posthumously (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974), p. 109.
18. Morris, 'Aims of Art', pp. 95–6.
 19. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–6.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 86, and 'all men that have left any signs of their existence behind them have practiced art', p. 82. See also Morris, 'The Lesser Arts' (1877), in *Hopes and Fears*, p. 8: 'These [the decorative] arts are part of a great system invented for the expression of a man's delight in beauty: all people in all times have used them'.
 21. 'The aims of art', 'the mood of idleness... the mood of energy... [in the latter case] to satisfy my master the mood, I must be making something [or playing]... Well I believe that all men's lives are compounded of these two moods in various proportions, and this explains why they have always with more or less toil, cherished and practised art'. Morris, *Aims of Art*, pp. 81–2.
 22. It is interesting to consider how much this form of identification shares with the available forms of identification for the Orientalist imagination in the nineteenth century, where the western bourgeois male routinely imagined himself, for example, as the lusty Turk. Imagining the self transported into work rather than into wreaking violence or satisfying appetite is certainly unusual.
 23. Nordau, *Degeneration*, p. 556.
 24. Crane 'William Morris and his Work', p. 24.
 25. John Bruce Glasier's description of Morris's appearance and habitual garb following Morris's 1884 lecture in Edinburgh was as follows: 'There he was, a sun-god, truly, in his ever afterwards familiar dark-blue serge jacket suit and lighter blue cotton shirt and collar (without scarf or tie), and with the grandest head I had ever seen on the shoulders of a man', quoted in Nicholas Salmon with Derek Baker, *The William Morris Chronology* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. 139.
 26. Morris, *News from Nowhere*, pp. 124–6, 138. Dick Hammond anticipates Clara becoming more beautiful as she gets involved in the haymaking: 'you will look so beautiful with your neck all brown, and your hands too, and you under your gown as white as privet', p. 124. The beauty of ornamented attire is understood as a response to the beauty of the natural world and as an equivalent to the beauty of the body itself: 'do you think there is anything wrong in liking to see the coverings of our bodies beautiful like our bodies are? – just as a deer's or an otter's skin has been made beautiful from the first?', p. 126.
 27. Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) p. 201.
 28. *Ibid.*, pp. 207–8.
 29. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 1987, cited Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, p. 198.
 30. Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil* (1861–63); see Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, tr. H.F. Mallgrave and W. Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
 31. Represented in this chapter by W.G. Goodyear, Henry Lubbock and Henry Balfour. John Ruskin too emphasised the representational aspects of ornament, but was keen to distinguish between magic and true religious feeling. In his lectures on ornament collected in *The Two Paths*, such abstract principles as contrast, serial arrangement and symmetry are said to be far less important than tender feeling and truth to nature (expressed as reverence, where the artist seizes hold of God's hand), allied with lovely drawing and an instinctive appreciation of appropriate disposition of elements. Indian ornamental art (venomously discussed in the wake of the 1857 uprising known as the Indian Mutiny) is said to show the loveliness and sense of pattern but to be devoid of

- the truth and reverence which make for true beauty. 'Leave therefore, boldly, though not irreverently, mysticism and symbolism on the one side; cast away with utter scorn geometry and legalism on the other; seize hold of God's hand and look full in the face of His creation'. John Ruskin, *The Two Paths* (1859) (London: George Allen, 1905), p. 42. Once again we can note the distance between the positions of Ruskin and Morris.
32. Represented in this chapter by Owen Jones, Alois Riegl, Alfred C. Haddon, John Robley and Franz Boas.
 33. John Lubbock, *The Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man*, 2nd edn (London: Longmans, 1870), p. 49.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
 35. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
 36. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
 38. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
 39. Looking at the evidence for art making in prehistoric western Europe, the discontinuity between the earliest cave paintings, which feature representational drawings, and the later tendency in the later stone age and bronze age to produce geometric ornament rather than realistic art, Lubbock is anxious not to suggest a degeneration from realism to non-representational ornament, which might imply a backwards progress in civilisation. Instead he suggests a discontinuity in racial identity. Lubbock, *The Origin of Civilisation*, p. 31.
 40. William H. Goodyear, *The Grammar of the Lotus* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1891). Goodyear's emphasis on religious feeling brings him closer to Tylor than to Lubbock in certain respects.
 41. Henry Balfour, *The Evolution of Decorative Art* (London: Rivington, Percival & Co., 1893), p. 6.
 42. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
 44. Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament; Illustrated by Examples from Various Styles of Ornament* (London: Day, 1856), p. 14.
 45. Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, (*Stilfragen*) (1893), tr. Evelyn Kain (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992). Rolf Winkes (following Kaschnitz) points out that Riegl, in challenging Semper, can be said to turn back to Romantic aesthetic theory in many ways; in particular Schnaase, Schelling, Herbart, Kant and Hegel are also indicated as sources. Winkes does point out though that Riegl, despite drawing on the Romantic notion of the powerful subjectivity of the artist, also 'sought to establish with his new term *Kunstwollen* objectivity'. Winkes, in Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), tr. Rolf Winkes (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 1985), p. xix. This work by Riegl was based on lectures dating from 1898.
 46. E.B. Tylor introduced an equivalent argument, which is that the vegetal ornament related to the palm rather than the lotus. Both Goodyear and Tylor are cited by Henry Balfour.
 47. Riegl, *Problems of Style*, p. 14.
 48. The Egyptians are said to move beyond 'the sheer joy of decoration itself' in introducing symbolic and religious meanings, while the Greeks are said to go a step further, in integrating the ornamental (at its 'most mature, perfect and formally beautiful') with symbolism: the needs of symbolism 'always bowed graciously to the overriding decorative demands'. Riegl, *Problems of Style*, pp. 82-3.
 49. Balfour identifies pure decoration with an animal-like capacity for play. Balfour, *The Evolution of Decorative Art*, citing the magpie's decoration of its nest, p. 6. 'In human activity there has always been, and it can be traced far back in the animal kingdom, a surplus store of energy, in excess of that required for the mere providing for the

- maintenance of life, and this latent vigour in primitive man no doubt found a ready employment in these early attempts in the aesthetic arts' (p. 80). Pure decoration is admitted as a primary stage in the development of art, but the aesthetic is only admitted here to be animal in its nature.
50. Major General H.R. Robley, *Moko; or Maori Tattooing* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1896), pp. 98–101. He states that the repute of individual practitioners was 'as well known as that of painters among the moderns'. Also Preface p. ix: 'The beautiful arabesques in moko patterns might, I think, commend themselves to art students and designers as well as to students of ethnology and folk lore; for the native artist in moko must be entitled to the great originality and taste in his patterns; and his skill is such as to class him among the world's artists.' The British Library copy of this work (10008 t20 J) is Grangerised.
 51. Robert Fletcher, *Tattooing Among Civilised People, Read Before the Anthropological Society of Washington* (Washington, DC: Judd & Detweiler, 1883), cited Darwin in *The Descent Of Man* (London: Murray, 1871), who explained the prevalence of tattooing in diverse locations: 'These practices ... rather indicate the close similarity of the mind of man, to whatever race he may belong, in the same manner as the almost universal habits of dancing, masquerading and making rude pictures.' Fletcher surveyed explanations for tattooing (Lombroso, Parent-Duchatelet etc), noting that women used the same patterns in embroidery and tattooing children and gave the example of a mother saying, 'it is done for beauty, it is an ornament, a flower' (p. 23); but his summary list of the motivations for tattoo (vanity, imitation, idleness, religious conviction, lust, transmission of traditional devices) excluded any purely aesthetic motivation.
 52. Alfred C. Haddon, *Evolution in Art, As Illustrated by the Life-Histories of Designs* (London: W. Scott, 1895), p. 72.
 53. Haddon, *Evolution in Art*, p. 2. Haddon argues that the less complex forms of art allow one to understand the principles of decorative art as higher civilised expressions do not. See also Haddon's list of the motivations for ornament which starts with art and moves on to semiotic and symbolic frameworks.
 54. Published in the *Commonweal* (15 May–14 August 1886).
 55. 'Introduction', in Nicholas Salmon (ed.), *William Morris on History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). See also John Goode, 'William Morris and the Dream of Revolution', in William John Lucas (ed.), *Literature and Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Methuen, 1971), pp. 261–5; and Steven Eisenman, 'Communism In Furs: A Dream of Prehistory in William Morris's "John Ball"', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 87, no. 1 (March, 2005), pp. 92–110. Stephen Eisenman draws attention to the statement in 'Manifesto of the Socialist League', partly written by Morris: 'The progress of all life must not be on the straight line, but on the spiral', *Commonweal*, vol. 1, no. 1 (February 1885); see also Stephen Eisenman, 'Class Consciousness in the Design of William Morris', *Journal of William Morris Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter 2002), p. 33.
 56. Evidence of Morris's ownership can be found in *Catalogue of a Portion of the Valuable Collection of Manuscripts, Early Printed Books, &c. of the Late William Morris, of Kelmscott House, Hammersmith* (London: Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 1898), p. 34: 'William Camden, *Britannia*, translated newly into English by Philemon Holland, revised, amended and enlarged, 1637'. This passage from Camden cited in Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England* (London: Reaktion, 2001), p. 69.
 57. See Fleming, *Graffiti*, pp. 69–78 on the relationship between William Camden, John Speed, Theodore de Bry and the artist Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues with regard to the representation of Pictish tattooing. Fleming offers observations about the complex puns activated in Le Moyne's image between 'a pink' (the flower), 'the pink' (meaning excellence or beauty), 'to pink' (to tattoo or cut cloth to display different coloured layers of lining or skin below) and the pink or flower as a general simile for woman and her

- beauty. These multiple references are entirely appropriate for the range of associations between botany, textiles, ornamented or punctured skin and aesthetics that Morris establishes in his work.
58. John Speed, *The Historie Of Great Britain* (1611) (London: G. Humble, 1627), p. 182, cited in Juliet Fleming, 'The Renaissance Tattoo', *Res*, no. 31 (Spring 1997), p. 47; and Fleming, *Graffiti*, p. 77.
 59. Le Moyne's volume of woodcuts and elaborate watercolours of plants is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.
 60. *Illustrated London News* (14 June 1884), pp. 574, 576; (1 September 1894), p. 266; *Graphic* (26 July, 1884), pp. 74–5; *Westminster Budget* (7 September 1894), pp. 427–8, 'The Late King of the Maoris. By One Who Knew Him', *Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist*, vol. 35 (1895). Tawhaio was represented in the press as a peaceable representative of a brave people, intelligent, a convert to teetotalism and in many ways dignified and controlled, but in his eccentricities showing his inherently lusty nature. He was said to be fascinated with the visible blushes 'red as the rata blossom' on European women's skin and to find the dancers at the Alhambra and the Empire the most beautiful of English women (*Westminster Budget*, p. 427). These emphases correspond to the comments in anthropological literature on the martial strength, physical bulk and vigorous appetite of the Maori people. See, for example, J.H. Kerry-Nicholls, 'The Origin, Physical Characteristics and Manners and Customs of the Maori Race, from Data Derived During a Recent Exploration of the King Country, New Zealand', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 15 (1886), pp. 187–209.
 61. Robley, *Moko*, p. 112.
 62. Adolf Loos used the idea of degeneracy to mount an objection to ornament altogether. 'The Papuan covers his skin with tattoos, his boat, his oars, in short everything he can lay his hands on... What is natural in the Papuan or the child is a sign of degeneracy in a modern adult'. 'Ornament and Crime' (written 1908, first published 1929) in Adolf Opel (ed.), *Adolf Loos, Ornament and Crime, Selected Essays*, tr. M. Mitchell (Riverside, Calif.: Ariadne Press, 1998), p. 167.
 63. 'Letters Without Address' (1899–1900), in Georgii V. Plekhanov, *Art and Social Life*, tr. Eric Hartley (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1953), pp. 83, 110, 116.
 64. Georg Lukács, Lucien Goldman, Francis Klingender and Nicos Hadjinicolaou are prominent figures in this tradition.

2 MIKHAIL LIFSHITS: A MARXIST CONSERVATIVE

This chapter is a compressed and revised version of an article that appeared in *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1997), pp. 23–41.

1. Mikhail Lifshitz, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, tr. Ralph B. Winn (London: Pluto Press, 1973).
2. Angel Flores (ed.), *Literature and Marxism: A Controversy* (New York: Marxist Critics' Group, 1939).
3. The first Russian edition appeared in 1937 and was later amplified in an edition published by *Iskusstvo* in 1957.
4. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951), letters to J. Bloch and C. Schmidt, pp. 443–50.
5. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), pp. 478–80.
6. For example, see Theodor Schmit, 'The Study of Art in the USSR (1917–1928)', *Parnassus*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1929), pp. 7–10; Frederick Antal, 'Über Museen in der Sowjetunion (1932)', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 4, nos 2–3 (1976), pp. 5–11.

7. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992).
8. *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1981). There is no English translation.
9. Valentin Nikolaevič Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, tr. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York and London: Seminar Press, 1973).
10. Mikhail Lifshits, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Moscow, 1984–88) vol. 2, p. 261.
11. Quoted in Arpad Kadarkay, *Georg Lukacs: Life, Thought, and Politics* (Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 352.
12. Herman Ermolaev, *Soviet Literary Theories, 1917–1934*, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, vol. 69, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), p. 144.
13. Maxim Gorky et al., *Soviet Writers' Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism in the Soviet Union* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1977).
14. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 478–80.
15. See Herbert Marcuse's *Soviet Marxism, 1917–1947* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).
16. Lifshits, 'Iz avtobiografii idei' ('From an Autobiography of Ideas'), *Kontekst, Literaturno-teoreticheskie issledovaniya* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), p. 314.
17. It is striking that Walter Benjamin attributes just such concepts to the rhetoric of fascism. See his *Illuminations*, tr. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 218.
18. Nestor Ivanovich Makhno (1884–1934) was a legendary anarchist commander in the immediate post-revolutionary years, fighting now the landowners, now Austro-German invaders, now Whites, now Reds.
19. Lifshits, *Kontekst*, 284–5.
20. Lifshits, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 2, pp. 245–92.
21. Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, part 2 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1969), p. 118.
22. Lifshits, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 2, pp. 226–32.
23. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12 (London and New York: Lawrence & Wishart, 1979), p. 189.
24. Lifshits, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 2, p. 258.
25. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, tr. Martin Nikolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 110–11.
26. See Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, tr. Charles Rougle (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Igor Golomshtok, *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and the People's Republic of China* (London: Collins-Harvill, 1990). Paul Wood discusses both books in 'Regarding Soviet Culture', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 18, no. 1 (1995), pp. 165–70, and 'Retreat from Moscow', *Artscribe*, No. 88 (September 1991), pp. 48–53.
27. E.V. Il'enkov, *The Dialectics of the Abstract and Concrete in Marx's Capital*, tr. Sergie Syrovatkin (Moscow: Progress, 1992).
28. Lifshits, 'Ob ideal'nom i o real'nom' ('On the Ideal and the Real'), *Voprosy filosofii*, 1984, no. 10, p. 132.
29. Kardakay, *Georg Lukács*, pp. 30–1.
30. Aleksei Kondratovich, *Novomirskii dnevnik (New World Diary)* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel, 1991), p. 92.

3 FREDERICK ANTAL

This essay has been developed from an earlier paper published in G. Ernyey (ed.) *Britain and Hungary II: Contacts in Architecture, Design, Art and Theory* (Budapest: Hungarian University

of Craft and Design, 2003), arising from a collaborative research project between Glasgow University, Glasgow School of Art, the Hungarian University of Craft and Design and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. I am also grateful to Professor Bridget Fowler, who provided useful comments on an earlier draft.

1. Frederick Antal, *Florentine Painting and its Social Background; the Bourgeois Republic before Cosimo de' Medici's advent to Power: XIV and early XV centuries* (London: Kegan Paul Trench & Co., 1948).
2. Frederick Antal, *Fuseli Studies* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), and *Hogarth and his Place in European Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962). Francis Haskell, in a fairly hostile review of *Hogarth and his Place in European Art*, summed up with the comment, 'this is by far the most important book on the subject that has appeared – or that is likely to appear – for a very long time'. *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 105, no. 726 (September 1963), pp. 417–18.
3. Factual information on Antal's life is taken from the *Dictionary of National Biography, Supplement 1951–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 27–8. A bibliography of Antal's writings, prepared by Nicos Hadjinicolaou and Anna Wessely, can be found in *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 4, nos. 2/3 (1976), pp. 35–7. An article by Wessely entitled 'Die Aufhebung des Stilbegriffs: Frederick Antals Rekonstruktion Kuenstlerischen Entwicklungen aus marxistischer Grundlage' can be found in the same issue of *Kritische Berichte*, pp. 16–35.
4. 'It was particularly during the heroic years around 1900, spiritually so rich and complex, that various methods of art-history, to a certain extent, overlapped.' 'Remarks on the method of art-history', in Frederick Antal, *Classicism and Romanticism and Other Studies in Art History*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 175. All references to this essay, hereafter referred to as 'Remarks', are to this publication, although the essay appeared originally in the *Burlington Magazine* (February–March 1949).
5. Wölfflin's lectures were notable for the simultaneous projection of two lantern slides in order to make close stylistic comparisons between works of art.
6. *Die klassische Kunst: ein Einführung in die Italienische Renaissance* (Munich: 1899), tr. P. and L. Murray as *Classic Art: an Introduction to the Italian Renaissance* (London: Phaidon Press, 1952).
7. *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe: das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neueren Kunst* (Munich: F. Bruckmann 1915), tr. M. D. Hottinger as *Principles of Art History* (New York: Dover Press, 1932).
8. Wölfflin, 'Preface' to *Classic Art*, p. 7.
9. Antal, 'Remarks', p. 175.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 176.
12. See, for example, Paul Crowther, 'The Rise of Art History', in Martin Kemp (ed.), *The Oxford History of Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 399.
13. Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen: Grundlegen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (Berlin: Siemens, 1893). These ideas were elaborated in *Die spätromische Kunstindustrie* (Vienna: K. K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1901).
14. Antal, 'Remarks', p. 176, n.1.
15. Ibid.
16. Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1776–88) is perhaps the definitive example of the genre, but it is seen equally in Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (Dresden, 1764), tr. G. Henry Lodge as *The History of Ancient Art among the Greeks* (London: John Chapman, 1850).
17. Wickhoff's most important early publication was a study of the Vienna Genesis (1895) in which he argued that the progressive stylisation of late antique figurative motifs, far

- from being a symptom of decline or loss of skill, was a response to new, non-classical sources and could be regarded as an 'advance' in the 'continuity of development'.
18. 'Das Rätsel der Kunst der Brüder Van Eyck', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, vol. 24 (1904), pp. 161–317. For a discussion of some of the diverse tendencies in Dvořák's writings, see Matthew Rampley, 'Max Dvořák: art history and the crisis of modernity', *Art History*, vol. 26, no. 2 (April 2003) pp. 214–37.
 19. Edwin Lachnit, précis of paper 'Ansätze methodischer Evolution in der Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte', *Actes du XXVII Congrès International d'histoire de l'art: Revolution et evolution de l'histoire de l'art de Warburg a nos jours* (Strasbourg, 1992).
 20. See Max Dvořák, *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte: Studien zur abendländischen Kunstentwicklung*, ed. J. Wilde and K. Swoboda (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1924); English translation *The History of Art as the History of Ideas* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984). Although this collection was very influential, especially the essay 'On El Greco and Mannerism', Rampley ('Max Dvořák') makes it clear how the 'expressionist' tendency came to dominate Dvořák's writings only during and after the First World War.
 21. Other students of Dvořák at this time included Fritz Saxl, Otto Benesch, Ludwig von Baldass, Richard Offner and Johannes Wilde.
 22. 'Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism' appeared in parts in the *Burlington Magazine* between April 1935 and January 1941 and was reprinted with alterations in *Classicism and Romanticism with other Studies in Art History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966). The original title of the thesis was *Klassizismus, Romantik und Realismus in der französischen Malerei von der Mitte des XVIII. Jahrhunderts bis zum auftreten Gericault*.
 23. Antal's comments on the condition, quality and attribution of Italian drawings in the Szépművészeti Múzeum can be seen on the museum index cards. See also A. Czére, *17th Century Italian Drawings in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts* (Budapest, 2004) (see drawing no. 51, *passim*). Many of Antal's specialist articles are concerned with drawings.
 24. The Free School programme was inspired by the sociological theories of Max Weber and Georg Simmel, under whom Lukács and Mannheim had studied. See Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács: from Romanticism to Bolshevism* (London: New Left Books, 1979), pp. 83–8. Another translation of the name is 'The Free School of Human Spirit', which further emphasises its idealist character.
 25. Quoted in A. Kadarkay, *Georg Lukács: Life, Thought and Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 202. For a more substantial analysis of Lukács' intellectual and political development, see Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1979).
 26. These issues were the larger context of Lukács's studies in Germany under Max Weber and Heinrich Rickert between 1912 and 1915, which appeared in several publications including *Theorie des Romans* (Berlin: P. Cassirer, 1920), in English as *The Theory of the Novel*, tr. Anna Bostock (London: Merlin, 1978).
 27. *Ideology and Utopia*, the English translation, appeared in 1936.
 28. See Jorge Larraín, *The Concept of Ideology* (London: Hutchison, 1979), pp. 100–22.
 29. Lukács later recalled, 'It is typical of the diversity of views within the Sunday [Circle] that I was the only one beginning to profess a Hegelian–Marxian view – perhaps only Frigyes Antal showed some inclination to Marxism.' In *Emlekezések* (Recollections), Budapest, 1967, quoted in Anna Wessely, 'Antal and Lukács: the Marxist Approach to the History of Art', *New Hungarian Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 73 (1979) p. 116.
 30. Georg Lukács, 'Preface' to *History and Class Consciousness*, tr. R. Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. x.
 31. The classic statement that economic factors determine the cultural and ideological patterns in society, their relationship described as 'base' and 'superstructure', is found

