FRENCH DRAMATIC LITERATURE AND FRENCH EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PAINTING FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

Study of the mode of life of primitive peoples is one of the best confirmations of the basic principle of historical materialism, that men's consciousness is determined by their being. Here, to confirm this, it is enough to recall the conclusion which Buecher reached in his brilliant study *Arbeit und Rhythmus*. He wrote:

> "I came to the conclusion that, at the first stage of development, labour, music and poetry were fused together, but that the basic element of the three was labour, while the other two were only of secondary importance."

Buecher states that the origin of poetry is to be sought in labour—"der Ursprung der Poesie ist in der Arbeit zu suchen." And no one familiar with the literature on this subject will accuse him of exaggeration.[1] Objections against his work by competent persons did not concern the essence, but only certain secondary peculiarities of his viewpoint. Fundamentally, Buecher was undoubtedly right.

But his conclusion applies only to the *origin* of poetry. What can be said of its *further development*? What is the situation as regards poetry, and art in general, at a higher level of social development? Is it possible, and at what levels, to observe the existence of causal ties between *being* and *consciousness*, between the technique and the economics of society, on the one hand, and its art on the other?

In seeking to answer this question, we shall, in the present article, base ourselves on the history of French eighteenth-century art. But the following reservation is necessary at the outset.

From the sociological point of view, the first characteristic of French eighteenth-century society is that it was divided into classes. This circumstance could not fail to affect the development of art. Let us take the theatre as an example. In the middle ages, in France as in the whole of western Europe, farce, as it is called, occupied the predominant place in the theatre. Farces were written for the people and played before the people. They always served as an expression of the people's views, their aspirations and —what is important to note here—their dissatisfaction with the upper classes. But farce began to decline from the reign of Louis XIII, when it was classed as an entertainment appropriate only to lackeys and unworthy of people of refined taste: "*Éprouvés des gens sages,*" as a French writer said in 1625. In place of farce, tragedy appeared. French tragedy, however, has nothing in common with the views, aspirations and sufferings of the masses of the people. It is the creation of the aristocracy and expresses the outlook, tastes and aspirations of the upper classes. We shall see presently how deep an imprint was left by its class origin on the entire character of French tragedy.

First, however, we would draw the reader's attention to the fact that at the time when tragedy arose in France, the aristocracy of that country did not engage in any productive work; it lived on the products created by the economic activities of the "third estate." It is easy to see that this fact could not fail to influence those works of art which originated in aristocratic circles and which expressed the tastes of those circles.

Consider an example taken from the life of the New Zealanders. Some of their songs are about the growing of sweet potatoes, and these songs are often accompanied by dances, in which are reproduced the movements made by the natives in cultivating these plants. Here may be clearly seen the influence of men's productive activities on their art; and it is no less clear that, since the upper classes do not engage in productive work, art arising in their midst cannot have any direct relation to the social productive process. Does this mean, however, that in a society divided into classes the causal dependence of men's consciousness on their being is weakened? No, it means nothing of the sort, since the division of society into classes is itself conditioned by society's economic development. And if the art created by the upper classes bears no direct relation to the productive process, this also, in the last analysis, is to be explained by economic causes. It becomes evident that here, too, the materialist explanation of history applies;

---

[1] Moritz Hœrnes writes of primitive ornament that "it could only develop on the basis of industrial activities" and that peoples such as the Ceylon Veddas who are unfamiliar with industrial activities of any kind have no ornaments either (*Urgeschichte der bildenden Kunst in Europa*, Vienna, 1898, p. 38). This conclusion is similar to Buecher's, cited above.

only in this case, it goes without saying that it is not so easy to discover the unquestionable causal ties between being and consciousness, between the social relations, which arise on the basis of "work," and art. For there are several intermediate links here between "work" on the one hand, and art on the other—and the fact that these often attract the entire attention of investigators renders more difficult a correct understanding of the phenomena.

Having made this necessary reservation, let us now turn to our subject, and deal first of all with tragedy.

> "French tragedy," says Taine in his *Philosophy of Art*, "appears at a time when the well-organised and noble monarchy of Louis XIV is establishing aristocratic elegance, magnificence, court life; it disappears as soon as the nobility and manners of the court fall beneath the blows of the revolution."

This is quite true. But the historical process of the rise, and particularly of the fall, of French classical tragedy was somewhat more complex than is represented by the famous theoretician of art. Let us examine this type of literary production from the point of view of its form and its content.

From the point of view of form, our attention is drawn first of all to the famous *Three Unities*,[1] which later caused so much argument in the period memorable in the annals of French literature, of the struggle between the romantic and the classical schools. The theory of the "unities" had been known in France as far back as the Renaissance, but it only became a law of literature, an undisputed rule of "good taste" in the seventeenth century. "When Corneille[2] wrote his *Mélite* in 1629," writes Lanson, "he knew nothing as yet of the three unities."[3]

It was Mairet who, around 1630, became the propagandist of the three unities. In 1634 his tragedy *Sophonisbe* was staged—the first tragedy written according to the "rules." It aroused controversy in which the enemies of the "rules" advanced arguments which recall, in many respects, the later reasoning of the romantics. The learned admirers of ancient literature ("les érudits") hastened to the defence of the three unities, and won a decisive and lasting victory. To what did they owe their victory, however? Not, certainly, to their "erudition," which interested the public very little; but rather to the growing fastidiousness of the upper class, for whom the naïve theatrical incongruities of the previous epoch were becoming unbearable.

> "Behind the unities lay an idea which was bound to appeal to persons of good breeding" Lanson continues, "the idea of an accurate imitation of reality, capable of evoking the appropriate illusion. The real significance of the unities was that they represented the minimum of convention. . . . Thus the triumph of the unities was in fact the victory of realism over imagination."[1]

In this way what really triumphed was the refinement of aristocratic taste, which developed step by step with the strengthening of the "noble and benevolent monarchy." Later developments of stage technique would have made the accurate imitation of reality possible without observing the unities. But the idea of the unities had meanwhile become associated in the minds of theatre-goers with a whole number of other cherished conceptions; and for this reason it acquired an independent value, as it were, based on what were allegedly the indisputable demands of good taste. Subsequently the rule of the three unities was reinforced, as we shall see below, by other social factors, and for this reason the theory was defended even by those who hated the aristocracy. The battle against the unities became a very hard one: the romantics had to display much ingenuity, steadfastness and an almost revolutionary energy to overthrow them.

