

# Ch. 22 McKay: Life in the Emerging Urban Society



• **European History**

**Before we begin, some context:**

**Today, in the Western World, an overwhelming majority of people live in urban areas; that is, cities or their suburbs. Prior to 1850, and certainly before the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the situation was otherwise. Most people lived on farms or in market towns, and the largest cities (London, Paris, New York) were small both in area and in population.**



**But several factors combined in the 1800s to change this:**

- 1) The growth of industry required a large residential work force near the factories.**
- 2) The growth of overseas trade required a large residential work force near port cities.**
- 3) Improvements in transport allowed food and other necessities to be brought into cities in sufficient quantities to sustain large populations.**



**The limiting factors which remained were:**

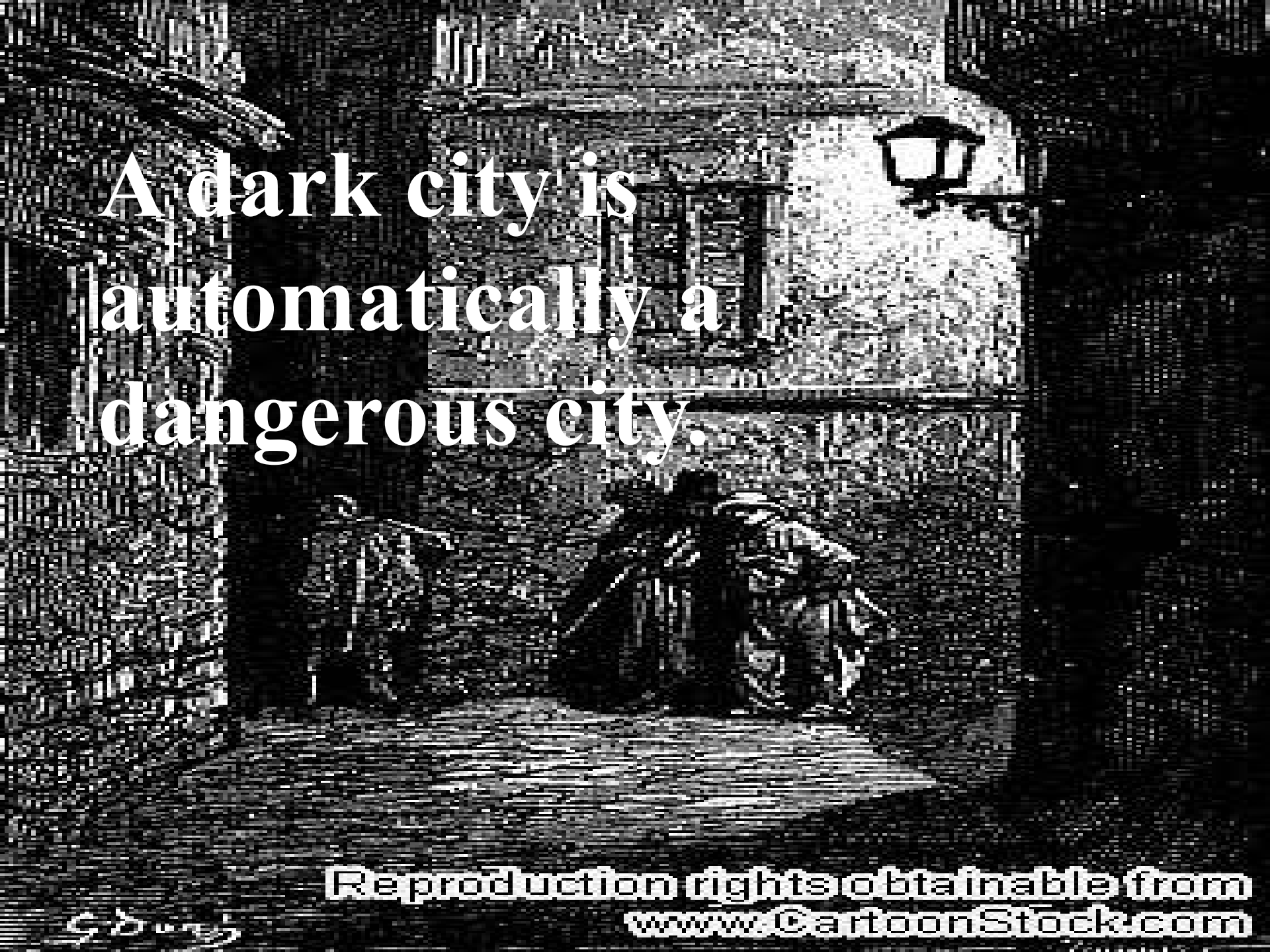
- 1) Lack of adequate housing and public transportation**
- 2) Lack of lighting technology**
- 3) Poor sanitation and hygiene**

