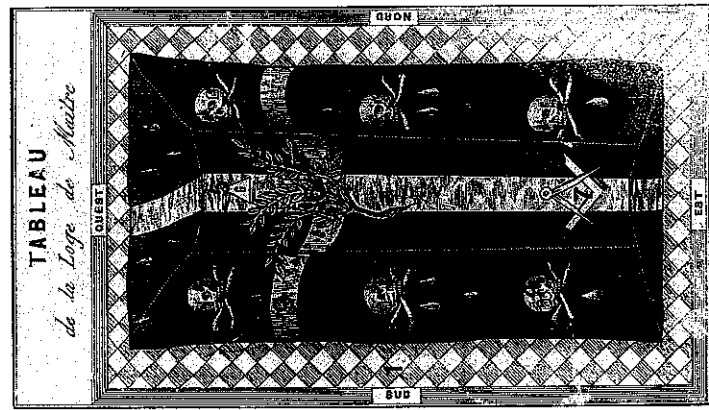


Courbet's friend and compatriot, who is depicted in startling profile at the left rear of *Funeral*, just above the pallbearer's hat. His head too is held high and, also like the gravedigger, he seems to stand apart from the others. The connection with the old stonebreaker is apt: the kneeling gravedigger with his shovel, just glimpsed at the bottom edge of the picture, partially mirrors the other in pose and costume. Although their legs are reversed, the position is identical, with both kneeling on improvised pads to cushion the knee and both wearing the peasant vest and full-sleeved chemise. The stalwart gravedigger operates as a kind of regenerated counterpart of the crushed stonebreaker.

Although I accept Lindsay's interpretation of this statement as a spiritual inversion of earthly status in which the last shall be first, I do not believe that it is meant to condemn the social body depicted. This is a dynamic aggregate that stands behind the gravedigger, an image of a society forced in spite of itself to undergo the process of social change. Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that the bourgeoisie inadvertently produces "its own gravediggers," a reference to the inevitability of the proletariat's success. Courbet shows a social resurrection in progress, beginning with the class heretofore howled to the earth in brutish humiliation; it is fitting that its emblematic representative kneels on one knee, ready to rise at the appropriate moment. This ironic twist to the funeral ritual is expressed in the curious position of Colart, who, holding up the paradigmatic symbol of the resurrection, looks outward at the spectator with a wily glance. A key figure in the composition, his strong vertical crucifix relieves the dominant horizontality of the composition and acts as an anchoring mechanism. Narratively, however, he behaves rather inappropriately for the sacrosanct *porte-croix*. He functions akin to those shrewd bystanders in nineteenth-century American genre who exchange a visual wink with the spectator, thereby commenting on that aspect of the pictorial narrative unseen to its other participants. Colart's disruptive glance ironizes the resurrection as a social rather than a religious phenomenon, affirming further that its reference is to the overburdened living rather than to the liberated dead.

This is the meaning of the presence, at the extreme left, of grandfather Oudot, who peers over the assembly as an interested spectator. It makes no sense to see his marginalized physical presence as a resurrection in the spiritual sense. Instead, as a historical commentary on the renewal and progress of society, he aptly fulfills the function of role model and witness. He corroborates the class origins of Courbet and his family, and evokes memories of his participation in the political and social struggle that surmounted them. The crowd at the funeral operates as a synecdoche of human history realizing itself in the victory of the proletariat. The deceased republican of '93, seconded by still living veterans of the first revolution who tower over the grave site, brackets the progressive evolution of French society from 1789 through 1848. The impulse given to the deliverance of the working classes by Oudot's generation still resonates through the society,



3.11 Master Mason's Tableau with Symbols of the Legend of Hiram, nineteenth century.

expressing itself in the uplifted heads of Buchon and Cassard. Although the accomplices of slavery and despotism still exist, the end of their reign of terror is imminent. When Courbet shared with Bruyas his plans for a counter-exhibition in 1855, he applied the metaphor of the gravedigger to himself to symbolize the destruction of the old order: "So we will lay our plans and proceed to this great burial. You have to admit that the role of gravedigger is a fine role, and that sweeping the earth clean of all that rubbishy jumble is not without its charms."⁶³

Grave-digging, stone-breaking, rebuilding on new foundations—these are terms that carry a frankly Masonic significance, and in *Funeral* there is a striking piece of evidence that confirms this interest.⁶⁴ The pall spread over the coffin is decorated with black crossbones and a series of droplets or "tears" near the trimming, a well-known Masonic combination symbolizing the death of Hiram, the officially recognized architect of King Solomon's temple (fig. 3.11). Legend had it that three journeymen working for Hiram, impatient to progress to master status, tried to wrest from him the sacred words of initiation to this level. Each one waited for him at one of the three doors of the temple, and when he refused in turn to divulge the secret they wounded him mortally with the tools of the trade: square, ruler, and mallet. They then buried his remains outside the town and planted a branch of the acacia tree to mark the spot.

The restaging of this legend is central to the ritual of elevation to the degree of Master Mason, as the journeyman undergoes a kind of psychodrama representing the chief scenes in the murder of the architect. This myth turns on the ritual of death and resurrection, with the three blows representing Hiram's physical, emotional, and mental death, and his rebirth at the same time in an improved body, heart, and mind. The allegorizing of Hiram is pervasive at the highest level of Masonry and focuses on the skull and crossbones as emblematic of the physical death of Hiram; tears (usually silver) symbolizing lunar rays or the loss of the solar (corporeal) influence; and a Latin cross signifying immortality. The appearance of these three symbols in close proximity in Courbet's work complicate the funeral theme with a Masonic signification that transforms it into a performative ritual.

Although Louis-Napoléon's coup d'état of 2 December 1851 would usher in a burgeoning of secret societies forced to go underground in the countryside, Freemasonry flourished openly in the short-lived republican era. The government itself was largely composed of Masons and contributed to

natural science, and the possibilities of human progress. His subject allowed him to carefully assemble a microcosm of society which he could classify and to which he could apply a strict empirical approach. As in the case of *The Stonebreakers*, he could stay within the realm of immediate experience and still contribute to an understanding of the laws governing human affairs. The small-town society comprehensively represented in *Funebral* served as a test case for realist documentation of historically progressing society, passing from the stages of the rule of priests and exploitative labor to the highest stage of society, when the mind breaks with all illusions inherited from the past, formulates laws based on careful observation of the empirical world, and reconstructs society in accordance with these laws.

The clergy—the first estate—are there in full array: they include the bald-headed curate Bonnet at the left dressed in a black, silver-embroidered cope, looking for the right page in his prayer book; his two beadles, Jean-Baptiste Muselier and Pierre Clément, wearing the Franche-Comté uniform of flared red cap and scarlet robes edged with black; behind them the church organist, Promayet (father of Alphonse), in white surplice and black cap; two choirboys carrying candle, holy water stoup, and brush; and the cross-bearer, also surpliced, named Colart; and behind him the sacristan, Cauchi, in a tall, black, triangular-shaped toque. Next comes the notables, or prominent citizens of the town, who dominate the central section: the portly mayor, Claude-Hélène Prosper Teste de Sagey, and to his right, occupying the pictorial center, Hippolyte Proudhon (no relation to the philosopher), a well-known lawyer of Ornans, and Courbet's equally prominent father, Régis, facing the spectator just to the right of the mourner crying into his handkerchief, and behind them Urbain Cuenot bareheaded, and probably Adolphe Marlet, wearing a top hat. This circle of male figures is completed by the two veteran republicans of '93, Cardet and Sécretan, the latter garbed in festive eighteenth-century dress including knee breeches, silk stockings, tail coat, and bicorne (cocked hat). He extends his hand, palm upward, toward the open grave, as if to comment on the meaning of death (or the futility of life—"See how it all ends!").

Consistent with Catholic custom, the women form a separate group and in their mourning cloaks seem to coalesce into a mass of black, relieved only by the whites of handkerchiefs and some lace bonnets. Like the cliff face of Roche du Mont rising above them, they provide a bulwark of support for the community, as well as expressing the collective grief of their households. Above the mayor, the heads of two of the tearful women—Josephine Bocquin's ample black hood swells to a crescendo—crown all the rest, bringing up the extreme rear of the cortege and projecting directly into the rock face of the Roche du Mont. Farther to the right, we come upon "Mère Gagéy," the craggy-faced woman in white bonnet fifth from the far right and looking away from the central group. She was the spouse of Claude François Gagéy, Courbet's old stonebreaker, and her head is located close to the rocky mass in the background. Courbet's sisters are the

three figures in black hoods in the foreground just right of Sécretan: Juliette covers her mouth with her handkerchief, Zoé's face is buried in her handkerchief, and Zélie bows her head pensively. Their mother, née Sylvie Oudot, also wearing a black cloak, is at the extreme right, holding the hand of a young daughter of the mayor's family and thus sharing the load of the communal grief beyond her familial duties.

Courbet's spread of the social strata of the town is complicated in this ritual, since many of the rustic participants are *endimanchés*, dressed in their Sunday-best or mourning clothes, blurring the differences in rank and station. In addition, even artisan and peasant members of the tiny population literally wore more than one hat in having to serve double functions in times of emergency and on special occasions, or, as in the case of the rural stonebreakers, to supplement their meager incomes. For examples, the beadles, Muselier and Clément, were by occupation vine-grower and shoemaker respectively, and the cross-bearer, Colart, was also a vintner. The most remarkable of the participants, the gravedigger kneeling on one knee beside the gaping cavity, Antoine Joseph Cassard, was another vine-grower who supplemented his income by digging graves.

The brawny peasant gravedigger cuts a curious figure at the side of his excavation; isolated from the rest by his kneeling position and disengagement from the mourning process, head erect and alert, hand authoritatively flexed on his upraised thigh, he eyes with impatience the clumsy pallbearers who buldoze their way through the crowd and get a severe look from a jostled choirboy. Although he alone kneels—the quintessential symbol of inferiority in nineteenth-century genre painting—his commanding torso and robust physique surmount the conventional designation and invest him with a singular dignity and authority that surpasses even that of the clergy and civic officials.

In the process of excavating the grave, Cassard has disinterred the skull and bones of an ancient inhabitant of the region—perhaps suggestive of the life-and-death cycle of the communal theme. Buchon, in a revision of the text of his Besançon ad for the exhibition at Dijon, was singularly drawn to the gravedigger, who reminded him of "the old dances of death," of the skeletal figure of Death personified, who "forced kings, popes, emperors—all the great men of the world and all the oppressors of the poor—to pirouette to his tune, whether they liked it or not."⁶² Buchon probably had in mind Sand's prologue to *La Mare au diable*, which incorporated Holbein's woodcut series into her realist-rural discourse, but instead of depicting the *danse macabre* to point up the hardships of rural life, he affirms the image as an instrument of radical thought.

Calling the gravedigger "the gatekeeper to the hereafter," Buchon next makes an unexpected connection between him and the old stonebreaker, coyly concluding: "In the mind of the painter he might well be nothing but the psychological antithesis, the counterbalance [to the stonebreaker]—I would say almost the avenger." This is a significant statement from

its solidarity during the early Provisional phase. Many of Courbet's friends in this period were Masons or would become initiated in the near future, including Proudhon, Champfleury, and Bruyas. No documented proof of his initiation exists, but enough visual evidence has been accumulating to attest to intimate contact with Masonic ideals. Given the intimate links between Masonry and the revolutionary tradition in France, it is possible that the presence of this material in *Funerai* pays homage to grandfather Oudot and represents a further development of French society in the direction of fraternal association. The gravedigger and his shovel (actually we see only the blade, which could pass for a mason's trowel) and the stonebreaker hammering away the impurities (the *pierre brute*) of his own existence may then be seen as shapers of the new unity among all creatures.

Despite the many novel features of the work and its social and political significations, it still may not be clear as to how such a work could have aroused the Parisian critics to violent discussion in 1851. One question especially drove them up the wall: was Courbet serious or was he trying to put one over on them? Some of the motifs in *Funerai* struck them as grotesque and primitive, more suitable to popular imagery and satire than to Salon art. The ruddy faces and especially the cherry-colored noses of the two beards chimed with their uniforms, together with the perceived stiffness and flarness of the figures, impressed reviewers as anticlerical caricature. As we have already seen, caricature and realism went hand in hand in dealing with the sordid aspects of nineteenth-century society, but Courbet's monumental display of everyday ugliness overtaxed critical tolerance.

Clément de Ris noted Courbet's urge "to do the ugly thing" and refused to be dragged into a discussion of *Funerai at Ornans*, which he could "not take seriously."⁶⁵ Dupays of *L'Illustration* had the most to say about the picture, which inspired a long disquisition on the decline of classical idealism and the fatal tendency of modern art to "enter into alliance with the ugly." *Funerai* manifested such a "harsh prejudice, an affectation of trivial or grotesque ugliness so offensive, that it seemed exclusively aimed at shocking us with a system." (The critics' repeated use of "system" to describe Courbet's intention was a coded rebuke of his radical agenda.) On this level, he felt compelled to address the picture, but it irritated him to hear that it was causing commotion in artistic circles as an art "of the people"—grandiose words too frequently abused in the present epoch and fraught with danger.

The reviewer noted that *After Dinner* should have warned him, for once again Courbet exaggerated the dimensions of his subject and failed to harmonize his color scheme. He wondered what the artist had in mind with all these grotesque singularities. One thing Courbet made abundantly clear, however, with all his bizarre motifs, he did not aim "to please." Dupays next provided a detailed description of the painting, describing the class makeup of the gathering as "half peasant, half bourgeois"—different from the previous year when he characterized the individual figures in *After*

Dinner as half-and-half. He perceived in the long file relatives, friends, and indifferents, all pressed closely together in great confusion, conforming to the reality of a funereal event but acting contrary to the aims of art, which presupposed a tasteful selective process:

The types of physiognomies are the most vulgar imaginable; for the most part they appear to be no more than portraits, which lowers the level of the work even more as a composition. It would seem that this is one of those pictures where one groups, as much as possible, the members of an extended family desiring to have their portraits reunited in the same space. Finally, in the midst of this terribly uninteresting crowd, the two beards distinguish themselves by their grotesque look and their drunkard's faces, which, like the dazzling red of their robes and toques, dash with the black and white that dominates the rest of the picture. Why these comical caricatures among this sadness?⁶⁶

Geofroy of the *Revue des deux mondes* agreed that the heads of the men and women are either so "insignificant or repugnant" that they fail to inspire interest:

If these are family portraits, leave them in Ornus [sic]. For those of us who are not of Ornus, we need something more to hold our interest. What is necessary to awake in the spectator is the natural feeling aroused by such an event in reality; now this is not exactly the result achieved by your grotesque caricatures. We will scarcely weep in front of this burial, and this certainly proves that the verity is not always true.⁶⁷

Pillar of the *Moniteur universel* more or less repeated these ideas, but as a writer for the government newspaper he could accept the grotesque portrayals as authentic images of that hostile portion of the countryside allying itself with the Reds:

Let us give credit to the artist, where credit is due: if the heads of his peasants are generally ugly and negligently modeled, if the flesh tones are not true, there is at least in the physiognomies, as in the demeanor of these villagers in their Sunday best, a sort of rustic naïveté which does honor to the observant attitude of the artist.⁶⁸

Courbet's able defender, Proudhon, denounced the critics for treating the work as gross caricature, but he had to admit that "the contrast between the figures and the pious motif that unites them is of such violence" that it would take a long time for the public to appreciate it. Of all life's events, Proudhon continued, the one that lends itself least to irony and satire is the one that terminates it, death. If anything must remain sacred on this plane of existence, for both the believer and the unbeliever, it is the last moments, the solemn farewells, the graveside ritual for the deceased.

How then was it possible for Courbet to take pleasure in ridiculing such a scene and in making its actors play the fool? It is all the more remarkable and indeed, sacrilegious, that the event takes place among the simple peasantry in the religious atmosphere of a small town:

Look at the gravedigger with the heavy, brutish face; the impious and mischievous choirboys; these pimple-nosed headles, who, for a few sous, have left their vineyards to come and participate in the funeral drama; at these priests, jaded with funerals as much as with baptisms, rushing through with a distracted air the indispensable *De Profundis*: what a sad and distressing spectacle! A shameful sight to spread before the eyes, is it not?

