

THE HOLY FAMILY

KARL MARX, FREDERICK ENGELS

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INTRODUCTION^I

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*²—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.

¹ *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Critique. Against Bruno Bauer and Co.*—the first joint work of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. It was written from September to November 1844 and published in February 1845 in Frankfurt.

“The Holy Family” is a humorous nickname for the Bauer brothers and their followers grouped around *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (*General Literary Gazette*). Attacking Bauer and the other Young Hegelians (or Left Hegelians), Marx and Engels at the same time criticized Hegel’s own idealist philosophy.

Marx gave evidence of deep divergencies with the Young Hegelians as early as summer 1842, when the club of the “Free” was formed in Berlin. When, in October 1842, Marx became editor of *Rheinische Zeitung* (*Rhine Gazette*), on the staff of which there were several Berlin Young Hegelians, he opposed the publication in the paper of insipid pretentious articles from the club, which had lost touch with reality and was absorbed in abstract philosophical disputes. During the two years following Marx’s break with the “Free,” the theoretical and political differences between Marx and Engels on the one hand and the Young Hegelians on the other became most profound and irreconcilable. This was due to the fact that Marx and Engels had abandoned idealism for materialism and revolutionary democratism for communism; it was also due to the evolution that the Bauer brothers and their fellow-thinkers went through during that time. Bauer and his group published in *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* disavowals of the “1842 radicalism” and of its most conspicuous mouthpiece, *Rheinische Zeitung*; they slithered into the vilest vulgar subjective idealism, to propaganda of the “theory” according to which only selected individuals, vehicles of the “spirit,” of “pure criticism,” are the makers of history, while the mass, the people, serves as inert material, ballast, in the historical process.

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.²

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.

Engels, Marx

Paris, September 1844

Marx and Engels decided to devote their first joint work to the exposure of these pernicious reactionary ideas and to the defense of their new materialistic and communistic outlook.

During a ten days' stay of Engels in Paris, the plan of the book—at first entitled *Critique of Critical Critique. Against Bruno Bauer and Co*—was drawn up, the parts were divided between the authors and the *Foreword* was written, Engels wrote his parts before leaving Paris. Marx, to whose share the larger part of the book fell, continued to work on it until the end of November 1844. He considerably increased the intended size of the book by using, in the writing of his sections, parts of his manuscripts on economics and philosophy on which he had been working in the spring and summer of 1844, his study of the history of the French Revolution and a number of excerpts and synopses. While the book was in the printing, Marx completed the title with the words *The Holy Family*. The table of contents showed which sections had been written by Marx and which by Engels (see Contents of the present edition pp. 5-6). As the book was more than 20 signatures and of small format, it was exempted from preliminary censorship according to the regulations then in vigor in a number of German states.

² *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (*General Literary Gazette*), a German monthly published by the Young Hegelian Bruno Bauer in Charlottenburg from December 1843 to October 1844.

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 therefore, Criticism has 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 considers it not a crime to be equal to God but empties itself and takes the form of a bookbinder and humbles itself even to nonsense, yea, 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 “*Boz*” 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 vague 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 labored under a *Musulman 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.

CHAPTER II

“CRITICAL CRITICISM”
AS A “MILL-OWNER,”

OR

CRITICAL CRITICISM
AS HERR JULES FAUCHER³

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 recognize history as it really took place, for that would mean recognizing 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 *Hangreaves’ 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*.

³ Marx here uses the word *Mühleigner*, a literal translation of the English mill-owner, to ridicule J. Faucher, of the editorial board of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, who applied English methods of word formation in German.

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 labor*; 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 labor* 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 laborers 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 through competition. Lastly, it decrees that neither the propertied nor the non-propertied classes in England are aware of the *centralization 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*⁴ 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

⁴ The struggle for legislation limiting the working day to ten hours started in England as early as the end of the 18th century and spread by the 30s of the 19th century to the mass of the proletariat. As the landed aristocracy wanted to use this popular slogan in their fight against the industrial bourgeoisie, they supported the Ten-Hour Bill in Parliament. The “Tory philanthropist” Lord Ashley headed the supporters of the bill in Parliament in 1833.

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 realization 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 realizes, 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!”⁵, has now learned *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 Nauwerk*.

⁵ These words are from Bruno Bauer’s book, *Die gute Sache der Freiheit und meine eigene Angelegenheit* (*The Good Cause of Freedom and My Own Affair*), Zurich and Winterthur, 1842.

CHAPTER III

“THE THOROUGHNESS
OF CRITICAL CRITICISM,”

OR

CRITICAL CRITICISM
AS HERR J. (JUNGNITZ?)⁶

Criticism cannot ignore Herr *Nauwerk's* infinitely important dispute with the Berlin Faculty of Philosophy. It has indeed had a similar experience and it must take Herr Nauwerk's fate as a background in order to put its own *dismissal from Bonn*⁷ 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 Nauwerk 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;

⁶ The article in question here is "Herr Nauwerk and the Faculty of Philosophy" published in No. VI of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (May 1844) and signed "J"—the first letter of Jungnitz.

⁷ The reference is to the dismissal of Bruno Bauer whom the Prussian Government deprived temporarily in October 1841 and permanently in March 1842 of the right to lecture in Bonn University because of his writings criticizing the Bible.

- 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 Nauwerk’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 tranquility of knowledge*.”

CHAPTER IV

“CRITICAL CRITICISM” AS THE
TRANQUILITY OF KNOWLEDGE,

OR

“CRITICAL CRITICISM”
AS HERR EDGAR

1) “Flora Tristan’s *Union Ouvrière*”⁸

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 *tranquility 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 labor are separated from, and even opposed to, one another; in short, because labor is not *organized*. Criticism’s own proposition, if taken in the only reasonable sense it can possibly have, demands the organization of labor. 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

⁸ In this section, Engels analyzes and quotes E. Bauer’s review of Flora Tristan’s *l’Union Ouvrière (The Workers’ Union)*, Paris, 1843, which was published in No. V of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (April 1844).

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, shriveled into the most repulsive abstraction, and ogles all over Germany in search of a wooer.

2) Béraud on Prostitutes

Herr Edgar, 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 “tranquility 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 “tranquility of knowledge,” Critical Criticism must first seek to dispose of *love*. Love is a passion, and nothing is more dangerous for the tranquility of knowledge than passion. That is why, speaking of Madame von Palzow’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 tranquility 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—grave; bas* the object!⁹ 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 tranquility 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

⁹ Down with the object!—*Ed.*

(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 tranquility 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 tranquility 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 tranquility 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.*¹⁰

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 “tranquility 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?*

¹⁰ From Schiller’s *Das Mädchen aus der Fremde* (*The Maid from Abroad*).

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?*"¹¹

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.

¹¹ The reference is to P. J. Proudhon's *Qu'est-ce que la propriété? ou Recherches sur le principe du droit et du gouvernement* (*What is Property? or Studies on the Principle of Law and of Government*), first published in Paris in 1840. Marx quotes the Paris edition of 1841.

Qu'est-ce que la propriété was written from the contradictory standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie. The sharp attacks it made on private property produced a profound impression. Marx gave an exhaustive critical appraisal of the book in his article "On Proudhon," published in the form of a letter to Schweitzer, editor of *Social-Demokrat*, in 1865 (see Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, two-volume edition, Vol. 1, pp. 390-398). Edgar Bauer's article "Proudhon," which Marx criticizes in this section of *The Holy Family* was published in No. V of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (April 1844).

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 systematized old or an unsystematized 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 an end of privilege, 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 à toute fin” means explanations which preclude any objection. The Critical Proudhon censures the “*Reformists*,” a French Socialist Party¹²; the massy 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*

¹² Marx here means the political grouping formed around the Paris paper *La Réforme*, consisting of petty-bourgeois Democratic-Republicans and petty-bourgeois Socialists.

education. He “questioned the masters of science, read hundreds of volumes of philosophy and law, etc., and *at last*” he “realized that we have never yet grasped the meaning of the words Justice, Equity, Freedom.” The real Proudhon thought he had realized *at first* (*je crus d’abord reconnaître*) what the Critical Proudhon realized only “at last.” The Critical alteration of *d’abord* into *enfin* is necessary because the mass may not think it realizes 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 to 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 honors *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 the principle is spoilt, misunderstood 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 honoring "this principle." The mass-type Proudhon, on the other hand, reproaches society with willing and honoring 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 characterized 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 favor [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*.”¹³

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 realize that the new which replaced the old had on itself [*an sich*] nothing methodical and considered.

He cannot refrain from repeating mechanically the favorite 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 *revolutionizes* 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.

¹³ “Slavery was established by the law of nations”, *Digesta*, Book I, Part I, Fragment A.

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.

Society was saved by negation of its principles... and the violation of the most sacred rights, says the real Proudhon.

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* [accidentally]," 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*¹⁴ (see *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* by F. Engels),

¹⁴ *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (*German-French Year-Book*) was published in German in Paris and edited by K. Marx and A. Ruge. The only issue was a double number in February 1844, carrying Marx's articles *On the Jewish Question* and *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction* and Engels' works, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and "The Position of England. Thomas Carlyle. 'Past and Present.'" These works mark the final transition of Marx and Engels to materialism and communism. Publication of the journal was discontinued chiefly because of differences of principle between Marx and the bourgeois radical Ruge.

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 labor. 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 polemizes 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 *characterize* 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 tranquility 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 tranquility 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-labor 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 *labor*. 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 are 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 belongs 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 labor 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 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 favor 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 favor 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 realize 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 interests, 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 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 realize the forces of my own being.

Proudhon did not succeed in giving this thought appropriate development. The idea of "*equal possession*" is a political-economic one and therefore itself still an estranged expression for the fact that the *objectified 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 behavior of man to man*. Proudhon abolishes economic estrangement *within* political-economic estrangement.

Characterizing 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* [natural wealth],” the Critical Proudhon makes Say understand “natural *possessions*” although Say, to preclude any error, states explicitly in the *Épitome* 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 the land a property *right* to it, says instead quite explicitly:

The rights of landed proprietors are to be traced to plunder.¹⁵

That is why, in Say’s opinion, there must be “*concours de la législation* [a concurrence of legislation]” and “*droit positif* [positive right]” 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 takes possibility for right. The question is not why land has been appropriated rather than sea or air, but by what right man has appropriated that wealth.

The Critical Proudhon continues:

¹⁵ *Traité d'économie politique*, édition III. t. I., p. 136, Nota.

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 polemizes 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 with 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 Baboeuf* 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 échangeable*); 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.

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 *labor time* the measure of the economic value of the product of labor. 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 labor. He achieves it by identifying empty length of time with time filled with labor. 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 labor time the measure of wages.

Even Critical Criticism must be capable of grasping that the *labor 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 labor time and the material of labor, 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 remains only the labor time and the expenses. By making labor 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*, *labor time* was the measure of *wages* and of the *value of the product of labor*, 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 labor time required for its production. For it depends on that 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 labor* into its importance for *wages*, for wage-labor.

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!* [Let us not be afraid! Let us not be afraid!]” 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 tranquility 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 the 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.].¹⁶

¹⁶ *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 labor, but still more than this product. To explain this, Herr Edgar would have to explain the relationship between labor 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 learned 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 labor 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 labor 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 Lyon 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-labor 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-labor; 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 their consciousness and scorning as un-Critical operations 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 tranquility of knowledge triumphantly,] we cannot even now credit him with the tranquility 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 tranquility 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*.¹⁷

¹⁷ The reference is to a review published by Szeliga in No. VII of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (June 1844) on the French writer Eugène Sue’s novel *Mystères de Paris*. The novel is written in the spirit of petty-bourgeois sentimentality and social fantasy. It was published in Paris in 1842-1843 and was popular in France and abroad.

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 obligé du monde de m'avoir appris cela. [Faith, I have been speaking prose for more than forty years without knowing it: I am infinitely grateful to you for telling me so.]

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 Civilization” and “The Mystery of Rightlessness 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 civilization 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 naïve 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 “*Ab! si le roi le savait!*” in a modified form: “*Ab! si le riche le savait!*” into the mouth of the working man Morel who lived at the time of the *Charte vérité*.¹⁸ In England and France, at least, this *naïve* 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.

¹⁸ The reference is to the *Charte constitutionnelle* adopted in France after the 1830 Revolution as the basic law of the July monarchy. The expression “Charter of Truth” is an ironic allusion to the conclusive words of Louis-Philippe’s proclamation on July 31, 1830: “henceforth the Charter will be the truth.”

If Eugène Sue depicts the taverns, hideouts and language of *criminals*, Herr Szeliga discloses the “*mystery*” that what the “author” wanted was not to depict that language or those hideouts, 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 hideouts 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 hideouts 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* [on the timid curiosity]” 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*, *Salamander*, *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 Hegelian construction*. Once Herr Szeliga has proclaimed that “degeneracy within civilization” 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 characterize 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 crystallizations 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*” making 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*” realizes 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 civilization, 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, Eugène Sue transports us to “*haute volée*, [high society]” 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 Eugène 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 Eugène Sue's novel, the transition from the low world to the aristocratic world is a normal transition for a novel. The *disguise of Rudolph*, Prince of Geroldstein, gives 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* disguise 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. [I find these contracts *piquant* enough," he says, "one day a fan painter, settling down in a hole in *rue aux Fèves*; this morning a salesman offering a glass of black currant wine to Madame Pipelet, and this evening... one of the privileged by the grace of God who reign over the world.]

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

*Sense and reason forsake me near,
In the midst of the potentates here!*¹⁹

It pours forth in *dithyrambs* as follows:

Here magic brings the brilliance of the sun at night, the verdure of spring and the splendor 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. (!!!)

¹⁹ Marx here paraphrases a couplet from Goethe's *Faust*, Part 1, Scene 6 (*The Witches' Kitchen*).

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,” Clémence 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 naïve 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 *enterprise* 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 recognize 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 *recognize* 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 recognizes *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 lips 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 Eugène 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.

Why, [we read,] do many women take as lovers men who are not worth their husbands? Because the *greatest charm of love* is the enjoyable attraction of *the forbidden fruit*.... Grant that if the fears, anxieties, difficulties, mysteries and dangers are taken away from that love there remains but little, to be precise, the lover ... in his original simplicity; in a word it would always be more or less the adventure of the man who was asked, “Why do you not marry that widow, your mistress?” “Alas, I thought of that,” he answered, “but then I would not know where to spend my evenings.”

Whereas Herr Szeliga says explicitly that the mystery of love is not in the *attraction of what is forbidden*, Eugène Sue says just as explicitly

that it is the “greatest charm of love” and the reason for all love adventures *extra muros*.

Prohibition and smuggling are as inseparable in love as in trade.²⁰

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

the propensity to pretense 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 Eugène 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 Eugène 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 Eugène 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 Eugène 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.”

²⁰ Quoted from Ch. Fourier’s *Théorie de l’unité universelle*, Vol. III, Part 11, Chap. 3.

After his outpourings against *sensuality*, our Critical saint deems it necessary to show why Eugène Sue introduces us to a ball in high society, 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 his [i.e., Herr Szeliga's] conception it cannot be indifferent there [in Herr Szeliga's construction] and merely accidental that Eugène 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 Wolf.

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 offense 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 Chaumière 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 offense,” 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 Eugène 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, Eugène Sue was not directly interested in the criminals’ hideouts 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 Szelig'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 jail 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* [sweet morals and tender commerce], is bound to describe as "perversité naturelle [natural perversity]."

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 Eléonore. Over a hundred sea-faring tales tell us how dangerous she is to sailors.

Cecily, [Eugene Sue tells us,] was the incarnation of burning sensuality which only the heat of the tropics can kindle.... Everybody has heard of those colored girls who are fatal, so to speak, to Europeans; of those charming vampires who inebriate their victim with terrible seductions... and leave him nothing, as the forcible expression of the country says, but his tears to drink and his heart to gnaw.

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

Women of the type of Cecily have a sudden effect, a magic omnipotence over men of *brutal sensuality* like *Jacques Ferrand*, [Sue tells us.]

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 were, 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, civilization, 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 Fer-*

rand, 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 *Mystères de Paris*, Critical Criticism, at the very time when it “*polemizes 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 *Léhon* ought to have taught it better. The position held by the *notary* in Eugène Sue’s novel is closely connected with his official position.

Notaries are in the temporal realm what priests are in the spiritual: they are the depositories of our secrets [Monteil, *Histoire des français des divers 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 of 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 somber dwelling of the charlatan Bradamanti (Abbé 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 honored.” As if in an act of murder, it was a question of respect, love or honor 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 Vergil* 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 the world.”²¹

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 skillfully 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

²¹ See *Polidori Virgilii, liber de rerum inventoribus*, Lugduni, MDCCVI.

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’ hideouts 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 *néglige*, 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 spy 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* [porter]” and “*épicier* [grocer]” are considered insulting names and the porter prefers to be called “*concierge* [caretaker].”

Far from being depicted as “disinterested” and harmless, Eugène 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 is so “petty” as to keep a check on his firewood, etc. She herself gives the reason for her “independent” behavior: 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 Eugène Sue, Anastasia Pipelet is a typical *Paris Portière*. He wants “to dramatize the *Portière*, whom Henri Monier portrayed with such mastery.” But Herr Szeliga feels bound to transform one of Madame Pipelet’s qualities—“*médisançe* [backbiting]”—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 practice 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 Szelig'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 Eugène Sue's book by Murph. She is "*une fort jolie grisette* [a very pretty *grisette*]."²² Eugène 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 idealize 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 naïve attachment to the student or the worker. 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.

²² Grisette—a young, flirtatious, working-class woman.

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 *Mystères 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.”

CHAPTER VI

ABSOLUTE CRITICAL CRITICISM,

OR

CRITICAL CRITICISM AS HERR BRUNO

1) Absolute Criticism's First Campaign

a) "Spirit" and "Mass"

So far Critical Criticism has seemed to deal more or less with the Critical treatment of various mass-type objects. We now find it dealing with the absolutely Critical object, *with itself*. So far it has derived its relative glory from Critical debasement, rejection and transformation of *definite* mass-type objects and persons. It now derives its *absolute* glory from the Critical debasement, rejection and transformation of the mass in general. Relative Criticism was faced with relative limits. Absolute Criticism is faced with an absolute limit, the limit of the Mass, the Mass as limit. Relative Criticism in its opposition to definite limits was itself necessarily a *limited* individual. Absolute Criticism, in its opposition to the *general* limit, to limit in general, is necessarily an *absolute* individual. As the various mass-type objects and persons have merged in the *impure* pulp of the "Mass," so still have seemingly objective and personal Criticism changed into "*pure Criticism*." So far Criticism has appeared to be more or less a quality of the Critical individuals: Reichardt, Edgar, Faucher, etc. Now it is the *Subject* and Herr Bruno is its incarnation.

So far *mass character* has seemed to be more or less the quality of the objects and persons criticized; now objects and persons have become the "Mass," and the "Mass" has become object and person. All previous Critical attitudes have been dissolved in the attitude of absolute Critical wisdom to absolute mass-type stupidity. This *basic attitude* appears as the *meaning*, the *tendency* and the *keyword* of Criticism's previous deeds and struggles.

In accordance with its absolute character, "pure" Criticism, as soon as it appears, will pronounce the differentiating "*cue*"; nevertheless, as Absolute Spirit it must go through a dialectical process. Only at the end of its heavenly motion will its original concept be truly realized.²³

But a few months ago, [Absolute Criticism announces,]
the Mass believed itself to be of gigantic strength and des-

²³ See Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*.

tinged to world mastery within a time that it could count on its fingers.²⁴

It was Herr *Bruno Bauer*, in *Die gute Sache der Freiheit* [*The Good Cause of Freedom*] (his “own” cause, of course), in *Die Judenfrage*,²⁵ etc., who counted on his fingers the time until the approaching world mastery, although he admitted he could not give the exact date. To the record of the sins of the Mass he adds the mass of his own sins.

The Mass thought itself in possession of so many truths which seemed obvious to it... But one *possesses a truth* completely only... when one follows it through *its* proofs.

For Herr Bauer, as for Hegel, truth is an *automaton* that proves itself. Man must *follow* it. As in Hegel, the result of real development is nothing but the *truth proven*—i.e., brought to *consciousness*. Absolute Criticism may therefore ask with the most narrow-minded theologian:

What would be the purpose of *history* if its task were not precisely to *prove* these simplest of all truths (such as the movement of the earth round the sun)?

Just as, according to the earlier teleologists, plants exist to be eaten by animals, and animals to be eaten by men, history exists in order to serve as the act of consumption of theoretical eating—*proving*. Man exists so that history may exist, and history exists so that the *proof of truths* exists. In this *Critically* trivialized form is repeated the speculative wisdom that man exists, and history exists, so that *truth* may arrive at *self-consciousness*.

That is why *history*, like *truth*, becomes a person apart, a metaphysical subject of which the real human individuals are merely the bearers. That is why Absolute Criticism uses phrases like these:

History does not allow itself to be mocked... *History* has exerted *its* greatest efforts to... *History* has been engaged...

²⁴ Here and lower quotations are made from B. Bauer's article "Latest Works on the Jewish Question" published in No. 1 of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (December 1843); this was B. Bauer's reply to press criticism of his book *Die Judenfrage*.

²⁵ Bruno Bauer's book *Die Judenfrage* (*The Jewish Question*) is a reprint with a few additions of his articles on the same subject published in *Deutsche Jahrbücher* (*German Year-Book*) in November 1842. The book was published in Brunswick in 1843.

what would be the purpose of History?... *History* provides the explicit proof... *History* puts forward truths [etc.].

If, as Absolute Criticism asserts, history has so far been occupied with only a *few* such truths—the simplest of all—which in the end are self-evident, this inadequacy to which Absolute Criticism reduces previous human experiences proves first of all only its own inadequacy. From the un-Critical standpoint the result of history is, on the contrary, that the most complicated truth, the quintessence of all truth, man, is self-evident in the end.

But truths, [Absolute Criticism continues to argue,] which *seem* to the mass to be so crystal-clear that they are self-evident *from the start*... and that the mass regards proof of them as superfluous, are not worth history supplying explicit proof of them; they are in general no part of the problem which history is engaged in solving.

In its holy zeal against the mass, Absolute Criticism pays it the finest compliment. If a truth is *crystal-clear* because it *seems* crystal-clear to the mass; if history's *attitude* to truths *depends* on the *opinion* of the mass, then the verdict of the mass is absolute, infallible, the *law* of history, and history proves only what does not seem crystal-clear to the mass, and therefore needs proof. It is the mass, then, that prescribes history's "task" and "occupation."

Absolute Criticism speaks of "truths which are self-evident *from the start*. In its Critical naivety it invents an absolute "*from the start*" and an abstract, immutable "*mass*." There is just as little difference, in the eyes of Absolute Criticism, between the "from the start" of the sixteenth-century mass and the "from the start" of the nineteenth-century mass as there is between those masses themselves. It is precisely the characteristic feature of a truth which has become true and obvious and is self-evident that it is "self-evident *from the start*." Absolute Criticism's polemic against truths which are self-evident from the start is a polemic against truths which are "self-evident" in general.

A truth which is self-evident has lost its savor, its meaning, its value for Absolute Criticism as it has for divine *dialectic*. It has become flat, like stale water. On the one hand, therefore, Absolute Criticism

proves everything which is self-evident and, in addition, many things which have the luck to be incomprehensible and therefore will never be self-evident. On the other hand, it considers as self-evident everything which needs some elaboration. Why? Because it is *self-evident* that *real problems* are not self-evident.

Since the “Truth,” like history, is an ethereal subject separate from the material mass, it addresses itself not to the empirical man but to the “*innermost depths of the soul*”; in order to be “*truly apprehended*” it does not act on his *vulgar body*, which may live deep down in an English cellar or at the top of a French block of flats; it “stretches” “from end to end” through his idealistic intestines. Absolute Criticism does certify that “the mass” has so far in its own way, i.e., superficially, been affected by the truths that history has been so gracious as to “put forward”; but at the same time it prophesies that

the *attitude* of the *mass* to *historical progress* will “*completely change*.”

It will not be long before the mysterious meaning of this Critical prophecy becomes “crystal-clear” to us.

All great actions of previous history, [we are told,] were failures *from the start* and had no effective success because the mass became *interested* in and *enthusiastic* over them—or, they were bound to come to a pitiful end, because the idea underlying them was such that it had to be content with a superficial comprehension and therefore to rely on the approval of the mass.

It seems that the comprehension which suffices for, and therefore corresponds to, an idea ceases to be superficial. It is only for appearance’s sake that Herr Bruno brings out a *relation* between an *idea* and its *comprehension*, just as it is only for *appearance’s sake* that he brings out a *relation* between unsuccessful historical action and the *mass*. If, therefore, Absolute Criticism condemns something as “superficial,” it is simply previous history, the actions and ideas of which were those of the “masses.” It rejects *mass-type*—history to replace it by *Critical* history.²⁶ According to previous *un-Critical* history, i.e., history not conceived in the sense of Abso-

²⁶ See Herr Jules Faucher on “English Questions of the Day.”

lute Criticism, it must further be precisely distinguished to what extent the *mass* was “*interested*” in aims and to what extent it was “*enthusiastic*” over them. The “*idea*” always disgraced itself insofar as it differed from the “*interest*.” On the other hand, it is easy to understand that every mass-type “*interest*” that asserts itself historically goes far beyond its real limits in the “*idea*” or “*imagination*” when it first comes on the scene and is confused with *human* interest in general. This *illusion* constitutes what *Fourier* calls the *tone* of each historical epoch. The *interest* of the bourgeoisie in the 1789 Revolution, far from having been a “*failure*,” “*won*” everything and had “*most effective success*,” however much its “*pathos*” has evaporated and the “*enthusiastic*” flowers with which that interest adorned its cradle have faded. That interest was so powerful that it was victorious over the pen of *Marat*, the guillotine of the Terror and the sword of *Napoleon* as well as the crucifix and the blue blood of the *Bourbons*. The Revolution was a “*failure*” only for the mass which did not have in the *political* “*idea*” the idea of its real “*interest*,” i.e., whose true life-principle did not coincide with the life-principle of the Revolution, the mass whose real conditions for emancipation were essentially different from the conditions within which the bourgeoisie could emancipate itself and society. If the Revolution, which can exemplify all great historical “*actions*,” was a failure, it was so because the mass within whose living conditions it essentially came to a stop, was an *exclusive, limited* mass, not an all-embracing one. If the Revolution was a failure it was not because the mass was “*enthusiastic*” over it and “*interested*” in it, but because the most numerous part of the mass, the part distinct from the bourgeoisie, did not have its *real* interest in the principle of the Revolution, did not have a revolutionary principle of its own, but *only* an “*idea*,” and hence only an object of momentary enthusiasm and only seeming *uplift*.

Together with the thoroughness of the historical action, the size of the mass whose action it is will therefore increase. In Critical history, according to which in historical actions it is not a matter of the acting masses, of empirical action, or of the empirical interest of this action, but instead is only “*a matter of an idea in them*,” things must naturally take a different course.

In the mass, [Criticism teaches us,] not somewhere else, as its former liberal spokesmen believed, is the enemy of the spirit to be found.

The enemies of progress *outside* the mass are precisely those *products* of *self-debasement*, *self-rejection* and *self-alienation* of the *mass* which have been endowed with independent being and a life of their *own*. The mass therefore turns against its *own* deficiency when it turns against the independently existing *products* of its *self-debasement*, just as man, turning against the existence of God, turns against his *own religiosity*. But as those *practical* self-alienations of the mass exist in the real world in an outward way, the mass must fight them in an *outward* way. It must by no means hold these products of its self-alienation for mere *ideal* fantasies, mere *alienations of self-consciousness*, and must not wish to abolish material estrangement by purely *inward spiritual* action. As early as 1789 Loustalot's journal²⁷ bore the motto:

*The great appear great in our eyes
Only because we kneel
Let us rise!*

But to rise it is not enough to do so in *thought* and to leave hanging over one's *real sensuously perceptible* head the *real sensuously perceptible* yoke that cannot be subtilized away with ideas. Yet *Absolute Criticism* has learned from Hegel's *Phänomenologie* at least the art of converting *real objective* chains that exist *outside me* into *merely ideal*, *merely subjective* chains, existing merely *in me* and thus of converting all external sensuously perceptible struggles into pure struggles of thought.

This Critical transformation is the basis of the *pre-established harmony* between *Critical Criticism* and the *ensorship*. From the Critical point of view, the writer's fight against the censor is not a fight of "man against man." The censor is nothing but *my own tact personified* for me by the solicitous police, my own tact struggling against my tactlessness and un-Criticalness. The struggle of the writer with the censor is only seemingly, only in the eyes of wicked sensuousness, anything else than the *inner* struggle of

²⁷ The reference is to the weekly paper *Revolutions de Paris*, which appeared in Paris from July 1789 to February 1794. Until September 1790 it was edited by the revolutionary publicist Eliséé Loustalot.

the writer *with himself*. Insofar as the censor is *really individually different* from myself, a *police executioner* who mishandles the product of my mind by applying an external standard alien to the matter in question, he is a mere *mass-type fantasy*, an *un-Critical figment of the brain*. When Feuerbach's *Thesen zur Reform der Philosophie* was prohibited by the censorship, it was not the official barbarity of the censorship that was to blame but the uncultured character of Feuerbach's *Thesen*. "Pure" Criticism, unsullied by mass or matter, too, has in the censor a purely "ethereal" form, divorced from all mass-type reality.

Absolute Criticism has declared the "Mass" to be the *true enemy of the Spirit*. It develops this in more detail as follows:

The Spirit now knows where to *look for its only adversary*—in the self-deception and the pithlessness of the Mass.

Absolute Criticism proceeds from the *dogma* of the absolute competency of the "Spirit." Furthermore, it proceeds from the *dogma* of the *extramundane* existence of the Spirit, i.e., of its existence outside the mass of humanity. Finally, it transforms "*the Spirit*," "*Progress*," on the one hand, and "*the Mass*," on the other, into *fixed* entities, into concepts, and then relates them to one another as such given rigid extremes. It does not occur to Absolute Criticism to investigate *the "Spirit"* itself, to find out whether it is not in its spiritualistic nature, in its airy pretensions, that the "Phrase," "self-deception" and "pithlessness" are rooted. No, the Spirit is *absolute*, but unfortunately at the same time it continually turns into *spiritlessness*; it continually reckons without its host. Hence it must necessarily have an *adversary* that intrigues against it. That adversary is the Mass.

The position is the same with "*Progress*." In spite of the pretensions of "*Progress*," continual *retrogressions* and *circular movements* occur. Far from suspecting that the category "*Progress*" is completely empty and abstract, Absolute Criticism is so profound as to recognize "*Progress*" as being absolute, so as to explain retrogression by assuming a "*personal adversary*" of Progress, *the Mass*. As "*the Mass*" is nothing but the "*opposite of the Spirit*," of Progress, of "*Criticism*," it can accordingly be defined only by this imaginary opposition; apart from that opposition all that Criticism can say about the meaning and the existence of the Mass is only something *meaningless*, because completely undefined:

The Mass, in *that sense* in which the “word” *also* embraces the *so-called* educated world.

“Also” and “so-called” suffice for a Critical definition. The “Mass” is therefore distinct from the *real* masses and exists as *the* “Mass” only for “*Criticism.*”

All communist and socialist writers proceeded from the observation that, on the one hand, even the most favorably brilliant deeds seemed to remain without brilliant results, to end in trivialities, and, on the other, *all progress of the Spirit* had so far been *progress against the mass of mankind*, driving it into an ever more *dehumanized* situation. They therefore declared “*progress*” (see *Fourier*) to be an inadequate, abstract phrase; they assumed (see *Owen* among others) a fundamental flaw in the civilized world; that is why they subjected the *real* foundations of contemporary society to incisive *criticism*. This communist criticism had practically at once as its counterpart the movement of the great mass, in opposition to which history had been developing so far. One must know the studiousness, the craving for knowledge, the moral energy and the unceasing urge for development of the French and English workers to be able to form an idea of the human nobility of this movement.

How infinitely *profound* then is “Absolute Criticism,” which, in face of these intellectual and practical facts, sees in a one-sided way only *one* aspect of the relationship, the continual foundering of the Spirit, and, vexed at this, seeks, in addition, an *adversary* of the “Spirit,” which it finds in *the* “Mass!” In the end this great Critical *discovery* amounts to a *tautology*. According to Criticism, *the Spirit* has so far had a limit, an obstacle, in other words, an *adversary*, *because* it has had an *adversary*. Who, then, is the adversary of the *Spirit*? *Spiritlessness*. For the Mass is defined only as the “opposite” of the Spirit, as *spiritlessness* or, to take the more precise definitions of spiritlessness, as “indolence,” “superficiality,” “self-complacency.” What a fundamental superiority over the communist writers it is not to have traced spiritlessness, indolence, superficiality and self-complacency to their places of origin, but to have denounced them *morally* and *exposed* them as the opposite of the Spirit, of Progress! If these qualities are proclaimed qualities of *the Mass*, as of a *subject* still distinct from them, that distinction is nothing but a “Critical” *semblance* of distinction. Only in

appearance has Absolute Criticism a *definite* concrete subject besides the abstract qualities of spiritlessness, indolence, etc., for “*the Mass*” in the Critical conception is *nothing* but those abstract qualities, another *word* for them, a *fantastic personification* of them. The relation between “Spirit and Mass” has, however, also a *hidden* meaning which will be completely revealed in the course of the reasoning. We only indicate it here. That relation *discovered* by Herr Bruno is, in fact, nothing but a *Critically caricatured consummation of Hegel’s conception of history*, which, in turn, is nothing but the *speculative* expression of the *Christian-Germanic* dogma of the antithesis between *Spirit* and *Matter*, between God and the world. This antithesis finds expression in history, in the human world itself in such a way that a few chosen *individuals* as the *active Spirit* are counterposed to the rest of mankind, as the *spiritless Mass*, as *Matter*.

Hegel’s conception of history presupposes an *Abstract* or *Absolute Spirit*, which develops in such a way that mankind is a mere *mass* that bears the Spirit with a varying degree of consciousness or unconsciousness. Within *empirical*, exoteric history, therefore, Hegel makes a speculative, esoteric history develop. The history of mankind becomes the history of the *Abstract Spirit* of mankind, hence a *spirit far removed* from the real man.

Parallel with this doctrine of Hegel’s, there developed in France the theory of the *Soctrinairians*²⁸ proclaiming the *sovereignty of reason* in opposition to the *sovereignty of the people*, in order to exclude the masses and rule *alone*. This was quite consistent. If the activity of *real* mankind is nothing but the activity of a mass of human individuals, then abstract *generality*, *Reason*, *the Spirit*, on the contrary, must have an abstract expression restricted to a few individuals. It then depends on the situation and imaginative power of each individual whether he will claim to be this representative of “the Spirit.”

Already in *Hegel* the *Absolute Spirit* of history has its material in the *Mass* and finds its appropriate expression only in *philosophy*. The philosopher, however, is only the organ through which the maker of history, the

²⁸ *Doctrinaires*—a group of French bourgeois politicians during the Restoration (1815-30); they were constitutional monarchists and rabid enemies of the democratic and revolutionary movement and wished to establish in France a bloc of the bourgeoisie and gentry after the English fashion; the best known among them were the historian F. Guizot and the philosopher P. Royer-Collard.

Absolute Spirit, arrives at self-consciousness *retrospectively* after the movement has ended. The participation of the philosopher in history is reduced to this retrospective consciousness, for the real movement is accomplished by the Absolute Spirit *unconsciously*. Hence the philosopher appears on the scene *post festum* [after the event].

Hegel is guilty of being doubly half-hearted: firstly in that, while declaring that philosophy is the mode of existence of the Absolute Spirit, he refuses to recognize the *actual philosophical individual* as the *Absolute Spirit*; secondly, in that he lets the Absolute Spirit as Absolute Spirit make history only in *appearance*. For since the Absolute Spirit becomes *conscious* of itself as the creative World Spirit only *post festum* in the philosopher, its making of history exists only in the consciousness, in the opinion and conception of the philosopher, i.e., only in the speculative imagination. Herr Bruno Bauer overcomes Hegel's half-heartedness.

Firstly, he proclaims *Criticism* to be the Absolute Spirit and *himself* to be *Criticism*. Just as the element of Criticism is banished from the Mass, so the element of the Mass is banished from Criticism. Therefore *Criticism* sees itself incarnate not in a *mass*, but exclusively in a *handful* of chosen men, in Herr *Bauer* and his disciples.

Herr Bauer furthermore overcomes Hegel's other half-heartedness. No longer, like the Hegelian Spirit, does he make history *post festum* and in imagination. He *consciously* plays the part of the *World Spirit* in opposition to the mass of the rest of mankind; he enters into a contemporary *dramatic* relation with that mass; he invents and executes history with a purpose and after mature reflection.

On the one side is the Mass as the passive, spiritless, unhistorical, *material* element of history. On the other is *the Spirit*, *Criticism*, Herr Bruno and Co. as the active element from which all *historical* action proceeds. The act of transforming society is reduced to the *cerebral activity* of Critical Criticism.

