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Uses of Marx

The Implicit of the Manifested

(Or, Demystification and Critique)

Truth is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters be not in perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition.

Milton, *Areopagitica*

To receive the Law is easy, to keep the Law is difficult.

Buddhist maxim

●. In today's headlong rush of the Gadarene swine toward the abyss, many labours of rethinking and reimagining are indispensable for those of us who have not despaired of struggling for a justice applied to all people that has in the meanwhile become the sole way for the human species to survive at all. One of them is to reground our bearings by finding a new bearing for the fertile work of Marx. This seems at the moment something of a double bind, **nec tecum neque sine te**: we can neither dispense with Marx's quite central insights about the hidden demons of commodity and capital and about their inner articulation, nor can we however accept his somewhat dated prescriptions for exorcizing them. They strike us with hindsight as quite indispensable yet also in dire need of some modification in their capacious fundaments.

There seem to be three ways out of this double bind. One is to pretend that the PoMo ("post-modern") dispensation has left this whole problematic behind; in the supercilious superficiality of aggressive self-advertizing that characterizes its mainstream, this often takes the tack of intellectual terrorism by shrugging off Marx and all those still reading him as dead dogs. Yet, while both important recomplings and important reconsiderations flow out of the last 150 years, the PoMo stance is at best inadequate and at worst simply an evasion of ostrich-like intellectuals into the sands of irresponsibility. As Nasruddin Hajj said, he who sticks his head into sand, his teeth shall be gritted. The second, symmetrically obverse, way is to hold that epicyclic or surface recomplings do not affect any aspect of Marx's central stance, so that they can be overcome simply by some purging of the dross accumulated by his followers of smaller genius, from Engels through Kautsky to Lenin and Stalin – indeed analogously to the purge and repristination that was already attempted by Lenin in the theoretical heyday of his last decade. The history of defeats suffered by the movements for the liberation of labour since then, i.e. from the rise of the still very much present fascism to the genocidal domination of the World Bank, speaks loudly against such seeming piety to Marx, which forgets his horizon of "pitiless criticism of all that exists" – including itself.

Beyond defeatism and rigid orthodoxy, we propose to begin discussing a third way, which consists in long and lengthy work (by many hands and brains) on finding out what has already withered and what is still fertile in Marx's stance. This should not be confused with some kind of middle way, or what the early Barthes of *Essays critiques* called the petty-bourgeois **ninisme** ("neither- nor-ism"). The third way ought to work toward a dialectical sublation of the fertile thesis and antithesis. But it seems to me that we are today badly situated for a confident dialectics; at any rate, the best we can do is to indicate two horns of a dilemma which might, with some luck, faintly suggest some sublation-like advance (**Aufhebung**).

To this end, we have taken (and largely amplified) an essay on the figures of demystification in the *Communist Manifesto*, written in French ca. 15 years ago by Marc Angenot and myself but not heretofore published in English, as the first, laudatory part of a diptych on this fundamental text (it uses “we” to identify the binary author). To this we have added a second part that attempts – in the interests of socialist propaganda, as Brecht once said – to identify one major, even if not consistent, dead-end premise of Marx’s: the recourse to *determinism in the form of scientism* in his work. This may stem from some at his time universally accepted evolutionary horizons and/or from revolutionary triumphalism – both being of bourgeois and indeed finally of monotheist provenience. One should today, historical experience teaches, modify Marx’s famous sentence that humanity poses itself only such questions that it can solve – which is, overridingly, the question whether anti-capitalist revolution could succeed – , by stressing the “can” or reading it as “may.” Thus: humanity poses itself only such questions that *have a chance* of being answered (since they had crystallized sufficiently to be posed in the first place); questions that in principle *could* (with much socially focussed ingenuity, struggle, and luck) be answered; but for which there is no transcendental guarantee that they *will be* answered – even though the lack of an answer may poison the whole social formation and set it on a path of radically devolving values and quite possibly global collapse, as for example today. The temporal horizon is here not scientific extrapolation but utopian orientation toward a project and prize; the tense is not the future but the conditional. Thence the subtitle balancing laudation and limit-finding in, and issuing into uses of, Marx.

1. The Figuration of Demystification: Laudation Arising out of the “Communist Manifesto”

[Chorus to audience:] Now you can see. Concealment is all over.

(*The doors are open. The corpse is revealed.*)

Sophocles, end of *Antigone*, tr. E. Wyckoff

Quidquid latet apparebit.

Dies irae

1.0. The *Communist Manifesto* was written, almost exclusively by Marx himself, upon commission by the “Communist League” in London. It drew upon Engels’s “Principles of Communism,” a small “catechism” (instructions in question-and-answer form) written in 1847, and further discussions with him. The discursive genres of the “creed” or “profession of faith,” and then of catechism, stemmed from the orality-oriented Catholic tradition but they were in Enlightenment and Romantic movements taken up by para-religious, political secret groups such as the Masons or the Carbonari. Predicated as these genres were upon a smaller and more enlightened nucleus spreading its illumination to a larger group, their

clearly articulated and easily remembered communicative forms were in the 1840s seen with favour by the socialist circles (cf. Struik 163ff. and passim, also Michel), which were sometimes organized into secret societies and modelled their initiation rituals on earlier anti-hegemonic groups. The June 1847 congress of the Communist League mandated the elaboration of a “confession of faith,” and this was attempted several times before Marx and Engels finally abandoned it at the end of the year in favour of a “manifesto.” The manifesto form was also bound up with the early history of the French working-class movement: for example, the Babouvist *Manifeste des Égaux* (1796) and the *Manifeste politique et social de la démocratie pacifique* (*Manifesto of Peaceful Democracy*) by Victor Considerant (1843), the leader of the Fourierists.¹

A fuller discussion than we have space for here would, no doubt, elucidate other, possibly very pertinent, aspects of the freight this generic or genological horizon of expectation carries with it.² The term itself of **manifesto** spread through most European languages from the French and the Italian (for example to English in 17th Century). In French (whence Marx took it), the term **manifestation** appears to have been from 12th Century on – and still in Calvin – a theological term, the “action de se révéler (en parlant de Dieu, de sa volonté)” (Wartburg, vol. I/6, in which all French citations of this paragraph can be found: “the act of revealing oneself, said of God and of his will”). From this flow the two principal meanings of “le manifeste”: first, in commercial shipping, “déclaration des biens; liste complète et détaillée des marchandises formant le cargaison d’un navire, qui doit être remise la douane du port de la destination” (mentioned in 1365: in brief, the complete list of wares carried by a ship, for use of customs at disembarkation); second, “écrit public par lequel un prince, un État, un parti [...] fait connaître ses vues sur tel ou tel sujet ou rend raison de sa conduite” (“public written statement by means of which a ruler, a State or a party makes known its views on a given subject or argues the reasons for its conduct”). This later meaning seems directly derived from the Italian “il manifesto,” which meant both such a public declaration and its display or posting as a printed sheet, handbill or placard (and which further became a popular literary term there in the 16th Century – see Segre 831), since its first French record is in a letter from the French ambassador in Venice to Catherine de Médicis in 1574. But we would add that there is also an indirect filiation with the revelation of divine will, gradually laicized by passing through the Ruler, the State, and the Party (this sense is to be found before the Venice letter in Mézeray 2: 951).

Even more useful is how the purpose of “manifesto” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is characterized: “for...making known past actions, and explaining the reasons or motives for actions announced as forthcoming”: this shows much better than Wartburg the generic necessity for any manifesto to span the complete gamut of temporal horizons – past, present, and future – as part of its end-goal (**telos**). Thus, the exemplary *Communist Manifesto* redescribes the salient traits of a history leading up to its own critical moment; it formulates then both a program and a political strategy (cf. Meyer 33-34). To the contrary, a catechism presents itself as atemporal. Marx’s choice of the discursive genre of manifesto is therefore correlative to its “substitution of an exhortational, optative formula for the normative one...” (Segre 831), i.e. to his desire for demystifying ahistorical, “eternal” truths (cf. Bender ed.

12-13 and 90-93). Wartburg adds that Marx's use of the term has disseminated it widely. This is brilliantly confirmed by the fact that volume 4 of Trübners *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, published in 1943 under Nazi rule, does not contain the term "Manifest"!

The manuscript of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (which is the full title) was completed in February 1848 and immediately published in London under the auspices of the League.³ This text has provoked a mountain of annotations and commentaries in socialist circles, as is particularly evident in Bravo's anthology. Translated into "all" languages from the 19th century on, the *Manifesto*, in a strange return to the genealogical vocabulary of 1847, was hailed as the "Gospel of the working class" and the "Bible of socialism" (Kautsky). The simple rehearsal of its editions takes up 500 pages in Andreas's bibliography. As all of Marx's texts – but apparently more so – the *Manifesto* has been examined by socialist commentators from two perspectives: the prevailing one focusses on the cognitive message and "scientific" character of the *Manifesto*, from which a political program is necessarily deduced; the other – more heterogeneous but constantly reappearing – admires the *Manifesto* as an instrument of liberation, an "imaginative monument," a "myth" (Sorel) or, on the contrary, finds in it a "utopian" sensibility which gives "critical" value to this text (Rubel, Marcuse – for the citations from Kautsky, Sorel, Rubel, and Marcuse see Bravo's introduction, xi ff.).

We cannot expatiate on this debate but we shall approach it indirectly while attempting a textual and intertextual analysis of the *Manifesto*. We shall read it, in other words, as a narrative text: not at all as a "fiction," but as a narrative and semantico-pragmatic construct whose language is historically determined. In other words, we are not here discussing the verifiability of the cognitive process in the *Manifesto*. While the *Manifesto* cannot be verified or falsified by the historico-semantic analysis of certain among its elements (nor, let us add, by providing a "scientific" analysis in the sense of Positivist ideology), our semantic and pragmatic analysis proposes to examine the interaction of a writerly practice – though extra-textual results have obviously flowed from it! – and the social discourse (with its clashing ideologies) from which it comes and to which it returns. Such an analysis should be a preliminary to any cognitive verification.

1.1. Within the limits of what is possible in this study, we shall concentrate on the examination of metaphoric sequences and clusters in the text. Intuitively, we consider these groups as the most striking element of the verbal surface and at the same time most appropriate for a study of intertextual **topoi** and Marx's revision of these **topoi**, together with the historical horizon which they imply. As Marx puts it in the *Manifesto*, "[die Bourgeoisie] schafft sich eine Welt nach ihrem eigenen Bilde" (6 – "The bourgeoisie constructs a world in its own image"): what he is engaging in is nothing less than a comprehensive counter-project, namely the polemical creation of a possible world in the image of the proletariat and its militant party. Further, the *Manifesto* is for us not only the text of a "performance" in which a collective speaker declares itself and takes up a stance, but also a "manifest" text in which no significant matters are to be left obscured (hence the perfect fit of the "unveiling" metaphors). A strategic model is laid out, explaining the essential relations of a world needing radical

renewal (cf. Segre 831) to which both the text and the collective proposer refer – here, the world of European politics, with its economic constraints and its perspectives.

Without taking into account the banal catachreses, the “low-grade” or lexicalized and the non-remotivated metaphors in Marx’s text (cf. Suvin, “Metaphoricity,” with a survey and further bibliography on metaphor), one notices immediately that dense *sequences of interacting full metaphors* appear at its strategic points. We shall group these metaphors into three imaginative or semantic fields: metaphors of struggle or *combat* (of strategy and war), metaphors which borrow from *fantastic* literature, and metaphors of *cloaking and uncloaking*. For example, the *Manifesto* opens by paraphrasing a recurrent element in horror stories and the Gothic novel, “A spectre is haunting Europe....” It is on such passages – whose meaning is not at all immediately apparent – that we shall dwell.