So who would be interested in such a work? What is its proper niche? Surely not in a church, where it would be an insult; not in a school, a town hall, or a theater. Even an eccentric man of leisure who might wish to exhibit it for the gaze of the curious would hesitate to display it in his living room.

Given the lack of moral purpose in this work, what is the rationale for its existence? Proudhon answers that this criticism is precisely the painter's justification. Anyone who has ever attended a modern funeral and observed its proceedings knows that French society has long ago abandoned the sublime poetry of ancient Christian burial rites. The French have lost faith in prayers and ridicule the idea of a hereafter, and the death of a human being is considered on the same level as the death of an animal. Despite all the outward display of churchly pomp and decorum, the dead are treated as ciphers. All the old signs of immortality, the ceremony, the marble, the crosses, and the inscriptions, have been emptied of their traditional meaning. It would suffice to simply order a dustcart from the police to remove the corpse to the cemetery.

It is this perverted development in modern society that Courbet wished to lay bare—excepting the authentic tears of the women. All the rest is a joke and a sacrilege. Courbet proves once again to be as profound a moralist as he is a painter, holding up a mirror to the brute facts of French existence. By offending the outworn ideal, he calls his fellow countrymen back to their authentic dignity. If *Funeral* is not flawless, at least it is salutary and original, and it would be judged prodigious if people had an ounce of feeling for art and modern hearts and souls were not corrupted.⁶⁹

Proudhon's interpretation plays down the communal theme in favor of the work's apparent anticlericalism, thereby in effect agreeing with the general commentary but taking a more positive view of what most reviewers condemned as negative. Nevertheless, he does imply that the funeral rite functions as a rallying point for understanding modern society, even if for its baser aspects. Funerals, then as now, assumed a class dimension in the period, with clear distinctions made between those of the rich and those of the poor. Most poor people were buried in pauper's or common graves, and the rising cost of funerals was a point of sore contention by radical

pamphleteers. Since the uprising at the funeral of Lamarque in 1832, it was noted that socialists used the assemblies at obsequies as a platform to launch political demonstrations.⁷⁰

Courbet's manifestation of anticlericalism within the context of a funeral rite was understandable from the perspective of the church's discriminatory practices. For example, in Sue's *Le Juif errant*, two funerals take place the same day at the church of Saint-Méry: in the first a couple of distracted choristers, wearing soiled surplices, chant prayers with a sullen air around a plain pine coffin, attended only by a sobbing old man and miserably clad child. Neither the beadle nor the sacristan put on their robes, and they yawned with impatience during the entire ceremony. That same morning the funeral of a wealthy donor also took place, and this time the numerous clergy of the parish turned out in full procession with their dazzling robes and brilliant uniforms, and a team of choristers wearing fresh white surplices sang out in thunderous unison.

Critics consistently responded to the male fashions in *Funeral*, mocking the pretentious airs of the rural bourgeoisie and the vine-growers in their Sunday best. Clothing was a critical marker of class status in this period, and we have already seen to what extent Courbet himself experienced the pressures of the mania for the fashionable. Dress as status symbol is always a tangible sign of economic and social change, signifying a society in a state of transition and the perception of new possibilities. The comments on the black coats and Parade of the rural social structure showed Courbet's ability to heighten Parisian consciousness of class differentiation in the countryside, again calling attention to the political potential of the provinces.

Champfleury's defense of the picture emphasized the way in which the bourgeois aspects of the work, especially the male costume, indirectly reinforced the issue of class differentiation in town and country. He wrote: "As for the alleged ugliness of the bourgeois of Ormans, he has not exaggerated anything; it is the ugliness of the province as opposed to the ugliness of Paris." He jeered at his contemporaries, unable to appreciate modern dress and ignorant of the fact "that the modern costume is in harmony with modern physiognomy, and that the fancy frills of Watteau would make us look more ridiculous than Cassandre [a commedia dell'arte character]." In Courbet's work, the "simplicity of the black costumes is akin to the grandeur of parliaments in red robes by Largillière. It is the modern bourgeoisie, full-length, in all its ridiculousness, its ugliness, and its beauty."⁷¹

These comments may be traced to Baudelaire's conclusion to his *Salon* review of 1846, in which he pleads for a recognition of the beauty and native charm of contemporary garb. The black dress coat and frock coat is the necessary fashion for "our suffering age, which wears the symbol of perpetual mourning even upon its thin black shoulders." This clothing not only possesses a special political beauty, which is an expression of universal equality, but also their poetic beauty, which is an expression of the public

soul—an immense cortege of pallbearers. Even the peasant dresses up for a funeral in his black Sunday best—hence funeral black is the common denominator of the modern male.⁷²

Courbet faced up to his community without finching at the sight of its absurdities, contradictions, and ugliness. The way we describe society dictates our ideological position, and in Courbet what we see is a community undergoing a process of change, carefully spelled out in the differentiation of personalities and social types and in the lack of internal cohesion. Typically, a recurrent activity like a funeral ceremony helps maintain structural continuity within social life, but in this instance Courbet seizes upon it as an occasion to disrupt that continuity by breaking with its protocol. He confounds in varying degrees the codes of beauty and ugliness assigned to the different social levels, spreading traits of deformity and coarseness egalitarian-like among all ranks in the countryside. If physically the gravedigger fits the gross stereotype of the rustic, he is also positioned as the most magisterial figure in the composition.

Courbet reorganizes his community on canvas for the purpose of showing its imminent dissolution in actuality. The provincial remnant of organic feudalism is simultaneously rent by atomistic capitalism and healing socialism. Courbet breaks up his family and disperses its members through the crowd, thereby politicizing it through identification with a social constellation transcending his immediate tribe and social class. The community rests on no clear-cut hierarchy or political authority: the sacredness of the ecclesiastical tradition is questioned and the legal authority in the person of the mayor and his adjoint are lost among the mass of mourners.

Courbet shrewdly exploits a funeral rite as the pretext for the reconciliation of the diverse constituencies of this society, for the funeral, like the Sunday dress, equalizes its participants and temporarily suspends the effects of the division of labor. Dupays called it “the love of the ugly in Sunday dress, all of the trivialities of our disgraceful and ridiculous modern costume taken seriously.”⁷³ The worker/peasant, whom the system daily impoverishes and reduces to a machine, takes his place at the interment as assistant to the clergy, as symbolic bridge between revolutions, and, ultimately, as the sturdy gravedigger who embodies the future. The ceremonial occasion and the funeral costume diminish the distance between town and countryside, between the urban and the rustic, so that the only difference that remained was the degree of ugliness.

Funeral at Ornans exemplified the realist-rural discourse carried to its logical conclusion, depicting the rural world as being as much a political and social mess as its cosmopolitan counterpart. It might be said as well that Courbet's small rustic society was realizing itself as part of a larger constellation, evolving from the local to the national and fulfilling Rousseau's conception of the “general will.” Thus it is altogether unsurprising that the theme troubled middle-class art critics for one reason or another. While Louis-Napoléon's regime was gradually suppressing republican innova-

tions and trying to achieve a disciplined social order, Courbet presented an uncontrollable community with a seeming penchant for troublemaking.

Peasants of Flagey Returning from the Fair (Doubts)

Almost as imposing as *Funeral and Stonebreakers*, Courbet's *Peasants of Flagey Returning from the Fair* similarly excited howls of protest and lamentations on society's inevitable lapse into barbarism. The outraged Dupays claimed to see in it an extension of the author's “systematic exposition of vulgar realism,” and his deliberate attempt “to disabuse us at one fell swoop of all our rural fantasies, to dispel forever the [Horatian musing] *O ruis, quando te [ego] aspiciam?*—Oh countryside, when can I behold you?” And he continued: “It is possible that on the day of the fair the highways out of Flagey are charged with figures as decidedly disagreeable as the ones we see here; but then it is necessary to pass over them and return another day for a better choice.”⁷⁴

A parody of a rural religious pilgrimage, *Peasants of Flagey*—another view along the highways and byways of Courbet's hometown region—depicts a parade of rustics trudging home with their commodities and newly purchased animals after a long day at the fair in Salins (fig. 3.12). The prominence of the animals indicates Courbet's fascination for the territory heretofore reserved for animaliers such as Troyon and especially Rosa Bonheur, whose popular image of an ox-drawn plow, *Ploughing in the Nivernais*, was purchased by the government in 1849. (Of course, Dupont's song of *Les Boeufs* still enjoyed an immense vogue, and some of its rustic humor may be

3.12 Gustave Courbet, *Peasants of Flagey Returning from the Fair*, 1855 version. Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, Besançon.



reflected in Courbet's "deux grands boeufs" at the left of the picture, who return the spectator's gaze.)

Courbet's obvious relish in portraying this menagerie created a memorable impression on Salon goers, seen in the contemporary caricatures of the painting that cast the subject as a procession of stuffed animals and toys. (The picture that exists is actually a later version, with a few changes, most notably the woman carrying the basket on her head, who originally was located at the far right.) The figure in the right foreground leading a pig by a long cord tied around its hind leg impressed itself so vividly on Thomas Courture's imagination that he satirized the realist by showing a painter in rough peasant costume seated on a classical head and sketching a severed pig's head (fig. 3.13). The critic Geoffroy sneered at Courbet's identification of the locale and the indigenous natives:

What does it matter to us . . . whether they come from Flagey or Pontoise? But it is necessary to be precisely true: it is definitely Flagey (department of Doubs) from whence they come; one has a blouse, the other a suit and a beaver hat. Good heavens! I almost forgot to mention that the latter [sic] is leading a pig by a cord around the right hind leg. It is not clear who has the most gauche demeanor here, the human beings, the oxen, or the pigs.



3.13. Thomas Courture, *The Realist*, 1865. Crawford Municipal School of Art, Cork, Ireland.

Actually, it is the rider with the blouse who wears the beaver hat, and he is Régis Courbet, the artist's father and mayor of Flagey, accompanied by his farmhands, servants, and neighbors. Régis on horseback occupies the compositional center, his tall hat strongly silhouetted against the twilight sky. Although depicted as a person of authority, he wears the peasant smock, reminding us that Courbet's father worked his own land in concert with his hired hands. The young rider alongside Régis looks back to exchange a smile with one of the two women following behind, one of whom leads a bull by the horn, as the other, a neighbor named Josette d'Arbon, brings up the rear with a basket of goods balanced on her head.

On the right, walking along the side of the road, the odd character walking the pig wears a hodgepodge of bourgeois and country clothing—including both peasant vest and black frock coat—castoffs perhaps picked up at the fair. His left hand grasps the strap of an oil keg on his back, while his right holds both an outlandish cotton umbrella and the pig's leash. A kind of peasant *chiffonnier* or junk collector, this large-scaled figure also flouts conventional perspective in moving across the picture plane counter to the dominant diagonal movement. Although coming up abruptly as he does adds to the feeling of an exodus, his idiosyncratic manner has an ungainliness reminiscent of the eccentrically clad figures of the Munich painter Carl Spitzweg. *The Poor Poet* with his umbrella and sundry accessories especially comes to mind—whose satires of bourgeois costume were themselves inspired by contemporary French caricaturists.

Of the three major pictures exhibited in the Salon of 1850–1851, this has always been considered the least worthy of extensive analysis. Yet Proudhon awarded it pride of place in his aesthetic treatise, using it as his quintessential test case in defining realism and art's social purpose and putting it in opposition to his *bête noir* of inauthentic representation—the “decked out” *Harvesters* of Léopold Robert. In *Peasants of Flagey* there is not the least bit of flattery or posturing, not the slightest glimmer of an “ideal figure.” For Proudhon everything in that work was “true, taken directly from nature, painted with so much naïveté and sincerity that we are tempted to accuse the painter of merely substituting a daguerreotype for a work of art.

But if we pause long enough before the work to get past this “realism of vulgar appearances,” we would soon sense that hidden beneath this vulgarity is “a depth of observation which I believe is the essence of art.” Proudhon begins his reading of the picture by placing the scene a little before 1830, during the time of the Restoration or “at least thirty years after the revolution.” Next he describes the characters, beginning with the man in the foreground, who evidently wore breeches and a three-cornered hat in the original, and then comments that the younger peasant on horseback was turned toward a young girl in the rear of the company. He agreed that at first glance none of this seemed to hold anything of strong interest, accustomed as most viewers were to paintings of exalted religious scenes, ancient history and mythology, or Shakespearean drama, and that it might

even strike beholders as a tavern sign or an item destined for the flea market. Yet these securing banalities concealed a significant statement.

Proudhon returned to the man leading the pig, whom he claimed could be defined by his clothing. He was actually a small village landholder already anxious about his winter provisions in the springtime. He represented one of the volunteers who heeded his country's call in 1793 and fought on the Rhemish front, where he took up smoking. Having returned from his military campaigns, he resumed his rustic life and no one who saw him would ever guess him to be a hero of the Republic. He went to the fair first of all to do his shopping, and then to cash his pension check earned in the war against the *émigrés*. If memories of the revolution are little to his taste, however, the stubbornly opinionated fellow preserves even greater rancor against the ancien régime, and come the July Days of 1830 he will be among the first to rally to the tricolor flag against the priests and the nobles.

The mature man riding the horse is a rich peasant, mayor of his commune, the chief of a major farming operation. He is a notable in the community who, beneath the blouse, knows how to preserve his official status, speaking little and with discretion, professing moderate opinions, and couching his responsibility in the trappings of superior authority. The serious and reserved demeanor of our mayor betrays the positivist outlook of a satisfied rustic, a man of order, proud of the beauty of his horses, and who, as a privileged elector, considers it beneath his dignity to vote with the opposition.

He is accompanied by his son, whom he has just secured against the risk of conscription, and who, on his side, has not the slightest intention of playing hero. No one is less avid of medals and military honors than the French peasant. The youth exchanges a smile with the peasant woman walking behind: is it his fiancée? No, the fiancée of the mayor's son would never travel alone on foot, lost in the crowd. Neither is she his mistress; in the marriage practice, the Franche-Comté peasant moves in a measured tread; a mismatch is as antipathetic to him as it would be to a bourgeois or noble. As to free love, he thinks twice about it: he dreads the potential scandal and its disadvantages, and it is certain that he would never advertise his passion. As much as he might appear to be flirtatious, it is certain that there is nothing to it. On her side, the young woman, even though she pays him the honor of returning his smile, would never dream of a marriage out of her class.

Proudhon sees all this as an authentic image not only of the peasantry of Franche-Comté, but of the French peasantry generally thirty or forty years removed from the revolution, in one of any number of typical scenes of provincial life. Courbet's types may disappoint lovers of Robert's more agreeable *Harvesters*, but they have the virtue of representing the stock out of which "our fathers emerged and on which our future posterity depends." It is indeed France's last bastion of regenerative potential in the declining state. Here is rustic France, with its indeterminate humor and

positive outlook, its simple language, its gentle passions, its unemphatic style, its thought more down to earth than in the clouds, its mores equidistant from democracy and demagoguery—a portrait of a once healthy and happy *juste milieu* consistently betrayed and exploited by the reigning authority and whose morals are now as corrupted as those of urban, industrialized France. Thus "Courbet's Country" and its precious values represent a world threatened with extinction, and in documenting it for posterity the painter rose to the stature of the Old Masters. Proudhon concluded that Courbet's work would one day be worth one hundred times all the fantasies of David, Delacroix, and Ingres put together.⁷⁵

No doubt Proudhon went over the deep end in propounding his fantastic interpretation of the work; setting Courbet's scene in some idealized recent past is surely a figment of his wildest imagination. One of Courbet's early biographers who knew the painter hints at his repudiation of Proudhon's zany explanation.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Courbet carried on extensive written and personal exchanges with the philosopher in the course of his research on the book and Proudhon—though clearly not bound by them—was therefore privy to at least some of the artist's intentions.

Some of Proudhon's narrative details resonate with the known facts of Courbet's family. His father was mayor of Flagey and politically more conservative than Courbet's grandfather, the old veteran of 1793. Although Gustave was the only son in his family and would have been too young to serve as the gallant swain in a narrative set around 1830, Régis did secure his son against conscription and it is true that Gustave detested military jingoism and battlefield heroics. This adds up to a scenario akin to the *Français*, where Courbet links the generation of the revolution with that of the present.

