

GATHERING UTOPIAS

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KRISTIN ROSS'S *THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SPACE* PP. 4 - 25

MANIFESTO OF THE PARIS COMMUNE'S FEDERATION OF ARTISTS



The Word Is Change

368 Tompkins Ave

KRISTIN
ROSS

V { **THE EMERGENCE
OF SOCIAL SPACE**
:
**RIMBAUD AND
THE PARIS COMMUNE**

Why view the Commune as a primarily spatial event? To mention just a few of the spatial problems posed by the Commune, consider, for example, the relationship of Paris to the provinces, the Commune as immense “rent strike,” the post-Haussmann social division of the city and the question of who, among its citizens, has a “right to the city”—the phrase is Henri Lefebvre’s—or the military and tactical use of city space during the street fighting. These are some of the specific spatial issues of the book; here I want to consider a more general “horizontal” effect of the Commune: the way hierarchy came to be contested in the realm of the social imagination of the Communards before it was attacked on the political and economic level. To do so we must review briefly the events of the Commune.

When the dubious bourgeois republicans who had claimed power on September 4, 1870, capitulated to the Prussians, they announced a “peace” to end Napoléon III’s disastrous war for which the working people in Paris would be made to pay. Class antagonism that had smoldered under the authoritarian social measures of the Second Empire intensified; on March 18, 1871, workers, many of them women who had borne the brunt of the hardships of the long Prussian siege of Paris, revolted. For seventy-three days a largely leaderless revolutionary government declared Paris an autonomous Commune and set about the free organization of its social life—free, that is, except for the constant threat of military reprisal from the “official” army at Versailles, which was to come, in the form of unprecedented carnage, in the final week of May.

But the Commune was not just an uprising against the political practices of the Second Empire; it was also, and perhaps above all, a revolt against deep forms of social regimentation. In the realm of cultural production, for instance, divisions solidly in place under the rigid censorship of the Empire and the constraints of the bourgeois market—between genres, between aesthetic and political discourses, between artistic and artisanal work, between high art and *reportage*—such hierarchical divisions under the Commune were fiercely debated and, in certain instances, simply withered away. It is these antihierarchical gestures and improvisations, what was entailed in extending principles of association and cooperation into the workings of everyday life, that make the Commune a predominantly “horizontal” moment.

We can take as an obvious and graphic example of the attack on verticality the Communards' demolition of the Vendôme Column, built to glorify the exploits of Napoléon's Grand Army. The strength of the gesture as antihierarchical act can be gauged by the hysteria registered in Parnassian poet and anti-Communist Catulle Mendès's account of the impending event. Mendès reads the destruction of the column as a leveling of history itself, an attack on genealogy and heredity designed to produce a timeless present. (Mendès includes in his journal the Commune decree he has just seen in the streets pronouncing the column's imminent demise):

The Commune of Paris:

Considering that the imperial column at the Place Vendôme is a monument to barbarism, a symbol of brute force and glory, an affirmation of militarism, a negation of international law, a permanent insult to the vanquished by the victors, a perpetual assault on one of the three great principles of the French Republic, Fraternity, it is thereby decreed:

Article One: The column at the Place Vendôme will be abolished.

It wasn't enough for you [writes Mendès], in a word, to have destroyed the present and compromised the future, you still want to annihilate the past! An ominous youthful prank. But the Vendôme Column is France, yes, the France of yesteryear, the France that we no longer are, alas! It's really about Napoléon, all this, it's about our victorious, superb fathers moving across the world, planting the tricolored flag whose staff is made of a branch of the tree of liberty! ... Don't think that demolishing the Vendôme Column is just toppling over a bronze column with an emperor's statue on top; it's unearthing your fathers in order to slap the fleshless cheeks of their skeletons and to say to them: You were wrong to be brave, to be proud, to be grand! You were wrong to conquer cities, to win battles. You were wrong to make the world marvel at the vision of a dazzling France.⁴



Figure 1. The Vendôme Column, five minutes before its fall. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale.

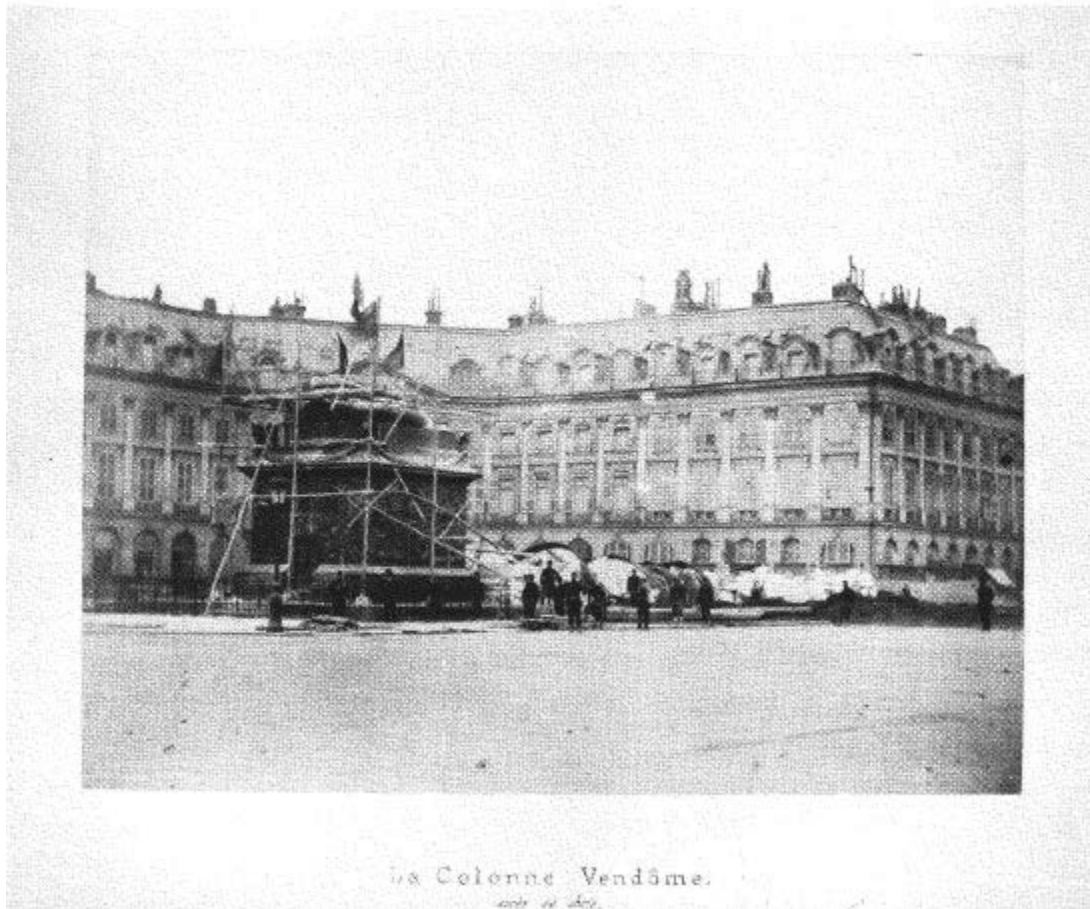


Figure 2. The Vendôme Column, after its fall. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale.

