

Banners every where; and generally all national or other sectarian Costumes and Customs; they have no intrinsic, necessary divineness, or even worth; but have acquired an extrinsic one. Nevertheless through all these there glimmers something of a Divine Idea; as through military Banners themselves, the Divine Idea of Duty, of heroic Daring; in some instances of Freedom, of Right. Nay, the highest ensign that men ever met and embraced under, the Cross itself, had no meaning save an accidental extrinsic one.

'Another matter it is, however, when your Symbol has intrinsic meaning, and is of itself fit that men should unite round it. Let but the Godlike manifest itself to Sense; let but Eternity look, more or less visibly, through the Time-Figure (*Zeithild*)! Then is it fit that men unite there; and worship together before such Symbol; and so from day to day, and from age to age, superadd to it new divineness.

'Of this latter sort are all true Works of Art: in them (if thou know a Work of Art from a Daub of Artifice) wilt thou discern Eternity looking through Time; the Godlike rendered visible. Here too may an extrinsic value gradually superadd itself: thus certain *Iliads*, and the like, have, in three thousand years, attained quite new significance. But nobler than all in this kind are the Lives of heroic, god-inspired Men; for what other Work of Art is so divine? In Death too, in the Death of the Just, as the last perfection of a Work of Art, may we not discern symbolic meaning? In that divinely transfigured Sleep, as of Victory, resting over the beloved face which now knows thee no more, read (if thou canst for tears) the confluence of Time with Eternity, and some gleam of the latter peering through.

'Highest of all Symbols are those wherein the Artist or Poet has risen into Prophet, and all men can recognize a present God, and worship the same: I mean religious Symbols. Various enough have been such religious Symbols, what we call *Religions*; as men stood in this stage of culture or the other, and could worse or better body forth the Godlike: some Symbols with a transient intrinsic worth; many with only an extrinsic. If thou ask to what height man has carried it in this matter, look on our divinest Symbol: on Jesus of Nazareth, and his Life, and his Biography, and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human Thought not yet reached: this is Christianity and Christendom; a Symbol of quite perennial, infinite character; whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest. But on the whole, as Time adds much to the sacredness of Symbols, so likewise in his progress he at length defaces, or even desecrates them; and Symbols, like all terrestrial Garments, wax old. Homer's Epos has not ceased to be true; yet it is no longer *our* Epos, but shines in the distance, if clearer and clearer yet also smaller and smaller, like a receding star.

'Of this thing however be certain: wouldst thou plant for Eternity, then plant into the deep infinite faculties of man, his Fantasy and Heart; wouldst thou plant for Year and Day, then plant into his shallow superficial faculties, his Self-love and Arithmetical Understanding, what will grow there. A Hierarch, therefore, and Pontiff of the World will we call him, the Poet and inspired Maker, who, Prometheus-like, can shape new Symbols, and bring new Fire from Heaven to fix it there. Such too will not always be wanting; neither perhaps now are. Meanwhile, as the average of matters goes, we account him Legislator and wise who can so much as tell when a Symbol has grown old, and gently remove it.' [...]

14 Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) from Salon of 1831

Born and educated in Germany, Heine lived from 1831 until his death in Paris. His reputation as a poet and writer was secured in the late 1820s, principally with his *Book of Songs* of 1827, but also by a series of introspective prose writings based on journeys in the Harz mountains and elsewhere. Unable to secure a literary or academic career in Germany, Heine went to Paris not as a direct result of the revolution of 1830, but because of a mixture of personal and religious, as well as political, motives. He wrote that he was travelling to Paris 'to breathe fresh air'. Briefly influenced around 1830 by St Simon's 'New Christianity', Heine's writing took on a more socially critical edge after his move to France. His work was subsequently banned in Germany, where it has remained controversial as a consequence of his association in the 1840s with the young Karl Marx. In Paris, Heine was largely dependent on journalism for an income, and his writing covered a wide variety of cultural and political subjects. Amongst his Salon reviews, the best known remains the first, of 1831, in which he attempts to assess the impact of revolution on the arts. It was originally published in German in the periodical *Morgenblatt*, in Augsburg, in September and October 1831, and was then published in book form in both French and German in 1833-4. The present extracts are taken from the translation by Charles Godfrey Leland in *The Salon, or Letters on Art, Music, Popular Life and Politics* (volume 4 of *The Works of Heinrich Heine*), London: Heinemann, 1893, pp. 1-3, 24-8, 30-1, 34-8, 88-9.