Indeed, the relation of Criticism, and hence of Criticism incarnate, Herr Bruno and Co., to the Mass is in truth the only historical relation of the present time. The whole of present-day history is reduced to the movement of these two sides against each other. All antitheses have been dissolved in this *Critical* antithesis.

Critical Criticism, which becomes *objective* to itself only in relation to its antithesis, to the Mass, to *stupidity*, is consequently obliged continually to *produce* this antithesis for itself, and Herren Faucher, Edgar and Szeliga have supplied sufficient proof of their Virtuosity in their speciality, the *mass stupefaction* of persons and things.

Let us now accompany Absolute Criticism in its *campaigns* against the *Mass*.

b) The Jewish Question No. 1. – The Setting of the Questions

The “Spirit,” contrary to the Mass, behaves from the outset in a *Critical way* by considering its own narrow-minded work, Bruno Bauer’s *Die Judenfrage*, as absolute, and only the opponents of that work as sinners. In Reply No. 1²⁹ to attacks on that treatise, he does not show any inkling of its defects; on the contrary, he declares he has set forth the “true,” “*general*” (!) significance of the Jewish question. In later replies we shall see him obliged to admit his “*oversights*.”

The reception my book has had is the *beginning* of the proof that the very ones who so far have advocated freedom, and still advocate it, must rise against the Spirit more than any others; the defense of my book which I am now going to undertake will supply further prove how thoughtless the *spokesmen of the Mass* are; they have God knows what a great opinion of themselves for supporting emancipation and the dogma of the “*rights of man*.”

On the occasion of a treatise by Absolute Criticism, the “Mass” must necessarily have *begun* to prove its antithesis to the Spirit; for it is its antithesis to Absolute Criticism that *determines* and *proves* its very *existence*.

The polemic of a few liberal and rationalist Jews against Herr Bruno’s *Die Judenfrage* has naturally a Critical meaning quite different from that of the mass-type polemic of the liberals against philosophy and of the rationalists against Strauss. Incidentally, the originality of the above-quoted remark can be judged by the following passage from *Hegel*:

²⁹ Marx has in mind B. Bauer’s article “Latest Works on the Jewish Question.”

We can here note the particular form of bad conscience manifest in the kind of eloquence with which that shallowness [of the liberals] plumes itself, and first of all in the fact that it speaks most of *Spirit* where its speech has the *least spirit*, and uses the word *life*, [etc.,] where it is most dead and withered.³⁰

As for the “*rights of man*,” it has been proved to Herr Bruno (“On the Jewish Question,” *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*³¹) that it is “*he himself*,” not the *spokesmen of the Mass*, who has misunderstood and dogmatically mishandled the essence of those rights. Compared to his discovery that the rights of man are not “*inborn*”—a discovery which has been made innumerable times in England during the last 40-odd years—Fourier’s assertion that the right to fish, to hunt, etc., are inborn rights of men is one of genius.

We give only a few examples of Herr Bruno’s fight against *Philippson*, *Hirsch* and others. Even such poor opponents as these are not disposed of by Absolute Criticism. It is by no means preposterous of Herr *Philippson*, as Absolute Criticism maintains, to say:

Bauer conceives a peculiar kind of state... a *philosophical ideal of a state*.

Herr Bruno, who confuses the state with humanity, the rights of man with man and political emancipation with human emancipation, was bound, if not to conceive, at least to imagine a peculiar kind of state, a philosophical ideal of a state.

Instead of writing his labored statement, the rhetorician [Herr Hirsch] would have done better to refute my proof that the *Christian state*, having as its vital principle a definite religion, cannot allow adherents of another particular religion... complete equality with its own social estates.

Had the rhetorician *Hirsch* really refuted Herr Bruno’s proof and shown, as is done in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, that the state of

³⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts (Elements of Philosophy of Right)*, Vorrede (Preface).

³¹ The reference is to Marx’s article “on the Jewish Question.”

social estates and of exclusive Christianity is not only an incomplete state but an incomplete *Christian* state, Herr Bruno would have answered as he does to that refutation:

Objections in this matter are meaningless.

Herr Hirsch is quite correct when in answer to Herr Bruno's statement:

By pressure against the mainsprings of history the Jews provided counterpressure,

he recalls:

Then they must have counted for something in the making of history, and if Bauer himself asserts this, he has no right to assert, on the other hand, that they did not contribute anything to the making of modern times.

Herr Bruno answers:

An eyesore is something too—does that mean it contributes to develop my eyesight?

Something which has been an eyesore to me from birth, as the Jews have been to the Christian world, and which persists and develops with the eye is not an ordinary sore, but a wonderful one, one that really belongs to my eye and must even contribute to a highly original development of my eyesight. The Critical "*eyesore*" does not therefore hurt the rhetorician "*Hirsch*." Incidentally, the criticism quoted above revealed to Herr Bruno the significance of Jewry in "the *making* of modern times."

The theological mind of Absolute Criticism feels so offended by a *deputy of the Rhenish Landtag* stating that "the Jews are *queer* in their own Jewish way, not in our so-called Christian way," that it is still "calling him *to order* for using that argument."

Concerning the assertion of another deputy that "civil equality of the Jews can be implemented only where Jewry no longer exists," Herr Bruno comments:

Correct! That is correct if Criticism's other proposition, which I put forward in my treatise, is not omitted [namely the proposition that Christianity also must have ceased to exist].

We see that in its Reply No. 1 to the attacks upon *Die Judenfrage*, Absolute Criticism still regards the abolition of religion, atheism, as the condition for civil equality. In its first stage it has therefore not yet acquired any deeper insight into the essence of the state than into the “oversights” of its “work.”

Absolute Criticism feels offended when one of its *intended* “latest” scientific discoveries is betrayed as something already generally recognized. A Rhenish deputy remarks:

No one has yet maintained that France and Belgium were distinguished by particular clarity in recognizing principles in the organization of their political affairs.

Absolute Criticism could have objected that that assertion transferred the present into the past by representing as traditional the now trivial view of the inadequacy of French political principles. Such a relevant objection would not be profitable for Absolute Criticism. On the contrary, it must assert the obsolete view to be that at present prevailing, and proclaim the now prevailing view a Critical mystery, which its investigation still has to reveal to the Mass. Hence it must say:

It [the antiquated prejudice] has been asserted *by very many* [of the Mass]: *but a thorough investigation* of history *will* provide the proof that even after the great work done by France to comprehend the principles, *much still remains to be achieved*.

That means that a thorough investigation of history will not itself “achieve” the comprehension of the principles. It will only *prove* in its thoroughness that “*much still remains to be achieved*.” A great achievement, especially after the works of the Socialists! Nevertheless Herr Bruno *already* achieves *much* for the comprehension of the present social state of things by his remark:

The *certainty* prevailing at present is *uncertainty*.

If Hegel says that the prevailing Chinese certainty is “Being,” that the prevailing *Indian* certainty is “Nothing,” etc., Absolute Criticism joins him in the “pure” way when it resolves the character of the present time in the logical category “*Uncertainty*,” and all the purer since “*Uncertainty*,”

like “Being” and “Nothing,” belongs to the first chapter of speculative logic, the chapter on “*Quality*.”

We cannot leave No. 1 of *Die Judenfrage* without a general remark.

One of the chief pursuits of Absolute Criticism consists of first bringing all questions of the day into their *right setting*. For it does not answer the *real* questions—it substitutes *quite different* ones. As it makes everything, it must also first make the “questions of the day,” make them *its own* questions, questions of Critical Criticism. If it were a question of the Code Napoléon, it would prove that it is *properly* a question of the *Pentateuch*. Its *setting* of “questions of the day” is Critical *distortion* and *misrepresentation* of them. It thus distorted the “Jewish question,” too, in such a way that it did not need to investigate *political emancipation*, which is the subject-matter of that question, but could instead confine itself to a criticism of the Jewish religion and a description of the Christian-Germanic state.

This method, too, like all Absolute Criticism’s originalities, is the repetition of a *speculative* verbal trick. *Speculative* philosophy, namely, *Hegel’s* philosophy, had to transpose all questions from the form of common sense to the form of speculative reason and convert the real question into a *speculative* one to be able to answer it. Having distorted *my* question on my lips and, like the catechism, put *its own* question into my mouth, it could, of course, like the catechism, have its ready answer to all my questions.

c) *Hinrichs* No. 1. — *Mysterious Hints on Politics, Socialism and Philosophy*

“*Political!*” Absolute Criticism is literally horrified at the presence of this word in Professor *Hinrichs’* lectures.³²

Whoever has followed the development of modern times and knows history will also know that the political movements at present taking place have a significance *quite different* [!] from a *political* one: at their base [at their base!... now for basic wisdom] they have a *social* [!] significance, which, as we know

³² The reference is to B. Bauer’s review of the first volume of a course of lectures on law by the right Hegelian *Hinrichs* published in Halle in 1843 under the title *Politische Vorlesungen*, Bd. I-II (*Political Lectures*, Vols. I-II), Bauer’s review was published in No. I of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (December 1843). Lower, in the section “*Hinrichs*, No. 2” the reference is to B. Bauer’s review on the second volume of the lectures published in No. V (April 1844) of the same journal.

[!] is such [!] that *all* political interests appear *insignificant* [!] in comparison with it.

A few months before the Critical *Literatur-Zeitung* began to be published, there appeared, *as we know* (!), Herr Bruno's fantastic political treatise: *Staat, Religion und Parthei!*

If *political* movements *have social significance*, how can political interests appear "*insignificant*" in comparison with their own social significance?

Herr Hinrichs does not know his way about either in his own house or anywhere else in the world.... He could not be at home anywhere *because... because* Criticism, which in the last four years has begun and carried on its *by no means* "*political*" but "*social*" [!] work, has remained *completely* [!] unknown to him.

Criticism, which according to the opinion of the Mass carried on "by no means *political*" but "in *all* respects *theological*" work, is still content with the word "*social*," even now when it has uttered this word for the first time, not just in the last four years, but since its literary birth.

Since socialist writings spread in Germany the recognition that all human aspirations and actions without exception have *social* significance, Herr Bruno can call his theological works social too. But what a *Critical* demand it is that Professor Hinrichs should have derived socialism from an *acquaintance* with *Bauer's* works, considering that all Bruno Bauer's works published up to the appearance of Hinrichs' lectures, when they do draw practical conclusions, draw *political* ones! It was impossible, un-Critically speaking, for Professor Hinrichs to supplement Herr Bruno's published works with his as yet unpublished ones. From the Critical point of view, the Mass is, of course, obliged to interpret all Absolute Criticism's mass-type "movements," as well as "political" ones, from the angle of the future and of Absolute Progress! But in order that Herr Hinrichs, after becoming acquainted with the *Literatur-Zeitung*, may never again forget the word "*social*" or fail to recognize the "*social*" character of *Criticism*, *Criticism* prohibits the word "political" for the third time before the whole world and solemnly repeats the word "*social*" for the third time.

If the *true* tendency of modern history is considered it is *no longer a question of political, but—*but of *social* significance [etc.].

Just as Professor Hinrichs is the scapegoat for the former “political” movements, so is he also for the “Hegelian” movements and expressions which Absolute Criticism used intentionally up to the publication of the *Literatur-Zeitung* and continues to use unintentionally in it.

Once “*real Hegelian*” and twice “*Hegelian philosopher*” are thrown in Hinrichs’ face as catchwords. Herr Bruno even “*hopes*” that the “banal expressions so tiresomely circulated in all the books of the *Hegelian* school” (in particular in his own books) will, *in view of* their great “*exhaustion*” as seen in Professor Hinrichs’ lectures, soon reach the end of their journey. From the “*exhaustion*” of *Professor Hinrichs*, Herr Bruno hopes for the dissolution of *Hegel’s philosophy* and thereby *his own redemption* from it.

Thus in its *first campaign* Absolute Criticism overthrows its own long-worshipped gods, “*Politics*” and “*Philosophy*,” declaring them idols of Professor Hinrichs.

Glorious first campaign!

2) Absolute Criticism’s Second Campaign

a) *Hinrichs No. 2. “Criticism” and “Feuerbach.” – Condemnation of Philosophy*

As the result of its first campaign, *Absolute Criticism* can regard “*philosophy*” as having been dealt with and term it outright an ally of the “*Mass.*”

Philosophy were predestined to fulfill the heart’s desires of the “*Mass.*” [For] the *Mass* *wants* simple concepts, in order to have nothing to do with the thing itself, shibboleths, so as to have finished with everything from the start, phrases by which Criticism can be done away with

And “*philosophy*” fulfills this longing of the “*Mass!*”³³

³³ This and the following quotations are from the second article written by B. Bauer against the critics of his book *Die Judenfrage*. This article, entitled as the first “Now Works on the Jewish Question,” was given in No. IV of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (March 1844).

Dizzy after its victories, Absolute Criticism breaks out in *Pythian*³⁴ frenzy against philosophy. *Feuerbach's Philosophie der Zukunft* [L. Feuerbach, Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft] is the concealed cauldron³⁵ whose fumes inspire the frenzy of Absolute Criticism's victory-intoxicated head. It read Feuerbach's work in March. The fruit of that reading, and at the same time the criterion of the earnestness with which it was undertaken, is Article No. 2 against Professor Hinrichs.

In this article Absolute Criticism, which has never freed itself from the cage of the Hegelian way of viewing things, storms at the iron bars and walls of its prison. The "simple concept," the terminology, the whole mode of thought of philosophy, indeed, the whole of philosophy, is rejected with disgust. In its place we suddenly find the "*real wealth of human relations*," the "*immense content of history*," the "*significance of man*," etc. "*The mystery of the system*" is declared "*revealed*."

But who, then, revealed the mystery of the "system?" *Feuerbach*. Who annihilated the dialectics of concepts, the war of the gods that was known to the philosophers alone? *Feuerbach*. Who substituted for the old lumber and for "infinite self-consciousness" if not, indeed, "*the significance of man*"—as though man had another significance than that of being man!—at any rate "*Man?*" *Feuerbach*, and only *Feuerbach*. And he did more. Long ago he did away with the very categories with which "*Criticism*" now operates—the "*real wealth of human relations*, the *immense content of history*, the *struggle of history*, the *fight of the Mass against the Spirit*," etc., etc.

Once man is recognized as the essence, the basis of all human activity and situations, only "*Criticism*" can invent *new categories* and transform *man* himself into a category and into the principle of a whole series of categories, as it is doing now. It is true that in so doing it takes the only road to salvation that has remained for frightened and persecuted *theological* inhumanity. *History* does *nothing*, it "possesses *no* immense wealth," it "wages *no* battles." It is *man*, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; "history" is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to

³⁴ In ancient Greece, the Temple of Delphi was known for its oracle, a high priestess who went by the name *Pythia*, and who was believed to be able to predict the future.

³⁵ Engels here makes a pun on "Feuerbach" (literally stream of fire) and "Feuerkessel" (boiler).

achieve *its own* aims; history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims. If *Absolute Criticism*, after *Feuerbach's* brilliant expositions, still dares to reproduce all the old trash in a new form, at the same time abusing it as “*mass-type*” trash—which it has all the less right to do as it never stirred a finger to dissolve philosophy—that fact alone is sufficient to bring the “*mystery*” of Criticism to light and to assess the Critical naivety with which it says the following to Professor Hinrichs, whose “*exhaustion*” once did it such a great service:

The *damage* is to those who have not gone through any development and therefore *could not alter themselves even if they wished to*, and at most to the *new principle*—but no! The new *cannot be made into a phrase, separate turn of speech cannot be borrowed from it.*

Absolute Criticism prides itself that, in contrast to Professor Hinrichs, it has solved “*the mystery of the faculty sciences.*” Has it then solved the “*mystery*” of philosophy, jurisprudence, politics, medicine, political economy and so forth? Not at all! It has—be it noted!—shown in *Die gute Sache der Freiheit* that science as a source of livelihood and free science, freedom of teaching and faculty statutes, contradict each other.

If “Absolute Criticism” were honest it would have admitted where its pretended illumination on the “Mystery of Philosophy” comes from. It is a good thing all the same that it does not put into *Feuerbach's* mouth such nonsense as the misunderstood and distorted propositions that it borrowed from him, as it has done with other people. By the way, it is characteristic of “Absolute Criticism's” *theological* viewpoint that, whereas the German philistines are now beginning to understand *Feuerbach* and to adopt his conclusions, it is unable to grasp a single sentence of his correctly or to use it properly.

Criticism achieves a real advance over its feats of the first campaign when it “defines” the struggle of “*the Mass*” against the “*Spirit*” as “*the aim*” of all previous history, when it declares that “*the Mass*” is the “*pure nothing*” of “*misery*”; when it calls the Mass purely and simply “*Matter*” and contrasts “*the Spirit*” as truth to “*Matter.*” Is not Absolute Criticism therefore *genuinely Christian-Germanic*? After the old antithesis between spiritualism and materialism has been fought out on all sides and over-

come once for all by *Feuerbach*, “*Criticism*” again makes a basic dogma of it in its most loathsome form and gives the victory to the “*Christian-Germanic spirit*.”

Finally, it must be considered as a development of *Criticism*’s mystery concealed in its first campaign when it now identifies the antithesis between *Spirit* and *Mass* with the antithesis between “*Criticism*” and the *Mass*. Later it will go on to identify *itself* with “*Criticism*” and therefore to represent itself as “*the Spirit*,” the Absolute and Infinite, and the *Mass*, on the other hand, as finite, coarse, brutal, dead and inorganic—for that is what “*Criticism*” understands by matter.

How immense is the wealth of history that is exhausted in the relationship of humanity to *Herr Bauer*!

b) The Jewish Question No. 2—Critical Discoveries on Socialism, Jurisprudence and Politics (Nationality)

To the material, mass-type Jews is preached the *Christian* doctrine of *freedom of the Spirit*, *freedom in theory*, that *spiritualistic* freedom which *imagines* itself to be free even in chains, and whose soul is satisfied with “*the idea*” and only embarrassed by any mass-type existence.

The Jews are *emancipated* to the extent they have now reached in *theory*, they are *free* to the extent that they *wish to be free*.

From this proposition one can immediately measure the Critical gap which separates *mass-type*, profane communism and socialism from *absolute* socialism. The first proposition of profane socialism rejects emancipation *in mere theory* as an illusion and for *real* freedom it demands besides the idealistic “*will*” very tangible, very material conditions. How low “*the Mass*” is in comparison with holy *Criticism*, the *Mass* which considers material, practical Upheavals necessary even to win the time and means required merely to occupy itself with “*theory!*”

Let us leave purely spiritual socialism an instant for *politics!*

Herr Riesser maintains against Bruno Bauer that his state (i.e., the *Critical* state) must exclude “*Jews*” and “*Christians*.” *Herr Riesser* is right. Since *Herr Bauer* confuses *political* emancipation with *human* emancipation, since the state can react to antagonistic elements—and Christianity and Judaism are described as treasonable elements in *Die Judenfrage*—only

by forcible exclusion of the persons representing them (as the Terror, for instance, wished to do away with hoarding by guillotining the hoarders), Herr Bauer must have both Jews and Christians hanged in his "Critical state." Having confused political emancipation with human emancipation, he had to be consistent and confuse the *political means* of emancipation with the *human means*. But as soon as Absolute Criticism is told the *definite* meaning of its deductions, it gives the answer that *Schelling* once gave to all his opponents who substituted *real* thoughts for his phrases:

Criticism's opponents are its opponents because they not only measure it with their *dogmatic* yardstick but regard Criticism itself as *dogmatic*; they oppose Criticism because it does not recognize their dogmatic distinctions, definitions and evasions.

It is, of course, to adopt a dogmatic attitude to Absolute Criticism, as also to Herr *Schelling*, if one assumes it to have *definite*, real meaning, thoughts and views. In order to be accommodating and to prove to Herr Riesser its humanity, "*Criticism*," however, decides to resort to dogmatic distinctions, definitions and especially to "*evasions*."

Thus we read:

Had I in that work [*Die Judenfrage*] had the *will* or the *right* to go *beyond*, criticism, I *ought* [!] to *have spoken* [!] not of the *state*, but of "*society*," which excludes no one but from which only those exclude themselves who do not wish to take part in its development.

Here Absolute Criticism makes a *dogmatic distinction* between what it ought to have done, if it had not done the contrary, and what it actually did. It explains the narrowness of its work *Die Judenfrage* by the "*dogmatic evasions*" of having the *will* and the *right* which prohibited it from going "*beyond criticism*." What? "*Criticism*" should go *beyond* "*criticism*?" This quite *mass-type* notion occurs to Absolute Criticism because of the dogmatic necessity for, on the one hand, asserting its conception of the Jewish question as absolute, as "*Criticism*," and on the other hand, admitting the possibility of a more comprehensive conception.

The *mystery* of its “*not having the will*” and “*not having the right*” will later be revealed as the Critical *dogma* according to which all apparent limitations of “Criticism” are nothing but necessary *adaptations* to the powers of comprehension of the Mass.

It had not the *will*. It *had* not the *right* to go beyond its narrow conception of the Jewish question! But what would it have done *had* it *had* the *will* or the *right*?—It would have given a *dogmatic definition*. It would have spoken of “*society*” instead of the “state,” that is to say, it would not have studied the *real* relation of Jewry to *present-day civil* society! It would have given a *dogmatic definition* of “*society*” as distinct from the “state,” in the sense that if the *state* excludes, on the other hand *they exclude* themselves from society who do not wish to take part in its development!

Society behaves just as exclusively as the state, only in a more polite form: it does not throw you out, but it makes it so uncomfortable for you that you go out of your own will.

Basically, the state does not behave otherwise, for it does not exclude anybody who complies with all *its* demands and orders and its development. In its *perfection* it even closes its eyes and declares *real* contradictions to be *non-political* contradictions which do not disturb it. Besides, Absolute Criticism itself has argued that the state excludes Jews because, and insofar as, the Jews exclude the state and hence exclude *themselves* from the state. If this reciprocal relationship has a more polite, a more hypocritical, a more insidious form in *Critical* “society,” this only proves that “*Critical*” “*society*” is more hypocritical and less developed.

Let us follow Absolute Criticism deeper in its “dogmatic distinctions” and “definitions,” and, in particular, in its “*evasions*.”

Herr Riesser, for example, demands of the critic “that he *distinguish* what belongs to the domain of law” from “what is beyond its sphere.”

The Critic is indignant at the impertinence of this *juridical* demand.

So far, *however*, [he retorts,] both feeling and conscience have interfered in law, always supplemented it, and because of its character, based on its *dogmatic form* [not, therefore, on its *dogmatic essence*?], have always had to supplement it.

The Critic forgets only that *law*, on the other hand, *distinguishes* itself quite explicitly from “feeling and conscience,” that this distinction is based

on the one-sided *essence* of *law* as well as on its dogmatic *form*, and is even one of the *main dogmas* of law; that, finally, the practical implementation of that distinction is just as much the peak of the *development of law* as the separation of religion from all profane content makes it *abstract, absolute* religion. The fact that “feeling and conscience” interfere in law is sufficient reason for *the “Critic”* to speak of feeling and conscience when it is a matter of *law*, and of *theological* dogmatism when it is a matter of *juridical* dogmatism.

The “definitions and distinctions of Absolute Criticism” have prepared us sufficiently to hear its latest “discoveries” on “society” and “law.”

The world form that *Criticism* is preparing, and the *thought* of which it is *even only* just preparing, is not a *merely legal* form but” (collect yourself, reader) “a *social* one, about which *at least* this much [this little?] *can* be said: whoever has not made his contribution to its development and does not live with his conscience and feeling in it, cannot feel at home in it or take part in its history.

The world form that “*Criticism*” is preparing is defined as *not merely* legal, *but* social. This definition can be interpreted in two ways. The sentence quoted may be taken as “*not legal but social*” or as “not merely legal, but *also* social.” Let us consider its content according to both readings, beginning with the first. Earlier, Absolute Criticism defined the new “world form” distinct from the “*state*” as “society.” Now it defines the noun “*society*” by the adjective “*social*.” If Herr Hinrichs was three times given the word “*social*” in contrast to his “*political*,” Herr Riesser is now given *social society* in contrast to his “*legal*” society. If the *Critical* explanations for Herr Hinrichs reduced themselves to the formula “social” + “social” + “social” = 3a, Absolute Criticism in its second campaign passes from *addition* to *multiplication* and Herr Riesser is referred to society multiplied by itself, society to the *second* power, Social society = a². In order to complete its deductions on society, all that now remains for Absolute Criticism to do is to go on to fractions, to extract the *square root* of society, and so forth.

If, on the other hand, we take the second reading: the “*not merely* legal, *but also* social” world form, this hybrid world form is nothing but the *world form* existing *today*, the world form of *present-day society*. It is a great,

a meritorious *Critical miracle* that “*Criticism*” in its pre-world thinking is only just *preparing* the *future* existence of the world form which *exists today*. But however matters stand with “not merely legal but social society,” *Criticism* can for the time being say no more about it than “*fabula docet*,” [the fable teaches] the *moral* application. Those who do not live in that society with their feeling and their conscience will “not *feel* at home” in it. In the end, no one will live in that society except “pure feeling” and “pure conscience,” that is, “the Spirit,” “*Criticism*” and its *supporters*. The *Mass* will be excluded from it in one way or another so that “mass-type society” will exist outside “social society.”

In a word, this society is nothing but the *Critical heaven* from which the real world is excluded as being the *un-Critical hell*. In its pure thinking, Absolute Criticism is preparing this transfigured *world form* of the contradiction between “*Mass*” and “*Spirit*.”

Of the same *Critical* depth as these explanations on “*society*” are the explanations Herr Riesser is given on the destiny of *nations*.

The Jews’ desire for emancipation and the desire of the Christian states to “classify” the Jews in “their government scheme”—as though the Jews had not long ago been classified in the Christian government scheme!—lead Absolute Criticism to prophecies on the *decay of nationalities*. See by what a complicated detour Absolute Criticism arrives at the present historical movement—namely, by the *detour of theology*. The following illuminating oracle shows us what great results Criticism achieves in this way:

The future of all nationalities—is—*very*—*obscure!*

But let the future of nationalities be as obscure as it may be, for Criticism’s sake. The one essential thing is *clear*: the *future* is the *work of Criticism*.

Destiny, [it exclaims,] may decide as it will: we now know that it is *our work*.

As God leaves *his creation*, man, his *own will*, so *Criticism* leaves destiny, which is *its creation*, its *own will*. *Criticism*, of which destiny is the work, is, like God, *almighty*. Even the “resistance” which it “*finds*” outside itself is its own work. “*Criticism makes* its adversaries.” The “*mass indignation*” against it is therefore “dangerous” only for “the Mass” itself.

But if Criticism, like God, is *almighty*, it is also, like God, *all-wise* and is capable of combining its almightiness with the *freedom*, the will and the *natural determination* of human individuals.

It would not be the *epoch-making* force if it did not have the effect of *making each one* what he *wills* to be and showing each one irrevocably the standpoint *corresponding to his nature* and *his will*.

Leibniz could not have given a happier presentation of the re-established harmony between the almightiness of God and the freedom and natural determination of man.

If “*Criticism*” seems to clash with psychology by *not distinguishing* between the *will* to be something and the *ability* to be something, it must be borne in mind that it has decisive grounds to declare this “*distinction*” “*dogmatic*.”

Let us steel ourselves for the third campaign! Let us recall once more that “*Criticism makes its adversary!*” But how could it make its adversary, *the “phrase,”* if it were not a phrase-monger?

3) Absolute Criticism’s Third Campaign

a) Absolute Criticism’s Self-Apology. – Its “Political” Past

Absolute Criticism begins its third campaign against the “*Mass*” with the question:

*What is now the object of criticism?*³⁶

In the same number of the *Literatur-Zeitung* we find the information:

Criticism wishes *nothing* but to know *things*.

According to this, all things are the *object* of Criticism. It would be senseless to inquire about some particular, definite object peculiar to Criticism. The contradiction is easily resolved when one remembers that all things “merge” into Critical things and all Critical things into *the Mass*, as *the “Object”* of “*Absolute Criticism*.”

³⁶ The title of B. Bauer’s article, published in No. VIII of the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (July 1844). Nearly all the quotations made by Marx in *Absolute Criticism’s Third Campaign* are taken from this article.

First of all, Herr Bruno describes his *infinite pity* for the “*Mass*.” He makes “*the gap* that separates him from the *crowd*” an object of “*persevering study*.” He wants “*to find out the significance of that gap for the future*” (this is what above was called knowing “*all*” things) and at the same time “*to abolish it*.” In truth, he therefore already knows the *significance* of that gap. It consists in being *abolished* by him.

As each man’s self is nearest to him, “*Criticism*” first sets about abolishing its *own mass nature*, like the Christian ascetics who begin the campaign of the spirit against the flesh with the mortification of their own flesh. The “*flesh*” of Absolute Criticism is its *really* massive literary *past*, amounting to 20–30 volumes. Herr Bauer must therefore free the literary biography of “*Criticism*”—which coincides exactly with his own literary biography—from its *mass-like appearance*; he must retrospectively *improve* and *explain* it and by this *apologetic* commentary “*place its earlier works in safety*.”

He begins by explaining by a double cause the error of the *Mass*, which until the end of the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*³⁷ and the *Rheinische Zeitung*³⁸ regarded Herr Bauer as one of its supporters. Firstly the mistake was made of regarding the literary movement as *not* “*purely literary*.” At the same time the opposite mistake was made, that of regarding the literary movement as “*a merely*” or “*purely*” *literary* movement. There is no doubt

³⁷ *Deutsche Jahrbücher*—abridged title of the literary-philosophical Young Hegelian journal *Deutsche Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Kunst* (*German Year-Book on Science and Art*). The year-book was published in Leipzig and edited by A. Ruge from July 1841. From 1838 to 1841 it appeared under the name *Hallische Jahrbücher für deutsche Wissenschaft und Kunst* (the *Halle Year-Book on German Science and Art*). The transfer of the editorial office from the Prussian town of Halle to Saxony and the alteration in the title of the year-book were motivated by the threat of prohibition in Prussia. But the journal did not exist long under its new name. In January, 1843 it was closed down by the Saxonian government and prohibited in the whole of Germany by a decree of the Diet.

³⁸ *Rheinische Zeitung für Politik, Handel und Gewerbe* (*Rhine Gazette of Politics, Trade and Industry*)—a daily paper which appeared in Cologne from January 1, 1842 to March 31, 1843. It was founded by representatives of the Rhineland bourgeoisie who were opposed to Prussian absolutism. Some young Hegelians were also on the staff. Marx wrote for it from April 1842 and became one of its editors in October of the same year. A number of Engels’s articles were also published in *Rheinische Zeitung*. During Marx’s editorship the paper became more and more markedly revolutionary-democratic. The government introduced a particularly strict censorship in regard to it and subsequently closed it.

that the “Mass” was mistaken in any case, if only because it made two mutually incompatible errors at *the same time*.

Absolute Criticism takes this opportunity of exclaiming to those who ridiculed the “German nation” as a “*blue stocking*”:

Name even a single historical epoch which was not authoritatively *outlined beforehand by the “pen”* and had not to allow itself to be shattered by a stroke of the pen!

In his Critical naivety Herr Bruno separates “*the pen*” from the *subject who writes*, and the subject who writes as “*abstract writer*” from the living *historical man* who wrote. This allows him to go into ecstasy over the *wonder-working* power of the “*pen*.” He might just as well have demanded to be told of a historical movement which was not outlined beforehand by “*poultry*” or the “*goose girl*.”

Later we shall be told by the same Herr Bruno that so far not one historical epoch, not a single one, has become known. How could the “*pen*,” which so far has been unable to *outline “any single”* historical epoch *after* the event, have been able to *outline them all beforehand*?

Nevertheless, Herr Bruno proves the correctness of his view by *deeds*, by himself “*outlining beforehand*” his own “*past*” with *apologetic “strokes of the pen.”*

Criticism, which was involved on all sides not only in the *general* limitation of the world and of the epoch, but in quite particular and personal limitations, and which nevertheless assures us that it has been “*absolute, perfect and pure*” *Criticism* in all its works for as long as man can think, has only *accommodated* itself to the *prejudices* and *power of comprehension* of the Mass, as God is wont to do in his revelations to man.

It was bound to come, [Absolute Criticism informs us,] to a breach of *Theory* with its *seeming ally*.

But because *Criticism*, here called *Theory* for a change, comes to *nothing*, but everything, on the contrary, comes from it; because it develops not inside but *outside* the world, and has predestined everything in its divine immutable consciousness, the *breach* with its former ally was a “*new turn*” only in *appearance*, only for others, not in itself and not for *Criticism* itself.

But this turn “*properly speaking*” was not even new. *Theory* had continually worked on *criticism of itself* [we know how much effort has been expended on it to force it to criticize itself]; it had never flattered the Mass [but itself all the more]; it had always *taken care* not to get itself ensnared in the premises of its opponent.

“The Christian theologian must tread *cautiously*.”³⁹ How did it happen that “cautious” Criticism nevertheless did get ensnared and did not already at that time express its “proper” meaning clearly and audibly? Why did it not speak out bluntly? Why did it let the illusion of its brotherhood with the Mass persist?

“Why hast thou done this to me?” said Pharaoh to Abraham as he restored to him Sarah, his wife. “Why didst thou say she was thy sister?”⁴⁰

“Away with reason and language!” says the theologian, “for otherwise Abraham would be a liar. It would be a mortal insult to Revelation!”⁴¹

“‘Away with reason and language!’ says the Critic. For had Herr Bauer *really* and not just apparently been ensnared with the Mass, Absolute Criticism would not be absolute in its revelations, it would be mortally insulted.

It is *only*, [Absolute Criticism continues,] that its [Absolute Criticism’s] efforts *had not been noticed*, and *there was moreover* a stage of Criticism when it was *forced sincerely* to consider its opponent’s premises and to take them seriously for an instant; a stage, in short, when it was *not yet fully* capable of taking away from the Mass the latter’s conviction that it had the same cause and the same interest as Criticism.

“*Criticism’s*” efforts had just not been noticed; therefore the Mass was to blame. On the other hand, Criticism admits that its efforts *could*

³⁹ Bruno Bauer, *Das entdeckte Christenthum*, p. 99.

⁴⁰ *Das entdeckte Christenthum* by Bruno Bauer, p. 100.

⁴¹ Loc. cit.

not be noticed because it itself was not yet “*capable*” of making them *noticeable*. Criticism *therefore appears* to be to blame.

God help us! Criticism was “forced”—violence was used against it—“sincerely to consider its opponent’s premises and to take them seriously for an instant.” A fine sincerity, a truly theological sincerity, which does not really take a thing seriously but only “*takes it seriously for an instant*”; which has always, therefore every instant, been careful not to get itself ensnared in its opponent’s premises, and nevertheless, “for an instant” “sincerely” takes these very premises into consideration. Its “sincerity” is still greater in the closing part of the sentence. It was in the same instant when Criticism “sincerely took into consideration the premises of the Mass” that it “was not yet fully *capable*” of destroying the illusion about the unity of *its* cause and the cause of the *Mass*. It was *not yet capable*, but it already had the *will* and the *thought* of it. It *could* not yet *outwardly* break with the Mass but the break was already *complete inside it*, in its *mind*—complete in the same instant when it *sincerely* sympathized with the Mass!

In its involvement with the prejudices of the Mass, Criticism was not *really* involved in *them*; on the contrary, it was, *properly speaking*, free from its own limitation and was only “*not yet completely capable*” of informing the Mass of this. Hence all the limitation of “Criticism” was pure *appearance*; an appearance, which without the limitation of the Mass, would have been superfluous and would therefore not have existed at all. It is therefore again the Mass that is to blame.

Insofar as this *appearance*, however, was supported by “the inability,” “the impotence” of Criticism to express its thought, Criticism itself was *imperfect*. This it admits in its own way, which is as sincere as it is apologetic.

In spite of having subjected liberalism itself to devastating criticism, it [Criticism] could *still* be regarded as a peculiar kind of liberalism, *perhaps* as its extreme form; *in spite of* its true and decisive arguments having gone beyond politics, it *nevertheless* was *still* bound to give an *appearance* of *engaging in politics*, and this *incomplete appearance* won it most of the friends mentioned above.

Criticism won its friends through its *incomplete appearance* of engaging in politics. Had it *completely appeared* to engage in politics, it would inevitably have lost its *political* friends. In its *apologetic anxiety* to wash itself free of all sin, it accuses the *false appearance* of having been an *incomplete false appearance*, not a *complete false one*. By substituting one appearance for the other, “Criticism” can console itself with the thought that if it had the “complete appearance” of wishing to engage in politics, it does not have, on the other hand, even the “incomplete appearance” of anywhere or at any time having dissolved politics.

Not completely satisfied with the “incomplete appearance,” Absolute Criticism again asks itself:

How did it happen that *Criticism* at that time became involved in “mass-linked, political” interests, that it—even [!]*—was obliged* [!]*—to engage in politics.*

Bauer the *theologian* takes it *as a matter of course* that *Criticism* had to indulge endlessly in *speculative theology* for *he*, “Criticism,” is indeed a theologian *ex professo*.⁴² But to *engage in politics*? That must be motivated by very special, political, personal circumstances!

