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From Thoré to Bürger: The image of Dutch art before and after the *Musées de la Hollande*

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Fig. 1
W. Bürger (THÉOPHILE THORÉ),
photograph by Nadar,
1860's. Photo: Biblio-
theque Nationale,
Paris.

Sometime in 1855, or possibly a couple of years later, a gaunt bearded man in his late forties, reflecting on his past and present life, compiled two lists. On one page he listed the various portraits of his earlier self – Théophile Thoré (fig. 1); and on the other, just a string of names.¹

The several portraits in different media included a drawing by his friend the painter Jean Gigoux,² dating from the early 1830s; various caricatures, such as one in *Charivari* (fig. 2) accompanied by a verse satirising the extreme distance between the lofty heights of his art criticism and the depths of his Romantic beard;³ a bronze medallion by David d'Angers of 1847; a popular woodcut; and a lithograph of *le citoyen Thoré* (fig. 3) dating from 1849.

These were all poignant reminders of his former renown as an art critic and political journalist in France during the July monarchy and the Second Republic – well known for his polemical stands in various critical debates. He had been a staunch champion of innovative artists such as Delacroix, Rousseau, Decamps, Diaz, and of the Barbizon school of landscape generally. In the age-old colour versus line debate, he was a fierce proponent of painterly 'chiaroscuro' and 'colour' – but gave a political twist to the argu-

ment: he praised colour and expressive brushwork as artistically and socially progressive and condemned linear style and smooth finish as restricted and reactionary. Artists such as Ingres and the neo-classical landscapists were further denounced for turning and returning to Italy – especially to the French school at Rome – and accused of subverting the progress of a national French art. From his earliest writings, Thoré exhorted French artists to reflect the social and aesthetic concerns of their own time and place and challenged the traditional hierarchy of historical subject matter above landscape, genre and portraiture. He dismissed verisimilitude and detailed finish as mundane realism – as merely materialistic. Instead he valued the artist's ability to communicate a heightened and original response to nature and life by the skilful use of the full language of painting – whatever the subject.

He coined the slogan – *l'art pour l'homme* (as opposed to *l'art pour l'art*) – to denote art that, in its shared experience, furthered the fraternal future of mankind by prefiguring its future unity, harmony and *solidarité*.⁴

At the outbreak of the 1848 revolution, Thoré threw himself into radical political action and journalism – but the strenuous republican efforts of



Fig. 2
Théophile Thoré,
from series *Panthéon
Charivarique*; litho-
graph published by *Le
Charivari*, August 2,
1839.

le citoyen Thoré resulted only in exile, which lasted a decade. By 1855, his active involvement with futile political pamphlets and plots had petered out.

The second list consisted only of a string of names: Dubois, Dutreih, Guyon, Paulin, Dumont, Haeffely, Tilmann, Tardieu, Termont, Denis, d'Hauregard, Lutens, van Cuyp, van Damme, Franz, Burger, van den Berghem, de Fontaine. These were all recent pseudonyms – reflecting the obscure anonymity of his fugitive and peripatetic exile in Switzerland, England, Belgium, and Holland.

But one name – W. Bürger – devised in 1855 – was to survive. In fact within five years, the unknown W. Bürger, had (as it were) made a name for himself – as confirmed in 1860 by none other than the venerable director of

the Berlin Gallery, Gustav Waagen.

In his update of Kugler's *Handbook of Painting. The German, Flemish and Dutch Schools* Waagen outlined the current state of art historical research.⁵ While commending German and Belgian scholars for their recent efforts, he regretted that *[i]n Holland, (...) the desire to prosecute similar researches regarding the great masters of their historically neglected schools has been but little aroused.*⁶ Nevertheless, he acknowledged the recent contributions by the archivist Dr. P. Scheltema, whose *notices upon Rembrandt have thrown quite a new light upon the life and character of this great master* and by T. van Westrheene whose *Jan Steen deserves honourable mention.*⁷ As for opinions and descriptions of pictures he mentioned works by non-Dutch writers: the English dealer John Smith's *Catalogue*;⁸ C.J. Nieuwenhuys' *valuable notices*;⁹ Mrs Jameson's *various works*;¹⁰ and, of course, his own publications.¹¹ Waagen's greatest tribute, however, was reserved to the end: *Finally the present age has found a recent and zealous labourer in Mr. W. Burger, a French gentleman, who, by the close study of pictures and the signatures and inscriptions upon them, by his artistic judgement, and by the additions to and corrections of historical data, has, in his various works, much contributed to laying the foundations for a history of this great school, which may claim the meed of scientific value.*¹²

Waagen noted three publications – Bürger's review of the great Art Treasures exhibition in Manchester of 1857; the first volume of the *Musées de la Hollande* of 1858 and the catalogue of the Arenberg collection in Brussels of 1859.¹³ The second volume of the *Musées*, published in 1860 (the year Bürger returned to Paris), further confirmed the authority of this *French gentleman*.

The two volumes about four museums in Holland – the Rijksmuseum, the Mauritshuis, the Van der Hoop

collection and the Boymans museum – immediately found a responsive audience, and inaugurated a new era in the historiography of Dutch art.

In 1863, Carel Vosmaer, in his pioneering book on Rembrandt's precursors, acknowledged his debt to Bürger's unsurpassed studies of the art of the United Provinces.¹⁴ He praised Bürger's broad and profound views, his bold and independent methods and above all his elucidation of the genius of Rembrandt – as a man and artist.¹⁵ Another avid reader of the *Musées* in the 1860s was the young Wilhelm Bode (future director of the Berlin museum) who travelled around Holland with the *Musées*, which he knew almost by heart under his arm.¹⁶ And decades later, the influence of Bürger's canon as established in his *Musées* was still evident in Wilhelm Martin's monumental volumes on Dutch art.¹⁷

What was Bürger's image of 17th-century Dutch art? And how could these two small volumes, ostensibly guidebooks to four collections, have become so immediately and lastingly influential?

To begin with, they go well beyond the usual content and format of guides or catalogues – then or now. Addressed to scholars, collectors and artists interested in the history of painting, they read like an ardent account of a personal discovery of 17th-century Dutch art. Rejecting a chronological or alphabetical system, he presented the works so as to reflect his own critical judgements – 'glorifying' first and foremost Rembrandt and his school, and then dealing, in turn, with the leading specialist painters and their followers.¹⁸

Each painting is scrutinised for subject, style, technical procedures and condition, and vividly described for the reader's mind's eye. He investigates, with an air of positivist rectitude, signatures, orthography, dates, dimensions. But he also projects imagined narratives, digresses, revises,



reminisces. He comments on provenance and price and reputation – often protesting about unjust neglect – or undeserved fame. He reports conversations with curators and restorers who obligingly took paintings off the walls for closer examination. He does not restrict himself to the museum in question, and often refers to other municipal buildings or collections in Holland (or indeed anywhere in Europe) in order to support an argument or to establish the whereabouts of an artist's oeuvre.

His text is enlivened by skirmishes with other writers – indignant attacks on Houbraken and other earlier authors for their apocryphal and slanderous anecdotes, or scornful dismissals of rival French critics for their ignorant opinions. He complains bitterly

Fig. 3
Théophile Thoré as editor of *La Vraie République*; lithograph by H. Jannin, from series *Républicains Socialistes*, 1848-1849. Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

about the lack of biographical documentation and appeals to Dutch scholars for more archival research. He does occasionally resort to trusted authorities, such as Smith or Waagen, for their descriptions of paintings, or to Scheltema for his recent archival research.