As Rubin argues, Proudhon's narrative declares the ideals associated with the old rural world as the source of moral and physical renewal. Proudhon envisions a bright, new France where all of the marvels predicted by Fourier have been realized. But first the people have to be instructed in science, history, in the cult of justice, and in the true joys of work and of association. Responsible intellectuals should give up their bohemian habits, engage in prolonged study, immerse themselves for ten to fifteen years in mechanical works and in business projects before addressing the public; certify their reason by their labors, produce late in life, and not indulge in literature, philosophy, and the arts until after forty or fifty years have transpired. Under these conditions, the long transition traced by the Renaissance, the Reform, and the French Revolution will have ended and re-generation will be complete.⁷⁷

Proudhon thus used Courbet and the realist-rural discourse to promote his own agenda, and this meant taking certain liberties with the material when necessary to make it conform to his program. What is significant is that the philosopher, who admitted his ignorance in matters of art, could find in Courbet's work a link to his radical social and humanitarian thought.

Alkin to Baudelaire's defense of the poetry of Pierre Dupont, Proudhon perceived Courbet's coarse and awkward portrayal of country types in *Peasants of Flagey* as a breath of fresh air in art and in life—a wholesome respite amid the general corruption in modern urban France.

Departure of the Firemen Rushing to a Fire

Courbet began an immense canvas, *Departure of the Firemen Rushing to a Fire*, after his return to Paris in the summer of 1850, but he abandoned it before completion for political reasons sometime in 1851 (fig. 3.14). It is his only large-scale urban scene (twelve by eighteen feet), and that it follows so soon his major rural subjects is probably no coincidence. If he had intended to displace academic history painting with monumental genre, he now strategized against the sacrosanct category by substituting domestic firefighting for classical and modern battle scenes. One obvious clue to Courbet's intention is the pun on the French word for fireman, *pompier*, and the insider's jeering term *l'art pompier* to designate pompous classical Salon works whose heroes wore metal helmets resembling those of modern firefighters. On a deeper level, however, he was also expressing an antimilitaristic position in eulogizing civilians whose courage was the equal of any warrior, past and present. I see the mobilized firemen as covert representatives of the metropolitan citizens who took up arms against the coup d'état.

3.14 Gustave Courbet, *Departure of the Firemen Rushing to a Fire*, 1850–1851. Musée du Petit Palais, Paris.

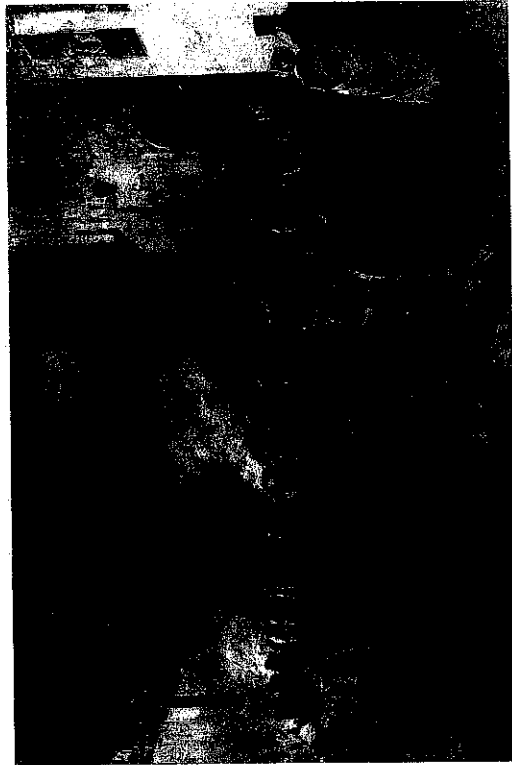
Nochlin has suggested a connection between the subject and Pierre Dupont's song *L'Incendie, chant des pompiers*, published in 1851.⁷⁶ Dupont

explained his song as "a kind of military march for the use of fire departments, these true soldiers of the peace, who confront fires with as much courage as our armies, but whose acts are too often little noted or forgotten." His verses sustain this central idea: "Our firemen, peaceful soldiers / Who also know how to conquer or die."⁷⁵ Courbet took over this idea but politicized it, perhaps in response to Antigna's *L'Incendie*, which showed in the Salon of 1850 and was awarded the medal for realism that Gautier felt should have gone to Courbet (fig. 3.15). Antigna's painting depicts an impoverished family trapped by fire in their attic chamber, and focuses on their terror in the face of impending tragedy. Representations of the poor could be raised to the level of serious painting when enfolded into the category of the sublime, and not surprisingly, critics positioned Antigna as a realist alternative to Courbet. Courbet's response is to send for help to put out the fire and rescue the destitute family that Antigna would risk for the sake of Salon honors.

As in *Funeral*, he organizes a social collectivity around a specific incident, in this case the sounding of a fire alarm to which a brigade of firemen hastily respond. Although the regimented units pulling the fire wagon with its pumps and hoses dominate the composition, they are flanked by the real protagonists of the picture: on the right, an artisan in his smock at the side of the chief fire officer and anxiously summoning his help, and on the left a working-class woman—presumably the artisan's wife, who looks across the picture in his direction—lifting her skirt in preparation to rush



3.15 Jean-Pierre Alexandre Antigna, *The Fire*, 1850. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orléans.



alongside the team of firemen. Together they lead the way to the location of the blaze and the officer directs his team according to their pleas. The woman carrying an infant in her left arm while another child clutches at her dress bears a striking resemblance to the panic-stricken mother in Antigna's picture. Courbet also sustains the class context by depicting at the far right a bourgeois couple who show little concern for the situation and coldly withdraw from the scene.

Courbet chose the fireman as his paradigmatic type in the representation of urban realism as a sign of the heroism in everyday life. The romantic conflagrations were typically inspired by biblical or infernal sources, but now the representation of fire need not be associated with apocalyptic visions but with catastrophic scenes of everyday life. Fires were commonplace in the town and country, especially within the crowded Parisian slums. Antigna depicted one such scene as high tragedy, whereas Courbet chose to exemplify social solidarity with the poor. The victorious French military suppression of the Roman Republic in 1849 may have further stimulated Courbet to displace heroic combat in the field to the daring actions of firemen in the civil domain.

The officer in the picture was the actual supervisor of the fire station off the rue Saint-Victor at 24, rue de Poissy, and he arranged for the alarm to be sounded one evening to give Courbet a glimpse of the proceedings at first hand.⁸⁰ As it turned out, this officer, Victor Frond, was a radical republican who rallied his firehouse to resistance against the coup d'état in December 1851. What happened to him may explain Courbet's subsequent abandonment of the picture. Writing his family about the fate of one of his friends in the aftermath of the coup, Courbet notes:

As for me, I was lucky and narrowly escaped. If I had been in Ormans two weeks later, I would be in his position, or two weeks earlier in Paris, I would have been transported because of my association with that idiot [Victor] Frond, officer of the fire brigade, who has just been sent off to Lambessa [a penal colony in southern Algeria] for having roused his firehouse to insurrection. I could have undergone the same fate, quite likely, for I had included him in my painting. I am forbidden to continue until further order and everyone is quite amazed that I am allowed that much.⁸¹

Significantly, Courbet considered his painting "quite daring," suggesting a more complex reading of the subject than meets the eye. Executed in a period of crisis, the depiction of the republican Frond leading his "troops" on behalf of the working class may have been a metaphor of the hoped-for movement to quench the destructive political fires engulfing the nation.

The Salons of 1852 and 1853

Despite Courbet's insistence that he would "never applaud M. Napoléon"

no matter what he did, the repressive period following the coup forced him to moderate the direction of his work during the next few years. In turn, the administration, recognizing his gifts, also offered him inducements to produce works more favorable to the official taste. (Louis-Napoléon had already offered to buy *The Man with the Pipe* in 1851, but as Courbet had accepted a previous offer he turned him down with relish. As will be shown, Napoléon III's regime actually promoted an official realist style and tried to enlist Millet and Courbet in the program.) Early in 1852 Courbet wrote to Champfleury about his forthcoming Salon submission that he was disarming his judges by shifting the terms of the realist debate: "I have made something graceful."⁸² He was referring to his *Young Ladies [Démotelles] of the Village*, and evidence of the government's encouragement of Courbet is seen in the purchase of this work by the comte (later duc) de Morny, Louis-Napoléon's half-brother, minister of the interior, and one of the leading architects of the coup d'état. His name was listed in the catalogue entry as the owner of the picture, giving Courbet a certain official cachet if not protection from the venom of some of his critics.

What we see in the picture is a pasturage enclosed in a rugged hill site setting above Ormans where the humans and animals seem to have been added as an afterthought (fig. 3.16). Three women, incongruously dressed to the nines as they saunter to a picnic area, encounter a young cowherd who is barefoot and clad in a patched pinafore and apron. They stop to chat with her and the one closest to her hands her a *galette* (a thin, flat cake) from her picnic basket. The young girl's free hand is close to her body and she



3.16 Gustave Courbet, *Young Ladies of the Village*, 1851. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

appears hesitant to accept the treat, but the young woman urges her to accept it. The other two women regard the transaction with a somewhat condescending air, while their spotted black-and-white dog keeps a close watch on the cattle on the opposite side of the stream that meanders through the grassy ravine. Although empirically located on different planes, cattle, dog, women, and cowherd are telescoped to form a single line running across the picture plane, uniting them in a type of processional movement favored by the artist.

Courbet posed his three sisters as the models for the fashionable woman. Zoé at the right in a yellow broad-brimmed hat that matches her dress; next Juliette with an umbrella and Indian shawl draped over her shoulders; and finally Zélie, who interacts so graciously with the young cowherd. Dupays, who had several reservations about the picture, nevertheless admired the "harmonious accord" that existed between the figures and the landscape.⁸³ Indeed, the earth tones, especially the yellow ochers, resonate throughout the surface, linking rocks, flora, cattle, and figures by way of the dresses of Zoé and Zélie and the straw hat of the young cowherd. It would seem that Courbet wished to show metaphorically the intimate connection between the inhabitants of the region and the land, that despite differences in degree of biological development and class, all creatures in the Franche-Comté were bound by a common ecological heritage, and that these relationships were solid and enduring like the geological formations of Ornans.

Critics once again rose up in protest, but this time the sense of outrage was muted somewhat by Courbet's feint to the right and the intimidating fact of the picture's owner, the comte de Morny. Dupays sandwiched his attack on the one hand with the recognition that the painter evidently wished to "humanize" his work—instead of giving us a "scarecrow," he met us halfway with "a truly pastoral scene"—and on the other with praise for the vivacious execution and aura of freshness and candor. All this despite the "too harsh and crude literalism" and the painter's monotonous fixation on the same regional landscape motif—clearly missing the point of Courbet's devotion to his native region. Finally, Dupays pulled out the class card, arguing that in the final analysis the painting represented a "bourgeois—rustic if you wish—but a trifling form of art" that fell woefully short of the standards of high performance.

Clément de Ris, who couldn't take *Funeral* seriously at the previous Salon, noted that the painter's style had "singularly modified since last year; he has, as they say, mixed a little water with his wine." He was not certain if Courbet had heeded the criticism, but he congratulated him in any case on the positive change. Although he faulted Courbet for still failing to make appropriate choices and for accepting all views and types willy-nilly, he thought that the landscape was "full of truth, energy, and radiance" and praised the simplicity of the style and dexterous paint handling. He criticized the work for a lack of aerial perspective that made the dogs,

and background appear at the same distance from the viewer, but he also defended the artist's presentation of the three women against unfair attacks on their commonplace appearance. It was clear to him that Courbet wanted to show commonplace creatures, so that the criticisms were not only misdirected but could be interpreted as indirect eulogies. Here again he raises the class issue: "Humble bourgeois women of a tiny provincial village, or the daughters of artisans habituated to woolen or gaudy dresses, could not be expected to show the free and easy manner of a Parisian woman long accustomed to enveloping herself in the folds of a cashmere shawl or a cloud of fancy lacework." In the end, he flat-out declared that Courbet would never do better.⁸⁴

Only Gustave Planche of the stuffy *Revue des deux mondes* remained adamant in his denunciation of Courbet. Nevertheless, he saw fit to consider Courbet at the very beginning of his review. At the outset of the Salon, he heard it rumored that Courbet's entry would silence his critics, and he looked forward to reviewing this new work and welcoming Courbet into the official pantheon of artists. Despite all the ugly figures in *Funeral*, no one could deny their "powerful reality" nor the bountiful pictorial gifts of the painter. But if he thought Courbet had heeded the advice of enlightened critics and "tempered his predilection for the ugly," he was sorely disappointed by the actual sight of *Demoiselles de village*. He could still marvel at Courbet's expressive power and astonishing transcription of details, but there remained the same old mistrust and disdain "for everything that smacked of the beautiful and elegance of form." The young women who share with the cowherd "are ugly enough to frighten you," and they provoke only disgust from the sophisticated Salon viewer.

Planche's critique oscillated between outright condemnation and awe of Courbet's potential: at one point he claimed that the artist's skill is of the type admirably suited for sign painting, and if that seemed cruel, he did not mean by it to imply that his work lacked natural qualities. The only thing to praise in the work is the treatment of the topography, yet even here the want of perspective and erroneous scale of the cattle (like wooden toys) undermines the landscape effect. Planche then gives the game away by suggesting that if the realist school had rested its hopes on this year's performance by Courbet it was doomed to disappointment. Planche claimed that the infatuation with his work has begun to fade, and he was happy to see this development because the inordinate acclaim that Courbet's painting won in some circles could only wound those honest laborers who have never separated "imitation of nature from ideal beauty." At the moment when literal, prosaic, and vulgar imitation will become the last word in art, when the imagination will be dismissed as irrelevant and useless luxury, then the worthy followers of the Renaissance tradition will find themselves disowned and humiliated. But at last the hour of Courbet's comeuppance has arrived, and now he may be ranked among those crude apes of nature who have never glimpsed the true mission of art.⁸⁵

writer admitted their coarse manner of speaking and acting but qualified this assertion by noting that if there was "rudesse" (roughness) there was no "grossièreté" (grossness)—the term used so often to put down Courbet's types. Unlike eager townfolk, always anxious to get ahead, the peasantry is content with their lot in life.⁸⁵

Following the coup, the same author began a new series called "Errors and Prejudices of the Peasants," recounting in detail the regional superstitions of even the most pious of the peasant population. This time he claimed that it would probably take a half century before these "barbaric" practices will have disappeared, and that the generation now arriving at maturity would probably blow off the last vestiges. Yet he reiterated his previous conclusion in the form of a question: "Would peasants then be more civilized than they are today? Foreseeing the moment when progress would sweep away tradition and morals would be set free from their mooring, the author conceptualized the peasantry as the one fixed point of stability amid the vast sea changes brought on by bourgeois industry."⁸⁷ In short, the tenor of his journalistic series ran counter to everything implied in Courbet's pictorial series, which perhaps helps explain the hostility aroused by his Salon exhibits in the moderate and conservative press and the reasons for the government's interest in his work.

As we have seen, the other side to the two-pronged attacks on Courbet concerned the "socialist" implications of his painting, typically invoked to discredit his work as entrenched in a distinct political agenda. In 1852 *L'Artiste* ran an article entitled "Socialism in Art," a vicious swipe at Courbet's attempt to mingle art and ideology. The author labeled any attempt to introduce socialist principles in art as a "monstrous" deviation from tradition, a move which could only end up "burlesquing" itself. A gifted painter impatient for fame, Courbet unwittingly put on a "mask of triviality" by attempting to embody socialist ideas in his work. Courbet needs to get back on track by recognizing that "socialist art" is an oxymoron, and that great art can never be egalitarian but must remain aristocratic and hierarchic.⁸⁸

This position dovetails with that of Dupays, who demeaned the subject matter of *Demoiselles de village* in class terms as "bourgeois," that is, as inferior to the traditional status of noble painting. Dupays would clarify his position in the ensuing years through his dialogue with Courbet's work, culminating with a clear statement of his position in his article on the realist presence in the Exposition Universelle of 1855. Noting that economically the bourgeoisie had gained the ascendancy in society, culturally they remained at the bottom of the heap. Dupays reiterated the cliché that art is essentially an aristocratic activity not used to keeping bad company. Like the great lord of an estate, art invites shepherds, shepherdesses, and beggars to his peasant festivals, but rejects with an exquisite disdain "that race of pretentious upstarts in their Sunday best, who from one end of the earth to the other all have the same physiognomy, the same expression, and the

What Planche feared most of all were not the frightening demoiselles, but the example that they might set for a younger generation. It is fascinating to see the critics fall all over themselves in trying to cope with an innovative painter with recognizable talent who flaunts the tradition that is central to their approach to art. They want him to renounce his unruly ways and "more rustic than thou attitude" and devote his talent to the art of the Beautiful. All the lamentations about the painter squandering a brilliant talent were at bottom an expression of displaced anxiety about the direction of contemporary art. In all this, there is evidence of a concerted effort that may have been inspired by the comte de Morry on behalf of the government. The oscillating critiques of 1852 suggest a subtle form of coercion hinting at conspiratorial action.

