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*Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian**

by Walter Benjamin

There are many kinds of collectors and each of them is moved by a multitude of impulses. As a collector Fuchs is primarily a pioneer. He founded the only existing archive for the history of caricature, of erotic art and of the genre picture (*Sittenbild*). More important, however, is another, complementary, circumstance: because he was a pioneer, Fuchs became a collector. Fuchs is the pioneer of a materialist consideration of art. What made this materialist a collector, however, was the more or less clear feeling for the historical situation in which he saw himself. This was the situation of historical materialism itself.

This situation is expressed in a letter which Friedrich Engels sent to Mehring at the time that Fuchs, working in a socialist editorial office, won his first victories as a publicist. The letter, dated July 14, 1893, among other things elaborates on the following: "It is above all this appearance (*Schein*) of an autonomous history of constitutions, of legal systems and of ideological conceptions in each specialized field of study, which deceives most people. When Luther and Calvin 'overcome' the official Catholic religion, when Hegel 'overcomes' Fichte and Kant, and when Rousseau indirectly 'overcomes' the constitutional work of Montesquieu with his *Contrat Social*, this is a process which remains theology, philosophy and government. This process represents a stage in the history of these disciplines and in no way goes outside of these disciplines themselves. And since the bourgeois illusion of the eternity and finality of capitalist production entered the picture, the overcoming of the mercantilists by the physiocrats and Adam Smith is seen as a mere victory of thought rather than as the reflection in thought of changed economic facts. Thus, this victory becomes the finally achieved correct insight into actual relations which always and everywhere existed."¹

Engels' argument is directed against two elements. First of all he criticizes the convention in the history of ideas which represents new dogmas as a "development" of an earlier stage, of seeing a new poetic school as a

* Walter Benjamin's "Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und der Historiker" first appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 6 (1937), 346-380.

1. Quoted in Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, Vol. 2, *Friedrich Engels und der Aufstieg der Arbeiterbewegung in Europa* (Berlin), pp. 450-451.

“reaction” to a preceding one, of understanding new styles as the “overcoming” of older forms. Of course, he implicitly criticizes at the same time the practice of representing such new structures completely detached from their effect on human beings and their spiritual as well as economic processes of production. Such an argument destroys the humanities’ claim to being a history of constitutions or a history of the natural sciences, of religion or of art. Yet the explosive force of this thought, which Engels carried with him for half a century, extends still deeper.² It places the closed unity of the disciplines and their products in question. As far as art is concerned, this thought challenges the unity of art itself, as well as that of those works which the concept of art claims to contain. For the person who is concerned with works of art in a historically dialectical mode, these works integrate their pre-as well as post-history; and it is their post-history which illuminates their pre-history as a continuous process of change. Works of art teach that person how their function outlives their creator and how his intentions are left behind. They demonstrate how the reception of the work by its contemporaries becomes a component of the effect which a work of art has upon us today. They further show that this effect does not rest in an encounter with the work of art alone but in an encounter with the history which has allowed the work to come down to our own age. Goethe intimated this in his habitually veiled manner when, in a conversation about Shakespeare, he said to Chancellor von Müller: “Everything which has produced a great effect can really no longer be judged.” No statement is more suited to evoke that state of unrest which constitutes the beginning of any contemplation of history that has the right to call itself dialectical. This state of unrest refers to the demand on the researcher to abandon the tranquil contemplative attitude toward the object in order to become conscious of the critical constellation in which precisely this fragment of the past finds itself in precisely this present. “The truth will not run away from us”—a statement found in Gottfried Keller—indicates exactly that point in the historical image of historicism where the image is broken through by historical materialism. It is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present which does not recognize its common relation with that image.

The more one considers Engels’ sentences, the clearer his insight becomes that any dialectical representation of history is paid for by renouncing the contemplativeness which characterizes historicism. The historical materialist

2. This thought appears in the earliest studies on Feuerbach and is expressed by Marx as follows: “There is no history of politics, of law, of science. . . of art, of religion, etc.” *Marx-Engels Archiv*, 1, Ed. David Riazanov (Frankfurt am Main, 1928), 301.

must abandon the epic element in history. For him history becomes the object of a construct (*Konstruktion*) which is not located in empty time but is constituted in a specific epoch, in a specific life, in a specific work. The historical materialist explodes the epoch out of its reified "historical continuity," and thereby lifts life out of this epoch, and the work out of the life work. Yet this construct results in simultaneous preservation and suspension (*Aufhebung*) of the life work in the work, of the epoch in the life work and of the course of history in the epoch.³

Historicism presents the eternal image of the past; historical materialism presents a given experience with the past, an experience which stands unique. The replacement of the epic element by the constructive element proves to be the condition for this experience. The immense forces which remain captive in historicism's "once upon a time" are freed in this experience. To bring about the consolidation of experience with history, which is original for every present, is the task of historical materialism. It is directed towards a consciousness of the present which explodes the continuum of history.

Historical materialism comprehends historical understanding as the afterlife of that which has been understood and whose pulse can be traced in the present. This understanding has its place in Fuchs' thinking, but not an undisputed one. In his thinking an old dogmatic and naive idea of reception exists together with the new and critical one. The first could be summarized as follows: what determines our reception of a work must have been its reception by its contemporaries. This is precisely analogous to Ranke's "how it truly was" which "solely and uniquely" matters.⁴ Next to this, however, we immediately find the dialectical insight which opens the widest horizons in the meaning of a history of reception. Fuchs criticizes the fact that in the history of art the question of the success of a work of art is left out of consideration. "This neglect . . . is a deficit in our whole consideration of art. And yet it strikes me that the uncovering of the real reasons for the greater or lesser success of an artist, the reasons for the duration of his success or its opposite, is one of the most important of the problems which . . . attach themselves to art."⁵ Mehring understood the matter in the same way. In his

3. It is the dialectical construct (*Konstruktion*) which distinguishes that which is our original concern in historical experience from the pieced together findings of actuality. "That which is original (*ursprünglich*) never identifies itself in the naked, obvious existence of the factual. The rhythm of the original opens itself solely to a double insight. This insight . . . concerns the pre- and post-history of the original. Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Berlin, 1928), p. 32.

4. *Erotische Kunst*, 1, p. 70.

5. Gavarni, p. 13.

Lessing-Legende, the reception of the poet by Heine, Gervinus, Stahr, Danzel and finally Erich Schmitt, becomes the starting point for his analyses. And it is not without good reason that Julian Hirsch's investigation into the "Genesis of Fame" appeared only shortly thereafter, though Hirsch's work has its merit less in its methodology than in its content. Hirsch envisages the same question as Fuchs. Its solution offers criteria for the standards of historical materialism. This circumstance, however, does not justify a failure to mention that such a solution does not yet exist. Rather, it must be conceded without reservations that only in isolated instances has it been possible to grasp the historical content of a work of art in such a way that it becomes more transparent to us *as a work of art*. All courting of a work of art must remain a vain endeavor as long as the work's prosaic historical content is untouched by dialectical knowledge. This, however, is only the first of the truths towards which the work of the collector Eduard Fuchs is oriented. His collections are the answers of the practical man to the irresolvable polarities of theory.

II

Fuchs was born in 1870. From the very beginning he was not meant to be a scholar. Nor did he ever become a scholarly "type" despite all the scholarship which he amassed in his later life. His efforts constantly projected beyond the limits which confine the horizon of the researcher. This is true for his accomplishments as a collector as well as for his activities as a politician. Fuchs entered working life in the mid-1880s. That was during the period of the anti-Socialist laws. His apprenticeship brought him together with politically interested proletarians and he was soon drawn by them into the struggle of those who were illegal at that time—a struggle which today appears to us in a rather idyllic light. These years of apprenticeship ended in 1887. A few years later, the *Münchener Post*, organ of the Bavarian Social Democrats, summoned the young bookkeeper Fuchs from a printing shop in Stuttgart. In Fuchs they believed they had found the man who would be able to relieve the administrative difficulties of the paper. Fuchs went to Munich to work side by side with Richard Calver.

The publishing house of the *Münchener Post* also published the *Süddeutsche Postillion*, a socialist magazine of political humor. By chance Fuchs had to temporarily assist with the page proofs of one issue and fill in gaps with a number of his own contributions. The success of this number was extraordinary. In the same year there appeared, brightly illustrated—colored printing was still in its infancy—the May issue of the journal, edited by Fuchs.