However, Bürger's interest went beyond scholarly connoisseurship: he also considered artists according to his concept of those qualities that distinguished and defined the Dutch school. These were first outlined in the introductory and concluding chapters of the first volume of the *Musées*. He attributed the emergence of a distinct, utterly original school of painting in the 17th-century Dutch republic to its hard won political and religious freedom – and to the independence and energy of its individual citizens. Not only had they created the very soil beneath their feet, they had – *par un élan spontané du génie national* – recreated both their society and their moral and intellectual world.¹⁹ Such a society also produced an utterly original art – naturalism. Furthermore, instead of glorifying rulers, the art of the Dutch republic served the whole nation – and indeed mankind, depicting *La vie, la vie vivante, l'homme, ses moeurs, ses occupations, ses joies, ses caprices*²⁰ – all aspects of life and nature as observed and experienced, producing a vivid visual history of their entire society and country. Furthermore, this 'veritable history' was represented in images strongly marked by the individuality of its native artists.

Some of these ideas can be traced to earlier literature. For example, the connection between the geographical conditions and the new protestant republic and its art is made by Hegel;²¹ and Bürger's accusation that the frequent confusion of the Dutch and Flemish schools constituted nothing less than 'historical heresy' is a direct quotation from van Westrheene.²² Other ideas such as the insistence

that the originality and individuality of Dutch artists reflected political and religious freedom, or the assumption that naturalism was the central principle of Dutch 17th-century art, are reminiscent of passages found in van Westrheene.²³

Bürger not only gave wide currency to these ideas, he took them further: thus freedom from imperial or papal patronage implied not merely freedom from pagan and religious themes – but also freedom to be oneself. Rubens – despite his abundant and splendid art – was therefore classed as one of the subjugated or defeated; whereas the liberated Rembrandt could study mankind for its own sake, free to create *l'art pour l'homme* – as opposed to art for rulers, princes or popes.²⁴

That Bürger's championship of Dutch art could be understood as a surrogate political campaign was not lost on at least one enthralled reader – his old ally and fellow exile, the radical socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Reviewing the first volume of the *Musées*,²⁵ Proudhon praised both the positivist probity of the unknown author and the wider political implications of his approach: *en nous parlant d'art, et d'art hollandais, il nous a fait rêver d'autre chose: le lecteur en décidera. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que nous avons cru voir, toucher, sentir, nous avons vu le progrès de l'humanité*.²⁶ Proudhon interspersed long quotations from the *Musées* with excited comments of his own, such as: *Bravo, Hollandais! Or: quand une nation, se séparant des autres, se condamne par là même à tout refaire en elle, elle refait tout*, echoing Bürger's assertion: *Le propre de l'homme est d'inventer, d'être soi et non pas un autre*.²⁷ Bürger's notion of *l'art pour l'homme*, or *l'art humain* as an alternative to *l'art pour les dieux et demi-dieux* is upheld by Proudhon as an ideal for contemporary France – with all its attendant political implications.

Proudhon's polemical review was welcomed by Bürger who even sug-

gested that Proudhon's review might serve as an appropriate preface for a future Dutch edition.²⁸ He wrote to his friend. *Ils disent tous: que ce gaillard connaît bien les tableaux! – Par diable! Je me moque bien de leurs vieilles toiles, si je n'y voyais pas l'Homme dessus. Oui, (entre nous), mon idée est qu'on peut travailler à la vérité et à la justice en parlant d'un rayon de soleil, et qu'un propos sur Rembrandt peut signifier autant pour la Révolution qu'un manifeste du citoyen Ledru à la République universelle.*²⁹

In the second volume of the *Musées*, which was published after his return to France in 1860, Bürger further emphasised Rembrandt's modern significance in a symbolic back-to-back confrontation with Raphael. Without any evident irony, Bürger resorted to a classical image, Janus, to explain how, in a flash of inspiration, he juxtaposed their images and initials back-to-back. Raphael is thereby honoured as the culmination of an ideal art of the past, while Rembrandt is proclaimed the source of a new principle in art – to paint what one sees and feels – to create a new art for a new society. Rembrandt, and the school he leads, is thus construed as the legitimate ancestor of modern art.

Although there is no substitute for reading the *Musées* in their entirety, Bürger's critical judgements may be illustrated by some of the artists represented in *The Glory of the Golden Age*.

Rembrandt – whose works are magnificently represented in the exhibition – is viewed throughout the *Musées* as the great visionary naturalist. He is both the embodiment of the national Dutch school – and universal. His authority and influence is seen as radiating throughout, across all the specialities: he is the measure of all other artists.

Bartholomeus van der Helst for example, is put firmly in his place in a carefully considered comparison between his traditionally lauded *Celebration of the Peace of Munster* [66]

and Rembrandt's more controversial (so-called) *Night Watch* [65]. Bürger argues that although the various parts of van der Helst's vast and impressive work are superbly painted – the evenly lit work lacks a unified general effect, and ultimately reveals a more vulgar or common way of seeing. Bürger concludes that van der Helst's 'banal realism' had more popular appeal than Rembrandt's 'savage poetry' – which Bürger had already analysed and eulogised at length in some eighteen pages.³⁰

Rembrandt's successive pupils are considered in turn, and judged according to their fidelity to the master: their early work is therefore generally preferred. Govaert Flinck's Rembrandtesque *Isaac Blessing Jacob* [56] was praised for its vigorous, broad brushwork and strong colour,³¹ and Nicolaes Maes' early style was admired for the transparency and depth of background, the gleam of light, the bold, precise brushwork (*la touche hardie et juste*) the skilful detail, the striking overall effect.³² But once out of the master's thrall, both painters were viewed by Bürger with undisguised disdain: Flinck for succumbing to Italian decadence and Maes for becoming over-elaborate and vulgar and Flemish. Ferdinand Bol was also criticised for ultimately succumbing to 'Italian decadence' in his later works – of which the *Venus and Adonis* [171], is an example.³³

On the other hand, one of Rembrandt's earliest pupils, Gerrit Dou [122] is reproached for making an 'industry' out of what was for the master a passing phase, *une fantaisie accidentelle*. Dou's meticulous illusionistic detail is deemed a futile preoccupation – lacking the spontaneity and sincerity of true art, and the virtuoso candle-lit effects emulated by his followers such as Schalcken [181], are acidly dismissed: 'A simply painted head in a ray of sunshine is preferable to the most ingenious combinations of artificial

light.³⁴ Bürger occasionally praises particular paintings by Dou, but more often he regrets that Dou founded an 'illegitimate school' that could claim descent from Rembrandt while lacking the distinctive qualities of Rembrandt's inspiration and execution.³⁵

While effectively ushering Dou and his followers off stage, Bürger determinedly brought other less favoured artists into the limelight. The beginnings of his later most celebrated achievements are to be found in the *Musées*.³⁶ His enthusiastic passages on Frans Hals anticipate his later critical and historical reappraisal of Hals as heading the first generation of artists of the liberty-loving republic. Countering Hals' reputation as a feckless alcoholic who often didn't bother to finish his works, Bürger positively valued the freedom and spontaneity of his brushwork, and the depicted vivacity of his sitters – as in two works he viewed in the Amsterdam museum – the *Marriage Portrait of Isaac Massa and Beatrix van der Laen* (then believed to be a self-portrait of Hals and his wife) [13] and the *Merry Drinker* [27].³⁷

