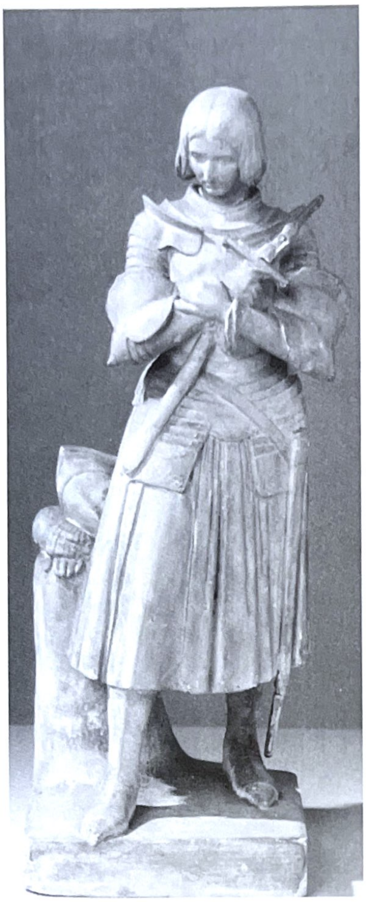
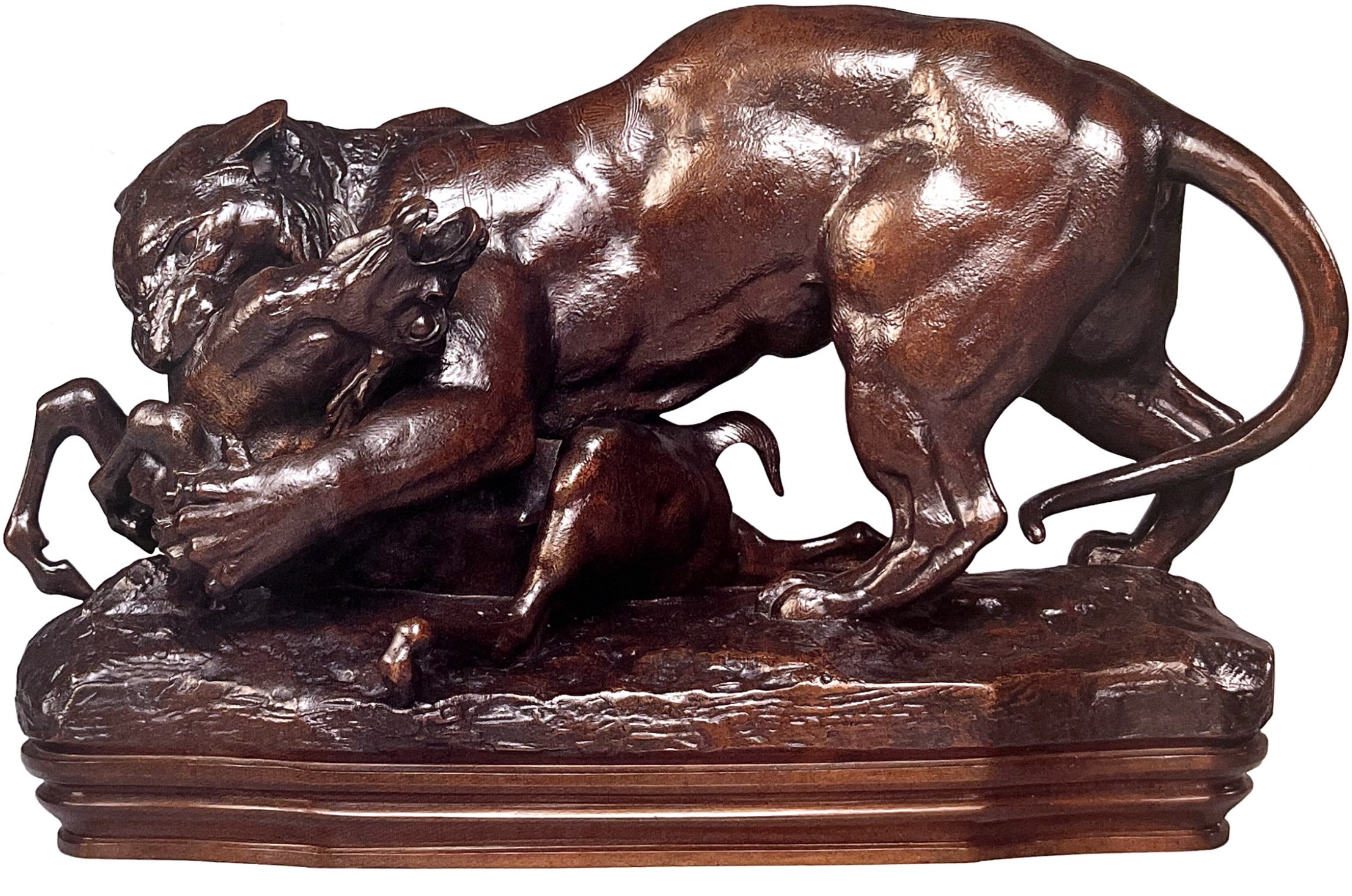


10-26 **Marie, Princesse d'Orléans,** *Joan of Arc at Prayer,* Salon of 1834. Terracotta, height 16⅛" (41cm). Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht.

Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Nineteenth Century
European Art, 2nd edition
(Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2006)

The Explosion of the Press and the Rise of Popular Culture

During the July Revolution press censorship was eliminated: newspaper editors were allowed to publish almost anything they saw fit, except libel. This unprecedented freedom of the press helped to foster a dramatic expansion of print media, especially newspapers and magazines. While newspapers had existed in France since the seventeenth century, their real importance dates from the time of the French Revolution, when, for the first time, their propaganda value was realized. Until about 1830 they were read primarily by the well-to-do, not only because they were



10-27 **Antoine-Louis Barye,** *Tiger Seizing a Gazelle,* 1834. Bronze, 13¾ x 21 15/16 x 9" (34.9 x 55.8 x 22.9 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

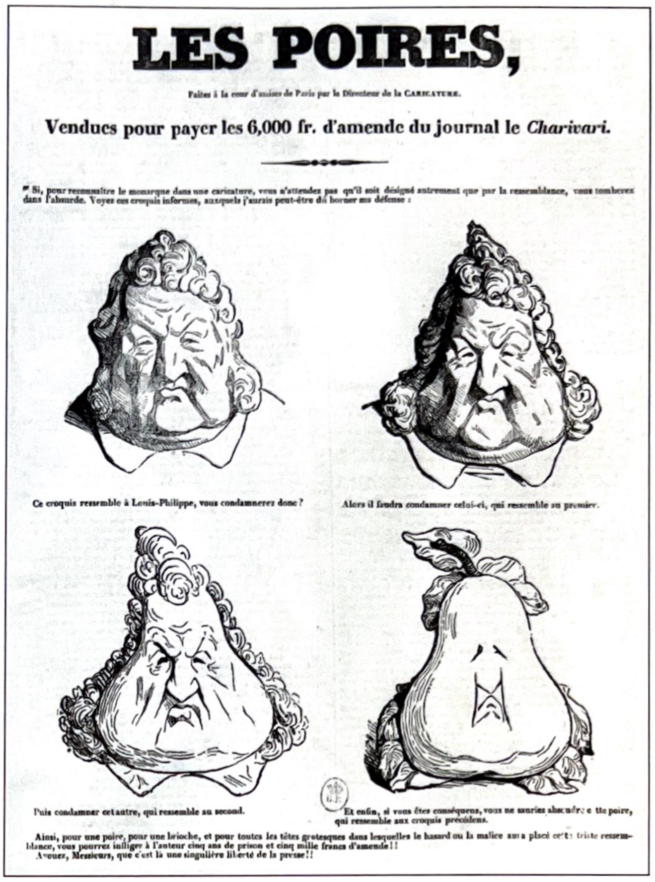
expensive, but also because the lower classes were largely illiterate. By the early 1830s, however, a dramatic rise in literacy rates coincided with considerable improvements in papermaking and printing, which made newspapers easier and cheaper to produce. The introduction of newspaper advertising, which shifted part of a paper's cost from subscribers to advertisers, was another cause of the veritable media explosion during the 1830s and 1840s.

The expansion of the media led to the rise of a popular culture, that is, a culture that embraced several classes at once. By 1840 a paper such as *La Presse* had a readership that ranged from aristocrats and wealthy professionals to shopkeepers and working-class artisans. It is important to realize that this popular culture was not yet a mass culture, for it was by no means universal. Most peasants and the vast underclass of the urban poor did not share in it.

Thanks to the vast increase, in the early 1830s, of papers and magazines that carried illustrations, the new popular culture had a strong visual component. Two newly invented printmaking techniques, wood engraving (see *Wood Engraving*, right) and lithography (see *Lithography*, page 215), enabled the mass reproduction of images. The advantage of images as a way to boost the sales of papers was quickly realized by several keen publishers. One such entrepreneur was Charles Philipon (1802–1862), who published humorous journals featuring political caricatures and social satire. His first two journals, *La Caricature*, founded in 1830, and *Le Charivari*, founded in 1832, enjoyed considerable success at first. Both journals ran into trouble, however, in 1835, when Louis-Philippe, tired of the unrelenting criticism of his government in the opposition press, restricted the press through the September laws. *La Caricature* was forced out of business, and *Le Charivari* was censored.

Honoré Daumier

Although himself a caricaturist of some merit, Charles Philipon's real strength was as a talent scout. To his various journals he attracted gifted draftsmen, including Honoré Daumier (1808–1879), a cutting political caricaturist. Together, Philipon and Daumier developed the most famous satirical emblem of the July Monarchy, *Les Poires* or "The Pears." It began as a caricature of Louis-Philippe, whose heavy-jowled face had the outline of a pear (FIG. 10-28). But the image owed its special potency to the slang meaning of the French word *poire*, which is "fathead." In a caricature by Daumier, *Masks of 1831* (FIG. 10-29), a phantom *poire* appears among a group of masks—caricatures of Louis-Philippe's ministers. The message is multi-layered. Not only are we to understand that Louis-Philippe is nothing but a figurehead, faceless and voiceless, out-ruled by his ministers, but by drawing the countenances of the ministers as masks (which hide their true selves), Daumier has also emphasized the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the men who ruled in the name of the king.



LES POIRES,

Faites à la cour d'assises de Paris par le Directeur de la CARICATURE.

Vendues pour payer les 6,000 fr. d'amende du journal le *Charivari*.

☞ Si, pour reconnaître le monarque dans une caricature, vous n'attendez pas qu'il soit désigné autrement que par la ressemblance, vous tomberez dans l'absurde. Voyez ces croquis informes, auxquels j'aurais peut-être dû borner ma défense :

Ce croquis ressemble à Louis-Philippe, vous condamnerez donc ?

Alors il faudra condamner celui-ci, qui ressemble au premier.

Puis condamner cet autre, qui ressemble au second.

Et enfin, si vous êtes conséquens, vous ne sauriez absoudre cette poire, qui ressemble aux croquis précédens.

Ainsi, pour une poire, pour une brioche, et pour toutes les têtes grotesques dans lesquelles le hasard ou la malice aura placé cette triste ressemblance, vous pourrez infliger à l'auteur cinq ans de prison et cinq mille francs d'amende!!

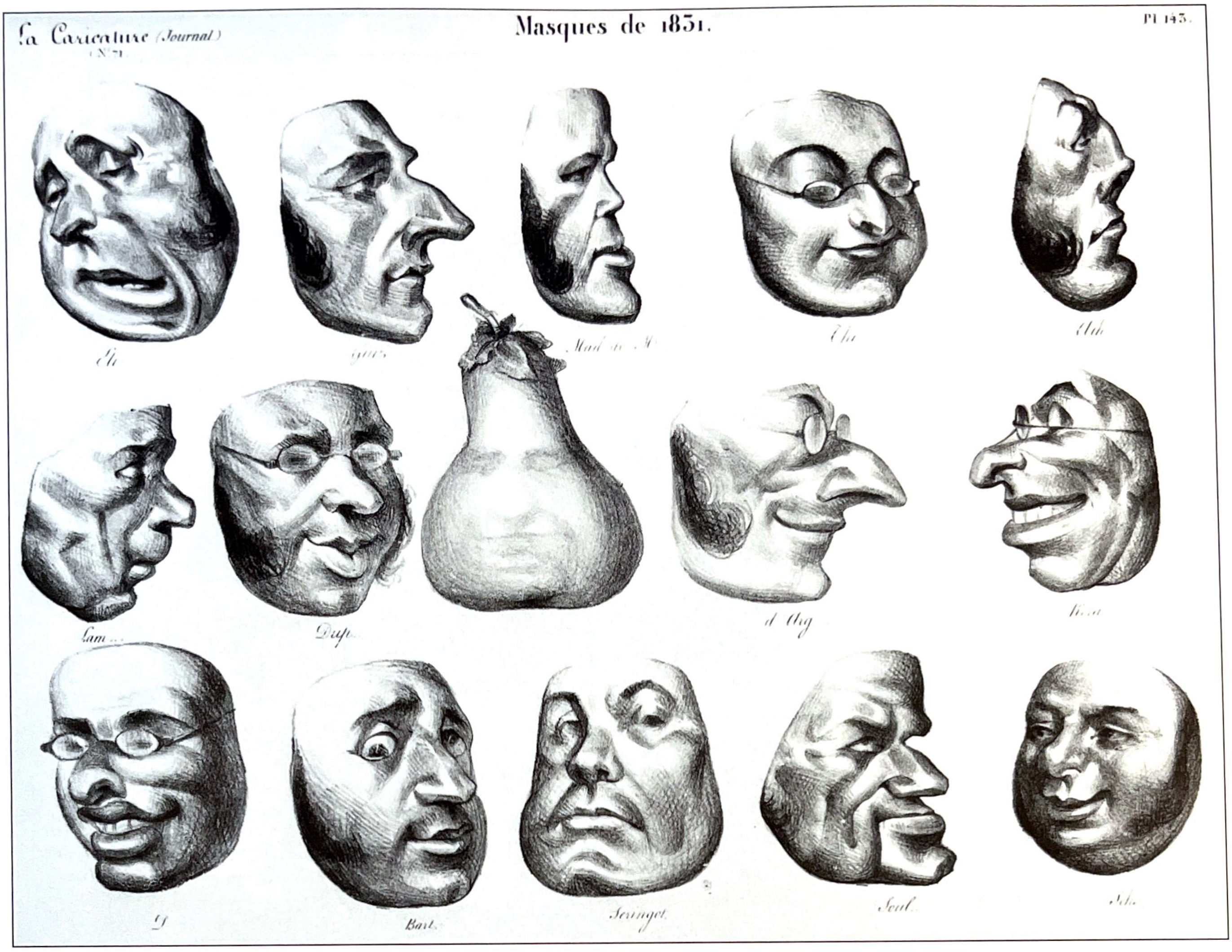
Avouez, Messieurs, que c'est là une singulière liberté de la presse!!

10-28 **Charles Philipon,** *Les Poires* (The Pears). Illustration in *Le Charivari*, January 17, 1831. Wood engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.

Wood Engraving

The most common printing technique of the nineteenth century, wood engraving was used to illustrate books, newspapers, and magazines. Unlike the related woodcut, which had been in use in the West since the late fourteenth century, wood engraving was not known until the eighteenth. The Englishman Thomas Bewick (1753–1828) has often been credited with its invention, but he did little more than improve on and popularize a technique that had already been in sporadic use.

The main difference between woodcut and wood engraving lies in the materials used. While the first is printed from a block of soft wood, cut along the grain, the second derives its special effects from the use of a hard boxwood, cut across the grain, that is carved with an engraver's burin (a chisel with a lozenge-shaped cutting edge). Wood engravings allow for fine detail. Especially well suited to translate the effect of pen drawings, they can also be used to convey the effects of *chiaroscuro*.



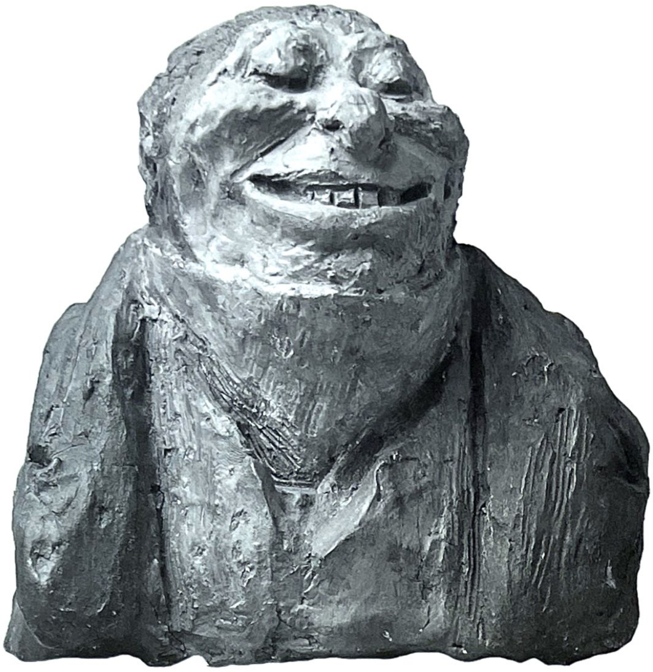
10-29 **Honoré Daumier,** *Masks of 1831*. Illustration in *La Caricature*, no. 71, March 8, 1832. Lithograph, 8⅜ x 11" (21.2 x 29 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.

Physiognomy and Phrenology

The caricaturists of the first half of the nineteenth century were intimately familiar with physiognomy and phrenology, two forms of science since discredited, which were developed by the Swiss Protestant minister Kaspar Lavater (see page 83) and the Austrian physician Franz-Joseph Gall (1758–1828) respectively. Each one had established a set of systematic relationships between the appearance of human heads on the one hand, and character and intelligence on the other. In analyzing the shape of the human head, they attached great importance to facial angles, proportions, and measurements. The angle of the nose, the height of the forehead in relation to the total height of the head, and the circumference of the skull were all important indicators of characteristic human traits.

Both systems relied loosely on the resemblance of certain human faces to specific animals, the characteristics of which were frequently assigned to the humans who looked like them. Caricaturists such as Daumier and especially Grandville (see pages 247 and 253) often exaggerated the traits of their sitters to make them look like monkeys, dogs, or birds (see FIG. 10-28).

Such resemblances acquired a whole new meaning after the publication of *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin in 1850. All of a sudden, they raised the specter of degeneration—the possibility that the human race would not progress to a higher state but instead regress to a less advanced stage in the evolutionary process. Degeneration was especially feared at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth (see page 423) and led to the concept of eugenics—the deliberate attempt to improve the human race.

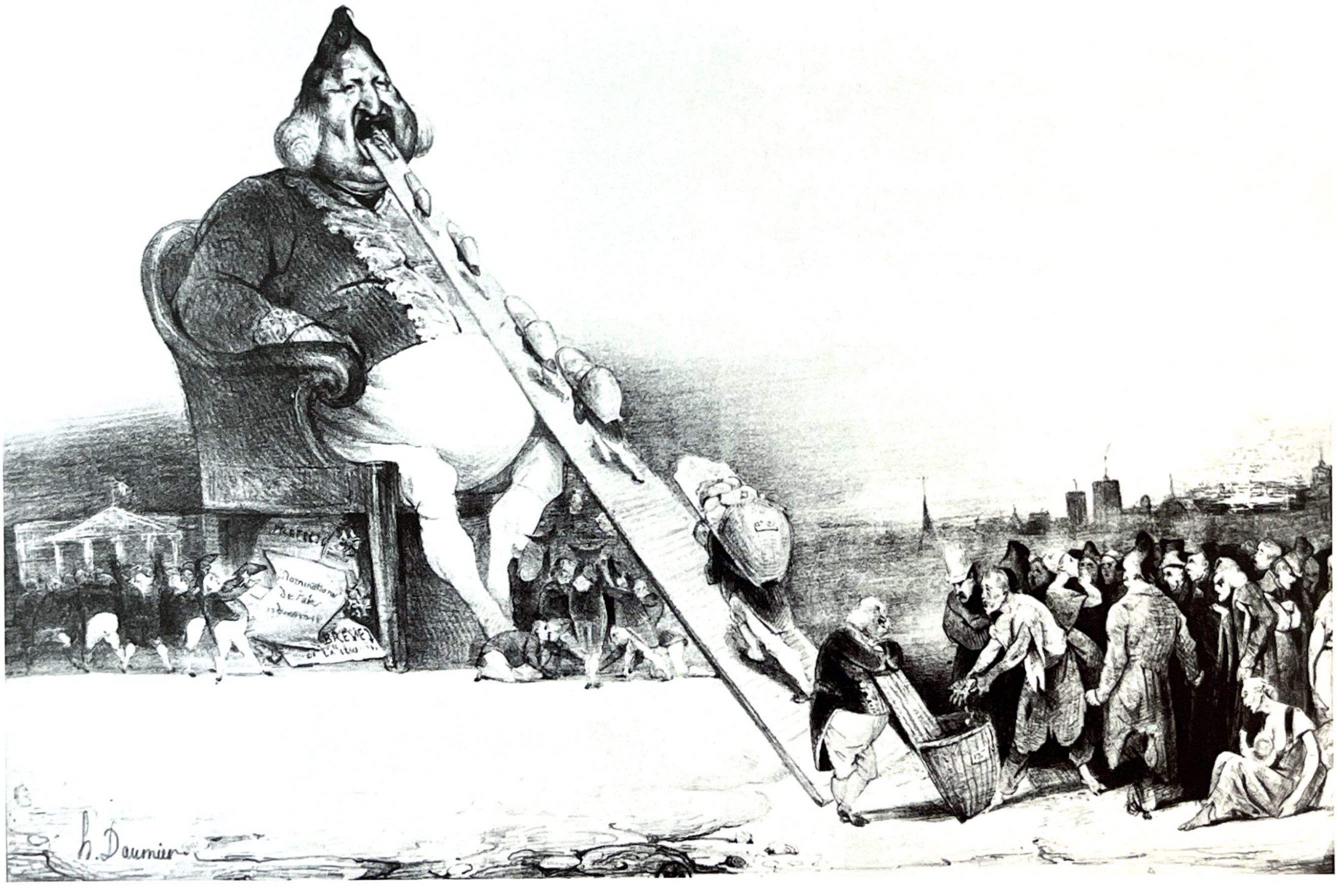


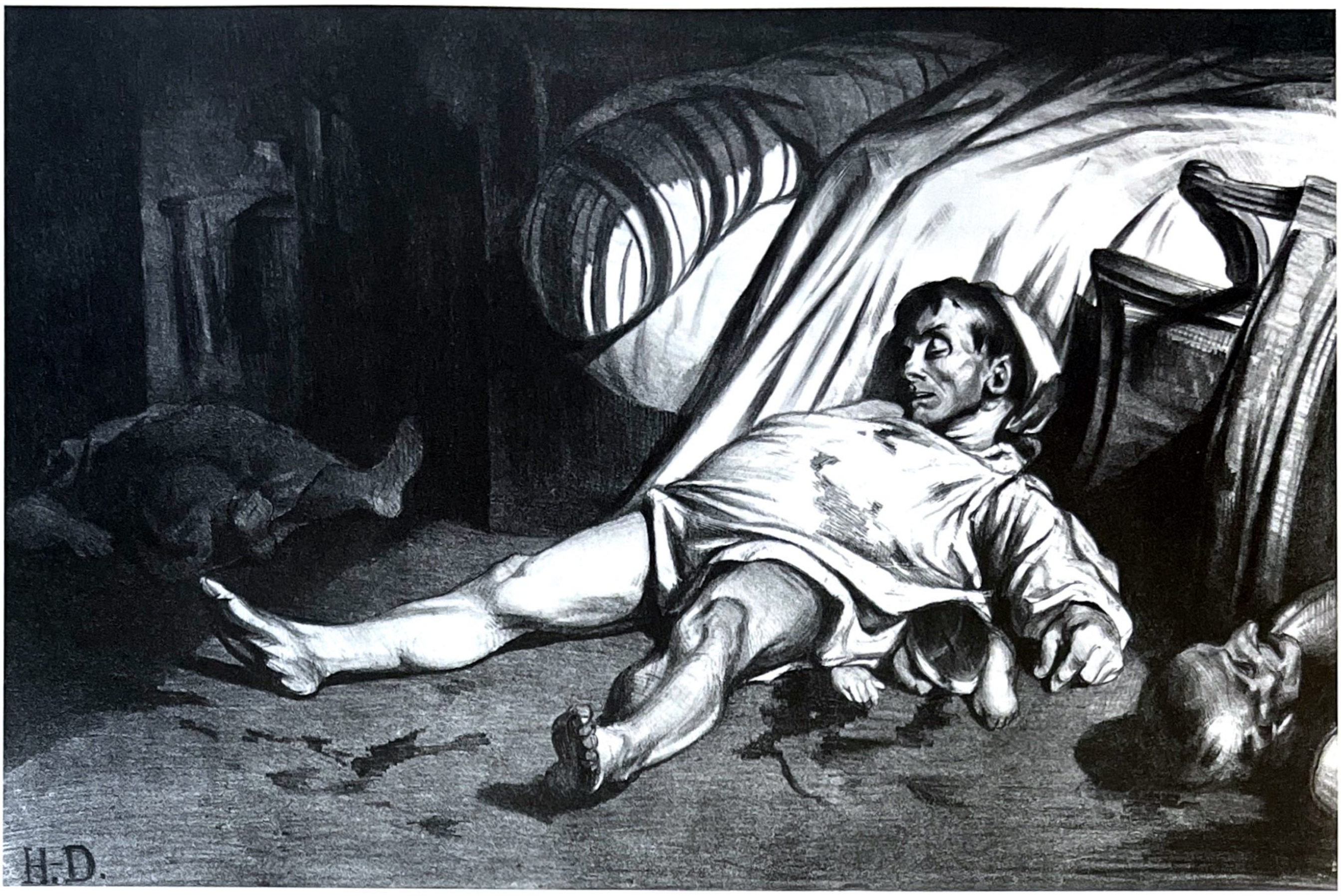
10-30 **Honoré Daumier,** *Count de Kératry,* 1832. Unbaked clay, painted, height 5″ (12.9 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Masks of 1831 is typical of Daumier's early work, which is composed almost exclusively of portrait caricatures. To advertise the issue of Philipon's *La Caricature* in which they were published, Daumier produced a series of caricature busts out of clay that were displayed in the shop window of Philipon's publishing house. Clay was an ideal medium for Daumier to develop exaggerated likenesses. Its easy malleability enabled him to tweak the faces of his "models" to experiment with their characterization. Daumier's bust of the *Count de Kératry* (FIG. 10-30), with its reduced cranium and wide mouth, gives the count an almost apelike appearance, suggesting that he has some of the characteristics of that animal. This was a common tactic in Daumier's portrait caricatures, which often owe much of their powerful impact to visual association (see *Physiognomy and Phrenology*, page 248).

While Daumier drew caricature portraits for *La Caricature*, he also made political cartoons for Philipon's papers. Most of these were so virulent that Philipon (and, on occasion, Daumier himself) was continually summoned in court for libel. A cartoon titled *Gargantua* (FIG. 10-31) led to the two men's imprisonment and to a ban on the publication in which it appeared. It shows a pear-headed Louis-Philippe in the guise of the giant Gargantua, a character invented by

10-31 **Honoré Daumier,** *Gargantua,* 1831. Lithograph, 8 x 12″ (21.4 x 30.5 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.