This issue sold 60,000 copies, though the average annual distribution had been 2500 copies. Fuchs thus became editor of a magazine devoted to political satire. Apart from the daily routine Fuchs at once turned his attention to the history of his field. This resulted in the illustrated studies on the year 1848 in caricature and about the political affair of Lola Montez. In contrast to the history books illustrated by living artists (such as Wilhelm Blos' popular books on the revolution with pictures by Jeutsch), these were the first historical works illustrated with documentary pictures. Encouraged by Harden, Fuchs even advertised the work on Lola Montez in *Die Zukunft*, and did not forget to mention that it represented merely a part of a comprehensive work which he was going to devote to the caricature of the European peoples. The studies for this work profited from a ten-month prison sentence which he had to serve for *lèse majesté* through the press. The idea seemed obviously auspicious. A certain Hans Kraemer, who already possessed some experience in the production of illustrated house-books, approached Fuchs with the news that he, Kraemer, had already been working on a history of caricature and suggested that they combine their studies and collaborate on the work. Kraemer's contributions, however, were awaited in vain. Soon it became evident that the whole, and quite considerable, workload rested on Fuchs. The name of the presumptive collaborator was eliminated from the title of the second edition, although it had appeared in the first. But Fuchs had given the first convincing proof of his stamina and his control of his material. The long series of his major works had begun.⁶

Fuchs' beginnings came at a time in which, as the *Neue Zeit* once put it, the "trunk of the Social Democratic Party produced ring after ring of organic growth."⁷ With this growth, new tasks in the educational work of the party

6. Fuchs' major works have been collected and published by Albert Langen of Munich as *Hauptwerke*. These include: *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, Vol. 1: *Renaissance*, Vol. 2: *Die galante Zeit*, Vol. 3: *Das bürgerliche Zeitalter*, also Supplementary Vols. 1-3 (here cited as *Sittengeschichte*); *Geschichte der erotischen Kunst*, Vol. 1: *Das zeitgeschichtliche Problem*, Vol. 2: *Das individuelle Problem*, Part One, Vol. 3: *Das individuelle Problem*, Part Two (here cited as *Erotische Kunst*); *Die Karikatur der europäischen Völker*, Vol. 1: *Vom Altertum bis zum Jahre 1848*, Vol. 2: *Vom Jahre 1848 bis zum Vorabend des Weltkrieges* (here cited as *Karikatur*); *Honoré Daumier: Holzschnitte und Lithographien*, Vol. 1: *Holzschnitte*, Vols. 2-4: *Lithographien* (here cited as *Daumier*); *Der Maler Daumier; Gavarni; Die grossen Meister der Erotik; Tang-Plastik Chinesische Grab-Keramik des 7.-10. Jahrhunderts; Dachreiter und verwandte chinesische Keramik des 15.-18. Jahrhunderts*. Apart from these works, Fuchs dedicated special works to the caricature of woman, of the Jews, and of the World War.

7. A. Max, "Zur Frage der Organisation des Proletariats der Intelligenz," *Die Neue Zeit*, 13:1 (Stuttgart, 1895), 645.

came to the fore. The greater the masses of workers that joined the party, the less the party could afford to be content with their merely political and scientific enlightenment, that is, with a vulgarization of the theory of surplus value and the theory of evolution. The party had to direct its attention to the inclusion of historical material in both its lecture programs and in the *Feuilleton* section of the party press. Thus the problem of the "popularization of science" arose in its full dimension. It was not solved. Nor was it even possible to approach a solution as long as those to be educated were considered a "public" rather than a class.⁸ If the educational effort had been directed toward the "class" it would not have lost its close touch with the scientific tasks of historical materialism. The historical material, turned by the plough of Marxist dialectics, would have become a soil capable of giving life to the seed which the present planted in it. That however did not occur. The Social Democrats opposed their own slogan, "knowledge is power" to the slogan "work and education," under which Schultz-Delitzsch's piously loyal unions operated their workers' education. But the Social Democrats did not perceive the double meaning of their own slogan. They believed that the same knowledge which secured the domination of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie would enable the proletariat to free itself from this domination. But in reality a form of knowledge without access to practice, and which could teach the proletariat nothing about its situation, was of no danger to its oppressors. This was particularly the case with the humanities. The humanities represented a kind of knowledge far removed from economics, and consequently untouched by the transformation of economics. The humanities were satisfied "to stimulate," "to offer diversion" or "to be interesting." History is disembodied while "cultural history" is preserved. Here Fuchs' work has its place: its greatness lies in its reaction to this state of affairs; its problematic lies in its participation in it. From the very beginning Fuchs made it a principle to direct himself toward a mass readership.⁹

Only a few recognized then how much truly depended on the materialist educational effort. The hopes, and still more importantly, the fears of those few were expressed in a debate whose traces can be found in the *Neue Zeit*. The most important of these is an essay by Korn entitled "Proletariat and

8. Nietzsche wrote as early as 1874: "Finally...there results the generally acclaimed 'popularization'...in science. This is the notorious tailoring of science's coat for the figure of a 'mixed public,' to use a tailor-like activity for a tailor-like German (sic!)." Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben," *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*. I (Leipzig, 1893), p. 168.

9. "A cultural historian who takes his task seriously must always write for the masses," *Erotische Kunst*, 2, Part One, Preface.

Classicism." This essay deals with the concept of heritage (*Erbe*), a concept which has again become important today. According to Korn, Lassalle saw German idealism as a heritage to which the working class acceded. Marx and Engels understood the matter differently, however. "They did not derive the social priority of the working class as . . . a heritage, but rather from the decisive position of the working class in the production process. How can possession be spoken of, even spiritual possession, with respect to a class parvenu such as the modern proletariat? Every hour, every day this proletariat demonstrates its 'right' by means of a labor process which continuously reproduces the whole cultural apparatus. Thus, for Marx and Engels the showpiece of Lassalle's educational ideal, namely speculative philosophy, was not a tabernacle, . . . and both felt more and more drawn toward natural science. Indeed, for a class whose essence is its functioning, natural science may be called science *per se*, while for the ruling and possessing class everything that is historical comprises the given form of their ideology. In fact, history represents for consciousness the same category of possession which capital represents for economics in terms of the domination over past labor."¹⁰

This is a significant criticism of historicism. The reference to natural science, however—as "science *per se*"—first permits a clear view of the dangerous problematic of the educational question. Since Bebel the prestige of natural science dominated the debate. Bebel's main work, *Woman Under Socialism*, had reached a circulation of 200,000 copies in the thirty years which passed between its first publication and Korn's essay. Bebel's high regard for natural science rests not only on the calculable accuracy of its results, but above all on its practical usefulness.¹¹ Somewhat later, the natural sciences occupy a similar position in Engels' thinking when he believes he has refuted Kant's phenomenalism by pointing to technology, which through its achievements shows that we do recognize "things in themselves." Natural science, which for Korn appears as science *per se*, makes this possible particularly as the foundation of technology. Technology, however, is obviously not a pure scientific fact. It is at the same time a historical fact. As such it forces an examination of the attempted positivistic and undialectical separation between the natural sciences and the humanities. The questions which humanity brings to nature are in part conditioned by the level of

10. C. Korn, "Proletariat und Klassik," *Die Neue Zeit*, 26:2 (Stuttgart, 1908), 414-417.

11. See August Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (Stuttgart, 1891), pp. 177-179, and pp. 333-336, on the changes in housekeeping through technology, pp. 200-201 on woman as inventor.

production. This is the point at which positivism fails. Positivism was only able to see the progress of natural science in the development of technology, but failed to recognize the concomitant retrogression of society. Positivism overlooked the fact that this development was decisively conditioned by capitalism. By the same token, the positivists among the Social Democratic theorists failed to understand that the increasingly more urgent act which would bring the proletariat into possession of this technology was rendered more and more precarious because of this development. They misunderstood the destructive side of this development because they were alienated from the destructive side of dialectics.

A prognosis was due but failed to materialize. That failure concluded a process characteristic of the past century: the miscarried reception of technology. It consists of a series of energetic, constantly renewed efforts, all attempting to overcome the fact that technology serves this society only by producing commodities. At the beginning there were the Saint-Simonians with their industrial poetry. They are followed by the realism of a Du Camp who sees the locomotive as the saint of the future. Finally there is a Ludwig Pfau: "it is quite unnecessary to become an angel," he wrote, "since a locomotive is worth more than the nicest pair of wings."¹² This image of technology comes from the *Gartenlaube*. This may cause one to ask whether the *Gemütlichkeit* which the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie enjoyed does not arise from the hollow comfort of never having to experience how the productive forces had to develop under their hands. This experience was really reserved for the following century. The present century experiences how the speed of traffic machines and the capacities of apparatuses for duplicating words and writing outstrip human needs. The energies which technology develops beyond this threshold are destructive. First of all, they advance the technology of war and its propagandistic preparation. One might say of this development, which was thoroughly class conditioned, that it occurred behind the backs of the last century. That century was not yet conscious of the destructive energies of technology. This is especially true for the Social Democrats at the turn of the century. If they occasionally criticized and opposed the illusions of positivism, they remained largely trapped by them. For them the past appeared to have been gathered up and stored forever in the sheds of the present. Although the future held the promise of work ahead, it also held the certitude of a blessed harvest.

12. Quoted in D. Bach, "John Ruskin," *Die Neue Zeit*, 18:1 (Stuttgart, 1900), 728.

III

Fuchs educated himself in this epoch and decisive aspects of his work derive from it. Expressed simply, his work participates in that problematic which is inseparable from cultural history. This problematic leads back to the quotation from Engels. One could believe this quotation to be the *locus classicus* which defines historical materialism as history of culture. Is this not the true meaning of the passage? Would it not be true that the study of individual disciplines, once the illusion (*Schein*) of unity has been removed, flows together into the study of cultural history as the inventory which humanity has preserved to the present day? In truth, to pose the question in this manner is to replace the varied and problematic unities which cultural history embraces (as history of literature and art, or history of law and religion) merely by a new and most problematic unity of all. Cultural history presents its contents by means of contrast. Yet for the historical materialist this contrast is illusory and is conjured up by false consciousness.¹³ He thus confronts it with reservations. Such reservations would be justified by the mere inspection of that which has existed: whatever the historical materialist would survey in art or science has a lineage which cannot be contemplated without dread. The products of art and science owe their existence not merely to the effort of the great geniuses that created them, but also to the unnamed drudgery of their contemporaries. There is no document of culture which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. No cultural history has yet done justice to this fundamental state of affairs, and it can hardly hope to do so.