The Exhibition (*Salon*) is at length closed, its pictures having been shown since the beginning of May. They were generally looked at with only fleeting glances, for people's minds were busy with other things, and anxiously occupied with perplexing politics. As for me, who had but recently come for the first time to the capital of France, and who was bewildered with innumerable new impressions, I was much less able than others to wander through the halls of the Louvre in a befitting tranquil state of mind. There they stood, close one by the other, three thousand beautiful pictures, the poor children of Art, to whom the multitude threw only the alms of an indifferent look. How they begged in silent sorrow for a little bit of sympathy, or to be sheltered in some tiny corner of the heart! It was all in vain, for all hearts were full of families of their own feelings, and had neither board nor lodging to bestow on such strangers. Aye, there it was; the Exhibition was like an orphan asylum - a crowd of infants gathered here and there, left to themselves, and none of them related one to the other in any way. They moved our souls, as they are wont to be moved on seeing child-like helplessness and youthful despair.

With what a different feeling are we seized on entering a gallery of those Italian paintings which are not exposed like foundlings to the cold world, but which, on the contrary, have drawn their nourishment from the breast of one great common mother, and who, like members of one large family, live together in peace and unity, speaking the same language, though they may not utter the same words!

The Catholic Church, which was once such a mother for this and all other arts, is now herself poor and helpless. Every painter now works according to his own taste and on his own account. The caprices of the day, the whims of the wealthy, or of his own idle heart, suggest subjects; the palette offers the most glowing colours, and the

canvas is patient to endure. Add to this, that now a badly understood Romanticism flourishes among French painters, and according to its chief rule, every artist strives to paint as differently as possible from all others, or, as the current phrase has it, to develop his own individuality. What pictures are thereby full oft produced may be imagined easily enough.

As the French have in any case much sound common-sense, they have always decided accurately as to failures, readily recognized what was truly characteristic and easily fished out the true pearls from this pictured ocean of many colours. The artists whose works were most discussed and most highly praised were Ary Scheffer, Horace Vernet, Delacroix, Decamps, Lessore, Schnetz, Delaroche, and Robert. I will therefore limit myself to repeating public opinion, which differs little on the whole from mine, and also avoid as much as possible criticism of technical merits or defects.

* * *
Delacroix has contributed a picture before which there was always a crowd, and which I therefore class among those which attracted the most attention. The sacredness of the subject forbids a severe criticism of the colouring, with which fault might otherwise be found. But despite a few artistic defects, there prevails in the picture a great thought, which strangely attracts us. It represents a group of the people during the Revolution of July, from the centre of which — almost like an allegorical figure — there rises boldly a young woman with a red Phrygian cap on her head, a gun in one hand, and in the other a tricolour flag. She strides over corpses calling men to fight — naked to the hips, a beautiful impetuous body, the face a bold profile, an air of insolent suffering in the features — altogether a strange blending of Phryne, *poissarde*,¹ and goddess of liberty. It is not distinctly shown that the artist meant to set forth the latter; it rather represents the savage power of the people which casts off an intolerable burden. I must admit that this figure reminds me of those peripatetic female philosophers, those quickly-running couriers of love or quickly-loving ones, who swarm of evenings on the Boulevards. And also that the little chimneysweep Cupid, who stands with a pistol in either hand by this alley-Venus, is perhaps soiled by something else as well as soot; that the candidate for the Pantheon who lies dead on the ground was perhaps selling *contre-marches* yestreen at the door of a theatre, and that the hero who storms onward with his gun, the galleys in his features, has certainly the smell of the criminal court in his abominable garments. And there we have it! a great thought has ennobled and sanctified these poor common people, this *croûle*, and again awakened the shumbering dignity in their souls.

Holy July days of Paris! ye will eternally testify in favour of the original dignity of man — a dignity which ne'er can be destroyed. He who beheld you grieves no more o'er ancient graves, but, full of joy, believes in the resurrection of races. Holy days of July! how beautiful was the sun and how great the people of Paris! The gods in heaven, who gazed on the great battle, shouted for joy; gladly would they have left their golden chairs and gone to earth to become citizens of Paris. [...]

