

[T]hat moving is of a higher degree than teaching, it may by this appear, that it is well nigh both the cause and effect of teaching.

Marx gave up writing poetry in 1837. The decision was announced with great solemnity in a letter to his father Heinrich Marx on the 10th November that year. Werner Blumenberg described this “great confessional letter” as the most “ecstatic” that Marx ever wrote: never again in his vast correspondence would Marx be “so ruthlessly open, so naively trusting, so lacking in pose or pretence, so free from all cynicism and so unrestrained” as he was at the moment when he announced that he would no longer write poetry.¹ The resolution had not come easy. During the previous five years Marx had written an impressive quantity of love poems, sonnets, ballads, songs and translations from Ovid. Poetry had been his “first subject.” In 1837, the meaning of this feverish activity had at last grown painfully clear. Marx’s judgment on his poems was unsparing. They were, he confessed, “rhetorical reflections instead of poetic thoughts”, petulant “attacks on our times” empty of real social criticism but bursting with “diffuse and inchoate expressions of feeling.” This estimate of the true value of his poetry was by his own account immoderately distressing for Marx: he described it as “shattering”.²

The problem now was how this irreversible judgment could be made to prove liberating. “There are moments in one’s life”, Marx wrote, “which are like frontier posts marking the completion of a period but at the same time clearly indicating a new direction.” “At such a moment of transition”, Marx continued, “we feel compelled to view the past and the present with the eagle eye of thought in order to become conscious of our real position.” Marx’s poetry had been produced in ignorance of his real position. Becoming conscious of his real position meant being impelled in one “new direction” in particular: the abandonment of poetry would at the same time be the impetus for a thorough and intensive study of Hegel, whose formidably extensive writings, together with those of “most of his disciples”, Marx claimed in 1837 already to “know from beginning to end.” It was not simply that Hegelian philosophy was now preferred to poetry. The abandonment of poetry must be conceived dialectically together with the comprehensive knowledge of Hegelian philosophy as a “moment of transition”, a critical stage in life’s work of negativity. Just this particular way out of a “completed period” of life was also of necessity a way to preserve what had to be abandoned: the “moment of transition” from poetry to speculative philosophy would be a traversal of the “frontier” of present existence only on the condition that poetry was not passively let go, but actively sublated, that is, at once negated and kept hold of, or in Hegel’s sense “comprehended”. “Reason”, Hegel writes, “cannot regard its former shapes as merely useful preludes to itself.”³ The subsequent critique of Hegel’s philosophy in Marx’s writings of the 1840s would in turn represent a new stage of development that still originated in the abandonment of a period of inglorious poetical exertion that was essentially “complete”.

The recent influence of Hegel is conspicuous in the style and substance of these reflections by Marx on the meaning of his resolution to abandon poetry. Practical decisions about what to do with life—how much time and energy should be spent on what activities—are represented by Marx in the figurative language conventionally used by Hegel to depict the activities of the concept. Marx had not simply changed his mind about poetry, but through working out the truth of its concept over years of ardent tarrying, he had reached the “shape” of existence in which Hegel’s famous judgment at the head of the *Aesthetics* must actually be personally owned and lived: “art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past.”⁴ Marx did not like the sound of this kind of philosophic phrase at first. He “had read fragments of

Hegel's philosophy" but "did not care for its grotesque and rocky melody." Hegel's *style*, the dissonantly wrought "melody" of the syntax of Spirit and the whole asphyxiatingly convoluted idiom of speculative logic, at first made Marx "want to dive off into the sea." Hegel's rocky approximations to poetry repulsed the young poet Marx, whose proudly irritable aesthetic sensibility reacted with the consciously escapist wish for total sensuous immersion in wild nature. But the intensive, initially grudging study of Hegel had made the cadences and syncopations of his "melody" resound with inescapable clarity, and now the melody was beginning to exercise an unshakeable grip on Marx's mind. The resolution to abandon poetry and take up the critique of philosophy would itself be expressed in the poetic idiom of speculative logic that had repulsed the young poet: giving up on the lyric was not mere cognitive behaviour, a career change or private act of will, but more profoundly, it was a moment of actual transition past the limit of a completed period of life, a moment when thought is compelled to become conscious of its reality by discovering its future direction. Consciousness, Hegel wrote in the *Phenomenology*, a text that Marx read in 1836 and which many years later he still called "a real theoretical revolution", "is something that goes beyond limits".⁵ This passage in the poetic idiom of speculative logic from the letter to Heinrich of November 1837 has been described by one of Marx's recent biographers as "a blast of Hegelian rhetoric." The judgment of the same biographer on the poetical "diversions" whose termination this "blast" trumpeted is even more scornfully censorious: "of these youthful writings [...] the less said the better."⁶ What Marx in 1837 solemnly called his "moment of transition" is on this account of no value for our understanding of the development of the thinker who would write *Capital*. Readers of the critique of political economy are in that case not obliged to think anything about the "youthful writings" whose failure to be "poetic thoughts" was shattering for Marx. Another recent biographer more indulgently allows that in his letter of 1837 Marx "at the age of nineteen" was "trying on the clothes of a Man of Destiny and finding that they fitted him handsomely."⁷ These sardonic remarks by Anglophone biographers writing from the capitalist West long after the collapse of the Soviet Union contrast very strikingly with the earlier account by the German biographer of the "great confessional letter." The disparity is instructive: the value of understanding what the composition of poetry meant for Marx is in the one case casually reckoned to be trivial, while in the other case the deliberate implication is that it might yet be incalculable.