Nevertheless, the decisive element does not lie here. If the concept of culture is problematical for historical materialism, it cannot conceive of the disintegration of culture into goods which become objects of possession for mankind. The work of the past remains uncompleted for historical materialism. It perceives no epoch in which the completed past could even in

13. This deceptive element found characteristic expression in Alfred Weber's welcoming address to the sociological convention of 1912: "Culture comes into existence only when life has become a structure which stands above its necessities and usefulness." This concept of culture contains seeds of barbarism which have, in the meantime, germinated. Culture appears as something "which is superfluous for the continued existence of life but is felt to be precisely the reason for which life is there." In short, culture exists after the fashion of an art work "which perhaps brings about the confusion of entire modes of living and life principles, and which may have dissolving and destructive effects, but which we shall feel to be higher than everything healthy and living which it destroys." Twenty-five years after this was said, 'cultural states' have seen it as an honor to resemble such art works, even to be such art works. Alfred Weber, "Der soziologische Kulturbegriff," *Verhandlungen des zweiten deutschen Soziologentages: Schriften der deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie*, 1:1 (Tübingen, 1913), 11-12.

part drop conveniently, thing-like, into mankind's lap. The concept of culture, as the substantive concept of creations which are considered independent, if not from the production process in which they originate, then from a production process in which they continue to survive, carries a fetishistic trait. Culture appears in a reified form. Its history would be nothing but the sediment formed by the curiosities which have been stirred up in the consciousness of human beings without any genuine, i.e. political, experience.

Apart from that, one cannot ignore the situation that thus far no historical presentation undertaken on a cultural-historical basis has escaped this problematic. It is obvious in Lamprecht's massive *Deutsche Geschichte*, a book which for understandable reasons has more than once been criticized by the *Neue Zeit*. "As we know," Mehring writes, "Lamprecht is the one bourgeois historian who came closest to historical materialism." However, "Lamprecht stopped halfway. . . . Any concept of a historical method disappears when Lamprecht treats cultural and economic developments according to a specific method and then proceeds to compile a history of simultaneous political developments from some other historians."¹⁴ To be sure, it makes no sense to present cultural history on the basis of pragmatic history. Yet a dialectical cultural history in itself is even more deeply devoid of sense since the continuum of history severed from the dialectic suffers in no realm so wide a dispersion as in that which is called culture.

Briefly, cultural history only seems to represent an advance of insight, but apparently not one of dialectic. For cultural history lacks the destructive element which authenticates both dialectical thought and the experience of the dialectical thinker. Cultural history, to be sure, enlarges the weight of the treasure which accumulates on the back of humanity. Yet cultural history does not provide the strength to shake off this burden in order to be able to take control of it. The same is true for the socialist educational efforts at the turn of the century which were guided by the star of cultural history.

IV

Against this background the historical outline of Fuchs' work becomes visible. Where his work has endurance and permanence is in those areas where it is wrested away from an intellectual constellation which has seldom appeared less favorable to it. This is the point where Fuchs the collector taught Fuchs the theoretician to comprehend much that was barred to him by his time. He was a collector who strayed into border disciplines such as

14. Franz Mehring, "Akademisches," *Die Neue Zeit*, 16:1 (Stuttgart, 1898), 195-196.

caricature and pornographic representation. These border disciplines sooner or later meant the ruin of a series of clichés in traditional art history. First, it should be noted that Fuchs had broken completely with the classicist conception of art, whose traces can still be recognized in Marx. The concepts by means of which the bourgeoisie developed this notion of art no longer play a role in Fuchs' work; neither the appearance of beauty (*der schöne Schein*), nor harmony, nor the unity of the manifold are to be found there. The same kind of collector's robust self-assertion which alienated Fuchs from the classicist theories sometimes arises, drastically and forcefully, in regard to classical antiquity itself. In 1908, drawing on the work of Slevogt and Rodin, Fuchs prophesied a new beauty "which in its final result will be infinitely greater than antiquity. Where antiquity was only the highest animalistic form, the new beauty will be filled with a grandiose spiritual and emotional content."¹⁵

In short, the order of values which determined the consideration of art for Goethe and Wincklemann has lost all influence in the work of Fuchs. Of course it would be a mistake to assume that consequently the idealist contemplation of art itself had been entirely unhinged. That could not happen any earlier than the point at which the *disiecta membra* which idealism contains as both "historical representation" on the one hand and "appreciation" (*Würdigung*) on the other become one and are thus surpassed. This effort, however, is left to a mode of historical science which does not fashion its object out of a tangled ball of mere facticities but creates it out of the counted group of threads which represent the woof of the past fed into the warp of the present. (It would be a mistake to equate this woof with mere causal connection. Rather, it is a thoroughly dialectical mode. For centuries threads can become lost and are picked up by the actual course of history in a disjointed and inconspicuous manner.) The historical object removed from pure facticity does not need any "appreciation." It does not offer vague analogies to actuality but constitutes itself as an object in the precise dialectical problem which actuality itself is obliged to solve. That is indeed what Fuchs intends. If in nothing else, the intention can be felt in the pathos

15. *Erotische Kunst*, 1, 125. Constant reference to contemporary art belongs to the most important impulses of Fuchs the collector. Contemporary art, too, comes to him partially through the great creations of the past. His incomparable knowledge of older caricature opens Fuchs to an early recognition of the works of a Toulouse-Lautrec, a Heartfield and a George Grosz. His passion for Daumier leads him to the work of Slevogt, whose conception of Don Quixote appears before his eyes as the only one which could hold its own beside Daumier. His studies in ceramics gives him all the authority to sponsor an Emil Pottner. All his life Fuchs had friendly relations with creative artists. Thus, it is not surprising that his manner of addressing works of art corresponds more to the ways of an artist than those of a historian.

which often makes the text approach the form of a lecture. This fact, however, also indicates that much of his effort did not advance beyond its mere intention or beginnings. What is fundamentally new in the intention becomes most directly visible where the material proves favorable. This occurs in the interpretation of iconography, in the contemplation of mass art as well as in the examination of techniques of reproduction. These aspects in Fuchs' work are pioneering. They are elements of any future materialist consideration of works of art.

The three mentioned motifs have one common denominator: they contain a reference to forms of knowledge which could not prove to be anything but destructive in regard to traditional conceptions of art. The consideration of techniques of reproduction, more than any other line of research, clarifies the decisive importance of reception. Thus it becomes to some degree possible to correct the process of reification which takes place in a work of art. The consideration of mass art leads to a revision of the concept of genius. It reminds us not to give priority to the inspiration, which participates in the becoming of the work of art, over and against the demand (*Faktur*) which alone allows inspiration to come to fruition. Finally, iconographic interpretation does not only prove to be indispensable for the study and reception of mass art: it repels the excesses which any formalism immediately encourages.¹⁶

Fuchs had to deal with formalism. Wölfflin's doctrine achieved its popularity at the same time that Fuchs laid down the foundations of his own work. In his *Das individuelle Problem (The Individual Problem)* Fuchs takes off on a thesis from Wölfflin's *Die klassische Kunst*. The thesis runs as follows: "Thus Quattrocento and Cinquecento as concepts of style cannot be exhausted by their material (*stofflich*) characterization. The phenomenon . . . indicates a development of artistic vision which is essentially independent of a particular attitude of mind or of a particular idea of beauty."¹⁷ Certainly, such a formulation can be offensive to historical materialism. Yet it also contains useful elements. For it is precisely historical materialism that is not so much interested in reducing the changes in artistic vision to a changed ideal of beauty as in tracing these changes back to more elementary processes—processes which are set in motion by economic and technological changes in production. In the above case one would hardly fail to benefit from asking

16. The master of iconographic representation might be Émile Mâle. His research is limited to the sculpture of French cathedrals from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. Thus, they do not overlap with Fuchs' studies.

17. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Die klassische Kunst* (Munich, 1899), p. 275.

what economically conditioned changes the Renaissance brought about in housing construction. Nor would it be unprofitable to examine the role played by Renaissance painting in projecting the new architecture and in illustrating its emergence, which Renaissance painting made possible.¹⁸ Wölfflin, of course, only very briefly touches on the question. And when Fuchs retorts that “precisely these formal elements cannot be explained any other way than by a changed mood of the times,”¹⁹ this points directly to the dubious status of cultural-historical categories which has been discussed above.