These metaphoric concentrations at the text’s key points shall not be treated simply as expressive emphases, a rhetorical **ornatus** divorced from cognition. In this Marxian discourse, in places extremely denuded and composed of severe sequences of conceptual and englobing propositions, the repeated eruption of what is usually called images (although this is more precisely a figuration, an array of tropes that does not always imply pictorial clarity) seems to lend itself to a symptomatic or semiotic reading of the text: a reading not primarily oriented toward the logical coherence of propositions but examining the subtle textual work upon the intertext. These metaphors seem to belong to the realm of an “implicit” which counterbalances the “manifest” articulation of the text. We shall argue that they work by way of a remotivation or reinterpretation of *worn-out* metaphors which have often become clichés. All of them are as a rule signs of intertextual and historical reference, generally ironical, and spanning a broad range from direct allusion, often to a source in “high literature” (Heine, Goethe, Carlyle), to a subversive collage of politico-literary clichés derived from partly individual, partly collective, partly literary, partly paraliterary and indeed non-fictional texts (fantastic narratives from the Grimm Brothers to the “Gothic novel”; journalistic and doxological reworkings) and transformed through processes of shape-change (anamorphosis).

Such rhetorical subversion, Marx’s dialogical irony, culminates in the technique of the *chiasmus* – an inversion of the text’s syntactical structure which makes the other appear in the same, here the truth behind the idealist imposture, by turning the lexical weapons of the opponent against him. One example is the straightforwardly significant reversal of:

Die herrschenden Ideen einer Zeit waren stets nur die Ideen der herrschenden Klasse. (18)

(The dominant ideas of a given age have always been only the ideas of the dominant class – Tucker ed. 351)

and another the ironic inversion of:

so war der Deutsche sich bewusst, [...] statt wahrer Bedürfnisse das Bedürfniss der Wahrheit [...] vertreten zu haben [...] (19)

([The German] felt conscious ...of representing not true requirements, but the requirement of Truth... – Tucker ed. 356)

By the way, the same procedure of chiasmus had been used in the reversal of Proudhon's title *Philosophie de la misère/ The Philosophy of Poverty* which became Marx's polemic *The Poverty of Philosophy*, and in many other places.

The "imagery" of the *Manifesto* has been invoked and described (but not systematically analyzed or interpreted) in the important works of such pioneers as Hyman and Prawer, to which we shall make frequent reference. Prawer, for example, writes, "This manifesto is pervaded from the very start by what may justifiably be called 'literary' imagery: metaphors, images, from oral and written literature, from publishing and from theatrical performance."⁴ We shall follow the lead of such studies, which rightly insist that for Marx "literature" is not a domain outside social discourse, one which should be fetishised or put on an isolated pedestal, but that literature is traversed by ideological vectors that reveal its deep consciousness of the social practice.

One passage in the *Manifesto* – itself inscribed as a metaphor in the text – could be read as a symbolic and self-referential representation of such a practice of writing. Marx conceives of it as a practice of permanent reutilisation of intertextual material, as the superimposing of traces, and as twists and turns of the text though a "geological" stratification of previous writings. He writes, apropos of German petty-bourgeois socialists:

Es ist bekannt wie die Mönche Manuscripte, worauf die klassischen Werke der alten Heidenzeit verzeichnet waren, mit abgeschmackten katholischen Heiligengeschichten überschrieben. Die deutschen Literaten gingen umgekehrt mit der profanen französischen Literatur um. Sie schrieben ihren philosophischen Unsinn hinter das französische Original. [...] Z.B. hinter die französische Kritik der Geldverhältnisse schrieben sie „Entäusserung des menschlichen Wesens,“ u.s.w. (19)

(It is well known how the monks wrote insipid lives of Catholic Saints over the manuscripts on which the classical works of ancient heathendom had been written. The German **literati** reversed this process with the profane French literature. They wrote their philosophical nonsense beneath the French original. For instance, beneath the French criticism of the economic functions of money, they wrote "alienation of human being," etc. – Tucker ed. 356)

This vision of a *palimpsest and of interpolation*, where Marx himself interpolates into a metaphor borrowed from medieval codicology his critique of speculative idealism, should be applied by contraries to the work of Marx himself. Scratching off the ideological verbiage of his time, he reconstructed a "hidden text" which itself speaks of real social relations. We shall thus read the tropological passages in the *Manifesto* as "counter-palimpsests," which reveal ideological work by simultaneously making evident and dismantling the dissimulation which it deploys.

We shall not deal with the first of the three semantic fields which we have outlined above. Not that it is unimportant – on the contrary! But it is the best known field, for it develops what is in a way the “most manifest” proposition in the text: *history as **Klassenkampf**, class struggle*; and its metaphors are explicit and by now familiar: “two hostile camps,” “combat,” “conquest,” “industrial army,” “heavy artillery,” “the bourgeoisie forges the arms which will destroy it,” etc.

This metaphoric field was privileged by the commentators of the 2nd and 3d Internationals, beginning with Engels’s preface to the English *Manifesto* edition of 1888 in which he identifies it as the “Grundgedanke der seinen Kern bildet” (“the fundamental thought which forms its kernel”). Of course, these commentators were not wrong to begin with this field, which is strategic, in both senses of the word. One could show that it is lexically not only the most extended of the three metaphoric fields, but that – in conjunction with the principally metonymical field of *economic production*, which will be so brilliantly developed by Marx from the *Grundrisse* until his death – it constitutes the skeleton of the entire *Manifesto*, the central argument about exploitation and the battle against it. One might however note, in accordance with the principal argument of our paper, that not only are even the metonymies of economic production here and there shot through with residual metaphors of creation and birth, but that this whole semantico-argumentative complex culminates, at the end of the section “Bourgeois and Proletarians,” in the figure of the **Todtengräber** – the proletariat as collective gravedigger, inevitably engendered by the bourgeoisie to bury it. This is both an everyday image and a literary one, found from the medieval Dance of Death and *Hamlet* to the cemetery scenes of the sentimental and Gothic romances in Marx’s youth.

We should like to leave no doubt as to our conviction that a depth analysis of this semantic field dealing with economico-political dynamics, centered on the indispensable allegory of class warfare, remains essential to a complete vision of the *Manifesto*, as is the understanding of a skeleton for that of a body. Nonetheless, the above founding citation by Engels uses a mixed metaphor which makes of this “basic idea” the “core” of the text, and seems to suggest that the text consists of a “core” and a “rind” or “shell” – to which, we suppose, one could allot all the other semantic fields. This language strikes us as outmoded, belonging to an antiquated aesthetic and stance. We therefore intend to approach **al pari** those other semantic fields which Marxologists seem to have seldom confronted. They can be divided into two apparently heterogeneous groups, which we shall nevertheless try to make sense of: 1) the poetico-grotesque images of the horror story (**Schauerroman**), of spectres and witchcraft, which is familiar to readers of Marx from the *German Ideology* to *Capital*, where it constantly reappears to describe the capitalist mode of production or to ironize bourgeois ideologies; 2) the politico-critical notional field of **Verhüllung/ Enthüllung**, of cloaking and uncloaking, of disguise and stripping bare, which has been noticed by some commentators (cf. for example Lefebvre) as central to Marx’s vision. This latter metaphoric field returns time and again in the *Manifesto*: first, in order to describe the “revolutionary role” which the ascending bourgeoisie played in “laying bare” social relations; then to reveal the ideology of the bourgeoisie in power as “veiling,” disguising, and masking its real **praxis**; and finally, to sanction the efforts of those socialists who – in a third moment of the Hege-

lian spiral – tear off this ideological disguising to expose the naked historical truth. We shall carry out a preliminary analysis of those passages which may give a key to these metaphoric developments. We shall then propose a general explicative hypothesis, that will also serve as a provisional conclusion.

1.2. We begin with the *fantastic* metaphors, divided into two groups: those having to do with *ghosts* and with the *sorcerer's apprentice*.

1.21. The text opens with a preamble which precedes the first section, “Bourgeois and Proletarian.” Its compositional or hypotactic status is comparable to that of the four sections of the *Manifesto* which follow. This preamble has a very specific function, of a weight disproportionate to its brevity. Among other things, it establishes a protocol for reading; it makes sense of the typological status of the text as a whole, i.e. of the pragmatio-semantic position of the *Manifesto* and what is at stake in it. The text here describes its own status by way of reference to another literary form and in the vocabulary appropriate to the latter:

Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa – das Gespenst des Kommunismus. Alle Mächte des alten Europa haben sich zu einer heiligen Hetzjagd gegen dies Gespenst verbündet, der Pabst and der Zar, Metternich und Guizot, französische Radikale und deutsche Polizisten. [...] Es ist hohe Zeit dass die Kommunisten ihre Anschauungsweise, ihre Zwecke, ihre Tendenzen vor der ganzen Welt offen darlegen, und den Märchen vom Gespenst ein Manifest der Partei selbst entgegenstellen. (3)

(A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered in a holy alliance to hunt down this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies. [...] It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself. – Tucker ed. 335)

This short passage (whose spectral metaphor recurs with astonishing frequency in socialist and non-socialist literature)⁵ already contains all the features which our analysis hopes to make visible: to the two powers (**Mächte**) which are opposed in it there correspond two ideological strategies which are explicated in terms of *literary genres*. The powers of old Europe – Gothic castle haunted by a ghost – choose to speak about communism in terms of a children's fairy-tale (**Mährchen**, old spelling of **Märchen**). **Märchen**, according to the dictionaries of Trübner and of the Grimms, includes and holds in balance two connotations, approximately those of the English “fairy tale” too: *fiction*, *impossible invention*, and even *untruth* in the first instance, and *narrative type* (from either folklore or “high literature”) in the second. Here, within the context of the Holy Alliance of reigning but already moribund forces against the Spectre, the **Märchen** seems to have been somewhat reinterpreted bringing it into proximity of the Gothic novel which was so much in fashion throughout continental Europe between 1800 and 1840.

Remarkably, the phrase “spectre of communism” was not Marx’s coinage: it was a set ideologeme in German ruling class propaganda of the 1840s. According to scholars, Marx could have found it in the *Staatslexikon* by Rotteck and Welker (1846) under the entry “Communismus”: “for several years,” we read in it, “on all the lips there is talk of communism, a doctrine which has become a menacing spectre [**drohenden Gespenst**] that some are terrified of and others use to dispel this terror” (translated from Andreas 7, cf. Bender ed. 35 and 93). Thus, from the opening words of the *Manifesto* we are in the realm of intertextuality, in an ironic recuperation of the bourgeois counter-discourse by that of proletarian critique.

The Holy Hue-and-Cry (**heilige Hetzjagd**) against the spectre can also be an anchoring point for multiple intertextual allusions. One may see here a reminiscence of the *Holy Inquisition* appearing behind the reference to the *Holy Alliance* of 1815, another unnatural alliance of reactionary forces in which Metternich already played a leading role. “Hetzjagd” is, moreover, not so much a “hunting party” as it is rendered by some translations, nor even simply a “shooting party,” but more of a “hunting pack” with its connotations of hounding, a turbulent pursuit **en masse** – not too far from a lynch-mob. Furthermore, this Holy Pack or Holy Battue is an antiphrastic reference to an important theme in German folklore, **die Wilde Jagd**: the Savage – Black or Damned – Hunt. The origin of this theme (Nordic or Latin) is disputed by scholars, but in any case, it has very deep roots. It is also found in the folklore and literature of other languages, from the high Middle Ages on (the “maisnie Hielekin” in the *Jeu d’Adan*, and an erotic variant in the *Decameron* 5/8). But it has left the strongest and most lasting imprint on German literature. Examples may be found in the poem of Hans Sachs (a writer much appreciated by Marx) about the “wütendes Heer,” and in its frequent recurring among the German Romantics: “das wilde Heer” in Uhland, “der wilde Jäger” in Goethe’s *Goetz von Berlichingen*, the refrain of the popular patriotic poem by Körner *Das Lützow’sche Freikorps* – “Es ist Lützows wilde verwegene Jagd” – and particularly Bürger’s romance *Der wilde Jäger*.. Jakob Grimm gives a most interesting description:

Der wilde Jäger reitet auf schwarzem kopflosem Pferde, eine Hetzpeitsche in der einen, ein Hifthorn in der andern Hand; das Gesicht sitzt ihm in Nacken und zwischen dem Blasen ruft er hoho! hoho! vor und hinter ihm sind Weiber, Jäger und Hunde in Menge [...].

(The Wild Hunter rides on a headless black horse, a riding crop in one hand, a hunting horn in the other; his head is mounted backwards on his shoulders; between the blares of the horn he cries: hoho, hoho! Before him and after him run women, hunters, and dogs in great numbers....)