- in Marx's preface to 'A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy' (1859), but it was given special importance in debates between Lenin and Plekhanov. See Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology*, pp. 68–83.
32. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p. 134.
 33. 'I, at least, find that my ideas hovered between the acquisition of Marxism and political activism on the one hand, and the constant intensification of my purely idealistic ethical preoccupations on the other.' See Lukács, 'Preface' to *History and Class Consciousness*.
 34. For a discussion of this period, see Andrew C. Janos and William Bradley Slottman (eds), *Revolution in Perspective: Essays on the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); and D. Kettler, 'Culture and Revolution: Lukács in the Hungarian Revolutions of 1918/19', *Telos*, no. 10 (Winter 1971).
 35. In his foreword to Frederick Antal, *Classicism and Romanticism, with Other Studies in Art History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. xiii, David Carriv states that two further volumes of 'Florentine Painting and its Social Background' covering the period of the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been prepared by Antal before his death, but not in sufficient order to be published. The texts for four lectures delivered at the Courtauld Institute of Art in the 1930s entitled 'Raphael between Classicism and Mannerism' were published in German as *Raffael zwischen Klassizismus und Manierismus* (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1980).
 36. This material first appeared in an article, 'Gedanken zur Entwicklung der Trecento- und Quattrocento-Malerei in Siena und Florenz', *Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* II (1924–5).
 37. *Kritische Berichte zur kunstgeschichtlichen Literatur* appeared irregularly from Berlin, Leipzig and Zurich between 1927 and 1937. It was reprinted in 1972 (New York and Hildesheim: Olms).
 38. Lukács, 'Preface' to *History and Class Consciousness*, p. xi.
 39. Georg Lukács, *A történelmi-regéni*, Budapest, 1954; *Der Historisches Roman* (Berlin 1955); *The Historical Novel*, tr. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin, 1962). This text was written in 1936–37.
 40. See Ernst Bloch, et al., *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: New Left Books, 1977).
 41. 'Naturalism' in this scheme could be regarded as a degraded form of 'realism', closer to the bourgeois world view, although it might also lead to a true understanding of the contradictions between 'appearance and reality'. See Georg Lukács, 'Introduction' to *Writer and Critic, and Other Essays* (London: Merlin Press, 1970).
 42. Antal, *Florentine Painting*, p. 117.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
 46. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
 47. Antal's use of the term 'reflect' is somewhat dated although I have chosen to use it throughout. In *Prisms*, tr. Samuel and Shierry M. Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967) Adorno proposes 'refract' as a more suitable term because it preserves the methodological notion of an art determined by the relations within the field of power while also giving a role to the independent shaping power of the art sphere itself. 'Refraction' suggests that the expression of class forces was more mediated by the play of artistic conventions.
 48. See reviews by Millard Meiss of *Florentine Painting and Its Social Background*, *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 31 (June 1949), pp. 143–150, and by Francis Haskell of *Hogarth and His Place in European Art*, *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 105, No. 726 (September 1963), pp. 417–18, and of *Classicism and Romanticism, with Other Studies in Art History*, *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 110, No. 780 (March, 1968), pp. 161–2.

49. Antal, *Florentine Painting*, p. 118.
50. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) pp. 86–108.
51. Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 'Preface'.
52. Frederick Antal, 'Über Museen in der Sowjetunion (1932)', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 4, nos 2/3 (1976), pp. 5–13, tr. and with a commentary by F-J. Verspohl and Anna Wessely.
53. G. V. Plekhanov, 'French Drama and Painting of the Eighteenth Century', in *Art and Society* (New York: Critics Group, 1936), pp. 9–35. The text was first published in Russian in 1910.
54. See also Milton W. Brown, *The Painting of the French Revolution* (New York: Critics Group, 1938).
55. See Robert L. Herbert, *David, Voltaire, Brutus and the French Revolution: An Essay in Art and Politics* (London: Allen Lane, 1972).
56. For a discussion of the historiography of the Revolution, see William Doyle, *Origins of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), part 1. Hemingway's 'Introduction' to part 2 (France), in Andrew Hemingway and William Vaughan (eds), *Art in Bourgeois Society, 1790–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 123–9, relates this to art-historical approaches.
57. Antal, 'Reflections', p. 25.
58. See Walter Friedlaender, *Von David bis Delacroix* (Leipzig, 1930), tr. as *From David to Delacroix* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1952).
59. Antal, 'Reflections', p. 37.
60. Paul Signac, *d' Eugène Delacroix au néo-impressionisme* (Paris: Fleury, 1899; later edns 1911, 1921 and 1939) is a key example linking Delacroix with tendencies towards colour and expression in early Modernist art.
61. Antal, *Hogarth*.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
65. Haskell, review of *Hogarth*, pp. 417–18.
66. William Hazlitt is the source for this view of Hogarth in the early nineteenth century. It was often repeated thereafter. See, for example, R. B. Beckett, *Hogarth* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), pp. 29–30, which also refers to C. H. Collins Baker.
67. Antal, *Hogarth*, p. 175
68. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 2 (1939), pp. 116–27. Wittkower and Fritz Saxl also prepared a photographic exhibition in 1941 entitled *British Art and the Mediterranean*, under the auspices of the Warburg Institute. This was later published as a book (1948).
69. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. 40 (1954), pp. 55–74.
70. Antal gave occasional lectures at the Courtauld Institute of Art in the 1930s and 1940s although he was not a full member of the teaching staff.
71. John Pope-Hennessy, *Learning to Look* (London: William Heinemann, 1991), p. 304.
72. John Berger, 'Frederick Antal: a personal tribute', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 96, no. 617 (August, 1954), pp. 259–60.
73. Anthony Blunt, 'From Bloomsbury to Marxism', *Studio International*, 1973. Reprinted *Art Monthly*, no. 32 (December 1979), pp. 12–17.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.
76. Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450–1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940). The book contains an acknowledgement to Antal in the preface and a further comment in footnote 1 mentioning Antal, 'to whom I owe much of the general method followed in this and later chapters'.

77. Ibid., pp. 1, 3, 5 and 21.
78. Evelyn Antal wrote that the relationship between Blunt and her husband cooled after Blunt became closer to the Warburg circle, especially Saxl and Wittkower. See Miranda Carter, *Anthony Blunt: His Lives* (London: Macmillan, 2001), p. 261.
79. By contrast, in his inaugural lecture as Slade Professor of Art at London University in 1933 Roger Fry dismissed the German model of art scholarship for regarding works of art 'almost entirely from a chronological point of view...without any reference to their aesthetic significance'. Roger Fry, 'Art-History as an Academic Study', in *Last Lectures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), pp. 3–4.
80. Berger, 'Frederick Antal', p. 259. In another context Berger described Antal as 'the art historian who, more than any other man, taught me how to write about art', going on to state that 'James Lavin', the central character in his first novel, *A Painter of our Time* (1958), was partly a composite of Antal and the sculptor Peter (László) Peri, also a Hungarian Marxist émigré. See John Berger, 'Peter Peri', in *Selected Essays and Articles* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 64.
81. Carter, *Anthony Blunt*, p. 127.
82. H. D. Gronau, review of *Florentine Painting and its Social Background*, *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 90, no. 547 (October 1948), pp. 297–8.
83. *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 31 (June 1949), p. 145. These terms would be repeated almost 20 years later by Alfred Neumeier in a review of *Classicism and Romanticism*, where he remarks: 'one experiences the unity of an underlying philosophy, social determinism, which Antal applied with some fanaticism to the field of his studies'. *Art Journal*, vol. 27 (1967–68), p. 230.
84. Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951).
85. See H. van Os, 'The Black Death and Siennese Painting: A Problem of Interpretation', *Art History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (September 1981), pp. 237–49.
86. Francis Haskell, review of *Classicism and Romanticism*, in *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 110, no. 780 (March 1968), p. 161.
87. Haskell, review of *Hogarth*.
88. Haskell, review of *Classicism and Romanticism*.
89. In 'Remarks', Antal identified his own work with several other art historians, including the circle at the Warburg Institute, whom he felt were pursuing the larger ideals of a 'social history of art', although very few shared his political or theoretical outlook.
90. See Henry Zerner, review of Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, *New York Review of Books*, 18 December 1980, where he attacks Antal's method as a background to Baxandall's work. In the response by Albert Boime and reply by Zerner in *ibid.*, 30 April 1981, Zerner goes on to suggest that 'the art history Baxandall practices may be more consistent with Marxist thought than Antal's'.
91. See A. Langdale, 'Aspects of the Critical Reception and Intellectual History of Baxandall's Concept of the Period Eye', *Art History*, vol. 21, no. 4 (December 1998), pp. 479–98.
92. N. Hadjinicolaou, *Histoire de l'art et lutte de classes* (Paris: François Maspero, 1973), tr. Louise Asmal as *Art History and Class Struggle* (London: Pluto Press, 1978), p. 1.
93. See Alan Wallach, 'In Search of a Marxist Theory of Art History', *Block*, no. 4 (1981), pp. 15–17.
94. T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), and *The Absolute Bourgeois* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973).
95. Clark, *Image of the People*, pp. 10–11.
96. See, for example, Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), and *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

97. Anna Wessely, 'Antal Frigyes, 1887–1954', in *Ars Hungarica*, vol. 2, (1978), p. 369.
98. Antal, 'Remarks', p. 189.

4 ART AS SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS: FRANCIS KLINGENDER AND BRITISH ART

Many of the thoughts in this essay go back to discussions with Tom Gretton when we taught a course together many years ago at University College London on *Art and the Industrial Revolution*. This article is dedicated to him. I am also grateful to Andrew Hemingway for a careful reading of the first draft and many important suggestions.

1. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory, 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992). The authors reprint 'Content and Form in Art', 1935, under the heading of 'Realism as Figuration' (pp. 421–3), and an extract from 'Marxism and Modern Art', 1943, under 'Art and Society' (pp. 631–3).
2. Francis Donald Klingender, *Goya in the Democratic Tradition* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1948, reprinted by the same publisher in 1968), and *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages*, ed. Evelyn Antal and John Harthan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).
3. A family genealogy kindly shown to me by Grant Pooke reveals that the family, though settled in Liverpool, was descended from French Huguenots who settled and married in Germany. Klingender's mother was the daughter of a mayor of Düsseldorf.
4. These biographical details are taken from Joyce M. Bellamy and John Saville (eds), *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. 9 (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 161–5. The entry was written by John Saville, his later colleague at the University of Hull. There is also Arthur Elton's memoir in his revision of *Art and The Industrial Revolution* (London: Evelyn, Adams & Mackay, 1968), pp. vii–xiv.
5. I owe this suggestion to Grant Pooke of the University of Kent, who allowed me to see his thesis in progress on Klingender.
6. These details are taken from Arthur Elton's preface to the 1968 edition of *Art and the Industrial Revolution*.
7. The main Soviet concern was that the Trade Delegation with its ciphers had been raided (Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, *Raid on Arcos Ltd. and the Trade Delegation of the USSR: Facts and Documents*, London, May 1927), while the Labour Party was concerned at the loss of trade that might follow if diplomatic relations were broken off by the Soviet government (Labour Research Department, *British Trade and the Arcos Raid*, London, May 1927).
8. Lynda Morris and Robert Radford, *The Story of the Artists' International Association, 1933–1953* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 1983), p. 25.
9. In his Hull curriculum vitae, shown to me by Grant Pooke.
10. See *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. 9, p. 164, and Klingender's curriculum vitae.
11. Noreen Branson, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1927–41* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1985), pp. 210–13.
12. Betty Rea (ed.), *5 on Revolutionary Art* (London: Wishart, 1935), p. 25.
13. H.G. Scott (ed.), *Problems of Soviet Literature: Reports and Speeches at the First Soviet Writers' Congress* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1935), p. 10.
14. Margot Heinemann, 'The People's Front and the Intellectuals', in Jim Fyrth (ed.), *Britain, Fascism and the Popular Front* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1985), p. 165.
15. Heinemann, 'The People's Front', p. 165.
16. Rea, *5 on Revolutionary Art*, pp. 25–43.
17. In a later obituary of Frederick Antal, he noted the importance of Riegl and Dvořák as *historical* interpreters of art (Morris and Radford, *Artists' International Association*, p. 24).
18. Rea, *5 on Revolutionary Art*, pp. 27f.

19. Margot Heinemann notes that before the Popular Front there was widespread suspicion of artists and intellectuals in the Communist Party (Heinemann, 'The People's Front', p. 164).
20. Georgii V. Plekhanov, *Art and Social Life*, ed. Andrew Rothstein (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1953).
21. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
22. George [sic] V. Plekhanov, *Art and Society*, tr. Paul S. Leitner, Alfred Goldstein and C.H. Crout (New York: Marxist Critics Group, 1937).
23. Georgii V. Plekhanov, *Essays in the History of Materialism*, tr. Ralph Fox (London: John Lane, 1934). This consists of three essays, on Holbach, Helvetius and Marx.
24. *Left Review*, no. 8 (May 1935), pp. 328–9.
25. David Margolies (ed.), *Writing the Revolution: Cultural Criticism from the Left Review* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), p. 125.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 129. For Fox, see Andy Croft (ed.), *A Weapon in the Struggle: The Cultural History of the Communist Party in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), pp. 109–11; and Ralph Fox, *The Novel and the People* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1937).
27. Heinemann, 'The People's Front', p. 177.
28. A.L. Morton, *A People's History of England* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938). A.L. Lloyd's *Come All Ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Folk Songs of the Coalfields* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1952) is a late product of the same impulse.
29. Klingender, *Goya*.
30. Rea, *5 on Revolutionary Art*, p. 38.
31. Miranda Carter, *Anthony Blunt: His Lives* (London: Macmillan, 2001), p. 149.
32. Robert Radford, 'To Disable the Enemy: the Graphic Art of the Three Jameses', in Croft, *A Weapon in the Struggle*, pp. 28–47.
33. Francis Donald Klingender, *Marxism and Modern Art: An Approach to Social Realism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1943).
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–10.
35. Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1928), p. 15.
36. Klingender, *Marxism and Modern Art*, p. 6.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.
38. Harrison and Wood, *Art in Theory*, p. 631.
39. Klingender, *Marxism and Modern Art*, pp. 32–37.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
42. Morris and Radford, *Artists' International Association*, p. 23.
43. The collection of c.700 prints was sold by Klingender to the museum in February 1948 for £60 (accession numbers 1948–2–14–333 to 1010). According to Saville (*Dictionary of Labour History*, vol. 9) the ownership of the collection was a matter of dispute with Millicent Rose.
44. See David Alexander, *Richard Newton and English Caricature in the 1790s* (Manchester: Whitworth Art Gallery in conjunction with Manchester University Press, 1998); Richard Pound, *C.J. Grant's Political Drama: A Radical Satirist Rediscovered* (London: University College London, 1998); and, for Spence, David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London: British Museum, 1989), pp. 198–203 (catalogue entries by Mark Jones).
45. Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution*, p. xvii.
46. Francis Donald Klingender, *Hogarth and English Caricature* (London and New York: Transatlantic Arts, 1944), p. iii.
47. *Ibid.*, p. vi.
48. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
49. See David Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times: Serious Comedy* (London: British Museum, 1997).

50. Ronald Paulson, *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975), p. 77.
51. Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray: the Art of Caricature* (London: Tate Gallery, 2001), p. 19.
52. Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 27ff.
53. Frederick Antal, *Hogarth and his Place in European Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962).
54. Klingender, *Hogarth and English Caricature*, p. xiii.
55. Francis Donald Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (London: Royle, 1947), p. v.
56. Most of the changes occur nearer to the beginning of the book, suggesting that Elton ran out of steam. The section on Wright of Derby is particularly badly mauled. I should add that John Saville takes a different view of the revision, describing Elton's work as 'careful and important' (*Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. 9, p. 164).
57. Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (1947), p. 46.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
59. Judy Egerton, *Wright of Derby* (London: Tate Gallery, 1990), cat. nos 21 and 18.
60. Benedict Nicolson, *Joseph Wright of Derby: Painter of Light* (London: Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art in association with Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968; and New York: Pantheon), pp. 112ff.
61. Egerton, *Wright of Derby*, cat. no. 127.
62. Egerton, *Wright of Derby*, cat. nos 47 and 28.
63. Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (1947), pp. 103–8.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 141–7.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
69. *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. 9, p. 164.
70. See Nicolson, *Wright of Derby*, for an exhaustive list of his patrons.
71. Stuart Hall, 'Notes on deconstructing "the popular"', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 29ff. Hall is here challenging E.P. Thompson's theory of 'the disassociation between patrician and plebeian cultures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', which Thompson elaborated in a series of articles in the 1970s that were gathered together in *Customs in Common* (New York: New Press, 1991).

5 MAX RAPHAEL: AESTHETICS AND POLITICS

1. Max Raphael, *The Demands of Art*, tr. Norbert Guterman, introduction by Herbert Read (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).
2. Max Raphael, *Proudhon, Marx, Picasso: Three Studies in the Sociology of Art*, tr. Inge Marcuse, ed. and introduced by John Tagg (New Jersey: Humanities Press; London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1980), p. 106. See also John Tagg, 'The Method of Max Raphael: Art History Set Back on its Feet', *Radical Philosophy*, no. 12 (Winter 1975), pp. 3–10; 'The Method of Criticism and its Objects in Max Raphael's Theory of Art', *Block*, no. 2 (1980), pp. 2–14.
3. Max Raphael, 'Geist wider Macht; Kriegstagebuch, 1915', in *Max Raphael Lebens-Erinnerung: Briefe, Tagebücher, Skizzen, Essays*, ed. Hans Jürgen Heinrichs (Frankfurt and New York: Qumran, Campus Verlag, 1985), pp. 50–170.

4. 'Das Sowjetpalais: Eine marxistische Kritik an einer reaktionären Architekten', in Max Raphael, *Für eine demokratische Architektur: Kunstsoziologische Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1976), pp. 53–131.
5. 'André Lurçat's Schulbau in Villejuif', in Raphael, *Für eine demokratische Architektur*, pp. 7–26.
6. Max Raphael, *Arbeiter, Kunst und Künstler* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1975). A section of this can be found as 'Workers and the Historical Heritage of Art', tr. Anna Bostock, in *Women and Art: Supplement on Art and Society* (Summer/Fall 1972), pp. 1–8, 20.
7. Max Raphael: *Prehistoric Cave Paintings*, tr. Norbert Guterman (New York: Pantheon, 1945); *Prehistoric Pottery and Civilization in Egypt*, tr. Norbert Guterman (New York: Pantheon, 1947).
8. Raphael, *Demands of Art*, p. xxiii.
9. See 'Aus dem Briefwechsel mit Max Horkheimer und Leo Löwenthal, 1934–1941', in Raphael, *Max Raphael Lebens-Erinnerungen*, pp. 413–22.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
13. Peter Fuller, *Seeing Berger: A Reevaluation of Ways of Seeing* (London: Writers & Readers, 1980), p. 10.
14. Raphael, *Demands of Art*, pp. 199–200.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 198; *Goethe: Wisdom and Experience*, selected by Ludwig Curtius, tr. and ed. Hermann J. Weigand (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 94.
16. J.W. Goethe, *Faust*, tr. John Shawcross (London: Allen Wingate, 1959) part 2, lines 6222f. and 6284, pp. 240, 242.
17. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, tr. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 111.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Raphael, *Proudhon, Marx, Picasso*, p. 106.
20. Max Raphael, *Der dorische Tempel (dargestellt am Poseidontempel zu Paestum)* (Augsburg: Dr. Benno Filser Verlag, 1930), p. 69.
21. Raphael, *Prehistoric Cave Paintings*, pp. 12, 17.
22. John Berger 'Revolutionary Undoing', *New Society*, 1969, reprinted in *Selected Essays and Articles: The Look of Things*, ed. and with an introduction by Nikos Stangos (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).
23. Tagg, 'Method of Max Raphael', pp. 3, 7. See also Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer', in *Conversations with Brecht*, tr. Anna Bostock (London: New Left Books, 1973), pp. 98, 102.
24. Raphael, *Demands of Art*, p. 204.
25. For other Marxist interpretations of *Guernica*, see Jutta Held, 'How Do Political Effects of Pictures Come About? The Case of Picasso's *Guernica*', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1988), pp. 33–9; and Otto Karl Werckmeister, 'Picasso's *Guernica* Returns to Germany', in his *Icons of the Left: Benjamin and Eisenstein, Picasso and Kafka after the Fall of Communism* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1999), chapter 3.
26. Raphael, *Demands of Art*, p. 138.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 141–2.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 145–6.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 175–6.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
33. Berger, 'Revolutionary Undoing', pp. 209–10.

