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0521662729 - Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity: The Post-Theistic Program of French Social Theory

Andrew Wernick

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I Introduction: rethinking Comte

At the heart of Auguste Comte's program for resolving the 'crisis' of (early) industrial society – and explicitly so with the publication, in 1851, of *Système de politique positive ou Traité de sociologie* – was a project for 'positivising' religion by instituting (as its subtitle announced) *la religion de l'Humanité*. My aim in this inquiry is to interrogate that project, together with the wider conceptualisation to which it was linked.

Today, no doubt, to suggest that Comte's labyrinthine synthesis of philosophy, science, sociology, politics and religion is *worth* reexamining, let alone from its religious side, will meet with scepticism. We have learnt very well to mistrust all systematisers, and we are bored with the shibboleths of the nineteenth century. Who cares, any more, about Comte's totalising scientism, or about the organised idolatry of *la société* which it underwrote? Why dig up Positivism, only (presumably) to bury it again? One answer, I mean to show, stems from Comte's crucial but underrecognised place in the formation of modern, and postmodern, French thought. Another concerns the continuing (or renewed) pertinence of fundamental thinking about the social itself as a topic for reflection. Yet another would argue the value of grappling with Comte as a way to clarify problems in the vantage point (political, reflexive, emancipatory) from which, in the first place, these considerations press into view.

This will already make clear that the interrogation I have in mind is not only the hard questioning of a suspect caught near the scene of a crime. Even those, I will suggest, for whom Comte is the intellectual progenitor of an odiously self-enclosed corporatism may learn something from his thinking. What I propose is an engagement with Comte, not just against and about him. The themes of such an engagement, and its angle of approach, require more comment. But before elaborating, it may be useful to set the stage by recalling first, in Comte's own terms, what he actually meant to establish. What was, or was to be, 'positive' religion?

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The project of Positive Religion

Based on a ‘demonstrable faith’, but otherwise homologous with the Catholic form of Christianity it was ‘destined’ to replace, the religion of Humanity was to be a triple institution.¹ Its full establishment required a doctrine (*dogme*), a moral rule (*régime*) and a system of worship (*culte*), all organised and coordinated through a Positivist Church. The first of these, the doctrine, could be considered established in Comte’s own writings, though not yet in complete form. The ‘objective synthesis’ of the *Philosophie positive* needed to be complemented by a ‘subjective synthesis’, for which the *Politique positive* was to provide the groundwork. As well, though he never got beyond a sketch-plan, there was to be a summarising and integrating *science de la morale*.² Taken as a whole, the Positivist System would provide the scientific–humanist equivalent to what systematic theology had been in the high Middle Ages: it would serve as the intellectually unifying basis of the new industrial order.

Of course, Positivism would be without effect if not disseminated. Hence the need for an educational reform, which in turn was part of a broader pattern of institutional changes designed to provide industrial society with an entire *régime* of cooperative purpose and order.³ What this entailed for the individual was a lifelong process of moral education.⁴ It would begin at home with Mother, continue in the schools with a revamped curriculum under (male) teacher-priests,⁵ and persist in the sermons and ceremonies which Positive Religion would install in a systematic and pervasive ritual round. Prominent among the latter were the sacraments (*présentation, initiation, admission, destination, mariage, maturité, retraite, transformation, incorporation*)⁶ which were to accompany each stage of the life course, and through which each servant of

¹ Comte provides a detailed account of Positive Religion in volume IV of *Politique positive*. Its three parts, moving from *culte* to *dogme* to *régime*, are outlined in chapters 2–4. See x:9–248.

² In the still fuller version of the doctrine, ‘First Philosophy’ would summarise the methodological principles of Positivism, ‘Second Philosophy’ would consist of the Subjective Synthesis, including the theoretical part of *la Morale*, and ‘Third Philosophy’ would systematise *l’action totale de l’Humanité sur son Planète* (x:246–7).

³ ‘Quand la discipline inspirée par l’amour se trouve ainsi fondée sur la foi, le régime la complète et la consolide en développant une activité d’où résulte la réaction, à la fois directrice et répressive, de l’ensemble envers les parties’ (x:167).

⁴ Besides the direct inculcation of *altruisme*, the formula for recalcitrant impulses was that ‘in the name of happiness and duty’ the *instinct nutritif* should be restrained, the sexual instinct severely so, and that envy and vanity should be weakened (x:344).