For Mendès the destruction of the column abolishes history—makes for a timeless present, an annihilated past, and an uncertain future. Alone in his room where he spends most of the Commune, wondering why he didn't have the sense to flee to Versailles along with the other “friends of order,” Mendès perceives time to be at a standstill. For the Communards, the *existence* of the column freezes time: “a *permanent* insult,” “a *perpetual* assault.” Whose time is it? In Communard Louis Barron's description of the toppling, the column is just as much a symbol of the State, but the State is a whitened sepulchre:

Tuesday, May 16. I saw the Vendôme Column fall, it collapsed all in one piece like a stage décor on a nice bed of trash when the machinist's whistle blew. Immediately a huge cloud of dust rose up, while a quantity of tiny fragments rolled and scattered about, white on one side, gray on the other, similar to little morsels of bronzed plaster. This colossal symbol of the Grand Army—how it was fragile, empty, miserable! It seemed to have been eaten out from the middle by a multitude of rats, like France itself, like its old tarnished glory, and we were surprised not to see

any [rats] run out along the drainpipes. The music played fanfares, some old greybeard declaimed a speech on the vanity of conquests, the villainy of conquerors, and the fraternity of the people, we danced in a circle around the debris, and then we went off, very content with the little party.⁵

Time, said Feuerbach, is the privileged category of the dialectician, because it excludes and subordinates where space tolerates and coordinates. Our tendency is to think of space as an abstract, metaphysical context, as the container for our lives rather than the structures we help create. The difficulty is also one of vocabulary, for while words like “historical” and “political” convey a dynamic of intentionality, vitality, and human motivation, “spatial,” on the other hand, connotes stasis, neutrality, and passivity. But the analysis of social space, far from being reactionary or technocratic, is rather a symptom of a strategic thought and of what Tristan Tzara, speaking of Rimbaud, called an “ethics of combat,” one that poses space as the terrain of political practice. An awareness of social space, as the example of the Vendôme Column makes clear, always entails an encounter with history—or better, a choice of histories.

“Social space,” then, became my way of mediating between the discursive and the event. I came to an understanding of the concept through my work on a project about Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre and the social thought and movements surrounding that other supremely antihierarchical event: May 1968 in Paris. It is tempting, but of course historically inaccurate, to analogize the events of May 1968 with those of May 1871. Much has been made of the migration of Commune slogans and iconography across a century where they erupted again in many of the same streets. It is true, however, that the events of May 1968 bore a complex relation to the history of the interpretation of the 1871 insurrection. And in this sense my own encounter with Lefebvre was perhaps theoretically overde-termined. For while Lefebvre first raised the notion of everyday life (or its synonym, “social space”) to the status of a concept in a book he wrote immediately after World War II, his most substantial rethinking of theories of everyday life and social space took place in the late sixties.⁶ At that time he was engaged simultaneously in completing a prolonged and controversial meditation on the Paris Commune, in associating with members of the anarcho-syndicalist group, the Situationists (who themselves produced a provocative interpretation of the Commune), and in participating in the movements that led to the events of May 1968. Perhaps my own experience—as well as that

of Alice Kaplan, Adrian Rifkin, and others with whom I worked on the everyday life project—of being socialized during the late 1960s and its aftermath, played a role in producing my fascination with the experience of a generation of writers, political thinkers, geographers, and poets whose political imaginations were formed by the event of the Commune. And that experience also, I think, drew me to certain contemporary theoretical voices, to wayward or renegade Marxists such as Lefebvre, or Jacques Rancière and the circle of writers around the journal *Révoltes logiques*, which took its name from a poem of Rimbaud's—writers whose intellectual and political development, like that of Lafargue, Rimbaud, Reclus, and other Communards a hundred years earlier, was profoundly altered by their contact with a version of historical agency.

The analysis of space, like the analysis of poetry, has been, until recently, neglected within traditional Marxism. The exceptions to this tendency are Lefebvre and the primarily French and American Marxist geographers writing in journals like *Hérodote* and *Antipode* who in the 1960s elaborated their theoretical position mostly through unearthing and reexamining the long-repressed figure of Communist geographer Elisée Reclus, inventor of social geography. Within traditional Marxism, however, a preoccupation with spatial categories was taken as the mark of “spatial fetishism,” a wrong-thinking conceptualizing of space as an autonomous determinant, separate from the structure of social relations and class conflict—a theoretical confusion deemed somewhat akin to technological determinism. But space, as a social fact, as a social factor and as an instance of society, is always political and strategic. And because it is characterized, among other things, by the difference in age of the elements that form it—the sum of the action of successive modernizations — social space cannot be understood according to an old and facile “history versus structure or logic” opposition.

Social space, for Lefebvre, can be understood as a kind of recoding of his initial concept of everyday life. Another way of saying this is that everyday life—what remains when all specialized activities have been eliminated—is primarily (but not entirely) a spatial concept. Like the state for Marx, everyday life for Lefebvre is only *modern* everyday life: the product of the great nineteenth-century European migration to urban centers and the waning of unifying styles disseminated by church and monarch. Everyday life is born in nineteenth-century Europe in the same gap or rift that separates a private, domesticated world from a public, institutional one. Alice Kaplan and I have

argued elsewhere that the importance of Lefebvre's concept of everyday life lies in its introduction of a third term into the most important philosophical opposition of the twentieth century: the opposition between the phenomenological and the structural.⁷ Everyday life is neither the realm of the intentional, monadic subject dear to phenomenology; nor does it dwell in the objective structures—the language, institutions, kinship structures—that are perceptible only by bracketing the experience of the individual subject. Neither the subjective (the biographical) nor the objective (the discursive), but both: literally and *dans tous les sens*.

In some sense my study of Commune culture could be said to begin with that well-known injunction from Rimbaud: that he be read or understood, as he put it, both literally and *dans tous les sens* (in all directions, according to all five senses, according to all possible meanings). The second part of his call, for an azimuthal, polysemic understanding as opposed to a literal one, was for me somewhat less problematic to think about than the first. For my own training in literary criticism was largely about being attentive to the lure of the polysemic; it was about producing the sophisticated reading, whose value far outweighed the merely and unanalyzed literal, or what we were taught to call, “naive” reading. In fact, the literal or naive reading was presented to me in my graduate studies as but the necessary step (a menial task, preferably performed by others) in the developmental move to a sophisticated, formalist, and polysemic reading. It was that which was to be surpassed, a vestigial, evolutionary relic. And according to some vast and unquestioned intellectual division of labor, the work of the literal or the naive—what dirties the hands of archivists—was always to be performed offstage, and not by theorists.

But if I were to read both literally and *dans tous les sens*, I would have to develop a new perspective on both the biographical (historical) material and the information to be gleaned from close textual interpretation. For that kind of reading would entail a balancing act: neither did I wish to mobilize formalist skills for the reading of historical data—a practice that has come to be called, in recent years, the “new historicism”—nor could I allow the weight of psychosexual, biographical fact to determine, in the sense of explain, textual intricacy. On the one hand I was faced with the historically acknowledged, and I think, unquestionable, particularity and force of Rimbaud's oppositional, iconoclastic, annihilatory voice. And, on the other, as I came to see more and more, with that voice as one that speaks within and

by means of a vast cultural system, a system that should be conceived *not* within the limits of some purely literary history but rather as made up of elements and languages that are not distinctly literary. A centrifugal reading of Rimbaud, which he himself invites, in fact leads very far afield. For it opens out onto a whole synchronic history, onto the web of social and political discourses and representations that simultaneously *place a limitation on* and *enable* meaning to take place.

As I began to consider my subject under the rubric of synchronic history, my own theoretical distance from much of the current social or “contextual” analysis of art became clearer. My concern was to establish oppositional or “vernacular” culture, voices that are for the most part conspicuously absent from or repressed in much of the recent attempt to rethink the relation between history and art that comes under the heading of the “new historicism.”⁸ In such critical narratives, the critic, adopting the point of view of some more advanced stage of capitalism’s development, inevitably reinstalls or rereads into the event in question the values or “bitter wisdom” of his or her own critical vantage point. Oppositional voices or moments in this critical paradigm become the “always already co-opted” of the forward movement of capital. A striking example of this depoliticizing strain in cultural criticism can be found in the recent French rewriting of the events of May 1968.⁹ Certainly one reason for the use I make of a kind of phenomenological perception—my attempt to imagine social constructions of space and time—is that it helps avoid the metaleptic “it couldn’t have been otherwise” dead end of such analyses. By imagining the lived experience of actors in particular oppositional moments, in other words, one can avoid an analytic structure that insists on starting from the (predetermined) result.