34. John Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 56.
35. For the reception of Raphael, see also Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs (ed.), *'Wir lassen uns die Welt nicht zerbrechen': Max Raphaels Werk in der Diskussion* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989).
36. Michèle Barrett, 'Max Raphael and the Question of Aesthetics', *New Left Review*, No. 161 (January–February 1987), p. 97.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

6 WALTER BENJAMIN'S ESSAY ON EDUARD FUCHS: AN ART-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Walter Benjamin, 'Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und Historiker', in Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* (7 vols), ed. R. Tiedemann and H. Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1972–89), vol. 2, pp. 465–505, tr. in Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, ed. M.W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1996–2003), vol. 3, pp. 260–302.
2. On the writing of this essay and its first publication, see the editors' comments in Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 1316–1363. The first English translation of the essay, by Knut Tarnowski, appeared in *New German Critique*, no. 5 (1975).
3. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (eds), *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York: Continuum, 1982), p. 225.
4. The two most substantial treatment of Fuchs are Thomas Huonker, *Revolution, Moral und Kunst. Eduard Fuchs: Leben und Werk* (Zurich: Limmat Verlag, 1985) and Ulrich Wiertz, *Salonkultur und Proletariat. Eduard Fuchs – Sammler, Sittengeschichtler, Sozialist* (Stuttgart: Stöffler & Schütz, 1991). See also Peter Gorsen, 'Mode und Erotik bei Eduard Fuchs', in Silvia Bovenschen (ed.), *Die Listen der Mode* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986). His collection is discussed in Paul Westheim, 'Das Haus eines Sammlers: Die Sammlung Eduard Fuchs, Zehlendorf', *Das Kunstblatt*, vol. 10 (1926), pp. 106–13.
5. The most thorough discussion of Benjamin's thoughts on the collector is Eckhardt Köhn, 'Sammler', in M. Opitz and E. Wizisla (eds), *Benjamins Begriffe* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000), vol. 2, pp. 695–724.
6. In fact Benjamin wrote about the history of art directly only in the Fuchs essay and in his review of the volume *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, ed. Hans Sedlmayr and Otto Pächt; see Benjamin, 'Strenge Kunstwissenschaft', *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, pp. 363–74, tr. Thomas Y. Levin as 'Rigorous Study of Art,' *October*, no. 47 (1988), pp. 84–90.
7. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe*, ed. C. Gödde and H. Lonitz (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1995–2000), vol. 5, p. 165, letter of 18 September 1935.
8. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe*, vol. 5, p. 480, letter of 17 March 1937 to Alfred Cohn.
9. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932–1940*, ed. Gershom Scholem, tr. G. Smith and A. Lefevere (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), p. 154, letter of 22 February 1935.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 164, letter of 9 August 1935.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 179, letter of 3 May 1936.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 193, letter of 4 April 1937.
13. On Benjamin and Riegl, see Wolfgang Kemp, 'Fernbilder. Benjamin und die Kunstwissenschaft', in Burkhardt Lindner (ed.), *Walter Benjamin im Kontext*, 2nd edn (Königstein i.T.: Athenäum, 1985), as well as Michael W. Jennings, *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 152–63, and Giles Peaker, 'Works that have Lasted: Walter Benjamin Reading Alois

- Riegl', in Richard Woodfield et al., *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts, 2001).
14. 'During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized... is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well.... The scholars of the Viennese School, Riegl and Wickhoff... were the first to draw conclusions... concerning the organization of perception at the time.' Benjamin, 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit' (3rd version), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 478; Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 222.
 15. Benjamin, 'Lebenslauf (III)', *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, p. 219; see also Jennings, *Dialectical Images*, p. 162.
 16. Benjamin, review of Oskar Walzel, *Das Wortkunstwerk*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 50, trans. in Jennings, *Dialectical Images*, p. 161
 17. On 'Strukturanalyse', see Christopher S. Wood, 'Introduction', *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s* (New York: Zone Books, 2000).
 18. Riegl discusses his interest in characterising the history of art as a whole – in other words, his interest in a philosophy of history – in his essay 'Kunstgeschichte und Universalgeschichte' (1898), which Benjamin cites in his review 'Rigorous Study of Art,' p. 88. See Riegl, 'Kunstgeschichte und Universalgeschichte', in Riegl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. K.M. Swoboda (Vienna: Benno Filser, 1928).
 19. Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 228; Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, tr. J. Osborne (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 47.
 20. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1940*, ed. Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, tr. M.R. Jacobson and E.R. Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 16, letter to Herbert Belmore of 12 August 1912.
 21. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History* (1915), tr. M.D. Hottinger (New York: Dover, 1950).
 22. Quoted in Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin und sein Engel: Vierzehn Aufsätze und kleine Beiträge* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 84–5. The first part of this passage is translated in Thomas Y. Levin, 'Walter Benjamin and the Theory of Art History: An Introduction to "Rigorous Study of Art"', *October*, no. 47 (1988), p. 79.
 23. On the neo-Kantian aspects of Wölfflin's *Principles*, see Joan Goldhammer Hart, 'Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics', *Art Journal*, vol. 42 (Winter 1982); on Panofsky and Neo-Kantianism, see Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984). Benjamin's reaction to neo-Kantianism is discussed with great insight in Howard Caygill, *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience* (London: Routledge, 1998).
 24. See Kemp, 'Fernbilder', pp. 240–6; Christina Knorr, 'Walter Benjamins *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* und die Kunstgeschichte', *Kritische Berichte*, no. 2 (1994); and Sigrid Weigel, 'Bildwissenschaft aus dem "Geist wahrer Philologie: Benjamins Wahlverwandtschaft mit der neuen Kunstwissenschaft und der Warburg-Schule', in Detlev Schöttker (ed.), *Schrift Bilder Denken: Walter Benjamin und die Künste* (Berlin: Haus am Waldsee/Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2004).
 25. See n.6 above.
 26. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin*, pp. 223–4, letter of 9 December 1923. This passage is also discussed in Irving Wohlfahrt's excellent 'Smashing the Kaleidoscope: Walter Benjamin's Critique of Cultural History', in Michael P. Steinberg (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).
 27. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 226; Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 45.

28. Karl Mannheim, 'Beiträge zur Theorie der Weltanschauungs-Interpretation', *Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 1 (1921/22) (Vienna, 1923), tr. as 'On the Interpretation of *Weltanschauung*' in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *From Karl Mannheim* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), esp. pp. 10–11. The essay appears as no. 832 in Benjamin's 'Verzeichnis der gelesenen Schriften', *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7, p. 451. Benjamin was in contact with Mannheim at the time, describing him as 'an acquaintance of Bloch and Lukács, a pleasant young man, at whose home I have been a guest'. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin*, p. 204, letter to Gershom Scholem of 30 December 1922. It would also seem to be out of discussions with Mannheim that he developed his parallel between works of art and philosophical systems, something discussed in Mannheim's essay 'Historicism', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 52, no. 1 (1924); see 'Historicism', in Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. P. Kecskemeti (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), esp. pp. 116–17. Mannheim was one of the subtlest thinkers about issues of hermeneutics and historical time writing in the early and mid-1920s, and was deeply engaged in the questions of art-historical methodology. The essay 'On the Interpretation of *Weltanschauung*' was also of fundamental (and inadequately acknowledged) importance to Erwin Panofsky. His theory of three stages of meaning is modelled on a similar scheme developed in this essay. See Joan Hart, 'Erwin Panofsky and Karl Mannheim: A Dialogue on Interpretation', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19, no. 3 (1993).
29. See Frederic J. Schwartz, *Blind Spots: Critical Theory and the History of Art in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), ch. 4.
30. One of the most useful books to explore the historiography of art from this perspective remains Michael Podro's *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982).
31. See Mannheim, 'Historicism', and Heinz-Dieter Kittsteiner's important essay 'Walter Benjamin's Historicism', *New German Critique*, no. 39 (1986).
32. For Hegel's own history of art, see most recently Beat Wyss, *Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity*, tr. C.D. Saltzwedel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
33. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888), tr. K. Simon (London: Fontana, 1964), p. 76.
34. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Classic Art* (1899), tr. Peter and Linda Murray (London: Phaidon, 1952), p. 287.
35. Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, tr. R. Winkes (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1985), pp. 7, 8.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
38. On Wölfflin, Hildebrandt and neo-Kantianism, see the introduction to H.F. Mallgrave and E. Ikonomidou (eds), *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873–1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994).
39. On Panofsky and Cassirer, see Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*, ch. 5.
40. See Wood's introduction to *The Vienna School Reader*, and Schwartz, *Blind Spots*, ch. 4.
41. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 261.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

47. Ibid., pp. 269–70.
48. Ibid., p. 270.
49. Ibid.
50. Fuchs's polemical attack on Wölfflin from the standpoint of Second International theory is discussed in Huonker, *Revolution, Moral und Kunst*, pp. 368–92.
51. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, pp. 261–2.
52. Ibid., p. 262–63.
53. Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, p. 6.
54. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 263.
55. Georg Lukács, 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat', in *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 86.
56. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 110–149, here 122 (quoting Fichte).
57. Ibid., p. 97.
58. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 262.
59. This is perhaps another extension of an insight of Karl Mannheim: see 'Historicism', p. 86–9.
60. *Correspondence of Walter Benjamin*, p. 223.
61. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 262.
62. Ibid., p. 263.
63. I discuss this in 'Out of Sync: Ernst Bloch and Wilhelm Pinder', *Grey Room*, no. 3 (2001) and in *Blind Spots*, ch. 3.
64. Benjamin's philosophy of history is articulated most clearly in his Convolute N of the Arcades Project and the late 'On the Concept of History'. See 'N: Erkenntnistheoretisches, Theorie des Fortschritts', in Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, pp. 570–611, tr. as 'N: On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress', in Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, tr. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 456–88; and 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte,' in Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 693–704, trans. as 'On the Concept of History', in Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, pp. 389–400. A useful discussion incorporating the vast literature on the topic is Wille Bolle, 'Geschichte', in Optiz and Wizisla (eds), *Benjamins Begriffe*, vol. 1, pp. 399–442.
65. It must be said, however, that Benjamin's ontology of the work of art is complicated by descriptions of other things, for example the outmoded object, that sound strikingly similar. See for example Benjamin, 'Der Surrealismus', *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, pp. 295–310; in English, tr E. Jephcott, in Benjamin, *Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1986).
66. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 267.
67. Ibid., p. 269.
68. Ibid., p. 262.
69. On knowledge as *Haltung*, see Schwartz, *Blind Spots*, pp. 225–6.
70. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 269.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., p. 266.
73. Ibid., p. 262.
74. Ibid., (translation modified).
75. Ibid., p. 266.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., p. 267.
78. Ibid., p. 265.
79. Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* (1935), tr. N. Plaiice and S. Plaiice (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990); Hans-Jürgen Schmitt (ed.), *Die Expressionismusdebatte: Materialien zu einer marxistischen Realismuskonzeption*

(Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973); Ernst Bloch et al., *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: New Left Books, 1977).

80. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3, p. 267.

7 MEYER SCHAPIRO: MARXISM, SCIENCE AND ART

My thanks to Steve Edwards, Fred Orton and Fred Schwartz for perceptive comments on an earlier version of this essay. Thanks, too, to Carol A. Leadenham of the Hoover Institution for providing copies of the Schapiro–Hook correspondence.

I am grateful to the estate of James T. Farrell for permission to quote from his diary, and to the estate of Meyer Schapiro for permission to quote from his unpublished letters.

1. Meyer Schapiro, *Paul Cézanne* (New York: Abrams, 1952); Meyer Schapiro, *Van Gogh* (New York: Abrams, 1952).
2. Thus Schapiro included ‘The Nature of Abstract Art’ in *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Selected Papers, vol. 2)* (New York: Braziller, 1978), despite the fact that it contained ‘certain observations and views...I now regard as inadequate or mistaken’ (p. xi). Since Schapiro’s death in 1996, his widow, Lillian Milgram, has published a fifth volume of *Selected Papers, Worldview in Painting – Art and Society* (New York: Braziller, 1999), which contains important texts hitherto unpublished and gives most sense of Schapiro as an engaged scholar. See also Lillian Milgram, *Meyer Schapiro: The Bibliography* (New York: Braziller, 1995).
3. E.g., Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 31 August 1938, 4 July 1942, and 8 August 1942. All Schapiro’s correspondence with Farrell referred to here is in the James T. Farrell Papers, Special Collections of the Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania. For Farrell, see Alan Wald, *James T. Farrell: The Revolutionary Socialist Years* (New York: New York University Press, 1978).
4. Meyer Schapiro, ‘The New Viennese School’ (review of Otto Pächt (ed.), *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, 2, 1933), *Art Bulletin*, vol. 18, no. 2 (June 1936), p. 259.
5. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 31 July 1942, in response to James T. Farrell to Meyer Schapiro, 28 July 1942, Meyer Schapiro Papers, collection of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University. Significantly, in this regard, the two chapters of Dewey’s aesthetic for which he acknowledged Schapiro’s advice were those dealing with the history of aesthetics and criticism – see John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934) (New York: Perigee, 1980), p. vii.
6. In English as *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, tr. John Fothergill (London: Duckworth, 1907).
7. Meyer Schapiro, *The Romanesque Sculptures of Moissac* (New York: Braziller, 1985).
8. Helen Epstein, ‘Meyer Schapiro: A Passion to Know and Make Known, Part 1’, *Art News*, vol. 82, no. 5 (May 1983), pp. 71–2. Epstein’s two-part article (for part 2, see *ibid.*, vol. 82, no. 6 (Summer 1983) pp. 84–95) remains the fullest biographical account.
9. Meyer Schapiro, ‘Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art’, *The Arts*, vol. 8, no. 3 (September 1925), pp. 170–2. Cf. Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature*, pp. 94–5, 57–9.
10. For Schapiro’s own work as an artist, see Lillian Milgram and David Esterman (eds), *Meyer Schapiro: His Paintings, Drawings, and Sculptures* (New York: Abrams, 2000).
11. ‘The Fine Arts and the Unity of Mankind’ (1943, 1947), in Schapiro, *Worldview in Painting*, p. 235. Cf. ‘The Introduction of Modern Art in America: The Armory Show’ (1952), in Schapiro, *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 152–3.
12. For his regard for Dewey’s aesthetics, see Schapiro, *Worldview in Painting*, pp. 71–2n.
13. With regard to the interest in psychoanalysis, see especially ‘The Apples of Cézanne: An Essay on the Meaning of Still-Life’ (1968), in Schapiro, *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 1–38; and ‘Freud and Leonardo: An Art Historical Study’

- (1956), in Meyer Schapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (*Selected Papers*, Vol. 4) (New York: Braziller, 1994), pp. 153–92. By 1940 Schapiro had become interested in Paul Ferdinand Schilder's *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body: Studies in Constructive Energies of the Psyche* (London: Kegan Paul, 1935), although he felt Schilder was 'unhistorical in his treatment of the social element' (Farrell diary, 7 January 1940). In early 1939 he was at work on 'the sociology of the senses...going into it with Marxian – and Deweyan – hypotheses' (Farrell diary, 30 January 1939).
14. Epstein, 'Meyer Schapiro', pp. 68, 70.
 15. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 4 June 1942.
 16. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 30 July 1942.
 17. The most authoritative account remains Theodore Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986).
 18. Sidney Hook, *Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 7–11, 23. A necessary corrective to Hook's own account of himself is Christopher Phelps's fine study *Young Sidney Hook: Marxist and Pragmatist* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997).
 19. Schapiro went to Columbia on a Regents' Scholarship.
 20. Hook, *Out of Step*, p. 81.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 111–13, 116, 122. Riazanov's fate is mentioned in the introduction to Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx* (1936) (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1962), p. 14.
 22. Farrell diary, 30 January 1939.
 23. Sidney Hook, 'The Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism', *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 25, no. 5 (1 March 1928), pp. 113–24; 25; *ibid.*, vol. 25, no. 6 (15 March 1928), pp. 141–55; Hook, *Out of Step*, 122. Schapiro's judgement on *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* is recorded in Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 30 June 1942.
 24. *The Holy Family* was still only available in German, and only the first part of *The German Ideology* had so far appeared in the *Marx–Engels Archiv: Zeitschrift des Marx–Engels-Instituts in Moskau*, vol. 1 (1926). The annotated bibliography to Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life*, tr. Edward Fitzgerald (New York: Covici, Friede, 1935), pp. 585–99, gives a useful picture of the availability of the works of Marx and Engels in this period.
 25. Hook, 'The Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism', pp. 121–2, 149–50, 153.
 26. *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 154.
 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 114.
 28. Sidney Hook, 'Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx', *The Symposium*, vol. 2, no. 3 (July 1931), p. 366.
 29. Sidney Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx: A Revolutionary Interpretation* (1933) (Amherst, New York: Prometheus, 2002), pp. 116, 30; and more generally chapters 4–6.
 30. *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 96.
 31. *Ibid.*, pp. 136–7.
 32. *Ibid.*, pp. 74. Cf. Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 60n.
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 148, 150. For the critique of Engels, see pp. 102–8.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 78–82. Cf. pp. 148–51.
 35. For the communist and other responses, see Christopher Phelps, 'Historical Introduction', *ibid.*, pp. 39–66. See also Hook, *Out of Step*, chapters 12–14.
 36. I have traced Schapiro's political involvement with the CP in my article 'Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1994), pp. 13–29.
 37. Meyer Schapiro to Sidney Hook, 22 June 1933 (Sidney Hook Papers, Hoover Institution (box 26, folder 22) – all letters to Hook cited hereafter are in this location).

38. Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, pp. 347, 187.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 361, 160.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 226–7, 250–4, 397–416. On ‘in the last instance’, see: pp. 254–7. It is possible that the formulations on form and tradition owe something to Trotsky, though Hook does not refer to him. Cf. Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, tr. Rose Strunsky (New York: International Publishers, 1925), pp. 179–81. Cf. the opening of Schapiro’s great ‘The Social Bases of Art’ paper of 1936 – *Worldview in Painting*, p. 119.
42. Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left: Episodes in American Literary Communism* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 245n. Evidence of Schapiro’s interest in Engels’s cultural writings at this time is provided by his translation ‘Engels on Goethe’, *New Masses*, vol. 8, no. 3 (September 1932), p. 13.
43. Hook: ‘Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx’, pp. 354–5; *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, p. 139.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
45. Schapiro, ‘The New Viennese School’, p. 260.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 259. Cf. Hook, ‘Dialectic as the Logic of Totality in Marx’, in *From Hegel to Marx*, pp. 62–4.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 259, 260.
49. Hook mentioned the dangers facing Columbia faculty with overt leftist affiliations in *Out of Step*, p. 183. Schapiro’s colleague, the art critic Jerome Klein, was fired from the university, for political activities, in 1934. See: M.W. Mather, ‘Columbia Fires Two’, *New Masses*, vol. 11, no. 11 (12 June 1934), pp. 9–10.
50. Meyer Schapiro to Aline Louchheim, 18 August 1936, Archives of American Art, Washington, DC. The letter is quoted at length in Patricia Hills, ‘1936: Meyer Schapiro, *Art Front*, and the Popular Front’, *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1994), p. 35.
51. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 8 August 1942, in response to James T. Farrell to Meyer Schapiro, 7 August 1942; ‘Courbet and Popular Imagery: An Essay on Realism and Naïveté’, reprinted in Schapiro, *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 47–85.
52. Hook, ‘The Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism’, pp. 115, 120, 148. Cf. Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, p. 18.
53. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 2 September 1942. Schapiro was responding to a report on the third annual Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life – ‘Scholars Confess They Are Confused’, *New York Times*, 1 September 1942. Hook himself was emphatic that Marxism was both scientific and normative – a view Schapiro undoubtedly shared. See Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, pp. 170–5; and my discussion of Schapiro on revolutionary morality in ‘Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s’, pp. 22–5.
54. For the Marxism of Schapiro’s medieval writings, see Otto Karl Werckmeister: review of *Romanesque Art (Selected Papers)*, vol. 1), in *Art Quarterly*, new series, vol. 2 (Spring 1980), pp. 211–18; and ‘Jugglers in a Monastery’, *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1994), pp. 60–4.
55. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 3 July 1938. See also Schapiro’s contribution to the symposium ‘Religion and the Intellectuals’, in *Partisan Review*, vol. 17, no. 4 (April 1950), pp. 331–9.
56. Meyer Schapiro, ‘Matisse and Impressionism’, *Androcles*, vol. 1, no. 1 (February 1932), pp. 21–36. Cf. Schapiro, ‘Nature of Abstract Art’, in *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 188–90. Schapiro makes a similar point about the complexities of the relationship between Seurat’s art and Impressionism in the important essay ‘Seurat and “La Grande Jatte”’, *Columbia Review*, vol. 17, no. 1 (November 1935), pp. 9–16.