In more than one passage it becomes clear that polemic or discussion are not in the line of the writer Fuchs’ talents. As valiant as Fuchs may appear, one cannot find in his arsenal the eristic dialectic, which, according to Hegel, “enters into the strength of the opponent in order to destroy him from within.” Among scholars who followed Marx and Engels, the destructive force of thought had relaxed and no longer dared to challenge the century. The multitude of struggles had already slackened the tension in Mehring’s work, although his *Lessing-Legende* remains a considerable achievement. In this book he showed what enormous political, scientific and theoretical energies were enlisted into the creation of the great works of the classic era. He thus affirmed his distaste for the lazy routine of his belletristic contemporaries. Mehring came to the noble insight that art could only expect its rebirth through the economic and political victory of the proletariat. He also arrived at the incontestable statement that “It [art] cannot deeply participate in the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”²⁰ The development of art proved him right. Such insights directed Mehring to study science with redoubled emphasis. Here he gained the solidity and serenity which kept him immune from revisionism. Thus he developed traits in his character which

18. Older tablet painting (*Tafelmalerei*) granted no more than an outline of a house to men for their quarters. The painters of the early Renaissance were the first to depict interior space in which the represented figures have room to move. That is what made Uccello’s invention of perspective so overpowering both for his contemporaries and himself. From then on the creations of painting were dedicated more than before to the inhabitants (rather than to praying persons). Paintings gave examples of patterns of habitation and never tired of erecting perspectives of the villa. The high Renaissance, although much more restrained in the representation of the actual *intérieur*, continued to build on this foundation. “The Cinquecento has a particularly strong feeling for the relation between man and building, that is, for the resonance of a beautiful room. This century can hardly imagine an existence which is not architectonically framed and founded.” Wölfflin, p. 227.

19. *Erotische Kunst*. 2, Part One, 20.

20. Franz Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, Part Two, *Von Lassalles offenem Antwortschreiben bis zum Erfurter Program*, Vol. 3, Part Two of *Geschichte des Sozialismus in Einzeldarstellungen* (Stuttgart, 1898), p. 546.

could be called bourgeois in the best meaning of the term. Yet these traits remained far removed from ensuring for him the title of dialectical thinker. The same traits can be found in Fuchs. In him they may be even more prominent insofar as they have been incorporated into a more expansive and sensualistic talent. Be that as it may, one can easily imagine his portrait in a gallery of bourgeois scholars. One might hang his picture next to Georg Brandes, with whom he shares the rationalistic furor, the passion to throw light onto vast historical spaces by means of the torch of the Idea (be it progress, science or reason). On the other side one could imagine the portrait of the ethnologist Adolf Bastian. Fuchs reminds one of the latter particularly in his insatiable hunger for material. Bastian acquired legendary fame for his readiness to pack a suitcase and go on expeditions when it was necessary to clarify a question, even if it kept him away from home for months. Similarly, Fuchs obeyed his impulses whenever they drove him to search out new evidence. The works of both these men will remain inexhaustible treasures for research.

V

It must be a significant question for the psychologist how an enthusiast, a person who by nature embraces the positive, can have such a passion for caricature. The psychologist may answer as he likes—there can be no doubt in Fuchs' case. From the beginning his interest in art differs from what one might call "taking pleasure in the beautiful." From the beginning truth is mixed with play. Fuchs never tires of stressing the value of caricature as a source, as authority. "Truth lies in the extreme," he occasionally remarks. But he goes further. To him caricature is "in a certain sense the form. . . from which all objective art takes its beginning. A single glance into ethnographic museums furnishes proof of this statement."²¹ When Fuchs uses prehistoric tribes as well as children's drawings for evidence, the concept of caricature is brought into a problematic context. Yet his vehement interest in an art work's drastic aspects (*Gehalt*), whether in its form or content,²² manifests itself all the more primally. This interest runs through the whole breadth of his work. In the late work *Tang Plastik (Tang Sculpture)* we can still read the

21. *Karikatur*, 1, 4-5.

22. Note the beautiful remark about Daumier's figures of proletarian women: "Whoever sees merely emotional themes proves that the ultimate motive forces which must be effective in order to create stirring art are a sealed book to him. Precisely because these pictures represent something altogether different from 'emotional themes' they will live eternally. . . as the moving monuments of the enslavement of maternal woman in the nineteenth century." *Der Maler Daumier*, p. 28.

following: "The grotesque is the highest escalation of what is sensually imaginable. In this sense grotesque products become an expression of the teeming health of a time. . . . Yet one cannot dispute the fact that the motivating forces of the grotesque have a crass counterpoint. Decadent times and sick brains also incline toward grotesque representations. In such cases the grotesque becomes the shocking reflection of the fact that for the times and individuals in question, the problems of existence have taken on an appearance of unsolvable complexity. Which of the two tendencies, however, is the creative motivating force behind a grotesque fantasy can be recognized at first glance."²³

This passage is instructive. It makes especially apparent upon what the wide-ranging effects and popularity of Fuchs' work rest. They rest upon his gift for immediately connecting the fundamental concepts of his presentation with immediate valuations (*Wertungen*). This often occurs in rather massive fashion.²⁴ Moreover, these valuations are always extreme. They occur as oppositions and in this way polarize the concept with which they are fused. That happens in his depiction of the grotesque as well as in that of erotic caricature. In times of decadence erotic caricature becomes "tickling piquanterie" or "filth" while in times of ascendancy it "expresses superabundant pleasure and exuberant strength."²⁵ Sometimes Fuchs draws on values of the heyday and decadence of a time, sometimes he draws on images of the sick and healthy. He avoids border cases in which the problematic of such images might become apparent. He prefers to stick to the "really great" which has the privilege of making room for "that which charms in the most simple manner."²⁶ He hardly appreciates discontinuous (*gebrochen*) periods such as the Baroque. For him the great epoch is still the Renaissance. Here, his cult of creativity maintains the upper hand over his dislike of classicism.

Fuchs' concept of creativity has a strong biological tinge. Authors whom he dislikes he tends to downgrade in their virility, while genius appears with attributes which occasionally take on priapic dimensions. Fuchs' argument carries the stamp of such a biologicistic attitude when he sums up a judgment on Greco, Murillo and Ribera. "All three became the classic representation of baroque spirit specifically because each was a 'bungled' eroticist."²⁷ One must not lose sight of the fact that Fuchs developed his categories at a time in which

23. *Tang-Plastik*, p. 44.

24. Note the thesis on the erotic effects of the work of art: "The more intensive the effect, the greater the artistic quality." *Erotische Kunst*, 1, 68.

25. *Karikatur*, p. 23.

26. *Dachreiter*, p. 39.

27. *Die grossen Meister der Erotik*, p. 115.

“pathography” represented the latest standard in the psychology of art and in which Möbius and Lombroso were considered authorities. At the same time Burckhardt had greatly enriched the concept of genius with illustrative material in his influential *Kultur der Renaissance*. From different sources, this concept of genius fed the same widespread conviction that creativity was above all the manifestation of superabundant strength. Similar tendencies later led Fuchs to conceptions which are related to psychoanalysis. He was the first to make them fruitful for aesthetics.

The eruptive and immediate elements which this conception regards as characteristic of artistic creation also dominate Fuchs' understanding of the work of art as well. Thus it is often not more than a leap that separates apperception and judgment for Fuchs. Indeed he thinks that the “impression” is not only the obvious impetus which a spectator receives from a work, but the category of contemplation itself. This is summarized in his remarks about the Ming period whose artistic formalism he treats with critical reserve. These works “ultimately and finally no longer achieve, and sometimes do not even approach, the impression which was produced by the great lines of the Tang period.”²⁸ This is how Fuchs the writer acquires his particular and apodictic, not to say almost rustic style. It is a style whose characteristic quality he formulates masterfully in the *Geschichte der erotischen Kunst (History of Erotic Art)*. Here he declares: “From the correct feeling to the correct and complete deciphering of the creative forces in the work of art there is always but a single step.”²⁹ Not everyone can achieve such a style. Fuchs had to pay his price for it. In a word, the price was that gift of creating wonder (*staunen*) which the writer failed to achieve. There is no doubt that he felt this lack. He tried to compensate for it in the most various ways. Thus, he liked nothing better than to speak of the secrets which he searches out in the psychology of creation, or of the riddles in the course of history which find their solution in materialism. Yet the impulse to immediately master matters at hand, an impulse which already had determined his conception of creativity as well as his understanding of reception, finally comes to dominate his analysis. The course of the history of art appears “necessary,” the characteristics of style appear “organic” and even the most peculiar art products appear “logical.” One gets the impression that in the development of his analysis these terms begin to occur less frequently than they seem to have at first. In the work on the Tang period he still says of the fairy creatures in the painting of that time that they seem “absolutely logical” and “organic” with

28. *Dachreiter*, p. 48.