When I turned to Marxist aesthetic theory, my problem became one of genre. For not only has Marxist theory neglected to develop a theory of space, but Marxist literary critics from Lukács through Sartre and on up to the current generation—Eagleton, Macherey, and even an occasional critic of poetry and provocative thinker of space like Fredric Jameson (“*narrative*, which I take to be ... the central function or *instance* of the human mind”)¹⁰—have continued to reassert the traditionally dominant concern with narrative and the novel genre. Walter Benjamin’s massive study of Baudelaire and Paris under the Second Empire stands out in the marked neglect shown by Marxist critics for poetry. Bertolt Brecht—whose favorite poet was Rimbaud—was certainly aware of that neglect when he debated it

in the 1930s with Lukács. Brecht's question—"What about the realism of lyric poetry?"¹¹—is no less pressing today. This hesitation on the part of Marxist critics to concern themselves with poetry can be traced back to all too traditional assumptions, themselves a development of the late nineteenth century, that regard prose as the privileged vehicle for objective or political themes, and verse for subjective or individual ones—or, put another way, to the assumption that there exists a social production of reality on the one hand, and a desiring production that is mere fantasy or wish fulfillment on the other. Despite extensive feminist critiques of such divisions between the "personal" and the "political," these assumptions remain largely intact and are reinscribed in Marxism as generic omission.

Many of the best readings of nineteenth-century bourgeois cultural production, analyses that resist treating art as a miracle of poetic creativity independent of economic or social developments, still seem to flounder in their theoretical attitude to the "masterpiece." A single masterpiece might, for example, be decoded by a literary critic in such a way that it is made to reveal or offer up all of the social relations of the Second Empire. A reading like this certifies not only the analytic acumen of the critic—the master decoder who takes on the subtle riches and multivalent significations of the masterpiece—but the masterpiece's enshrined position in museum or canon as well. The wealth of social history "revealed" by the masterpiece forms a kind of landscape or ornamental drapery that reinforces canonical status and thus, paradoxically perhaps, the masterpiece's inertia. For my own purposes, an unquestioned cult of the masterpiece seemed singularly at odds with both Rimbaud and the people who pulled down the Vendôme Column. Another problem with such "contextual" analyses of art—analyses that leave untroubled the distinction between "text" and "context"—is that the "social history" that emerges full blown from the interpretation of the masterwork tends itself to be left unanalyzed—as if the formal analysis of a text or painting offered up a social context that did not in turn have to be analyzed! Again social history remains merely decorative. But another analysis, particularly an analysis by a historian, might easily err in the opposite direction: by refusing culture its role in the articulation of social conflict, by limiting its role to that of providing décor for the "real" social conflict taking place.

In the course of writing this book I have come to see the kind of division of labor that has defined literary studies for some time—between the historical

and the theoretical, or the historical and the linguistic, the contextual and the textual, the literal and the *dans tous les sens*—as politically counterproductive. And I have begun to recognize versions of that division of labor, often in dimly recognizable shapes, as that which formed the primary subject of debate and conflict during the Commune. Much of the formalist sterility of our own critical tendencies, in other words, bears the trace of nineteenth-century doctrines that proclaim the superiority of intellectual work over manual work, and the natural destiny that ordains some to perform one task, and others another. During the Commune these issues were fiercely debated as poets, cartoonists, musicians, and writers took sides for or against the insurgent government. One form the debate took was a radical questioning of the respective identities of worker and artist.

Workers and Artists

I would like to expand at some length on this debate by returning to the exemplary figure of Mallarmé's friend and fellow Parnassian, Catulle Mendès. Mendès, as I mentioned, lived out the Commune for the most part alone in his room; this rather furtive existence was interrupted by occasional and equally furtive forays out into the streets, forays he performed and then recorded faithfully in his journal. Mendès's journal, *Les 73 journées de la Commune*, is itself exemplary of a genre that sprang up immediately after the demise of the Commune: the hurriedly written eyewitness account or diary documenting everyday life under the Commune. Active Communards like Elisée Reclus's brother, Elie, who during the Commune served as the director of the Bibliothèque Nationale (a fact that the official history of the Bibliothèque Nationale neglects to mention!),¹² published an account many years later; so did Louise Michel and Jean-Baptiste Clément, composer of one of the better known Commune songs, "Le Temps des cerises."¹³ Pro-Commune accounts like these tended to appear much later unless they were published in Switzerland or England; by contrast, the rapid publication and distribution of anti-Commune texts like Mendès's in the early summer of 1871 coincided with and helped justify the violence of the repression of the Commune, a violence with which Edmond de Goncourt, writing in his journal in May, heartily concurs: "The bloodletting is a bleeding white. Such a purge, by killing off the combative part of the population, defers the next

revolution by a whole generation.”¹⁴ By the end of 1871 a rigid censorship again prevailed. The onslaught of anti-Commune memoirs during the summer and fall was followed by a complete prohibition as the year ended, of any mention, pro or con, of the Commune.

In his journal Mendès describes how he is given to hallucinating late-night imaginary conversations with Gustave Courbet, president of the Fédération des Artistes under the Commune. The Fédération des Artistes, responsible for the organization of various concerts and cultural affairs, was mainly concerned with education and organization and hardly at all with artistic questions.¹⁵ Mendès finds Courbet’s position ridiculous. Doing a little bit of everything, even politics, is comprehensible, if not excusable, if you are good for nothing else. But what is unacceptable to Mendès is that kind of varied activity on the part of someone “who can make excellent boots like Napoléon Gaillard, or paintings as good as Gustave Courbet’s” (166). Art for art’s sake, of which Mendès is one of the most vocal, if not the most adept, spokespersons of his time, seems, as Franco Moretti has suggested, to be in a dialectical relation to production for production’s sake, i.e., to booming late capitalism.¹⁶ Mendès’s concern is for the *bel ouvrage*—or rather, its loss—the loss of Napoléon Gaillard’s excellent boots, the sacrifice of the masterpieces Courbet would have painted were he not so busy organizing artists or sitting on Commune committees. But can a lapse in production in itself produce such anxiety? Mendès’s fantasy continues. Were Courbet or any other poet or artist actually to appear at his doorstep and try to get him to “federate,” he announces, he would reply, “Leave me in peace, Monsieur de la Fédération, je suis un rêveur, un travailleur.” A dreamer, a worker. He concludes with his version of a call to action:

Let us return home, messieurs the artists, close the doors, let’s say to our servant—if we have a servant—that we’re not at home to anyone, and after having prepared our best pen or taken up our best paintbrush, let us work in solitude, without stopping, with no other worry than that of doing the best we can. (167)

“I am a worker.” To describe his own position, Mendès appropriates the term *travailleur* and inflects it with the full logic of the *métier*: the specialization that alone defines one’s being. For workers or artisans, of course, that specialization, dating back to the justification of the division of labor in Plato’s *Republic*, is simply the prohibition against doing anything else: “the *métier* for which nature made him and at which he must work all

his life, to the exclusion of any other ... in order to make the *bel ouvrage*.”¹⁷ In Plato’s well-constituted state, a unique *métier* is attributed to each person; a shoemaker is first of all someone who cannot also be a warrior. What is at first a simple functional or structural division of labor—to each person one task—is rapidly transformed into a hierarchy of “natures”: to each person the task that nature destined him or her to perform. In the late nineteenth century little has changed; in fact, in the world of generalized production, in the interest of progress, one can less than ever do two things at the same time. A shoemaker like Napoléon Gaillard is still he who cannot do anything other than make shoes (excellent ones, it appears). “Nature,” according to an 1845 article in the journal *L’Artiste*, “has not allowed everyone to possess genius; she has said to one, ‘make poems,’ and to the other, ‘make shoes.’ ”¹⁸ Author Charles Nodier, writing in midcentury, has become unnerved by the quantity of shoemakers who have transgressed the rules fixing their status and have taken to writing tragedies in the style of Corneille. The democracy of writing, he warns, is transforming “useful workers and artisans” into “thieves, impostors, and forgers.”¹⁹