But Bürger also declared Hals the 'true precursor' of Rembrandt whom he then almost equalled after broadening his style, achieving incomparable mastery, greater depth of colour, intimacy of facial expressions, harmonious and tranquil effects.³⁸

Bürger's first substantial discoveries about the rare Vermeer, or 'van der Meer', date from the second volume. In 1858 he was grouped as one of several illustrious unknown artists; by 1860 he was extolled as the unknown genius whose works Bürger had begun to bring to light. Bürger doubled the number of attributed and located paintings and listed several more *a retrouver* – which included the presently exhibited *Glass of Wine* from Berlin [137]. The famous rediscovery was well underway.³⁹ As with so many other artists, besides attempting to characterise Vermeer's particular qual-

ities and to establish his *oeuvre*, Bürger also suggests that he learnt his art from Rembrandt.⁴⁰

Bürger tried to unravel the lives and works of several other little known or little documented artists – or families of artists – such as the de Keyser or Barent and Carel Fabritius.⁴¹ He had already discovered and praised Carel Fabritius' *Goldfinch* [135] – a painting that was later to become one of his most treasured possessions.⁴² The recent discovery in Rotterdam that the vigorously executed and striking portrait, formerly attributed Rembrandt, was, in fact, signed by Fabritius, further stimulated his interest in this family. He assumed this portrait [143] (now considered a self-portrait) represented a proud *homme du peuple*.⁴³ He wondered, perspicaciously, whether its similarity to Rembrandt's *Girl at a Window* – admittedly not the painting in the present exhibition, but the version he remembered from his visit to Dulwich Art Gallery in 1857 – was a clue to the artist's presence in Rembrandt's studio at that time.

Unlike these and other little known artists, Jan Steen [116, 117] was well represented in Dutch museums and private collections and highly esteemed in Holland and elsewhere. Nevertheless Bürger complained that his work was not fully appreciated for its profound significance and artistic versatility and skill. While Rembrandt expressed the serious side of life – (science, work, patriotism, devotion, passion), Steen depicted the human comedy, satirising not only the human follies of his era – but of universal humanity. Artistically Steen's best works were seen as possessing the artistic qualities of all the finest masters – such as ter Borch, Metsu, de Hooch and Adriaen van Ostade.⁴⁴

Adriaen van Ostade [115] is deemed a sort of *Rembrandt en petit* – not for poetry or profundity – but for his painting techniques: his transparency of shadows, tonal subtleties and har-

monious effects.⁴⁵ Bürger's entry on van Ostade's famous *Peasants in an interior* [115] – then in the Van der Hoop collection – was enthusiastic: *Première beauté* – adding that, for an artist, it rivalled the finest works in the collection.⁴⁶

Affinities with Rembrandt were also claimed for Pieter de Hooch's subtly differentiated areas of light, and Bürger suggested tentatively that he may have worked with Rembrandt (or possibly Maes).⁴⁷ The detailed and harmonious milieu created for the figures, which he likened to Balzac,⁴⁸ was seen as affording a glimpse into 17th-century life – as were the superbly painted scenes of the elegant haute bourgeoisie by other artists, such as Gerard ter Borch [121] and Gabriel Metsu [141]. Nevertheless, Bürger also occasionally sensed intimations of a mysterious *demi-monde* and subtle allegorical levels of meaning in their charming *conversations*⁴⁹ – including the elegantly attired couple engaged in a *tête-à-tête* in de Hooch's *Three women and a man in a courtyard* [139].⁵⁰

While admiring both Metsu and ter Borch, Bürger credited ter Borch as the inventor of the genre of elegant interiors – especially the satin dress: *La robe de satin appartient à Terburg* he declared.⁵¹ Ter Borch had yet another claim on Bürger's approval: for despite being one of the most travelled artists of his time, he remained, according to Bürger view, resolutely Dutch in style and execution – staunchly resisting the temptations of Italian art: *La terrible épreuve de l'Italie ne l'a point perverti*.⁵² Terborch is considered to be utterly original, and a source of inspiration to a range of other artists – such as Metsu, van Mieris, Netscher, Wouwermans, Steen.

Bürger reactions to paintings are sometimes unexpected. Hondcoeter, for example, inspired an extravagant mock heroic declaration that his sympathetically depicted bird families rival Raphael's Holy Families – for al-

though perhaps less sublime, they are certainly more natural. Of the *Floating Feather* [198] he warned the viewer not to blow on the feather – lest it fly away.⁵³ Paulus Potter, on the other hand, is generally chided for the literalness of his animal portraiture – its concentration on detail and local colour. He considered the *Two Horses near a gate in a meadow* [97], which he saw in the Van der Hoop museum, of little interest – except as an early example of his characteristic dryness of touch, and coarseness of light.⁵⁴ Elsewhere he regrets that Potter was not more varied in his treatment of light, more personal in his interpretation – and, as always, Bürger invokes as an example Rembrandt's inventive play of light as being both realistic and poetic.⁵⁵

Bürger admired the works of Jan van der Heyden and Adriaen van de Velde [175], as demonstrating the rare gift of reducing architecture and figures to microscopic proportions without meanness or dryness of execution, while nevertheless conveying a sense of their natural scale.⁵⁶

He was less respectful of the unfortunate Backhuysen, whose works he generally considered to be miserable, mean, cold and mannered⁵⁷ – and whom he disparaged for attending to calligraphic detail rather than to the sublime aspects of the sea. This was condemned by Bürger as pandering to the vulgar taste of the rich and ignorant bourgeoisie who neglected the works of true artists such as Meindert Hobbema [157] or Aelbert Cuyp [151]. Bürger reminded his readers that the now highly valued and rare works of Hobbema and Cuyp were better represented in English collections or in private Dutch collections than in the Dutch museums.⁵⁸

Bürger eulogised their works – and those of other Dutch landscapists – as evocative portrayals of the various beauties of their native country and as reflections of their love of nature.

Thus Adriaen van de Velde's *Little Hut* [177] was lyrically praised for conveying nature's tender and mysterious harmonies as well as the innocent encounters of its rural inhabitants.⁵⁹ While on the other hand, a completely different form of landscape – the panoramic composition – was interpreted as reflecting an all encompassing pantheism – a poetic contemplation of nature from on high. He attributed its invention to Rembrandt but commended Philips Koninck [152] and others – such as Jacob van Ruisdael [82] for further developing its potential.⁶⁰

Jacob van Ruisdael was generally extolled by Bürger just as he had been by his earlier self Thoré – as the great poet of nature. In front of the *Windmill at Wijk bij Duurstede* [154], then in the Van der Hoop museum, Bürger marvelled at the overwhelming melancholy aroused by this simple and familiar image of earth, water and sky – consisting merely of a common watermill, a strip of land protected from the invading water and three women returning from the village: in short, a typical Dutch landscape.⁶¹

But what of those artists who depicted foreign climes? What of artists such as Cornelis van Poelenburch, or Jan Both, or Nicolaes Berchem, or Adam Pynacker – or a host of others – who left their native Holland and set off to Italy for their artistic training and inspiration? They were chided for travelling to a moribund country identified with an out dated pagan-Christian Renaissance that had nothing to do with the Dutch nation now renewed by civic and religious freedom: *La vie éclairait en Hollande; pourquoi s'en aller chez les morts? La pauvre grande Italie avait accompli son oeuvre. La Renaissance mi-païenne et mi-chrétienne ne devait plus être qu'un souvenir désormais, une tradition comme les arts de l'antiquité et du moyen âge, assez indifférente d'ailleurs au peuple hollandais renouvelé par la liberté civile et religieuse.*⁶²

