

**Marx and Engels among Socialists in Paris,  
the late summer of 1844**

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Karl Marx and Frederick Engels'

# **THE HOLY FAMILY or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Company.**

"When I visited Marx in Paris in the  
summer of 1844, our complete agreement  
in all theoretical fields became evident and  
our joint work dates from that time."

*Frederick Engels*

During Engels' short stay in Paris in 1844, Marx suggested the two of them should write a critique of the rage of their day, the Young Hegelians. In the doing was born the first joint writing project between the two men -- and a life-long association that would change the world.

At the end of August, 1844, Engels passed through Paris, *en route* to his employment in Manchester, England, from visiting his family in Barmen (Germany). During 10 days in the French capital, he met Marx (for the second time).

After talking, they began drawing up plans for a book about the Young Hegelian trend of thought very popular in academic circles. Agreeing to co-author the Foreword, they divided up the other sections. Engels finished his assigned chapters before leaving Paris. Marx had the larger share of work, and he completed it by the end of November 1844. (Marx would draw from his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, on which he'd been working the spring and summer of 1844.)

The foremost title line -- "The Holy Family" -- was added at the suggestion of the book publisher Lowenthal. It's a sarcastic reference to the Bauer brothers and their supporters.

The book made something of a splash in the newspapers. One paper noted, that it expressed socialist views since it criticised the "inadequacy of any half-measures directed at eliminating the social ailments of our time." The conservative press immediately recognized the radical elements inherent in its many arguments. One paper wrote that, in *The Holy Family*, "every line preaches revolt... against the state, the church, the family, legality, religion and property." It also noted that "prominence is given to the most radical and the most open communism, and this is all the more dangerous as Mr. Marx cannot be denied either extremely broad knowledge or the ability to make use of the polemical arsenal of Hegel's logic, what is customarily called 'iron logic.'"

Lenin would later claim this work laid the foundations for what would develop into a scientific revolutionary materialist socialism.

Bruno Bauer attempted to rebut the book in the article "Charakteristik Ludwig Feuerbachs" -- which was published in *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift*, Leipzig 1845. Bauer essentially claimed that Marx and Engels misunderstood what he was really saying. Marx would reply to that article with his own article -- published in the journal *Gesellschaftsspiegel*, Elberfeld, January 1846. And the matter was also discussed in chapter 2 of *The German Ideology*.

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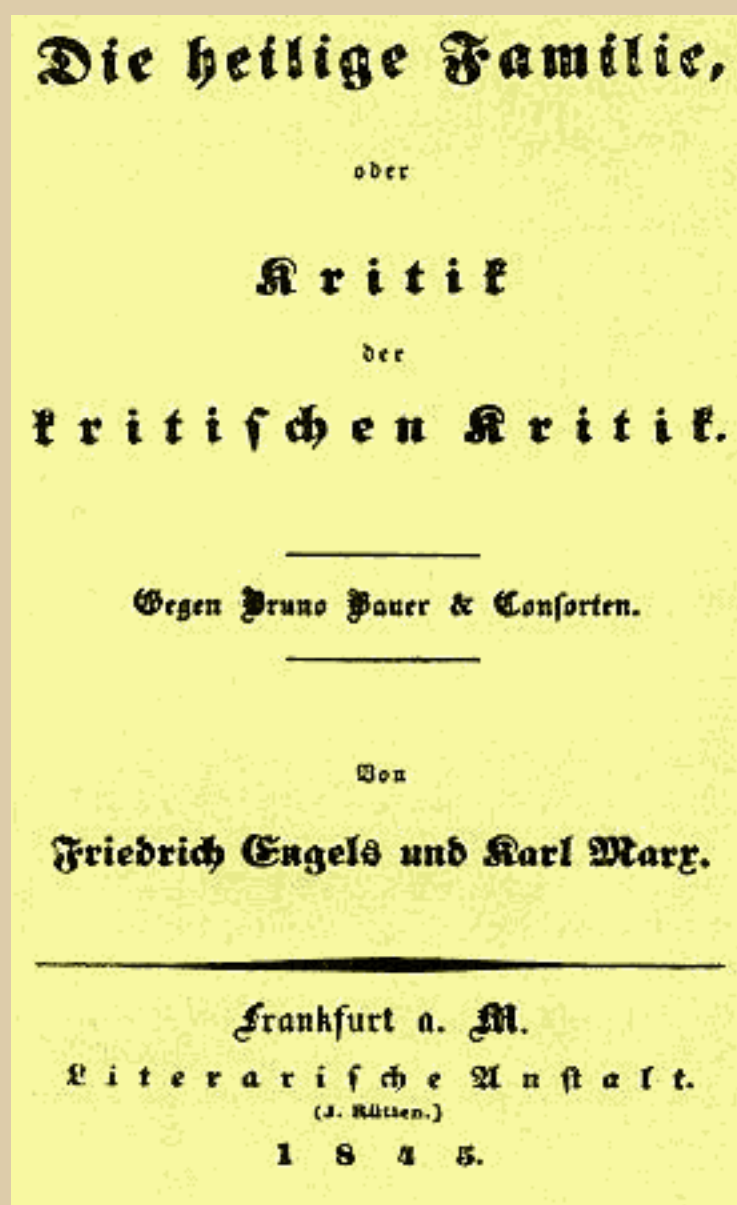
ONLINE EDITION: Written between September and November 1884, this book was first published in February 1845, Frankfurt am Main. The work was never translated into English in either man's lifetime. This 1956 English translation is by Richard Dixon and Clement Dutt and is taken from the 1845 German edition. It is transcribed for the MEIA by Peter Byrne, 1997.

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## Foreword

*Real humanism* has no more dangerous enemy in Germany than *spiritualism* or *speculative idealism*, which substitutes "*self-consciousness*" or the "*spirit*" for the *real individual man* and with the evangelist teaches: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." Needless to say, this incorporeal spirit is spiritual only in its imagination. What we are combating in *Bauer's* criticism is precisely *speculation* reproducing itself as a *caricature*. We see in it the most complete expression of the *Christian-Germanic* principle, which makes its last effort by transforming "*criticism*" itself into a transcendent power.

Our exposition deals first and foremost with *Bruno Bauer's Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* -- the first eight numbers are here before us -- because in it Bauer's criticism, and with it the nonsense of *German speculation in general*, has reached its peak. The more completely Critical Criticism (the criticism of the *Literatur-Zeitung*) distorts reality into an obvious comedy through philosophy, the more instructive it is. -- For examples see *Faucher* and *Szeliga*. -- The *Literatur-Zeitung* offers material by which even the broad public can be enlightened on the illusions of speculative philosophy. That is the aim of our book.

Our exposition is naturally determined by its *subject*. Critical Criticism is in all respects *below* the level already attained by German theoretical development. The nature of our subject therefore justifies our refraining *here* from further *discussion* of that development itself.

Critical Criticism makes it necessary rather to assert, in contrast to it, the already achieved results *as such*.

We therefore give this polemic as a preliminary to the independent works in which we -- each of us for himself, of course -- shall present our positive view and thereby our positive attitude to the more recent philosophical anti social doctrines.

Paris, September 1834

Engels, Marx

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## Chapter I

### "CRITICAL CRITICISM IN THE FORM OF A MASTER-BOOKBINDER", OR CRITICAL CRITICISM AS HERR REICHARDT

Critical Criticism, however superior to the mass it deems itself, nevertheless has boundless pity for the mass. And Criticism so loved the mass that it sent its only begotten son, that all who believe in him may not be lost, but may have Critical life. Criticism was made mass and dwells amongst us and we behold its glory, the glory of the only begotten son of the father. In other words, Criticism becomes socialistic and speaks of "works on pauperism". It does not regard it as a crime to be equal to God but alienates itself and takes the form of a master-bookbinder and humiliates itself to the extent of nonsense -- indeed even to Critical nonsense in foreign languages. It, whose heavenly virginal purity shrinks from contact with the sinful leprous mass, overcomes itself to the extent of taking notice of "*Bodz*" and "*all* original writers on pauperism" and "has for years been following this evil of the present time step by step"; it scorns writing for experts, it writes for the general public, banning all outlandish expressions, all "Latin intricacies, all professional jargon". It bans all that from the works of *others*, for it would be too much to expect Criticism itself to submit to "this administrative regulation". And yet it does do so partly, renouncing with admirable ease, if not the words themselves, at least their content. And who will reproach it for using "the huge heap of unintelligible foreign words" when it repeatedly proves that it does not understand those words itself, Here are a few samples:

"That is why the *institutions of mendicancy* inspire them with horror."

"A doctrine of responsibility in which every motion of *human thought becomes an image of Lot's wife*."

"On the keystone of this really *profound edifice of art*."

"This is the main content of Stein's political testament, which the great statesman handed in even before retiring from the active service of the government and from all its transactions."

"This people had *not yet any dimensions* at that time for such extensive freedom."

"By *palavering* with fair assurance at the end of his publicistic work that only confidence was still lacking."

"To the manly state-elevating understanding, rising above routine and pusillanimous fear, reared on history and nurtured with a live perception of foreign public state system."

"The education of general national welfare."

"Freedom lay dead in the *breast of the Prussian national mission* under the control of the authorities."

"*Popular-organic* publicism."

"The people to whom even Herr Brüggemann delivers the *baptismal certificate of its adulthood*."

"A rather glaring contradiction to the other *certitudes* which are expressed in the work on the professional capacities of the people."

"Wretched self-interest quickly dispels all the *chimeras of the national will*."

"Passion for great gains, etc., was the spirit that pervaded the whole of the Restoration period and which, with a *fair quantity of indifference*, adhered to the new age."

"The obscure idea of political significance to be found in the *Prussian countrymanship nationality rests on the memory of a great history*."

"The antipathy disappeared and turned into a completely exalted condition."

"In this wonderful transition each one in his own way still *put forward in prospect* his own special *wish*."

"A catechism with unctuous Solomon-like language the words of which rise gently like a dove -- chirp! chirp! -- to the regions of pathos and *thunder-like aspects*."

"All the *dilettantism of thirty-five years of neglect*."

"The *too sharp thundering* at the citizens by one of their former town authorities could have been suffered with the calmness of mind characteristic of our representatives if Benda's view of the Town Charter of 1808 had not laboured under a *Mussulman conceptual affliction* with regard to the essence and the application of the Town Charter."

In Herr Reichardt, the audacity of style always corresponds to the audacity of the thought. He makes transitions like the following:

"Herr Brüggemann ... 1843 ... state theory ... every upright man ... the great modesty of our Socialists ... natural marvels ... demands to be made on Germany ... supernatural marvels ... Abraham ... Philadelphia ... manna ... baker ... but *since* we are speaking of *marvels*, *Napoleon* brought," etc.

After these samples it is no wonder that Critical Criticism gives us a further "explanation" of a sentence which it itself describes as expressed in "popular language", for it "arms its eyes with organic power to penetrate chaos". And here it must be said that then even "popular language" cannot remain unintelligible to Critical Criticism. It is aware that the way of the writer must necessarily be a crooked one if the individual who sets out on it is not strong enough to make it straight; and therefore it naturally ascribes "mathematical operations" to the author.

It is self-evident -- and history, which proves everything which is self-evident, also proves this -- that Criticism does not become mass in order to remain mass, but in order to redeem the mass from its mass-like mass nature, that is, to raise the popular language of the mass to the critical language of Critical Criticism. It is the lowest grade of degradation for Criticism to learn the popular language of the mass and transfigure that vulgar jargon into the high-flown intricacy of the dialectics of Critical Criticism.



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## Chapter II

### "CRITICAL CRITICISM" AS A "MILL-OWNER", OR CRITICAL CRITICISM AS HERR JULES FAUCHER

After rendering most substantial services to self-consciousness by humiliating itself to the extent of nonsense in foreign languages, and thereby at the same time freeing the world from pauperism, Criticism still further humiliates itself to the extent of *nonsense* in *practice* and *history*. It masters "*English questions of the day*" and gives us a genuinely *critical outline of the history of English industry*.

Criticism, which is self-sufficient, and complete and perfect in itself, naturally cannot recognise history as it really took place, for that would mean recognising the base mass in all its mass-like mass nature, whereas the problem is precisely to redeem the mass from its mass nature. History is therefore freed from its mass nature, and Criticism, which has a free attitude to its object, calls to history: "*You ought to have happened in such and such a way!*" All the laws of Criticism have *retrospective* force: *prior* to the decrees of Criticism, history behaved quite differently from how it did *after* them. Hence mass-type history, so-called *real* history, deviates considerably from Critical history, as it takes place in Heft VII of the *Literatur-Zeitung* from page 4 onwards.

In mass-type history there were *no factory towns* before there were *factories*; but in Critical history, in which, as already in *Hegel*, the son begets his father, *Manchester*, *Bolton* and *Preston* were flourishing factory towns before factories were even thought of. In real history the *cotton industry* was founded mainly on *Hargreaves' jenny* and *Arkwright's throstle*, *Crompton's mule* being only an improvement of the spinning jenny according to the new principle discovered by Arkwright. But Critical history knows how to make distinctions: it scorns the one-sidedness of the jenny and the throstle, and gives the crown to the mule as the speculative identity of the extremes. In reality, the invention of the throstle and the mule immediately made possible the *application of water-power* to those machines, but Critical Criticism sorts out the principles lumped together by crude history and makes this application come only later, as something quite special. In reality the invention of the steam-engine *preceded* all the above-mentioned inventions; according to Criticism it is the crown of them all and the *last*.

In reality the *business* ties between Liverpool and Manchester in their present scope were the result of the export of English goods; according to Criticism they are the *cause* of the export and both are the result of the proximity of the two towns. In reality nearly all goods from Manchester go to the Continent via *Hull*, according to Criticism via *Liverpool*.

In reality all *grades of wages* exist in English factories, from 1s 6d to 40s and more; but according to Criticism only one rate is paid -- 11s. In reality the *machine* replaces *manual labour*; according to Criticism it replaces *thought*. In reality the association of workers for wage rises is allowed in *England*, but according to Criticism it is prohibited, for when the Mass wants to allow itself anything it must first

ask Criticism. In reality *factory labour* is extremely *tiring* and gives rise to specific diseases -- there are even special medical works on them; according to Criticism "excessive exertion cannot be a hindrance to work, for the power is provided by the machine". In reality the machine is a machine; according to Criticism it has a will, for as it does not rest, neither can the worker, and he is subordinated to an alien will.

But that is still nothing at all. Criticism cannot be content with the *mass-type parties* in England; it creates new ones, including a "*factory party*", for which history may be thankful to it. On the other hand, it lumps together the factory-owners and the factory workers in one massive heap -- why bother about such trifles! -- and decrees that the factory workers refused to contribute to the Anti-Corn-Law Leagues not out of ill-will or because of Chartism, as the stupid factory-owners maintain, but merely because they were poor. It further decrees that with the repeal of the English Corn Laws agricultural labourers will have to put up with a lowering of wages, in regard to which, however, we must most submissively remark that that destitute class cannot be deprived of another penny without being reduced to absolute starvation. It decrees that the working day in English factories is sixteen hours, although a silly un-Critical English law has fixed a maximum of twelve hours. It decrees that England is to become a huge workshop for the world, although the un-Critical mass of Americans, Germans and Belgians are ruining one market after another for the English by their competition. Lastly, it decrees that neither the propertied nor the non-propertied classes in England are aware of the *centralisation of property* and its consequences for the working classes, although the stupid Chartists think they are well aware of them; the Socialists maintain that they expounded those consequences in detail long ago, and even Tories and Whigs like *Carlyle, Alison and Gaskell* have proved their knowledge of them in their works.

Criticism decrees that *Lord Ashley's Ten Hour Bill* is a half-hearted *juste-milieu* measure and Lord Ashley himself "a true illustration of constitutional action", while the factory-owners, the Chartists, the landowners -- in short, all that makes up the mass nature of England -- have so far considered this measure as an expression, the mildest possible one admittedly, of a downright radical principle, since it would lay the axe at the root of foreign trade and thereby at the root of the factory system -- nay, not merely lay the axe to it, but cut deeply into it. Critical Criticism knows better. It knows that the ten hour question was discussed before a "commission" of the Lower House, although the un-Critical newspapers try to make us believe that this "commission" was the *House itself*, "*a Committee of the Whole House*"; but Criticism must needs do away with that eccentricity of the English Constitution.

Critical Criticism, which itself *begets* its *opposite*, the *stupidity of the Mass*, also produces the stupidity of Sir James Graham: by a Critical understanding of the English language it puts things in his mouth which the un-Critical Home Secretary never said, just to allow Critical wisdom to shine brighter in comparison with his stupidity. Graham, according to Criticism, says that the machines in the factories wear out in about twelve years whether they work ten hours a day or twelve, and that therefore a Ten Hour Bill would make it impossible for the capitalists to reproduce in twelve years through the work of their machines the capital laid out on them. Criticism proves that it has thus put a false conclusion in the mouth of Sir James Graham, for a machine that works one-sixth of the time less every day will naturally remain usable longer.

However correct this observation of Critical Criticism against its own false conclusion, it must, on the other hand, be conceded that Sir James Graham said that under a Ten Hour Bill the machine would have to work quicker in the proportion that its working time was reduced (Criticism itself quotes this in [Heft] VIII, page 32) and that in that case the time when it would be worn out would be the same -- twelve

years. This must all the more be acknowledged as the acknowledgment contributes to the glory and exaltation of "*Criticism*"; for only Criticism both made the false conclusion and then refuted it. Criticism is just as magnanimous towards Lord *John Russell*, to whom it imputes the wish to change the political form of the state and the electoral system. From this we must conclude either that Criticism's urge to produce stupidities is uncommonly powerful or that Lord John Russell must have become a Critical Critic within the past week.