This passage from the *Deutsche Mythologie*, which was first published in 1835, could well have been known to Marx (and perhaps even ironically used in his and Engels’s title *Deutsche Ideologie*). Marx was an admirer not only of the Grimm Brothers’ *Märchen* (1812-15), themselves chockfull of fantastic horrors and a source – for example – for Monk Lewis, but also of Jakob Grimm’s philological work (cf. Prawer 208-09, 305, 320, and 387-88, also Plischke). With a bit of audacity one might even wonder whether the above passage did not

inspire Marx for the “heilige Hetzjagd” of the *Manifesto* – there are some verbal indications which might be used to argue so. In any case, it is not necessary to find “the” source for Marx, since these sources are at once multiple and clear: it is the whole discourse concerning the Demonic Hunt – the tumultuous appearance of the powers of the Night, tormented souls and vestiges of the pagan supernatural, where frequently the devil leads the band of the damned – , a theme translated all over Europe from its deep traces in German literature, from Hans Sachs to Marx’s favourite poet, Heinrich Heine.

For the Accursed Hunt appears functioning as a historical satire in Heine’s *Atta Troll*, where references to it (underlined by us) are used precisely in relation with “Spuk,” “Geist,” “Gespenst” (spirit, spectre) and “Hexe” (witch):

Und es war die Zeit des Vollmonds
 In der Nacht vor Sankt Johannis
 Wo der Spuk der wilden Jagd
 Umzieht durch den Geisterhohlweg.
 Aus dem Fenster von Urakas
 Hexennest konnt’ich vortrefflich
 Das Gespensterheer betrachten, [...]
 Hetzend hinterdrein die Meute,
 Jäger aus verschiedenen Zonen
 Und aus gar verschiedenen Zeiten;
 Neben Nimrod von Assyrien
 Ritt z.B. Karl X

(XVIII, v.1-7 and 20-24)⁶

(And it was at the time of the full moon, on the night before Saint John, when the phantom of the Demonic Hunt roamed the ravine of ghosts. By the window of Uraka’s witches’ nest we had a magnificent view of the spectral horde.... Following behind was the tumult, hunters from various times and places; beside Nimrod of Assyria, for example, rode Charles the Tenth.)

It is quite suggestive to see the figures and even some of the principal terms of the preamble to Marx’s *Manifesto* appearing here almost word for word, up to Heine’s “Hetzend... Jäger” as a juxtaposition of two terms which only need to fuse in order to become the Marxian compound “Hetzjagd.” Thus Marx returns to Heine’s original idea of a political fantastic, expressed in a letter before writing *Atta Troll*, that “Revoluzion und Kriegsstürme [sind] die wilde Jagd unserer Zeit” (“revolution and war tempests are the Savage Hunt of our epoch,” cited in Reeves, “Atta” 401).

Within the context of the *Manifesto*, the Accursed Pack, transformed into the Holy Ride, represents a reactionary coalition engaged in the defense of eminently earthly but artificially sacralized goods. It functions as a “veil of saintliness” set to cover the appetites of feudal and bourgeois forces in league against communism. Thus a link is established between the

opposition “Märchen” / “Manifest” and the other metaphoric field with which we shall deal: that of veiling and unveiling.

The high expressive density of the preamble is linked to a technique which is more characteristic of the lyrical form than of narrative and scientific discourse: the conspicuous use of alliteration and assonance. In the first paragraph alone (cited above) the most suggestive repetitions in [g] are “Gespenst” (three times), “Geht um” and “Guizot,” with echoes in the second paragraph – “reGierenden GeGnern” and “reaktionären GeGnern,” – and in the fifth (also cited above): “Ganzen Welt” and a final mention of “Gespenst”; to which is opposed (“entGeGenGestellt”) the truth of the “Heilige Hetzjagd” and the urgency of the response, “Hohe Zeit.” The alliterations on [p] run through the whole demonic alliance of the infernal chase: “Gespenst,” “Europa,” “Pabst,” “Polizisten,” to which is opposed the “Partei.” A more complex series of vocals and consonants – especially nasals – echo in the articulation of “Alle Mächte des Alten Europa” (with “Metternich” in the central position) against the communism which “geht um in Europa” and which is already “von allen Europäischen Mächten als eine Macht anerkannt” (paragraph 3). By reason of which the communists must manifest their manner of seeing – “ihre Anschauungsweise offen darlegen” – and oppose – “entgegenstellen” – this cock and bull story with their manifesto: – “den Märchen von Gespenst ...ein Manifest der Partei.” This final passage of the preamble, where the phonetic games culminate in the opposition of “Märchen” and of “Manifest” (this latter subtly but vigorously associated with “Kommunisten” and “Gespenst”) is accompanied by the entire gamut of assonances and alliterations which we have not reviewed here in any systematic manner (for example, the further [c] phonemes in “Zar,” “GuiZot,” “franZösische,” “PoliZisten,” “Zeit,” “Zwecke,” or the [r] phonemes, and so forth).

Charged with all the richness of the associations in the preamble as a whole, insistently signalled by the phonetic correspondences, the two literary genres – the “Märchen” and the “Manifest” – thus enter into the opposition of one framework and reading protocol to another. They are opposed as the untrue to the true, and as the occulting to the subversive use of the fantastic, clouding or revealing central knots of human **praxis**. Furthermore, the semantic field dealing with literary genres and literary production proliferates in the *Manifesto*: one finds references to **Schauspiel, Klagelied, Pasquill, Pamphlet, Utopie, Robinsonaden, Evangelium, Duodez-Ausgabe des Neuen Jerusalem, Schulübung, Schmählieder, Literatur** (theatre play, lamentation, parody, pamphlet, utopia, desert-island story, gospel, duodicesimo edition of the New Jerusalem, school exercise, verse invective, and literature in the sense of “secondary literature about a given subject-matter”).

Further, one might also read an accessory hypothesis “in passing” in the preamble, about the proliferation of politico-literary ghosts which haunts the “Gothic” discourse through Radcliffe, Lewis, Maturin, and their continental equivalents. This is a characteristically Marxian procedure, used by him in other places too when speaking the vampires and monsters spawned by capitalism (see Suvin, “Transubstantiation”), and it provides a thisworldly object to the bourgeois predilection for the safely melodramatic spectral terror. Marx and Engels are, moreover, excellent “ghostbusters” who, for example in the *German Ideology*,

never miss the “ghosts of truth,” the “hydras” and “vampires” of the ideologues from the opposing camp. The first book of *Capital*, Hyman notes, is full of fantastic beings: Gorgons, vampires, werewolves, giants, ogres, cyclopes, monstres, sellers of human flesh haunt those pages. We have thus in these few paragraphs of the *Manifesto* the beginning of a polyvalent intertextual strategy typical of Marxian irony and of his polemical dialogism.

Finally, we note that **topoi** of the “nursery tale” will recur in the text; we read later on, “The bastion of manufacture has been conquered by that *giant* called Modern Industry.” It is as though the bourgeoisie, which established itself on “the *ruins* of the feudal world” now lacked the courage to face up to its “revolutionary role,” and masked its ideology by means of literary models deriving from the phylogenetic or ontogenetic past: either the feudal age, or infancy. Bourgeois society identifies the communist movement with an upsurge of the irrational in society, but the communism-spectre is in fact the opposite, a wholly concrete power. It is the bourgeoisie which, condemned to die, dedicates itself to horror and the irrational.

1.22. Let us jump to another pertinent passage which develops an apposite figuration from fantastic literature:

[...] die moderne bürgerliche Gesellschaft, die so gewaltige Produktions- und Verkehrsmittel hervorgezaubert hat, gleicht dem Hexenmeister, der die unterirdischen Gewalten nicht mehr zu beherrschen vermag, die er herauf beschwor. (6)
(Modern bourgeois society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. – Tucker ed. 340)

Here, the intertext is clearly Goethe’s ballad *Der Zauberlehrling* (*The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, 1798, see Goethe), itself reworked from Antiquity. Yet again, the text of the poem is at the same time called up in its inner articulation and subverted by a radical transformation. In Goethe’s poem it is the sorcerer’s apprentice who misbehaves while the master is gone: „Hat der alte Hexenmeister/ Sich doch einmal wegbegeben. /Und nun sollen seine Geister /Auf nach meinem Willen leben.“ (“Now that the old master sorcerer has, finally! left, we can raise the Spirits at my own will.”) There is a polysemy here, as the last German verse also suggests that the spirits should “live” – behave – according to the apprentice’s will. Yet though he can call them up he cannot make them behave. Disaster ensues because of his vanity and ignorance. But the Master returns and everything is restored to order. In Marx, there is no apprentice: it is *the Master himself* who can no longer control the situation. The bourgeoisie, we read later on in the *Manifesto* (11), “produziert vor Allem ihre eignen Todtengräber,” gives birth to their own gravediggers. The revolutionary function of capitalism is dialectically identified with its inevitable destruction by way of its own processes of development. One possible reading of Goethe is that the sorcerer’s apprentice allegorizes the presumptuous bourgeoisie, but that the aristocracy of “Masters” is there once more to repair the temporary damages. In 1848 the apprentice has become fused with the master in a holy alliance of upper classes fearful of the chthonic powers. But this new collective

pseudo-mastery can no longer control the crisis of overproduction; it goes from crisis to crisis and wants to halt the disorderly process (read: the proletarian uprising) whose ineluctable development it has brought about. We see here a reinterpretation which, again, rearticulates a literary commonplace along the changing fault-lines of history.⁷

1.3. The other metaphoric series is one of *cloaking* and *uncloaking* (or *hiding and revealing*). It appears first as a long, sustained hammering in the midst of the first part of the *Manifesto*, which praises the revolutionary role of capitalism. This praise is not to be read as irony; insofar as the bourgeoisie has eliminated the old system of premises, dissolved symbolic territorialisation, “torn off the veil” from social relations, its role has been fully positive, even though cruel:

Alles Ständische und Stehende verdampft, alles Heilige wird entweiht, und die Menschen sind endlich gezwungen, ihre Lebensstellung, ihre gegenseitigen Beziehungen mit nüchternen Augen anzusehen. (5)

(All that is antiquated [everything that relates to a **Stand**, i.e. a feudal “estate,” with wordplay on “ständige,” stable] and established evaporates, all that is sacred is desecrated, and people are finally forced to consider with sober eyes their position in life and their mutual relationships. – Tucker ed. 338)

This bourgeois cruelty is the midwife of a new state where the illusion of holiness and the false, drugged euphoria to which it gives rise, as well as the concomitant illusion of permanence and fixity are finally “profaned,” exposed to the eyes of people who rediscover the clear outlook of sobriety.

1.31. Here is the sequence of tropes and figures of uncloaking:

Die Bourgeoisie [...] hat alle feudalen, patriarchalischen, idyllischen Verhältnisse zerstört. Sie hat die buntscheckigen Feudalbände, die den Menschen an seinen natürlichen Vorgesetzten knüpften, unbarmherzig zerrissen, und kein anderes Band zwischen Mensch und Mensch übrig gelassen als das nackte Interesse, als die gefühllose „baare Zahlung.“ Sie hat die heiligen Schauer der frommen Schwärmerei, der ritterlichen Begeisterung, der spiessbürgerlichen Wehmuth in dem eiskalten Wasser egoistischer Berechnung ertränkt. [...] Sie hat, mit einem Wort, an die Stelle der mit religiösen und politischen Illusionen verhüllten Ausbeutung die offene, unverschämte, direkte, dürre Ausbeutung gesetzt. – Die Bourgeoisie hat alle bisher ehrwürdigen und mit frommer Scheu betrachteten Thätigkeiten ihres Heiligenscheins entkleidet. [...] Die Bourgeoisie hat dem Familienverhältniss seinen rührend-sentimentalen Schleier abgerissen [...]. – Die Bourgeoisie hat enthüllt, wie die brutale Kraftäusserung, die die Reaktion so sehr am Mittelalter bewundert, in der trügsten Bärenhäuterei ihre passende Ergänzung fand. Erst sie hat bewiesen was die Thätigkeit der Menschen zu Stande bringen kann. (5)

(The bourgeoisie [...] has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural

superiors,” and left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment.” It has drowned the holy ecstasies of pious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine melancholy in the icy water of egotistical calculation. [...] In one word, for exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, lean exploitation. – The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. [...] The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family relationship its touchingly sentimental veil [...]. – The bourgeoisie has revealed how the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which reactionaries so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what people’s activity can bring about. [Tucker ed. 337-38])

It is well known that this passage is a partial recovery of the prophetic imprecations of Carlyle against the “Gospel of Mammon,” and particularly of his theme of “social bonds” being replaced by “Cash Payment as the sole nexus.”⁸ This reinterpretation of Carlyle, whose ferocious perspicacity goes hand in hand with an apocalyptic nostalgia, is an ideal illustration of Marx’s and Engels’s maxim according to which an intelligent reactionary (Balzac, for example) is better – i.e. more useful – than a shallow socialist.