We have seen as well the class readings of the work by the critics: Planche for example decried the "pimply noses" of the young women that one might find in the "cabaret," and Gautier described one of Courbet's sisters as looking like "a cook in her Sunday best." As in his previous work, Courbet raised the issue of class structure in the countryside through his insights into the ideology of fashion, and otherwise complicated the static, homogeneous view of the rural world maintained by partisans of the status quo. The juxtaposition of the barefoot and impoverished cowherd with the fashionably dressed women who offer her a charitable gift conjured up a problematic class structure in the countryside, and not surprisingly critics consistently pointed out the women's want of elegance. By emphasizing the lack of good taste among the aspiring bourgeoisie, they tried to absorb them into that amorphous rustic mass that had until 1848 conformed rather reliably to the elite myth.

Once the threat of this problematic in the rural areas subsided, after the suppression of resistance against the coup, the old myth began to revive. Already at the end of 1851 the conservative *L'Illustration* began a series on peasant life, celebrating rustic life as the cradle of French civilization, whose virtues and values remain constant amid "the confusion of ideas and dissolution of morality" in the present age. While nine million city and town folk are busily occupied with politics and art, twenty-seven million country folk are laboring in the field to provide them with the necessities of life. Yet there is little overall recognition of their contributions to contemporary society. The author of the series ostensibly wanted to get beyond stereotypes and address key questions thus far ignored: What role do peasants play in modern society? What part do they play in the daily progress of our civilization? To what extent do new ideas or biases penetrate their customs?

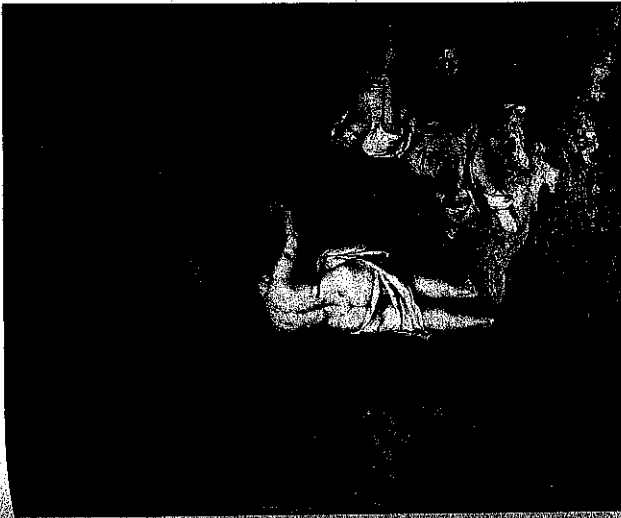
The peasantry, as the only class that preserves tradition, serves as a counterweight to accelerating historical change. As French people are dragged unwittingly to an uncertain future, the peasant's persistent loyalty to the fatherland and love of family should provide a model for the nonpeasant population. Describing the peasantry's cultural behavior, the

same dress suit." Dupays felt palpably uncomfortable in the presence of rural folk he could not quite pigeonhole, and he classified them in the same category as the bourgeoisie, who, in their ugly fashions, are indistinguishable from one another. He argued that it was to this bourgeois concept of art that Courbet was devoted—the bourgeois in trousers, in vest, in derby, in black dress suit, half-bourgeois, quarter-bourgeois—of the type you find in *Demiselles de village*, the most anticluttered and disagreeable scene it is possible to imagine, where "boots pretend to elegance." According to Dupays, this bourgeois pretentiousness constitutes Courbet's sole claim to fame, and he isolated him from other realists in a special category of "vulgarianism."⁸⁹

Courbet's confounding of bourgeois and villager, urban and rural, ugly and elegant, underscored the changes in French society that elevated commoners to the level of the old elite. The sight of half- and quarter-bourgeois suggested an aspiring and upwardly mobile peasantry transforming the countryside into a hotbed of political agitation that threatened to overturn the dominance of the old order. Thus Dupays's negative definition of Courbet's radical realism served to reinforce it as a political and social as well as cultural force.

This was affirmed in his comments on the painter in the Salon of 1853, when once again Courbet's entries attracted a disproportionate amount of critical attention. Courbet had planned from the outset of that year's Salon to take up the traditional category of the nude and run it through the alembic of radical realism. He treated the female nude in his *Bathers* and the male in his *Wrestlers*, and both were greeted with consternation as parodies of academic standards (figs. 3-17-18). *The Bathers* spotlights a hefty woman seen from her fleshy rear, stepping out of a shallow forest pool totally naked save for a scanty drape held below her buttocks, while *The Wrestlers*—painted over the old *Classical Wagnus's Night* to literally efface his romantic phase—shows a pair of bulky fighters locked in tense struggle before a dis-tant crowd of spectators.⁹⁰ It is symptomatic of Courbet's approach that he contextualized his figures with a convincing modern narrative that justified their nudity: they were not simply posing for an audience of voyeurs.

Dupays immediately jumped on Courbet, dubbing him the "chief of the school of the ugly," and not of the type of ugly expressed as supernatural grandeur and force, but of "vulgar ugliness, ignoble ugliness." What does Courbet want? He no longer needs a reputation, since he already has earned more notoriety than any artist in recent memory. The critics and the public are even prepared to forgive his "offending eccentricities" as youthful peccadilloes, but instead of appeasing them he continues to squander his talent on caricatures enlarged to the scale of history painting. Dupays contemptuously claimed that no one could pass *The Bathers* without laughing out loud, and Gautier likened the massive central figure to a "Hottentot Venus" mooning the beholder with her "monstrous rump." All that adipose tissue in the compositional center shocked the Salon audience: the



3-17 Gustave Courbet, *The Bathers*, 1853. Musée Fabre, Montpellier.

3-18 Gustave Courbet, *The Wrestlers*, 1853. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

emperor supposedly struck the canvas with his riding crop in indignation, and Empress Eugénie, who had been admiring the massive haunches of the Percherons in Rosa Bonheur's *Horse Fair*, wisecracked before *The Bathers*, "Is she a Percheron too?"⁹¹

Dupays was also offended by the female servant of the fleshy bather: "This slut has not yet revealed her deformities; she has only begun to remove her stockings. As she undresses she gazes upon her companion, entirely nude and turning away, and is unable to stifle her surprise and her laughter at the sight of this elephantine portliness."⁹² Dupays and even Delacroix misunderstood the meaning of the exchange that goes on between the two women: as the lusty bather steps from the water she raises her right arm in modesty to signal her companion not to look at her, but the latter cannot forbear a quick peek and gazes in admiration at the amplitude of her mistress. That there is something distinctly sensual in this exchange is reinforced by the half-undressed servant's grasp of a nearby tree branch, upturned to suggest an erect phallus.

Courbet took the elegantly contoured nude of the academics and literally and figuratively turned it inside out, thereby attacking the Academy's paradigm of the Beautiful. Instead of depicting his nude frontally as

did Ingres and Gérôme, he hides her sexuality from spectators and shows them her behind; instead of a typically smooth and graceful modeling, he submerges the female anatomy in layers of fat. The only one privy to her charms is the maidservant, again flouting the conventional notion of the female nude as less a site of sexual arousal than an exemplar of ideal purity for a predominantly male audience. Courbet's subversive nude was meant to disrupt the prevailing hypocrisies of contemporary cultural display and through gross emphasis on the flesh forcefully project the substance and variety of human existence.⁵³

Here Proudhon is once again instructive as confidante of Courbet and interpreter of his works. Taking on the critics of the work, he jeers at their preference for the nymphs of the academic sculptors Pradier and Clésinger, always displayed in some impossible posture suffering the arrow of Eros, or for the "aphrodisiacal" odalisques of Ingres. He points up their hypocrisy in salivating over a prostituted or millionaire Venus wearing tucked-up nightgown and turning away in disgust from the "honest woman" of Courbet, who exits her outdoor bath while showing them her big behind. This is authentic art and not pornography disguised as mythology: you would never confuse his "horsy" and "big-assed" bather with a Diana or Hebe. Nevertheless, she is neither humpbacked nor bowlegged, and not badly built; the world is full of beautiful women, who, when undressed, would not look half so good. So why the indignation and repugnance?

Courbet's only sin in painting the figure with "a truth, a realism, if you will, that will never be surpassed," was that he broke with the stereotype, the arbitrary convention of the ideal. Proudhon then recounts the anecdote of the empress's confrontation with the picture and her clever sally in response: "Is she a Percheron too?" He claims that if he had been present at the time he would have replied, as he politely doffed his hat, "No, madame; she is only a simple bourgeoisie, like so many others in our society, and whose husband, liberal under Louis-Philippe, reactionary under the Republic, is now one of the most devoted subjects of the emperor." And he elaborated on his idea of the bather as personification of her class:

Yes, here is this fleshy and well-to-do bourgeoisie, deformed by fat and luxury; whose flabbiness and mass stifles the ideal, and forcoindains them to die of cowardice if not of molten grease. Here is what their foolishness, their egoism and cuisine have given us. What amplitude! What opulence! They may be likened to a lamb awaiting slaughter.⁵⁴

Proudhon's interpretation is revealing in showing us how a radical interpretation of the work could intersect at many points with the conservative accounts. They differed fundamentally, however, in evaluating the motives of the painter: for the radical, Courbet's work excelled in clarifying the state of the society, while for the puzzled conservatives (including Delacroix) it contributed to its debasement. Proudhon asserted that Courbet

mercilessly stripped his victims to disclose the vulgar forms beneath, while Dupays saw this display of the forms as itself a manifestation of bourgeois corruption.

The conservative reaction is also seen in the mocking critiques of *The Wrestlers*, similarly discussed in class terms. Typically, wrestlers were of peasant origin, selling their physical power for the entertainment of society's privileged sectors. In this case, the site of the wrestling match—the open-air arena of the Imperial Hippodrome on the periphery of the Champs-Élysées—was a favorite sporting ground for the upper classes of the Second Empire. Dupays argued that in order to compensate for his bather's affront to the "fair sex," Courbet attempted to produce with even more rudeness "the deformities of the *villain*"—a pun on the feudalistic term for serf and its topical connotations of blackguard, or filthy and wicked character. Whatever their anatomical merits, the wrestlers were overshadowed by content exclusively devoted "to blackness, ugliness, and triviality."

All three works by Courbet were subjected to scatological insults; the critics seemed to have sniffed a malodorous aroma around every one—monumental unwashed bodies reeking with the stale stench of bodily fluids of every sort. The predominant gray cast of the wrestlers' bodies sparked an obsessive harping on the theme of darkness, which suggests still another manifestation of a regional and class-bound discourse tinged with racism. Charles Tillot, for example, claimed to see "two Auvergnat traders in coal" (keeping in mind the stereotype of Auvergnats as petty sharpers), and Clément de Ris pretended to perceive them as an advertisement for "shoe polish merchants." Gautier, who had previously described the bather as a Hottentot Venus, saw the wrestlers as having "rolled in soot and coal dust" prior to the match, and even refers to them at one point as "black men." Eugène Loudun mocked the muscular athletes as "enormous black, burly, bullnecked men, with blacksmith's arms and boxer's hands that could break your jaw with one blow. . . . It's real enough to scare the hell out of you." Despite the scoffing context of these remarks, they betray what Herding rightfully interprets as a displaced fear of the potential threat of the underclasses.⁵⁵

The wrestlers sell their labor power as purveyors of entertainment, heroic warriors operating outside the military domain to divert the bourgeoisie from the exploitative routine of everyday life. Now the French word for wrestler, *lutteur*, derives from *lutter*, meaning to struggle, to strive against, to cope with, so that wrestling quickly springs to mind as a metaphor for the struggle for existence or the class struggle.⁵⁶ Courbet's wrestlers go about their work as strenuously as the stonebreakers: their swollen veins demonstrate that they are using every fiber of their bodies to accomplish their task. Yet instead of setting up a dramatic confrontation between opposing forces as Gérôme and others did in fistfights and other competitive sports, Courbet ironizes his contest as a stalemate between evenly matched contenders. Dupays and others were confused by the positions of

the fighters, whose legs line up like the legs of a piece of furniture, as if united into a single interlocking mass. Despite their intense struggle on behalf of the bourgeoisie, these bigger-than-life proletarian combatants wind up in a deadlock, and by extension probably refer to the standstill of the entire republican movement.

The Meeting

The 1833 Salon had one positive outcome for Courbet; it brought him into contact with Alfred Bruyas of Montpeller, soon to become his single most important patron. Bruyas was profoundly moved by the works at the Salon and promptly purchased *The Bathers* and *The Sleeping Spinner*, as well as *The Man with the Pipe*, and even commissioned his own portrait (a favorite subject, judging from the number of his portraits in his gallery). Just two years younger than Courbet, living a similar bachelor existence, Bruyas had inherited a fortune from his banker father and lived out the role of wealthy Maccenas. Despite his wealth, however, he was always in delicate health, and he seemed desperate to leave something to posterity. An obsession with his own self-image represented one pole of his desire for immortality; finding a solution to the world's social ills constituted the other.

It is this longing that made the rich connoisseur an unexpected partner of the realist and socialist Courbet. Bruyas espoused Saint-Simonist and Fourierist principles, among them the importance assigned to the artist in advancing humanity's quest for fulfillment. Their mutual friend, the Fourierist critic François Sabatier-Unger, sympathetic to the radical realists, may have brought them together. Bruyas felt obligated to buy *The Bathers* despite the attacks against it because it represented to him a new truth and a vivid instance of creative independence. He associated realism with positivism in the evolution of human progress and championed Courbet as its leading exponent, envisioning the artist as a model of social as well as of artistic freedom.⁹⁷

The painter's first portrait of his new friend and benefactor, called *Tableau-Solution*, depicts Bruyas with his left hand resting on a fictive book entitled "Études / sur / l'Art moderne / Solution / A. Bruyas." According to Silvestre, the painting represented a symbolic pact between artist and patron to promote their shared views on the "solution" to contemporary life and art. Their solution, of course, was Courbet's brand of realism, and its realization implied the patron's commitment to subsidizing Courbet's work and maximizing his freedom of action. Bruyas, however, was a bundle of contradictions who confused his art patronage with the public good. He stood behind the coup d'état as a socially stabilizing act whose beneficent results, he predicted, would be reflected in the Salon exhibits of 1833! Then he purchased *The Bathers*, the most provocative work in the house, because it raised the most challenging questions about art and its relationship to reality. Yet his favorite painting of 1833 represented him in the middle of



Octave Tassaert's studio holding forth with the painter on a canvas in progress, and this image, he wrote Courbet, embodied "the true poem of modern painting." Courbet had found a partner loonier than himself, although art history has privileged Bruyas as a mere "eccentric."⁹⁸

Courbet consistently took advantage of Bruyas's foibles, and nowhere is this more evident than in the picture entitled *La Rencontre* or *The Meeting* (fig. 3.19). Commissioned by Bruyas, *The Meeting* bears visual testimony to their partnership and commemorates Courbet's stay at Montpeller between June and October 1854 to collaborate with the patron on their joint "solution." Just before he left Ormans for Montpeller he wrote Bruyas that he planned to realize a "unique miracle" in his lifetime, to live off his art without sacrificing his principles. In Bruyas he had found his ideal sponsor: "I have met [rencontre] you. It was inevitable because it was not we who

3.19 Gustave Courbet, *The Meeting*, 1854. Musée Fabre, Montpellier.



have encountered [rencontres] each other, but our solutions." The reiterated form of *rencontre*, to meet, the meeting, is the operative metaphor in the picture, a meeting of minds bent on a single purpose.