- Cf. his critique of the undialectical treatment of late nineteenth-century art and the modern movement in his review of Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius* (1937), *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, vol. 7 (1938), pp. 291–3. For a comparable model of dialectical change, see Hook, *From Hegel to Marx*, pp. 67–8. Donald Kuspit gives an interesting reading in 'Dialectical Reasoning in Meyer Schapiro', *Social Research*, vol. 45, no. 1 (Spring 1978) pp. 93–129, but almost completely evacuates the class politics from Schapiro's project.
57. Describing his review of Jurgis Baltrušaitis's *La stylistique ornementale dans la sculpture romane* (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1931) to Hook in 1934, Schapiro wrote: 'The article is a detailed analysis of a French work on the dialectical development of ornament and sculptural forms in architecture. I tried to show how the neglect of meanings and functions of the objects led to a distortion in describing the objects, and how the conception of development among formalistic writers is artificial and abstract, and does not answer the usual questions about the nature and causes of development.' Meyer Schapiro to Sidney Hook, 8 August 1934. The review is reprinted as 'On Geometrical Schematicism in Romanesque Art' in Meyer Schapiro, *Romanesque Art (Selected Papers, vol. 1)* (London: Thomas & Hudson, 1993), pp. 265–83.
 58. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 29.
 59. John Kwait [Meyer Schapiro], 'John Reed Club Art Exhibition', *New Masses*, vol. 8, no. 7 (February 1933), p. 23; Jacob Burck, 'Sectarianism in Art', *ibid.*, vol. 8, no. 8 (April 1933), pp. 26–7. Both are reprinted in David Shapiro (ed.), *Social Realism: Art as a Weapon* (New York: Ungar, 1973), pp. 66–73. For the context, see Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926–1956* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 51–9.
 60. Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, pp. 185, 229. In a letter of 25 July 1942, Schapiro wrote to Farrell: 'I share your enthusiasm for LT's My Life [Trotsky's autobiography]; I read it in two sittings when I was a student in the graduate school, and it gave me the deep respect for LT that I have preserved to this day.'
 61. Schapiro, 'The Social Bases of Art', in *Worldview in Painting*, p. 127. He elaborated on the institutional, psychological and formal obstacles facing the development of a revolutionary art in the manuscript 'Problems of Revolutionary Art' – see *ibid.*, pp. 226–31. In my view this should probably be dated c.1936 rather than the editor's 1938.
 62. Schapiro, 'Social Realism and Revolutionary Art' (1938), *ibid.*, pp. 211, 212. Schapiro's main statement on Rivera is 'The Patrons of Revolutionary Art', *Marxist Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 3 (October–December 1937), pp. 462–6. This is distinctly more positive than the private judgement he had earlier expressed to Hook in Meyer Schapiro to Sidney Hook, 22 June 1933.
 63. For his disdain for 'class collaboration' in a later context, see Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 17 July 1942.
 64. 'Public Use of Art', *Art Front 2* (November 1936), pp. 4–6, reprinted in Schapiro, *Worldview in Painting*, pp. 173–9. See Hemingway, 'Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s', pp. 18–20; Hills, '1936: Meyer Schapiro, *Art Front*, and the Popular Front', pp. 35–8, 41n.74. Despite his anti-Stalinism, Schapiro attended some sessions at the League of American Writers' Congress in June 1937, where he found the level of the theoretical papers 'almost abysmal' – see Meyer Schapiro to Sidney Hook, 7 June 1937.
 65. See Hemingway, 'Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s', pp. 24–5.
 66. Farrell Diary, 6 October 1940; James T. Farrell to Meyer Schapiro, 11 July 1942.
 67. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 10 August 1943.
 68. Farrell diary, 14 February 1940.
 69. Hook, *Out of Step*, pp. 218–19.

70. Meyer Schapiro, 'The Revolutionary Personality', *Partisan Review*, vol. 7, no. 6 (1940), pp. 475–9. Cf. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 17 July 1942 and 25 July 1942.
71. Hemingway, 'Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s', pp. 24–5.
72. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 25 June 1943. Eight years before, Schapiro had written to Hook: 'If I myself refuse to adopt dialectical philosophy, it is because I find it too narrow and cumbersome to fit all experiences into an a priori frame of polarities, but on the other hand I am interested in the attempts to formulate a dialectic philosophy because such attempts offer to discover significant constancies or forms in the flux of development.' Meyer Schapiro to Sidney Hook, 13 July 1935. Hence, perhaps, his interest in Raphael's epistemological study *Zur Erkenntnistheorie der konkreten Dialektik* (Paris: Excelsior, 1934), a section of which he translated as 'A Marxist Critique of Thomism', *Marxist Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 2 (April–June 1937), pp. 285–92.
73. Zilsel was a member of the Vienna Circle, but also criticised its approach from a Marxist perspective for not registering that the sciences were grounded in changing social practices. He also precisely rejected the separation between the natural and social and historical sciences. See 'Edgar Zilsel: His Life and Work (1891–1944)' and 'Science and the Humanistic Studies' in Zilsel, *The Social Origins of Modern Science*, ed. Diederick Raven, Wolfgang Krohn and Robert S. Cohen (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), pp. xix–lix, 221–3. Schapiro mentioned his interest in Zilsel's work in conversation with the author, 4 August 1992.
74. 'The Study of Art as Humanistic', in Schapiro, *Worldview in Painting*, pp. 111–12. Cf. Erwin Panofsky, 'The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline', in *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp. 23–50, first published in T.M. Greene (ed.), *The Meaning of the Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1940). The friendship of Schapiro and Panofsky went back to 1931, and in 1945, Schapiro warmly defended the latter's concept of iconology against a know-nothing (and anti-German) attack by the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art – see his review of Francis Henry Taylor's *Babel's Tower: The Dilemma of the Modern Museum*, in *Art Bulletin*, vol. 27, no. 4 (December 1945), pp. 272–6.
75. Schapiro, 'The Introduction of Modern Art in America', pp. 154–5.
76. Schapiro, review of Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design*.
77. Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 10 October 1941. Schapiro was referring to Max Horkheimer, 'Preface', *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science (Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung)*, vol. 9 (1941), pp. 195–9. David Craven presents a rather different view of Schapiro and the Frankfurt School in 'Meyer Schapiro, Karl Korsch, and the Emergence of Critical Theory', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1994), pp. 42–54.
78. Schapiro, 'The Fine Arts and the Unity of Mankind', pp. 245–6. On the deadening effects of mass culture, see also the review of Taylor, *Babel's Tower*, p. 274.
79. Schapiro's familiarity with Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* is confirmed by his reference to 'Lukács's astonishing retraction of his old work on dialectics' in Meyer Schapiro to Theodor W. Adorno, 10 August 1938, in Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence, 1928–1940* (ed. Henri Lonitz) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 270.
80. Quoted in James Thompson and Susan Raines, 'A Vermont Visit with Meyer Schapiro (August 1991)', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1994), p. 9. Schapiro thought Adorno had 'theories about everything'. Farrell diary, 31 May 1939. The differences were felt on both sides. Adorno described Schapiro to Benjamin as 'in general a well-informed and intellectually imaginative man if not always discriminating, as when he tried to convince us once that your essay on mechanical reproduction was quite compatible with the methods of logical positivism'. Theodor Adorno to Walter Benjamin, 4 March 1938, in Adorno and Benjamin, *Complete Correspondence, 1928–1940*, p. 252 – my

thanks to Justine Price for drawing my attention to this. The grounds of the difference are symptomatic.

81. For a sympathetic but critical Frankfurt School appraisal of pragmatism from this moment, see Herbert Marcuse's review of John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation* (1939), *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, vol. 9 (1941), pp. 144–8.
82. Work on the book is mentioned in Meyer Schapiro to James T. Farrell, 31 August 1938, 25 August 1941, 25 July 1942, 8 August 1942, and 9 September 1942.
83. Schapiro, 'Courbet and Popular Imagery', pp. 73–4; cf. p. 68. Cf. the analysis of Courbet in 'Social Realism and Revolutionary Art', pp. 219–20. Given that Schapiro was writing to a major exponent of literary realism in Farrell, he obviously did not think that the aesthetic was redundant in the novel, as he explained to him in a letter of 29 July 1942. For Schapiro, formal innovation was not as important an aspect of modernism in literature as it was in the visual arts – see 'Socialism and Revolutionary Art', pp. 226–7; 'The Introduction of Modern Art in America', pp. 153.
84. Schapiro, 'Social Realism and Revolutionary Art', pp. 213–14, 220.
85. Schapiro, 'The Value of Modern Art', in *Worldview in Painting*, p. 155.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 214–15, 221, 225, 226.
87. Schapiro, 'The Value of Modern Art', p. 149. Cf. Schapiro, 'The Social Bases of Art', pp. 121–8.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 144–5, 157; Schapiro, 'The Introduction of Modern Art in America', pp. 85, 139, 176. In effect, Schapiro held to the view he shared with Hook in the early 1930s: 'Bourgeois democracy is not the opposite of bourgeois dictatorship; it is one of its species. It is a dictatorship of a minority of the population over a majority – a minority defined not by the numbers of votes cast but by the number of those who own the instruments of social production'. Hook, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, p. 303.
89. Schapiro, 'The Introduction of Modern Art in America', pp. 137, 151–2, 154.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 138, 174–5; Schapiro, contribution to 'Religion and the Intellectuals', p. 339.
91. 'Recent Abstract Painting', in Schapiro, *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, pp. 217–8, 222–3, 224.
92. Nominally, at least, Schapiro remained a socialist – see Epstein, 'Meyer Schapiro: A Passion to Know and Make Known', p. 87. For a telling episode in Schapiro's relations with the New Left, see Francis Frascina, 'Meyer Schapiro's Choice: My Lai, Guernica, MoMA and the Art Left, 1969–70', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 30, no. 3 (July 1995), pp. 481–510; vol. 30, no. 4 (October 1995), pp. 705–28; and the documents printed in Ellen C. Oppler (ed.), *Picasso's Guernica* (New York and London: Norton, 1988), pp. 239–43.

8 HENRI LEFEBVRE AND THE MOMENT OF THE AESTHETIC

1. Anderson remarks that the most prominent Western Marxists in the inter-war period were concerned with 'superstructural' questions of culture. See Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1976), pp. 75–7.
2. Rémi Hess, *Henri Lefebvre et l'aventure du siècle* (Paris: A.M. Métailié, 1988), p. 37.
3. Henri Lefebvre, *Le Temps des méprises* (Paris: Editions Stock, 1975), p. 45. Note: all citations from French language texts have been translated by the author.
4. Henri Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, vol. 2 (Paris: Editions NEF, 1959), p. 671.
5. Lefebvre, *Le Temps des méprises*, pp. 63–4.
6. Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 238. Lefebvre was a member of the oppositional wing within the PCF. He was suspended in 1956 and subsequently quit the party. He was officially expelled in 1958.
7. Hess, *Henri Lefebvre*, p. 328.

8. Michael Kelly, *Modern French Marxism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 75.
9. Kelly's evaluation is often in accordance with the concerns of PCF philosophers during the Stalinist period. See also Michael Kelly, *Hegel in France* (Birmingham: Birmingham Modern Languages Publications, 1992). Kelly's emphasis on patriotism has some credence inasmuch as Lefebvre's wartime mishaps with the Communist International and the Resistance added to his view that Moscow authorities had little or no interest in initiatives coming from French Marxism. Kelly's thesis, nevertheless, requires more nuance, as Lefebvre was in fact opposed to the abstract nationalism of the PCF in the 1940s.
10. Michel Trebitsch, 'Introduction', in Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 1 (London: Verso, 1991), p. xiv.
11. Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 73.
12. Hess, *Henri Lefebvre*, p. 135.
13. See, for instance, David Joravsky, *The Lysenko Affair* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), and Dominique Lecourt, *Proletarian Science? The Case of Lysenko* (London: New Left Books, 1977). For an example of the Lysenkoist line, see Jean Desanti, 'La science, forme de la conscience sociale', *Cahiers du communisme*, no. 10 (October 1951), pp. 1188–1204.
14. Henri Lefebvre, 'Art et connaissance', *Cahiers rationalistes*, No. 136 (January/ February 1954), pp. 12–15.
15. Hess, *Henri Lefebvre*, p. 146.
16. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, pp. 503–7.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 538.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 538. The fabricated quote from Marx is the opening epigraph of *Contribution à l'esthétique*.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 606.
20. Lefebvre, *Critique*, vol. 1, p. 114.
21. Hess, *Henri Lefebvre*, p. 301.
22. Lefebvre's conception of the subject at this time was dialectical materialist and existentialist. While André Breton introduced Lefebvre to the writings of Hegel and welcomed the Philosophes into his group – a joint publication, *La Révolution d'abord et toujours* appeared in 1925 – Lefebvre was so repelled by Breton's authoritarian personality that he soon rejected the Surrealists' paratactical methods, with regard to both the social and the psychic. Lefebvre's readings and translations of Marx that same year led him to a critique of Surrealism through a focus on everyday life and a Marxist understanding of modern consciousness. His reading of Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* in the late 1920s would reinforce his materialist criticism of the everyday and the conditions of alienation within capitalist society. On the links between Surrealism and the Philosophes, see Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives 1922–1939* (Paris: Le terrain vague, 1980), and Bud Burkhard, *French Marxism Between the Wars: Henri Lefebvre and the 'Philosophies'* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2000). See also Alan Rose, *Surrealism and Communism in the Early Years* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991).
23. Lefebvre, *Contribution à l'esthétique* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1953), p. 34.
24. Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*, p. 60.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
26. Lefebvre, *Contribution*, p. 40.
27. Lefebvre, *Critique*, vol. 1, p. 174. See also Lefebvre, *Contribution*, pp. 44–5.
28. Lefebvre, *Contribution*, p. 47.
29. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, vol. 2, p. 584.
30. Lefebvre, *Contribution*, p. 145.
31. Georg Lukács, 'Narrate or Describe?' in *Writer and Critic, and Other Essays* (London: Merlin Press, 1970), pp. 110–47.

32. In his evaluation of Balzac, Lukács follows some of the ideas expressed by Engels in a letter to Margaret Harkness (1888). The letters to Kautsky and Harkness are printed in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Literature and Art*, ed. Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski (New York: International General, 1973), pp. 113–17.
33. Lefebvre, *Contribution*, pp. 155–56.
34. Lefebvre met Lukács in 1947 and again in 1950. Their relationship was sympathetic, perhaps because both had struggled against and had come under the control of party censorship. C. Vaughan James attributes the emphasis within Socialist Realism on the requirement of identification with Communist Party policy to Lenin's 1905 article, 'Party Organization and Part Literature', reprinted in C. Vaughan James (ed.), *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (London: Macmillan, 1973).
35. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, vol. 2, p. 68.
36. Lefebvre, *Contribution*, p. 9.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
38. The term 'new realism' has competing uses and definitions in the post-war period. Among the new realists that Lefebvre championed was the painter Edouard Pignon, an artist whose work has affinities with French informalism. He also supported the writings of novelist and playwright Roger Vailland and the socialist realist poet Federico Garcia Lorca.
39. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, p. 209.
40. Anderson, *Considerations*, p. 43.
41. Hess, *Henri Lefebvre*, p. 236.
42. Lefebvre, *Critique*, vol. 1, p. 144.
43. Martin Jay, 'Henri Lefebvre, the Surrealists and the Reception of Hegelian Marxism in France', in *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 295.
44. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, vol. 2, p. 237.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
46. Patricia Latour and Francis Combes, *Conversation avec Henri Lefebvre* (Paris: Messidor, 1991), pp. 55–56.
47. Cited in Hess, *Henri Lefebvre*, p. 186.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 144. The choice of words suggests Lefebvre's divergence from phenomenology's emphasis on direct perception.
49. Jean-Paul Sartre is the figure who is most indebted to Lefebvre's method. Sartre addresses this in his introduction to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason (Questions of Method)*. On this subject, see for instance Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism*, pp. 266–9. As he began to take issue with certain aspects of existentialism and structuralism, Lefebvre wrote two essays that clarified his method: 'Perspectives de la sociologie rurale', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, vol. 14 (1953), pp. 123–140; and 'La notion de totalité dans les sciences sociales', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, vol. 18 (1955), pp. 55–77.
50. Lefebvre, *La Somme et le reste*, vol. 2, p. 560.
51. Henri Lefebvre, *Alfred de Musset: Dramaturge* (Paris: L'Arche, 1955), p. 37.
52. Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the 'Pensées' of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 17.
53. For a consideration of the limits of Goldmann's theory of art as ideology, see Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 2nd edn (New York: New York University Press, 1993).
54. Gallia Burgel, Guy Burgel and M.G. Dezes, 'An Interview with Henri Lefebvre', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, no. 5 (1987), pp. 27–38.

9 ARNOLD HAUSER, ADORNO, LUKÁCS AND THE IDEAL SPECTATOR

1. Arpad Kadarky, *Georg Lukács: Life, Thought, and Politics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1991), p. 178.

2. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951).
3. The complete correspondence between Hauser and Adorno remains unpublished. A number of the early letters – which I quote from here – were published as ‘Zeugnisse einer Freundschaft’, in *Der Aquädukt 1763–1988. Ein Almanach aus dem Verlag C.H. Beck im 225. Jahr seines Bestehens*. (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1988), pp. 507–14.
4. *Ibid.*, Theodor W. Adorno to Arnold Hauser, July 1954, p. 512.
5. *Ibid.*, 13 July 1954, p. 514.
6. *Ibid.*, 16 July 1954, p. 514.
7. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, tr. C. Lenhardt (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).
8. A.A. Zhdanov, *On Literature, Music and Philosophy* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1950), p. 65.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
10. See also Maurice Cornforth, *Historical Materialism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1953).
11. On the response, see Michael Orwicz, ‘Critical Discourse in the Formation of a Social History of Art: Anglo-American Response to Arnold Hauser’, *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1985), pp. 52–62.
12. Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, vol. 4, *Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 16.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
16. Georg Lukács, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (London: Merlin, 1963).
17. ‘The Ideology of Modernism’, *ibid.*, p. 43.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
19. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 321.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
21. G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 11.
22. Walter Benjamin, ‘L’Oeuvre d’art à l’époque de sa reproduction mécanisée’, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1936), translated as ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, tr. Harry Zohn (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1970), pp. 219–53.
23. Hauser, *Social History of Art* (1989), vol. 4, pp. 109–10.
24. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958). For an excellent defence of the labour theory of culture, see Charles Woolfson, *The Labour Theory of Culture: A Re-examination of Engels’s Theory of Human Origins* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).
25. Hauser, *Social History of Art* (1989), vol. 4, p. 110.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
27. Arnold Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 339.
28. Jürgen Habermas, ‘Questions and Counterquestions’, in Richard J. Bernstein (ed.), *Habermas and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985), p. 202. Habermas actually mentions Hauser in passing in his essay. ‘Since the investigations of Arnold Hauser into the social history of art, this institutional differentiation of art has often been analyzed’ (p. 199).
29. Arnold Hauser, *Soziologie der Kunst* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1974), in English as *The Sociology of Art*, tr. Kenneth J. Northcott (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1982).
30. Hauser, *Sociology of Art*, p. 5.