The passage cited is one which develops what Hyman has already noted as the “favourite metaphor” of Marxian rhetoric. The preface of *Capital*, he recalls, will elaborate on this “unveiling” which claims to “Lay bare the economic laws of modern society.”⁹ Whereas the field of the reified fantastic was based on nouns, the semantic field of stripping bare, **Enthüllung**, is rather built out of verbs and the attributive adjectives resulting from them: “zerstört,” “zerrissen,” “nackte,” “verhüllte,” “entkleidet,” “[den] Schleier abgerissen,” “aufgelöst,” “enthüllt,” etc. What happens here is again a remotivation of the metaphors around the theme of “seeing the naked truth.” The favourite metonymy for this theme is the “unveiling”: “The secret has from time immemorial been *interpellated* by the image of the veil” (Benjamin 461). From a literal function in religious cult (cf. Jeremias), this image turned into a frequent **topos** used equally by detractors of mystery (in scenes of recognition or **anagnorisis** from Dante to, for example, Milton, Galileo or Balzac’s *Sarrasine* as analyzed by Barthes 193-94), by the defenders of poetry as veiled cognition (for example Boccaccio’s *Genealogy*, cf. Koelb), and by the Romantic partisans of mystery (not only in the “Gothic novel” but also in Romantic poetry, cf. Lévy-Bertherat 97-109). One of Marx’s favourite authors, Shakespeare, is an anthological source of such figuration, especially in *King Lear*, where the false usurpers’ “robes and furr’d gowns hide all” (IV. vi. 167), and in particular a female form hides a monster and demon in Goneril and Regan, while Lear and Edgar strip themselves of a ruling identity and reveal their suffering humanity of “naked wretches” (cf. Pugliatti 122-25, 146, 172-75, Berman 107ff.). In the *Manifesto*, the image of a “naked, shameless, lean (**dürre**, literally “arid,” i.e. both stripped of everything inessential and also boring, puritanic, Gradgrindian) exploitation” – together with its phonetical expressivity, which could be analyzed much in the same way as we have tried to do for the Preamble of the *Manifesto* – evokes an allegorical ugly naked body, which we imagine as something on the order of Lear’s Poor Tom, or better of Breughel’s Dulle Griet in a world of monsters, only

unclothed. That body is the vicious counterpart of the beautiful and virtuous Naked Truth to which we shall arrive at the end of this investigation.

The figure and concept of a stripping bare or naked subsumes within itself, of course, a long and venerable history. It is built on the central parallel between the material (body) and the moral (human values). In the hegemonic Christian view, the marvellous veil rightly hides the sacred truth; this has been claimed for poetry too by its Idealist defenders. In the materialist view, nakedness equals sincerity, truth, virtue – an equation that, in the European tradition, runs from the Hellenes through some medieval heretic sects (and further, see Berman 108-09 on Montesquieu and Rousseau): Francesco leaves naked the house of his father, rich cloth merchant of Assisi, in order to better serve God and the poor. The Adamite sectarians and the original Franciscans deconstructed simultaneously the theological discourse which defended private property and its empirical practice: far-off but significant and legitimate ancestors of Marx's *Manifesto*.

1.32. This system of figuration is going to reappear in three significant recurrences. Once to criticize the bourgeois pseudo-socialists in Germany who are eager to drape indecent truths in “literary” clothing:

Das Gewand, gewirkt aus spekulativem Spinnweb, überstrickt mit schöngeistigen Redebäumen, durchtränkt von liebes-schwülem Gemüthsthan, dies überschwängliche Gewand, worin die deutschen Socialisten ihre paar knöchernen ewigen Wahrheiten einhüllten, vermehrte nur der Absatz ihrer Waare bei diesem Publikum. (20)
(This robe of speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of “beautiful soul” rhetoric, steeped in the dew of sickly sentiment, this transcendental robe in which the German Socialists wrapped their few skeletal “eternal truths,” served to wonderfully increase the sale of their commodity amongst such a [petty-bourgeois] public. – Tucker ed. 357)

In two other places, Marx eulogizes some other socialists. First there are the French Fourierists who have themselves “revealed” the truth of economic relationships as against the *mystifications* of bourgeois economists:

Dieser Socialismus [...] enthüllte die gleissnerischen Beschönigungen der Ökonomen. [...] Er wies unwiderleglich die zerstörenden Wirkungen der Maschinerie und der Theilung der Arbeit nach, [...] die Auflösung der alten Sitten, der alten Familien-Verhältnisse, der alten Nationalitäten. (18)
(This school of Socialism [...] laid bare the hypocritical apologies of economists. It proved, incontrovertibly, the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour, [...] the dissolution of old moral bonds, of the old family relations, of the old nationalities. – Tucker ed. 355)

And finally, there is the Communist polemic against bourgeois sexual hypocrisy:

Die bürgerliche Ehe ist in Wirklichkeit die Gemeinschaft der Ehefrauen. Man konnte höchstens den Kommunisten vorwerfen, dass sie an der Stelle einer heuchlerisch versteckten eine offizielle, offenherzige Weibergemeinschaft einführen wollen (14) (Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common; thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in place of a hypocritically concealed, an openly recognised, above-board community of women. – Tucker ed. 350)

The figuration is here situated somewhat deeper, but it is the same semantic field of the “hypocritical occultation” of reality, in opposition to a clarifying sincerity. The passage continues elsewhere with an “admitted but not conceded” – the communists do not have to commit themselves, whether hypocritically or sincerely, to a community of women, since the **Aufhebung** (sublation) of the relations of bourgeois production will among other matters also put paid to this prostitutional community as a whole. Such passages are echoed in other texts by Marx. To “ideologues [...] whose role is to forge the illusions of the [bourgeois] class about itself,” Marx will constantly oppose the real movement of society in which communism will be the “resolved enigma of history” (“1844 Manuscripts” in *MEW*, 9: 536). *The Holy Family* opposes also an “unmasked truth” of bourgeois social practice to the truth that is masked – but again still perceptible to the critical reader – under bourgeois phraseology, its philosophy, and its literature (here the Young Hegelians or Eugène Sue).

1.4. We now propose an *explanatory hypothesis* – to function as a provisional conclusion from these analyses – as to the historical situating of this imagery or figuration and as to what it indicates in Marx’s textual practice. We believe it should be presented as a central metaphoric coupling that is a polemical reconstruction of the fundamental dyad in the great Enlightenment tradition, which for Marx goes from Epicure to Diderot: *light vs. obscurity, the unveiled reality opposed to mystifying dissimulation* (cf. a similar conclusion about his *Capital* in Lefebvre 50-53). This coupling implies that the truth is naked, and the untruth disguised; that the conquest of truth is disclosure because falsity comes (came) about as the result of an active process of dissimulation and mystification. Marx is thus reappropriating the cognitive optimism which belonged to Enlightenment rationalism.

1.41. Historically, it is the movement by which the bourgeoisie is constituted as a dominant class which is at the outset an unveiling, a stripping bare: **Enthüllung**. This is abundantly shown by the eulogy to the revolutionary bourgeoisie in the *Manifesto*. However, when the bourgeoisie came to power, it did not openly reveal and glory in its power – as the ruling feudal class had done – but to the contrary it obstinately *veiled* that **praxis**, hiding it behind an abstract (therefore moralising, idealist) “human” rhetoric, cloaking it with the mantle of Noah: **Verhüllung**. If the bourgeoisie at the height of its power turns away with horror from what the *Manifesto* describes as its “revolutionary role,” if it looks so much for religious or literary alibis, then socialists have to anticipate a communist society, the “resolved enigma of history,” by unveiling in theory what the bourgeois revolutionary practice has in its development of forces of production already uncovered but then carefully again hidden and mystified. Thus it is that the bourgeois becomes the master-sorcerer whose invocations

no longer coincide with his deeds and who looks for other magic formulas in order to return beneath ground the chthonic forces which he has called up. The “spectre which haunts Europe” is this subterranean being that the bourgeoisie can no longer master; this is – in another figure, taken from Hamlet’s Father – the subversive “old mole” of the proletariat to which the bourgeoisie has given birth. One could think here – to extend the intertext of Marxian critique and Gothic literature – also of Victor Frankenstein and of the creature whom he produces and who demands from him justice: Marx mentions “Frankenstein” in his letter to Engels of Dec. 27, 1863 (see Prawer 382), but he seems to mean by it the “Monster,” i.e. Frankenstein’s Creature (probably from one of the popular press references or stage adaptations – cf. Baldick 58-61 and *passim*, who seems to overemphasize Marx’s direct acquaintance with Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel).

The Marxian text is organized around the following two isotopies, whose terms are correlative:

Die Bourgeoisie	vs.	Die Kommunisten
Märchen	vs.	Manifest
Gespentst	vs.	Partei
Heilige Hetzjagd	vs.	Klassenkampf
Verhüllen	vs.	Enthüllen
(Bourgeoisie, fairy tale, ghost, holy hunt, veiling vs. Communists, manifesto, party, class struggle, unveiling).		

Marx’s critical work consists of making the **topoi** and ideologemes of bourgeois literature and speculative philosophy say what they hide. In doing so, his critical work is homologous with the progressive “disrobing” accomplished in the materiality of history by capitalist **praxis**. Metaphoric remotivation is one of the methods of such critical work, in that it “lays bare” the complex relations of a philosophical or narrative work to the intertext which it deploys. A network of allusions illuminates the pious untruths and the involuntary confessions. For example, like Marx’s text, Goethe’s ballad is part of a total discursive field and its textual reinsertion is an unveiling. The spectres of the Gothic novel are articulated as very real forces. The socialist critique consists of making *manifest* what is implicit and occulted in ideology, thus of dismantling the mystification; it is essentially an intertextual labour of *demystification*.

The system of metaphors is here linked to an intertextual dialogism in which the connections between discourse and counter-discourse, between the posed and the presupposed, between the literal and the symbolic, the mimetic mode and the fantastic mode, notional critique and “thick” narrative description (whether the paraliterature of Gothic novel or Goethean “high literature”) are revealed. All these interlacings of discursive practice are subsumed by the opposition of mystification and demystification.

1.42. The encompassing dyad of *mystification vs. demystification* thus subsumes both the static metaphoric field of the fantastic (dominated by nouns – these are false or true

existents) and the dynamic field of cloaking and uncloaking (dominated by verbs – these are occulting or revealing actions or at least their sediments). In this network of correspondences the fantastic topic fulfills diverse functions. At the beginning, while the Spectre rightfully haunts the old castle (again like Hamlet’s Father, the dispossessed but legitimate ruler), the Demonic Hunt baying at its heels and other black “fairy tales” support obscurantist ideology. And yet, the uncrowning of the master-sorcerer shows how this topic comes to participate more and more of an ironic “you don’t know how right you are,” or as Wittgenstein might say, “you are not aware what the language speaking you is saying.” The presumed master is seen as confronted by fantastic subterranean powers in which he does not really want to believe. However, in a slide from an Enlightenment stance from above to a Romantic stance of subversion from below, these powers are irrevocably unleashed. The two stances fuse in the Shakespearean figure of gravediggers, who dig up the earth (as does the ghostly mole) to lay low the erstwhile mighty, yet themselves live on as an ironic revenge of the lowest.