But Criticism only becomes truly magnificent in its fabrication of stupidities when it discovers that the English workers -- who in April and May held meeting after meeting, drew up petition after petition, and all for the Ten Hour Bill, and displayed more agitation throughout the factory districts than at any time during the past two years -- that those workers take only a "*partial* interest" in this question, although it is evident that "legislation limiting the working day has also occupied their attention" Criticism is truly magnificent when it finally makes the great, the glorious, the unheard-of discovery that

"the apparently more immediate help from the repeal of the Corn Laws absorbs most of the wishes of the workers and will do so until no longer doubtful realisation of those wishes practically proves the futility of the repeal" --

proves it to workers who drag Anti-Corn-Law agitators down from the platform at every public meeting, who have seen to it that the Anti-Corn-Law League no longer dares to hold a public meeting in any English industrial town, who consider the League to be their only enemy and who, during the debate of the Ten Hour Bill -- as nearly always before in similar matters -- had the support of the Tories. Criticism is superb, too, when it discovers that "the workers still let themselves be lured by the sweeping promises of the *Chartist movement*", which is nothing but the political expression of public opinion among the workers. Criticism is superb, too, when it realises, in the depths of its Absolute Spirit, that

"the two party groupings, the political one and that of the landowners and mill-owners, *no longer* wish to merge or coincide".

It was so far not known that the party grouping of the landowners and the mill-owners, because of the numerical smallness of either class of owners and the equal political rights of each (with the exception of the few peers), was so comprehensive that it was completely identical with the political party groupings, and not their most consistent expression, their peak. Criticism is splendid when it suggests that the Anti-Corn-Law Leaguers do not know that, *ceteris paribus*, a drop in the price of bread must be followed by a drop in wages, so that all would remain as it was; whereas these people expect that, granted there is a drop in wages and a consequent lowering of production costs, the result will be an expansion of the market. This, they expect, would lead to a reduction of competition among the workers, and consequently wages would still be kept a little higher in comparison with the price of bread than they are now.

Freely creating its opposite -- nonsense -- and moving in artistic rapture, Criticism, which only two years ago exclaimed "Criticism speaks German, theology speaks Latin!", has now learnt *English* and calls the estate-owners "*Landeigner*" (landowners), the factoryowners "*Mühleigner*" (mill-owners) -- in English a mill means any factory with machinery driven by steam or water-power -- and the workers "*Hände*" (hands). Instead of "*Einmischung*" it says *Interferenz* (interference); and in its infinite mercy for the English language, the sinful mass nature of which is abundantly evident, it condescends to improve it by doing away with the pedantry with which the English place the title "Sir" before the *Christian* name of knights and baronets. Where the Mass says "Sir James Graham", it says "Sir Graham".

That Criticism reforms *English* history and the *English* language out of *principle* and not out of levity will presently be provided by the *thoroughness* with which it treats the *history of Herr Nauwerck*.

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## Chapter III

### "THE THOROUGHNESS OF CRITICAL CRITICISM", OR CRITICAL CRITICISM AS HERR J. (JUNGNITZ?)

Criticism cannot ignore Herr *Nauwerck's* infinitely important dispute with the Berlin Faculty of Philosophy. It has indeed had a similar experience and it must take Herr Nauwerck's fate as a background in order to put its own *dismissal from Bonn* in sharper relief. Criticism, being accustomed to considering the Bonn affair as the event of the century, and having already written the "philosophy of the deposition of criticism", could be expected to give a similar detailed philosophical construction of the Berlin "collision". Criticism proves *a priori* that everything had to happen in such a way and no other. It proves:

- 1) Why the Faculty of Philosophy was bound to come into "collision" not with a logician or metaphysician, but with a philosopher of the state;
- 2) Why that collision could not be so sharp and decisive as Criticism's conflict with theology in Bonn;
- 3) Why that collision was, properly speaking, a stupid business, since Criticism had already concentrated all principles and all content in its Bonn collision, so that world history could only become a plagiarist of Criticism;
- 4) Why the Faculty of Philosophy considered attacks on the works of Herr Nauwerck as attacks on itself;
- 5) Why no other course remained for Herr N, but to retire of his own accord;
- 6) Why the Faculty had to defend Herr N. if it did not want to disavow itself;
- 7) Why the "inner split in the Faculty had necessarily to manifest itself in such a way" that the Faculty declared both N. and the Government right and wrong at the same time;
- 8) Why the Faculty finds in N.'s works no reason for dismissing him;
- 9) What determined the lack of clarity of the whole verdict;
- 10) Why the Faculty "deems itself (!) entitled (!) as a scientific authority (!) to examine the essence of the matter", and finally;
- 11) Why, nevertheless, the Faculty does not want to write in the same way as Herr N.

Criticism disposes of these important questions with rare thoroughness in four pages, proving by means of Hegel's logic why everything had to happen as it did and why no god could have prevented it. In another place Criticism says that there has not yet been full knowledge of a single epoch in history; modesty prevents it from saying that it has full knowledge of at least its own collision and Nauwerck's, which, although they are not epochs, appear to Criticism to be epoch-making.

Having "abolished" in itself the "element" of *thoroughness*, Critical Criticism becomes "*the tranquillity of knowledge*".

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## Chapter IV

### "CRITICAL CRITICISM"

### AS THE TRANQUILLITY OF KNOWLEDGE,

### OR

### "CRITICAL CRITICISM" AS HERR EDGAR

## 1) Flora Tristan's "*Union Ouvrière*"

The French Socialists maintain that the worker makes everything, produces everything and yet has no rights, no possessions, in short, nothing at all. Criticism answers in the words of Herr *Edgar*, the personification of the *tranquillity of Knowledge*:

"To be able to create everything, a stronger consciousness is needed than that of the worker. Only the opposite of the above proposition would be true: the worker makes nothing, therefore he has nothing; but the reason why he makes nothing is that his work is always individual, having as its object his most personal needs, and is everyday work."

Here Criticism achieves a height of abstraction in which it regards only the creations of its own thought and generalities which contradict all reality as "something", indeed as "*everything*", The worker creates nothing because he creates only "individual", that is, perceptible, palpable, spiritless and un-Critical objects, which are an abomination in the eyes of pure Criticism. Everything that is real and living is un-Critical, of a mass nature, and therefore "nothing"; only the ideal, fantastic creatures of Critical Criticism are "*everything*".

The worker creates nothing, because his work remains individual, having only his individual needs as its object, that is, because in the present world system the individual interconnected branches of labour are separated from, and even opposed to, one another; in short, because labour is not *organized*. Criticism's own proposition, if taken in the only reasonable sense it can possibly have, demands the organization of labour. Flora Tristan, in an assessment of whose work this great proposition appears, puts forward the same demand and is treated *en canaille* for her insolence in anticipating Critical Criticism. Anyhow, the proposition that the worker creates nothing is absolutely crazy except in the sense that the *individual* worker produces nothing *whole*, which is tautology. Critical Criticism creates nothing, the worker creates everything; and so much so that even his intellectual creations put the whole of Criticism to shame; the English and the French workers provide proof of this. The worker creates even *man*; the critic will never be anything but sub-human though on the other hand, of course, he has the satisfaction of being a Critical critic.

"Flora Tristan is an example of the feminine dogmatism which must have a formula and constructs

it out of the categories of what exists."

Criticism does nothing but "construct formulae out of the categories of what exists", namely, out of the existing *Hegelian* philosophy and the existing social aspirations. Formulae, nothing but formulae. And despite all its invectives against dogmatism, it condemns itself to dogmatism and even to *feminine* dogmatism. It is and remains an old woman -- faded, widowed *Hegelian* philosophy which paints and adorns its body, shrivelled into the most repulsive abstraction, and ogles all over Germany in search of a wooer.

## 2) Béraud on Prostitutes

Herr Edger, taking pity on social questions, meddles also in "*conditions of prostitutes*" (Heft V, p. 26).

He criticizes Paris Police Commissioner Béraud's book on prostitution because he is concerned with the "*point of view*" from which "Béraud considers the attitude of prostitutes to society" The "tranquillity of knowledge" is surprised to see that a policeman adopts the point of view of the police, and it gives the mass to understand that that point of view is quite wrong. But it does not reveal its own point of view. Of course not! When Criticism takes up with prostitutes it cannot be expected to do so in public.

## 3) LOVE

In order to complete its transformation into the "tranquillity of knowledge", Critical Criticism must first seek to dispose of *love*. Love is a passion, and nothing is more dangerous for the tranquillity of knowledge than passion. That is why, speaking of Madame von Paalzow's novels, which, he assures us, he has "thoroughly *studied*". Herr Edgar is amazed at "*a childish thing like so-called love*". It is a horror and abomination and excites the wrath of Critical Criticism, makes it almost as bitter as gall, indeed, insane.

"Love ... is a cruel goddess, and like every deity she wishes to possess the whole of man and is not satisfied until he has surrendered to her not merely his soul, but his physical self. The worship of love is suffering, the peak of this worship is self-immolation, suicide."

In order to change love into "Moloch", the devil incarnate, Herr Edgar first changes it into a goddess. When love has become a goddess, i.e., a theological object, it is of course submitted to *theological criticism*; moreover, it is known that god and the devil are not far apart. Herr Edgar changes love into a "goddess", a "cruel goddess" at that, by changing *man who loves*, the love of *man*, into a man of *love*; by making "*love*" a being apart, separate from man and as such independent. By this simple process, by changing the predicate into the subject, all the attributes and manifestations of human nature can be Critically transformed into their *negation* and into *alienations* of human nature." Thus, for example, Critical Criticism makes criticism, as a predicate and activity of man, into a subject apart, criticism which relates itself to itself and is therefore Critical Criticism: a "Moloch", the worship of which consists in the self-immolation, the suicide of man, and in particular of his *ability to think*.

"Object," exclaims, the tranquillity of knowledge, "object is the right expression, for the beloved is important to the lover [denn der Geliebte ist dem Liebenden] (there is no feminine) only as this external object of the emotion of his soul, as the object in which he wishes to see his selfish feeling satisfied."

*Object!* Horrible! There is nothing more damnable, more profane, more mass-like than an *object* -- *agave*; *bas* the object! How could absolute subjectivity, the *actus puris*, "pure" Criticism, not see in love its *bête noire*, that Satan incarnate, in love, which first really teaches man to believe in the objective world outside himself, which not only makes man into an object, but even the object into a man!

Love, continues the tranquillity of knowledge, beside itself, is not even content with turning man into the *category of "object"* for another man, it even makes him into a definite, real object, into *this* bad-individual (see Hegel's *Phänomenologie* on the categories "This" and "That", where there is also a polemic against the bad "This"), *external* object, which does not remain internal, hidden in the brain, but is sensuously manifest.

Love

Lives not only in the brain immured.

No, the beloved is a *sensuous object*, and if Critical Criticism is to condescend to recognition of an object, it demands at the very least a *senseless* object. But love is an *un-Critical*, *un-Christian* *materialist*.

Finally, love even makes one human being "*this external object of the emotion of the soul*" of another, the object in which the *selfish* feeling of the other finds its satisfaction, a selfish feeling because it *looks for its own essence* in the other, and that must not be. Critical Criticism is so *free* from all *selfishness* that for it the whole range of human essence is exhausted *by its own self*.

Herr Edgar, of course, does not tell us in what way the beloved differs from the other "external objects of the emotion of the soul in which the selfish feelings of men find their satisfaction". The spiritually profound, meaningful, highly expressive object of love means nothing to the tranquillity of knowledge but the abstract formula: "this external object of the emotion of the soul", much as the comet means nothing to the speculative natural philosopher but "negativity". By making man the external object of the emotion of his soul, man does in fact attach "importance" to him, Critical Criticism itself admits, but only *objective importance*, so to speak, while the importance which Criticism attaches to objects is none other than that which it attaches to itself. Hence this importance lies not in "*bad external being*", but in the "*Nothing*" of the Critically important object.

If the tranquillity of knowledge has no *object* in real man, it has, on the other hand, a *cause in humanity*. Critical love "*is careful* above all not to forget the *cause* behind the personality, for that cause is none other than the cause of humanity". Un-Critical love does not separate humanity from the personal, individual man.

Love itself, as an abstract passion, which comes we know not whence and goes we know not whither, is incapable of having an interest in internal development."

In the eyes of the tranquillity of knowledge, love is an abstract passion according to the *speculative* terminology in which the concrete is called abstract and the abstract concrete.

The maid was not born in that valley,  
But where she came from, no one knew.  
And soon all trace of her did vanish  
Once she had bidden them adieu.

For abstraction, love is "the maid from a foreign land" who has no dialectical passport and is therefore expelled from the country by the Critical police.



The passion of love is incapable of having an interest in *internal* development because it cannot be construed *a priori*, because its development is a real one which takes place in the world of the senses and between real individuals. But the main interest of speculative construction is the "Whence" and the "Whither". The "Whence" is the "*necessity* of a concept, its proof and deduction" (Hegel). The "Whither" is the determination "by which each individual link of the speculative circular course, as the animated content of the method, is at the same time the beginning of a new link" (Hegel). Hence, only if its "Whence" and its "Whither" could be construed *a priori* would love deserve the "interest" of speculative Criticism.

What Critical Criticism combats here is not merely love but everything living, everything which is immediate, every sensuous experience, any and every *real* experience, the "Whence" and the "Whither" of which one never *knows* beforehand.

By overcoming love, Herr Edgar has completely *asserted* himself as the "tranquillity of knowledge", and now by his treatment of *Proudhon*, he can show great virtuosity in knowledge, the "*object*" of which is no longer "*this external object*", and a still greater *lack of love* for the French language.

## 4) PROUDHON

It was not *Proudhon* himself, but "Proudhon's *point of view*", Critical Criticism informs us, that wrote *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*

"I begin my exposition of Proudhon's point of view by characterizing its" (the point of view's) "work, "*Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*"

As only the works of the Critical point of view possess a character of their own, the Critical characterization necessarily begins by giving a character to Proudhon's work. Herr Edgar gives this work a character by *translating* it. He naturally gives it a *bad* character, for he turns it into an *object* of "Criticism"

Proudhon's work, therefore, is subjected to a double attack by Herr Edgar -- an *unspoken* one in his characterising translation and an *outspoken* one in his Critical comments. We shall see that Herr Edgar is more devastating when he translates than when he comments.

## Characterizing Translation No. 1

"I do not wish" (says the Critically translated Proudhon) "to give any system of the new; I wish for nothing but the abolition of privilege, the abolition of slavery.... Justice, nothing but justice, that is what I mean."

The characterized Proudhon confines himself to will and opinion, because "good will" and unscientific "opinion" are characteristic attributes of the un-Critical Mass. The characterized Proudhon behaves with the humility that is fitting for the mass and subordinates what he wishes to what he does *not* wish. He does not presume to wish to give a system of the new, he wishes less, he even wishes for *nothing* but the abolition of privilege, etc. Besides this Critical subordination of the will he has to the will he has not, his very first word is marked by a characteristic lack of logic. A writer who begins his book by saying that he does not wish to give any system of the new, should then tell us what he does wish to give: whether it

is a systematised old or an unsystematised new. But does the characterized Proudhon, who does not wish to give any system of the new, wish to give the abolition of privilege? No. He just *wishes* it.

The real Proudhon says: "*Je ne fais pas de système; je demande la fin du privilège*," etc. I make no system, I demand, etc., that is to say, the real Proudhon declares that he does not pursue any abstract scientific aims, but makes immediately practical demands on society. And the demand he makes is not an arbitrary one. It is motivated and justified by his whole argument and is the summary of that argument for, he says, "*justice, rien que justice; tel est le résumé de mon discours*." With his "Justice, nothing but justice, that is what I mean", the characterized Proudhon gets himself into a position which is all the more embarrassing as he means much more. According to Herr Edgar, for example, he "*means*" that philosophy has not been practical enough, he "*means*" to refute Charles Comte, and so forth.

The Critical Proudhon asks: "Ought *man* then always to be unhappy?" In other words, he asks whether unhappiness is man's moral destiny. The real Proudhon is a light-minded Frenchman and he asks whether unhappiness is a material necessity, a must. (*L'homme doit-il être éternellement malheureux?*)

The mass-type Proudhon says: "Et, sans m'arrêter aux explications à toute fin des entrepreneurs de réformes, accusant de la détresse générale, ceux-ci la lâcheté et l'impéritie du pouvoir, ceux-là les conspirateurs et les émeutes, d'autres l'ignorance et la corruption générale", etc.

The expression "à toute fin" being a bad mass-type expression that is not in the mass-type German dictionaries, the Critical Proudhon naturally omits this more exact definition of the "explanations". This term is taken from mass-type French jurisprudence, and "explications ... toute fin" means explanations which preclude any objection. The Critical Proudhon censures the "*Reformists*", a French Socialist Party; the mass-type Proudhon censures the initiators of reforms. The mass-type Proudhon distinguishes various classes of "entrepreneurs de réformes". These (ceux-ci) say *one thing*, those (ceux-là) say *another*, others (d'autres) a third. The Critical Proudhon, on the other hand, makes *the same reformists* "accuse now one, then another, then a third", which in any case is proof of their inconstancy. The real Proudhon, who follows mass-type French practice, speaks of "les conspirateurs et les émeutes", i.e., first of the conspirators and then of their activity, revolts. The Critical Proudhon, on the other hand, who has lumped together the various classes of reformists, classifies the rebels and hence says: the conspirators and the rebels. The mass-type Proudhon speaks of *ignorance* and "*general corruption*". The Critical Proudhon changes ignorance into stupidity, "corruption" into "depravity, and finally, as a Critical critic, makes the stupidity *general*. He himself gives an immediate example of it by putting "générale" in the singular instead of the plural. He writes: "l'ignorance et la corruption générale" for general stupidity and depravity. According to un-Critical French grammar this should be: "l'ignorance et la corruption générales.