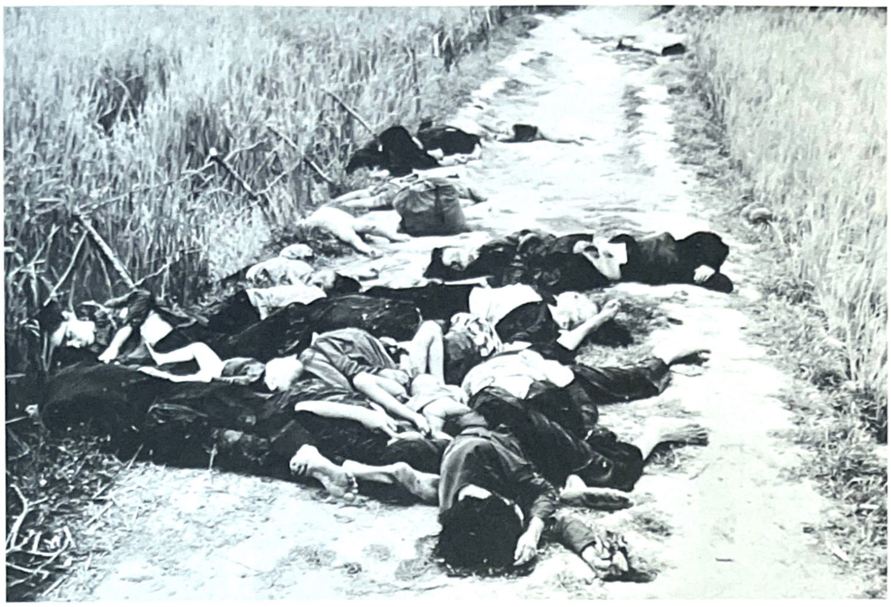
10-32 **Honoré Daumier,** *Rue Transnonain, April 15, 1834*. Illustration in *L'Association Mensuelle*, July 1834. Lithograph, 17 x 11" (44.5 x 29 cm). Private Collection, London.

the medieval French writer François Rabelais (c.1494–1553). Gargantua is seated on a nineteenth-century john (a chair with a hole in the seat), devouring baskets full of gold that are brought up to his mouth by an army of carriers. Thanks to an excellent digestion, Gargantua immediately expels a mound of paper documents, which, inscriptions tell us, are letters of nomination and appointment to special government positions and court honors.

With cruel sarcasm, Daumier criticized a government that levied taxes not to improve the lives of the common people (represented in *Gargantua* by the group of men and women on the right) but to fatten up that government by giving special honors to tax collectors and other reprehensible types. In Daumier's scatological caricature, the body of the king is a metaphor for the government. "The State, it is I," Louis XIV had boasted in the seventeenth century. Here Daumier gives a negative meaning to that royal proclamation by representing the king as a grossly overweight creature, engaged in a foul-smelling bodily function.

Not all Daumier's political lithographs are in a satirical vein. One of his best-known images, *Rue Transnonain, April 15, 1834* (FIG. 10-32), is a dramatic recreation of an actual event. Because it was not libellous, the government was unable to bar its publication, even though it contained an implicit critique of its actions. In the spring of 1834 there was great unrest in Paris, fueled by secret republican and socialist societies that opposed the July Monarchy regime. The government sent in troops to end the riots that had broken out in the poorer sections of Paris. On April 15 a rioter hiding in a tenement house on Transnonain Street shot a popular army officer. To avenge him, his soldiers went through each house on the street and killed everyone. Twenty innocent men, women, and children were slaughtered in a night that became known as the Transnonain Massacre.

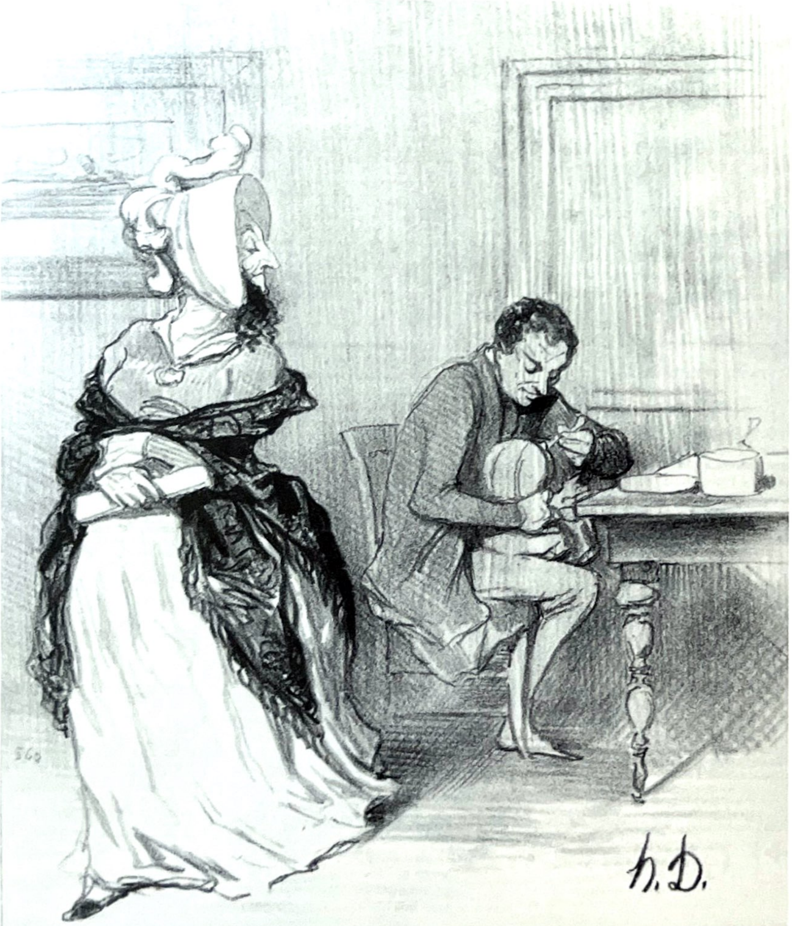
Daumier's print shows the bedroom in one of the workers' apartments, its floor covered with corpses. A man wearing a nightshirt and nightcap lies beside the bed from which he has been dragged. His dead body crushes that of his baby, which lies in a puddle of blood. Like *Gargantua*, *Rue Transnonain* is a politically subversive image, although it operates in a very different way. Comedy and satire have been replaced by stark, explicit imagery to make a dramatic point. Daumier's lithograph may be compared with twentieth-century photojournalistic images, such as Ronald Haeberle's *My Lai Massacre Scene* (FIG. 10-33), which shows the bodies of women and children lying on a road in South Vietnam. Just as the American government dreaded such images for their potential to arouse anti-war protests, so the July Monarchy government feared Daumier's lithograph. Unable to bar Philipon from publishing it, they



10-33 **Ronald Haeberle,** *My Lai Massacre Scene,* 1968. Gelatin silver print. Timepix, New York.

purchased as many of the newspapers in which it appeared as possible, and destroyed them.

The realization of the dangerous power of images led Louis-Philippe's government, in September 1835, to introduce strict censorship laws that made the publication of politically subversive imagery very difficult. Henceforth, Philipon and his illustrators were forced to concentrate on social rather than political satire. The new imagery focused on specific urban locales, such as the streets of Paris, the theatre, the bathhouse, or the Salon, as well as on various groups, such as lawyers, doctors, artists, or "blue stockings." The last group, comprising the feminists of the day, was the target of a comprehensive series of caricatures, published in *Le Charivari* in 1844. *Good-bye My Dear, I Am Going to My Editors* (FIG.

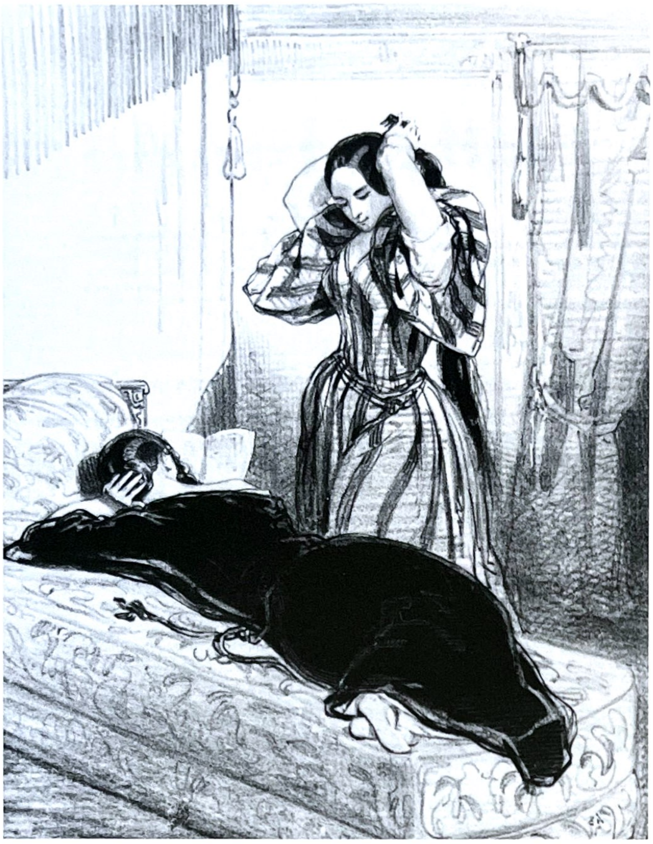


10-34 **Honoré Daumier,** *Good-bye My Dear, I Am Going to My Editors.* From the series *Les Bas Bleus* (The Bluestockings). Illustration in *Le Charivari*, February 8, 1844. Lithograph, 11 x 7" (27.8 x 17.9 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris.

10-34) is one of the prints in this series. It shows a woman leaving the house to take a literary manuscript to an editor, while her husband stays at home to watch the baby. Caricatures such as this made fun of the ambitions of contemporary women—such as Madame de Staël, George Sand (1804–1876), and Louise Colet (1810–1876)—to become poets or novelists. Their humor depended on their visual presentation of an "upside-down world," in which gender roles were switched. In Daumier's caricature the man sits at home, feeding the baby, while the woman searches fame and fortune.

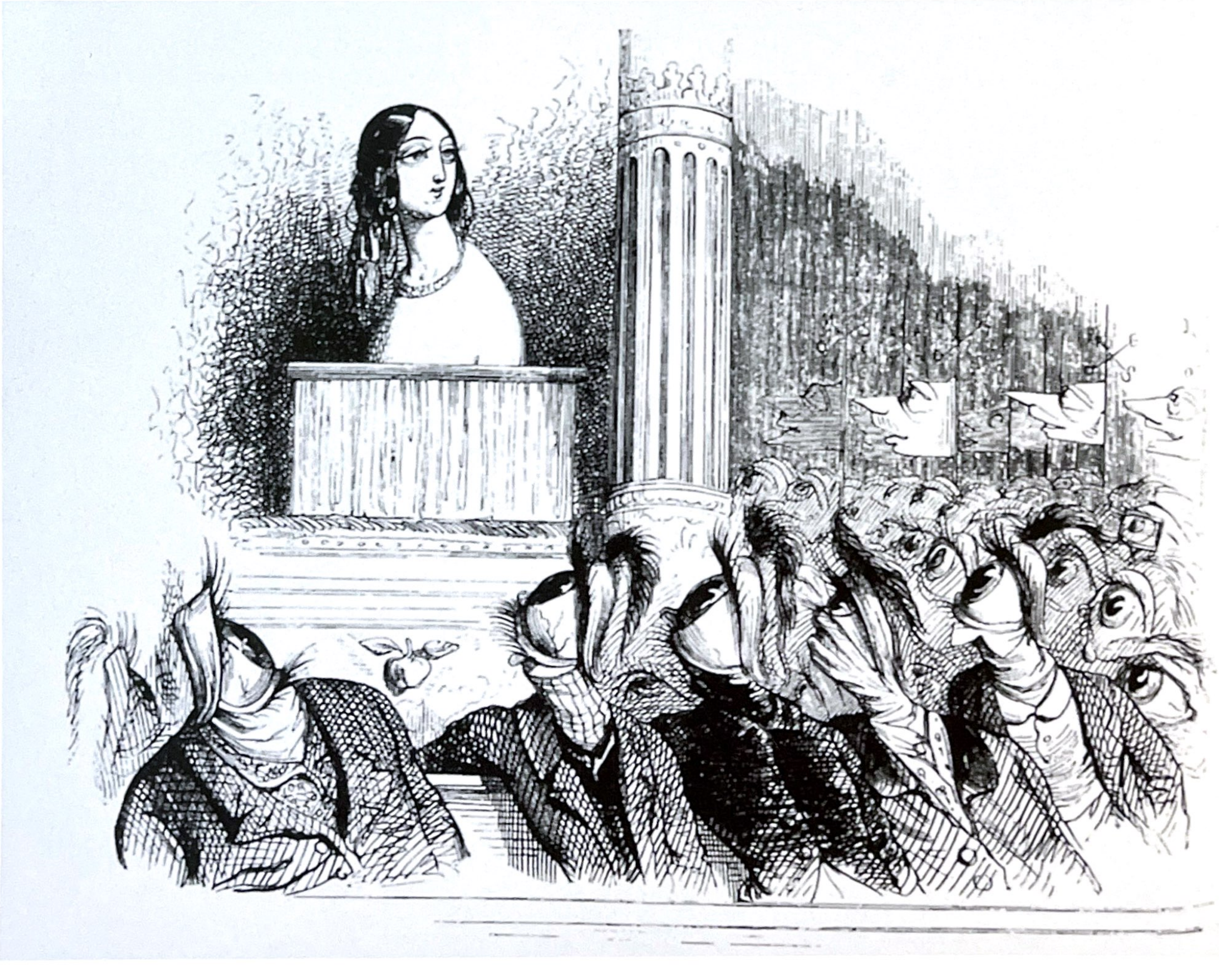
Gavarni and Grandville

In the realm of social satire Daumier had to compete with many other draftsmen, including Paul Gavarni (1804–1866) and J. J. Grandville (1803–1847), who were also employed



10-35 **Paul Gavarni,** What are you reading?—*The Virtue of Women*—Are you sick? Illustration in *Le Charivari*, January 29, 1843. Lithograph. British Library, London.

10-36 (below) **J. J. Grandville,** *Venus at the Opera*. Illustration in *Un Autre Monde* (Another World), Paris, 1844. Wood engraving, 5¼ × 4" (2 × 1.6 cm). Private Collection, Paris.



by Philipon. Unlike Daumier, both these artists not only contributed to humorous journals but also made drawings for fashion magazines and family journals and, on occasion, did book illustrations as well. Both Gavarni and Grandville (whose real name was Jean-Ignace-Isidore Gérard) also produced special albums reproducing their drawings, for direct sale to admirers of their work.

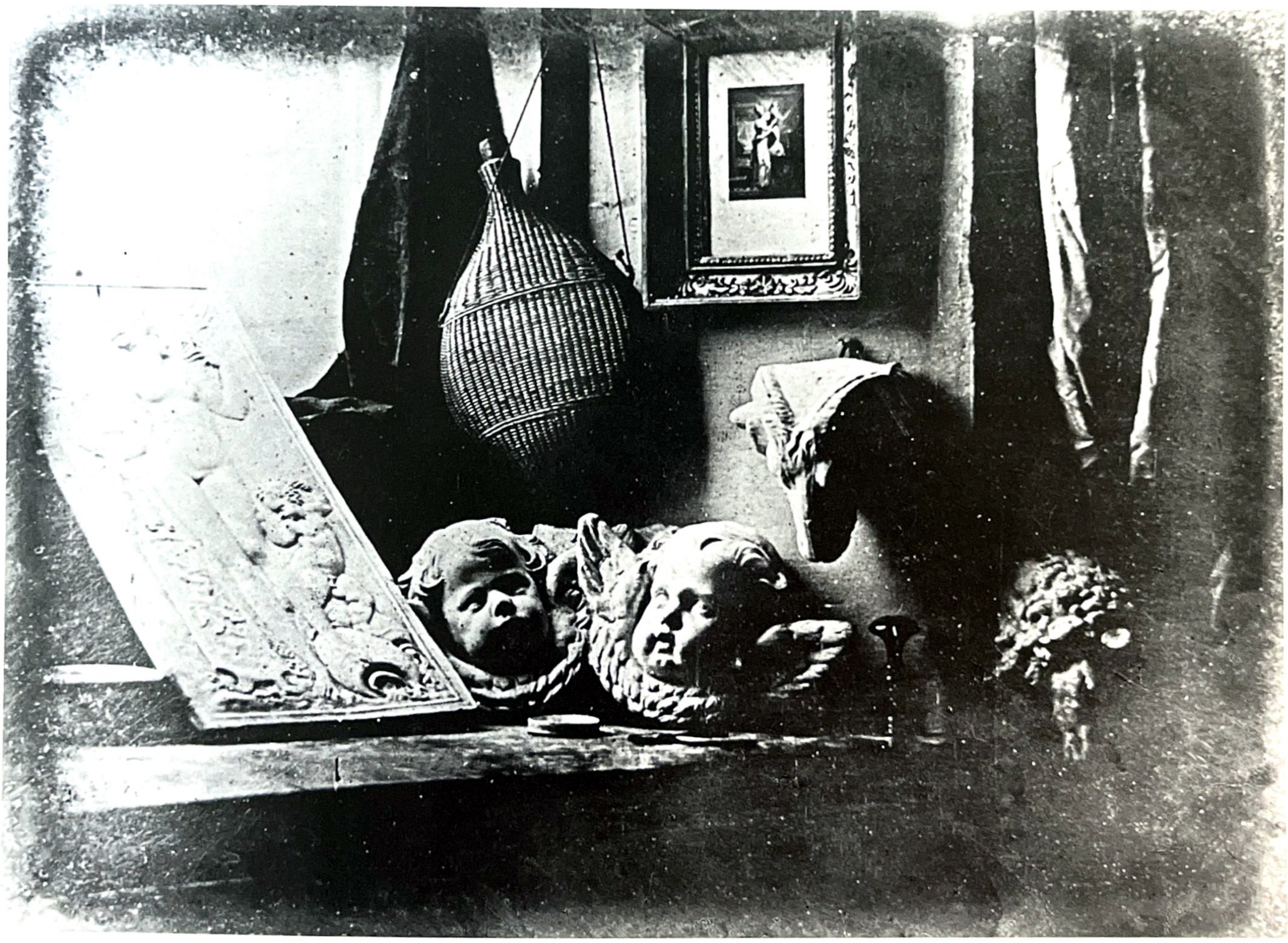
Gavarni began as an illustrator of *La Mode*, a well-known fashion magazine. He earned his reputation, however, with his drawings of *lorettes*, young working-class girls of loose morals who were the favored companions of students and artists. (Musette and Mimi, in Puccini's famous opera *La Bohème*, of 1896, are outstanding examples of the *lorette*.) The lithograph reproduced in FIG. 10-35 appeared in *Le Charivari* in 1843 and was part of a series of seventy-nine prints that appeared in that journal between 1841 and 1843. It shows two *lorettes* in a room, one reading on the bed, the other putting a comb in her hair. The caption records the following conversation: "What are you reading?"—"*The Virtue of Women*"—"Are you sick?"

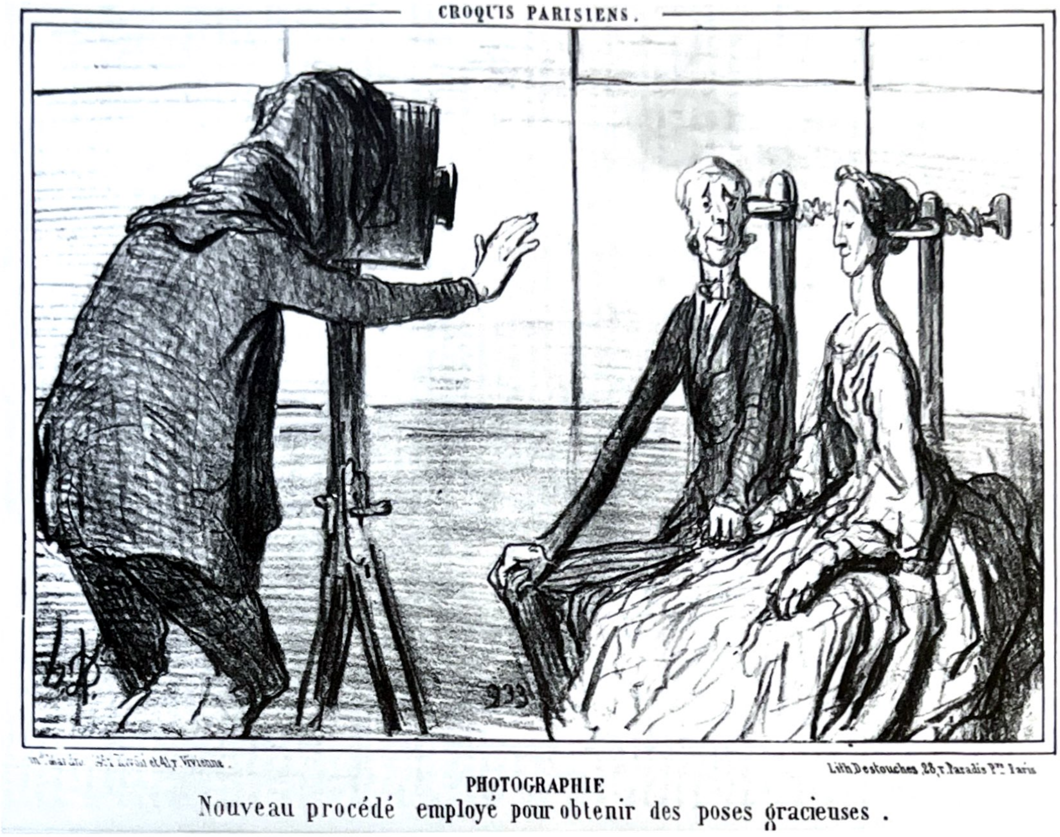
Grandville, who began as a political caricaturist and social satirist, eventually became best known for his fantastic drawings. The most interesting of these are contained in his album *Un Autre Monde* (Another World), published in 1844, not long before his death. *Venus at the Opera* (FIG. 10-36) is one drawing from the album. It mocks the ambience of the nineteenth-century theater, in which spectators were more interested in each other than in the drama that was performed on stage. We see a crowd of male spectators craning their necks to see a beautiful woman on the balcony. She feigns to ignore their gazes, even though her whole reason for being in the theater is to be on display. The special interest of Grandville's caricature lies, of course, in the metamorphosis of the men's heads into eyes (visually to express the notion that they are "all eyes") and of the woman into a bust placed on a podium (illustrating the idea of placing a person "on a pedestal"). This transformation of reality gives to Grandville's prints a surreal quality that anticipates the works of Salvador Dalí and René Magritte in the twentieth century.

Louis Daguerre and the Beginnings of Photography in France

In addition to the printing techniques of lithography and wood engraving, a new process of chemical printing was

10-37 **Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre,** *The Artist's Studio,* 1837. Daguerreotype, 6 x 8" (16.5 x 21.7 cm). Société Française de Photographie, Paris.




CROQUIS PARISIENS.
333
Lith Destouches 28, r. Paradis P.re Paris
PHOTOGRAPHIE
Nouveau procédé employé pour obtenir des poses gracieuses.

10-38 **Honoré Daumier,** *Photography. A New Procedure, Used To Ensure Graceful Poses.* From the series *Croquis Parisiens* (Parisian Sketches). Illustration in *Le Charivari*, 1856. Lithograph. University of California, Los Angeles, Armand Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles.

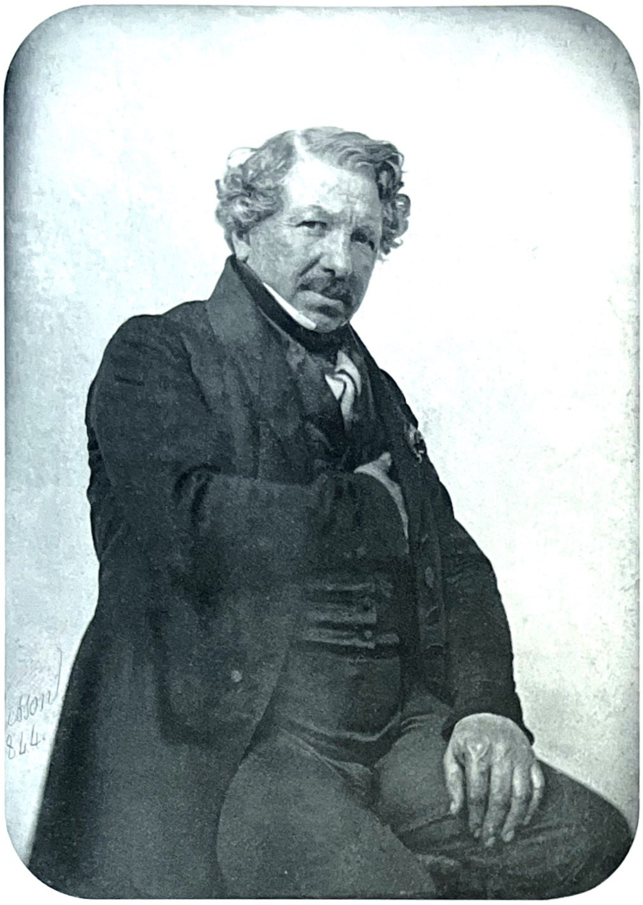
developed in the 1830s by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787–1851). One of the most inventive men of his time, Daguerre was a stage designer, a painter, a printmaker, an amateur scientist, and an entrepreneur. Before he became involved with photography, he had obtained international fame as the inventor of the "diorama," a form of artistic entertainment analogous to the panorama (see *Girtin and the Vogue for the Painted Panorama*, page 187) that owed its illusionary effects to the manipulation of light.

Together with Joseph Nicéphore Niepce, Daguerre developed one of the first of the numerous photographic processes that were to be used in the nineteenth century. His "daguerreotype" differed from other processes in that it was printed not on paper but on thin silver-coated copper plates. Daguerreotypes were known for their clarity and sharpness. The disadvantage of the process was that it only allowed for a single impression.

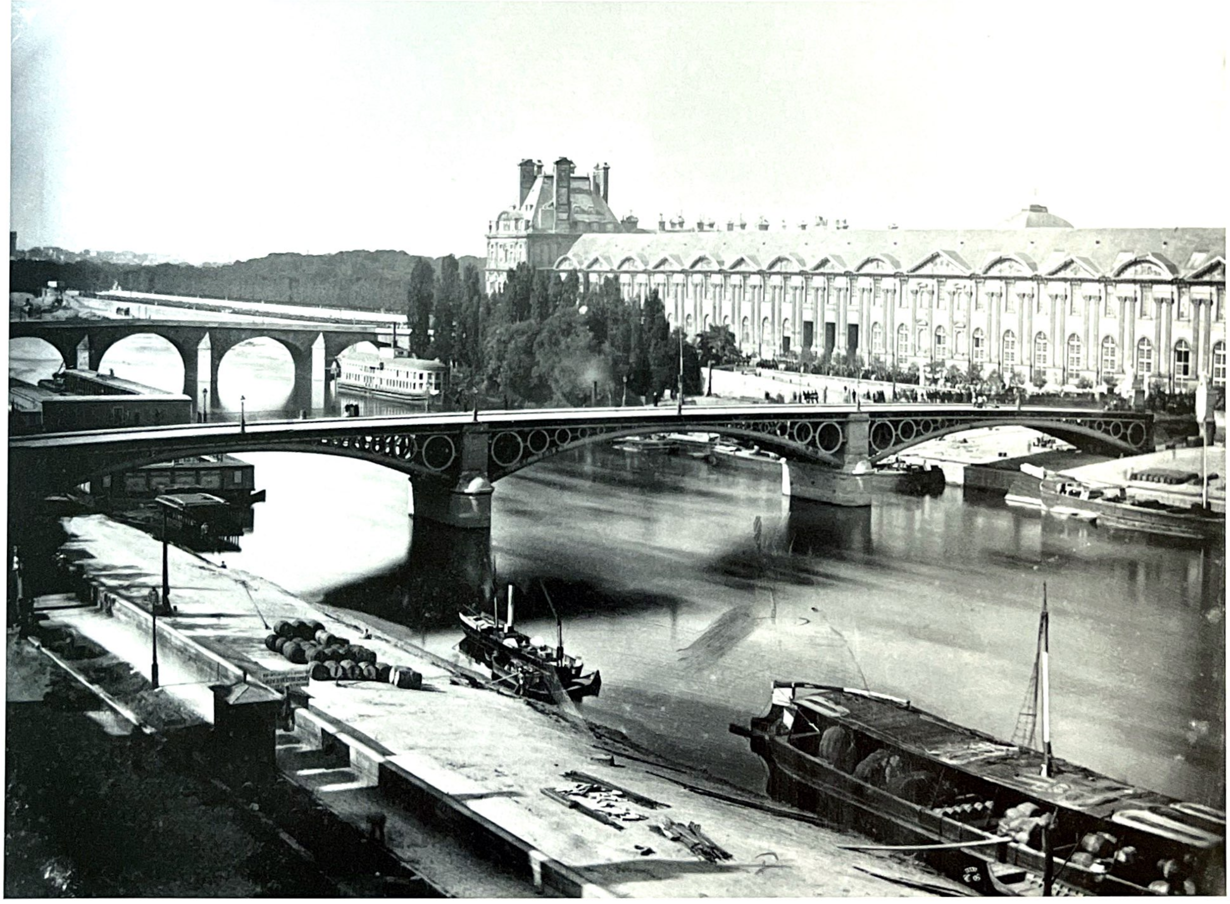
One of Daguerre's earliest photographs, dating from 1837, is of a still life arrangement of plaster casts and other objects placed in a window embrasure in the artist's studio (FIG. 10-37). Daguerre has carefully manipulated the light in order to achieve dramatic contrasts of light and dark. Still life was a common subject in early photography. Exposure times were so long, initially 15–30 minutes, that it was impossible to photograph anything that moved. Already by 1842, however, the process had been improved to allow for much shorter exposure times of 10–50 seconds. By the mid-1840s the daguerreotype could be used for portrait photography, as long as the models sat very still. To meet this challenge, photographers used a special apparatus that clamped and effectively immobilized the sitter's head (FIG. 10-38). This explains the stiff formality of many early portrait photographs (for example, FIG. 10-39), which, paradoxically, often seem less lively than painted portraits of the same period.