Courbet and Bruyas and Bruyas's manservant Calas all meet at a symbolic crossroads just outside Montpellier and exchange formal salutations. Their body language and costume make a study in contrasts while apparently meeting on a common plane. Courbet, as fashion-conscious as ever, portrays himself as a sturdy vagabond with a huge pilgrim's staff, roughing it in the wilderness with gaitered boots, a battered hat crushed in his left hand, and his portable landscape equipment strapped to his back; Bruyas carries an elegant walking stick and wears kid gloves and his fashionable trademark olive green jacket with striped collar; the servant wears lumpy bourgeois hand-me-downs and carries a knob-headed cane along with a spare wrap for his master. Courbet energetically thrusts himself forward with his staff planted ahead, his right foot advanced, his head upraised and beard stiffly pointing outward; Bruyas stands rigidly at attention, halted in his tracks by his formidable partner, and extends

his hat outward in welcome, while Calas, who also doffs his cap, bows his head in reverence. (About claimed that the self-effacing servant behaved as if he were assisting a priest at mass.) Even Bruyas's dog stands erect on all four legs, wagging his tail and barking a ceremonial greeting. Courbet not only reverses the traditional hierarchical relationship of artist and patron but equates himself with visiting royalty and saintly heroes.

At the same time, he alters conventional class decorum in posing himself as a journeyman craftsman confidently facing his bourgeois better. Ironically, the source for the image was a portion of a popular broadside of the *Wandering Jew*, representing an encounter of Ahasuerus and two upright citizens ("Les Bourgeois de la Ville parlant au Juif errant") on the road to a nearby town (fig. 3.20).³⁹ The Legend of the Wandering Jew was well known in Courbet's circle: in addition to Pierre Dupont's poem on the theme (1856), Champfleury would later use this same woodcut print as the frontispiece for his *Histoire de l'immagerie populaire* (1869), and the voluminous notes of his systematic study of the legend suggest that he had been engaged in the research over a long period, accumulating along the way a major collection of prints illustrating the subject that Courbet surely knew.⁴⁰

3.20 *Legend of the Wandering Jew*, woodcut, early nineteenth century. Frontispiece for Champfleury, *Histoire de l'immagerie populaire* (1869).



Briefly, the genesis of the theme of the Wandering Jew traces to a legendary inhabitant of Jerusalem named Ahasuerus, who, when Jesus agonizingly bore his cross to Calvary and paused for a rest at his doorstep, drove him away with the rebuke, "Walk faster!" and received in turn this chiding, "I go, but you will walk until I come again!"³⁸ Ahasuerus was henceforth condemned to perpetual wandering until Jesus returned to redeem humankind. Popular literature in the late medieval period linked him and his fellow Jews to the Antichrist, and thus he was fused with the anti-Semitic diabolical Jew. Although the mythical figure undergoes various mutations throughout history depending on time and place—peripatetic observer of human folly, harbinger of disaster, example of man's inhumanity to man, and mysterious stalker of the night—he is most often the suffering sinner who abused Jesus and can never know peace until the advent of Christ's return. If then he repents and converts, he could at long last find his eternal resting place. Thus on one level he embodied a Christian parable on the fate of the Jewish people, and on another served as a warning to other would-be dissidents within the church.

Later folkloric accretions made Ahasuerus a shoemaker, an artisan, and in the most influential treatment of the legend—the Fourierist-inspired novel *Le Juif errant* by Eugène Sue—he emerges as the intermittent synecdoche of the downtrodden proletariat. Joined by his sister, the Wandering Jewess, the two stand as symbolic spokespersons for the oppressed laborers of the world, Jew and Gentile, male and female. Indeed, in the novel the persecution of the Jews (symbolically enacted in the long-suffering Samuel and Bathsheba) and the curse of the Wandering Jew merge with the afflictions of the proletariat, as uttered in this lamentation of Ahasuerus: "My brethren! through me—the laborer of Jerusalem, cursed by the Lord, who in my person cursed the race of laborers—a race always suffering, always disinherited, always slaves, who, like me, go on, on, on, without rest or intermission, without recompense, or hope."

The vignette of Ahasuerus encountering two solid burghers of the local town (a constant in the Franco-Flemish version of the legend) and accompanying text were crucial to establishing the moral and social contrast between the accursed pariah and the upright citizenry to whom he invariably confesses his woeful tale. Courbet clearly chose this secondary image to play up the incongruity between himself and his patron, preferring in this instance to identify with the outcast Jewish artisan in opposition to his solidly bourgeois patron. As in the case of the allegorical personification of the Republic, where the abstract female image could embody positive energy, so the image of the Jew, also operating on the plane of abstraction, could serve as role model for the realist condemned to pariah status.

Courbet in fact had used the image once before in painting the portrait of Jean Journet, a Fourierist missionary, who, staff in hand, marches off to announce to the world the benefits of the phalanstery. Courbet also executed a lithograph of the radical evangelist entitled *The Apostle Jean Journet*



3.21 Gustave Courbet, *The Apostle Jean Journet Setting Out for the Conquest of Universal Harmony*, lithograph, 1850. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Setting Out for the Conquest of Universal Harmony, showing him beginning a nationwide pilgrimage with his staff and shoulder bags loaded with brochures and extra clothes (fig. 3.21). Significantly, the lithograph is enclosed on three sides by a *complainte*, a plaintive lyric of the type attached to the image of the Wandering Jew.

Champfleury felt a strong affection for this madcap Fourierist true believer who disrupted theatrical performances and private parties with a call for converts to the cause. Journet considered himself the modern "savior of the world" and Champfleury quotes him as having written to Chateaubriand: "The apostle is he who condemns, who absolves, who judges; it is he who is the last man on earth, it is he who is powerful, it is he who is the apostle, it is I, it is Jean Journet."¹⁰² This is the kind of rhetorical bravado that appealed to Courbet, who considered himself the "apostle" of realism.

Journet, who left the Parisian nonbelievers for the provinces, established a precedent for Courbet in trekking to Montpellier to preach his Fourierist doctrine to local church dignitaries. Traveling on foot like his Fourierist role model and the Wandering Jew, he deliberately eschews such bourgeois conveniences as the diligence receding in the distance. Despite his humble lifestyle, however, the outcast is not only elevated socially in relation to the townsmen but immodestly accepts their acknowledgment of his superiority.

The Meeting was one of eleven canvases accepted for the Exposition Universelle of 1855, and Courbet wrote Bruyas that the work created "an extraordinary impression." Critics, he noted, were calling it *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet*, and the numerous foreigners crowding around it attested to its "universal success." The various doggerel verses, satirical poems, and caricatures devoted to the picture would seem to confirm Courbet's sense of its reception, but most often they were aimed at deriding the sheer narcissism of his self-presentation:

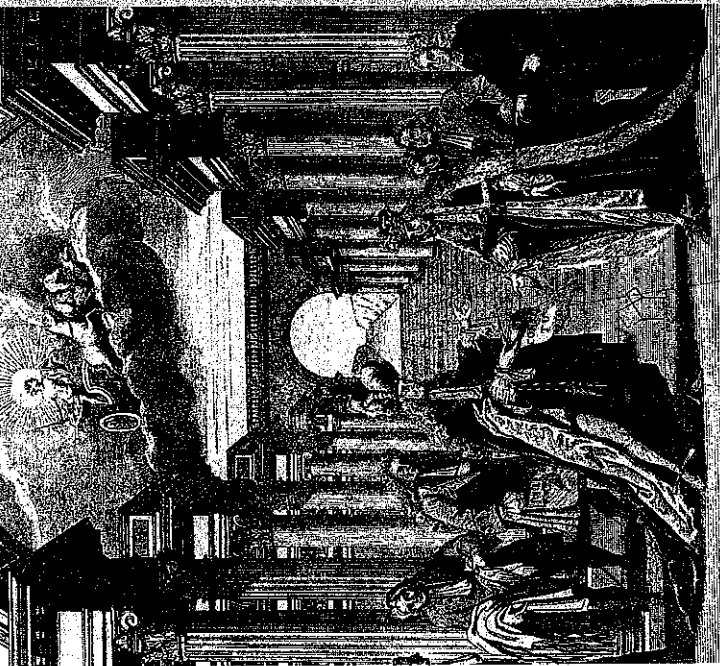
And the somber foliage, hollowed out like an arch,
The meadows, the branch that a swollen fruit caused to curve [*courbait*],
Sang in unison: "Bonjour, M. Courbet, the master painter!
Monsieur Courbet, salut! Bonjour, M. Courbet!"¹⁰³

About, who nicknamed the work "Fortune Bowing before Genius," mockingly observed that neither the bourgeois patron nor his servant cast a shadow on the ground: "M. Courbet alone has power to obstruct the sun's rays."

Yet on the peripheries of About's jibes there is inadvertent testimony to some of the work's positive qualities: the critic gleans from the landscape the weather ("It is a hot day"), the time of day ("between eleven and noon"), and the topographical location ("outskirts of Montpellier"). For what is remarkable is that just as he convincingly conveyed the peculiar geographical features in and around Ormans, here Courbet captures the brightness and warmth of the southern atmosphere, low horizon, big azure sky, and indigenous vegetation of the Midi in late spring. Courbet's *Meeting* represents an actual moment in time, but a moment mediated by a selectively staged action reminiscent of the popular source that informed it. Although embedded in the ordinary act of greeting, the picture stands as the first of Courbet's "real allegories."

Indeed, it represents a sort of ritual encounter commemorating the creative association of Bruyas and Courbet. The ritualistic component may overlay a Freemasonic intention: Bruyas belonged to a local lodge and wears white gloves in the painting, an indispensable item of the ceremonial dress worn at Masonic unions. White gloves symbolize the purity of the soul and possess a protective power—qualities that Courbet may have wished to assign to his patron under the circumstances. Canes—usually decorated with prominent pommeles like the round-headed type held by Calas—also form part of the symbolic garb at lodge meetings when carried by the Master of Ceremonies. It may be stretching it a bit to confront the frontispiece of the first edition of *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons* (1723) with *The Meeting*, but the juxtaposition reveals some intriguing parallels (fig. 3.22). In the ritual encounter of the two principal officers, the Grand Master commits the constitutions to his successor with a hand gesture resembling that of Bruyas, while the attendant at the left holding a wrap (apron?) and a pair of gloves and inclining his head strikes me as the prototype of Calas.

Courbet may have used Masonic materials to lend emphasis to this rite of passage, but they are of minor importance within his larger realist enterprise. They relate to Courbet's projection of himself as itinerant artisan, the type of journeyman or *compagnon* who traveled freely from town to town seeking to ply his skills. George Sand's novel *Le Compagnon du tour de France* celebrates the independence of these skilled craftsmen as they rambled through the countryside. In addition, their craft brotherhoods and signage were modeled on Freemasonry, which in turn associated itself with the tradition of the *compagnonnage*. The itinerant craftsman could be seen as a regenerated version of the Wandering Jew, and Courbet, as has been shown, transposed the sign of persecuted artisan into one of liberation.



3.22 Frontispiece for first edition of *Constitutions des franc-maçons* (1723).

By joining the rural and the urban, town and country, Courbet's scene metaphorically realized the Comtean ideal of social and environmental transformation through synthesis of scientific knowledge. His exploitation of a popular image for the source of his painting drew on traditional folklore as a bridge between high and low culture, making his subject matter more inclusive and enabling him to emancipate himself from elite aesthetic norms. The landscape as sign of untrammelled nature served as a locus of freedom for reconciliation of town and country, artist and society, worker and bourgeois, bourgeois and peasant, thus fulfilling the ideals of the realist-rural discourse. The fact that Monipellier and the department of Hérault generally had formed part of Red France, and that its well-organized working classes and petty bourgeoisie resisted the coup d'état in December 1851, perhaps made this symbolic reunion especially urgent for Bruyas.¹⁰⁴ The celebratory meeting of the townsman and the artist/worker/peasant at the rural crossroads heralds the resolution of social and political divisions in the post-1848 period.

The Studio

By the decree of 22 June 1853, the Salon of 1854 was canceled and postponed to 1855, when it was to be combined with the Exposition Universelle. The Exposition Universelle of 1855 represented the imperial riposte to Britain's Great Exhibition of 1851, and the French government meant to surpass its predecessor by staging a vast spectacle of the fine arts, a component missing from the London show, limited to the display of sculpture and examples of the industrial arts. Writing for *L'Artiste*, Charles Perrin puffed this innovation for France, which for the first time in history permitted "art to appear face to face with industry." Ironically, Perrin, who loathed Courbet, inadvertently wrote the apologia for the painter's attractions. Speaking for France, he claimed that the nation called upon art in 1855 to function "as a more or less faithful image of our society and that of foreign societies as well," a role that industry could never fulfill.¹⁰⁵

It already has been shown to what degree the government's plans for the Exposition influenced Millet's exhibit of *Peasant Grafting a Tree*, and it remains to be seen what strategies were deployed to win Courbet's sympathy. Around October of 1853, Courbet wrote to Bruyas about a luncheon date with Nieuwerkerke, the authoritarian surintendant des Beaux-Arts who wielded enormous clout over cultural matters during the Second Empire. Courbet noted that the engagement had been arranged by the two "sell-outs" Chenavard and the landscapist Louis François (recently named Chevaliers in the Légion d'Honneur), and that the sole intention of the surintendant was to convert him to the government's position. Nieuwerkerke told Courbet that the administration hated to see him going alone, that he could win its full support if only he would tone down his approach and "mix a little water with [his] wine" (recall the same expression by Clément de Ris, a critic close to the seat of cultural power). Nieuwerkerke admitted the regime's great respect for Courbet's talent, and declared that the government hoped to see him produce his greatest work yet for the coming World's Fair and that he, Nieuwerkerke, would personally steer it through appropriate channels.

Courbet's reply to Nieuwerkerke, as he related it to Bruyas, was filled with righteous indignation, but he also made it clear that he understood why the government needed his talents: "I alone, of all the French artists of my time, [have] the power to represent and translate in an original way both my personality and my society." When a startled Nieuwerkerke blurted out, "Why, Monsieur Courbet, you are quite proud," Courbet replied: "Sir, I am the proudest man in France." He opposed himself as an individual one-person government to the collective government of Napoleon III and shouted that the attempted bribe insulted the entire community of artists. When Nieuwerkerke requested a definitive answer to his request for a special work for the Exposition Universelle, Courbet responded that the government owed him 15,000 francs for drawing so many

paid admissions to their previous exhibitions. Defeated, Nieuwerkerke retreated to the door in disgust, but turned back one last time to admonish Courbet: "Note well that it is the government and not just me that has invited you to lunch today!"¹⁰⁶

One year later we find Courbet hard at work on his magnum opus, the immense, multifigured *Atelier*, or *The Painter's Studio*, one of fourteen entries that he initially planned to submit to the Paris Exhibition of 1855 (fig. 3.23). This ambitious canvas, twenty feet wide and twelve feet high and containing thirty-three life-size figures, was unmistakably the fruit of the exchange between Courbet and Nieuwerkerke. We first learn of its existence in a letter to Bruyas where Courbet informs his patron that he has completed the outline sketch of the definitive tableau. He describes it as "the moral and physical history of my atelier, including all the people who serve me and participate in my action. In the background of the painting will be *The Bathers* and *Return from the Fair*. On my easel I'll paint a landscape with a miller driving his donkeys loaded with sacks to the mill. I'll title it the 'first series,' for I hope to have society pass through my studio, to become aware of and to love my inclinations as well as my aversions."¹⁰⁷

He amplified and clarified his theme in even more detail in his letter to Champfleury, written not long afterwards (autumn 1854). Here he states that the work—as yet untitled—is divided into two parts, but then runs

3.23 Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio*, 1854–1855. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



them together in his opening description of the first: "These are the people who serve me, support me in my ideas, and take part in my activity; people who thrive on life, and those who thrive on death; society at its best, its worst, and its average—in short, it's my way of seeing society with all its interests and passions; it is the whole world coming to me to be painted."