In Hegel's speculative logic, the traversal of limits, or "frontiers", cannot simply be proclaimed, but must be worked out, or "actualised", during lived moments in the existence of consciousness. This is because conceptual limits are not imaginary, but real: as Hegel writes in *The Science of Logic*, "the limit is not abstract negation, but is rather *in this existence*."⁸ These actually lived moments of transition complete what Hegel called one "shape", and what Marx, now in conscious conceptual harmony with Hegel's melody, called one "period", of life, and at the same time they indicate its next shape or "new direction".⁹ It should not seem remarkable that Marx should have found the idiom of Hegel's speculative logic so hospitable to personal testimony. Part of the power of that idiom in its philosophical context is precisely owing to the fact that people do often make spontaneous use of it at important moments of decision in their lives. Abstract propositions in the idiom of speculative logic are not invariably, or in essence, "hard of utterance and so misty to be conceived", as Sidney described the abstraction of philosophy in opposition to the life of poetry.¹⁰ Hegel's abstract thinking is very often dramatic, striking and intuitive. In something like the sense in which Blumenberg used the word in his comment on Marx's letter of 1837, it is often even "ecstatic". It is abstraction of a singular intensity whose demand on thought is that the concept should be "experience-near", not "experience-distant", to borrow an illuminating psychoanalytic distinction from Heinz Kohut.¹¹ Examples of dramatic, "experience-near" abstraction are not only prolific in Hegel's philosophy, they are vital to its power as thinking. In explanation of the intensely abstract proposition that "points of space" are "the negation of space", Hegel writes in the *Philosophy of Nature*: "no Here is ultimate. However remotely I place a star, I can go beyond it, for the universe is nowhere nailed up in boards."¹² Formalistic or schematic wisdom, what in the *Philosophy of Nature* Hegel called "conceptless

thinking”, is vividly compared in the *Phenomenology* to “a skeleton with scraps of paper stuck all over it.”¹³ Similar moments of poetic flourish can be found throughout Hegel. Poetry, in the form of abstract propositions that do precisely what Pope said they typically cannot do—“strike the Senses” and “raise the Passions”—is indigenous to the idiom of speculative logic. Hegel expressed nearly this thought in the chapter on poetry in his *Aesthetics*, when he said that “speculative thinking” is “from one point of view akin to the poetic imagination”, namely in that both speculative thinking and poetry “extinguish” the “deficiencies of the Understanding’s categories and the ordinary man’s vision.”¹⁴ Hegel does not go quite so far as to conclude that poetry is for this reason essential to speculative thinking, let alone identical to it, but the “kinship” at least is confirmed repeatedly throughout his philosophy, where poetic images are too vital and prolific to count only as subservient illustrations of propositions whose essential content could be transferred without loss into an idiom that is “hard of utterance and so misty to be conceived.”

Longer exposure to this logic whose Notion exists outside of time provoked Marx in 1847 to issue the epigrammatic belittlement that “for Hegel, all that has happened and is still happening is only just what is happening in his own mind.”¹⁵ This judgment or something roughly like it has often been conveniently taken for the last word of “materialism” on “idealism.” The conspicuous literary genre of the judgment is however customarily ignored. Like the majority of Marx’s polemical objections to Hegel, not least the famous verdict repeated in the preface to *Capital* that Hegel is standing on his head and must be turned upside down on to his feet, this epigram about a vacuum-packed, dreamy “idealism” is an unmistakably conscious use of satire. In the satirical “Dedication” to *Don Juan*, Byron epigrammatically belittled the *Excursion* with its “vasty version” of Wordsworth’s “new system to perplex the sages”. Byron pledges that he by contrast can be trusted to stick with his “pedestrian Muses” and leave jockeying on “the winged steed” to exalted minds mystically placed in Keswick. In similar style, Hegel’s “vasty” logic of the infinity of self-consciousness is paraphrased by Marx in a farcically finite witticism: the absolute is all inside his head. The aim of an epigrammatic judgment like this is evidently not to contest speculative logic point for point, but on the contrary, to ridicule the idea that speculative logic should ever be contested at that level. It would be a waste of time: it would not be real work. The work of the concept done “only in the mind” is in materialist reality what Hegel himself in *The Philosophy of Nature* called the “dissipation” of the concept. Hegel describes in the following terms the uselessness of trying to express the Notion in the kind of “simple elementary figures and numbers” used in mathematics:

[T]he fluid character of the Notion is dissipated in such an external medium, in which each determination is indifferent to and outside the others. This ambiguity could be resolved only by an explanation; but then the essential expression of the thought is this explanation, so that the representation by symbols becomes a worthless superfluity.¹⁶

History that happens only in the mind is in this respect like the Notion expressed in symbols. It is a “worthless superfluity” that increases the pressure of the demand for actual expression: the Notion in its work of “becoming”, or “development”, in the one case, practical revolutionary activity that makes history and changes the world in the other. For the revolutionary critic of capital and its material relations it could only be an extravagant diversion to pick through Hegel and test out every logical turn, obligingly thinking every concept intensely enough to make it “experience-near”: it would be a kind of dissipated palely loitering in the universe of the legendary Notion made up of transcendently fertile ground for unyielding “notions which can blossom only in the brain of a poet who has not been understood.”¹⁷ Marx, like Byron, expects poetry to be understood; Hegel, like Wordsworth, can be left to explore unfathomableness in thoughts of more deep seclusion.¹⁸ The idea that the whole progress of Spirit, “all that has happened and is still happening”, is in reality the projection of an unwitting fantasist is

consciously used by Marx to define the difference between materialism and idealism. The power of *the idea of materialism* in Marx's writing depends on the vitality of the polemic against the exclusively mental character of idealism; specifically, it depends on the epigrammatic keenness of that polemic, the sharp poetic edge of what Marx in his letter of 1837 called "Satyrmusik", the music of satire.

It has often been observed that Marx was throughout all his writings a master of figurative language. Franz Mehring described this achievement memorably in 1918, in the context of a remark about Marx's early poetry.

In general these youthful poems breathe a spirit of trivial romanticism, and very seldom does any true note ring through. In addition the technique of their verse is more clumsy and helpless than it had a right to be after Heine and Platen had both sung. Thus the artistic talent which Marx possessed in great measure and which later expressed itself in his scientific works began to develop along peculiar by-paths. In the figurative power of his language Marx rose to the level of the greatest masters of German literature and he attached great value to the aesthetic harmony of his writing, unlike those poor spirits who regard a dry-as-dust style as the first condition of scholarly achievement; but still, the gift of verse was not amongst the talents placed in his cradle by the Muses.¹⁹