⁵ From ages 7 to 14, with one year being devoted to each of seven courses of study, corresponding to the seven branches of knowledge (x:250–2).

⁶ The last sacrament, *incorporation* (into *le Grand-Être*) would come after death, following a favourable judgment for those deemed worthy of remembrance (x:130).

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Humanity would solemnly rededicate himself (or herself)⁷ to a life of service.

But it was not only individuals who were to be ‘rallied’ and ‘regulated’. The *régime* governed the form and functioning of the ‘tissues’ and ‘organs’ which made up the social body as a whole. Hence a mass of prescriptions for the harmonious (re)ordering of every major institution. The family: role-divided, chivalric, extended, replete with children, servants and animals (x:292–6). The sphere of production: cooperative, functionally ordered, justly meritocratic (x:338–42). The polity: reduced to the humanly manageable scale of a small republic,⁸ oriented to production not war, and linked to others in an ultimately global confederation. Overarching direction would be provided by a complementary leadership of temporal and spiritual authorities. The former (*les patriciens*) was to consist of bankers, industrialists and engineers from whom, in each republic, a committee of thirty, topped by a triumvirate, would be selected to direct the state (x:345). The new ‘Spirituals’, on the other hand, would be the scientists–philosophers–teachers–pastors encadred in the Positivist priesthood itself.⁹

As with Positivism’s feudal–Catholic predecessor, the two leading powers of industrial society were to be not only functionally distinct: each was to have its own form of rule. The lay elites who coordinated production (and distribution) would control the repressive organs of the state. The officers of the Positivist Church, commanding neither wealth nor force, were to exercise a purely moral suasion (vii:504). But there were also differences. The priests of Humanity would have not only care of souls, but also – having regard to their integrated expertise in all the sciences of Man – of bodies too (x:281). As well, their spiritual authority – i.e. their capacity to mobilise public opinion, whether against incorrigible displays of egoism and immorality, or against destructive social conflict over the distribution of social wealth¹⁰ – would be rooted not only in the prestige of their office as representatives of Humanity and mediators of its grace, but also in the ties ‘spontaneously developed’ between themselves and their natural allies. Positivism would draw the support of *les prolétaires* as industrialism’s indispensable, but excluded,

⁷ For women, destined for marriage and motherhood, and excluded from external careers, there would be three fewer sacraments – i.e. no *destination* independent of *mariage*, and correspondingly no *maturité* or *retrait* (x:123).

⁸ The world, with an estimated population of 140 million, would be divided into 70 republics with 300,000 family households and 1–3 million inhabitants each (x:309–10).

⁹ For the triple function of *le pouvoir spirituel* (‘conseiller, consacrer, et régler’), see x:9. For its guiding role within the wider industrial intelligentsia, see x:253–5.

¹⁰ Salaries would be fixed according to a just scale and dispensed centrally through the employer-based civic authority (x:340).

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class.¹¹ It would also forge links to women, finding in *la femme* a powerful moralising influence hitherto confined within the familial household, for which Positive Religion would provide, at last, due place and recognition.¹²

The third element of positive religion was its cult: the organised yet 'effusive' worship of Humanity. Under the guidance of the new priesthood, this was to be conducted through public festivals (calibrated with the Positivist Calendar in 'appreciations' for the greatest aspects and benefactors of the Grand-Être),¹³ through worship at the family hearth and ancestral tomb, and through thrice-daily private devotions (x:131). If the doctrine was designed to *synthesise* the understanding, and the regime to *synergise* action, the cult was to mobilise and canalise that benevolent harmonisation of the instincts Comte called *sympathie*, as the proper inspiration for the other two.

The living centre of Positive Religion was, indeed, precisely here: in the feelings of venerative, identificatory and devotional love towards Humanity which the liturgy and teaching of its Church were designed continually to engender. As with Feuerbach (1957), Positivism took sentiments, especially those of the most elevated forms of love, to be the essence of religion.¹⁴ In Comte's general formula: feeling guides action in line with practical knowledge supplied by the intellect. The worship of Humanity was to fix in its adherents a lively impression of such harmonious coordination of the whole human being. The effusions of its rituals would also strengthen the altruistic impulses seen as vital for the correct orientation of thinking and acting. To which there was a corollary. If the cult of Humanity 'consecrated feeling over intellect', it also, in the Romantic vocabulary of gender dimorphism, elevated the symbolic role of women, identified by Comte as a sex naturally predisposed to express and embody the finest (and least grossly physical) sentiments of all. From medieval chivalry and Maryolatry, Positive

¹¹ Strictly speaking, *les prolétaires* were not to be considered a 'class' at all, but the 'nutritive' function's 'moral milieu' (x:332–3).