Portraiture was probably the most common early use of photography. The camera offered members of the middle class an opportunity to record likenesses of themselves and their loved ones without having to lay out the cash to have a portrait painted. Yet photography was also commonly used to document places, as we see in the *View of the Seine and the Louvre* (FIG. 10-40), of 1847, by Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gros (1793–1870). Such photographs were the predecessors of the picture postcard of modern times.

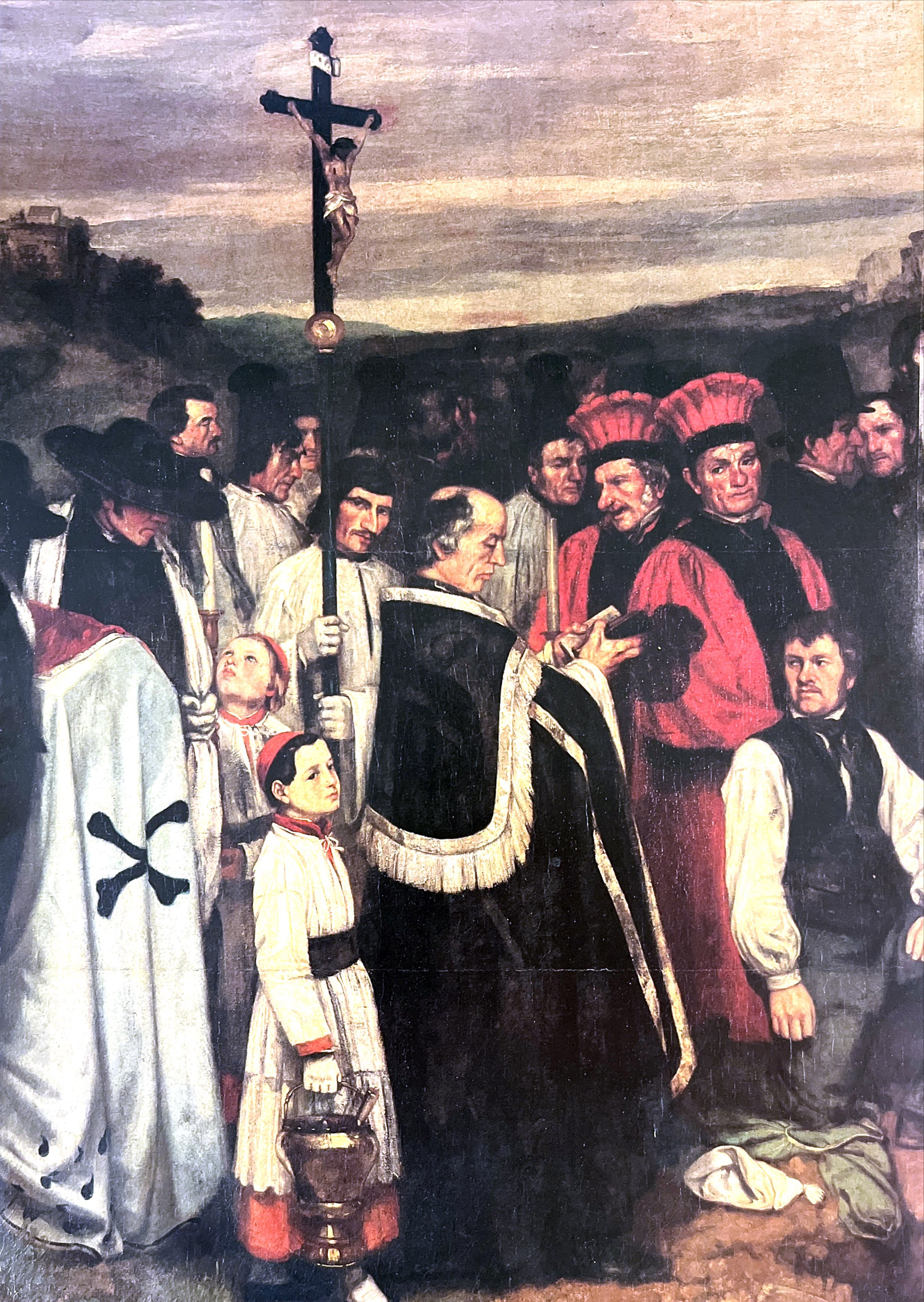
Daguerre's process was only one of many that were developed in various parts of Europe in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. Among these the calotype (Greek for "beautiful print"), invented in Britain by William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), was the first process that made it possible to print on paper rather than a metallic surface (see page 333).



10-39 **E. Thiesson,** *Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre,* 1844. Daguerreotype. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.



10-40 **Jean-Baptiste-Louis Gros,** *View of the Seine and the Louvre,* 1847. Daguerreotype. George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.



Chapter Eleven

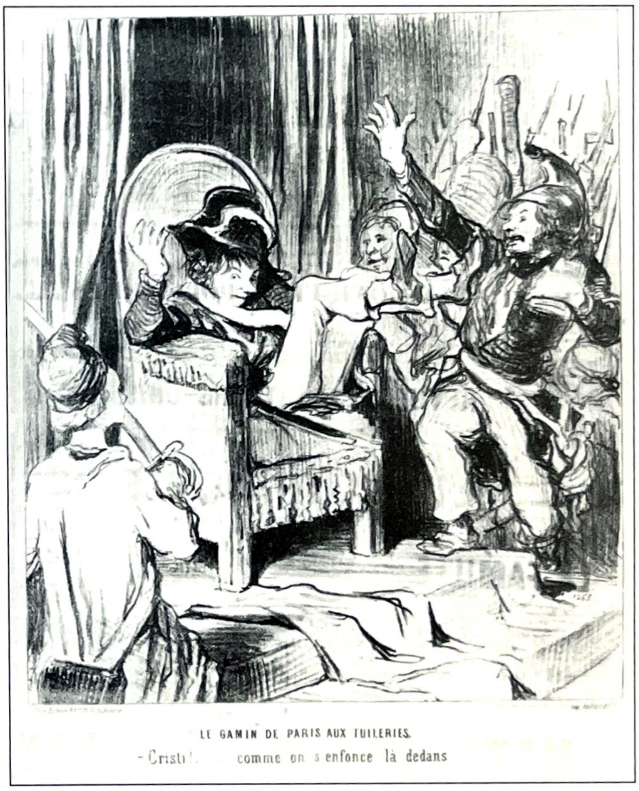
The Revolution of 1848 and the Emergence of Realism in France

Le Charivari of March 4, 1848, published a cartoon that, for many Parisians, must have recalled the events of 1789 (FIG. 11-1). It showed the king's chair in the Tuileries Palace occupied not by Louis-Philippe but by a street urchin exclaiming: "Wow! . . . How softly you sink down in it!"

The cartoon appeared in the wake of the notorious revolution of 1848. During the last week of February, there was an uprising in Paris that in the next few months would escalate into a wave of revolutions across Europe. Before the end of the year, the German states, Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia (the present-day Czech Republic) all experienced complete political upheaval.

The revolutionary sweep was caused by a severe food shortage that had begun as early as 1846 and soon affected the entire European economy. In France recession and massive unemployment fanned political discontent. Throughout the 1840s the middle and lower classes had clamored for increased participation in government. Political agitators now demanded universal male suffrage, as well as freedom of speech and assembly.

After two days of street fighting, Louis-Philippe abdicated and fled to Britain. The Second Republic was proclaimed and a provisional government, led by the poet Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869), attempted to restore order. This was no easy task, especially because of the grave


LE GAMIN DE PARIS AUX TUILERIES.
- Cristi !... comme on s enfonce là dedans

11-1 **Honoré Daumier,** *The Urchin of Paris in the Tuileries Palace* ("Wow! . . . How softly you sink down in it!"). Illustration in *Le Charivari*, March 4, 1848. Lithograph, 10 x 9" (25.5 x 22.7 cm). British Library, London.

Gustave Courbet, *A Burial at Ornans,* (Detail of FIG. 11-3.)

unemployment problem. The effort to create "national workshops" to provide temporary work collapsed when jobless workers from all over France poured into the capital to take advantage of this opportunity. The government had neither the infrastructure nor the money to cope with the crowds, and was forced to close the workshops in June. The unemployed took to the streets, and were joined by students, artisans, and employed workers. The government sent in troops, and the bloody "June Days" ensued, leaving 1,500 rebels dead. Another 12,000 were arrested, and some were exiled to France's new colony, Algeria. A military dictatorship replaced the republican government until elections could be scheduled.

In December 1848 Louis Napoleon, a nephew of the former Emperor, was elected president. He had been biding his time to enter politics, and the revolution of 1848 provided a long-awaited opportunity. Although his presidency was supported by the French, the constitution of the Second Republic restricted it to a non-renewable four-year term, which meant that elections had to be held again in 1852. To prevent this, Louis Napoleon staged a military coup in December, 1851, effectively terminating the Second Republic and establishing a military dictatorship. Less than a year later, like his uncle, he proclaimed himself Emperor. As Napoleon III he reigned until the Prussians invaded France in 1870.

The Salons of the Second Republic

The revolution of 1848 had a dramatic impact on that year's Salon. The provisional government sympathized with young artists who, for years, had complained about extreme conservatism and nepotism in the Academy's jury selection process. The government decided to suppress the jury entirely that year, allowing all artists to exhibit. A record 5,180 works were shown, more than twice the number that had appeared in previous exhibitions. Many were mediocre, making it obvious that eliminating the jury was not the answer to the Salon's problems. In 1849 the republican government supported a new, democratic organization of the Salon, whereby the jury was elected by artists instead of an elite group of academicians. This jury reduced the number of works to 2,586, its former average. The following year the number rose again, because the Salon of 1850 was combined with that of 1851. Held, for the first time, in the Palais Royal (rather than the Louvre), it included almost 4,000 works.

While the unjuried Salon of 1848 was an opportunity for many young artists to make their exhibition debut, few of them were able to make a mark. The Salon was too crowded, and preoccupation with the revolution sapped the public's interest in art. The subsequent Salons of 1849 and 1850–51 offered a better opportunity for young and innovative artists to have their works noticed as well as shown. Many of them had waited for this moment for years.

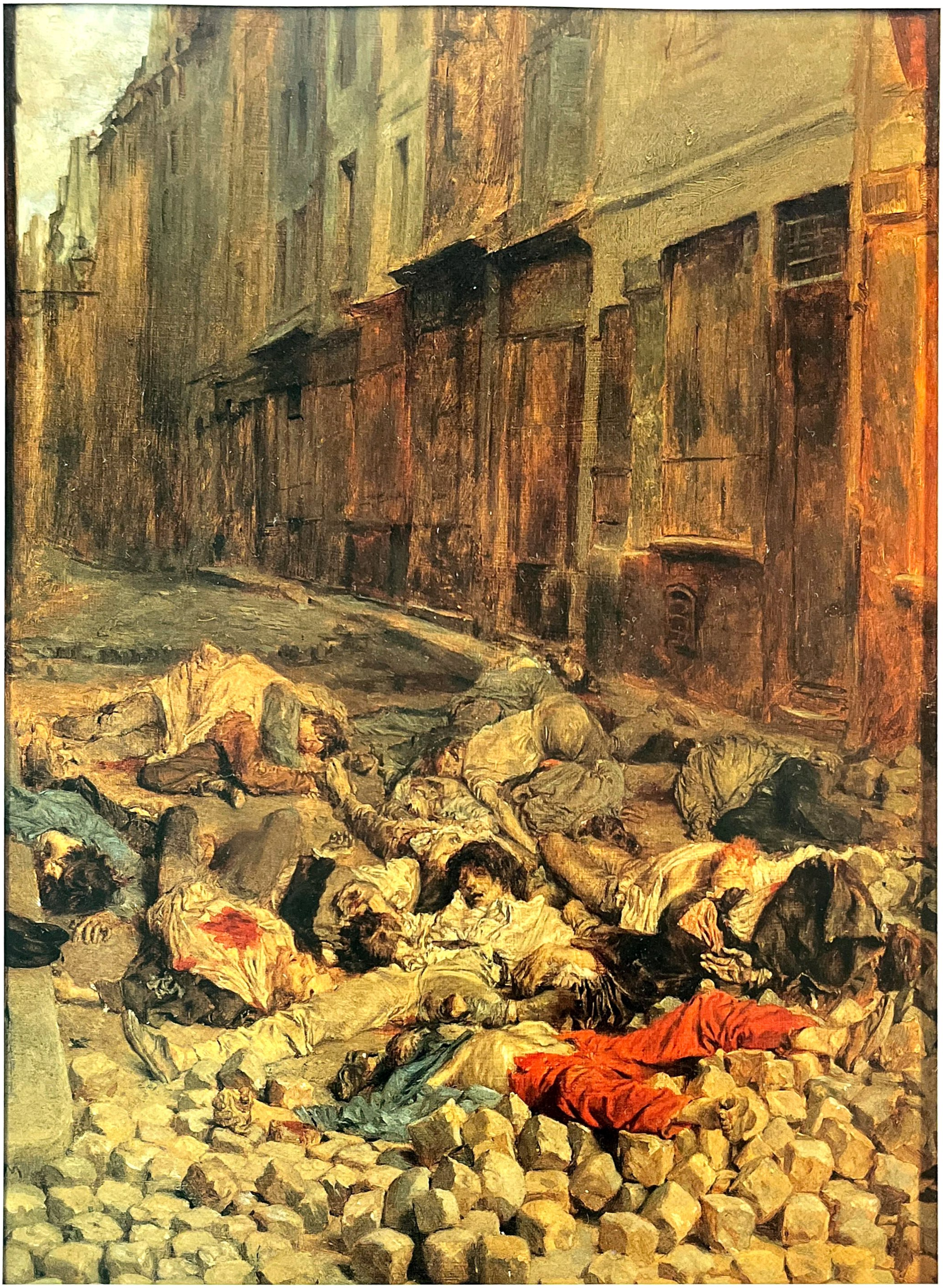
Of the paintings exhibited at these Salons, several demonstrated the profound impact of the events of 1848. While some artists had been swept up in republican enthusiasm, others mourned the revolution and its atrocities. Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891), a conservative artist who had shown some small historical genre paintings in the Salons of the July Monarchy, was in the latter group. *Memory of Civil War* or *Barricade in the Rue de la Mortellerie* (FIG. 11-2), exhibited at the Salon of 1850–51, was his first contemporary picture, a small, carefully painted canvas representing the June Days. Although it was painted after the fact, with the help of models, it was based on a scene that Meissonier had witnessed personally. During the June Days he had stormed the rebel barricades as an artillery captain in the National Guard. Meissonier later remembered this time, writing: "When the barricade in the rue de la Mortellerie was taken, . . . I saw the defenders shot down, hurled out of windows, the ground strewn with corpses, the earth red with the blood it had not yet drunk."

Meissonier's painting shows a back street in Paris, its cobblestones dug up for the construction of a barricade. But the government troops have toppled the makeshift structure, and the rebels, shot dead, are piled up amidst the rubble. This is a far cry from Delacroix's splendid barricade scene in *Liberty Leading the People* (see FIG. 10-1). While that painting suggests that a rightful revolution is worth the sacrifice of a few victims, Meissonier's painting stresses the tragedy and senselessness of a revolution in which Frenchmen are killing Frenchmen. The painting reflects the different characters of the two revolutions—the "three glorious days" of July 1830, which were quick and bloodless, versus the bloody June Days of 1848. The sober realism of his work, quite different from the Romantic elan of Delacroix's paintings, was in tune with the newly-emerging movement in the arts known as "Realism."

The Origins of Realism

In 1846 the poet and journalist Charles Baudelaire (see page 226) had written a book-length review of the Salon. While hailing what he perceived as the positive qualities of Romanticism, "intimacy, spirituality, color, aspiration towards the infinite," he criticized Romantic and Classical artists alike for always depicting the past and neglecting the present. Baudelaire did not deny that some artists (such as Gros, Géricault, and Delacroix) had treated contemporary scenes, but he downplayed their contribution because they had painted "public" and "official" subjects.

In the final chapter of his Salon review, entitled "On the Heroism of Modern Life," Baudelaire challenged artists to paint the ordinary aspects of modern life and to find in them some grand and epic quality. For, as he wrote, "There are such things as modern beauty and modern heroism!" He demanded that artists renounce allegory and nudity,



11-2 **Jean-Louis Ernest Meissonier,** *Memory of Civil War*, or *Barricade in the Rue de la Mortellerie, June 1848*, 1848. Oil on canvas, 11 x 8″ (29 x 22 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

as well as any kind of historical costume (togas, medieval armor, etc.). He wanted to see modern man, in the dark suit and overcoat of the times.

> As for the garb, the outer husk, of the modern hero, . . . [does it not have] its own beauty, its native charm? Is it not the necessary garb of our suffering age, which wears the symbol of perpetual mourning upon its thin black shoulder?

It is true that the subjects of ordinary life that Baudelaire was referring to had already been represented in the prints of Gavarni, Grandville, and Daumier (see Chapter 10). In fact, Baudelaire greatly admired the work of these artists and, in a later essay, called Daumier one of the most important figures in modern art. Baudelaire was also well aware that a small number of July Monarchy painters had produced modest genre pictures of everyday people for a middle-class market. Yet in his review of the Salon of 1846 he called for something more. He was asking for large-scale, serious works that would have the same artistic merit as the history paintings shown at the July Monarchy Salons.

Gustave Courbet's *A Burial at Ornans*

At least one painting at the Salon of 1850–51 seemed to respond to Baudelaire's call. It was painted by Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), who had befriended the poet–critic in the late 1840s. Entitled *A Burial at Ornans* (FIG. 11-3), it was a monumental representation (approximately 10 feet by 22) of a middle-class burial in the French provinces.

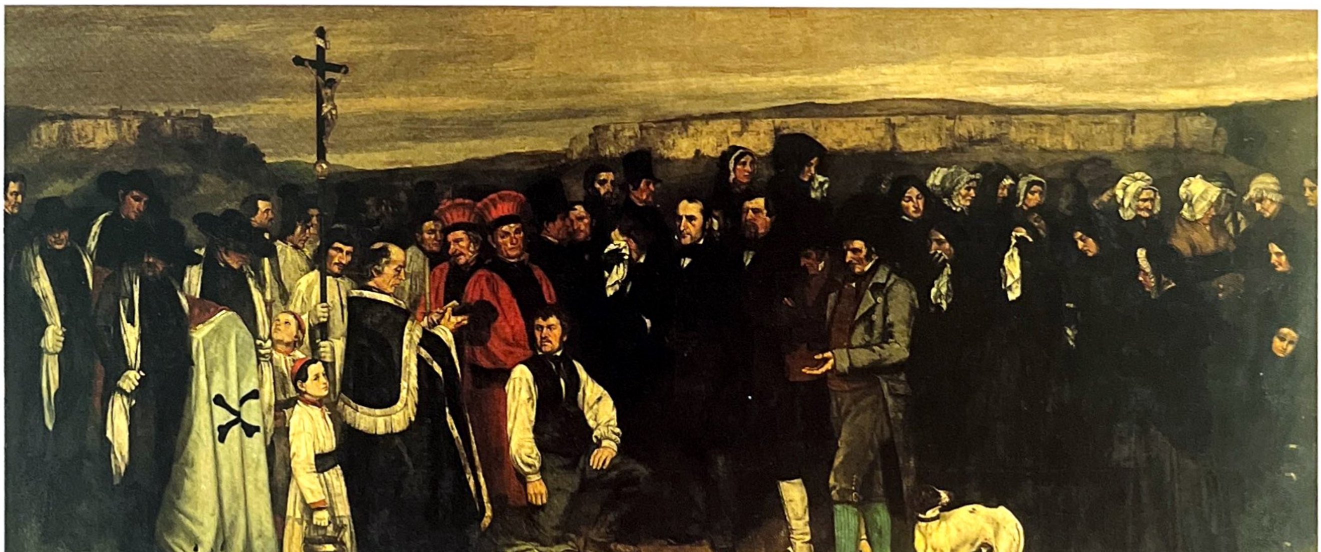
The painting shows a funeral procession making its way from the small town of Ornans (the artist's home town) to the cemetery. On the left, four pall bearers wait as the priest reads from the Bible. Surrounding the priest are various church functionaries: a cross bearer, choir boys, sacristans, and beadles, dressed in red. A gravedigger kneels beside the grave. To the right of the grave are the relatives of the deceased. The men have taken off their hats, while the women wipe away their tears with large white linen handkerchiefs. A dog stands quietly among them.

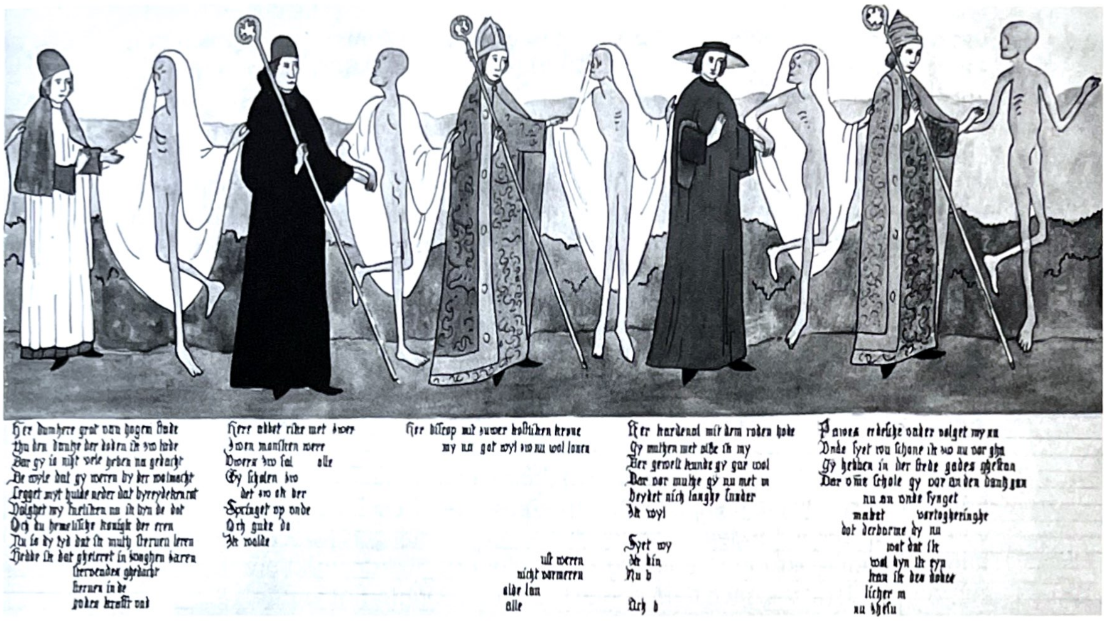
Unlike earlier paintings, such as David's *Death of Socrates* and Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (see FIGS. 2-19 and 9-18), Courbet's *Burial* neither ennobles nor dramatizes death. It represents death for what it is—a recurrent and unremarkable event. Yet, even though the painting emphasizes the prosaic nature of death, the artist does not trivialize it. Instead he seems to express the impossibility of truly fathoming death's mystery.

One of Courbet's close friends compared the long procession in the *Burial* with medieval representations of the "Dance of Death" (FIG. 11-4), in which Death leads a procession of kings, bishops, rich, and poor to the grave. In medieval thinking, death was the great equalizer, since it dealt the same fate to king and pauper. Courbet's *Burial*, with its uniformly dressed figures, suggests that in the modern age—thanks to the revolutions of 1789 and 1848—equality may be achieved even during one's lifetime.