The so-called Italianate landscapists, highly valued in their own time and since, were scathingly dismissed by Bürger as pseudo-Italians, or denaturalised Dutchmen – as an academic gang (*bande*) who sacrificed their originality to pastiche. Bürger dismissed their compositions as formulaic, repetitive, derivative and lacking original inspiration from nature. In his view, they made no contribution to the authentic Dutch school, for each artist lost his individuality – the hallmark of Dutch naturalism.⁶³ He dismissed the landscape by Pynacker [95] as a large, mediocre work.⁶⁴

That said, Bürger occasionally relented and was, for example, prepared to admire Both's *Italian Landscape with Draughtsman* [94] which he saw in the Van der Hoop collection. He cited John Smith's enthusiastic description of the painting in which the figure of the draughtsman is identified as Both. Bürger then explains that its artistic merit is owing to the artist's direct study of nature.⁶⁵

There were no exceptions, however, to his unremitting hostility towards two other artists who were famously celebrated during their lives – Gerard de Lairese [200] and Adriaen van der Werff [183]. Bürger resented their princely patronage and despised their smoothly painted decorative mythologies and history paintings. He viewed their works as decadent aberrations which signalled the end of the heroic Dutch school.⁶⁶ He was scornful about their ill deserved success, but pleased to point to the current falling off in their prices compared to the rising values of works by artists such as Rembrandt, Cuyper and Hobbema.⁶⁷

Bürger was confident that the artists excluded from his canon would soon be forgotten, and that his critical judgements would be vindicated by posterity.

And for a while Bürger's views prevailed, for during subsequent decades Bürger's outcasts were to languish

unstudied or unappreciated by historians, little valued in sale rooms, banished to the basements of museums – occasionally even deaccessioned. Only relatively recently have they been invited back, escorted by exhibition after exhibition devoted to their rediscovery, rehabilitation, and re-inclusion in a more comprehensive and diverse image of Dutch 17th-century art – and as confirmed by the present exhibition.⁶⁸

This shifting image and less exclusive canon has itself recently been the subject of exhaustive historiographic introspection⁶⁹ and Bürger's pioneering role, his achievements and his misdemeanours, his sins of commission and omission have over the years received considerable attention; his contribution to the evolving canon is also acknowledged in the catalogue to *The Glory of the Golden Age*.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, it must be said that despite Bürger's pivotal role in the historiography of Dutch art, the particular biographical circumstances in which this exiled French republican embarked on his influential *Musées* have received little attention: accounts are inevitably vague or inaccurate. I will therefore risk an unfashionable (albeit brief) abandonment of the text in search of the author – to show how a timely encounter with Dutch museums was crucial to *le citoyen Thoré's* Phoenix like reincarnation as W. Bürger.

That brings us back to where we began – to Brussels in 1855 – with the exiled Thoré a bitter witness to his own oblivion. He was acutely aware that his name was not mentioned in any of the reviews of the Exposition Universelle in Paris – despite his former prominence; furthermore, although starting work on a newly founded art journal in Brussels, *La Revue Universelle des Arts*, he was himself prohibited from using his own name. He resorted, somewhat ironi-

cally, to a triumvirate of literary identities – a passionate Belgian art critic (van den Berghen); a witty French essayist (Fontainas); and a solemn German aesthetician – W. Bürger – whose first article (on the direction of contemporary art) appeared in 1855.⁷¹

But neither his triple authorship nor the somewhat tedious editorial work consoled the exiled republican, as is revealed by a short despondent note, dated 7 oct 1856: *Je suis un homme perdu, s'il ne survient pas de nouveau dans ma vie; un aliment quelconque, de la passion, du travail, de la lutte, de l'amour, de la distraction, un grain de folie. Je ne passerai pas l'hiver, ou, si je traîne douloureusement ces jours sombres, je finirai en juin avant le 23*. As it happened, he did survive June 23, which marked his fiftieth birthday. A cheerful scribble, dated 1859, on the same sheet of paper, explains his change of mind: *En effet, ce sont les voyages en Hollande, à Manchester etc., et le travail qui en est résulté, qui m'ont sauvé*.⁷²

Indeed, his letters bear this out, for in October 1856, only a couple of weeks after his *cri de coeur* – we find him in Holland – utterly revived. He was particularly charmed by Amsterdam which he described as *grand, vivant, actif, singulier, original, une des villes intéressante de l'Europe*.⁷³ He was also excited by the art he viewed. Travelling as M Delhasse, he visited museums, private collections, contemporary exhibitions, and he wrote to the friend whose name he had borrowed: *J'ai des notes pour faire des volumes, et j'ai fait des découvertes de dates et autres, les plus curieuses*. He added *Ah! si la Hollande voulait me faire faire les catalogues de ses musées! Il n'y en a point de catalogues, que des notes insignifiantes, et pour tant de trésors! Ils ne connaissent point du tout eux-mêmes leur maîtres, ni les oeuvres les plus célèbres de leurs maîtres. Personne ne peut rien dire sur la Ronde de nuit!*⁷⁴

He, of course, had plenty to say about the *Night Watch*: he determined

to write a book on Rembrandt – with a French audience in mind. He excitedly read all the available literature he could lay his hands on, and ambitiously planned a chronological study of Rembrandt's life and works with an appended *catalogue raisonné* of all the paintings and prints.

The great Art Treasures exhibition in Manchester in 1857 gave him the opportunity to consider Rembrandt and Dutch art in the context of other European schools. His lengthy review, initially serialised in a Paris newspaper then published as a separate volume began to establish the reputation of the previously unknown W. Bürger in France.⁷⁵ But not all his readers were taken in by his *nom de plume*: according to Sensier, Théodore Rousseau, who immediately recognised the style of his old friend, exclaimin: 'He lives, ... Diaz, who is going to England, must be told to find him and bring us news of him.'⁷⁶

Bürger's wide-ranging review had indeed taken up some of Thoré's old campaigns – such as his hostility to the fatal influence of Italian art⁷⁷ and his belief in vitality of naturalism: *Quand un art commence, c'est la nature qui l'inspire; quand un art finit, il ne s'inspire plus de la vie: il pastiche les morts.*⁷⁸ He suggests that the naturalism of a few original Spanish, Flemish and French masters, and especially that of the Dutch school – with Rembrandt as its central figure – was a new beginning in art: *Peut-être les écoles naturaliste du XVIIe siècle sont-elles un commencement, au lieu d'être une fin.*⁷⁹

He notes that Rembrandt *est à faire* both in France and elsewhere, and promises to undertake the elucidation of his 'new' art, and a chronological study of his works.⁸⁰ Bürger's initial researches into Rembrandt were published in several articles in 1858, but his intended monograph was never to be completed.⁸¹ He had, in any case, started on another project to which

Rembrandt was of central importance: a small volume on the Dutch museums – intended mainly for a French audience. He believed that the recently constructed railways would encourage French visitors to visit the little known Dutch museums for which they would need guides or catalogues. By 1862 a French guidebook to Holland recommended the *Musées* as *le manuel indispensable de l'amateur*.⁸²