**Once these problems were addressed in the latter half of the century, urban growth changed gears, from rapid to explosive.**

**“In England two-thirds of the people lived in places of 20,000 or less in 1830, (but) in 1914 two-thirds lived in places of 20,000 or more...Some places, like the English Midlands and the Ruhr Valley in Germany, became a mass of contiguous smaller cities, vast urban agglomerations divided only by municipal lines.”**



**The Midlands of England:**



A dark city is  
automatically a  
dangerous city.

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**People looked to government for help with urban problems, but government was slow to react. Most improvements were the result of for-profit private innovation and applied science. Some were the result of changes in people's own behavior.**

**1) By 1914, most large cities had developed a subway or elevated-train and trolley system.**

**2) The gas light and later, the electric lamp, made it safer to walk around at night**

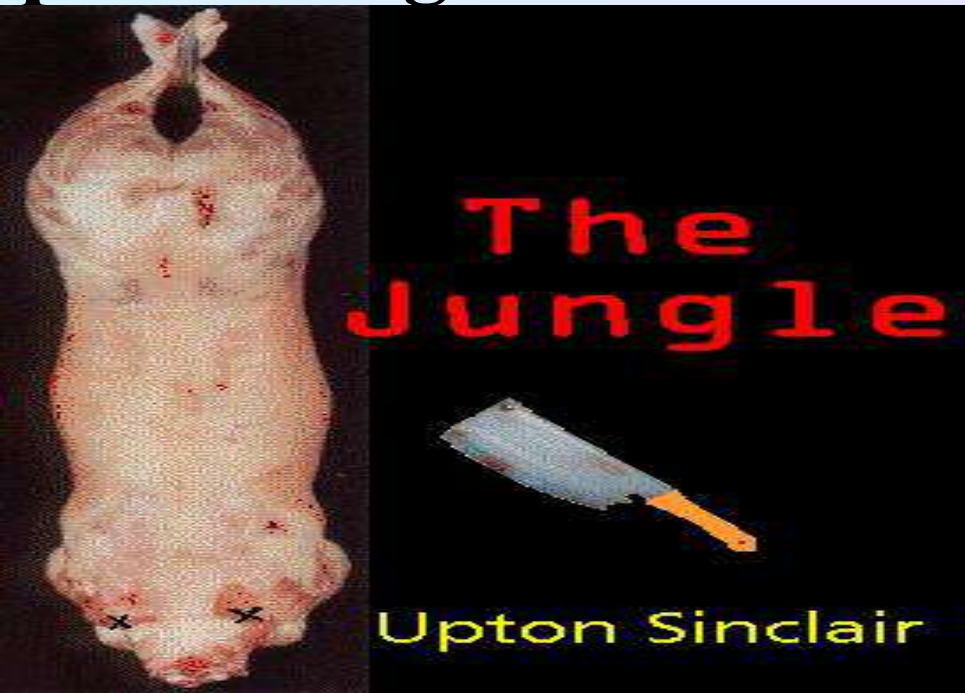




**The improvements in sewage systems advocated by Chadwick in England had been effected in England, America and the Continent by 1914, and coupled with the innovation of indoor plumbing, things were looking up — so people didn't have to!**



**Arguably the biggest boon was the application of newfound knowledge about bacteria and disease, such as Louis Pasteur's discoveries. Still to come were modern hospitals, and for that matter, hygienic food processing.**



**Modern boulevards (built on areas cleared of slums) and public parks (ditto) greatly improved the lives of urban dwellers.**

Hyde Park, London

An aerial photograph of Hyde Park in London. The park is a large, green, tree-filled area with a central pond and several paths. To the left, a large, ornate Gothic-style building is visible. To the right, there are modern urban buildings and a road with cars. The text 'Hyde Park, London' is overlaid in white on the lower part of the image.