With regard to stage technique, there is a further point to be noted.

The aristocratic origin of French tragedy left its imprint, among other things, on the technique of the actor as well. Everyone knows, for example, that French acting technique is distinguished even up to the present time by a certain artificial and even stilted manner, which creates a rather unpleasant impression on the spectator unused to it. No one who has seen Sarah Bernhardt will dispute this. This style of acting was inherited from the time when classical tragedy dominated the French stage. The aristocratic society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would have been very displeased if tragic actors had conceived the idea of playing their parts with the simplicity and naturalness with which an Eleanora Duse, for example, charms us today. Simple and natural acting was in direct contradiction to all the requirements of aristocratic aesthetics.

---

[1] *The Three Unities*: a conception borrowed from ancient Greek drama, meaning unity of time, place and action. Unity of time demanded that the events represented in the drama must be confined within a single day; unity of place demanded that the characters must not travel a greater distance than was possible within the time allowed; unity of action demanded the close knitting together of the plot, with no extraneous scenes.—TRANS.

[2] *Pierre Corneille*, 1606–1684: One of the masters of classical French tragedy. His plays include *Le Cid, Horace, Cinna*.—TRANS.

[3] *Histoire de la littérature française*, p. 415. [In the original, Plekhanov wrote *Médée*—to which the remark of Lanson also applies: but the tragedy of *Médée* appeared in 1635. *Mélite* is a comedy.—TRANS.]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 416.

"The French do not rely on costume alone to give the actors and the tragedy the nobility and dignity they demand," writes the Abbé Dubos with pride. "We also like our actors to speak in a tone of voice louder, more grave and more sustained than that of everyday speech." This way of speaking is more difficult, but it has greater dignity. Gesture must correspond to tone, Dubos continues, because "we require our tragic actors to assume an air of greatness and superiority in all they do."

But why were actors expected to show greatness and superiority? Because tragedy was the offspring of the court aristocracy and the main characters in the tragedy were kings, "heroes" and, generally speaking, "highly placed" persons whose rank made it necessary for them to seem, if not to be, "great" and "superior." A dramatist whose works lacked the necessary conventional dose of aristocratic "superiority" would never have won the applause of the audience of the day, however great his talent.

This can be best seen from the opinions on Shakespeare expressed at that time in France, and, under French influence, in England too.

Hume found that Shakespeare's genius should not be over-rated. Deformed bodies often appear bigger than they really are. Shakespeare was good for his time, but he was not good enough for a refined audience. Pope expressed regret that Shakespeare wrote for the people and not for "society."

> "Shakespeare would have written better," he said, "if he had enjoyed the patronage of his sovereign and of the court."

Voltaire himself, who in his literary work was the mouthpiece of the new age that was hostile to the "old order," and who gave many of his tragedies a "philosophical" content, paid a tremendous tribute to the aesthetic conceptions of aristocratic society. He considered Shakespeare a genius, but a crude barbarian nevertheless. His opinion of *Hamlet* is highly symptomatic.

> "This play," he wrote, "is full of anachronisms and absurdities. Ophelia's burial takes place on the stage, such a monstrous spectacle that the famous Garrick cut the graveyard scene. . . . The play abounds in vulgarities. The watch says in the opening scene, for example, 'not a mouse stirring.' Can one imagine such an incongruity? A soldier may undoubtedly talk like this in the guard-room, but not on the stage, before the first people of the land—personages who speak a noble language, and in whose presence one should express oneself no less nobly. . . . Picture to yourselves, gentlemen, Louis XIV in his Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, surrounded by a brilliant court—and then picture a clown, clad in rags and tatters, pushing his way among the heroes, great men and beauties who make up this court. He suggests that they abandon Corneille, Racine and Molière for a mountebank, who has flashes of talent, but who pulls faces. How do you think this proposal would be received?"

These words of Voltaire's reveal not only the aristocratic source of French classical tragedy, but also the reason for its decline.[1]

Refinement easily turns to affectation, and affectation excludes any serious and penetrating treatment of a theme. And not only its treatment. The range of choice of subjects was bound inevitably to become restricted under the influence of the class prejudices of the aristocracy. Its class conception of what was "correct" clipped the wings of art. In this connection, the demands made of tragedy by Marmontel were extremely characteristic and instructive.

> "A nation which is both peaceful and well-bred," he wrote, "in which everyone considers himself obliged to adapt his ideas and feelings to the customs and morals of society, a nation in which the proprieties are law, can only admit characters softened by deference for those around them, and vices which are softened by propriety."

Society manners became the criterion by which works of art were judged. This was sufficient to bring about the decline of classical tragedy. But it does not sufficiently explain the appearance on the French stage of a new kind of dramatic work. Nevertheless, about 1730–40 there did appear a new literary genre—the so-called "*comédie larmoyante*" (sentimental comedy), which for some time enjoyed considerable popularity. If consciousness is to be explained by being, if the so-called spiritual development of mankind is causally dependent on its economic development, then eighteenth century economics should explain for us, among other things, the appearance of the "sentimental comedy." Can it do so?

---

[1] We may note in passing that it was precisely this aspect of Voltaire's views that repelled Lessing, who was the consistent ideologist of the German burghers, and this is very clearly brought out by F. Mehring in his book *Die Lessingslegende.*

It not only can, but it has in part already done so—though, it is true, without recourse to any rigorous method. Let us take Hettner, for example, who, in his history of French literature, considers the "sentimental comedy" as a consequence of the growth of the French bourgeoisie. But the growth of the bourgeoisie, as of any other class, can only be explained by the economic development of society. And so, without suspecting or desiring it, Hettner, who is a great enemy of materialism (about which, it may be said in passing, he has the crudest notions) arrives at a materialist explanation of history. And it is not only Hettner who does this. Brunetière, in his book, *Les époques du théatre français,* reveals even better than Hettner the causal dependence which we are seeking.

He writes:

> From the failure of Law's bank onwards—to go no further back—the aristocracy loses ground every day. Everything a class can do to discredit itself, it hastens to do. . . . But above all, it ruins itself while the bourgeoisie, the third estate, enriches itself in proportion, grows in importance and acquires a new consciousness of its rights. Existing inequalities appear ever more abominable, abuses more insupportable. Hearts are 'great with hatred,' as a poet has since expressed it, and 'athirst for justice.' . . . Is it possible that, with such a means of propaganda and action as the theatre at its disposal, the bourgeoisie should not use it? That it should not take as matter for serious treatment, almost for tragedy, those inequalities which only amused the author of *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* and *Georges Dandin*? And above all, could this already triumphant bourgeoisie reconcile itself to the constant portrayal on the stage of emperors and kings, or refrain from spending some of its savings, if one may so express onself, on having its own portrait painted?