By then Bürger was allowed back to Paris where he had resumed his role as a critic of contemporary art as well as continuing with his art-historical researches. Although he wrote authoritatively and extensively on other schools, Dutch art remained his special interest – as explained in 1861 in relation to the first Salon he reviewed after his return from exile: *La Hollande, qui avait eu le courage de secouer tout joug religieux et politique se sentant plus à l'aise qu'aucun autre peuple, enfanta l'école la plus délibérée, la plus originale, la plus variée, la plus révolutionnaire, la plus naturelle et la plus humaine à la fois; c'est assurément celle qui est le plus dégagée du passé, qui adhère plus à la nature, et qui par là signale le mieux une des tendances de l'art à venir ... C'est pourquoi, nous-même ... nous nous sommes consacré avec une passion exclusive à l'éclaircissement d'une de ces écoles, de celle qui nous semble la plus singulière et la plus instructive pour les novateurs.*⁸³

Throughout the 1860's, while waging war on so-called academic painters, he encouraged and befriended the innovators – especially Courbet (whose recent works he had seen while in exile⁸⁴) and Manet, as well as a host of others – but only when their works fulfilled his ideal of naturalism as a universally accessible art, and only if they fulfilled his aesthetic and social values.⁸⁵

In 1868 he finally managed to republish his prophetic *Salons* of the 1840's, with a preface by W. Bürger and a long tract on new directions in

art in relation to the art of the past.⁸⁶ These *Salons*, together with his wide-ranging knowledge of the art of the past, further confirmed his authority as a formidable critic of contemporary art. In his *Salons* of the 1860's he frequently taunted contemporary artists about the unrivalled painterly skills of his favoured old masters, such as Frans Hals whose *Malle Babbe* (fig. 4) Bürger published in 1868 – marvelling at its audacious naturalism, its abandoned, passionate brushwork, its unequalled animation.⁸⁷

It was perhaps Bürger's challenge that provoked Courbet's bravado copy (fig. 5), with which he supposedly replaced the original at an exhibition for several days without anyone noticing.⁸⁸

The *Malle Babbe* belonged to Bartholdt Suermondt, one of the most important of several collectors advised by Bürger during the 1860's, and with whom he collaborated in various purchases and sales. Bürger's activities in the art market were another means of promoting particular artists.⁸⁹ He negotiated private sales and purchases; he organised public sales and compiled catalogues; he reviewed collections and exhibitions and organised the famous *Exposition Retrospective* of 1866 – which was also Vermeer's Paris debut.⁹⁰

Sale rooms and auctions throughout Europe provided opportunities to discover new works, attribute paintings, acquire them, study them and occasionally sell them on – except for a few favourites. At one point he owned about 200 paintings – and joked wryly about suffering from *tableaumanie*.⁹¹

He regarded the art market as an important arena for his promotion of Dutch art, viewing the series of spectacular public art sales of the 1860's as battles between the elect and the damned. He was confident that the reputations of his chosen artists – both past and present – would ultimately endure, that posterity would confirm his judgements.



Fig. 4
FRANS HALS, *Malle Babbe*. Oil on canvas, 75 x 64 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.



Fig. 5
GUSTAVE COURBET
after FRANS HALS,
Malle Babbe, 1869. Oil
on canvas, 85 x 71 cm.
Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

The rising value of certain Dutch paintings seemed indeed to vindicate his judgements – and his private letters are peppered with enthusiastic comments about sales such as *La vente Boittelle a un succès prodigieux. Réaction contre les Italiens ... Morte l'Italie! tant mieux. Vive Rembrandt!*⁹²

Even on his deathbed he wrote exultantly of the victory of *les petits maitres* over Italian art when a work by Pieter de Hooch – which he mistakenly believed to be a Vermeer – fetched an unprecedented 150,000

francs – the same amount as paid for a Raphael in the same sale. *Quel succès hier! notre Van der Meer! 150,000 ... Ca a ravigoté le pauvre Burger... Un de mes correspondants ajoutait 'Vierge Raphael enfoncé par les magots!' Il est sur que les Italiens sont dans le dernier dessous et que les hollandais et les Flamands montent, montent.*⁹³

In his last publication (which was on the Suermondt collection) he mused about the significance of the high speculative prices paid for 'the little masters' – particularly for Dutch paintings with subjects of utter human simplicity: *Chances de bourse, Assurément. C'est à dire qu'à la Bourse des tableaux, - au grand marché de l'hotel Drouot, si vous voulez, - la valeur relative des tableaux hollandais et des tableaux d'une simplicité tout humaine est en hausse. C'est un fait qui pourrait être interprété très-diversement.*⁹⁴

Besides the different possible interpretations, he must also have been aware of his own contribution to this recent phenomenon – despite an (earlier) somewhat disingenuous disclaimer: *Ce n'est pas ma faute si, dans toutes les collections, les hollandais priment tout.*⁹⁵

Not only was Bürger widely consulted by artists, critics, collectors and curators, dealers, auctioneers – he was also an experienced publicist: he promoted his ideas in the press, in art and literary journals, in reeditions of earlier works, in catalogues and handbooks. As Thoré and as Bürger he promoted his ideas with the intrepid zeal of an experienced (if unsuccessful) political campaigner – whether dealing with the art of the past or the art of his own time.

His *Musées de la Hollande* may not have incited revolution or brought about the new Universal Republic, but they established a longlasting canon and image of 17th-century Dutch art, and decisively influenced the terms in which Dutch art was viewed, valued and emulated; it was an image which

took some time to shift.

In 1885 van Gogh, who believed of Bürger that 'everything he says is true' explained: 'Bürger wrote about Rembrandt's *Jewish Bride* the way he wrote about Vermeer of Delft, the way he wrote about Millet's *Sower*, the way he wrote about Frans Hals – surrendering himself to his subject and surpassing himself.'⁹⁶

Indeed – but the subject in the broadest possible sense, encompassing both what was depicted and how it was depicted – and always, always reflecting values that for Thoré-Bürger gave meaning both to art and to life.