29. *Erotische Kunst*, 2, Part One, 186.

their horns and flaming wings. "Even the huge elephant's ears have a logical effect and their posture, too, is always logical. Never are they merely contrived concepts, for it is always the idea which has become a life-breathing form."³⁰

30. *Tang-Plastik*, pp. 30-31. This intuitive and immediate manner of consideration becomes problematical when it attempts to fulfill the demands of the situation of a materialist analysis. It is well known that Marx did not intensively elaborate anywhere on how the relationship between superstructure and infrastructure can be thought of in individual cases. It can only be firmly established that he envisaged a series of mediations, transmissions one might say, which interpolate between the material relationships of production and the more removed domains of the superstructure, which includes art. Plekhanov says the same: "When art, which is created by the higher classes, stands in no direct relation to the process of production, then this must ultimately be explained by means of economic causes. The materialist interpretation of history. . . can be applied in this case as well. It is apparant, however, that the causal connections which doubtlessly exist between being and consciousness, between the social relations which are founded on 'labor' on the one hand, and art on the other, do not come easily to fore in this case." G. Plekhanov, "Das französische Malerei im neunzehnten Jahrhundert vom Standpunkte der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung," *Die Neue Zeit*, 24 (Stuttgart, 1911), 544-545. So much is clear, however; Marx's classical historical dialectic considers causal contingencies as given in this relationship. In later praxis he had become more lax and was often content with analogies. It is possible that this was connected to the project of replacing bourgeois histories of literature and art by materialistic ones which were planned on an equally grand scale. This project is a characteristic mark of the epoch; it is part of the Wilhelminian spirit. This project demanded its tribute from Fuchs as well. A favorite thought of the author, which is expressed in various ways, conceived of establishing realistic art epochs for the trading nations. This goes for Holland of the seventeenth century as well as for China of the eighth and ninth centuries. Beginning with an analysis of Chinese garden economy, by means of which he explains many characteristics of the Empire, Fuchs then turns to the new sculpture which originates under the Tang rule. The monumental rigidification of the Han style becomes loosened. The interest of the anonymous masters, who created the pottery, is now intent upon the movements of men and animals. "Time," Fuchs elaborates, "awoke from its great slumber in those centuries in China. . . , for trade always means an intensified life—life and movement. Hence, life and movement had to come primarily into the art of the Tang period. This is the first characteristic one encounters. While, for example, the whole demeanor of the animals of the Han period is still heavy and monumental in their whole habitus, those of the Tang period exhibit everything lively, every limb is in motion." *Tang-Plastik*, p. 41. This mode of consideration rests on mere analogy: movement in trade as in sculpture. One might almost call it nominalistic. His attempts at making transparent the reception of antiquity in the Renaissance remains equally trapped in analogy. "In both epochs the economic basis was the same, only in the Renaissance this basis found itself on a higher stage of development. Both were founded on trade of commodities." *Erotische Kunst*, 1, p. 42. Finally trade itself appears as the subject of the contemplation of art and Fuchs says: "Trade has to calculate with given qualities and it can only apply concrete and verifiable quantities. That is how trade has to approach the world and things if it wants to control them economically. Consequently its aesthetic consideration of things occurs in every regard in a realistic mode." *Tang-Plastik*, p. 42. One may disregard the fact that a "realistic" representation "in every regard" cannot be found in art. In principle one would have to say that any connection appears problematical which claims equal validity for the art of ancient China and for that of ancient Holland. Indeed, a connection does not exist in this manner. A glance at the Republic of Venice suffices: Venice's art flourished because of its trade. Yet the art of a Palma Vecchio, of Titian or of Veronese could hardly be called "realistic in every regard." The only aspect of life

In these formulae a series of conceptualizations comes to the fore which are intimately connected with the Social Democratic doctrines of the epoch. The deep effect of Darwinism on the development of the socialist understanding of history is well known. During the time of Bismarck's persecution of the socialists the Darwinian influence served to maintain the party's faith and determination in the struggle. Later, in revisionism, the evolutionary view of history burdened the concept of "development" all the more, the less the party was willing to risk what it had gained in the struggle against capitalism. History assumed deterministic traits: "the victory of the party was inevitable." Fuchs always remained distant from revisionism. His political instincts and his martial nature led him to the left wing. As a theoretician, however, he was not able to remain free from those influences. One can feel them at work everywhere. At that time, a man like Ferri not only traced the principles of Social Democracy, but also its tactics, back to natural laws. Deficiencies in the knowledge of geology and biology were held to be responsible for anarchistic deviations. Certainly leaders like Kautsky fought against such deviations.³¹ Nevertheless, many were satisfied with theses which sorted historical processes into "physiological" and "pathological" ones. Or they thought that natural scientific materialism "automatically" turned into historical materialism simply by being in the hands of the proletariat.³² Similarly Fuchs sees the progress of human society as a process which "cannot be held back, just as it is impossible to arrest the continuous forward motion of a glacier."³³ Consequently, deterministic understanding pairs itself with solid optimism. Yet without confidence no class could, in the long run, hope to enter the political sphere with any kind of success. But it makes a difference whether this optimism directs itself towards the active strength of the class, or whether it centers on the conditions under which the class operates. Social Democracy leaned toward the latter, questionable, kind of optimism. The epigones of the turn of the century were barred from a vision of the emerging barbarism which an Engels perceived in the *Condition of the Working Class*

which we encounter in this art is a festive and representative one. On the other hand, working life in all its stages demands a considerable sense of reality. From this approach the materialist cannot draw any conclusions as to the manifestation of style.

31. Karl Kautsky, "Darwinismus und Marxismus," *Die Neue Zeit*, 13:1 (Stuttgart, 1895), 710.

32. H. Laufenberg, "Dogma und Klassenkampf," *Die Neue Zeit*, 27:1 (Stuttgart, 1909), 574. Here the concept of self-activity has sunk to a sad state. The heyday of this term is the eighteenth century when the self regulation of the market was in its beginning. Then the concept celebrated its triumph in Kant in the form of "spontaneity," as well as in technology in the form of automatic machines.

33. *Karikatur*, 1, 312.

in England, which a Marx glimpsed in his prognosis of capitalist development, and which is today well known even to the most mediocre statesman. When Condorcet publicized the doctrine of progress the bourgeoisie stood before the assumption of power. A century later the proletariat found itself in a different position. For the proletariat this doctrine could awaken illusions. Indeed, these illusions provide the background occasionally revealed in Fuchs' history of art. "Today's art," he thinks, "has brought us a hundred fulfillments which in the most diverse directions exceed the achievements of Renaissance art, and the art of the future must certainly mean something still higher."³⁴

VI

The pathos which runs through Fuchs' understanding of history is the democratic pathos of 1830. Its echo was the speaker Victor Hugo. The echo of that echo are the books in which the speaker Hugo addresses himself to posterity. Fuchs' conception of history is the same as that which Hugo celebrates in *William Shakespeare*: "Progress is the stride of God himself." And universal suffrage appears as the world chronometer which measures the speed of these strides. With the statement "*Qui vote règne*" Hugo had erected the tablets of democratic optimism. Even much later this optimism produced strange daydreams. One of these dreams produced the illusion that "all intellectual workers, including persons of high material as well as social position, had to be considered proletarians." For it is "an undeniable fact that all persons who hire out their services for money are helpless victims of capitalism, from a *Hofrat*, strutting in his gold covered uniform, down to the most downtrodden pieceworker."³⁵ The tablets set up by Hugo still cast their shadow over Fuchs' work. Fuchs remains within the democratic tradition when he attaches himself to France with a particular love. He admires France as the soil of three great revolutions, as the home of the exiles, as the source of utopian socialism, as the fatherland of haters of tyranny such as Michelet and Quinet, and finally as the soil in which the Communards are buried. Thus lived the image of France in Marx and Engels, thus it descended to Mehring, and even to Fuchs it still appeared as the land of "the avant-garde of culture and freedom."³⁶ He compares the spirited mockery of the French with the clumsy ridicule of the Germans. He compares Heine with those who remained at home. He compares German naturalism with the satirical novels of Anatole

34. *Erotische Kunst*, 1, 3.

35. A. Max, "Zur Frage der Organisation," 652.

36. *Karikatur*, 2, 238.

France. In this manner, like Mehring, he was led to solid prognoses, especially in the case of Gerhard Hauptmann.³⁷

France is a home for Fuchs the collector as well. The figure of the collector, more attractive the longer one observes it, has not been given its due attention so far. One would imagine no figure more tempting to the Romantic storytellers. The type is motivated by dangerous though domesticated passions. Yet one searches in vain among the figurines of a Hoffmann, Quincey or Nerval for that of the collector. Romantic figures are those of the traveller, of the *flâneur*, of the gambler or of the virtuoso. That of the collector is not found here. In vain one searches through the "physiologies" which otherwise do not miss a single figure of the Paris waxworks under Louis Philippe, from the kiosk operator to the salon-lion. All the more important therefore is the place of the collector in the work of Balzac. Balzac erected a monument to the figure of the collector, yet he treated it quite unromantically. Balzac was always alien to romanticism anyway. There are also few pieces in his corpus in which an anti-romantic position so surprisingly claims its right as in the sketch of *Cousin Pons*. One element is particularly characteristic. As accurately as we know the inventory of the collection to which Pons dedicates his life, just as little do we learn about the history of the acquisition of this collection. No passage in *Cousin Pons* can be compared to the breathtaking suspense of the description of the uncovering of a rare find which the brothers Goncourt give in their diaries. Balzac does not represent the hunter in the hunting grounds of inventory as any collector might be considered. Every fiber of his Pons, of his Elie Magus trembles with exultation. This exultation is the pride in the incomparable treasures which they protect with never tiring care. Balzac places all his stress on the representation of the "possessor," and the term "millionaire" seems to him a synonym for the word "collector." He speaks of Paris: "There one can often meet a very shabbily dressed Pons or an Elie Magus. They seem neither to respect nor to care for anything. They pay attention neither to women nor to window displays. They walk along as in a dream, their pockets are empty, their gaze is aimless and one wonders what kind of Parisian they really are. These people are millionaires. They are collectors, the most passionate people in the world."³⁸

37. Mehring commented on the trial ensuing from "The Weavers" in the *Neue Zeit*. Parts of the defense speech have regained the actuality which they had in 1893. The attorney elaborated that "he had to point out that the seemingly revolutionary passages in question are contrasted by others which are soothing and calming in character. The poet does not at all stand on the side of revolt insofar as he allows the victory of order by means of the intervention of a handful of soldiers." Franz Mehring, "Entweder Oder," *Die Neue Zeit*, 11:1 (Stuttgart, 1893), 780.