The characterized Proudhon, who speaks and thinks otherwise than the mass-type one, necessarily went through quite a different *course of education*. He "questioned the masters of science, read hundreds of volumes of philosophy and law, etc., and *at last*" he "realised that we have never yet grasped the meaning of the words Justice, Equity, Freedom". The real Proudhon thought he had realised *at first* (*je crus d'abord reconnaître*) what the Critical Proudhon realised only "at last". The Critical alteration of *d'abord* into *enfin* is necessary because the mass may not think it realises anything "at first". The mass-type Proudhon tells explicitly how he was staggered by the unexpected result of his studies and distrusted it. Hence he decided to carry out a "*countertest*" and asked himself: "Is it possible that mankind has so long and so universally been mistaken over the principles of the application of morals? How and why was it

mistaken?" etc. He made the correctness of his observations dependent on the solution of these questions. He found that in morals, as in all other branches of knowledge, errors "*are stages of science*". The Critical Proudhon, on the other hand, immediately trusted the first impression that his studies of political economy, law and the like made upon him. Needless to say, the mass cannot proceed in any *thorough* way; it is bound to raise the first results of its investigations to the level of indisputable truths. It has "reached the end before it has started, before it has measured itself with its opposite". Hence, "it is seen" later "that it is not yet at the beginning when it thinks it has reached the end".

The Critical Proudhon therefore continues his reasoning in the most untenable and incoherent way.

"Our knowledge of moral laws is not complete from the beginning; thus it can for some time suffice for social progress, but in the long run it will lead us on a false path."

The Critical Proudhon does not give any reason why incomplete knowledge of moral laws call suffice for social progress even for a single day. The real Proudhon, having asked himself whether and why mankind could universally and so long have been mistaken and having found as the solution that all errors are stages of science and that our most imperfect judgments contain a sum of truths sufficient for a certain number of inductions and for a certain area of practical life, beyond which number and which area they lead theoretically to the absurd and practically to decay, is in a position to say that even imperfect knowledge of moral laws can suffice for social progress for a time.

The Critical Proudhon says:

"But if new knowledge has become necessary, a bitter struggle arises between the old prejudices and the new idea."

How can a struggle arise against an opponent who does *not yet* exist? Admitted, the Critical Proudhon has told us that a new idea has become necessary but he has not said that it has already *come into existence*.

The mass-type Proudhon says:

"Once higher knowledge has become indispensable it is *never lacking*", it is therefore ready at hand. "*It is then* that the struggle begins."

The Critical Proudhon asserts: "It is man's destiny to learn step by step", as if man did not have a quite different destiny, namely, that of being man, and as if that learning "step by step" necessarily brought him a step farther. I can go step by step and arrive at the very point from which I set out. The un-Critical Proudhon speaks, not of "destiny", but of the *condition (condition)* for man to learn not *step by step (pas à pas)*, but *by degrees (par degrés)*. The Critical Proudhon says to himself:

"Among the principles upon which society rests there is one which society does not understand, which is spoilt by society's ignorance and is the cause of all evil. Nevertheless, man honours *this* principle" and "wills it, for otherwise it would have no influence. Now this principle which is true in its *essence*; but is false in the way we conceive it ... what is it?"

In the first sentence the Critical Proudhon says that th>

## Transfer interrupted!

by society, hence that it is correct in itself. In the second sentence he admits superfluously that it is true in its essence; nevertheless he reproaches society with willing and honouring "this principle". The mass-type Proudhon, on the other hand, reproaches society with willing and honouring not this principle, but this principle as falsified by our ignorance (*"Ce principe ...tel que notre ignorance l'a fait, est honoré."*). The Critical Proudhon finds the essence of the principle in its untrue form true. The mass-type Proudhon finds that the essence of the falsified principle is our incorrect conception, but that it is true in its *object (objet)*, just as the essence of alchemy and astrology is our imagination, but their objects -- the movement of the heavenly bodies and the chemical properties of substances -- are true.

The Critical Proudhon continues his monologue:

The object of our investigation is the law, the definition of the social principle. Now the politicians, i.e., the men of social science, are a prey to complete lack of clarity...; but as there is a reality at the basis of every error, in their books we shall find the truth, which they have brought into the world without knowing it."

The Critical Proudhon has a most fantastic way of reasoning. From the fact that the politicians are ignorant and unclear, he goes on in the most arbitrary fashion to say that a reality lies *at the basis* of every error, which can all the less he doubted as there is a reality at the basis of every error -- in the person of the one who errs. From the fact that a reality lies at the basis of every error he goes on to conclude that truth is to be found *in the books* of politicians. And finally he even makes out that the politicians have brought this truth into the *world*. Had they brought it into the *world* we should not need to look for it in their *books*.

The mass-type Proudhon says:

"The politicians do not understand one another (*ne s'entendent pas*); their error is therefore a subjective one, having its origin in them (*donc c'est en eux qu'est l'erreur*). Their mutual misunderstanding proves their one-sidedness. They confuse "their private opinion with common sense", and "as", according to the previous deduction, "every error has a true reality as its object, their books must contain the truth, which they unconsciously have put there" -- i.e., in their books -- "but have not brought into the world" (*dans leurs livres doit se trouver la vérité qu' à leur insu ils y auront mise*).

The Critical Proudhon asks himself: "What is justice, what is its essence, its character, its meaning?" As if it had some meaning apart from its essence and character. The un-Critical Proudhon asks: What is its principle, its character and its formula (*formule*)? The formula is the principle as a principle of scientific reasoning. In the mass-type French language there is an essential difference between *formule* and *signification*. In the Critical French language there is none.

After his highly irrelevant disquisitions, the Critical Proudhon pulls himself together and exclaims:

"Let us try to get somewhat closer to our object."

The un-Critical Proudhon, on the other hand, who arrived at his object long ago, tries to attain more precise and more positive definitions of his object (*d'arriver à quelque chose de plus précis et de plus positif*).

For the Critical Proudhon "the law" is a "*definition* of what is right", for the un-Critical Proudhon it is a



"statement" (*déclaration*) of it. The un-Critical Proudhon disputes the view that right is made by law. But a "definition of the law" can mean that the law is defined just as it can mean that it defines. Previously, the Critical Proudhon himself spoke about the definition of the social principle in this latter sense. To be sure, it is unseemly of the mass-type Proudhon to make such nice distinctions.

Considering these differences between the Critically characterised Proudhon and the real Proudhon, it is no wonder that Proudhon No. 1 seeks to *prove* quite different things than Proudhon No. 2.

### The Critical Proudhon

"*seeks to prove by the experience of history*" that "if the idea that we have of what is just and right is false, *evidently*" (he tries to prove it in spite of its evidence) "all its applications in law must be bad, all our institutions must be defective".

The mass-type Proudhon is far from wishing to prove what is evident. He says instead:

"If the idea that we have of what is just and right were badly defined, if it were incomplete or even false, it is *evident* that all our legislative applications would be bad", etc.

What, then, does the un-Critical Proudhon wish to prove?

"This hypothesis," he continues, "of the perversion of justice in our understanding, and as a necessary consequence in our actions, would be an established fact if the opinions of men concerning the concept of justice and its applications had not remained constantly the same, if at different times they had undergone modifications; in a word, if there had been progress in ideas."

And precisely that inconstancy, that change, that progress "is what *history* proves by the most striking testimonies". And the un-Critical Proudhon quotes these striking testimonies of history. His Critical double, who proves a completely different proposition by the experience of history, also presents that experience itself in a different way.

According to the real Proudhon, "the wise" (*les sages*), according to the Critical Proudhon, "the philosophers", foresaw the fall of the Roman Empire. The Critical Proudhon can of course consider only philosophers to be wise men. According to the real Proudhon, Roman "rights were consecrated by ten centuries of law practice" or "administration of justice" (*ces droits consacrés par une justice dix: fois séculaire*); according to the Critical Proudhon, Rome had "rights consecrated by ten centuries of *justice*".

According to the same Proudhon No. 1, the Romans reasoned as follows:

"Rome ... was victorious through its policy and its gods; any reform in worship or public spirit would be stupidity and profanation" (according to the Critical Proudhon, *sacrilège* means not the profanation or desecration of a holy thing, as in the mass-type French language, but just profanation). "Had it wished to free the peoples, it would thereby have renounced its right." "Rome had thus fact and right in its favour," Proudhon No. 1 adds.

According to the un-Critical Proudhon, the Romans reasoned more logically. The *fact* was set out in detail:

"The slaves are the most fertile source of its wealth; the freeing of the peoples would therefore be the *ruin of its finance*."

And the mass-type Proudhon adds, referring to law: "Rome's claims were justified by the law of nations (*droit des gens*)." This way of proving the right of subjugation was completely in keeping with the Roman view on law. See the mass-type pandects: "*jure gentium servitus invasit*" (Fr. 4. D.I.I.)."



According to the Critical Proudhon, "idolatry, slavery and softness" were "the basis of Roman institutions", of all its institutions without exception. The real Proudhon says: "Idolatry in religion, slavery in the state and Epicureanism in private life" (*épicurisme* in the ordinary French language is not synonymous with *mollesse*, softness) "were the basis of the institutions." Within that Roman situation there "appeared", says the mystic Proudhon, "the Word of God", whereas according to the real, rationalistic Proudhon, it was "a man who *called* himself the Word of God". In the real Proudhon this man calls the priests "vipers" (*vipères*); in the Critical Proudhon he speaks more courteously with them and calls them "serpents". In the former he speaks in the Roman way of "advocates" [*Advokaten*], in the latter in the German way of "lawyers" [*Rechtsgelehrte*].

The Critical Proudhon calls the spirit of the French Revolution a spirit of contradiction, and adds:

"That is enough to realised that the new which replaced the old had on itself [*an sich*] nothing methodical and considered."

He cannot refrain from repeating mechanically the favourite categories of Critical Criticism, the "old" and the "new". He cannot refrain from the senseless demand that the "new" should have on itself [*an sich*] something methodical and considered, just as one might have a stain on oneself [*an sich*]. The real Proudhon says:

"That is enough to prove that the new order of things which was substituted for the old was in itself [*in sich*] without method or reflection."

Carried away by the memory of the French Revolution, the Critical Proudhon *revolutionises* the French language so much that he translates *un fait physique* by "a fact of physics", and *un fait intellectuel* by "a fact of the intellect". By this revolution in the French language the Critical Proudhon manages to put physics in possession of all the facts to be found in nature. Raising natural science unduly on one side, he debases it just as much on the other by depriving it of intellect and distinguishing between a fact of physics and a fact of the intellect. To the same extent he makes all further psychological and logical investigation unnecessary by raising the intellectual fact directly to the level of a fact of the intellect.

Since the Critical Proudhon, Proudhon No. 1, has not the slightest idea what the real Proudhon, Proudhon No. 2, wishes to prove by his historical deduction, neither does the real content of that deduction exist for him, namely, the proof of the change in the views on law and of the continuous *implementation* of justice by the *negation* of historical actual right.

"La société fut sauvée par la *négation* de ses principes ... et la violation des droits les plus sacrés."

Thus the real Proudhon proves how the negation of Roman law led to the widening of right in the Christian *conception*, the negation of the right of conquest to the right of the communes and the negation of the whole feudal law by the French Revolution to the present more comprehensive system of law.

Critical Criticism could not possibly leave Proudhon the glory of having discovered the law of the implementation of a principle by its negation. In this conscious formulation, this idea was a real revelation for the French.

# Critical Comment No. 1

As the first criticism of any science is necessarily influenced by the premises of the science it is fighting against, so Proudhon's treatise *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* is the criticism of *political economy* from the standpoint of political economy. -- We need not go more deeply into the juridical part of the book, which criticizes law from the standpoint of law, for our main interest is the criticism of political economy. -- Proudhon's treatise will therefore be scientifically superseded by a criticism of *political economy*, including Proudhon's conception of political economy. This work became possible only owing to the work of Proudhon himself, just as Proudhon's criticism has as its premise the criticism of the mercantile system by the Physiocrats, Adam Smith's criticism of the Physiocrats, Ricardo's criticism of Adam Smith, and the works of Fourier and Saint-Simon.

All treatises on political economy take *private property* for granted. This basic premise is for them an incontestable fact to which they devote no further investigation, indeed a fact which is spoken about only "*accidentellement*", as Say naively admits. But Proudhon makes a critical investigation -- the first resolute, ruthless, and at the same time scientific investigation -- of the basis of political economy, *private property*. This is the great scientific advance he made, an advance which revolutionizes political economy and for the first time makes a real science of political economy possible. Proudhon's treatise *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* is as important for modern political economy as Sieyès' work *Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?* for modern politics.

Proudhon does not consider the further creations of private property, e.g., wages, trade, value, price, money, etc., as forms of private property in themselves, as they are considered, for example, in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (see *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* by F. Engels), but uses these economic premises in arguing against the political economists; this is fully in keeping with his historically justified standpoint to which we referred above.

Accepting the relationships of private property as human and rational, political economy operates in permanent contradiction to its basic premise, private property, a contradiction analogous to that of the theologian who continually gives a human interpretation to religious conceptions, and by that very fact comes into constant conflict with his basic premise, the superhuman character of religion. Thus in political economy wages appear at the beginning as the proportional share of the product due to labour. Wages and profit on capital stand in the most friendly, mutually stimulating, apparently most human relationship to each other. Afterwards it turns out that they stand in the most hostile relationship, in *inverse* proportion to each other. Value is determined at the beginning in an apparently rational way, by the cost of production of an object and by its social usefulness. Later it turns out that value is determined quite fortuitously and that it does not need to bear any relation to either the cost of production or social usefulness. The size of wages is determined at the beginning by *free* agreement between the free worker and the free capitalist. Later it turns out that the worker is compelled to allow the capitalist to determine it, just as the capitalist is compelled to fix it as low as possible. *Freedom* of the contracting parties has been supplanted by *compulsion*. The same holds good of trade and all other economic relationships. The economists themselves occasionally feel these contradictions, the development of which is the main content of the conflict between them. When, however, the economists become conscious of these contradictions, *they themselves* attack *private property* in one or other *particular* form as the falsifier of what is in itself (i.e., in their imagination) rational wages, in itself rational value, in itself rational trade. Adam Smith, for instance, occasionally polemises against the capitalists, Destutt de Tracy against the

money-changers, Simonde de Sismondi against the factory system, Ricardo against landed property, and nearly all modern economists against the *non-industrial* capitalists, among whom property appears as a mere *consumer*.

Thus, as an exception -- when they attack some special abuse -- the economists occasionally stress the semblance of humanity in economic relations, but sometimes, and as a rule, they take these relations precisely in their clearly pronounced *difference* from the human, in their strictly economic sense. They stagger about within this contradiction completely unaware of it.

Now *Proudhon* has put an end to this unconsciousness once for all. He takes the *human semblance* of the economic relations seriously and sharply opposes it to their *inhuman reality*. He forces them to be in reality what they imagine themselves to be, or rather to give up their own idea of themselves and confess their real inhumanity. He therefore consistently depicts as the falsifier of economic relations not this or that particular kind of private property, as other economists do, but private property as such and in its entirety. He has done all that criticism of political economy from the standpoint of political economy can do.

Herr Edgar, who wishes to *characterise* the *standpoint* of the treatise *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*, naturally does not say a word either of political economy or of the distinctive character of this book, which is precisely that it has made the *essence of private property* the vital question of political economy and jurisprudence. This is all self-evident for Critical Criticism. Proudhon, it says, has done nothing new by his negation of private property. He has only let out a secret which Critical Criticism did not want to divulge.

"Proudhon," Herr Edgar continues immediately after his characterising translation, "therefore finds something absolute, an eternal foundation in history, a god that guides mankind -- justice."

Proudhon's book, written in France in 1840, does not adopt the standpoint of German development in 1844. It is Proudhon's standpoint, a standpoint which is shared by countless diametrically opposed French writers, which therefore gives Critical Criticism the advantage of having characterized the most contradictory standpoints with a single stroke of the pen. Incidentally, to be relieved from this Absolute in history as well one has only to apply consistently the law formulated by Proudhon himself, that of the implementation of justice by its negation. If Proudhon does not carry consistency as far as that, it is only because he had the misfortune of being born a Frenchman, not a German.

For Herr Edgar, Proudhon has become a *theological* object by his Absolute in history, his belief in justice, and Critical Criticism, which is *ex professo* a criticism of theology, can now set to work on him in order to expatiate on "religious conceptions"

"It is a characteristic of every religious conception that it sets up as a dogma a situation in which at the end one of the opposites comes out victorious as the only truth."

We shall see how religious Critical Criticism sets up as a dogma a situation in which at the end one of the opposites, "*Criticism*", comes out victorious over the other, the "Mass", as the only truth. By seeing in mass-type justice an Absolute, a god of history, Proudhon committed an injustice that is all the greater because just Criticism has *explicitly* reserved for itself the role of that Absolute, that god in history.

## Critical Comment No. 2

"The fact of misery, of poverty, makes Proudhon one-sided in his considerations; he sees in it a *contradiction* to equality and justice; it provides him with a weapon. Hence this fact becomes for him absolute and justified, whereas the fact of property becomes unjustified."

The tranquillity of knowledge tells us that Proudhon sees in the fact of poverty a contradiction to justice, that is to say, finds it unjustified; yet in the same breath it assures us that this fact becomes for him absolute and justified.