31. Ibid., p. 6.
32. Ibid., p. 11.
33. Ibid.
34. See, for example, John Fiske, 'Popular Discrimination', *Modernity and Mass Culture* (London and New York: Routledge 1991).
35. For an extensive discussion of this issue, see David Wallace, 'Art, Autonomy and Heteronomy: The Provocation of Arnold Hauser's *The Social History of Art*', *Thesis Eleven*, no. 44 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).
36. Hauser, *Sociology of Art*, p. 4.
37. 'Introduction', in John Roberts (ed.) *Art Has No History! The Making and Unmaking of Modern Art* (London and New York: Verso, 1994). My understanding of realism here is as an *emergence* theory of materialism. That is, social reality is neither a closed system nor the 'flow of one thing after another', but a multiplicity of stratified mechanisms jointly producing the course of human events. This theory of realism does not seek to explain the objects of less basic sciences in terms of more fundamental ones (physics for instance). Stratification, therefore, involves recognising and analysing social reality as an ordered series of generative mechanisms in which the more basic sciences explain but do not subsume the higher forms of explanation under their conceptual categories. Thus economics may explain the link between capitalist recession and the preponderance of certain kinds of art using 'poor' materials, but this does not mean that we have thereby causally explained the meanings of those materials. For a defence of 'depth realism', see Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* (London and New York: Verso, 1995). For a discussion of Bhaskar's realism see Andrew Collier, *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy* (London and New York: Verso, 1994). Hauser's whole mature output and 'unhappy relationship with Marxism' (Peter C. Lutz, 'Hauser and Lukács', *Telos*, no. 41 (Fall 1979), p. 181) is based on the struggle to conceptualise a non-deterministic notion of stratification, or to put it in more familiar terms, the base-superstructure problem.
38. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 265.
39. Hauser, *Philosophy of Art History*, p. 13.
40. Orthodox Marxism's teleological emphasis on the sharpening of socio-historical contradictions of capitalism could never answer why art of a high quality continues to be produced under bourgeois culture. This was the overriding philosophical and political question to be answered by the Stalinist and non-Stalinist (Trotskyist) left in the 1940s and 1950s. Hauser's response – similar in many respects to that of Henri Lefebvre in the 1940s and 1950s, who was also working through the legacy of Hegel – was to treat the issues of alienation and self-estrangement as the actual ground of formal quality, expression and achievement in art. Nevertheless, Hauser's writing never descended into a liberal defence of 'capitalist creativity'. Because there was no immediate end to capitalism for Hauser, there could be no 'talk' about the 'end' of art or its terminal crisis. As a result this made his sociology of art appear assimilationist to its orthodox critics, whereas its concern was to return the interpretation of art to the study of the concrete particularities of the historical moment. I see Hauser's 'de-(right wing) Hegelianisation' of art history, his emphasis on sociological stratification and interdisciplinarity, as a contribution to the recovery of Marxism as a non-historicist account of historical development. For a discussion of the implications of this in relation to art and ideology, see Arnold Hauser, 'Propaganda, Ideology and Art', in István Mészáros (ed.) *Aspects of History and Class Consciousness* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971).
41. Hauser, *Philosophy of Art History*, p. 53.
42. Ibid. p. 13.
43. See Arnold Hauser and Georg Lukács, 'On Youth, Art and Philosophy: A 1969 Radio Meeting', *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 58 (Summer 1975), pp. 96–105.

44. Remarkably, even Clement Greenberg recognised Hauser's 'sensitivity' to the complex interrelations between the aesthetic and the social. As Greenberg said in a review of *The Social History of Art* in 1951: 'Most of the talk about the relations between art and society has been by people more competent – when they are at all – to discover the latter than the former. This does not apply to the author of the present momentous work'. 'Review of *The Social History of Art*', in Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 3, 1950–56: *Affirmations and Refusals*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 94.

10 NEW LEFT ART HISTORY'S INTERNATIONAL

My thanks to Steve Edwards and Stephen Eisenman for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

1. Published as Martin Warnke (ed.), *Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Kunstverlag, 1970). O.K. Werckmeister discusses the event in 'Radical Art History', *Art Journal*, vol. 42, no. 4 (Winter 1982), pp. 284–91.
2. One of these, Berthold Hinz's *Die Malerei in deutschen Faschismus: Kunst und Konterrevolution* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1974), appeared in revised form as *Art in the Third Reich*, tr. Robert and Rita Kimbert (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).
3. O.K. Werckmeister, 'The Ulmer Verein', CAA Marxism and Art Caucus, *Newsletter*, no. 1 (Fall 1977), pp. 5–6.
4. In English as Reinhardt Bentmann and Michael Müller, *The Villa as Hegemonic Architecture*, tr. Tim Spence and David Craven (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1992).
5. For a more recent assessment of the Frankfurt School's value for art history, see Andreas Berndt et al. (eds), *Frankfurter Schule und Kunst-Geschichte* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1992).
6. O.K. Werckmeister, *Ideologie und Kunst bei Marx und andere Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1974), pp. 7–35; and in English as 'Marx on Ideology and Art', *New Literary History*, no. 4 (1973), pp. 500–19.
7. Werckmeister, 'Marx on Ideology and Art', pp. 508–10, 518–19. Cf. Werckmeister, 'Radical Art History', pp. 284–6.
8. Adorno had precisely rejected such a position. See, for instance, 'Baby with the bath-water', in Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, tr. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: Verso 1978), pp. 43–5. For Werckmeister's critique of Adorno's aesthetic, see his 'Das Kunstwerk als Negation: Zur geschichtlichen Bestimmung der Kunsttheorie Theodor W. Adornos', in O.K. Werckmeister, *Ende der Ästhetik: Essays über Adorno, Bloch, das gelbe Unterseeboot und der eindimensionale Mensch* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer 1971), pp. 7–32. For a bibliography of Werckmeister's writings, see Wolfgang Kersten (ed.), *Radical Art History: Internationale Anthologie: Subject: O.K. Werckmeister* (Zurich: ZIP, 1997), pp. 482–7.
9. For example, see Paul Paolucci, 'The Scientific Method and the Dialectical Method', *Historical Materialism*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2003), pp. 75–106.
10. Although see notes 2 and 4 above, and also Klaus Herding, *Courbet: To Venture Independence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991).
11. See also the special issue 'Zwanzige Jahre danach: Kritische Kunstwissenschaft heute', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 18, no. 3 (1990).
12. Gabi Dolff and Andreas Haus, 'Zur Situation der marxistischen Kunstwissenschaft in der BRD, Grossbritannien und den USA', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 8, nos 1/2 (1980), pp. 71–5.

13. Grace Glueck, 'New Art Group Makes Resolve to Push for Reforms', *New York Times*, 2 November 1970. Glueck was quoting from the *New Art Association Newsletter* 3 (September 1970), reprinted in Thomas B. Hess, 'Editorial: Arise You Prisoners of Art History', *Art News*, vol. 69, no. 7 (November 1970), p. 35.
14. Grace Glueck, 'College Art Group Dissidents Are Gaining Ground', *New York Times*, 2 February 1971. See also Edward F. Fry, 'The NAA revision of the CAA', *Art in America* (March–April 1971), pp. 31–2.
15. See *New Art Association Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 4 (December 1971).
16. Gregory Battcock (ed.), *New Ideas in Art Education: A Critical Anthology* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1973) is representative of the moment.
17. 'On Art and Society', Supplement to *Women and Art* (Summer/Fall 1972), compiled by Irene Peslikis.
18. Catalog Committee of Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, *an anti-catalog* (New York, 1977). The committee included Rudolf Baranik, Sarina Bromberg, Sarah Charlesworth, Susanne Cohn, Carol Duncan, Shawn Gargagliano, Eunice Golden, Janet Koenig, Joseph Kosuth, Anthony McCall, Paul Pechter, Elaine Bendock Pelosini, Aaron Roseman, Larry Rosing, Ann Marie Rousseau, Alan Wallach and Walter Weissman. The format probably owed something to John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*.
19. The New York Art and Language journal *The Fox* (1975–6) should also be noted as a forum in which radical artists and art historians came together.
20. See Mary D. Garrard, 'Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations', and Carrie Rickey, 'Writing (and Righting) Wrongs: Feminist Art Publications', in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (eds), *The Power of Feminist Art: Emergence, Impact and Triumph of the American Feminist Art Movement* (New York: Abrams, 1994), pp. 88–103, 120–9. For the Marxist Caucus at the 1980 CAA conference, see Janet Koenig, 'Why You're Not Smiling' and 'Social Studies', in Judy Seigel (ed.), *Mutiny and the Mainstream: Talk That Changed Art, 1975–1990* (New York: Midmarch, 1992), pp. 141–2.
21. *Art Journal*, vol. 35, no. 4 (Summer 1976); Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).
22. For example, the 'Art and Ideology' issue of *Radical History Review*, no. 38 (1987).
23. Frederick Antal, 'Remarks on the Method of Art History', parts 1 and 2, *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 91 (February–March 1949), pp. 49–52, 73–75; Arnold Hauser, 'The New Outlook', *Art News*, vol. 51, no. 4 (Summer 1952), pp. 43–6.
24. CAA Marxism and Art Caucus, *Newsletter*, no. 1 (Fall 1977), p. 1; T.J. Cark, 'Preliminary Arguments: Work of Art and Ideology', in *Papers Presented to the Marxism and Art History Session of the College Art Association Meeting in Chicago, February 1976* (mimeograph), pp. 5–6. The ambiguities surrounding what constituted a Marxist approach at this time are exemplified by the papers from two colloquia sessions held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1972 and 1974, published as Henry A. Millon and Linda Nochlin (eds), *Art and Architecture in the Service of Politics* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1978).
25. O.K. Werckmeister, 'From Marxist to Critical Art History', *Papers Presented to the Marxism and Art History Session of the College Art Association Meeting in Chicago, February 1976*, pp. 29–30.
26. Peter Klein, 'Marxism and Arnold Hauser's Concept of the Social History of Art', in Caucus for Marxism and Art, *Papers Delivered in the Marxism and Art History Session of the College Art Association Meeting in Los Angeles, February 1977* (mimeograph), pp. 49–57. For Werckmeister's very different appraisal, see 'The Depoliticized Attenuated Version', in *Art History*, vol. 7, no. 3 (September 1984), pp. 345–8.
27. Nicos Hadjinicolaou, 'Art History and the Appreciation of Works of Art', Caucus for Marxism and Art, *Proceedings of the Caucus for Marxism and Art at the College Art Association Convention, January 1978*, pp. 9–12.

28. Donald Kuspit, 'Meyer Schapiro's Marxism', *Caucus for Marxism and Art, Proceedings of the Caucus for Marxism and Art at the College Art Association Convention, January 1978*, pp. 28–9; also in *Arts Magazine*, vol. 53, no. 3 (November 1978), pp. 142–4.
29. Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis', *Marxist Perspectives*, vol. 1, no. 4 (Winter 1978), pp. 28–51; Eunice Lipton, 'The Laundress in Late Nineteenth-Century French Culture', *Art History*, vol. 3, no. 3 (September 1980), pp. 295–313; Serge Guilbaut, 'Greenberg, Pollock, or from Trotskyism to the New Liberalism of the "Vital Center"', *October*, no. 15 (Winter 1980), pp. 61–78; David Kunzle, 'Bruegel's Proverb Painting and the World Turned Upside Down', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 59, no. 2 (June 1977), pp. 197–202.
30. Respectively, 'Daumier in the History of Art' and 'The Paris Commune of 1871 and the Political Print', in *Caucus for Marxism and Art, Proceedings of the Caucus for Marxism and Art at the College Art Association Convention, January 1979*, pp. 24–31, 32–36.
31. Titled "'The Olympia Scandal': The Language of the Critics in 1865 and the Problems of *Olympia's* Meaning for its Public'.
32. For example, the session 'Post-war Theory and Art Practice', organised by Jon Bird at the 1983 conference, where Hadjinicolaou was given a double slot; and 'The Effectiveness of Images', organised by Alex Potts, for the 1985 event.
33. Amongst the important work that appeared in its pages, not already listed, were the following: Thomas Crow, 'The *Oath of the Horatii* in 1785', *Art History*, vol. 1, no. 4 (December 1978), pp. 424–71; Adrian Rifkin, 'Cultural Movement and the Paris Commune', *ibid.*, vol. 2, no. 2 (June 1979), pp. 201–20; Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock: 'Les donnés bretonnantes: la prairie de représentation', *ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 3 (September 1980), pp. 314–44, and 'Avant-Gardes and Partisans Reviewed', *ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 3 (September 1981), pp. 305–27; Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 4 (December 1980), pp. 448–69; Michael Baldwin, Charles Harrison and Mel Ramsden, 'Art History, Art Criticism and Explanation', *ibid.*, vol. 4, no. 4 (December 1981), pp. 432–56. The role of *Art History's* first two reviews editors, Alex Potts and Fred Orton, should also be noted.
34. The initial editors were Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, Frances Hannah, Lisa Tickner and John A. Walker, later joined by Michael Evans and Tim Putnam. See 'Introduction', in George Robertson (ed.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. xi–xiv; and Jon Bird, 'On Newness and Art History: Reviewing *Block*, 1979–85', in A.L. Rees and Frances Borzello (eds), *The New Art History* (London: Camden, 1986), pp. 32–40.
35. It was to be 'a journal devoted to the theory, analysis and criticism of art, design and the mass media', according to its first editorial.
36. Tony Rickaby, 'The Artists' International', *Block*, no. 1 (1979), pp. 5–14; Jo Spence, 'The Sign as a Site of Class Struggle: Reflections on Works by John Heartfield', *ibid.*, no. 5 (1981), pp. 2–13.
37. For a history, analysis and defence, see Anthony Easthope, 'The Trajectory of *Screen*', in Francis Barker et al. (eds), *The Politics of Theory: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1982* (University of Essex, 1983), pp. 121–33.
38. John Tagg, 'The Method of Criticism and its Objects in Max Raphael's Theory of Art', *Block*, no. 2 (1980), pp. 2–14.
39. Alan Wallach, 'In Search of a Marxist Theory of Art History', *ibid.*, no. 4 (1981), p. 17; Adrian Rifkin, 'Can Gramsci Save Art History?', *ibid.*, no. 3 (1980), pp. 37–9.
40. The key Marxist reflection on the topic remains Meyer Schapiro, 'Style', in *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society (Selected Papers, vol. 4)* (New York: Braziller, 1994), p. 51–101. On which, see Alan Wallach, 'Meyer Schapiro's Essay on Style: Falling into the Void', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 55, no. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 11–15.

41. My quotations are from Jon Bird, 'The Politics of Representation', *Block*, No. 2 (1980), pp. 40–4.
42. Rifkin, 'Can Gramsci Save Art History?', p. 40, n.15.
43. Notably John Heskett, 'Modernism and Archaism in Design in the Third Reich', *Block*, no. 3 (1980), pp. 13–24; T.J. Clark, 'Courbet the Communist and the Temple Bar Magazine', *ibid.*, no. 4 (1981), pp. 32–8; Nicos Hadjinicolaou, 'The Debate at the Salon of 1831', *ibid.*, no. 9 (1983), pp. 62–7.
44. Griselda Pollock, 'Vision, Voice, and Power: Feminist Art History and Marxism', *ibid.*, no. 6 (1982), pp. 2–21.
45. 'Editorial', *ibid.*, No. 10 (1985), p. 4.
46. John Tagg, 'Art History and Difference', *ibid.*, pp. 45–7. Cf. Jon Bird, 'Art History and Hegemony', *ibid.*, No. 12 (Winter 1986/7), pp. 27–40. For a different perspective on the perceived crisis, see Adrian Rifkin, 'Humming and Hegemony', *ibid.*, pp. 45–8.
47. Louis James, 'Cruikshank and Early Victorian Caricature'; Eric Hobsbawm, 'Men and Women in Socialist Iconography'; John Heskett, 'Art and Design in Nazi Germany'; Tony Rickaby, 'The Artists' International', in *History Workshop Journal*, issue 6 (Autumn 1978), pp. 107–20, 121–38, 139, 53, 154–68. Hobsbawm's essay sparked a fierce debate in issues 7 (Spring 1979) and 8 (Autumn 1979).
48. Among the most important are Jutta Held, 'Between Bourgeois Enlightenment and Popular Culture: Goya's Festivals, Old Women, Monsters and Blind Men', *History Workshop Journal*, issue 23 (Spring 1987), pp. 39–58; John Hutton, 'Camille Pissarro's *Turpitudes Sociales* and Late Nineteenth-Century French Anarchist Anti-Feminism', *ibid.*, issue 24 (Autumn 1987), pp. 32–61; Alex Potts, 'Picturing the Modern Metropolis: Images of London in the Nineteenth Century', *ibid.*, issue 26 (Autumn 1988), pp. 28–56.
49. Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 161.
50. In Britain, notable examples of the genre included Pollock and Orton, 'Les données bretonnantes'; Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, 'Patriarchal Power and the Pre-Raphaelites', *Art History*, vol. 7, no. 4 (December 1984), pp. 480–95; Fred Orton, 'Reactions to Renoir Keep Changing', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 8, no. 2 (1985), pp. 28–35.
51. This conjunction provided the occasion for the 'Reading Landscape' session at the AAH Conference of 1989, organised by Simon Pugh.
52. Namely, *Constable: The Art of Nature* (1971), *Landscape in Britain, 1750–1850* (1974) and *Constable* (1976).
53. John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 1. Contemporaneously, Alan Wallach was developing a rather different Marxist approach to landscape painting in the United States. See Alan Wallach, 'Thomas Cole and the Aristocracy', *Arts Magazine*, vol. 56, no. 3 (November 1981), pp. 94–106.
54. Michael Rosenthal, *Constable: The Painter and his Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983); Ann Bermingham *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
55. David Solkin, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction* (London: Tate Gallery, 1982), pp. 22, 136, n.4.
56. For an account of this reception, see Neil McWilliam and Alex Potts, 'The Landscape of Reaction: Richard Wilson (1713?–1782) and his Critics', in Rees and Borzello, *The New Art History*, pp. 106–19.
57. My own book *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) was a late product of this tendency.

58. 'Editorial', *Histoire et critique des arts*, no. 1 (1977), pp. 1–2 (n.p.), my translation. The 'manque de ligne politique' is again emphasised in 'Editorial', *ibid.*, no. 2 (June 1977), p. 1. Those involved included, among others, Maria Estrella, Virginia Garretta, Nicos Hadjinicolaou, Hélène Hourmat, Maria Ivens, Patrick Le Nouêne, Laura Malvano, Michel Melot and Michèle Witwer.
59. 'Les réalistes et l'histoire de l'art', *Histoire et critique des arts*, nos. 4–5 (May 1978); 'Daumier et le dessin de presse', *Histoire et critique des arts*, nos. 13–14 (1980).
60. 'Les avant-gardes', *ibid.*, no. 6 (July 1978); 'Les musées', *ibid.*, nos. 7–8 (December 1978); 'Que faire de l'histoire de l'art?', *ibid.*, nos. 9–10 (1979); 'Expositions', *ibid.*, nos. 11–12 (1979).
61. Major contributions included Klaus Herding, 'Les Lutteurs "détestable": critique de style, critique sociale', *ibid.*, nos. 4–5 (May 1978), pp. 95–123; T.J. Clark, 'Un réalisme du corps: *Olympia* et ses critiques en 1865', *ibid.*, pp. 139–55.
62. Max Kozloff, 'La peinture américaine pendant la guerre froide'; Eva Cockroft, 'L'Expressionisme Abstrait, arme de la guerre froide'; Serge Guilbaut, 'Création et développement d'une avant-garde: New York, 1946–1951', Nicos Hadjinicolaou, 'Sur l'idéologie de l'avant-gardisme', *ibid.*, no. 6 (July 1978), pp. 3–19, 20–28, 29–48, 49–76. Hadjinicolaou's article also appeared as 'On the Ideology of Avant-Gardism', *Praxis*, no. 6 (1982), pp. 39–70.
63. T.J. Clark, 'Questions préliminaires: l'oeuvre d'art et idéologie'; John Tagg, 'Marxism et histoire de l'art' (in English as 'Marxism and Art History', *Marxism Today*, vol. 21, no. 6 (June 1977), pp. 183–92); Klaus Herding, 'La responsabilité de l'historien de l'art dans la société'; Jean-Pierre Sanchez, 'Que faire de l'idéologie en l'histoire de l'art?'; Tom Cummings, Deborah Weiner and Joan Weinstein, 'Le rôle de l'historien d'art marxiste dans une société capitaliste', *ibid.*, no. 9–10 (1979), pp. 9–11, 13–29, 30–48, 49–87, 88–108.
64. For example, Michel Melot: 'La pratique d'un artiste: Pissarro Graveur en 1880', *ibid.*, no. 2 (June 1977), pp. 14–38 (tr. by Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach as 'Camille Pissarro in 1880: An Anarchistic Artist in Bourgeois Society', *Marxist Perspectives*, no. 8 (Winter 1979/80), pp. 22–54), 'Daumier devant l'histoire de l'art: Jugement esthétique/Jugement politique', *ibid.*, nos. 13–14 (1980), pp. 159–95. Maurice Domino, 'Les discours du réalisme'; Nicos Hadjinicolaou, 'L'exigence de "réalisme" au Salon de 1831'; Patrick Le Nouêne, 'Les soldats de l'industrie de François Bonhommé: l'idéologie d'un projet'; *ibid.*, nos. 4–5 (May 1978), pp. 5–20; 21–34, 35–61.
65. Albert Boime, 'L'exposition Second Empire et la célébration du pouvoir dans le monde de l'art'; Marc Rosenblum and Bertrand Gautier, 'L'exposition Second Empire: Histoire d'un oubli, histoire d'un refus'; Michel Melot, 'L'exposition "l'art en France sous le Second Empire": une impasse', *ibid.*, nos. 11–12 (1979), pp. 7–24, 25–46, 47–62.
66. Lee Baxandall (ed.), *Radical Perspectives on the Arts* (New York: Penguin, 1972); David Craig (ed.), *Marxists on Literature: An Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975). Maynard Solomon's important anthology *Marxism and Art: Essays Classic and Contemporary* was published in two editions in the United States (Knopf, 1973; Vintage, 1974), and was reprinted by Harvester Press in the United Kingdom in 1979.
67. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971); Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (1976) (London: Verso, 1998); Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
68. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972). The inadequacies of the work were laboriously analysed in 'Ways of Seeing', *Art-Language*, vol. 4, no. 3 (October 1978).