Spelling out more precisely the differences of the two divisions of the painting, he locates on the right the shareholders (*actionnaires*) in his enterprise—that is, friends, working colleagues, and art lovers. On the left is the other world of commonplace life—the people, misery, poverty, wealth, the exploited and the exploiters, the people who thrive on death. Courbet himself is in the middle of these two groups, painting away at his easel, this time modifying the subject to show the miller pinching the butt of a young girl he meets on the way to the mill. After this general description, he gets down to specifics, starting from the extreme left:

On the edge of the canvas is a Jew I saw in England making his way through the feverish activity of the London streets, devotedly cradling a coffin in his right arm and covering it with his left hand. He seemed to be saying, "It is I who have the bear of it." He had an ivory complexion, a long beard, a turban, and a long black robe that trailed on the ground. Behind him is a curate with a red bloated face and triumphant expression. In front of them is a poor, very thin old man, a veteran republican of '93 (that minister of the interior, for example, who was part of the Assembly when Louis XVI was condemned to death, the one who as recently as last year was taking courses at the Sorbonne), ninety years old, a beggar's pouch in his hand, wearing a patched white linen jacket and a broad-brimmed hat; he is looking at a pile of romantic paraphernalia at his feet. (The Jew takes pity on him.) Then there's a hunter, a reaper with his scythe, a circus Hercules, a clown, an old-clothes merchant, a laborer's wife, a laborer, and an undertaker's assistant; a skull lying on a newspaper; an Irishwoman nursing her child, and a studio mannequin. . . . The old-clothes man presides over all this, displaying his shoddy goods to all these people, each of whom in their own way pays the greatest attention. Behind him, in the foreground, is a guitar and a plumed hat.

Next, Courbet enumerates the aggregate of individuals on the opposite side, starting with himself at the easel, but not bothering to reveal as much descriptive detail as in the first part. Watching him paint over his shoulder is a nude model, with her clothes piled up behind his chair. A white cat crouches on the floor nearby. Next comes his friend Promayet, holding his violin beneath his arm, followed by Bruyas, Cuenot, Buchon, and Proudron. Champfleury he includes seated on a stool, and beside him an elegantly clad lady with her husband. Baudelaire would be depicted at the extreme right absorbed in a book, and next to him a "Negress looking coquettishly at her reflection in a mirror." Finally, in the rear of the painting, in a window recess, two lovers will be whispering sweet nothings to one another.¹⁰⁸

Courbet's description was by no means exhaustive, but it characterized the work's conceptualization up to that moment. He made several changes and additions as he continued, most notably the introduction of the seated *braconnier* or poacher, with his rifle and dogs, on the left, and a peasant child watching Courbet paint at the easel along with the nude model. He also altered the painting on the easel, removing the incident of the miller and the young girl and confining himself to a pure landscape of the Loue banks near Ornans. Next to Champfleury, he added a young boy lying on the floor making a child's drawing—a subject akin to popular imagery that especially intrigued the writer. Finally, just before exhibiting the picture he eliminated the black woman; Edouard Houssaye, editor of *L'Artiste*, noted her presence as late as April 1855, describing her as a person of the "yellow race."¹⁰ She was actually Jeanne Duval, the mixed-race mistress of Baudelaire, who requested that Courbet remove Duval from the picture. (The chemistry of oil paint, however, has allowed her to remain as a faint silhouette hovering above her lover.)

When Courbet completed the work he called it *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up a Seven-Year Phase of My Artistic Life*, using the oxymoronic form of "allegorie réelle" to reconcile his realist approach with an attempt at historical synthesis—a kind of realist riposte to the historical cycles of Chenavard, Ingres, and Delaroche. Since he began the work at the end of 1854, modern commentators tend to date his "seven-year" phase from 1847, but it was actually the delivery date of the picture and the event of the Exposition Universelle he had in mind, making the starting year 1848. Thus the work constitutes a summation of his career from the decisive revolutionary moment at which he attained political as well as artistic maturity.

Several emblematic passages in the painting signify the rejection of both classicism and romanticism: on the side of those who thrive on death the mannequin of St. Sebastian pierced with arrows suggests the demise of classicism, while the undertaker's assistant presides over a pile of props dear to romantic imaginations, including plumed slouch hat, dagger, and a guitar that Courbet had himself used in his own romantic phase. Also to the side of the undertaker's assistant is a skull nestled in a crumpled copy of the *Journal des débats*, a newspaper that extolled classicism and romanticism and scoffed at Courbet's realism. His emblematic barbs specifically targeted the chiefs of the two schools, Ingres and Delacroix, who were given special retrospective exhibitions at the World's Fair, as well as the sycophantic press who puffed them as representative of France's cultural supremacy. The peddler of shoddy goods who attracts the crowd alludes to the government-controlled press that camouflaged outworn ideas with inflated rhetoric.

Meanwhile, Courbet shrewdly paints a landscape while turning his back on the posing model—an outright refusal of the academic routine. The unschooled model, the innocent peasant lad—and perhaps the playful animal

reacting instinctively—alone grasp the importance of Courbet's work, representative of that wider natural community (Sand's *la vie primitive*) Courbet hoped to reach with his art. This theme is reinforced by the child sketching on the floor near Champfleury who, as Schapiro pointed out, profoundly admired children's drawings for precisely those traits of sincerity and truthfulness that he admired in folk imagery.

At the same time that Courbet rejects outworn classicism and romanticism and reaffirms realism and its sources in spontaneous nature, he also announces his program of social inclusivity in the post-1848 period. His wide range of types include agricultural and town laborers, artisans, mountebanks—including a clown in Chinese costume, perhaps signaling the imperial ties of the Second Empire—religious figures, a peddler of cheap goods, and a destitute woman clinging to life for herself and her suckling infant, as well as the affluent in his circle, including a number of prominent landowners, financiers, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals.

There can be no doubt that he produced this magisterial effort in response to Nieuwerkerke's request. Early in 1855, as the deadline for submission drew close, Courbet, delayed by illness and the enormity of the task he set himself, asked François to intervene with Nieuwerkerke on his behalf to obtain a special extension to complete it. He reminded his friend that Nieuwerkerke "offered me his help in your presence," and hoped that he "could hold him to his word at this time."¹⁰⁰ Courbet was granted the extension, but in the end the selection committee of the Exposition Universelle of 1855 rejected the picture, along with two others, *Funeral at Ornans* and his portrait of Champfleury. (Although the pretext for refusing the big works was the want of space required for the foreign displays, the rejection of the portrait of Champfleury hints at behind-the-scenes manipulation.) The committee, however, did accept eleven of his entries, including *The Stonebreakers*, *The Meeting*, and *Demoiselles of the Village*.

Courbet's desire to be represented by *Funeral* and especially the new *Studio* prompted him to organize a retaliatory counter-exhibition in a hastily constructed iron and hollow-brick structure on 7, avenue Montaigne, opposite the Fine Arts pavilion of the World's Fair. Opening just six weeks after the inauguration of the Exposition Universelle, his display of forty paintings and four drawings approximated the numbers allowed to Ingres and Delacroix, who carried the banners for classicism and romanticism in their separate retrospectives. His special show was advertised by a large sign over the entrance which read "LE REALISME"—a clear shot at his official competition.

Well aware that the administration had used realist rhetoric to justify its inclusion of the fine arts in its commercial and industrial exhibition, Courbet reappropriated the high ground by emphatically declaring, in the catalogue printed for his private show: "To be in a position to translate the customs, the ideas, the appearance of my epoch, according to my own estimation; to be not only a painter, but a man as well; in short, to create living

art—this is my goal." Calling upon Bruyas to ship *The Bathers* to Paris for the show, he reminded him that "in this you are serving a holy and sacred cause, the cause of liberty and independence, a cause to which I, like you, have consecrated my entire life."

Courbet's paranoid dreams of overwhelming his enemies and earning profitable returns from thrill-seeking crowds were quickly dashed, however, when only a trickle of visitors showed up each day. Critics like Perrin calumiated him for his inordinate vanity in posing "heroically as commander-in-chief of realism," although they could hardly avoid confronting *The Painter's Studio*. Writing for *L'Artiste*, Perrin saw, on the left-hand side of the painting, "a battalion of monsters escaped from the Cour des Miracles—Courbet's lamentable personification of 'our era.'" Yet this was the same work that Delacroix went to visit in early August and which held him spellbound for nearly an hour. He confessed in his diary that he simply "could not tear" himself away from the sight of the singular "masterpiece," and concluded that the selection committee refused "one of the most extraordinary works of our time."

Courbet's subtitle, suggesting the conclusion of a distinct phase of his career, clarifies the paradoxical coupling of "real" and "allegory." The work tries to marry the autobiographical and the social in a historical synthesis that conveys the "appearance of my epoch, according to my own estimation." There is a suggestion of a concealed message in the work, a puzzle that needed to be deciphered. He wrote to François that it would "take too long to explain what I want to let you guess when you see it. . . . It is fairly mysterious, it will keep people guessing." This statement has given rise to all sorts of ingenious interpretations by modern art historians, but since Courbet had already delivered the long version to Champfleury, I believe there is no need to think beyond what the painter reiterated for François as "the story of my atelier, what goes on there morally and physically."

Most of the recent work of interpretation has been based on Toussaint's identification of the figures on the left-hand side as well-known historical celebrities, some of them quite convincing, as for example, the Jew (Achille Fould, minister of state) and the curate (Louis Veuillot, the ultramontane Catholic editor of *L'Univers*). But I find her other identifications less persuasive, including the designations of the seated poacher as Napoleon III and the purveyor of shoddy goods as Persigny, minister of the interior. Courbet may very well have employed actual personalities for his types on the left-hand half of the composition, but they could have easily served him as representative ethnic or occupational types of what he characterized as the exploiters, those who "thrive on death," rather than as hidden portraits in a preplanned puzzle. This type of abstruse riddle is totally alien to Courbet's sensibility, and it hardly makes sense for Courbet to have included revolutionaries like Garibaldi, Kossuth, and Kosciuszko (who died in 1871)—as Toussaint supposed—among those who "thrive on death."

On the other hand, I am sympathetic to her Masonic reading of the picture, which I shall return to in a moment.

My rejection of the identification of the poacher with Napoléon III means also that I have to reluctantly reject Herding's imaginative interpretation of the work as an *adhortatio ad principem*, an exhortation to the ruler calling for reconciliation between rival nations, parties, and classes.¹⁰ I see the picture is an enterprising attempt at a temporal synthesis of Courbet's experience within a given time period, and a monument to his intellectual mastery of people and events. Not unlike Ingres in his *Apotheosis of Homer*, Courbet visualized a universal scheme of culture that emanated from a single powerful source. He differed significantly from Ingres, however, in placing himself, the artist, at the center of that formation. In a sense, Courbet broke the ice with this picture by daring to place himself at the hub of history and society. If Toussaint is right in her identification of the poacher as Napoléon III, his presence in a subordinate position serves to categorically affirm Courbet's dominance within his realm of action. (Recall his statement to Nieuwerkerke that he too was "a government.") In expressing gratitude to Bruyas for his support of the private exhibition, Courbet reminded him of the historical importance of participating "in my action." But here as elsewhere he meant no mere show of egocentricity, but a reversal of the social and political conventions that would impose arbitrary constraints on human beings.

Here is where I believe Toussaint's Masonic reading offers a possible clarification of Courbet's intent, although she seems to have confused his early label for his effort—"first series"—with the first three degrees or Blue Lodge degrees of Masonry. The term "series" is used almost uniquely in the Rite of Misraim (or Rite of Egypt) that is divided into four series of ninety degrees, of which the first series is "symbolic" (*série symbolique*) and comprises thirty-five degrees including apprentice, journeyman, and master. The final degree in this series is "Grand Commandeur du Temple," and Toussaint rightfully suggests that Courbet's description of Bruyas's pose as "trionphant et commandeur" carries this Masonic connotation.¹¹ Above all, she points out the significance of the term "atelier" in French Masonry as a synonym for *loge* or lodge. Actually, "atelier" in the Masonic terminology means much more: it is the generic term for the entire Masonic edifice. Masons cannot exist in isolation, but only in groups, and it is the group concept that is designated as "atelier."¹² Thus the Masonic symbolism lends support to Courbet's totalizing attempt to harmonize metaphorically the varying levels of his society. The representative community of *Funeal at Ornaas* now expands into a global fraternal association united around a common vision of nature or reality.

This is symbolized in the Franche-Comté landscape that Courbet paints on his easel, the focal point of the composition.¹³ The whole world comes to Courbet's doorstep to participate in his celebration of his native

environment—the rustic alternative to town corruption, the site of reconstruction of the urban and the rural, and of the restoration of inner peace to troubled souls, the model for the regeneration of French society. As in *The Meeting*, he again metaphorically resolves the conflict between town and country and pictorially realizes the realist-rural discourse as a “solution” to the social question.

Until now, not much attention has been paid to the significance of that part of the title referring to the picture as a résumé of a “seven-year phase.” I intend to develop this idea even more fully in my discussion of Whittman and Courbet, but for now I wish to point out that Courbet consistently conceptualized his career as a series of discrete “stages” of development progressively leading to his realization as a complete person making “living art.” This is an idea borrowed from Comte, who believed that his own era opened upon the final stage of historical development. Comte’s sequence of three historical stages, culminating with the positive, provided the conceptual model for thinking about human progress—the philosophical and sociological foundation of Courbet’s seven-year phase crowned by his fulfillment as a realist painter. In one sense, Courbet’s *Studio*, which brings the whole world to his doorstep, visualizes Comte’s design for a comprehensive philosophical system capable of encompassing all human knowledge.

This interpretation assumes a public and political intention in the construction of the monumental composition, but we have also seen the attempted government intervention to pressure him to conform to its program. It would have been difficult for anyone, even a strong-willed personality like Courbet, to stoutheartedly resist a combination of blandishments and threats by the authoritarian regime. Several years later, in a bitter letter to the exiled Victor Hugo, Courbet compared his lot under Napoléon III’s regime to that in which Hugo and Delacroix worked:

When you and Delacroix were in your prime, you did not have, as I do, the Empire to tell you, “Outside of us there is no salvation.” There was no warrant for your arrest; your mothers, unlike mine, did not make underground passages in the house to hide you from the police; Delacroix never saw soldiers violating his home, effacing his paintings with a bucket of turpentine, by ministerial order; his works were not arbitrarily shut out of the Exposition [1855]; he did not need ridiculous clapsnets to house his pictures outside the Exposition; the annual official speeches did not single him out for censure; unlike me, he did not have that pack of mongrels baying at his heels, in the service of their mongrel masters. The battles were about art and questions of principle; you were not threatened with proscription.¹⁴

Here, whether partially hallucinatory or not, he alludes to the intense compulsion to conform that he experienced at the time of the Exposition Universelle. Clearly his capacity to demonstrate his convictions required the government’s facilities, including its permission for an extension of

the deadline to complete his picture and for erecting his temporary pavilion near the grounds of the Exposition Universelle. In the end, I believe that these pressures acted negatively on him to produce an outcome that in many ways contradicted his stated convictions.

Most modern observers point out the lack of communication among the diverse figures assembled in the painter’s studio and the painter’s utter indifference to their presence, including his dearest friends, mentors, and patrons. In a work pretending to visualize a harmonious reconciliation of modern social factions, the want of a shared activity or reciprocal recognition militates against a metaphorical resolution of the social question. In addition, there are what I would call “ethnic slurs” in the composition that undermine its stated claim to inclusivity. The “Negress” that has been effaced was originally gazing at herself “coquettishly” in the mirror while her lover read, and the circus clown wears a mocking Chinese mask and costume. But it is especially the image of the Jew, hugging tightly his jewel box (a familiar trope in the literature) and muttering to himself that he has the best of it, who betrays Courbet’s social and ethnic prejudices. Significantly, Courbet began his description of the theme in his letter to Champfleury with the position of the Jew, and in the composition it is the Jew’s full-length body with his prominent fur *shtrivel* and caftan at the extreme left-hand edge that towers over all the others and frames the section of those who “thrive on death.”

Courbet could identify with the pariahs of society when projected on a level of abstraction like the fabulous Ahasuerus, but when it came to empathizing with them in actuality he expressed traditional rural prejudices that irrationally associated Jews with usury. Leftist anti-Semitism found a source of strength in the financial policies of the house of Rothschild, which maintained close ties with Louis-Philippe and supported his relative neutrality in foreign affairs. (Generally, the Rothschilds opted for political stability and the reigning authority, but rumors of Louis-Napoléon’s coup d’état did not endear them to the enemies of Louis-Napoléon.) Alphonse Toussenel’s notorious *Les Juifs, rois de l’époque; histoire de la féodalité financière* (The Jews, Kings of the Epoch; History of Financial Feudalism), first published in 1845—the most popular book in a flood of pamphlets against the Rothschilds—was enthusiastically endorsed by the entire radical press. A disciple of both Michelet and Fourier, Toussenel articulated the resentments of a large portion of his society who perceived the handful of Jews in Paris in control of Louis-Philippe.