**One other very important change on a city-wide level was the trend toward neighborhoods based on socio-economic class. Before the advent of public transport, poor and rich lived side by side, since the latter employed the former. Now, poor people could travel from the ghettos they inhabited to the homes, shops or factories of their employers.**





**Unlike today, the richer neighborhoods were closest to the city center.**

**Only 20% of the population was middle class or wealthy, so there were vast urban slums. But the middle class was still big enough to:**

- 1) Subdivide into upper-middle (industrialists, bankers), middle-middle (doctors, lawyers), and lower-middle (store managers, clerks)**
- 2) Develop a group identity based on lifestyle and a code of moral behavior.**

**The working classes were divided into the families of skilled vs. unskilled workers. “Families” may be stretching it, since among the urban poor, it was often questionable who was related to whom. While skilled workers embraced the middle class moral code and tried to meet its demands, the unskilled tended to mock or ignore it**





**“Working-class leisure included drinking in taverns; watching sports, especially racing and soccer; and attending music hall performances... Working class church attendance declined in the nineteenth century.” By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it mustn’t have been so bad to be an urban worker, as long as you kept your family size down. That, in fact, is one of the major outcomes of urbanization.**



**How could people before the “pill” was created limit family size?” The answer is many-fold, and shocking in its own way:**

- 1) Marriage was delayed further and further into a couple’s twenties.**
- 2) Husbands and wives had sex infrequently.**

**3) Religion lost its hold, especially on men, in the cities. They ignored the Bible's proscriptions against sex not geared for reproduction.**

**4) Many women simply did without, their fear of slaving over a huge brood of kids (or dying in childbirth, which was still common) overcoming their sexual urges.**

**5) Primitive forms of birth control and abortion were already being used, and widespread venereal disease reduced overall fertility.**

**Many kids, though, were still being born to working-class urban dwellers in Europe. There were three additional checks on family size:**

- 1) Infant and child mortality remained high.**
- 2) Kids as young as fourteen took off for America.**
- 3) By sixteen, many boys joined the army or navy, and many girls hired on as domestic servants.**

**Now, at the same time, kinship ties within extended families helped working-class people get along. One example was the in-family adoption, where if a couple could not feed their latest child, cousins (or siblings, or young aunts/uncles) who were wealthier or unable to conceive would adopt the child as their own.**



**Back to the middle class for a moment. Middle-class people had to marry within their class. Understand why?**

- If you were a middle class man, and you married a working-class girl, you would be expected to support her extended family financially.**
- If you were a middle class woman, and you married a working-class man, since you didn't work you'd be forced to accept a working-class standard of living**

**In the middle class, women in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century were “relegated to the domestic sphere”, which meant they controlled family finances and their kids’ education, but could not work outside the home.**