Thus the "sentimental comedy" was a portrait of the French bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century. That is quite true. It is, therefore, not surprising that it is also known as bourgeois drama. But Brunetière's opinion, correct as it is, is nevertheless too general and, therefore, too abstract. Let us try to develop the point in somewhat greater detail.

Brunetière writes that the bourgeoisie could not reconcile itself to the constant portrayal only of emperors and kings on the stage.

In the light of the explanations he gives in the excerpts we have quoted this is very probable—but so far only probable. And it will only become indubitable when we have familiarised ourselves with the psychology of at least some of the people who played an active part in the literary life of France at that time. One of these was, undoubtedly, the talented Beaumarchais,[1] the author of several "sentimental comedies." What did Beaumarchais think of the constant portrayal of nothing but emperors and kings?

He was resolutely and passionately opposed to it. He caustically derided the literary custom which made kings and the mighty of this world the heroes of tragedy, while comedy lampooned only people of lower degree.

> Depict middle-class folk in misfortune! *Fi donc!* They should always be laughed at. Comic citizens and a tragic king: that is the entire scope of the theatre. I will take note of that.[2]

This caustic outburst by one of the outstanding ideologists of the third estate seems to confirm the psychological conclusions of Brunetière cited above. But Beaumarchais did not only want to depict middle-class people in "misfortune." He also protested against the convention of choosing the leading characters in "serious" dramatic works from amongst the heroes of the ancient world.

> "What have revolutions in Athens and Rome," he asks, "to do with me—a peaceful subject of an eighteenth century monarchic state? What interest have I got in the death of some Peloponnesian tyrant or the sacrifice of some princess in Aulis? All this is no concern of mine and nothing of the slightest importance to me emerges from it."[3]

The choice of heroes from the ancient world was one of the extremely numerous manifestations of that fascination with the ancient world, which was itself an ideological reflection of the struggle of the new social order, in process of being born, against *feudalism.* This fascination with ancient civilisation was carried over from the Renaissance to the epoch of Louis XIV, whose age, it will be remembered, was readily compared with that of Augustus.

But when the bourgeoisie began to be imbued with opposition sentiments, when "hatred, together with a thirst for justice," was born in its heart, the fascination with the heroes of antiquity, which had been fully shared by its former representatives, began to appear out of place—and the "events" of ancient history to seem insufficiently instructive. The hero of bourgeois drama became the contemporary "man of middle estate," more or less idealised by the bourgeois ideologists of the day. This characteristic circumstance, of course, could not injure the "portrait" that Brunetière speaks of.

---

[1] *Pierre Beaumarchais,* 1732–1799: leading French playwright, satirist of the manners of his day, outstanding in the literary struggles preceding the French bourgeois revolution of 1789.—TRANS.

[2] *Lettre sur la critique du Barbier de Séville.*

[3] *Eugénie, avec un essai sur le genre dramatique sérieux, Oeuvres* I, p. 11.

But to continue. The real creator of bourgeois drama in France was Nivelle de la Chaussée. What do we find in his numerous works? Revolt against every aspect of aristocratic psychology, a struggle against the prejudices—or, if you prefer it, the vices—of the nobility. What his contemporaries valued above all in his works was the moral instruction they contained.[1] And from this angle, too, the "sentimental comedy" was true to its origins.

We know that the ideologists of the French bourgeoisie were not very original in their attempts to "portray" this class in their dramatic works. They did not create bourgeois drama—they simply transferred it from England to France. In England this type of dramatic work had arisen at the end of the seventeenth century as a reaction against the terrifying depravity which then held sway on the stage and which reflected the moral decline of the English aristocracy of the day. In its fight against the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie wanted to make comedy "worthy of Christians," and began to preach in it its own morality.

The French literary innovators of the eighteenth century who, by and large, borrowed from English literature everything that was appropriate to the position and the feelings of the French bourgeoisie in opposition, transferred bodily into France this aspect of the English "sentimental comedy." French bourgeois drama is no less successful than the English in preaching the virtues of bourgeois family life. Therein lay one of the secrets of its success, and therein, too, lies the key to what at first sight appears utterly incomprehensible—the fact that French bourgeois drama, which about the middle of the eighteenth century seems to be a firmly established literary form, fairly rapidly recedes into the

---

[1] d'Alembert writes of Nivelle de la Chaussée: "Both in his literary work and in his private life he held to the rule that that man is wise whose desires and aspirations are in keeping with his means." This is an apologia for equilibrium, moderation and correctness.

background in the face of classical tragedy, instead, as one might have expected, of the other way about. We shall see in a moment how this strange fact is to be explained. But before doing so, it will be as well to add one thing more.

Diderot[1] who, by nature a passionate innovator, could not fail to be carried away by bourgeois drama, and who, as we know, himself tried his hand at the new literary form (his *Le fils naturel* of 1757 and *Le Père de famille* of 1758 come to mind), wished to see on the stage, not character, but situations, and, more precisely, social situations. To this the objection was made that the social situation is not in itself enough to determine personality. "What is a judge in himself?" he was asked (*le juge en soi*). "What is a merchant in himself?" (*le négociant en soi*). Herein lay a great misunderstanding, however. For Diderot did not have in mind the judge or merchant "in himself," but rather the merchant and, particularly, the judge *of that day*. And that celebrated comedy, *Le mariage de Figaro*, proved that the judges of the day contributed a good deal of instructive material for very lively theatrical presentation. Diderot's demand was only a literary reflection of the revolutionary aspirations of the French "middle estate" of the day.

But it was precisely the revolutionary character of these aspirations that prevented French bourgeois drama from finally ousting classical tragedy.