Forging and falsifying: In Plato the prohibition against artisans doing something other than their proper task has its roots in barring their access to the realm open to (and “proper to”) artists and poets, namely, the realm of imitation, of appearances and role-playing.²⁰ “Je est un autre.” The artist, as imitator of an imitation, is inferior to the worthy artisan. The artisan is defined by his prohibition from games, falsehood, appearance, imitation, fiction, lying. Gaillard makes shoes; Courbet counterfeits reality. But during the Commune Courbet and Gaillard are not in their proper places. Art for art’s sake may have its roots in production for production’s sake, but a deeper anxiety fuels Mendès: the anxiety of displacement, of a shift or confusion in the hierarchy of tasks. Displacement, after all, hurts. I am a worker, Mendès writes. The rights of the inspired are retained by invoking the myth of the artisan and of labor as redemptive agency. The rights of the inspired are retained by Mendès’s “borrowing” or imitating a role—by his asserting the right to precisely the activity (imitation) that is the privilege of the writer but forbidden the honest artisan, the good worker. “Je est un autre.” The worker becomes the exemplum, the bearer of truth in order to be all the better excluded from the science reserved for scholars and the

inspiration reserved for poets. The rights of the inspired conspire without violence in the reign of order.

What happens to a state if the shoemakers and the artists are not in their proper place? Production—*le bel ouvrage*—is not the real concern. A drop in production can be withstood. Mendès is not really mourning the unmade boots of Napoléon Gaillard or even the unpainted paintings of Gustave Courbet. His anxiety stems from the experience of displacement, from the attack on identity. “Je est un autre.” Not being able to *identify* a shoemaker—and thus, perhaps, not being able to identify himself, an artist—makes Mendès nervous. In his “call to action” to artists everywhere, he advises them to grasp their “best pen” or their “best paintbrush”: the tools of the trade. Tools as fetishized anticipation of the gestures and disciplines of the *métier*, but above all as identification devices: the brand, the badge, the heraldic emblem. During the Commune, however, shoemakers—and artists—have laid down their tools. And shoemakers and artists are not in their place. How can they be recognized?

How to Identify a Worker

The problem of how to identify a worker absorbed the attention and energy of a considerable number of people and was addressed in a variety of ways toward the end of the Second Empire. Here are three examples. Frédéric Le Play, the conservative, Catholic sociologist who sought to reform society by shoring up the authority of property owners, managers, and fathers, was placed in charge of the 1867 International Exposition held in Paris, an exposition whose ostensible goal was to display “objects for the improvement of the physical and moral conditions of the masses.”²¹ In fact, only one-third of the space allotted to this purpose was used. Much more space was taken up by a display of *objets d’art* to be used by the rich, and by a second display—not of objects created by workers but of workers themselves! In a section of the exposition entitled “Petits Métiers,” model workers, male and female, could be seen plying their craft: lace makers, artificial flower makers, chocolate makers.

The visitors to the exhibition could see them at work and could come to the enjoyment of two illusions at least. One was the appearance of the relative independence and self-motivation of the workers. The appearance, that is, because in the case of the lacemakers, they belonged to home based industries controlled by a single large capitalist. Nevertheless, the small unit or

family unit could be seen as operative. Another illusion was the absence of industrial disease. In this display, none of the flower-makers would have torn or bleeding fingers.²²

Such a display can in some sense be taken as a three-dimensional realization of the vast taxonomic project to which Le Play had devoted most of his life.²³ His aim was that of producing the image of the perfect worker for a newly industrializing, Catholic society, and he did so by grafting what he took to be the familial and moral values of rural workers onto the skills and energy of the industrious urban worker.²⁴ The conservative moralism of Le Play's construction of the "good worker" is perhaps most important in its implication of the consequences for workers—and in this, the exposition's zoolike display is all the more emblematic—of transgression, of escape to other worlds, or other conditions.

Denis Poulot's *Le Sublime, ou le travailleur comme il est en 1870, et ce qu'il peut être* (1870), written on the eve of the Commune, resonates with the fear of workers' transgression. As such, it reveals the same degree of bourgeois anxiety as Le Play's work, and the same will to construct, and thus wishfully "realize," the image type of the good worker. But Poulot's focus is the inverse of Le Play's. A bourgeois, Parisian industrialist with no pretense toward being a writer or an economist, Poulot sees himself more as a diagnostician. His concern is with identifying the *bad* worker, with being able to recognize one when you see one.²⁵ His position as *patron* allows him the opportunity to observe closely workers' habits; from such scientific observation he establishes a "pathological diagnostic" designed to ferret out *sublimisme*: the illness affecting those workers most insubordinate inside the *atelier* and those most oblivious to familial morals outside the *atelier*. *Sublime* (along with other slang expressions denoting superlatives: *chouette*, *rupin*, *d'attaque*)²⁶ was the word insubordinate workers used to refer to themselves; Poulot designates such workers rather as *ivrognes* or *paresseux*. The standards Poulot uses to establish a scale ranging from the good worker to the *sublime*—with many intermediate categories of moderate or incipient *sublimisme*—emphasize drunkenness and laziness: the degree of drunkenness or sobriety, the degree of laziness or ardor for work, the degree of conformity to the bourgeois family model, the degree of violence between companions. Something like a composite image of these four categories—the bloodthirsty, slothful, drunken prostitute—would be used after the Commune to construct the image of the Communard woman worker as *pétroleuse*.