There is no picture in the Salon in which colour is so sunk in as in the July Revolution of Delacroix. But just this absence of varnish and sheen, with the powder-smoke and dust which covers the figures as with a grey cobweb, and the sun-dried hue which seems to be thirsting for a drop of water, all gives to the picture a truth, a reality, an originality in which we find the real physiognomy of the days of July. [...]

¹ Sometimes in the month of July the sun has most powerfully inflamed with its rays Parisian hearts when freedom was threatened, and, drunk with sunlight, the people of Paris rose against the crumbling bastilles and ordinances of serfdom. The sun and the city sympathize wondrously, and love one another. Before the sun of the evening sinks into the sea, her last fond lingering gaze rests with delight on Paris as the bravest of all towns, and she kisses with fleeting rays the tricoloured flag on its towers. Barthelemy, one of the best of French poets, has wisely proposed to celebrate the festival of July by a symbolic wedding, and as the Doge of Venice annually ascended the golden Bucentaur to ally all-conquering Venice to the Adriatic Sea, so should Paris every year be married on the Place de la Bastille to the sun, to the great flaming lucky star of her freedom.

* * *

France has . . . its standing and never moving army of art critics, who carp at and condemn, according to old conventional rules, every new work, its subtle and refined connoisseurs who sniff round in the ateliers, smiling approbation when any one tickles their hobby [...]

The poor, wretched rascal with his miserable intelligence or 'understanding', he knows not how accurately he condemns himself. Poor understanding or sense should never have the first word when works of art are discussed, any more than it was called to take any leading part in their creation. The idea of a work of art is born of the emotions or feeling, and this demands of free, wild fancy the aid of realization. Fancy then throws him all her flowers — indeed, almost smother the idea, and would more probably kill it than give it life, if understanding did not come limping up to put aside or clip away the superabundant blossoms. Understanding or judgment only keeps order, and is, so to speak, the police in the realm of art. In life it is generally a cold calculator who adds up our follies; unfortunately, it is often only the bookkeeper of the bankruptcy of a broken heart.

The great error always exists in or consists of this: that the critic asks, 'What should the artist do?' It would be much more correct to say, 'What does the artist desire?' or even, 'What must the artist execute?' The question, 'What should the artist do?' originated with those art philosophers who, without any poetry of their own, abstracted characteristics from different works of art, and from what existed deduced a standard or rule for all future art, and so established species, definitions, and rules. They did not know that all such abstractions can only be of use to judge of imitations, but that every original artist, and even every new genius in art, should be judged according to his own law of art, which he brings with him. Rules and all such antiquated doctrines are, for such souls, much less applicable. 'There are no laws or rules of fencing for young giants,' says Menzel, because they break through every parade. Every genius should be studied, and only judged according to what he himself wills or means. Here we have only to answer the question, 'Has he the ability to carry out his idea?' 'Has he applied the right means?' Here we stand on firm ground. We measure or decide no longer, as to the work submitted, according to our own subjective wishes, but we come to mutual intelligence as to the God-given means at the command of the artist for realizing his idea. In the recitative arts, these means consist of intonation or sound and words. In the representative arts, they are supplied by colour and form. Sounds and words, colours and forms, that above all which appears to sense,

are, however, only symbols of the idea – symbols which rise in the soul of the artist when it is moved by the Holy Ghost of the world [*Weltgeist*]; for his art-works are but symbols, by which he conveys his ideas to others. He who expresses the most, and the most significant, with the fewest and simplest symbols, he is the greatest artist.

* * *

Returning to my subject, I should here have praised many a brave painter but, despite the best will, it is all the same impossible to calmly analyse their merits, for there, out of doors, the storm rages too terribly, and no one can concentrate his thoughts when such tempests re-echo in the soul. It is even on so-called peaceful days very hard in Paris to turn one's mind away from what is in the streets, and indulge in wistful private dreams [*privatträumend nachzuhängen*]. And though Art blooms more luxuriantly in Paris than elsewhere, we are still disturbed in its enjoyment at every moment by the rude rush and roar of life; the sweetest tones of Pasta and of Malibran are jarred by the suffering cries of bitter poverty, and the intoxicated heart, which has just drank eagerly from the inspiring cup of Robert's colour, will be immediately after sobered by the sight of public misery. It requires almost a Goethean egoism to attain here to undisturbed art enjoyment, and how very difficult art criticism thereby becomes I feel at this moment. I succeeded yesterday evening in writing something more of this paper, after I had, however, seen a deathly pale man fall to the ground on the Boulevard from hunger and wretchedness. But, when all at once a whole race falls on the Boulevard of Europe, then it is impossible to write further in peace. When the eyes of the critic are wet with tears his opinion is not worth much.