38. Honoré de Balzac, *Le Cousin Pons* (Paris, 1925), p. 162.

The image of the collector sketched by Balzac comes closer to the activity and fullness of Fuchs' character than one would expect from a romantic. Indeed, pointing to the man's life nerve, one might say that as a collector Fuchs is truly Balzacian—a Balzacian figure that outgrew the poet's conception. What could be more in accord with this conception than a collector whose pride and expansiveness lead him to bring reproductions of his collection onto the market for the sole reason of being able to appear in public with his collections. That in consequence he becomes a rich man, is again a Balzacian turn. Not only the conscientiousness of a man who sees himself as a preserver of treasures but also the exhibitionism of a great collector prompted Fuchs into publishing almost exclusively unpublished illustrative material in each of his works. This material was almost completely drawn from his own collections. For the first volume alone of his *Karikatur der europäischen Völker* (*Caricature of the European Peoples*), he collated 68,000 pages and then chose only about 500. He did not permit a single page to be reproduced in more than one place. The fullness of his documentation and its wide-ranging effect go hand in hand. Both attest to his descendance from the race of bourgeois giants of around 1830 as Drumont characterizes them. Drumont writes: "Almost all the leaders of the school of 1830 had the same extraordinary constitution, the same fecundity and the same tendency toward the grandiose. Delacroix paints epics on canvas, Balzac depicts a whole society and Dumas covers a four thousand year stretch of human history in his novels. They all have backs strong enough for any burden."³⁹ When the revolution came in 1848, Dumas published an appeal to the workers of Paris in which he introduced himself as one of them. In twenty years, he said, he had written 400 novels and 35 plays. He had created jobs for 8160 people: readers, typesetters, machinists, wardrobe mistresses. Nor did he forget the claque. The feeling with which the universal historian Fuchs created for himself the economic basis for his magnificent collections is probably not quite unlike Dumas' *amour-propre*. Later this economic base made it possible for Fuchs to deal on the Paris market almost as sovereignly as in his own collection. Around the turn of the century the senior representative of Paris art dealers used to say the following of Fuchs: "C'est le monsieur qui mange tout Paris." Fuchs belongs to the type of *rammasseurs* (packrats); he takes a Rabelaisian delight in quantities, a delight which can be noted in the luxurious repetitions of his texts.

39. Edouard Drumont, *Les héros et les pitres* (Paris), pp. 107-108.

VII

Fuchs' French family tree is that of the collector, his German one, that of the historian. The austerity of morals characteristic of Fuchs the historian marks him as a German. This austerity already characterized Gervinus, whose *Geschichte der poetischen Nationalliteratur (History of Poetic National Literature)* could be called the first attempt at a German history of ideas. It is typical for Gervinus, just as it is later for Fuchs, to represent the great creators in quasi-martial form. This results in the dominance of the active, manly and spontaneous elements in their nature over their contemplative, feminine and receptive characteristics. Certainly, such a representation was easier for Gervinus. When he wrote his work the bourgeoisie was in ascendancy: bourgeois art was full of political energies. Fuchs writes in the time of imperialism: he presents the political energies of art polemically to an age in whose works these energies diminish from day to day. But Fuchs' standards are still those of Gervinus. In fact they can be traced back even further into the eighteenth century. This becomes possible with reference to Gervinus himself, whose memorial speech for F.C. Schlosser lent a grandiose voice to the armed moralism of the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary epoch. Schlosser had been criticized for a "miserable moral austerity." Gervinus however defends him by saying that "Schlosser could and would have answered these criticisms as follows: Contrary to one's experience with novels and novellas one does not learn a superficial enjoyment of life by looking at life on a large scale, as history, despite all the serenity of the senses and the spirit. Through the contemplation of history one does not absorb a misanthropic scorn but a severe outlook on the world and serious principles of life. The greatest judges of the world and of humanity knew how to measure external life according to their own internal life. Thus for Shakespeare, Dante and Machiavelli the essence of the world made an impression which always led them to seriousness and severity."⁴⁰ Here lies the origin of Fuchs' moralism. It is a German Jacobinism whose monument is Schlosser's world history, which Fuchs came to know in his youth.⁴¹

40. G. G. Gervinus, *Friedrich Christoph Schlosser: Ein Nekrolog* (Leipzig, 1861), pp. 30-31.

41. This direction of Fuchs' work proved useful when the imperial prosecutors began accusing him of "distributing obscene writings." An expert judgement naturally represented Fuchs' moralism with particular emphasis. This expert opinion was submitted in the course of one of the trials, all of which without exception ended in acquittal. It is the work of Fedor von Zobeltitz and its most important passage says the following: "Fuchs seriously considers himself a preacher of morals and an educator. This deeply serious understanding of life, this intimate comprehension of the fact that his work in the service of the history of humanity must be borne by the highest morality, is alone enough to protect him against the suspicion of profit-hungry speculation. Anyone who knows the man and his illumined idealism would have to smile at such a suspicion."

Not surprisingly, this bourgeois moralism contains elements which collide with Fuchs' materialism. If Fuchs had recognized this he might have been able to ameliorate this conflict. He was convinced, however, that his moralistic consideration of history and his historical materialism were completely harmonious. This was illusory. Underlying this illusion is a widespread opinion badly in need of revision; that the bourgeois revolutions, as they are celebrated by the bourgeoisie, are the genealogical root of a proletarian revolution.⁴² On the contrary, it is necessary to look at the spiritualism which is woven into these revolutions. The golden threads of this spiritualism were spun by morality. Bourgeois morals function under the banner of inwardness—the first signs of this were already exhibited in the reign of terror. The keystone of this morality is conscience, be it the conscience of Robespierre's *Citoyen*, be it that of the Kantian cosmopolitan. The attitude of the bourgeoisie proclaimed the moral authority of conscience which proved favorable to bourgeois interests but depended on a complementary attitude of the proletariat, unfavorable to the interests of the latter. Conscience carries the banner of altruism. Conscience advises the proprietor to act according to concepts which are immediately fruitful to his co-proprietors. And conscience easily advises the same for those who possess nothing. When the latter take this advice, the advantage of their behavior for the proprietors becomes all the more immediately obvious as this advice becomes more doubtful for those who follow it, as well as for their class. For this reason the price of virtue rests on this attitude—thus a class morality becomes dominant. But the process occurs on an unconscious level. The bourgeoisie did not need consciousness to establish this class morality as much as the proletariat needs consciousness in order to overthrow that morality. Fuchs does not do justice to this state of affairs because he believes that his attack must be directed against the conscience of the bourgeoisie. He sees deceit in bourgeois ideology. "In view of the most shameless class judgments," he says, "the fulsome babble about the subjective honesty of the judges in question proves only the lack of character of those who write or speak in this way. At best one might ascribe it to their denseness."⁴³ Fuchs, however, does not think of judging the concept of *bona fides* (good conscience) itself. Yet this will occur to historical materialists, not only because the historical

42. This revision has been inaugurated by Max Horkheimer in his essay "Egoismus und Freiheitsbewegung," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 5 (1936), 161ff. The documents assembled by Horkheimer correspond to a series of interesting proofs on which the extremist Abel Bonnard bases his accusation of those bourgeois historians of the Revolution whom Châteaubriand quaintly calls "L'école admirative de la terreur." See Abel Bonnard, *Les Modérés* (Paris), pp. 179ff.

43. *Der Maler Daumier*, p. 30.

materialist recognizes that the concept is the bearer of bourgeois class morality, but also because he will not fail to see that this concept furthers the solidarity of moral disorder with economic planlessness. Younger Marxists at least hinted at this situation. Thus the following was said about Lamartine's politics which made excessive use of *bona fides*: "bourgeois. . . democracy. . . is dependent on this value. A democrat is honest by trade. Thus a democrat feels no need to examine the true state of affairs."⁴⁴

Considerations which focus more on the conscious interests of individuals than on the behavior which is imposed on their class, often unconsciously and as a result of its position in the production process, lead to an overestimation of the conscious elements in the formation of ideology. This is evident in Fuchs' work when he declares: "In all its essential elements, art is the idealized disguise of a given social situation. For it is an eternal law. . . that every dominant political or social situation is forced to idealize itself in order to ethically justify its existence."⁴⁵ Here we approach the crux of the misunderstanding. It rests on the conception that exploitation conditions false consciousness, at least on the part of the exploiter, because true consciousness would prove to be a moral burden. This sentence may have a limited validity for the present insofar as the class struggle has involved all of bourgeois life in the extreme. However, the "bad conscience" of the privileged is by no means self-evident for earlier forms of exploitation. Reification not only clouds the relations among human beings—the real subjects of these relations remain clouded. An apparatus of legal and administrative bureaucracies intervenes between the rulers of economic life and the exploited. The members of these bureaucracies no longer function as fully responsible moral subjects, and their "sense of duty" is nothing but the unconscious expression of this deformation.

VIII

Fuchs' moralism, traces of which can be found in his historical materialism, was not shaken by psychoanalysis either. About sexuality he makes the following statement: "All forms of sensual behavior are justified in which the creative element of this law of life becomes visible. Those forms, however, are evil in which this highest of drives becomes degraded to a mere means of refined craving for pleasure."⁴⁶ It is clear that this moralism carries the

44. N. Guterman and H. Lefebvre, *La conscience mystifiée* (Paris, 1936), p. 151.

45. *Erotische Kunst*, 2, Part One, 11.