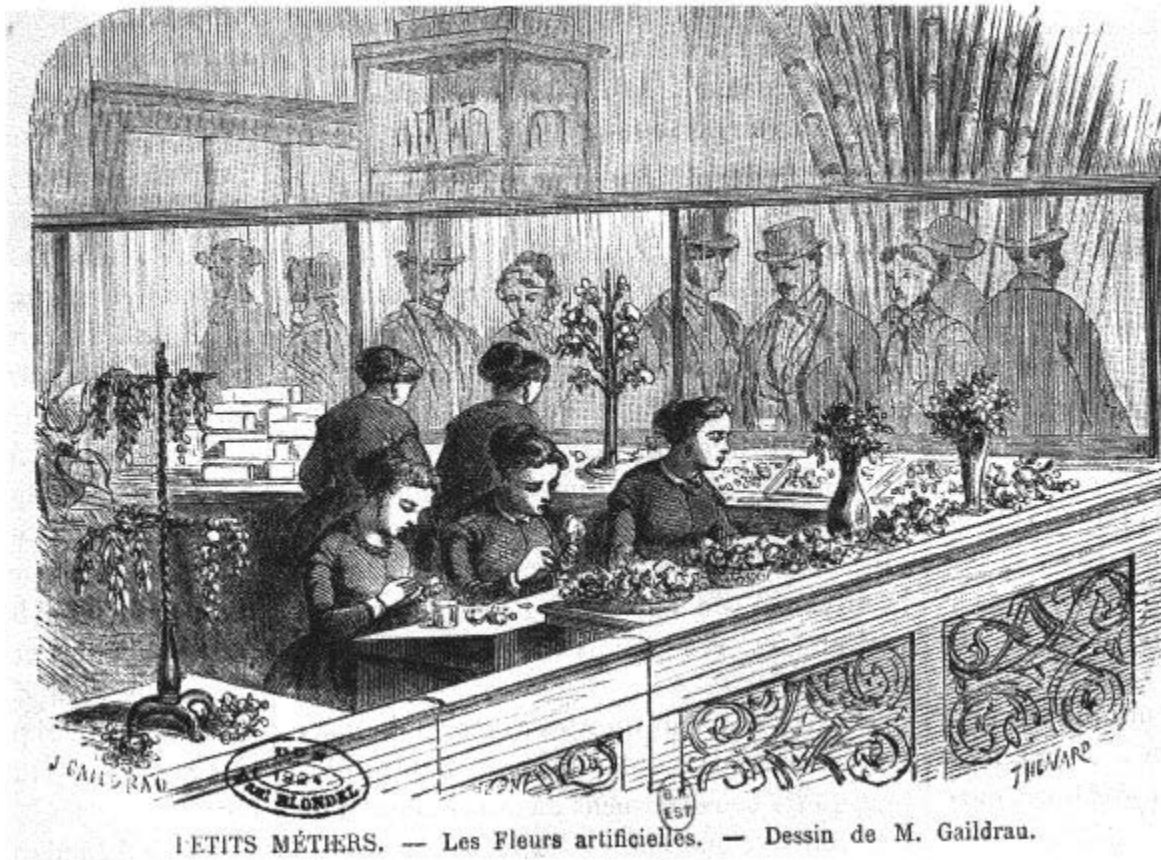


Figure 3. Petits métiers. Artificial flower making. Courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, from *L'Exposition illustrée*, 1867.

It might seem peculiar to discuss my third example, that of Karl Marx, in the reactionary climate of Poulot, Le Play, and the anxiety of identity. I should make clear that my concern here is with a particular Marx, the Marx of the 1850s and 1860s, the “mature” Marx, architect of scientific socialism. That Marx might be said to have provided the best-known and most sustained attempt to ascertain the identity of the worker. In Jacques Rancière’s reading of Marx, the Platonic myth of the artisan as he who can do nothing other than his *métier* is displaced, but essentially operative, in the Marx of “mature” scientific socialism. “The impossibility of [the artisan doing] ‘something else’ becomes that general law of history that resounds like an obsession in *The German Ideology* or *The Communist Manifesto*: we know ‘only one science,’ the science of history.”²⁷ The worker is still destined to do his unique “proper affair.” For Marx, the unique task of the worker is to suppress property; workers must transform their own condition into the general condition of society, because of the identity provided them by the positive

principle that makes the unity of the historic process: production. To find out what the worker is, is to find out what he will be obliged to perform historically, in conformity with his being. The proletarian, for mature, scientific Marx, the Marx of the 1850s and 1860s, is the worker who still has only one thing to do, the revolution, and who still has only one identity: that of the lone historical agent who will destroy capital.

Je Est un Autre

Gustave Courbet's activities and everyday life during the Commune are well known. A member of the Commune, delegate to the *mairie*, member of the Commission on Education, and president of the Fédération des Artistes, he is, in his own words, "up to my neck in political affairs." "I get up, I eat breakfast, I sit down and preside twelve hours a day. My head begins to feel like a cooked apple. But despite all this turmoil of the head and of my understanding which I'm not used to, I'm in a state of enchantment. Paris is a true Paradise."²⁸

Shoemaker Napoléon Gaillard's activities are less well known. In the months immediately following the Commune, a full half of the shoemakers in Paris were missing—massacred, arrested, in exile. "Shoemaking is the last of the *métiers*. If we find shoemakers in the first row everywhere where workers shouldn't be, it's because they are the most numerous, the least occupied, and the least mystified by the glory of the artisan."²⁹ Gaillard was a famous shoemaker, a member of the International, the author of a treatise on the foot, and an orator who had been imprisoned in 1869 for speaking at public meetings, a flamboyant figure and heavy drinker—a *sublime* according to Poulot's diagnostic categories. Fiftysix years old in 1871, he was the director of barricade construction during the Commune. But more significant, perhaps, than his shoemaking, and more significant, perhaps, than the fact that he stopped making shoes during the Commune in order to build barricades, is the fact that he insisted on being photographed posing in front of the barricade he made—thus, as Adrian Rifkin suggests, "authoring" it, demanding and appropriating for himself the status of author that was denied him.

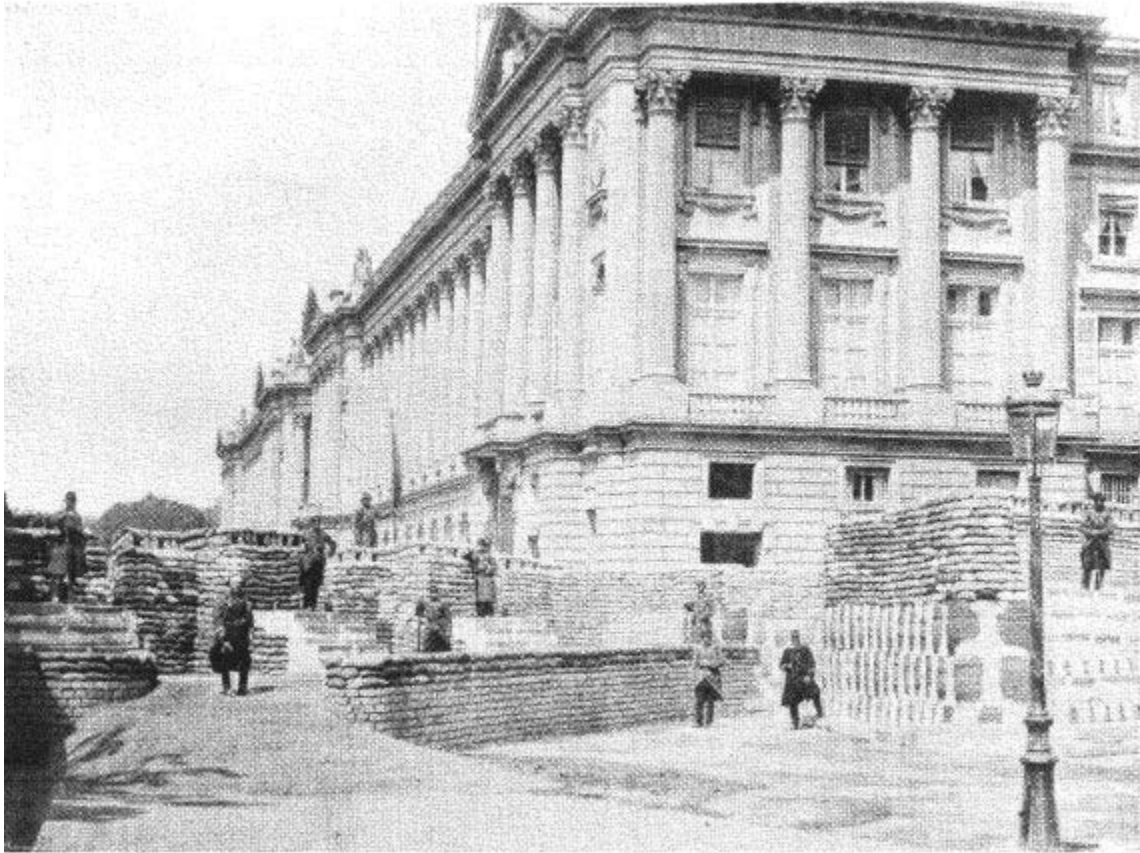


Figure 4. Napoléon Gaillard in front of his barricade at the place de la Concorde. Courtesy Adrian Rifkin from *Paris sous la Commune, par un témoin fidèle: La Photographie*, 1871(?).

Gaillard père, the head of barricade construction, appeared so proud of his creation that on the morning of May 20, we saw him in full commandant's uniform, four gold braids on the sleeve and cap, red lapels on his tunic, great riding boots, long, flowing hair, a steady gaze, ordering the staging of a spectacle that was immediately carried out. While national guards prevented the public from walking about on one side of the square, the barricade maker posed proudly some twenty feet in front of his creation, and, with his hand on his hip, had himself photographed.³⁰

Gaillard does not choose to celebrate his status as worker. Instead he transgresses what is perhaps the most time honored and inflexible of barriers: the one separating those who carry out useful labor from those who ponder aesthetics.