Why, then, had “*Criticism*” to *engage* even in *politics*? “It was accused—that is the answer to the question.” At least the “mystery” of “*Bauer’s politics*” is thereby disclosed; at least the *appearance*, which in Bruno Bauer’s *Die gute Sache der Freiheit und meine eigene Sache* links its “*own cause*” to the *mass-linked* “*cause of freedom*” by means of an “*and*,” cannot be called *non-political*. But if *Criticism* pursued not its “*own cause*” in the *interest of politics*, but *politics* in the *interest of its own cause*, it must be admitted that not *Criticism* was taken in by politics, but politics by *Criticism*.

So Bruno Bauer was to be dismissed from his chair of theology: he was *accused*; “*Criticism*” had to engage in politics, that is to say, to *conduct* “*its*,” i.e., Bruno Bauer’s, suit. Herr Bauer did not conduct *Criticism*’s suit, “*Criticism*” conducted Herr Bauer’s suit. Why did “*Criticism*” *have* to conduct its suit?

“In order to justify itself!” *It may well be*; only “*Criticism*” is far from limiting itself to such a personal, vulgar reason. It may well be; but *not*

⁴² As an expert.

solely for that reason, “*but mainly* in order to bring out the contradictions of its opponents,” and, Criticism could add, in order to have bound together in a single *book* old essays against various theologians—see among other things the wordy bickering with *Planck*, that family affair between “Bauer-theology” and Strauss-theology.

Having got a load off its heart by admitting the real interest of its “*politics*,” Absolute Criticism remembers its “*suit*” and again chews the old *Hegelian* cud (see the struggle between Enlightenment and faith in the *Phänomenologie*, see the whole of the *Phänomenologie*) that “the old which resists the new is no longer really the old,” the cud which it has already chewed over at length in *Die gute Sache der Freiheit*. Critical Criticism is a ruminant animal. It keeps on warming up a few crumbs dropped by Hegel, like the above-quoted proposition about the “old” and the “new,” or again that about the “development of the extreme out of its opposite extreme,” and the like, without ever feeling the need to deal with “*speculative dialectic*” in any other way than by the exhaustion of Professor Hinrichs. Hegel, on the contrary, it continually transcends “*Critically*” by repeating him. For example:

Criticism, by appearing and giving the investigation a new form, i.e., giving it the form which is *no longer* susceptible of being transformed into an external limitation [etc.].

When I *transform* something I make it something essentially different. Since every form is also an “*external limitation*,” *no* form is “susceptible” of being *transformed* into an “external limitation” any more than an apple of being “transformed” into an apple. Admittedly, the form which “*Criticism*” gives to the investigation is not susceptible to being transformed into any “external limitation” for quite *another* reason. Beyond every “external limitation” it is blurred into an ash-grey, dark-blue vapor of nonsense.

It [the struggle between the old and the new] would, *however, be quite impossible even then* [namely at the moment when Criticism “gives” the investigation “the new form”] if the old were to deal with the question of compatibility or incompatibility... *theoretically*.

But why does not the old deal with this question theoretically? Because “this, *however*, is *least of all* possible for it in the beginning, *since at the moment of surprise*” (i.e., in the beginning) it “knows neither itself nor the new,” i.e., it deals *theoretically* neither with itself nor with the new. It would be quite impossible if “impossibility,” unfortunately, were not impossible!

When *the* “Critic” from the theological faculty further “admits that he erred *intentionally*, that he committed the mistake deliberately and after mature reflection” (all that Criticism has experienced, learned, and done *is transformed* for it into a free, pure and intentional product of its reflection) this confession of the Critic has only an “incomplete appearance” of truth. Since the *Kritik der Synoptiker* [B. Bauer, *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker*]⁴³ has a completely *theological* foundation, since it is through and through *theological* criticism, Herr Bauer, university lecturer in theology, could write and teach it “without mistake or error.” The mistake and error were rather on the part of the theological faculties, which did not realize how strictly Herr Bauer had kept his promise, the promise he gave in *Kritik der Synoptiker*, Bd. 1, Foreword, p. xxiii.

If the *negation* may appear still too sharp and far-reaching in this first volume too, we must remember that the truly positive can be born only if the negation has been serious and general.... *In the end* it will be seen that only the most devastating criticism of the world can teach us the creative *power of Jesus* and of his *principle*.

Herr Bauer intentionally separates the Lord “Jesus” and his “principle” in order to free the *positive* meaning of his promise from all semblance of ambiguity. And Herr Bauer has really made the “*creative*” power of the Lord Jesus and of his principle so evident that his “*infinite self-consciousness*” and the “*Spirit*” are nothing but *creations* of Christianity.

If Critical Criticism’s dispute with the Bonn theological faculty explained so well its “politics” at that time, why did Critical Criticism continue to engage in politics after the dispute had been settled? Listen to this:

⁴³ Synoptics is the name given in the history of religion to the compilers of the first three gospels.

At this point “Criticism” *should have* either *come to a halt* or immediately *proceeded further* to examine the essence of politics and depict it as its adversary;—if only it had been possible for it to be able to come to a halt in the struggle at that time and if, on the *other* hand, there had not been a far too strict historical law that when a principle measures itself for the first time with its opposite it must let itself be repressed by it.

What a delightful apologetic phrase! “Criticism *should have* come to a halt” if only it had been possible... “to be able to come to a halt!” Who “*should*” come to a halt? And who should have done what “it would not have been possible... to be able to do?” On the other hand! Criticism should have proceeded “*if only*, on the other hand, there had *not* been a far *too* strict historical law,” etc. Historical laws are also “*far too strict*” with Absolute Criticism! If only they did not stand on the *opposite* side to Critical Criticism, how brilliantly the latter would proceed! But *à la guerre comme à la guerre*! In history, Critical Criticism must allow itself to be made a sorry “story” of!

If Criticism [still Herr Bauer] had to... it will *at the same time* be admitted that it always felt *uncertain* when it gave in to demands of this [political] kind, and that as a result of these demands it came into contradiction with its *true elements*, a contradiction that had *already* found its *solution* in those *elements*.

Criticism was forced into political weaknesses by the all too strict laws of history, but—it entreats—*it will at the same time be admitted* that it was above those weaknesses, if not in reality, at least *in itself*. Firstly, it had overcome them, “*in feeling*,” for “it always felt uncertain in its demands”; it felt *ill at ease* in politics, it could not make out what was the matter with it. More than that! It came into contradiction with its *true elements*. And finally the greatest thing of all! The contradiction with its true *elements* into which it came found its solution not in the course of Criticism’s *development*, but “*had*,” on the contrary, “*already*” found its solution in Criticism’s true *elements* existing independently of the contradiction! These Critical elements can claim with pride: before Abraham was, we were. Before the opposite to us was produced by development, it

lay yet unborn in our chaotic womb, dissolved, dead, ruined. But since Criticism's contradiction with its true elements "had already found its solution" in the true elements of Criticism, and since a *solved* contradiction is *not* a contradiction, it found itself, to be precise, in no contradiction with its true elements, in *no* contradiction with itself, and—the general aim of self-apology seems attained.

Absolute Criticism's self-apology has a whole *apologetical* dictionary at its disposal:

not even properly speaking... only not noticed... there was besides... not yet complete... although—nevertheless... not only—but mainly... just as much, properly speaking, only... Criticism should have if only it had been possible and if on the other hand... if... it will *at the same time* be admitted... was it not natural, was it not inevitable... neither... [etc.].

Not so very long ago Absolute Criticism said the following about apologetic phrases of this kind:

"Although" and "nevertheless," "indeed" and "but," a heavenly "Nay," and an earthly "Yea," are the main pillars of modern theology, the stilts on which it strides along, the artifice to which its whole wisdom is reduced, the phrase which recurs in all its phrases, its alpha and omega.⁴⁴

b) *The Jewish Question No. 3*

"Absolute Criticism" does not stop at proving by its autobiography its own singular almightiness which "*properly speaking, first creates the old, just as much as the new.*" It does not stop at writing in *person* the apology of its past. It now sets third persons, the rest of the secular world, the Absolute "Task," the "task which is *much more important now,*" the *apologia* for Bauer's deeds and "works."

The *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* published a criticism of Herr Bauer's *Die Judenfrage*.⁴⁵ His basic error, the confusion of "*political*" with "*human emancipation,*" was revealed. True, the old Jewish question was not first brought into its "*correct setting*"; the "Jewish question" was rather

⁴⁴ *Das entdeckte Christenthum.*

⁴⁵ The reference is to Marx's article "On the Jewish Question."

dealt with and solved in the setting which recent developments have given to *old questions of the day*, and as a result of which the latter have become “questions” of the present instead of “questions” of the past.

Absolute Criticism’s *third* campaign, it seems, is intended to reply to the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. First of all, Absolute Criticism *admits*:

In *Die Judenfrage* the same “oversight” was made—that of identifying the *human* with the *political* essence.

Criticism remarks:

it would be too late to *reproach* criticism for the stand which it still maintained partially *two* years ago.... *The question is rather to explain why criticism... even had to engage in politics.*

“Two years ago?” We must reckon according to the *absolute* chronology, from the birth of the Critical Redeemer of the world, Bauer’s *Literatur-Zeitung!* The Critical world redeemer was born in 1843. In the same year, the second, enlarged edition of *Die Judenfrage* was published. The “Critical” treatment of the Jewish question” in *Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz*⁴⁶ appeared later in the same year, 1843 old style. *After the end* of the *Deutsche Jahrbücher* and the *Rheinische Zeitung*, in the same momentous year 1843 old style, or in the year of the Critical era, appeared Herr Bauer’s fantastic-political work *Staat, Religion und Parthei*, which exactly repeated his old errors on the “*political* essence.” The apologist is forced to falsify *chronology*.

The “*explanation*” why Herr Bauer “*even had to*” engage in politics is a matter of general interest only under certain conditions. If the infallibility, purity and absoluteness of Critical Criticism are assumed as *basic dogma*, then, of course, the facts contradicting that dogma turn into riddles which are just as difficult, profound and mysterious as the apparently ungodly deeds of God are for theologians.

If, on the other hand, “*the Critic*” is considered as a finite individual, if he is not separated from the *limitations* of his time, one does not have to

⁴⁶ The article in question is B. Bauer’s “Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen, frei zu werden” (“The Capacity of the Jews and Christians of Today to Obtain Freedom”).

answer the question *why he* had to develop *even* within the world, because the *question* itself does not exist.

If, however, Absolute Criticism insists on its demand, one can offer to provide a little scholastic treatise dealing with the following “*questions of the times*”:

Why had the Virgin Mary’s conception by the Holy Ghost to be proved by no other than Herr Bruno Bauer? ...Why had Herr Bauer to prove that the angel that appeared to Abraham was a *real* emanation of God, an emanation which, nevertheless, lacked the consistency necessary to *digest food*? ...Why had Herr Bauer to provide an apologia for the Prussian royal house and to raise the Prussian state to the rank of *absolute* state? ...Why had Herr Bauer, in his *Kritik der Synoptiker*, to substitute ‘*infinite self-consciousness*’ for man? ...Why had Herr Bauer in his *Das entdeckte Christenthum* to repeat the *Christian theory of creation* in a *Hegelian* form? ...Why had Herr Bauer to demand of himself and others an ‘*explanation*’ of the miracle that he was bound to be mistaken?

While waiting for proofs of these necessities, which are just as “Critical” as they are “Absolute,” let us listen once more to “*Criticisms*” apologetic evasions.

The Jewish question... had... first to be brought into its *correct* setting, as a *religious* and *theological* and as a *political* question.... As to the treatment and solution of both these questions, *Criticism* is *neither religious nor political*.

The point is that the *Deutsch-Französische-Jahrbücher* declares Bauer’s treatment of the “Jewish question” to be *really* theological and *fantastic-political*.

First, “*Criticism*” replies to the “reproach” of *theological* limitation.

The Jewish question is a *religious* question. The *Enlightenment* claimed to solve it by describing the *religious contradiction* as *insignificant* or even by denying it. *Criticism*, on the contrary, had to present it in its purity.

When we come to the *political* part of the Jewish question we shall see that in politics, too, Herr Bauer the theologian is not concerned with politics but with theology.

But when the *Deutsch-Französische-Jahrbücher* attacked his treatment of the Jewish question as “*purely religious*,” it was concerned especially with his article in *Einundzwanzig Bogen*, the title of which was:

Die Fähigkeit der hewigen Juden und Christen, frei zu werden.
[The Ability of Present-Day Jews and Christians to obtain Freedom.]

This article has nothing to do with the old “Enlightenment.” It contains Herr Bauer’s *positive* view on the ability of the present-day Jews to be emancipated, that is, on the possibility of their emancipation. “Criticism” says:

The Jewish question is a *religious* question.

The question is: *What is a religious question?* And, in particular, *what is a religious question today?*

The *theologian* will judge by *appearances* and see a *religious* question in a religious question. But “Criticism” must remember the explanation it gave Professor *Hinrichs* that the *political* interests of the present time have *social* significance, that it is “*no longer a question*” of *political interests*.

The *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* with equal right said to Criticism: *Religious* questions of the day have at the present time a *social* significance. It is no longer a question of *religious* interests as *such*. Only the *theologian* can believe it is a question of religion as religion. Granted, the *Jahrbücher* committed the *error* of not stopping at the word “*social*.” It characterized the real position of the Jews in civil society today. Once Jewry was stripped bare of the *religious* shell and its empirical, worldly, practical kernel was revealed, the practical, *really social* way in which this kernel is to be abolished could be indicated. Herr Bauer was content with a “religious question” being a “religious question.”

It was by no means denied, as Herr Bauer *makes out*, that the Jewish question is also a *religious* question. On the contrary, it was shown that Herr Bauer grasps *only the religious* essence of Jewry, but not the *secular, real basis* of that religious essence. He combats *religious consciousness* as

if it were something independent. Herr Bauer therefore explains the *real* Jews by the *Jewish religion*, instead of explaining the mystery of the Jewish religion by the *real Jews*. Herr Bauer therefore understands the Jew only insofar as he is an immediate object of *theology* or a *theologian*.

Consequently Herr Bauer has no inkling that real *secular* Jewry, and hence *religious* Jewry *too*, is being continually produced by the *present-day civil life* and finds its final development in the *money system*. He could not have any inkling of this because he did not know Jewry as a part of the real world but only as a part of his world, *theology*; because he, a pious, godly man, considers not the active, *everyday Jew* but the hypocritical *Jew of the Sabbath* to be the *real* Jew. For Herr Bauer, as a theologian of the *Christian faith*, the *world-historic* significance of Jewry had to cease the *moment* Christianity was *born*. Hence he had to repeat the old orthodox view that it has maintained itself *in spite* of history; and the old theological superstition that Jewry exists only as a *confirmation* of the divine curse, as a *tangible proof* of the Christian revelation had to recur with him in the *Critical-theological* form that it exists and has existed only as *crude religious doubt* about the supernatural origin of Christianity, i.e., as a *tangible proof* against Christian revelation.

On the other hand, it was proved that Jewry has maintained itself and developed *through* history, *in* and *with* history, and that this development is to be perceived not by the eye of the theologian, but only by the eye of the man of the world, because it is to be found, not in *religious theory*, but only in *commercial* and *industrial practice*. It was explained why practical Jewry attains its full development only in the fully developed Christian world, *why* indeed it is the fully developed *practice* of the *Christian world itself*. The existence of the *present-day* Jew was not explained by his religion—as though this religion were something apart, independently existing—but the tenacious survival of the Jewish religion was explained by practical features of civil society which are *fantastically* reflected in that religion. The emancipation of the Jews into human beings, or the human emancipation of Jewry, was therefore not conceived, as by Herr Bauer, as the special task of the Jews, but as a general practical task of the present-day world, which is *Jewish* to the core. It was proved that the task of abolishing the essence of Jewry is actually the task of abolishing the *Jewish*

character of civil society, abolishing the inhumanity of the present-day practice of life, the most extreme expression of which is the *money system*.

Herr Bauer, as a *genuine*, although *Critical theologian* or *theological Critic*, could not get beyond the *religious contradiction*. In the attitude of the Jews to the Christian world he could see only the attitude of the *Jewish religion* to the *Christian religion*. He even had to restore the religious contradiction in a *Critical way*—in the *antithesis* between the attitudes of the Jew and the Christian to *Critical religion*—*atheism*, the last stage of *theism*, the *negative* recognition of God. Finally, in his *theological fanaticism* he had to *restrict* the ability of the “present-day Jews and Christians,” i.e., of the present-day world, “to obtain freedom” to their ability to grasp “the Criticism” of theology and apply it themselves. For the orthodox theologian the whole world is dissolved in “religion and theology.” (He could just as well dissolve it in politics, political economy, etc., and call *theology* heavenly *political economy*, for example, since it is the theory of the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of “*spiritual wealth*” and of the treasures of heaven!) Similarly, for the radical, Critical theologian, the *ability* of the world to achieve freedom is dissolved in the *single* abstract ability to criticize “religion and theology” as “religion and theology.” The only struggle he knows is the struggle against the *religious* limitations of self-consciousness, whose Critical “*purity*” and “*infinity*” is just as much a theological limitation.

Herr Bauer, therefore, dealt with the *religious* and *theological* question in the *religious* and *theological* way, if only because he saw in the “religious” question of the time a “*purely religious*” question. His “*correct setting* of the question” set the question “correctly” only in respect of his “*own ability*”—to answer!

Let us now go on to the political part of the *Jewish question*.

The *Jews* (like the Christians) are fully *politically emancipated* in various states. Both Jews and Christians are far from being *humanly* emancipated. Hence there must be a *difference* between *political* and *human* emancipation. The essence of political emancipation, i.e., of the developed, modern state, must therefore be studied. On the other hand, states which cannot yet *politically* emancipate the Jews must be rated by comparison with the perfected political state and shown to be underdeveloped states.

That is the point of view from which the “*political* emancipation” of the Jews should have been dealt with and is dealt with in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*.

Herr Bauer offers the following defense of “Criticism’s” *Die Judenfrage*.

The Jews were shown that they labored under an illusion about *the system* from which they demanded freedom.

Herr Bauer did show that the illusion of the *German* Jews was to demand the right to partake in the political community life in a land where there was no political community and to demand *political rights* where only political privileges existed. On the other hand, Herr Bauer was shown that he himself, no less than the Jews, labored under “illusions” about the “German political system.” For he explained the position of the Jews in the German states as being due to the inability of “*the Christian state*” to emancipate the Jews politically. Flying in the face of the facts, he depicted the state of *privilege*, the *Christian-Germanic* state, as the Absolute Christian state. It was proved to him, on the contrary, that the politically perfected, modern state that knows no religious privileges is also the fully developed *Christian* state, and that therefore the fully developed Christian state, not only can emancipate the Jews but has emancipated them and by its very nature must emancipate them.

the Jews are shown... that they are under the greatest illusion about themselves when they think they are demanding *freedom* and the recognition of *free humanity*, whereas for them it is, and can be, only a question of a special *privilege*.

Freedom! Recognition of free humanity! Special privilege! Edifying words by which to by-pass certain questions apologetically!

Freedom? it was a question of political freedom. Herr Bauer was shown that when the Jew demands freedom and nevertheless refuses to renounce his religion, he “*is engaging in politics*” and sets no condition that is contrary to *political* freedom. Herr Bauer was shown that it is by no means contrary to political emancipation to *divide* man into the non-religious citizen and the religious *private individual*. He was shown that just as the state emancipates itself from religion by emancipating itself from *state*

religion and leaving religion to itself within civil society, so the individual emancipates himself *politically* from religion by regarding it no longer as a *public* matter but as a *private matter*. Finally, it was shown that the *terroristic* attitude of the French Revolution to *religion*, far from refuting this conception, bears it out.

Instead of studying the real attitude of the *modern* state to religion, Herr Bauer thought it necessary to imagine a *Critical* state, a state which is nothing but the *Critic of theology inflated into a state* in Herr Bauer's imagination. If Herr Bauer is caught up in *politics* he continually makes politics a prisoner of his faith, *Critical* faith. Insofar as he deals with the state, he always makes out of it an *argument* against "the adversary," *un-Critical* religion and theology. The state acts as executor of *Critical-theological* cherished desires.

When Herr Bauer had first freed himself from *orthodox*, *un-Critical* *theology*, *political authority* took for him the place of *religious authority*. His faith in Jehovah changed into faith in the Prussian state. In Bruno Bauer's work *Die evangelische Landeskirche* [B. Bauer, *Die evangelische Landeskirche Preussens und die Wissenschaft*], not only the Prussian state, but, quite consistently, the Prussian royal house too, was made into an *absolute*. In reality Herr Bauer had no *political* interest in that state; its merit, in the eyes of "Criticism," was rather that it abolished dogmas by means of the *Unified Church* and suppressed the dissenting sects with the help of the police.

The political movement that began in the year 1840 redeemed Herr Bauer from *his conservative politics* and raised him for a moment to *liberal* politics. But here again politics was in reality only a *pretext* for theology. In his work *Die gute Sache der Freiheit und meine eigene Angelegenheit*, the free state is the *Critic* of the theological faculty in Bonn and an argument against religion. In *Die Judenfrage* the contradiction between state and religion is the main interest, so that the criticism of political emancipation changes into a criticism of the Jewish religion. In his latest political work, *Staat, Religion und Parthei*, the most secret cherished desire of the *Critic* inflated into a state is at last expressed. *Religion is sacrificed to the state* or rather the state is only the *means* by which the opponent of "Criticism," *un-Critical* religion and theology, is done to death. Finally, after *Criticism* has been redeemed, if only apparently, from all politics by the socialist

ideas, which have been spreading in Germany from 1843 onwards, in the same way as it was redeemed from its conservative politics by the political movement after 1840, it is finally able to proclaim its writings against *un-Critical* theology to be social and to indulge unhindered in its own *Critical* theology, the contrasting of Spirit and Mass, as the annunciation of the Critical Savior and Redeemer of the world.

Let us return to our subject!

Recognition of free humanity? “Free humanity,” recognition of which the Jews did not merely think they wanted, but really did want, is the same “free humanity” which found *classic* recognition in the so-called universal *rights of man*. Herr Bauer himself explicitly treated the Jews’ efforts for recognition of their free humanity as their efforts to obtain the universal *rights of man*.

In the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* it was demonstrated to Herr Bauer that this “free humanity” and the “recognition” of it are nothing but the recognition of the *egoistic civil individual* and of the *unrestrained* movement of the spiritual and material elements which are the content of his life situation, the content of *present-day* civil life; that the *rights of man* do not, therefore, free man from religion, but give him freedom of religion; that they do not free him from property, but procure for him *freedom of property*; that they do not free him from the filth of gain, but rather give him *freedom of gainful occupation*.

It was shown that the *recognition of the rights of man* by the *modern state* has no other meaning than the *recognition of slavery* by the *state of antiquity* had. In other words, just as the ancient state had slavery as its *natural basis*, the *modern state* has as its *natural basis* civil society and the *man* of civil society, i.e., the independent man linked with other men only by the ties of private interest and *unconscious* natural necessity, the *slave* of labor for gain and of his own as well as other men’s *selfish* need. The modern state has recognized this as its natural basis as such in the *universal rights of man*. It did not create it. As it was the product of civil society driven beyond the old political bonds by its own development, the modern state, for its part, now recognized the womb from which it sprang and its basis by the *declaration* of the *rights of man*. Hence, the political emancipation of the Jews and the granting to them of the “*rights of man*” is an act the two sides of which are mutually dependent. Herr *Riesser* correctly expresses the

meaning of the Jews' desire for recognition of their free humanity when he demands, among other things, the freedom of movement, sojourn, travel, earning one's living, etc. These manifestations of "*free humanity*" are explicitly recognized as such in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. The Jew has all the more right to the recognition of his "free humanity" as "free civil society" is of a thoroughly commercial and Jewish nature, and the Jew is a necessary member of it. The *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* further demonstrated why the member of civil society is called, *par excellence*, "Man" and why the rights of man are called "inborn rights."

The only Critical thing Criticism could say about the rights of man was that they are not inborn but arose in the course of history. That much Hegel had already told us. Finally, to its assertion that both Jews and Christians, in order to grant or receive the universal rights of man, *must sacrifice the privilege of faith*—the Critical theologian supposes his *one* fixed idea at the basis of all things—there was specially counterposed the fact contained in all un-Critical declarations of the rights of man that the *right* to believe what one wishes, the right to practice any religion, is explicitly recognized as a *universal right of man*. Besides, "*Criticism*" should have known that Hébert's party in particular was defeated on the pretext that it attacked the rights of man by attacking *freedom of religion*, and that similarly the rights of man were invoked later when freedom of worship was restored.

As far as *political* essence is concerned, *Criticism* followed its contradictions to the point where the *contradiction between theory and practice* had been most thoroughly elaborated during the past fifty years—to the *French representative system*, in which the freedom of theory is disavowed by practice and the freedom of practical life seeks in vain its expression in theory.

Now that the basic illusion has been done away with, *the contradiction* proved in the *debates in the French Chamber*, the contradiction between *free theory* and the *practical validity of privileges*, between the legal validity of privileges and a *public system* in which the *egoism of the pure individual* tries to dominate the *exclusivity of the privileged*, should be conceived as a *general contradiction* in this sphere.

The contradiction that Criticism proved in the debates in the French Chamber was nothing but a contradiction of *constitutionalism*. Had Criticism grasped it as a *general* contradiction it would have grasped the general contradiction of constitutionalism. Had it gone still further than in its opinion it “should have” gone, had it, to be precise, gone as far as the *abolition* of this general contradiction, it would have proceeded correctly from constitutional *monarchy* to arrive at the *democratic representative state*, the perfected modern state. Far from having criticized the essence of political emancipation and proved its definite relation to the essence of man, it would have arrived only at the *fact* of political emancipation, at the fully developed modern state, that is to say, only at the point where the existence of the modern state conforms to its essence and where, therefore, not only the relative, but the absolute *imperfections*, those which constitute its very essence, can be observed and described.

The above-quoted “Critical” passage is all the more valuable as it proves beyond any doubt that at the very moment when *Criticism* sees the “*political essence*” far below itself, it is, on the contrary, far below the political essence; it still needs to find in the latter the solution of its own contradictions and it still persists in not giving a thought to the *modern principle of the state*.

To “*free theory*” Criticism contrasts the “*practical validity of privileges*”; to the “*legal validity of privileges*” it contrasts the “*public system*.”

In order not to misinterpret the opinion of *Criticism*, let us recall the contradiction it proved in the debates in the French Chamber, the very contradiction which “should have been conceived” as a *general* one. One of the questions dealt with was the fixing of a day in the week on which children would be freed from work. *Sunday* was suggested. One deputy moved to leave out mention of Sunday in the law as being unconstitutional. The Minister Martin (du Nord) saw in this motion an attempt to proclaim that Christianity had ceased to exist. Monsieur Crémieux declared on behalf of the French Jews that the Jews, out of respect for the religion of the great majority of Frenchmen, did not object to Sunday being mentioned. Now, according to free theory, Jews and Christians are equal, but according to this practice, Christians have a privilege over Jews; for otherwise how could the Sunday of the Christians have a place in a law made for all Frenchmen? Should not the Jewish Sabbath have the same right, etc.? Or in the prac-

tical life of the French too, the Jew is not really oppressed by Christian privileges; but the law does not dare to express this practical equality. All the contradictions in the political essence expounded by Herr Bauer in *Die Judenfrage* are of this kind—contradictions of *constitutionalism*, which is, in general, the contradiction between the modern representative state and the old state of privileges.

Herr Bauer is committing a very serious oversight when he thinks he is rising from the *political* to the *human* essence by conceiving and criticizing this contradiction as a “general” one. He would thus only rise from partial political emancipation to full Political emancipation, from the constitutional state to the democratic representative state.

Herr Bauer thinks that by the abolition of *privilege*, the *object* of privilege is also abolished. Concerning the statement of Monsieur Martin (du Nord), he says:

There is no longer any religion when there is no longer any privileged religion. Take from religion its exclusive power and it will no longer exist.

Just as *industrial* activity is not abolished when the *privileges of the trades*, guilds and corporations are abolished, but, on the contrary, real *industry* begins only after the abolition of these privileges; just as *ownership of the land* is not abolished when *privileged* land-ownership is abolished, but, on the contrary, begins its universal movement only with the abolition of privileges and with the free division and free sale of land; just as *trade* is not abolished by the abolition of *trade privileges*, but finds its true realization in free trade; so religion develops in its *practical* universality only where there is no *privileged* religion (cf. the North American States).

The modern “*public system*,” the developed modern state, is not based, as *Criticism* thinks, on a society of privileges, but on a society in which *privileges have been abolished and dissolved*, on developed *civil society* in which the vital elements which were still politically bound under the privilege system have been set free. Here *no “privileged exclusivity”* stands opposed either to any other exclusivity or to the public system. Free industry and free trade abolish privileged exclusivity and thereby the struggle between the privileged exclusivities. They replace exclusivity with man freed from privilege—which isolates from the general totality but at the

same time unites in a smaller exclusive totality—man no longer bound to other men even by the *semblance* of a common bond. Thus they produce the universal struggle of man against man, individual against individual. In the same way *civil society* as a whole is this war against one another of all individuals, who are no longer isolated from one another by anything but their *individuality*, and the universal unrestrained movement of the elementary forces of life freed from the fetters of privilege. The contradiction between the *democratic representative state* and *civil society* is the completion of the *classic* contradiction between public *commonweal* and *slavery*. In the modern world each person is *at the same time* a member of slave society and of the public commonweal. Precisely the *slavery of civil society is in appearance* the greatest *freedom* because it is in appearance the fully developed independence of the individual, who considers as his *own* freedom the uncurbed movement, no longer bound by a common bond or by man, of the estranged elements of his life, such as property, industry, religion, etc., whereas actually this is his fully developed slavery and inhumanity. *Law* has here taken the place of *privilege*.

It is therefore only here, where we find no contradiction between free theory and the practical validity of privilege, but, on the contrary, the practical abolition of privilege, *free* industry, *free* trade, etc., conform to “free theory,” where the public system is not opposed by any privileged exclusivity, where the contradiction expounded by Criticism is *abolished*—only here is the *fully developed modern state to be found*.

Here also reigns the *reverse* of the law which Herr Bauer, on the occasion of the debates in the French Chamber, formulated in perfect agreement with Monsieur Martin (du Nord):

Just as M. Martin (du Nord) saw the proposal to omit mention of *Sunday* in the *law* as a motion to declare that Christianity has ceased to exist, with equal reason (*and this reason is very well founded*)—the declaration that the *law of the Sabbath* is no longer binding on the Jews would be a *proclamation abolishing Judaism*.

It is just *the opposite* in the developed modern state. The state declares that religion, like the other elements of civil life, only *begins* to exist in its full scope when the state declares it to be *non-political* and therefore leaves

it to itself. To the dissolution of the *political* existence of these elements, as for example, the: dissolution of *property* by the abolition of the *property qualification for electors*, the dissolution of *religion* by the abolition of the *state church*, to this proclamation of their civil death corresponds their most vigorous life, which henceforth obeys its own laws undisturbed and develops to its full scope.

Anarchy is the law of civil society emancipated from divisive privileges, and the *anarchy of civil society* is the basis of the modern *public system*, just as the public system in its turn is the guarantee of that anarchy. To the same great extent that the two are opposed to each other they also determine each other.

It is clear how capable *Criticism* is of assimilating the “new.” But if we remain within the bounds of “pure Criticism,” the question arises: Why did Criticism not conceive as a *universal* contradiction the contradiction which it disclosed in connection with the debates in the French Chamber, although in its own opinion that is what it “*should have*” done?

That step *was*, however, then *impossible*—not only because... not only because... *but also* because without that *last remnant* of inner involvement with its opposite Criticism *was impossible* and *could not have come to the point* from which only *one step* remained to be taken.⁴⁷

It was impossible... because... it was impossible! *Criticism* assures us, moreover, that the fateful “*one step*” necessary to “come to the point from which only one step remained to be taken” was impossible. Who will dispute that? In order to be able to come to a point from which only “*one step*” remains to be taken, it is absolutely impossible to take that “*one step*” more which leads over the point beyond which still “*one step*” remains to be taken.

All's well that ends well! At the end of the encounter with the *Mass*, which is hostile to *Criticism's Die Judenfrage*, “*Criticism*” admits that its conception of the “*rights of man*,” its

appraisal of religion in the French Revolution, [the] free political essence it pointed to occasionally *at the conclusion of its*

⁴⁷ Here and below quotations are taken from the article “Was ist jetzt der Gegenstand der Kritik?,” *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, Heft VIII.

considerations, [in short, the whole] period of the French Revolution, was for *Criticism* neither more nor less than a symbol—that is to say, not the period of the revolutionary efforts of the French in the exact and prosaic sense—a symbol and therefore only a fantastic expression of the shapes which it saw at the end.

We shall not deprive *Criticism* of the consolation that when it sinned politically, it did so only at the “conclusion” and at the “end” of its works. A notorious drunkard used to console himself with the thought that he was never drunk before midnight.

In the sphere of the “Jewish question,” *Criticism* has indisputably been winning more and more ground from *the Enemy*. In No. 1 of the “Jewish question,” the treatise of “*Criticism*” defended by Herr Bauer was still absolute and revealed the “*true*” and “*general*” significance of the “Jewish question.” In No. 2 *Criticism* had neither the “*will*” nor the “*right*” to go beyond *Criticism*. In No. 3 it had still to take “*one step*,” but that step was “impossible”—because it was—“impossible.” It was not its “will or right” but its involvement in its “opposite” that prevented it from taking that “*one step*.” It would very much have liked to clear the last obstacle, but unfortunately a *last remnant of Mass* stuck to its Critical seven-league boots.

c) *Critical Battle Against the French Revolution*

The *narrow-mindedness of the Mass* forced the “Spirit,” *Criticism*, Herr Bauer, to consider the *French Revolution* not as the time of the revolutionary efforts of the French in the “*prosaic sense*” but “*only*” as the “*symbol and fantastic expression*” of the Critical figments of his own brain. *Criticism* does *penance* for its “*oversight*” by submitting the *Revolution* to a *fresh examination*. At the same time it punishes the seducer of its innocence—“the Mass”—by communicating to it the results of this “fresh examination.”

The *French Revolution* was an experiment which still belonged entirely to the eighteenth century.

The chronological truth that an experiment of the eighteenth century like the French Revolution is still entirely an experiment of the eigh-

teenth century, and not, for example, an experiment of the nineteenth, seems “still entirely” to be one of those truths which “are self-evident from the start.” But in the terminology of criticism, which is very prejudiced against “crystal-clear” truths, a truth like that is called an “*examination*” and therefore naturally has its place in a “fresh examination of the Revolution.”

The ideas to which the French Revolution gave rise did not, however, lead beyond the *order of things* that it wanted to abolish by force.

Ideas can never lead beyond an old world order but only beyond the ideas of the old world order. Ideas *cannot carry out anything* at all. In order to carry out ideas men are needed who can exert practical force. In its literal *sense* the Critical sentence is therefore another truth that is self-evident, and therefore another “*examination*.”

Undeterred by this examination, the French Revolution gave rise to ideas which led beyond the *ideas* of the entire old world order. The revolutionary movement which began in 1789 in the *Cercle Social*,⁴⁸ which in the middle of its course had as its chief representatives *Leclerc* and *Roux*, and which finally with *Babeuf's* conspiracy was temporarily defeated, gave rise to the communist idea which *Babeuf's* friend *Buonarroti* re-introduced in France after the Revolution of 1830. This idea, consistently developed, is the *idea* of the *new world order*.

After the Revolution had therefore [!] abolished the feudal barriers in the life of the people, it was compelled to satisfy and even to inflame the pure egoism of the nation and, on the other hand, to curb it by its necessary complement, the recognition of a supreme being, by this higher confirmation of the general state System, which has to hold together the individual self-seeking atoms.

⁴⁸ *Cercle social*—an organization established by democratic intellectuals and functioning in Paris in the first years of the French Revolution. Its place in the history of communist ideas in France is determined by the fact that its ideologist K. Foche demanded an equalitarian redivision of the land, restrictions on large fortunes and employment for all able-bodied citizens. Foche's criticism of the formal equality proclaimed in the documents of the French Revolution prepared the ground for bolder action on the question by Jacques Roux, leader of the “*Enragés*.”

The egoism of the nation is the natural egoism of the general state system, as opposed to the egoism of the feudal classes. The supreme being is the higher confirmation of the general state system, and hence also of the nation. Nevertheless, the supreme being is supposed to curb the egoism of the nation, that is, of the general state system! A really Critical task, to *curb* egoism by means of its confirmation and even of its *religious* confirmation, i.e., by recognizing that it is of a superhuman nature and therefore free of human restraint! The creators of the supreme being were not aware of this, their Critical intention.

Monsieur *Buchez*, who bases national fanaticism on religious fanaticism, understands his hero *Robespierre* better.