Courbet's *Burial* caused a scandal at the Salon of 1850–51. Its line-up of provincial bourgeois in black suits was said to be dull and boring. Courbet was also criticized for glorifying a trivial subject. Underlying all this criticism was a good deal of fear, stemming from recent political changes. Courbet's painting was a reminder to Parisian visitors that, under the new republican regime, ordinary, provincial

11-3 **Gustave Courbet,** *A Burial at Ornans*, 1849–50. Oil on canvas, 10′4″ x 21′11″ (3.15 x 6.68 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



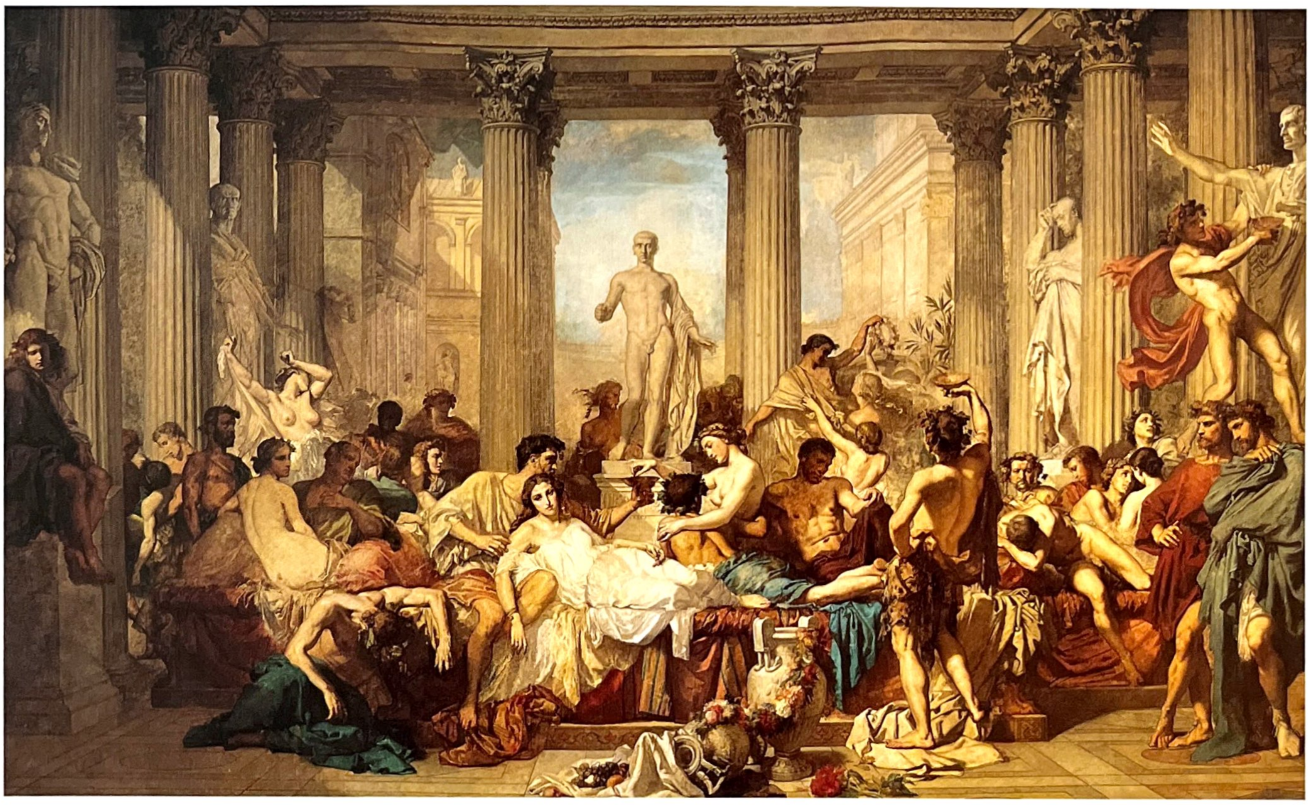


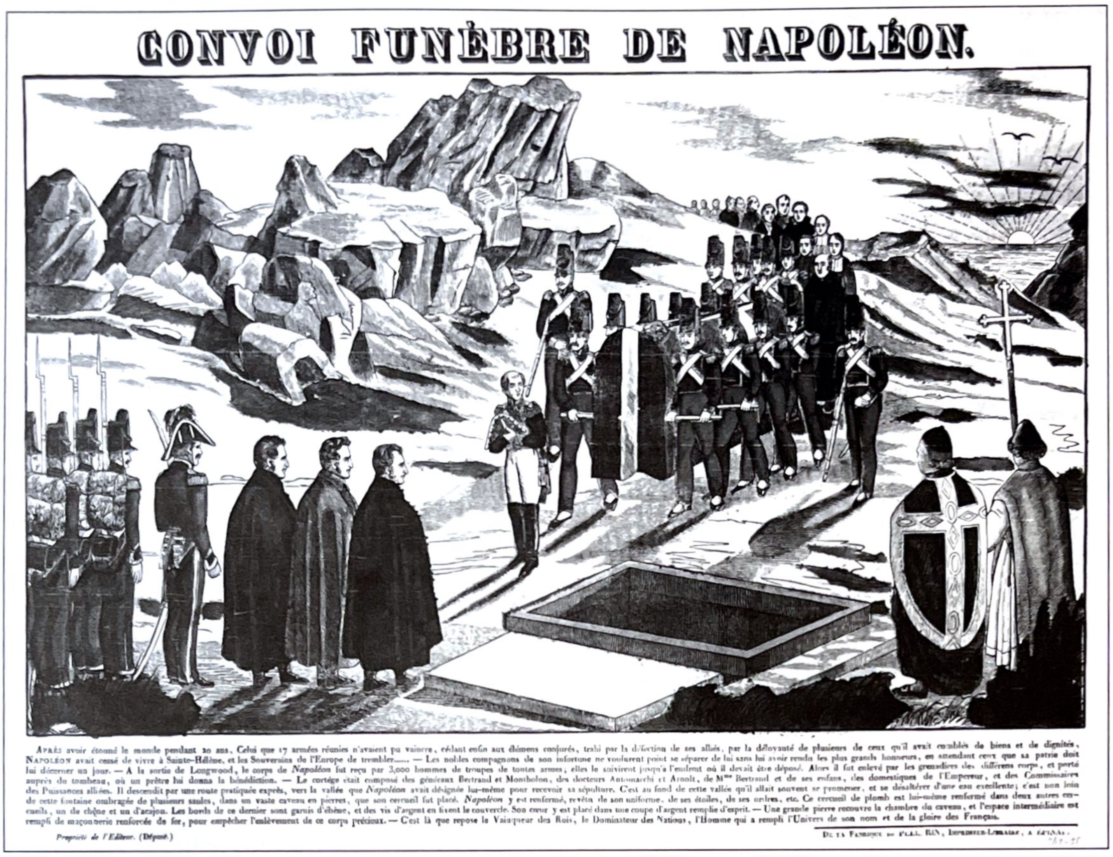
11-4 *Totentanz* (Dance of Death), detail of wall painting in the porch of St Mary's Church, Berlin, c.1484. Approximately 6 x 66′ (1.83 x 20.12 m).

bourgeois had to be reckoned with. The revolution of 1848 had brought universal male suffrage; voting rights were no longer restricted to the rich, as had been the case during the July Monarchy. Every male resident of France could now vote. The men in Courbet's *Burial* represented the large mass of new voters in the provinces that could completely change the political picture of France.

Today, *A Burial at Ornans* may be seen in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. There, it hangs near another colossal painting, done three years earlier, by Thomas Couture. His *Romans of the Decadence* (FIG. 11-5) was the toast of the 1847 Salon, the last Salon of the July Monarchy. Couture's painting shows a scene from Roman imperial times. Through the majestic columns of a palatial courtyard, the sun rises on

11-5 **Thomas Couture,** *Romans of the Decadence*, 1847. Oil on canvas, 15′5″ x 25′14″ (4.72 x 7.72 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.




CONVOI FUNÈBRE DE NAPOLÉON.
Après avoir étonné le monde pendant 20 ans, Celui que 17 armées réunies n'avaient pu vaincre, cédant enfin aux élémens conjurés, trahi par la défection de ses alliés, par la déloyauté de plusieurs de ceux qu'il avait comblés de biens et de dignités, Napoléon avait cessé de vivre à Sainte-Hélène, et les Souverains de l'Europe de trembler...... — Les nobles compagnons de son infortune ne voulurent point se séparer de lui sans lui avoir rendu les plus grands honneurs, en attendant ceux que sa patrie doit lui décerner un jour. — A la sortie de Longwood, le corps de Napoléon fut reçu par 3,000 hommes de troupes de toutes armes; elles le suivirent jusqu'à l'endroit où il devait être déposé. Alors il fut enlevé par les grenadiers des différens corps, et porté auprès du tombeau, où un prêtre lui donna la bénédiction. — Le cortége était composé des généraux Bertrand et Montholon, des docteurs Antomarchi et Arnolt, de Mme Bertrand et de ses enfans, des domestiques de l'Empereur, et des Commissaires des Puissances alliées. Il descendit par une route pratiquée exprès, vers la vallée que Napoléon avait désignée lui-même pour recevoir sa sépulture. C'est au fond de cette vallée qu'il allait souvent se promener, et se désaltérer d'une eau excellente; c'est non loin de cette fontaine ombragée de plusieurs saules, dans un vaste caveau en pierres, que son cercueil fut placé. Napoléon y est renfermé, revêtu de son uniforme, de ses étoiles, de ses ordres, etc. Ce cercueil de plomb est lui-même renfermé dans deux autres cercueils, un de chêne et un d'acajou. Les bords de ce dernier sont garnis d'ébène, et des vis d'argent en fixent le couvercle. Son cœur y est placé dans une coupe d'argent remplie d'esprit. — Une grande pierre recouvre la chambre du caveau, et l'espace intermédiaire est rempli de maçonnerie renforcée de fer, pour empêcher l'enlèvement de ce corps précieux. — C'est là que repose le Vainqueur des Rois, le Dominateur des Nations, l'Homme qui a rempli l'Univers de son nom et de la gloire des Français.
Propriété de l'Éditeur. (Déposé.)
De la Fabrique de Pellerin, Imprimeur-Libraire, à Epinal.

11-6 *Convoi Funèbre de Napoléon* (Napoleon's Funeral Procession), 1821, (published by Pellerin, Epinal, 1835). Woodcut, 16 x 28⅝" (41.2 x 60.1 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

a drunken crowd of revelers. After a night of cavorting, most seem exhausted or sick. One of the few still energetic revelers has climbed up on a pedestal to offer a drink mockingly to a statue of a Roman republican hero.

The painting's critical acclaim was due to its successful reconciliation of Classicism and Romanticism, as well as its pertinent visual message. Many critics saw *Romans of the Decadence* as a thinly disguised image of the excesses of the *nouveau riche* middle class of the July Monarchy. Just as the Roman Empire fell because of the decadence of its ruling class (a commonly held belief of the time), so France was suffering because of the excesses of its rich and powerful bourgeoisie.

Courbet's *Burial* was the post-revolutionary answer to Couture's work. His painting alludes to the new republican ideal of equal representation that had replaced the oligarchic and self-serving regime of the July Monarchy symbolized in Couture's *Romans*. What is more, through the *Burial* Courbet asserted the importance of representing the ideas of his time in contemporary rather than historical terms. "To go backward is . . . to waste effort," he would write several years later. "I deny the possibility of historical art applied to the past. Historical art is by nature contemporary. Every age must have its artists, who give expression to it and reproduce it for the future."

Courbet also responded to the dramatic poses and the stylish composition of Couture (which combines Classicist symmetry with sweeping diagonals full of Romantic dynamism) by opting instead for a stiff line-up of motionless figures. At least one critic commented that the painting reminded him of an enlarged daguerreotype (see page 253) and, indeed, the painting has much of the rigidity of contemporary group photographs (see FIG. 14-1). Others felt that his painting resembled contemporary folk art, such as the woodblock prints produced in the French town of Epinal (FIG. 11-6). Courbet's defenders, however, praised his "egalitarian" composition, in which each figure had equal importance, and felt it suited Courbet's new "democratic art." They also hailed the awkward, folksy character of his painting, arguing that Courbet's "naïf" approach was a perfect antidote to the bombast of Couture and Company.

Courbet, Millet, and an Art of Social Consciousness

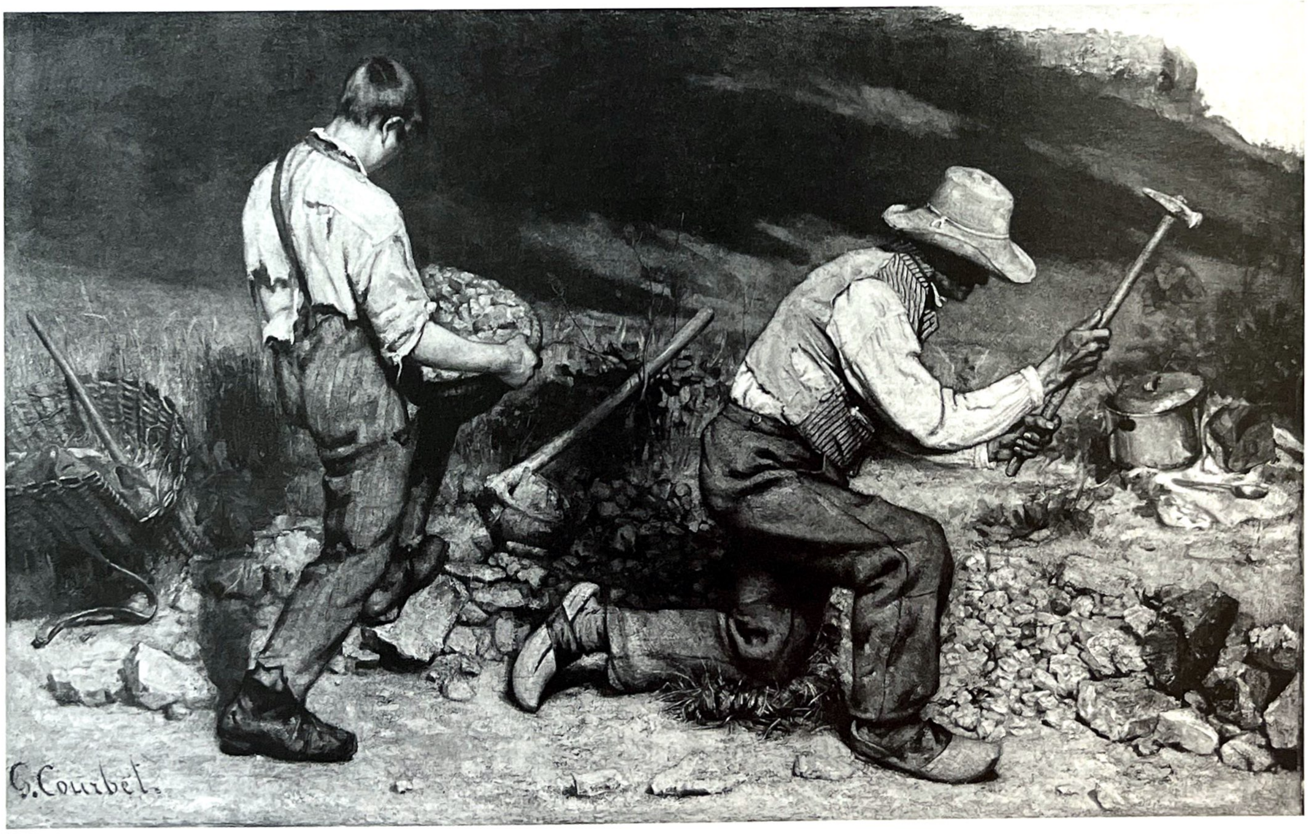
A Burial at Ornans was only one of nine canvases that Courbet had submitted to the Salon of 1850–51. Another that drew much attention was *The Stonebreakers* (FIG. 11-7), a work allegedly destroyed during World War II but known today through photographs. It is a painting of two men, one old, the other young, working in the bend of a road bordering on a wheat field. Their thankless job is to crush large field stones into gravel to be used for paving the roads. Courbet has emphasized the poverty of the two men by dressing them in tattered rags and showing their meager lunch, to be eaten by the roadside. Their age differential suggests that those who are born poor will remain poor. Or, as Courbet himself put it, in reference to this painting: "Alas, in that class, that is how one begins and that is how one ends up."

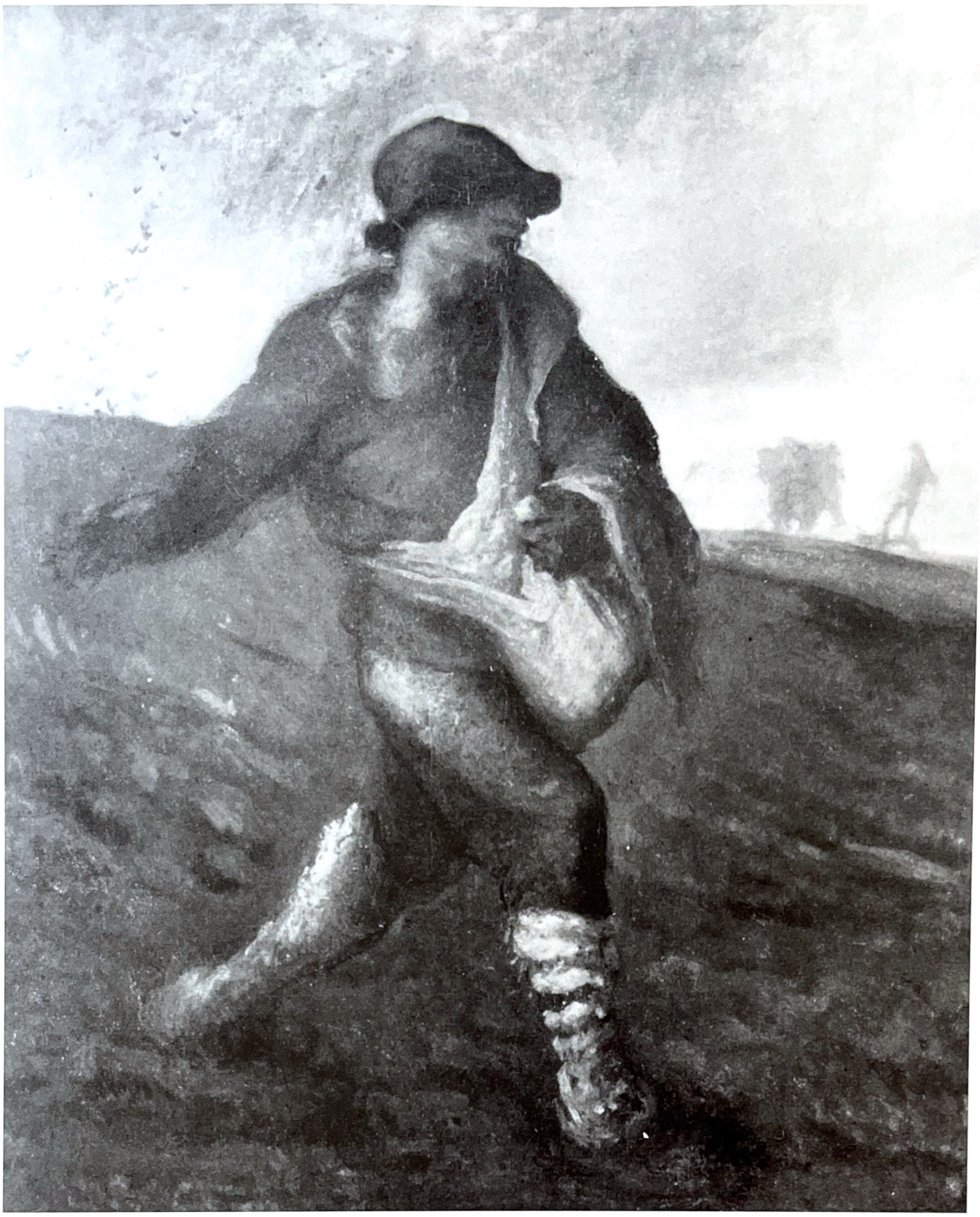
Courbet's painting is a comment on the grinding poverty that had become endemic during the July Monarchy. Louis-Philippe's policy of improving the economy by encouraging the industrialist middle class to "get rich" had led to a rapidly widening gap between rich and poor. The pathetic condition of the lower classes had become a closely debated issue in the later years of the July Monarchy and continued to be so during the Second Republic and the Second Empire. In 1846 Courbet's friend Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) wrote a book called *La Philosophie de la Misère* (The Philosophy of Poverty) which established him as a leading spokesman of "socialism." Not yet a specific movement, socialism at that time comprised people of various philosophical and religious persuasions who were concerned about poverty. Among them was the future president and emperor, Louis Napoleon, who in 1844 wrote a pamphlet entitled *Extinction du Paupérisme* (Extinction of Pauperism), which later helped him win the presidency. Among them, too, was the German Karl Marx (1818–1883), who in the mid-1840s lived in France. Marx would eventually abandon socialism and become the spokesman for the new "Communist League," for which, in 1848, he wrote the *Communist Manifesto*.

Considering the lively debate on poverty, it is hardly surprising that Courbet was not the only young artist to become interested in the lives of the poor. At the same Salon of 1850–51, Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) exhibited *The Sower* (FIG. 11-8), a painting of a peasant casting seed from a cloth bag that hangs from his shoulder. Millet, son of a prosperous farmer in the region of Normandy, had previously painted portraits and nudes. In 1848 he had moved to Barbizon, where he became a neighbor of Théodore Rousseau (see page 240). Living in the countryside, he became interested in peasant subjects. Like Courbet's stonebreakers, his sower is "anonymous," his face darkly shaded and turned away from the viewer. Both paintings suggest that, much like machines, these men are valued only for the work they perform, not for their human individuality.

But there is also a difference between the two paintings. Whereas Courbet's *The Stonebreakers* merely invokes sympathy for the poor, Millet's *The Sower* inspires respect. His figure has power and dignity, and his expansive gesture appears to command the earth to come alive. This is even clearer in an earlier version of the painting, now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which Millet, for some reason, did not send to the Salon.

11-7 **Gustave Courbet,** *The Stonebreakers*, 1849–50. Oil on canvas, 6′2″ x 9′9″ (1.9 x 3 m). Destroyed, formerly in Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.



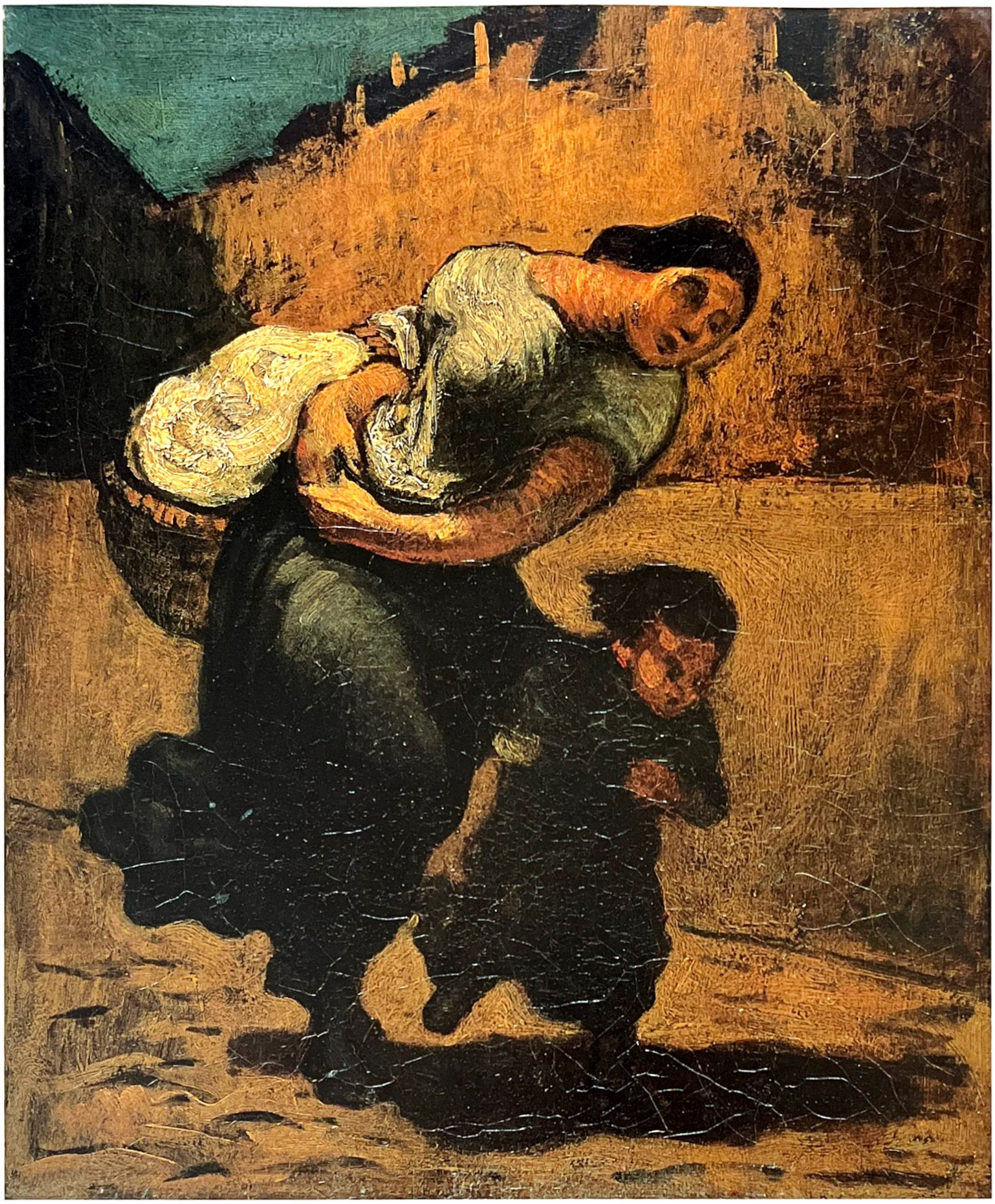


11-8 **Jean-François Millet,** *The Sower,* 1850. Oil on canvas, 39 x 31" (1 m x 80.6 cm) after restoration. Yamanashi Museum of Art, Japan.

Courbet's *Stonebreakers* and Millet's *Sower* invited the Salon public to consider France's largely invisible underclass. Not surprisingly, critical reactions were mixed, depending largely on the political biases of individual critics or of the papers for which they wrote. Conservative critics berated the works for being "socialist." Progressive critics praised the artists for their sense of social responsibility. Neither Courbet nor Millet found much of a market for these works, which were too radical for the state and too "dark and ugly" for private collectors.

Daumier and the Urban Working Class

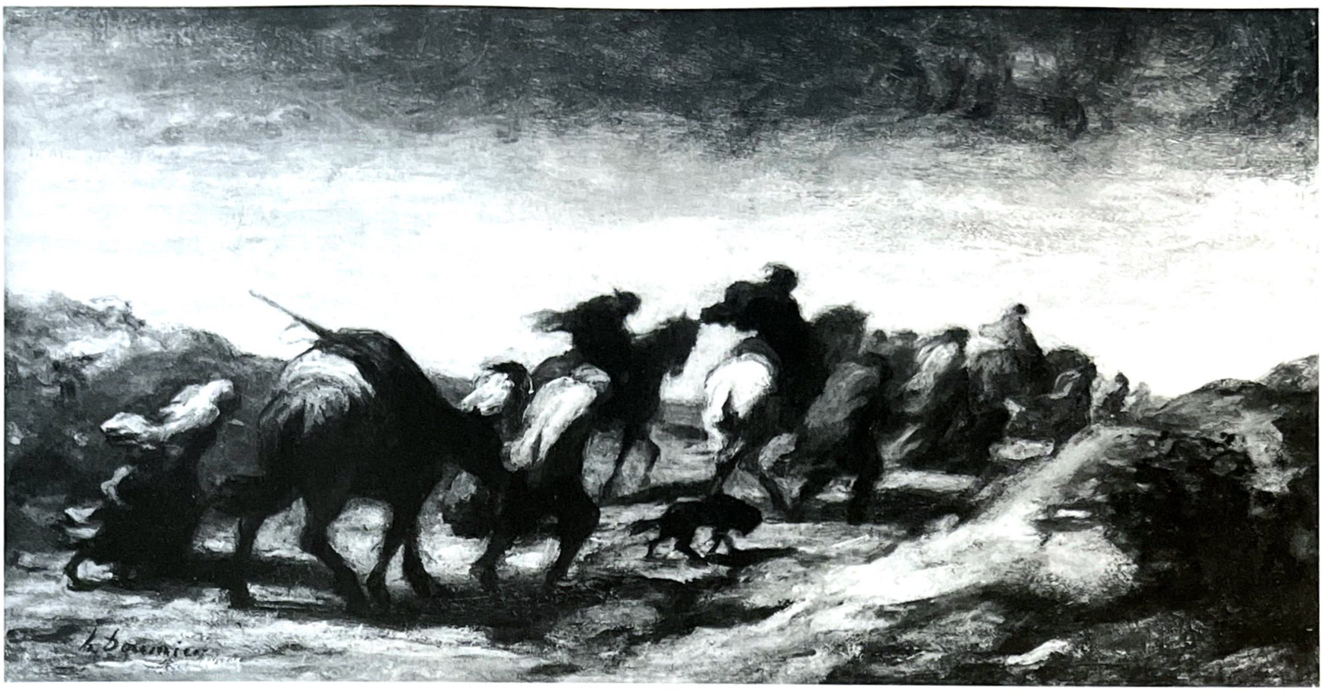
While Courbet and Millet focused on country life, a few artists were interested in the urban working class. Among them was Honoré Daumier, who, in the course of the 1840s, began to complement his work as an illustrator by trying his hand at painting. While he treated religious and mythological as well as allegorical themes, Daumier is best known today for his paintings depicting aspects of the lives of the Parisian working class. For the most part, these



11-9 **Honoré Daumier,** *The Heavy Burden,* c.1850–53. Oil on canvas, 21⅞ x 17$^{15}/_{16}$" (55.5 x 45.5 cm). National Gallery, Prague.

works remained unseen during the artist's lifetime because Daumier rarely exhibited his paintings. It was not until 1878, one year before the artist's death, that a retrospective exhibition of his paintings was held in the commercial gallery of Paul Durand-Ruel.

Among Daumier's favorite subjects were laundry women, who, for a small fee, washed people's linen in the Seine river. Laundry had become something of a cottage industry in the 1840s, particularly among unwed mothers who were unable to get jobs as domestic servants. To facilitate their work, special washing barges were moored in the river. Daumier lived on the banks of the Seine and saw the laundry women on a daily basis. Summer and winter, they dragged their loads of laundry to the river, often with their children in tow. After washing for hours, they lugged the wet laundry home to dry it in their small dank rooms, which must have been unbearable to live in. Their work was not only hard but low-paid and thankless; no wonder that many of these women turned to drink for solace.