In his claim to “author” his own work, Gaillard launches an attack on the good worker, on the very identity, as it was understood, of *l'être ouvrier*—an attack whose counterpart can be found in Rimbaud's own resistance to the identity he playfully accused Verlaine of embracing: that of a “bon Parnassien.” These two flights from the idiotism of the *métier* form a single

dialectical image. And it is this gesture—one that resonates with a nineteenth-century critique of specialization and of the division of labor—that I have attempted to trace in Reclus, Lafargue, and the other figures that move within and on the periphery of the Commune. My study began with Rimbaud and with what I took to be Rimbaud’s flight from *l’être poète*: a flight that took shape, as I came to realize not with his famous silence, his departure for Africa, but in 1870 when he wrote his first poem. Rimbaud left literature before he even got there.

“Bosses and workers,” Rimbaud writes in “Bad Blood,” “all of them peasants, and common.” And, “I have a horror of all *métiers*.” Communard and anarchist Elisée Reclus, whose “invention” of the field of social geography, as I argue in Chapter 3, had to be repressed for the field of academic geography to take institutional shape, unknowingly echoes “Bad Blood”:

He who commands becomes depraved, he who obeys becomes smaller. Either way, as a tyrant or a slave, as an officer or as an underling, man is diminished. The morality which is born out of the present conception of the state and the social hierarchy is necessarily corrupt. Religions have taught us that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, whereas history tells us that it is the beginning of all servitude and all depravity.³¹

Reclus, like many of his generation, was a maker of slogans, and one of his slogans, “Travaillons à nous rendre inutile” (Work to Make Ourselves Useless), could be said to have been expanded into manifesto form by Paul Lafargue, the Communard to whom his father-in-law Karl Marx in an 1882 letter to Engels referred as “the last Bakuninist.” Lafargue wrote *Le Droit à la paresse* eight years after the Commune, at a moment when the left, responding to the scurrilous right-wing histories of the Commune that portrayed prostitutes, drunkards, and vagabonds setting Paris aflame, had reclaimed as its own the task of constructing the Communard as good or model worker. In leftist hagiographies of the period and after, the Communard was a good family man who never beat his wife, never touched *eau-de-vie*, and wanted nothing more than to devote himself fifteen hours a day to his *métier*. At a moment when labor was being deified by both left and right, Lafargue advocated laziness.

The threat of Lafargue, Reclus, and Rimbaud, all exiles or figures of displacement, lies in the “bastard” nature of their thought. Reclus’s geography, written for the most part in Switzerland where he was exiled after

the Commune, is as he proclaims, nothing but “history in space.” Rimbaud’s poetry mixes the useful with the luxurious, the artistic with the artisanal, precious metals with trash. And Lafargue, in *Le Droit à la paresse*, suggests that revolutionary praxis, the attack on the existing order, comes not from some untainted and virtuous working class in the full flower of its maturity, but from a challenge to the boundaries *between* work and leisure, producer and consumer, worker and bourgeois, worker and intellectual.

“(What a century for hands!),” writes Rimbaud. “I’ll never learn to use my hands.” Emancipation, in Roman and civil law, means to be freed from control; from the Latin *mancipare*, to seize with the hand (*manus*): emancipation, literally, to be unhandled. Emancipation, for Rancière, writing in the 1970s, takes as its point of departure not workers’ solidarity or community, but rather their atomization under capitalism: the alienated seriality of workers dependent on competing with each other for work. Rancière has shown how the usefulness that gains the worker a place in the city is what prevents him or her from doing anything other than his or her task—from being a citizen, for instance: “Work is not, in and of itself, a principle of liberty and equality; the defense of its interest may be the politics of a new slavery.”³² Emancipation—the transformation of a servile identity into a free identity—must be based on a principle other than work, since the exercise and defense of work are what constitute the servile identity. Emancipation follows from dispensing with the positivities of workers’ community, and from *radicalizing* that atomization instead:

It is about making oneself a citizen-atom: an atom whose movement, free from that point on, must produce a molecular energy able to decompose into free atoms the mass of “fanatics of the corporation.” The people, free and citizens, can only be the reunion of incandescent atoms.

It is not masses but atoms that enter into fusion.³³

The greatest danger to the “friends of order,” in other words, is not in the masses; it is in their decomposition—what I call, in Chapter 4, the swarm.

“I’m not against the asocial,” Bertolt Brecht says in conversation with Walter Benjamin. “I’m against the nonsocial.”³⁴ Such a vision as Rancière’s, by downplaying the emancipatory value of workers’ culture or community, risks appearing nonsocial; in fact it is anything but. Mendès, the poet who is not at home to anyone, is nonsocial; Rimbaud, indifferent to conforming to conventional standards of behavior—be they moral, sexual, national, artistic, or lexical—is asocial. And nothing is more social than Rimbaud’s

asociability. Consider his experience, as he himself was wont to do, geographically. To do so means focusing on his intersection with collectivities and movements that have been traditionally deemed irrelevant to his development *as a poet*. Rimbaud's trajectory is part of the massive displacement of populations from the provinces to the city, that vagabondage whereby thousands of peasants, workers, and middle-class people learned of exile for the first time—a migration preparatory to that even greater geographic displacement, from the metropolises to the colonies. Rimbaud moves from the countryside—the “occidental forests”—through the capitals, to the desert. In his *Illuminations*, the fantastic city and the barren desert (or its equivalent, the polar regions), often in uneasy proximity, form the most prevalent landscapes. Worker-philosopher Louis Gauny suggests a reason for this:

It is in the desert that seditious thought ferments, but it is in the city that such thought erupts. Liberty likes extreme crowds or absolute solitude... . But the unhappy inhabitants of the countryside, brutalized by taxes, are rarely visited by rebellion.³⁵

If the peasant population in France forms an obstacle to rebellion, it is not because it is atomized (for this, in fact, is the reality of the social, what makes us human, the distance between us), but rather because of its character of being an indivisible mass—what Rimbaud calls *les assis* of Charleville, the seated ones, or *les accroupissements*, the squatting. Rimbaud's later works stage the dialectic of the city and the desert (or the city and the sea in “The Drunken Boat”)—the crowd and an absolute, vertiginous, nonhuman or more-than-human solitude: the Drunken Boat as incandescent atom. These works reveal a thinker whose primary concern is that of emancipation.

Marx and the Commune

“The inventions of the unknown,” Rimbaud wrote in May 1871, “demand new forms.” Later that summer, Rimbaud composed a “communist constitution” (now lost) inspired by the form, the organization of the Commune. His friend Delahaye recalls it as follows:

In the little states that made up ancient Greece, it was the agora that directed everything; the agora, that is to say, the public place, the assembled citizens deliberating, voting, with equal rights, on what had to be done. He then began by abolishing the representative government and by replacing it by a system of permanent referendum.³⁶

For Marx too, the Commune's abolition of representative (parliamentary) government was entirely unforeseen, a true "invention of the unknown." Marx's writings about the Commune could arguably mark the beginning of a "third phase" in his thinking—one that is distinct from what is thought to be his mature "scientific" phase, and one that is involved in rethinking some of the themes of his early "immature" writings of the 1840s. Confronted in 1871 with the unexpected event of the Commune, Marx is led to focus on what he saw to be the Communards' unprecedented discovery of the "political form ... under which to work out the economical emancipation of labor."³⁷ The economic emancipation of labor, in other words, presupposes political forms that are *themselves* emancipatory;³⁸ this is the lesson Marx takes from the Commune:

The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state-machinery and wield it for their own purpose. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation. (196)

Far more important than any of the measures or laws the Commune managed to pass was simply "its own working existence": the expansive, thoroughly democratic nature of its social organization. Its discovery of a "thoroughly expansive political form," a "completely new historical creation," was for Marx what made the Commune "the greatest revolution of the century."