The second sentence of this passage is important. Mehring appears to take seriously the question of poetry's right to exist, which poets know is intrinsic in the problem of how to keep writing it. Mehring's judgment in this case confirms Marx's own judgment at the time. The verse was more "helpless" than it had a right to be: because it had proved not to be real work, Marx burned the majority of his poetry. Mehring's serious interest in the poverty of Marx's verse leads him to inquire where the energy that was spent writing that verse found its actual expression. His answer is approximately psychoanalytic in form: a great quantity of ultimately irrepressible talent, frustrated in the pursuit of its aim, was instead expressed in a productive activity seemingly remote from the origins of the drive. The image obviously resembles Freud's mechanism of sublimation.²⁰ What could not be expressed directly as poetry with a right to exist would instead be expressed "along peculiar by-paths" as the "figurative power" of the critique of political economy. Powerful figurative language in the critique of political economy would do real work whereas the dissipation of poetry could only "breathe a spirit of trivial romanticism". This "development" of Marx's "artistic talent" is in psychoanalytic terms the deviant ontogenetic progress of psychic work. But the idea of 'development' in this context also irresistibly recalls again the philosophy of Hegel, in which it is the concept or Notion that develops out of its purity or emptiness into substantiality and fullness. The Freudian and the Hegelian resonances of Mehring's image of Marx's artistic talent developing "along peculiar by-paths" toward its ultimate expression in the critique of political economy, or "scientific works", both imply the concept of poetry as what must be negated, either by psychic repression or else by logical supersession. The critique of political economy which is the true end of artistic talent is where poetry exists in the negated form of "figurative power". *Capital* is not poetry, it is only written in language of great figurative power equal "to the level of the greatest masters of German literature."

Marx could reasonably expect that his father would take considerable comfort in the news that he had abandoned poetry. For months now, Heinrich had pressed his son, if not to scrap poetry altogether (since versifying in moderation might yet add something to his prospects or at least to his refinement), then to exercise a more gainly restraint in throwing his life away on it. Marx had spent the past five years in a fever of what the English Romantics, who borrowed the epithet from the Augustans, took robust pleasure in reviling as "sickly" German expression. Many of his poems Marx had recently collected together into volumes with the titles "Book of Love" and

“Book of Songs”, after the fashion of Heine’s *Buch der Lieder* of 1827, and presented to Jenny von Westphalen. Others were dedicated to Heinrich on his birthday in 1837. Heinrich commended some of the poems and gratefully condescended to propose a new poetic undertaking: Marx should write an ode on the Prussian contribution to the victory at the battle of Waterloo. This ode should be tactful on the one hand, skillful on the other, “executed in a patriotic and German spirit with depth of feeling”, so as to “redound to the honour of Prussia and afford the opportunity of allotting a role to the genius of the monarchy—if need be, through the mind of the very noble Queen Louise.”²¹ “Good poetry”, the father conceded, “never harms one’s reputation, except perhaps in the eyes of a few pedants”, but even good poetry should “take second place” to serious literary occupations like law. But at the same time his father could not in good conscience neglect to tell Marx that he must stop right away acting the part of the distressed maniac love poet. The latter flux in particular ought not to be blasted at the tender Jenny von Westphalen, the good fiancée. Letters to that “good, lovable girl”, who “torments herself incessantly” with fear that her beloved will “over-exert” himself, should be “full of delicate, devoted feeling and pure love”, but it should be pure love straightened out to “give a clear view” and “elucidate the prospects.” Letters to that recipient, vulnerable as she surely was to the pollutions of mist, should “not be dictated by the fanciful poet.” “Do not overdo things.”²² Marx must surely have thought that poetry that might ever be capable of being governed by principles like these should indeed be abandoned. Figurative language of great power might be used even to these ends without prejudice to its possibility, but poetry on anything like these terms is by definition impossible: poetry does not take second place to law, it is intrinsically a form of over-exertion, it does not give a clear view, and it is inescapably free to be dictated by fancy. The poetry that Marx abandoned was not poetry in the only sense in which the father who wished to make it impossible could conceive it. Negativity in this last distinction is not trivial. Poetry that is ardently worked on and then just as ardently abandoned and poetry prescribed as a career advantage that could not possibly be done with any honest ardency are not just alternative conceptions: one is destined to be held on to or comprehended in life and to shape the future of thinking by its abandonment, while the other is merely dead.

Moments of intense, striking, potently poetic abstraction are everywhere in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. “Consciousness”, Hegel writes, “can only find as a present reality the *grave* of its life. But [...] the presence of that grave, too, is merely the struggle of an enterprise doomed to failure.” The life of consciousness cannot be left with nowhere to go but its grave, and the desperate struggle to bar every other progress will sooner or later be proved futile. Once it has learned this, “consciousness will abandon its quest for the unchangeable individuality as an *actual* existence, or will stop trying to hold on to what has vanished.”²³ Actual existence is the changeable individuality of consciousness that holds on to what cannot vanish but must be sublated. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx’s critique of Proudhon’s *Système des contradictions économiques ou Philosophie de la misère*, a book which Marx mockingly called a “bible” full of “Mysteries” and “Revelations”, Marx accuses Proudhon of “clinging to poetic images.”²⁴ Proudhon’s “poetic images” are not the “poetic thoughts” that Marx’s own poetry had failed to be, but mere examples of the power of figurative language to dress up empty ideas. “In our age”, Marx writes in another passage in the same text, “the superfluous is easier to produce than the necessary.”²⁵ Proudhon’s “poetic images” are superfluous: they are not the difficult sublation of the concept, but its vanishing in easy dissipation. Marx pursues the logic of this thought about superfluous production and its difference from necessary production to a speculative conclusion about what communist society will be like:

In a future society, in which class antagonism will have ceased, in which there will no longer be any classes, use will no longer be determined by the minimum time of production; but the time of production devoted to an article will be determined by the degree of its social utility.²⁶