¹ *Poissonade*, a fish-woman; metaphorically, any very insolent and vulgar woman of the street type.

15 Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) Letters and Notes on his Journey to North Africa

In 1832 Delacroix was able to use his social connections in order to accompany the Count de Mornay on a French diplomatic mission to Morocco. The political point of the mission was to ensure friendly relations with Morocco while the French extended their recent conquest of Algeria. Artistically, Delacroix's experiences in North Africa helped sustain him for the rest of his career. The vividness of his verbal descriptions and visual images also energized a wider strain of exoticism which continued to run through French art until well into the twentieth century. By the same token, Delacroix's observations seemed to confirm that the classical tradition had weakened, at least in the form transmitted by the Academy, and that measures of authenticity in experience and response would have to be sought elsewhere. The following extracts are drawn from two sources: the Journal entries from Pach's translation (cf. 1A3 for publication details), pp. 101, 103–4, 106–8, 122; the letters from *Eugène Delacroix: Selected Letters 1813–1863*, translated by Jean Stewart with an introduction by John Russell, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971, pp. 181, 186, 187–8, 193–4.

Letter to J.-B. Pierret, Tangier, 25 January 1832

I've just arrived in Tangier. I have rushed through the town. I am quite bewildered by all that I've seen. I can't let the mail boat go – it's leaving shortly for Gibraltar –

without telling you something of my amazement at all the things I've seen. We landed in the midst of the strangest crowd of people. The Pasha of the city received us, surrounded by his soldiers. One would need to have twenty arms and forty-eight hours a day to give any tolerable impression of it all. The Jewesses are quite lovely. I'm afraid it will be difficult to do more than paint them: they are real pearls of Eden. We were given a superb reception, by local standards. They treated us to the most peculiar military music. At the moment I'm like a man in a dream, seeing things he's afraid will vanish from him. [...]

Journal entry, Tangier, 26 January 1832

WITH the *pasha*. The entrance to the castle. The guardsmen in the court, the façade, the lane between two walls. At the end, under a sort of vault, men seated, making a brown silhouette against a bit of sky.

The handsome man with the green sleeves.

The mulatto slave who poured the tea, yellow caftan and burnous attached in back, turban. The old man who gave the rose with *haik* and dark blue caftan.

The pasha with his two haiks or hoods, and the burnous beside. All three of them on a white mattress with a long square cushion covered with printed calico. A long narrow cushion of checkered cloth, another in horsehair, of various patterns; tips of the feet visible, the inkwell made of horn, various small objects lying about.

The head of the customs house leaning on his elbow, his arm bare, if I remember rightly: very wide haik on his head, white turban on top, amaranth-coloured cloth hanging over his breast, his cowl not in use, his legs crossed. We had met him mounted on a grey mule as we came up. A great deal of his leg was to be seen; a little of his coloured breeches; his saddle covered in front and behind by a scarlet cloth. A red band went around the hind quarters of the horse and hung down. The red halter or rather the breastpiece of the harness also hanging down. A Moor fed the horse by the halter.

The handsome man with the green sleeves, his outer shirt in dimity, bare-footed in the presence of the pasha.

The garden divided by alleys covered with trellises. Large orange trees covered with fruits; on the ground fruit had fallen; high walls enclosed the garden. [...]

Journal entry, 29 January 1832

[...] The scene of the fighting horses. From the start, they stood up and fought with a fierceness which made me tremble for those gentlemen, but it was really admirable for a painting. I witnessed, I am certain, the most fantastic and graceful movements that Gros and Rubens could have imagined. Then the grey got his neck around the other one. For a time that seemed endless, it was impossible to make him let go. Mornay managed to dismount. While he was holding him by the bridle, the black reared furiously. The other kept on fiercely biting him behind. In all this struggle the consul fell down. We then let the two horses go; they kept on fighting with each other as they got to the river, both falling into it as they continued fighting and at the same time trying to get out of the water; their feet slipped in the mud at the edge; they were