Nationalism [*Nationalität*] led to the downfall of Rome and Greece. *Criticism* therefore says nothing specific about the French Revolution when it maintains that nationalism caused its downfall, and it says just as little about the nation when it defines its egoism as *pure*. This pure egoism appears rather to be a very dark, spontaneous egoism, combined with flesh and blood, when compared, for example, with the pure egoism of *Fichte's* "ego." But if, in contrast to the egoism of the feudal classes, its purity is only relative, no "fresh examination of the revolution" was needed to see that the egoism which has a nation as its content is more general or purer than that which has as its content a particular social class or a particular corporation.

Criticism's explanations about the general state system are no less instructive. They are confined to saying that the general state system must hold together the individual self-seeking atoms.

Speaking exactly and in the prosaic sense, the members of civil society are not *atoms*. The *specific property* of the atom is that it has no properties and is therefore not connected with beings outside it by any relationship determined by its own *natural necessity*. The atom *has no needs*, it is *self-sufficient*; the world outside it is an absolute *vacuum*, i.e., is contentless, senseless, meaningless, just because the atom has *all fullness* in itself. The egoistic individual in civil society may in his non-sensuous imagination and lifeless abstraction inflate himself into an *atom*, i.e., into an unrelated, self-sufficient, wantless, *absolutely full*, blessed being. Unblessed *sensuous reality* does not bother about his imagination, each of his senses compels him to believe in the existence of the world and of individuals outside him,

and even his *profane* stomach reminds him every day that the world *outside* him is not *empty*, but is what really *fills*. Every activity and property of his being, every one of his vital urges, becomes a *need*, a *necessity*, which his *self-seeking* transforms into seeking for other things and human beings outside him. But since the need of one individual has no self-evident meaning for another egoistic individual capable of satisfying that need, and therefore no direct connection with its satisfaction, each individual has to create this connection; it thus becomes the intermediary between the need of another and the objects of this need. Therefore, it is *natural necessity*. The *essential human properties*, however estranged they may seem to be, and *interest* that hold the members of civil society together; *civil*, not *political* life is their *real* tie. It is therefore not the *state* that holds the *atoms* of civil society together, but the fact that they are *atoms* only in *imagination* in the *heaven* of their fancy, but in *reality* beings tremendously different from atoms, in other words, not *divine egoists*, but *egoistic human beings*. Only political superstition still imagines today that civil life must be held together by the state, whereas in reality, on the contrary, the state is held together by civil life.

Robespierre's and *Saint-Just's* tremendous idea of making a “*free people*” which would live only according to the rules of justice and *virtue*—see, for example, Saint-Just's report on Danton's crimes and his other report on the general police—could be maintained for a certain time only by terror and was a *contradiction against which* the vulgar, self-seeking elements of the *popular community* reacted in the cowardly and insidious way that was only to be expected from them.

This phrase of *Absolute Criticism*, which describes a “*free people*” as a “*contradiction*” against which the elements of the “*popular community*” are bound to react, is absolutely hollow, for according to Robespierre and Saint-just *liberty, justice* and *virtue* could, on the contrary, be only manifestations of the life of the “*people*” and only properties of the “*popular community*.” Robespierre and Saint-just spoke explicitly of “*liberty, justice* and *virtue*” of *ancient times*, belonging only to the “*popular community*.” *Spartans, Athenians* and *Romans* at the time of their greatness were “*free, just* and *virtuous peoples*.”

What, [asks Robespierre in his speech on the principles of public morals (sitting of the Convention on February 5, 1794),] is the *fundamental principle* of democratic or popular government? It is *virtue*, I mean *public* virtue, which worked such miracles in *Greece* and *Rome* and which will work still greater ones in Republican France; virtue which is nothing but love of one's country and its laws.

Robespierre then explicitly calls the *Athenians* and *Spartans* "*peuples libres*." He continually recalls the ancient *popular commune* and quotes its heroes as well as its corrupters—Lycurgus, Demosthenes, Miltiades, Aristides, Brutus and Catilina, Caesar, Clodius and Piso.

In his report on Danton's arrest (referred to by Criticism) *Saint-Just* says explicitly:

The world has been empty since the *Romans*, and only their memory fills it and still prophesies liberty.

His accusation is composed in the ancient style and directed against *Danton* as against *Catilina*.

In *Saint-Just's* other report, the one on the general police, the *republican* is described exactly in the *ancient* sense, as *inflexible, modest, simple* and so on. The *police* should be an institution of the same nature as the Roman *ensorship*.—He does not fail to mention Codrus, Lycurgus, Caesar, Cato, Catilina, Brutus, Antonius, and Cassius. Finally, *Saint-Just* describes the "*liberty, justice and virtue*" that he demands in a *single word* when he says:

Que les hommes révolutionnaires soient des *Romains*. ["Revolutionary men must be *Romans*."]

Robespierre, Saint-just and their party fell because they confused the ancient, *realistic-democratic commonweal* based on *real slavery* with the *modern spiritualistic-democratic representative state*, which is based on *emancipated slavery, bourgeois society*. What a terrible illusion it is to have to recognize and sanction in the *rights of man* modern bourgeois society, the society of industry, of universal competition, of private interest freely pursuing its aims, of anarchy, of self-estranged natural and spiritual individuality, and at the same time to want afterwards to annul the *manifestations of*

the life of this society in particular individuals and simultaneously to want to model the *political head* of that society in the manner of antiquity!

The illusion appears tragic when Saint-Just, on the day of his execution, pointed to the large table of the *Rights of Man* hanging in the hall of the *Conciergerie* and said with proud dignity: “*C’est pourtant moi qui ai fait cela*” [Yet it was I who made that.] It was just this table that proclaimed the *right* of a *man* who cannot be the man of the ancient commonwealth any more than his *economic* and *industrial* conditions are those of *ancient* times.

This is not the place to vindicate the illusion of the *Terrorists* historically.

After the fall of Robespierre the *political enlightenment* and *movement* hastened to the point where they became the prey of *Napoleon* who, shortly after 18 Brumaire, could say: “With my prefects, gendarmes and priests I can do what I like with France.”

Profane history, on the other hand, reports: After the fall of Robespierre, the *political enlightenment*, which formerly had been *overreaching* itself and had been *extravagant*, began for the first time to develop *prosaically*. Under the government of the *Directorate bourgeois society*, freed by the Revolution itself from the trammels of feudalism and officially recognized in spite of the *Terror’s* wish to sacrifice it to an ancient form of political life, broke out in powerful streams of life. A storm and stress of commercial enterprise, a passion for enrichment, the exuberance of the new bourgeois life, whose first self-enjoyment is pert, light-hearted, frivolous and intoxicating; a *real enlightenment* of the *land* of France, the feudal structure of which had been smashed by the hammer of the Revolution and which, by the first feverish efforts of the numerous new owners, had become the object of all-round cultivation; the first moves of industry that had now become free—these were some of the signs of life of the newly emerged bourgeois society. *Bourgeois society* is *positively* represented by the *bourgeoisie*. The bourgeoisie, therefore, *begins* its rule. The *rights of man* cease to exist *merely in theory*.

It was not the revolutionary movement as a whole that became the prey of Napoleon on 18 Brumaire, as *Criticism* in its faith in a Herr von

Rotteck or Welcker believes; it was the *liberal bourgeoisie*. One only needs to read the speeches of the legislators of the time to be convinced of this. One has the impression of coming from the National Convention into a modern Chamber of Deputies.

Napoleon represented the last battle of *revolutionary terror* against the *bourgeois society* which had been proclaimed by this same revolution, and against its policy. Napoleon, of course, already discerned the essence of the *modern state*; he understood that it is based on the unhampered development of bourgeois society, on the free movement of private interest, etc. He decided to recognize and protect this basis. He was no terrorist with his head in the clouds. Yet at the same time he still regarded the *state* as an *end in itself* and civil life only as a treasurer and his *subordinate*, which must have no *will of its own*. He *perfected* the *Terror* by *substituting permanent war* for *permanent revolution*. He fed the egoism of the French nation to complete satiety but demanded also the sacrifice of bourgeois business, enjoyments, wealth, etc., whenever this was required by the political aim of conquest. If he despotically suppressed the liberalism of bourgeois society—the political idealism of its daily practice—he showed no more consideration for its essential *material* interests, trade and industry, whenever they conflicted with his political interests. His scorn of industrial *hommes d'affaires* was the complement to his scorn of *ideologists*. In his home policy, too, he combated bourgeois society as the opponent of the state, which in his own person he still held to be an absolute aim in itself. Thus he declared in the State Council that he would not suffer the owner of extensive estates to cultivate them or not as he pleased. Thus, too, he conceived the plan of subordinating trade to the state by appropriation of *roulage* [road haulage]. French businessmen took steps to anticipate the event that first shook Napoleon's power. Paris exchange-brokers forced him by means of an artificially created famine to delay the opening of the Russian campaign by nearly two months and thus to launch it too late in the year.

Just as the liberal bourgeoisie was opposed once more by revolutionary terror in the person of Napoleon, so it was opposed once more by counter-revolution in the Restoration in the person of the Bourbons. Finally, in 1830 the bourgeoisie put into effect its wishes of the year 1789, with the only difference that its *political enlightenment* was now *completed*, that it no longer considered the constitutional representative state as a

means for achieving the ideal of the state, the welfare of the world and universal human aims but, on the contrary, had acknowledged it as the *official* expression of its own *exclusive* power and the *political* recognition of its own *special* interests.

The history of the French Revolution, which dates from 1789, did not come to an end in 1830 with the victory of one of its components enriched by the consciousness of its own *social* importance.

d) Critical Battle Against French Materialism

Spinozism dominated the eighteenth century both in its later French variety, which made matter into substance, and in deism, which conferred on matter a more spiritual name.... *Spinoza's French school* and the supporters of deism were but two sects disputing over the true meaning of *his system*.... The simple fate of this Enlightenment was its decline in *romanticism* after being obliged to surrender to the reaction which began after the French movement.

That is what *Criticism* says.

To the Critical history of French materialism we shall oppose a brief outline of its ordinary, mass-type history. We shall acknowledge with due respect the abyss between history as it really happened and history as it takes place according to the decree of "*Absolute Criticism*," the creator equally of the old and of the new. And finally, obeying the prescriptions of *Criticism*, we shall make the "Why?," "Whence?" and "Whither?" of Critical history the "object of a persevering study."

"Speaking *exactly* and in the *prosaic sense*," the French Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and in particular *French materialism*, was not only a struggle against the existing political institutions and the existing religion and theology; it was just as much an *open, clearly expressed* struggle against the *metaphysics of the seventeenth century*, and against all *metaphysics*, in particular that of *Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza and Leibniz*. *Philosophy* was counterposed to *metaphysics*, just as *Feuerbach*, in his first resolute attack on *Hegel*, counterposed *sober philosophy* to *wild speculation*. Seventeenth century *metaphysics*, driven from the field by the *French Enlightenment*, notably, by French materialism of the eighteenth century, experienced a *victorious and substantial restoration* in *German philosophy*,

particularly in *the speculative German philosophy* of the nineteenth century. After *Hegel* linked it in a masterly fashion with all subsequent metaphysics and with German idealism and founded a metaphysical universal kingdom, the attack on theology again corresponded, as in the eighteenth century, to an attack on *speculative metaphysics* and *metaphysics in general*. It will be defeated forever by *materialism*, which has now been perfected by the work of *speculation* itself and coincides with *humanism*. But just as *Feuerbach* is the representative of *materialism* coinciding with *humanism* in the *theoretical* domain, French and English *socialism* and *communism* represent *materialism* coinciding with *humanism* in the *practical* domain.

“Speaking *exactly* and in the *prosaic sense*,” there are *two trends* in *French materialism*; one traces its origin to *Descartes*, the other to *Locke*. The latter is *mainly* a *French* development and leads directly to *socialism*. The former, *mechanical* materialism, merges with French *natural science* proper. The two trends intersect in the course of development. We have no need here to go more deeply into the French materialism that derives directly from *Descartes*, any more than into the French school of *Newton* and the development of French natural science in general.

We shall therefore merely say the following:

Descartes in his *physics* endowed *matter* with self-creative power and conceived *mechanical* motion as the manifestation of its life. He completely separated his *physics* from his *metaphysics*. Within his physics, *matter* is the sole *substance*, the sole basis of being and of knowledge.

Mechanical French materialism adopted *Descartes’ physics* in opposition to his metaphysics. His followers were by profession *anti-metaphysicians*, i.e., *physicists*.

This school begins with the *physician* *Le Roy*, reaches its zenith with the physician *Cabanis*, and the physician *La Mettrie* is its center. *Descartes* was still living when *Le Roy*, like *La Mettrie* in the eighteenth century, transposed the Cartesian structure of the animal to the human soul and declared that the soul is a *modus of the body* and *ideas* are *mechanical motions*. *Le Roy* even thought *Descartes* had kept his real opinion secret. *Descartes* protested. At the end of the eighteenth century *Cabanis* perfected Cartesian materialism in his treatise: *Rapport du physique et du moral de l’homme*.

Cartesian materialism still exists today in France. It has achieved great successes in *mechanical natural science* which, “speaking *exactly* and in the *prosaic sense*,” will be least of all reproached with *romanticism*.

The *metaphysics* of the seventeenth century, represented in France by *Descartes*, had *materialism* as its *antagonist* from its very birth. The latter’s opposition to *Descartes* was personified by *Gassendi*, the restorer of *Epicurean* materialism. French and English materialism was always closely related to *Democritus* and *Epicurus*. Cartesian metaphysics had another opponent in the *English* materialist *Hobbes*. *Gassendi* and *Hobbes* triumphed over their opponent long after their death at the very time when metaphysics was already officially dominant in all French schools.

Voltaire pointed out that the indifference of the French of the eighteenth century to the disputes between the Jesuits and the Jansenists⁴⁹ was due less to philosophy than to *Law’s* financial speculations. So the downfall of seventeenth-century metaphysics can be explained by the materialistic theory of the eighteenth century only insofar as this theoretical movement itself is explained by the practical nature of French life at that time. This life was turned to the immediate present, to worldly enjoyment and worldly interests, to the *earthly* world. Its anti-theological, anti-metaphysical, materialistic practice demanded corresponding anti-theological, anti-metaphysical, materialistic theories. Metaphysics had *in practice* lost all credit. Here we have only to indicate briefly the *theoretical* course of events.

In the seventeenth century metaphysics (cf. *Descartes*, *Leibniz*, and others) still contained a *positive*, secular element. It made discoveries in mathematics, physics and other exact sciences which seemed to come within its scope. This semblance was done away with as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. The positive sciences broke away from metaphysics and marked out their independent fields. The whole wealth of metaphysics now consisted only of beings of thought and heavenly things, at the very time when real beings and earthly things began to be the center of all interest. Metaphysics had become insipid. In the very year in which

⁴⁹ Jansenists—named after the Dutch theologian Jansenius—representatives of the opposition trend among Catholics in France in the 17th and early 18th centuries. They voiced the discontent of a part of the French bourgeoisie at the feudal ideology of official Catholicism.

Malebranche and Arnauld, the last great French metaphysicians of the seventeenth century, died, *Helvétius* and *Condillac* were born.

The man who deprived seventeenth-century metaphysics and metaphysics in general of all *credit* in the domain of *theory* was *Pierre Bayle*. His weapon was *skepticism*, which he forged out of metaphysics' own magic formulas. He himself proceeded at first from Cartesian metaphysics. Just as *Feuerbach* by combating speculative theology was driven further to combat *speculative philosophy*, precisely because he recognized in speculation the last drop of theology, because he had to force theology to retreat from pseudo-science to *crude*, repulsive *faith*, so Bayle too was driven by religious doubt to doubt about the metaphysics which was the prop of that faith. He therefore critically investigated metaphysics in its entire historical development. He became its historian in order to write the history of its death. He refuted chiefly *Spinoza* and *Leibniz*.

Pierre Bayle not only prepared the reception of materialism and of the philosophy of common sense in France by shattering metaphysics with his skepticism. He heralded the *atheistic society* which was soon to come into existence by proving that a society consisting only of atheists is *possible*, that an atheist can be a man worthy of respect, and that it is not by atheism but by superstition and idolatry that man debases himself.

To quote a French writer, *Pierre Bayle* was "the last metaphysician in the sense of the seventeenth century and *the first philosopher in the sense of the eighteenth century*."

Besides the negative refutation of seventeenth-century theology and metaphysics, a *positive, anti-metaphysical* system was required. A book was needed which would systematize and theoretically substantiate the life practice of that time. *Locke's* treatise *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* came from across the Channel as if in answer to a call. It was welcomed enthusiastically like a long-awaited guest.

The question arises: Is *Locke* perhaps a disciple of *Spinoza*? "Profane" history can answer:

Materialism is the *natural-born* son of *Great Britain*. Already the British schoolman, *Duns Scotus*, asked, "*whether it was impossible for matter to think?*"

In order to effect this miracle, he took refuge in God's omnipotence, i.e., he made *theology* preach *materialism*. Moreover, he was a nominal-

ist. Nominalism, the *first form* of materialism, is chiefly found among the *English* schoolmen.

The real progenitor of *English materialism* and all *modern experimental science* is *Bacon*. To him natural philosophy is the only true philosophy, and *physics* based upon the experience of the senses is the chief part of natural philosophy. *Anaxagoras* and his *homoeomeriae*, *Democritus* and his atoms, he often quotes as his authorities. According to him the *senses* are infallible and the *source* of all knowledge. All science is based on *experience*, and consists of subjecting the data furnished by the senses to a *rational method* of investigation. Induction, analysis, comparison, observation, experiment, are the principal forms of such a rational method. Among the qualities inherent in *matter*, *motion* is the first and foremost, not only in the form of *mechanical* and *mathematical* motion, but chiefly in the form of an *impulse*, a *vital spirit*, a *tension*—or the *throes* [*Qual*], to use a term of Jakob Böhme's—of matter. The primary forms of matter are the living, individualizing *forces of being* inherent in it and producing the distinctions between the species.

In *Bacon*, its first creator, materialism still holds back within itself in a naïve way the germs of a many-sided development. On the one hand, matter, surrounded by a sensuous, poetic glamour, seems to attract man's whole entity by winning smiles. On the other, the aphoristically formulated doctrine pullulates with inconsistencies imported from theology.

In its further evolution, materialism becomes *one-sided*. *Hobbes* is the man who *systematizes Baconian* materialism. Knowledge based upon the senses loses its poetic blossom, it passes into the abstract experience of the *geometrician*. *Physical* motion is sacrificed to *mechanical* or *mathematical* motion; *geometry* is proclaimed as the queen of sciences. Materialism takes to *misanthropy*. If it is to overcome its opponent, *misanthropic*, *fleshless* spiritualism, and that on the latter's own ground, materialism has to chastise its own flesh and turn *ascetic*. Thus it passes into an *intellectual entity*; but thus, too, it evolves all the consistency, regardless of consequences, characteristic of the intellect.

Hobbes, as *Bacon's* continuator, argues thus: if all human knowledge is furnished by the senses, then our concepts, notions, and ideas are but the phantoms of the real world, more or less divested of its sensual form. Philosophy can but give names to these phantoms. One name may be

applied to more than one of them. There may even be names of names. But it would imply a contradiction if, on the one hand, we maintained that all ideas had their origin in the world of sensation, and, on the other, that a word was more than a word; that besides the beings known to us by our senses, beings which are one and all individuals, there existed also beings of a general, not individual, nature. An *incorporeal substance* is the same absurdity as an *incorporeal body*. *Body, being, substance*, are but different terms for the same *reality*. It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks. This matter is the substratum of all changes going on in the world. The word *infinite* is *meaningless*, unless it states that our mind is capable of performing an endless process of addition. Only material things being perceptible, knowable to us, we cannot know *anything* about the existence of God. My own existence alone is certain. Every human passion is a mechanical movement which has a beginning and an end. The objects of impulse are what we call good. Man is subject to the same laws as nature. Power and freedom are identical.

Hobbes had systematized Bacon without, however, furnishing a proof for Bacon's fundamental principle, the origin of all human knowledge and ideas from the world of sensation.

It was *Locke* who, in his *Essay on the Humane Understanding*, supplied this proof.

Hobbes had shattered the *theistic* prejudices of Baconian materialism; Collins, Dodwell, Coward, Hartley, Priestley, similarly shattered the last theological bars that still hemmed in Locke's sensationalism. At all events, for materialists, deism is but an easy-going way of getting rid of religion.

We have already mentioned how opportune Locke's work was for the French. Locke founded the philosophy of *bon sens*, of common sense; i.e., he said indirectly that there cannot be any philosophy at variance with the healthy human senses and reason based on them.

Locke's *immediate* pupil, *Condillac*, who translated him into *French*, at once applied Locke's sensualism against seventeenth-century *metaphysics*. He proved that the French had rightly rejected this metaphysics as a mere botch work of fancy and theological prejudice. He published a refutation of the systems of *Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz* and *Malebranche*.

In his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* he expounded Locke's ideas and proved that not only the soul, but the senses too, not only the art of creating ideas, but also the art of sensuous perception, are matters of *experience* and *habit*. The whole development of man therefore depends on *education* and *external circumstances*. It was only by *eclectic* philosophy that Condillac was ousted from the French schools.

The difference between *French* and *English* materialism reflects the difference between the two nations. The French imparted to English materialism wit, flesh and blood, and eloquence. They gave it the temperament and grace that it lacked. They *civilized* it.

In *Helvétius*, who also based himself on Locke, materialism assumed a really French character. Helvétius conceived it immediately in its application to social life (Helvétius, *De l'homme*). The sensory qualities and self-love, enjoyment and correctly understood personal interest are the basis of all morality. The natural equality of human intelligences, the unity of progress of reason and progress of industry, the natural goodness of man, and the omnipotence of education, are the main features in his system.

In *Lamettrie's* works we find a synthesis of Cartesian and English materialism. He makes use of Descartes' physics in detail. His *Man Machine*⁵⁰ is a treatise after the model of Descartes' animal-machine. The physical part of Holbach's *Système de la nature* is also a result of the combination of French and English materialism, while the moral part is based essentially on the morality of Helvétius. *Robinet* (*De la nature*), the French materialist who had the most connection with metaphysics and was therefore praised by Hegel, refers explicitly to *Leibniz*.

We need not dwell on Volney, Dupuis, Diderot and others, any more than on the physiocrats, after we have proved the dual origin of French materialism from Descartes' physics and English materialism, and the opposition of French materialism to seventeenth-century *metaphysics*, to the metaphysics of Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, and Leibniz. This opposition only became evident to the Germans after they themselves had come into opposition to *speculative metaphysics*.

⁵⁰ Lamettrie's book (*L'homme machine*) was published anonymously in Leyden in 1748. It was burned and its author was banished from Holland whither he had emigrated from France in 1745.

Just as *Cartesian* materialism passes into *natural science proper*, the other trend of French materialism leads directly to *socialism* and *communism*.

There is no need for any great penetration to see from the teaching of materialism on the original goodness and equal intellectual endowment of men, the omnipotence of experience, habit and education, and the influence of environment on man, the great significance of industry, the justification of enjoyment, etc., how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. If man draws all his knowledge, sensation, etc., from the world of the senses and the experience gained in it, then what has to be done is to arrange the empirical world in such a way that man experiences and becomes accustomed to what is truly human in it and that he becomes aware of himself as man. If correctly understood, interest is the principle of all morality, man's private interest must be made to coincide with the interest of humanity. If man is unfree in the materialistic sense, i.e., is free not through the negative power to avoid this or that, but through the positive power to assert his true individuality, crime must not be punished in the individual, but the anti-social sources of crime must be destroyed, and each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being. If man is shaped by environment, his environment must be made human. If man is social by nature, he will develop his true nature only in society, and the power of his nature must be measured not by the power of the separate individual but by the power of society. These and similar propositions are to be found almost literally even in the oldest French materialists. This is not the place to assess them. The apologia of vices by Mandeville, one of Locke's early English followers, is typical of the socialist tendencies of materialism. He proves that in *modern* society, vice is *indispensable* and *useful*.⁵¹ This was by no means an apologia for modern society.

Fourier proceeds directly from the teaching of the French materialists. The *Babouvists* were crude, uncivilized materialists, but mature communism, too, derives *directly* from *French materialism*. The latter returned to its mother-country, *England*, in the form *Helvétius* gave it. *Bentham* based his system of *correctly understood interest* on *Helvétius'* morality, and

⁵¹ Bernard de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*.

Owen proceeded from *Bentham's* system to found English communism. Exiled to England, the Frenchman *Cabet* came under the influence of communist ideas there and on his return to France became the most popular, if the most superficial, representative of communism. Like Owen, the more scientific French Communists, *Dézamy*, *Gay* and others, developed the teaching of *materialism* as the teaching of *real humanism* and the *logical* basis of *communism*.

Where, then, did Herr Bauer or, *Criticism*, manage to acquire the documents for the Critical history of French materialism?

- 1) Hegel's [*Vorlesungen über die*] *Geschichte der Philosophie* presents French materialism as the *realization* of the Substance of Spinoza, which at any rate is far more comprehensible than "the French school of Spinoza."
- 2) Herr *Bauer* read Hegel's *Geschichte der Philosophie* as saying that French materialism was the *school* of Spinoza. Then, as he found in another of Hegel's works that deism and materialism are *two parties* representing *one and the same* basic principle, he concluded that Spinoza had *two* schools which disputed over the meaning of his system. Herr Bauer could have found the supposed explanation in Hegel's *Phänomenologie*, where it is said:

Regarding that Absolute Being, *Enlightenment* itself fails out with itself... and is divided between the views of *two parties*.... The one... calls *Absolute Being* that predicateless Absolute... the other calls it *matter*.... Both are entirely the *same* notion—the distinction lies not in the objective fact, but purely in the diversity of starting-point adopted by the two developments.⁵²

- 3) Finally Herr Bauer could find, again in Hegel, that when Substance does not develop into a concept and self-consciousness, it degenerates into "romanticism." The journal *Hallische Jahrbücher* at one time developed a similar theory.

⁵² Hegel, *Phänomenologie*.

But at all costs, *the "Spirit"* had to decree a "*foolish destiny*" for its "*adversary, materialism.*"⁵³

e) *Final Defeat of Socialism*

The French set up a series of *systems of how the mass* should be *organized*, but they had to resort to *fantasy* because they considered the mass, as it is, to be usable material.

Actually, the French and the English have proved, and proved in great detail, that the present social system organizes the "*mass as it is*" and is therefore its *organization*. *Criticism*, following the example of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*,⁵⁴ disposes of all socialist and communist systems by means of the *fundamental* word "*fantasy.*" Having thus shat-

⁵³ Note. French materialism's connection with Descartes and Locke and the opposition of eighteenth-century philosophy to seventeenth-century metaphysics are presented in detail in most recent French histories of philosophy. In this respect, we had only to repeat against Critical Criticism what was already known. But the connection of eighteenth-century materialism with English and French communism of the nineteenth century still needs to be presented in detail. We confine ourselves here to quoting a few typical passages from Helvétius, Holbach and Bentham.

1) *Helvétius*. "Man is not wicked, but he is subordinate to his interests. One must not therefore complain of the wickedness of man but of the ignorance of the legislators, who have always placed the particular interest in opposition to the general interest."—"The moralists have so far had no success because we have to dig into legislation to pull out the roots which create vice. In New Orleans women have the right to repudiate their husbands as soon as they are tired of them. In countries like that women are not faithless, because they have no interest in being so."—"Morality is but a frivolous science when not combined with politics and legislation."—"The hypocritical moralists can be recognized on the one hand by the equanimity with which they consider vices which undermine the state, and on the other by the fury with which they condemn private vice"—"Human beings are born neither good nor bad but ready to become one or the other according as a common interest unites or divides them."—"If citizens could not achieve their own particular good without achieving the general good, there would be no vicious people except fools" (*De l'esprit*, Paris, 1822, pp. 117, 240, 241, 249, 251, 369 and 339).

As, according to Helvétius, it is education, by which he means (cf. loc. cit., p. 390) not only education in the ordinary sense but the totality of the individual's conditions of life, which forms man, if a reform is necessary to abolish the contradiction between particular interests and those of society, so, on the other hand, a transformation of consciousness is necessary to carry out such a reform: Great reforms can be implemented only by weakening the stupid respect of peoples for old laws and customs [loc. cit., p. 260], or, as he says elsewhere, by abolishing ignorance.

tered foreign socialism and communism, *Criticism* transfers its warlike operations to Germany.

When the *German Enlighteners* suddenly found themselves disappointed in their hopes of 1842 and, in their embarrassment, did not know *what to do*, news of the recent *French* systems came in the nick of time. They were henceforth able to speak of raising the lower classes of the people and at that price they were able to dispense with the question whether they did not themselves belong to the mass, which is to be found not only in the lowest strata.

Criticism has obviously so exhausted its entire provision of well-meaning motives in the apologia for Bauer's literary past that it can find no other explanation for the German socialist movement than the "embarrassment" of the Enlightenment in 1842. "Fortunately they received news of the recent *French* systems." Why not of the *English*? For the decisive *Critical* reason that Herr Bauer received no news of the recent English systems through Stein's book: *Der Communismus und Socialismus des heutigen Frankreichs*. This is also the decisive reason why only *French* systems ever exist for *Criticism* in all its talk about socialist systems.⁵⁴

2) *Holbach*. "Man can only love himself in the objects he loves: he can have affection only for himself in the other beings of his kind." "Man can never separate himself from himself for a single instant in his life, he cannot lose sight of himself." "It is always our convenience, our interest... that makes us hate or love things." (*Système social, ou principes naturels de la morale et de la politique*, t. 1, Paris, 1822, 56 pp. 80, 112), but "In his own interest man must love other men, because they are necessary to welfare.... Morality proves to him that of all beings *the most necessary to man is man*." (p. 76). "True morality, and true politics as well, is that which seeks to bring men nearer to one another to make them work by united efforts for their common happiness. Any morality which *separates our interests from those of our associates*, is false, senseless, unnatural." (p. 116). "To love others... is to *merge our interests with those of our associates*, to work for the common benefit.... *Virtue* is but the *usefulness of men united in society*." (p. 77). "A man without desires or passions would cease to be a man.... Perfectly detached from himself, how could one make him decide to attach himself to others? A man indifferent to everything and having no passions, sufficient to himself, would cease to be a social being.... *Virtue* is but the *communication of good*." (loc. cit., p. 118). "Religious morality never served to make mortals more sociable." (loc. cit., p. 36).

3) Bentham. We only quote one passage from Bentham in which he opposes "*intérêt général* (*general interest*) in the political sense" "The interest of indi-

The German Enlighteners, Criticism goes on to explain, committed a sin against the Holy Ghost. They busied themselves with the “lower classes of the people,” already in existence in 1842, in order to get rid of the question, which did not yet exist then, as to what rank they were destined to occupy in the *Critical world system* that was to be instituted in the year 1843: sheep or goat, Critical Critic or impure Mass, *Spirit* or *Matter*. But above all they should have thought seriously of the *Critical salvation of their own souls*, for of what profit is it to me if I gain the whole world, including the lower classes of the people, and suffer the loss of my own soul?

But a spiritual being cannot be raised to a higher level unless it is altered, and it cannot be altered before it has experienced extreme resistance.

Were *Criticism* better acquainted with the movement of the lower classes of the people, it would know that the extreme resistance that they have experienced from practical life is changing them every day. Modern prose and poetry emanating in England and France from the lower classes of the people would show it that the lower classes of the people know how to raise themselves spiritually even without being directly *overshadowed* by the *Holy Ghost of Critical Criticism*.

They, [Absolute Criticism continues to indulge in fancy,] whose *whole wealth* is the word “*organization of the mass*” [etc.].

A lot has been said about “organization of labor,” although even this “catchword” came not from the Socialists themselves but from the politically radical party in France, which tried to be an intermediary between politics and socialism. But nobody before Critical Criticism spoke of

viduals... must give way to the public interest. But... what does that mean? Is not each individual part of the public as much as any other? This public interest that you personify is but an abstract term: it represents but the mass of individual interests.... If it were good to sacrifice the fortune of one individual to increase that of others, it would be better to sacrifice that of a second, a third, and so on *ad infinitum*.... Individual interests are the only real interests.” (Bentham, *Théorie des peines et des récompenses*, Paris, 1826, 3ème ed., II, p. [229], 230).

⁵⁴ *Allgemeine Zeitung* (*General Newspaper*) a reactionary German daily newspaper founded in 1798; from 1810 to 1882 it appeared in Augsburg.

“organization of the mass” as of a question yet to be solved. It was proved, on the contrary, that *bourgeois society*, the dissolution of the old *feudal society*, is this organization of the mass.

Criticism puts its discovery in quotation marks (Gänsefüsse [goose feet]).⁵⁵ The goose that cackled to Herr Bauer the watchword for saving the Capitol is none but his *own goose*, *Critical Criticism*. It organized the mass anew by speculatively constructing it as *the Absolute Opponent of the Spirit*. The antithesis between spirit and mass is the Critical “organization of society,” in which *the Spirit*, or *Criticism*, represents the organizing *work*, the mass—the *raw material*, and history—the *product*.

After Absolute Criticism’s great victories over revolution, materialism and socialism in its third campaign, we may ask: What is the *final result* of these Herculean feats? Only that these movements *perished* without any result because they were still *criticism adulterated by mass* or *spirit adulterated by matter*. Even in Herr Bauer’s own literary past *Criticism* discovered manifold adulterations of criticism by the mass. But *here* it writes an apologia instead of a criticism, “*places in safety*” instead of *surrendering*; instead of seeing in the *adulteration of the spirit* by the *flesh* the death of the spirit too, it reverses the case and finds in the adulteration of the *flesh by the spirit* the life even of *Bauer’s flesh*. On the other hand, it is all the more ruthless and decisively *terroristic* as soon as imperfect criticism still adulterated by mass is no longer the *work* of Herr Bauer but of whole peoples and of a number of ordinary Frenchmen and Englishmen; as soon as imperfect criticism is no longer entitled *Die Judenfrage*, or *Die gute Sache der Freiheit, or Staat, Religion und Parthei*, but revolution, materialism, socialism or communism. Thus *Criticism* did away with the adulteration of spirit by matter and of criticism by mass by sparing its own flesh and crucifying the flesh of others.

One way or the other, the “spirit adulterated by flesh” or “Criticism adulterated by mass” has been cleared out of the way. Instead of this un-Critical adulteration, there appears absolutely Critical *disintegration* of spirit and flesh, criticism and mass, their pure opposition. This opposition in its *world-historic* form in which it constitutes the true historical interest

⁵⁵ Gänsefüsse means goose feet in German, a word for quotation marks.

of the present time, is the opposition of Herr Bauer and Co., or *the Spirit*, to the rest of the human race as Matter.

Revolution, materialism and communism *therefore* have fulfilled their historic mission. By their *downfall* they have prepared the way for the Critical Lord. Hosanna!

f) *The Speculative Cycle of Absolute Criticism and the Philosophy of Self-Consciousness*

Criticism, having supposedly attained *perfection* and purity in *one* domain, *therefore* committed only one *oversight* “only” one “inconsistency,” that of not being “pure” and “perfect” in all domains. The “one” Critical domain is none other than that of *theology*. The *pure* area of this domain extends from the *Kritik der Synoptiker* by Bruno Bauer to *Das entdeckte Christenthum* by Bruno Bauer, as the farthest frontier post.

Modern Criticism, [we are told,] had finally dealt with Spinozism; it was therefore inconsistent of it naively to presuppose Substance in one domain, even if only in individual, falsely expounded points.

Criticism's earlier admission that it had been involved in political prejudice was immediately followed by the extenuating circumstance that this involvement had been “*basically so slight!*” Now the admission of *inconsistency* is tempered by the parenthesis that it committed only in *individual, falsely expounded points*. It was not Herr Bauer who was to blame, but the *false points* which *ran away with Criticism* like recalcitrant mounts.

A few quotations will show that by overcoming *Spinozism*, *Criticism* ended up in *Hegelian idealism*, that from “*Substance*” it arrived at another *metaphysical monster*, the “*Subject*,” “*Substance as a process*,” “*infinite self-consciousness*,” and that the final result of “perfect” and “pure” Criticism is the *restoration of the Christian theory of creation* in a *speculative, Hegelian* form.

Let us first open the *Kritik der Synoptiker*.

Strauss remains true to the view that Substance is the Absolute. Tradition in this form of universality, which has not yet attained the real and rational certitude of universality, that certitude which can be attained only in self-consciousness, in

the oneness and infinity of self-consciousness, is nothing but Substance which has emerged from its logical simplicity and has assumed a definite form of existence as the *power of the community*.⁵⁶

Let us leave to their fate “*the universality which attains certitude*,” the “oneness and infinity” (the Hegelian *Notion*).—Instead of saying that the view put forward in *Strauss’* theory on the “power of the community” and “tradition” has its abstract expression, its logical and metaphysical *hieroglyphic*, in the Spinozist conception of *Substance*, Herr Bauer makes “*Substance emerge from its logical simplicity and assume a definite form of existence in the power of the community*.” He applies the *Hegelian* miracle apparatus by which the “*metaphysical categories*”—abstractions extracted out of *reality*—emerge from *logic*, where they are dissolved in the “*simplicity*” of thought, and assume “a definite form” of physical or human existence; he makes them become incarnate. Help, *Hinrichs!*

Mysterious, [*Criticism* continues its argument against Strauss,] mysterious is this view because whenever it wishes to explain and make visible the process to which the gospel history owes its origin, it can only bring out the *semblance* of a press... The sentence: “The gospel history has its source and origin in tradition,” posits the same thing *twice*—“tradition” and the “gospel history”; admittedly it does posit a relation between them, but it does not tell us to what *internal process of Substance* the development and exposition owe their origin.