NOTES

- 1 The two undated pages are among the unpublished papers conserved in Paris, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, MSS 7917, *Papiers Thoré-Bürger*. I am making the assumption that they were compiled at the same time.
- 2 Now in the Musée de Besançon.
- 3 *Aux extrêmes, Thoré, tu vas: / Ton intelligente critique / S'élève toujours haut, tandis que toujours bas / Descend ta barbe romantique*; see *Panthéon charivarique*, 8 (1839), August 2, n.p..
- 4 These ideas were derived from evangelical socialism expounded by Pierre Leroux. For further discussion on Thoré's ideas, see Pontus Grate, *Deux Critiques d'Art de l'Epoque Romantique: Gustave Planche et Théophile Thoré*, Stockholm 1959; F.S. Jowell *Thoré-Bürger and the Art of the Past*, New York 1977, pp. 24-116; Neil McWilliam, *Dreams of Happiness*, Princeton 1993, pp. 165-187.
- 5 *Handbook of Painting, The German, Flemish, and Dutch Schools. Based on the handbook of Kugler. Enlarged and for the most part re-written by Dr. Waagen*, London 1860, 2 vols. See the Preface, pp. i-xvi.
- 6 Waagen, *op.cit.* (note 5), p. xiv.
- 7 *Ibidem*, pp. xiv-xv. Scheltema's essay of 1853 was translated and annotated by W. Bürger: 'Discours sur la vie et le génie de Rembrandt, par le Dr P. Scheltema,' *Revue Universelle des Arts* 8 (1859), pp. 273-299, 369-390, 485-516; T. van Westrheene, *Jan Steen. Etude sur l'Art en Hollande*, La Haye 1856.
- 8 *A Catalogue raisonné of the Works of the most eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters*, London 1829/42, 9 vols.
- 9 *A Review of the Lives and Works of some of the most eminent Painters*, London 1834; *Description des Tableaux de S.M. le Roi des Pays Bas*, Bruxelles 1843.
- 10 *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London*, London 1842; *A Companion to the most celebrated Private Galleries of Art in London*, London 1844.
- 11 *Kunstwerke und Künstler in Paris*, Berlin 1839; *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, London 1854, 3 vols.; *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain – Supplement*, London 1857.
- 12 Waagen, *op.cit.* (note 5), p. xv.
- 13 *Trésors d'Art exposés à Manchester, 1857*, Paris 1857; *Musées de la Hollande; Amsterdam, et la Haye*, Paris 1858; *Galerie d'Arenberg à Bruxelles*, Paris etc. 1859.
- 14 C. Vosmaer, *Rembrandt Harmens van Rijn: ses précurseurs et ses années d'apprentissage*, La Haye 1863.
- 15 *Je m'associe avec une vive et entière sympathie à ses vues larges et profondes sur l'art, celui des Provinces-Unies, celui de Rembrandt. C'est un hommage qu'on lui doit, et que je m'empresse de lui rendre, qu'à de rare exceptions, nul écrivain n'a mis à l'examen de notre école, surtout de la pléiade rembrandtique, tant de talent, tant de sagacité, une méthode aussi hardie et indépendante que M Bürger. Nul n'a approfondi tellement ce génie tout particulier de Rembrandt, ainsi que ses principes, l'homme et ses oeuvres, surtout ses peintures*; Vosmaer, *op.cit.* (note 14), p. iii.
- 16 W. von Bode, *Mein Leben*, Berlin 1930, vol. 1 (2 vols.), p. 126. On Bürger's death, Bode acknowledged: *Er hat zuerst eine wissenschaftliche Behandlung der holländischen Kunst begründet und dadurch den Grund zu einer allgemeinen Anerkennung derselben gelegt*; *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst*, 1869, p. 346.
- 17 On Thoré-Bürger's enduring influence on the next generation of art historians, see Peter Hecht, 'Rembrandt and Raphael back to back: the contribution of Thoré' and Lyckle de Vries, 'Surveys: Yellow Pages or Guide Bleu?', *Simiolus* 26 (1998), pp. 169-173 and p. 213 respectively; on Martin see also Eric J. Sluiter, 'New Approaches in Art History and the Changing Image of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art between 1960 and 1990', in: Frans Grijzenhout and Henk van Veen (ed.), *The Golden Age of Dutch Painting in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge 1999, p. 250 (orig. ed. in Dutch, Nijmegen 1992).
- 18 Bürger explained his approach: *Mais un catalogue, si parfait qu'il soit, n'est qu'une sorte d'inventaire numérique et ne donne qu'une idée très-imparfaite de la qualité des tableaux, de la valeur qu'ils ont dans l'oeuvre d'un maître et de leur signification relative dans l'histoire de l'art. A notre avis, tout catalogue qui a pour but de populariser une galerie doit être accompagné d'une revue générale où le sentiment artiste intervient à son tour, s'empare des créations les plus dignes d'enthousiasme, les met hors ligne et dans leur vrai jour, les interprète et les glorifie*; see his *Galerie Suermondt à Aix-la-Chapelle*, Bruxelles 1860, pp. vii-viii.
- 19 *Musées*, *op.cit.* (note 13), pp. ix-x.
- 20 *Musées*, *op.cit.* (note 13), p. 323.
- 21 Compare, for example, a passage such as *Les Hollandais ont tiré le fond de leurs représentations d'eux-mêmes, du spectacle de leur vie et de leur histoire. L'Hollandais a créé lui-même en grande partie le sol sur lequel il habite, et il est forcé continuellement de le défendre contre les envahissements de la mer qui menace de le submerger. Les citoyens des villes, comme les paysans, ont par leur courage, leur constance, et leur bravoure, secoué le joug de la domination espagnole sous Philippe II. Ils ont conquis, avec la liberté politique, la liberté religieuse dans la religion de la liberté*; C.F.Hegel, *Cours d'Esthétique*, (C. Bénard ed. and trans.), Paris 1840, vol. 2, p. 146.
- 22 After dismissing several French critics for carelessly confusing the Dutch and Flemish schools, he approvingly cites van Westrheene: *C'est une*