All history of class societies and particularly the history of the forces of production “unleashed” under the bourgeoisie *tends* to this result. Nevertheless, in an apparent paradox – which becomes an **aporia** only for scientistic ideology, including here the orthodox Marxism of the 2nd and 3d Internationals – this potential tendency and latency (as Ernst Bloch would say) will become reality only on one condition: and the *Manifesto* believes with confidence that this condition is coming about. It is *the polemical attainment of a clear, revealed truth*, in an active process of tearing off the covering veils of bourgeois (and petty-bourgeois) ideological occultation. It is this conquest on which depends the victory of the proletarian party and its struggle, presented metaphorically as combat and war – the final metaphoric system which we have here taken for granted. The two groups of conceptual figures examined in this study are thus summed up in the concept and englobing metaphor of *de/mystification*. The positive poles of these two fields are the *manifest* (opposed to the occulting fantastic) and *the unveiling* (opposed to veiling and cloaking), which represent the **pars construens** opposed to the **pars destruens**.

These positive poles finally result in an englobing image which is at the same time a concept: that of the *Naked Truth*. This conceptual image – well known from Antiquity on (cf. Horace, *Odes* I.xxiv) as an allegorical image! – is on a par with Marx’s other famous “social characters,” that is allegorical personifications or figurations of the most important human relationships, for example “Monsieur le Capital and Madame la Terre” who ghost-walk in the reifications of bourgeois political economy in Volume 3 of *Capital* (McLellan ed. 504). In the *maieutic drama and performance of the Manifesto*, that anti-fairy-tale, the Naked Truth plays the agential role of the indispensable Proppian ally who guarantees success in the battle. As in Luke, “The truth shall make you free” (VIII.32); but as opposed to the New Testament Kingdom of Heavens in the heart of people, the Truth is here one of strife between classes of people, and its goal is, as in Antiquity, a thisworldly community. Like Delacroix’s bare-breasted *Liberty on the Barricades* of 1830, very popular up to 1848, this is an active female figure, not isolated like the usual upper-class iconographic allegories but leading a plebeian revolt in the tradition of French revolutionary imagery (cf. Adhémar, Agulhon, Mitchell, and Hobsbawm). The figure is an emblem of the **virtus** proper to it: that of tearing

off the veils – i.e., to render Justice seeing or clear-sighted by removing the bandage from her eyes, by curing the blindness that is ignorance.

In the work of Marx's favourite writer, Lucretius, the mandator and guarantor role was filled by Venus, principle of Life: **alma Venus deorum hominumque genitrix**. After the Renaissance, Liberty and Venus were as a rule the only fully naked allegorical females in painting. This figure of the Naked Truth is homologous to Venus or Phryne before the judges of Athens (Heine commented that Delacroix's Liberty was "a strange mixture of Phryne, fishwife, and goddess of freedom," Hobsbawm 123); at the same time, it is a counter-figure not only to the demonic hag of naked exploitation, which we found in 1.31 above, but also to the ancient Roman figure of Justice, a well-swathed matron whose eyes are bandaged in order to follow the law rather than personal favouritism. This is quite logical; the Roman **Iustitia** is a class justice, distributively equal. Marx argues in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* that communist justice is not distributive, but must regard each human case separately and directly, without any transcendent abstract principle (even that of individual equality).¹⁰

This constellation may in a useful shorthand be shown as a Lévi-Straussian quadrangle having on top the two possibilities of VALUE, and at the side those of COGNITION:

	Beautiful	Ugly
Naked and Demystified	TRUTH	EXPLOITATION
Cloaked and Mystifying	IUSTITIA	[HYPOCRISY]

Truth as a precondition and guarantor of the Victory (i.e., of an "in/sightful," regardant or visionary, Justice) of the communists: such is the Promethean implicit of the *Manifesto*.

2. Oscillation and Its Limits: Demystifying Scientism and Anti-Essentialism

The heretic spoke to the Buddha: "Yesterday, what kind of law did you preach?" The Buddha replied: "Yesterday we preached the Definite Law." "What kind of law will you preach today?" "Today we shall preach the Indefinite Law." The heretic asked: "Why do you preach the Indefinite Law today?" The Buddha responded: "Yesterday's Definite Law is today's Indefinite Law."

(variant on a Zen dialog or **mondô** of Dôgen, *Shôbôgenzô*, Section 73)

2.0. Let us pick up again and develop the question posed at the very beginning of this essay: Why revisit and revise Marx and/or our opinion of Marx today? The reason is clear: because his forecasts (or what was taken for such) seem to have been, and in part certainly have been, massively confuted by historical practice, by what he called in the 1846 *The Poverty of Philosophy* "history's wrong side" (noting that it usually advances by that

side). But as Balibar remarks, this will apply to 1848 and 1871 in Marx's lifetime, and then 1914, 1933, 1968, and 1989. No doubt, this is an one-sided list, to which can be opposed 1917 and 1945, for example, but it is equally doubtless that it is the dominant list. For all his significant oscillations, Marx on the whole believed he could subsume this bad and most painful side of history under a rhetoric of double negation, where poverty for example means not only poverty but also revolt, so that in the proper Hegelian fashion it is materially necessary that the latencies of history have to pass through the Purgatory of defeats but then prove so powerful as to issue in the positive resolution. Perhaps we are too panicky after the number and quality of defeats beginning in 1848, but it seems to me this "Marxist" confidence is for our generation irretrievably a Paradise Lost: rather, Rosa Luxemburg's alternative of "socialism or barbarism" and its dialectics of determinacy / indeterminacy remain as our realistic horizon. But then it becomes quite indispensable to envisage what is lost and what is not necessarily lost with this fool's paradise – at least for me, and for people like me.

We shall enter here only into a few points pertinent to a discussion arising out of the triumphalist and determinist aspect of the *Communist Manifesto*.¹¹ In brief, what is lost today is *a scientific, i.e. deterministic, belief in progress*, directly descended from theological triumphalism, and what is not lost are two major methodological pointers: the *demystificatory vision* and the *open-ended concreteness of analysis and resemanticisation*. They allow a new take on, indeed refusal of, the undialectical and quite irrational onslaughts on any essence and totality which today predominate in the ideology of "cultural studies." More substantial arguments about labour-power, production/ self-creativity, and an intelligibility of history posited against the horizon of social struggles and of a (however distant) revolutionary practice, we can only mention as **desiderata** at the end.

Finally, this brief sketch of Marx's oscillation toward but also away from scientism and triumphalism cannot be confined to, or even primarily deal with, the *Communist Manifesto*, even as it latches on to its discussion and attempts to balance its major strengths with its one major weakness. Following Marx, a retrospective from later developments is unavoidable in order to understand the potentialities and contradictions hidden in a prior phase; in that sense, "Human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape" (*Grundrisse* 105). If the human hand inescapably denaturalizes – simultaneously estranges and ostends, or criticizes and functionally reveals – the ape's hand in all its glories and limitations, so does Marx's work as a whole deautomatize our understanding of the *Manifesto* and put into perspective its yield. It seems evident that only thus can the deserved laudation of the youthful masterpiece (Marx was not yet 30 when writing it!) be accommodated within the proper horizons of the master's overriding category: the *critique*.

2.1. In a strictly Marxian optic, the division of labour results within antagonistically split societies in a division into exploiting and exploited social groups – by race, class, gender, etc. – and exfoliates as a series of historical, productive and societal, formations. Modern natural sciences (and all other ones) arose within that division; they are not only as it were accidentally within history, subordinating it to some cognitive or technological imperative;

they are not a pure transcendence of the regrettably impure history; they are a stuff interacting most intimately with all other stuffs of history. In fact sciences arose together with the rise of capital and the bourgeoisie – as visible in the methodology of Bacon, Descartes, and Galileo – in fierce opposition to the clerico-feudal Aristotelianism, “qualitative physics,” and similar theological deductions. It is therefore counter-indicated (to use a term from medical science) or historically dubious to adopt the paradigm of bourgeois science for an anti-capitalist mode of systematic cognition. While tools, once invented, may be adapted to many uses, a strong suspicion should be legitimately entertained that, to rephrase Audrey Lorde, the master’s tools have been bent by constructing the master’s house. This is the case whenever the dynamics of science are arrested by presenting them (as Marx’s critique of Mill puts it) “as encased in eternal natural laws independent of history, at which opportunity *bourgeois* relations are then quietly smuggled in as the inviolable natural laws on which society in the abstract is founded” (*Grundrisse* 87). Therefore the term “science” strongly invites confusion with the bent institutionalized practice thereof in the service of capitalism, which made it possible for Wallerstein to stress, on the negative side, that “we have come to call rationality or universalism or ‘science’ ...[those cultural] pressures that seek to discipline and channel the world’s cadres or ‘middle’ strata” (107). It would be much safer to find for positive use a disambiguating term like “articulated and systematic understanding,” or indeed, as Jameson most perspicaciously suggests, non-alienated production (*Ideologies* 2: 141; cf. Suvin, “Transubstantiation”). The logic of Marx’s analysis and what followed it in both bourgeois and supposedly socialist history strongly suggests that – with all due caution against a return into irrationalism – a new cognitive epistemology is on the order of the day (cf. some very preliminary spadework in Suvin “Notions,” and Wallerstein’s suggestions 115-19, 181-83, and *passim*).

In particular, the quintessentially capitalist and liberal ideology of progress is a highly suspect vehicle for such a mode of cognition. Balibar rightly notes that it reposes on the fusion of two factors: the notion of *irreversible temporal flow* (time as a river rather than, for example, an ocean or an electric current or...), which presupposes an overall linearity regardless of local eddies, and the notion of technical, moral or other *improvement* (87 – we would actually foreground the economic one). But one would have to add to this a third notion (which Balibar approaches in the same section), that of a *monocausal determinism* in the guise of “if atomic A then, necessarily, complex B,” in which there is a necessary relation between a given beginning and the “end” of history (even if that end is in Marx conceived as the beginning of another, radically better history, that of classless society). History is then seen as having a predetermined goal in the laicized form of strict and, in spite of Engels’s plea for multicausality, “ultimately determining” (Engels 692, cf. Balibar 91) immanent necessities. Only such a trinity, it seems to me, melds to make a pseudo-Darwinian upward arrow of evolution. This brand of evolutionism was the “scientific ideology” par excellence of Marx’s time and probably its unavoidable furthest imaginative horizon (cf. Canguilhem, also Suvin “Cognitive”). It was also in part shared by Marx, when for example he speaks of a kind of Newtonian “natural laws” that “make one’s way by iron necessity” (**diese [Naturg]esetze, diese mit eherner Notwendigkeit ... sich durchsetzenden Tendenzen**) in the Preface to *Das Kapital* (12). But even here the immediately apposed concept weakens the laws into

“tendencies,” and to Marx’s great honour he practically abandons “progress” in the body of *Das Kapital*, which is precisely the place where Marx ceases to use that term without critical irony (Balibar 98). To the contrary, “progress” was later on fully embraced by Engels and orthodox Marxism of most stripes. Both Gramsci and Benjamin have (under the twin impact of Fascism and Stalinism) convincingly noted how history itself put paid to such illusions and indeed delusions about history. Their diagnosis of the 1920s-30s could today be repeated in spades. Using Marx’s own method of demystificatory analysis based on **praxis**, we can today see behind this over-reified image the ungainly bones of a theological pre-established plan for mankind (directly inherited from Christianity through Hegel) sticking out.

2.2. If not progress, then what is it that gives an intelligibility to history? What can be used to organize events into a story that makes sense? (Making sense is to my mind “anthropologically” inescapable: what various PoMo Lyotards are doing in their epic story to end all epics – bound to the same apocalyptic delusion which made US President Wilson believe he was entering a world war to end all wars – is saying that nonsense makes sense to them: primarily, we believe, because both the World Bank and the Marxian intelligibility or historicity do not make sense to them.) If history is a process rather than a final product, what are the forces, the collective agents, in it, and what is their logic? It seems clear today, negatively, that Marx’s unconcluded opus is also inconclusive: it does not give what we would be able to accept as an operative answer. But then, this difficulty is also, dialectically, an advantage, from which we may crystallize two major achievements and methodological lessons that set the stage for articulating any acceptable answer.