¹² Within the spiritual power, nonetheless, even the saintliest women were subordinate to (exclusively male) priests. 'Le caractère propre au sacerdoce ressort naturellement de sa comparaison générale avec celui qui convient à la femme. Plus sympathiques et plus synthétiques que le milieu pratique qu'ils doivent discipliner, les deux éléments de la spiritualité ne diffèrent que par la proportion des deux qualités, dont la première est plus féminine et la seconde plus sacerdotale' (x:72).

¹³ The Festivals are discussed throughout the *Politique positive*. The *Calendrier* itself, subtitled 'Tableau concret de la préparation humaine', with its thirteen lunar months and prescribed daily festivals, is appended to the *Catéchisme positiviste* (xi:334).

¹⁴ 'Destinée surtout à nous apprendre à vivre pour l'autrui, la religion doit essentiellement consister à régulariser la culture direct des instincts sympathétiques.' This would 'healthily' reverse the priority which Christianity (in traditional form) had given to doctrine over worship (x:85).

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Religion would distil guardian angels and subcults of Clotilde ('ma sainte ange')¹⁵ and the *Vierge-Mère*. Not to mention the sacred icon of *l'Humanité* itself: in the statuary of its Temples, a thirty-year-old woman cradling a boy-child in her tender arms (XI:127).

Looking back over the period of his first synthesis (1826–42) Comte liked to think of himself as the Aristotle of Positivism. With the religious program, announced in the second, he aspired to be its St Paul – not only as an evangelist for the new faith, but above all as the organiser of its Church. Besides congregations, there were literal churches to be built, surrounded by elaborate cemeteries, and Positivist priests to be recruited, trained and set to work. The religion of Humanity was to have two hundred residential presbyteries in France alone, with one priest per 6,000 inhabitants.¹⁶ Beyond that, beginning with the most advanced societies of Western Europe, then spreading from the 'white races' to the 'less advanced' regions of Asia and Africa, it was to expand into a global organisation. Coordinated by national and regional councils, under the overall guidance of seven 'metropolitans', this would culminate in the primacy of the *sacerdoce* in Paris (X:323–7). Not merely St Paul; in fact, Comte was to be Positivism's St Peter as well, inaugurating the office of *Grand-prêtre de l'Humanité* in his own august person.¹⁷

Comte, Nietzsche, Marx

In practical terms, Comte's founding religious project was a complete, even preposterous, failure.¹⁸ It was, like Comte himself, an easy-to-satirise victim of its own rigidities, archaisms and inflated ambition. Nevertheless, the thinking *behind* that project is worth reflecting on because in two important respects the problems with which Comte was grappling in the aftermath of the French Revolution have not only endured but belong, I would argue, within the still unsurpassed horizons of our epoch.

¹⁵ As he called 'Mon éternelle amie, Madame Clotilde de Vaux (née Marie), morte, sous mes yeux, au commencement de sa trente-deuxième année', in the *dédicace* which prefaced the first volume of *Politique positive*.

¹⁶ Each to house 7 vicars and 3 fully fledged priests, plus lay workers and any number of trainees. Altogether, there were to be 100,000 fully qualified Positivist priests worldwide. The master plan is outlined in *Catéchisme positive* (XI:272).

¹⁷ 'Toute la hiérarchie théorique subit immédiatement l'impulsion continue du Grand-Prêtre, qui nomme, déplace, suspend, et même révoque, sous sa seule responsabilité, ses membres quelconques' (X:325–6).

¹⁸ For a first-hand account of the Positivist Society and its aims, see Littré, 1864:592–603. As a curious residue of the Society's Latin American influence, the official state motto of Brazil, where Positivists were active within the modernising elite at the end of the nineteenth century, is to this day *Ordem e progresso*.