- hérésie historique et artistique, que de soutenir l'identité, en leur origine et leur développement, de l'école hollandaise et de l'école flamande. Rembrandt est le centre d'une tout autre pléiade que celle qui s'est formée autour de Rubens; il est le moteur d'une impulsion toute nouvelle; *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 320. See Van Westrheene, *op.cit.* (note 7), pp. 7-8.
- 23 See, for example, passages such as: *L'art sort indépendant de la vie du peuple dans toute la variété qu'elle présente* or *'Le principe naturaliste une fois établi, l'âge d'or de l'art hollandais s'ouvrirait dans toute sa gloire;* Van Westrheene, *op.cit.* (note 7), pp. 10 and 20.
- 24 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 321-322.
- 25 'Musées de la Hollande: Amsterdam et La Haye. Etudes sur l'école hollandaise, par W. Burger', *Revue trimestrielle*, janvier 1859, pp. 277-289.
- 26 *Ibidem*, p. 277.
- 27 *Ibidem*, p. 279.
- 28 This suggestion never materialised.
- 29 Extract from unpublished letter, Fondation Custodia (coll. Frits Lugt), Institut Néerlandais, Paris.
- 30 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 6-24, 33-40.
- 31 *Vigoureuse peinture, d'une touche large et d'une forte couleur*; see *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 48-49.
- 32 On Maes, see *Musées de la Hollande; Amsterdam, et la Haye*, Paris 1860, vol. 2, pp. 23-28, 184-186.
- 33 On Bol and the later works of other pupils, see *ibidem*, pp. 17-18.
- 34 *Pour ma part, je ne suis pas fou de ces espèces de jongleries en peinture, (...) Gerard Dou, cherchant aussi à se créer une spécialité de ce qui fut chez son maître une fantaisie accidentelle, y témoigne sans doute d'une comparable industrie. C'est le mot, mais l'art véritable n'as point de ces préoccupations futiles. L'art est plus spontanés d'impression, plus franc dans ses résultats. J'aime mieux une tête naïvement peinte sous un rayon de soleil, que les plus ingénieuses combinaisons de lumières factices*; see *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 82-83. For a recent discussion of Thoré's role in 'Dou's slide into obscurity', see Arthur Wheelock, 'Dou's Reputation', in exh.cat. *Gerrit Dou*, Washington (National Gallery) etc. 2000, pp. 15-16.
- 35 GERARD DOU et ses continuateurs. – Passons à la petite école bâtarde, issue de la première manière de Rembrandt, et qui lui ressemble si peu, et qui aboutit être son antithèse, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), p. 189.
- 36 See F.S. Jowell 'Thoré-Bürger and the Revival of Frans Hals', *The Art Bulletin* 56 (1974), pp. 101-117 and 'The Rediscovery of Frans Hals', in exh.cat. *Frans Hals*, London (Royal Academy) etc. 1989-90, pp. 61-86.
- 37 *Sa physionomie est très-vivante et très gaie: bonne commère pour ce diable d'homme dont on raconte tant de brutalités; il a pourtant l'air d'un vrai gentleman, très-distingué et très-soigné, très-spirituel et très-fier (...)* [T]out est enlevé avec la plus franche adresse, dans une gamme verdâtre, du ton de l'olive. On sent partout le maître qui couvre une grande toile en se jouant, et dans les têtes la finesse expressive d'un portraitiste consommé, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 58-59.
- 38 *C'est la belle époque de ce maître vaillant et original, qui doit être considéré comme le véritable précurseur de Rembrandt, et qui l'égale presque, après avoir agrandi son style quand il eut vu des oeuvres du jeune peintre établi à Amsterdam. (...) Il connaît la peinture de Rembrandt alors, et cette jeune concurrence sans doute l'a poussé à une couleur plus profonde, à un effet plus harmonieux et plus tranquille, tout en conservant la brusquerie énergique de l'exécution*, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 121-122.
- 39 For a reaffirmation of Bürger's important role in the rediscovery of Vermeer (provoked by the disparaging account of Thoré in Ben Broos's 'Un celebre peijnter nommé Verme[e]r', in: exh.cat. *Johannes Vermeer*, Washington (National Gallery of Art) etc. 1995/96, pp. 59-61), see F.S. Jowell, 'Vermeer and Thoré-Bürger: Recoveries of Reputation', in: Ivan Gaskell and Michiel Jonker (ed.), *Vermeer Studies*, New Haven-London 1998, pp. 35-57.
- 40 *Le voilà en 1656, à vingt-quatre ans, aussi fort que les maîtres. Et d'où sort-il? Il sort de chez rembrandt. Ce tableau de Dresde suffirait seul à le prouver. L'homme à la guitare est tout à fait rembranesque. L'audace des tons francs combinés avec des dégradations prodigieuses de clair-obscur, la sincérité profonde des expressions, la pose de la pâte ferme dans les lumières, les frottis transparents dans les ombres, c'était rembrandt qui enseignait ces secrets-là*, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 79-80.
- 41 For Thoré-Bürger's 'rediscovery' of Fabritius, see Christopher Brown, *Carel Fabritius*, Oxford 1981, pp. 64-82.
- 42 Fabritius' *Goldfinch* – then in the Camberlyn collection in Brussels – was first mentioned by Bürger in his catalogue of the Arenberg collection in 1859. It was presented to him by Camberlyn's heirs in 1865. *Comme j'ai fait, par souvenir très désintéressé, une notice sur le vieux chevalier, que j'aimais beaucoup (...)* le neveu, l'héritier, le jeune chev. Camberlyn m'a envoyé aissi en souvenir de son oncle ce petit morceau de rien du tout, mais qui est un chef d'oeuvre. Extract of a letter to Suermondt, published in F.S. Jowell, 'Thoré-Bürger – a critical rôle in the art market', *Burlington Magazine* 138 (1996), pp. 115-129; *ibidem*, see note 12 on p. 117.
- 43 *C'est un grand honneur pour ce peintre inconnu, que son portrait d'homme ait été admiré, pendant dix années, comme un Rembrandt de haute qualité. Cette peinture est saisissante, en effet, et vraiment magistrale. L'homme, un homme du peuple, inculte et énergique, et très fier dans sa rudesse. (...)*

- Cheveux très-bruns, drus et mal peignés, tombant en avalanches aux deux côtés du visage; *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 170-171 (he here assumes the work to be by Barent Fabritius).
- 44 For Bürger's lengthy sections on Steen, see *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 104-118, 252-258; and *Musées op.cit.* (note 32), 107-120, 262-267.
- 45 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 92.
- 46 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 98-99.
- 47 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 98-101.
- 48 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 56-63.
- 49 *Ibidem*, p. 100.
- 50 *Ibidem*, pp. 62-63.
- 51 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 118.
- 52 *Ibidem*, pp. 118-119.
- 53 *Ibidem*, p. 161.
- 54 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 146-147.
- 55 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 211-219.
- 56 sans mesquinerie, sans secheresse, aussi largement en apparence, aussi magistralement, que si les objets avaient leur grandeur naturelle, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 143.
- 57 j'avoue qu'en général sa peinture me semble misérable, petite, froide, maniérée, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 158.
- 58 Point de Hobbema! Le musée de La Haye n'en a point non plus; le musée de Rotterdam n'en a qu'un petit. Le musée van der Hoop en a deux. Mais les collections particulières en ont de superbes, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 149. Les Anglais ont si bien accaparé Aalbert Cuijpp, au commencement de ce siècle, qu'on ne le trouve plus guère en Hollande dans sa haute qualité, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), p. 143. For his enthusiastic account the Hobbema landscapes exhibited in Manchester in 1857, see Bürger 1857, *op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 286-293.
- 59 Quand il avait étudiée jusque dans les fibres les plus délicates et les plus intimes, il la voilait d'une tendre et mystérieuse harmonie, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 135-136. For his description of *The Hut* [177] see pp. 137-138
- 60 Rembrandt fut (...) l'autre grand initiateur de l'espèce de panthéisme qui caractérise les paysagistes hollandais. Lui, le poète qui contemple d'en haut et de loin, il a enseigné à voir la nature dans son ensemble, dans ses plans immenses, et il a su faire quelquefois des lieux de terrain, en étalant son pinceau sur une bande horizontale large d'un pouce. Philips Koninck et Jacob Ruijsdael l'ont imité souvent dans ces aspects de la terre à vol d'oiseau, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 140. See also *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), p. 183.
- 61 La terre, l'eau, le ciel, tout est si bien ensemble, dans une harmonie si forte et si dominante, si simple et pourtant si grandiose, qu'on est saisi par cet effet unique, presque terrible, sans qu'on sache pourquoi... Ah! le grande poète que Ruijsdael, puisqu'il communique la poésie avec un moulin à vent, une pointe de clocher et quelques vagues qui minent sourdement une haie de pilotis!, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 133-134; for further passages on Ruijsdael see *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 270--272, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 134-138, 299-300.
- 62 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 145.
- 63 Les maîtres hollandais qui ne subirent point cette influence méridionale conservèrent, au contraire, une personnalité très-caractérisée (...) Leur point de départ est toujours la nature: ils l'aiment, ils la contemplent, ils l'étudient, ils se tiennent en communication intime avec elle, et quand ils la traduisent, ils l'imprègnent du sentiment qu'elle leur a inspiré. A la réalité consciencieusement observée avec une sorte de passion placide, ils ajoute une interprétation vivement sentie au contact meme de la nature. Ils animent la vie extérieure au feu de leur propre originalité. Est-ce là qu'on appelle le naturalisme? Ce naturalisme a du bon, décidément. Telle est la divergence radicale entre Berchem et les vrais Hollandais, entre le maître falsifié par un mélange étranger et les maîtres du crû, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), pp. 131-132.
- 64 *Musées, op.cit.* (note 13), p. 152.
- 65 La supériorité du tableau van der Hoop tient à ce qu'il été, très-probablement, étudié d'après nature, avec l'idée d'en faire une oeuvre précieuse qui conservât le portrait des deux frères, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 95-96.
- 66 Avec van der Werff, la décadence est complète, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), p. 148.
- 67 Les amateurs de mauvais goût n'ont jamais manqué aux peintres de mauvais style, *Musées, op.cit.* (note 32), pp. 106-107.
- 68 *Nederlandse 17e eeuwse Italianiserende landschapsschilders*, Utrecht (Centraal Museum) 1965, re-published as Albert Blankert, *Dutch 17th Century Italianate Landscape Painters*, Soest 1978; Albert Blankert et al., *Gods, saints and heroes*, Washington (National Gallery of Art), Detroit (Institute of Arts), Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1980/81; Peter Hecht, *De Hollandse fjnschilders. Van Gerard Dou tot Adriaen van der Werff*, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1989/90; Albert Blankert et al., *Dutch Classicism in Seventeenth-Century Painting*, Rotterdam (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen)/Frankfurt, (Städtisches Kunstinstitut 1999-2000; Arthur Wheelock et al., *Gerrit Dou 1613-1675. Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt*, Washington (National Gallery) 2000.
- 69 Such as the 1996 symposium at Utrecht University subsequently published as 'The Evolving Canon of Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Painting', *Simiolus* 26 (1998), pp. 143-224, or the various essays in Grijzenhout and Van Veen, *op.cit.* (note 17).
- 70 See the Epilogue essay: 'Collecting Art of the Golden Age', pp. 293-307, p. 303.
- 71 'Des Tendances de l'art au XIXe siècle', *Revue Universelle des Arts* 1 (1855), pp. 77-85.