46. *Ibid.*, 1, 43. The moral-historical representation of the Directory carries traits which are just about those of a popular ballad (*Moritat*). "The terrible book of the Marquis de Sade with its plates as bad as infamous lay open in all shop windows." And Barras expresses "the devastated fantasy of the shameless libertine." *Karikatur*, 1, 201-202.

bourgeois signature. Fuchs never acquired the proper distrust for the bourgeois scorn for pure sexual pleasure and the more or less fantastic means of creating it. In principle, to be sure, he declares that one can speak of "morality and immorality only in relative terms." Yet in the same passage he states immediately an exception for "absolute immorality" which "identifies itself by transgressions against the social drives of society and are thus, so to speak, a transgression against nature." According to Fuchs, this position is characterized by the historically inevitable victory of "the masses over a degenerate individuality, for the masses are always capable of development."⁴⁷ In short, it is true of Fuchs that he "does not attack the justification for condemning allegedly corrupt drives, but beliefs about the history and extent of these drives."⁴⁸

Because of this the clarification of the sexual-psychological problem is hampered. Since the rule of the bourgeoisie this clarification has become particularly important. This is where the taboo of more or less wide areas of sexual pleasure has its place. The repressions which are thus produced in the masses bring to the fore masochistic and sadistic complexes. Those in power then further these complexes by delivering up to the masses those objects which prove most favorable for their politics. Wedekind, a contemporary of Fuchs, recognized these connections. Fuchs failed to produce a social critique in this regard. Therefore a passage where he compensates for this lack by means of a detour through natural history becomes all the more important. The passage in question is his brilliant defense of orgies. According to Fuchs ". . . the pleasure of orgiastic rites belongs to the most valuable tendencies of culture. One must understand that orgies belong to that which distinguishes us from animals. In contrast to humans, animals do not know orgies. When their hunger and thirst are satisfied animals will turn away from the juiciest feed and the clearest spring. Further, the sexual drive of animals is generally restricted to specific and brief periods of the year. This is quite different from human beings and in particular from creative human beings. The latter do not know the concept of 'enough' at all."⁴⁹ Fuchs' sexual-psychological statements draw their strength from thought processes in which he deals critically

47. *Karikatur*, 1, 188.

48. Max Horkheimer, "Egoismus und Freiheitsbewegung," p. 166.

49. *Erotische Kunst*, 2, Part One, 283. Here Fuchs is on the track of an important state of affairs. Would it be too rash to put into immediate relation the threshold between human and animal, which Fuchs sees in the orgy, with the erect posture? This allows for the unheard of occurrence of the phenomenon in natural history that the partners can look into each other's eyes during orgasm. Only thus an orgy becomes possible, but not by an increase in visual stimuli. Rather, the determining factor is that the expression of satiety and even impotence can now become an erotic stimulant itself.

with traditional norms. This enables him to disperse certain petit-bourgeois illusions. That goes for nudism in which he rightly sees a "revolution of narrow-mindedness." "Happily, human beings are not forest animals any longer. Thus we . . . desire that fantasy, even erotic fantasy, play its part in clothing. What we do not want, however, is exactly that social organization of humanity which depraves all of this."⁵⁰

Fuchs' psychological and historical understanding becomes fruitful for the history of clothing in many ways. In fact, there is hardly a subject matter apart from fashion which more closely approaches the author's threefold interest, namely, his historical, social and erotic interests. This already becomes evident in his definition of fashion, which, in its language, is suggestive of Karl Kraus. Fashion, he says in his *Sittengeschichte (History of Morals)*, "indicates how people intend to deal with the business of public morality altogether."⁵¹ Fuchs, by the way, did not succumb to the general mistake of examining fashion only according to aesthetic and erotic viewpoints, as did, for example, Max von Boehn. He did not fail to recognize the role of fashion as a means of domination. As fashion brings out the subtler distinctions of social standing it keeps a particularly close watch over the coarser distinctions of the classes. Fuchs dedicated a long essay to fashion in his third volume of the *Sittengeschichte*. The supplementary volume sums up the train of thought of the essay by listing the decisive elements in fashion. The first element is formed by "the interests of class separation." The second is provided by "the mode of production of private capitalism" which tries to increase its sales volume by manifold fashion changes. Thirdly, one must not forget the "erotically stimulating purposes of fashion."⁵²

The cult of creativity which runs through the whole of Fuchs' work drew fresh nourishment from his psychoanalytic studies. They enriched his originally biological conception of creativity, though they did not, of course, correct it. Fuchs enthusiastically adopted the doctrine of the erotic origin of the creative impulse. His notion of eroticism, however, remained tied to a drastic, biologically determined sensuality. Fuchs avoided, to the degree that it was applicable at all, the theory of complexes and sublimation, which

50. *Sittengeschichte*, 3, 234. A few pages later this confident judgement can no longer be found. This is evidence of the force with which it had to be wrested away from convention. Rather, he says here: "The fact that thousands of people become sexually excited when they look at a female or male nude photograph . . . proves that the eye is no longer capable of perceiving the harmonious whole but only the piquant detail." *Ibid.*, 3, 269. If there is anything sexually arousing here it is more the exhibition of the naked body in front of the camera, than the view of nakedness itself. This is probably the notion which is intended by most of these photographs.

51. *Ibid.*, 3, 189.

52. *Ibid.*, Supplementary Vol., pp. 53-54.

might have modified his moralistic understanding of social and sexual relationships. Fuchs' historical materialism derives things more from the conscious economic interest of the individual than from the class interest which is unconsciously at work within the individual. Similarly, he brings the creative impulse closer to the conscious sensual intention than to the image-creating unconscious.⁵³ The world of erotic images which Freud made accessible as a symbolic world in his *Interpretation of Dreams* expresses itself in Fuchs' work only where his own inner involvement is most enthusiastic. In such cases this world fills his writing even where any explicit mention of it is avoided. This can be seen in the masterful characterization of the graphics of the revolutionary era. "Everything is stiff and military. Men do not lie down since the drill square does not tolerate any 'at ease.' Even when people are sitting down they look as if they want to jump up. Their whole bodies are full of tension as an arrow on a bow string. What goes for the lines holds true for the colors. The pictures give a cold and tinny impression over and against the paintings of the Rococo. The color had to be hard and metallic if it was to be appropriate for the content of the pictures."⁵⁴ An informative remark regarding fetishism is more explicit. Here he traces the historical equivalents of fetishism. He says that "the increase of shoe and leg fetishism points to the replacement of the priapic cult with the vulva cult." The increase in breast fetishism on the other hand points to a regressive development. "The cult of a covered foot or leg reflects the dominance of woman over man, whereas the cult of breasts indicates the role of woman as an object of pleasure for men."⁵⁵ His deepest insights into the symbolic realm Fuchs gained at the hand of Daumier. What he says about Daumier's trees must be considered one of the most auspicious finds of his whole work. In these trees he recognizes "a totally unique symbolic form . . . which expresses Daumier's sense of social responsibility as well as his conviction that it is society's duty to protect the individual. His typical manner of depicting trees shows them always with far reaching branches, particularly if a person stands or rests under the tree. In such trees the branches stretch like the arms of a giant, and actually seem as if they want to reach for infinity. Thus the branches come to form an impenetrable roof which keeps danger away from all those who come under

53. As ideology is the immediate production of interests so, for Fuchs, art is immediate sensuality. "The essence of art is: Sensuality (*Sinnlichkeit*). Art is sensuality. Indeed it is sensuality in its most potent form. Art is sensuality become form, become visible. At the same time it is the highest and noblest form of sensuality." *Erotische Kunst*, 1, 61.

54. *Karikatur*, 1, 223.

55. *Erotische Kunst*, 2, Part One, 390.

their shelter."⁵⁶ This beautiful contemplation leads Fuchs to the notion of the maternal preponderance in Daumier's work.

IX

No other figure has as much life for Fuchs as Daumier, a figure that accompanied him throughout his working life. One might almost say that this made Fuchs into a dialectical thinker. At least he conceived of Daumier in all the latter's fullness and contradiction. Though Fuchs grasps the maternal elements in Daumier's art and paraphrases them rather impressively, he was just as familiar with the other side of the man and his manly and aggressive characteristics. He was right in pointing out the absence of idyllic notions in Daumier's work: not only landscapes, animals and still lifes, but also erotic motifs and self-portraits are not to be found. What impressed Fuchs most was the element of strife in Daumier's work. Or would it be too daring to look for the origin of Daumier's great caricature in a question? Daumier seems to ask himself the following: "What would the bourgeois people of my time look like if one were to imagine their struggle for existence as taking place in a *palaestra*, an arena?" Daumier translated the Parisians' public and private life into the language of the *agon*. The athletic tension of the whole body, the muscular movements capture Daumier's highest enthusiasm. That is not contradicted by the fact that there is probably no one who sketched the deepest bodily relaxation as fascinatingly as Daumier. As Fuchs remarks, Daumier's representation has a deep relationship to sculpture. And thus he carries off the types which his time has to offer, these distorted caricatures of olympic contestants, in order to exhibit them on pedestals. His studies of judges and lawyers prove particularly favorable for this kind of consideration. The elegiac humor with which Daumier likes to surround the Greek Pantheon indicates this inspiration more immediately. Perhaps this is the solution to the riddle which Daumier, the master, represented for Baudelaire: how Daumier's caricature with all its force and impact could remain so free from resentment.