Child of the aristocracy, classical tragedy held unchallenged and undivided sway on the French stage as long as the aristocracy held undivided and unchallenged sway, limited only by the existence of the absolute monarchy, which in its turn was the historical result of a fierce and prolonged class struggle in France. When the rule of the aristocracy began to be questioned, and when the "middle estate" was seized by a mood of opposition, the old literary conceptions began to appear unsatisfactory to them, and the old theatre insufficiently "instructive." At this point bourgeois drama appeared, side by side with classical tragedy which was declining rapidly. In bourgeois drama the French "man of middle estate" contrasted his own domestic virtues with the profound depravity of the aristocracy. Nevertheless, the social contradiction which the France of that day had to solve was insoluble merely by preaching morality. The question at issue was not the elimination of aristocratic vices, but the elimination of the aristocracy itself. It is obvious that this could not be done without a bitter struggle, and it is no less understandable that the father of the family (*le père de famille*), despite all the undoubted respectability of his bourgeois morality, could not serve as an example of a tireless and dauntless fighter. The literary "portrait" of the bourgeois did not inspire heroism. Yet the enemies of the old order felt the need of heroism, and recognised the need to develop the *civic* virtues among the third estate. Where at that time could they find examples of such virtues? In the same place where examples of literary taste had formerly been sought—in the ancient world.

---

[1] *Denis Diderot,* 1713–84: French materialist philosopher, Encyclopædist and leading bourgeois realist writer.—TRANS.

And so, once again, the passion for ancient heroes appeared. The enemy of the aristocrat now no longer says, as did Beaumarchais:

> What interest, can I, as a citizen of an eighteenth-century monarchic state, have in revolutions in Athens or Rome?

Athenian and Roman "revolutions" once again began to arouse the liveliest interest in the public. But the interest in them was of a totally different character.

If the young ideologists of the bourgeoisie were now interested in the "sacrifice of the young princess of Aulis," it was because she served, primarily, as material for the unmasking of "superstition." And if their attention could be attracted by the "death of some Peloponnesian tyrant," this was not so much from the psychological as from the political angle. People became interested in the republican heroes of Plutarch, rather than in the imperial epoch of Augustus. Plutarch became the daily reading of the young ideologists of the bourgeoisie, as Mme. Roland's memoirs show. And this passion for republican heroes once again aroused interest in the whole of life in the ancient world. Imitation of antiquity became the fashion and made a deep imprint on the entire French art of the day. Below we shall see what a considerable mark it made on the history of French painting. For the present let us note that it also weakened the interest in bourgeois drama, because of the common-place bourgeois life which the latter portrayed, and put off for a long time the death of classical tragedy.

Historians of French literature have often asked themselves with surprise how to explain the fact that those who prepared and carried out the great French Revolution remained conservative in their literary tastes. And why did the rule of classicism come to an end only a fairly long time after the collapse of the old order? As a matter of fact, the literary conservatism of the innovators of the day was only on the surface. Even if the form of tragedy did not change, its content was changed fundamentally.

Let us take Saurin's tragedy *Spartacus*, which appeared in 1760. Its hero, Spartacus, breathes only the love of liberty. Because of his great ideal he even refuses to marry his beloved, and throughout the play he never ceases to speak of liberty and of love for humanity. A literary conservative would have been the very last either to write such plays or to applaud them. An entirely new, revolutionary, content had been poured into the old literary bottles.

Tragedies like those of Saurin or Lemierre (see his *Guillaume Tell*) embodied one of the most revolutionary demands of Diderot the literary innovator. They took as their theme, not the characters but the social situations and, in particular, the revolutionary social aspirations of the period. And if this new wine was being poured into old bottles, this was because these old bottles had been bequeathed by that same antiquity, universal attraction to which was one of the most outstanding and characteristic symptoms of the new social temper. Beside this new variety of classical tragedy, the bourgeois drama—"morality in action," as Beaumarchais expressed it in what he intended to be praise—seemed, indeed, and could not but seem too colourless, too flat, too conservative in its content.

Bourgeois drama was born of the *opposition* temper of the French bourgeoisie and was no longer of any use in expressing its *revolutionary* aspirations. The literary "portrait" had well reproduced the temporary and ephemeral characteristics of its original: and for this reason, people ceased to care for it when the original had lost those characteristics, and when they had ceased to please. That is the whole point.

Classical tragedy continued to flourish right up to the time when the French bourgeoisie finally triumphed over the defenders of the old order, and when interest in the republican heroes of antiquity lost all social significance for it.[1] And when this time came, bourgeois drama was reborn, and, after undergoing some changes which were appropriate to the peculiar features of the new social situation, but which were by no means fundamental, it became firmly established on the French stage.

Even those who refuse to recognise the close kinship of romantic drama and the bourgeois drama of the nineteenth century, cannot deny that the plays of Alexandre Dumas *fils*, for example, are true nineteenth century bourgeois drama.

Social psychology is expressed in the works of art and literary tastes of a given period; and in the psychology of a class-divided society, much will remain incomprehensible or paradoxical if we continue to ignore the relations between classes and the class struggle, as is being done at the present time by idealist historians, contrary to the best traditions of bourgeois historical science itself.

But we shall now leave the stage and turn our attention to another branch of French art, namely to painting.

Under social influences with which we are already familiar, development here follows parallel lines to those already noted in dramatic literature. This had already been noticed by Hettner, who was quite right when he said that Diderot's "sentimental comedy" was nothing but genre painting transferred to the stage.

In the epoch of Louis XIV, that is, in the heyday of the absolute monarchy, French painting had a good deal in common with classical tragedy. Both were dominated by the idea of "dignity," of "the sublime." And painting, like classical tragedy, chose its heroes from along the mighty of this world. Charles Lebrun, whose word was then law in all matters of taste affecting painting, recognised virtually only one hero—Louis XIV, whom, however, he clothed in classical costume.

His famous "Battles of Alexander," which may be seen today in the Louvre, and are well worth studying, were painted after the Flanders military campaign of 1667, which spread far and wide the fame of the French monarchy.[2] The paintings were wholly devoted to glorifying the "Roi Soleil." And they so well corresponded to the feelings of Frenchmen at that time, to their striving towards "greatness," towards glory and victories, that they inevitably made a decisive impression on the social consciousness of the ruling class. Lebrun, perhaps without realising it, responded to the need to speak grandiloquently, to dazzle the eye, to make the brilliance of grand artistic conception be in keeping with the splendour which surrounded the king, writes Genevay. The France of the time was epitomised in the person of its king. It was Louis XIV who was applauded in the image of Alexander.[3]

To give some idea of the profound impression produced by Lebrun's paintings, it is enough to quote Etienne Carneau's exclamation: "Lebrun, with how pure a light dost thou shine!"