**Romance was considered ideal but not necessary.**

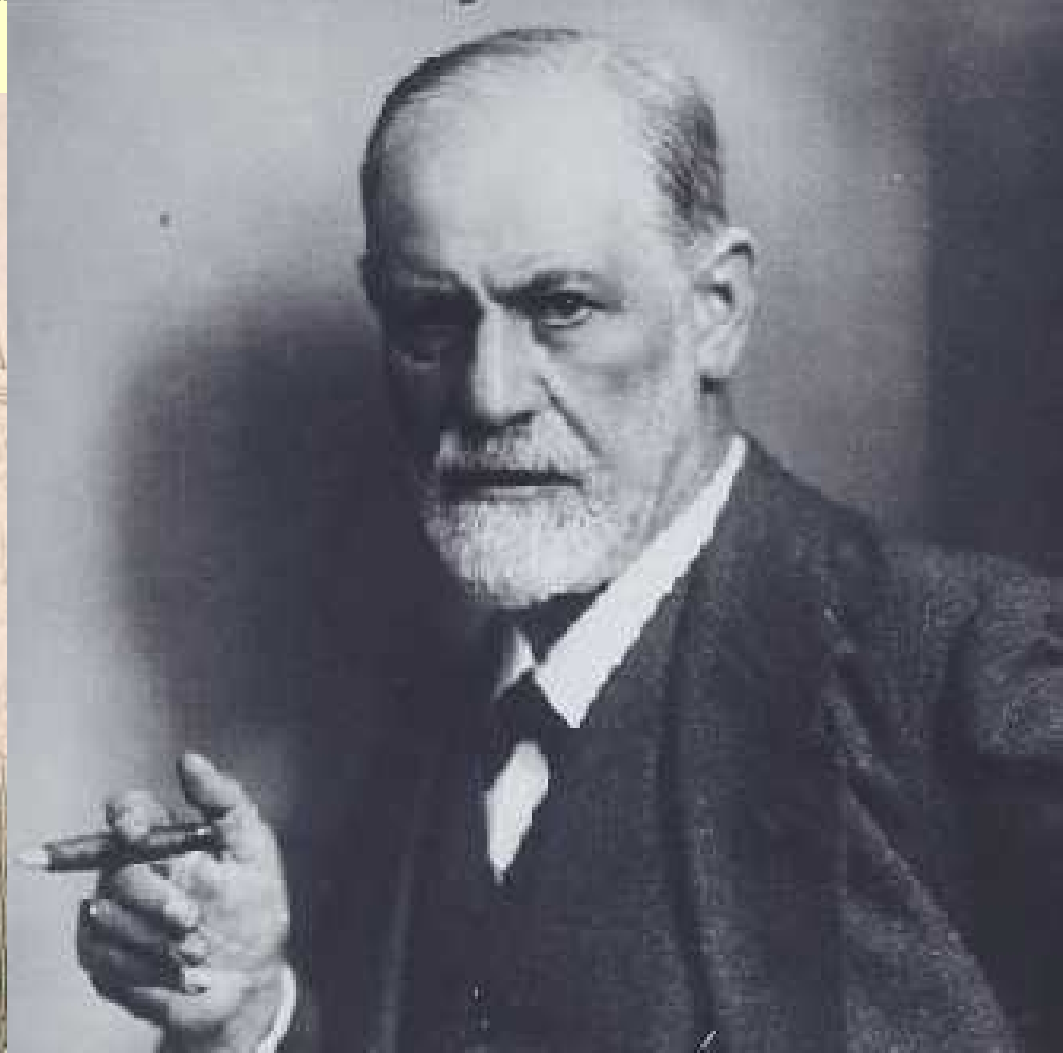
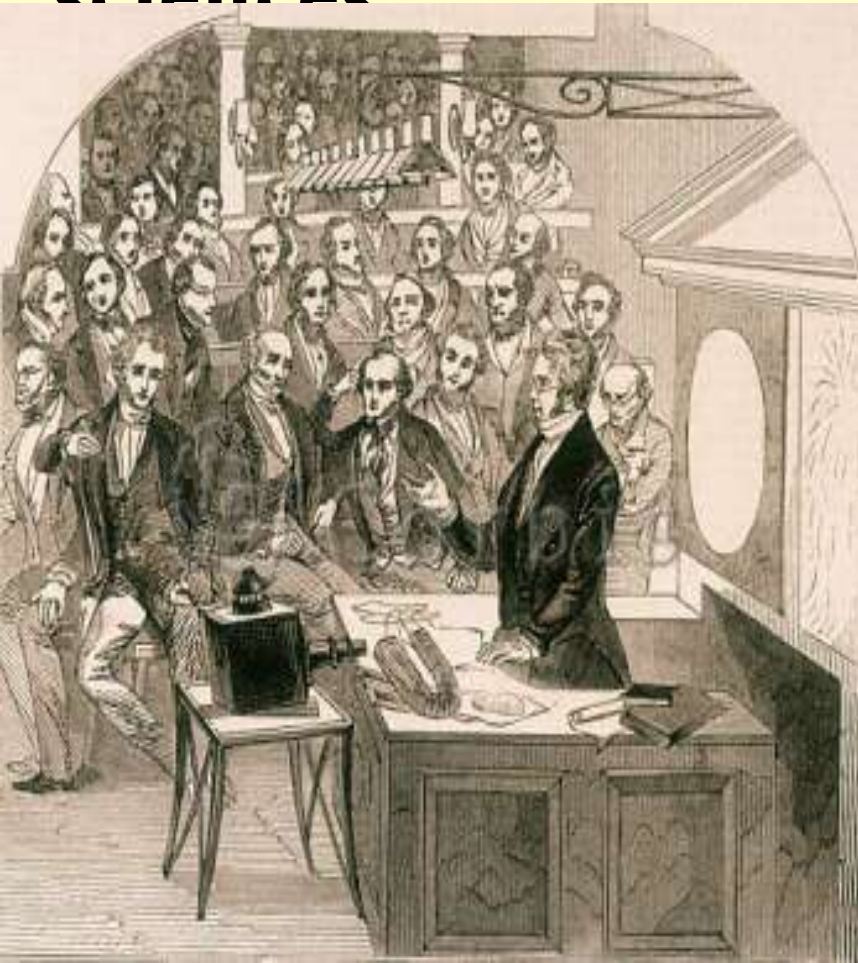
**The love and adoration of the mother was mostly directed at their children.**