Whenever Fuchs speaks of Daumier all his energies come to life. There is no other subject matter that could draw such divinatory flashes of insight from his knowledgeability. Here the smallest impulse becomes important. A single page, so superficially done that it would be a euphemism to call it unfinished, suffices for Fuchs to give a deep insight into Daumier's creative mania. The sheet in question represents only the upper part of a head in which the only expressive parts are the nose and eyes. Insofar as the sketch limits itself to that

56. *Der Maler Daumier*, p. 30.

part, insofar as it only represents the observer, it becomes an indication for Fuchs that here the painter's central interest is at play. For, he supposes, every painter begins the execution of his paintings in precisely that place in which he is compulsively most interested.⁵⁷ In Fuchs' work on the painter we find: "Innumerable of Daumier's characters are busy with the most concentrated looking, be it a looking on the world, or a contemplating of specific things or even a concentrated look into their own interior. Daumier's people practically look with the tips of their noses."⁵⁸

X

Daumier turned out to be the most auspicious subject matter for Fuchs the scholar. He was also the collector's most lucky find. With just pride Fuchs mentions that it was his own initiative and not that of the government which prompted the first collections of Daumier (and Gavarni) in Germany. In his dislike for museums he does not stand alone among the great collectors. The brothers Goncourt preceded him in this dislike and exceeded him in their violence. Public collections may be less problematical from a social point of view, and can be scientifically more useful than private ones, yet they lack the greatest possibilities of private ones. The collector's passion is his divining rod and turns him into a finder of new sources. That holds true for Fuchs, and that is why he had to feel so opposed to the spirit which dominated the museums under Wilhelm II. These museums were intent on possessing so-called showpieces. "Certainly," says Fuchs, "today's museums tend toward such a mode of collecting simply for spatial reasons. But that does not change the fact that we thus have quite fragmentary notions of the culture of the

57. This has to be compared with the following reflection: "According. . . to my observations I think that the respective dominant elements of the artist's palette occur particularly clearly in his erotically pointed paintings. Here. . . these elements. . . experience their highest luminosity." *Die grossen Meister der Erotik*, p. 14.

58. *Der Maler Daumier*, p. 18. The famous "Art Expert," a water color which occurs in several versions, has to be counted among the figures in question. Fuchs one day was shown a version of the pointing which so far had been unknown. He was supposed to authenticate it. Fuchs picked up the main representation of the motif in a good reproduction and then began with an extremely instructive comparison. No deviation, not even the smallest one, remained unnoticed. Each one of these deviations had to be accounted for and had to be judged as to whether it was the product of the master's hand or that of impotence. Again and again Fuchs returned to the original. Yet the way he did that seemed to indicate that he could have easily dispensed with it. He proved so familiar with its appearance, in a way that can only be the case with a painting which one carried in one's mind for years. No doubt this was the case for Fuchs. Only because of this was he able to uncover the most hidden uncertainties in the contour, to see the most insignificant color deviations of the shadows, to identify the smallest derailing of the lines. Thus he was able to put the painting in its place—not as a forgery but as a good old copy which might have been an amateur's product.

past. We see the past in its splendid festive gown and rarely encounter it in its most shabby working clothes.”⁵⁹

The great collectors distinguish themselves mostly by the originality of their choice of subject matter. There are exceptions. The Goncourts started less with objects than with the whole that had to ensure the integrity of these objects. They undertook the transfiguration of the interior just as the latter had expired. As a rule, however, collectors have been guided by the objects themselves. The humanists on the threshold of modern history are a great example of this. Their Greek acquisitions and journeys give testimony to the purposefulness with which they collected. Guided by La Bruyère the figure of the collector was introduced, though disadvantageously, into literature with Marolles, who served as a model for Damocède. Marolles was the first to recognize the importance of graphics. His collection of 125,000 sheets forms the nucleus of the Cabinet des Estampes. The first great effort of archaeology is Count Caylus' seven-volume catalogue of his collections in the following century. Stosch's collection of gems was catalogued by Winckelmann upon commission by the collector himself. Even where the scientific conception which wanted to materialize itself in such a collection did not last for any length of time, the collection itself sometimes endured more successfully. This is true of the collections of Wallraff and Boisserée. Arising out of the romantic Nazarene theory, which viewed the art of Cologne as the heir of the old Roman art, the founders of the collection formed the basis of Cologne's museum with their German paintings of the Middle Ages. Fuchs has to be placed in this line of great and systematic collectors who were resolutely intent on a single subject matter. It is his idea to give back to the work of art its existence within the society from which it had been cut off. The work of art had been detached from society to such a degree that the place in which the collector found it had become the art market. There the work of art endured, shrunken to a commodity, and found itself equally as removed from its creators as from those who were able to understand it. The master's name is the fetish of the art market. From a historical point of view, Fuchs' greatest achievement may be his having cleared the way for art history to be freed from the fetish of the master's signature. "That is why," according to Fuchs' essay on the Tang period, "the complete anonymity of these burial gifts means that one cannot even in a single case know the name of the individual creator. This is an important proof for the fact that in all of this it is never the question of individual artistic results, but rather of the way the totality then

59. *Dachreiter*, pp. 5-6.

looked upon the world and things."⁶⁰ Fuchs was one of the first to develop the specific character of mass art and thus to germinate the impulses which he had received from historical materialism.

Any study of mass art leads necessarily to the question of the technological reproduction of the work of art. "Every time has very specific techniques of reproduction which correspond to it. The techniques of reproduction always represent the respective standard of technological development and are the result of a specific need of the time. For this reason it is not astonishing that any historical upheaval which brings into power other classes than the ruling ones, regularly goes hand in hand with changes in the techniques of pictorial reproduction. This fact needs to be pointed out with particular emphasis."⁶¹ Insights like this proved Fuchs a pioneer. In these insights he points to objects which would represent an educational gain for historical materialism were it to study them. The technological standard of the arts is one of the most important of these insights. The continued examination of this standard makes up for many a harm which comes from the vague concept of culture in the traditional history of ideas (and occasionally even in Fuchs' own work). The fact that "thousands of simple potters were capable of creating products equally daring both in regard to their technique and to their artistry as if it were nothing,"⁶² rightly appears to Fuchs as the concrete verification of old Chinese art. Occasionally his technological reflections lead him to illumined *aperçus* which run ahead of his own time. There is no other way of judging his explanation of the fact that antiquity does not know any caricature. Which idealistic representation of history would not see in this a support for the classicist image of the Greeks and their "noble simplicity and quiet greatness"? And how does Fuchs explain the matter? Caricature, he says, is mass art. There cannot be any caricature without mass distribution of its products. Mass distribution means cheap distribution. However, "except for the minting of coins antiquity has no cheap means of reproduction."⁶³ The surface of the coin is too small to make room for caricature. That is why antiquity did not know caricature.

60. *Tang-Plastik*, p. 44.

61. *Honoré Daumier*, 1, 13. One should compare these thoughts with Victor Hugo's allegorical interpretation of the wedding at Cana. "The miracle of the bread loaves represents the multiplied increase of readers. The day that Christ stumbled on this symbol he had a premonition of the art of the book printer." Victor Hugo, "William Shakespeare," quoted by Georges Batault, *Le pontife de la démagogie: Victor Hugo* (Paris, 1934), p. 142.

62. *Dachreiter*, p. 46.

63. *Karikatur*, 1, 19. The exception proves the rule. A mechanical technique of reproduction served in the production of the terracotta figures. Among those many caricatures can be found.

Like caricature, the genre picture was mass art. This trait attached itself to the character of caricature and defamed the already doubtful conventional historiography still more. Fuchs sees the matter differently. The fact that he considers scorned and apocryphal matters indicates his real strength. And he has cleared the way to these matters as a collector all by himself, for Marxism had but shown him the beginning. For such an endeavor a passion was needed that bordered on mania. This passion has marked Fuchs' character. Whoever goes through the long line of patrons of the arts, of dealers, of admirers of paintings and experts in sculpture in Daumier's lithographs will be able to see exactly how this passion characterized Fuchs. All these characters resemble Fuchs down to his stature. They are tall and skinny figures whose eyes project fiery glances. Not without reason has it been said that Daumier conceived in these characters the descendants of those gold-diggers, necromants and misers which can be found in the paintings of the old masters.⁶⁴ As a collector Fuchs belongs to their race. The alchemist connects his "base" desire for making gold with a complete examination of the chemicals in which planets and elements come together in images of spiritual man. Similarly, in satisfying the "base" desire of possession, Fuchs searches through an art in whose products the productive forces and the masses come together in images of historical man. Even in his late works the passionate interest can be felt with which Fuchs turned toward these images. He writes: "It is not the least of the Chinese turrets' claims to fame that they are the product of an anonymous popular art. There is no heroic book which gives testimony to their creators."⁶⁵ Such a consideration is directed toward the anonymous artists and the objects which preserved the trace of their hands. Would this attitude not contribute more to the humanization of mankind than the leader cult, which, it seems, one is once again about to impose on mankind? Whether that is the case remains, as the past taught vainly in so many instances, always to be taught again by the future.

Translated by Knut Tarnowski

64. See Erich Klossowski, *Honoré Daumier* (Munich, 1908), p. 113.

65. *Dachreiter*, p. 45.