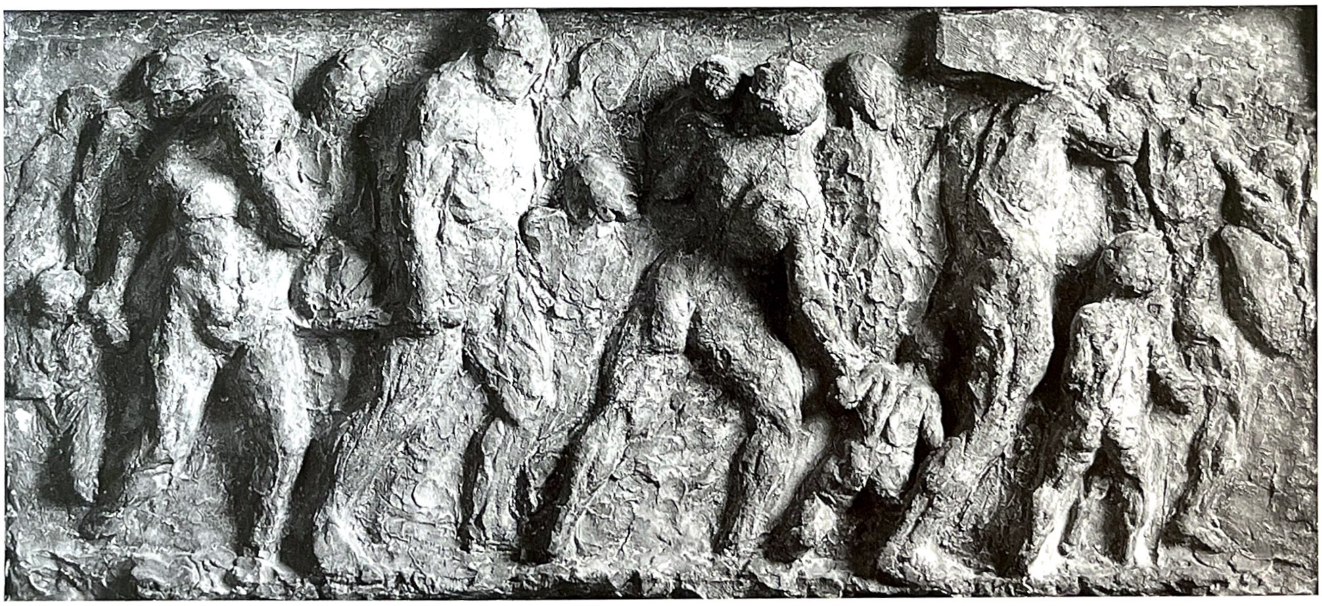
11-10 **Honoré Daumier,** *The Fugitives*, c.1849–50. Oil on panel, 6 x 12" (16 x 31 cm). Private Collection, on permanent loan to National Gallery, London.

The Heavy Burden (FIG. 11-9), painted during the early 1850s, is one of several variations on this theme, which preoccupied Daumier for nearly twenty years. A young laundry woman, carrying a basket filled with wet clothes, walks home along the Seine quay, struggling against the wind. Her bent pose is echoed by the little girl by her side, who clutches her skirt. Much like Courbet's *Stonebreakers*, Daumier's *Heavy Burden* suggests that poverty is inescapable—once one is born into it, one's life is determined by it.

The painting is highly simplified: facial features and details of clothing are only summarily indicated. The palette is limited, almost monochrome, much like the early works of Courbet and Millet. As in his caricatures, Daumier has exaggerated bodily forms and gestures in his painting. Here, though, distortions of reality do not serve a humorist purpose but express the essence of this woman's tortured life.

The Fugitives (FIG. 11-10) represents refugees, another subject that preoccupied Daumier around the same time.

11-11 **Honoré Daumier,** *The Fugitives*, c.1862–78. Relief in patinated plaster (third state), 11 x 26 x 3⅜" (28 x 66 x 8.5 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Mass movements of people were a common sight in these revolutionary years. After the bloody June Days, 4,000 revolutionaries and their families were ordered to "leave town." Elsewhere in Europe, similar "migrations" occurred. In Germany and central Europe, hunger drove large groups of people to wander around in search of food. In Ireland about 1.5 million Irish emigrated to America to escape the great potato famine of 1845–8; at the same time, some 40,000 people moved across North America during the California Gold Rush of 1848. Mass movements of people were so ubiquitous at the time that one French journalist spoke of a "paroxysm of emigration."

In *Fugitives* a group of refugees trudges aimlessly through a desolate landscape. Dark storm clouds gather overhead and a strong wind hampers their movements. A sense of doom pervades the painting. In the string of dark, shapeless figures stretching diagonally across the picture plane, Daumier has captured the hopelessness of these estranged, modern nomads.

Daumier's sculptural reliefs on the theme of fugitives (for example, FIG. 11-11) differ dramatically from his paintings. Instead of loose strings of shapeless figures, they show men, women, and children densely packed in a rectangular frame. The figures are nude rather than clothed, which gives them a Classical character. Their significance goes beyond an engagement with the contemporary homeless problem. Rather, they may be seen as an allegory of human life—that aimless march from birth to death that is often referred to as the "human condition."

Realism

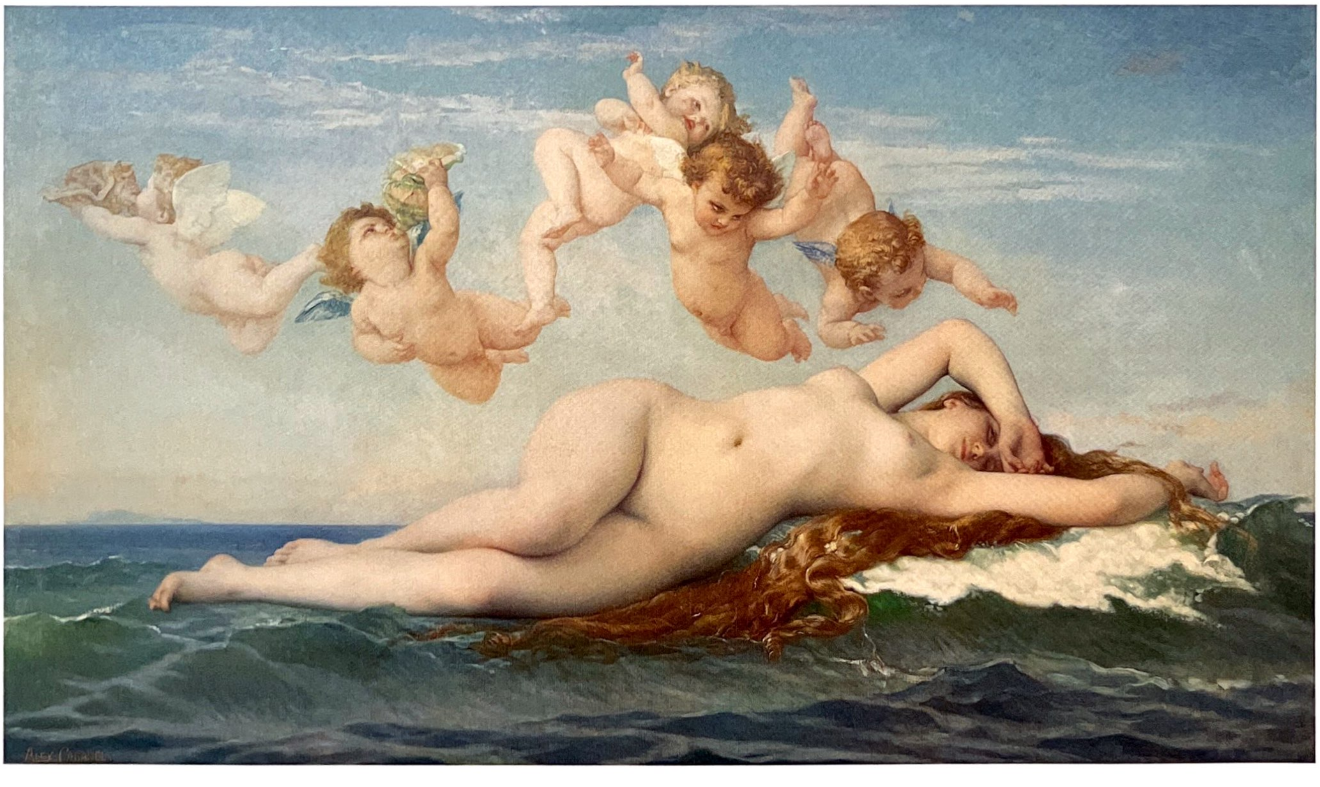
Today, the artistic engagement with the ordinary, contemporary life that began in the 1840s is known as "Realism." This term had been used in France since the 1830s by artists and critics who felt, like Baudelaire, that a renewal in literature and art was possible only if artists abandoned their love affair with the past and focused on the present.

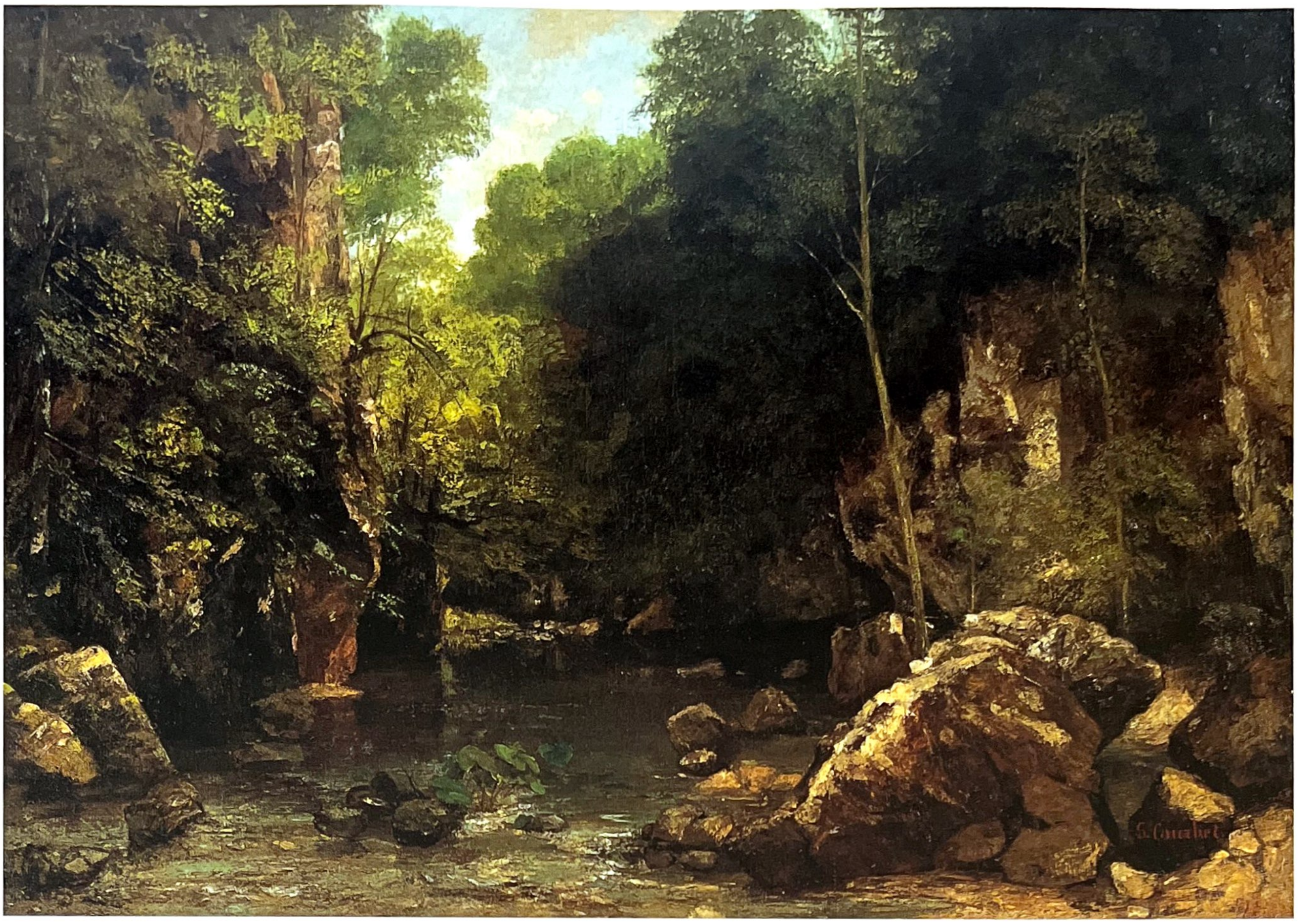
When Courbet entered the art scene with his *Burial at Ornans* and his *The Stonebreakers*, critics referred to these works as "realist," a term at once complimentary and pejorative. While advocates saw in it a democratic style of art, an art by the common man for the common man, detractors criticized it for a lack of poetry and imagination. By the mid-1850s Courbet had "officially" adopted the term Realism as the name for the movement in art that he had inaugurated and of which he proclaimed himself the leader. At the Paris International Exhibition of 1855 he opened his own "Realist Pavilion," to promote Realism internationally (see page 364).

Landscape and Animal Painting: Courbet and Bonheur

In terms of subject matter, landscape was the undisputed favorite of mid-nineteenth-century art collectors. For the typical art buyer of the period, the harried businessman or overworked industrialist, landscapes were a pleasant reminder of the beauty, calm, and wholesomeness of the

12-20 **Alexandre Cabanel,** *The Birth of Venus,* 1863. Oil on canvas, 4′4″ x 7′6″ (1.32 x 2.29 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



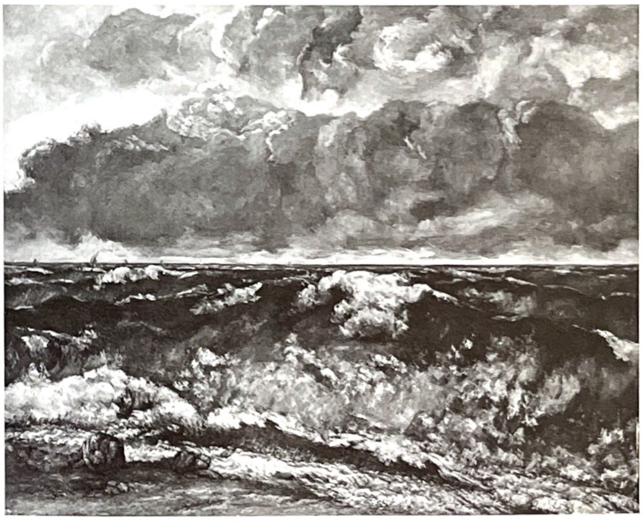


12-21 **Gustave Courbet,** *Entrance to the Puits Noir Valley,* 1865. Oil on canvas, 37 x 53³⁄₁₆" (94 cm x 1.35 m). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

countryside. There was an insatiable market for woodland scenes, pastoral paintings, and seascapes. Hunting scenes, too, were popular, particularly among sportsmen.

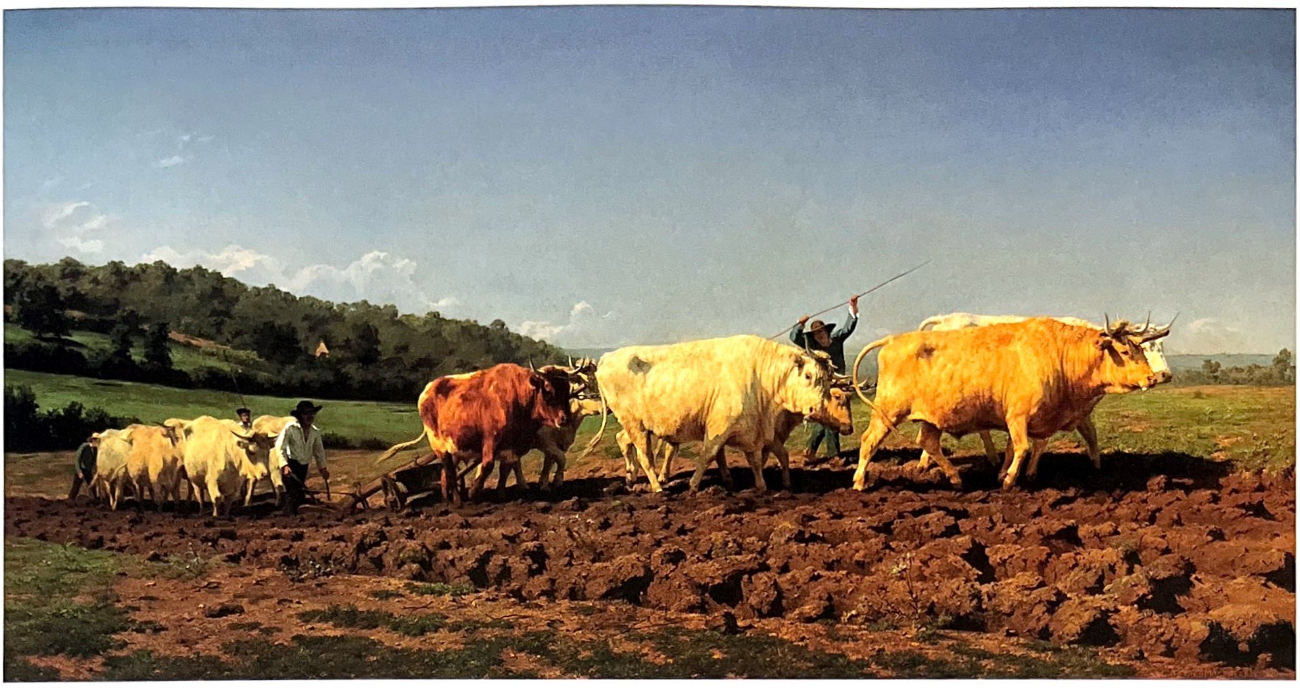
The Barbizon school flourished during the Second Empire, and its artists, who had previously struggled, were now highly successful. The village of Barbizon became a magnet for young artists, who flocked to the forest of Fontainebleau to paint. Many other regions of France attracted artists as well. Gustave Courbet, who turned to landscape during the late 1850s, specialized in scenes from his native Jura region, as well as seascapes painted in Normandy. His *Entrance to the Puits Noir Valley* (FIG. 12-21), exhibited at the Salon of 1865, was bought by Count de Nieuwerkerke for the private collection of Napoleon III. The work became so popular that Courbet made dozens of variations and replicas for other collectors.

Courbet's style of landscape painting was quite different from the elaborate, overworked method of Rousseau. He used rapid brushstrokes and made extensive use of the palette knife—a knife with a broad, flexible blade without a cutting edge, designed to scrape the palette clean. The palette knife enabled the artist to apply the paint in irregular dabs to create the thick, encrusted paint surfaces, called *impasto*. This technique was eminently suitable for rendering the surfaces of the dramatic rock formations of the Jura.



12-22 **Gustave Courbet,** *The Wave,* 1870. Oil on canvas, 44⅛ x 56" (1.12 x 1.44 m). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

Courbet used the same technique in a series of seascapes, done in Normandy in the late 1860s (though some bear the date 1870). Many of these were unique for their close-up

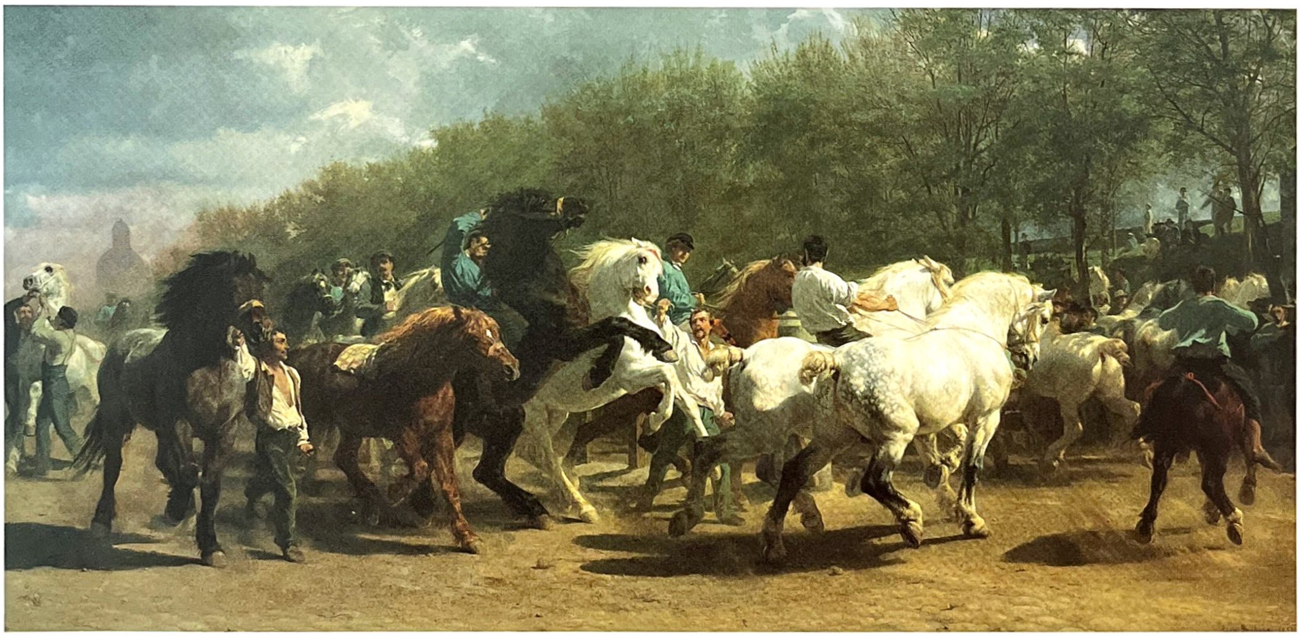


12-23 **Rosa Bonheur,** *Plowing in the Nivernais Region,* 1849. Oil on canvas, 5′9″ x 8′8″ (1.75 x 2.64 m). Musée National du Château de Fontainebleau, Fontainebleau.

view of waves (FIG. 12-22). In the past, the sea had been painted only from a safe distance. Courbet, an avid swimmer, represented it as if he were about to dive in. Thickly painted with heavily impastoed foamy crests, his waves are almost palpable, causing one caricaturist to lampoon a Courbet seascape as a slice of pie with heavy whipped cream.

Courbet also painted a number of hunting scenes and animal paintings; but in this area he was surpassed by the most famous female painter of the nineteenth century, Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899). Trained by her father, Bonheur made her reputation at the Salon of 1850–51 with *Plowing in the Nivernais Region* (FIG. 12-23). Like Courbet and Millet, whose *Stonebreakers* and *Sower* were shown at the same Salon, Bonheur focused on a rural theme, but her painting is more idyllic. Whereas Courbet and Millet emphasized the hardships and drudgery of peasant life, Bonheur lent it a rustic grandeur. Focusing on the oxen that strain to pull the heavy plow, she created a bucolic

12-24 **Rosa Bonheur,** *The Horse Fair,* 1853. Oil on canvas, 8′ x 16′7″ (2.45 x 5.05 m). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



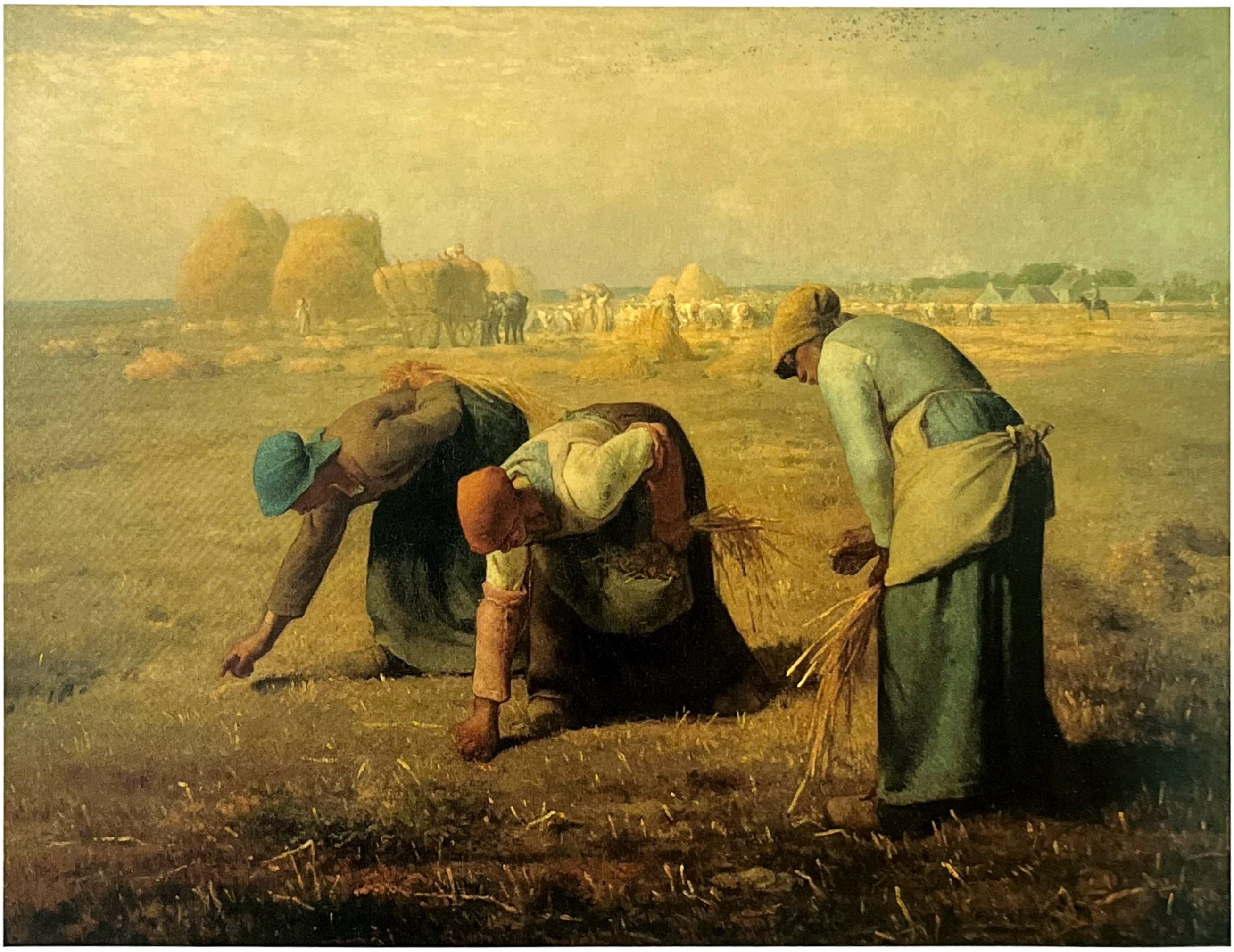
scene that has a timeless and enduring quality. *Plowing in the Nivernais Region* is said to have been inspired by *La mare au diable* (The Haunted Pool; 1846), a popular novel about country life by the famous French writer Aurore Dudevant (1804–1876). Dudevant, a woman who used the masculine pen name George Sand, was certainly a role model for the younger Bonheur as a professional female artist. Through tireless self-promotion, she had managed to make her career in the masculine literary world.