Hitherto political economy proceeded from *wealth*, which the movement of private property supposedly creates for the *nations*, to its considerations which are an apology for private property. Proudhon proceeds from the opposite side, which political economy sophistically conceals, from the poverty bred by the movement of private property to his considerations which negate private property. The first criticism of private property proceeds, of course, from the fact in which its contradictory essence appears in the form that is most perceptible and most glaring and most directly arouses man's indignation -- from the fact of poverty, of misery.

"Criticism, on the other hand, joins the two facts, poverty and property, in a single unity, grasps the inner link between them and makes them a single whole, which it investigates as such to find the preconditions for its existence."

Criticism, which has hitherto understood nothing of the facts of property and of poverty, uses, "on the other hand", the deed which it has accomplished in its imagination as an argument against Proudhon's real deed. It unites the *two* facts in a *single* one, and having made *one* out of *two*, grasps the inner link between the two. Criticism cannot deny that Proudhon, too, is aware of an inner link between the facts of poverty and of property, since because of that very link he abolishes property in order to abolish poverty. Proudhon did even more. He proved in detail *how* the movement of capital produces poverty. But Critical Criticism does not bother with such trifles. It recognizes that poverty and private property are *opposites* -- a rather widespread recognition. It makes poverty and wealth a *single whole*, which it "investigates as such to find the preconditions for its existence" an investigation which is all the more superfluous since it has just *made* "the whole as such" and therefore its *making* is in itself the precondition for the existence of this whole.

By investigating "the whole as such" to find the preconditions for its existence, Critical Criticism is searching in the genuine theological manner *outside* the "whole" for the preconditions for its existence. Critical speculation operates outside the object which it pretends to deal with. Whereas the *whole antithesis* is nothing but the *movement of both its sides*, and the precondition for the existence of the whole lies in the very nature of the two sides. But Critical Criticism dispenses with the study of this real movement which forms the whole in order to be able to declare that it, Critical Criticism as the tranquillity of knowledge, is above both extremes of the antithesis, and that its activity, which has made "the whole as such", is now alone in a position to abolish the abstraction of which it is the maker.

Proletariat and wealth are opposites; as such they form a single whole. They are both creations of the world of private property. The question is exactly what place each occupies in the antithesis. It is not sufficient to declare them two sides of a single whole.

Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain *itself*, and thereby its opposite, the proletariat, in *existence*. That is the *positive* side of the antithesis, self-satisfied private property.



The proletariat, on the contrary, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and thereby its opposite, private property, which determines its existence, and which makes it proletariat. It is the *negative* side of the antithesis, its restlessness within its very self, dissolved and self-dissolving private property.

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognizes estrangement as *its own power* and has in it the *semblance* of a human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence. It is, to use an expression of Hegel, in its abasement the indignation at that abasement, an *indignation* to which it is necessarily driven by the contradiction between its human *nature* and its condition of life, which is the outright, resolute and comprehensive negation of that nature.

Within this antithesis the private property-owner is therefore the *conservative* side, the proletarian the *destructive* side. From the former arises the action of preserving the antithesis, from the latter the action of annihilating it.

Indeed private property drives itself in its economic movement towards its own dissolution, but only through a development which does not depend on it, which is unconscious and which takes place against the will of private property by the very nature of things, only inasmuch as it produces the proletariat as proletariat, poverty which is conscious of its spiritual and physical poverty, dehumanization which is conscious of its dehumanization, and therefore self-abolishing. The proletariat executes the sentence that private property pronounces on itself by producing the proletariat, just as it executes the sentence that wage-labour pronounces on itself by producing wealth for others and poverty for itself. When the proletariat is victorious, it by no means becomes the absolute side of society, for it is victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Then the proletariat disappears as well as the opposite which determines it, private property.

When socialist writers ascribe this world-historic role to the proletariat, it is not at all, as Critical Criticism pretends to believe, because they regard the proletarians as *gods*. Rather the contrary. Since in the fully-formed proletariat the abstraction of all humanity, even of the *semblance* of humanity, is practically complete; since the conditions of life of the proletariat sum up all the conditions of life of society today in their most inhuman form; since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer removable, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative *need* -- the practical expression of *necessity* -- is driven directly to revolt against this inhumanity, it follows that the proletariat can and must emancipate itself. But it cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation. Not in vain does it go through the stern but steeling school of *labour*. It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment *regards* as its aim. It is a question of *what the proletariat is*, and what, in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is visibly and irrevocably foreshadowed in its own life situation as well as in the whole organization of bourgeois society today. There is no need to explain here that a large part of the English and French proletariat is already *conscious* of its historic task and is constantly working to develop that consciousness into complete clarity.

"Critical Criticism" can all the less admit this since it has proclaimed itself the exclusive creative element in history. To it belong the historical antitheses, to it belongs the task of abolishing them. That is why it



issues the following *notification* through its incarnation, Edgar:

"Education and lack of education, property and absence of property, these antitheses, if they are not to be desecrated, must be wholly and entirely the concern of Criticism."

Property and absence of property have received metaphysical consecration as Critical speculative antitheses. That is why only the hand of Critical Criticism can touch them without committing a sacrilege. Capitalists and workers must not interfere in their mutual relationship.

Far from having any idea that his Critical conception of antitheses could be touched, that this holy thing could be desecrated, Herr Edgar lets his opponent make an objection that he alone could make to himself.

"Is it then possible," the imaginary opponent of Critical Criticism asks, "to use other concepts than those already existing -- liberty, equality, etc.? I answer" (note Herr Edgar's answer) "that Greek and Latin perished as soon as the range of thoughts that they served to express was exhausted."

It is now clear why Critical Criticism does not give a single thought in *German*. The language of its thoughts has not yet come into being in spite of all that Herr Reichardt by his Critical handling of foreign words, Herr Faucher by his handling of English, and Herr Edgar by his handling of French, have done to prepare the *new Critical* language.

## ***Characterizing Translation No. 2***

The Critical Proudhon says:

"The husbandmen divided the land among themselves; equality consecrated only possession; on this occasion it consecrated property."

The Critical Proudhon makes landed property arise simultaneously with the division of land. He effects the transition from possession to property by the expression "on this occasion".

The real Proudhon says:

"Husbandry was the basis of possession of the land.... It was not enough to ensure for the tiller the fruit of his labour without ensuring for him at the same time the instruments of production. To guard the weaker against the encroachments of the stronger ... it was felt necessary to establish permanent demarcation lines between owners."

On this occasion, therefore, it is *possession* that equality consecrated in the first place.

"Every year saw the population increase and the greed of the settlers grow; it was thought ambition should be checked by new insuperable barriers. Thus the land became property owing to the need for equality ... doubtless the division was never geographically equal ... but the principle nevertheless remained the same; equality had consecrated possession, equality consecrated property."

According to the Critical Proudhon

"the ancient founders of property, absorbed with concern for their needs, overlooked the fact that to the right of property corresponded at the same time the right to alienate, to sell, to give away, to acquire and to lose, which destroyed the equality from which they started out."

According to the real Proudhon it was not that the founders of property overlooked this course of its development in their concern for their needs. It was rather that they did not foresee it; but even if they had been able to foresee it, their actual need would have gained the upper hand. Besides, the real

Proudhon is too mass-minded to counterpose the right to alienate, sell, etc., to the "*right of property*", i.e., to counterpose the varieties to the species. He contrasts the "right to *keep* one's heritage" to the "right to *alienate* it, etc.", which constitutes a real opposition and a real step forward.

## Critical Comment No. 3

"On what then does Proudhon base his proof of the impossibility of property? Difficult as it is to believe it -- on the same principle of equality!"

A short consideration would have sufficed to arouse the belief of Herr Edgar. He must be aware that Herr Bruno Bauer based all his arguments on "*infinite* self-consciousness" and that he also saw in this principle the creative principle of the gospels which, by their infinite unconsciousness, appear to be in direct contradiction to infinite self-consciousness. In the same way Proudhon conceives equality as the creative principle of private property, which is in direct contradiction to equality. If Herr Edgar compares French *equality* with German "self-consciousness" for an instant, he will see that the latter principle expresses in *German*, i.e., in abstract thought, what the former says in *French*, that is, in the language of politics and of thoughtful observation. Self-consciousness is man's equality with himself in pure thought. Equality is man's consciousness of himself in the element of practice, i.e., man's consciousness of other men as his equals and man's attitude to other men as his equals. Equality is the French expression for the unity of human essence, for man's consciousness of his species and his attitude towards his species, for the practical identity of man with man, i.e., for the social or human relation of man to man. Hence, just as destructive criticism in Germany, before it had progressed in *Feuerbach* to the consideration of *real man*, tried to resolve everything definite and existing by the principle of *self-consciousness*, destructive criticism in France tried to do the same by the principle of equality.

"Proudhon is angry with philosophy, for which, in itself, we cannot blame him. But why is he angry? Philosophy, he maintains, has not yet been practical enough; it has mounted the high horse of speculation and from up there human beings have seemed much too small. I think that philosophy is over practical, i.e., it has so far been nothing but the abstract expression of the existing state of things; it has always been captive to the premises of the existing state of things, which it has accepted as absolute."

The opinion that philosophy is the abstract expression of the existing state of things does not belong originally to Herr Edgar. It belongs to *Feuerbach*, who was the first to describe philosophy as speculative and mystical empiricism and to prove it. But Herr Edgar manages to give this opinion an original, Critical twist. While *Feuerbach* concludes that philosophy must come down from the heaven of speculation to the depth of human misery, Herr Edgar, on the contrary, informs us that philosophy is over-practical. However, it seems rather that philosophy, precisely because it was only the transcendent, abstract expression of the actual state of things, by reason of its transcendentalism and abstraction, by reason of its *imaginary difference* from the world, must have imagined it had left the actual state of things and real human beings far below itself. On the other hand, it seems that because philosophy was not really different from the world it could not pronounce any *real judgment* on it, it could not bring any real differentiating force to bear on it and could therefore not interfere *practically*, but had to be satisfied at most with a practice *in abstracto*. Philosophy was over-practical only in the sense that it soared above practice. Critical Criticism, by lumping humanity together in a spiritless mass, gives the most striking proof how infinitely small real human beings seem to speculation. In this the old speculation agrees with Critical Criticism, as the following sentence out of Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie* shows:

"From the standpoint of needs, it is the concrete object of the idea that is called man; therefore what we are concerned with here, and properly speaking only here, is man in this sense."

In other cases in which speculation speaks of man it does not mean the *concrete*, but the *abstract*, the *idea*, the *spirit*, etc. The way in which philosophy expresses the actual state of things is strikingly exemplified by Herr Faucher in connection with the actual English situation and by Herr Edgar in connection with the actual situation of the French language.

"Thus Proudhon also is practical because, finding that the concept of equality is the basis of the proofs in favour of property, he argues from the same concept against property."

Proudhon here does exactly the same thing as the German critics who,, finding that the proofs of the existence of God are based on the idea of man, argue from that idea against the existence of God.

"If the consequences of the principle of equality are more powerful than equality itself, how does Proudhon intend to help that principle to acquire its sudden power?"

Self-consciousness, according to Herr Bruno Bauer, lies at the basis of all religious ideas. It is, he says, the creative principle of the gospels. Why, then, were the consequences of the principle of self-consciousness more powerful than self-consciousness itself? Because, the answer comes after the German fashion, self-consciousness is indeed the creative principle of religious ideas, but only as self-consciousness outside itself, in contradiction to itself, alienated and estranged. Self-consciousness that has come to itself, that understands itself, that apprehends its essence, therefore governs the creations of its self-alienation. Proudhon finds himself in exactly the same case, with the difference, of course, that he speaks French whereas we speak German, and he therefore expresses in a French way what we express in a German way.

Proudhon asks himself why equality, although as the creative principle of reason it underlies the institution of property and as the ultimate rational foundation is the basis of all arguments in favour of property, nevertheless does not exist, while its negation, private property, does. He accordingly considers the fact of property in itself. He proves "that, in truth, property, as an institution and a principle, is *impossible*" (p. 34), i.e., that *it contradicts itself* and abolishes itself in all points; that, to put it in the German way, it is the existence of alienated, self-contradicting, self-estranged equality. The real state of things in France, like the recognition of this estrangement, suggests correctly to Proudhon the necessity of the real abolition of this estrangement.

While negating private property, Proudhon feels the need to justify the existence of private property historically. His argument, like all first arguments of this kind, is pragmatic, i.e., he assumes that earlier generations wished consciously and with reflection to realised in their institutions that equality which for him represents the human essence.

"We always come back to the same thing.... Proudhon writes in the interest of the proletarians."

He does not write in the interest of self-sufficient Criticism or out of any abstract, self-made interest, but out of a mass-type, real, historic interest, an interest that goes beyond criticism, that will go as far as a crisis. Not only does Proudhon write in the interest of the proletarians, he is himself a proletarian, an *ouvrier*. His work is a scientific manifesto of the French proletariat and therefore has quite a different historical significance from that of the literary botch-work of any Critical Critic.

"Proudhon writes in the interest of those who have nothing; to have and not to have are for him absolute categories. To have is for him the highest, because at the same time not to have is for him the highest object of thought. Every man ought to have, but no more or less than another,

Proudhon thinks. But one should bear in mind that of all I have, only what I have exclusively, or what I have more of than other people have, is interesting for me. With equality, both to have and equality itself will be a matter of indifference to me.

According to Herr Edgar, *having and not having* are for Proudhon absolute categories. Critical Criticism sees nothing but categories everywhere. Thus, according to Herr Edgar, having and not having, wages, salary, want and need, and work to satisfy that need, are nothing but categories.

If society had to free itself only from the *categories* of having and not having, how easy would the "overcoming" and "abolition" of those categories be made for it by any dialectician, even if he were weaker than Herr Edgar! Indeed, Herr Edgar considers this such a trifle that he does not think it worth the trouble to give even an *explanation* of the categories of having and not having as an argument against Proudhon. But not having is not a mere category, it is a most dismal reality; today the man who has nothing is nothing, for he is cut off from existence in general, and still more from a human existence, for the condition of not having is the condition of the complete separation of man from his objectivity. Therefore not having seems quite justified in being the highest object of thought for Proudhon; all the more since so little thought had been given to this subject prior to him and the socialist writers in general. Not having is the most despairing *spiritualism*, a complete unreality of the human being, a complete reality of the dehumanized being, a very positive having, a having of hunger, of cold, of disease, of crime, of debasement, of hebetude, of all inhumanity and abnormality. But every object which for the first time is made the object of thought with full consciousness of its importance is the *highest object of thought*.

Proudhon's wish to abolish not having and the old way of having is quite identical with his wish to abolish the practically estranged relation of man to his *objective essence* and the *economic* expression of human self-estrangement. But since his criticism of political economy is still captive to the premises of political economy, the re-appropriation of the objective world itself is still conceived in the economic form of *possession*.

Proudhon does not oppose having to not having, as Critical Criticism makes him do; he opposes *possession* to the old way of having, to *private property*. He proclaims possession to be a "*social function*". What is "interesting" in a function, however, is not to "exclude" the other person, but to affirm and to realised the forces of my own being.

Proudhon did not succeed in giving this thought appropriate development The idea of "*equal possession*" is the economic and therefore itself still estranged expression for the fact that the *object as being for man*, as the *objective being of man*, is at the same time the *existence of man for other men*, his human relation to other men, the *social behaviour of man to man*. Proudhon abolishes economic estrangement *within* economic estrangement.

## Characterising Translation No. 3

The Critical Proudhon has a *Critical property-owner*, too, according to whose

"own admission those who had to work for him lost what he appropriated."

The mass-type Proudhon says to the mass-type property-owner:

"You have worked! Ought you never to have let others work for you! How, then, have they lost



while working for you, what you were able to acquire while not working for them!"

By "*richesse naturelle*", the Critical Proudhon makes Say understand "natural *possessions*" although Say, to preclude any error, states explicitly in the *Épitomé* to his *Traité d'économie politique* that by *richesse* he understands neither property nor possession, but a "sum of values". Of course, the Critical Proudhon reforms Say just as he himself is reformed by Herr Edgar. He makes Say "infer immediately a right to take a field as property" because land is easier to appropriate than air or water. But Say, far from inferring from the greater possibility of appropriating land a property right to it, says instead quite explicitly:

"Les droits des propriétaires de terres -- remontent une *spoliation*." (*Traité d'économie politique*, edition III. t. I., p. 136, Nota.)

That is why, in Say's opinion, there must be "*concours de la législation*" and "*droit positif*" to provide a basis for the *right* to landed property. The real Proudhon does not make Say "immediately" *infer* the right of landed property from the easier appropriation of land. He reproaches him with basing himself on possibility *instead* of right and *confusing* the question of possibility with the question of right:

"Say prend la possibilité *pour* le droit. On ne demande pas pourquoi la terre a été plutôt appropriée que la mer et les airs; on veut savoir, en vertu de quel droit l'homme s'est approprié cette richesse.

The Critical Proudhon continues:

"The only remark to be made on this is that with the appropriation of a piece of land the other elements -- air, water and fire -- are also appropriated: *terra, aqua, aëre et igne interdicti sumus*."

Far from making "*only*" this remark, the real Proudhon says, on the contrary, that he draws "attention", to the appropriation of air and water incidentally (*en passant*). The Critical Proudhon makes an unaccountable use of the Roman formula of banishment. He forgets to say who the "we" are who have been banished. The real Proudhon addresses the non-property-owners :

"Proletarians... property *excommunicates* us: *terra, etc. interdicti sumus*."