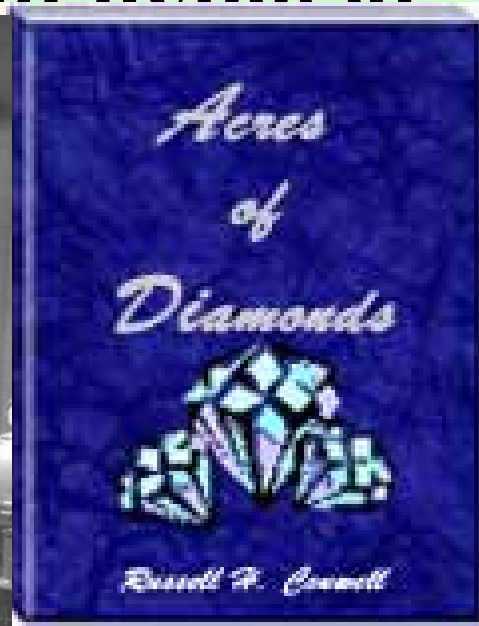
**Of course, “increased connection often meant increased control.”**



**Let's conclude by looking at the relationship between urbanization and the burst of discoveries in the physical and social sciences.**



**As we've seen, urbanization created an urgent need for the practical application of science. Also, it made possible a great expansion in the number of colleges and technical schools, since the sons of the middle class and even skilled laborers could take classes part-time while working and living at**



## A Tale of Three Cities: Electrification and the Structure of Choice in the Ruhr, 1886-1900

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*Technological systems often take on characteristics of their social and political contexts. This was particularly clear during the 1890s, when alternating-current and direct-current systems offered different advantages. In the late nineteenth century, the two cities of Dortmund and Essen were expansive, and introduced electric light and power systems using alternating current to promote that tendency.*