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To be noted first is Comte's (anticipatory) relation to Nietzsche as a pioneering but troubled champion of the post-Enlightenment break with theism. For all its dogmatic and ecclesiastical airs, Comte's positive faith in Humanity is suspended over the abyss which Nietzsche inscribed with 'the death of God', to which it can be interpreted as both a panic reaction and a strategic response. Like Nietzsche's madman in the marketplace, Comte was 'seeking God'; yet he was doing so, in the endless turmoil of post-Napoleonic France, in the very midst of God's cultural demise. For Comte, too, the waning of theism in the dawn of positivity entailed, at the limit, not just the decay of belief in an external yet ineffable super-being,¹⁹ nor indeed just the delegitimising moral and political consequences of this. It entailed a shattering epistemic break. The rise of a scientific world-view spelt the end of all supernaturalist ontologies, however attenuated, and their displacement by an immanentist materialism, grasped as the primacy of experienced actuality behind and beyond which we cannot go. At the same time, partly through the discoveries of empirical science itself, this same shift induced a profound decentring. After Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and Newton, the human species upon whose reason and experience the new science was based, was discovered not to be the centre of anything.

[T]he discovery, or rather the proof, of the double movement of the earth constitutes the most important revolution in science belonging to the preliminary stage of human reason . . . it is by virtue of the earth's motion that the Positive doctrine has come to be directly incompatible with all theological doctrine by making our largest speculations relative, whereas previously they had an absolute character. (xi:190–1)

The 'this-sided' disintegration of a shadowy beyond implied the valorisation of human actuality. Yet the Copernican turn undermined the naive anthropocentrism on which the old theism had depended. To make humankind the measure and source of all moral and epistemological value might still be the indicated path. However, if we were to be true to our knowledge, it was a path that could only be taken with the clear recognition that for the human subject to take itself as a foundation was a *relative* standpoint which could only be ratified as such. In any case, a return to innocent illusion was barred. If the humanity pitched into an a-centric universe was to provide itself with a new map and compass, this could only be done in full awareness of the perspectival relativity of all human constructions, and with no guarantees concerning their Truth.²⁰

¹⁹ The historical course of the *décadence de Dieu* is traced in the third volume of *Politique positive* (ix:507 et seq.).

²⁰ Macherey (1989:31–3, 121–2) also notes the similarity between Comte's relativism and

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The striking affinities between Comte's and Nietzsche's understandings of the paradoxical implications of the scientific break from theism are not accidental. Nietzsche cites or alludes to Comte in several of the texts²¹ in which he discusses what it would mean to become contemporary with, and take responsibility for, the enhanced scientific and technological power of the species, and the this-sided grasp of the world on which such knowledge depends. But the relation is two-way. If Nietzsche, in a certain measure, appropriated Comte, Comte can also be read in the light of Nietzsche. That is: his entire reconstructive effort can be seen as an attempt to grapple with the vertiginous disorientation – and nihilism – which Nietzsche was to place at the foreground of attention. Of course it is a different response. Rather than pushing perspectivalism or nihilism all the way, Comte strenuously reacts, in the medium of a traumatised ex-Catholic sensibility, against the threat of 'anarchy', both social and interior to the individual subject. And where Nietzsche, allergic to 'moralic acid', embraced Dionysus (as a figure for the divine but amoral procreativity of Life) against the Crucified, Comte followed the 'secularising' path of those who sought, contrariwise, to extract from Christianity – indeed from all religions – Love as the rational kernel of its ethic, and Humanity as the truth of its God.

The stormy passage, from Hegel to Nietzsche via the Young Hegelians, of the immanent critique of religion in nineteenth-century German thought was examined by Löwith in a celebrated debate with Blumenberg about 'secularisation'.²² A comparison with the corresponding French narrative would be instructive. In general terms, the German development proceeds from the cultural and subjective grounding of 'spirit', an interiorisation of the divine principle that had already been personalised and desacredotalised through Protestantism; whereas the French, in the current that runs through the *idéologues*,

Nietzsche's perspectivism, though without reference to the 'Copernicanism' that is a recurrent theme in Comte (e.g. VII:46 and IX:349).

²¹ Besides the reference to 'positivism' in the 'History of an Error' section of *Twilight of the Idols* (Nietzsche, 1990:50), two passages in *Daybreak* explicitly comment on Comte (Nietzsche, 1982:82, 215–16). I discuss these in chapter 7 below.