69. Nicos Hadjinicolaou, *Art History and Class Struggle*, tr. Louise Asmal (London: Pluto Press, 1978) – originally published as *Histoire de l'art et lutte des classes* (Paris: Maspero, 1973).
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 79.
71. Pierre Macherey, *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire* (Paris: Maspero, 1966); in English as *A Theory of Literary Production*, tr. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).
72. Hadjinicolaou, *Art History and Class Struggle*, ch. 15. On 'self-recognition', cf. Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, tr. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1979), p. 149. Althusser's own view on the relationship between art and knowledge was more complex than this – see 'A Letter on Art in Reply to André Daspre' and 'Cremonini, Painter of the Abstract', in Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, tr. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), pp. 203–20.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 19, n.1. Arnold Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1963).
75. For critical responses, see Alan Wallach, 'In Search of a Marxist Theory of Art History'; John Tagg, *Red Letters*, no. 8 (1978), pp. 77–8; John Berger, 'In Defense of Art', *New Society*, vol. 45, no. 834 (28 September 1978), pp. 702–4.
76. Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, tr. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1970); Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*. In 1977, NLB reprinted Brewster's translation of Althusser's *For Marx*, originally published by Allen Lane in 1969. Critical assessments from *New Left Review* included Norman Geras's 'Althusser's Marxism: An Assessment' and André Glucksmann's 'A Ventriloquist Structuralism', both reprinted in Gareth Stedman Jones et al., *Western Marxism: A Critical Reader* (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp. 232–314.
77. Sebastian Timpanaro, *On Materialism*, tr. Lawrence Garner (London: New Left Books, 1975), pp. 64–5.
78. Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology*, pp. 44, 82–6, 162. For Eagleton's retrospect on Althusserianism, see his *Against the Grain: Essays, 1975–1985* (London: Verso, 1986), pp. 1–4.
79. Jonathan Rée, 'Marxist Modes', in Roy Edgley and Richard Osborne (eds), *Radical Philosophy Reader* (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 337–60.
80. Althusser, 'Freud and Lacan', in *Lenin and Philosophy*, pp. 181–202. Timpanaro was equally hostile to Lacan – see *On Materialism*, pp. 171, 177, 188.
81. Timpanaro, *On Materialism*, pp. 103, 192–3.
82. E.P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London: Merlin, 1978), pp. 374–9. On the unfairness of the 'Stalinist' jibe, see Perry Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 103–16.
83. Kevin McDonnell and Kevin Robins, 'Marxist Cultural Theory: The Althusserian Smokescreen', in Simon Clarke et al., *One-Dimensional Marxism: Althusser and the Politics of Culture* (London and New York: Allison & Busby, 1980), pp. 202, 196, 221–3. Cf. Althusser's attack on the concepts of alienation and reification in *For Marx*, pp. 230, n.239. For useful assessments of the Althusserian legacy, see Peter Dews, 'Althusser, Structuralism and the French Epistemological Tradition', and Francis Muhlern, 'Message in a Bottle: Althusser in Literary Studies', in Gregory Elliott (ed.), *Althusser: A Critical Reader* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 104–41, 159–76.
84. The former is reprinted in Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory*, pp. 35–91.
85. Most notably in John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: 'The Body of the Public'* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986). I take issue with this interpretation in my review 'The Political Theory of Painting Without the Politics', *Art History*, vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1987), pp. 381–95.

86. Art history's links with the *Screen* nexus are exemplified by Griselda Pollock, 'Artists Mythologies and Media Genius, Madness and Art History', *Screen*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1980), pp. 57–96; and the essays by John Tagg published in *Screen Education*, reprinted in his *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), chs 3, 4, and 6.
87. Hadjinicolaou, 'The Debate at the Salon of 1831'; Nicos Hadjinicolaou, "'La Liberté guidant le peuple" de Delacroix devant son premier public', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 28 (1979), pp. 3–26.
88. For a German response to the first volume, see the review by Klaus Herding in *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 4, nos 2–3 (1976), pp. 39–50.
89. T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), p. 10. Those writers one or more of whose works Clark listed were Antal, Klingender, Larkin and Schapiro.
90. For Lacan, see Clark, *Images of the People*, p. 171, n.8; for Macherey, see *ibid.*, pp. 120; 183, n.105. On the importance of Macherey's consideration on the relationship between the artwork and ideology in *Pour une théorie de la production littéraire* for his own thinking, see Clark, 'Questions préliminaire: l'oeuvre d'art et l'idéologie', p. 11.
91. T.J. Clark, 'The Conditions of Artistic Creation', *Times Literary Supplement* (24 May 1974), p. 561. For Clark and Hegel, see Gail Day, 'Persisting and Mediating: T.J. Clark and "the Pain of the Unattainable Beyond"', *Art History*, vol. 23, no. 1 (March 2000), pp. 1–18.
92. Peter Wollen, 'Manet: Modernism and Avant-Garde', *Screen*, vol. 21, no. 2 (Summer 1980), pp. 18–20.
93. T.J. Clark, 'Preliminaries to a Possible Treatment of "Olympia" in 1865', *Screen*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Spring 1980), p. 22. Clark is quoting Colin McCabe. The Lacanian term 'the Imaginary' plays a significant role in the article (p. 39), and in the earlier French version there was some reference to Barthes' semiology – see Clark, 'Un réalisme du corps: "Olympia" et ses critiques en 1865', p. 140.
94. T.J. Clark, 'A Note in Reply to Peter Wollen', *Screen*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1980), p. 100. Both were corrected on the matter of contradiction by Charles Harrison, Michael Baldwin and Mel Ramsden, in 'Manet's "Olympia" and Contradiction', *Block*, no. 5 (1981), pp. 34–43.
95. T.J. Clark, 'Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art', in W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.), *The Politics of Interpretation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 205, n.2; 217–19.
96. The take-up of this model is exemplified by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Serge Guilbaut and David Solkin (eds), *Modernism and Modernity: The Vancouver Conference Papers* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983). The Marxist element in the OU's art history programme is most evident in the materials for the first course (A315): Open University, *A Third Level Course, Modern Art and Modernism: Manet to Pollock* (Milton Keynes: The Open University, 1983, printed in 28 units) and Francis Francina and Charles Harrison (eds), *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (London: Harper & Row in association with the Open University, 1982).
97. Hadjinicolaou, 'On the ideology of avant-gardism', pp. 56, 62. Werckmeister's position is different, but no more sympathetic to avant-garde claims. See his 'A Critique of T.J. Clark's *Farewell to an Idea*', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 28 (Summer 2002), pp. 857–8. Probably the most influential instance of this scepticism towards avant-garde art to appear at the time was Serge Guilbaut's *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1983) – sharply contested from the left by David

- Craven in 'The Disappropriation of Abstract Expressionism', *Art History*, vol. 8, no. 4 (December 1985), pp. 499–515.
98. Clark, 'Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art', p. 213, n.6; T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985), p. 13.
 99. Adrian Rifkin, 'Marx's Clarkism', *Art History*, vol. 8, no. 4 (December 1985), pp. 488, 489.
 100. 'Preface to the Revised Edition', T.J. Clark, *The Painter of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*, 2nd edn (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), p. xxv.
 101. Especially in Clark, 'The Conditions of Artistic Creation'. Cf. Nicos Hadjinicolaou, 'The Social History of Art – An Alibi?', *Ideas and Production*, no. 5 (1986) pp. 8–9.
 102. For a comparative assessment of their recent work, see Andrew Hemingway and Paul Jaskot, review of T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), and O.K. Werckmeister, *Icons of the Left: Benjamin and Eisenstein, Picasso and Kafka after the Fall of Communism* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1999), in *Historical Materialism*, no. 7 (Winter 2000), pp. 257–80. For their current political positions, see Retort, *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (London: Verso, 2005); Otto Karl Werckmeister, *Der Medusa Effekt: Politische Bildstrategien seit dem 11. September 2001* (Berlin: Form & Zweck, 2005).
 103. Clark, 'The Conditions of Artistic Creation', p. 562.
 104. Adrian Rifkin, 'Art's Histories', in Rees and Borzello, *The New Art History*, pp. 158, 162.
 105. Rifkin, 'Art's Histories', pp. 158, 161–2. Cf. Tom Gretton, 'New Lamps for Old', in Rees and Borzello, *The New Art History*, pp. 63–74.
 106. Hadjinicolaou, 'The Social History of Art – An Alibi?', p. 13.
 107. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, tr. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 123.

11 NEW LEFT ART HISTORY AND FASCISM IN GERMANY

This chapter was translated by Kerstin Stakemeier.

1. Frederick Antal's great survey *Florentine Painting and its Social Background* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1948), for example, was well known during the post-war period, but its theoretical as well as methodological standing within historical science was not discussed. See also Max Raphael, *Arbeiter, Kunst und Künstler. Beiträge zu einer marxistischen Kunstwissenschaft* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1975) as well as Max Raphael, *Für eine demokratische Architektur* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1976).
2. Discriminations of the problem of realism and of a critical artistic practice in West Germany were debated almost exclusively by the magazine *Tendenzen*, which was published in Munich from 1960 on. The early editions especially were remarkably versatile, theoretically agile and international in perspective.
3. Max Horkheimer, 'Die Juden und Europa', *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, vol. 7 (1939). German version in Helmut Dubiel and Alfons Söllner (eds), *Wirtschaft, Recht und Staat im Nationalsozialismus: Analysen des Instituts für Sozialforschung 1939–1942 von Max Horkheimer et al.* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 33–53, here p. 33. See also Theodor W. Adorno, 'Was Bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit', in *Eingriffe. Neuen Kritische Modelle* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1964), pp. 125–46.
4. See the early research reports of Anson G. Rabinbach, 'Marxistische Faschismustheorien: Ein Überblick', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, vol. 7, no. 26 (December 1976), pp. 5–19 and vol. 8, no. 27 (April 1977), pp. 89–103.

5. See Wolfgang Abendroth et al. (eds), *Faschismus und Kapitalismus. Theorien über die sozialen Ursprünge und die Funktion des Faschismus* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, and Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1967), p. 5, where a 'general sociological concept' of fascism is called for.
6. See the article on fascism in Georg Klaus and Manfred Buhr (eds), *Philosophisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1 (West Berlin, 1975), pp. 403 ff.
7. See the discussion in *Das Argument*, no. 41 (December 1966), especially the centrepiece essay by Tim Mason: 'Der Primat der Politik – Politik und Wirtschaft im Nationalsozialismus', pp. 473–94; see also the following articles in *Das Argument*, no. 47 (July 1968): Eberhard Czichon, Berlin/DDR, 'Der Primat der Industrie im Kartell der nationalsozialistischen Macht', pp. 168–92; Tim Mason, 'Primat der Industrie? – Eine Erwidrerung', pp. 193–209; Dietrich Eichholtz, Kurt Gossweiler, Berlin/DDR, 'Noch einmal: Politik und Wirtschaft 1933–1945', pp. 210–27.
8. See Friedrich Pollock, 'State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations', *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, vol. 9 (1941), reprinted in German as 'Staatskapitalismus', in Dubiel and Söllner, *Wirtschaft, Recht und Staat im Nationalsozialismus*, pp. 81–109.
9. 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception', in Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. John Cumming (London: Verso, 1979), pp. 120–67. See also Theodor W. Adorno, 'Culture Industry Reconsidered', in Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 98–106.
10. See Mason, 'Primat der Industrie?', pp. 199 ff., and Czichon, 'Der Primat der Industrie im Kartell', pp. 166 ff.
11. Alfred Sohn-Rethel: *Ökonomie und Klassenstruktur des deutschen Faschismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973). In English as Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Economy and Class Structure of German Fascism*, tr. Martin Sohn-Rethel (London: Free Association, 1987). Re-edited version published as *Industrie und Nationalsozialismus. Aufzeichnungen aus dem 'Mitteleuropäischen Wirtschaftstag'* (Berlin, 1992).
12. Thalheimer, amongst others, set out from the thesis of the strength of capital. This was in contrast to the KPD, which argued that National Socialism was capitalism's last chance to hold off revolution. See August Thalheimer, 'Über den Faschismus', in Abendroth, *Faschismus und Kapitalismus*, pp. 19–38, pp. 36 ff.
13. Mason, 'Primat der Politik', pp. 473–94.
14. Manfred Clemenz, *Gesellschaftliche Ursprünge des Faschismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972).
15. Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus. Die politische Entwicklung von Handwerk und Kleinhandel in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne: Keipenheur & Witsch, 1972).
16. Barrington Moore, *Soziale Ursprünge von Diktatur und Demokratie. Die Rolle der Grundbesitzer und der Bauern bei der Entstehung der modernen Welt* (Frankfurt, 1969), p. 513. Originally in English as Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in Making the Modern World* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).
17. See especially the following publications by Reinhard Kühnl: *Deutschland zwischen Demokratie und Faschismus* (Munich: Hanser 1971); *Formen bürgerlicher Herrschaft. Liberalismus – Faschismus* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1971).
18. Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris, 1895) – the 38th edition of this text was published in 1934. Sigmund Freud, *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* (Leipzig and Zurich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1921) – in English as Sigmund Freud, *Mass Psychology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2004). Wilhelm Reich, *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus. Zur Sexualökonomie der politischen Reaktion und zur proletarischer Sexualpolitik* (1933) (Köln, 1971). In English as Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1970).

19. Siegfried Kracauer, *Das Ornament der Masse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963). The essays were written between 1921 and 1931. In English as Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, tr. and ed. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1995). Walter Benjamin, 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit', first published in French 1936. In English as 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, tr. Harry Zohn (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1973), pp. 219–53.
20. See Martin Warnke (ed.), *Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Kunstverlag, 1970); Berthold Hinz, *Die Malerei im deutschen Faschismus. Kunst und Konterrevolution* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1974).
21. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Der hilflose Antifaschismus: Zur Kritik der Vorlesungsschreiben über Wissenschaft und NS an deutschen Universitäten* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970).
22. That was chiefly owing to the internationalisation of discussions around art in the 1930s. See the exhibition catalogue *Realismus zwischen Revolution und Reaktion 1919–1939* (Munich: Prestel, 1981) and the exhibition catalogue *Die Dreissiger Jahre – Schauplatz Deutschland* (Munich: Haus der Kunst, 1977); the latter was correctly criticised for speaking only of art and of 'ideological un-art', p. 8. See Berthold Hinz, Hans-Ernst Mittag, et al (eds), *Die Dekoration der Gewalt. Kunst und Medien im Faschismus* (Gießen: Anabas, 1979), Introduction. For a critique, see also Jutta Held, 'Exilforschung in der DDR und der alten Bundesrepublik', *Kunst und Politik*, vol. 1 (1999), pp. 77–90, here pp. 85ff.
23. As in the exhibition catalogue *Skulptur und Macht. Figurative Plastik im Deutschland der 30er und 40er Jahre* (Berlin: Frölich & Kaufmann, 1983), in which Arno Breker is described as a 'non-artist', and his works were not displayed but shown only in photographs.
24. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung – Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972). In English as Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
25. For this heavily discussed exhibition, see Detlef Hoffmann, Almut Junker and Peter Schirmbeck (eds), *Geschichte als öffentliches Ärgernis oder: ein Museum für die demokratische Gesellschaft* (Giessen: Anabas, 1974).
26. *Kunst im 3. Reich. Dokumente der Unterwerfung* (Frankfurt: Frankfurter Kunstverein, 1974). [Ed.: for an important English-language appraisal of this exhibition, see John Heskett, 'Art and Design in Nazi Germany', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 6 (Autumn 1978), pp. 139–53.]
27. On this, see the documentation in *Kunst im 3. Reich*.
28. See Hinz, *Malerei im deutschen Faschismus*, pp. 11ff.
29. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (1923), tr. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971). See also Georg Lukács, *Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen I* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1963).
30. Berthold Hinz, 'Das Denkmal und sein "Prinzip"', in *Kunst im 3. Reich*, pp. 104–109; Hinz, Mittag, et al., *Die Dekoration der Gewalt*, pp. 104–9.
31. According to Hinz this is true also for the materialist as well as extremely precise analysis of Speer's street lamps in Berlin. See Klaus Herding and Hans-Ernst Mittag, *Kunst und Alltag im NS-System. Albert Speers Berliner Straßenlaternen* (Gießen: Anabas, 1975); Hinz, Mittag, et al., *Die Dekoration der Gewalt*, pp. 6ff.
32. Dieter Kimpel and Robert Suckale, *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich 1130–1270* (Munich: Hirmer, 1985), pp. 74ff.
33. Hinz, *Die Malerei im deutschen Faschismus*, pp. 120ff.
34. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Kritik der Warenästhetik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971). In English as Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society*, tr. Robert Bock (Cambridge: Polity, 1986).

35. Hinz, 'Malerei des Faschismus', in *Kunst im 3. Reich*, pp. 122–8. See also Hinz, *Die Malerei im deutschen Faschismus*.
36. Martin Heidegger, 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes', in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt, 1950). In English as 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in *Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David F. Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977). Heidegger presented a first version of this text as a lecture in 1935.
37. On the realism debate, especially on the different conceptions of Lukács and Brecht, see Werner Mittenzwei, *Der Realismus-Streit um Brecht. Grundris der Brecht-Rezeption in der DR 1945–1975* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1978).
38. Berthold Hinz, in *Kunst im 3. Reich*, p. 122; Berthold Hinz, '1933/45: Ein Kapitel kunstgeschichtlicher Forschung seit 1945', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 14, (1986), pp. 18–33, here p. 18.
39. Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, 'Zur Frage der Rekonstruktion proletarisch-revolutionärer Kunst und Literatur', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, year 2, vol. 4 (October 1971), pp. 72–9. More articles on this topic were published in this and the following volumes – for examples, see *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, year 4, vol. 12 (September 1972).
40. One could also show aesthetic continuities between National Socialist art and the photo-realist pictures of the post-war period (and also significant deviations). See the compelling comparative analysis by Berthold Hinz, 'Bilder zweier Ausstellungen', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 6, nos. 1/2 (1978), pp. 64ff.
41. See Norbert Schneider, 'Kunst und Gesellschaft: Der sozialgeschichtliche Ansatz', in Hans Belting, et al. (eds), *Kunstgeschichte. Eine Einführung* (Berlin: Reimer, 2003), pp. 267–95.
42. Most importantly, see Berthold Hinz, 'Bild und Lichtbild im Medienverbund', in Hinz, Mittig, et al., *Die Dekoration der Gewalt*, pp. 137–48; Berthold Hinz, 'Disparität und Diffusion – Kriterien einer "Ästhetik" des NS', in Berthold Hinz (ed.) *NS-Kunst – 50 Jahre danach. neue Beiträge* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1989); Hinz, '1933/45: Ein Kapitel kunstgeschichtlicher Forschung', pp. 24ff.
43. Jutta Held, 'Minimal Art: eine amerikanische Ideologie', *Neue Rundschau*, vol. 81, no. 4 (1972), pp. 660–77; Jutta Held, 'Pop Art und Werbung in den USA. Über das dialektische Verhältnis zwischen freier und angewandter Kunst', *Kritische Berichte*, vol. 4, nos. 5/6 (1976), pp. 27–44.
44. See Wulf D. Hund, 'Kommunikation – Manipulation', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, year 2, vol. 4 (October 1971), pp. 100ff.
45. Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 120–67.
46. See *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, year 4, vol. 14 (April 1974). Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien', *Kursbuch*, vol. 20 (1970), pp. 159–86. See Hans-Joachim Piechotta, *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, year 1, vol. 2 (December 1970), pp. 31–4.
47. Whereas the minefield of fascism research was initially left to the leftist art historians, and thus to the fringes of art history, the exhibition, *Die Dreissiger Jahre – Schauplatz Deutschland* (Munich, 1977), made an attempt to win back the power of definition over this most loaded period. The method was an internalisation of the art-historical frame within which Nationalist Socialist art was perceived and the goal was to reject questions of possible fascist continuities. The publication *Inszenierung der Macht* (see below, n.60) was a reaction to this, internationalising the topic of fascism and remaining committed to the thesis that fascism has to be understood as an inherent possibility of late capitalist society.
48. For this new approach, see the schematic outline of the problematic by Eike Hennig, 'Faschistische Öffentlichkeit und Faschismustheorien', *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, year 6, vol. 20 (June 1975), pp. 107–17.
49. See the magazines *Das Argument*, *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, *Kritische Berichte*.