Courbet was close to a number of anti-Jewish leftists, including his friends Toussenel (whom he knew from the Brasserie Laveru) and the poet Pierre Dupont, who wrote a particularly nasty piece about Jewish usury.¹⁵ In addition, he clearly shared the virulent anti-Semitism of his compatriots from the Department of the Doubs. Proudhon and Fourier, who decisively contributed to the development of an anti-Jewish ideology in France, Fourier knew that more Christians practiced usury than Jews in France, but

stigmatized Jewish usury as more dangerous and therefore opposed Jewish emancipation. His disciples Toussaint and Proudhon identified the Jew with usurious parasitism and condemned the Jewish *arriviste* as the epitome of crass philistinism and vulgarity.¹¹⁶

During the Second Empire, French Jewry attained the height of its power and prosperity in the nineteenth century and became linked symbolically with the regime. Louis-Napoléon was predisposed toward Saint-Simon's technocratic program, and a number of Jews who had been affiliated with Saint-Simonism, including the brothers Emile and Isaac Péraire—founders of the *Crédit Mobilier* to help provide capital and credit for rapid industrialization—carved out distinguished careers for themselves. The banker Achille Fould, another prominent Jewish Saint-Simonist, subsidized Louis-Napoléon's campaign for president in 1848, and subsequently held key positions as minister of finance and minister of state in his administrations.

As one of the key organizers of the Exposition Universelle of 1855, it was Fould who ultimately authorized permission for Courbet to organize his private show. Courbet's references to Fould in his letters are always respectful, but he acknowledges him as the seat of power in his dealings with the regime. If Toussaint is correct in identifying the Jew as a disguised Fould (there even appears to be a letter "r" on his *skirted*), then the Jew's body may be a site for displaced anxieties about Jewish influence in cultural matters generally and in the World's Fair specifically. At the picture's opposite end is Baudelaire, the Jew's counterpart, who is a source of moral support and creative inspiration. The Jew and Baudelaire constitute the boundaries of the composition, the flanking antipodes of constructive and destructive influence on the artist's work. Given the salient role of the Jew in Courbet's textual and visual formulations, he implies that the pressures constraining him at the point of creative practice stem from overweaving Jewish ascendancy in French culture.

What I see in the picture is a retreat from the radicalism of the 1848–1854 phase and a settling into a bourgeois mode that he had for so long valiantly resisted within and without the familial context. His need to please his patron, the Bonapartist Bruyas, as well as the strains of government coercion must have affected his compromised "solution" to the social question. Unlike *Fumerol*, where the community organizes around a commonplace ritual and his social criticism has a logic, in the *Studio* there is no correlation between the negative and positive poles of society and no implied critique of the political and social constraints responsible for conditions of exploitation. Indeed, he has nothing but praise for the rich bourgeois on the right side who participate in his action. These controllable gestures and built-in limitations flagrantly disrupt his prior development, and the resultant guilt feelings may have been displaced to the body of the close-fisted Jew. Against this Jewish "other," Courbet can gesture expansively and magnanimously within a narrowly circumscribed field of action.

In any case, the *Studio*, far from posing a threat like the previous pictures, indicated the concessions he made in response to his patronage and government efforts to modify his style. The work might be more appropriately subtitled "An Allegory Summarizing My Bourgeoisification during the Last Seven Years." First, it is composed in the academic manner that he studiously avoided in previous work. It converges on a single dominant figure flanked on either side by well-defined groups, recalling David's *Leontidas* or any number of conventional history paintings invoking the frieze principle, with a hero or ruler occupying the compositional center. Indeed, at the Exposition Universelle of 1855 there were several major variants of this pattern, including Courur's *Romans of the Decadence*, Chassériau's *Tripitaram*, Hamon's *Human Comedy*, and Müller's *Last Roll Call of the Revolution*.

Second, Courbet's painting ranges him directly among the dominant elite performing the role of a courtly entourage. His version of the Human Comedy is divided into two distinct groups, a privileged class who serves his cause and provides for his support, and a parasitic and marginalized class who "thrive on death" or who are otherwise exploited. There is no question as to his affiliation; he wears the fashionable jacket with striped collar beloved of his patron Bruyas, as seen in the comparison of his self-portrait study for the *Studio* and his portraits of Bruyas for this picture and *The Meeting*. The striped collar and piping emanate from the same tailor's workshop, and his wearing of it in his studio betrays the rustic garb he wears in *The Meeting* as masquerade.

Significantly, the aspiring grand bourgeois, as we have seen, uses the language of the stock exchange to describe his relationship to his patrons: he called them "actionnaires," or shareholders in Courbet, Inc. It is no coincidence that in the period 1855–1856 Courbet speculated on the stock market, investing heavily in railway and other shares. The result, however, was disastrous, and his financial losses (including those incurred by the private show) threw him into a profound depression during the latter part of 1855. Proudhon was himself preoccupied with the Bourse in this period. His friend and biographer, Sature-Beuve, wrote that Proudhon tried to get railroad concessions for friends in 1853–1854 and asked for help from Prince Napoleon. Proudhon also advised English capitalists who sought to finance railways in Switzerland. It was in this period that he decided to publish, although anonymously at first, the sensational potboiler *The Manual of the Stock Exchange Speculator*, consisting of a mass of statistical information on all the leading companies listed on the Bourse. Courbet must have read the work, because his letter to Champfleury describing the *Studio* borrows its terminology. Proudhon declared that the public of the Bourse, similar to the world of production and consumption, divides itself into two categories, the *exploités* and the *exploiteurs*. The first—the more numerous—consists of the "wile multitude, the rubbish heap of porters, domestics, rentiers, petty bourgeois, hard working but greedy."¹¹⁷

The very title of Courbet's painting reflects an entrepreneurial attitude. The Masonic implications of the term *atelier* have already been discussed, but another related definition is that of a small factory, designating a location where mechanical and artisanal activity of every kind was carried out under the direction of a chief called the *patron*. And what does Courbet produce in his atelier? A landscape, now an artifact removed from nature, or the prime source of realist inspiration. This marked a new direction; in the next few years he churned out numerous landscapes and hunting scenes for the market inspired partly by the British artist-entrepreneur Edwin Landseer. He purchased several pieces of real estate, including land on which he wanted "to plant clumps of trees of all species for my painting."¹¹⁸

Champfleury wrote at this time that it disturbed him to witness Courbet's concessions, that he was becoming increasingly preoccupied with the concerns of his patrons. This observation was seconded by conservative critics who noted that he was gradually humanizing his work, while the more progressive Thoreé regretted throughout the 1860s Courbet's apparent renunciation of his social commitment. Finally, in 1866 Courbet's provocative nude, *Woman with a Parrot*, earned him universal esteem from the Second Empire gang, and no one was more pleased to see it than Sainte-Beuve, a Second Empire lackey, who raved about it in the company of Troubat, the chaplain of Princess Mathilde, and Edmond About, who suggested that Courbet now quit his modest studio and live like the true Renaissance Man in a sumptuous Parisian townhouse.¹¹⁹

The *Studio* then, though a magisterial effort to visually contextualize the sociological conditions of a contemporary artist's career, pulls its punches and discloses a conservative tendency. Dupays argued that the work should be viewed "as a general confession of the error of [Courbet's] youth," like those farewell reunions organized for the noisy and scatterbrained companions associated with the wild heyday of youth just at the moment one accepts a serious position in life. He saw in the work's left half all the "hideousness of the world," the deformities, vices, gruesome-ness, deceptitude and poverty, frightful women, detestable types of every stamp. Concentrating his repugnance on the Irish mother, the reviewer wondered how Courbet had the courage to place "this vermin next to him and one of his friends in a hunter's outfit, instead of relegating her to an obscure corner, behind the indescribable dustheap of humanity in which we can pick out peasants, street porters, a Jew, an old-clothes peddler, a clown, and an undertaker's assistant." But Dupays noticed that Courbet had decisively turned his back on this human debris in favor of his landscape, signaling a wholly new and improved direction in his work.¹²⁰

Striking as this testimony is from one of Courbet's most ardent opponents, it pales in comparison with the curt observation of Courbet's mentor Proudhon on the work. The anarchist philosopher, who could read a political message in a grain of sand, had only this terse comment to make about the *Studio* while moderately critiquing the self-indulgent display of

the painter's monumental ego: "He has made a purely personal picture in his *Real Allegory*, a work that is at the same low level of quality as *Lot and His Daughters*—an early biblical theme done before Courbet's realist renunciation that shows a father seducing his daughters."¹²¹

Yet in the end this centerpiece of his private exhibition produced a positive outcome in stimulating a heated debate on the meaning of "realism" in the modern age. Champfleury's famous open letter to George Sand defending Courbet was written in support of his private show at a time when the painter sustained acrimonious attack from the press. The letter was first published in *L'Artiste*, a journal generally hostile to Courbet but whose editors hoped to exploit the painter's notoriety to ingratiate itself with the government and gain increased readership.¹²² Although Champfleury was not wholly uncritical of Courbet's work, troubled especially by the self-contradictory subtitle of "Real Allegory," he nevertheless ends on a strong note of support for Courbet's painterly independence.

Champfleury's letter has become a canonical text in Courbet scholarship, but the equally important response to it by Charles Perrin has been systematically elided from the literature. Perrin directed his letter to Houssaye, managing director of *L'Artiste*, opening it with an expression of shock that anyone other than the artist himself took Courbet seriously. Perrin began by denying any animus against realism per se; in fact, some brands of realism were perfectly acceptable to him, including Champfleury's novel *Chien-Caillon*, which mingled grace and beauty in its "sincere expression of nature." Realism and poetic expression are not incompatible, but Perrin denied that the realm of poetry in Courbet's "notorious bazaar" on the avenue Montaigne and challenged any of his readers to prove him wrong.

Perrin understood Courbet's realism as a way of painting "that exalts and exaggerates only one of the many true aspects of nature—I speak of the material side—at the expense of another no less true, which is the spiritual." Ugliness, Perrin continued, had no claim to art other than to serve as "a diaphanous veil through which the spiritual penetrates, and it makes no difference whether this spiritual gaze is objective or subjective, whether it emanates from the painter or the model." Perrin then seized upon the example of Champfleury's correspondent to exemplify his point, opposing Sand's pastoral novels to Courbet's *Demoiselles de village*. Sand painted reality, but her types were neither rooco nor ugly, and never did "the monstrous realism of *The Bathers* ever sully her brush." Perrin then followed with an exclamatory note, first observing that Courbet wished to paint his century and then protesting: "My God! It is possible that the century is ugly; however, with all due respect, not as ugly as that!"

Perrin concluded his rebuttal of Champfleury's defense with his wicked analysis of the *Studio*, declaring that Courbet's "battalion of monsters escaped from the Court of Miracles" were the sick models of reality Courbet relied upon to personify the epoch. Nevertheless, he still felt that the

Studio showed progress over his previous work, and that, although a failure, it would have made a great painting had Courbet eliminated everything in the picture except himself alone at the easel. What troubled and perplexed Perrin most of all was that "Courbet, young, handsome, and well built, with a spiritual physiognomy, stubbornly refuses to see anything in nature but the ugly."²² Since good taste, like good breeding, was predicated on the ability to appreciate the Beautiful, Courbet's assertion of the ugly in life threatened the cherished assumptions and class supports of high culture.

Perrin's dogmatic riposte to Champfleury was in turn taken up by a more progressive writer, Fernand Desnoyers, soon to be an eloquent spokesperson for the idea of an official Salon des Reçus as an alternative outlet for independent and experimental work rejected by the Salon juries. Desnoyers wrote that one did not have to be an apologist for ugliness and evil to perceive that realism had "the right to represent that which exists and that which is visible to the naked eye." He then concluded with a positive appreciation of the new tendency while making a sly dig at its opponents: "Singular school, is it not? Where there is neither master nor pupil, and whose only principles are independence, sincerity, and individuality!"²³

The debate on realism stirred by Courbet's private show proved immensely valuable in articulating and clarifying the aims of the independents, and paving the way for the avant-garde painters of the next generation. Additionally, it caused consternation among bourgeois progressives by aligning itself with the new era of technology, science, and faith in progress yet at the same time dwelling on the negative aspects of the market economy. At the Exposition Universelle, Courbet's imagery raised the controversial issue of *laissez-faire* economics versus state intervention in the face of human misery. Finally, Courbet's grim representations rent the veil from the world of illusions to reveal the politics of culture beneath.

Coda on Courbet and Walt Whitman

I wish to conclude this chapter with a parallel study of Courbet and Walt Whitman to suggest that Courbet's persona was not unique in the Age of Civil Struggle, but represented a type of individual challenge everywhere in the individualized battle against illegitimate authority. In the case of Courbet and Whitman, their thematic and subjective affinities are so striking that past failure to make the case for their relationship appears as an historical oddity. Whitman's "I Sing the Body Electric" (titled "Poem of the Body" in the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*) mingles images of laborers, athletes, and firemen reminiscent of Courbet's subjects of the 1850s, at one point juxtaposing swimmers, wrestlers, and firemen in a single verse and thematically converging with Courbet's Salon entries of 1853, which included *The Bathers* and *The Wrestlers*. The poet's allusion to firefighters in "Song of Myself" (one of the untitled "Leaves of Grass" in the 1855 first edition) practically transcribes Courbet's *Firemen Rushing to a Fire*:

Those aloft of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes more to me than
the gods of the antique wars,
Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,
Their brawny limbs passing safe over the charred latiss . . . their white
foreheads whole and unharmed out of the flames;
By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding for every
person born . . .

The poet and the painter were particularly responsive to water and often walked the seashore, identifying their expansive egos with the infinite regression of the sea's horizon and the surging ocean. Courbet's paintings of himself saluting the sea at Palavas (1854) and the later stormy seas done at Etretat in 1869 come alive when juxtaposed with Whitman's "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life," first published in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* (and excerpted here from a later edition):

As I ebb'd with the ocean of life,
As I wended the shores I know,
As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you Panmanok,
Where they rustle up horse and sultan,
Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her castaways,
I musing late in the autumn day, gazing off southward,
Held by this electric self out of the pride of which I utter poems,
Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines underfoot,
The rim, the sediment that stands for all the water and all the land of the globe.

Or again from the first edition:

Sea of stretched ground-swells!
Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths!
Sea of the brine of life! Sea of unshovelled and always-ready graves!
Howler and scooper of storms! Capricious and dainty seal!
I am integral with you . . . I too am of one phase and of all phases.

It may be argued that the remarkable coincidence in their artistic strategies and thematics is nothing more than the playing out of a nineteenth-century episteme and that other similar parallels could be easily adduced out of the welter of periodic or Zeitgeist options. Nevertheless, let us press on. The basic biographical facts of the lives of Whitman and Courbet are in themselves full of intriguing coincidences. Whitman was born on 31 May 1819 and Courbet less than two weeks later on 10 June 1819, an unlikely pair of twins starting their lives under the sign of Gemini. They were passionately fond of music, swimming, and hunting and incorporate these recreations into their work as thematic testimony to the free-spirited democrat.

Both Whitman and Courbet entered adulthood with only a semi-education because of conflicts between their career preferences and paternal pressures, and both passed through a "romantic" phase before forging their identity in a self-conscious "realist" mode which crystallized in the year 1855. That year Whitman and Courbet outraged the establishment and the public on both sides of the Atlantic, and the savage epithets heaped upon their work for lack of decorum, aesthetically flawed structures and common source. They flouted their lack of "finish" and "polish" in their work and lifestyles, borrowing metaphors from the sketching practices of the art world to describe their broadly brushed ventures. The two "roughs" then associated their respective cultural production with their idea of democracy, functioning as Messiahs and way-showers of a New Age. They deployed the open-air landscape and its material rugosities as the chief vehicle for their republican and nationalist proclivities.