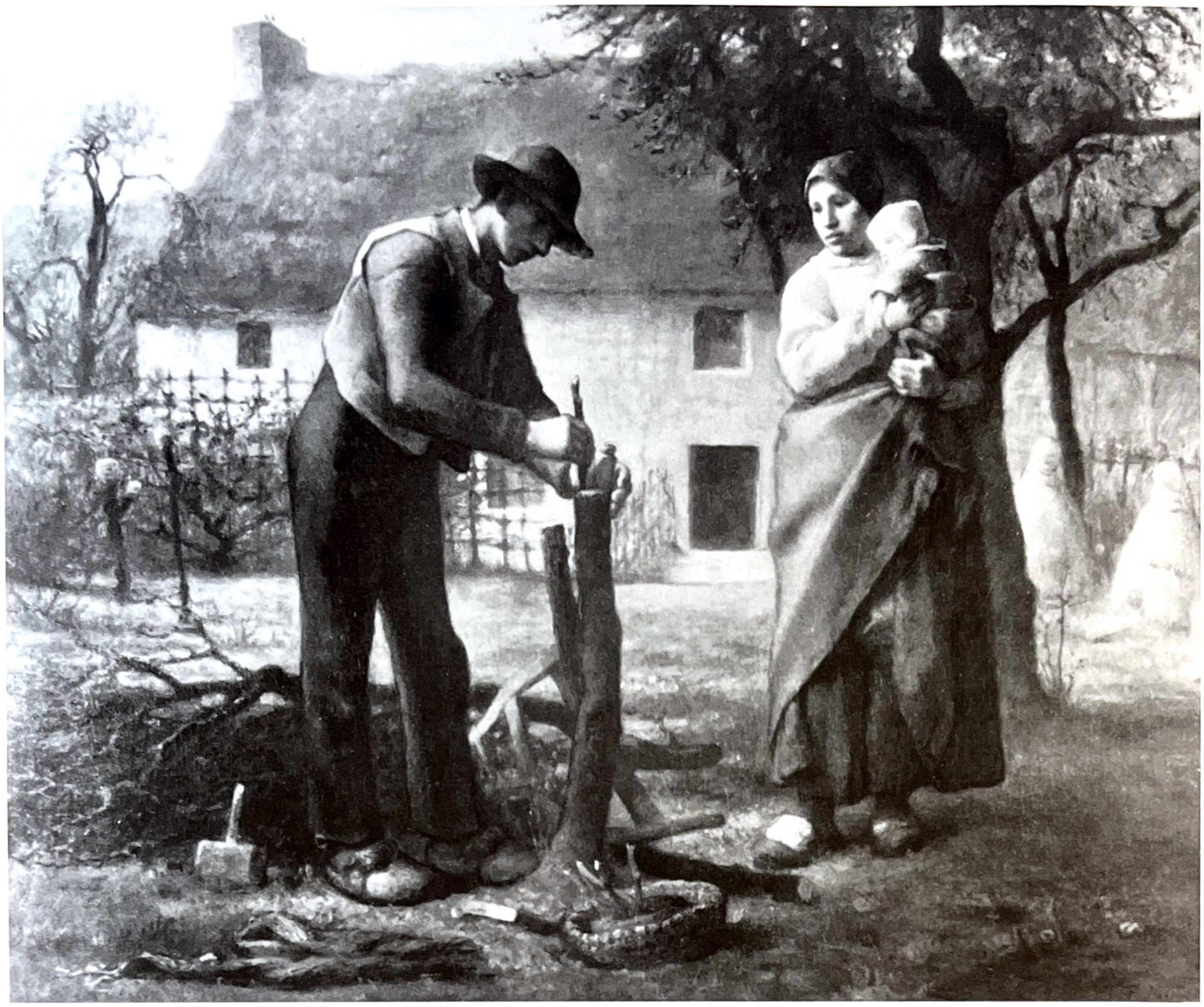
Bonheur became especially famous after the exhibition of *The Horse Fair* (FIG. 12-24) at the Salon of 1853. The painting represents the biweekly horse market in Paris, where draft and work horses were bought and sold. The long, oblong canvas is filled with a throng of horses, some held by the reins, others ridden by handlers, who seem to have a difficult time keeping the jittery animals under control. Bonheur's painting is a tour de force of horse painting, since it represents the animals life-size, in different poses and seen from a variety of angles. To accomplish this feat, Bonheur made numerous trips to the horse market. Women were rarely seen at that eminently masculine event, and Bonheur is known to have dressed in pants (after obtaining permission from the police) to avoid undue attention as well as to prevent her skirt and crinolines from getting soiled. The artist always claimed that, in wearing male clothes, she did not want to draw undue attention to herself, thus distancing herself from George Sand, who had courted notoriety by wearing pants and smoking cigars. Some art historians, nonetheless, believe that she has painted herself, right in the center of the *Horse Fair*, riding a horse like a man and dressed in a blue smock and a dark cap.

The Horse Fair, that enormous painting with its masculine subject, was intended to prove that women could do more than paint watercolors and flowers on porcelain—the usual genres of female artists exhibiting at the Salons of the period. What is more, *The Horse Fair* was painted with a force and bravura that suited the subject matter but which contrasted sharply with the genteel brushwork that marked most women's art of the period. Indeed, Bonheur was determined to make her reputation on masculine terms—to show that women, like men, could lay a claim to artistic "genius."

The Horse Fair became a sensation in its time, both on its own merits and because it was the work of a woman. The painting went on tour in Britain and North America

12-25 **Jean-François Millet,** *The Gleaners,* 1857. Oil on canvas, 33 x 44" (83.8 cm x 1.12 m). Musée du Louvre, Paris.





12-26 **Jean-François Millet,** *Grafting a Tree,* 1855. Oil on canvas, 32 x 39⅜" (81 cm x 1 m). Private Collection, USA.

and was widely available in reproduction. In 1887 it was bought by Cornelius Vanderbilt, who donated it to the newly founded Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Second Empire Peasant Painting: Millet and Jules Breton

The success of Rosa Bonheur's *Plowing in the Nivernais Region* at the Salon of 1850–51 suggested that there was a market for paintings of peasant life, provided that artists underplayed its wretchedness and emphasized its idyllic qualities or, at least, its dignity. Such affirmative views of peasant life, showing what one art historian has called "the bourgeois myth of rural society," became quite popular during the Second Empire and were actively promoted by the government. Although the founder of nineteenth-century peasant painting, Millet, continued to draw attention to the miserable fate of contemporary peasants, even he, gradually, came to prefer a more idealizing approach.

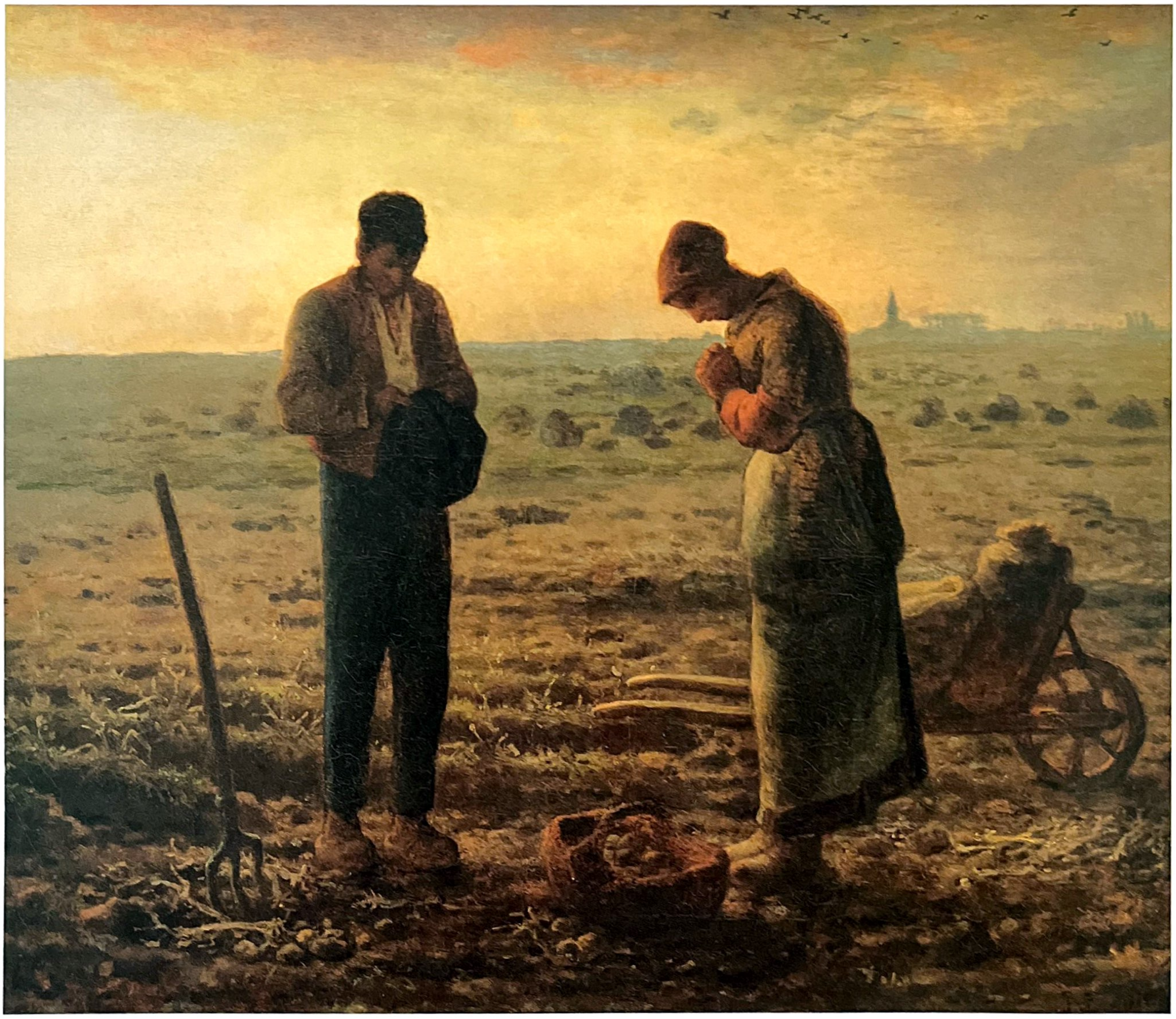
Millet's *The Gleaners* (FIG. 12-25), exhibited at the Salon of 1857, represents three women who are collecting stray ears of wheat left in the field after the harvest. In the nineteenth century gleaning was a privilege that was extended by wealthy farmers to the families of indigent farm laborers. Because there were so many of them and so little wheat to collect, gleaning was carefully supervised, as is suggested by the figure of the mounted constable in the background. In Millet's painting, the three gleaners, in their fusty, patched clothes, represent the poorest of the poor. By representing them bending down to the ground, the artist suggests the lowly, even debased position of peasants in nineteenth-century society. Yet, at the same time, the women's carefully orchestrated poses and gestures and the way their ponderous forms dominate the land lend them a sense of dignity and epic grandeur. By focusing on the activity of gleaning, moreover, Millet made an allusion to the biblical heroine Ruth, who gleaned in the field of Boaz. Thus his painting assumed a moralizing, even religious importance.

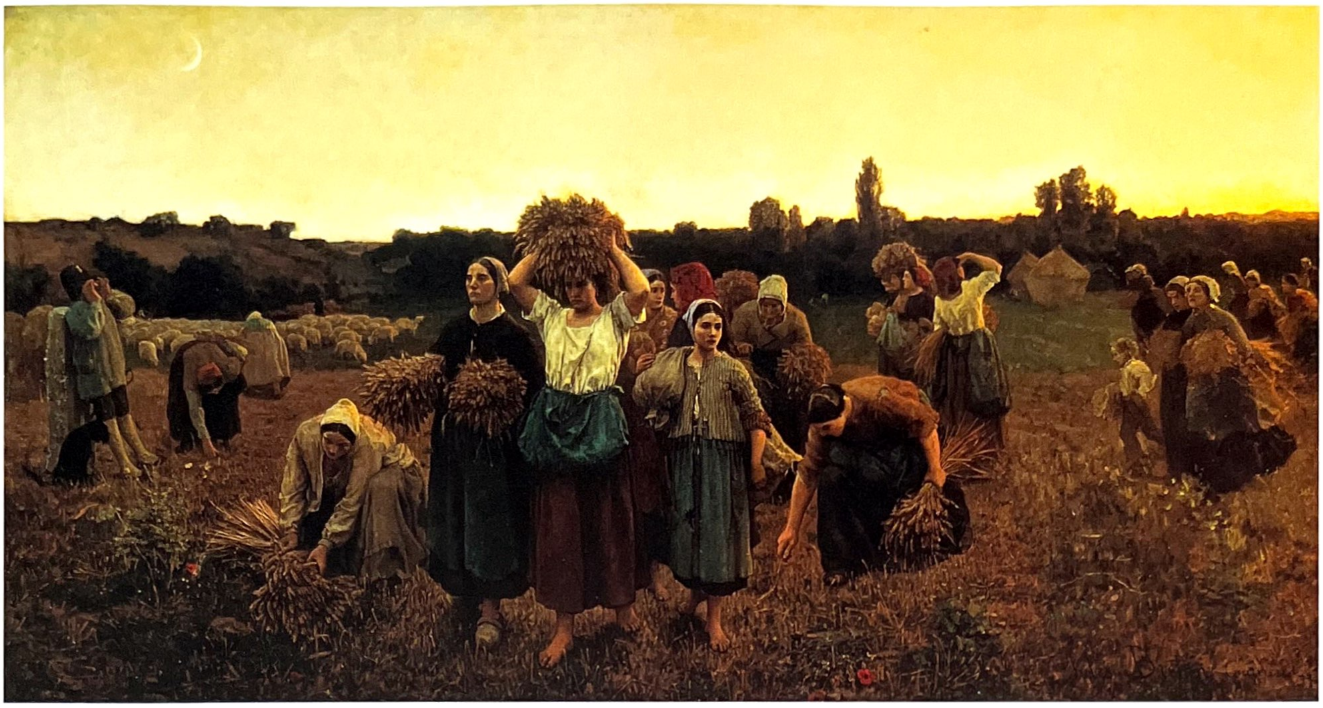
While in *The Gleaners* Millet ennobled the very wretchedness of peasant life, in *Grafting a Tree* (FIG. 12-26) he showed its idyllic qualities. This painting depicts a country family in front of their tidy, well-kept cottage. The farmer grafts a tree, while his young wife, carrying their small infant, looks on. Contented peasant pictures such as this one were popular among collectors, but that was not the only reason for their presence in Millet's *oeuvre*. *Grafting a Tree* was representative of a form of peasant life that actually existed in mid-nineteenth-century France. The peasant in Millet's painting is an independent farmer, master of his own small tract of land, which he cultivates himself with the help of his family. Millet's own father was such a farmer, so the painter knew this kind of peasant life firsthand. Yet he also realized that it was disappearing fast, since farming was turning into an industry in which huge tracts of land, owned by capitalist farmers, were cultivated by low-paid day laborers (as in *The Gleaners*).

As small farming waned, the nostalgia for an idyllic rural past increased. This explains the enormous success of Millet's *Angelus* (FIG. 12-27), begun in 1857 and completed in 1859. The painting shows a farmer and his wife interrupted as they labor to pull potatoes in their little plot. At sundown, they hear the toll of the "Angelus" bell in the village church. The farmer takes off his cap, his wife bows her head, and they recite the biblical text of the angel Gabriel's greeting: "Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariae . . . " (The angel of the Lord announced to Mary). To our modern eyes, the painting, showing the praying peasants set against the sunset, may seem over-sentimental. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, however, it was widely admired and became something of a cultural icon. In 1889 it was bought by an American consortium for the unprecedented sum of more than 500,000 francs. Sent on tour in the United States, it was billed as the most famous painting in the world.

While Millet's reputation was long and hard in the making, a slightly younger painter, Jules Breton (1827–1906), became the most widely recognized master of the peasant

12-27 **Jean-François Millet,** *Angelus*, 1859. Oil on canvas, 21⅞ x 26" (55.5 x 66 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.





12-28 **Jules Breton,** *Recall of the Gleaners,* 1859. Oil on canvas, 36 x 70⅛" (91.5 cm x 1.78 m). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

genre during the Second Empire. His paintings were repeatedly bought by the government, which preferred his positive, even epic, vision of peasant life to Millet's more challenging one. It is instructive to compare Breton's *Recall of the Gleaners* (FIG. 12-28) of 1859 with Millet's *The Gleaners*, exhibited two years earlier. In Breton's large painting a crowd of women is leaving the field, upon being recalled by the field guard on the left. In the center stands a tall young woman. Carrying a large bundle of grain on her head, she resembles traditional allegories of the harvest. On either side of her are other women, young and old, carrying heavy bundles and sacks of grain. Breton does not show the backbreaking labor of gleaning. Instead, his women look content as they carry away their rich bounty. Although the festive mood of the picture belies all that we know about nineteenth-century peasant life, contemporary critics praised Breton's painting for its realism. To them, the careful characterization of the women—every one lovingly painted from a model—as well as Breton's faithful rendering of their regional clothing and his apt characterization of the northern French landscape setting, rang more true than Millet's probings of the essence of peasant life.

Baudelaire and "The Painter of Modern Life"

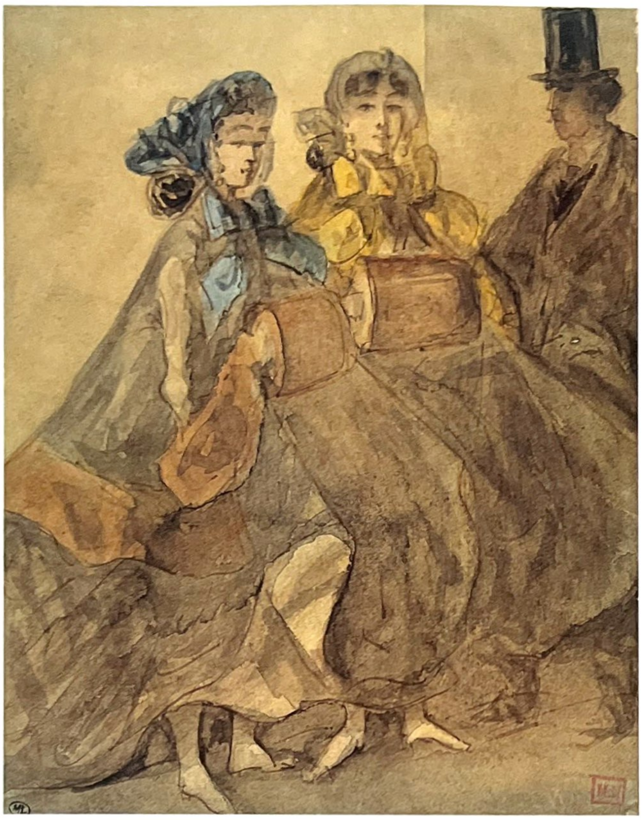
In his review of the Salon of 1846 (see page 258) Baudelaire had called for an art that would glorify life in the big city:

> The spectacle of elegant life and of the thousands of floating existences that circulate in the underground of a big city—criminals and kept women: the *Gazette des Tribunaux* and the *Moniteur* [two government papers that reported on crime in the city] prove to us that we only have to open our eyes to know our heroism.

Few artists of his generation answered his call. Yet Baudelaire did, eventually, find his painter of modern urban life in Constantin Guys (1802–1892), a now somewhat forgotten artist, who worked primarily in pencil and watercolor. To this artist, Baudelaire devoted a lengthy article in the well-known newspaper *Le Figaro*, entitled "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863). Born in Flanders, Guys had started his career as an illustrator for two British magazines, the *Illustrated London News* and *Punch*. During the first twenty years of his career, he had traveled around the world to record important historical events, such as the battles of the Crimean War. Living in Paris from the late 1850s onward, he spent the remainder of his life drawing street scenes, focusing on the comings and goings of the rich.

According to Baudelaire, Guys spent afternoons and evenings sauntering (the French use the verb *flâner*) on Haussmann's new boulevards, mingling with the elegant crowds. At night he sketched, from memory, the figures and scenes that had caught his eye. *Two Women Wearing Blue Feathers* (FIG. 12-29) is such a sketch. Like most of Guys's works, it is done in pencil and thinly washed watercolor, a medium that was eminently suited to depict momentary scenes of urban street life. Guys's watercolor almost certainly represents street walkers. Their extravagantly wide skirts, impudently lifted, and the blue feathers in their hair

Baudelaire and "The Painter of Modern Life" **291**



12-29 **Constantin Guys,** *Two Women Wearing Blue Feathers.* Watercolor, 8′5″ x 6′7″ (21.4 x 17.1 cm). Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

give them away. Guys was the chief recorder of what Baudelaire had mockingly called the "elegant life," and he showed it in all its phony splendor and underlying sadness. If he did not "heroicize" modern life in one or more large-scale oil paintings, he certainly created a monument to it in the sheer quantity of his drawings.

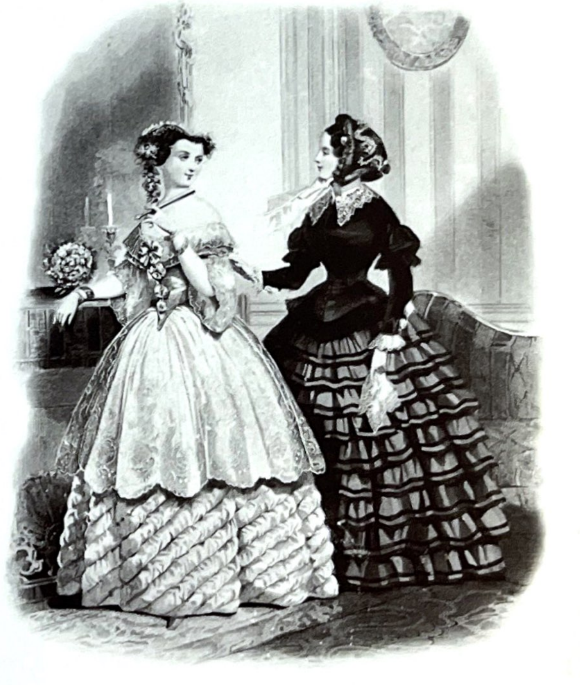
Guys's women, dressed and groomed in the latest styles, fascinated Baudelaire. He felt that they embodied "modernity," a newly coined term describing the state of transience and continual change that, the poet felt, characterized his times. It is not coincidental that the terms "modern" and "modernity" had their roots in the French word *mode* (fashion), for it was in women's fashions that the phenomenon of change was most clearly visible (see *Women's Fashions and Women's Journals*, below). Moreover, as Baudelaire keenly observed, the more women's fashions changed, the less they were useful as indicators of class. Indeed, in his essay on "The Painter of Modern Life," Baudelaire referred to the difficulty of distinguishing "ladies" from prostitutes. This was especially true during the Second Empire, when it was fashionable for men of wealth to set up mistresses in elegant apartments and give them handsome allowances. These kept women, or *cocottes*, defied traditional class boundaries. Coming from all walks of life, they formed the so-called *demimonde*, a shifting and unstable world that, to Baudelaire, was the breeding ground of modernity.

Women's Fashions and Women's Journals

The manufacturing of men's and women's clothing was one of the biggest industries of the nineteenth century. Thanks to the mechanization of spinning, weaving, dyeing, and even sewing, clothes could be produced much more cheaply and easily than a century earlier. As a result, they became a commodity rather than a necessity.

Clothing manufacturers found that they could increase sales by continually changing fashion trends, especially women's, so as to encourage them to renew their wardrobes on a regular basis. Publishers relied on manufacturers' need to advertise and women's desire to be informed by launching "ladies' journals," which were among the most lucrative publications of the nineteenth century. In them, as in *Vogue* and *Glamor* today, women could find pictures and descriptions of the latest dresses to wear in town, at home, or on the beach, as well as of the underwear to go with them—whalebone corsets to squeeze the waist, horsehair or iron-enforced crinolines to widen the skirts.

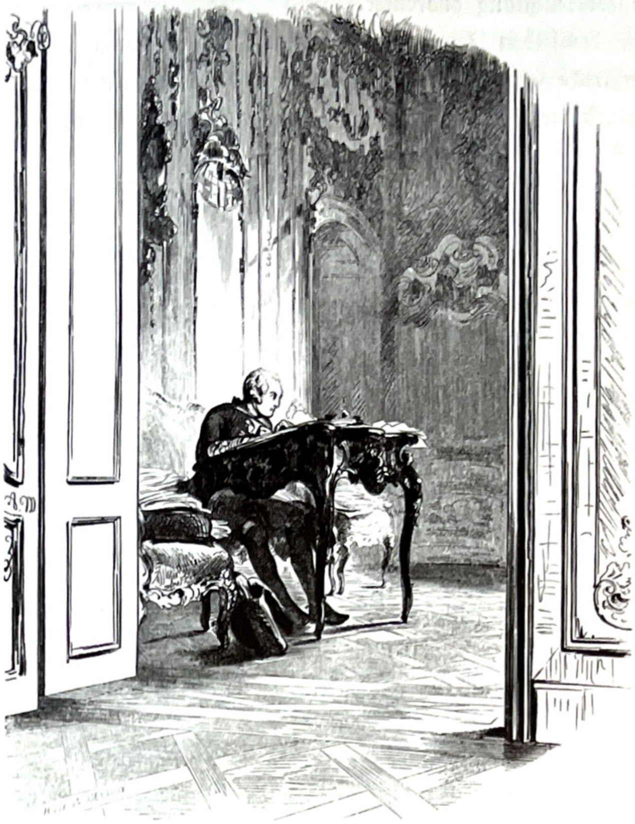
A fashion plate from *Le Moniteur de la Mode* (The Fashion Monitor; FIG. 12.3–1) exemplifies nineteenth-century fashion illustrations, which generally show two women in dresses for different occasions. Both the ball outfit and the visiting clothes in this illustration show the enormous skirts that were fashionable during the Second Empire and which reached their largest proportions in the late 1850s. They were lampooned by contemporary caricaturists such as Daumier, who showed the many difficult situations that crinolines would get women into.



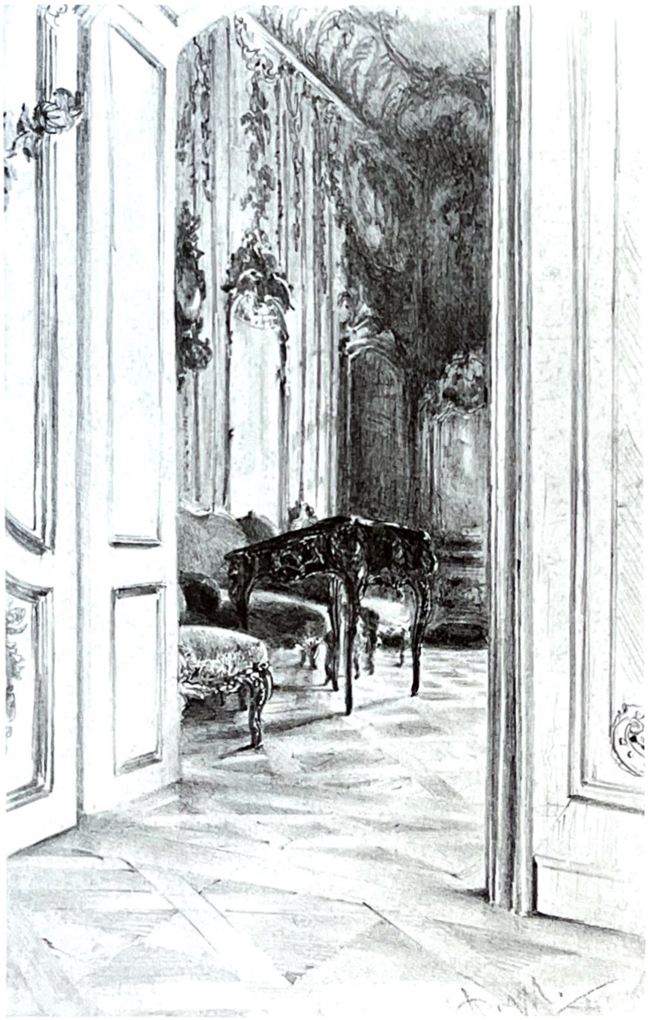
12.3–1 *Ball outfit and visiting clothes.* Illustration in *Le Moniteur de la Mode*, 1853. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Adolph Menzel

Although Piloty's mode of history painting became vastly popular in Germany, there were alternative approaches to history as well. One such alternative may be seen in the early work of Adolph Menzel (1815–1905), who, in a series of mid-size historical genre paintings, celebrated the world of the eighteenth-century Prussian king Frederick II (1712–1786), better known to us as "Frederick the Great."



13-13 **Adolph Menzel,** *The King at his Desk.* Illustration in Franz Kugler, *Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen,* 1840. Wood engraving, 43 x 33" (1.09 m x 85 cm). Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin.



13-12 **Adolph Menzel,** *Frederick the Great's Study in the Palace of Potsdam,* 1840. Pencil, 8⅛ x 5" (20.8 x 12.7 cm). Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin.

The son of a lithographic printer, Menzel had begun his career as a book illustrator. He first became known for his nearly 400 illustrations for Franz Kugler's *Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen* (History of Frederick the Great), published in Leipzig in 1840. Menzel's drawings for these illustrations, which were handed over to professional wood engravers for reproduction (see *Wood Engraving*, page 247) are now lost, but several preparatory drawings have been preserved. Most of these depict places where Frederick the Great had lived, which Menzel visited and sketched in order to give a greater sense of accuracy to his illustrations.