2.21. First, we see no reason to retract the laudation of the kind of demystification which is brilliantly carried through in the *Communist Manifesto*, and whose inner logic or method we have attempted to unravel in Part 1.¹² The associated figures of removing a veil continue in fact to operate right through *Das Kapital*. What this amounts to is quite akin to a procedure that Brecht will later develop as a stance of estrangement (**Verfremdungseffekt**). That is, once a configuration of phenomena has been described in a “normal” way – i.e. as they immediately appear to the contemporary socialized eye, subsumed under the dominant alienated, bourgeois or positivistic, norms – Marx sets out to demystify or demythologize them; his analytic yield is to reveal a different configuration *hidden* behind or under, and even more precisely encoded within, the phenomena. In other words, the norms of the initial description are to begin with, pragmatically, not considered irrelevant since they represent the “commonsensical” hegemony from which one has to begin one’s analysis in order to have a chance of making it both relevant and understandable; yet they are finally, axiologically, considered as not simply erroneous but as an alienation which is in itself significant and has to be accounted for (as it were by subtraction) in order to get at the really operative categories that permit an interventionist understanding. This constitutes a refusal of the bourgeois subject-object split: in a central example, commodity objectively generates a fetishized world which then subjects rightly perceive as reified and opaque; but the fetish draws its power from incessant alienation of surplus labour in the specific capitalist form of a market(able) “equality and freedom,” which alienation is in its turn at the same time collectively objective and distributively or serially subjective.

The PoMo vogue, which possesses and is possessed by strong elective affinities with intellectual prohibitionism akin to terrorism, would prohibit the positive turn of this demystification. Expressions such as “subjective and objective alienation” and others suggesting an operative assumption of reality as something to be understood and intervened into are in this vogue tabooed as “essentialist.” The shrewdest **tu quoque** (“you too”) formulation we are aware of is Althusser’s observation that “the total [‘expressive’] presence of essence in existence which reduces all opacity to zero ...makes us suspect the presence behind it of the tenebrous religious phantasm of epiphanic transparency” (1: 41).¹³ And there is no doubt that Marx repeatedly talks of an inner essential structure (for example of economic relations) in a way which we would today wish to rephrase. Yet washing one’s hands of the world we live in and that lives in us is epistemologically as well as ethically futile: we think, together with Guattari, that this tabooing finally boomerangs on its promoters to show the “postmodern condition ...to be the very paradigm of every sort of [buckling under and] compromise with the existing status quo” (40). But the question is important and necessitates a little – even if quite sketchy – detour into the problem of essentialism, and later on of totality.

2.22. *Essence* is one half of the doublet or pair “essence vs. appearance (or existence),” which stands as perhaps the longest unresolved quarrel in philosophy (cf. for example Marcuse). From a materialist point of view it sounds tempting to privilege appearance which, being here-and-now, seems immediately accessible to sensual perception. This can be done either in the nihilist (for example Buddhist) version of a bad appearance – we can never get beyond appearances, so reality can’t be known at all; or in the phenomenological version of a good appearance – appearance is reality, there is nothing else to know. However, questions such as just what are the limits of any spatiotemporal present and just how sovereign may any perception be lead into veritable minefields: semiotics has been grappling with them since ancient divination and Chinese or Greek medicine. But even outside these central epistemic conundrums, there are excellent reasons why taking appearance at face-value is suspect: first, it does not allow for human foresight and intervention outside of the present instant (no long-range agency); second, even in the present instant it remains unclear which of the many facets of appearance – and how and why – to intervene into for a probable result (no strategic choices). Thirdly, in a commodified and therefore fetishised world, where money and commodities are “the alienated essence of people’s work and existence” (Marx, tr. modified from Tucker ed. 48), direct experience is even more radically polluted. Thence the no doubt partly justified downgrading of appearance as a naive or indeed degraded, merely “subjective,” experience of or take on or view about reality, as opposed to “reality itself.”

But obversely, all approaches to essence, especially when it is postulated to exist independent of appearances, are notoriously complex, difficult, and very often disappointing in their results (for example in Kant’s **noumina** as opposed to the phenomena). The narrow (Cartesian or bourgeois) rationalists and – in an apparent paradox – the mystics, beginning with Plato, believe that the really real can be known directly without passing thru’ appearance, either by logic, or by direct mystical communion. While all of these stances

may have useful or even admirable elements, none of them seems able to allow for lastingly intelligent agency. They all result as a rule in rigid Aristotelian or monotheistic norms of what is “natural,” therefore eternal and valuable, in a social order (see Jameson *Seeds* 33-34). Thus, one has to exclaim “a plague on both your houses!” about the strict essentialists and the strict existentialists. As Marx noted, “if the appearance and the essence of things directly coincided ...all science would be superfluous” (*MEW* 25: 825): we need this distinction, and its feedback dialectics, for any systematic cognition or understanding. This leaves us with the necessity to either integrate the essence into our knowledge or to invent some hitherto undreamt of new terms. The second alternative is not only uneconomic and strongly subject to privatisation of language but also favours the pernicious extinction of historical memory, and is to be rejected.

Thus, the real or demystified question becomes: Whence the dislike of essentialism anyway? What functions does it fulfil? In our time it is employed as a World-Bank ideological ploy for demonizing and thus dismantling all opposition to savage capitalism. More precisely, Jameson has drawn a most interesting and suggestive analogy between such antifoundationalism and economic circulation in post-Fordist capitalism with its “drive to liquidate inventories” (*Seeds* 41) – including human “inventories.” Diachronically, it is a liberal habit stemming from the breakdown of fixed feudal “estates” and similar slots in the “historically unique democratisation of oppression” (Chéla Sandoval, in Gardiner ed. 97), i.e. the diffuse, more hypocritical, and much more “internalized” bourgeois oppression of our age. The intellectuals’ anti-essentialism agenda today may well stem from a repugnance against being lumped together or identified with any kind of articulated collective, except the privatized and narcissistic identification with market competition and consumerism. This PoMo slogan has by now petrified “into a kind of norm in its own right ...wide open to the objection that it has itself become something of a dogmatic foundation...” (Jameson, *Seeds* 34-35).¹⁴ The quite indispensable hermeneutics of suspicion and demystification, discussed in Part 1, are either incomplete or counterproductive unless accompanied by the readiness for and attempts at reconstruction.

A **bon usage** of essence, a term which we think signals a real unresolved problem within understanding, would then seem to be a “soft” one, open to historical practice and therefore limited both in time and in scope, in which essence is neither to be dogmatically rejected because it provides a movable focus permitting choice and agency nor dogmatically accepted as static, natural, and eternal. It should decisively reject the monotheist topology (taken over by bourgeois understanding in Cartesian, Lutheran or other guises) of identifying human or any other essence with a spheric interiority of the kernel-in-a-shell type (cf. Althusser 1: 44, 2: 174-75, and *passim*). As Sève repeatedly phrases it, human essence is “socially de-centered.” Our **bon usage** should therefore use essence simply as a supremely important “rational abstraction” which not only underlines the common traits of a subject and thus avoids repetition but furthermore allows us to define and intervene into (first discursively and then empirically) any subject in the first place. Not being the Truth – a spherically internal, or polar or diametrical, opposite of empirical appearance – , this essence is only there as an indispensable mediation toward a richer concretisation (see 2.23 below).

In this area, Marx is precisely the high point of a “Copernican revolution” in the whole European philosophical tradition, to the effect of seeing the essence as *relational* rather than substantive (Sève 331, also 194, 510-11, and *passim*). This relationality has a synchronic and a diachronic aspect. First, the essence of (for example) money, labour-power, production, class, exploitation or any other major concept is a nexus and a node of multiple, *pluricausal* interactions. One of the major necessities of a reasonable epistemology today is to discuss the conundrum of causality and get rid of the reified cause-effect dead-end (and especially only of efficient cause, and most especially of single cause vs. complex effect) without throwing the baby of causality out with such a dirty bath: “Any historical event comes about,” noted Brecht, “[...as a result of] contradictory tendencies, which were decided by struggle, this is much less than ‘sufficient reasons’” (20: 156), and elsewhere he speaks of a “bundle of motives” (20: 157). In other words, we would argue that all complex concepts such as those above are – Marx stresses it time and again – not merely general or abstract, “horizontally” referring to each other as fixed pseudo-things in a closed and unfalsifiable doctrinal system. When Marx refuses Feuerbach’s fixedly “naturalized” or reified human essence, he does so because it is an “internal and mute generality, which connects individuals in a merely *natural* way” (*Theses on Feuerbach* 6, tr. modified from Tucker ed. 109).

Second, as against such old-style philosophizing, history is not accidental and extrinsic but constitutive:

This sum of productive forces, [a historically created relation of individuals to nature and to one another,] capital funds and social forms of intercourse, which every individual and generation finds in existence as something given, is the real basis of what the philosophers have conceived as ‘substance’ and ‘essence of man’... (*The German Ideology*, Tucker ed. 128-29).

In a vivid example:

The “essence” of the fish is its “existence,” water – to go no further than this one proposition. The “essence” of the freshwater fish is the water of a river. But the latter ceases to be the “essence” of the fish and is no longer a suitable medium of existence as soon as the river is... polluted by dyes and other waste products and navigated by steamboats... (ibid. 132)

In sum, for Marx each essential concept is “a *generative process*, [a] self-constructing dynamic” (Sève 332, cf. Berman 93), which participates in the no doubt imaginatively constructed yet also reality-constricted, “vertical” feedback with material bodies and processes. A good example would today be the difference between the simultaneously abstract and reified atom from the Greeks to Rutherford, as opposed to the infinitely subdivisible and recombinable dialectics of atom in 20th-Century physics – whose “essential” existence nobody has nonetheless put into doubt, simply because operative physics functionally, strategically or epistemologically must have this concept. Thus, a Marxian essence is organized into formal topologies (see also Sève 328-33, and Suvin “Cognitive”): “human essence,”

concludes Thesis 6, “is an ensemble of social relationships.” As such relationships change, with ever-increasing speed under capitalism, essences or “natures” change too, prominently including human nature – that is a ground bass of *Das Kapital*.

It is noteworthy that two among the central lines of epistemic insight in our century, namely the best formulations by Bertolt Brecht and by the critics arising out of feminism, develop such a flexible “soft” essentialism. Among many of Brecht’s statements of this kind (he also has “hard” essentialist statements), which foreground the aspect interest plays in such determinations (see also Marcuse 76), one might here suffice:

...truth has become a commodity to such an extent, ...that the question “what is true” cannot be solved without answering the question “whom does this truth avail.” Truth has become an entirely functional matter, something that does not exist (above all, not without people) but must be created in each case, certainly a means of production but a produced means! (GW 20: 87)

And what we take to be the feminist theoreticians useful beyond the internal debates of that movement, picking their way thru’ the antinomy between valorizing a women’s standpoint and seeking equality, agree that we need a useful “strategic essentialism based on the creative force of labor” (Weeks 299), which is “a performative discourse seeking to constitute a political effect and a political community” (Judith Butler quoted by Patricia Stamp in Gardiner ed. 88; many other examples could be found, from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak through Judith Butler to Kathi Weeks, *ibid.* 95).

2.23. A second strong (and presently very useful) aspect in Marx’s opus, and a central implication of his methodology, is that in fact *there can be no final answers* in a quickly changing history (i.e. after the Industrial Revolution/s). His central stance and concept of *critique* (for example the critique of commodity fetishism) constitutes a firm refusal of all static fixity, of any eternally natural categories and undialectical determinism (cf. Haug, Balibar, Berman 20 and *passim*, Amariglio-Callari 56 and *passim*). (There is no dialectical determinism: there are only more or less strong tendencies that can succeed or be counteracted in a multicausal world.) Brecht argued that “in reality, processes never reach conclusions. It is observation that needs and sets conclusions.” (20: 156).