The Critical Proudhon polemises against Charles Comte as follows:

"Charles Comte thinks that, in order to live, man needs air, food and clothing. Some of these things, like air and water, are inexhaustible and therefore always remain common property; but others are available in smaller quantities and become private property. Charles Comte therefore bases his proof on the concepts of limitedness and unlimitedness; he would perhaps have come to a different conclusion had he made the concepts of dispensability and indispensability his main categories."

How childish the Critical Proudhon's polemic is! He expects Charles Comte to give up the categories he uses for his proof and to jump over to others so as to come, not to his own conclusions, but "*perhaps*" to those of the Critical Proudhon.

The real Proudhon does not make any such demands on Charles Comte; he does not dispose of him with a "perhaps", but defeats him with his own categories.

Charles Comte, Proudhon says, proceeds from the indispensability of air, food, and, in certain climates, clothing, not in order to live, but in order not to stop living. Hence (according to Charles Comte) in order to maintain himself, man constantly needs to appropriate things of various kinds. These things do not all exist in the same proportion.



"The light of the heavenly bodies, air and water exist in such quantities that man can neither increase nor decrease them appreciably; hence everyone can appropriate as much of them as his needs require, *without prejudice to the enjoyment of others*".

Proudhon proceeds from Comte's own definitions. First of all he proves to him that land is also an object of primary necessity, the usufruct of which must therefore remain free to everyone, within the limits of Comte's clause, namely: "*without prejudice to the enjoyment of others*." Why then has land become private property? Charles Comte answers: because it is *not unlimited*. He should have concluded, on the contrary, that because land is *limited* it may not be appropriated. The appropriation of air and water causes no prejudice to anybody because, as they are unlimited, there is always enough left. The arbitrary appropriation of land, on the other hand, prejudices the enjoyment of others precisely because the land is *limited*. The use of the land must therefore be regulated in the interests of *all*. Charles Comte's method of proving refutes his own thesis.

"Charles Comte, so Proudhon" (the Critical one, of course) "reasons, proceeds from the view that a nation can be the owner of a land; yet if property involves the right to use and misuse -- *jus utendi et abutendi re sua* -- even a nation cannot be adjudged the right to use and misuse a land."

The real Proudhon does not speak of *jus utendi et abutendi* that the right of property "*involves*". He is too mass-minded to speak of a right of property that the right of property involves. *Jus utendi et abutendi re sua* is, in fact, the right of property itself. Hence Proudhon directly refuses a people the right of property over its territory. To those who find that exaggerated, he replies that in all epochs the imagined right of national property gave rise to suzerainty, tribute, royal prerogatives, corvée, etc.

The real Proudhon reasons against Charles Comte as follows: Comte wishes to expound how property arises and he begins with the hypothesis of a nation as owner. He thus falls into a *petitio principii*. He makes the state sell lands, he lets industrialists buy those estates, that is to say, he presupposes the *property* relations that he wishes to prove.

The Critical Proudhon scraps the French *decimal system*. He keeps the *franc* but replaces the *centime* by the "*Dreier*".

"If I cede a piece of land, Proudhon" (the Critical one) "continues, I not only rob myself of one harvest; I deprive my children and children's children of a lasting good. Land has value not only today, it has also the value of its capacity and its future."

The real Proudhon does not speak of the fact that land has value not only today but also tomorrow: he contrasts the full present value to the value of its capacity and its future, which depends on my skill in exploiting the land. He says:

"Destroy the land, or, what comes to the same thing for you, sell it; you not only deprive yourself of one, two or more harvests; you annihilate all the produce you could have obtained from it, you, your children and your children's children."

For Proudhon the question is not one of stressing the contrast between one harvest and the lasting good -- the money I get for the field can, as capital, also become a "lasting good" -- but the contrast between the present value and the value the land can acquire through continuous cultivation.

"The new value, Charles Comte says, that I give to a thing by my work is my property. Proudhon" (the Critical one) "thinks he can refute him in the following way: *Then* a man must cease to be a property-owner as soon as he ceases to work. Ownership of the product

can by no means involve ownership of the material from which the product was made."

The real Proudhon says:

"Let the worker appropriate the products of his work, but I do not understand how ownership of the products involves ownership of the matter. Does the fisherman who manages to catch more fish than the others on the same bank become by this skill the owner of the place where he fishes! Was the skill of a hunter ever considered a title to ownership of the game in a canton! The same applies to agriculture. In order to transform *possession* into *property*, *another condition* is necessary besides work, or a man would cease to be a property-owner as soon as he ceased to be a worker."

*Cessante causa cessat effectus*. When the owner is owner only as a worker, he ceases to be an owner as soon as he ceases to be a worker.

"According to *law*, it is *prescription* which creates ownership; *work* is only the perceptible sign, the material act by which occupation is *manifested*."

"The system of appropriation through work," Proudhon goes on, "is therefore *contrary* to law; and when the supporters of that system put it forward as an explanation of the laws they are *contradicting themselves*."

To say further, according to this opinion, that the cultivation of the land, for example, "creates full ownership of the same" is a *petitio principii*. It is a fact that a new productive capacity of the matter has been created. But what has to be proved is that ownership of the matter itself has thereby been created. Man has not created the matter itself. And he cannot even create any productive capacity if the matter does not exist beforehand.

The Critical Proudhon makes *Gracchus Babeuf* a partisan of *freedom*, but for the mass-minded Proudhon he is a partisan of *equality* (*partisan de l'égalité*).

The *Critical Proudhon*, who wanted to estimate *Homer's* fee for the *Iliad*, says:

"The fee which I pay Homer should be equal to what he gives me. But how is the value of what he gives to be determined!"

The Critical Proudhon is too superior to the trifles of political economy to know that the *value* of an object and what that object gives somebody else are two different things. The real Proudhon says:

"The fee of the poet should be equal to his product: what then is the value of that product?"

The real Proudhon supposes that the *Iliad* has an infinite *price* (or exchange value, *prix*), while the Critical Proudhon supposes that it has an infinite *value*. The real Proudhon counterposes the value of the *Iliad*, its *value* in the *economic* sense (*valeur intrinsèque*), to its exchange value (*valeur changeable*); the Critical Proudhon counterposes its "value for exchange" to its "intrinsic value", i.e., its value as a poem.

The real Proudhon says:

"Between material reward and talent there is no common measure. In this respect the situation of all producers is the same. Consequently any comparison between them, any classification according to fortune is impossible." ("Entre une récompense matérielle et le talent il n'existe pas de commune mesure; sous ce rapport la condition de tous les producteurs est égale; conséquemment toute comparaison entre eux et toute distinction de fortunes est impossible.")

The Critical Proudhon says:

"*Relatively*, the position of all producers is the same. Talent cannot be weighed materially .... Any comparison of the producers among themselves, any *external distinction* is impossible."

In the Critical Proudhon we read that

"the man of science must feel himself equal in society, because his talent and his insight are only a product of the insight of society".

The real Proudhon does not speak anywhere about the feelings of talent. He says that talent must lower itself to the level of society. Nor does he at all assert that the man of talent is only a product of society. On the contrary, he says:

"The man of talent has contributed to produce in himself a useful instrument .... There exist in him a free worker and an accumulated social capital."

The Critical Proudhon goes on to say:

"Besides, he must be thankful to society for releasing him from other work so that he can apply himself to science."

The real Proudhon nowhere resorts to the gratitude of the man of talent. He says:

"The artist, the scientist, the poet, receive their just reward by the mere fact that society allows them to apply themselves exclusively to science and art."

Finally, the Critical Proudhon achieves the miracle of making a society of 150 workers able to maintain a "*marshal*" and, therefore, probably, an army. In the real Proudhon the marshal is a "*farrier*" (*maréchal*).

## Critical Comment No. 4

"If he" (Proudhon) "retains the concept of wages, if he sees in society an institution that gives us work and pays us for it, he has all the less right to recognize time as the measure for payment as he but shortly before, agreeing with Hugo Grotius, professed that time has no bearing on the validity of an object."

This is the only point on which Critical Criticism attempts to solve its problem and to prove to Proudhon that from the standpoint of political economy he is arguing wrongly against political economy. Here Criticism *disgraces* itself in truly Critical fashion.

Proudhon agrees with Hugo Grotius in arguing that *prescription* is no title to change *possession into property* or a "*legal principle*" into another principle, any more than time can change the truth that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles into the truth that they are equal to three right angles.

"Never," exclaims Proudhon, "will you succeed in making length of time, which of itself creates nothing, changes nothing, modifies nothing, able to change the user into a proprietor."

Herr Edgar's conclusion is: since Proudhon said that mere time cannot *change* one legal principle into another, that by itself it cannot change or modify anything, he is inconsistent when he makes *labour time* the measure of the economic value of the product of labour. Herr Edgar achieves this Critically Critical remark by translating "*valeur*" by "*Geltung*" so that he can use the word for validity of a legal principle

in the same sense as for the commercial value of a product of labour. He achieves it by identifying empty length of time with time filled with labour. Had Proudhon said that time cannot change a fly into an elephant, Critical Criticism could have said with the same justification: he has therefore no right to make labour time the measure of wages.

Even Critical Criticism must be capable of grasping that the *labour time expended* on the production of an object is included in the *cost of production* of that object, that the *cost of production* of an object is what it *costs*, and therefore what it can be sold for, abstraction being made of the influence of *competition*. Besides the labour time and the material of labour, economists include in the cost of production the rent paid to the owner of the land, interest and the profit of the capitalist. The latter are excluded by Proudhon because he excludes private property. Hence there remain only the labour time and the expenses. By making labour time, the immediate existence of human activity as activity, the measure of wages and the determinant of the value of the product, Proudhon makes the human side the decisive factor. In old political economy, on the other hand, the decisive factor was the material power of capital and of landed property. In other words, Proudhon reinstates man in his rights, but still in an economic and therefore contradictory way. How right he is from the standpoint of political economy can be seen from the fact that *Adam Smith*, the founder of modern political economy, in the very first pages of his book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, develops the idea that before the invention of private property, that is to say, presupposing the *non-existence of private property*, *labour time* was the measure of *wages* and of the *value of the product of labour*, which was not yet distinguished from wages.

But even let Critical Criticism suppose for an instant that Proudhon did not proceed from the premise of wages. Does it believe that the time which the production of an object requires will ever not be an essential factor in the "*validity*" of the object! Does it believe that time will lose its *costliness*?

As far as immediate material production is concerned, the decision whether an object is to be produced or not, i.e., the decision on the *value* of the object, will depend essentially on the labour time required for its production. For it depends on time whether society has time to develop in a human way.

And even as far as *intellectual* production is concerned, must I not, if I proceed reasonably in other respects, consider the time necessary for the production of an intellectual work when I determine its scope, its character and its plan? Otherwise I risk at least that the object that is in my idea will never become an object in reality, and can therefore acquire only the value of an imaginary object, i.e., an *imaginary value*.

The criticism of political economy from the standpoint of political economy recognizes all the essential determinants of human activity, but only in an estranged, alienated form. Here, for example, it converts the importance of time for *human labour* into its importance for *wages*, for wage-labour.

Herr Edgar continues:

"In order to force talent to accept that measure, Proudhon misuses the concept of free contract and asserts that society and its individual members have the right to reject the products of talent."

Among the *followers of Fourier and Saint-Simon*, talent puts forward exaggerated *fee claims* on an economic basis and makes its imagined notion of its infinite value the measure of the *exchange value* of its products. Proudhon answers it in exactly the same way as political economy answers any claim for a



price much higher than the so-called natural price, that is, higher than the cost of production of the object offered. He answers by freedom of contract. But Proudhon does not *misuse* this relation in the sense of political economy; on the contrary, he assumes that to be real which the economists consider to be only nominal and illusory-the *freedom* of the contracting parties.

## Characterizing Translation No. 4

The Critical Proudhon finally reforms *French society* by as deep a transformation of the French proletarians as of the French bourgeoisie.

He denies the French proletarians "*strength*" because the real Proudhon reproaches them with a lack of *virtue* (*vertu*). He makes their *skill* in work problematic -- "you are *perhaps* skilled in work" -- because the real Proudhon unconditionally recognizes it ("*prompts au travail vous êtes*", etc.). He converts the French bourgeoisie into dull burghers whereas the real Proudhon counterposes the ignoble bourgeois (*bourgeois ignobles*) to the blemished nobles (*nobles flétris*). He converts the bourgeois from happy-medium burghers (*bourgeois juste-milieu*) into "our good burghers", for which the French bourgeoisie can be grateful. Hence, where the real Proudhon says the "ill will" of the French bourgeoisie (*la malveillance de nos bourgeois*) is growing, the Critical Proudhon consistently makes the "carefreeness of our burghers" grow. The real Proudhon's bourgeois is so far from being carefree that he calls out to himself: "*N'ayons pas peur! N'ayons pas peur!*" Those are the words of a man who wishes to reason himself out of fear and worry.

By creating the Critical Proudhon through its translation of the real Proudhon, Critical Criticism has revealed to the Mass what a Critically perfect translation is. It has given directions for "translation as it ought to be". It is therefore rightly against bad, mass-type translations.

"The German public wants the booksellers' wares ridiculously cheap, so the publisher needs a cheap translation; the translator does not want to starve at his work, he cannot even perform it with mature reflection" (with all the tranquillity of knowledge) "because the publisher must anticipate rivals by quick delivery of translations; even the translator has to fear competition, has to fear that someone else will produce the ware cheaper and quicker; he therefore dictates his manuscript offhand to some poor scribe -- as quickly as he can in order not to pay the scribe his hourly wage for nothing. He is more than happy when he can next day adequately satisfy the harassing type-setter. For the rest, the translations with which we are flooded are but a manifestation of the present-day impotence of German literature", etc. (*Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, Heft VIII, p.54.)

## Critical Comment No. 5

"The proof of the impossibility of property that Proudhon draws from the fact that mankind ruins itself particularly by the interest and profit system and by the disproportion between consumption and production lacks its counterpart, namely, the proof that private property is historically possible."

Critical Criticism has the fortunate instinct not to go into Proudhon's reasoning on the interest and profit system, etc., i.e., into the most important part of his argument. The reason is that on this point not even a semblance of criticism of Proudhon can be offered without absolutely positive knowledge of the



movement of private property. Critical Criticism tries to make up for its impotence by observing that Proudhon has not proved the historical possibility of property. Why does Criticism, which has nothing but words to give, expect others to give it *everything*?

"Proudhon proves the impossibility of property by the fact that the worker cannot buy back the product of his work out of his wage. Proudhon does not give an exhaustive proof of this by expounding the essence of capital. The worker cannot buy back his product because it is always a joint product, whereas he is never anything but an individual paid man."

Herr Edgar, in contrast to Proudhon's deduction, could have expressed himself still more exhaustively to the effect that the worker cannot buy back his product because in general he must *buy it back*. The definition of buying already implies that he regards his product as an object that is no longer his, an estranged object. Among other things, Herr Edgar's exhaustive argument does not exhaust the question why the capitalist, who himself is *nothing* but an *individual* man, and what is more, a man *paid* by profit and interest, can buy back not only the product of labour, but still more than this product. To explain this Herr Edgar would have to explain the relationship between labour and capital, that is, to expound the essence of capital.

The above quotation from Criticism shows most palpably how Critical Criticism immediately makes use of what it has learnt from a writer to pass it off as wisdom it has itself discovered and use it with a Critical twist against the same writer. For it is from Proudhon himself that Critical Criticism drew the argument that it says Proudhon did not give and that Herr Edgar did. Proudhon says:

"Divide et impera ... separate the workers from one another, and it is quite possible that the daily wage paid to each one may exceed the value of each individual product; but that is not the point at issue.... Although you have paid for all the individual powers you have still not paid for the collective power."

Proudhon was the first to draw attention to the fact that the sum of the wages of the individual workers, even if each individual labour be paid for completely, does not pay for the collective power objectified in its product, that therefore the worker is not paid as a part of the *collective labour power* [*gemeinschaftlichen Arbeitskraft*]. Herr Edgar twists this into the assertion that the worker is nothing but an individual paid man. Critical Criticism thus opposes a *general* thought of Proudhon's to the further *concrete* development that Proudhon himself gives to the same thought. It takes possession of this thought after the fashion of Criticism and expresses the secret of *Critical socialism* in the following sentence:

"The modern worker thinks only of himself, i.e., he allows himself to be paid only for his own person. It is he himself who fails to take into account the enormous, the immeasurable power which arises from his co-operation with other powers."

According to Critical Criticism, the whole evil lies only in the workers' "*thinking*". It is true that the English and French workers have formed associations in which they exchange opinions not only on their immediate needs as *workers*, but on their needs as human beings. In their associations, moreover, they show a very thorough and comprehensive consciousness of the "enormous" and "immeasurable" power which arises from their co-operation. But these *mass-minded*, communist workers, employed, for instance, in the Manchester or Lyons workshops, do not believe that by "*pure thinking*" they will be able to argue away their industrial masters and their own practical debasement. They are most painfully aware of the *difference* between *being* and *thinking*, between *consciousness* and *life*. They know that property, capital, money, wage-labour and the like are no ideal figments of the brain but very practical, very

objective products of their self-estrangement and that therefore they must be abolished in a practical, objective way for man to become man not only in *thinking*, in *consciousness*, but in mass *being*, in life. Critical Criticism, on the contrary, teaches them that they cease in reality to be wage-workers if in thinking they abolish the thought of wage-labour; if in thinking they cease to regard themselves as wage-workers and, in accordance with that extravagant notion, no longer let themselves be paid for their person. As absolute idealists, as ethereal beings, they will then naturally be able to live on the ether of pure thought. Critical Criticism teaches them that they abolish real capital by overcoming in *thinking* the category Capital, that they *really* change and transform themselves into real human beings by changing their "*abstract ego*" in consciousness and scorning as an un-Critical operation all real change of their real existence, of the real conditions of their existence, that is to say, of their *real ego*. The "*spirit*", which sees in reality only categories, naturally reduces all human activity and practice to the dialectical process of thought of Critical Criticism. That is what distinguishes its socialism from *mass-type* socialism and communism.