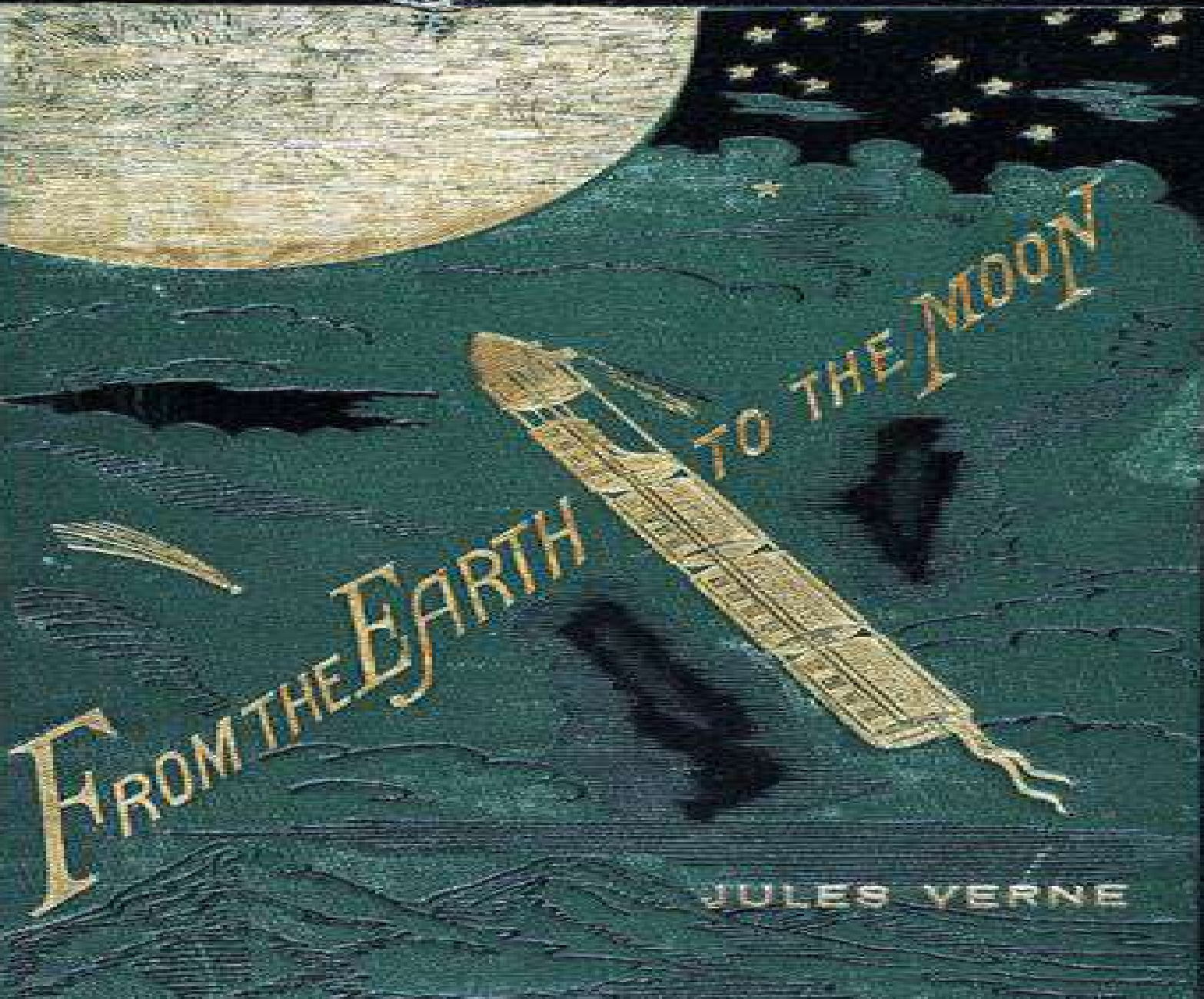
**A virtuous cycle developed, where widespread public education increased appreciation for science and technology, which enabled (again, think electric lights and subways) a broadening majority of the population to attend the *gymnasium*, what we in America would call high school.**

**Although you might read such a quest as romantic (being emotional and self-referential), the thrust in late 19<sup>th</sup> century literature was toward Realism. This, too, was partly a reflection of urbanization. People realized at some point that everyone couldn't return to Eden, Eden being unable to sustain millions of city-dwellers. "Life as it really was" required science, and its applications to daily urban life. Thus, the new wave of Utopian thinkers set their (often socialist) visions in cities with high-tech conveniences.**

**It also became impossible to ignore the role of environment in the development of human behavior. Urban life was associated with a variety of vices, which the strongest genetics could only partly overcome. This made for more balanced theories of human development, economics and political science, and it created the first interest in urban design, planned suburbs, and even residential architecture.**