This stance may be to begin with educed from the definition of dialectics in Marx’s Afterword to the second edition of *Das Kapital* in 1873, which is:

a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire spokesmen because it includes into the positive understanding of the existing state of things at the same time also the understanding of the negation of that state, of its necessary decline; because it regards every form that came about as in fluid movement, thus also in its transient aspect; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary. (28; tr. modified from McLellan ed. 420-21)

Dialectics can only be found within a temporal horizon of a potentially different and a potentially better (less oppressive) set of human relationships. Obversely, “all categories that describe the given [historically mutable] form of existence... become ‘ironic’: they contain their own negation” (Marcuse 86). The stance of critique, which is necessarily always dialogical and ironical, is never absent in Marx, and it predominates wherever the level of concrete analyses (which was for him the most important one) is his strategic choice: in the *18th Brumaire* more than in the *Communist Manifesto*, in *Das Kapital* (perhaps most clearly) more than in the *Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* of 1859. In other words, rather than in the programmatic and thus inevitably schematic – though still immensely stimulating – summaries, Marx attained in such feedbacks, where the inductive verticality from actual messy historical processes intertwines with thought-experiments, the maximal richness of all his concepts, as well as their maximal plasticity, visible in the modifications they underwent whenever new analytic exigencies arose. Marx himself defined this inductive-deductive methodology as going from an empirically superficial and/or banal conception first to “ever thinner abstractions,” but then from such simplest conceptual determinations spirally back to a reconceptualized and enriched concreteness: “The concrete is concrete,” he concluded, “because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse” (*Grundrisse* 100-01, the last phrase coming as a direct quote from Hegel’s *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* and going towards Althusser’s “over-determination”).

It is one of Balibar’s (and before him, W.F. Haug’s) great merits that he has drawn attention to the methodological consequences arising from Marx’s letters to Mikhailovsky and Zassulich in 1877-81 on whether Russia could jump from the medieval peasant commune directly to socialism, namely that “one has to descend from pure theory to Russian reality in order to discuss that,” that his historical discussion of capitalism in Western Europe is not “a general historico-philosophical theory of development... regardless of historical circumstances” but that it would have to be independently argued for another spacetime, and that the answer is finally a matter of possible political contingencies rather than predetermination – so that “the Russian commune can be saved by a Russian revolution” (*MEW* 19: 108 and 926, English excerpts in McLellan ed. 571-80; cf. Haug 44-46 and Balibar 105-07). The very linearity of historical time, indispensable for making it the space of progress, is here decisively doubted in favour of a Riemannian or Einsteinian “qualitative” dialectics of time (cf. Balibar 112) which depends on its constituent matter (this will be developed further by Ernst Bloch’s reflections on the asynchronicity of global history as well as by Wallerstein’s topology of the global centre vs. periphery). Thus, in order to discuss Marx’s concepts in less than several hundred pages, the finite schemas have inevitably to be used – but not without correction by his most highly developed philosophical practice as in *Das Kapital* (cf. on this Balibar 91-94), accompanied by sarcastic disclaimers such as one in the letter to Mikhailovsky against applying the **passe-partout** masterkey of “a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which is to be supra-historical.” That is why the early Marx’s generous attempt to substitute the proletariat as “universal class” for the Chosen People of World History would not work even if the incidence of workers’ resistance were happily much higher than it is, even if revolutions made in the name of and together

with the working classes were still on the horizon: the whole constellation, notion or image is still within a monotheistic teleology.

From this vantage point, it would be possible to attempt a differentiation within (and if you wish demystification of) the outcry against *totality* similar to that attempted for anti-essentialism. It is of course possible to reduce totality to what Althusser identifies as the Leibniz-Hegel (in fact, as he says in Vol. 1, the monotheistic) “expressive” model, which presupposes that the whole in question “possess such a unity that each element of the whole, be that a material or economic determination, a political institution, or a religious, artistic or philosophical form, is always only the presence of the [essential] concept to itself in a given historical moment” (2: 40), so that at each such monadic moment it is possible to employ the equation “element” = “the inner essence of the whole” (cf. also Witt 748-49). What has thence come to be called “expressive totality,” tho’ this somewhat unfortunate ellipse should properly be “totality with an expressive causality” (2: 173), is (as we argued in 2.22) clearly to be rejected as a static, “bad” essentialism. However mediated and overdetermined the vivifying warmth of this Sun Deity may be, in Althusser it is a “code word for Stalin” (Jameson, *Political* 37), even if it is in the texts under discussion mainly applied to Lukács’s messianic *History and Class Consciousness*. Before Althusser this was perhaps even more convincingly articulated by such undoubted totality-seekers as Bakhtin/Vološinov, Brecht, and Benjamin (for example in “The Author as Producer”). All of them protested against the Platonic impoverishment of experience, the reduction of new understanding to a re-cognition (**anamnesis**) of eternal Ideas, and the concomitant assumption of the text’s author into the heaven of prophetic transmission.¹⁵

No doubt, interesting variants of predetermining reality can be found: it may become an *illustration* of what existed (or in fact, was believed to exist) earlier, or an *indication* of simple “underlying causes,” or an onset or *seed* which is seen backward from its teleological perspective-point as a “baby figure of the giant mass /Of things to come” (Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* II.i – cf. Witt 755-56). But all of these allegories suppress agency and actors between its rigid poles, i.e. the possibility of a Novum, of something new and not previously known resulting from the existing; all of them occult the author’s situation; and all of them fully subordinate and incorporate induction from possibly new practice to hegemonically deductive modes of thought handed down from the past.

Again, there is no doubt that Marx had such a Hegelian or messianic heritage which he grew increasingly critical of but never quite outgrew (tho’ even Hegel never quite articulated his “thick” arguments according to his programmatic essentialism but let all his decipherments of appearances function exclusively within history). The strongest post-Cartesian and scientific dualism is in Marx one of outer appearance vs. inner laws of movement (see for example *Das Kapital* III, MEW 25: 324, discussed in Witt 750-51). However, the Althusserian or monotheistic totality is not the only, nor even the most important, model of totality available. In Marx, much more frequently and significantly, we are within *Das Kapital* confronted by two *different ways of cognizing* reality. We could call these two models rock-solid vs. ocean-fluid: on the one hand, an uncritical linkage of notions (**Vorstellungen**) which

follow a “common sense” that is usually more conceptual than sensual, and on the other hand a critical reasoning that reconstructs the given in its becoming, having become, and functioning, as well as according to subversive norms of desire and value, into an articulated, fluid, and dialectically contradictory “concrete”: “Beneath the apparently solid surface, they [the 1848 revolutions] betrayed oceans of liquid matter, only needing expansion to rend into fragments continents of hard rock” (“Speech at the Anniversary of the People’s Paper,” Tucker ed. 427; and see on this remarkable passage Berman 90 and *passim*). This is in fact the Marxian whole or totality (cf. Althusser 2: 43ff. and Haug 49 and *passim*). Marx’s oscillation between them may be phrased also as his not having “adequately and articulately conceptualised (**pensé**) the ...theoretical implications of his theoretically revolutionary proceeding” (Althusser 2: 75).

In that vein, we would maintain that we need to strive for both extensive totality (understanding the capitalist world-system which beats Western trade unions by shifting to Taiwan or Georgia) and intensive totality (a standpoint able to see the shifting paradigms under the extension). After all, since a total, and negative, world-system exists beyond any reasonable doubt – let us take only the examples of the sale and use of arms and chemicals – to refuse thinking it as such is an act of imaginative and political abdication. Therefore, in our cultural theory Jameson’s insistence on a dynamic and open-ended value-horizon of possible (if largely unrealized) totalisation – “the absent totality that makes a mockery of us” (“Actually” 172) – is a **sine qua non** reference, a necessary presupposition for criticism and for positive counter-proposals. Such a totality is not expressive of any divine essence, but on the contrary, as we argued earlier, resolutely divorced from any imaginary spheric centrality analogous to Christian soul, Ptolemeian Earth or imperial power (such as the Muscovite Komintern – cf. Althusser 2: 45). In other words, we can and have to use *an epistemological or hermeneutic but not an ontological totality*, as a trope quite indispensable in understanding anything & everything but not present in any “deep” or “interior” way in an Engelsian “(dialectics of) Nature.” As Brecht lucidly remarked in a note called “Totality” from the 1930s: “In fact, we can only *construct*, make put together a totality, and this should be done quite openly, but following a plan and for a given purpose” (20: 131). Symmetrically obverse, we understand open-endedness in Jameson’s and Marx’s sense not as liberal pluralism or simply mush, but as a Brechtian productive doubt entailing an articulated stance and clear value-horizon. The resulting inescapable totality is always provisional; yet it, simultaneously, remains operative for *this* stance and horizon as well as necessarily wedded to change, consubstantially with a changeable stance in order to render justice to the coming about of different situations and to the agent’s self-reflection and self-correction.

3. In sum, we have to read Marx’s opus as a rich and uneven force-field. His rupture with traditional philosophy had not resulted in a monolithic system. Nonetheless, it certainly included an aspect and stance of deterministic scientism, founded in his hopeful enthusiasm of the 1840s and echoed as late as the 1867 Preface to *Das Kapital*. This proved an inspiration but also finally a snare to the socialist movements in the century after his death: it answered their legitimate need for clear and simple slogans, but it also easily slid into a pernicious impoverishment and doctrinaire encapsulation toward which the monotheistic “Marxists”

had tended since the late Engels and which was consummated in Stalinism. Yet in Marx this stance went always hand in hand with, and by the time of *Das Kapital* became on the whole superseded by, his “thick” effort of a demystificatory critique of ruling illusions and capitalist fetishism, advancing finally toward a dynamic and unceasingly renewing, open-ended illumination. The result is a plurality of oscillating stances unified by Marx’s constant horizon of revolutionary practice as the agency needed to rid people of devastating capitalist exploitation of human labour. However, this oscillating and in many respects even contradictory plurality-in-unity, arising out of his reflection on changing phases of capitalist power during his lifetime and in particular out of the defeats of the revolutionary hopes both in 1848 and in 1871, “in no way signifies a weakness of Marx’s” (Balibar 6).

At the end, we would like to return the reader, with what we hope is some additional illumination, to what we began with. We hold that if we cannot accept the deterministic Marx, we cannot do either without such a final horizon, to be read out of and no doubt also partly read into Marx. We accept Guattari’s characterisation of our historical moment:

A certain idea of progress and of modernity has gone bankrupt, and in its fall it has dragged along all confidence in the notion of emancipation thru’ social action. At the same time social relations have entered an ice age: hierarchy and segregation have solidified, poverty and unemployment tend now to be accepted as inevitable evils... (40).

Nonetheless, especially in our time, the heritage which the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was willing to accept from the revolutionary bourgeoisie, today taken as hope and horizon to be devoutly striven for rather than as prophecy, remains the quite indispensable beacon:

Alle festen, eingerosteten Verhältnisse mit ihrem Gefolge von altehrwürdigen Vorstellungen und Anschauungen werden aufgelöst, alle neugebildeten veralten, ehe sie verknöchern können. Alles Ständische und Stehende verdampft, alles Heilige wird entweiht, und die Menschen sind endlich gezwungen, ihre Lebensstellungen, ihre gegenseitigen Beziehungen mit nüchternen Augen anzusehn.

(All fixed, rusted-in circumstances, with their train of ancient and venerable notions and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and people are at last compelled to face with sober senses their position in life and their relations to each other. – tr. modified from Tucker ed. 338; cf. the literal tr. in 1.3 above)

Facing soberly our position in life, we cannot cease talking (for example) of labour-power and production, and how they provide the stuff of human reproduction, i.e. of history, of its hegemonic occultations, and some of its central – finally no doubt revolutionary – tensions: they are, after all, verified daily even in the somewhat epicyclic regions of our work in academia.

Notes

This article was written in two phases. Its nucleus, with the main theses, was written in collaboration by Angenot and Suvin in 1979 and published in the Montréal periodical *Études françaises* special issue on the **manifeste** genre 16.3-4 (1980): 43-67, as “L’implicite du manifeste: métaphores et imagerie de la démystification dans le ‘manifeste communiste’”; this was translated into Japanese as “Datsu shinpika, aruiwa sengen-saretamono no ganisurukota” [“Demystification, or the Implicit of the Manifested”] in *Hihyô kûkan* no. 10 (1996): 106-28. It was then in 1994 considerably expanded (mainly by Suvin, including most of Part 2) for the Italian translation: “L’aggirarsi degli spettri. Metafore e demistificazioni, ovvero l’implicito del manifesto (Elogio, limiti e uso di Marx),” in M. Galletti ed., *Le soglie del fantastico*, Roma: Lithos, 1997, 129-66, which could not take into account Derrida’s different take in the just published *Spectres de Marx* (1993). Small details have since been added to by Suvin but is centrally a product of the late 1970s.