After his great argumentation, Herr Edgar must, of course, declare Proudhon's criticism "devoid of consciousness".

"Proudhon, however, wishes to be practical too." "He thinks he has grasped." "And nevertheless," cries the tranquillity of knowledge triumphantly, "we cannot even now credit him with the tranquillity of knowledge." "We quote a few passages to show how little he has thought out his attitude to society."

Later we shall also quote a few passages from the works of Critical Criticism (see the *Bank for the Poor* and the *Model Farm*) to show that it has not yet become acquainted with the most elementary economic relationships, let alone thought them out, and hence with its characteristic Critical tact has felt itself called upon to pass judgment on Proudhon.

Now that Critical Criticism as the tranquillity of knowledge has "*made*" *all the mass-type antitheses its concern*", has mastered all reality in the form of categories and dissolved all human activity into speculative dialectics, we shall see it produce the world again out of speculative dialectics. It goes without saying that if the miracles of the Critically speculative creation of the world are not to be "desecrated", they can be presented to the profane mass only in the form of *mysteries*. Critical Criticism therefore appears in the incarnation of Vishnu-Szeliga as a *mystery-monger*.

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## Karl Marx's

## The Holy Family

## Chapter V

**"CRITICAL CRITICISM" AS A MYSTERY-MONGER,  
OR  
"CRITICAL CRITICISM" AS HERR SZELIGA**

"Critical Criticism" in its *Szeliga-Vishnu* incarnation provides an apotheosis of the *Mystères de Paris*. Eugène Sue is proclaimed a "Critical Critic". Hearing this, he may exclaim like Molière's *Bourgeois gentilhomme*:

"Par ma foi, il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose, sans que j'en susse rien: et je vous suis le plus oblig, du monde de m'avoir appris cela."

Herr Szeliga prefaces his criticism with an *aesthetic* prologue. "The aesthetic prologue" gives the following explanation of the general meaning of the "Critical" epic and in particular of the *Mystères de Paris*:

"The epic gives rise to the thought that the present in itself is nothing, and not only" (nothing and not only!) "the eternal boundary between past and future, but" (nothing, and not only, but) "but the gap that separates immortality from transience and must continually be filled.... Such is the *general meaning of the Mystères de Paris*."

The "aesthetic prologue" further asserts that "if the Critic wished he could also be a *poet*".

The whole of Herr Szeliga's criticism will prove that assertion. It is "*poetic fiction*" in every respect.

It is also a product of "free art" according to the definition of the latter given in the "aesthetic prologue" -- it "invents *something quite new, something that absolutely never existed before*".

Finally, it is even a *Critical epic*, for it is "the gap that separates immortality" -- Herr Szeliga's Critical Criticism -- from "transience" -- Eugène Sue's novel -- and "must continually be filled".

**1) "THE MYSTERY OF DEGENERACY IN CIVILISATION" AND "THE MYSTERY OF RICHTESSNESS IN THE STATE"**

*Feuerbach*, we know, conceived the Christian ideas of the Incarnation, the Trinity, Immortality, etc., as the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of Immortality. Herr Szeliga conceives all present world conditions as mysteries. But whereas *Feuerbach* disclosed *real mysteries*,

Herr *Szeliga* makes *mysteries* out of real *trivialities*. His art is not that of disclosing what is hidden, but of hiding what is disclosed.

Thus he proclaims as *mysteries* degeneracy (criminals) within civilisation and rightlessness and inequality in the state. This means that socialist literature, which has revealed these mysteries, is still a mystery to Herr *Szeliga*, or that he wants to convert the best-known findings of that literature into a private mystery of "Critical Criticism".

We therefore need not go more deeply into Herr *Szeliga*'s discourse on these mysteries; we shall merely draw attention to a few of the most brilliant points.

"Before the law and the judge everything is *equal*, the high and the low, the rich and the poor. This proposition stands at the head of the credo of *the state*."

Of the state? The credo of most states starts, on the contrary, by making the high and the low, the rich and the poor *unequal* before the *law*.

"The gem-cutter Morel in his naive probity most clearly expresses the mystery" (the mystery of the antithesis of poor and rich) "when he says: If only the rich knew! If only the rich knew! The misfortune is that they do not know what poverty is."

Herr *Szeliga* does not know that Eugène Sue commits an *anachronism* out of courtesy to the French bourgeoisie when he puts the motto of the burghers of Louis XIV's time "*Ah! si le roi le savait!*" in a modified form: "*Ah! si le riche le savait!*" into the mouth of the working man Morel who lived at the time of the *Charte vérité*" In England and France, at least, this *naive* relation between rich and poor has ceased to exist. There the scientific representatives of wealth, the economists, have spread a very detailed understanding of the physical and moral misery of poverty. They have made up for that by proving that misery must remain because the present state of things must remain. In their solicitude they have even calculated the *proportions* in which the poor must be reduced in number by deaths for the good of the rich and for their own welfare.

If Eugene Sue depicts the taverns, hide-outs and language of *criminals*, Herr *Szeliga* discloses the "*mystery*" that what the "author" wanted was not to depict that language or those hide-outs, but

"to teach us the mystery of the mainsprings of evil, etc." "It is precisely in the most crowded places ... that criminals feel at *home*."

What would a natural scientist say if one were to prove to him that the bee's cell does not interest him as a bee's cell, that it has no mystery for one who has not studied it, because the bee "feels at home precisely" in the open air and on the flower? The hide-outs of the criminals and their language reflect the character of the criminal, they are part of his existence, their description is part of his description just as the description of the *petite maison* is part of the description of the *femme galante*.

For Parisians in general and even for the Paris police the hide-outs of criminals are such a "mystery" that at this very moment broad light streets are being laid out in the *Cité* to give the police access to them.

Finally, Eugène Sue himself states that in the descriptions mentioned above he was counting "*sur la curiosité, craintive*" of his readers. M. Eugène Sue has counted on the timid curiosity of his readers in all his novels. It is sufficient to recall *Atar Gull*, *Salamandre*, *Plick and Plock*, etc.

## 2) THE MYSTERY OF SPECULATIVE CONSTRUCTION



The mystery of the Critical presentation of the *Mystères de Paris* is the mystery of *speculative*, of *Hegelian construction*. Once Herr Szeliga has proclaimed that "degeneracy within civilisation" and rightlessness in the state are "mysteries", i.e., has dissolved them in the category "*mystery*", he lets "*mystery*" begin its *speculative career*. A few words will suffice to characterise speculative construction *in general*. Herr Szeliga's treatment of the *Mystères de Paris* will give the application in *detail*.

If from real apples, pears, strawberries and almonds I form the general idea "*Fruit*", if I go further and *imagine* that my abstract idea "*Fruit*", derived from real fruit, is an entity existing outside me, is indeed the true essence of the pear, the apple, etc., then in the *language of speculative philosophy* -- I am declaring that "*Fruit*" is the "*Substance*" of the pear, the apple, the almond, etc. I am saying, therefore, that to be a pear is not essential to the pear, that to be an apple is not essential to the apple; that what is essential to these things is not their real existence, perceptible to the senses, but the essence that I have abstracted from them and then foisted on them, the essence of my idea -- "*Fruit*". I therefore declare apples, pears, almonds, etc., to be mere forms of existence, *modi*, of "*Fruit*". My finite understanding supported by my senses does of course *distinguish* an apple from a pear and a pear from an almond, but my speculative reason declares these sensuous differences inessential and irrelevant. It sees in the apple *the same* as in the pear, and in the pear the same as in the almond, namely "*Fruit*". Particular real fruits are no more than semblances whose true essence is "*the substance*" -- "*Fruit*".

By this method one attains no particular *wealth of definition*. The mineralogist whose whole science was limited to the statement that all minerals are really "*the Mineral*" would be a mineralogist only in *his imagination*. For every mineral the speculative mineralogist Says "*the Mineral*", and his science is reduced to repeating this word as many times as there are real minerals.

Having reduced the different real fruits to the *one* "fruit" of abstraction -- "*the Fruit*", speculation must, in order to attain some semblance of real content, try somehow to find its way back from "*the Fruit*", from the *Substance* to the *diverse*, ordinary real fruits, the pear, the apple, the almond, etc. It is as hard to produce real fruits from the abstract idea "*the Fruit*" as it is easy to produce this abstract idea from real fruits. Indeed, it is impossible to arrive at the opposite of an abstraction without relinquishing the abstraction.

The speculative philosopher therefore relinquishes the abstraction "*the Fruit*", but in a *speculative, mystical* fashion -- with the appearance of *not* relinquishing it. Thus it is really only in appearance that he rises above his abstraction. He argues somewhat as follows:

If apples, pears, almonds and strawberries are really nothing but "*the Substance*", "*the Fruit*", the question arises: Why does "*the Fruit*" manifest itself to me sometimes as an apple, sometimes as a pear, sometimes as an almond? Why this *semblance of diversity* which so obviously contradicts my speculative conception of *Unity*, "*the Substance*", "*the Fruit*"?

This, answers the speculative philosopher, is because "*the Fruit*" is not dead, undifferentiated, motionless, but a living, self-differentiating, moving essence. The diversity of the ordinary fruits is significant not only for my sensuous understanding, but also for "*the Fruit*" itself and for speculative reason. The different ordinary fruits are different manifestations of the life of the "one Fruit"; they are crystallisations of "*the Fruit*" itself. Thus in the apple "*the Fruit*" gives itself an apple-like existence, in the pear a pear-like existence. We must therefore no longer say, as one might from the standpoint of the Substance: a pear is "*the Fruit*", an apple is "*the Fruit*", an almond is "*the Fruit*", but rather "*the Fruit*" presents itself as a pear, "*the Fruit*" presents itself as an apple, "*the Fruit*" presents itself as an almond;



and the differences which distinguish apples, pears and almonds from one another are the self-differentiations of "*the Fruit*" and, make the particular fruits different members of the life-process of "*the Fruit*". Thus "*the Fruit*" is no longer an empty undifferentiated unity; it is oneness as *allness*, as "*totality*" of fruits, which constitute an "*organically linked series of members*". In every member of that series "*the Fruit*" gives itself a more developed, more explicit existence, until finally, as the "*summary*" of all fruits, it is at the same time the living *unity* which contains all those fruits dissolved in itself just as it produces them from within itself, just as, for instance, all the limbs of the body are constantly dissolved in and constantly produced out of the blood.

We see that if the Christian religion knows only *one* Incarnation of God, speculative philosophy has as many incarnations as there are things, just as it has here in every fruit an incarnation of the Substance, of the Absolute Fruit. The main interest for the speculative philosopher is therefore to produce the *existence* of the real ordinary fruits and to say in some mysterious way that there are apples, pears, almonds and raisins. But the apples, pears, almonds and raisins that we rediscover in the speculative world are nothing but *semblances* of apples, *semblances* of pears, *semblances* of almonds and *semblances* of raisins, for they are moments in the life of "*the Fruit*", this abstract creation of the mind, and therefore themselves abstract *creations of the mind*. Hence what is delightful in this speculation is to rediscover all the real fruits there, but as fruits which have a higher mystical significance, which have grown out of the ether of your brain and not out of the material earth, which are incarnations of "*the Fruit*", of the *Absolute Subject*. When you return from the abstraction, the *supernatural* creation of the mind, "*the Fruit*", to real *natural* fruits, you give on the contrary the natural fruits a supernatural significance and transform them into sheer abstractions. Your main interest is then to point out the *unity* of "*the Fruit*" in all the manifestations of its life -- the apple, the pear, the almond -- that is, to show the *mystical interconnection* between these fruits, how in each one of them "*the Fruit*" realises itself by *degrees* and *necessarily* progresses, for instance, from its existence as a raisin to its existence as an almond. Hence the value of the ordinary fruits *no longer* consists in their *natural* qualities, *but* in their *speculative* quality, which gives each of them a definite place in the life-process of "*the Absolute Fruit*"

The ordinary man does not think he is saying anything extraordinary when he states that there are apples and pears. But when the philosopher expresses their existence in the speculative way he says something *extraordinary*. He performs a *miracle* by producing the real *natural objects*, the apple, the pear, etc., out of the unreal *creation of the mind* "*the Fruit*", i.e., by *creating* those fruits out of his *own abstract reason*, which he considers as an Absolute Subject outside himself, represented here as "*the Fruit*". And in regard to every object the existence of which he expresses, he accomplishes an act of creation.

It goes without saying that the speculative philosopher accomplishes this continuous creation only by presenting universally known qualities of the apple, the pear, etc., which exist in reality, as determining features *invented* by him, by giving the *names* of the real things to what abstract reason alone can create, to abstract formulas of reason, finally, by declaring his *own* activity, by which *he passes* from the idea of an apple to the idea of a pear, to be the *self-activity* of the Absolute Subject, "*the Fruit*"

In the speculative way of speaking, this operation is called comprehending *Substance as Subject*, as an *inner process*, as an *Absolute Person*, and this comprehension constitutes the essential character of *Hegel's* method.

These preliminary remarks were necessary to make Herr Szeliga intelligible. Only now, after dissolving real relations, e.g., law and civilisation, in the category of mystery and thereby making "*Mystery*"(das

Geheimnis) into Substance, does he rise to the true speculative, *Hegelian* height and transforms "*Mystery*" into a self-existing Subject *incarnating* itself in real situations and persons so that the manifestations of its life are countesses, marquises, grisettes, porters, notaries, charlatans, and love intrigues, balls, wooden doors, etc. Having produced the category "*Mystery*" out of the real world, he produces the real world out of this category.

The mysteries of *speculative construction* in Herr Szeliga's presentation will be all the *more visibly* disclosed as he has an indisputable *double* advantage over *Hegel*. On the one hand, Hegel with masterly sophistry is able to present as a process of the imagined creation of the mind itself, of the Absolute Subject, the process by which the philosopher through sensory perception and imagination passes from one subject to another. On the other hand, however, Hegel very often gives a *real* presentation, embracing the *thing* itself, within the *speculative* presentation. This real development *within* the speculative development misleads the reader into considering the speculative development as real and the real as speculative.

With Herr Szeliga both these difficulties vanish. His dialectics have no hypocrisy or dissimulation. He performs his tricks with the most laudable honesty and the most ingenuous straightforwardness. But then he *nowhere* develops any *real content*, so that his speculative construction is free from all disturbing accessories, from all ambiguous disguises, and appeals to the eye in its naked beauty. In Herr Szeliga we also see a brilliant illustration of how speculation on the one hand apparently freely creates its object *a priori* out of itself and, on the other hand, precisely because it wishes to get rid by sophistry of the rational and natural dependence on the *object*, falls into the most irrational and unnatural *bondage* to the object, whose most accidental and most individual attributes it is obliged to construe as absolutely necessary and general.

### 3) "THE MYSTERY OF EDUCATED SOCIETY"

After leading us through the lowest strata of society, for example through the criminals' taverns, Eugene Sue transports us to "*haute volée*," to a ball in the Quartier Saint-Germain.

This *transition* Herr Szeliga construes as follows:

"*Mystery* tries to evade examination by a ... twist: so far it appeared as the absolutely enigmatic, elusive and negative, in contrast to the true, real and positive; now it withdraws into the latter as its *invisible* content. But by doing so it gives up the unconditional possibility of becoming known."

"*Mystery*" which has so far appeared in contrast to the "true", the "real", the "positive", that is, to law and education, "now withdraws into the latter", that is, into the realm of education. It is certainly a *mystère* for Paris, if not of Paris, that "*haute volée*" is the exclusive realm of education. Herr Szeliga does not pass from the mysteries of the criminal world to those of aristocratic society; instead, "*Mystery*" becomes the "invisible content" of educated society, its *real essence*. It is "*not a new twist*" of Herr Szeliga's designed to enable him to proceed to further examination; "*Mystery*" itself takes this "new twist" in order to escape examination.

Before really following Eugene Sue where his heart leads him – to an aristocratic ball, Herr Szeliga resorts to the *hypocritical* twists of speculation which makes *a priori* constructions.

"One can *naturally foresee* what a solid shell 'Mystery' will *choose* to hide in; it *seems*, in *fact*, that it is of *insuperable impenetrability* ... that ... *hence* it may *be expected* that in

*general ... nevertheless* a new attempt to pick out the kernel is *here indispensable*.”

Enough. Herr Szeliga has gone so far that the

“*metaphysical* subject, *Mystery*, now steps forward, light, self-confident and jaunty”.

In order now to change aristocratic society into a “mystery”, Herr Szeliga gives us a few considerations on “*education*”. He presumes aristocratic society to have all sorts of qualities that no man would look for in it, in order later to find the “mystery” that it does not possess those qualities. Then he presents this discovery as the “mystery” of educated society. Herr Szeliga wonders, for example, whether “*general reason*” (does he mean speculative logic?) constitutes the content of its “*drawing-room talk*”, whether “the *rhythm and measure of love alone* makes” it a “harmonious whole”, whether “what we call *general education* is the form of the *general, the eternal, the ideal*”, i.e., whether what we call education is a metaphysical illusion. It is not difficult for Herr Szeliga to prophesy *a priori* in answer to his questions:

“It is to be *expected, however ...* that the answer will be in the negative.”