His drawing titled *Frederick the Great's Study in the Palace of Potsdam* (FIG. 13-12) was made in preparation for the illustration representing the king at his desk (FIG. 13-13). It shows the interior of the New or City Palace in Potsdam, one of Frederick the Great's residences (destroyed in 1945). To render the Rococo style of the palace suggestively, Menzel used a free and loose style of drawing that was quite different from the tight, classical contour drawing that was practiced in the academies during the

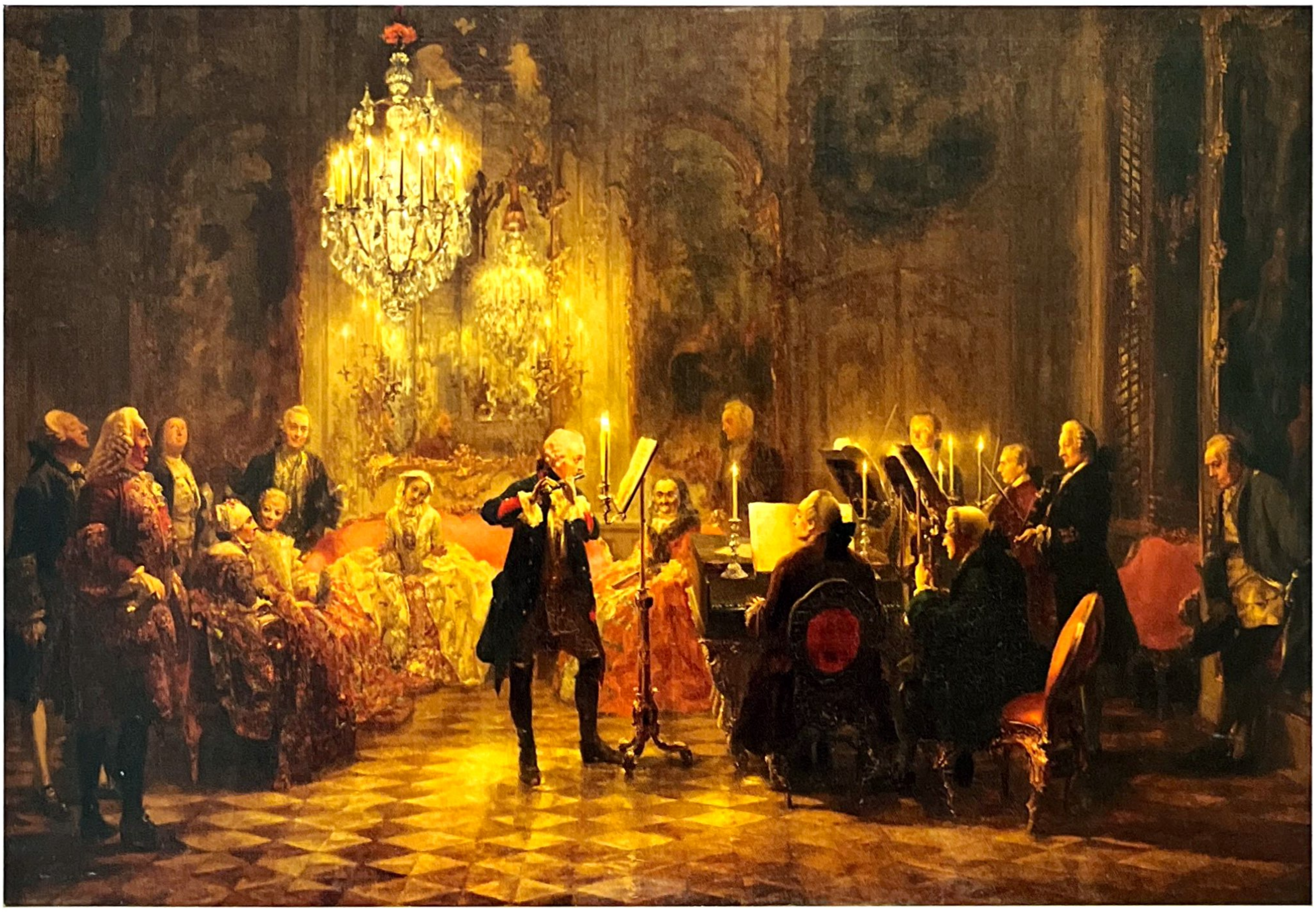
Biedermeier period. Although his technique was well suited to the artist's Rococo subject matter, it was criticized in most academic circles. Johann Gottfried Schadow (1764–1850), the director of the Berlin Academy, for example, referred to Menzel's illustrations as little more than "scrawls."

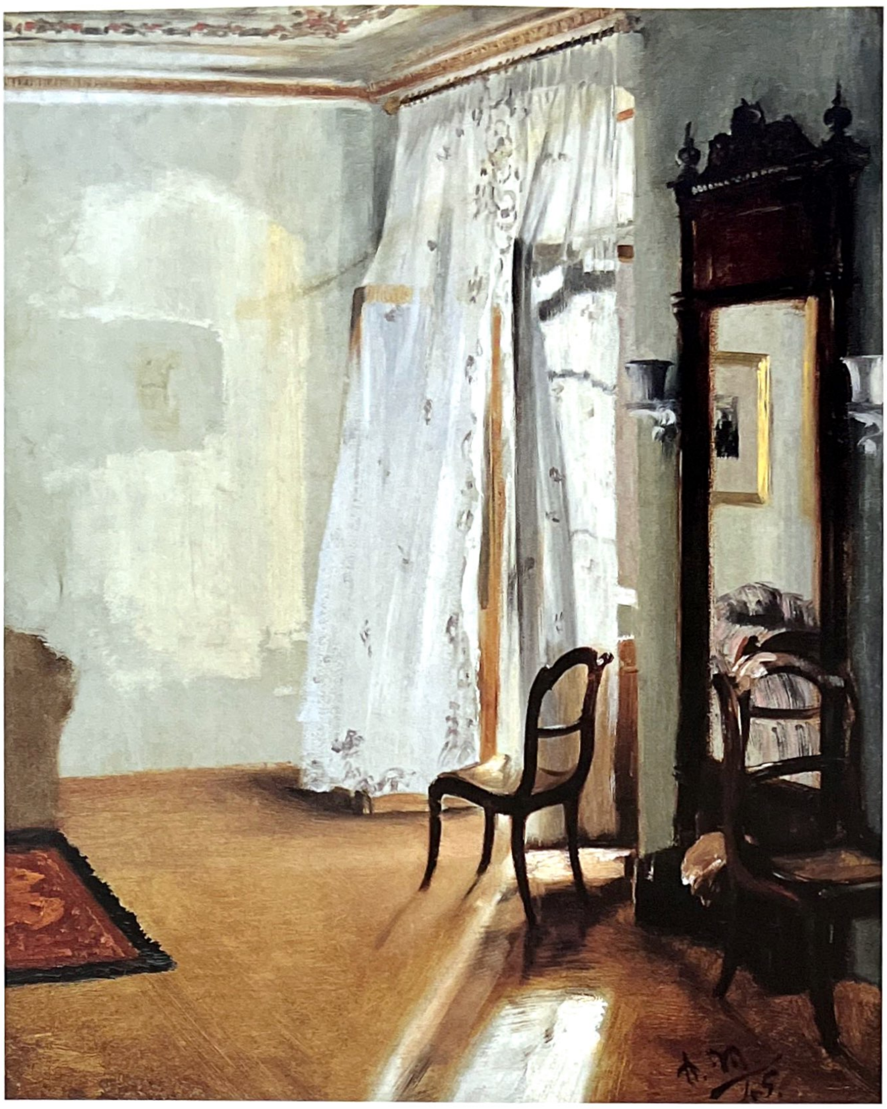
The success of Menzel's illustrations for the *Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen* led him to embark on a series of related paintings for the expositions of the Berlin Academy. Of these, *The Flute Concert of Frederick the Great at Sansouci* (FIG. 13-14) became most popular. Like many of the German princes, Frederick the Great was an enthusiastic amateur flute player. He played several nights a week, accompanied by his court chamber orchestra. In Menzel's painting, the King stands in one of the reception rooms at Sansouci, his garden palace at Potsdam. On his right, we see his court harpsichordist, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the son of Johann Sebastian Bach, who directs the royal chamber orchestra. On his left, a select audience composed of family members, friends, and courtiers listens politely to the music. One of the special attractions of this painting is its candlelight illumination. Two large glass chandeliers cast a soft light across the spectators and the King. The musicians remain in semi-darkness, except for the glow of the individual candles attached to their music stands.

Menzel's painting presents a view of history that was different both from the Renaissance-style history paintings of the Nazarenes and the new Realist style of history painting of Piloty. Like Meissonier in France, who was his exact contemporary, Menzel was primarily attracted to historical genre scenes. But he had no use for the miniaturist approach of Meissonier. As in his drawings, he deliberately modeled his style after Rococo painting (see Fragonard's painting in FIG. 1-8) in order to capture the ambience of the eighteenth century. Only in its unapologetically realistic portrayal of the figures (see especially the group on the left of the canvas) does the painting betray its nineteenth-century roots.

While Menzel habitually submitted historical genre paintings to the Academy exhibitions of the 1840s and 1850s, he was by nature more interested in portraying contemporary life, and it is in his paintings of the private and public spheres of Berlin, as well as the landscape scenery around the city, that his originality as an artist is most clearly visible. *Balcony Room* (FIG. 13-15), one of his best-known paintings, differs radically from *The Flute Concert*, not only because it depicts a contemporary interior, but also because it is about vision rather than narration. The painting shows one side of a sparsely furnished bedroom, its French windows opened wide, with a breeze swaying

13-14 **Adolph Menzel,** *The Flute Concert of Frederick the Great at Sansouci,* 1852. Oil on canvas, 4′8″ x 6′8″ (1.42 x 2.05 m). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.





13-15 **Adolph Menzel,** *Balcony Room,* 1845. Oil on board, 22⅞ x 18" (58 x 47 cm). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

the long lace curtains. Two Biedermeier chairs stand, back to back, beside a mirror that reflects the other half of the room. The painting hints strongly at a human presence, and even encourages us to imagine some scenario that may have led to the strange configuration of the furniture; but that search proves futile, forcing us to concentrate on the purely visual aspects of the work.

Thus we begin to marvel at the early morning light and gentle breeze which Menzel has so successfully captured. We also become intrigued by the different degrees of precision with which the forms are rendered. While the mirror and the chair are highly detailed, the wall in the background is loosely sketched. The varying degrees of "focus" in Menzel's painting may be related to contemporary photography. Using the primitive cameras of the period, focusing on one object inevitably meant that others would be fuzzy. It may also be related to the growing interest in visual perception, advanced by the German scholar Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894), and the ensuing realization that the human eye does not see everything in its visual field with equal precision.

Tableaux Vivants

The staged character of Menzel's *Flute Concert of Frederick the Great at Sanssouci* made it an appropriate model for *tableaux vivants* or "living pictures." The social practice of the *tableau vivant*, in which a group of people would dress up and strike poses in order to create the effect of a painting, was popular in the nineteenth century. *Tableaux vivants* could be imaginary pictures, in which the subject and composition were conceived by the performers, or they could be modeled after well-known paintings by Old Masters or modern artists.

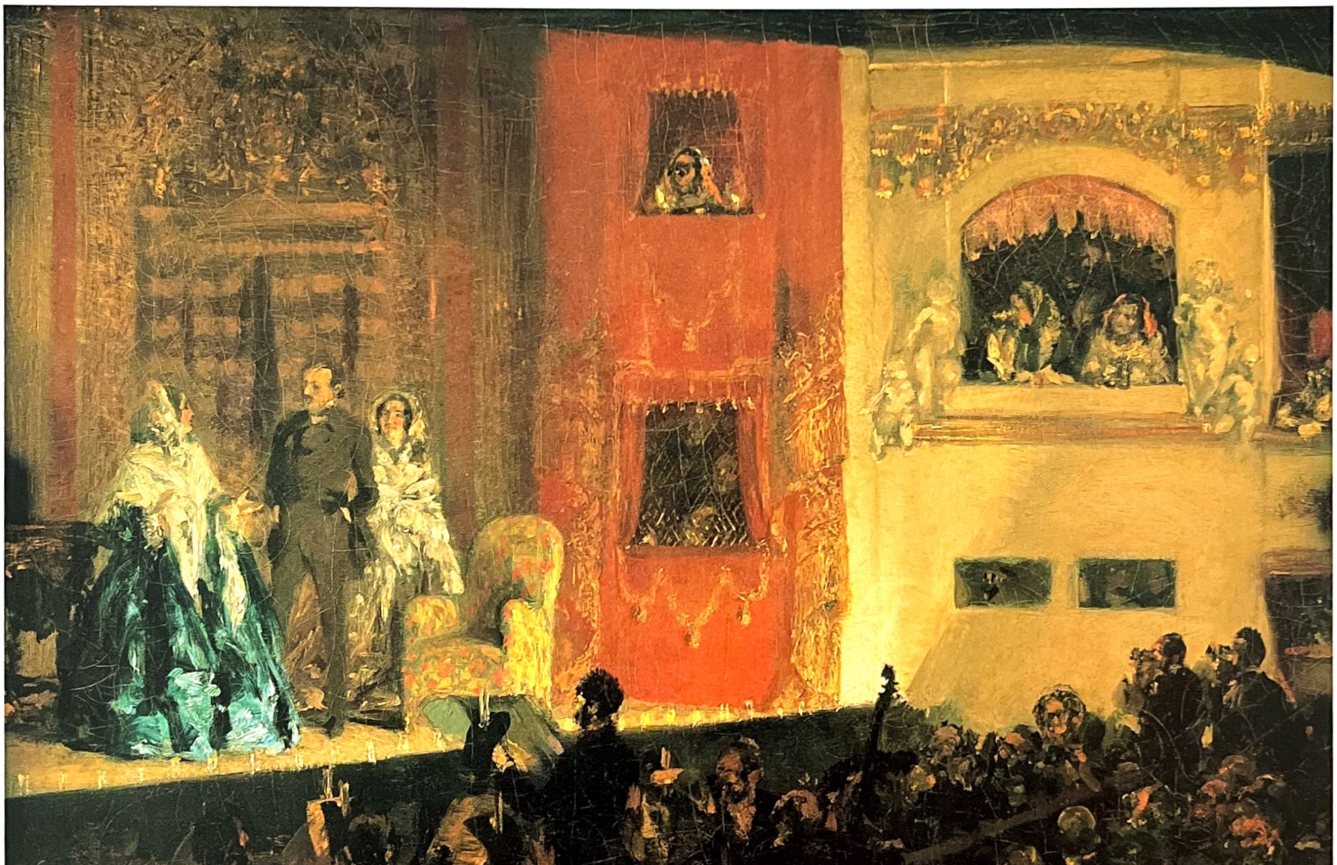
The staging of *tableaux vivants* was both a parlor activity and a popular pastime in art academies, where students would often go to great lengths to "recreate" famous masterpieces of the past. For Menzel's seventieth birthday the students of the Berlin Academy staged the *Flute Concert*, even arranging for the "actors" to perform a piece by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach.

Balcony Room was not exhibited during Menzel's lifetime. The artist probably considered it as a mere sketch. Moreover, its contemporary subject matter fell outside the scope of his early exhibition strategy, which privileged historical scenes. It was not until the late 1850s that Menzel began to exhibit landscape paintings and scenes of contemporary life. This change in his policy may be due to a visit to the International Exhibition of 1855 in Paris (see pages 361 and 364). There he must have seen the work of Gustave Courbet, who for several years had loudly proclaimed that artists should paint the reality of their own time rather than an imagined historical past. *The Théâtre du Gymnase* (FIG. 13-16), exhibited in Berlin in 1861, was a direct result of Menzel's trip. Anticipating the works of the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists (see FIGS. 16-34 and 17-5), the painting depicts a view of a Parisian stage. Like *Balcony Room*, *The Théâtre du Gymnase* presents evidence of Menzel's interest in perception. Its elevated oblique viewpoint and the tripartite division of the painting into stage, orchestra pit, and audience suggest the view that a spectator would have from a balcony seat. The painting's dramatic contrasts between light and dark further enhance the sense of the reality of the theatrical experience.

Despite its steady movement towards Realism, nineteenth-century painting rarely treated industrial scenes, although these were commonly illustrated in newspapers and magazines. Artists tended to focus on peasants rather than factory workers; neither Courbet nor Millet painted industrial scenes. Menzel generally avoided such scenes as well, with one noteworthy exception. His *Iron Rolling Mill*, or *Modern Cyclops I* (FIG. 13-17) was one of the most striking industrial paintings to emerge from the nineteenth century. This monumental work, measuring some 5 feet by 8½, was exhibited in Berlin in 1876 and again at the Paris International Exhibition of 1878.

Menzel's *Iron Rolling Mill* represents the interior of a rolling mill for train rails in the artist's native region of Silesia (now in Poland). The painting centers around one of the mills, attended by several workers whose faces are dramatically lit by the glow of the red-hot molten iron. On the periphery of this scene, we see workers at rest—drinking, eating their lunch, or washing the sweat from their faces and backs. In the distance, additional mills are visible.

13-16 **Adolph Menzel,** *The Théâtre du Gymnase*, 1856. Oil on canvas, 18⅛ x 24⅜" (46 x 62 cm). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.



Menzel's painting contains few hints of the sympathy toward workers that marks the early works of Courbet and Millet. *Iron Rolling Mill* was painted at a time when Bismarck's government was aiding industrial capitalists so that the country could compete on the international market, a move generally applauded by the middle class. Although the first volume of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, with its grim description of the lives of British workers, was published in Berlin in 1867 and, again, in 1873, few Germans appear to have taken more than an intellectual interest in it. Menzel seems to have been interested in the factory as a new kind of heroical subject rather than as a focus for his social concerns. His lengthy description of the painting, composed for its exhibition in 1879, reveals his interest in the industrial process and the worker's role in it, rather than his sympathy with the working class.

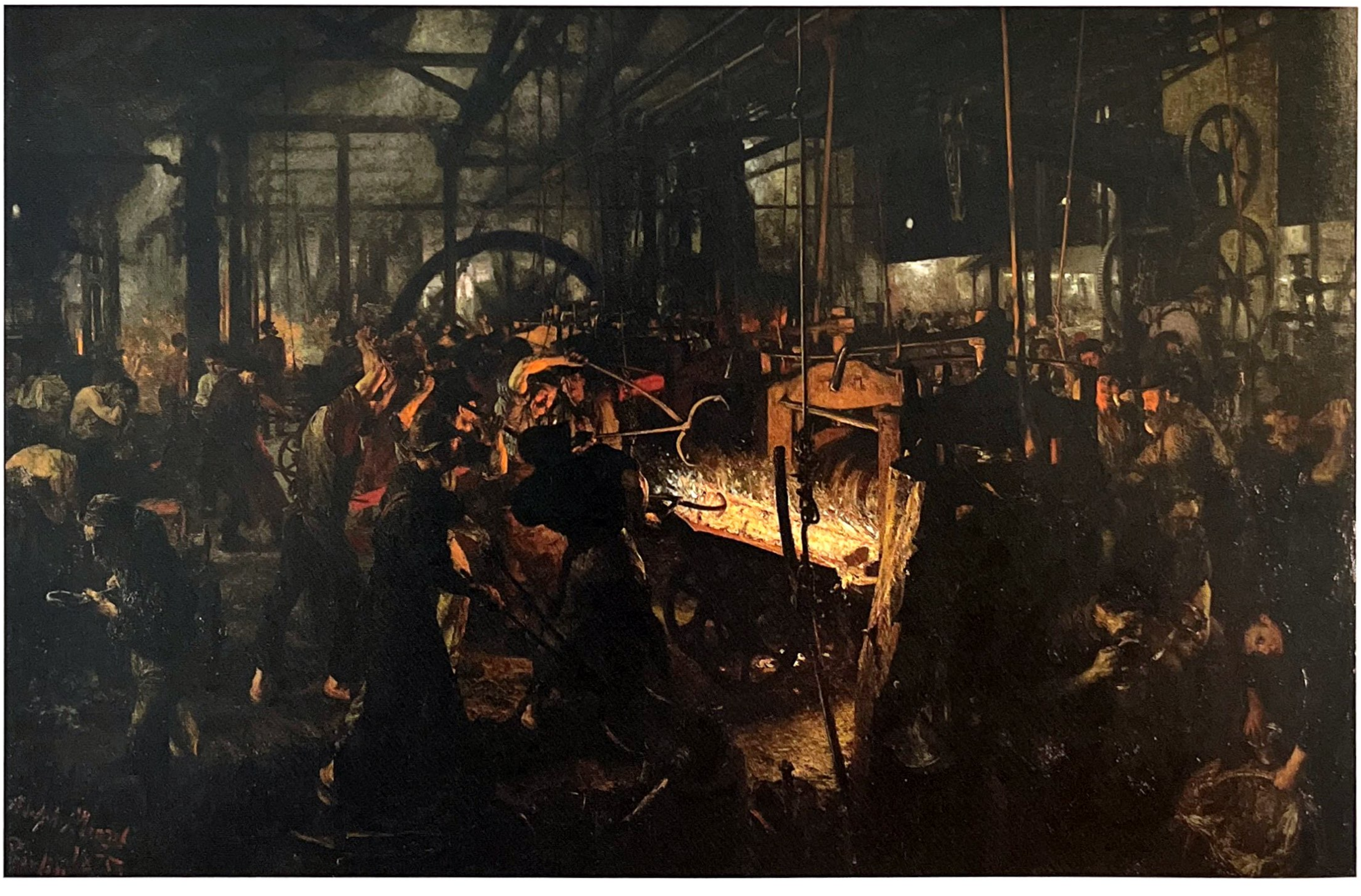
Realism and Idealism: Diverging Trends in the Early 1870s

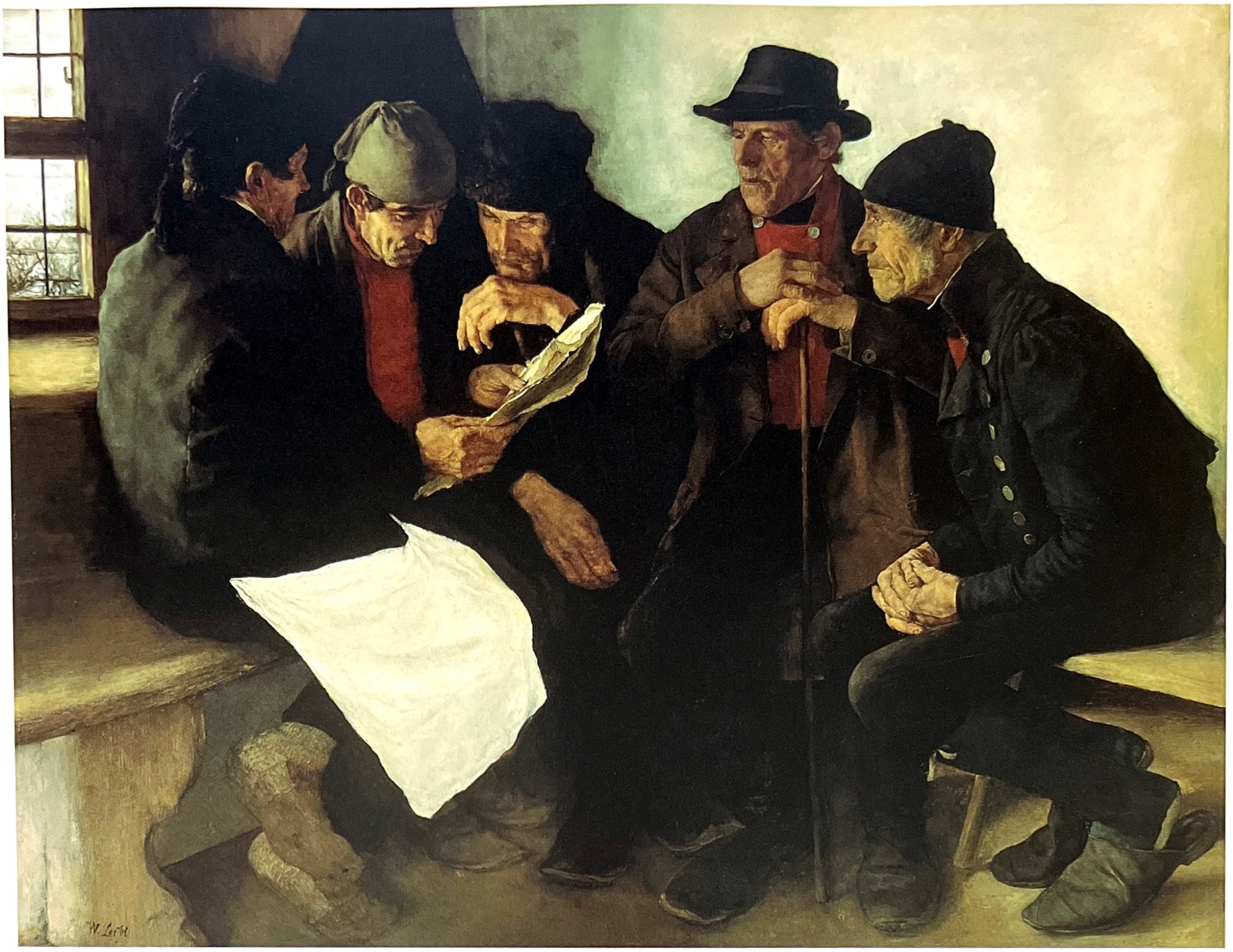
Although Menzel, even in his own time, was recognized as one of the greatest artists of nineteenth-century Germany, his influence was limited. Indeed, his work had less of an impact on German art of the third quarter of the nineteenth century than the work of French artists, most notably Courbet. The latter's influence on young German artists in the late 1860s and early 1870s led to the formation of several regional Realist movements, especially in the cities of Frankfurt and Munich.

Courbet's importance for German art has often been linked to the artist's stay in Munich in 1869. The recipient of a Bavarian Cross at the Great International Art Exhibition of 1869, he became acquainted with several German artists, including the young Wilhelm Leibl (1844–1900), whose works Courbet singled out as the best in the show. As a result, Leibl received an invitation to travel to Paris, where he studied contemporary French painting.

In its close-up representation of country life, *Village Politicians* (FIG. 13-18), painted in 1876–7, is reminiscent of Courbet's early works, such as *A Burial at Ornans* and *The Stonebreakers* (see FIGS. 11-3 and 11-7). Five villagers of various ages are huddled together in a room, focusing intently on a newspaper held by one of them. Presumably, the paper contains a list of those who are eligible to vote. Leibl's characters show suspense and

13-17 **Adolph Menzel,** *Iron Rolling Mill*, or *Modern Cyclops I*, 1872–5. Oil on canvas, 5′2″ x 8′4″ (1.58 x 2.54 m). Nationalgalerie, Berlin.



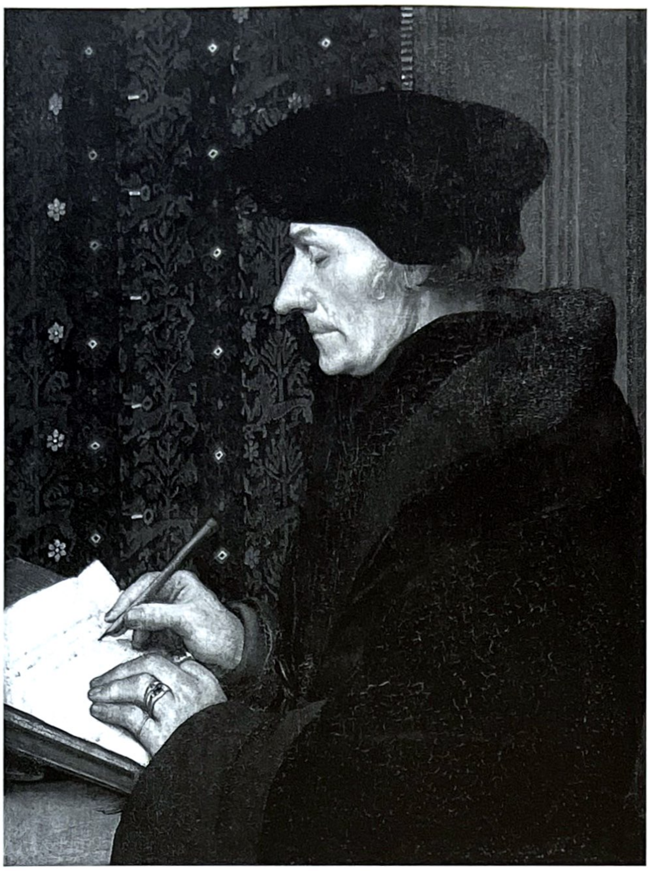


13-18 **Wilhelm Leibl,** *Village Politicians,* 1876–7. Oil on canvas, 29¾ x 38⅛″ (56.6 x 96.8 cm). Museum Oskar Reinhart am Stadtgarten, Winterthur, Switzerland.

tension in their facial expressions and gestures, as they await this crucial information. Leibl goes beyond Courbet in his scrupulous attention to physiognomy, pose, and gesture, all for the purpose of achieving greater psychological truth. His sharp-focus Realism may be credited to his interest in photography as well as his study of sixteenth-century German portraits by such artists as Dürer and, especially, Hans Holbein (1497/8–1543), with whom Leibl's mature work has often been compared. Holbein's works, such as his famous *Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus* (FIG. 13-19), may have inspired Leibl's crisp contours, his emphasis on faces and hands, and, above all, the keen characterization of his figures.