But everything moves, everything changes: the summit once reached, the path leads downhill. For the French monarchy the way down had already begun during the lifetime of Louis XIV, and subsequently continued unceasingly right up to the Revolution. The "Sun King" who had declared "I am the State," was nevertheless concerned in his own way for the greatness of France. Louis XV, without renouncing any of the pretensions of absolutism, was interested only in his own pleasures. And the great majority of the aristocratic court which surrounded him were of like mind. His period was a time of insatiable pursuit after pleasure, a period of gay dissipation. Yet, however dirty the diversions to which, at times, aristocratic idlers sank, the tastes of the society of the day were nevertheless distinguished for their undeniable elegance and delicate refinement, which made France "the lawgiver of fashion." And these elegant and refined tastes found expression in the aesthetic concepts of the day.

> When the age of Louis XV succeeded that of Louis XIV, the ideal of art remained artificial and conventional; but it descended from one of majesty to one of pleasure. There spread everywhere a refinement of elegance, a subtlety of sensual pleasure.[4]

---

[1] "The ghost of Lycurgus, although he never thought of such a thing, guards the Three Unities," wrote Petit de Julleville *Le théatre en France*, p. 334. This could not have been better expressed. But on the eve of the Great Revolution the ideologists of the bourgeoisie did not see anything conservative about this "ghost." On the contrary, they saw in it only revolutionary civic virtue. This must not be forgotten. (Lycurgus was the famous law-giver of Sparta.—TRANS.)

[2] The siege of Tournai was successful after two days; the sieges of Furnes, Courtrai, Douai, Armentières were also all of short duration. Lille was captured in nine days, and so on.

[3] See Antoine Genevay, *Charles Lebrun* (Paris, 1886), p. 220.

[4] Goncourt, *L'art au XVIII siècle*, pp. 135–6.

And this artistic ideal was realised at its best and most vivid in the paintings of Boucher.

> "Pleasure of the senses," we read in Goncourt, "was Boucher's ideal, the soul of his art. . . . The Venus of whom he dreamed and whom he depicts is wholly a physical Venus."[1]

That is absolutely true, and it was well understood by Boucher's contemporaries. In 1740 his friend Piron, in one of his poems, represented the famous painter as saying to Madame de Pompadour:

> Je ne recherche, pour tout dire,
> Qu' élégance, grâces, beauté,
> Douceur, gentillesse et gaité,
> En un mot, ce qui respire
> Ou badinage, ou volupté;
> Le tout sans trop de liberté,
> Drapé du voile que désire
> La scrupuleuse honneteté.[2]

This was a superb characterisation of Boucher—his muse was the elegant sensuality in which all his paintings are steeped. There are a number of his paintings in the Louvre,[3] and anyone who wants to form an idea of how great a distance separates the aristocratic-monarchic France of Louis XV from the similar France of Louis XIV cannot do better than compare the paintings of Boucher with those of Lebrun. Such a comparison will be more instructive than whole volumes of abstract historical commentaries.

The success of Boucher's painting was as great as Lebrun's had been in the earlier period. His influence was truly immense. It was justly said that the young French painters of the day who went to Rome to finish their artistic education, left France with their minds full of his paintings, and brought back with them, not impressions received from the great masters of the Renaissance, but only their memories of Boucher. But his supremacy and influence were not lasting. Under the influence of the emancipation movement of the French bourgeoisie, the advanced criticism of the day adopted a negative attitude towards him.

---

[1] Goncourt, *L'art au XVIII siècle*, p. 145.

[2] I seek, after all, only for elegance, grace, beauty, sweetness, charm and gaiety; in a word, for whatever breathes either badinage or pleasure; all without too much license, veiled as scrupulous chastity would desire.

[3] And also in the National Gallery, London.—TRANS.

Already in 1753, Grimm was severely criticising him in his *Correspondance Litteraire*. "There is little masculine strength in Boucher," he writes. And, in point of fact, the male sex is represented in Boucher's paintings mainly by cupids, who obviously bore not the slightest relation to the aspirations for liberty of that epoch. Diderot in his *Salons* attacked Boucher even more sharply than Grimm.

"Degradation of taste, colour and composition, of characters, conception and drawing," wrote Diderot in 1765, "accompanied in him the corruption of morals step by step." In Diderot's opinion, Boucher ceased to be an artist, "and it was precisely at this moment that he was appointed painter to the King." But it is Boucher's cupids, mentioned above, that particularly aroused Diderot's wrath. The impassioned Encyclopædist rather unexpectedly remarks that there is not a single child among all this crowd of cupids who would be of any use whatsoever in real life—"to learn his lessons, read, write or crush hemp." This reproach, which in some ways recalls our own Pisarev's criticisms of Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin*, makes many present-day French critics shrug their shoulders contemptuously. They say that "crushing hemp" is not the job of cupids, and they are right. What they fail to see, is that Diderot's naïve indignation with these "debauched little satyrs" expressed the class hatred of the then industrious bourgeoisie for the frivolous delights of the aristocratic idlers.

Nor was Diderot any more pleased with what was undoubtedly Boucher's strength, his femininity. "Was there not a time when he had a passion for painting young maidens?" he says. "What sort of girls were they? Pretty little sluts."

These elegant demi-mondaines were beautiful enough in their way. But their beauty only revolted, instead of attracting, the ideologists of the third estate. It was admired only by the aristocracy and those members of the third estate who, under the influence of aristocrats, had acquired aristocratic tastes.

"The painter for you and me," writes Diderot, addressing the reader, "is Greuze. Greuze was the first to make art moral." This praise is as characteristic of Diderot's state of mind—and, at the same time, of the state of mind of all the thinking bourgeois of the day—as the angry reproaches addressed by him to the hateful Boucher.