50. *Argument* contributions, for example, inveigh against the fascism theory of the GDR historians. See the important volume *Theorien über Ideologie, Argument* special issue AS 40, (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1979), pp. 82ff.
51. See the works by Reinhard Kühnl listed in n.17 above.
52. See Jutta Held, *Avantgarde und Politik in Frankreich. Revolution, Faschismus und Krieg im Blickfeld der Künste* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2005).
53. See *Theorien über Ideologie, Argument* special issue AS 40 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1979).
54. See especially Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, tr. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), pp. 121–73.
55. Roland Barthes *Mythologies*, tr. Annette Lavers (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972).
56. That economic theory was rejected at this moment was criticised as a refusal of a Marxist analysis, for example by Reinhard Opitz, 'Über vermeidbare Irrtümer. Zum Themenschwerpunkt "Faschismus und Ideologie" in *Argument* 117', *Das Argument*, Vol. 121 (1980), pp. 357–77.
57. This theory of the workings of ideology within fascism was developed by Wolfgang Fritz Haug and his working group in several stages. See, most importantly, the following publications: *Faschismus und Ideologie 1, Argument* special issue AS 60 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1980); *Faschismus und Ideologie 2, Argument* special issue AS 62 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1980); Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Die Faschisierung des bürgerlichen Subjekts. Die Ideologie der gesunden Normalität und die Ausrottungspolitiken im deutschen Faschismus. Materialanalysen. Argument* special issue AS 80 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1986).
58. Adorno and Horkheimer had presumed that the 'classical' ideology had vanished in fascism (as in late capitalism as such) and had been replaced by the culture industry. The reason for this disappearance of the ideological was said to lie in the replacement of the capitalist principle of competition by monopoly capitalism. That is why the ideological constitution supposedly needed no specific analysis. See *Argument* special issue 60, pp. 44ff.
59. See Haug, *Faschisierung des bürgerlichen Subjekts*, pp. 152ff.
60. Neuen Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (NGBK), *Inszenierung der Macht. Ästhetische Faszination im Faschismus* (Berlin, 1987).
61. See, most importantly, *Massen/Kultur/Politik. Argument* special issue AS 23 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1978). Wolfgang Fritz Haug and Kaspar Maase (eds), *Materialistische Kulturtheorie und Alltagskultur, Argument* special issue AS 47 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1980). Throughout the 1980s numerous texts on culture theory and a new culture history appeared. Here I will name but a few selected publications from the *Argument* circle: Heiko Haumann (ed.), *Arbeiteralltag in Stadt und Land. Neue Wege der Geschichtsschreibung, Argument* special issue AS 94 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1982); Jutta Held (ed.), *Kultur zwischen Bürgertum und Volk. Argument* special issue AS 103 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1983); Jutta Held and Norbert Schneider (eds), *Kunst und Alltagskultur* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1981).
62. NGBK, *Inszenierung der Macht*, p. 7.
63. See the documentation of this exhibition as well as Klaus Staeck (ed.), *Nazi-Kunst ins Museum? Mit Beiträgen von Hans Mommsen et al.* (Göttingen: Steidl, 1988).
64. For a critique of the exhibition, see Berthold Hinz, 'Disparität und Diffusion – Kriterien einer "Ästhetik" des NS', in Hinz, *NS-Kunst: 50 Jahre danach*.
65. See the conclusion which Wieland Elfferding draws in 'Politik der Sinne oder Legoland der Gefühle. Was ich aus unserer Ausstellung *Inszenierung der Macht, ästhetische Faszination im Faschismus* zu lernen vorschlage', in *Erbeutete Sinne. Nachträge zur Berliner Ausstellung 'Inszenierung der Macht, Ästhetische Faszination im Faschismus'* (Berlin: Nischen, 1988), pp. 33–42.

12 THE TURN FROM MARX TO WARBURG
IN WEST GERMAN ART HISTORY, 1968–90

1. See Martin Warnke (ed.), *Das Kunstwerk zwischen Wissenschaft und Weltanschauung* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Kunstverlag, 1970); and the journal *Kritische Berichte*, vols. 1–8 (1973–1980).
2. Rolf Wiggershaus, *Die Frankfurter Schule: Geschichte, theoretische Entwicklung, politische Bedeutung* (Munich: Hanser, 1987), pp. 676ff.
3. Warnke, *Das Kunstwerk*; cf. O. K. Werckmeister, 'Radical Art History', *Art Journal*, vol. 42, no. 4 (1982), pp. 284–91, esp. p. 284.
4. Martin Warnke, *Bau und Überbau: Soziologie der mittelalterlichen Architektur nach den Schriftquellen* (Frankfurt: Syndikat, 1976, 2nd edn 1979); Horst Bredekamp, *Kunst als Medium sozialer Konflikte: Bilderkämpfe von der Spätantike bis zur Hussitenrevolution* (Frankfurt am Main, 1975).
5. Mikhail Lifshitz, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, tr. Ralph B. Winn (New York: Marxist Critics Group, 1938), p. 27; cf. O. K. Werckmeister, 'Marx on Ideology and Art', *New Literary History*, no. 4 (1973), pp. 500–19, cf. pp. 510f.
6. Otto Karl Werckmeister, *Citadel Culture* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press), 1991.
7. Horst Bredekamp, Michael Diers and Charlotte Schoell-Glass (eds), *Aby Warburg: Akten des internationalen Symposions, Hamburg 1990* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1991).
8. Horst Bredekamp, "'Du lebst und thust mir nichts": Anmerkungen zur Aktualität Aby Warburgs', in Bredekamp et al., *Aby Warburg*, pp. 1–7.
9. Aby Warburg, *Schlangeritual: Ein Reisebericht* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1996).
10. Aby Warburg, *Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe*, ed. Horst Bredekamp, section 2, *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, ed. Martin Warnke, assisted by Claudia Brink, part 1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000).
11. Kurt W. Forster, 'Die Hamburg-Amerika-Linie, oder: Warburgs Kulturwissenschaft zwischen den Kontinenten', in Bredekamp et al., *Aby Warburg*, pp. 11–37.
12. Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890–1990* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).
13. <http://www.warburg-haus.hamburg.de/>
14. <http://www2.hu-berlin.de/kulturtechnik/zentrum.php>

Index

- Abstract Expressionism, 142
Addison, Joseph, 61
Adorno, Theodor W., 8, 34, 51, 103, 104, 105, 119, 139, 140, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166–8, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 180, 197, 198, 206
aestheticism, 6, 94
Alberti, Leone Battista, 63
alienation, 13, 151, 154, 155, 158
Allende, Salvador, 197
Althusser, Louis, 105, 182, 184, 188, 189–90, 191, 192, 208, 209
Amalgamated Engineering Union, 80
anarchism, 12, 36
Anderson, Perry, 190
Antal, Frederick, 6, 7, 45–6, 68, 70, 80, 104, 161, 176, 179, 182, 214
 Florentine Painting and its Social Background, 6, 45, 50, 51, 64
 Hogarth and his Place in European Art, 59, 61, 64, 80
 ‘Reflections on Classicism and Romanticism’, 48, 57, 65
 USSR, visits, 57
anti-catalog, an, 178
ARCOS, 68
Argument, 200, 207, 208, 210, 211
Aristotle, 90
Arslanov, Viktor, 35, 36, 44
Art History, 179, 181
Artists’ International Association (AIA), 68–9, 72, 75, 80, 182
Artists Meeting for Cultural Change (AMCC), 178
Arts, The, 124
Association of Art Historians (AAH), 181
Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 205, 207
Atkinson, Terry, 182
Austrian Institute for Historical Research, 46
avant-garde, 192
Aveling, Edward, 12
Ayer, A.J., 139
Bacon, Francis, 39
Bakhtin, Mikhail, 30, 35
Balázs, Béla, 48–9, 161
Balfour, Henry
 Evolution of Decorative Art, 19, 21
Balzac, Honoré de, 28, 33, 38, 40, 51, 140, 154, 170
Baranik, Rudolf, 179
Barrell, John, 185–6, 190
 Dark Side of the Landscape, The, 185
Barrett, Michèle
 ‘Max Raphael and the Question of Aesthetics’, 105
Barthes, Roland, 182, 183, 186, 209
Bartók, Béla, 49, 161
base and superstructure, 147, 159–60
Baudelaire, Charles, 10
Baxandall, Michael, 53, 57, 65
 Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy, 180
Bell, Clive, 7, 67, 70, 125
Benesch, Otto, 50
Benjamin, Walter, 7, 51, 89, 91, 104, 105, 106–22, 139, 165, 169, 200, 202, 206
 Arcades project, 106,
 ‘Author as Producer’, 97
 ‘Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian’, 106–22
 Origin of German Tragic Drama, 103, 107, 109, 110
 ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, 35, 114, 120
 ‘Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility’, 107, 110, 117, 120, 169
Bentmann, Reinhardt, 176
Benton, Thomas Hart, 136
Berger, John, 62, 63, 90, 97, 104, 105, 164
 ‘Revolutionary Undoing’, 93, 104
 Ways of Seeing, 93, 188
Bergson, Henri, 89
Berlin, Isaiah, 29
Berlin Volkshochschule, 90
Bermingham, Ann, 185
Bernstein, Eduard, 130
Bettelheim, Charles, 1

- Blaue Reiter group, 89
 Bloch, Ernst, 51, 92
 Heritage of our Time, 121
 Block, 104, 181–4, 191
 Blunt, Anthony, 62–3, 70, 72, 164
 Art of William Blake, The, 62
 Artistic Theory in Italy 1450–1600, 63
 Boas, Franz, 125
 Bosch, Hieronymous, 77
 Boswell, James, 72, 75
 Bourne, J.C., 82
 lithographs of London and Birmingham
 Railway, *fig. 11*, 84
 Brandt, Willy, 213
 Brecht, Bertolt, 29, 43, 51, 103, 149, 154,
 205
 Bredekamp, Horst, 176, 214, 215, 216, 217,
 219
 Kunst als Medium sozialer Konflikte, 215,
 219
 Breker, Arno, 210, 211
 Briussov, Valery, 29
 Bruegel, Pieter, 40, 77, 80
 Budapest
 Free School of the Cultural Sciences, 49,
 161
 Museum of Fine Arts, 48
 ‘Sunday Circle’, 48, 51, 161
 Bulgakov, Mikhail
 Master and the Margarita, The, 31
 Burckhardt, Jacob, 45–6, 111, 218
 Bürger, Peter, 171

 Camden, William
 Britannia, 25
 Camerawork, 182
 Carlyle, Thomas, 169
 Cassirer, Ernst, 113
 Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies,
 182
 Cézanne, Paul, 49, 73, 93, 104, 123
 Champfleury (Jules François Félix Husson),
 67
 Chekhov, Anton, 29
 Clark, T.J., 65, 177, 179, 180, 181, 187, 191–3
 Absolute Bourgeois, The, 191
 Image of the People, 65, 191
 Painting of Modern Life, The, 193
 Clemenz, Manfred, 199
 Cliff, Tony, 1
 Cobbett, William, 39
 Cockroft, Eva, 187
 Cohn, Alfred, 106

 Cold War, 64, 141, 162, 177, 199, 205
 College Art Association, 133, 177, 178
 Caucus for Marxism and Art, 179–81
 Women’s Caucus for Art, 179
 Colletti, Lucio, 191
 Comintern – see Third International
 commodity fetishism, 17, 116
 Communist Party
 Britain, 68, 75
 France (PCF), 143, 144, 145, 146, 147,
 148, 149, 154–5, 158
 Germany, 198
 Hungary, 31
 USA, 128, 136, 137
 USSR, 5, 30, 33
 Constable, John, 83
 Courbet, Gustave, 59, 63, 65, 104, 140, 142
 Enterrement à Ornans, 140
 Courtauld Institute of Art, 45
 Crane, Walter, 9, 15
 Cultural studies, 172–3, 182, 206
 Cummings, Tom, 187

 Dada, 153
 Daumier, Honoré, 6, 107, 140
 David, Jacques-Louis, 58
 Davis, Stuart, 136
 De Bry, Theodore
 America, 25
 Deborin, Anton, 37
 Defoe, Daniel, 61
 Degas, Edgar, 134
Dekoration der Gewalt, Die, 207
 Delacroix, Eugène, 59
 Demetz, Peter, 29
 Democratic Federation, 12,
 Descartes, René, 147, 158
 determination in the last instance, 3–4
 Dewey, John, 125, 129, 132, 137, 138
 Dickens, Charles, 170
 Diderot, Denis, 147–8, 153, 158
 Dimitrov, Georgii, 197
 Domino, Maurice, 187
 Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, 11, 49
 Duncan, Carol, 177, 181
 Dunn, Peter, 182
 Dvořák, Max, 46, 47, 50, 61, 133
 ‘Enigma of the Art of the van Eyck
 Brothers’, 48

 Eagleton, Terry, 28
 Criticism and Ideology, 188, 189
 Ideology of the Aesthetic, 15, 17, 105

- Eckhart, Meister, 90, 91, 92
 Eisenstein, Sergei, 143
 Elton, Arthur, 77, 80, 83
 Engels, Friedrich, 2, 3, 4, 25, 28, 29, 32, 44,
 70, 80, 113, 114, 129, 130, 131, 138,
 154, 176, 208, 213
*Origin of the Family, Private Property and
 the State*, 25
 Epicurus, 28
 everyday life, 156
 exhibitions, 178, 185, 187, 201
 Expressionism, 89, 121
- Fadeyev, Alexander, 33
 Farrell, James T., 123, 133, 134, 137, 138,
 250 n.83
 fascist, 42, 69, 90, 91, 102, 139, *see also*
under National Socialism
 feminist art history, 178, 179, 183, 184, 194
 Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 15
 Fiedler, Konrad, 112
 Fielding, Henry, 61, 77
 Fitton, James, 72, 75
5 on Revolutionary Art, 69–71
 Flaubert, Gustave, 91
 formalism, 3, 46, 70, 71, 73, 112, 114, 119
 Forster, Kurt, 218
 Foucault, Michel, 183, 190
 Fox, Ralph, 71, 72
 Franco, Francisco, 102
 Frankfurt Historical Museum, 202
 Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, 91,
 107, 140, 142, 162, 175, 176, 180, 188,
 189, 200, 206, 214
 Freud, Sigmund, 14, 200, 208, 216
 Friche, Vladimir, 37
 Fry, Edward F., 177
 Fry, Roger, 7, 67, 73, 124, 125
Vision and Design, 73
 Fuchs, Eduard, 5, 106, 114, 115, 116,
 Fuller, Peter, 93
 Fukayama, Francis, 1
 Fürst, Bruno, 50
 Fuseli, Henry, 45
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 115
 Gainsborough, Thomas, 80, 85
 Gauguin, Paul, 73
 Genet, Jean, 163
 Gericault, Théodore, 58, 59
Entrance to the Adelphi Wharf, *fig.* 8, 59,
 60
Raft of the Medusa, 59
- German Democratic Republic, 213, 214,
 216
 theory of fascism in, 198–9
 Gill, Eric, 69
 Gillray, James, 77, 79, 80
 Giotto, 52, 63, 91
 Bardi Chapel frescoes, *fig.* 5, 52, 54
 Girodet de Roucy-Trioson, Anne-Louis, 58
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 40, 92, 159
Faust, 93–4, 159
 Goldmann, Lucien, 158–9
 Golomstok, Igor, 42
 Gombrich, Ernst, 8, 64, 164, 225 n.33
 Goodyear, William, 21
Grammar of the Lotus, 19, 21, 22
 Gorky, Maxim, 29, 33
 Gowing, Laurence, 75
 Goya y Lucientes, Francisco de, 6, 67, 72, 88
 Gramsci, Antonio, 156, 184, 208
 Grant, C.J., 75
Reviewing the Blue Devils, *fig.* 10, 78
 Greenberg, Clement, 192, 255 n.44
 Gretton, Tom, 184
 Gronau, H.D., 64
 Gronsky, Ivan, 33
 Gros, Antoine-Jean, Baron, 58
 Groys, Boris, 42
 Grosz, George, 72
 Guilbaut, Serge, 181, 187
 Guterman, Norbert, 158
- Habermas, Jürgen, 171, 180, 214
 Haddon, Alfred C.
Evolution in Art, 23, 25
 Hadjinicolaou, Nicos, 105, 180, 187, 191,
 192, 193, 194
Art History and Class Struggle, 65, 180,
 188–9, 191
 Hall, Stuart, 87
 Harkness, Margaret, 33
 Harrison, Charles, 73
 Haskell, Francis, 61, 64, 65
 Haug, Wolfgang Fritz, 204, 210, 211
 Hausenstein, Wilhelm, 5, 109
 Hauser, Arnold, 7, 45, 49, 96, 104, 161–74,
 176, 179, 182, 193, 214
Mannerism, 8
Philosophy of Art History, 8, 170–1, 173,
 174, 188
Social History of Art, 8, 162, 164, 168–9,
 170, 171, 173
Sociology of Art, 171, 174

- Heartfield, John, 182
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 30–1, 32, 35, 44, 47, 51, 90, 108, 111, 114, 129, 130, 131, 140, 148, 157, 163, 164, 166, 167, 188, 189, 191, 192, 202, 219
- Aesthetics*, 167
- Phenomenology of Spirit*, 37, 192
- Heidegger, Martin, 118, 149, 205
- Heinemann, Margot, 69, 72
- Held, Jutta, 176
- Herder, Johann Gottfried von, 67, 110
- Herding, Klaus, 176, 187
- Herman, Jost, 176
- hermeneutics, 115–16, 118, 119
- Heron, Patrick, 164
- Heskett, John, 184
- Hess, Rémi, 158
- Hildebrand, Adolf von, 112
- Hiller, Susan, 182
- Hills, Patricia, 177
- Hinz, Berthold, 176, 203–4
- Histoire et Critique des Arts, 181, 186–7
- historicism, 47–8, 111, 113, 117, 120, 180
- History Workshop Journal*, 182, 184–5
- Hitler, Adolf, 198, 199, 208, 216
- Hobsbawm, Eric, 184, 185
- Hoffmann-Curtius, Kathryn, 176
- Hogarth, William, 6, 45, 59, 75, 77, 79, 81, 87–8
- Industry and Idleness*, 79
- Hogarth Group, 75
- Hölderlin, Friedrich, 105
- Holland, James, 72, 75
- Homer, 91, 92, 94
- Hook, Sidney, 128–32, 133, 137, 138
- From Hegel to Marx*, 132
- ‘Philosophy of Dialectical Materialism, The’, 128–9
- Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, 129–30, 131
- Horkheimer, Max, 91, 107, 139, 162, 180, 197, 198, 204, 206
- Husserl, Edmund, 90
- Hyndman, H.M., 12
- ideology, 4, 29, 98, 105, 153, 159, 176–77, 180, 193, 203, 204, 206, 207–12
- Ilyenkov, Evald
- Dialectic of the Concrete and Abstract in Marx’s Capital*, 43
- imperialism, 12, 42, 140, 146, 175
- Impressionism, 74, 97, 116, 134, 142
- Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique, 59
- Inszenierung der Macht*, 210–11
- International Association of Proletarian Writers, 31
- Ivens, Maria, 187
- James, Louis, 184
- James, William, 37
- Jameson, Fredric, *Marxism and Form*, 188
- Jay, Martin, 156
- Jones, Owen, 23
- Grammar of Ornament*, 21
- Kafka, Franz, 51
- Kandinsky, Wassily, 89
- Kant, Immanuel, 15, 23, 29, 73, 97, 110, 125, 167
- Kautsky, Karl, 29, 129, 131
- Kautsky, Minna, 33, 154
- Kelly, Mary, 182
- Kelly, Michael, 145–6
- Klein, Peter
- critique of Hauser, 180
- Kemp, Wolfgang, 176
- Kimpel, Dieter, 204
- Klingender, Francis, 6, 65, 67–88, 104
- Art and the Industrial Revolution*, 68, 77, 80–7
- Condition of Clerical Labour in Britain, The*, 68
- ‘Content and Form in Art’, 70
- Hogarth and English Caricature*, 67, 75–80, 87–8
- Marxism and Modern Art*, 70
- Klingender, Louis, 67–8
- Korsch, Karl, 128, 156
- Marxism and Philosophy*, 130
- Kozloff, Max, 187
- Kracauer, Siegfried, 139, 200
- Kritische Berichte* (1927–37), 50, 175–6
- Kritische Berichte* (1974–), 175–6, 214, 217
- Kruger, Barbara, 182
- Kühnl, Reinhard, 200, 208
- Kun, Béla, 50
- Kunst im 3 Reich. Dokumente der Unterwerfung*, 202
- Kunze, David, 177, 179, 181, 187
- Kuspit, Donald, 181
- labour theory of culture, 169–70
- Lacan, Jacques, 182, 183, 189, 191, 208
- landscape painting, 185–6, 190
- Lang, Andrew, 11, 15