In Eugene Sue’s novel, the transition from the low world to the aristocratic world is a normal transition for a novel. The *disguises of Rudolph*, Prince of Geroldstein, give him entry into the lower strata of society as his title gives him access to the highest circles. On his way to the aristocratic ball he is by no means engrossed in the contrasts of contemporary life; it is the contrasts of his own disguises that he finds *piquant*. He informs his obedient companions how extraordinarily interesting he finds himself in the various situations.

“Je trouve,” he says, “assez de piquant dans ces contrastes: un jour peintre en éventails, m’établant dans un bouge de la rue aux Fèves; ce matin commis marchand offrant un verre de cassis à Madame Pipelet, et ce soir ... un des privilégiés par la grâce de dieu, qui règnent sur ce monde.”

When Critical Criticism is ushered into the ball-room, it sings:

Sense and reason forsake me near,  
In the midst of the potentates here!

It pours forth in *dithyrambs* as follows:

“Here magic brings the brilliance of the sun at night, the verdure of spring and the splendour of summer in winter. We immediately feel in a mood to believe in the miracle of the divine presence in the breast of man, especially when beauty and grace uphold the conviction that we are in the immediate proximity of ideals.” (!!!)

Inexperienced, credulous *Critical country parson*! Only your Critical ingenuousness can be raised by an elegant Parisian ball-room “to a mood” in which you believe in “the miracle of the divine presence in the breast of man”, and see in Parisian lionesses “immediate ideals” and angels corporeal!

In his *unctuous* naivety the Critical parson listens to the two “most beautiful among the beautiful”, Clemence d’Harville and Countess Sarah MacGregor. One can guess what he wishes to “*hear*” from them:

“In what way we can be the *blessing* of beloved children and the ‘*fullness* of happiness of a husband’!... “We hark ... we wonder ... we do not trust our ears.”

We secretly feel a malicious pleasure when the listening parson is disappointed. The ladies converse neither about “blessing”, nor “fullness”, nor “general reason”, but about “an infidelity of Madame d’Harville to her husband”.

We get the following naive revelation about one of the ladies, Countess MacGregor:

She was “*enterprising enough to become mother to a child as the result of a secret marriage*”.

Unpleasantly affected by the

of the Countess, Herr Szeliga has sharp words for her:

“We find that all the strivings of the Countess are for her personal, selfish advantage.”

Indeed, he expects nothing good from the attainment of her purpose – marriage to the Prince of Geroldstein:

“concerning which we can *by no means* expect that she will avail herself of it for the *happiness* of the Prince of Geroldstein’s *subjects*.”

The puritan ends his admonitory sermon with “profound earnestness”:

“Sarah” (the *enterprising* lady), “*incidentally, is hardly* an exception in this brilliant circle, *although* she is one of its *summits*.”

Incidentally, hardly! Although! And is not the “summit” of a circle an exception?

Here is what we learn about the character of two other ideals, the Marquise d’Harville and the Duchess of Lucenay:

They “‘lack satisfaction of the heart’. They have not found in marriage the object of love, so they seek it outside marriage. In marriage, love has remained a *mystery* for them, and the imperative urge of the heart drives them to unravel this mystery. So they give themselves up to *secret love*. These ‘victims’ of ‘loveless marriage’ are ‘driven against their will to debase love to something external, to a so-called affair, and take the romantic, the *secrecy*, for the internal, the vivifying, the essential element of love’”.

The merit of this dialectical reasoning is to be assessed all the higher as it is of more general application.

He, for example, who is not allowed to *drink* at home and yet feels the need to drink looks for the “object” of drinking “*outside*” the house, and “so” takes to *secret drinking*. Indeed, he will be driven to consider secrecy an essential ingredient of drinking, although he will not debase drink to a mere “external” indifferent thing, any more than those ladies did with love. For, according to Herr Szeliga himself, it is not love, but marriage without love, that they debase to what it really is, to something external, to a so-called affair.

Herr Szeliga goes on to ask: “What is the ‘*mystery*’ of love?”

We have just had the speculative construction that “mystery” is the “*essence*” of this kind of love. How is it that we now come to be looking for the mystery of the mystery, the essence of the essence?

“Not the shady paths in the thickets,” declaims the parson, “not the *natural* semi-obscurity of moonlight night nor the artificial semi-obscurity of costly curtains and draperies; not the soft and enrapturing notes of the harps and the organs, not the attraction of what is forbidden....”

Curtains and draperies! Soft and enrapturing notes! Even the *organ*! Let the reverend parson stop thinking of *church*! Who would bring an organ to a love tryst?

“All this” (curtains, draperies and organs) “is only the mysterious.”

And is not the mysterious the “mystery” of mysterious love? By no means:



"The mysterious in it is what excites, what intoxicates, what enraptures, the *power of sensuality*."

In the "soft and *enrapturing*" notes, the parson already had what enraptures. Had he brought turtle soup and champagne to his love tryst instead of curtains and organs, the "*exciting and intoxicating*" would have been present too.

"It is true we do not like to admit," the reverend gentleman argues, "the power of sensuality; but it has such tremendous power over us only because we cast it out of us and will not recognise it as our own nature, which we should then be in a position to dominate if it tried to assert itself at the expense of reason, of true love and of will-power."

The parson advises us, after the fashion of speculative theology, to *recognise* sensuality as our *own* nature, in order afterwards to be able to *dominate* it, i.e., to retract recognition of it. True, he wishes to dominate it only when it tries to assert itself at the expense of *Reason* – will-power and love as *opposed* to sensuality are only the will-power and love of *Reason*. The unspeculative Christian also recognises *sensuality* as long as it does not assert itself at the expense of true reason, i.e., of faith, of true love, i.e., of love of God, of true will-power, i.e., of will in Christ.

The parson immediately betrays his real meaning when he continues:

"If then love ceases to be the essential element of marriage and of morality in general, *sensuality* becomes the mystery of love, of morality, of educated society – sensuality both in its *narrow* meaning, in which it is a *trembling in the nerves* and a *burning stream* in the veins, and in the broader meaning, in which it is elevated to a *semblance* of spiritual power, to lust for power, ambition, craving for glory.... Countess MacGregor represents" the latter meaning "of sensuality as the mystery of educated society."

The parson hits the nail on the head. To overcome *sensuality* he must first of all overcome the *nerve currents* and the quick *circulation of the blood*.– Herr Szeliga believes in the "narrow" meaning that greater warmth in the body comes from the heat of the blood in the veins; he does not know that *warm-blooded animals* are so called because the temperature of their blood, apart from slight modifications, always remains at a constant level.– As soon as there is no more nerve current and the blood in the veins is no longer hot, the *sinful body*, this seat of sensual lust, becomes a *corpse* and the souls can converse unhindered about "general reason", "true love", and "pure morals". The parson debases sensuality to such an extent that he abolishes the very elements of sensual love which inspire it – the rapid circulation of the blood, which proves that man does not love by insensitive phlegm; the nerve currents which connect the organ that is the main seat of sensuality with the brain. He reduces true sensual love to the *mechanical secretio seminis* and lisps with a notorious German theologian:

"Not for the sake of sensual love, not for the lust of the flesh, but because the Lord said: Increase and multiply."

Let us now compare the speculative construction with Eugene Sue's novel. It is not *sensuality* which is presented as the secret of love, but mysteries, adventures, obstacles, fears, dangers, and especially the attraction of what is forbidden.

"Pourquoi," says Eugene Sue, "beaucoup de femmes prennent-elles pourtant des hommes qui ne valent pas leurs maris? Parce que le plus grand charme de l'amour est l'attrait affriandant du fruit défendu ... avancez que, en retranchant de cet amour les craintes, les angoisses, les difficultés, les mystères, les dangers, il ne reste rien ou peu de chose, c'est-à-dire, l'amant ... dans sa simplicité première ... en un mot, ce serait toujours plus ou



moins l'aventure de cet homme à qui l'on disait: 'Pourquoi n'épousez-vous donc pas cette veuve, votre maîtresse?' – 'Hélas, j'y ai bien pensé' – répondit-il' – 'mais alors je ne saurais plus où aller passer mes soirées.'"

Whereas Herr Szeliga says explicitly that the mystery of love is not in the *attraction of what is forbidden*, Eugene Sue says just as explicitly that it is the "greatest charm of love" and the reason for all love adventures *extra muros*.

"La prohibition et la contrebande sont inseparables en amour comme en marchandise."

Eugene Sue similarly maintains, contrary to his speculative commentator, that

"the propensity to pretence and craft, the liking for mysteries and intrigues, is an essential quality, a natural propensity and an imperative instinct of woman's nature".

The only thing which embarrasses Eugene Sue is that this propensity and this liking are directed against *marriage*. He would like to give the instincts of woman's nature a more harmless, more useful application.

Herr Szeliga makes Countess MacGregor a representative of the kind of *sensuality* which "is elevated to a semblance of spiritual power", but in Eugene Sue she is a *person of abstract reason*. Her "ambition" and her "pride", far from being forms of sensuality, are born of an abstract reason which is completely independent of sensuality. That is why Eugene Sue explicitly notes that

"the fiery impulses of love could never make her icy breast heave; no surprise of the heart or the senses could upset the pitiless calculations of this crafty, selfish, ambitious woman".

This woman's essential character lies in the egoism of abstract reason that never suffers from the sympathetic senses and on which the blood has no influence. Her soul is therefore described as "dry and hard", her mind as "artfully wicked", her character as "treacherous" and – what is very typical of a person of abstract reason – as "absolute", her dissimulation as "profound". – It is to be noted incidentally that Eugene Sue motivates the career of the Countess just as stupidly as that of most of his characters. An old nurse gives her the idea that she must become a "crowned head". Convinced of this, she undertakes journeys to capture a crown through marriage. Finally she commits the inconsistency of considering a petty German "*Serenissimus*" as a "crowned head".

After his outpourings against *sensuality*, our Critical saint deems it necessary to show why Eugene Sue introduces us to *haute volée* at a ball, a method which is used by nearly all French novelists, whereas the *English* do so more often at the chase or in a country mansion.

"For this" (i.e., Herr Szeliga's) "conception it cannot be indifferent there" (in Herr Szeliga's construction) "and merely accidental that Eugene Sue introduces us to high society at a ball."

Now the horse has been given a free rein and it trots briskly towards the necessary end through a series of conclusions reminding one of the late Wolff.

"*Dancing* is the most common manifestation of *sensuality as a mystery*. The immediate *contact*, the embracing of the two sexes" (?) "necessary to form a couple are allowed in dancing because, in spite of appearances, and the really" (really, Mr. Parson?) "perceptible pleasant sensation, it is not considered as *sensual* contact and embracing" (but probably as connected with universal reason?).

And then comes a closing sentence which at best staggers rather than dances:

“For if it were in actual fact considered as such it would be impossible to understand why society is so lenient only as regards dancing while it, on the contrary, so severely condemns that which, if exhibited with similar freedom elsewhere, incurs branding and merciless casting out as a most unpardonable offence against morals and modesty.”

The reverend parson speaks here neither of the *cancan* nor of the *polka*, but of *dancing* in general, of the *category* Dancing, which is not performed anywhere except in his Critical cranium. Let him see a dance at the Chaumiere in Paris, and his Christian-German soul would be outraged by the boldness, the frankness, the graceful petulance and the music of that most sensual movement. His own “really perceptible pleasant sensation” would make it “perceptible” to him that “in actual fact it would be impossible to understand why the dancers themselves, while on the contrary they” give the spectator the uplifting impression of frank human sensuality – “which, if exhibited in the same way elsewhere” – namely in Germany – “would be severely condemned as an unpardonable offence”, etc., etc. – why those dancers, at least so to speak in their own eyes, not only should not and may not, but of necessity cannot and must not be frankly sensual human beings!!

The Critic introduces us to the *ball* for the sake of the *essence of dancing*. He encounters a great difficulty. True, there is dancing at this ball, but only in imagination. The fact is that Eugene Sue does not say a word describing the dancing. He does not mix among the throng of dancers. He makes use of the ball only as an opportunity for bringing together his characters from the upper aristocracy. In despair, “Criticism” comes to help out and *supplement* the author, and its own “fancy” easily provides a description of ball incidents, etc. If, as prescribed by Criticism, Eugene Sue was not directly interested in the criminals’ hide-outs and language when he described them, the dance, on the other hand, which *not he* but his “fanciful” Critic describes, necessarily interests him infinitely.

Let us continue.

“*Actually*, the secret of sociable tone and tact – the secret of that extremely unnatural thing – is the longing to return to nature. That is why the appearance of a person like *Cecily* in educated society has such an electrifying effect and is crowned with such extraordinary success. She grew up a slave among slaves, without any education, and the only source of life she has to rely upon is her -nature. Suddenly transported to a court and subjected to its constraint and customs, she soon learns to see through the secret of the latter.... In this sphere, which she can undoubtedly hold in sway because her power, the power of her nature, has an enigmatic magic, *Cecily* must necessarily stray into losing all sense of measure, whereas formerly, when she was still a slave, the same nature taught her to resist any unworthy demand of the powerful master and to remain true to her love. *Cecily is the mystery of educated society disclosed*. The scorned senses finally break down the barriers and surge forth completely uncurbed”, etc.

Those of Herr Szeliga’s readers who have not read Sue’s novel will certainly think that *Cecily* is the lioness of the ball that is described. In the novel she is in a German gaol while the dancing goes on in Paris.

*Cecily*, as a slave, remains true to the Negro doctor David because she loves him “passionately” and because her owner, Mr. Willis, is “*brutal*” in courting her. The reason for her change to a dissolute life is a very simple one. Transported into the “European world”, she “blushes” at being “married to a Negro”. On arriving in Germany she is “*at once*” seduced by a wicked man and her “Indian blood” comes into its own. This the hypocritical M. Sue, for the sake of *douce morale* and *doux commerce*, is bound to

describe as “perversité naturelle”.

The secret of Cecily is that she is a *half-breed*. The secret of her sensuality is the *heat of the tropics*. Parny sang praises of the half-breed in his beautiful lines to Eleonore. Over a hundred sea-faring tales tell us how dangerous she is to sailors.

“Cecily était le type incarné de la sensualité brûlante, qui ne s’allume qu’au feu des tropiques.... Tout le monde a entendu parler de ces filles de couleur, pour ainsi dire mortelles aux Européens, de ces vampires enchanteurs, qui, enivrant leurs victimes de séductions terribles ... ne lui laissent, selon l’énergique expression du pays, que ses larmes à boire, que son coeur à ronger.”

Cecily was far from producing such a magical effect precisely on people aristocratically educated, blasé...

“les femmes de l’espèce de Cecily exercent une action soudaine, une omnipotence magique sur les hommes de sensualité brutale tels que Jacques Ferrand”.

Since when have men like Jacques Ferrand been representative of fine society? But Critical Criticism must speculatively make *Cecily* a factor in the life-process of Absolute Mystery.

#### 4) “THE MYSTERY OF PROBITY AND PIETY”

“*Mystery, as that of educated society, withdraws, it is true, from the antithesis into the inner sphere. Nevertheless, high society once again has exclusively its own circles in which it preserves the holy. It is, as it were, the chapel for this holy of holies. But for people in the forecourt, the chapel itself is the mystery. Education, therefore, in its exclusive position is the same thing for the people ... as vulgarity is for the educated.*”

*It is true, nevertheless, once again, as it arere, but, therefore* – those are the magic hooks which hold together the links of the chain of *speculative reasoning*. Herr Szeliga has made *Mystery* withdraw from the world of criminals into high society. Now he has to construct the mystery that high society has its *exclusive* circles and that the mysteries of those circles are mysteries for the people. Besides the magic hooks already mentioned, this construction requires the transformation of a *circle* into a *chapel* and the transformation of non-aristocratic society into a *forecourt* of that chapel. Again it is a mystery for Paris that all the spheres of bourgeois society are only a forecourt of the chapel of high society.

Herr Szeliga pursues two aims. Firstly, *Mystery* which has become incarnate in the exclusive circle of high society must be declared “*common property of the world*”. Secondly, the *notary Jacques Ferrand* must be construed as a link in the life of *Mystery*. Here is the way Herr Szeliga reasons:

“Education as yet is unable and unwilling to bring all estates and distinctions into its circle. Only *Christianity and morality* are able to found universal kingdoms on earth.”

Herr Szeliga identifies education, civilisation, with *aristocratic* education. That is why he cannot see that *industry and trade* found universal kingdoms quite different from *Christianity and morality*, domestic happiness and civic welfare. But how do we come to the *notary Jacques Ferrand*? Quite simply!

Herr Szeliga transforms *Christianity* into an *individual* quality, “*piety*”, and *morality* into another *individual* quality, “*probity*”. He combines these two qualities in one individual whom he christens *Jacques Ferrand*, because Jacques Ferrand does not possess these two qualities but only pretends to. Thus Jacques Ferrand becomes the “mystery of probity and piety”. His “testament”, on the other hand, is

“the mystery of *seeming* piety and probity”, and therefore no longer of piety and probity themselves. If Critical Criticism had wanted speculatively to construe this testament as a mystery, it should have declared the seeming probity and piety to be the mystery of this testament, and not the other way round, this testament as the mystery of the seeming probity.

Whereas the Paris college of notaries considered Jacques Ferrand as a malicious libel against itself and through the theatrical censorship had this character removed from the stage performance of the *Mysteres de Paris*, Critical Criticism, at the very time when it “*polemises against the airy kingdom of conceptions*”, sees in a Paris notary not a Paris notary but religion and morality, probity and piety. The trial of the notary *Lehon* ought to have taught it better. The position held by the *notary* in Eugene Sue’s novel is closely connected with his official position.