As a matter of fact Greuze was indeed a moral painter in the highest degree. If the bourgeois plays of Nivelle de la Chaussée, Beaumarchais and others were "moralities in action," Greuze's paintings may be called "moralities on canvas." The "father of the family" holds the place of honour in his work; he stands in the foreground; he is to be found in the most varied, but always touching, situations; and is distinguished by the same respected domestic virtues which adorn him in bourgeois drama. But while this patriarch undoubtedly deserves all due respect, he is entirely devoid of political interest. He stands, "a reproach incarnate," before the dissolute and degenerate aristocracy—and his "reproach" goes no further. This is not in the least surprising, since the painter who created him also confines himself to "reproach." Greuze is far from being a revolutionary. He is striving, not for the abolition of the old order but only for its improvement in a spirit of morality. For him the French clergy were "the guardians of religion and morality, the spiritual fathers of every citizen."[1]

Nevertheless, the spirit of revolutionary dissatisfaction was already penetrating into French artistic circles. In the 1750's a pupil who had refused to observe fast days was expelled from the French Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. In 1767, another pupil of the same academy, the architect Adrien Mouton, suffered the same punishment for the same misdemeanour. The sculptor Claude Monot, who took Mouton's part, was also expelled from the institution. Public opinion in Paris decisively supported Mouton, who instituted legal proceedings against the Director of the Rome Academy; the court of the Chatelet found the latter guilty, and ordered him to pay Mouton 20,000 *livres* damages. The social atmosphere became more and more heated and, as the revolutionary mood took hold of the third estate, interest in genre painting—sentimental comedy painted in oils—faded away. Changes in the mood of the advanced people of the day led to a change in their aesthetic tastes—just as it led to a change in literary conceptions—and genre painting in the manner of Greuze, which had so recently called forth general enthusiasm,[2] was eclipsed by the revolutionary painting of David and his school.

---

[1] See his "Lettre à Messieurs les curés" in the *Journal de Paris* of December 5, 1786.

[2] Such enthusiasm was evoked, for example, in 1735 by his painting, shown at the Salon, *Le Père de famille* and in 1761 by his *L'accordée du village.*

Afterwards, when David was a member of the Convention, he said, in a speech to that assembly:

> There was not a form of art but served the tastes and whims of a handful of sybarites with pockets stuffed with gold. The corporations (David's name for the Academies) persecuted men of genius and, in fact, all who came to them with pure ideas of morality and philosophy.

In David's opinion art should serve the people of the Republic. But this same David was a determined partisan of classicism. More than that: by his own artistic activities he brought declining classicism to life again, and prolonged its reign for several decades. The example of David shows better than anything else that French classicism at the end of the eighteenth century was conservative (or, if you prefer it, reactionary, since after all it was striving to return from modern imitators to the antique models) only in *form.* Its *content* was entirely steeped in the most revolutionary spirit.

In this respect one of the most characteristic and remarkable works by David was his *Brutus.* The lictors are bringing to Brutus the bodies of his children, who have just been executed for participation in monarchist activities; his wife and daughter are in tears; but Brutus himself sits grim and unyielding, and one realises that for this man the good of the republic is, indeed, the supreme law. Brutus too, is "father of a family." But this is the father of a family who has become a citizen. His virtue is the political virtue of a revolutionary. He shows us how far bourgeois France had moved from the period when Diderot praised Greuze for the moral character of his painting.[1]

Exhibited in 1789, in the year when the great revolutionary upheaval began, *Brutus* was astoundingly successful. The painting brought to consciousness that which had become the very core, the most essential demand of being—that is, of the social life of the France of the day. Ernest Chesneau is quite justified when he writes, in his book on the French schools of painting:

> David accurately reflected the feeling of the nation, which, in applauding his paintings, applauded its own portrait. He depicted those same heroes which the public was taking as its model; admiring his pictures, it confirmed its own

---

[1] "Brutus" hangs to-day in the Louvre. The Russian who may find himself in Paris has the bounden duty to go and pay it his respects. [Plekhanov was thinking of many Russian families who lost their young people in Tsarist days, for political reasons—though different from those mentioned.—TRANS.].

enthusiasm for these heroes. That is why there was so easily achieved in art a revolution parallel to the revolution which was then taking place in manners and in the social order.

The reader would be gravely mistaken if he thought that the revolution achieved in art by David concerned only the choice of subject matter. If that were all, we would have no right to speak of a revolution. No, the mighty breath of the approaching revolution radically transformed the whole attitude of the painter to his work. To the affectation and sugariness of the old school—see the paintings of Van Loo, for example—the painters of the new trend opposed severe simplicity. Even the shortcomings of these new painters are easily explained by the moods which swayed them. David was criticised, for example, on the grounds that the people in his paintings looked like statues. This criticism is unfortunately not without foundation. But David sought his models in antiquity, and for modern times the supreme art of antiquity is sculpture. David was also criticised for his weakness of imagination. This was also a just criticism. David himself admitted that with him it is reason that prevails. But to be led by reason was the most outstanding characteristic of all the representatives of the movement for liberty at that time. And not only at that time—reason discovers a broad field for its development, and has been elevated among all civilised peoples at periods of crisis in their history, when the old social order is declining and representatives of new social aspirations are subjecting it to criticism. Reason was no less to the fore among the Greeks of Socrates' time than among eighteenth century Frenchmen. It is not surprising that the German romantics attacked Euripides for his rationalism. Reason is a fruit of the struggle of the new with the old, and it serves as a weapon for the former. Reason was also a characteristic of all the great Jacobins. It is entirely mistaken to regard it as being a monopoly of the Hamlets.[1]

Having established the social causes which gave birth to the school of David, it is not difficult to explain its fall. Here again we see what we have already observed in literature.

After the revolution, the French bourgeoisie, having achieved their aim, ceased to interest themselves in ancient republican heroes; and so classicism appeared to them in a totally different light. They began to find it cold and conventional. And, indeed, it had become so. Its great revolutionary soul, which had made it so entrancing, had left it, and only the body remained—the sum-total of external methods of artistic creation, which were now unwanted, strange, inconvenient, and no longer corresponding to the new aspirations and tastes, born of new social relationships. The depiction of ancient gods and heroes now became an occupation for pedants, and it was very natural that the younger generation of painters should find no attraction in this occupation. Dissatisfaction with classicism and the effort to blaze a fresh trail can already be seen among David's own pupils, for example, in Gros. In vain their master reminds them of the old ideal, in vain they themselves condemn their own new impulses—the march of ideas is irresistibly changed by the march of events. But the Bourbons, returning to Paris "in the official baggage train," once again for a while postponed the final disappearance of classicism. The restoration slowed down, and even threatened to bring to a full stop, the victorious advance of the bourgeoisie. For this reason the latter could not bring itself to part with the "ghost of Lycurgus," which still breathed a little life into old traditions in politics, and did the same for painting as well. But Géricault was already painting. Romanticism was already knocking at the door.

However, we are now going too far ahead. We will at some other time consider how classicism fell. At the moment we would like to say a few words about how the revolutionary catastrophe itself was reflected in the aesthetic conceptions of its contemporaries.