According to *Hegel*, *Substance* must be conceived as an *internal process*. He characterizes *development* from the viewpoint of Substance as follows:

But if we look more closely at this *expansion*, we find that it has not come about by one and the same principle taking shape in diverse ways; it is only the shapeless *repetition of one and the same thing*... keeping up a tedious *semblance* of diversity.⁵⁷

Help, *Hinrichs!*

⁵⁶ *Kritik der Synoptiker*, Vol. I, Preface, pp. vi-vii.

⁵⁷ *Phänomenologie*, Preface, p. 12.

Criticism,” Herr Bauer continues, “according to this, must turn against itself and look for the solution of the *mysterious substantiality*... in what the *development of Substance itself* leads to, in the universality and certitude of the idea and its real existence, in *infinite self-consciousness*.”

Hegel's criticism of the substantiality view continues:

The compact solidity of Substance is to be opened up and Substance raised to *self-consciousness*.⁵⁸

Bauer's *self-consciousness*, too, is *Substance raised* to self-consciousness or *self-consciousness as Substance*; self-consciousness is transformed from an *attribute of man* into a *self-existing subject*. This is the *metaphysical-theological* caricature of man in his *severance* from nature. The *being* of this self-consciousness is therefore not *man*, but *the idea* of which self-consciousness is the *real existence*. It is the idea of *becoming man*, and therefore it is *infinite*. All *human* qualities are thus transformed in a *mysterious way* into qualities of imaginary “*infinite self-consciousness*.” Hence, Herr Bauer says *expressly* that *everything* has its *origin* and its *explanation* in this “infinite self-consciousness,” i.e., finds in it the *basis* of its *existence*. Help, *Hinrichs!*

Herr Bauer continues:

The power of the *substantiality relation* lies in its impulse, which leads us to the concept, the idea and self-consciousness.

Hegel says:

Thus the *concept* is the *truth* of the substance.... The transition of the *substantiality relation* takes place through its own immanent necessity and consists in this only, that *the* concept is the truth of the substance.... The *idea* is the adequate concept.... The concept... having achieved *free* existence... is nothing but the *ego* or *pure self-consciousness*.⁵⁹

Help, *Hinrichs!*

⁵⁸ Loc. cit., p. 7.

⁵⁹ “Logik,” Hegel's *Werke*, 2nd ed., Vol. 5, pp. 6, 9, 229, 13.

It seems comic in the extreme when Herr Bauer says in his *Literatur-Zeitung*:

Strauss came to grief because he was unable to *complete the criticism of Hegel's system*, although he proved by his half-way criticism the necessity for its completion [etc.].

It was not a *complete criticism* of Hegel's system that Herr Bauer himself thought he was giving in his *Kritik der Synoptiker* but at the most the *completion of Hegel's system*, at least in its application to theology.

He describes his criticism (*Kritik der Synoptiker*, Preface, p. xxi) as "the last act of a definite system," which is no other than *Hegel's system*.

The dispute between *Strauss* and *Bauer* over *Substance* and *Self-Consciousness* is a dispute *within Hegelian speculation*. In *Hegel* there are *three elements*: *Spinoza's Substance*, *Fichte's Self-Consciousness* and *Hegel's necessarily antagonistic unity* of the two, the *Absolute Spirit*. The first element is metaphysically disguised *nature separated* from man; the second is metaphysically disguised *spirit separated* from nature; the third is the metaphysically disguised *unity* of both *real man* and the *real human species*.

Within the domain of theology, *Strauss* expounds *Hegel* from *Spinoza's point of view*, and *Bauer* does so from *Fichte's point of view*, both quite consistently. They both *criticized Hegel* insofar as with him each of the two elements was *falsified* by the other, whereas they carried each of these elements to its *one-sided* and hence consistent development.—Both of them therefore go *beyond Hegel* in their criticism, but both also remain *within* his speculation and each represents only *one* side of his system. *Feuerbach*, who completed and criticized *Hegel from Hegel's point of view* by resolving the metaphysical *Absolute Spirit* into "*real man on the basis of nature*," was the first to complete the *criticism of religion* by sketching in a grand and masterly manner the *basic features* of the *criticism of Hegel's speculation* and hence of *all metaphysics*.

With Herr Bauer it is, admittedly, no longer the *Holy Ghost*, but nevertheless *infinite self-consciousness* that dictates the writings of the evangelist.

We ought not any longer to conceal the fact that the correct conception of the gospel history also has its *philosophical basis, namely, the philosophy of self-consciousness*.⁶⁰

This philosophy of Herr Bauer, the *philosophy of self-consciousness*, like the *results* he achieved by his criticism of theology, must be characterized by a few extracts from *Das entdeckte Christenthum*, his *last* work on the philosophy of religion.

Speaking of the *French materialists*, he says:

When the *truth* of materialism, the *philosophy of self-consciousness*, is revealed and *self-consciousness* is recognized as the *Universe*, as the solution of the riddle of *Spinoza's substance* and as the true *causa sui* [Cause of itself]... , what is the purpose of *the Spirit*? *What is the purpose of self-consciousness*? As if *self-consciousness*, by positing the *world*, did not posit *distinction* and did not produce itself in all it produces, since it does away again with *the distinction of what it produced from itself*, and since, consequently it is itself only in production and in movement—as if self-consciousness in this movement, which is itself, had not its purpose and did not possess itself!⁶¹

The French materialists did, indeed, conceive the movement of self-consciousness as the movement of the universal being, matter, but they could *not yet* see that the *movement of the universe* became *real* for itself and achieved unity with itself *only* as the *movement of self-consciousness*.⁶²

Help, *Hinrichs!*

In plain language the *first* extract means: the truth of *materialism* is the *opposite* of materialism, *absolute*, i.e., exclusive, unmitigated *idealism*. Self-consciousness, *the Spirit*, is the *Universe*. Outside of it there is *nothing*. “Self-consciousness,” “*the Spirit*,” is the almighty creator of the world, of heaven and earth. The *world* is a manifestation of the life of self-consciousness which has to *alienate* itself and take on *the form of a slave*, but the

⁶⁰ Bruno Bauer, *Kritik der Synoptiker*, Preface, p. xv.

⁶¹ *Das entdeckte Christenthum*, p. 113.

⁶² Loc. cit., pp. 114-115.

difference between the world and self-consciousness is only an *apparent difference*. Self-consciousness distinguishes *nothing real* from itself. The world is, rather, only a metaphysical *distinction*, a phantom of its ethereal brain and an *imaginary* product of the latter. Hence self-consciousness does away again with the appearance, which it conceded for a moment, that something exists outside of it, and it recognizes in what it has “produced” no real object, i.e., no object which in reality, is distinct from it. By this movement, however, *self-consciousness* first produces itself as absolute, for the *absolute* idealist, in order to be an absolute idealist, must necessarily constantly go through the *sophistical process* of first transforming the world *outside himself* into an appearance, a mere fancy of *his* brain, and afterwards declaring this *fantasy* to be what it really is, i.e., a mere fantasy, so as finally to be able to proclaim his sole, exclusive existence, which is no longer disturbed even by the semblance of an external world.

In plain language the *second* extract means: The French materialists did, of course, conceive the movements of matter as movements involving spirit, but they were not yet able to see that they are not *material* but *ideal* movements, movements of self-consciousness, consequently pure movements of thought. They were not yet able to see that the real movement of the universe became true and real only as the *ideal* movement of self-consciousness free and freed from *matter*, that is, from reality; in other words, that a *material* movement distinct from ideal brain movement exists only in *appearance*. Help, *Hinrichs!*

This speculative *theory of creation* is almost word for word in *Hegel*; it can be found in his *first* work, his *Phänomenologie*.

The alienation of *self-consciousness* itself establishes *thinghood*.... In this alienation self-consciousness establishes itself as object or sets up the object as *itself*. On the other hand, there is also this other moment in the process that it has just as much *abolished* this *alienation* and *objectification* and resumed them into itself.... This is the *movement of consciousness*.⁶³

Self-consciousness has a *content* which it distinguishes *from itself*... This content in its *distinction* is itself the *ego*, for it is the *movement* of superseding itself.... More precisely stated,

⁶³ Hegel, *Phänomenologie*, pp. 574-75.

this content is nothing but the *very movement just spoken of*; for the content is *the Spirit* which traverses the whole range of its own being, and does this *for itself as Spirit*.⁶⁴

Referring to this theory of creation of Hegel's, *Feuerbach* observes:

Matter is the self-alienation of the spirit. Thereby matter itself acquires spirit and reason—but at the same time it is assumed as a *nothingness*, an *unreal* being, inasmuch as being producing itself from this alienation, i.e., being divesting itself of matter, of sensuousness, is pronounced to be being in its perfection, in its true shape and form. Therefore the natural, the material, the sensuous, is what is to be *negated* here too, as *nature poisoned by original sin* is in theology.⁶⁵

Herr Bauer therefore defends materialism against *un-Critical theology*, at the same time as he reproaches it with “not yet” being *Critical theology, theology of reason, Hegelian speculation. Hinrichs! Hinrichs!*

Herr Bauer, who in all domains carries through *his* opposition to *Substance, his philosophy of self-consciousness* or of the *Spirit*, must therefore in all domains have only the *figments* of his own *brain* to deal with. In his hands, *Criticism* is the instrument to sublimate into mere *appearance* and *pure thought* all that affirms a *finite* material existence *outside infinite self-consciousness*. What he combats in *Substance* is not the *metaphysical illusion* but its *mundane* kernel—*nature*; nature both as it exists *outside* man and as man's nature. Not to presume *Substance* in any domain—he still uses this language—means therefore for him not to recognize any *being* distinct from thought, any *natural energy* distinct from the *spontaneity of the spirit*, any *power of human nature* distinct from *reason*, any *passivity* distinct from *activity*, any *influence of others* distinct from *one's own action* any *feeling* or *willing* distinct from *knowing*, any *heart* distinct from the *head*, any *object* distinct from the *subject*, any *practice* distinct from *theory*, any *man* distinct from the *Critic*, any *real community* distinct from *abstract generality*, any *Thou* distinct from *I*. Herr Bauer is therefore consistent when he goes on to identify *himself* with *infinite self-consciousness*, with

⁶⁴ Loc. cit., pp. 582-583.

⁶⁵ *Philosophie der Zukunft*, p. 35.

the *Spirit*, i.e., to replace these creations of his by their creator. He is just as consistent in rejecting as *stubborn mass* and *matter* the *rest of the world*, which obstinately insists on being something *distinct* from what *he*, Herr Bauer, has produced. And so he hopes:

It will not be long
Before all bodies perish.⁶⁶

His own ill-humor at so far being unable to master “the *something* of this *clumsy world*” he interprets equally consistently as the *self-discontent* of this world, and the indignation of his Criticism at the development of mankind as the *mass-type* indignation of mankind against *his* Criticism, against the Spirit, against Herr Bruno Bauer and Co.

Herr Bauer was a *theologian* from the very beginning, but no ordinary one; he was a *Critical theologian* or a *theological Critic*. While still the extreme representative of *old Hegelian* orthodoxy who put in a speculative form all *religious* and *theological nonsense*, he constantly proclaimed *Criticism* his *private domain*. At that time he called *Strauss’* criticism *human* criticism and expressly asserted the right of divine criticism in opposition to it. He later stripped the great *self-reliance* or *self-consciousness*, which was the hidden kernel of this divinity, of its religious shell, made it self-existing as an independent being, and raised it, under the trade-mark “*Infinite Self-consciousness*,” to the rank of the principle of Criticism. Then he accomplished in his own movement the movement that the “philosophy of self-consciousness” describes as the absolute act of life. He abolished anew the “distinction” between “the product,” *infinite self-consciousness*, and the producer, *himself*, and acknowledged that infinite self-consciousness in its movement “*was only he himself*,” and that therefore the movement of the universe only becomes *true* and *real* in his ideal self-movement.

Divine criticism in its *return into itself* is restored in a rational, conscious, Critical way; *being in-itself* is transformed into *being in-and-for-itself* and only at the *end* does the fulfilled, realized, revealed *beginning* take place. *Divine* criticism, as *distinct* from *human* criticism, reveals itself as *Criticism*, *pure Criticism*, *Critical Criticism*. The apologia for the Old and the New Testament is replaced by the apologia for the old and new works of Herr Bauer. The *theological* antithesis of God and man, spirit

⁶⁶ Goethe, *Faust*, Part 1, Sc. 3 (*Faust’s Study*).

and flesh, infinity and finiteness is transformed into the *Critical-theological antithesis of the Spirit, Criticism*, or Herr Bauer, and the *matter of the mass*, or the secular world. The theological antithesis of faith and reason has been resolved into the Critical-theological antithesis of *common sense* and pure Critical thought. The *Zeitschrift für spekulative Theologie*⁶⁷ has been transformed into the Critical *Literatur-Zeitung*. *The religious redeemer of the world* has finally become a reality in the *Critical redeemer of the world*, Herr Bauer.

Herr Bauer's last stage is not an anomaly in his development; it is the *return* of his development *into* itself from its *alienation*. Naturally, the point at which *divine Criticism alienated* itself and came out of itself coincided with the point at which it became partly untrue to itself and created something *human*.

Returning to its starting-point, *Absolute Criticism* has ended the *speculative cycle* and thereby its own *life's career*. Its further movement is *pure*, lofty *circling within itself*, above all interest of a mass nature and therefore devoid of any further interest for the Mass.

⁶⁷ *Zeitschrift für spekulative Theologie (Journal of Speculative Theology)*—published in Berlin from 1836 to 1838 under the editorship of B. Bauer, who then belonged to the “Right” (or “Old”) Hegelians.

CHAPTER VII
CRITICAL CRITICISM'S
CORRESPONDENCE

1) The Critical Mass

Where can one feel better
Than in the bosom of one's family?⁶⁸

In its *Absolute* existence as Herr *Bruno*, Critical Criticism has declared the *mass* of mankind, the whole of mankind that is not Critical Criticism, to be its *opposite*, its *essential object*; *essential*, because the Mass exists *ad majorem gloriam dei* [For the greater glory of God], the glory of *Criticism*, of *the Spirit*; *its object*, because it is only the *matter* on which Critical Criticism operates. Critical Criticism has proclaimed its relationship to the Mass as the *world-historic relationship* of the present time.

No *world-historic opposition* is formed, however, by the statement that one is in opposition to the whole world. One can imagine that one is a stumbling-block for the world because one is clumsy enough to stumble everywhere. But for a world-historic opposition it is not enough for me to declare the world *my* opposite; the *world* for its part must declare me to be its essential opposite, and must treat and *recognize* me as such. Critical Criticism ensures itself this recognition by its *correspondence*, which is called upon to *bear witness* before the world to Criticism's function of redeemer and equally to the general *irritation* of the world at the Critical gospel. Critical Criticism is its own object as the *object of the world*. The correspondence is intended to *show it as such*, as the *world interest* of the present time.

Critical Criticism is in its own eyes the *Absolute Subject*. The Absolute Subject requires a cult. A real cult requires other believing individuals. The *Holy Family of Charlottenburg* therefore receives from its correspondents the cult due to it. The correspondents tell it *what it is* and what its adversary, the Mass, *is not*.

However, Criticism falls into an inconsistency by thus having its opinion of itself represented as the opinion of the world and by its *concept* being converted into *reality*. *Within Criticism itself* a sort of *Mass* is forming, a Critical Mass whose simple function is untiringly to echo the stock phrases of Criticism. For consistency's sake this inconsistency may be forgiven. Not feeling at home in the sinful world, Critical Criticism must set up a sinful world in its own home.

⁶⁸ From the French writer J. F. Marmontel's one-act comedy *Lucile*, Scene 4.

The path of Critical Criticism's correspondent, a member of the Critical Mass, is not a rosy one. It is a difficult, thorny path, a Critical path. Critical Criticism is a spiritualistic lord, pure spontaneity, *actus purus*, intolerant of any influence *from without*. The correspondent can therefore be a *subject* only *in appearance*, can only *seem* to behave *independently* towards Critical Criticism, can only *seemingly* want to communicate something new and of his own to it. In *reality* he is Critical Criticism's own *product*, its perception of its own voice made for an instant *objective* and self-existing.

That is why the correspondents do not fail to assert incessantly that Critical Criticism itself *knows, realizes, understands, grasps, and experiences* what at the same moment is being communicated to it for *appearance's sake*. Thus *Zerrleder*, for instance, uses the expressions: "Do you grasp it? You know. You know for the second and third time. You have probably heard enough to be able to see for yourself."

So too the Breslau correspondent *Fleischhammer* says: "But the fact," etc., "will be as little of a puzzle to you as to me." Or the Zurich correspondent *Hirzel*: "You will probably find out for yourself." The Critical correspondent has such anxious respect for the absolute understanding of *Critical Criticism* that he attributes understanding to it even where there is absolutely nothing to understand. For example, *Fleischhammer* says:

You will *perfectly* [!] *understand* [!] me when I tell you that one can hardly go out without meeting young Catholic priests in their long black cowls and cloaks.

Indeed, in their *fear* the correspondents *hear* Critical Criticism—*saying, answering, exclaiming, deriding!*

Zerrleder, for example, says: "But—you *say*. Well, then, listen." And *Fleischhammer*. "Yes, I hear what *you say*—I *only* mean that..." And *Hirzel*: "Good for you, you *will exclaim!*" And a Tübingen correspondent: "*Do not laugh* at me!"

The correspondents, therefore, also express themselves as though they were communicating *facts* to Critical Criticism and expect from it the *spiritual interpretation*; they provide it with *premises* and leave the *conclusion* to it, or they even *apologize* for repeating things Criticism has known for a long time.

Zerrleder, for example, says:

Your correspondent can only give a picture, a description of the facts. The Spirit which animates these things is *certainly* not unknown to *you*. [Or again:] Now you will *surely* draw the *conclusion for yourself*.

And *Hirzel* says:

I shall not presume to entertain you with the speculative proposition that every creation arises out of its extreme opposite.

Sometimes, too, the *experiences* of the correspondents are merely the *fulfilment* and *confirmation* of Criticism's *prophecies*.

Fleischhammer, for example, says:

Your *prediction* has come true.

And *Zerrleder*:

Far from being disastrous, the tendencies that I have described to you as gaining ever greater scope in Switzerland, are very *fortunate*; they *only confirm* the *thought* you have already often expressed [etc.].

Critical Criticism sometimes feels urged to express the condescension involved by its participation in the correspondence and motivates this condescension by the fact that the correspondent has successfully carried out some *task*. Thus Herr Bruno writes to the Tübingen correspondent:

It is really inconsistent on my part to answer your letter.—On the other hand, you have again... made such an *apt remark* that I... *cannot refuse* the explanation you request.

Critical Criticism has letters written to it *from the provinces*; not the provinces in the political sense, which, as we know, do not exist anywhere in Germany, but from the *Critical provinces* of which. Berlin is the capital, *Berlin*, the seat of the Critical patriarchs and of the Holy Critical Family, whereas the provinces are where the Critical Mass resides. The *Critical provincials* dare not engage the attention of the *supreme Critical authority* without bows and apologies.

Thus, someone writes anonymously to Herr *Edgar*, who, being a member of the Holy Family, is also an eminent personage:

Honorable Sir, I hope you will *excuse* these lines on the grounds that young people like to unite in common strivings (there is not more than two years' *difference* in our ages).

The coeval of Herr Edgar describes *himself* incidentally as the *essence of modern philosophy*. Is it not in the nature of things that *Criticism* should correspond with *the essence* of philosophy? If Herr Edgar's coeval affirms that he has already lost his *teeth*, that is only an allusion to his *allegorical* essence. This "essence of modern philosophy" has "learned from *Feuerbach* to set the factor of education in objective view." It at once gives a sample of its *education* and *views* by assuring Herr Edgar that it has acquired a "*complete view* of his short story," "*Es leben feste Grundsätze!*" [Long Live firm principles!" A. Weill und E. Bauer, Berliner Novellen] At the same time it openly admits that Herr Edgar's point of view is by no means quite clear to it, and finally invalidates the assurance concerning the complete view by the question: "Or have I *completely misunderstood* you?" After this sample it will be found quite normal that the essence of modern philosophy, referring to the Mass, should say:

We must at least once *condescend* to examine and untie the magic knot which bars *common human reason* from access to the *unrestricted flood of thought*.

In order to get a complete view of the Critical Mass one should read the *correspondence* of Herr *Hirzel* from Zurich (Heft V). This unfortunate man memorizes the stock phrases of Criticism with really touching docility and praiseworthy power of recall, not omitting Herr Bruno's favorite phrases about the battles he has waged and the campaigns he has planned and led. But Herr *Hirzel* exercises his profession as a member of the Critical Mass especially by raging against the *profane Mass* and its attitude to *Critical Criticism*.

He speaks of the Mass claiming a part in history, "of the pure Mass," of "pure Criticism," of the "purity of this contradiction"—"a contradiction purer than any that history has provided"—of the "*discontented being*," of the "perfect emptiness, ill humor, dejection, heartlessness, timidity, fury

and bitterness of the Mass towards Criticism”; of “the Mass which only exists in order by its resistance to make Criticism sharper and more vigilant.” He speaks of “creation from the extreme opposite,” of how Criticism is above *hate* and similar profane sentiments. The whole of Herr *Hirzel's* contribution to the *Literatur-Zeitung* is confined to this profusion of Critical stock phrases. While reproaching the Mass for being satisfied with mere “disposition,” “good will,” “the phrase,” “faith,” etc., he himself, as a member of the *Critical Mass*, is content with phrases, expressions of his “Critical disposition,” his “Critical faith,” his “Critical good will” and leaves “action, work, struggle” and “works” to Herr Bruno and Co.

Despite the terrible picture of the world-historic tension between the profane world and “Critical Criticism” which the members of the “Critical Mass” outline, for the non-believer at least not even the fact of the matter is stated, the factual existence of this *world-historic* tension. The obliging and un-Critical repetition of Criticism’s “imagination” and “pretensions” by the correspondents only proves that the fixed ideas of the master are the fixed ideas of the servant as well. It is true that one of the Critical correspondents [The reference is to the author of an anonymous report published in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, Heft VI, May 1844, in the section “Correspondenz aus der Provinz”] makes an attempt at a proof based on *fact*.

You see, [he writes to the Holy Family,] that the *Literatur-Zeitung* is fulfilling its purpose, i.e., that it meets with *no approval*. It could meet with approval only if it sounded in unison with the general thoughtlessness, if you strode proudly before it with the jingling of hackneyed phrases of a whole janissary band of current categories.

It is evident that the Critical correspondent does his best to keep pace with non-“current” hackneyed phrases. But his explanation of the fact that the *Literatur-Zeitung* meets with no approval must be rejected as purely *apologetic*. This fact could be better explained in just the opposite way by saying that Critical Criticism is in *unison* with the great mass, to be precise, the great *mass* of scribblers who meet with no approval.

It is therefore not enough for the *Critical* correspondent to address Critical hackneyed phrases to the Holy Family as “prayers” and at the same

time to the Mass as “anathemas.” *Un-Critical, mass-type* correspondents, *real* delegates of the *Mass* to Critical Criticism, are needed to show the real tension between the Mass and Criticism.

That is why Critical Criticism also assigns a place to the *un-Critical Mass*. It makes unbiased *representatives* of the latter *correspond* with it, acknowledge the opposition to itself, Criticism, as important and absolute, and utter a *fearful cry* for redemption from this opposition.

2) The “Un-Critical Mass” and “Critical Criticism”

a) *The “Obdurate Mass” and the “Unsatisfied Mass”*

The hardness of heart, the obduracy and blind unbelief of “the Mass” has one rather determined representative. This representative speaks of the exclusively “Hegelian philosophical education of the Berlin Couleur.”⁶⁹

The only true progress that we can make, [he says,] lies in the acknowledgment of reality. But we learn from you that our knowledge was not knowledge of reality but of something unreal.

He calls “natural science” the basis of philosophy.

A good naturalist stands in the same relation to the philosopher as. the philosopher to the theologian.

Further he comments as follows on the “Berlin Couleur.”

I do not think it would be exaggerating to try to explain the state of these people by saying that, although they have gone through a process of spiritual {{mouking, they have not yet altogether got rid of their old skin in order to be able to absorb the elements of renovation and rejuvenation.... We must yet assimilate this [natural-scientific and industrial] knowledge.... The knowledge of the world and of man, which we need most of all, cannot be acquired only by acuity of thought; all the

⁶⁹ Berlin Couleur was the name given by the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* correspondent to the Young Hegelians who did not belong to B. Bauer’s group and who criticized *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* on certain petty questions. One of them was Max Stirner.

senses must collaborate and all the aptitudes of man must be applied as indispensable instruments; otherwise contemplation and knowledge will always remain defective—and will lead to *moral death*.

This correspondent, however, sweetens the pill that he hands out to Critical Criticism. He “makes *Bauer’s words* find their correct application,” he has “followed *Bauer’s thoughts*,” he agrees that “*Bauer has spoken* the truth” and in the end he seems to polemize, not against *Criticism* itself, but against a “Berlin Couleur” which is distinct from it.

Critical Criticism, feeling itself hit and, moreover, being as sensitive as an old maid in all *matters of faith*, is not taken in by these distinctions and this semi-homage.

You are *mistaken*, [it answers,] if you have taken the party you described at the beginning of your letter for *your opponent*. Rather *admit* [and now comes the crushing sentence of excommunication] that *you are an opponent of Criticism itself!*

The miserable wretch! The man of the Mass! An opponent of *Criticism itself!* But as far as the content of that *mass-type* polemic is concerned, Critical Criticism declares its respect for its critical attitude to *natural science* and *industry*.”

“*All respect for natural science! All respect* for James Watt and” (a really noble turn!) “no respect at all for the millions that he made for his relatives.”

All respect for the respect of Critical Criticism! In the same letter in which Critical Criticism reproaches the above-mentioned *Berlin Couleur* with too easily disposing of thorough and solid works without studying them and having *finished* with a work when they have merely remarked that it is epoch-making, etc.—in that same letter *Criticism itself disposes* of the whole of natural science and *industry* by merely declaring its respect for them. The clause which it appends to its declaration of respect for *natural science* reminds one of the first fulminations of the deceased knight *Krug* against natural philosophy.

Nature is not the only reality *because we eat and drink it in its individual products*.

Critical Criticism knows this much about the *individual products* of nature that “we *eat and drink* them.” All respect for the natural science of Critical Criticism!

Criticism is consistent in countering the embarrassingly importunate demand to study “nature” and “industry” with the following indisputably witty rhetorical exclamation:

Or [!] do you think that the knowledge of *historical* reality is *already complete*? Or [!] do you know of any single period in history which is already *actually* known?

Or does Critical Criticism believe that it has reached even the *beginning* of a knowledge of historical reality so long as it excludes *from* the historical movement the theoretical and practical relation of man to nature, i.e., natural science and industry? Or does it think that it actually knows any period without knowing, for example, the industry of that period, the immediate mode of Production of life itself? Of course, spiritualistic, *theological* Critical Criticism only knows (at least it imagines it knows) the main political, literary and theological acts of history. Just as it separates thinking from the senses, the soul from the body and itself from the world, it separates history from natural science and industry and sees the origin of history not in vulgar *material* production on the earth but in vaporous clouds in the heavens.

The representative of the “obdurate” and “hard-hearted” Mass with his trenchant reproofs and counsels is disposed of as a *mass-type materialist*. Another correspondent, not so malicious or mass-like, who places his hopes in Critical Criticism but finds them unsatisfied, faring no better. The representative of the “*unsatisfied*” Mass writes:

I must, however, admit that the first number of your paper was *by no means satisfying*. We expected something else.

The *Critical patriarch* answers in person:

I knew beforehand that it would not satisfy expectations, because I could rather easily imagine those expectations. One is so exhausted that one wishes to have *everything at once*. Everything? No! If possible everything and nothing at the same time. An everything that costs no trouble, an everything

that one can absorb without going through any development, an everything that is contained in a single word.

In his vexation at the undue demands of the “Mass,” which demands *something*, indeed everything, from Criticism, which by principle and disposition “*gives nothing*,” the Critical patriarch relates an *anecdote* in the way that old men do. Not long ago a Berlin *acquaintance* complained bitterly of the verbosity and profusion of detail of his works—Herr Bruno is known to make a bulky work out of the tiniest semblance of a thought. He was consoled with the promise of being sent the ink necessary for the printing of the book in a small pellet so that he could easily absorb it. The patriarch explains the length of his “works” by the bad spreading of the ink, as he explains the nothingness of his *Literatur-Zeitung* by the emptiness of the “profane Mass,” which, in order to be full, wants to swallow everything and nothing at the same time.

Just as it is difficult to deny the importance of what has so far been related, it is equally difficult to see a *world-historic contradiction* in the fact that a mass-type acquaintance of Critical Criticism considers Criticism empty, while Criticism, for its part, declares him to be un-Critical; that a second acquaintance does not find that the *Literatur-Zeitung* satisfies his expectations, and that a third acquaintance and friend of the family finds Criticism’s works too bulky. However, acquaintance No. 2, who entertains expectations, and friend of the family No. 3, who wishes at least to find out the secrets of Critical Criticism, constitute the transition to a *more substantial* and tenser relationship between Criticism and the “un-Critical Mass.” Cruel as Criticism is to the “hard-hearted” Mass which has only “common human reason,” we shall find it condescending to the Mass that is pining for *redemption* from contradiction. The Mass which approaches Criticism with a contrite heart, a spirit of repentance and a humble mind will be rewarded for its honest striving with many a *wise, prophetic and outspoken* word.

b) The “Soft-Hearted” Mass “Pining for Redemption”

The representative of the *sentimental, soft-hearted Mass pining for redemption* cringes and implores Critical Criticism for a kind word with effusions of the heart, deep bows and rolling of the eyes, as follows:

Why am I writing this to you? Why am I justifying myself before you? Because I *respect* you and therefore *desire* your *respect*; because I owe you deepest *thanks* for my development and therefore *love* you. *My heart* impels me to justify myself before you... who have upbraided me.... *Far be* it from me to *obtrude* upon you; judging *by myself*, I thought you *might be pleased* to have proof of *sympathy* from a man who is still little known to you. I *make no claim whatsoever* that you should answer my letter: I wish neither to take up your time, of which you can make better use, nor to be irksome to you, nor to expose myself to the mortification of seeing something that I hoped for remain *unfulfilled*. You *may* interpret my letter as *sentimentality*, importunity or vanity [!] or whatever you like; you may answer me or not, I cannot resist the *impulse* to send it and I only hope that you will realize the *friendly feeling* which inspired it [!!].

Just as from the beginning God has had mercy on the *poor in spirit*, this mass-like but humble correspondent, too, who whimpers for mercy from Critical Criticism, has his wish *fulfilled*. Critical Criticism gives him a kind answer. More than that! It gives him most Profound explanations on the objects of his curiosity.

Two years ago, [Critical Criticism teaches,] it was opportune to remember the Enlightenment of the French in the eighteenth century in order to be able to make use of those *light troops*, too, at a place in the battle that was then being waged. The situation is now *quite different*. Truths now change very quickly. What was then *opportune* is now an *oversight*.

Of course it was only “an *oversight*” then too, but an “*opportune*” one, when the Absolute Critical All-high itself (cf. *Anekdotia*, Book II, p. 89)⁷⁰ called those *light troops* “*our saints*,” our “*prophets*,” “*patriarchs*” etc. Who would call *light troops* a *troop of “patriarchs?”* It was an “opportune” oversight when it spoke with enthusiasm of the self-denial, moral energy

⁷⁰ Marx here means B. Bauer’s article “Leiden und Freuden des theologischen Bewusstseins” (“Suffering and Joys of Theological Consciousness”) in *Anekdotia zur neuesten deutschen Philosophie und Publicistik*.

and inspiration with which these *light* troops “thought, worked—and studied—throughout their lives for the truth.” It was an “oversight” when, in the preface to *Das entdeckte Christenthum*, it was stated that these “*light*” troops seemed invincible and *any one well-informed* would have wagered that they would *put the world out of joint*” and that “it seemed beyond doubt that they would succeed in giving the world a new shape.” *Those light troops?*

Critical Criticism continues to teach the inquisitive representative of the “*cordial Mass*”:

Although it was a new historical merit of the French to attempt to set up a social theory, they are none *the less* now exhausted; their new theory was not yet pure, their social fantasies and their peaceful democracy are by no means free from the assumptions of the old state of things.

Criticism is talking here about *Fourierism*—if it is talking about anything—and in particular of the Fourierism of *La Démocratie pacifique*.⁷¹ But this is far from being the “social theory” of the French. The French have *social theories*, but not a social theory; the diluted Fourierism that *La Démocratie pacifique* preaches is nothing but the social doctrine of a section of the philanthropic bourgeoisie. The people are *communistic*, and, as a matter of fact, split into a multitude of different groups; the true movement and the elaboration of these different social shades is not only not *exhausted*, it is really only *beginning*. But it will not end in pure, i.e., abstract, *theory* as Critical Criticism would like it to; it will end in a quite *practical practice* that will not bother at all about the categorical categories of Criticism.

No nation, [Criticism chatters on,] has *so far* any advantage over another. If one can succeed in winning some spiritual superiority over the others, it will be the one which is in a position to criticize itself and the others and to discover the causes of the universal decay.

⁷¹ *La Démocratie Pacifique*—a daily paper of the Fourierists published in Paris from 1843 to 1851 under the editorship of V. Considerant.

Every nation has so far, some advantage over another. But if the Critical prophecy is right, no nation will have any advantage over another, because all the civilized peoples of Europe—the English, the Germans, the French—now “criticize themselves and others” and “are in a position to discover the causes of the universal decay.” Finally, it is high-sounding *tautology* to say that “criticizing,” “discovering,” i.e., *spiritual* activities, give a *spiritual superiority*, and Criticism, which in its infinite self-consciousness places itself above the nations and expects them to kneel at its feet and implore it for enlightenment, only shows by this caricatured Christian-Germanic idealism that it is still up to its neck in the mire of *German nationalism*.

The criticism of the French and the English is not an abstract, preternatural personality outside mankind; it is the *real human activity* of individuals who are active members of society and who suffer, feel, think and act as human beings. That is why their criticism is at the same time practical, their communism a socialism in which they give practical, concrete measures, and in which they not only think but even more act, it is the living, real criticism of existing society, the recognition of the causes of “the decay.”

After Critical Criticism’s explanations for the inquisitive member of the Mass, it is entitled to say of its *Literatur-Zeitung*:

Here Criticism that is *pure*, graphic, relevant and adds nothing is practiced.

Here “*nothing self-existing* is given”; here *nothing* at all *is given* except *criticism that gives nothing*, that is, criticism which culminates in extreme non-criticism. *Criticism* has underlined passages printed and reaches its full bloom in *excerpts*. *Wolfgang Menzel* and *Bruno Bauer* stretch a brotherly hand to each other and Critical Criticism stands where the *philosophy of identity* stood at the beginning of this century, when *Schelling* protested against the mass-like supposition that he wanted to give something, anything except *pure, entirely philosophical* philosophy.

c) *Grace Bestowed on the Mass*

The soft-hearted correspondent whose instruction we have just witnessed stood in a *comfortable* relationship to Criticism. In his case there

was only an idyllic hint of the tension between the *Mass* and *Criticism*. Both sides of the *world-historic* contradiction behaved *kindly* and *politely*, and therefore *exoterically*, to each other.

Critical Criticism, in its *unhealthy*, soul-shattering effect on the Mass, is seen first in regard to a correspondent who has one foot already in Criticism and the other still in the profane world. He represents the “Mass” in its *inner* struggle with Criticism.

At times it seems to him “that Herr Bruno and his friends do not understand *mankind*,” that “they are the ones who are really blinded.” Then he immediately corrects himself:

Yes, it is *as clear as daylight* to me that you are right and that your thoughts are correct; but *excuse* me, the people is not wrong *either*.... Oh yes! The people is right.... I cannot deny that you are right.... I really do not know what it will all lead to: you will say... well, stay at home.... *Alas!* I can no longer stand it.... *Alas!* One might otherwise go *mad* in the end.... *Kindly* accept... Believe me, the knowledge one has acquired sometimes makes one feel as *stupid* as if a mill-wheel were turning in one’s head.