- Larkin, Oliver, 224 n.21
 Le Bon, Gustave, 200, 208
 Le Moyne de Morgues, Jacques, 25
 Le Nain, Louis
 Peasant Family, 104
 Le Nouëne, Patrick, 187
 Leeson, Lorraine, 182
 LEF, 29
 Lefebvre, Henri, 7, 143–60
 Conscience Mystifiée, La, 149, 155, 158
 Contribution à l'esthétique, 143, 144, 145,
 147, 148, 149, 150–4, 155, 158, 159
 Critique de la vie quotidienne, La, 144,
 149, 155, 156, 158
 Descartes, study of, 147, 158
 Diderot, study of, 147–8, 158
 Musset, 143, 158, 159
 Pascal, study of, 158
 Pignon, 143, 158, 252 n.38
 Présence et l'absence, La, 143
 Problèmes actuels du marxisme, 144
 Production de l'espace, La, 144
 Rabelais et l'émergence du capitalisme,
 143, 158, 159
 Révolution urbaine, La, 144
 Somme et le reste, La, 144, 151, 155, 156,
 159
 Surrealism and, 251 n.22
 Trois textes pour le théâtre, 143
 Vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne,
 La, 144
 Léger, Fernand, 42
 Left Book Club, 72
Left Review, 71, 164
 Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, 28, 29–30, 32, 34, 36,
 43, 73, 74, 75, 85, 87, 90, 129, 136, 138
 Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, 43,
 128, 130
 Philosophical Notebooks, 32
 What is to be done?, 130
 Leonardo da Vinci, 40, 41
 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 191
 Lifshits, Mikhail, 5, 28–44, 96, 97, 149
 Crisis of Ugliness, The, 42
 'Dialectics in the History of Art', 37
 Literature and Marxism, 28
 'On the Ideal and the Real', 43
 Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx, 28
 'Popular in Art and the Class Struggle,
 The', 38, 40
 'Why I Am Not a Modernist', 41–2
 Lipton, Eunice, 177, 181
 Lissitsky, El, 219
 Literary Critic, 32, 33, 41
 Literaturnaya Gazeta, 28, 34, 37
 Lloyd, A.L., 69, 72
 Loewy, Emanuel
 *Naturwiedergabe in der älteren
 griechischen Kunst, Die*, 124, 126, 127,
 fig. 14, fig. 15
 Lombroso, Cesare, 10
 Loos, Adolf, 230 n.62
 Lubbock, John, 21, 26
 Origin of Civilisation, 18–19
 Lukács, Georg, 5, 8, 31, 34, 40, 42, 43, 44,
 49–50, 51, 94, 97, 105, 130, 140, 145,
 149, 154, 155, 156, 161, 165, 166, 167,
 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 180, 188,
 189, 192, 202, 205, 208
 Blum Theses, 31
 Eigenart des Ästhetischen, Die, 30
 History and Class Consciousness, 49, 50,
 51, 116, 130
 My Road to Marx, 50
 'Narrate or Describe?', 154
 Studies in European Realism, 33
 'Tactics and Ethics', 36
 Lunacharsky, Anatoly, 37
 Lurçat, André, 91
 Luxemburg, Rosa, 129, 138
 Lyotard, Jean-François, 184
 Lysenkoism, 147
 McDonnell, Kevin, 190
 Macherey, Pierre, 104, 182, 188, 189, 191
 *Pour une théorie de la production
 littéraire*, 188
 Malthus, Thomas, 38
 Malvano, Laura, 187
 Mandelstam, Osip, 31
 Manet, Édouard, 191
 Mann, Thomas, 31, 51
 Mannheim, Karl, 49, 110, 161, 180, 243 n.28
 Conservative Thought, 49
 Ideology and Utopia, 49
 Maori decoration, 14, 18, 19, 20–21, 22, 23,
 24, fig. 2, fig. 3
 Marcuse, Herbert, 1, 214
 Marr, Nikolai, 30
 Martin, John, 82
 Marx, Karl, 2, 3, 4, 15, 16, 23, 28, 29, 35,
 39, 43, 44, 49, 51, 70, 74, 75, 83, 90, 95,
 97, 116, 129, 130, 131, 133, 148, 149,
 151, 152, 156, 157, 161, 173, 176, 208,
 213, 215, 217, 219, 220

- Capital*, 12, 43, 158
Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, 159
Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, 29, 31–2, 142
German Ideology, The, 129, 226–7 n.17
 Greek art, on, 129
Grundrisse, 40, 158, 173
Holy Family, The, 129
 ‘On Religious Art’, 215
Theories of Surplus Value, 28
 ‘Theses on Feuerbach’, 44, 129
 Marx-Engels Institute, 29, 33, 37, 128
Marxist Perspectives, 179
 Masaccio, 63
 mass culture, 168, 169, 170–1, 172–3
 Mason, Tim, 199, 207
 Matisse, Henri, 90, 134
 Nasturtiums with the Painting ‘Dance’, 134, 135, *fig. 16*
 Mayakovsky, Vladimir, 29, 30, 143
 Medvedev, Pavel, 30
 Mehring, Franz, 4, 29, 42, 106, 113
 Meiss, Millard, 64
 Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death, 64
 Melot, Michel, 181, 187
 Menshevism, 37
 Meyer, Ursula, 179
 Michelangelo, 63
 Middlesex Polytechnic, 181
 Mitchell, Hannah, 184
 Mitchell, Stanley, 184
 Mittag, Hans-Ernst, 176
Modern Quarterly, 28
 modernism, 7, 42–3, 51, 59, 73, 125, 134, 141, 163, 165, 166, 174, 192
 Morgan, Lewis H.
 Ancient Society, 25
 Morris, William, 4–5, 9–27, 75, 169
 ‘How We Live and How We Might Live’, 226 n.16
 News from Nowhere, 15, 226 n.15, 226 n.17, 227 n.26
 Pimpernell, 16, *fig. 1*
 primitive society, on, 25
 ‘Socialism from the Root Up’, 25
 Morton, A.L.
 People’s History of England, 72
 Mukhina, Vera, 36
 Müller, Michael, 176
 Nagel, Ernest, 139
 Nairn, Tom, 190
 Nardo di Cione, 52
 Strozzi Chapel frescoes, 52, 55, *fig. 6*
 National Socialism, 196–212, 213
 architecture, and, 203–4, 206
 mass media, and the, 206–7
 painting, and, 204–5
 sculpture, and, 210
 neo-liberalism, 2
 neo-Kantianism, 43, 109, 112, 113, 118, 129, 130, 163, 173
 Nesterov, Mikhail, 36
 New Art Association, 177–8
 New Left, 8, 65, 104–5, 142, 175, 177, 184, 186, 187, 196, 197, 201, 213, 215
 Neurath, Otto, 139
 New Art History, 193
New Left Review, 189
 Newton, Isaac, 90
 Newton, Richard, 75, 79
 A Will O Th’ Wisp, *fig. 9, 76*
 Nicolson, Benedict, 81
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, 42, 116, 149, 157, 219
 Nochlin, Linda, 177
 Nordau, Max, 10, 14, 25
 Degeneration, 10, 11, 12
Novy Mir, 37, 41, 44

 ornament, 13, 18, 21, 27, *see also under* decoration
 Fiji, in, 19
 New Guinea, in, 23
 Orcagna, Andrea, 52–3
 Strozzi altarpiece, 52–3, 56, *fig. 7*
Oxford Art Journal, 181

 Pächt, Otto, 50, 109, 113, 132
 paleolithic art, 74, 99, 102
 Panofsky, Erwin, 109, 113
 ‘The Study of Art as a Humanistic Discipline’, 139
Partisan Review, 133, 137
 Paulson, Ronald, 79
 Pavlov, Ivan, 30
 Pepper, D. Stephen, 177
 Pereverzev, Valerian, 37
 Peri, Peter, 72, 236 n.80
 Pevsner, Nikolaus, 61
 Picasso, Pablo, 42, 90, 163
 Guernica, 7, 43, 92, 98–103, 105, *fig. 13*

- Plekhanov, Georgii, 5, 29, 36, 42, 57, 71, 73,
74, 131, 160
Art and Social Life, 71
'Letters Without Address', 26
- Pocock, J.G.A., 190
- Pollitt, J.J.,
Art and Experience in Classical Greece,
180
- Pollock, Griselda,
'Vision, Voice and Power', 183
- Pope-Hennessy, John, 62
- Popper, Leo, 49
- popular art, 34, 67, 75, 77, 80, 87, 88, 140,
163,
- Popular Front, 6, 31, 69, 121, 137
- Post-Impressionism, 74
- Poster, Mark, 145
- Potts, Alex, 184
- Poulantzas, Nicos, 188
- Poussin, Nicolas, 63, 90
Apollo and Daphne, 104
- pragmatism, 37
- Praxis*, 179
- Pre-Raphaelites, 10
- Preziosi, Donald, 185, 223 n.1
- Prolet'kult, 29, 205
- Proudhon, Pierre Joseph, 94
- Proust, Marcel, 157
- Pushkin, Alexander, 29, 40
- Rabelais, François, 35
- Racine, Jean, 91
Radical History Review, 179
Radical Philosophy, 182
- Rahv, Philip, 128
- Rang, Florens Christian, 109, 117
- Ranke, Leopold von, 116
- Raphael, 63
- Raphael, Max, 7, 89–105, 139, 176, 178,
193, 214
Demands of Art, The, 89, 91, 92, 97,
98–103
Doric Temple, The, 92, 96
From Monet to Picasso, 90
Greek art, on, 95–6
Idee und Gestalt, 90
Prehistoric Cave Paintings, 91, 92, 96
*Prehistoric Pottery and Civilisation in
Egypt*, 91
Proudhon, Marx, Picasso, 89, 91, 92
Workers, Art, and Artists, 91, 104
- Zur Erkenntnistheorie der konkreten
Dialektik*, 91
- RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian
Writers), 5, 32, 33
- Rea, Betty, 69
- Read, Herbert, 69, 70, 89, 91, 92
- Reagan, Ronald, 193
- realism, 32, 51, 73, 75, 124, 150, 153, 154,
155, 157, 165, 173, 196, 205, 206
epistemological, 254 n.37
- Red Letters*, 182
- Reich, Wilhelm, 208
- reification, 116, 140, 165
- relative autonomy, 3, 4, 131, 151
- Rembrandt, 63, 90
- revolutions
of 1848, 140, 164, 165, 168, 191
French Revolution, 58–61, 79–80
Hungarian Revolution, 45, 50, 161
Mexican Revolution, 141
Russian Revolution, 5, 36, 161, 164
- Reynolds, Joshua, 61, 80, 85
- Riazanov, David, 29, 37, 128
- Ricardo, David, 38, 39
- Rickaby, Tony, 182, 184
- Riegl, Alois, 3, 23, 25, 42, 46, 48, 61, 107–8,
111, 112, 116, 132, 133, 228 n.45
Problems of Style, 21–2, 47
Late Roman Art Industry, 22, 107, 112
- Rifkin, Adrian, 181, 182, 183, 184, 193, 194
- Rivera, Diego, 124
- Robins, Kevin, 190
- Robley, Major General H.R.
Moko; or Maori Tattooing, 23, 25
- Rodin, Auguste, 89
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 139
- Rose, Millicent, 75
- Rosenthal, Michael, 185
- Rosler, Martha, 179, 182
- Rosmer, Alfred, 139
- Rowlandson, Thomas, 80
- Rudé, George, 185
- Ruskin, John, 9–10, 11, 13, 169
Modern Painters, 9
Stones of Venice, The, 9
'The Two Paths', 227–8 n.31
- Russell, Bertrand, 42
- Samuel, Raphael, 184
- Saville, John, 68, 85
- Scarry, Elaine, 17

- Schapiro, Meyer, 6, 7, 65, 91, 104, 123–42, 180, 182, 193
 ‘Courbet and Popular Imagery’, 133, 140
 dialectic, on, 138, 249 n.72
 formalism, on, 248 n.57
 Frankfurt School, and, 139–40, 249 n.80
 ‘Matisse and Impressionism’, 134, 136
 ‘Recent Abstract Painting’, 142
 review of Loewy, *Die Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griechischen Kunst*, 124
 review of *Social Viewpoint in Art* exhibition, 136
 revolutionary art, on, 136–7
 secularism of, 133–4
 ‘Social Bases of Art, The’, 136, 178
- Scheler, Max Ferdinand, 90
- Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von, 15, 37
- Schiller, Friedrich
Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man, 93
- Schlosser, Julius von, 48
- Schneider, Norbert, 176
- Scholem, Gershom, 107
- Scott, Walter, 51
- Screen*, 182, 183, 189, 190, 191, 192
- Second International, 4–5, 7, 29, 37, 113, 119
- Sedlmayr, Hans, 109, 113, 132, 133
- Sekula, Allan, 179
- Semper, Gottfried, 18, 21, 22, 25, 47, 111
- Shakespeare, William, 40, 90, 91
- Sharples, James, 83, 85
The Forge, 83, 85, 86, *fig. 12*
- Shaw, George Bernard, 10
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 32
- Shields, Rob, 146, 150
- Sholokov, Mikhail, 31
- Simmel, Georg, 89, 149
- Sismondi, Jean Charles Léonard Simone de, 38, 39
- Situationism, 153
- Slater, Montague, 71
- Smiles, Samuel, 83
- social democracy, 4, 29, 31, 106, 113, 120, 129, 130, 184
- Socialist Realism, 5, 7, 30, 33, 35, 72, 90, 94, 141, 144–5, 148, 149, 155, 205
- Sohn-Rethel, Alfred, 198, 199
- Solkin, David
Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction, 185–6
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, 37
- Sorel, Georges, 129
- Souvarine, Boris, 139
- Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS), 175
- Soviet Writers’ Congress (1934), 5, 69, 163
- Speed, John
Historie of Great Britain, 25
- Spence, Jo, 182
- Spence, Thomas, 75, 80
- Spero, Nancy, 182
- Spinoza, Baruch, 91
- Stalin, Joseph, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, 41, 128, 147
Marxism and Problems of Linguistics, 30
- Stalinism, 1, 5, 6, 8, 42, 128, 148, 163
- Stendhal (Marie Henri Beyle), 140
- Stevens, May, 179, 182
- Stevenson, Robert Louis
Kidnapped, 11
- style, 46, 47, 61, 75, 108–9, 114, 182
- structuralism, 158–9, 182–3, 189, 191, 192, 208
- Students for a Democratic Society, 177
- Sue, Eugène, 149
- Surrealism, 143, 149, 251 n.22
- Tagg, John, 89, 97, 104, 105, 182, 187
 ‘Art History and Difference’, 184
 ‘The Method of Max Raphael’, 104, 182
- Tate Gallery, 185
- Tawhiao, 25, 26, 230 n.60, *fig. 4*
- Thatcher, Margaret, 184, 185, 193
- Third International, 5, 31, 128, 130, 131, 197
 Seventh World Congress of, 69, 72
- Thompson, E.P., 12, 184, 185, 186, 190
 ‘The Poverty of Theory’, 190
- Timpanaro, Sebastiano, 189, 190
- Tito, Josip Broz, 85
- Tolstoy, Leo, 10, 29, 40, 51, 74, 79
- totality, 156–7, 165, 167, 171, 173, 203
- Trebitsch, Michael, 146
- Trotsky, Leon, 29, 42, 51, 136, 138
- Trotskyism, 6, 136, 138
- Tsalpine, Dimitri, 71–2
- Tyler, Edward, 14, 26
Primitive Culture, 11–12, 19
- Turner, Joseph Mallord William, 82, 83
- Tvardosky, Alexander, 37, 41, 44
- Tzara, Tristan, 143

- Ulmer Verein für Kunst- und
Kulturwissenschaften (UV), 175, 186,
214
universities
Berlin, 45, 162
Columbia, 107, 124, 125, 128, 133, 142
Budapest, 45
Freiburg, 45
Hamburg, 219
Hull, 68
Leeds, 45, 162
London School of Economics, 68
Marburg, 214
Open, 192
Vienna, 47
USSR, 1–2, 5, 138, 215
anti-Semitism in, 35, 41
April decree (1932), 5, 32
Cultural Revolution in, 5, 33, 35
First Five Year Plan, 5, 30, 31, 32–3, 35
Palace of the Soviets competition, 90, 91
Second Five Year Plan, 33, 35
Show Trials, 7, 35, 137
Thaw, 41
Third Period line, 33
Union of Soviet Writers, 33, 34
- Valéry, Paul, 90
Van Gogh, Vincent, 123, 205
Verband Deutscher Kunsthistoriker, 175,
176, 214
Verlaine, Paul, 10
Vico, Giovanni Battista, 30–1, 35
Vienna School, 46–8, 61, 109, 132, 133
Vietnam War, 142, 196
Vkhutemas, 36, 37
Voloshinov, Valentin, 30
Voltaire, François Marie Arouet de, 44
'vulgar sociology', 29, 30, 37, 38, 96
Vygotsky, Lev, 30
- Wagner, Richard, 10
Wallach, Alan, 177, 181, 182
Warburg, Aby, 109, 215–20
Warburg Institute, 65
Warburg School, 109
Warnke, Martin, 176, 214, 215, 216, 217, 219
Bau und Überbau, 215, 219
Waterhouse, Ellis, 62
Weber, Max, 180
- Wedgwood, Josiah, 85
Weiner, Deborah, 187
Weinstein, Joan, 187
Werckmeister, Otto Karl, 176–7, 179, 180,
192, 193
Ende der Ästhetik, 176
'Ideologie und Kunst bei Marx', 176–7
West, Alick, 69
Western Marxism, 7, 130, 143, 156, 165
Whitney Museum of American Art
Three Centuries of American Art, 178
Wickhoff, Franz, 46, 47
Wilde, Johannes, 45, 49
Wilkes, John, 79
Williams, Raymond, 50, 185, 189, 190
Culture and Society, 170
Marxism and Literature, 188
Wilson, Richard, 85
Winckelmann, Johann Joachim, 40, 46
Wind, Edgar, 61, 139
Wittkower, Rudolf, 61, 63
Wölfflin, Heinrich, 3, 50, 89, 91, 108–9, 111,
112, 114, 115, 133, 162, 180
Classic Art, 46, 108, 112, 114
Principles of Art History, 46
Renaissance and Baroque, 111–12
Wollen, Peter, 191–2
Women and Art, 178
Wood, Paul, 73
Worringer, Wilhelm, 42
Abstraction and Empathy, 89
Wright, Joseph, 81–2, 83, 85, 87
Arkwright's Cotton Mills by Night, 81
Blacksmith's Shop, The, 82
Experiment on a Bird in the Air-Pump,
The, 81, 82
Philosopher Giving that Lecture on the
Orrery, A, 81, 82
Wright, Willard Huntington, 124
- Yessenin, Sergei, 143
Yudin, M.P., 33
- Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 106, 139, 169
Zhdanov, A.A., 148, 163
On Literature, Music and Philosophy, 163
Zhdanovism, 146–8, 149
Zholtovsky, Ivan, 34
Zilsel, Edgar, 139, 249 n.73
Zola, Émile, 154