The struggle with the aristocracy, which now reached its zenith, aroused hatred for all aristocratic tastes and traditions. In January, 1790, the journal *La Chronique de Paris* wrote:

> All our mechanical etiquette, all our meticulous civility, all our oppressive and false gallantry, all our mutual expressions of respect, humility and devotion, must be thrown out of our language. All such things too much recall the old order.

And two years later the *Annales Patriotiques* wrote:

> The practices and rules of politeness were invented in the days of slavery; they are superstitions which must be swept away by the wind of liberty and equality.

In the same journal the patriot-philosopher Sanial, of Tournon-en-Vivarais, maintained:

---

[1] One could, in this connection, raise many strong objections to the views expressed by I. S. Turgenev in his famous article, *Hamlet and Don Quixote*.

> We should never take off our hats except when our heads feel too hot, or when we wish to speak at a meeting, as a way of showing that we have a resolution to propose. In the same way the habit of bowing must be given up, because it is a relic of the days of slavery.

It was also necessary to forget and to exclude from one's vocabulary phrases and expressions like: "I have the honour," "You will do me the honour," and so on. At the end of a letter one should never write "Your most obedient servant," "Your most humble servant." All such expressions were relics of the old order, unworthy of free men. One should write, "I remain, your fellow citizen," "Your brother," "Your comrade" or, finally, "Your equal."

Citizen Chalier prepared and presented to the Convention a whole dissertation on manners, in which he sharply criticised old aristocratic politeness and asserted that any special care about cleanliness in dress was ridiculous because aristocratic. Elegant clothes were nothing short of a crime, a theft from the State. Chalier considered that everyone should use "thou," the familiar form of address: "By saying 'thou' to one another, we complete the collapse of the old system of insolence and tyranny." And it seems that Chalier's dissertation created an impression. On November 8, 1793, the Convention prescribed that all civil servants should use the familiar form of address in their dealings with one another. A certain Lebon, a convinced democrat and ardent revolutionary, received an expensive suit as a gift from his mother. Not wishing to offend the old lady, he accepted it; but his conscience began to try him sorely, and he wrote to his brother:

> I have not slept for ten days now because of this accursed suit. I, a philosopher, the friend of mankind, dressing so lavishly while thousands of my fellow-men are dying of hunger and wearing pitiable rags! How can I enter their humble dwellings to comfort them in their adversity? How can I continue to plead the cause of the poor? How can I protest against the robberies of the rich, when I myself imitate their luxury and elegance? These thoughts pursue me mercilessly and give me no peace.

And this was by no means a unique occurrence. The question of dress became at the time a question of conscience, just as it did with us in our so-called "nihilist" period.[1] And for the same reasons. In January, 1793, the journal *Le courrier de l'égalité* declared that it was shameful to have two suits while soldiers defending the independence of the Republic at the frontiers went in rags. At the same time, the famous *Père Duchêne* demands that fashion shops be turned into workshops, that skilled carriage-makers should make only baggage-waggons, that goldsmiths should become ironsmiths, while the cafés, instead of being meeting places for the idle, should be handed over to the workers for their meetings.

When such was the condition of "manners," it is quite understandable that art should go to the extreme limit in its rejection of all the old aesthetic traditions of the aristocratic epoch.

The theatre, which, as we have seen, had already served the third estate as a spiritual weapon in its struggle against the old order in the pre-revolutionary epoch, now ridiculed the clergy and the nobility without the slightest restraint. In 1790 a drama entitled *La liberté conquise, ou le despotisme renversé* (Liberty Triumphant, or Tyranny Overthrown) enjoyed a great success. The audience chanted in chorus, "Aristocrats, you are defeated!" The defeated aristocracy, on the other hand, flocked to see tragedies, which reminded them of the good old times—*Cinna, Athalie* and so on. In 1793 people danced the *carmagnole* on the stage and ridiculed kings and emigrés. As Goncourt, from whom we have learned the facts concerning this period, puts it, "The theatre was taken over by the *sans-culottes*."[1] Actors mocked at the bombastic mannerisms of the old-timers. They behaved with the utmost lack of constraint, climbing in through the windows, for example, instead of entering by the door. Goncourt describes how on one occasion, during a performance of the play *Le faux savant*, an actor came down the chimney instead of in through the door. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*[2]

It is not in the least surprising that the theatre was "*sans-culottisé*" by the revolution, since for a short time the revolution put power into the hands of the *sans-culottes*. But it is important for us here to record the fact that even during the revolution—as in all previous epochs—the theatre served as a true reflection of social life, with its contradictions and with the class struggle to which they gave rise. If, in the good old days, when manners served as laws—to use the expression of Marmontel quoted above—the theatre expressed the aristocratic view of men's mutual relations, now, under the rule of the *sans-culottes*, there was realised the ideal of M. J. Chenier, who said that the theatre should instil in citizens contempt for superstitions, hatred of oppressors and love of liberty.

---

[1] The period of democratic-revolutionary Narodnik activities among the educated Russian youth in the '60s and '70s.—TRANS.

[1] *Sans-culottes*: literally, "without breeches," a derisory term applied to the common people during the French Revolution—who wore trousers, convenient for work, rather than the tight breeches which were the wear of the gentry. The epithet was taken up by the revolutionaries and used with pride.—TRANS.

[2] If not the truth, a good idea.

The ideals of the time demanded of the citizen such intensive and unceasing work for the general good that there was little room left for purely aesthetic requirements in the sum-total of his spiritual needs. The citizen of this great epoch delighted above all in the poetry of action, and the beauty of civic achievement. And this circumstance at times gave a somewhat original character to the aesthetic judgments of the French "patriots." Goncourt writes that one of the members of the jury chosen to judge works exhibited in the Salon of 1793, a certain Fleuriot, regretted that the bas-reliefs submitted for award failed to express clearly enough the great principles of the revolution:

> What sort of men are these, anyway, occupying themselves with sculpture, at a time when their brothers are shedding their blood for the fatherland? In my opinion, there should be no prizes!

Another member of the jury, Hassenfratz, said:

> I will speak frankly—in my opinion, the talent of an artist is in his heart, not in his hand; what the hand can master is comparatively unimportant.

A certain Neveu having been bold enough to declare: "I must tell Hassenfratz that regard must be paid to craftsmanship and expression" (don't forget that sculpture was under discussion), Hassenfratz answered: "Citizen Neveu, skill of the hand is nothing—you shouldn't base your judgment on skill of hand." It was decided not to award any prizes for sculpture.