Another correspondent, too, writes that he “is *occasionally disconcerted*.” One can see that *Critical grace* is about *to be bestowed* on this mass-type correspondent. The poor wretch! The sinful Mass is tugging at him on one side and Critical Criticism on the other. It is not the knowledge he has acquired that reduces this pupil of Critical Criticism to a state of stupor; it is the question of *faith* and *conscience*; Critical Christ or the people, God or the world, Bruno Bauer and his friends or the profane Mass! But just as bestowal of *divine* grace is preceded by extreme wretchedness of the sinner, Critical grace is preceded by a crushing *stupefaction*. And when it is at last bestowed, the chosen one loses not stupidity but the *consciousness of stupidity*.

3) The Un-Critically Critical Mass or “Criticism” and the “Berlin Couleur”

Critical Criticism has not succeeded in depicting itself as the *essential opposite*, and hence at the same time as the *essential object*, of the mass

of humanity. Apart from the representatives of the *obdurate* Mass which reproaches Critical Criticism for its *objectlessness* and gives it to understand in the most courteous possible way that it has not yet gone through the *process* of its spiritual “*moult*” and must first of all acquire solid knowledge, there is the *soft-hearted* correspondent. He is no *opposite* at all, but then the actual reason for his approach to Critical Criticism is a *purely personal* one. As we can see a little further on in his letter, he really only wants to reconcile his devotion to Herr Arnold Ruge with his devotion to Herr *Bruno Bauer*. This attempt at reconciliation does credit to his kind heart, but it in no way constitutes an *interest of a mass nature*. Finally, the last correspondent to appear was no longer a *real* member of the Mass, he was only a catechumen of Critical Criticism.

In general, the *Mass* is an *indefinite* object, and therefore can neither carry out a definite action nor enter into a definite relationship. *The Mass*, as the object of Critical Criticism, has nothing in common with the *real* masses who, for their part, form among themselves oppositions of a pronounced mass nature. *Critical Criticism's* mass is “made” by Criticism itself, as would be the case if a naturalist, instead of speaking of definite classes, contrasted *the Class* to himself.

Hence, in order to have an opposite of a really mass nature, *Critical Criticism* needs, besides this *abstract* Mass which is the figment of its own brain, a *definite Mass* that can be empirically demonstrated and not just conjured up. This Mass must see in Critical Criticism both its *essence and the annihilation of its essence*. It must wish to be Critical Criticism, non-Mass, without *being able to*. This Critically un-Critical Mass is the above-mentioned “*Berlin Couleur*.” The *mass* of humanity which is seriously concerned with Critical Criticism is confined to a Berlin Couleur.

The “Berlin Couleur,” the “*essential object*” of Critical Criticism, of which it is always thinking and which, Critical Criticism imagines, is always thinking of Critical Criticism, consists, as far as we know, of a few *ci-devant* [former] *Young Hegelians* in whom Critical Criticism claims to inspire partly a *horror vacui* [horror of emptiness] and partly a feeling of *futility*. We are not investigating the actual state of affairs, we rely on what *Criticism* says.

The *Correspondence* is mainly intended to expound *at length* to the public this *world-historic* relation of *Criticism* to the “Berlin Couleur,” to reveal its profound significance, to show why *Criticism* must necessarily be cruel towards this “Mass,” and finally to make it appear that *the whole world* is in fearful agitation over this opposition, expressing itself now in favor of, and then against the actions of *Criticism*. For example, *Absolute Criticism* writes to a correspondent who sides with the “Berlin Couleur”:

I have *already* heard things like that *so often* that I have made up my mind not to take any more notice of them.

The world has no idea how often it has dealt with Critical things *like that*.

Let us now hear what a member of the Critical Mass reports on the Berlin Couleur:

“If anyone recognizes the Bauers” [the Holy Family must always be recognized *pêle-mêle*] began his answer⁷²—I am the one. But the *Literatur-zeitung*! Let us be quite fair. It was interesting for me to hear what one of those radicals, those clever men of anno 42, thought of you.

The correspondent goes on to report that the unfortunate man had all sorts of reproaches to make to the *Literatur-Zeitung*.

Herr Edgar’s short story, *Die drei Biedermdnner*, he found lacking in polish and exaggerated. He could not understand that *ensorship* is not so much a fight of man against man, an external fight, as an internal one. They do not take the trouble to bethink themselves and to replace the *phrase the censor objects to* by a *cleverly* expressed and thoroughly developed *Critical thought*. He found Herr Edgar’s essay on Béraud lacking in thoroughness. The Critical reporter thinks it was thorough. True he admitted himself: “I have *not* read Béraud’s book.” But he *believes* that Herr Edgar has *succeeded*, etc., and belief, we know, is {{bhss. “In general,” the Critical believer continues, “he” (the one from the Berlin Couleur) “*is not at all satisfied* with Herr Edgar’s works.” He also finds that

⁷² The reference is to the answer given by an adherent to the Berlin Couleur to one of the authors of the anonymous report “Aus der Provinz” published in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, Heft VI, May 1844.

“*Proudhon* is not dealt with *thoroughly* enough.” And here the reporter gives Herr Edgar a testimonial:

It is true [!?] *that I am acquainted with Proudhon. I know that Edgar’s presentation took the characteristic points from him and set them out clearly.*

The only reason why Herr Edgar’s *excellent* criticism of Proudhon is not liked, the reporter says, can only be that Herr Edgar does *not fulminate* against property. And just imagine it, the opponent finds Herr Edgar’s essay on the “*Union ouvrière*” *unimportant*. To console Herr Edgar the reporter says:

Of course, it does not give anything *independent*, and these people have really gone back to *Gruppe’s* point of view, which, to be sure, they have *always maintained*. Criticism must give, give and *give!*

As though Criticism had not given quite new linguistic, historical, philosophical, economic, and juridical discoveries. And it is so modest as to let itself be told that it has not given anything *independent!* Even our Critical correspondent gave mechanics something that it had not hitherto known when he made people *go back to the same* point of view which they had always *maintained*. It is clumsy to recall *Gruppe’s* point of view. In his pamphlet, which is otherwise miserable and not worth mentioning, Gruppe asked Herr Bruno what criticism he could give on *speculative logic*. Herr Bruno referred him to future generations and—

a fool is waiting for an answer.⁷³

As God punished the unbelieving Pharaoh by hardening his heart and did *not think* him *worthy* of being enlightened, so the reporter assures us:

They are therefore *not at all worthy* of seeing or knowing the contents of your *Literatur-Zeitung*.

And instead of advising his friend Edgar to acquire thoughts and knowledge he gives him the following advice:

⁷³ Heine—Die Nordsee (Second cycle “Fragen”).

Let Edgar get a *bag of phrases* and draw blindly out of it when he writes essays in future, in order to acquire a style in harmony with the public.

Besides assurances of “a certain fury, ill-favor, emptiness, thoughtlessness, an inkling of something which they are not able to fathom, and a feeling of nullity” (all these epithets apply, of course, to the Berlin Couleur), eulogies like the following are made of the Holy Family:

Lightness of treatment penetrating the matter, command of the categories, insight acquired by study, in a word, *command of the Objects*. He [of the Berlin Couleur] takes an easy attitude to the thing, you make the thing easy. [Or:] Your criticism in the *Literatur-Zeitung* is pure, graphic and relevant.

Finally it is stated:

I have written it all to you at such length because I know that I shall give you *pleasure* by reporting the opinions of my friend. From this you can see that the *Literatur-Zeitung* is fulfilling its purpose.

Its purpose is opposition to the Berlin Couleur. Having just witnessed the *Berlin Couleur's polemic* against Critical Criticism and the reproof it received for that polemic, we are now given a double picture of its efforts to obtain mercy from Critical Criticism.

One correspondent writes:

My acquaintances in Berlin told me when I was there at the beginning of the year that you repel all and keep all at a distance; that you keep yourself to yourself and let nobody approach you, assiduously avoiding all intercourse. I, of course, cannot tell which side is to blame.

Absolute Criticism replies:

Criticism does *not* form any *party* and will have no party of its own; it is *solitary* because it is engrossed in *its* [!] object and opposes itself to it. It *isolates itself from everything*.

Critical Criticism thinks it rises above all dogmatic antitheses by substituting for the real antitheses the imaginary antithesis between *itself and the world*, between the *Holy Ghost* and the *profane Mass*. In the same way it thinks it rises *above parties* by falling *below the party point of view*, by counterposing itself as a *party* to the rest of mankind and concentrating all interest in the personality of Herr Bruno and Co. The truth of Criticism's *admission* that it sits enthroned in the solitude of *abstraction*, that even when it seems to be occupied with some *object* it does not come out of its objectless solitude into a truly social relation to a *real object*, because *its object* is only the object of its *imagination*, only an imaginary object—the truth of this Critical *admission* is proved by the whole of our exposition. Equally correctly Criticism defines its *abstraction* as *absolute abstraction*, in the sense that “it *isolates itself from everything*,” and precisely this isolation of *nothing from everything*, from *all thought*, contemplation, etc., is *absolute nonsense*. Incidentally, the solitude which it achieves by isolating and abstracting itself from *everything* is no more free from the object from which it abstracts itself than *Origen* was from the *genital organ* that he *isolated* from himself.

Another correspondent begins by describing *one* of the members of the “Berlin Couleur,” whom he saw and spoke with, as “gloomy,” “depressed,” “no longer able to open his mouth” (although he was formerly always “ready with a quite *impudent* word”), and “despondent.” This member of the “Berlin Couleur” related the following to the correspondent, who in turn reported it to Criticism:

He cannot grasp how people like you two, who formerly respected the principle of humanity, can behave in such an aloof, repelling, indeed arrogant manner. [He does not know] why there are some people who, it seems, Intentionally cause a split. Have we not all the same point of view? Do we not all *pay homage* to the extreme, to Criticism? Are we not all capable, if not of producing, at least of grasping and applying an extreme thought? [He] finds that this split is motivated by no other principle than egoism and arrogance.

Then the correspondent puts in a good word:

Have not at least some of our friends grasped *Criticism*, or perhaps *the good will of Criticism*... “*ut desint vires, tamen est laudanda voluntas.*” [the strength may be lacking, but the will is praiseworthy.]

Criticism replies with the following *antitheses* between itself and the Berlin Couleur:

“There are *various* standpoints on criticism.” The members of the Berlin Couleur “thought they had criticism in their pocket,” but Criticism “really knows and applies the force of criticism,” i.e., does not keep it in its pocket. For the former, criticism is pure form, whereas for Criticism, on the other hand, it is the “*most substantial* or rather the only substantial thing.” Just as Absolute Thought considers itself the whole of reality, so does Critical Criticism. That is why it sees no content *outside itself* and is therefore not the criticism of *real* objects existing outside the Critical subject; on the contrary, it *makes* the object, it is the Absolute *Subject-Object*. Further! “The former kind of criticism disposes of everything, of the investigation of things, by means of phrases. The latter isolates itself *from everything* by means of phrases.” The former is “*clever in ignorance*,” the latter is “learning.” The latter, at any rate, is not clever, it learns *par ça, par là* [here and there], but only in appearance, only in order to be able to fling what it has superficially learned from the Mass back at the Mass in the form of a “catchword,” as wisdom that it itself has discovered, and to resolve it into the nonsense of Critical Criticism.

For the former, words such as “extreme,” “proceed,” “not go far enough” are of importance and highly revered categories; the latter investigates the *standpoints* and does not apply to them the *measures* of those abstract categories.

The exclamations of Criticism No. 2 that it is no longer a question of politics, that philosophy is done away with, and its dismissal of social systems and developments by means of words like “fantastic,” “utopian,” etc.—what is all that if not a *Critically revised* version of “proceeding” and “not going far enough?” And are not its “measures,” such as “*History*,” “*Criticism*,” “summing up of objects,” “the old and the new,” “Criticism and Mass,” “investigation of standpoints”—in a word, are not all its catchwords *categorical measures* and abstractly categorical ones at that!?

The former is theological, spiteful, envious, petty, presumptuous, the latter is the *opposite* of all that.

After thus praising itself a dozen times in one breath and ascribing to itself all that the Berlin Couleur lacks, just as God is all that *man is not*, *Criticism* bears witness to itself that:

It has achieved a clarity, a thirst for learning, a tranquility in which it is *unassailable* and *invincible*.

Hence it can “at the most treat” its opponent, the Berlin Couleur, “with *Olympic laughter*.” This *laughter*—it explains with its customary thoroughness what it is and what it is not—“this laughter is not arrogance.” By no means! It is the negation of the negation. It is “*only the process that the Critic must apply* in all ease and equanimity against a *subordinate standpoint* which *thinks* itself *equal* to him” (what conceit!). When *the Critic* laughs, therefore, he is *applying a process*! And “in all equanimity” he applies the *process of laughter* not against *persons*, but against a *standpoint*! Even *laughter* is a category which he applies and even *must* apply!

Extramundane Criticism is not an *essential activity* of the *human subject* who is *real* and therefore lives and suffers in *present-day* society, sharing in its pains and pleasures. The *real* individual is only an *accidental feature*, an earthly vessel of *Critical Criticism*, which reveals itself in it as *eternal Substance*. The subject is not the human individual’s criticism, but the *non-human individual of Criticism*. Criticism is not a *manifestation of man*, but man is an *alienation of Criticism*, and that is why the Critic lives completely outside society.

Can the Critic live in the society which he criticizes?

It should be asked instead: Must he not live in that society? Must he not himself be a manifestation of the life of that society? Why does the Critic *sell* the products of his mind, for thereby he makes the worst law of present-day society his own law?

The Critic must not even dare to mix *personally* with society.

That is why he creates for himself a *Holy Family*, just as the solitary God endeavours in the Holy Family to end his tedious isolation from soci-

ety. If the Critic *wants to free himself* from *bad society* he must first of all free himself from *his own society*.

Thus the Critic dispenses with *all the pleasures of society*, but *its sufferings*, too, stay remote from him. He knows neither friendship [except that of Critical friends] nor love [except *self-love*] but on the other hand calumny is powerless against him; nothing can offend him; no hatred, no envy can affect him; vexation and grief are *feelings unknown* to him.

In short, the Critic is free from all *human passions*, he is a *divine person*; he can apply to himself the song of the nun.

*I think not of a lover,
I think not of a spouse.
I think of God the Father
For he my life endows.*⁷⁴

Criticism cannot write a single passage without contradicting itself. Thus it tells us finally:

The Philistinism that stones the Critic [he has to be stoned by analogy with the Bible,] that misjudges him and ascribes *impure* motives to him [ascribes *impure* motives to *pure* Criticism!] in order to make *him equal to itself* [the conceit of equality reproved above!,] is *not laughed at* by him, because it is not worth it, but is seen through and calmly {{rciezated to its own insignificant significance.

Earlier the Critic *had to apply the process of laughter* to the “subordinate standpoint that thought itself equal to him.” Critical Criticism’s unclarity about its mode of procedure with the godless “Mass” seems almost to indicate an interior irritation, a sort of bile to which “feelings” are not “unknown.”

However, there should be no misunderstanding. Having waged a Herculean struggle *to free* itself from the uncritical “profane Mass” and “everything,” Critical Criticism has at last succeeded in achieving its *solitary, god-like, self-sufficient, absolute* existence. If in its first pronouncement

⁷⁴ From the German folk song Nönnchen.

in this, its “new phase,” the old world of *sinful feelings* seems still to have some power over it, we shall now see Criticism find aesthetic relaxation and *transfiguration* in an “*artistic form*” and complete its *penance* so it can finally as a second triumphant *Christ* accomplish the *Critical last judgment* and after its victory over the dragon ascend calmly to heaven.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EARTHLY COURSE AND
TRANSFIGURATION OF “CRITICAL CRITICISM,”

OR

“CRITICAL CRITICISM”
AS RUDOLPH, PRINCE OF GEROLDSTEIN

[In this chapter Marx continues his criticism of Szeliga's article "Eugène Sue: Die Geheimnisse von Paris"]

Rudolph, Prince of Geroldstein, *does penance* in his *earthly course* for a *double crime*: his *personal crime* and that of *Critical Criticism*. In a furious dialogue, he drew his sword against his father; Critical Criticism, also in a furious dialogue, let itself be carried away by sinful feelings against the Mass. Critical Criticism did not reveal a *single* mystery. Rudolph does penance for that and reveals *all* mysteries.

Rudolph, Herr Szeliga informs us, is the *first* servant of the *state* of humanity (the *Humanitätsstaat* of the Swabian *Egidius*).⁷⁵

For *the world not to be destroyed*, Herr Szeliga asserts, it is necessary that

Men of ruthless criticism appear.... Rudolph is *such* a man.... Rudolph grasps the thought of *pure criticism*. And that thought is more fruitful for him and mankind than *all* the experiences of the latter in its *history*, than *all* the knowledge that Rudolph, guided even by the most reliable teacher, was able to derive from that history.... The impartial judgment by which Rudolph perpetuates his *earthly course* is, *in fact*, nothing but *the revelation of the mysteries of society*.
[He is:] *the revealed mystery of all mysteries*.

Rudolph has far more external means at his disposal than the other men of Critical Criticism. But the latter consoles itself:

Unattainable for those less favored by destiny are Rudolph's *results* [!], not unattainable is the splendid goal [!].

That is why Criticism leaves the *realization* of its own *thoughts* to Rudolph, who is so favored by destiny. It sings to him:

Hahnemann, go on ahead.

You've waders on, you won't get wet!⁷⁶

Let us accompany Rudolph in his Critical earthly course, which "is *more fruitful* for *mankind* than *all the experiences* of the latter in its

⁷⁵ See *Konstitutionelle Jahrbücher* by Dr. Karl Weil, 1844, Bd. 266.

⁷⁶ From the German comic folk-tale Seven Suabans.

history, than *all the knowledge*" etc., and which twice saves the world from *destruction*.

1) Critical Transformation of a Butcher into a Dog, or Chourineur

Chourineur [French thieves' slang for a murderous ruffian] was a butcher by trade. Owing to a concourse of circumstances, this mighty son of nature becomes a murderer. Rudolph comes across him accidentally just when he is molesting Fleur de Marie. Rudolph gives the dexterous brawler a few impressive, masterly punches on the head, and thus wins his respect. Later, in the tavern frequented by criminals, Chourineur's kind-hearted disposition is revealed. "You still have heart and honor," Rudolph says to him. By these words he instills in Chourineur respect for himself. Chourineur is reformed or, as Herr Szeliga says, is transformed into a "*moral being*." Rudolph takes him under his protection. Let us follow the course of Chourineur's education under the guidance of Rudolph.

1st Stage. The first lesson Chourineur receives is a lesson in hypocrisy, faithlessness, craft and *dissimulation*. Rudolph uses the reformed Chourineur in exactly the same way as *Vidocq* used the criminals he had reformed, i.e., he makes him a *mouchard* [police spy] and *agent provocateur*. He advises him to "*pretend*" to the "*maître d'école*" [the gang leader's nickname given by his fellow criminals] that he has altered his "principle of not stealing" and to suggest a robbery so as to lure him into a trap set by Rudolph. Chourineur feels that he is being made a fool of. He protests against the suggestion of playing the role of *mouchard* and *agent provocateur*. Rudolph easily convinces the son of nature by the "*pure*" *casuistry* of Critical Criticism that a foul trick is not foul when it is done for "*good, moral*" reasons. Chourineur, as an *agent provocateur* and under the pretense of friendship and confidence, lures his former companion to destruction. For the first time in his life he commits an act of *infamy*.

2nd Stage. We next find Chourineur acting as *garde-malade* [sick attendant] to Rudolph, whom he has saved from mortal danger.

Chourineur has become such a *respectable moral* being that he rejects the Negro doctor David's suggestion to sit on the floor, for fear of dirtying the carpet. He is indeed too *shy* to sit on a chair. He first lays the chair on its back and then sits on the front legs. He never fails to apologize when

he addresses Rudolph, whom he saved from a mortal danger, as “friend” or “*Monsieur*” instead of “*Monseigneur*.”

What a wonderful training of the ruthless son of nature! Chourineur expresses the innermost secret of his Critical transformation when he admits to Rudolph that he has the same attachment for him as a *bulldog* for its master: “Je me sens pour vous, comme qui dirait *l’attachement* d’un *bouledogue* pour son maître.” The former butcher is transformed into a dog. Henceforth all his virtues will be reduced to the virtue of a dog, pure “dévouement [devotion]” to its master. His independence, his individuality will disappear completely. But just as bad painters have to label their pictures to say what they are supposed to represent, Eugène Sue has to put a label on “*bulldog*” Chourineur, who constantly affirms: “The two words, ‘You still have heart and honor,’ made a man out of me.” Until his very last breath, Chourineur will find the motive for his actions, not in his human individuality, but in that label. As proof of his moral reformation he will often reflect on his own excellence and the wickedness of other individuals. And every time he throws out moral sentences, Rudolph will say to him: “I like to hear you *speak* like that.” Chourineur has not become an ordinary *bulldog* but a *moral one*.

3rd Stage. We have already admired the *petty-bourgeois respectability* which has taken the place of Chourineur’s coarse but *daring* unceremoniousness. We now learn that, as befits a “*moral being*,” he has also adopted the gait and demeanor of the *petty bourgeois*.

A le voir marcher—on l’eût pris pour le bourgeois le plus inoffensif du monde. [To see him walk you would have taken him for the most harmless bourgeois in the world.]

Still sadder than this form is the content that Rudolph gives his Critically reformed life. He sends him to Africa “to serve as a living and salutary example of repentance to the world of unbelievers.” In future, he will have to represent, not his own human nature, but a Christian dogma.

4th Stage. The Critically moral transformation has made Chourineur a quiet, cautious man who behaves according to the rules of fear and worldly wisdom.

Chourineur, [reports Murph, who in his indiscreet simplicity continually tells tales out of school] said nothing of the pun-

ishment meted out to the *maître d'école*, for fear of compromising himself.

So Chourineur knows that the punishment of the *maître d'école* was an illegal act. But he does not talk about it for fear of compromising himself. *Wise Chourineur!*

5th Stage. Chourineur has carried his moral education to such perfection that he gives his *dog-like* attitude to Rudolph a civilized form—he becomes conscious of it. After saving *Germain* from a mortal danger he says to him:

I have a protector who is to me what *God* is to *priests*—he is such as to make one kneel before him.

And in imagination he kneels before his God.

Monsieur Rudolph [he says to *Germain*,] protects you. I say “*Monsieur*” though I should say “*Monseigneur*.” But I am used to calling him “*Monsieur Rudolph*,” and he allows me to.

“Magnificent awakening and flowering!” exclaims Szeliga in Critical delight.

6th Stage. Chourineur worthily ends his career of pure *dévouement*, or moral bulldogishness, by finally letting himself be stabbed to death for his gracious lord. At the moment when Squelette threatens the prince with his knife, Chourineur stays the murderer’s arm. Squelette stabs him. But, dying, Chourineur says to Rudolph:

I was right when I said that a *lump of earth* [a bulldog] like me can sometimes be useful to a *great and gracious master* like you.

To this dog-like utterance, which sums up the whole of Chourineur’s Critical life like an epigram, the label put in his mouth adds:

We are quits, Monsieur Rudolph. You told me that I had heart and honor.

Herr Szeliga cries as loud as he can:

What a merit it was for Rudolph to have restored the *Schuriman* [Germanized form of Chourineur] [?] to *mankind* [?!]

2) Revelation of the Mystery of Critical Religion, or Fleur De Marie

[*Fleur de Marie* is translated by the authors into German as “*Marien-Blume*” which means *Marguerite*].

a) *The Speculative “Marguerite”*

A word more about Herr Szeliga’s speculative “Marguerite” before we go on to Eugène Sue’s *Fleur de Marie*.

The speculative “Marguerite” is above all a *correction*. The fact is that the reader could conclude from Herr Szeliga’s construction that Eugène Sue had

separated the presentation of the objective basis [of the “world system”] from the development of the acting individual forces which can be understood only against that background.

Besides the task of correcting this erroneous conjecture that the reader may have made from Herr Szeliga’s presentation, Marguerite has also a metaphysical mission in our, or rather Herr Szeliga’s, “epic.”

The *world system* and an epic event *would still not* be artistically united in a really *single* whole if they were only interspersed in a motley mixture—now here a bit of world system and then there some stage play. If *real unity* is to result, both things, the mysteries of this prejudiced *world* and the clarity, frankness and confidence with which *Rudolph* penetrates and reveals them, must clash in a *single* individual.... This is the task of Marguerite.

Herr Szeliga speculatively constructs Marguerite by analogy with *Bauer’s* construction of the *Mother of God*.

On one side is the “*divine element*” (*Rudolph*) to, which “all power and freedom” are attributed, the only *active* principle. On the other side is the passive “*world system*” and the human beings belonging to it. The world system is the “ground of reality.” If this ground is not to be “entirely abandoned” or “the last remnant of the natural condition is not to be abolished”; if the world itself is to have some share in the “principle of development” that *Rudolph*, in contrast to the world, concentrates in himself; if “the human element is not to be represented simply as unfree

and inactive,” Herr Szeliga is bound to fall into the “contradiction of religious consciousness.” Although he tears apart the world system and its activity as the dualism of a dead Mass and Criticism (Rudolph), he is nevertheless obliged to concede some attributes of divinity to the world system and the mass and to give in Marguerite a speculative construction of the unity of the two, Rudolph and the world (see *Kritik der Synoptiker*, Band 1, p. 39).

Besides the real relations of the *house-owner*, the acting “individual force,” to his *house* (the “objective basis”), mystical speculation, and speculative aesthetics too, need a third *concrete, speculative unity*, a *Subject-Object*, which is the house and the house-owner in *one*. As speculation does not like natural mediations in their extensive circumstantiality, it does not realize that the same “bit of world system,” the house, for example, which for one, the house-owner, for example, is an “objective basis,” is for the other, the builder of the house, an “epic event.” In order to get a “really single whole” and “real unity.” Critical Criticism, which reproaches “romantic art” with the “dogma of unity,” replaces the natural and human connection between the world system and world events by a fantastic connection, a mystical Subject-Object, just as *Hegel* replaces the real connection between man and nature by an absolute Subject-Object, which is at one and the same time the whole of nature and the whole of humanity, the *Absolute Spirit*.

In the Critical Marguerite “the universal guilt of the time, the guilt of mystery,” becomes the “*mystery of guilt*,” just as the universal debt [a pun on the word “Schuld” which means “guilt” and “debt”] of mystery becomes *the mystery of debts* in the indebted *Epicier* [grocer].

According to the Mother-of-God construction, Marguerite should really have been the *mother of Rudolph*, the redeemer of the world. Herr Szeliga expressly says:

According to the *logical sequence*, Rudolph should have been the *son* of Marguerite.

Since, however, he is not her son, but her father, Herr Szeliga finds in this “the new mystery that the present often bears in its womb the long departed past instead of the future.” He even reveals another mystery, a

still greater one, a mystery which directly contradicts mass-type statistics, the mystery that

a child, if it does not, in its turn, become a father or mother, but goes to its grave pure and innocent, is... *essentially... a daughter.*

Herr Szeliga faithfully follows Hegel's speculation when, according to the "logical sequence," he regards the daughter as the mother of her father. In Hegel's philosophy of history, as in his philosophy of nature, the son engenders the mother, the spirit nature, the Christian religion paganism, the result, the beginning.

After proving that according to the "logical sequence" Marguerite ought to have been Rudolph's mother, Herr Szeliga proves the opposite:

in order to conform fully to the *idea* she embodies in *our* epic, she must *never become a mother.*

This shows at least that the idea of our epic and Herr Szeliga's logical sequence are mutually contradictory.

The speculative Marguerite is nothing but the "*embodiment of an idea.*" But what idea?

She has the task of representing, *as it were*, the last tear of grief that the past sheds prior to its final passing away.

She is the representation of an allegorical tear, and even this little that she is, is only "*as it were.*"

We shall not follow Herr Szeliga in his further description of Marguerite. We shall leave her the satisfaction, according to Herr Szeliga's prescription, of "constituting *the most decisive* antithesis to *everyone*," a mysterious antithesis, as mysterious as the attributes of God.

Neither shall we delve into the "*true mystery*" that is "deposited *by God* in the breast of man" and at which the speculative Marguerite "as it were" hints. We shall pass from Herr Szeliga's Marguerite to Eugène Sue's Fleur de Marie and to the Critical miraculous cures Rudolph operates on her.

b) Fleur de Marie

We meet Marie surrounded by criminals, as a prostitute in bondage to the proprietress of the criminals' tavern. In this debasement she preserves

a human nobleness of soul, a human unaffectedness and a human beauty that impress those around her, raise her to the level of a poetical flower of the criminal world and win for her the name of Fleur de Marie.

We must observe Fleur de Marie attentively from her first appearance in order to be able to compare her *original form* with her *Critical transformation*.

In spite of her frailty, Fleur de Marie at once gives proof of vitality, energy, cheerfulness, resilience of character—qualities which alone explain her human development in her *inhuman* situation.

When Chourineur ill-treats her, she defends herself with her scissors. That is the situation in which we first find her. She does not appear as a defenseless lamb who surrenders without any resistance to overwhelming brutality; she is a girl who can vindicate her rights and put up a fight.

In the criminals' tavern in the Rue aux Fèves she tells Chourineur and Rudolph the story of her life. As she does so, she *laughs* at Chourineur's wit. She blames herself because on being released from prison she spent the 300 francs she had earned there on amusements instead of looking for work. "But," she said, "I had no one to advise me." The memory of the catastrophe of her life—her selling herself to the proprietress of the criminals' tavern—puts her in a melancholy mood. It is the first time since her childhood that she has recalled these events.

Le fait est, que ça me chagrine de regarder ainsi derrière moi... il doit être bien bon d'être honnête. [The fact is that it grieves me when I look back in this way... it must be lovely to be honest.]

When Chourineur makes fun of her and tells her she must become honest, she exclaims:

Honnête, mon dieu! et avec quoi donc veux-tu que je sois honnête? [Honest! My God! What do you want me to be honest with?]

She insists that she is not one "to have fits of tears": "*Je ne suis pas pleurnicheuse*" [I am no cry-baby]; but her position in life is sad—"Ça nest pas gai." [It isn't a happy one] Finally, contrary to Christian *repentance*, she

pronounces on the past the human sentence, at once *Stoic* and Epicurean, of a free and strong nature:

Enfin ce qui est fait, est fait. [Well, what is done is done]

Let us accompany Fleur de Marie on her first outing with Rudolph.

“The consciousness of your terrible situation has probably often distressed you,” Rudolph says, itching to moralize.

Yes, [she replies,] more than once I looked over the embankment of the Seine; but then I would gaze at the flowers and the sun and say to myself: the river will always be there and I am not yet seventeen years old. Who can say? *On such occasions it seemed to me that I had not deserved my fate, that I had something good in me. People have tormented me enough, I used to say to myself, but at least I have never done any harm to anyone.*

Fleur de Marie considers her situation not as one she has freely created, not as the expression of her own personality, but as a fate she has not deserved. Her bad fortune can change. She is still young.

Good and *evil*, as Marie conceives them, are not the *moral abstractions* of good and evil. She is *good* because she has never caused *suffering* to anyone, she has always been *human* towards her inhuman surroundings. She is *good* because the sun and the flowers reveal to her her own sunny and blossoming nature. She is good because she is still *young*, full of hope and vitality. Her situation is *not good*, because it puts an unnatural constraint on her, because it is not the expression of her human impulses, not the fulfilment of her human desires; because it is full of torment and without joy. She measures her situation in life by her own *individuality*, her *essential nature*, not by *the ideal of what is good*.

In *natural* surroundings, where the chains of bourgeois life fall away, and she can freely manifest her own nature, Fleur de Marie bubbles over with love of life, with a wealth of feeling, with human joy at the beauty of nature; these show that her social position has only grazed the surface of her and is a mere misfortune, that she herself is neither good nor bad, but *human*.

Monsieur Rudolph, what happiness!... grass, fields! If you would allow me to get out, the weather is so fine... I should love so much to run about in these meadows.

Alighting from the carriage, she plucks flowers for Rudolph, can hardly speak for joy," etc., etc.

Rudolph tells her that he is going to take her to *Madame George's farm*. There she can see dove-cotes, cow-stalls and so forth; there they have milk, butter, fruit, etc. Those are real *blessings* for this child. She will *be merry*, that is her main thought. "You can't believe how I am longing for some fun!" She explains to Rudolph in the most unaffected way her own share of responsibility for her misfortune. "My whole fate is due to the fact that I did not save up my money." She therefore advises him to be thrifty and to put money in the savings-bank. Her fancy runs wild in the castles in the air that Rudolph builds for her. She becomes sad only because she

has forgotten the present [and] the contrast of that present with the dream of a joyous and laughing existence reminds her of the cruelty of her situation.

So far we have seen Fleur de Marie in her original un-Critical form. Eugène Sue has risen above the horizon of his narrow world outlook. He has slapped bourgeois prejudice in the face. He will hand over Fleur de Marie to the hero Rudolph to atone for his temerity and to reap applause from all old men and women, from the whole of the Paris police, from the current religion and from "Critical Criticism."

Madame George, to whom Rudolph entrusts Fleur de Marie, is an unhappy, hypochondriacal religious woman. She immediately welcomes the child with the unctuous words: "God blesses those who love and fear him, who have been unhappy and who *repent*." Rudolph, the man of "pure Criticism," has the wretched priest *Laporte*, whose hair has greyed in superstition, called in. He has the mission of accomplishing Fleur de Marie's Critical reform.

Joyfully and unaffectedly Marie approaches the old priest. In his Christian brutality, *Eugène Sue* makes a "marvelous instinct" at once whisper in her ear that "*shame* ends where *repentance* and *penance* begin," that is, in the church, which alone saves. He forgets the unconstrained merriness of the outing, a merriness which nature's grace and Rudolph's friendly

sympathy had produced, and which was troubled only by the thought of having to go back to the criminals' landlady.

The priest Laporte immediately adopts a *supermundane* attitude. His first words are:

God's mercy is infinite, my dear child! He has proved it to you by not abandoning you in your severe trials.... The magnanimous man who saved you fulfilled the *word of the Scriptures* [note—the word of the Scriptures, not a human purpose!] Verily the Lord is nigh to those who invoke him; he will fulfill their desires... he will hear their voice and will save them... the Lord will accomplish *his* work.

Marie cannot yet understand the evil meaning of the priest's exhortations. She answers:

I shall pray for those who pitied me and brought me back to God.

Her first thought is *not* for God, it is for her *human* savior and she wants to pray for *him*, not for her *own* absolution. She attributes to her prayer some influence on the salvation of others. Indeed, she is still so naïve that she supposes she has *already been brought back* to God. The priest feels it is his duty to destroy this unorthodox illusion.

Soon, [he says, interrupting her,] soon you will deserve absolution, absolution from your great errors... for, to quote the prophet once more, the Lord holdeth up those who are on the brink of falling.

One should not fail to see the inhuman expressions the priest uses. Soon you will deserve absolution. Your sins are *not yet forgiven*.

As Laporte, when he receives the girl, bestows on her the *consciousness of her sins*, so Rudolph, when he leaves her, presents her with a gold *cross*, the symbol of the *Christian crucifixion* awaiting her.

Marie has already been living for some time on Madame George's farm. Let us first listen to a dialogue between the old priest Laporte and Madame George.

He considers "marriage" out of the question for Marie

because no man, in spite of the priest's guarantee, will have the courage to face the past that has soiled her youth. [He adds:] she has great errors to atone for, her moral sense ought to have kept her upright.

He proves, as the commonest of bourgeois would, that she could have remained good: "There are many virtuous people in Paris today." The hypocritical priest knows quite well that at any hour of the day, in the busiest streets, those virtuous people of Paris pass indifferently by little girls of seven or eight years who sell *allumettes* [matches], and the like until about midnight as Marie herself used to do and who, almost without exception, will have the same fate as Marie.

The priest has made up his mind concerning Marie's *penance*; in his own mind he has already *condemned* her. Let us follow Marie when she is accompanying Laporte home in the evening.

See, my child, [he begins with unctuous eloquence,] the boundless horizon the limits of which are no longer visible [for it is evening,] it seems to me that the calm and the vastness almost give us an idea of eternity.... I am telling you this, Marie, because you are sensitive to the beauties of creation.... I have often been moved by the religious admiration which they inspire in you—you who for so long were deprived of religious feeling.

The priest has already succeeded in changing Marie's immediate naïve pleasure in the beauties of nature into a *religious* admiration. For her, *nature* has already become devout, *Christianized* nature, debased to *creation*. The transparent sea of space is desecrated and turned into the dark symbol of stagnant *eternity*. She has already learned that all human manifestations of her being were "*profane*," devoid of religion, of real consecration, that they were impious and godless. The priest must soil her in her own eyes, he must trample underfoot her natural, spiritual resources and means of grace, in order to make her receptive to the supernatural means of grace he promises her, *baptism*.

When Marie wants to make a confession to him and asks him to be lenient, he answers:

The *Lord* has shown you that he is merciful.

In the clemency which she is shown, Marie must not see a natural, self-evident attitude of a related human being to her, another human being. She must see in it an extravagant, supernatural, superhuman mercy and condescension; in *human leniency* she must see *divine mercy*. She must transcendentalize all human and natural relationships by making them *relationships to God*. The way Fleur de Marie in her answer accepts the priest's chatter about divine mercy shows how far she has already been spoiled by religious doctrine.