“Les notaires sont au temporel ce qu’au spirituel sont les curés; ils sont les dépositaires de nos secrets” (Monteil, Hist[oire] des frangais des div[ers] états,” etc. t. ix, p. 37).

The notary is the secular confessor. He is a puritan by profession, and “honesty”, Shakespeare says, is “no Puritan”. He is at the same time the go-between for all possible purposes, the manager of all civil intrigues and plots.

With the notary Ferrand, whose whole mystery consists in his hypocrisy and his profession, we do not seem to have made a single step forward yet. But listen:

“If for the notary hypocrisy is a matter of the most complete consciousness, and for Madame Roland it is, *as it were*, instinct, *then* between them there is the great mass of those who cannot get to the bottom of the mystery and yet involuntarily feel a desire to do so. It is therefore not superstition that leads the high and the low to the sombre dwelling of the charlatan Bradamanti (Abbe Polidori); no, it is the search for *Mystery*, to justify themselves to the world.”

“The high and the low” flock to Polidori not to find out a definite mystery which is justified to the whole world, but to look for *Mystery* in general, *Mystery* as the Absolute Subject, *in order to* justify themselves to the world; as if to chop wood one looked, not for an axe, but for the Instrument *in abstracto*.

All the mysteries that Polidori possesses are limited to a means for abortion and a poison for murder.— In a speculative frenzy Herr Szeliga makes the “*murderer*” resort to Polidori’s poison “because he wants to be not a murderer, but respected, loved and honoured”. As if in an act of murder it was a question of respect, love or honour and not of one’s *neck*! But the Critical murderer does not bother about his neck, but only about “*Mystery*”.— As not everyone commits murder or becomes pregnant illegitimately, how is Polidori to put *everyone* in the desired possession of *Mystery*? Herr Szeliga probably confuses the charlatan Polidori with the scholar *Polydore Virgil* who lived in the sixteenth century and who, although he did not discover any mysteries, tried to make the history of those who did, the *inventors*, the “common property of ~he world” (see *Polidori Virgilii liber de rerum inventoribus*, Lugduni MDCCVI).

*Mystery*, Absolute *Mystery*, as it has finally established itself as the “common property of the world”, consists therefore in the mystery of abortion and poisoning. *Mystery* could not make itself “the common property of the world” more skilfully than by turning itself into mysteries which are mysteries to no one.



## 5) “MYSTERY, A MOCKERY”

“Mystery has now become common property, the mystery of the whole world and of every individual. Either it is my art or my instinct, or I can buy it as a purchasable commodity.”

*What mystery has now become the common property of the world? Is it the mystery of rightlessness in the state, or the mystery of educated society, or the mystery of adulterating wares, or the mystery of making eau-de-cologne, or the mystery of “Critical Criticism”? None of all these, but *Mystery in abstracto*, the category *Mystery*!*

Herr Szeliga intends to depict the servants and the *porter Pipelet and his wife* as the incarnation of Absolute Mystery. He wants speculatively to construct the *servant* and the porter of “*Mystery*”. How does he manage to make the headlong descent from *pure category* down to the “*servant*” who “*spies at a locked door*”, from *Mystery as the Absolute Subject*, which is enthroned above the *roof* in the cloudy heavens of abstraction, down to the ground floor where the porter’s lodge is situated?

First he subjects the category *Mystery* to a speculative process. When by the aid of means for abortion and poisoning *Mystery* has become the common property of the world, it is

“*therefore by no means any longer concealment and inaccessibility itself*, but it conceals itself, or better still” (always better!) “*I conceal it, I make it inaccessible*”.

With this transformation of Absolute Mystery from *essence* into *concept*, from the *objective* stage, in which it is concealment itself, into the *subjective* stage, in which it conceals itself, or better still, in which I conceal it, we have not made a single step forward. On the contrary, the difficulty seems to grow, for a mystery in man’s head or breast is more inaccessible and concealed than at the bottom of the sea. That is why Herr Szeliga comes to the aid of his *speculative* progress *directly* by means of an *empirical* progress.

“It is *behind locked doors*” – hark! hark! – “that *henceforth*” – henceforth! – “*Mystery*, is hatched, brewed and perpetrated.”

Herr Szeliga has “*henceforth*” changed the speculative *ego* of *Mystery* into a very empirical, very wooden reality – a *door*.

“*But with that*” – i.e., with the locked door, not with the transition from the closed essence to the concept – “there exists *also the possibility* of my overhearing, eavesdropping, and spying on it.”

It is not *Herr Szeliga* who discovered the “mystery” that one can eavesdrop at locked doors. The mass-type proverb even says that walls have ears. On the other hand it is a quite Critical speculative mystery that only “*henceforth*”, after the descent into the hell of the criminals’ hide-outs and the ascent into the heaven of educated society, and after Polidori’s miracles, mysteries can be brewed behind locked doors and overheard *through* closed doors. It is just as great a Critical mystery that locked doors are a categorical necessity for hatching, brewing and perpetrating mysteries – how many mysteries are hatched, brewed, and perpetrated behind bushes! – as well as for spying them out.

After this brilliant dialectical feat of arms, Herr Szeliga naturally goes on from *spying* itself to the *reasons for spying*. Here he reveals the mystery that *malicious gloating* is the reason for it. From malicious gloating he goes on to the *reason for malicious gloating*.

"Everyone wishes to be better than the others," he says, "because he keeps secret the mainsprings not only of his good actions, but of his bad ones too, which he tries to hide in impenetrable darkness."



The sentence should be the other way round: Everyone not only keeps the mainsprings of his good actions secret, but tries to conceal his bad ones in impenetrable darkness because he wishes to be better than the others.

Thus it seems we have gone from *Mystery that conceals itself* to the *ego* that conceals it, from the *ego* to the *locked door*, from the *locked door to spying*, from *spying* to the *reason for spying*, malicious gloating; from *malicious gloating* to the *reason for malicious gloating*, the *desire to be better than the others*. We shall soon have the pleasure of seeing the *servant* standing at the locked door. For the general desire to be better than the others leads us directly to this: that “everyone is inclined to find out the mysteries of another”, and this is followed easily by the witty remark:

“In this respect *servants* have the *best opportunity*.”

Had Herr Szeliga read the records from the Paris police archives, Vidocq’s memoirs, the *Livre noir* and the like, he would know that in this respect the *police* has still greater opportunity than the “best opportunity” that servants have; that it uses servants only for crude jobs, that it does not stop at the door or where the masters are in *neglige*, but creeps under their sheets next to their naked body in the shape of a femme galante or even of a legitimate wife. In Sue’s novel the police spy “*Bras rouge*” plays a leading part in the story.

What “henceforth” annoys Herr Szeliga in servants is that they are not “*disinterested*” enough. This Critical misgiving leads him to the *porter Pipelet and his wife*.

“The porter’s position, on the other hand, gives him relative independence so that he can pour out free, disinterested, although vulgar and injurious, mockery on the mysteries of the house.”

At first this speculative construction of the porter is put into a great difficulty because in many Paris houses the servant and the porter are one and the same person for some of the tenants.

The following facts will enable the reader to form an opinion of the Critical fantasy concerning the relatively independent, disinterested position of the porter. The porter in Paris is the representative and spy of the landlord. He is generally paid not by the landlord but by the tenants. Because of that precarious position he often combines the functions of commission agent with his official duties. During the Terror, the Empire and the Restoration, the porter was one of the main agents of the secret police. General Foy, for instance, was watched by his porter, who took all the letters addressed to the general to be read by a police agent not far away (see Froment, *La police dévoilée*). As a result “*portier*” and “*épiciier*” are considered insulting names and the porter prefers to be called “*conciierge*”.

Far from being depicted as “disinterested” and harmless, Eugene Sue’s Madame Pipelet immediately cheats Rudolph when giving him his change; she recommends to him the dishonest money-lender living in the house and describes Rigolette to him as an acquaintance who may be pleasant to him. She teases the major because he pays her badly and haggles with her – in her vexation she calls him a “*commandant de deux liards*” – “*ca t’apprendra à ne donner que douze francs par mois pour ton ménage*.” – and because he has the “*petitesse*” as to keep a check on his firewood, etc. She herself gives the reason for her “independent” behaviour: the major only pays her twelve francs a month.

According to Herr Szeliga, “Anastasia Pipelet has, *to some extent*, to declare a small war on *Mystery*”.

According to Eugene Sue, Anastasia Pipelet is a typical *Paris Portière*. He wants “to dramatise the *Portière*, whom Henri Monier portrayed with such mastery”. But Herr Szeliga feels bound to transform

one of Madame Pipelet's qualities – "*médiance*" – into a separate being and then to make her a representative of that being.

"The husband," Herr Szeliga continues, "the porter Alfred Pipelet, helps her, but with less luck."

To console him for this bad luck, Herr Szeliga makes him also into an *allegory*. He represents the "*objective*" side of Mystery, "*Mystery as Mockery*".

"The mystery which defeats him is a mockery, a joke, that is played on him."

Indeed, in its infinite pity divine dialectic makes the "unhappy, old, childish man" a "*strong man*" in the *metaphysical sense*, by making him represent a very worthy, very happy and very decisive factor in the life-process of Absolute Mystery. The victory over Pipelet is

"*Mystery's most decisive defeat.*" "A cleverer, courageous man would not let himself be duped by a *joke*."

## 6) TURTLE-DOVE (RIGOLETTE)

"There is still one step left. Through *its own consistent development*, Mystery, as we saw in Pipelet and Cabrion, is driven to debase itself to mere clowning. The *one* thing necessary now is that the individual should no longer agree to play that silly comedy. *Turtle-dove* takes that step in the most nonchalant way in the world."

Anyone in two minutes can see through the mystery of this speculative clowning and learn to practise it himself. We will give brief directions in this respect.

*Problem.* You must give me the speculative construction showing how man becomes master over animals.

*Speculative solution.* Given are half a dozen animals, such as the lion, the shark, the snake, the bull, the horse and the pug. From these six animals abstract the category: *the* "Animal". Imagine *the* "Animal" to be an independent being. Regard the lion, the shark, the snake, etc., as disguises, incarnations, of *the* "Animal". Just as you made your imagination, the "Animal" of your abstraction, into a real being, now make the real animals into beings of abstraction, of your imagination. You see that the "Animal", which in the *lion* tears man to pieces, in the *shark* swallows him up, in the *snake* stings him with venom, in the *bull* tosses him with its horns and in the *horse* kicks him, only barks at him when it presents itself as a *pug*, and converts the fight against man into the mere *semblance of a fight*. Through its *own consistent development*, the "Animal" is driven, as we have seen in the *pug*, to debase itself to a *mere clown*. When a child or a childish man runs away from a pug, the only thing is for the individual no longer to agree to play the silly comedy. The individual X takes this step in the most nonchalant way in the world by using his bamboo cane on the pug. You see how "Man", through the agency of the individual X and the pug, has become master over the "Animal", and consequently over animals, and in the *Animal as a pug* has defeated the *lion as an animal*.

Similarly Herr Szeliga's "turtle-dove" defeats the mysteries of the present state of the world through the intermediary of Pipelet and Cabrion. More than that! She is herself a manifestation of the category "*Mystery*".

"She herself is not yet conscious of her high moral value, therefore she is still a mystery to herself."

The mystery of *non*-speculative Rigolette is revealed in Eugene Sue's book by Murph. She is "*une fort jolie grisette*". Eugene Sue described in her the lovely human character of the Paris *grisette*. Only owing to his devotion to the bourgeoisie and his own tendency to high-flown exaggeration, he had to idealise the *grisette morally*. He had to gloss over the essential point of her situation in life and her character, to be precise, her disregard for the form of marriage, her naive attachment to the Etudiant or the Ouvrier. It is precisely in that attachment that she constitutes a really human contrast to the hypocritical, narrow-hearted, self-seeking wife of the bourgeois, to the whole circle of the bourgeoisie, that is, to the official circle.

## 7) THE WORLD SYSTEM OF THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS

"This world of mysteries is now the general world system, in which the individual action of the *Mysteries of Paris* is set."

Before, "however", Herr Szeliga "passes on to the *philosophical reproduction* of the epic event", he must "assemble in a general picture the sketches previously jotted down separately".

It must be considered as a real confession, a revelation of Herr Szeliga's Critical Mystery, when he says that he wishes to pass on to the "philosophical reproduction" of the epic event. He has so far been "philosophically reproducing" the world system.

Herr Szeliga continues his confession:

"From our presentation it appears that the individual mysteries dealt with have not their value in themselves, each separate from the others, and are in no way magnificent novelties for gossip, but that their value consists in their constituting an *organically linked sequence*, the *totality* of which is "*Mystery*".

In his mood of sincerity, Herr Szeliga goes still further. He admits that the "*speculative sequence*" is not the *real* sequence of the *Mysteres de Paris*.

"Granted, the mysteries do not appear in our epic in the relationship of this *self-knowing sequence*" (to cost prices?). "But we are not dealing with the *logical*, obvious, *free organism* of criticism, but with a *mysterious vegetable existence*."

We shall pass over Herr Szeliga's summary and go on immediately to the point that constitutes the "transition". In Pipelet we saw the "self-mockery of Mystery".

"In self-mockery, Mystery passes judgment on itself. *Thereby* the mysteries, annihilating themselves in their final consequence, challenge every strong character to independent examination."

Rudolph, Prince of Geroldstein, the *man of "pure Criticism"*, is destined to carry out this examination and the "*disclosure of the mysteries*."

If we deal with Rudolph and his deeds only later, after diverting our attention from Herr Szeliga for some time, it can already be foreseen, and to a certain degree the reader can sense, indeed even surmise without presumption, that instead of treating him as a "*mysterious vegetable existence*", which he is in the Critical *Literatur-Zeitung*, we shall make him a "*logical, obvious, free link*" in the "organism of Critical Criticism."

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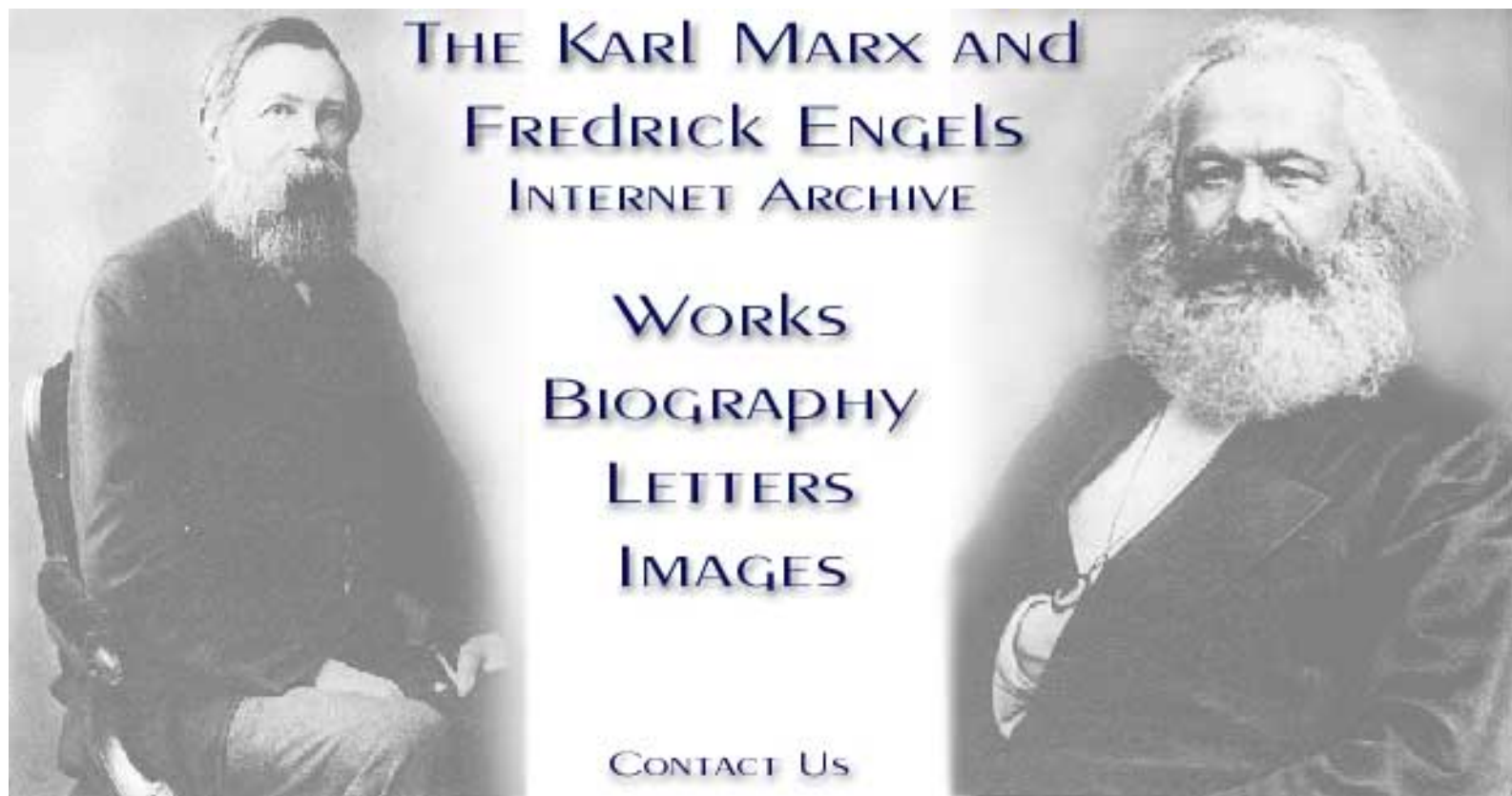
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