Communist society will be one in which the time devoted to the superfluous article will be zero. This speculation about future society seems conspicuously vulnerable to the logical objection that the degree of social utility of an article cannot be known in advance, so the time that must be devoted to its production cannot be determined and therefore cannot be rationally planned. The idea of communism on this basis might seem precisely “utopian”. But this objection elides what Marx here calls “the time of production” with what he would later in *Capital* call “socially necessary labour time” and it elides what he here calls “social utility” with what he would later call “use value.” These elisions obscure the significance of the “transition” from speculative logic to the critique of political economy. The analysis of the relations of material production in *Capital* makes clear that the socially necessary labour time that must be devoted to the production of a commodity cannot conceivably be determined by the use value of that commodity. The same rational calculation can however be conceived very well in speculative logical terms, in the form of what Hegel called an “absolute objective determination.” “[T]here are no absolute objective determinations for the intellect”, Hegel wrote in his early essay *The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s System of Philosophy*, “but they are present for Reason.”²⁷ The time of production that must be devoted to an article can be “absolutely objectively determined” in advance by the social utility of the article if the social utility is known to be infinite. The time of production would in that case be what Hegel called “the true Present”, life right now, our real “eternity.”²⁸ A thing of infinite utility made in the eternity of the true present is the pure logical identity of the “article” whose production, according to Marx writing in 1847, will be possible for the first time in a future society “in which class antagonism will have ceased.” Poetry is an irresistible candidate for this pure logical identity: it never stops working and it can only be written during a “time of production” that is categorically not “socially necessary labour time”, but always “the true Present” of consciousness actually alive right now in the ecstasy of expression. Its dependency on speculative logic makes this concept of poetry capable of being ardently abandoned, rather than—as can very easily be done with mere “poetic images”—simply forgotten or let go. The abandonment is essential to the doctrine of revolution. Social problems do not have material solutions with pure logical identities. Calculations about how to make “a future society in which class antagonism will have ceased” will no longer be based on the wish for “absolutely objective determinations” of time by utility, or the pure logical unity of the eternity of production and the infinity of use.

Abstract thinking in Hegel’s philosophy is often poetically intensified to the point where it may appear realist rather than idealist. The *Phenomenology* is the attempt to look material, historical, human reality in its true face, where the truth of the face is not the expression at the surface but “the Notion of the veritable soul.”²⁹ The English word “intensify” was invented by a poet. Its first use was by Coleridge in 1817 in the *Biographia Literaria*, who wrote that “the will itself by confining and intensifying the attention may arbitrarily give vividness or distinctness to any object whatsoever”. Coleridge added a note to the word “intensifying”, explaining that he was aware this word did not exist on any previous authority, but that since the paraphrase “render intense” would “often break up the sentence and destroy that harmony of the position of the words with the logical position of the thoughts, which is a beauty in all composition, and more especially desirable in a close philosophical investigation”, he had “hazarded the word, *intensify*.”³⁰ Notwithstanding the sceptical idea that vividness may be given to any object whatever “arbitrarily”, this thought gave birth in Coleridge’s writing to a new expression for a concept of thrilling power: intensification, the activity of “will” or “mind” with the power to make every object in the world without exception vivid and distinct. The “will” that “intensifies” the world in Coleridge’s sense is by sceptical implication the mere reflection within the subject of the predisposition of objects in general to accept the vividness “given” to them.³¹ Marx objected to the poetic intensification of abstract thinking in Hegel’s philosophy that he thought licenced the treatment of abstract ideas as though they were “objects” in Coleridge’s sense, that is, as though they were material things that can indiscriminately be made vivid by arbitrary acts of “will”. The objects that matter for materialism are objects in social reality whose vividness is not determined

by the “intensifying” activity of the mind. The destiny of objects within the capital-relation is the commodity-form, which by definition is irreversibly dead. The point of critique is to grasp the social logic of production of these dead objects and actually to change it, not to exploit the predisposition of abstract ideas to grow vivid in poetic images. Hegel “intensified” abstract thinking. But in reality the “contradiction” which Hegel safely confined to the movement of the Notion is “brutal” and it ends not in intensified objects but in violated subjects, in the “shock of body against body, as its final denouement.”³² Abstraction as a whole in *Capital* is “brutal” by comparison with the kind of abstraction that is intensified through the use of poetic images in speculative logic. “A brick does not kill a man just because it is a brick, but brings about such a result only by virtue of the velocity it has acquired”, Hegel explains in *The Philosophy of Nature*; “that is to say, the man is killed by space and time.”³³ Even the image of death by transcendental categories is positively consoling by comparison with the abstraction in *Capital*, whose material reality is the crushing of proletarian humanity as a whole into the repulsive *Gallerte* of “abstract human labour.” Abstraction in *Capital* is combatively disintensified: abstraction is not a logical state but the real, material state of dead existence that no act of will, however poetically adept at being “arbitrary”, can ever restore to vividness. Whereas in Hegel moments of negated poetry in the form of abstract “figurative language” or “poetic figures” pervade the idiom of speculative logic and participate in the real work of the concept, in the critique of political economy abstraction is the material relation of working individuals to capital, the murderous economisation of a life whose “present reality” actually is its “grave”. The specific impotence of poetry is its fatal inability to erupt out of, destroy or even disturb this material relation by itself or “inside its own head”. Abstraction is disintensified by being posited as a material relation that cannot be altered by any act of the intensifying will; poetry survives in negated form as the power of expression that *contrary to its concept* cannot by itself make abstract relations vivid, or bring what is dead back to life.

The image in the letter of 1837 of the frontier post marking completion and indicating a new direction, together with the conceptualisation of the “moment of transition” as thought compelling the subject into consciousness of objective reality, are among the earliest indicators of Hegel’s influence on Marx. Marx’s announcement to his father of the practical decision no longer to write poetry resembles in abstract intensity the account of “education” that Marx had recently read in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*:

The final purpose of education [...] is liberation and the struggle for a higher liberation still; education is the absolute transition from an ethical substantiality which is immediate and natural to the one which is intellectual and so both infinitely subjective and lofty enough to have attained universality of form. In the individual subject, this liberation is the hard struggle against pure subjectivity of demeanour, against the immediacy of desire, against the empty subjectivity of feeling and the caprice of inclination.³⁴

For Hegel at this late stage of his life, the moment of transition into infinitely subjective and at the same time universal ethical substantiality is a liberation struggle against a “pure subjectivity” barren of substance that sounds like the “demeanour” of the love poet in particular. Liberation on this difficult passage is redolent of the classic *Bildung*, the story of a sentimental education acquired through the progressive disabuse of wishful ideals. Freedom is the upward narrative mobility of the heroic or anti-heroic subject who is realistically liberated into maturity by accepting an intelligent universal ethics in logical stages, which he does by abandoning his states of subjection to purity, desire, feeling and caprice. Love poetry strongly resembles the “pure subjectivity” that the real “individual subject” must be disabused of, not only because feeling and desire, and in particular “the immediacy of desire”, are essential to love poetry’s expression, but also because love poetry, in common with feeling and desire, is not in essence narrative mobility, which for Hegel is the only true mobility of the subject. Love poetry scarcely ever makes the