As soon as she entered upon her improved situation, she said, she had felt only her *new happiness*.

Every instant I thought of Monsieur Rudolph. I often raised my eyes to heaven, to look there, not for God, but for Monsieur Rudolph, and to thank him. Yes, *I confess*, Father, I *thought more* of him than of God; for *he* did for me what God alone could have done.... I was *happy*, as happy as someone who has escaped a great danger forever.

Fleur de Marie already finds it wrong that she took a new happy situation in life simply for what it *really* was, that she felt it as a new happiness, that her attitude to it was a natural, not a supernatural one. She accuses herself of seeing in the man who rescued her what he *really* was, her rescuer, instead of supposing some imaginary savior, *God*, in his place. She is already caught in religious hypocrisy, which takes away from *another* man what he has deserved in respect of me in order to give it to God, and which in general regards everything human in man as alien to him and everything inhuman in him as *really* belonging to him.

Marie tells us that the *religious transformation* of her thoughts, her sentiments, her attitude to life was effected by Madame George and Laporte.

When Rudolph took me away from the city, I already had a vague consciousness of my degradation. But the education, the advice and examples I got from you and Madame George made me understand... that I had been more guilty than

unfortunate.... You and Madame George made me *realize the infinite depth of my damnation.*

That is to say she owes to the priest Laporte and Madame George the replacement of the human and therefore bearable consciousness of her degradation by the Christian and hence unbearable consciousness of eternal damnation. The priest and the bigot have taught her to judge herself from the *Christian point of view.*

Marie feels the depth of the spiritual misfortune into which she has been cast. She says:

Since the consciousness of good and evil had to be so frightful for me, why was I not left to my wretched lot?... Had I not been snatched away from infamy, misery and blows would soon have killed me. At least I should have died in ignorance of a purity that I shall always wish for in vain.

The heartless priest replies:

Even the most noble nature, were it to be plunged only for a day in the filth from which you have been saved, would be *indelibly branded.* That is the *immutability of divine justice!*

Deeply wounded by this *priestly curse* uttered in such honeyed tones, Fleur de Marie exclaims:

You see therefore, I must despair!

The grey-headed slave of religion answers:

You must renounce hope of effacing this desolate page from your life, but you must trust in the *infinite mercy of God.* Here *below,* my poor child, you will have tears, remorse and penance, but one day *up above,* forgiveness and *eternal bliss!*

Marie is not yet stupid enough to be satisfied with eternal bliss and forgiveness up above.

Pity, pity, my God! [she cries.] I am so young.... *Malheur à moi!* [Woe unto me!]

Then the hypocritical sophistry of the priest reaches its peak:

On the contrary, happiness for you, Marie; happiness for you to whom the Lord sends this bitter but saving remorse! It shows the religious susceptibility of your soul.... Each of your sufferings is counted up above. Believe me, God left you awhile on the path of evil only to reserve for you the *glory of repentance* and the eternal reward due to *atonement*.

From this moment Marie is *enslaved by the consciousness of sin*. In her former most unhappy situation in life she was able to develop a lovable, human individuality; in her outward debasement she was conscious that *her human essence was her true essence*. Now the filth of modern society, which has touched her externally, becomes her innermost being, and continual hypochondriacal self-torture because of that filth becomes her duty, the task of her life appointed by God himself, the self-purpose of her existence. Formerly she said of herself "*Je ne suis pas pleurnicheuse* [I am no cry-baby]" and knew that "*ce qui est fait, est fait* [what is done is done]." Now self-torment will be her good and remorse will be her *glory*.

It turns out later that Fleur de Marie is Rudolph's daughter. We come across her again as Princess of Geroldstein. We overhear a conversation she has with her father:

In vain I pray to God to deliver me from these obsessions, to fill my heart solely with his pious love and his holy hopes; in a word, to take me entirely, because I wish to give myself entirely to him... he does not grant my wishes, doubtless because my earthly preoccupations make me unworthy of communion with him.

When man has realized that his transgressions are *infinite* crimes against God he can be sure of *salvation* and *mercy* only if he gives himself *wholly* to God and becomes *wholly* dead to the world and worldly concerns. When Fleur de Marie realizes that her delivery from her inhuman situation in life was a miracle of *God*, she *herself* has to become a *saint* in order to be worthy of such a *miracle*. Her human love must be transformed into religious love, the striving for happiness into striving for eternal bliss, worldly satisfaction into holy hope, communion with people into communion with God. God must take her entirely. She herself reveals to us why he does not take her entirely. She has not yet *given* herself entirely to him,

her heart is still preoccupied and engaged with earthly affairs. This is the last flickering of her strong nature. She gives herself entirely up to God by becoming wholly dead to the world and entering a *convent*.

A monastery is no place for him
Who has no stock of sins laid in,
So numerous and great
That be it early, be it late
He may not miss the sweet delight
Of penance for a heart contrite.
[Goethe, *Zahme Xenien IX*]

In the convent Fleur de Marie is promoted to *abbess* through the intrigues of Rudolph. At first she refuses to accept this appointment because she feels unworthy. The old abbess persuades her:

I shall say more, my dear daughter: if before entering the fold your life had been as full of error as, on the contrary, it was pure and praiseworthy... the evangelical virtues of which you have given an example since you have been here would have atoned for and redeemed your past in the eyes of the Lord, no matter how sinful it was.

From what the abbess says, we see that Fleur de Marie's earthly virtues have changed into evangelical virtues, or rather that her real virtues can no longer appear otherwise than as evangelical caricatures. Marie answers the abbess:

Holy Mother, I now believe that I can accept.

Convent life does not suit Marie's individuality—she dies. Christianity consoles her only in imagination, or rather her Christian consolation is precisely the annihilation of her real life and essence—her death.

So Rudolph first changed Fleur de Marie into a repentant sinner, then the repentant sinner into a nun and finally the nun into a corpse. At her funeral not only the Catholic priest, but also the Critical priest Szeliga preaches a sermon over her grave.

Her "*innocent*" existence he calls her "*transient*" existence, opposing it to "eternal and unforgettable guilt." He praises the fact that her "*last*

breath” was a “prayer for forgiveness and pardon.” But just as the Protestant Minister, after expounding the necessity of the Lord’s mercy, the participation of the deceased in universal original sin and the intensity of his consciousness of sin, must praise the virtues of the departed in *earthly* terms, so, too, Herr Szeliga uses the expression:

And yet *personally*, she has nothing to ask forgiveness for.

Finally he throws on Marie’s grave the most faded flower of pulpit eloquence:

Inwardly pure as human beings seldom are, she has closed her eyes to this world.

Amen!

3) Revelation of the Mysteries of Law

a) *The maître d’école [the gang leader], or the New Penal Theory. – The Mystery of Solitary Confinement Revealed. Medical Mysteries*

The *maître d’école* is a criminal of Herculean strength and great intellectual vigor. He was brought up an educated and well-schooled man. This passionate athlete comes into conflict with the laws and customs of bourgeois society, whose universal yardstick is mediocrity, delicate morals and quiet trade. He becomes a murderer and abandons himself to all the excesses of a violent temperament that can nowhere find a fitting human occupation.

Rudolph captures this criminal. He wants to reform him critically and set him up as an example for the world of law. He quarrels with the world of *law* not over “*punishment*” itself, but over *kinds and methods* of punishment. He invents, as the Negro doctor David aptly expresses it, a penal theory which would be worthy of the “*greatest German criminal expert*,” and which has since had the good fortune to be defended by a German criminal expert with German earnestness and German thoroughness. Rudolph has not the slightest idea that one can rise *above* criminal experts: his ambition is to be “the greatest criminal expert,” *primus inter pares* [first among equals]. He has the *maître d’école* blinded by the Negro doctor David.

At first Rudolph repeats all the trivial objections to capital punishment: that it has no effect on the criminal and no effect on the people, for whom it seems to be an entertaining spectacle.

Further, Rudolph establishes a difference between the *maître d'école* and the *soul* of the *maître d'école*. It is not the man, not the *real maître d'école* whom he wishes to save; he wants the *spiritual salvation* of his soul.

The salvation of a soul, [he teaches,] is something holy.... Every crime can be *atoned for* and redeemed, the Savior said, but only if the criminal earnestly desires to repent and *atone*. The transition from the court to the scaffold is too short.... You [the *maître d'école*] have criminally misused your *strength*. I shall *paralyze* your strength... you will tremble before the weakest, your punishment will be equal to your crime... but this terrible punishment will at least leave you the boundless horizon of *atonement*.... I shall cut you off only from the outer world in order to plunge you into impenetrable night and leave you *alone* with the memory of your ignominious deeds.... You will be forced to look into yourself... your intelligence, which you have degraded, will be roused and will lead you to atonement.

Since Rudolph regards the *soul* as *holy* and man's *body* as *profane*, since he thus considers only the soul to be the true essence, because—according to Herr Szeliga's Critical description of humanity—it belongs to heaven, the body and the strength of the *maître d'école* do not belong to humanity, the manifestation of their essence cannot be given human form or claimed for humanity and cannot be treated as essentially human. The *maître d'école* has misused his strength; Rudolph paralyzes, lames, destroys that strength. There is no more *Critical* means of getting rid of the perverse manifestations of a human essential strength than the destruction of this essential strength. This is the Christian means—plucking out the eye if it offends or cutting off the hand if it offends, in a word, killing the body if the body gives offense; for the eye, the hand, the body are really only superfluous, sinful appendages of man. Human nature must be killed in order to heal its ailments. Mass-type jurisprudence, too, in agreement here

with the Critical, sees in the *laming* and paralyzing of human strength the antidote to the objectionable manifestations of that strength.

What Rudolph, the man of pure Criticism, objects to in profane criminal justice is the too swift transition from the court to the scaffold. He, on the other hand, wants to link *vengeance* on the criminal with *penance* and *consciousness of sin* in the criminal, corporal punishment with spiritual punishment, sensuous torture with the non-sensuous torture of remorse. Profane punishment must at the same time be a means of Christian moral education.

This penal theory, which links *jurisprudence* with *theology*, this “revealed mystery of the mystery,” is no other than the penal theory of the *Catholic Church*, as already expounded at length by *Bentham* in his work *Punishments and Rewards* [*Théorie des peines et des récompenses*]. In that book Bentham also proved the moral futility of the punishments of today. He calls legal penalties “*legal parodies*.”

The punishment that Rudolph imposed on the *maître d'école* is the same as that which *Origen* imposed on himself. He *emasculates* him, robs him of a *productive organ*, the eye. “The eye is the light of the body” [New Testament, Matthew, 6:22]. It does great credit to Rudolph’s religious instinct that he should hit, of all things, upon the idea of *blinding*. This punishment was current in the thoroughly Christian empire of Byzantium and came to full flower in the vigorous youthful period of the Christian-Germanic states of England and France. Cutting man off from the perceptible outer world, throwing him back into his abstract inner nature in order to correct him—blinding—is a necessary consequence of the Christian doctrine according to which the consummation of this cutting off, the pure isolation of man in his spiritualistic “*ego*,” is *good itself*. If Rudolph does not shut the *maître d'école* up in a real monastery, as was the case in Byzantium and in Franconia, he at least shuts him up in an ideal monastery, in the cloister of an impenetrable night which the light of the outer world cannot pierce, the cloister of an idle conscience and consciousness of sin filled with nothing but the phantoms of memory.

A certain speculative bashfulness prevents Herr Szeliga from discussing openly the penal theory of his hero Rudolph that worldly punishment must be linked with Christian repentance and atonement. Instead he imputes to him—naturally as a mystery which is only just being revealed

to the world—the theory that punishment must make the criminal the “judge” of his “own” crime.

The mystery of this revealed mystery is *Hegel's* penal theory. According to Hegel, the criminal in his punishment passes sentence on himself. *Gans* developed this theory at greater length. In Hegel this is the *speculative disguise* of the old *jus talionis* [the right of retaliation—an eye for an eye], which Kant expounded as the *only juridical* penal theory. For Hegel, self-judgment of the criminal remains a mere “*Idea*,” a mere speculative interpretation of the *current empirical punishments* for criminals. He thus leaves the mode of application to the respective stage of development of the state, i.e., he leaves punishment as it is. Precisely in that he shows himself more critical than his Critical echo. A *penal* theory which at the same time sees in the criminal the man can do so only in *abstraction*, in imagination, precisely because *punishment, coercion*, is contrary to *human* conduct. Moreover, this would be impossible to carry out. Purely subjective arbitrariness would take the place of the abstract law because it would always depend on the official, “honorable and decent” men to adapt the penalty to the individuality of the criminal. Plato long ago realized that the *law* must be one-sided and *take no account* of the individual. On the other hand, under *human* conditions punishment will *really* be nothing but the sentence passed by the culprit on himself. No one will want to convince him that *violence* from *without*, done to him by others, is violence which he had done to himself. On the contrary, he will see in *other* men his natural saviors from the punishment which he has imposed on himself; in other words, the relation will be reversed.

Rudolph expresses his innermost thought—the purpose of blinding the *maître d'école*—when he says to him:

Chacune de tes paroles sera une prière. [Every word you say will be a prayer.]

He wants to teach him to *pray*. He wants to convert the Herculean robber into a *monk*, whose only work is prayer. Compared with this Christian cruelty, how humane is the ordinary penal theory that just chops a man's head off when it wants to destroy him? Finally, it goes without saying that whenever real mass-type legislation was seriously concerned with improving the criminal it acted incomparably more sensibly and humanely

than the German Harun al-Rashid. The four Dutch agricultural colonies and the Ostwald penal colony in Alsace are truly humane attempts in comparison with the blinding of the *maître d'école* just as Rudolph kills Fleur de Marie by handing her over to the priest and consciousness of sin, just as he kills Chourineur by robbing him of his human independence and degrading him into a bulldog, so he kills the *maître d'école* by having his eyes gouged out in order that he can learn to “pray.”

This is, of course, the way in which all reality emerges “*simply*” out of “*pure Criticism*,” namely, as a distortion and *senseless abstraction* of reality.

Immediately after the blinding of the *maître d'école* Herr Szeliga causes a *moral miracle* to take place.

The terrible *maître d'école*, [he reports,] *suddenly* recognizes the power of honesty and decency and says to Schurimann: “*Yes, I can trust you, you have never stolen anything.*”

Unfortunately Eugène Sue recorded a statement of the *maître d'école* about Chourineur which contains the same recognition and cannot be the effect of his having been blinded, since it was made earlier. In talking to Rudolph alone, the *maître d'école* said about Chourineur:

Besides, he is not capable of betraying a friend. No, there’s something good in him... he has always had strange ideas.

This would seem to do away with Herr Szeliga’s moral miracle. Now we shall see the *real* results of Rudolph’s Critical cure.

We next meet the *maître d'école* as he is going with a woman called Chouette to Bouqueval farm to play a foul trick on Fleur de Marie. The thought that dominates him is, of course, the thought of *revenge* on Rudolph. But the only way he knows of wreaking vengeance on him is metaphysically, by thinking and hatching “*evil*” to spite him.

He has taken away my sight but not the thought of evil.

He tells Chouette why he had sent for her:

I was bored all alone with those honest people.

When Eugène Sue satisfies his monkish, bestial lust in the *self-humiliation* of man to the extent of making the *maître d'école* implore on

his knees for the old hag Chouette and the little imp Tortillard not to abandon him, the great moralist forgets that that is the height of diabolical satisfaction for Chouette. Just as Rudolph, precisely by the *violent act* of *blinding* the criminal, proved to him the power of *physical force*, which he wants to show him is insignificant, so Eugène Sue now teaches the *maître d'école* really to recognize the full power of the *senses*. He teaches him to understand that without it man is *unmanned* and becomes a helpless object of mockery for children. He convinces him that the world deserved his crimes, for he had only to lose his sight to be ill-treated by it. He robs him of his last human illusion, for so far the *maître d'école* believed in Chouette's attachment to him. He had said to Rudolph: "She would let herself be thrown into the fire for me." Eugène Sue, on the other hand, has the satisfaction of hearing the *maître d'école* cry out in the depths of despair:

Mon dieu! Mon dieu! Mon dieu! [My God! My God! My God!]

He has learned to "*pray!*" In this "*appel involontaire de la commisération divine,*" Eugène Sue sees "*quelque chose de providentiel*" [spontaneous appeal for divine mercy... something providential].

The first result of Rudolph's Criticism is this *spontaneous prayer*. It is followed immediately by an involuntary *atonement* at Bouqueval farm, where the ghosts of those whom the *maître d'école* murdered appear to him in a dream.

We shall not give a detailed description of this dream. We next find the Critically reformed *maître d'école* fettered in the cellar of the "Bras rouge," half devoured by rats, half starving and half insane, as a result of being tortured by Chouette and Tortillard, and roaring like a beast. Tortillard had delivered Chouette to him. Let us watch the treatment he inflicts on her. He *copies* the hero *Rudolph* not only outwardly, by scratching out Chouette's eyes, but *morally* too by repeating Rudolph's hypocrisy and embellishing his cruel treatment with pious phrases. As soon as the *maître d'école* has Chouette in his power he gives vent to "*une joie effrayante,*" [terrifying joy] and his voice trembles with rage.

You realize that I do not want to get it over at once.... Torture for torture.... I must have a long talk with you before killing you.... It is going to be terrible for you. First of all, you see...

since that dream at Bouqueval farm which brought all our crimes back before me, since that dream which nearly drove me mad... and which will drive me mad... a strange change has come over me.... I have become horrified at my past cruelty.... At first I would not let you torture the songstress [Fleur de Marie], but that was nothing.... By bringing me to this cellar and making me suffer cold and hunger.... you left me to the terror of my own thoughts.... Oh, you don't know what it is to be alone.... Isolation purified me. I should not have thought it possible... a proof that I am perhaps less of a blackguard than before... what an infinite joy I feel to have you in my power, you monster... not in order to revenge myself but... to avenge our victims.... Yes, I shall have done my duty when I have punished my accomplice with my own hand I am now horrified at my past murders, and yet... don't you find it strange? It is without fear and quite calmly that I am going to commit a terrible murder on you, with terrible refinements... tell me, tell me... do you understand that?

In those few words the *maître d'école* goes through a whole gamut of *moral casuistry*.

His first words are a *frank* expression of his desire for vengeance. He wants to give torture for torture. He wants to murder Chouette and he wants to prolong her agony with a long sermon. And—delightful sophistry!—the speech with which he tortures her is a sermon on morals. He asserts that his dream at Bouqueval has improved him. At the same time he reveals the real effect of the dream by admitting that it almost drove him mad and that it will actually do so. He gives as a proof of his reform that he prevented Fleur de Marie from being tortured. Eugène Sue's personages—earlier Chourineur and now the *maître d'école*—must express, as the result of their thoughts, as the conscious motive of their actions, his own intention as a writer, which causes him to make them behave in a certain way and no other. They must continually say: I have reformed myself in this, in that, etc. Since their life has no real content, their words must give vigorous tones to insignificant features like the protection of Fleur de Marie.

Having reported the salutary effect of his Bouqueval dream, the *maître d'école* must explain why Eugène Sue had him locked up in a cellar. He must find the novelist's procedure reasonable. He must say to Chouette: by locking me up in a cellar, causing me to be gnawed by rats and to suffer hunger and thirst, you have completed my reform. Solitude has Purified me.

The beastly roar, the wild fury, the terrible lust for vengeance with which the *maître d'école* welcomes Chouette are in complete contradiction to this moralizing talk. They betray what kind of thoughts occupied him in his dungeon.

The *maître d'école* himself seems to realize this, but being a Critical moralist, he will know how to reconcile the contradictions.

He declares that the "infinite joy" of having Chouette in his power is precisely a sign of his reform, for his lust for vengeance is not a natural one but a *moral* one. He wants to avenge, not himself, but the common *victims* of Chouette and himself. If he murders her, he does not commit *murder*, he fulfills a *duty*. He does not *avenge* himself on her, he *punishes* his accomplice like an impartial judge. He shudders at his past murders and, nevertheless, marveling at his own casuistry, he asks Chouette: "Don't you find it strange? Without fear and quite calmly I am going to kill you." On moral grounds that he does not reveal, he gloats at the same time over the picture of the murder that he is going to commit, as being *terrible murder... murder with terrible refinements*.

It is in accord with the character of the *maître d'école* that he should murder Chouette, especially after the cruelty with which she treated him. But that he should commit murder on moral grounds, that he should give a moral interpretation to his savage pleasure in the *terrible murder* and the *terrible refinements* that he should show his remorse for the past murders precisely by committing a fresh one, that from a simple murderer he should become *a murderer in a double sense, a moral murderer*—all this is the glorious result of Rudolph's Critical cure.

Chouette tries to get away from the *maître d'école*. He notices it and holds her fast.

Keep still, Chouette, I must finish explaining to you how I gradually came to repentance.... This revelation will be hate-

ful to you... and it will also show you how pitiless I must be in the vengeance I want to wreak on you in the name of our victims.... I must hurry.... The joy of having you here in my hands makes the blood pound in my veins.... I shall have time to make the approach of your death terrifying to you by forcing you to listen to me.... I am blind... and my thoughts take a shape, a body, such that they incessantly present to me visibly, almost palpably... the features of my victims.... The ideas are reflected almost materially in my brain. When repentance is linked with an atonement of terrifying severity, an atonement that changes our life into a long sleeplessness filled with hallucinations of revenge or desperate reflections... then, perhaps, the pardon of men follows remorse and atonement.

The *maître d'école* continues with his hypocrisy, which every minute betrays itself as such. Chouette must hear how he came by degrees to repentance. This revelation will be hateful to her, for it will prove that it is his *duty* to take a pitiless revenge on her, not in his own name, but in the name of their common victims. Suddenly the *maître d'école* interrupts his didactic lecture. He must, he says, "hurry" with his lecture, for the pleasure of having her in his hands makes the blood pound in his veins; that is a moral reason for cutting the lecture short! Then he calms his blood again. The long time that he takes in preaching her a moral sermon is not wasted for his revenge. It will "make the approach of death terrifying" for her. That is a different moral reason, one for protracting his sermon! And having such moral reasons he can safely resume his moral text where he left off.

The *maître d'école* describes correctly the condition to which isolation from the outer world reduces a man. For one to whom the *sensuously perceptible world* becomes a *mere idea*, for him mere ideas are transformed into *sensuously perceptible beings*. The figments of his brain assume corporeal form. A world of tangible, palpable ghosts is begotten within his mind. That is the secret of all pious visions and at the same time it is the general form of insanity. When the *maître d'école* repeats Rudolph's words about the "power of repentance and atonement linked with terrible torments," he does so in a state of semi-madness, thus prov-

ing in fact the connection between Christian consciousness of sin and insanity. Similarly, when the *maître d'école* considers the transformation of *life* into a *night of dream* filled with ghosts as the real result of repentance and atonement, he is expressing the true mystery of pure Criticism and of Christian reform, which consists in changing man into a ghost and his life into a life of dream.

At this point Eugène Sue realizes how the *salutary thoughts*, which he makes the blind robber prate after Rudolph will be made ridiculous by the robber's treatment of Chouette. That is why he makes the *maître d'école* say:

The salutary influence of these thoughts is such that my rage is appeased.

So the *maître d'école* now admits that his moral wrath was nothing but *profane rage*.

I lack courage... strength... will to kill you.... No, it is not for me to shed Your blood... it would be... murder.... Excusable murder, perhaps, but murder all the same.

Chouette wounds the *maître d'école* with a dagger just in time. Eugène Sue can now let him kill her without any further moral casuistry.

He uttered a cry of pain... his fierce passion of vengeance, of rage and of bloodthirsty instinct, suddenly aroused and exacerbated by this attack, had a sudden and terrible outburst in which his already badly shaken reason was shattered.... Viper! I have felt your fang... you will be *sightless as I am*.

And he scratches her eyes out.

When the nature of the *maître d'école*, which has been only hypocritically, sophistically disguised, only ascetically repressed by Rudolph's cure, breaks out, the *outburst* is all the more violent and terrifying. We must be grateful to Eugène Sue for his admission that the *maître d'école's* reason was badly shaken by all the events that Rudolph had prepared.

The last spark of his reason was extinguished in that cry of terror, in that cry of a damned soul [he sees the ghosts of his

murdered victims]... the *maître d'école* rages and roars like a *frenzied beast*... He tortures Chouette to death.

Herr Szeliga mutters under his breath:

With the *maître d'école* there cannot be such a *swift* [!] and *fortunate* [!] *transformation* [!] as with Schurimann.

Just as Rudolph sends Fleur de Marie into a convent, he makes the *maître d'école* an inmate of the *Bicêtre* asylum. He has paralyzed his *spiritual* as well as his physical strength. And rightly. For the *maître d'école* sinned with his spiritual as well as his physical strength, and according to Rudolph's penal theory the *sinning forces* must be annihilated.

But Eugène Sue has not yet consummated the "repentance and atonement linked with a terrible revenge." The *maître d'école* recovers his reason, but fearing to be delivered to justice he remains in *Bicêtre* and *pretends* to be mad. Monsieur Sue forgets that "every word he said was to be a *prayer*," whereas finally it is much more like the inarticulate howling and raving of a madman. Or does Monsieur Sue perhaps ironically put these manifestations of life on the same level as praying?

The idea underlying the punishment that Rudolph carried out in blinding the *maître d'école*—the isolation of the man and his soul from the outer world, the combination of legal punishment with theological torture—finds its ultimate expression in *solitary confinement*. That is why Monsieur Sue glorifies this system.

How many centuries had to pass before it was realized that there is only one means of overcoming the rapidly spreading leprosy [i.e., the corruption of morals in prisons] which is threatening the body of society: isolation.

Monsieur Sue shares the opinion of the worthy people who explain the spread of crime by the organization of prisons. To remove the criminal from bad society he is left to his own society.

Eugène Sue says:

I should consider myself lucky if my weak voice could be heard among all those which so rightly and so insistently

demand the *complete* and *absolute* application of solitary confinement.

Monsieur Sue's wish has been only *partially* fulfilled. In the debates on solitary confinement in the Chamber of Deputies this year, even the official supporters of that system had to acknowledge that it leads sooner or later to insanity in the criminal. All sentences of imprisonment for more than ten years had therefore to be converted into deportation.

Had Messieurs Tocqueville and Beaumont studied Eugène Sue's novel thoroughly, they would certainly have secured complete and absolute application of solitary confinement.

If Eugène Sue deprives criminals with a sane mind of society in order to make them insane, he gives insane persons society to make them sane.

Experience proves that isolation is as fatal for the insane as it is salutary for imprisoned criminals.

If Monsieur Sue and his Critical hero Rudolph have not made law poorer by any mystery, whether through the *Catholic penal theory* or the *Methodist solitary confinement*, they have, on the other hand, enriched medicine with new mysteries, and after all, it is just as much of a service to *discover new* mysteries as to *disclose old* ones. In its report on the blinding of the *maître d'école*, Critical Criticism fully agrees with Monsieur Sue:

When he is told he is deprived of the light of his eyes he does not even believe it.

The *maître d'école* could not believe in the loss of his sight because in reality he could still see. Monsieur Sue is describing a new kind of cataract and is reporting a real mystery for mass-type, un-Critical *ophthalmology*.

The *pupil* is *white* after the operation, so it is a case of *cataract of the crystalline lens*. So far, this could, of course, be caused by injury to the envelope of the lens without causing much pain, though not entirely without pain. But as doctors achieve this result only by natural, not by *Critical* means, the only resort was to wait until inflammation set in after the injury and the exudation dimmed the lens.

A still greater *miracle* and greater *mystery* befall the *maître d'école* in the third chapter of the third book.

The man who has been blinded *sees* again,

Chouette, the *maître d'école* and Tortillard saw the priest and Fleur de Marie.

If we do not interpret this restoration of the *maître d'école's* ability to see as an author's miracle after the method of the *Kritik der Synoptiker*, the *maître d'école* must have had his cataract operated on again. Later he is blind again. So he used his eyes too soon and the irritation of the light caused inflammation, which ended in paralysis of the *retina* and incurable *amaurosis*. It is another *mystery* for un-Critical ophthalmology that this process takes place here in a single second.

b) Reward and Punishment. Double Justice (with a Table)

The hero Rudolph reveals a new theory to keep society upright by *rewarding the good* and *punishing the wicked*. Un-Critically considered, this theory is nothing but the theory of society as it is today. How little lacking it is in rewards for the good and punishments for the wicked! Compared with this revealed mystery, how un-Critical is the mass-type Communist *Owen*, who sees in punishment and reward the consecration of differences in social rank and the complete expression of a servile abasement.

It could be considered as a new revelation that Eugène Sue makes rewards derive from the judiciary—from a new appendix to the Penal Code—and not satisfied with *one* jurisdiction he invents a *second*. Unfortunately this revealed mystery, too, is the repetition of an old theory expounded in detail by *Bentham* in his work already mentioned [*Théorie des peines et des récompenses*]. On the other hand, we cannot deny Monsieur Eugène Sue the honor of having motivated and developed Bentham's suggestion in an incomparably more Critical way than the latter. Whereas the mass-type Englishman keeps his feet on the ground, Sue's deduction rises to the Critical region of the heavens. His argument is as follows:

The supposed effects of heavenly wrath are materialized to deter the wicked. Why should not the effect of the divine reward of the good be similarly materialized and anticipated on earth?

In the *un-Critical* view it is the other way round: the heavenly criminal theory has only idealized the earthly theory, just as divine reward is only an idealization of human wage service. It is absolutely necessary that society should not reward all good people so that divine justice will have some advantage over human justice.

In depicting his Critical rewarding justice, Monsieur Sue gives “an example of the *feminine dogmatism* that must have a formula and forms it according to the categories of *what exists*,” dogmatism which was censured with all the “tranquility of knowledge” by Herr Edgar in *Flora Tristan*. For each point of the present *penal code*, which he retains, Monsieur Sue projects the addition of a counterpart in a *reward code* copied from it to the last detail. For easier survey we shall give his description of the complementary pairs in tabular form:

Table of Critically Complete Justice:

Existing Justice	Critically Supplementing Justice
<i>Name:</i> Criminal Justice	<i>Name:</i> Virtuous Justice
<i>Description:</i> holds in its hand a sword to shorten the wicked by a head.	<i>Description:</i> holds in its hand a crown to raise the good by a head.
<i>Purpose:</i> Punishment of the wicked—imprisonment, infamy, deprivation of life. The people are notified of the terrible chastisements for the wicked.	<i>Purpose:</i> Reward of the good, free board, honor, maintenance of life. The people are notified of the brilliant triumphs for the good.
<i>Means of discovering the wicked:</i> Police spying, denouncers, to keep watch over the wicked.	<i>Means of discovering the Good:</i> Virtue spying, denouncers, to keep watch over the virtuous.
<i>Method of ascertaining whether someone is wicked:</i> “ <i>Les assises du crime</i> ,” criminal assizes. The public ministry points out and indicts the crimes of the accused for public vengeance.	<i>Method of ascertaining whether someone is good:</i> “ <i>Assises de la vertu</i> ,” virtue assizes. The public ministry points out and proclaims the noble deeds of the accused for public recognition.

<p><i>Condition of the criminal after sentence:</i> Under supervision of supreme police. Is fed in prison. The state defrays expenses.</p>	<p><i>Condition of the virtuous after sentence:</i> Under supervision of supreme moral charity. Is fed at home. The state defrays expenses.</p>
<p><i>Execution:</i> The criminal stands on the <i>scaffold</i>.</p>	<p><i>Execution:</i> Immediately opposite the scaffold of the criminal a <i>pedestal</i> is erected on which the <i>great</i> man of good stands.—<i>A pillory of virtue</i>.</p>

Moved by the sight of this picture, Monsieur Sue exclaims:

Alas! It is a utopia! But suppose a society were organized in this way!

That would be the *Critical organization of society*. We must defend this organization against Eugène Sue's reproach that up to now it has remained a utopia. Sue has again forgotten the "*Virtue Prize*" which is awarded every year in Paris and which he himself mentions. This prize is even organized in duplicate: the material *Montyon Prize* for noble acts of men and women, and the *Rosière*⁷⁷ *Prize* for girls of highest morality. There is even the *wreath* of roses demanded by Eugène Sue.

As far as spying on virtue and the supervision of supreme moral charity are concerned, they were organized long ago by the Jesuits. Moreover, the *Journal des Débats*,⁷⁸ *Siècle*,⁷⁹ *Petites affiches de Paris*,⁸⁰ etc., point out and proclaim the virtues, noble acts and merits of all the Paris stockjobbers daily and at cost price not counting the pointing out and proclamation of political noble acts, for which each party has its own organ.

⁷⁷ A virtuous girl awarded with a wreath of roses.

⁷⁸ *Journal des Débats*, abridged title of the French bourgeois daily paper *Journal des Débats politiques et littéraires*, founded in Paris in 1789. During the July monarchy it was a government paper and the organ of the Orleanist bourgeoisie.

⁷⁹ *Le Siècle* (*The Century*)—a daily newspaper appearing in Paris from 1836 to 1939. In the forties of the 19th century it reflected the views of the part of the petty bourgeoisie which confined its demands to moderate constitutional reforms.

⁸⁰ *Petites Affiches* (*Short Announcements*)—an old French periodical publication founded in Paris in 1612; a sort of information sheet in which short announcements and notifications were published.

Old Voss remarked long ago that Homer is better than his gods. The “revealed mystery of all mysteries,” Rudolph, can therefore be made responsible for Eugène Sue’s ideas.

In addition, Herr *Szeliga* reports:

Besides, the passages in which Eugène Sue interrupts the narration and introduces or concludes episodes are very numerous, and all are *Critical*.

c) Abolition of Degeneracy Within Civilization and of Rightlessness in the State

The juridical *preventive means* for the abolition of crime and hence of degeneracy within civilization consists in the

protective guardianship assumed by the state over the children of executed criminals or of those condemned to a life sentence.

Sue wants to organize the subdivision of crime in a more liberal way. No family should any longer have a hereditary privilege to crime; free competition in crime should triumph over monopoly.

Monsieur Sue abolishes “rightlessness in the state” by reforming the section of the *Code pénal* on *confidence tricks*, and especially by the institution of *paid lawyers for the poor*. He finds that in Piedmont, Holland, etc., where there are lawyers for the poor, rightlessness in the state has been abolished. The only failing of French legislation is that it does not provide for payment of lawyers for the poor, has no lawyers restricted to serving the poor, and makes the legal limits of poverty too narrow. As if rightlessness did not begin in the very lawsuit itself, and as if it had not already been known for a long time in France that the law gives nothing, but only sanctions what exists. The already trivial differentiation between *droit* [right] and *fait* [fact] seems still to be a *Mystère de Paris* for the Critical novelist.

If we add to the Critical revelation of the mysteries of law the great reforms which Eugène Sue wants to institute in respect of *huissiers* [bailiffs], we shall understand the Paris Journal *Satan*.⁸¹ There we see the resi-

⁸¹ *Satan*—a small bourgeois satirical paper appearing in Paris from 1840 to 1844.

dents of a district in the city write to the “*grand réformateur à tant la ligne*” [great reformer at so much a line], that there is no gaslight yet in their streets. Monsieur Sue replies that he will deal with this shortcoming in the sixth volume of his *Wandering Jew*. Another part of the city complains of the shortcomings of preliminary education. He promises a preliminary education reform for that district of the city in the tenth volume of the *Wandering Jew*.

4) The Revealed Mystery of the “Standpoint”

Rudolph does not remain at his lofty (!) *standpoint*... he does not shirk the trouble of adopting by free choice the *standpoints* on the right and on the left, above and below [*Szeliga*].

One of the principal mysteries of Critical Criticism is the “*standpoint*” and *judgment from the standpoint of the standpoint*. For Criticism every man, like every product of the spirit, is turned into a standpoint.

Nothing is easier than to see through the mystery of the standpoint when one has seen through the general mystery of Critical Criticism, that of warming up old speculative trash.

First of all, let Criticism itself expound its theory of the “standpoint” in the words of its patriarch, Herr *Bruno Bauer*.