²² Löwith's *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (1967) argues the continuity of modern German philosophy with Protestant theology, particularly in those moves which proclaimed a break from, or supersession of, the latter. The general framework is laid out in *Meaning in History* (1949), and it is this text which Blumenberg addresses in *Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1985:27–9). For Löwith, modern thought in repudiating God only secularised the Christian theme of salvation in/through history and so did not involve a fundamental break. The real break was Christianity's own turning away from the cosmos to history as the ground of meaning in the first place. Blumenberg attacks this view as 'substantialist', and insists that intellectual modernity is indeed discontinuous, particularly with regard to its changed grounds for the legitimacy of knowledge and judgment.

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Saint-Simonians and sociologists, generated a civic humanism saturated with the corporatism and religious externalism of the unreconstructedly Catholic. Thus the divinisation of Man implicit, for example, in Feuerbach's ambition to translate theology into anthropology, focussed on the generic essence of the human individual. For Saint-Simon, Comte and Durkheim, on the other hand, divine predicates were shifted onto a metaindividual *topos* constituted by the human collectivity in a strong and organic sense.

Nietzsche, it can be said, broke from any version of this neo-Christian schema, while Comte clearly did not. Indeed, Comte's religion of Humanity can be regarded as just a stopgap, or detour, in the 'self-devaluating of the highest values hitherto' (Nietzsche, 1968:9) which Nietzsche, drawing more radical conclusions, wished to push through to a 'transvaluation of all values'. As such, it would be a case of what Heidegger called 'incomplete nihilism',²³ a critique of metaphysics that takes fright at the abyss of evacuated faith and tries to staunch the wound with debris from the shattered idols. It can even be read as not a real rupture at all. As John Milbank observes, "society is God" can always be deconstructed to read "society is God's presence" (1993:52).

It can nevertheless be argued that Comte still belongs to a Nietzschean problematic because, in his effort to reconstruct subjectivity in light of the scientific transformation of knowledge, he aimed to root out not only supernaturalism but any absolutely fixed truth, and even – notwithstanding any worshipful way *La Déesse* was to be imagined – any essentialist mysticism about Humanity itself. Against readings of Comte, then, that primarily emphasise his continuity with the ideology²⁴ (Nisbet, 1973) and theology (Milbank, 1993) of the Catholic reactionaries, I would like to insist that his religiosity is *also* marked by the deeply reflected tension of a thought which is, so to speak, becoming post-theistic. As such, its lines of flight intersect with contemporary discussions which, via Heidegger, Bataille and the postmoderns, have revived Nietzsche's scenario of dying gods and twilight idols as the

²³ 'Incomplete nihilism does indeed replace the former values with others, but it still posits the latter always in the old position of authority that is, as it were, gratuitously maintained and the ideal realm of the supersensory. Completed nihilism however must do away even with the place of value itself, with the supersensory as a realm' (1977a:69). For Heidegger, Nietzsche's own 'positivist' enmeshment in a vocabulary of values and valuation left him still within the modern philosophy of the subject, so that his own transvaluation was itself only 'incompletely nihilist' (ibid.:104–9).

²⁴ Nisbet's emphasis on the influence of conservative religious thought on French sociology (e.g. 1973:238–41) leads him to misread some aspects of the latter. Speaking of Durkheim, he observes, 'His positivism has little to do with Comte's brand' (1965:28).

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groundless ground on which to construct an understanding of our own discontents and possibilities.

Comte's contradictory position as an anti-metaphysician who sacralises a socio-historical conception of the human also holds a special interest for those trying to think through what it means, at millennium's end, to be of (or on) the left. As an eccentric outrider of the Saint-Simonians, Comte belongs to the ideological preformation of modern socialism.²⁵ As such, his work may be dismissed as a historical footnote to the founders. What is worth highlighting, though, is precisely what was entailed by this preformative role.

Comte not only espoused, but deeply probed the rationale for, a cooperative form of society; a rationale which he linked on the one hand to the fundamental (and historically developing) nature of social being, and on the other to the problems of developing a non-transcendentalist religious perspective in tune with the scientific age. Considering that the deepest presuppositions of the transformist impulse – for so long 'wized and out of sight' both in the Marxism that has prevailed on its radical side and in the moralism (manifest today in identity politics and the 'equity agenda') that has prevailed on its reformist side – became fragile and exposed in the unravelling of the socialist project in the last decades of the twentieth century, we can see here a second order of contemporary significance. As displayed, for example, in Habermas's reflection on communicative rationality (1987), in Derrida's spectrological meditations on justice as the 'messianic' element in Marx (1993), in Levinas's phenomenology of the Other (1969), and (at a less exalted theoretical level) in Lerner's 'politics of meaning' (1996), a reconsideration of the ideological, even religious, roots of socialism has moved (back) on to the agenda. Re-examining earlier figures like Comte, then, can become part of a renewed effort to clarify, and soberly rethink, what most deeply defines a progressive, emancipatory or – to use the maligned word – communist commitment.