This also explains the curious coincidence of their personas: the earthy, free-swinging independents shouting a "barbaric yawp" over the roofs of the world.³ I shall never forget the flush of excitement I experienced when I first juxtaposed the frontispiece of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*—the so-called "carpenter's portrait" based on a photograph taken on a hot July day



3.24 Frontispiece for *Leaves of Grass*, engraving, 1855, after Gabriel Harrison's daguerotype, *Walt Whitman* (1854). Photograph courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

in 1854—with Courbet's self-projection in *The Meeting*, painted the same year and exhibited for the first time at the Universal Exposition of 1855 (fig. 3.24). Rakish, bearded, defiant, casually clothed in workman's costume, they identified themselves with the independent itinerant artisan.

Perhaps the most striking material parallel in their respective careers is their notorious manifestoes of 1855, *Leaves of Grass* and *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up a Seven-Year Phase of My Artistic Life*. Operating on the margins of the establishment in their respective countries, they undertook at their own expense to bring these works before the public. Whitman published his own book and Courbet erected a large pavilion to show his rejected work in competition with the official international exhibition. Whitman described his ultimate intention in *Leaves* as "a feeling or ambition to articulate and faithfully express in literary and poetic form, and uncomproisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual, and aesthetic Personality, in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate days, and of current America—and to exploit that Personality, identified with place and date, in a far more candid and comprehensive sense than any hitherto poem or book."

And here is what Courbet wrote in his realist manifesto of 1855: "I have studied, outside of all systems and without prejudice, the art of the ancients and the art of the moderns. I no more wanted to imitate the one than to copy the other . . . No! I simply wanted to draw forth from a complete acquaintance with tradition the reasoned and independent consciousness of my own individuality. To know in order to be able to create, that was my idea. To be in a position to translate the customs, the ideas, the appearance of my epoch, according to my own estimation; to be not only a painter, but a man as well; in short, to create living art—this is my goal."

It is now possible to see as one outcome of the American and French Revolutions the rise of the independent creator, the autodidact who wishes to free her- or himself from illegitimate authority. Whitman, one of the "roughs," and Courbet, "maître-peintre," assumed the pose of the self-taught, literate artisan. Both read deeply into contemporary science and sometimes pseudoscience to liberate themselves from orthodoxy and nourish their particular brand of realism. They went outside academic, political, and literary establishments in their attempt to empower themselves to empower others, identifying with a kind of pantheism that recognizes the Godhead, or good, in everything and everyone, in their likes as well as their dislikes. To break from authority meant realizing their freedom with the kind of "retching" effort Whitman spoke of in his *Eagle* review on Hazlitt, and they meant to serve as a paradigm for everyone to follow. Their boastful brand of self-respect carried with it respect for the underdog. Two distinct yet similar artists drew upon the same sources for their own sense of national identity, and in the process struggle to preserve the flame of liberty in the midst of repression.

38. T. Gautier, "Salon de 1851: Distribution des recompenses aux artistes," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 6 (1851): 118.
39. Quoted in ten-Doesschate Chu, *Courbet in Perspective*, pp. 14-15.
40. G. Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (London, 1972), p. 11. The great realist sets aside his prejudices and "describes what he really sees, not what he would prefer to see."
41. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 88, with modifications based on original text.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93, letter to Champfleury of February-March 1850.
43. Fried, *Courbet's Realism*, p. 102.
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45. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. 203-204.
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47. A.-J. Dupays, "Salon de 1850," *L'Illustration* 17 (31 January-7 February 1851): 72.
48. F. Pillet, "Beaux-Arts.—Reinure. Salon de 1850-1851," *Le Montiteur universel*, 13 February 1851.
49. P.-J. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination sociale* (Paris, 1865), pp. 236-242.
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52. Buchon's advertisement in T. J. Clark, *Image of the People* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 162-164.
53. Bonnemère, *Histoire des paysans*, quoted in R. L. Herbert, "City vs. Country: The Rural Image in French Painting from Millet to Gauguin," *Artforum* 8 (February 1970): 48.
54. F. Pillet, "Salon de 1850-1851," *Le Montiteur universel*, 13 February, 9 March 1851.
55. See A. Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1971), pp. 149-165.
56. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 109.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
58. Schapiro, "Courbet and Popular Imagery," p. 170.
59. Riart, *Gustave Courbet*, p. 77. At the time Riart published his monograph on the painter (1906), he claimed that the old-timers of Ormans could still name everyone in the picture.
60. The best case is made by C. R. Mainzer, "Who Is Buried at Ormans?," in *Courbet Reconsidered* (Brooklyn Museum, 1988), pp. 77-81.
61. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 95.
62. See T. J. Clark, "A Bourgeois Dance of Death: Max Buchon on Courbet," in ten-Doesschate Chu, *Courbet in Perspective*, pp. 88-107.
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64. Hélène Toussaint was the first to discuss Courbet's Masonic links, but she does not specify the sources of the imagery: see *Gustave Courbet, 1819-1877*, Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1978), pp. 210, 212, 269-271.
65. L. Clément de Ris, "Salon de 1851," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 6 (1851): 34-35.
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68. Pillet, "Salon de 1850-1851."
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70. Clark, *Image of the People*, pp. 127-128.
71. Champfleury, "In Defense of the Funeral at Ormans," in ten-Doesschate Chu, *Courbet in Perspective*, pp. 69, 71-73.
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CHAPTER 3

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2. T. Thoré, "Salon de 1861," *Salons de W. Biguer, 1861 à 1868*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1870), 1:91-94.
3. G. Riat, *Gustave Courbet, peintre* (Paris, 1906), pp. 1-3.
4. *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, trans. and ed. P. ten-Doesschate Chu (Chicago and London, 1992), p. 31.
5. Courbet's letter to his family of 25 January 1841 describes the standard academic studio routine and not that of the Académie Suisse: see ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 36.
6. A. Pécaré, *La Galerie des Beaux-Arts au Musée de Versailles* (Paris, 1916), pp. 2, 8.
7. M. Martinnan, *Painting Politics for Louis-Philippe* (New Haven and London, 1988), p. 173.
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10. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 48.
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12. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
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15. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.
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17. M. Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago and London, 1990), pp. 67-68.
18. P. ten-Doesschate Chu, ed., *Courbet in Perspective* (Binglewood Cliffs, 1977), p. 13.
19. *Courbet raconté par lui-même et par ses amis*, ed. P. Courthion, 2 vols. (Geneva, 1948-1950), 2:47; L. Neelich, *Gustave Courbet: A Study of Style and Society* (New York and London, 1976), pp. 2, 59, 77-85.
20. A.-J.-D., "Salon de 1849," *L'Illustration* 13 (18 August 1849): 393.
21. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 194.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 88; Courthion, *Courbet raconté par lui-même*, 1:87-88.
23. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. 443-448.
24. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, especially pp. 201-202.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
26. A.-J.-D., "Salon de 1849," p. 393.
27. Feu Diderot [pseudonym], "Salon de 1849," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 3 (1849): 129-130.
28. Courthion, *Courbet raconté par lui-même*, 2:186-187.
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31. A. Frankenstein, *William Sidney Mount* (New York, 1973), pp. 132, 156.
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34. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
36. G. Courbet, "Le Réalisme," in *Exhibition et vente de 36 tableaux et 4 dessins de l'œuvre de M. Gustave Courbet* (Paris, 1855), p. 2.
37. L. de Geoffroy, "Le Salon de 1850," *Revue des deux mondes*, nouv. pér., t. 9 (January-March 1851): 928, 965.

38. T. Gautier, "Salon de 1851: Distribution des récompenses aux artistes," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 6 (1851): 118.
39. Quoted in ten-Doesschate Chu, *Courbet in Perspective*, pp. 14-15.
40. G. Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (London, 1972), p. 11. The great realist sees aside his prejudices and "describes what he really sees, not what he would prefer to see."
41. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 88, with modifications based on original text.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93, letter to Champfleury of February-March 1850.
43. Fried, *Courbet's Realism*, p. 102.
44. A. de Lunnarène, *History of the French Revolution of 1848* (London, 1849), p. 324.
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49. P.-J. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art et de sa détermination sociale* (Paris, 1865), pp. 236-242.
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52. Buchon's advertisement in T. J. Clark, *Image of the People* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 162-164.
53. Bonnamy, *Histoire des paysans*, quoted in R. L. Herbert, "City vs. Country: The Rural Image in French Painting from Millet to Gauguin," *Artforum* 8 (February 1970): 48.
54. F. Pillet, "Salon de 1850-1851," *Le Moniteur universel*, 13 February, 9 March 1851.
55. See A. Boinne, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1971), pp. 149-165.
56. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 109.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
58. Schapiro, "Courbet and Popular Imagery," p. 170.
59. Riat, *Gustave Courbet*, p. 77. At the time Riat published his monograph on the painter (1906), he claimed that the old-timers of Ormans could still name everyone in the picture.
60. The best case is made by C. R. Maitzer, "Who Is Buried at Ormans?" in *Courbet Reconsidered* (Brooklyn Museum, 1986), pp. 77-81.
61. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 95.
62. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, pp. 88-107.
63. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 120.
64. Hélène Toussaint was the first to discuss Courbet's Masonic links, but she does not specify the sources of the imagery; see *Gustave Courbet, 1819-1877*, Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1978), pp. 210, 212, 269-271.
65. L. Clément de Ris, "Salon de 1851," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 6 (1851): 34-35.
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67. Geoffroy, "Le Salon de 1850," pp. 929-930.
68. Pillet, "Salon de 1850-1851."
69. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, pp. 207-212.
70. Clark, *Image of the People*, pp. 127-128.
71. Champfleury, "In Defense of the Funeral of Ormans," in ten-Doesschate Chu, *Courbet in Perspective*, pp. 69, 71-73.
72. C. Baudehate, *Christiques esthétiques* (Paris, n.d.), pp. 205-206.
73. A.-J. Dupays, "Salon de 1850," *L'Illustration* 17 (14-21 February 1851): 104.

74. A.-J. Dupuy, "Salon de 1850," *L'Illustration* 17 (31 January–7 February 1851): 72–73.

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77. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, pp. 373–376.

78. Noëllin, *Gustave Courbet*, p. 170.

79. Bonnier, *Pierre Dupon, poète et chansonnier du peuple* (Paris, 1991), pp. 213–234.

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83. A.-J. Dupuy, "Salon de 1852," *L'Illustration* 19 (22 May 1852): 316. For a modern interpretation of the work, see P. Mainardi, "Gustave Courbet's Second Scandal: Les Démocrates de Village," *Art Magazine* 53 (January 1979): 95–109.

84. L. Clement de Ris, "Le Salon de 1852," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 8 (1852): 99–100.

85. G. Planché, "Le Salon de 1852," *Revue des deux mondes*, nouv. pér., t. 14 (April–June 1852): 670–672.

86. J. Laprade, "Les Paysans," *L'Illustration* 18 (10 October–6 November 1851): 278; *ibid.* (13–20 November 1851): 310–311.

87. J. Laprade, "Ereurs et préjugés des paysans," *L'Illustration* 19 (8 January–15 January 1852): 31.

88. A. Deplacé, "Le Socialisme dans l'art," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 8 (1852): 184–185.

89. A.-J. Dupuy, "Exposition Universelle des Beaux-Arts: Réalisme," *L'Illustration* 26 (28 July 1853): 71.

90. For the *Wanderers* the indispensable study is K. Herding, *Courbet: 26 Years of Independence* (New Haven and London, 1991), p. 43.

91. Riat, *Gustave Courbet*, p. 104.

92. A.-J. Dupuy, "Salon de 1853," *L'Illustration* 21 (18 June 1853): 397–399.

93. I also believe that Courbet's painting metaphorically challenges the erotic fantasies of the Barbizon school, rapidly becoming a la mode among the Second Empire bourgeoisie. Several critics characterized the stout baker as a "bourgeois," not in the exclusively pejorative sense of Dupuy but as suggestive of actual class status. Here they were informed no doubt by the presence of the silk dress, short cloak, and fashionable hat hanging on the tree to the baker's left. Courbet's two women, towering in all their physical amplitude in an arcadian landscape setting, contrast dramatically with the wiry, diaphanous nymphs of Carot or the diminutive erotic escapades of his peers and those of the Prix de Rome landscape competitions. This is what Gautier means, I believe, when he calls Courbet the "Watteau of the ugly" in his critique of the painting; Courbet had taken to task the pastoral tradition and its contemporary offshoots, actualizing and foregrounding the fantasy veiled in the landscape and realizing it in all of its gross substance on a heroic scale. One possible clue to his intention is the conspicuous inscription of his graffiti-like signature on a rock in the right foreground—the sign of his physical presence in the secluded *sous-bois*. Not surprisingly, his robbing of the deceptions of bourgeois culture to disclose the unadorned anonymity beneath aroused the hostility of patrons and enemies alike of that culture.

94. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, pp. 212–217.

95. Herding, *Courbet*, pp. 24–25, 190–192.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

97. Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision*, pp. 23–28.

98. P. Bordes, "Montpeller, Bruyas et Courbet," in *Courbet à Montpellier*, Musée Fabre (Montpellier, 1983), pp. 27–38.

99. L. Noëllin, "Gustave Courbet's Meeting: A Portrait of the Artist as a Wandering Jew," *Art Bulletin* 49 (1967): 209–222.

100. J. Champfleury, *Histoire de l'industrie populaire* (Paris, 1886), p. 2. Claims that since the late eighteenth century "billions" (*milliards*) of copies were made each year and could be found everywhere in the town, in the cabaret, and in the peasant's cottage.

101. G. K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence, 1965).

102. J. Champfleury, *Les Excentriques* (Paris, 1855), p. 91.

103. Ched in Courthion, *Courbet raconté par lui-même*, 1:115.

104. V. Schoelcher, *History of the Crimes of the Second of December* (London, 1853), pp. 354, 448–449.

105. C. Perrier, "L'Art à l'Exposition Universelle," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 15 (1855): 15–16.

106. Courthion, *Courbet raconté par lui-même*, 2:79–84.

107. Letter of December 1854, reproduced in Bordes, "Montpeller, Bruyas et Courbet," pp. 127–128.

108. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet* (with modifications), pp. 131–133.

109. *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

110. Herding, *Courbet*, pp. 45–61.

111. It may be noted that the book held so impractically by Baudelaire is tilted at an angle similar to the way the Bible is displayed on Masonic altars.

112. D. Ligou, *Dictionnaire de la France-Magomette* (Paris, 1987), p. 83.

113. M. Morton and C. Eyerman, *Courbet and the Modern Landscape*, J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, 2006), pp. 1–19.

114. Letter of 28 November 1864, modified version of translation in Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, p. 249.

115. Bonnier, *Pierre Dupon*, pp. 207–208.

116. For a rare investigation of Proudhon's attitude toward the Jews, see E. Silberman, "Proudhon's Judeophobia," *Historia Judaica* 9–10 (April 1948): 61–80.

117. P.-J. Proudhon, *Mémoires du spéculateur à la Bourse*, 5th ed. (Paris, 1857), pp. 177–178. The term *actionnaires* pervades the entire book.

118. Ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet*, pp. 161, 164, 165–167.

119. J. Troubat, *Une amitié à la d'Arizès* (Paris, 1900), pp. 181–182.

120. A.-J. Dupuy, "Exposition Universelle des Beaux-Arts: Réalisme," *L'Illustration* 26 (28 July 1853): 71–73.

121. Proudhon, *Du principe de l'art*, pp. 283–284.

122. Champfleury, "Du Réalisme, Lettre à George Sand," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 16 (1855): 1–5.

123. C. Perrier, "Du Réalisme, Lettre à M. le Directeur de *L'Artiste*," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 16 (1855): 85–89.

124. F. Desnoyers, "Du Réalisme," *L'Artiste*, 5e sér., t. 16 (1855): 197–200.

CHAPTER 4

1. An excellent summary of Pre-Raphaelite achievement is found in E. Prestgjohn, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (Princeton, 2000).

2. W. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols. (New York, 1905–1906), 1:138.

3. F. H. Hueffer, *Fort Maddox Brown: A Record of His Life and Work* (London, 1896), p. 63; Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 1:100–101, 140.

4. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 1:141.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 96–97.

6. "The Chartist Demonstration," *Times*, 10 and 11 April 1848; "Manifestation chartreuse," *La République*, 12 April 1848.

7. Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism*, 1:101–102.