- 72 The original page, conserved in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, *Papiers de Thoré-Bürger*, MS 7917, was published in F. Delhasse (éd.), 'Notes et souvenirs de Théophile Thoré. 1807-1869', *Nouvelle Revue Retrospective* 15 (1901), pp. 169-192, p. 171.
- 73 Letter to Félix Delhasse, 20 October, 1856; published in Paul Cottin (ed.), *Thoré-Bürger peint par lui-même. Lettres et notes intimes*, Paris 1900, pp. 159-160.
- 74 Published in Cottin, *op.cit.* (note 73), pp. 159-160.
- 75 *Trésors d'art en Angleterre*, Paris 1857. References here are to the second edition, Bruxelles et Ostende 1860.
- 76 *Il vit, s'écria-t-il, et son oeil se baissa comme surpris par un choc d'émotion. Il faut dire à Emile Diaz qui se rend en Angleterre de nous en donner des nouvelles, qu'il cherche et qu'il nous parle de lui*, Alfred Sensier, *Souvenirs sur Théodore Rousseau*, Paris 1872, p. 196.
- 77 On this subject, see Frances Jowell, 'Le voilé en France: Géricault according to Thoré', in: Régis Michel (ed.), *Géricault. Conférence et Colloque*, Paris 1996, vol. 2, pp. 779-799 (La Documentation française).
- 78 *Trésors*, *op.cit.* (note 75), p. 99.
- 79 *Ibidem*, p. 321.
- 80 *Ibidem*, p. 246.
- 81 'Les Rembrandt de Buckingham Palace à Londres,' *Revue Universelle des Arts* 7 (July 1858), pp. 335-344; 'Généalogie de Rembrandt', *L'Artiste* 1858, n.s. 4, pp. 161-163; 'Les Dessins de Rembrandt au British Museum à Londres', *Revue Germanique* (1858) 3, pp. 392-403; 'Les Rembrandt des collections particulières d'Amsterdam. Galeries de M. Six van Hillegom – de M. van Loon – du baron van Brienen', *L'Artiste* (1858) n.s. 5, pp. 17-22; 'La Première femme de Rembrandt', *Revue Germanique* (1858) 4, pp. 560-578.
- 82 *Guide Joanne*, Paris 1862, pp. 215-216.
- 83 'Salon de 1861. De l'avenir de l'art', *Revue Germanique* 1861, 15, pp. 248-260. This little-known third review of the Salon of 1861 echoes the ideas expressed in his *Nouvelles Tendances de l'Art* dated 1857, but first published as a preface to W. Bürger, *Salons de T. Thoré 1844, 1845, 1846, 1847, 1848*, Paris 1868.
- 84 Bürger was aware of the debates about Realism, and he saw examples of Courbet's works in 1857 and 1858 in Belgium. I hope to deal with his relationship with Courbet in a future article.
- 85 See F.S. Jowell, 'Politique et esthétique: du citoyen Thoré à William Bürger', *La Critique d'Art en France 1850-1900*, Actes du colloque de Clermont Ferrand, 25, 26 et 27 mai 1987, (Jean-Paul Bouillon ed.), Saint-Etienne 1989, pp. 25-41.
- 86 *Salons de Thoré*, see note 83.
- 87 *En effet, dans cette peinture (...) Frans Hals, par la violence de la touche et l'étrangeté du ton, surprend le regard, comme tous les maîtres impétueux et col-*
- oristes*, in 'Frans Hals', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (1868) 24, p. 443. The painting was further publicised the following year in Bürger's article on the Suermondt collection: 'Nouvelles Etudes sur la Galerie Suermondt à Aix-la-Chapelle', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 2e pér. (1869) 1, pp. 162-164. Etching by Unger.
- 88 See Jowell, *op.cit.* (note 85), pp. 36-37, and Jowell, *op.cit.* (note 36), p. 71.
- 89 On Bürger's involvement in the art market, see F.S. Jowell, 'Thoré-Bürger and Vermeer: Critical and Commercial Fortunes', *Shop Talk. Studies in Honor of Seymour Slive*, Cambridge, Mass. 1995, pp. 124-127 and Jowell, *op.cit.* (note 42).
- 90 See Jowell, *op.cit.* (note 85).
- 91 I hope to publish a future study on his fluctuating collection.
- 92 Extract from unpublished undated letter to Suermondt; *Papiers de Thoré-Bürger*, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 7919.
- 93 The painting by Pieter de Hooch in question was *The Visit*, now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Letter to L. Double, 17 March 1869, published in Jowell 1996, *op.cit.* (note 42), p. 124.
- 94 Bürger 1869, *op.cit.* (note 87), p. 6.
- 95 'Les collections particulières', *Paris-Guide*, [1867] 1, p. 541.
- 96 Hecht, *op.cit.* (note 17), p. 174, note 38.

Wilhelm Bode and Dutch painting

• THOMAS W. GAEHTGENS •



Fig. 1
MAX LIEBERMANN,
*Wilhelm Bode looking
at a statuette*, 1890.
Charcoal drawing.
Private collection.

Already during his lifetime Wilhelm Bode was considered a great connoisseur of Italian, Flemish, Dutch and German painting and sculpture (fig. 1). His international reputation, his excellent connections to renowned art dealers and outstanding collectors, as well as his regular contact with upper class, often Jewish, benefactors laid the foundation for his expansion of Berlin's museums. Although at the time of his appointment in 1872, the Gemäldegalerie already owned an important group of works, these could hardly compare with the collections of Europe's other great cities: London, Vienna, Madrid, Paris, Amsterdam or Munich. By the end of his life, however, the Berlin museums had achieved world fame. Bode's aim as director, and later general director, was to expand into new territories. He fostered the Islamic, Asian and ethnographic collections. He himself collected oriental carpets, and later donated them to the newly founded museum for Islamic art.¹

This global perspective in collecting and museum practice grew out of the Empire's cultural and educational policies.² The extraordinary economic dynamism of the period – a result of both industrialisation and the high reparations demanded of France following the war of 1870-1871 – was