Comte, to be sure, is a strange mirror to hold up. His political relation to the socialist tradition is ambiguous, to say the least. A top-down reformist who eschewed the collectivisation of private property in favour of measures to ensure its morally responsive stewardship,²⁶ his politics

²⁵ For Comte's place in the larger contemporary Parisian constellation of prophetic and utopian thinkers, see Manuel, 1962:249–96.

²⁶ These measures included: the establishment of a fixed scale of salaries (x:340–3), the institution of local *salons* for mingling and instruction, which would bring *patriciens* and *prolétaires* together in the same moral milieu (x:314–15), and a succession process in which the passage of property to heirs would be vetted, and eventually, through artificial conception (x:278), separated from heredity as such. The total intended effect was to create a moral atmosphere in which *occupations personnelles* would be converted

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had much in common with the Saint-Simonian current, in whose direct orbit he was from 1817 to 1825.²⁷ His political objective, which never changed, was to complete the work of 1789 by developing an institutional framework (including a ‘terrestrial morality’) within which science-based knowledge and production could become systematic, harmonious and predominant, to the benefit of society as a whole. Remnants of the *ancien régime* were at first the main target. ‘It is on the revolutionary school alone’, he noted in *Philosophie positive*, ‘that we can expect that the positive polity can experience a predominant influence, because this is the only one that is always open to new action on behalf of progress.’²⁸ In that spirit, he was an anti-monarchist during the Bourbon restoration, while under Louis-Philippe he urged a cross-class alliance of workers and ‘patriciens’ to press for the reforms that would permit the new industrial/positive system fully to emerge. At the same time, and increasingly, Comte was a partisan of order as well as progress. He was hostile to any form of popular insurrection, or indeed democratising project. With the rise of a radical workers’ movement in the watershed decade of the 1840s, he began, accordingly, to seek alliances on the right. In the upheavals of 1848–51, he detached himself from the republicans, argued for a ‘dictatorship’ (as under Danton), then gave cautious welcome to Louis Bonaparte, whose regime he tried to win to the cause.²⁹ When that came to nothing, he was again pushed into

into *fonctions civiques*, and in which all would be cooperating in a collective and, above all, future-oriented task (ix:491).

²⁷ In 1817 Comte became Saint-Simon’s personal secretary and editor of his house journal, *L’Industrie*. The master’s refusal to acknowledge Comte’s authorship of key articles, and arguments about who was stealing ideas from whom, led to a bitter break. On Saint-Simon’s death in 1825, Comte nonetheless agreed to contribute an essay to the founding issue of *Le Producteur*, which his closest followers put together a bare three weeks after the old man was gone. For a detailed account of Comte’s break with Saint-Simon, see Gouhier (1965:95–109) and Pickering (1993:192–244). The essay at the centre of their final dispute (which Comte wrote in 1822 but which Saint-Simon published, with a disclaimer, only in 1824) was ‘Plan des travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la société’. He always referred to it as ‘mon opuscule fondamental’. He republished it, with five other early essays, as an appendix to the last volume of *Politique positive*.

²⁸ Martineau, 1853, II:437. A critical but ‘appreciative’ assessment of the ‘époque critique, ou âge de transition révolutionnaire’ is laid out in the 55th *leçon* of *Le cours de philosophie positive* (v:394–623).

²⁹ For Comte’s political trajectory, see Pickering, 1993:chs. 2 and 10, and Gouhier, 1965:144–8. Comte’s critique of the Bourbon Restoration for its ‘retrograde’ alliance with remnants of the *ancien régime* continued into the Orleanist regime of Louis-Philippe. Unlike other moderate Republicans, though, he equally opposed Parliamentarism, as he made clear in a letter (with other signatories) he sent to Louis-Philippe in 1840 (Pickering, 1993:432). After seeking the support of women and workers in the *Catéchisme positiviste* of 1852, he sought those of *les hommes d’état* in his *Appel aux conservateurs*, which appealed for subsidies to support (his own) *sacerdoce*. Its tone may