Who were the agents of this decisive event? Who were the Communards? Although primarily manual workers, the Communards were by no means the new, industrialized proletariat that Marx, the architect of scientific socialism, had predicted. A significant percentage were the semiskilled day laborers (*journaliers*) who had migrated from the provinces to work on Haussmann's massive and fantastic urban-renewal projects; another significant group were traditional artisans.³⁹ A decisive role in the revolution was played by women, a population that had borne more than its share of the everyday hardships of the Siege: "Women started first, as they did during the revolution. Those of March 18, hardened by the war in which they had a double share of misery, did not wait for their men."⁴⁰ The Communards' self-definition, if not their origins, was decidedly Parisian, and their most immediate concerns had less to do with gaining control over the means of production than with avoiding eviction. (On March 13, a decree had been approved that required the forceful payment of all rents due and commercial debts unpaid during the siege.) The chosen targets of Commune violence,

as Manuel Castells points out, were less the industrial capitalist than those emblematic figures charged with social classification and the policing of everyday life: the *curé*, the *gendarme*, and the *concierge*.

The event of the Commune caused Marx to return to some of the themes that had already emerged in what are called his early or “immature” writings of the 1840s. Manifest property relations recede into the background of his analysis of the Commune. Instead, a stronger focus on emancipatory political form and a new attention to the social and political forms that fetter that emancipation begin to emerge. Chief among these latter are the State and the division of labor.

The revolutions of 1830 and 1848, according to Marx, had succeeded only in transferring power from one faction of the ruling class to another. In each case, “the repressive character of the state power was more fully developed and more mercilessly used” (197). State power under the Second Empire reached unprecedented and grotesque dimensions; the Second Empire was “the last triumph of a State separate of and independent from society” (151). And the Commune, for Marx, was “the direct antithesis to the Empire” (151): “The Commune ... was a revolution against the State itself ... a resumption by the people for the people of its own social life” (150). The Commune’s form, in other words, was emancipatory because and to the extent that it did not form a state; because and to the extent that it proclaimed its historical capacity to organize all aspects of social life freely.

For Marx the “State” as such is only the modern state. It is only in modern times that the state becomes detached from society and forms a “parasitic excrescence,” existing over and above society all the while dominating it. The abstraction of the state belongs to modernity, because the abstraction of private life—an apolitical, civil sphere organized around particular, individual interests—belongs only to modernity.

Already in his 1843 *Critique of Hegel’s Doctrine of the State*, Marx had argued that the political state disappears in a true democracy. In that essay he presents an important critique of parliamentarism and of the modern representative principle itself that is worth reviewing here. Representation for Hegel (in the *Philosophy of Right*) demands *either* the use of deputies (representatives) *or* the participation of “all individuals as single individuals” in the decision making of all public affairs.⁴¹ The terms of Hegel’s choice—either the representative or each and every one—are interesting in that they recall the terms of Rimbaud’s version of literary

representation: “literally” and “*dans tous les sens*” (according to all possible meanings). *Either* a literal, straightforward notion of representation, where the representative—be it political deputy or poetic signifier—“stands in for” the represented (offstage, in the depths) *or* a kind of chaotic polysemia: in all possible ways, according to all possible significations, all individuals as individuals participating in all public affairs. (This, in fact, is how Rimbaud historically has been read: *either* literally [biographically] *or* as the exemplum of a Tel Quelian polysemic modernism.) Marx, however, proves Hegel’s choice to be a false one, just as Rimbaud will insist that he be understood both literally *and* in all possible ways.

Marx, writing in 1843, undoes Hegel by emphasizing the modern state’s detachment from civil society. It is that very detachment that makes “representatives” necessary:

Either the political state is separated from civil society; in that event it is not possible for all as individuals to take part in the legislature. The political state leads an existence *divorced* from civil society ... the fact that civil society takes part in the political state through its deputies is the expression of the separation.⁴²

If the state is separated from civil society, then representatives are divided from those they represent. But what if such a separation, because historical, is not inevitable? What if politics were not a specialized set of activities, institutions, and occasions? What if the proper task of the poet were not, as Rimbaud’s contemporary Mallarmé was to proclaim, to “render more pure the words of the masses [le tribu]”? What if there were no distinct political sphere, no distinctly poetic perception or language? Marx’s critique of Hegel continues:

Alternatively, civil society is the *real* political society. If so, it would be senseless to insist on a requirement which stems from the conception of the political state as something existing apart from civil society [for here] the *legislature* entirely ceases to be important as a *representative* body. The legislature is representative only in the sense that *every* function is representative. For example, a shoemaker is representative in so far as he satisfies a social need. ... In this sense he is representative not by virtue of another thing which he represents but by virtue of what he *is* and *does*.⁴³

If the separation between state and civil society does not exist, then politics becomes just another branch of social production. Political emancipation means emancipation from politics as a specialized activity. Marx concludes his critique of Hegel with the suppression of politics and the extinction of the

state. Thirty years later the Commune, which was both the thing and the rallying cry, put an end to the separation between event and sign, and an end to labor and politics as class attributes.

The Commune, then, reawakened in Marx a critique of the state he had already, to some extent, formulated in his “immaturity.” In 1872 he added a new preface to one of his “mature” texts, the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, writing now against the “revolutionary measures” that had, in the 1848 version, hinged on “centralization ... in the hands of the state”:

The practical applications of the principles will depend everywhere and at all times upon extant historical conditions. We therefore do not lay any special stress upon the revolutionary measures suggested at the close of the second section. In many respects the passage would have to be differently worded today ... in view of the practical knowledge acquired during the two months' existence of the Paris Commune when the proletariat held political power for the first time ... the program has, to a certain extent, become out of date. Above all the Commune of Paris has taught us that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.”⁴⁴

The stronger focus on the division of labor that emerges in Marx's writing after the Commune is, on the other hand, new. The state is not merely an instrument of the bourgeoisie; its detachment from civil society, its status as a distinct organism, is attained only *through and by means of* the social division of labor. The organs of centralized state power—the standing army, the bureaucracy, the police, the clergy, the judiciary—are “organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labor” (197). The *means* through which the Commune was possible was simply its sustained attack on the divisions of labor that render administrations and government “mysteries, transcendent functions only to be trusted to the hands of a trained caste.”⁴⁵

Marx's return to the themes of his “immaturity,” and to the consideration of the actual natures of political and social organization, shows a departure from and critique of the evolutionist, progressivist view of what is taken to be his middle, scientific, and “mature” phase: one that proclaims the inexorable march of history toward capitalist centralization.⁴⁶ The principal tenet of scientific socialism is well known: only at an objectively defined stage of socioeconomic development (that of “mature” capitalist mode of production) and only as a result of the class struggle of the proletariat (workers performing their sole historical task) can the socialist transformation take place. By the standards of scientific socialism, the

Commune, that “unplanned, unguided, formless revolution,”⁴⁷ can only be seen as an evolutionary accident. The Communards are “out of sync” with the timetable of the inexorable march of history. They are not the industrialized proletariat they are supposed to be. Like adolescents they are moving at once too fast in their unplanned seizure of power and too slowly. They are caught up in what was by all accounts an unusually mild and festive spring, unaware of or ignoring the massive Versaillais threat being mobilized against them, playing at symbolic games: demolishing the Vendôme Column while leaving the Bank of France untouched. When Marx takes the Commune seriously, he must confront the possibility of a multiplicity of roads replacing the unique Highway of History; he must give new significance to the decentralization of sociopolitical power. The country that is more developed industrially might still not be destined to show to the less developed, as he had written in *Capital*, “the image of its own future.”⁴⁸

The developmental model of Marx’s own theoretical evolution is troubled by this autocritique: one that puts into question the very notion of “maturity.” Late Marx bends back and touches young Marx in a recognition of the inadequacy of unilinear, “progressive” models of historical analysis. “Science, the new nobility! Progress. The world is on the march. Why shouldn’t it turn around?” (*Une Saison en enfer*). And Lautréamont: “Plagiarism is necessary. Progress implies it” (*Poésies II*).