Suvin would like to add here that in the almost quarter century since this was finished Marx has to his delight returned, so that some general formulations here could now be changed or expanded.

Suvin’s later work on Marx and Marxism can be seen in his vita at <http://darkosuvn.com/>, in his book *Splendour, Misery, and Potentialities: An X-ray of Socialist Yugoslavia* (forthcoming at Brill 2016), and in a number of papers available at <https://independent.academia.edu/DarkoSuvn/Papers>, of which he would like to mention here:

“15 Theses about Communism and Yugoslavia, or The Two-Headed Janus of Emancipation through the State (Metamorphoses and Anamorphoses of >On the Jewish Question< by Marx).” *Critical Q* 57. 2 (2015): 90-110.

“From the Archeology of Marxism and Communism: Pt. 1 “Phases and Characteristics of Marxism/s,” Pt. 2 “On the Concept and Role of the Communist Party: Prehistory and the Epoch of October Revolution.” *Debatte* 21.2-3 (2013): 279-311.

“What Is To Be Done?: A First Step.” *Socialism and Democracy* 30.1 (2016): 105-27.

“Communism Can Only Be Radical Plebeian Democracy.” forthcoming in *International Critical Thought* 6.2 (June 2016).

1/ Cf. on the history Riazanov and Struik. Considerant was the most prolific author of manifestos before 1848. His first was *Bases de la politique positive: Manifeste de l’École sociétaire, fondée par Fourier* (Paris, 1841). The most interesting and most pertinent text for the ancestry of the *Communist Manifesto* seems to be the *Manifeste politique et social...* adduced in the body of our study, published in his journal *la Démocratie pacifique* in 1843, and reissued as a book with the title *Principes du socialisme: Manifeste de la démocratie au*

XIXe siècle (Paris, 1847). It was certainly known to Marx and Engels as a summary of the contemporary French socialist thought. In the *Principes*, the first part is also a historical survey dealing with the Antique and feudal societies and arriving to the new Christian and democratic regime. The earlier two societies were based on force (war) and a total, inhuman, and barbarous exploitation of man by man. To the contrary, the new dispensation is based on industry, science, labour, and reason, and its principle of equality leads to democracy. The first part ends by analyzing the metamorphosis of free competition into a new industrial, monopolistic feudalism, which will lead to the revolution if all classes do not unite to prevent this. The second part opposes the revolutionary, communist, solution of the “social problem” to the peaceful solution proposed by Considerant’s Association. Part 3 passes in review its doctrines of “integral humanism” (cf. on Considerant Dommanget, Zil’berfarb “Bankrotstvo,” a long bibliography in idem, *Sotsial’naia* 473-78, and Davidson). It would be, no doubt, useful and instructive to systematically find out the parallels and radical divergences between these *Principes*, Engels’s *Principles*, and Marx’s *Manifesto*. In spite of a small polemic between the “revisionists” (for example Sorel, cf. Andler, Ramus, and Laski) and the “orthodox” (from Kautsky and Mehring to Struik, 64-66), so far as we know this task has not yet been accomplished. It is probable that an influence exists, partly as parallels (especially in the military metaphors) but largely **a contrario**; beyond the **topoi** current in the socialist movement, Considerant’s example might have encouraged the choice of the form of manifesto. Cf. from the large literature on manifestos (primarily literary ones) the two special issues of *Études françaises* 16.3-4 (1980) and *Littérature* no. 39 (1980), especially the articles in the latter discussed in the next note.

2/ In *Littérature* (1980), Abastado approaches a potentially very illuminating genological discussion by contrasting the manifesto genre (3) to the appeal (**appel**, which contains no program), declaration (**déclaration**, which states a position without explicit demand for the addressees’ adherence), petition (**pétition**, a point-like claim signed by all the claimants), and preface (an introduction to another text). He goes on to indicate rightly the obscurity and metaphorisation that besets such distinctions (from which the creed and the catechism genres are in any case missing). From our perspective, most interesting are his discussions of the manifesto as cognitive rupture and refounding as well as desire (6-7). See also there the very stimulating discussion of this genre’s paradoxical institutional status by Pelletier and of the tension in it between model and practice by Meyer.

3/ We cite the German text from the original edition: *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (London: Bildungs-Ges. für Arbeiter, 1848). For translations we have used the one in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, and the “classic” translation by Samuel Moore in 1888, corrected by Engels, and available in the Penguin edition. We have used, among others, the comments and analyses from Andreas, Baldick, Berman, Bravo ed., Croce, Demetz, Hyman, Johnson, Labriola, Lifshits, Mierau ed., Papaioannou, Prawer, Silva, Struik, and Walton and Hall eds. “Translating the *Manifesto*,” wrote Engels to Sorge, “is terribly difficult” (*MEW* 36: 45); comparing various translations will instantly convince a reader. We have therefore opted for citing the original followed by the page of most accessible translation, the one in Tucker ed., but often modified by us – partly using the other translations mentioned. All

non-attributed translations from various languages are by D. Suvin, who is beholden to the critique of Chang Hueikeng.

4/ Prawer 138; the beginning of his ch. 7 includes a seminal and very interesting discussion on “literature” in the *Manifesto*. Hyman also notes: “The spectral image had always fascinated Marx, and his early writings are full of it” (98). As to the Gothic novel, it has been analyzed as a **récit énigmatique**, a laicized mystery whose secrets are at the end revealed within an “architecture of the hidden” that coincides with the architecture of a black castle – or, we would say, as a kind of palimpsest which resurfaces in conclusion. Thus, the trajectory of the text sifts the initial illusions in favour of “the irruption of a truth which is also the promise of salvation” (Macherey 40 and 41).

5/ A separate hi/story is needed for the constant reuse of key formulas from the *Manifesto* in socialist (and other) writings up to our days. The spectre haunting a place is possibly the most popular (as testified by the latest of Derrida’s books, which even pluralises it). As a number of other formulations in the *Manifesto*, it has among other precursors the vituperations against the French Revolution by Burke and Carlyle (see Baldick 19 and 98-101), whose inverted use remains to be studied. However, many other fantastic figurations which Marx took from popular culture and literature have in turn strongly contributed to the effect and popularity of the *Manifesto*; cf. for the “demon huntsman” theme in England James 72ff. and passim.

6/ See also *Atta Troll* XIX. For the irony and satire of Heine, the German writer most devoted to intertextual allusions, cf. for example Heissenbüttel and Hinck; for the parallels Heine-Marx Demetz, Prawer (who has also written a book on Heine), and Reeves. A bit further on, Marx ironically recalls an image from Heine’s satirical poem *Deutschland* (see Prawer’s comment, 139). Heine’s pamphlet against the reactionary use of the fantastic, *Die romantische Schule*, should also be taken into account here.

7/ Although Marx is somewhat more precise than Goya, at least in the *Manifesto* his (not always clearly differentiated) use of fantasy between the poles of mystifying and demystifying recalls the opposition in Goya’s annotation to his *Caprichos* no. 43, “The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters,” which runs: “Fantasy bereft of reason creates impossible monsters (**monstruos**); united with reason, it becomes the mother of arts and source of its marvels (**maravillas**)” (cited in Helman 221).

8/ See Carlyle, *Signs* 154, first published in 1829, and cf. his “Gospel of Mammonism” in *Past and Present* III, ch. 2: “We have profoundly forgotten everywhere that **Cash-Payment** is not the sole relation of human being.” See also Hyman 100 and Prawer 72 and 174, as well as note 5 above.

9/ Hyman writes however: “In truth Marx tears away these veils and halos in the bourgeoisie’s name” (102-03). In truth, he does not (though his relationship to the bourgeoisie is an exemplary one of sublation rather than sterile negation). We think Hyman has here

been misled by the Marxian method of indirect discourse and appropriation-cum-sublation of different historical discourses. First, Marx simply adduces the evidence of what bourgeois practice has accomplished in actuality; second, he picks up the process of **Enthüllung**, abandoned by bourgeois ideology after that class came to power, to reclaim it for the communists. Cf. Suvin, “Transubstantiation,” for a discussion of similar rhetoric in his *Grundrisse*, which includes even an **Abhäutung**, skinning alive, of wage labour (635). By the way, **Enthüllung** is also Freud’s favourite term, to our mind quite suggestively for a proper cross-referencing of both these revealers.

10/ In a new heterodoxy of which there seems to be as yet no explication, in early Protestantism and commercial capitalism some radicals seem to have picked up the activist theme of naked virtue and, concomitantly, of open-eyed justice. My example for the “inversion of the veil motif” in the first case is *Paradise Lost* V: 383, where Eve “no veil /Shee needed, Virtue-proof” (this reference is from Plaks 105), and in the second case the highly interesting painting *Allegory of Law* by Maarten De Vos (in Rockox House, Antwerp), where Justice is a sharp-eyed young woman with both balance *and sword*, triumphing over a masked woman caught in a net (Deceit) and a chained warrior (Violence).

11/ My (Suvin’s) reflections here are much indebted to Balibar’s stimulating *La philosophie de Marx* (as well as to Haug, Jameson, and Witt). Thinking back to my first acquaintance with Althusser’s and his *Lire “le Capital,”* I remember my centrally negative reaction to its scientism, as in the famous epistemological break between the young humanistic and mature “scientific” Marx (later repudiated both by a self-critical Althusser and by Balibar). I still regret this work’s insistence on scientificity, and its exclusive horizon of conceptuality as epistemic criterion when the best analyses in it indicate that totality and other matters should also be discussed as topological discursive necessities (cf. for example 2: 329). But it is obvious today that the very foundational gesture of rereading *Das Kapital* – as well as some useful loosening of determinist orthodoxy, such as the rejection of the subject-object split and the structures with shifting dominance which their strong and complex reading found – must have emboldened my constant but awe-stricken preoccupation with it. One of the consequences of reading it closely is that we shall be in this Part 2 citing only the German edition of *Das Kapital*, with my own translation. Let me add that the territory I am attempting to sketch in for my own purposes, and much too rapidly, is of course a well-traversed one. In particular the debate about Marx’s supposed scientism has raged from the 19th Century to the present day, since it is centrally a political debate about the claims to predictive authority by movements claiming to follow Marx. I assume that documenting the echoes of and/or dissents from many earlier writers would unduly clutter up this essay.

12/ Instead of discussing Derrida’s latest book on *Specters of Marx*, **which deserves** separate treatment, the following conclusion about Baudelaire’s pamphlet will be approvingly cited: “The critique or polemic of ‘The Pagan School’ would have the virtue of *demystification*. The word is no longer fashionable but it does seem to impose itself in this case, does it not? It is a matter of unfolding the mystagogical hypocrisy of a secret, putting on trial a fabricated mystery...” (112)

13/ Althusser does not here directly address Marx, and elsewhere confines his critique to the “young, humanist” Marx; cf. for direct critiques of *Capital*, among many others, Cutler et al. See also 2.23 below.

14/ In a work to my surprise often taken on the Left too seriously, Laclau and Mouffe’s *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, the authors have totally equated Marxian theory with economic determinism. Their shell-shocked hyper-essentialism in the guise of radical anti-essentialism concludes that Marx’s key concepts of labour-power as commodity, of class, and of exploitation have to be totally rejected. While it may be in places useful to look at some insights from their critiques of orthodox Marxism (both social-democratic and Leninist), though even those have since been superseded by better critiques, we totally reject their framework, tone, and conclusions. Even this note would not be necessary except for their (to my mind incorrect) claim to speak as radical democrats and indeed socialists. Yet their banner of anti-essentialism logically leads them to anti-socialism (cf. a similar conclusion by Stabile 284-85, which identifies their position as that of privileged intellectuals bidding to become a new center for political struggle, and the painstaking critique by Haug 41-47).

15/ But nonetheless, there also undoubtedly exist “expressive” totalities, for example all Euro-American works of art between the Middle Ages and Modernism. The Leibniz-Hegel mistake was to illegitimately extrapolate such “soulful” construct (cf. Suvin “Soul”) from art to State, a procedure then foregrounded by Burckhardt for the Renaissance.

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Second Part

See also Berman, Jameson *Ideologies*, Marx *Grundrisse* and *Selected Writings*, Marx and Engels *Reader* and *Werke* [MEW], and Suvin "Transubstantiation" from Part 1.

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