Just when Leibl achieved his first artistic successes in the early 1870s, a number of German artists were rejecting both the sentimental realism of Biedermeier artists and the new forms of Realism of Menzel and Leibl. This reaction was prompted by a distaste, among young artists and intellectuals, for bourgeois materialism and the increasing commercialization of the art world. Realism, these artists felt, was both a symptom and a consequence of these phenomena. Like the Nazarenes before them, they were drawn to the idealism of Classical sculpture and Italian Renaissance painting; many of them spent prolonged periods of time in Italy. Unlike the Nazarenes, however, these anti-Realists did not form a coherent movement, and worked in very different styles.

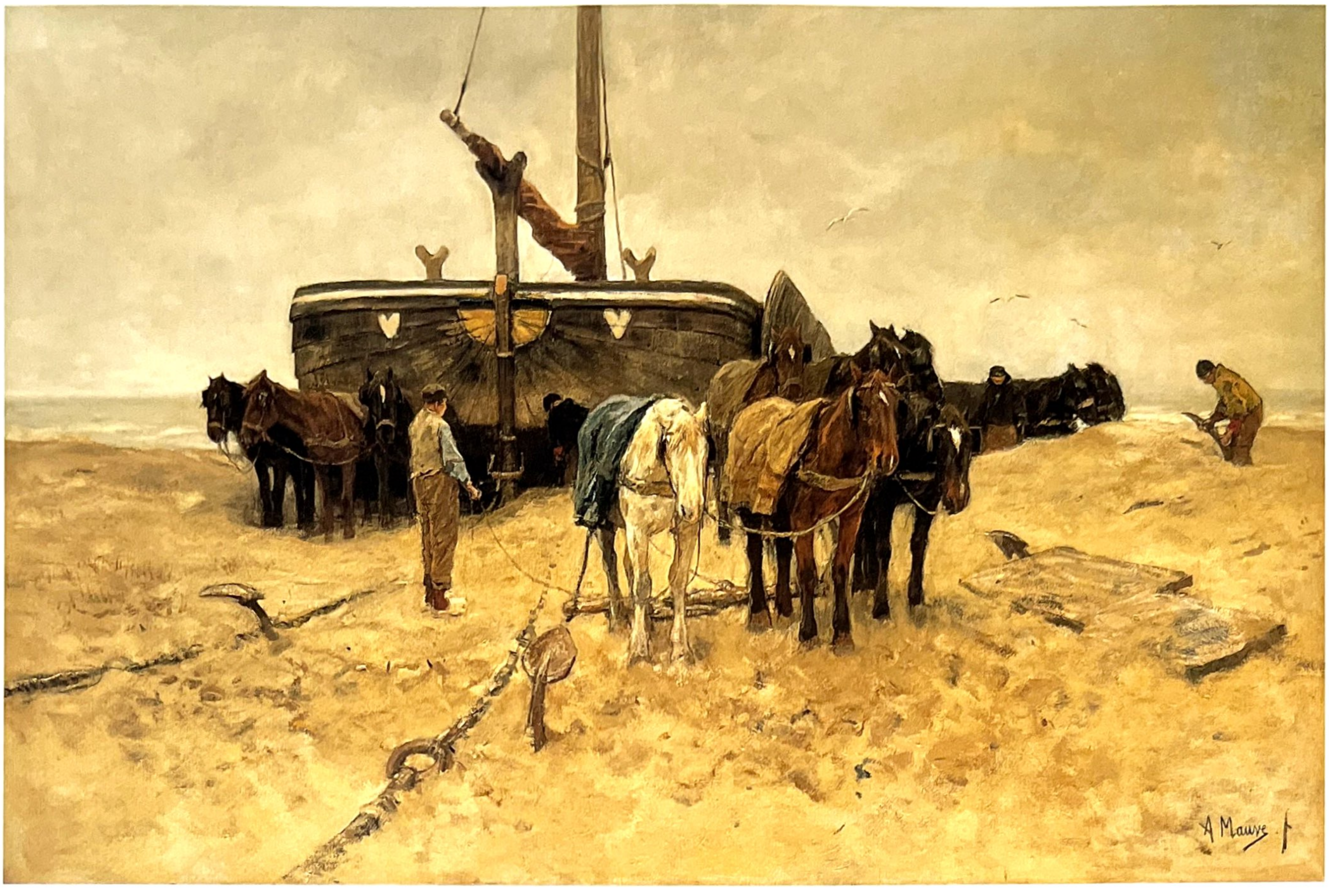
Hans von Marées (1837–1887) is perhaps the best-known painter in this category of late nineteenth-century German artists. Although he started out as a Realist, Von Marées became interested in Renaissance art in the 1860s, when he went to Italy to copy Italian paintings for a German collector. Several years later, in 1873, he was commissioned to paint five large frescos depicting scenes of life in the Bay of Naples for the German zoological



13-19 **Hans Holbein,** *Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus,* 1523. Oil on panel, 16½ x 12½" (42 x 32 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

observatory in that city. *Orange Grove of Sorrento* (FIG. 13-20) is one of these. It shows an orange grove with a nude male, seen from the back, reaching up to pick an orange from the tree. Lying on the ground next to him is a nude boy playing with an orange. Another child, dressed and seated, looks on; behind the two children, an old man digs at the soil. The painting has been interpreted as an allegory of human life, representing its different stages: the playfulness of youth, the fruitful labor of adulthood, and the preparation for death and eternity of old age. It conveys a feeling of peacefulness and earnestness, evoking a Utopian world in which all men are equal and conflict is unknown. Indeed, the work may be seen as a reinterpretation of the Classical Golden Age or even the biblical notion of Paradise.

The careers of Leibl and Von Marées suggest that there were two main paths for German painters of the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, the glory period of the German Empire. One was the path of Realism, which would lead German artists on to the road of the international Naturalist movement of the late nineteenth century (see pages 384 and 447). The other was that path of idealism, which became the precursor to the Symbolist movement (see page 483).

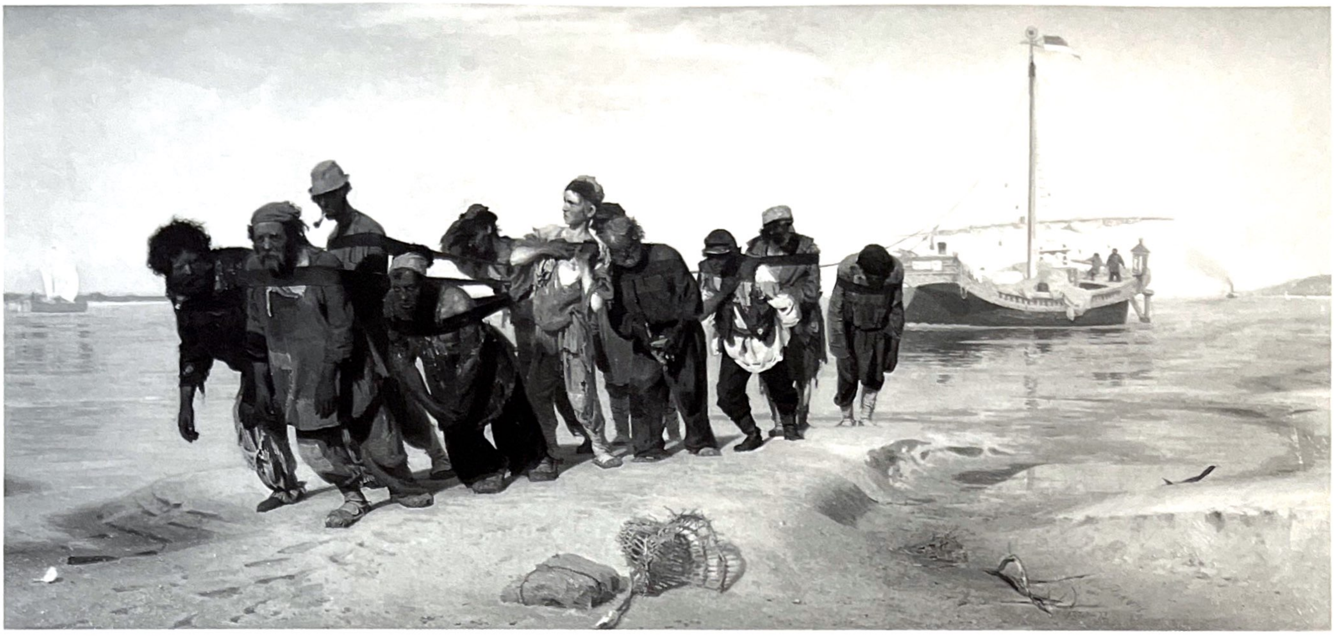


18-20 **Anton Mauve,** *Fishing Boat on the Beach,* 1882. Oil on canvas, 45 x 67" (1.15 x 1.72 m). Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.

Russian Painting

Critics of the art exhibitions of 1889 were generally disappointed by the showing of Russian art, which, they felt, compared poorly with the exhibits of other countries. The problem, apparently, was not that there was no great Russian art in 1889, but that too little of it had been sent to Paris. The Russian exhibit was dominated by older, conservative artists, while young, promising painters were represented only with minor works.

In Russia, as in western Europe, an anti-academic move-



18-21 **Ilya Repin,** *Barge Haulers on the Volga,* 1870–73. Oil on canvas, 4′4″ x 9′3″ (1.31 x 2.81 m). Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

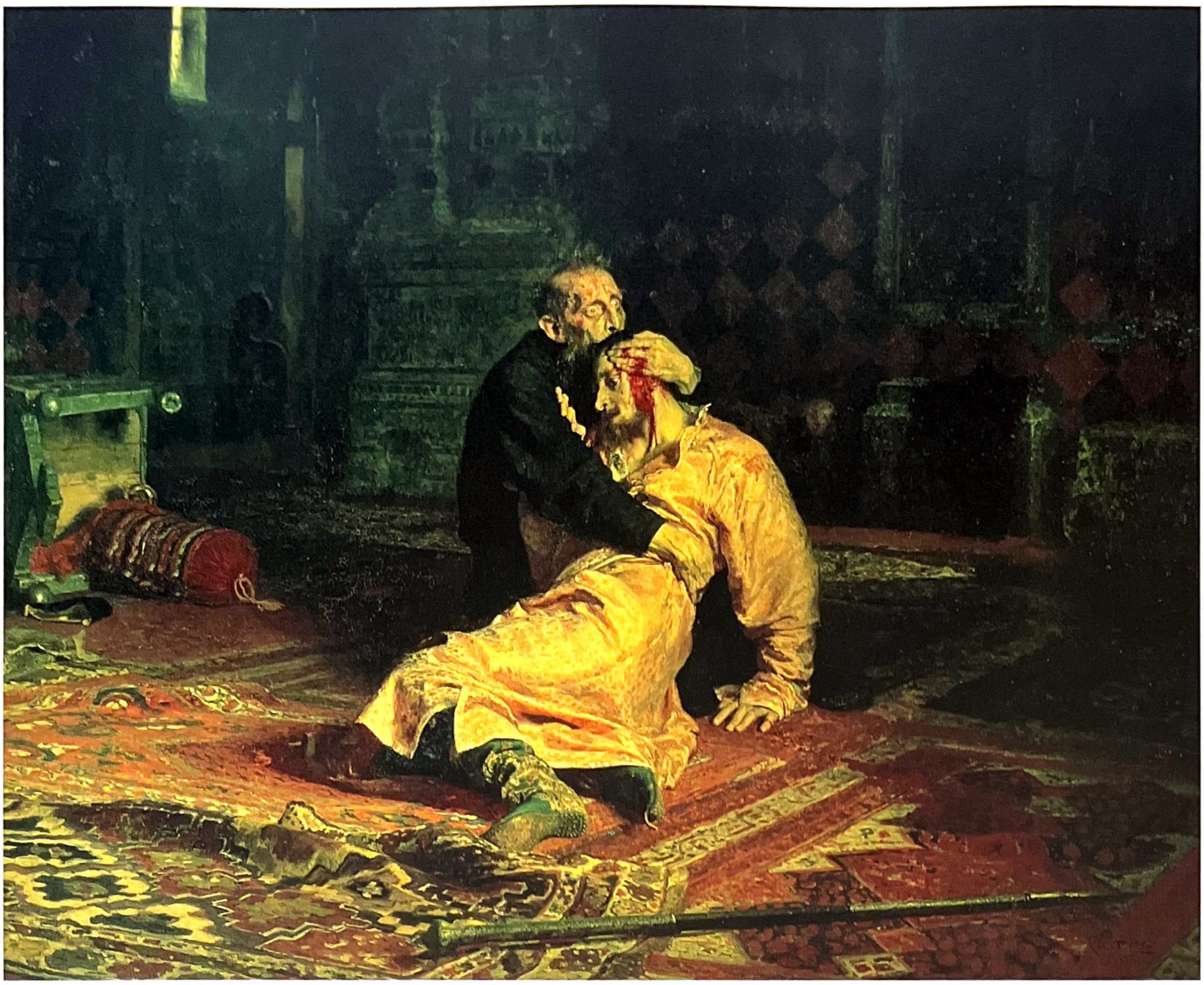
ment had developed around the middle of the century. In 1863 thirteen Russian artists had seceded from the Academy and formed a society called the Wanderers (*Peredvizhniki*). The name was a reference to their practice of forgoing academic exhibitions in order to organize traveling exhibitions in the Russian countryside for the benefit of society at large. Like Realism in France and the Pre-Raphaelite movement in Britain, the Russian rebel movement was both anti-academic and anti-Romantic. The Wanderers believed that art should represent real life and comment on it. They rejected the "art for art's sake" philosophy of the older generation and insisted that art be an agent of social reform. They had use neither for the large-scale history paintings that were produced by the leaders of the St Petersburg Academy nor for the sentimental scenes of Russian life produced by older painters such as Vasili Perov (see FIG. 15-21).

One of the leading painters to exhibit his work regularly in the Wanderers' exhibitions was Ilya Repin (1844–1930). Before joining the group, Repin had made his debut at the Academy with a strikingly non-academic work, *Barge Haulers on the Volga* (FIG. 18-21), a large canvas that shows a team of ten men towing a heavy barge on the still waters of the Volga river. Although painted ten years after serfdom had been abolished in Russia, the painting shows that that edict had done little to alleviate the fate of the underclass in Russia. Indeed, the bargemen, yoked to the barge with leather straps and ropes, are doing the work that was more often done by animals.

Repin's work differs from that of the French Realists, most notably Courbet and Millet, in that the Russian artist has taken great pains to paint individual portraits of the barge haulers, a motley group of different ages and ethnic groups. While the French Realists had "de-individualized" their subjects to show how hard and demeaning labor takes away people's humanity, Repin instead shows the psychological effects that labor has on the haulers. Some look resigned to their fate, others seem rebellious, indifferent, or simply too exhausted to have any emotions at all. Like Millet, however, Repin presents his *Barge Haulers* both as an image of suffering and as an example of the dignity and strength of the lower classes.

Barge Haulers on the Volga was seen at the 1873 exhibition of the St Petersburg Academy by the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881), who was greatly impressed by it. Sharing, like many Russian intellectuals, Repin's feeling of personal responsibility for the fate of the poor, Dostoevsky wrote in his *Writer's Diary*, a monthly publication: "You can't help but think that you are indebted, truly indebted to the People . . . You will be dreaming of this whole group of barge haulers afterward; you will still recall them fifteen years later!"

Like many Russian artists during the 1880s, Repin turned away from Realist subject matter toward themes from Russian history. This trend was closely related to the growth of Russian nationalism, which caused Russians to become intensely interested in their history and folklore. *Ivan the Terrible and his Son Ivan on November 15, 1581* (FIG. 18-22) is one of the most famous and dramatic of Repin's history paintings. It depicts Ivan, Russia's first czar, who murdered his son and heir in a fit of rage. The event was important historically, because it led to the "Time of Troubles," a period of crisis that ended only with the establishment of the Romanov dynasty, which still ruled Russia in the nineteenth century. But Repin's painting was connected to contemporary events. In 1881 the Russian czar, Alexan-



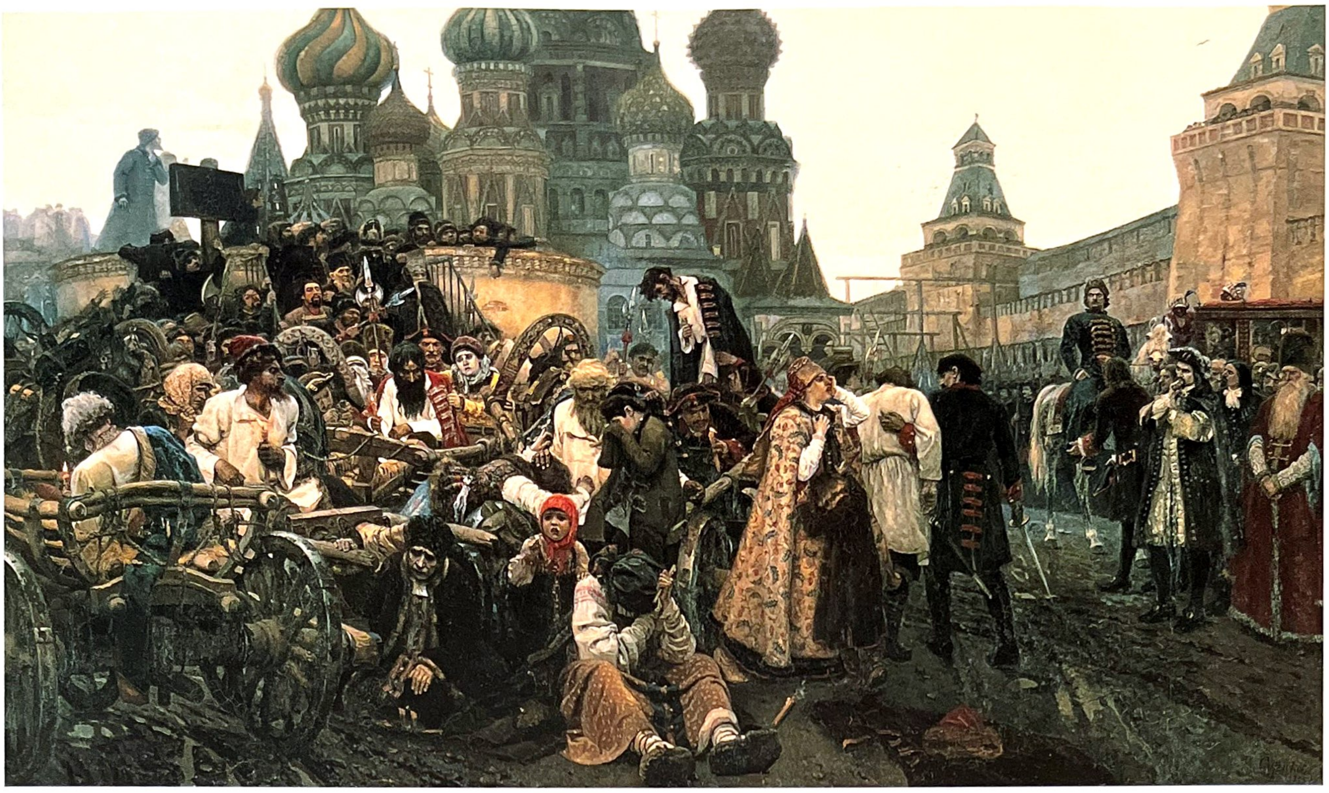
18-22 **Ilya Repin,** *Ivan the Terrible and his Son Ivan on November 15, 1581,* 1885. Oil on canvas, 6′4″ x 8′4″ (2 x 2.54 m). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

der II, had been murdered by a revolutionary terrorist, an event that led to a period of bloody government reprisals. Touched by the "unbearable tragism of history," Repin painted *Ivan the Terrible and his Son Ivan* as a way to show the senselessness of killing one's kin, one's fellow countrymen. Repin's painting stands out not merely by its convincing rendering of setting and costumes but also by the psychological insight he has brought to the two figures—Ivan's son, whose life is slipping away, and Ivan himself, who, his fury gone, realizes what he has done. His face and hands covered with blood, he embraces the limp body of his son as his features are distorted in a frightful expression of regret and despair.

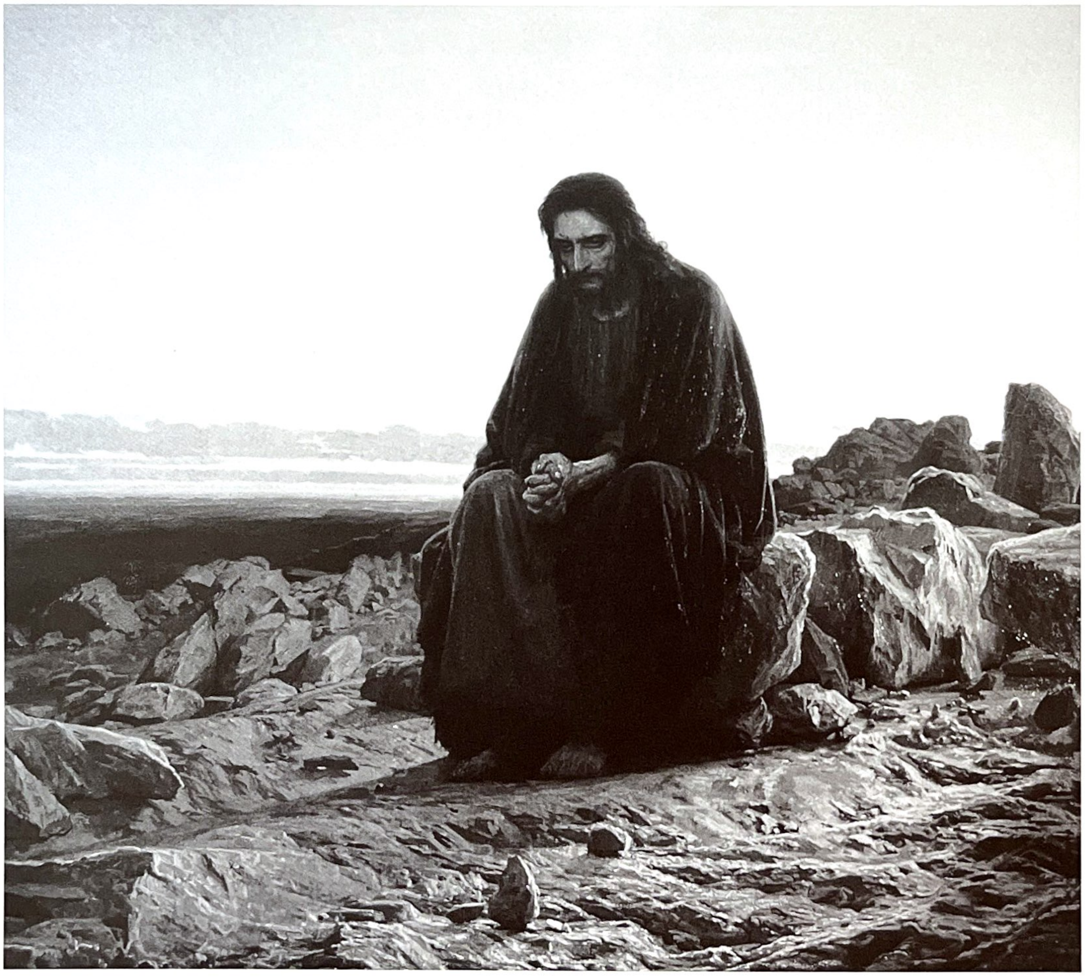
Next to Repin, two important members of the Wanderers were Vasili Surikov (1848–1916) and Ivan Kramskoy (1837–1887). Surikov is famous for his enormous multi-figure history paintings that depict important events in Russian history. His *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy* (FIG. 18-23) depicts the notorious moment in Russian history when Peter the Great ordered the execution of hundreds of Streltsy, members of a corps of musketeers from which the czar's bodyguard had traditionally been recruited. Peter the Great's distrust of the Streltsy was triggered by their undue political influence, which he intended to crush by having them exiled or put to death. Even today, tourists in Moscow are taken to the place, in front of St Basil's Church on Red Square, where the Streltsy were executed, suggesting that the event is etched deep into Russian historical consciousness.

Surikov's history paintings owe their impact to their epic proportions, their multi-figure compositions, and the meticulous care with which the setting and each figure in the scene have been depicted. His paintings seem to anticipate some of the huge film dramas of the twentieth century—*War and Peace,* most immediately, comes to mind—in the attention to historical truthfulness and the magnitude of their conception.

Kramskoy's *Christ in the Wilderness* (FIG. 18-24), in comparison, is a simple painting. It represents a unique attempt to create a modern Russian religious painting. Russian reli-



18-23 **Vasili Surikov,** *The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy,* 1881. Oil on canvas, 7′2″ x 12′5″ (2.18 x 3.79 m). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.



18-24 **Ivan Kramskoy,** *Christ in the Wilderness,* 1872, 5′11″ x 6′11″ (1.8 x 2.1 m). State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

gious art had always taken the traditional form of icon painting. Icons, even in the nineteenth century, were painted in the Byzantine style, the origins of which went back to the Middle Ages. Most icons were painted by artists specializing in this genre, such as Ivan Bunakov, the earliest teacher of Repin. Kramskoy's preoccupation with the creation of a modern, Russian image of Christ was related to new attitudes toward religion among the Russian intelligentsia during the last decades of the nineteenth century. These attitudes, most clearly articulated by the writer Lev Tolstoy (1828–1910), are marked by a distrust of the Orthodox Church and its clergy and a new emphasis on personal faith. Christ, in this new belief context, was seen not in the first instance as a member of the Holy Trinity, but as a wise and moral being, who, during his life on earth, had followed his conscience and loved his fellow men.

Kramskoy's painting shows Christ in the wilderness, having fasted for forty days and forty nights. According to the Bible, the devil came to tempt him, telling him to use his divine powers by commanding that the stones be turned into bread. But Christ answered: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). In Kramskoy's painting the emphasis is on the psychological struggle that goes on within Christ as he considers his options. Shall he give in to his hunger and change the stones into bread, or follow his mission, namely to live out his life on earth as a human being, according to God's will? The representation of Christ as a lone figure in a forlorn, deserted landscape exemplifies Kramskoy's view of the place of modern man in the world. Alone, living in a spiritual desert, he must follow his conscience, even if it appears that no one cares or even pays attention.

The 1889 Exposition in Review

Naturalism and nationalism were the two factors that determined the aspect of most of the art that was exhibited at the exposition of 1889 in Paris. Naturalism, by the late 1880s, had become an international style that lent a formal similarity to works from different nations. Nationalism, by contrast, led to difference, especially in content and subject matter. It caused artists to select scenes and subjects that, they felt, were characteristic of their own countries. Frequently their paintings represented traditional rural customs that were in the process of disappearing as urbanization and industry encroached upon the countryside. In addition, nationalism led some artists, beginning with Bastien-Lepage (for example in his *Joan of Arc*) and continuing with such artists as von Uhde, Repin, and Kramskoy, to return to historical and religious painting in an attempt to imbue both with a new spirit that was both chauvinistic and modern.