“absolute transition” from nature to intellect, or from desire to ethics, but is more often and invariably with greater power the paralysis of the intellect in nature, or the paralysis of ethics in desire.³⁵ Poetry, and perhaps love poetry in particular, carries to the point of paralysis with what comes before the concept can. Poetry is a tarrying with what Hegel called “pure subjectivity”, experience still barren of conceptual substance, still dissipated in the intensification of desire, inclination and feeling. “Work” is defined in the *Philosophy of Right* as “the middle term between the subjective and the objective.”³⁶ Figurative language does this sort of work: its “poetic images” dissolve in their contribution toward the reconciliation of experience with reality in logical stages. But poetry that can be ardently abandoned is not work toward the logical reconciliation of experience with reality. In its actual expression, poetry undoes that work as much as it does it, or undoes it more.

Looking back from a clinical promontory of spirit at the sickly trance in which he had for so long lay enchanted, Marx described his poetical exertions as follows:

In accordance with my state of mind [*Geisteslage*: spiritual disposition] at the time, lyrical poetry was bound to be my first subject, at least the most pleasant and immediate one. But owing to my attitude and whole previous development it was purely idealistic. My heaven, my art, became a world beyond [*ein fernliegendes Jenseits*], as remote as my love. Everything real became hazy and what is hazy has no definite outlines [*findet keine Grenze*: finds no limits]. All the poems of the first three volumes I sent to Jenny are marked by attacks on our times, diffuse and inchoate expressions of feeling, nothing natural, everything built out of moonshine, complete opposition between what is and what ought to be, rhetorical reflections instead of poetic thoughts, but perhaps also a certain warmth of feeling and striving for poetic fire. The whole extent of a longing that has no bounds [*keine Grenze sieht*: sees no limits] finds expression there in many different forms and makes the poetic “composition” into “diffusion.” [*macht aus dem “Dichten” ein “Breiten.”*]

However tormented or exasperated this assessment may be, it is fair self-criticism. Marx’s poems are just as he describes them. They are not arguments about the world, but feeble visionary dispatches from a faraway beyond. This was the very idea, and the very word, “beyond” [*Jenseits*], that Hegel had indefatigably smashed to dust in his polemical criticisms of Kant’s critical philosophy. Kant had surrendered the “thing in itself” to the “beyond”, a universe nailed up in boards to keep the subject out. Marx’s poems from “beyond” are full of magic, spells, souls, heavens, creators, wizards and dreams. Keats with his modest band of ambivalent Spenserian deceiving elves was Zhdanov by comparison. Marx would later start his onslaught against Young-Hegelianism in *The German Ideology* by identifying as the very “kernel” of that philosophy its “innocent and child-like fancies” that appeal to the “dreamy and muddled German nation.”³⁷ But in 1837, it is his own poetry that is accused of turning reality hazy and dissipating its outlines in “innocent fancies”. His own excessively free longing, everywhere expressed in his poetry, “longing that has no bounds”, had reduced “Dichten” to “Breiten”. This is a wordplay that works by an antithesis that is difficult to reproduce in English translation. “Dichten” means to obturate, to block up or condense, but it also means to write poetry. Marx is playing on the opposition with “breiten”, which means to spread out, dissipate or diffuse, as though what he had really made was not poetry, “Dichtung”, but “Breitung”, some kind of absurdly abstract diffusion, scatter, or widening. Excessively free longing turns blockages into dispersals and poetry into argumentatively formless diffusions of energy. Thought moved by free longing rather than by reason is the dissipation of the concept. Marx could not have accepted his father’s judgment that “overdoing it” is responsible for wasting energy in this way. The diffusion or spreading out of poetic energy, the ironic loosening of Dichten into Breiten, was never the consequence of labouring too ardently, but the consequence of an obsessive disfiguring of all thought under the influence of a paralytic “complete opposition”, the “complete opposition

between what is and what ought to be.” Here again Marx’s criticism of his own poetry closely reprises one of Hegel’s basic criticisms of Kant, in this case the criticism of the “fixed mutual opposites” that structure Kant’s philosophy, opposites that cannot be reconciled into unity by the work of the speculative concept.³⁸ Poetic infatuation with the unreal “complete opposition between what is and what ought to be” coupled with ‘longing that has no bounds’ resembles the story of “the heart” in the *Phenomenology*, of which Hegel writes in disgust that in “the ravings of an insane self-conceit” it thinks that “its law ought to have reality; the law, then, is for it *qua* reality, *qua* valid ordinance, its own aim and essential nature; but reality, that very law *qua* valid ordinance, is on the contrary immediately for it something which is not valid.” Hegel then intensifyingly adds: “thus the heart learns rather that its self is not real, and that its reality is an unreality.”³⁹ Marx’s poems which are not real poems, his “rhetorical reflections instead of poetic thoughts”, are full of abstract, contactless, bodiless intensities. The jingle that wraps up the penultimate stanza of the first section of the poem entitled “To My Father” dutifully recites the celebrated Neoplatonic restriction: “Harmony alone its like may find, / Only Soul another Soul may bind.” The body is of course doomed never to find its like. Fucking is no use. [“Harmonie kann nur das Gleiche finden, / Seelen können nur die Seele binden.”] The last stanza concludes the rapture with this vision of divinely vapid intermingling:

Out of me your Spirits burn
 Into Forms of lofty meaning;
To the Maker you return,
 Images no more remaining,
By Man’s look of Love ringed burningly,
You in him dissolved, and he in me.

Aus mir brannten eure Geister,
 Zu Gebilden Deutungshehr,
Rückwärts kehrt ihr zu dem Meister,
 Seid nun keine Bilder mehr,
Von des Menschen Liebblick heiß umfangen,
Ihr in ihm und er in mir vergangen!⁴⁰

Spirits are always burning in these poems and never burning out. Souls are forever being dissolved in souls. Even the *images* of reality are burnt away like incense. Forms of lofty abstract meaning replace bodies. There are no whole bodies in Marx’s poems, but just the rare assortment of “limbs of love”, “eyes that glow in rainbows high”, and hearts mechanically pounding in rapt breasts. The breast in particular appears with great frequency, always in the conventional guise of the repository of sublime feelings. Breasts appear in all the books of poetry that Marx compiled. The second section of “To My Father”, entitled “Dichtung” or “Poetry”, begins with the following pair of rhymes.