Manifesto of the Paris Commune's Federation of Artists

Source: *Red Wedge*, April 15th, 2016;

Translated: by Jeff Skinner.

The Paris Commune was in essence the first large scale experiment in socialist governance. On March 18th of 1871, radical workers and artisans organized in the National Guard decisively took control of the city as the regular French army fled. Days later, the Commune was elected, immediately declaring that workers could take over and run workshops and businesses, as well as abolishing the death penalty and military conscription, mandating the separation of church and state, and the beginnings of a social safety net and pensions. Both revolutionary and democratic, every day saw new ways of running the city advanced by ordinary laborers.

This included a wholly and radically different way of approaching the realm of art. On April 15th, artists, painters, sculptors and ornamentalists from around Paris – including Gustave Courbet, the well-known painter, and Eugène Pottier, later the author of the lyrics to “L’Internationale” – gathered to thrash out and propose what this approach might be.

The proposals were straightforward: artists’ control of art, and art and culture as a right. Above all, they questioned why art was almost exclusively to be enjoyed by the state and the well-off. The Federation founded by these artists insisted that everyone had the right to live and work amidst beauty. Kristin Ross, author of *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune*, describes the significance of this:

This may seem like a small, even a “decorative,” demand. But it actually entails not only a complete reconfiguration of our relation to art, but to labor, social relations, nature, and the lived environment as well... It means art and beauty deprivatized, fully integrated into everyday life, and not hidden away in private salons or centralized into obscene nationalistic monumentality.

The text below is taken from the daily reports and journals of the Commune. It includes the manifesto of these artists. This is, to our knowledge, the first widely available English translation of the manifesto of the Paris Federation of Artists. *Red Wedge* publishes it here for the purposes of both rediscovering radical history and rethinking the role of art in everyday life. – The Editors

Assembly of artists

Yesterday, at two o'clock, the meeting of artists brought about by Mr. Courbet with the permission of the Commune took place in the grand lecture hall of the School of Medicine. The hall was absolutely full up, and all the arts were amply represented. Among the painters we noticed Messrs Feyen-Perrin and Héreau; among the sculptors, Messrs

Moulin and Delaplanche; cartooning sent Bertall; engraving, Mr. Michelin; and criticism Mr. Philippe Burty – many architects and ornamentalists. An assembly of more than four hundred persons.

Mr. Courbet presiding, assisted by Messrs Moulin and Pottier. The latter, first and foremost, read a report drawn up by a preparatory committee and edited by him. This very interesting document contained truly lofty considerations of the needs and the destinies of contemporary art.

Entrust to artists alone the management of their interests.

It was this idea that appeared to prevail in the spirit of the subcommittee's report. It was a question of establishing a *federation* of Paris artists, comprising under that title all who exhibit their works to Paris.



Federation of Paris artists

The artists of Paris, in adhering to the principles of the Communal Republic, have formed a federation.

This uniting of all the artistic intellects has as its bases:

“The free expansion of art, free from all governmental supervision and from all privileges.”

“Equality of rights among all the members of the federation.”

“The independence and dignity of every artist taken under the protection of all through the creation of a committee elected by the universal suffrage of artists.” This committee strengthened the bonds of solidarity and achieved unity of action.

Composition of the committee

The committee is composed of 47 members representing various faculties, namely:

- 16 painters;
- 10 sculptors;
- 5 architects;
- 6 engravers; and

- 10 members representing the decorative arts, incorrectly called the industrial arts.

They were appointed by the list system and by secret vote.

Citizens of both sexes who proved their position as artists – whether through the fame of their works, or through an exhibitor’s card, or through a written attestation from two sponsor artists – had the right to take part in the vote.

Committee members were elected for one year.

Upon the expiration of the mandate, fifteen members designated by a secret vote of the committee will remain in office over the following year; the other thirty-two members will be replaced.

The outgoing members may only be re-elected at the end of an interval of one year.

The right of recall may be exercised against a member who is not fulfilling their mandate. This recall may only be pronounced one month after the demand for it has been made, and – if voted on in general assembly – on a majority of two thirds of the voters.

Establishing mandate

This government of the world of the arts by the artists has as its mission:

- Preserving of the treasures of the past;
- Implementing and illuminating all the elements of the present; and
- Regenerating the future through education.
- Monuments, museums.

Monuments, from the artistic point of view, museums and Paris establishments containing galleries, collections, and libraries of works of art not belonging to private individuals, are entrusted to the keeping and the administrative supervision of the committee.

It will erect them, preserve them, and adjust them, and it will complete plans, inventories, indexes and catalogues.

It will place these at the disposal of the public in order to encourage studies and satisfy the curiosity of visitors.

It will note the state of preservation of buildings, indicate urgent repairs, and present the Commune with a frequent account of its works.

After examination of their capacity and inquiry into their morality, it will appoint administrators, a secretary, archivists and wardens, in order to assure the service needs of these establishments and for exhibitions, which will be spoken of later.

Exhibitions

The committee will organize communal, national and international exhibitions taking place in Paris.

For national and international exhibitions not taking place in Paris, it will delegate a commission in charge of the interests of Parisian artists.

It will only admit works signed by their authors, original creations or translations from one art to another, such as engravings rendering paintings, etc.

It rejects absolutely all mercenary exhibitions that tend to substitute the name of the editor or the manufacturer for that of the real creator.

It has not been given awards.

Ordinary works commissioned by the Commune will be distributed among the artists that the votes of all the exhibitors will have designated.

Extraordinary works will be submitted to competition.

Education

The committee will supervise the teaching of drawing and modeling in the communal primary and professional schools, in which the teachers are appointed through competition; it encourages the introduction of attractive, logical methods; it stamps models; and it designs the subjects among which a higher spirit is revealed, and the studies of which must be completed at the expense of the Commune.

It prompts and encourages the construction of vast halls for higher education, for conferences on the aesthetics, history, and philosophy of art.

Publicity

It will create a publicity organ entitled: *Officiel des arts*.

Under the control and the responsibility of the committee, this journal will publish events concerning the world of the arts and useful information for artists.

It will publish accounts of the committee's works, the minutes of its meetings, the budget of receipts and expenditures, and all the statistical works that bring light and prepare order.

The literary section, dedicated to essays on aesthetics, will be a neutral field open to all opinions and all systems.

Progressive, independent, dignified and sincere, *Officiel des arts* will be the most serious statement of our regeneration.

Arbitrations

For all contentious disputes relating to the arts, the committee – upon the request of the interested parties (artists or others) – will appoint conciliating arbiters.

On issues of principle and general interest, the committee will form into an arbitral council, and its decisions will be inserted into *Officiel des arts*.

Individual initiative

The committee invites all citizens to send it all proposals, projects, reports, and opinions having the progress of art, the moral or intellectual emancipation of artists, or the material improvement of their lot as a goal.

It will give an account of this to the Commune and lend its moral support and its collaboration to everything it judges feasible.

It calls public opinion to sanction all attempts at progress, giving these proposals the publicity of *Officiel des arts*.

Lastly, by the word, by the pen, by the pencil, through popular reproduction of masterpieces, and through intelligent and edifying images that can be spread in profusion and displayed in the town halls of the most humble villages in France, the committee will work towards our regeneration, the inauguration of communal wealth, the splendors of the future and the Universal Republic.

G. COURBET, MOULINET, STEPHEN MARTIN, ALEXANDRE JOUSSE,
ROSZEZENCH, TRICHON, DALOU, JULES HÉREAU, C. CHABERT, H.
DUBOIS, A. FALEYNIÈRE, EUGÈNE POTTIER, PERRIN, A. MOUILLIARD.