During the discussion on painting the same Hassenfratz ardently sought to prove that the citizens fighting for freedom on the frontiers were the best painters. In his enthusiasm he even said that "everything in painting ought to be done with a ruler and compass." When architecture came up for judgment, a certain Dufourny asserted that all buildings "should be as plain as a citizen's virtues." "What end is served by superfluous decoration?" he added. "Architecture must be regenerated by geometry."

It goes without saying that we are dealing here with a most gross exaggeration, and have reached the limits beyond which reason could not go, even at that time of pressing to the limit logical conclusions from premises accepted as indubitable. And it is not difficult to ridicule—as Goncourt does—opinions of this sort. But to conclude from such opinions that the revolutionary period was altogether unfavourable to the development of art, would be quite wrong. We repeat, the bitter fight then being waged—not only "on the frontier," but throughout French territory from end to end—left citizens little time for peaceful pursuit of the arts. But it far from stifled the aesthetic requirements of the people. Quite the contrary. The great social movement which made the people clearly aware of their worth gave a strong and unprecedented impetus to the development of these requirements.

To be convinced of this one has only to visit the Paris "Musée Carnavalet." The material in this interesting museum, devoted to the revolutionary period, shows irrefutably that, in becoming *sans-culottisé*, art certainly did not perish, nor cease to be art. It simply became steeped in an entirely new spirit. As the virtue of the French "patriot" of the day was primarily political virtue, so was his art primarily political. Dear reader, don't be alarmed. It simply means that the citizen of that time—i.e. a citizen of course, worthy of the name—could not be moved, or was almost unmoved, by an art which was not based upon some cherished political idea.[1]

And let it not be said that such art must be barren. That is a mistake. The inimitable art of the ancient Greeks was, to a very large degree and in the same sense, political art. And is it alone in this? French art of the age of Louis XIV was also in the service of certain political ideas, but this did not prevent it from flourishing. As for French art of the revolutionary period, the *sans-culottes* made it something which the art of the upper classes could never be: art became the affair of the whole people.

The numerous civic holidays, processions and celebrations of that time were the best and most convincing evidence in favour of the aesthetics of the *sans-culottes*. Not everybody takes this evidence into account, however.

But because of the historical circumstances of that epoch, art for the whole people lacked any firm social foundation. The cruel Thermidor[1] reaction soon put an end to the rule of the *sans-culottes* and, opening up a new era in politics, opened up also a new era in art—an era expressing the aspirations and tastes of a new upper class, the bourgeoisie which had won power. We shall not say anything here of this new era: it deserves detailed analysis, and it is time we finished.

---

[1] We are using the word "political" in the same broad sense in which it has been said that every class struggle is a political struggle.

What follows from all we have said? The following conclusions may be drawn:—

First: even if it is correct to say that art—like literature—is a reflection of life, it is nevertheless still a very vague statement. To understand in what manner art reflects life, one must understand the mechanism of the latter. Among civilised peoples the class struggle constitutes one of the mainsprings in this mechanism. And only if we examine this mainspring, take into account the class struggle and study its many and various aspects, shall we be able to explain to ourselves at all satisfactorily the "spiritual" history of civilised society. The "march" of its ideas is a reflection of the history of its classes and of their struggle one with the other.

Second: Kant wrote that the feeling of pleasure which determines the judgment of taste must be free of all interest, and that any judgment of beauty into which the slightest interest enters, is very partisan and far from a pure judgment of taste.[2] This is quite true as applied to a single individual. If I like a picture only because I can make money by selling it, then my judgment is, of course, not a pure judgment of taste. But it is a different matter when we take the standpoint of society. Study of the art of primitive tribes has shown that social man looks at objects and phenomena in the first instance from the utilitarian standpoint, and only subsequently changes, in his attitude to some of them, to an aesthetic viewpoint. This throws fresh light on the history of art. Naturally, not every useful object appears beautiful to social man. But undoubtedly only that which is useful—that is to say, of importance in his struggle for existence, with nature or with other social men—can seem beautiful to him. This does not mean that for social man the utilitarian viewpoint coincides with the aesthetic. Not at all! Usefulness is perceived by reason: beauty by the contemplative faculty. The sphere of the first is calculation, the sphere of the second is instinct. Moreover—and it is necessary to remember this—the field of the contemplative faculty is incomparably broader than the field of reason; enjoying what appears to him beautiful, social man hardly ever takes into account the utility of the object concerned.[1] In the vast majority of cases this utility can only be discovered by scientific analysis. The main distinguishing feature of aesthetic pleasure is its *directness*. But the utility exists nevertheless: it still lies at the basis of aesthetic enjoyment (let us recall that we are speaking of social man, not of the individual), and if it were non-existent, the object would not appear beautiful.

It may be objected that an object's colour pleases us independently of the significance which this object could have, or may have, in the struggle for existence. Without entering into any lengthy argument, allow me to recall an observation by Fechner. We like red when we see it on the cheeks of a young and beautiful woman, for example. But what effect would this colour have on us if we saw it on the nose, instead of on the cheeks, of our beauty?

Here there is to be observed a complete parallel with morality. Not everything which is good for social man is moral. But only that which is useful to his life and his development can assume moral significance for him: not man for morality, but morality for man. In exactly the same way it may be said that man is not made for beauty, but beauty is made for man. And this may, indeed, be called utilitarianism, understood in its real, that is to say in its broadest sense: as being useful not for individual man but for society—the tribe, the whole clan, the class.

But precisely because we are thinking, not of the individual, but of society (tribe, people, class) we can find room also for the Kantian view of this question: judgments of taste undoubtedly presuppose the absence of any utilitarian considerations whatever in the individual who expresses them. Here also one can draw an exact parallel with moral judgment. If I pronounce a given action to be moral only because it is useful to *me*, then I have no moral instinct.

---

[1] *Thermidor*: name given by the French revolutionaries to the period covering July 19 to August 18, when the months were renamed for a short period. Also applied to the counter-revolutionary upheaval of July 27/8, 1794, which put an end to the dictatorship of the Jacobins or radical petty bourgeoisie during the French Revolution.—TRANS.

[2] *Critique of the Capacity of Judgment* (1790).

[1] By "object" we must here understand not only material things but also natural phenomena, human feelings and relations between people.