Flames Creator-like once poured
 Streaming to me from your breast,
Clashing up on high they soared,
 And I nursed them in my breast.

Schöpferähnlich strömten Flammen
 Rieselnd mir aus Deiner Brust,
Hochweit schlugen sie zusammen,
 Und ich nährt’ sie in der Brust.⁴¹

The breast is an object noble and lofty enough to be repeated at both ends of the rhyme without impropriety. The breast is everywhere, dissipated through the whole extent of longing that has

no bounds through which the poet is swept along without contact with reality high above the world in dreams, fantasy and magic words. This last sentence is a prose redaction of part of Marx's poem titled "Erste Elegie aus Ovid's Büchern der Trauer; frei übersetzt."⁴² Following his renunciation of his own poetry and its complete oppositions stuck in the faraway beyond, Marx might have been expected to dispense once and for all with the sublime anatomy and concentrate exclusively on the real anatomy. In his journalism on the Factory Acts, in his several copious polemics against fashionable German philosophy, and in *Capital* itself, in particular in the chapter on the working day, that is just what he does, with a conscious vengeance. The chapter on the working day in *Capital* contains a graphic catalogue of bodily injuries inflicted during industrial labour. The capital-relation is a killing floor littered with offcuts of the sublime anatomy: "a productive expenditure of human brains, muscles, nerves, hands etc." The chapter on poetry in Hegel's *Aesthetics* contains a similar list. "The proper subject-matter of poetry is spiritual interests, not the sun, mountains, woods, landscapes, or constituents of the human body like nerves, blood, muscles, etc."⁴³ The body broken down into "constituents" is no longer a unity and therefore it cannot be subjectivity. "The infinite wealth of the spirit" and the power to express in poetry "all that surges to and fro in human passion and feeling or passes quietly through our meditations" belong to subjectivity, which is the unity of individual life with the world. The proletarian body is the compulsory productive expenditure of its own "dead" or "conceptless" constituent bits. It is at once real and abstract. Real, because it breaks, hurts, desires, ages, sings, fucks and dies. Abstract, because it exists only for capital and within the capital-relation in the form of "abstract labour". The unity of this body is ripped up into scraps of subsistence, a grotesquely culinary string of equivalents: brains, muscles, nerves, hands, etc. Beyond the reach of its subjectivity and outside its power of expression, the unity of this body is restored in the logical form of a unit of variable capital determined by the exchange value of a socially necessary average quantity of labour-power. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx describes the proletarian body in characteristically epigrammatic style. The proletarian is "depressed spiritually and physically to the condition of a machine and from being a man becomes an abstract activity and a belly."⁴⁴ The sublime breast that is exposed in Marx's poems, the repository of intense feeling and the poetic heart of the subject, has no place in the proletarian body, which lacks the organ of conceptual mediation required to bring "abstract activity" and hunger into simple unity. The proletarian has a concave chest from obstructed infantile respiration or a depressed sternum. He is a unit of whatever expense in variable capital is at present the "lowest compatible with common humanity, that is, with cattle-like existence".⁴⁵ The sublime anatomy as a whole is alien to this figure, and the epitome of that anatomy, the poetic breast puffed up with "Spirits that burn into Forms of lofty meaning", is the abhorrent symbol or farcical "poetic image" of what is actually extinguished in the fragmentation of the exploited body. The capitalist likes to cling on to this "poetic image" and he has plenty of uses for it. Confronted with the choice whether to spend all its money on itself in a fit of feudal sensory indulgence, or instead to put its money back into circulation as capital and so ruthlessly exploit the bodies of a yet greater number of workers, 'the breast of the capitalist', Marx writes in *Capital*, becomes the theatre of "a Faustian conflict between the passion for accumulation and the desire for enjoyment." In Marx's original German the idea is given a more literary expression. "Damit entwickelt sich gleichzeitig in der Hochbrust des Kapitalindividuums ein faustischer Konflikt zwischen Akkumulations- und Genußtrieb": not the "Brust" merely but now the "Hochbrust" is where the "Forms of lofty meaning" repose. This word "Hochbrust" was a recent neologism invented by Heine in his satirical epic poem *Atta Troll*. Its first usage was in the following stanza at the end of "Caput XXIV":

Atta Troll, Tendenzbär, sittlich
Religiös; als Gatte brünstig;
Durch Verführtsein von dem Zeitgeist,
Waldursprünglich Sansculotte;

Sehr schlecht tanzend, doch Gesinnung
Tragend in der zott'gen Hochbrust;
Manchmal auch gestunken habend;
Kein Talent, doch ein Charakter!⁴⁶

Atta Troll: reformer, pure,
Pious: husband warm and true,
By the Zeit-Geist led astray—
Wood-engendered sans-culotte:

Dancing badly: yet ideals
Bearing in his shaggy breast:
Ofttimes stinking very strongly,
Talent none: but character.⁴⁷