Science... *never* deals with a *given single individual* or a *given definite standpoint*... it will not fail, of course, *to do away with the limitations of a standpoint* if it is worth the trouble and if these limitations have really general human significance; but it conceives them as *pure category and determinations of self-consciousness* and accordingly speaks only for those who have the courage to rise to the *generality of self-consciousness*, i.e., who do not wish with all their strength to remain within those limitations.⁸²

[B. Bauer, *Leiden und Freuden des theologischen Bewusstseins*]

The *mystery* of this courage of Bauer’s is *Hegel’s Phänomenologie*. Because Hegel here substitutes *self-consciousness* for *man*, the *most varied* manifestations of human reality appear only as *definite* forms, as *determi-*

⁸² *Anekdotas*, t. II, p. 127.

nateness of self-consciousness. But mere determinateness of self-consciousness is a “*pure category*,” a mere “*thought*,” which I can consequently also transcend in “*pure*” thought and overcome through pure thought. In Hegel’s *Phänomenologie* the *material, sensuously perceptible, objective* foundations of the various estranged forms of human self-consciousness are allowed to remain. The whole destructive work results in the *most conservative philosophy* because it thinks it has overcome the *objective world*, the sensuously perceptible real world, by transforming it into a “*Thing of Thought*,” a mere *determinateness of self-consciousness*, and can therefore also dissolve its opponent, which has become *ethereal*, in the “*ether of pure thought*.” The *Phänomenologie* is therefore quite consistent in that it ends by replacing human reality by “*absolute knowledge*”—*knowledge*, because this is the only mode of existence of self-consciousness, and because self-consciousness is considered the only mode of existence of man—*absolute knowledge* for the very reason that self-consciousness knows *only itself* and is no longer disturbed by any objective world. Hegel makes man the *man of self-consciousness* instead of making self-consciousness the *self-consciousness of man*, of real man, i.e., of man living also in a real, objective world and determined by that world. He stands the world *on its head* and can therefore *in his head* also dissolve all limitations, which nevertheless remain in existence *for evil sensuousness, for real man*. Moreover, everything that betrays the *limitations of general self-consciousness*—all sensuousness, reality, individuality of men and of their world—is necessarily held by him to be a limit. The whole of the *Phänomenologie* is intended to prove that *self-consciousness* is the *only reality and all reality*.

Herr Bauer has recently rechristened Absolute Knowledge *Criticism*, and given the more profane sounding name *standpoint* to the determinateness of self-consciousness. In the *Anekdoten* both names are still to be found side-by-side, and standpoint is still explained as the determinateness of self-consciousness.

Since the “*religious world as such*” exists only as the world of *self-consciousness*, the Critical Critic—the theologian *ex professo*—cannot by any means entertain the thought that there is a world in which *consciousness* and *being* are distinct; a world which continues to exist when I merely abolish its existence in thought, its existence as a category or as a standpoint; i.e., when I modify my own subjective consciousness without alter-

ing the objective reality in a really objective way, that is to say, without altering my own *objective* reality and that of other men. Hence the speculative *mystical identity of being and thinking* is repeated in Criticism as the equally mystical identity of *practice and theory*. That is why Criticism is so vexed with practice that wants to be something distinct from theory, and with theory that wants to be something other than the dissolution of a definite *category* in the “*boundless generality of self-consciousness*.” Its own theory is confined to stating that everything determinate is an opposite of the boundless generality of self-consciousness and is, therefore, of no significance; for example, the state, private property, etc. It must be shown, on the contrary, how the state, private property, etc., turn human beings into abstractions, or are products of abstract man, instead of being the reality of individual, concrete human beings.

Finally, it goes without saying that whereas Hegel’s *Phänomenologie*, in spite of its speculative original sin, gives in many instances the elements of a true description of human relations, Herr Bruno and Co., on the other hand, provide only an empty caricature, a caricature that is satisfied with deriving any determinateness out of a product of the spirit or even out of real relations and movements, changing this determinateness into a determinateness of thought, into a *category*, and making out that this category is the *standpoint* of the product, of the relation and the movement, in order then to be able to look down on this determinateness triumphantly with old-man’s wisdom from the standpoint of abstraction, of the general category and of general self-consciousness.

Just as in Rudolph’s opinion all human beings maintain the standpoint of good or bad and are judged by these two immutable conceptions, so for Herr Bauer and Co. all human beings adopt the standpoint of Criticism or that of the *Mass*. But both turn *real human beings* into *abstract standpoints*.

5) Revelation of the Mystery of the Utilization of Human Impulses, or Clémence D’Harville

So far Rudolph has been unable to do more than reward the good and punish the wicked in his own way. We shall now see an example of how he makes the passions useful and “gives the good natural disposition of Clémence d’Harville an appropriate development.”

Rudolph, [says Herr Szeliga,] draws her attention to the entertaining aspect of charity, a thought which testifies to a knowledge of human beings that can *only* arise in the soul of Rudolph after it has been through trial.

The expressions which Rudolph uses in his conversation with Clémence:

To make attractive... to utilize natural taste... to regulate intrigue... to utilize the propensity to dissimulation and craft... to change imperious, inexorable instincts into noble qualities, [etc.],

these expressions just as much as the *impulses* themselves, which are mostly attributed here to woman's nature, betray the secret source of Rudolph's wisdom—*Fourier*. He has come across some popular presentation of Fourier's theory.

The *application* is again just as much Rudolph's Critical own as is the exposition of Bentham's theory given above.

It is not in charity *as such* that the young marquise is to find the satisfaction of her essential human nature, a human content and purpose of her activity, and hence entertainment. Charity offers rather only the external occasion, only the *pretext*, only the *material*, for a kind of entertainment that could just as well use any other material as its content. Misery is exploited consciously to procure the charitable person "the piquancy of a novel, the satisfaction of curiosity, adventure, disguise, enjoyment of his or her own excellence, violent nervous excitement," and the like.

Rudolph has thereby unconsciously expressed the mystery which was revealed long ago, that human misery itself, the infinite abjectness which is obliged to receive alms, must serve the aristocracy of money and education as a *plaything* to satisfy its self-love, tickle its arrogance and amuse it.

The numerous charitable associations in Germany, the numerous charitable societies in France and the great number of charitable quixotic societies in England, the concerts, balls, plays, meals for the poor, and even the public subscriptions for victims of accidents, have no other object. It seems then that along these lines charity, too, has long been *organized* as entertainment.

The sudden, unmotivated transformation of the marquise at the mere word "*amusant* [amusing]" makes us doubt the durability of her cure; or

rather this transformation is sudden and unmotivated only in appearance and is caused only in appearance by the description of charity as an amusement. The marquise *loves* Rudolph and Rudolph wants to disguise himself *along with her*, to intrigue and to indulge in charitable adventures. Later, when the marquise pays a charity visit to the prison of Saint-Lazare, her jealousy of Fleur de Marie becomes apparent and out of charity towards her jealousy she conceals from Rudolph the fact of Marie's detention. At the best, Rudolph has succeeded in teaching an unhappy woman to play a silly comedy with unhappy beings. The mystery of the *philanthropy* he has hatched is betrayed by the Paris fop, who invites his partner to supper after the dance in the following words:

Ah, Madame, it is not enough to have danced for the benefit of these poor Poles.... Let us be philanthropy to the end.... Let us have *supper* now for the *benefit of the poor!*

6) Revelation of the Mystery of the Emancipation of Women, or Louise Morel

On the occasion of the arrest of *Louise Morel*, Rudolph indulges in reflections which he sums up as follows:

The master often ruins the maid, either by fear, surprise or other use of the opportunities provided by the nature of *the servants' condition*. He reduces her to misery, shame and crime. The *law is not concerned* with this.... The criminal who has in fact driven a girl to infanticide is not *punished*.

Rudolph's reflections do not go so far as to make the *servants' condition* the object of his most gracious Criticism. Being a *petty* ruler he is a *great* advocate of servants' conditions. Still less does he go so far as to understand that the general position of women in modern society is inhuman. Faithful in all respects to his previous theory, he deplores only that there is no *law which punishes* a seducer and links repentance and atonement with terrible chastisement.

Rudolph has only to take a look at the existing legislation in other countries. *English* laws fulfill all his wishes. In their delicacy, which *Black-*

stone so highly praises, they go so far as to declare it a *felony* to seduce even a prostitute.

Herr Szeliga exclaims with a *flourish*:

So [!]*—thinks* [!]*—Rudolph* [!]*—and now compare these thoughts with your fantasies about the emancipation of woman. The act of this emancipation can be almost physically grasped from them, but you are much too practical to start with, and that is why your attempts have failed so often.*

In any case we must thank Herr Szeliga for revealing the mystery that an act can be almost physically grasped from thoughts. As for his ridiculous comparison of Rudolph with men who taught the emancipation of woman, compare Rudolph's thoughts with the following "fantasies" of *Fourier*.

Adultery, seduction, are a credit to the seducer, are good tone.... But, poor girl! Infanticide! What a crime! If she prizes her honor she must efface all traces of dishonor. But if she sacrifices her child to the prejudices of the world her ignominy is all the greater and she is a victim of the prejudices of the law.... That is the vicious circle which every civilized mechanism describes.

Is not the young daughter a ware held up for sale to the first bidder who wishes to obtain exclusive ownership of her? ... just as in grammar, two negations are the equivalent of an affirmation, we can say that in the marriage trade two prostitutions are the equivalent of virtue.

The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by women's progress towards freedom, because here, in the relation of woman to man, of the weak to the strong, the victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation.

The humiliation of the female sex is an essential feature of civilization as well as of barbarism. The only difference is that the civilized system raises every vice that barbarism practices in a

simple form to a compound, equivocal, ambiguous, hypocritical mode of existence.... No one is punished more severely for keeping woman in slavery than man himself [*Fourier*].

It is superfluous to contrast Rudolph's thoughts with Fourier's masterly characterization of *marriage*, or with the works of the materialist section of French communism.

The most pitiful off-scourings of socialist literature, a sample of which is to be found in this novelist, reveal "mysteries" still unknown to Critical Criticism.

7) Revelation of Political Economic Mysteries

a) *Theoretical Revelation of Political Economic Mysteries*

First revelation: Wealth often leads to waste, waste to ruin.

Second revelation: The above-mentioned effects of wealth arise from a lack of instruction in rich youth.

Third revelation: *Inheritance* and *private property* are and *must* be inviolable and sacred.

Fourth revelation: The rich man is *morally* responsible to the workers for the way he uses his fortune. A large fortune is a hereditary deposit—a *feudal tenement*—entrusted to clever, firm, skillful and magnanimous hands, which are at the same time charged with making it fruitful and using it in such a way that everything that has the *good luck* to be within the range of the dazzling and wholesome radiation of that large fortune is fructified, vitalized and improved.

Fifth revelation: The state must give inexperienced rich youth the rudiments of *individual economy*. It must give a moral character to riches.

Sixth revelation: Finally, the state must tackle the vast question of the *organization of labor*. It must give the wholesome example of the *association of capitals and labor*, of an association that is honest, intelligent and fair, which ensures the well-being of the *worker without* prejudice to the *fortune of the rich*, which establishes links of sympathy and gratitude between these *two classes* and thus ensures tranquility in the state *forever*.

Since the state at present does not yet accept this theory *Rudolph* himself gives some practical examples. They reveal the mystery that the

most generally known *economic relations* are still “mysteries” for Monsieur Sue, Monsieur Rudolph and Critical Criticism.

b) “*The Bank for the Poor*”

Rudolph institutes a *Bank for the Poor*. The statute of this Critical Bank for the Poor is as follows:

It must give support during periods of unemployment to honest workers with families. It must replace alms and pawnshops. It has at its disposal an annual income of 12,000 francs and distributes interest-free assistance loans of 20 to 40 francs. At first it extends its activity only to the *seventh arrondissement* of Paris, where most of the workers live. Working men and women applying for relief must have a certificate from their last employer vouching for their good behavior and giving the cause and date of the interruption of work. These loans are to be paid off in monthly instalments of one-sixth or one-twelfth of the sum at the choice of the borrower, counting from the day on which he finds employment again. The loan is guaranteed by the borrower’s word of honor. Moreover, the latter’s *parole jurée* [sworn sword] must be guaranteed by two other workers.

As the Critical purpose of the Bank for the Poor is to remedy one of the most grievous misfortunes in the life of the worker—*interruption in employment*—assistance would be given only to unemployed manual workers. Monsieur Germain, the manager of this institution, draws a yearly salary of 10,000 francs.

Let us now cast a mass-type glance at the practice of Critical political economy. The annual income is 12,000 francs. The amount loaned per person is from 20 to 40 francs, hence an average of 30 francs. The number of workers in the seventh *arrondissement* who are officially recognized as “needy” is at least 4,000. Hence, in a year only 400, or one-tenth, of the neediest workers in the seventh *arrondissement* can receive relief. If we estimate the *average length* of unemployment in Paris at 4 months, i.e., 16 weeks, we shall be considerably below the actual figure. Thirty francs divided over 16 weeks gives somewhat less than 37 sous and 3 centimes a week, not even 27 centimes a day. The daily expense on *one prisoner* in France is on the average a little over 47 centimes, somewhat over 30 centimes being spent on food alone. But the worker to whom Monsieur Rudolph pays relief has a family. Let us take the average family as con-

sisting of man, wife and only two children; that means that 27 centimes must be divided among four persons. From this we must deduct rent—a minimum of 15 centimes a day—so that 12 centimes remain. The average amount of *bread* eaten by a *single* prisoner costs about 14 centimes. Therefore, even disregarding all other needs, the worker and his family will not be able to buy even a quarter of the bread they need with the help obtained from the Critical Bank for the Poor. They will certainly starve if they do not resort to the means that the bank is intended to obviate—the pawnshop, begging, thieving and prostitution.

The manager of the Bank for the Poor, on the other hand, is all the more brilliantly provided for by the man of ruthless Criticism. The income he administers is 12,000 francs, his salary is 10,000. The management therefore costs 85 percent of the total, nearly three times as much as the mass-type administration of poor relief in Paris, which costs about 17 percent of the total.

Let us suppose for a moment that the assistance that the Bank for the Poor provides is real, not just illusory. In that case the institution of the revealed mystery of all mysteries rests on the illusion that only a different *distribution* of wages is required to enable the workers to live through the year.

Speaking in the prosaic sense, the income of 7,500,000 French workers averages no more than 91 francs per head, that of another 7,500,000 is only 120 francs per head; hence for at least 15,000,000 it is less than is absolutely necessary for life.

The idea of the Critical Bank for the Poor, if it is rationally conceived, amounts to this: during the time the worker is employed as much will be deducted from his wages as he needs for his living during unemployment. It comes to the same thing whether I advance him a certain sum during his unemployment and he gives it back when he has employment, or he gives up a certain sum when he has employment and I give it back to him when he is unemployed. In either case he gives me when he is working what he gets from me when he is unemployed.

Thus, the “Pure” *Bank for the Poor* differs from the mass-type *savings-banks* only in two very original, very Critical qualities. The first is that the Bank for the Poor lends money “à fonds perdu” [not to be repaid], on the senseless assumption that the worker could pay back if he wanted to

and that he would always want to pay back if he could. The second is that it pays no *interest* on the sum put aside by the worker. As this sum is given the form of an advance, the Bank for the Poor thinks it is doing the worker a favor by not charging him any interest.

The difference between the Critical Bank for the Poor and the mass-type savings-banks is therefore that the worker loses his interest and the Bank its capital.

c) *Model Farm at Bouqueval*

Rudolph founds a *model farm* at *Bouqueval*. The choice of the place is all the more fortunate as it preserves memories of feudal times, namely of a *château seigneurial* [feudal manor].

Each of the six men employed on this farm is paid 150 *écus*, or 450 francs a year, while the women get 60 *écus*, or 180 francs. Moreover, they get board and lodging free. The ordinary daily fare of the people at Bouqueval consists of a “formidable” plate of ham, an equally formidable plate of mutton and, finally, a no less massive piece of veal supplemented by two kinds of winter salad, two large cheeses, potatoes, cider, etc. Each of the six men does twice the work of the ordinary French agricultural laborer.

As the total annual income produced by France, if divided equally, would come to no more than 93 francs per person, and as the total number of inhabitants employed directly in agriculture is two-thirds of the population of France, it will be seen what a revolution the general imitation of the German caliph’s model farm would cause not only in the distribution, but also in the production of the national wealth.

According to what has been said, Rudolph achieved this enormous increase in production solely by making each laborer work twice as much and eat six times as much as before.

Since the French peasant is very industrious, laborers who work twice as much must be *superhuman athletes*, as the “formidable” meat dishes also seem to indicate. Hence we may assume that each of the six men eats at least a pound of meat a day.

If all the meat produced in France were distributed equally there would not be even a quarter of a pound per person per day. It is therefore obvious what a revolution Rudolph’s example would cause in this respect too. The agricultural population *alone* would consume more meat than is

produced in France, so that as a result of this Critical reform France would be left without any livestock.

The fifth part of the gross product which Rudolph, according to the report of the manager of Bouqueval, Father Chatelain, allows the laborers, in addition to the high wage and sumptuous board, is nothing else than his *rent*. It is assumed that, on the average, after deduction of all production costs and profit on the working capital, one-fifth of the gross product remains for the French landowner, that is to say, the ratio of the rent to the gross product is one to five. Although it is beyond doubt that Rudolph decreases the profit on his working capital beyond all proportion by increasing the expenditure for the laborers beyond all proportion—according to Chaptal (*De l'industrie française*, t. 1, p. 2 39) the average yearly income of the French agricultural laborer is 120 francs—although Rudolph gives his whole rent away to the laborers, Father Chatelain nevertheless reports that the prince thereby increases his revenue and thus inspires un-Critical landowners to farm in the same way.

The Bouqueval model farm is nothing but a fantastic illusion; its *hidden fund* is not the natural land of the Bouqueval estate, it is a magic purse of Fortunatus that Rudolph has!

In this connection Critical Criticism exultantly declares:

You can see from the *whole* plan at a *first glance* that it is *not a utopia*.

Only Critical Criticism can see at a first glance at a *Fortunatus*⁸³ purse that it is not a utopia. The first glance of Criticism is—the glance of “the evil eye!”

8) Rudolph, “The Revealed Mystery of All Mysteries”

The miraculous means by which Rudolph accomplishes all his redemptions and miracle cures is not his fine words but his *ready money*. That is what the moralists are like, says Fourier. You must be a millionaire to be able to imitate their heroes.

⁸³ Fortunatus, a hero of German popular legend who had a wonderful, inexhaustible purse and a magic hat.

Moral is “*impotence in action*.”⁸⁴ Every time it fights a vice it is defeated. And Rudolph does not even rise to the standpoint of independent morality, which is based at least on the consciousness of *human dignity*. His morality, on the contrary, is based on the consciousness of human weakness. His is the *theological* morality. We have investigated in detail the heroic feats that he accomplished with his fixed, Christian ideas, by which he measures the world, with his “*charité*,” “*dévouement*,” “*abnégation*,” “*repentir*,” “*bons*” and “*méchants*,” “*récompense*” and “*punition*,” “*châtiments terribles*,” “*isolement*,” “*salut de l’âme*” [“charity, devotion, self-denial, repentance,” the good and the wicked people, reward and punishment, terrible chastisements, isolation, salvation of the soul], etc. We have proved that they are mere *Eulenspiegel* tricks. All that we still have to deal with here is the personal character of Rudolph, the “revealed mystery of all mysteries” or the revealed mystery of “*pure Criticism*.”

The antithesis of “good” and “evil” confronts the Critical Hercules when he is still a youth in two personifications, *Murph* and *Polidori*, both of them Rudolph’s teachers. The former educates him in good and is “the *Good One*.” The latter educates him in evil and is “the *Evil One*.” So that this conception should by no means be inferior in triviality to similar conceptions in other novels, *Murph*, the personification of “*the good*,” cannot be “*savant*” or “particularly endowed intellectually.” But he is *honest*, *simple*, and *laconic*; he feels himself great when he applies to evil such monosyllabic words as “*foul*” or “*vile*,” and he has a *horror* of anything which is *base*. To use Hegel’s expression, he honestly sets the melody of the good and the true in an equality of tones, i.e., on *one note*.

Polidori, on the contrary, is a prodigy of cleverness, knowledge and education, and at the same time of the “most dangerous immorality,” having, in particular, what Eugène Sue, as a member of the young pious French bourgeoisie, could not forget—“*Le plus effrayant skepticism*” [the most frightful skepticism]. We can judge the spiritual energy and education of Eugène Sue and his hero by their panic fear of skepticism.

Murph, [says Herr Szeliga,] is at the same time the perpetuated guilt of January 13 [On this day, Rudolph, in a fit of anger, made an attempt on the life of his father, but repented

⁸⁴ From Fourier’s *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales*.

and gave the word to do good] and the perpetual redemption of that guilt by his incomparable love and self-sacrifice for the person of Rudolph.

Just as Rudolph is the *deus ex machina*⁸⁵ and the mediator of the world, so Murph, for his part, is the personal *deus ex machina* and mediator of Rudolph.

Rudolph and the salvation of mankind, Rudolph and the realization of man's essential perfections, are for Murph an inseparable unity, a unity to which he dedicates himself not with the stupid dog-like devotion of the slave, but knowingly and independently.

So Murph is an enlightened, knowing and independent slave. Like every prince's valet, he sees in his master the salvation of mankind personified. Graun flatters Murph with the words: "*intrépide garde du corps*" [fearless bodyguard]. Rudolph himself calls him *modèle d'un valet* [model servant] and truly he is a *model servant*. Eugène Sue tells us that Murph scrupulously addresses Rudolph as "Monseigneur" when alone with him. In the presence of others he calls him *Monsieur* with his lips to keep his incognito, but "Monseigneur" with his heart.

Murph helps to raise the veil from the mysteries, but only for Rudolph's sake. He helps in the work of destroying the power of mystery.

The denseness of the veil, which conceals the simplest conditions of the world from Murph can be seen from his conversation with the envoy Graun. From the legal right of self-defense in case of emergency he concludes that Rudolph, as *judge of the secret court*, was entitled to blind the *maître d'école*, although the latter was in chains and "defenseless." His description of how Rudolph will tell of his "noble" actions before the assizes, will make a display of eloquent phrases, and will let his great heart pour forth, is worthy of a grammar-school boy who has just read Schiller's *The Robbers*.⁸⁶ The only mystery which Murph lets the world solve is

⁸⁵ A plot device to resolve a previously unsolvable problem by the sudden appearance of a person or event.

⁸⁶ A play by German writer, Friedrich Schiller, written in 1781.

whether he blacked his face with coal-dust or black paint when he played the *charbonnier* [coal man].

The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just [Mat. 13:49]. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil...; But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good [Rom. 2:9-10].

Rudolph makes himself one of those *angels*. He goes forth into the world to sever the wicked from among the just, to punish the wicked and reward the good. The conception of good and evil has sunk so deep into his weak brain that he really believes in a corporeal Satan and wants to catch the devil alive, as at one time *Professor Sack* wanted to in Bonn. On the other hand, he tries to copy on a small scale the opposite of the devil, *God*. He likes “*de jouer un peu le rôle de la providence*” [to play the role of Providence a little]. Just as in *reality* all differences become merged more and more in the difference between *poor* and *rich*, so *all* aristocratic differences become dissolved in *idea* in the opposition between *good* and *evil*. This distinction is the last form that the aristocrat gives to his prejudices. Rudolph regards himself as a good man and thinks that the wicked exist to afford him the self-satisfaction of his own excellence. Let us consider this personification of “the good” a little more closely.

Herr Rudolph indulges in charity and extravagance like the Caliph of Baghdad in the *Arabian Nights*. He cannot possibly lead that kind of life without sucking the blood out of his little principality in Germany to the last drop like a vampire. As Monsieur Sue tells us, he would have been among the German princes who were victims of mediation⁸⁷ had he not been saved from involuntary abdication by the protection of a French *marquis*. This gives us an idea of the size of his territory. We can form a further idea of how *Critically* Rudolph appraises his *own situation* by the fact that he, a minor German *Serenissimus*,⁸⁸ thinks it necessary to live semi-incognito in Paris in order not to attract attention. He specially

⁸⁷ The allusion is to the petty German princes who lost their power and whose possessions were annexed to the territories of larger German states as the result of the reshaping of the German political map (luring the Napoleonic Wars and at the Vienna Congress (1814-15)).

⁸⁸ From the Italian, *Serenissimo*, a Byzantine title indicating sovereignty meaning, literally, “most serene.”

takes with him one of his *chancellors* for the Critical purpose of the latter representing for him “*le côté théâtral et puéril du pouvoir souverain*” [the theatrical and childish side of sovereign power], as though a minor German *Serenissimus* needed another representative of the theatrical and childish side of sovereign power besides himself and his mirror. Rudolph has succeeded in imposing on his suite the same *Critical self-delusion*. Thus his servant *Murph* and his envoy *Graun* do not notice that the Parisian *homme d'affaires* [household manager], Monsieur *Badinot*, makes fun of them when he pretends to take their private instructions as matters of state and sarcastically chatters about “occult relations that can exist between the most varying interests and the destinies of empires.”

Yes, [says Rudolph's envoy,] he has the impudence to say to me sometimes: “How many complications unknown to the people there are in the government of a state! Who would think, Herr Baron, that the notes which I deliver to you doubtless have their influence on the course of *European affairs*?”

The envoy and *Murph* do not find it impudent that influence on European affairs is ascribed to them, but that *Badinot* idealizes his lowly occupation in such a way.

Let us first recall a scene from *Rudolph's* domestic life. Rudolph tells *Murph*, “he was having moments of pride and bliss.” Immediately afterwards he becomes furious because *Murph* will not answer a question of his. “*Je vous ordonne de parler.*” [I order you to speak.] *Murph* will not let himself be ordered. Rudolph says: “*Je n'aime pas les réticences*” [I do not like reticence.] He forgets himself so far as to be base enough to remind *Murph* that he *pays* him for all his services. He will not be calmed until *Murph* reminds him of January 13. *Murph's* servile nature reasserts itself after its momentary abeyance. He tears out his “hair,” which he luckily has not got, and is desperate at having been somewhat rude to his exalted master who calls him “a model servant,” “his good old faithful *Murph*.”

After these samples of evil in him, Rudolph repeats his fixed ideas on “good” and “evil” and reports the progress he is making in regard to the good. He calls alms and compassion the chaste and pious consolers of his wounded soul. It would be horrible, impious, a sacrilege, to prostitute them to abject, unworthy beings. Of course alms and compassion are the

consolers of *his* soul. That is why it would be a sacrilege to desecrate them. It would be “to inspire doubt in God, and he who gives must make people believe in Him.” To give alms to one abject is unthinkable!

Rudolph considers every motion of his soul as infinitely important. That is why he constantly observes and appraises them. Thus the simpleton consoles himself as far as his outburst against Murph is concerned by the fact that he was moved by Fleur de Marie. “I was moved to tears, and I am accused of being *blasé*, hard and inflexible!” After thus proving *his own goodness*, he waxes furious over “*evil*,” over the wickedness of Marie’s unknown mother, and says with the greatest possible solemnity to Murph:

You know—some vengeance are very dear to me, some sufferings very precious.

In speaking, he makes such diabolical grimaces that his faithful servant cries out in fear: “Alas, Monseigneur!” This great lord is like the members of *Young England*,⁸⁹ who also wish to reform the world, perform noble deeds, and are subject to similar hysterical fits.

The explanation of the adventures and situations in which Rudolph finds himself involved is to be found above all in Rudolph’s *adventurous disposition*. He loves “the piquancy of novels, distractions, adventures, disguise,” his “curiosity” is “insatiable,” he feels a “need for vigorous, stimulating sensations,” he is “eager for *violent nervous excitement*.”

This disposition of Rudolph is reinforced by his craze for *playing the role of Providence* and arranging the world according to his fixed ideas.

His attitude to other persons is determined either by an abstract fixed idea or by quite personal, fortuitous motives.

He frees the Negro doctor David and his beloved, for example, not because of the direct human sympathy which they inspire, not to free *them*, but to play *Providence* to the slave-owner Willis and to punish him for *not believing in God*. In the same way the *maître d’école* seems to him

⁸⁹ “Young England”—a group of English politicians and writers belonging to the Tories, formed in the early 40s of the 19th century. They voiced the dissatisfaction of the landed gentry at the strengthening of the economic and political might of the bourgeoisie and resorted to demagogic methods in order to bring the working class under their influence and make use of it in their fight against the bourgeoisie. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels described their views as “feudal socialism.”

a god-sent opportunity for *applying* the penal theory that he invented so long ago. Murph's conversation with the envoy Graun enables us from another aspect to see deeply into the purely personal motives that determine Rudolph's noble acts.

The prince's interest in Fleur de Marie is based, as Murph says, "apart from" the pity which the poor girl inspires, on the fact that the daughter whose loss caused him such bitter grief would now be of the same age. Rudolph's sympathy for the Marquise d'Harville has, "apart from" his philanthropic idiosyncrasies, the personal ground that without the old Marquise d'Harville and his friendship with the Emperor Alexander, Rudolph's father would have been deleted from the line of German sovereigns.

His kindness towards Madame George and his interest in Germain, her son, have the same motive. Madame George belongs to the d'Harville family.

It is no less to her misfortunes and her virtues than *to this relationship* that Poor Madame George owes the ceaseless kindness of His Highness.

The apologist Murph tries to gloss over the ambiguity of Rudolph's motives by such expressions as: "*surtout, à part, non moins que*" ["above all, apart from and no less than"].

The whole of Rudolph's character is finally summed up in the "pure" *hypocrisy* by which he manages to see and make others see the *outbursts of his evil passions as outbursts against the passions of the wicked*, in a way similar to that in which Critical Criticism represents *its own stupidities as the stupidities of the Mass*, its spiteful rancor at the progress of the world outside itself as the rancor of the world outside itself at progress, and finally its egoism, which thinks it has absorbed all Spirit in itself, as the egoistic opposition of the Mass to the Spirit.

We shall prove *Rudolph's* "pure" hypocrisy in his attitude to the *maître d'école*, to Countess Sarah MacGregor and to the notary Jacques Ferrand.

In order to lure the *maître d'école* into a trap and seize him, Rudolph persuades him to break into his apartment. The interest he has in this is a purely personal one, not a general human one. The fact is that the *maître d'école* has a *portfolio* belonging to Countess MacGregor, and Rudolph is

greatly interested in gaining possession of *it*. Speaking of Rudolph's *tête-à-tête* with the *maître d'école*, the author says explicitly:

Rudolph was cruelly anxious; if he let *slip this opportunity of seizing the maître d'école*, he would probably never have another; the brigand would *carry away the secrets* that Rudolph was so keen to find out.

With the *maître d'école*, Rudolph obtains possession of Countess MacGregor's *portfolio*; he *seizes the maître d'école* out of purely personal interest; he has him *blinded* out of personal passion.

When Chourineur tells Rudolph of the struggle of the *maître d'école* with Murph and gives as the reason for his resistance the fact that he knew what was in store for him, Rudolph replies: "He did not know," and he says "*with a somber look, his features contracted by the almost ferocious expression of which we have spoken.*" The thought of vengeance flashes across his mind, he anticipates the savage pleasure that the barbarous punishment of the *maître d'école* will afford him.

On the entrance of the Negro doctor David, whom he intends to make the instrument of his *revenge*, Rudolph cries out with cold and concentrated fury: "Revenge! Revenge!"

A cold and concentrated fury is seething in him. Then he whispers his plan in the doctor's ear, and when the latter recoils at it, he immediately finds a "pure" theoretical motive to substitute for *personal vengeance*. It is only a case, he says, of "*applying an idea*" that has often flashed across his noble mind, and he does not forget to add unctuously: "He will still have before him the boundless horizon of atonement." He follows the example of the Spanish Inquisition which, when handing over to civil justice, the victim condemned to be burned at the stake, added a hypocritical request for mercy for the repentant sinner.

Of course, when the interrogation and sentencing of the *maître d'école* is to take place, His Highness is seated in a most comfortable study in a long, deep black dressing-gown, his features impressively pale, and in order to copy the court of justice more faithfully, he is sitting at a long table on which are the exhibits of the case. He must now discard the expression of rage and revenge with which he told Chourineur and the doctor of his plan for blinding the *maître d'école*. He must show himself "calm, sad and

composed,” and display the extremely comic, solemn attitude of a self-styled world judge.

In order to leave no doubt as to the “pure” motive of the blinding, the silly Murph admits to the envoy Graun:

The cruel punishment of the *maître d'école* was intended *chiefly* to give me my revenge against the assassin.

In a *tête-à-tête* with Murph, Rudolph says:

My hatred of the wicked... has become stronger, my aversion for Sarah Bags, doubtless because of the grief caused by the death of my daughter.

Rudolph tells us how much stronger his hatred of the wicked has become. Needless to say, his hatred is a Critical, pure, moral hatred—hatred of the wicked *because* they are wicked. That is why he regards this hatred as his own progress in the good.

At the same time, however, he betrays that this growth of moral hatred is nothing but a *hypocritical justification* to excuse the growth of his *personal aversion* to Sarah. The vague moral idea of his increasing hatred of the wicked is only a mask for the definite immoral fact of his increased aversion to Sarah. This aversion has a very natural and a very personal basis, his personal grief, which is also the measure of his aversion. *Sans doute* [Without a doubt]!

Still more repugnant is the hypocrisy to be seen in Rudolph's meeting with the dying Countess MacGregor.

After the revelation of the mystery that Fleur de Marie is the daughter of Rudolph and the Countess, Rudolph goes up to her “*l'air menaçant, impitoyable*” [looking threatening and pitiless]. She begs for mercy.

No mercy, [he replies,] a curse on you... you... my evil genius and the evil genius of my race.

So it is his “race” that he wishes to avenge. He goes on to inform the Countess how, to atone for his attempted murder of his father, he has taken upon himself a world crusade for the reward of the good and the punishment of the wicked. He tortures the Countess, he abandons himself to his *rage*, but in his *own* eyes he is only carrying out the task

which he took upon himself after January 13, of "*poursuivre le mal*" [prosecuting evil].

As he is leaving, Sarah cries out:

"Have pity! I am dying!" "Die then, accursed one!" replies Rudolph, terrible in his rage.

The last words "terrible in his rage" betray the pure, Critical and moral motives of his actions. It was the same rage that made him draw his sword against his father, his *blessed* father, as Herr Szeliga calls him. Instead of fighting this evil in himself he fights it, like a pure Critic, in others.

In the end, Rudolph himself discards his Catholic penal theory. He wanted to abolish capital punishment, to change punishment into penance, but only as long as the murderer murdered strangers and spared members of Rudolph's family. He adopts the death penalty as soon as one of his kin is murdered; he needs a double set of laws, one for his own person and one for ordinary persons.

He learns from Sarah that Jacques Ferrand was the cause of the death of Fleur de Marie. He says to himself:

No, it is not enough!... What a burning desire for revenge!
What a thirst for blood!... What calm, deliberate rage!...
Until I knew that *one* of the monster's victims was *my child*
I said to myself: this man's death would be fruitless.... Life without money, life without satisfaction of his frenzied sensuality will be a long and double torture.... *But it is MY daughter!*... I shall *kill* this man!

And he rushes out to kill him, but finds him in a state which makes murder superfluous.

The "good" Rudolph! Burning with desire for revenge, thirsting for blood, with calm, deliberate rage, with a hypocrisy which excuses every evil impulse with its casuistry, he has all the evil passions for which he gouges out the eyes of others. Only accidental strokes of luck, money and rank in society save this "good" man from the penitentiary.

"The *power of Criticism*," to compensate for the otherwise complete nullity of this Don Quixote, makes him a "good tenant," a "good neighbor," a "good friend," a "good father," a "good bourgeois," a "good

citizen,” a “good prince,” and so on, according to Herr Szeliga’s gamut of eulogy. That is *more* than *all the results* that “*mankind* in its *entire history*” has achieved. That is enough for *Rudolph* to *save* “the world” twice from “ruin!”

CHAPTER IX
THE CRITICAL LAST
JUDGMENT

Through *Rudolph*, Critical Criticism has twice saved the world from downfall, but only that it may now *itself* decree the *end of the world*.

And I saw and heard a mighty angel, Herr *Hirzel*, flying from Zurich across the heavens. And he had in his hand a little book open like the fifth number of the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, and he set his right foot upon the Mass and his left foot upon Charlottenburg; and he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth, and his words rose like a dove—chirp! chirp!—to the regions of pathos and thunder-like aspects of the *Critical Last judgment*.

When, finally, all is united against Criticism and—*verily, verily I say unto you*—this time is no longer far off—when the whole world in dissolution—to it it was given to fight against the Holy—groups around Criticism for the last onslaught; then the courage of Criticism and its significance will have found the greatest recognition. We can have no fear of the outcome. It will all end by our settling accounts with the various groups—and *we shall separate them from one another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and we shall set the sheep on our right hand and the goats on our left*—and we shall give a general certificate of poverty to the hostile knights—*they are spirits of the devil, they go out into the breadth of the world and they gather to fight on the great day of God the Almighty—and all who dwell on earth will wonder*.⁹⁰

And when the angel had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices:

That day of wrath
Will reduce the world to ashes.
When the judge takes his seat
All that is hidden will come to light,
Nothing will remain unpunished.
What shall I, wretch, say then? etc.

Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. All this must first of all come to pass. For there shall rise false Christs and false prophets, Messieurs Buchez and

⁹⁰ Marx here quotes with ironic insertions correspondence from Hirzel in Zurich published in No. V of *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (April 1844).

The Holy Family

Roux from Paris, Herr Friedrich Rohmer and Theodor Rohmer from Zurich, and they will say: Here is Christ! But then the sign of the *Bauer* brothers will appear in Criticism and the words of the Scripture on *Bauer's work* [Bauernwerk—"peasant's work"] will be accomplished:

With the oxen paired together.

Ploughing goes much better.⁹¹

Historical Epilogue

As we learned later, it was not the world, but the Critical *Literatur-Zeitung* that came to an end.

⁹¹ From a French drinking song.

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