**A new genre in literature, science fiction, was, in some sense, “realistic”. The miracles, at least, were grounded in science. It was also among the literate urban middle class that science fiction attracted its first audience. Jules Gabriel Verne (February 8, 1828–March 24, 1905) was a French author who pioneered the science-fiction genre. He is best known for novels such as *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1870), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873). Verne wrote about space, air, and underwater travel before air travel and practical submarines were invented, and before practical means of space travel had been devised.**



FROM THE EARTH

TO THE MOON

JULES VERNE

# The Triumph of Science in Industry

- Scientific Advancement = More practical benefits = more influence on thought
- Physicists developed the laws of thermodynamics
- Chemists learned to measure atomic weight = Mendeleev's Periodic Table
- Coal Tar was converted into synthetic dye for emerging fashion industry
- Electricity becomes a commercial form of energy.
- 1890 – Petroleum powered internal combustion engine
- “R&D” became an important part of corporate infrastructure
- Science became a buzzword in newspapers and magazines.
- The general public began trusting the validity of science over everything else.



# Modern University and Social Sciences

- 1880s – Europe’s major Universities modernized and professionalized.
- Emphasis on controlled research.
- Faculty now also devoted to social sciences.
- Studies numerical data that governments collect (census, crime reports, hospital reports, etc)
- Sociology – the study of social groups emerged as a leading social science.
- Max Weber – “The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” – argues that capitalism and industrialism linked to Protestant values.
- Emile Durkheim – Leading sociologist who studies religious beliefs, and wrote landmark “Suicide” which studied the emergence of widespread suicide throughout Europe.
- Sociologist believed urban industrial society led to rationalization and modernization but caused a loss of community

# Darwin and Natural Selection

- Scientific research began directly challenging traditional beliefs
- Charles Lyell – discredited view of earth being shaped by short lived events like earthquakes and floods. Instead believed earth had formed over an immensely long period.
- Jean Baptiste Lamarck – asserts all forms of life arise from a long process of adjusting to environment.
- Charles Darwin – “On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection”. Argues that beneficial variations in species lead them to evolve over time. Best version of species are naturally selected through higher survival rates.
- Herbert Spencer – applied Darwin’s theory to human affairs. Coined phrase “survival of the fittest”. Fits neatly within Classical Liberal philosophy.
- Nationalists adopted “Social Darwinism” as justification for their aggression and domination of other nations and cultures. Leads to imperialism.

# Realism in Art and Literature

- Around 1840 the Realism movement emerged in art and literature. Objective “scientific” approach to capturing the world exactly as it is.
- Rejected the romantic search for the exotic, beautiful, or sublime.
- Realists focused on the working class, exploring sex, labor strikes, violence, alcoholism – goal was to reveal the savageness of urban living.
- The realist movement began in France where romanticism never fully took hold.
- Gustave Courbet, Jean-Francois Millet, and Honore Daumier painted scenes of laboring workers and peasants in somber colors and simple compositions.
- Literary realism began in France – Honore de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, and Emile Zola became internationally famous novelists.
- Balzac – “The Human Comedy” portrays urban society as grasping, amoral, and brutal.
- Flaubert – “Madame Bovary” – portray the middle class as petty, smug, and hypocritical. Demonstrates psychological insights new to literary world.
- Emile Zola – wrote gripping, carefully researched stories about the stock exchange, department store, the army, urban slums, and coal strikes.
- Leo Tolstoy – “War and Peace” regards free will as an illusion. Only human love, trust, and family can endure through his fatalistic theory of history.