The English translator of this passage has avoided the difficulty of finding a word precisely equivalent to “Hochbrust” and has settled for “bosom”, which could as well be the translation of “Brust.” Grimm’s dictionary credits Heine with coining the word in *Atta Troll* and gives the short definition “hohe, gewölbte Brust”: high, convex, swollen breast. Heine’s invention of the derivative adjectival form is also cited: “hochbrüstig, der ein grosze, weite oder breite und starke Brust hat, *pectorosus*”: “one who has a great, wide or broad and strong breast, *pectorosus*.” Marx’s use of the word is a conscious reference to its meaning in Heine’s poem: the capitalist “Hochbrust”, of which “the passion for accumulation and the desire for enjoyment” dispute the mastery, is the masculine, swollen, unmusical or “bad at dancing” bearer, or *Träger*, of “strong opinions”, literally of attitude: “Sehr schlecht tanzend, doch Gesinnung / Tragend in der zott’gen Hochbrust.”⁴⁸ The “Hochbrust” of the dancing bear Atta Troll in Heine’s satirical epic is a distinct item of anatomy: not the amorous “schwellende Brust” that heaved in Heine’s youthful *Buch der Lieder*, but the *Träger* of grown-up bourgeois morality.⁴⁹ The breast that epitomised the sublime anatomy in Marx’s poems, the abhorrent symbol or “poetic image” of what is actually extinguished in the fragmentation of the exploited body, reappears in *Capital* in the satirically disfigured form of the swollen breast of the “capital-individual”, the “Hochbrust des Kapitalindividuums”. The conflict between “the passion for accumulation and the desire for enjoyment” is the psychological dilemma of the “capital-individual”, but also his ontological dilemma. If the desire for enjoyment prevails, the “capital-individual” risks being ontologically demoted back into a mere “individual”, since he may be dispossessed through profligacy of the only power that sustains his identity, namely capital itself. In order to cling on to the unity of self and world that obtains only in the identity “capital-individual”, the “Hochbrust” must ideally be purified of every passion except the passion for accumulation.⁵⁰ Everything lies within the reach of accumulation and nothing is outside its power of disposal. The passion for accumulation prevails in the swollen capitalist breast like the absolute in Spirit, and with equal necessity. The opposition between life and capital within the unity of the “capital-relation” is figured as the opposition between a concave fragmented body with no poetry in it and a convex breast swelling with grotesque poetic afflatus. The capitalist breast is introduced several times elsewhere in *Capital*, always in connection with tawdry or disfigured poetic images. The 1857 preface to the first edition of *Capital* states that the “Furies of private interest” are the “sordid and malignant passions of the human breast”.⁵¹ Marx later quotes Goethe’s *Faust* (part 1, ll.1112-3) in mockery of this self-interested ratiocination disguised as a psychological dilemma: “Two souls, alas, do dwell within his breast; / The one is ever parting from the other.”

The progress in Marx’s writing from the proliferation without bounds of the unambiguously sublime breast in the poems of 1836-7 to the targeted satirical use of the same article of anatomy now disfigured by poetic swelling in *Capital* covers a significant critical distance. The traversal from one to the other is the transition from ardently abandoned poetry to the

materialist critique of political economy, whose idea depends on the power of its satirical polemic against an “idealism” that still clings to poetic images. The poetry that is actually abandoned in this progress survives in negated form as the power of expression that contrary to its concept cannot by itself make abstract relations vivid, or bring what is dead back to life. Poetry is intensification pressed to the point of absolute impotence against the real limit of capitalist social reality, where abstract relations reveal their abhorrent imperviousness to poetry in “brutal” detail. This is a revolutionary account of the power of poetry.

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Notes

¹ Werner Blumenberg, *Karl Marx*, trans. Douglas Scott, (London: Verso, 1998) (first published in German in 1962), 24, 32.

² These and all future references to the letter of 10th November 1937 are to *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels Collected Works* [MECW hereafter], vol.1, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975), 10-21.

³ Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), 89.

⁴ Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, vol.1 trans. T.M. Knox, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 11.

⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, (Oxford: OUP, 1977), 51. On Marx's “discovery” of the *Phenomenology* in 1836, see Jacques Attali, *Karl Marx ou l'esprit du monde*, (Paris: Fayard, 2005), 37. Marx describes the *Phenomenology* as a “real theoretical revolution” in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, MECW 3, 232.

⁶ Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, (New York: Liveright, 2013), 52, 48-9. Reading poetry, in particular the poetry of the so-called Romantics, is a lesson in how to truly value the kind of thinking and expression that are only possible in youth.

⁷ Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx*, (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), 28.

⁸ Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. George Di Giovanni, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 100.

⁹ Philosophy as a whole makes explicit “the series of the shapes of Spirit”, *Phenomenology*, 483, as biography makes explicit the series of the periods of life.

¹⁰ *The Defence of Poesie, The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, vol.III, ed. Albert Feuillerat, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1963), 13. Cf. Pope's letter to Arbuthnot, 26th July 1734: “General propositions are obscure, misty, and uncertain, compar'd with plain, full and home examples: Precepts only apply to our Reason, which in most men is weak: Examples are pictures, and strike the Senses, nay raise the Passions, and call in those (the strongest and most general of all motives) to the aid of reformation.” Hegel never accepted that the power of ‘general propositions’ should be measured by observing their impact on weak Reason. Abstract propositions in the idiom of speculative logic should “strike the Senses” and “raise the Passions” with far greater force and vitality than mere “examples” and “pictures”. *The Works of Alexander Pope*, vol.VII, ed. John Wilson Croker, (London: John Murray, 1871), 481-2.

¹¹ These epithets are used by Kohut to distinguish “high-level” psychoanalytic abstractions such as “ego, id and superego”, which are “experience-distant”, from more familiar or everyday concepts of the self, such as “personality”, which are “experience-near” and “not indigenous to psychoanalytic psychology.” Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: a Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders*, (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2009), xiv-xv.

¹² *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, trans. A.V. Miller, (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), 29. "Stelle ich den Stern auch noch so weit, so kann ich darüber hinausgehen; die Welt ist nirgends mit Brettern zugenagelt." Hegel, *Werke*, vol.9, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 43.

¹³ *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 41; *Phenomenology*, 31.

¹⁴ *Aesthetics*, vol.II, 976.

¹⁵ *The Poverty of Philosophy*, MECW vol.6, 164-5.

¹⁶ *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 38-9.

¹⁷ *The Poverty of Philosophy*, MECW vol.6, 207.

¹⁸ That Hegel anticipated the witticism that according to his system of philosophy "all that has happened and is still happening is only just what is happening in his own mind" is quite clear throughout all his philosophy at least since the early critique of Fichte, who in Hegel's reckoning would be its fitting target. Hegel explains the difference of his system from what he calls "the systematized idealism of subjectivity" for which "content is not *real existence*" and "external being" is only "*for me*" or "*in me idealized*" in *The Science of Logic*, 125. But for Marx in 1847 these distinctions are still what he would later call, in the account of the fetish-character in *Capital*, "metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties".

¹⁹ Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: the Story of His Life*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald, (London: John Lane, 1936), 11.

²⁰ Compare Coleridge's instructions for the dramatic delivery of a speech by Viola in his notes on *Twelfth Night*: "After the first line (of which the last five words should be spoken with, and drop down in, a deep sigh) the actress ought to make a pause; and then start afresh, from the activity of thought, born of suppressed feelings, and which thought had accumulated during the brief interval, as vital heat under the skin during a dip in cold water." *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and Other English Poets*, ed. T. Ashe, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1888), 296.