# Gustave Courbet – Self Portrait (The Desperate Man)



# Jean Francois Millet – The Gleaners



# Honore Daumier – The Chess Players



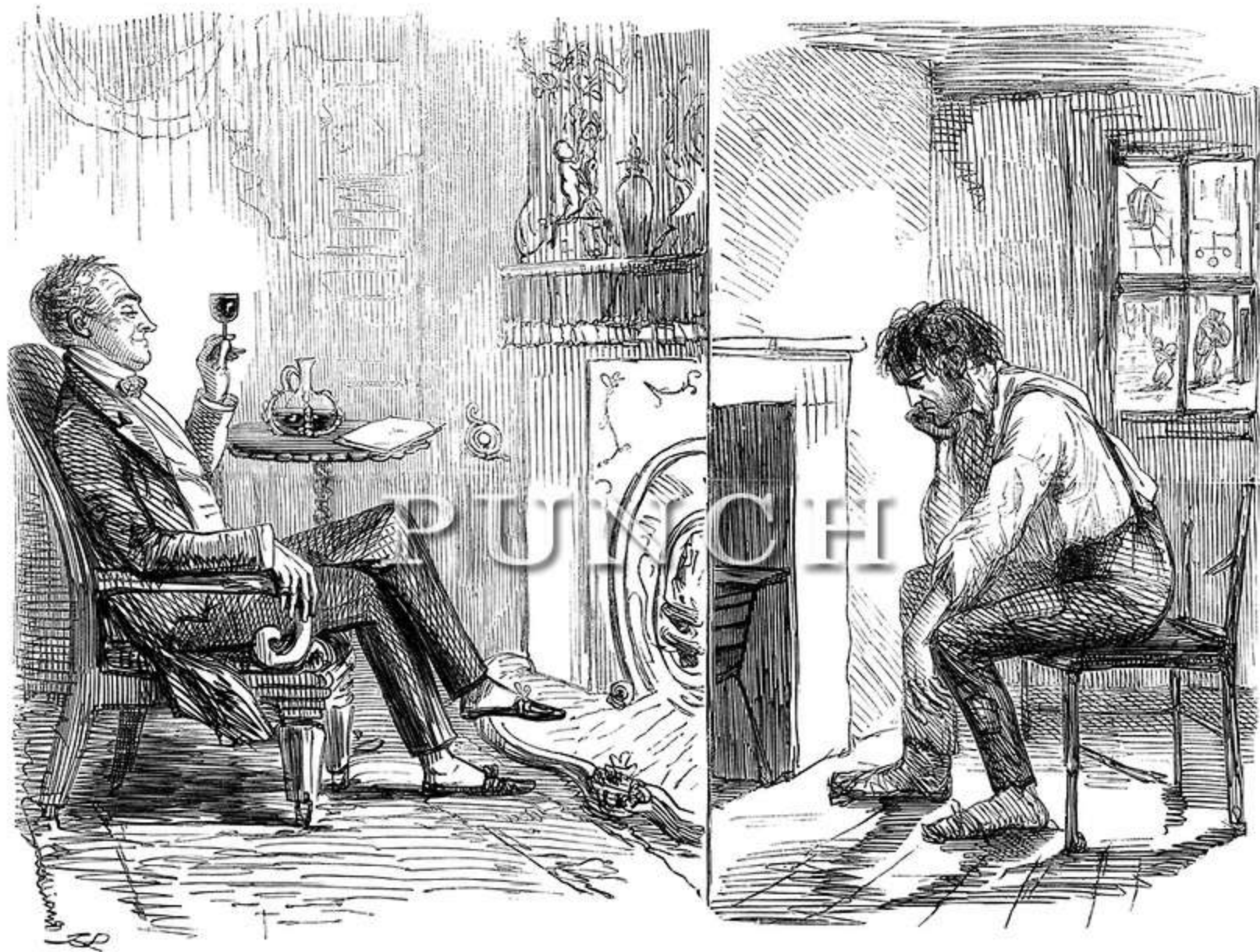
# Balzac Quotes

- “Laws are spider webs through which the big flies pass and the little ones get caught.”
- “Behind every great fortune there is a crime.”
- “Every moment of happiness requires a great amount of Ignorance”
- “It is absurd to pretend that one cannot love the same woman always, as to pretend that a good artist needs several violins to execute a piece of music.”

# Flaubert Quotes

- “To be stupid, selfish, and have good health are three requirements for happiness, though if stupidity is lacking, all is lost.”
- “The public wants work which flatters its illusions.”
- “But, in her life, nothing was going to happen. Such was the will of God! The future was a dark corridor, and at the far end the door was bolted.”





## EFFECTS OF A STRIKE

UPON THE CAPITALIST

AND

UPON THE WORKING MAN.



THE "SILENT HIGHWAY"-MAN.

"Your MONEY or your LIFE!"



A COURT FOR KING CHOLERA.