²¹ Heinrich Marx to Karl Marx, March 2nd, 1837, MECW, vol.1, 672-3.

²² Heinrich Marx to Karl Marx, February 3rd, 1837, MECW, vol.1, 668. In reality the same "good" Jenny von Westphalen whom Heinrich painted as a timorous creature who trembled at the thought of over-exertion had begun her own independent reading of Hegelian philosophy in 1836, and would continue to study Hegel and the controversies surrounding Young-Hegelianism into the 1840s. See Attali, *Karl Marx ou l'esprit du monde*, 39, and Mary Gabriel, *Love and Capital: Karl and Jenny Marx and the Birth of a Revolution*, (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2011), 37. Francis Wheen's remark in *Karl Marx*, 50, "Marx's intellectual strength intimidated Jenny", seems capable of significant improvement: Marx's "intellectual strength" did not intimidate her out of making an independent and untutored study of the most notoriously demanding and formidable contemporary philosophy.

²³ *Phenomenology*, 132. The *Phenomenology* contains innumerable similar examples of the psychoanalytic character of Hegel's logic.

²⁴ *The Poverty of Philosophy*, MECW vol.6, 110, 194.

²⁵ *The Poverty of Philosophy*, MECW vol.6, 133.

²⁶ *The Poverty of Philosophy*, MECW vol.6, 134.

²⁷ Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, 81.

²⁸ *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 39.

²⁹ *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 43.

³⁰ *Biographia Literaria*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol.7, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983), 127.

³¹ A reflection prompted by *Measure for Measure* in his *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare* makes clear that for Coleridge “will” is a synonym for “mind”. The will that may give vividness to any object whatever is not psychic inclination precipitating cathexis but the existence of spirit in time: “It appears to me to be the grandest symptom of an immortal spirit, when even that bedimmed and overwhelmed spirit recked not of its own immortality, still to seek to be,—to be a mind, a will.” *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and Other English Poets*, 300.

³² *The Poverty of Philosophy*, MECW vol.6, 212.

³³ *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 42.

³⁴ *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 125.

³⁵ Cf. De Quincey on the power of “Greek dialogue” in “Grecian tragedy”: “Had the dialogue ministered to any purpose so *progressive* and so active as that of developing a character, with new incidents and changes of the speakers coming forward at every moment, as occasions for the evoking the peculiarities of that character—in such a case the more it had resembled the movement, the fluctuations, the hurry of actual life and of real colloquial intercourse, the more it would have aided the views of the poet. But the purpose of the Greek dialogue was not progressive; essentially it was retrospective.” “Theory of Greek Tragedy” (1840), *De Quincey as Critic*, ed. John E. Jordan, (London: Routledge, 1973), 186. The simple conclusion of this complex thought contained in its last clause seems unnecessary, as though De Quincey anxiously imagined that his negative judgment that “Greek dialogue” is not progressive required confirming by the assertion of its antithesis.

³⁶ *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 126.

³⁷ MECW, vol.5, 23-4.

³⁸ The phrase “fixed mutual opposites” is from *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 45, but the criticism can be found in many places in Hegel's writings.

³⁹ *Phenomenology*, 226.

⁴⁰ This translation and the facing German original are in Leonard P. Wessell, Jr., *Karl Marx, Romantic Irony and the Proletariat: The Mythopoetic Origins of Marxism*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 226-9. The risible conclusion of this book given in the “Summary” on 224 is that “Marxism is a poetic interpretation of reality. But because Marxism does not calm man's basic fear [of death and meaninglessness] it has to turn its poetics into a vital lie. The believing Marxist can, indeed, live, die, and kill with mythopoetic certainty, but not with consciousness of truth. Perhaps this is the ultimate refutation of Marxism, namely that it is a ‘bad’ aesthetics. Its poetry is not that of life and openness but that of ideological paranoia.” Wessell, Jr. at least deserves credit for grasping that Marxist critical thinking has a poetics.

⁴¹ MECW, vol.1, 535.

⁴² MEGA, 1.1, 629.

⁴³ *Aesthetics*, vol.II, 972.

⁴⁴ MECW, vol.3, 237-8.

⁴⁵ MECW, vol.3, 237-8, 235.

⁴⁶ Heinrich Heine, *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Hans Kaufmann, vol.1, (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1961), 420-1.

⁴⁷ *Atta Troll*, trans. Hermann Georg Scheffauer, (Berlin, 2015), 65.

⁴⁸ I can find no previous notice of this inexplicit reference to Heine's satirical epic in *Capital*, though some authors who write about Marx have commented on the poem, for example Margaret A. Rose, *Marx's Lost Aesthetic: Karl Marx and the Visual Arts*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), 29 and David Leopold, *The Young Karl Marx: German Philosophy, Modern Politics, and Human Flourishing*, (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 195. S.S. Prawer does not notice it, though he does brilliantly suggest that Marx's neologism "Lumpenproletariat" was modeled on Heine's earlier neologism "Lumpensammler", "rag-pickers", in Heine's *Französische Zustände*. *Karl Marx and World Literature*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 201.

⁴⁹ Heine, *Buch der Lieder*, XXV, ll.3-4: "Da küßttest du mich, und dein Arm mich umschlang / Da preßtest du mich an die schwellende Brust." ["There you kissed me, and your arm clasped me, / There you pressed me to your swelling breast."] *Werke und Briefe*, vol.1, 82. On "bearers" or *Träger*, see *Capital*, vol.1, 92: "But individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, the bearers [*Träger*] of particular class-relations and interests."

⁵⁰ David Harvey makes a useful comment on this "Faustian conflict" in the conscience of the capitalist in *A Companion to Marx's Capital*, (London: Verso, 2010, 257-8. What Marx means, he explains, is that "restraint" in private consumption is "converted into an ideology of voluntary bourgeois virtue." Harvey does not make any observation on the reference to Heine implicit in the choice of "Hochbrust" to represent the anatomical theatre of this ideology, nor does he conclude as I do that the capitalist's very being as such (his "ontology") and not only his good moral feelings (his "psychology") are at stake in this grotesque, mock tragic "conflict".

⁵¹ *Capital*, vol.1, 92.

